

**MASTER PLAN  
VILLAGE OF LOS RANCHOS DE ALBUQUERQUE**

**FEBRUARY 1992**



Village of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque  
February 1992

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**We would like to thank the following members of the Citizens' Advisory Planning Committee for their valuable effort, without which there would be no plan:**

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\*CHAIRPERSON



RESOLUTION NO. 92-2-2

ADOPTING THE VILLAGE OF LOS RANCHOS DE ALBUQUERQUE MASTER PLAN

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees, the governing body of the Village of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque, has the authority to adopt and amend master plans for the physical development of areas within its planning and platting jurisdiction, as authorized by Section 3-19-1 et seq. NMSA 1978; and

WHEREAS, municipal zoning regulations and restrictions are to be in conformance with a comprehensive plan, as provided by Section 3-21-5 NMSA 1978; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees recognizes that the areas within the planning and platting jurisdiction of the Village are a unique and special part of the Albuquerque Metropolitan Area and that exceptional measures are required in order to preserve the qualities of this area that make it unique, while at the same time providing for orderly and compatible development within it; and

WHEREAS, The Master Land Use Plan, Phase I Goals and Policies, and Appendix A: Report of the Citizens Advisory Planning Committee have been developed in accordance with the desires and needs of residents, property owners, and business people within the planning and platting jurisdiction of the Village as expressed through the Citizens Advisory Planning Committee, special surveys, and public hearings; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees has concurred with the findings stated in the Master Land Use Plan, Phase I Goals and Policies, and Appendix A: Report of the Citizens Advisory Planning Committee and recognizes the need to create a new Master plan in order to accomplish the aims of preservation and orderly growth.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE VILLAGE OF LOS RANCHOS DE ALBUQUERQUE:

Section 1. That the Goals and Policies contained within the Master Land Use Plan and Phase I Goals and Policies be adopted as the Master Plan of the Village of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque, with the following provisions:

A. That the density, type, and design of all land uses and development, including

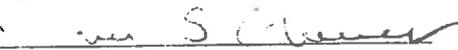
residential, agricultural, commercial, and recreational and open space shall be in accordance with the Master Plan as adopted by the Village.

B. That the provision, maintenance and design of public and private facilities and services, including, but not limited to, roads and streets, recreational trails, drainage, public safety, solid waste disposal and water and sewer systems shall be in accordance with the Master Plan as adopted by the Village.

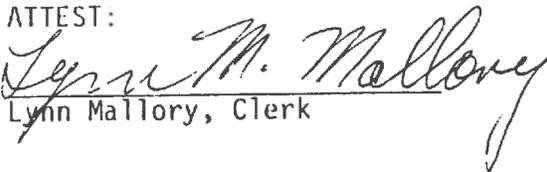
Section 2. That the Master Plan shall serve as a general guideline for land use, environmental, and resource management decisions and shall form the foundation for future planning activities and amendments to land use and related regulations.

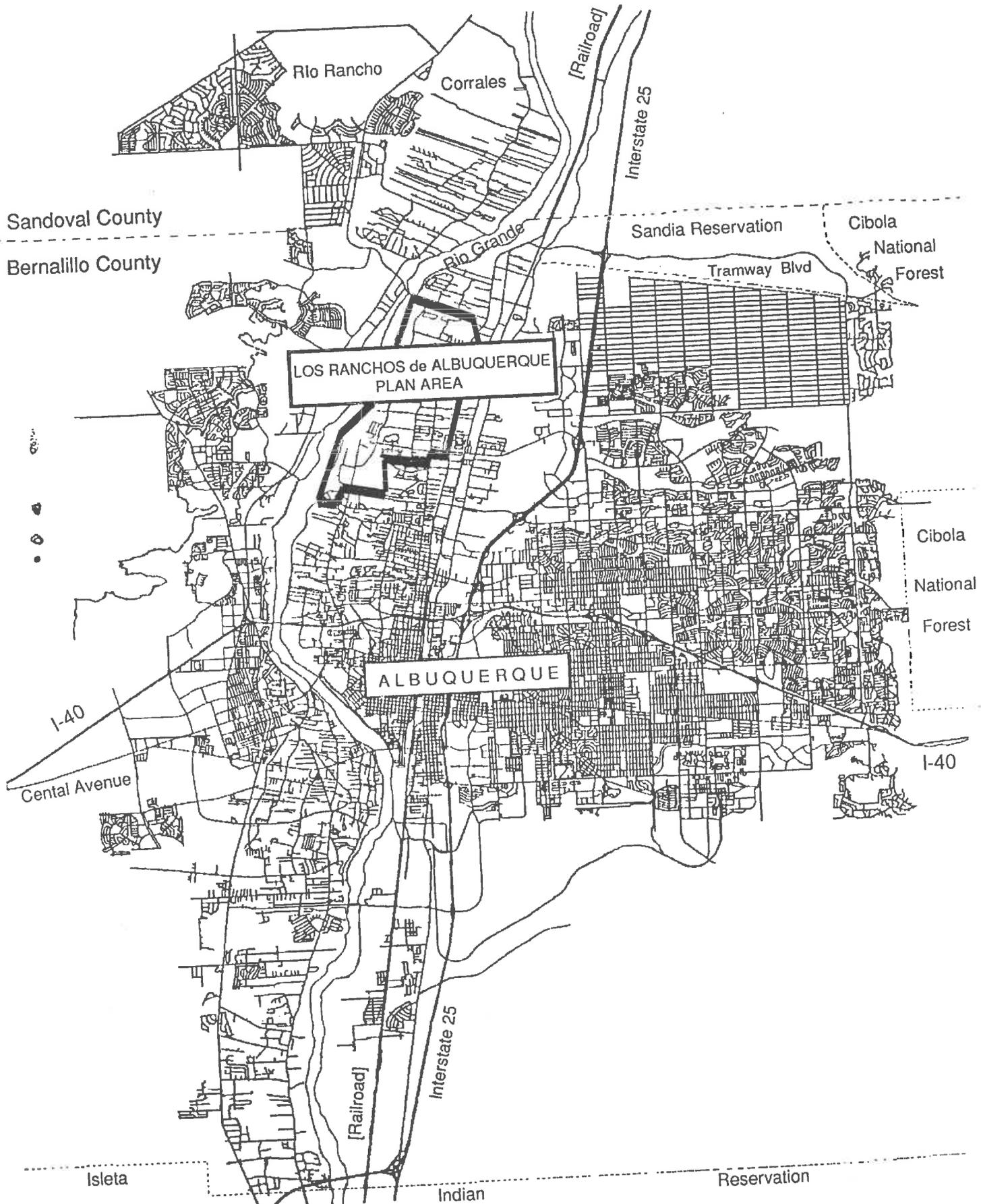
Section 3. That possible techniques listed in the Master Land Use Plan and Phase I Goals and Policies shall serve to implement policies where feasible and shall be periodically revised or expanded to achieve general policy objectives, but shall be specifically excluded from official adoption as part of the Village of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque Master Plan.

ADOPTED AND APPROVED by the Board of Trustees in the Village of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque this 11<sup>th</sup> day of March 1992

  
John O'Connor, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
Lynn Mallory, Clerk



Sandoval County  
Bernalillo County

LOS RANCHOS de ALBUQUERQUE  
PLAN AREA

ALBUQUERQUE

Interstate 25

I-40

Cental Avenue

Interstate 25

Isleta

Indian

Reservation

Rio Rancho

Corrales

Rio Grande

Sandia Reservation

Cibola  
National  
Forest

Tramway Blvd

Cibola  
National  
Forest

I-40



**Village of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque  
Master Plan  
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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Master Plan for a community is the major tool by which its citizenry gains control over the future of their area. Under New Mexico law, zoning and other land use related ordinances must be based upon a Master Plan. The Plan assists the elected officials of the community in making decisions related to public expenditures, capital improvements, and ongoing decisions related to zoning and land use. It is the statement of the residents of a community on what their community is and what they want it to be in the future. It is not a static document, but must change as the community changes. Planning is an ongoing process.

The area now containing the Village of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque grew for many years without zoning, subdivision, or land use controls of any kind. The Village incorporated in 1958 partially because of this lack of control and the resultant growth. Though the Village adopted zoning almost immediately, many of the unincorporated areas later added to the Village grew for several more years without any land use controls. This legacy has given the area a diverse look and "feel" that is pleasing to most residents but it has also given rise to problems which continue to trouble residents today. Among these are the loss of agricultural land, increases in traffic, sprawling suburban-type development, and the closure of parts of the ditch system. Much development occurred at a density that intensifies ground water pollution from septic tanks, a very serious problem in the area.

### **THE PLANNING PROCESS IN THE VILLAGE**

#### ***PHASE ONE***

In 1981, the Village adopted the 1975 Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan. By 1988, the Board of Trustees had determined that increasing development pressures warranted further action on the part of the Village, and that the 1975 metropolitan-wide plan had become less than adequate to satisfy the needs of the community. That same year, the Board expanded the Village Master Plan outside of the Village with the exercise of extraterritorial planning

and platting. In May, 1989 the Citizens Advisory Planning Committee (CAPC) was formed. In 1989 and 1990, the committee, with assistance of Village staff, undertook the task of gathering citizen input for a new Master Plan. After an exhaustive round of meetings and hearings, this first phase of the process was concluded in July, 1990, with the largest public hearing held in the Village up to that time. In September, 1990, the committee issued a report entitled **Statement of Goals, Objectives, and Policies, Report of the Citizens Advisory Planning Committee** cataloging citizen input and findings. Within a few months, the committee and Village staff reformatted and summarized the committee report into **Phase I Goals and Policies**. Adopted by the Board of Trustees as **Resolution 90-12-1**, this document amends the 1975 Plan. This Resolution sets forth the primary objectives of the Village for the future.

As part of that first phase of the planning process, the Village completed an **Inventory of Existing Conditions**, which is essentially a status report of the Village as it exists today. As part of that exercise, Village staff completed a **Buildout Study**. This study attempts to project the ultimate population of this area based upon the maximum number of potential housing units that may be built within the area under certain planning and zoning regulations. One of the significant findings of this study is that, even with no change in the current zoning ordinances with regard to minimum lot size, the population of the area will nearly double before all of the land is fully subdivided and built upon.

## **PHASE TWO**

The primary aim of the second phase of the planning process was the creation of the **Master Land Use Plan**. This document applies general principles of Resolution 90-12-1 to specific geographic regions of the Plan Area. Thus the goals and policies of the Master Land Use Plan are further refinements of the goals and policies of Resolution 90-12-1. In this way, the Master Land Use Plan is consistent with Resolution 90-12-1 and will lead to the implementation of some of its parts. With the adoption of the Master Land Use Plan together with the Resolution, the two

phases of the planning process are blended together as one.

The second phase of the planning process included a number of public meetings which included participants from throughout the Plan Area (see figure 1). The process also incorporated a scientific planning survey of residents in 500 households randomly selected from throughout the Plan Area. This Land Use Planning Survey was administered by the University of New Mexico, in cooperation with Village staff, in May, 1991. This survey attempted to attain an accurate picture of the attitude of residents toward their area today and what they would like it to look like in the future. The survey results, combined with input from a number of public meetings and hearings throughout all phases of the process, have given the Village a representation of the viewpoints of a majority of residents in the Plan Area. While realizing that no point of view is shared by every single person in any area, these ideas have been summarized as follows:

(1) This area is appreciated for its diverse nature and the wide variety of architectural styles, neighborhoods, socioeconomic groups and lifestyles within it. Neighborhoods with mixed lot sizes are preferred over "cookie cutter" subdivisions in which lot sizes are uniform.

(2) Residents of the area identify with three major road corridors- Fourth Street, Guadalupe Trail, and Rio Grande Boulevard, as a focus of neighborhoods and as main avenues of travel to and from other areas.

(3) The low density character of the area is important. Housing densities of one to two units per acre or less are preferred.

(4) The rural/agricultural "feel" of the area is critical. Maintaining this includes encouraging all types of gardening and crop raising as well as animal husbandry. Open spaces and vistas are important to the character of the area.

(5) The preservation of the environment of the area is vital. All forms of pollution, including air, water, noise, light, and visual, are to be discouraged.

(6) The MRGCD ditch system is considered to be vital to the character of the area and its future.

**(7) Commercial activity in the area should be concentrated along Fourth Street. The amount of commercially zoned land in the area should remain basically constant. Measures should be taken to assist the Fourth Street business community such that a stable revenue base is maintained and the appearance and vitality of this commercial district are improved.**

**(8) Sanitary sewer lines should be extended into areas where septic tank usage has become a problem. The Village should take an active role in ongoing planning efforts for the future of the north valley sewer system. Sewer installation should be used to alleviate environmental problems and not as an excuse to increase density and promote urbanization. Funding sources should be sought to assist low income individuals with the cost of connection to sewer lines.**

**(9) A certain amount of growth in the area is inevitable, but urbanization and the destruction of the essential character of the area do not have to be.**

**(10) The people of the area are one of its most precious resources, and a method must be implemented which keeps long term residents from being forced to move away due to economic pressures.**



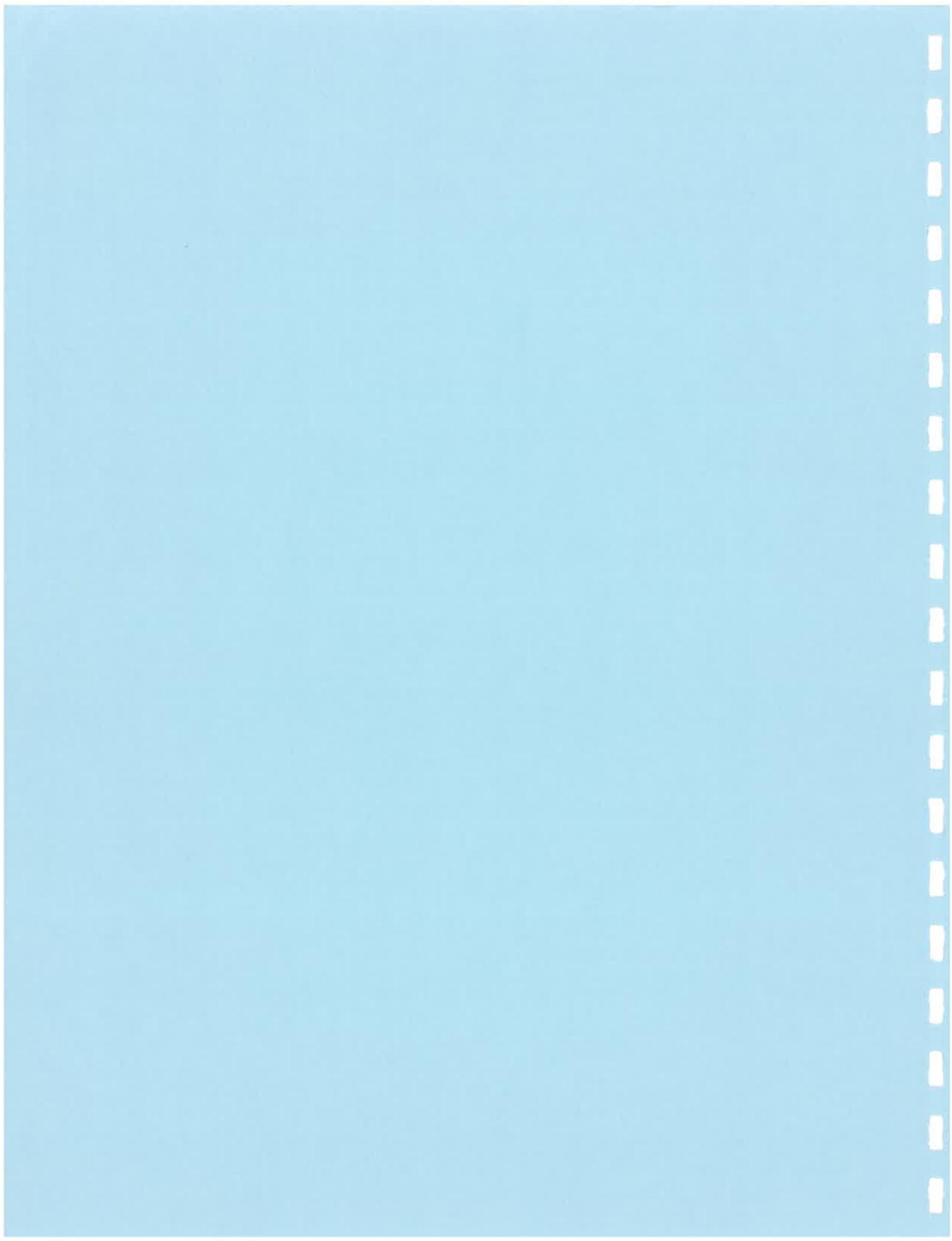
**FIGURE 1**

<p><i>Citizen's Advisory Planning Committee</i></p>	
<p>▲ Participating Household</p>	
	<p>Los Ranchos de Albuquerque Comprehensive Plan—1991</p>



**PHASE I GOALS AND POLICIES  
(Resolution 90-12-1)**





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I. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

OVERALL GOALS

THE FIRST OVERALL GOAL OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IS TO PRESERVE AND ENCOURAGE THE LOW DENSITY, DIVERSIFIED, RURAL AND RESIDENTIAL USE OF THE LAND.

THE SECOND OVERALL GOAL IS TO ENSURE THE EXISTENCE AND AVAILABILITY OF ALL SERVICES NECESSARY TO THE HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELFARE OF ALL VILLAGE CITIZENS, WHILE RECOGNIZING THE SCALE AND RESOURCE LIMITATIONS OF VILLAGE GOVERNMENT.

## II. AREAWIDE GOALS AND POLICIES

### A. AGRICULTURE

IN RECOGNITION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF AGRICULTURE TO THE HISTORY AND CHARACTER OF THE AREA, THE GOAL IS TO ENCOURAGE ITS PRESERVATION WHEREVER AND WHENEVER POSSIBLE.

#### POLICIES

- a. The Village shall consider agriculture (including livestock raising) to be the "highest and best" use of land in the area and the key to "rural atmosphere."

#### POSSIBLE TECHNIQUES

- (1) Secure "greenbelt" tax status for as many persons as possible.
- (2) Educate citizens on the "greenbelt" law.
- (3) Work with the State legislature and the Office of the Bernalillo County Assessor to help make the "greenbelt" law more effective for agricultural preservation and more equitable for the average citizen.
- (4) Promote Animal Husbandry .
- (5) Encourage low capital investment agriculture by:
  - a) Renting land and doing cost-effective cropping.
  - b) Coordinating a tool and equipment cooperative to share the burden of capital investment.
- (6) Educate citizens on water law and motivating the irrigating and cropping of land.
- (7) Protect the continued use of agricultural wells.
- (8) Use Innovative methods such as:
  - a) Innovative zoning ordinances incorporating developer incentives and agricultural open space.
  - b) Conservation easements.
  - c) Transferring Development Rights.
- (9) Preserve the use of irrigation ditches through political and other means.

**A. AGRICULTURE**

**POLICIES**

**POSSIBLE TECHNIQUES**

- (10) Include a study of agricultural economics in future planning efforts of the Village.
- (11) Establish a "growers market" at Ranchitos Shopping Center.
- (12) Start an "agricultural fair" on an annual basis.
- (13) Encourage the maintenance of irrigation easements in replatting actions.

## B. DITCH SYSTEM

THE GOAL IS TO PRESERVE THE DITCH IRRIGATION SYSTEM THAT BRINGS GREEN TO THE VALLEY AND SUSTAINS AGRICULTURE.

### POLICIES

- a. The Village shall consider the ditch system as a vital component of the unique character of the area and shall preserve it to the fullest extent possible, to include outright acquisition wherever financially feasible.

- b. The Village shall devise a plan for the future of the ditches which takes into account the following functions of the ditches: irrigation, wildlife habitat, support of vegetation, drainage, water table support, and recreation. This plan shall determine which ditches are appropriate for which uses. Recreational use of ditches shall be in accordance with the following policies:

1) The Village shall attempt to linkup trails on ditches in a logical fashion with those in neighboring jurisdictions both geographically and functionally.

2) In all recreational planning efforts, the Village shall take into account the desires of adjoining property owners and their need for privacy and safety.

### POSSIBLE TECHNIQUES

- (1) Utilize methods to preserve irrigated uses of land. Educate property owners about the ditch system and applicable laws.
  - (2) Examine the net effects of ditch closures upon the area environment.
  - (3) Form a citizen ditch committee which will work with Trustees, Village staff, State legislators, MRGCD staff and the office of the State Engineer to promote ditch preservation.
  - (4) Research the MRGCD mandate and applicable laws in order to devise an overall plan for preservation.
  - (5) Work with the State Legislature to change laws which encourage ditch closure.
  - (6) Acquire and keep open abandoned ditches whenever possible.
  - (7) Educate area citizens about the linkage between irrigation and ditch preservation.
  - (8) Encourage the maintenance of irrigation easements in replatting actions.
- (1) Call upon the citizen ditch committee to assist in planning efforts.
- (2) Gather appropriate hydrological and environmental data.
- (3) Conduct an inventory of ditches to determine appropriate and diversified uses.
- (4) Coordinate trail system development with neighboring local governments and the MRGCD.

### C. OPEN EXPANSES

IN RECOGNITION OF THE VALUE OF OPEN EXPANSES TO THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA, THE GOAL IS TO IDENTIFY AND PRESERVE THESE AREAS TO THE GREATEST DEGREE POSSIBLE.

#### POLICIES

- a. The Village aggressively acquire appropriate open spaces in recognition of its limited financial resources in accordance with the following policies:
- 1) The function of open spaces shall be appropriate to their location.
  - 2) Preservation of vistas or views shall be a top priority in the acquisition of open space lands.
  - 3) The needs and desires of residents in the affected area shall be considered when allocating open spaces for active or passive uses.
  - 4) Ongoing maintenance costs and staff resources shall be considered before developing open spaces for active uses.
  - 5) Linear open spaces (trails) shall logically connect with those in neighboring jurisdictions, both geographically and functionally.
  - 6) Passive open space as a wildlife habitat shall be encouraged.

#### POSSIBLE TECHNIQUES

- (1) Seek innovative preservation techniques such as the purchase of development rights, purchase of water rights, or conservation easements.
- (2) Pursue authority for a real estate transfer tax from the state legislature to fund acquisition of open spaces.
- (3) Utilize innovative zoning techniques to preserve open spaces.
- (4) Become active in the development of plans for the Rio Grande Valley state park.
- (5) Promote incentives to keep land undeveloped.
- (6) Identify appropriate open expanse parcels in future planning efforts.
- (7) Incorporate the preservation of open spaces into zoning ordinances.
- (8) Coordinate recreational trail development with neighboring jurisdictions.
- (9) Explore having multiple-use sports-related properties in several areas of the Village.

#### D. VEGETATION AND WILDLIFE

THE GOAL IS TO PRESERVE AND ENCOURAGE THE VEGETATION AND WILDLIFE THAT APPEAR IN AREA YARDS AND FIELDS

##### POLICIES

- a. The Village shall support vegetation and wildlife whenever possible in Village programs, such as tree planting programs.

- b. Passive open space as a wildlife habitat shall be encouraged.

##### POSSIBLE TECHNIQUES

- (1) Promote land uses which encourage the presence of wildlife.
  - (2) Educate the public on local wildlife and implement methods to encourage the presence of wildlife.
  - (3) Seek private and public funding for preservation and encouragement of vegetation and wildlife.
  - (4) Address greening the Village beyond commercial agriculture.
- (1) Lobby the State Legislature to allow passive open space to qualify as greenbelt.

III. CORRIDOR GOALS AND POLICIES

A. CORRIDORS

THE GOAL IS TO PLAN FOR THE FUTURE OF THE AREA BASED UPON ITS THREE MAJOR CORRIDORS, RIO GRANDE BOULEVARD, GUADALUPE TRAIL, AND FOURTH STREET, TO PROVIDE RESOURCE-DIVISION AND PROBLEM-SOLVING UNITS THAT UNITE THE ELEMENTS OF BOTH IRRIGATION AGRICULTURE AND RESIDENTIAL USAGE.

POLICIES

POSSIBLE TECHNIQUES

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| a. The "Corridor" concept shall be used to preserve and encourage the following:<br><br>1) the <u>low density</u> , and the social, architectural, and historic <u>diversity of Village neighborhoods</u> clustering along Village roads,<br><br>2) specific historic landmarks and rural features in each neighborhood,<br><br>3) the rural nature of Village roads, and the uniqueness of Rio Grande Boulevard, Guadalupe Trail, and Fourth Street, reflecting their separate history,<br><br>4) compatible commercial development along Fourth Street. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) Conduct comprehensive and scientific surveys of residents and property owners in each corridor.</li><li>(2) Expand public involvement in activities of the Citizens Advisory Planning Committee.</li><li>(3) Incorporate previous historic preservation efforts into the studies.</li><li>(4) Examine the effects of Paseo del Norte upon the three corridors.</li><li>(5) Incorporate the results of corridor studies into plans regarding the ultimate extent of Village annexation.</li><li>(6) Integrate corridor study findings into Village ordinances.</li><li>(7) Identify existing and desirable open expanses and vistas.</li><li>(8) Address greening the Village beyond commercial agriculture.</li><li>(9) Study the rural, residential, and commercial aspects of Fourth Street.</li></ul> |
|---|--|

## B. ROADS AND STREETS

THE GOAL IS TO PRESERVE THE RURAL NATURE OF VILLAGE ROADWAYS WHILE RECOGNIZING THE UNIQUE CHARACTER AND HISTORY OF FOURTH STREET, GUADALUPE TRAIL, AND RIO GRANDE BOULEVARD

### POLICIES

- a. The Village shall identify Fourth Street, Guadalupe Trail, and Rio Grande Boulevard as its three main north and south roads shall preserve the unique nature of each.

- b. The Village shall exercise maximum control over roadways so that rural features are maintained in balance with safety requirements and in accordance with the following:

- 1) Non-stop commuter traffic shall be discouraged on Village roadways.
- 2) Village roadways shall be designed to be no wider than is absolutely necessary for service and safety.
- 3) Road shoulders or excess right-of-way areas shall be established to accommodate non-vehicular traffic as well as emergency vehicles.
- 4) Overall traffic volume and speed shall be reduced on village roads.

### POSSIBLE TECHNIQUES

- (1) Utilize recommendations of a "rural issues" task force in the development of a "rural road" ordinance.
- (2) Study further the unique and desired aspects of the three corridors within the "rural issues" task force and future planning efforts.
- (3) Recognize the unique character and history of these roadways in zoning ordinance revisions.
- (4) Beautify Fourth Street.
- (1) Have the "rural issues" task force develop "rural atmosphere road criteria".
- (2) Incorporate "rural atmosphere road criteria" into applicable sections of Village zoning and subdivision ordinances.
- (3) Work with Village Fire and public safety personnel in the development of roadway requirements.
- (4) Work within MRGCOG to promote limited-access roadways which bypass the area.
- (5) Utilize MRGCOG traffic generation models to evaluate the impact of development proposals upon Village roads.
- (6) Have Village staff work with contractors to ensure that sanitary sewer line installation does not destroy "rural features" on Village roads.
- (7) Develop new signage ordinances so as to reinforce rural atmosphere road criteria, discourage a "commuter strip" appearance on village roads and minimize the overall quantity of signs.

**B. ROADS AND STREETS**

**POLICIES**

**POSSIBLE TECHNIQUES**

- (8) Have County Sheriff officers assigned to the Village make speed limit enforcement a top priority.
- (9) Study the Fourth Street/Chavez/Osuna Road intersection to facilitate improvements in safety at this and any other major intersections.
- (10) Landscape roadways in accordance with "rural atmosphere road criteria."
- (11) Consider an "adopt-a-roadway" program.

C. COMMERCE

THE GOAL IS TO REVITALIZE THE VILLAGE BUSINESS CLIMATE AND FOURTH STREET, THE MAIN COMMERCIAL DISTRICT OF THE VILLAGE.

POLICIES

- a. The Village shall consider Fourth Street as an invaluable community resource both financially and historically and shall work closely with local residents and business people to improve conditions along this vital corridor.

POSSIBLE TECHNIQUES

- (1) Complete annexation of street right-of-way adjacent to current Village limits.
- (2) Complete annexation of lands between the current Village boundary and the Chamisal Lateral.
- (3) Strongly support the business community on Fourth Street.
- (4) Promote a Businesspersons Association and work closely with this group in improvement efforts.
- (5) Promote beautification and "greening" of the Fourth Street Corridor.
- (6) Re-emphasize the "Rural/Commercial" history of Fourth Street and its history as US Highway 85.
- (7) Consider replatting and site development of commercial lots to provide space for safe off-street parking and landscaping.
- (8) Promote the development of local neighborhood-level commercial establishments.
- (9) Encourage a mixture of commercial, agricultural, and residential usage where economically feasible along the Fourth Street Corridor.
- (10) Consider a sign ordinance, developed in concert with the Fourth Street business community, which preserves the diverse nature of businesses there while beautifying the corridor.
- (11) Originate a business study which considers the North Valley and Albuquerque economy and assists the Village in encouraging feasible commercial development within the scale and character of the Village.
- (12) Encourage participation in programs such as Main Street.

IV. SECTOR GOALS AND POLICIES

A. LAND USE

**THE GOAL IS TO PRESERVE AND ENCOURAGE A LOW DENSITY, DIVERSIFIED, RURAL, AND RESIDENTIAL USE OF THE LAND**

**POLICIES**

**POSSIBLE TECHNIQUES**

- |    |   |     |  |
|----|---|-----|--|
| a. | The Village shall maintain the low density residential character of the area. Such efforts shall be in accordance with the following policies:<br><br>1) The Village shall focus its efforts on maintaining a low density by utilizing methods beyond minimum lot size requirements.<br><br>2) Sanitary sewer line extensions shall be considered as an environmental improvement measure and shall not be used to justify an increase in density.<br><br>3) Until adoption of Phase II of the Comprehensive Plan by the Village, the Village shall seek to retain the current neighborhood zoning and density characteristics.<br><br>4) Commercial development shall be concentrated in the Fourth Street area. | (1) | Encourage the maintenance of large open spaces.  |
|    |   | (2) | Build incentives for open space preservation into the zoning and subdivision ordinances.   |
|    |   | (3) | Place future land use decisions within the framework of neighborhood context and character.  |
|    |   | (4) | Encourage preservation of agricultural lands.  |
|    |   | (5) | Examine "zoning sectors" in future planning efforts and maintain overall density within that called for in the sectors.  |
|    |   | (6) | Expand "zoning sectors" and overall densities in future planning efforts to unincorporated areas within the planning and platting jurisdiction of the Village. |
|    |   | (7) | Examine appropriate residential density for C-1 areas in future planning efforts.  |
|    |   | (8) | Consider areas for large lot rezoning.   |
| b. | The Village shall recognize and maintain the diverse nature of neighborhoods and lifestyles within the area.  | (1) | Maintain and encourage Home Occupation business.   |
|    |   | (2) | Define "Neighborhood Context."   |
|    |   | (3) | Consider neighborhood needs and wishes in future policy decisions.   |
|    |   | (4) | Place future land use decisions within the framework of neighborhood context and character.  |
|    |   | (5) | Address the problem of family-held lands in long-lot division, or "tripas."  |
| c. | The Village shall maintain and encourage rural land uses, such as animal husbandry and features which contribute to the rural atmosphere in the area.   | (1) | Build the recommendations of the "rural features" committee into applicable ordinances.  |

## A. LAND USE

### POLICIES

### POSSIBLE TECHNIQUES

- |    |     |  |
|----|-----|--|
|    | (2) | Evaluate development proposals with regard to desired "rural features".  |
|    | (3) | Encourage agricultural land uses and animal husbandry operations.  |
|    | (4) | Assist residents in obtaining "greenbelt" tax status.  |
|    | (5) | Emphasize the rural/commercial history of Fourth Street when evaluating commercial development proposals.  |
|    | (6) | Develop "rural road" ordinances.   |
|    | (7) | Identify and preserve historic landmarks in each neighborhood.   |
|    | (8) | Encourage land use which encourages the presence of wildlife.  |
|    | (9) | Adapt the zoning ordinance to permit more animal husbandry uses.   |
| d. | (1) | Government buildings and surroundings will be constructed in southwestern or compatible style.<br>Form an architectural and landscape review board for government buildings. |

**B. URBANIZATION AND DIVERSITY**

**THE GOAL IS TO CONTROL AND DISCOURAGE LAND USES WHICH REPRESENT NOTICEABLE OR INTRUSIVE URBANIZATION AND WHICH ADVERSELY IMPACT UPON THE LOW DENSITY, DIVERSIFIED, AND RURAL NATURE OF THE AREA.**

**POLICIES**

**POSSIBLE TECHNIQUES**

- |    |  |     |   |
|----|--|-----|---|
| a. | The Village shall control and discourage land uses and related features which represent urbanization and an adverse impact upon the rural atmosphere of the area. These uses and features shall include:<br><br>1) High density housing<br><br>2) Heavy industry<br><br>3) Uses which cause pollution to the air or groundwater.<br><br>4) Uses which cause visual or noise pollution<br><br>5) Curbs, gutters, storm sewers, sidewalks and residential street lights. | (1) | Appoint a "rural features" task force to define further those features which should be controlled and/or discouraged. |
|    |  | (2) | Revise zoning and subdivision ordinances to more specifically reflect such adverse uses and features.                 |
|    |  | (3) | Incorporate those features which should be controlled or discouraged into a "rural road" ordinance.                   |
| b. | The Village shall recognize that the area is characterized by and appreciated for its landscaping diversity, overall spontaneity and relative freedom.   | (1) | Do not promote one style of architecture for construction in the area.  |
|    |  | (2) | Incorporate diverse areas and lifestyles into Village ordinances.   |

C. UNINCORPORATED AREAS

IN RECOGNITION THAT THE CHARACTER OF DEVELOPMENT OF UNINCORPORATED AREAS WITHIN THE PLANNING AND PLATTING JURISDICTION OF THE VILLAGE IS IMPORTANT TO ITS FUTURE, THE GOAL IS TO UTILIZE POWERS GRANTED TO THE VILLAGE BY THE STATE LEGISLATURE TO WORK TOGETHER WITH THE COUNTY OF BERNALILLO TO ENSURE THE BEST POSSIBLE FUTURE FOR THESE AREAS.

**POLICIES**

**POSSIBLE TECHNIQUES**

- |    |  |     |   |
|----|--|-----|---|
| a. | The Village will utilize extraterritorial powers to the greatest degree possible to safeguard the future of all areas within its planning and platting jurisdiction.   | (1) | Pursue an extraterritorial zoning agreement with Bernalillo County.   |
|    |  | (2) | Pursue extraterritorial powers on the west side of the Rio Grande.  |
|    |  | (3) | Conduct a future study to include more detailed recommendations for the exercise of extraterritorial powers by the Village. |
| b. | Annexation will be utilized by the Village as a permanent method of protection of its rural way of life and in accordance with the following policies:<br><br>1) Annexation of an area shall seek to retain the small, personal scale of representative government in the Village.<br><br>2) Areas annexed shall be roughly compatible in character with the existing Village.<br><br>3) Annexation shall acknowledge the need the aim of maintaining a diverse makeup of the population in the Village.<br><br>4) Before an annexation takes place, the Village shall consider the balance between potential tax revenues to be gained from the area of annexation and the potential costs of providing services to the new area. | (1) | Annex both sides of an arterial street whenever possible.   |
|    |  | (2) | Complete the annexation of areas between the current Village boundary and the Chamisal Lateral undertaken in 1989.          |
|    |  | (3) | Examine further the ultimate extent of annexation in future planning efforts by the Village.                                |
| c. | In the event of consolidation between the City of Albuquerque and the County of Bernalillo, the Village shall work to retain extraterritorial jurisdiction to the greatest degree possible   | (1) | Keep open lines of communication between the village and the City and County governments.                                   |

V. SERVICES

A. GENERAL SERVICES

THE GOAL IS TO ENSURE THE EXISTENCE AND AVAILABILITY OF ALL SERVICES NECESSARY TO THE HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELFARE OF ALL VILLAGE CITIZENS, WHILE RECOGNIZING THE SCALE AND RESOURCE LIMITATIONS OF THE VILLAGE GOVERNMENT.

POLICIES

POSSIBLE TECHNIQUES

a. Service provision by the Village shall be a balance between the need to control vital services and the limited resource base available to pay for such services and shall be in accordance with the following policies:

1) The Village shall focus on providing services for the protection of the people, property, way of life, and environment of the Village and shall provide such services directly whenever possible.

2) The village shall minimize the overall number of services directly provided by encouraging and assisting other governmental agencies, private organizations, and individuals to provide some services.

b. Village government shall be more efficient, accessible, and accountable to the public.

c. The efforts of citizen volunteers shall be respected and enhanced and shall not be substituted for staffing needs.

(1) Provide staff and proper mechanisms for the enforcement of existing ordinances.

(2) Be careful not to pass ordinances which the Village is unwilling or unable to enforce or which unnecessarily squelch the diversity in lifestyles of the Village.

(3) Complete procedures allowing sheriff's officers assigned to the Village to enforce Village ordinances.

(1) Develop a long range budget process which takes into account citizen desires and is more understandable for the average citizen.

(2) Inform and educate citizens on a regular basis about key issues that are central to Village life, such as "greenbelt property tax status."

(3) Encourage open "town meetings" on a periodic basis.

(1) Assign staff to steer efforts of volunteer committees.

(2) Assign volunteer efforts and committees to top priority items such as Comprehensive Plan issues.

## B. ENVIRONMENTAL

IN RECOGNITION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE AREA, THE GOAL IS TO TAKE STEPS WHEREVER AND WHENEVER POSSIBLE TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE THAT ENVIRONMENT

### POLICIES

### POSSIBLE TECHNIQUES

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| a. The Village shall adopt the following policies to facilitate the protection of its vulnerable groundwater resources:  | (1) Become directly involved in the planning of sanitary sewer line extensions in the area.  |
| 1) The Village shall promote and facilitate the extension of sanitary sewer lines into areas where the use of septic tanks threatens the groundwater.  | (2) Promote sanitary sewer hookup for as many residents as possible.   |
| 2) The Village shall balance strict enforcement of liquid waste regulations with the recognition of the economic burden that these regulations may create for some residents.  | (3) Assist residents in obtaining subsidies for sanitary sewer hookup.   |
| b. The Village shall provide for solid waste removal services as required by state law. This service will be in accordance with the following policy:  | (4) Educate residents on techniques and benefits of sanitary sewer hookup.   |
| 1) Any solid waste service provided will balance the need for the service with the scale of Village government, the rural atmosphere and natural environment of the Village, and the limited ability of some residents to pay for the service. | (5) Educate residents who live in areas where sanitary sewer is not available on proper methods of septic tank installation and maintenance. |
| c. The Village shall take an aggressive stand on air pollution problems within its planning and platting jurisdiction.   | (1) Examine available subsidies for garbage collection fees.   |
| d. The Village shall take steps to enhance the natural environment of its planning and platting jurisdiction.  | (2) Examine the need for a solid waste transfer station near the Village.  |
|  | (3) Promote incentives for recycling in the area which are appropriate to its diverse population subgroups.                                  |
|  | (1) Gain representation on the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Air Quality Control Board.  |
|  | (2) Aggressively enforce burning ordinances in the Village.  |
|  | (1) Become actively involved in so as to exert strong influence over plans for the Rio Grande Valley State Park and Bosque.                  |
|  | (2) Examine the influence, if any, gained by the Village through extraterritorial powers over the Rio Grande bosque.                         |
|  | (3) Obtain hydrological and environmental data associated with the impact of ditch closings upon the natural environment.                    |

**B. ENVIRONMENTAL**

**POLICIES**

**POSSIBLE TECHNIQUES**

- e. Consider the development of noise and light pollution ordinances for the Village. The Village shall consider the diversity of its neighborhoods and proper mechanisms for enforcement when developing such ordinances.

- (4) Educate the public on local wildlife and implement methods to encourage the continued presence of that wildlife.
- (5) Encourage the "greening" of the Village through tree planting, particularly with native cottonwoods and willows.
- (6) Form a standing environmental committee and provide representation on all metropolitan area environmental boards.

**C. FUTURE PLANNING EFFORTS**

**THE GOAL IS TO FURTHER DEFINE THE FUTURE OF THE AREA THROUGH MORE DETAILED PLANNING EFFORTS AND STUDIES TO BE UNDERTAKEN BY THE VILLAGE IN COOPERATION WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES WHEN APPROPRIATE.**

**POLICIES**

**POSSIBLE TECHNIQUES**

a. The Village shall undertake and fund as appropriate detailed studies of the three major corridors (Rio Grande Boulevard, Fourth Street, and Guadalupe Trail) which will incorporate, but not be limited to, the following objectives:

1) Outlining in detail the past land use, social, and historic dynamics that have given form to the three corridor areas.

2) Identification of perceived problems in each corridor area.

3) Identification of the unique features and areas of each corridor which are in need of preservation.

4) Identification of appropriate public functions for each corridor.

5) Integration of the findings of the corridor studies into later planning efforts.

6) Exploration of the definition and possible use of "Neighborhood Context."

b. The Village shall undertake detailed studies of all areas within its planning and platting jurisdiction such that zoning and density sectors may be more accurately determined. These studies will incorporate, but not be limited to, the following objectives:

1) The collection of adequate baseline data to determine neighborhood context.

(1) Conduct comprehensive and scientific surveys of residents and property owners in each corridor.

(2) Expand public involvement in activities of the Citizens Advisory Planning Committee.

(3) Incorporate previous historic preservation efforts into the studies.

(4) Examine the effects of Paseo del Norte upon the three corridors.

(5) Incorporate the results of corridor studies into plans regarding the ultimate extent of Village annexation.

(6) Integrate corridor study findings into Village ordinances.

(7) Identify existing and desirable open expanses and vistas.

(8) Address greening the Village beyond commercial agriculture.

(9) Study the rural, residential, and commercial aspects of Fourth Street.

(1) Conduct Comprehensive surveys of citizen opinions and desires throughout the process.

(2) Expand the Citizen Advisory Planning Committee.

(3) Integrate sector study findings and recommendations into Village ordinances.

(4) Gain concurrent approval of study recommendations by the Bernalillo County Commission as they apply to unincorporated areas.

**C. FUTURE PLANNING EFFORTS**

**POLICIES**

2) The increasing awareness of citizen needs and desires within different areas.

3) The development of more specific policies to govern land use and zoning decisions.

c. The Village shall consider planning to be an ongoing process and shall effect periodic monitoring and updating of all adopted plans and plan amendments.

d. The Village shall explore a policy of affordable housing where appropriate.

**POSSIBLE TECHNIQUES**

(5) Consider "rezoning to match use" in areas with an established development pattern and history.

(6) Utilize census data to help determine needs on specific areas.

(7) Consider the viability of agricultural land uses in the commercial sector.

(8) Develop a more specific variance policy.

(1) Village Government will provide a Citizens Advisory Planning steering Committee as a permanent organization to participate in, monitor, and evaluate the planning process for conformity to citizen wishes.

(2) Provide adequate funding and staff for enforcement.

(3) Survey citizens periodically.

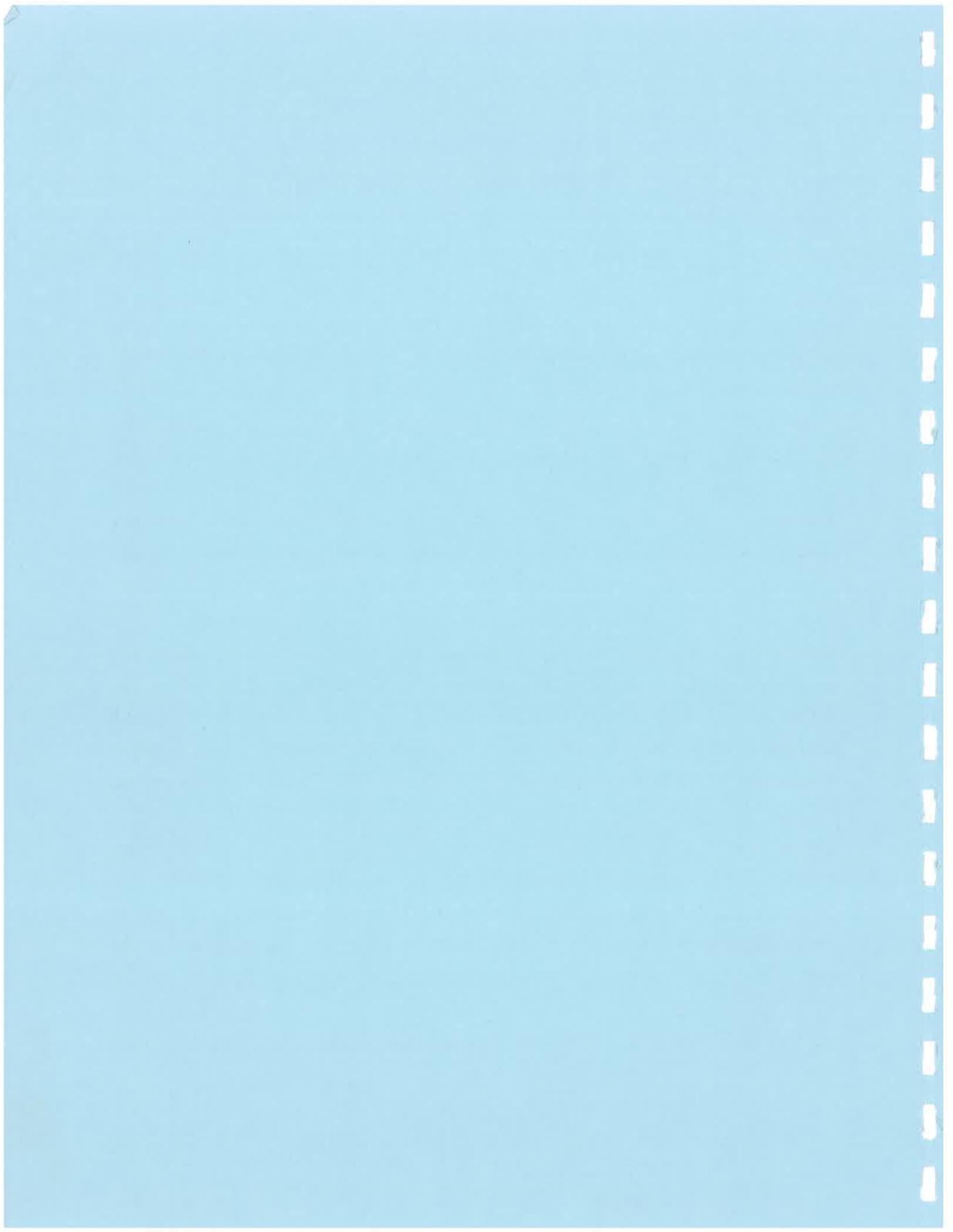
(1) Utilize existing studies of affordable housing.

(2) Evaluate census data with regard to the affordable housing issue.



**MASTER LAND USE PLAN**





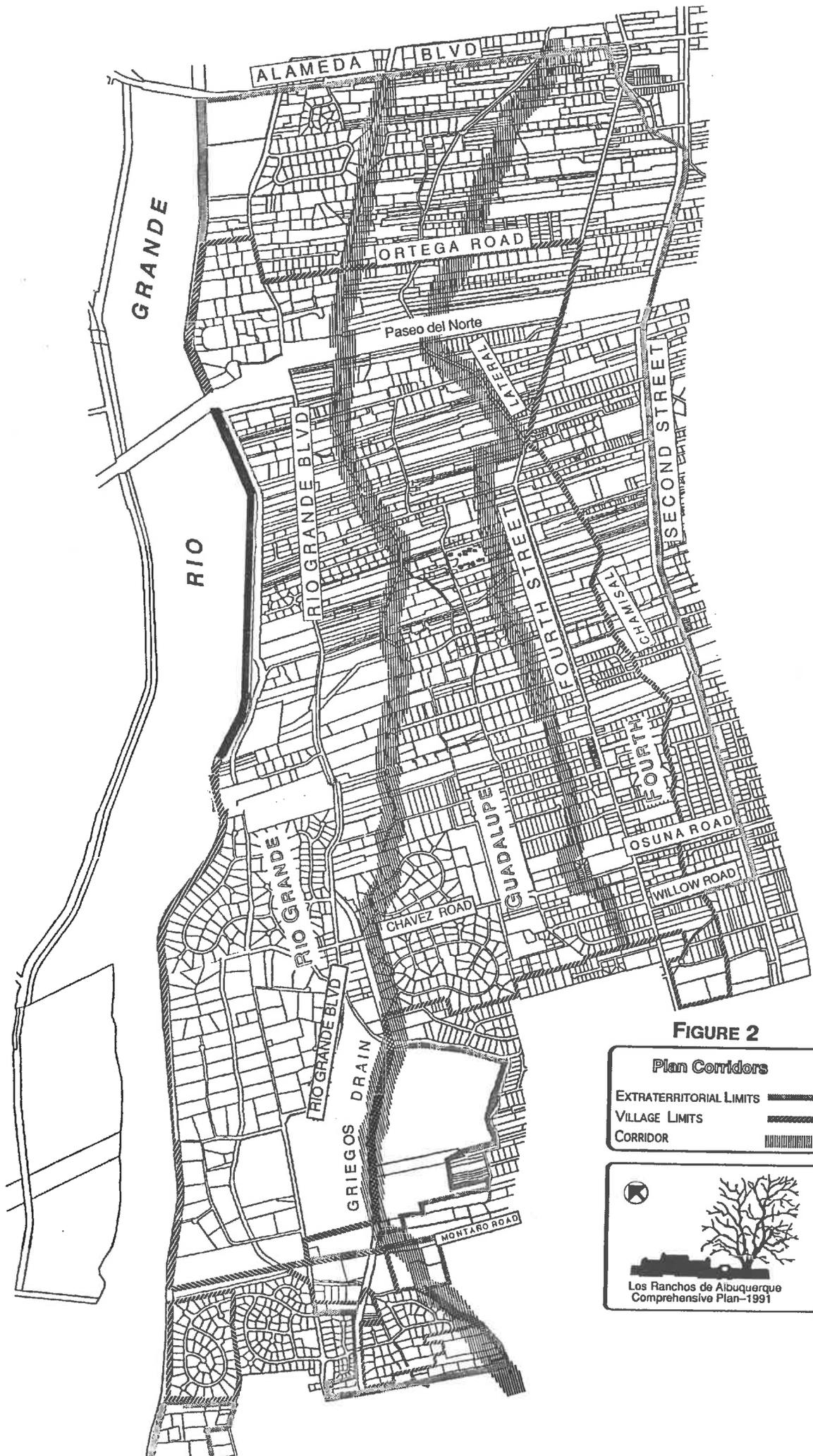
## THE MASTER LAND USE PLAN

### INTRODUCTION

Given the Plan Area's location in the middle of a rapidly growing metropolitan region and its reputation as a nice place to live, growth can be expected to occur. Thwarting all forms of growth is impractical and legally impossible. However, it is not growth itself which presents the main threat to area character, but rather the form of that growth. Until this recent planning process began, the Village mainly attempted to control land use and achieve its goals through the use of zoning and associated minimum lot size requirements. Since 1972, the Village has maintained a one acre minimum lot size throughout much of its area. However, the existence of large lot zoning has not accomplished the end of maintaining agricultural uses in the area or maintaining its perceived rural character. While it has kept overall density low, it has also led to sprawling subdivisions with uniform lot sizes which ignore ditches and replace former agricultural areas with a suburban pattern of land use. The exclusive use of large lot zoning also raises important questions with regard to land values and the ability of people of differing economic groups to continue to live in the area. Much of the lower cost housing in the area is provided by aging mobile home parks, most of which lack modern utilities and amenities. With the Albuquerque area continuing to grow, urbanization pressures in the area will only continue. It is clear that further steps are needed.

The sections of the Master Land Use plan are an analysis of the aforementioned problems at a number of levels. For purposes of developing an overall residential density plan, the Plan Area is divided into **sectors**, which are pockets of the area that are appropriate for certain levels of development. Residents' perceptions of the area and its character are very much defined by the major north-south **corridors** which pass through

it. Thus, concerns which relate to development character are addressed by corridor. These north-south roadways often contain parts of more than one sector, since sectors often have an east-west orientation (see Figure 2). Land use concerns which impact all parts of the Plan Area equally are addressed on an **area-wide** basis. These include the preservation of open spaces and the ditch system as well as sanitary sewer extension.



**FIGURE 2**

**Plan Corridors**

- EXTRATERRITORIAL LIMITS 
- VILLAGE LIMITS 
- CORRIDOR 




Los Ranchos de Albuquerque  
Comprehensive Plan-1991



## Section 2

### OVERALL DEVELOPMENT DENSITY

The density of development is an important concern to area residents. Work completed in earlier phases of the planning process reinforces the importance and further implications of density to the area. Resolution 90-12-1 contains the following Goal "...to preserve and encourage a LOW DENSITY, diversified and rural use of the land" (emphasis added). The results of the Land Use Planning Survey indicated that nearly 90% of respondents preferred a density of two homes/acre or less. The Buildout Study indicated that the overall density of housing units in the Plan Area in 1990 was approximately .7/acre, and that when the area is fully built out at current zoning, the maximum density will nearly double to 1.32 homes/acre. Another finding of the Buildout Study was that a small change in the zoning ordinance can have a dramatic effect on the maximum population. For example, allowing the build out of all vacant commercial land at five homes/acre increases the overall figure to 1.98 homes/acre. The Buildout Study also demonstrated the wide variation of density within the area. The density of a 400 acre sector in the southeastern section of the Plan Area was 1.78 homes/acre, or nearly twelve times higher than an equivalently sized sector in the southwest at .15 homes/acre.

For purposes of developing an overall land use plan for the Plan Area, certain sectors have been identified which are appropriate for certain densities of residential development. The number of these areas, or sectors, is indicative of the diverse character of the Plan Area. The boundaries of these sectors are based upon the results of the community planning survey, existing zoning and land use data from the Inventory of Existing Conditions, future sanitary sewer extensions and ground water concerns, the results of the Buildout Study, zoning and platting history, and input from a number of community meetings. The data from these various sources were combined and common elements within different parts of the Plan Area were sought. Although the sectors do not precisely match the main corridors (see Figure 2), a definite correlation can be found. The Plan Area could be divided in a number of different ways, but these particular boundaries

are the most logical given all of the relevant factors.

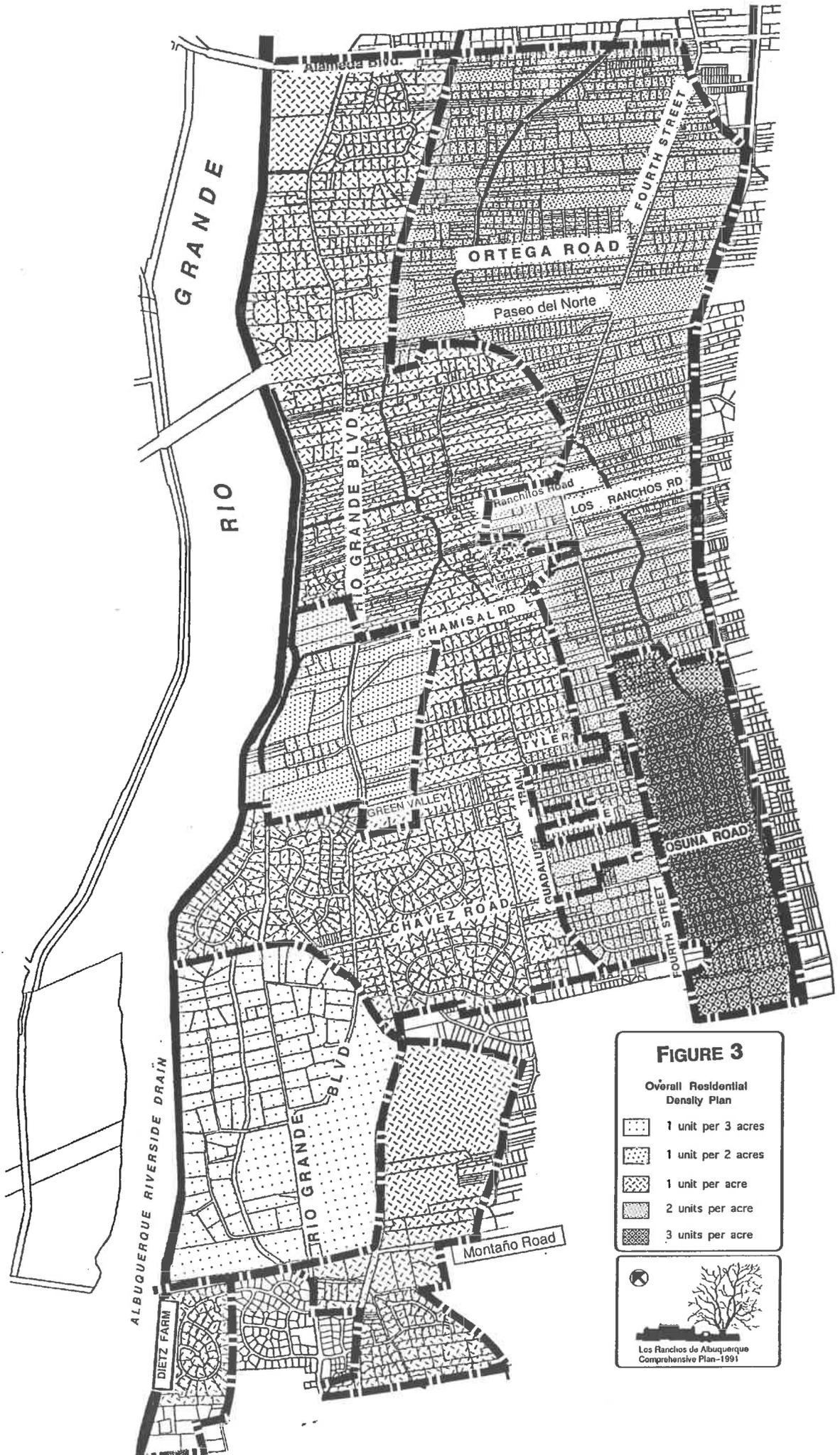
*A. Overall Densities*

The Goal is to control the density of residential development while recognizing the diverse character of the plan area.

*POLICY (a)* The Overall Residential Density Map (Figure 3) shall represent the ultimate extent of housing development within residentially zoned areas of the Plan Area.

*Possible Techniques*

- (1) Amend the zoning ordinance such that no residential zone exceeds densities called for in the Map.
- (2) Utilize this map as a guide in zoning-related decisions.



**FIGURE 3**

**Overall Residential Density Plan**

-  1 unit per 3 acres
-  1 unit per 2 acres
-  1 unit per acre
-  2 units per acre
-  3 units per acre





## Section 3

### DEVELOPMENT IN THE CORRIDORS

#### INTRODUCTION

The history and development character of the Plan Area are very much defined by three major road corridors which pass through it. Guadalupe Trail and Rio Grande Boulevard are the two main residential corridors, while Fourth Street is the main commercial corridor. Even though the current pattern of residential density and zoning does not precisely correspond with these corridors, it is clear that residents' perceptions of the area are very much based upon them.

The Trends section of each corridor discussion in this report represents a forecast of the future of these areas based upon prevailing economic and land use trends. This forecast assumes no change in current land use regulations and weak implementation of plan policies. This forecast could accurately be called the "do nothing" alternative. As with any estimate concerning the future, it represents one alternative forecast of the many that are possible. However, this estimate is based upon intensive research into current and past tendencies in these areas. The Existing Policy section ties this phase of the planning process to Resolution 90-12-1.

#### *A. Rio Grande Boulevard*

##### Corridor Character and History

Rio Grande Boulevard is simultaneously one of the oldest and newest roads in the north valley. Much of the area of the modern road was impassible swamp or sandbar prior to the drainage work of the Conservancy District in the 1930's. This road passes near the sites of the eighteenth century villages of Alameda, Los Ranchos, and Los Poblanos.

Rio Grande is an important "gateway" to the traveler as he or she enters the Village from the south. Vast open spaces, including the Anderson Valley Vineyards and its associated agricultural lands contrast sharply with the developed character of the Boulevard south of Montaño in the city of Albuquerque. South of Chamisal Road the

corridor is characterized by large agricultural parcels, animal raising (particularly horses) and many homes which are set back quite far from Rio Grande Blvd. Weekend drivers from throughout the Albuquerque area come to this part of the Village to experience these scenic views.

North of Chamisal Road lot sizes are smaller and population is more dense, but the beauty of agriculture continues on a smaller scale. However, the Rio Grande corridor as a whole is the most sparsely populated section of the Village. Some parts of this corridor have experienced subdivision in recent years including Tinnin Farms, Lands of L.J. Lippett, and Rio Grande Estates. Many developments such as this occupy former farm land. Some provide very little open space and others break the visual continuity of the area because they are walled off from their neighbors. Due to continual river flooding prior to the 1930's, most of the development in this corridor, particularly to the west of the Boulevard, is relatively new.

### Trends

This corridor contains some of the highest property values in the Albuquerque area. Land prices have skyrocketed here since the 1960's, and are likely to continue to increase in value. Unless agricultural assessment ("greenbelt") laws are maintained or strengthened at the state level, the trend will likely be for the Legislature to erode them away in areas such as this. As state and county governments become more strapped for income, agricultural ("greenbelt") assessment within this area will be a likely target for "revenue enhancement". The combined pressures of rising property values and increasing property and inheritance taxes will encourage land sales here, particularly of larger parcels. Given these pressures, the Los Poblanos neighborhood will eventually rescind covenants requiring a three acre minimum lot size and many lots in the area will be divided. The resulting new housing will fill in the area and increase its traffic.

Large parcels will be divided into standard subdivisions with one acre lots and wide, paved roads. These subdivisions will feature high, solid walls and security gates which isolate them from their neighbors, block out views of open space, and give the area a suburban look. Developers here will have no alternative but to provide access and egress to the new developments via Rio Grande Boulevard. As this happens, traffic and

associated congestion in the area will worsen and will be focused on the Boulevard, an action which will contribute to air pollution with the addition of idling vehicles.

As agricultural uses disappear, so will the need to provide irrigation waters via the MRGCD ditch system. Subsequent ditch closures will accelerate the loss of agricultural uses and horse raising, as access to equestrian trails on ditches is diminished. Many of the one acre parcels will become suburban in appearance, as there will be no ditch irrigation and the incentive to raise any crops will disappear. Strict covenants, designed for the suburban migrant, will prohibit "rural" activities such as creating compost and the keeping of livestock.

#### Existing Policy

The preservation of agricultural use is considered to be of utmost importance in Resolution 90-12-1. An entire section of this Resolution is devoted to agriculture and includes the following goal: "In recognition of the importance of agriculture to the history and character of the area, the Goal is to encourage its preservation wherever and whenever possible." Agricultural preservation is of particular importance to the Rio Grande corridor because of the size of parcels involved. The section of 90-12-1 relating to the ditch system includes the following important goal: "...to preserve the ditch irrigation system that brings green to the valley and sustains agriculture." Ditch preservation is important throughout the north valley, but in this corridor it is important because of the size of its irrigated fields and the fact that the ditch system in this corridor provides direct access to the *bosque*.

The goals of agriculture and ditch preservation from Resolution 90-12-1 apply here. In addition, the goal in the Roads and Streets section of Resolution 90-12-1 is to "...preserve the rural nature of Village roadways while recognizing the unique character and history of Fourth Street, Guadalupe Trail, and Rio Grande Boulevard" (emphasis added). The scenic views found on this part of Rio Grande Boulevard are unique anywhere within the north valley and perhaps the entire Albuquerque metropolitan area. Obviously, these views and the "feel" of Rio Grande Boulevard are important to its unique character.

## Goals and Policies

The **Goal** is to retain the agricultural and scenic resources of this corridor to the greatest degree possible.

**POLICY (a)** The Rio Grande corridor shall retain its scenic character. The preservation of existing scenic resources in this corridor shall be a priority in evaluating new development.

### *Possible Techniques*

- (1) Work closely with local land trusts in implementing a conservation easement program.
- (2) Develop a design overlay which utilizes setback, height, and site development criteria in order to retain important scenic views.
- (3) Rezone sections of this corridor to help preserve important views.

**POLICY (b)** The Village shall maintain the Rio Grande corridor as a prime agricultural resource for the community.

### *Possible Techniques*

- (1) Work with local land trusts in implementing a conservation easement program.
- (2) Purchase development rights from landowners when and if possible.
- (3) Rezone areas to a larger minimum lot size
- (4) Encourage uses in the Rio Grande corridor which permit property owners to profit from agricultural uses of property.
- (5) Do not permit subdivision covenants which restrict agricultural activity.

## **B. Guadalupe Trail**

### Corridor Character and History

Guadalupe Trail is one of the most intriguing and historic roads in the north valley. In the 19th century it was used as a path along which sheep and cattle were driven. This

informal road served as the "main street" for such historic settlements as Los Garcias and Placita de los Pais. Remnants of these settlements survive along Guadalupe Trail to this day. Some of the oldest homes in the area lie within this corridor, including several near the intersection of Guadalupe and Los Ranchos Road.

The winding nature of Guadalupe Trail and the fact that it starts and stops at several points in the plan area combine to give it a unique flavor. In contrast to Rio Grande Boulevard, homes on Guadalupe Trail tend in many sections to be clustered near the roadway. This historic settlement pattern hides much of the open space and agricultural use in the corridor from a person traveling along the roadway. However, the maintenance of these features is crucial to the character of the corridor.

The development pattern within the Guadalupe corridor is mixed, with post 1930's subdivisions such as the Pueblo Solano and Green Valley Additions, mixed in with historic settlement patterns that have evolved over many generations. Although settlement here is more dense than in the Rio Grande corridor, it is less dense than residential development in the Fourth Street corridor and is far less dense than most areas within the city of Albuquerque. Development within the Guadalupe corridor is reflective of the traditional land use pattern which arose from irrigation agriculture. It is this diverse pattern of settlement which is a crucial part of the character of the Plan Area.

One of the settlement patterns which occurs throughout the Plan area, but which is predominant in the Guadalupe corridor, is the linea or tripa pattern. Lineas or tripas are long, narrow lots which are typical of an older pattern of agricultural land use in the north valley. Many families in the area, particularly early hispanic settlers, passed on land to each of their descendants in equal parts. Agricultural land in the area was worthless without access to irrigation and a roadway, so land was divided such that each lot maintained access to both. As the number of land divisions increased, the width of the lots decreased. This type of land division is unique in the Albuquerque metropolitan area to the Rio Grande valley. Some modern subdivisions, such as Landmark Estates, Vista Ranchitos, and the Diamond Addition have been accomplished by combining two or more lineas together and then dividing them into rectangular or square lots. However, these areas exist as islands within a landscape dominated by this historic pattern.

Many extended Hispanic families have occupied these areas for generations and continue to have strong ties to the land. A large amount of irrigation and animal raising continues in these areas, although it is difficult for the casual visitor to see because of the configuration of lots. Many property owners here as in other parts of the area are in great need of "greenbelt" tax relief due to the conflicting pressures of rising property valuation and lower or fixed incomes. Many extended families in these areas would like to maintain their property in family ownership. However, contemporary subdivision standards which favor uniform, rectangular lots and wide roadways make it difficult to divide property among family members.

### Trends

Rising property valuation and taxation will have a particularly dramatic effect here. If the agricultural ("greenbelt") assessment is lost, some residents may be forced to sell their land. Some developers may buy homes on such parcels and greatly expand a small historic home such that it loses its character. Other developers may consolidate enough adjacent lineas or tripas such that these long lots will be turned into subdivisions containing uniform rectangular lots. The resulting new developments will not respect ditches and lots will likely be of a size such that livestock keeping or any type of agricultural use will be nearly impossible. Due to economic pressures, pressures for high density housing will be acute here, particularly in those areas served by sanitary sewer. These processes will combine such that families who have lived here for generations will disappear from the area along with the land use patterns and open spaces associated with their way of life. This process is known as gentrification. The loss of irrigated agricultural uses associated with gentrification in the Guadalupe corridor will be particularly dramatic.

Many outsiders moving into the area will see Guadalupe Trail as an "inefficient" and "outmoded" street. The pressure will increase on local government to widen, straighten and otherwise "modernize" the road. This type of "improvement" will combine with gentrification to destroy the existing character of Guadalupe Trail. In particular, the character of remnants of historic settlements which clustered around the "old" road will be lost forever.

### Existing Policy

Goals and policies from the Roads and Streets section of Resolution 90-12-1 are obviously very important as applied to Guadalupe Trail. In particular, the Goal "...To preserve the rural nature of Village roadways while recognizing the unique character and history of Fourth Street, Guadalupe Trail, and Rio Grande Boulevard.." (emphasis added) is vital. As well, Policy (b) "The Village shall exercise maximum control over roadways so that rural features are maintained in balance with safety requirements....." (emphasis added) is important with regard to "update" this roadway.

Obviously, goals and policies related to preserving the ditch system are vital to maintaining an economical source of irrigation and preserving remaining rural/agricultural features within this corridor. Also, Policy (b) under the Land Use section of the Resolution 90-12-1 has particular application to this corridor: "The Village shall recognize and maintain the diverse nature of neighborhoods and lifestyles within the (Village) area." There is an important possible (implementation) technique which applies to this corridor as follows: "(4) Address the problem of family-held lands in long-lot divisions, or 'tripas'." In Resolution 90-12-1, this concept is treated as a technique. However, it should be an important goal when applied to this corridor.

### Goals and Policies

The Goal is to retain the rural/agricultural qualities of the Guadalupe corridor while at the same time recognizing its unique and historic land division pattern.

***POLICY(a)*** The unique characteristics of historic settlement patterns which are exemplified by the Guadalupe corridor shall be recognized and preserved by the Village wherever they exist.

### *Possible Techniques*

(1) Adapt zoning, subdivision and related ordinances to address linea or tripa land division pattern.

- (2) Utilize cluster development with incentives to encourage the continuation of the historic settlement pattern.
- (3) Allow for the clustering of homes with the well-regulated use of accessory dwellings.
- (4) Maintain inventories of historic buildings and areas within the Guadalupe corridor.
- (5) Evaluate proposals for new development with regard to their potential impact upon historic buildings or areas.
- (6) Explore the use of "neighborhood context" to preserve mixed density.

***POLICY (b)*** The retention of family ownership of lands shall be a priority areawide, particularly within long lot (linea) regions.

*Possible Techniques*

- (1) Allow for accessory living quarters (guest homes) in accordance with liquid waste regulations.
- (2) Encourage cooperative relationships between family members such that adjacent long lots may be combined and retained within a family.
- (3) Allow for a density bonus incentive for clustering homes.

***POLICY (c)*** The Village shall seek to eliminate inequities in taxation throughout, especially those affecting the residents of linea areas.

*Possible Techniques*

- (1) Form a committee to address taxation concerns and support lobbying efforts at the State Legislature to change relevant legislation.

***POLICY (d)***

**The Village shall maintain Guadalupe Trail as a historic roadway. Proposed improvements shall only be undertaken if a clear and present health and safety risk can be demonstrated.**

*Possible Techniques*

- (1) Do not change the existing course of Guadalupe Trail.
- (2) Adopt roadway standards which take into account the unique and historic character of this roadway.
- (3) Do not widen Guadalupe Trail.
- (4) Educate new residents about the history and origins of this road and accompanying corridor.
- (5) Work with the city of Albuquerque and its contractors such that future sanitary sewer extension will not result in the alteration and "modernizing" of Guadalupe Trail.

**POLICY (e) The Village shall ensure that no property owner is penalized by having to grant land for access easements.**

*Possible Techniques*

- (1) Amend the zoning and subdivision ordinances such that the area of roadway easements is included within the lot area.

*C. Fourth Street*

Corridor Character and History

Fourth Street was the first straight paved road across the north valley, paralleling the Railroad Tracks. In the 1920's, it was designated US Highway 66. Shortly thereafter, Fourth became US Highway 85 and as such was the main north-south highway through the Albuquerque area until the interstate highways were completed in the 1950's and 60's. Fourth Street provided access to the first anglo settlements in the north valley, and many pre-World War II homes built in midwestern and eastern styles still line the street. Because of the traffic on the road, it became the commercial strip of the north valley and remains as such today. When this area was first zoned by Bernalillo County in the 1960's and 70's, a "strip" of commercial zoning was created fronting Fourth Street and varying in depth from 100 to 300 feet. In many areas, "split-zoned" parcels were created as the Fourth Street frontage was zoned commercial and the balance zoned residential. In part this was because of the age of the commercial district, which predated modern shopping malls with their acres of parking lots. Also, in the 1960's and 70's, "strip" commercial

zoning was quite common. This can be seen in the zoning of certain Albuquerque roadways such as Eubank and Wyoming.

Today, Fourth Street is a mixture of single family residential areas, aging mobile home parks, modern subdivisions and various commercial buildings and related uses. Much of the older commercial "strip" lacks modern amenities such as off-street parking and landscaping. Many businesses cater to the remaining agriculture and animal husbandry of the area and many revolve around the automobile, a trend that began while Fourth Street was a major highway. Mixed in with these businesses are a number of specialty shops (which cater to local residents) with health food products, antiques, and clothing. The density of commercial uses in the commercial zone decreases dramatically north of Wayne Road (just north of Ranchitos). The corridor contains many older commercial buildings and residences which reflect the history of the area but are in need of renovation and are thus difficult to rent to modern commercial tenants. A local real estate firm derived some figures in 1990 that showed that commercial vacancy rates in the north valley area as a whole were 10% higher than the metropolitan-wide average.

The Fourth Street corridor contains the highest residential densities in the Plan Area. This corridor also contains the bulk of the area served by sanitary sewer lines and should eventually be served throughout. However, not all households with access to service are connected to sewer lines here. This is the location of some of the first formal subdivision platting which was accomplished by nonhispanic settlers in the period 1925-1950. These subdivisions include El Paraiso Subdivision, Zia Gardens, Osuna Addition, and Schulte Acres. These neighborhoods tend to consist of relatively uniform rectangular or square lots that tend to be smaller than those in the Guadalupe corridor. Remaining rural character here consists of a scattering of irrigated parcels interspersed between subdivisions and the ditch system, which is still mostly intact within this corridor. The Chamisal Lateral, which is mostly intact, was the historic Acequia Madre. Although overall density is higher here than elsewhere in the Plan Area, it is lower than in much of the city of Albuquerque.

### Trends

The Fourth Street area contains many aging commercial structures within areas that lack amenities for the shopper such as parking and landscaping. Many of these structures are also too small to be desirable for large scale commercial tenants. These characteristics will contribute to the continued decline of much of the Fourth Street commercial strip. Businesses that are franchises of national companies or that draw customers from across the Albuquerque area will continue to do well. Small, local stores will have trouble surviving and some of the limited amount of commercial property will be converted to other uses; such as high density housing. Older, historic homes in the area may be demolished to make way for high density housing developments and franchise businesses. As this type of development occurs, the unique character of Fourth Street will be less evident and it will eventually resemble other streets in the Albuquerque area such as Menaul or Juan Tabo.

Residential land within this corridor is built out to a higher extent than in the other corridors, making open spaces and ditch use particularly important. This area will gradually fill in with new suburban type subdivisions. The new residents of this area will demand more urban type infrastructure such as sidewalks and curb and gutter. These amenities will drive up the cost of new housing and increase the pressure for increasing densities in this area, which is completely served by sanitary sewer. Some of the older neighborhoods in this area will become less desirable places to live. As the housing stock ages and the land becomes more valuable, pressures will increase for commercial development to "creep" into these areas from Fourth Street. The loss of ditches and their associated uses will occur here first.

### Existing Policy

The existing comprehensive Master Plan devotes an entire section to Commerce. The goal "...to revitalize the Village business climate and Fourth Street, the main commercial district of the Village" is obviously quite important. POLICY (a) in the Commerce section defines a vision for this area: "The Village shall consider Fourth Street as an invaluable community resource both financially and historically and shall work

closely with local residents and business people to improve conditions along this vital corridor." Along with a study of the ditch system, a business study of the Fourth Street economy with regard to revitalization (Fourth Street corridor study) is one of the most important efforts called for in the current comprehensive Master Plan. The Goal and Policy in this Commerce section implies a recognition that Fourth Street is important to the Village as its major source of tax revenue and that its historic heritage is important. Policy (a) (4) under Land Use implies that commercial zoning should not be expanded beyond Fourth Street: "...Commercial development shall be concentrated in the Fourth Street area..".

Goals and policies calling for the revitalization of Fourth Street as both a commercial center and historic area do not necessarily conflict. Business activity in this corridor can be increased while at the same time historic buildings are protected. This was proven in 1989 when the Juan Chavez house (1914) was purchased and renovated. The Chavez house now accommodates a number of business tenants. While the narrow "strip" of commercial zoning inhibits some businesses in their ability to provide amenities, the land use planning survey indicated that residents are mostly (87% of survey respondents) opposed to increasing commercial zoning. A potential solution is to deepen the commercial "strip" slightly to allow for the provision of safe, off-street parking and landscaping and thus attract more businesses to the area. However, it is clear from prior citizen input that a dramatic increase in commercial zoning is not desired, particularly where it intrudes into residential neighborhoods.

Goals and policies related to preserving the ditch system are particularly important within this corridor for a number of reasons. This corridor contains the smallest percentage of irrigated acreage of any in the Plan Area so is thus the most susceptible to ditch closures. In fact, some closure of smaller ditches has already occurred here. Since ditches are one of the few remaining rural features in the corridor and are considered vital by most Plan Area residents, their preservation takes on a special importance. The higher population density in this area makes the Open Expanses goal of Resolution 90-12-1 especially important. here: "In recognition of the value of open expanses to the character of the area, the goal is to identify and preserve these areas to

the greatest degree possible." Although some of the remaining open space in this subarea is currently not irrigated, its preservation is linked closely with the remaining rural "feel" here.

#### *Major Commercial Intersections*

Four areas have been identified within the commercial zone which have developed as areas of more dense commercial activity, with existing commercial zoning extending beyond the "strip" fronting Fourth Street. These areas accommodate a significant portion of the business community in the Plan Area.

The major commercial intersections in the Plan area are as follows:

Fourth/Solar: This is a large center of commercial activity, part of which is within the city of Albuquerque and therefore outside of the Plan Area. The section within the Village limits was annexed into the Village in June, 1991, and is thus a new consideration for the Village planning process. This node includes the Guadalupe Plaza shopping center (in the city of Albuquerque) whose anchor supermarket is patronized by residents from throughout the north valley. The section within the Village includes a number of restaurants, lounges, a bowling alley, a convenience store, and a number of smaller businesses. Housing in the area includes a 104 unit apartment complex. A great deal of the commercial development here occurred in the 1950's and 1960's and incorporates little or no landscaping. This area is harsh for the pedestrian and an ultimate solution for smooth traffic circulation at this intersection has not been reached. The number of full-service liquor licenses concentrated at this intersection has helped to make this area a busy one for law enforcement agencies.

While this area will undoubtedly provide the Village with a good source of tax revenue in the upcoming years, definite improvements can be made which will make it safer and more attractive. The city of Albuquerque shares this area with the Village and this section of Fourth Street itself is within its municipal limits. Thus, the Village and the city must cooperate to improve the safety and livability of this commercial area. Both municipalities will benefit from doing so, as tax revenues can only be enhanced by improving the area, and municipal revenue in New Mexico is clearly dependent upon gross receipts taxes. In addition, this area forms the "gateway" into each municipality

when traveling into it from the other.

Fourth/Osuna/Chavez: Northdale Shopping Center, built in 1961, forms the nucleus of this area, which also includes two other small shopping centers, two banks, and the Gemini Fireworks complex, which incorporates a handful of high volume businesses. The commercially zoned area along Chavez Road has developed into an area of higher density housing since sanitary sewer lines arrived in 1985. One historic structure, an adobe home dating from 1915, lies in the heart of this commercial area. Traffic circulation in the area has been a problem in the last few years, in part due to the configuration of the intersection of these three roadways. However, business activity is thriving, and vacancy rates are relatively low.

Fourth/Ranchitos: The nucleus of this area is Ranchitos Shopping Center, which was built in the 1960's. This area also includes a convenience store, a bank, two contracting businesses, a large lumber operation and a handful of other businesses. To the north of Ranchitos Shopping Center is a large trailer park, which represents the only high density housing in the area. Commercial vacancy rates have plagued the area since the late 1980's, beginning when the anchor tenant at Ranchitos Center ceased operation. A modern commercial structure at the southeast corner of the intersection, built in the 1970's, is now completely vacant and overgrown with weeds. The existing vacant space at this intersection represents a real opportunity for new business activity in the Plan Area.

Fourth/El Pueblo: This area is the only one of the four that is largely undeveloped. At the present time, only a fast food restaurant, a pair of contractors yards and a couple of other businesses operate here. Both El Pueblo and Fourth Street are former state highways and have a significant traffic volume. This factor, combined with the amount of commercially zoned land in the area, creates the potential for increased commercial development here.

At the southwest corner of this intersection is a historic home, built in 1919, while at the northeast corner is a small home which is used part-time for commercial purposes. The north side of El Pueblo between Fourth and Second Street was rezoned commercial for its entire length by the County Commission in the late 1980's. This property, which is in single ownership, is currently in agricultural use. Across El Pueblo on the south is

a mixture of residential and commercial uses. These commercial uses, allowed by county Special Use permits, include a large nursery operation and a woodworking shop.

Development in this area clearly reflects a current downturn for commercial operations in the Albuquerque area in general and the north valley in particular. While traffic circulation is generally good and plenty of commercial zoning exists in the area, much land which is so zoned is not used for commercial purposes. This intersection represents a great potential for growth in commercial development in the future as it has the space, traffic circulation, and existing zoning to accommodate it. Because of these characteristics, this area could accommodate good quality commercial amenities such as landscaping, pedestrian access, and good vehicular access and parking.

### GOALS AND POLICIES

1. The Goal is to maintain and revitalize commercial areas in recognition of their economic importance to the community while carefully directing commercial development to certain locations within the Plan Area.

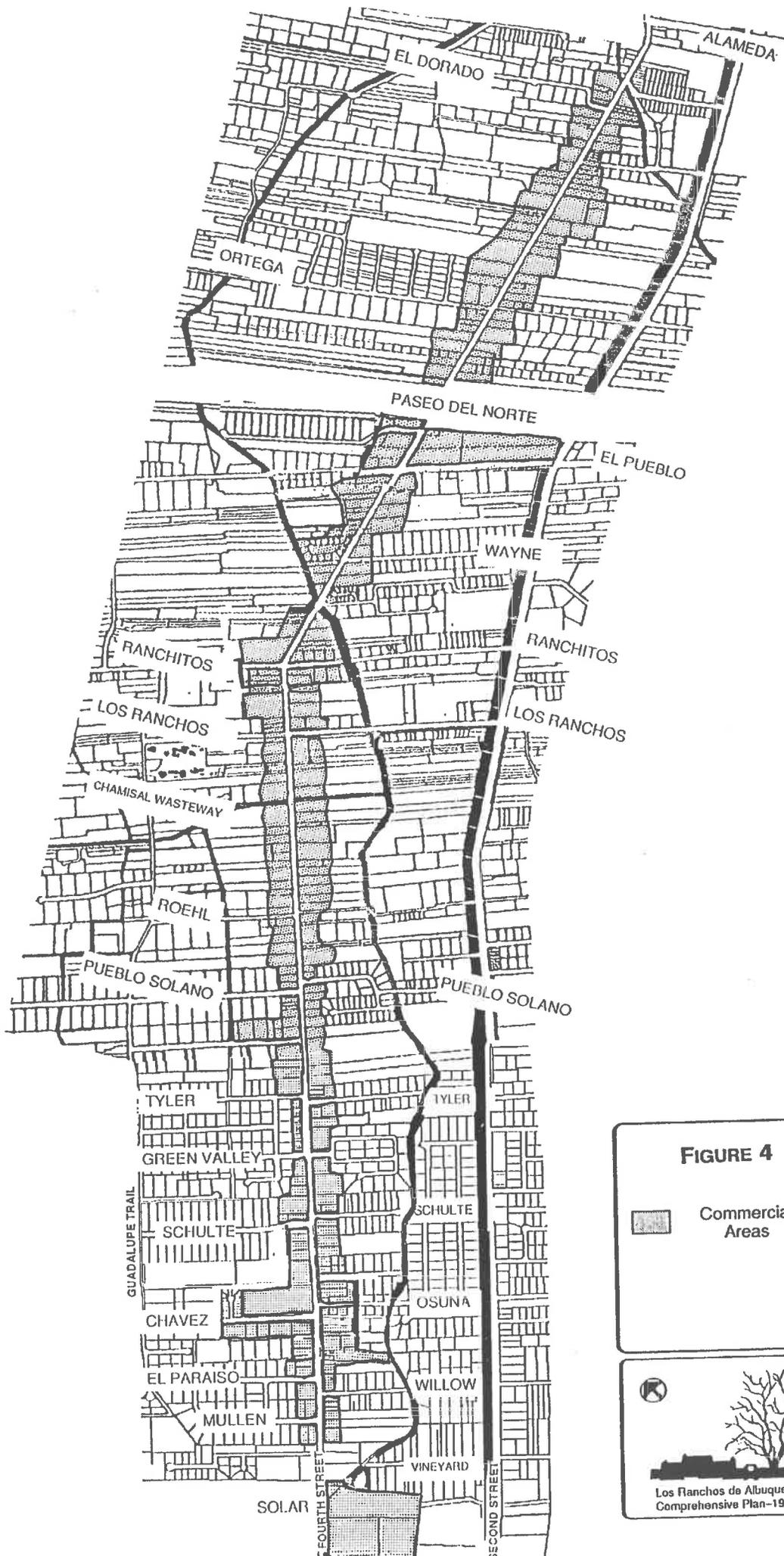
*POLICY (a)* Commercially zoned areas shall remain concentrated along Fourth Street and shall have Fourth Street frontage. Commercial zoning shall generally have a maximum depth of 300 feet, except where otherwise previously zoned. (see Figure 4)

#### *Possible Techniques*

- (1) Do not grant requests for commercial zoning in areas outside of the Fourth Street corridor.
- (2) Examine the issue of commercial zoning further in the Fourth Street corridor study.

*POLICY (b)* Development in commercial zones shall be of a retail nature and amenities shall be provided in this corridor for pedestrian, parking, landscaping, and transit usage. Historic structures shall be identified and preserved wherever possible. Commercial development shall reflect a rural, southwestern atmosphere.





**FIGURE 4**

 Commercial Areas



Los Ranchos de Albuquerque  
Comprehensive Plan-1991



*Possible Techniques*

- (1) Require site development approval for all new commercial development.
- (2) Consider widening the commercial zone in areas where needed for additional amenities such as parking and landscaping.
- (3) Utilize state cooperative program funds to make Fourth Street a safer place for pedestrians.
- (4) Incorporate historic preservation into the Fourth Street corridor study.

***POLICY (c) the encouragement of agricultural and related businesses shall be a priority within commercial zones.***

*Possible Techniques*

- (1) Adopt less restrictive zoning regulations for agricultural and related operations.
- (2) Encourage the establishment of a "farmers market" within the area where local products can be sold.

***POLICY (d) Provisions for residential uses in the commercial zone shall be made when and where appropriate. Overall residential density in commercial areas shall not exceed six dwelling units per acre.***

*Possible Techniques*

- (1) Allow for "watchman's quarters" and residential uses with commercial buildings in order to increase safety and security within commercial areas.
- (2) Require special approval for new residential subdivisions in commercial areas.
- (3) Require buffering of residential subdivisions in commercial areas through the plat approval process.
- (4) Require that sanitary sewer be available for residential subdivisions within commercial areas.

**POLICY (e) Buffering and other special considerations shall be required in recognition of the higher intensity of development in commercial areas.**

*Possible Techniques*

- (1) Revise zoning and subdivision ordinances to require buffering where commercial development abuts residential areas.
- (2) Require site development approval for all new development in commercial areas. Approval criteria should recognize the intensity of such uses.
- (3) Require review and approval by the Village Engineer of grading, drainage, and traffic circulation related to new development within commercial areas.

**2. The Goal is to maintain the rural characteristics that remain in the residential parts of the Fourth Street corridor while recognizing their developed character.**

**POLICY (a) Residential areas within the Fourth Street corridor shall retain important open spaces and access to ditch areas so that they retain a unique north valley flavor.**

*Possible Techniques*

- (1) Encourage the addition of pedestrian amenities in residential areas within the Fourth Street corridor, particularly near ditch irrigation areas.
- (2) Designate public open spaces to serve the Fourth Street corridor.

**POLICY (b) The character and stability of existing neighborhoods in the Fourth Street corridor shall be strengthened.**

*Possible Techniques*

- (1) Notify affected neighborhoods when zone change or subdivision requests are made.
- (2) Solicit input from established neighborhoods in future plan or plan amendment efforts.

(3) Encourage the "greening" of the Fourth Street corridor through tree planting efforts.

## Section 4

### AREAWIDE AGRICULTURAL/OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

#### INTRODUCTION

It is obvious that preserving some elements of the area's agricultural past is essential to maintaining its character. In many ways, this is also one of the most difficult tasks in the planning effort. Due to the proximity of this area to Albuquerque and the resulting land values, the free market will convert remaining agricultural land uses to other uses if left to its own devices. It is clear that some method must be utilized which allows the landowner to receive fair market value for his or her land without carving it up into a suburban-type subdivision which takes away its agricultural use and rural "feel". Several of these methods are in existence. What follows is a list which may be applicable in the Plan Area.

*Agricultural ("Greenbelt") Assessment:* An important factor in the preservation of rural/agricultural uses is the agricultural assessment, or "greenbelt" law (see section 8 of this report). First passed by the New Mexico Legislature in 1967 and revised in 1973, this law provides that agricultural lands are assessed for property taxes according to their ability to produce agricultural income, as opposed to their fair market value. Within the Albuquerque metropolitan area, this can amount to considerable savings in property taxes. For example, irrigated lands are valued at \$500/acre as opposed to market valuation, which can range from \$60,000 to \$100,000/acre in the Plan Area. The law provides that "greenbelt" assessment must be applied for annually. At least one full acre must be in agricultural use, and the landowner must prove such use has occurred for the previous year with tax records, a statement of labor and materials charges, or a signed affidavit. If a home is sited on the property, the assessor will deduct 1/2 acre, meaning that a property with a home must be on at least 1 and 1/2 acres in order to qualify.

A number of concerns have arisen with the existing law and its ability to preserve agricultural lands. Although implementation regulations for the law are issued by the state, the County Assessor is charged with local enforcement of its provisions. The purpose of the Assessor's office is to gather revenues for county government and not to

preserve agricultural land uses. This fact often places landowners at odds with the assessor's office, a situation which does not help preservation efforts. Due to the minimum parcel size requirement and the lack of generally available information concerning this law, many of the people who would most benefit from "greenbelt" assessment have not obtained it. A parcel developed in accordance with the predominant zoning in the area (one home on a one acre parcel) is ineligible for "greenbelt" assessment. According to 1989 records of the Bernalillo County Assessor there are approximately 700 acres, or nearly one quarter of the developable land in the Plan Area, which receive "greenbelt" assessment. It is believed that this total would be higher if landowners were better educated about the "greenbelt" law or this law were amended to be more applicable to land in the area.

Additional concerns are raised because of the lack of a penalty provision in the New Mexico law. While some states require payment of an interest penalty upon conversion of "greenbelt" property to nonagricultural uses, New Mexico does not. Many observers have noted that a statute such as this with no penalty provision often subsidizes land speculators rather than discouraging development. It is true that the New Mexico law has slowed land development in places such as the Plan Area. However, market pressures will dictate conversion of agricultural lands in this area unless this law is broadened to assist more landowners and strengthened to become more effective as a preservation technique. While this task is beyond the scope of the Village Master Plan, Village policies which emerge from the plan effort can be directed to the State Legislature in the form of lobbying efforts.

*Conservation Easements:* This is a voluntary, legally-recorded agreement between a landowner and a private trust or conservation organization. In entering into such an agreement, the landowner donates the development rights of his or her property to the organization. The resulting easement prohibits any subdivision or development of that land in perpetuity, but the property owner retains ownership of the land. In return, the landowner can receive significant income tax benefits for the donation. For example, John Landowner has ten acres with a total fair market value of \$900,000. He enters an easement agreement. The agricultural value of the land is \$30,000, making the value of

the donation \$870,000. Once the easement agreement is in place, Mr. Landowner can deduct up to 30% of his adjusted gross income for up to seven years from both federal and state income taxes. If his income is high enough, he may deduct the full \$870,000, or \$124,000 per year for seven years. In addition, when Mr. Landowner dies, his estate will be valued at \$30,000 instead of \$900,000, saving his heirs a hefty portion of their federal and state inheritance taxes and preventing a "tax sale" of the land to a developer by the heirs.

This concept has particular applicability to the Plan Area due to high land values and thus the high values of conservation easements on these lands. In addition, many of the property owners owning larger parcels in this area are in a high income bracket so that they may realize the full tax benefit of the easement donation. Additionally, the New Mexico Legislature passed a new law in the 1991 session entitled the Land Use Easement Act which assists in the process of creating conservation easements by clearly defining the rights and responsibilities of parties in such agreements. Finally, there are volunteer organizations such as the Albuquerque Conservation Trust and the Trust for Public Lands which are willing to assist the Village in implementing an easement program. Drawbacks to conservation easements include the length of time required to establish an easement on a property and to educate and negotiate with property owners.

*Purchase of Development Rights (PDR):* This is a sale whereby the Village or another entity buys the right to develop a property from a landowner, similar to a sale of mineral rights. The land remains in private ownership, but it is protected from subdivision and development for perpetuity. This has the advantage of leaving desirable agricultural lands in private ownership and avoiding public expenditure for ongoing maintenance of these lands. PDR is also cheaper than an outright purchase of the property. However, with the high land values present in the Plan Area, the cost of a PDR program would still be very high. In other areas, communities have issued bonds in order to purchase such rights or the PDR program has been adopted at the state level.

*Preservation of the ditch system:* Preserving the MRGCD ditch irrigation and drainage system is a high priority among area residents. In the May, 1991 survey, over 80% of the respondents agreed that the preservation of the system is a positive step. The

preservation of agricultural uses and the survival of the ditch system are certainly linked. As the amount of irrigated acreage decreases, the demand for irrigation waters also diminishes. If this decrease in demand is sufficient, the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District may then close particular ditches. With the closure of any ditches, further irrigation in the area becomes more difficult and other agricultural uses disappear. Thus, two of the most important features of the area, as perceived by residents, vanish hand-in-hand. Ditch closures have already occurred in some places in the valley.

*Cluster Development:* This is a technique under which development is concentrated on one part of a parcel while the remainder is left in permanent open space. For example, John Landowner owns his ten acres of developable agricultural property in the one acre minimum lot size zone which would entitle him to subdivide the land into ten one-acre tracts. With a cluster development, he could also create ten new lots, but the lots could be one-half acre apiece, for a total of five acres in developed lots. The remaining five acres would then be preserved in permanent agricultural or open space use and held in common by the ten property owners. Open space such as this is most often owned and maintained by a homeowners association. In this way, open tracts of agricultural land can be permanently preserved while the land remains in private ownership. As a developer, Mr. Landowner benefits as well because he can reap the same profit from the sale of his land but the cost of infrastructure (roads, water lines, fire hydrants, and other utility facilities) is reduced. The cost reduction to the developer results from the development being much more compact.

It is crucial that the Village or any other government review proposals for cluster development very carefully. A poorly planned or designed cluster development with token open space will achieve even less success than one acre lots at maintaining the rural character. It is important in cluster development that new housing not destroy the sense of open space for residents in adjoining, existing neighborhoods. A recent New Mexico Appeals Court decision upholds the ability of local governments like the Village to enforce the conditions for approval of a cluster development, including the maintenance of common open space.

Cluster development can result in important benefits for both the Village and the

developer. However, there are few examples of good cluster development within the Plan Area. The lack of good local examples is partially a result of the nontraditional aspect of cluster development. The combination of these two factors may make area residents cautious about this technique. Developers also perceive that there can be problems with marketing a nontraditional concept such as this. However, there are methods available to provide incentives to developers so that they will be motivated to undertake cluster development more readily while, at the same time, insuring that such a development benefits the community as a whole.

*Density Bonus:* A density bonus is one way to encourage cluster development. In return for a developer leaving a certain percentage of the land in permanent agricultural or open space use, he has the right to increase the density of the entire project by a certain percentage. In the example above, Mr. Landowner would be allowed 11 homes on his ten acres (a ten percent bonus) in return for preserving five acres, or 50 percent of the developable site, in agricultural use. The key to this concept is to strictly regulate and define such bonuses in the zoning ordinance and make these regulations clear enough so that everyone can understand them.

#### Existing Policy

The current Master Plan recognizes the importance of preserving agricultural uses of land, open space, and the MRGCD ditch irrigation and drainage system. Each of these topics forms a section of Resolution 90-12-1. Adopted goals addressing these issues are as follows:

"In recognition of the importance of agriculture to the history and character of the area, the goal is to encourage its preservation wherever and whenever possible."

"In recognition of the value of open expanses to the character of the area, the goal is to identify and preserve these areas to the greatest degree possible."

"The goal is to preserve the ditch irrigation system that brings green to the valley and sustains agriculture."

In fact, Resolution 90-12-1 incorporates a Policy which states that "The Village shall consider agriculture (including livestock raising) to be the 'highest and best' use of land in the area and the key to 'rural atmosphere'." Tax relief through "greenbelt" tax reform,

conservation easements, and "innovative zoning ordinances incorporating developer incentives..." (of which cluster development is an example) are mentioned in the Agriculture section of Resolution 90-12-1, although only as possible techniques and not as adopted policy.

#### GOALS AND POLICIES

The goal is to insure that new development is in keeping with the preservation of agricultural use and open spaces.

**POLICY (a) The Village shall evaluate all new subdivision and development in terms of its impact upon the ditch irrigation and drainage system in the area.**

##### *Possible Techniques*

- (1) Require that ditch irrigation be maintained within new subdivisions
- (2) Do not permit the abandonment of ditch and irrigation easements in subdivisions and replats.
- (3) Require that the access to ditches be preserved despite the existence of new development.
- (4) Acquire ditch right-of-way within new development areas if necessary.

**POLICY (b) To encourage open space for both the community and residents of developments, the Village shall support cluster development in all areas within its planning and platting jurisdiction while controlling the design and extent of such development to the greatest degree possible.**

##### *Possible Techniques*

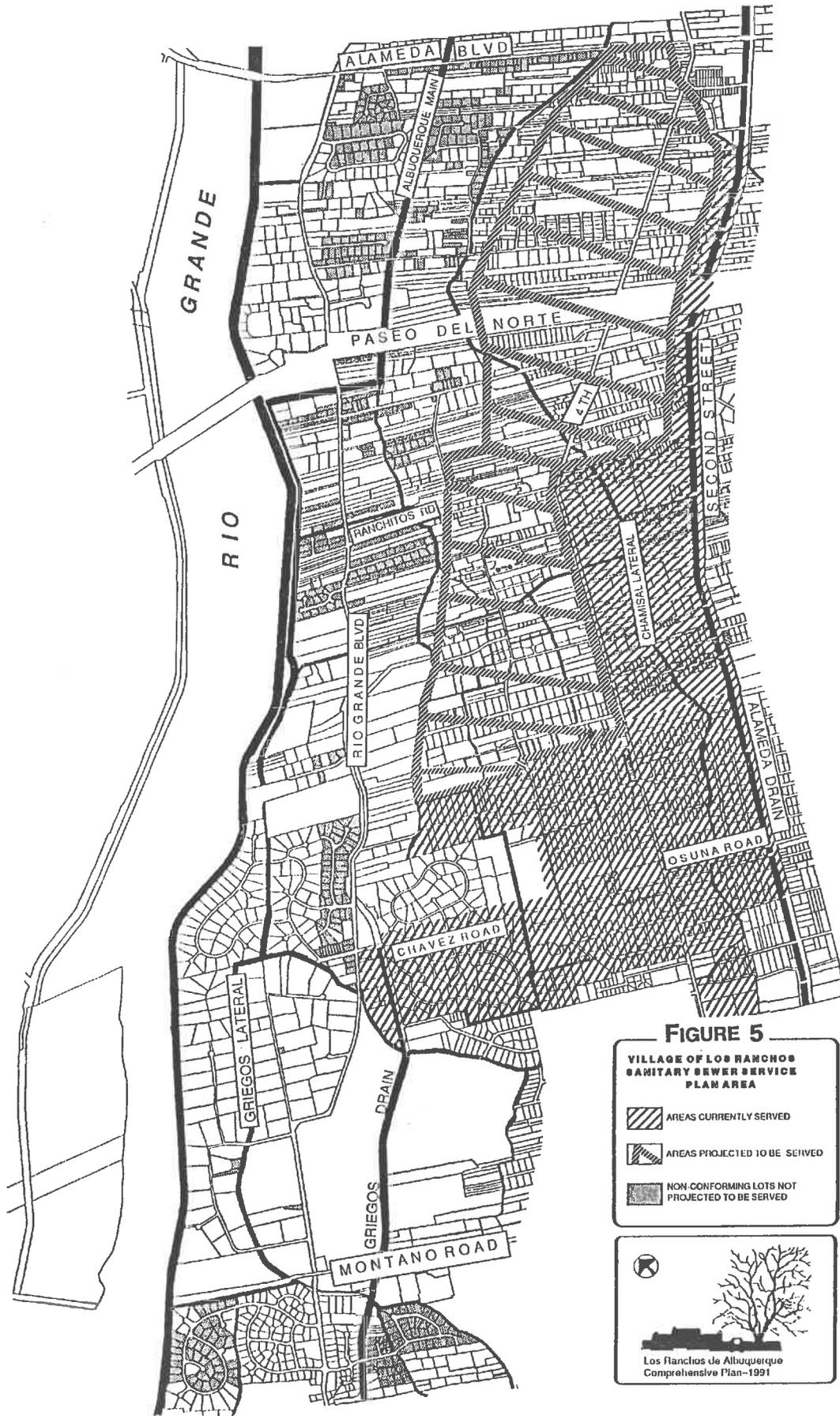
- (1) Amend appropriate ordinances to tightly control the design of permitted cluster developments.
- (2) Require that all proposals for cluster development be reviewed by staff and approved by the Board of Trustees.
- (3) Fully inform residents and property owners about all aspects of cluster development.

**POLICY (c)** The Village shall consider a density bonus incentive for both large and small scale cluster developments in order to address particular needs as follows:

- (1) The preservation of large, agricultural tracts throughout the Plan Area.**
- (2) The preservation of long views in the Rio Grande corridor.**
- (3) The provision of recreational open space in the Fourth Street and Guadalupe Trail corridors where it is most needed.**
- (4) To recognize and preserve historic settlement patterns.**
- (5) To help solve problems related to linea and other nonrectangular lot configurations.**

*Possible Techniques*

- (1) Amend zoning and related ordinances where appropriate.**
- (2) Conduct a study of the needs and desires of area residents with regard to recreational facilities and available open spaces.**
- (3) Reduce the need for long access roads in Linea areas by clustering homes near major streets.**



**FIGURE 5**

**VILLAGE OF LOS RANCHOS  
SANITARY SEWER SERVICE  
PLAN AREA**

-  AREAS CURRENTLY SERVED
-  AREAS PROJECTED TO BE SERVED
-  NON-CONFORMING LOTS NOT PROJECTED TO BE SERVED





GROUND WATER PROTECTION

INTRODUCTION

Ground water pollution in the north valley area, due to septic tank and drain field usage, is a looming problem which is compounded by the high water table in the area. Most residents, particularly those who live on smaller parcels, would prefer the convenience of sanitary sewer service. Sewer service relieves them of the responsibility of septic tank maintenance while at the same time alleviating the threat to ground water. However, standard sanitary sewer systems are most practical in areas of high population density. As density goes down, the cost of the system per person goes up. Additionally, standard urban sewers work on gravity flow. In a low-lying area such as the north valley, *lift stations* are required to make the system work properly. A *lift station* is a pump which raises the sewage from the low end of one pipe to the high end of the other. Lift stations are expensive to build and maintain and raise the per household cost of extending the system in the Village area still higher.

The current program for extending sanitary sewers in the Village is governed by the Albuquerque Areawide Wastewater Collection and Treatment Facilities Plan (AWCTF plan), completed in 1978 for the city of Albuquerque. In that plan the low-lying western portion of the Plan Area was designated to remain "on-site systems" (septic tanks) while the more highly developed eastern portion (see Figure 5) would be programmed for extension of the Albuquerque sewer system. Today, the programmed extensions of the AWCTF plan have been partially completed. However, this extension has been tremendously expensive and has had to be funded by an outside source (the state of New Mexico). Merely completing the remaining sewer lines called for in the AWCTF document will cost many millions of dollars. At that time, many residents will not be able to afford the cost of connection. When these extensions are completed, a good portion of the Plan Area will remain on septic systems, including many neighborhoods with lots that are too small to conform to modern standards for septic usage (see Figure 5). Even if standard sewer lines were to be extended into these areas, their existence could bring

about pressures to intensify development in an area with a low overall density.

At the present time, the problems of septic tank usage and ground water pollution are being reinvestigated with a series of contractors working with departments of the city of Albuquerque and Bernalillo County. The *Wastewater Master Plan*, initiated in 1990, will attempt to reinvestigate collection and treatment options for liquid waste in the Albuquerque area through the year 2030. Recommendations from this plan will modify and/or eventually replace those of the AWCTF plan. Concurrently with this plan, contractors will assist in developing a *North Valley Wastewater Options Study* and the *Ground Water Protection Policy and Action Plan*. The former will evaluate alternatives for serving valley areas, while the latter will attempt to establish policies and action steps for protecting ground water throughout the Albuquerque Metropolitan area. The Village government can ill-afford to be less than fully involved in each of these efforts as they will impact directly upon the Plan Area.

Clearly, an alternative solution must be sought which alleviates the threat to ground water everywhere, while at the same time keeping pressure for increased density away from areas where it is not wanted. Any such alternatives must be more cost effective than standard sanitary sewers in low-lying, more sparsely populated areas like the western part of the Plan Area. The areas designated for sewer service in the AWCTF plan should receive sewer extension as soon as possible. Alternative funding sources should be sought if state money is not forthcoming. A special assessment district (SAD) or a bond issue are two such sources. SAD is a program whereby property owners benefitting from a particular public improvement (such as sewer extension) are assessed the cost of that improvement according to their share of it. For example, if a particular sewer project cost \$800,000 to build and it were to serve 400 households, then the Village would assess each household \$2,000.

Areas designated to remain on septic systems by the AWCTF plan should be addressed separately. Clearly, there is a poor long term outlook for septic tank and drain field usage on all but the largest parcels in these areas when ground water is considered. However, there are alternatives to BOTH septic tanks and standard sanitary sewer systems. Standard sanitary sewer system extension should be weighed against these

alternatives in light of costs, feasibility and probable impact upon development. A summary of potential alternatives to standard sanitary sewers is included in Section 6 of this report.

#### Existing Policy

Within Resolution 90-12-1 there is general policy addressing ground water concerns on an areawide basis. Policies (a) (1) (2) under the Environmental section of that Resolution state the following:

a. The Village shall adopt the following policies to facilitate the protection of its vulnerable ground water resources:

1) The Village shall promote and facilitate the extension of sanitary sewer lines into areas where the use of septic tanks threatens the ground water

2) The Village shall balance strict enforcement of liquid waste regulations with the recognition of the economic burden that these regulations may create for some residents.

The Master Land Use Plan expands upon these policies and applies them to specific geographic areas.

#### GOALS AND POLICIES

**The goal is to alleviate the threat to ground water from septic tank usage, while at the same time preserving the low density residential character of the Plan Area.**

***POLICY (a)* Sanitary sewer lines shall be extended as soon as possible to all areas projected for such service in the AWCTF plan that are currently unserved.**

#### *Possible Techniques*

(1) Approach the New Mexico Legislature for funding to complete sewer extensions.

(2) Utilize various funding sources such as bond issues or Special Assessment Districts

***POLICY (b)* The Village shall address the problem of residents who are unable to afford the cost of sanitary sewer connection.**

*Possible Techniques*

- (1) Approach the New Mexico Legislature and state agencies to seek funding on behalf of residents.
- (2) Educate residents about connection to sewer lines and methods of obtaining grants and other funding.
- (3) Work with the state of New Mexico to ascertain whether the Village can utilize an environmental gross receipts tax (like Bernalillo County) to subsidize sewer connection.

**POLICY (c) Connection to sanitary sewer lines and abandonment of septic systems shall be encouraged once sewer service becomes available.**

*Possible Techniques*

- (1) Identify areas with septic systems still in use through the AGIS computer mapping system.
- (2) Require the abandonment of existing septic systems within properties when they are incorporated into new subdivisions.
- (3) Work with major septic tank companies in the front setback area so that septic systems are abandoned in accordance with applicable liquid waste regulations.
- (4) Require septic tank placement in the front setback area of lots within new subdivisions that are slated for eventual sanitary sewer service.
- (5) Strongly encourage the owners of mobile home parks to connect to sewer service when it becomes available.

**POLICY (d) In areas not slated for sanitary sewer service in the AWCTF plan, alternative liquid waste systems shall be considered by the Village along with sanitary sewer extension. Standard and alternative systems shall be compared in light of feasibility, short and long-term costs, and potential impact upon development in the area.**

*Possible Techniques*

- (1) Work with other affected local governments in the current Wastewater Master Plan and related efforts.

(2) Work with available resources to develop an alternative system of wastewater treatment for appropriate areas.

(3) Consider the possibility of assisting in the funding of appropriate studies undertaken by other entities which affect the Village. Any such consideration should recognize the relatively limited resources of the Village.

**POLICY (e) Standard sanitary sewer lines shall be extended into the Rio Grande corridor only if a clear and present ground water threat can be demonstrated that cannot be alleviated by the use of alternative liquid waste systems.**

*Possible Technique*

(1) Work with the state Environment Department to study water quality in the aforementioned areas to determine if septic tank usage is a problem there.

**POLICY (f) Sanitary sewer extension to commercial areas shall be a higher priority than extensions to other locations.**

*Possible Techniques*

(1) Work with the city of Albuquerque in the Wastewater Master Plan and related efforts.

(2) Require sanitary sewer connection for new development in commercial areas.

(3) Require developer construction of public sanitary sewer lines in commercial areas where sewer is available.

## Section 6

### ALTERNATIVE SEWAGE COLLECTION AND TREATMENT SYSTEMS

*Pressure Sewer Systems:* This type of system utilizes standard sewer collection and interceptor mains. However, it eliminates the need for expensive lift stations by the use of centrifugal grinder pumps to move wastewater. Also, the sewer mains do not need to be as large or be buried as deeply, thereby reducing the overall cost of the system. Each home would be equipped with a pump assembly which utilizes a motor to force sewage accumulations by pressure into the nearest sewer main. These mains would then connect to the gravity fed main lines of the Albuquerque system. Many communities in the United States already utilize such systems. In fact, this type of system was studied and recommended for the west section of the Village by Gordon Herkenhoff and Associates in 1981. Herkenhoff estimated the cost of the grinder pump assemblies per household served by the system. Projected to 1991 dollars, this would be approximately \$4600 per unit.

This approach would be more cost effective for the west side of the Village area than a standard sewer system. Property owners would need to maintain each grinder pump much as they maintain their septic systems today. However, the cost of the system would either have to be paid by outside entities (such as the state of New Mexico) or by the Village through a bond issue, SAD, or additional taxation. Also, this type of a system could encourage an increase in housing density in the same way as a standard system.

*Vacuum Sewer Systems:* This type of system also utilizes standard sewer collector and interceptor mains. However, as with a pressure system, no lift stations would be required and mains do not need to be as large or buried as deeply as they do in a standard gravity system. The vacuum system moves sewage by the use of a large centralized vacuum pump. This pump maintains a low air pressure (about one-half normal air pressure) inside the entire system of sewer lines. Sewage at each household accumulates against a valve. When a sufficient pressure is built up, the valve opens, allowing the sewage to be sucked into the system by the difference in air pressure, much

as material is sucked outside of a hole in the side of an airplane when that airplane is flying at high altitudes. Herkenhoff also examined this alternative in 1981. Projected to 1991 dollars, the cost of the vacuum pump and associated equipment would be approximately \$535,000 to service 191 households. The valve equipment required for each household would cost a little over \$1000 per household served, once again projected to 1991 dollars.

As with a pressure system, the vacuum system would be more cost effective than a standard system for the areas in question but would not reduce pressures for increased housing density. As with a pressure system, the vacuum system has been used successfully in other places in the United States. Although the total cost of pressure and vacuum systems for the west side of the Village was estimated to be almost equal by Herkenhoff, the pressure system was recommended over the vacuum type. Herkenhoff's recommendation was made in light of greater ease in expansion and the lower cost in electricity of the pressure system as well as the need to maintain centralized equipment with a vacuum system. As with a pressure system, establishing the vacuum system would require outside funding or a bond issue.

*Natural Treatment Systems:* The chief problem with the use of septic tanks for wastewater disposal is not the tank itself but the drain field. In a standard septic system, wastewater is discharged into the soil essentially untreated. Bacteria in the drain field soil is supposed to treat the wastewater. However, over a period of time this soil becomes saturated and less effective for treatment. In the case of smaller parcels there is less drain field space, making such treatment more difficult. These problems are compounded by the high water table in the north valley area. This high water table means that poorly treated wastewater does not have very far to go to reach the ground water from which everyone in the Albuquerque area obtains drinking water.

*Natural Treatment Systems* chiefly *Constructed Wetlands*, attack this drain field problem directly. A Constructed Wetland is essentially an artificial marsh which utilizes aquatic plants to filter wastewater before it is discharged into the soil. These plants can grow very well feeding off of septic discharge and, in turn, they filter the water extremely well. The filtered water can be used for landscaping and thus beautify the property. A

Constructed Wetland system can be utilized with a standard individual septic tank in place of the drain field or can be connected to a group of septic systems. These systems are relatively new in the United States but have been used successfully in many places. The city of Arcata, California, hoping to avoid the increase in housing density associated with a standard sewer system, installed a Constructed Wetland for the entire community. Closer to home, the town of Tatum, New Mexico operates a Constructed Wetland system in place of a standard sewage treatment plant. The New Mexico State Highway Department has installed one for a rest stop on Interstate 25 and there are a number of residential systems in use throughout the state.

These systems have a number of advantages. Because the wastewater can be treated effectively on site, these systems do not encourage increased housing density. Although the waste is treated on site, the liquid is not discharged directly into the soil as with a regular drain field but is filtered by the plants. Constructed Wetlands are also much less expensive to build and maintain than standard sewer systems. Thus, ground water is protected without the expense of installing standard sewers with their attendant development pressures. The chief disadvantage of the systems is that the concept is new and people need time to be educated and to adjust to the idea, including environmental officials. Also, people devising and implementing the systems need time to further develop and improve upon the concept. Finally, if septic systems were to be grouped together and connected to one Wetland, sufficient land would need to be found to accommodate that wetland. Also, this could be a way to utilize a community association for wetland maintenance.

Section 7

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**AGIS-** the Albuquerque Geographic Information System. Operated by the city of Albuquerque, this computerized mapping system contains information concerning water and sewer line locations and locations of properties which are hooked up to these systems.

**AWCTF Plan-** Albuquerque Areawide Wastewater Collection and Treatment Facilities Plan; developed in 1978 for the city of Albuquerque, this document is the blueprint for the extension of sanitary sewer lines within the Village and its plan area.

**Agricultural ("Greenbelt") Assessment-** a provision in the state laws of New Mexico and several other states whereby lands in agricultural use are taxed at a different (and usually lower) rate than the market value of these lands.

**Buildout Study-** completed in 1989 and 1990 by the Village, this study attempts to predict the maximum population of the Village and its plan area given different zoning and subdivision regulations.

**CAPC-** the Citizens Advisory Planning Committee. Formed in 1989, this open committee of interested citizens exists for the purpose of assisting the Village in developing its master plan and related efforts and gathering citizen input to the process.

**Cluster Housing-** a provision within zoning ordinances which can be used to preserve open space in perpetuity. Housing is concentrated on one part of a parcel while the remainder is left in agricultural or open space use.

**Comprehensive Master Plan-** the blueprint or set of guidelines for the physical development of areas within the planning and platting jurisdiction of a municipality.

**Conservation Easement-** a tax incentive for landowners to preserve property in agricultural or open space use. In return for giving up the right to develop property, the owner is rewarded with significant deductions on his or her state and federal income taxes.

**Constructed Wetland-** a method of liquid waste treatment which utilizes a marsh to treat effluent from a septic tank rather than a regular drainfield.

**Corridor-** Parts of the Plan Area as defined by the three major north-south arterial which traverse it. These arterial are Rio Grande Boulevard, Guadalupe Trail, and Fourth Street.

**Covenants-** restrictions placed upon the use of private property by a developer or neighborhood association. Covenants may not be enforced by a public body unless they are a condition of subdivision or development approval.

**Density Bonus-** an incentive provision usually coupled in a zoning ordinance with cluster housing. In return for preserving so much open space in a cluster development, the developer is allowed to increase density by a slight percentage.

**Density, net-** a figure derived by dividing the total number of housing units in an area by the number of acres. This figure excludes acreage within streets, ditches, and other lands which are not developable.

**Density, overall-** a figure derived by dividing the total number of housing units in an area by the number of acres. Streets, ditches and other lands that are not developable are included within the area's acreage.

**Development Rights-** one of the privileges that accompany ownership of land. Just like mineral or water rights, this right can be sold separately from other ownership. In practical terms, this means that a property owner can still own land while having sold the

authority to develop it to another party.

**Ground Water Protection Policy and Action Plan-** A policy document which is under development by a contractor for the city of Albuquerque Public Works Department to develop and implement measures to guard threatened underground water sources in the Albuquerque area. At this writing, this document is in draft stage.

**Inventory of Existing Conditions-** completed in 1990 and 1991 by the Village, this document is a compilation of important data concerning the current status of the Village with regard to its physical development. Such an inventory is called for in state planning legislation.

**Linea-** a historic land division pattern whose main features are long, very narrow lots. In most cases, the length of one of these lots is at least five times its width. This pattern arose in the Rio Grande valley from the hispanic custom of dividing land equally among descendants while preserving property access to both an irrigation ditch and a street (or high ground and low lands).

**MRGCD-** the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District. Established by state law, this agency administers the irrigation and drainage system within the Rio Grande valley. Every property owner in the Plan Area supports the MRGCD through a mill levy which is added to property tax bills.

**Manufactured Home-** as defined within state law, a prefabricated home constructed within a factory to meet certain standards set forth by the federal government. Such a home must be at least 36 feet by 24 feet, or 864 square feet in area and may not be prohibited in any zone where standard housing is allowed.

**Natural Treatment Systems-** devices which utilize biological processes to treat household wastewater.

**North Valley Wastewater Options Study-** a proposed component of the *Wastewater Master Plan* which will examine alternatives to standard sewer and septic tank systems for the north valley area. One such study already exists for the South Valley area of Bernalillo County.

**Overall Residential Density Plan-** The map established to guide the future of housing density within the Village.

**Overlay Zone-** a set of mapped provisions that serve as an addition to an area's existing zoning regulations. Where the provisions of the overlay zone conflict with existing zoning, the overlay standards prevail.

**Phase I Goals and Policies-** adopted by the Village in 1990, this document sets forth general objectives for the future of the plan area. This document amends and supersedes the 1975 Albuquerque/Bernalillo County *Comprehensive Plan* which the Village adopted in 1981.

**Plan Area-** a region encompassing the incorporated territory of the Village of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque plus all the lands included within its extraterritorial planning and platting jurisdiction.

**Pressure Sewer System-** an alternative type of wastewater collection system which utilizes grinder pump assemblies to force sewage through pipes when it will not flow properly due to the lack of natural incline in an area.

**Real Estate Transfer Tax-** a provision utilized in several states whereby a small tax is assessed upon the sale of property in an area. Usually paid by the buyer, this tax is commonly utilized to help a local government acquire land for open spaces. At present, no authority exists in New Mexico to allow a local government to assess such a tax.

**Sanitary Sewer-** The collection and disposal of liquid waste which results from household or commercial activities through a system of underground pipes which carry the waste to a central facility for treatment.

**Special Assessment District (SAD)-** an area designated for a tax levy which only applies to that area and whose revenues are earmarked for improvements only within that area.

**"Strip" Zoning-** a form of zoning wherein a narrow band of property along an arterial is zoned one particular category, usually commercial. Fourth Street within the plan was zoned as such in the late 1960's by the Bernalillo County Commission.

**Subarea-** a section of the plan area designated as such because of common elements of platting, land use, and neighborhood character within that section.

**Tripa-** see *Linea*.

**Unit-** any residential dwelling. Each residential kitchen facility constitutes a separate *unit*.

**Vacuum Sewer System-** a type of sewage collection system which uses differences in air pressure to move wastewater through pipes when it will not flow properly due to the lack of natural incline in an area.

**Wastewater Master Plan-** a plan currently under development for the city of Albuquerque. When adopted, this plan will guide the future of wastewater collection and treatment in the Albuquerque area into the 21st century. This plan will replace the AWCTF plan and will among other things, establish locations for sewer lines and other such facilities within the plan area.

"GREENBELT" TAX ASSESSMENT LAW

**7-36-20. Special method of valuation; land used primarily for agricultural purposes.**

A. The value of land used primarily for agricultural purposes shall be determined on the basis of the land's capacity to produce agricultural products. The burden of demonstrating primary agricultural use is on the owner of the land, and he must produce objective evidence of bona fide agricultural use for the year preceding the year in which application is made for his land to be valued under this section. The fact that land was devoted to agricultural use in the preceding year is not of itself sufficient evidence to support a finding of bona fide primary agricultural use when there is evidence that the agricultural use was subordinate to another use or purpose of the owner, such as holding for speculative land subdivision and sale, commercial use of a nonagricultural character, recreational use or other nonagricultural purpose.

B. For the purpose of this section, "agricultural use" means the use of land for the production of plants, crops, trees, forest products, orchard crops, livestock, poultry or fish. The term also includes the use of land that meets the requirements for payment or other compensation pursuant to a soil conservation program under an agreement with an agency of the federal government.

C. The department shall adopt regulations for determining whether or not land is used primarily for agricultural purposes.

D. The department shall adopt regulations for determining the value of land used primarily for agricultural purposes. The regulations shall:

(1) specify procedures to use in determining the capacity of land to produce agricultural products and the derivation of value of the land based upon its production capacity;

(2) establish carrying capacity as the measurement of the production capacity of land used for grazing purposes, develop a system of determining carrying capacity through the use of an animal unit concept and establish carrying capacities for the land in the state classified as grazing land;

(3) provide for the consideration of determinations of any other governmental agency concerning the capacity of the same or similar lands to produce agricultural products;

(4) assure that land determined under the regulations to have the same or similar production capacity shall be valued uniformly throughout the state; and

(5) provide for the periodic review by the department of determined production capacities and capitalization rates used for determining annually the value of land used primarily for agricultural purposes.

E. All improvements, other than those specified in Section 7-36-15 NMSA 1978, on land used primarily for agricultural purposes shall be valued separately for property taxation purposes and the value of these improvements shall be added to the value of the land determined under this section.

F. The owner of the land must make application to the county assessor in each tax year in which the valuation method of this section is claimed to be applicable to his land. Application shall be made under oath, shall be in a form and contain the information required by department regulations and must be made no later than the last day of February of the tax year. If the owner of the land fails to make the application required by this subsection, the county assessor shall:

(1) if the land was valued under this section in the immediately preceding tax year and if he determines that the land continues to be entitled to valuation under this section, value the land under this section and impose a penalty for failure to make the required application in an amount equal to fifteen percent of the tax determined to be due on the land for that tax year; or

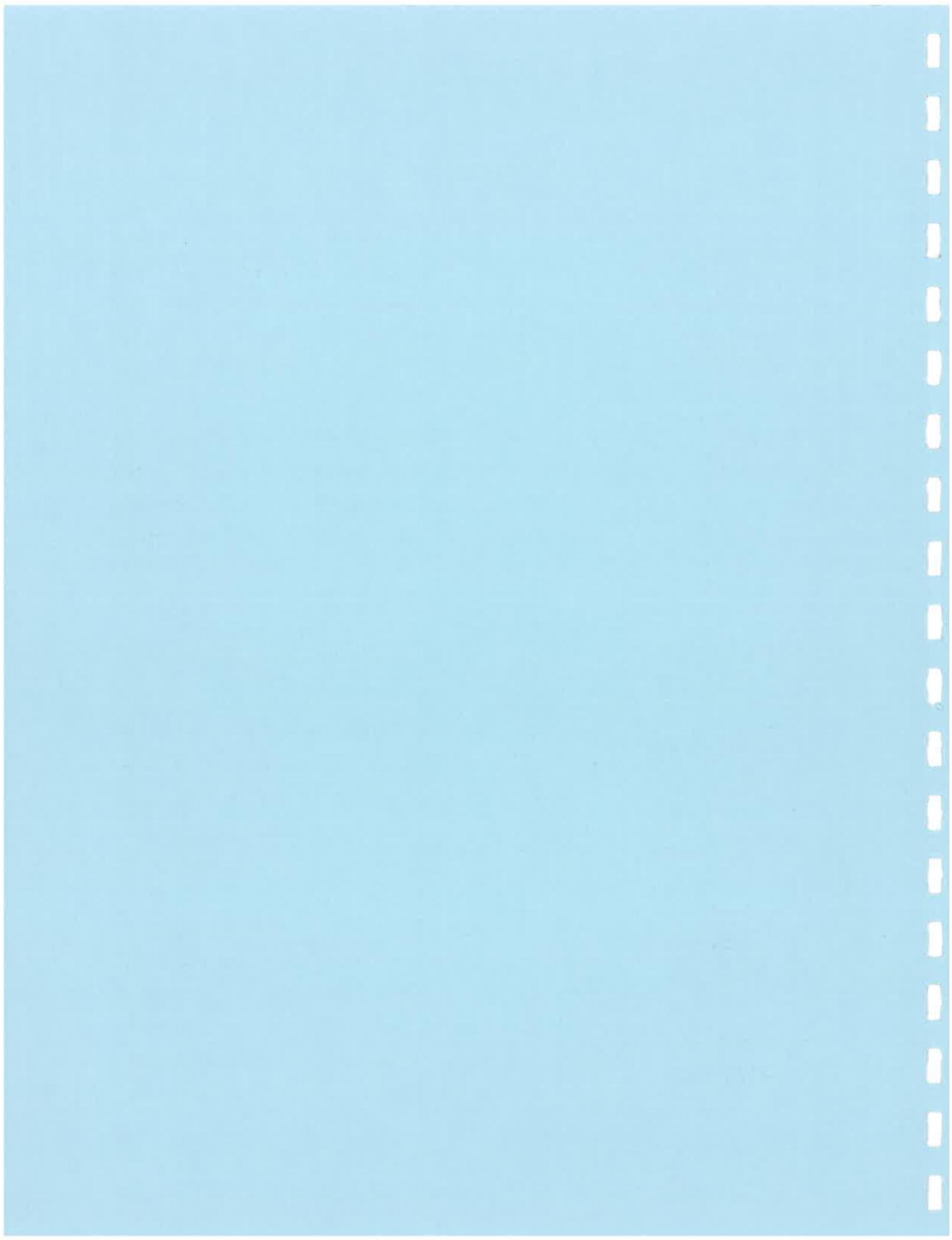
(2) if the land was valued under this section in the immediately preceding tax year and if he determines that the land is no longer entitled to valuation under this section, value the land in accordance with the applicable provisions of the Property Tax Code [Articles 35 to 38 of Chapter 7 NMSA 1978] and department regulations.

If land is initially valued under Paragraph (2) of this subsection and, due to subsequent action by the county assessor or as a result of a protest, the land is determined to be entitled to valuation as land used primarily for agricultural purposes, the penalty provided in Paragraph (1) of this subsection shall be applied.



**INVENTORY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS**  
**June 1991**





## Section 1

### INTRODUCTION

The area containing the Village of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque has been settled by humans for at least 2500 years. At one time there were a series of adobe villages scattered throughout the north valley, including a community settled around a small plaza called San José de Los Ranchos. After New Mexico became a United States territory, this community was actually the Bernalillo County seat from 1850 to 1854. Los Ranchos and the north valley were historically agricultural, centered around dairy farming. By 1920, however, much land was out of production because of recurrent flooding and poor drainage. In response to this problem, the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District was formed in the 1920's to implement drainage and flood control improvements in the area. Besides improving the situation for agriculture, this opened the area to increased development. Thus, when World War II and its aftermath brought a population explosion in the Albuquerque region, the Los Ranchos area became ripe for development associated with the growth boom. Concern over this growth on the part of local residents helped lead to the incorporation of the modern Village of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque in the late 1950's.

The Village of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque celebrated its thirtieth year as an independent, incorporated municipality in 1988. The years that have passed since the incorporation of the Village have seen continued growth and development in the Albuquerque area. The Village is the closest of any incorporated community to the city of Albuquerque, which raises justifiable concerns related to this growth in the future. A major purpose behind the incorporation of the Village was to allow its residents a greater voice in decisions affecting growth-- its pace, type, and density. Thirty years later the Village's incorporation has fulfilled the promise of self-determination. Los Ranchos de Albuquerque is now a viable municipality with a unique character differing from the rest of the Albuquerque area, even those neighborhoods that lie at its borders. However, development pressure has increased to the point where further action must be taken

A Comprehensive Master Plan is the next logical step in the process of self-determination. The Plan will become a set of guidelines to be used by the Village of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque in making decisions related to the physical development of the community. It will be based upon goals, objectives and planning policies which have been developed through citizen participation. In this way, the citizens can set a pattern for their own future. Once adopted, the Comprehensive Master Plan is an official statement of the Village Board of Trustees, setting forth its major policies, goals, and objectives for the future of the community. In this way, the Plan will allow the Board of Trustees to have policies in place and thus to address important concerns before they become major problems.

The Planning Process began in 1981 when village adopted the 1975 Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan. By 1988, the Board of Trustees determined that increasing development pressures warranted further action on the part of the Village, and that the 1975 metropolitan-wide plan had become less than adequate to satisfy the needs of the community. In May 1989, the Citizens Advisory Planning Committee (CAPC) was formed. In 1989 and 1990, this committee, along with Village staff, undertook the task of gathering citizen input on planning issues. In September 1990, the committee issued a report cataloging citizen input and findings. Subsequently, the committee and Village staff had and summarized the committee report into Phase I Goals and Policies. Adopted by the Board of Trustees in December 1990 as Resolution 90-12-1, this document amended the 1975 Plan.

In 1991 the Village began the next phase in the planning process which should lead to a Plan which will replace the 1975 plan altogether. The first step in that process is the compilation of the *Inventory of Existing Conditions*, which is a snapshot of the Village and its surrounds as they exist in the year 1991. Along with this will be another and more intensive round of public input which shall examine closely the current state of the Village and make strong recommendations for its future. With Resolution 90-12-1 and the *Inventory of Existing Conditions* as a foundation, this next phase in the planning process should result in the complete Comprehensive Master Plan. This Plan will be the first ever developed by the Village for the Village.

## Section 2

### GENERAL CONTEXT

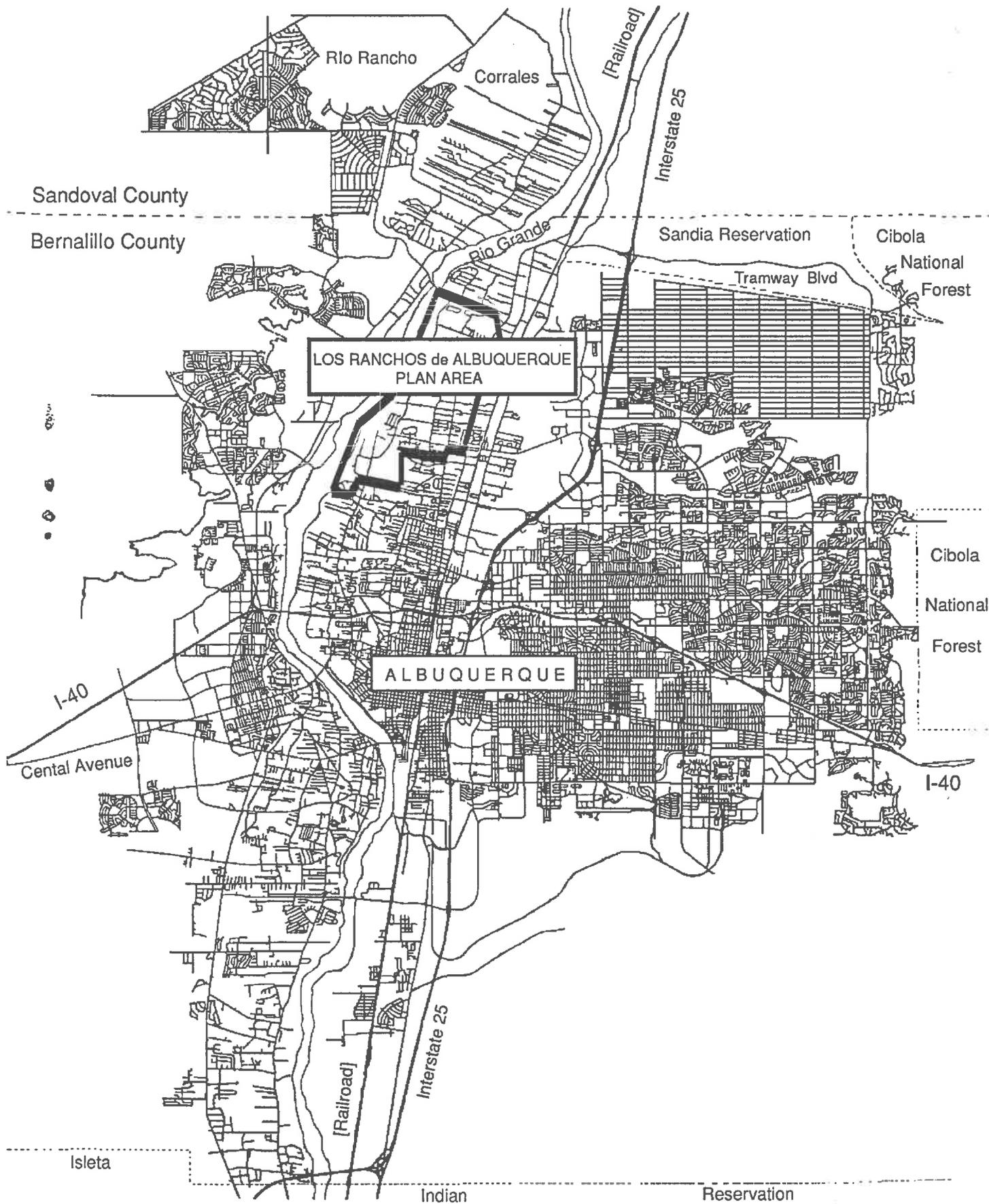
The Village of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque is an incorporated municipality which was formed under the laws of the state of New Mexico on December 29, 1958. The 1991 population of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque is about 5000. The Village has a mayor-council form of government. The council, known as the Board of Trustees, is a four member body that is elected at large. The Trustees serve four year staggered terms, with two seats on the Board becoming open every two years. The Mayor is elected once every four years and votes on the Board only in the event of a tie. At present, the Village has no Planning or Zoning Commission separate from the Board, which functions in this capacity as well as being the governing body at the present time.

On September 21, 1988 the Village Board of Trustees voted to exercise planning and platting jurisdiction outside the Village limits as authorized by state law. NMSA 3-19-5 allows the Village three miles of such jurisdiction over land in unincorporated Bernalillo County. Where this three mile jurisdiction overlaps the five mile jurisdiction of the city of Albuquerque, the line is drawn equidistant to each municipality. This area of jurisdiction is known as the **extraterritorial area** and is included in the Comprehensive Plan for the Village. The Plan policies that apply to the extraterritorial area will have to be approved by the Bernalillo County Commission as well as by the Village. All references to the **Plan Area** in this report apply to this area in combination with the incorporated area of the Village.

Los Ranchos de Albuquerque is located in the north valley region of Bernalillo County (see Figure A), just seven miles from downtown Albuquerque, the heart of its urban neighbor. The incorporated limits of the Village contain 2620 acres, with an additional 1086 acres in the **extraterritorial area**. The population in the **extraterritorial area** is around 2300, bringing the total for the **Plan Area** to around 6800 persons in 5.8 square miles (see Figure B). The Village is bordered on the south by the city of Albuquerque, on the east and north by unincorporated Bernalillo County, and on the west by the Rio Grande Valley State Park, which incorporates the river of the same name. The



FIGURE A







**FIGURE B**

**LOS RANCHOS PLAN  
AREA BOUNDARIES**

VILLAGE LIMITS

EXTRATERRITORIAL LIMITS



Los Ranchos de Albuquerque  
Comprehensive Plan-1991



village of Corrales and the city of Rio Rancho lie just across the Rio Grande to the north.

Los Ranchos de Albuquerque is interconnected with the other jurisdictions in the Albuquerque Metropolitan area. The economic and social systems of the Village are inseparable from those of its neighbors. Many vital facilities for the functioning of the Village are operated at a metropolitan level and are supported by the residents of all of the various jurisdictions of the metropolitan area in addition to those in the Village. Among these are the public school system, the system of health care facilities, the state highway system, the Technical-Vocational Institute, and ambulance service. The Village shares the metropolitan transportation network with its neighbors. Three major routes (Fourth Street, Rio Grande Boulevard and Paseo Del Norte ) traverse the boundaries of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque. Two other arterials, Second Street and Alameda Boulevard, lie on the borders of the Village's planning jurisdiction, and the area of the proposed Montañó river crossing lies at the southern edge of the Village.

The Village, along with the city of Albuquerque and unincorporated Bernalillo County, shares the irrigation and drainage system. This system is owned and maintained by a fourth governmental entity, the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District. Los Ranchos de Albuquerque shares the city of Albuquerque's community water and sewer system. This system was installed and is maintained by the city of Albuquerque, but service and maintenance are paid for by residents of the Village. The police and fire services of the Village are linked with those of neighboring Bernalillo County. Bernalillo County furnishes police protection for the Village, which reimburses the County government for this service. Due to a 1977 Mutual Aid Agreement, the Village Fire Department and its Bernalillo County counterparts assist one another in their corresponding districts.

One important result of these jurisdictional interconnections is a set of problems which cross jurisdictional lines and which demand multijurisdictional cooperation in their solution. Therefore, a major challenge of the Village planning effort is to work with neighboring jurisdictions in solving regional problems, while at the same time maintaining the Village's identity. At present, the chief vehicles for regional problem solving are the Middle Rio Grande Council of Governments and the New Mexico Municipal League. Los

Ranchos de Albuquerque, along with many other jurisdictions in the area, is a member of these bodies, which fulfill two primary functions. In addition to a forum for member governments to discuss important issues, the staff assigned to these bodies provide technical support to these governments.

## Section 3

### ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENT

#### A. Natural Setting and Topography

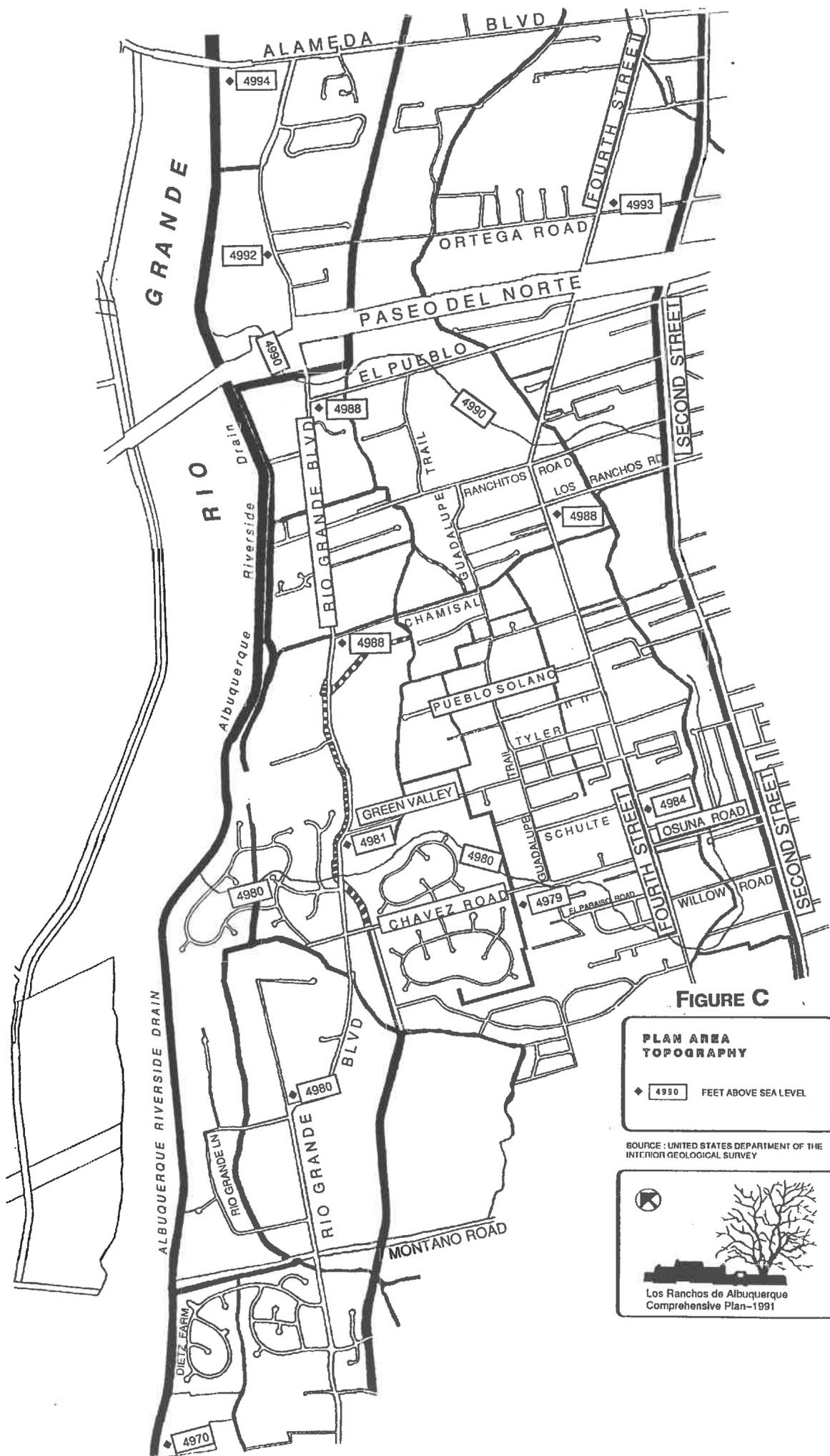
The Plan Area lies entirely within the Rio Grande flood plain. Before the 1920's, when the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (MRGCD) was created, the area that now comprises the Plan Area was subject to regular flooding. The system of drainage and irrigation canals created by the MRGCD, coupled with the construction of dams further upstream on the Rio Grande, greatly reduced this threat. The continual flooding prior to the 1920's reflects the natural environment of the valley and the low-lying location of the area in a riverine flood plain. The portion of the Rio Grande that abuts the Plan Area at its western edge is part of the Rio Grande Valley State Park. This park is an important natural resource and contains a riparian environment unique in the Albuquerque area and in the region.

The topography of the Los Ranchos area is typical of a riverine flood plain, and contrasts sharply with the alluvial fan topography of the areas to its east and west. These areas, which include the northeast heights section of the city of Albuquerque and the west mesa area, are characterized by steep slopes. In the majority of the northeast heights, the slope of the land averages seventy-five feet per mile. In contrast, the slope of the Plan Area is very gentle, averaging between five and six feet per mile.

The Los Ranchos area slopes gradually southwestward, following the contour of the Rio Grande (see Figure C). At the highest point of the Plan Area, at Fourth Street and Alameda, the elevation is 4995 feet. The lowest point lies in the Dietz Farms neighborhood, at approximately 4970 feet. The Plan Area is framed by the Rio Grande to the west and an area of increasingly sloping land to the east. The Sandia Mountains, lying twelve miles to the east, offer a dramatic backdrop to the entire region.

The geologic structure of the Plan Area is basically uniform throughout. This structure corresponds to its topographic features, which are typical of a flood plain. This underlying structure is built from discontinuous beds of clay, silt, sand and gravel. These beds are mostly shallow, being not more than sixty feet thick. This structure was set





**FIGURE C**

**PLAN AREA TOPOGRAPHY**

◆ 4990 FEET ABOVE SEA LEVEL

SOURCE: UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

Los Ranchos de Albuquerque Comprehensive Plan-1991



down during the last aggrading stage of the river, or the leveling of river bed slope by the deposition of sediments.

The Plan Area lies above the same aquifer that serves the entire Albuquerque metropolitan region. However, in the area of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque, this aquifer lies much closer to the surface than in most other places in this region. In much of the Plan Area, the aquifer is closer than twenty feet to the surface. Thus, development with on site septic systems raises serious concerns over water quality.

The climate of the Plan Area is that of a continental plateau desert with low rainfall, low average relative humidity, high daily temperature ranges and abundant sunshine. Temperatures above 100 degrees F and below zero degrees F are relatively rare. Though the Los Ranchos climate shares these basic characteristics, there are some differences due to its low elevation and close proximity to the Rio Grande. Nighttime temperatures tend to be slightly lower due to the tendency of heavier cold air to fill low areas. Rainfall and average relative humidity are slightly higher due to the proximity of open water. The Plan Area has the same basic climate in most respects as does the rest of the Albuquerque region. Regional problems such as air pollution and temperature inversions are important considerations for Village government.

- Sources:** City of Albuquerque Planning Department, North Valley Area Plan, Volume I, Existing Conditions.  
United States Department of Commerce, National Weather Service.  
United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service.

## B. THE RIO GRANDE *BOSQUE*

The river adjoining the Village to the west has been the main agent in the creation of its natural environment. Likewise, decisions made by humans can have a profound influence on the river's future environment. Approximately 1000 acres of the Rio Grande border Los Ranchos de Albuquerque to the west. This area is now part of the Rio Grande Valley State Park. The terms of a 1983 Act authorized a Park for the length of the river between the riverside drains within Bernalillo County. In 1985, the State of New

Mexico and the city of Albuquerque signed a management agreement which gives the city responsibility for maintenance of the park. At present, the City's Open Space Division is responsible for the river area, and the Village government has no responsibility nor direct control over the future of this park. In 1988, the city of Albuquerque began a plan for the future of the river park, known as the *Bosque* Improvement Plan. The Village, along with several other agencies and citizen groups, has been invited to participate in that plan.

The Rio Grande is an important resource for the Village and its citizens. Though the river has been channelized and much of its former floodplain converted to residential and agricultural uses, it remains one of the only riparian habitats in the southwestern United States. The dominant native trees in this riparian forest, or *bosque*, are the Rio Grande Cottonwood and the coyote willow. In fact, this area is the largest remaining cottonwood forest in the southwest. A study conducted by Hink and Ohmart in the early 1980's showed that the *bosque* provides a habitat for large numbers of wildlife species, many of which are rare outside of it. In particular, there are a great variety of riparian bird species, some occurring at very high densities.

The pressures on the *bosque*, with its location in the center of an urban area, are immense. The spread of hardy exotic plants, such as salt cedar, tamarisk, and russian olive trees, is a continuing problem. This exotic growth occurs at a time when the native cottonwood and willow stands are adversely affected by the alterations to the natural flow pattern of the river that gave rise to them. Population growth in throughout the metropolitan area and surrounding areas has increased the demand for recreational use of the State Park and the river *bosque*. While some forms of recreation are relatively innocuous, others, such as motorized vehicle use and camping, can have serious adverse side-effects.

The need for protection and preservation of the *bosque* habitat has been documented in studies of the area. Hink and Ohmart found that stands of the native cottonwoods, particularly those with large mature trees, are extremely valuable to wildlife. The cottonwood tree, with its broad leaves, serves as a food source for native insects and thus, forms a base for the natural food chain. In contrast the exotic plant species do not

serve nearly as well for habitat. A study of bird species in the *bosque*, completed by Stephen Hoffman in 1988, as well as the Hink and Ohmart study, found a significant difference in the density of bird species between areas. Typically, areas of heavier human usage contained a lower bird density and less variety of species.

Protection and preservation has been noted as a need by the residents of the area as well as by the governments of neighboring jurisdictions. In May 1989, a telephone survey was conducted in Bernalillo County by the University of New Mexico Institute for Public Policy. The overwhelming majority of respondents favored the protection and enhancement of the natural environment of the *bosque* to include, among other things, the regeneration of the native forest. The development of a *Bosque* Improvement Plan to involve the Village and various other jurisdictions indicates a desire on the part of local government to preserve the *bosque*. However, the survey also brought out the desire of many residents for better access to the *bosque* for recreational purposes. Among the types of recreation favored were trails for hiking, bicycling and equestrian use, as well as areas set aside for picnicking. Nearly half of those polled felt that the State Park use should be evenly split between preservation and recreation.

The results of the survey bring out the essential dilemma of the *bosque*. How can a fragile natural environment be preserved while at the same time allowing access to human beings so that they might enjoy it? The answer will not be arrived at easily and must involve a great deal of cooperation between many jurisdictions. In addition to Los Ranchos, the city of Albuquerque, Bernalillo County, and the State of New Mexico, there are other entities with an important role in the future of the *bosque*. These include the Bureau of Reclamation, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (MRGCD). The MRGCD is the actual owner and controller of much of the land in the State Park area. The *Bosque* Improvement Plan, if it is to succeed, must attempt to resolve this dilemma with input from all jurisdictions concerned, as well as the residents of the area. Los Ranchos has had, until present, a limited role in the development of this plan.

**Sources:** City of Albuquerque, Open Space Division.  
State of New Mexico, Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department.

### C. NATURAL VEGETATION AND WILDLIFE

The natural vegetation and wildlife communities in the Los Ranchos area have been heavily influenced by two forces: the nearby Rio Grande and the reconstruction of the area that has taken place since the MRGCD began in the 1920's. There are three major vegetative communities in the Plan Area, all of which can trace their origins to these two forces.

**Riparian Woodland** - This community is most commonly associated with the Rio Grande itself and is known as *bosque*. This Spanish word describes the collection of deciduous trees associated with a stream or spring. The dominant tree in this community is the Rio Grande cottonwood, which occurs in extensive stands throughout the river area. Willows, tamarisks, and russian olives are also quite common. Plants associated with this community include New Mexico olive, Canada wild rye, foxtail, Virginia creeper, sunflower, spiny aster, kochia, globe mallow, sand dropseed, muhly, yerba, mansa, salt grass, lambs quarters and lue weed. Stands of cottonwoods exist in the Village area outside of the river. In addition, pockets of the riparian woodland community occur along the MRGCD canal system and in other locations that have been protected from development.

**Wetland-** This community is very limited in the Los Ranchos area. It occurs primarily in marshes, ponds, and depressed areas, although some remnants of this community can be found along the MRGCD canals. Main vegetative types include cattails, duckweed, smartweeds, rushes, knotweed, reedgrass and many types of algae. At one point, this community inhabited large portions of the Plan Area as vast marshes were created by continual flooding. Subsequent drainage and development greatly reduced the extent of this community.

**Altered through development-** This is not a specific community, but includes all areas that are not part of the naturally occurring communities listed above. Most of the Plan Area outside of the Rio Grande falls into this category. When the land was drained and the hazard of continual river flooding eliminated, land was converted to agricultural uses. After World War II, the population boom in the Albuquerque area brought an

increase in development. As the area built up, much of the vegetation that had not been altered through agriculture was replaced by houses, concrete and nonnative vegetation associated with residential development. Today, the indigenous plants and associated animals are mainly confined to the area between the river levees.

**Sources:** City of Albuquerque, Planning Department, North Valley Area Plan, Volume I, Existing Conditions.

#### D. WATER QUALITY

##### Underground Water

In an arid locality such as Los Ranchos de Albuquerque, a vital resource is water. The main source of water for use in the Village area is underground. The Village, along with the rest of the metropolitan area, sits above a vast subterranean aquifer, of which the full extent is not known. Prominent geologist Phillip R. Grant, in his book ENERGYtic NEW MEXICO. The Power and State said, in reference to nearby Albuquerque, "Probably no other city in the Southwest has such an extraordinary supply of fresh water."

The existence and maintenance of this aquifer is important to the future of the Plan Area for several reasons. Residents throughout the Plan Area can connect to the community water system furnished by the city of Albuquerque under joint powers agreements between the city, the county, and the Village (these are discussed further in the Infrastructure Element). The majority of residents have opted to do so. However, the State Engineer does allow property owners to drill private wells for their own use. There are an indeterminate number of private wells still in use for domestic and irrigation purposes in the Plan Area. Those drilled after 1956 must legally have a permit on file with the office of the State Engineer, however, many of these were drilled prior to that date. In either case, potable water for each resident comes from the same aquifer and a threat to the quality of any part of the aquifer is a threat to all of it. The shallow water table in the Village area compounds this problem.

The main threat to this aquifer is percolation of pollutants through the surrounding soil to the water table. The sources of these materials are many and varied, including

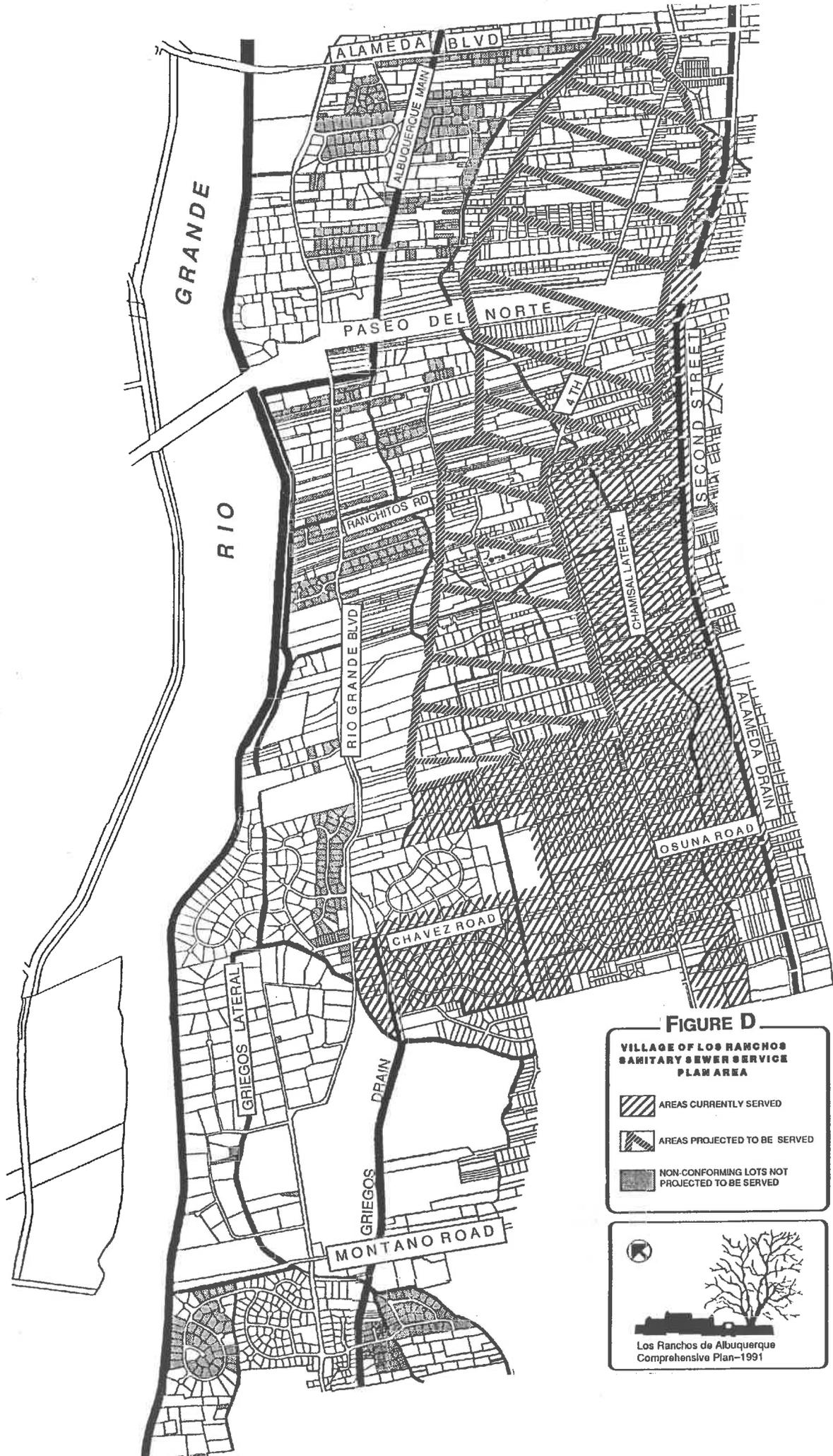
leaking underground tanks and the leaching of materials from the surface, such as chemicals used for agricultural purposes. There are two major varieties of underground tanks to be considered when examining pollutants in the aquifer; septic tanks used for private liquid waste disposal and Underground Storage Tanks (UST's) used for a variety of hazardous chemicals.

### Septic Systems

Approximately one-fifth of the Plan Area is served by the city of Albuquerque sanitary sewer system under joint powers agreements (this is discussed further in the Infrastructure Element). The remainder is served by private septic systems. These private liquid waste disposal systems are regulated and inspected by the New Mexico Environmental Improvement Division (NMEID) within the Village limits and the Bernalillo County Environmental Health Department within the extraterritorial area. These regulations specify a minimum lot size, a maximum flow rate and minimum setback requirements for such tanks. The regulations are very similar under both jurisdictions with minimum lot sizes varying according to the design flow of the tank.

The design flow of a septic system is based upon the number of bedrooms in a residence and an average water usage of 75 gallons per day per person. In a typical home, it is assumed that four persons inhabit the first two bedrooms with one person occupying each additional bedroom. Therefore, a septic system for a three-bedroom home should have a design flow of at least 375 gallons/day. Commercial and office uses have different criteria established for liquid waste systems than residential. However, residential uses are the most common origin of liquid wastes in the Plan Area and thus are the main focus of discussion in this report.

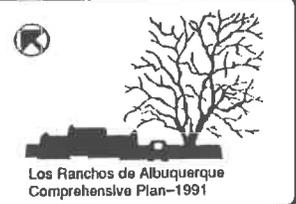
In February 1990, a new set of liquid waste regulations went into effect throughout the State of New Mexico. These regulations were drafted by the state Environmental Improvement Board. These state regulations override any regulations of a county or municipality, meaning that any local laws must be at least as stringent as state codes. According to the new law, the minimum lot size for any newly created parcel with an onsite liquid waste system anywhere in the state is .75 acres, regardless of the water source. New liquid waste systems installed within preexisting lots that are smaller than



**FIGURE D**

**VILLAGE OF LOS RANCHOS  
SANITARY SEWER SERVICE  
PLAN AREA**

-  AREAS CURRENTLY SERVED
-  AREAS PROJECTED TO BE SERVED
-  NON-CONFORMING LOTS NOT PROJECTED TO BE SERVED



Los Ranchos de Albuquerque  
Comprehensive Plan-1991



.75 acres are limited in capacity by regulation while existing systems on these smaller lots are allowed to remain. The Village zoning ordinance was revised in March, 1990, to reflect this change and the Bernalillo County zoning and liquid waste ordinances are currently under revision as well.

However, both sets of regulations allow for the installation of holding tanks in lots which do not meet minimum lot size requirements for a septic system. A holding tank is a liquid waste tank which does not discharge wastewater and must be pumped out much more frequently than a septic system. These tanks represent an enforcement problem for environmental agencies and can pose a serious threat to groundwater when used improperly or illegally. In fact, illegal drainfields are frequently created after a holding tank is installed and approved. In a study of such systems in the state of Wisconsin in the late 1980's (APA Journal, Spring 1989), it was discovered that, on average, only half of the waste from these tanks was being pumped properly.

In addition, there are many cases of platted lots not currently served by sanitary sewer which were created before February 1, 1990 and do not conform to the current requirements. Each of these is a buildable lot since it was legally subdivided at the time. Many of the areas in which such nonconforming lots are located may be served by sanitary sewer in the near future. The areas that will eventually be served by sanitary sewer have been programmed (see Figure D). However, there exists no precise timetable for the extension of the city of Albuquerque system to these areas, and a great deal of the Plan Area is not programmed for extensions at all under the current scheme. In addition, extensions are expensive and must depend on funding from the state of New Mexico to become reality. In many areas, sewer extension may not be cost effective because of topographic location and the lack of sufficient overall population density. In other areas, the overall character of the neighborhood may not warrant sewer extension and the associated development pressures.

Despite increased regulation and further sanitary sewer extensions, the continued use of onsite systems and their associated drainfields presents a problem. The proliferation of such septic tanks throughout the Plan Area and the shallow groundwater level combine to increase the threat of pollution through effluent discharge from these

tanks. It is not known exactly how many of these tanks may be leaching effluent into the groundwater within the Los Ranchos de Albuquerque area, though it has been estimated that there are 3000 homes with such tanks in the entire north valley region. The implications of this problem are heightened when the households remaining on private wells in the area are considered. The precise depth at which pollutants have circulated into the water table is not known.

### Underground Storage Tanks

Underground Storage Tanks (UST's) are the other chief threat to ground water resources in the area. There are several in the Plan Area, mainly concentrated in the Fourth and Second Street areas. Many of these contain or have contained gasoline and/or diesel fuel because of the historical connection of these streets to trade focused around the automobile. Regulation and monitoring of such tanks has increased dramatically in recent years. NMEID and the Environmental Health Department of the city of Albuquerque have participated in a joint effort to address the problem of tanks that may be leaking into the water table.

On March 16, 1989 the Phase III regulations governing UST's took effect. These regulations were established by the Environmental Improvement Board (EIB) of the State of New Mexico. These regulations govern the installation, construction and piping of all UST's and are basically designed to reduce corrosion and resulting leakage from such tanks. Phase III also designates three geographical areas relative to their sensitivity to pollution from UST's. Due to the shallow, high water table the entire Plan Area falls into the "highly sensitive area" as designated in the regulations. According to NMEID statistics, 90% of the groundwater contamination related to these tanks has occurred in the highly sensitive areas.

Phase III requirements apply immediately to all new UST's. In addition, existing tanks will have to be updated to match a schedule according to the geographical area in which they are located. Since the entire Plan Area is in the "highly sensitive" zone, all tanks will have to meet such requirements by June 1, 1993. In 1987 the Plan Area contained seven reported and three unreported UST's, based on federally mandated

reporting requirements. Figure E shows the location of these tanks, four of which were known to be more than fifteen years old. The Federal Environmental Protection Agency estimates that 5-10% of the UST's in the Albuquerque area may be leaking. However, little work has been done to gauge the problem in the Plan Area. As a matter of fact, the technical staffs that will administer and implement the Phase III program for the State have not yet been established.

### Surface Water

The major surface water source in the Plan Area is Rio Grande water diverted into the area by the MRGCD system of drains and irrigation canals. This system is discussed in greater detail in the Infrastructure Element. From a water quality standpoint, there are several important facts to note. First, if properly treated, this water can be potable. However, unless a request for change in use is approved by the State Engineer, this water may only be used for irrigation. Given this restriction upon use, the issue of contamination is not as critical as with groundwater sources. However, it is important to note that agricultural chemicals are in use in the area and can be carried into the river by this system or into the aquifer through leaching.

**Sources:** State of New Mexico, Health and Environment Department, Environmental Improvement Division.  
County of Bernalillo, Environmental Health Department.  
City of Albuquerque, Environmental Health Department.

## E. AIR QUALITY

The air quality of the Albuquerque metropolitan area, of which Los Ranchos de Albuquerque is a part, is adversely affected by its natural environment. Situated in a trough between a mountain chain on the east and a high plateau on the west, the entire area is somewhat insulated from ventilating wind currents. The climate of the area intensifies this situation as well, particularly with the temperature inversions that occur during the winter months, when colder air is trapped beneath a layer of warmer air and is unable to rise.





**FIGURE E**

**EXISTING UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANKS**

● LOCATION OF KNOWN TANKS

SOURCE: CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT





Several ideal conditions exist in this climate for temperature inversions during the nighttime hours. These include (1) clear skies, so that the loss of heat by radiation is great; (2) dry air that absorbs very little of this outgoing radiation; and (3) calm air, so that very little mixing occurs and the air near the ground quickly acquires the ground temperature. These conditions aggravate the situation by helping to produce a phenomenon known as radiation ground inversion. This refers to a condition in which heat is radiated quickly from the land surface after sundown, leaving a pocket of cold air lying close to the ground, trapped under a layer of warmer air above.

The depth of temperature inversion is intensified in the Plan Area due to its location in the river valley. Los Ranchos de Albuquerque lies at one of the lower elevations in the metropolitan area, making it susceptible to another phenomenon known as air drainage. Under this condition, cold, dense air flows downhill from higher elevations in the metropolitan area to lower elevations such as the Plan Area. This phenomenon tends to combine with radiation ground inversion to intensify stratification, or layering of the air mass. The effect of inversion is to trap pollutants near to the ground, with the warmer layer of air above tending to form a "cap" and prevent the escape of these pollutants.

The New Mexico Air Quality Control Act of 1967 established the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Air Quality Control Board as the primary authority on air quality in the area. This is a seven-member body, which includes four employees of the city of Albuquerque and three of the county of Bernalillo. These representatives are appointed by the Mayor of Albuquerque and serve three-year staggered terms. This board is the product of a joint powers agreement between these two government entities and, at present, contains no representative from the Village. However, due to state statute, regulations adopted by this Board apply to all areas of Bernalillo County, including the Village. Despite this, the Village government has had a very limited role in past decisions related to metropolitan air quality.

The Air Pollution Control Division of the city of Albuquerque Environmental Health Department is responsible for the monitoring of air quality throughout Bernalillo County. This agency maintains thirteen air quality monitoring sites within the city limits as well as in the area of the county. Monitor 2ZH is located at the Alameda Fire Station, just outside

## Figure F

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>Monitor 2ZH Plan Area*</b>	<b>All Monitors (Bernalillo County)</b>
<b>1983</b>	102	71.7
<b>1984</b>	90.1	78.6
<b>1985</b>	96.8	75.3
<b>1986</b>	89.6	70.9
<b>1987</b>	87.9	62.6
<b>1988</b>	105.3	64.7
<b>Mean TSP (Micrograms per square meter)</b>		

the Plan Area on North Second Street. Since this monitor is less than five miles from the farthest point of the Plan Area, it provides the best overall perspective on local air quality.

The major pollutant measured at Monitor 2ZH is Total Suspended Particulates (TSP's). Some examples of TSP's are fireplace smoke, dust and soot. These particulates constitute the vast majority of visible pollution. The unit of measurement of TSP's at the Monitors in Bernalillo County is micrograms per square meter. TSP measurements are important to public health, particularly because of the impact of smaller inhalable particles (less than 1/2500 inch). Human and animal respiratory systems can filter out larger particles than this, but the smaller ones can cause some types of health problems. These particles can contain toxic and carcinogenic substances as well as respiratory irritants. In addition, the small size of these objects makes them susceptible to being deposited deep within the lungs.

TSP's constitute only ten percent of all pollutants by weight in the County area. However, TSP is the most apparent form of pollution because of its great degree of visibility. Beyond the economic and health cost associated with illness, the existence of a layer of TSP commonly referred to as the "brown cloud" can adversely affect visibility in the Albuquerque area. In addition, the panoramic views present in the metropolitan area are one of its greatest assets and are one that is most dramatically affected by TSP.

In general, TSP figures for Monitor 2ZH have been among the highest in the Bernalillo County area in recent years, as was seen in the period 1983-88. Figure F shows that the mean TSP level for Monitor 2ZH has been significantly higher than the average mean for all of the monitors in each of the six years. During this time period, this station has recorded the highest mean TSP level of any station in three different years. Monitor 2ZH ranked second in this category in two other years, and has never ranked in the bottom half in any year. The highest recorded maximum TSP level for this monitor ranked either first or second against the other stations for five out of six years, and has never ranked below third since 1983.

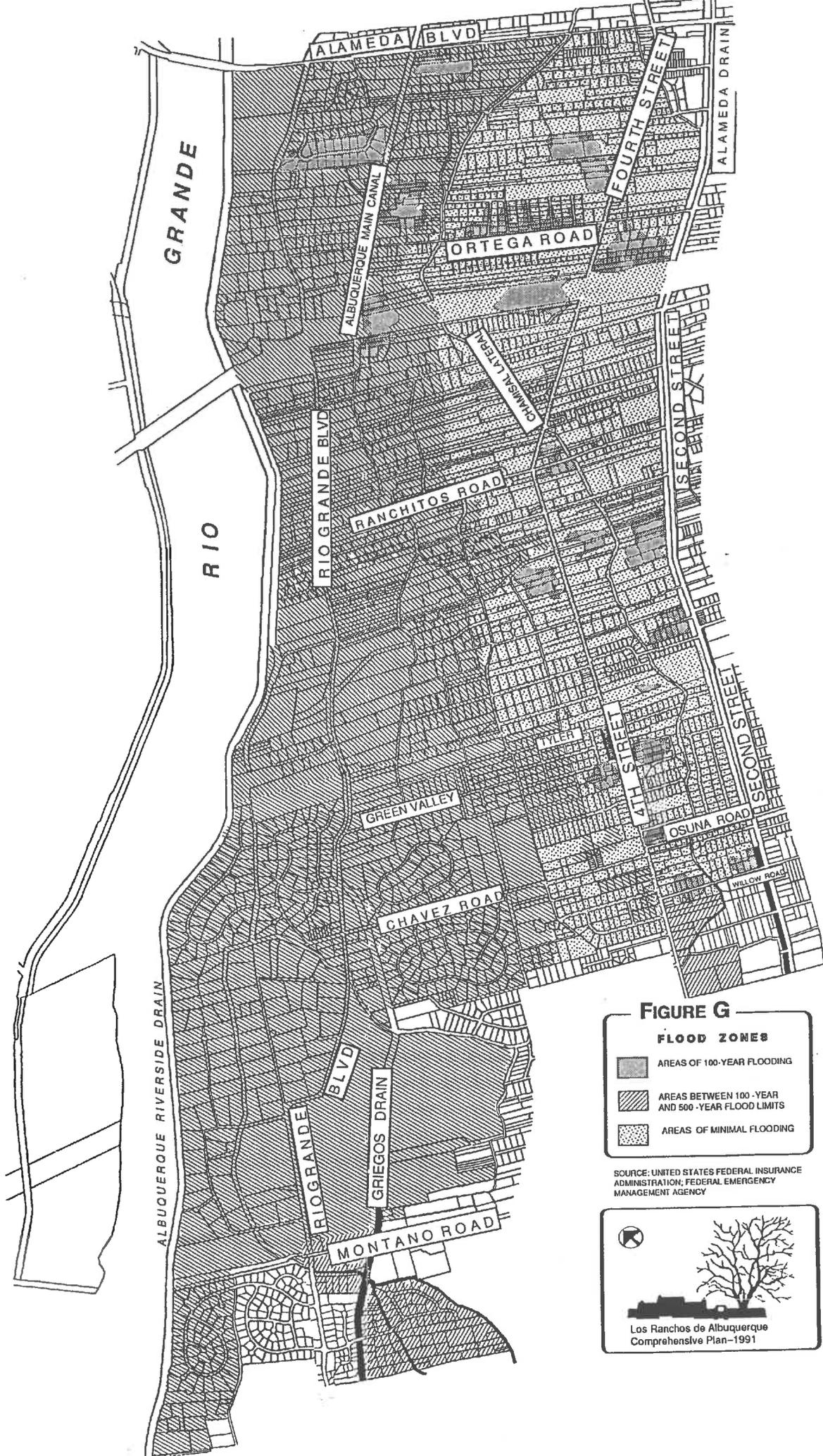
Federal air quality standards for TSP are 260 micrograms per cubic meter for a given 24-hour period and an annual mean TSP level of 75 micrograms per cubic meter. Monitor 2ZH has exceeded federal standards for a given 24-hour period only twice in six

years. However, the mean TSP level has exceeded the standard of 75 micrograms/cubic meter for each of the six years researched for this report. The main reasons for this relate to the inversions occurring in the area and the large number of firewood users in the Valley.

Carbon monoxide is an invisible gas, which, in high enough concentrations, is quite toxic. This is another important pollutant in the Albuquerque area, but it is not monitored at 2ZH. In fact, the air in the metropolitan area has many times exceeded federal standards for carbon monoxide levels, in part due to the heavy dependence of residents upon the automobile. Under pressure from the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Albuquerque and Bernalillo County have twice implemented vehicle emissions programs which have included the Plan Area in their scope. The first, which ran for two years beginning in 1983, was overturned by the New Mexico Supreme Court on constitutional grounds. The second was implemented in March 1989 and has been considerably revised from the first program. Though the latest program is relatively comprehensive in nature and includes all of Bernalillo County, it does not include neighboring counties that are part of the metropolitan airshed.

Woodburning is another cause of TSP and carbon monoxide emissions in the metropolitan area. In August of 1988, the city of Albuquerque passed an ordinance prohibiting woodburning during certain periods when the potential for inversion is great. The ordinance also details requirements for new woodburning heating devices. In November of 1988, the Air Quality Control Board passed a very similar ordinance, and in so doing, created a near uniform set of woodburning regulations throughout all of Bernalillo County including the Village.

Open and agricultural burning occurs frequently in the north valley and is considered by many residents to be a part of their lifestyle. In the Plan Area, both the Village and Bernalillo County regulate such open burning in their respective jurisdictions. These regulations restrict such burning to organic materials and limit the hours of the day that burning may occur. The ordinances also require that such burning be personally attended and that the respective Fire Departments be notified in advance when and if it does occur. On certain days, this burning is prohibited due to weather and



**FIGURE G**

**FLOOD ZONES**

-  AREAS OF 100-YEAR FLOODING
-  AREAS BETWEEN 100-YEAR AND 500-YEAR FLOOD LIMITS
-  AREAS OF MINIMAL FLOODING

SOURCE: UNITED STATES FEDERAL INSURANCE ADMINISTRATION; FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY





atmospheric conditions that raise the potential for air pollution in the area. In both jurisdictions, such regulations have proven difficult to enforce due to the lack of staff and the frequency of illegal burning.

**Sources:** City of Albuquerque, Environmental Health Department.  
County of Bernalillo, Environmental Health Department.

## F. FLOOD HAZARD

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has mapped the entire Plan Area, dividing it into three general zones for purposes of flood insurance. These zones are shown in Figure G and are described as follows:

AH- These are zones of 100-year flooding. A **100-year flood** is described as a flood of such magnitude that it is likely to occur at least once in a 100 year period. In AH zones, the 100-year flood is a shallow one, leaving standing water one to three feet in depth.

B- These are generally zones lying between the limits of the **100-year flood** area and the limits of the **500-year flood** area, making them regions less susceptible to flooding than the AH. The B zones can also be subject to very shallow 100-year flooding (less than 1 foot), or are protected by levees from such flooding.

C- These are areas of minimal flooding.

A general analysis of Figure G as it relates to the Plan Area shows several important characteristics. The majority of the area, particularly the western part, is dominated by areas in the B zone. This is due in large part to the basically level topography of the area and its protection from flooding by drainage canals and levees. Areas in the C zone occur mainly in the higher, eastern portions of the Plan Area. The AH zones that are most susceptible to 100-year flooding occur the least of the three. These areas are concentrated in small depressions that are surrounded by higher terrain. Due to their topography, these areas are subject to ponding of water during severe storms.

**Source:** United States Federal Emergency Management Agency.

## G. NOISE

Noise impacts in the Plan Area are mainly associated with vehicular traffic along major roadways in the area. Industrial noise sources are not a major factor within the Plan Area, since there is no industry. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has set a roadway standard of 10,000 AWDT (Average Weekday Traffic, vehicles per day) at which the average noise level for an hour exceeds 67 decibels for locations adjacent to the right of way. At 67 decibels, normal speech is drowned out and it is a level that most people find to be too high. For this reason, the 67 decibel level is stated to be excessive for Category B land uses. These include residences, schools, churches, hospitals and motels. There are six roadways in the Plan Area that average above 10,000 AWDT for part or all of their length: Rio Grande Boulevard, Paseo del Norte, Fourth Street, Osuna Road, Second Street, and Alameda Boulevard.

For roadways with over 16,000 AWDT, noise levels exceeding the standard can be expected to extend far beyond the right-of-way. The following road spans exceed 16,000 AWDT in the Plan Area: Fourth Street from the Village's southern boundary to approximately Roehl Road, Second Street from Willow Road to approximately Los Ranchos Road, and the entire distance of Paseo Del Norte and Alameda Boulevard as they traverse the Plan Area. The proposed Montaña bridge roadway, though not within the boundaries of the Plan Area, will exceed 16,000 AWDT if completed, and the resulting noise impacts will affect properties in the Plan Area.

Noise contours represent the distance that noise levels will carry from such roadways, and their range depends on a number of factors other than traffic volume. These include traffic speed, type of roadway construction, line of sight from the roadway and the presence of different types of truck traffic. Only two of these higher volume road spans in the Los Ranchos area, Paseo del Norte and Alameda Boulevard, have had such detailed noise analyses completed for them. The Alameda study was based on a projected roadway design, while the Paseo del Norte report was an analysis of the existing roadway.

The Alameda Boulevard noise contour study was based on several projected four

lane designs and a projected traffic volume of around 30,000 AWDT. The noise figures were a combination of observed current noise levels and projected noise levels based upon a computer model. This study revealed that the 67 decibel contour will extend approximately seventy five feet from the edge of the right-of-way. The number of existing residences impacted by this does not differ significantly when comparing the preferred design alternative and the no build alternative. Mitigating, or relieving this impact with noise walls was deemed ineffective because of the number of access points that would need to be provided through the wall. A design alternative that would have lessened the number of noise impacted residences was not recommended by the study team.

The Paseo del Norte noise study was initiated by complaints from area residents following its completion in late 1987. Field measurements of noise were made at sixteen sites adjacent to the roadway from Coors Road on the West Mesa to Second Street. It was discovered that, while none of the sites experienced noise levels above 67 decibels, all but one experienced an increase in noise level of over 10 decibels from measurements prior to the construction of the roadway. Due to the amount of increase, the New Mexico State Highway Department deems these sites eligible for mitigation relief measures. However, the Department policy is that mitigation costs should be less than \$40,000 per affected residence. Due to the low density of population in the area, only the construction of a 10-12 foot noise wall between Rio Grande and Fourth Street would fall within this guideline. Any other mitigation alternatives would violate current Department policy and would require prior approval by the Highway Commission.

Traffic and its resulting noise impacts have increased steadily as the north valley has developed. In the last five years, eight lanes of traffic have been added to the Plan Area as Paseo del Norte was completed and Second Street was widened. Proposals for the widening of Alameda Boulevard and the Montañño Roadway project, if completed, will contribute to noise impacts in the Plan Area with additional roadway capacity. The location of Los Ranchos with these major commuter streets traversing it, will continue to pose a noise problem for its residents. The mitigation of noise impacts will become an increasingly important issue in the future.

**Source:** New Mexico Highway and Transportation Department and MRCOG.

## Section 4

### INFRASTRUCTURE ELEMENT

#### A. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The Village owns two buildings in the Plan Area, the Warren J. Gray Hall and Village Fire Station at 6718 Rio Grande Boulevard and the old Village Hall at 920 Green Valley Road. The present Village Hall and Fire Station complex was completed in 1983. Just south of the intersection of Green Valley and Rio Grande, it occupies a little over 8000 square feet of space. In 1990, this building was remodeled, reflecting the growth of population and attendant governmental services in the Village area. In that same year, the Hall was renamed for Warren J. Gray, a former Mayor, who passed away in 1989. The old Village Hall was used as the center of Village government from the early 1960's to 1983. Situated on a .5 acre tract of land on the south side of Green Valley Road, this complex is now used as the Village police station.

Los Ranchos de Albuquerque owns just over 18 acres of land in the Plan Area (see Figure H). This includes 2.7 acres of land occupied by the Village Hall complex plus the old Village Hall/police station. Immediately south of the Village Hall complex lies Hartnett Park, a fully developed facility comprising four acres. This park, named for former Mayor Sam Hartnett, incorporates tennis courts, a handball area, and a jogging/pedestrian trail. At present, this is the only developed park within the Village limits. Adjacent to this is the Jenkins property, a 2.3 acre parcel purchased by the Village in 1989 which also is believed to be a site of enormous archaeological importance. In 1986, the Village acquired 2.8 acres of land within the right-of-way of the abandoned Griegos Drain, in 1987 a 2.7 acre parcel adjacent to Paseo Del Norte on the south, and in 1988 the 3.7 acre Nolasco property just north of Paseo Del Norte.

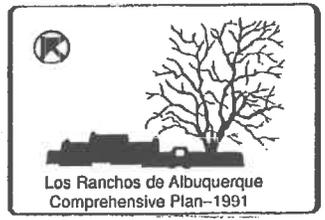
For the purposes of constructing the Paseo Del Norte roadway, the New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department acquired vast tracts of land through condemnation. Among this territory was approximately 59 acres within 11 parcels in the Plan Area both north and south of Paseo Del Norte which the Department determined was not needed for the development of the roadway. These lands, known as excess right-of-way are owned in fee simple by the Department, but are managed by the Village



**FIGURE H**  
**COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

-  VILLAGE OWNED LANDS
-  VILLAGE MANAGED LANDS
-  ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
-  MIDDLE SCHOOL

- 1 VILLAGE HALL & FIRE STATION
- 2 HARTNETT PARK
- 3 "OLD" VILLAGE HALL/POLICE STATION





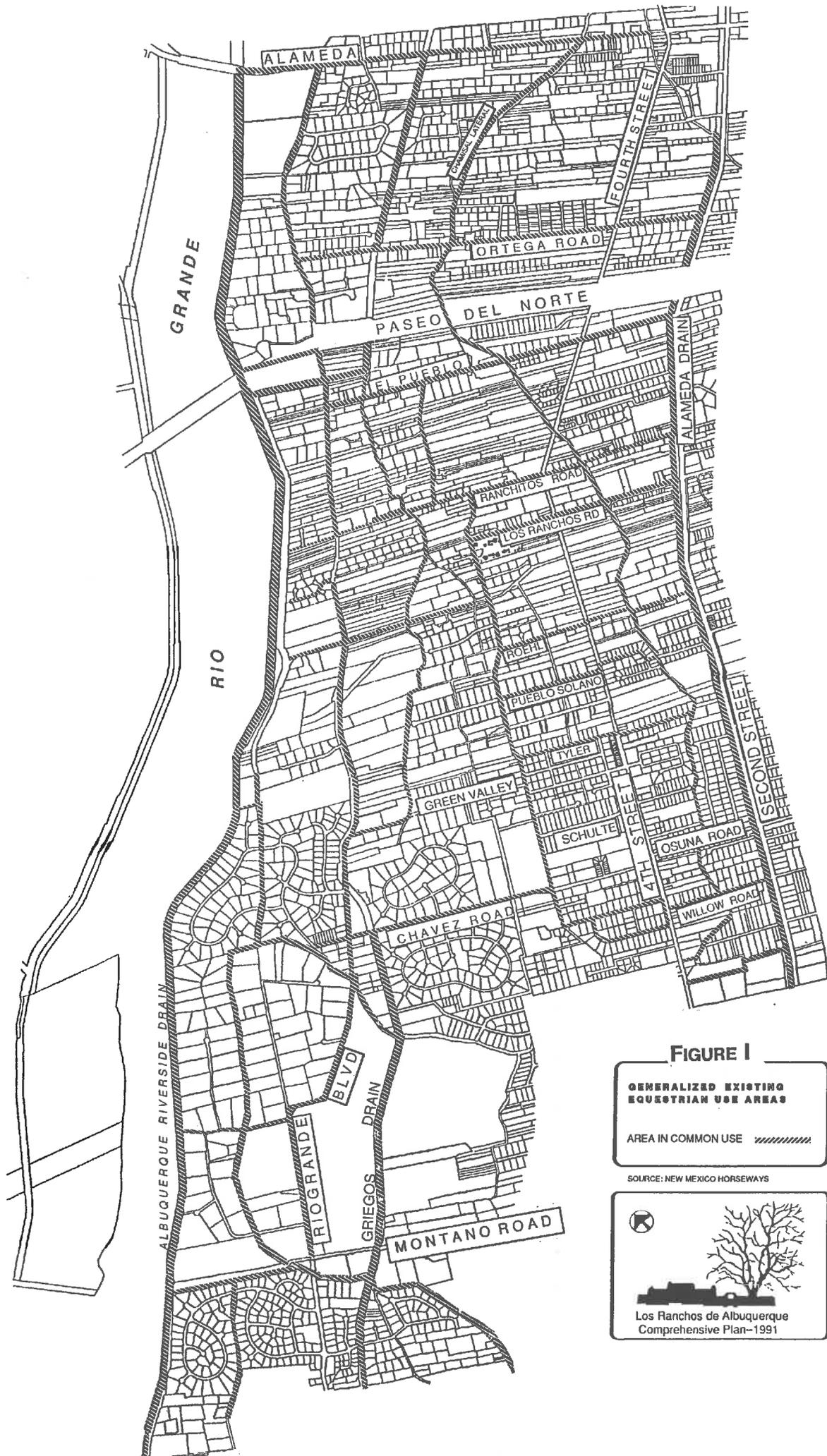
under the terms of a joint powers agreement. At present, these lands are largely vacant and mostly unused, but they have a vast potential to provide recreational and open space uses. Among the proposals for use of these lands are the Bernalillo County north valley library, soccer fields and a senior community center. In 1987, Ken Marron & Associates, a consulting firm, completed a study for the Village which recommended a variety of uses for these lands including a nature area, recreational areas, a park and ride facility, agricultural uses and a network of multiple use trails. The study recommended that the trails interconnect with those of neighboring jurisdictions.

Trail facilities are becoming increasingly important as the Village area becomes more populated. In particular, trail space for equestrian users is vital to many area residents and has become more critical with increasing vehicular traffic and development in the Plan Area. An informal system of equestrian trails and key access points already exists in the Plan Area (see Figure I). This system of trails is concentrated along the Conservancy waterways, but it does cross, parallel and share street right-of-ways. No governmental entity has formally adopted this system, though it will be important to any overall plan.

Since the early 1970's, work has been underway to create a metropolitan system of bikeways. Numerous citizen volunteers have been involved in this process over the years, and one result has been the creation of bicycle trails, routes, and lanes throughout the Albuquerque area. These efforts also led to the creation of the Greater Albuquerque Bicycling Advisory Committee, a nine-member advisory board. Seven of the members are appointed by the Mayor of Albuquerque and two by the Bernalillo County Commission. The Village has no representation on this committee. Since the 1970's, volunteers such as the ones on this committee have worked with Middle Rio Grande Council of Governments staff to develop and revise a Bikeways Master Plan, which is adopted annually by the Urban Transportation Planning Policy Board. Though this Plan includes proposed bicycle trails, lanes, and routes through the Village and its Plan Area (see Figure J), the Village has had little or no involvement in the development of the Bikeways Master Plan since its original inception.

There are only two existing formal trail facilities within the Plan Area at the present



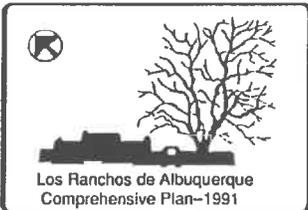


**FIGURE I**

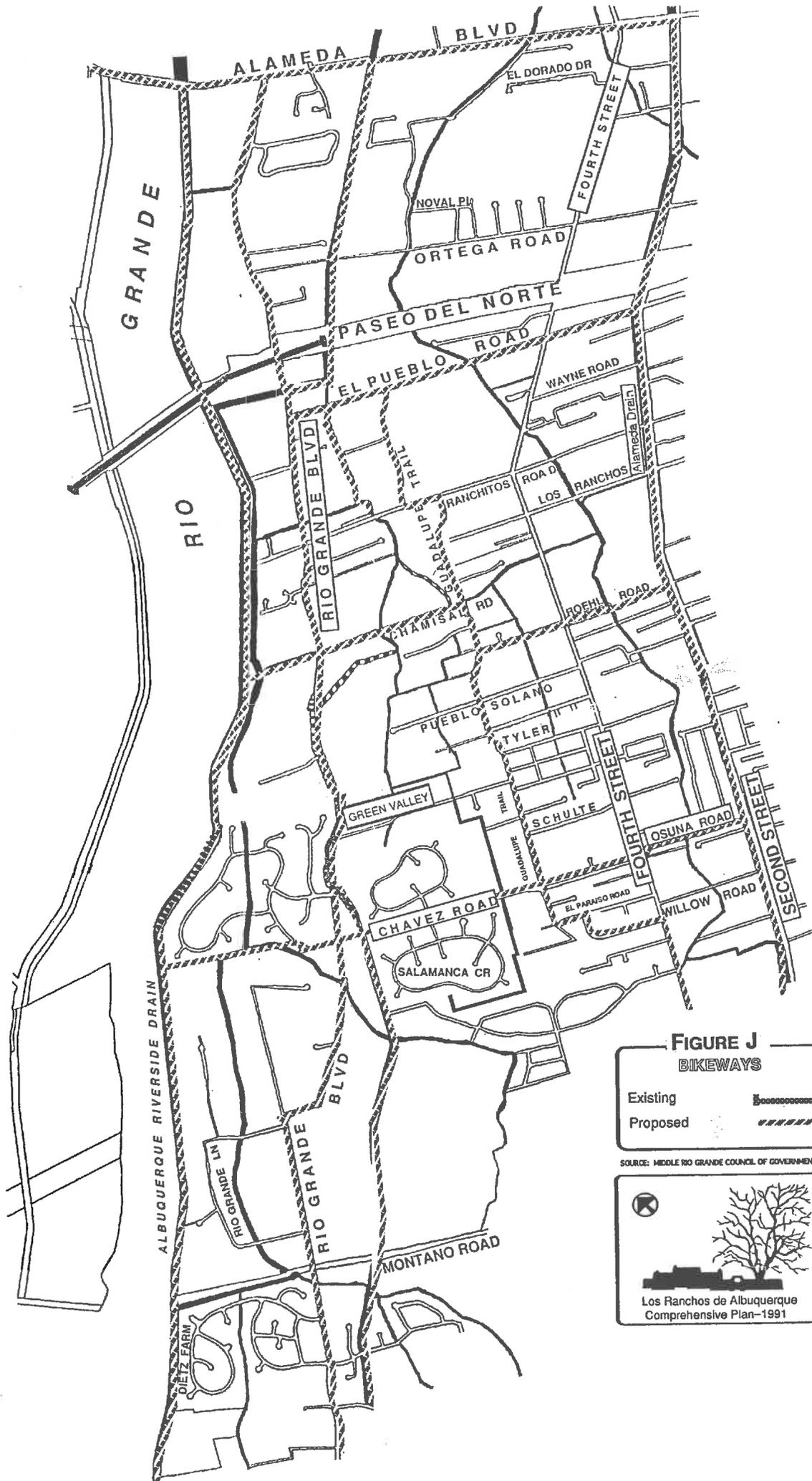
**GENERALIZED EXISTING EQUESTRIAN USE AREAS**

AREA IN COMMON USE 

SOURCE: NEW MEXICO HORSEWAYS









time. The first is an unpaved pedestrian and recreational pathway which was developed along the western shoulder of Rio Grande Boulevard within the Village limits in 1990. No figures are yet available on the usage of this facility, which lacks functional connections with trails in adjoining jurisdictions. The second is a small bicycle trail along the south side of Paseo del Norte.

In 1988 the Albuquerque City Council passed an ordinance establishing a Greater Albuquerque Recreational Trails Committee. Among other things, this committee will work to create a network of off-road recreational trails which link parks and open space areas in the various jurisdictions. In addition, the committee will help promote joint use of trail facilities for a variety of users. Along with the other jurisdictions in the Albuquerque area, Los Ranchos de Albuquerque is represented on the eleven-member advisory body.

At present, there are no multiple use indoor community facilities nor senior centers in the Plan Area. However, the Alameda Park and Community Center, operated by the county of Bernalillo, lies just outside the Plan Area and serves many of its residents. Local groups and organizations within the Village often use either the Warren J. Hall or the old Village Hall/police facility for meeting space. These types of facilities can serve a wide variety of community needs as well as focusing the identity of the overall community.

At the western edge of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque is the Rio Grande Valley State Park, which was created by the Rio Grande Valley State Park Act of 1983. This park is managed by the city of Albuquerque under a 1985 joint powers agreement. By virtue of this act, nearly 1000 acres of the Rio Grande *bosque* adjacent to the Village are protected from development. This *bosque* represents one of the few riparian woodland areas in New Mexico. The Park is a vital source of passive recreation for residents of the Plan Area, particularly those on the west side of Rio Grande Boulevard.

**Source:** City of Albuquerque Planning Department.  
Middle Rio Grande Council of Governments.  
New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department.

## B. DRAINAGE

### *Canals and Drains*

The Plan Area contains a vast system of levees, ditches, laterals, drains and canals, many of which were created by the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (MRGCD) in the late 1920's (see Figure K). Creation of this system allowed the Valley to sustain agriculture. Prior to this time, the area was subject to continual flooding. In addition to providing flood control, this system supplements an older irrigation, or acequia system. Ownership of lands within the system is complex. Some lands are owned outright by the District and others are contained within easements held by the MRGCD.

The Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District is an independent governmental unit, established under state law, which is charged with the maintenance of this drainage and irrigation system. The District has the authority to levee a tax on property owners within its jurisdiction, which includes the entire Plan Area. The MRGCD is controlled by the Conservancy Board. This is a seven-member body which oversees MRGCD operations in a three county area. These are elected representatives who serve four-year staggered terms. Three board members represent voters within Bernalillo County, including those in the Plan Area. In addition, there is one member elected at-large by voters in all three counties.

The MRGCD has a close relationship with the federal Bureau of Reclamation, which is charged by Congress with flood control management throughout the United States. In the 1950's the Bureau completed major rehabilitative work on many parts of the Conservancy system. The MRGCD has been repaying the Bureau for these improvements since that time. From the 1950's to the mid-1970's the Bureau actually operated the system until this responsibility was returned to the Conservancy. The Bureau maintains a program of regular oversight of Conservancy operations. Annually, the maintenance of the MRGCD system is reviewed by local Bureau staff. Every three years regional staff from the Denver office of this federal agency conducts a similar review.

The MRGCD system is vital to the community for several reasons. Chief among these are flood control, drainage, and the maintenance of the remaining agricultural uses. In addition, the banks of these waterways provide an informal network of trails used by



**FIGURE K**

**VILLAGE OF LOS RANCHOS  
PLAN AREA  
MRQCD NETWORK  
OF MAJOR  
IRRIGATION AND DRAINAGE  
FACILITIES**





pedestrians and equestrians. In many places, the waterways and adjoining vegetation provide habitat for wildlife.

In many ways, the system and its predecessors have helped define and shape the development of the Plan Area. Access to irrigation water was important, so lots were divided into long strips known as "lineas" or "tripas". In the Albuquerque area, this historic pattern of long lot land division is unique to the Rio Grande Valley.

The changing land use pattern in the Plan Area from agricultural to residential has had an impact on the MRGCD system. In some places, as irrigation demand has decreased, parts of the system have been abandoned by the MRGCD and acquired by owners of adjoining properties. The need to maintain the system for recreational trail use has been recognized. The Village acquired a large section of the abandoned Griegos Drain right-of-way for such use. However, these types of acquisitions require an expenditure of local government funds under present regulations.

Until recently, there has not been coordination between the MRGCD, residents and local government concerning the future of the system. As development trends continue, the operation and maintenance of the system, and recognition of its recreational potential will be increasingly important to the Plan Area. At present, there is no overall plan for balancing the future uses of the land within the system. This will require a much greater degree of cooperation between interested parties and the MRGCD.

#### *Storm Drainage*

There are scattered areas of 100-year flooding in the Plan Area (see Figure G) which are subject to ponding of water during heavy rainstorms. Though there are several of these 100-year zones in the Los Ranchos area, there are not as many as in other parts of the Albuquerque region. However, these areas can present a problem to local residents after the severe thundershowers that can sometimes occur during the summer months. At present, there is no system of storm sewers in the Plan Area. However, there are some local drainage facilities along certain thoroughfares. Known as french drains, these consist of small depressions filled with rocks and gravel that allow the water to collect and percolate into the ground slowly.

**Source:** Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District

## C. VITAL SERVICES

Vital services in the Plan Area are provided by a number of governmental entities, including the Village, Bernalillo County, and the city of Albuquerque as well as a number of private companies. The unincorporated sections of the Plan Area have a slightly different structure of services than the presently incorporated Village.

### *Law Enforcement*

Law enforcement throughout the Plan Area is provided by the Bernalillo County Sheriff's Office. Within the incorporated limits of the Village, this is accomplished by virtue of a joint powers agreement entered into annually between the Village and the county. Under the terms of this agreement, the Sheriff's Office provides seven (7) deputies and is reimbursed by the Village. In addition, the Village furnishes and maintains its own vehicles and equipment to be used by the deputies. Dispatching and training is provided by the County Sheriff's Office.

The main police station for the Plan Area is located at the Bernalillo County Sheriff's Office in downtown Albuquerque, seven miles away. There are no substations in the Plan Area. The old Village Hall, located at 920 Green Valley Road serves some of the functions of a complete substation, as the deputies assigned to the Village use it as an office. However, deputies are not located there on a regular schedule, and there are no facilities beyond a simple office. Officials of the county and the Village have discussed the possibility of a substation in the Plan Area, however, this decision rests with the Bernalillo County Sheriff's Office. At present, there are no plans to create such a substation.

### *Fire Protection*

Fire protection in the Plan Area is provided by two fire departments, the Bernalillo County Fire & Rescue Department and the Los Ranchos Fire Department. The Los Ranchos Fire Department maintains a station at 6718 Rio Grande Boulevard adjacent to the Village Hall. This department has three full-time paid firefighters and a paid Chief.

The station is staffed seven days a week by paid personnel. The department also has approximately twenty trained volunteer firefighters.

There are two Bernalillo County fire districts covering the unincorporated section of the Plan Area, District 1 north of Ranchitos Road and District 9 to the south. Each of these stations is staffed five days a week with one paid firefighter and has a Chief and approximately 20 volunteer firefighters each. In addition, the District 1 station is home to the north valley Paramedic Unit, which is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week by paid personnel. The Village and county departments have a cooperative relationship which was set forth by a mutual aid contract, signed in 1977. Under the terms of this agreement, each department is bound to assist the other in the event of structure fires or rescue calls.

#### *Natural Gas Service*

The entire Plan Area is served by the Gas Company of New Mexico. In 1973, the Village and the county signed Franchise Agreements which will be valid until 1998. Gas is brought into the Plan Area via the Alameda Border Station on the eastern edge of the Rio Grande near the Alameda bridge. A 16-inch line transmits gas south on Rio Grande Boulevard from the bridge to Ortega Road and easterly out of the Plan Area. Gas flows to regulator stations where gas pressure is further reduced to be released through street mains and reduced again at individual meters. Property owners may extend such service to their land or install their own propane gas tank systems.

#### *Electric Service*

Public Service Company of New Mexico (PNM) provides electrical service to the entire Plan Area. In 1985, the Village signed a Franchise Agreement that will be valid until 2010. However, this agreement is nonexclusive, meaning that the Village may grant this franchise to any other corporation during the term of the agreement. This is significant, because in October 1989 voters in the city of Albuquerque passed a Charter Amendment requiring that the city grant its next electric franchise to the lowest bidder. The city/PNM agreement expires in 1992. The transmission system in the Plan Area is linked to that in

the city of Albuquerque. PNM owns the transmission and distribution system throughout the metropolitan area as well. Major facilities in the Plan Area include the Wayne electrical substation near the intersection of Paseo del Norte and Fourth Street as well as parallel sets of transmission lines running east and west just to the south of the substation. A 46 kilovolt subtransmission line runs along Fourth Street and a 115 kilovolt subtransmission line along Second Street.

The year 1992 will be an important one for the future of electric power in the Village area. If the city of Albuquerque should switch to another electric provider due to the 1989 Amendment, the Village and Bernalillo County will be more than likely forced to switch as well due to the interconnections with the electrical system in the city. A buyout of the PNM transmission and distribution system could prove to be prohibitively expensive for any municipality.

#### *Water Service*

The Plan Area is fully served by the city of Albuquerque municipal water system by virtue of joint powers agreements which were executed by the city, Bernalillo County, and the Village in the early 1970's. The agreement between the Village and the city, executed in 1973, provided that the city would construct and maintain the system, but that it would be paid for by the Village. It also provided that service would be available to any property owner who desired it. Under the terms of the agreement, the Village has the option at any point in the future to purchase the entire original distribution system within its municipal limits for \$1.00. However, this action would instantly relieve the city of any further obligation to provide water service to the Village area. At present, neither the Village nor Bernalillo County owns any water rights within the Plan Area.

Though water service is available throughout the Plan Area, there are still a significant number of private wells in use. The State Engineer allows property owners outside of the Albuquerque municipal limits to drill their own wells for domestic and irrigation use. However, the property owners do not own the water right, and they may not sell it. Many irrigation wells exist and a significant number of property owners in the area still use wells for household purposes.

### *Sanitary Sewer Service*

The current policy governing sanitary sewer service in the Plan Area was set by the Village and county governments in the 1970's. At this time, both signed agreements with the city of Albuquerque to provide for extensions of the city's municipal system into their respective jurisdictions. In 1978, Molzen/Corbin, under contract with the city, produced a four volume Albuquerque Areawide Wastewater Collection and Treatment Facilities Plan (AWCTF Plan) for the metropolitan area, which, among other things, established costs and alternatives for extending sewer service into the Village and unincorporated sections of the Plan Area. This study, which forecasted service needs in the year 2000, recommended areas to be eventually serviced by sewer and areas to remain on on-site (septic) systems (Figure D). Since the city system is gravity-fed, the low-lying areas on the western half of the Plan Area would require expensive lift stations to be adequately served. In addition, city policy on rural areas, as set forth by two editions of its Comprehensive Plan, recognizes that extension of such service may trigger urbanization. The current low density of population in these areas dramatically increases the costs of service as related to the return from user fees. As a result of these factors, the city's intent was clearly to service existing development in more densely populated areas where gravity flow would be facilitated.

In 1981, Herkenhoff and Associates produced a Sewer Master Plan for the village outlining costs and alternatives associated with providing sewer service to the areas designated for "on-site service" by the city plan. Though the study was based on an unrealistically low population projection for the year 2000, it did set forth some viable alternatives for serving the western portion of the Village. The conclusion of the study was that the best alternative for servicing the area was through a pressure sewer system utilizing individual pump assemblies to move wastewater through a network of sewer lines. The sewage would then be piped into the city's gravity lines for treatment at the Albuquerque facility. The study estimated that it would cost approximately \$7000 per household to construct such a system in 1981 dollars. This plan has yet to be studied further or implemented.

In the past five years, implementation of the recommendations of the

Molzen-Corbin study has begun within the Plan Area. With funding from the state of New Mexico and joint powers agreements between the city, the county, and the Village, sanitary sewer lines have been constructed within a significant portion of that part of the plan area recommended for service in that 1978 study. In addition, a lift station was constructed at the southwest corner of Second Street and Osuna Road to service the Plan Area. It is anticipated that this portion of the Plan Area will be completely serviced by sanitary sewer lines within the next decade. However, this leaves unresolved the question of those areas designated to remain on on-site systems in the 1978 study, some of which contain septic systems within lots which are too small to meet modern environmental standards.

In 1990, the city of Albuquerque Public Works Department, in combination with a number of contractors, began work on the Albuquerque Wastewater Master Plan which will study the further extension of sanitary sewer lines into areas beyond those recommended for service in the 1978 study. This plan will undertake the task of planning for the construction of wastewater facilities to meet the needs of the entire Albuquerque metropolitan area in 2030. Having just gotten underway, this effort will involve all affected local governments, to include the Village and the county of Bernalillo. Land use and zoning plans within the Plan Area will have a dramatic effect on the projected need for sanitary sewer service.

#### *Solid Waste*

New Mexico law requires that every municipality with a population of 3000 or more provide for refuse service for all of its residents and businesses. The 1990 Federal Census was the first to show a population in excess of 3000 for the Village, thus the release of census figures in 1991 triggered this state requirement.

The Village began in 1988 to prepare for the eventuality of mandatory refuse collection. In that same year, a volunteer citizen's committee formed to help develop a curbside recycling program as part of the refuse collection activity. At present, the Village is in the process of accepting bids from refuse companies to provide collection services. When this contract is awarded, refuse collection will be mandatory for all residents and business owners in the Village and it will include curbside recycling.

The state law referenced above does not impact areas that lie outside of any municipality, therefore the unincorporated sections of the plan area will not be impacted by the Village solid waste contract. Residents and business owners within these unincorporated sections are currently under no legal obligation to obtain refuse service.

#### D. SOCIAL SERVICES

##### *Health Care*

There are no hospitals located within the Plan Area, however, there are two medical centers located nearby in the city of Albuquerque. The St. Joseph West Mesa Hospital and the Northside Presbyterian Hospital near Interstate 25 are within minutes by automobile. In addition, residents have access to the large medical complexes located throughout the metropolitan area including the Lovelace Medical Center and the University of New Mexico Hospital (UNMH). UNMH is the only Level One Trauma Center in the state of New Mexico.

##### *Libraries*

There are no libraries located within the Plan Area. The nearest facility is on Griegos Road in the city of Albuquerque. Officials from the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Library system have established three miles as a maximum distance that any library should be from a resident. This agency has set a goal of bringing library service within this distance for each resident in Bernalillo County. The city's Griegos facility exceeds the three mile distance for the vast majority of the residents in the Plan Area. Realizing this, officials of the Village, Bernalillo County, and the library system have begun work to establish a regional library to bring this service closer to north valley residents. In, 1990, County voters approved a bond issue which will provide funding to construct such a facility, which will be staffed and maintained by the county of Bernalillo. Some of the Village-managed lands at Fourth Street and Paseo del Norte have been discussed as a site for this library. Though a final site has yet to be selected, it will certainly meet the three-mile criteria for residents in the Plan Area.

##### *Education*

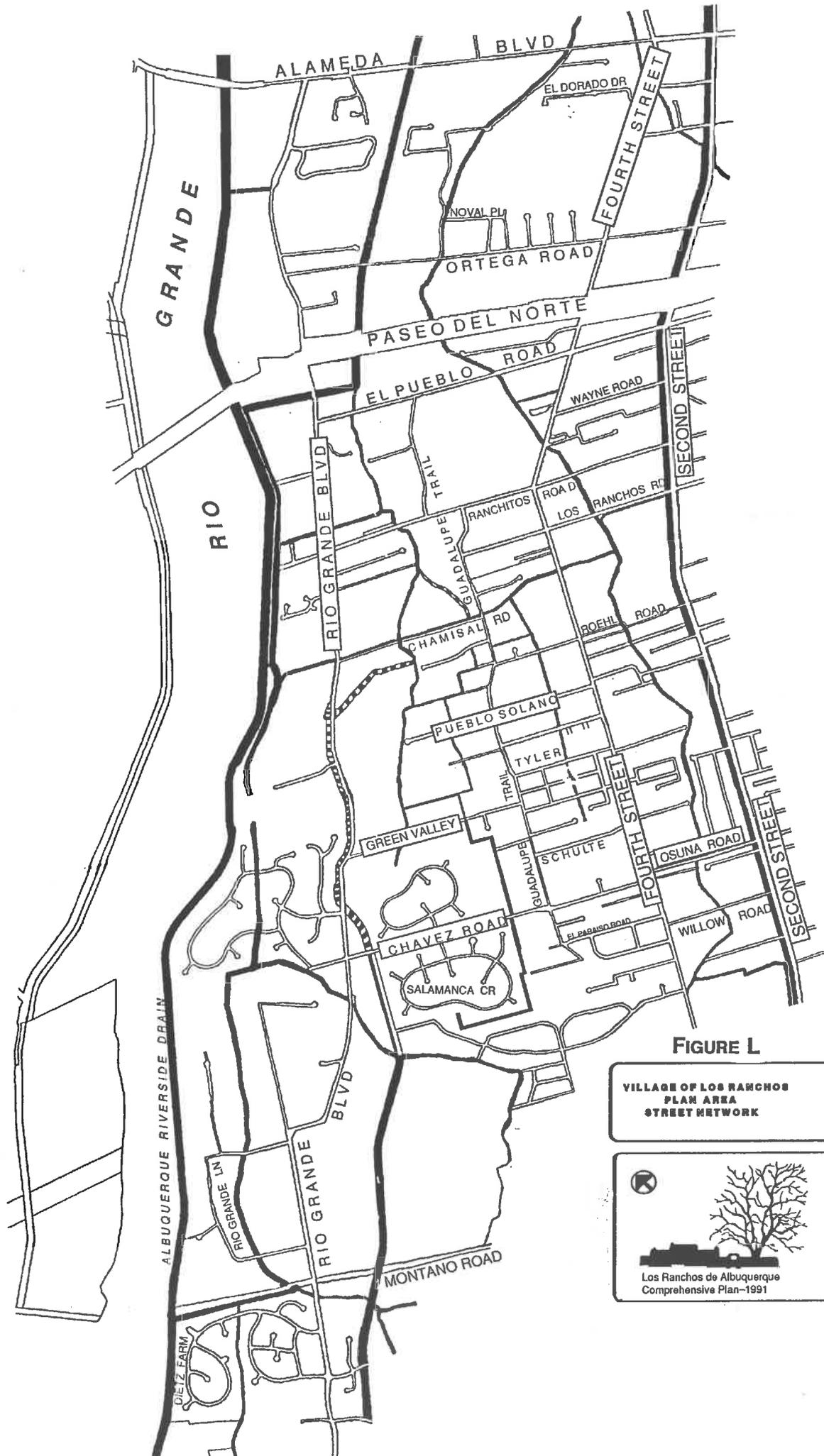
The entire Plan Area is served by the Albuquerque Public Schools (APS), a

metropolitan-wide school district. There are two middle schools, Taft and Taylor, and one elementary school, Ranchos, within the boundaries of the Village. In addition, two other elementary schools, Alameda and Alvarado, and two high schools, Cibola and Valley, serve the Plan Area. Taft Middle School and Valley High School are special education side-by-side sites. Valley High School, which serves the majority of the Plan Area, is home to the Valley Academy, a cooperative program designed to increase the percentage of its graduates that go on to colleges and universities. Valley was one of the first schools in the nation to adopt this program.

### E. ROADS AND STREETS

The Plan Area lies within the metropolitan transportation network of Albuquerque and as such, its roads and streets are greatly impacted by the demands of the metropolitan area, both in form and function. Albuquerque is a post-war automobile-oriented city, characterized by low transit usage, low vehicle occupancy rates (many people driving alone), and a high number of vehicles per capita. The combination of these factors with the location of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque near the center of a growing metropolitan area, has had a dramatic effect upon major roadways in the Plan Area (Figure L). Since 1985, eight lanes of roadway have been added to the Plan Area with the widening of Second Street (two lanes) and the construction of Paseo del Norte (six lanes). At present, Alameda Boulevard is slated to be widened with the addition of two lanes and Second Street is being considered for further widening. In addition, Montaña Road, adjacent to the Plan Area, is slated for additional traffic as the city of Albuquerque plans to connect it with the west side of the metropolitan area with the Montaña Crossing. This project is on indefinite hold pending resolution of litigation.

Transportation plans which affect the Plan Area are developed on a multi-jurisdictional, metropolitan-wide basis. By virtue of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1973, the (federal) Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1964 and the (federal) Airport and Airway Development Act of 1970, the agency charged with this responsibility is the Middle Rio Grande Council of Governments (MRGCOG). Under this federal mandate, MRGCOG was designated as a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) by the Governor of New



**FIGURE L**

**VILLAGE OF LOS RANCHOS  
PLAN AREA  
STREET NETWORK**





Mexico. Under guidelines established by the Federal Department of Transportation, this MPO is directed to oversee and coordinate transportation planning throughout the Albuquerque metropolitan area. Each of the governmental jurisdictions within the metropolitan area, including Los Ranchos de Albuquerque, is a member of MRGCOG. MRGCOG's operations are overseen by its Board of Directors, which is composed of elected officials from each member government, including the Village.

The policy making body of MRGCOG is the Urban Transportation Planning Policy Board (UTPPB). The UTPPB is composed of elected officials appointed by each member government, including the Village. UTPPB provides the forum for the local decision-making process relating to the regional transportation system. The UTPPB members bring to this forum the policy positions of their respective governing bodies. Assisting the UTPPB is the Transportation Coordinating Committee (TCC), a technical advisory body composed of staff from the member jurisdictions, including the Village. Among other functions, these bodies are responsible for compiling and reviewing a Transportation Program for the metropolitan area. Adopted annually by the UTPPB, the Transportation Program provides a summary of long-range and short-range transportation planning activities in the metropolitan area. As a part of the program, an annual Long Range Major Street Plan is approved, which, among other things, includes a map of the planned transportation network for the metropolitan area.

The Long Range Major Street Plan encompasses many important features of the metropolitan transportation plan, including the classification of major roadways by their intended future function. The Plan Area includes seven roadways that are included in this classification system. Second Street, Paseo del Norte, and Alameda Boulevard are classified as principal arterials. At the top of the classification hierarchy, these roadways are designated to carry long-range continuous traffic from one part of the metropolitan area to another. Rio Grande Boulevard, Fourth Street, and Osuna Road are classified as minor arterials. These streets are designated to carry intermediate-range trips between abutting communities and to connect principal arterials. El Pueblo Road is classified as a collector. Collectors are designated to carry short-range traffic primarily originating in residential areas and to provide access to arterials from these areas. Montaña Road,

which lies adjacent to the Plan Area, is classified as a minor arterial. This classification system does not consider traffic volumes.

Figure M: Traffic Volumes in Plan Area 1986 to 1991							
Roadway	SECTION	1986 AWDT	1987 AWDT	1988 AWDT	1989 AWDT	1990 AWDT	1991 AWDT
NM 528	Coors Road/Rio Grande Blvd.	28300	29400	24200	24700	24400	24300
NM 528	Rio Grande Blvd./4th Street	18100	22000	19500	19800	20200	19300
Rio Grand Blvd.	Alameda/El Pueblo	13600	12300	8300	8100	8500	8800
Rio Grande Blvd.	El Pueblo/ Chavez	9800	9700	9300	8500	8300	8400
Rio Grand Blvd.	Chavez/ Montaño	10700	10300	10400	10900	11700	11800
Montaño Rd.	Rio Grande Blvd/ Guad. Trail	5200	5300	5300	5500	5300	4800
Montaño Rd.	Guad. Trail/ 4th St.	5200	5300	6500	7100	5100	5100
Paseo del Norte*	Coors Blvd./ Rio Grande	0	0	28000	35200	38400	39700
Paseo del Norte	Guad. Trail/4th St.	8200	6600	28000	35200	38400	39700
Paseo del Norte	4th St/ 2nd St.	8800	6800	28000	35200	38400	39700
4th Street	Alameda/Paseo del Norte	14700	13300	10000	10500	9900	9400
4th Street	Paseo del Norte/ Osuna	16600	15500	12200	12900	13800	13700
4th Street	Osuna/ Montaño	23700	22800	21700	22700	21400	18200

Source: Middle Rio Grande Council of Governments. AWDT is average weekday traffic. First year available for Paseo del Norte data is 1988.

In addition to sorting major roadways by function, the Long Range Major Street Plan includes a set of general right-of-way standards for these roadways. These standard widths vary by classification, with principal arterials being the widest and collectors the least wide. Many roadways in the metropolitan area, including those in the Plan Area, do not yet meet these standards of width. As well, certain roadways, including Alameda, Fourth Street, and Rio Grande Boulevard, have a lesser width standard than the rest in their classification. This is because these roadways have been specifically separated out within the Long Range Major Street Plan. The Bernalillo County subdivision ordinance, which impacts the unincorporated portions of the Plan Area, incorporates those standard widths as outlined in the Long Range Major Street Plan. Under this scheme, if a subdivider plats land along one of these roadways and the roadway does not meet the right-of-way standard, then the subdivider must dedicate land on the plat. This is so that the road right-of-way in question may be widened in the future, and the roadway brought into line with the standard. The Village has no such provision in its regulations.

While traffic volumes are not considered in the roadway classification system of the Long Range Major Street Plan, they are an unquestionable byproduct of roadway size and function. Traffic volumes also have an environmental impact on the area through which roadways pass (see Environmental Element).

One of MRGCOG's primary functions is data collection, and this data includes annual collection of traffic volumes for major roadways in the metropolitan area, including the aforementioned roadways in the Plan Area. The trend and pattern of automobile usage on local roadways can be analyzed by reviewing Figure M which displays Average Weekday Traffic (AWDT) for spans along each of the principal and minor arterials in the Plan Area from 1986 through 1990. These figures represent the average total number of cars on a given weekday traveling these roadway spans, all lanes combined. A simple analysis of these figures shows definite trends along certain roadways. Traffic volumes on Paseo del Norte have increased steadily since its completion in late 1987. Alameda Boulevard, with its present two-lane river crossing, shows a heavy volume of traffic for a two-lane span. Slated for widening to four lanes beginning in 1992, this roadway shows a general decrease of traffic volume between Coors Road and Fourth Street after the completion of the Paseo del Norte river crossing in 1987. Rio Grande Boulevard also shows a considerable decrease in traffic volume after 1987, due in large part to the completion of Paseo del Norte. Second Street is now carrying considerable traffic volume between Montaño and Paseo del Norte. This traffic has increased significantly in the past three years due to its connection with the new Paseo del Norte crossing and the addition of two more lanes to this roadway. Fourth Street shows a slight drop in traffic volume after the completion of Paseo del Norte, in part reflecting the lack of a connection between Fourth and Paseo del Norte. Traffic volume on Montaño Road between Rio Grande and Guadalupe Trail seems to be holding steady. Montaño between Guadalupe and Fourth Street has shown an increase in volume, but it remains light.

The changes in traffic volume figures reflect the dramatic effect of changes in the roadway network which have emerged from the metropolitan-level transportation planning process. More dramatic changes in these figures may emerge as the Transportation Program is realized. In particular, the widening of Alameda Boulevard and possible

further widening of Second Street could have a substantial effect on traffic volumes throughout the Plan Area. The Montañó River Crossing, if completed, is forecast to nearly triple volumes between Rio Grande Boulevard and Fourth Street and could impact streets in the Plan Area. The importance of the transportation planning process, as undertaken through MRGCOG, cannot be underestimated. The direct involvement of the Village in this process is extremely important.

### Roadway Maintenance

Within the municipal limits of the Village there are a little more than 23 miles of public roads and streets that are controlled by the Village and over which the Village has maintenance responsibility. Almost one-third of this road mileage was recently transferred to the Village by the New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department, as nearly seven additional miles of roadway within Village limits, including Fourth Street, Rio Grande Boulevard, and El Pueblo Road are now under Village control. This action was part of an overall program by the Highway Department to transfer some of the smaller, local highways off of the state system and onto local roadway systems throughout New Mexico. The Highway Department retains control and responsibility over Paseo del Norte as it passes through the Village, as well as the Rio Grande Boulevard and Fourth Street overpasses across Paseo del Norte.

The Village retains a small road crew to handle minor road and street maintenance. For more extensive roadway maintenance, reconstruction, and repairs the Village utilizes independent contractors. Los Ranchos de Albuquerque, like many other small municipalities in New Mexico, is greatly assisted with this financial burden by the Cooperative Agreement program of the state Highway Department. The Cooperative program has its foundation in a series of state laws, which among other things, establishes a "local government road fund" which is administered by the Highway Department. This fund is to be used expressly for the purpose of assisting municipalities and counties with construction and maintenance of local roadways. Fund monies are distributed annually by the Highway Department according to a set formula. State law

provides that the Highway Department may enter into cooperative agreements with such local governments to accomplish these improvements. As provided by statute, preference for state funding is given to those municipalities who can provide at least 40 percent of the improvement cost. The Village has utilized this program for a number of years.

Past Village policy has been to reduce the overall mileage of public roadways within its borders, and thus reduce the overall expense of roadway maintenance. As a result, there are a significant number of private roadways within the Village upon which no public money is expended on rehabilitation or maintenance. The Village contains three large subdivisions: Caballero Norte, Caballero Ranchitos, and Tinnin Farms, have been developed wholly dependent upon private roadways for internal circulation. Partially as a result of this common use of private roadways, the Village has not utilized any of its bonding capacity to fund any road or street improvements. While this policy has greatly reduced the expense to the Village in maintaining roads and streets, it does reduce the direct control that the Village has over significant parts of its roadway system.

Bernalillo County controls 7.2 miles of roadway within the unincorporated sections of the Plan Area. Much like the incorporated area of the Village, these sections contain a number of privately maintained roadways. Similar to the incorporated Village, several major subdivisions have been approved recently in these unincorporated areas which rely solely on private roads for internal circulation. These include Vista Ranchitos and Pequito Ranchitos. Much like the Village, Bernalillo County relies on funds from the Cooperative Agreements program to fund road rehabilitation and maintenance. There are some important differences between the roadway maintenance programs of the two governments. The county, being a larger governmental entity than the Village, handles more roadway maintenance with its own road crews. As well, the county has utilized bond monies for roadway improvements within the Plan Area.

There are important differences in the roadway standards of the two governments as expressed in their respective subdivision ordinances. Bernalillo County requires a minimum 30 feet of right-of-way for any street or access roadway within a subdivision. However, the county has a well established variance procedure and variances have often

been granted to this minimum width requirement. The Village has a sliding roadway standard as follows: 20 feet for one lot, 25 feet for two to eight lots and 40 feet for nine or more. The county has a much more explicit set of standards for the construction of roadways within a subdivision including criteria for surfacing, geometric design, and intersection design. The county ordinance, unlike the Village's, also considers and, in some instances, requires urban-type improvements such as sidewalks and curb and gutter.

**Source:** Middle Rio Grande Council of Governments  
Bernalillo County Public Works Department

## Section 5

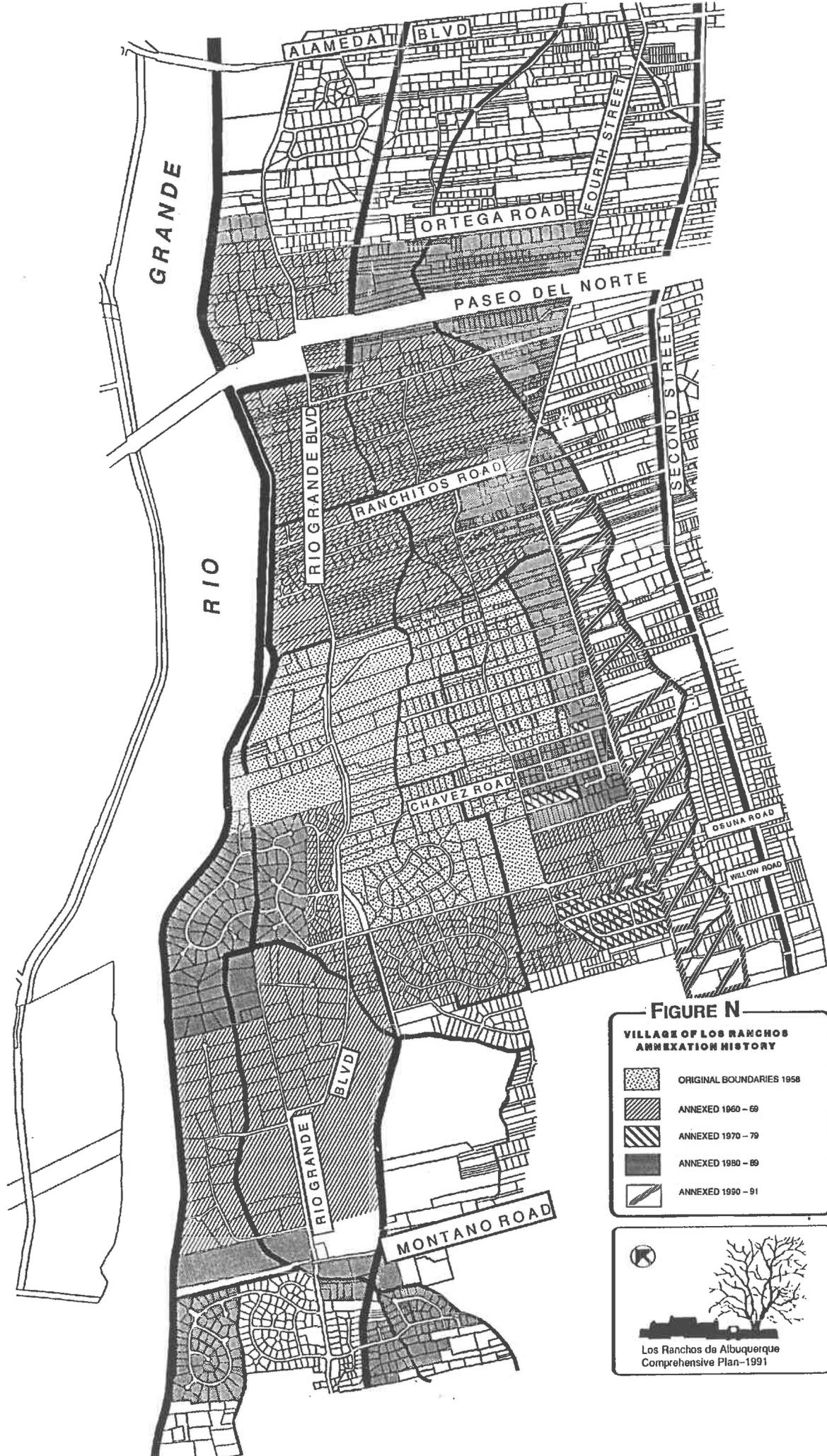
### **LAND USE & ZONING ELEMENT PLANNING & ZONING HISTORY**

For much of its history the region that now comprises the Plan Area lacked even the most basic of land use and zoning controls. Before 1958, there was no comprehensive plan, no zoning ordinance, no subdivision ordinance, no liquid waste ordinance, and no requirement for building permits within the unincorporated area of the county that later became the Plan Area. In part because of concern about this lack of regulation, the Village was incorporated at the close of 1958. The original Village limits (see Figure N) contained just over 500 acres. The Village established zoning quickly in 1959. This first zoning ordinance was fairly rudimentary, though it did attempt to ban mobile homes and contained a minimum residential lot size requirement of just over .5 acre.

As the Village expanded its boundaries via annexation in the 1960's (see Figure N), the "new" areas became subject to zoning for the first time. In 1968, the county passed its first Comprehensive zoning and subdivision ordinances, finally bringing the entire Plan Area under some form of land use control. In 1972, the Village adopted a new zoning ordinance which established a minimum residential lot size of one acre throughout Los Ranchos de Albuquerque, and in 1974 the Village adopted its first subdivision ordinance. In 1989 the Village established a new zone allowing for a .5 acre minimum lot size in those areas annexed in 1987 that had been zoned as such by Bernalillo County while unincorporated.

Although the city of Albuquerque established a Planning Department in 1949, there was no formal land use plan for the Plan Area until 1962, when the first Land Use Plan was adopted by the city and county. This was a very basic plan, which did not take natural resource considerations into account. In the late 1960's and early 1970's a new planning effort began with funding from the Federal Housing and Urban Development Department which resulted in the 1975 Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan. In 1981 the Board of Trustees adopted this plan for the Village, although the Village government had had little or no role in drafting this or the earlier plan. In 1988, the city





**FIGURE N**

**VILLAGE OF LOS RANCHOS ANNEXATION HISTORY**

-  ORIGINAL BOUNDARIES 1958
-  ANNEXED 1960 - 69
-  ANNEXED 1970 - 79
-  ANNEXED 1980 - 89
-  ANNEXED 1990 - 91





and county adopted a new Comprehensive Plan. The Village did not formally adopt this plan. By 1988, the Trustees had decided that the Village needed a plan of its own.

The Plan Area grew for much of its history without land use planning or regulation of any type. This has resulted in a disorganized pattern of development in many parts of this area. While this diversity is favored by many residents, it has created a number of problems which must be addressed in the current planning effort. Among these are environmental and infrastructure problems as well as the loss of important community open spaces and the proximity of incompatible land uses. As the Plan Area grows and population density increases, these issues take on a greater importance. The preservation of this diversity is one of the central issues in the Village planning effort.

## B. REGULATORY STRUCTURE

Bernalillo County and the Village have separate regulatory structures with regard to land use, although there are some similarities and both impact the Plan Area. In the past the two governmental entities have cooperated minimally in the area of land use regulation.

The regulatory body for planning and zoning within the Village is the Board of Trustees, which is also the governing body. All zone map change requests, major subdivisions (three or more parcels), land use plans and plan amendments within the Village must be approved by this body at a public hearing. In addition, the Board must approve major subdivisions, replats, land use plans, and plan amendments for any territory within the unincorporated sections of the Plan Area. Los Ranchos de Albuquerque has had its own building inspector for a number of years. However, the Village did not begin managing its own land use planning function until 1987, when a consultant was hired to make recommendations on long-range planning issues. In 1988, the Village hired its first Planning and Zoning Administrator to address these concerns on a regular basis.

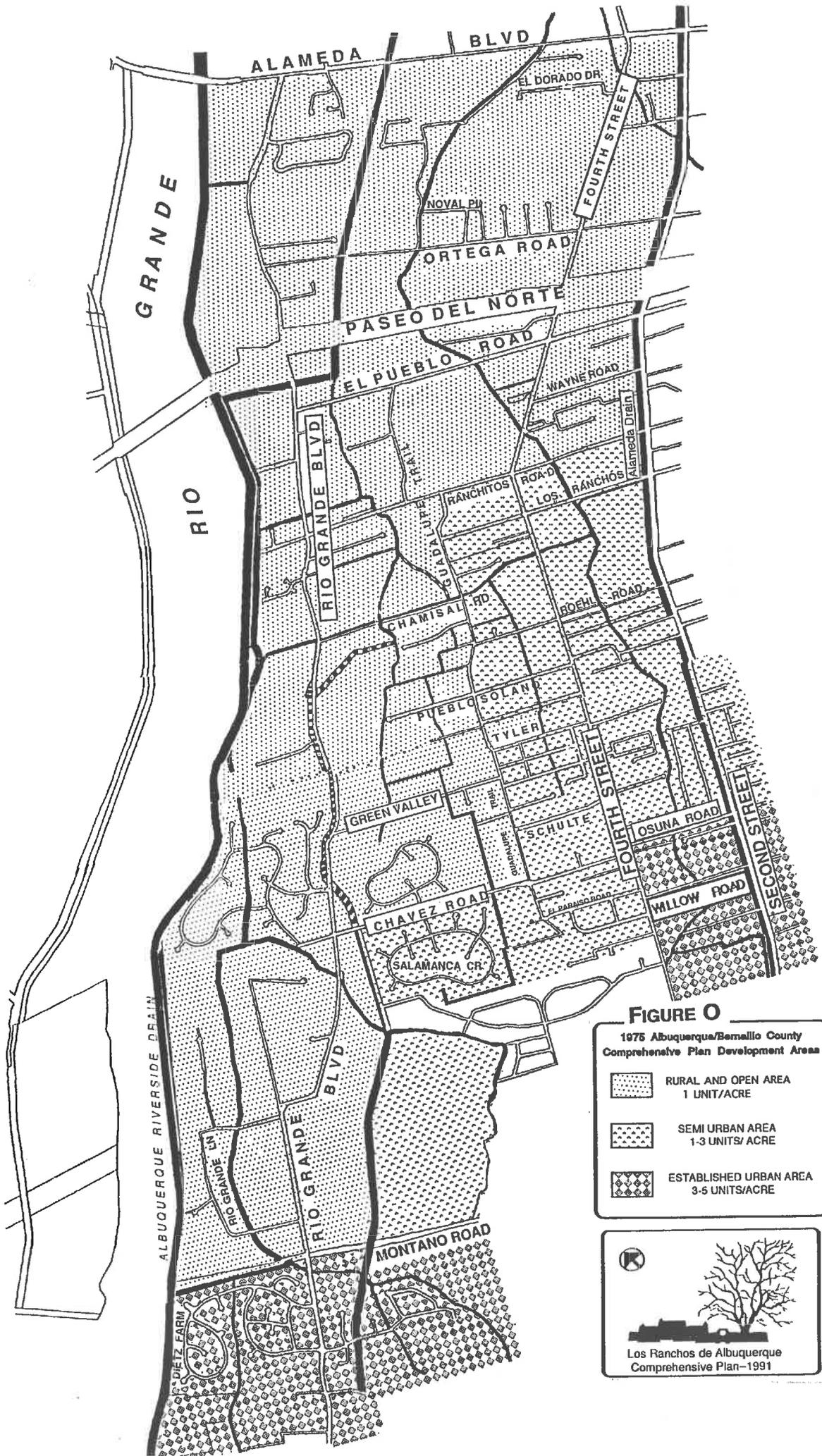
The county of Bernalillo currently exercises zoning jurisdiction over the unincorporated portions of the Plan Area. Although state law provides for extraterritorial zoning jurisdiction for a municipality in such areas, the county and Village governments

have yet to implement the necessary joint powers agreement. The main advisory body with regard to planning and zoning for the county is the County Planning Commission (CPC). This is a seven-member body, each member of which is appointed to a three year term by the members of the County Commission, the governing body of Bernalillo County. All zone map change requests, subdivisions, land use plans, and plan amendments must first be submitted to the CPC for hearing prior to their being heard by the County Commission. If the CPC decides favorably upon any of these items, then they pass on to the County Commission, which makes the final decision with regard to approval or denial. In the case of a zone map change, the County Commission is required by ordinance to sustain the decision of the CPC unless it is appealed.

The Bernalillo County Building & Zoning Department processes requests for zone map changes, variances, and building permits. Land use planning for the county is handled by the Planning Department of the city of Albuquerque under the terms of a joint powers agreement. One staff member of this department has the title of County Planner and members of the department process subdivision and site plan requests for unincorporated areas of the county. In addition, land use plans and plan amendments for areas within unincorporated Bernalillo County are prepared for review and approval by staff of this department. Due to the exercise of extraterritorial authority by the Village, the Board of Trustees and county planning authorities hear many of the same cases in unincorporated sections of the Plan Area.

## CURRENT REGULATIONS

The 1975 Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan established Development Areas throughout Bernalillo County, including the Plan Area (see Figure O). These areas remained virtually unchanged within the Plan Area in the 1988 version of the Plan, which was not adopted by the Village. Among other things, the designation of these Areas sets a pattern for the development and future appearance of lands within each Area. In addition, within each Area there is an established range of recommended development densities (homes/acre). According to state law, zoning ordinances and changes to zone maps of a particular region are to be based upon the Comprehensive



**FIGURE O**

1975 Albuquerque/Bernalillo County  
Comprehensive Plan Development Area

-  RURAL AND OPEN AREA  
1 UNIT/ACRE
-  SEMI URBAN AREA  
1-3 UNITS/ ACRE
-  ESTABLISHED URBAN AREA  
3-5 UNITS/ACRE





Plan which has been adopted for that region.

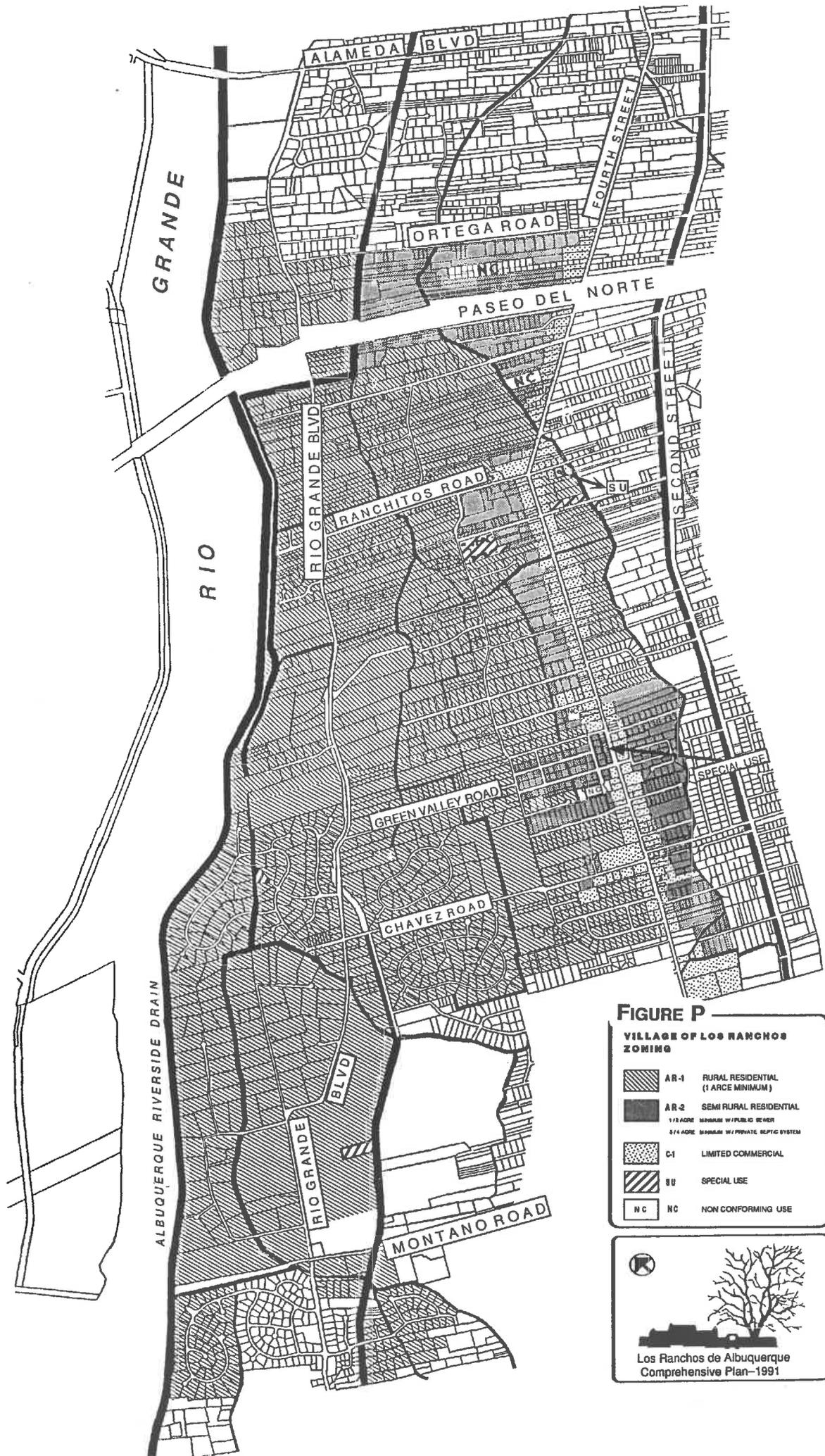
The existing zoning established for the incorporated Village and unincorporated portions of the Plan Area is shown in Figures P and Q. Figure R contains a summary of the basic requirements of all of the Village and county zones which impact upon the Plan Area. As can be seen in the above referenced figures, the minimum lot size requirements of county zones relate directly to the Development Areas.

The zoning ordinances of both jurisdictions within the Plan Area contain a classification for Special Uses. The purpose of this classification is to allow uses which are not permitted within the regular zones within each ordinance. Under Bernalillo County zoning regulations this classification is known as a Special Use permit, while under the Village zoning ordinance this is known as the Special Use zone. While the purposes behind this classification are similar for the two jurisdictions, the classifications function somewhat differently in each jurisdiction.

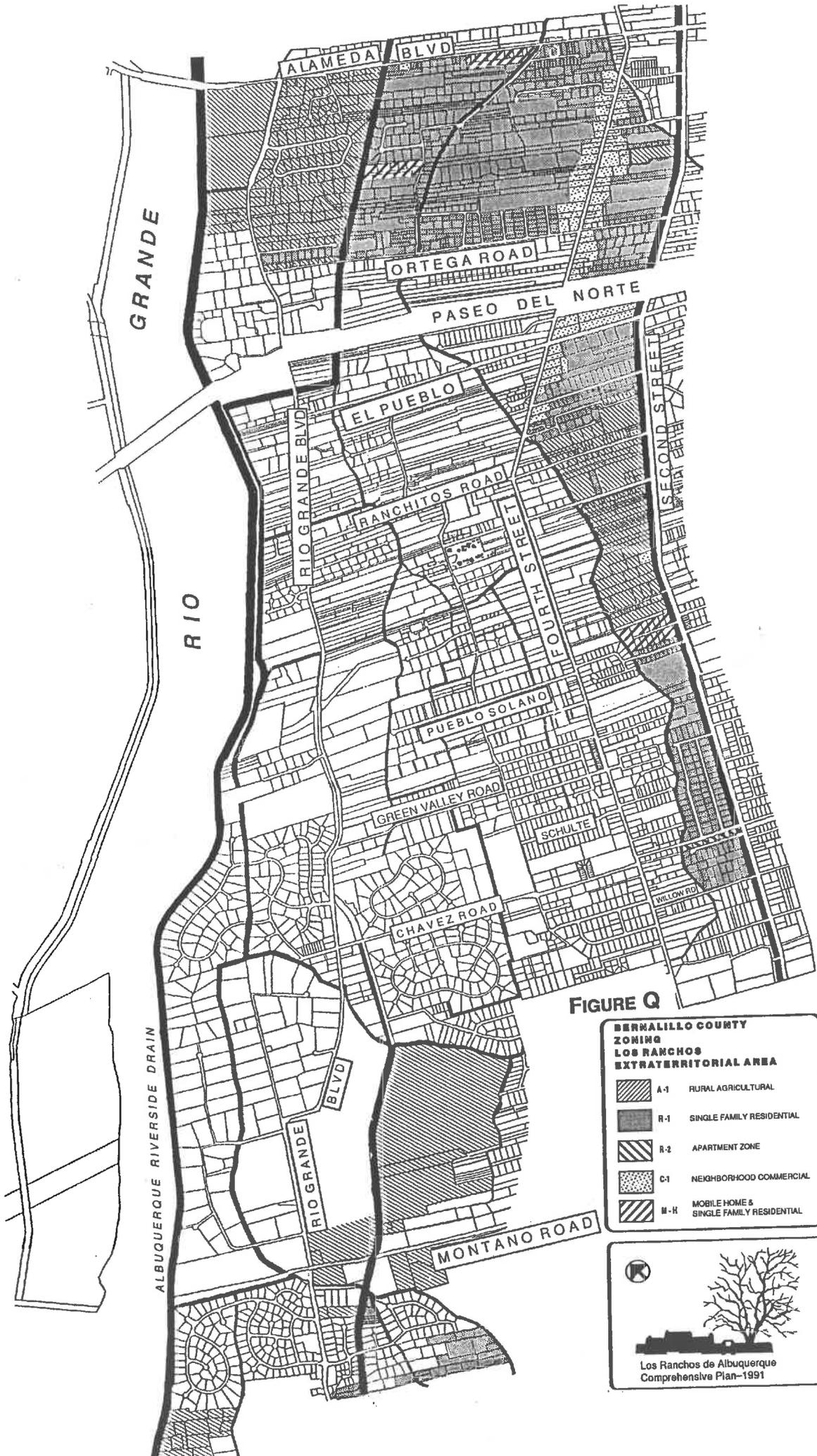
In the Bernalillo County zoning ordinance, a Special Use permit is a change to the zone map which allows a property owner to utilize his or her property in a specific manner. Applications for such permits must be first addressed by the CPC and then passed on to the County Commission for final approval or denial. While a special use permit does not change the actual zoning of a property, the permit allows the owner of a property to use that land in a way that is not allowed by the zoning of the property. While these permits can be granted on a temporary basis, most are granted for the life of the use. The county ordinance contains a provision for periodic monitoring and possible elimination of Special Use permits. However, many of these permits are granted for what becomes a permanent conversion of use (such as site built housing) which makes enforcement of such a provision difficult.

Figure S shows all of the parcels containing existing Special Use permits granted by Bernalillo County within the Plan Area. A small portion of the many existing permits in the Plan Area were granted by the county for uses that predated the establishment of zoning in the unincorporated sections. Most of the mobile home parks within the Plan Area fall into this category. Many permit areas now lie within the municipal limits of the Village and thus contain special use permits that have been continued as non-conforming









**FIGURE Q**

**BERNALILLO COUNTY  
ZONING  
LOS RANCHOS  
EXTRATERRITORIAL AREA**

	A-1 RURAL AGRICULTURAL
	R-1 SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
	R-2 APARTMENT ZONE
	C-1 NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL
	M-H MOBILE HOME & SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL





**Figure R: Current Zones in Plan Area**

	Village	Village	Village	County	County	County	County	County
	AR-1	C-1	AR-2	A-1	R-1	R-2	C-1	M-H
<b>Name</b>	Rural Residential	Limited Commercial	Semi-rural Residential	Rural Agriculture	Single Family Residential	Apartment	Neighborhood Commercial	Mobile Home & Single Family Residential
<b>MINIMUM LOT SIZE</b>	one acre	no provision	3/4 acre	one acre	1/2 acre	1/5 acre	No provision	1/2 acre
<b>with sanitary sewer</b>	one acre	1/2 acre	1/2 acre	one acre	*1/2, 1/3, 1/5 acre	1/5 acre	1/2 acre	1/2, 1/3, 1/5 acre
<b>without sanitary sewer</b>	one acre	3/4 acre	3/4 acre	one acre	3/4 acre	3/4 acre	3/4 acre	3/4 acre
<b>Major Permitted Uses</b>	Single Family Dwellings, Accessory Uses	Retail, Commercial, AR-1 uses	Single Family Dwellings, Municipal, Accessory Uses	Agricultural, Single Family Dwellings, Accessory Uses	Agricultural, Single Family Dwellings, Accessory Uses	Single Family Dwellings, apartments	Various Commercial Uses, including auto repair (no body work)	Single Family Residential Units
<b>Commercial Uses</b>	Agriculture, Home Occupations	Various retail and office	Agriculture, Home Occupations	Agriculture Home Occupations	Agriculture, Home Occupations	Single Family Dwellings, Apartments	Various Commercial Uses	Agriculture, Home Occupations
<b>Minimum Lot Width</b>	35 feet	35 feet	35 feet	150 feet	60 feet	60 feet	No provision	60 feet
<b>Setbacks</b>								
<b>Front</b>	25 feet	25 feet	25 feet	25 feet	20 feet	20 feet	30 feet	20 feet
<b>Side</b>	5 feet	5 feet	5 feet	10 feet	14 feet per side	14 feet per side	none except for buffers	14 feet (2 side total)
<b>Rear</b>	10 feet	10 feet	10 feet	25 feet	15 feet	15 feet	15 feet	15 feet
<b>Cluster Housing Provision</b>	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	no	no
<b>Livestock</b>	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	yes
<b>Permanent Mobile Homes</b>	no	no	no	yes	no	no	yes conditionally	yes
<b>Maximum Building Height</b>	2 stories or 26 feet	2.5 stories or 35 feet	2 stories or 26 feet	2.5 stories or 26 feet	2.5 stories or 26 feet	Greater than 26 feet conditionally	Greater than 26 feet conditionally	2.5 stories or 26 feet
<b>*Dependent on development area.</b>								

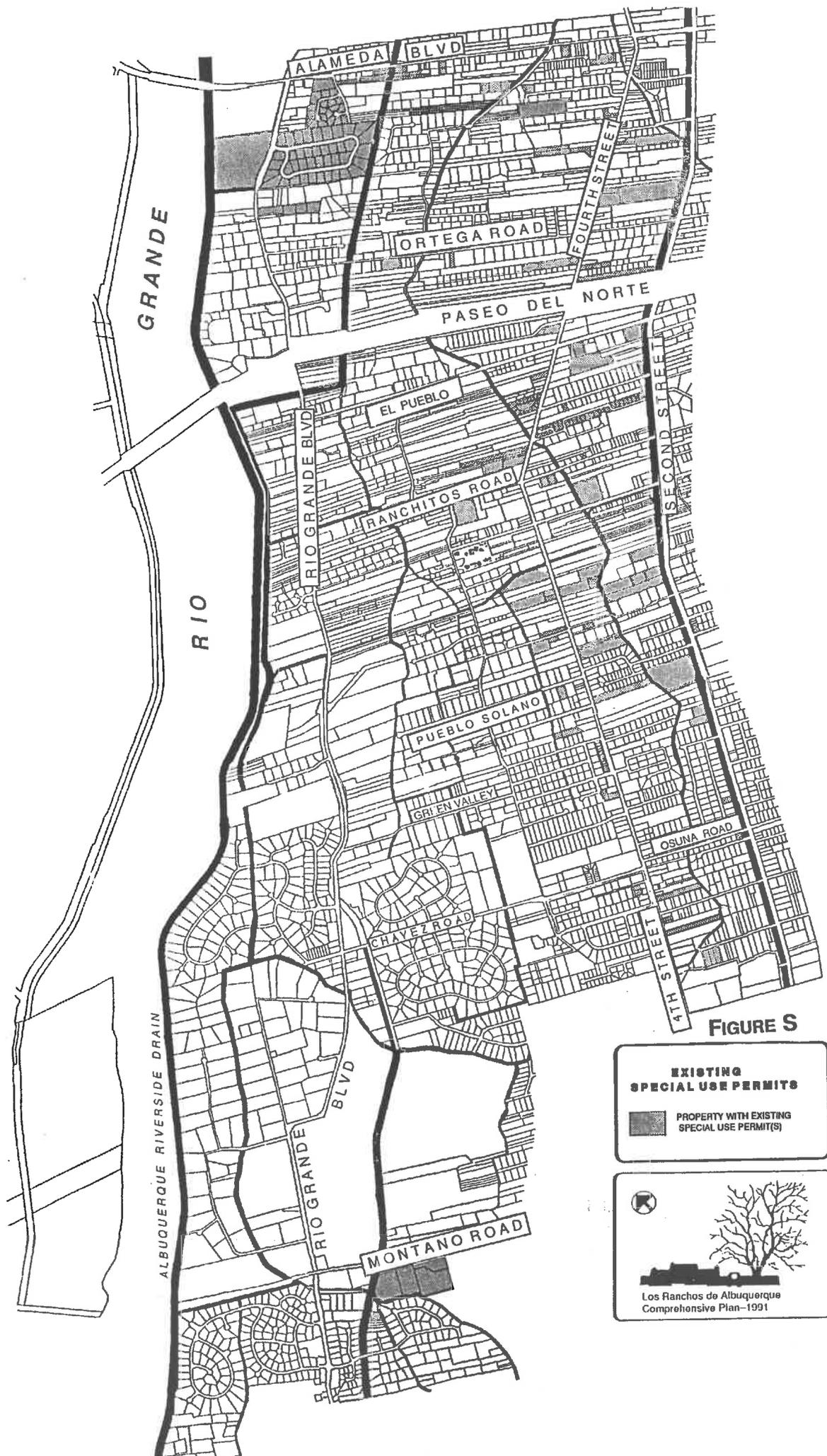
uses subsequent to annexation. This means that the municipal limits now contain a great number of non-conforming uses and structures.

The Village ordinance provides for a Special Use zone. This zone, like the county's permit system, is designed to allow for uses that are not allowed within the regular zones of the ordinance. Unlike the county's system, a change to Special Use in the Village involves a change to the actual zoning of the property. This type of zone change, like any other within the Village, must be approved by the Board of Trustees at a public hearing. Similarly to the county, the Village has granted Special Use to parcels containing uses that predated the existence of zoning. A comparison of the two systems reveals that Special Use has been granted much more frequently by the county than by the Village. This may be due in part to the fact that the Village provision requires a change of zone and is thus less flexible.

Within the Village limits there are certain areas that are classified as Nonconforming Use Zones. These areas were classified as such when they were annexed to the Village in 1987. This was due to the fact that the Village had no zoning for these lands that was equivalent to their then existing zoning under Bernalillo County jurisdiction. The Board of Trustees intended this to be a holding zone in order that uses allowed under the Bernalillo County ordinance could continue until the Village zoning ordinance was amended accordingly. It is believed that planning efforts now underway should accomplish the objective of establishing permanent zoning for these parcels.

#### D. LAND USE AND BUILDOUT STUDIES

A buildout study attempts to project the ultimate population of a community based upon the maximum number of potential housing units that may be built within that community under certain planning, zoning, and subdivision regulations. To do such a study, an inventory must be made of current land use, total number of existing housing units, existing parcels, and the total acreage of buildable land within the community. Once these figures are obtained, then the maximum number of possible housing units and population can be estimated based upon potential planning and zoning regulations.



**FIGURE S**

**EXISTING SPECIAL USE PERMITS**

PROPERTY WITH EXISTING SPECIAL USE PERMIT(S)

Los Ranchos de Albuquerque Comprehensive Plan—1991



In 1989 and 1990, a series of buildout studies were conducted by the Village of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque for the Plan Area. Existing land use was initially mapped in the field by Village and city of Albuquerque staff and subsequently updated by Village staff. The total number of parcels and the acreage of buildable land were obtained from studies conducted by the city of Albuquerque that were then updated by staff of the Village. From this data, the total number of existing households within the Plan Area was obtained. The Village staff was then able to project the buildout population of the Plan Area based upon assumptions concerning future development trends and certain scenarios of future regulation.

Any study of this type must be based upon certain assumptions concerning the future of an area. The following are the assumptions made in order to arrive at the figures produced by this study:

- (1) Any fractions of acreage below the minimum lot size in a particular zone were rounded down to the nearest whole number.
- (2) The total number of units to be added was reduced by 10% to reflect acreage needed for roads and other infrastructure throughout the area.
- (3) Extensions of sanitary sewer lines will be completed as programmed in the 1978 Wastewater Master Plan (see Figure D).
- (4) Commercially zoned parcels not currently in use as commercial will be converted to residential developments at a density of 5 units/acre.
- (5) No existing institutional land uses (churches, schools, etc.) will be converted to residential land uses in the future.
- (6) Mobile home park areas will be converted to standard residential subdivisions at the density provided in the applicable zoning of each scenario.
- (7) No existing commercial land uses will be converted to residential land uses in the future.
- (8) Properties which currently contain more than one zone will be replatted such that platting and zoning match.
- (9) Average household size will be 2.6 persons/household.

Based upon the assumptions referenced above, the figures for the ultimate Plan Area population were developed according to six possible scenarios for future land use regulation and resulting development in this area. All references to units refer to housing units. The scenarios used in the study are as follows:

Scenario A: All zoning in the Plan Area remains as it is today.

Scenario B: A new Village zone allowing 3 units/acre is created and all lands now zoned AR-2 (2 units/acre) by the Village are rezoned to this new category. All other zoning remains the same.

Scenario C: All land currently zoned AR-1 (1 unit/acre) by the Village that lies within areas to be served by sanitary sewer lines is rezoned to AR-2 (2 units/acre). All other zoning remains the same.

Scenario D: A new zoning category is created within the Village allowing 5 units/acre. All lands not containing existing commercial uses within areas that are to be served by sanitary sewer lines are rezoned to this new category or its county equivalent. All other zoning remains the same.

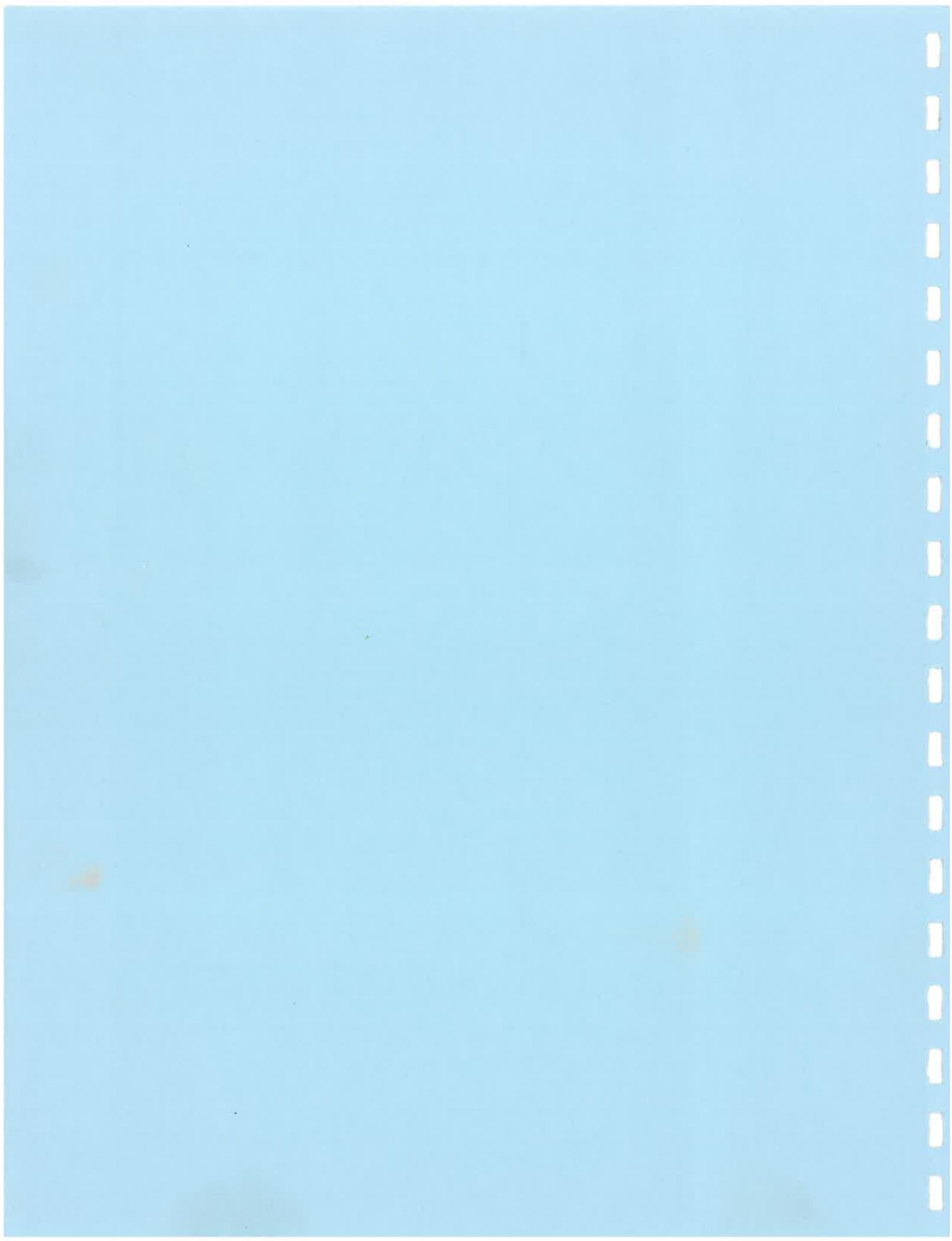
The results of this study are displayed in Figure T. It should be noted that gross acreage refers to all of the land within a particular area, including land which cannot be developed, such as roads and streets and public parks. It can be clearly seen here that, even within the existing zoning regulations, there is enough land available for the population of the Plan Area to nearly double (70% increase) at full buildout. A more important finding of the study is that even minor amendments to the zoning scheme of the area can have a dramatic impact upon the level of future growth in the area. Scenario D shows this most clearly, as the Plan Area population at buildout nearly triples with the change of one part of the zoning map.

<b>Figure T: Results of Buildout Study</b>					
	<b>1991</b>	<b>Scenario A</b>	<b>Scenario B</b>	<b>Scenario C</b>	<b>Scenario D</b>
<b>VILLAGE LIMITS</b>					
<b>Total Gross Acreage</b>	2620	2620	2620	2620	2620
<b>Number of Housing Units</b>	1733	2744	2839	2941	4855
<b>Population</b>	4505	7134	7381	7647	12623
<b>Persons per Gross Acre</b>	1.72	2.72	2.81	2.92	4.82
<b>EXTRATERRITORIAL AREA</b>					
<b>Total Gross Acres</b>	1086	1086	1086	1086	1086
<b>Number of Housing Units</b>	907	1754	1754	1754	2512
<b>Population</b>	2358	4560	4560	4560	6531
<b>Persons per Gross Acre</b>	2.17	4.2	4.2	4.2	6.01
<b>TOTAL PLAN AREA</b>					
<b>Total Gross Acreage</b>	3706	3706	3706	3706	3706
<b>Number of Housing Units</b>	2640	4498	4593	4695	7367
<b>Population</b>	6864	11695	11942	12207	19154
<b>Persons per gross acre</b>	1.85	3.16	3.22	3.29	5.17
Persons per acre comparatives: City of Albuquerque 4.52; Entire North Valley 3.49.					



**REPORT OF THE CITIZENS ADVISORY PLANNING  
COMMITTEE - JULY 1990**





Village of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque  
Conclusion of Phase I of the Comprehensive Planning Process  
Report of the Citizens' Advisory Planning Committee

"STATEMENT OF  
GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES"

Draft for Public Review and Comment  
from July 11, 1990 through July 26, 1990

Public Hearing to be Held

July 26, 1990

7:30 p.m.

Village Hall

For Information Contact  
Brad Stebleton  
Village Planner  
344-6582

The "Goals, Objectives, and Policies" put forward in this document are entirely the opinions of the Citizens' Advisory Planning Committee, and should not be construed as representing the opinions of the Village of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque Trustees.

This document is subject to change in format before the Public Hearing. Conceptual content will remain the same.

## High Priority "Action Steps"

Selected from Phase I of the  
Comprehensive Planning Process

Directed to the Village of Los Ranchos Trustees

### LAND USE

- Preserve rural features
  - Secure "greenbelt" property tax status for as many Villagers as possible. (Start now.)
  - Write new "rural" road ordinances. (In Phase II of the Plan.)
  - Save the ditches. (Start a Ditch Preservation Committee now.)
- Create three zoning sectors reflecting existing zoning patterns, and consider options for granting variances. (In Phase II.)
- Revitalize the Village business climate on Fourth Street. (Start a Village Business Person's Association now.)
- Do the "Corridor" and "Sector" Studies to support the roads, zoning, and business related "action steps" above. (In Phase II.)

### VILLAGE SERVICES

- Get direct influence over sewer line extension into the Village to protect groundwater quality. (Village staff start now.)

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## I. Introduction

### A. Purpose of the Plan

In 1981, the Village of Los Ranchos adopted the Albuquerque/Bernalillo 1975 Comprehensive Plan. However, increased population growth in the Albuquerque area has created the need for the Village Trustees to have a plan that directly expresses Village wishes.

According to State of New Mexico law, a comprehensive plan does the following things.

"The planning commission shall prepare and adopt a master plan for the physical development of the municipality. . ."

"The plan shall be made with the general purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the municipality which will, in accordance with existing and future needs, best promote health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity for the general welfare as well as efficiency and economy in the process of development."

The special challenge in planning for the Village is solving the contradiction of planning orderly growth in an area characterized by and appreciated for its diversity, spontaneity, and relative freedom.

### B. The Village Planning Process

The Village planning staff began collecting background data for the planning process in September of 1988. In May, 1989, the Citizens Advisory Planning Committee was formed. After several initial meetings, a planning process was developed and followed intensively from February through July of 1990.

In January, the Committee was given a six month time frame to complete the Plan. The Committee decided to use the six months to produce a citizen developed and written "Statement of Goals, Objectives and Policies" covering key issues, designated also as the "Phase I Report of the Comprehensive Planning Process."

Baseline data, background reports, and technical support were given to the Committee from the Village planning staff and professional consultants. This information forms the analytic underpinnings of Committee decisions. A limited survey of citizen concerns was conducted. The Committee then concluded that "Land Use", i.e., "What will the Village look like in the future?" and environmental issues, i.e., "Is the Village a healthy place to live?" were the two top

planning concerns, and would be addressed in Phase I. The analysis of these two questions has been completed and is the substance of the Phase I report.

Phase I now ends with community feedback on the Phase I Report at a public hearing, and adoption of the Report by the Trustees as the first part of the new Village Comprehensive Plan.

Phase II will begin with a broad recruitment effort to bring in more Committee members to continue to insure that the Plan is representative of Villager wishes.

Phase II of the planning process will complete collection and analysis of background data, initiate several in-depth studies, refine Phase I, and address goals, objectives and policies for areas not covered in Phase I, such as non-environmental Village services. One of the Phase II studies will include a broad-based comprehensive scientific survey of what residents want for and from the Village in order to validate Phase I and be baseline data for Phase II. Phase II will also end with a completed report, a public hearing, and the requirement of Trustee adoption of the report. This will result in a complete Comprehensive Plan for the Village of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque.

#### C. Structure of the Phase I Report

Page one of this report is a list of "High Priority 'Action Steps'" selected from the Phase I Report. These seven issues should be addressed immediately. An "Outline of the Plan" follows showing major topics addressed. The body of the report covers mostly two major topics, "II. Land Use," and "II. Public Services Provided Within the Village" (mostly environmentally related). Each section contains "Goals and Objectives". These are followed by "Policy Statements" suggesting programs, action steps and ordinances. Background information is provided when necessary.

#### D. How Irrigation Agriculture Has Shaped the Village

As the Committee began to focus its efforts in Phase I, it became clear that a desire to preserve rural atmosphere cross cuts all specific issues of concern. The first and key task then became determining the meaning of "rural atmosphere". This exercise then led to the citizens' realization that this "atmosphere" is created not just by open spaces and greenery, but by the actual dynamics and resultant outputs of irrigation agriculture in the Valley. Thus the overall planning task becomes one of encouraging agriculture in the Village in a way that is compatible with rural residency.

## II. Land Use

This section addresses the first and foremost area of concern of Phase I of the Comprehensive Planning Process, i.e., "What will the Village look like in the future?" Section A, "Land Use Goals and Objectives", lays out guiding principles for Trustees. Section B, "Policies", translates goals and objectives into specific policy directives, programs, action steps, and suggestions for ordinances. Background information is provided where necessary for understanding.

### A. Land Use Goals and Objectives

It is the goal of the Village of Los Ranchos to preserve and encourage a low density, diversified, rural and residential use of the land.

Land use policies shall have the objectives of preserving and encouraging

1. open expanses through economic incentives and zoning controls on private land, and by creating public open spaces,
2. agriculture (including livestock raising), the key to Village rural atmosphere, as the "highest and best use of the land",
3. the ditch irrigation system that brings green to the Valley and sustains agriculture,
4. indigenous vegetation such as cottonwoods, and the wildlife that appear in Village yards and fields,
5. the rural nature of Village roads, and the uniqueness of Rio Grande Boulevard, Guadalupe Trail, and Fourth Street, reflecting their separate history,
6. the low density, and the social, architectural, and historic diversity of Village neighborhoods clustering along Village roads,
7. specific historic landmarks and rural features in each neighborhood,
8. compatible commercial development along Fourth Street,
9. and any other land use which promotes the overall land use goal.

Land use policies will also have the objectives of controlling and discouraging land use which provides

1. noticeable or intrusive urbanization,
2. high density housing,
3. heavy industry,
4. pollution in all forms, especially air, ground-water, noise and visual pollution, and
5. any other land use or feature that would clash with, detract from, or adversely affect the overall land use goal.

#### B. Types of Land Use and Recommended Policies - Private and Public Land

For this report, the physical land surface of the Village is divided into two intertwining types of land; privately owned land, and publicly owned or controlled land. Residential, agricultural and commercial private property is crossed by and interspersed with semi-rural roads, irrigation ditches, and pieces of property devoted to public buildings and residential use. Section "II. B." of the Plan puts forward policy recommendations for all types of land in the Village.

##### 1. Village Commitment to Agriculture and Open Expanses

The Village will go beyond maintaining rural atmosphere mainly with the "one acre zoning minimum".

##### Agriculture

First, the Village will recognize how critical agriculture has been in the shaping of the Village and how necessary it is to preserving the rural atmosphere. Agriculture and animal husbandry keep this Village from being simply a "bedroom community" near the Rio Grande River.

To preserve this unique and essential aspect of the Village for current and future residents, the Trustees will establish that the "highest and best use of land is agriculture". This means, at the minimum, doing everything possible to help new and long time property owners obtain and keep the favorable "greenbelt" property tax status for their land in agricultural usage. (See "Commercial Agriculture" for other proposals).

### "Open Expanses"

Second, the Village will provide incentives beyond acreage minimums to keep density low, i.e., to create "open expanses" especially in high density areas. For private land, the Village will utilize standard zoning controls and innovative zoning techniques. The Village will also explore innovative methods to directly purchase open spaces. (See also "Creating Three Zoning Sectors in the Village", "Going Below Lot Minimums - Suggested Policies for Types of Variances" and "Village Owned Acreage - 'Open Spaces'").

### 2. "Corridor Concept" - Village Subareas Integrating Public and Private Lands, or the Village defined by Rio Grande Boulevard, Guadalupe Trail, and Fourth Street.

As background, mixing irrigation agriculture and rural residency has shaped these three streets in three different ways. Guadalupe Trail, a curving country road, represents a long history of clustering of homes of farming families and later rural style residential infilling. Rio Grande Boulevard is a country road that retains large agricultural fields and parcels. Fourth Street reflects its past as a commercial and residential center, formerly part of the main road to Santa Fe.

This new planning concept of Village "Corridors" is an attempt to integrate the underlying dynamics of Valley agricultural and residential history with current residents' highly individual and daily experience of the Village; i.e., going home down one of the three major north-south roads, and arriving in one's immediate neighborhood.

These three major streets and bordering lands will be used to define three "corridors" or "natural" areas of the Village. (The "sector" concept utilized later in the Plan, is too precise for defining historic land use and current neighborhood interrelationships.)

### Phase II "Corridor Study"

In Phase II of the Plan, a study will be done to

- a. outline in detail what past land use, social and historic dynamics have given form to the Village and its rural features. Then the Study will determine how these forces have led to Villagers' current perceptions and experiences. Rio Grande Boulevard, Guadalupe Trail and Fourth

Street will be assumed to be the major units of analysis, unless proven otherwise.

b. The Study will also define "neighborhood contexts" as a baseline for zoning decisions,

c. and outline any changes needed in corridors to realign them with villager and neighborhood wishes.

d. Neighborhood residents will also be surveyed as to their desires for overall as well as neighborhood specific services from the Village. This information will be used in Phase II for an extensive analysis of Village programs.

e. The Study will identify public functions that should be located in each of the three corridors,

f. and locate specific existing and desirable open expanses, and "long views" or vistas of the Sandia Mountains on both public and private land.

g. Previous Historic Preservation efforts in the Village will be incorporated into the "Corridor Study".

h. Several annexation issues should be addressed; i.e., locating natural neighborhoods currently split by Village boundaries, bringing the Ortega Road area into the Village and the desirability of annexing the north side of the street.

i. The Corridor Study will address how to remedy the negative effects of Paseo del Norte on Village north/south corridors.

j. The Corridor Study will also address the issue of "greening the Village" beyond promoting commercial agriculture; i.e., where planting should be encouraged and ways to do so such as, a Village tree nursery and planting programs, Village garden clubs, compost piles, farmers' markets, and possible laws encouraging planting and wildlife and discouraging "degreening".

k. In addressing Fourth Street, the Corridor Study will consider the rural, residential, and commercial aspects of this street, and will integrate this work with data collection and analysis done to formalize Fourth Street as the center of the proposed "C-1" or Commercial Sector.

1. Other efforts mentioned in the Plan that are dependent on data from the Corridor Study are location of, and activities to be planned for "Village Owned Recreational Use Property", rural features of roads to be preserved by new Village road ordinances, location of suggested "open expanses", and neighborhood contexts for noise and light pollution ordinances.

### Corridor Study - Rural Features Committee

In Phase II of the Plan, the Village will create a "Corridor Study - Rural Features" Committee to oversee, work with and participate in the Corridor Study. This Committee, as a subcommittee of the planning effort, will be educated to the complex dynamics of Village history, help in identifying Village rural features, and monitor Village efforts to prevent their destruction.

### 3. Privately Owned Land

#### a. Background - Land Use and Zoning History, and Current Problems

Traditionally, the planning process centers around developing an overall picture of desired land use for an area. This picture is developed and continued by controlling land use through enforcement of specific planning and zoning ordinances. These ordinances are laws that tell what major activity can take place on specific parcels of land (business, residence, agriculture, manufacture of goods, etc.), what can be built on the land, and how big the lot must be at a minimum. Thus, planning and zoning are one of the keys to determining the nature of the Village in the future.

#### Zoning History - From "Tripas" to Rectangles

Briefly, "platting" or demarcation of lot boundaries has been going on for centuries. Historically, farm land has had to adjoin ditches or the Rio Grande River to obtain water for cropping. Dividing property so the lots have access to water for heirs has created the long, thin strips known as "tripas". Over time, much of this land has changed hands. Large purchases of land have consolidated many "tripas" and have led to eventual replatting of farm land into more rectangular fields and residential lots. Also, families in the Valley began replatting "tripas"

with homes so that family members could live on adjacent smaller parcels. (See Map in Appendix.)

Rio Grande Boulevard and the southwestern area of the Village represent consolidated land replatted to large residential and agricultural lots. The southeast quadrant of the Village represents former large east/west "tripas", or long strips of land, divided into smaller parcels with residential streets down the center. The north and northeast Village still have the old pattern of the long agricultural "tripas" forming large areas bounded by the older Village roads. "Tripas" bordering the roads have been subdivided into family compounds.

Village incorporation in 1958 stopped any further high density replatting, whether for the families of long time residents or for new residential homes. In 1972, the Village changed its half acre minimum lot size to one acre. Village annexation of land has increased its original size from 500 to 23,000 acres. Annexation has also brought in lot sizes below the minimum allowed by ordinance. Also, land platted at a higher residential density before Village incorporation or annexation is said to be "grandfathered in". The Trustees have favored a strict interpretation of the zoning code as related to minimum lot size. One of the goals of Village incorporation was to establish a zoning code that would preserve open expanses.

#### Current Problems - Differing Density Preferences and Unplattable Land

Any zoning code creates conflicts between differing residents' interests. People owning homes in the Village, who can afford the increasing property taxes, will prefer larger lot sizes to preserve neighborhood open spaces. Residents who have land to sell will prefer smaller minimum lot sizes as this will bring a higher sale price for the land.

People living here who have to stop farming or have other economic hardships may have trouble paying the high non-agricultural use property taxes and may be forced to sell their land. Those with unplattable land due to size or odd lot shape problems may be forced to both sell their land and move away.

In Phase II of the planning process, solutions to

some of these problems will be explored. These solutions will not damage the goal of low density housing, and the integrity of Village zoning codes. (See also "Privately Owned Land", "a." and "b.".)

b. Creating Three Zoning Sectors in the Village

A "zoning sector" would be a defined large area in the Village where land could not be replatted or rezoned below a specific lot size. Usage of the land would be uniform as well. These sectors would be created in the Village to guide specific trustee zoning decisions.

Rationale for Specific Sector Areas

Phase I of the Comprehensive Plan proposes the Village be divided into three distinct planning and zoning sectors. These sectors reflect current zoning patterns and the recent annexation history of the Village. Thus, these sectors would in essence consolidate patterns that already exist, and reinforce the past zoning experience of each area. In Phase II, these sectors will be delineated in the Village "Planning and Zoning Ordinances".

Specific Sectors (See Map in Appendix)

The first sector is "AR-1"; agricultural and residential usage with a one acre minimum platting requirement. It incorporates areas around Rio Grande Boulevard and Guadalupe Trail.

The second sector is "AR-2"; agricultural and residential usage with a 1/2 acre minimum platting requirement with sewer available, and 3/4 acre with on-site septic systems. This proposed sector incorporates newly annexed areas south of Ortega Road toward El Pueblo and further south near Fourth Street.

The third sector is "C-1"; all land included will be any current and future commercially zoned parcels. Agricultural and residential usage will be permitted. Minimum lot size requirements will be determined in Phase II. It is required that all new C-1 zoning must have frontage on Fourth Street. Thus, commercial activity will continue to be concentrated in one area, rather than scattered throughout the Village.

The Village will study if and where to redraw and "even out" the north/south boundary between

sectors AR-1 to the west and AR-2 to the east (see "Sector Study" below). This boundary line will reflect "neighborhood contexts" and resident wishes, and will go no further west than Guadalupe Trail.

The "Sector Study", referred to below, will consider creating a new sector with larger than one acre lots along Rio Grande Boulevard and toward the Bosque. This would be "zoning to existing use" and would also reflect covenants currently governing these lands.

Suggested Policy for Limits on "Variances"

Any "variances", or Trustee-granted permission for specific replatting below density minimums in sectors, will be governed by the statements "replatting cannot go below the minimum lot sizes 'grandfathered' or already platted in the neighborhood" and "any variance granted will be based on the context of the neighborhood."

"Sector Study" to Further Justify Sector Areas and Variance Policy

In Phase II of the Comprehensive Plan, a "Sector Study" will be done to accumulate data to either validate the suggested sector boundaries, density minimums, and constraints on variances, or to show other possibilities. The Study will include residents' wishes, an analysis of developed and undeveloped parcels, population distribution, etc. Great care will be taken with the newly annexed areas in AR-2, since this area is new to Village staff and Trustees, and has its own pre-existing and recent zoning history with Bernalillo County.

This "Sector Study" will also consider density issues in detail, providing professional suggestions that balance flexibility against legal vulnerability.

If this study reveals a lack of "grandfathered" vacant land available for new, higher density housing, the Citizens' Advisory Planning Committee will determine, through the use of census data, if this will pose a threat to the diversity of the Village. If so, in Phase II, the Committee will consider designating areas appropriate for higher density housing. Annexation is an alternative means to maintain Village diversity.

Resultant New Planning and Zoning Ordinances

At the conclusion of the "Sector Study" in Phase

II of the Plan, Village ordinances will be written to cover "sectors" and "variances".

c. Specific Uses for Private Land, and  
Accompanying Special Issues

1. Residential Use of Land in  
Sectors "AR-1" and "AR-2"

a). Diversity of Architectural Style

It is agreed that promoting one style of architecture for Village residents would violate the diversity of the Village.

b). Going Below Lot Minimums -  
Suggested Policies for Types of  
Variances

(1). Alternatives to Sector Lot  
Minimums for Large Parcels of Land

For large parcel residential developments, Phase II of the Plan will consider the "cluster housing" concept and will spell out "density bonuses" as an alternative to preserve threatened open spaces and rural features. "Cluster housing" allows a developer to plat smaller than minimum lots if large areas of the parcel to be developed are held in common and remain "open spaces". The "density bonus", in contrast to cluster housing, allows the overall project to go below minimum sector lot size in exchange for further concessions to Village desires.

(2). Undevelopable Parcels - Too  
Small or Odd Shaped

Smaller parcels are often undevelopable because they are just under minimum lot size and /or are odd shaped. In Phase II of the Comprehensive Plan, the Sector Study will develop data showing where these situations are located to determine the scope of the problem and any underlying general patterns to this situation.

The Village will specifically study ways to reconcile the lack of fit between the historic pattern of

replatting agricultural land for heirs (long, narrow "tripas") and Village ordinances geared to large rectangular residential parcels. The pattern of replatting a "tripa" for family members to live and build on should also be explored. This situation is currently being handled with permission to build a "guest house" but not to replat.

#### Possible Solutions

The Village, at minimum, should encourage these owners to crop their lands and help them get "greenbelt" property tax status. Some selected smaller lots or perhaps only the development rights could be purchased by the Village as small "open spaces". "Easements" could be included in lot sizes. Proposals for "odd lot" or family replatting that fit the context of the neighborhood and are not below the lowest parcel of land grandfathered into the neighborhood could be appropriate requests for variances as outlined earlier in "Creating Three Zoning Sectors".

#### 2). Commercial Agriculture in All Three Sectors: AR-1, AR-2, and C-1

Agriculture, i.e, crop growing, and livestock raising, will continue to be permitted in all three sectors of the Village. Since agriculture is the backbone of Village rural atmosphere, the Village will take active steps to help keep agriculture economically viable to long time residents and encourage newcomers to try growing crops. While costs are forcing established farmers out, another subtle threat to agriculture is the fact that new arrivals to the Village do not know about "greenbelt" property tax savings, and do not know how to use the ditches or even how important they are to the environment in the Valley.

The Village should give direct help to agriculture by

a). immediately promoting "greenbelt" property tax relief; by lobbying state and county officials, getting the assessor to agree that "the highest and best use is agriculture" for a parcel of land, assist in getting "greenbelt" status for as many people as possible through education and direct contact,

b). preserving the ditch system in any way possible, encouraging the residents to preserve ditch easements, and by possible direct Village purchase of ditch easements,

c). protecting agricultural wells by not prohibiting them by law, and protecting them from other authorities,

d). looking into encouraging "low capital-investment agriculture" in Phase II by

(1). having the Village itself actually rent land and do cost effective cropping,

(2). and by coordinating a tool and equipment cooperative to share the burden of capital investment.

In Phase II of the Comprehensive Plan, the Village should develop a program to educate newcomers in order to motivate greening and cropping the land; instruct people on how to irrigate with ditches and about the cost advantages of irrigating over using wells and city water, inform newcomers of the danger of losing irrigation water rights by not using them, and to ask people to preserve the water rights and ditch easements for those who may later purchase the land.

And last, the Village should consider the wildlife that appear along ditches and fields by educating the public on how to encourage their presence. Public and private funding sources should be explored for subsidizing crops grown as wild forage.

3). Businesses in the Village - Commerce and Services (Commercial C-1 Sector)

a). Background

The proposed C-1 Sector includes all current C-1 property, largely on Fourth Street, and requires all new C-1 lots to have frontage on Fourth Street as well. C-1 permits commercial, agricultural and residential usage. There is no "density" or lot size limit.

In the past, this road, newly annexed by the Village, supported both the residential and commercial needs of an agricultural village. These functions, somewhat submerged, continue to the present.

Village Revenue Base

Also it is important to emphasize the importance of Fourth Street as the main current and future revenue base, through the gross receipts tax, for the Village of Los Ranchos.

Problems on Fourth Street

The closing of stores and resultant abandonment of buildings, the need for more signs to attract a faltering customer base, "degreening" of the street, and widening of the roadway obliterating parking and walking space in the right-of-way, have created a situation that needs intervention before Fourth Street becomes simply another commuter "strip".

b). Policy Recommendations

(1). Overall Guidelines

(a). The "Rural/Commercial" history of Fourth Street should be re-emphasized and carried forward into the future if possible.

(b). The Village should strongly support the Village and Fourth Street business community, and

vigorously pursue a program of revitalizing the commercial viability of Fourth Street.

(c). The Village should continue to encourage the mixture of commercial agricultural and residential usage, if economically feasible.

(d). Beautification and "greening" of Fourth Street should be promoted since it is one of the main semi-rural routes villagers take " on the way home".

(2). Businessperson's Association

The Village Trustees need to immediately promote a strong Businesspersons' Association for the Village of Los Ranchos. The Village will work closely with this group, and look to this group for guidance in pursuing any revitalization program.

(3). Annexation

The Village will complete the current annexation effort to include the east side of Fourth Street to the Chamisal Lateral Ditch.

(4). Phase II Fourth Street- "Corridor" and C-1 "Sector" Studies

As part of Phase II of the Comprehensive Plan, the Village will do both a "Corridor" and "Sector" Study for Fourth Street as both an integrator of neighborhoods and the main location of the Village business community.

Corridor Study (Fourth Street and adjoining residential neighborhoods) The Corridor Study will delineate historic dynamics and resultant rural features, document residents' and businesspersons' perceptions and wants for the area, define neighborhood contexts, locate open expanses, pinpoint locations for public functions, outline rural road features and other points covered in

the "Corridor Concept".

General "Corridor" recommendations will be made that will overlap with the Sector Study.

Sector Study C-1

The Fourth Street Sector Study will consider innovative ways to structure planning and zoning to promote the C-1 Sector as the Village commercial center.

Regarding the business aspect of the Study, in Phase II of the Plan expertise will be sought that both understands the New Mexico, Albuquerque, and North Valley economy and understands Villagers' concern for rural atmosphere. Research will be done on what types of businesses will thrive on Fourth Street and contribute to the gross receipts tax base. "Rural/Commercial" or Valley-type businesses will be defined. A strong preference has been expressed for rural, local and neighborhood establishments harmonizing with the scale of the Village.

The Sector Study will address residential viability and density, and the feasibility of continued agricultural usage in the C-1 Sector.

Architectural review, and sign, lighting and noise ordinances will be explored specifically on Fourth Street.

Replatting of commercial lots on Fourth Street will be considered to provide space for off-street parking and landscaping.

(5). Other Phase II Suggestions

Some specific suggestions and ideas offered for consideration in Phase II of the Plan are demarcating Village borders along Fourth Street by tasteful signs and by renaming Fourth "Old US 85" in the Village, organizing

Village events focusing on Fourth Street such as a "farmers market" or an agricultural fair with arts and crafts, purchasing the shopping center at Fourth and Ranchitos, and "greening" the street through promoting tree planting, landscaping, and possible medians down the center of the street.

4). "Businesses in the Home" (Commercial Activity Permitted in All Three Sectors)

In keeping with the goal of "diversity" of the Village, home occupancy businesses that fit the "context of the neighborhood" will be permitted, and those that fit the rural atmosphere such as bed and breakfasts and art galleries will be encouraged. Current Village regulations in this area are considered to be adequate.

d. Review Board - Architecture and Landscaping

In Phase II of the Plan, the Village will consider instituting a review board that will review and recommend on architecture and landscaping issues coming before the Trustees. Additional review will alleviate some of the time pressure on trustees, and provide help in monitoring development to prevent loss of rural features.

This Review Board would attempt to prevent "worst case" buildings and landscaping rather than set an absolute style requirement. This is in keeping with the desire for neighborhood diversity.

The Review Board could also review landscaping intentions to encourage rural features, wildlife, agricultural fields, etc. and plant growth that will not block off existing large vistas of the Sandias. (See "Corridor Study").

4. Publicly Owned Land

Land owned in the Village by governments will complement and support rurality, agriculture, and open expanses.

a. Land Used for Public Functions

1). Public buildings and surroundings will be constructed in Southwestern or compatible style.

2). Recreational use property will provide for "multiple use", i.e., several sports activities located in several areas of the Village. Locations will be examined in the "Corridor Studies" mentioned earlier in the Plan.

3). Roads

a). Background

Other than living in one's home, traversing Village roads and streets is a major source of the rural experience in the Valley. Main north/south roads in the Valley continue to reflect the agricultural past. East/west side roads are the result of carving fields into residential neighborhoods. At first glance, Village roads may not be thought of as either "rural" or "suburban". Residents may not realize how important roads are to "rural atmosphere" until some are irrevocably changed, i.e., a road is repaired and is too "wide" and no longer looks like a country road.

b). Policy Recommendations - Maximum Control Over Village Roads

Maintaining rural roads will require detailed vigilance. Thus, to preserve rural atmosphere, the Village should obtain as much control as possible over the physical and traffic aspects of all roads in the Village. Physical development, maintenance, and repair of roads, as well as traffic flow, is to be in conformity with both safety requirements and the desire for rural atmosphere.

In Phase II of the Plan, "rural atmosphere road criteria" will be developed and made into law. The "Corridor Studies" will help to delineate the rural characteristics of different roads. The Trustees will direct all professionals, staff, consultants, and contractors to balance the above, and to be innovative in order to preserve rural features whenever possible. Some specific constraints governing roads and their characteristics to be written into ordinances will include the following items.

(1). There will be no curbs, storm sewers, sidewalks, or residential street lights.

(2). Residential density and road width will be related so roads are no wider than needed to support existing, not future, traffic levels. Road shoulders or right-of-way will be set up for and used by non-vehicular traffic and emergency vehicles. The Village will "green", i.e., plant vegetation in, right-of-ways in a way compatible with rural atmosphere.

(3). The Village will discourage commuter, non-shopper, non-resident traffic through the Village. The Village will promote the completion of Unser Boulevard to Paseo del Norte, and use extraterritorial planning powers to prevent construction of turn lanes from Alameda Boulevard to Rio Grande Boulevard. The Village will study the intersection of Fourth, Osuna and Chavez Roads and find a way to facilitate smoother traffic flow without increasing activity on Chavez.

(4). Signs Seen From Roads:  
A comprehensive and strict "signage" ordinance will be written to support rural atmosphere and to prevent the "strip" look on streets. The specific style of signs will fit the context of the neighborhood. Explicit standards will be developed for materials, dimensions, placement, etc. Differences between signs located on Fourth Street, i.e., "Rural/Commercial" and signs for "businesses in the home" will be considered.

(5). The Village will develop a "traffic flow" computer model for planning purposes to show the effect of new homes or businesses on neighborhood and Village traffic.

#### 4). Ditches and Land Dedicated to Ditch Maintenance Roads

##### a). Background

The irrigation ditches of the Village form a web that inter-connects neighborhoods by diagonally crossing the three north/south rural roads; and provides the life blood of water that greens the Valley both directly as it flows through the ditches, and indirectly as it supports the high water table. Private and Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District ditches also provide flood control and out-flowing drainage of water. These ditches are informally used by residents as recreational pathways and are a haven for wildlife.

##### b). Policy Recommendations - Preserve the Ditches

The future of the ditches cannot be taken for granted. As irrigation agriculture declines in the Southwest the Village must take a position on whether and how much to intervene in supporting the ditch system. The Village of Los Ranchos will immediately form a Ditch Preservation Committee which will do the following activities.

(1). This Committee will determine the feasibility of supporting the ditch system at various levels of cost assuming various levels of Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District involvement.

(2). The Ditch Committee will consider all or a combination of some of the following functions of the ditches; flood control, agricultural water supply, drainage, water for landscaping, support of the water table, "cover" for wildlife, and a recreational path for walkers, joggers, mountain bikes and horses. The committee will develop a plan to achieve the most feasible combination of the above uses.

(3). At minimum, the Village Trustees will move to acquire the land, if ditches are abandoned, to use as trails.

(4). The Committee will obtain organized legal baseline data regarding water rights, who has land title rights to ditch property, the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District mandate, etc., in order to understand the situation and begin developing alternative scenarios of support.

(5). The Committee will obtain hydrological and environmental data outlining the effects of ditch closings on the water table and wildlife, flood control, and drainage of water out of the Valley.

(6). The Ditch Committee will explore an organized link up of Village ditches to other trails in the Village, the North Valley, and the City of Albuquerque, choosing ditches appropriate to different types and levels of recreational activity.

(7). In all efforts, the Village will mitigate the conflict between the intrusiveness of recreational use and residential privacy, and take all practical measures to prevent residential burglary from the ditch banks.

(8). The Village, through the Ditch Preservation Committee, will teach Villagers how to use the ditches for landscape watering to help preserve water rights, i.e., "use it or lose it."

(9). The Committee will work with State legislators, elected officials, the State Engineer, and staff of the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District; and coordinate any efforts with the new Rio Grande Valley State Park in the Bosque.

#### b. Open Public Land

1). Village Owned Acreage - "Open Spaces"  
The Village of Los Ranchos will aggressively acquire "open spaces." Location of these areas will be recommended in the Phase II

"Corridor Studies". The Village currently owns acreage surrounding the Village Hall, and manages acreage on both sides of Paseo del Norte.

Consideration will be given to the different types of "open spaces" appropriate to their geographic context; i.e., "active use" versus "passive use", "landscaped park land" versus "preservation of a natural area". In addition, in any acquisition of land, preserving vistas or views of the Sandia Mountains will be considered.

a). The Village will search out innovative means of purchasing this land, such as purchasing only the land "development rights" to selected large parcels of land, and possibly instituting a transfer tax on the sale of property to fund acquisition of "open spaces", "development rights" and private "rural features", etc.

b). Private land "open expanses" will be encouraged through zoning, i.e., by acreage minimums and such concepts as "cluster housing" and by the Village promoting maximum use of the "green belt" laws (property tax advantages for agricultural use).

## 2). Rio Grande Valley State Park

The Village will investigate avenues to be directly represented in and adequately control the planning and development of the Rio Grande Valley State Park. Currently, the Village participates solely in an advisory capacity.

## III. Public Services Provided Within the Village

This section of the Plan address the second major area of concern of Phase II of the Comprehensive Planning Process, "Will the Village be a healthy place to live in the future?" This question translates into a concern for the environment and its regulation. Other services, such as Village fire protection, emergency rescue, animal control, etc., will be considered in depth in Phase II of the Comprehensive Plan.

### A. Public Services - Goals and Objectives

The Village shall have the goal of ensuring the existence and availability of all services necessary to provide for the well-being of its citizens. The Village shall accomplish this goal by the following objectives.

1. The Village will focus on providing services for the protection of the people, property, way of life, and environment of the Village. The Village will have "in-house" services in areas critical to the maintenance of control over life in the Village.

2. The Village will minimize the number of services provided directly by encouraging and assisting other governmental agencies, private organizations, and individuals to provide these services.

3. Services will be provided within the scale of the Village. Maximum control of and provision of services will be obtained with minimum spending.

#### B. Types of Environmentally Related Services and Recommended Policies

##### 1. Future Village Administrated Programs

###### a. Future Trash and Garbage Removal Program

Due to population growth, it is anticipated that soon the Village will be required by law to provide garbage pickup services to all Village residents, either on a contract or direct services basis.

1). The Village will look into subsidizing garbage fees for those unable to pay.

2). The Village will explore the need for a "transfer station" somewhere near the Village. Transfer stations are central collecting places where people can bring their trash.

3). The Recycling Committee's efforts will be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan in Phase II. The Recycling Committee will develop incentives to promote recycling appropriate to the diverse population subgroups in the Village.

4). All trash and garbage removal programs will take the "rural atmosphere" into consideration.

###### b. Needed Noise Pollution Ordinance

In Phase II of the Plan, the Village will write a noise ordinance and provide enforcement without the need for a citizen to complain verbally or

sign a complaint. This ordinance should reflect differences between the three corridors in the Village.

c. Needed Light Pollution Ordinance

In Phase II of the Plan the Village will write a light pollution ordinance that will allow for residential security and safety without spreading excess light. This ordinance will consider "rural features" and differentiate between residential and business needs. The Village will provide a mechanism for enforcement of this ordinance.

d. Philosophy for "b." and "c." Above

In structuring "b." and "c." the Village should be cautioned not to pass too many laws that violate privacy, or squelch diversity as the Village grapples with problems of increasing population, and people living closer and closer to one another.

2. Environmental Services Provided through Cooperative Agreements with Other Governments

a. Arrival of Sewer Lines - Need for Village Control

The Village and the City of Albuquerque have a cooperative agreement to extend the City sewer system into the Village of Los Ranchos. Installation is funded by the State of New Mexico and done by City contractors. Wide spread use of septic tanks in the Valley is a serious threat to ground water purity. Gradual introduction of the sewer system is an environmental necessity.

1). The Village of Los Ranchos professional staff will immediately begin to find a way to steer the planning process for sewer line installation in the Village. Staff will negotiate with the State and City as to where to direct the lines.

2). The Village of Los Ranchos will promote residents hooking up to the sewer lines. The Village will alert citizens of the cost savings associated with hooking up "sooner", rather than "later".

3). The Village will attempt to avoid forcing people to have to move out of the Village over the costs of hooking up to the

sewer lines. The Village will inform citizens of State funds available to support sewer hook up, and think of innovative ways to hook up for less money. (The law states that if a residence is within 200 feet of any lot serviced by a sewer line, and the septic system needs replacing, the resident must hook up to the sewer.)

4). The Village will educate residents who are at a distance from the sewer line how to construct and maintain septic systems properly to avoid further groundwater pollution.

5). Village staff will prevent negative impacts on rural roads and rural features due to sewer line installation.

6). Installation of sewer lines is for environmental purposes and will not be used to justify increased residential density. Density will be determined by zoning ordinances and variances granted "within the context of the neighborhood".

### 3. Environmental Services Provided by Other Governmental Entities

#### a. Air Pollution Regulation - Village Representation

The Village of Los Ranchos will take a more aggressive stand on air pollution. Since the Village suffers from being a collection point for regional air pollution, Village staff must gain representation as soon as possible on the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Air Quality Control Board.

### C. Other Village Provided Services and Recommended Policies

#### 1. Phase II In-Depth Analysis of Village Services

The Corridor Study will determine citizen wishes and needs for Village services by neighborhood and "corridor" or region. These wants and needs will be balanced against potential sources of revenue. Various forms of appropriate Village administrative service delivery structures will be proposed.

## 2. Government/Administration

### a. More Trustee Monthly Meetings

Trustees will explore meeting more often to speed governmental decision making and make the process more accessible to the public.

### b. Adopt Long Range Budget Planning

The Village of Los Ranchos will develop a long range budget planning process that incorporates an objective canvassing of citizen needs, shows consideration of the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan, and demonstrates fiscal responsibility by planning for both an increase and decrease in future Village revenues.

### c. Village Support for Citizen Committees

Volunteer efforts will be respected and enhanced by assigning staff to all active Village committees. Volunteer energy will not be substituted for the staffing needs of the Village. Community volunteer energy should be directed to top priority items, i.e., key issues in the plan, whenever possible.

### d. Informing Citizens on Key Topics

The Village will inform and educate residents through the Village newsletter, workshops, and other means about key issues in the Comprehensive Plan, especially how individuals can contribute to the preservation of the rural features central to Village life. Preserving "irrigation water rights", "water usage", "obtaining greenbelt property tax status", and hooking up to the sewer line are typical topics.

## 3. Increased Enforcement of Village Ordinances

a. The Village needs to complete procedures allowing the County Sheriff to enforce Village ordinances.

b. The Planning Officer for the Village will be provided with adequate staff to enforce land use related ordinances.

## IV. Other Issues

### A. Annexation and Extraterritorial Planning and Zoning - Goals and Recommended Policies

"Annexation" is the process by which the Village acquires new land within its boundaries. "Extraterritorial planning

and zoning" refers to the Village's ability to share with other governments, planning and zoning decisions adjacent to the Village boundaries.

Goal The Village is directed to utilize either annexation or extraterritorial planning and zoning to protect the Village rural way of life.

1. Extraterritorial planning and zoning will be used as an interim measure to influence land use decisions without the increased costs to the Village associated with annexation.

a. The Village will pursue expanding the current extraterritorial powers of agreement from "planning" or lot size control to include "zoning" control, i.e., control of permitted use of the land.

b. The Village will use its extraterritorial powers to be part of the development of two recreational ditches, the Alameda Drain and the Chamisal Lateral.

c. The Village will seek extraterritorial powers on the west side of the Rio Grande River, to use in promoting recreational trails and prevent bridge development.

d. Phase II of the Comprehensive Plan will develop further detailed recommendations for Village exercising of its extraterritorial powers. These recommendations will take into consideration the character and history of affected neighborhoods, and wishes of residents. Current Village extraterritorial policy is governed by the Albuquerque Comprehensive Plan.

2. Annexation will be used as a permanent measure to protect the Village's rural way of life.

a. Annexation will be done with a balance between

1). keeping a small or personal scale of representative government,

2). adding neighborhoods compatible with the Village,

3). honoring the wishes of the potential Villagers,

4). controlling costs to provide increasing services,

5). being aware of possible changes in the political makeup of the Village,

6). keeping the diversity of the population;

and what must be done to protect the Village "rural lifestyle".

b. For continuity of governmental management, both sides of major arterial streets should be annexed whenever possible.

c. Geographic recommendations for possible annexation will be developed in Phase II of the Comprehensive Planning Process.

#### B. The Comprehensive Planning Process - Goals and Recommended Policies

Goal The Comprehensive Planning Process will translate the residents' vision for the future of the Village into concrete goals, objectives, policies, action steps, programs and ordinances.

Developing a plan or guideline for Trustees to use to shape the Village in accord with citizens desires is an ongoing process and not simply the preparation of a document.

1. The Citizens' Advisory Planning Committee will continue to create, monitor, and annually revise the Comprehensive Plan.

2. Periodic scientific surveys will be made by the Village to collect baseline data documenting specific issues residents wish to be addressed in the Plan.

3. The Citizens' Advisory Planning Committee will translate this broad citizen input into Phase I goals, objectives, and statements of policy recommendations. Phase II translates this mandate into a complete professional plan, with supporting data and resultant action steps, programs, and ordinances.

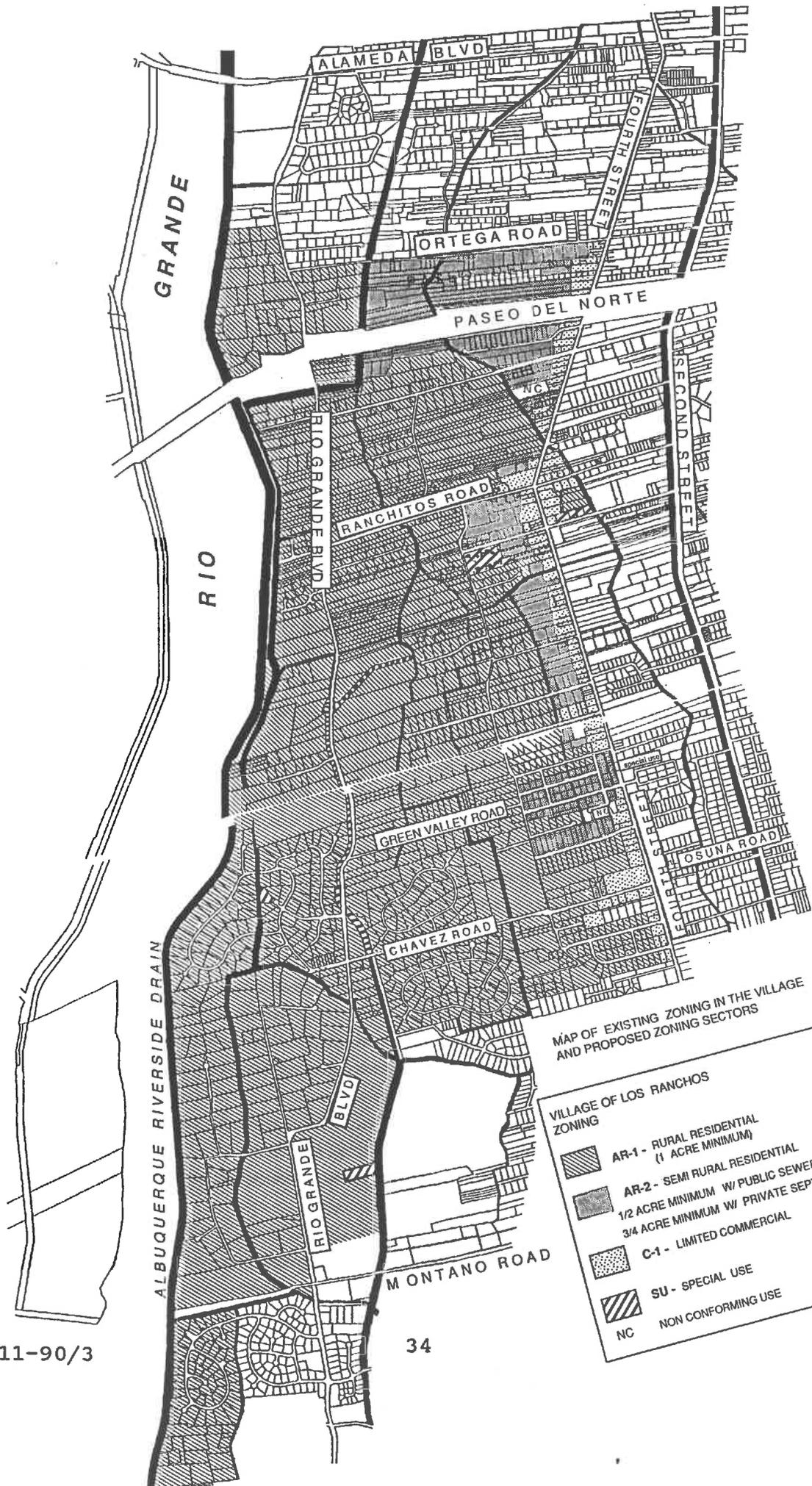
4. The Committee will attempt to recruit members broadly from affected areas and create a group that is representative of the Village.

5. A Chairperson will be elected annually by the Committee.

6. Issues put to a vote will be decided by persons affected by the Plan; residents of the Village, Village property owners and business persons, and anyone affected by the plan in extra-territorial areas.

7. Professional "in-house" support will be provided by the Village planning staff.





MAP OF EXISTING ZONING SECTORS AND PROPOSED ZONING SECTORS

- VILLAGE OF LOS RANCHOS ZONING
- AR-1 - RURAL RESIDENTIAL (1 ACRE MINIMUM)
  - AR-2 - SEMI RURAL RESIDENTIAL  
1/2 ACRE MINIMUM W/ PUBLIC SEWER  
3/4 ACRE MINIMUM W/ PRIVATE SEPTIC SYSTEM
  - C-1 - LIMITED COMMERCIAL
  - SU - SPECIAL USE
  - NC - NON CONFORMING USE

7-11-90/3



V. Appendix

A. Map of Existing Zoning in the Village And Proposed Zoning Sectors (Previous Page)

B. Acknowledgements

Citizens' Advisory Planning Committee Attendees

Amonette, Ed	Gross, Louis	McDonough, Tim
Belcher, Jack	Hannah, Michael	Pennybacker, Sallie
Bennett, Jane	Hindi, Moneer	Rigel, James (Bud)
Craig, Pete	Kaplan, Nat	Rosnagle, Barbara
Day, Phil	King, Elbert	Smith, Stephen
Duran, David	Lentz, Susan	Steger, Art
Duran, Levi	Markham, Marion	Steger, Marge
Groff, Richard		

Maggie Knight, Chair

Frank Feather, Vice-Chair

Quanta Hinson, Consensus Officer

Professional Staff and Consultants

Brad Stebleton, Village Planner  
Dorothy Wegrzyn, Cartographer  
John Comstock, Cartographic Analyst  
Ken Marron, Planning Consultant  
Karen Dunning, Planning Consultant

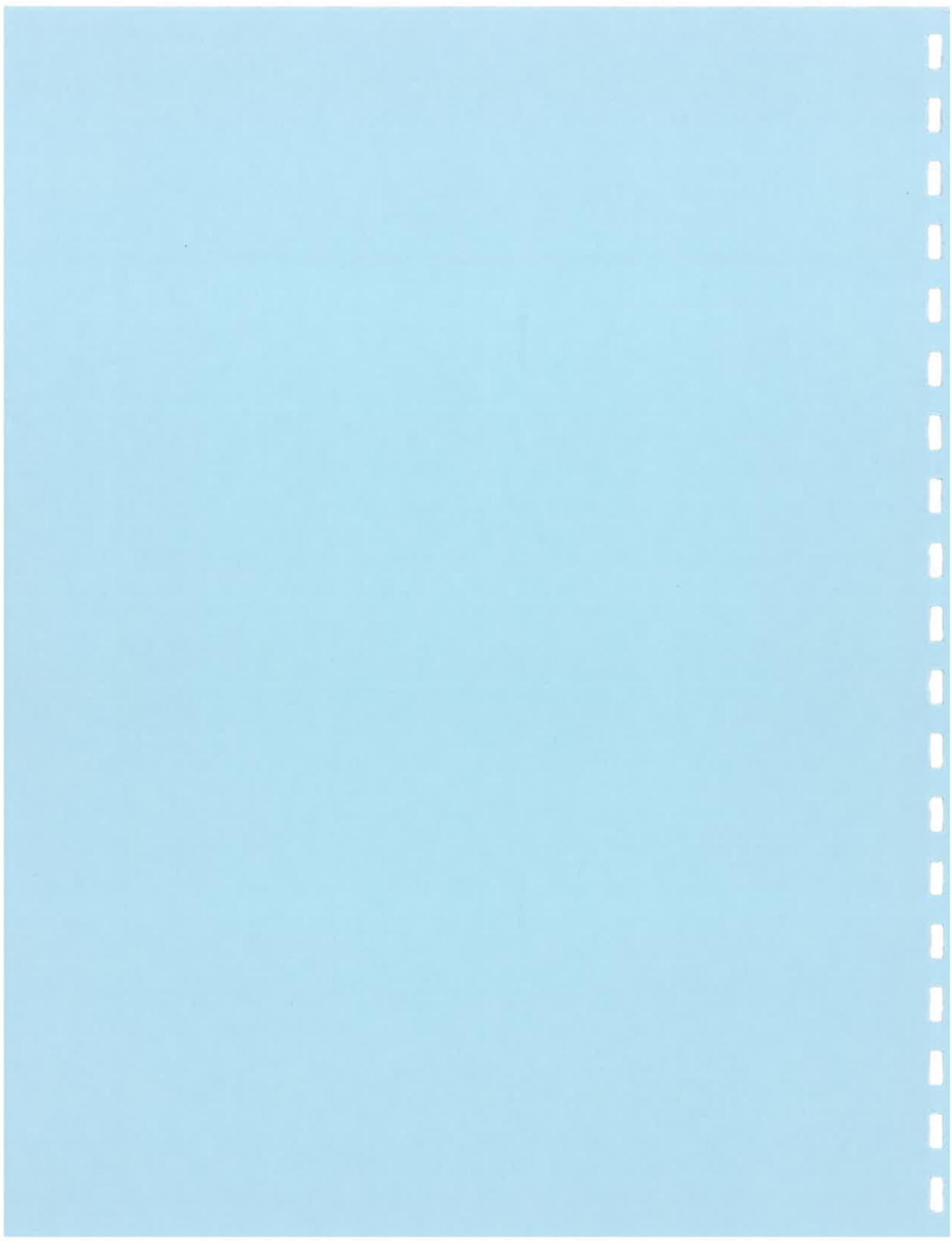
Mayor and Trustees

Alfredo Garcia, Mayor  
John O'Connor, Trustee  
Julian Padilla, Trustee  
Arnold Sargeant, Trustee  
Tunny Wilson, Trustee



**LAND USE PLANNING SURVEY - JUNE 1991**





**Los Ranchos de Albuquerque Planning Area  
Land Use Planning Survey**

Prepared by

THE UNM INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY  
UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO

for

THE VILLAGE OF LOS RANCHOS DE ALBUQUERQUE

JUNE, 1991

THE CONDUCT OF THIS RESEARCH WAS FUNDED IN PART BY THE VILLAGE OF LOS RANCHOS DE ALBUQUERQUE. ADDITIONAL SUPPORT  
WAS PROVIDED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of a random household telephone survey conducted among residents who live within the Village of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque Planning Area in May and June of 1991. The UNM Institute for Public Policy's Survey Research Center interviewed 500 residents of the Planning Area regarding their perceptions and preferences for land use.<sup>1</sup> With a survey sample of this size, the survey sampling error is  $\pm 4\%$ , meaning that 95% of the time, the survey results for any question should fall within 4 percentage points of the true population value. Respondent households were selected at random using a computer generated telephone sampling list, and respondents were chosen randomly within households by interviewing the resident who had the most recent birthday. The survey questionnaire was created in consultation with the Planning staff at the Village of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque, and is included in Appendix A of this report. The survey was conducted from the University of New Mexico's computer assisted telephone interviewing laboratory, using trained and supervised UNM interviewers.

The primary focus of the survey was on a set of attitudinal questions regarding aspects of land use within the Planning Area. These include (a) preferred land uses, (b) preferred housing density and the preferred mix of lot sizes, (c) preferences for changes in business and commercial zoning, (d) preferences regarding "open space" policy in the Planning Area, (e) preferences regarding extensions of City sewer lines to areas where sewer lines are not currently accessible, and (f) preferences regarding maintenance of the ditch system.

The following section of this report provides the distributions of survey responses for questions in each of these areas. Where statistically significant differences are apparent, we also present the distribution of responses across ethnic groups within the Planning Area.<sup>2</sup> The subsequent section provides the distributions of responses within four regions within the Planning Area.

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<sup>1</sup> In order to be sure we were talking with residents of the Planning Area, we employed a set of screening questions to ascertain whether the residency was within the boundaries of the Area. These screening questions are shown in Appendix A.

<sup>2</sup> Due to the very small number of African American, American Indian, and Asian respondents, these individuals were combined into an "Other" category for comparison of responses by ethnic groups.

## 2. OVERVIEW OF SURVEY RESULTS

### *Ethnicity of Survey Respondents*

The ethnic breakdown of all of the survey respondents appears in Table 1:

**Table 1: Ethnicity of Survey Respondents**

Anglo	55.6%
Hispanic	35.6%
Other	8.8%

### *Citizen Land Use Preferences*

The first set of questions were designed to ascertain the respondents' perceptions of current land uses proximate to their homes, and to gauge their preferences for land use. The question wording used, and the breakdown of responses, are shown in Table 1(a).

**Table 1(a): "What is the most common use of land in the area where you live?" And "which of these kinds of land use would you most like to see encouraged?"**

Type of Use	Current Use	Encouraged Use
Commercial/Business	5.6%	6.3%
Agricultural/Residential	20.9%	31.6%
Mobile Home/Residential	6.0%	3.6%
Multi-Family/Apartments	2.5%	1.0%
Residential, Small Lots	31.9%	18.3%
Residential, Large Lots	29.8%	33.0%
Other	3.3%	6.1%

By a large margin, among our respondents the most common land uses in the Village are small (31.9%) and large (29.8%) residential lots. Next in frequency is a combined agricultural and residential use, at about 21%. About 6.6% of the survey respondents perceive the areas in which they live to be primarily used for commercial and business purposes. Those uses that most respondents want to see encouraged are large residential lots (33.0%), combined agricultural and residential (31.6%), and small residential lots (18.3%). This pattern of current and preferred uses illustrates that the residents of the Village of Los Ranchos perceive the Village primarily as a residential community, and choose to keep it that way. Furthermore, the emphasis appears to be on maintaining a rural atmosphere, with larger

residential lots and retaining a significant mixture of residential and agricultural use.

Some difference is apparent across ethnic lines within the Planning Area. Hispanic respondents were slightly more likely to prefer an increase in business and commercial uses, were more inclined than Anglos to prefer small residential lots, and were less inclined than Anglos to prefer large residential lots. These differences are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Breakdown of Preferred Land Use by Ethnicity**

	Anglo	Hispanic	Other	Total
Commercial/Business	3.3%	11.8%	2.9%	6.3%
Agricultural/Residential	32.6%	28.2%	40.0%	31.6%
Mobile Home/Residential	3.0%	4.7%	2.9%	3.6%
Multi-Family/Apartments	1.5%	0.6%	0.0%	1.0%
Residential, Small Lots	16.7%	21.2%	17.1%	18.3%
Residential, Large Lots	35.9%	28.8%	31.4%	33.0%
Other	7.0%	4.7%	5.7%	6.1%

*Preferred Housing Density*

Survey respondents were asked to indicate their preferences for the housing density in their neighborhoods. The question wording and overall responses are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: "In the future, what overall housing density, or number of homes per acre, do you think would be best for the area where you live?"**

Less than 1 Home per Acre	11.2%
One Home per Acre	42.1%
Two Homes per Acre	35.7%
Three Home per Acre	5.2%
Four or More Homes per Acre	5.8%

As indicated in Table 3, the most frequently picked response was one home per acre (42.1%), followed by two homes per acre (35.7%). Much smaller percentages of respondents picked lower or higher housing densities.

When the results were analyzed across ethnic groups, Hispanics tended to prefer somewhat smaller lot sizes than did Anglos. These results are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4: Breakdown of Preferred Housing Density by Ethnicity**

	Anglo	Hispanic	Other	Total
Less than 1 Home per Acre	14.8%	5.8%	10.8%	11.8%
One Home per Acre	45.1%	36.3%	48.6%	42.1%
Two Homes per Acre	31.9%	43.3%	27.0%	35.7%
Three Homes per Acre	3.5%	7.6%	5.4%	5.1%
Four or More Homes per Acre	4.7%	7.2%	8.1%	5.8%

*Lot Size Mixture*

When asked to indicate their preferences regarding the mix of lot sizes in their neighborhoods, a large majority preferred a mix of large and small lot sizes. These results, and the question wording, are shown in Table 5. There were virtually no differences across ethnic groups on this question.

**Table 5: "Thinking about your area, would you prefer to have most houses on lots that are the same size, or do you prefer a mixture of large and small lot sizes?"**

All the same size lots	30.7%
Mixture of large and small lots	60.7%
Unsure, Don't Know	8.6%

*Business Zoning*

Respondents were asked to indicate their preferences for business zoning in their neighborhoods. The question wording and response distribution are shown in Table 6.

**Table 6: "Do you believe the amount of land zoned for business in the area where you live should be increased, kept as it is, or decreased?"**

Increased	12.2%
Kept the same	68.1%
Decreased	19.7%

As indicated in Table 6, a large majority of respondents preferred no change in the extent of business zoning in their area. When analyzed by ethnic group, Hispanics were more inclined than Anglos to increase the extent of business zoning in their areas, though both groups had large majorities preferring "no change." These results are shown in Table 7.

**Table 7: Breakdown of Preferred Changes in Business Zoning by Ethnicity**

	Anglo	Hispanic	Other	Total
Increased	9.6%	17.6%	5.4	12.2%
Kept the Same	72.2%	64.2%	56.8%	68.1%
Decreased	18.1%	18.8%	37.8%	19.7%

*Open Space*

Regarding open space, residents of the planning area are overwhelmingly in favor of keeping the amount open space as it is (64.3%) or expanding it (31.8%). Very few respondents -- only 3.9% -- expressed a preferences for reducing open space. These results are shown in Table 8. No significant differences across ethnic groups were evident on this question.

**Table 8: "Do you think the amount of open space in your area, including pastureland, farmland, and parks should be increased, kept as is, or decreased?"**

Increased	31.8%
Kept the same	64.3%
Decreased	3.9%

*Sewer Line Access*

Respondents were asked if City sewer lines were currently available to homes in their neighborhood. Of our sample, 64.2% said sewer lines were currently available. Those 35.8% who did not currently have access to City sewer lines were asked if they desired an extension of the sewer lines to homes in their area. A large majority -- 79.1% -- of those currently without access said they would prefer an extension of the City sewer lines to their area. These results are shown in Table 9.

**Table 9: "Are sewer lines presently available to homes in your area?" IF NO, "Do you want the city sewer lines extended to your area?"**

	Presently Available?	Desire City Extension?*
Yes	64.2%	79.1%
No	35.8%	20.9%

\*\*Note: Percentage responses for "Desire City Extension" include only those who responded that sewer lines were not currently available to homes in their area.

When analyzed by ethnic groups, Hispanics were far more likely to desire extension of the City sewer lines than were Anglos. Fully 94.7% of those

Hispanic respondents currently without access to City sewer lines desired the extension of the lines. Among Anglos, 68.8% of those currently without access desired the extension. These results are shown in Table 10.

**Table 10: Breakdown of Preferred Extension of City Sewer Lines by Ethnicity**

	Anglo	Hispanic	Other	Total
Yes	68.8%	94.7%	84.6	79.1%
No	31.2%	5.3%	15.4%	20.9%

### *Preservation of the Ditch System*

Among the questions included on the survey, the greatest consensus concerned preservation of the ditch system. When asked whether preservation of the ditch system was important to maintaining the quality of life in their areas, 83.8% of the respondents agreed that preserving the ditch system was important. Furthermore, no differences across ethnic groups were evident on this question. These results are shown in Table 11.

**Table 11: "Do you believe preservation of the ditch system is important to maintaining the quality of life in your area?"**

Yes	83.8%
No	10.4%
Don't Know, No Answer	5.8%

### **3. REGIONAL VARIATIONS IN LAND USE PREFERENCES**

In order to assess regional variations within the Planning Area in preferences for land use planning, the survey respondents were asked to indicate which of six major intersections they lived closest to. The intersections, and the percentage responses to this question, are shown in Table 12.

**Table 12: "Which of the following intersections do you live closest to?"**

Intersection	Percent	Region
1. Rio Grande Blvd & Chavez Road	23.9%	Region 1
2. 4th Street & Osuna Road	32.5%	Region 2
3. Ranchitos Road & Guadalupe Trail	14.3%	Region 3
4. Rio Grande Blvd & Ortega Road	8.6%	Region 3
5. 2nd Street and Los Ranchos Road	9.2%	Region 4
6. 4th Street & Ortega Road	11.2%	Region 4

Several of the intersections -- including Ranchitos Road & Guadalupe Trail, 2nd Street & Los Ranchos Road, 4th Street & Ortega Road, and Rio Grande Blvd & Ortega Road -- had insufficient numbers of respondents for adequate comparison of responses. In order to facilitate comparisons, respondents nearest to Ranchitos Road & Guadalupe Trail and Rio Grande Blvd & Ortega Road were combined into Region 3, and respondents nearest to 4th Street & Ortega Road and 2nd Street and Los Ranchos were combined into Region 4. Those nearest to the intersection of Rio Grande Blvd & Chavez Road were designated Region 1, and those nearest to Ranchitos Road & Guadalupe Trail were designated Region 2. These designations are shown in Table 12.

The ethnic breakdown of all survey respondents by region appears in Table 12(a).

**Table 12(a): Ethnic Breakdown by Region**

	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4
Anglo	74.5%	56.1%	52.3%	39.4%
Hispanic	20.2%	34.8%	38.5%	56.6%
Other	5.3%	9.0%	9.1%	4.0%

The analysis of survey question responses by Region are shown in Tables 13 through 15. The analysis of regional variations in survey responses are shown only for those questions in which differences across Regions were statistically significant.

Regarding preferred land use, the most prominent difference concerns the preference for combined agricultural/residential use. While over 44% of the respondents from Region 1 preferred such use, only 21.5% of those in Region 2 expressed such a preference. These results are shown in Table 13.

**Table 13: Breakdown of Preferred Land Use by Region**

	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4
Commercial/Business	3.6%	8.7%	4.7%	7.4%
Agricultural/Residential	44.1%	21.5%	31.3%	34.0%
Mobile Home/Residential	0.9%	4.7%	2.8%	6.3%
Multi-Family/Apartments	0.0%	1.3%	2.8%	1.1%
Residential, Small Lots	8.1%	24.8%	18.9%	20.2%
Residential, Large Lots	38.7%	34.9%	31.1%	25.5%
Other	4.5%	4.0%	8.4%	6.4%

Regarding preferences for residential lot sizes, respondents from Region 1 tended to prefer larger lots, with over half (71.6%) picking lots of one acre per house or more. Residents from the other Regions tended to be more evenly split between preferences for larger and smaller lot sizes. These results are shown in Table 14.

**Table 14: Breakdown of Preferred Residential Lot Sizes by Region**

	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4
Less than 1 Home per Acre	19.3%	8.2%	8.9%	9.7%
One Home per Acre	52.3%	34.0%	46.5%	35.5%
Two Homes per Acre	21.1%	44.9%	35.6%	39.8%
Three Homes per Acre	2.7%	5.4%	5.9%	7.5%
Four or More Homes per Acre	4.6%	7.5%	3.0%	7.5%

Regarding extension of City sewer lines to areas currently without access to sewer lines, there was notable variation across regions. While respondents from all Regions tended to prefer extension of City sewer lines to their areas, Regions 3 and 4 expressed the strongest preferences for extension. Region 1 respondents were least inclined to prefer extension. These results are shown in Table 15.

**Table 15: Breakdown of Preferences for Sewer Line Extension by Region\*\***

	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4
Extend Sewer Line	68.4%	82.3%	92.4%	74.5%
Do Not Extend Line	31.6%	17.6%	7.5%	25.5%

\*\*Note: This question was asked only of those respondents who currently do not have access to the city sewer lines. These differences are statistically significant.

There were no statistically discernable differences across regions regarding preferences for mixtures of large and small lot sizes, business zoning, open space policy, or preservation of the ditch system. In each of these issue areas, the Regional distributions of preferences were very similar to the distribution for the Planning Area as a whole, as presented in Section 2 of this report.

#### 4. APPENDICES

##### A. Survey Instrument

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am calling from the University of New Mexico. We are conducting a survey of residents of the Village of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque regarding land use planning. Are you 18 years of age or older?

[IF NOT OVER AGE 18] Is there someone at home over the age of 18?

[IF NO ADULTS HOME RIGHT NOW] Is there a time that I could call back so that I could speak to someone over the age of 18?

[IF THE RESPONDENT IS OVER 18]

If you have a moment, I would like to ask you some questions...

[THIS SURVEY IS BEING CONDUCTED BY THE INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY FOR THE VILLAGE OF LOS RANCHOS DE ALBUQUERQUE. THE DIRECTOR OF THE IPP IS DR. HANK JENKINS-SMITH, PHONE: 277-1099. THE RESULTS ARE FOR LAND USE PLANNING PURPOSES AND INDIVIDUAL ANSWERS ARE STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL]

Do you live in the Village of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque or in the unincorporated section of the County of Bernalillo?

[IF THE RESPONDENT LIVES IN ALBUQUERQUE, DO NOT CONDUCT THE INTERVIEW. IF THE RESPONDENT IS NOT SURE, CONTINUE THE SURVEY BY CHECKING THE 'NOT SURE' RESPONSE]

- 1 . Los Ranchos
- 2 . unincorp. county
- 3 . anywhere else
- 4 . not sure

Do you live east of the Rio Grande?

Do you live south of Alameda Blvd.?

Do you live west of 2nd Street?

Do you live north of Osuna?

Do you live north of Willow Road?

What is the most common use of land in the area where you live?

[READ RESPONSES]

1. commercial/business
2. agricultural/residential
3. mobile home/residential
4. multi-family/apartments
5. residential, small lots (less than 1 acre)
6. residential, large lots (at least 1 acre)
7. other
8. DK/NA

Which of these kinds of land use would you most like to see encouraged in the area where you live?

[READ RESPONSES IF PROMPTED]

1. commercial/business
2. agricultural/residential
3. mobile home/residential
4. multi-family/apartments
5. residential, small lots (less than 1 acre)
6. residential, large lots (at least 1 acre)
7. other
8. DK/NA

In the future, what overall housing density, or number of homes per acre, do you think would be best for the area where you live?

- 1 . < 1 home per acre
- 2 . 1 home per acre
- 3 . 2 homes per acre
- 4 . 3 homes per acre
- 5 . 4 or more per acre
- 6 . DK/NA

Do you believe the amount of land zoned for business in the area where you live should be increased, kept as it is, or decreased?

- 1 . increased
- 2 . kept as is
- 3 . decreased
- 4 . DK/NA

Do you think the amount of open space in your area, including pastureland, farmland, and parks should be increased, kept the same, or decreased?

- 1 . increased
- 2 . kept as is
- 3 . decreased
- 4 . DK/NA

Are sewer lines presently available to homes in your area?

- 1 . Yes
- 2 . No
- 3 . DK/NA

Do you want the city sewer lines extended to your area?

- 1 . Yes
- 2 . No
- 3 . DK/NA

Thinking about your area, would you prefer to have most houses on lots that are the same size, or do you prefer a mixture of large and small lot sizes?

- 1 . all the same
- 2 . mixture
- 3 . no preference
- 4 . DK/NA

Do you believe that the preservation of the ditch system is important to maintaining the quality of life in your area?

- 1 . Yes
- 2 . No
- 3 . DK/NA

How many years have you lived at your current residence?

[LESS THAN SIX MONTHS--ENTER '0']

Which of the following major intersections do you live closest to?

1. Rio Grande Blvd. and Chavez Road
2. 4th Street and Osuna Road
3. Ranchitos Road and Guadalupe Trail
4. 2nd Street and Los Ranchos Road
5. 4th Street and Ortega Road
6. Rio Grande Blvd. and Ortega Road
7. DK/NA

What is your race or ethnic background? Are you:

- 1 . 1-white
- 2 . 2-African-Amer.
- 3 . 3-Spanish-Amer.
- 4 . 4-Mexican-Amer.
- 5 . 5-Asian
- 6 . 6-American Indian
- 7 . 7-Other
- 8 . 8-refused (DK/NR)

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. One final thing, could I have your first name in case my supervisor needs to call back to make sure that I have actually spoken to you?

**Terminate Screen [if respondent is OUT OF AREA]:**

Thank you for your interest in this survey, but we are not currently interviewing residents living in your area.

[INTERVIEWER---GO TO THE 'CALL STATUS' MENU AND ENTER 'WRONG CITY'...DO NOT SAVE THIS INTERVIEW!!!]

Gender of the respondent:

- 1 . Male
- 2 . Female

B. PLAN BOUNDARIES AND MAJOR INTERSECTIONS

