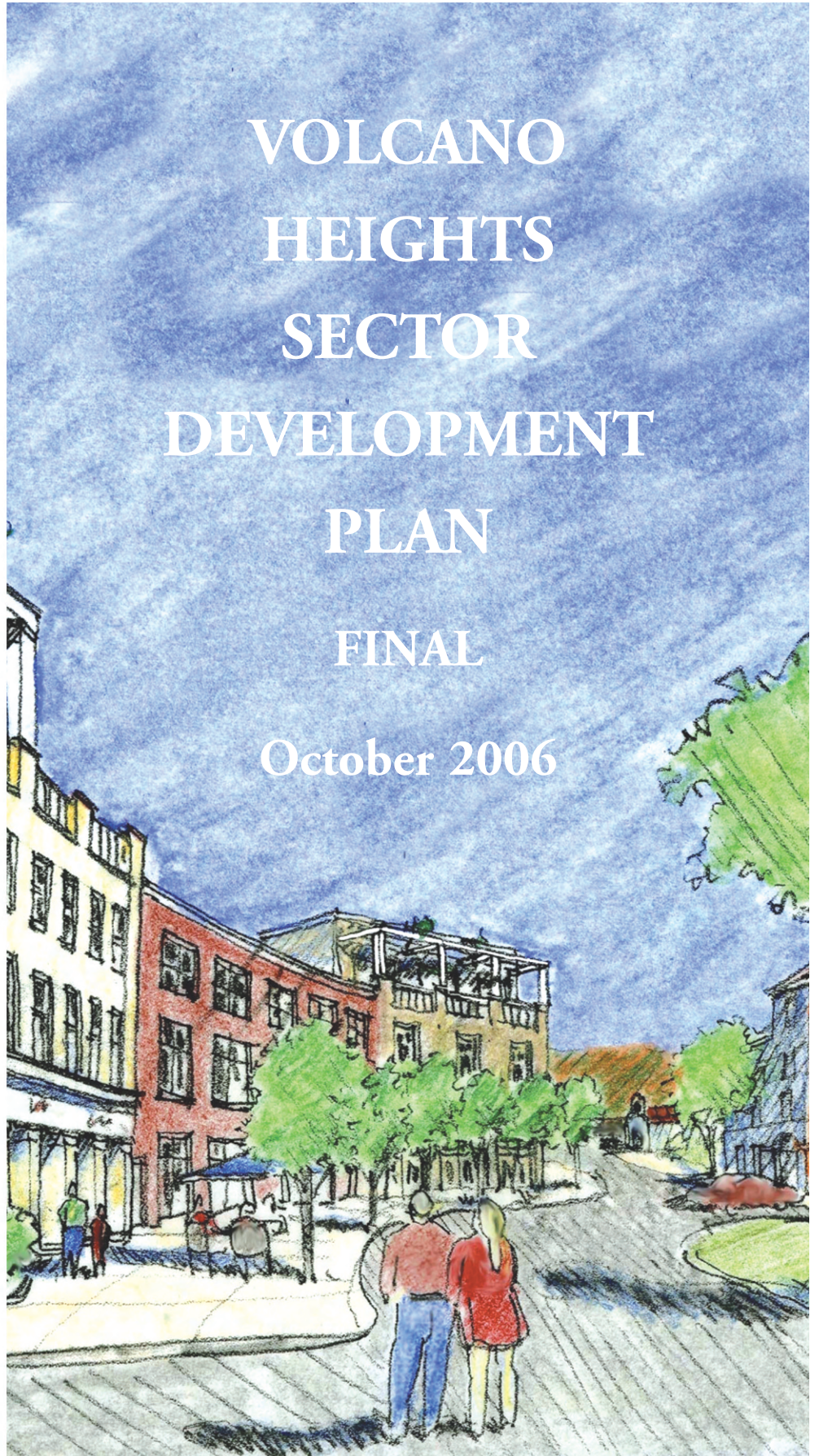


VOLCANO
HEIGHTS
SECTOR
DEVELOPMENT
PLAN
FINAL

October 2006



VOLCANO HEIGHTS
SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PLAN

FINAL

October 2006

Prepared for the City of Albuquerque

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Contents

Purpose and Authorityviii

Section One–Planning Framework

I. Conditions and Considerations1

1. PLAN AREA1

2. THE MEANING OF PLACE: NATURAL AND CULTURAL FEATURES .4

3. GEOLOGICAL AND SOIL CONDITIONS9

4. TREATMENT OF NATURAL FEATURES13

5. PLATTING AND ZONING16

6. WATER UTILITIES17

7. DEVELOPMENT TRENDS19

8. TRANSPORTATION AND TRANSIT20

II. Land Use Plans and Policies25

III. Planning Process27

1. COORDINATION WITH LAND OWNERS AND AGENCIES27

2. LAND USE SCENARIOS27

3. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PROCESS29

Design Workshops29

Presentations and Website Comments30

Concerns and Issues30

4. TRANSPORTATION STUDIES32

MRCOG Transportation Modeling32

Kimley-Horn Analysis34

5. VIEW ANALYSIS36

Section Two–Plan Elements

I. Fundamental Goals39

 NEIGHBORHOODS39

 TRANSPORTATION40

 EMPLOYMENT40

 OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS41

 VIEWS AND CULTURAL RESOURCES42

 DEVELOPMENT PHASING43

II. Transportation44

1. INTENT44

2. STREET NETWORK45

3. STREET DESIGN47

Cross Sections for Limited Access Roadways48

Cross Sections for Arterials51

Cross Sections for Collectors53

Cross Sections for Local Streets54

Traffic Calming Features55

4. TRANSIT NETWORK58

5. PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS62

6. TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT63

7. BICYCLE TRAIL NETWORK63

III. Land Use65

1. INTENT65

2. LAND USE PLAN66

3. REQUIRED USES IN MIXED USE AREAS68

4. DEVELOPMENT DENSITIES AND INTENSITIES69

5. ACCEPTABLE BUILDING TYPES71

6. PERMITTED AND LIMITED USES76

7. RURAL RESIDENTIAL PRIVATE COMMONS DEVELOPMENT78

8. UTILITY EASEMENTS AND FACILITIES79

9. AREAS PREVIOUSLY OMITTED FROM THE VOLCANO HEIGHTS
DEVELOPMENT MORATORIUM79

10. ILLUSTRATIVE PLANS AND URBAN FORM
DIAGRAMS FOR ACTIVITY CENTERS82

 Urban Form Diagrams82

 Town Center83

 Volcano Cliffs Village Center85

 Universe Village Center86

 Rainbow Village Center87

IV. Urban Design88

1. INTENT88

2. BUILDING HEIGHTS AND SETBACKS90

3. PUBLIC BUILDING STANDARDS92

4. OTHER ESSENTIAL BUILDING-STREET RELATIONSHIPS93

5. PARKING STANDARDS97

6. CONSERVATION DEVELOPMENT AND
DEVELOPMENT ENVELOPES99

Intent and Definitions99

Requirements100

Conservation Design Features101

Rural Residential Private Commons Development102

Development Envelopes103

V. Architectural and Landscape Design104

1. INTENT104

2. VIEW SHED FINDINGS105

3. ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN STANDARDS108

4. LANDSCAPE DESIGN STANDARDS110

5. APPROPRIATE PLANTING LISTS114

- VI. Open Space115
 - 1. CHARACTER AND INTENT115
 - 2. ARROYOS AND DRAINAGE120
 - 3. PETROGLYPH NATIONAL MONUMENT BUFFER121
 - 4. NEIGHBORHOOD EDGE / TRANSITIONS122
 - 5. ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES122
 - 6. MULTI-USE TRAILS123
 - 7. PARKS124
 - 8. SCENIC CORRIDORS125
 - 9. ADJACENCY TO OPEN SPACE126

- VII. Implementation129
 - 1. INTENT129
 - 2. APPLICABLE REGULATIONS AND STANDARDS130
 - 3. GROWTH PHASING AND TIMING130
 - 4. IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS: PID, SAD, TIDD,
WORKFORCE HOUSING, AND PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS .133
 - 5. ADEQUATE PUBLIC FACILITIES137
 - Linking Residential Development Approval to School Facilities .138*
 - Linking Development to Roadway Capacity143*
 - 6. PARKS, OPEN SPACE, STORM DRAINAGE ACQUISITION144
 - 7. DEVELOPMENT APPROVALS145
 - 8. AMENDMENTS TO EXISTING PLANS147

- Appendix148
 - A. Northwest Mesa Escarpment Sector Plan149
 - B. Approved Colors150
 - C. Appendix - Native Plant List A152
 - D. Construction Mitigation158
 - E. Stormwater Design and Management Standards160
 - F. Definition: Qualified Archaeologist161
 - G. Kimley-Horn Memorandum162

Lists of maps and diagrams

EXHIBITS

1	City Designated Plan Area	1
2	Built or Approved Projects	2
3	Aerial Context and Roadway Network	3
4	Natural and Cultural Features	5
5	Petroglyphs	6
6	Paths	8
7	Lava Flows	10
8	Soil Series Map	11
9	Parks and Natural Drainages	14
10	Stormwater Infrastructure	15
11	Comprehensive Plan Designations and Zoning	16
12	Water Pressure Zones	18
13	Long Range Roadway System	21
14	Long Range High Capacity Transit System	23
15	Long Range Bikeway System	24
16	Comparison of Initial Scenarios	28
17	2025 Baseline PM LOS	32
18	2025 MTP Peak Hour Volumes	33
19	Visual Sensitivity	37
20	Road Network	46
21	Limited Access Arterials Key Map	49
22	Transit Network	59
23	Proposed Long Range High Capacity Transit System	60
24	Bicycle Trail Network	64
25	Land Use Plan	67
26	Higher Density Residential Building Types	72
27	Lower Density Residential Building Types	73
28	Non-Residential Building Types	75
29	Building Heights Concept Map	91
30	View Shed Analysis Observations 1 and 2	106
31	View Shed Analysis Observations 6 and 9	107
32	Allowed Perimeter Fencing	110
33	Open Space and Scenic Corridors Plan	118
34	Multi-Use Trail Network	119
35	Parks and Open Space Acquisition Source Map	127

EXHIBITS CONTINUED

36 Trail Maintenance Responsibility Map128
 37 Phasing Diagram131
 38 Public Improvement District / Special Assessment District .135
 39 Tax Increment for Development District136
 40 Elementary Schools and Service Areas at Build Out140
 41 Elementary Schools and Service Areas Initial Phase141
 42 Elementary Schools and Service Areas Intermediate Phase ..142

DIAGRAMS

1 Street Network45
 2 Maximum Block Size47
 3 Sidewalk/Street/Tree Relationship47
 4 Traffic Calming Features55
 5 Street Lighting57
 6 Swale Streets57
 7 Transit-Oriented Development61
 8 Mixed Retail, Housing and Employment65
 9 Average Density–Urban Residential70
 10 Methods for Intensifying Platted Lots70
 11 Desirable Building Street Patterns88
 12 Suburban Residential Building Heights and Setbacks92
 13 Street Facing Public Building Entry92
 14 Mixed-Use/Commercial Setbacks93
 15 Town Center, Village Centers & Live-Work with Storefronts 93
 16 Town and Village Centers, Office and
 Urban Residential without Storefronts94
 17 Mixed-Use Commercial Street Frontage Length94
 18 Transparency94
 19 Street Facing Residential Entries95
 20 Buildings Oriented to Courtyard95
 21 Garages and Residential Street Frontage96
 22 Appropriate Parking Configurations97
 23 Conservation Easements and Development Envelopes99
 24 Conservation Development Lot Patterns100
 25 Traditional Elements that Respond to Climate108
 26 Mechanical Equipment109
 27 Front Walls110
 28 Naturalistic Grading111
 29 Alternatives to Mass Grading112
 30 Benefits of Natural Drainage & Infiltration Opportunities .113
 31 Swale Streets113

DIAGRAMS CONTINUED

32 Arroyo Setbacks120
 33 Arroyo Street Frontage Requirements120
 34 Lighting Along Arroyos and Monument121
 35 Arterials and Collectors Adjacent to Unique Features125
 36 Arroyo Crossings126

FIGURES

1 Pueblo View7
 2 Conceptual Design of Paseo del Norte Boulevard35
 3. Live-Work Unit74

CROSS SECTIONS

1 Paseo del Norte 6 Lane plus BRT 48
 2 Paseo del Norte 6 Lane without BRT,
 Unser 6 Lane without BRT, Unser 4 Lane plus BRT 48
 3 Paseo del Norte Access Lane Both Sides–Urban Blvd. 50
 4 Unser Blvd. Access Lane One Side–Urban Blvd. 50
 5 Unser Blvd. – 4 Lane,
 Rainbow – Principal Arterial 4 Lane 51
 6 Unser Blvd. through the Escarpment 51
 7 Paseo del Norte at Escarpment 6 Lane plus BRT 51
 8 Principal Arterial 4 Lane with Parkway 52
 9 Minor Residential Arterial 52
 10 Minor Retail Arterial 52
 11 2 Lane Residential Collector 53
 12 2 Lane Retail Collector 53
 13 (a.) Town Center Parkway BRT at Median Typical,
 (b.) Town Center Parkway at Platform BRT at Median,
 (c.) Town Center Parkway BRT at Outer Curb 53-54
 14 Typical Local Street 54
 15 Mid-Block Lane 55

ILLUSTRATIVE PLANS

1 Town Center84
 2 Volcano Cliffs Village Center 85
 3 Universe Village Center 86
 4 Rainbow Village Center 87

TABLES

1 Trend Scenario Assumptions19

2 Employment Deficits under Different Alternatives20

3 Comparison of PM Peak Traffic Volumes34

4 Required Uses in Mixed-use Areas68

5 Development Densities and Intensities69

6 Residential Densities69

7 Open Space Requirements for Urban and
Mixed-Use Residential70

8 Acceptable Residential Building Types71

9 Acceptable Non-Residential Building Types74

10 Permitted and Limited Uses76

11 Building Heights and Setbacks90

12 Parking Standards97

13 Minimum Lot Size and Trail / Linear Park Dedication
Requirements102

14 Plant Lists114

15 Open Space, Parks and Drainage Funding144

16 Land Acquisition Funding Sources, Acreage, and Current
Estimated Costs145

17 Development Review Processes146

Purpose and Authority

City legislation has guided the planning process for Volcano Heights.

On October 4, 2004 the City Council initiated the planning work by calling for a study of the Volcano Cliffs plan area (now called “Volcano Heights”) to be completed in six months and instituting a moratorium on development (Bill No. R-04-145, Enactment No. R-2004-115). Subdivisions that had received preliminary plat approval were exempted from the development moratorium. Finding that “The Volcanic Escarpment of the Northwest Mesa has long been considered a unique landscape that requires special protection” the Council expressed concerns over development trends with subdivisions being approved piecemeal without the guidance of an overall plan for the area.

The Council saw the need for a plan that would bring development in line with the West Side Strategic Plan, the Northwest Mesa Escarpment Plan, the Albuquerque / Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan, and other previously established policies such as Executive Communication EC-35. Issues to be addressed included transportation, drainage, water and wastewater, land uses, view corridors, building height, massing and orientation, walls, parks, trails and open space, and phasing and timing of growth.

Six months later on April 4, 2005 the Council received the *Volcano Heights Planning Study* report (Bill No. R-05-263, Enactment No. R-2005-052) as a foundation and guide to continue the planning and implementation process under a moratorium for a year. On March 6, 2006 (Bill No. R-06-44, Enactment No. R-2006-025) the Council extended the moratorium and set hearing dates for the Plan. In the meantime and throughout the planning process, subdivisions already in the City’s development approval process exempted from the moratorium (including Vista Vieja and Longford) were reviewed to bring design more closely in line with adopted and recommended policies.

Certain policies and regulations as specified in the *Volcano Heights Sector Development Plan* apply to portions of these formerly exempted areas which do not have final plat approval. Areas which received final plat approval during the planning process retain original zoning and are excluded from the new zoning categories of the sector plan.

The *Volcano Heights Planning Study* forecasts over 100,000 additional residents in the plan area and adjoining areas on the Northwest Mesa. The Study identified several issues to be addressed through further planning: jobs/housing imbalances caused by build-out with single-family subdivisions; anticipated traffic congestion and burden on West Side transportation systems; need for transit-supportive densities and design; need for consolidation and connection of open space and trails along drainage channels; and retaining access to exceptional views.

Given the development pressures the area now is experiencing, a plan guiding development in the area is long overdue. The goal of this process is a plan that results in more sustainable development benefiting property owners, West Side residents and the larger community.

The Volcano Heights Planning Management Team included the City Council Office and the City Planning Department.

Section One

Planning Framework

I

Conditions and Considerations

1. PLAN AREA

The Volcano Heights Plan Area (See **Exhibit 1, City Designated Plan Area**) covers 3,532 acres. The area is surrounded on three sides by more than 7,000 acres of open space under City, State and Federal jurisdictions. The shape of the open space holdings includes large tracts and long, narrow bands of escarpment. The Plan Area includes portions of the land the US Congress set aside as Petroglyph National Monument (the “Monument”) in 1990. From east to west, the Plan Area extends from the volcanic escarpment to the open space surrounding five dormant volcanoes. From north to south, the Plan Area extends from Paseo del Norte to city open space and the Monument. The dotted lines on Exhibit 1 indicate subdivisions that had received preliminary plat approval as of October 11, 2004 and were not subject to the City Council development moratorium.

Exhibit 2, Built or Approved Projects shows the relationship of the Plan Area to Albuquerque’s West Side jurisdictions and development patterns and includes location of major utility easements. **Exhibit 3, Aerial Context and Roadway Network** provides an overview of the existing and proposed transportation system overlaid on an aerial view of the Plan Area and surroundings.

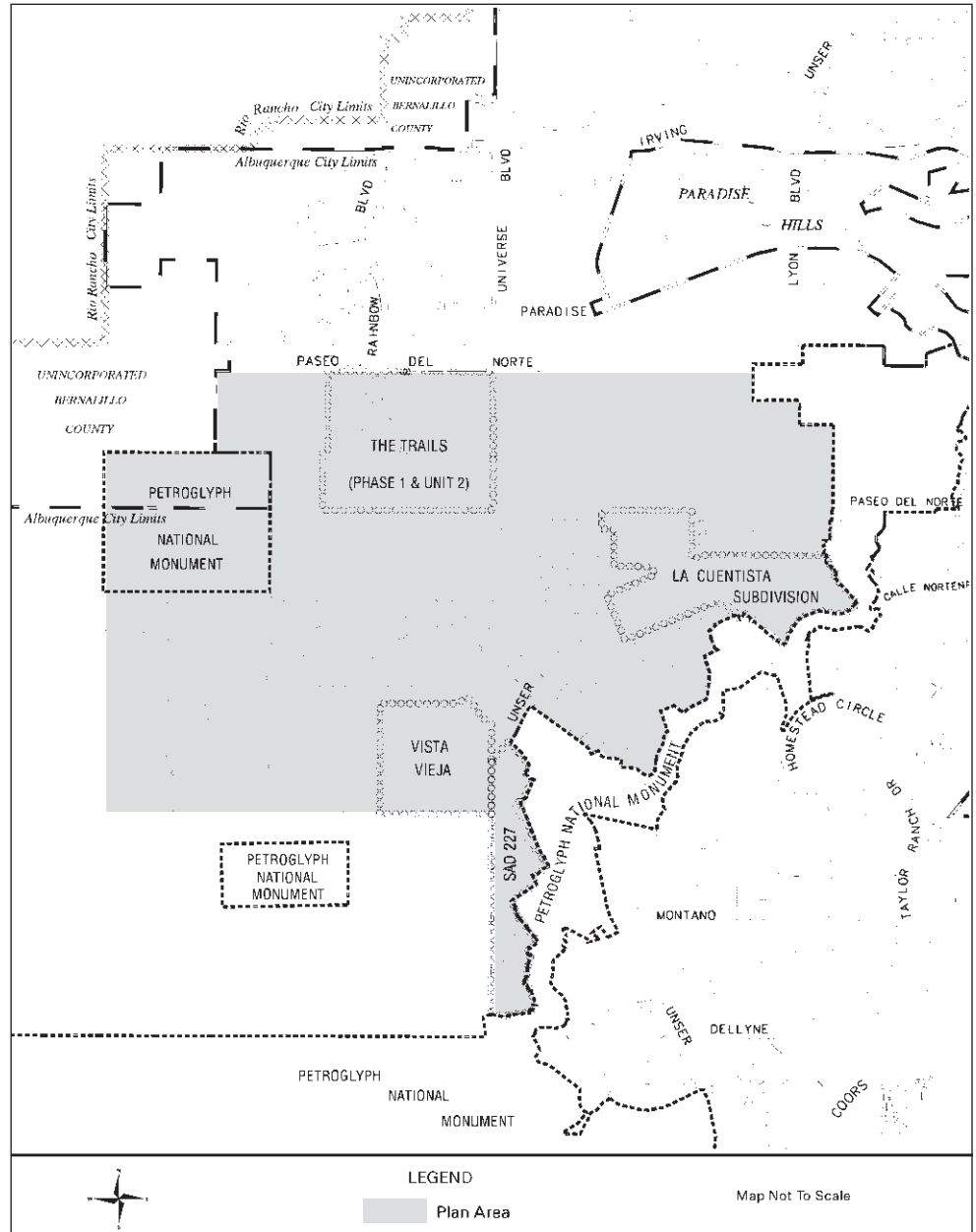


Exhibit 1
City Designated Plan Area

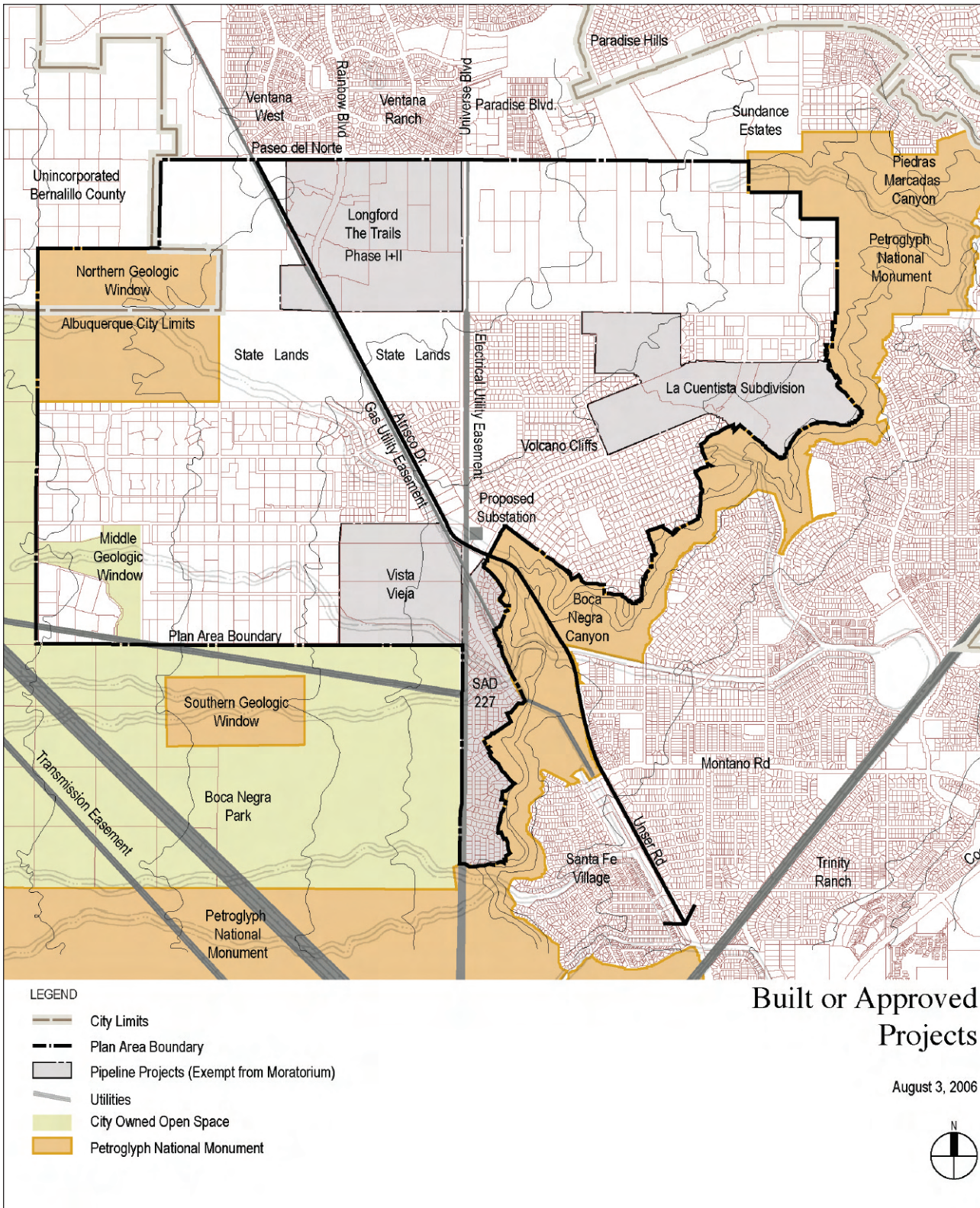
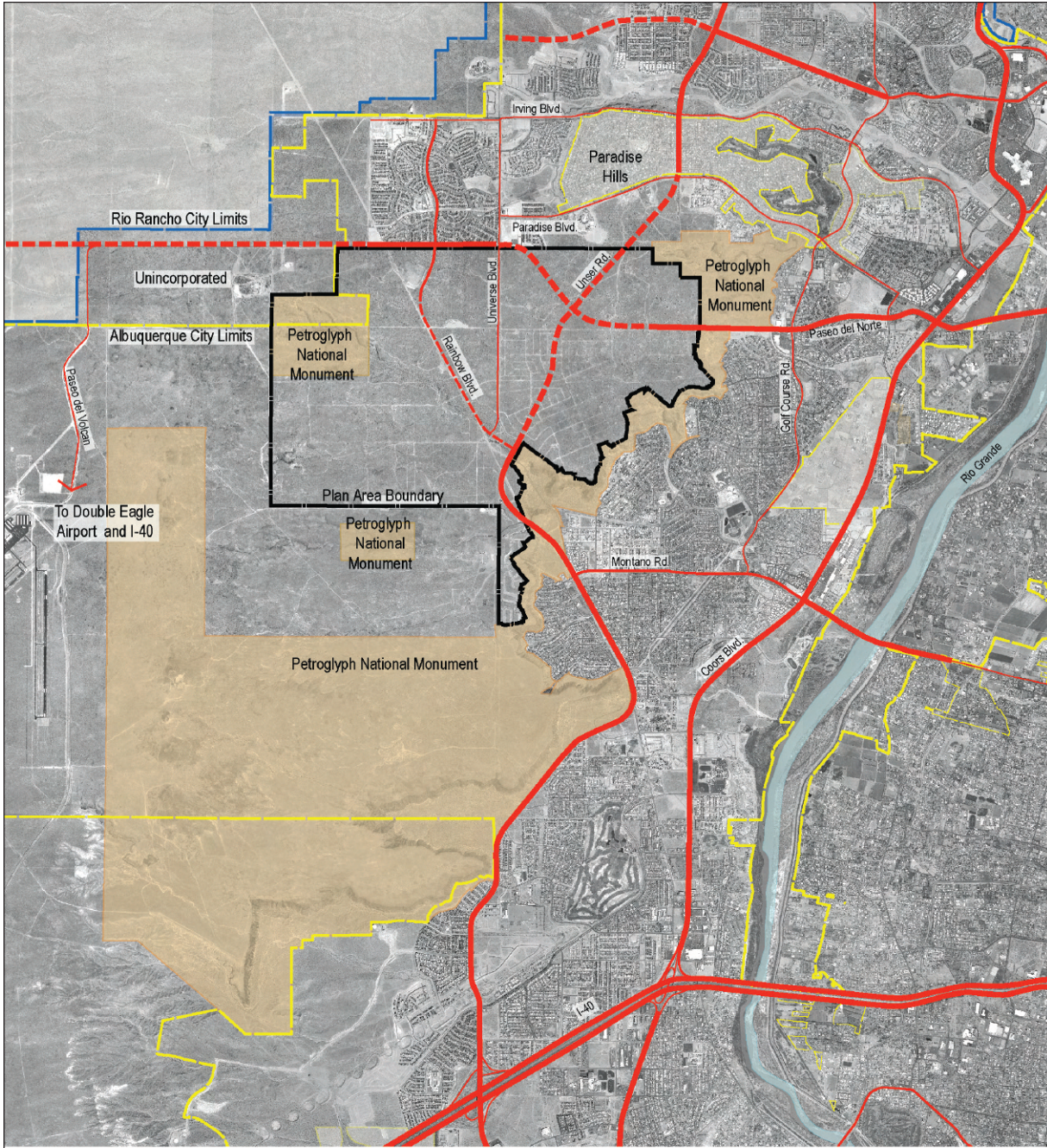











Exhibit 2



LEGEND

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  Freeway |  Albuquerque City Limits |
|  Limited Access Roadway |  Rio Rancho City Limits |
|  Proposed Limited Access Roadway |  Bernalillo County |
|  Principal Arterial | |
|  Minor Arterial | |
|  Plan Area | |

Aerial Context and Roadway Network

May 1, 2006



Exhibit 3

2. THE MEANING OF PLACE: NATURAL AND CULTURAL FEATURES

(See **Exhibit 4, *Natural and Cultural Features***)

Volcano Heights lies between publicly owned lands preserving the escarpment and lands protecting the volcanoes and geologic windows. Arroyos generally run west to east between these features.

Volcano Heights provides a unique portal into New Mexico's rich interplay of cultures. Most Albuquerque residents recognize the Monument as an important asset and associate it with the five volcanic cones and the 17-mile Escarpment containing petroglyphs.

There are more than 20,000 petroglyphs dating from 700 to 3,000 years ago carved here and in other places within the Monument. A 2002 National Park Service ethnographic study—“*That Place People Talk About: The Petroglyph National Monument, Ethnographic Landscape Report*,” Anschuetz et al., 2002 (hereinafter referred to as “Anschuetz”) illuminates the still active religious and cultural value these sacred places hold for many Native Americans.

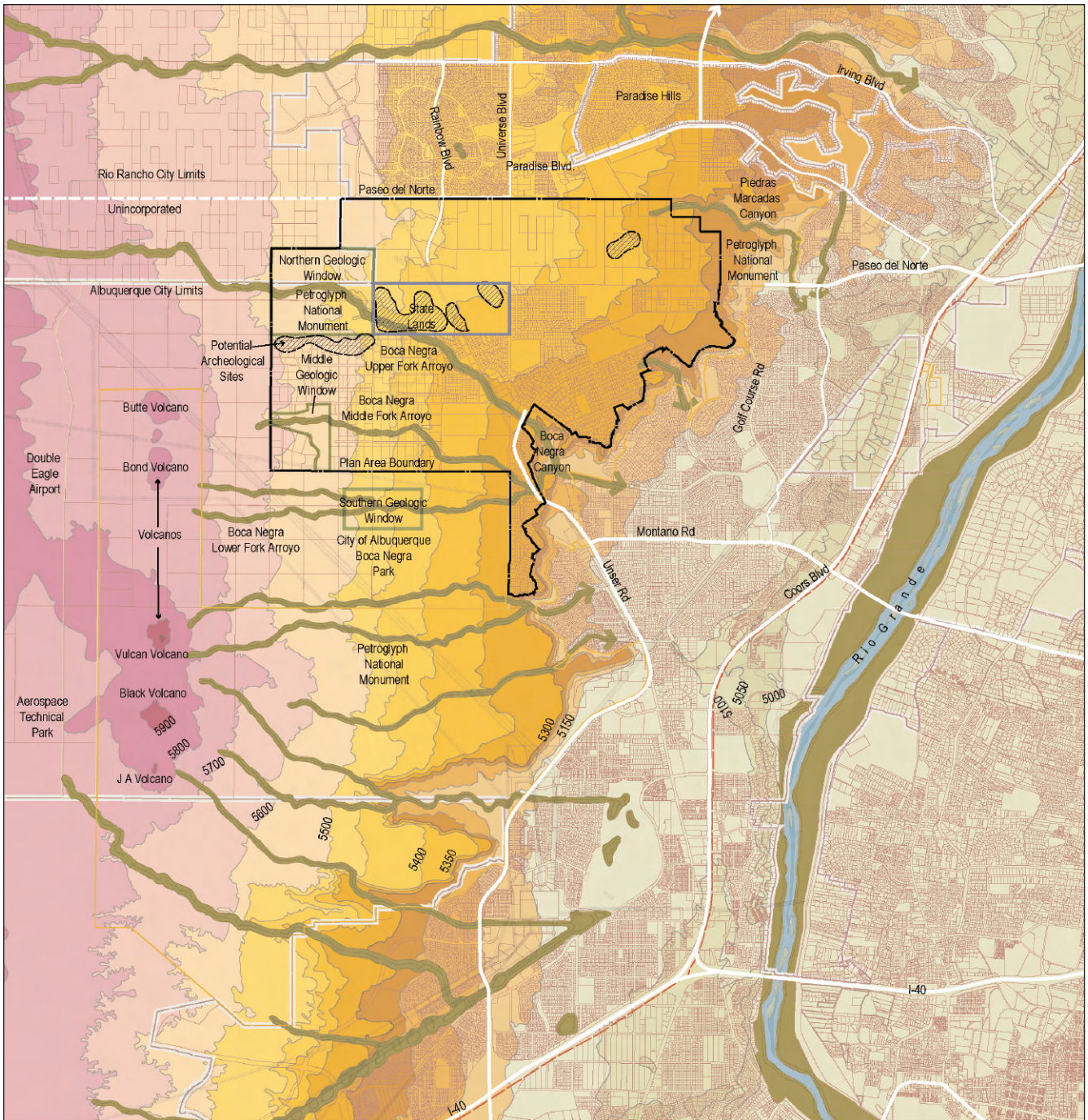
This rich document explores the meaning of the West Mesa volcanic area for Pueblo and other Native American and Hispanic people. Because of space limitations, the present document approaches the meaning of the West Mesa area from the Rio Grande Pueblos' perspective; the reader is encouraged to read the entire *Ethnographic Landscape Report*.

The Monument legal boundaries were influenced by financial resources available for land acquisition. For the Pueblos, however, the site encompasses the entire lava bed, the volcanoes' caves and shafts, the petroglyphs, and additional features of comparable importance in meaning and use. As planners, residents, and visitors, our responsibilities to the Volcano Heights area are the same as to the National Monument. Anschuetz 3.31, 9.9 writes: “Land-use planning in the face of development, to be successful, needs to consider how to *sustain* extant landscape traditions within an ongoing historical process”

Petroglyphs. According to Anschuetz, the petroglyphs focus Pueblo people's concentration and prayer. Not just realistic representations of specific animals or people, the images are used to transmit thought, energy, and learning across space and time into other dimensions within a defined and bounded world.

Shrines, Caves, Lava Tubes in Volcanoes, Recesses in the Escarpment Face, and Elsewhere. Various other West Mesa sites function with the petroglyphs as an interlocking system of spiritual communication. The lava tubes and caves near two northernmost Volcanoes west of the Plan Area contained shell beads, pendants, turquoise, hematite, selenite, mica, colored pebbles, prayer sticks, and feathers. These are places “where the world breathes” and prayers are directed. Arrangements of stones, boulders with pecked and ground facets, stone piles, prominent boulders, recesses in the Escarpment, or rock spires are similarly meaningful. (Anschuetz, 3.24-25) See **Exhibit 5, *Petroglyphs***.

The Pueblo World is often depicted as a bowl in the landscape with the community's plaza at its center, extending to distant mountains, with upper and lower realms as the places of the gods, the deceased, water, breath, transformation, and more. Along the Rio Grande, the West Mesa's Volcanic cones, the Escarpment, the Sandia Mountains and more distant mountains were the periphery of the former Pueblos' world. (Anschuetz, 3.3, 3.8, 3.14)



LEGEND

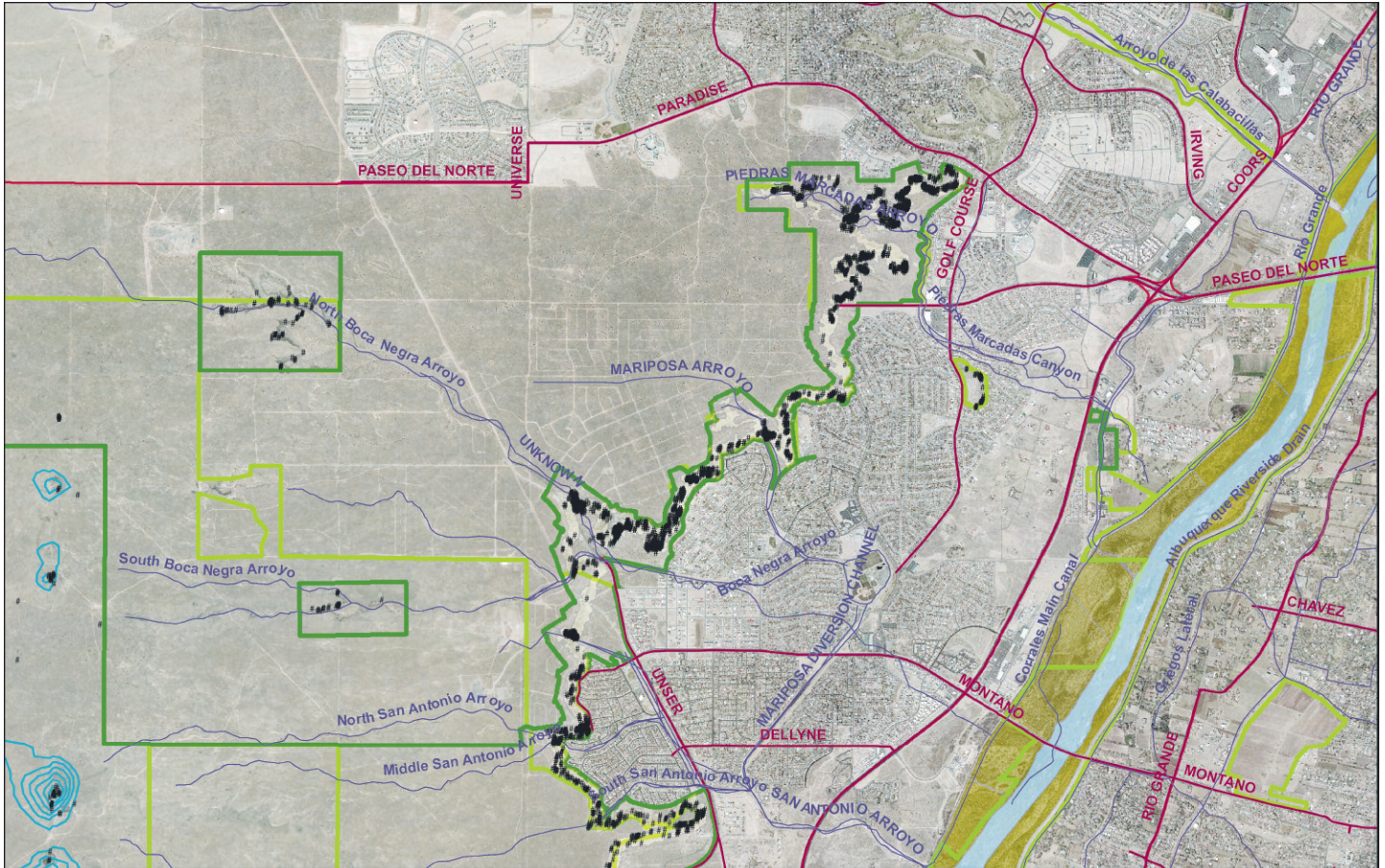
- City Limits
- Plan Area Boundary
- Petroglyph National Monument
- Drainage
- Utilities
- Archeological Sites
(hatching represent NPS data, additional study needed)
- Slopes over 8%

Natural and Cultural Features

December 3, 2006



Exhibit 4



Legend

- # Petroglyph Sites
- Volcano
- Stream
- Escarpment
- Rio Grande
- Present-day Bosque
- City Open Space
- Petroglyph National Monument

Petroglyphs

Volcano Heights
City of Albuquerque
City Council Services



Exhibit 5

Plazas physically express the Pueblos' center and open the villages to the landscape. Pueblo people channel blessings across the landscape through shrines and special places, and the blessings intersect with the upper and lower worlds, where they are transformed and gain increased power. As they return to the people, these strengthened blessings renew the cycle of life from the plaza center. (Anschuetz, 3.8-3.12) See **Figure 1, Pueblo View** (3.13)

The Sandia Mountains. On one edge of the bowl that forms the Pueblo World, the Sandias are the home for important shrines and the highest earth spirits, who protect the communities below and visit the West Mesa lava bed. (Anschuetz, 3.21-22)

Pathways. Trails connecting former villages along the Rio Grande with each other ran up the valley slopes and Escarpment, past the petroglyphs and shrines, to the volcanoes and mountains beyond. The trails were used for hunting, gathering, agricultural, and traditional and cultural activities. Because in Pueblo life, there is little separation of the functional from the spiritual, the paths form an interrelated flow of energy and movement along the trails that can be considered a ritual pilgrimage. (Anschuetz, 3.31, 3.33-34). **Exhibit 6, Paths** illustrates many of the paths in and around the Volcano Heights area so the reader may visualize the petroglyph concentrations on the Escarpment paths such as along the Boca Negra and the Piedras Marcadas arroyos that lead to the volcanic cones.

Significance. Together, the elements described above constitute a world view that symbolizes a transformative healing process emanating from the West Mesa. In Pueblo terms, this is a significant place for reestablishing harmony with the environment, one another, and the spiritual dimensions of life. Pueblo members, at the hearing to designate the Monument, said: "We pray for peace, good health, harmony among all people, and a long and happy life." (Anschuetz, 3.45-46)

In terms of the Volcano Heights planning process and of the area's future, Pueblo members have recognized that change is part of life, but "it has to be transformed in terms of continuing," through "respect, connectedness—which is love." (Anschuetz, 3.15). The Volcano Heights Plan respects this intent in the following ways:

- Expanding the narrow edge of the Escarpment to allow more reflective space at a greater distance from the built environment;
- Maintaining the travel paths along the arroyo courses from the Pueblo sites on the Rio Grande valley floor, through the Escarpment, the Monument's North and Middle Geologic Windows, and to the Volcanic cones;
- Protecting view sheds from the North Geologic Window and the cones of the northern most Volcanoes to the Sandia Mountains and the Rio Grande;
- Providing ample open space, particularly in the developed areas on the west side of the Plan Area;
- Including a plant list for the open space and conservation areas drawn from native species in the area;
- Encouraging adequate jobs-housing balance and enhanced opportunities for walking, biking, lanes set aside for High Occupancy Vehicles (HOV), and transit trips to reduce congestion and pollution;

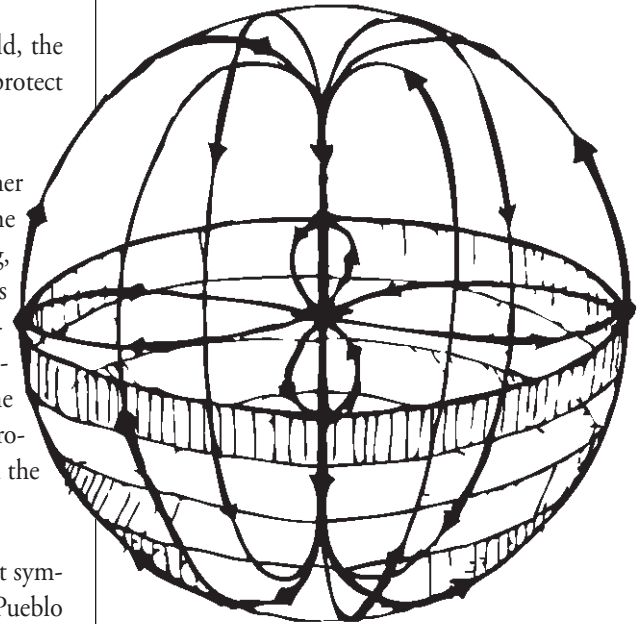
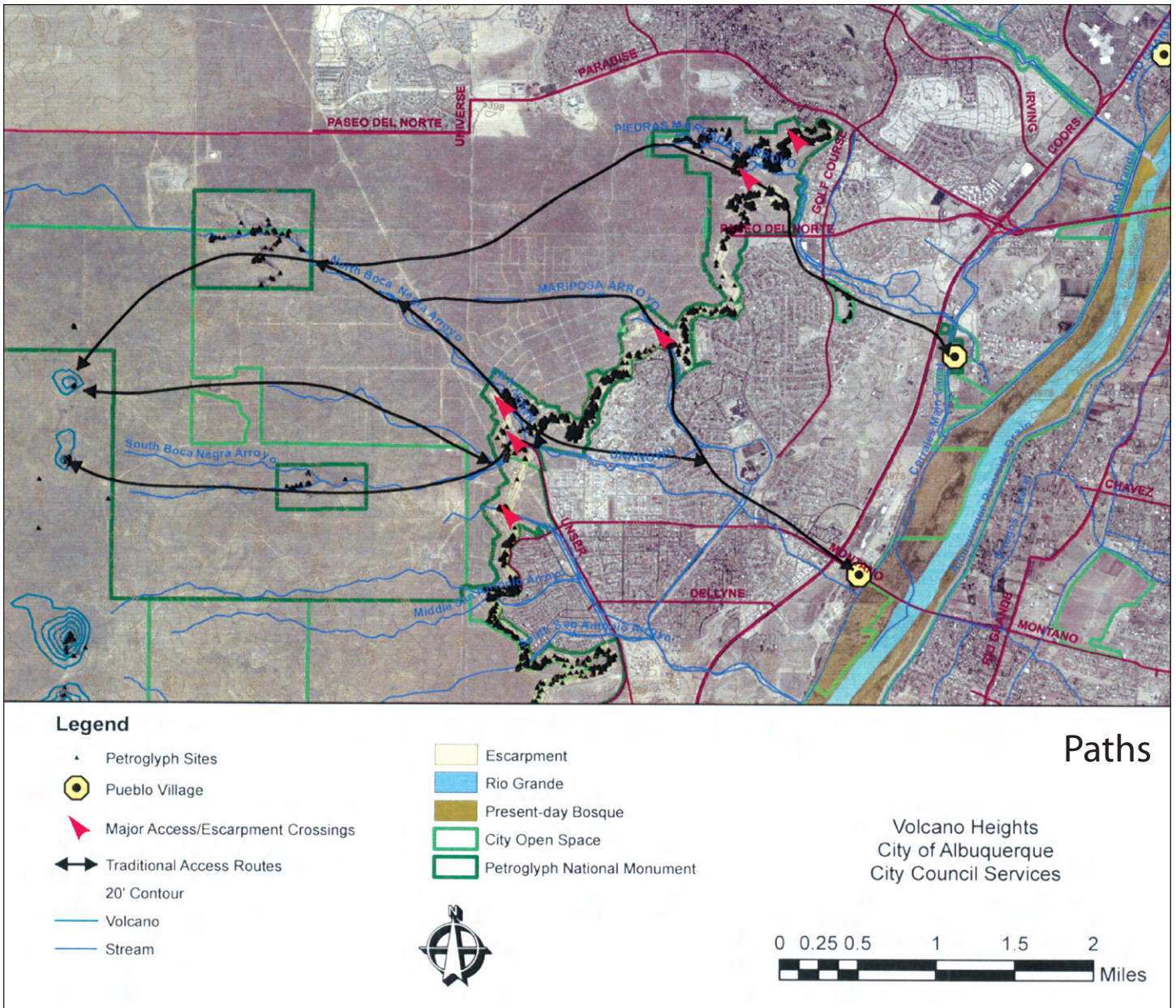


Figure 1
Pueblo View

The movement of life energy throughout the realms of the Pueblo world. (from Wentzell 1990a: Figure 3-5).



- Establishing plazas that focus the active life of the community, including young people in school.

These are included in the Plan not just because they reflect traditional values, but also because they incorporate good planning principles.

The Volcano Heights Plan only will succeed through resident and user acceptance of the principles guiding it. Celestino Gachupin of Zia Pueblo has said: “The petroglyphs... belong to all of us now, not only the native people,...the individual family that has a home that abuts the monument...you are our eyes and ears now, as far as ensuring that nothing bad happens to the place.” All must become caretakers, recognizing and understanding the importance of the place to all people, and respecting it. Volcano Heights should continue to be a healing place for the entire community, encouraging better balance with the environment and with one another.

Exhibit 6
Paths