

# 2.0

## *Village Background*

The Village of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque is located in the north valley region of Bernalillo County, seven miles from downtown Albuquerque, the heart of its urban neighbor. The incorporated limits of the Village contain 2,500 acres.

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

Communities are enabled under New Mexico Statutes to prepare and adopt a general plan for the physical development within their municipal boundaries and planning and platting jurisdiction. In addition, the Village of Los Ranchos has extraterritorial jurisdiction approximately three miles wide over land in unincorporated Bernalillo County.

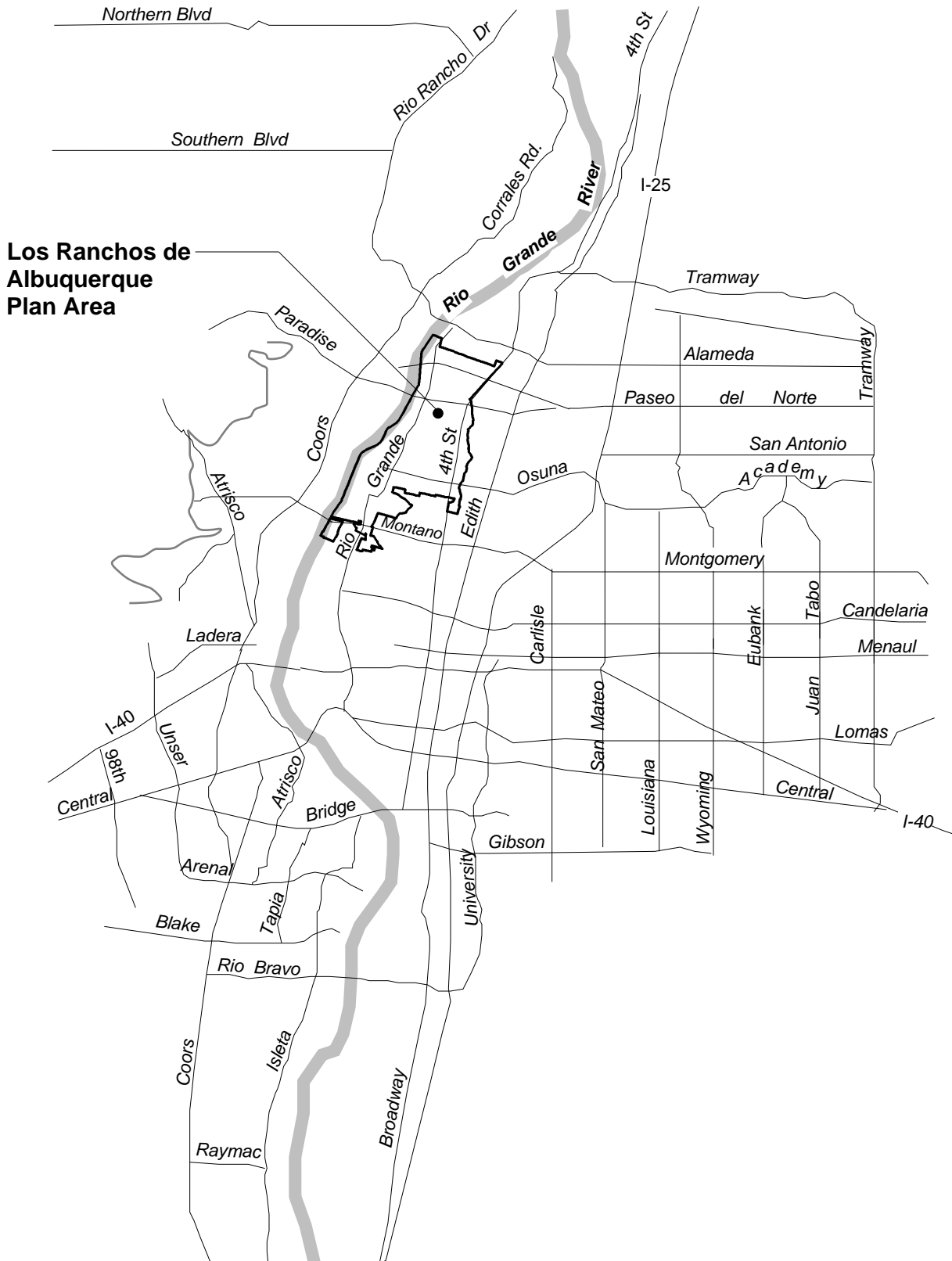
### **2.1 Village History**

The area containing the Village of Los Ranchos has been settled by humans for at least 2500 years. During the Spanish Colonial period, there were a series of adobe villages scattered throughout the north valley, including a community settled around a small plaza called San Jose 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 settlements. By 1920, however, much land was out of production because of recurrent flooding and poor drainage. In response to this

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## Exhibit 2-1: Village Location Map



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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 in the late 1950's.

The Village of Los Ranchos is an incorporated municipality which was formed under the laws of the state of New Mexico on December 29, 1958. The original Los Ranchos townsite in 1958 was located between Guadalupe Trail and Rio Grande, north of Chavez, and south of Los Ranchos. The character of the community was largely homogeneous, rural and agricultural. Over the past 40 years, additional territory has been annexed into the Village (Exhibit 2-2). During that time, the Village has lost considerable open expanses and agricultural usage to residential development (Building Densities, Exhibit 2-3a-c). The Village has tripled in population since 1970 (largely through annexation). The 1999 population of Los Ranchos is about 6,000 (Exhibit 6-1).

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 issues only in the event of a tie. At present, the Board of Trustees functions as the Planning and Zoning Commission.

### **2.2 Regional Context**

Los Ranchos is interconnected with the other jurisdictions in the Albuquerque Metropolitan area. The economic and social systems of the Village are

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**Exhibit 2-2: Annexation Map**

Exhibit 2-3a: Building Density in 1970

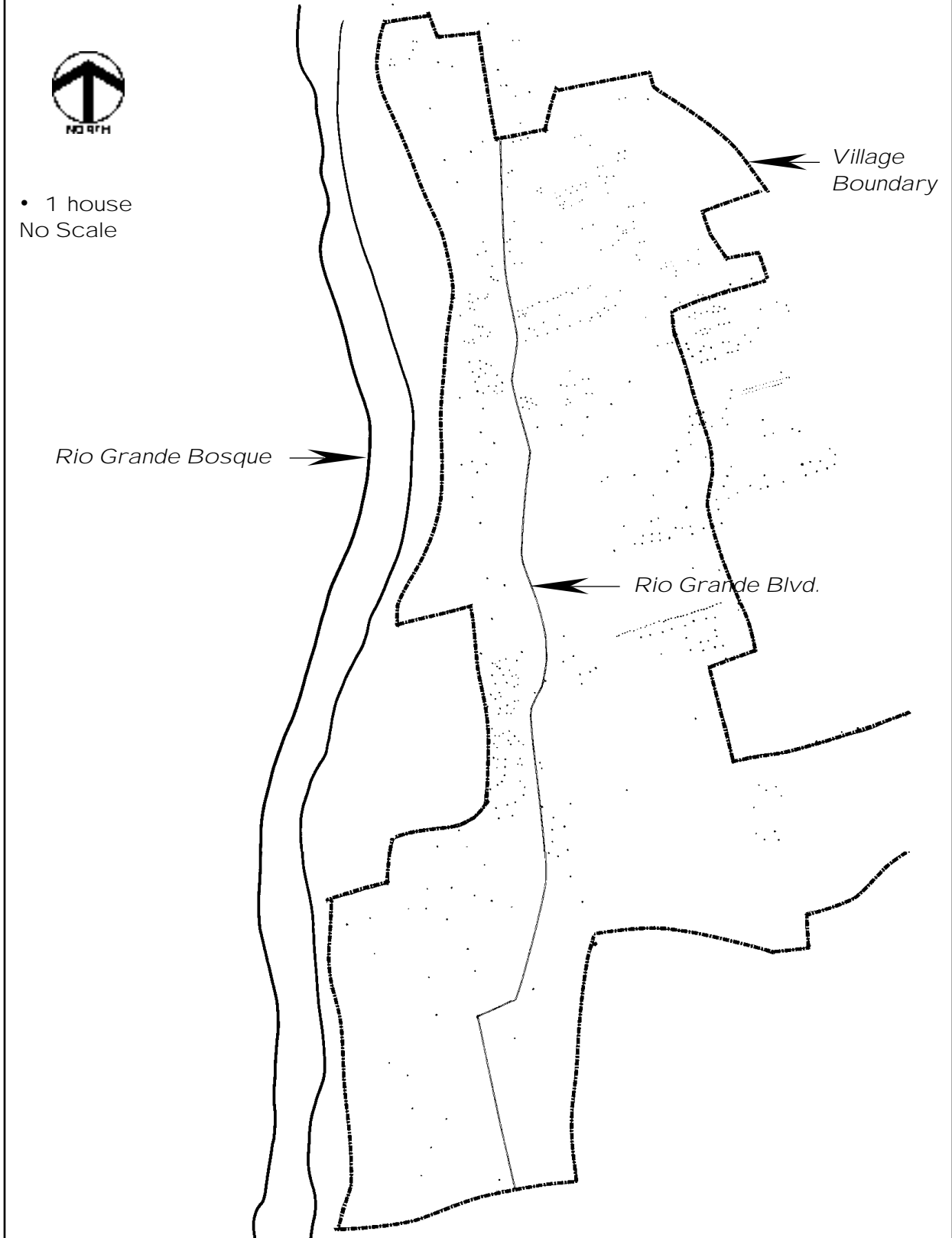


Exhibit 2-3b: Building Density in 1996

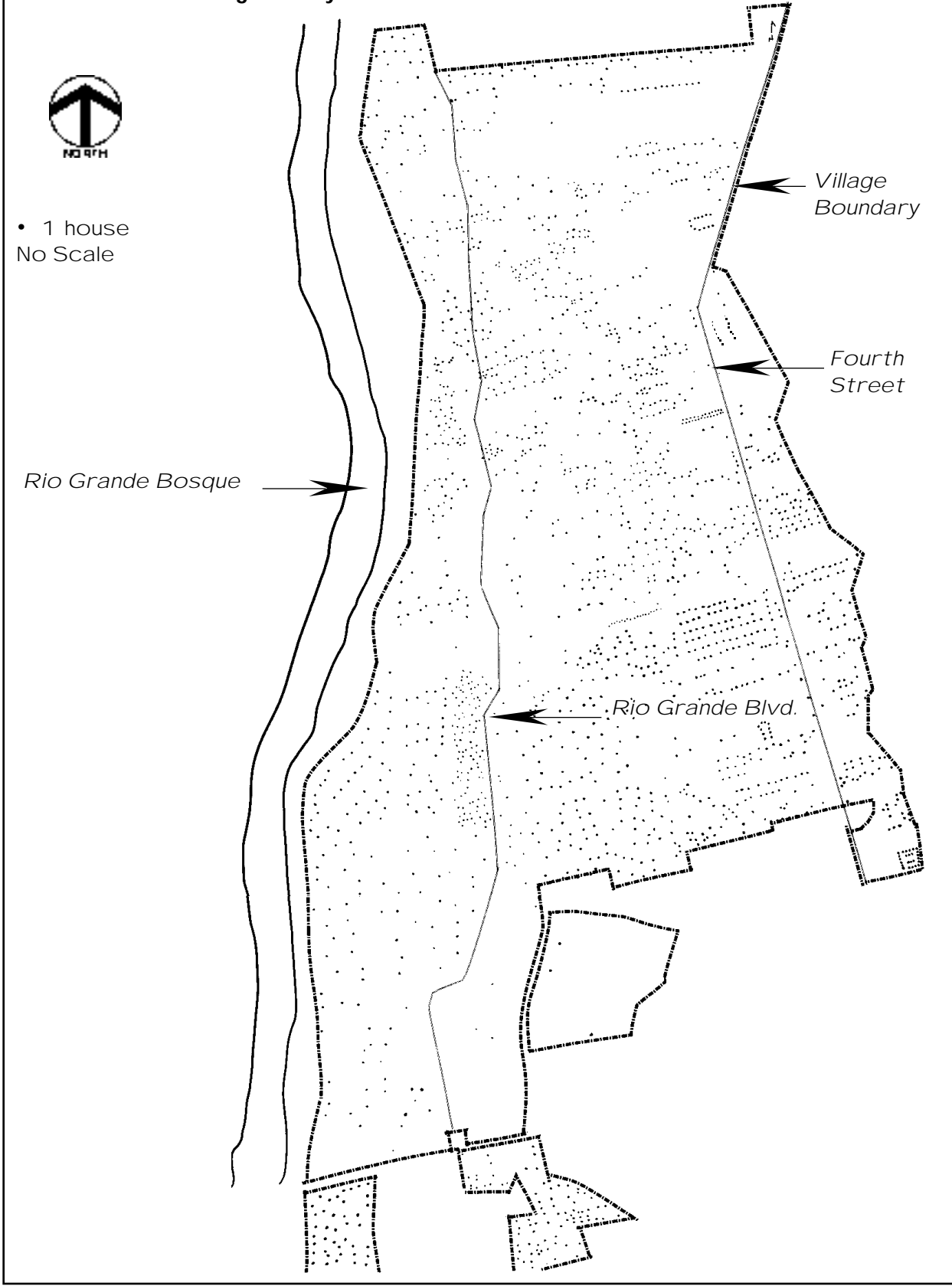
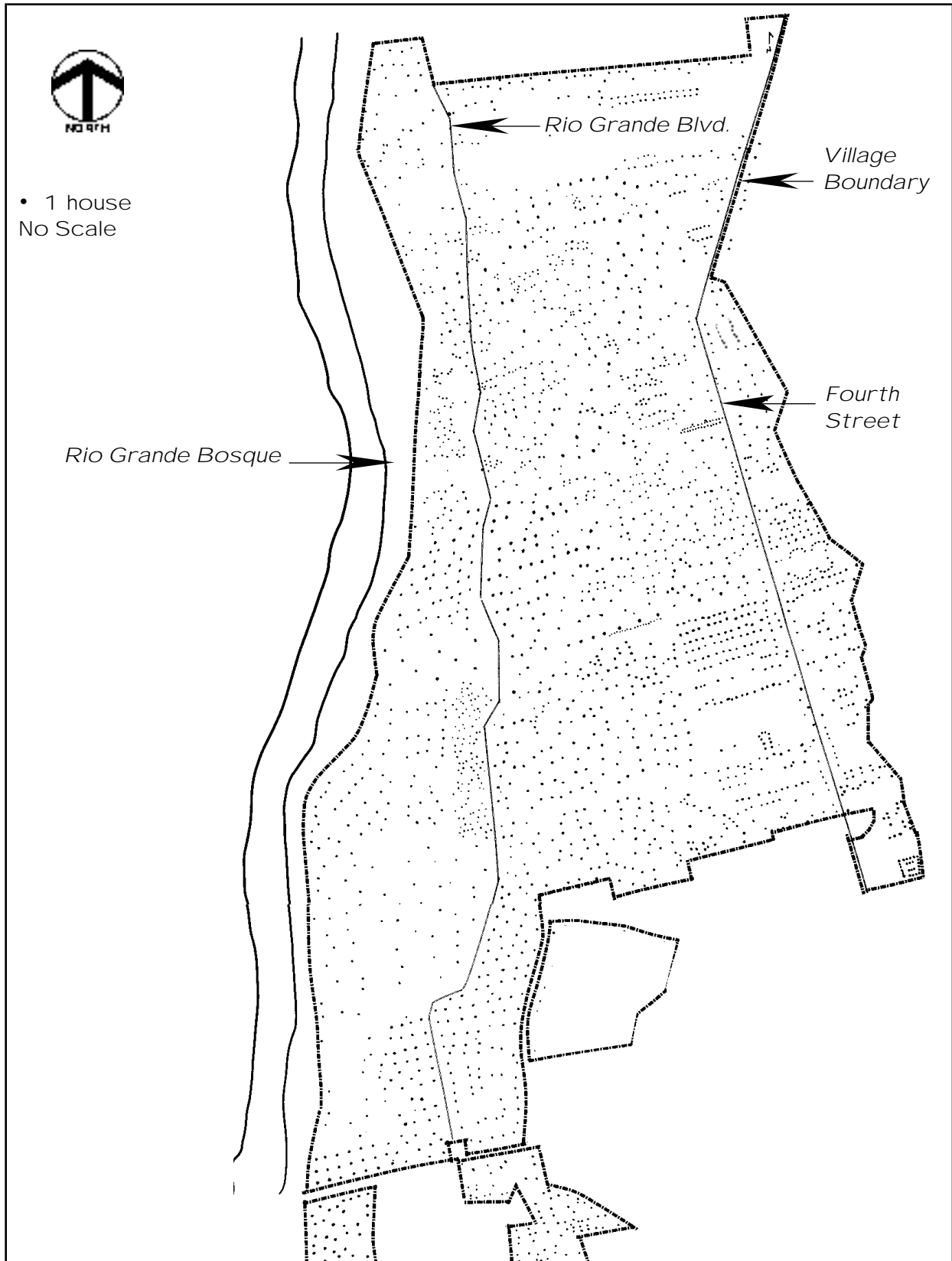


Exhibit 2-3c: Build-Out Density Under Current Zoning



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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.

- The Village shares the metropolitan transportation network with its neighbors. Four major routes (Fourth Street, Rio Grande Boulevard, Montañño and Paseo Del Norte) traverse the Village. Two other arterials, Second Street and Alameda Boulevard, lie on the borders of the Village's planning jurisdiction.
- The Village, along with other jurisdictions, share the irrigation and drainage system. This system is owned and maintained by the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (MRGCD).
- Los Ranchos 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. In 1998, the state legislature enabled creation of a regional water/wastewater utility board, via a joint powers agreement between the city of Albuquerque, Bernalillo County and the Village. Currently, a representative of the Village sits on the Board and has been given one vote.
- The police 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.
- Per agreement, the Village, Bernalillo County, and City of Albuquerque cooperate in providing fire protection to the area.

### *Regional Interdependence:*

Los Ranchos depends upon many regional services:

- Transportation network
- Irrigation and drainage system
- Rio Grande Bosque open space
- City of Albuquerque community water and sewer system
- Bernalillo County police
- Bernalillo County/Albuquerque fire services
- Albuquerque Public Schools

## *Village Services*



- Public Education is provided by Albuquerque Public Schools within and outside the Village limits. Higher education is provided by Technical Vocational Institute (TVI) and University of New Mexico (UNM) outside the village limits.
- Public and indigent health care is provided by University Medical Center. Private hospitals include St. Joseph, Lovelace, and Presbyterian Hospitals, among others. All are located outside the Village limits. A public health clinic is located on north Second Street.

*Existing Plans:*

- Los Ranchos Master Plan, 1992
- Fourth Street Revitalization Study, 1998
- North Valley Area Plan, 1993
- Bosque Action Plan, 1993
- 2020 Regional Transportation Plan, 1992
- North Valley Drainage Master Plan, 1988
- Trails and Bikeways Facility Plan, 1993
- Albuquerque Wastewater Master Plan, 1992

### **2.3 Existing Plans**

The 2010 Master Plan for the Village is intended to retain those concepts and principles of the 1992 Plan which are still viable while supplementing this with new conditions and community direction that may have arisen since that time.

#### **Los Ranchos Master Plan 1992**

The Village began to plan for the community in 1981 when village adopted the 1975 Albuquerque / Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan. By 1989, it was decided the Village should determine its own future by adopting a plan that would more closely represent the unique qualities of the community. Some of the more significant plan recommendations include:

- agriculture and rural residential are the primary uses in the Village.
- implement cluster housing policies.
- downzone most rural areas to A-2 and A-3 zoning.
- commercial uses are to be concentrated along Fourth Street.
- conduct a Fourth Street improvement study.
- require sanitary sewer hook-ups to all commercial and residential development as the new system comes on-line.
- all streets (including Fourth Street) are to be rural in character with no sidewalks, curb, gutter or lighting.

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- develop rural roadway design criteria for Guadalupe, Rio Grande and Fourth Street corridors.
- form a Ditch Committee to inventory and study the ditch system and advocate changes at MRGCD.

### **Fourth Street Revitalization Plan, 1998**

As part of the implementation of the 1992 Master Plan and in conjunction with the Fourth Street Corridor engineering study, a revitalization planning study was also prepared and accepted by the Board of Trustees. Some of the more significant recommendations include:

- A combination of public investment and incentives (roadway improvements, landscaping and pedestrian amenities) and regulatory tools be used to encourage appropriate development and redevelopment along the corridor.
- Strategies could include the development of a theme, concentrations of activity at neighborhood and Village centers and reinforcement of rural character through zoning and design guidelines (signage, landscaping, parking, etc.). Guidelines should be referenced in all site plan reviews.

### **Community Center Report, 1998**

Based on prioritized needs identified in a community questionnaire, the study recommended:

*Phase 1* - Renovation of the Old Village Hall for temporary use.

*Phase 2* - Construction of one large (2,000 s.f.) multipurpose room capable of dividing into two multipurpose rooms; 600 s.f. classroom; 350 s.f. kitchen; 250 s.f. office; 550 s.f. restrooms ;and maintenance and storage rooms. Total building area would be 4,500 s.f. estimated to cost \$485,400.

*Phase 3* - Construction of Specialized Use Rooms.

*Phase 4* - Community Swimming Pool.

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It is recommended the facility be built in a visible location. Recommendations also include coordinating with Bernalillo County Senior and Community Center programs.

### **2020 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, 1999**

The plan identifies street, bike and pedestrian facility, and transit improvements for the Albuquerque metropolitan area, including Los Ranchos, until the year 2020. Roadways within or near Los Ranchos listed for major reconstruction and rehabilitation include Fourth Street and Second Street. A neighborhood bus center is planned for Los Ranchos at Fourth Street and Osuna. A related plan is the City of Albuquerque/ Bernalillo County **Long-Range Major Streets Plan**.

### **North Valley Drainage Master Plan, Phase 1, 1998**

Identifies priority flood areas within the Village for storm drainage improvements. Eleven sites in the Village are identified, four are high priority. The majority of the flood problem sites are in the north and east parts of the Los Ranchos area. Future phases of the plan will include hydrological studies and development of solutions.

## *Village Cyclist*



### **Trails and Bikeways Facility Plan, 1996**

A number of multi-use trails are identified in this plan for the Los Ranchos area, including:

- Griegos Drain
- Rio Grande
- Griegos Lateral
- Gallegos Lateral
- Chamisal Lateral
- Chamisal Wasteway
- Alameda Drain
- Albuquerque Main Canal

In addition, Albuquerque's **Long Range Bikeways Plan** proposes bike routes along Guadalupe Trail, Chavez Road, and Chamisal/Roehl Roads through the Village.

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### **Albuquerque Wastewater Master Plan, 1992 (and North Valley Service Options Evaluation Study, 1994)**

Priorities for sanitary sewer service are identified by subareas based on weighted criteria (documented groundwater problems, soils, groundwater depth, water system availability, density of septic systems, etc.). In Los Ranchos, Area I, northwest and east sides of the Village, ranked highest in terms of system need. Area J, west side of Village ranked next, then Areas E and K, north and southwest parts of Village respectively, ranked last. Sewer service has largely been installed on the east side of the Village since the study was completed.

### **North Valley Area Plan, 1996**

The North Valley Area Plan, adopted by the City of Albuquerque and Bernalillo County, includes the Village within its scope, although it has never been formally adopted by the Village (because it has its own plan). Many of the issues faced by the Village relating to rural character are similar to those also identified in this plan. Some of the principles set out in the North Valley Area Plan include:

- *Agriculture and Rural Character* - "...farming, gardening, raising livestock, maintaining irrigated permanent pasture land, and related uses would be encouraged through market and tax incentives and through subdivision standards that provide for the retention of irrigation access and larger parcels."
- *Cluster Housing* - "Existing features that distinguish the valley, such as narrow roads and ditches, would be retained in all new development." Those "that typify rural character such as mixed lot sizes and setbacks would be replicated ..."
- *Village Centers* - Both public and commercial uses would apply these principles. Businesses "would meet local neighborhood needs and would be oriented to those neighborhoods through provision

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of access to pedestrians and bicyclists. These businesses would be smaller scale and would incorporate...pedestrian access, mixed use and valley scale and character.”

### **Bosque Action Plan, 1993**

This plan, prepared by the City of Albuquerque with participation of the state, county and Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District, is especially influential because the bosque is the western boundary of the Village. “The purpose of the plan is to identify specific environmental and recreational improvements for the Rio Grande State Park.” It contains policies designed “to minimize impacts on the bosque environment and to ensure continued survival of the plants and animals habitat within the bosque.” Of particular interest to the Village are planned access points at Alameda and Paseo del Norte bridges. However, trailhead amenities and parking are not planned for all access points, including Montaña.

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