Sandoval County Board of County Commissioners
Agenda Item Summary

AGENDA ITEM # 9-18-14.10C

1. REQUESTED MOTION

ACTION REQUESTED:
Adopt Resolution No. 9-18-14.10C Approving the Rio Rancho Estates Area Plan

WHY ACTION IS NECESSARY (Summary):
NM Statutory laws require that the Sandoval County Board of County Commissioners adopt a resolution approving the proposed area plan.

2. REQUESTOR

COMMISSIONER SPONSORED: ☐ YES ☒ NO

DISTRICT: ☐ DISTRICT 1 ☐ DISTRICT 4
☐ DISTRICT 2 ☐ DISTRICT 5
☐ DISTRICT 3

DIRECTOR / ELECTED: Michael Springfield
DIVISION: Planning & Zoning
ELECTED OFFICE:

ATTACHMENTS: ☒ YES ☐ NO

3. MEETING DATE

September 21, 2014

4. AGENDA (To be completed by County Manager)

☐ PROCLAMATION
☐ PRESENTATION
☐ CONSENT
☒ REGULAR
☐ APPEAL

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends approval of the Rio Rancho Estates Area Plan.

6. FISCAL IMPACT

N/A

7. RECOMMENDED APPROVAL (Initials & Date)

Department Director/Elected Official	Human Resources	Purchasing	Attorney As to Form	Finance Budget	County Manager	Other
MRS 8/19/14	———	———	PFT 8/20/14	———	PPR 9/10/14	———

8. COMMISSION ACTION

☐ Approved ☐ Denied ☐ Deferred ☐ Other

WHY ACTION IS NECESSARY (Summary) continued:

Sandoval County Planning and Zoning Commission requests that the Board of County Commissioners review and consider a Resolution for ADOPTION the Rio Rancho Estates Area Plan.

The Rio Rancho Estates Area Plan (RREAP) is designed to establish policy on the following issues for the Estates plan area:

1. Neighborhood Preservation.

2. Minimum Development and Habitation Standards for Existing and Future Neighborhood Areas.

3. Identification of Areas for New Non-Residential Development.

4. Potential for Large-Scale Redevelopment

5. Open Space Preservation for Water and Environmental Conservation

The RREAP has been reviewed and commented on by citizens attending the October 25, 2012 and January 24, 2013 Planning and Zoning Commission public hearings. Citizens who live in the Estates area were notified of these meetings by letter, and information regarding the RREAP has been posted on the Sandoval County website. More than 50 citizens from the Estates area attended these meetings and gave input to staff and the Commission regarding their concerns for the preservation and enhancement of existing neighborhoods, water supply, housing conditions, and concerns regarding the potential for local government involvement in development in the Estates area. All issues to date have been addressed in the June 2013 DRAFT 2013 RREAP. The Planning and Zoning Commission voted unanimously to forward the DRAFT RREAP to the Board of County Commissioners, with their recommendation to approve the plan, at their public hearing on June 20, 2013.

The County has contracted with an environmental engineering firm, Souder Miller & Associates, to assess the amount of underground aquifer water needed to support full residential build-out of the Estates area, and the amount of underground water currently available. Preliminary findings indicate that approximately 16,000-acre feet of water annually would be needed to support a full residential build-out scenario on the 40,000+ lots in the Estates, and that only 8,000-acre feet of water annually is available underground on a renewable basis. The 8,000-acre feet of water in the Estates also contributed to the water needs for the City of Rio Rancho.

Availability of water, the sharing of the water supply in the short and long-term, and the proposed use of both individual wells and limited water infrastructure service, serves as the basis for all proposals and policies in the RREAP. The RREAP policies are structured to support existing neighborhoods, propose new development at appropriate scales near residential areas, identify areas for larger scale development, and to acquire vacant privately owned properties in the Plan Area for the purpose of preserving existing water supplies and provide recreational opportunities in the area.

Staff recommended additional information and DRAFT policy for the DRAFT RREAP regarding the development of Paseo del Volcan through the Plan area, and the potential opportunities for urban scale commercial development at the intersections of Paseo del Volcan and Northern and Southern Boulevards. These changes were discussed and approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission at their March 28, 2013 public hearing. Final DRAFT revisions to the plan were completed in June 2013 and the Planning and Zoning Commission reviewed and approved these revisions.

WHY ACTION IS NECESSARY (Summary) continued:

Staff proposes additional changes to the June 2013 DRAFT RREAP as follows:

- The removal of language specific to Special Assessment Districts (SAD's).
- The revision of language regarding "Joint Operating Agreements", to be changed to "agreements".

Findings for the June 2013 DRAFT RREAP were included in the Planning and Zoning Commission Staff report for the June 20, 2013 Planning and Zoning Commission public hearing. These Findings remained throughout the completion of the Planning and Commission's review of the DRAFT RREAP, and are as follows:

FINDINGS

(1) This is a request by the Sandoval County Planning and Zoning Division to Approve a Resolution to ADOPT the Rio Rancho Estates Area Plan (RREAP).

(2) The RREAP has been reviewed by citizens living in the Rio Rancho Estates area during public hearings held by the Sandoval County Planning and Zoning Commission on October 25, 2012, January 24, 2013, and February 28, 2013.

(3) The RREAP is proposed as a policy plan. As such, policy in the RREAP will establish recommendations for both preservation of existing residential neighborhoods and encouraging new development, while addressing issues of water supply, habitation standards, open space and recreational uses.

(4) The RREAP is consistent with current policy in the SCCP which establishes a planning process for identifying and supporting unique area characteristics and growth pressures in areas through the County (SCCP Section I, Land Use and Natural, Historic, and Cultural Resources, Policy A, Strategies 1 and 4).

(5) The RREAP has been reviewed and commented upon by the Rio Rancho Public Schools, the Southern Sandoval

County Flood Control Authority (SSCAFCA), Ciudad Soil and Water Conservation District, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Mid-Region Council of Governments, New Mexico State Land Office, New Mexico Department of Transportation, New Mexico Environment Department, and the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish.

Staff recommends that the Board of County Commissioners Approve the Resolution to ADOPT the Rio Rancho Estates Area Plan, with instructions and any changes to the Plan as needed.

Attachments:

- Rio Rancho Estates Area Plan (RREAP)
- DRAFT Resolution

SANDOVAL COUNTY

RESOLUTION NO. 9-18-14.10C

APPROVING THE RIO RANCHO ESTATES AREA PLAN AND LAND USE CONCEPT MAP AS A COMPONENT OF THAT PLAN

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners, the governing body of the County of Sandoval, has retained the authority to adopt master plans for the physical development of areas within the jurisdiction of Sandoval County, as authorized by 4-57-1 and 4-57-2, NMSA 1978; and

WHEREAS, the ***Sandoval County Comprehensive Plan***, originally developed in 1988-89, is the officially adopted general long-range plan for the County of Sandoval jurisdiction as a whole; and

WHEREAS, the ***Sandoval County Comprehensive Plan*** establishes the foundation for area plans that will further ensure rational development in specific areas of Sandoval County that respects human, economic, and environmental needs; and

WHEREAS, the Sandoval County Planning & Zoning Commission, as the advisory body to the Board of County Commissioners on all matters related to planning, has reviewed and recommended the adoption of the attached ***Rio Rancho Estates Area Plan*** at a public hearing on June 20, 2013; and

WHEREAS, the ***Rio Rancho Estates Area Plan*** is a policy planning document that addresses preservation of existing neighborhoods, minimum habitation standards for existing and future neighborhoods, identification of areas for new non-residential development, and open space planning for water and environmental conservation, and recreation; and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners recognizes that the contents of the ***Rio Rancho Estates Area Plan*** reflect the standards for area planning for the County of Sandoval as established in the ***Sandoval County Comprehensive Plan***; and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners recognize the need for the ***Rio Rancho Estates Area Plan*** to guide development in this area of the County of Sandoval and to provide a basis for cooperative planning with other agencies and individuals involved in land use and environmental decisions to ensure orderly development; and

WHEREAS, the ***Rio Rancho Estates Area Plan*** will be adopted as an area plan component of the ***Sandoval County Comprehensive Plan*** to address planning needs and concerns specific to particular communities within the unincorporated area of the County of Sandoval.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SANDOVAL COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS:

Section 1:

That the attached ***Rio Rancho Estates Area Plan***, including the related Land Use Concept Map, be adopted as the area plan for the unincorporated Rio Rancho Estates area of the County of Sandoval.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED THIS 18th DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 2014.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF SANDOVAL COUNTY

Darryl F. Madalena, Chair

Orlando Lucero, Vice Chair

Nora Scherzinger, Member

Don Chapman, Member

Glenn Walters, Member

ATTEST:

Eileen Garbagni, County Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Patrick F. Trujillo, County Attorney

Rio Rancho Estates Area Plan

Sandoval County
New Mexico

Board of County Commissioners

Darryl Madalena, County Commissioner
District 5, Chair.

Orlando Lucero, County Commissioner
District 1, Vice-Chair

Nora Scherzinger, County Commissioner
District 2

Don Chapman, County Commissioner
District 3

Glenn Walters, County Commissioner
District 4

Phil Rios, County Manager
Patrick Trujillo, County Attorney

Planning and Zoning Commission

John Arango, Chair
Pat Vester, Vice-Chair
Larry McClaine, Member
Robert Cote, Member
James Maduena, Member
Sam Landee-Thompson, Member

Planning and Zoning Division Staff

Michael Springfield, Division Director
Brad Stebleton, Senior Planner
Makita Hill, Long Range Senior Planner (Project Manager)
John Lorne, Zoning Officer
Jeff Epler, GIS Manager
Gary Pals, GIS Analyst
Edward Montoya, Right of Way Specialist
Kelly Romero, Support Coordinator
Maria Encinias, Administrative Assistant
Lesley Picchione, Administrative Assistant

Rio Rancho Estates Area Plan

Acknowledgements

Section 1: Purpose of the Plan.....5
Section 2: History and Local/Regional Context.....6
Section 3: Existing Water Supply Conditions.....8
Section 4: Antiquated Land Platting and Land Ownership.....11
Section 5: Zoning and Land Use.....13
Section 6: Population.....15
Section 7: Infrastructure and Public Safety.....17
Section 8: Natural Environment and Cultural Resources.....20
Section 9: County Planning Initiatives/Interagency Planning.....24
Section 10: Land Planning.....26
Section 11: "Do Nothing" Scenarios.....36
Section 12: Plan Concept.....37
Section 13: Development Policy.....42
Section 14: Implementation Measures.....44

Acknowledgements

Much knowledge and expertise has been contributed to the Rio Rancho Estates Area Plan (RREAP) through inter-agency collaboration with the County. The Southern Sandoval County Arroyo Flood Control Authority (SSCAFCA) has contributed land development standards regarding on-site rainwater detention, which is critical to controlling development-related water drainage into arroyos and reducing flood potential. The Ciudad Soil and Water Conservation District and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service have contributed environmentally low-impact land development guidelines consistent with the erosive conditions of the soils in the plan area. The NM Environment Department has also contributed knowledge on the functioning of independent water and liquid waste infrastructure districts. The NM State Land Office, NM Department of Game and Fish, as well as the City of Rio Rancho and the Rio Rancho Public Schools, have also been active participants in the development of land use policy for the Rio Rancho Estates Area Plan.

SECTION 1
Purpose of the Plan

Introduction

The Rio Rancho Estates Area Plan (RREAP) is designed to establish policy on the following issues for the plan area:

1. Neighborhood Preservation.
2. Minimum Development and Habitation Standards for Existing and Future Neighborhood Areas.
3. Identification of Areas of New Non-Residential Development.
4. Potential for Large-Scale Public Redevelopment.
5. Open Space Preservation for Water and Environmental Conservation.

In 2001, Sandoval County adopted its current Comprehensive Plan. In that plan, the Rio Rancho Estates area was identified as one of six "planning regions" in Sandoval County and the plan stated that the County in the future would develop more detailed land use plans for each region that would reflect the "*...unique characteristics, constraints, and growth pressures of (each) region...*" These plans are to be consistent with the general policies in the County's Comprehensive Plan. The Board of County Commissioners in 1987 adopted such a plan for the Algodones area, in 2007 for the Jemez Valley, and in 2009 for the Placitas area.

The RREAP reflects the unique characteristics, the constraints, and the growth pressures in this specific area. The land use and management goals, strategies, and recommendations set forth in this area plan will guide the decision process for future development, and future preservation, in the plan area. The RREAP area is illustrated in Figure 1.

Intergovernmental Cooperation

Sandoval County is the lead governmental agency for the RREAP and is responsible for the content of this plan. The County will facilitate a planning process in cooperation with the City of Rio Rancho, the Town of Bernalillo, the Pueblo of Zia, the Pueblo of Laguna, the Southern Sandoval County Arroyo Flood Control Authority (SSCAFCA), Ciudad Soil and Water Conservation District, the New Mexico State Land Office/Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the New Mexico State Engineer's Office, the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED), the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT), the Mid-Region Council of Governments (MRCOG), and private land owners. Woven into these efforts is a commitment to facilitate positive change in the RREAP area through appropriate land planning, and a recognition of the great possibilities and potential this area holds for all residents of Sandoval County and the State of New Mexico.

SECTION 2
History and Local/Regional Context

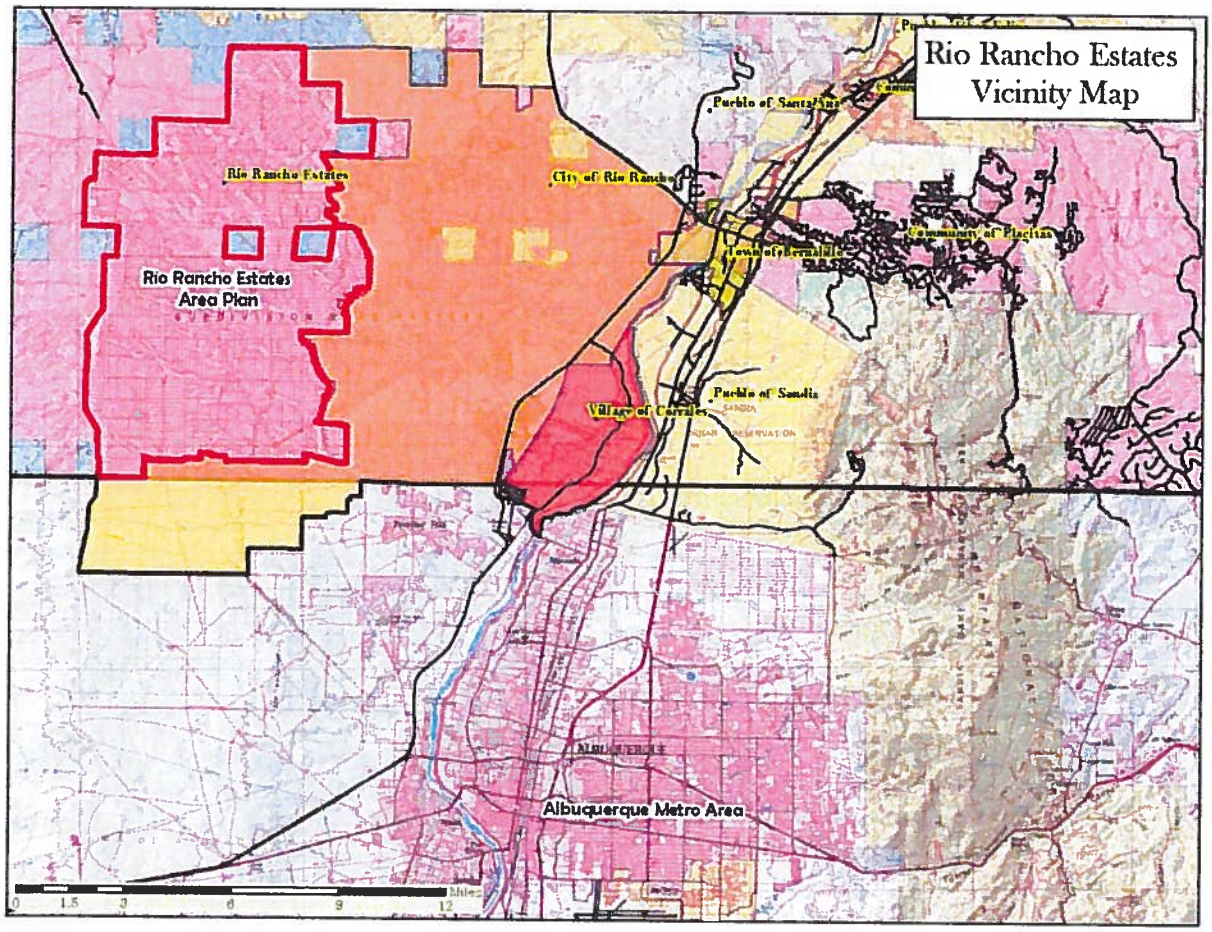

Figure 1, RREAP Area. Source: Sandoval County Planning and Zoning/GIS Division.

The area of south central Sandoval County, now known as Rio Rancho Estates, is made up of a portion of the Town of Alameda Land Grant, dating from Spanish settlement in the 1700's, as well as a portion of the King Ranch. During the years from 1960 to 1975, the American Realty and Petroleum Corporation (AMREP) purchased 90,000 acres of this land and subdivided it into thousands of lots, mostly one-half and one acre parcels. Through an extensive advertising campaign, many of these properties were sold to individuals from all over the world. By 1977, AMREP had sold 75,000 of these lots. The 1980 census recorded approximately 10,000 residents in the southeastern portion of the original AMREP land holdings. Rio Rancho emerged in this process as an urban area, and in 1981, incorporated. Through successive annexations, Rio Rancho became one of the fastest growing cities in the United States and now holds more than 85,000 residents, including just over half of the original AMREP land holdings. The last annexation by the city in this area was in 2006 when two-1 square mile portions of State-owned land north of Paseo del Volcan and east of Unser Boulevard were added to the

city. The remaining unincorporated area of roughly 60 square miles, and 43,629 acres (known herein as the "plan area") located west of the city limits is the RREAP project area.

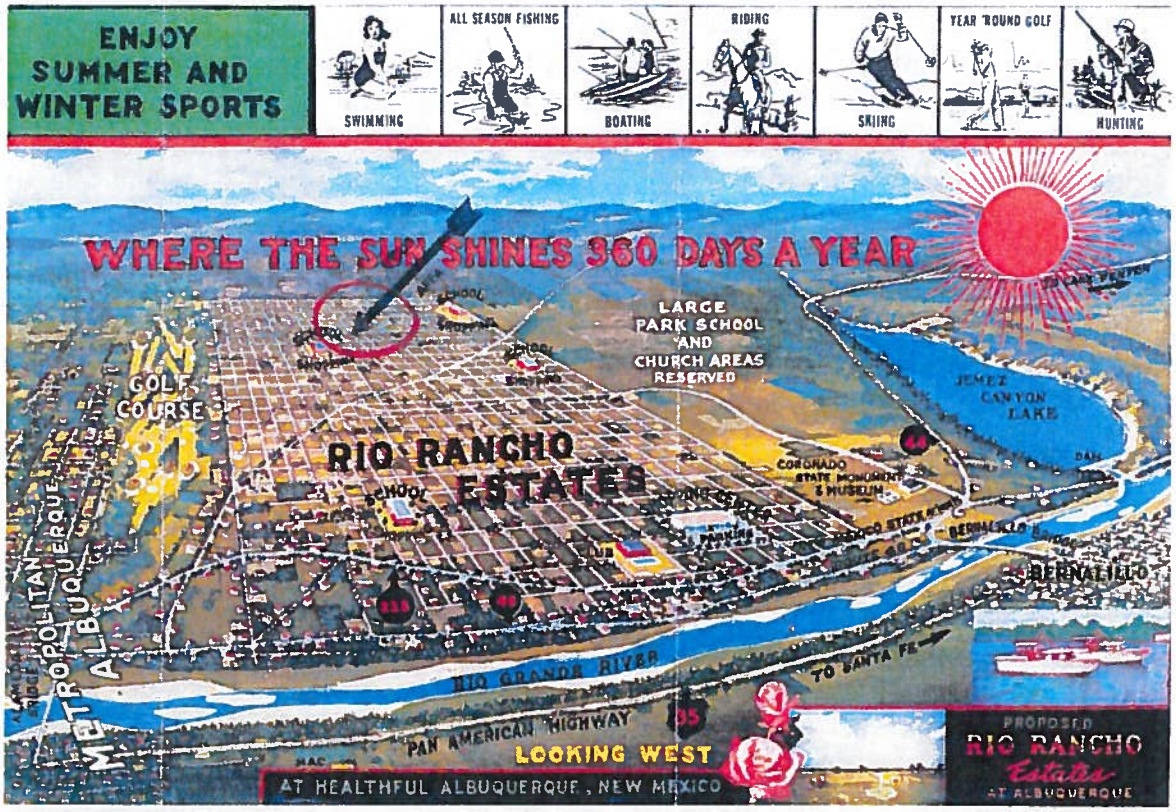

Figure 2, AMREP Land Sales Promotion in the 1960's. Source: AMREP.

Within the plan area, the State of New Mexico holds two truncated sections of land (approximately 1,100 acres), with additional State owned parcels surrounding the plan area to east, north, and south. Much of the remainder is divided into thousands of parcels as part of the original AMREP subdivisions. Approximately one-third of the lots are owned by AMREP Corporation, while the rest are held by thousands of individuals all over the world, some the heirs of now deceased purchasers of the land in the 1960's and 70's (Figure 2). The area grew slowly through most of its history, mainly due to a lack of infrastructure and the distance to employment and services. In 2000, the County's Planning & Zoning Division tallied 395 dwellings in this area, just over three-quarters of them mobile or manufactured homes. In 2010, Sandoval County estimates that there are 514 dwellings in this area. Assuming an average of 2.5 persons per dwelling unit, there is an estimated population of 1,285 people in the plan area, more than in the Sandoval County municipalities of Cuba, San Ysidro, or Jemez Springs.

SECTION 3
Existing Water Supply Conditions

To understand the Estates and its potential as a County community, it is important to establish an understanding of existing water supply conditions in the area as a point of departure. The County has contracted with an environmental engineering firm to assess the amount of underground aquifer water needed to support full residential build-out of the Estates area, and the amount of underground water currently available. Preliminary findings indicate that approximately 16,000-acre feet of water annually would be needed to support a full residential build-out scenario on the 40,000+ lots in the Estates, and that only 8,000-acre feet of water annually is available underground on a renewable basis (APPENDIX). The 8,000-acre feet of water in the Estates is also a source of water supply for the City of Rio Rancho.

The City's current water allotment under permits from the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer is approximately 24,000 acre feet of water annually. To date, the City has secured half of this supply. With a population of just over 85,000, Rio Rancho's incorporated area is only 1/3 built, leaving most of the city area vacant. The remaining 12,000 acre-feet to be acquired by the City will provide for a maximum build out of ½ of the incorporated area. The Estates area comprises a portion of the water "well field" for City use, and is also the water supply for County residents. Typical depths for private water wells in the Estates ranges in depth from 900 to 1,150 feet. The average cost of drilling and installing a private water well in the Estates under current circumstances is approximately $30,000.00 (APPENDIX). Current Rio Rancho Estates Community District (CD-RRE) zoning regulations allow up to three connections for each well licensed by the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer. A new well is permitted to pump a maximum of 1-acre feet of water annually.

Currently, there are 63 individual private wells and 30 private shared wells in the Estates area, providing well water to approximately 120 housing units. The City of Rio Rancho has extended water utility lines into the Estates area on Northern Boulevard from Rainbow Boulevard to Encino Road, and from Northern Boulevard to King Boulevard. Along Northern Boulevard westward to Encino Road, there are currently 255 housing units connected to this water line. The total number of housing units receiving water from either a water well or a water line is approximately 375. The City of Rio Rancho also currently operates a water supply station on Northern Boulevard near Encino Road, where County residents may purchase and haul water (Figure 3). Approximately 139 housing units depend on this station and other privately owned water hauling services in the Estates area.

In the event of development of a new major residential subdivision in the area, the new subdivision would be subject to the Sandoval County Subdivision Regulations, Appendix A, which requires that a 100-year assured water supply for all new lots must be demonstrated, and that the water study must include the potential for impacts/impairments on existing water rights holders in the area, including the City of Rio Rancho.

Given the water availability in the Estates, a full residential build out of the Estates is not possible. Under this scenario, water availability to both County and City residents would be jeopardized. Add to this scenario the presence of over 40,000 septic systems operating in the area, the quality of the water would be jeopardized as well. The accessibility to water by Estates residents, the availability of water in the Estates for County and city residents, and water quality, will serve as the foundation upon which the RREAP will be built and maintained. In order to better understand how the plan will accomplish this task, it is important to understand the circumstances and history surrounding the land in the Estates, and how these circumstances can lend to a process of planning for the Estates that will balance these needs.

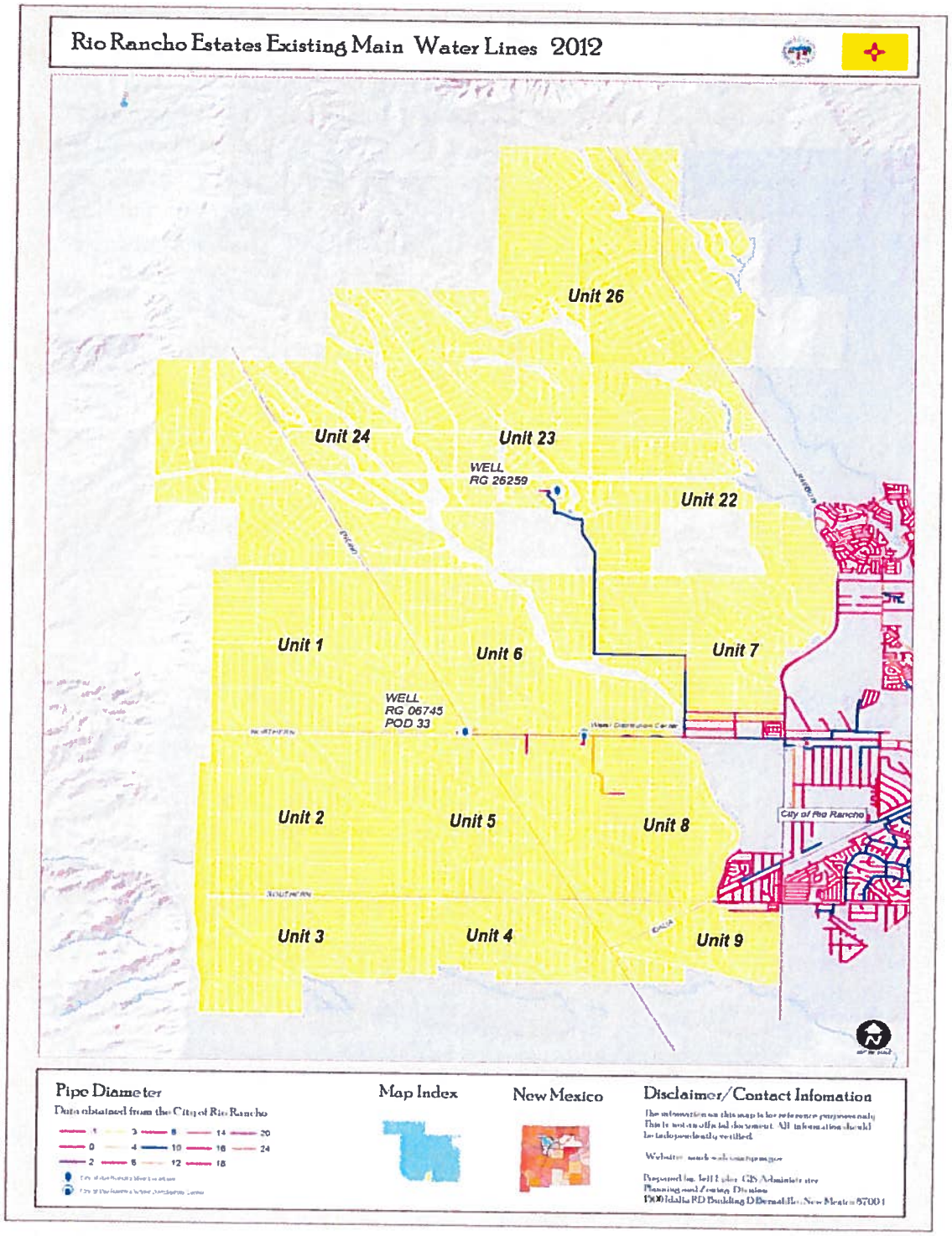

Figure 3, Water Lines and Distribution Center. Source: Sandoval County Planning and Zoning Division/GIS.

SECTION 4
Antiquated Land Platting and Land Ownership

The original Rio Rancho Estates platting process created thousands of lots through a series of large subdivisions that were approved and recorded in the Office of the Sandoval County Clerk in the 1960's and early 1970's. According to Sandoval County parcel data, there are approximately 48,000 parcels of land which are generally one-half or one acre in size in the plan area. All of these lots were of record prior to 1973 when New Mexico adopted its first Subdivision Act for Counties, and prior to establishment of County zoning. The controls and safeguards traditionally associated with subdivision regulation, such as terrain management and adequate infrastructure, were not implemented in the plan area, resulting in an antiquated subdivision.

Antiquated subdivisions have occurred throughout New Mexico and in many parts of the United States. Common circumstances created by these subdivisions include a lack of planned infrastructure improvements (paved roads, water, sewer, gas) as well as inadequate street layouts and a lack of collector and arterial street planning necessary to provide ease of ingress and egress for the subdivision. Rio Rancho Estates carries these conditions, as well as a land pattern that does not conform to the area's natural features which include 100-year arroyo flood areas. Many parcels have been platted within or immediately abutting arroyo flood areas, and with the flood hazard and erosive qualities of these areas, these parcels cannot be feasibly developed. The City of Rio Rancho and Sandoval County now share jurisdiction over subdivisions in much of the plan area, however, the potential impact of current subdivision regulations in this antiquated area is limited.

Land ownership in the plan area is very diverse and presents a great challenge to developing a coordinated land use plan in the plan area. AMREP, the original land subdivider, owns approximately one-third of the parcels in the plan area, making it the largest single land owner (Figure 4). The next largest land owner in the plan area is the State Land Office, which owns approximately 1100 acres within the plan area and another two and one half 1-mile sections of land bordering the plan area, together totaling nearly 2900 acres. There are many other private land owners in the plan area who own large numbers of parcels as well. It is estimated by the Sandoval County Assessor's Office that approximately 30,000 parcels of land in the plan area are owned by individuals in other states throughout the United States and the world.

From a water availability standpoint, the number of existing parcels in the Estates cannot be served with a water source. Also, changes in the tools of redevelopment of antiquated areas have occurred that bring new challenges for large area planning.

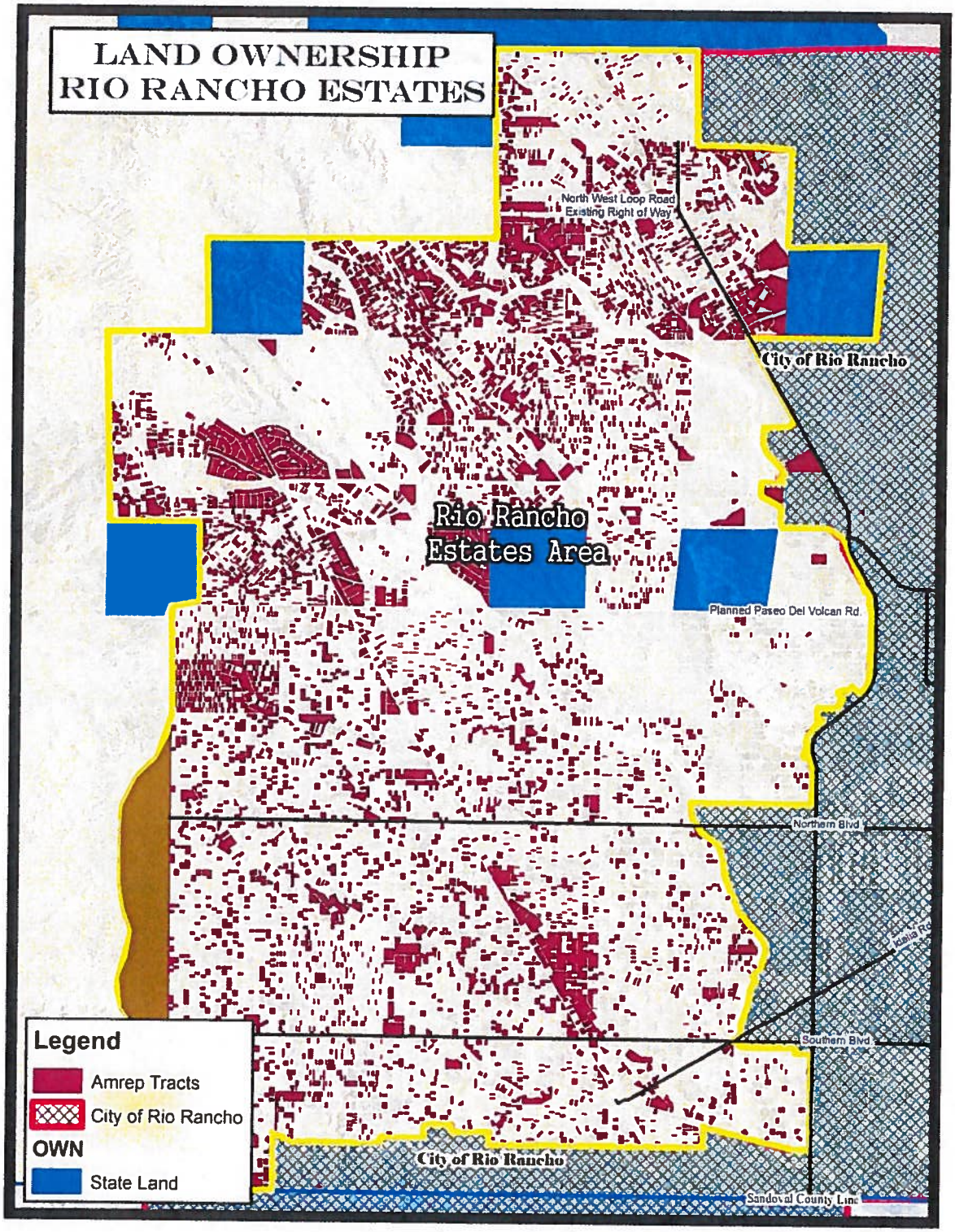

Figure 4. Rio Rancho Estates Platting and Ownership. Source: Sandoval County Planning and Zoning/GIS Division.

SECTION 5
Zoning and Land Use

There was no zoning in the plan area until 1990, when Sandoval County amended its Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance to cover the unincorporated areas of the County outside of Algodones. As with most of the County, the plan area was "blanketed" by the DR (Development Review) District. The DR District allowed residential uses, including mobile homes, and agricultural uses by right. Any change to non-residential and non-agricultural uses required a conditional use permit or a zone change. Zone change and conditional use activity in the area, reviewed by the County's Board of County Commissioners and Planning & Zoning Commission, was very limited under the DR classification, mainly confined to requests for non-residential land uses. DR zoning did not require building setbacks, nor did it provide any standards for mobile homes or manufactured housing. Sandoval County revised the DR zone in 2001, establishing elements of the Algodones district standards for County-wide use in the creation of the Rural Residential Agricultural (RRA) zone district. The RRA district allows single-family residences including mobile homes, agricultural uses and the raising of animals, public parks and open space, utility structures, and related uses.

By 2001, the plan area contained a wide variety of housing units, including some very old and dilapidated single-wide mobile homes, many of which were not set on permanent foundations and thus were not subject to taxation as real property. Many of these properties also developed illegal shared well systems which created sanitation-related health problems. In that year, and in response to the problem of largely unregulated development and related health issues, Sandoval County adopted a 6-month moratorium prohibiting permits for single-wide mobile homes and homes connected to shared well systems with more than five connections. Illegal dumping has been a serious problem in this area as well.

During the interim period, the County's Planning & Zoning Division, Planning & Zoning Commission, and Board of County Commissioners developed a new zoning District for the area known as the Rio Rancho Estates Community District (CD-RRE), which requires permanent foundations for mobile homes and a standard for shared residential wells to not exceed three residences. The RRE district was developed in public meetings with property owners and representatives of the manufactured housing industry. The Ordinance creating the District was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners on November 1, 2001. With the exception of a pair of large public utility facilities, the plan area is entirely within the CD-RRE Zone District. Land use in the plan area continues to be primarily single family residential (Figure 6).

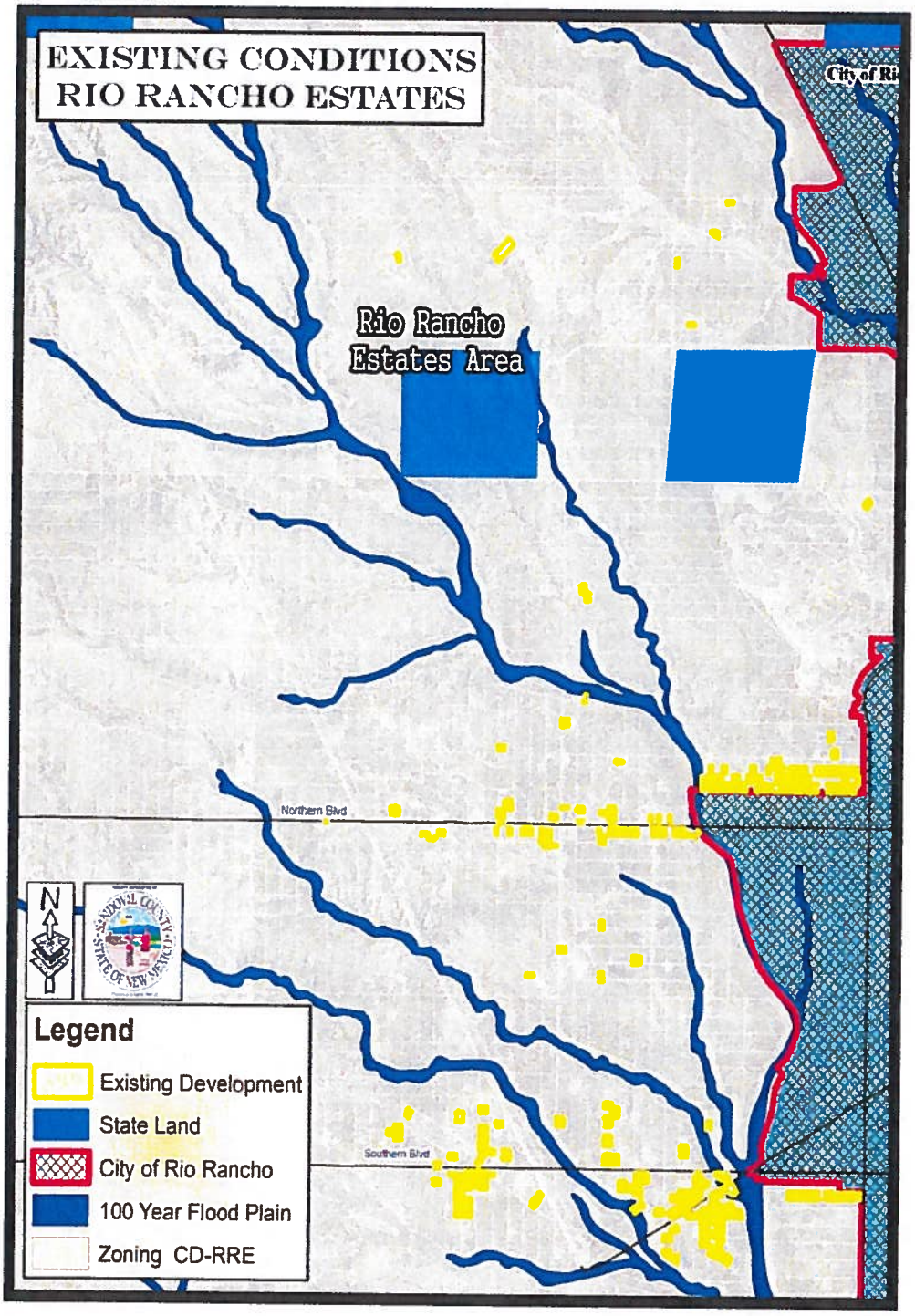

Figure 5, County RRE Zoning/Land Use. Source: Sandoval County Planning and Zoning/GIS Division.

SECTION 6
Population

Population

From 2000 to 2010, the number of dwelling units in the RREAP area grew from an estimated 395 to 514. Assuming an average of 2.5 persons per dwelling unit, there is an estimated population of 1,285 people in the plan area, which, over the 10-year period, is a growth rate exceeding 50%. Further population growth in the plan area at this rate underscores the need for a plan for the plan area.

The City of Rio Rancho is the third largest municipality in New Mexico, and one of the fastest growing urban areas in the United States. From 2000 to 2010, Rio Rancho grew from a population of 51,756 to an estimated population of over 85,000, a 60% increase over this 10-year period. Draft population projections generated by the Mid-Region Council of Governments (MRCOG, Figure 7) indicate that by the year 2035, Rio Rancho may grow to a population exceeding 210,000. Rio Rancho Planning Department staff expects a more moderate growth rate, anticipating a maximum population of 135,000 within this timeframe. This population will be accommodated within the current Rio Rancho city limits, and the city has no plans for annexation of land within the plan area in this time frame.

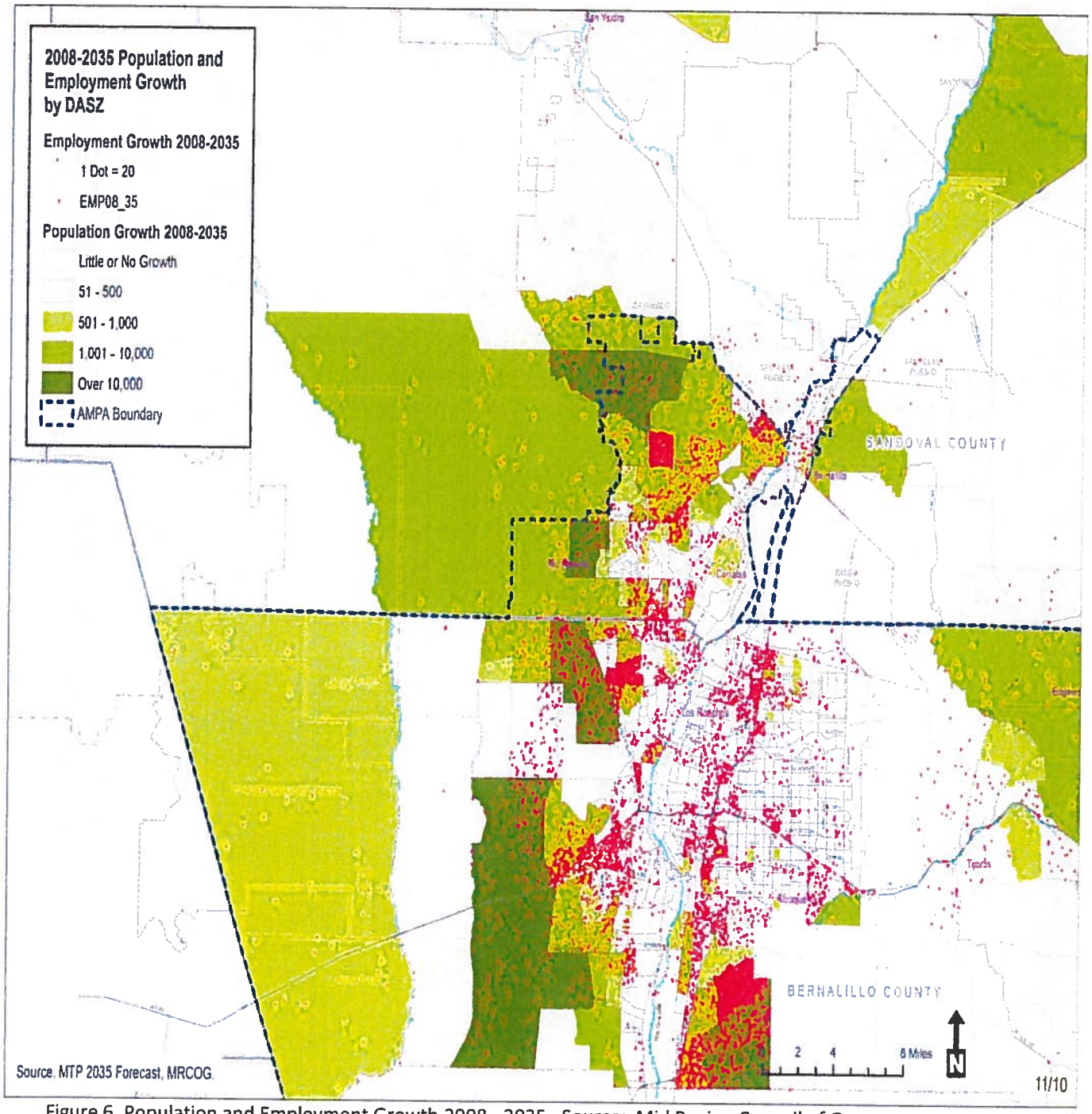

Figure 6, Population and Employment Growth 2008 - 2035. Source: Mid Region Council of Governments.

SECTION 7
Infrastructure and Public Safety

Liquid Waste

At present, there are no sanitary sewer lines extending outside of the city limits. Clusters of sewage treatment lines are currently in place in Rio Rancho at Southern Boulevard and Paseo del Volcan west of the City Center/Campus Center, adjacent to the plan area. Residents in the plan area use onsite liquid waste systems for sewage disposal, most of them septic systems. The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) has jurisdiction over liquid waste systems in the plan area. As the existing ½-acre lots were platted prior to adoption of the ¾-acre minimum lot size for a standard septic system, the NMED was previously obligated to approve applications for septic systems for these lots. In these areas where standard septic systems are in closer proximity to wells, well water is subject to exposure to bacteria and nitrates, which may also spread among greater numbers of residents through the use of multiple connections on existing wells. Today, the NMED licenses individual alternative active treatment systems in the area which are much safer for water users and for the environment.

Solid Waste

Sandoval County does not require its residents to have solid waste collection at their homes. Residents have the option of contracting for the service from a private company or taking their trash to the Sandoval County landfill, located on Idalia Road near Paseo del Volcan and within close proximity to the plan area. The unpaved roads in the area can cause difficulties for trash pickup, particularly during periods of inclement weather. There have been a number of incidents where residents have stored and buried large quantities of trash and garbage on their property or where trash has been dumped illegally. Sandoval County has sponsored a number of "cleanup days" over the past several years and continues to enact enforcement measures for illegal dumping in the area.

Other Utility Infrastructure

The plan area is within the electric service area of the Public Service Company of New Mexico (PNM), and the gas service area of the New Mexico Gas Company (NMGS). PNM and NMGS services extend into the plan area. There is a NMGS gas service line along Southern Boulevard which extends west of Rainbow Boulevard to Hondo Road, and there are gas transmission lines in operation along Encino Road and Idalia Road. PNM operates an east-west transmission line in the plan area between Prospect Boulevard and King Boulevard, and a north-south transmission line along 60th Street. These transmission lines meet at the PNM switching station at the Prospect Boulevard, Encino Road intersection. Electric service lines are also in the plan area, extending westward from Rainbow Boulevard along King Boulevard and Northern Boulevard to Encino Road and along Southern Boulevard to 60th Street. North-south electric lines extend along Encino Road between King Boulevard and the Sandoval County line, and along 60th Street from Southern Boulevard to Alice King Way. Electric lines extend along Alice King Way westward from 60th Street into the Rio Puerco area.

Transportation

Those portions of the study area that are already subdivided are crisscrossed by a network of mostly unpaved roads, 657 miles in total, that are maintained by Sandoval County. These roads were created by AMREP in its original subdivisions. The layout of these roads is generally formed along a mile grid network with rectangular block structure in the southern portion of the plan area (Figure 8). This grid network bears no relation to existing topography, except in the northern part of the plan area where the grid pattern is irregular due to the extensive arroyos in the Calabacillas watershed. Major access into the plan area includes major streets Northern Boulevard and Southern Boulevard, which serve as the major East/West roadways, with Northern paved west near 30th Street, and Southern paved west near 40th Street.

Paseo del Volcan, a planned new limited access highway, is under construction and will traverse the plan area in an east-west and north-south configuration, ultimately connecting NM Highway 550 with Interstate 40. To date, Paseo del Volcan has been constructed from US 550 to Unser Boulevard. The Mid Region Council of Governments Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) 2035 establishes further construction plans for Paseo del Volcan during this time period. Between current time and 2035, Paseo del Volcan will be built as a 2-lane road between Southern Boulevard and Unser Boulevard, then the road will be widened from 2 lanes to 4 lanes from Unser Boulevard to Iris Road and from Iris Road to US 550. In the process, new major Paseo del Volcan road intersections will be created at Northern and Southern Boulevards within the plan area. This road project will bring opportunities for new development and economic activity that will benefit County and Rio Rancho residents.

King Way Boulevard, a future east-west roadway, will serve as a major corridor from the Rio Puerco to the central portion of the plan area and Rio Rancho. In addition, 40th Street and 60th Street will function as secondary north-south major roadways providing access within the plan area, and to the Rio West Master Plan area and the Rio Puerco region. These five roadways therefore constitute the backbone of the network. At present there is no public transportation within the plan area. Opportunities may exist for such service in the future as the area develops.

Public Safety

Currently there are no fire stations or fire protection/EMS facilities located within the area. The City of Rio Rancho addresses most incidents in the area, with assistance from more distant Sandoval County Fire Districts. The lack of water service in the area has also resulted in a lack of fire hydrants and other fire protection facilities in the area, leaving many residents vulnerable in the event of a fire. The few hydrants in the plan area are part of the Rio Rancho water system and connect to their transmission lines. Police protection is provided to the study area by the Sandoval County Sheriff's Department. The Department has no facilities in the area, the nearest one being located several miles away in the Town of Bernalillo. The relatively low population and lack of diverse development in the area has limited the amount of crime.

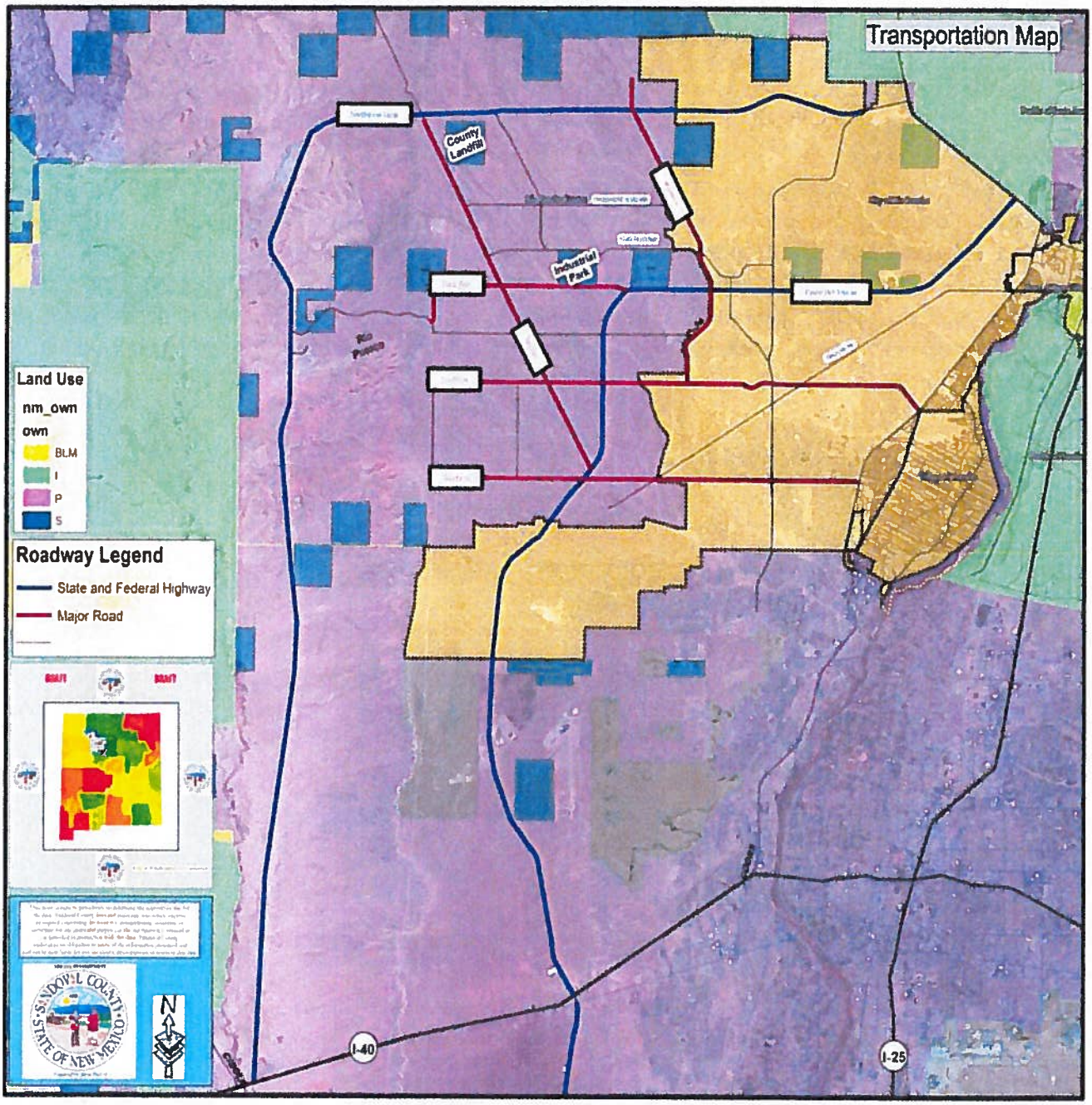

Figure 7, RREAP Transportation Map. Source: Sandoval County Planning and Zoning/GIS Division.

SECTION 8
Natural Environment and Cultural Resources

Natural Vegetation and Soils

The natural vegetation in the plan area is dominated by native grasses and shrubs (Figure 9). The elevation ranges from about 5,500 feet in the east side to about 6,200 feet at the west. At elevations above 5,800 feet are scattered native woodland trees. The soil in the plan area is comprised of five variations of sandy loam. These soils are subject to erosion when the natural vegetation is disturbed by off road vehicle use, maintenance of roads, and the human disturbance around existing developed areas. Due to the impacts of development in the area and off road vehicle use, the erosion of top soil is a major issue and contributes to air pollution from dust exposed to prevailing southwesterly winds. Loss of vegetation and subsequent top soil erosion are among the existing environmental problems associated with human activity in the plan area.

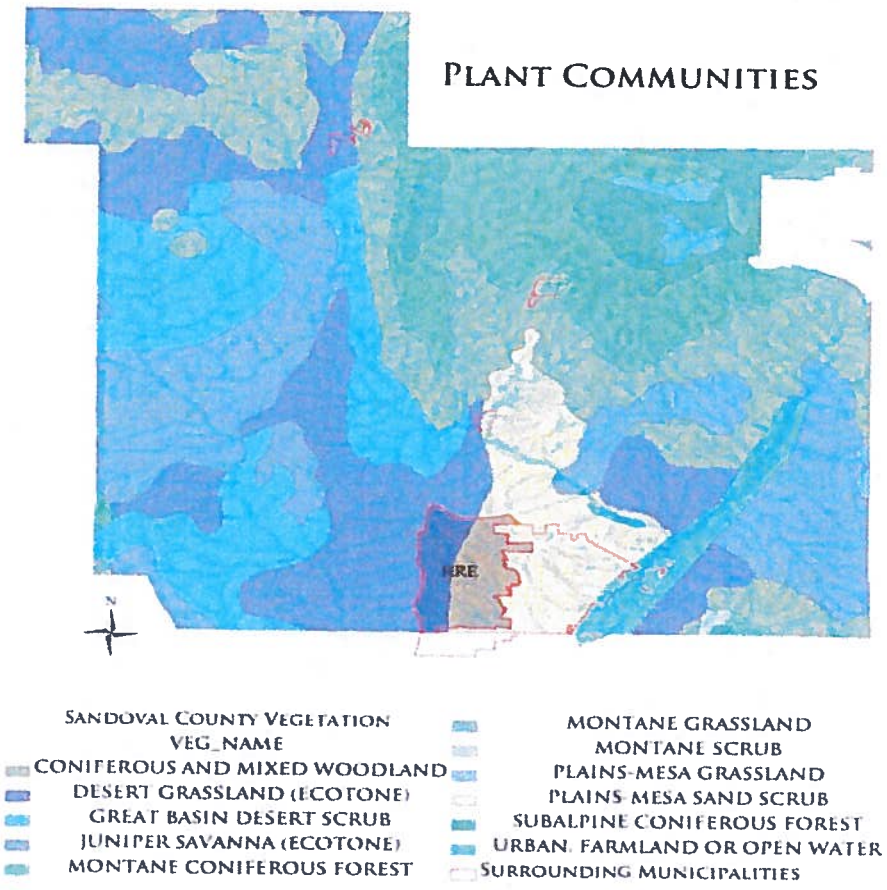

Figure 8, Natural Vegetation. Source: USDA National Resources Conservation Service.

Terrain and Drainage

The plan area is relatively flat with small rolling hills and an average grade of less than 5%, and is generally more level than the city of Rio Rancho which contains areas with slopes as steep as 12%. However, the plan area shares development constraints with the city due to the similarity in its network of watershed arroyos and floodplains (Figure 10).

There is an extensive network of open escarpment spaces adjacent to the Rio West area, Rio Puerco area, and the State Land Office/BLM land and Zia Pueblo to the north. The major floodway/arroyo network in the RRE is comprised of the Panta de Leon, Montoya, and Calabacillas arroyo watersheds. The Calabacillas watershed is the second largest drainage way in the middle Rio Grande region after the Tijeras Arroyo . The upper watershed in Sandoval County falls within the jurisdiction of the Southern Sandoval County Arroyo Flood Control Authority (SSCAFCA). Currently, almost the entire 100 year floodway area in the plan area is under the jurisdiction of SSCAFCA, and is also under private ownership.

In 2006, southern areas in Rio Rancho and Sandoval County suffered a 100-year flood event that damaged several neighborhoods, roads, and bridges due to the lack of proper drainage infrastructure and planning, causing an estimated $2.6 million dollars in damage. Drainage concerns in the plan area to date have been limited due to the fact that most of the area is vacant. However, the original AMREP platting was on a "grid" layout with little recognition of the rolling terrain and heavy summer downpours in the area. As development increases in this area, drainage issues will become increasingly important. While the drainage and floodway networks of the plan area are a major natural feature, planning for the area must consider not only the preservation of the natural features within the 100 year flood zone, but also planning for adequate storm water facilities to support new development.

The Panta de Leon, Montoya, and Calabacillas arroyo networks are included in the SSCAFCA Quality of Life Master Plan for Watershed Park. The Plan identifies the Panta de Leon and Montoya arroyo networks for trail and open space connectivity in the area, with the Panta de Leon network recommended as a trail linkage from Northern Meadows subdivision park in Rio Rancho northward through the area. The Calabacillas arroyo network is recommended as a multi-purpose activity area consisting of off-road vehicle and other commercial recreational uses. This plan will coordinate trail and open space initiatives with SSCAFCA for these arroyo networks consistent with safeguards for protection of the natural environment.

Wildlife Habitat

The plan area is within the Upper Sonoran (elev. 5,000-7,000') wildlife zone. A great variety of mammals, reptiles, and birds live and thrive in the plan area. Animal species in this zone include towhees, hawks, owls, quail, sparrows, meadowlark, coyote, badger, kit fox, prairie dog, jackrabbit, cottontail rabbit, rock squirrel, ground squirrel, kangaroo rat and pocket gopher. Also, prairie rattlesnake, round-tail horned lizard, lesser earless lizard, and New Mexico whiptail are common in the area. Larger animals such as antelope, black bear, deer, and mountain lion

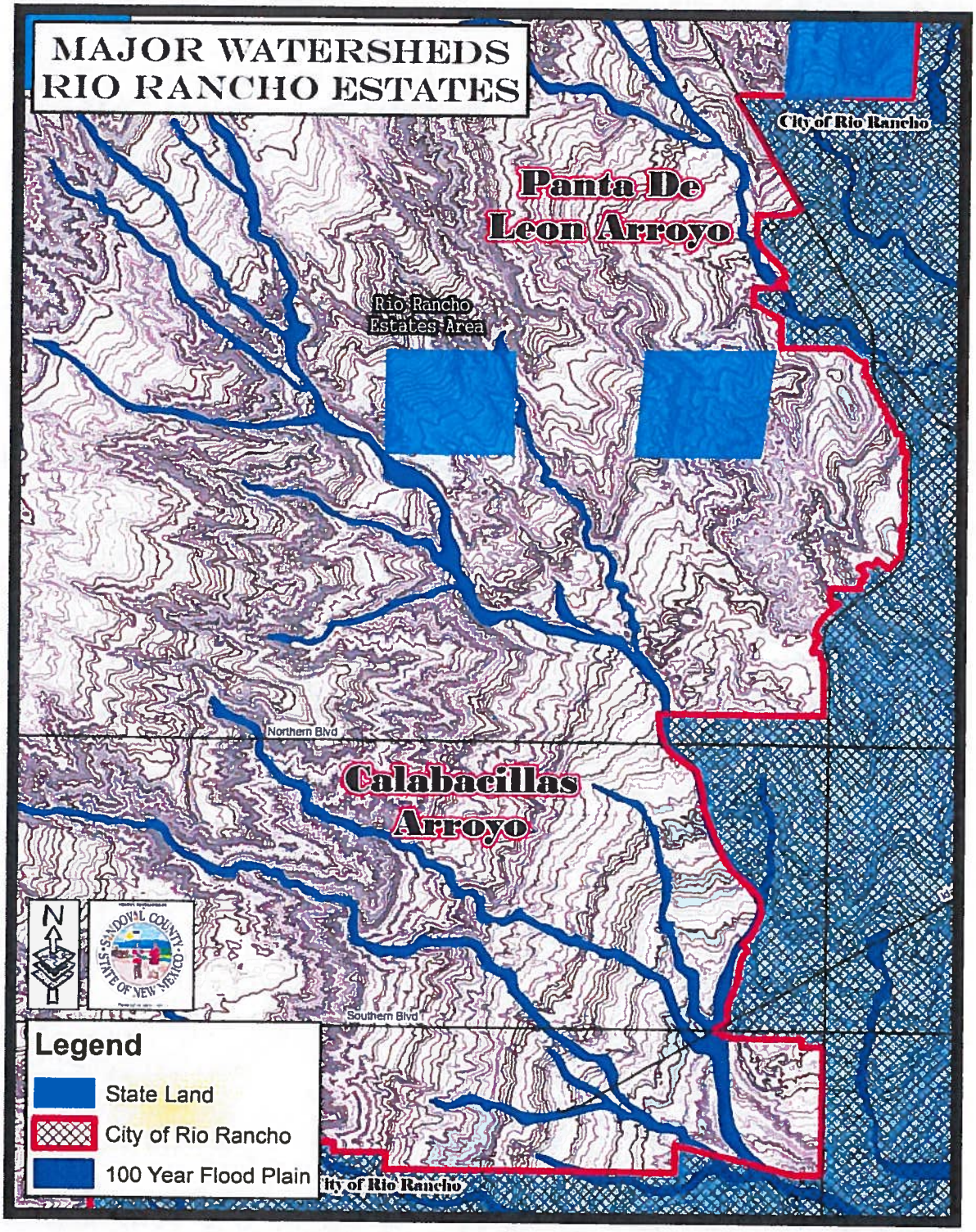

Figure 9, Major Watersheds in the Plan Area. Source: SSCACFA, Sandoval County Planning and Zoning/GIS Division.

may appear in more remote arroyo areas. Threatened or endangered wildlife known to appear in this area may include New Mexican jumping mouse, common black hawk and broad-billed hummingbird. The western burrowing owl, Townsend's big-eared bat, American peregrine falcon, mountain plover, San Ysidro tiger beetle, and William Lar's tiger beetle are other species of concern that may be found in this area.

Cultural Resources

Sandoval County has reviewed the New Mexico Registered Cultural Properties report, dated February 2005, for the RREAP area. The presence of cultural archeological resources in the plan area has been confirmed by SSCAFCA.

SECTION 9
County Planning Initiatives/Interagency Planning

County Area Planning Initiatives

Sandoval County is involved in a number of planning initiatives within and beyond the RREAP area. These initiatives are the following:

- Industrial Park Master Plan: the Industrial Park Master Plan area is located on a 529-acre parcel owned by the State. This industrial development project site, planned by the Rio Rancho Economic Development Corporation, is located outside the Rio Rancho city limits along King Boulevard east of Torcido Road. Although the site is currently under the CD-RRE zone, the Industrial Park Master Plan, completed in May 2010, is designed for development under the County's Urban Industrial Zone.

- County Landfill: Sandoval County has initiated preliminary environmental studies for a new landfill to be located on a parcel of land owned by the State Land Office that is located outside but abutting the plan area to the northwest. The County's new landfill will be accessed by the existing Encino Road.

- Northwest Loop Road, a bypass arterial facility as shown below, will not be built in its entirety as most of the right-of-way has reverted to private land ownership. Sandoval County has built a segment of the road in the Rio Puerco area, and also owns right-of-way for another segment near the future County landfill.

Joint Planning with the City of Rio Rancho

To date, no plans have been developed and fully implemented for this area. AMREP Corporation developed a land use plan for Rio Rancho Estates as a part of its original platting process, however, the plan remains largely unimplemented and is not recognized by Rio Rancho or by Sandoval County as an official plan. The 1991 Rio Rancho City Comprehensive Plan discussed a joint city/county planning concept in Rio Rancho Estates. In 1997, the City of Rio Rancho completed a study of future annexation and concluded at the time that further annexation of lands within Rio Rancho Estates may not be cost-effective for the city. As with both the city and county Comprehensive Plans, this document pointed the way to a future planning concept for the area as follows: "...The City of Rio Rancho could work with Sandoval County to amend the County Comprehensive Plan for the Rio Rancho Estates area to reflect a shared vision of the city and county for the area..."

State law allows for the city and county to jointly administer zoning in the area through an Extraterritorial Zoning Commission and Authority (ETZ), an idea also recommended in the 1997 city annexation study. This method is in use within Dona Ana and Santa Fe counties, two of the state's three most populous counties. Rio Rancho and Sandoval County have held discussions

regarding the establishment of an ETZ dating back to 1998. This plan will outline proposals for continued cooperative planning in the RREAP area in a manner that will benefit both governmental agencies such that the investment and maintenance of an ETZ planning process will not be needed. Given that much of the plan area is under the joint jurisdiction of the both the City and the county, the RREAP should be jointly adopted and implemented. A successful plan for this area must involve the city and the county working together, as the future of the city and the plan area are linked.

Joint Planning with Rio Rancho Public Schools

The Rio Rancho Public Schools (RRPS) is viewing areas within the plan area for future school system expansion. RRPS will have a school population-based need to build a new elementary, middle, and high school within the plan area and adjacent to the current Rio Rancho city limits. With the planning for new schools come opportunities for land use planning to support the schools and create quality school-residential communities.

SECTION 10
Land Planning

Existing conditions in Rio Rancho Estates reveal a set of circumstances that point to one conclusion: either the area is planned for appropriate growth and development, or the area, over time, will become an environmental disaster amidst conditions that increasingly reflect blight and slum conditions. Due to the limited water resources in the area, and the fragmented land ownership in the area, the acquisition of land in the plan area must play a role in an effective land planning program. Ultimately, the overall number of privately owned parcels must be reduced, and a new set of circumstances must be established to create a County community that is healthy and water sustainable for residents of the area. Water availability and circumstances surrounding water availability, land and housing values, and current governmental statutory authority regarding land acquisition will provide information on establishing policy to address these issues.

Land Values

Figure 11 illustrates County assessed land values by Unit in the Estates. Generally, land values are higher in close proximity to the Rio Rancho city limits, and lower where properties are located further away from the city. The geographic consistency in where the lower land values are located provides an opportunity to consider land acquisition as a tool for reducing the number of privately owned land parcels and creating a more realistic alignment of developable land and available water resources.

Land Acquisition

Land acquisition in the Estates may occur through some form of government intervention, or through the provision of incentives for the private sector, or a combination of both. For government intervention, the legal ability to condemn private property through eminent domain currently does not exist for redevelopment purposes. The acquisition of land with the purpose of reducing the amount of land available for development would not be for an economic purpose. The current government eminent domain laws are as follows:

NM State Statute 3-33-5 NMSA 1978/Eminent Domain:
NM 3-33-5/Eminent Domain establishes the powers to government jurisdictions to exercise condemnation of private property for the following public purposes:

- Creating and widening roadways.
- Constructing, maintaining and operating storm drains or solid waste disposal areas.
- Acquiring land for open space/public park purposes.
- Establishing or acquiring existing cemeteries or mausoleums.

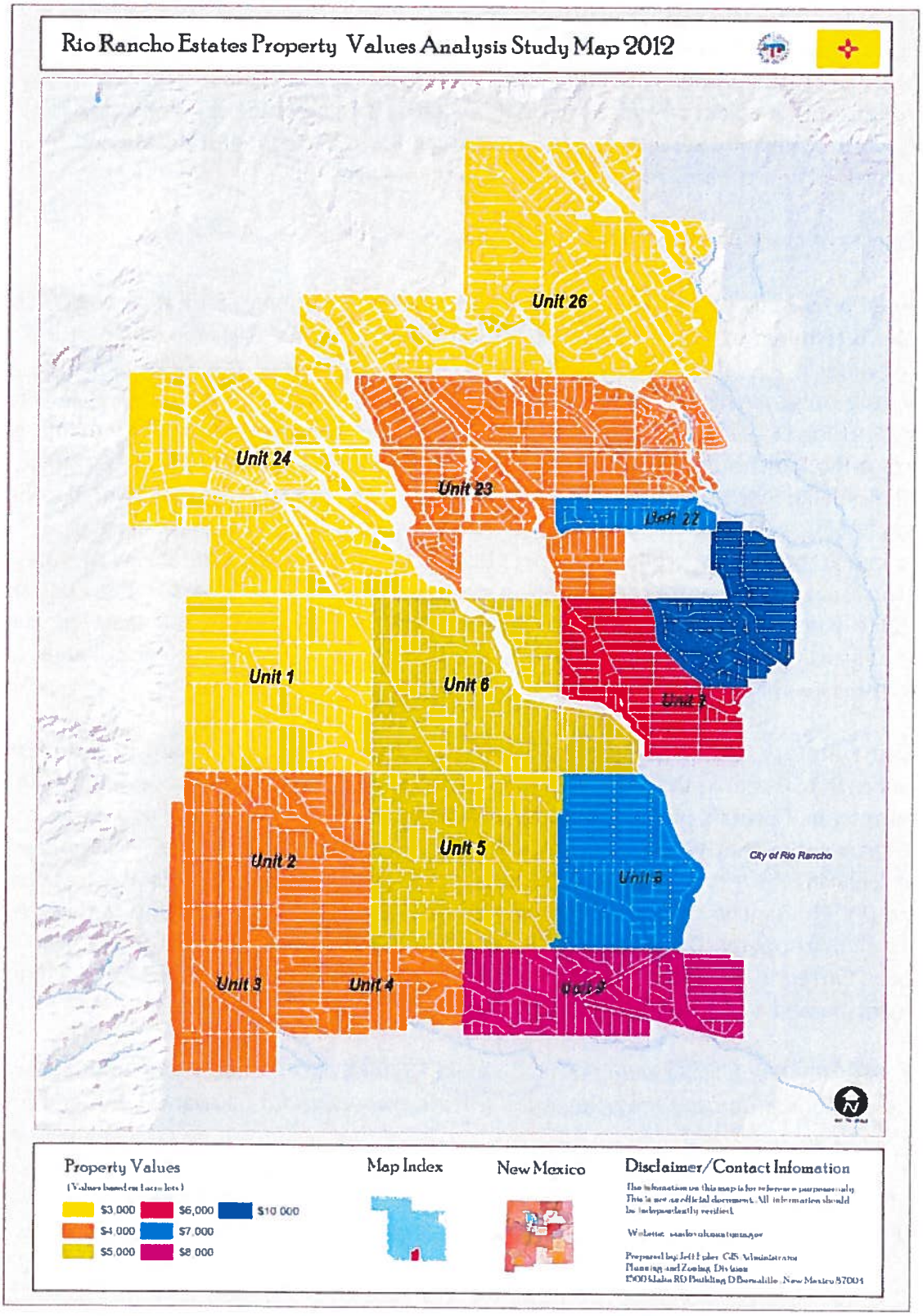

Figure 10, Estates Property Values. Source: Sandoval County Planning and Zoning Division/GIS.

NM State Statute 3-41-3 NMSA 1978/Eminent Domain:
NM 3-41-3/Eminent Domain establishes the powers to government jurisdictions to exercise condemnation of private property for flood control purposes. This Statute may be utilized to acquire properties that adjoin arroyos in the plan area to create networks of open space for public use, which would also serve to maintain existing arroyos in their natural state and protect threatened and endangered wildlife living in the arroyos.

Western Estates/Water Conservation:

As mentioned previously (Section 3, Existing Water Supply Conditions), a total of 16,000-acre feet of water is required to support full residential build out of the Estates area, and only 8,000-acre feet of water is available on a renewable basis. In greater detail, the water study for the area shows the presence of an underground geologic rift extending from the northeast to the southwest (FIGURE 11). This rift separates the Estates areas into two sub-areas, one adjacent to the current Rio Rancho city limits, and one further to the west. The area closer to the city contains the smaller portion of the existing 8,000-acre feet of water at shallower depths (approximately 650 feet), and the area further to the west contains the larger portion of the 8,000-acre feet at much greater depths (greater than 1,000 feet). The greater depth to water in the western area is such that the cost of drilling individual wells is prohibitive for many citizens, and coincides with relatively lower land values in the Estates area. The western area, containing approximately 21,900 lots, is also an area where several future municipal wells are planned for the city of Rio Rancho.

With current statutory authority regarding land acquisition, a western pattern of lower land values, the depth to water in this area, and the need to reduce the number of developable lots in the Estates by half overall, public acquisition of land in these areas is viewed as a measure to create an open space that would serve a public water conservation purpose. This measure would not only insure a sustainable water supply for current and future Estates residents adjacent to the Rio Rancho city limits, but would also create an area that supports long-term municipal well development and function for the city of Rio Rancho to support their long-term water needs. Currently the County receives land from property owners as voluntary donations, and the County would also seek these land donations in the Western Estates area.

While the need for a publically acquired and owned Water Conservation Area/Open Space is clear, some portions of this area may be left in private ownership for allowances for land uses that use little to no water and are non-polluting, provided that water can be provided to these uses from a source outside of the Estates area. Uses may include light industrial/assembly uses. Location of these uses adjacent to existing arterial roadways such as King, Northern, and Southern Boulevards would be minimally invasive to a Water Conservation Area/Open Space.

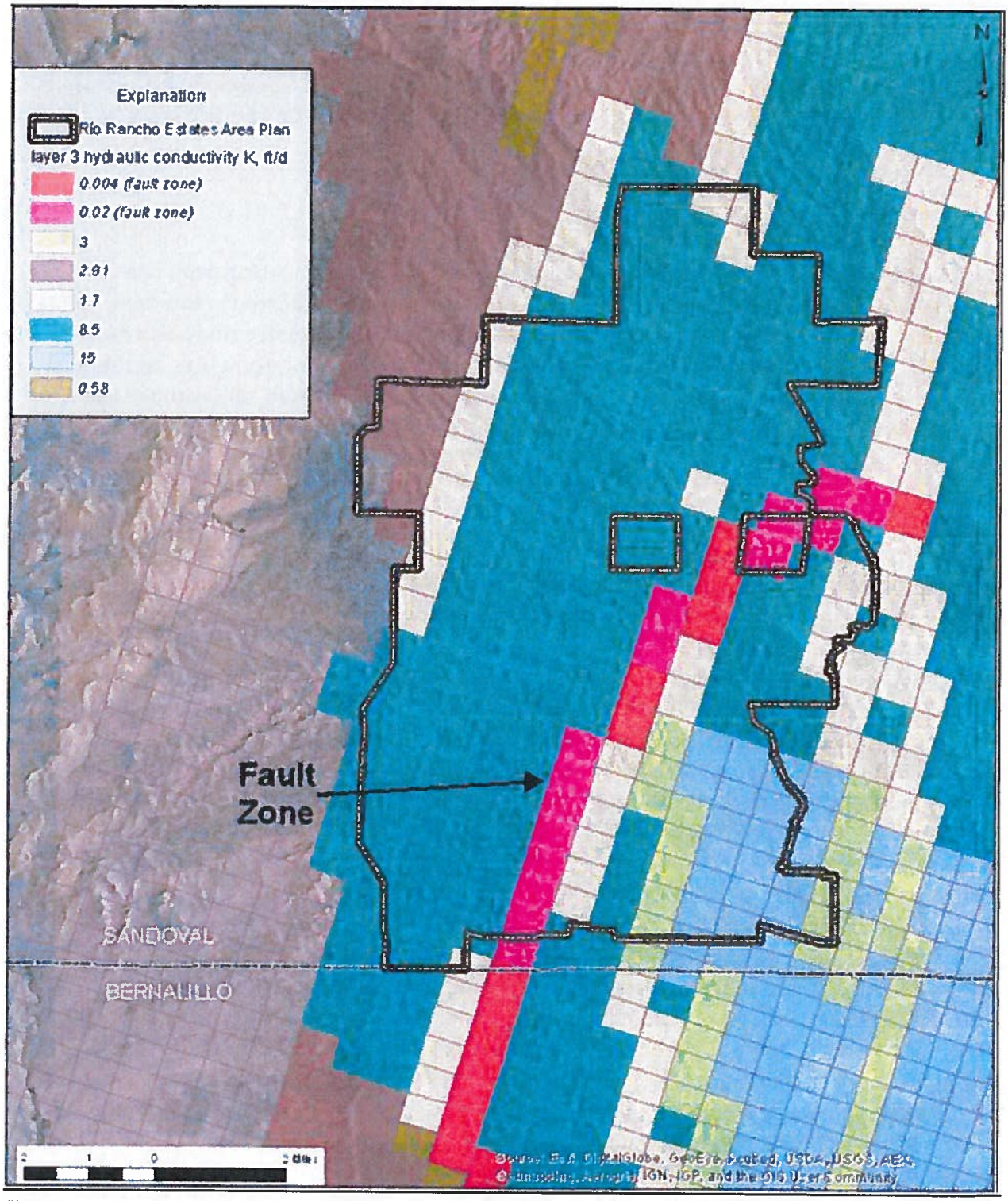

Figure 11, Rio Rancho Estates Rift Fault Zone. Source: Souder Miller & Associates

The Water Conservation Area/Open Space will serve water conservation, recreation, and arroyo and wildlife preservation purposes. The Water Conservation Area/Open Space will also result in losses in property tax revenue for the County. Improvements in conditions for private land development in the Eastern Estates area adjoining the city of Rio Rancho will serve to balance County property revenues.

Eastern Estates/Private Development:

The Eastern Estates area is comprised of approximately 18,100 lots varying from one-half acre to one acre. The smaller portion of the 8,000-acre feet of water is located in this area, and at shallower depths, is more accessible for private wells. The Estates water study also provides an estimate of 16,000 private wells that can operate sustainably for long-term use. As this well number does not equal the number of privately-owned lots in the area, and with the need for revenue balance for the Estates area as a while, the Eastern Estates area will require detailed land value and land use planning.

Housing

Currently, there are approximately 514 housing units in the Estates area (including manufactured/modular homes). While the number of single family housing units has grown significantly in recent years, not every unit is considered by the County Assessor to be Real Property Assessed Housing. Of 514 total units, 418 are assessed permanent structures. Manufactured/Modular Homes represent approximately 83% of all homes in the Estates area. Approx 23% of manufactured homes are not assessed as real property. Site built homes represent approximately 17% of homes in the area. The median assessed value for all units (514) is $71,000.00 (Figure 12, Housing Study Map). Year to date (as of 12/12/12) property sales found in the Southwest MLS have a median value of $98,000.00. In comparison, the median assessed value of single family housing units in the City of Rio Rancho overall is $134,000.00, while the city's overall MLS median is $159,000.00 (Figure 13, Housing Study Data).

The difference in City and County land values is generally based on the presence, or lack, of urban infrastructure (municipal water and sewer line systems). The lack of water resources renders the extension and operation of both municipal water and sewer systems prohibitive. Residential land values may be stabilized through the establishment of minimum rural infrastructure and habitation living standards (licensed habitable living structure, individual water well, a connection to a well, a water storage tank supplied by a water hauling service, or a connection to a municipal water utility line, advanced aeration low pollution septic systems). These standards would improve the quality of living standards in existing and new neighborhoods in the Estates area and, as a result, improve land values which would contribute to the revenue balancing needed for a publically acquired Water Conservation Area/Open Space.

Stabilizing conditions for single family residential development, it is hoped, will bring new homes and residents to the Eastern Estates area. New home settlements in the area will bring interest in a variety of housing types, and a need for supporting business services and employment opportunities, all of which must be woven into stringent water availability conditions and a need for traffic management in the area with regard to minimizing impacts on existing neighborhoods and the city of Rio Rancho.

Higher Density Residential/Non-Residential Development

Higher density residential development (apartments, condominiums, townhouses), and non-residential development (commercial, office, light industrial) would provided a variety of housing types and circumstances for County residents, provide needed employment opportunities and non-residential services to residents that would reduce traffic into Rio Rancho, may be of a select group of types of uses that utilize lower amounts of water, and will also contribute to the needed revenue balancing publically acquired park/open space/land bank area. Such development may occur with government support to the private sector.

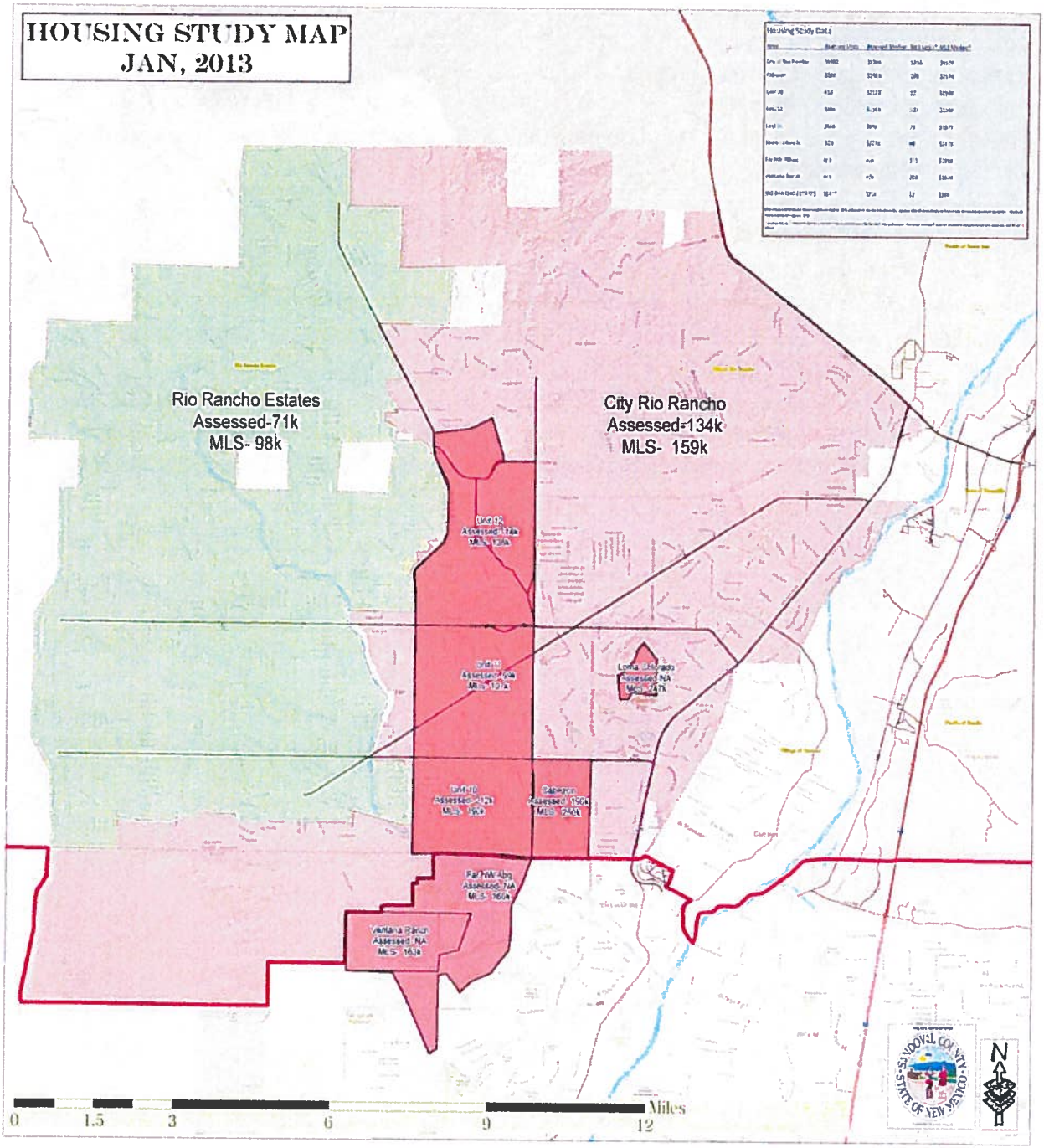

Figure 12, Housing Study Map. Source: Sandoval County Planning and Zoning Division/GIS.

Housing Study Data

Area	Assessed Units	Assessed Median	MLS Units*	MLS Median*
City of Rio Rancho	31902	$134K	1236	$159K
Cabezon	2207	$190K	108	$250K
Unit 10	418	$212K	12	$190K
Unit 12	5394	$114K	227	$136K
Unit 11	3966	$99K	78	$107K
Loma Colorado	528	$227K	49	$247K
Far NW Albuq	n/a	n/a	371	$160K
Ventana Ranch	n/a	n/a	208	$163K
RIO RANCHO ESTATES	514**	$71k	12	$98k

Manufactured/Modular Homes represent approx. 83% of homes in the Rio Estates area. Approx 23% of manufactured homes are not assessed as real property. Site built home represent approx. 17%.

*** As of 12/12/12. **418 of the 514 are assessed as improved real property by Sandoval County Assessor. Remainder includes Properties Assessed as Mobile Homes with Estimated land values added.**

Figure 13, Housing Study Data. Source: Sandoval County Planning and Zoning Division.

There are incentives available to the private sector from local governments which may facilitate redevelopment in specific planned areas. All of the above mentioned mechanisms designed for the public sector may create circumstances under which private sector development may flourish, however added incentives may be needed to sustain long term economic development success.

Types of incentives currently available to the private sector for economic development purposes are:

- Tax Incentives: local governments have the authority to establish areas of focus for development, and provide tax incentives in the form of lower tax structures, and tax abatements (delays) for specified periods of time, to support development activities.

- Performance Development Standards: local governments may establish zoning and other land development regulations that provide for higher densities, parking area reductions, increases in signage face area allowances, and increases in Floor Area Ratio (FAR) standards provided that proposed developments meet specified regulatory requirements.

Areas in the Estates that may be appropriate for higher density residential and non-residential are major arterial streets (Southern, Northern, and King Boulevards) and areas adjacent to these streets. This pattern would mirror proposed development patterns for light industrial/assemble low water uses on private land within the Western Estates area, and would strengthen land designation distinctions regarding corridor higher intensity development adjacent to arterial roadway corridors, and the Water Conservation Area/Open Space in between arterial roadway corridors. The pattern would also support efficient movement of corridor-related traffic with minimal impacts on existing neighborhoods.

New Eastern Estates development on this scale is best located within and adjacent to existing neighborhoods to provide quality of life improvements and land use diversity. In this event, governments may establish Improvement Districts as established in New Mexico under NM State Statute 3-33-2 as a mechanism for provision of infrastructure to support this scale of redevelopment. A popular form of Improvement District is a Special Assessment District (SAD), where the government establishes a land assessment tax for an area to fund infrastructure improvements. SAD's typically involve paving of roads and installation of water and sewer infrastructure, as well as drainage infrastructure. In antiquated subdivision areas like Rio Rancho Estates, individual development sites are otherwise charged impact fees where Improvement Districts are not implemented.

As an example of how infrastructure costs may be addressed through an improvement district, the current city of Rio Rancho schedule for impact fees indicates increased costs associated with infrastructure development in antiquated subdivision areas due to the need for new drainage infrastructure, as follows:

Land Use	Within City Limits	County Estates Area	Drainage Difference
Single Family Res	$9,882	$14,347	$4,465
Office (3,560 sq ft)	$26,240	$32,598	$6,358
Commercial	$26,145	$30,517	$27,872
Office (22,343 sq ft)	$91,324	$131,228	$39,904

These costs would be a detriment to development or redevelopment efforts in the antiquated Rio Rancho Estates subdivision, or may be avoided through public redevelopment efforts.

Public Redevelopment

With areas located furthest west in the Estates acquired for a public Water Conservation Area/Open Space, minimum rural infrastructure and habitation standards for existing and new future residential areas, and the inclusion of higher density residential and non-residential development, there still remains a significant amount of land available for redevelopment where very few citizens live. Such circumstances exist in areas north of Northern Boulevard and adjacent to the Rio Rancho city limits. In these areas, public redevelopment of vacant land may find a role in the land planning in the Estates.

In order to facilitate land redevelopment by local government, changes are needed to the New Mexico Metropolitan Redevelopment Act which would restore eminent domain for redevelopment purposes. While Sandoval County government will not pursue such changes, the County's planning efforts in the northern portion of the Eastern Estates area would benefit from these changes if they were to occur. Land in these areas may then be acquired and assembled for large-scale private sector redevelopment. This would eliminate the existing antiquated subdivision platting in the area, and pave the way for modern large-scale redevelopment which may also accommodate commercial and industrial/manufacturing uses and provide additional job opportunities to residents of the County. Such development would also contribute significantly to the revenue balancing needed to establish the Water Conservation Area/Open Space. The development proposed for the northern portion of the Eastern Estates area would benefit from improvement district planning, and would require water and wastewater infrastructure that is based outside of the Estates area.

Estates Area Overall:

Common to the Estates area overall are arroyos and the properties that adjoin and are located between the arroyos. The public acquisition of properties that adjoin or are located between arroyos throughout the Estates area would be an important land contribution to a Water Conservation Area/Open Space, and may also serve a recreational role which would serve to maintain arroyos in their natural state and support their flood control role, as well as protecting threatened and endangered wildlife living in the arroyos.

SECTION 11
"Do Nothing" Scenarios

With public acquisition of land in the furthest western areas of the Estates, minimum rural infrastructure and habitation standards, the introduction of higher density and non-residential development, and the potential for a public redevelopment role in the land planning process, the Estates area may become a County community that has vibrant and healthy neighborhoods, employment and services, as well as open space and recreation, all of which will co-exist in a proper alignment with available water resources. Otherwise, if nothing is done and the Estates are left with existing development standards and antiquated platting, the "do nothing" alternative will result in an increase in scattered residential development in the Estates, and will leave the following scenarios to impact the area for years to come:

- An unavoidable tapping of underground water supplies by individual wells that will result in eventual water losses in the Estates and will reduce the City of Rio Rancho's ability to provide a long-term water supply for its current and future citizens.
- Individual septic systems scattered across the 43,000+ acre plan area will eventually impact the quality of underground water resources, and may affect the livability of the area, for both citizens as well as for the threatened and endangered wildlife in the Estates area.
- Development that is sub-standard in relation to surrounding area existing uses will become more common, creating environments that are unhealthy and dangerous for plan area residents.
- With only single-family residential uses continuing to develop in the Estates area, this will create a growing traffic demand into Rio Rancho for needed employment, retail and health services. This traffic demand will create challenges for maintenance of the existing road network as well as impacts in the Rio Rancho city network.

SECTION 12
Plan Concept

The Plan Concept for the Rio Rancho Estates plan area is multi-faceted and combines elements of neighborhood preservation, land acquisition, water and environmental conservation, private sector development incentives, private sector limited commercial redevelopment, and the potential for government intervention for large-scale redevelopment.

The Plan Concept is based on the following guidelines:

1. Neighborhood preservation is a priority.
2. The County will pursue the establishment of minimum rural infrastructure and habitation standards (licensed habitable living structure, individual water well, a connection to a well, a water storage tank supplied by a water hauling service, or a connection to a municipal water utility line, advanced aeration low pollution septic systems) to improve the quality of life in existing and future neighborhoods and to stabilize land values.
3. For areas identified for Water Conservation Area/Open Space, the County will seek to acquire only vacant privately owned land. The County will seek to acquire this land through outright purchase, and through utilization of NM State Statute 3-33-5/Eminent Domain (roads, bridges, open space and public parks) and NM State Statute 3-41-3/Eminent Domain (flood prone areas). The County will also seek Federal, State, and non-profit organization funding, as well as private donations, to assist in this process.
4. The County will pursue development of incentives to promote private sector redevelopment of privately owned vacant land in and adjacent to major arterial street areas (Southern, Northern, and King Boulevards).
5. Paseo del Volcan is identified as a limited access arterial highway in the Mid Region Council of Governments Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) 2035. As Paseo del Volcan will be built within the plan area and create new major road intersections at Northern and Southern Boulevards, these intersections are opportunities for new urban scale land uses and economic development that will benefit County and Rio Rancho residents.
6. New development, both residential and non-residential, will be designed to blend with existing development patterns.
7. The County will pursue development of design guidelines for areas adjacent to the Rio Rancho city limits that establish consistency in standards for new development while providing flexibility that supports existing development.
8. In the event that eminent domain laws are restored for public land acquisition for redevelopment, the County will acquire land in specifically identified areas, and promote and support the establishment of Special Assessment Districts (SAD's) to generate revenue for utility, road and drainage improvements for the private sector. In

this event, the County would not utilize eminent domain for condemnation of existing homes for economic development purposes.

9. The public acquisition of properties that adjoin or are located between arroyos in the area would be an important land contribution to a Water Conservation Area/Open Space, and may also serve a recreational role which would serve to maintain arroyos in their natural state and support their flood control role, as well as protecting threatened and endangered wildlife living in the arroyos.
10. The County will work cooperatively with the Southern Sandoval County Arroyo Flood Control Authority (SSCAFCA), the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, and the New Mexico State Land Office, in creating opportunities for public recreational activities in open space/flood prone areas where such activities do not adversely affect wildlife. Linkages between recreation areas and existing and new development will be designed throughout the plan area to the extent feasible.

The Plan Concept Map (Figure 14) illustrates the following:

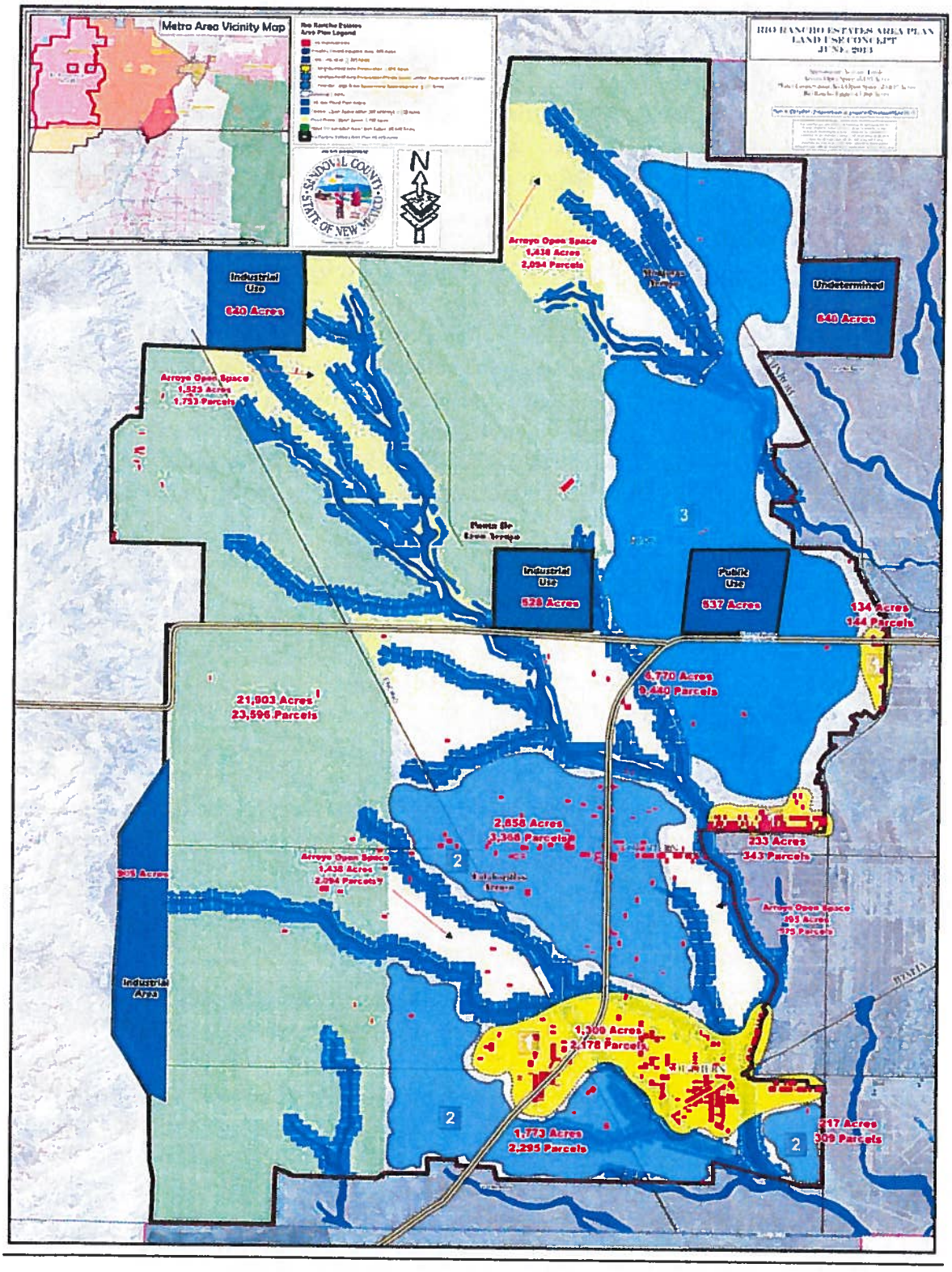

Figure 14, Plan Concept Map. Source: Sandoval County Planning and Zoning/GIS Division.

Eastern Estates:

Neighborhood Preservation Area (YELLOW: 1,676 Acres/2,665 Parcels):
The Neighborhood Preservation Areas are existing neighborhoods in the plan area. The County will support continued single family residential development in these areas to stabilize and preserve the neighborhoods. These areas may continue utilizing individual water wells for a long-term water source.

Neighborhood Preservation/Private Sector Limited Redevelopment Area (PURPLE: 4,631 Acres/5,663 Parcels):
The Neighborhood Preservation/Private Sector Limited Redevelopment Areas are neighborhood areas which have potential to support limited mixed-use (commercial, office, light industrial, high-density residential) redevelopment. Higher density redevelopment will be supported along Northern and Southern Boulevards, and at major road intersections, to facilitate adequate traffic access and minimize traffic related impacts on neighborhood areas. These areas may continue utilizing individual water wells for a long-term water source.

Potential Large Scale Redevelopment Area (LIGHT BLUE: 5,271 Acres/3,368 Parcels):
The Potential Large Scale Redevelopment Area is the area adjacent to the current Rio Rancho city limits that has the least amount of existing development. Larger-scale commercial, office, and employment uses will be the focus in this area. The County shall support private sector incentives to facilitate large scale lot consolidation and redevelopment, and a balance of housing and employment opportunities in this area will be pursued. Water and Wastewater infrastructure will be required to support this area, and this infrastructure must be based on municipal-scale water and wastewater services. While Sandoval County government will not pursue changes to existing Metropolitan Redevelopment Area statutes regarding eminent domain, the County's planning efforts in the northern portion of the Eastern Estates area would benefit from these changes.

Western Estates:

Water Conservation Area/Open Space (GREEN: 21,903 Acres/23,596 Parcels):
The Water Conservation Area/Open Space is proposed as a public open space reserve for water conservation. This area will be created under current eminent domain statutory authority for open space/park land acquisition, Federal and State monetary support, and through private donations. Single family residences and related uses will be permitted under existing zoning on privately owned land. Light industrial/assembly low-water uses on private land are encouraged adjacent to arterial roadways, provided that these uses receive their water from sources outside the Estates area.

Light Industrial Development Area (DARK BLUE/WEST ESCARPMENT: 905 Acres/2 Parcels):
The Light Industrial Development Area is intended as an area of focus for industrial activities

that minimally impact the surrounding Water Conservation Area/Open Space. This area may be served by water and waste water infrastructure from outside the plan area.

Estates Area Overall:

Flood Prone Arroyo Area Open Space (GOLD: 3,841 Acres/4,927 Parcels):
The Flood Prone Arroyo Area Open Space is proposed as an addition to the Water Conservation Area/Open Space and may serve the area for recreational purposes. These areas are located in between 100-year arroyo flood areas. Single family residences and related uses will be permitted under existing zoning, however development of non-residential uses in these areas will be discouraged. The financial cost of roadway access and maintenance for these areas is significant due to flooding and erosion. Development of new roadways in these areas will be kept to a minimum.

Arroyo Bank Open Space (COBALT BLUE: 2,288 Acres/2,400 Parcels):
The Arroyo Bank Open Space is proposed as an addition to the Water Conservation Area/Open Space and may serve the area for recreational purposes. This area is comprised of parcels of land that abut existing arroyos. Single family residences and related uses will be permitted under existing zoning, however development of non-residential uses in these areas will be discouraged.

SECTION 13
Development Policy

Land ownership in the plan area is very diverse and includes property owners who live outside the United States, making implementation of proposals for new development in the plan area challenging. The RREAP will be a policy document with recommendations on land use, in relation to environmental and infrastructure conditions, that will serve as a guide for future decisions on zoning proposals submitted by private land owners consistent with this plan. For areas where new development is proposed, the following policy is recommended.

RREAP Development Policy :

1. **Neighborhood Preservation Areas**:
   a. New single family residential development should be encouraged in existing neighborhood areas for neighborhood stability.
   b. New single family residential development adjacent to major arterial roadways such as Northern and Southern Boulevards should be discouraged.
   c. Urban Multi-Family zoning and development should be encouraged only on major roadways to minimize potential traffic related impacts on existing neighborhoods.
   d. Existing neighborhoods should have vehicular and pedestrian access to public open space recreational activity areas where feasible.

2. **Neighborhood Preservation/Private Sector Limited Redevelopment Areas**:
   a. A mix of neighborhood-scale commercial, office, light industrial, and high density residential development should be encouraged adjacent to major arterial roadways.
   b. Higher urban-scale intensity commercial and light industrial uses should be encouraged at the intersections of Paseo del Volcan and Northern and Southern Boulevards.
   c. The establishment of Rural Commercial (RC) and Urban Multi-Family zoning adjacent to major arterial roadways should be encouraged. Industrial and salvage yard uses should be discouraged.
   d. New single family residential development should be encouraged in existing neighborhood areas adjacent to local and collector roadways.
   e. Vehicular and pedestrian access to public open space recreational activity areas should be provided in residential and commercial areas where feasible.

3. **Potential Large Scale Government Redevelopment Area**:
   a. A mix of large-scale commercial, office, employment uses, and high density residential development should be encouraged adjacent to major arterial roadways.
   b. The establishment of Urban Commercial, Urban Industrial, Urban Multi-Family, and Master Plan zoning adjacent to major arterial roadways should be encouraged. Salvage Yard uses should be discouraged.

c. Urban Single Family Residential zoning and development should be encouraged in areas that are adjacent to existing urban single family residential development within the Rio Rancho city limits.
d. Vehicular and pedestrian access to public open space recreational activity areas should be provided in residential and commercial areas where feasible.

4. **Area Design Guidelines**:
   a. Design guidelines for landscaping, lighting, signage, and parking areas should be developed for properties adjacent to major arterial roadways to minimize impacts related to on-site activities and traffic circulation.
   b. On-site drainage and ponding criteria should be developed to minimize development related storm run-off into adjacent arroyos.
   c. Criteria for new site development procedures should be developed to minimize erosion and other environmental impacts.

5. **Infrastructure**:
   a. The County should pursue provision of minimum rural infrastructure and habitation standards for the health and benefit of existing and future neighborhoods (licensed habitable living structure, individual water well, a connection to a well, a water storage tank supplied by a water hauling service, or a connection to a municipal water utility line, advanced aeration low pollution septic systems).
   b. The County should pursue provision of paving and street lighting for Southern, Northern, and King Boulevards, between Rainbow Boulevard and 40th Street, to the extent feasible.
   c. The County should pursue provision of water line infrastructure for Southern and King Boulevards, between Rainbow Boulevard and 40th Street, to the extent feasible.

6. **Environment**:
   a. The County should work cooperatively with the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) in establishing criteria for liquid waste systems for commercial/industrial/high density residential areas that minimize effluent impacts on arroyos and on wildlife in the area.

SECTION 14
Implementation Measures

1. Copies of the DRAFT Rio Rancho Estates Area Plan (RREAP) will be distributed to the following Local, State and Federal agencies for review and comment:

   - City of Rio Rancho.
   - Rio Rancho Public Schools.
   - Southern Sandoval County Arroyo Flood Control Authority.
   - New Mexico Office of the State Engineer.
   - New Mexico State Land Office.
   - New Mexico Environment Department.
   - New Mexico Department of Game and Fish.
   - New Mexico Department of Transportation.
   - CIUDAD Soil and Water Conservation District.
   - USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.
   - Mid Region Council of Governments.

2. Upon review and comment from the above agencies, the DRAFT RREAP will be distributed to the Sandoval County Planning and Zoning Commission and the Sandoval County Board of County Commissioners for their review and comment.

3. Sandoval County will hold public hearings on the DRAFT RREAP for public review and comment.

4. The Sandoval County Planning and Zoning Commission will forward the DRAFT RREAP to the Sandoval County Board of County Commissioners with a recommendation to approve public review of the Plan by the City of Rio Rancho Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council.

5. Revision of the DRAFT RREAP will address comments from the City of Rio Rancho, the above listed agencies, and citizens, and will address comments from the Sandoval County Planning and Zoning Commission and Board of County Commission. Implementation Measures will be structured as a DRAFT Work Program and will contain the following:

   a. An amended Well Permit from the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer establishing agreements for acquisition and use of ground water in the RREAP area by Sandoval County and the City of Rio Rancho.
   b. An agreement between Sandoval County and the City of Rio Rancho regarding provision and operation of water infrastructure in development areas as identified in the RREAP.

c. An agreement between Sandoval County and the Rio Rancho Public Schools regarding the siting and planning for new school facilities in the RREAP area, and the acquisition and management of arroyo open space that adjoins school facilities.
d. An agreement between Sandoval County and the Southern Sandoval County Arroyo Flood Control Authority (SSCAFCA) regarding acquisition and management of arroyo open space in the RREAP area.
e. An agreement between Sandoval County and the New Mexico State Land Office regarding planning for development of State-owned land parcels in the RREAP area.
f. DRAFT Environmentally low impact procedures governing new development in the RREAP area as recommended by SSCAFCA, Cuidad Soil and Water Conservation District, and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.
g. DRAFT recommendations on the development of roads in the RREAP area from the New Mexico Department of Transportation and the Mid Region Council of Governments and the scheduling of construction of roads in the Sandoval County Capital Improvement Plan.
h. DRAFT development proposals to establish minimum rural infrastructure and habitation standards for the health and benefit of existing and future neighborhoods (licensed habitable living structure, individual water well, a connection to a well, a water storage tank supplied by a water hauling service, or a connection to a municipal water utility line, advanced aeration low pollution septic systems).
i. If needed, a DRAFT proposal for the creation of a Special Assessment District (SAD) in the RREAP area for the purpose of generating revenue for the construction and maintenance of water infrastructure, and the construction and maintenance of new roads in specifically identified public redevelopment areas.
j. A DRAFT proposal for County tax assessment for the Plan area which will include formulas for tax revenue balance between the County's Water Conservation Area/Open Space and areas identified and recommended for commercial, light industrial, office, and high density residential uses.

6. The DRAFT Rio Rancho Estates Area Plan and DRAFT Work Program will be submitted for review to the Sandoval County Planning and Zoning Commission for their comments and recommendations for the Sandoval County Board of County Commissioners.

7. The DRAFT Rio Rancho Estates Area Plan and DRAFT Work Program, as reviewed for comments and recommendations by the Sandoval County Planning and Zoning Commission, and the DRAFT agreements and other proposals, will be forwarded to the Sandoval County Board of County Commissioners for their review and consideration for adoption.