

COORS CORRIDOR PLAN

Draft May 2007



Mayor Martin J. Chavez
City of Albuquerque

DRAFT

Coors Corridor Plan

MAY 2007



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In late 2005, the City of Albuquerque's Planning Department began an update of the Coors Corridor Plan (Corridor Plan). The original version of this Sector Development Plan was adopted in 1984, to guide development along Coors between Central and Alameda (Corridor). It consisted of four elements:

- 1) Environmental Concerns and Related Improvements
- 2) Traffic Movement/Access and Roadway Design
- 3) Land Use and Intensity of Development
- 4) Visual Impressions and Urban Design Overlay Zone

Significant changes along the Corridor, and ongoing difficulties in interpreting the original Plan, led to a new Coors Corridor Plan.

The Plan Area remains the same. Its geographic scope includes roughly 10 miles in length extending from Central Avenue (south) to Alameda Boulevard (north) paralleling the Rio Grande's west bank. It is divided into four distinct segments used to analyze conditions and tailor recommendations and design guidelines. (See Figure 1.2, pages 12 and 13)

Funding for the Corridor Plan was authorized by Council Resolution R-05-234. Based on this legislation and the intent of the Planning Department, the Corridor Plan focuses on preserving visual qualities through a Design Overlay Zone, view preservation strategies, the design of Coors Boulevard as a parkway, and the identification of new pedestrian facilities in the Plan Area north of Western Trail. Other elements from the original Plan were updated and amended to reflect changes in the planning and regulatory framework.

This Corridor Plan implements portions of the Albuquerque Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan and the West Side Strategic Plan (WSSP) with policy recommendations, design guidelines and standards, a comprehensive pedestrian facility plan, and a capital improvement matrix that identifies specific projects and projected costs.

The Coors Corridor planning effort included an extensive public input process featuring a kick-off meeting, a community workshop, a feedback forum, and two open house meetings. The Plan will be presented to the City's Environmental Planning Commission for review in Spring 2007, and to the City Council for adoption in Summer 2007.



Section I.
Planning Framework

FIGURE 1.1: CORRIDOR CONTEXT



Section I. Planning Framework

Introduction

This section provides background information and analysis on which recommendations in Section II are based.

Coors Boulevard (Coors) is one of Albuquerque's most significant streets relative to its length, traffic volume, and location. Situated between two geographic features—the mesa slope to the west and the inner valley of the Rio Grande to the east—Coors is a crucial street for persons traveling to, from, and along Albuquerque's West Side. Bisected by Central Avenue, the northern half of Coors—between Central and Alameda—has developed into the primary north-south thoroughfare west of the Rio Grande. Figure 1.1, on the preceding page, shows the corridor and its context; Figure 1.2, on pages 12 and 13, shows the Corridor Boundary and Segments.

Land use associated with the northern half of the boulevard has kept pace with the dramatic post-1980 surge in development. It features regional commercial development and a range of residential development, with fewer than 20 remaining undeveloped lots larger than 5 acres. Conditions have changed significantly since the 1984 Plan established traffic, land use, environmental and visual preservation policies and guidelines. At that time, most of the northern portion of the Plan Area was not developed and Coors appeared and functioned as a country road, albeit a heavily-traveled one.



Coors traffic and existing eastern view

Changes to the broader planning goals and policies that apply to the Corridor have also occurred, particularly those established by the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan (Comprehensive Plan) adopted in 1988 and the West Side Strategic Plan (WSSP) adopted in 1997.

The purpose of these amendments, as directed by City Enactment R-2005-054, is to update the 1984 Plan, address changes in planning policies, provide street designs, and provide updates to the view preservation and site design regulations. Area changes and new policy issues require different strategies, however, the 1984 Plan objective remains:

to “Develop the corridor along Coors Boulevard as a distinct place that preserves visual access to scenic features and is served by an arterial street with improved safety, efficiency and architectural character.”

The following objectives were identified in the 2006 public process and planning framework:

- Improve design standards to achieve better spatial relationships
- Improve the visual harmony between new and existing buildings and between the built environment and its natural setting
- Improve site planning standards; balance and integrate the natural setting with building development; preserve unique natural features
- Improve the site and building design standards and the Design Overlay Zone that help maintain views of the Bosque and the Sandia Mountains
- Develop a Corridor Plan that conforms to existing planning policies
- Develop transit linkages
- Respect the bosque as it abuts the Rio Grande Valley State Park
- Recognize Coors as a commuter route with limited access
- Create safer pedestrian facilities and streetscapes, including new crossings
- Create a plan that is easy to follow and apply

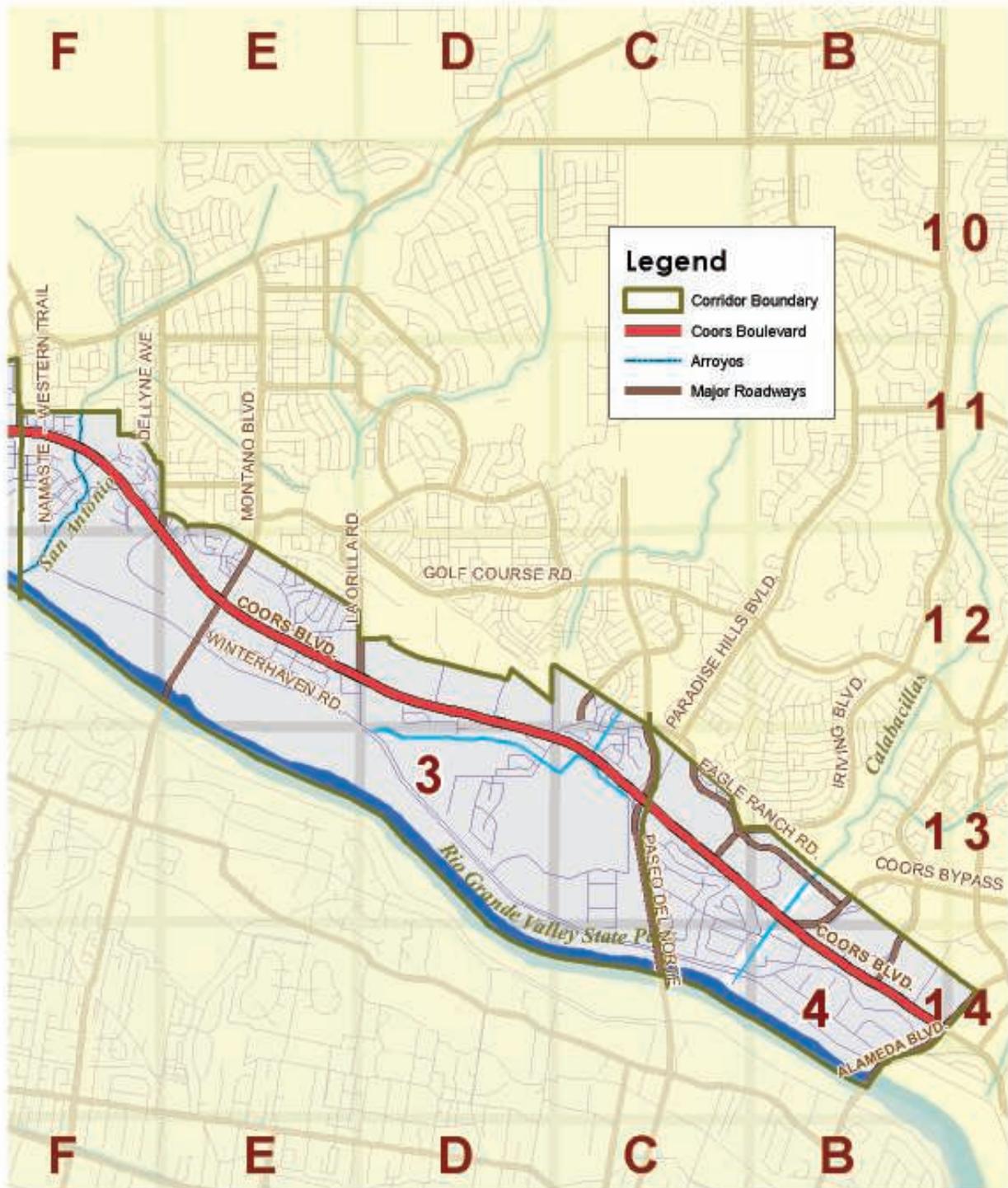
Matrix of Regulations and Policies referenced in Section II of this document.

Regulations / Policies		Page Number
Bosque	Section II Plan Elements	89
San Antonio Marsh		90
Floodplain / Floodway		90
Farmland		90
Archeological Sites		91
Drainage / Grading		91
Distribution Lines		92
Open Space Development		92
On-Site Parking		92
View Preservation		D. View Preservation and Enhancement
Non-residential Development	E. Zoning and Design Regulations	110
Multi-family Development		119
Residential Development		122

FIGURE 1.2: COORS CORRIDOR BOUNDARY AND SEGMENTS



FIGURE 1.2: COORS CORRIDOR BOUNDARY AND SEGMENTS



Source: The City of Albuquerque Planning Department. Map and data are for planning purposes only.

Plan Structure

This Corridor Plan is organized into three sections:

- Section I, Planning Framework
- Section II, Plan Elements
- Section III, Technical Appendix

Section I, Plan Framework, describes the Corridor Plan goals and objectives and its existing conditions. It also provides a summary of the planning policies and documents that pertain to the Corridor and identifies key issues, opportunities, and constraints that will impact the area. It is organized under the following subsections:

- A. Planning Policies and Documents
- B. Natural Environment and History
- C. Scenic Qualities and Development Character
- D. Land Use and Zoning
- E. Population and Employment Projections
- F. Transportation and Transit
- G. Pedestrian Facilities and Recreational Trails

Section II, Plan Elements, includes policy recommendations, design guidelines, and implementation mechanisms under the following elements:

- A. Coors Boulevard Design
- B. Pedestrian Facilities and Trail System
- C. Environmental Quality and Public Stewardship
- D. Design Overlay Zone
 - 1. View Preservation Regulations
 - 2. Enhancements
 - 3. Zoning and Design Regulations
- E. Implementation Summary and CIP Matrix

Section III, Technical Appendix, provides background and resource materials.

Community Process

The Corridor Plan reflects community input that ranged from a written survey and a design workshop, to stakeholder group feedback sessions. Approximately 80 residents, landowners, neighborhood associations, and developers participated in the 12 month planning process. During this period, the planning team provided maps, photographs, images, and presentations to help community members evaluate existing conditions and opportunities. The information from community input sessions serves as the basis for Corridor Plan recommendations.

A kick-off meeting was held on November 1, 2005. Identified were community values and the desired character for the street and fronting development. At this meeting, participants learned about major Corridor issues and provided valuable information to the planning team regarding their experience of the Corridor and what is needed to improve it. The planning team sought the opinions of participants regarding desired visual characteristics through two facilitated discussion groups. One group considered the section of Coors between Eagle Ranch Road and Paseo del Norte while the other group analyzed the section between Paseo del Norte and Alameda.

Residents had an opportunity to further express their preferences through a mail-in *Stakeholder Survey*. The survey solicited responses to questions regarding view preservation, pedestrian facility priorities, desired character, and sense of place. The survey was posted on the City's web site for expanded distribution to greater metropolitan area residents.

The planning team held a collaborative workshop on December 9, 2005, in the form of a hands-on design session. This workshop built on input from the November 1 meeting, and suggested specific strategies to achieve view preservation, landscape enhancements, open space, and pedestrian improvements. Participants applied these strategies to specific areas along Coors, drew on large aerial maps in an attempt to identify how and where to achieve goals outlined in the first meeting.

A consensus began to emerge and helped direct the next phase of work: developing specific recommendations and strategies. Property owners and members of the development community offered further input to initial plan concepts in a feedback forum held on January 25, 2006. All of the community input guided the planning team during the development of proposals for walking and bicycling trails, connections to open space, transit linkages, view enhancements, site design, and development review considerations.



Feedback Forum, January 2006

A community Open House meeting was held on May 24, 2006. Pedestrian improvements and district design recommendations were presented to attendees. Community feedback on implementation priorities was a key component of this outreach effort. Presentation boards remained posted at the Taylor Ranch Community Center for three days to make plan information available for an extended period. A community update meeting was held on November 9th to present refinements to the Corridor Plan and the revised schedule for adoption.

Public process documentation and other background materials are incorporated in Section III, Technical Appendix.

A. PLANNING POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

The Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan (adopted in 1988, with amendments adopted through 2003) is the municipal general plan which provides for orderly physical development of the City and the unincorporated area of the County. The following major concepts are briefly described and discussed to demonstrate the Coors Corridor Plan's relationship to the Comprehensive Plan.,

Planning and Development Areas

The Comprehensive Plan contains five development areas that allow for distinct development intensities and character based on natural features and man-made development patterns.

The Corridor Plan contains four of the five development areas: Open Space, Rural, Developing Urban, and Established Urban. [See Figure 1.3, page 23]

Open Space Areas preserve important natural and cultural landscapes and shape the urban form by separating different parts of the community. Within the Corridor Plan Area, the Calabacillas Arroyo, Rio Grande Valley State Park, Piedras Marcadas, and the Oxbow Wetlands are examples of designated Open Space areas.

Rural Areas promote preservation of rural settlement patterns and land uses, such as agriculture. Rural areas have an overall housing density of not more than one dwelling unit (DU) per acre. In the Corridor Plan Area, the County's Alban Hills neighborhood, and a sliver along the west side of the bosque are designated Rural by the Comprehensive Plan.

Developing Urban Areas are in the process of becoming urbanized. Many of these areas were formally undeveloped but are close enough to existing established urban development that densities of three dwellings per acre are sustainable. Developing Urban Areas comprise a significant percentage of the northern portion of the Plan Area.

Established Urban Areas are developed areas with five dwellings or more per acre. The Cottonwood Mall area and much of the southern part of the Corridor are considered Established Urban.



Developed Landscape

This Comprehensive Plan element addresses visual quality. This concept provides for the maintenance and improvement of the natural and developed landscape quality. The Coors Corridor Plan identifies the area north of Western Trail/Namaste, east of Coors Corridor as being significant and contains high scenic attributes.

Centers and Corridors

The Comprehensive Plan provides a framework for a series of activity centers and major transportation corridors as the basis for future spatial development, redevelopment, and new development, further refining where non-residential uses in the Plan Area should appear. [See figure 1.4: Activity Centers and Development Area, pages 24 and 25] Activity centers are primarily employment-based and typically feature a mixture of uses including commercial/retail, commercial/office, civic/institutional, and multi-family residential. Well-developed pedestrian facilities are a critical ingredient for successful activity centers.

Major Activity Centers are typically larger than 300 acres and provide highly concentrated locations of commercial, service, and employment uses in conjunction with area-wide needs. The built environment often consists of mid-rise buildings (three stories or higher) and residential densities typically greater than 30 dwellings per acre. They serve large areas of the City and are fully accessible to all modes of transportation. Ideally, they provide transit connections, on- and off-street parking, and highly functional pedestrian environments. The Seven Bar/Cottonwood Regional Center and the Atrisco Business Park Center are currently the only Major Activity Centers on the West Side. Both are partially located within the Plan Area.

Community Activity Centers are areas typically between 35 and 60 acres and serve areas up to three miles in radius. They function as major transit hubs and include concentrations of commercial and entertainment uses. Paseo del Norte Center, Montañño Plaza, I-40/Coors Center, and the Central/Coors Center are all examples of Community Activity Centers.

Neighborhood Activity Centers are up to 15 acres in size that offer convenience goods and personal services for surrounding residential neighborhoods. Although none are designated by the Comprehensive Plan, Neighborhood Activity Centers are designated by the WSSP. Within the Plan Area, these include the intersections of Coors/Western Trail and Montañño/Taylor Ranch.

The Comprehensive Plan also designates corridors as major arterial streets that provide a variety of transit types, including automobile, mass transportation, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities. Corridors connect Major, Community, Neighborhood, and Specialty Activity Centers. There are four types of corridors: Express, Major Transit, Enhanced Transit, and Arterial.

The Comprehensive Plan identifies Coors as an Enhanced Transit Corridor, with several intersecting streets, including Central Avenue, Montañño, and Alameda. It also identifies Paseo del Norte, Alameda/NM 528, and I-40—all intersecting Coors in the Plan Area—as Express Corridors.

Enhanced Transit Corridors are partially-controlled access routes with express transit stops to weather-protected stops surrounded by medium-density development. Because of its designation as a Limited Access street by NM Department of Transportation (NMDOT) and the Mid-Region Council of Governments (MRCOG) in 1987, as well as its classification by MRCOG as a Major Regional Transit Route, Coors Boulevard may be considered for reclassification as an Express or Major Transit Corridor. [See Figure 1.1.4: Transportation, Roadways and Transit, on pages 58 and 59]

Planned Growth Strategy (2003)

Also complementing the Comprehensive Plan is the City-adopted Planned Growth Strategy (PGS). The PGS used the MRCOG Land Use Allocation Model (LAM) to project land use patterns until 2025. Projections of employment, population, and housing (to 2025) developed for the PGS and referenced in the Comprehensive Plan are spatially distributed as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative projects a full build-out of the Coors Corridor by 2025.

West Side Strategic Plan (1997)

The WSSP provides a framework of strategic policies within which to manage future growth and development on Albuquerque's West Side. Relative to the Coors Corridor, the Strategic Plan proposes the following:

- Community Areas have distinct identities and development conditions. The WSSP identifies six community areas in the Corridor, including Seven-Bar Ranch, Paradise Hills, Taylor Ranch, Ladera, West Central, and Atrisco Park.
- Activity Centers are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's Centers & Corridors policies. They include the Seven-Bar/Cottonwood Regional Center, Paseo

del Norte Center, Montañño Plaza, Coors/I-40 Center, and Atrisco Business Park.

Although consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's intent for Activity Centers, the boundaries of these centers in each plan do not match.

- Limited strip commercial development is discouraged by the WSSP.

The 2025 Metropolitan Transportation Plan

Complementing the Comprehensive Plan, the 2025 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) adopted in 2003, proposes regional transportation investments over a 20 year cycle. The MTP evaluates the current transportation system, considers probable growth patterns, and envisions an appropriate future transportation system. The plans' goals give significant support to the development of an integrated, multi-modal transportation system. It includes the 2004-2009 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which details federal funding for the first six years of the MTP. It also establishes access policies for major streets, including Coors Boulevard. The MTP is currently being updated and will be completed by early 2007.

Other Rank II Plans and Facility Plans

The following documents are pertinent to facility and system planning efforts within the Plan Area and are therefore incorporated herein by reference:

- Trails and Bikeways Facility Plan
- Major Public Open Space Facility Plan (MPOS)
- Facility Plan for Arroyos
- North Coors Drainage Master Plan
- City of Albuquerque Open Space Division Bosque Action Plan
- Rio Grande Valley State Park Management Plan and Amendments
- Calabacillas Arroyo Master Plan (Not yet adopted)
- Long-Range Major Street Map
- Long-Range Bikeway System Map
- Long-Range Major Transit Map

Sector Development Plans

The following Sector Plans and Master Plan have overlapping boundaries within the Plan Area, which illustrates the challenges that City Planners have in achieving consistent application of plan standards and policies:

- Seven-Bar
- University of Albuquerque
- Riverview
- West Route 66
- East Atrisco



View from Coors near Paseo del Norte

FIGURE 1.4: ACTIVITY CENTERS AND DEVELOPMENT AREA

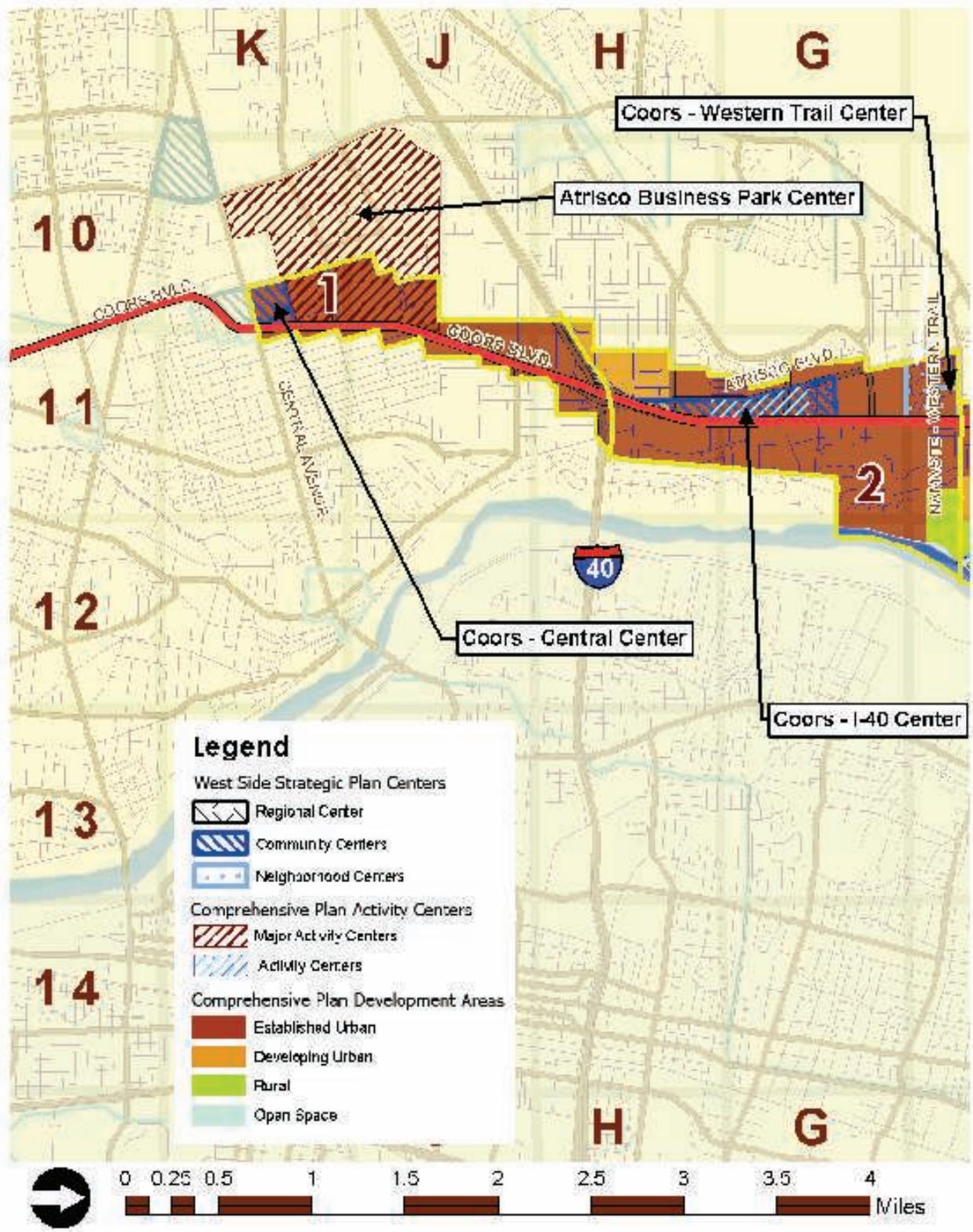
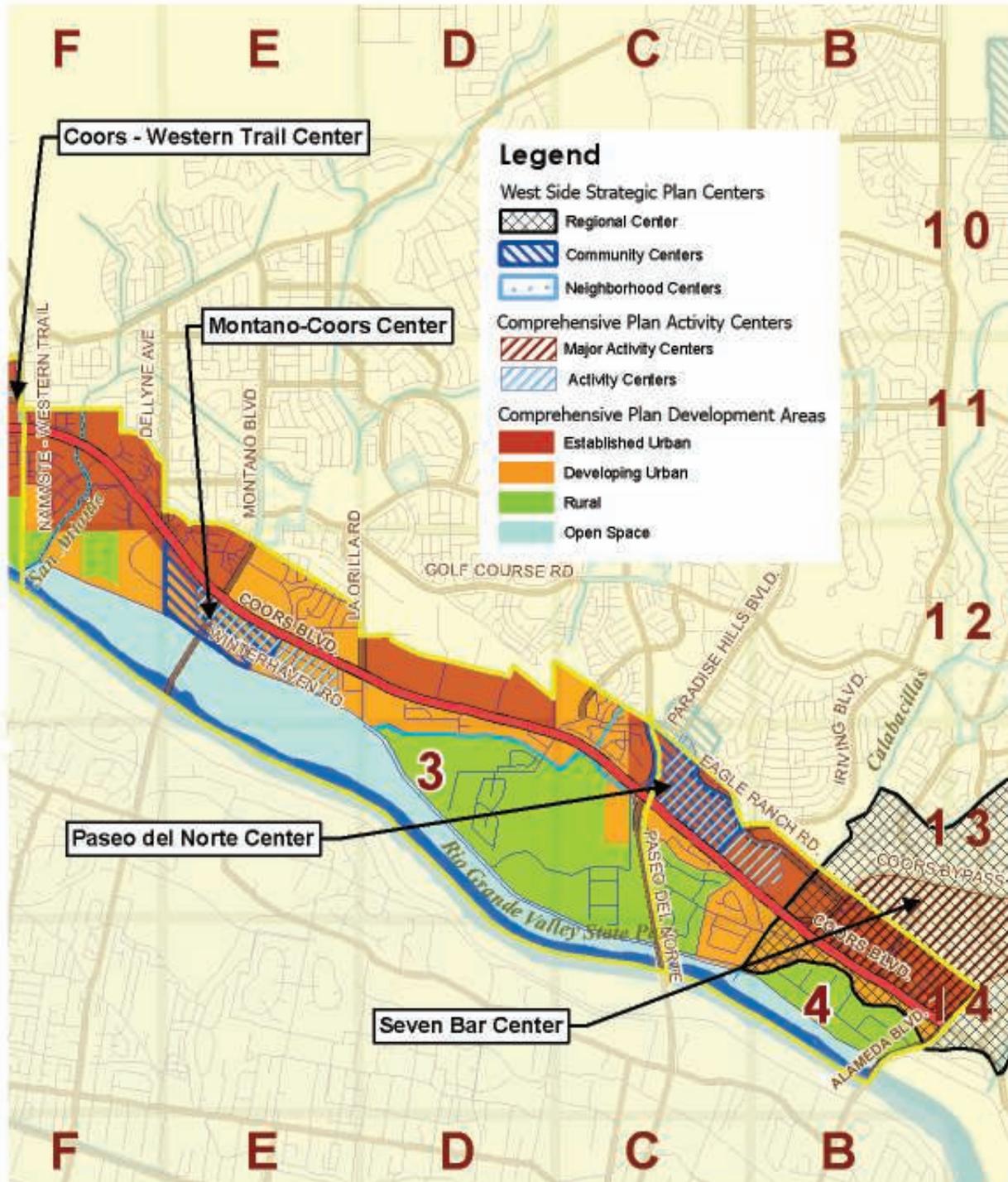


FIGURE 1.4: ACTIVITY CENTERS AND DEVELOPMENT AREA



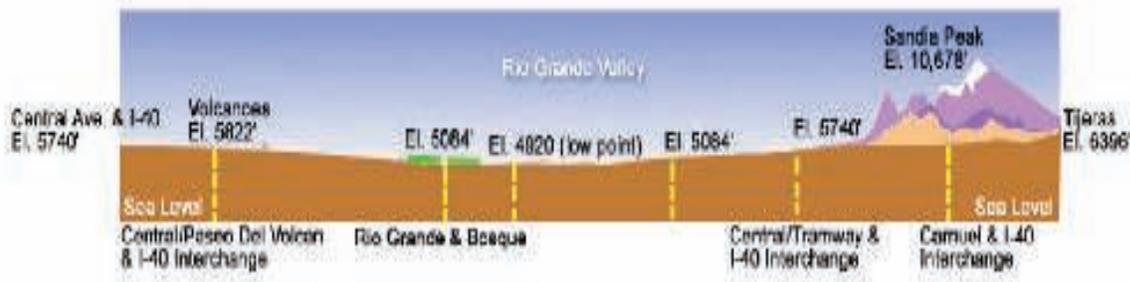
Source: The City of Albuquerque Planning Department. Map and data are for planning purposes only.



B. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND HISTORY

The Coors Corridor is located on the west side of the Rio Grande in the Middle Rio Grande sub-basin. The roadway is elevated from the historic floodplain. The Corridor area south of Western Trail is on the mesa; north of Western Trail, the Corridor lies on a bench along the floodplain edge. Changes in topography and the north/northeast aspect of the Corridor contribute to the dramatic views of the bosque and the Sandia Mountains (Sandias).

Figure 1.5: Topographic Section Through Albuquerque Metropolitan Area



The Corridor was shaped by the formation of the Rio Grande rift. The volcanic escarpment and dormant cones to the west, as well as the river valley and the Sandias to the east, are vestiges of that process. These features are primary way-finding elements within Albuquerque and the basis for many of the views appreciated by people living and driving on Coors.

Topography, natural features and open space areas are shown in Figure 1.6: Existing Environmental Conditions and Open Space on pages 32 and 33.

Naturally-formed arroyos drain from upland areas through the volcanic escarpment and mesa to the river valley, ultimately creating small deltas along the Rio Grande. These channels are not only a vital link in the hydrologic system but they also provide a critical movement corridor for wildlife and humans from upland mesa grassland areas to bottomland bosque areas. The mosaic of cottonwood forest, willow thickets, side-channel wetlands, and the open areas of fresh scour, sediment, and grasses, is commonly referred to as the bosque. At the breaks in the escarpment along the west side, arroyos frame vistas of the bosque and the Sandia Mountains.

The Calabacillas Arroyo at the north end of the Plan Area is the only arroyo left largely in its natural state from the mesa to the river. Minor modifications were made to the San Antonio Arroyo, which outfalls through an engineered channel adjacent to the Oxbow Wetlands. The other arroyos are diverted into drainage channels or pipes before reaching the river.

Prior to Spanish contact, Native American ancestors of the Sandia and Isleta Pueblos settled in a number of areas adjacent to these arroyos. They relied primarily on floodwater farming. The largely unexcavated Piedras Marcadas Pueblo and Calabacillas Pueblo are examples of Native American settlements within the Plan Area.



Trail along Calabacillas Arroyo



Alamo Farm Open Space

The diversion of water into constructed acequias or canals was transported to fields for flood irrigation from early historic times. As a result of contemporary flood control measures such as levees and riverside drains, the improvement in irrigation systems allows agricultural practices throughout the central Rio Grande Valley to endure. The Corrales (Riverside) Drain and the Corrales Canal, which weave through the eastern portion of Segments 3 and 4, as well as the fields at the Open Space Visitors Center and Alamo Farms Open Space, are remnants of a time when the entire Rio Grande Valley was cleared and farmed. Today, the ditches, as well as the land inside the levees along the Rio Grande (itself now a conveyance channel), support the remaining mosaic of floodplain vegetation.

Ditch systems were also important in shaping mobility systems within the valley. Today, they may be remembered as long lots connected by ditch banks that recreational trail users still utilize. Early travelers using the Camino Real may have walked previous alignments of the path adjacent to the Corrales Canal, and along a trail near the current alignment of Coors in Segments 3 and 4.

Over time, the early trail was improved to a gravel road, then a 2-lane paved road, and finally an 8-lane major arterial now known as Coors Boulevard. The land surrounding the road shifted from grazing lands on the mesa and crop farming in the valley to modern residential and commercial development.

Former land uses are preserved in various open space areas that were acquired and are now protected by the City. These Open Space areas preserve important features and create potential access points and interpretation opportunities. Parcels owned by the City and managed by the Open Space Division include:

- Rio Grande Valley State Park (State Park that includes the bosque and is co-managed with the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District)
- San Antonio Oxbow Wetlands (former Oxbow of the Rio Grande maintained as a wildlife preserve)



- Alamo Farms (former agriculture area with fields maintained for wildlife forage)
- Piedras Marcadas (Pre-European Pueblo Village)
- Open Space Visitors Center (interpretive displays, gardens and fields maintained for wildlife forage)
- Calabacillas Arroyo (natural arroyo with trails and parks)
- Petroglyphs-Volcanoes Open Space (co-managed with the National Park Service)

The fields at the Open Space Visitors' Center, Alamo Farm, Piedras Marcadas, and the Oxbow Wetlands allow limited public access. The Petroglyphs-Volcanoes Open Space is maintained by the U.S. National Park Service. Other areas remain completely open to public access.



Open Space Visitors' Center



Oxbow Overlook

The following list outlines opportunities and constraints within the Plan Area based on its environmental setting.

Opportunities

- Emulate and re-create natural vista frames caused by breaks in the escarpment and mesa
- Preserve views of the bosque through preservation of arroyos and redesign of streets, trails, and built forms
- Connect open space areas from the Petroglyph National Monument to the bosque via the existing arroyos and flood control channels to create an interconnected open space system
- Preserve natural open space remnants and agricultural land

Constraints

- Building on steep slopes may create major erosion problems
- Open space areas are encroached upon by commercial and residential development
- The viewshed of the bosque and the Sandia Mountains east of Coors are negatively impacted by development

FIGURE 1.6: EXISTING ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS AND OPEN SPACE

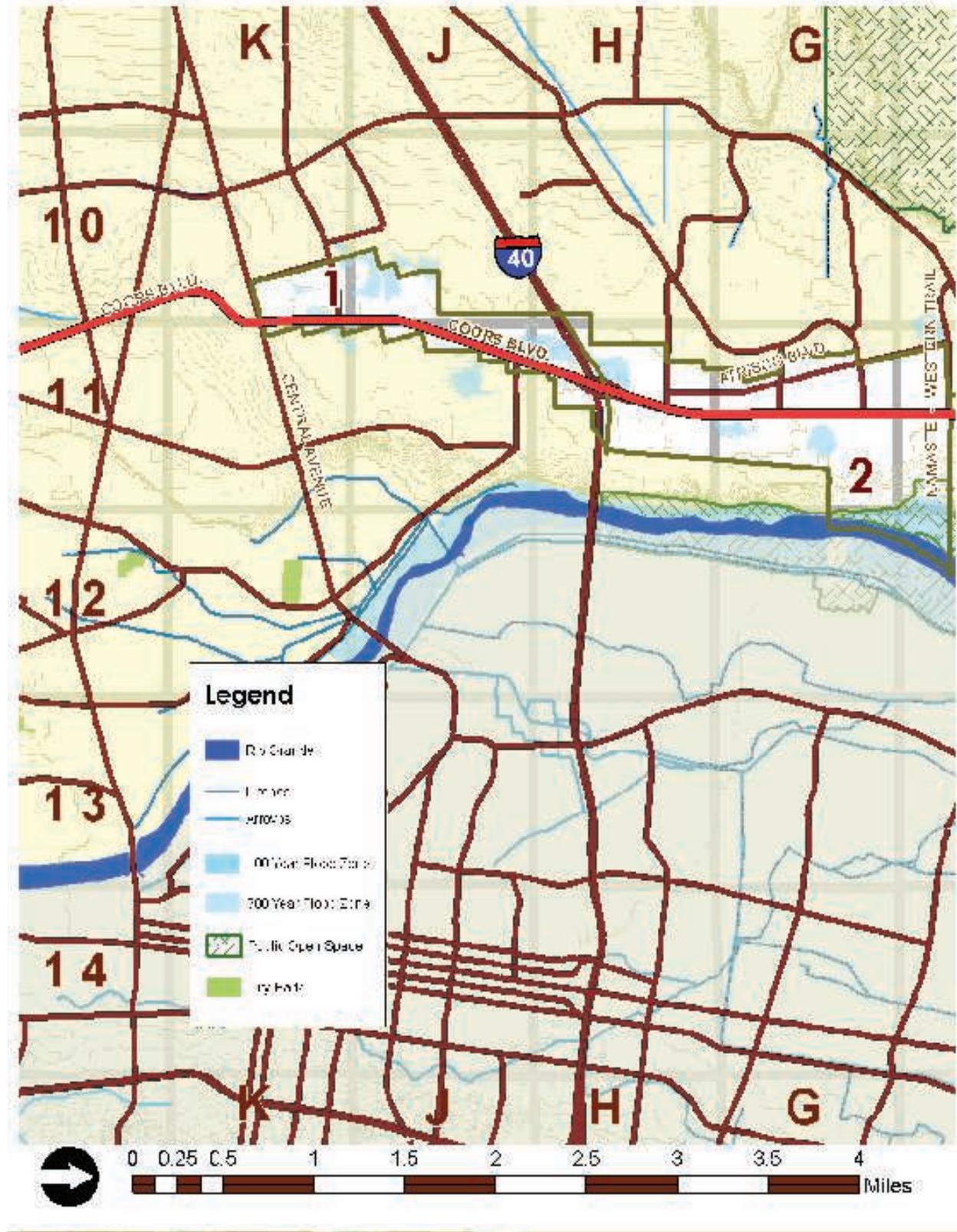
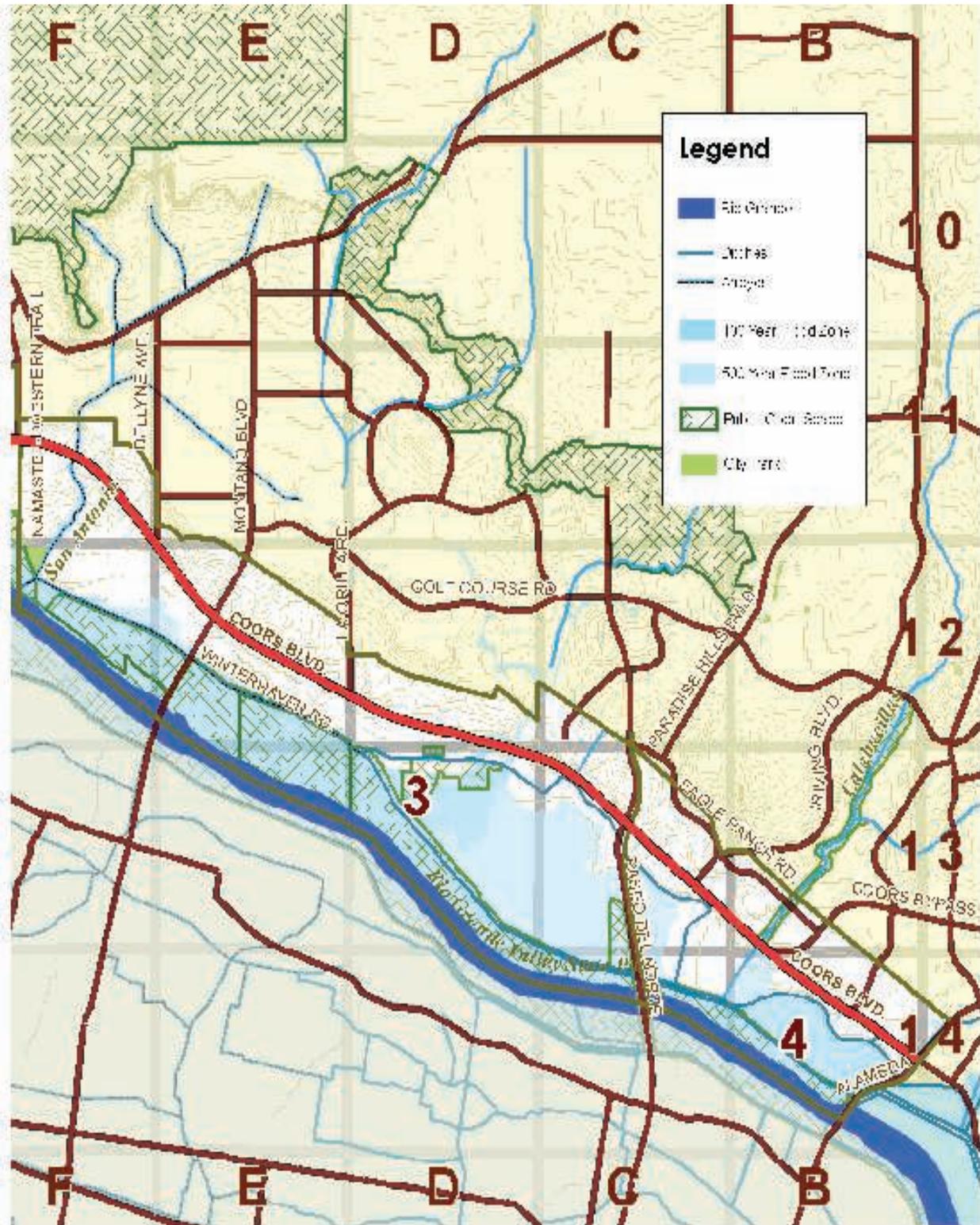


FIGURE 1.6: EXISTING ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS AND OPEN SPACE



Source: The City of Albuquerque Planning Department. Map and data are for planning purposes only.



C. SCENIC QUALITIES AND DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER

Simultaneous views of the bosque and the Sandias are the Plan Area's viewshed and a defining Corridor feature. These scenic qualities are revealed at three scales: panoramas, vistas, and views. Views of the bosque and the Sandias from north of Western Trail are unique and compelling. Here, the alignment runs along the bluff that forms the western edge of the Rio Grande Valley.

The streambeds and cuts created by the arroyos over time were used as early trails and informal roads. Traditionally, people traveled along arroyos back and forth from the valley to upland grazing and hunting areas. Returning home to the valley meant descending from the mesa down along an arroyo and experiencing the extraordinary views of the Sandias, the valley, and the bosque. These views are celebrated in ancient petroglyphs found along the escarpment and in some of the arroyos, and continue to be a symbolic connection to place for West Side residents.

As part of the Corridor Plan's existing conditions analysis, view characteristics were evaluated. Initially, the planning team utilized the parameters of the original viewshed overlay to rate views every one-tenth of a mile along the Corridor south of Western Trail. Photos were taken at a 45-degree angle from the street from four feet above ground. The views were rated, mapped, and keyed as:

- Full view of the bosque and the Sandias (as required by the original Design Overlay Zone)
- Partial view of the bosque and the Sandia Mountains
- Broken view of the Sandia Mountains only
- No view at all

Twelve of the 60 evaluation points along the road have a full view. Four points have no view at all, and the remainder has compromised views. The majority of intact full views were found in Segment 3, where the land has remained undeveloped. Please refer to the photo-keyed evaluation of views: Figure 1.7 A and B, on pages 38 and 39, and Figure 1.8 A and B, on pages 40 and 41.

A second view analysis was conducted to identify and classify views from a pedestrian's perspective along the eastern edge of the Coors right-of-way (ROW). The criteria for this view analysis were derived from the National Parks Service's View Assessment process and modified for the more urban context of the Coors Corridor.

Views were evaluated from the eastern edge of the roadway (at 90 degrees to the roadway) looking east toward the bosque and the Sandia Mountains. Views were rated based on the level of their urban fragmentation, from "A+" - fully intact views of continuous landscape, to "F" - no view at all. "A-" views had a full view of the Sandias and bosque, although the foreground landscape was compromised by landscape. "B+" to "B-" views represented various levels of fragmentation of the landscape in view with impact to the view of the bosque and Sandias. "D" rated landscapes had no view at all of the Sandias or bosque, but had a continuous landscape in the foreground. [See Figure 1.9: Analysis of Existing Landscape Character, pages 42 and 43]

The views were then recorded on an evaluation sheet and on a map prepared for this purpose and taken into the field. An example of the evaluation sheet used in this process is found in Section III, Technical Appendix.

Three areas have fully intact landscape views. One is adjacent to the La Luz neighborhood, the second is adjacent to Montaña Road (currently slated for development), and the third is at the Piedras Marcadas Open Space. Six additional areas also have fairly intact landscape views or fragmented foreground landscapes, but maintain full or partial views of the bosque and the Sandias. All told, less than one-quarter of the distance along the street has intact landscape views.

In addition to the landscape views, several roads and/or arroyos were identified as important view corridors. These view corridors provide complete vignettes of the bosque and Sandias.

Opportunities

- Preserve intact and partial views through windows or corridors that utilize open space, hydrologic/drainage ways, roads, and trail features as breaks in the built environment
- Use landscape strategies along Coors and intersecting streets to visually reconnect areas to the Sandias
- Support future redevelopment of commercial areas to create and preserve view corridors

Constraints

- Almost all of the landscape views along the Corridor are compromised by development
- Compromised views cannot be restored

FIGURE 1.7A: EXISTING VIEW ANALYSIS

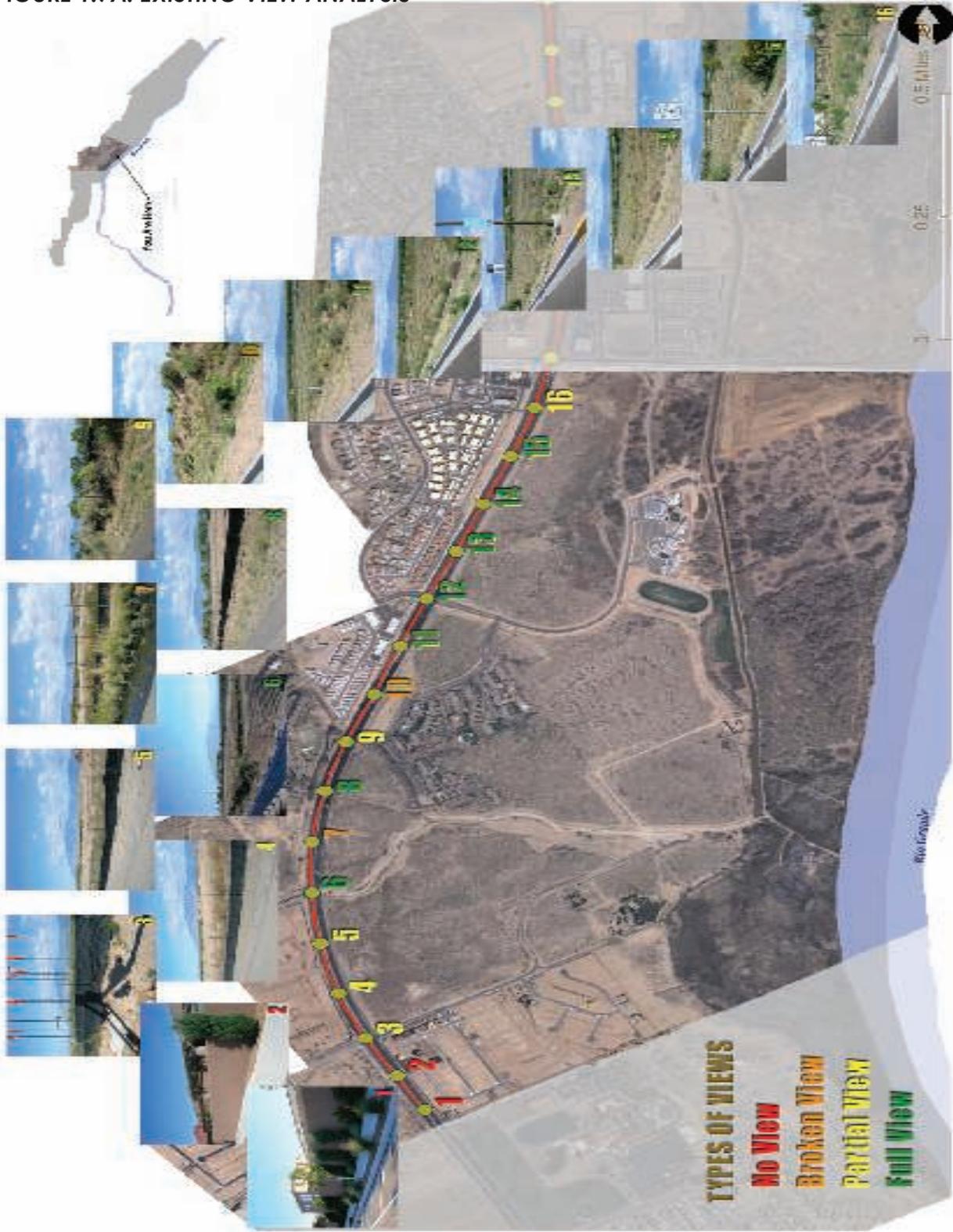


FIGURE 1.7B: EXISTING VIEW ANALYSIS

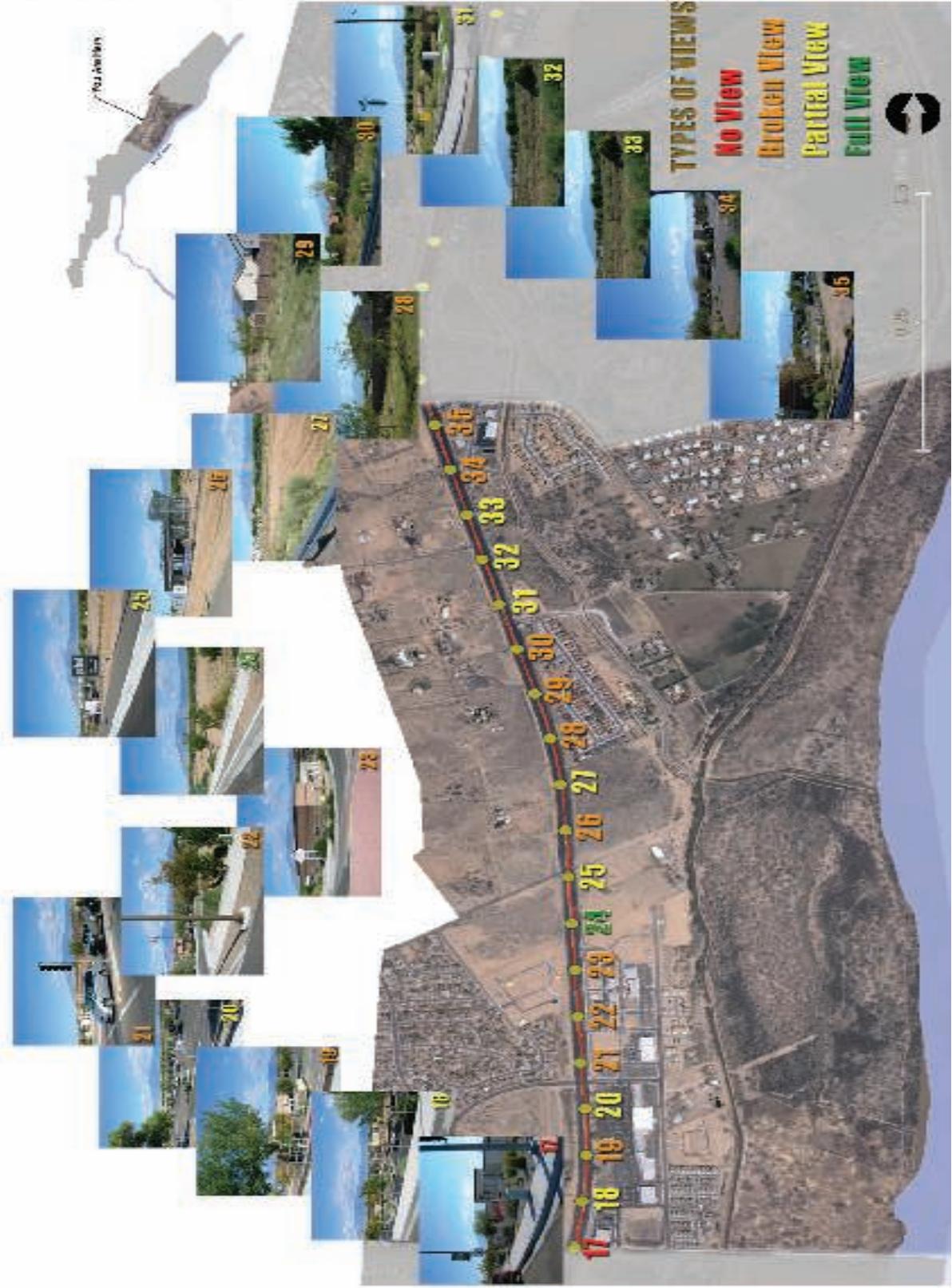


FIGURE 1.8A: EXISTING VIEW ANALYSIS

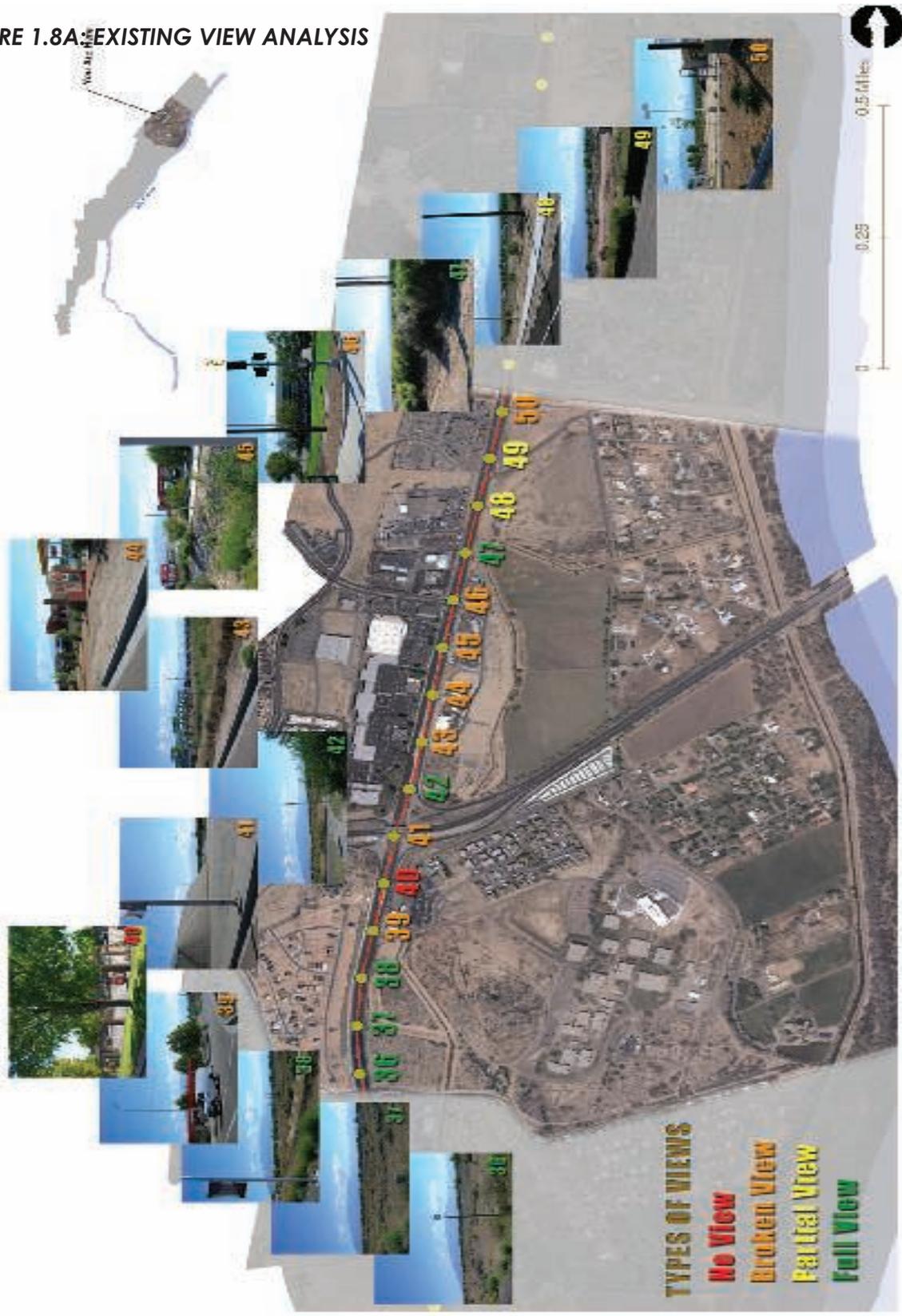


FIGURE 1.8B: EXISTING VIEW ANALYSIS



FIGURE 1.9: ANALYSIS OF EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER (MODIFIED NPS STANDARD)

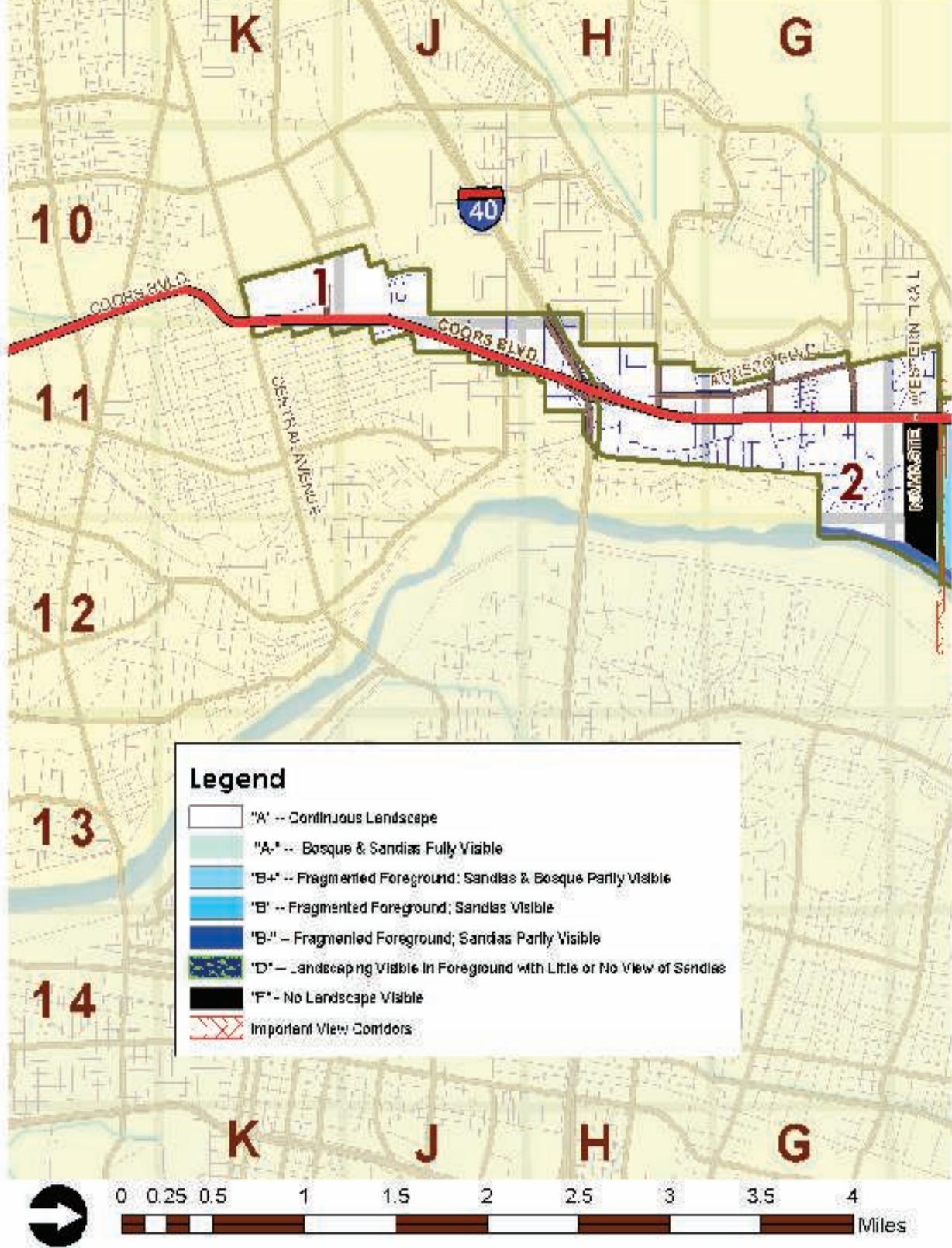
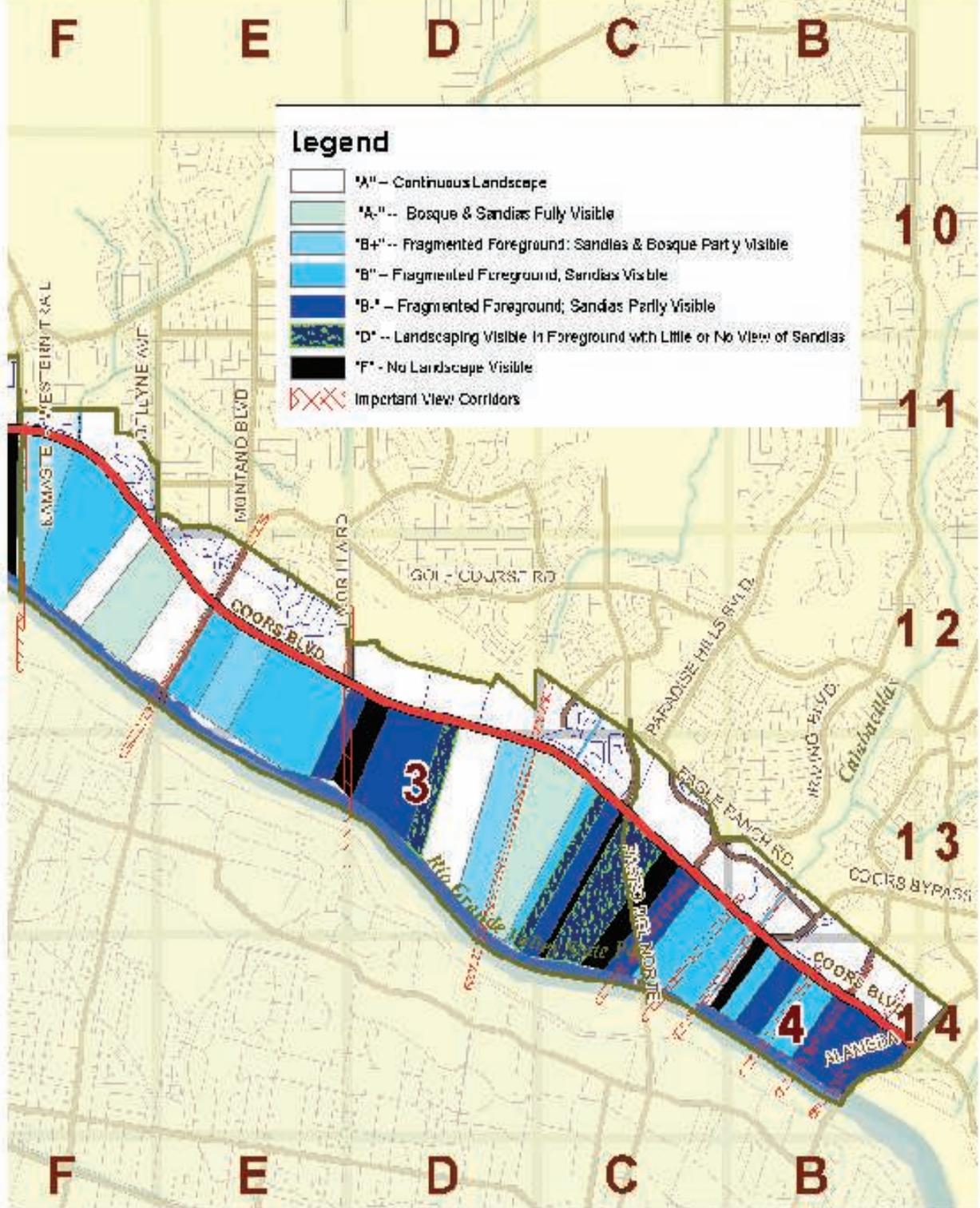


FIGURE 1.9: ANALYSIS OF EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER (MODIFIED NPS STANDARD)



Source: The City of Albuquerque Planning Department. Map and data are for planning purposes only.



D. LAND USE AND ZONING

Current land use in the Plan Area is diverse and representative of the West Side. Approximately one-quarter of the Plan Area is Open Space: the bosque, portions of the Petroglyphs, Calabacillas Arroyo, and other drainages. [See Figure 1.10: Existing Land Use, pages 46 and 47, and Figure 1.11: Existing Zoning, pages 48 and 49]

Approximately one-third of the Corridor is residential, mostly single-family dwelling units, in fact, areas of residential use far exceed those zoned for that use. About half of the cumulative residential areas in the Corridor have housing densities of more than one DU per acre; the other half has densities of one DU (or less) per acre. Single-family residential use areas are roughly split between suburban housing densities (greater than 1 DU per acre) and semi-rural residential areas (1 DU per acre or less). Within the Plan Area, semi-rural residential areas are the Alban Hills neighborhood and those adjacent to the bosque.

Approximately one-quarter of the Plan Area is commercial, the vast majority is commercial/retail while a smaller area is commercial/office. Most of the commercial uses along Coors are within places designated as Activity Centers. The remaining area is split evenly between vacant land and institutional uses, including schools such as Southwest Indian Polytechnical Institute.

Zoning in the Plan Area is primarily commercial and single-family residential. Nearly half of the Plan Area is zoned SU-1, a special-use zone permitting commercial, office, and retail uses in addition to residential. Approximately one-third of the Plan Area is rural-residential within the City and the County. The remaining land is zoned commercial/retail, commercial/office, single-family residential, and multi-family residential.

Opportunities

- Plan and design existing commercial property to build fully-integrated commercial Activity Centers to serve adjacent neighborhoods

Constraints

- Densities cannot be increased beyond those permitted under existing regulations
- Existing zoning and land use patterns will make it difficult to combine uses into viable mixed-use centers

FIGURE 1.10: EXISTING LAND USE

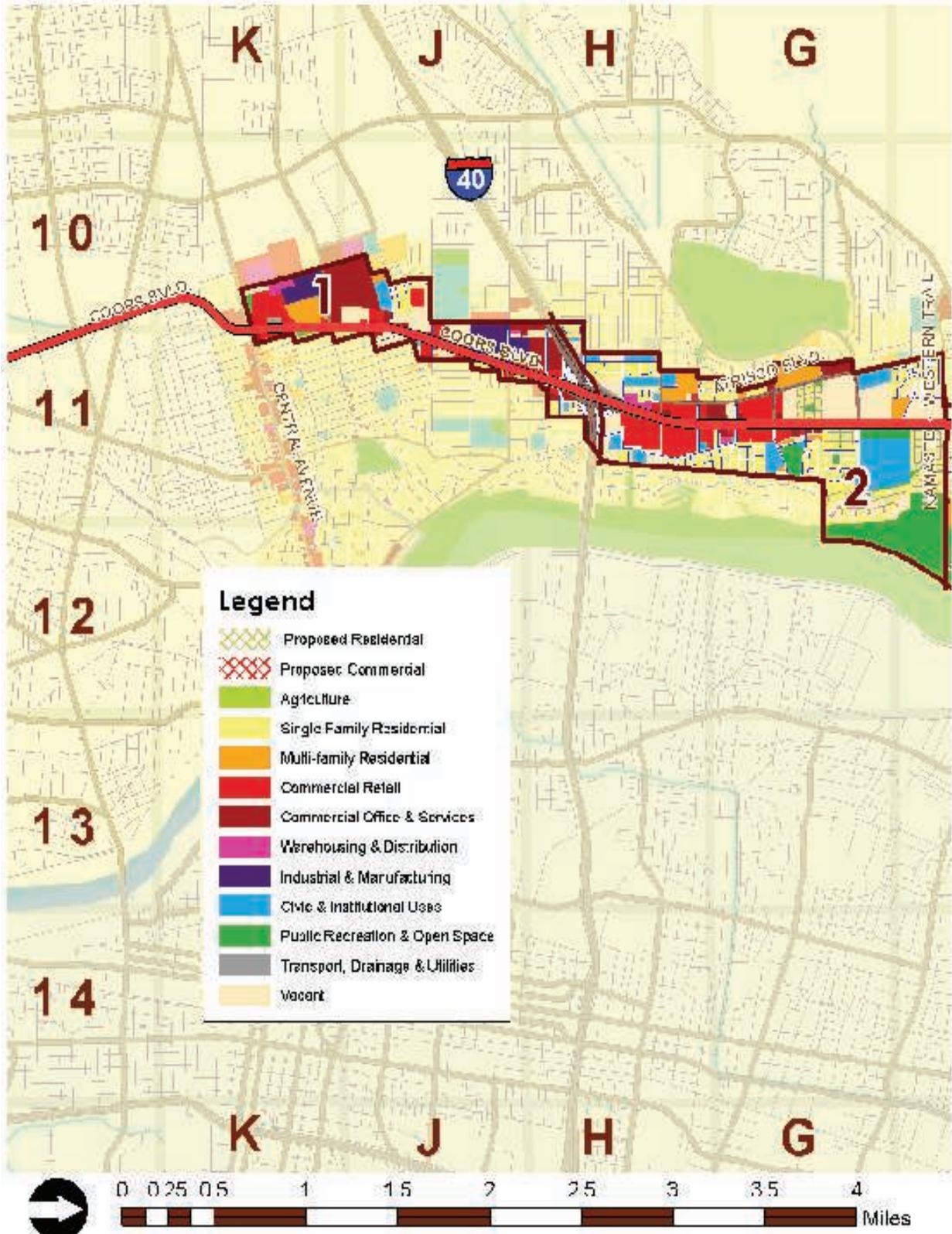
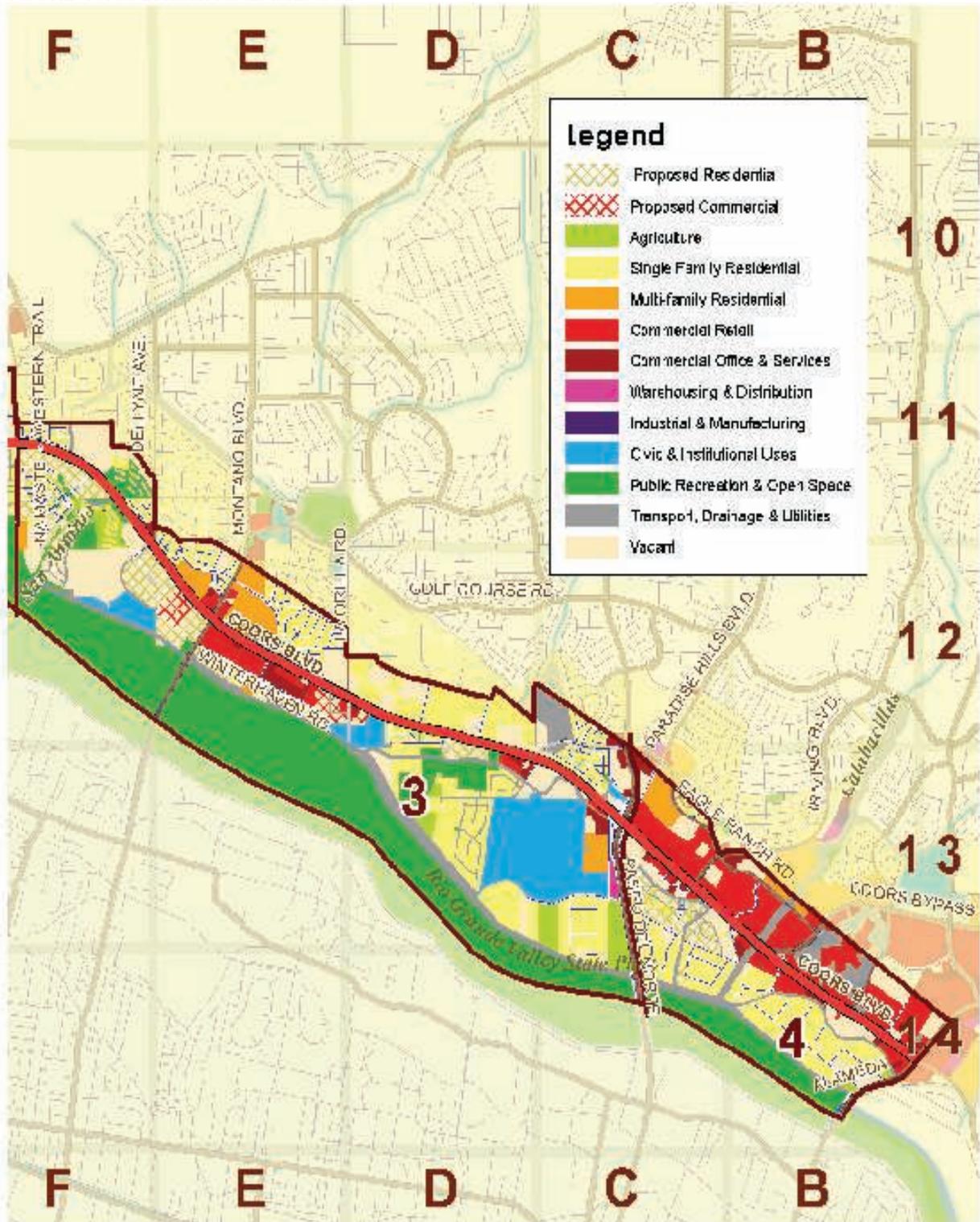
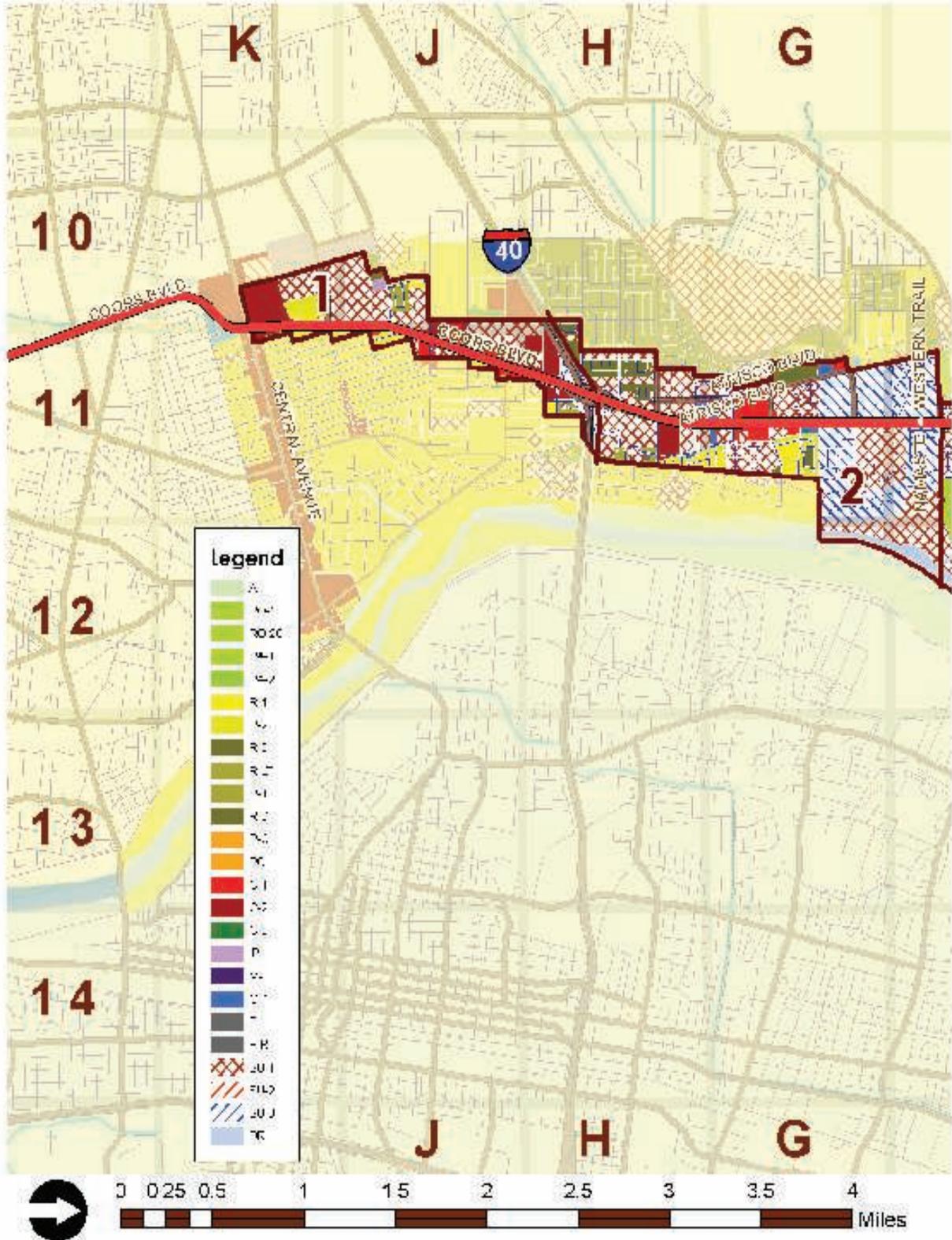


FIGURE 1.10: EXISTING LAND USE



Source: The City of Albuquerque Planning Department. Map and data are for planning purposes only.

FIGURE 1.11: EXISTING ZONING





E. POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS

Population densities are ideally aligned with Employment and Activity Centers. After World War II, residential developments moved away from urban centers and spread into suburban, decentralized environments; Albuquerque's West Side development followed this trend. Starting in the 1970s, residential growth first expanded and later accelerated west of the river. [See Figure 1.12: Existing and Projected Population Densities on page 53]

Population trends within the Plan Area are:

- Higher population density, multi-family housing and higher density, single-family housing developments
- Most high-density occurs in the older developed areas of Segment 2
- Lower population densities correspond to commercial and rural residential areas

Future growth projections through 2025 by MRCOG suggest the following:

- There will be dramatic population growth in Segment 3, east of Coors
- Rural residential areas will continue to grow slowly

A review of existing employment indicates:

- Higher numbers of jobs correspond to the activity centers at Paseo del Norte/Golf Course Road, Cottonwood Center, and the Atrisco Employment Center
- Lower numbers of jobs correlate with primarily residential and open space areas

Employment projections show that there will be an increase in the number of jobs, particularly at the activity centers that currently have a relatively low number of jobs; Coors/Montaña Plaza and the Coors/I-40 Center. Atrisco Business Park and Cottonwood Center will also continue to provide more jobs. [See Figure 1.13: Existing and Projected Employment on page 54]

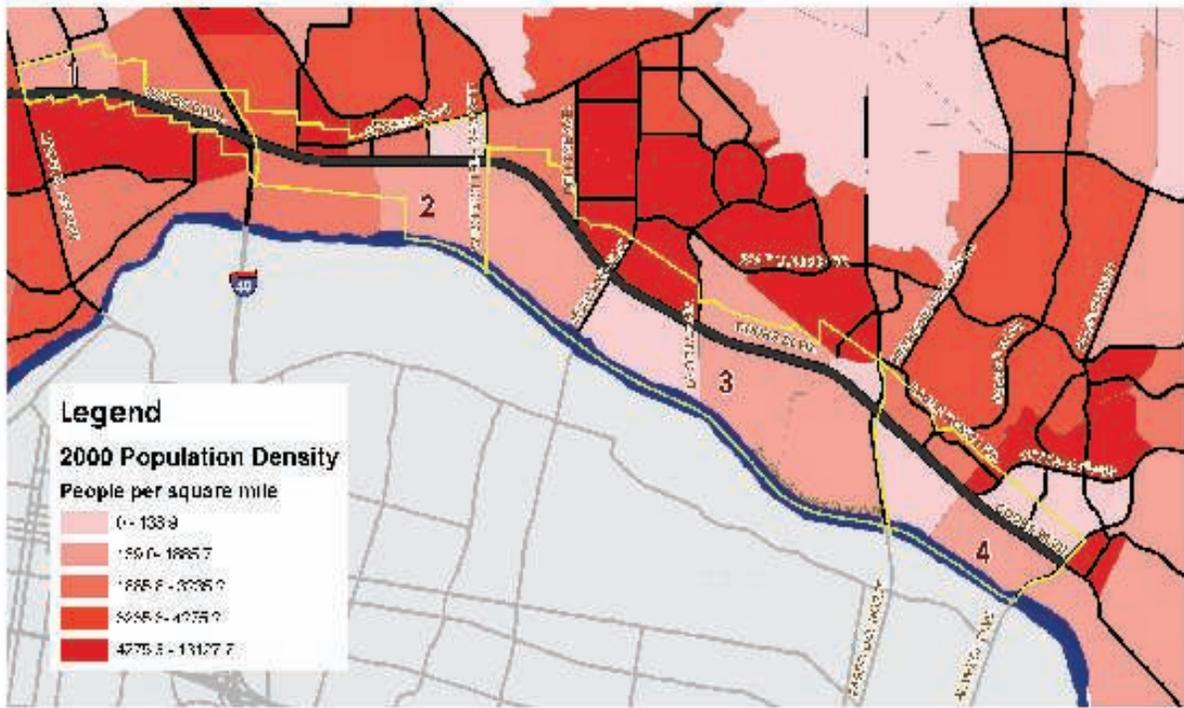
Opportunities

- A more integrated and sustainable mix of uses and the potential for greater densities than current zoning regulations permit, is suggested by residential and employment growth projections in Segment 3
- Higher densities and growth rates in certain areas suggest a higher priority for future capital improvements of pedestrian facilities
- Existing and projected population density increases suggest the need for enhanced transit and transit-oriented development

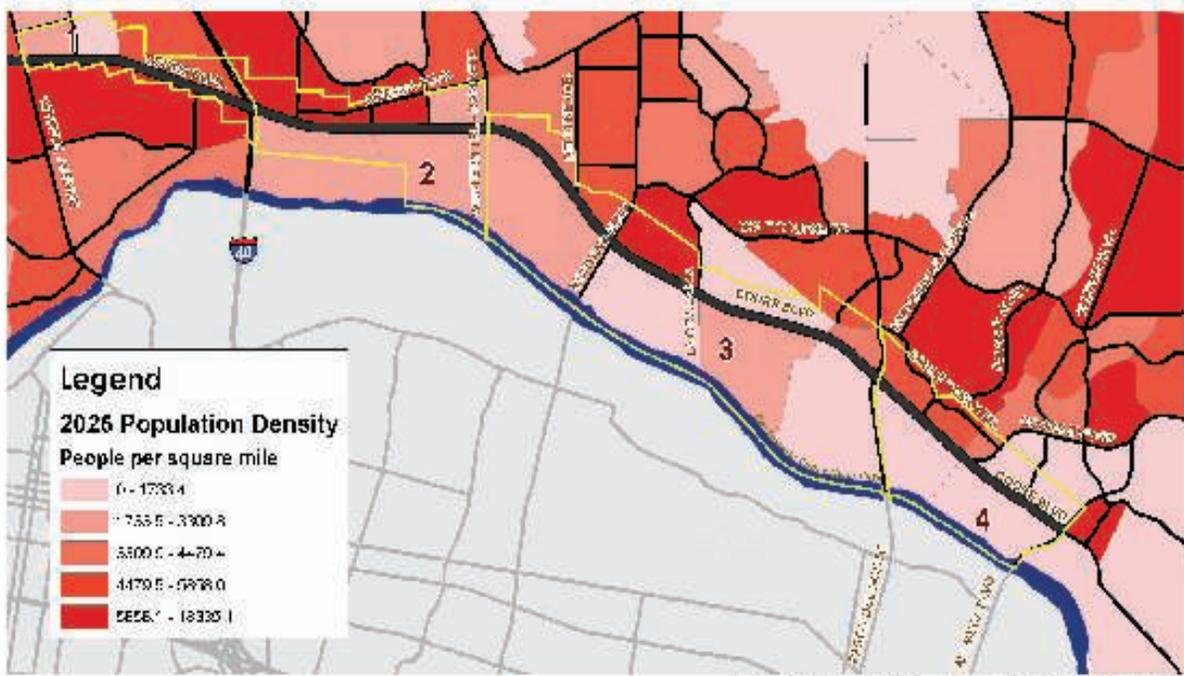
Constraints

- Low population densities in existing Activity Centers may impact the vitality and safety of those areas and the viability of connecting pedestrian facilities outside of business areas

FIGURE 1.12: EXISTING AND PROJECTED (2025) POPULATION DENSITY

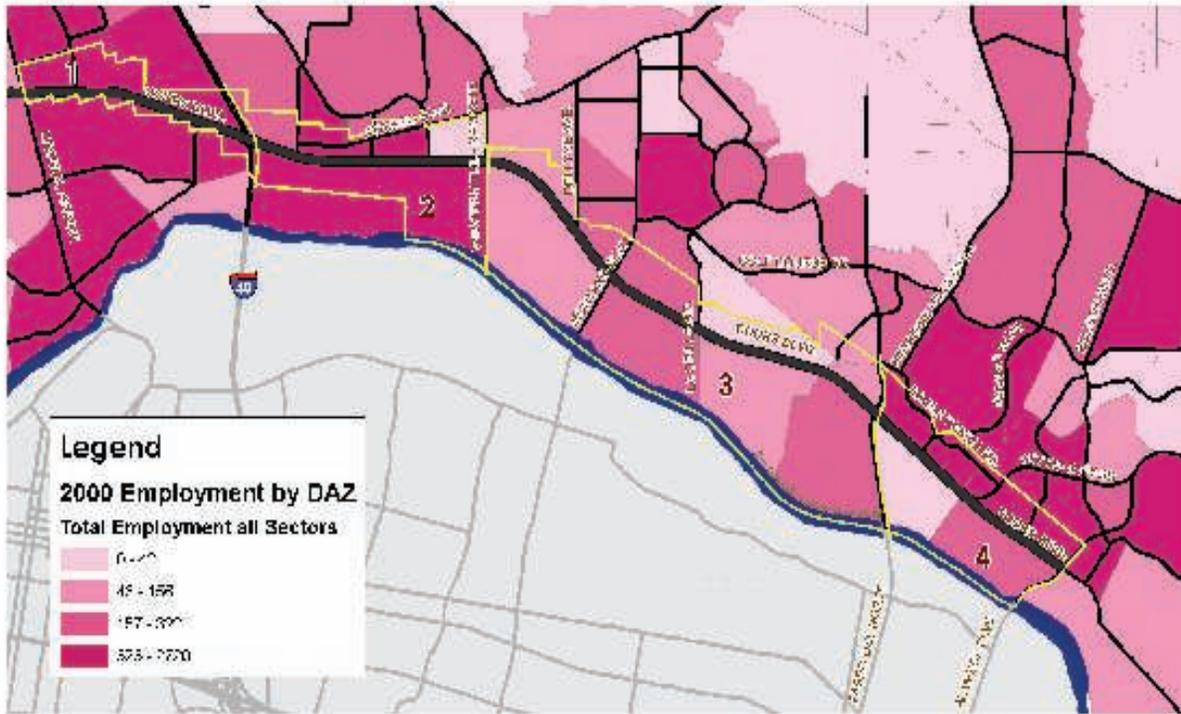


2000 Population Density



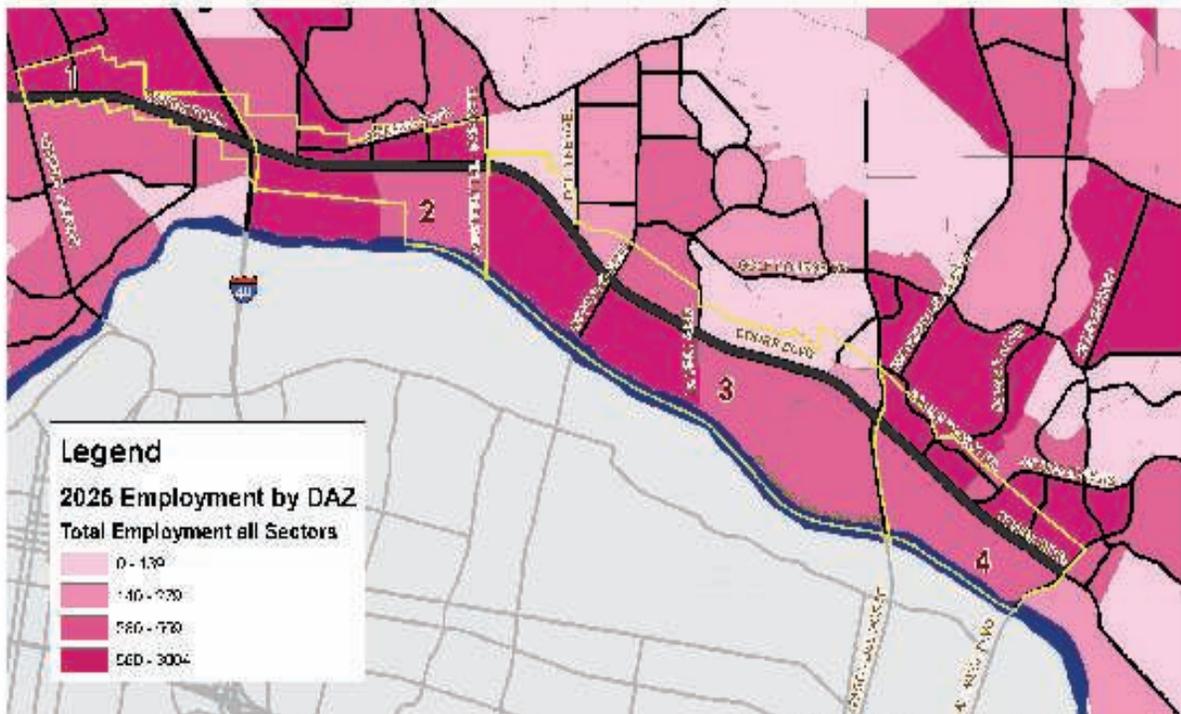
2025 Population Density

FIGURE 1.13: EXISTING AND PROJECTED (2025) EMPLOYMENT



Source: The Nike Region Council of Governments, based on data from the 2000 census.

2000 Employment



Source: The Nike Region Council of Governments, based on data from the 2000 census.

2025 Employment



F. TRANSPORTATION AND TRANSIT

As the primary arterial for the Plan Area, Coors Boulevard provides the Corridor with its organizational spine. [See Figure 1.14: Transportation, Roadways and Transit on pages 58 and 59]

Background

Originally designated as State Highway NM 448 by the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT), Coors Boulevard was renamed in 1965. Studies conducted in the 1980s concluded that Coors Boulevard should be identified as a limited access road. At that time, a connection route between Coors Road Southwest and Coors Boulevard Northwest was provided to relieve congestion on Central Avenue and to connect traffic from “north Coors” and “south Coors.” The roadway is currently a major west side corridor that connects Rio Rancho and Corrales from the north to the more southern communities of Isleta and Los Lunas.

The 1984 Coors Corridor Plan identified acceptable access points at intersections, allowable median openings, and existing traffic conditions. It recommended traffic improvements, particularly signalization. At that time, Coors had numerous unsignalized intersections, especially in segments 1 & 2. Since then, new signalized intersections were located, turning movements have been completely restricted, and many unsignalized intersections were restricted to left turn only. Permitting left turns from Coors at unsignalized intersections creates the potential for accidents, which is why the Corridor Plan continues to recommend restricting these intersections to right turns. Since 1984, all of the recommended signalized intersections have been implemented.

The right-of-way (ROW) width for Coors Boulevard has generally been expanded to 156 feet which will accommodate a future street section of eight lanes. This Plan does not modify the ROW. As development occurred along Coors Boulevard, additional ROW was granted. However, some development predated the 1984 Plan and Coors Boulevard still contains developed areas where ROW is less than 156 feet. Additional ROW could be granted at these sites through the redevelopment process or by condemnation. Other improvements, such as street lighting, transit service, sidewalks, bikeways, and landscaping continue to be implemented.



The City is responsible for the portion of Coors from Eduardo Road SW to St. Joseph Drive NW. NMDOT has jurisdiction of Coors at two locations—St. Joseph Drive NW to Alameda (NM 528) and Eduardo Road to I-25. This area of Coors is designated as Coors Road (NM 45). All major transportation development along Coors Boulevard must be a part of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and requires approval from the City and/or NMDOT in accordance with their responsibilities.

Overseeing street development and maintenance along Coors was historically the responsibility of NMDOT until a transfer agreement with the City was approved in 1989. The agreement transferred ownership of Coors Boulevard to the City for ownership of Unser Boulevard to the State. The City is responsible for the portion of Coors from Eduardo Road SW to St. Joseph Drive NW. NMDOT has jurisdiction of Coors at two locations—St. Joseph Drive NW to Alameda (NM 528) and Eduardo Road to I-25. This area of Coors is designated as Coors Road (NM 45). Once the missing segments of Unser Boulevard are built, the portion of Coors between St. Joseph and Alameda will revert to the City.

All major transportation development along Coors Boulevard must be a part of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and requires approval from the City and/or NMDOT in accordance with their responsibilities.

Coors is classified as a Limited Access Principal Arterial street. It is intended to have limited intersections with at least one-half mile between them. Limited Access Arterials are major Transportation Corridors that may be grade-separated and may also have grade-separated ingress and egress.

Coors is intersected by five additional primary arterials: Central Avenue, Paseo del Norte, Alameda, Coors Bypass, and I-40. I-40 and Paseo del Norte are also limited access roads. Coors, Alameda, and Paseo del Norte have the highest non-interstate vehicle counts in the City of Albuquerque. Additional streets within the plan area include:

- Montañño Road
- Irving Boulevard
- Eagle Ranch Road
- La Orilla
- Western Trail
- Dellynnne Avenue

Coors Boulevard is an Enhanced Transit Corridor with two transit lines along its length. East/West routes along Paseo del Norte and Alameda also have transit lines that feed the Coors transit routes. Coors is proposed as a long-term major transit corridor by the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. As a result, in April 2006, a limited stop transit route that operates during weekday peak hours was extended to connect major activity centers along Coors to Route 766 (Rapid Ride) on Central Avenue.

Opportunities

- Existing land uses and densities suggest that there is potential to enhance existing transit service and facilitate more transit-oriented development along Coors

Constraints

- As a Limited Access Principal Arterial—Coors is designed to accommodate large traffic volumes at fairly high rates of speed; it is unlikely to become a more pedestrian-oriented environment

FIGURE 1.14: TRANSPORTATION, ROADWAYS AND TRAFFIC

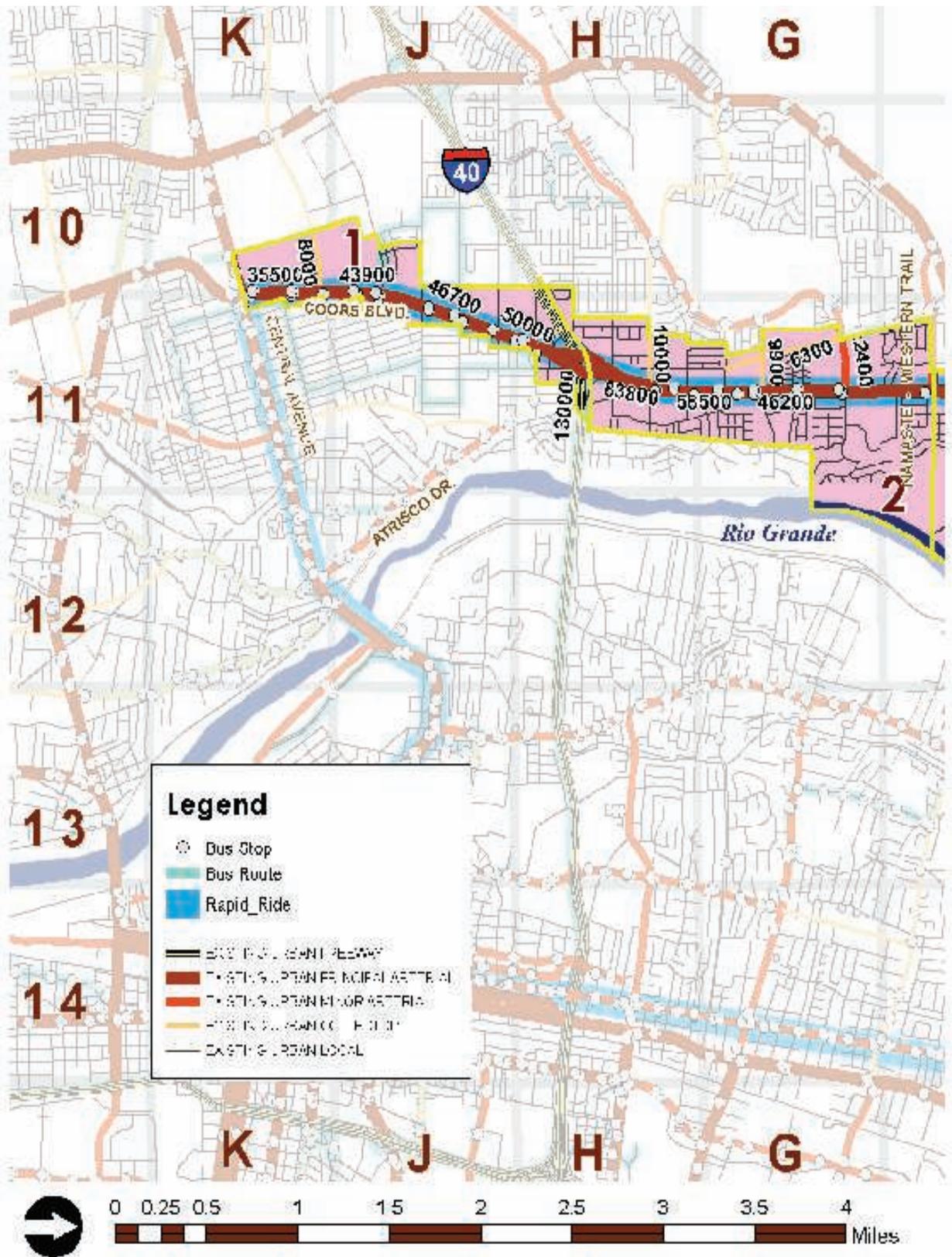
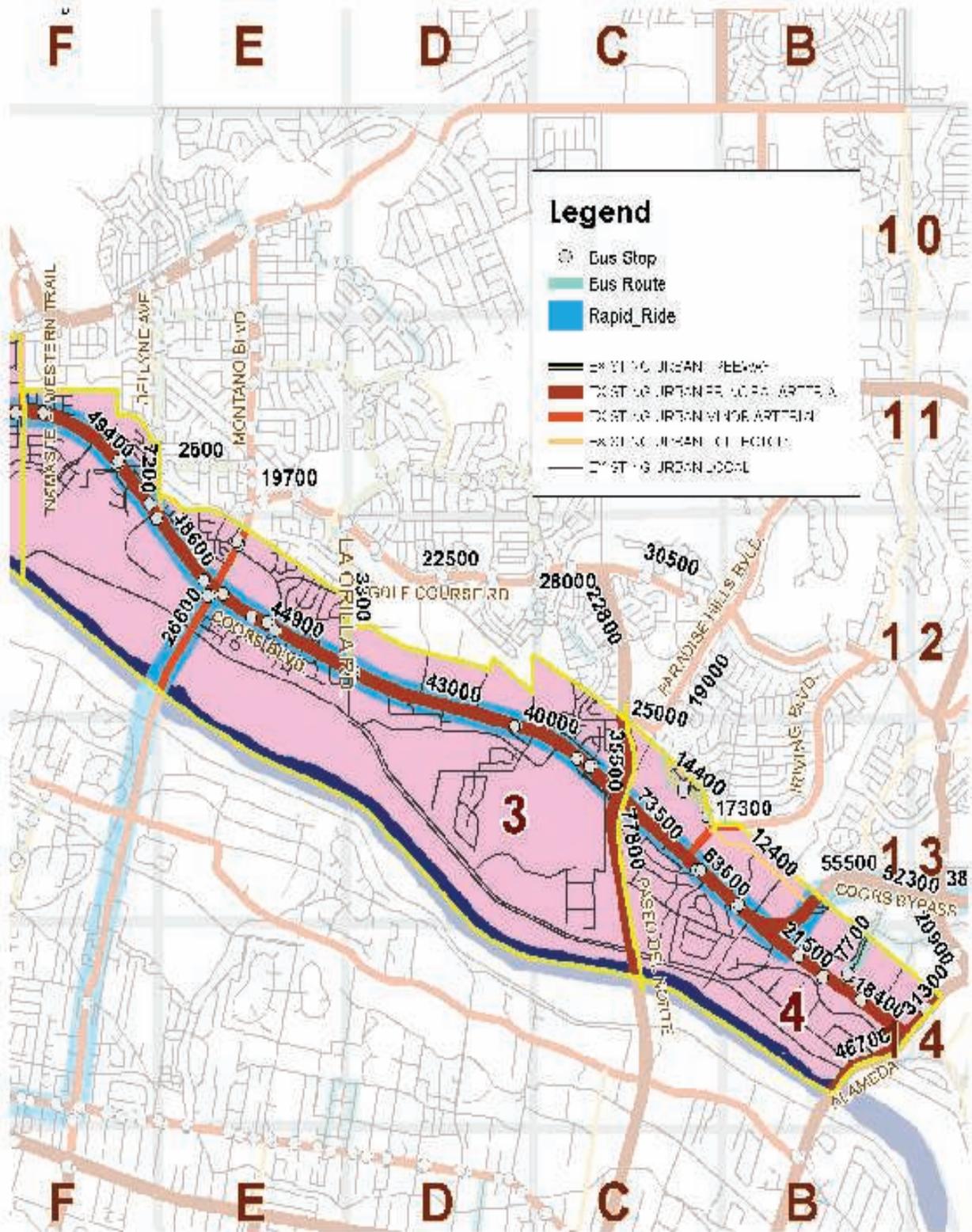


FIGURE 1.14: TRANSPORTATION, ROADWAYS AND TRAFFIC



Source: The City of Albuquerque Planning Department. Map and data are for planning purposes only.



G. PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES AND RECREATIONAL TRAILS

The existing street character and the volume/speed of traffic makes this street a challenging pedestrian environment. There are, however, several pedestrian facilities, trails, and bikeways available for City residents.

Opportunities

- Pedestrian facilities can be designed to take advantage of scenic views
- Pedestrian and bicycle access points to the bosque, the Petroglyphs, parks, and open space can be connected by a trails and bikeways network
- Arroyo edges that connect upland areas to the bosque are potential off-road pedestrian links; ditches are potential links to open space areas
- Future development and redevelopment could promote building key linkages
- Improvements can be developed based on Design Overlay Zone specifications
- An off-road, paved trail could be developed in a landscape buffer to provide a viable pedestrian facility that connects activity centers and neighborhoods
- A mix of land uses including commercial, open space, and residential can result in a diversity of destinations



Coors Bike Lane



Sidewalk Ends

Constraints

- Pedestrian crossings are extremely hazardous
- The limited-access characteristics of Coors impede the development of a safe and comfortable pedestrian environment, including installation of additional crosswalks
- Pedestrian facilities along Coors Boulevard and other streets are fragmented and not buffered from traffic
- Steep drop-offs and deep setbacks inhibit pedestrian access to commercial areas
- No direct access from neighborhoods to trails and bus routes
- Pedestrian amenities in commercial use areas tend to be disjointed or missing
- Access to the bosque will be limited to proposed access points identified by the City's Open Space Division
- Trail development will be limited by existing right-of-way (ROW). In areas where there is insufficient ROW, an easement must be purchased by the City prior to trail development



Pedestrian Crossing Coors



Pedestrian Lane?