SECTION 2.0

SITE OVERVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This section describes the overall setting of Double Eagle II Airport and the west side communities. This includes a summary of the history and general information about Double Eagle II Airport. From information provided by the City of Albuquerque and the county, descriptions of surrounding land use, west side infrastructure, ongoing community area planning, and surface transportation planning are provided. In addition, a socioeconomic summary of the state and Albuquerque Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) is provided.

2.2 AIRPORT LOCATION

Double Eagle II Airport, as shown on Figure 2.1, is located approximately 10 statute miles northwest of the Albuquerque central business district and 13.5 statute miles northwest of the Albuquerque International Sunport in the north-central portion of Bernalillo County.

The location of the Double Eagle II Airport Reference Point (ARP), defined as the midpoint of airport runway pavements, is shown on the State of New Mexico Aeronautical Chart for 1990-1991 as Latitude 35° 09' North and Longitude 106° 48' West. The official Double Eagle II Airport elevation, defined as the highest point of useable runway, is listed on that same chart as 5,837 feet above mean sea level (msl) in North American Vertical Datum (NAVD), 1987.

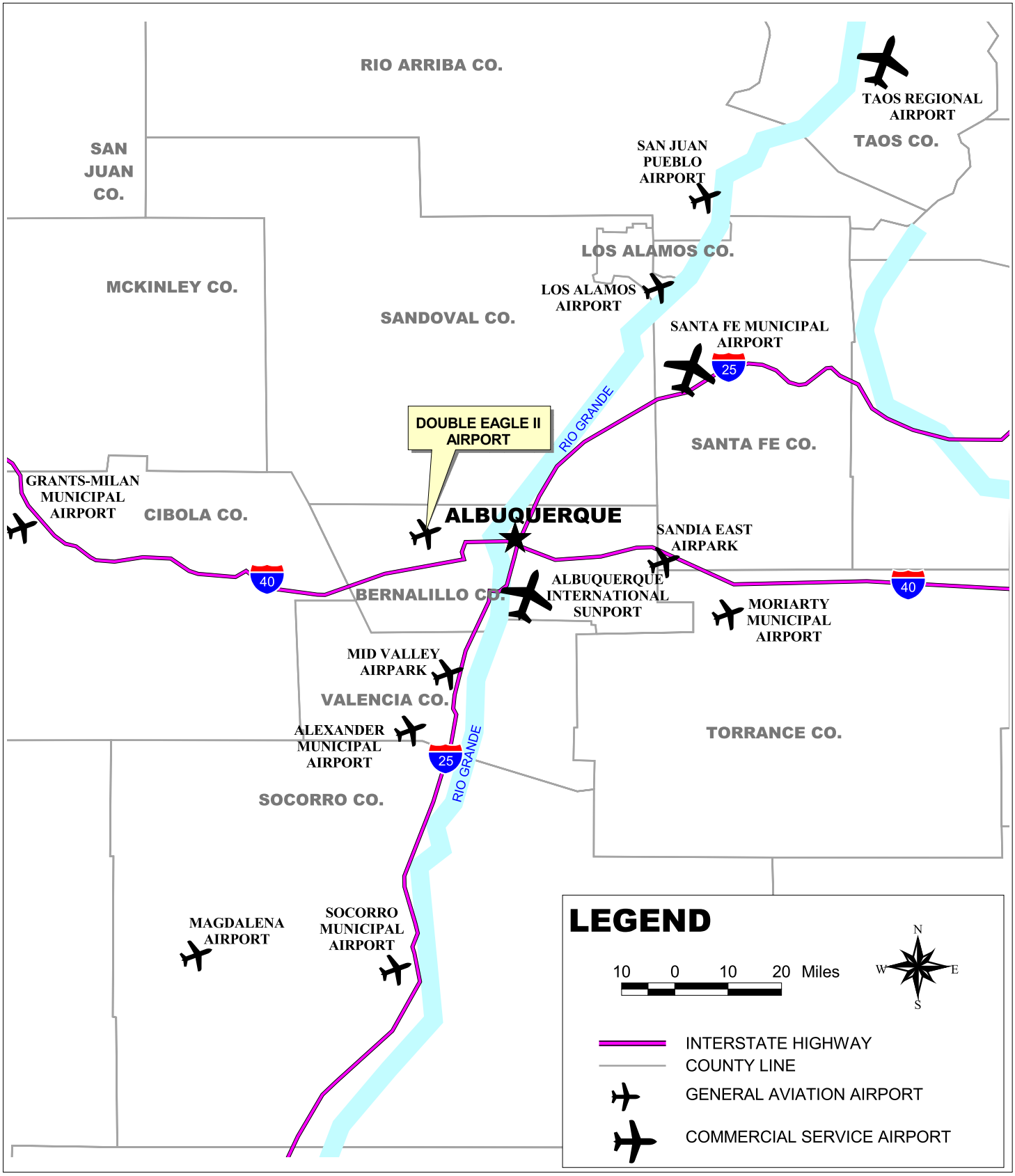
Double Eagle II Airport is situated north of the Atrisco Land Grant Boundary, south of the Alameda Land Grant Boundary, and west of the Petroglyph National Monument.

2.3 AIRPORT HISTORY

Double Eagle II Airport is the culmination of efforts commenced by the City of Albuquerque in 1969. At that time, a master plan study, prepared by the firm of Landrum and Brown for Albuquerque International Sunport urges the City to consider long-range future aviation needs of the area and plan for facilities accordingly.

A statewide Airport System Plan, prepared in 1972 by Bucher and Willis, identified the need to develop additional general aviation (GA) facilities in the Albuquerque area.

A comprehensive master plan study for a "West Mesa Airport" was conducted in 1972 by the joint firms of Herkenhoff and Parsons. It was stated in that study that the airport mission for the West Mesa Airport would be to "service all segments of Albuquerque's air transportation requirements" including commercial air services. The initial mission was to be a reliever airport for Albuquerque International Sunport. The initial site chosen (not final location) was four miles north of I-40 and southwest of the volcanoes.



DOUBLE EAGLE II AIRPORT MASTER PLAN	AIRPORT LOCATION MAP	**Figure 2.1**

In August 1980, an Environmental Assessment (EA) was completed by Chambers-Campbell-Isaacson-Chaplin, Inc. for the City of Albuquerque for the proposed development of a new GA airport on the West Mesa, Bernalillo County, New Mexico. This EA was completed to assess the potential impacts of the construction and operation of the West Mesa Airport (known today as Double Eagle II Airport) at the site upon which the airport is located today. In response to this EA, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

Construction of Double Eagle II Airport began in 1982 and the initial work was completed in 1983. It consisted of two runways – 4/22 (7,400 feet x 100 feet) and 17/35 (6,000 x 100 feet), GA parking apron, miscellaneous security fencing, and airport access road from I-40.

An update of the New Mexico Airport System Plan was prepared in 1983 by Bucher, Willis & Ratliff. Double Eagle II Airport was included (with an "Under Construction" notation) in the state plan and in the Albuquerque Metro Airport System Plan as a reliever airport for Albuquerque International Sunport.

A General Aviation Facilities Plan Report, prepared by Greiner, Inc., was published in February 1986. This report prepared a conceptual GA facilities layout plan for Double Eagle II Airport associated with the runway layouts developed and planned in the 1980 West Mesa Alternative Site Study.

The New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department (NMSHTD), Aviation Division; New Mexico State University; and Leedshill-Herkenhoff Engineers issued a draft of a revision to the Albuquerque Metropolitan Airport System Plan in March 1991. This plan predicts that Double Eagle II Airport "will become the center of GA activity in New Mexico."

A draft Airport Master Plan was prepared in 1991 by Greiner, Inc. This report was not completed.

An EA for the Proposed On-Airport Access Road at Double Eagle II Airport was published in May 1994. This report was an assessment of the NMSHTD Aviation Division request to construct a new, on-airport access road to connect the airport's landside facilities to an off-airport access road located north of the airport. The proposed action called for the construction of two, 12-foot driving lanes for a total paved surface of 24 feet. The access road was constructed in 1997.

In May of 2000, Eclipse Aviation announced the selection of Albuquerque and Double Eagle II Airport as the site to manufacture their state-of-the-art business jets.

2.4 AIRPORT PROPERTY

Double Eagle II Airport is comprised of approximately 4,261 acres, as shown in Figure 2.3. The City of Albuquerque owns 4,045 acres of this land. The remaining 216 acres are State Trust Lands, which the City has a right-of-way on (in the areas of Runway 17/35 and the access road).

2.5 ADJACENT LAND USES

The City of Albuquerque has studied land use adjacent to Double Eagle II Airport as part of the Double Eagle Sector Development Plan. The planning area of the sector study encompassed 11,700 acres. Current land uses adjacent to Double Eagle II Airport are described as follows:

East of Double Eagle II Airport - Adjacent to Double Eagle II Airport is the Petroglyph National Monument and city park and open space lands. Exhibit 1.5 of the Double Eagle Sector Development Plan shows the boundary of the monument. Further east are residential developments.

South of Double Eagle II Airport - Adjacent to Double Eagle II Airport is an area which is predominantly undeveloped, owned by Westland Development, Inc. The land use further south consists mostly of undeveloped areas.

West of Double Eagle II Airport - Adjacent to Double Eagle II Airport are land uses consisting of open space, a police/fire training area, a public works facility (Soils Amendment Facility), and a temporary county jail facility. Further west is a shooting range and parks and recreation/open space land.

North of Double Eagle II Airport -Adjacent to Double Eagle II Airport are undeveloped private lands, most notably Quail Ranch. Further north are residential subdivision developments in the Rio Rancho area.

2.6 AREA PLANNING

Albuquerque and Bernalillo counties have experienced dynamic growth in the past few decades. Consequently, they have prepared a comprehensive plan to adequately manage growth that has already occurred and to prudently plan for projected growth in the future.

A number of city, county, and regional planning documents contain policies, which affect Double Eagle II Airport and development in the vicinity of Double Eagle II Airport. Those documents most directly related to the history of Double Eagle II Airport are described in the introduction to this master plan update. A brief summary of other planning documents affecting Double Eagle II Airport and the area follows:

- An Environmental Impact Assessment Report for Proposed West Mesa Airport at Albuquerque, dated 1976, evaluated ten categories of environmental impact including soil erosion, water use and wastewater, solid waste, noise impacts, air pollution impacts, biotic impacts, impact on wetlands, and impacts on vegetation and wildlife. The assessment was considered applicable to the site recommended in 1972 and the site eventually purchased in 1980 received a FONSI.

- The Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 1988, contains policies, which will guide future development in the plan area.

- Two volumes of the Northwest Mesa Area Plan have been adopted. Volume I contains general descriptive information about the entire Northwest Mesa. Volume II establishes goals and defines issues to be considered in development of the plan. With respect to Double Eagle II Airport, this document states that incompatible land uses within the 59-75 Ldn noise contours and flight paths of the airport should be avoided. The document also notes the economic development potential of the airport, and states that adequate land for airport-related businesses and large industrial tracts should be provided.

- The 1988 Transportation Program for the Albuquerque Urban Area contains long-range plans and projects programmed through 1994 for major streets, bikeways, and public transportation. Road improvements (or new roads) identified in the plan of interest to Double Eagle II Airport are Paseo del Volcan, which provides access from I-40 to the south, and Paseo del Norte, which will provide access to northern and northeastern Albuquerque.

- There is a Master Plan for the Development of Shooting Range State Park, which occupies 4,600 acres west of Double Eagle II Airport. The southern portion of the park has shooting ranges while the remainder is grassland preserve.

- The West Side Strategic Plan was initiated by City Council Bill R-121-1992 and co-sponsored by Councilor Alan Armijo. The plan was prepared during 1994 and reviewed by both the City and County Planning Commissions in 1995. It responds to significant amounts of previous work on the west side, and to an acknowledged need for a framework from which to evaluate and guide new growth. It provides pro-active tools to manage change and implement the west side community vision. The document provides a framework of strategic policies within which future growth and development on Albuquerque's west side should be managed. The intent of the plan is to achieve a sensible balance between a desired land use pattern and the preservation of the sensitive environmental characteristics of the area. Communities identified within the West Side Strategic Plan are described below and are presented on Figure 2.2:

  - **Seven Bar Ranch Community**

    The Seven Bar Ranch Community lies between the Calabacillas Arroyo and the County line, and between the Rio Grande and an area slightly west of the Rainbow Boulevard corridor. For planning purposes, the area is estimated to contain 2,400 acres. At full buildout, it is estimated to include a population of approximately 18,700 with 7,500 housing units and 6,200 jobs. Development has occurred in Seven Bar Ranch since the 1970s and it has long been a magnet for area residents seeking services.

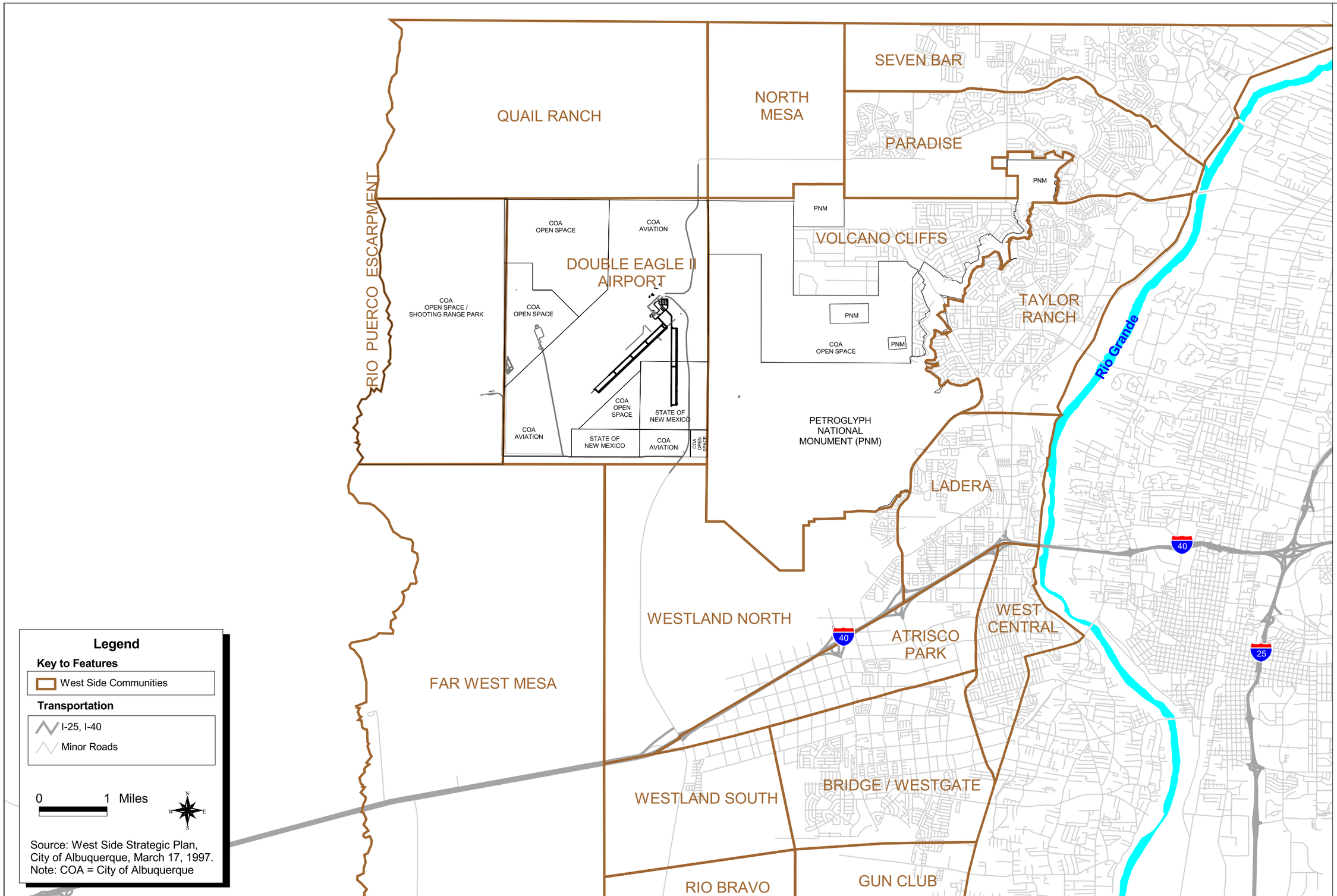


Figure 2.2

West Side Communities

Double Eagle II Airport Master Plan

– **Paradise Community**

The Paradise Community includes the existing County subdivisions of Paradise Hills, as well as the City's annexed areas in Ventana Ranch and those lands on both sides of Coors Boulevard to the Rio Grande. The northern boundary of the Paradise Community is the Calabacillas Arroyo, and the southern boundary is the Town of Alameda Grant line, currently consistent with the alignment of Paseo del Norte at its river crossing.

The community includes approximately 3,100 acres and is projected to have a full buildout population of 21,700. This population would require 8,700 housing units and could attract up to 7,200 jobs. The 1994 population of this community was approximately 7,600. The Community Core Area for this community is located generally near the Paseo del Norte and Coors intersection. Other smaller Village Centers, such as those already existing near Paradise Boulevard, will continue to develop. Both the City and County share jurisdiction in this community and consistent enforcement of compatible policies will be critical.

There are significant regional transportation system impacts on this community, due to road extension and capacity issues that are still unresolved. Resolution of these issues is critical to handling existing traffic in the area, and absolutely necessary to accommodate future growth in the area.

– **Taylor Ranch**

The Taylor Ranch Community is located entirely below, or east of, the Volcanic Escarpment, and extends to the Paseo del Norte on the north, to the river on the east, and to the general vicinity of Western Trails on the south. The Taylor Ranch Community includes approximately 3,700 acres capable of supporting a population of 25,900. This would result in 10,400 housing units, and a potential employment of 8,600. The Taylor Ranch Community includes rural County areas near the river, as well as established commercial services and buildout subdivisions in its central area. The Taylor Ranch Community Core Area is located generally in the vicinity of the Coors Boulevard and Montano Road intersection.

– **Ladera**

The Ladera Community includes the area between the river on the east, roughly aligned with Western Trails on the north, with Unser Boulevard and the Petroglyph National Monument on the west, and with the I-40 corridor on the south. It is 2,200 acres in size, completely within the City of Albuquerque's municipal limits, and could potentially support a population of 15,400. This would result in approximately 6,200 housing units with a potential for 5,100 jobs in the area. The Ladera Community is continuing to buildout, with vacant land only available in the northeast portion and in the southwest portion.

- **West Central Community**

  This community includes the largely established neighborhoods and businesses existing on both sides of Central Avenue between Coors Boulevard and the river. The north end of the West Central Community is the I-40 corridor and the southern terminus is the intersection of Old Coors and Coors Boulevards. This community is the smallest of the sub-areas identified in the Plan, but has a distinct character from neighboring areas and is deserving of its own community designation. The West Central Community contains 1,100 acres with an expected full buildout population of approximately 2,100 jobs in the area.

- **Bridge/Westgate Community**

  The Bridge/Westgate Community includes the already developed area within Westgate Heights, the existing subdivisions and businesses south of Central Avenue and along Bridge Street, and the vacant land between and around these areas. The boundaries of the community roughly follow Central Avenue on the north, Coors Boulevard on the east, the 118th Street corridor on the west, and Blake Road on the south. The area contains approximately 4,900 acres and could someday include a population of 38,300; it would support 15,300 housing units and could provide as many as 12,700 jobs. The Bridge/Westgate Community is planned to provide substantial growth capacity for Albuquerque at urban densities.

- **Gun Club Community**

  The Gun Club Community is located south of Blake Road, west of Coors Boulevard, east of the 118th Street corridor, and north of the southern Plan Boundary (just south of Gun Club Road). The community is a transition zone between rural South Valley and the more urbanized area to the north in Bridge/Westgate. The city is located partly in the City and partly in the County with irregular boundaries between the two jurisdictions. Portions of the area have been annexed to the City of Albuquerque and the remaining lands need to be investigated by the City and the County to determine appropriate annexation boundaries.

  The Gun Club Community is 4,085 acres in size and could accommodate 4,300 housing units. The full buildout population is expected to 12,700. These numbers are consistent with existing development in the area, which is sparse, on large lots, with the greatest density located along Coors Boulevard.

- **Westland North Community**

  The Westland North Community is one of the largest in the Plan area. It is bordered by the Petroglyph National Monument to the north, Unser Boulevard to the east, I-40 to the south, and the eastern limit of the Paseo del Volcan corridor on the west (west of Double Eagle II Airport Paseo Del Volcan). The community is comprised of 6,500 acres and could support a population of approximately 56,200 requiring 18,700 new jobs and 22,500 housing units.

The City of Albuquerque has stated intent to annex this area for future growth capacity for the City. Annexation will be a function of negotiations regarding utility service, but even if Westland North remains in the County without annexation, it is still expected to develop with full urban-style services and densities.

Some residential development west of Unser Boulevard and north of I-40 has already occurred within this community's border. The remainder of the land is vacant and zoned agricultural. The development of the Westland North Community will be phased over time and is expected to occur over a 20-40 year timeframe.

– **Westland South Community**

This community is planned to be developed in the County without City annexation as a separate Planned Community in conformance with the Planned Communities Guidelines. The community is roughly bounded to the north by Central Avenue, to the east by 118th Street, and the Gibson West corridor or Blake Road alignment on the south. The community is estimated to contain approximately 3,507 acres of land, resulting in an eventual population of approximately 21,700 and 7,400 housing units.

Two significant physical features cross this land: the Southwest Mesa Escarpment Sandhills (designated for Major Public Open Space) and the Amole Arroyo. The Amole Arroyo is a Major Open Space Link, providing potential open space and trail connection from the Rio Grande to the Rio Puerco Escarpment. The Westland South Community will be bisected by the Paseo del Volcan connection between I-40 and Rio Bravo, and is expected to develop a Community Core near the Paseo del Volcan and Central Avenue ("Gateway to Albuquerque") intersection.

– **Rio Bravo Community**

The Rio Bravo Community is planned for the area located south of the Westland South Community and west of the Gun Club rural area. The City of Albuquerque does not intend to pursue annexation of this area, but to allow it to develop as a separate Planned Community on the Southwest Mesa under the jurisdiction of Bernalillo County. This community is estimated to contain approximately 4,163 acres. It is assumed this area will develop at a lower overall density than the Westland South Community due to its distance south and its proximity to the rural Gun Club area. An initial development of 4,400 housing units resulting in a population of approximately 12,900 has occurred in this area. The Rio Bravo Community is roughly bounded by Gibson West corridor/Blake Road alignment to the north, the 118th Street corridor to the east, the Plan Boundary to the south, and the area 0.25 miles west of the Paseo del Volcan alignment (eastern limit of corridor).

The Paseo del Volcan and Rio Bravo intersection is expected to develop as the Core Area of the community and is ideally located to accommodate a number of community services and mixed-use commercial, employment and high-density residential uses. Some additional mixed-use and high-density uses may occur in Village Centers within the community. Most of the community will be devoted to low-density residential uses, but in all cases, community water and wastewater services are envisioned for the area.

- **North Mesa Community**

  The planned North Mesa area is currently platted into 5-acre tracts under an antiquated platting scheme. The current configuration will make the area very difficult to develop with useable roadway or utility systems. There is a need for this area to be re-planned and platted in order for reasonable development to occur. The North Mesa Community is approximately 4,516 acres in size, which presents a considerable challenge for redevelopment of the area. For strategic planning purposes, the North Mesa area has been assumed to eventually buildout as a new Planned Community, which would result in a population of approximately 28,000 and 9,500 housing units at full buildout.

  The North Mesa Community resides outside the City of Albuquerque's water service area and adjacent to a private utility's service area. Therefore, the City of Albuquerque has expressed intent not to annex the area and leave it under the control of Bernalillo County.

- **Black Ranch (Quail Ranch)**

  The Black Ranch is the only Planned Community of the west side or in the County to acquire Level A: Planned Community Master Plan approval from Bernalillo County. As such, it has a defined mix of land uses, approved densities and open space systems, and identified locations for its Community Core area, Villages, Village Centers, and Employment Areas. The Sandoval County line on the north, the Rio Puerco Escarpment on the west, the City's Shooting Range Park and Double Eagle II Airport lands to the south, and the North Mesa Community on the east borders the Black Ranch. It is almost 7,000 acres in size (slightly smaller than the Westland North Community) and is one of the largest community areas on the west side.

  At full buildout, which is projected to take 30+ years, the Black Ranch will support a population of approximately 46,740 and over 19,000 housing units. The City of Albuquerque does not intend to provide services to the Black Ranch and it is currently planned to develop under the jurisdiction of Bernalillo County as a separate Planned Community. The presence of the Calabacillas Arroyo and the Rio Puerco Escarpment offer significant opportunities for meeting open space needs within this community.

- **Far West Mesa Future Communities**

  The Far West Mesa area encompasses 17,029 acres and is the largest sub-area within the Plan area. It is envisioned as a future growth area capable of developing as 3 to 5 separate Planned Communities, but its capacity is not needed in the next 50 years of growth in the metropolitan area. This area should be retained as agricultural land, and when appropriate, will be developed under the Planned Communities Guidelines.

  The Rio Puerco Escarpment at the western edge of the Far West Mesa Community is an ecologically fragile area with a high potential for numerous archaeological resources. It has been recommended that Bernalillo County assess the resources of the area and develop policies protecting key environmental and cultural resources through a Rio Puerco planning process.

- **City Lands, Double Eagle II Airport, Shooting Range Park, Open Space Lands**

  The City of Albuquerque owns substantial acreage on top of the Northwest Mesa at Double Eagle II Airport, the Shooting Range Park, Open Space lands, and the Soil Amendment Facility. Together, these areas total 14,715 acres in size, making the City of Albuquerque the second largest landowner on the west side (behind Westland Development Company). The City varies in use from permanent open space, open space trust land, developed park facilities, to Double Eagle II Airport. The City lands extend from the Black Ranch (old Town of Alameda Grant Line) on the north, to the Rio Puerco Escarpment on the west, to the Petroglyph National Monument on the east, and south to the top of the Westland North Community, and Far West Mesa area.

- **Petroglyph National Monument**

  The Petroglyph National Monument was established through federal legislation after years of work by local agencies and individuals dedicated to the preservation of its unique cultural, historical, spiritual, and physical features. The area encompasses 7,244 acres and includes the volcanoes and Basalt Escarpment areas that were previously part of the City's open space system. The National Monument is of great national and local significance and is both a unique asset and unusual constraint to the urban development planned around its boundaries.

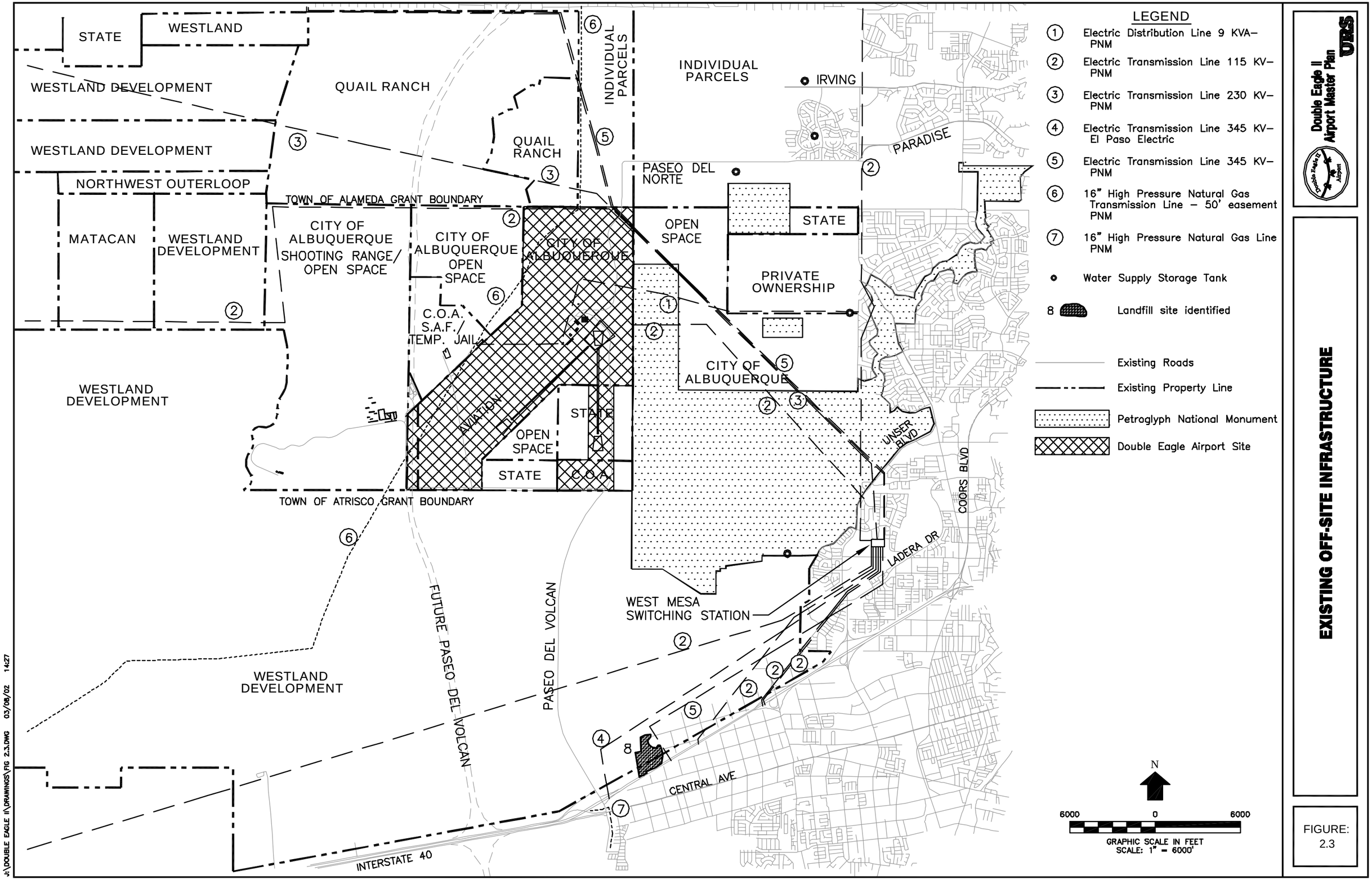
2.7 AREA INFRASTRUCTURE

The area surrounding Double Eagle II Airport has several high-voltage electric transmission lines in close proximity to the airport boundary as well as two high-pressure natural gas transmission lines. Currently, there are no major water distribution facilities or sewer trunk lines near the airport. While the current facilities at Double Eagle II Airport have phone service provided by QWEST, there is no major communications infrastructure in the vicinity of the airport. Existing off-site infrastructure is presented in Figure 2.3.

2.8 SURFACE TRANSPORTATION

I-40 and Paseo Del Volcan provide access to Double Eagle II Airport from the south. I-25 and Paradise Boulevard provide access to Double Eagle II Airport from the north. An extension to Paradise Boulevard was completed in the mid-1990s and serves as a temporary access road.

The Middle Rio Grande Council of Governments Long-Range Major Street Plan identifies a future transportation network or roadway grid on the northern portion of the West Mesa. In keeping with the Major Street Plan, the City and/or the State plan to develop a permanent access road to serve this area at some point in the future. This permanent alignment, which would be a limited access principal arterial, would serve as the primary access road to the airport as well as planned local residential/Planned Community developments.



Double Eagle II Airport Master Plan

URS

EXISTING OFF-SITE INFRASTRUCTURE

FIGURE: 2.3

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One of the east-west roads identified in the Major Street Plan, which could provide the permanent "northern" access to the airport, and other development as it occurs in this area is the extension of Paseo del Norte. Dependent on the ultimate implementation of the Major Street Plan, portions of the temporary or off-airport access road could be removed, re-routed, or realigned to complete the area's transportation system. Existing surface transportation for Double Eagle II Airport is presented in Figure 2.4).

2.9 AREA AIRPORTS

Figure 2.1 shows the central New Mexico region with its public-use airports (GA and commercial service). Within the greater Albuquerque area, there is one commercial service airport (Albuquerque International Sunport) and five GA airports (Double Eagle II, Sandia East Airpark, Moriarty Municipal, Mid Valley Airpark, and Alexander Municipal Airports). All of the GA airports other than Double Eagle II Airport offer only one useable runway. Only one airport (Moriarty Municipal Airport) offers a runway longer than any of Double Eagle II Airport's existing runways – 7,700 feet compared to 7,400 feet.

2.10 SOCIOECONOMIC SUMMARY

A summary of socioeconomic data from 1970 to 2000 is provided in the following sections for the State of New Mexico and the Albuquerque MSA. The Albuquerque MSA is comprised of Bernalillo, Sandoval, and Valencia counties. The overview of socioeconomic data includes population, employment, and income levels.

2.10.1 Population

The University of New Mexico Bureau of Business and Economic Research (UNM-BBER) regularly updates demographic information for the State of New Mexico and its counties. The population of the State of New Mexico was 1.8 million in 2000 and has grown over 20 percent since 1990. The population of the Albuquerque MSA was 712,738 for 2000. This is a population increase of 21 percent over 1990 Albuquerque MSA population levels. A detailed historical population count is presented in Table 2.1.

2.10.2 Employment

Employment data was obtained from the New Mexico Department of Labor, Economic Research and Analysis. The historic employment figures for New Mexico and the Albuquerque MSA are presented in Table 2.1.

Unemployment rates within the State of New Mexico have fallen from 7.7 percent in 1970 to 4.9 percent in 2000. Unemployment rates in the Albuquerque MSA increased to 8.0 percent in 1980 and have fallen to 3.3 percent in 2000.

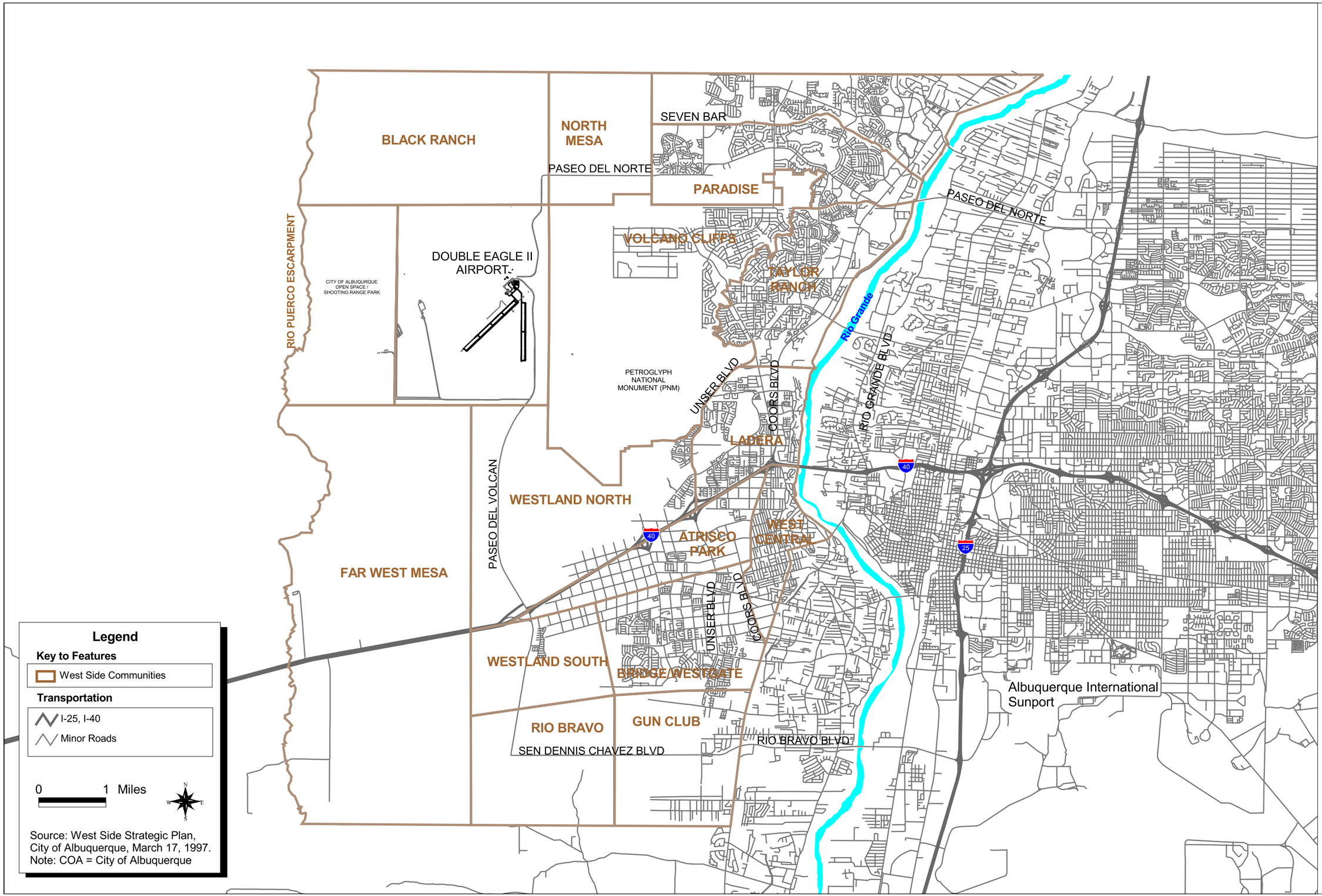

Figure 2.4

Existing Surface Transportation

Double Eagle II Airport Master Plan

2.10.3 Income

As indicated in Table 2.1, the per capita personal income (PCPI) rose dramatically from 1970 to 1980 due to inflation in the state and the Albuquerque MSA. The PCPI has grown at a slower rate from 1980 to 1999. The Albuquerque MSA PCPI growth has out-paced the state PCPI growth since 1980.

TABLE 2.1

LOCAL POPULATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND INCOME DATA
Double Eagle II Airport
Master Plan Study

(a) State of New Mexico

Year	Population	% Increase	Civilian Labor Force[1]			Per Capita Personal Income (PCPI)	% Increase
			Employment	Unemployment	Rate		
1970	1,017,055	---	323,577	27,010	7.7%	$3,197	---
1980	1,303,303	28%	520,000	42,000	7.5%	$8,402	163%
1990	1,515,069	16%	661,540	46,013	6.5%	$14,960	78%
2000	1,819,046	20%	792,435	40,400	4.9%	$21,836[3]	46%

(b) Albuquerque Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)
(Bernalillo, Sandoval, and Valencia counties)

Year	Population	% Increase	Civilian Labor Force[1]			Per Capita Personal Income (PCPI)	% Increase
			Employment	Unemployment	Rate		
1970	373,842	---	112,657[2]	8,319[2]	6.9%***	$3,469	---
1980	485,431	30%	186,377	16,131	8.0%	$9,020	160%
1990	589,131	21%	283,190	16,204	5.4%	$17,118	90%
2000	712,738	21%	355,818	12,124	3.3%	$25,619[3]	50%

1 Numbers in thousands.
2 Bernalillo and Sandoval counties (does not include Valencia County).
3 Represents 1999 for PCPI.

Sources: Population – U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, 2000.
Civilian Labor Force – New Mexico Department of Labor, Economic Research and Analysis, 2001.
PCPI – U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2001.