



CHAPTER I

introduction

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1.1. Plan Area

Volcano Heights is one of three Sector Development Plan areas in Volcano Mesa. (See **Exhibit 1.1**).

The Volcano Heights Sector Development Plan (SDP) is bordered by Paseo del Norte to the north before it curves southeast, the Petroglyph National Monument on the east, Volcano Cliffs SDP boundary on the south, and Universe Boulevard on the west. The Plan area includes approximately 570 acres and surrounds the intersection of Paseo del Norte and Unser Boulevard, two vital, regional traffic arteries.

1.2. Purpose

The purpose of the Plan is to support pedestrian-friendly and transit-supportive development with particular emphasis on employment, while buffering pre-existing single-family neighborhoods and sensitive lands on the borders of the Plan area from higher-density development toward the center of the Plan area.

1.3. Intent

The intent of this Plan is to encourage development that creates an attractive, vibrant Major Activity Center that respects and honors the unique cultural, historical, geological, and volcanological setting, while providing employment, services, amenities, housing, and transportation choices for the larger region as part of a sustainable community on Albuquerque's West Side.

Adding jobs, urban and mixed-use housing options, and regional retail opportunities in Volcano Heights is part of a larger strategy to provide a center on the West Side that can begin to address the imbalance of jobs and housing that's expected to contribute to increasing traffic congestion on the region's river crossings in the future.

The zoning and corresponding standards are created to support economic development, sustainable tax base, and job creation by establishing the predictability of private development along corridors and across property lines to support and leverage investment in Volcano Heights.

The Plan aims to encourage attractive development through the use of recognized principles of urban design and to allow property owners flexibility in land use, while providing predictability through a higher level of detail in proscribed site development standards, building design, and form.

1.4. Zoning Strategy

All zones in Volcano Heights allow a mix of residential and non-residential development in order to provide maximum flexibility to property owners to adapt to market conditions and to encourage a mix of housing and services within walking and biking distance.

East of the intersection of Paseo del Norte and Unser Boulevard, the Plan envisions a Town Center with employment-oriented development and entertainment uses organized around a planned transit corridor. Development lining these vital regional auto transportation corridors is intended to support auto-oriented, destination retail and businesses accessed from local roads. Surrounding the Town Center and Regional Center, the Plan offers pedestrian-oriented, mixed use development with convenient access between new and existing neighborhoods and shopping, employment, services, and amenities throughout the Plan area. One Village Center is included at the intersection of Paseo del Norte and Universe Boulevard, mirroring a Village Center in Volcano Trails.

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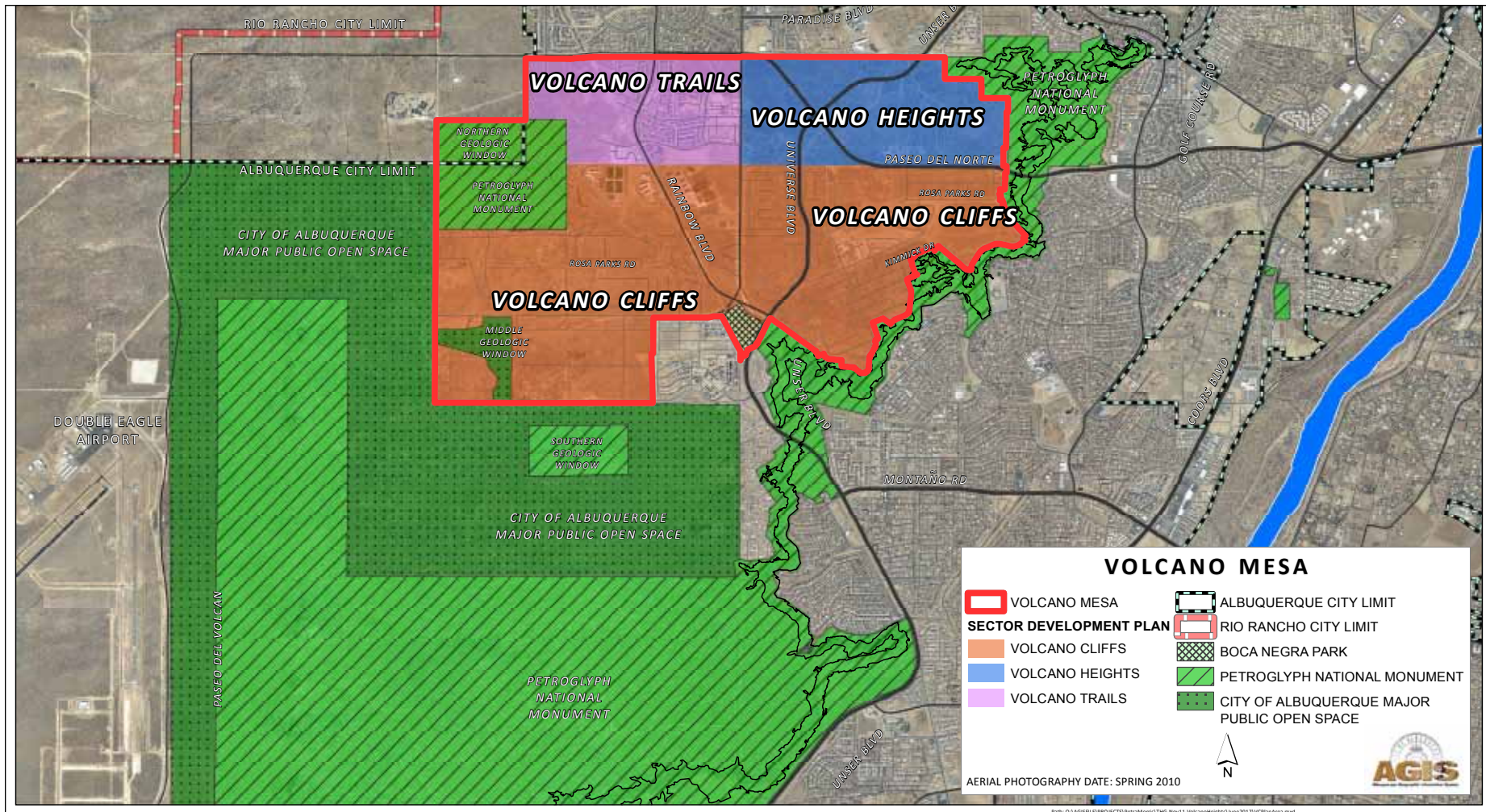


Exhibit 1.1 – Volcano Mesa Sector Development Plan Areas

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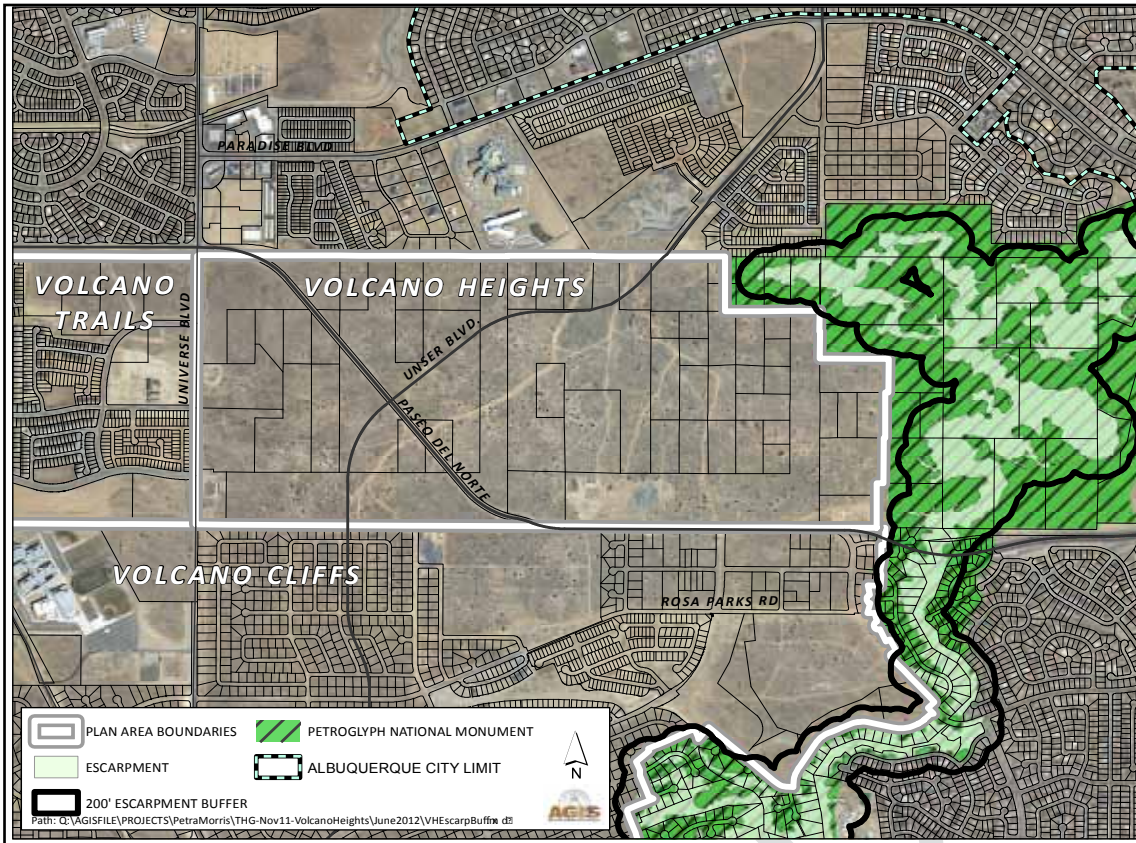


Exhibit 1.2 – Volcano Heights Plan Area

The Plan includes two types of transition zones as buffers between development densities and intensities: (1) Neighborhood Transitions to ensure new development compatible with pre-existing neighborhoods to the north and south of the Plan area and (2) an Escarpment Transition east of the Plan area to ensure development compatible with sensitive lands within the Petroglyph National Monument.

As Volcano Heights is a unique landscape that shares a border with the Petroglyph National Monument, the Plan takes an innovative approach toward height limits for buildings and structures to concentrate opportunities for height and density toward the center of the Plan Area and step heights down toward the edges with Transition zones. The Plan offers an optional bonus height system as an incentive to preserve and provide public access to rock outcroppings and other sensitive lands. See **Section 7.3 Optional Bonus Heights**.

1.5. Development Standards Strategy

The Plan implements the vision for Volcano Heights as established by the zoning map. (See **Exhibit 5.1** on page 84.) The zoning requires minimum standards to guide property owners, developers, and the City on the form, character, and intensity of desired future development within key locations and along key corridors in the Plan area. Six distinct character zones enumerate specific site, building design, and other development standards as basic building blocks to create sense of place. Clear graphic standards are provided for location, height, and building design elements. Such standards promote predictability of adjacent developments, flexibility in land use, walkable and transit-supportive mixed-use development, transitions to existing neighborhoods, and protection of natural and cultural resources.

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1.6. Plan Development Vision for Full Build-out by 2035

The zoning and development standards for Volcano Heights allow more density and intensity of uses than it seems the market will support in the foreseeable future in order to maximize density and thus walkability and transit serviceability where development occurs. The following development scenario represents an optimistic yet realistic vision for the ultimate build-out of Volcano Heights by 2035, based on the developable area in each zone and assuming the required internal street network, the preservation of significant rock outcroppings, and the achievement of bonus heights where they are allowed.

Consistent with the goal of providing a Major Activity Center, more retail and office uses are proposed than residential dwelling units. Based on conservative estimates of employees per square feet for different land uses, the total jobs associated with the realistic vision

for 2035 full build-out is approximately 5,400. No jobs are estimated in the VHNT zone, so after removing that acreage, Volcano Heights would average an estimated 10 jobs per acre (i.e. 5,389 jobs / (570-32 acres)). Based on an average household size of 2.7 people per dwelling unit, consistent with West Side demographics nearby, this vision includes approximately 13,000 additional residents.

TABLE 1.1 – VOLCANO HEIGHTS DEVELOPMENT VISION TOTAL BY LAND USE

Residential	4,769 units
Hotel	53,600 square feet
Office	1,180,135 square feet
Retail	819,498 square feet
Office + Retail	1,999,633 square feet

TABLE 1.2 – DEVELOPMENT VISION BY CHARACTER ZONE

Character Zone	Unit Count			Square Footage (SF)				
	Single-family detached	Single-family attached	Multifamily	Hotel	Office	Regional Retail	Specialty Retail	Local Retail
<i>Town Center (VHTC)</i>	0	0	1,406	0	552,650	25,000	125,000	25,000
<i>Regional Center (VHRC)</i>	0	0	551	0	352,800	301,700	131,600	47,600
<i>Village Center (VHVC)</i>	0	0	99	0	20,685	0	65,598	0
<i>Mixed Use (VHMX)</i>	0	165	2,002	0	254,000	0	0	80,000
<i>Neighborhood Transition (VHNT)</i>	130	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Escarpment Transition (VHET)</i>	234	126	56	53,600	0	0	0	18,000
Volcano Heights Total	364	291	4,114	53,600	1,180,135	326,700	322,198	170,600
Full-time Equivalent (FTE) Job Estimate	NA	NA	NA	600 SF/FTE	300 SF/FTE	600 SF/FTE	600 SF/FTE	600 SF/FTE
Job Estimate Total	NA	NA	NA	89	3934	545	537	284

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This vision was also used as the base assumption for the traffic study for Volcano Heights, the results of which can be found in **Appendix C**.

The hotel noted in the Escarpment Transition zone was an idea floated by community members during a public meeting. If realized, this facility could honor the unique geological, cultural, and historical context of this area and leverage the permanent open space, recreation opportunities, and spectacular views to create a destination spa/retreat/resort that would set the tone for the character of surrounding development and help anchor the area as a unique destination. While it is a use allowed by zoning, there is no requirement in this Plan that it be constructed or recommendation of its exact location.

1.7. Plan Components

The VHSDP shall provide the official zoning map. It establishes the development standards for all properties within the Plan area including the following:

1.7.1. Character Zones

The zoning map designates all property in Volcano Heights as one of six character zones, described in **Section 5.0 Zoning** starting on page 83. Each character zone is intended to create a distinct urban form and a mix of residential and commercial uses.

Each character zone establishes the following:

- (i) The intended character of each zone in **Section 5.0 Zoning**, including land uses for each zone per **Table 5.1** starting on page 87, including permitted, conditional, and prohibited uses.

- (ii) Site Development and Building Design Standards, including building and parking location, height, massing, glazing, materials, and design, for each character zone per **Section 6.0** starting on page 99.

In order to establish predictability along corridors, where zones change along a Mandatory Street (see **Exhibit 4.2** starting on page 56), frontage standards associated with the Mandatory Street prevail over site development standards of the character zones.

1.7.2.

Regulations General to All Zones

The Plan provides standards applicable to all development regardless of character zone. These are presented in separate sections according to subject:

- (i) **Section 7.0 Site Development Standards** starting on page 131, including an optional bonus height system, grading standards, construction mitigation, and utilities.
- (ii) **Section 8.0 Building Design Standards** starting on page 141, including building orientation, mass, scale, and color; parking structure and residential garage design; auto-oriented design and **street screens**; communication antennae; and rainwater harvesting equipment.
- (iii) **9.0 Sign Standards** starting on page 147 with a table for anticipated sign elements; and
- (iv) **10.0 Open Space, Landscaping, and Sight Lighting Design Standards** starting on page 153, including detached and **usable open space**, landscape, and site lighting.

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1.7.3. **Streets and Streetscape Standards**

All streets in Volcano Heights are to be constructed by developers and/or property owners at the time of the property's development. All streets and streetscape standards are described in **Section 4.0 Streets and Streetscape Standards** starting on page 53. This Plan includes a street hierarchy of **Mandatory Streets** versus non-mandatory Streets and **street designations** of 'A' versus 'B' streets.

(i) **Mandatory Streets:** The Mandatory Street Map designates street types according to character of development along corridors, as well as designating 'A' Streets versus 'B' Streets within the Plan area. All streets, whether 'A' or 'B,' that are mapped in **Exhibit 4.1** in **Section 4.4** are considered **Mandatory**

Streets and shall be constructed in that approximate location, with those general connections to other Mandatory Streets, and according to the required cross section for the appropriate street type.

(ii) **Non-mandatory Streets:** Non-mandatory streets are those local roads constructed to serve development projects and contribute to the local street network grid. These streets, described in in **Section 4.7**, are to be constructed per a menu of cross section options in **Table 4.2**, based on whether they are to be designated 'A' or 'B' Streets (i.e. primarily to serve pedestrians or to provide vehicle access). Typical cross sections are provided in **Exhibit 4.20** and **Exhibit 4.21**.

TABLE 1.3 – STREET HIERARCHY AND STREET DESIGNATIONS MATRIX

Street Hierarchy	Street Designations	
	'A' Streets	'B' Streets
Mandatory Streets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mapped Required cross sections by street type Primarily serve street network Building frontages regulated by Streetscape Standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mandatory streets and portions of mandatory streets that are pedestrian-oriented No curb cuts Primary building frontage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mandatory streets and portions of mandatory streets that are auto-oriented Curb cuts, parking, and alley access Primary service/loading access
Non-mandatory Streets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not mapped Cross section options by street designation Primarily serve local development projects Building frontages regulated by Character Zone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-mandatory streets and portions of non-mandatory streets that are pedestrian-oriented No curb cuts Primary building frontage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-mandatory streets and portions of non-mandatory streets that are auto-oriented Curb cuts, parking, and alley access Primary service/loading access

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1.8. Using This Plan

1.8.1. Plan Organization

- (i) **Chapter I** summarizes the purpose and intent of the Plan.
- (ii) Only **Chapter II** includes regulations with the power of law, including zoning and all design and development regulations and standards.
- (iii) **Chapter III** provides policy and guidance for City staff and developers.
- (iv) The Appendix includes supplementary information, including pre-existing conditions prior to the Plan's adoption.

1.8.2. **Project Development Steps:** The following basic steps should be followed to determine the uses and development standards applicable on property within Volcano Heights, including where the building can sit on the lot, the limits on its three-dimensional form, the range of uses allowed, and the palette of materials that will cover it.

- (i) Review **Exhibit 3.1**, the development review flow chart, on page 34 to determine the level of review required based on whether significant infrastructure coordination is needed for the proposed project.
- (i) Review **Table 3.1 – Applicable Plan Sections by Development Type** starting on page 21 to evaluate the applicability of the uses and design standards/regulations based on the size and scope of the proposed project.
- (ii) Locate the subject property in **Exhibit 4.2 starting on page 56** and identify:
 - a. the character zone(s) in which the property is located; and,

b. the Street Type designation along all its Mandatory Street frontages, if any.

- (iii) Review **Section 4.0 Streets and Streetscape Standards** starting on page 53 for relevant **Mandatory Streets** and options for non-mandatory streets proposed to serve the project.
- (iv) Review **Table 5.1 – Land Use Table by Character Zone** starting on page 87 to determine allowed uses.
- (v) Examine **Section 6.0 Site Development and Building Design Standards Specific to Zones** starting on page 99 to determine the applicable development standards and any Special Frontage standards for each character zone.
- (vi) Refer to **Section 7.0 Site Development Standards** starting on page 131 for regulations at the site-level that apply generally to all zones.
- (vii) Refer to **Section 8.0 Building Design Standards** starting on page 141 for **regulations at the building-level** that apply generally to all zones.
- (viii) Refer to **Section 9.0 Sign Standards** starting on page 147 for regulations about signage that apply generally to all zones.
- (ix) Refer to **Section 10.0 Open Space, Landscaping, and Sight Lighting Design Standards** starting on page 153 for regulations about open space, landscaping, and site lighting design that apply generally to all zones.
- (x) Projects are also subject to the City's Development Process Manual (DPM) [under separate cover], ordinances, and regulations not in conflict with this Plan.