



Northern-Unser Specific Area Plan

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of *Northern-Unser Specific Area Plan* is to help guide and manage the physical development within the planning area. Physical development within the planning area will be guided by:

- Prescribing land uses to developed and undeveloped land
- Establishing a policy document for decision making
- Establishing a minimum acreage for the rezoning of land
- Establishing limited access points along arterial and collector streets
- Creating incentives to expand public infrastructure

This plan provides information about current conditions in the planning area, identifies goals and objectives, proposes land uses, identifies access management areas, and lists methods of implementation. Additionally, this plan identifies the development plan scenario for the planning area. Moreover, this plan further develops the land use element of the Comprehensive Plan by addressing compatibility of development within the planning area.

1.2 RELATIONSHIP TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The *Vision 2020 – Integrated Comprehensive Plan*, adopted June 2001, is a broad-based general policy plan designed to direct current and future growth and physical development within the City. The *Northern-Unser Specific Area Plan* is effectively part of the land use element of the Comprehensive Plan. As such, the *Northern-Unser Specific Area Plan* provides more area-specific goals and policies designed

to carry out the vision of the Comprehensive Plan.

1.3 NEED FOR A LAND USE PLAN

The *Northern-Unser Specific Area Plan* is a land use plan. Land use plans can be created by the City or by a developer in the case of a master-planned community. In either case, a land use plan is specific to a geographic area within the City.

Recent development activity in the planning area for rezoning of land has established a need to develop a land use plan that will address the needs of residents living in the planning area and potential business developments along arterial roads. Additionally, developing a land use plan that addresses the creation of public infrastructure in areas that lack adequate public infrastructure is necessary to ensure that future development can be supported.

1.4 PLANNING PROCESS

There are many aspects to the planning process. Some aspects of the planning process deal with long-range planning (the creation of planning policy documents) while other aspects deal with current planning (the development review and public hearing process). While these two processes are very different, they are integrally linked to each other in that the land use plan goals and policies are carried out through the zoning ordinance, which is the basis of current planning. Another aspect of the planning process, where there is a similarity, is public involvement. Both types of planning involve public involvement through neighborhood meetings, Planning & Zoning Board meetings, and Governing Body meetings.

In the development of this land use plan, the Development Services Department notified citizens within the planning area and held a neighborhood meeting where staff took comments and input from citizens regarding

the land use plan. Public hearings will also be held by both the Planning & Zoning Board and the Governing Body.

1.5 PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of this plan will occur through the approval of zone map amendments, initiated by either the City or landowners. An Access Management Plan for the planning area is established through the adoption of this plan as identified on the Access Management Map. Capital improvements will be implemented through the City's *Infrastructure and Capital Improvements Plan* (ICIP) or through the development review process as development occurs.

1.6 PLANNING AREA

The *Northern-Unser Specific Area Plan* encompasses an area of approximately 1,472 acres and is bounded by Idalia Road, Abrazo Road, 10th Street, 8th Street, Pine Road, 23rd Avenue, and the east edge of the Los Montoyas Arroyo (**Map 1**). This area encompasses parts of Units 11, 12, 13 and various subdivisions.

Northern Boulevard and Unser Boulevard, the two major roads within the planning area, intersect in the southeast region of the planning area. Northern Boulevard is the principal north-south boundary between Units 11 and 12, within the planning area. Unser Boulevard is the principal east-west boundary between Unit 13 and Units 11 and 12, within the planning area.

The majority of the planning area is comprised of large, undeveloped lots currently zoned E-1 Estate Residential. The largest existing development within the planning area is the North Hills subdivision which makes up the majority the northern area, north of Pine Road.

1.7 OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

A major challenge for the planning area and the City is addressing land that was prematurely platted in the 1960s. When land for Rio Rancho Estates was subdivided, off-site improvements were not required as part of the subdivision platting. The lack of infrastructure, such as streets, curbs, gutters, sidewalks, sewer and water lines, and proper drainage facilities creates planning and safety concerns. Arroyos with erosive soils can be hazardous during flash floods that develop during summer thunderstorms. Creative planning of prematurely platted land near these areas is necessary to mitigate the damage that can be caused by this phenomenon.

Another challenge created by the prematurely platted land is the potential for numerous curb cuts along arterial and collector roads, thereby impeding traffic flow and reducing the level of service on these roads.

2. EXISTING CONDITIONS

Existing conditions for Rio Rancho and the planning area described in this section include:

- Population and Housing
- Natural Environment
- Land Use
- Zoning
- Public Facilities
- Capital Improvements
- Transportation
- Utilities

2.1 POPULATION AND HOUSING

2.1.1 Population

Rio Rancho's total population has increased since 2000. Between 2000 and 2008 the City's overall population increased by almost 60%. The 2008 population is projected to double by 2030 (Mid-Region Council of Governments Data Analysis Subzones).

In just over 10 years, the population of the planning area has increased by almost 30%. In 1997, the planning area population was estimated to be 4,204 persons in more than 1,500 households. In 2008, the planning area population was estimated at nearly 6,000 persons in 2,215 households.

2.1.2 Housing

Currently, all of the housing in the planning area is single-family. More than 70% of the homes in the planning area are in the North Hills subdivision. North Hills consists of more than 1,500 homes on lots that are generally smaller than $\frac{1}{4}$ of an acre.

The City and the planning area have experienced an overall slow-down related to national economic conditions. As **Figure 1** shows, the City and the planning area have produced a comparable decline in construction starts since 2005. However, 2009 construction starts have only been reported through September. The majority of construction starts during this time period in the planning area were in the Sierra Norte 2 and Los Pinons subdivisions. Prior to 2005, most of the North Hills subdivision was already developed.

2.2 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

In general, planning area soils are sandy and receive 8-10 inches of rain a year which support mainly native grasses and shrubs. The Sheppard and Grieta soils are representative of the soil types in the planning area and are appropriate for urban development. **Table 1** shows the total acreage, percentage of each soil type and the slope conditions where these soils exist in the planning area (**Map 3**).

Figure 1. Construction Starts

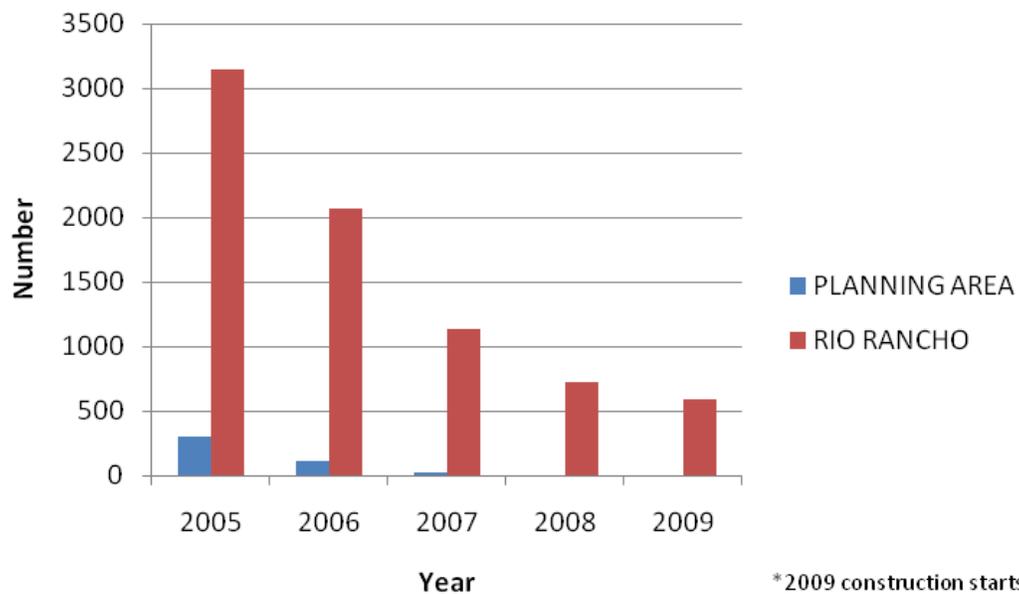


Table 1. Planning Area Soils

Type	Slope	Acreage	Percent
Grieta Fine Sandy Loam	1 - 4%	96.96	6.60%
Grieta-Sheppard Loamy Fine Sand	2 - 9%	51.67	3.52%
Sheppard Loamy Fine Sand	3 - 8%	629.57	42.87%
Sheppard Loamy Fine Sand	8 - 15%	690.33	47.01%
Total		1468.53	100.00%

2.2.1 Plant & Wildlife

The natural plant habitat of the planning area is marked by riparian conditions along arroyos with many indigenous types of brush and grasses. Common plants include chamisa, sand sagebrush, winterfat, mormon tea, broom snakewood, cholla cacti, prickly pear cacti, four-wing saltbrush, yucca, buckwheat, tansy mustard, tumbleweed, fiddleneck, western ragweed, verbena, fleabane, desert senna, kochia, piñon, and oneseed juniper.

Local wildlife includes mammals, reptiles, and birds such as coyotes, badgers, kit foxes, prairie dogs, jackrabbits, prairie rattlesnakes, round-tailed horned lizards, lesser earless lizards, and New Mexico whiptails.

2.2.2 Topography

The planning area is characterized by hilly terrain. Some hills, or lomas, are steep and stand out in the landscape. The hilly topography makes drainage a planning consideration. The major drainage feature in the planning area is the Los Montoyas Arroyo (**Map 4**). The land in the planning area slopes from west to east with a maximum elevation of 5,772 feet, dropping more than 370 feet to a low of 5,396 feet.

2.3 EXISTING LAND USE

As indicated in the *Population and Housing* section, the planning area population is estimated to be approximately 6,000 persons in 2215 households. All of the existing

residential development is single-family housing. The majority of this existing residential development is in the North Hills subdivision, north of Pine Road (**Table 2, Map 5**).

Rio Rancho has over 1.7 million square feet of retail space and 410,056 square feet of office space (Grubb & Ellis, 2009). Currently, the planning area has two commercial developments. The *North Hills Mini Mart* is an established business located at 1504 Cherry Road next to fire station #2. A *Walgreen's Pharmacy* is nearing completion at the northeast corner of Northern Boulevard and Unser Boulevard. Additionally, the planning area contains 82 active home occupation business licenses.

2.4 EXISTING ZONING

The majority of the properties within the planning area are zoned residential, 98% (1137 acres). 2% (59 acres) is zoned for non-residential uses.

2.5 PUBLIC FACILITIES

2.5.1 Parks

There are three City-maintained parks within the North Hills subdivision that were previously maintained by the North Hiss Homeowners Association. The Department of Parks, Recreation & Community Services is managing a redevelopment of the park located off of 17th Avenue. The first phase of this project is anticipated to be completed by April 2010. There is also one park located within

Table 2. Planning Area Existing Land Use

Land Use Category	Lots	%	Acreage	%
Vacant	646	22.4%	668.53	45.4%
Arroyos & Drainage	N/A	0.0%	110.89	8.9%
Open Space & Parks	17	0.6%	39.81	1.4%
Low-Density Residential	103	3.6%	101.79	6.9%
Medium-Residential	2,105	73.1%	293.48	19.9%
High-Density Residential	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Office & Commercial	2	0.1%	2.57	0.2%
Civic & Institutional	2	0.1%	13.16	0.9%
Industrial	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Utilities	1	0.2%	0.99	0.1%
Right-Of-Way	N/A	0.0%	240.88	16.4%
Total	2,875	100.0%	1,472.82	100.0%

the Sierra Norte II subdivision, also maintained by the City.

2.5.2 Public Schools

Rio Rancho Public Schools has over 16,000 students in 17 school facilities (8 are elementary schools). There are no public schools within the planning area. However, Colinas Del Norte Elementary School is located on the northwestern boundary of the planning area.

2.5.3 Churches

There is one church located within the planning area.

Living Word Church

1901 17th Avenue NE

NWC of 17th Avenue and Unser Boulevard

2.5.4 Special Assessment Districts

Special Assessment Districts (SADs) are areas in which property owners reimburse the City for the cost of public improvements in that district. Improvements within a SAD may include, storm drainage, sanitary sewer, streets, water and private utility

improvements. SADs 6 and 7A are included in the planning area (**Map 6**).

SAD 6 improvements have been completed to five different roads, three of which are in the planning area. The following streets received pavement as part of SAD 6: Acebo Road, Lorry Lane, Acetin Place, Flagstone Street, and Essex Road. While Idalia Road was not officially adopted as a part of SAD 6, it should be noted that the Department of Public Works also paved Idalia Road between Chessman Drive and Colorado Mountain Road at the time SAD 6 was constructed.

Improvements in SAD 7A included curb, gutter and paving roads, storm drains, sanitary sewer, water and private utilities. The portion of SAD 7A within the planning area covered Gazelle Road.

2.6 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

All municipalities prepare an *Infrastructure and Capital Improvements Plan* (ICIP) that is submitted to the State annually. The ICIP is a plan that establishes planning priorities for all anticipated capital projects for a period of six years and is updated annually. Where

possible, the ICIP also identifies funding sources for projects, such as state appropriations, bonds, loans or grants. However, the ICIP is a plan that is only intended to identify projects and potential funding sources, but projects are not guaranteed to be executed.

Projects highlighted in this Plan are understood to be anticipatory and are not guaranteed, whether or not funding has been identified.

The 2010-2015 ICIP lists \$594.6 million in capital projects for parks, public safety, drainage, transportation, utilities, equipment, and vehicles across the City. Transportation projects total \$186.1 million city-wide over the six-year period. Projects specifically associated with the planning area have been identified and are highlighted in the appropriate section.

2.7 TRANSPORTATION

The planning area's transportation system includes existing and proposed streets, transit, and trails as described in this section.

2.7.1 Street System

The street system to serve the planning area is summarized by functional classification as described in the sections below.

Local Streets

A local street is intended primarily for access to abutting properties and carries low-volume traffic. Accessibility to homes and business is more important than mobility. Speed limits are set low, below what the roadway geometry allows, usually 25 MPH, with traffic volumes typically less than 1,000 vehicles per day (VPD). Minimum right-of-way is 50 feet.

There are 121 local streets within the planning area, 88 of which are paved.

Collector Streets

A collector street carries traffic from local streets to arterial streets. Accessibility and mobility are balanced relative to land use with speed limits generally between 25 and 35 MPH. Residential collectors with driveways are generally 25 MPH, while those with more limited access have a higher posted speed limit. Volumes can vary from 1,000 to 15,000 VPD. Collector streets are required to provide a minimum right-of-way width of 68 feet.

There are four collector streets in the planning area—all of which are paved except for a portion of 10th Street.

Arterial Streets

An arterial street is designed and used primarily for serving large volumes of traffic and to provide cross-city travel. Mobility takes precedence over accessibility. Speed limits are generally 35 to 45 MPH with volumes of approximately 7,000 VPD per lane. Four-lane arterials with a median are common with a capacity of 28,000 VPD. Access is controlled via signalized intersections and raised medians. Principal arterials are required to provide a minimum right-of-way width of 156 feet and minor arterials, 106 feet.

There are four arterial streets within the planning area, Northern Boulevard, Unser Boulevard, Cherry Road, and Idalia Road—all of which are paved except for a portion of Idalia Road.

2.7.2 Traffic

Traffic counts on collector and arterial streets in the planning area are shown in **Table 3**.

2.7.3 Street Naming

As part of the City's on-going addressing project, numeric street names are to be replaced with non-numeric street names. For example, 15th Avenue/Kings Road/Pine Road has been renamed to Pine Road.

Table 3. Traffic Volume on Collectors & Arterials

Street Name	Classification	Annual Average
Northern Boulevard	Principal Arterial	16,000
Unser Boulevard	Principal Arterial	20,100
Cherry Road	Minor Arterial	3,700-8,500
Idalia Road	Minor Arterial	N/A
10 th Street	Collector	3,300
17 th Avenue	Collector	2,200
19 th Avenue	Collector	N/A
Abrazo Road	Collector	1,600-3,100

Source: Mid Region Council of Governments 2008

2.7.4 Transit

Rio Transit operates a para-transit system serving seniors and eligible disabled adults 18 and older and seniors 55 and older who are residents of the City of Rio Rancho. Funding for this program is provided through the Federal Transit Administration under Section 5307 of Title 49 of the United States Code and the City of Rio Rancho general fund. Trips are available for any purpose in Rio Rancho. However, trips to Albuquerque, Placitas, Bernalillo, and Corrales are limited to medical, educational, and work purposes.

Starting in January 2010, Rio Transit, which is city-operated, will be operated by the Mid-Region Council of Governments.

The Rio Metro Transit District which is operated by the Mid-Region Council of Governments serves Sandoval, Bernalillo, and Valencia Counties. Rio Metro has developed a transit plan to be funded by a 1/8-cent gross receipts tax. It would provide for three neighborhood circulator routes, four commuter express routes, and four park and ride facilities in Rio Rancho. Funding has been secured by an approved increase in the gross receipts tax and funding commenced in October 2009.

2.7.5 Trails and Bike Paths

Trails and bike paths listed in the 2030 Metropolitan Transportation Plan include the following City of Rio Rancho projects:

- Montoyas Arroyo Trail, \$3.63 million for construction of a bicycle trail located along Los Montoyas Arroyo
- Unser Boulevard Bike Lanes, \$254,363 from Abrazo to King

2.8 UTILITIES

2.8.1 Wet Utilities

Infrastructure that is designed to manage or move fluids, such as potable water, sewage, and runoff, are considered to be wet utilities. Wet utilities include water lines, sewage lines, drainage channels, detention ponds and arroyos, for example.

There are no waterlines programmed in the 2010-2015 ICIP for the planning area.

Maps 7 and 8 depict the existing sewer and water lines in the planning area.

2.8.2 Dry Utilities

Infrastructure such as electrical, gas, and data lines are considered to be dry utilities.

Electricity

There are two types of electrical lines in the electrical grid. The first type is a transmission line which carries high-voltage electricity at either at 115 or 345 kilovolts from power plants to substations in cities and towns. The second type is a distribution line which is smaller, usually underground, carrying electricity from substations into homes and businesses. Substations play a critical role in the delivery of electricity by decreasing the voltage for delivery to homes and businesses, typically at either 120 or 240 volts.

Map 9 depicts the electrical power lines and the substations in the planning area.

Natural Gas

Natural gas pipelines that distribute natural gas to residences and businesses are typically run under streets, sidewalks, and sometimes across private property within a utility easement. These smaller distribution lines can be only a few inches below ground due to erosion, landscaping and other activities. In contrast, larger and higher-pressure transmission pipelines that transport gas from suppliers to communities are typically buried four to eight feet below ground and can be affected by activities such as farming, construction and new housing development (New Mexico Gas Company 2009).

Natural gas service in the planning area is provided by New Mexico Gas Company. **Map 10** depicts the natural gas lines in the planning area.

2.8.3 Communications

Hard-line Telephone Service

Qwest Communications is the telephone service provider in Rio Rancho. Qwest also provides DSL (Digital Subscriber Line) Internet service within Rio Rancho. Qwest does not currently have their service lines in GIS—no map was created of their service lines in the planning area.

Cable Television

Cable ONE is the cable television service provider in Rio Rancho (**Map 11**).

Internet Service

Cable ONE is also the cable Internet service provider in Rio Rancho. They also offer Internet Telephone service. **Map 11** depicts Cable ONE's service lines in the planning area.

2.8.4 Drainage

The Southern Sandoval County Arroyo Flood Control Authority (SSCAFCA) has jurisdiction over drainage channels in the Sandoval County portion of Rio Rancho. The City acts as SSCAFCA's designee for minor facilities, including conveyances less than 500 cubic feet per second (CFS). Regional improvements are typically constructed by SSCAFCA and local improvements are typically constructed by the City.

3. PROPOSED LAND USE

3.1 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

In accordance with the *Vision 2020 – Integrated Comprehensive Plan*, the land use plan for the planning area promotes high-density, mixed-use activity centers and discourages strip commercial development. Actions within the Comprehensive Plan that support this land use plan include:

- Encouraging infill development of all undeveloped areas within the municipal boundary
- Incorporating useable public spaces and provide for community gathering spaces in activity centers
- Integrating mixed uses into a single structure with retail on lower level and office and residential on upper levels

- Balancing compact development with parks, open space, and quality of life considerations
- Evaluating future development based on the ability to integrate dissimilar uses by utilizing buffering, scale, and design elements
- Expanding the City's gross receipts tax base by recruiting additional local retail and office uses
- Making Rio Rancho a place where one can live, work, shop, and play without leaving the city

3.2 SPECIAL USE ZONING

Future land use alternatives planned for the *Northern-Unser Specific Area Plan* are shown in **Map 2, Table 4**. While land designated for non-residential land uses in this section may fall into a specific range of allowable zoning districts, it may be necessary for parcels to be rezoned to a *SU Special Use* zoning district to ensure access, design and land use compatibility issues are addressed.

3.3 LAND USE CATEGORIES

The *Northern-Unser Specific Area Plan* contains proposed land use categories that are consistent with and promote the goals and policies of the *Vision 2020 - Integrated Comprehensive Plan*. Each of the categories indicate the range of suitable uses for that area. The overall land use orientation reflects nodal-oriented development that ensures there is appropriate compatibility between uses. Also, the land use plan ensures that proposed future uses will be well integrated with existing development. The land use categories identified in this plan are listed in **Table 4**.

3.3.1 Low-Density Residential

The Low-Density Residential land use category is intended to provide opportunities for large-lot, single-family development.

Additional uses that may be integrated into low-density residential development include community uses, such as schools, parks, and churches.

Density: Maximum 4 DU/AC

Compatible Zoning Districts:

- A-R Agricultural Residential
- E-1 Estate Residential
- R-1 Single-Family Residential

Further subdivision of land or rezoning shall generally require the consolidation of lots to achieve a minimum of five acres.

3.3.2 Medium-Density Residential

The Medium-Density Residential land use category is intended to provide opportunities for higher-density, single-family development. Additional uses that may be integrated into medium-density residential development include community uses, such as schools, parks, and churches.

Density: 4.01 – 10.99 DU/AC

Compatible Zoning Districts:

- R-1 Single-Family Residential
- R-2 Single-Family Residential
- R-3 Multi-Family Residential*
- R-4 Single-Family Residential

*Only **single-family** and **townhome** uses within R-3 zoning district.

Further subdivision of land or rezoning shall generally require the consolidation of lots to achieve a minimum of five acres.

3.3.3 High-Density Residential

The High-Density Residential land use category is intended to provide opportunities

for small-lot, single-family residential and multi-family residential development. Additional uses that may be integrated into high-density residential development include community uses, such as schools, parks, and churches.

Density: Minimum 11 DU/AC

Compatible Zoning Districts:

- R-3 Multi-Family Residential*
- R-5 Single-Family Residential
- R-6 Multi-Family Residential

*Only **multi-family** and **townhome** uses within R-3 zoning district.

Further subdivision of land or rezoning shall generally require the consolidation of lots to achieve a minimum of five acres.

3.3.4 Office

The Office land use category is intended to provide opportunities for a variety of office uses. Appropriate uses may include financial, services or public administration. Office development is intended to provide a buffer between residential uses and more intense commercial uses.

Compatible Zoning Districts:

- O-1 Office
- O-2 Office

Further subdivision of land or rezoning shall generally require the consolidation of lots to achieve a minimum of two and one-half acres.

3.3.5 Mixed-Use

The Mixed-Use land use category is intended to provide a dense, integrated blend of land uses allowing people to live and work in the same place. Mixed-use development seeks to decrease the use of automobiles and encourage alternative modes of transportation, including walking.

Compatible Zoning Districts:

- MU-A Mixed Use Activity Center

Further subdivision of land or rezoning shall generally require the consolidation of lots to achieve a minimum of five acres.

3.3.6 Neighborhood Commercial

The Neighborhood Commercial land use category is intended to provide neighborhood-scale retail centers that serve the immediate residential areas. Uses for a Neighborhood Commercial may include small-scale

Table 4. Proposed Land Use Categories

Land Use Category	Density and Rezoning Specifications	Zoning Code
Low-Density Residential	0 - 4 DU/AC	A-R, E-1, R-1
Medium-Density Residential	4.01 - 10.99 DU/AC	R-1, R-2, R-3 (SF), R-4
High-Density Residential	11 - 32 DU/AC	R-3 (MF), R-5, R-6
Office	Generally Min. 2.5 Acres	O-1, O-2
Mixed-Use	Generally Min. 5 Acres	MU-A
Neighborhood Commercial	Generally Min. 2.5 Acres	O-1, O-2, C-1, CMU
Community Commercial	Generally Min. 5 Acres	O-1, O-2, C-1, CMU
Industrial	Generally Min. 2.5 Acres	C-2, M-1
Public and Community Facilities	-	-

restaurants, retail stores, or offices. The following uses due to their nature and intensity are deemed to be inappropriate within the Neighborhood Commercial land use category: Adult Uses and Conditional Uses within the C-1 zoning district.

Compatible Zoning Districts:

- O-1 Office
- O-2 Office
- C-1 Commercial
- CMU Commercial/Mixed Use

Further subdivision of land or rezoning shall generally require the consolidation of lots to achieve a minimum of two and one-half acres.

3.3.7 Community Commercial

The Community Commercial land use category is intended to provide community-scale retail nodes that serve surrounding residential areas. Uses for a Community Commercial may include large-lot, anchor businesses, commercial mixed-use buildings, restaurants, retail stores, or offices.

Compatible Zoning Districts:

- O-1 Office
- O-2 Office
- C-1 Commercial
- CMU Commercial/Mixed Use

Further subdivision of land or rezoning shall generally require the consolidation of lots to achieve a minimum of five acres.

3.3.8 Civic

The Civic land use category is intended to identify land that is either developed or owned by a church, the Rio Rancho School District, a private school, a public utility company, or the City of Rio Rancho for the purpose of providing community and public

facilities. Any zoning district is appropriate for this classification.

4. TRANSPORTATION & ACCESS MANAGEMENT

4.1 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLANS

A \$15 million Northern Boulevard improvement project is proposed to be built from 35th Court (out of the planning area) west to Acorn Loop. The planned improvements consist of roadway, drainage, and utility modifications needed to increase functionality and safety. The proposed improvements to Northern Boulevard include widening the existing two-lane undivided roadway to a divided four-lane roadway with an elevated median, bicycle lanes, curbs, gutters and storm water drainage inlets. Installation of water and sanitary sewer lines will also take place to provide residents with the ability to tie into the City's water and waste systems.

The Northern Boulevard widening project will be split into two phases. Phase 1 will be entirely outside of the planning area, 35th Court to Broadmoor Drive. Phase 2 of the project will be from Broadmoor Drive west to Acorn Loop.

A planned improvement listed in the 2010-2015 ICIP is an intersection improvement at the corner of Colorado Mountain Road and Idalia Road. The proposed improvement has a project cost of \$317,200 and is unfunded.

A third improvement project listed in the 2010-2015 ICIP is an extension of 17th Avenue from Unser Boulevard to Cherry Road with a project cost of \$1.45 million.

Transportation projects are also listed in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), which is prepared by the Mid-Region Council

of Governments (MRCOG). The 2030 MTP identifies regionally significant projects that are anticipated to be built within a 20 year period. Projects listed within the MTP are eligible for federal funding. These projects would be programmed in the five-year State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP). Roadway construction projects within the planning area that appear in the MTP are widening Northern Boulevard and widening Unser Boulevard (already completed).

4.2 ACCESS MANAGEMENT

4.2.1 Justification

Obsolete platting has produced narrow, 50-foot wide lots along Northern Boulevard and Unser Boulevard. These lots are difficult to develop individually and create the possibility of curb cuts every 50 feet for commercial access. Allowing each 50-foot wide lot to have individual access off of arterial and collector streets creates potential ineffective traffic conditions.

Managing access into and out of commercial and multi-family residential developments along collector and arterial streets is necessary for the City of Rio Rancho to promote the health, safety, and welfare of the community and ensure proper traffic flow. The City follows the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) access spacing standards. The standards are based on roadway classification and its posted speed.

4.2.2 Requirements

Non-residential (Office, Neighbor Commercial, Community Commercial, Mixed-Use and Civic) and multifamily residential (High-Density Residential) land uses will generally be limited to defined access points along arterial and collector roads determined by the Department of Public Works via an Access Management Plan in **Map 12**.

A reciprocal, cross-access, ingress and egress easement shall be required for all lots along a block. The easement shall be coordinated with the Department of Public Works to ensure NMDOT safety standards are met.

The easement will be required, unless adequate lot consolidation takes place for the establishment of a commercial or multifamily residential subdivision, to provide limited access points.

The City's access policy as part of this Plan will require that before an applicant may receive a building permit, they shall meet the following access requirements:

- Re-plat multiple narrow lots under common ownership into a single lot where possible and provide acceptable access points where possible
- Provide a recorded document showing a reciprocal, cross-access, ingress and egress agreement across the property
- Provide shared access driveways

4.2.3 Chessman Drive Access

Due to the existing large-lot, single-family character of the neighborhood on the south side of Chessman Drive, limiting commercial access along this road and into this neighborhood is necessary to preserve the residential character of this area. Therefore, commercial access to the properties along the north side of Chessman Drive and into this neighborhood shall be limited and addressed on a case-by-case basis to ensure that the vehicular traffic in this area is consistent with a residential neighborhood.

5. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The purpose of this section is to identify the goals of the plan, the policies staff will use as a basis for staff recommendations, and actions the Planning and Zoning Board and the Governing Body need to take in order to implement the this plan.

5.1 LAND USE

The objective of the land use goals, policies, and actions section of this plan is to achieve a balance between residential and commercial land uses and to promote development that is successful and increases the economic stability of the City of Rio Rancho.

Goal L1: Establish large commercial nodes to reduce the dominance of strip commercial.

Goal L2: Encourage consolidation of lots to promote a variety of housing choices including low- and medium-density single-family residential development to high-density multi-family residential development.

Goal L3: Encourage mixed uses – retail, office, and residential centered on pedestrian-oriented developments along principal arterial roads.

Policy L1: Restrict commercial development to arterial and collector roads.

Policy L2: Encourage residential lot consolidation.

Action L1: Provide density bonuses for lot consolidation to the base residential density with a consolidation generally in excess of 5 acres to the maximum density upon consolidating 10 acres or greater.

Action L2: Prohibit residential zone changes to a higher density zoning district for a parcel or group of parcels generally less than 5 acres.

5.2 TRANSPORTATION & ACCESS MANAGEMENT

The objective of the access management section of this plan is to reduce congestion on collector and arterial streets where commercial and multi-family residential developments are concentrated.

Goal TAM1: Reduce traffic congestion associated with multiple access points.

Policy TAM1: Discourage multi-point access for commercial developments.

Policy TMA2: Assure safe and convenient multi-modal roadways to well-connected residences, businesses, offices, schools, and other facilities.

Policy TMA3: Where common ownership of lots exists for contiguous parcels along a street frontage, the property owner of these parcels shall consolidate the lots prior to the approval of a Site Plan Review. Where possible, the minimum lot width shall be 300 feet.

Action TAM1: Preserve future rights-of-way by amending the zoning ordinance to require greater setbacks adjacent to public rights-of-way.

Action TAM3: Require applicants to demonstrate compliance with the Access Management Plan prior to acceptance of a site plan review application.

5.3 URBAN DESIGN

The objective of the urban design section of this plan is to create a vibrant community where people are encouraged, because of site design, to interact with other people.

Policy UD1: Encourage developers to design commercial and residential sites that foster human interaction.

Policy UD2: Provide development incentives for developments that incorporate quality design principles that foster human interaction.

Policy UD3: Encourage connectivity between residential developments and commercial developments.

Action UD1: Amend the subdivision ordinance to prohibit a block length greater

than 600 feet without a horizontal offset of 5 feet.

Action UD2: Amend the subdivision ordinance to require new cul-de-sac or hammer-head streets to provide pedestrian connectivity easements where possible.

5.4 INFRASTRUCTURE

The objective of the infrastructure section of this plan is to promote the development of infrastructure, to promote the health, safety, and welfare of the community by reducing flood risk and by providing improvements such as streets, sewer and water lines that are consistent with urban infrastructure development standards.

Policy I1: *Ensure all development within the planning area has connectivity to: paved streets, community water, sewer, power, and natural gas.*

Policy I2: *Ensure adequate drainage facilities are in place prior to completion of new development projects.*

Action I1: Adopt an overlay zone to restrict development in the 100-year floodplain as indicated on the most recent FIRM maps.

5.5 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The objective of the community facilities section of this plan is to ensure that there is adequate parkland, trails, open space and other recreational amenities accessible to all people in the City of Rio Rancho.

Policy CF1: *Work with Parks, Recreation, and Community Services to identify adequate open space requirements for residential developments.*

Policy CF2: *The city shall require residential developments within the planning area to comply with the Subdivision Ordinance requirements for dedicated park, open space and trails. The city shall expect land to be dedicated adjacent to or in close proximity to one of the following public facilities: public schools, existing/planned trails and open space, or wherever dedication of land would make a logical connection linking these facilities within a fifteen minute walk.*

Action CF1: Amend the subdivision ordinance to require all residential subdivisions to provide public open space with recreational amenities that are maintained via a maintenance association.

APPENDICES

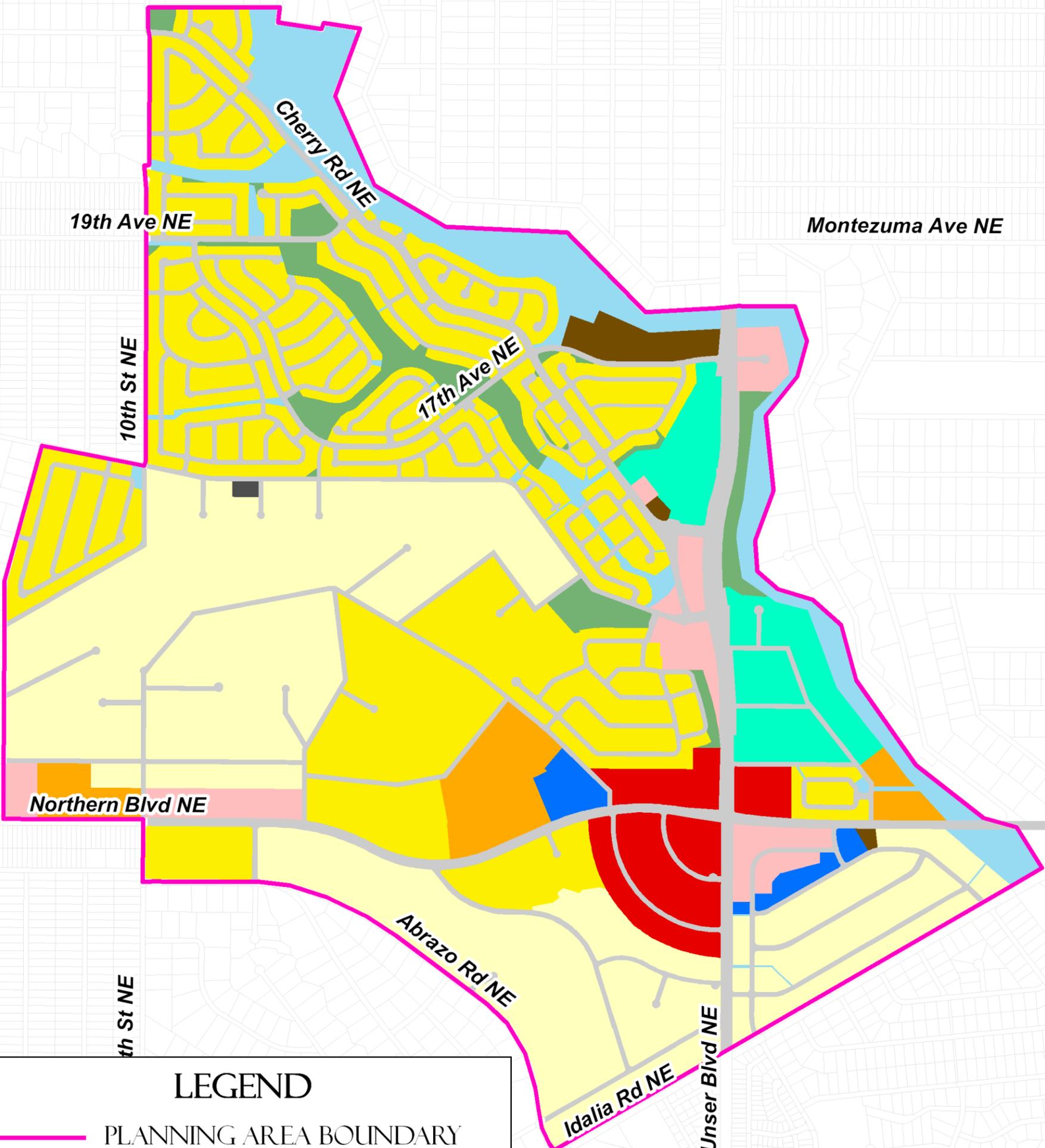
REFERENCES

Rio Rancho Parks and Recreation Master Plan, City of Rio Rancho, 2004
Vision 2020 – Integrated Comprehensive Plan, City of Rio Rancho, 2001
North Central Area Plan (Draft), City of Rio Rancho, 2006
2030 Transportation Plan, Mid-Region Council of Governments, 2007
US Census Bureau, Economic Census, 2002
Mayor’s Transition Team Report, 2008
Grubb & Ellis Market Reports, 2008
Rio Rancho Community Overview, Rio Rancho
Economic Development Corp., 2008

Prepared By: Department of Development Services

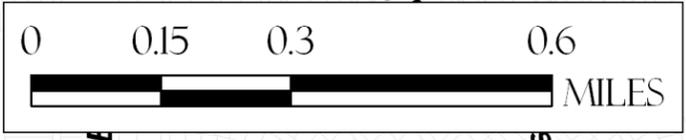
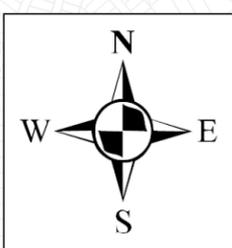
Reviewed By: City Manager’s Office
Development Services Department
Department of Public Works
Department of Parks Recreation and Community Services
Fire and Rescue
Police Department

MAP 2. PROPOSED LAND USE

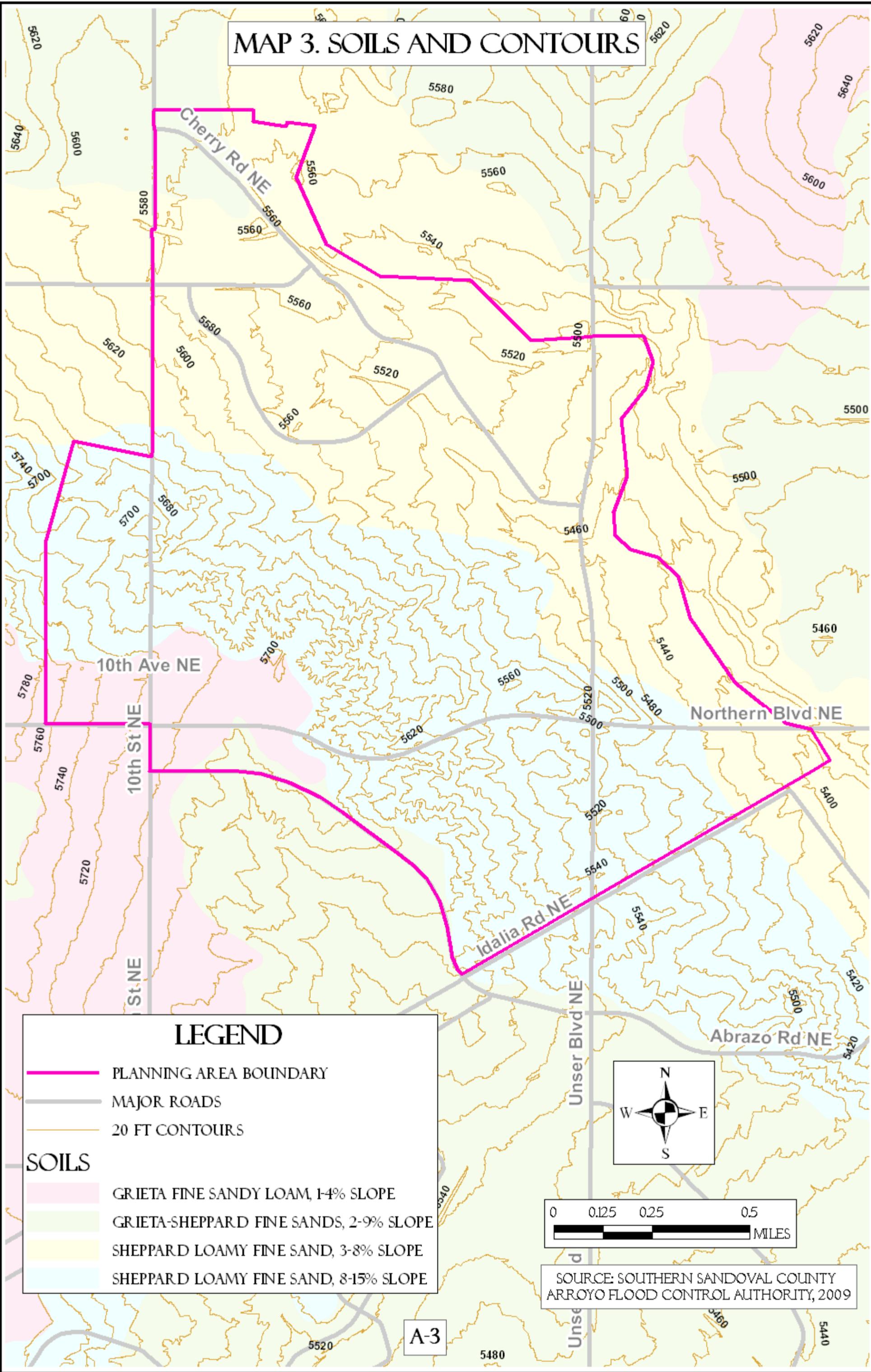


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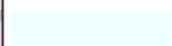
- PLANNING AREA BOUNDARY
- DRAINAGE
- OPEN SPACE
- LOW-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- MEDIUM-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- HIGH-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- OFFICE
- NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL
- COMMUNITY COMMERCIAL
- MIXED-USE
- CIVIC
- UTILITY
- RIGHT OF WAY

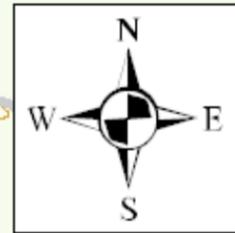


MAP 3. SOILS AND CONTOURS



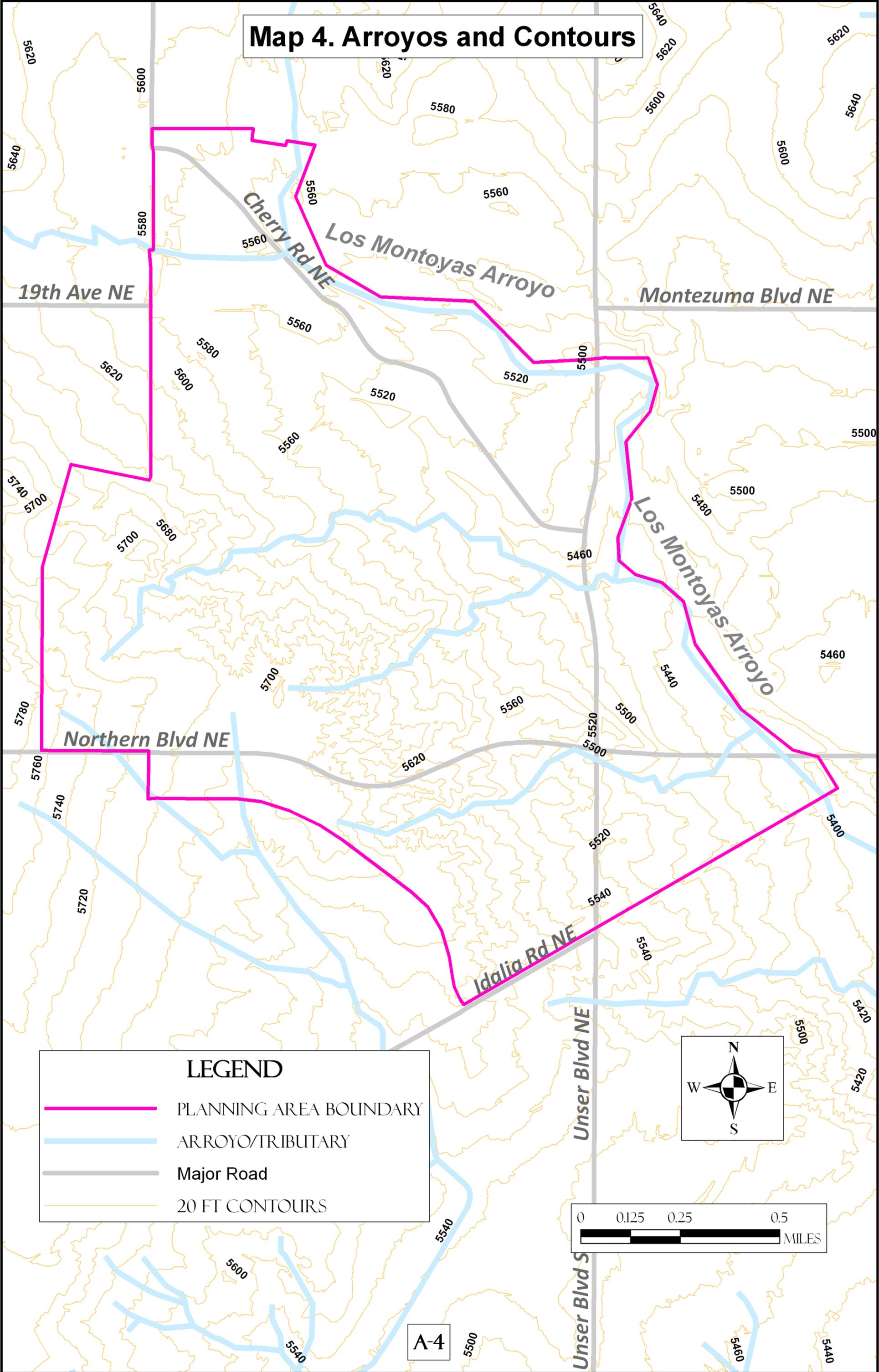
LEGEND

-  PLANNING AREA BOUNDARY
 -  MAJOR ROADS
 -  20 FT CONTOURS
- SOILS**
-  GRIETA FINE SANDY LOAM, 1-4% SLOPE
 -  GRIETA-SHEPPARD FINE SANDS, 2-9% SLOPE
 -  SHEPPARD LOAMY FINE SAND, 3-8% SLOPE
 -  SHEPPARD LOAMY FINE SAND, 8-15% SLOPE

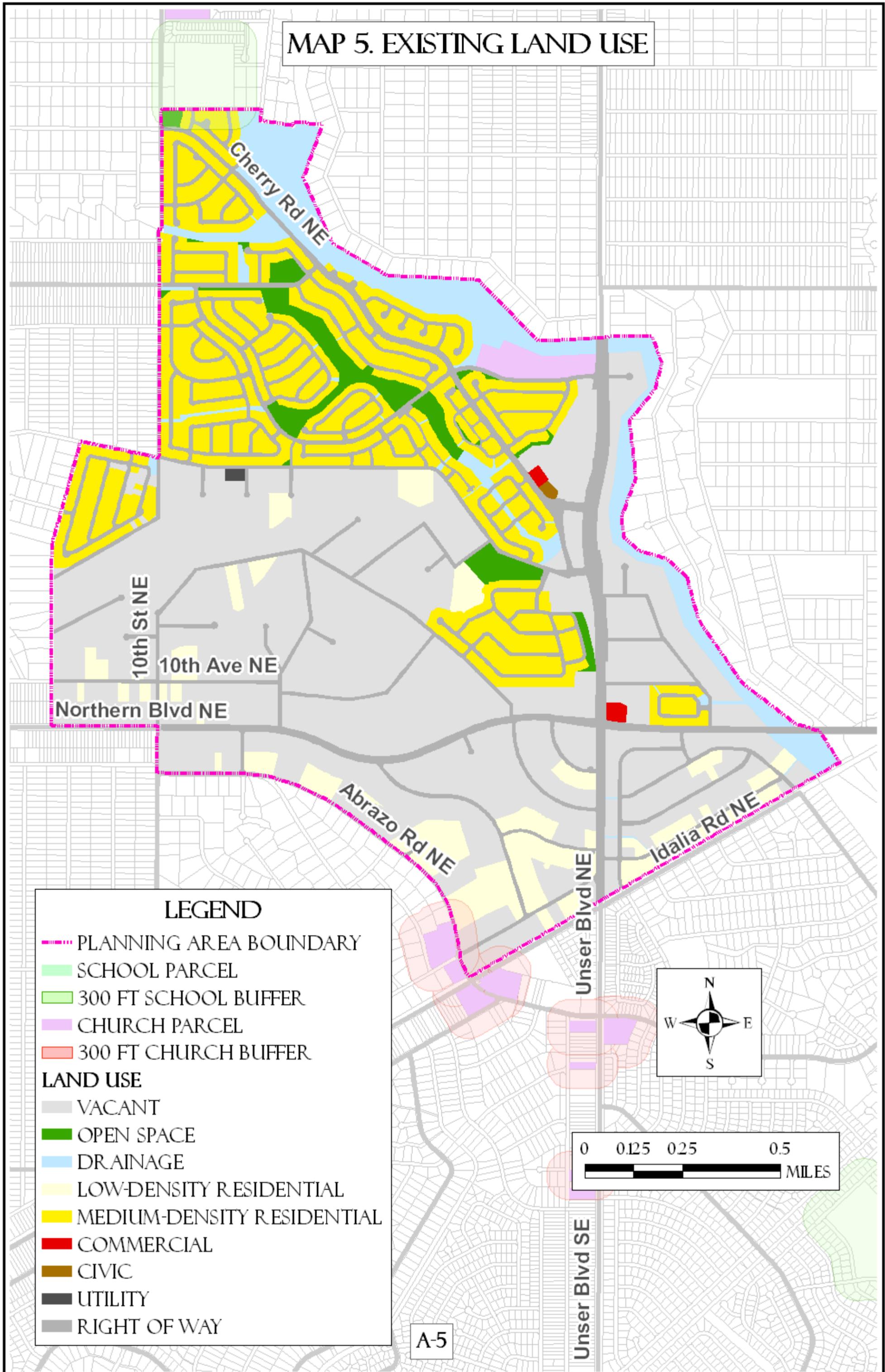


SOURCE: SOUTHERN SANDOVAL COUNTY ARROYO FLOOD CONTROL AUTHORITY, 2009

Map 4. Arroyos and Contours



MAP 5. EXISTING LAND USE

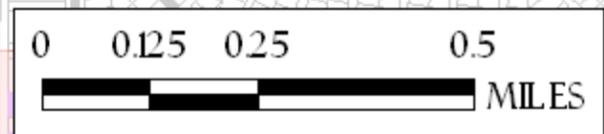
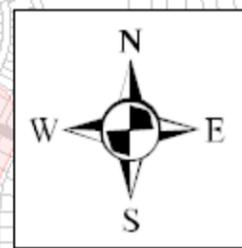


LEGEND

- PLANNING AREA BOUNDARY
- SCHOOL PARCEL
- 300 FT SCHOOL BUFFER
- CHURCH PARCEL
- 300 FT CHURCH BUFFER

LAND USE

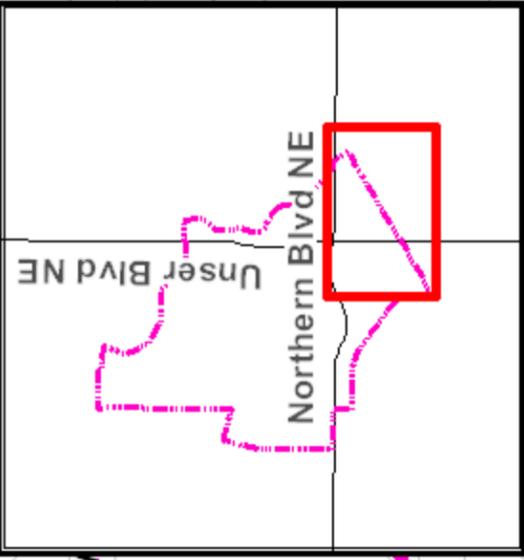
- VACANT
- OPEN SPACE
- DRAINAGE
- LOW-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- MEDIUM-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- COMMERCIAL
- CIVIC
- UTILITY
- RIGHT OF WAY



A-5

Unser Blvd SE

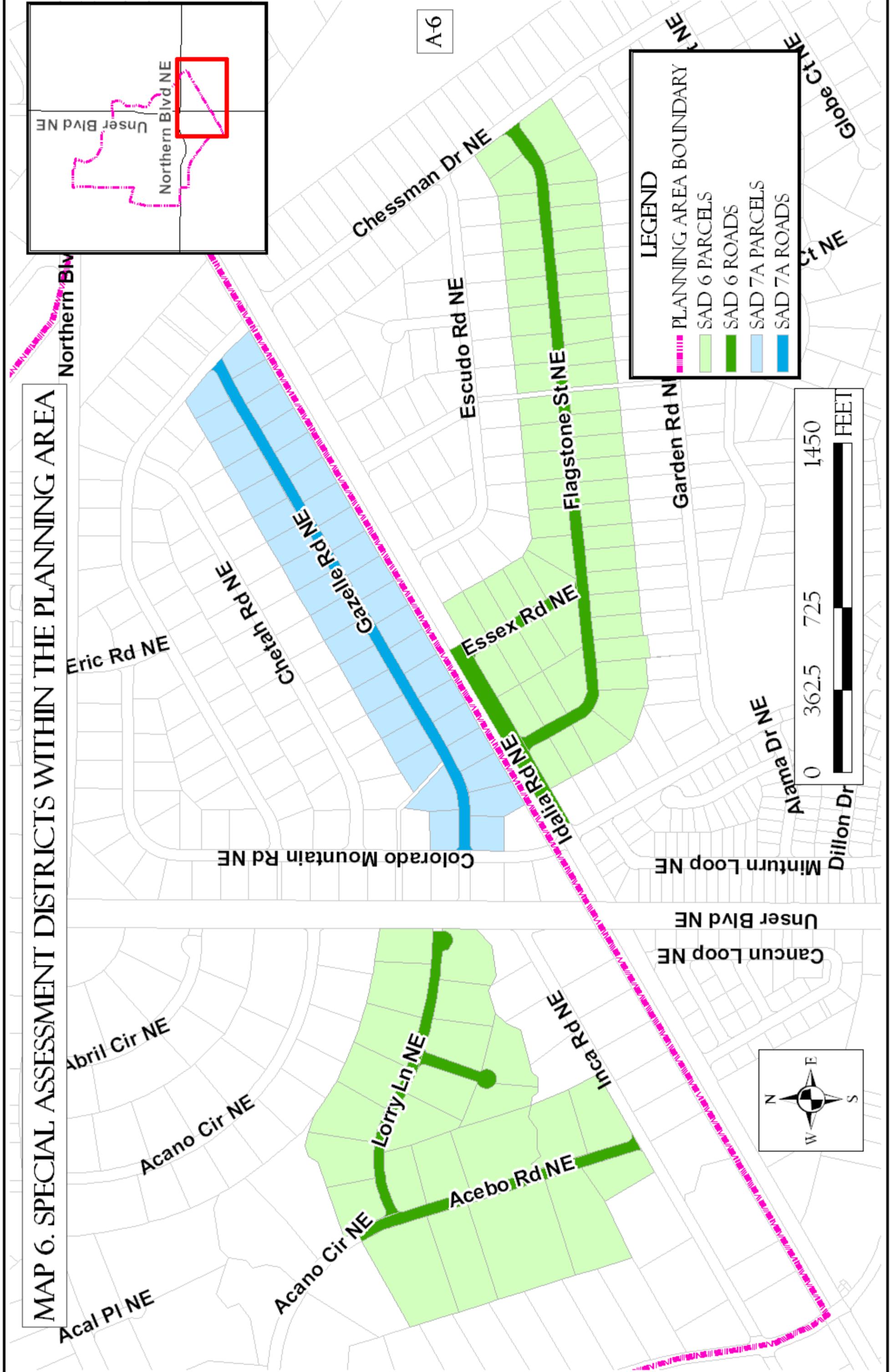
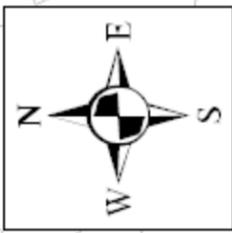
MAP 6. SPECIAL ASSESSMENT DISTRICTS WITHIN THE PLANNING AREA



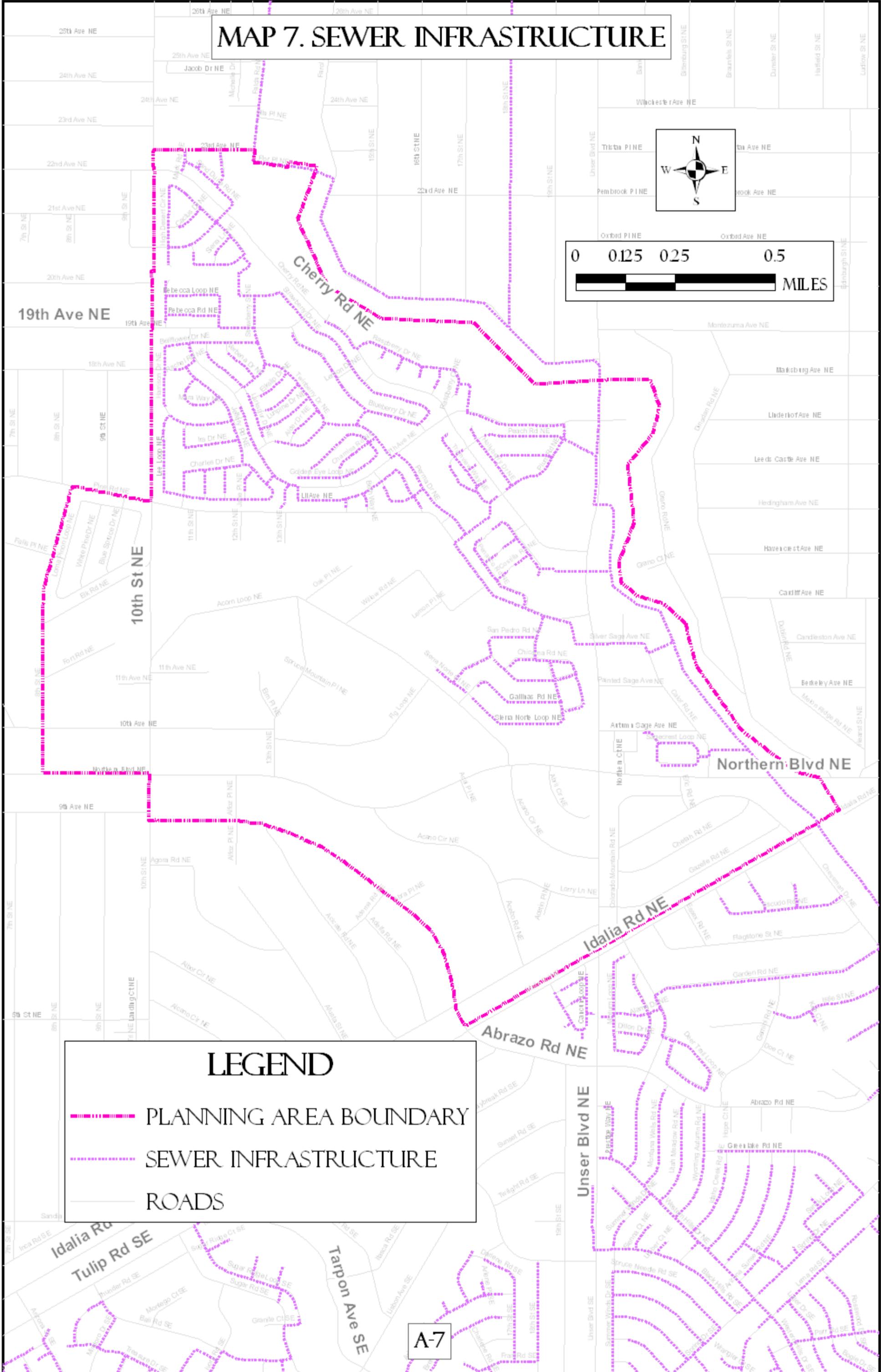
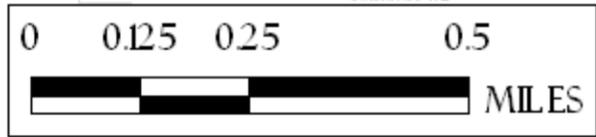
A-6

LEGEND

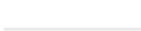
- PLANNING AREA BOUNDARY
- SAD 6 PARCELS
- SAD 6 ROADS
- SAD 7A PARCELS
- SAD 7A ROADS



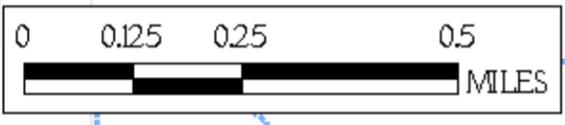
MAP 7. SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE



LEGEND

-  PLANNING AREA BOUNDARY
-  SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE
-  ROADS

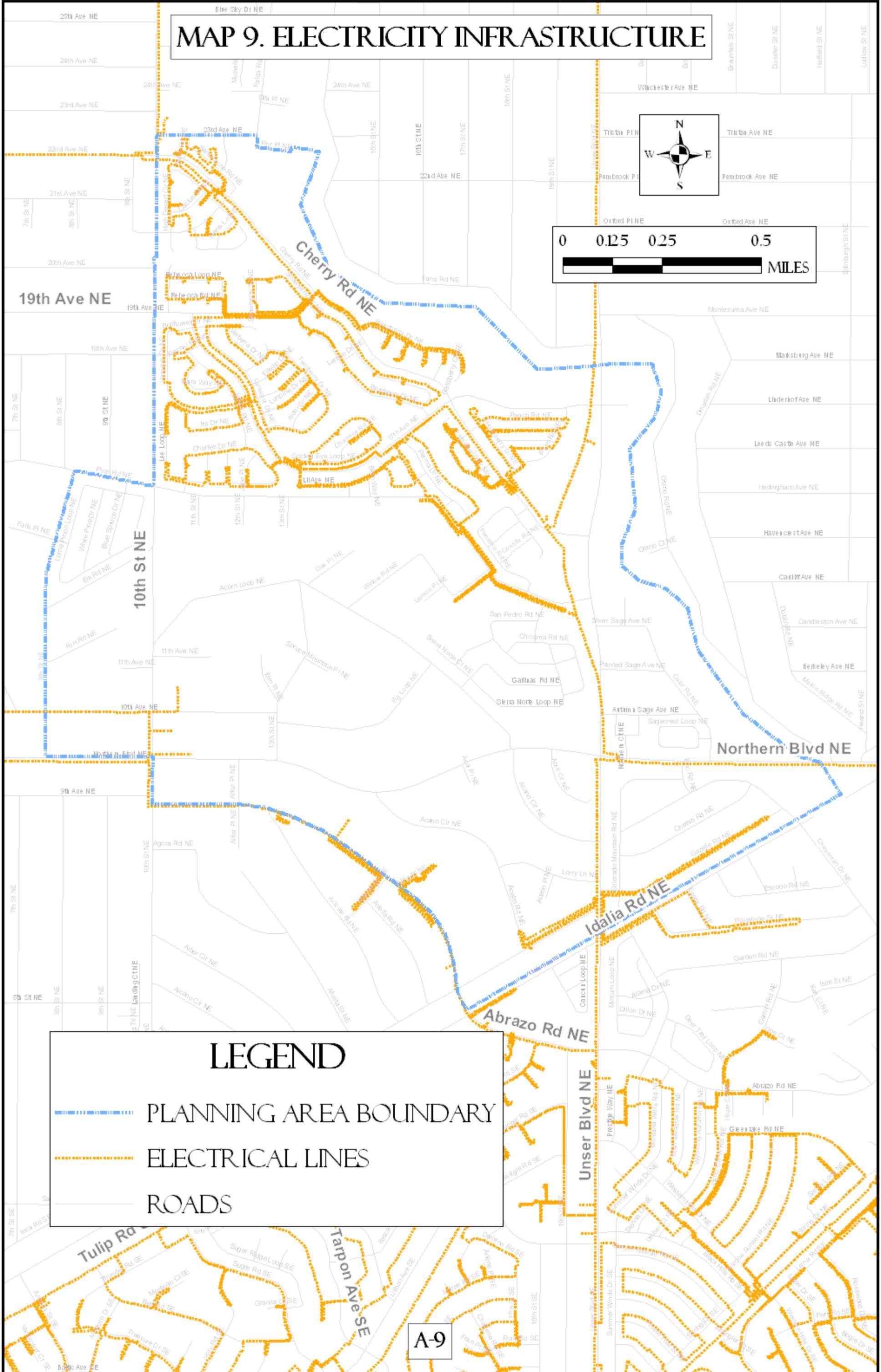
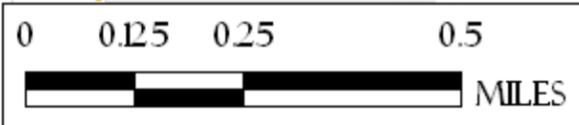
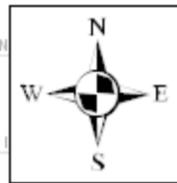
MAP 8. WATER INFRASTRUCTURE



LEGEND

-  PLANNING AREA BOUNDARY
-  WATER MAIN
-  ROADS

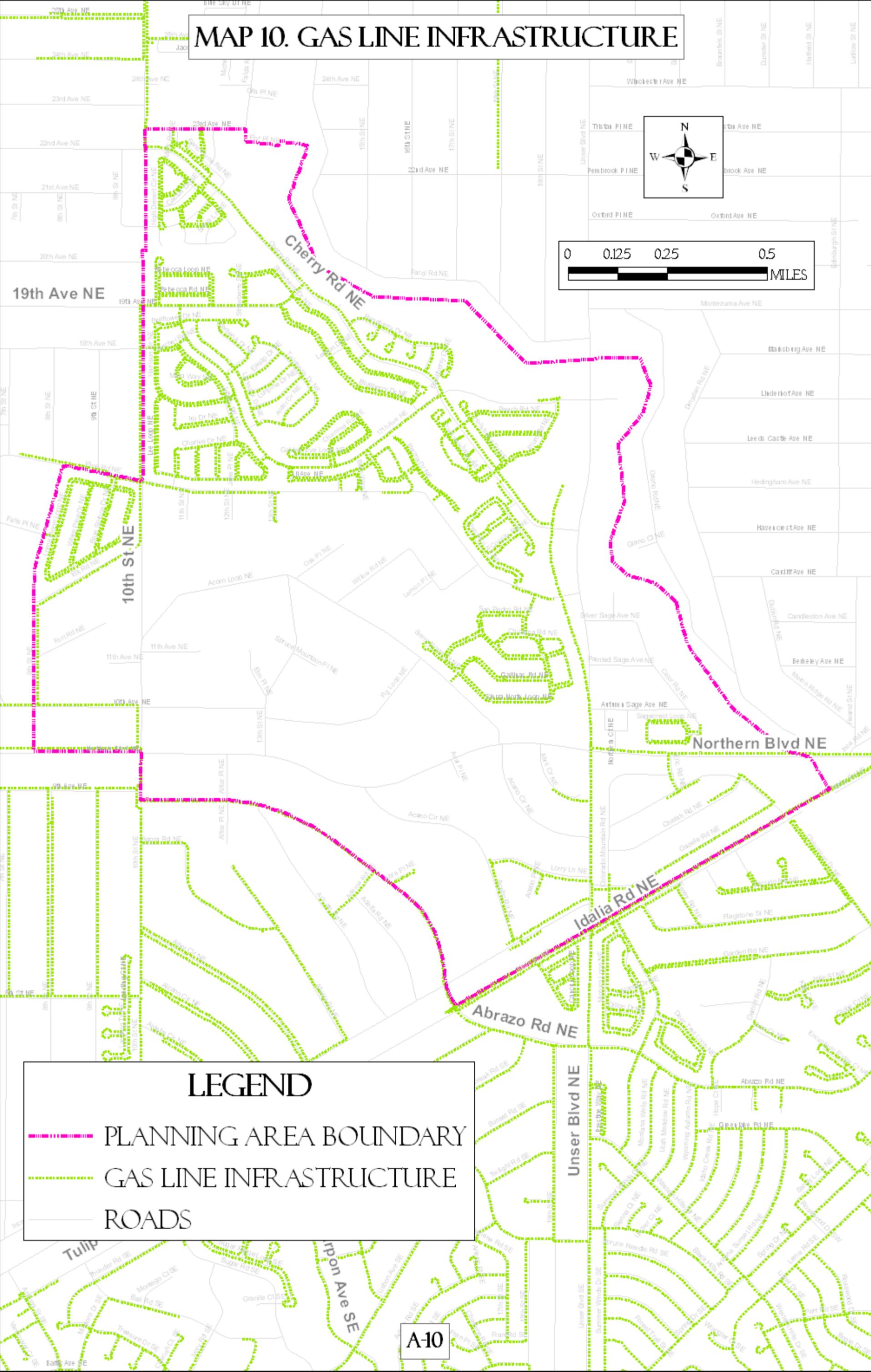
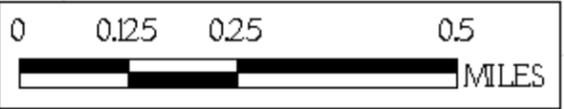
MAP 9. ELECTRICITY INFRASTRUCTURE



LEGEND

-  PLANNING AREA BOUNDARY
-  ELECTRICAL LINES
-  ROADS

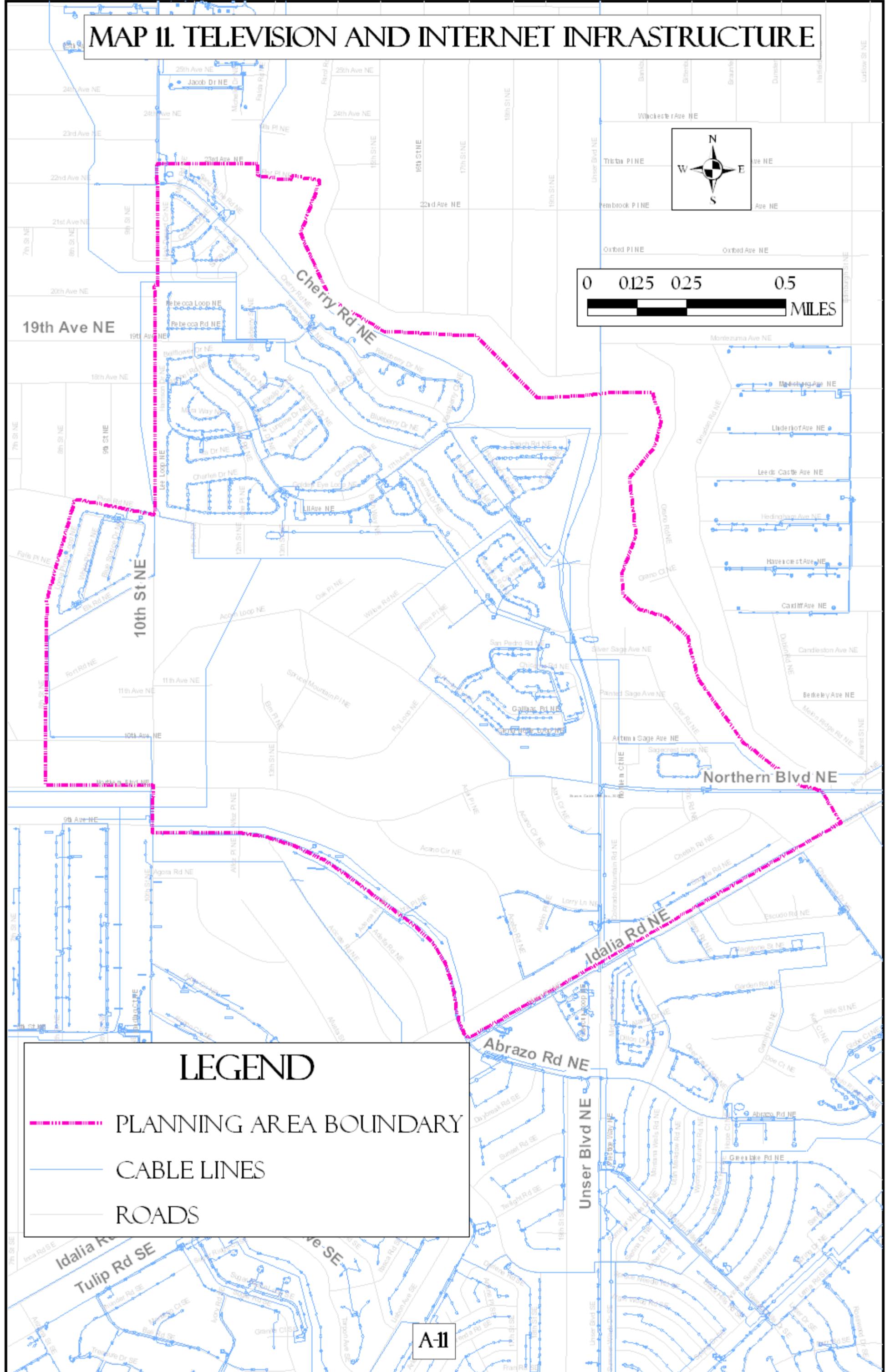
MAP 10. GAS LINE INFRASTRUCTURE



LEGEND

- PLANNING AREA BOUNDARY
- GAS LINE INFRASTRUCTURE
- ROADS

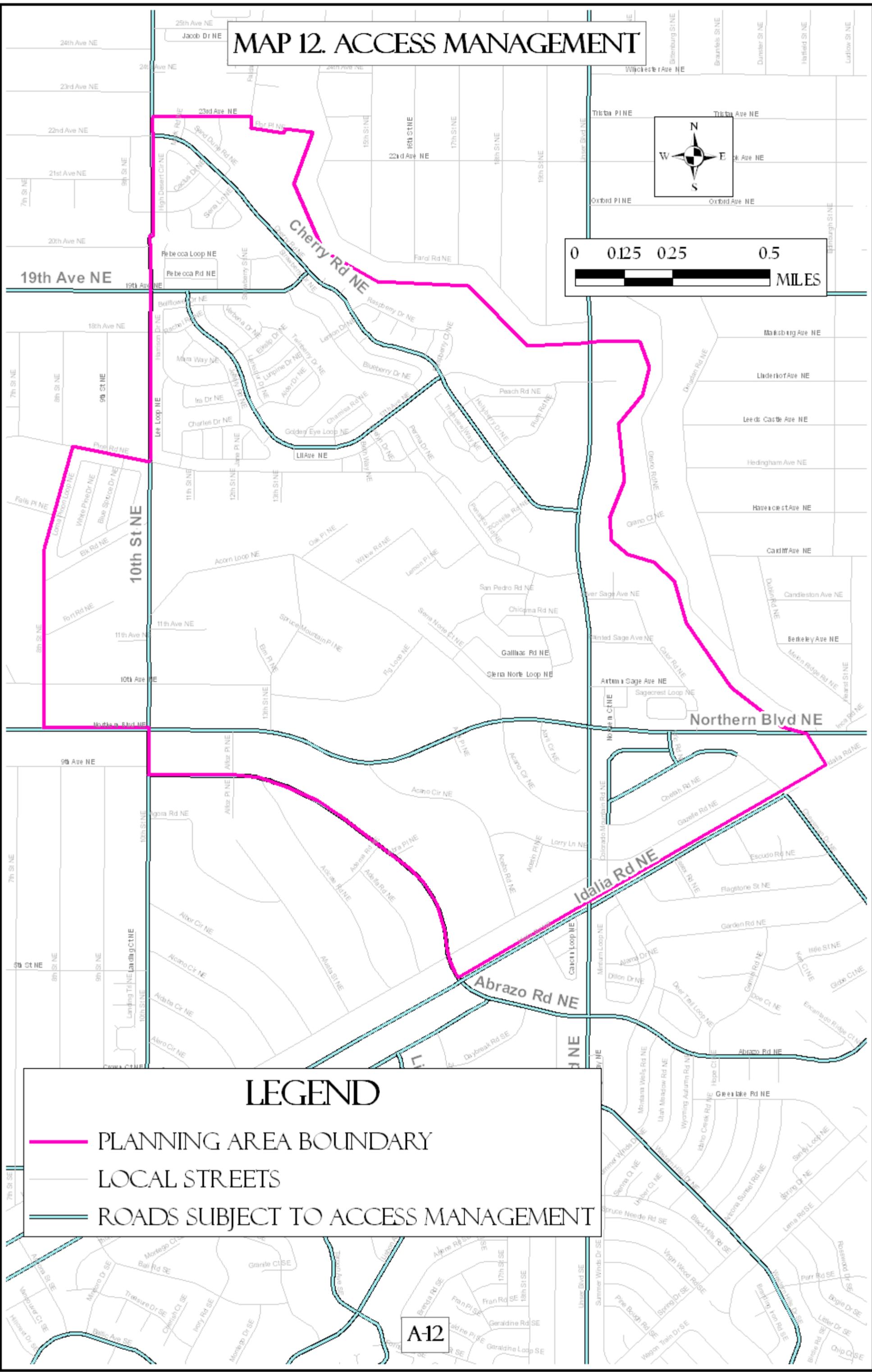
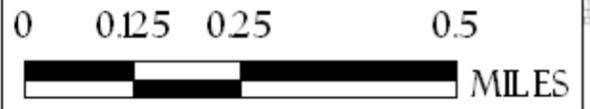
MAP 11. TELEVISION AND INTERNET INFRASTRUCTURE



LEGEND

- - - - - PLANNING AREA BOUNDARY
- — — — — CABLE LINES
- — — — — ROADS

MAP 12. ACCESS MANAGEMENT



LEGEND

-  PLANNING AREA BOUNDARY
-  LOCAL STREETS
-  ROADS SUBJECT TO ACCESS MANAGEMENT