

Sec.6 Rural Agricultural Zone Background

Loss of Open Space and Decline of Farming

The population growth all around the South Valley and the decline of local farming has caused a squeeze on local agricultural land. Whereas the Valley used to be known for large open space and farming areas, the economics of population growth have caused much of these larger lots to be subdivided for housing. Given the local minimum lot size of one acre and landowners' monetary interests in developing as many homes as possible on their land, subdividing in the South Valley has the impact of turning this historic semi-rural community into a suburban-style neighborhood with land use patterns that scream "Anywhere, USA." In meeting after meeting, area residents expressed the need for comprehensive planning strategies that speak both to farmers' needs and

In a recent survey* of South Valley residents, 78% said agricultural land and the Valley's semi-rural character should be protected
*RCRP Community Assessment, 2000

to the development pressures exerted upon the land. This sector plan speaks to those needs in the Isleta corridor, but a larger County-wide strategy is crucial in order to help protect agricultural land throughout the South Valley.

Loss of Rural Character

As agricultural lands are converted to residential and commercial uses, more is at stake than a simple economic transition. In the South Valley, agriculture is more than how some residents make a living; it is expressed in the essence of the place. In public processes like the Southwest Area Plan and the Bridge/Isleta Revitalization Plan, South Valley residents state overwhelmingly that despite current trends, they desire to maintain the rural character of their community. In a survey conducted by RCRP in 2000, 78% of residents expressed their desire to maintain agricultural land and the area's semi-rural quality of life. Yet gradual urbanization is dangerously close to destroying what remains of the Valley's unique character. With piecemeal, unplanned, sprawling development happening at a fast pace, the line between urban and rural is vanishing and a suburban, "anywhere" character is taking hold along the corridor. As more parking lots are paved, more bright signs erected, and more big-box stores opened, the rural character of the Valley inches closer to being gone forever. Area residents have stated overwhelmingly – through the sector plan planning process and others – that preventing the loss of rural character is one of the Isleta corridor's most pressing needs. Residents express a crucial need to respond to the threats of vanishing character with a plan that "has teeth"; a plan that can be enforced.

Residents' biggest fear? That the corridor's unique, semi-rural character will be destroyed in favor of an "Anywhere USA" look and feel

Need for Economic Development

Over time, the South Valley has seen a transition from most of the community making their living on nearby farms to most of the community driving to Albuquerque for work each day. The loss of agriculture eliminated many local jobs that had sustained the Isleta corridor economy for centuries. As such, residents state that the lack of job opportunities in the Valley is a major challenge to its overall health. Given the rich history of agriculture and small business in the community, this is an especially significant transformation. Luckily, the Isleta

In 20 years, I'd like to see:
"A bustling and diversified locally-run business district."

-Resident response from a survey administered during the 9/21/04 public meeting

corridor is home to a new small business incubator that stands to make a big difference in jump-starting local entrepreneurship. Especially promising is the incubator's commercial kitchen, which could be a major player in the production of local value-added agricultural products. Residents state that building on these opportunities is crucial, as is the need for a continued focus on the economic needs of local residents and some organizing work among small business owners.

In summary, the pressures of Westside growth and traffic congestion, loss of open space and decline of farming, loss of rural character, and the need for economic development all play a role in some of the troubling conditions along the Isleta corridor that contribute to the need for a sector plan.

A. RURAL CHARACTER

Agriculture has been an important part of life in the South Valley for over 300 years, profoundly influencing the local culture, economy, and rural character of the Isleta corridor. Agriculture's importance to Bernalillo County cannot be overstated, and its production capacity and cultural significance to the South Valley is invaluable.

Agriculture has been in decline in the South Valley for at least a generation, due to a number of factors: growth of large-scale agribusiness, population growth in the region, and declining profits for traditional farmers. New residential development offers current farmers and those holding onto fallow agricultural land the lure of high prices for their land. With every newly developed subdivision, pressure grows upon other landowners to sell, and the critical mass of farm activity needed to sustain an agricultural economy and culture diminishes. If agriculture is to remain an important part of the South Valley's future, the issues threatening farmers and the land they farm must be addressed without delay.

The preservation of agricultural land (including fallow land that could be used for farming but is sitting vacant) along Isleta Boulevard and within the greater South Valley area will need a comprehensive approach in order to be successful. This includes tackling social policy issues and potentially establishing new institutions such as a land trust and conservation



Raising sheep at the Hubbell House, 1916
Source: Geri Knoebel



This 1930s snapshot of the Rio Bravo/Coors area near the Isleta corridor shows the predominance of agriculture in the past



Current farmland and open views along the Isleta corridor
Source: Geri Knoebel

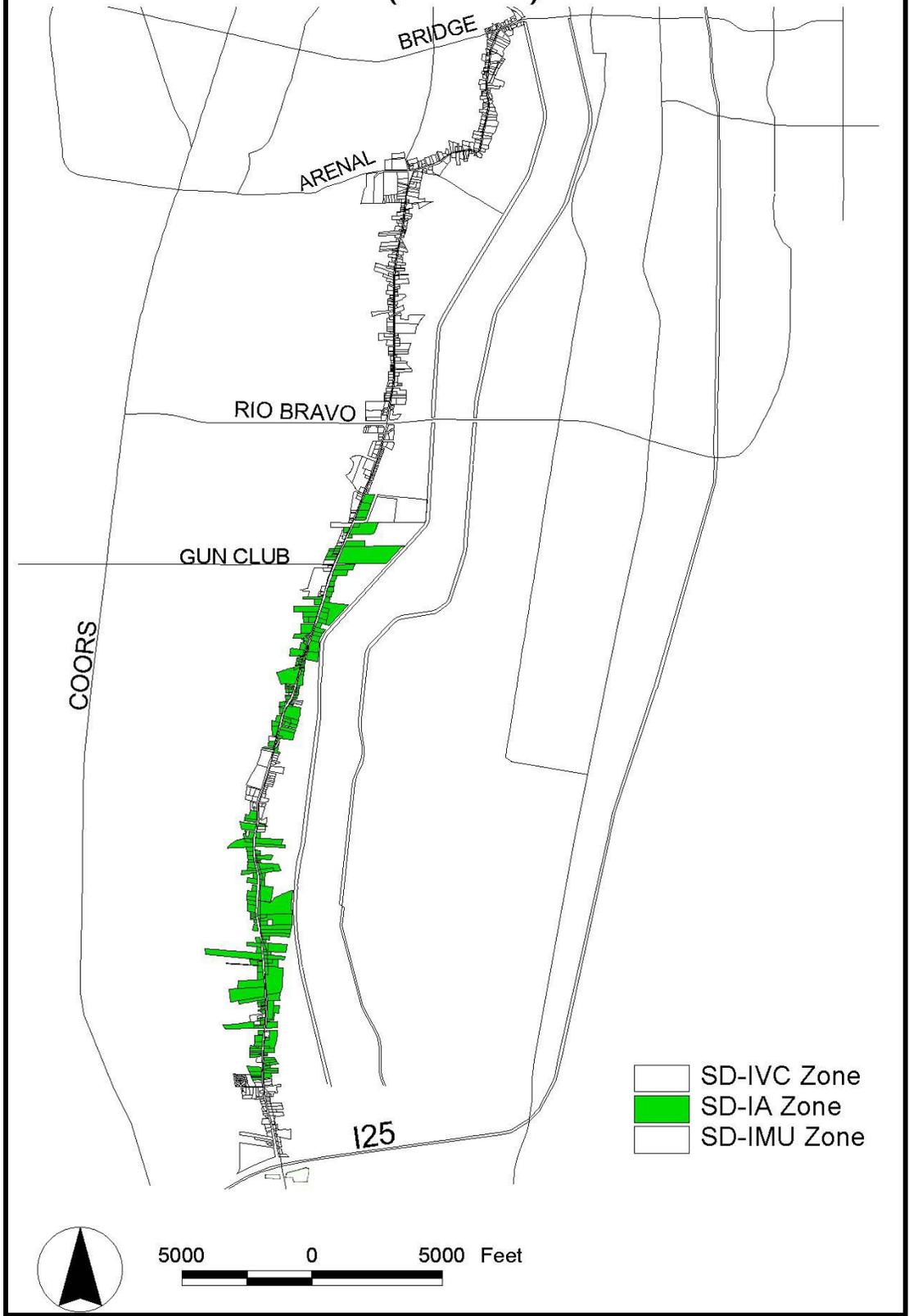
easements, continuing to support the current greenbelt policy and acequia preservation.

While it's important for work to begin on these longer-term steps to maintain agriculture and open space in the South Valley, as described further below, this sector plan focuses on maintaining the traditional semi-rural character along Isleta Boulevard in the Rural Areas. Accordingly, the Agricultural zone in this plan is consistent with the current A-1 in the Bernalillo County Zoning Ordinance.

i. Isleta Boulevard Agricultural Zone (SD-IA)

The complete language of the Isleta Boulevard Agricultural Zone can be found in Volume 2 of this Sector Plan.

Isleta Agriculture Boundary (SD-IA)



Sec. 6 Isleta Boulevard Agricultural Zone (SD-A-1) Regulations.

A. The regulations set forth in this section or set forth in this ordinance, when referred to in this section, are the regulations in the A-1 Rural Agricultural Zone. The purposes of this zone are to preserve the scenic and recreational values in the National Forests and similar adjoining land, to safeguard the future water supply, to provide open and spacious development in areas remote from available public services, and to recognize the desirability of carrying on compatible agricultural operations and spacious home developments in areas near the fringes of urban development. The regulations provide for the protection of these important land uses, and are not intended to unduly restrict or regulate dairying, farming, or ranching operations.

B. Use Regulations. A building or premises shall be used only for the following purposes. All uses customarily incidental to the building or premises shall be maintained on site.

1. Prohibited Uses. The following uses are prohibited in this zone:

- a. The open storage of inoperative vehicles or auto parts;
- b. The open storage of trash or junk;
- c. The open storage of large appliances;
- d. Any use not designated a permissive use or conditional use in this zone, unless otherwise authorized by this Code; or
- e. Any use not recognized as customarily incidental to a permitted use in the zone.

2. Permissive Uses:

- a. Ranch, farm, dairy, and rural residential activities.
- b. Display and sale of agricultural products including poultry or rabbits raised on the premises, and products incidental to the sales activity.
- c. One single-family dwelling or H.U.D. Zone Code II manufactured home per lot of record.
- d. Accessory building or structure customarily incidental to the above uses.
- e. Recreational vehicle or boat storage in the rear yard when such recreational vehicle or boat is not to be used as accessory living quarters, and is not connected to utilities, other than temporarily to a source of electricity. Such units cannot be used for storage of goods, materials, or equipment other than those items considered to be a part of the unit or essential for its immediate use. Recreation vehicle used for dwelling purposes served only by electricity for lighting purposes, the use of such recreational vehicle shall be limited to a maximum of two weeks in any calendar year.

(1) In the event where rear yard access is not available, outside parking in the front yard is allowed, provided:

(a) The body of the recreational vehicle or boat is at least 11 feet from the front property line.

(b) No part of the unit extends onto the public right-of-way.

(c) A corner lot is always deemed to have reasonable access to the rear yard; a fence or wall is not necessarily deemed to prevent reasonable access.

f. Signs not exceeding 16 square feet in area per sign pertaining to the lease, hire or sale of a premises or sale of home-raised products, provided there shall be no more than one such sign per acre of lot area, and provided further that, if illuminated, the source of such illumination shall be nonoscillating and nonflashing.

g. Parking incidental to uses permitted in this zone, provided all vehicles parked are in operative condition.

h. Home occupation.

i. Concealed Wireless Telecommunications Facility, provided that it satisfies the requirements of section 22.5 of the Bernalillo County Zoning Code.

j. Wireless Telecommunications Antenna located on a public utility structure, provided that it satisfies the requirements of section 22.5 of the Bernalillo County Zoning Code.

k. Amateur Radio Antenna/Tower up to 65 feet as measured from grade.

l. Garage or yard sale, provided:

1. No more than four events are allowed at a given dwelling in any calendar year. The duration of the garage or yard sale shall not exceed three consecutive days.

2. No items shall be purchased for a garage or yard sale for the purpose of resale; items shall be of the type normally accumulated by a household.

3. One non-illuminated, on-premises sign, not exceeding four square feet in area shall be permitted. The sign shall pertain to the garage or yard sale only and shall be permitted only for the three-day period of the sale.

3. Conditional Uses. The following uses may be permitted, if approved by the Zoning Administrator, in accordance with the procedures and under the conditions set out in the Administrative Section of this ordinance, with additional requirements deemed necessary to safeguard the best interest of the adjoining property, neighborhood and the community.

a. Church and incidental facilities.

b. Day Care Center.

c. Family Day Care Home.

d. School.

e. Temporary festivals, circuses, carnivals or activities in a tent, provided that the use or activity meets the following requirements:

(1) The minimum lot size per use or activity shall be five acres.

(2) All required parking shall be located on the same site with the activity or use.

(3) The use or activity shall be at least two miles from the nearest conforming residential use.

(4) Prior approval of the proposed use or activity must be obtained from the County Sheriff, County Fire Department, County Environmental Health, County Public Works, City of Albuquerque Air Pollution Control, and Albuquerque Metropolitan Arroyo Flood Control Authority or their authorized representative.

- (5) The hours of operation, shall be between 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. This includes the time of erection and dismantling.
- (6) The use or activity shall be limited to three days in one calendar year.
- (7) No permanent structures shall be erected.
- (8) Temporary fencing may be erected, and shall be removed within 24 hours after the activity.

- f. Commercial stables, rodeo arenas, polo grounds, and riding academies.
- g. Privately or commercially operated recreational camps, lakes, swimming pools, and tennis courts.
- h. Guest ranch and incidental facilities, including stables, corrals, swimming pools, restaurants, incidental retail sales and services and personal services provided such ranches are located on sites containing not less than 20 acres.
- i. Hunting, fishing, ski resorts, and incidental facilities, provided they are located on sites containing not less than 20 acres.
- j. Kennels, animal hospitals, or the breeding, boarding or sale of dogs, cats, and birds.
- k. Commercial animal establishment and nonprofit animal facility.
- l. Real estate sales office in connection with a specific development for a period of not more than two years.
- m. Temporary sawmill and logging camp, when located not less than 1,000 feet from any public highway, dwelling, or public recreational area.
- n. Temporary storage building or yard for equipment, material, or activity incidental to a specific construction project but not to exceed one year, unless the time is extended by the Zoning Administrator.
- o. One mobile home per lot of record used as a one-family dwelling, provided that where two or more mobile homes are located on one lot, they must be clearly incidental to a use listed under Section 7.B.2.a. or as provided in Section 7.B.3.p.
- p. One mobile home for a three-year period in addition to an existing single-family dwelling or mobile home on a lot provided it complies with the following requirements:

- (1) The mobile home may be used only by members of the immediate family for the purpose of providing assistance to those members of the family who are elderly, ill, or mentally or physically disabled as attested by a licensed physician.
- (2) The mobile home shall be connected to water and sewage disposal facilities approved by the Department of Environmental Health.
- (3) The mobile home must be placed on the property in conformance with the setback requirements and located at least 15 feet from any structures on the same or on adjoining property.
- (4) Placement of a mobile home on the property will not seriously conflict with the character of the area or be detrimental to the values of surrounding properties.

- q. Mobile home used as a dwelling (with connections to any utilities) during construction of a dwelling on the same premises, provided such use shall be limited to a maximum period of 24 months.

- r. Amateur Radio Antenna/Tower 65 to 100 feet as measured from grade.
- s. Bed and Breakfast House.
- t. Park.
- u. Home Occupation where the business includes visits to the site from clients, customers, patients, patrons or similar individuals. Such home occupations may allow for employment of one non-family member and may be approved for a period of time not to exceed three years.

C. Height Regulations. Buildings and structures shall not exceed 26 feet or 2 1/2 stories in height, except as provided in the Supplementary Height and Area Regulation Section of this ordinance.

D. Area Regulations:

1. Minimum Lot Area and Lot Width. Every lot shall have an average width of not less than 150 feet. The minimum lot area for this zone shall be one (1) acre, however, if the lot is in Residential Area Two (2) as designated in the Bernalillo County Southwest Area Plan the minimum acceptable lot size of each lot is as follows:

- a. One acre if both municipal water and sewer services are available.
- b. One and one-fourth acres if municipal water and sewer services are not available.

2. Setbacks. Minimum front yard setback shall be 25 feet, minimum side yard shall be ten feet, and the minimum rear yard shall be 25 feet, except as provided in the Supplementary Height and Area Regulations Section of this ordinance.

3. On any lot occupied by a mobile home, there shall be a side yard on each side of the mobile home of 15 feet in width and in no instance shall a mobile home be located nearer than 15 feet to an accessory building.

E. Parking Requirements. Off-street parking for all uses must be provided in accordance with the regulations set forth in the Off-Street Parking, Loading and Unloading Regulations Section of this ordinance.

A. Cluster Development Guidelines are Consistent with those Contained in the Southwest Area Plan

Proposed Cluster Density Guidelines								
Zone Type	SWAP Area	Comp Plan Area	Sewer Available	Existing Density in SWAP	Cluster	% of Open Space	Proposed Density per Acre	Lot Size SQ FT
A-1	Res-2	Rural/Dev. Urban	Yes	1 DU/Acre	Yes	50%	1.5 DU/Acre	11,616
A-1	Res-2	Rural/Dev. Urban	Yes	1 DU/Acre	Yes	30%	1.25 DU/Acre	11,000
A-1	Res-2	Rural/Dev. Urban	Yes	1 DU/Acre	No	None	1 DU/Acre	34,848
A-1	Res-2	Rural/Dev. Urban	No	1.25 DU/Acre	Yes	50%	1.5 DU/Acre	11,616
A-1	Res-2	Rural/Dev. Urban	No	1.25 DU/Acre	Yes	30%	1.25 DU/Acre	11,000
A-1	Res-2	Rural/Dev. Urban	No	1.25 DU/Acre	No	None	1 DU/Acre	34,848
<p>These figures assume 20% of the overall site is necessary for roads and other right-of-way. The open space is then deducted from the net area to attain the buildable area. The number of clustered units is based on the cluster density times the total site acreage. Homeowner's lot size is estimated by dividing the number of clustered units into the buildable area.</p> <p>*All cluster proposals will be evaluated on a site by site basis.</p>								