

6.0 Open Space Plan

6.1 Development of the Public Open Space Plan

The CAC and the technical team also developed a public open space plan for North Albuquerque Acres. This plan evaluates potential public open space sites in the community and recommends a preferred site in North Albuquerque Acres for Bernalillo County to acquire with current open space funds. It also identifies community priorities for open space to guide future public open space acquisition in North Albuquerque Acres.

The Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan defines major public open space as land "acquired, developed, used, and maintained to retain (its) natural character to benefit people throughout the metropolitan area by conserving resources related to the natural environment, providing opportunities for outdoor education and recreation, or defining the boundaries of the urban environment." In November 1998, voters in Bernalillo County approved a mil levy to pay for the acquisition of public open space. The County Commission established the Bernalillo County Open Space Advisory Committee to review proposals submitted by the public for open space acquisition and to make recommendations to the Commission on the expenditure of open space funds. At the start of the Sector Development Plan process, no sites in North Albuquerque Acres had been designated for acquisition as public open space. Treatment of open space was therefore included within the sector plan process to ensure that open space recommendations would be consistent with the broader sector plan recommendations for North Albuquerque Acres.

The CAC and the technical team devoted two meetings to developing proposed open space selection criteria and open space site alternatives for North Albuquerque Acres. First, the selection criteria used by the Open Space Advisory Committee were reviewed and discussed. The CAC and the technical team then developed a list of proposed criteria specifically to reflect the particular needs and preferences of the community. Table 6-1 lists the Open Space Advisory Committee’s criteria and the criteria proposed by the CAC.

Table 6-1 Public Open Space Selection Criteria

<i>Bernalillo County Open Space Advisory Committee Criteria</i>
▪ Provide opportunities for recreation (e.g., linkage to trails; ease of access; suitability for multiple uses).
▪ Need for protection from development; enhancement to community.
▪ Minimize costs from environmental clean-up and ongoing maintenance and management.
▪ Implement open space recommendations of adopted policies.
▪ Preserve water availability, improve air quality, and control flood plains.
▪ Potential to highlight wildlife and flora.
▪ Preserve significant archeological and/or historical sites.
▪ Site has demonstrated support for acquisition.
▪ Site has a reasonable cost and a willing seller.
▪ Site is at risk of development.
▪ Site meets the open space needs of the area.

Table 6-1 (cont.) Public Open Space Selection Criteria

<i>Community Advisory Committee Criteria</i>
▪ Preserve undeveloped land.
▪ Protect natural drainage ways from development.
▪ Serve principally the North Albuquerque Acres Community.
▪ Preserve wildlife habitat.
▪ Provide natural settings for community use.
▪ Provide opportunities for walking and horseback riding.
▪ Offer access from main road.
▪ Coordinate with AMAFCA for joint acquisition and/or management.

Next, the CAC and the technical team considered several possible site alternatives in light of the proposed selection criteria. To help inform the discussion, the consultants prepared a number of map overlays depicting a variety of relevant information, including nominated open space sites, existing land uses, drainage ways, and existing and proposed trails and bikeways. The CAC and technical team selected three open space site alternatives to present to NAA residents at the first public meeting: the La Cueva Arroyo site, the Signal-Alameda site, and the South Domingo Baca Arroyo site. Figure 6-1 shows the location of the open space site alternatives. Figure 6-2 shows site maps of each alternative. Table 6-2 shows summary information for each site.

Table 6-2 Summary of Public Open Space Site Information

Site Name	La Cueva Arroyo	Alameda/Signal	South Domingo Baca Arroyo
Size	Approx. 29 vacant acres in arroyo between Eubank and Browning in joint County/AMAFCA project	Approx. 21 acres of vacant land on north side of Signal between Ventura and AMAFCA property (between Holbrook and Eubank).	Approx. 40 acres of vacant land between Eubank and Holbrook
General Description	Narrow floodplain with vegetation: chamisa, apache plume, cholla. Scattered houses to north and south.	Row of lots along road with buffalo grass, snakeweed, tumbleweed. Western end of site lies in Alameda Arroyo. Scattered houses to the north and south. ROW for Alameda Blvd expansion will be located along north edge.	Broad, generally flat open floodplain with moderate amount of vegetation. Scattered houses to the north and south. Mormon church at eastern end.
Major Road Access	Eubank, Browning	Ventura, Holbrook, Eubank	Eubank
Recreational potential	Short trail, limited links	Would lengthen potential trail that could extend east from AMAFCA property to an on-street trail linking to parks.	Links on west side to City trail; extends potential link by off-road trail to S. Domingo Baca Dam/Equestrian Park.
Need for protection/enhancement	Expanded space could allow AMAFCA to preserve arroyo in more natural state.	Would prevent development in portions of floodplain.	Would prevent development in floodplain.
Water implications	Flood zone; AMAFCA considering acquisition of portions.	Periodic storm water	Periodic storm water
Potential to highlight wildlife/flora	Water, native plants offer habitat, food.	Proximity to road limits value to wildlife.	Native vegetation offers habitat, food.

Figure 6-1

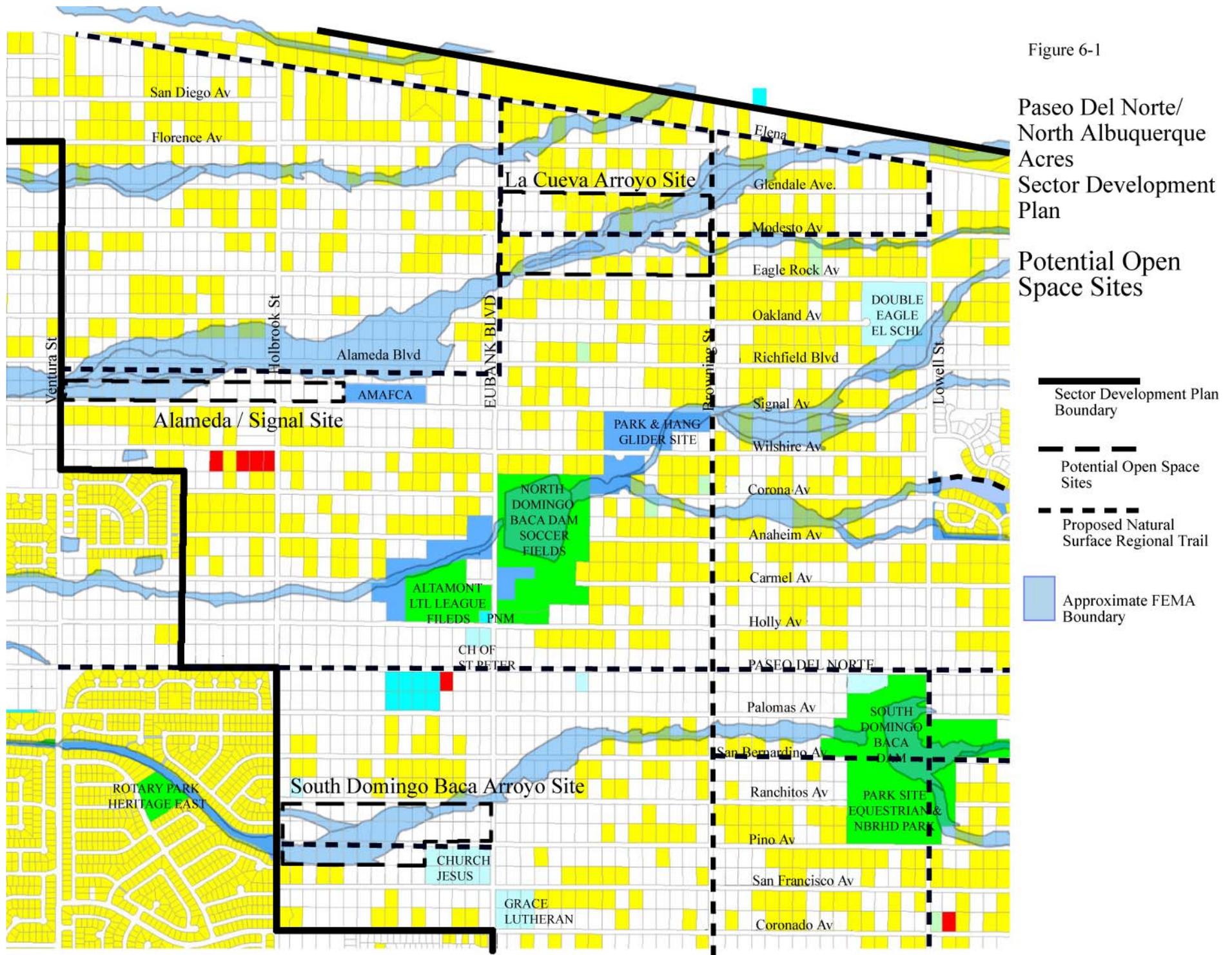


Table 6-2 (cont.) Summary of Public Open Space Site Information

	La Cueva Arroyo	Alameda/Signal	South Domingo Baca Arroyo
Archaeological/historical significance	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Area open space needs	Hang gliding park four blocks south; no trails in immediate area.	Area has some parks, trails.	Area has some parks, trails.
Consistent with adopted plans	Facility Plan for Arroyos designates arroyo as major open space link.	NAA Transportation Plan moves most trails from arroyos to nearest road.	Facility Plan for Arroyos designates arroyo as urban recreation arroyo.
Demonstrated community support	To be determined	Proposed by community leader.	Nominated by several residents/owners.
Willing seller/reasonable cost	Potential to combine County and AMAFCA funds for larger purchase; easements. Seller willingness to be determined. Most land in arroyo.	Land is developable, likely resulting in higher acquisition costs. Seller willingness to be determined.	Willing sellers for all lots; some potential land donations. Some land is developable.
Current development risk	Unknown	Some parcels for sale.	Some lots may be for sale.
Post-acquisition issues/costs	Illegal dumping, leash law enforcement, motorized vehicle control.	Illegal dumping, leash law enforcement, motorized vehicle control	Illegal dumping, leash law enforcement, motorized vehicle control.

The purpose of the first public meeting, held on July 13 at the William Sibrava Sheriff's Substation, was to have participants review and comment upon the proposed open space selection criteria and the open space site alternatives. The main displays for this meeting were a list of the proposed selection criteria and maps of each proposed open space site, shown in Appendix B, along with the above summary site information. After a presentation of these materials and a period for questions and answers, participants were asked to rank their preferred selection criteria and site alternatives. Table 6-3 and Table 6-4 show a summary of the responses received from the questionnaire. The South Domingo Baca Arroyo site was ranked most frequently as the preferred open space site, but all of the proposed sites received significant support from meeting participants.

Table 6-3 Summary of Open Space Questionnaire Responses

Public Open Space Site Alternative Ranking				
	Rank			
	First	Second	Third	Average Rank
La Cueva Arroyo	21	30	12	1.86
Alameda-Signal	18	22	21	2.05
South Domingo Baca Arroyo	29	7	28	1.98

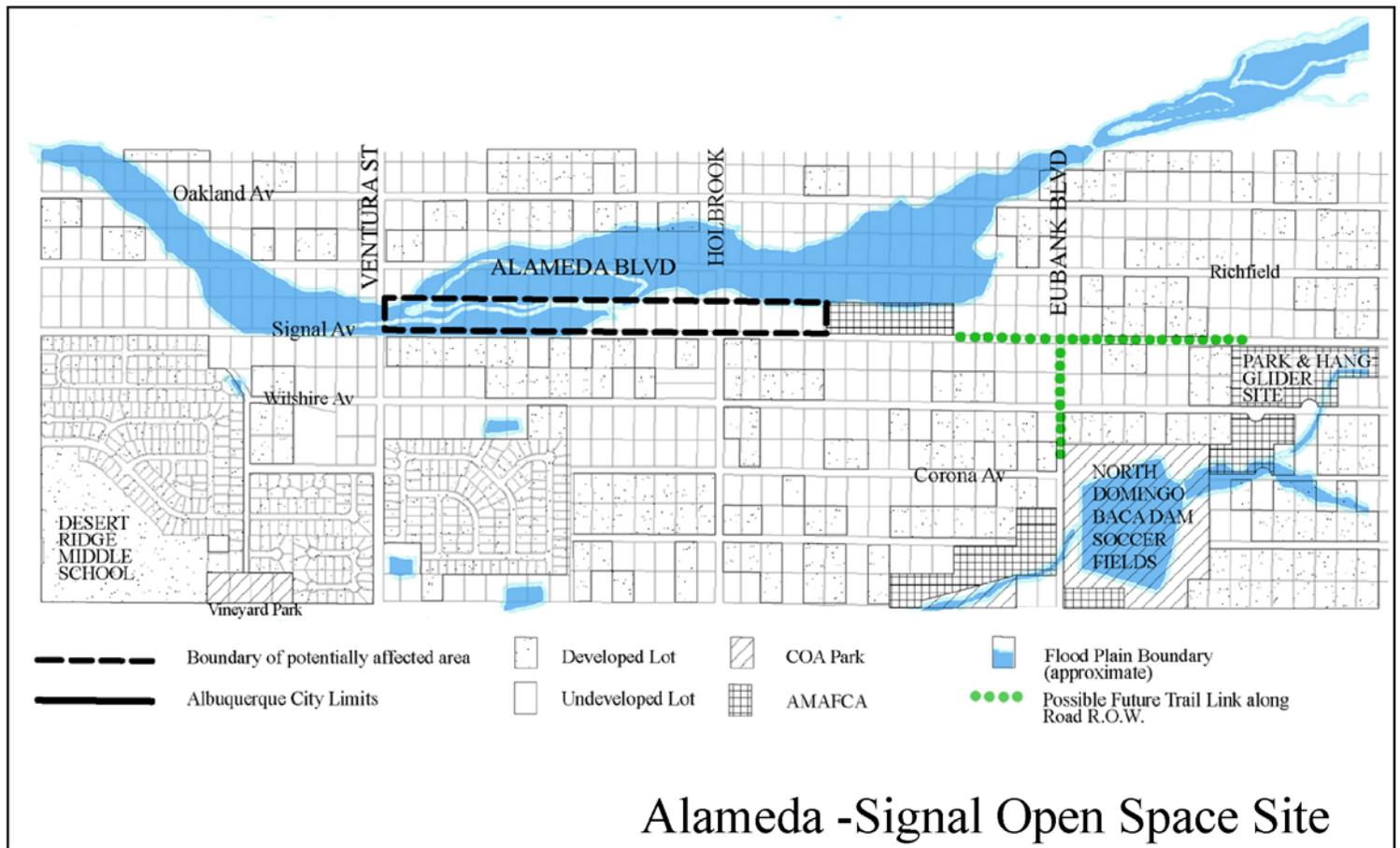
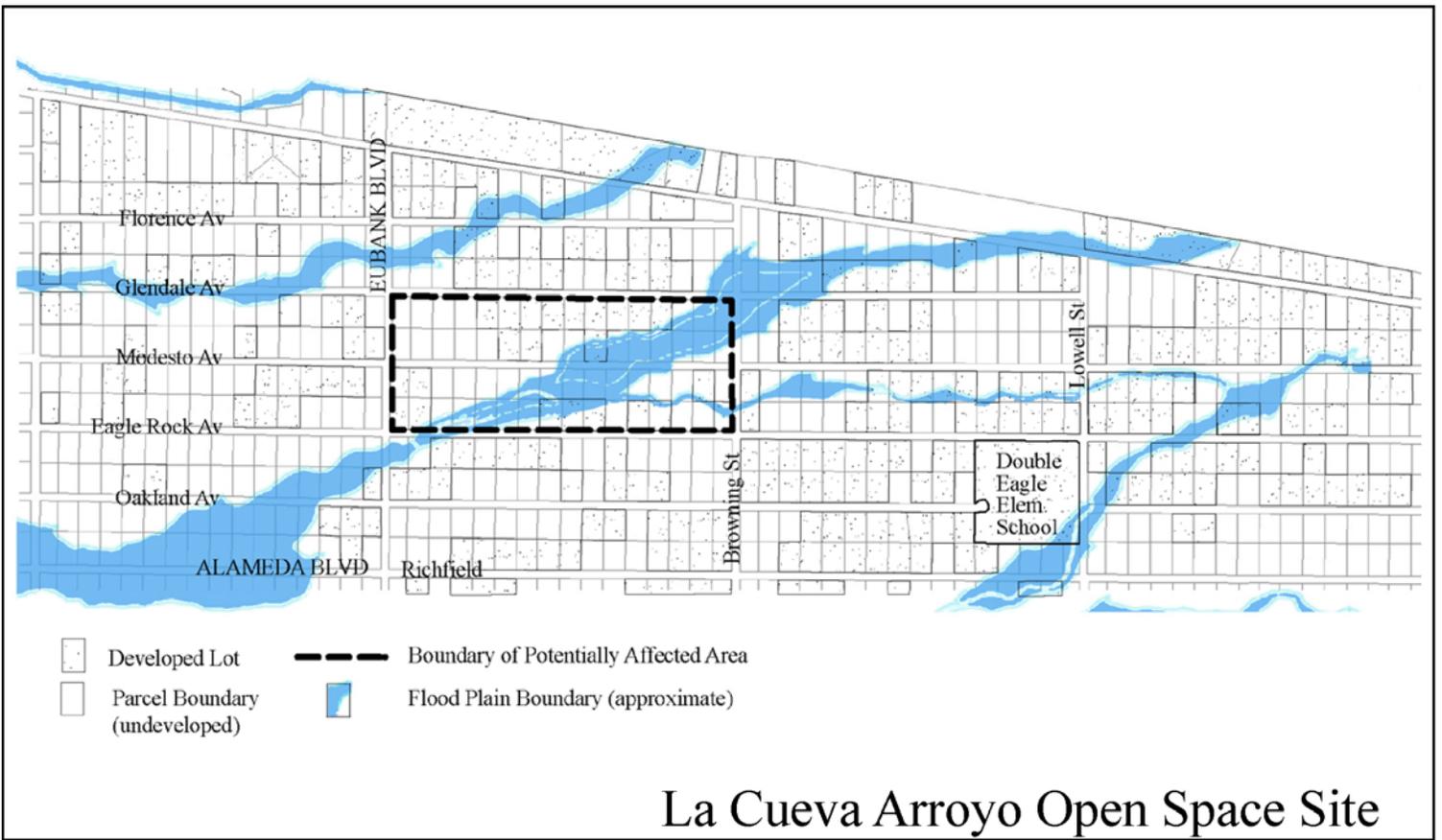


Figure 6-2 Public Open Space Alternatives

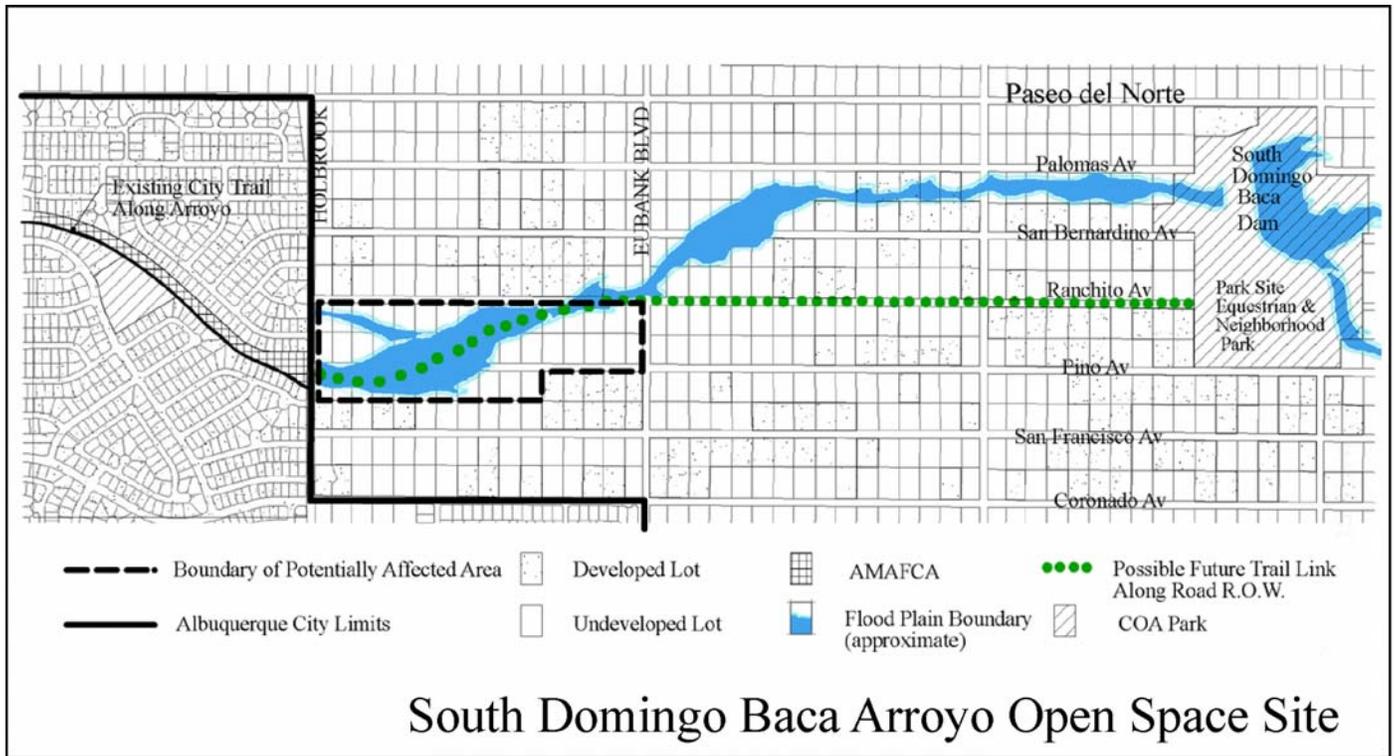


Figure 6-2 Public Open Space Site Alternatives (con't)

Table 6-4 Public Open Space Criteria Ranking

Public Open Space Criteria Ranking	
Number of Times among Top 5 criteria by meeting participants	Open Space Selection Criteria
38	Preserve wildlife habitat.
36	Preserve undeveloped land.
32	Need for protection from development; enhancement to community.
32	Provide natural settings for public use.
23	Provide opportunities for walking and horseback riding.
20	Protect natural drainage ways from development.
20	Serve principally the North Albuquerque Acres Community.
19	Provide opportunities for recreation (e.g., linkage to trails; ease of access; suitability for multiple uses).
14	Preserve water availability, improve air quality, and control flood plains.
12	Site meets the open space needs of the area.
11	Coordinate with AMAFCA for joint acquisition and/or management.
6	Site has a reasonable cost and a willing seller.
6	Site has demonstrated support for acquisition.
6	Site is at risk of development.
4	Implement open space recommendations of adopted policies.
3	Minimize costs from environmental clean-up and ongoing maintenance and management.
2	Offer access from main road.
1	Preserve significant archeological and/or historical sites.

Since all of the sites had community support, the CAC and technical team decided to recommend that the final selection take into account the willingness of landowners within each site to sell their properties for a reasonable price. The property owners were mailed a questionnaire regarding their willingness to sell, trade, or donate their property to the County for public open space. The consultants also attempted to call those owners who did not mail back their questionnaire. Table 6-5 shows a summary of property owner responses for each site.

Table 6-5 Owner Willingness to Sell Property for Public Open Space (as of 9/27/00)

Public Open Space Site Alternatives	Number of Owners	Willing to Consider Selling or Trading	Unwilling to Consider Selling or Trading	Unable to Contact
La Cueva Arroyo Site	18 (29 parcels)	6 (8 parcels)	2 (7 parcels)	10 (14 parcels)
Signal-Alameda Site	13 (21 parcels)	4 (9 parcels)	3 (5 parcels)	6 (7 parcels)
South Domingo Baca Arroyo Site	10 (40 parcels)	10 (40 Parcels)	0	0

As shown in Table 6-5, all of the owners of property within the South Domingo Baca Arroyo site said they would consider selling or trading their property to Bernalillo County for public open space. In each of the other two sites, in contrast, key property owners said they would not sell their property or could not be reached for a response.

6.2 Potential for Use of Conservation Easements to Establish Open Space and Trail Linkages

The Advisory Committee and technical team discussed the issue of conservation easements at the initial committee meeting to address public open space in North Albuquerque Acres. Members of the committee from the community were generally opposed to the idea of Bernalillo County seeking easements on individual private lots as a means to establish open space and trail linkages in the area. In this attitude they followed the recommendation of the North Albuquerque Acres Transportation Plan (1998) to move future public trails out of arroyos (and hence off of private property) and onto street rights-of-way. The Advisory Committee and technical team therefore decided not to recommend that Bernalillo County consider conservation easements in North Albuquerque Acres.

In addition, only one owner of potential open space property, out of a total of 24 owners who completed a landowner survey, responded positively to the question asking whether owners would consider granting an access easement on their property for use as a public trail.

6.3 Public Open Space Recommendations

Based on the findings of the 2000 public process, the CAC and technical team made the following recommendations for the acquisition of public open space in North Albuquerque Acres:

1. Bernalillo County should pursue acquisition of the South Domingo Baca Arroyo site as the first priority for public open space in North Albuquerque Acres, given the substantial community support it received and the willingness of all of the property owners within the site to consider selling their property.
Update: The South Domingo Baca Arroyo site is no longer an open space acquisition priority for the County. Since the publishing of the 2001 Plan, many of the properties within the site have been sold and/or developed.
2. Bernalillo County should also continue discussions with AMAFCA regarding the potential for joint acquisition and use of the La Cueva Arroyo site for public open space and flood control purposes. The site also received substantial community support and provides an opportunity to leverage additional resources for public open space in North Albuquerque Acres.
3. Future acquisition of public open space in North Albuquerque Acres should give priority to the community's preferred selection criteria as presented in this plan.