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Proposed Access Management Concept for Paseo del Norte: Atrisco Vista Boulevard to Ventana West Parkway

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Prepared for

**BERNALILLO COUNTY
PUBLIC WORKS DIVISION**



Background and Objective

Paseo del Norte is classified as a regional principal arterial on the *2040 Long Range Roadway System* (LRRS). Because principal arterials are intended to serve longer distance travel, a high level of access management is essential to preserve their efficiency. As one of only three river crossings north of I-40 serving the urban area within Bernalillo County, efficient traffic flow is particularly important for Paseo del Norte. The purpose of this paper is to identify a potential access management plan for the 2-mile segment of Paseo del Norte from Atrisco Vista Boulevard east to Ventana West Parkway / Woodmont Avenue (referenced hereafter as the “study area”). The study area is shown in Figure 1.

Within the study area, Paseo del Norte is constructed as a 2-lane roadway. Its western terminus begins at a curve where the north-south alignment of Atrisco Vista Boulevard transitions to become the east-west alignment of Paseo del Norte. One existing full intersection is within the study area at Ventana West Parkway. In addition to this intersection, eleven unimproved dirt roads exist with connections to Paseo del Norte (See Figure 1). A local street network does not exist within the study area; however, the *2040 Long Range Roadway System* (LRRS) includes two future north-south streets: Boulevard del Oeste, a proposed community principal arterial and CS 003, a proposed major collector street (see Figure 1). Neither of these streets have been improved, although a dirt road extends north and south of Paseo del Norte at the future alignment of Boulevard del Oeste.

Existing Access Policy and Access on Paseo del Norte

Guidance on access management within the Albuquerque Metropolitan Planning Area (AMPA) is provided by two policies: 1) the *Roadway Access Control (RAC) Policy for the Albuquerque Metropolitan Planning Area*, and 2) the *NMDOT State Access Management Manual*. The RAC Policy is specific to AMPA and includes:

- 1) an inventory of access limited roadways within AMPA and previously approved access points;
- 2) the jurisdictional responsibility for each roadway; and,
- 3) the procedures for modifying access on existing and future limited access roadways.

Paseo del Norte is included in Attachment #1 — *Inventory of Roadway Access Limitations* — of the RAC Policy. Currently, the segment of Paseo del Norte from Atrisco Vista Boulevard east to Golf Course Road is under the jurisdiction of the City of Albuquerque and is therefore subject to RAC policies and procedures. However, because Paseo del Norte is a state highway, the RAC notes that jurisdiction will transfer from the City to the NMDOT at some point in the future. For this reason, and, until the change in jurisdiction occurs, RAC policies guide access management of Paseo del Norte west of Golf Course Road. After the transfer to the NMDOT, access management of Paseo del Norte will follow the State Access Management Manual (SAMM). SAMM, together with rule 18.31.6 of the New Mexico Administrative Code, provides the administrative procedures and engineering methods used by the NMDOT to manage access to and from the state highway system. This includes state highways within AMPA.

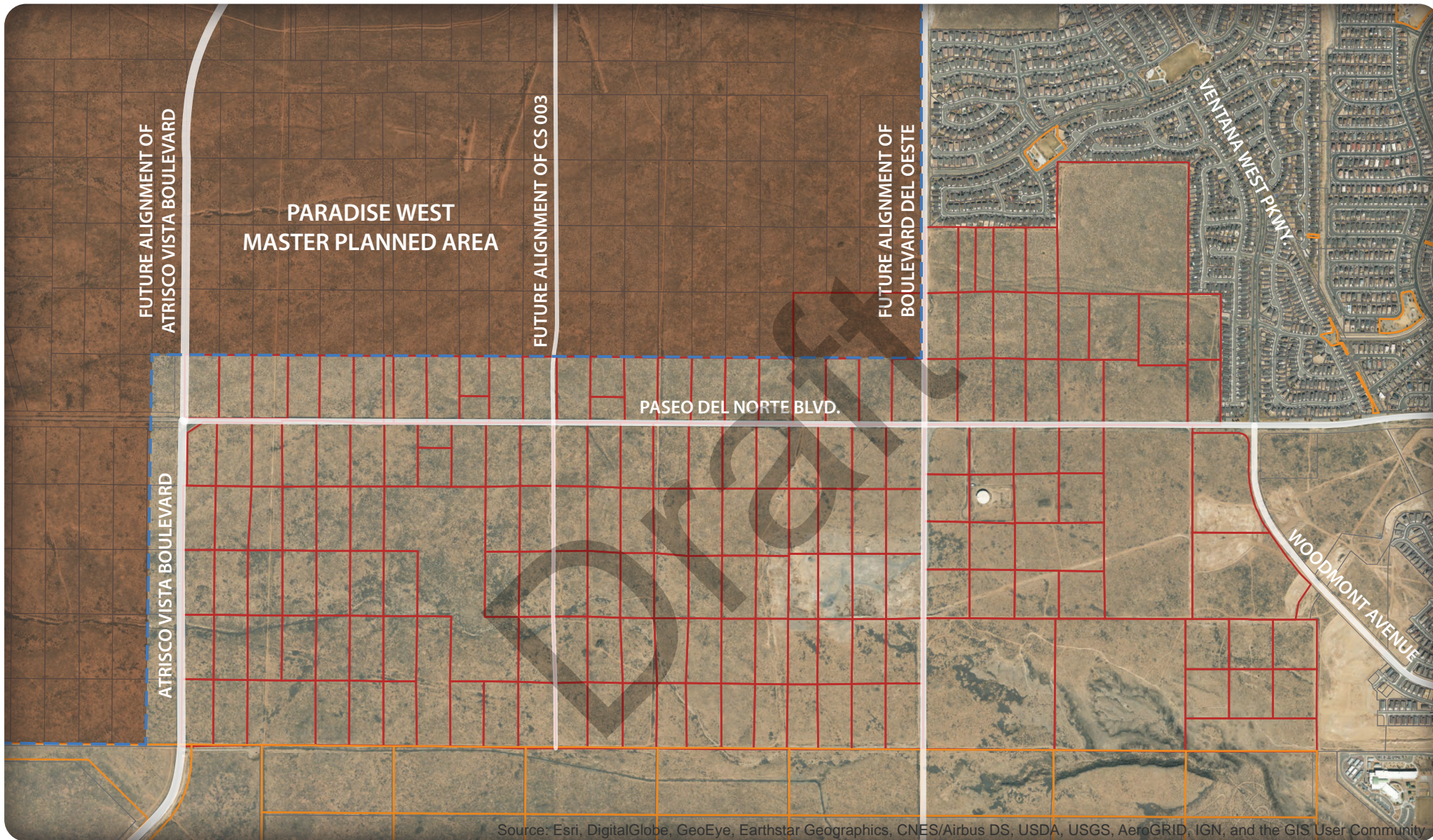


FIGURE 1

PASEO DEL NORTE ACCESS MANAGEMENT STUDY AREA

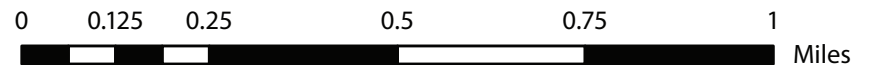


Paseo del Norte adjacent parcels



City of Albuquerque owned parcels

— — Rio Rancho City limits



The pertinent RAC policies for Paseo del Norte between Atrisco Vista Boulevard and Ventana West Parkway / Woodmont Avenue are as follows:

- Previously approved full access locations (i.e., at-grade intersections with median openings) include Atrisco Vista Boulevard, Boulevard del Oeste, and Ventana West Parkway.
- Additional full access points are limited to a spacing of approximately ½ mile, or as identified on the LRRS.
- Future intersections are to be determined by the entities having jurisdiction over the roadway and reviewed by the RAC Policy Committee.

The NMDOT SAMM does not identify specific access points for state highways, rather, it establishes the access requirements for specific roadway types. The SAMM requirements for a principal arterial allow access as follows:

- Full access signalized intersections are limited to a minimum spacing of ½ mile for roadways with posted speeds less than 55 mph (the posted speed on Paseo del Norte west of Ventana West parkway is 50 mph).
- Full access unsignalized intersections are allowed at a minimum of ¼ mile spacing.
- Partial access unsignalized intersections are limited to a minimum of 450 feet for roadways with a posted speed of 45 mph to 50 mph and 625 feet for roadways posted at 55 mph or greater.

In general, existing access along Paseo del Norte from Atrisco Vista Boulevard east to Tramway Boulevard meets the requirements of SAMM and the RAC Policy. Looking at the Paseo del Norte corridor in segments going east to west, signalized intersections in the easternmost segment from I-25 to Tramway Boulevard are at ½ mile spacing except for the segment between I-25 and San Pedro Drive, which is about 0.3 miles. This segment also includes three partial access intersections, all of which are in the eastbound direction of travel. These restricted intersections range from about 650 feet spacing from the closest signalized intersection (the shopping center access between I-25 and San Pedro Drive) to over 1,200 feet.

Access along the middle segment of Paseo del Norte, from Coors Boulevard to I-25, is limited to grade-separated intersections. No at-grade full access or partial access intersections exist in this segment. This segment fully complies with the RAC Policy and SAMM.

The western segment of Paseo del Norte, from Coors Boulevard to Atrisco Vista Boulevard, also complies with the RAC policy; however, one location exists where a full access signalized intersection has been constructed at less than ½ mile spacing. The intersection of Richland Hills Drive / Rancho Sereno Road is about 0.37 miles from the adjacent intersections at Eagle Ranch Road to the east and Golf Course Road to the west. In addition to this location, the RAC Policy for the segment of Paseo del Norte between Universe Boulevard and Kimmick Drive identifies three future additional at-grade street intersections with median openings. When implemented, these intersections will be spaced approximately ¼ mile to 0.35 mile from adjacent intersections. All the existing and planned intersections west of Universe Boulevard meet the ½ mile spacing requirement.

Proposed Access between Ventana West Parkway and Atrisco Vista Boulevard

Paseo del Norte is the only continuous east-west limited access principal arterial that spans the northern half of the Albuquerque metropolitan area. Because of this, it has been envisioned as an expressway facility intended to carry high volume traffic. Except for the 3.3-mile segment between Universe Boulevard and Eagle Ranch Road, this facility has achieved a high degree of access management and can function as an expressway for most of its route. For this reason, the recommended access policy for the segment between Atrisco Vista Boulevard and Ventana West Parkway limits access to ½ mile spacing with a single partial access point in between full access intersections.

Platting along Paseo del Norte within the study limits includes 56 individual lots fronting the roadway, including 29 parcels to the north and 27 on the south side. These parcels are generally about 5 acres in size, although three smaller parcels (about 2 acres in size) and three larger parcels (ranging from 7 acres to about 50 acres in size) have been platted. The larger parcels are all located at the east end of the study area adjacent to the Ventana Ranch subdivision. Based on a sampling of plats in this area, each parcel includes a 20-foot easement around the lot perimeter. Thus, a 40-foot easement is available to accommodate access to each individual lot.

It is likely that development within the study area will continue in a way that is similar to the existing subdivisions east of Ventana West Parkway (e.g., Ventana Ranch and The Trails) and will consist of large residential subdivisions with pockets of community commercial land uses. Achieving this will require assembly of individual parcels and implementation of a street hierarchy. Examples of this are already occurring west of Ventana West Parkway as evidenced by the Catalonia subdivision — a recently approved extension of The Trails west of Woodmont Avenue/Ventana West Parkway.

A review of parcel ownership shows three entities control much of the land within the study area both north and south of Paseo del Norte (see Figure 2). In addition, the parcels one lot north of Paseo del Norte are all within the Paradise West Master Planned area, most of which are controlled by Paradise West, Inc. The common ownership of parcels available for development increase the likelihood of development occurring as larger subdivisions. However, smaller developments could still occur. Thus, the need for an access management concept that guides where and how access is allowed is important to preserving the efficiency of travel on Paseo del Norte.



FIGURE 2

EXISTING PARCEL CONFIGURATION AND OWNERSHIP



- | | |
|--|---|
| Paradise West Inc. | Ransom Trust |
| TP Paseo del Norte, LLC | KL Garcia Family Partnership |
| City of Albuquerque | FTF Salls, LLC |
| Ruiz Development | Paseo del Norte adjacent parcels |

The proposed access management plan is shown in Figure 3. Full signalized at-grade intersections are proposed at:

- Ventana West Parkway / Woodmont Avenue – This existing intersection is approximately 3,300 feet (0.63 mile) west of the intersection of Paseo del Norte and Rainbow Boulevard.
- Boulevard del Oeste – An intersection at this future street is included in Attachment #1 of the RAC Policy. As proposed, this intersection will be located approximately 3,300 feet (0.62 mile) west of Ventana West Parkway / Woodmont Avenue.
- CS 003 – An intersection at this future street is also included in Attachment #1 of the RAC Policy. CS 003 is the name used in the Paradise West Master Plan and refers to “collector street number 3”, so the name of this street is to be determined. As proposed, this intersection will be located approximately 3,700 feet (0.7 mile) west of Boulevard del Oeste.
- Atrisco Vista Boulevard – This existing intersection is approximately 3,700 feet (0.7 mile) west of the intersection of Paseo del Norte and CS 003.

In addition to the above signalized intersections, partial access (right-in/right-out) intersections are also proposed. While the NMDOT SAMM policy allows for partial access intersections with a limited spacing of 425 feet, the proposed access management plan for this segment of Paseo del Norte is more restrictive than allowed by SAMM. A spacing of ¼ mile from the nearest signalized intersection is proposed to be consistent with the expressway character of this corridor. This spacing is also consistent with the spacing used to the east and for other westside roadways such as Unser Boulevard. As shown in Figure 3, a single right-in/right-out intersection would be allowed at a point to be determined in the area outside of the 1,320-foot access-controlled area surrounding each signalized intersection.

Access to individual parcels not directly served by the above access points will rely on the easements mentioned above. These easements can be used to cross adjacent parcels and access the closest intersection.

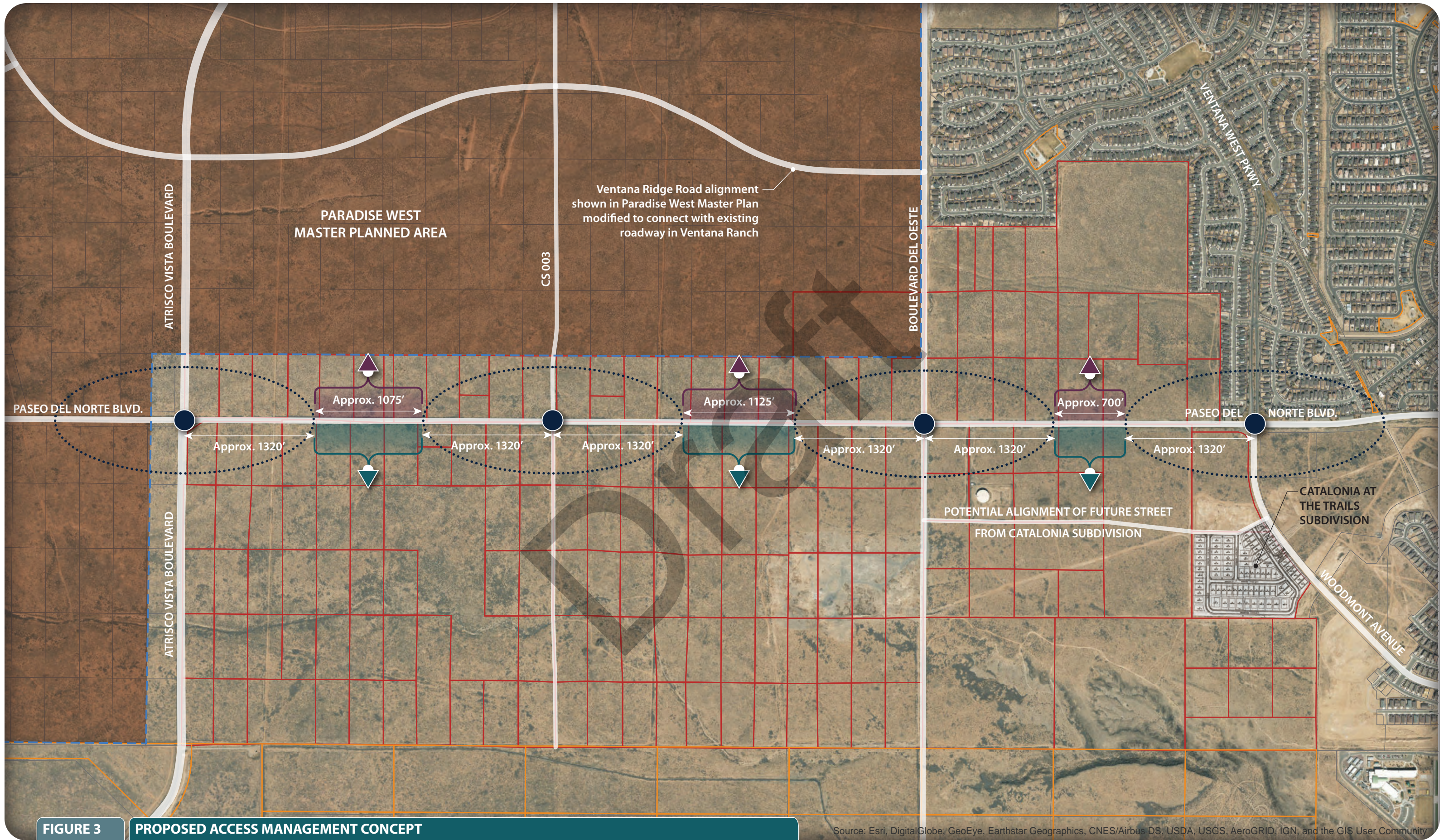


FIGURE 3

PROPOSED ACCESS MANAGEMENT CONCEPT

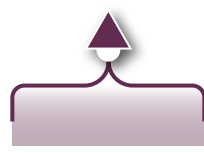
Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community



Full access intersection



Area in which additional access point is not allowed



Areas of allowable partial access intersections (minimum spacing of 1320')



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--- Rio Rancho City limits

