Quality of Life Master Plan

Prepared for:

Southern Sandoval County Arroyo Flood Control Authority (SSCAFCA)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This update to SSCAFCA's Quality of Life Master Plan (QOLMP) has been 15 years in the making. When the original Quality of Life Master Plan was published in 2006, the concept behind the plan was to propose that rights of way owned and operated by SSCAFCA should not exist solely for flood control purposes, but rather, when not in use to actively convey stormwater should be open and accessible to the public for their use and enjoyment. The original QOLMP was not intended as a punch-list of potential projects but as an illustration of concepts that could be employed by either the agency or by outside entities (governmental and non-governmental) to provide outdoor recreational possibilities of many types.

Since the inception of the QOLMP, numerous opportunities for outdoor recreation have been constructed within SSCAFCA's operational footprint. These facilities range from ball fields to walking trails and parks that have been constructed by other stakeholders within the 100-year flood pool of SSCAFCA facilities to provide multi-purpose uses for those facilities. Additionally, SSCAFCA has taken the opportunity to construct their own improvements to provide enhanced outdoor quality of life opportunities in the Black Arroyo drainage. These facilities were constructed to provide safe crossings of arroyos to access an elementary school and to provide access to channels for SSCAFCA maintenance personnel, doubling as pedestrian access.

For this update to the QOLMP, SSCAFCA wanted to re-examine, within its jurisdiction, or service area, revising the background information and reinforcing its dedication to multi-use of their facilities for both flood control and outdoor quality of life activities. SSCAFCA also wanted to examine planning documents developed since 2006 by SSCAFCA and other governmental agencies for outdoor trails and recreational opportunities to see how they might integrate into potential future opportunities for enhancing the quality of life in the jurisdiction.

From this review of background information and plans, SSCAFCA is proposing a series of focused actions for consideration in the near term. The focus of these projects is to build on the message of arroyo safety in some cases and in others, to provide maintenance access to facilities with pedestrian access as a secondary use. The discrete projects would require coordination with other entities, primarily the City of Rio Rancho, as well as identification of funding to develop and construct these proposed projects.

Finally, with an eye to the long-term future, SSCAFCA has identified long range projects that fit into the plans generated by both SSCAFCA and other governmental entities, including the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) developed by New Mexico State Parks (2015). This long-term view of potential projects is provided so that they remain active within planning documents and are not shelved in perpetuity.

Since SSCAFCA is a flood control agency focused on stormwater, all of these projects are tied to and organized by watersheds. We hope that you take the opportunity to review this QOLMP Update and view it through the lens of the watershed park.

Within this plan, SSCAFCA has listed both short range and long-range projects and objectives for quality of life improvements within the SSCAFCA jurisdiction. The timeframe for short-term project implementation is not set and depends largely on availability of funding to implement these improvements, however, the intent of the short-term projects is to implement them within five to ten years after finalization of this document. Short-term projects identified in this QOLMP Update are the Black Arroyo Wildlife Park, Black Arroyo Loop Trail, Arkansas Channel Trail, V. Sue Cleveland High School to Rio Rancho City Center pedestrian access, upper Lomitas Negras Trail, bridges over the Montoyas Arroyo at Sportsplex, Sportsplex to Sportsplex Dam trail, Barranca wildlife corridor, middle Venada trail, and the upper Venada Trail. In addition to these short-term priority projects, the QOLMP update also identifies long term projects. The most significant of these long-term agency objectives is the creation of the Outer Loop Trail (OLT). This approximately 36.8-mile-long trail is part of the agency's strategic quality of life vision. While some segments of the OLT are identified as short-term goals under this iteration of the plan, the hope is that future boards of directors will desire to continue implementation of this strategic vision and as the QOLMP is updated, additional segments can be moved to short-term priority projects.

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ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

Acronym	Definition
AMAFCA	Albuquerque Metropolitan Arroyo Flood Control Authority
BAWP	Black Arroyo Wildlife Park
CORR	City of Rio Rancho
LEE	Lateral erosion envelope
MRCOG	Mid-Region Council of Governments
MTP	Metropolitan Transportation Plan
ORV	Off-road vehicle
QOLMP	Quality of Life Master Plan for Watershed Park
ROW	Right of way
SSCAFCA	Southern Sandoval County Arroyo Flood Control Authority
WMP	Watershed management plan

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Southern Sandoval County Arroyo Flood Control Authority (SSCAFCA) developed a *Quality of Life Master Plan (QOLMP) for Watershed Park* in 2006 (Community Sciences Corporation 2006), recognizing that the large, contiguous tracts of land that are owned and managed for flood protection may also be used for public recreation during the majority of the time when SSCAFCA's extensive system of arroyos is not conveying or containing stormwater. The 2006 QOLMP approach introduced prospects for creating a Watershed Park, which would be made up of individual arroyo watersheds (parks). The purpose of the QOLMP was to enable multi-use initiatives that enhanced citizen outdoor enjoyment as well as provide amenities for properties and neighborhoods adjacent to SSCAFCA lands.

Since the original plan was completed in 2006, SSCAFCA has developed the *Maintenance Access and Trails Master Plan* (CDM Smith 2018), and planning efforts led by SSCAFCA and the City of Rio Rancho (CORR) have occurred throughout the CORR and within the SSCAFCA administrative boundaries (service area). Numerous projects with multi-use components have also been completed by both SSCAFCA and other entities within the watershed parks since 2006. Although there are 16 watersheds in the SSCAFCA service area, this document presents results of an analysis of the six major watersheds within SSCAFCA's jurisdictional area: Black Arroyo Watershed, Montoyas Arroyo Watershed, Venada Arroyo Watershed, Barranca Arroyo Watershed, Willow Creek Watershed, and Calabacillas Arroyo Watershed (Figure 1).

All watersheds are within the SSCAFCA service area. One of the main features for potential recreational use within the service area are rights of way (ROW) owned and operated by SSCAFCA for flood water conveyance. The City of Rio Rancho Development Process Manual (CORR 2010) describes ROW use for temporary access, construction, and for uses adjacent and ancillary to those for flood control and drainage management (e.g., joint recreation or landscaping). SSCAFCA is a participating agency.

The SSCAFCA service area covers a portion of southern Sandoval County bounded on the east by the Rio Grande, on the south by the Bernalillo and Sandoval county lines, on the west by the top of the Rio Puerco drainage and on the north by the top of the drainage that lies on the southern boundary of the Zia Indian reservation, the Santa Ana Indian reservation, and state highway 550. Municipalities contained within the SSCAFCA service area include the entirety of the City of Rio Rancho within Sandoval County (the City of Rio Rancho annexed an area within Bernalillo County that is not within SSCAFCA's service area), the entirety of the Village of Corrales, and the portion of the Town of Bernalillo west of the Rio Grande.

This QOLMP update provides an overview of work completed to date in the focus watersheds listed above, current project and planning processes, and related potential public recreational amenities that can be provided within the overall SSCAFCA service area. An additional purpose of this QOLMP update is to review planning documents that have been developed by other entities within the service area and entities who have interest in the service area (e.g., Mid Region Council of Governments) and to integrate findings and recommendations of those documents into SSCAFCA's planning efforts with regard to multi-use of its ROW and facilities.

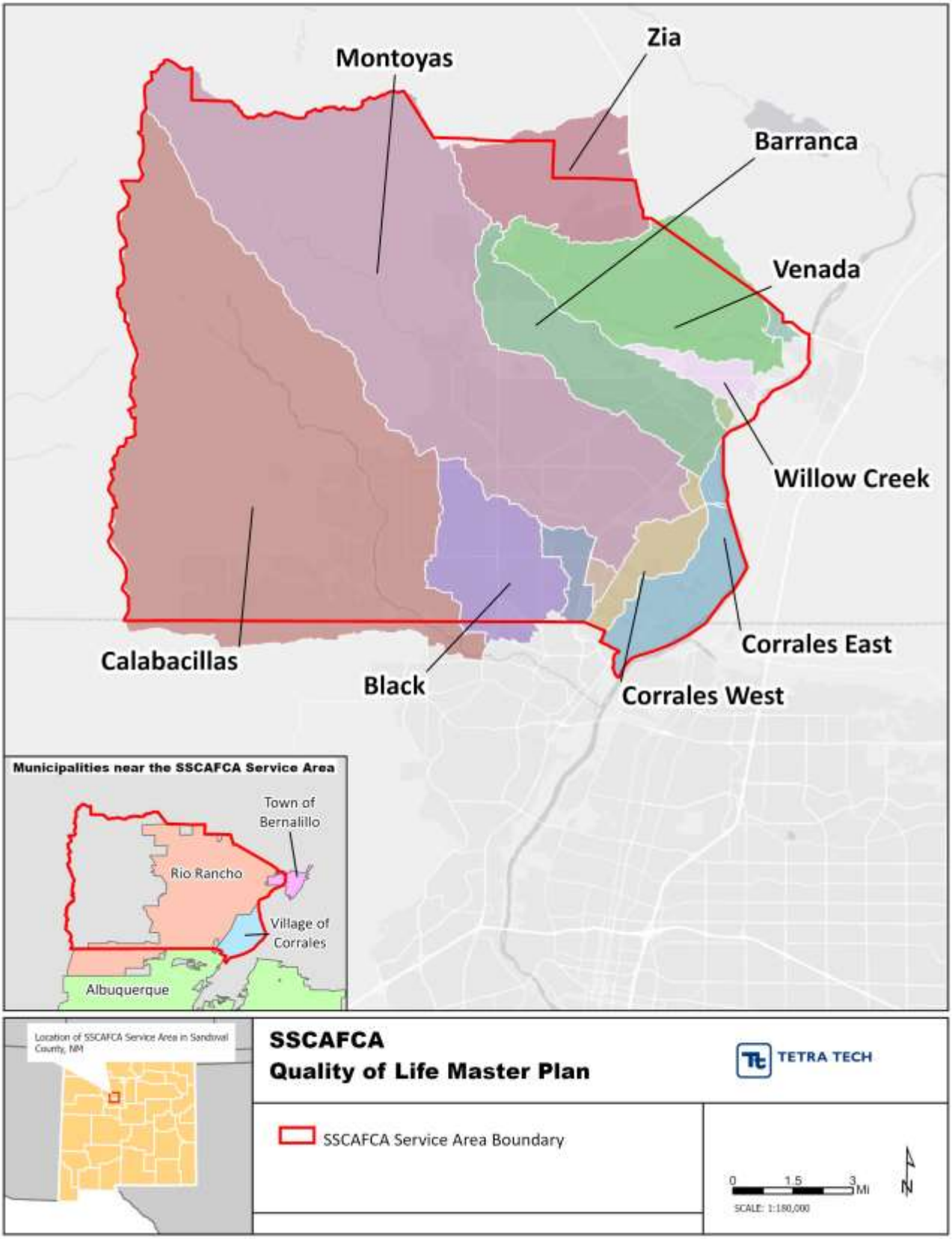

Figure 1. Watersheds in the SSCAFCA service area

2.0 PLAN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following goals and vision were presented in the 2006 QOLMP and have been updated to reflect current agency priorities:

- The **purpose** of the SSCAFCA QOLMP update is to "enable multi-use initiatives that may enhance citizens' outdoor enjoyment as well as provide a mechanism for developing amenities for properties or neighborhoods adjacent to SSCAFCA facilities and lands."
- **Activities proposed** in (or adjacent to) flood control facilities must be compatible with the mission of protecting public safety, private property, and habitats in undeveloped areas. The lands may be susceptible to flood damage from storm runoff. With these general conditions, jurisdictions, developers, and citizen groups are invited to make joint use of authority lands.
- The **vision** is to foresee recreation, alternative transportation, outdoor gathering places, scenic viewpoints, wildlife habitat, and cultural resources preservation among many other potential open space advantages.
- Planning **concepts** include corridors for open space, recreation, institutions, natural preserves, and low impact development.
- The QOLMP document has also been updated with the goal of meeting the vision of the 2016-2020 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), *Viva New Mexico: A Statewide Plan for Outdoor Adventure* (New Mexico State Parks, 2015).

These goals and vision from 2006 have also been revisited by the Quality of Life Committee and the SSCAFCA board and their updates are reflected above.

3.0 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

This section updates the 2006 QOLMP overview of the existing environment. The SSCAFCA service area is in the south-central portion of Sandoval County; it primarily lies within the mesa environs east of the Rio Grande, with limited portions of SSCAFCA situated in the Rio Grande floodplain. The ecosystems and environmental resources in the SSCAFCA region encompass the Albuquerque Basin and Rio Grande Floodplain Level IV Ecoregions (Omernik and Griffith 2005). The Albuquerque Basin is distinguished by its lower topographic position compared to neighboring higher elevation areas and is comparatively drier and warmer than these surrounding zones. The Albuquerque Basin supports a mix of sand scrub, desert grassland, and juniper savannah vegetation types. Located on the eastern edge of the SSCAFCA boundary, the Rio Grande Floodplain contains a mosaic of riparian vegetation (also known as "bosque"), including woodlands, forests, and wetlands, all of which have all been heavily altered through extensive floodplain modifications and upstream dams. Both of these Level IV Ecoregions are within the spatially extensive Arizona/New Mexico Plateau Level III Ecoregion that covers a significant portion of northwestern New Mexico and forms a transitional zone between eastern grasslands and higher elevation areas of the Colorado Plateau to the northwest and mountainous areas to the south and east (Omernik and Griffith 2005). Elevation in the SSCAFCA service area ranges from 4,998 feet at the Rio Grande to 6,706 feet near the northwest boundary.

3.1 CLIMATE

The SSCAFCA service area is in a semi-arid climate type that is typically located in elevated settings of temperate zones and that have low annual humidity, warm to hot summers, and cold winters with a wide range of diurnal temperatures (Kottek et al. 2006). Interannual precipitation in this region is highly variable and climate fluctuations through time are typical. A pronounced increase of precipitation generally occurs in the summer and during the North American monsoon, which typically begins in early July and lasts through September. These convective precipitation events are generally short in duration but can generate significant rainfall events that are an

important source of annual precipitation (Western Regional Climate Center 2020). Typical winter weather patterns consist of short-duration cyclonic storms with general movements from west to east, whereas summer precipitation events are convective in nature and tend to produce heavy localized rainfall (Scurlock 1998).

Based on 1971–2020 climate records, average annual precipitation is 9.51 inches. The average annual temperature is 54.7 degrees Fahrenheit (°F). Annual high and low temperatures range from an average monthly maximum of 95 °F in July to an average monthly minimum of 23.8°F in December (ACIS-NOAA 2020).

3.2 SOILS

Two broad soil types are found within the SCCAFCA service area: aridisols, which occur over most of the drier portions of the region; and entisols, which are found in the Rio Grande floodplain. Soils within the SSCAFCA service area primarily consist of highly erodible sandy soils that are generally loose in nature and prone to being windblown. The seven major soil types are found in the SSCAFCA service area are presented in Table 1 (USDA-NRCS 2019).

Table 1. Major soil types in SSCAFCA ROWs

Soil Type	Acres	Percent of SCCAFCA ROW*
Sheppard loamy fine sand, 3%–8% slopes	1663.23	38.8%
Zia-Clovis association, 2%–10% slopes	1152.17	26.9%
Grieta-Sheppard loamy fine sands, 2%–9% slopes	933.68	21.8%
Grieta fine sandy loam, 1%–4% slopes	249.79	5.8%
Sheppard loamy fine sand, 8%–15% slopes	173.51	4.1%
Kona-lava flows complex, 2%–10% slopes	78.65	1.8%
Pinavetes-rock outcrop complex, 15%–35% slopes	32.62	0.8%

*This analysis does not include soil types less than 20 acres.

3.3 VEGETATION

The SSCAFCA service area supports two predominant vegetation types: desert grassland and riparian forest and woodland. Desert grassland vegetation types cover the majority of the SSCAFCA service area and includes several desert perennial grasses. Dominant grasses include blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), with galleta (*Pleuraphis jamesii*) and sand dropseed (*Sporobolus cryptandrus*) common throughout. Common forbs include spectacle-pod (*Dimorphocarpa wislizeni*), tufted evening-primrose (*Oenothera caespitosa*), and ruderal species such as Russian-thistle (*Salsola tragus*) and fireweed (*Kochia scoparia*) in disturbed areas. Shrub species include four-wing saltbush (*Atriplex canescens*) and sand sagebrush (*Artemisia filifolia*). Drainages typically support rubber rabbitbrush (*Ericameria nauseosa*) while upper elevation settings in the western extent of SSCAFCA's boundary support limited one-seed juniper (*Juniperus monosperma*) savannah. A small portion of the SSCAFCA service area contains riparian areas that are confined to the historic floodplain of the Rio Grande in Corrales. Historically this area contained a mosaic of riparian woodlands and shrublands along with a variety of wetland meadows, ponds, and marshes. Presently, typical vegetation in this area includes Rio Grande cottonwood (*Populus deltoides* subsp. *wislizeni*) and willow (*Salix* spp.) bosque with understories of coyote willow (*Salix exigua*), New Mexico olive (*Forestiera neomexicana*), false indigo (*Amorpha fruticosa*), and seepwillow (*Baccharis* spp.). Characteristic exotic plant species in this area consist of tamarisk (*Tamarix* spp.), Siberian elm (*Ulmus pumila*), tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), and Russian olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*).

3.4 WILDLIFE

The SSCAFCA service area supports a variety of habitat types for terrestrial wildlife species. The majority of SSCAFCA's drainages are natural arroyos that provide habitat for a variety of species and provide corridors for wildlife. Common mammal species known to be associated with the SSCAFCA service area include coyote (*Canis latrans*), jackrabbit (*Lepus* spp.), cottontail (*Sylvilagus* spp.), and woodrat (*Neotoma* spp.). Several avian species may be found in SSCAFCA's service area, including cliff swallow (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*), mourning dove (*Zenaida macroura*), sage thrasher (*Oreoscoptes montanus*), house finch (*Haemorhous mexicanus*), Brewer's sparrows (*Spizella breweri*), northern flicker (*Colaptes auratus*), vesper sparrow (*Pooecetes gramineus*), and northern mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*). Potential raptors may include red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*), American kestrel (*Falco sparverius*), and great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*). The western burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia hypugaea*) has been observed in the SSCAFCA service area, particularly in nests on the vertical faces of arroyos. A variety of herptiles that might occur in the SSCAFCA service area include fence lizard (*Aspidoscelis inornata*), horned lizard (Phrynosoma spp.), New Mexico whiptail (*Cnemidophorus neomexicanus*), gopher snake (*Pityophis catenifer*), rattlesnake (*Crotalus* spp.), and New Mexico spadefoot toad (*Spea multiplicata*).

4.0 AGENCY COORDINATION

As part of the initial planning and data collection components of this report, SSCAFCA held outreach meetings with stakeholders to gather information related to the planning process. In addition, existing reports and documentation were reviewed and summarized.

4.1 AGENCY COORDINATION AND REVIEW

4.1.1 City of Rio Rancho

An outreach meeting was held with the CORR Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department in April 2020. CORR has developed a collection of planning documents that address parks, bike paths, open space, and trails. Several of these are summarized in Section 5 below. The potential use of SSCAFCA ROW adjacent to arroyos was discussed as a way to implement recreation and park facilities that would benefit both SSCAFCA and CORR. CORR notes that different groups of people would be interested in the SSCAFCA QOLMP project, including volunteers, the CORR Parks and Recreation Commission, and the Sandoval County Touring Society.

4.1.2 City of Rio Rancho Planning and Zoning

An outreach meeting was held with the CORR Development Service Department, Planning and Zoning Division, in May 2020 that addressed different topics related to the project and potential outside interest groups. The main document discussed in this meeting was the update to the *Rio Rancho Comprehensive Plan* (CORR 2010), which is currently underway.

4.1.3 Mid-Region Council of Governments

The meeting held with representatives from the Mid-Region Council of Governments (MRCOG) was also held in May 2020. It addressed topics related to QOLMP update documents, including geospatial resources and contact details for interested groups who can provide more information for and about the project.

Outreach was also conducted with representatives from the Village of Corrales and Sandoval County and additional QOLMP update resource information and documentation were collected.

5.0 PLANNING DOCUMENTS OVERVIEW

The information provided in this section describes highlighted elements from the review process of various documents as part of the QOLMP update. Documents were provided by SSCAFCA and agency partners during the initial outreach meeting events described above. A summary of the elements from each document are provided below to illustrate potential connections with the SSCAFCA system and QOLMP update.

5.1 SOUTHERN SANDOVAL COUNTY ARROYO FLOOD CONTROL AUTHORITY

5.1.1 SSCAFCA Maintenance Access and Trails Master Plan

While the QOLMP sets the policy direction and lays the vision for the multiple uses of arroyo Watershed Parks, the *Maintenance Access and Trails Master Plan* (SSCAFCA Trails Plan; CDM Smith 2018) is an implementation-focused document that refines proposed access trail locations and alignments and identifies potential funding strategies. Goals include effective maintenance of arroyo and flood control facilities, providing a safe and secure trail system, accommodating a variety of recreation opportunities, providing local and regional connectivity, minimizing environmental impacts, and pursuing diverse funding. The process to develop the SSCAFCA Trails Plan considered existing trails that are part of SSCAFCA, CORR, Village of Corrales, City of Albuquerque, and Bernalillo County networks as well as future trails proposed by these entities. SSCAFCA considered a variety of user types, including pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians, and off-road vehicle (ORV) users, and analyzed adjacent trail networks, existing ROW, and connections to other trails. The SSCAFCA Trails Plan includes and describes approximately 87 miles of proposed new trails and trail segments. Detailed design guidelines including trail surface, accessibility, crossings, signage systems, safety measures, layout configuration, and estimated costs are also provided. Operations and maintenance are addressed. Finally, the plan outlines strategies for implementation, including agency coordination, public education and outreach strategies, and funding opportunities.

5.1.2 Watershed Management Plans

SSCAFCA has developed watershed management plans (WMPs) for many of the watersheds within the SSCAFCA service area. The primary purpose of these WMPs is to address flooding issues within each watershed. However, in many cases, multi-use of SSCAFCA ROW and facilities is addressed as a tangential usage of SSCAFCA-owned properties. These plans vary by watershed addressed, but in general they describe notable features of the specific watershed, management and access strategies, and existing and recommended recreation and trails (if applicable). WMPs have been prepared for Barranca Watershed, Black Arroyo, Calabacillas Watershed, Montoyas Watershed, Unnamed Arroyo, Venada Arroyo, and Willow Creek Watershed. These are referenced in Section 7 and in Appendix A.

5.2 STATEWIDE COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN (SCORP)

The SCORP illustrates the complete picture of outdoor recreation in New Mexico across federal, state, local, and private lands. The document is intended for both private and public outdoor recreation stakeholders to achieve the vision that improves New Mexico's economic, physical and environmental health. The SCORP is best used for all stakeholders to promote, provide, and manage outdoor recreation activities, facilities, and programs. The SCORP also enables New Mexico to continue receiving its apportionment of federal recreation funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund annually allocated by Congress. The report includes data-rich references on visitor use (i.e., favorite and common activities, recreation satisfaction, facilities, desired experiences, events, out of state

visitors, and technology influence), trends, agency recommendations, and priorities. Highlighted topics include participation preferences and perceptions, economic and health benefits, suggested non-regulatory actions, and information on funding. This information can be used for recreational financing; and educating civic leaders, the public, and the media on the positive impacts of outdoor recreation on New Mexico's economy and the quality of life. The SCORP identifies factors that will influence how agencies provide outdoor recreation in New Mexico including, recreation providers, population trends, socioeconomic patterns, and public preferences.

5.3 CITY OF RIO RANCHO

5.3.1 Rio Rancho Bosque Open Space Integrated Management Plan

The *Rio Ranch Bosque Open Space Integrated Management Plan* (Open Space Plan) was developed in 2015 (Brown, Green & more, LLC. and Golder Associates Inc. 2015). The Open Space Plan intends to provide information for future work in the Rio Rancho Bosque Open Space including restoration, recreation, education, preservation, and maintenance. The Open Space Plan affirms that providing opportunities for residents to enjoy the Rio Rancho Bosque Open Space will enhance the attraction of business and residents to the CORR. The plan recommends the evaluation of methods to improve the long-term condition of trails and to identify partnerships and funding opportunities. Additionally, the plan recognizes that infrastructure maintenance through several large arroyos needs to be considered before investments are directed to such areas. One of the main objectives of this plan is to guide future management decisions in a manner that promotes compatibility with habitat restoration work that is performed in compliance with the Endangered Species Act. With regards to SSCAFCA's QOLMP update, this plan suggests management techniques that allow for recreational uses to occur without impacting the ecological integrity of the bosque.

5.3.2 City of Rio Rancho Comprehensive Plan

Adopted in 2010, the *Rio Rancho Comprehensive Plan* outlines land use categories and provides a conceptual generalized land use map. It fulfills legal requirements that justify the land use decisions adopted by the governing body. The primary goals of the plan include infrastructure, development, fiscal health, public safety services, government services, and quality of life. The plan considers the preservation and enhancements of arroyos as an open space corridor that provides aquifer recharge and flood control, wildlife habitat, and a place where citizens can embrace the environment. It also considers community facilities (e.g., parks, school, libraries) and transit opportunities, walkable neighborhoods, and complete streets to accommodate the CORR's growth. Specific elements of the plan address trails, parks, and transportation as well as how the CORR can enhance each of these. In addition to this, the plan can be a tool by which the CORR can work with private developers to address gaps in trail systems and to provide connections between arroyo trail systems.

5.3.3 City of Rio Rancho Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Master Plan

The CORR's 2011 *Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Master Plan* (PMC 2011) was developed to make the city a safer and more enjoyable place for residents and visitors to walk and bike. The plan has three primary goals:

- Interconnect the pedestrian and bicycle network to provide safe and attractive options.
- Expand arroyo trails and trail access opportunities for travel and recreation.
- Reduce vehicle miles traveled by making biking and walking more available.

The benefits of these goals will contribute toward the improving public health, air quality, economic development, and the quality of life. Most of the complete bicycle and pedestrian networks are found in the southern portion of Rio Rancho. In older neighborhoods most of the streetscapes were developed without sidewalks and bike lanes, however; new development is required to accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians.

5.3.4 City of Rio Rancho Strategic Plan

The *Strategic Plan 2017–2022* (CORR 2019) states the local government's vision, mission statement, and core values. It also identifies focus areas with corresponding goals and objectives. The CORR's vision and mission statements are guided by three core values: cooperation, respect, and stewardship. The plan identifies key areas that are accompanied by goals and objectives. These key areas include economic vitality, safety, infrastructure, quality of life, and organizational vitality. Recommendations and objectives relevant to SSCAFCA's QOLMP update are discussed under the 'Quality of Life' key area. This section advises the pursuit of funding options to begin phased implementation of trail system enhancements and to coordinate land use efforts that are reflective of open space and other amenity needs.

5.3.5 City of Rio Rancho Development Manual

The CORR's *Development Manual* contains two volumes. *Volume I – Process* identifies policies and procedures routinely used by the CORR. *Volume II – Design Criteria* provides design standards and criteria for the physical development of the City of Rio Rancho. Chapter II.5 addresses parks and trails design guidelines for facilities including parks, landscaping, trails, fencing, and other elements. The document also includes guidance for managing ROW and easements for multiple use, including SSCAFCA facilities.

5.3.5.1 City or Rio Rancho Development Manual Volume I – Process

Volume I of the CORR Development Manual (CORR 2009a) provides policies and procedures routinely used by the CORR. The development process refers to the *Rio Rancho Comprehensive Plan*, zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations, systems and facilities plans, large-scale area plans, master plans, specific area and corridor plans, and the project-specific site plans. This manual outlines the commercial building permit process, construction and inspection process, the application for construction within public ROW, street and address naming, and administrative permits and processes. The use of the development process for implementing recreational features is further discussed under Section 6.2 below.

5.3.5.2 City of Rio Rancho Development Manual Volume II – Design Criteria

Volume II of the CORR Development Manual (CORR 2009b) discusses design criteria that provides design and physical development standards for the CORR. The other major documents discussed in this manual are the site development plans, grading and drainage master plan, drainage implementation plan, and the Water and Wastewater Availability Statement. Guidelines for joint use possibilities, permanent open space, and multiple-use ROW and easements are described. In reference to matters of interest for this QOLMP update, the 2009 Development Manual states:

> *Multiple uses are encouraged for drainage ROWs and drainage easements including, but not limited to, utility corridors, wildlife habitat, open space and recreation trails. Where multiple uses are planned by the city, another public agency, or a public utility, the city may require that dedication statements include language which permits said specified multiple uses and Watershed Management Parks amenities in addition to the primary drainage function.*

5.4 MID-REGION COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

5.4.1 Connections 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan

The *Connections 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan* (MTP; MRCOG 2020) is a long-range transportation plan developed to help guide transportation investment in the greater Albuquerque metro area, which includes Rio Rancho. The MTP identifies challenges that will face the planning area over the next 20 years and presents strategies for addressing them. Some concerns related to pedestrian and bicycle modes include unsafe cross walks, a lack of buffered bike lanes, and the incompleteness of bicycle and pedestrian networks. Additional concerns are land use, freight corridors, poor signal timing, and a need for better coordination between agencies. The MTP presents goals, pathways, and strategies to optimize mobility, foster economic linkages, improve active transportation, and encourage environmental resiliency. MTP appendices include a list of potential projects, financial plan detail, a long-range transportation systems guide, recommended pathways, and model methodologies. In addition, the Mid-Region Council of Governments maintains a Long Range Bicycle System map and there are opportunities for additional coordination.

5.5 VILLAGE OF CORRALES

5.5.1 Corrales Trails Master Plan

The *Corrales Trails Master Plan* was originally produced in 2009 and was updated in 2016 (RTI 2016). The plan provides short-term goals, including preservation and enhancement of the Village's existing system of trails and pathways; expansion of access to existing trails and pathways; and acquisition and construction of new trails according to the plan as opportunities present themselves. One of the project goals mentioned in relation to the SSCAFCA Trails Plan includes a connection between West Sagebrush and the Thompson Fence Line trail. Trails and pathways connecting the north and south portions of the Village through or over the flood control channels were also included.

5.6 GEODATABASE

An Esri File Geodatabase (GDB) for use in the analysis and development of recommended projects was assembled during the development of this project and is included as part of the package of deliverables. Data were compiled from CORR, the Village of Corrales, and MRCOG, and were imported into this GDB to provide a uniform data source. The GDB contains 20 features classes representing the various types of data used to perform geospatial analysis. Additionally, four raster layers were included; the National Land Cover Database tree canopy and imperviousness products (Homer et al. 2016); a normalized difference vegetation index derived from Sentinel-2 data (Copernicus 2020) to identify areas with higher canopy values; and Southwest Regional Gap Analysis Project (SWReGAP) displaying land cover types (Prior-Magee 2007).

6.0 TYPES OF RECREATION FEATURES

Many of the plans summarized in preceding sections address recreation and recreation facilities. Relevant types of recreation features and measures that could be applied in the SSCAFCA service area (or included in master planning for the SSCAFCA service area) are described in this section. Though not all features may be utilized in recommended alternatives or plans, this section provides an overview of feature types that either currently exist within the project boundaries or are addressed in various agency planning documents. These types of recreation features can provide potential linkages throughout the system, which is one of the main goals of the QOLMP.

It should be noted that not all recreational features listed here are within SSCAFCA's ability to construct and maintain. SSCAFCA welcomes proposals by outside entities for the construction and operation and maintenance of all types of recreational facilities within SSCAFCA's ROW. While it will be outside of the mission of SSCAFCA to construct and maintain parks, where feasible SSCAFCA-owned facilities could be developed and maintained by outside entities or organizations for the benefit of the citizens of Rio Rancho. To the greatest extent possible, SSCAFCA's right of way should be maintained as open space, providing that amenity to the citizens of the jurisdiction. Obviously, construction of flood control facilities may diminish some of these open space potentials. SSCAFCA will make every attempt to maintain their areas as Open Space.

6.1 TRAILS

Trails create recreation and transportation opportunities to safely cycle, walk, jog, horseback ride, skate, etc. for the community. They are an ideal recreation feature for the linear ROWs managed by SSCAFCA. Trails can add benefit to the community's access and connectivity for all modes of transportation in the area. Many of the planning documents reviewed in Section 5 identify proposed trails and trail networks to complement the existing trail infrastructure. In some areas, proposed trails have been constructed since the 2006 QOLMP and implemented per the SSCAFCA Trails Plan, CORR, and/or projects listed in MRCOG planning documentation. These are shown as "Existing Trail or Bike Route" on all of the figures provided in Section 7.

6.1.1 Unpaved Trails

Natural surfaces can be soft or hard materials (Figure 2). Users that typically prefer natural surfaces are mountain bikers, hikers, runners, equestrians, and walkers. The SSCAFCA Trails Plan explains how native soil that is used to construct trails is adequate, but its erodibility and durability may need to be addressed. Activities that can affect natural trails include equestrian use, mountain bikes and ORVs which are prohibited within SSCAFCA boundaries. SSCAFCA's Trails Plan also indicates that the coarsely textured native soils should be augmented with gravel and sand for areas that need firmness, and to exercise caution with finely textured native soils, as they can be poor surface trail materials (CDM Smith 2018). Unpaved trails may be developed primarily from access routes for SSCAFCA maintenance activities.

Crusher fines are the byproduct of rock crushing operations. A crusher fines trail is defined as having a soft stone surface consisting of finely crushed rock such as granite, limestone, or sandstone (Figure 3). SSCAFCA's Trails Plan states that crusher fines are an appropriate trail surfaces for wheelchair accessibility. Crusher fines trails can accommodate most trail activities while still providing the natural environmental feeling of a gravel-like surface. Additionally, crusher fines trails seem to be stable over the long term and provide proper compaction and drainage (CDM Smith 2018). Treatment of natural materials, including crusher fines, with a stabilizer can extend the functioning life of natural trail surfaces.

Figure 2. Natural Surface Trail

Figure 3. Crusher Fines Trail

6.1.2 Paved Trails

Paved trails consist of asphalt, concrete, or a mixture of both materials (Figure 4). Typically, paved trails can be more expensive; however, they usually require less maintenance and can accommodate high-impact use. Some maintenance tasks include washing off deposited silt and dirt, filling cracks, patching, stabilizing slabs, and grinding for even surface reestablishment. SSCAFCA's Trails Plan highlights how paved trails are great for urban use, especially bicycle commuting, but sometimes they are not preferred by joggers, walkers, or horses. Paved trails are a hard material and, if designed well, will provide a long-term service life (CDM Smith 2018).

Figure 4. Paved Trail

6.1.3 Bike Routes and Lanes

While not within SSCAFCA's purview, bike routes and lanes are portions of roadways, often signified by striping, signage, or pavement markings, that are designated for the exclusive or preferential use of bicyclists. Bike routes and lanes should be utilized to provide connections to existing or proposed recreation features or linkages between trail segments within the SSCAFCA service area. The SSCAFCA Trails Plan (CDM Smith 2018) highlights how the Safe Routes To Schools program projects can incorporate bike parking near schools.

6.2 PARKING

Parking lots provided near and for access to recreational amenities allow for users within and outside of the community to drive to the location and stay for long periods of time. Parking lots are usually provided where larger tracts of land are available, when accessing amenities that attract large groups of people (parks, sporting events), or when accessing a long trail system that has limited access points (CDM Smith 2018). Parking lots can be natural surface, crusher fines, and/or paved with parking bumpers.

6.3 ARROYO CROSSINGS (PEDESTRIAN BRIDGES)

Arroyo crossings (bridges) are only for non-motorized use (Figure 5). To safely cross over an arroyo, grade-separated crossings are required. Bridges are beneficial to provide a continuity of trail use over an arroyo during all weather conditions, including active arroyo flow. The different arroyo crossings mentioned in SSCAFCA's Trails Plan include bridge overpass, underpass, culvert crossings, and wood stringer bridge (CDM Smith 2018). The improvement of arroyo crossings is highlighted in the goals and safety section of the SSCAFCA Trails Plan, thus leading to improved safe and secure trail systems.

Figure 5. Example of a Pedestrian Bridge

6.4 OPEN SPACE

In June 2015, the *Rio Rancho Bosque Open Space Integrated Management Plan* was created to guide development for future work in the Rio Rancho Bosque Open Space area in the bosque. The objective of this development is to promote restoration, recreation, education, preservation, and maintenance. There are four specific objectives in the Open Space Plan: (1) Sustain the Rio Rancho Open Space Bosque in its natural condition for future generations, (2) Intervene with restoration actions in areas where the bosque ecosystem is degraded, (3) Protect designated ecologically sensitive areas throughout the Rio Rancho Bosque, and (4) Provide habitat for endangered species and encourage natural river processes (Brown, Green & more, LLC and Golder Associates 2015). While SSCAFCA does not have any official participation or stake in the City's Open Space program, SSCAFCA concurs with the City's objectives regarding Open Space.

However, SSCAFCA does consider its upland arroyo properties to be Open Space. SSCAFCA's intent is to preserve the arroyos in this manner as a means of providing habitat for wildlife, infiltration of surface water into groundwater through natural bottom arroyos and provide the aesthetic benefits of open space to the citizens of the City of Rio Rancho.

6.5 SPECIAL RECREATIONAL VENUES

6.5.1 Parks

The CORR believes that "parks are a key catalyst of an evolving sense of community for residents moving here from around the country" (Sites Southwest 2004). Fourteen parks have been constructed within CORR boundaries since 2006. The CORR currently maintains 43 parks and recreation spaces. These include playgrounds, ball fields, walking paths, benches, shade structures, picnic areas, and other amenities.

6.5.2 Disc Golf

A planning concept included in the 2006 QOLMP invites competitive skills through the development of a disc golf course. Disc golf, also known as frisbee golf, is played like golf except that a flying disc is used. The game is

designed for all ages and is an excellent lifetime fitness activity. Potential locations for disc golf are adjacent to residential neighborhoods, parks, and schools (Community Sciences Corporation 2006). According to the Professional Disc Golf Association (PDGA 2020), the space between targets should be 200–400 feet, with no targets closer than 100 feet apart.

6.5.3 Equestrian Facilities

The trail type descriptions in the SSCAFCA Trails Plan highlight that for native soil trail types, equestrians prefer loose or compacted dirt trails, whereas an unpaved gravel trail may not be suitable for equestrians, unless specifically designed. Often mountain bikers share trails with equestrians, regardless of single or double track (CDM Smith 2018). Trails and bridge crossings for equestrians provide a variety of uses and, where possible, loose or compacted dirt trails are preferred for this use. A separation of trail uses will also aid in safety for all users. Where equestrian passage is provided, educational signage should be provided to make all users aware of trail etiquette.

6.5.4 Archery Range

The 2006 QOLMP highlights archery in its planning concepts labeled as a special recreation venue. Archery is an activity where people practice the skill of using a bow to shoot arrows. The Archery Trade Association states in its archery park development guidelines that no more than one-half acre of land is typical for an archery range (Archery Trade Association 2020). As more targets are offered, more space needed. To provide access to the community, it is recommended that archery facilities should be located in common park facilities.

6.5.5 Non-motorized BMX Mountain Bike Park

BMX tracks are popular in various communities. They can be built anywhere, but ideally would be placed in a location with natural hills and a scenic view. As noted in the 2006 QOLMP, headwater portions of several Watershed Parks can offer stretches for use by non-motorized cycles (Community Sciences Corporation 2006).

Trail design considerations will differ for the type of desired users. Shared-use trail systems can accommodate the needs of a broad array of users, including hikers, trail runners, and mountain bikers. Trail design should be appropriate to the soil and topographic types in the proposed trail system to create sustainable routes that require the least maintenance. A minimum area of approximately 40 acres is typical for a shared-use trail system. A bike park contains banked features, dirt jumps, and pump track elements that are suitable for BMX and mountain bikes.

6.6 WILDLIFE CORRIDORS

A wildlife corridor provides a habitat corridor to connect wildlife populations to different areas or habitat types that would otherwise be fractured by human development. The *Rio Rancho Comprehensive Plan* outlines a goal to establish a coordinated and connected system of open space throughout the city that preserves natural systems, protects wildlife habitat and corridors, and provides land for low impact recreation (CORR 2010).

The 72-acre Black Arroyo Wildlife Park (BAWP) is considered a wildlife corridor and is discussed in more detail in Section 7. The trail has a single-span pedestrian bridge (220 feet) that stretches over the arroyo west of Maggie Cordova Elementary School. It has two culverted crossings, trailhead parking areas, interpretive signage, shade structures, and wildlife drinking fountains supplied with harvested water (CDM Smith 2018).

Every drainage is a wildlife corridor; therefore, potential arroyo crossings are considered within each Watershed Park in order to maintain habitat connection.

6.7 TOOLS FOR DEVELOPING RECREATIONAL AMENITIES

SSCAFCA can work with other agencies and community stakeholders to be a part of implementing recreational amenities on or near SSCAFCA facilities. These potential processes are described below.

SSCAFCA has developed WMPs for many of the watersheds within the SSCAFCA service area. The WMPs identify specific opportunities and limitations in each of the watersheds and outline strategies for managing flood control facilities. These WMPs are addressed in more detail in Section 7.

6.7.1 Lateral Erosion Envelope

The Lateral Erosion Envelope (LEE) is also referred to as the "LEE line." The LEE line is "an area that is adjacent to unlined or natural arroyos or drainage ways that has potential to be disturbed by erosion, scour (materials being swept away by flowing water), or lateral migration caused by storms up to and including a 100-year storm" (SSCAFCA 2016). The reason for creating a LEE is so that areas around an arroyo that poses a risk to new or existing structures (e.g., homes, multi-family dwellings, or commercial projects) due to the movement of flowing water in the arroyo and the erosion of banks, can be identified. SSCAFCA establishes and updates LEE lines only for the larger regional natural arroyos. The buffered areas around LEE lines constitute ROW areas targeted for acquisition by SCCAFCA and may be used to provide additional trails and other public use amenities discussed in this report.

6.7.2 City of Rio Rancho Development Manual

Volume I of the CORR Development Manual, described in Section 5 above, refers to the development process for planning, zoning, facilities, master planning, and site-specific plans. The manual includes discussion of construction or use within public ROW. As noted above, ROW within or adjacent to SSCAFCA project areas can provide both maintenance access for SSCAFCA as well as allow public use (CORR 2009a). Volume II of the CORR Development Manual describes design standards for use within the CORR. Working with CORR during development and implementation of master plans can be a way to implement multiple use of ROW and easements. Open space and trails can be formalized by establishing joint use agreements, establishing specific cost allocations within city budgets, or incorporating multiple ROWs and easements (CORR 2009b). Appendix II.5-1 of Volume II of the CORR Development Manual has specific language regarding the parks and recreational trails development process.

Either during development of SSCAFCA project and/or working with housing developers directly, these goals of public and open space use can be implemented. The CORR development goals were created to promote the health, safety, and welfare of current and future citizens.

6.7.3 Partnering with other government agencies or private organizations

In addition to partnering with CORR, SSCAFCA also regularly coordinates with Sandoval County, the Village of Corrales, and the Town of Bernalillo. These entities have various levels of planning efforts related to recreational and public use amenities. Where applicable, coordination within the respective geographic boundaries could allow for a shared implementation of public use benefit in the form of trails, access, and parks. Specific potential opportunities are described in Section 7.

Several private organizations that are interested in specific types of recreational amenities or access, that could also be potential partners, are described below.

6.7.3.1 Disc Golf Association

The Albuquerque Disc Golf Association (ADGA) is a nonprofit organization that serves a group of people who support the Albuquerque disc golf and its growth. The ADGA's mission is about "building relations with the city

and communities in which their courses exist."
(https://www.discgolfscene.com/clubs/Albuquerque_Disc_Golf_Association)

6.7.3.2 Bike ABQ

Bike ABQ is an organization with the mission to "support, educate, and advocate for a Bike-Friendly Greater Albuquerque." (https://www.bikeabq.org/)

6.7.3.3 Greater Albuquerque Active Transportation Committee (GAATC)

The GAATC is a City of Albuquerque governmental committee that advises the Mayor, City Council and City Departments on projects and policies that improve active transportation options. Working with this committee will assist SSCAFCA in completing the Outer Loop Trail (discussed below in Section 7.1) since a segment of this trail is within the City of Albuquerque. (Greater Albuquerque Active Transportation Committee — City of Albuquerque (cabq.gov))

6.7.3.4 New Mexico Touring Society

New Mexico Touring society is a bicycle advocacy and education group.
(https://www.nmts.org/BicycleAdvocacy.php)

7.0 ARROYO CONDITIONS, FACILITIES AND EXAMPLES OF POTENTIAL PROJECTS

Many projects are presented in various documents, including the original QOLMP (Community Sciences Corporation 2006), SSCAFCA Trails Plan (CDM Smith 2018), Rio Rancho Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Master Plan (PMC 2011), Village of Corrales Comprehensive Plan (MRCOG 2009), Corrales Trails Master Plan (RTI 2009) and the City of Rio Rancho Comprehensive Plan (CORR 2010).

In order to be able to build momentum to accomplish these larger project scopes envisioned in the above planning documents, SSCAFCA is recommending implementation of components of the larger projects. Each of the projects listed in this section are components of the larger vision for outdoor recreation in the watershed and will provide stand-alone utility as they are not dependent on the completion of other elements in the watershed.

Proposed infrastructure improvements occur primarily within SSCAFCA or CORR ROW and the land ownership status for each proposed recreation amenity is described under each specific proposed feature. Proposed recreational amenities in this section primarily consist of trail features that are generally discussed from lower topographic positions to higher topographic positions. For example, a proposed trail segment would be described from its lower elevation start to its higher elevation terminus.

Short term (within the next 5-10 years) priority project areas are listed first for each watershed. Longer term (10 years or more) recommended projects are also discussed.

7.1 OUTLER LOOP TRAIL

The strategic vision of the SSCAFCA Board of Directors is that the Outer Loop Trail (OLT; Figure 6) be established. This proposed trail provides a long-distance trail loop around SSCAFCA's service area, using arroyo corridors to provide the vast majority of the right of way and alignment for the trail as well as provide maintenance access to the arroyo corridors for SSCAFCA personnel. The OLT was identified in the SSCAFCA Trails Master Plan (CDM Smith 2018).

The initial proposed alignment for the OLT contained seven segments around the north, west, and south perimeter of the service area for a total of approximately 36.8 miles of proposed contiguous trail/arroyo access system.

OLT Segment 1: This segment is along the northern perimeter of the service area in the Venada Arroyo watershed. The eastern start of the segment is the Rio Grande and the western terminus of this segment is Paseo del Volcan. The approximate length of this OLT segment is 2.7 miles. Of this 2.7 miles, SSCAFCA owns or has easement over the entire length. The Middle Venada Trail segment identified in the short-range priority projects section of this document (Section 7.4.1.1) proposes to construct approximately 2.1 miles of this segment. The remaining 0.6 miles of this OLT segment is identified in the long-range project for the Bosque to NM528 trail alignment of this document (Section 7.4.2.1).

OLT Segment 2: This segment is along the northern perimeter of the service area in the Venada Arroyo watershed. The eastern start of this OLT segment is Paseo del Volcan and the western terminus is Unser Blvd. where the Venada Arroyo crosses. The approximate length of this OLT segment is 4.2 miles. Of this 4.2 miles, SSCAFCA owns or has easement over the entire length. The Upper Venada Trail segment identified in the short-range priority projects section of this document (Section 7.4.1.2) proposes to construct the entire length of this segment.

OLT Segment 3: This segment is along the western perimeter of the service area, with the northern start of this OLT segment at the Venada Arroyo at Unser Blvd and the southern terminus in the headwaters of a tributary to the Montoyas Arroyo. The approximate length of this OLT segment is 3.5 miles. Of this 3.5 miles, SSCAFCA and/or the City of Rio Rancho has easement or ownership over 3.1 miles of the proposed alignment, with the

remaining length being in private ownership. SSCAFCA is proposing to use approximately 2.0 miles of existing trail/sidewalk network through the Mariposa subdivision, therefore that portion of the trail is already constructed. Construction of trail segments through easements within the Mariposa subdivision will need to be coordinated with the Mariposa Homeowners Association and will likely need to be limited to a minimal trail footprint to ensure to preserve native vegetation within these areas. Within the privately owned portion of this segment, there is an existing tributary to the Montoyas Arroyo that could be acquired as drainage ROW. The private owner of this segment of ROW is Mariposa East 2 LP according to the Sandoval County Assessor.

OLT Segment 4: This segment along the western perimeter of the service area, with a northern start at the headwaters of a tributary to the Montoyas Arroyo and a southern terminus is located near the headwaters of the main stem of the Montoyas Arroyo. The approximate length of this OLT segment is 3.4 miles. SSCAFCA currently owns approximately 1.4 miles of the proposed ROW of this OLT segment. The remaining 2.0 miles of this segment is privately owned by numerous separate lot owners. Alternative alignments can be explored, taking advantage of existing Sandoval County-owned rights-of-way, however, this may increase the length of trail and potentially cost associated with this segment. The construction of the northern 1.1 miles of this segment of the OLT is identified in the long-term project as a portion of the Northern Meadows to Mariposa trail, Section 7.4.2.2.

OLT Segment 5: This segment along the western perimeter of the service area, with the northern start downstream of the headwaters of the Montoyas Arroyo and the southern terminus located at the headwaters of the Calabacillas Arroyo. The approximate length of this OLT segment is 4.8 miles. SSCAFCA currently owns approximately 3.8 miles of the proposed ROW of this OLT segment. The remaining 1.0 miles of this segment is privately owned by one landowner, the King Brothers, according to the Sandoval County Assessor.

OLT Segment 6: This segment is along the southern perimeter of the service area, with a western start at the headwaters of the Calabacillas Arroyo and the eastern terminus along the Calabacillas Arroyo at the Bernalillo County line. This segment of the OLT is approximately 13 miles long and SSCAFCA owns ROW along the entire 13 proposed miles.

OLT Segment 7: This segment is along the southern perimeter of the service area, with a western start at the Calabacillas Arroyo at the Bernalillo County line and the eastern terminus at the Rio Grande. This segment of the OLT is approximately 5.2 miles long. Ownership of this property is assumed to be the Albuquerque Metropolitan Arroyo Flood Control Authority (AMAFCA) and is assumed to be contiguous ownership all the way to the river from the county line. Since this segment is outside of SSCAFCA’s jurisdictional area, coordination with Bernalillo County local governments will be required to complete this OLT segment.

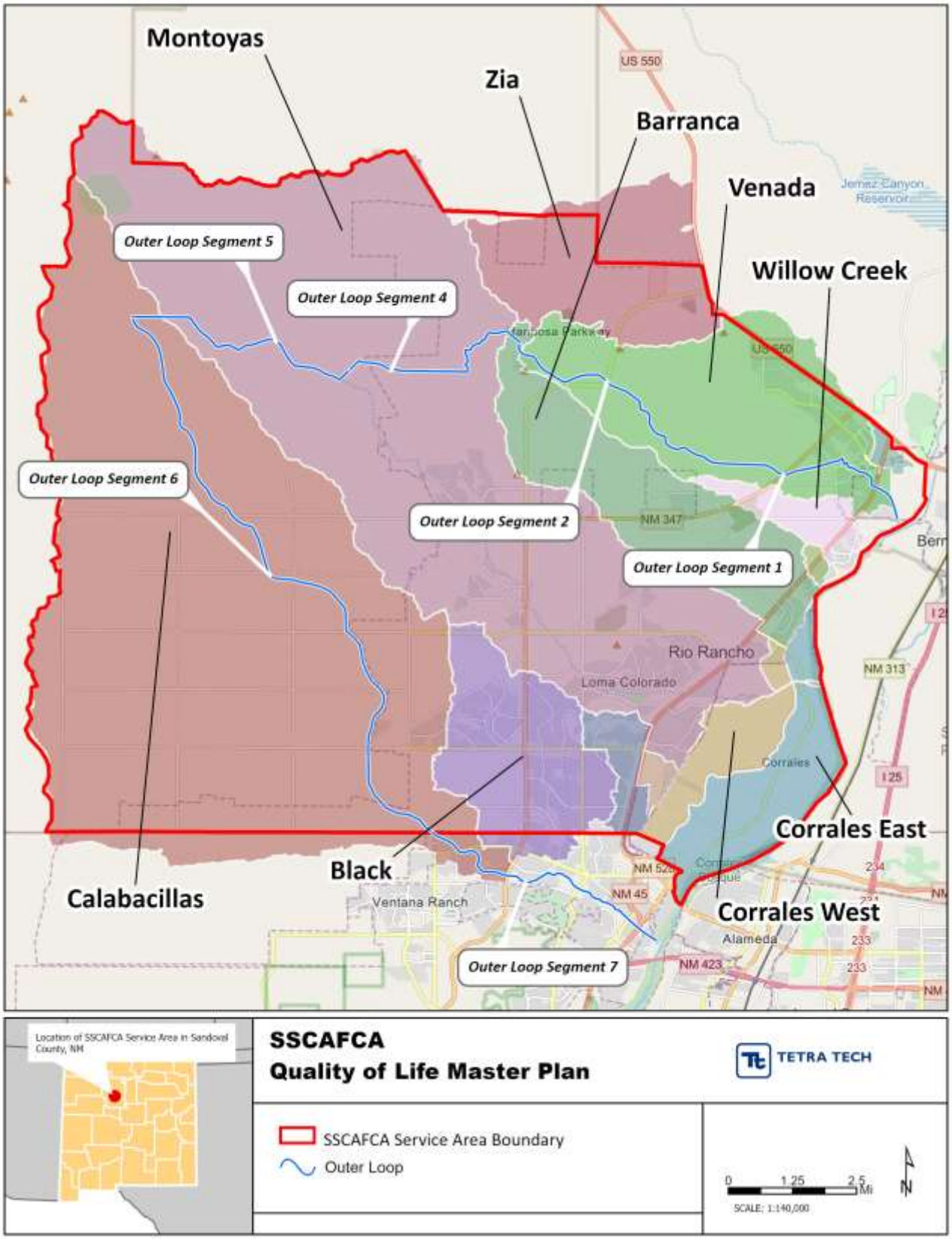

Figure 6. Outer Loop Trail

7.2 BLACK ARROYO WATERSHED

The Black Arroyo Watershed is on the southern edge of the SSCAFCA boundaries, with the southernmost portion of the watershed falling outside of the SSCAFCA service area (Figure 7). The area within the SSCAFCA service area is 9.38 square miles with 0.78 sq. miles located in Bernalillo County. The Black Arroyo Watershed consists of two main branches, the east and west branch, which both drain into the AMAFCA Black Dam, located south of the SSCAFCA service area in Bernalillo County. The *Black Arroyo Watershed Park Management Plan* Technical Addendum (Smith Engineering 2013) estimated that approximately 70% of the watershed was developed. The east branch is largely developed, while the west branch contains a higher proportion of undeveloped land.

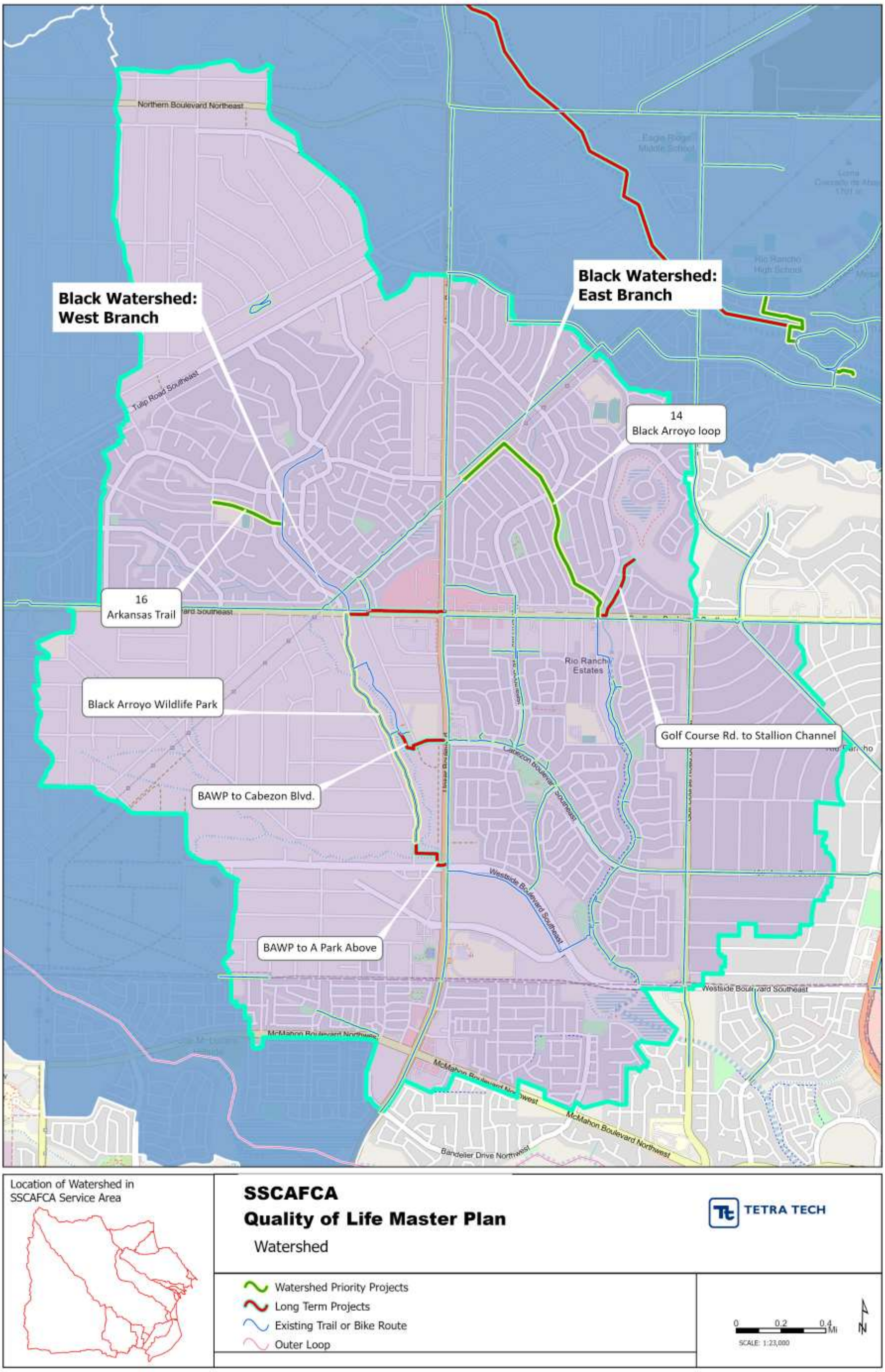

Figure 7. Black Arroyo Watershed

7.2.1 Black Arroyo Watershed Short-term Priority Projects

The Black Arroyo Watershed Master Plan (ASCG 2002) provided a comprehensive plan for flood control and watershed protection and introduced concepts to offer multiple use trails and recreational facilities. It identified undersized crossing structures and minimal access for maintenance or multi-use purposes. The following priority projects have been identified in this Master Plan and/or in the various planning documents described above.

7.2.1.1 Black Arroyo Wildlife Park

The Black Arroyo Watershed Park (BAWP) consists of 72 contiguous acres devoted to ecological preservation, environmental education, and recreation. Additionally, the BAWP contains 14 acres preserved as an environmental mitigation zone and 8.5 acres dedicated to education including interpretive signage, arroyo crossing bridges, and multi-use paths. A site plan for additional recreational features within the Barranca Wildlife Corridor including shade structures, a bird blind, benches and trees has been developed and are shown in more detail on Figure 9. Much of the BAWP has been implemented including the construction of two bridges and a trail segment along the northern to southern extents of the Park.

The Black Arroyo Wildlife Park (BAWP) trail (Figure 8) is an asphalt surfaced trail that was constructed by SSCAFCA in 2016. This trail runs from Southern Blvd to the vicinity of Westside Blvd. To connect the trail fully to Westside Blvd., a private development has planned to construct this segment sometime in the future. In the short term (prior to final development of the south end of this segment), the Black Arroyo Loop Trail (BALT) could be routed across the Black Arroyo at Maggie Cordova Elementary School using an existing bridge, then continued down to Unser using Veranda Road, Cabezon Blvd. and existing trail along Unser Blvd to connect to the West Cabezon Trail segment. Planning for this feature is documented in the *Master Plan for Black Arroyo Wildlife Park: An Environmental Mitigation Area and Multi-Use Open Space* (Sites Southwest 2013).

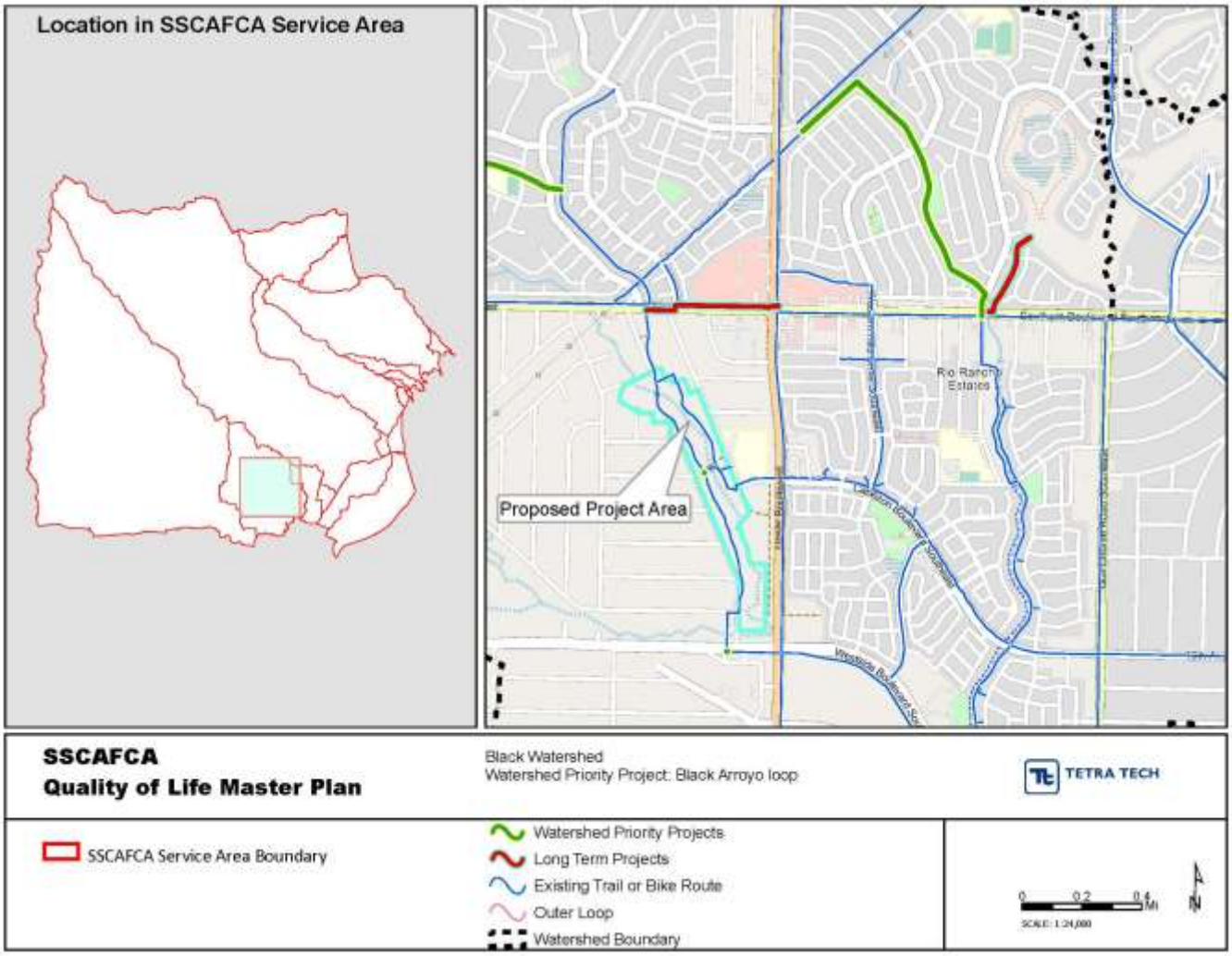

Figure 8. Black Arroyo Wildlife Park

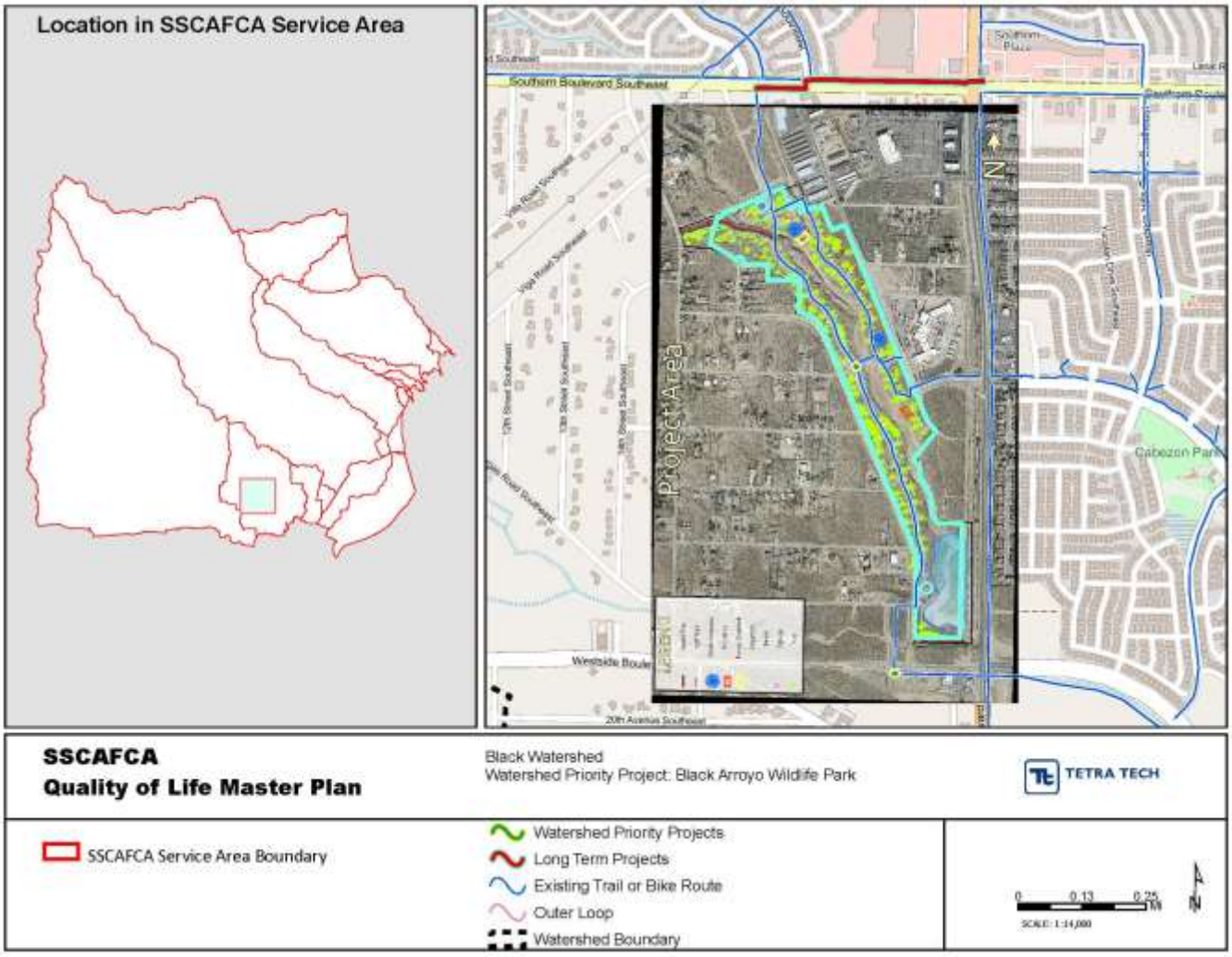

Figure 9. Black Arroyo Wildlife Park detail

7.2.1.2 Black Arroyo Loop Trail

The Black Arroyo Loop Trail (BALT) is a combination of several existing trail sections: BAWP Trail, operated by SSCAFCA), Wexford Trail (operated by CORR), West Cabezon Channel trail (operated by SSCAFCA), and Cabezon Linear Park Trail (owned by CORR and operated by Cabezon Public Improvement District) and undeveloped trail segments within the BAWP, near the Stallion Chanel, and the extension of CORR's Wexford Trail north of Summer Winds Dr. SE connecting to the Stallion Channel trail segment, resulting in a 6.2-mile loop trail (see Figure 10). To develop the BALT, several small trail segments would need to be completed and City and SSCAFCA would need to cooperate to link up these individual segments. In addition to the physical elements of trail construction, it is recommended to develop a SSCAFCA/CORR uniform signage package that would guide the users along the BALT.

1. Both the completed and undeveloped segments of the BALT are in the SSCAFCA Trails Plan and are identified in Figure 10. Most undeveloped loop segments are within SSCAFCA or CORR ROW. The completed loop is described in a counterclockwise fashion from the BAWP: through the BAWP (SSCAFCA/Private Development) and exit the southeast corner of BAWP to Unser Blvd. The segment of trail that extends from the southern terminus in BAWP to Westside Blvd. has not been completed yet.

   a. As an interim condition, the BALT could be routed through the BAWP trail across the main bridge crossing on the Black Arroyo toward Maggie Cordova Elementary and then routed along sidewalks along Veranda Road, cross Unser Blvd. at the signalized intersection, then south along Unser Blvd. to Westside Blvd.

2. West Cabezon Channel Segment (SSCAFCA) - This existing 1.35-mile trail would be incorporated into the BALT and links south end of the BAWP to points east as it parallels Westside Boulevard (Figure 10). The extent of this segment of the trail is Unser Blvd. to Westside Ct. and has an asphalt surface.

3. A Park Above segment (CORR) – use sidewalk along Westside Ct. to connect to East Cabezon Channel segment. This existing segment would be incorporated into the BALT. The extent of this segment is from Westside Blvd. on the south end proceeding north along Westside Ct. to the East Cabezon Channel trail.

4. East Cabezon Channel Segment (SSCAFCA/CORR)– This existing asphalt trail parallels the East Cabezon Channel on the west bank. The existing trail, also called Cabezon Linear Park, would be incorporated into the BALT. The extent of this trail segment is from Westside Ct. to 27th St. SE approximately 0.15 miles south of Southern Blvd. The length of this segment is approximately 1.39 miles.

   a. As a potential spur off of the BALT, a bridge across the East Cabezon Channel ultimately connecting to Chianti Park could be constructed. This would provide a destination node along the BALT.

5. 27th Street Segment (CORR) – City of Rio Rancho recently completed work on sidewalk along 27th St connecting Martin Luther King Elementary School to Southern Blvd. A portion of this new sidewalk work would be incorporated into the BALT from the north end of the East Cabezon Channel trail segment to Southern Blvd. The length of this segment is approximately 0.15 miles.

6. Southern Blvd. to Stallion Channel (CORR)– There is currently no sidewalk located on the west side of Nicklaus Dr. In order to complete this segment of the BALT, a pedestrian trail or sidewalk would need to be constructed between Southern Blvd. and the south terminus of the Stallion Channel. Approximately 310 feet of pedestrian access would need to be constructed. Alternatively, the sidewalk on the east side of Nicklaus Dr. could be used, however, this would require pedestrians to cross Nicklaus Dr. in two locations, one of which would need a pedestrian crosswalk.

7. Nicklaus Dr. to REA Easement (west end of Stallion Channel) (SSCAFCA) – This segment of the BALT (aka Stallion Channel segment) would need to be constructed within SSCAFCA ROW along the west bank of the Stallion Channel. The new segment would be a base course or asphalt trail along Stallion Channel alignment extending approximately 0.9 miles north from Nicklaus Dr. to the REA easement (a powerline easement).

   a. A potential off of the BALT, a bridge over Stallion Channel to connecting to Snead Park would provide a destination node along the BALT.

8. REA Easement from Stallion Channel to Summer Winds Dr. (CORR) – Develop and formalize trail through the REA Easement alignment (base course or asphalt). The City has determined that that underlying land owner of this right of way is the City of Rio Rancho. The development of this 0.35-mile trail would be constructed of either asphalt of base course. Traffic control (e.g. fence, gates and/or bollards) would need to be placed at the NE and SW termini of this trail segment to prevent illicit vehicular usage of the segment. Alternatively, the Stallion Channel segment could be extended through existing CORR ROW to Spring Dr. and then this road could be used to convey pedestrians southwest to connect to the north limit of the Wexford Trail. One issue with this alternative is that Spring Dr. does not have sidewalks.

9. Summer Winds Dr to Southern Blvd (CORR) – Incorporate existing asphalt trail (aka Wexford Trail) into BALT. This is an existing 0.86-mile-long segment.

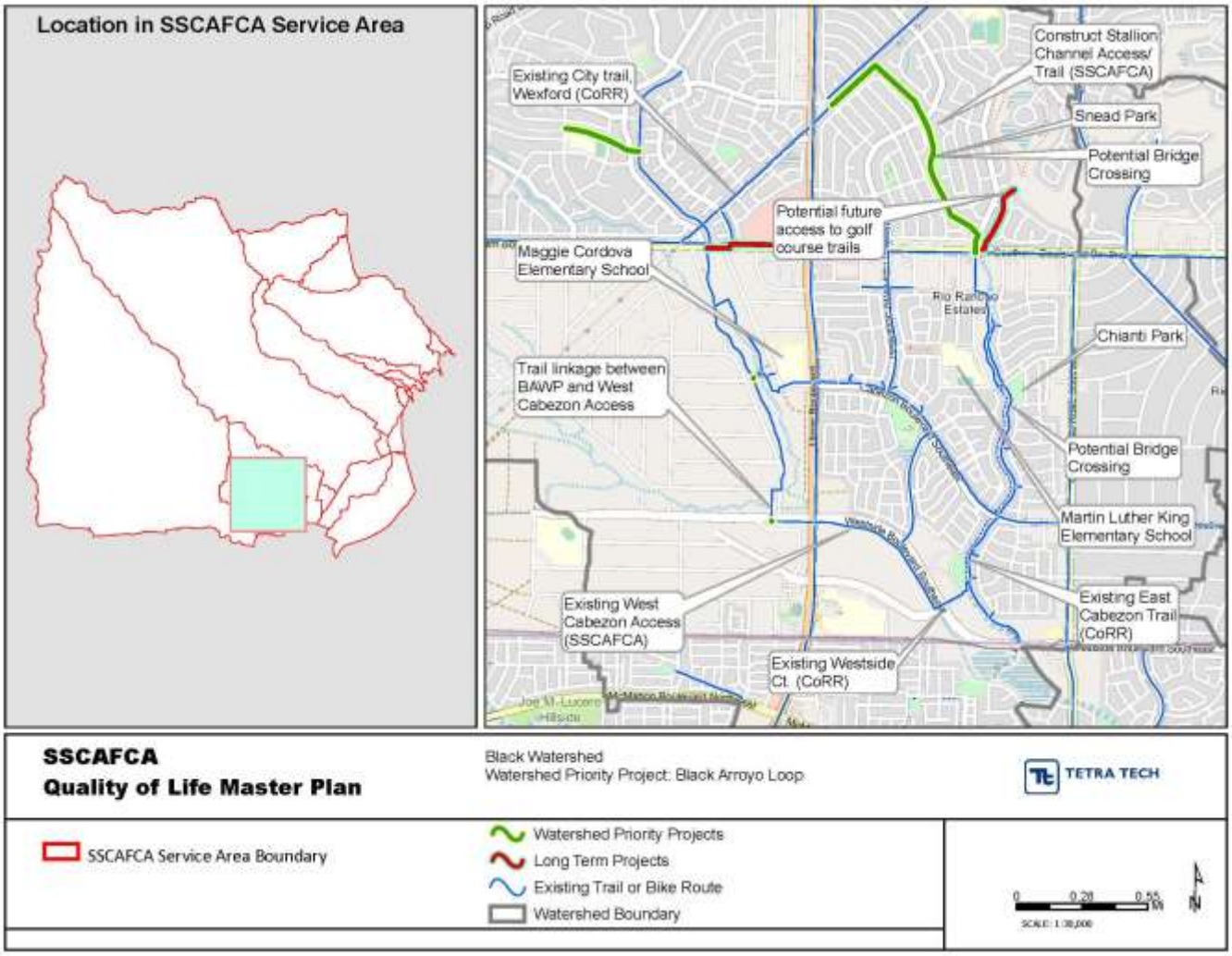

Figure 10. Black Arroyo Loop Trail

7.2.1.3 Arkansas Channel Trail

The concept behind this proposed trail segment is to extend the trail network further into the urban core of Rio Rancho. The existing Lisbon Channel trail connects to the Wexford Trail north of Southern Blvd. and continues north until Tarpon Road. The proposed Arkansas Channel trail links to the Lisbon Channel trail north of Southern Blvd. This proposed trail segment would cross the Lisbon Channel with a pedestrian bridge and then continue west along the Arkansas channel to Ivory Road.

This proposed new trail will connect a school, Thomas Aquinas School, to the larger trail network envisioned in the BALT project as well as provide another anchor point or destination within the trail system.

The Arkansas Trail is illustrated on Figure 11.

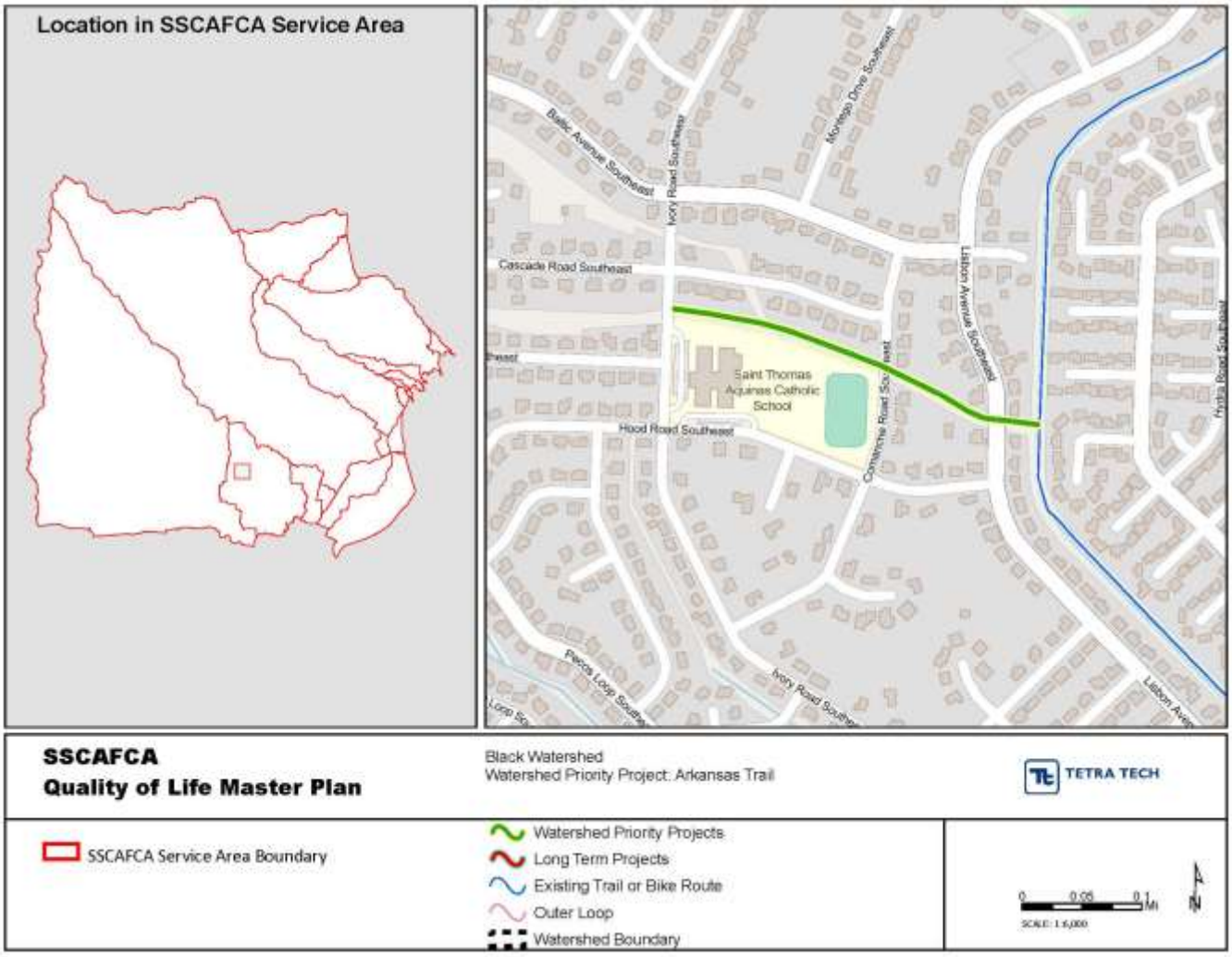

Figure 11. Arkansas Channel Trail

7.2.2 Black Arroyo Watershed Long-term Projects

The following Black Arroyo Loop Trail Feeder Trails projects are more long-term but also of interest.

7.2.2.1 Southern Blvd. to Unser Blvd.

Additional trail connections recommended in the SSCAFCA Trails Plan (CDM Smith 2018) and CORR Strategic Plan 2017–2022 (CORR 2019) that are of priority include the segment located within the BAWP and a connector trail along Unser Blvd. and Southern Blvd.. This 0.46-mile proposed paved trail parallels Southern Blvd. and connects to an existing trail at Unser Blvd. and is within CORR ROW (Figure 12). This trail segment would form a crucial link to the BALT and the 72-acre BAWP, which contains educational signage, a 220-foot-long pedestrian bridge, shade structures, and water-harvesting features to support wildlife.

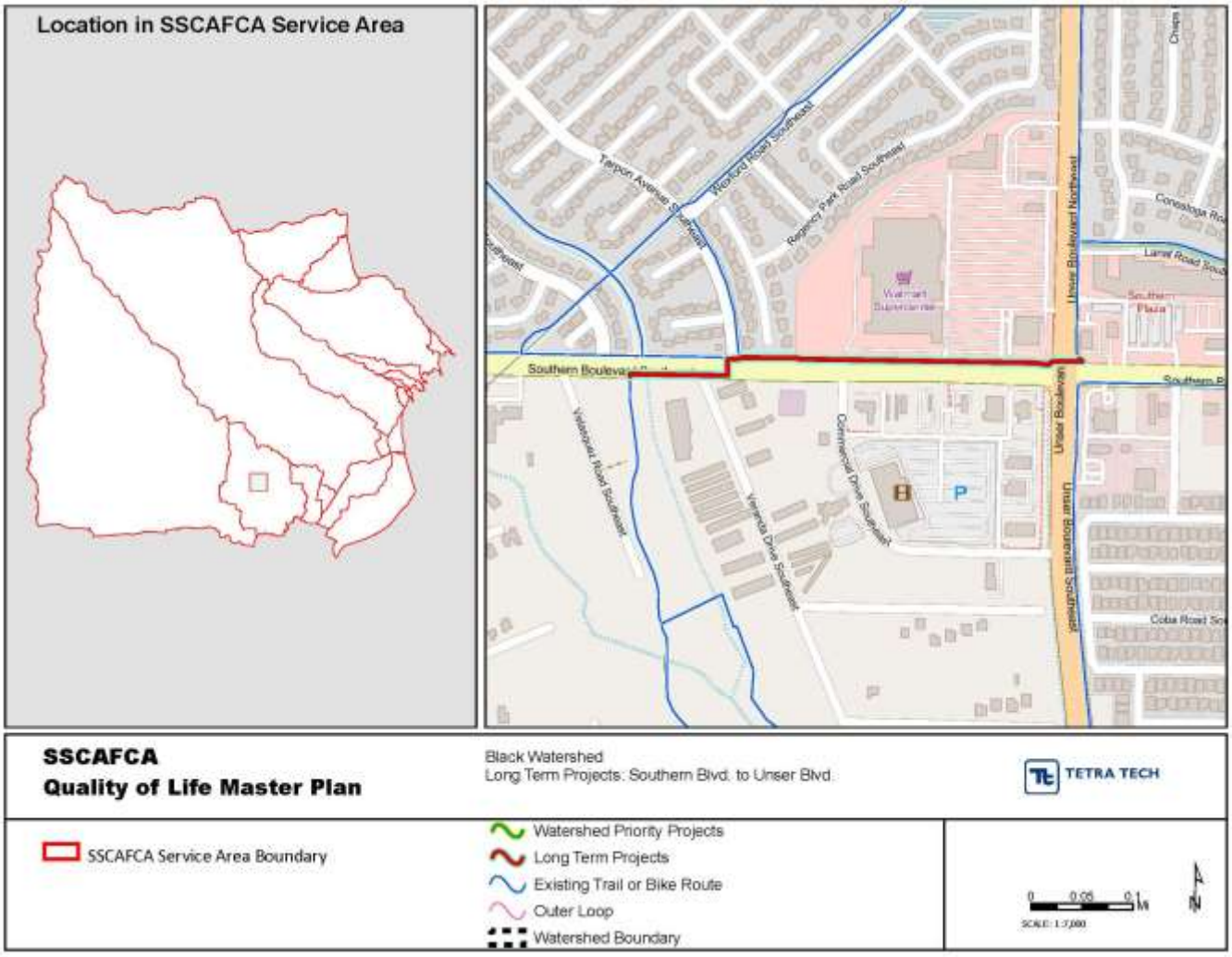

Figure 12. Southern Blvd. to Unser Blvd.

7.2.2.2 Golf Course Road to La Rambla de Rio Rancho

La Rambla de Rio Rancho is a proposed master planned subdivision and open space complex in the location of the old Rio Rancho Golf Course. Assuming this subdivision is developed similar to the proposed draft Master Plan, there will be an internal trail network within the footprint of the old golf course and the concept is to link this trail network with the BALT via the Trevino Channel. If the La Rambla de Rio Rancho subdivision moves forward, drainage improvements will be required within the Trevino Channel. As these improvements are being made, there will be an excellent opportunity to create a pedestrian trail.

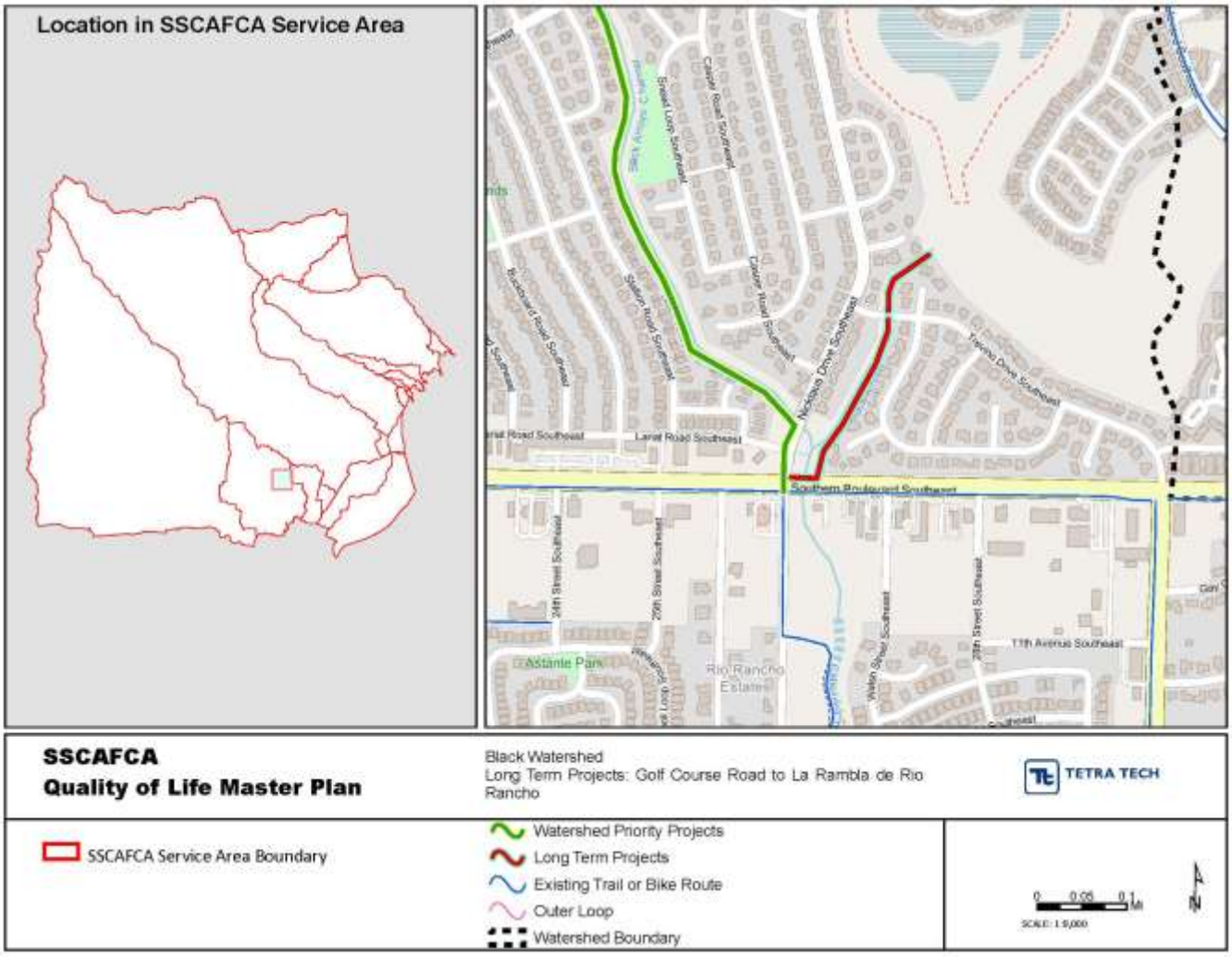

Figure 13. Golf Course Rd. to La Rambla de Rio Rancho

7.3 MONTOYAS ARROYO WATERSHED

The Montoyas Arroyo Watershed is approximately 61 square miles. The Montoyas Arroyo Watershed is drained by the 15-mile long Montoyas Arroyo and the 6.5-mile long Lomitas Negras Arroyo, which join approximately 1.5 miles east of NM Highway 528 (NM528) and then drains into the Rio Grande via the Harvey Jones Channel (Figure 14). Significant development has occurred over the past two decades in this area and an estimated 20% is built-out or is in process or being developed. Residential areas within the Montoyas Arroyo Watershed include North Hills subdivision, Country Club Hills, The Greens, Panorama Heights, The Ridges, Cascades, Stonehenge Estates, Broadmoor, Rolling Hills, and Vista Hills (Community Sciences Corporation 2006).

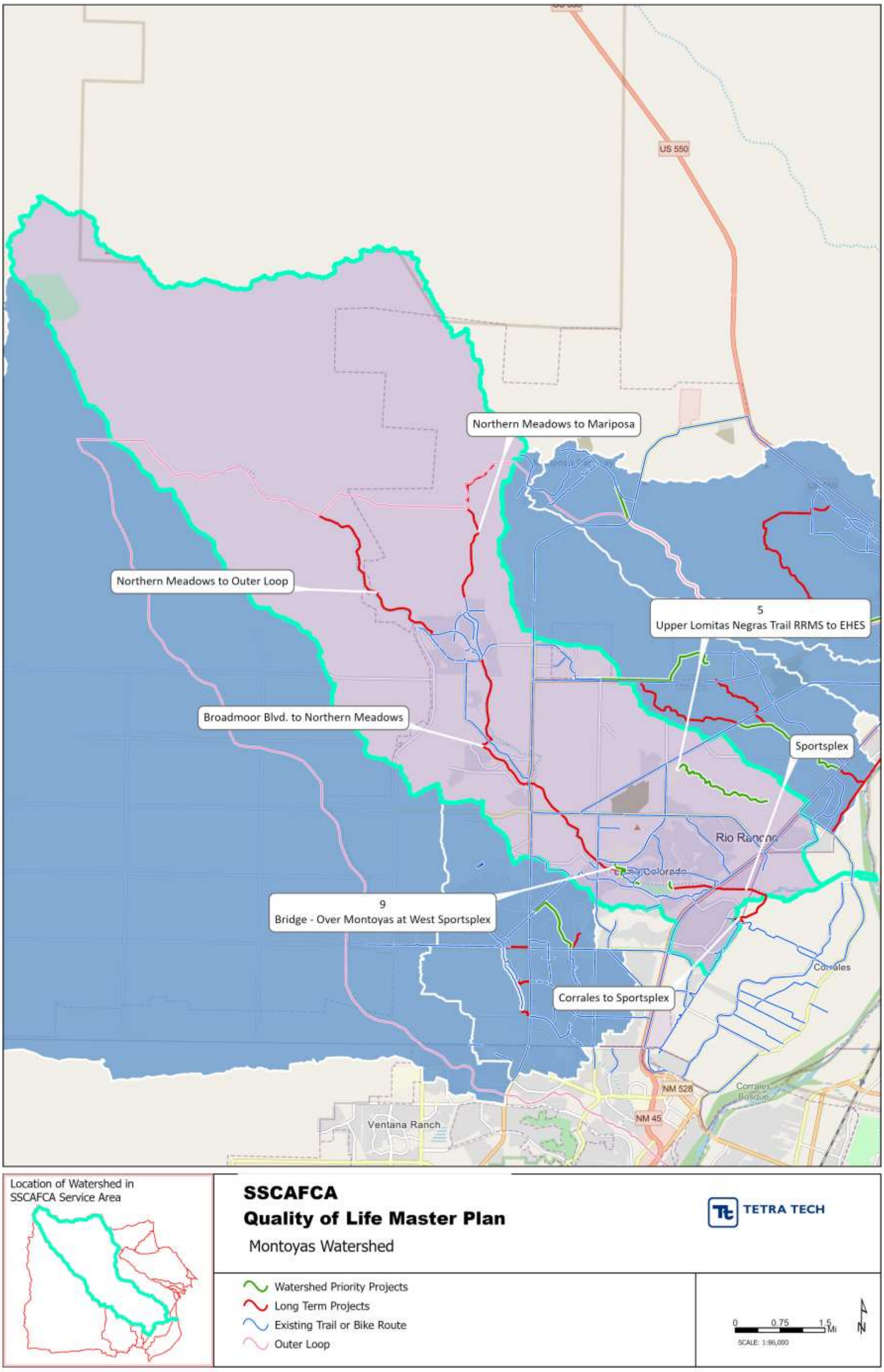

Figure 14. Montoyas Watershed

7.3.1 Montoyas Arroyo Watershed Short-term Priority Projects

The Montoyas Watershed Park Management Plan (SSCAFCA 2021) encompasses the Montoyas Arroyo and Lomitas Negras Arroyo. The plan recommended regional stormwater detention facilities, road crossing structure improvements and channel improvements. The vision and goals of the plan included opportunities to establish natural or naturalistic arroyo corridors to allow for recreational facilities and preservation of flora, fauna, open spaces and viewsheds (BHI 2011). The following priority projects have been identified in this Management Plan and/or in the various planning documents described above.

7.3.1.1 Pedestrian Access - V. Sue Cleveland High School to Rio Rancho City Center

This pedestrian access project is proposed to anchor two points between V. Sue Cleveland High School (CHS) and Rio Rancho City Center (RRCC). Recent development patterns have started to create residential subdivisions immediately west of CHS. Based on development pressure in the area, it is likely that increasing numbers of residential subdivisions will be constructed along this corridor. The proposed pedestrian access will provide a means for walking or biking from these subdivisions to either of these anchor points that serve a large population.

The proposed alignment for this project, starting from CHS, is to proceed west from the west entrance of CHS approximately 0.75 miles along Cleveland Heights Road then to Loma Colorado Blvd., using the ROW of these roadways. Approximately half of this alignment has sidewalk constructed on the south/east side of the roadways. As development increases in this area, it is likely that the full alignment of Loma Colorado Blvd. will have a sidewalk.

Approximately 0.1 miles north of Paseo del Volcan road, a ROW will need to be identified to transition from Loma Colorado Blvd. to Falcon Road. Depending on the location selected for this transition, the distance to the new alignment is approximately 0.04 miles.

Falcon Road is the primary ROW that will be used to proceed west towards RRCC. Approximately 0.4 miles west of the transition to Falcon Road is the planned location of Paseo deo Volcan Dam. Falcon Road has been identified as the location for the crest of the dam, thereby providing a corridor over the existing drainage which happens to be the La Barranca Arroyo.

After crossing the La Barranca Arroyo, the trail would proceed along the alignment of Falcon Road for another 0.6 miles to the Paseo del Volcan (PdV) Bypass near RRCC. The RRCC includes city hall, University of New Mexico (UNM) Sandoval Regional Medical Center, the UNM Sandoval County branch campus, Central New Mexico Community College Rio Rancho campus, and the Rio Rancho Civic Center.

See Figure 15 as an illustration of this alignment.

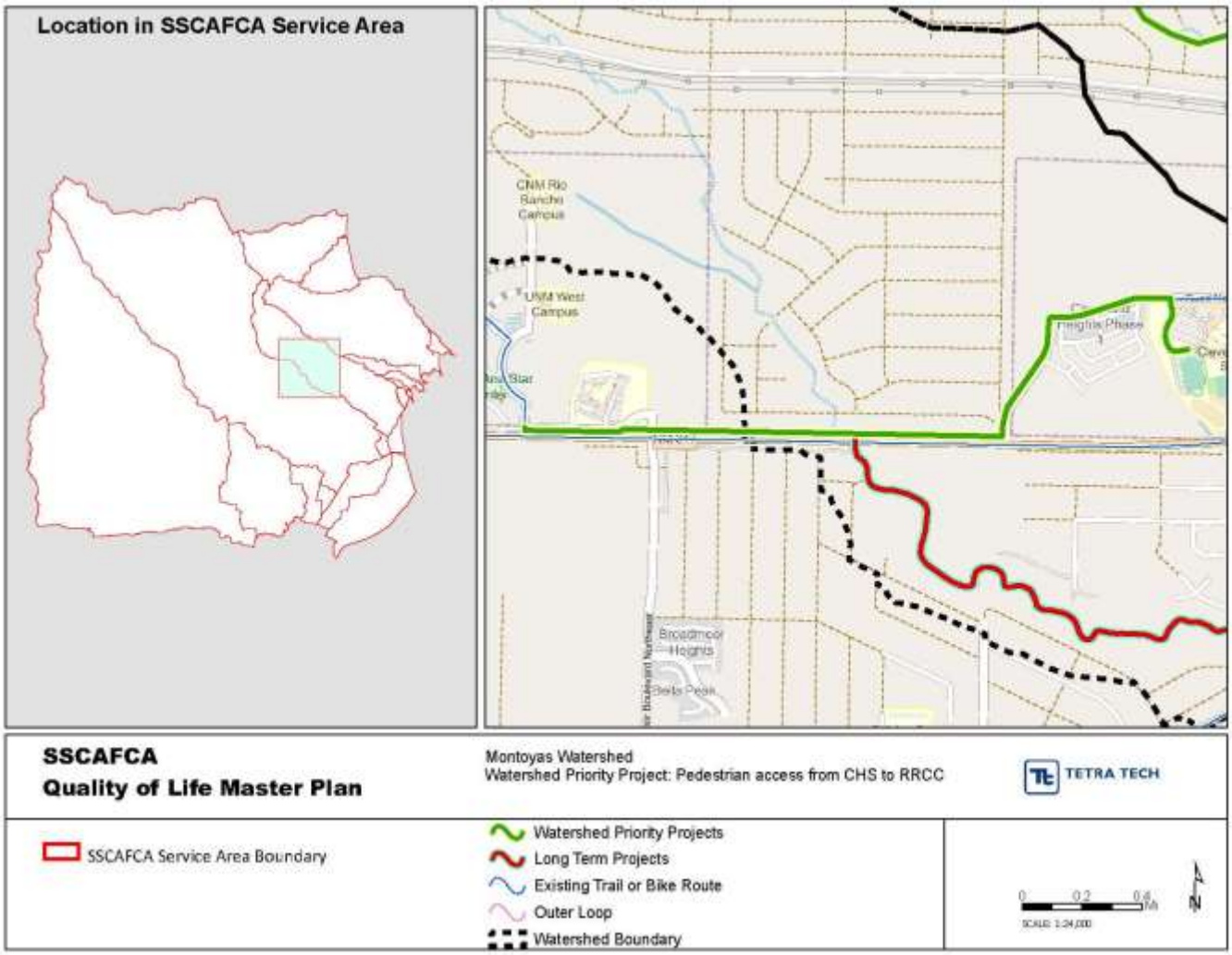

Figure 15. Pedestrian access from CHS to RRCC

7.3.1.2 Upper Lomitas Negras Trail - Rio Rancho Middle School to Enchanted Hills Elementary School

The Upper Lomitas Negras Trail is a segment of proposed trail that runs between Enchanted Hills Elementary School (EHES) on the east end and Rio Rancho Middle School (RRMS) on the west end (Figure 16). Development in the area is primarily limited to single lot, single family home construction because of antiquated zoning and scattered ownership in the area. Based on this zoning and ownership pattern, it is unlikely that a large-scale residential development will occur along the proposed trail alignment.

Currently, SSCAFCA owns ROW to construct a contiguous trail between the two anchor points in the trail (EHES and RRMS). This ROW follows the arroyo and in some areas is narrow and constrained down to the width of the natural arroyo. The topography of the area surrounding the arroyo provides some challenges for both the construction and maintenance of any trail. Steep (or vertical) slopes adjacent to the arroyo will make it difficult to build the trail and, where ROW is constrained, bank protection may be needed to prevent lateral erosion from undercutting a constructed trail.

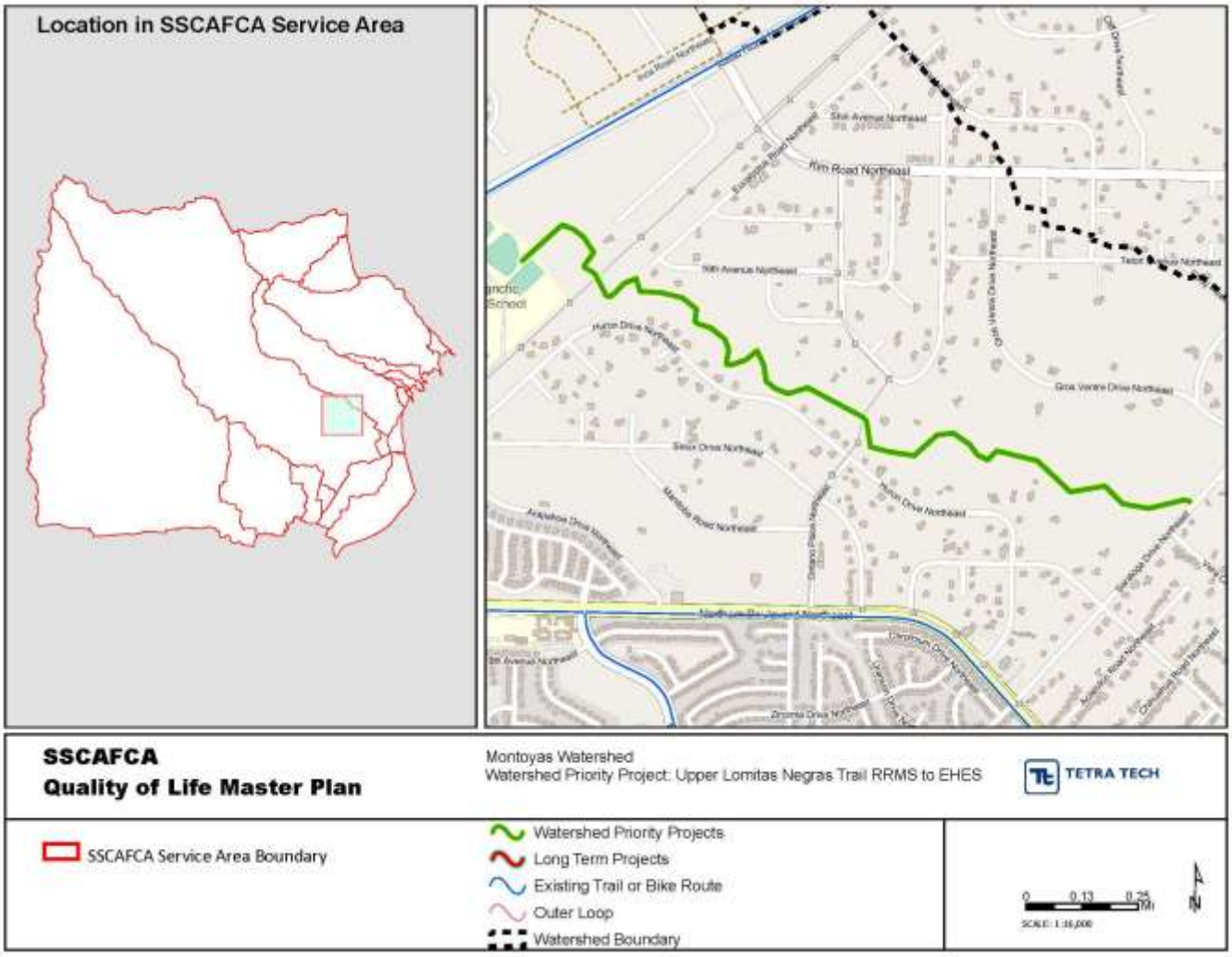

Figure 16. Upper Lomitas Negras Trail

If a trail is constructed along this ROW, it is likely that it will be natural surface or crusher fines that will double as an access road for SSCAFCA maintenance vehicles. If constructed, this approximately 1.93-mile-long trail segment would provide a dedicated pedestrian or bicycle route between two large activity centers.

7.3.1.3 Bridge over Montoyas at East Sportsplex

This proposed project provides connectivity between the large, developed subdivision north of the main stem of the Montoyas Arroyo and the Sports Complex activity center (Sportsplex) (Figure 17). The north bank of the bridge would be tied to the existing trail system within the Loma Colorado subdivision. On the south bank of the bridge, pedestrian users would have access to the Sportsplex which includes baseball/softball diamonds, large playing fields, and tennis courts.

Since the Montoyas Arroyo has the potential to flow frequently during the monsoon season, and to provide a safe way of crossing the arroyo, SSCAFCA is proposing that a pedestrian bridge be installed. This bridge would link two trail networks (on the north and south ends of the Sportsplex) in a manner that allows users to cross the arroyo under all conditions.

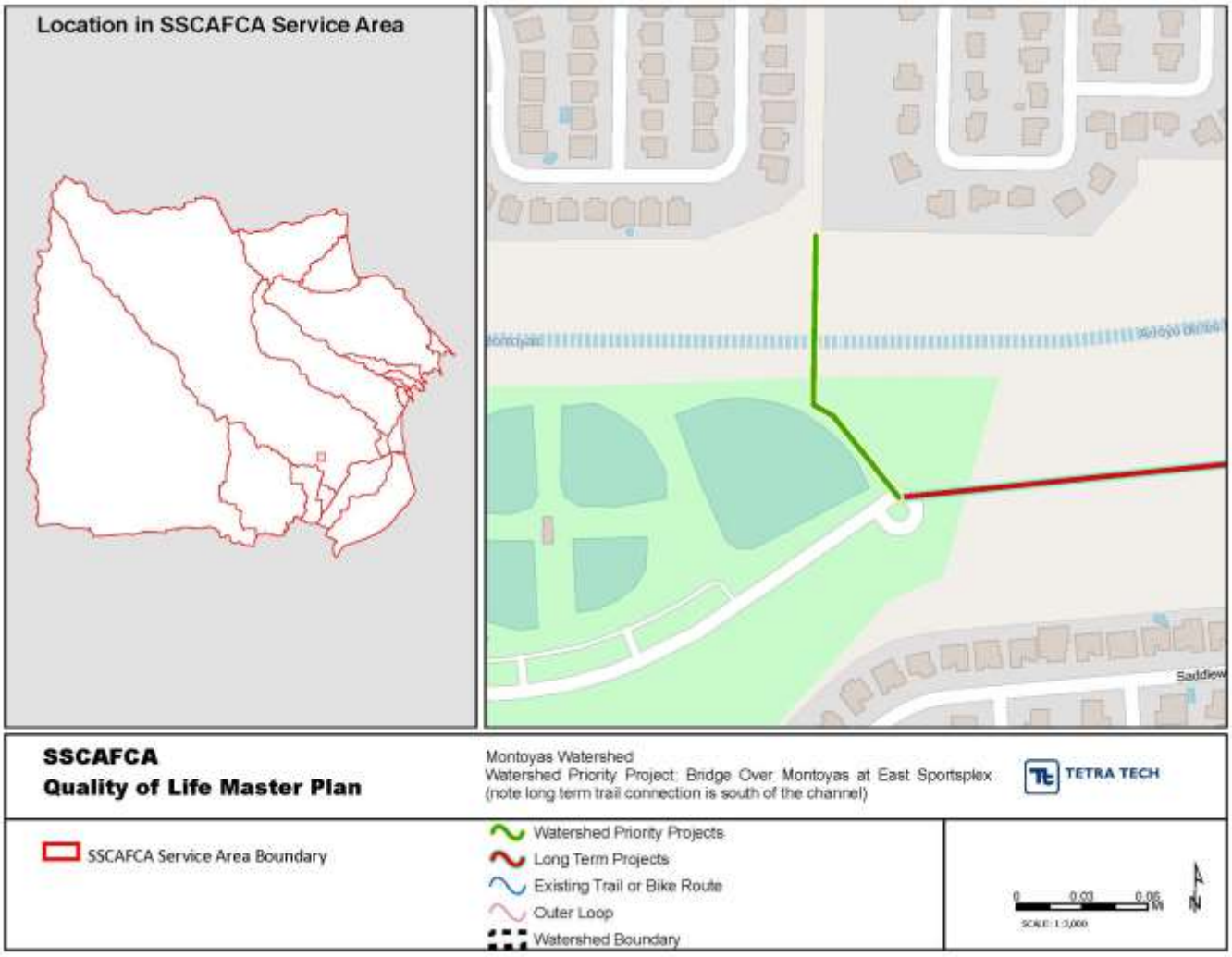

Figure 17. Bridge over Montoyas at East Sportsplex

The eastern portion of the City's Sportsplex complex is currently primarily used for materials storage, equipment storage and various other maintenance activities required for proper operation of the Sportsplex. The precise location of this arroyo crossing can be moved east or west to accomplish the proposed function of getting pedestrians safely across the arroyo. The final chosen location of this crossing will dictate the need for extension of trails to the crossing or stabilization of the arroyo bank to protect bridge abutments from lateral erosion during stormwater flows..

The ROW for the north abutment is currently owned by SSCAFCA and the ROW for the south abutment is owned by the CORR. If this bridge is installed, an operations and maintenance agreement would need to be developed to have one party (either SSCAFCA or CORR) operate and maintain the bridge structure.

7.3.1.4 Bridge over Montoyas at West Sportsplex

The proposed project provides a pedestrian connection between the large subdivision to the north of the Montoyas Arroyo (Figure 18), which includes RRHS, and the heavily urbanized area to the south of the Montoyas Arroyo. The bridge would also link the very popular Sportsplex Dam trail to the subdivision north of the arroyo by providing further connectivity at the west end of the dam embayment.

In order to access the pedestrian bridge from the north, a small trail segment (approximately 300 feet long) would need to be constructed from Llano Vista Loop to the north abutment of the bridge. The ROW needed to construct this bridge approach is currently owned by the CORR.

The south approach to the bridge location is fed by the Sportsplex Dam trail system. This existing loop trail system provides a paved asphalt path with access points to the subdivisions immediately south of the dam embayment.

For the bridge structure, the ROW for both the north and south abutments is owned by SSCAFCA. Also, the banks of the Montoyas Arroyo in the vicinity of the proposed abutment locations have been reinforced and are currently protected from erosion.

In order to span the arroyo, an approximately 155-foot-long bridge would need to be constructed from bank to bank. By providing this span, it would allow pedestrians to cross the Montoyas Arroyo under all weather conditions, including heavy monsoon flows in the arroyo. The only limitations in the bridge construction is that it would have to be a free span (no center support) to limit the potential of erosion and allow for maximum flows within the arroyo and the bottom chord of the bridge would need to be sufficiently high to allow for maintenance vehicles and equipment to pass underneath the bridge span.

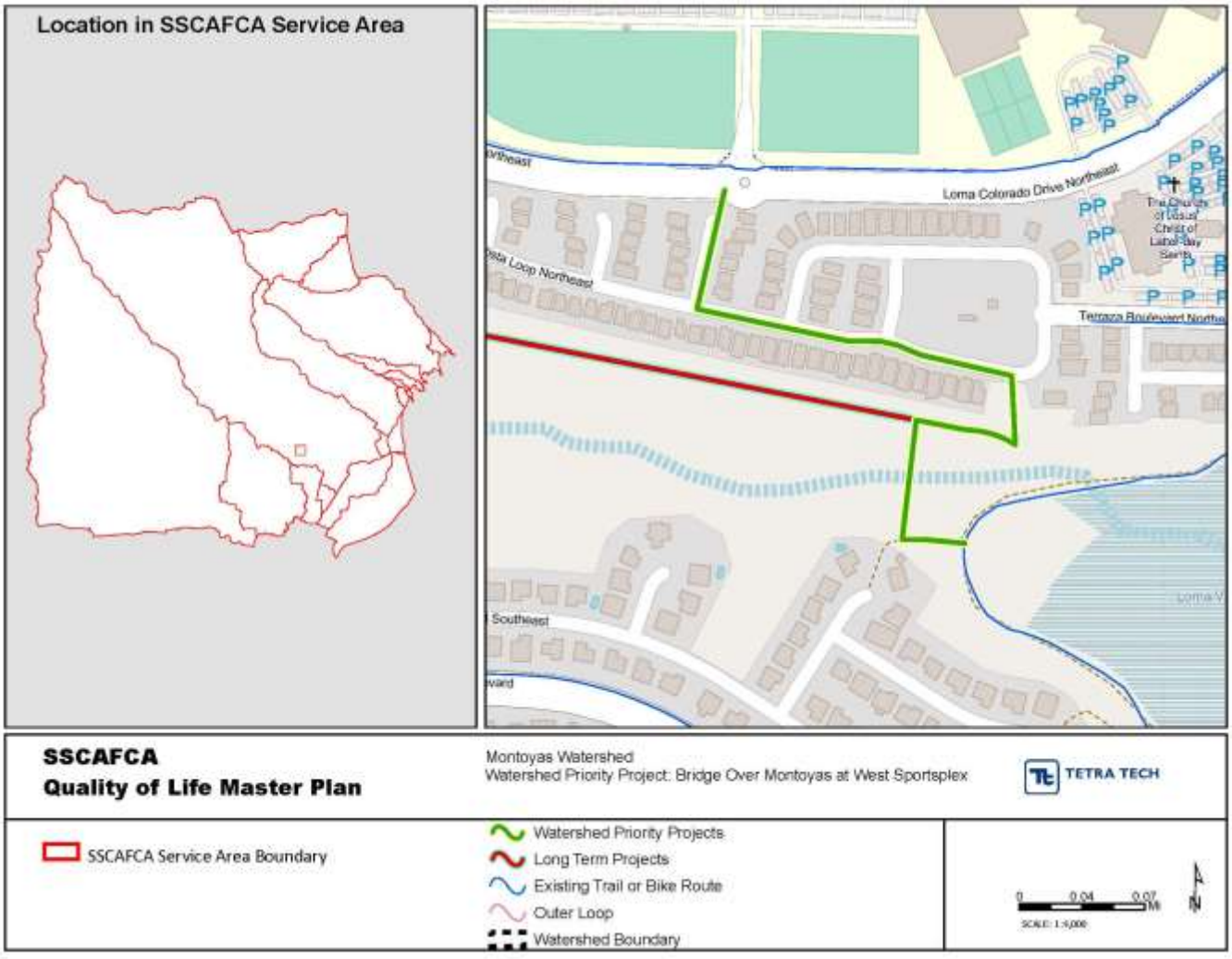

Figure 18. Bridge over Montoyas at West Sportsplex

7.3.1.5 Sportsplex to Sportsplex Dam Trail

The Sportsplex to Sportsplex Dam trail segment would provide connectivity between the very popular Sportsplex Dam trail system and the Sportsplex, a multi-sport complex. The CORR recently constructed a trail connection from the west end of the Sportsplex to the east sidewalk along Loma Vista Blvd. SSCAFCA's Sportsplex Dam trail system connects to the west edge of Loma Vista Blvd. For all intents and purposes, all of the infrastructure is in place for this connection except for potentially having a dedicated pedestrian crosswalk across Loma Vista Blvd.

In addition to a potential crosswalk, development of uniform signage between the CORR trail system and the SSCAFCA trail system would assist users in wayfinding throughout the area. See Figure 19 for the location of this proposed improvement.

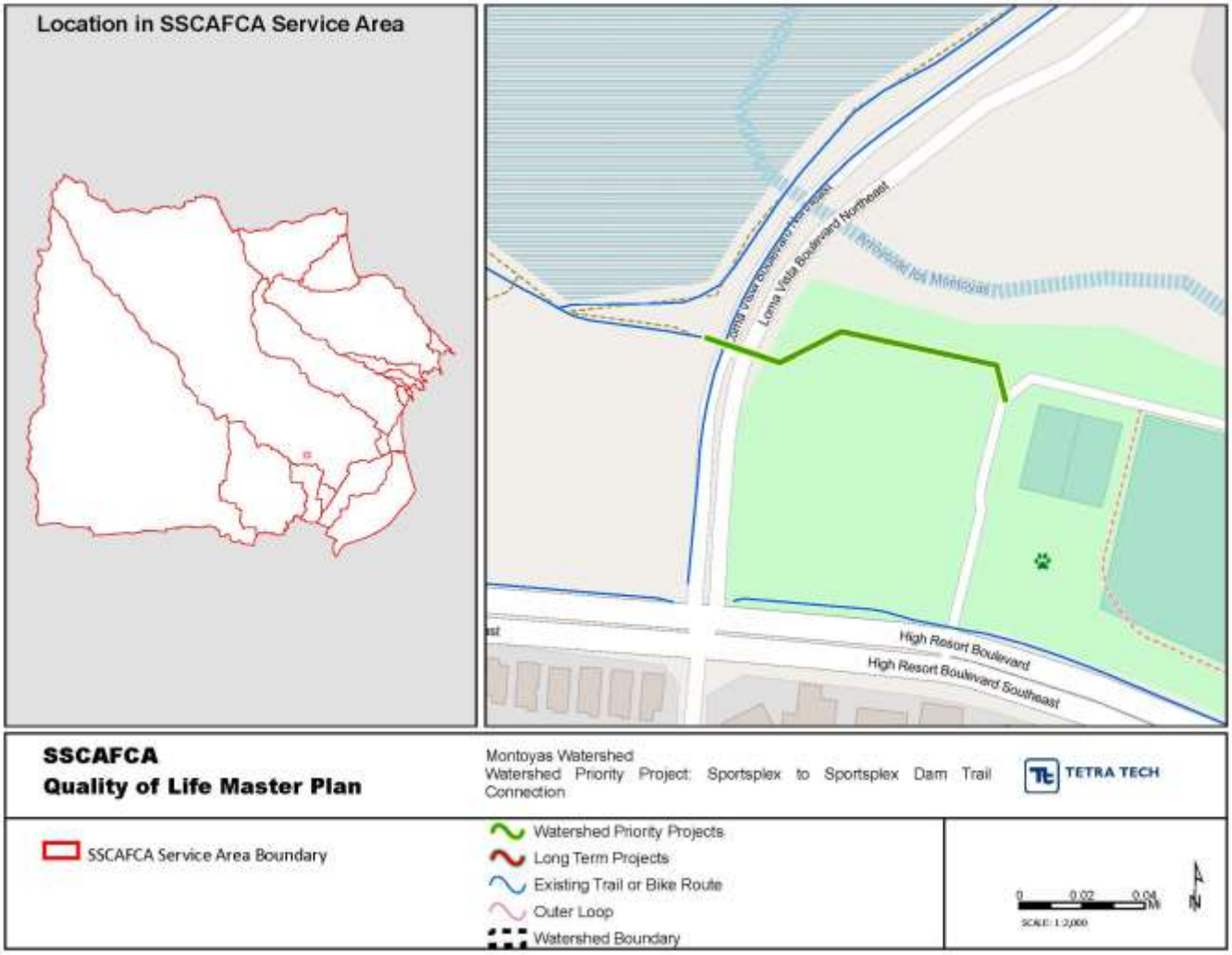

Figure 19. Sportsplex to Sportsplex Dam Trail

7.3.2 Montoyas Arroyo Watershed Long-term Projects

The following additional projects are of interest but long-term in nature.

7.3.2.1 Sportsplex

This proposed paved 2.5-mile trail segment is within SSCAFCA ROW and begins at the proposed Corrales to Sportsplex segment and would parallel the Montoyas Arroyo (Figure 20). It would cross NM528 using pedestrian crossings at the Sundt Road/NM528 signalized intersection and enter the Sportsplex. This trail would continue west of the Sportsplex and cross Loma Vista Blvd. and continue west to Broadmoor Blvd. The trail would link an existing paved trail loop along the rim of the Sportsplex Dam west of the Sportsplex area east of Broadmoor Blvd.

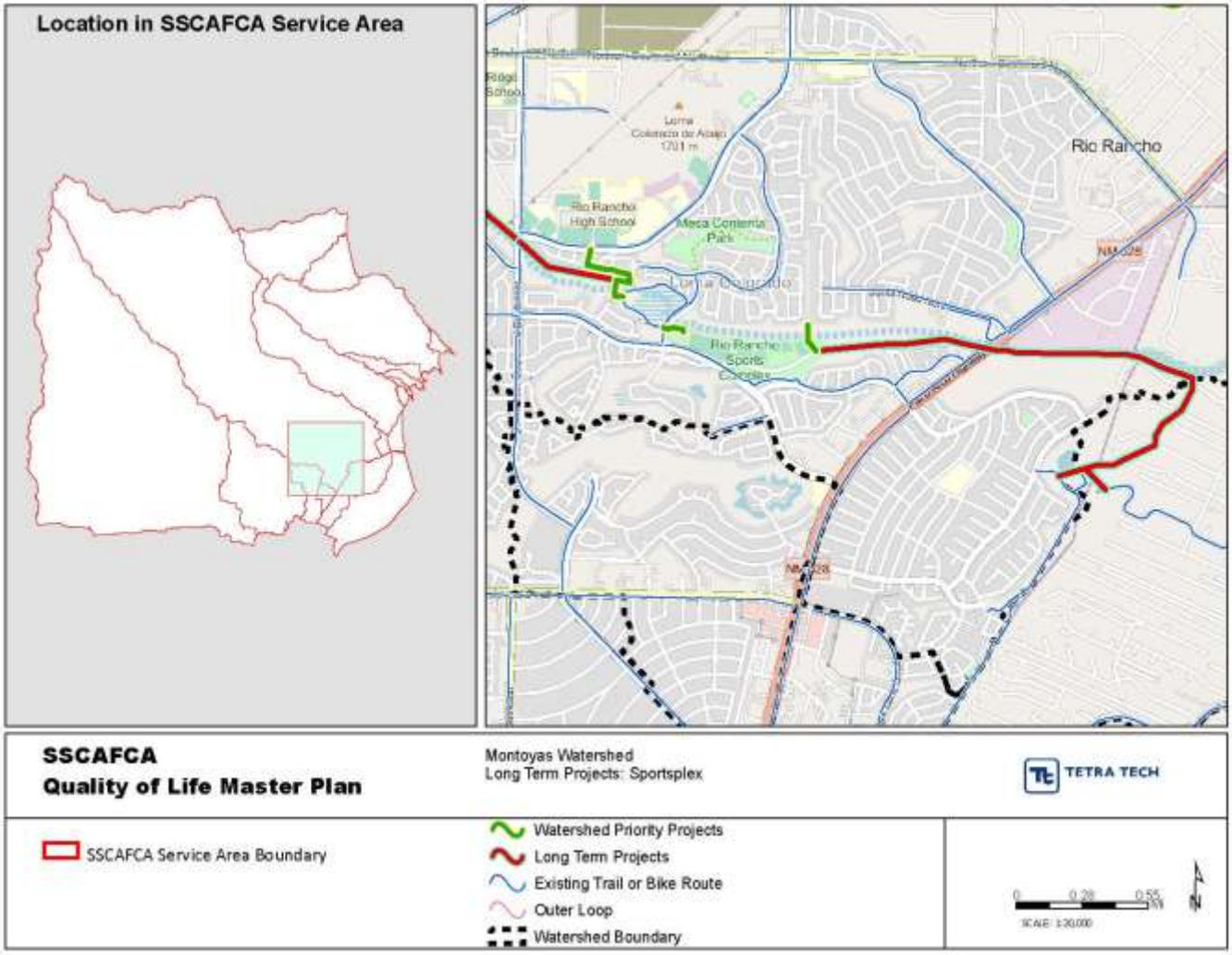

Figure 20. Sportsplex

7.3.2.2 Broadmoor Blvd. to Northern Meadows

This 2.79-mile proposed paved trail segment forms a connection to the proposed Sportsplex trail at Broadmoor Blvd. It is aligned parallel to the Montoyas Arroyo and crosses through Canyon Park, North Hills Open Space, to 19th Ave. near North Hills Park (Figure 21). The trail would continue northeast for approximately 1,500 feet and then parallel the Montoyas Arroyo northwest to King Blvd. near Zia Park, where the segment terminates. Much of this trail segment is within existing SSCAFCA and CORR ROW, however, 4 segments totaling approximately 900 feet are not within the ROW of either entity.

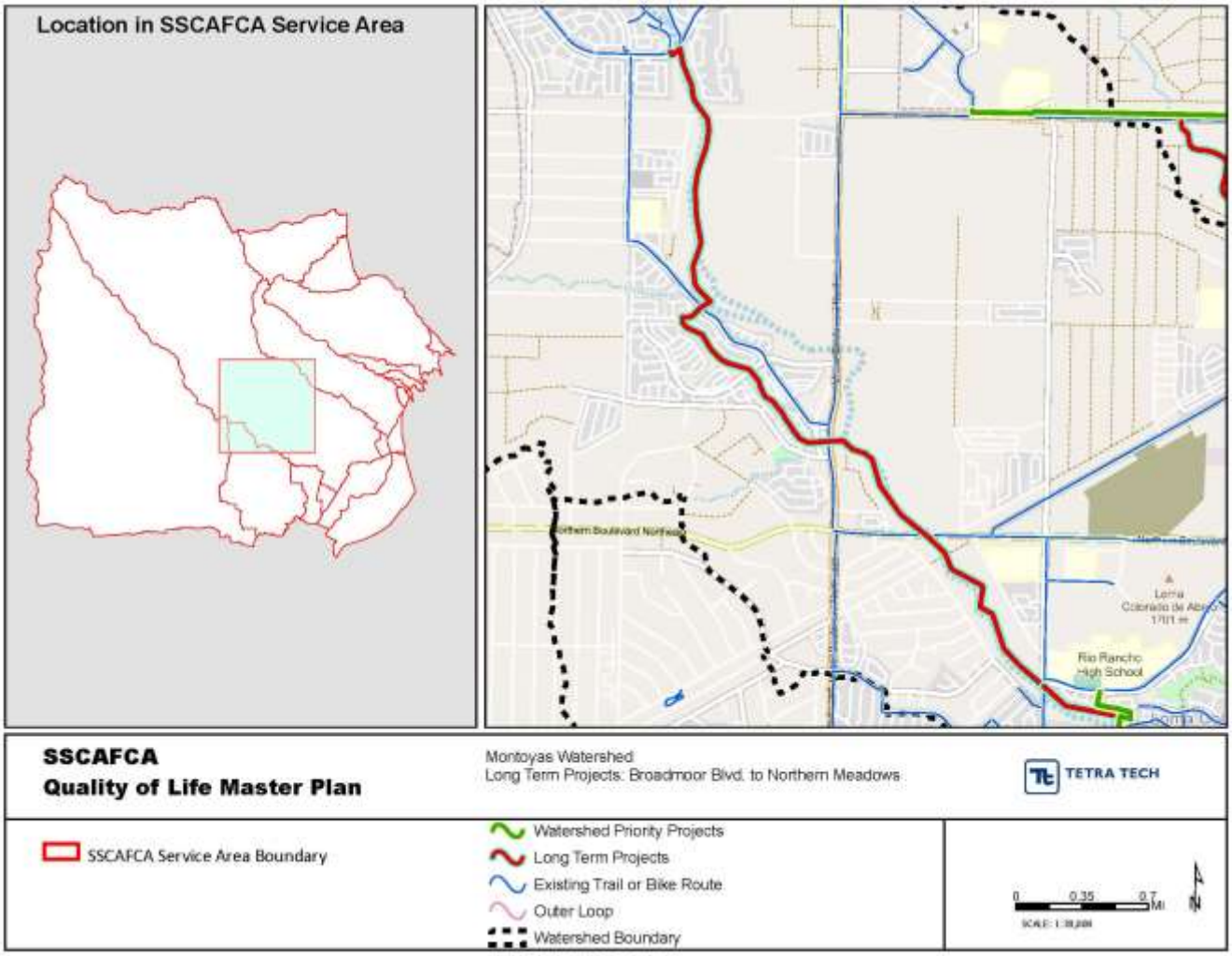

Figure 21. Broadmoor Blvd. to Northern Meadows

7.3.2.3 Northern Meadows to Outer Loop

This 3.3-mile proposed trail begins at King Blvd. near King Meadows Park and continues northwest to the proposed Outer Loop Trail (Figure 22). The final 1.27 miles of the segment is not within the ROW of SSCAFCA or CORR, however, it is along an existing arroyo feature.

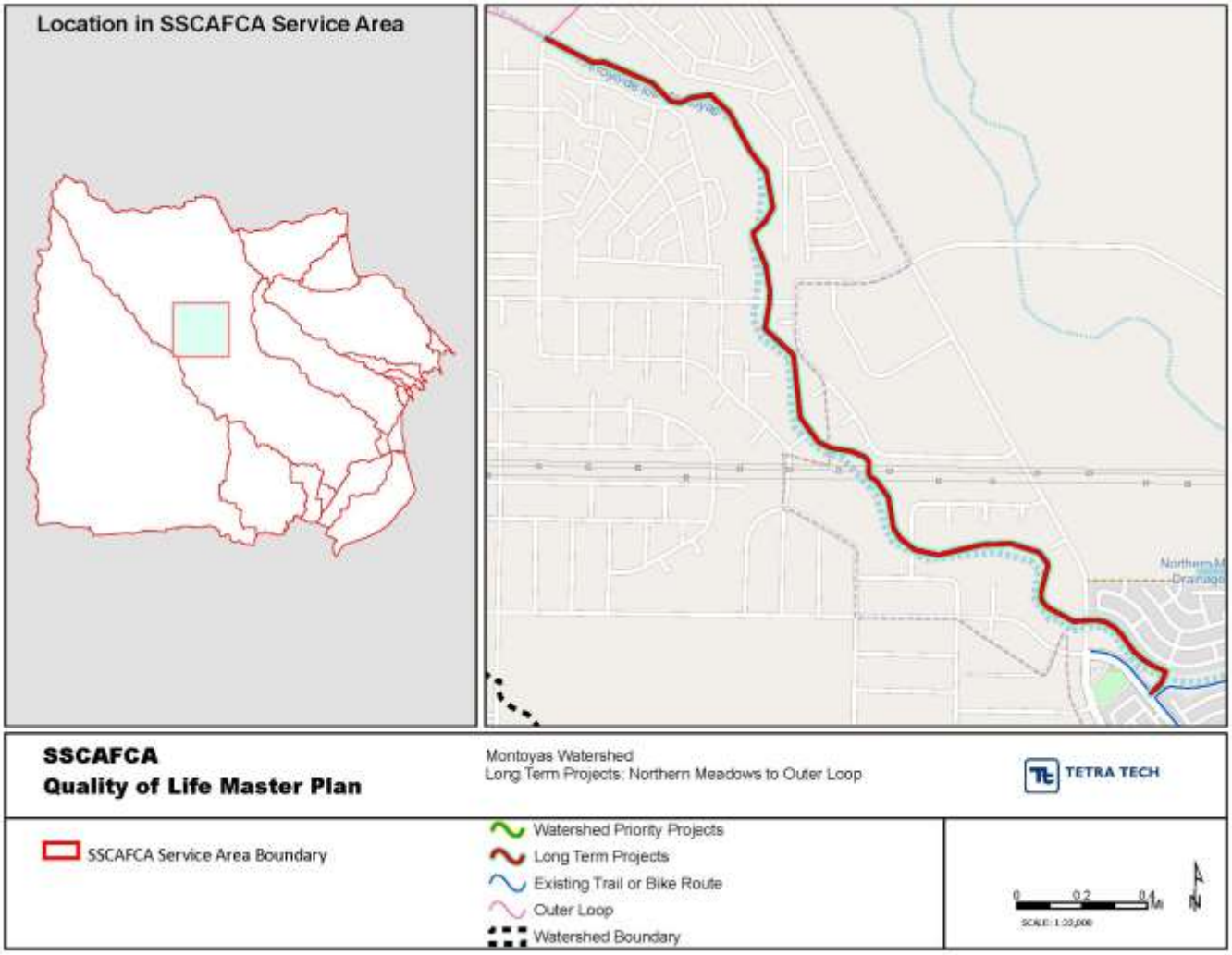

Figure 22. Northern Meadows to Outer Loop Trail

7.3.2.4 Northern Meadows to Mariposa

This proposed paved trail starts at the terminus of the New Mexico Recreational Trail in Northern Meadows and proceeds north for 3.46 miles to the Mariposa Community (Figure 23). The trail shares an alignment with the proposed Outer Loop Trail at Pantadeleon Drive NE until it reaches the Mariposa Community. Much of this trail segment is within existing SSCAFCA ROW, however, a 0.36-mile section is not within the ROW.

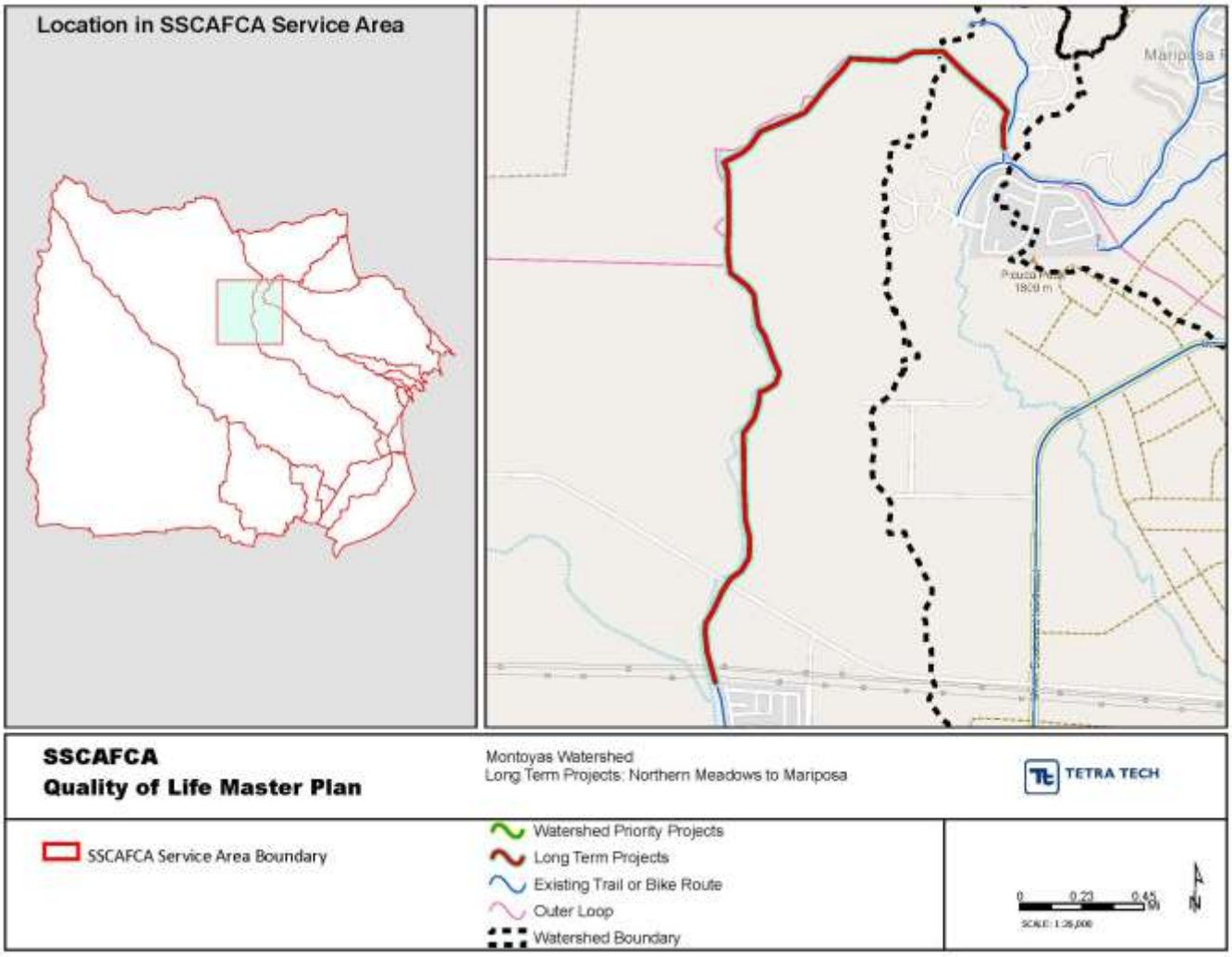

Figure 23. Northern Meadows to Mariposa

7.4 BARRANCA ARROYO WATERSHED

The 25 square mile Barranca Arroyo Watershed is situated between the Montoyas and Venada watersheds and encompasses the unincorporated Rio Rancho Estates community in the northwest portion of the watershed to the River's Edge residential area near the Rio Grande (Figure 24).

Potential watershed park amenities include opportunities to construct multi-use facilities in CORR and Village of Corrales centers, State Land Office projects, and the connection to Rio Rancho Open Space projects. The existing developments in this area include the RRCC, a UNM branch campus, and mixed-use residential, commercial, and employment uses. SSCAFCA views this area, Barranca Arroyo Watershed Park, as a stakeholder location, that will need to keep its high desert character for human enjoyment and protect native plants and wildlife (Community Sciences Corporation 2006).

The *Barranca Watershed Park Management Plan* (WH Pacific 2010) discussed multiple-use trails on major and secondary arroyos in order to incorporate the Watershed Park concept on the main branch of the Barranca Arroyo (from the headwaters to the Rio Grande). Many of these segments have been constructed with some constraints to access under NM528. Recommended projects would aid in filling in the remaining gaps.

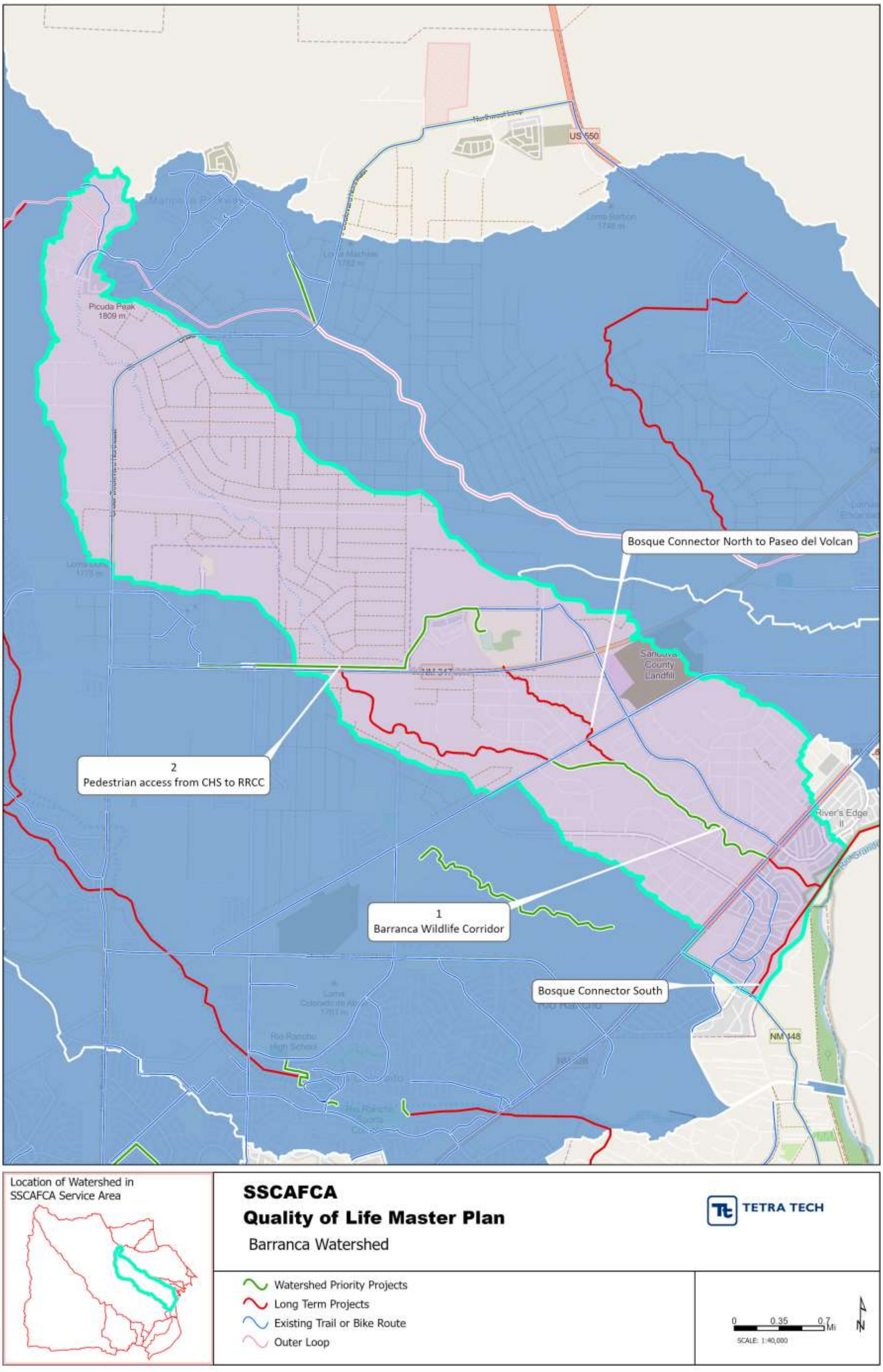

Figure 24. Barranca Watershed

7.4.1 Barranca Arroyo Watershed Short-term Priority Projects

The following priority projects have been identified in this QOLMP and/or in the various planning documents described above.

7.4.1.1 Barranca Wildlife Corridor

The Barranca watershed is a relatively undeveloped area. Antiquated platting and ownership has led to a highly sporadic building pattern, dominated by individual single family home development projects performed by owners or custom builders. There is no large-scale organized subdivision construction within this watershed at this time. The lack of this large-scale development presents interesting possibilities to provide a rural-style trail along the Barranca arroyo. The other consequence of this sparce, low density development is that wildlife along the Barranca arroyo corridor is plentiful, consisting of numerous bird and mammal species. With both of these potential benefits, SSCAFCA is proposing the construction of the Barranca Wildlife Corridor.

The Barranca Wildlife Corridor would run from NM528 (Pat D'Arco Highway) west to Idalia Road. This approximately 2.0-mile-long trail would be designed to double both as a pedestrian trail as well as an access road for SSCAFCA equipment and vehicles to perform arroyo maintenance. It is likely that a basecourse or dirt trail would be proposed. The ROW is entirely owned by SSCAFCA. However, there are sections of the arroyo that have meandered outside of this ROW presenting issues with arroyo access and maintenance. This could be resolved by purchasing additional ROW in areas where the arroyo has meandered outside of the dedicated ROW. Constrained ROW might also present an issue of trail maintenance. In areas where the trail is constructed adjacent to the natural arroyo, actions would need to be taken to preserve the bank to limit lateral erosion and damage to the trail.

The location of the Barranca Wildlife Corridor is shown on Figure 25.

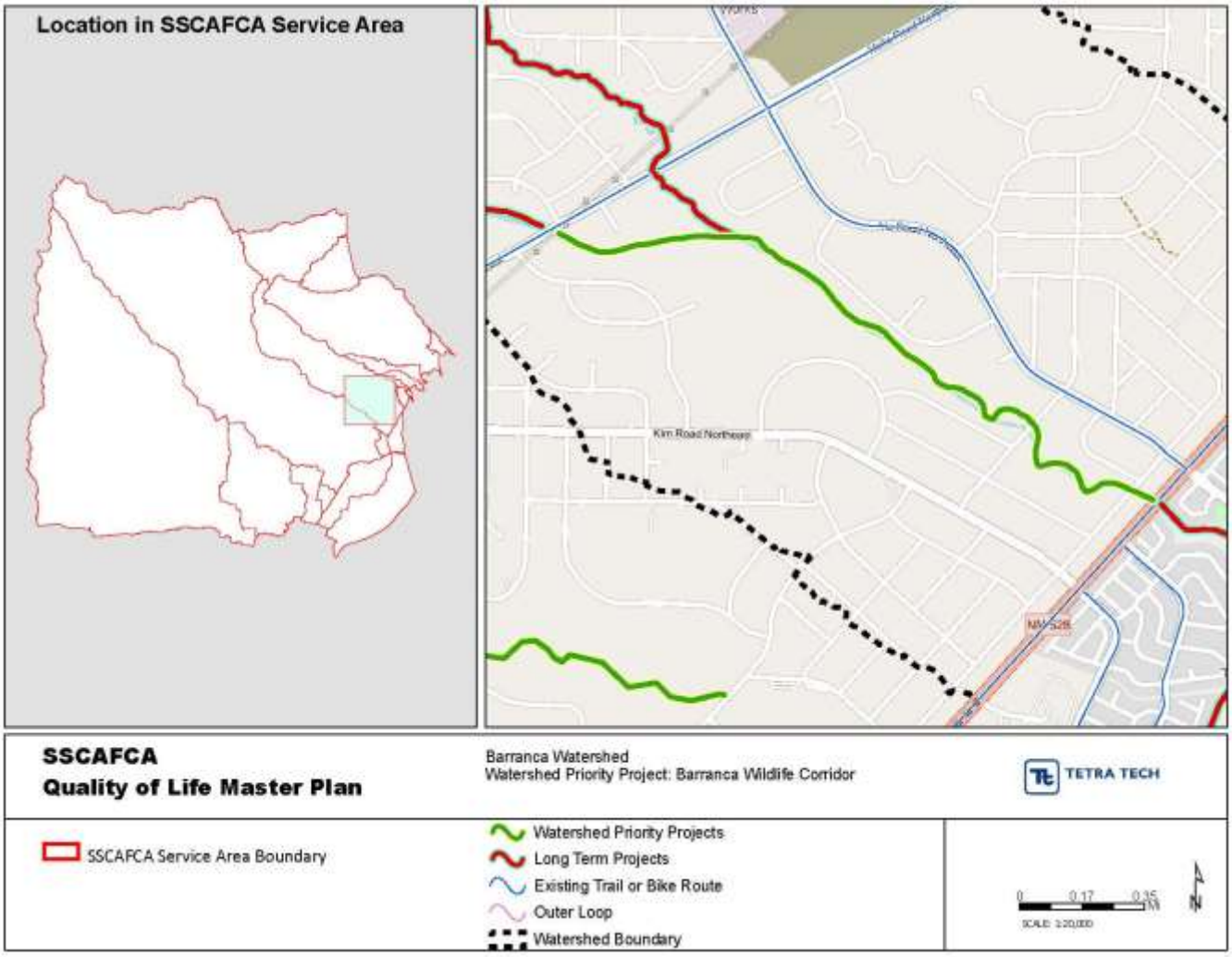

Figure 25. Barranca Wildlife Corridor

7.4.2 Barranca Arroyo Watershed Long-term Projects

The following additional projects are of interest but long-term in nature.

7.4.2.1 Bosque Connector South

This 1-mile proposed natural surfaces trail links the Montoyas Watershed to Barranca Watershed the via a trail moving southwest from the outlet of the Barranca Arroyo to the proposed Bosque Connector to Idalia Road trail. ROW along this segment includes the CORR bosque and SSCAFCA ROW (Figure 26). When considering the extension of the Bosque Connector South trail toward NM 528, consideration should be given to limiting off-road vehicle access to and traffic along this segment of the Barranca Arroyo corridor.

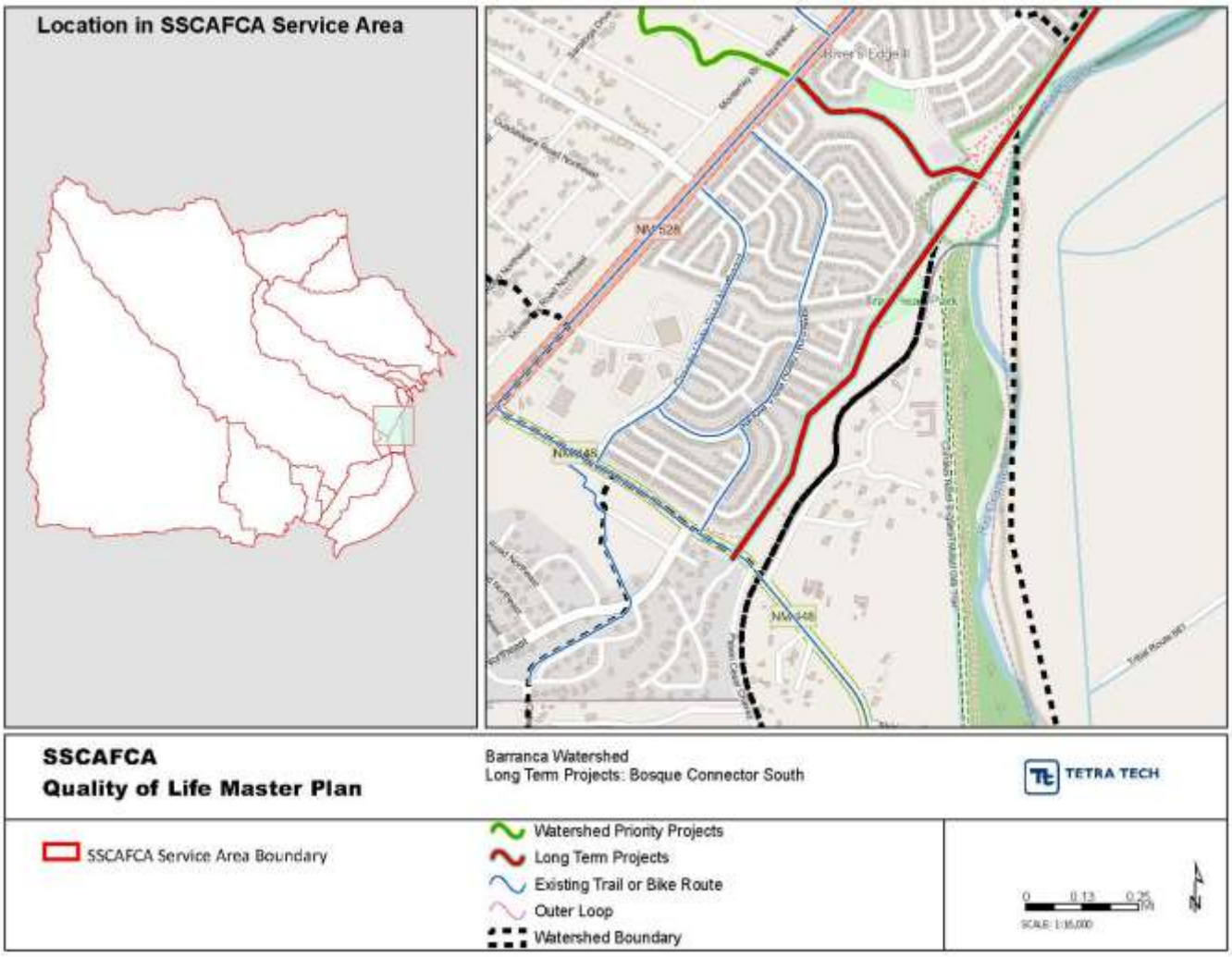

Figure 26. Bosque Connector South

7.4.2.2 Bosque Connector North

This 1.7-mile proposed paved trail is located at the intersection of the proposed Bosque Connector South and Bosque Connector North to Paseo del Volcan trails near the outlet of the Barranca Arroyo (Figure 27). This proposed trail forms a connection from existing North Loop and Willow Creek Loop NE trails near the outlet of the Venada Watershed in the floodplain of the Rio Grande. ROW along this segment includes the CORR bosque and SCCAFCA ROW. Specific activities in this trail segment include birdwatching and amenities could include educational signage. Due to some existing non-disturbance agreements and the presence of Pueblo of Sandia owned property along this alignment, the trail may need to be left in a undeveloped condition.

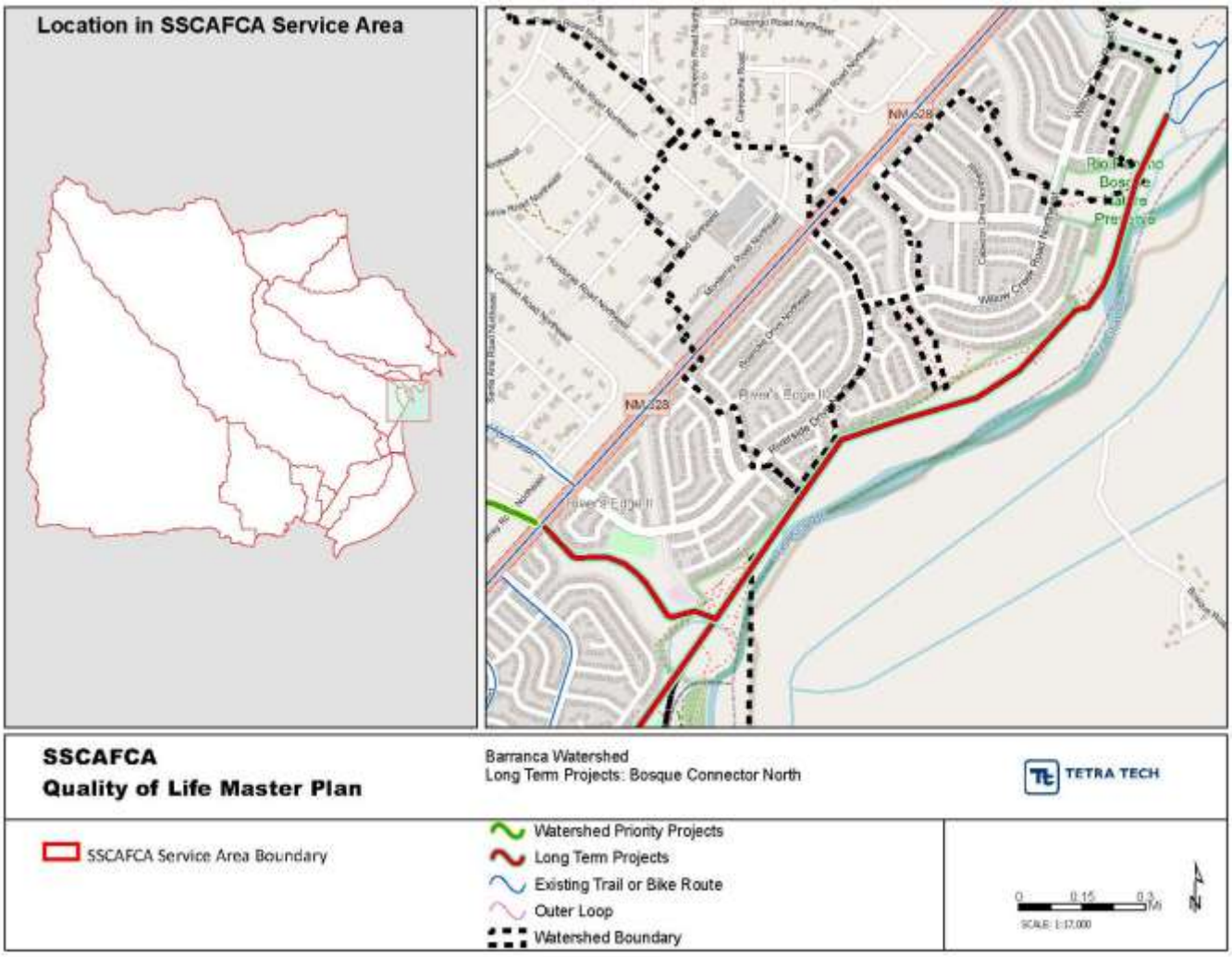

Figure 27. Bosque Connector North

7.4.2.3 Bosque Connector North to Paseo del Volcan

This 6.1-mile proposed paved trail is within SSCAFCA ROW and begins at the intersection of the Bosque Connector South and North trails and extends northwest along the Barranca Arroyo until is splits approximately 0.25-miles southeast of Idalia Road. (Figure 28) The southern trail segment parallels the Barranca Arroyo and the other proposed segment to the north and follows another trail feature, with both trail segments terminating near the proposed V. Sue Cleveland High School to Rio Rancho City Center trail. The southern fork terminates at Paseo del Volcan approximately 0.75-miles east of City Center. The northern fork terminates at Paseo del Volcan near V. Sue Cleveland High School. Approximately half of this proposed segment is within SSCAFCA ROW and the other remaining half is not within ROW of SSCAFCA or CORR.

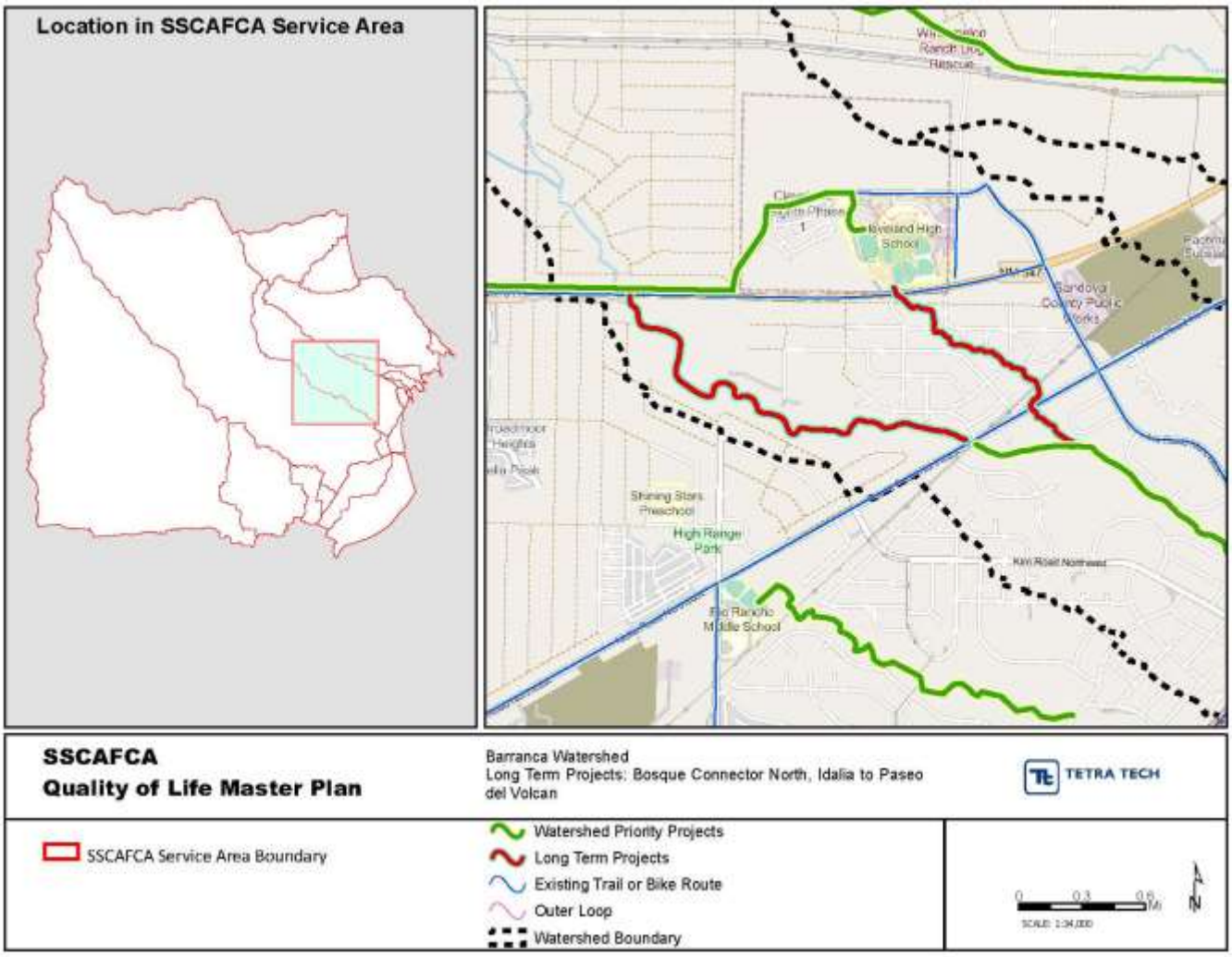

Figure 28. Bosque Connector North, Idalia to Paseo del Volcan

7.5 VENADA ARROYO WATERSHED

The Venada Arroyo Watershed encompasses 15 square miles within the SSCAFCA service area and is primarily located south of US550 on the northern edge of the SSCAFCA service area (Figure 29). The watershed contains several tributaries divided into four specific reaches: Unser Boulevard, Middle Venada, Enchanted Hills and Lower Venada, that drain into the main branch of the Venada Arroyo, which eventually reaches the Rio Grande.

The *Venada Arroyo Watershed Park Management Plan Technical Addendum* (ASCG 2002b) identified that approximately 50% of the watershed was developed, although significant construction of housing and other forms of development have occurred over the past 18 years.

The Venada Arroyo Watershed Management Plan (ASCG 2002a) summarizes the drainage strategy for the area but also includes plan criteria and objectives to provide for a Venada Parkway Corridor and multiple use trails and recreation.

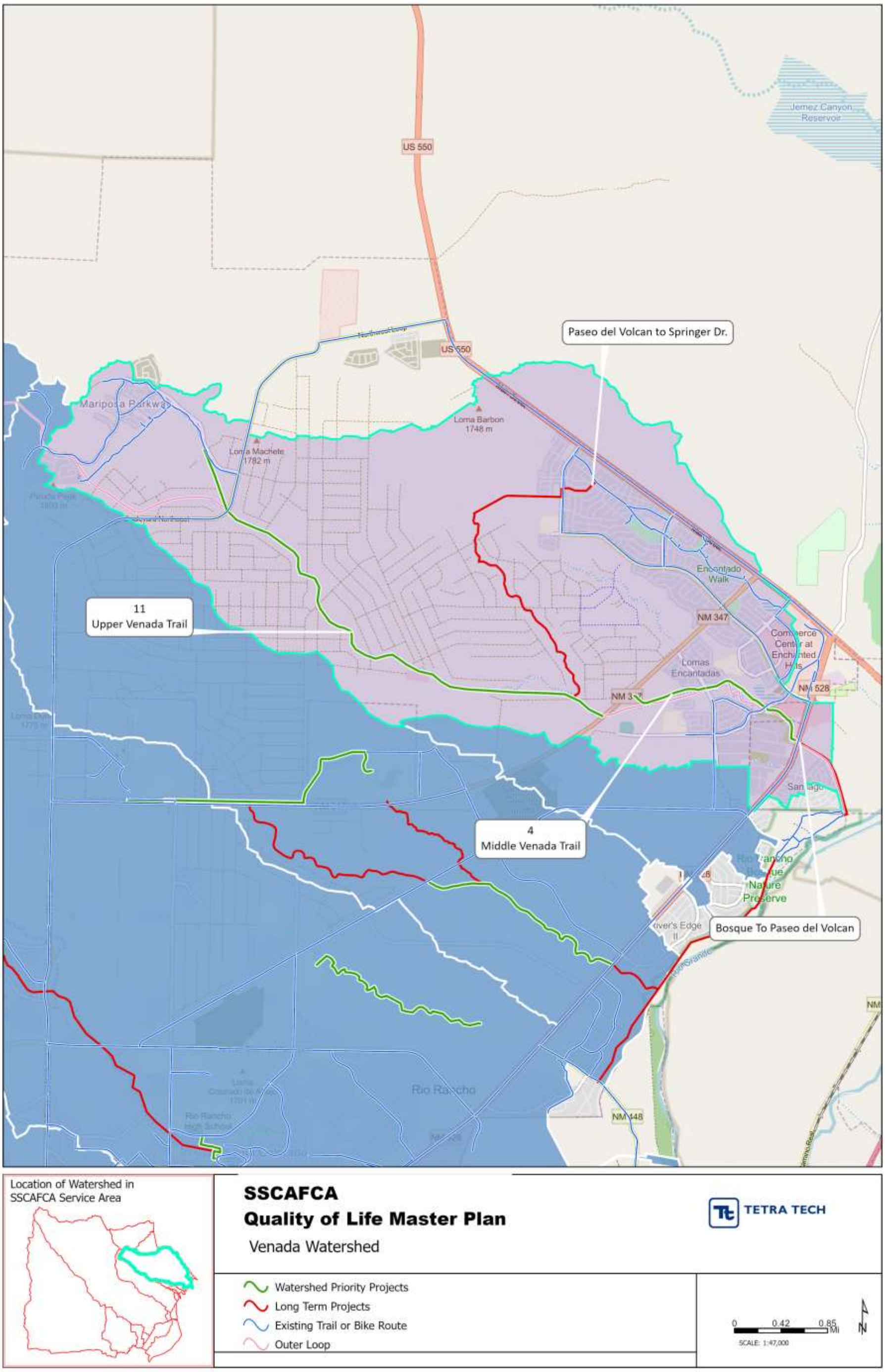

Figure 29. Venada Watershed

7.5.1 Venada Watershed Short-term Priority Projects

The following priority projects have been identified in this QOLMP and/or in the various planning documents described above.

7.5.1.1 Middle Venada Trail

The Middle Venada Trail section is bounded on the east end by NM528 (Pat D'Arco Highway) and on the west end by the PdV highway. The east end of the trail segment contains a highly urbanized subdivision and access to shopping locations. The west end of the trail segment is quickly urbanizing with additional master planned subdivisions around the corridor.

Currently, SSCAFCA owns significant ROW along the corridor, including a mix of both fee ownership and floodway easement. This trail would be constructed to both function as pedestrian access as well as access for SSCAFCA operations and maintenance vehicles and equipment.

In addition to the significant amount of residential development in the upper reaches of this segment, SSCAFCA is planning facilities in the lower reach of the Middle Venada. This development provides the opportunity to formalize access routes for maintenance and transition those to a formal pedestrian trail network. As private development unfolds, numerous opportunities will likely arise to tie into the Middle Venada trail, allowing residents to have access to larger portions of the arroyo.

In order to successfully connect segments of the trail, pedestrian crosswalks would need to be coordinated with the CORR across both Lincoln Avenue and Camino Encantadas. However, this also leads to opportunities to connect to other smaller trail networks within each subdivision that might feed to these road crossing locations.

The overall length of this proposed trail segment is 1.79 miles. The location of this trail segment is located in Figure 30.

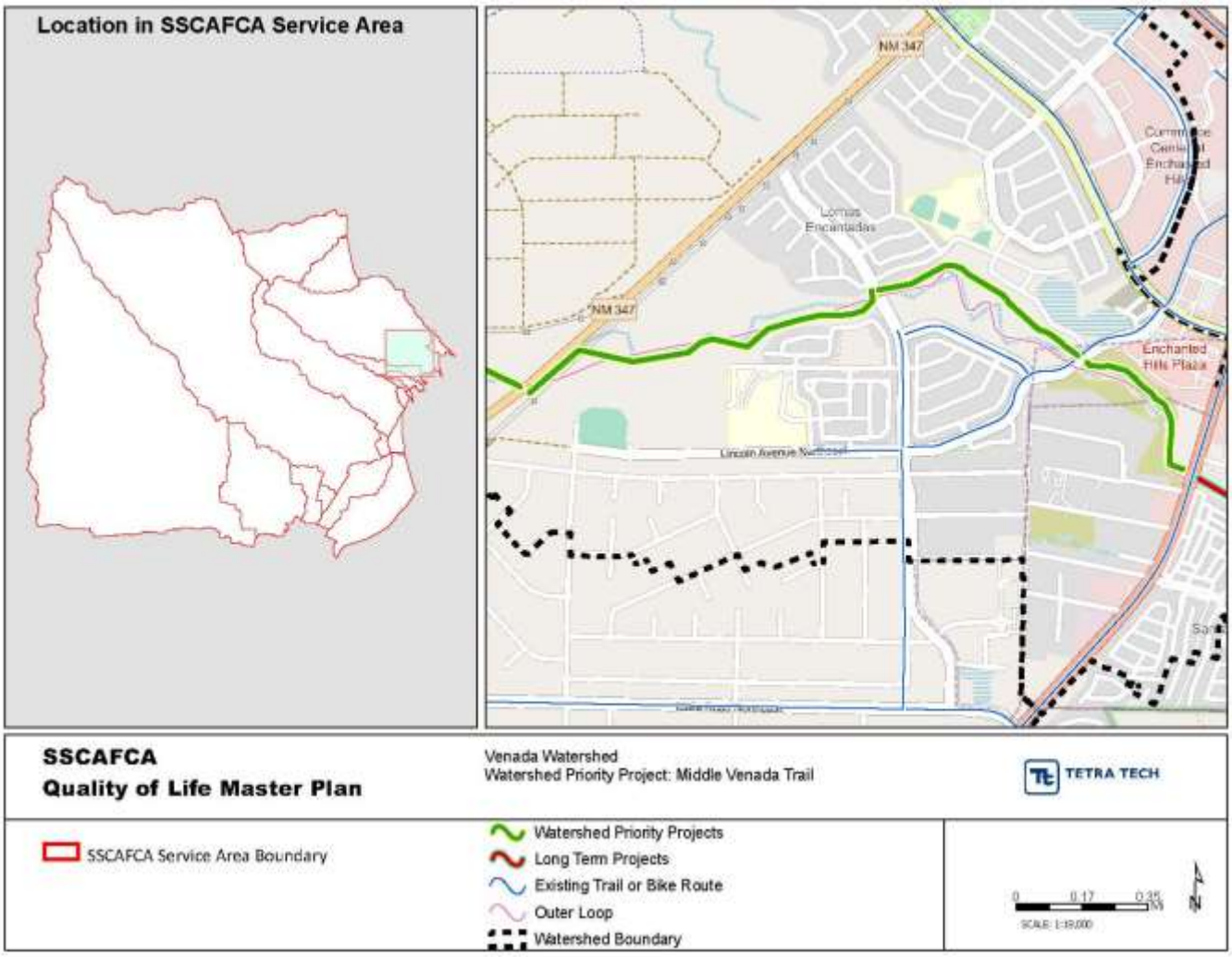

Figure 30. Middle Venada Trail

7.5.1.2 Upper Venada Trail

The Upper Venada trail segment is located in a largely undeveloped area of SSCAFCA's jurisdiction and is proposed between PdV on the east end and the Mariposa Subdivision on the west end. Fortunately, SSCAFCA has been able to acquire contiguous ROW between PdV and the Mariposa subdivision.

The Mariposa subdivision would be the west end anchor to the trail system. This subdivision has a significant developed trail network within the boundaries of the subdivision with a large user group. By constructing the Upper Venada trail segment, users of the Mariposa trail system would have access to a larger segment of the watershed.

Currently, there is development pressure at the east end of this trail segment. The increased number of residents in this area will have access to the relatively unspoiled watershed by virtue of the new trail segment.

The proposed trail segment would be constructed either as a dirt or basecourse path and would serve as a maintenance access for the arroyo by SSCAFCA operations and maintenance personnel. This approximately 4.75-mile-long trail segment is illustrated in Figure 31.

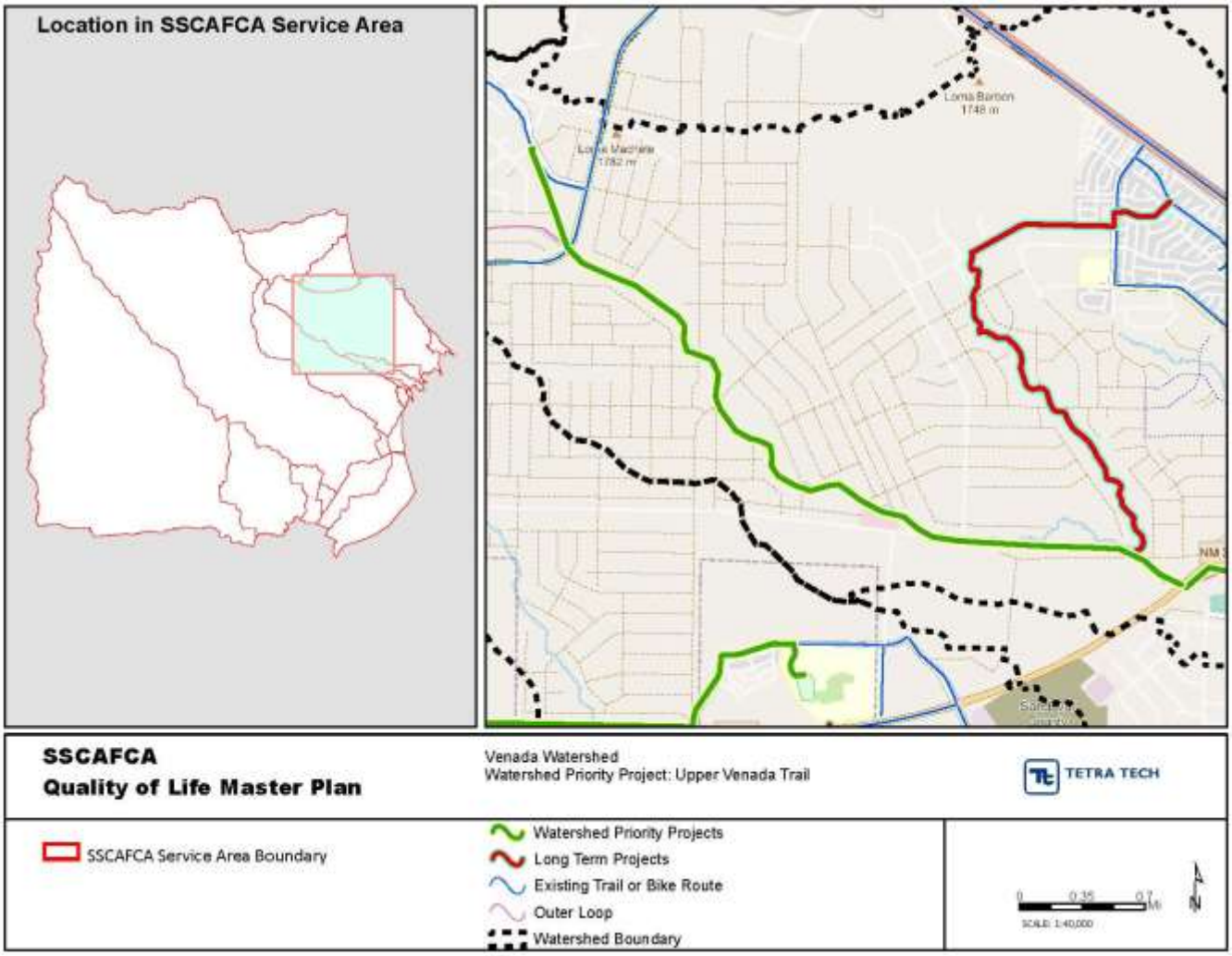

Figure 31. Upper Venada Trail

7.5.2 Venada Watershed Long-term Projects

The following projects are also of interest but long-term in nature.

7.5.2.1 Paseo del Volcan to Springer Dr.

This 5-mile proposed paved trail segment begins at Paseo del Volcan and terminates in the Enchanted Hills subdivision. This proposed trail is within the SSCAFCA ROW (Figure 32).

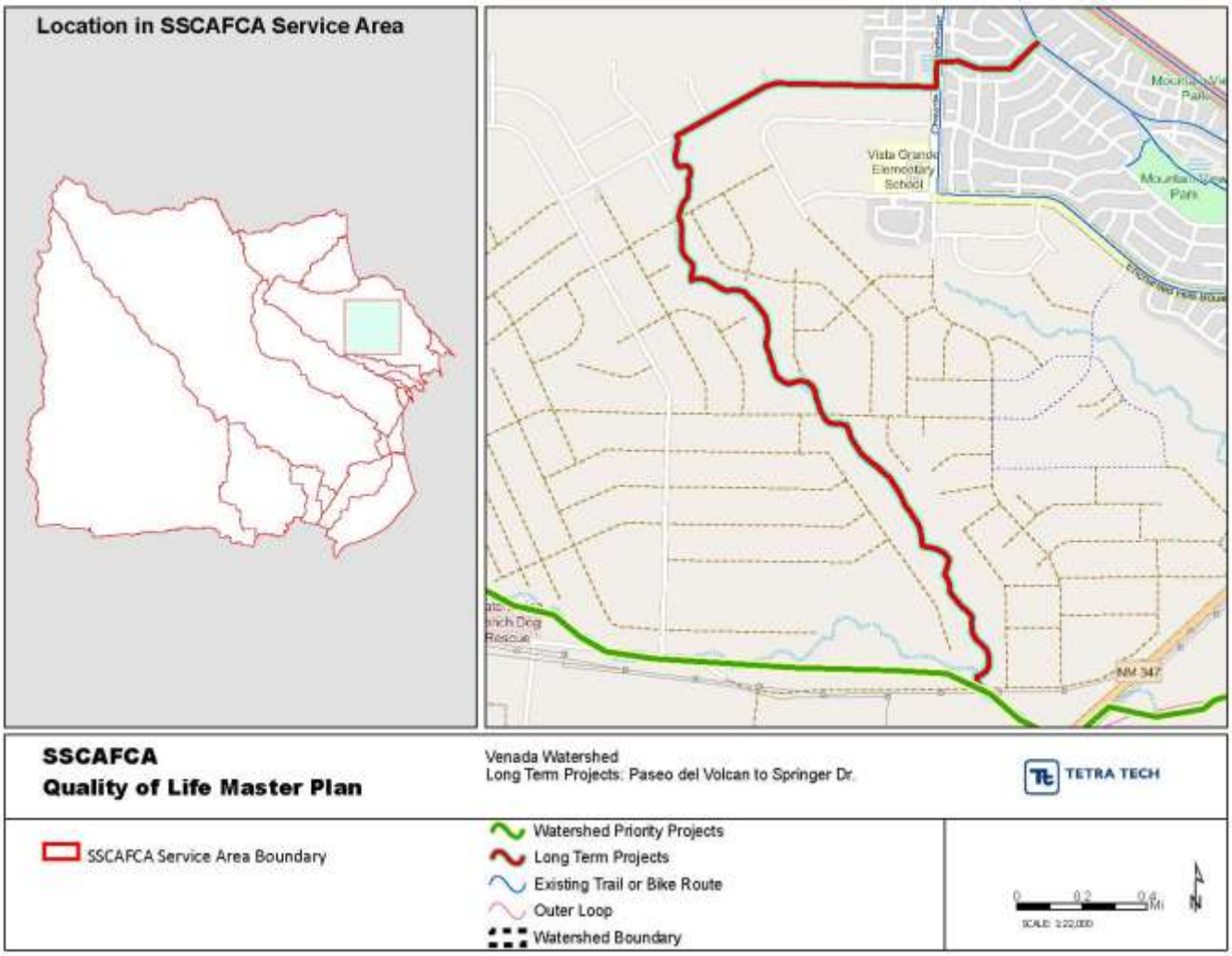

Figure 32. Paseo del Volcan to Springer Dr.

7.5.2.2 Bosque to NM528

The Bosque to NM528 trail segment is a relatively short trail segment that will complete the Venada trail east to the Rio Grande (Figure 33). One of the complicating items for this trail segment is the crossing at NM528 and its location relative to the proposed alignment of this trail segment. Currently, a portion of this trail segment is constructed along the south bank of the Venada Arroyo, providing a linkage to the subdivision immediately south of the arroyo. The crossing at NM528 will likely be a surface crossing at Venada Plaza Dr., north of the Venada Arroyo. Connecting the NM528 crossing with the desired alignment of this trail segment will require coordination with the New Mexico Department of Transportation since a portion of this this connection will need to be made within their ROW.

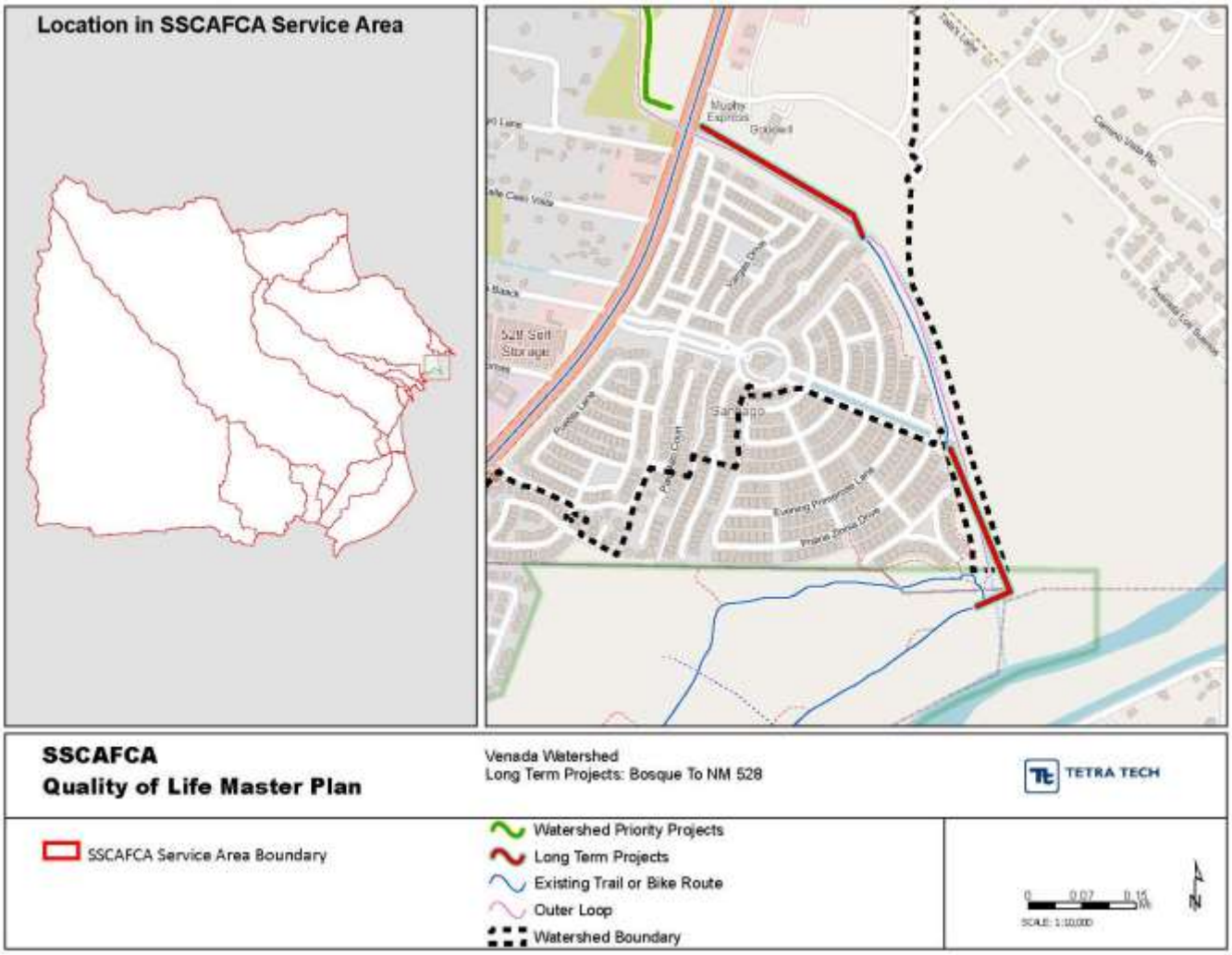

Figure 33. Bosque to NM 528

7.6 WILLOW CREEK WATERSHED

Willow Creek and Sierra Blanca are adjacent arroyos referred to as “Red Rock.” The Willow Creek Watershed is located near the intersection of Idalia Road SE and NM528 (shown on Figure 34) and includes three basins: Willow Creek A, Willow Creek B, and Willow Creek C, totaling 2 square miles. Willow Creek discharges into state highway culverts at about one half-mile to the south, forming the boundary between the planned subdivision developments of River’s Edge II and River’s Edge III (Community Sciences Corporation 2006).

Parking and access to bosque trails are present off of Willow Creek Road. Additional access to the trail that runs to the north exist within the Rivers Edge developments (a Trailhead and North Beach). The *Willow Creek Watershed Park Management Plan* (SSCAFCA 2013) describes existing and proposed facilities where recreation facilities listed above might be considered.

7.6.1 Willow Creek Short-term Priority Projects

The Bosque Connector is a recommended project that runs from Barranca to Venada passes through the extreme eastern portion of the Willow Creek and is included in the Barranca Arroyo Watershed section for the purposes of clarity.

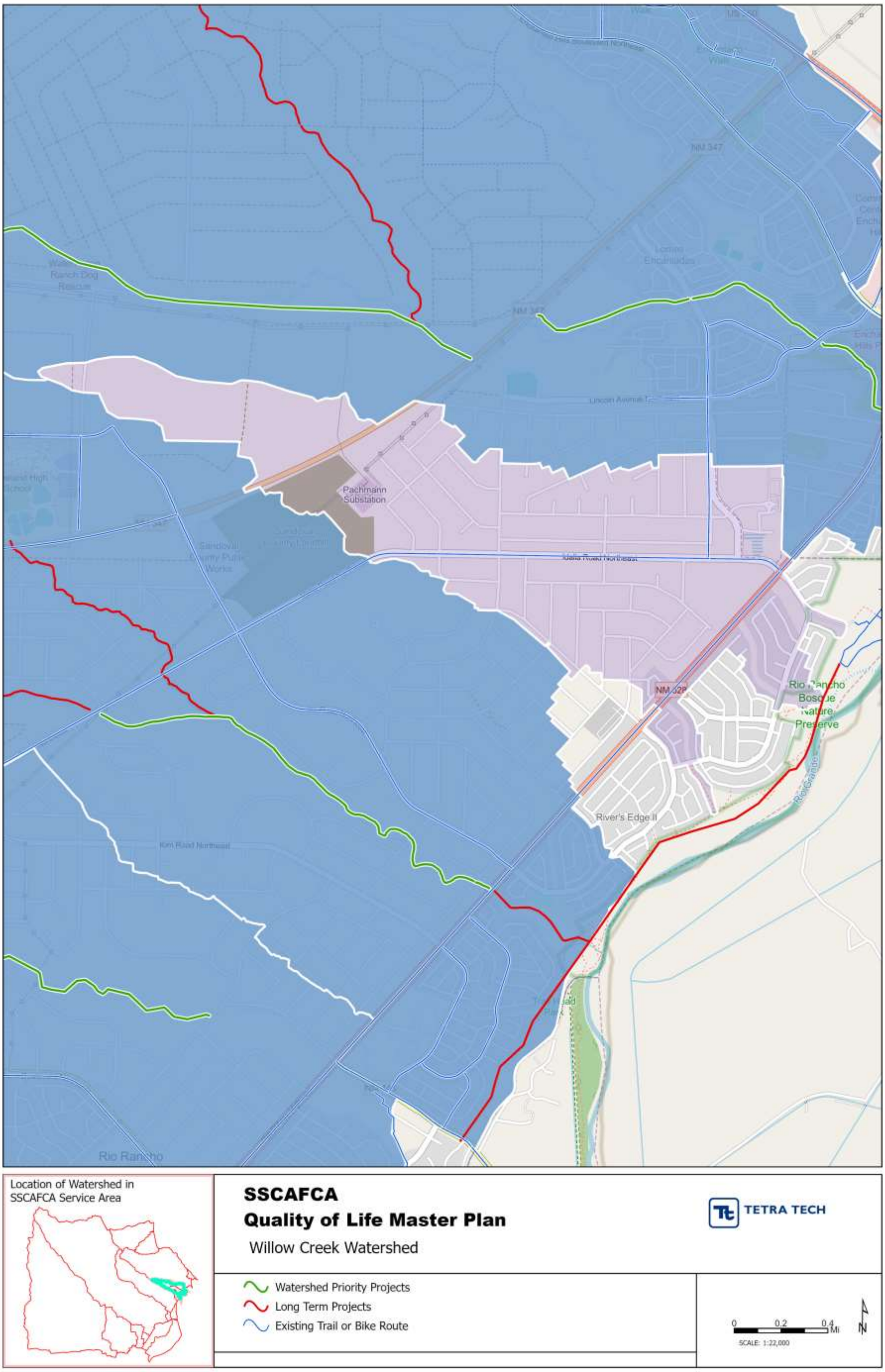

Figure 34. Willow Creek Watershed

7.7 CALABACILLAS WATERSHED

The second-largest arroyo in the Albuquerque metropolitan region is the Calabacillas Arroyo. The arroyo starts near the watershed boundary with the Rio Puerco watershed to the west in Sandoval County and runs southeast to Bernalillo County to the AMAFCA jurisdictions (shown on Figure 1). A majority of the Calabacillas watershed is classified as Public Open Space. The portion of the watershed within SSCAFCA's service area is about 60 square miles and the length of the arroyo channel is about 8.5 miles. Future versions of the Quality of Life Master Plan will consider potential watershed park amenity projects in the Calabacillas Watershed.

7.8 PROPOSED FACILITIES WITH NO LOCATION

The following facility types are described in Section 6.5. While these types of facilities are also considered a priority for evaluation, specific locations have not been identified at this time.

- Equestrian Facility
- Archery Range
- Non-motorized BMX Park

8.0 PUBLIC AND AGENCY REVIEW

8.1 AGENCY AND PUBLIC COORDINATION AND REVIEW

As noted in Section 4 above, initial agency coordination meetings were held during the planning process to collect information on implemented and planned recreational amenities. During development of this plan, public and agency outreach was conducted in order to obtain comments on the plan on the following dates.

- SSCAFCA Board of Directors; December 16, 2021
- Quality of Life Board: January 6, 2022
- Stakeholder Review: January 20-February 4, 2022
- Public Review: January 31-February 14, 2022

8.1.1 Agency Review Comments

Comments were received from CORR, MRCOG and the Town of Bernalillo (see Appendix B). Revisions made to the Draft QOLMP in response to these comments included clarifying the intent of both short-term and long-term proposed projects, clarifying language around the intent of managing open space, differentiating between ownership and operation responsibilities for some facilities, and revising language pertaining to existing agreements about public access in sensitive areas.

8.1.2 Public Review Comments

The January 2022 Draft QOLMP was placed on the SSCAFCA website for public review and local user groups were notified. No comments were received.

9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS/PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The table below provides a cumulative list of all priority and long-term recommendations in this plan.

Table 2. Recommended Projects

Watershed	Priority Project	Long-term Project
	Outer Loop Trail	
Black Arroyo	Black Arroyo Wildlife Park	Southern Blvd. to Unser Blvd.
	Black Arroyo Loop Trail	Golf Course to La Rambla de Rio Rancho
	Arkansas Channel Trail	
Montoyas	Ped Access CHS to RRCC	Sportsplex
	Upper Lomitas Negras Trail RRMS to EHES	Broadmoor Blvd. to Northern Meadows
	Bridge over Montoyas at East Sportsplex	Northern Meadows to Outer Loop
	Bridge over Montoyas at West Sportsplex	Northern Meadows to Mariposa
	Sportsplex to Sportsplex Dam Trail Connection	
Barranca	Barranca Wildlife Corridor	Bosque Connector North, Idalia to Paseo del Volcan
Venada	Middle Venada Trail	Paseo del Volcan to Springer
	Upper Venada Trail	Bosque to NM528

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APPENDIX A. WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLANS

Existing SSCAFCA Watershed Management Plans (WMPs) and other Watershed Planning Documents

Watershed Area	Relevant Trails and Recreation Information
Barranca WMP	• Nothing specific about trails
Black Arroyo WMP	• Nothing specific about trails
Master Plan for Black Arroyo Wildlife Park	• Divides Black Arroyo into 4 basic zones with different management strategies • Trail system and access control addressed • Educational and interpretive strategies presented • Public involvement summarized
Calabacillas Watershed Park Management Plan	• Upper portion of Rainbow Tributary proposed as trail corridor and open space in description of drainage improvements
Montoyas Arroyo Watershed Park Management Plan	• Trails proposed in Northern Meadows, at SSCAFCA's Sportsplex Dam • A network of trails connecting the existing trails to each other • Check appendices for locations
Unnamed Arroyo WMP	• Recommendations include a trail system connecting Enchanted Hills area and the Rio Grande bosque with trailheads at NM528 and Sheriff's Posse Road. Map page 34 • Trails (and other facilities) east of Sheriff's Posse Road, also west of Sheriff's Posse Road Map page 34 • This area is Bernalillo just south of 550 just west of the Rio Grande
Venada Arroyo WMP	• Tributary trails proposed
Willow Creek Watershed Park Management Plan	• Only shows existing trail and trailhead in bosque

APPENDIX B. AGENCY COMMENTS

Stakeholder Review Comments		Project Name: SSCAFCA Quality of Life	Document: Master Plan Update	
Date: January, February 2022		**Reviewer:** • Mid-Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MRMPO), • City of Rio Rancho Parks, Rec and Community Services Dept (CORR PRCS) • Town of Bernalillo		Back Check By: (initials)
Commenting Agency	Section/Page	**COMMENTS**	Action Taken:	By:
GENERAL				
Town of Bernalillo	Entire doc	Thank you for the opportunity to review the proposed plan. No adverse comments. Great job!	Thank you for the comment. No action required.	OH
MRMPO	Entire doc.	Overall MRCOG has no issues with the Quality of Life plan and supports the plan goals and objectives which are also consistent with the goals and objectives (or pathways) of the Connections 2040 MTP.	Thank you for your comment.	OH
MRMPO		The plan might benefit from an executive summary at the beginning, especially one that included the list of priority projects for each watershed as found in chapter 9.	Added clarifying language to the end of the Executive Summary.	DG
MRMPO		MRCOG finds the plan to be thorough concerning wildlife needs and other environmental considerations.	No action required.	OH
SPECIFIC				
MRMPO	Project maps in chapter 7	MRMPO maintains a Long Range Bicycle System map. Coordination with MRMPO on including SSCAFCA-mapped exisisting and long term (bicycle) projects in the LRBS is encouraged where appropriate if the Plan is adopted.	Added language regarding coordination to Section 5.4.1.	DG
CORR PRCS	Page 10: Section 6.1.1 – Unpaved Trails	Please add language that allows treatment of "natural materials" – specifically crusher fines with a type of stabilizer to extend the functional life of natural trail surfacing. This would be in keeping with the Department's criteria for improved trails described in the City's DPM. Polypavement: https://www.polypavement.com/ Stabilizer Solutions: http://www.stabilizersolutions.com/technologies/pathway-technology/	Added statement regarding addition of stabilizers.	DG
CORR PRCS	Page 12: Section 6.4 Open Space	Because a large amount of "improvements" will likely be in response to, or in conjunction with development, additional language discussing (more specifically or in more detail) how Open Space AND habitat (in addition to the wildlife corridors mentioned later in section 6.6), other than the Rio Rancho Bosque, would be: preserved, re-established, created and maintained in the context of the watershed/s where developments or improvements are made.	Added clarification regarding SSCAFCA's intent to manage upland arroyo properties to be Open Space.	DG

Stakeholder Review Comments		Project Name: SSCAFCA Quality of Life	Document: Master Plan Update	
Date:	**January, February 2022**	**Reviewer:** • Mid-Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MRMPO), • City of Rio Rancho Parks, Rec and Community Services Dept (CORR PRCS) • Town of Bernalillo		Back Check By: (initials)
Commenting Agency	Section/Page	**COMMENTS**	Action Taken:	By:
CORR PRCS	Page 13: Section 6.5.1 Parks	Eliminate second paragraph or compose a simpler segue to the sections that follow. The paragraph seems very specific, gives the impression that some how those "recreation venues" were created in partnership with SSCAFCA already, and for those reasons should be removed.	Second paragraph of this section was removed.	DG
CORR PRCS	Page 15: Section 6.7.3.2 Friends of Rio Rancho Open Space	FORROS was dissolved their 501 (C) 3 in December, 2021 and no longer exist formally or informally.	This section was removed.	DG
CORR PRCS	Page 23: Section 7.2.1.2 Black Arroyo Loop Trail	Should there be any reference to the Cabezon PID that maintains the Linear Park through Cabezon, and I believe will continue to do so for another 14 years (30 year levy, I thought started as early as 2005).	Clarified that the trail is owned by CoRR and operated by the Cabezon PID.	DG
CORR PRCS	Page 32: Section 7.3.1.3 Bridge over Montoyas at East Sportsplex; somewhat related to Page 36: Section 7.3.2.1	David is aware of the PRCS and City's feelings about a bridge in this area and the specificity of language used in this section. David will compose replacement language that is more general. A proposed bridge between the drop structure in the arroyo, west toward the rundown on the south bank at the Sports Complex Skate Park would be problematic as the "road" is intended only as a maintenance road, there are many barriers and potential interactions with heavy machinery and city vehicles – this is not a trail in the City's view. The long-term improvement to the east toward 528 could be accommodated, but a great deal of future discussion would need to occur as the Department's materials storage facility is in or very near the proposed alignment and again, is not an area the City would like to direct people to frequent.	Language changed to reflect intent of comment.	DG

Stakeholder Review Comments		Project Name: SSCAFCA Quality of Life	Document: Master Plan Update	
Date:	**January, February 2022**	**Reviewer:** • Mid-Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MRMPO), • City of Rio Rancho Parks, Rec and Community Services Dept (CORR PRCS) • Town of Bernalillo		Back Check By: (initials)
Commenting Agency	Section/Page	**COMMENTS**	Action Taken:	By:
CORR PRCS	Page 39: Section 7.4 Baranca Arroyo Watershed/Page 40 and 41: Section 7.4.1 Barranca Arroyo Watershed Short-Term Priority Projects Section	PRCS needs to note that at this time there is a great deal of Off-Road/4x4 Truck, ATV and other motorized vehicle pressure on the south end of the Rio Rancho Bosque at the Barranca Arroyo. Any future improvements would need to consider how this can be mitigated, specifically any development of the "Long Term Projects" indicated between NM528 and The Rio Grande.	Language added to address concerns in this comment.	DG

Stakeholder Review Comments		Project Name: SSCAFCA Quality of Life	Document: Master Plan Update	
Date: January, February 2022		**Reviewer:** • Mid-Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MRMPO), • City of Rio Rancho Parks, Rec and Community Services Dept (CORR PRCS) • Town of Bernalillo		Back Check By: (initials)
Commenting Agency	Section/Page	**COMMENTS**	Action Taken:	By:
CORR PRCS	Page 43: Section 7.4.2.2 Bosque Connector North; Page 44: Section 7.4.2.3 Bosque Connector North to Paseo del Volcan	If the improvements described are referring to the red lines (Long Term Projects) on Figures 26 and 27, the trail is not paved. It is a formalized trail constructed of stabilized basalt crusher fines and would continue to exist as a natural material trail and will not be paved. The red line appears to follow the existing North Beach Trail and Middle Bosque Trail.* The same will be true of the section of informal, natural material "trail" where the stabilized trail ends heading north through to the southern end of the Willow Creek Trail. There are multiple parcels along the Rio Rancho Bosque Trail where the Sandia Pueblo is the owner or AMREP is the owner with a perpetual non-disturbance agreement in place that will prevent complete trail sections from being constructed through those areas to protect significant cultural sites. The City/PRCS is thankful that the Pueblo allows "incidental" trial users through these properties, as they wish for there to be no viewing or crossing of the parcels (and have indicated if we pursue a formal trail, they will fence all public use off/out of the parcel). The remaining, narrow section of City land between these parcels and the river are sheer bank and are not safely improved or traversable. Just as PRCS and the City informed the State of NM as it was developing the Rio Grande Trail alignment, the Bosque Trail is non-contiguous and will continue to be so if following the proposed alignment. An alternative route leaving the river, west along Corrales Road or through the Rivers Edge I Neighborhood, then N/NE behind the traffic/sound walls to the Venada, could be the best, contiguous alignment for the Rio Grande Trail and may be the same for the SSCAFCA Loop if the current Rio Rancho Bosque trail conditions do not meet SSCAFCA's short or long term plans for surfacing, access or alignment. *If the red line on figures 26 and 27 is not indicating this trail or long-term improvements following that line/alignment, then the figure is confusing and should be changed or improved to better show what improvements are indicated by the figure.	Language added to address concerns in this comment.	DG

Stakeholder Review Comments		Project Name: SSCAFCA Quality of Life	Document: Master Plan Update	
Date:	**January, February 2022**	**Reviewer:** • Mid-Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MRMPO), • City of Rio Rancho Parks, Rec and Community Services Dept (CORR PRCS) • Town of Bernalillo		Back Check By: (initials)
Commenting Agency	Section/Page	**COMMENTS**	Action Taken:	By:
CORR PRCS	Page 52: Section 7.6.1 Willow Creek Short-term Priority Projects	The same comments as provided above for Sections 7.4.2.2 and 7.4.2.3 apply. This facility exists as a non-contiguous trail system where many sections are made up of informal, natural trails or paths. Specifically, there are a few areas or "trail connections" between the south end of the Willow Creek Trail – south past the "Duck Blind" that could benefit from trail improvements, but access for construction is very limited and could damage more habitat than it could help or protect by constructing a formal trail. The section between the two AMREP/Pueblo parcels is not accessible for construction vehicles without permission from either party, and neither will permit it (Per the last 2 Interstate Stream and BOR projects that modified the Rio Grande bank on the Rio Rancho side and discussions that followed the initial talks with the Pueblo for the Governor Richardson Rio Grande Trail project undertaken by MRCOG in the early to mid-2000's).	Addressed above.	DG
CORR PRCS	Page 55: Section 9.0	If not redefined in their respective sections, PRCS would request that the table be adjusted to remove projects within the Rio Rancho Bosque along the east boundary of the City/SSCAFCA jurisdiction. Again, if there is a misunderstanding of what the red lines mean on figures including the Rio Rancho Bosque, please change the language to clarify SSCAFCA's ideas or plans related to improvements in the areas depicted.	Bosque Connectors North and South removed from the table.	DG