

CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE

Planning Department
Alan Varela – Director



DATE: October 21, 2024

RESPONSE TO COMMENTS BY: Judith Becker, P.E, Tierra West LLC

Mayor Timothy M. Keller

August 19, 2024

Terry Brown, PE
Ronald Bohannon, PE
Tierra West, LLC
5571 Midway Park Pl NE
Albuquerque, NM 87109

**Re: Central and Unser Development
Traffic Impact Study (K10D063)**
DRAFT dated June 25, 2024
Via email jroberts@tierrawestllc.com

Dear Mr. Brown/Bohannon,

The subject Traffic Impact Study (Study) draft received on July 12, 2024, has been reviewed by the City of Albuquerque Planning Development Transportation Section. The City has the following comments to be addressed.

1. This project was discussed with COA Traffic Operations. Route most traffic internally to the access off of Central Ave at the Driveway "E" location. A traffic signal at this location was discussed.
Response: A Traffic Signal should be located at Sarracino Pl/Unser Blvd. instead of Central Ave./Driveway E for the following reasons:
 - **A signal at Sarracino would service a public street that feeds two potential major developments**, the existing mixed-use development at the northwest quadrant of Central/Unser (75% complete) and the proposed development at the northeast quadrant of Central/Unser. Placing the signal on Central would only service the proposed development. The signal will assist City Transit with moving the buses northbound to the West Transit service center and also allow better movement for the general public accessing the transit facility. Sarracino is a public roadway.
 - **All northbound traffic (approximately 20% of all trips) from the existing northwest development must make a left-turn movements at the development's two unsignalized access intersections.** As mentioned above, a proposed signal assists City buses leaving the Central & Unser Major Transit Center and returning to Daytona Transit Facility. A signal at Sarracino would eliminate this problem.
 - **A signal at Sarracino would benefit more pedestrians.** Pedestrian traffic crossing Unser Blvd. at Sarracino Place and Central Ave. is expected to increase as a result of the proposed development. The development in the northwest quadrant of Central/Unser contains a major transit center, public library, and a large apartment complex and the proposed development will contain restaurants and retail spaces. At Driveway "E" on Central, there are only two single family homes on the south side of central across from the proposed development. As stated in the City's DPM, "The greatest level of safety and comfort for pedestrians are provided by traffic control signals, including pedestrian hybrid beacons that completely stop the flow of traffic through a pedestrian-activated sensor". And since the project is in an Activity Center, designated pedestrian crossings should be less than 600-ft apart and signalized pedestrian crossings should be less than 1320-ft apart. (DPM, Table 7.4.41)
 - **Given the traffic volume on Unser Blvd. and Central Ave. (>12000 vehicles per direction) and the number of lanes to cross (>4 lanes), a signalized intersection control is the only acceptable control for a crosswalk. See Figure 7.4.51 of the DPM.**
 - **Traffic Volumes on Unser (28975 AADT) are greater than Traffic Volumes on Central (19876 AADT).** Therefore, unsignalized intersection delays on Unser for an are greater than on Central for the same volume of traffic exiting the development.
 - **All northbound traffic (approximately 20% of all trips) from the existing northwest development must make a left-turn movements at the development's two unsignalized access intersections.** A signal at Sarracino would eliminate this problem.

- **No median modifications are required for the Sarracino location to install a signal.** The median at Central/Driveway E would need to be modified to install a signal.
 - **A signal at Sarracino would be 35-feet further away from the Central/Unser intersection than a signal at Central/Driveway E** (920-ft north vs. 885-ft East). Unser Blvd. and Central Ave. are Major Transit Corridors in the vicinity of the project, therefore, minimum distance between signalized spacing is 1320-ft according to the DPM, Table 7.4.42. However, since the project is in an Activity Center, signalized pedestrian crossings should be less than 1320-ft apart. (DPM, Table 7.4.41).
2. Include a crash section in the Study. MRCOG HFIN shows all 4 legs of Unser Blvd and Central Ave as “Red”. Recommend mitigation to reduce crashes as necessary. Elaborate on pedestrian fatalities, if any, including mitigation. Recommendations in the Study should focus more on crash reduction than improving LOS at Central Ave and Unser Blvd.
Response: A crash study for the intersection of Central Ave./Unser Blvd. will be included in the final report.
3. Unser Blvd is a limited access Roadway, therefore access on Unser Blvd will be per Sarracino Pl.
Response: All accesses other than Sarracino Place have been eliminated from the design as requested.
4. There are too many driveways/conflict points proposed on Central Ave. It is preferable to have just one access on Central Ave as discussed in #1 above.
Response: The number accesses to the development have been reduce to 4 instead of 6:
 1. Driveway “A” - Sarracino Pl/Unser (Full Access, Existing, Signalized)
 2. Driveway “B” (Formerly “E”) - Central Ave./Driveway “B”(Full Access, Proposed, Unsignalized),
 3. Driveway “C” - Central Ave./Driveway “C” (Right-in/Right-out, Proposed, Unsignalized)
 4. Driveway “D” - Central Ave./Driveway “D” (Right-in/Right-out, Proposed, Unsignalized)
- *In Table 7.4.46 of the DPM, the maximum allowable number of commercial access points per site off a Principal Arterial is 1-2 access points per 300-ft of road frontage. This site has 1775-ft of frontage which would allow up to 11 access points. Just along Central Ave., which has 900-ft of frontage, the standard would allow up to 6 access points.*
 - *There are currently 6 commercial access points to the proposed site on Central Ave. The new development would reduce the number of access points to only 3. The remaining 3 would be decommissioned.*
 - *The proposed access points would meet the minimum spacing requirements listed in Table 7.4.45 of the DPM ((300-ft Approach Distance & 200-ft Departure Distance)*
5. Since this commercial subdivision will be master-planned, the Access Spacing as shown/discussed on page 43 is less appropriate. Every driveway is a conflict point for vehicles and pedestrians. *See response for Comment #4*
6. The 3rd SBT lane on Unser Blvd south of Central Ave creates a merge and may increase crashes. Please remove recommendation from the Study.
Response: Agreed. Optimizing the timing of the signal at Central/Unser and redistributing most of the traffic away from Central to the signalized intersection at Sarracino eliminated the need for a 3rd Southbound lane.
7. Changing the Unser Blvd NBT to a thru/right may increase crashes and may be less safe for pedestrians. Please remove recommendation from the Study.
Response: Agreed. The NBTR was changed back to NBT
8. For the intersection of Unser Blvd and Sarracino Pl, a WBR would allow drivers to make this turn without waiting for the WBT movement. Exhibit 3 shows 1 car driving thru. Drivers wishing to go west can use the driveway on Central Ave.
Response: The WBT/R does not affect the performance of the intersection. The second WBL lane has been eliminated.
9. Show the Central driveway design in more detail.
See response for Comment #1.

If you have any questions, please contact me [at ccherne@cabq.gov](mailto:accherne@cabq.gov) or (505) 924-3986.

Sincerely,

Curtis A Cherne

Curtis Cherne, P.E.
 Senior Engineer, Planning Dept.
 Development Review Services