



**Environmental  
Planning  
Commission**

*Agenda Number: 6  
Project Number: 1007204  
Case #'s: 08EPC 40063  
July 17, 2008*

**Staff Report**

<b>Agent</b>	Darren Sowell Architects, LLC
<b>Applicant</b>	Armstrong Development Properties
<b>Request</b>	<b>Amendment to a site development plan for subdivision</b>
<b>Legal Description</b>	Tracts 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B, 3A, 3B, 4B, and 6 V.E. Barrett Subdivision and Tracts 4-A-1, 5-B-1, 5-B-2, Lands of WEFCO Partners
<b>Location</b>	SW Corner of Central and Unser SW between Bridge and 86 <sup>th</sup> Street
<b>Size</b>	Approximately 50 acres
<b>Existing Zoning</b>	C-2 and SU-1/C-2 (10 acres), O-1, and PRD 20 du/acre
<b>Proposed Zoning</b>	C-2 (previous request, pending City Council action)

**Staff Recommendation**

**APPROVAL of 08EPC-40063, based on the findings on pages 24 - 27, and subject to the conditions of approval on pages 27 - 31.**

**Staff Planner**

**Russell Brito, Division Manager**

**Summary of Analysis**

The site development plan for subdivision amendment proposes to add sign standards to its list of approved design standards that pertain to all development on the site. The signage program submitted by the applicant does not fully comply with the applicable regulations of the Zoning Code and the West Route 66 Sector Development Plan.

The site's layout and design make it an automobile dominated shopping center with numerous pedestrian/vehicle conflicts throughout the site that may be partially addressed with additional signage. Recommended conditions of approval are proposed by Planning Staff to bring the submittal into better compliance with controlling plans, policies and regulations.

Location Map (3" x 3")

City Departments and other interested agencies reviewed this application from 9 June 2008 to 20 June 2008. Agency comments were used in the preparation of this report and begin on page 32.

**AREA CHARACTERISTICS AND ZONING HISTORY**

*Surrounding zoning, plan designations, and land uses:*

	<b>Zoning</b>	<b>Comprehensive Plan Area; Applicable Rank II &amp; III Plans</b>	<b>Land Use</b>
<b>Site</b>	C-2 and SU-1 for C-2 (10 acres) / O-1/ PRD 20 DU/A (7 acres)	Established Urban, West Side Strategic Plan, and West Route 66 Sector Development Plan	Vacant Undeveloped Land
<b>North</b>	SU-2 for IP	Established Urban, West Side Strategic Plan, and West Route 66 Sector Development Plan	Commercial
<b>South</b>	R-T and SU-1 for PRD 20 DU/A	Established Urban, Westside Strategic Plan, and West Route 66 Sector Development Plan	Single-family homes and apartments
<b>East</b>	C-2	Established Urban, West Side Strategic Plan, and West Route 66 Sector Development Plan	Gas Station, Family Dollar, and Vacant Land
<b>West</b>	R-1	Established Urban and West Side Strategic Plan	Vacant Undeveloped Land

**BACKGROUND**

This is a request for an amendment to a site development plan for subdivision to add signage design standards, for Tracts 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B, 3A, 3B, 4B, and 6 V.E. Barrett Subdivision and Tracts 4-A-1, 5-B-1, 5-B-2, Lands of WEFECO Partners, located on the SW corner of Central Avenue and Unser Boulevard, within the West Route 66 Sector Development Plan, the West Side Strategic Plan and Established Urban Area designated by the Comprehensive Plan. The subject site contains approximately 50 acres and is vacant. Single-family and apartment uses are located to the south of the subject site. A gas station and a retail store are located to the west of the subject site. To the east is a vacant lot, and to the north are commercial uses.

The EPC heard the original site development plan for subdivision (08EPC-40034) in conjunction with a sector development plan map amendment (08EPC-40039) and a site development plan for building permit (08EPC-40035) at the public hearing of 15 May 2008. The sector development plan map amendment was forwarded to the City Council with an approval recommendation. The site development plans were approved with conditions, one of which is the current request to add a signage program to the site development plan for subdivision's design standards. Another outstanding condition of approval for the site development plans is a final approval action on the sector development plan map amendment by the City Council. The DRB will not sign off on the site development plans until all conditions of approval have been met (see attached, 15 May 2008 Notice of Decision).

After returning from their July recess, the City Council will consider the sector development plan map amendment from *SU-1 for C-2 (maximum 10 acres) / O-1 & Planned Residential Development*

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(PRD) 20 Dwelling units per acre (DU/A) (minimum 7 acres) to C-2 for approximately 36 acres. The balance of the 50-acre site is already zoned C-2 (14 acres). The existing zoning, which was established by the West Route 66 Plan, restricts commercial uses to 10 acres in the SU-1 zoned portion and requires at least 7 acres to be Planned Residential Development (see definition in zoning section). If the City Council approves the sector development plan map amendment, then the entire site will be zoned C-2, which allows for 100% commercial uses and the possibility, but no requirement for residential uses on the site.

The applicant is proposing to subdivide the site into 14 tracts. The approved site development plan for building permit request includes nine buildings ranging in size from greater than 125,000 square feet to 4,800 square feet. In addition to the nine proposed buildings in the site development for building permit, there are eight tracts located along the northern boundary of the site that are intended to be developed in the future. The layout and design of these eight tracts (future pad sites) would be regulated by the proposed design standards in the site development plan for subdivision.

## **HISTORY**

The subject site's history includes several zone changes beginning in the 1960s. The first occurred in March 1960 (Z-883) and changed the zoning from M-1 to C-2 for a small portion of the site adjacent to Central Avenue. The majority of the subject site was zoned A-1 at the time and continued as such until 1966, when a zone change was approved from A-1 to SU-1 for Planned Tourist Commercial Development for Tracts 1B, 2B, 3B, 4B, and 5 and from A-1 to SU-1 for Planned Mobile Home Development for Tracts 6 and 7, all in the V.E. Barrett Subdivision (Z-1636).

In June 1976, the Unser Boulevard Regional Complex Master Plan was presented to the EPC for approval (S-76-9(MP)). Staff was unable to find an official notice of decision for this case, but did find an action sheet. This action sheet does not indicate approval or denial of the master plan, but rather states, "Be it resolved that the Environmental Planning Commission supports the planning efforts thus far and in particular the efforts to consolidate the land involved and further, encourages the applicant to proceed with more detailed plans for the proposed complex and to work with the Planning Department and other departments and agencies in the development of such plans." Based upon this language, staff concludes that this master plan was never officially approved.

In 1988, the West Route 66 Sector Development Plan was adopted. It was with the adoption of this plan that the site's current zoning was established.

In 2003, DRB approved a site plan for subdivision (03DRB-01692) for the C-2 portion of the subject site. The site plan for subdivision subdivided Tracts 4A1, 4B, 5B1, and 5B2 into five reconfigured tracts with a primary driveway through the site plan for subdivision. The approval of the 2008 requests will supersede the DRB approval of 03DRB-01692.

## **CONTEXT**

The subject site is currently vacant. Single-family and apartment uses are located to the south of the subject site. A gas station and a retail store are located to the west of the subject site. To the east is a vacant lot, and to the north across Central Avenue are commercial uses.

**LONG RANGE ROADWAY SYSTEM**

The Long Range Roadway System (LRRS) map, produced by the Mid-Region Council of Governments (MRCOG), identifies the functional classifications of roadways.

The Long Range Roadway System designates Central Avenue and Unser Boulevard as a Principal Arterial, with a right-of-way of 124' (Established & Developing Urban) or 156' (elsewhere).

The Long Range Roadway System designates 86<sup>th</sup> Street as a Collector street, with a right-of-way of 68'.

Long Range Bicycle Plan shows a bike trail on Unser Boulevard and a proposed bike lane on Central Avenue and Unser Boulevard.

Four ABQ Ride Routes serve the site (1) Route 766; (2) Route 66; (3) Route 54; and (4) Route 162. Route 66 and Route 766 begin and terminate at Central Avenue and Unser Boulevard.

Central Avenue and Unser Boulevard are both designated as enhanced transit corridors in the Comprehensive Plan Corridor Designation Plan.

A Traffic Impact Study was required for this site and was completed on March 31, 2008. The TIS was based upon a single-phase development consisting of a shopping center, fast food restaurants, high turnover sit-down restaurants, a gasoline/service station, a drive-in bank, and a drugstore. The anticipated implementation year reflected in the TIS is 2013. Utilizing projected traffic volumes resulting from the development of this site into a commercial facility the TIS report concludes that development of the subject site will have no significant adverse impact on the adjacent transportation system, provided that the recommendations of the TIS are followed.

**PUBLIC FACILITIES/COMMUNITY SERVICES**

The subject site is located within one mile of two developed parks, a community center and library, one fire station, and an elementary school and middle school.

**ANALYSIS OF APPLICABLE ORDINANCES, PLANS AND POLICIES**

**ALBUQUERQUE COMPREHENSIVE ZONING CODE**

The May 2008 proposals include a map amendment to the West Route 66 Sector Development Plan. Currently, the site contains two zoning designations: (1) the northeast 14 acres of the site, Tracts 4A1, 4B, 5B1, and 5B2 are zoned C-2 and; (2) 36 acres of the site are zoned SU-1 for C-2 (10 acres), O-1, and PRD 20 du/ac (7 acres). The request for a sector plan map amendment pertains to the 36-acre portion of the site and will be considered by the City Council following their July recess. The table below compares the existing and proposed zoning.

**Comparison of the Existing and Proposed Zoning (pending City Council action)**

	<b>Current Zoning: Area Proposed to</b>	<b>Proposed Zoning of Entire Site</b>
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	<b>be Rezoned</b>	
<b>Zoning</b>	SU-1/C-2 (10 acres), O-1, and PRD 20 du/acre (7 acres)	C-2
<b>Allowed Uses</b>	Limits Commercial (max. 10 acres)	Allows 100% Commercial
	Allows Office	Allows Office
	Requires Residential (min. 7 acres)	Allows Multi-family Residential
<b>Process</b>	Requires site plan review	Requires site plan review

The proposed zoning will be more flexible to market conditions, yet allow for the same uses as the existing zoning. In addition to the regulations of the site’s underlying zoning and other general regulations, the proposal needs to comply with the new Large Retail Facilities (Big Box) regulations and those of the West Route 66 Sector Development Plan.

**SU-1 ZONE - §14-16-2-22**

The intent of the SU-1 Special Use Zone is to provide suitable sites for uses that are special, and for which the appropriateness of the use to a specific location depends upon the character of the site design. SU-1 zoning requires review by the Environmental Planning Commission (EPC). Additionally, “development within the SU-1 zone may only occur in conformance with an approved site development plan” (See Zoning Code §14-16-2-22-A1).

**C-2 ZONE- §14-16-2-17**

C-2 is the Community Commercial Zone, which “provides suitable sites for offices, most commercial service and commercial activities, and for certain specified institutional uses”. Examples of permissive uses are: antenna up to 65 feet in height; clinic; copy, blueprinting; day care center; office; park and ride temporary facility; retailing of any consumer product and provision of any customer, personal, or business service, except adult amusement establishments; vehicle sales, rental, service, and storage; banking and pawn shops; dry cleaning and laundry; flowers and plant sales; gasoline sales; drive-in restaurant; restaurant with outdoor seating; secondhand store; and hospital for animals.

**O-1 ZONE -§14-16-2-15**

O-1 is the Office and Institution Zone, which “provides sites suitable for office, service, institutional, and dwelling uses”. Examples of permissive uses are: antenna up to 65 feet in height, beauty shop, barber shop, church, club with no license to sell liquor, institutions including library, museum, medical supplies and services, and office.

**PLANNED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT- §14-16-2-22 (B) (25)**

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The PRD allows uses including single-family houses, townhouses, apartments, associated accessory structures and home occupations as regulated in the R-1 zone. Residence/ work spaces are allowed as approved by the Planning Commission. PRD development uses need to be compatible with adjacent properties, including public open spaces, public trails and existing neighborhoods and communities.

#### LARGE RETAIL FACILITY REGULATIONS (BIG BOX ORDINANCE)

The applicant is proposing two retail buildings, each greater than 75,000 sf, which are subject to the “Big Box” regulations, described in §14-16-3-2 of the Zoning Code. The “Big Box” ordinance was developed by the City to mitigate the unique problems related to big box development including traffic congestion, architectural scale, compatibility with adjoining neighborhoods, and noise than has adversely impacted neighborhoods near big box stores. The comprehensive big box regulations protect the quality of life within surrounding residential areas and support efficient traffic flows. The analysis of the Big Box Ordinance will be included in the site plan subdivision and building permit section below.

#### Proposed Zoning: C-2

If the applicant is successful with the map amendment at the City Council, then the entire site will be zoned C-2. This change will eliminate the restriction on commercial uses and will also remove the requirement for residential uses. However, the C-2 zone allows some residential uses and therefore this proposed zone change would not entirely preclude residential uses from locating on the site in the future.

It is important to note that the removal of the SU-1 designation from this site does not eliminate the requirement for EPC site plan approval. Due to the site’s size, it is subject to Shopping Center regulations, which require EPC approval and the size of the proposed retail shops makes the request subject to the Large Retail Facilities regulations, again ensuring EPC site plan review.

### **1. ANALYSIS- CONFORMANCE TO ADOPTED PLANS AND POLICIES**

#### **ALBUQUERQUE / BERNALILLO COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (RANK 1)**

##### ESTABLISHED URBAN AREA

The subject site is located in the area designated Established Urban by the *Comprehensive Plan* with a Goal to “create a quality urban environment which perpetuates the tradition of identifiable, individual but integrated communities within the metropolitan area and which offers a variety and maximum choice in housing, transportation, work areas, and life styles, while creating a visually pleasing built environment.”

**The site development plan amendment to add a signage program to the design standards partially furthers the Goal of the Established Urban Area. The concept of creating a shopping center to offer more retail options to west side residents is commendable. The proposed signage program will help to create a visually pleasing built environment. However, the overall layout and design of the shopping center with its back towards the adjacent residential**

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**neighborhoods continues to be an obstacle to an integrated community. The site layout is not conducive to overall walkability and places the greatest emphasis on the automobile.**

Policy II.B.5a: The Developing and Established Urban Areas as shown by the Plan map shall allow a full range of urban land uses, resulting in an overall gross density up to 5 dwelling units per acre.

**The site development plan for subdivision amendment will allow for a range of urban land uses, most notably commercial uses that are needed in this part of the city. This request furthers this policy.**

Policy II.B.5d: The location, intensity and design of new development shall respect existing neighborhood values, natural environmental conditions and carrying capacities, scenic resources, and resources of other social, cultural, or recreational concern.

**The subject site is an appropriate location for the proposed commercial uses and intensity. The applicant cites neighborhood support for the proposal and the TIS indicates sufficient roadway carrying capacity for this project. The proposed signage program for the site will help to ensure respect of scenic resources in the area and views beyond.**

**However, a design issue continues to exist: the entire length of Bridge Boulevard, the site's only street frontage with adjacent residential neighborhoods, is dedicated to building rears, including loading and staging areas. The proposed site layout could be improved to better respect existing neighborhood conditions, but is not the subject of the current request. The submittal partially furthers this policy.**

Policy II.B.5e: New growth shall be accommodated through development in areas where vacant land is contiguous to existing or programmed urban facilities and services and where the integrity of existing neighborhoods can be ensured.

**The site development plan amendment will contribute to development of a vacant infill site that is contiguous to existing infrastructure. It is unknown if the proposed layout and design of the site will ensure the integrity of the existing neighborhood because the entire length of Bridge Boulevard, which is adjacent to residential neighborhoods, is devoted to building rears and loading docks. This request partially furthers this policy.**

Policy II.B.5h: Higher density housing is most appropriate in the following situations:

- In designated Activity Centers.
- In areas with excellent access to the major street network.

**The applicant is not proposing housing in this Activity Center. While the pending C-2 zoning would permit multi-family residential, it is not required and none is being proposed at this time. This request partially furthers this policy, as residential development is appropriate, allowed and encouraged, but not proposed by the site development plan at this time.**

Policy II.B.5i: Employment and service uses shall be located to complement residential areas and shall be sited to minimize adverse effects of noise, lighting, pollution, and traffic on residential environments.

**The employment and services uses in the retail center would complement the surrounding residential areas, as there are few retail options on the southwest mesa. However, the design of the site may create adverse effects of noise, lighting, pollution, and traffic on the adjacent residential environment. The loading docks are located adjacent to the residential neighborhood, and delivery trucks parking in the loading docks and driving along Bridge Boulevard may negatively impact nearby residents. The submittal has a note on the site plan in accordance with the large retail facility regulations prohibiting truck operations between the hours of 10pm and 6:30am. The request furthers this policy.**

Policy II.B.5k: Land adjacent to arterial streets shall be planned to minimize harmful effects of traffic; livability and safety of established residential neighborhoods shall be protected in transportation planning and operation.

**Unser Boulevard and Central Avenue are both Principal Arterial Streets. The site development plan does not include information about specific types of development immediately adjacent to these arterials. The applicant is proposing design standards that would regulate the use and design of these future pad sites. The applicant has stated that this development will buffer adjacent residential areas from the noise on Central Avenue. While this may be true, the proposed location of the truck loading docks along Bridge may create additional noise. This request partially furthers this policy.**

Policy II.B.5l: Quality and innovation in design shall be encouraged in all new development; design shall be encouraged which is appropriate to the Plan area.

**The layout of the proposed site development plan is not innovative and does not strictly comply with all large retail facility regulations. The site is typical of a traditional suburban shopping center with a row of shops at the rear of the site and around the perimeter, a sea of parking, and several pad sites along Central and Unser. The design standards for individual buildings and signage will result in quality development that is appropriate for the area. The submittal partially furthers this policy.**

ACTIVITY CENTERS: The subject site is designated a Community Activity Center

Goal: to expand and strengthen concentrations of moderate and high-density mixed land use and social/economic activities which reduce urban sprawl, auto travel needs, and service costs, and which enhance the identity of Albuquerque and its communities.

**The applicant is proposing 100% commercial on the site, but the pending C-2 zoning does not completely eliminate the possibility of mixed land uses, including residential. The proposed site design does not reduce auto travel needs, but the proposed uses will contribute to a decrease in the distance to reach commercial uses. Pedestrian access to and circulation within**



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**the site is not entirely convenient or pleasant. The proposed signage program with directional signs will help pedestrians navigate this site. This request partially furthers this goal.**

Policy II.B.7a: Activity centers are designated by the Centers and Corridors map where appropriate to help shape the built environment in a sustainable development pattern, create mixed-use concentrations of interrelated activities that promote transit and pedestrian access both to and within the Activity Center, and maximize cost-effectiveness of City services. Each Activity Center will undergo further analysis that will identify design elements, appropriate uses, transportation service, and other details of implementation. The following table specified policy objectives for each type (See table 22 after page II-33). “The purpose of a Community Activity Center is to “provide the primary focus for the entire community sub-area with a higher concentration and greater variety of commercial and entertainment uses in conjunction with community-wide services, civic land uses, employment, and the most intense land uses within the community sub-area.” The desired scale of a Community Activity Center includes the following elements: a) Some larger parcels, but heavily punctuated with fine grain, smaller parcels, very walkable; b) 2-3 story, building separate off-street parking form the street; c) site circulation plan is important to avoid conflict between pedestrian and auto, parking in lots or structures; and d) Public plaza/open space should be provided.”

**The location of this proposed shopping center is convenient for nearby residents, but the site design does not encourage multi-modal transportation. No mixture of uses is proposed for this site, and while sidewalks and pedestrian crossings are provided within the site, the overall site layout does not encourage walking. The site plan consists mostly of larger parcels with large parking fields and one-story buildings. Many vehicle/pedestrian conflicts exist, although ample public open space is provided. This request partially furthers this policy because the location is convenient for commercial services, but mixed uses are not proposed and the site design does not encourage walking.**

Policy II.B.7f: The most intense uses in Activity Centers shall be located away from nearby low-density residential development and shall be buffered from those residential uses by a transition area of less intensive development.

**The site development plan shows the most intense uses located near the residential development across Bridge. A buffer consisting of a truck dock and loading area and a wide landscape area is provided. However, this policy calls for the buffer to be of less intensive development. This request conflicts with this policy.**

Policy II.B.7i: Multi-unit housing is an appropriate use in Neighborhood, Community and Major Activity Centers.

**The submittal partially furthers this policy, as residential development is appropriate and encouraged, but not required.**

#### COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND URBAN DESIGN

Policy II.C.9d: Development projects within Community Activity Centers should contribute the following:

1. Related land uses that effectively encourage walking trips from one destination to

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another within the center, including shopping, schools, parks or plazas, employment, entertainment, and civic uses such as public libraries, recreation or senior centers, post office or fire station.

2. Pedestrian linkages among uses in the Activity Center and connecting to surrounding neighborhoods.

3. Buildings designed and arranged to reflect local architectural traditions, scale, height, massing and setbacks appropriate to the community served by the Activity Center and that support public transit and pedestrian activity.

4. Landscaping, street furniture, public art, colored or textured paving and other improvements to the public realm that reinforce the cultural, social and design traditions of the community served by the Activity Center.

**1. The proposed commercial uses may somewhat encourage walking from one shop to another adjacent shop, although the overall site design does not encourage walking.**

**2. Pedestrian linkages are provided between uses within the site and to surrounding neighborhood.**

**3. Buildings are not designed to support public transit and pedestrian activity, although the architecture is appropriate.**

**4. Landscaping, street furniture, and textured paving are proposed.**

**This request partially furthers this policy.**

Policy II.C.9e: Roadway corridors (collectors, arterials, Enhanced Transit and Major Transit) within each community and that connect the community's Activity Centers shall be designed and developed to reinforce the community's unique identity; streetscape improvements to these roadways shall be designed to:

- minimize water use
- screen parking areas
- create useful and attractive signage and building facades
- facilitate walking safety and convenience

**Adequate parking screening is provided, and no high water use plants are proposed for the landscape strips. The proposed signage standards should lead to useful and attractive signage on the site. Building facades are mostly separated from the roadway corridor and sidewalks by parking areas. This request partially furthers this policy.**

TRANSPORTATION AND TRANSIT: Central and Unser are both designated Enhanced Transit Corridors

Goal: The goal is to develop corridors, both streets and adjacent land uses, that provide a balanced circulation system through efficient placement of employment and services, and encouragement of

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bicycling, walking, and use of transit/paratransit as alternatives to automobile travel, while providing sufficient roadway capacity to meet mobility and access needs.

**While the proposal may contribute to the efficient placement of services and sufficient roadway capacity will be ensured through required improvements at the applicant's cost, the proposal does not encourage walking, bicycling, or the use of transit. The proposed signage standards will hopefully facilitate a safer environment for pedestrians. This request partially furthers this goal.**

Policy II.D.4a: The following Table presents ideal policy objectives for street design, transit service, and development form consistent with Transportation Corridors and Activity Centers as shown on the Comprehensive Plan's Activity Centers section. Each corridor will undergo further analysis that will identify design elements, appropriate uses, transportation service, and other details of implementation (see Table 11 on pages II-82 through II-83). The desired development form for Enhanced Transit Corridors includes the following elements: 1) Provide building entrance from the street; 2) Minimum building setback only to provide landscaping or pedestrian activity areas; 3) Parking separated from the street by the building or to the side of the building; 4) 10%-20% parking reduction and shared parking encouraged; 5) Floor area ratio of 0.5-1.5; 6) Housing density target of 7-30 du/acre; and 7) a modal hierarchy of transit & autos, then pedestrians, then bikes.

**The proposal does not show a majority of building entrances from the street and shows the majority of building set back from the street at distances far greater than what this policy calls for, with parking areas separating the buildings from the street. This policy calls for building entrances to be on the street for the convenience of transit riders and to make the use of transit more appealing to vehicle drivers.**

**Table 11 has a desired modal hierarchy that places transit and auto travel at the top, with pedestrians and bicycles at the bottom. Pedestrian access to the site from the transit stops and within the site is paramount in order to ensure convenient access to transit. The proposed signage standards will hopefully facilitate a safer environment for pedestrians. The submitted site plan partially furthers this policy.**

Policy II.D.4g: Pedestrian opportunities shall be promoted and integrated into development to create safe and pleasant non-motorized travel conditions.

**Sidewalks and pedestrian crossings are provided on the site plan. However, the proposed site design does not encourage parking once and walking from shop to shop or walking to the site itself. Many of the pedestrian walkways within the site are through large parking areas. This does not contribute to safe or pleasant non-motorized travel conditions. Extensive pedestrian and bicycle paths have been incorporated into the project, but appear to be an afterthought given the layout of the buildings. The proposed signage standards will hopefully facilitate a safer environment for pedestrians to reduce pedestrian/vehicle conflicts. The submittal partially furthers this policy.**

Policy II.D.4p: Efficient, safe access and transfer capability shall be provided between all modes of transportation.

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Four transit routes service this site, although a bus stop on 86<sup>th</sup> Street has not been shown on the site plan. Safe access to transit and transfer capability is provided for in this site plan, although the site plan fails to meaningfully integrate transit into the development. Access to transit is not efficient, and the way finding signs should incorporate directions to transit stops. This request only partially furthers this policy.

#### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Goal: to achieve steady and diversified economic development balanced with other important social, cultural, and environmental goals.

**The addition of commercial services on the West Side furthers this goal.**

Policy II.D.6a: New employment opportunities which will accommodate a wide range of occupational skills and salary levels shall be encouraged and new jobs located convenient to areas of most need.

**The proposed zoning will accommodate a wide range of occupational skills and salary levels because retail establishments will have salaried managers as well as hourly employees. This request furthers this policy.**

Policy II.D.6b: Development of local business enterprises as well as the recruitment of outside firms shall be emphasized.

**The shopping center may attract both local and outside businesses. This amendment request to add sign standards furthers this policy.**

Policy II.D.6g: Concentrations of employment in Activity Centers should be promoted in an effort to balance jobs with housing and population and reduce the need to travel.

**This shopping center will create jobs and reduce the need to travel. The submitted site development plan furthers this policy.**

#### WESTSIDE STRATEGIC PLAN (RANK II)

The *West Side Strategic Plan (WSSP)* was first adopted in 1997 and recently amended in 2002. The WSSP area is bounded by the Sandoval County line on the north, the Rio Puerco Escarpment on the west, a line south of Gun Club Road (the Atrisco Grant line) on the south, and the Rio Grande on the east for areas north of Central, and Coors Boulevard on the east for areas south of Central. It encompasses over 96,000 acres of land, or approximately 150 square miles. Specific boundaries are shown on the Plan Boundary map on p.2 in the WSSP. The recent amendments to the WSSP include several changes to policies, activity center boundaries and locations, and clarifications of conflicting and unclear policies. The adopting resolution for the amendments (R-01-278, Enactment No. 35-2002) has a section that reads:

“Section 3. The West Side Strategic Plan is a Rank 2 Plan and its provisions shall be mandatory except where they conflict with existing zoning.”

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The *WSSP* identifies thirteen communities in established areas of the West Side that are partially developed and describes how community concepts can be applied. The subject site falls within the ***Bridge/Westgate Community*** as described on pages 70-72 of the *WSSP*. A Community is comprised of a Neighborhood Center(s) and Community Center(s), and the Plan outlines uses that should occur within the centers, as well as uses that should occur in areas adjacent to the centers. The *WSSP* emphasizes throughout its text the concept of commercial development in cluster configurations in contrast to the traditionally evolved strip commercial development. The subject site is located within the ***Central/ Unser Community Activity Center***, as identified in the *WSSP*.

Applicable West Side Strategic Plan goals, objectives, and policies include:

Goal 10: The Plan should create a framework to build a community where its citizens can live, work, shop, play, and learn together while protecting the unique quality of life and natural and cultural resources for West Side residents.

**Implementation of the submitted site development plan will allow west side residents the opportunity to shop and play in the area where they live. The submittal furthers this goal.**

Objective 1: Provide for a complete mix of land uses on the West Side, including opportunities for large-scale employment, in order to minimize the needs for cross-metro trips. Employment opportunities are encouraged on the West Side.

**Land uses on the west side are unbalanced with a need for commercial uses. Employment opportunities will be provided by this development, showing that it furthers this objective.**

Objective 8: Promote job opportunities and business growth in appropriate areas of the west side.

**This submittal will promote job opportunities and business growth in an appropriate area and furthers this objective.**

Policy 1.2: A transit feasibility and access plan shall be provided with each development plan located within the Regional Center, Employment Centers, Community Centers, and developments elsewhere adjacent to designated transit corridors. The plan shall state proposed densities and demonstrate how the proposed development meets “transit friendly” design guidelines found in the design guidelines herein. The plan shall include information on access through larger commercial and residential developments for shuttle and full-size buses, with planned linkages between on-site uses; and access to existing and planned transit facilities such as park-and-ride lots, bike-and-ride programs, bus routes, pedestrian trails and pedestrian linkages. The plan shall include the proposed development’s role in area Transportation Management Associations and/or other incentive programs to promote alternative transportation, such as employee commute passes, carpool/vanpool programs, etc (p. 38).

**This information has been provided as part of a condition of approval with the May 2008 EPC approvals.**

Policy 1.3: Strip commercial developments shall not be approved on the West Side. Commercial development shall occur in concentrated clustered areas rather than new strip developments. Zone changes to commercial, industrial, or office uses for areas outside the centers are strongly discouraged, in order to reinforce the Neighborhood and Community Centers. Changes of commercial and office zoning outside the centers to residential use is encouraged.... This policy is meant to impact the design and layout of commercial areas and their connections to adjacent development and to encourage clustering of commercial and office uses in activity centers. It is not intended to rezone allowed commercial uses (p. 38).

**The pending zone change to C-2 zoning is within the Community Center. Although some of the smaller shops are clustered in some areas of the site plan, many of the proposed structures have the appearance of a strip mall. The intent of this policy is to avoid linear arrangements of buildings facing parking lots. This request partially furthers this policy.**

Policy 1.5: Community and Neighborhood Centers shall be required to provide pedestrian/bicycle access to key activity areas. Parking lots shall be carefully designed to facilitate trail access and pedestrian access between buildings (p. 39).

**Pedestrian and bicycle access is provided to key activity areas. However, the parking lots are not carefully designed to facilitate this access. Rather, the parking lots are designed primarily to facilitate automobile circulation and to allow visibility to the retail shops from Central Avenue. This request partially furthers this policy.**

Policy 1.6: Large areas dedicated to employment uses shall be preserved on the West Side at Seven Bar Ranch, Atrisco Business Park, and Double Eagle II Airport. Additional employment center development is also encouraged. The City of Albuquerque and Bernalillo County economic development programs shall actively encourage employers to locate in these employment centers.

**The intention of this policy is to create jobs through office and industrial development – not retail. The submittal neither furthers nor is in conflict with this policy.**

Policy 1.12: The ideal community activity center of 35 to 60 acres will have parcels and buildings in scale with pedestrians, small enough to encourage parking once and walking to more than one destination. Off-street parking should be shared; on-street parking will contribute to the intimate scale typical of well functioning pedestrian areas. Parking shall be located between and behind buildings to permit walking more safely and comfortably between uses that front on sidewalks rather than parking lots. Seating and shade will be provided along pedestrian routes to promote walking and informal gathering (p. 41).

**The proposal shows buildings of different scales and the smaller building clusters will encourage pedestrian access. The three main building structures are too large to be**

**considered pedestrian scale and parking is located solely in front of the larger buildings. No on-street parking is proposed. This request partially furthers this policy.**

Policy 1.13: The Community Activity Center shall provide the primary focus for the entire community with a higher concentration and greater variety of commercial and entertainment uses in conjunction with community-wide services, civic land uses, employment, and the most intense land uses within the community. Its service area may be approximately three miles (radius) and a population of up to 30,000 (p. 41).

**The submittal proposes a variety of commercial uses, but not civic land uses or office employment. Regardless, this site will be a primary focus for the community until additional uses come to this area. The submitted site development plan partially furthers this policy.**

Policy 1.14: The typical Community Center shall be accessible by a major street or parkway, provide a hub for transit service, and be accessible by pedestrians and bicyclists (p. 41).

**This site is accessible by several major streets and is also served by 4 bus routes. It is accessible by pedestrians and bicyclists, although this access may not be ideal. This request furthers this policy.**

*Policies specific to the Bridge/Westgate Community:*

Policy 3.40: Urban style services are appropriate in this community. This area shall receive a high priority for public infrastructure spending (p. 71).

**The applicant is proposing urban style services. This request furthers this policy.**

Policy 3.41: ...Encourage employment growth in this Community.

**The proposed site development plan will encourage employment growth and furthers this policy.**

Policy 3.42: Support the location of mixed-use higher density development within this Community in the Activity Centers internal to the Community (p. 71).

**The applicant is not proposing mixed use in this Activity Center. The site development plan is in conflict with this policy.**

Policy 3.45: Support enhancements (both physical and social) for Bridge Boulevard and Central Avenue (p. 71).

**While the applicant is proposing aesthetically pleasing landscaping for Bridge and Central and is also proposing commercial services that will contribute to the social enhancement of Bridge and Central, the entire length of Bridge adjacent to the subject site is dedicated to building rears with large loading dock areas. The site contains opportunities to further enhance Bridge Boulevard that the applicant has not proposed or utilized. This request partially furthers this policy.**

*The Central/Unser Community Center (p. 92)*

Potential uses listed for the Central/Unser Community Center are retail, business and personal services, and higher density housing. 2 strategies are recommended to support the development of this center:

1. Infrastructure in the area should be completed to accommodate commercial and higher density residential development.
2. Encourage the development of non-retail uses, including office and higher density housing adjacent to the center. Land that is zoned for offices and higher density housing should not be rezoned, and development of commercially zoned land surrounding the Community Center as uses other than retail should be encouraged.

**The site development plan does not propose any higher density housing and conflicts with this development strategy for this Activity Center.**

*Design Guidelines*

Policy 4.6: The following Design Guidelines section shall become policies with the adoption of this Plan (p. 164-175).

**Compliance with the Design Guidelines is analyzed below in the Site Development Plan section of this staff report.**

**WEST ROUTE 66 SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PLAN (RANK III)**

The West Route 66 Sector Development Plan was adopted on November 24, 1987. The Plan area generally encompasses 1,765 acres and stretches 6.63 miles along Central Ave from the Rio Grande west to its intersection with Interstate 40 (what is commonly known as the top of “nine-mile hill.” The north and south boundaries of the plan area vary.

The plan area has been divided into three segments. Segment One includes the plan area from the Rio Grande River west to North Coors Boulevard; Segment Two extends from North Coors Boulevard west to the City limits, prior to October 19, 1987 (at approximately 106<sup>th</sup> Street; and Segment Three begins from that point and extends west to Central Avenue’s intersection with Interstate 40. The subject site is located within Segment Two.



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The purpose of the plan is to enhance the negative community image of West Central and instill community confidence in this area as a developable segment of the City. The plan specifies infrastructure requirements to complete development of the plan area. The plan also specifies land use, zoning, and design standards for future development.

There are no specific policies in this plan; however the plan did establish the site's current zoning (p. 68) and also includes a design overlay zone (p. 82). Compliance with the design overlay zone is analyzed in the site plan for subdivision section below.

## **2. ANALYSIS OF AMENDMENT TO THE SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR SUBDIVISION WITH DESIGN STANDARDS TO INCLUDE A SIGN PROGRAM**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The conditionally approved site development plan for subdivision and the current amendment proposes to subdivide the approximately 50-acre site into 14 tracts of varying sizes (see sheet C-003). The site development plan for building permit sheets included with this submittal (sheets C-001, A-101, A-102, A-103, A-104, A-105, A-106A, A-106B, A-107A, A-107B, A-107C, A-107D, A-107E-1, A-107E-2, A-108A and A-108B) are not the subject of this site development plan for subdivision amendment, but are illustrative of the applicant's proposal. The EPC approved site development plan for building permit (08EPC-40035) pending final sign-off at the DRB will have to be altered to reflect the sign standards that may be approved with this site development plan for subdivision.

The site development plan for subdivision contains all required information and design standards as approved and conditioned at the May 2008 EPC hearing. A signage master plan is conditioned as part of the EPC approval of the site development plan for subdivision (08EPC-40034):

- 4. Signage Master Plan shall return to the EPC for review and approval:**
  - i. Off-premise signs shall be added to the list of prohibited signs. Temporary banner signs for special events may be allowed with an Administrative Amendment.**
  - ii. The statement "signs will not be permitted to be installed or placed along the perimeter of the property" shall be removed.**
  - iii. A note shall be added stating that all signage shall comply with regulations of the Zoning Code and the West Route 66 Sector Development Plan Design Overlay Zone unless the Zoning Hearing Examiner approves a variance.**
  - iv. A note shall be added stating that signage facing residential areas shall not be illuminated.**

The following analysis revisits the revised design standards from the May 2008 EPC approval that is currently awaiting final DRB sign-off. Approval of the current request will supplant the May 2008 approval (08EPC-40034).

## DESIGN STANDARDS

### A. INTRODUCTION

*This section is acceptable.*

### B. STREETScape

*This section is acceptable.*

### C. PARKING

*Both the big box ordinance and policies for Activity Centers encourage parking on internal street networks. This should be noted in the parking section of the design standards.*

### D. BICYCLE FACILITIES

*This section is acceptable.*

### E. SITE LANDSCAPE

*This section is acceptable.*

### F. SITE PLANNING

*This section is acceptable.*

### H. SETBACKS

*This section should be re-lettered from "H" to "G."*

### I. ARCHITECTURE

*This section should be re-lettered from "I" to "H."*

#### a. Development Densities

*This section is acceptable.*

#### b. Building Heights

*This section is acceptable.*

#### c. Building Entrances

*These requirements are merely reiterations of Zoning Code requirements and are generally acceptable despite the fact that they do not go over and above any existing city-wide requirements. This section is acceptable.*

#### d. Service/ Loading Areas

*This section is acceptable.*

#### e. Context

*This section is acceptable.*

#### f. Building Articulation/ Design

*This section is acceptable.*

#### g. Equipment

*This section is acceptable.*

#### h. Portable Buildings

*This section is acceptable.*

#### i. Materials and Colors

*This section is acceptable.*

#### j. Sustainability

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*This section is acceptable.*

k. Plan Arrangement Opportunities

*This section is acceptable.*

J. LIGHTING

*This section should be re-lettered from "J" to "I."*

K. SCREENING/ BUFFERING

*This section should be re-lettered from "K" to "J."*

L. SIGNAGE

*This section should be re-lettered from "L" to "K."*

M. TRANSIT FACILITIES

*This section should be re-lettered from "M" to "L."*

N. DRIVE-UP SERVICE WINDOWS

*This section should be re-lettered from "N" to "M."*

O. WIRE TELECOMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES

*This section should be re-lettered from "O" to "N."*

### 3. ANALYSIS OF SIGNAGE STANDARDS (SIGN PACKAGE)

#### *Applicable Regulations*

Signage on this site must comply with several layers of regulations. These include: The C-2 zone, General Sign regulations of the Zoning Code, the big box ordinance, and the West Route 66 Sector Plan Design Overlay Zone. Applicable sign and other pertinent regulations are as follows:

Zoning Code, Interpretation (Section 14-16-1-4):

- **Where the provisions of this article impose greater restrictions than those of any other ordinance or resolution the provisions of this article shall prevail. Where the provisions of any other ordinance, resolution, or covenant impose greater restrictions than those of this article, the provisions of such other ordinance, resolution, or covenant shall prevail.**
- Essentially, the most restrictive regulations prevail in all cases.

Zoning Code, Definitions (Section 14-16-1-5):

- **Premises: Any lot or combination of contiguous lots held in single ownership, together with the development thereon; there may be multiple occupancy.**

C-2 Zone:

- All freestanding signage regulations of the C-2 zone are less restrictive than those of the West Route 66 Sector Development Plan Design Overlay Zone and the Large Retail Facility Regulations. The Design Overlay Zone prevails over the C-2 regulations (see 14-16-1-4).

General Sign Regulations:

- Section 14-16-3-5 of the Zoning Code. This section contains regulations pertaining to lighting, location, and other topics.
- One permanent identification sign setting forth the name of a community, development, center, or other like project shall be permitted if set back in accordance with the requirements of the zone in which the sign is placed. . . . Such sign shall not exceed 20 square feet in area. Additional signs meeting the above definitions may be approved by the Planning Director if he finds the project is large and needs additional signs for reasonable identification.

This size restriction on permanent identification signs is more restrictive than that of the WR66 Design Overlay Zone, and this regulation should apply to the subject site.

Shopping Center Regulations:

- This section contains regulations regarding sign number and size. All Shopping Center signage regulations are less restrictive than those of the West Route 66 Sector Development Plan Design Overlay Zone. The Design Overlay Zone trumps the Shopping Center regulations.

Large Retail Facilities Regulations:

- Signage shall comply with shopping center regulations
- Maximum height of any monument sign shall be 15'
- Building-mounted signs that face residential zoning shall not be illuminated
- Building-mounted signs shall consist of individual channel letters. Illuminated plastic panel signs are prohibited
- All freestanding signs shall be monument style.
- All signage shall be designed to be consistent with and complement the materials, color, and architectural style of the buildings.

West Route 66 Sector Development Plan, Design Overlay Zone:

**In order to improve and enhance West Central Avenue as a developing segment of our community, the following standards for design quality will regulate all properties within the plan area boundaries. The regulations of the Design Overlay Zone take precedence over other City or County regulations where there is a conflict. (WR66SDP pg. 82)**

**Where a site development plan is required by the basic zone, it shall incorporate the provisions required by the Design Overlay Zone. (WR66SDP, pg. 86)**

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- One freestanding sign per premise frontage is permitted with a maximum sign face area of 100 square feet.
  - Directory signs, with a maximum size of 24 square feet, are allowed and do not count as an advertising sign referred to above.
  - The height of free-standing signs shall not exceed 26’
  - General illumination is permitted by backlighting for all signs or by ground-mounted spot lighting if the sign is 8’ or less in height
  - Unless more restrictive provisions are specified in this Signage Section, the following provisions of the Zoning Code apply: Section 40.E; as to retail areas, the on-premise building-mounted sign regulations of the C-2 zone; as to other non-residential areas, the on-premise building-mounted sign regulations of the IP zone.
  - Some signs and sign elements are specifically prohibited, including off-premise signs, portable signs, and roof-mounted signs. For a complete list see pages 85 and 86 of the WR66SDP.

Based upon the applicable regulations, the West Route 66 Sector Development Plan (WR66SDP) is the most restrictive in all areas except sign height and permanent identification signs. Because the WR66SDP states that its regulations apply unless the Zoning Code is more restrictive, the applicant must comply with the all regulations of the WR66SDP Design Overlay Zone, with the exception of sign height, which the Large Retail Facilities Regulations limit to 15’ and permanent identification signs, which the Zoning Code limits to 20 square feet.

Because the requested, pending zoning at City Council is a straight C-2 zone, the EPC is charged with ensuring that the signage complies with applicable regulations. Any departure from the Zoning Code and WR66SDP regulations will require a variance approval from the Zoning Hearing Examiner (ZHE).

### ***Proposed Signage***

The applicant has provided signage standards with this site development plan submittal. A map showing freestanding sign locations, and sign elevations accompanies these sign standards. Building-mounted signage is shown on the building elevations sheets. The sign elevations do not indicate colors, materials or total square footage of building mounted sign area.

Eight types of monument signs are proposed in eleven locations. These signs range in height from 8’-10” to 20’-7” and with sign face areas that range from 24 square feet to 141 square feet.

Two of the proposed signs are described as permanent identification signs (Sign Types A1 and A2) and would not count as advertising signs if their sign face areas were limited to 20 square feet, but they are shown well above that limit.

### ***Compliance with applicable regulations***

The proposed signage standards and sign locations are excessive and do not comply with the applicable regulations. The applicant has proposed signage in a total of eleven locations (see sheet S-103). The entire shopping center is one premises with frontage on four streets, which according to the WR66SDP allows the applicant four freestanding signs.

The applicant has stated a desire to pursue the signage as shown through a ZHE variance. Staff finds that the proposed signage is far in excess of what is allowed and recommends that the applicant comply with applicable regulations. The applicant will need to apply for variances through the ZHE if they wish to pursue these excessive signs. If the EPC finds the proposed sign standards to be appropriate, conditions of approval will need to be approved requiring the ZHE variances.

Signage (both freestanding and building-mounted) must not be illuminated where it faces a residential area.

***Proposed Sign Standards*** (sheet S-101)

The site development plan for subdivision amendment proposes sign standards. The building mounted standards are generally in agreement with C-2 regulations. Several changes to the standards are necessary to bring them into full compliance with applicable regulations:

- Add to the list of prohibited signs: off-premise signs.
- Add a note: “Temporary banner signs for special events may be allowed with an Administrative Amendment.”
- Remove the statement: “Signs will not be permitted to be installed or placed along the perimeter of the property.”
- Add a note stating: “All signage shall comply with applicable regulations of the Zoning Code and the West Route 66 Sector Development Plan, Design Overlay Zone. Where a conflict between regulations exists, the most restrictive shall prevail.”
- Add a note: “Signs (both freestanding and building-mounted) that face residential zones shall not be illuminated.”
- Remove note: “It has been determined that all sign areas are wholly visible from an abutting arterial street. Therefore all tenants will be allowed 15% of the areas of the façade for building signage.”
- And replace with: “The size of building mounted signage for each building façade will be determined on a case by case basis. The applicant shall demonstrate sign area visibility from abutting streets with line of sight diagrams that include all other buildings that may obstruct and/or obscure visibility from abutting streets. If a building façade’s sign area is not wholly visible from any adjacent street, then the minimum sign area shall be applied.”
- Add a note: “All free-standing signs shall be monument style.”
- Add a note: “The maximum height of any freestanding sign shall be 15 feet.”
- Add a note: “One free-standing sign per premise frontage is permitted for a maximum number of four free standing signs.”

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- Add a note: “Maximum sign-face area for free-standing signs is 100 square feet.”
  - Add a note: “Directory signs, with a maximum size of 24 square feet, are allowed and do not count as an advertising sign.”
  - Add a note: “Uplighting of any kind is prohibited.”
  - Add a note: “Each freestanding sign shall display a numeric street address with a size that is easily readable to drivers on adjacent streets. This numeric street address shall not be calculated as part of the allowed sign face area.”
  - Remove any provisions or requirements that are not enforceable by the Planning Department, Code Enforcement Division, including requirements, standards and agreements between the property owner/management and individual tenants.

***Proposed Sign Standards Detail Drawings*** (sheets S-102, S-103 and subsequent, unnumbered sheet)

As previously noted, the proposed signage standards and number of sign locations are excessive and do not comply with applicable regulations. The applicant has proposed signage in a total of eleven locations. The entire shopping center is one premises with frontage on four streets, which according to the WR66SDP allows the applicant four freestanding signs. Changes are needed to bring the submittal into compliance with applicable regulations, including:

- All sign-type drawings (A1, A2, B, C, D, E, F and G) on Sheets S-102 and S-103 should be altered in height (15'-0") and sign face area (100 sq. ft.) to reflect the regulations of the Zoning Code and the WR66SDP and as noted in the sign standards language.
- The site plan diagram of sign locations on sheet S-103 should be altered to show a total of four, perimeter, freestanding sign locations, as allowed by the WR66SDP Design Overlay Zone (one freestanding sign per premise frontage).
- The single, single faced center ID monument with directionals proposed to be located at the entry roundabout south of Central Avenue is appropriate as an identification sign and iconic monument, but should be reduced in height to 15'-0".

The design and dimensions of the proposed multi-tenant, directional monument signs (unnumbered sheet after S-103) are pedestrian scale and appropriate for the subject site. Their locations as shown on sheet C-001 should be transferred to the site plan diagram of sign locations on sheet S-103.

The site development plan for building permit, currently awaiting final sign-off at the DRB, should be revised to reflect the amended and approved site development plan for subdivision and its sign standards (signage master plan).

This shopping center has an automobile-dominated layout with numerous pedestrian/vehicular conflicts. Additional signage details and locations are needed for vehicular and pedestrian circulation to ensure a modicum of safety, including:

- Pedestrian crossing signs at every drive aisle crossing.
- Traffic control signs at the roundabout that direct drivers in a counter-clockwise flow and right turns only.

## **CONCERNS OF REVIEWING AGENCIES / PRE-HEARING DISCUSSION**

The Advanced Planning Division has submitted comments regarding future development of the pad sites along Central and Unser. Otherwise there are no substantial comments regarding the proposed sign standards.

## **NEIGHBORHOOD/PUBLIC CONCERNS**

No comments have been received regarding this current request.

## **CONCLUSION**

The site development plan for subdivision amendment proposes to add sign standards to its list of approved design standards that pertain to all development on the site. The signage program submitted by the applicant does not fully comply with the applicable regulations of the Zoning Code and the West Route 66 Sector Development Plan. The site's layout and design make it an automobile dominated shopping center with numerous pedestrian/vehicle conflicts throughout the site that may be partially addressed with additional signage. Recommended conditions of approval are proposed by Planning Staff to bring the submittal into better compliance with controlling plans, policies and regulations.



**FINDINGS – 08EPC 40063 – Amendment to Site Development Plan for Subdivision**

1. This is a request for an amendment to a site development plan for subdivision with design standards for Tracts 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B, 3A, 3B, 4B, and 6 V.E. Barrett Subdivision and Tracts 4-A-1, 5-B-1, 5-B-2, Lands of WEFECO Partners an approximately 50-acre vacant site located at the southwest corner of Central and Unser SW.
2. The applicant is proposing to re-plat the existing 11 tracts into 14 tracts and proposes design standards and sign standards.
3. A request for a map amendment to the West Route 66 Sector Development Plan for an approximately 36-acre portion of the site so that the entire site will be zoned C-2 is pending at City Council. An approved site development plan for building permit is awaiting final sign-off at the DRB. Retail uses are proposed for the entire site, including a health club.
4. The subject site is located within the Established Urban Area as designated by the Comprehensive Plan and is also within the boundaries of the West side Strategic Plan and the West Route 66 Sector Development Plan. The site is a designated Community Activity Center, and Central and Unser are both Enhanced Transit Corridors in this area.
5. The submittal furthers the following Comprehensive Plan goal and policies:
  - a. The site development plan for subdivision amendment will allow for a range of urban land uses, most notably commercial uses that are needed in this part of the city. (Policy II.B.5.a)
  - b. The employment and services uses in the retail center would complement the surrounding residential areas, as there are few retail options on the southwest mesa. The submittal has a note on the site plan in accordance with the large retail facility regulations prohibiting truck operations between the hours of 10pm and 6:30am. (Policy II.B.5.i)
  - c. The addition of commercial services on the West Side furthers the Economic Development goal.
  - d. The shopping center may attract both local and outside businesses. This amendment request to add sign standards will benefit the site. (Policy II.D.6.b)
  - e. This shopping center will create jobs and reduce the need to travel. The submitted site development plan includes sign standards that will benefit the site. (Policy II.D.6.g)

6. This request partially furthers the following Comprehensive Plan goals and policies:
- a. The site development plan amendment to add a signage program to the design standards partially furthers the Goal of the Established Urban Area. The concept of creating a shopping center to offer more retail options to west side residents is commendable. The proposed signage program will help to create a visually pleasing built environment. However, the overall layout and design of the shopping center with its back towards the adjacent residential neighborhoods continues to be an obstacle to an integrated community. The site layout is not conducive to overall walkability and places the greatest emphasis on the automobile.
  - b. While staff agrees that the location is convenient for residents, the proposed site plan consists mostly of larger parcels (II.B.7a).
  - c. The subject site is an appropriate location for the proposed commercial uses and intensity. The applicant cites neighborhood support for the proposal and the TIS indicates sufficient roadway carrying capacity for this project. The proposed signage program for the site will help to ensure respect of scenic resources in the area and views beyond. The proposed site layout could be improved to better respect existing neighborhood conditions, but is not the subject of the current request. (Policy II.B.5.d)
  - d. The site development plan amendment will contribute to development of a vacant infill site that is contiguous to existing infrastructure. It is unknown if the proposed layout and design of the site will ensure the integrity of the existing neighborhood because the entire length of Bridge Boulevard, which is adjacent to residential neighborhoods, is devoted to building rears and loading docks. (Policy II.B.5.e)
  - e. The applicant is not proposing housing in this Activity Center. While the pending C-2 zoning would permit multi-family residential, it is not required and none is being proposed at this time. Residential development is appropriate, allowed and encouraged, but not proposed by the site development plan at this time. (Policy II.B.5.h)
  - f. The layout of the proposed site development plan is not innovative and does not strictly comply with all large retail facility regulations. The site is typical of a traditional suburban shopping center with a row of shops at the rear of the site and around the perimeter, a sea of parking, and several pad sites along Central and Unser. The design standards for individual buildings and signage will result in quality development that is appropriate for the area. (Policy II.B.5.l)
  - g. The applicant is proposing 100% commercial on the site, but the pending C-2 zoning does not completely eliminate the possibility of mixed land uses, including residential. The proposed site design does not reduce auto travel needs, but the proposed uses will contribute to a decrease in the distance to reach commercial uses. Pedestrian access to and circulation within the site is not entirely convenient or pleasant. The proposed

signage program with directional signs will help pedestrians navigate this site. (Activity Center Goal)

- h. The location of this proposed shopping center is convenient for nearby residents, but the site design does not encourage multi-modal transportation. No mixture of uses is proposed for this site, and while sidewalks and pedestrian crossings are provided within the site, the overall site layout does not encourage walking. The site plan consists mostly of larger parcels with large parking fields and one-story buildings. Many vehicle/pedestrian conflicts exist, although ample public open space is provided. The location is convenient for commercial services, but mixed uses are not proposed and the site design does not encourage walking. (Policies II.B.7.a and i)
  - i. Adequate parking screening is provided, and no high water use plants are proposed for the landscape strips. The proposed signage standards should lead to useful and attractive signage on the site. Building facades are mostly separated from the roadway corridor and sidewalks by parking areas. (Policy II.C.9.e)
  - j. While the proposal may contribute to the efficient placement of services and sufficient roadway capacity will be ensured through required improvements at the applicant's cost, the proposal does not encourage walking, bicycling, or the use of transit. The proposed signage standards will hopefully facilitate a safer environment for pedestrians. (Transportation and Transit Goal and Policy II.D.4.a, g and p)
7. This request furthers the following West Side Strategic Plan goal, objectives and policies:
- a. Implementation of the submitted site development plan will allow west side residents the opportunity to shop and play in the area where they live. (Goal 10)
  - b. This submittal will promote job opportunities and business growth in an appropriate area. (Objective 8)
  - c. This site is accessible by several major streets and is also served by 4 bus routes (Policy 1.14).
  - d. The applicant is proposing urban style services. (Policy 3.40)
  - e. The proposed site development plan will encourage employment growth. (Policy 3.41)
8. Delegation of future phases of development to the DRB is not appropriate in this case because of the importance of the properties adjacent to Central and Unser.

9. There are several conflicts with controlling plans and regulations, including the Zoning Code and the West Route 66 SDP that are addressed in the conditions of approval.
  
10. There is no known neighborhood or other opposition to this request.

***RECOMMENDATION - 08EPC 40063***

**APPROVAL of 08EPC 40063, a site development plan for subdivision amendment, for Tracts 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B, 3A, 3B, 4B, and 6 V.E. Barrett Subdivision and Tracts 4-A-1, 5-B-1, 5-B-2, Lands of WEFECO Partners, based on the preceding Findings and subject to the following Conditions of Approval.**

***CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL - 08EPC 40063***

1. The EPC delegates final sign-off authority of this site development plan to the Development Review Board (DRB). The DRB is responsible for ensuring that all EPC Conditions have been satisfied and that other applicable City requirements have been met. A letter shall accompany the submittal, specifying all modifications that have been made to the site plan since the EPC hearing, including how the site plan has been modified to meet each of the EPC conditions. Unauthorized changes to this site plan, including before or after DRB final sign-off, may result in forfeiture of approvals.
  
2. Prior to application submittal to the DRB, the applicant shall meet with the staff planner to ensure that all conditions of approval are met.
  
3. Design Standards
  - a. Parking: Parking shall be encouraged on internal street networks.
  
  - b. The applicant shall provide a note stating that all development on the site must comply with Zoning Code and West Route 66 Sector Development Plan Design Overlay Zone regulations and that where conflicts exist, the most restrictive shall apply.
  
  - c. The design standards sections shall be re-lettered after F to reflect G through N.
  
4. Signage Master Plan:
  - a. The signage map and the approved site plan for building permit shall correspond at the DRB final sign-off.

- b. Any departure from the Zoning Code and WR66SDP regulations will require a variance approval from the Zoning Hearing Examiner (ZHE).
- c. The sign elevations shall indicate colors, materials and total square footage
- d. Add to the list of prohibited signs: off-premise signs.
- e. Add a note: "Temporary banner signs for special events may be allowed with an Administrative Amendment."
- f. Add a note stating: "All signage shall comply with applicable regulations of the Zoning Code and the West Route 66 Sector Development Plan, Design Overlay Zone. Where a conflict between regulations exists, the most restrictive shall prevail."
- g. Add a note: "Signs (both freestanding and building-mounted) that face residential zones shall not be illuminated."
- h. Remove note: "It has been determined that all sign areas are wholly visible from an abutting arterial street. Therefore all tenants will be allowed 15% of the areas of the façade for building signage."
- i. And replace with: "The size of building mounted signage for each building façade will be determined on a case by case basis. The applicant shall demonstrate sign area visibility from abutting streets with line of sight diagrams that include all other buildings that may obstruct and/or obscure visibility from abutting streets. If a building façade's sign area is not wholly visible from any adjacent street, then the minimum sign area shall be applied."
- j. Add a note: "All free-standing signs shall be monument style."
- k. Add a note: "The maximum height of any freestanding sign shall be 15 feet."
- l. Add a note: "One free-standing sign per premise frontage is permitted for a maximum number of four free standing signs."
- m. Add a note: "Maximum sign-face area for free-standing signs is 100 square feet."
- n. Add a note: "Directory signs, with a maximum size of 24 square feet, are allowed and do not count as an advertising sign."
- o. Add a note: "Uplighting of any kind is prohibited."
- p. Add a note: "Each freestanding sign shall display a numeric street address with a size that is easily readable to drivers on adjacent streets. This numeric street address shall not be calculated as part of the allowed sign face area."

- q. Remove any provisions or requirements that are not enforceable by the Planning Department, Code Enforcement Division, including requirements, standards and agreements between the property owner/management and individual tenants.
5. Sign Standards Detail Drawings (sheets S-102, S-103 and subsequent, unnumbered sheet):
    - a. All sign-type drawings (A1, A2, B, C, D, E, F and G) on Sheets S-102 and S-103 should be altered in height (15'-0") and sign face area (100 sq. ft.) to reflect the regulations of the Zoning Code and the WR66SDP and as noted in the sign standards language.
    - b. The site plan diagram of sign locations on sheet S-103 should be altered to show a total of four, perimeter, freestanding sign locations, as allowed by the WR66SDP Design Overlay Zone (one freestanding sign per premise frontage).
    - c. The single, single faced center ID monument with directionals proposed to be located at the entry roundabout south of Central Avenue is appropriate as an identification sign and iconic monument, but should be reduced in height to 15'-0".
    - d. The multi-tenant, directional monument signs (unnumbered sheet after S-103) locations as shown on sheet C-001 shall be transferred to the site plan diagram of sign locations on sheet S-103.
    - e. The site development plan for building permit, currently awaiting final sign-off at the DRB, shall be revised to reflect the amended and approved site development plan for subdivision and its sign standards (signage master plan).
  6. Additional signage shall be detailed and located on the site development plans for building permit and subdivision:
    - a. Pedestrian crossing signs at every drive aisle crossing.
    - b. Traffic control signs at the roundabout that direct drivers in a counter-clockwise flow and right turns only.
  7. Final approval of the corresponding map amendment to the West Route 66 Sector Development Plan (08EPC 40039) by the City Council is required prior to final sign-off of the site development plan for subdivision at the DRB.
  8. City Engineer Conditions:

- a. The Developer is responsible for permanent improvements to the transportation facilities adjacent to the proposed site development plan. Those improvements will include any additional right-of-way requirements, paving, curb and gutter, sidewalk and ADA accessible ramps that have not already been provided for. Comment continued on next page. All public infrastructure constructed within public right-of-way or public easements shall be to City Standards. Those Standards will include but are not limited to sidewalks (std. dwg. 2430), driveways (std. dwg. 2425), private entrances (std. dwg. 2426) and wheel chair ramps (std. dwg. 2441).
- b. Per Transportation Development Staff, completion of the required system improvements that are attributable to the development, as identified in the TIS, is required.
- c. Extend the north/south drive aisle from Central Avenue at site drive "A" to Bridge Boulevard (would bisect the area between retail shops 7C and 7C2), provide an east/west connection from this extension to the delivery/service areas of these same retail buildings and provide additional parking adjacent to this extension (from east/west connection to retail buildings).
- d. Provide adequate site distance at service drives along Bridge Boulevard adjacent to 6' screen wall.
- e. According to the TIS, there are six uses with drive-thru windows. Therefore, the applicant should provide the entire site plan for the purpose of reviewing site circulation.
- f. Site drives to be designed and located per the recommendations in the TIS.
- g. Provide truck route and turning information on site plan. Service drives and loading areas to be designed accordingly.
- h. Provide cross access to Tracts 7 and 8 (designated as not a part on site plan), to site drive aisles that provide connections with Unser and Bridge Boulevards. Provide applicable cross access agreements.
- i. A concurrent platting action will be required at DRB.
- j. Site plan shall comply and be designed per DPM Standards.
- k. Dedication of right-of-way from the centerline of Unser Boulevard a limited access, principal arterial as designated on the Long Range Roadway System map.
- l. Dedication of right-of-way from the centerline of Central Avenue a Principal arterial as designated on the Long Range Roadway System map.

- m. Dedication of right-of-way from the centerline of Bridge Boulevard a Collector Street as designated on the Long Range Roadway System map.
  - n. Dedication of right-of-way from the centerline of 86<sup>th</sup> Street a Collector Street as designated on the Long Range Roadway System map.
  - o. Dedication of an additional 6 feet of right-of-way along Unser Boulevard, Central Avenue, Bridge Boulevard and 86<sup>th</sup> Street as required by the City Engineer to provide for on-street bicycle lanes.
  - p. Construction of the bicycle lanes along Unser Boulevard, Central Avenue, Bridge Boulevard and 86<sup>th</sup> Street adjacent to the subject property, as designated on Long Range Bikeways System map.
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***Russell Brito***  
***Division Manager***

cc: Armstrong Development Properties, 1500 N. Priest Dr., Suite 150E, Tempe, AZ 85281  
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Miguel Maestas, Westside Merchants Assoc., 6013 Sunset Gardens SW, Albuquerque, NM 87121

***Attachments***



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# ***CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE AGENCY COMMENTS***

## ***PLANNING DEPARTMENT***

### ***Zoning Code Services***

#### ***Office of Neighborhood Coordination***

**Avalon NA (R), Los Volcanes NA (R), Stinson Tower NA (R), Sunrise HOA (R), Westgate Heights NA (R), Westside Merchants Assoc. (R)**

#### ***Advanced Planning***

The site development plan was resubmitted with a Signage Master Plan on May 30, 2008. We have no adverse comments concerning the Signage Master Plan.

The following comments regarding future development along Central Avenue are for informational purposes only:

A great deal of public resources is being expended to ensure that the northwest corner of Central and Unser (Transit Center, mixed use development and public library) functions as an integrated whole that caters to people on-foot. Additional public resources will be used to design and build a state-of-the-art Central/Unser street intersection. The street side tracts need to be well designed to support this massive undertaking for what could be the Community Activity Center gem of Southwest Albuquerque.

## ***CITY ENGINEER***

### **Transportation Development (City Engineer/Planning Department):**

- Reviewed, no comments for master signage plan.

### **Hydrology Development (City Engineer/Planning Department):**

- The Hydrology Section has no objection to the site plan amendment. A concurrent platting is required at DRB.

### **Transportation Planning (Department of Municipal Development):**

- Reviewed, and no comments regarding on-street bikeways, off-street trails or roadway system facilities.

### **Traffic Engineering Operations (Department of Municipal Development):**

- No comments received.

### **Street Maintenance (Department of Municipal Development):**

- No comments received.

**New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT):**

- No comments received.

**RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS FROM CITY ENGINEER, MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT  
and NMDOT:**

Conditions of approval for the proposed Site Development Plan for Subdivision Amendment shall include:

- a. None.

***DEPARTMENT of MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT  
Transportation Planning***

***WATER UTILITY AUTHORITY  
Utility Services***

***ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
Air Quality Division***

***Environmental Services Division***

***PARKS AND RECREATION  
Planning and Design***

Reviewed, no objection. Request does not affect our facilities.

***Open Space Division***

Open Space has no adverse comments

***City Forester***

***POLICE DEPARTMENT/Planning***

***SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT***

***Refuse Division***

Disapproved, requires 2 additional enclosures for 7c & 7c2, and reangle of enclosures for health club, and identified recycle areas labled.

***FIRE DEPARTMENT/Planning***

***TRANSIT DEPARTMENT***

***COMMENTS FROM OTHER AGENCIES***

***BERNALILLO COUNTY***

***ALBUQUERQUE METROPOLITAN ARROYO FLOOD CONTROL AUTHORITY***

***ALBUQUERQUE PUBLIC SCHOOLS***

**Barret and Lands of Wetco**, Tracts 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B, 3B, 4B, 3A, and Tract 6 of Barret Sub and Tract 4-A-1, 5-B-1, 5-B-2, Lands of Wetco is located on Central Ave and Unser Between Bridge St and 86<sup>th</sup>. The owner of the above property requests an Amendment to the Site Development Plan for Subdivision for a development that will consist of a retail center. This will have no adverse impacts to the APS district.

***MID-REGION COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS***

***MIDDLE RIO GRANDE CONSERVANCY DISTRICT***

***PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY OF NEW MEXICO***

No comment based on the information provided to date.