



August 27, 2021

Yvette Bordeaux Williams, Chair
Spring Valley Town Advisory Board

Dear Ms. Williams,

We ask the Spring Valley Town Advisory Board to reject the revised “Durango Station” project (APN: 176-05-601-028), which is scheduled to come before you on August 31.¹ The applicant is requesting an extension of time for a 13-year-old project *and* approvals for revised plans that still call for a Strip-sized 94,511 square-foot casino and two 216-foot hotel towers with 452 total rooms.²

Because there are approximately 200 Culinary Union members who reside within a mile of the project site, we wish to raise questions about potential life-of-quality issues involving traffic, pedestrian safety, and neighborhood compatibility with this new “Durango Station” project. We believe the applicant’s extension of time request should be denied because circumstances have substantially changed since the project’s last extension of time in 2018, specifically with the approval and on-going construction of the large UnCommons development to the east. We also ask you to deny the applicant’s request for a revised conditional use permit and design review because the new proposal, in spite of its reduced intensity, does not in our view meet the standards of Title 29 nor does it confirm with multiple policies of the Clark County Master Plan.

How much more traffic will “Durango Station” generate *on top of* new traffic from the UnCommons development across the street?

The applicant argues in its extension of time justification letter that “[s]ince the extension of time in October 2018, circumstances have not substantially changed to the subject property, area surrounding the subject property, or any change in laws or policies affecting the subject property.” The approval and construction of a “high impact project” to the site’s east across Durango would seem to contradict this statement.³

According to the Traffic Impact Study approved for the UnCommons project, the average daily traffic (ADT) on Durango between I-215 and W. Warm Springs Rd. is anticipated to increase 18,533 to reach 78,558 vehicle trips per day upon that project’s completion.⁴ This projected ADT will make this stretch of Durango busier than the Strip between Flamingo and Desert Inn, which saw an estimated 63,000 vehicle trips per day in 2019, according to NDOT data.⁵ How much additional traffic – on top of new traffic due to UnCommons – will be generated by “Durango Station”? Were the roads in the immediate area designed to handle this much traffic?

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UnCommons (Approved)		Durango Station (Proposed) ⁶	
Total Area	564,900 sf	Total Area	569,415 sf
Apartments	838 units	Hotel rooms	452 keys
Additional ADT	18,533	Additional ADT	?

Given the presence of UnCommons now, this application for a *fifth* extension of time for a conditional use permit approved 13 years ago (UC-08-0726) should be denied.

Why is the hotel driveway on Maule Avenue?

Some of the additional traffic the “Durango Station” project will generate will be on Maule Avenue, with the driveway to the hotel’s porte-cochere situated on that street. This layout appears to go directly against the spirit of Policy No. 88 of the Clark County Master Plan, which states: “Encourage resort hotels to provide primary access from existing/planned arterial streets.”⁷ Maule Avenue is not an arterial road.⁸ Moreover, the plans show the hotel driveway to be directly opposite the primary entrance/exit of the condo-apartment complex across Maule Avenue. What kind of traffic and safety issues might arise with this choice to locate a major driveway on a non-arterial road? Can the applicant move the project’s hotel driveway from Maule to Durango?

Traffic on Maule was increasing significantly before the pandemic hit in 2020. From 2016 to 2019, annual average daily traffic (AADT) on Maule grew by 56%, from 2400 to 3750, according to NDOT data.⁹ Driver and vehicle incidents on Maule were also on an upward trend, and 2021 is on track to surpass pre-pandemic levels, according to data from Metro.¹⁰ How much more traffic and traffic accidents can be expected if there is a hotel driveway to a Strip-sized resort hotel on Maule?

Until the applicant has either provided a justification for situating its hotel driveway on Maule, or alternatively, redesigned the project to move the hotel driveway, its application for a new conditional use permit and design review should be denied.

What safety measures will be implemented to ensure pedestrian student safety on Maule?

Wayne N. Tanaka Elementary School is located within “walking distance” of the “Durango Station” site, according to CCSD guidelines.¹¹ Given the project’s proximity to Tanaka Elementary, has the applicant reached out to the CCSD to discuss mitigation and safety measures for student transportation?

Furthermore, Clark County is currently updating its master plan and development through the “Transform Clark County” process. The draft master plan was released last month.¹² One of the new policies is Policy 4.1.7 SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL, which states: “In coordination with Clark County School District (CCSD), support Safe Routes to Schools programs as a way to reduce vehicular congestion in school zones and create safe and inviting environments for students, families, and staff to walk, bicycle, and use public transportation to travel to and from school.”

Due to the potential traffic impact of the proposed project, until the applicant has engaged CCSD to discuss and jointly formulate a plan to provide for safe student routes on Maule and adjacent streets, its application for a new conditional use permit and design review should be denied.

Is a 216-foot hotel tower compatible with the area surrounding the project site?

As proposed, the “Durango Station” hotel tower will be the tallest building in the area and almost three times taller than the tallest planned building at UnCommons (an office building at 75 feet). The hotel tower will be much taller than the residential developments west and south of the site – single-family units or condo-apartments which are at most two stories tall. It seems clear then that the “Durango Station” project would be visually incompatible with its surroundings and in violation of another set of policies set out in the Clark County Master Plan. Policy No. 4 states: “Development approval should be conditioned upon screening between visual incompatibilities;” and Policy No. 9 states: “Encourage requests for permit modifications or extensions of time on existing uses to include a plan to reduce their visual impacts and a phasing plan for completion.” Did the applicant consider lower height for the hotel component when it formulated its new proposal?

Thought should be given to the possibility that hotel guests in the 216-foot tower might be able to see into nearby residences or their backyards. Is that something the applicant has considered?

Again, we believe the applicant request for approval of a revised conditional use permit and design review should be denied because the proposed height is incompatible with its surrounding area.

In closing, given how much the project site’s surrounding area has changed, we believe a denial for a fifth further extension of time is warranted. As for the applicant’s request for a revised conditional use permit and design review, we believe it should be denied as well. This holdover resort hotel project has been around for so long that it is still subject to Title 29, which was replaced by the new development code Title 30 more than 20 years ago.¹³ But even Title 29 requires a high standard from the applicant when it comes to design review.

The purpose of this part, Design Review (previously referred to as architectural supervision), is to provide a mechanism to ensure that the design and layout of buildings, structures and other improvements shall be adequate to prevent them, or the uses for which they are to be intended, from being unsightly, undesirable, or obnoxious, hindering the orderly and harmonious development of the county, limiting the opportunity to attain the optimum use and value of land and improvements, impairing the desirability of living conditions in the same area or adjacent areas, or otherwise adversely affecting the general prosperity and welfare and to further the purposes of the master plan. (Title 29, Section 05.510)

As for standards for conditional use permits, Title 29 states:

No conditional use permit shall be approved unless the applicant establishes that the proposed conditional use is appropriate for its proposed location by a showing that:

1. The proposed use shall be in harmony with the general purpose, goals, objectives and standards of the comprehensive plan and of this title;
2. The proposed use at the proposed location shall not result in a substantial or undue adverse effect on: adjacent property, the character of the neighborhood, traffic conditions, parking, public improvements, public sites or rights-of-way, or other matters affecting the public health, safety and general welfare; and
3. The proposed use in the proposed area will be adequately served by and will not impose an undue burden on any public improvements, facilities or services. (Title 29, Section 29.05.050)

We believe that the proposal in front of you does not meet these standards. Furthermore, we believe it also does not comply with policies of the county master plan, as discussed above.

The applicant had ample opportunity in the past to commence its previously approved project, especially before the UnCommons development, but it did not. Instead, the company bought the Palms casino for \$316.4 million in 2016¹⁴ and spent \$690 million through the fall of 2019 to renovate the property.¹⁵ Now it is running up against the deadline to commence on September 3, 2021 and is seeking approval for a revised project that still raises significant traffic, safety, and compatibility issues. The applicant can do better. The area and its residents deserve better.

Sincerely,



Ken Liu
Research Director

¹ Record/Application 21-0387, Record Details, from the Clark County Citizen Access website, last accessed 8/17/2021.

² “DURANGO STATION: ENTITLEMENT DATA”, associated with Application 21-400117. Accessed via Document Image search provided by Clark County Comprehensive Planning, Building Department, and Public Works at [http://dsnet.co.clark.nv.us/webimage10/\(S\(qu2us5pg3npvekco2oz5kxhv\)\)/dsimages2011.aspx?ddlAppType=12](http://dsnet.co.clark.nv.us/webimage10/(S(qu2us5pg3npvekco2oz5kxhv))/dsimages2011.aspx?ddlAppType=12). The proposed casino area is larger than that of the Paris Las Vegas (95,300 sf) or Excalibur (91,882 sf). See Nevada Gaming Control Board data on the areas of casinos with a nonrestricted license; accessible here: <https://gaming.nv.gov/index.aspx?page=142>.

³ See, for example, agenda item 32 on for the 8/19/2020 Clark County Board of County Commissioners meeting: http://clark.granicus.com/MinutesViewer.php?view_id=17&clip_id=6787.

⁴ Lochsa Engineering, “Traffic Impact Analysis for Uncommons Mixed Use”, March, 2019, p. 24. Filed as PW19-12178, dated 3/14/2019, with Clark County Public Works Department.

⁵ NDOT TRINA Traffic Information System, at <https://ndot.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=278339b4605e4dda8da9bdd2fd9f1e9>. Station 0030370.

⁶ See “DURANGO PARKING ANALYSIS PHASE 1 AND 2” dated 4/21/2021, on “OVERALL LAND USE PLAN” by Friedmutter Group, associated with Application 21-400117. Accessed via Document Image search provided by Clark County Comprehensive Planning, Building Department, and Public Works at [http://dsnet.co.clark.nv.us/webimage10/\(S\(qu2us5pg3npvekco2oz5kxhv\)\)/dsimages2011.aspx?ddlAppType=12](http://dsnet.co.clark.nv.us/webimage10/(S(qu2us5pg3npvekco2oz5kxhv))/dsimages2011.aspx?ddlAppType=12).

⁷ Clark County Master Plan, Land Use Element, “Goals and Policies”. Available at https://www.clarkcountynv.gov/government/departments/comprehensive_planning_department/library/comprehensive_master_plan.php.

⁸ Roadway Functional Classification map (Map 1.3) from Clark County Master Plan Transportation Element; link from https://www.clarkcountynv.gov/government/departments/comprehensive_planning_department/library/comprehensive_master_plan.php.

⁹ NDOT TRINA Traffic Information System, at <https://ndot.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=278339b4605e4dda8da9bddd2fd9f1e9>. Station 0030863, on Maule Ave, 330 feet east of Fort Apache Road.

¹⁰ Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, Incident counts for command sectors Q3 and R4

¹¹ Clark County School District Regulation R-3531, “Student Transportation Guidelines”, defines “walking distance” as “two miles from a school”; at <https://www.ccsd.net/district/policies-regulations/?page=3>.

¹² See the document linked from <https://www.transformclarkcounty.com/post/the-draft-master-plan-is-ready-for-your-review>.

¹³ Title 30, Clark County’s current Unified Development Code, was adopted in 2000.

¹⁴ Red Rock Resorts, Inc., 10-K filed 3/13/2017, p. 40.

¹⁵ Red Rock Resorts, Inc., 10-K filed 2/21/2020, p. 8.