

Brief Summary of Intersection Operations and Safety Report

NM 333/NM 217 Intersection

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Overview

In January 2025, the NMDOT completed a Safety Study for the existing intersection at NM 333 and NM 217. This intersection had been identified as an area of concern due to traffic backups, and several serious crashes have occurred over recent years. The study involved:

- Analysis of crash data
- Speed measurements approaching the intersection
- Intersection turning movement data

The findings from these efforts helped identify issues at the intersection and analyze potential improvements.

Crash Analysis

An analysis of crashes at the intersection between 2018 and 2022 (the latest data available at the time of the study) indicated that injury or fatal crashes occur at a high rate at this intersection. Additionally, the types of crashes were due to speeding and dangerous turning movements.

Speed Analysis

The speed study showed the typical speeds to be slightly higher than the posted limit, with most drivers frequently traveling at speeds of 6-8 mph over the limit. The overall speed at the crossing is considered a contributing factor to the severity of the crashes. Since 2022, several additional crashes have occurred at this intersection, including multiple serious injury crashes and at least one fatality.

Turning Movement Analysis

Analysis showed that northbound/southbound NM 217 traffic often waited for long periods before they could turn onto NM 333. This long waiting time can often lead to impatient drivers making dangerous maneuvers.

Improvements Considered and Recommendations

To develop improvements that would address these concerns, an operations analysis was completed for two alternatives:

- Signalized Intersection
- Single-lane Roundabout

Both alternatives showed improvement in traffic flow through the intersection and a reduction in crashes. However, the roundabout showed the greatest benefit in reducing traffic delays and crashes. Additionally, the roundabout is more cost-effective to construct and maintain.