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ALBUQUERQUE NEWS

City of Albuquerque turns to AI to help warn drivers of pedestrians on Central

by: [Melissa Torres](#)
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[ALBUQUERQUE, N.M.](#) (KRQE) – With more deadly crashes on Central Ave., the City of Albuquerque is now turning to AI to help warn drivers when people are crossing the street. The city’s Pedestrian Activated Warning System, or what they call “PAWS,” is adding AI-powered lights on Central Ave. near Louisiana Blvd. That system recognizes when someone is walking across driving lanes, activating special lights to warn

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“So, we’ve spent several months training the cameras to recognize when people aren’t just walking on the sidewalk, but when they’re actually about to cross the street. And we’ve gotten to a point now with the cameras where they can spot when a pedestrian turns to walk across the street,” said Dan Mayfield, Public Information Officer for the City of Albuquerque’s Department of Municipal Development.

The Department of Municipal Development said the new system covers a several-hundred-foot section of Central Ave. on both east and west of the Louisiana Blvd. intersection.

To make it work, they’re repurposing wildlife detection technology, which alerts drivers of deer and elk crossing the road. The city thinks it may be the first city in the United States to take on this kind of project.

The technology should be able to detect anyone crossing the street in its designated area near Louisiana Blvd., regardless of whether or not that person is in a marked crosswalk. “This particular area is one of the worst in the city for pedestrian deaths. So this is a project we really think could save lives. This is one that we really hope will let drivers know there are pedestrians in the area,” continued Mayfield.

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The city has four signs up on Central Ave. Although the signs and cameras are now installed, they haven’t turned on the system just yet. DMD said it’s aiming to turn everything on sometime in early May. The city said the “PAWS” system is just one part of a larger project, to add more pedestrian and mid-block crossings along with additional warning lights on east Central Ave.

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