



El Paso Group

February 2011

LORYX

Transmountain Road

The plan to widen El Paso's Transmountain Road continues to concern El Paso Sierrans. The city's engineering department recently weighed in with these three alternatives and comments: **Alternative 1: Install a complete interchange at Transmountain and Paseo del Norte and an overpass at Plexxar (as designed)**

The analysis shows that Paseo del Norte attracts a high amount of the traffic from the region and the interchange, when built, will be the most used in the system. While the network would work in some respects better without the interchange, it would be very problematic to provide access to the Westside Master Plan properties that it serves. In addition, without this interchange, trip average length will be longer and congestion at the other major interchanges will be greater. [Note that despite efforts to separate the two, the Westside Master Plan is indeed a very important factor in Transmountain expansion.]

Alternative 2: Install a complete interchange at Plexxar and do not construct an Interchange for Paseo del Norte: The distance between Plexxar and Resler is too close to build a complete interchange at Plexxar.

February General Meeting

Sierra Club and Beer

Outings Picture Show

Come see photos of our recent expeditions. Buy yourself a pizza if you like. First 12 members get a free drink. This fun, new-style meeting is going great in Austin and Albuquerque!

Wednesday, February 23 at 6:30 PM

Sunset Brewery and Pizzeria
4176 North Mesa

Alternative 3: Install a complete interchange at Paseo del Norte with no overpass at Plexxar

This alternative would result in the following:

- 1) The aesthetics of the project at this interchange would be improved.
- 2) Increased congestion would exist at the intersections of Transmountain and Resler and Transmountain and Paseo del Norte...
- 3) Trip length for local traffic using Plexxar would substantially increase.
- 4) Pedestrian and bicycle connectivity would be very negatively impacted, requiring an additional mile of walking or biking if trying to move across Transmountain at Plexxar.

The summary to City Manager Joyce Wilson: "Collectively, the Department of Engineering and Construction Management and the El Paso Department of Transportation share the opinion that both the full interchange at Transmountain and Paseo del Norte and the overpass at Plexxar are valuable and important components of the project and should be constructed with the project."

TxDot revealed its Environmental Assessment of the project to the public last week. There is a comment period and the Sierra Club will be commenting. Stay tuned!

In the meantime keep up-to-date with Jim Tolbert's great blog at elpasonaturally.blogspot.com.

—Laurence Gibson

El Paso Regional Group
SIERRA CLUB
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Outings

Pine Springs Dayhike

Date: March 6, Sunday
Place: Guadalupe Mountains National Park
Class: Easy
Leader: Liz Walsh 915 342-7630

The most difficult part of this trip will be the 110 mile drive east out the Carlsbad Highway to our nearest National Park.

Participants will need to furnish their own transportation. There is no gas available at the park.

There are several short and easy loop trails to choose from at the Pine Springs trailhead. The Visitor Center is nearby as well as some Butterfield Stage Station ruins. Join Professor Walsh for a relaxing Sunday outing. Call for details.

Want to Lead a Hike?

Several members have expressed a desire to have more dayhikes. Please consider volunteering to be a leader. Let an Excom member know of your interest. We'll schedule a training session and send study materials after your First Aid training is completed.

Hillsboro Peak Dayhike

Date: April 17
Place: Black Range, Gila Nat'l Forest
Class: Srenuous-moderate
Length: 10 miles
Elevation gain: about 1900 feet
Leader: Harry Newman
Contact: h_k_n@hotmail.com

We will depart early for a classic dayhike uphill to Hillsboro Peak. The hike starts at the trailhead and highlights include abundant scenery as we climb in altitude. On a clear day, the trail provides many scenic overlooks. Participants should be equipped for potentially bad weather and possibly even snow or ice on north facing slopes. If we summit, all are advised to bring a camera. This trail is 5 miles each way with nearly 1,900 feet elevation gain, so all must bring water, snacks, and a lunch. All should have appropriate footwear, rainwear, and be physically able to complete 10 miles in one day with a moderate pace. The group facilitator will call participants if forest conditions warrant rerouting or cancelling this trip.

Friedman Recycling Company

Place: 5835 Wren Avenue
Class: Easy
Length: 1 hour
Leader: Call 792 9300

Tours of the recycling center are available on the third Monday of each month at 9:00 am. They take about an hour and are limited to six or seven people. Members who want a tour can call Friedman and sign up on their own, subject to their own schedules.

Next ExCom March 3rd

The Executive Committee of the El Paso Group will meet at 6:30 at the Singapore Cafe on Mesa across from UTEP. All members are welcome.

El Paso Regional Group Leaders

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