

The Tramway Tour is a 16 mile ride, with the magnificent Sandia Mountains as a back drop. Along the way we'll encounter local geology, wildlife, native plants, Spanish colonial history, public art, the civic spirit of our fine city, and last but not least our New Mexico State Insect. Most of the tour is parallel to heavy traffic which is kept at bay by a segregated trail, and by a road with a good shoulder. A long steady 1,000 foot drop—or climb—adds to the fun. Riders start at either end—Tramway & Central or the junction of North Fourth and North Second Streets—but parking is more convenient at the southeast terminus. Parking is also available at several trailheads for City Open Space, in most cases, less than a mile east of Tramway.

Parking

Park and Ride, Wenonah Ave. east of Tramway. About .2 miles south of Tramway and Central.

East end of Copper Avenue. 0.8 Miles/15.0 Miles.

East end of Indian School Road. 2.0 Miles/13.8 Miles.

East end of Menaul Boulevard. 3.0 Miles/12.8 Miles.

Embudito Trailhead. See Glenwood Hills side trip under Candelaria Road, 3.4 Miles/12.4 Miles.

Michial M. Emery Bear Canyon Trailhead and Parking Lot. See Spain Road, 5.5 Miles/10.3 Miles.

Elena Gallegos Picnic Area/Albert G Simms Park. See Simms Park Road, 6.4 Miles/9.4 Miles.

W. L. Jackson County Park. See Cedar Hill Road, 8.2 Miles/7.6 Miles

Junction 4th St. & 2nd St. No official parking available. See 15.8 Miles/0.0 Miles for possibilities.

For those wishing to drive to the start of the tour, convenient parking is available at a Park and Ride parking area just west of Tramway on Wenonah, which is just south of Central. Another option is parking at Singing Arrow Community Center in Singing Arrow Park, (south on Tramway, west on Wenonah Ave., south on Dorado Place, east on Singing Arrow Ave., total about .8 mi). The parking lot may be locked after hours. But consider the possibilities for public transportation. The City's bike-friendly buses (the Green Line, #777) run frequently from downtown up to Tramway and Central (<http://www.cabq.gov/transit/routes-and-schedules>) and with careful planning, you and your bike can take the Rail Runner (<http://nmrailrunner.com/schedule.asp>) from the end of the tour back to downtown.

Four Hills Road & Stagecoach Road,
Four Hills Village

Although many cyclists will start this tour at Central and Tramway, it is most logical for the written tour to start at the upscale community of Four Hills Village, one mile to the south. Starting where Four Hills Road meets Stagecoach Road, enabling a circular tour of Four Hills and passing its golf course, one descends on a bike trail hugging the west side of the four lane Four Hills Avenue. You'll pass over Tijeras Arroyo at 0.4 miles, and then turn left on Wenonah Avenue near the

top of the hill. Wenonah curves around to the north past a grocery store, arriving at Tramway and Central.

Adjacent to the Four Hills residential area are two City Open Space areas worthy of side trips.

- The first, Manzano Open Space can be accessed either from the end of Stagecoach Road or from La Cabra Drive, both within the Four Hills residential area and both with on-street parking allowed.
- The second and more recently acquired land is the '66 Open Space'. Development of this area is still in the planning stage; currently it can be accessed legally only from a gate on Highway 333, (Old U S 66) about .6 miles east of Tramway and Central. Jay Lee Evans, Open Space Division Planner, describes the land like this:

"The '66 Open Space' is a splendid and welcome addition to the City of Albuquerque's Major Public Open Space (MPOS) Network. The dramatic topography includes steep cliffs rising up from the perennially flowing Tijeras Arroyo stream, and is marked by lovely and stately mature cottonwood and willow stands. Besides the rich habitat value – the area is visited by deer, bear, bald eagle, and other native critters -- the 66 Open Space enjoys a rich historical tradition due to its proximity to 'The Mother Road', historic US Route 66. In the early 1960's, this was the site of 'Little Beaver Town', a replica of a frontier Wild West town, complete with cowboys, Indians, wild horses, buffalo, stagecoaches, gunfights in the street and bar-room brawls in the saloon. Twice a day."

As a very important note, City Open Space staff strongly discourages accessing this area by walking or biking up Tijeras Arroyo from the informal parking area where Four Hills Road crosses the Arroyo. This part of the Arroyo is private land and entering it constitutes trespass. And remember, all City Open Space facilities are open to mountain bikes, but unauthorized motor vehicles are strictly prohibited.

0.0 Miles From Tramway & Central

15.8 Miles From Second & Fourth Streets

SE Corner, Central Avenue and Tramway Boulevard. In addition to the Tramway Bike Trail, two other significant bike routes start (or finish) here. Highway 333—old U S 66—heads west from here into Tijeras Canyon. Cyclists may continue east on this road toward Edgewood, turn

north toward Sandia Crest and Santa Fe, or turn south toward Mountainair. Also, the I-40 bike path runs northwest from here, following the interstate currently as far as Los Altos Park, and with breaks on city streets, all the way to Unser Avenue on the West Side.

Long- time residents will recall an area near this intersection as the former site of the Western Skies Motor Hotel. Built in 1959, demolished in 1988, the Hotel was an Albuquerque landmark, in its heyday one of the most glamorous tourist spots in the city. Guests included Elvis Presley, Marilyn Monroe, Kirk Douglas, Arnold Palmer, King Hussein of Jordan, and Hubert Humphrey. In December, 1962, President Kennedy stayed at Western Skies while on a visit to Sandia National Laboratory. But from the beginning, the hotel was beset with financial and management problems which only deepened, especially with the construction of Interstate 40 and the draining of tourists onto a new artery lined with more modern facilities. Western Skies finally succumbed to back taxes, unpaid bills, City code violations and a bleak location robbed of vital traffic.



The Hand Of Friendship

In the southeast corner of Tramway and I-40 lies La Luz de Amistad City Park with its sculpture, The Hand Of Friendship. The first of many pieces of public art to be found along the Tramway corridor, the sculpture was dedicated in 1969, having been commissioned by a private individual and later adopted by the City Arts program. The Hand holds an eternal torch, encircled by symbols of atomic energy and the Zia sunburst. The eternal flame of the torch has since been extinguished due to cost concerns. Toward the north side of the park sits a more recent sculpture. The park also has several bicycle parking racks, themselves attractive objects plus a few automobile parking spaces.

As you approach the I-40 overpass, you'll notice Native American design elements incorporated into the horizontal members of the bridge. This is also part of the City Arts program.

Formed on to the surfaces of the I-40 overpass embankments, are enlarged castings of trilobites, brachiopods and other extinct water-dwelling invertebrates. The real 300 million year old creatures were preserved as fossils in limestone layers found in the nearby Manzanita Mountains and also atop the Sandia Crest. These lovely creations come to us courtesy of the State Department of Transportation.

Trilobite



Passing under the I-40 overpass and starting up a small grade, the Sandia Mountains come into clear view. The approximately 15 mile long, 10,678 foot high range will remain an imposing presence throughout this tour, visible to the east of Tramway Blvd. and directly behind (or ahead) of a cyclist riding Tramway and Roy Roads. The mountains shape the surrounding terrain and weather, influence development patterns, contribute to the City's drinking water, and help form the very soil on which our route passes. The range is a vast cultural, historic, scientific and recreational resource for the entire state and beyond. For many residents in the metropolitan area, the mountains are etched into their consciousness, a daily presence and a frame of reference for their lives in the City. And of course it's a source of many side trips for this tour. Contrary to what many think, the Sandias are not part of the Rocky Mountains--that mountain system ends with the Sangre de Cristo range near Santa Fe—but were formed tens of millions of years later. For a good introduction to the geology, flora and fauna of the Sandias, see the Field Guide to the Sandia Mountains, edited by Robert Julyan and Mary Stuever and published by the UNM Press.

From I-40 to Lomas, the route follows the concrete-lined Tramway Diversion Channel. The Channel is one of many examples of how government agencies have altered natural drainage patterns to assure the safety of developed areas. In this case, rain water originating in the Sandias and flowing westward down Copper, Lomas and smaller channels is diverted southward into Tijeras Arroyo, protecting the homes just west of Tramway.

Mile 0.8

Mile 15.0

Copper Avenue. There is a pedestrian/bicycle overpass here, offering safe crossing over Tramway. East of Tramway, Copper leads to a City Open Space trailhead for hiking and mountain biking (approximately .7 miles). Car parking is available at the trailhead.

Mile 1.2

Mile 14.6

A bike trail takes off to the east following a concrete lined channel, ending at Embudo Hills City Park (about .6 miles).

Mile 1.4

Mile 14.4

Lomas Boulevard. The Lomas-Tramway Library sits in the southwest corner, offering shade, water and of course books. Designed by architect Van H Gilbert, built in 1987, and renovated in 2010-11, the library has a large northeast-facing window



“La Blessure,” Lomas-Tramway Library

providing expansive views of the mountains. Skylights and many other windows further contribute to the open air feeling. Public art abounds here, with sculptures inside and out and with more art hanging on inside walls. Outside are courtyards for reading, contemplation and public events.

Started in 1978 and patterned after similar programs around the country as well as Europe, Albuquerque’s 1% for the Arts program is funded by general obligation bonds, of which 1% is allocated to public art. Later years saw the County and the State (which uses different funding) adopt similar programs. Citizen committees are active in many of the critical aspects of the

City program. They work with City staff, neighborhood associations, community groups and others to locate sites; identify the relevant physical, cultural, social or historical needs of the neighborhood and various constituencies; determine the scope of requests for proposals and choose the artist.

1% For The Arts has created enormous City-wide benefit and enrichment. This is well summed up by the late Gordon Church, City Public Arts Administrator from its founding in 1978 to 2004:

“At one level, public artworks in Albuquerque and Bernalillo County enhance our urban and rural facilities, but at other levels works of art are used to convey community values, to commemorate individuals, groups and events of our history, to punctuate economic development efforts and to demonstrate new tools and techniques in the creation of visual art-all to ensure that our environment is both functional and beautiful. They reflect the essence of Albuquerque to ourselves and our visitors.”

Just north of Lomas in the planted strip between the bike path and the roadway, one sees the first of many prairie dog communities found along Tramway. Known as Gunnison Prairie Dogs, they are remnants of what was once a vast population native to Albuquerque and the Southwest. Along with four other species, these small rodents (closely related to ground squirrels, not dogs) inhabited the Great Plains from southern Canada to Mexico, occurring in enormous numbers which were catastrophically reduced as the area was settled. Now several species are listed as Endangered and Threatened.



In addition to their high-pitched ‘bark’ (hence the name dog), these animals are known for their sophisticated social behavior and communication. Warning calls announce predators, with different calls for each kind of predator, and when they’re gone an all clear is sounded. ‘Kissing’, (actually the rubbing of teeth), is another social behavior which helps to determine relatedness. Kissing behavior may be followed by other friendly actions such as mutual grooming.

Prairie dogs normally get all needed water from the vegetation they eat. The animals in these vegetated strips are under the care of Prairie Dog Pals (www.prairiedogpals.org),

which provides supplemental feeding where necessary and transplants individuals when the

population--lacking natural predators here--grows too large. Cold weather cyclists may see few of these creatures since they hibernate in the winter.

1.5 Miles

14.3 Miles

A (painless) encounter with the New Mexico State Insect. The adjacent photo shows a tarantula hawk wasp (genus *Pepsis*) seen along the Trail. This very large (2") wasp has an extremely painful sting but is relatively docile unless a female encounters a tarantula at egg-laying time. Then a life and death struggle ensues with a common outcome involving the wasp stinging the spider, paralyzing but not killing it. The wasp drags the hapless arachnid to her nest where she lays an egg on it and buries it. Upon hatching, the larval wasp burrows in, feeding on its supply of fresh meat, growing, and eventually metamorphosing into an adult which bursts out of the now-empty spider skin. Adults have less grisly feeding habits, drinking nectar from flowers. Among the very few predators daring to look at



these venomous insects as a potential meal is our own iron-stomached state bird, the roadrunner, which also dines on scorpions and rattlesnakes. For the story of how New Mexico school children helped choose the State Insect,

see http://www.statesymbolsusa.org/New_Mexico/Tarantula_hawk_wasp.html.

2.0 Miles

13.8 Miles

Indian School Road. East of Tramway, Indian School climbs steeply through the foothills, ending at the parking lot for the Embudo Canyon Trailhead and City Open Space (approximately 1.1 mile). Mountain bikes are welcome in City Open Space, but are prohibited in National Forest Wilderness. Riding westward, Indian School along with connecting streets and paths offers a continuous bike-friendly route to Broadway. There is a short stretch of Indian School just west of Tramway not designated for bikes (approximately .3 miles), but this stretch may be avoided by continuing less than one half mile north on Tramway to the Embudo Recreational trail, turning west at Embudo and continuing to Indian School. Another possibility for



Sandia Pentstemen

westward travel involves riding down Indian School for approximately .2 mile to its junction with Constitution. Following Constitution as well as its bike-friendly connecting routes takes you to UNM's North Golf Course.

Signs along the Path identify the State Department of Transportation as providing maintenance for the trail. The trail is well lined with vegetation, much of it native.

2.4 Miles

13.4 Miles

Embudo Arroyo and Overpass.

Heading west along the Embudo Arroyo, the Embudo Recreation Trail provides access to Indian School Rd.

(see previous entry) and eventually turns into Paseo de las Montañas Trail, which runs westward to Louisiana and I-40. To reach the trail, go over the wooden overpass and follow the path past a small, pleasant City park (picnic tables and shade). Just past the park the trail crosses a bridge and heads straight down the Arroyo. From Tramway looking eastward up the Arroyo you can see an informal mountain bike trail which leads to a multi-use path, ending at an Open Space trailhead. Embudo Arroyo itself follows a circuitous, mostly human-made route to the Rio Grande, running west, northwest, and then southwest until it reaches I-40 where it flows between the east and west bound lanes. It is eventually diverted out of I-40 and into the North Diversion Channel near Menaul and University. See the separate guide to the NDC.

3.0 Miles

12.8 Miles

Menaul Boulevard. Eastward, Menaul climbs through the foothills development. At .3 miles is Piedra Lisa City Park, an attractive facility with picnic tables and shade. At the east end of the park, adjacent to City Open Space, note the huge and colorful depiction of the Sandias painted on the concrete spillway for the flood control dam. More public art sits at the park's entrance. At .6 miles, Menaul ends at parking for City Open Space.

"Morning Allegory", Piedra Lisa Park



3.2 Miles
12.6 Miles

**Piedra Lisa Arroyo -
Lexington Ave. and
Overpass.** Crossing the

overpass provides access to several westbound bike routes. One can follow Lexington Ave. and several bike friendly connecting routes to Claremont which runs to a point just west of Carlisle. Alternatively, a few steps north of the overpass, and also on the west side is Piedra Lisa Arroyo and its adjacent bike path. This path, along with connecting bike routes turns southwest and connects to the Embudo Recreation Trail and Paseo de las Montañas (see mile 2.4, above).

3.4 Miles
12.4 Miles

Candelaria Road. Cyclists wishing to ride a parallel route somewhat closer to

the Open Space through Glenwood Hills may follow the designated bike route east on Candelaria, north on Camino de la Sierra, continuing north on Glenwood Hills Dr. and then west on Manitoba along with its connecting streets. This route totals about 3 miles and includes many short steep hills. The neighborhood is quiet with well kept homes. (See side bar.)

4.0 Miles
11.8 Miles

Comanche Road. A wooden overpass crosses Tramway. Running west, the Comanche

Road bike lane meets Paseo del Nordeste bike trail which then connects to the North Diversion Channel bike path. This route also crosses many north-south bike routes. Eastward, Comanche dead ends at Open Space; no car parking is allowed here.

4.5 Miles
11.3 Miles

Montgomery Blvd. Here within the commercial development, a cyclist can

Glenwood Hills Side Trip

.3 Miles/2.7 Miles. Climbing steadily, Candelaria passes Casa Grande Linear Park, a long narrow City recreation area following a power line right of way and running from Candelaria to a point just north of Comanche. Parking spaces and a play ground are adjacent to Candelaria, and a packed gravel path runs its length. The power line, its right of way, and the long term plan for a park existed prior to the development of the neighborhood and in the year 2000, neighborhood meetings with the City led to the facility's eventual development. South of Candelaria, the power line right of way is owned by the Public Service Company of NM and has a bicycle trail leading to the trailhead at the end of Menaul Boulevard.

.5 Miles/2.5 Miles. Turn north on Camino de la Sierra, and continue north on Glenwood Hills Drive.

2.1 Miles/.9 Miles. Trailhead Road heads east a short distance and a steep climb up to the Embudito Trailhead and parking.

Approx. 2.2 Miles/.8 Miles. Turn west on Manitoba. Manitoba intersects several connecting streets before reaching Tramway. (Cyclists riding from north to south will want to reverse the following directions so that, starting at Manitoba & Tramway, you will turn east instead of west and north instead of south).

From Manitoba, turn south on Calle de Luna.

Turn west on Manitoba.

Turn north on Larchmont.

Turn west on Manitoba.

3 Miles/0 Miles. Manitoba meets Tramway.

find many retail establishments providing refreshment.

5.0 Miles
10.8 Miles

Manitoba Drive. The parallel bike route running closer to the foothills enters from the east. See Candelaria, 3.4 mi./12.4 mi..

5.1 Miles
10.7 Miles

Bridge over Arroyo del Oso (Bear Canyon). A dirt trail leads eastward up the Arroyo, toward the foothills. The mountain bike trail connects to the Embudito trail head (see side trip, above), the High Desert residential development with its

network of bike lanes, and the Elena Gallegos Open Space area. Westward from Tramway, the drainage has been dammed and left lightly developed, enhancing both flood control and recreation. Arroyo del Oso Park and Arroyo del Oso Golf Course are examples of such multi-use planning. The Arroyo has a series of bike paths



Osos del Cañon

and routes on both sides which now run as far as the north side of I-25 and which long term will pass over or under I-25 to connect with a short spur leading to the North Diversion Channel Bike Path. Access to these routes is via the bike route on Spain, 5.5/10.3 miles. Land within this part of Bear Canyon and on both sides of Tramway is City Open Space. The sculpture, “Osos Del Cañon” (see photo), lies on the south bank of the Arroyo, a hundred feet or so west of Tramway Boulevard. You’ll see it from the shoulder of the southbound lane. Informal walking trails lead closer.

5.5 Miles
10.3 Miles

Spain Road. Spain, an unsigned bike route, leads westward to bike friendly paths following Bear Canyon (see City Map). To the east, Spain Road enters High Desert, one of the area’s newer residential developments. Traveling east on Spain, you’ll follow a strip of open space with interpretive signs explaining High Desert’s use of native vegetation and surface runoff to keep it watered. At .6 miles, the junction with Imperata Road, you’ll find a formal garden. Spain ends at .9 miles; turning south on High Desert for .1 mile takes you to the Michial M. Emery Bear Canyon Trailhead and Parking Lot. As noted on the sign, the area is

maintained by High Desert in co-operation with the Forest Service, and is open 5:00 AM to 9:00 PM. A large sculpture (photo) stands on High Desert land, just east of Tramway on the north side of Spain. In the southeast corner is a smaller sculpture.

5.8 Miles
10.1 Miles

A small sign and map on the east side of the bike path invites you to visit High Desert grounds and art, including "... a variety of areas from a City Park, formal gardens, streetscapes and natural open spaces."

6.1 Miles
9.7 Miles

Academy Road. The road is named for nearby Albuquerque Academy, one of the City's most prominent private schools and the former owner of the Elena Gallegos Grant land. See the next entry, Mile 6.4. Near the northeast corner of this intersection is another large sculpture courtesy of High Desert.



High Desert Sculpture

6.4 Miles
9.4 Miles

Simms Park Road. This is the main entrance to the Elena Gallegos Picnic Area/Albert G. Simms Park. Within the 640 acre park are trails for hiking or running, mountain biking and horseback riding. The Pino Trail begins here and goes up through the Sandia Mountain Wilderness to the Crest. Additional facilities include wheelchair accessible areas, picnic shelters, interpretive signage, public art, and programs in environmental education—all for a very modest entrance fee (bicyclists enter free). For a schedule of events see the Open Space website, <http://www.cabq.gov/openspace/education.html>. The Park is an invaluable facility, the pre-eminent unit of the Open Space system and its preservation is a landmark achievement for the City and its citizens.

The story of Elena Gallegos, her land and how it changed hands is complex and somewhat mysterious—especially with regard to how Elena acquired the land. The full history is beyond the scope of this guide, but a summary from the State Historian can be found here: http://www.newmexicohistory.org/filedetails.php?fileID=24399#_edn2.

Elena, then a 32 year old widow, probably acquired the land in 1712. Upon her death, the land was divided among her heirs. They and subsequent heirs established individual home sites in the lower areas, but kept the west face of the Sandias as a 'commons' for such uses as grazing and logging. In 1893, the heirs filed a claim with the Court of Private Land Claims, seeking to uphold the original boundaries (approximately 70,000 acres, from the Rio Grande to the Crest) while the United States Government sought to have the area on the mountain removed, claiming the court had misinterpreted the language of the grant. The heirs prevailed, benefiting not only themselves but also future generations of Albuquerque residents who were able to purchase the area as a single large unit and preserve it.

Much of the land was lost to the State for back taxes in the 1920's, and was bought first by a Gene Norment and later by Albert G Simms, a prominent businessman and U S Congressman. Simms, a principal supporter of the Albuquerque Academy, bequeathed to the school a substantial part of the grant when he died in 1964.

With open space acquisition already on the radar of the City and citizen groups, advocates became alarmed in 1980 when California developers offered to buy the land from the Academy. A well coordinated citizens' effort, supported by then-Mayor Harry Kinney and the City Council led to Albuquerque residents voting a .25% increase to its gross receipts tax for the express purpose of buying the land. The selling price of 24.5 million dollars established by the Academy reflected altruism, civic mindedness, and good business sense given the alternatives. The purchase was ultimately successful and through a series of exchanges with the federal government, all of the grant land except for the 640 acres of Open Space was traded to the Forest Service. Federal land traded to the City was sold and used to establish a fund intended for the purchase and maintenance of Open Space.

Less than .1 mile north of Simms Park Rd., Pino Arroyo crosses Tramway, emptying into a basin created by Pino Dam. The dam is one of several flood control facilities built to temporarily hold water from a flash flood, releasing it slowly and safely. Below the dam, Pino Arroyo flows west into Tanoan, a gated community. The Tanoan Golf Course which sits astride the Arroyo is part of an easement granted by the Albuquerque Metropolitan Arroyo Flood Control Authority (AMAFCA- see the tour for the North Diversion Channel), allowing the recreational facility to exist while maintaining its ability to help control runoff. Land within the Arroyo and to the immediate east of Tramway is City Open Space, with a mountain bike trail running toward the foothills.

6.9 Miles
8.9 Miles

San Rafael Avenue. San Rafael Avenue, along with connecting streets and bike paths provides excellent access to points west. Go west on San Rafael, taking the first left (south), on Tennyson St., then right (west) on Del Rey Ave. Del Rey, along with bike-friendly connections runs all the way to Ellison and Journal Center.

7.4 Miles
8.4 Miles

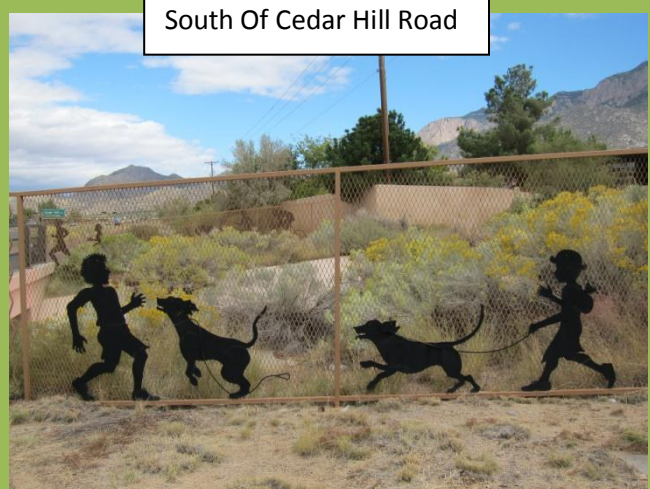
Just south of San Bernardino is the crossing for South Domingo Baca Arroyo, wide and shallow. Next to it just east of Tramway and alongside the Arroyo is a pretty, small County park called Little Cloud Park, with a bike rack and public art.

7.6 Miles
8.2 Miles

Paseo del Norte bike path. From here, one can ride bike friendly routes to a point just west of San Pedro and nearly to I-25. After that, there are significant gaps before one again reaches the path with its junction at the North Diversion Channel. Refer to the City Bike Map.

8.2 Miles
7.6 Miles

Cedar Hill Road. About ½ block east of Tramway lies W. L. Jackson County Park, a small, attractive facility with picnic tables, a little shade, public art and several parking spaces.



On rare occasions in this general area, cyclists may be treated to the sight of hang gliders coming in for a landing at nearby Harrison Schmidt Hang Glider Park. The County park--originally called Big Sky Hang Glider Park and then renamed after New Mexico's former senator and astronaut--was created to alleviate the problem of dwindling landing sites, as development gobbled up open space. In most cases hang gliders landing here have launched from one of two sites near Sandia Crest. Hang glider enthusiasts note that the current distance record is 438 miles, but for those not wishing to make an extended trip, the County Park comes in handy. For more information about hang gliding in Albuquerque, visit www.flysandia.org.

8.7 Miles
7.1 Miles

Junction Tramway Boulevard and Tramway Road. The elevation here is approximately 6120', the high point for the trip. From here cyclists will descend, (or will have climbed) about 1,010' to the river. Pausing before the drop, (or catching one's breath after the strenuous ascent), one is treated to panoramic views including the volcanoes on the sweeping West Mesa, with another volcano, Mt. Taylor, beyond. To the northwest, the southern tip of the Jemez Mountains is just visible and to the southwest, Ladrón Peak, 9,176 feet high and about 60 miles away looms as a solitary presence rising above the desert floor.

To the east, Tramway Road rises steeply, terminating at the Sandia Peak Tramway. "The Tram," which climbs about 3,800 feet over its 2.7 mile course is one of the world's longest and is a major tourist attraction here in Albuquerque.

The west face of the Sandias in this general area was subject to litigation, negotiation and much publicity for nearly 10 years, starting in the mid nineties. In 1994, the Sandia Pueblo filed a civil lawsuit against the federal government, claiming ownership of about 9,900 acres of land on the west face of the mountain all the way up to the crest. The claim was based on a 1748 grant to the Pueblo by the King of Spain, a grant the Pueblo alleged was mistakenly altered in an 1859 United States survey which omitted the acreage in question. With both sides having good reason to fear an adverse court decision, the parties engaged in several years of negotiations, leading to a mutually acceptable agreement which was finalized in 2000, and received formal recognition and support through federal legislation, (Public Law H.J. Res2-2), a few years later. Under the terms of the agreement, the Pueblo was assured access to the area for cultural and religious purposes, and was also guaranteed a voice in any possible future changes in the area's management. The federal government retained ownership of the land, with the understanding it would be managed according to its existing uses. Private property owners were assured of the permanence of their ownership as well as access to their land.

9.4 Miles
6.4 Miles

Forest Road 333. Popular with cyclists wishing to test their climbing ability, the road ascends through the foothills to Juan Tabo Picnic Ground. For hikers, branches of the road lead to the La Luz and the Piedra Lisa trailheads, ending at Sandia Crest and near Placitas, respectively. From this point, gazing to the immediate south and for a considerable distance to the north, one is struck by the wide open spaces which are in stark contrast to the nearby development of Albuquerque and Bernalillo County. This open space reflects current policies of Sandia Pueblo, owner of the land. Looking directly across the road to the south, one sees

very sturdy fencing running east-west, part of Sandia Pueblo's buffalo enclosure. The Pueblo maintains a herd of about 45 animals as part of their cultural tradition and also as a tourist attraction. Long time City residents who traveled on Rio Grande Blvd. will recall the small herd of bison near the big curve (still referred to as the "Buffalo Curve") in the road. Many individuals in the Pueblo's current herd are descendents of those animals, with others brought in from neighboring states to improve genetic diversity. As a word of warning, these are wild animals, capable of inflicting serious injury and should not be approached.

13.2 Miles
2.6 Miles

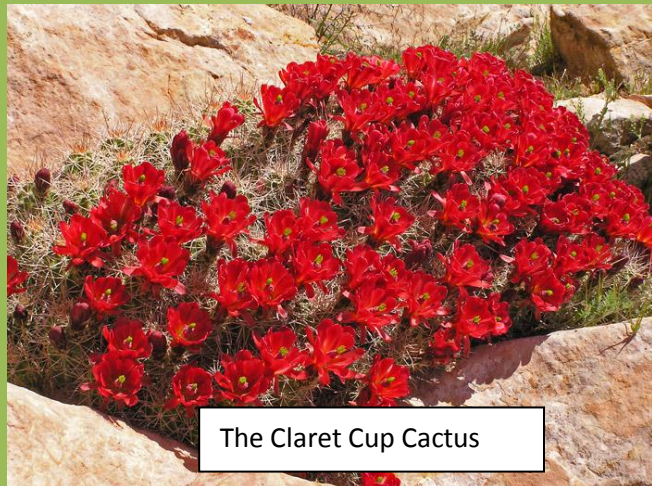
Rainbow Road. Sandia Resort and Casino. The striking building, visible for miles around, incorporates many traditional pueblo architectural and design elements but on a grand scale, both inside and out. Inside the hotel lobby are many pieces of art depicting pueblo culture and history. Just to the south of the casino entrance is a gas station and Indian arts store, also operated by the Pueblo. Indian gaming, since taking root in NM and elsewhere has undoubtedly created economic benefits for many Native Americans and arguably, for the larger state and local economies. Numerous studies have been done to assess overall costs vs. benefits, but big conclusions remain elusive, as the discussion continues.

13.7 Miles
2.1 Miles

Under I-25. The Claret-cup cactus and other native plants have been planted by the casino-resort.

15.2 Miles
0.6 Miles

Traffic circle. From this junction NM 313 heads north to Shady Lakes, a commercial, heavily-stocked fishing ponds with a beautiful collection of water lilies, 3 mi. to Sandia Pueblo itself, and 7 miles to Bernalillo. A very short distance up NM 313 is the Sandia Pueblo Station for the New Mexico Rail Runner, whose sleek



The Claret Cup Cactus

trains run from Santa Fe to Belen, with many stops in between. Those not wishing to ride a complete a loop as part of this tour might consider using the Rail Runner—which carries bicycles—to help close the circle, (<http://nmrailrunner.com/schedule.asp>). The Rail Runner's downtown Albuquerque station is part of the City's Alvarado Transportation Center, an important hub for the City's bicycle-friendly buses, (<http://www.cabq.gov/transit/routes-and-schedules>).

15.5 Miles
0.3 Miles

Bridge over the North Diversion Channel. This is the outlet for the NDC into the Rio Grande. The sediment brought down through the channel as well as water backed up from the river creates a relatively lush environment supporting many plants, birds, and other wildlife. It is not possible to bicycle south on the NDC from here; if you wish to do that, head south on Second Street to Paseo del Norte, where a bike rail will take you up intersect with the NDC.

15.8 Miles
0.0 Miles

Junction of Second and Fourth Streets. This is the end of the trip. A sign on Second Street says “Leaving Sandia Pueblo Reservation”. The elevation here is approximately 5010 feet.

Parking at this end of the route is problematic. One possibility is the Rail Runner station (see mile 15.1). Another unofficial but probably safe place is the parking lot at Bernalillo County’s Raymond G. Sanchez Community Center, 9800 4th NW, about 1.2 miles south of here.

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