

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.

Michael 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 4<sup>th</sup> St. & 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 or the Central bus, #66) run frequently from downtown and beyond 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 northwest 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 loop 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 (the bus stop is at Tramway and Wenonah), 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 not to motor vehicles except on paved roads.

**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 98<sup>th</sup> Street 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 (the Light of Friendship) 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.

Trilobites



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, which runs south to dump floodwater into the Tijeras Arroyo. You'll cross several bridges over the tributaries of the Tramway Channel coming from the slopes to the east. The Channel is one of many examples of how local government agencies, especially the Albuquerque Metropolitan Arroyo Flood Control Authority (AMAFCA), have altered natural drainage patterns to assure the safety of developed areas; like many of them, flood control facilities are shared with bicycle trails. 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.

As you ride along Tramway Bike Trail, you will be tempted by numerous possibilities both to the east and the west of the trail. We'll summarize them in tables for you to choose from (or bypass. To the east:

<b>Miles north of Tramway and Central</b>	<b>Street heading east</b>	<b>Destination(s)</b>
0.6	Encantado NE	Supper Rock, extensive loops of walking/mountain bike trails in foothills
1.0	Copper NE	Copper Trailhead for trails both in City Open Space and in national forest
1.5	Lomas NE	Embudo Hills Park
2.1	Indian School NE	Embudo Trailhead, from which trail goes to top of Sandias
3.1	Menaul NE	Menaul Trailhead, with extensive loops of walking/mountain bike trails in foothills; south-north trail connects with Candelaria and Comanche
3.5 4.1	Candelaria NE, Comanche NE	Connects to north-south trails and Menaul
5.2	Manitoba NE	North-south foothills trail and Embudito Trailhead, with access to Sandia Crest
5.4 5.6 6.1	Arroyo del Oso/Bear Canyon or Spain NE or Academy NE	Mountain bike trail to foothills trail and Michael Emery Trail
6.8	Simms Park Rd NE	Elena Gallegos Picnic Area, Pino Trail to Sandia Crest, foothills trails
8.3	Cedar Hills NE	Entry to foothills trail
8.7	Tramway Rd.	Sandia Peak Tram and foothills trail system
9.7	Forest Road 333	Juan Tabo Picnic Area, Piedra Lisa and La Luz trails

For excellent maps of the Open Space trails in the foothills, go to <https://www.cabq.gov/parksandrecreation/open-space/facilities-map>.

Going west from the Tramway Bike Trail, here are some of the westbound bicycle-friendly routes:

Miles north of Tramway and Central	Route name and type	Destinations
0.1	I-40 Bike Trail*, paved, bikes and pedestrians only	Crosses city all the way to 98 <sup>th</sup> St. at the far west side. Comes close to Indian Pueblo Cultural Center and Old Town
2.2	Constitution NE, bike lane on street	West to Pennsylvania NE, Winrock Center, Uptown
2.7	Embudo Bike Trail*, paved, bikes and pedestrians only	West to join Paseo de las Montañas, see next entry
3.3	Paseo de las Montañas, paved, bikes and pedestrians only	West to Pennsylvania NE, Winrock Center, Uptown, Tom Bolack Urban Forest, San Pedro NE
4.1	Comanche Blvd., bike lane, becomes Griegos Road past I-25	Montgomery Park, Hahn Arroyo Trail*, NDC Trail*, Rio Grande Blvd.
5.2	Manitoba Drive; leads to Arroyo del Oso Trail*, city street, then paved bike trail	Arroyo del Oso Park and Golf Course, San Mateo NE, bicycle bridge over I-25, NDC Trail*
5.6	Spain Road, bike lane	Wyoming Blvd., Arroyo del Oso Park
6.9	Pino Arroyo Trail* (parts called del Rey Trail, Quintessence Trail), paved bike trail, with some connector streets	Quintessence Park, Cherry Hills Library, San Antonio and I-25, NDC Trail*
7.7	Paseo del Norte/South Domingo Baca bike trail*, mostly paved bike trail, some city streets	Paseo del Norte and I-25 (note: dangerous intersection!), Journal Center, Railrunner station, Paseo del Bosque*, Southwest Indian Polytechnic Institute, Coors Blvd., Unser Blvd., Ventana Ranch bike trails

\*Described as entry on cabq.gov bike trails page.

<p><b>Mile 0.8</b></p> <p>Mile 15.0</p>	<p><b>Copper Avenue.</b> 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.</p>
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<p><b>Mile 1.2</b></p> <p>Mile 14.6</p>	<p>A bike trail takes off to the east following a concrete lined channel, ending at Embudo Hills City Park (about .6 miles).</p>
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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.

Begun 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 citywide 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, you may see prairie dogs living in communities along Tramway. Known as Gunnison Prairie Dogs (*Cynomys gunnisoni*), 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” under the federal Endangered Species Act.



Prairie Dog Mother & Pup “Kissing”

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 (PDP,

[www.prairiedogpals.org](http://www.prairiedogpals.org)), which provides supplemental feeding where necessary and transplants individuals when the population--lacking natural predators here--grows too large. Speaking with Prairie Dog Pals President Yvonne Boudreaux and her husband Ed Urbanski, we discovered why we saw no prairie dogs in a recent summer visit along the Tramway Trail: as of mid-2020, PDP had over the last decades transplanted some 20,000 prairie dogs from locations within Albuquerque to safer places; probably the best place to be sure of seeing them now is the Albuquerque Zoo, though there are locations along the east end of the I-40 bike trail and near the Veterans Administration Hospital where they are still seen “in the wild.”

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, lizards and even small birds. 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](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 nearby, signed national forest wilderness.

**2.4 Miles**  
13.4 Miles

**Embudo Arroyo and Overpass.** Heading west along the Embudo Arroyo, 0.4 mi. north of Indian School Rd., the Embudo Recreation Trail eventually joins the Paseo de las Montañas Trail. To reach that trail, go over the wooden overpass and follow the path past small, pleasant Lynnewood Park (picnic tables and shade). Just past the park, the trail crosses a bridge and heads right alongside the arroyo. 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.

**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.



**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 the tables 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.

#### 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.

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 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, above. To the west, a descent on Manitoba Dr. to Juan Tabo Blvd. takes you to the lower side of impressive John B. Robert Dam and the east end of the Arroyo del Oso bike trail.

**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



Osos del Cañon  
(Bears of the  
Arroyo)

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.

Land within this part of Bear Canyon and on both sides of Tramway is City Open Space. The sculpture, “Osos Del Cañon” sits 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.** 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 0.9 miles east of Tramway; from there, turning south on High Desert for .1 mile takes you to the Michael 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, one of the pre-eminent units 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](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.

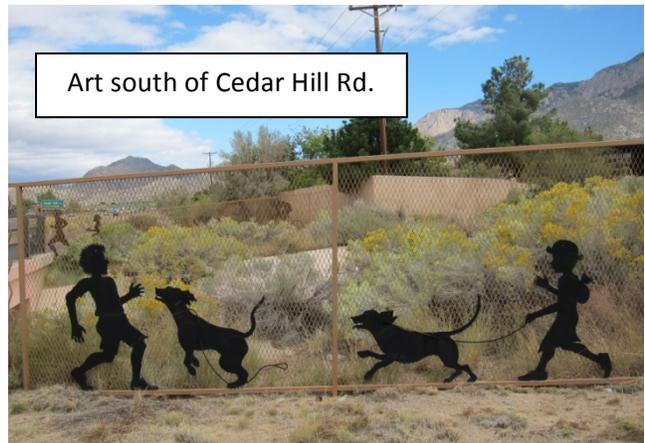
Less than .1 mile north of Simms Park Rd., Pino Arroyo crosses Tramway, emptying into a basin created by Pino Dam. The dam is one of many flood control facilities along Tramway and throughout the city built to temporarily hold water from a flash flood, releasing it slowly and safely. Below the dam, Pino 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, described in the guide 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 to Quintessence Trail and the Pino Canyon Trail, runs all the way to Ellison and Journal Center (described in Northeast Trails).

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 for dogs and people, with a bike rack, playground and exercise equipment, and public art.



7.6 Miles  
8.2 Miles

**Paseo del Norte bike path.** From here, one can ride bike friendly routes, mostly paved bike trails, to I-25, through Journal Center, and on toward the Rio Grande and beyond. Refer to the Paseo del Norte/South Domingo Trail description, part of the Northeast Trails entry in the Bike Trail Guides.

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, child-friendly public art, including large lizards and Pueblo potsherd-styled benches.



On rare occasions in this general area, cyclists may be treated to the sight of hang gliders coming in for a landing at nearby (1.7 miles due west) Harrison Schmitt Big Sky Hang Glider Park. That 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 for hang gliders, as development gobbled up open space. In most cases hang gliders landing there 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 the Sandia Soaring Association's website, [www.flysandia.org](http://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, (108th Congress Public Law 7), in 2003. 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 a sturdy fence 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 Albuquerque 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, replaced now by a full-sized, oxidized-

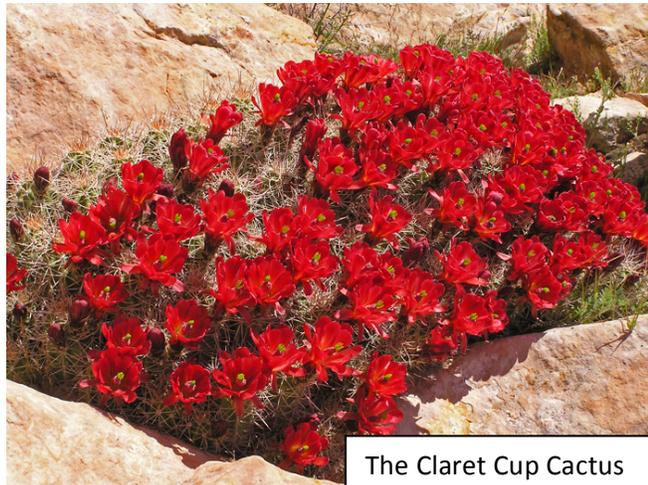
steel sculptural bison. Many individuals in the Pueblo's current herd are descendants of those animals, with others brought in from neighboring states to improve genetic diversity. The herd is moved around Sandia Pueblo land to conserve their pasture, so they may not be present when you are. As a word 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. The complex also contains a golf course and outdoor amphitheater. 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 versus 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 as part of extensive plantings along Tramway Road east of I-25 and the entry roads into the casino-hotel complex.



The Claret Cup Cactus

**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 trains run from Santa Fe to Belen, with many stops in between. Those not wishing to ride a complete 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 lies near 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 Alameda Blvd. or Paseo del Norte, where bike trails will take you up to 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.

You have finished this ride with several tenths of a mile on El Camino Real De Tierra Adentro (The Royal Road of the Internal Land); a sign just south of the roundabout notes that this stretch is part of El Camino Real National Scenic Byway, the route taken by Spanish explorers beginning with controversial Don Juan de Oñate in 1598. The entire route, 1590 miles long, was more than a little bit difficult, stretching from Mexico City through the Pueblo Indian villages now replaced by Albuquerque, through what was to become Santa Fe and on to end at the Pueblo of Ohkay Owingeh, some 29 miles north of what is now downtown Santa Fe.

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