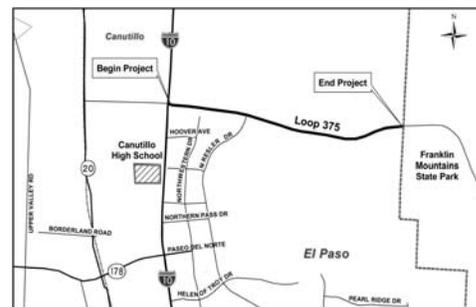


PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD NOTICE  
PM<sub>10</sub> HOT-SPOT ANALYSIS DETERMINATION  
Loop 375 Transmountain Road Project  
I-10 to east of the Franklin Mountains State Park Entrance  
El Paso County, Texas



The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is initiating a seven-day public comment period related to the PM<sub>10</sub> hot-spot determination for the proposed improvements to Loop 375 (Woodrow Bean/Transmountain Road) from Interstate 10 (I-10) to east of the Franklin Mountains State Park entrance in the northwestern portion of the City of El Paso, El Paso County, Texas. The proposed improvements will consist of expanding the current two-lane undivided roadway to a four-lane divided roadway with two-lane frontage roads. The improvements also include grade separated intersections at Northwestern Drive, Resler Drive, Plexxar Drive and Paseo del Norte Drive as well as two direct connectors from Loop 375 west to I-10 east and from I-10 west to Loop 375 east. As part of this project shared hike-and-bike trail will be constructed separate from the roadways, near the Loop 375 right-of-way line, between the intersections of Northwestern Drive and the proposed Paseo del Norte Drive. Access to the LP 375 main lanes and frontage roads will be by means of entrance and exit ramps at various locations between intersections.



The El Paso region is considered to be in non-attainment of certain air quality standards due to levels of certain pollutants that are higher than those established by state and federal laws and regulations. In order to address air quality issues that are related to the implementation of transportation plans, programs and projects in the El Paso metropolitan area, the Consultative Partners for the El Paso MPO area meet as needed. The Consultative Partners represent transportation and air quality professionals from various local, State and Federal agencies, including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), TxDOT, and the El Paso MPO.

The Consultative Partners recently convened to address whether a PM<sub>10</sub> hot-spot analysis was required for the proposed project. Federal laws, such as the 1990 Federal Clean Air Act Amendments and the National Ambient Air Quality Standards, identify PM<sub>10</sub> as a pollutant and establish multiple policies and procedures to monitor and manage emissions. Specifically, 40 CFR 93.116 requires that a PM<sub>10</sub> hot spot analysis needs to be performed by referencing projects identified in 40 CFR 93.123(b)(1). The Consultative Partners took into consideration EPA's "Transportation Conformity Guidance for Quantitative Hot-spot Analyses in PM<sub>2.5</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub> Nonattainment and Maintenance Areas," published by EPA in December 2010. Appendix B of the guidance provides examples of projects that would be considered of local air quality concern and would be covered under 40 CFR 93.123(b)(1)(i) and (ii). One such example is a project "...that serves a significant volume of diesel truck traffic, such as facilities with greater than 125,000 annual average daily traffic (AADT) and 8% or more of such AADT is diesel truck traffic." The Consultative Partners reviewed the data for the Loop 375 (Transmountain Road) proposed project. The ADT and truck percentage information is consistent with the data utilized to prepare the project's Environmental Assessment (EA) that was released in February of this year by FHWA for public consultation. This information was derived from the MPO's Transborder 2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), which was the conforming plan at the time that the EA and other project development activities were initiated. Based on the Transborder MTP and for the design year 2035, ADT was estimated at 71,000 vehicles and truck percentage at 5.3%. Both values are under the thresholds identified in the EPA guidance. The Consultative Partners also reviewed ADT and truck percentage data that was derived from the MPO's Mission 2035 MTP, which are below the thresholds as well. The Consultative Partners concurred that the Loop 375 (Transmountain Road) project is not one that would be covered under 40 CFR 93.123(b)(1)(i) and (ii) and, therefore, does not require a PM<sub>10</sub> hot-spot analysis.

Documents supporting this decision will be made available for public inspection and copying at TxDOT's El Paso District office, located at 13301 Gateway Blvd. West, El Paso, Texas 79928. The public is invited to provide comments on this decision. Written comments may be sent via U.S. Mail to the following address: Texas Department of Transportation-Loop 375 (Transmountain Road) PM<sub>10</sub> Hot-Spot, Attn: Mr. Antonio Uribe, Jr., P.E., District Design, 13301 Gateway Blvd. West, El Paso, Texas 79928, or e-mail: ELP\_Loop375West@txdot.gov. Comments may also be provided in person at the TxDOT - El Paso District office, located at the address indicated above, where comment cards will be available. All comments should be e-mailed, hand delivered or postmarked on or before, Monday, June 20, 2011 to be included as part of the official public record.