

The comments below were originally posted on the **El Paso Times Forum** at <http://www.topix.net/forum/source/el-paso-times/TK2IGTPNHF6PRIJV4#comments> that linked to the El Paso Times May 28, 2010 article titled *“Asarco opinions sought: Planners want El Paso’s best ideas for land use”*.

**1. Juan Garza**

El Paso, TX  
Friday May 28

Take it down, right below the stack is the greatest concentration of arsenic. Arsenic which leaches into the water table and affects our drinking water. When the stack was built the engineers did not provide protection for heavy metal infiltration or wash down prevention. Every time it rains, materials pour down the stack and soak into the ground around it.

Take it down and dig it up.(It's not sitting plumb and is on hollow ground)

**2. Agree**

Boerne, TX  
Friday May 28

Take it down. That smokestack is an eyesore from any angle. Remediate what you can, then make a park out of it or turn the border highway into a high-speed bypass for I-10 or both. If you want to put a recreation destination on the park area, fine, but the earth is so damaged there it's probably best to just let it lie fallow for the next century and let nature take its course. No matter what people say about the black stuff coating the dirt, there are places along I-10 where you can see weeds and stuff starting to poke out of the black stuff along the sides of the hills.

**3. Citizen Ken**

Pittsburgh, PA  
Friday May 28

Tear down the smokestacks, clean up the contamination, build a civic arena in a large open space or park. Turn this eyesore into a valuable asset to benefit all El Pasoans -- and visitors.

Now, about those downtown railyards....

#### **4. Hmmmmm**

El Paso, TX  
Friday May 28

I see the tallest flagpole in the world , presenting the largest American flag in the world.

#### **5. Rosco**

El Paso, TX  
Friday May 28

There is a \$52 billion budget that must be spent tearing down and cleaning up the plant and a line item in that budget is specifically for the tear down of all the smoke stacks. The city planners or other city officials have absolutely no rights to object or interfere with the tear down of that ugly and polluted stack. Public opinion about the stacks has no validity either. The stacks cannot remain. Period.

Those stacks are the most horrid and embarrassing landmarks in our city. They stand in the way of any hope to revitalize our downtown and our city's tarnished image.

Shame on our planning department for even suggesting there can be debate on this issue. They have no authority to allow these stacks to remain. If the stacks or just the tall one did remain at the direction of the city then the city WILL be sued for the polluted stacks continued existence.

#### **6. David**

San Antonio, TX  
Friday May 28

I am a proud El Pasoan who currently is attending college in San Antonio and I personally believe that it is in the city's best interest not to tear down the Asarco smokestacks. The Asarco plant is a part of the history of El Paso and it would be horrible if the city decides to destroy that. I agree that the plant might have not had positive impacts in the community during the time that it was operating but I strongly believe that destroying would negatively impact the city. Here in San Antonio we have the Quarry. The Quarry used to be a mining/railroad station back in the days. Now its a high end shopping center complete with a movie theater, high end shops and fine dining. The Quarry is a hot spot in San Antonio and they have about five beautiful smokestacks outlining the shopping center. El Paso needs to look at other options to revitalize the area. We should not just knock everything down since that would destroy part of our history and destroy something that could be great.

#### **7. STEVE**

El Paso, TX  
Friday May 28

turn it into a park and make the stacks bungee jump platforms

### **8. suggestion**

El Paso, TX  
Friday May 28

just leave the main smoke stack and tear everything else down. it is an el paso icon.  
more so for the families who live near smelertown

### **9. MondoMiner**

El Paso, TX  
Friday May 28

Donate the land to UTEP, build a new arena, and turn the smoke stack into a giant pickaxe!

### **10. blablabla**

El Paso, TX  
Friday May 28

turn it into a cemetery because Juarez is running out of room..

### **11. Citizen**

El Paso, TX  
Friday May 28

Maybe we could build new Government housing on the land and house more illegal immigrants.

### **12. protester**

El Paso, TX  
Friday May 28

The smokestacks need to come down. They're the WRONG kind of land mark for El Paso. Some of the historic buildings, and admittedly ASARCO is a historic location, should be preserved. The rest of it should be demolished and turned into a greenbelt. It should be returned to nature. I suppose dirt to plant grass and trees would have to be put on top of the lava stuff that is all around there.

I'm not saying it should be open to the public, we all know what that would mean ...

actually it should be protected FROM people.

That's the opinion of one intelligent mind!

### **13.M- My Rights**

United States

Friday May 28

My idea would be to make a River Walk like San Antonio with A Old Style Southwestern archetecture and find a way to add in Gateways on both sides of I-10, to help with traffic when theres an accident. We have the Racetrack and casino, amusment park to the north and south we have Downtown which needs help to be revitalized. UTEP's Sun Bowl to the east And Mt. Cristo Rey to the west. It would bring back a huge tourist industry. Think about that?? But most should be paid by Developers and the GateWays have been needed since 1969 and why not leave the Smoke Stack?

### **14.M- My Rights**

United States

Friday May 28

*Rosco wrote:*

*There is a \$52 billion budget that must be spent tearing down and cleaning up the plant and a line item in that budget is specifically for the tear down of all the smoke stacks. The city planners or other city officials have absolutely no rights to object or interfere with the tear down of that ugly and polluted stack. Public opinion about the stacks has no validity either. The stacks cannot remain. Period. Those stacks are the most horrid and embarrassing landmarks in our city. They stand in the way of any hope to revitalize our downtown and our city's tarnished image.*

*Shame on our planning department for even suggesting there can be debate on this issue. They have no authority to allow these stacks to remain. If the stacks or just the tall one did remain at the direction of the city then the city WILL be sued for the polluted stacks continued existance.*

Rosco you are way too embarrassed and The Old Smoke stack will not put out any pollution anymore than Utep or other structures that have been existing there for the last 100 years. ASARCO is our history and I worked there when it produced related income for thousands of El Pasoans. History is a terrible thing to lose, pollution can be cleaned up!

### **15.M- My Rights**

United States

Friday May 28

*Juan Garza wrote:*

*Take it down, right below the stack is the greatest concentration of arsenic. Arsenic which leaches into the water table and affects our drinking water. When the stack was built the engineers did not provide protection for heavy metal infiltration or wash down prevention. Every time it rains, materials pour down the stack and soak into the ground around it.*

*Take it down and dig it up. (It's not sitting plumb and is on hollow ground)*

Juan the biggest stack had been rebuilt in the 60's and there is no way it can leak through more than 80' of concrete at the bottom base. It is plumb and not "Hollow" underneath. The clean up will already require removal of the soil at least 8' below the surface and replaced with clean topsoil, and it will grow plantlife again. The smokestack would be easy to clean compared to removing it.

## **16. Chimichanga**

Friday May 28

Take it down and publicize the event. The city can make some money from people coming to watch it. How much maintenance does a smokestack like that require? Who will pay for that?

## **17. M- My Rights**

United States

Friday May 28

*Citizen Ken wrote:*

*Tear down the smokestacks, clean up the contamination, build a civic arena in a large open space or park. Turn this eyesore into a valuable asset to benefit all El Pasoans -- and visitors.*

*Now, about those downtown railyards....*

Ken I see your a visitor from Pittsburg ? This is El Paso Texas and we like our history. Contamination can be cleaned up without tearing down a true historic landmark.

## **18. mia**

Fort Lauderdale, FL

Friday May 28

i would put a sniper tower and surveillance cameras to monitor the borders. then with the facility use it to burn all the drugs that are caught on the us- mexican border. the stacks would come to use. another idea is to put a walmart

## **19. Soldier First**

"Shit Happens, take it in stride"

Since: Jan 08

1,633

today italy tomorrow who knows

Friday May 28

Build a new UTEP stadium with additional practice fields.

**20. Rosco**

El Paso, TX

Saturday May 29

*M- My Rights wrote:*

*Rosco you are way too embarrassed and The Old Smoke stack will not put out any pollution anymore than Utep or other structures that have been existing there for the last 100 years. ASARCO is our history and I worked there when it produced related income for thousands of El Pasoans. History is a terrible thing to lose, pollution can be cleaned up!*

The smoke stacks are polluted. Cleaning out the inside of the stacks would be virtually impossible. They are coated with heavy metals and very toxic chemicals. They must come down. Not that it matters but the maintenance of the stacks to ensure they remained structurally stable would be a huge ongoing expense for the city. Also anyone who thinks they are anything but a horrible embarrassment to our city is not being objective. Just ask someone who has driven through town on Route 10 if their impression of El Paso was not tarnished by seeing industrial smoke stacks adjacent to the downtown. The stacks do not represent a link to a proud history of El Paso - they represent a horrible and extended period of time when a powerful corporation made lots of money at the expense of the health of the citizens. No smelter should ever have been built in the heart of a city.

**21. Rosco**

El Paso, TX

Saturday May 29

*M- My Rights wrote:*

*Juan the biggest stack had been rebuilt in the 60's and there is no way it can leak through more than 80' of concrete at the bottom base. It is plumb and not "Hollow" underneath The clean up will already require removal of the soil at least 8' below the surface and replaced with clean topsoil, and it will grow plantlife again. The smokestack would be easy to clean compared to removing it.*

I believe you are misinformed about the clean up. No polluted soils or materials will be leaving the site. And the future use for the entire site is already legally restricted to never be a park, school or hospital for example because the "clean up" is so limited within the paltry \$52 million budget that it will be forever dangerously contaminated.

**22. Ralph**

El Paso, TX

Saturday May 29

*David wrote:*

*I am a proud El Pasoan who currently is attending college in San Antonio and I personally believe that it is in the city's best interest not to tear down the Asarco*

*smokestacks. The Asarco plant is a part of the history of El Paso and it would be horrible if the city decides to destroy that. I agree that the plant might have not had possitive impacts in the community during the time that it was opperating but I strongly believe that destroying would negatively impact the city. Here in San Antonio we have the Quarry. The Quarry used to be a mining/railroad station back in the days. Now its a high end shopping center complete with a movie theater, high end shops and fine dinning. The Quarry is a hot spot in San Antonio and they have about five beutiful smokestacks outlining the shopping center. El Paso needs to look at other options to revitalize the area. We should not just knock everything down since that would destroy part of our history and destroy something that could be great.*

David - Asarco is so completely and dangerously contaminated with such toxic metals and chemicals that unless you have several hundred million dollars to donate for a real clean-up it can never becaume a public place. The clean up now going forward is only for \$52 million which will acomplish very little other than removing the buildings, equipment and stacks. The slag piles are not going anywhere, the contaminated soils are not going anywhere and do not be niave about the permanent toxicity of this property. You cannot compare what happened at other places where there were smokestacks (like your quaint shopping center in San Antonio) with what happened during the 100 years of smelting and also incineration of toxic wastes (that were brought here from Colorado in recent times) at Asarco. What we have here is dangerously polluted land that will never ever have any type of a public place built on it. The city staff are being absurd to have any dialogue about a potential development of the property.

### **23. Gnossos**

El Paso, TX

Saturday May 29

Our community needs to learn more facts about how little work is going to be done for the \$52 muillion. The property is not going to be decontaminated. Rick Perry's boys on our discrased Texas TCEQ actually wanted the toxic smoke to resume and the plant to go back into operation. They did us no favors with this final small stipend being established for the removal fo the buildings. There is not going to be a clean-up of this site. Only the buildings are going to be removed and none of the polution is going away. And as long as Texas elects Governors who are in the pockets of coporations that is not going to change. Our textbooks are a national joke (and a tradgedy) and our TCEQ allows corporations to pollute at will (have you been to Houston lately?). Texas is run like a third world country and the corporations get the government they pay for.