

Due to required maintenance on Sunday, May 31, over-the-air viewers in Alamogordo and El Paso may experience a loss of signal from 12 a.m. to 12 p.m. Service for TDS, Dish, DirecTV, U-verse, and Spectrum customers may also be impacted. We apologize for any inconvenience and appreciate your patience as this necessary maintenance is completed.



El Paso Matters

Another property tax hike possible for El Pasoans and more

By **KRWG News and Partners**

Published May 29, 2026 at 4:09 PM MDT

▶ **LISTEN • 13:12**

*Change.org*

KC Counts:

It seems like, Bob, even though I haven't personally spoken to you in a while, a topic that comes up for El Paso over and over again is possible increases in property taxes.

Bob Moore:

Yeah, and so I should preface this conversation by saying the numbers we're about to discuss, the city is really stressing these are just tentative, kind of a first look at the budget. But the city of El Paso this week rolled out a preliminary budget for the coming fiscal year that includes quite a bit of increased spending, much of it for public safety and streets, basic city services. And they were kind of deceptive a little bit, I think, with us when we were initially asking them about, you know, what's the tax impact they're assuming. They said they hadn't conducted that yet and it wouldn't be unveiled. And then at the public meeting, They did unveil it, which is, I'm still not sure

why they were playing games. On that, it doesn't kind of help their credibility. But the basic proposal that they're outlining now would require a a modest tax increase that for an average value home in El Paso would add about \$105 to the property tax bill for the coming year. Obviously, that actual impact will depend on how much each home is valued for. Some will see less, some will see more. But this is in line with what the city has been doing for the last couple of years. And in Texas, you have a thing called the no new revenue tax rate, which in prior years a lot of governments had strived to reach, which is, you know, the rate they need to set to kind of raise the same amount of money on the same properties as last year. The city last started last year, and I think they're looking to continue it this year, said that can't sustain a city government, especially in times of inflation. So they've been looking at, you know, two to 3% overall increases. And so in the this plan they've rolled out. That's kind of where they've landed for now. This is not going to be finalized until August, and the city is trying to use this. an opportunity for people in the community to say, okay, this is what we want out of the budget. We would tweak it up this way, tweak it down that way, and have a conversation, which is all well and good. But at the end of the day, the vast majority of the city budget is going to be spent on public safety and roads. I've kind of jokingly started telling people that the city government is a public safety agency that kind of happens to own a few museums and parks and things like that. And that's not much of a joke because of the, you know, property tax structure in El Paso. Our local governments don't have the room for amenities that a lot of other bigger cities in Texas do. And so one of the, you hear two common complaints in El Paso. I think one, we're paying too much in property taxes and two, we're not getting enough services. And both of those statements can be true even if they're somewhat contradictory. And that's the great challenge that El Pasoans face and certainly that policymakers face when they're looking to set a tax rate down a budget right now.

KC Counts:

All right, head spinning. Let's move on to another thing that maybe some of that tax money could be used for, and that's keeping things clean.

Bob Moore:

So trash is kind of an ongoing problem around town. We still see a lot of dumping and open space and things like that. The story we focused on this week is begins with some good news for Franklin Mountain State Park, which is the largest urban park in the country. State Parks Board approved expanding the park by 1,000 acres, which is really nice, more protected space. But when we kind of dug into it a little bit, our reporter, Priscilla Prosser, was talking to the superintendent of the park and he was pointing out that, yeah, it's really good news, but there's no added resources that come with this. And the park is already really struggling with a lot of dumping. If you drive across Trans Mountain Road, you can look down the hill and see people with their own tires and all sorts of other stuff down there. And the park system doesn't have the resources to clean it up. been piling up. It's unsightly. I think one good outcome of the story so far has been a community reaction that said, okay, can we get some volunteers together and start a cleanup effort? You know, that park is a jewel for El Paso. It's something that is uniquely El Paso to have such a big open space in an urban setting. But the problem is you have irresponsible people out there who for decades have been dumping stuff and that trash has just accumulated. So hopefully some good can come out of this and we can begin to see some volunteer



♥ Donate

KC Counts:

Right. Earlier when we were talking about property taxes, you mentioned some of the amenities in other communities around the state, maybe places where a lot of young El Pasoans are moving to. And while we're out of time for the on-air segment of this conversation. I want to direct people to our website to hear the continuation of the conversation about why El Paso's population is dwindling, why young people are leaving, and where they're going. Bob, thank you so much for the update and have a great week.

Bob Moore:

rap

Thank you so much. Appreciate it.

C Counts:

Well right. Well, let's continue that conversation.

Job Moore:

So this, I think, is the most important issue facing El Paso, bar none. And by the way, it also is a big issue facing Dona Ana County, too, right? We're kind of tied at the hip to each other. And so when you look at where people from El Paso are moving to and from, guess what the number one destination is? Dona Ana County. And there's a lot of reasons for that. and thousands of people move every year, one direction or the other. On net, more people are moving from El Paso to Dona Ana County. But that's in large part because El Paso's population is so much bigger. When you break it down, you know, as a percentage of the population, basically people who live in Dona Ana County are about three times more likely to move to El Paso than the other way

KRWG



Wait Wait...Don't Tell Me

KRWG

Wait Wait...Don't Tell Me



movement between neighbors essentially, a lot of commonalities really pop up in the destinations for El Paso. After Dona Ana County, the biggest destination is the Phoenix metro area. And then after that, you're looking at places like San Antonio, Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston. So all of the big Texas cities are drawing lots and lots of El Pasoans. And on the reverse of that, we're not drawing nearly as many people from those communities here. So one of the questions I've been studying for a long long time is why is that? And you mentioned amenities. People, you know, like to be in a community where they can have some fun, where there's lots of things to do. But at the end of the day, what people are really looking for is economic mobility. Where can I work and live where I can raise a family, where I can build savings, and where I can feel comfortable? And so there's a lot of components to that. The first and most important is always going to be wage. And then the second that's tied in with that is the cost of living. So can I get paid a wage that allows me to afford the

cost of living in that community? And here's the hard truth about El Paso that we don't really address enough. The answer to that question for an increasing number of El Pasoans is they cannot earn a wage that allows them to live even a modest lifestyle in El Paso. And so they're forced to look elsewhere. And that sounds weird to a lot of people because we assume, oh, our cost of living is lower here. It shouldn't be that hard. And while our cost of living is modestly lower than most other communities, our wage structure, especially in the private sector, is way, way below that. And so in this latest analysis, I kind of create a couple of formulas to really compare us to other cities that we're competing with for talent. And it's really clear that just by the numbers that it's easier for people to find economic mobility in places like Phoenix and San Antonio and Dallas and increasingly difficult to do it in places like El Paso and Doña Ana County. Those are things that are going to take a long time to correct. The biggest root cause for me is the one indicator I look at the most is the average private sector wage. And in El Paso and Doña Ana County, that average wage has been two-thirds or less than the state and national averages, compared to Texas at least, and it's getting worse. So, for El Paso County, at the beginning of this century, Our average private sector wage was about two thirds of the state national average, 67%. It's now down to 60%. So that gap is widening. And as long as that continues, it's almost impossible to attract large numbers of people. And it is really impossible to retain the people who want to stay in El Paso because they want to be close to their families. So kind of using this story as an opportunity to kick off what I think will be some broader conversations about this. El Paso Matters is planning a roundtable discussion for probably sometime this summer where we can bring a lot of pretty smart people together and really talk about what it would take for El Paso to sort of reverse some of these trends. And it's not easy. It's an uncomfortable conversation because people want to point fingers and blame at what's happened in the past. And I get all of that, but I think we really need to try to figure out what's our path forward here. So this is, again, one of those issues you and I have talked an awful lot about over the last five or so years. I think it's really time that we need to, as a community, and by that I mean both El Paso and Donana Counties, really have a conversation on where we need to go to make this place the kind of community that we all want.

KC Counts:

Now, I know we're not just talking about minimum wage jobs, of course, but there have been efforts in New Mexico that certainly haven't taken place in Texas to raise that minimum wage bar, and in the city of Las Cruces as well, that continues to change. But no impact on that big number.

Bob Moore:

Not really, because you're, you know, what matters isn't just what's happening in your community. What matters is what's happening in your community compared to what's happening elsewhere. And we continue to lose ground with that. And I understand the focus on minimum wage jobs as a floor. But what really is more important are the kinds of jobs that would allow people to lead that modest but secure lifestyle. Minimum wage shops are never going to do that. That's kind of an entry-level thing. And we're not doing enough to move people up the economic ladder because even if you stay in a minimum wage job and it goes up, you know, a dollar or two an hour every year, you're still behind. And so it's one step, but I don't think the long-term answer to these problems are going to be government mandates on wage structure. The real long-term answer is going to be creating a wage mixture in a community, which means a job mixture that creates more of these higher paying jobs. We need to get above those jobs that pay \$900 a week, which is kind of what we're talking about, which is well above minimum wage, but it's not enough for people to live in our communities now. So we need to be getting those wages up to \$1,200, \$1,400 a week so that we can afford -- people can afford to live and thrive and save a little money and not have to worry that if their car breaks down, they're gonna lose their job because they can't afford to fix the car. That's the reality a lot of people are living in right now. And we really have to start creating economic infrastructures to allow people to avoid that. And that's not gonna come with government mandates. Governments have a role to play in creating economic conditions. But this is really going to require a lot of cooperation with both public and private sectors.

KC Counts:

All right, Bob. Well, we look forward to continuing the conversation. Thanks so much for your work on this.

Bob Moore:

Thanks for talking with me about it. I appreciate it.

El Paso Matters

KRWG News and Partners

[See stories by KRWG News and Partners](#)

Related Content

El Paso Matters

June 22, 2020

KC Counts speaks with editors from El Paso Matters. El Paso Matters is a member-supported nonpartisan media organization that uses journalism to expand civic capacity in our region. They inform and engage with people in El Paso, Ciudad Juarez and neighboring communities to create solutions-driven conversations about complex issues shaping our region.

Load More

KRWG.ORG - The Region's Homepage Comment Policy

Off-topic or offensive posts are subject to removal; no profanity or falsehoods; provide links to factual claims.

Please read our Comment Policy before commenting.

Got it

What do you think?

1 Response



0 Comments

1 Login ▼



Start the discussion...

LOG IN WITH

OR SIGN UP WITH DISQUS ?

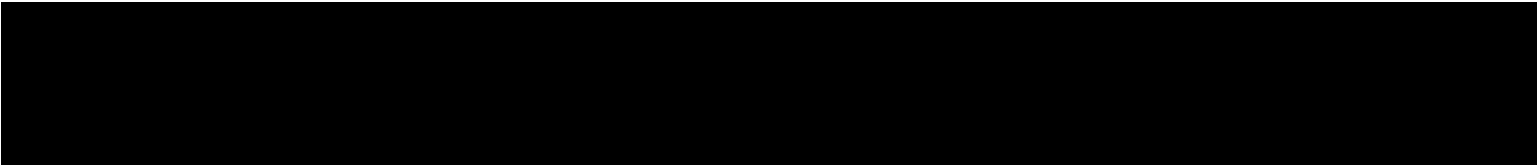


Name

• Share

Best Newest Oldest

Be the first to comment.





© 2026 KRWG

[Stream PBS & KRWG](#)

[Community Events](#)

[TV Schedule](#)

[Radio Schedule](#)

[Where To Watch & Listen](#)

[Contact Us & KRWG Information](#)

[Local News](#)

[Regional News](#)

[National/World](#)

[Local Viewpoints](#)

[Donate Now](#)

[Weather](#)

[COMPLIANCE](#)

[Meetings Information](#)

[FCC Public Files](#)

[EEO Reports](#)

[Financial Information](#)

[Content Reports](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

