

**Proposition 1A: Unfair, Incomplete, Ineffective  
Vote No RTA, Till Growth Pays Its Way**

**THE TRUTH ABOUT RTA  
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Proposition 1A, raising local sales tax and forming the Pikes Peak Rural Transportation Authority, is a bad idea for area citizens. We instinctively want to pitch in to improve traffic congestion, but passing the RTA will actually sentence us to ever-worsening traffic problems. It's a complex issue, so let me offer some pertinent facts as well as some analysis:

**TAX INFO:** RTA will double local sales tax in unincorporated El Paso County and increase local sales tax in Colorado Springs by 40%. It will cost us as much as \$1 billion over the next ten years. RTA supporters say the citizens haven't done their part to pay for maintenance and expansion of our roadways since 1991. The fact is total per capita tax revenue in Colorado Springs increased 13% from 1991 to 2000 (UCCS Center for Colorado Policy Studies). We're not proposing citizens shouldn't pitch in for part of the cost of maintaining & improving our roadways, just not all of it.

**MORE BUREAUCRACY:** The intergovernmental agreement for RTA specifically states it is a separate political entity. It is another layer of government, and 1A allows 1%, which within a few years could be as much as \$1 million annually, to be wasted on management of this bureaucracy. We get the disadvantages of potential conflict, necessary compromise, and added expense of this new entity serving four different governments, but none of the advantages that would come with true countywide collaboration (several important cities are not participating because they didn't see this as such a bright idea). How can we expect a true regional transit solution without Monument and Fountain on board, or even Calhan and Woodland Park?

As other opponents of RTA have wisely pointed out, the Pikes Peak Rural Transportation Authority 1A would create is almost impossible to dismantle. A unanimous vote of the board is required. Also, many decisions require not just a majority vote of the RTA board, but also require that each board member have gotten a majority vote of his/her respective council or commissioners in support of his/her position on the RTA matter. And it is true that the citizens/voters do not get to select their representatives on the RTA board. Each council and the Board of County Commissioners get to select which of their members serve on the RTA.

**CAUSES OF CONGESTION:** Nearly half a million people moved into the county during the 1990's, leaving us with 150,000 more population. That is called "growth." If it were true that "growth pays its way," then our roadway network capacity would have grown to keep up. Instead, lane/miles of roadway increased at 1/5 the rate of the population. Many of the RTA projects (hundreds of millions of dollars) are to increase capacity on roads that were not overcrowded in 1991. Growth created the need for these projects; growth created the congestion. New developments did not provide the revenue needed for our transportation network to keep up. County and city officials failed to assess developments for the full cost of off-site transportation impacts. Officials also approved development plans they knew were projected to result in traffic jams. This information is in the government records, and it has happened as recently as this past July (Please see **Woodmen Heights Annexation Boondoggle** at [http://savethesprings.org/issues/docs/woodmn\\_annex\\_bdoggle.pdf](http://savethesprings.org/issues/docs/woodmn_annex_bdoggle.pdf))

**DECEPTION:** I'm skeptical whenever proponents of an issue lie in order to persuade voters. We've been told it's not an extra layer of bureaucracy. We now know otherwise. We've been told the cities and county cannot decrease their current funding levels for transit and for

roadway improvements should 1A pass. The fact is that requirement is not legal, and therefore it is not in the plan. We've been told RTA is not needed to pay for growth; it's needed because we each drive more. Let's be serious: 150,000 more people on our roads today than in 1991. New developments are not assessed for their impact on our area-wide road capacity. Statistically, the average resident or household probably does drive more miles today, but that is only because the city is more spread out (growth) so we have more residents living farther from work, entertainment centers, the mountains, etc. That is why "vehicle/miles traveled" is higher. Why the deception?

**RTA TAXES US TO PAY FOR GROWTH:** The growth industry was well-represented on the "citizen task force" that came up with RTA, a cleverly-disguised corporate welfare tax. Members of this industry are the biggest supporters of the pro-RTA campaign -- bankrolling over \$150,000 worth of billboards, yard signs, flyers and commercials. See "Pro-RTA Campaign Bankrolled by Growth Industry." [DAVID: LINK TO NEW DOC. OF THIS TITLE] They support RTA because it shifts costs that should be theirs onto the public at large. Their activities over the past 15 years have created the congestion, and they think we're easy -- uninformed enough we'll gladly pay more than our share -- 100% -- of the cost of fixing it, as well as the ongoing cost of building off-site infrastructure to serve future growth.

**REALLY FIXING CONGESTION:** Pouring more asphalt is a proven failure in reducing congestion. Of the 85 cities in the Texas Transportation Institute study, only 5 have been able to add roadway at a rate equal to or greater than traffic growth. And even those 5 were unable to stop congestion delays from getting worse. The RTA asphalt solution fails to address the root causes of our congestion. Even if we pass the RTA tax, if we continue current development policies the problem will get worse, not better. What's missing? A change in the grow-at-any-cost policies that created the traffic mess. We need requirements that new developments pay for off-site impacts, that development not outstrip the transportation network's capacity, and that new development be transit and pedestrian-friendly and contain work centers.

**PASSING RTA GUARANTEES WE'LL CONTINUE THE FAILED POLICIES:** Citizens have a right to decide whether we want to continue giving the development industry financial-aid. And we should have a say in whether local governments continue the growth-pandering policies that created the traffic mess. Sadly, nearly every decision about how we grow and how we fund that growth is made in council chambers and commissioners court, not by the citizens. And our elected representatives repeatedly ignore the will of the majority to serve the special interests. The RTA is a unique opportunity for us to decide how growth impacts are funded. It's a referendum on area growth management and funding. If we pass the RTA tax, with its tacit approval of archaic growth policies, the more we grow, the slower we will go. If we pass RTA, there will be no pressure on local officials to change the behavior that created the mess, no pressure on the growth industry to come to the table and pay their fair share.

**DEFEATING RTA IS OUR ONLY HOPE FOR ADOPTION OF SMARTER POLICIES:** We can do better. We're at a critical juncture and we cannot sign up for another decade of business-as-usual. Elected officials have failed us in this critical area and we must force them to join the 21st century. The growth industry is betting we're miserable enough in traffic we'll mindlessly pass any backward solution they put in front of us. I'm not suggesting we let our infrastructure crumble indefinitely. Let's hold the line on this unwise solution this year, and come back next year with an approach that shares costs more equitably, one much more effective and far-reaching. Let's not let our impatience with traffic congestion dupe us into enduring forever an ill-conceived solution that won't do the job.