

RTA: NOT TODAY

“Would you bail water out of a sinking boat without first plugging the leaks?”

1. RTA IS A GROWTH TAX

SAMPLING OF RTA PROJECTS NECESSITATED BY GROWTH:

- Baptist Road in Gleneagle - perfectly adequate in 1995
- Meridian Road widening and extension – on city outskirts
- Widen/Extend Marksheffel Road – on outskirts, not needed ten years ago
- Austin Bluffs corridor, intersection and bridge improvements – all capacity-driven
- Woodmen widening – due to growth to the East
- Hodgen, Struthers – fine a decade ago before rampant development in Black Forest

New development didn't pay; now we have to!

2. GROWING LIST OF GROWTH SUBSIDIES

- RTA - \$100 million/year*
- Utility Extension - \$130 million/year*
- Federal Highway funding - ?
- Schools - ?
- Fire Stations - ?
- Police Stations - ?
- Open Space Protection - ?
- Libraries - ?

*As an investment in job creation, these two alone cost us \$675,000 for each new job for a current resident. Do you consider that a good investment?

3. TAX FACTS

- Real per capita Colorado Springs tax revenue increased 13% from 1991 to 2000*
- El Paso County added 1% sales tax in 1986

*9/2003 study by UCCS Center for Colorado Policy Studies

4. CAUSES OF OUR TRAFFIC PROBLEM

- No comprehensive planning or policies for growth
- Cities/county increase backlogs with each new annexation or development approval
- City fiscal impact analyses ignore costs to improve road network
- Few/inadequate off-site transportation impact assessments
- Routine approval of development plans resulting in F level of service on roadways
- Lack of “Pay-As-You-Grow” approach requires diversion of rehab. and maint. resources
- Competition instead of collaboration between county & city
- Lack of adequate impact fees & excise tax to cover true impacts of growth

5. THROWING \$ AT PROBLEM W/O COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

What can we expect?

Dallas/Fort Worth

- 8 to 9% sales tax rates
- 2 hours daily commute common
- No \$ for freeway capacity expansion – will have to be tollways

Atlanta

- Raised sales tax 3 cents from 1985 to 1995 (75%)
- Raised property tax 22 %
- Traffic quagmire capital of the nation

Also see Austin, San Jose, etc.

“In the past I've voted for taxes to improve infrastructure, but I now realize that increasing taxes before the structural reforms noted above, even for worthy projects, will simply encourage continuing policies that are creating ever-increasing infrastructure backlogs.”

Bob Powell, Ph.D., MBA
Continuous Improvement Associates
in “The Facts of Life About Growth”

FROM: “A Dynamic Analysis of Growth, Transportation & Home Prices”

Bob Powell, Ph.D., MBA, Continuous Improvement Associates

Road building to relieve traffic congestion. A natural response to traffic congestion is to call for new roads and wider roads as a remedy. Linear thinking leads from the action, build roads, to the conclusion, less congestion. However, common experience, as well as economic and system dynamics studies, tell us that road building does *not* relieve congestion. We can't build roads fast enough to keep up with the new demands caused by increased traffic. That's because any temporary reduction in congestion by reducing travel time leads to *more* traffic and *more* congestion. This is called “in-duced” traffic. A 1995 econometric study of U.S. metropolitan areas showed that a 10% increase in capacity led to a 9% increase in traffic in 5 years. The time lags for many of the induced effects take even longer and eat up the remaining 1%.* Some roads even experience worse congestion when capacity is added by attracting more traffic than the capacity added. What road building actually controls is the number of cars on the road and the size of the metropolitan area. Road building is a driver of sprawl.

* Hansen, M., “Do new highways generate traffic?” *Access* 7, Fall 1995, 16-22.

“Let's not throw money at this problem without comprehensive growth planning. Contact us for a copy of our “Sensible Growth Planning Agenda.”

SaveTheSprings

A sustainable approach to growth, quality of life,
economic development and natural resources

