

TRANSPORTATION EDUCATION

JUNE 2004

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**CITY AND COUNTY AGREE ON PRIORITIES
(SEE PAGE 3 FOR LIST OF PROJECTS).**

At a joint meeting between the Colorado Springs City Council and El Paso County Commissioners on April 30, the two voting bodies expressed their support of sending a ballot initiative to the voters in November.

The proposed ballot initiative would form an RTA, or Rural Transportation Authority, that would allow El Paso County and the City of Colorado Springs to jointly collect revenue for infrastructure maintenance and projects.

It is currently proposed that the RTA be funded by a 1-cent sales tax, broken down as follows:

- 55% roadway capital improvements, as defined by the joint priority list. This portion of the tax would end after 10 years.
- 35% maintenance
- 10% transit service improvements

State law requires that an RTA be approved by voters.

**SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:**

It costs the average commuter \$1.25 for every mile spent in traffic jams. (*Public Transit Economic Benefits Study*)

Together, the City and County maintain over 3,500 miles of centerline roadway.

(www.springsgov.com and www.elpasoco.com)

**THE SURVEY SAYS...CITIZENS WANT ACTION
ON TRANSPORTATION PROBLEMS**

According to Pikes Peak United Way's 2004 Community Survey, transportation is the number one issue citizens want government to address.

- ◆ **36% of those surveyed listed traffic or streets/roads as the NUMBER ONE issue that needs to be addressed in Colorado Springs.**
- ◆ **63% of those citizens who listed transportation issues as their number-one concern agreed that it is critical to address those needs now.**

The survey also gauged community receptiveness to the proposed RTA sales tax.

- ◆ **65% of citizens surveyed said they would support a tax increase dedicated to building and maintaining roads and highways.**

The Pikes Peak Transportation Coalition, a group of more than 30 community organizations dedicated to improving transportation in the Pikes Peak region, also sponsored a survey that confirmed Pikes Peak United Way's findings. Indeed, transportation and traffic issues are of paramount concern

to local voters, and they are not only anxious for solutions but willing to consider methods of funding those solutions.

The Pikes Peak Transportation Coalition survey targeted active voters in the El Paso County area. The results from these potential voters were even more positive.

- ◆ **62% saying yes to the formation of an RTA through a 1-cent sales tax.**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **What is an RTA?** An RTA is a Rural Transportation Authority that could levy a one percent sales tax to fund transportation improvements in the City of Colorado Springs and El Paso County. The proposed formation of the RTA and its ability to collect revenue must be approved by the voters.
2. **Why don't we use Transit grant funds for this?** The City already uses Federal Transit grant funds to the fullest extent allowable. Federal Transit funds cannot be used for operation expenses; they can only be used for capital expenses such as the purchase of buses.
3. **Who will decide what gets done?** The City's Citizens' Transportation Advisory Board and the County's Highway Advisory Commission have already developed a list of joint projects for the proposed 55% capital improvements portion of the proposed sales tax. The remaining funding would be used for maintenance and transit activities already identified by the City and County.
4. **Who would manage the funds?** The management of funds would be contracted, eliminating the need for government staff. One option is to contract with Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments, or PPACG.
5. **How long would this proposed one cent tax last?** It is currently proposed that the 55% capital improvements portion of the tax end after 10 years. The remaining 35% for maintenance and 10% for transit improvements would continue in perpetuity, as these needs will remain beyond 10 years.
6. **Why don't we use federal and state funds for these major problems?** In most cases, federal and state funds are restricted to projects on federal and state highways, such as Interstate-25 and State Highway 83.



Over \$45 million is needed just to catch up with needed resurfacing. Currently, there is only enough money to resurface about 1/2 of the roads that need this maintenance.

◆ **473 potholes were filled by the City's Public Works department during their annual 2-week Operation Pothole campaign.**

CITY/ COUNTY AGREE ON PRIORITIES (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

- **"We need to tell the voters, 'These are the projects we plan to do with the money you allow us to steward'... I think this is a good model and if we all get behind it, it will help make our community much better for the next 40 years."**
Mayor Lionel Rivera
- **"This is truly a regional project that we all are going to benefit by..."**
Vice Mayor Richard Skorman
- **"The public needs to see very specific projects and know that there's very specific accountability on those projects...All in all, I'm thrilled with the project list. It looks very consistent with our regional priorities."**
Council Member Margaret Radford
- **"This is an indication of how well our citizen's community works in Colorado Springs The development of this concept, the structuring of these projects, the structuring of the RTA, has been done by our citizens, not by elected officials... They have recognized the needs of our community..."**
Council Member Larry Small

COLORADO SPRINGS RANKS #1 IN HOURS OF DELAY

**Urban Mobility Report
Analysis For Colorado Springs
(1 – 14 With “1” Being the Worst)**

Factor	Rank
Annual Hours of Delay	1
Annual Cost of Congestion	1
% of Freeway Congestion Per Person	1
Change in Travel Time ‘96-’01	1
Roadway Congestion Index	1



Did you Know?
Developers build nearly all of the new streets in Colorado Springs but maintenance is the responsibility of the City.

CITY AND COUNTY APPROVE JOINT PRIORITY LIST

After months of meetings, the City’s Citizens’ Transportation Advisory Board (CTAB) and the County’s Highway Advisory Commission (HAC) agreed upon a joint list of roadway and bridge projects. These projects were prioritized into 3 groups, with Group A being of the highest priority. If an RTA is approved by voters, these projects would make up the proposed 55% capital improvements component.

GROUP A (Top 15 projects)	
Project Name	Location
Baptist Road Widening	Mitchell Avenue to I-25
Austin Bluffs Interchange	at Union Boulevard
Woodmen Road Widening & Interchange	I-25 to Powers Blvd
Cimarron Street Bridge Replacement	at Conejos Street
South Metro Accessibility, Phase I	SH 115 to Powers Blvd
Baptist RR X-ing Overpass	At BNSF/UP / Monument Creek
Austin Bluffs Corridor Improvements	Nevada Ave to Academy Blvd
Meridian Road Extension	Falcon Hwy to US 24 Hwy
Baptist-Hodgen Connection	SH 83 Hwy to Rollercoaster Road
County Line Road Upgrade	I-25 to Furrow Road
Meridian Road Widening	Woodmen Road to Rex Road
Hodgen Road Upgrade to Arterial	Rollercoaster Rd to Eastonville Road
Austin Bluffs/Nevada Improvements	Austin Bluffs/Nevada
I-25 Interchange Companion Projects	Bijou/I-25; Nevada/Rockrimmon/I-25

Communities with viable transit systems save households about \$3,000 per year in transportation costs. (Public Transit Economic Benefits Study)

TRANSPORTATION EDUCATION

Visit www.SpringsGov.com and click on Transportation Education

CITIZEN DRIVEN GROUPS

The Pikes Peak Transportation Coalition emerged in January '04 after a Chamber of Commerce co-sponsored Transportation Summit that identified the mounting problems facing the region around transportation. The coalition is made up of a broad cross-section of the community, organizational, business and civic group representatives as well as concerned individuals. The Coalition meets twice a month, the first and third Wednesday mornings, 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. at the United Way offices, 518 N. Nevada Ave. Everyone is invited to attend.



Community Transportation Summit Panel, January 2004

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Other citizen driven organizations addressing infrastructure are:

CTAB

CTAB was appointed by the Colorado Springs City Council in 2002 to evaluate and recommend solutions to the transportation problems.

1st Tuesday of each month
Call 385-5542
Alamo Corporate Center
3 p.m.

HAC

The Highway Advisory Commission was created to advise the El Paso County Commissioners in transportation policy and philosophy.

3rd Tuesday of each month
Call 520-6460

Pikes Peak Chapter of the Colorado Mobility Coalition

A team of individuals, organizations and businesses working to increase regional multi-modal transportation.

2nd and 4th Thursdays
Pikes Peak Room

City Hall
107 N. Nevada
Noon to 1p.m.