



Ballot Proposition #1 Voter Information Pamphlet

Utah County, Utah

Election Date: November 3, 2015

UTAH COUNTY, UTAH SPECIAL ELECTION
COUNTY PROPOSITION #1
AN OPINION QUESTION TO PROVIDE FUNDING FOR TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS SUCH AS ROADS, SIDEWALKS, TRAILS, MAINTENANCE, BUS AND RAIL SERVICE, AND SAFETY FEATURES
Shall Utah County, Utah, be authorized to impose a quarter-of-one-percent (0.25% or the equivalent of 1 cent for every \$4 spent) sales and use tax for the specific purpose of transportation improvements such as roads, trails, sidewalks, maintenance, bus and rail service, and traffic and pedestrian safety features, with the revenues divided among the county, cities and towns, and the public transit provider within the County?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For the Tax• Against The Tax

ELECTION INFORMATION

Election Day: November 3, 2015

To **register to vote**, find out where you vote and to request an absentee ballot go to:
www.vote.utah.gov

Vote by Mail: Alpine, Lehi, Cedar Hills, Orem and Vineyard are all voting my mail. If you live in another city or are a resident in the unincorporated part of the County you may still [request an absentee ballot](#).

All absentee and vote by mail ballots must be postmarked by November 2, 2015.

Further information can be found on the [Utah County Elections](#) web site

Arguments for or against a ballot proposition are the opinions of the authors.

Argument FOR Proposition #1

We all want our children and grandchildren to enjoy a wonderful quality life now and in the future. Utah's cities and counties face a growing population, deteriorating roads, and local budgets that fail to keep up with mounting maintenance costs. The need is visible on our streets and sidewalks. Our transportation choices are limited by gaps in transit service and incomplete bike paths and trails. The result: longer commutes, more wear and tear on our cars, hampered economic prosperity, and a diminished quality of life.

With new funding through Proposition 1 (a sales tax for local transportation), local elected leaders can prepare for population growth, take better care of our roadways and sidewalks, and promote economic prosperity in our community.

Prop 1 will provide a substantial piece of the local transportation puzzle. For just one cent of every four dollars spent—excluding food purchases—we can maintain our local roads, keep our economy moving, improve our air quality, and reduce our traffic so that we spend more time with our families and less time in our cars.

The cost of doing nothing is far higher for the average Utah family than the local option sales tax. Prop 1 would cost the average person \$20-24 a year, but our current road disrepair costs the average driver over \$600 more a year in added fuel use, tire wear, and extra car maintenance. In addition, for every dollar we invest now in infrastructure, we save \$6 in repair and \$10 in reconstruction work. We know that roads cost more taxpayer dollars when they are not maintained. Things like slurry seals, chip seals and overlays, that help keep roads in good shape cost money, but are far less expensive than going without maintenance and having to rebuild a road years later. Choosing to maintain our roads today is the financially responsible and fiscally conservative approach for families.

Prop 1 is dedicated exclusively to *local* transportation. Prop 1 is not for the construction of major highways and rail lines, nor will it fund the overhead of large agencies. Prop 1 will fund things that are close to home – the transportation options you use and need the most. It will fill a nasty pothole on your local street, finish a sidewalk between your house and your children's school, or add to bus service, trails, and bike paths so you have more transportation choices.

More than 110 cities and towns across Utah passed resolutions supporting Prop 1. The business community solidly supports the measure because business leaders know that investing in transportation today will save taxpayer dollars tomorrow. This is a historic moment to join our local government officials and the business community in support of Prop 1.

Voting YES will save Utah families money, protect the local businesses, improve our air quality, and preserve our quality of life.

Signed,

Provo Mayor John Curtis
Orem Mayor Richard Brunst
Springville Mayor Wilford Clyde
Utah County Commissioner Larry A. Ellertson
Lane Beattie, President and CEO Salt Lake Chamber

Arguments AGAINST Proposition #1

Dear Utah County Voters,

Proposition 1 is not about local transportation needs—it's about increasing taxpayer subsidization of the Utah Transit Authority (UTA).

A primary effect of the Proposition 1 tax increase is to bail out UTA, whose operating and debt service costs are projected to exceed revenues for the next several years. Although proponents of Proposition 1 tout it as a solution to local road needs, what they don't like to mention is that 40% of the revenues from this tax will go directly to UTA, which has a history of mismanaging public funds.

In an August 2014 audit report, the Legislative Auditor General highlighted numerous instances of UTA's egregious misuse of tax dollars. For example, in violation of its own policies and practices, UTA gave what the auditors called a "very unusual" \$10,000,000 prepayment to a developer for a parking structure that he never built, thus "put[ting] taxpayer dollars at unnecessary risk." Notwithstanding objections from its own employees, UTA also awarded that same developer another multimillion-dollar contract over two other bidders despite the developer's failure to provide required financial information.

The audit report also blasts UTA's lack of transparency. At the beginning of the report, the auditors noted, "We are not certain UTA provided us complete and accurate information during the course of our fieldwork" due to UTA's "changing explanations and lack of documentation." The absence of forthright information from UTA is a constant theme throughout the Auditor General's report. For example, even after receiving a warning, UTA continued to violate state law by underreporting the compensation information of its management personnel. The audit report further notes that UTA executives receive much higher compensation and bonuses than their counterparts at similar government agencies.

DON'T BE FOOLED by UTA's rhetoric that Proposition 1 "is only a penny tax." Nothing could be further from the truth. If this proposal passes, it will be the third Utah County sales tax increase in less than a decade. Utah County taxpayers already subsidize UTA to the tune of over \$36,000,000 annually (not including BRT), and Proposition 1 will give UTA yet another \$7,000,000 annually from Utah County taxpayers.

UTAH COUNTY RESIDENTS ARE TAXED ENOUGH. In recent years we've seen property tax increases, gas taxes increases, vehicle registration fee increases, and other sales tax increases from the county and many of our cities. And these tax increases don't add up to pennies—they add up to thousands of dollars per household. That's why the overwhelming majority of Utah County's legislators voted against this proposed tax increase.

PROPOSITION 1 DOES NOT ADDRESS OUR LOCAL UTAH COUNTY TRANSPORTATION NEEDS. By voting "no," we can send this proposition back to the Legislature and ask them to allow Utah County to address our actual local needs without further subsidizing UTA on the backs of our hard-working taxpayers.

PLEASE JOIN US IN VOTING "NO" ON PROPOSITION 1.

Sincerely,

Commissioner Bill Lee
Mayor Brian Wall (Mapleton)
Representative Brian Greene (Pleasant Grove)

Senator Margaret Dayton (Orem)
Senator Mark Madsen (Saratoga Springs)

Say No to Proposition 1

If approved, the combined state and local sales tax in Utah County will increase from 6.75% to 7.0% countywide - a change that will increase taxes in Utah County by \$17 million, or \$30 per person and \$120 for an average family of four every year. This could mean the difference between a week's worth of groceries for many families.

Utah families have had enough new taxes this year as it is. The local option sales tax would be the third tax increase Utah residents have faced this year. In March, the legislature voted to approve a 5-cent-per-gallon increase in the gas tax, which now means that Utah drivers will pay over 48-cents-per-gallon just in taxes every time they fill up the tank. The state legislature also raised homeowner's property taxes in the valley an average of \$50 per home.

Considered separately, these tax increases may not sound like much, but for lower-income and middle-class families, every dollar counts and higher local sales taxes would only make their financial struggles worse.

Like the gas tax increase, this sales tax will fall hardest on those who have little or nothing left at the end of the month. According to the Utah Taxpayers Association, the average Utahn already pays \$720 in sales taxes every year, and \$3,304 in combined state and local taxes. The local option tax would add a few cents to most purchases, which quickly adds up.

If the sales tax increase is passed, Utahns would pay a quarter of a cent more for all purchases. In Utah County, this increased sales tax would scrape \$17 million out of our checkbooks, according to the state's own analysis.

Supporters say that the proposed tax increase is, in part, for road and infrastructure improvement. But 40% of the tax increase - over \$6.8 million dollars worth - will actually be diverted to help fund the Utah Transit Authority. The Utah Transit Authority already receives \$33.8 million in Utah County alone.

UTA executives receive six figure salaries and tens of thousands of dollars in bonuses and perks. The agency's CEO travelled out of state on agency-funded trips 42 times in 28 months, travelling internationally nearly as often as the President of the United States.

It's about stewardship. If the UTA can afford to pay such high salaries and award such benefits, then they probably can also afford to better shepherd the resources taxpayers have given them.

The Utah Transit Authority just doesn't need another \$40 million in extra revenue. Instead, the agency should be looking toward reducing executive pay, cutting down on travel costs, and reducing inefficiencies wherever they find them.

Government doesn't need more money—it needs to better prioritize where it spends the taxes we already pay. Please vote NO on Proposition 1.

Heather Williamson- resident Saratoga Springs, Utah

Rebuttal to arguments AGAINST Proposition #1

Utah County is a trusted steward of public funds. Investment in our community is prioritized so that funds are used wisely and efficiently. The county's fiscally conservative approach has paid significant dividends to residents. Our economy is thriving and employment is strong.

But the population of Utah County – and the State of Utah – is projected to double in the next few decades. The current mechanisms for meeting growing transportation needs are insufficient. We can't just let traffic keep building and air pollution get worse. We need to invest in transportation to keep people moving, and provide options for using trains, buses and bikes to help our air quality.

At the same time, we have to prudently take care of our current roads rather than let them fall into disrepair. When that happens, the cost to taxpayers of deferred maintenance is much higher: \$1 invested to preserve our roads saves residents \$10-\$25 in costly repair or replacement later.

If Proposition 1 is approved, the funds going to transit will be the equivalent of one penny for every \$10 someone spends. UTA has committed to utilize the new funds to improve and enhance transit service, with complete accountability and clear reporting of how funds are spent. There will be more bus service, more places, more often. This is a significant benefit to Utah's families who rely on affordable transportation choices to get to work or to school, and it will help to clean our air.

Rebuttals to arguments FOR Proposition #1

Rebuttal #1 of 2

This year, Tax Freedom Day—the day taxpayers stop working for the government and start working for themselves—did not occur in Utah until April 20th. That means the average Utahn spent the first 109 days of the year working to pay for nothing but taxes. For Utah County taxpayers, Proposition 1 will push Tax Freedom Day back even further.

It would be easier to accept current taxing levels if the entities receiving the taxes were good stewards over that money. Unfortunately, that's not the case with UTA. It's no secret that many UTA buses throughout Utah County carry no riders throughout much of the day. Only government would take a failing product and say, "Let's put more money into this." Responsible businesses would never do that.

In their statement of support, proponents paint an inaccurate picture of how the Proposition 1 tax revenues will be spent. Make no mistake: Proposition 1 will raise your taxes on behalf of UTA. Only a small fraction of Utah County residents ride UTA each day, yet Utah County taxpayers subsidize UTA to the tune of \$36,000,000 annually—which is currently 66% of Utah County's total sales tax revenue. Proposition 1 will increase that by another \$7,000,000 annually.

Utah County and its municipalities have serious transportation needs, namely road repair and replacement. Unfortunately, Proposition 1 is nothing more than a small band-aide for our current (and serious) road needs. However, it is a huge boost to UTA's bottom line.

VOTE "NO" ON PROPOSITION 1.

Rebuttal #2 of 2

Proposition 1 proponents argue that raising our sales taxes would improve our daily lives. The best way for our lives to be improved is to keep the majority of the proceeds of our own labors, not to be taxed.

According to the Utah Taxpayers Association, we currently pay on average \$3304 a year in taxes in exchange for the services that we are told this tax increase will pay for; roads, local budgets and maintenance. Before we should even consider a tax increase, we must verify that our government has done a thorough audit and has cut back on all waste and unaccountable spending. Waste is intrinsic in any budget of this size and must be constantly checked and corrected.

The proponents of Proposition 1 make mention that the money will go towards bus service but fail to mention that 40% of this sales tax increase is slated to go to the Utah Transit Authority. The Utah Transit Authority has a history of fraud, waste and abuse with our tax dollars. From lavish trips and bonuses for top executives to \$10 million parking lots that are never built, the Utah Transit Authority has not earned the public trust and should not be given more funding.

Government doesn't need more money—it needs to better prioritize where it spends the taxes we already pay. Please vote no on Proposition 1.

Heather Williamson- resident Saratoga Springs, Utah