

Passing the Capital Projects Sales Tax Act (RIDE II) on Election Day is in the Best Interests of Horry County

With November 7th quickly approaching, the future of the Capital Projects Sales Tax Act (RIDE II) remains uncertain. Considering the negative aspects and positive ramifications of the initiative, it is clear that not only is RIDE II in the best interests of the people of Horry County, it is also a financially responsible and economically sound proposal. Furthermore, RIDE II offers us the only viable option for making the investments in our transportation infrastructure that are crucial for the overall well being of our area.

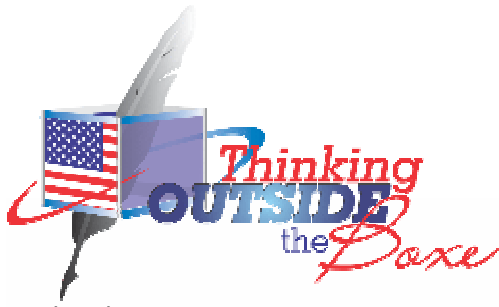
There is no doubt that Columbia should fund the roads for our area. Given the tax revenues we send to Columbia, we clearly deserve our fair share of funds for our roads. However, the reality is that the process of getting such funding from Columbia may be long and ultimately unsuccessful. In the meantime, our situation will only continue to worsen.

We were not prepared for the rapid growth of this area—growth that placed a strain upon our transportation infrastructure—and we are not prepared for the additional growth that is to come in the near future.

To those who suggest that we place the burden of updating our transportation infrastructure solely upon the developers in the area, consider this: If they are forced to pay for all of these projects, they will do so, but they will pass this cost onto their customers—the homebuyers. For many, housing in this area is already unaffordable. This would only make housing more unaffordable and place homeownership squarely out of the reach of many. Let the developers share some of this cost, but let us not give them the entire burden.

The congestion on our roads is exacerbated by the thirteen million visitors who travel to the area each year. These tourists spend money in our local establishments and make our economy thrive. But shouldn't the visitors to this area share some of the cost for new roads? They contribute greatly to the congestion on our roads during the summertime. The Capital Project Sales Tax Act places a

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majority of the burden upon the visitors to this area, not the residents of this area.

And let us recall that the roads contemplated under RIDE II primarily benefit the people of Horry County. The dirt roads that will be paved, the completion of International Drive, and the Carolina Bays Parkway will mostly be used by residents, not tourists. For this, let us pay our fair share along with the developers while allowing the tourists to fund most of these projects.

While RIDE II does not meet the needs every resident of Horry County, there is a greater good for a greater number to be derived from this initiative. To those still opposed, I urge you to consider this: If the RIDE II initiative fails, what are our alternatives? Higher property taxes? A creaking transportation infrastructure that will be further strained? Or will the County Council have the resolve to impose a strict moratorium on growth until adequate roads are built? The consequences of inaction do not serve our interests well.

On the last day of the Constitutional Convention in September 1787, Benjamin Franklin expressed the following: *I confess that there are several parts of this constitution which I do not at present approve, but I am not sure I shall never approve them...On the whole, Sir, I can not help expressing a wish that every member of the Convention who may still have objections to it, would with me, on this occasion doubt a little of his own infallibility, and to make manifest our unanimity, put his name to this instrument.*

Let us remember this as we consider the Capital Projects Sales Tax Act. Let us, the people of Horry County, be masters of our own destiny and join together to pass the RIDE II initiative.