



Our two cents: The one-cent for transportation tax



File Photo

On May 21, Osceola County residents will have a chance to shape the future of our community via a special election to approve or reject a one-cent sales surtax for the next 30 years. There have been many strong opinions aired regarding past tax usage and a healthy dose of skepticism about potential future spending. The issues are simple and complex at the same time and here's what we have discovered.

Doing nothing is not an option.

Vehicle traffic here is bothersome on a good day and impossible on a bad one. Most days are pretty miserable if you have any measurable commute. We all know it. But what are you going to do?

The fact of the matter is that we have to do something and the time is now. The past is just that, the past. We can't go back and re-plan for exponential growth. But we can address our current needs and prepare for the future. How? Fix the roads we have by widening and resurfacing. Address problematic intersections to relieve congestion and bottlenecks.

This is certainly a quality of community life issue that affects us all. All we have to do is pay for it. The one-cent tax proposed is the least painful for Osceola County residents. Our visitors, whom we rely on greatly for many things, would foot almost half of the bill. For full time residents it would cost the average Osceolan an estimated \$10 a month. A small price to pay for a better transportation future.

What happens if the voters reject the tax?

We'll be up Shingle Creek without a paddle.

We will likely face a millage increase that homeowners and commercial business owners will have to incur. For example a 2.6 millage increase would equal a tax bill \$390 a year higher for an average household. For a \$200,000 house the amount slides up to \$520 a year. Business owners will have to pass along the increase including jumps in rent and costs of goods and services.

It would also push the timeline for projects to begin and end. Time we really don't have.

Nobody likes more taxes but the one-cent initiative is the least impactful way to do what needs to be done.