

The other side of the story...

START needs Fixing, not Funding

START has problems, we all know that. We see the empty buses endlessly circling town. No riders! That's the problem.

When you've got no customers you're out of business. That's how business works. Not so for government, they can hold onto a failed idea for decades. It's easy when it's not your money.

Even by 'Mountain Ski Town' standards, START is a failure. Its fare-box collections are dismal when compared to its peers.

In corporate life you get rewarded for catching mistakes quickly. Not so in government. As long as they can come up with a positive 'spin' they can stay at it. The press attends their meetings and reports their talking points. No one, it seems, is interested in finding truth.

Of course, blurting out the truth is what the "Other Side" is all about. We address threats to a 'livable Jackson Hole.' Information in the right hands can work wonders.

#1 Threat: The unspoken 'Bigger and Grander' agenda local government pursues. They want GROWTH! More, always more. Never mind the toll it takes on wildlife. Who cares about a 'livable Jackson Hole?'

Voters care. Voters said NO to the bus repeatedly. Eventually there will be backlash. Ignoring voters can be deadly for politicians.

Many of our leaders have an outdated 'poverty consciousness.' Fifty years ago it was tough to make it in Jackson. Folks worked hard in the summer and winter; they saved to survive the off-season.

The bus is an outgrowth of those tougher times. It was supposed to court visitors. But the

survival era is long gone. Some say we now have too many visitors, too much congestion.

In the last two elections voters said no to both the bus and subsidized housing. They want to stop growing Jackson Hole at breakneck speed. But politicians are ignoring the voters.

They keep pretending START is a viable transportation system. It isn't. It never made sense.

*START doesn't work
but they can't admit it.*

Wendell Cox, a world-renowned authority on mass transit, looked at START in 2015. He said, "The potential of public transit has been so overblown it's almost scandalous."

Eventually taxpayers close the checkbook, the money-waste ends. So it's no wonder "the START board is struggling with how to fund new service" as reported in the November 11 *Daily*.

Of course they're struggling. The electeds asked them to do the impossible. Voters wisely said NO to bus funding, but the START Board is supposed to "fund new service" anyway.

Too bad the START Board wasn't asked to 'fix' the system. They should be working to bring collections up to where they belong. But they're just looking at 'funding,' not 'fixing.'

So they're hunting money. They're searching for groups to punish with higher taxes. The *Daily* says they're targeting "short term [rentals], paid parking and additional fees for rental cars."

Our electeds are in denial. START doesn't work, but they can't admit it. They need to stop acting like 'rulers' and represent the voters.

The era of tens of millions in free \$\$\$ is over. We need to scale back START until it makes sense.