
Upstate Board of Directors unanimously vote to support a NO Vote on Ballot issue 1A

Greeley, CO – February 5, 2026 – The Upstate Colorado Economic Development Board, made up of Public and Private leaders from across Weld County, has taken the position to support a NO vote on Proposition 1A.

President & CEO Richard Werner released the following statement regarding the board's position and the concerns that governing by referendum undermines the structure and stability of zoning and infrastructure planning:

Zoning exists for a reason: to balance growth, infrastructure capacity, and property rights.

Allowing individual zoning decisions to be overturned by public vote may sound democratic on the surface, but in practice it can create serious and lasting challenges for future economic development.

Greeley already faces a familiar challenge seen in many communities across Northern Colorado: infrastructure must serve more people without falling behind. West Greeley, in particular, has struggled with this for years. However, through the work of elected officials and technical staff, Greeley has created catalytic opportunity through the Cascadia project, which is supported by infrastructure plans in West Greeley as well as downtown. These plans provide a blueprint to attract investment and create a path forward that accommodates growth and private-sector investment.

These plans leverage resources by supporting a public sports arena and the opportunity of traditional private-sector development; opportunities Greeley has not been able to fully realize in the past. Across the Front Range, many communities compete for assets in the sports, lifestyle, and entertainment economy. A YES vote on 1A would jeopardize this opportunity by rolling back the zoning timeline for these projects.

It is important to note that zoning decisions are based on evaluations by planners, engineers, and public works staff using established standards. Reducing these complex decisions to a yes-or-no ballot question removes critical context and replaces informed review with campaign messaging.

Infrastructure grows more expensive every year. A YES vote on 1A would delay necessary projects and increase costs for Greeley as it invests in the future. Infrastructure requires long-term commitments, and communities that invest strategically in themselves see the greatest returns. Clear planning gives the business community confidence in the path forward while ensuring the community is protected by infrastructure assets capable of serving growth for decades.

When evaluating 1A, residents should consider how directly the measure addresses these fundamentals. Infrastructure investments succeed when they lower long-term costs, not when costs are shifted into the future.

Governing zoning by referendum undermines infrastructure planning. Cities plan roads, utilities, and public services years, often decades, in advance. When zoning approvals can be reversed unpredictably, infrastructure investments become riskier and less efficient. Future projects may be delayed or abandoned after planning and engineering work has already been completed, wasting taxpayer dollars and staff time.

As has already been observed, inconsistent or politically driven attempts to reverse decisions, after incredible amounts of due diligence by our elected officials, expose Greeley to legal and financial consequences. These include potential lawsuits, increased insurance and bonding costs, and a discouragement of responsible development. Developers, employers, and housing providers rely on clear rules. When the rules change midstream, fewer projects move forward, and costs rise over time, making private-sector investment less palatable.

This approach also risks keeping Greeley stagnant. When every zoning decision can be relitigated at the ballot box, cities become reactive rather than strategic, making it harder to address growth, affordability, and infrastructure modernization responsibly.

A healthy city depends on predictable rules, informed decision-making, and long-term infrastructure planning. Public input is essential, but it is most effective when it is integrated into a clear, professional, and accountable planning process. Undermining that process through ad hoc public votes does not strengthen democracy. It weakens the systems that allow cities to function, plan, and invest wisely for the future.

About Upstate Colorado Economic Development:

Founded in 1987 as a public/private non-profit economic development corporation that provides comprehensive site selection services to companies seeking to establish or expand their presence in Weld County and the surrounding region. Our mission focuses on business advocacy, facilitating and attracting investment, creating new job opportunities, stimulating income growth, and expanding the local community tax base.

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