

To Whom It May Concern:

ODOT's failure to complete an EIS on the rose quarter project presents a clear case study of why people have lost faith in their government and representatives.

Throughout this process, ODOT has claimed that they are moving forward with the project to fulfill the legislative mandate implied by funding in HB2017.

Legislators may be forgiven once for giving the go ahead to ODOT, which presumably was made with the expectation that the agency would complete an EIS.

It's alarming that legislators haven't since mandated an EIS and instead appear to be ready to allow the project to go forward - despite public opposition calling out the many project impacts that are not being thoroughly studied and the lack of proposed mitigations for negative impacts they have identified.

It is a sign of either incompetence or willful negligence that the Legislature is receptive of ODOT's updated cost estimates without the pre-condition of a commitment to producing an environmental impact statement.

This is your second chance to hold ODOT accountable to the policies and procedures put in place through the EIS process to ensure that government plans and expense of tax payer dollars have the intended outcomes and that negative impacts are identified, quantified, and mitigated.

It is unconscionable that you continue to give ODOT audience as ODOT obviously takes this as permission to proceed without oversight or accountability to you and your citizens that you supposedly represent. They so thoroughly bungled the first cost estimate that one might think it was intentional. The environmental assessment process was misleading at best, an outright lie at worst. How can you even let ODOT through the door without a pledge to conduct an EIS?

The neighborhood was cleared for the freeway in the first place and the state and city were forgiven a first time as the injustice to minorities was seen at that time as insignificant - a negative impact not worth studying or mitigating - the community against the project not worth listening too. Now that community, and other marginalized communities are calling for equity, with the support of the majority and explicit recognition in numerous city, county and state governing statements. Now the community is once again against the project. Now there is a clear procedure for what to do in these circumstances (in the form of the EIS) so that the many mistakes of the past are not replicated.

What is ODOT trying to hide by avoiding an EIS? You should be concerned. You should be concerned enough to demand to know. And it shouldn't be in a closed door hearing, back room deal, no public testimony allowed. It should be clear for the public to witness - an EIS is most appropriate.

ODOT fooled you once when they took HB2017 funds and ran away to spend the loot (our tax payer dollars) expecting no oversight. Shame on them. But if ODOT fools you twice, shame on you. Shame on you. They need you, you have leverage and authority over them and you have a widely accepted and implemented, uniform method for that oversight - an EIS - at your disposal if you choose to mandate it. And this time there is a huge spotlight on you and your decision. You should hold ODOT accountable to an EIS, and you, as the authoritative representatives of the public, will most certainly be held accountable and remembered for your actions and oversight, or lack thereof.

Sincerely,

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