

Let me set the record straight: I support rail.

As a rail supporter, however, I worry that the City's rush to turn a shovel of dirt by the end of the year, has led to a flawed DEIS process which will create a Super Ferry-like legal limbo for the rail project. If this project has significant delays, it will not be due to City Councilmembers who ask tough questions about the project, but it will be because of the City Administration's reluctance to welcome all parties to the discussion and address significant concerns.

My concerns include:

- The technology has already been selected. Despite denials, the public has been misled into thinking the technology hasn't been chosen yet. **The City has chosen an elevated, above-grade technology for the entire route.** If you don't believe me, read the requests for proposals they've issued for the guideway and the core system already – **terminology such as “high floor”, “high vehicle platform” and “power contact rail” are signals that the City is NOT looking for a flexible technology.** By choosing an elevated fixed guideway, the City is severely limiting its choices of how and where it can expand the route – if it can even be afforded.

*Note: The decision to move forward with rail was made last November by the voters – by a margin of 52.57% (155,880) vs. 47.43% (140,623). The City Administration seems to treat this and the Council selection of the Locally-Preferred Alternative (LPA) as a mandate to move forward with an above-grade project.

*Note: Light Rail can be done above, below and underground. A “hot” 3rd rail system that the City has put out to bid has to be elevated and grade separated for safety. Light Rail can be done using a grade-separated rail, overhead cantenary(sp?) wires and wireless.

- Lack of information in the DEIS. The DEIS is deficient in numerous areas, including the impact of future extensions to UH and Waikiki. **Based on the City's figures which equate to \$270 million per mile for the elevated fixed guideway, full build-out of these extensions will bring the entire project cost to \$8 billion -- the full financial and environmental impacts are not discussed in the DEIS.**

*Note: If the City moves forward with a above-grade fixed guideway, as proposed in the RFPs, it will be near impossible to develop the UH and Waikiki extensions as at-grade extensions.

- Finally, and most importantly, I am concerned about the enormous amounts of local money that the City is dumping into the project. **If we are not careful with how we spend our money – even the local money – the cost per mile of the project skyrockets and the Administration jeopardizes our chances of receiving federal funding.** The Feds will not like the high cost per mile given the predicted ridership levels, and the environmental damage predicted for the current project.

And this doesn't even take into account the billions of dollars the City wants to borrow, with no source of repayment, binding future generations with billions of dollars of debt and a rail system that no one will use.

*Note: A flexible, partly above-grade and partly at-grade system could save the City upwards of \$2 billion dollars.

Smart financial and policy decisions need to be made so we have the best system for the right price and is something that our current and future residents want. We need transparency in the process so that everyone – all taxpayers – can see concerns raised by other community members, as well as other professional and governmental agencies. That's why today, I introduced a Resolution urging the Administration to release all the comments submitted during the public comment period for the DEIS. I urge my fellow Councilmembers to support this measure so that our community can stay involved and continue to work on this project together.

I urge all Councilmember, whether they support rail or not, to continue to ask the hard questions and monitor this project on behalf of our taxpayers. Asking the hard questions will not kill rail -- rather, it's NOT asking the hard questions which could kill rail.

