



KATE BROWN
Governor

December 16, 2019

Members of the Oregon Transportation Commission,

I signed HB 2017 into law with the intention that the Rose Quarter project would bring a vital infrastructure improvement to a transportation corridor that is of statewide significance. The current configuration of the interstates intersecting at the Rose Quarter is a safety hazard to Oregonians and those visiting our state.

Having key local partners who are focused on a successful project will be critical to its long-term success, as well as the success of other major regional transportation initiatives, including the I-5 bridge replacement and congestion pricing. Based on recent feedback from our local partners, specifically the local elected officials at Metro, the City of Portland and Multnomah County, I request the Commission table the decision on the environmental review path for a few months and focus on completing work on developing a leadership policy, project decision-making structure and moving forward with a third-party independent study of development alternatives for the planned highway covers. These items were requested for completion over six months ago, and ODOT has not yet completed them. In order to move forward in partnership with the region, they must be completed before an environmental review path is chosen.

In addition, as you move toward a decision on an environmental review path I would like you to include a full review of congestion pricing and how its implementation would impact the Rose Quarter. The pricing plan should provide an incentive to utilize other transportation modes and enhance mobility options for low-income communities and communities of color, and it should also provide greater certainty for freight haulers. We cannot build our way out of congestion by inducing greater demand on the system. We must manage demand to reduce congestion while also reducing emissions consistent with our state's greenhouse gas emission goals. The planned improvements along with demand management is the strategy we should pursue, and this approach has been proven to be effective in many jurisdictions around the world.

Finally, the Rose Quarter Project also needs to proceed in a manner that recognizes the past injustices to impacted communities. This must include aggressive usage of minority contracting for the construction of the project. If the Portland City Council moves forward on a new district plan for Lower Albina, ODOT and the Rose Quarter Project will need to be significant partners. Visions being generated are compelling and have the potential to address historical injustices. I support these efforts, and ODOT needs to be a partner in them.



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I know this direction coincides with the new direction and values we have jointly set for the agency and look forward to continuing this important work of meeting the transportation needs of Metro-area travelers by listening and responding.

Thank you for your thoughtful leadership and continued service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kate Brown". The signature is written in black ink and includes a horizontal flourish at the end.

Governor Kate Brown