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Rudolph Bush: It's hard to dream about the Trinity's future when you don't trust the past and present



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Rudolph Bush

rbush@dallasnews.com

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Late yesterday afternoon - so late in fact there was hardly time for comment - the city council's Trinity River committee [offered up a briefing on possible future amenities](#) in along the river and the ponds that are planned for construction next year.

It is not a modest plan. Gail Thomas, president of the non-profit Trinity Trust, called it a dream, a \$76 million dream that will have to be privately funded.

Thomas is out there now trying to raise money to make some of the renderings - dreams again - become something like reality.

I found myself listening to her and feeling a little sad. You might not believe this, but I do. Gail Thomas wants the Trinity River to be a beautiful place that our city can be proud of.

Unfortunately, the Trinity Trust has shackled itself to a plan that includes the proposed toll road. There is no way to talk about making the river a beautiful place without addressing that road, something most of us understand very clearly will prevent the river from becoming what Dallas should want it to be.

So there is this throat-clearing awkwardness that consumes meetings like the one at the council horseshoe tomorrow.

Those who favor the road, or at least won't openly oppose it, are left to either downplay it or hope it doesn't come up at all.

There are sins of omission and commission about the project. Deliberately misleading renderings like the one above are presented quickly then shunted off.

That rendering shows a four-lane road, peacefully landscaped with a smattering of cars. (At a glance, it looks like two lanes.)

The real road being proposed is six lanes; those cars might well be trucks and the landscaping is still very much up in the air absent approval from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

To bring up salient facts such as these is unwelcome. Council member Scott Griggs was given about four minutes to note that this pretty picture is a dramatic departure from reality before the committee's chairman, Vonciel Jones Hill, literally shouted him from the room. She insisted on drowning out his statements with her voice as gavel.

Hill then gave council member Philip Kingston "three minutes" to sound his concerns about the road. Kingston stretched that into five.

Sheffie Kadane, Lakewood's dependable toll road backer, repeated the fiction that voters have twice approved this road. (I'll give you the 2007 vote, despite its problem. But the '97 vote doesn't count. The real road isn't what voters were expecting back then.)

Thomas needs to go out and raise a lot of money that the city simply does not have (again despite the '97 vote) to put an actual park inside the Trinity River levees.

To do that, she needs to get donors behind a vision for the river. That vision is cast in the pages of the briefing below. But if I were someone with the sort of money to make these things happen, I might wonder what in this vision is real and what is a dream that cannot come true.

These renderings, this vision of the future, is too weighted now with the reality of the past and the present that have called into question our trust in those who are pushing this project.

As Griggs said yesterday, we have to start to get real about this project. Until we do that - until we present the truth about the Trinity - we can rest assured that dreams for its future will be just that.

Trinity Lakes Briefing

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