

Dear Joint Transportation Committee,

I am writing to provide written comments regarding the emergency routes in the St. Johns neighborhood where I live with my family.

I am very concerned about the state of the existing bridges over the Cut. I heard Zef Wagner from PBOT speak at a recent St Johns Neighborhood Association meeting (5/13/24) and I now understand how complicated the situation is to repair the bridges. (The St Johns bridge might be safe to cross, but that is in the direction of the oil and other toxic substance storage tanks and if they rupture, it will not be safe to drive in that direction.)

We desperately need money to secure the emergency routes so that we can leave this area safely and/or allow needed emergency help to get to this area where 30,000 people reside.

Specifically, we need help from the 2025 Oregon state legislature to get the match money. A feasibility study of the Columbia Blvd bridges over the cut has been conducted and PBOT is ready to apply for a grant as soon as they have the "match" funds. The PBOT budget cannot handle the amount needed, approximately 20% of the estimated \$57 million required for the rebuild. We need the match money!

The other emergency route is Lombard. We need elected officials to bring together PBOT, ODOT, and BNSF representatives to collaborate on solutions. We need financing for staff time to work through this collaboration and a feasibility study, which will also require funding.

These are also key freight corridors for Portland and the region. We need to make sure these bridges don't collapse in a major earthquake so that important supplies can get in and out.

Please include us in your next transportation package beginning in January 2025. I am very scared about the impact a bad earthquake will have on my family and my neighbors. It could be devastating. Please use your power to move things in the right direction.

I am writing this letter to you on May 29, one day before the anniversary of the Vanport floods which happened on May 30, 1948. I can't help but reflect on how the communities then were all told that the levees were safe and we know the disaster that resulted from willful negligence. There are a lot of People of Color who live in the St. Johns neighborhood. Let's not have a repeat of a Vanport-level disaster in this neighborhood just because legislatures and the Officials who can make these decisions don't see us as a priority.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,  
Erin Neff-Minyard  
St. Johns resident since 2012