

Dear Oregon State Joint Committee On Transportation,

I would like to submit a comment as a concerned resident of St. Johns neighborhood in North Portland regarding the safety and well-being of the residents and businesses of St. Johns and the surrounding neighborhoods in North Portland, particularly in the event of a major earthquake in Portland. An earthquake of any significant magnitude would be devastating for our community.

One of the most pressing concerns is the vulnerability of our critical energy infrastructure hub. This OPB news report notes:

"For this month's report, Multnomah County emergency managers assessed other high-risk industrial facilities in the county, many of which are concentrated in North Portland near the convergence of the Willamette and Columbia rivers. That area is also the most vulnerable to destruction resulting from liquefaction. That's when earthquake shaking breaks up soil near bodies of water, creating a quicksand effect that can compromise above-ground storage tanks containing fuels and chemicals. If that happens, poisonous plumes could spread through much of the county and beyond, causing injuries ranging from mild eye irritation to deadly respiratory problems... Many of those facilities chose North Portland because of its proximity to ports and river transports, Voss said. When they were built, land-use planners weren't yet aware of the area's considerable liquefaction risk. It wasn't until 2010 that [scientists forecasted](#) the Pacific Northwest had a one-in-three chance of a megaquake in the next 50 years." (access 6/4/24 from [Cascadia earthquake could release deadly chemicals, endangering much of Multnomah County - OPB](#))

The geography of our area presents additional challenges. Three sides of the north peninsula, including areas vital for transportation and infrastructure, are at risk of liquefaction in the event of a major earthquake. This would severely compromise our ability to access emergency services, medical care, and essential supplies. The bridges over the railroad built over a century ago, are at risk of failure, further limiting our potential access to evacuation routes.

In light of these risks, it is imperative that we take proactive measures to ensure emergency routes for our area's residents. While there is a regional transportation emergency route plan designating Columbia Blvd and Lombard as Emergency Routes, it is clear that these routes are insufficient given the potential for bridge failures and other obstacles. I understand that a solution will need to involve the Portland Bureau of Transportation, Oregon Department of Transportation, and the railway companies.

Please help engage the necessary stakeholders on a feasibility study and include this in the next transportation budget.

Thank you for your consideration in this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

Mary Roes

St Johns Resident