



Voices!

News and Views from the District 4 Coalition

October 2025

Volume 1, Number 10

districtfourcoalition.org

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Community Reacts

City Planners Dive Into Concerns Over the CEI Hub

An important step in the increasing public debate about the Critical Energy Infrastructure Hub (CEI Hub) is unfolding at City Hall as the Bureau of Planning & Sustainability moves ahead on a CEI Hub Project that resulted from a City ordinance adopted last year.

Last month, BPS issued a Discussion Draft that outlines a series of alternatives for dealing with the controversial fuel terminal storage facilities along the lower Willamette River (**see full story on Page 2**).

It will lead to potential changes to the zoning code and the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Community groups, including neighborhood associations across the city and environmental organizations, have been increasingly vocal about the dangers posed by the concentration of fuel tank storage and transportation facilities. They see the CEI Hub Project as the next opportunity to influence the future of the six-mile stretch of land that is home to multiple fuel tank storage and transportation facilities.



A view of a portion of the CEI Hub area from the east side of the Willamette River. Concerns about environmental issues not only cross the river but affect the overall community long-term as well.

Photo: Bureau of Planning & Sustainability

Environmental advocates, including an all-volunteer CEI Hub Task Force and neighborhood leaders on both sides of the river, are lining up for the push to reduce significant dangers from release of toxic or flammable stored fuels should the expected eventual earthquake to hit Portland were to materialize.

Scientists believe there is a 40% chance that the "big one" will happen in the next 50 years.

"The CEI Hub Policy Project is a great opportunity to reduce the risks we have due to the earthquake potential

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City’s CEI Hub Project

Alternatives Posed for Reducing Risks at the CEI Hub

A Discussion Draft of proposals that would impose additional restrictions on Portland’s [Critical Energy Infrastructure Hub](#) has been published by the City for community comment. It seeks to amend City zoning and the Comprehensive Plan to deal with dangers associated with the fuel transloading and storage facilities along the lower Willamette River basin.

Last year, City Council adopted an ordinance seeking to reduce the risks associated with the millions of gallons of combustible, flammable and toxic fuels sitting on liquifiable soils on the Cascadia fault in Northwest and North Portland.

[The CEI Hub Project](#) was created in response. It aims to “further regulate bulk fuel facilities and support safety upgrades to reduce risks in the event of an accident or earthquake.”

According to the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS), the CEI Hub stores 90% of Oregon’s liquid fuel, and “is vulnerable to earthquakes and other natural disasters, posing human health and environmental risks.”

The [Discussion Draft](#) includes four alternatives. Each includes increasing levels of safety requirements and expansion restrictions, ranging from unlimited expansions for aviation and renewable fuels to a requirement to reduce storage capacity by 2035.

- **Alternative 1 – Limit Fossil Fuel Transloading:** Expands the current prohibition on expansion of fossil fuel storage capacity to also cover expansion of fossil fuel [transloading](#) infrastructure. It retains the allowance for expansion of renewable and aviation fuels.

“Studies show that the storage tanks at the CEI Hub are likely to fail in the event of a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake. Such a disaster would pose serious threats to nearby residents and the environment.”
Discussion Draft Executive Summary



CEI Hub along the lower Willamette River. This view from the Linnton neighborhood is looking downriver toward the confluence with the Columbia River. Photo: Bureau of Planning & Sustainability

- **Alternative 2 – Limited Expansion with Seismic Upgrades:** Includes the elements above with the addition of a volume cap on storage capacity expansions of renewable and aviation fuels. It also requires terminals to install spill mitigation measures and ground improvements to reduce risk.
- **Alternative 3 – Prohibit All Expansions:** Includes the above but removes exemptions for renewable and aviation fuels. It also prohibits the expansion of storage tank capacity and transloading infrastructure for all bulk fuels, including fossil fuel and aviation.
- **Alternative 4 – Prohibits All Expansions and Reduces Existing Capacity:** In addition to the prohibition of expanding storage capacity, existing bulk fuel terminals would be required to reduce their storage by 17 percent.

[Learn more here.](#)

Public comments on these alternatives are welcome through Friday, Oct. 17th. Those interested

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CEI Hub Project –

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may submit comments using the [Map App](#). In addition, two more information sessions are scheduled for this month:

[CEI Hub Policy Project Information Session #2](#)

Wednesday, October 1, 5:30pm to 7pm (online)

[CEI Hub Policy Project - Willamette Riverkeepers webinar](#)

Thursday, October 2, 6pm to 8pm (online)

A Critical Community Issue

In discussions with BPS on a July preliminary draft, community and environmental groups continued to raise their longstanding concerns about the safety and risks CEI Hub operations pose due, in large measure, to its location on a known fault line and proximity to the river and nearby neighborhoods.

“To reduce risk, we must significantly draw down toxic or flammable substances to an already unstable soils,” says **Laurie King** of the community-based CEI Hub Task

Force. In addition, she notes that it is a well-known fact that renewable (fuels) are equally combustible and toxic as fossil fuels in those situations.

“The first two alternatives increase the risk and the third leaves things as they are,” she says. “Alternative 4 goes in the right direction of drawdown, but it is too timid to ameliorate the dangers, she says.

Community advocates believe less fuel means less risk and are proposing more drawdown than the proposed 17%.

Nancy Hiser, who lives in Linnton and overlooks the CEI Hub, was the moderator of the recent Rumble on the River event that drew hundreds of people to discuss the CEI Hub Project. She points out that motion such as that from an earthquake causes “sloshing” of fuel inside the tanks, resulting in internal pressure on tank walls.

There is a positive correlation between fuel tank fill levels and risk, according to Hiser. The more fuel, the more pressure, she says, noting that tank walls can crack or buckle thereby causing a breach.

“With high fill levels in tanks with floating roofs, sloshing can cause ‘overtopping’ which means fuel spills out from the top of the tank,” she says. “Fuel that spills out can release large volumes of vapor that can burn or explode.”

Hiser says ignition does not require a spark but can also result from static charges, adding that fuel can flow into the river unless it is contained. Even if contained, she says, pool fires can occur.

Next Steps

Comments on the Discussion Draft will be considered by the Planning Commission in November. Following public hearings and testimony, the Commission will consider amendments and forward a Recommended Draft to the City Council.

It is expected that the Planning Commission will forward one recommendation to City Council, most likely in November or December. Council action is expected in early 2026.

Dean Smith

Concerns Over CEI Hub –

(Continued from Page 1)

at the CEI Hub,” says **Laurie King**, a spokesperson for the Task Force, who notes that the fuel storage facilities that sit atop unstable soils are located immediately below and across the river from residential neighborhoods.

The Hub is also adjacent to Forest Park which is extremely vulnerable in the event of a Hub fire.

Will it Be Enough?

There already are some concerns that the Discussion Draft does not go far enough.

King, who lives across from the CEI Hub in the Cathedral Park neighborhood, says a big push is needed to get policies that put the health and safety of communities and our environment above the business plans of the fuel industries.

Of the four alternatives described in the Discussion Draft, only the fourth calls for a reduction in the millions of gallons of fuel stored at the CEI Hub – and it just calls for a 17 percent reduction.

“Many advocates from various environmental groups working on the CEI Policy Project think that it is imperative that we go beyond the bare minimum of prohibiting expansion of combustible fuels at

the Hub,” King says, “but must draw down the storage and transloading of these dangerous substances with clear and accountable benchmarks.”

According to **Nancy Hiser**, who lives in the Linnton neighborhood and overlooks the CEI Hub, it is a “ticking time bomb” with millions of gallons of combustible, flammable, toxic fuels sitting on liquefiable soils, on the Portland Hills Fault and near the major offshore – and dangerous – Cascadia fault.

Councilor's Corner: Olivia Clark

Emergency Preparedness: Know Thy Neighbor!

What is the best way to prepare for a disaster? Get to know your neighbors! According to former FEMA Administrator **Craig Fugate**, **up to 95 percent of all people rescued in a disaster are rescued by a neighbor.**



Neighborhood Emergency Teams, such as this, are critical components of the City's emergency response system.

Photo: Bureau of Emergency Management

Volunteer neighborhood rescuers will likely be first on-the-scene when firefighters and police are slowed by impassable streets or overwhelmed by calls for help.

With that in mind, here is a checklist to make sure you are prepared:

- [Join your Neighborhood Emergency Team \(NET\)](#)
- [Sign up for public alerts](#)
- [Be 2 Weeks Ready:](#) Have a plan and the supplies necessary to help your household survive for two weeks.

Traffic Safety

Speaking of safety, did you know that Portland Bureau of Transportation

(PBOT) has a team dedicated to small-scale traffic safety improvements?

Every year, PBOT receives about 3,000 inputs and requests through PDX 311 for warning signs, crosswalks, traffic calming, pedestrian issues and other concerns.

It then investigates and prioritizes these requests based on the limited revenue streams available.

Last month my Transportation and Infrastructure Committee heard from leaders who want to create safer routes to school for kids in downtown and South Portland.

They are proposing solutions for an unsafe stretch of South Sheridan Street near the International School of Portland that includes incomplete sidewalks, missing bike lane connections, and limited safety features.



These neighborhood leaders are working to create safer routes to school in downtown and South Portland.

Photo: Councilor Clark's office

In addition, I was proud to partner with Council Vice President **Tiffany Koyama Lane** on a resolution to recommit to [Vision Zero](#). The resolution will promote better cross-bureau collaboration and data collection to reduce speeds with the goal of reducing traffic deaths.

Public Safety

Lastly, my commitment to public safety is foremost. I support **Chief Bob Day's** goal of hiring the largest number of sworn Portland Police Bureau officers in 30 years.

I recently attended a ceremony for its largest hiring class since the late 1990s! As we work and see success in recruiting and hiring, we must also look at proven prevention and community volunteer programs.

I'm also meeting with the Police Bureau and neighborhood leaders about bringing back "Neighborhood Watch" programs. I discussed this at a recent meeting of the Goose Hollow Foothills League.

Our community is thirsty to find ways to support Portland's public safety system and first responders. I'd like to bring back the Portland Police Bureau volunteer programs we once had beyond Safe Blocks.



Portland Police continue to swear in new officers who are committed to protecting public safety.

Photo: Councilor Clark's office