

TIF District St Johns - Fessenden

St Johns is the largest of the 95 neighborhoods in Portland. A portion of St Johns has been a part of the Interstate TIF for years, however, that area covers only a very small slice of St Johns and NOT that part of St Johns – the northern part above the St Louis-Fessenden corridor – above which reside our greatest number of lower-income and diverse residents.

In fact, those who live above the corridor are roughly half the population of this largest neighborhood, and they are WELL OUT OF the 20-minute walkability zone to local services/businesses which the city says is its goal.

The Fessenden-St Louis corridor, and residents above it, have been neglected over the years. The main reason was that the road was being used as a cut-through by freight traffic going to/from the Rivergate Industrial Area. Because of the tacit acceptance of this by the city, almost no pedestrian crossing features existed. Combined with a wide roadway with a blind curve, pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers were repelled from using this main artery in St Johns. But...

After 12 years of community advocacy, in 2020 the freight trucks have been routed back onto the official truck route [Columbia], many pedestrian crossing features have been added and the speed limit lowered. The corridor is now ripe for becoming a resident and business friendly street! Add to this, the recent set-aside of \$4 million dollars to improve George Park, a long-neglected location along the corridor, and Fessenden-St Louis is primed to become a hugely beneficial residential and commercial entity in the *heart* of St Johns.

For all these reasons, and because this would be supported by so many neighbors, I am suggesting that the Fessenden-St Louis corridor in St Johns be explored for becoming a TIF district. A TIF district would encourage development of affordable housing – countering displacement out of St Johns happening at an alarming rate – along with the benefits of commercial establishments – to allow the thousands of residents above the corridor a walkable route to local goods and services.

Thank you for this consideration.

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