Max Gordon

In Seattle, parts of the downtown area and areas along Puget Sound are prone to landslides, and some bridges and tracks are in poor condition (see Appendix A). The train that derailed in Seattle on July 24, 2014 was going very slowly, less than five mph. If it had gone faster, the derailment could have been worse. In Spokane, derailment risk is exacerbated by the elevated tracks, which are at about fourteen feet at the bottom of bridges – this would complicate how first responders and Union Pacific react, due to collateral damage from falling bridge infrastructure and the capacity to respond to a fire in tank cars. Compounding this significant risk for certain urban areas is the particular threat of Bakken oil. In the Northwest Area Contingency Plan ("NWACP") (section 2000-7), Bakken oil is specifically noted to be dangerous and a Bakken oil fire is to be handled with extreme caution. Further, it's the single largest risk to responder and public health.