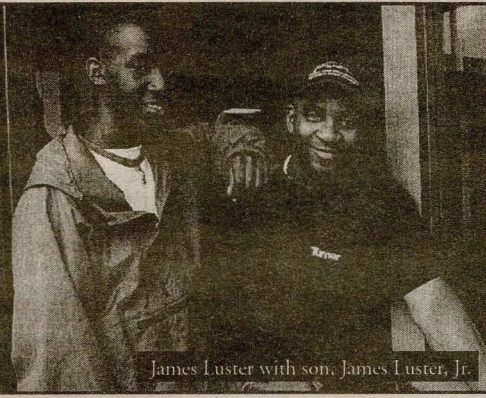


Sound Transit Community Update



Michelle Nelson



James Luster with son, James Luster, Jr.

Michelle Nelson, James Luster and a lot of other volunteers are helping make sure that building the Link light rail project means good jobs for the Rainier Valley.

"This is a nice opportunity for those in the valley," said Nelson, who is a volunteer on the FAST (Fair Access to Sound Transit) Jobs Coalition. The FAST JOBS Coalition helped make sure that some of the training and union jobs in the construction, operation and maintenance of the Sound Transit project go to low-income individuals, including youth of color, recent immigrants and women. In order to do that, the coalition organized community members to make sure that a Sound Transit construction labor agreement for its Link light rail and Sounder commuter rail lines include these provisions:

- 33% of all construction work hours will be performed by women or people of color
- 20% of all construction work hours will be performed by state approved apprenticeships
- half of all new first year apprentices will be women or people of color
- FAST JOBS will be a permanent member of a committee that regularly oversees project issues
- FAST JOBS trained "Community Representatives" will have access to all job-sites to ensure that the terms of the construction labor agreement are met
- \$.05 per hour worked will be earmarked for the training and support services for interested applicants from women and people of color.

"I think it's important for not only the Rainier Valley but it's good for Snohomish, King and Pierce counties," Nelson said. "We're trying to include everybody."

Link light rail trains will run from Seattle to SeaTac including at street level on Martin Luther King Jr. Way South. Light rail trains will also operate in Tacoma. Local community members will be used in the construction of the Tacoma Link segment, which begins next year.

The labor agreement with Sound Transit gives more people an opportunity for better wage jobs, Luster said. A union carpenter for the last nine years, Luster said it's tough for low-income people, women and people of color to

break into the construction field. Like most professions, he said, hiring for construction jobs often comes down to who you know and minorities are not always in a position to hire – or even hear about those jobs. Besides his work on the FAST Coalition, Luster has been a longtime volunteer in the Rainier Beach Community. "There's lots of kids at the community center who want to work but have no idea where to find a job," he said. Skilled construction jobs may not be for everyone, but for those who are interested and have the ability, construction can be a good career, he said. Luster and Nelson and a lot of others in the community spend many hours a week volunteering on various local projects. "There's a lot of people in Southeast Seattle who want to make a difference," Luster said. He also said that people need better transportation options. The light rail system, he added, is just that opportunity. "Look at all the people moving in here, we're running out of land," he said. "We need a better mode of transportation, we need to be visionaries."

And when it comes to building the system, Luster and Nelson want local communities to benefit with jobs. They know there are many barriers facing low-income residents who are interested in construction employment and training. That includes educational requirements, lack of driver's licenses and dependable transportation and English language skills. Sound Transit, the building trades unions, and employers are committed to working with FAST JOBS to address those problems. The challenge for the FAST JOBS Coalition is to keep them accountable to the community, Luster said. "I believe the requirements for licenses, education, and language should become a part of completing an apprenticeship, rather than a barrier to entry," he said.

"My personal dream is that everybody who wants to get into a state-approved apprenticeship program can get into it," said Nelson, adding that construction skills can be taken just about anywhere. "We'll have employable people making a livable wage." **ST**

Rainier Valley Community Development Fund

Rainier Valley Community Development Fund Steering Committee Community Forum
Feb. 20, 7 p.m.-9 p.m.
Filipino Community Center
5740 Martin Luther King Jr. Way S.

The Steering Committee for the Rainier Valley Community Development Fund (CDF) has been hard at work developing an operating plan for the CDF. That plan will be submitted to the Sound Transit Board for consideration and possible approval several months from now. Recently, the

committee has been drafting a mission and principles for the fund as well as funding priorities. These are the guidelines that, if adopted by the Sound Transit Board, would determine how the \$50 million fund is spent. The committee will take these proposals to the community for comment to ensure that the proposal for the fund's use is consistent with the community's desires. If you want to learn more about the fund or provide comment, consider attending the next community forum. The forum will include a discussion on the proposed mission statement, guiding principles and funding priorities of the CDF.

Station Design Update

Edmunds/ Othello/ Henderson Station Design Workshop
Feb. 27, 7 p.m. - 9 p.m.
Rainier Beach Community Center
8825 Rainier Ave. S., Seattle

Sound Transit staff received constructive comments on the latest station designs during Rainier Valley station design workshops in November. The designers will incorporate the comments into the next phase of design and will present their work to the community at the next station design meeting on the Edmunds, Othello and Henderson stations.

Updates

SOUNDER COMMUTER RAIL

Sounder will open the Puyallup and Kent stations for commuter rail passenger service on Feb. 5th. The Tukwila Station is scheduled to open in March.

ST EXPRESS BUS

Route 585 from Lakewood to Auburn will connect to the Sumner commuter rail station starting Feb. 5th.

REAL ESTATE

All Link light rail property acquisition activity in the Rainier Valley has been temporarily suspended in compliance with a court order associated with a lawsuit filed against Sound Transit. Sound Transit is currently seeking the court's clarification of the kinds of contacts and discussions that are acceptable to hold with potentially affected property owners and tenants. We recognize that some community members want to receive more information about their property. We hope to be able to provide more specific information on the status of Sound Transit's real estate acquisition activities to these owners and tenants in the next few weeks.

MODIFICATIONS TO LINK ROUTE DESIGN

As Sound Transit proceeds with its light rail route final design, staff has modified designs in several sections along the MLK route to reduce and limit property impacts and environmental impacts, as well as save money. The improved design locations are between South Brandon and South Juneau Street, between South Thistle and South Trenton/MLK and between South Merton Way and Boeing Access Road.

CITY OF SEATTLE STATION AREA OVERLAY AND REZONES

The City of Seattle Station Area Planning staff will be submitting a revised proposal for the permanent Station Area Overlay and rezones to the City Council in coming months. This proposal will respond to widespread community concerns about the original legislation. Station Area Planners will hold public meetings in late February or early March to explain the latest proposal and take public comments before submitting the legislation to the Council.

McCLELLAN TOWN CENTER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The city's Station Area Planning Team is working with Sound Transit's design team to better integrate the McClellan light rail station into the future town center as envisioned by community members. The new station design is supported by the community and provides flexibility to adapt to future development by including space under the station guideway for retail businesses. The city will continue to explore development opportunities with the community and Sound Transit in 2001, and is also currently studying the feasibility of a roundabout at the intersection of MLK and Rainier Avenue.

\$500 MILLION FEDERAL GRANT

On Jan. 19, the Federal Transit Administration signed a \$500 million grant agreement to help pay for construction of the Link light rail project. A lot of attention has been focused on the future of the project recently because the cost to complete Link is higher than previously estimated and it will take longer to build. On Jan. 11, the Sound Transit Board voted to revise the budget and to extend the date for the startup of light rail service from 2006 to 2009. This is expected to have an impact on the work that Sound Transit is planning for the Rainier Valley.

The Sound Transit Board has directed staff to provide a proposal of how work will proceed in the Rainier Valley and other southern segments of the project. The proposal will include an updated schedule for final design, property acquisition, and construction. The proposed work plan is expected to go to the board for consideration and possible approval in February although no specific date has been set. Meantime, design work on the route and stations continues as scheduled. Sound Transit will continue to notify the community of updated information in the Rainier Valley.