

From: Constantine, Dow <Dow.Constantine@soundtransit.org>

Sent: Wednesday, March 4, 2026 2:51 PM

To: Saka, Rob <Rob.Saka@seattle.gov>; 'Dave.Somers@co.snohomish.wa.us' <Dave.Somers@co.snohomish.wa.us>

Cc: Strauss, Dan <Dan.Strauss@seattle.gov>; Wilson, Mayor <Mayor.Wilson@seattle.gov>

Subject: RE: Support for Businesses Impacted by West Seattle Link Extension (WSLE) Project

Dear Councilmember Saka,

Thank you for continuing to share the concerns you hear from small businesses in your district regarding the West Seattle Link Extension (WSLE). We apologize for the delayed response and appreciate your ongoing engagement, advocacy, and partnership on behalf of West Seattle residents and business owners.

As discussed at the November 24 community forum you helped organize with Councilmember Teresa Mosqueda, Sound Transit is currently undertaking a Board-directed, agency-wide effort to address a significant funding gap in our Long-Range Financial Plan. As part of this work, the Board has directed staff to conduct design validation and cost-saving analyses across major capital projects, including WSLE. This effort reflects our responsibility to steward taxpayer resources carefully while continuing to deliver a safe, reliable transit system for the region.

These analyses may lead to refinements in the WSLE project design, which could affect the number and location of property acquisitions and, in turn, the businesses and residents that may need to relocate. While this work has extended the timeline for some acquisition and relocation processes, it also has the potential to significantly reduce the number of businesses and residents ultimately impacted.

We recognize, however, that this additional process creates real uncertainty for property owners and tenants. For small businesses in particular, uncertainty can make planning extremely difficult. We want to acknowledge that this is a challenging situation, and we are committed to providing as much clarity and transparency as possible as the project continues to evolve.

Work to identify cost-saving opportunities is ongoing, and we anticipate that the Sound Transit Board will make decisions on a refined WSLE project and an updated system expansion plan by the end of Q2 2026. The Board's decisions will clarify which properties

will need to be acquired and when relocation activities will occur. While most relocation efforts are currently slowed, a limited number of actions with unique circumstances are continuing, and decisions about broader acquisition and relocation timelines will follow the Board's direction.

In response to your specific questions:

Relocation Assistance for Small Businesses

Sound Transit provides relocation assistance in accordance with federal and state requirements, including the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act. Assistance for small businesses includes advisory services and multiple forms of financial support. Once a business enters the formal relocation process, a dedicated relocation agent is assigned to guide the business through each step. In the interim, our external engagement and real property teams remain available to provide project updates, explain what businesses can expect, and provide early advisory services.

Eligible Relocation Expenses

We understand the importance of early clarity regarding reimbursable expenses. Eligible costs generally fall into several categories, including moving and related expenses – such as packing, transportation, and reconnecting equipment – and reestablishment expenses associated with setting up operations at a new location. Because businesses vary widely in size, operations, and needs, the specific assistance provided is determined on a case-by-case basis. Our staff works closely with each business to explain eligible expenses and reimbursement requirements once formal relocation begins.

Additionally, Sound Transit has taken proactive steps to ensure certain North Delridge businesses have access to relocation benefits amid ongoing project delays. These businesses include tenants of the Frye Commerce Center, as well as Skylark Cafe, Mode Music, and Ounces Taproom. All tenants of the Frye Commerce Center were notified of their eligibility for relocation assistance and reimbursement in early 2025, and they continue to remain eligible.

With respect to Ounces Taproom, Mode Music, and Skylark Cafe, the Board took action in early 2025 to accelerate the relocation eligibility timeline for these business tenants. During the week of February 23–27, 2026, staff met directly with each of these businesses to inform them that the agency is granting them early eligibility for relocation assistance

and associated benefits. Dedicated relocation agents have been assigned to support these businesses, and they will continue to provide individualized assistance in coordination with our community engagement staff.

We recognize that many businesses and residents have experienced years of uncertainty during the planning process, and we share your desire to provide greater certainty as soon as possible. Your feedback underscores the importance of this work, and we appreciate your continued partnership as we move forward responsibly.

Thank you again for your engagement and advocacy.

Regards,

Dow

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