

Profile of Community Partners



Stacey Drake-Edwards, center, meets with Interstate project artists Valerie Otani, left and Adreine Cruz at the Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center.

John Toran, Jan Shearer, Bill Council and Amber Ontiveros discuss Interstate community needs.

Bruce Watts gets ready for Interstate MAX construction.

MEET NEW MEMBERS OF THE INTERSTATE MAX TEAM

Bruce Watts, Stacey Drake-Edwards, Amber Ontiveros, John Toran and Bill Council are among a fast-growing new group of Tri-Met employees who have strong ties and commitments to the people of North and Northeast Portland. They are working to make sure the Interstate MAX project brings benefits to the neighborhoods it will travel through.

BUILDING WITH LOCAL RESOURCES

Bruce Watts, former executive director of the Coalition of Black Men, has one driving focus in his work—strengthening the community where he's lived for the past 16 years. He wants to make sure the Interstate MAX light rail project puts people and businesses in North and Northeast Portland to work.

Fred Hansen, Tri-Met general manager, recruited Bruce. "I told Bruce this was a chance to put his ideals to the test—to really make a difference," Hansen said. Bruce is convinced. "Fred's and Tri-Met's commitment is really there," he stated. "This is not simply a project about tracks and trains," he continued. "I want businesses to take advantage of the technical assistance we offer, to expand their capacity. I want the community to benefit from this project long after the track is built."

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ART FROM OUR HEARTS

Stacey Drake-Edwards spent eight years as a community outreach and education specialist before becoming public art coordinator for Tri-Met. She honed her community involvement perspective while working with the Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center, Portland's lead hazard reduction program and school traffic safety education.

"My hope is that as many artists, especially artists of color, will work on Interstate MAX," she said. "We're providing opportunities for local artists to participate in an arena that's new to them."

Stacey believes art can be a way of healing. "The stories we all hear of displacement, racism and cultural differences in

the community are embodied in the public art being created for this very diverse community," she explained.

Of her new employer, Stacey said, "Tri-Met is providing opportunities for people of color to participate at levels I have not seen in many public agencies. There is definitely a respect here."

OUTREACH BY COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Amber Ontiveros lived and worked in Northeast Portland for eight years. As a legislative aide to Oregon Representative Margaret Carter, she advocated increased funding for schools, more services for welfare recipients and strengthening Head Start programs. Amber brings her wide-ranging communications skills to the task of preparing and disseminating public information about Interstate MAX.

She was attracted to Tri-Met because people she trusts told her "you can take [General Manager] Fred Hansen's word to the bank. I wanted to work for a leader who follows through on what he says," she explained.

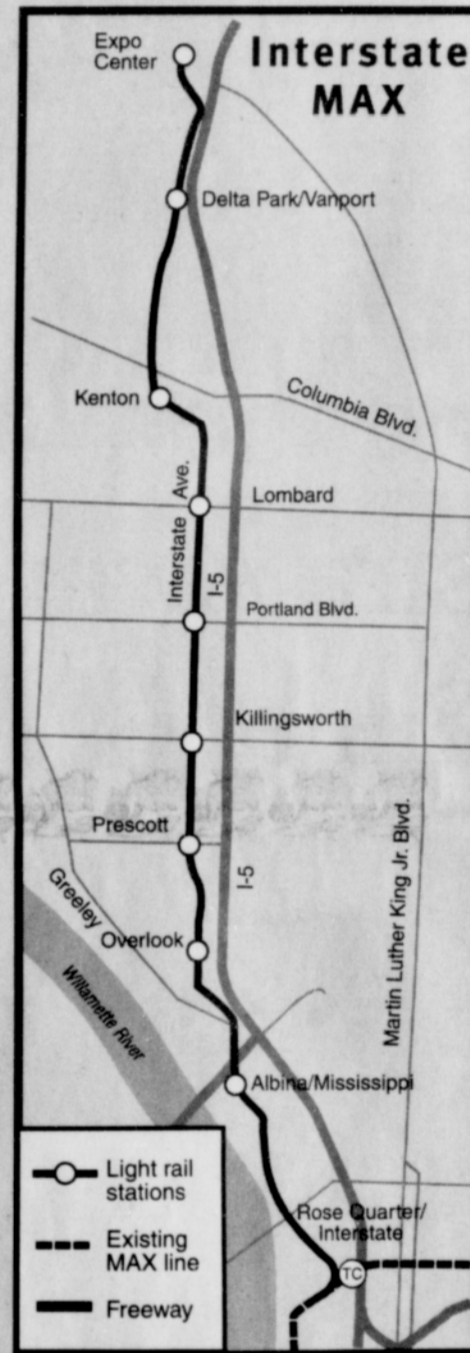
Amber hopes that the relationships of trust with the community remain strong long after the light rail project is complete.

John Toran grew up in Northeast Portland and returned here to work after graduating from Hampton University. He volunteers for Friends of Children, a mentorship program for at-risk youth in Northeast Portland. He joined Tri-Met as a community relations assistant a few months ago.

"I have been standing on the sidelines watching government operate for most of my life," he said, referring to his parents' work in state government and the judiciary. "Tri-Met is providing a foundation for what I want to do in the future."

Bill Council was 69 years old and finally ready to retire when Bruce Watts told him Tri-Met was looking for someone to staff its Interstate MAX information office.

Bill's background as trainer, teacher, and facilitator serve him well. "I went to work for Tri-Met because I could use my skills and work on a worthwhile project benefiting my neighborhood," he said. "Besides, I love working with people."



- 5.8 miles long
- 10 stations
- \$350 million budget
- 18,100 new riders by 2020, including 8,400 new to transit
- Service through downtown
- Final design underway spring 2000
- Federal funding grant signed September 2000
- Sewer relocation starts November 2000
- Trackway/street construction starts spring 2001
- Opens September 2004

For project information call 503-962-2155
www.tri-met.org



How we get there matters.