

New places to live and go along the Yellow Line

Interstate corridor neighborhoods have long been sought for their well-built single family homes, close to downtown Portland and priced relatively lower than in areas of the city with the liveliest real estate markets. In the past five years, a number of new buildings with apartments or condominium units have opened or are soon to open along the Yellow Line, providing an array of new housing choices.

With 54 units, **Patton Park** is the first large-scale affordable housing project on Interstate. TriMet partnered with the community housing nonprofit, REACH, to build the project, which includes a dozen family-sized units with three bedrooms.

When Patton Park opened in 2009, REACH reported that 54 of the 106 apartment residents had incomes below 30 percent of median family income, while 99 residents earned less than 50 percent median family income. Over two-thirds of the occupants represent racial and ethnic minorities.

TriMet expects to develop a second affordable housing project soon on land it owns at N. Argyle and Denver avenues. It would like to do more. "As a regional leader, TriMet is seeking partners to increase the inventory of affordable housing, particularly around transit service and on land that we already own," said TriMet General Manager Neil McFarlane.

"Affordable housing needs to be built near transit to serve the people who most often depend on transit to get around. TriMet will work with the City of Portland, community organizations and others to support this goal," McFarlane said.

Long targeted for mixed use development, **Killingsworth Station** opened with a LEED platinum rating and 57 condominium units. Homebuyers have access to the **Portland Housing Bureau's Down Payment Assistance Loan program**, designed to help qualified first-time homebuyers purchase a home in the Interstate Corridor. The housing bureau has partnered with the **Minority Homeownership Assistance Collaborative** to identify and select eligible households to receive these loans.

The first condo project on N. Interstate, **The Overlook**, was completed in 2008. It has 24 units near the MAX Overlook Park Station.

The recovering economy is producing



PATTON PARK

YELLOW LINE LIVE & GO SPOTLIGHTS

Find out about what's new at **ARBOR LODGE** and in **HISTORIC KENTON** by reading the LIVE & GO spotlights on the inside spread of this special insert.



The Prescott apartments

more new housing choices. **The Prescott** recently opened with 155 market-rate rental units opposite the N. Prescott St. Station. **Jarrett Street Lofts** offers 30 units. The 46-unit **Corso Apartments** are under construction across from **Pause Kitchen and Bar**.

What about displacement?

The thorny twin issues of gentrification and displacement have affected people living along the Yellow Line, although perhaps not to the same extent as in some of Portland's other neighborhoods.

As businesses upgrade and new ones move in, market forces push rental rates

and home prices higher. Inevitably, people at the lower end of the income spectrum are forced to look elsewhere for cheaper homes to rent or buy.

This phenomenon is disturbing and difficult to address. Google it and you'll find city after city wrestling with the same concerns.

Maxine Fitzpatrick has dedicated her professional and personal life fighting to right the wrongs associated with the forces of displacement.

Fitzpatrick runs **Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives, Inc.** "We are the only community development corporation actively engaged in the African American community," she said.

Fitzpatrick served on the Interstate Urban Renewable Advisory Committee which advised the Portland Development Commission on what to do with funds drawn from increased property tax revenues in the urban renewal area. Fitzpatrick and her colleagues persuaded Portland City Council and PDC to commit to spending 30 percent of these funds on affordable housing along Interstate and in other urban renewal areas.

Fitzpatrick believes significant displacement of low-income families has occurred in the Interstate urban renewal area since the start of Yellow Line service.

She believes too little has done to remedy the problem. Fitzpatrick would like TriMet to do more. "But the burden is not all on TriMet," she said.

"It would be made right if PDC and the Portland Housing Bureau would honor their commitments as best they can to provide affordable housing."

Growing small businesses, diversifying the workforce



Building the Yellow Line gave TriMet an opportunity to intentionally open doors for small businesses, often minority- or women-owned, that traditionally had not participated in large civil works projects.

People living on and near N. Interstate Avenue are among Portland's most ethnically diverse and economically challenged. At the outset, TriMet committed to having the Yellow Line built by people and businesses from nearby communities.

Small business owners described challenges that had kept them from signing on to earlier projects. Many of them lacked capacity—knowledge and time—to produce required paperwork. Most were simply too small to attract the attention of large general contractors.

TriMet responded by providing business assistance and support. Local disadvantaged businesses ended up with 18 percent of Yellow Line contract

dollars—nearly half of it going to businesses in North and Northeast Portland. TriMet's approach was lauded as a national model.

Fast-forward to the Portland-Milwaukie MAX line currently under construction. TriMet has broadened its outreach and support for small and emerging businesses and, in addition, is aiding trade unions in recruiting and training a diverse workforce.

The count of disadvantaged businesses working on the current line reached 127 in April 2014, fully one quarter of the more than 500 private sector companies contracted.

All told, the PMLR has created more than 10,000 jobs since construction began in 2011. Of the more than 1.8 million work hours logged to date, people of color account for 24 percent, women worked eight percent of those hours, while 17 percent went to apprentices. To date, DBE firms have received \$154 million.

YELLOW LINE

WORKFORCE SPOTLIGHT

O'NEILL ELECTRIC, INC.: ELECTRIFYING GROWTH OF A SMALL COMPANY

When Maurice Rahming got a TriMet contract in 2002 to provide ductbanks, grounding and cathodic protection for Interstate MAX and the Ruby Junction expansion, his Southeast Portland-based business—**O'Neill Electric, Inc.**—brought in a little over \$1 million annually.

"Now it's up to \$13-14 million," Rahming said. "Working on light rail gave me opportunities to do different types of work and work at a larger scale. This definitely helped grow the business. It tells others we can do projects of this size."

Rahming is a local and national leader advancing the participation of people of color and women in the workforce, along with increasing



Maurice Rahming

demand for minority- and women-owned businesses.

He is a big fan of public transit and the Yellow Line. "Transit lets people get around who might not be able to afford a car, or live too far from work for a bike, or have mobility issues," he said. He adds that Interstate looks so much better in the 'after' photos than before MAX construction."

VALLEY GROWERS

Valley Growers has produced a lot of green since providing erosion control seedlings for the Yellow Line. "When we worked on Interstate, the business probably earned below \$1 million (per year)," said owner Vicqui Guevara.

"This year we're expecting to come in around \$3.5 million.

"Back then we had maybe six field workers. Now we have a nursery and we're up to 20."

For PMLR, the company is providing erosion control on the west side of the Willamette River and full greenscape construction services on the longer east segment.

"Without TriMet it would have been hard for a little business like mine to climb and go to the next level." She adds with pride "we do a good job."



10 YEARS OF **MAX** YELLOW LINE

Boulman

10 YEARS OF MAX YELLOW LINE

N PORTLAND

Where transit goes, community grows

Ten years ago on Saturday, May 1, Oregonians took their first rides on the new MAX Yellow Line, the fourth link in the region's light rail system.

The Yellow Line ran then from the Galleria in Downtown Portland to Expo Center. In 2009, it was moved to SW 5th and 6th avenues as part of the MAX Green Line extension.

Today, 10 years later, Yellow Line ridership has grown. More new businesses have opened and people are living in new multi-story apartments and condos.

Growth has come to N. Interstate Avenue, but it's not the kind of growth that obliterates all that came before. There's a balance and graciousness to the pace of change along the Yellow Line. It wasn't always this way. Portland historian Dan Haneckow captured the high points of Interstate Avenue's past transitions in contributions to *Overlook Views*, the neighborhood newsletter.

Most of the land along the street and adjacent neighborhoods was rural in 1916 when two existing streets were joined to create Interstate Avenue, part of Pacific Highway #1.

By the 1930s houses had filled the vacant lots. Interstate Avenue had become Highway 99 and, as befits a major highway, motels and gasoline stations proliferated. **Overlook Park** was built on a former dump. Planes landed at the airport on Swan Island.

The next disruption occurred with construction of I-5 in the early 1960s. Hundreds of homes were torn down. Traffic on Interstate was drastically reduced and businesses closed.

For the past decade, Interstate has been rebuilding. Many of the long-time motels and night spots are still there, along with a few of the gas stations. Meanwhile, slowly but steadily, the area is producing a greater diversity of places for people to go to shop, live, eat and work.

A MAX ride up Interstate offers a good look at new pockets of vibrancy around stations on the line.

At the **Albina/Mississippi Station**, south of **Widmer Brothers Brewing**, the renovated **Gotham Building** is home to 28 independent and very small businesses. When Interstate MAX was in blueprints, this building was an eyesore inside and out. On the west side is **Indow Windows**, manufacturer of innovative, classy, Portland-invented interior storm windows.

Up the hill, near the **Prescott St Station**, new paint on a quaint, 1930s



EXPO CENTER PLATFORM

former auto shop signals that new businesses and new life are coming to an area already enlivened by **Fire on the Mountain** chicken wings and the **Exodus Spa and Salon**. The **Prescott** apartments, which opened next to the MAX station, promise plenty of customers.

Approaching the **N. Killingsworth St Station**, new housing choices abound. The first affordable housing development along the Yellow Line, **Patton Park Apartments** is designed to bring families back to the community. Past the adjacent **Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center and Trillium Charter School**—a vibrant re-do of the old Interstate Special Events building—is **Killingsworth Station**, with 57 condo units in a LEED Platinum building.

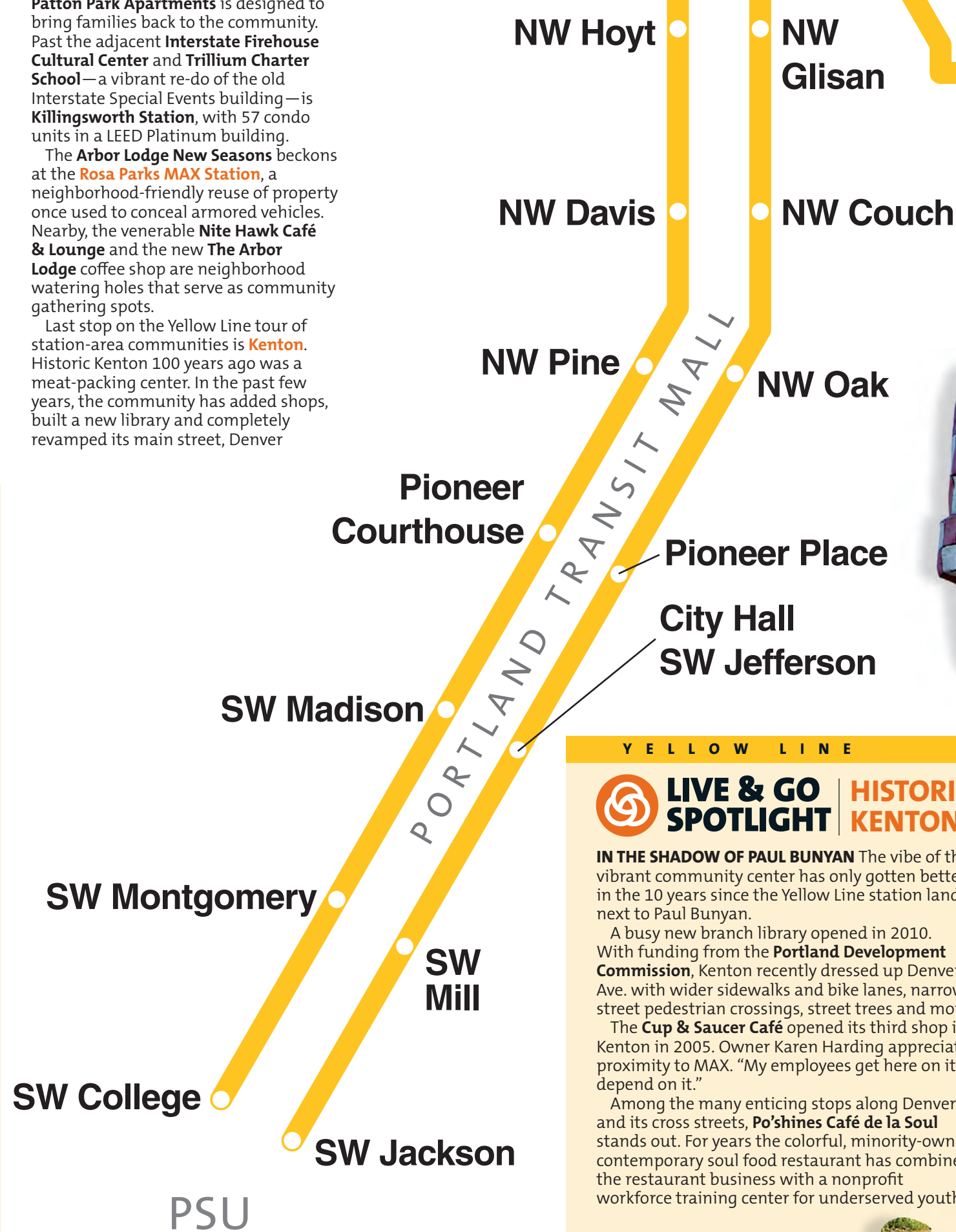
The **Arbor Lodge New Seasons** beckons at the **Rosa Parks MAX Station**, a neighborhood-friendly reuse of property once used to conceal armored vehicles. Nearby, the venerable **Nite Hawk Café & Lounge** and the new **The Arbor Lodge** coffee shop are neighborhood watering holes that serve as community gathering spots.

Last stop on the Yellow Line tour of station-area communities is **Kenton**. Historic Kenton 100 years ago was a meat-packing center. In the past few years, the community has added shops, built a new library and completely revamped its main street, Denver

Avenue, spurred by proximity to the Yellow Line.

The trip by MAX Yellow Line from Kenton to downtown Portland, past the old and new on N. Interstate Avenue, takes only about 25 minutes.

ABOVE: Expo Center Platform, Opening Day 2004



PAUL BUNYAN
The 31-foot-tall statue, created in 1959 to mark Oregon's centennial, is on the National Register of Historic Places. Commissioned by the Kenton Businessman's Club to greet the millions of visitors headed to the Centennial Exposition, the statue was moved 59 feet west to make room for the Yellow Line.

LIVE & GO SPOTLIGHT HISTORIC KENTON

IN THE SHADOW OF PAUL BUNYAN The vibe of this vibrant community center has only gotten better in the 10 years since the Yellow Line station landed next to Paul Bunyan.

A busy new branch library opened in 2010. With funding from the **Portland Development Commission**, Kenton recently dressed up Denver Ave. with wider sidewalks and bike lanes, narrower street pedestrian crossings, street trees and more.

The **Cup & Saucer Café** opened its third shop in Kenton in 2005. Owner Karen Harding appreciates proximity to MAX. "My employees get here on it. I depend on it."

Among the many enticing stops along Denver and its cross streets, **Po'shines Café de la Soul** stands out. For years the colorful, minority-owned contemporary soul food restaurant has combined the restaurant business with a nonprofit workforce training center for underserved youth.

- Expo Center
- Delta Park/Vanport
- Kenton/Denver
- N Lombard TC
- Rosa Parks
- N Killingsworth
- N Prescott
- Overlook Park
- Albina/Mississippi
- Interstate Rose Quarter

Interstate businesses thrive next to the Yellow Line

If you haven't travelled the length of N. Interstate Avenue in the past 10 years, since Yellow Line service started, go now.

You'll see many of the iconic businesses, like **The Alibi** and **The Palms**, still there in all their Art Deco glory. You'll also see many new businesses that give neighbors more local choices for shopping and eating.

Overall, about half of the 120 Interstate Ave. businesses present when MAX service started are open for business today. That's a pretty good record, considering the Great Recession and the fact that the average lifespan of a small business is less than nine years.

Today there are close to 140 businesses along the Yellow Line, an increase of about 16 percent.

Some of the long-time businesses have acquired a new look.

Fred Meyer, at the corner of N. Interstate and Lombard, completely rebuilt its store and added some tenant spaces after MAX started. The intersection is one of the busiest MAX/bus transfer points in the region.

Some businesses have changed hands but stayed true to mission. Bright colors herald the **Michoacan Mexican Restaurant** and next door **La Victoria Carniceria** meat market. Ten years ago the equally colorful Mexican **Playa Azul** restaurant occupied the building.

Providence Medical Group built a new clinic on the street, while **Kaiser Permanente** added an oncology radiation center to its already extensive Interstate campus.

Access among these businesses is better now than in pre-Yellow Line days. MAX replaces the old Line 5 bus with more capacity and is just as frequent. "Having the confidence that the train will be on time and that there will be room is a huge improvement over the Line 5 bus," said longtime Overlook neighborhood leader Brad Halverson.

The Yellow Line has helped stimulate business growth and resilience. "The presence of MAX was totally a factor in my 2006 decision to start **Revolver**," a bike shop on N. Interstate, said owner Mark Pickett.

Robby Russell is a partner at **Planet Argon**, a creative agency that develops web and mobile applications out of a studio in the **Gotham Building** near the Albina/Mississippi Station.

"Having quick access to public transportation was a huge factor when we looked for places to relocate from Old Town/Pearl District," Russell said. "Being right next to the Yellow Line has allowed clients from outside Portland to fly into PDX and walk less than a block to our door. Our team and clients can navigate back and forth across the river



THE ARBOR LODGE NEW SEASONS

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

THE NITE HAWK
The Nite Hawk has served patrons since 1931. Starting in 1980, Bill and Elaine Mildenberger—and now son Bill Jr.—have run the place next to the Rosa Parks Station.

"Business has been fantastic the past couple years," said Mildenberger. The Nite Hawk received matching storefront improvement funds from the Portland Development Commission. "Before MAX, Interstate was a blight. We wanted to fit in with the shiny new train."

EXODUS SPA & SALON

A full-service salon adorns a once-forlorn corner. Esmeralda Caldera bought the site and opened her Exodus Spa and Salon before Yellow Line construction began. Anticipating a big upswing in business near the N. Prescott Station, Caldera began a major renovation in 2004. She feared she had over-invested and struggled financially for years.

Meanwhile, MAX was beginning to deliver customers. With The Prescott apartments opening nearby and new businesses sprucing up a run-down property across Interstate, Caldera is seeing an uptick. "It's been a long wait, but it's finally here."

with ease."

When **New Seasons** opened its sixth store (there now are 13) at the corner of N. Interstate and Rosa Parks Way in 2006, neighbors welcomed its arrival. "We have waited a long time for the Arbor Lodge store to open," the then-president of the Arbor Lodge Neighborhood Association, Chris Duffy, said at the time.

The local chain brought new, fresh food choices to a corridor that, except for Fred Meyer a half-mile north, had been largely a grocery desert. Years back an Albertsons had occupied the site. When

it left, Oregon Armored took over the building. It became a gray, foreboding presence.

Claudia Knotek, community relations manager for New Seasons, said the store held job fairs in the neighborhood to recruit staff. The store created approximately 160 new jobs.

"We give priority to people who live in the neighborhood," Knotek said. We like to promote from within, since our staff know so many customers by name." And, according to Knotek, more than 40 percent of the Arbor Lodge store's customers live within a mile of the store.

MAX-imizing the school, work connection

Students at De La Salle North Catholic High School, located off Lombard in the former Kenton Elementary School, use the Yellow Line to get to work.

De La Salle offers high school college preparation to urban students with limited education options, turning away no one due to inability to pay. Students come from a diversity of cultural, spiritual and ethnic backgrounds.

President Matt Powell helped establish De La Salle in 2001. In addition to educational excellence, De La Salle is distinguished for offering a corporate work-study experience for all students.

"Every student spends five days each month in a corporate internship assignment," Powell explained. "Typically four students share one full-time position from August to June. Their work pays approximately 50 percent of their education cost."

Each day a quarter of the school's 330 students travel offsite to their 9 to 5 white collar entry level jobs in the corporate world.



Most of them walk together two blocks to the Yellow Line MAX station at Lombard. An Access Transit grant from TriMet reduces the cost of the fares.

(From left) Mike Fesser, Henry Sissac, Cortnee Harris all are seniors at De La Salle North Catholic High School. All three are headed to college in the fall.