

TriMet cont'd from pg 1

In response, TriMet has attempted to set straight the public confusion.

“No, We’re Not Building a Jail”, reads the transit agency’s recent Facebook post. It’s an effort to dispel rumors of TriMet foregoing a plan to implement a low-income fare and the agency’s al-

OPAL states on its website. “When we need to get home, to a doctor, or to the store, sometimes \$2.50 is out of reach. Sometimes our fares expire before we arrive at our destinations.”

The organization claims that TriMet has dropped the project to pursue police expansion

“We don’t need another transit police station”

leged connections to the Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

The updated precinct – to be located at the parking garage of the new Hyatt Regency Portland, adjacent to the Oregon Convention Center – will accommodate officers, staff and vehicles. Similar to the downtown division, the new precinct will contain only a few holding cells.

Unlike a jail, none of those cells will detain people overnight, Roberta Altstadt, communications manager at TriMet, told *The Skanner*.

At 9,000 square feet, the original precinct at Northwest First Avenue has struggled with growing pains, a leaking ceiling and limited parking space.

“We’ve really outgrown that location. The building is also very old,” said Altstadt, adding that the location’s lease with the City of Portland is coming to end.

The new precinct will provide double the space and parking, and is expected for completion in 2019.

In addition to the new location, TriMet operates three other divisions – in the south, the west, and the east.

That’s enough to suffice operations, said BRU’s organizer Orlando Lopez. “We don’t need another transit police station.”

Low-Income Fare Program

OPAL and Bus Riders Unite are calling for spending on improved services, additional buses to increase frequency, shelter and lighting at bus stops, and BRU’s proposed low-income fare plan for bus riders.

The program would offer more accessible and affordable transportation, while curbing run-ins with police officers, according to its supporters.

“Fare evasion is a victimless crime, one that riders almost always commit out of desperation or unknowingness,”

and racist profiling on the transit system.

“Where you put your funding is where your priorities are,” Lopez told *The Skanner*. “TriMet is prioritizing criminalizing low-income folks.”

In defense, Trimet has explained that it is not abandoning a low-income fare program for the new police division. As bond proceeds, the \$11 million can only legally be spent on tangible investments, such as a precinct, and cannot be funneled into fare programs or operations.

Altstadt said the transit agency continues to meet with regional partners to devise a funding base to decrease fares for riders with less means.

“We would love to see a low-income fare,” she said. “But TriMet can’t float the bill alone.” The agency is hoping such funds will be made available through the state’s upcoming transportation bill.

The agency is also asking the legislature for jurisdiction over processing fare evasion citations. Doing so would allow riders with citations to pay a fine or do community service, instead of attending a court hearing.

Furthermore, said Altstadt, the new police precinct would not be used for fare violations.

Citations Up, Ridership Down

Recent numbers show that crimes reported by TriMet riders fell more than 40 percent, totaling 366 incidents.

Yet dropping along with TriMet crime is its ridership, which has decreased by over 1.3 million trips in recent years. The latest stats on the 2016 fiscal year show 100,429,710 trips, down from 101,754,048 in 2015.

Meanwhile, fare enforcement actions – which are doled out by TriMet inspectors and supervisors, not transit police – have risen slightly.

Read the full story at TheSkanner.com



PHOTO BY BOBBIE DORE FOSTER

PCC Students Seek Gentrification Stories

Portland Community College students Olivia Siulagi (left), Jovann Ray and Anna Girdner, as part of Sandy Sampson’s experimental media class, are seeking interview subjects to talk about gentrification in Portland. Their project focuses on changes in North and Northeast Portland and the experience of being Black in a predominantly White city, and the group is particularly interested in talking to longtime residents of the community. The finished project will be exhibited at Portland City Hall later this spring. Anyone interested in participating in the project should contact Siulagi at (503) 939-9207 or email oliviasiuilagi@gmail.com.

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Thayer said the lecture series was the brain child of two local physicians: Dr. Nathalie Johnson, the medical director of Legacy Cancer Institute, and her husband, Dr. William Johnson, the President of Moda Health, both of whom are African American.

“They wanted to create a lectureship that would help bring to light the health inequities that exist in the Portland area. They decided to name it after Dr. Norval Unthank to give it broader community reach, especially in the African American community,” Thayer told *The Skanner*. One of the goals of the lecture series is to bring the community together; another is to “move the needle” politically for communities of color in Oregon.

Thayer said organizers are assembling an advisory committee, composed of faculty and community members, to help plan future lectures. DeNorval Unthank, Sr. was born in Allentown, Pennsylvania in 1899, raised in Kansas City and educated at the University of Michi-

gan and the University of Kansas, and attended medical school at Howard University, graduating in 1926.

After performing his internship and residency in Kansas City, he was hired by the Union Pacific Railroad to provide medical services for minority workers

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in Portland. When he arrived, in 1929, Oregon voters had just three years previously voted to repeal a provision in the state constitution preventing non-White people from permanently settling in the state. He also arrived to a city where the Ku Klux Klan was entrenched in the city and state power structure, and his family were harassed mercilessly, relocating four times before settling in southeast Portland.

As his career progressed and

the city’s Black population grew, Dr. Unthank turned his attention to improving race relations in Portland. He cofounded the city’s chapter of the Urban League and served as president of the NAACP Portland branch, served on the state Committee for Equal Rights and the Council of Social Agen-

cies and helped lobby for the passage of the state’s 1953 Civil Rights Bill. In 1958 he was named Doctor of the Year by the Oregon Medical Society; he received a distinguished service award from the University of Oregon in 1971; and received awards from the B’nai B’rith Lodge \$65, Concordia College and the National Conference of Christians and Jews. In 1969, the city dedicated a park in North Portland to honor Dr. Unthank. He died in 1977.

Violence cont'd from pg 1

work very hard to get them – and may lash out.

That doesn’t excuse violent behavior, she said. Rather, understanding how trauma and compounding social factors, including poverty and racism, can lead to violence can point to a way

“Survival is driven by this emotion called fear”

forward. In her own practice, she said patients who’ve survived severe trauma can have very good outcomes when their trauma and pain are properly addressed.

“Survival is driven by this emotion called fear,” Moreland said. “My talk will focus on the intersection of fear, trauma and

violence and also the path to healing.”

The conference is open to everyone, including family and community members affected by violence, as well as leaders and health care providers looking to learn more about the issue. But Moreland also said she hopes OHSU and PSU can become more of a resource for people in the community look-



PHOTO COURTESY OF OHSU
Psychiatrist Dr. Alisha Moreland-Capua will speak at this Saturday’s all-day forum on gun violence as a public health issue.

ing to address social problems.

According to the event announcement page on OHSU’s website, last summer OHSU

President Joe Robertson called for a series of institutional conversations “to help us ensure that our community can bring together diverse perspectives to address violence as a public health issue – and that OHSU can act as a convenor to bring together others in the communities we serve.”

“Healing doesn’t happen in isolation. Healing happens when we come to come together as a community,” Moreland said.

The conference runs from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Highland Christian Center, 7600 NE Glisan Street. For more information, visit www.ohsu.edu/xd/about/news_events/events/Gun-violence-public-health.cfm.