

From: [Joe Lodinsky](#)
To: [Alex Clifford](#)
Subject: Grand Jury Response
Date: Wednesday, October 16, 2019 12:47:16 PM



October 16, 2019

Alex Clifford,
CEO/General Manager Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District
110 Vernon Street
Santa Cruz, Ca.95060

Dear Mr. Clifford:

In 2017 the Grand Jury issued a report to the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District entitled, *"The Bus Stops Here."* Today the Grand Jury is reviewing the actions which you took in response to the recommendations in that report. In your reply, you indicated that you would follow up on the recommendations specified below:

"b. HAS NOT YET BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE, *with a timeframe or expected date for implementation*"

- Recommendation 14

"c. REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS, *with an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for that analysis or study; this timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report*"

- Recommendation 9
- Recommendation 10
- Recommendation 11
- Recommendation 12

For reference, your complete responses are available [here](#).

For each recommendation that you committed to analyze within six months, please provide relevant documents related to the steps you took to consider the recommendation. Relevant documents may include analyses, proposals, meeting minutes, draft plans, and emails.

If you did not analyze a recommendation that you committed to analyze, your response should make clear that you have no relevant documents to provide to the Grand Jury.

For each recommendation that you committed to implement in the future and then did implement, please provide documentation. For example, if you indicated that you would devise a plan, please provide a copy of the plan.

For each recommendation that you committed to implement but did not implement, please provide relevant documentation related to the analyses, discussions, and other steps you took to consider the recommendation. Relevant documents might include analyses, proposals, meeting minutes, draft plans, and emails.

All documents submitted to the Grand Jury should be dated. In addition, if your cover letter or cover email presents substantive information, such as describing actions taken or documents created, then you must include the date of every action and every document you reference.

Please email the requested documents to-[@scgrandjury.org](mailto:scgrandjury.org) or send them to Grand Jury, 701 Ocean Street, Room 318i, Santa Cruz, CA 95060, by November 1, 2019

If you have any questions about this request for documents, please contact us at 831-454-2099 or grandjury@scgrandjury.org.

Sincerely,
Joe Lodinsky
2019-2020 Santa Cruz Civil Grand Jury



Bruce Gritton, Foreperson
2019-2020 Santa Cruz County Civil Grand Jury

*Santa Cruz Metropolitan
Transit District*



November 7, 2019

Joe Lodinsky
2019-2020 Santa Cruz Civil Grand Jury
County of Santa Cruz
Civil Grand Jury
701 Ocean Street, Room 318-I
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
Via email and USPS

Dear Mr. Lodinsky:

I am in receipt of your letter dated October 16, 2019 in which you are requesting an update on five of the Grand Jury's Recommendations from 2017 in which Santa Cruz METRO in their response to the five Recommendations replied that further analysis was required, which are provided in their entirety below along with Metro's initial responses. You also note in your letter that for each of these Recommendations I committed to analyze them within six (6) months.

As a point of clarification, I believe your form gave me only one option in this respect which was "explain scope and timeframe (not to exceed six months)."

On October 18, 2019 I responded to your email explaining that it might take a few weeks for me to respond due to my busy calendar.

The following updates, identified by bold red font, reflect the most up to date information I have available on the five Recommendations:

R14. Metro should use easily cleanable materials for bus seats. (F12)

HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED – summarize what has been done

HAS NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE – summarize what will be done and the timeframe

REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS – explain scope and timeframe (not to exceed six months)

WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED – explain why

Response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

See Metro's response to Finding 12

F12. Metro bus seats are difficult to clean and sanitize, which may negatively impact ridership.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE – explain the disputed portion

DISAGREE – explain why

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):



This is not a new topic for Metro. Over the past two years, Metro staff has discussed the sanitary and maintenance challenges of padded seats and are considering that future bus procurements should be ordered without padded seats. Metro will purchase all future fixed-route buses without padded seats or seat inserts. The partial disagreement has to do with the broad brush Finding. Metro staff believes that all future Highway 17 commuter bus procurements will continue to include padded seats.

UPDATE: November 6, 2019

COMPLETED – Upon further investigation, METRO discovered that the problem has nothing to do with padded seats. The seat sanitary/odor concerns have to do with the fabric that covers the padded seats. Since the 2017 Grand Jury report, METRO has received five new Gillig buses and will receive four new zero emissions Proterra electric buses next year. All of these buses have been spec'ed with a different seat insert which has an imperviable vinyl cover.

- a) Metro recently received delivery of five Gillig buses that were spec'ed with the USSC "Gemini" seating. The seat inserts are spec'ed with a 0.50" padding and a vinyl seat cover. The vinyl seat cover selected has been shown to enhance the customer experience and reduce cleaning time. Also, the design of the seat takes into account, comfort, durability, maintainability and cost effectiveness.**
- b) The upcoming Proterra zero emissions buses are spec'ed with the American "insight" seating. The seat inserts are spec'ed with a bottom padding of 1" and a back padding of 0.50" and vinyl seating covering.**

R9. Metro should create a bus stop sponsorship program that underwrites construction of bus stops in accordance with Metro's design standards. (F11)

HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED – summarize what has been done

HAS NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE – summarize what will be done and the timeframe

REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS – explain scope and timeframe
(not to exceed six months)

WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED – explain why

Response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

This Recommendation requires further analysis.

Metro is and has been considering the creation of a bus bench and bus shelter advertising program in the future, much like many transit properties around the country do today. One approach might be to secure a contract with an advertising company that includes the provision of new bus shelters in the deal.

The ability to sell advertising space and the valuation of that space is most often driven by the number of potential visual impressions. Impressions are the number of people who actually see the advertisement, based on the size of the advertisement, visibility, and the speed at which people are



passing by. While some may characterize the Santa Cruz County roadway corridors as heavily congested, from a marketing advertisement space perspective, the corridors don't have the kinds of car counts most high-dollar perspective advertisers seek and who are willing to pay high rental rates.

Nonetheless, Metro believes there is a new revenue stream and/or new bus shelters that can be obtained by the addition of bus bench and bus shelter advertising. However, cities sensitive to the escalation of outdoor advertising, sometimes called visual pollution, may have concerns about the addition of potentially 847 new public advertising spaces along Santa Cruz County roadway corridors. Metro will need to work with the County and the four cities within Metro's service area to attempt to find common ground in the creation of aesthetically pleasing advertising spaces. Two years ago the Board gave the CEO such direction. Now that Metro's fiscal structural deficit has been resolved, the CEO plans to turn his attention to this matter.

UPDATE: November 6, 2019

METRO recently hired a Marketing, Communications & Customer Service Director (May 2019). The new Director has been tasked with this project. The new Director plans to complete the evaluation of potential bus stops that may be attractive locations for sponsorship or "adoption" as part of a new outdoor advertising program planned for launch in 2020.

- R10.** Metro should improve cleanliness at transit facilities. (F12, F16)
- HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED** – summarize what has been done
 - HAS NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE** – summarize what will be done and the timeframe
 - REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS** – explain scope and timeframe (not to exceed six months)
 - WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED** – explain why

Response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

See responses to Findings F15 and F16

- R11.** Metro should improve maintenance at transit facilities. (F12, F15, F16)
- HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED** – summarize what has been done
 - HAS NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE** – summarize what will be done and the timeframe
 - REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS** – explain scope and timeframe (not to exceed six months)
 - WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED** – explain why

Response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

See responses to Findings F15 and F16



F15. Metro transit centers are deteriorating and in disrepair, which may negatively impact ridership.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE – explain the disputed portion

DISAGREE – explain why

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

Metro is confused by the following statement that was included in the Grand Jury report – “The transit centers in Santa Cruz and Watsonville however are deteriorating and are not well maintained.” The statement seems subjective and is lacking specific detail for a proper response. In the CEO’s opinion, if METRO continues to properly maintain these facilities, they should provide benefit to Metro and its customers for many years to come. The facilities are not “deteriorating.” While in need of some upgrades, both structures are sound.

Nearly three years ago, soon after the arrival of the new CEO, a complete assessment of both facilities was performed and a list of needed investments was identified. Over the past three years, as the budget would allow, tens of thousands of dollars have been invested in these facilities, as described below:

Watsonville Transit Center

- Santa Cruz Metro signs installed on exterior
- Restrooms rehabilitation
- Exterior repainting - All buildings, clock tower and other exterior structures
- New bus loop signage
- Full exterior lighting upgrades
- Design and construction of Customer Service Information Booth
- New staffed customer service center
- Added stop sign inside the bus loop
- Installed two new bus benches outside
- Removal of several kiosks to improve visibility, safety, and customer Experience
- Refinishing of all wooden interior benches

Next series of upgrades being considered or in work

- Possible main building floor replacement
- New community mural
- Public spaces art
- Vegetation upgrades
- Conversion of one out-building to another leasable space

Pacific Station

- All new carpet throughout second floor
- Complete interior repainting
- Refinishing of all the interior wood benches
- Rebuild the upstairs customer service area (currently in design)
- Targeted exterior repainting of various ironworks and Metro logo



- Major tree trimming
- Power washing of all concrete areas
- A/C cooling unit for server room
- Major repairs to the public restrooms
- Interior floor stripping and deep cleaning
- Clean overhead lamp shades

Next series of upgrades being considered or in work

- Emergency generator replacement
- Replacement of curved plexi-glass windows that leak
- Lease remaining leasable space

There is no question that Metro can and should do more frequent **custodial** work at these two facilities. Metro's fiscal challenges limit operations resources with which to hire the additional custodian or two that is needed if Metro wants to increase the frequency of cleanings. Metro agrees that doing so would improve the customer experience at these two locations. Additionally, vandalism of the public restrooms is a recurring and costly challenge to keep up with. That said, Metro has and will continue to make every attempt possible to keep up with vandalism remediation.

F16. Metro transit centers are not clean, which may negatively impact ridership.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE – explain the disputed portion

DISAGREE – explain why

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

Response included in answer to Finding 15

UPDATE: November 6, 2019

COMPLETED - METRO has made three significant accomplishments relative to these Recommendations.

First, in FY17, the METRO Board authorized one additional Custodial Service Worker.

Second, in compliance with the FTA's requirement that all agencies receiving federal funds develop a Transit Asset Management Plan, METRO met the federal deadline and now has a Plan in place that recognizes all assets valued at \$50,000 or greater and establishes a remaining life for the asset and a Preventative Maintenance Program for the proper maintenance of the assets. Such a program now helps METRO regularly maintain the assets and facilitates the programming of the replacement of the assets in the Capital Improvement Plan.

Third, over the past year METRO invested over \$35,000 at Pacific Station remediating water damage and attempting to make the facility water-tight.



Finally, I will also remind the Grand Jury that we stated the following in our 2017 response, “Metro is confused by the following statement that was included in the Grand Jury report – “The transit centers in Santa Cruz and Watsonville however are deteriorating and are not well maintained.” The statement seems subjective and is lacking specific detail for a proper response.”

- R12.** Metro should establish overnight parking at the Scotts Valley Cavallaro Transit Center for riders. (F13)
- HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED** – summarize what has been done
 - HAS NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE** – summarize what will be done and the timeframe
 - REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS** – explain scope and timeframe (not to exceed six months)
 - WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED** – explain why

Response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

The CEO concurs with this recommendation; however, establishing overnight parking at the Scotts Valley Cavallaro Transit Center will require further analysis to mitigate some operational challenges.

About a year ago, Metro posted "No Overnight Parking" signs at the transit center. At that time, the parking lot was surveyed and found to have only a small handful of vacant parking spaces (excess capacity) at the end of the weekday peak hour. A lack of parking was identified as being an impediment to marketing efforts to grow Highway 17 commuter service ridership.

Upon further analysis, it was discovered that several spaces were being taken up nightly by some homeowners residing at the Blue Bonnet condominium complex, adjacent to the parking facility. Unfortunately, the owners of these cars typically do not move them prior to the start and end of Metro's peak hour transit need. Complicating matters further, Metro discovered that Apple, among other tech firms, was using the facility for their tech bus riders without Metro authorization.

In order to deter the Blue Bonnet condominium homeowners from their unauthorized overnight parking, Metro installed the no overnight parking signs and Metro plans to enforce the no overnight parking ban in the near-future. Metro has also been working with the City of Scotts Valley to identify alternate tech bus parking spaces. At Metro's urging, Google recently negotiated a lease with the Scotts Valley Boys and Girls Club to utilize their excess daily parking. Also, the City is currently negotiating with Apple for Apple to lease off-site spaces on City-owned property.

Metro does acknowledge the need for legitimate transit overnight parking. For example, it might be common for someone to park at the transit center and take the Highway 17 commuter service to San Jose Diridon Station and catch CAL TRAIN to San Francisco for an overnight business or pleasure stay, or, to take Amtrak from San Jose Diridon Station to a vacation destination.

As time and resources permit, Metro staff has been, and will continue, to investigate possible solutions to the overnight parking, permitting and enforcement challenges and the unauthorized tech bus and Blue Bonnet homeowners' usage of the transit center parking lot. While tech buses provide a

*Santa Cruz Metropolitan
Transit District*



similar service as the Highway 17 commuter service, that is, taking cars off the highway, it is not prudent to use public resources to provide tech companies with free parking. At some point in the near future, Metro will start citing and towing those who park at this facility and board tech buses and the cars of the Blue Bonnet homeowners. Metro staff will also investigate opportunities to permit transit-oriented overnight parking. Such a program might involve the purchase of one or two parking ticket machines that would dispense overnight permits for a cost.

Metro will continue to study, analyze and evaluate solutions to these challenges.

UPDATE: November 6, 2019

COMPLETED - METRO has posted the Scotts Valley Transit Center (Cavallaro Transit Center) with signs reflecting overnight parking by permit only. Paper permits can be obtained at the Pacific Station customer service booth at a cost of \$5/day. METRO is also investigating a smartphone application that could eventually replace the paper permits.

Respectfully,

Alex Clifford, CEO
Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transportation District