



SANTA CRUZ METROPOLITAN TRANSIT DISTRICT (METRO) BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES*

September 22, 2023 – 9:00 AM

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO) convened on Friday, September 22, 2023, as a hybrid meeting.

The Board Meeting Agenda Packet can be found online at www.SCMTD.com. *Minutes are “summary” minutes, not verbatim minutes. Audio recordings of Board meeting open sessions are available to the public upon request.

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1 CALLED TO ORDER at 9:06 AM by Board Chair Kalantari-Johnson.

2 ROLL CALL:

The following Directors were **present**, representing a quorum:

Director Kristen Brown	City of Capitola
Director Rebecca Downing	County of Santa Cruz
Direct Jimmy Dutra*	City of Watsonville
Director Shebreh Kalantari-Johnson	City of Santa Cruz
Director Manu Koenig	County of Santa Cruz
Director Donna Lind	City of Scotts Valley
Director Bruce McPherson	County of Santa Cruz
Director Scott Newsome	City of Santa Cruz
Director Larry Pageler	County of Santa Cruz
Director Quiroz-Carter	City of Watsonville
Director Mike Rotkin	County of Santa Cruz
Ex-Officio Director Dan Henderson	UC Santa Cruz
Ex-Officio Director Alta Northcutt	Cabrillo College
Michael Tree	CEO/General Manager
Julie Sherman	General Counsel

*Attended via teleconference. Due to technical difficulties, staff was unable to hear Director Dutra until 11:09 AM.

3 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today's meeting is being broadcast by Community Television of Santa Cruz County.

Maria Avila, Language Line Services, provided Spanish language interpretation services.

4 BOARD OF DIRECTORS COMMENTS

Director Downing reminded the Board Members and public that America Walks is encouraging all to participate in the Week Without Driving challenge October 2–8, 2023. The challenge allows those who have the option to drive regularly to understand the barriers and challenges that nondrivers face on trying to move safely within their communities.

Director McPherson attended the annual meeting of the Central Coast Community Energy (3CE) last week. Many challenges lie ahead, mainly with resource adequacy in the grid, but 3CE is pleased to be working with METRO.

Hearing nothing further, Board Chair Kalantari-Johnson moved to the next agenda item.

5 ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Brian Peoples, Trail Now, spoke to his written communications included in the agenda packet.

A member of the public encouraged the Board to look at all options for the rail trail. She and her husband enjoy using the parts of the rail trail that are open.

Hearing nothing further, Board Chair Kalantari-Johnson moved to the next agenda item.

6 LABOR ORGANIZATION COMMUNICATIONS

James Sandoval, SMART Chairperson, Local 0023, announced that he will be leaving METRO at the end of September for a position at SMART International. He thanked the Board Members, METRO staff, and CEO Tree for their help over the years.

Dawn Crummié, Human Resources Director, thanked Mr. Sandoval for his willingness to work with her over the years. We didn't always agree on issues, but we showed respect for each other with the end goal of making METRO successful.

Jordan Vascones, SEIU 521, President of SEA, expressed gratitude towards Mr. Sandoval and that his leadership has been an inspiration. Because of Mr. Sandoval, we were able to establish solidarity between the two unions that didn't formerly exist.

Board Chair Kalantari-Johnson acknowledged and expressed appreciation that Mr. Sandoval has led with vision and compassion and being a leader for the Bus Operators and a great facilitator of deep conversations. It has been a pleasure to work with you in my years on the METRO Board and I know our paths will cross as you continue to do great work in our community. We look forward to working with Mr. Freeman as he steps into this leadership role.

Hearing nothing further, Board Chair Kalantari-Johnson moved to the next agenda item.

7 ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION TO SUPPORT EXISTING AGENDA ITEMS

Board Chair Kalantari-Johnson noted additional written communications (attached) had been received and were distributed to the Board Members.

Hearing nothing further, Board Chair Kalantari-Johnson moved to the next agenda item.

CONSENT AGENDA

- 8.1 ACCEPT AND FILE: PRELIMINARY APPROVED CHECK JOURNAL DETAIL FOR THE MONTH OF AUGUST 2023
Chuck Farmer, CFO
 - 8.2 ACCEPT AND FILE MINUTES OF:
 - A. AUGUST 16, 2023 METRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
 - B. AUGUST 25, 2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING
 - C. AUGUST 25, 2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS SPECIAL MEETINGMichael Tree, CEO/General Manager
 - 8.3 APPROVE: RECOMMEND ACTION ON TORT CLAIMS
Michael Tree, CEO/General Manager
 - 8.4 ACCEPT AND FILE: THE FISCAL YEAR END MONTHLY BUDGET STATUS REPORTS FOR JUNE 30, 2023 AND ADOPTION OF THE PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE OF RESERVE ACCOUNT BALANCES
Chuck Farmer, CFO
 - 8.5 CONSIDERATION OF AWARD OF CONTRACT TO ADARIDE.COM, LLC FOR PARATRANSIT ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION PROGRAM SERVICES NOT TO EXCEED \$206,777
Margo Ross, Chief Operations Officer
 - 8.6 CONSIDERATION OF CONTRACT AWARDS TO CONTINENTAL BATTERY SYSTEMS AND KELLEY'S SERVICE INC. FOR PURCHASE, DELIVERY AND SERVICING OF HEAVY-DUTY COACH BATTERIES NOT TO EXCEED \$281,837
Eddie Benson, Maintenance Manager
 - 8.7 AUTHORIZE THE CEO TO EXECUTE A SOLE SOURCE CONTRACT WITH CLEVER DEVICES NOT TO EXCEED \$300,342
Margo Ross, Chief Operations Officer
 - 8.8 CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF CALPERS RESOLUTION TO UPDATE MEDICAL PREMIUM CONTRIBUTION RATES FOR SMART PARACRUZ
Dawn Crummié, HR Director

ACTION: MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS PRESENTED

MOTION: DIRECTOR ROTKIN

SECOND: DIRECTOR PAGELER

MOTION PASSED WITH 9 AYES (Directors Brown, Downing, Kalantari-Johnson, Koenig, Lind, McPherson, Newsome, Pageler, and Rotkin). Directors Dutra and Quiroz-Carter were absent.

REGULAR AGENDA

- 9 PRESENTATION OF EMPLOYEE LONGEVITY AWARDS: (10 YEARS)
EDUARDO BIBRIESCA, DAVID HERNANDEZ, JOHNNY LOPEZ, EDGARDO
MADRIGAL, IGNACIO MATA, LIZETTE MENDOZA-GARCIA, JUAN
MONTESINO-ZARATE, AMY PEREZ, AND ROMEO VIDAL AND (35 YEARS)
ANGEL VALDEZ**

Board Chair Kalantari-Johnson thanked the employees for their service at METRO and distributed certificates to Johnny Lopez, Edgardo Madrigal, and Romeo Vidal who attended the meeting.

10 SAFETY CERTIFICATES OF ACHIEVEMENT PRESENTATION FOR 4TH QUARTER ENDING JUNE 30, 2023: OPERATIONS – TRANSIT SUPERVISORS, SAFETY & TRAINING, AND DISPATCHERS

Margo Ross, Chief Operations Officer, acknowledged and thanked the departments for following the five tenets of the Federal Transit Administration. They followed the safety policies, safety risk management, safety assurance and safety promotion. They've had no accidents or incidents in the last 90 days.

11 CONSIDERATION OF AUTHORIZING THE USE OF THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES FOR THE PURCHASE OF FORTY-EIGHT (48) 40 FOOT FUEL CELL ELECTRIC BUSES AND AUTHORIZING THE USE OF THE WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF ENTERPRISE SERVICES FOR THE PURCHASE OF (9) 60 FOOT FUEL CELL ELECTRIC BUSES FROM NEW FLYER OF AMERICA INC.

Wondimu Mengistu, Capital Planning and Grants Program Manager, provided a background summary of METRO's zero emission bus (ZEB) roll-out plan goals and the grants awarded to METRO. He requested the Board authorize the utilization of the California Department of General Services to purchase 48 40' fuel cell electric buses and the Washington State Department of Enterprise Services for the purchase of nine 60' fuel cell electric buses, awarding these two contracts to New Flyer of America Inc.

Board Chair Kalantari-Johnson thanked Mr. Mengistu for all his work in getting METRO to this point.

Ex-Officio Director Henderson asked where the buses are being manufactured. Mr. Mengistu responded that they will be built in Alabama.

Director Lind mentioned a recent article in the Sentinel. It was nice to see METRO acknowledged for the largest purchase of hydrogen fuel cell electric buses nationally. She asked if Mr. Mengistu could respond to the concerns regarding a hydrogen fueling station. Mr. Mengistu said METRO has worked extensively with its partners in analyzing this and Governor Newsom has expressed support in bringing the funding needed to California to support that supply chain.

Director Rotkin added that the Board received detailed presentations at the August 25, 2023 meeting on the progression of hydrogen technology. He recognized that there are some risks involved but pointed out that battery-electric technology has its own risks and proposed moving forward with hydrogen.

CEO Tree commented that the Board is doing two historic things today. The 57 bus purchase is the largest in North America thus far and the nine hydrogen articulated buses will be the largest fleet of articulated buses in the nation running on hydrogen.

Eduardo Montesino, Transit Supervisor, commented that METRO should be celebrating. The last time there was a big purchase in METRO's fleet was in 1998. This is historic for METRO and urged the Board to approve this purchase.

Beverly Des Chaux, Electric Vehicle Association of the Central Coast, expressed concern for using hydrogen fuel and the expense of the fueling stations. She urged the Board not to invest in hydrogen buses.

Matt Farrell thanked METRO and the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC) for their collaborative work on this grant. In terms of heavy vehicles, hydrogen represents a real advantage. The vehicle is much lighter without all the batteries that would be required to create the necessary ranges for some of the bus routes. He was encouraged that Director McPherson talked about collaboration between 3CE and METRO and urged the Board to move forward on this purchase.

Barry Scott mentioned that he is the State Director for the National Energy Education Development Project for PG&E and other utility providers in educational programs and considered a subject matter expert in energy generation, conservation, and renewable energy. Hydrogen generation technologies are advancing and although it is not totally green yet, the industry is moving in that direction. The energy density of hydrogen as a fuel and the capacity for these buses to serve longer hours, advance steep grades, and to be available during natural disasters is significant. He hoped to see unanimous support for this purchase.

A member of the public encouraged the Board to think about the layout of the buses before purchasing them. They may be ADA compliant but that doesn't mean it is easy for someone in a wheelchair to use. The buses purchased from VTA are difficult to get a wheelchair on. Some of the electric buses only have the top window open and that is inadequate for fresh air.

Brandon Freeman, Vice Chairperson of SMART, Local 0023, reminded the Board that METRO would need a new operations center to accommodate a fleet of battery electric buses, which is costly. Hydrogen is probably the most cost-efficient option because we can fuel the buses and get back on the road. Regarding the previous comment about the bus windows, they are designed that way intentionally for the HVAC systems to work properly.

Director Koenig added that when he joined the METRO Board, the replacement of buses was a huge, looming problem with 60% of the fleet beyond its useful life span and we didn't have a plan on how to solve this. CEO Tree brought a vision on how we can move forward with hydrogen and electric buses. We need to thank Mr. Mengistu for his grant writing skills and going after the TIRCP funds in a way that this agency has never done before. I went to Sacramento with Guy Preston, Executive Director of the SCCRCC, and we talked to the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) on our vision for a sustainable transit system in Santa Cruz County and how it was going to work with our plan to build sustainable housing. This is a huge step forward in defining and shaping transportation in our county.

Director Lind agreed with Director Koenig. To see what has been accomplished in this past year and a half is amazing and she was proud of all the work that METRO has done.

ACTION: MOTION TO AUTHORIZE THE USE OF THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES FOR THE PURCHASE OF FORTY-EIGHT (48) 40 FOOT FUEL CELL ELECTRIC BUSES AND AUTHORIZE THE USE OF THE WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF ENTERPRISE SERVICES FOR THE PURCHASE OF NINE (9) 60 FOOT FUEL CELL ELECTRIC BUSES FROM NEW FLYER OF AMERICAN INC.

MOTION: DIRECTOR KOENIG

SECOND: DIRECTOR BROWN

MOTION PASSED WITH 9 AYES (Directors Brown, Downing, Kalantari-Johnson, Koenig, Lind, McPherson, Newsome, Pageler, and Rotkin). Directors Dutra and Quiroz-Carter were absent.

- 12 PUBLIC HEARING TO RECEIVE PUBLIC COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSED DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS ENTERPRISE (DBE) GOAL OF 0% FOR FEDERALLY FUNDED PROCUREMENTS FOR FEDERAL FISCAL YEARS 2024-2026 (FFY24-FFY26) WILL COMMENCE AT 9:00 AM OR AS SOON THEREAFTER AS THE MATTER CAN BE HEARD**

Chuck Farmer, CFO and DBELO, spoke to the item and explained the reasoning behind the goal of 0% for federally funded procurements. Our vision for the next three years is to buy buses and those purchases are not DBE. We had two outreach events with 120 DBE companies, and they were appreciative that we reached out to them, and we received positive feedback. Because we are just talking about federally funded projects, we are setting the goal at 0%.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED AT 9:48 AM.

Director Rotkin commented that it has always been frustrating that we can't come up with a higher percentage of contracts coming from the disadvantaged communities, but after years of working on this, it really comes down to a practical question of availability of firms that can provide these services. As pointed out, we are focusing on buying buses and can't put the procurement out to the local community.

There were no public comments.

PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED AT 9:51 AM.

ACTION: MOTION TO ADOPT THE DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS ENTERPRISE (DBE) GOAL OF 0% FOR FEDERALLY FUNDED PROCUREMENTS FOR FEDERAL FISCAL YEARS 2024-2026 (FFY24-FFY26)

MOTION: DIRECTOR ROTKIN

SECOND: DIRECTOR KOENIG

MOTION PASSED WITH 9 AYES (Directors Brown, Downing, Kalantari-Johnson, Koenig, Lind, McPherson, Newsome, Pageler, and Rotkin). Directors Dutra and Quiroz-Carter were absent.

- 13 PUBLIC HEARING TO RECEIVE PUBLIC COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSED REIMAGINE METRO PHASE 1 SERVICE PROPOSALS FOR IMPLEMENTATION IN DECEMBER 2023 WILL COMMENCE AT 9:00 AM OR AS SOON THERE-AFTER AS THE MATTER CAN BE HEARD**

John Urgo, Planning and Development Director, recapped how METRO laid out in October 2022 three ambitious goals (double ridership in five years, never buy another bus with a tailpipe, and maximize the development of affordable housing at our transit centers). These goals are interrelated and supportive of each other. In the past six months we secured funding to complete the development of Pacific Station and will break ground in February 2024. We are well on our way to secure the funding we need to develop the Watsonville Transit Center and the Board just heard of this historic purchase of 57 zero emission hydrogen fuel cell buses. The service changes staff are asking the Board to adopt are no less historic because they begin to reverse the reductions in service this community has seen since 2016. They also set the stage for the service expansion plan that we will bring

back to you for consideration under Phase 2. METRO has partnered with the Cities of Santa Cruz, Watsonville, Scotts Valley, and Capitola as well as with the County, Bus Operators, SMART representatives in developing these proposals.

The Phase 1 and 2 proposals aim to create a transit system that is fast, frequent, reliable and responds to community concerns and one that transforms riding METRO into a matter of convenience and self-interest rather than self-sacrifice. The notion that we could consider increasing service was given life in recent months with a concerted effort to recruit, hire and train Bus Operators. In short, METRO is on a roll and with your support, we plan to continue that.

Mr. Urgo then introduced Jarrett Walker, CEO of Walker & Associates, to present the Phase 1 proposals and recommended holding the public hearing before discussion on Phase 2 and 3 concepts were presented.

Mr. Walker spoke to his presentation (included in the agenda packet) and said that Reimagine METRO is about re-envisioning where buses should go and how often they should run. He reviewed the key goals of the project and focused on Phase 1 service changes. He explained his agency's process of analyzing the existing network, developing a couple of alternatives for Phase 1, and running those alternatives by the community for their input. Upon that feedback, Walker & Associates developed the final Phase 1 proposal before the Board today. Hiring has happened faster than anticipated allowing METRO the ability to add more service. If the Board approves the proposed Phase 1, staff and the project team will immediately prepare for these service changes.

Director Brown asked if she understood correctly that there will be a 25% increase in services in Phase 1? Mr. Walker confirmed that.

Director Rotkin asked Mr. Walker to comment on the extent of making these changes in December and how that helps pave the way for Phases 2 and 3. Mr. Walker conveyed that the hunger for better transit service is so intense that the sooner you do something about it, the more positive feedback you are going to get going into the later phases. CEO Tree added that Phase 1 is a building block to Phase 2. Phase 2 is what staff wants to get off the ground in the first half of 2024.

Director Downing asked what type of tracking METRO will be doing for Phase 1? Mr. Urgo said METRO currently has automatic passenger counters installed fleetwide, which allows us to track ridership at every stop throughout the system. We will be tracking data in real time, allowing us to track reliability, run time, and adjust the schedule as needed.

Director Pageler expressed concern on the timeline for implementation and asked how realistic is it to educate our community on these changes in three months? Mr. Walker responded that the agency has a relatively compact community and extremely motivated leadership committed to doing this. It will be a lot of work but believes METRO can succeed.

Ex-Officio Director Henderson said it appears that Route 15 will cease to exist in Phase 1. Is that going to cause a capacity issue? Mr. Walker responded that METRO is currently running eight buses an hour between downtown and the university. In the proposal, there are 11 buses running an hour.

Ex-Officio Director Henderson asked if Routes 18 and 19 will now be running every 15 minutes under the proposal and Mr. Walker said that is correct.

Ex-Officio Director Henderson asked if there is a requisite in Phase 2 for access to the West Remote Parking Lot at UCSC campus for Phase 1 to be feasible? Mr. Walker replied that Route 3 will run more reliably if it gets a break on the campus. Phase 2 does assume a substantial terminus be developed on the campus.

Ex-Officio Director Henderson asked about a continuous loop from Capitola Mall and what variable is making it less reliable there versus being able to stop on campus? Mr. Walker said the reliability of a bus is directly related to how long it has been going since it last had a break. Its last break is where it had an opportunity to catch up to its schedule if it was running late.

Director Koenig noted that the routes are designed to go around the Murray Street Bridge. If we vote for Phase 1 today, is there a built-in assumption that once that redevelopment project is complete, Route 3A will go over the bridge? Mr. Walker said the long-term assumption is yes so that you'd have service at Seabright and Murray. Director Koenig said he likes the simplicity of the maps and thinks this is the best solution for that area. He asked if there will be a route to the new Westridge facility in Watsonville and Mr. Urgo said there will be a stop on Green Valley Road.

Director Koenig said that Phase 1 will require about \$2 million more per year. For transparency purposes, can you tell the Board how much is available over the next four years. Mr. Urgo said there is about a 7% increase in operations over pre-COVID levels. One tricky thing is that we don't know the full cost until we design the system. The actual cost is measured in the number of Bus Operators required to operate the service. We think that is a 5-7% increase. \$1.5-2 million in operating expense per year could be drawn from the one-time TIRCP grant of \$28 million.

Director McPherson asked if the frequency on Route 35 will remain the same under Phase 1. Mr. Walker said we aren't increasing the frequency to the San Lorenzo Valley, but service will be more regular and reliable when we remove the current Emeline deviation.

Board Chair Kalantari-Johnson asked what are some of the specific tactics we will use to reach out to hard-to-reach populations? Mr. Urgo said we will target apps, bus stop information, post flyers/notices in both English and Spanish, and go to city councils and commissions meetings in the next three months to make sure the word gets out. In addition to the traditional avenues for disseminating information through our website, social media, email lists, etc., we also can publish this information to Google maps; transit riders who are currently riding the bus and using that app will see those service notifications. As we develop Phase 2, we will continue with more outreach and request stakeholders for their input.

Director Downing said METRO will be removing a few bus stops. Do you intend to post something at these stops? Mr. Urgo said there may be five bus stops eliminated so we will be posting notices at those locations as well as at every bus stop that has a service change.

Director Rotkin suggested posting flyers at the UCSC bus stops for the students.

Ex-Officio Director Henderson mentioned that the end of the Fall Quarter is December 15, 2023. What is the date you are targeting to put this into place? Mr. Urgo said December 21, 2023.

Donna Lind suggested reaching out to the school districts so they can send out information to parents and students as well as senior centers.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED AT 10:38 AM.

Eduardo Montesino, Transit Supervisor, commented that this is exciting for the community. METRO is building capacity and it is important for all of us to get the word out. This provides an option for our outer communities in getting to their destinations and urged the Board to approve this.

Dodie Anderson, resident of La Selva Beach, said the La Selva Beach community is grateful for the possibility of bus coverage again. She requested METRO to utilize the bus stop already on Playa Boulevard.

Claire Gallogly, Transportation Planner for the City of Santa Cruz, expressed support for Phase 1. The service enhancements will increase mobility for the entire city. The City of Santa Cruz appreciates the opportunity to participate in the design sessions and provide feedback to refine the concepts for serving the broadest cross section of our community. She expressed appreciation for the robust public outreach that was done, and the City of Santa Cruz is hopeful this will roll out and we can partner in disseminating information to the community.

Matt Farrell, speaking on behalf of Friends of the Rail and Trail, strongly supported the implementation of this plan. We think it is a critical foundation to rebuilding our transit system and moving forward with work that comes out of the rail content study, all forms of transit being integrated—the bus and the rail. He thanked everyone for their work.

Faina Segal, Friends of the Rail and Trail, said she is excited to see Phase 1 implemented. It affects everyone in our community, and we are excited to see METRO building the transit ridership. She thanked the Board, CEO Tree, and METRO staff for making this happen.

Lani Faulkner, Equity Transit, thanked the Board and METRO staff for their work in creating a simpler but more effective system. It was an honor to be part of the stakeholder group in the Reimagine METRO process. The kind of changes being proposed will make a real difference in the lives of our community members, and it addresses three important issues—mitigating climate change, more jobs and equity. Close to 30% of our community does not have viable access to a car so providing alternatives is a critical step to addressing the climate crisis and equity and asked the Board to support Phase 1.

Rohan Tuli, UCSC student, thinks the proposed service changes are exciting and thanked METRO's Planning Department and Jarrett Walker & Associates for making this possible. He did have concerns regarding Route 3 and spoke to his written communications previously mentioned by the Board Chair and attached.

Jonathan, UCSC student, also talked about alternative Route 3 solutions for turning around at the arboretum. Solutions included Cowell Circle, East Remote Overflow Lot, Barn Theater Lot, and Quarry Plaza.

Tom Dillow, UCSC student, also expressed concern on the turnaround location on campus and urged METRO to consider the students' feedback.

Maria, member of the public, expressed concern that in Watsonville there are no routes going to Santa Cruz from the Holohan bus stop near the school district. There is an apartment complex there and not having access to that stop adds a 20-minute walk to alternative bus stops. Concerned with safety issues on Airport Boulevard, she requested this bus stop remain in place.

Romeo Vidal, Bus Operator, mentioned that there is no service in the Corralitos area during peak school hours. If service were provided, it would help reduce traffic on Freedom Boulevard.

Antonio Rios, member of the public, expressed the need for more frequency in the Watsonville routes, especially for the increasing student population and destinations that seniors use, and to include stops along Green Valley Road, East Lake, Riverside, Freedom Boulevard and Airport Boulevard. It's important to the City of Watsonville that we have coverage. He also requested that the service change signs be larger and in Spanish.

Brandon Freeman said he has personally driven every line on this map in a 35', 40' and 60' bus and everything is possible. He traveled with CEO Tree and Mr. Urgo so they have full knowledge of what these routes are like. We are finally building the foundation to build ridership. METRO staff is committed to making this work. We want to be a leader in public transportation.

James Sandoval added that he understands any change is going to be difficult and we can't please everyone, but we can all agree that our system is not where it needs to be right now. He fully supports Phase 1.

PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED AT 11:02 AM.

Mr. Urgo pointed out that there is an error on the map that may have prompted a lot of the Route 3 discussion. It should have shown West Remote Parking Lot instead of the arboretum and we are happy to work with the students to determine the best location to turn around on campus.

Ex-Officio Henderson said UCSC is supporting anything that will help all our staff, students and guests coming to and from campus but need to do our due diligence on the turnaround of Route 3. I look forward to working with METRO staff and the students so that we mitigate as many unintended consequences as possible and find a solution that is feasible and works.

Director Koenig pointed out that one of the biggest critiques heard from the public is that the buses are empty. Even people who don't ride the bus want to know that our public infrastructure is being well utilized and that people are able to take the bus to where they want to go. This is a real demonstration that this agency is determined to provide fast, frequent, reliable service and 25% expansion in service. The simplified route numbers will make it easier for people who have never ridden the system before to start riding it. The other piece to this is having routes that go all the way from the east side to UCSC and this demonstrates a more unified vision of how we can move forward with our housing and transportation infrastructure together, how the housing we build in the city and county can support the university and how the work that has been done at the

university can support the rest of our infrastructure. This provides a unified vision for moving forward.

Director McPherson said there is tremendous pressure in local government to increase local housing units. This 25% increase in service is going to make a significant difference. Being on this Board for more than 10 years, it's really a welcome opportunity to see us increase our service to the people of Santa Cruz County.

Board Chair Kalantari-Johnson thanked everyone who attended and spoke at today's meeting, providing suggestions and recommendations. I know Watsonville has come up a couple of times and we will be hearing more about the enhancements to that service area in Phase 2. I also want to thank the staff because this has been a huge lift and there is more to come so I want to thank you for the work you have done and thank you in advance for the work that remains and for CEO Tree's leadership in moving this forward. Clearly the community is hungry for this and ready to move in this direction. I know there are eyes on us and that is a good thing because when we are successful, we deepen our partnerships and bring in more resources. This agency has proven repeatedly that we are beyond moving people from Point A to Point B. METRO is about environmental sustainability, equity and overall health and wellbeing for the community.

Director Dutra entered the meeting at 11:09 AM.

He mentioned he was able to hear everyone's comments and wanted to thank CEO Tree and Mr. Urge for meeting with him and Director Quiroz-Carter in Watsonville and having a conversation on what METRO is going to look like. I have been sitting on this Board since 2014 and have seen the ups and downs and I understand the needs of our community. Phase 1 is good, but Phase 2 will bring in what South County is looking for in the METRO system. Thank you for putting in the hard work. It is never easy, but we are headed in the right direction, and I will support this. Thank you to those who attended today and supported this proposal.

ACTION: MOTION TO APPROVE THE REIMAGINE METRO PHASE 1 SERVICE PROPOSALS FOR IMPLEMENTATION IN DECEMBER 2023 WITH THE STIPULATION THAT STAFF REVIEW ROUTE 3 SUGGESTIONS

MOTION: DIRECTOR ROTKIN

SECOND DIRECTOR: PAGELER

MOTION PASSED WITH 10 AYES (Directors Brown, Downing, Dutra, Kalantari-Johnson, Koenig, Lind, McPherson, Newsome, Pageler, and Rotkin). Director Quiroz-Carter was absent.

CEO Tree commented that this is that world class system METRO staff has been promising to bring to you. We talked about getting seven million in ridership. Mr. Walker will show you in Phase 2, combined with some incentives that staff have in mind, how METRO is going to get to that number. This next phase gets more expensive so we will be back in October to discuss the financial plans so there is clarity on where the money is coming from.

Mr. Walker continued with the presentation and laid out the conceptual draft improvements of Phases 2 and 3. He pointed out that we are at the beginning stage of outreach for

Phase 2. One of the assumptions for Phase 2 is that there is financial participation in some form from the university.

Director Rotkin suggested METRO consider reviving an express route in the peak morning hours from the east side of Santa Cruz to the university without going through the downtown METRO Transit Center so people can get to campus quicker. Mr. Walker said the public outreach process is a great time to surface these ideas, develop them and talk about them. Mr. Walker said once you have frequency in place and see the ridership patterns on it, you will start identifying the places where there are additional markets.

Director Downing asked if holidays would be included in expanding weekend hours. Mr. Walker said we will take that into consideration. Director Downing said Route 55 is currently the only bus that goes to Capitola Village. In an outreach meeting with La Selva Beach it was noted that the community doesn't necessarily want to go to Santa Cruz. As Watsonville is growing, more people in mid county are going to Watsonville to do their business and to consider that in the planning phase.

Director Brown said she understands Phase 2's improvements are over the course of 2024 as the funding resources become available, but do we know when Phase 3 implementation would begin. Mr. Walker said you should think of Phase 3 as the next tier in a list of priorities. No one can predict at this point exactly when that will happen.

Ex-Officio Director Henderson said it looks like Route 61 is the circulator between Watsonville and Cabrillo and it doesn't continue to the university. UCSC employs many employees that live in Watsonville so keep that in mind when designing that segment.

Director Koenig noticed that we're no longer splitting Route 3 in Phase 2. Mr. Walker said once the Murray Bridge project is completed, the route would be adjusted. That's something to get feedback on from the public when we do outreach.

Director Rotkin said financial contributions of the university are key to making Phase 2 work. In earlier talks the Board discussed the need to look at a local sales tax and asked about the timing for a ballot measure. CEO Tree said it is a delicate dance with multiple partners. Phase 2 will require participation by the university and to run it long term beyond a pilot project, it'll require funding. It's been 45 years since METRO has been on a ballot by itself to make improvements to METRO. We've done polling and have seen strength in the number of folks who would be interested in increasing funding for METRO. We have been seriously considering the November 2024 ballot. A lot of discussions are happening daily, and I would assume the Board will talk about it soon because there is a lot of work that needs to be done if November 2024 is the date. But there is discussion on other dates as well.

Eduardo Montesino said he was excited about Phase 2 because it provides a road map. He suggested we need to plant the seed in the community for a potential sales tax. As cities are planning less parking in their developments, people will need an alternative option. METRO is that option and I look forward to working with all of you on moving this vision forward.

Maria, a member of the public, would like to see the frequency in service improve in Watsonville. She suggested having smaller buses like the ones used in the Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST) system to help reduce costs.

Rohan Tuli asked if METRO is considering an operational policy in conjunction with the Phase 2 process? Mr. Urgo said we will continue to develop operational policies to address bus bunching and reliability as we roll out Phase 2. The general idea is that Phase 2 can be phased in. It doesn't need to be an all-in-one package.

A member of the public spoke that she likes the changes proposed in Phase 1 and encouraged everybody involved in developing Phase 2 to consider changes to Route 35 to make it more reliable. When it turns around in Ben Lomond currently, it is usually behind schedule.

Director Lind asked for a response about using smaller buses used at MST. Mr. Walker said we recently did a study for MST and the primary reason to have smaller buses is to fit around tighter corners and default geometry. It is not because there are any cost savings, because labor is the largest expense. A smart transit agency will run the largest bus it will ever need during the day. Director Rotkin added that with small buses you must keep a separate inventory of parts on hand.

Director Lind said she hears from Boulder Creek and Ben Lomond about the lack of reliability and understands that we will address that. Part of the problem is that it is more rural and parts of Scotts Valley face that as well. Mr. Walker said Phase 1 is the first step. Route 35 is a long route. Phase 3 takes the Scotts Valley deviation off the route and starts to make a bigger difference toward making the route more useful but ultimately reliability will be a challenge. Of course, access from some of the remote neighborhoods will be physically impossible.

Board Chair Kalantari-Johnson thanked Mr. Walker for being here today and providing the presentation.

Hearing nothing further, Board Chair Kalantari-Johnson moved on to the next agenda item.

14. CEO ORAL REPORT

Michael Tree, CEO/General Manager, thanked the public that visited today and provided their input. He also thanked the public that visited METRO's booth at the Santa Cruz County Fair. A lot of people stopped by to get information on employment with METRO. Anna Marie Gouveia, Operations Manager – Fixed Route, was there to talk to them about the benefits of joining METRO. The articulated buses from San Diego had a slight delay but the first three of the 15 arrived this morning. We are hopeful that three buses will arrive every week until they all are on site.

15. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING

Board Chair Kalantari-Johnson announced the next regular Board Meeting will be held on Friday, October 27, 2023 at 9:00 AM at the Watsonville City Council Chambers, 275 Main Street, Watsonville.

16. ADJOURNMENT

Board Chair Kalantari-Johnson adjourned the meeting at 11:55 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Bauer
Executive Assistant

Attachment A

From: Sean Abbey
To: boardinginquiries@scmtd.com
Subject: Comment on proposed Metro Service changes
Date: Tuesday, September 19, 2023 4:37:38 PM

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Thank you for working to improve Metro service for Santa Cruz County. It is always difficult to change service in a way that may result in some people losing access, but I would argue that you would be denying access to more people by not making changes. That is why I support alternative A as it has the highest potential increase in ridership.

I would actually recommend that riders per dollar spent be a guiding metric for Metro going forward. All routes should be viewed through that lense and future planning should seek to maximize that. In essence, if an underperforming route could be altered to allow for additional service on a route with high growth potential, that should be strongly considered.

Thank you again for working to improve public transit in our county!

Sean Abbey

Attachment A

From: [Jordan Vascones](#)
To: boardinginquiries@scmtd.com
Subject: Why is METRO making huge route changes without public input?
Date: Thursday, September 21, 2023 10:19:56 AM

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Hello Board of Directors,

I find it disturbing that this board meeting did not include a Zoom option to attend.

If we are making such huge changes to our routes and overall structure of our service, there needs to be more inclusive efforts to make sure the public is well informed of these significant changes.

We had METRO have a booth at the county fair, why wasn't there any signage to inform the public of this?

If we are trying to improve the public's trust in METRO, we should be more transparent, ensure the public is involved in these discussions, and by minimum, allow a Zoom option for people to attend these board meetings.

Best regards,
Jordan Vascones

Attachment A

From: Maia Raman
To: boardinginquiries@scmtd.com
Subject: Google maps
Date: Thursday, September 21, 2023 9:12:13 PM

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Today (Sept 21) while using google maps to take the 35 from Scott's valley to Santa Cruz not all the times showed up. I put in the current time, which was around 2 and planned to take the bus that came around 2:45. The only ones that showed up was the one at 2ish and 4ish and I had to search several different times around 2 in order for it to show up. I think the current system could use improvement, this isn't the first time I've had to deal with it.

Attachment A

From: Thomas Dillow
To: boardinginquiries@scmtd.com
Subject: Public Comment on SCMTD Sept 2023 Board meeting Item 8.7, Clever Devices
Date: Thursday, September 21, 2023 10:50:00 PM

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Metro should not sign a "sole source contract" with Clever Devices. The claim that there are no compatible systems indicates a severe misunderstanding of how the [GTFS-rt standard](https://developers.google.com/transit/gtfs-realtime) (<https://developers.google.com/transit/gtfs-realtime>) works as you can amalgamate different AVL vendor's feeds to create one shared feed, as seen in the [regional Bay Area GTFS-rt feed](https://www.transit.land/feeds/f-sf~bay~area~rg~rt) (<https://www.transit.land/feeds/f-sf~bay~area~rg~rt>). Within this GTFS-rt feed, a number of AVL vendors are used including UMO IQ, Clever Devices, Syncromatics, and Swiftly. Due to how the GTFS standard works, the server creates unique feed entities which are combined into the complete GTFS-rt feed.. If Clever Device's feed entities are truly incompatible with other vendors, then it wouldn't be compliant with the GTFS-rt standard and would fail to show up in Google Maps.

On top of this misunderstanding of the GTFS-rt standard, Clever Devices' system just isn't up to par. Their J1708 implementation is inadequate for properly controlling the headsigns, and the trip updates component of the realtime feed provides erroneous information, and their service alerts do not work. A friend of mine missed the last 10 of the night because of this erroneous information, and I've run for buses that I expected to be showing up at Science Hill imminently, but in reality were on Mission St. For the prediction to have been accurate, the bus would have had to go 60 miles per hour on average up Western Dr and through UCSC. I've transferred buses on-route where drivers have pulled over due to their headsign reading the wrong route. I've been at the metro center and there have been 3 buses all displaying route 18. However, none of these buses were on route 18. The true route 18 wasn't in the lane. I've seen buses with front, side, and rear headsigns all displaying different routes. If I can't trust the information the bus is providing, how am I supposed to effectively navigate using Metro? See below images for examples of above experiences.

Best Regards,

Attachment A

From: Rohan Tuli
To: boardinginquiries@scmt.com
Subject: Public Comment for Sept. 22, 2023 Board Meeting on Agenda Item 13: Reimagine Metro
Date: Friday, September 22, 2023 1:44:31 AM
Attachments: [Campus Turnaround.pdf](#)
[Complete Run Times.xlsx](#)

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To Metro Board of Directors:

I am providing public comment on item 13 on the Board of Directors agenda for September 22nd, 2023.

Myself and other members of the UCSC community are concerned about the proposed Metro routing through the UCSC campus that's shown in the Phase 1 Proposal.

Specifically, we discussed the proposed routing of the 3 (High St/Eastside) with staff members at TAPS, including bus operators, supervisors, and Assistant Transit Managers (ATMs), and they are concerned that the chosen routing for Route 3 requires turning movements that are physically impossible for a bus to safely complete. The issue of the route through campus was also raised, as the proposed routing for the 3 is not reflective of the ridership needs across the UCSC campus.

We acknowledge that routing bidirectionally through campus with distinct inbound and outbound directions (rather than looping) has some major benefits, including a 30% increase in the capacity on the bus that results from inbound and outbound passengers no longer being on the bus at the same time, as well the ability to set buses to "Drop Off Only" and "Pick Up Only" to ensure there's enough capacity for essential off-campus journeys. These are excellent improvements. The issue is the specific way the Metro plans to do this.

Here are the main issues:

1. The bus needs to turn around somewhere other than Empire Grade. None of the possible turnaround locations in this area were considered safe. The TAPS staff members I talked with were especially concerned about the possibility of buses turning around in the Arboretum and that Metro hadn't clearly communicated this to them.

Attachment A

2.

The majority of campus ridership comes from the core section of campus between Cowell/Stevenson Colleges and Oakes College, closest to the West Gate. However, Route 3 would enter and exit campus via the East Gate, meaning that buses would have to pass through the low-ridership section (past Lower Campus, the Village, and East Remote Parking, through the meadow) when buses are at their busiest point along the route, and everyone entering or exiting campus on Route 3 would have to pass through this section.

We were concerned enough about this that we planned out several alternative routings that better suit the needs of UCSC and tested them in a bus yesterday. These routings meet the following goals:

1.

All turning movements can be safely completed.

2.

The outbound terminal of the route has a place for the bus to safely layover and has a bathroom for the bus operator to use.

3.

Buses enter and exit campus through the West Gate to minimize the amount of time people have to spend on the bus.

For each option, buses would enter campus through the West Gate, travel outbound from Oakes towards Cowell/Stevenson, turn around at one of the proposed locations, and travel inbound from Cowell/Stevenson towards Oakes, passing through the West Gate again to exit. Buses would layover on campus.

Here's an overview of the different options that we tested. For each of these, we have video of the bus completing the specified routing and turns, as well as GPS breadcrumbs logged from the Pinpoint AVL onboard the bus.

The options that we decided on are Cowell Circle, the East Remote Overflow Lot, the Barn Theater Lot, and Quarry Plaza.

Option 1: Cowell Circle. After proceeding straight on McLaughlin Dr past the intersection with Hagar Dr, the bus would then turn right onto Cowell-Stevenson road and enter Cowell Circle.

Attachment A

There is ample space to turn around using the circle, and there is sufficient red-curb for two buses to lay over at the same time without obstructing traffic. This location also allows for an ADA compliant bus stop, which fills a gap in Metro's service area near Merrill and Stevenson colleges. There are also several bathrooms in the adjacent Cowell Academic Building which could be used during the layover time. Note that the bus would not serve the existing Cowell/Stevenson/Bookstore stops on Hagar Dr, and would instead serve the new stop in Cowell Circle. The service area of the Cowell Circle stop provides greater coverage of academic and residential buildings than the existing stops on Hagar Dr, which would still be served by the 18, 19, and 20. The bus operator did not encounter any issues turning around in Cowell Circle, even with the bike rack lowered.

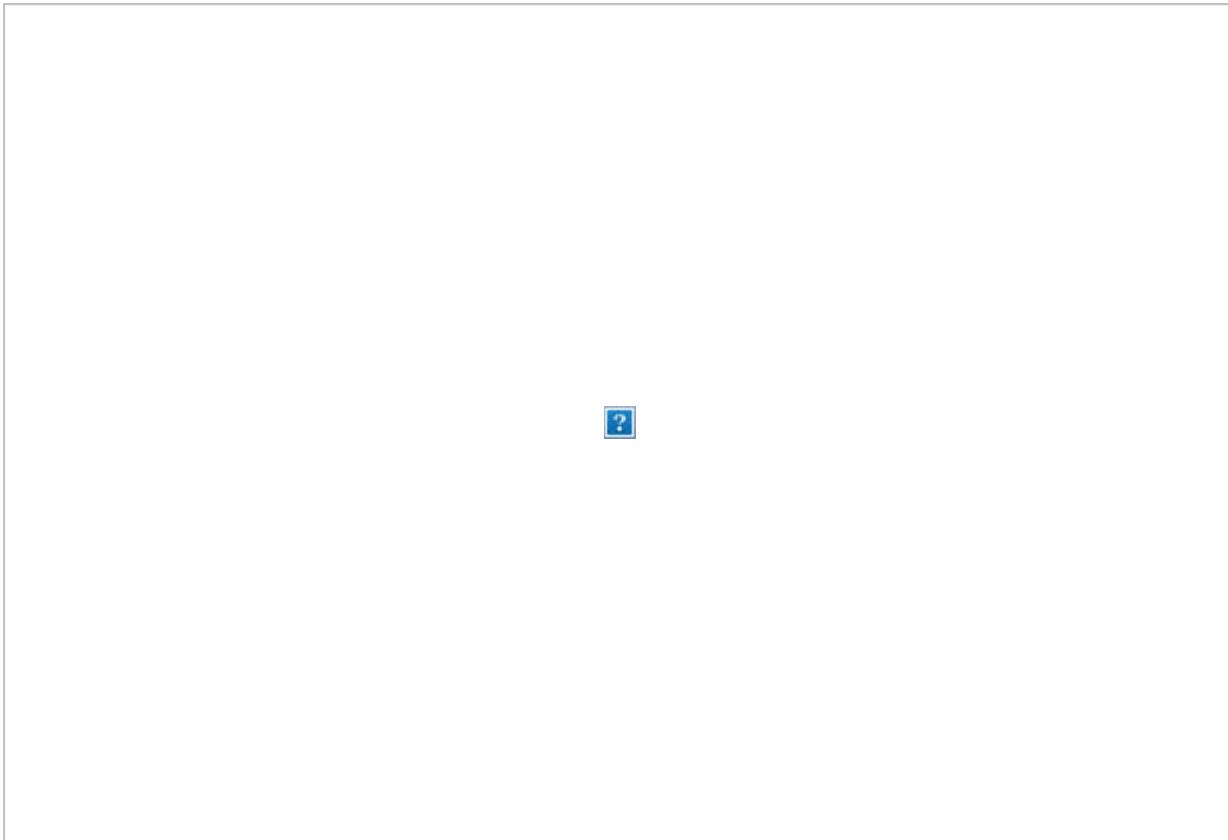


Image: GPS breadcrumbs from our test in Cowell Circle

Video of Cowell Circle test: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/TgDhy5bBLNsA6U7C9>

Option 2: East Remote Overflow Lot. After proceeding downhill on Hagar Drive, the bus would turn left into East Remote, and then go through East Remote in order to turn around. This is something that TAPS' Upper Campus buses do many times every day, and there's an existing bus stop inside East Remote that buses could layover at. However, if buses kept

Attachment A

going into the adjacent overflow lot, there's a much more convenient spot to layover that's out of the way and closer to the bathrooms in the nearby Athletics & Recreation Center. We confirmed with the bus operator during the test that there is always sufficient space in the overflow lot for the bus to hold over during the school term. The only time this would be tight is during the Slug Crossing commencement weekend. Although there is the potential for conflict with cars backing in and out when maneuvering through a parking lot, the run time data from TAPS' Upper Campus buses shows that this has a negligible impact on the reliability of turning the bus around in East Remote. Compared to Cowell Circle, the East Remote overflow lot has more space for more buses to layover simultaneously, such that Metro routes other than Route 3 could turn around here if desired in the future. This routing would take longer than using Cowell Circle, but would allow Route 3 to still serve the stops on Hagar Dr between East Remote and Cowell/Stevenson.

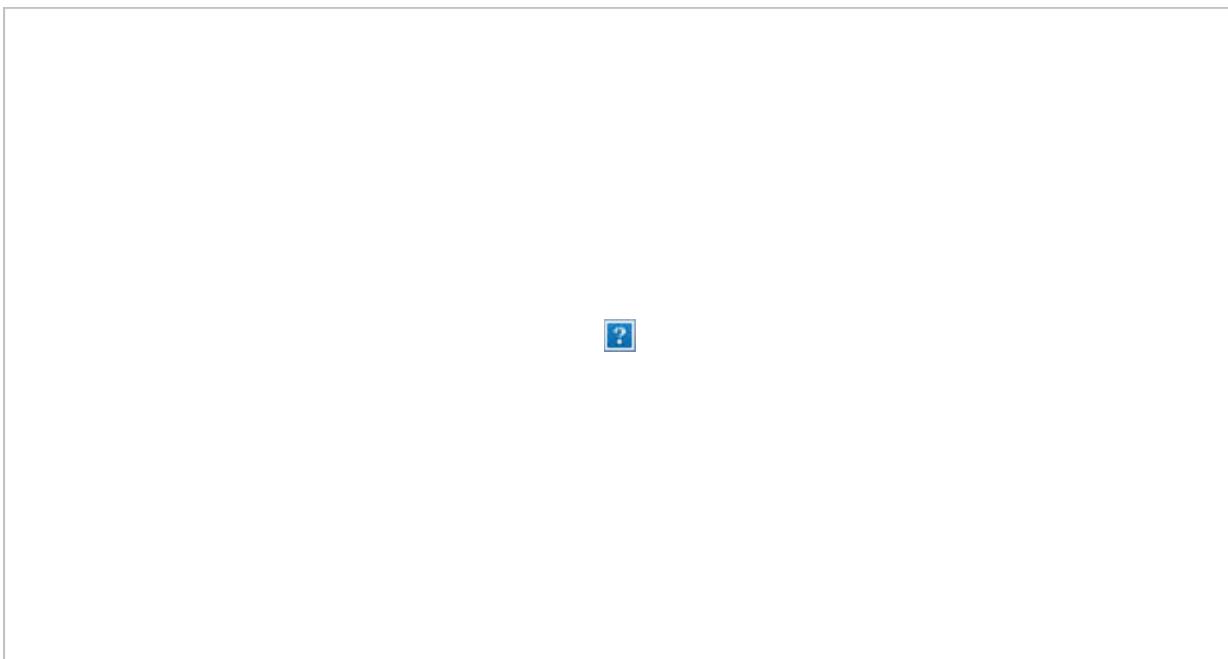


Image: GPS breadcrumbs from our test in the East Remote Parking/Overflow Lot.

Attachment A

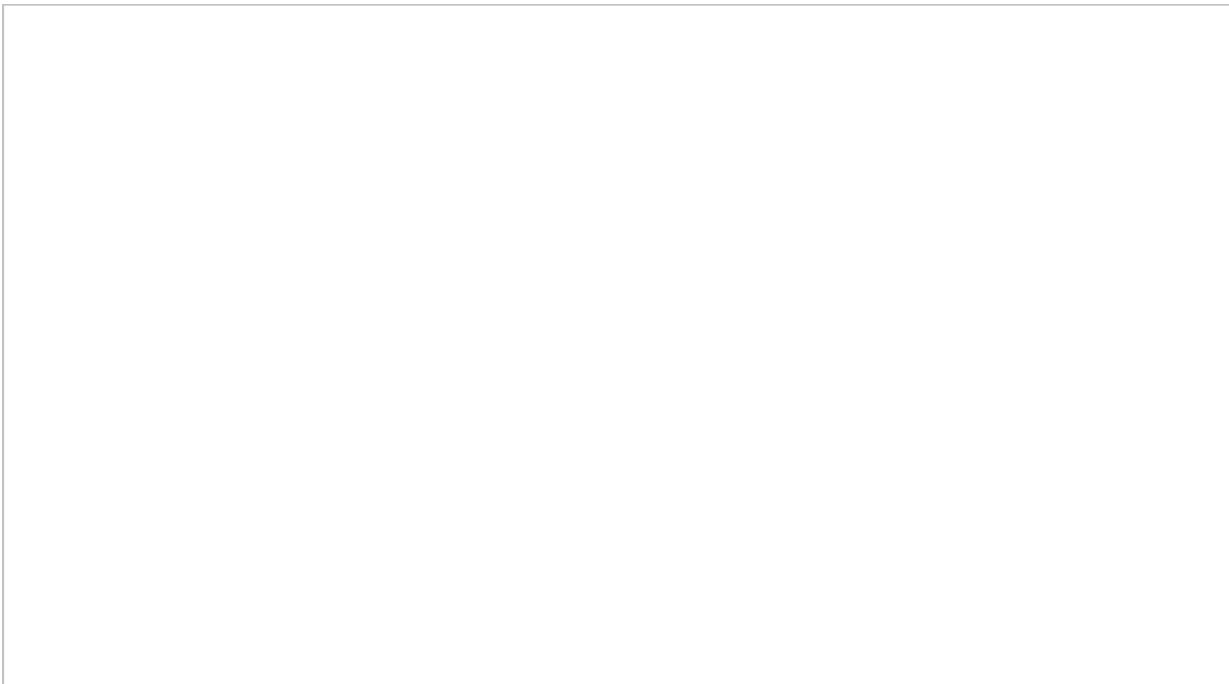


Image: GPS breadcrumbs aggregated from multiple in-service trips through East Remote, showing the variety of ways a bus can traverse East Remote.

Video of East Remote test: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/ByKehMpdpKcK5vqc8>

Option 3: Barn Theater Lot: Buses would essentially do a full loop of campus, pulling into the Barn Theater Lot after running counter-clockwise. The bus would then layover in the lot. When leaving the lot, the bus would turn right, and then make a u-turn at the Bay & High intersection before pulling into the Main Entrance bus stop (1341). This is something that TAPS' Clockwise Loop and Night Upper Campus buses already do many times each day. If Metro does not wish to serve the Main Entrance stop in this direction (since the 3 would already be serving the stops near the Main Entrance on High St), then the bus could turn left onto Coolidge Dr directly after leaving the Barn Theater Lot and skip the u-turn. It's important that the bus travels a different direction through campus inbound as it does outbound, in order to avoid a confusing situation where both inbound and outbound buses serve the exact same stop. Although taking longer than Quarry Plaza or East Remote, this routing has the advantage of serving every stop that Metro currently serves on campus, including the low-ridership stops in the meadow area of east campus.

Attachment A

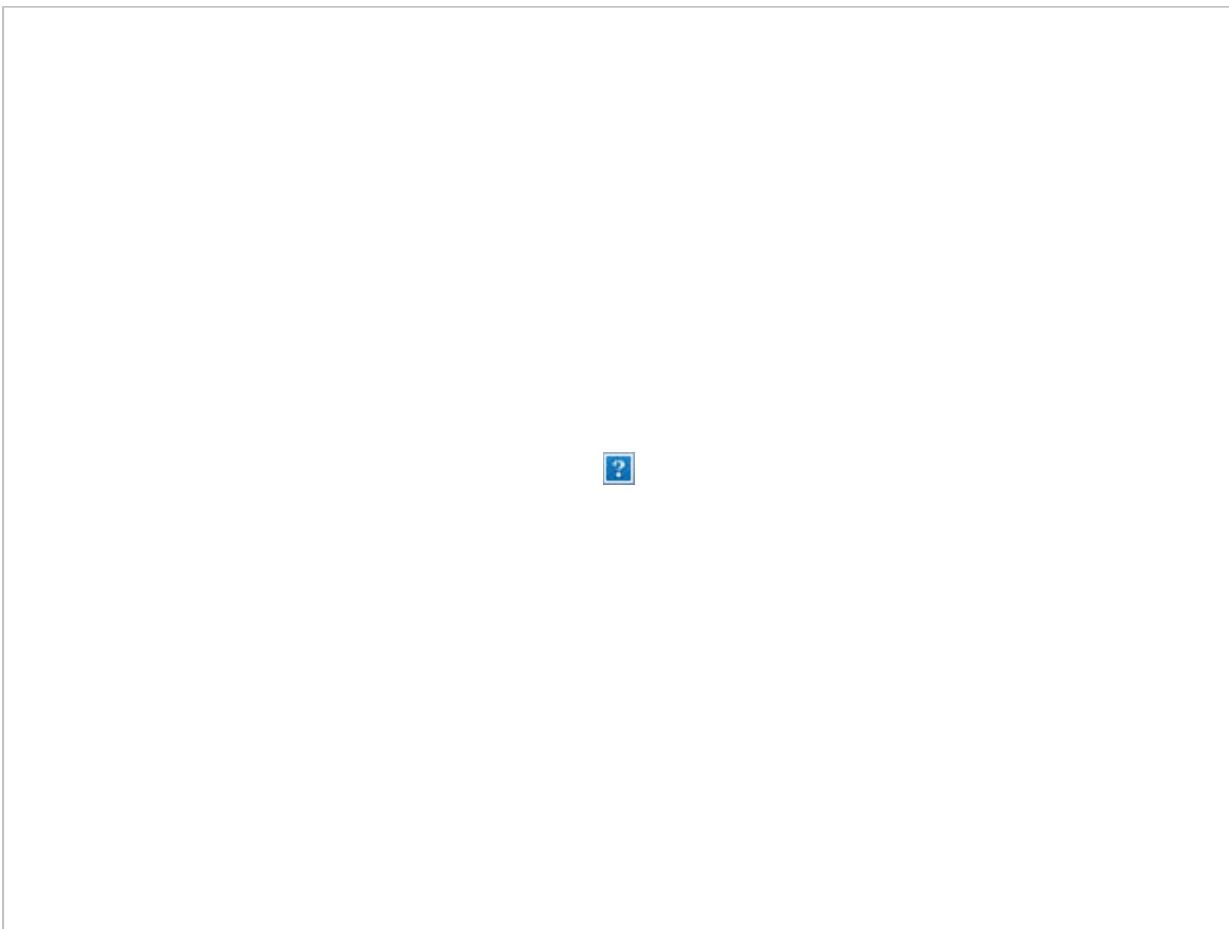


Image: GPS breadcrumbs aggregated from multiple in-service movements, showing the variety of turning movements made by buses in the Bay & High and Barn Theater area, including pullin in and out of the Barn Theater Lot and making a u-turn at the intersection.

Option 4: Quarry Plaza: After turning left from McLaughlin Dr onto Hagar Dr, the bus would proceed down the hill, turn right on Steinhart Way, and then immediately turn right into Quarry Plaza. Here, there is an existing red curb that allows for an ADA compliant bus stop where the bus could discharge passengers before turning around. After turning around in the Quarry Plaza lot, the bus would turn left on Steinhart Way, turn left on Hagar Dr, and pick up passengers for its inbound trip at the existing stop on Hagar Dr (2102). The bus operator noted that turning around in Quarry Plaza is only possible with the bike rack up, and the turning movements are difficult when there are a lot of parked cars. Although there are bathrooms in the adjacent Bay Tree Building, there's only sufficient space for a single bus to layover at a time without obstructing vehicle movement within the Quarry Plaza lot. For these reasons, we only recommend this option if none of the other proposed options are available. However, it is still better than what's in Metro's phase one proposal.

Attachment A

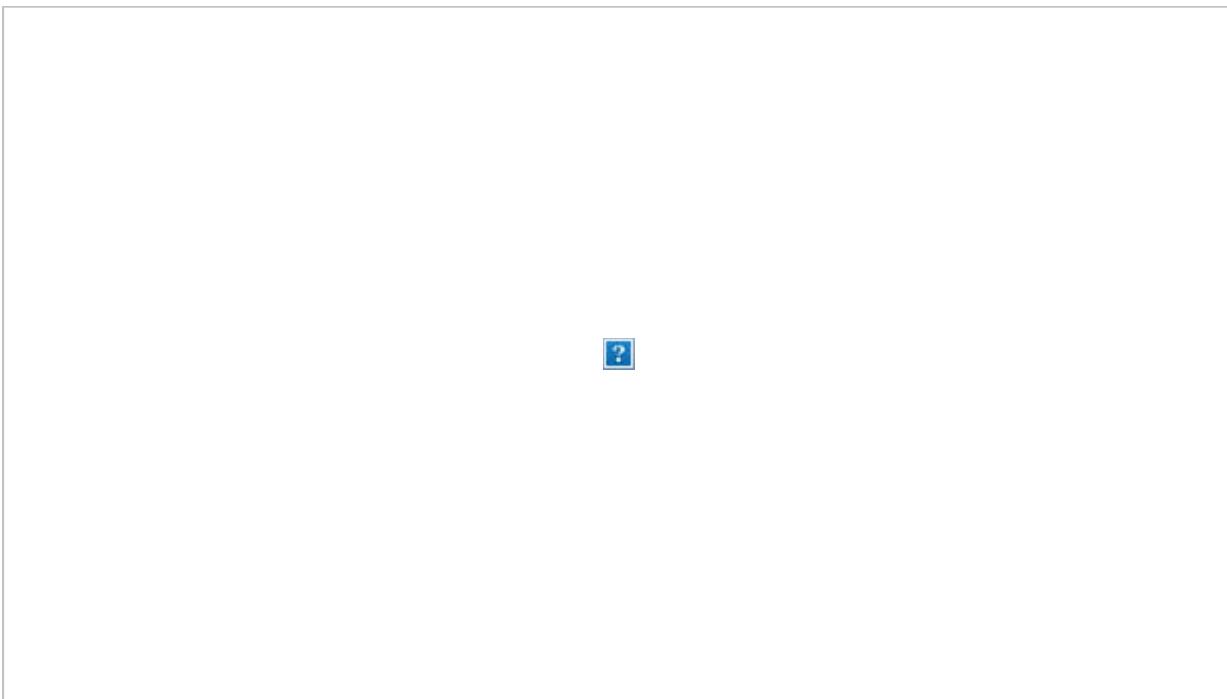


Image: GPS breadcrumbs from our test in Quarry Plaza. Note that we did not test turning left onto Hagar Dr from Steinhart Way, as we had already tested the tighter turn from Hagar Dr into Quarry Plaza.

Video of Quarry Plaza test: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/ftNLsvNd6bQQBEDv5>

After going through these proposed turnaround options, I would like to reiterate the benefits of having Route 3 (and maybe more Metro routes in the future) run directionally through the UCSC campus. It's very exciting that Metro will be doing this, and all we want changed is the turnaround location and where the bus enters campus. Here's a list of some of the benefits:

1. 30% increase in capacity since inbound and outbound journeys will no longer be on the bus at the same time
2. The ability to restrict short-on campus journeys through outbound “Drop Off Only” and inbound “Pick Up Only” buses on campus to ensure that there’s enough capacity for essential off-campus journeys.
3. Outbound delays no longer cascade onto inbound trips. The layover on campus will absorb any outbound delays, meaning that inbound trips can still depart on time.
- 4.

Attachment A

Riders will no longer have to sit at a timepoint during the busiest part of the route.

Currently, buses sometimes sit at Science Hill for 5 or more minutes. By replacing this mid-route timepoint with a layover at the end of the outbound segment, the bus will be empty while it waits to return inbound.

5.

If all Metro buses run directionally like this, then there will be a consistent side of the street for customers to wait if they are headed in the downtown direction. Currently, buses headed downtown board on either side of the street and students often run out into traffic to catch a bus on the other side.

6.

Round-trip journey times are reduced for the places on campus with the highest ridership.

We urge Metro to consider this feedback and implement one of these proposed campus routings for Route 3 instead of the existing plan in the Phase 1 proposal. These routings have been designed and tested by the people that know UCSC transportation the best with consideration of the needs of everyone affected, including students, bus operators, and the general public. By working together we can implement a solution that works best for everyone.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and please feel free to reach out to us and to the TAPS ATMs with any questions or comments you may have.

Best regards,

Rohan Tuli

rtuli@ucsc.edu

Material prepared by UCSC students: Rohan Tuli, Thomas Dillow, Aaron Brunckhurst, Jonathan Morris

Routing test conducted by TAPS staff: Adam Kraten, Troy Lanthrop, Dennis Cowell
GPS breadcrumbs provided by: Pinpoint AVL LLC

Attached for reference is TAPS' run times for Spring of 2023 to show the time differences

Attachment A

between the different routings. Please note that all of these times will be slightly slower for Metro buses as TAPS utilizes all-door boarding to reduce dwell times and Metro does not.

Attachment A

From: [Jessica de Wit](#)
To: boardinginquiries@scmtd.com
Cc: [Donna Bauer](#); [Elizabeth Rocha-Rocha](#)
Subject: support for ReImagine METRO phase 1 roll out this December
Date: Friday, September 22, 2023 11:19:11 AM

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Good morning METRO Board,

I'm participating in the METRO board meeting this morning on ZOOM. I am a METRO Advisory Committee member but today I'm writing as a Santa Cruz City employee commuting in and out of downtown. I appreciate the thoughtful approach METRO has taken with the service planning in the ReImagine METRO proposal. They've done an extensive amount of community outreach and engagement and I support and am excited to support the Phase 1 roll out this December.

Thank you,
Jessica de Wit
Housing Manager
City of Santa Cruz