

MINUTES*

MAC MEETING OF FEBRUARY 20, 2019



The METRO Advisory Committee (MAC) met on Wednesday, February 20, 2019 in the METRO Administrative Office located at 110 Vernon Street, in Santa Cruz, CA. *Minutes are “summary” minutes, not verbatim minutes.

1 CALL TO ORDER at 6:09 PM by Chair Elsea.

ROLL CALL: The following MAC Members were present, representing a quorum:

Veronica Elsea, Chair
Joseph Martinez, Vice Chair
Kevin Andrews
Jason Lopez

Cassity Mega
Michael Pisano
Becky Taylor

METRO EMPLOYEES AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WHO VOLUNTARILY INDICATED THEY WERE PRESENT (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER) THROUGH A SIGN IN SHEET OR VERBAL INTRODUCTION WERE:

Ciro Aguirre, METRO
Barrow Emerson, METRO
Isaac Holly, METRO

Pete Rasmussen, METRO
Brandon Freeman, SMART Local 23

2 COMMUNICATIONS TO THE METRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Chair Elsea announced METRO’s Title IV Policy is going to the Board of Directors on February 22, 2019 and MAC will have an opportunity to comment on it at MAC’s April 17, 2019 meeting.

Vice Chair Martinez mentioned that when he was at the Watsonville Transit Center a couple of weeks ago, Customer Service was on break for more than 15 minutes. The owners of Jessica Grocery were upset that riders were coming to them for bus information when Customer Service went on break.

Mr. Pisano requested METRO look into acquiring a couple of shelter enclosures at the Scotts Valley Transit Center. The benches get wet in stormy weather and the existing overhang does not protect riders.

Mr. Pisano inquired if METRO has considered having an express bus from Watsonville to the Scotts Valley Transit Center, pointing out that Scotts Valley has several large employers. He mentioned that the 91X and 35A just miss each other by a few minutes so one has to wait another one-half hour to make the next connection. COO Aguirre, Chief Operations Officer, said that option is not being considered at this time.

Mr. Lopez mentioned the Hwy. 17 bus had been rerouted due to road closures caused by the inclement weather and this rerouting has caused confusion for riders. He asked how that decision is determined. COO Aguirre said it depends on the reason and length of the closure. The Dispatch Supervisor evaluates the information and then makes the call to reroute if necessary. Mr. Lopez asked if the Bus Operator could communicate that to the riders when they get on the bus. Mr. Aguirre said he would talk to the Bus Operators. Chair Elsea added that a text message was sent; however, if riders have not subscribed to the service alerts, they would not know that.

Chair Elsea requested school term service alerts. Mr. Emerson, Planning and Development Director, said service alerts will be sent out starting in March 2019 that involve school term changes. Mr. Pisano complimented the Dispatchers for getting alerts sent out in a timely manner.

Chair Elsea inquired about the high volume of mechanical failures. COO Aguirre responded that in order to prepare the VTA buses acquired, we have had to divert labor resources from our regular fleet maintenance to retrofit the VTA buses (i.e., exchange the fare boxes, put in the radio and camera systems, etc.)

Ms. Mega noticed that one of the Route 71 buses inbound at 2:15 PM keeps saying June 22, 1999 on the scroll. COO Aguirre said he would look into this.

Mr. Pisano congratulated METRO on the VTA deal and asked if METRO has reached out to other agencies for similar deals. COO Aguirre replied, “No; MST is using strictly diesel buses and we are mandated to get away from diesel. The VTA buses are diesel electric hybrids.”

Mr. Andrews asked how much does a new bus cost outright. Mr. Emerson said a CNG bus is approximately \$750,000 and an electric bus is \$1 million.

Vice Chair Martinez asked who rented the space in Pacific Station. COO Aguirre said it is a vendor named Local Jerk.

3 ACCEPT AND FILE MINUTES FROM THE METRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF OCTOBER 17, 2018

MOTION: ACCEPT AND FILE MINUTES FROM THE METRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF OCTOBER 17, 2018

MOTION: MEGA

SECOND: PISANO

AYES: ELSEA, MARTINEZ, ANDREWS, LOPEZ, MEGA, PISANO, AND TAYLOR

NAYES: NONE

ABSTAIN: NONE

MOTION CARRIED: UNANIMOUS

4 COMMUNICATIONS FROM METRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Mr. Pisano commented on his presentation to the Board of Directors on January 25, 2019. He addressed the positive things that have affected METRO over the last several years—getting over the \$6 million deficit, passage of Measure D, defeat of Proposition 6, and passage of SB1. He is now watching what will happen with housing and transportation in Governor Newsom’s budget proposal.

5 UPDATE ON INTELLIGENT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM FOR FIXED-ROUTE FLEET

Isaac Holly, IT and ITS Director, gave a status update on the Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) for the fixed-route fleet. The IT Department is providing data on METRO routes and Bus Operator information so the vendor can build the back end of the system. In early to mid-April, the first equipment will be installed. In late April, we will start installing the equipment on the rest of the fleet. Chair Elsea asked how passengers would access information. Mr. Holly replied that METRO would not go live until all the buses are fitted with these systems. Once that happens, we will then roll out the real time application. METRO is working with the vendor so that ADA standards are met.

Mr. Pisano asked if there would be signage at the transit centers. Mr. Holly replied that the initial stage of the project is to have real time signage at all of the transit centers. He is reviewing sign options with regard to accessibility.

Chair Elsea asked how riders would be informed of the upgrades. Mr. Holly said METRO would reach out to riders and the community. Mr. Holly said he would be available to give an update at the April 17, 2019 MAC meeting.

6 TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT (TDM) AND METRO'S ROLE

Mr. Pisano mentioned that he went to a neighborhood forum on Jump Bikes and the speaker was talking about Transportation Demand Management (TDM). Mr. Pisano reached out to the speaker with a C-SPAN documentary that discussed a TDM system. She responded that Monterey is using 831 and the City of Santa Cruz is looking to partner with the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC) to do some sort of incentive based TDM. Mr. Pisano said the system comes up with ways to carpool, Uber, and Lyft but nothing for buses because there is no data available. Mr. Emerson said METRO is familiar with the program that Santa Cruz and the SCCRTC are working on and suggested he discuss how METRO will or won't fit into that program at the April 17, 2019 MAC meeting.

7 SERVICE PLANNING UPDATE

Mr. Emerson introduced Pete Rasmussen, Transportation Planner, and touched on fare restructuring. METRO started fare restructuring in 2018 and paused while Proposition 6's fate was being determined. It is now part of FY20's planning exercise. This will be about fare payment technology and presented to the Board of Directors and public for review.

Mr. Emerson discussed the ridership reports for the second quarter of FY19, comparing October/November/December from FY18 to FY19. Fixed route ridership was down 1.5%, local ridership was down 1.5%, and UCSC ridership was down 1.7%. Cabrillo ridership increased 6.6%. Hwy. 17 ridership decreased 0.9%. Fewer passengers bought 31-day passes and 15-ride passes increased by 1%.

COO Aguirre noted that Mr. Emerson's team has added a one-way pass that you can buy with a credit card at the window or TVM. This has been very popular and successful.

This winter, METRO realigned the Cabrillo route so that it took the bus closer to the Watsonville Campus in the evenings, allowing a safer environment for students. Ex-Officio Director Alta Northcutt has been promoting this change.

Santa Cruz City Council approved METRO supplying bus passes to all 4,000 employees who work in downtown Santa Cruz. It could be four to five months before the logistics are completed.

Mr. Rasmussen is issuing an RFP for a mobile ticketing application. We will start this program on the Hwy. 17 Route and assess those results before introducing it to the rest of the system.

Spring service begins on March 7, 2019. Mr. Pisano asked if the buses would be operating on both sides of Scotts Valley Drive. Mr. Emerson said that is not happening at this time.

Onboard and online surveys will take place this spring to gather information (i.e., how many times one takes the bus, why take the bus, how many cars owned, etc.) to be used as a benchmark.

We are advertising for the position of Marketing, Communications and Customer Service Director. Mr. Emerson said that position will have two primary functions—customer service and increasing ridership.

We anticipate returning the leased buses in the next month or two.

This fall, we will review the service routes on the west side of Santa Cruz.

We anticipate getting our first electric bus delivered in February 2020 so by summer or fall 2020 we can introduce the Watsonville circulator. Starting this fall, Vice Chair Martinez, along with former Director Hagen, will begin a public outreach process. Chair Elsea asked if there had been modifications to the plans with regard to the percentage of underserved neighborhoods that had to be met. Mr. Emerson said that each year Low Carbon Transit

Operations Program (LCTOP) guidelines change slightly. Since Watsonville is a designated disadvantaged area, our plan to run a local service qualifies.

Chair Elsea mentioned that Lift Line has a grant to get two electric buses and they have the charging station. COO Aguirre explained that Lift Line did not meet the design criteria, so the delivery of their vehicles has been postponed.

Mr. Emerson gave an update on METRO's 10-Year Strategic Plan. The Board of Directors and METRO's management team established seven strategic priorities in the fall of 2018. Management has proposed tactical initiatives in support of the plan and the Board of Directors directed METRO staff to develop the implementation of the plan at the January 25, 2019 meeting.

Mr. Emerson also gave an update on concerns raised at the October 17, 2018 meeting:

- The enunciator problem has been fixed on the buses.
- We are reviewing the standing benches concept presented by Mr. Pisano. A viable option may be semi-seats.
- METRO's Facility Department went out to Main and Clifford Streets to review the bench that is being moved around. They are working on anchoring it.

Ms. Mega mentioned the 91X being late at the February 20, 2019 meeting. Mr. Emerson requested that any MAC member contact him when that happens and report the date and time so we can track the data.

Mr. Pisano asked if METRO is involved with hiring the new UCSC Transportation and Parking Services (TAPS) Director. Mr. Emerson said we're currently working with the acting replacement."

8 UPDATE ON PROPOSITION 6 ELECTION RESULTS

Mr. Emerson responded to Mr. Pisano posing what the reality is following the defeat of Proposition 6. It saved us financially and METRO is on the same footing as eight months ago. We established a \$3 million annual capital replacement budget so we are able to fund a replacement fleet.

The second thing Mr. Pisano brought up was tying housing to transportation. There are currently no bills on that topic but the California Transit Association is following the issue.

Vice Chair Martinez asked if it is good for METRO that the Governor is putting a stop to the rail system. Mr. Emerson said he did not think it was being stopped but rather just slowed down.

9 FLIXBUS USE OF STOP AT PACIFIC STATION TRANSIT CENTER

COO Aguirre presented information on Flixbus and how they reached out to METRO to use the Pacific Station Transit Center as one of their stops on trips between San Francisco and San Diego. The agreement is to stop at the Pacific Station twice a day for boarding and alighting. Flixbus and METRO agreed to an \$11.00 per stop licensing fee and Flixbus will work around METRO's scheduled routes so as not to interfere with METRO's service.

10 UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTING POLICY: USE OF FIXED ROUTE SERVICES AND TRANSIT FACILITIES, INCLUDING PASSENGER CODE OF CONDUCT AND SERVICE SUSPENSION/EXCLUSION

Chair Elsea stated the concern raised at the October 17, 2018 MAC meeting was how METRO will reach out to riders when this policy goes into effect and the role the Marketing, Communications and Customer Service Director will play in this outreach. COO Aguirre said the policy provides Security, Customer Service, and Bus Operators a means to address acceptable/unacceptable behavior from riders. Ms. Mega asked if the Bus Operators are

already following the policy. COO Aguirre said to an extent. Mr. Freeman, SMART Local 32, pointed out that all Bus Operators need training first, but we cannot shut down the routes to do that so we have to balance the training with providing service. Mr. Pisano commented that he would like to see the policy presented in a positive way with user-friendly posters. Ms. Mega elaborated that in Vancouver they use cute animals to make the points and everyone has access to the information. Chair Elsea feels it is important to have the information on the website and available at the transit stations. COO Aguirre replied that METRO would make sure everyone would have access to the information. Mr. Andrews commented that METRO's Bus Operators are phenomenal compared to other agencies. Chair Elsea added that METRO's Bus Operators go the extra mile and are understanding and patient.

11 ADDITIONAL BUS PASSES FOR MAC MEMBERS

Chair Elsea gave some history of past practices where MAC members received three vouchers in the past because METRO wanted MAC members on the system to provide input on its service. The MAC bylaws state that we cannot receive compensation for serving on this committee. COO Aguirre reviewed the bylaws and came to the same conclusion. Mr. Pisano said we used to have monthly meetings and got three vouchers but also talked about discounted bus passes. He added that if we are using the system and reporting back, that adds value to METRO. Chair Elsea said there was discussion on the MAC Ad Hoc Committee about what we legally can and cannot do. COO Aguirre said that if this is a concern to the committee, they should take it up with the CEO.

12 COMMUNICATIONS TO THE SANTA CRUZ METRO CEO

None.

13 COMMUNICATIONS TO THE SANTA CRUZ METRO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

None.

14 ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING AGENDA

- Review Title VI Policy Changes
- Update on Intelligent Transportation System
- Presentation of Preliminary Budget for FY20 and FY21
- Update on Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

15 DISTRIBUTION OF VOUCHER

Vouchers distributed by Ciro Aguirre.

16 ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 7:42 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Bauer

Administrative Assistant