



DATE: August 23, 2024
TO: Board of Directors
FROM: John Urgo, Planning & Development Manager
SUBJECT: ACCEPT AND FILE THE METRO SYSTEM RIDERSHIP REPORTS FOR THE FOURTH QUARTER OF FY24

I. RECOMMENDED ACTION

That the Board of Directors accept and file the METRO system ridership report for the Fourth quarter of FY24

II. SUMMARY

- FY24 Q4 total ridership increased 7.0% (+67,220) compared to FY23 Q4. However, FY24 Q4 ridership is -27.7% (-393,290) compared to FY19 Q4.
- Local non-student ridership decreased 0.2% (-702) and is -30.5% (-133,319) compared to FY19 Q4.
- Highway 17 (Hwy 17) ridership decreased 10.0% (3,920) and is -51.8% (-38,073) compared to FY19 Q4.
- UCSC ridership increased 6.1% (+32,162) and is -31.0% (-252,062) compared to FY19 Q4.
- Cabrillo College ridership increased 41.1% (+13,044) and is -38.2% (-27,684) compared to FY19 Q4.
- Youth (18 and under) ridership increased 47.4% (+26,636) compared to FY23 Q4.

III. DISCUSSION/BACKGROUND

This report contains ridership summaries and ridership by route for Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO) fixed route bus service for the Fourth quarter (Q4) of FY24, April 1 – June 30, 2024. Quarterly ridership reports keep the Board of Directors (Board) apprised of METRO's ridership statistics and ridership trends:

- Attachment A shows system-wide and college student ridership statistics for Q4 of FY24 and makes year-over-year comparisons with ridership statistics.
- Attachment B shows the average ridership and pass/fare usage per route and system wide.
- Attachment C shows the weekly ridership comparison for Q4 of FY24-23.

Total Fixed Route Ridership

In FY24 Q4, METRO operated 22 Local routes and 1 Commuter route over Highway 17 (Hwy 17). In 2022, METRO set a goal of doubling ridership in five years, to seven million passenger trips by FY27, a level last achieved in the early 2000s. To meet this goal, ridership would need to increase 15 per cent per year on average.

In FY24 Q4, total fixed-route ridership increased 7.0%. Vehicle Revenue Hours (VRH) for total fixed-route service increased 10.4%. There was a 10.0% increase in VRH operated on local routes (91.4% of total fixed-route VRH) and a 15.0% increase in VRH on the Hwy 17.

Total local route ridership increased 7.7%. Average weekday and weekend ridership increased 8.3% (+971 daily boardings) and 5.3% (+346 daily boardings), respectively. The increase in local boardings was assumed by the Student Pass segment of METRO's ridership, which comprises UCSC, Cabrillo, and Youth ridership.

Hwy 17 ridership decreased 10.0%. Average weekday decreased 7.1% (-31 daily boardings) and weekend ridership decreased 17.2% (-74 daily boardings). With the long-term goal of growing Hwy 17 ridership, METRO operated 15.0% more VRH on the Hwy 17 to increase the frequency of service (8.6% of total fixed route VRH).

The Student Pass ridership {UCSC, Cabrillo and Youth}, which comprised 69.3% of local ridership, increased 11.7% (+71,842) in Q4. Youth, Cabrillo, and UCSC ridership grew 47.4% (+26,636), 41.1% (+13,044) and 6.1% (+32,162), respectively. UCSC encompassed 81.4% Student Pass boardings and 56.5 % of all local boardings. While UCSC ridership increased 6.1%, the protests on campus for the last few weeks of UCSC spring quarter and the implementation of remote learning in response likely reduced UCSC transit usage in Q4.

Regular and Discount Passes & Fares

Regular cash usage on total fixed-route service increased 3.7% (+3,827 boardings). Cash usage increased 2.9% on local routes (+2,634 boardings) and 9.6% on Hwy 17 (+1,193 boardings). Regular pass usage increased 4.1% (+5,625). Pass and SplashPass usage increased 5.6% and 20.3%, respectively. Regular Hwy 17 pass and SplashPass use declined 36.6% (-3,429 boardings) and 8.8% (-1,207 boardings), respectively.

Total Discount pass and cash usage decreased 19.0% (-10,856 boardings) and 7.1% (-3,218 boardings), respectively when compared to Q4 of FY23. While there was an overall decrease in Discount pass ridership, there was a 44.7%

(+2,259 boardings) and 51.7% (+1,384 boardings) rise in Discount mobile pass usage on local and Hwy 17 route(s), respectively.

Weekly Ridership Growth

UCSC spring quarter began on the first day of Q4 of FY24, and ridership was, on average, 29.8% greater than year-over-year ridership in the same week in FY23. From mid-May to mid-June, average weekly ridership decreased 15.5%, likely in response to disruptions to service and the implementation of remote learning in response to the protests on the UCSC campus. Average weekly ridership increases 12.6% in the latter half of June.

Ridership by Revenue Hour

FY24 Q4 average weekday ridership per vehicle revenue hour (VRH) on all routes was 21.5 riders and weekend ridership per VRH was 17.3 riders. Compared to Q4 of FY23, weekday riders per VRH decreased 0.6% (less than 1 boarding/VRH) and weekend riders per VRH decreased 12.4% (-2 boardings/VRH). The weekday route with the highest average passenger load per VRH was route 19 UCSC via West Gate - Bay with 45.9 riders per VRH. The weekend route with the largest average passenger load was also the route 19 UCSC via West Gate - Bay with an average of 38.4 riders per VRH.

Reimagine METRO Route Performance Comparison

As part of the service redesign, the following routes were introduced or modified in FY24: 1 (replacing the route 71), 2 (replacing the route(s) 69A/W), 18, 19, 55, 71, 72, 73 (replacing the rural portion of the 71), 78, and 79. This was done to assist in METRO's goal of doubling ridership to seven million passenger trips by FY27. The first changes were implemented in December 2023 (the end of FY24 Q2).

In Q4 of FY24, VRH increased on the routes 18 (+63.7%) and 19 (+74.2% VRH), which serve the UCSC and Westside region, as well as the local Watsonville route 79 (+84.6%). The total boardings on the route(s) 18, 19, and 79 increased 19.9%, 35.2%, and 63.7%, respectively. While total boardings increased, boardings per VRH decreased on the route(s) 18 by 15 boardings per VRH (-26.8%). The route 19 decreased by 13 boardings per VRH (-22.4%). The route 79 decreased by 1 boardings per hour (-11.3%).

The route(s) 1, 73, 2, 55, and 72 were modified or introduced as revisions of routes that were discontinued in FY24 Q2. The route(s) 1, 73, and 2 operated as replacement routes for the 71 and 69A/W, which served the Cabrillo & South County region. The route 55, which served Mid-County and Cabrillo College

added service to La Selva beach and the route 72 reduced its coverage in Local Watsonville by roughly 1.8 miles.

The total boardings on the route 1 decreased 7.4% (-9,136 boardings), as compared to the route 71 operated in FY23 Q4. However, the 73, which covered the rural areas of the discontinued 71 and served Aptos High and Cabrillo College had 23,807 boardings in Q4. The combined route 1 and route 73 boardings per VRH increased 20.3% (3 boardings/VRH). Total route 2 boardings increased 15.3% (+15,209 boardings) when compared against the 69A/W in Q4 of FY23. Boardings per VRH on the route 2 increased 91.2% (+13 boardings/VRH). Total boardings and boardings per VRH on the route 55 decreased 2.1% (-99 boardings) and 7.0 % (less than 1 boardings/VRH), respectively. There was a decrease in total boardings -7.3% (-700 boardings) and boardings/VRH -4.9% (less than 1 boarding/VRH) on the route 72, as well.

The route 73, 78, and 90X did not have a corresponding route operating in Q4 of FY23. The 90X was introduced as an Express route between Santa Cruz and Watsonville, operating as a modified version of the old 91X that we last offered in Q2 of FY23. The 78 was introduced to cover the local Watsonville service areas that were no longer served by the 72 as well as to offer service to the new South County Government Center that opened in May. In Q4, the total boardings of the route(s) 73, 90X, and 78 were 23,807, 7,576, and 3,543, respectively.

IV. STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES ALIGNMENT

This report aligns with METRO's Service Quality and Delivery strategic priority.

V. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS/IMPACT

Revenue derived from passenger fares and passes was reflected in the FY24 operating budget. There may be a decline in overall cash fares resulting from the Youth Cruz Free program and other Pass Programs. Farebox cash revenue in Q4 of FY24 was 1.7% less (-\$5,720.17) compared to Q4 in FY23.

VI. CHANGES FROM COMMITTEE

N/A

VII. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

There are no alternatives to consider.

VIII. ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A:** Quarterly System Ridership Summary for FY24 Q4 April 1 – June 30, 2024
- Attachment B:** Quarterly Average Ridership by Route Report for FY24 Q4 April 1 – June 30, 2024
- Attachment C:** Quarterly Ridership by Week for FY24 Q4 April 1 – June 30, 2024

Prepared by: Cayla Hill, Planning Analyst

IX. APPROVALS

John Urgo
Planning and Development Director

Approved as to fiscal impact:
Chuck Farmer, CFO

Michael Tree, CEO/General Manager

Quarterly System Ridership Summary

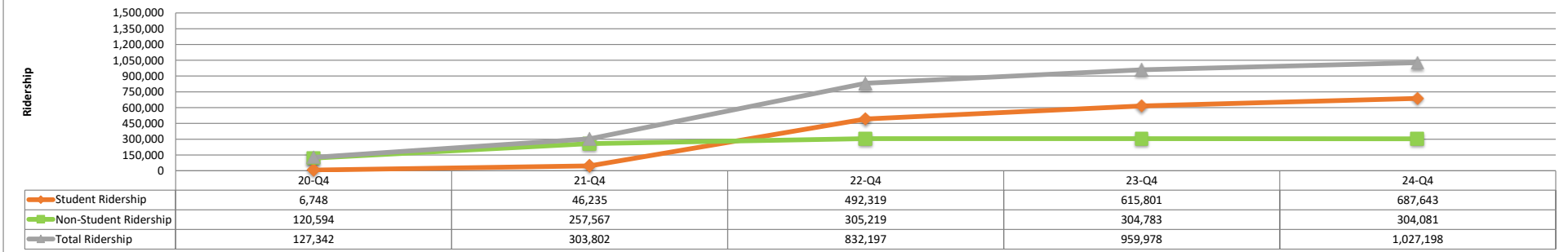
FY24 Q4 (April 1 - June 30, 2024)

Calendar Operating Days	Discounted Pass Usage (Senior/Disabled)				Regular Pass Usage							
	This Year	Last Year	FY24 Q4	FY23 Q4	Difference	% Change	FY24 Q4	FY23 Q4	Difference	% Change		
Weekdays	65	65	Local Pass Usage *	37,742	50,824	(13,082)	-25.7%	Local Pass Usage *	93,503	88,551	4,952	5.6%
			* Includes Smartcard and Mag-stripe passes					* Includes Misc. boardings (Key presses, such as Free boardings, excluding Student passes, Smartcard and Mag-stripe passes)				
Weekends	26	26	Hwy 17 Pass Usage *	159	574	(415)	-72.3%	Hwy 17 Pass Usage *	5,952	9,381	(3,429)	-36.6%
			* Includes Smartcard and Mag-stripe passes					*Includes Misc. Boardings (Key Presses), Smartcard and Mag-stripe passes				
UCSC Days of Instruction *	53	53	Local Mobile Pass Usage *	7,317	5,058	2,259	44.7%	Local Mobile Pass Usage *	31,512	26,203	5,309	20.3%
			* Includes general public use for discounted fare adults					* Includes general public use for full fare adults and Pass Program riders using SplashPass				
Cabrillo Days of Instruction *	39	40	Hwy 17 Mobile Pass Usage *	1,121	739	382	51.7%	Hwy 17 Mobile Pass Usage *	12,448	13,655	(1,207)	-8.8%
			* Includes general public use for discounted fare adults					* Includes general public use for full fare adults				
			Total Pass Usage	46,339	57,195	(10,856)	-19.0%	Total Pass Usage	143,415	137,790	5,625	4.1%

Discounted Cash Usage (Senior/Disabled)				Regular Cash Usage					
	FY24 Q4	FY23 Q4	Difference	% Change		FY24 Q4	FY23 Q4	Difference	% Change
Local Single Cash Fare	39,642	42,416	(2,774)	-6.5%	Local Single Cash Fare	94,365	91,731	2,634	2.9%
Hwy 17 Single Cash Fare	2,182	2,626	(444)	-16.9%	Hwy 17 Single Cash Fare	13,612	12,419	1,193	9.6%
Total Cash Usage	41,824	45,042	(3,218)	-7.1%	Total Cash Usage	107,977	104,150	3,827	3.7%

System Totals				Student Pass Program Totals					
	FY24 Q4	FY23 Q4	Difference	% Change		FY24 Q4	FY23 Q4	Difference	% Change
Local Fixed Route	991,724	920,584	71,140	7.7%	UCSC	559,970	527,808	32,162	6.1%
Highway 17 Express	35,474	39,394	(3,920)	-10.0%	Cabrillo	44,807	31,763	13,044	41.1%
					Youth	82,866	56,230	26,636	47.4%
System Total	1,027,198	959,978	67,220	7.0%	Student Total	687,643	615,801	71,842	11.7%

Fourth Quarter Ridership - System Totals



Quarterly Average Ridership by Route Report

April 1 - June 30, 2024		Average Weekday Ridership per VRH						Average Weekend Ridership per VRH					
Route	Corridor	Total Riders	UCSC Riders %	Cabrillo Riders %	Youth Riders %	Discount Fares & Passes %	Regular Fares & Passes %	Total Riders	UCSC Riders %	Cabrillo Riders %	Youth Riders %	Discount Fares & Passes %	Regular Fares & Passes %
UCSC													
3A	UCSC/Capitola Mall/Live Oak via East Cliff	23.8	74.9%	1.4%	5.8%	6.1%	11.8%	23.0	76.0%	1.4%	7.1%	4.9%	10.4%
3B	UCSC/Capitola Mall/Live Oak via 17th/Brommer	23.0	67.0%	1.7%	9.7%	7.3%	14.3%	19.4	70.8%	1.5%	11.0%	7.1%	9.7%
11	UCSC via West Gate - High	7.9	79.8%	0.8%	7.3%	1.1%	11.0%	3.9	63.6%	0.9%	22.1%	2.0%	11.4%
18	UCSC via Main Gate - Mission	41.6	94.0%	0.4%	0.6%	0.7%	4.2%	32.3	94.4%	0.6%	1.3%	0.8%	2.9%
19	UCSC via West Gate - Bay	45.9	93.5%	0.5%	0.8%	0.9%	4.3%	38.4	92.8%	0.5%	1.6%	1.2%	4.0%
20	UCSC via Main Gate - Delaware	35.0	91.0%	0.6%	1.0%	1.6%	5.9%	25.0	91.8%	0.6%	1.6%	1.1%	4.9%
Intercity													
1	Soquel/Cabrillo/Airport	25.7	5.3%	15.8%	18.7%	17.5%	42.8%	16.1	5.7%	6.0%	36.4%	19.1%	32.8%
2	Capitola/Cabrillo/Main	30.9	6.2%	13.9%	20.2%	16.8%	43.0%	20.7	7.3%	6.0%	34.5%	19.7%	32.5%
90X	Express	4.8	6.8%	3.8%	22.4%	13.1%	53.9%	8.0	1.7%	6.0%	25.2%	16.5%	50.6%
Rural													
35	Hwy 9/Scotts Valley	10.6	5.8%	4.4%	32.6%	13.5%	43.7%	8.8	5.5%	4.1%	25.7%	16.5%	48.3%
40	Highway 1 - Davenport	12.2	5.3%	2.2%	66.2%	2.4%	23.9%	4.3	16.3%	7.0%	7.0%	2.3%	67.4%
41	Empire Grade - Bonny Doon	4.9	6.6%	2.3%	43.6%	6.4%	41.1%	1.6	22.2%	2.8%	27.8%	13.9%	33.3%
42	Davenport/Bonny Doon	5.2	15.3%	1.5%	47.5%	7.8%	27.9%	4.1	25.3%	1.6%	20.4%	18.8%	33.9%
73	Soquel/Freedom/Cabrillo	9.3	0.8%	13.9%	41.4%	12.8%	31.0%	9.0	2.5%	8.2%	22.2%	22.0%	45.1%
Local													
4	River/Harvey West/Emeline	6.0	10.3%	2.7%	0.9%	24.4%	61.6%	1.0	0.0%	2.9%	17.6%	14.7%	64.7%
55	Capitola/Rio Del Mar/La Selva	5.7	3.1%	29.8%	18.0%	17.9%	31.3%	5.3	8.8%	9.2%	13.6%	31.0%	37.4%
72	Green Valley - Pinto lake	9.4	0.6%	7.6%	34.5%	20.1%	37.1%	2.4	0.4%	6.5%	25.0%	22.5%	45.7%
74S	PVHS/Watsonville Hospital	17.2	0.1%	2.1%	89.5%	2.5%	5.8%						
75	Green Valley - Wheelock	11.3	0.5%	4.6%	29.2%	25.8%	39.8%	7.8	0.3%	3.5%	20.1%	33.3%	42.9%
78	Green Valley - Ohlone	3.5	0.4%	7.2%	53.8%	14.7%	23.9%	1.9	0.3%	7.8%	46.2%	13.0%	32.7%
79	East Lake	5.1	1.0%	11.5%	39.3%	14.7%	33.6%	4.2	0.1%	5.4%	25.8%	26.2%	42.5%
Commuter													
Hwy 17	Hwy 17 Express	8.4	-	-	-	6.8%	93.2%	8.2	-	-	-	6.1%	93.9%
Avg. Ridership per VRH		21.5	54.6%	4.8%	10.9%	7.6%	22.1%	17.3	54.1%	2.5%	13.5%	8.8%	21.0%

39 Calendar School Days of Cabrillo
 53 Calendar School Days of UCSC
 33 Calendar School Days of SJSU

Weekly Ridership Graph FY24-23 Q4 Comparison

