

# MINUTES\*

MAC MEETING OF AUGUST 19, 2020



The METRO Advisory Committee (MAC) met on Wednesday, August 19, 2020. The meeting was held via teleconference. \*Minutes are “summary” minutes, not verbatim minutes.

**1. CALL TO ORDER** at 6:02 PM.

**2. ROLL CALL** - The following MAC Members were present via teleconference, representing a quorum:

Veronica Elsea, Chair	Becky Taylor
Joseph Martinez, Vice Chair	James Von Hendy
Michael Pisano	

Jessica de Wit was an excused absence.

Additional METRO staff and presenters:

Alex Clifford, CEO/General Manager	John Urgo, Planning & Development Director
Margo Ross, Chief Operations Officer	Rina Solorio, Interim Asst. Operations Manager
Isaac Holly, IT and ITS Director	Brandon Freeman, Bus Operator
Danielle Glagola, Marketing, Communications, & Customer Service Director	Donna Bauer, Administrative Specialist

**3. COMMUNICATIONS TO THE METRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Mr. Pisano thanked METRO for helping San Lorenzo Valley residents evacuate from the CZU Lightning Complex Fire. Alex Clifford, CEO/General Manager, mentioned that Brandon Freeman, Bus Operator, was one of the drivers who helped with the evacuations. The Committee thanked Mr. Freeman for his dedication.

Mr. Pisano attended an Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee (E&D TAC) meeting and asked Caltrans to improve the benches at the Pasatiempo Bus Stop. Caltrans indicated that this is not within their jurisdiction and referred him to METRO. Chair Elsea suggested this item be added to the next MAC agenda to give METRO’s staff an opportunity to review the situation. CEO Clifford suggested that John Urgo, Planning and Development Director, look into this and present his findings at the next meeting.

Chair Elsea encouraged everyone to fill out their census form, reminding all that being counted has a major effect on the money METRO receives for transportation from the federal government.

Vice Chair Martinez mentioned the COVID-19 case at METRO. He expressed concern that the painter who did a mural for METRO was now circulating this story on Facebook. He suggested that METRO reach out to the painter if deemed appropriate.

**3.a – Resignation Letter of Jason Lopez**

Chair Elsea thanked Jason for his service.

**3.b – Veronica Elsea Email & METRO Response**

Chair Elsea thanked Rina Solorio, Interim Assistant Operations Manager, for responding so quickly to her email and said the turnaround was impressive.

**4. RECEIVE AND FILE MINUTES FROM THE METRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF JUNE 17, 2020**

**MOTION: ACCEPT AND FILE THE MINUTES FROM THE METRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF JUNE 17, 2020**

**MOTION: VON HENDY**

**SECOND: TAYLOR**

**MOTION PASSED WITH 5 AYES: Elsea, Martinez, Pisano, Taylor, and Von Hendy. de Wit was absent.**

**5. COMMUNICATIONS FROM METRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE (MAC)**

Chair Elsea reported she attended the June 26, 2020 Board of Directors (Board) meeting and bragged to the Board about MAC's attendance and participation within the group. She pointed out that the only time MAC Committee Members leave is when they move out of town.

She highlighted items MAC has been working on (e.g., thanking the Bus Operators for their efforts in the COVID-19 environment; being brought up-to-date on the CARES Act money METRO received; seeking updates on the transit centers' food vendors, public restrooms, service changes; addressing capacity on METRO buses to avoid pass ups; thanking Finance for developing their budget models; receiving a demonstration on the mobile ticketing app; receiving an explanation as to why the website couldn't automatically be made adaptable to mobile devices; and discussing alternative fuels and future buses). MAC is appreciative for the introduction of the new METRO directors.

**6. INTRODUCTION OF DANIELLE GLAGOLA, MARKETING, COMMUNICATIONS & CUSTOMER SERVICE DIRECTOR**

CEO Clifford introduced Director Glagola as the new Marketing, Communications and Customer Service Director. She gave a synopsis of her background and current projects she is working on at METRO.

Chair Elsea briefly described MAC's involvement in the marketing process/outreach for the Code of Conduct Policy METRO has developed. She invited Director Glagola to come back to MAC with some marketing ideas after reviewing the policy.

Chair Elsea inquired if Director Glagola will train the Customer Service Representatives. Director Glagola responded that Manager Solorio has been helping with the training of the Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) while she has dedicated her time to marketing projects.

**7. COVID-19 UPDATE**

CEO Clifford gave a list of COVID-19 preparations taken and presented to the Board in June and will address the Board on August 28, 2020 with additional steps taken (e.g., deploying handwashing stations to both Watsonville and Scotts Valley Transit Centers; installing hand sanitizer dispensers on the buses; installing plastic sneeze barriers in between seat rows on the buses; refining the COVID-19 messaging; imposing capacity limits on the buses; hiring temporary employees to disinfect the high-touch surfaces on the buses when they arrive at the transit centers; deploying electrostatic disinfectant foggers each night when the buses come into the yard; installing windows at METRO Center and Watsonville Transit Center to service customers on the outside while the stations are closed; and working with HVAC technicians to increase the exchange of air in all METRO buildings).

James Von Hendy thanked CEO Clifford for the all-encompassing report.

Chair Elsea asked where the hand sanitizers will be installed on the buses. CEO Clifford said they are located right by the fare box on the forward bulkhead or just to the left after you board by the front door.

Chair Elsea expressed concern about the installation of the sneeze barriers and getting her guide dog in by her since the side-facing seats in the front are not available. Margo Ross, Chief Operations Officer, responded that the barriers are supported on the back of the seats and do not go to the floor, allowing space for her guide dog.

## **7a. Customer Service Update**

Manager Solorio reminded the Committee that both the METRO and Watsonville Transit Centers are currently closed and will remain so until further notice. She addressed the concern regarding public restrooms and informed the group that Director Glagola is creating flyers to let customers know where public restrooms are located. These flyers will be posted at all of METRO's transit centers. In addition, Customer Service has extended its service hours at the METRO Center and the phone system has been updated to reflect this change.

We are installing an exterior window for the Customer Service Booth at the Watsonville Transit Center. We have relocated our TVM machines at the METRO and Watsonville Transit Centers to the outside of the buildings and they are available 24 hours. All CSRs are required to wear masks at all times, especially when they are dealing with the public. We've provided gloves and hand sanitizer for cash handling. We have also installed sneeze barriers between cubicles to provide separation.

Chair Elsea asked if she and other visually impaired riders could approach the Customer Service window for guidance once the list of public restrooms is released. Manager Solorio responded yes.

Vice Chair Martinez inquired if the Santa Cruz store inside the METRO Center was closed. Manager Solorio confirmed that it is.

Ms. Taylor inquired about John Daugherty, Accessible Services Coordinator, having his position relocated to the ParaCruz office. CEO Clifford responded that METRO does not publicly discuss personnel matters.

## **8. UPDATE ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS (ITS)**

Isaac Holly, IT and ITS Director, informed the members that the ITS install is almost complete. Director Holly thanked Mr. Freeman for his assistance in troubleshooting technical issues.

The vendor just released the Real-Time Passenger Information (RTPI) app. Director Holly asked Chair Elsea and Mr. Pisano if they have had a chance to download the beta version for testing. Both acknowledged they have been interacting with it and sending feedback reports. Director Holly said the other element of RTPI is the station signage to display arrival/departure information.

Chair Elsea said that CEO Clifford mentioned the accelerated rollout for the mobile ticketing app. Director Holly said he is acting in a supporting role for that and Pete Rasmussen, Transportation Planner II, has been spearheading the project.

Mr. Pisano asked about passenger counting on the bus and if that is part of this project. Director Holly replied that it was not part of the original scope of the project but we do have the ability to exercise that option within the contract. Mr. Pisano asked if it would be possible to include bicycle counting as well. Director Holly said he can explore that with the vendor.

## **9. SERVICE PLANNING UPDATE**

### **a. Quarterly Ridership Report**

John Urgo, Planning & Development Director, said ridership is about 80% down from this time last year. He expects that number to rise in September and October due to remote learning at Cabrillo College and USCS.

#### **a.i. COVID-19 Rider Survey Results**

Director Urgo said he will bring a full rider survey report to the Board on August 28, 2020. The results indicate over 75% of customers do plan to return to METRO once the shelter-in-place order ends or is relaxed further. Two-thirds of riders also plan to ride the same

as pre-COVID-19. The survey showed most riders want METRO to restore service to pre-COVID-19 levels, keep the vehicles clean, and require passengers to wear personal protective equipment (PPE). Riders who plan to ride less say they are unlikely to come back until a vaccine is developed or there is a decrease in local levels of COVID-19 cases. These factors are not within METRO's control, so staff is focusing on the first group of riders.

This Fall we are restoring nearly 100% of local service with the exception of the Hwy. 17 route having a modified, enhanced weekend schedule.

Mr. Von Hendy asked if METRO is developing a message for its ridership about the steps it has already taken to protect passengers and drivers. Director Urgo said METRO has been and will continue to work to convey this message to the ridership.

Chair Elsea asked if METRO has considered making a video showing the safety measures that METRO has taken. Director Glagola said we are considering making a video; but for now, the next Headways is a special COVID-19 edition. We have many pictures of safety measures taken along with a specialized COVID-19 FAQ section in the printed Headways and on the website. We are in the process of getting some quotes for advertising on all of our buses showing images of our Bus Operators wearing a mask, the buses being fogged and the hand straps being wiped clean, with focus on sanitizing and disinfecting.

Director Glagola said METRO has also been in the Santa Cruz Sentinel and on KSCO with interviews promoting our cleaning efforts.

**b. Stops – No updates**

**c. Other Projects**

**c.i. Transit Corridor Alternatives Analysis**

Director Urgo said the project team is bringing their final recommendations to the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC) in September.

**c.ii. Capitola Mall**

No movement with the developers since the last meeting.

**c.iii. ParaCruz Trips and On-Demand Microtransit Trips**

We are exploring the use of our ParaCruz Operators and vehicles as general public on-demand. ParaCruz trips would still be booked as they are now—24 hours in advance and those trips are guaranteed. On the day of the booked rides, we would open up the schedule where a customer could book an on-demand trip within a specified zone, although not countywide. We think there is capacity and it may help ridership return. The idea is to connect to the transit centers and other METRO services.

Chair Elsea asked how many people are allowed to ride on a ParaCruz vehicle at a time. Vice Chair Martinez said it is now two. Director Ross added now is a good time to test this out and see what METRO can handle.

**c.iv. Mobile Ticketing App**

METRO is expanding the pilot program of the mobile ticketing app from the Hwy. 17 route to system wide. You'll be able to board a METRO bus with a Splash Pass mobile ticket purchased on your phone. The whole idea is to expand contactless payment, protect

Operators from unnecessary exposure and speed up the boarding process. Besides the app, we will be accepting cash again at the TVMs.

Chair Elsea asked how riders will know when this app is available. Director Urgo said there will be a soft launch. It will be mentioned in the Headways and on the website. Once we are comfortable that it is working, we will do more active marketing at the transit centers and with car cards.

#### **10. COMMUNICATIONS TO THE METRO CEO**

Hearing none, Chair Elsea moved to the next item.

#### **11. COMMUNICATIONS TO THE METRO BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Ms. Taylor suggested sending a letter in support of the Bus Operators who are going above and beyond to help with the fire evacuations. The rest of the MAC members thought this was a great suggestion and Chair Elsea said she would write a letter on behalf of MAC.

A roll call vote was taken and there were 5 Ayes: Elsea, Martinez, Pisano, Taylor and Von Hendy with de Wit absent.

#### **12. ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING AGENDA**

- METRO COVID-19 General Update
- Pasatiempo Bus Stop
- Marketing of the Code of Conduct
- Information Technology Systems Update
- Service Planning Update

#### **13. DISTRIBUTION OF VOUCHERS**

Donna Bauer, Administrative Specialist, will mail out the vouchers to all members on Thursday, August 20, 2020.

#### **14. ADJOURNMENT**

The next MAC meeting is scheduled for October 21, 2020 at 6:00 PM. Please check the SCMTD website for venue updates, as METRO remains dependent upon the public health orders in place at this time.

Meeting adjourned at 7:18 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Bauer  
Administrative Specialist

Pursuant to Section 54954.2(a)(1) of the Government Code of the State of California, this agenda was posted at least 72 hours in advance of the scheduled meeting at a public place freely accessible to the public 24 hours a day. The agenda packet and materials related to an item on this Agenda submitted after distribution of the agenda packet are available for public inspection in the Santa Cruz METRO Administrative Office (110 Vernon Street, Santa Cruz) during normal business hours. Such documents are also available on the Santa Cruz METRO website at [www.scmttd.com](http://www.scmttd.com) subject to staff's ability to post the document before the meeting.