

MINUTES*

MAC MEETING OF FEBRUARY 17, 2021



The METRO Advisory Committee (MAC) met on Wednesday, February 17, 2021. The meeting was held via teleconference. *Minutes are “summary” minutes, not verbatim minutes.

1. **CALL TO ORDER** at 6:02 PM. Chair Von Hendy welcomed MAC’s newest member, James Cruse.
2. **ROLL CALL** - The following MAC Members were present via teleconference, representing a quorum:

James Von Hendy, Chair	Veronica Elsea
Joseph Martinez, Vice Chair	Michael Pisano
James Cruse	Becky Taylor
Jessica de Wit	

Additional METRO staff and presenters:

Alex Clifford, CEO/General Manager	John Urgo, Planning & Development Director
Margo Ross, Chief Operations Officer	Brandon Freeman, Bus Operator
Danielle Glagola, Marketing, Communications, & Customer Service Director	Pete Rasmussen, Transportation Planner II
Isaac Holly, IT and ITS Director	Donna Bauer, Administrative Specialist
	Keith Otto, Public

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

Chair Von Hendy announced an email was received after the agenda was posted from Rick Hyman regarding the bus stop signs redesign. This item was deferred to Agenda Item 8b – Bus Stops.

Ms. Elsea asked if the agreement between METRO and Greyhound will be covered under Item 8 - Service Planning Updates. John Urgo, Planning and Development Director, confirmed it would.

Vice Chair Martinez informed METRO that a trash can by the bus stop at Main Street and Pacifica Boulevard in Watsonville is being used by several people for personal use. Margo Ross, Chief Operations Officer, said she’d have METRO’s Facilities Department review the situation.

Mr. Pisano expressed gratitude for the Bus Operators’ perseverance during the recent storms.

4. **RECEIVE AND FILE MINUTES FROM THE METRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF OCTOBER 21, 2020**

MOTION: ACCEPT AND FILE THE MINUTES FROM THE METRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF OCTOBER 21, 2020

MOTION: ELSEA

SECOND: PISANO

MOTION PASSED WITH 7 AYES: Von Hendy, Martinez, Cruse, de Wit, Elsea, Pisano, and Taylor

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

Ms. Elsea reported on her last semi-annual report to the Board of Directors on November 20, 2020. She focused on items MAC had been working on (e.g., attendance, COVID-19, Customer Service Booths, closed restrooms at the transit centers, ridership survey, safety event, on-demand microtransit, SMART phone apps, and marketing outreach).

6. COVID-19 UPDATE

Alex Clifford, CEO/General Manager, updated the Committee on several items related to COVID-19 and METRO's response:

- METRO is adhering to the CDC face covering guidelines.
- Current capacity restrictions are meeting the demand for service. METRO will monitor the limits as more people are vaccinated and ridership increases.
- METRO does not publicize test or case information due to HIPAA regulations and to protect our Bus Operators.
- Since February 1, 2021, METRO has not had any employees test positive.

Discussion ensued on the agreement between ParaCruz and Sutter Health to transport riders to/from COVID-19 vaccination appointments and other services being offered within Santa Cruz County by Community Bridges, Lift Line, Uber and Lyft.

7. UPDATE ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS (ITS)

Isaac Holly, IT and ITS Director, gave a brief snapshot of the software challenges experienced and the software update that is addressing most of those issues. The system is more stable; but we continue to monitor the situation. Discussion followed on accessibility testing and possible beta testing of other programs.

8. SERVICE PLANNING UPDATE

John Urgo, Planning & Development Director, gave an overview of the new agreement between METRO and Greyhound. Effective February 1, 2021 METRO will offer transit service on Highway 17 to Greyhound ticketed customers. Greyhound will reimburse METRO the Highway 17 fare. Ms. Elsea asked if the new agreement allowed the buses to stop in Los Gatos. Director Urgo responded that service will not deviate from Highway 17.

Mr. Pisano inquired about FlixBus service. Margo Ross, Chief Operations Officer, said FlixBus has advised METRO they are not going to start the service.

Director Urgo added that a temporary six-month fare reduction will be on the February Board of Directors agenda. The idea is to increase ridership and help people financially. The proposal represents a 50% reduction on adult and youth regular fares; riders with an eligible discount card would ride free.

a. Quarterly Ridership Report

Director Urgo reported that METRO is averaging an 85% reduction in ridership year-over-year or pre-COVID. Since the beginning of February, ridership has picked up due to the regional stay-at-home order being lifted and businesses being able to reopen.

b. Bus Stops

Mr. Pisano requested review of the bus route near the Capitola Library. The nearest bus stop is several blocks away. Director Urgo said his department will look at it.

Mr. Pisano asked if there is any more information on adding fitness exercises to the bus stops and if there is anything MAC can do to help. Director Urgo said METRO would need funding in order to implement that program and emphasized that METRO does not control the right-of-way, sidewalks, streets, etc.

b.i. Bus Stop Sign Improvement

Director Urgo said this item went to MAC and the Board of Directors in October 2020. The Board did approve the project as proposed.

Rick Hyman's email (attached) was discussed at length with the proposed upgrades and criteria being reviewed (e.g., cell phone connectivity, destinations like hospitals, senior centers and community centers, infrequent service routes, and high activity stops).

Discussion continued on adding Braille route numbers and the Stop ID number to the bottom of the sign. Director Urgo said he would look into this. A motion was made to bring this to the Board of Directors' attention.

MOTION: ADD BRAILLE ROUTE NUMBERS AND THE STOP ID NUMBER TO THE BOTTOM OF THE NEW BUS STOP SIGNS

MOTION: ELSEA

SECOND: CRUSE

MOTION PASSED WITH 7 AYES: Von Hendy, Martinez, Cruse, de Wit, Elsea, Pisano, and Taylor

c. Other Projects

c.i. Transit Corridor Alternatives Analysis

The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC) did approve the locally preferred alternative of electric passenger rail.

c.ii. March Service Changes

The biggest service change for the March bid will be providing bi-directional service on Scotts Valley Drive.

c.iii. ParaCruz and On-Demand Microtransit Trips

Director Urgo said an agreement had been reached with SMART to operate microtransit trips as part of ParaCruz. The service will operate in zones and will be shorter trips connecting to neighborhood destinations or connect to Fixed Route for longer trips. One of the zones will include the Enterprise Technology Center in Scotts Valley. These trips will be available on-demand starting 24 hours prior to departure. This will allow METRO to maintain priority for ParaCruz customers.

c.iv. Mobile Ticketing App

Director Urgo reported that the mobile Flash Pass is about 1.5% of ticket sales. We expect that to go up as ridership returns and the validators are added to the Highway 17 buses. COO Ross added that the validators are currently being installed on the buses.

Discussion ensued on using the mobile ticketing app and issues that have risen in purchasing passes and the activation time limit. Director Urgo urged riders to reach out to METRO when these circumstances happen.

9. MARKETING OF THE METRO PASSENGER CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

Danielle Glagola, Marketing, Communications and Customer Service Director, shared the layout for the new Code of Conduct Policy brochure (attached). The brochure highlights the main points of the policy and provides the link for the full policy which is posted on METRO's website. The brochures will be printed in English and Spanish and available on the METRO buses and at the transit centers.

Background was provided on MAC's involvement in the policy wording and ideas for marketing the policy in a friendly manner so that riders felt welcomed. Director Glagola described some examples of animated messaging slogans that are currently being used on the buses and at the transit centers but offered to look at additional marketing.

Chair Von Hendy commented on the smoking limitation and how that is a challenge at the bus stop at Diridon Station in San Jose. He thinks the smoking areas do not adhere to the policy. Ms. Elsea said this is Caltrain's property and they are bound to the smoking laws if there is a violation.

10. COMMUNICATIONS TO THE METRO CEO

Hearing none, Chair Von Hendy moved to the next item.

11. COMMUNICATIONS TO THE METRO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Hearing none, Chair Von Hendy moved to the next item.

12. ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING AGENDA

- COVID-19
- Information Technology Systems
- ParaCruz and On-Demand Microtransit Trips
- Bus Stop Sign Improvement
- New Marketing Ideas for Code of Conduct Policy
- Fitness at Bus Stops

13. DISTRIBUTION OF VOUCHERS

Donna Bauer, Administrative Specialist, will mail out the vouchers on Thursday, February 18, 2021 to all members in attendance.

Chair Von Hendy gave a quick overview to MAC's newest member on how to use the vouchers.

14. ADJOURNMENT

The next MAC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 21, 2021 at 6:00 PM.

Meeting adjourned at 7:42 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.scmtd.com subject to staff's ability to post the document before the meeting.

Attachment

From: Richard Hyman [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, February 15, 2021 5:28 PM
To: boardinquiries@scmtd.com; mac@scmtd.com
Subject: new bus stop signs (MAC 2/17/21 Item 8b)

Dear Board Members and Committee Members: I urge you to retain maps on the METRO bus stop signs. I just saw a copy of the redesigned bus stop sign presentation in the MAC packet. Eliminating maps on 85% of the signs, as proposed, would not be helpful to infrequent METRO riders.

Please consider the experiences and needs of infrequent users, potential new users, and visitors. These riders and potential riders are not going to be familiar with the system and maybe not even the area. The largest component of the proposed sign -- the Route number -- is of least help. Destinations are helpful and hence that wording should be larger. Times and maps are important and hence should be on all signs. The alternative of carrying a paper schedule is unlikely and the alternative of having to look up the information on line on one's cell phone (assuming one has one handy) is cumbersome.

For example, when I travel, I often take a local bus, or if walking around an unfamiliar town, think of taking a bus. To me, these new signs, especially the ones lacking maps, would be perplexing to visitors, and I probably would forego waiting for the bus for using some other easier mode. Similarly, for those in town who might not normally take the bus, but may find themselves on the street with their own vehicle (say, for example, they just left their car at a repair shop and want to get back to town or home), if they walked over to a bus stop and tried to figure out if and when a bus might come to take them close to their destination, the new signs would prove lacking.

I find that the current signs are helpful. Often, when waiting for a bus, I consult them, and notice many others also consulting them. I actually like the design that allows METRO to simply print new stickers with changed schedules to overlay on the relevant parts of the signs without having to change the whole sign. While the staff report mentions that this is an expense, it seems worthwhile to me.

I appreciate the attempt to make the signs look and read better, and some of the new design is an improvement. But, is it really worth the expense to change all of the signs, especially when the result will be less information? I'm not that familiar with emerging technology, but eventually bus stop signs will probably be replaced with electric displays; or voiced information; or simpler, one-step ways to find bus stops on one's phone. Perhaps, it's best to pause changing signs until they can be replaced with either similar (or even more) informative signs or an entirely different system.

Thanks for your consideration,
Rick Hyman

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We ask for all METRO customers and Transit Center visitors to follow METRO's Code of Conduct Policy.

The Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District ("Santa Cruz METRO") is committed to providing quality and non-discriminatory public transportation within Santa Cruz METRO's service area. There are occasions, however, when customer behavior seriously disrupts or endangers the health and safety of our employees and members of the public who use our services. When this occurs, it may be necessary to deny Santa Cruz METRO services and/or access to Santa Cruz METRO facilities to those customers in accordance with the criteria and procedures specified in this Policy.

The rules contained herein are intended to regulate conduct occurring on Santa Cruz METRO vehicles, within or upon Santa Cruz METRO facilities and properties, and in connection with Santa Cruz METRO's provision of public transportation services. The Policy is enacted pursuant to the authority granted to Santa Cruz METRO by the California Penal Code Section 640 and the California Public Utilities Code Sections 98112 and 99170.

This Policy applies to any member of the public utilizing Santa Cruz METRO's fixed-route service and ParaCruz service, or while on Santa Cruz METRO's property or facilities.

Please note that this is a partial list of Santa Cruz METRO's Code of Conduct Policy, to view the entire Fixed-Route Policy visit scmttd.com/ Code-of-Conduct or to view the entire ParaCruz Policy visit scmttd.com/PC-Code-of-Conduct.



PROCEDURES FOR SUSPENSION AND/OR EXCLUSION

A person who violates this Policy is subject to a notice of violation and imposition of any and all remedies, fines, criminal sanctions, damages, and penalties available by law based on California Penal Code section 640 (b) and (c), shall be pursuant to the authority and according to the procedures, herein and as set forth in the California Public Utilities Code including section 99580 et seq. Parents or guardians shall also be responsible for minors.

Suspendable Conduct will subject a Santa Cruz METRO customer to removal, including immediate removal where appropriate, and/or exclusion from buses and vehicles and/or transit facilities.

Failure to comply with an exclusion determination may result in fines, a citation for criminal trespass, and any other applicable criminal and civil remedies.

For the complete Santa Cruz METRO Fixed-Route Code of Conduct Policy including procedures for suspension and/or exclusion visit scmttd.com/Code-of-Conduct or to view the complete ParaCruz Policy visit scmttd.com/PC-Code-of-Conduct.



Customer Service

920 Pacific Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
(831) 425-8600
Daily 8am - 5pm

Administrative Offices

110 Vernon Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
(831) 426-6080
Mon-Fri 8am-5pm

Accessible Services

Coordinator
(831) 423-3868

METRO ParaCruz

2880 Research Park Dr.
Suite 160
Soquel, CA 95073
(831) 425-4664
Daily 8am-5pm

scmttd.com  



Attachment

CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

for

METRO Transit Centers,
Facilities, and Vehicles

ONBOARD BUSES/VEHICLES

- Splash Pass, CRUZ Card, Discount Fare ID Card, or exact fare should be ready prior to boarding. Cash or proof of fare is required to board the bus. If a discount is requested, proof of qualifying discount must be provided.
- Animals are not permitted in Santa Cruz METRO facilities or vehicles, unless the animal is: (1) in a secure animal carrier, (2) a certified police dog accompanied by a peace officer, (3) service animal, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Sealed food and drink are permitted on Santa Cruz METRO buses, but eating and drinking onboard a vehicle is prohibited.
- Drinking or carrying alcohol in an open container is strictly prohibited.
- All passengers must wear soled foot coverings (shoes, flip flops, high heels, etc.).
- Placing one's feet or shoes on seats or furnishings is prohibited within buses and Transit Centers.
- Blocking an aisle, door, or stairway with one's body or an object, in a way that poses a danger, unreasonably impedes a patron's movement, or displaces a person is not permitted.
- Occupying more than one seat is not permitted. Personal items should be stored under rider's seat.
- Carrying any flammable liquids, explosives, acid, battery, or other article or material likely to cause harm to others is strictly prohibited including firearms, fireworks and hoverboards.
- Sticking or affixing chewing gum onto any surfaces in a vehicle or Santa Cruz METRO facility is prohibited.
- Extending an object or a portion of one's body through the door or window of a transit vehicle while it is in motion is strictly prohibited.
- Hanging or swinging on bars or stanchions, with feet off the floor, inside a transit vehicle or other transit property; hanging onto or otherwise attaching oneself at any time to the exterior of a transit vehicle or other transit property is prohibited.

TRANSIT CENTERS/METRO PROPERTY

- Bicycles, skates, skateboards, kick scooters and other wheeled devices, except wheelchairs and mobility aid devices, may not be ridden on Santa Cruz METRO property or buses.
- No person shall conduct or participate in assemblies or demonstrations or commercial activity, display or post signs or banners, solicit funds, or distribute written pamphlets, flyers, petitions or other materials in or on any of the following areas:
 - (1) any bus or van operated by or for Santa Cruz METRO,
 - (2) Santa Cruz METRO owned or occupied workshops, offices, maintenance facilities or garages.
- No person, other than Santa Cruz METRO personnel or agents, shall post flyers, pamphlets, posters or any other materials in Santa Cruz METRO buses or bus shelters.
- Intentionally obstructing or impeding the flow of transit vehicles, passenger traffic, hindering or preventing access to transit vehicles or Transit Centers is strictly prohibited.
- Defacing, destroying, tampering, removing or otherwise damaging Santa Cruz METRO property or any signs, notices or advertisements on transit property, or vehicles, including graffiti of any kind is strictly prohibited.
- Discarding litter, other than in designated trash receptacles, is not permitted.
- Loitering, camping, laying down or sleeping in or on Santa Cruz METRO transit property, including bus stops and bus shelters is strictly prohibited.
- Smoking or carrying a lighted or smoldering pipe, cigar, cigarette, electronic cigarette, "vaping" device or using any tobacco, cannabis or other products on Santa Cruz METRO properties or buses is strictly prohibited. Smoking is also prohibited within 50 feet of any bus stop or 25 feet of any Santa Cruz METRO facility and on or in any transit vehicle.

DISORDERLY CONDUCT

- Harassing or abusing a Santa Cruz METRO employee or customer because of that person's race, nationality, sexual orientation or other protected classifications is strictly prohibited.
- Sexually harassing any Santa Cruz METRO employee or customer is strictly prohibited.
- Verbal, threatening, violent or physical abuse of Santa Cruz METRO employees or customers is strictly prohibited. This includes engaging in or soliciting another person to engage in lewd conduct.
- Behavior that presents a danger to the health, safety or welfare of the offending customer, other customers or a Santa Cruz METRO employee is strictly prohibited. Such behavior includes conduct which is violent, seriously disruptive or illegal as defined by the California Penal Code.
- Urinating, defecating, vomiting, spitting or inappropriately discharging of bodily fluids on transit property is strictly prohibited.
- Possession of alcohol, controlled or hazardous substances, guns, knives or devices that are weapons or appear to be capable of being used as a weapon are strictly prohibited. This provision does not apply to law enforcement or security personnel.
- Disregard of, or failure to follow, a reasonable request made by METRO Security or a METRO employee (Operator, Supervisor) is strictly prohibited.
- Intentionally disturbing others by engaging in loud, boisterous, raucous, unruly, or harassing behavior that is harmful and intimidating to others, including gum popping, whistling and drumming or pounding is prohibited.
- Playing an audio device, audible game device, cell phone on speaker, musical instrument or any other sound producing equipment, except when the equipment is connected to earphones is prohibited. When using earphones, the volume must be lowered such that passengers sitting in adjacent seats will not be bothered by the sounds emanating from the earphones.
- Failing to maintain acceptable standards of personal hygiene, which could expose Santa Cruz METRO customers or employees to health and safety risks is prohibited.
- Engaging in or soliciting another person to engage in prostitution or other illicit activity is strictly prohibited.