



**SANTA CRUZ METROPOLITAN TRANSIT DISTRICT (METRO)
PLANNING & PROJECTS STANDING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES*
MARCH 17, 2026 – 11:00 AM**

A regular meeting of the Planning & Projects Standing Committee of the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO) was convened on Tuesday, March 17, 2026.

The Committee Meeting Agenda Packet can be found online at www.scmetro.org. *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 by Director Downing at 11:02 AM.

2 SAFETY DEBRIEF

Gregory Strecker, Safety, Security & Risk Management Director, provided a debriefing on safety, emphasizing METRO’s response to a fire, earthquake and/or medical emergency, and evacuation routes.

3 ROLL CALL:

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

Director Rebecca Downing
Director Monica Martinez
Director Scott Newsome
Director Larry Pageler

County of Santa Cruz
County of Santa Cruz
City of Santa Cruz
County of Santa Cruz

Corey Aldridge
Julie Sherman

METRO CEO/General Manager
METRO General Counsel

4 ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS TO THE PLANNING & PROJECTS STANDING COMMITTEE

Hearing none, Director Downing moved to the next agenda item.

5 ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS FROM AGENDA/ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION TO SUPPORT EXISTING AGENDA ITEMS

Having none, Director Downing moved to the next agenda item.

6 APPROVE: RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF CONTRACT AWARD TO CAPUZZI CONSULTING GROUP, INC. FOR RAPID CORRIDORS PROJECT DESIGN AND ENGINEERING SERVICES IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$2,723,000, SUBJECT TO CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION (CTC) APPROVAL OF FUNDING ALLOCATION REQUESTS

John Urgo, Chief Planning and Innovation Officer, spoke to the item and shared a presentation (attached). He provided a project overview, existing conditions, needs identified, and transit routes studied. He discussed the seven rapid corridor improvements—enhanced bus stop amenities, relocation/consolidation of rapid bus stops, bus bulbs and transit islands, transit signal priority, pedestrian crossings, queue jumps, and intersection improvements—as well as the benefits of these improvements. He continued with the public outreach performed and the results of those studies. He finished with the project schedule and a staff recommendation to approve and present to the full Board.

Discussion followed on:

- Involving MAC (METRO Advisory Committee) members for a walk audit
- The flow of the construction (i.e., north to south)
- Time construction with county projects
- Bus shelters at all bus stops
- Funding of project

The Directors recommended putting this item on the regular agenda at the Board Meeting on March 27, 2026 for full participation by Board Members.

Staff addressed all concerns.

There were no public comments.

Hearing nothing further, Director Downing called for a voice vote.

MOTION: RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF CONTRACT AWARD TO CAPUZZI CONSULTING GROUP, INC. FOR RAPID CORRIDORS PROJECT DESIGN AND ENGINEERING SERVICES IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$2,723,000, SUBJECT TO CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION (CTC) APPROVAL OF FUNDING ALLOCATION REQUESTS TO THE FULL BOARD AS PRESENTED

MOTION: DIRECTOR NEWSOME

SECOND: DIRECTOR MARTINEZ

MOTION PASSED WITH 3 AYES (Directors Downing, Martinez, and Newsome). Director Pageler was absent.

7 APPROVE: ADOPT MODIFIED FARE STRUCTURE AND POLICIES

Derek Toups, Planning and Innovation Deputy Director, spoke to his presentation and he provided a recap of proposed changes to the fare structure and policies. He covered the analysis of the reduced cost of fare collection and the proposed fare revenue impacts. He discussed why fare capping reduces revenue when compared to pre-purchased pass products and the benefits of the fare changes. He completed the presentation by requesting approval to present this item to the full Board on March 27, 2026.

Discussion followed on:

- 15-Day Pass elimination
- Putting a strategy in place if the youth cruz free program is ended
- Fare capping

Staff addressed all concerns.

There were no public comments.

Hearing nothing further, Director Downing called for a voice vote.

MOTION: RECOMMEND APPROVAL TO BRING THE MODIFIED FARE STRUCTURE AND POLICIES TO THE FULL BOARD FOR ADOPTION ON MARCH 27, 2026

MOTION: DIRECTOR MARTINEZ

SECOND: DIRECTOR NEWSOME

**MOTION PASSED WITH 3 AYES (Directors Downing, Martinez, and Newsome).
Director Pageler was absent.**

8 ADJOURNMENT

Director Downing adjourned the meeting at 11:55 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Bauer
Sr. Executive Assistant



SANTA CRUZ METRO'S

Rapid Corridors Project

Planning & Projects Standing Committee

March 27, 2026



Kimley»Horn





Rapid Corridors Project



Project Overview



Project Overview

Goal: Improve the quality of service and accessibility of METRO's core intercity routes between Santa Cruz and Watsonville

Project Objectives:



Evaluate traffic and travel conditions along the corridor. Identify existing needs for pedestrians, bus stop amenities, and transit priority improvements.



Develop strategies and solutions for improving transit service and access.



Engage community members to understand needs and opportunities.



Coordinate with local jurisdictions and key stakeholders to identify steps to implementation.



Rapid Corridors Project



Existing Conditions



Existing Conditions

- Over 4,500 people ride the bus each weekday between Santa Cruz and Watsonville
 - That's over 20% of all transit riders in the County!
- These routes serve primarily transit-dependent riders, with 65% making less than \$24,000/year





Needs Identification

Field visit

- Missing amenities at bus stops (**69% without shelters and 31% without benches**)
- Improper location (**50% of stops are near side or mid block**)
- Lack of protected crosswalks near stops (**42% do not have a crosswalk within 100ft**)

Operator Input

- Turning and visibility challenges
- Customers using cash or not familiar with service increase dwell time

Data Analysis

- **Delay due to congestion** of up to **30 mins/trip**
- **Dwell time** between **20 and 30 mins/trip**
- Travel time on the bus is approximately twice as long as vehicle travel time

Public Outreach

- Faster, more reliable, and more frequent service
- Increased coverage
- Enhanced bus shelters with greater accessibility
- Improved apps and information



Existing Plans/Projects

- **Reimagine METRO** network redesign includes implementation of the rapid route alignments proposed by the Rapid Corridors Project
- **Santa Cruz County's Buffered Bike Lane Project** installed bicycle, pedestrian, and transit improvements along 5.6 miles of Soquel Ave-Soquel Dr and will be extended from State Park Drive to Freedom Boulevard
- The **Rotkin Transit Center** will advance transit-supportive strategies along River St and Front St



Study Area Transit Routes (Reimagine)





Transit Supportive Strategies






Proposed Rapid Corridor Improvements



Improvements focused on two rapid routes



Seven types of improvements

Improvement Type	Category
Enhanced Bus Stop Amenities	 Bus Stop Access
Relocation/Consolidation of Rapid Bus Stops	
Bus Bulbs and Transit Islands	 Bus Stop Amenities
Transit Signal Priority	
Pedestrian Crossings	 Bus Speed and Reliability
Queue Jumps	
Intersection Improvements	



Enhanced Bus Stop Amenities

Installs additional bus stop amenities to improve the comfort and safety of riders

Quantity: Benches (51 new locations), shelters (53 new locations), lighting (45 new locations), and sidewalks (7 new locations)

Estimated Capital Cost: \$10,505,000



15% increase in the number of people within 1/4 mile of a **bus stop with enhanced amenities**



Improves access to bus stops



Enhances **comfort** and **user experience**



Improves **pedestrian/ bike safety**



Attachment



Rapid Corridors Project

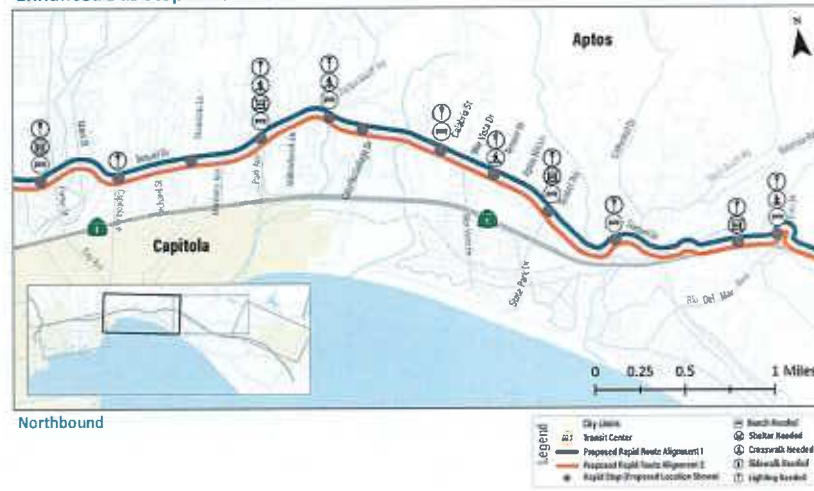


Enhanced Bus Stop Amenities



Northbound

Enhanced Bus Stop Amenities



Northbound

Enhanced Bus Stop Amenities



Northbound

Attachment



Rapid Corridors Project



Enhanced Bus Stop Amenities



Southbound



Enhanced Bus Stop Amenities



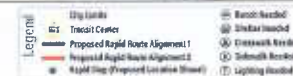
Southbound



Enhanced Bus Stop Amenities



Southbound





Relocation/Consolidation of Rapid Bus Stops



Bus arrives **on time** more often



Reduces trip time between Santa Cruz and Watsonville by 7-14 minutes



Reduces wait time at bus stop



Enhances **comfort** and **user experience**



Improves **pedestrian/** **bike safety**

Relocates/adds/removes stops to lower overall trip time and provide better bus stop coverage

Quantity: 58 stops remain, 43 new/relocated stops, 50 stops removed

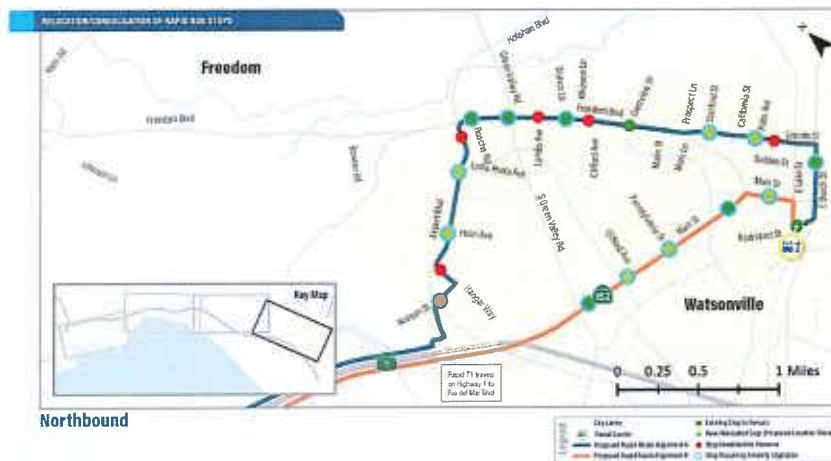
Estimated Capital Cost: \$715,000

Detailed maps can be found at <https://bit.ly/METROround2>

Attachment



Rapid Corridors Project



Relocation / Consolidation of Rapid Bus Stops – Northbound

- Santa Cruz:**
- Existing: 6
 - New/Relocated: 2
 - Removal: 4

- Capitola:**
- Existing: 1
 - New/Relocated: 2
 - Removal: 2

- Watsonville:**
- Existing: 9
 - New/Relocated: 8
 - Removal: 5

- County:**
- Existing: 11
 - New/Relocated: 11
 - Removal: 13

Detailed maps can be found at <https://bit.ly/METROround2>



Bus Bulbs and Transit Islands



Bus Bulb



Transit Island

Extends the curb into the roadway, closer to the traffic lane, so buses are not delayed by traffic when departing the bus stop and providing additional space for bus stop amenities

Quantity: 23 bus stops

Estimated Capital Cost: \$1,415,000



Bus arrives **on time** more often



Reduces trip time between Santa Cruz and Watsonville by 1-2 minutes



Reduces delay for bus riders, may cause delay for car users



Enhances **comfort** and **user experience**



Wider bus boarding areas **improve accessibility**



Improves **pedestrian/ bike safety**

Attachment



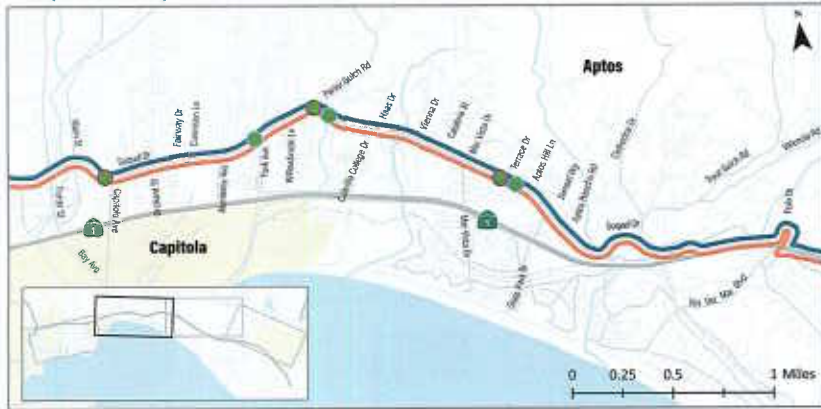
Rapid Corridors Project



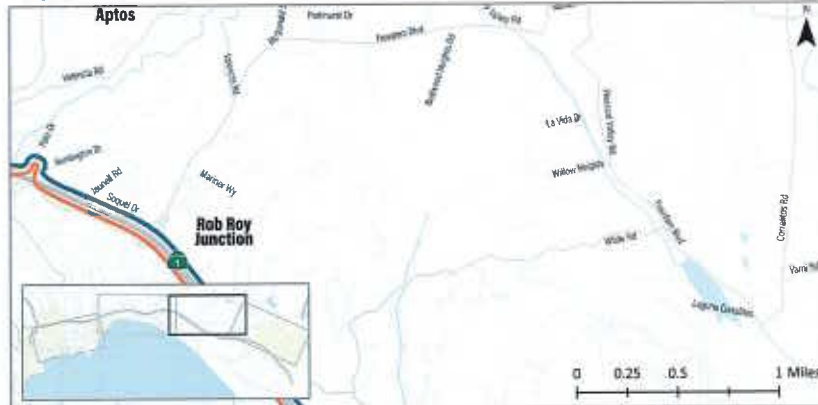
Santa Cruz to Capitola



Capitola to Aptos



Aptos to Freedom



Freedom to Watsonville

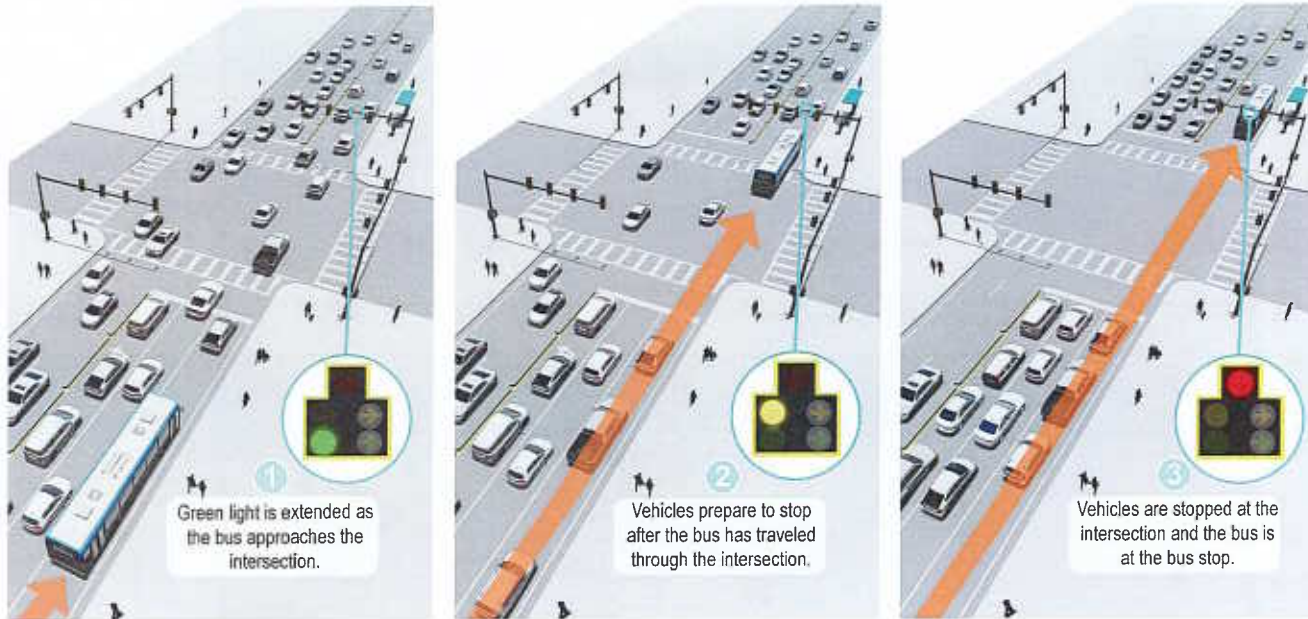


Bus Bulb & Transit Island Locations

- Santa Cruz:**
 - Transit Island: 2
- Watsonville:**
 - Transit Island: 1
 - Bus Bulb: 7
- County:**
 - Transit Island: 13



Transit Signal Priority



Bus arrives **on time** more often



Reduces trip time between Santa Cruz and Watsonville by 5-9 minutes



Reduces delay for bus riders

Technologies used to reduce transit vehicle delays at signalized intersections such as holding lights green for a few seconds until the bus can pass through.

Active TSP recommended using a combination of on-board (AVL, GPS) and wayside technology.

Quantity: 61 intersections not included in County Project (21 included in County Project)

Estimated Capital Cost: \$2,784,000

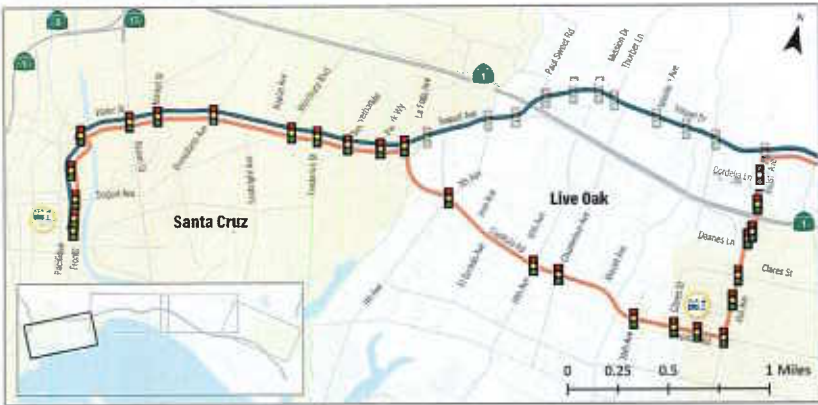
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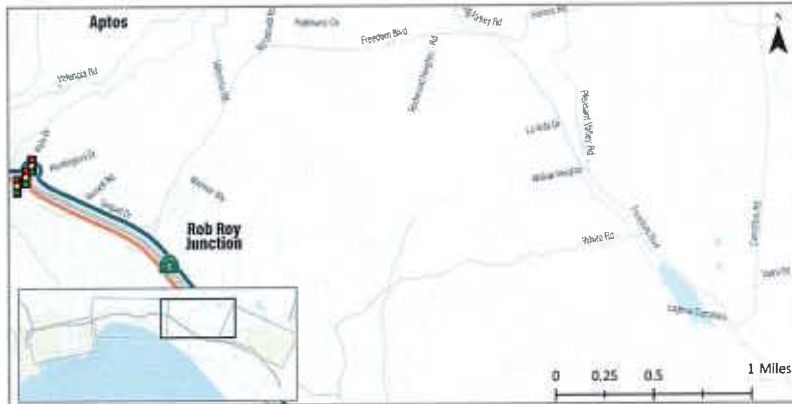
Rapid Corridors Project



Santa Cruz to Capitola



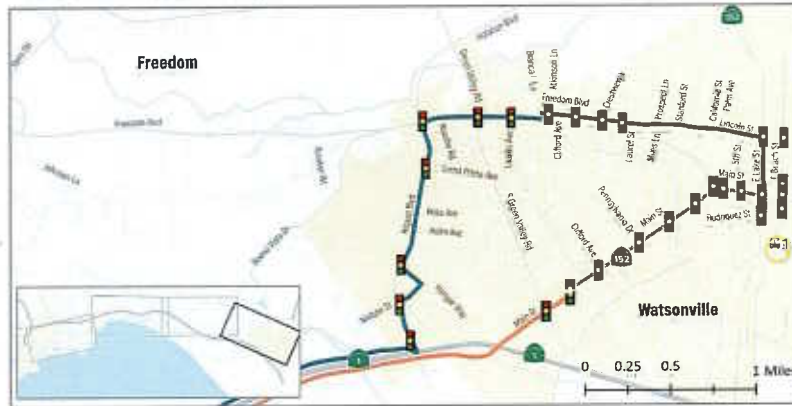
Aptos to Freedom



Capitola to Aptos



Freedom to Watsonville



Legend

- City Limits
- Transit Center
- Proposed Rapid Route 1
- Proposed Rapid Route 2
- Transit Signal Priority (TSP) Recommended
- TSP Treatments Included in County Project

TSP Locations

- Santa Cruz:**
- County Project: 1
 - Not in County Project: 13
- Capitola:**
- Not in County Project: 9
- Watsonville:**
- Not in County Project: 27
- County**
- County Project: 20
 - Not in County Project: 12



Enhanced Pedestrian Crossings



Improves **pedestrian/**
bike safety



Improves **access**
to bus stops



Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons



Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons



High-Visibility Crosswalks

Provides priority to pedestrians and/or increases visibility and driver awareness of pedestrians

Quantity: 19 locations

Estimated Capital Cost: \$2,473,000

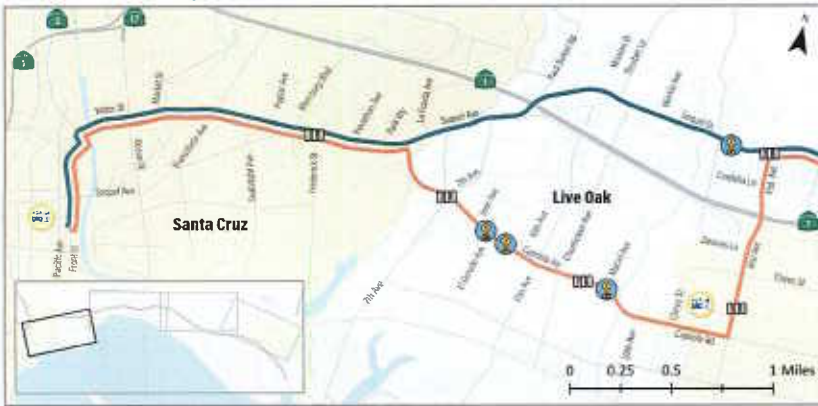
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Rapid Corridors Project



Santa Cruz to Capitola



Aptos to Freedom



Capitola to Aptos



Freedom to Watsonville



Legend	City Limits	Pedestrian Crossings	High-Visibility Crosswalks
	Transit Center		Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB)
	Proposed Rapid Route 1		Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons (PHB)
	Proposed Rapid Route 2		

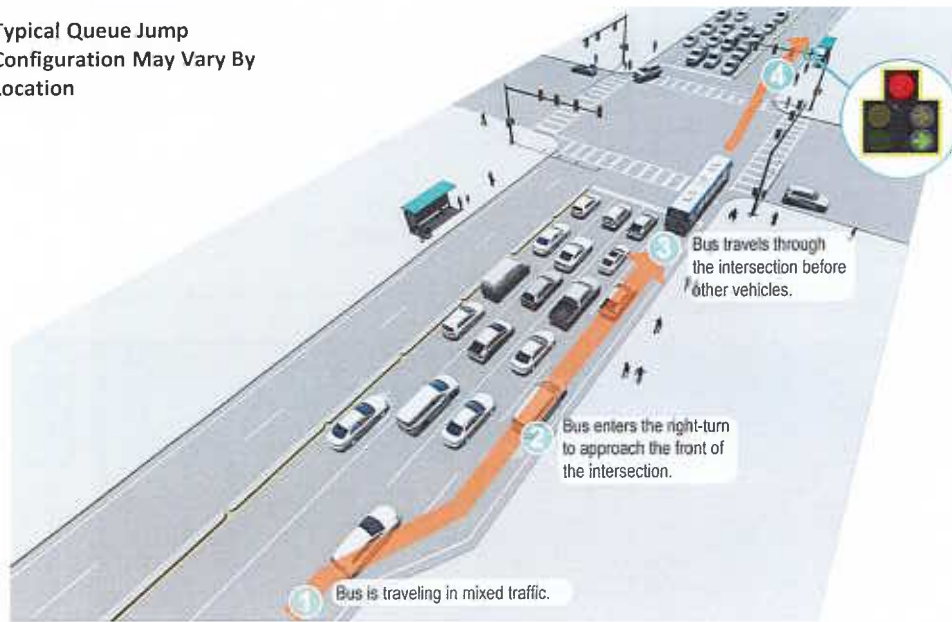
Pedestrian Crossing Locations

- Santa Cruz:
 - High Vis Xwalk: 1
- Capitola:
 - High Vis Xwalk: 1
- Watsonville:
 - High Vis Xwalk: 3
 - PHB: 1
- County:
 - High Vis Xwalk: 7
 - RRFB: 6



Queue Jumps

Typical Queue Jump
Configuration May Vary By
Location



Through traffic is stopped and right turns are permitted while the bus travels through the intersection.



Bus arrives **on time** more often



Reduces wait time at bus stop



Reduces delay for bus riders, may cause delay for some car users

Travel lane at traffic signals specially marked or signed for transit vehicles that allows buses to get ahead of the traffic queue at the signal

Quantity: 5 intersections

Estimated Capital Cost: \$422,000

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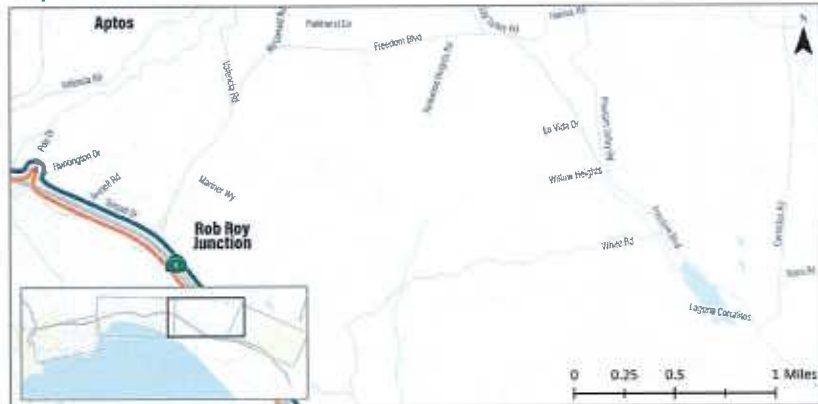
Rapid Corridors Project



Santa Cruz to Capitola



Aptos to Freedom



Capitola to Aptos



Freedom to Watsonville



Queue Jump Locations
 Watsonville: 2
 County: 3

	City Limits		Northbound Queue Jump Location
	Transit Center		Southbound Queue Jump Location
	Proposed Rapid Route 1		
	Proposed Rapid Route 2		

Attachment



Rapid Corridors Project



DOWNTOWN SANTA CRUZ FRONT STREET & RIVER STREET TRANSIT LANE



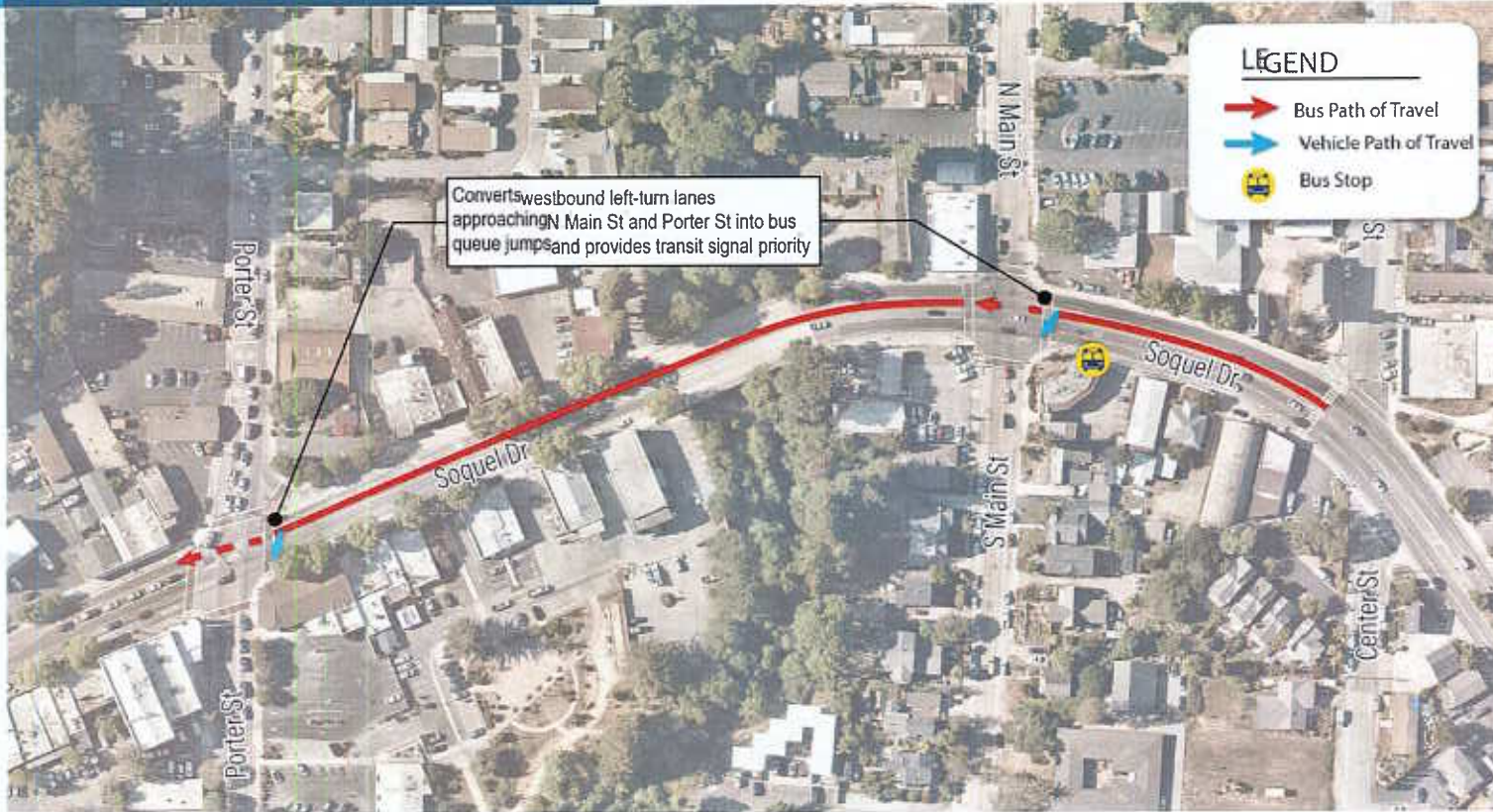
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Rapid Corridors Project



SOQUEL QUEUE JUMPS



Bus arrives **on time** more often



Reduces trip time by about 40 seconds



Reduces wait time at bus stop



Reduces delay for bus riders, may cause delay for some car users

Modifies the lane geometry and signal operations to provide transit priority treatments on westbound Soquel Dr approaching Porter St and Main St

Estimated Capital Cost: \$958,000



Benefits of Proposed Improvements

- Improvements along rapid routes ensure:
 - **Faster** and **more reliable** service
 - **Safer access** to bus stops
 - **Improved** bus stop **amenities**
- Improvements result in:
 - **15% increase** in number of people within $\frac{1}{4}$ **mile of high-quality bus stop** (includes shelter, bench, lighting, accessible by crosswalk and sidewalk)
 - **28-40% faster** travel time **from Santa Cruz to Watsonville**
 - **29-33% faster** travel time **from Watsonville to Santa Cruz**
 - **Allows METRO to operate buses more frequently, serving more riders**



Rapid Corridors Project



Public and Stakeholder Engagement



Outreach Activities

- Presented proposed transportation improvements to the public for input
- Occurred between **September and October 2023**
- All materials provided in **English and Spanish**
- **7 in-person pop-up events**
 - Held at major transit and community hubs in Santa Cruz and Watsonville
 - Supported by Regeneración Pajaro Valley
- **Virtual public meeting**
 - Thursday, October 12, 2023
 - Attended by 12 members of the community





Outreach Activities

- **Online and paper survey**
 - Paper survey distributed at events
 - Online survey open for 5 weeks
 - 133 total survey responses
 - 42% of responses in Spanish
- **Comprehensive project website** (<https://bit.ly/METROround2>)
 - Project information
 - Detailed factsheets
 - Online survey
 - Promoted events

Santa Cruz METRO's Rapid Corridors Project

Mejor acceso a un servicio de tránsito mejorado

Santa Cruz METRO planea crear un nuevo servicio rápido para pasar tránsito entre Watsonville and Santa Cruz faster, más cómodo y de más fácil acceso. Basado en las actividades compartidas por el público a través de este año, Santa Cruz METRO ha identificado maneras que harán del tránsito una experiencia de la longitud de la vida, incluyendo mejorar y garantizar la salud y la seguridad, mejorar en accesos y opciones de transporte.

METRO busca su opinión sobre el proyecto. Por favor, envíe sus comentarios a semit@com/metro o escan el QR code.



Proyecto Corredores Rápidos de Santa Cruz METRO

Mejor acceso a un servicio de tránsito mejorado

Santa Cruz METRO planea crear un nuevo servicio rápido para pasar tránsito entre Watsonville y Santa Cruz más rápido, más cómodo y de más fácil acceso. Basado en las actividades compartidas por el público a través de este año, Santa Cruz METRO ha identificado maneras que harán del tránsito una experiencia de la longitud de la vida, incluyendo mejorar y garantizar la salud y la seguridad, mejorar en accesos y opciones de transporte.

A METRO le gustaría conocer sus comentarios sobre las mejoras propuestas. Por favor, envíe sus comentarios a semit@com/metro o escan el código QR.



ENHANCED BUS STOP AMENITIES

IMPROVEMENTS

- Adds additional bus stop amenities to improve the comfort and safety of riders.
- Amenities may include bus shelters, benches, pedestrian-scale lighting, trash cans, wayfinding, branding, transit information displays, bike racks, and sidewalk improvements.

Improvement Category	Effects of Improvements
<p>Bus Stop Access</p>	<p>Improve wayfinding and user experience</p>
<p>Bus Stop Amenities</p>	<p>Improve pedestrian/bike safety</p>

Kimley + Horn

SEMAFORO EN FREEDOM BOULEVARD Y LINCOLN STREET

MEJORAS

- Instalar un semáforo y proporcionar prioridad en el semáforo en la intersección de Lincoln Street y Freedom Boulevard para permitir que los autos pasen con mayor facilidad.
- Mejora en la salud y seguridad peatonal que incluye: Benches, Bicycles

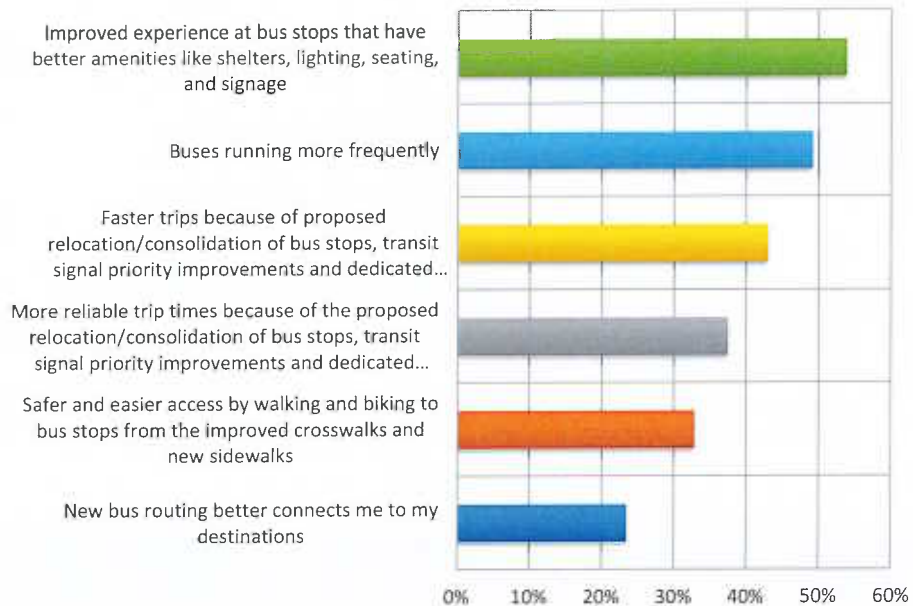
Categoría de la mejora	Efectos de las mejoras
<p>Velocidad y seguridad de los autobuses</p>	<p>Reduce los tiempos de espera de los autobuses</p>
	<p>Reduce los tiempos de espera de los pasajeros</p>
	<p>Reduce los tiempos de espera de los pasajeros</p>

Kimley + Horn

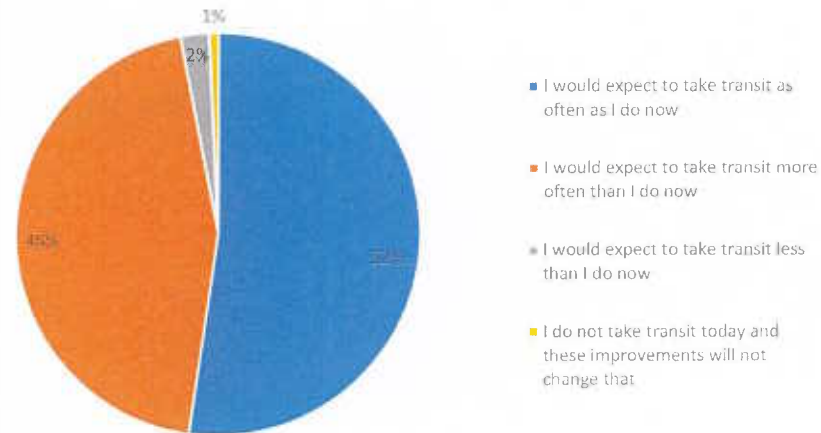


Survey Results: Feedback On Improvements

Which of the following improvements being considered for the Rapid Corridors Project would most encourage you to take transit or enhance your experience taking transit?
Please select up to three.



If all of the improvements identified in this study are implemented, how would that change your travel decisions?





Survey Comments

178 Comments Received

Key takeaways:

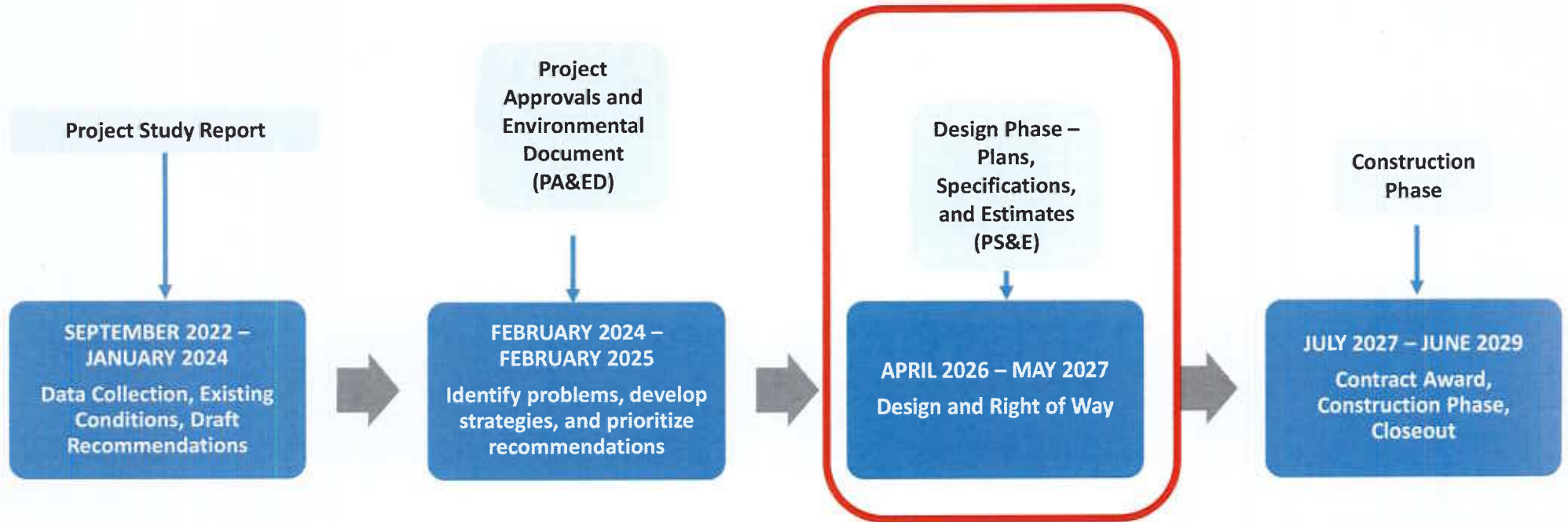
- Desire for faster, more reliable, and more frequent service
- Interest in expanded service and additional routes
- Cleaner bus stops with enhanced amenities
- Desire to keep specific stops



Implementation Plan



Project Schedule





Funding

- Required
 - \$27 million to implement full suite of strategies
- Secured
 - Local: \$1.6 million
 - SB 125/TIRCP: \$3.4 million
 - TIRCP Cycle 6: \$5.6 million
 - SB1 SCCP: \$13.8 million
 - LPP-F: \$1.3 million
 - AHSC Round 9: \$1.3 million
 - Total: \$27 million



Questions or Comments?

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John Urgo
Director, Planning & Development

