METRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE (MAC) MEETING AGENDA
OCTOBER 21, 2026 – 6:00 PM
HYBRID MEETING

Members of the public may attend in-person or participate remotely via Zoom.

METRO Admin Office
110 Vernon Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Zoom Link
Dial In: 1-669-900-9128
Meeting ID: 822 6490 5446

The METRO Advisory Committee (MAC) Meeting Agenda Packet can be found online at www.scmetro.org and is available for inspection at the Santa Cruz METRO's Administrative Office at 110 Vernon Street, Santa Cruz, CA.

Public comment may be submitted via email to mac@scmetro.org. Please indicate in your email the agenda item to which your comment applies. Comments submitted before the meeting will be provided to the staff before or during the meeting. Comments submitted after the meeting is called to order will be included in the correspondence that is posted online at the meeting packet link. Oral public comments will also be accepted during the meeting through Zoom. Each public comment is limited to three minutes or less. The Committee Chair has the discretion to manage the public comment process in a manner that achieves the purpose of public communication and assures the orderly conduct of the meeting.

The Board of Directors may take action on each item on the agenda. The action may consist of the recommended action, a related action or no action. Staff recommendations are subject to action and/or change by the Board of Directors.

COMMITTEE ROSTER

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

NOTICE TO PUBLIC
At each meeting, every effort will be made to conclude MAC business by 8:00 PM. If there is concern that an item may not be adequately addressed in the time allowed, Committee members may choose to table the item until the next meeting, move the item earlier in the agenda or to extend the meeting if necessary.

MEETING TIME: 6:00 PM

NOTE: THE COMMITTEE CHAIR MAY TAKE ITEMS OUT OF ORDER

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

2. **SAFETY DEBRIEF**
   Gregory Strecker, Safety, Security and Risk Management Director

3. **ROLL CALL**

4. **COMMUNICATIONS TO THE METRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE**
   This time is set aside for MAC members and members of the general public to address any item not on the agenda which is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Committee. No action or discussion shall be taken on any item presented except that any MAC member may respond to statements made or questions asked or may ask questions for clarification. All matters of an administrative nature will be referred to staff. Each public comment is limited to three minutes or less. The MAC Chair has the discretion to manage the public comment process in a manner that achieves the purpose of public communication and assures the orderly conduct of the meeting. When addressing the Committee, the individual may, but is not required to, provide his/her name and address in an audible tone for the record.

   4.1 Email from Tianna Cui dated 09/19/26

5. **RECEIVE AND FILE MINUTES FROM THE METRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF AUGUST 19, 2026**
   Jessica de Wit, Chair

6. **COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE METRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

7. **UPDATE ON PARACRUZ GUIDE**
   Rina Solorio, Assistant Operations Manager, Paratransit

8. **RECAP OF 2026 SANTA CRUZ COUNTY WEEK WITHOUT DRIVING**
   Rebecca Downing, Board Member

9. **UPDATE ON ACCESSIBLE ROUTE PLANNING**
   Michael Bois, Communications and Marketing Manager

10. **UPDATE ON TAP2CRUZ**
    Michael Bois, Communications and Marketing Manager

11. **RECAP OF 2026 SANTA CRUZ COUNTY FAIR**
    Michael Bois, Communications and Marketing Manager

12. **UPDATE ON OPERATIONS**
    Margo Ross, Chief Operations Officer

13. UPDATE ON TOUR OF ROTKIN TRANSIT CENTER
Margo Ross, Chief Operations Officer

14. SERVICE PLANNING UPDATE
John Urgo, Chief Planning and Innovation Officer

a. Quarterly Ridership Report
b. 2026 Strawberry Festival Ridership
c. Bus Stops
   i. Update on Braille Bus Stop Signage
   ii. Update on Rapid Corridors Project
d. Other Projects
   i. Update on Reimagine METRO
   ii. Update on River Front Transit Center
   iii. Update on Rotkin Transit Center
   iv. Update on Watsonville Transit Center

15. ESTABLISH AND APPROVE THE METRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE 2027 MEETING SCHEDULE
Jessica de Wit, Chair

16. ELECT THE METRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR FOR 2027 TERM
Jessica de Wit, Chair

17. COMMUNICATIONS TO THE METRO CEO/GENERAL MANAGER

18. COMMUNICATIONS TO THE METRO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

19. ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING AGENDA

20. DISTRIBUTION OF VOUCHERS
Elizabeth Rocha, Administrative Specialist

21. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING IN 2027
Jessica de Wit, Chair

22. ADJOURNMENT

Accessibility for Individuals with Disabilities

This document has been created with accessibility in mind. With the exception of certain third party and other attachments, it passes the Adobe Acrobat XI Accessibility Full Check. If you have any questions about the accessibility of this document, please email your inquiry to accessibility@scmtd.com. Upon request, Santa Cruz METRO will provide written agenda materials in appropriate alternative formats or disability related modification or accommodation, including auxiliary aids or services, to enable individuals with disabilities to participate in and provide comments at/related to public meetings. Please submit a request, including your name, phone number, and/or email address, and a description of the modification, accommodation, auxiliary aid, service or alternative format requested at least two days before the meeting. Requests should be emailed to mac@scmetro.org or submitted by phone to the Administrative Specialist at 831-426-6080. Requests made by mail (sent to the Administrative Specialist, Santa Cruz METRO, 110 Vernon Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060) must be received at least two days before the meeting. Requests will be granted whenever possible and resolved in favor of accessibility.

Public Comment

If you wish to address the Committee, please follow the directions at the top of the agenda. If you have anything that you wish distributed to the Committee and included for the official record, please include it in your email. Comments that require a response may be deferred for staff reply.

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, CA 95060) during normal business hours. Such documents are also available on the Santa Cruz METRO website at www.scmetro.org subject to staff's ability to post the document before the meeting.

COMMUNICATIONS TO METRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE WITH METRO RESPONSE ADDED ON 10/27/2026

From: Pete Rasmussen
To: [redacted]
Cc: Donna Bauer; John Urgo
Subject: Re: Inquiry: Potential Student Bus Route from Scotts Valley to Pacific Collegiate School
Date: Friday, October 16, 2026 3:22:53 PM

Dear Tianna,

Thank you for your interest in exploring METRO service to Pacific Collegiate School. Santa Cruz METRO routes provide access to approximately 90% of schools in Santa Cruz County, with 67 of 74 schools located within a half-mile of a bus stop. Since the introduction of METRO's Youth Cruz Free program in March 2023, youth ridership has grown by 500%.

Federal regulations governing transit agencies preclude METRO from providing dedicated student shuttles, analogous to "yellow school bus" service. Therefore, METRO instead provides school service on routes available to the general public. In many cases, schools are located on or near major corridors that are regularly served throughout the day. In some cases, schools are located farther from major corridors, so METRO has adjusted regular routes using small route deviations. METRO also tries, when practical, to accommodate school bell schedules with small schedule adjustments. When school-based ridership is significant enough, METRO may provide supplemental school-focused trips (but still open to the general public).

METRO currently provides morning service to Natural Bridges Dr & Mission St, about a five-minute walk from Pacific Collegiate School, Routes 20 and 40. In addition, Route 18 provides service to Western Dr & Beachview Ave, an eight-minute walk. We acknowledge, however, that the current bus options from Scotts Valley are not well-timed to connect to these Westside route options; for example, Route 35 from Scotts Valley arrives at River Front Transit Center at 7:31am, but Route 40 doesn't depart until 7:50am. One option would be to drive your child to the departure point of Route 40 at River Street South and Soquel Ave to at least avoid the Mission St traffic before heading back north on Hwy 17.

METRO typically works with school administrators rather than individual parents to assess whether there is sufficient demand for transit service and whether a viable option exists that works with the school's bell schedules. Please consult with fellow Scotts Valley and SLV PCS students and parents to assess how many students would take the bus if a more convenient option were available, and express your interest to the school Principal or Head of School. Upon request from the school administration, we will explore whether there are viable options to improve service.

Sincerely,

METRO Planning

COMMUNICATIONS TO METRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE WITH METRO RESPONSE ADDED ON 10/27/2026

From: [redacted]
Sent: Saturday, September 19, 2026 8:55 PM
To: boardinquiries <boardinquiries@scmetro.org>; MAC <mac@scmetro.org>; youthcruzfree@scmeteo.org <youthcruzfree@scmeteo.org>
Subject: Inquiry: Potential Student Bus Route from Scotts Valley to Pacific Collegiate School

This Message Is From an Untrusted Sender
You have not previously corresponded with this sender.
!!! Be cautious for phishing and do not click suspicious links from senders you do not know !!!

Dear Santa Cruz METRO Planning Team,
I am writing as a parent of a student who recently enrolled at Pacific Collegiate School (PCS). We love the school.However, many families living in Scotts Valley face a significant morning commute challenge. Currently, I need to drive my child from Scotts Valley to PCS every morning before commuting over Highway 17 to my job in San Jose. By the time I finish dropping off my child, the peak morning traffic has already built up, making the commute to San Jose quite difficult. Since my spouse travels frequently for work, driving our child every day is a major logistical hurdle for our household.
I am reaching out to inquire if Santa Cruz METRO has ever considered or would be open to establishing a dedicated student route (or an adjusted morning express service) connecting Scotts Valley directly to PCS.
Could you please share with us:

1. **Ridership Threshold:** How many students/riders would be needed to justify adding or adjusting a bus route for this area?
2. **Alternative Solutions:** Are there any existing routes or upcoming transit service adjustments that families in Scotts Valley could utilize for commuting to PCS?

I am confident that many families in the Scotts Valley area are facing the exact same challenge and would benefit greatly from public transit options to PCS. If there is a minimum threshold of interested families or a formal request process, please let us know so we can help coordinate with the PCS parent community.
Thank you very much for your time, support, and dedication to serving our community.
Sincerely,
Tianna

MINUTES*

MAC MEETING OF AUGUST 19, 2026

The METRO Advisory Committee (MAC) met on Wednesday, August 19, 2026. The meeting was held as a hybrid meeting. *Minutes are "summary" minutes, not verbatim minutes.

1. **CALLED TO ORDER** at 6:04 PM by Chair de Wit.

2. **SAFETY DEBRIEF**
   Gregory Strecker, Safety, Security and Risk Management Director, provided a debriefing on safety, emphasizing METRO's response to an active threat, fire, earthquake and/or medical emergency, and the evacuation routes.

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

   Jessica de Wit, Chair
   Becky Taylor, Vice Chair *AR 6:26 PM*
   James Cruse
   Veronica Elsea
   Curtis Halpin
   Joseph Martinez *AR 6:15 PM*
   Michael Pisano

4. **COMMUNICATIONS TO THE METRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE**
   Veronica Elsea mentioned that she was unable to find the Zoom link for the MAC meeting on the agenda packet.

   Michael Pisano mentioned that Zoox in Las Vegas has completed its free trail and transitioned to a paid service. He asked whether METRO would be interested in exploring a similar approach in Santa Cruz County as a potential pilot program. Discussion continued on this service.

   James Cruse mentioned that the MAC information in the METRO ParaCruz Customer Guide is incorrect. The guide states that MAC meetings are held monthly; however, MAC meetings are held quarterly. Staff will look into correcting this information.

   Hearing nothing further, Chair de Wit moved to the next agenda item.

   Chair de Wit announced that Item 10 and Item 14 will be combined and pulled up.
   Derek Toups, Planning and Innovation Deputy Director, spoke to the attached presentation for Item 10 and Item 14.

10. **UPDATE ON ROTKIN TRANSIT CENTER SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING**
    Derek Toups, Planning and Innovation Deputy Director, introduced some of the different types of signage that will be installed at the Rotkin Transit Center. He shared examples of the signage and wayfinding, including where the signs will be located and the information they will provide. The signage will help riders and pedestrians find their way around the transit center and locate areas such as the bus terminal, bus boarding area, bike hub, and Customer Service.

DRAFT

14. SERVICE PLANNING UPDATE

a. Quarterly Ridership Report

Jeff Wootton, Transportation Planner I, provided an update on the quarterly ridership report. He spoke to the slide in the attached presentation. Overall, total ridership for FY26 Q4 increased about 7.8%.

b. Bus Stops

b.i. Update on Braille Bus Stop Signage

Deputy Director Toups provided an update on the Braille Bus Stop Signage. He discussed the braille and text-to-speech (TTS) features that will be included with the new digital signs. The information can be broadcast in both English and Spanish.

b.ii. Update on Rapid Corridors Project

Deputy Director Toups provided an update on the Rapid Corridors Project. He spoke to the Rapid Corridors Project slide in the attached presentation. Deputy Director Topus reported that the project is currently in the design phase. This project will improve about 100 bus stops and pedestrian crossings while also helping to speed up bus service. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2028.

c. Other Projects

c.i. Update on Reimagine METRO

Deputy Director Toups provided an update on Reimagine METRO. He spoke to the Reimagine METRO slide in the attached presentation. He reported that ridership has increased and METRO is well on its way to achieving its goal of 7 million trips by 2028.

c.ii. Update on River Front Transit Center

Deputy Director Toups shared an update on a pilot project to install electronic ink (e-ink or e-paper) digital displays at the River Front Transit Center at the end of August 2026. He gave a brief overview of the displays, and Michael Bois, Communications and Marketing Manager, followed with a demonstration.

c.iii. Update on Rotkin Transit Center

Deputy Director Toups provided an update on the Rotkin Transit Center. He spoke to the Rotkin Transit Center slides in the attached presentation. He reported that the Rotkin Transit Center is still scheduled to open in 2026.

c.iv. Update on Watsonville Transit Center

Deputy Director Toups provided an update on the Watsonville Transit Center. He spoke to the Watsonville Transit Center slides in the attached presentation. The project is moving along and is currently in the final stages of the design phase. METRO's housing partner for this project is MidPen Housing, and the development

DRAFT

will include 79 affordable housing units. He mentioned that during construction, the Watsonville Transit Center will temporarily relocate to a new location.

Staff answered all questions and concerns.

Hearing nothing further, Chair de Wit moved to the next agenda item.

5. RECEIVE AND FILE MINUTES FROM THE METRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF MAY 20, 2026

MOTION: ACCEPT AND FILE THE MINUTES FROM THE METRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF MAY 20, 2026 AS AMENDED

MOTION: ELSEA SECOND: PISANO

MOTION PASSED WITH 7 AYES: de Wit, Taylor, Cruse, Elsea, Halpin, Martinez, and Pisano.

6. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE METRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Veronica Elsea referenced the letter she wrote, which was included in the agenda packet. The letter included some of the challenges riders with disabilities are currently experiencing. She shared that riding the bus has been difficult and talked about her experience with Route 18.

Michael Bois, Communications and Marketing Manager, reassured everyone that routes and schedules are available on METRO's website. He also said that staff will follow-up with Ms. Elsea and work with her to address the concerns she raised in her letter.

Hearing nothing further, Chair de Wit moved to the next agenda item.

7. DISCUSS EMAIL FROM KEVIN MAGUIRE DATED APRIL 12, 2026

The MAC members acknowledged and discussed the email from Kevin Maguire, which was included in the agenda packet. Some of the topics discussed included UCSC routes, UCSC shuttle for students, and trip-chaining routes.

Hearing nothing further, Chair de Wit moved to the next agenda item.

8. UPDATE ON WEEK WITHOUT DRIVING 2026

Michael Bois, Communications and Marketing Manager, reminded everyone that Week Without Driving 2026 will take place from October 1 through October 8, 2026. He also shared that a Capitola Mall Community Celebration Event will be held on Friday, October 2, 2026, from 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM. He encouraged everyone to sign up and participate in Week Without Driving 2026. Additional information about the event, including how to register and participate, is available at cruzintogetherscc.org.

Hearing nothing further, Chair de Wit moved to the next agenda item.

9. UPDATE ON OPERATIONS

Margo Ross, COO, provided an update on operations. She reported that all hydrogen buses have been received and Bus Operators have provided very positive feedback on the buses. The permanent hydrogen fueling station is expected to be ready in October 2026 and will have the capacity to fuel all 53 buses. Bus Operators are also currently undergoing training on the 60-foot articulated buses.

DRAFT

Hearing nothing further, Chair de Wit moved to the next agenda item.

11. UPDATE ON TAP2CRUZ

Michael Bois, Communications and Marketing Manager, provided an update on TAP2CRUZ, a contactless fare payment technology for riders. He reported that testing of TAP2CRUZ is continuing, and that it is being rolled out in collaboration with the State of California ‘s Integrated Travel Project (Cal-ITP). While there is no confirmed launch date at this time, the goal is to launch in September 2026. Discussion continued on discount fare riders, including self-enrollment and in-person enrollment.

Staff answered all questions and concerns.

Hearing nothing further, Chair de Wit moved to the next agenda item.

12. UPDATE ON ADA RIDE PROCESS FOR PARACRUZ ELIGIBILITY

Michael Bois, Communications and Marketing Manager, provided a brief overview of ADA Ride, which was onboarded in 2023 to manage the eligibility process for ParaCruz. He reported that since November 2023, ADA Ride has averaged about 81 certifications per month. Since November 2023, ADA Ride’s denial rate has been about 2.5% of all applications. Applicants who are denied eligibility receive a denial letter from ADA Ride and have the opportunity to appeal the decision. He emphasized that METRO’s overall denial rate remains very low. Mr. Bois also reported that over the last year, only 5 recertifying riders have not finished the process, down from 17 in the prior year.

Discussion continued on the eligibility process.

Margo Ross, COO, reported that no formal complaints have been received regarding the ParaCruz eligibility process.

METRO’s Customer Service can be reached at 831-425-8600 for assistance with completing the application.

Staff answered all questions and concerns.

Hearing nothing further, Chair de Wit moved to the next agenda item.

13. 2026 SANTA CRUZ COUNTY FAIR – SEPTEMBER 16 TO SEPTEMBER 20, 2026

Margo Ross, COO, reported that METRO will be participating in the Santa Cruz County Fair from September 16 through September 20, 2026. METRO will be offering free fares on Route 79F (daily) and 79 (weekends only). ParaCruz will also provide free daily service to and from the fair. She mentioned that riders who take Route 79F, 79, or ParaCruz to the fair can also receive discounted admission. Riders should request a voucher from the Bus Operator upon arrival at the fairgrounds.

Hearing nothing further, Chair de Wit moved to the next agenda item.

15. COMMUNICATIONS TO THE METRO CEO/GENERAL MANAGER

None.

16. COMMUNICATIONS TO THE METRO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

None.

DRAFT

17. ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING AGENDA

- Service Planning Updates
- Quarterly Ridership Report
- Update on Reimagine METRO
- Update on Transit Centers
- Update on Rapid Corridors Project
- Update on TAP2CRUZ
- Recap of 2026 Week Without Driving
- Elect New Chair and Vice Chair
- Choose 2027 Dates for MAC Meetings
- Update on Operations
- Follow-up on Accessible Route Planning
- 2026 Strawberry Festival Ridership
- Recap of 2026 Santa Cruz County Fair

18. DISTRIBUTION OF VOUCHERS

Vouchers were distributed by Elizabeth Rocha, Administrative Specialist.

19. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING

Chair de Wit announced the next MAC meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 21, 2026, at 6:00 PM at the METRO Admin Office, 110 Vernon Street, Santa Cruz.

20. ADJOURNMENT

Chair de Wit adjourned the meeting at 8:04 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Rocha
Administrative Specialist

DRAFT

METRO Advisory Committee Planning Project Updates

August 19, 2026

METRO's Strategic Goals

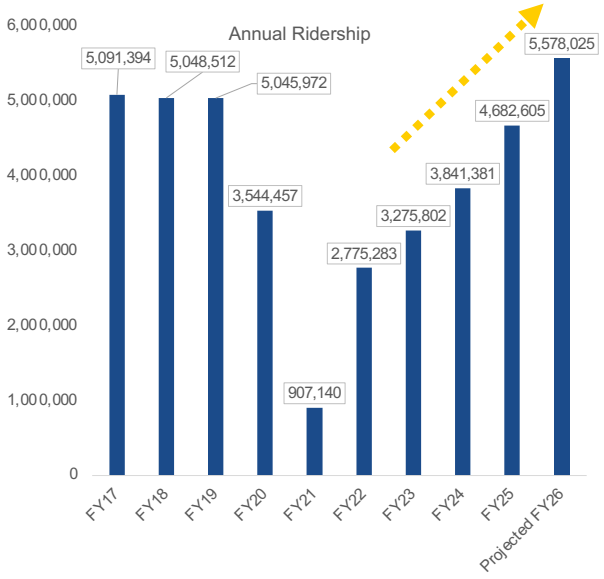
- **Double ridership** 2023-2028 (7 million trips)
- Build 200+ units of **affordable housing** at METRO-owned properties in the next decade
- Transition 100% of METRO's bus fleet to **zero-emissions** technologies by 2040

Re-Imagine METRO

Item 14.c.i

Progress To Date

- **Ridership:** 5.5 million trips (on track to finish FY26 10% *above* pre-COVID and *highest since 2011*)
- **Housing**: 127 units nearing occupancy at Rotkin Transit Center (Pacific Station) and 79 units to break ground in 2027 in Watsonville
- **Vehicles**: 60% of METRO's bus fleet converted to **zero-emission** in two years.

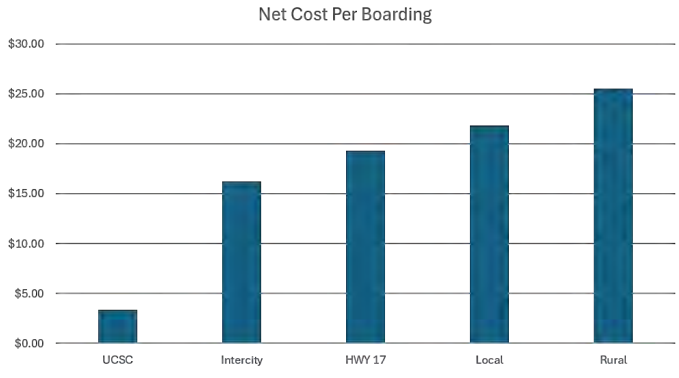


FY26 Ridership Results

Item 14.a

FY26 Q4 Ridership Results

- Total ridership: 1.58M boardings, up 7.8% YoY
- UCSC +9.4%
- Youth +11.8%
- Hwy 17 +8.1%
- Local non-student +3.7%
- VRH +9.4%; riders/VRH 23.2 (-1.4%)
- System net cost per boarding: $10:73



River Front Transit Center

Item 14.c.ii

E-Paper Signage Pilot

- Four (4) electronic ink (e-ink or e-paper) digital displays will be installed at Areas 1, 2, 3, and 4 of the River and Front Transit Center at the end of August
- The signs are equipped with integrated audio speaker and text-to-speech (TTS) functionality that can be activated by a paired braille info button
- The signs will broadcast approaching bus departure times and other service alert messages in English and Spanish

Rotkin Transit Center

Item 14.c.iii

Rotkin Transit Center Status

- The first residents of the new transit-oriented affordable housing at Pacific Station North moved in last month
- When fully occupied, the building will house 127 families or individuals, all units will have below market rents
- The transit center is scheduled to open sometime in Winter 2026-2027
- The canopy that will house the solar PV system for the buildings is being installed this fall and once that is complete the transit center will be finalized

Rotkin Center Wayfinding Signage

Item 10

Rotkin Transit Center Signage

- METRO is coordinating the installation of wayfinding and passenger information signs at the Rotkin Transit Center
- Signs will include a mix of directional indicators, departure times and other passenger information
- Each platform will be equipped with relevant signage and there will be additional signage in the Customer Service lobby and breezeway
- All digital signs will include braille / text-to-speech (TTS) functionality

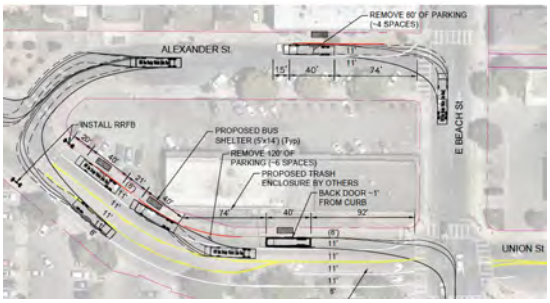
Watsonville Transit Center

Item 14.c.iv

Watsonville Transit Center Status

- Final design of the new Watsonville Transit Center and Watsonville METRO affordable infill housing complex will be completed this fall
- METRO and MidPen Housing will award construction contracts and break ground by late Winter 2027
- During construction METRO will operate temporary bus stops along portions of E. Lake Ave., E. Beach St., Union St. and Alexander St.
- The project is expected to open sometime in 2029

Temporary Watsonville Transit Center (2027-2029)



Braille and Text-to-Speech Features at New Digital Bus Stop Signage

Item 14.b.i

Braille / TTS Feature of Digital Bus Stop Signage

- New digital signs will be equipped with text-to-speech (TTS) that reads aloud the information displayed on the screen when activated by a push-button
- The TTS button is linked to the sign and has braille and raised lettering on the housing that says “INFO”
- The information can be broadcast in English and Spanish languages

Rapid Corridors Project

Item 14.b.ii

Rapid Corridors Route 1 and Route 2

- Project is currently being designed
- Will improve up to 100 bus stops and add new improved pedestrian crossings along METRO Routes 1 and 2
- Partnership with Santa Cruz County and the Cities of Capitola, Santa Cruz and Watsonville and Caltrans (Hwy 1 / 152)
- Construction anticipated to begin in 2028 and improvements open to public in 2029
- Full update will be provided at a future MAC meeting

Questions?