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METRO Board Approves Major Bus Service Improvements for December Rollout
Reimagine METRO Phase II changes to go to the Board later this year

Santa Cruz, CA (Sept. 27, 2023): The Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO) Board of Directors unanimously approved a package of significant bus service improvements at its meeting on Friday, Sept. 22. The changes, which will go into effect in December, at the start of METRO's winter schedule, are the first phase of a system-wide restructuring effort known as Reimagine METRO.

The Board decision came immediately after a public hearing on the Phase 1 long-term bus-improvement plan. A Reimagine METRO Phase 2 hearing and Board review are expected later this year.

"The goal of Reimagine METRO is to increase the amount of bus service provided in Santa Cruz County, making it more reliable and relevant to our community's needs," said METRO Board Chair, Shebreh Kalantari-Johnson. "Everyone's lives and travel patterns have changed in our post-pandemic world, and we want to create a bus network that is useful and attractive to as many people as possible."

The Reimagine METRO Phase 1 improvements will increase bus service that include:

- Higher frequency service in areas with high transit demand
- Simpler, more direct routes, especially in Watsonville
- Better transfers with shorter wait times and no additional fare
- Some changes to route numbers and names
- Some changes to bus stop locations and which streets have bus service.

A detailed description of all Phase 1 improvements can be found at scmetro.org/reimagine.

Later this year, the METRO Board of Directors will review a second round of bus service changes that could go into effect in April 2024, that include:

- Increased, 15-minute frequency on three cross-county corridors serving South and Mid-County (Soquel, Capitola, and Live Oak)
- Service extension from the east side of Santa Cruz through downtown to the University of California Santa Cruz (UCSC) campus, creating a frequent, one-seat ride from Cabrillo College or the Capitola Mall all the way to UCSC
- A new, frequent route connecting Watsonville to Cabrillo College via Freedom Blvd. and Airport Rd.

Taken as a whole, METRO estimates that all changes from Reimagine METRO will nearly double transit ridership from the current 3.5 million trips per year to 7 million trips per year. This increase in ridership will significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions by lessening the amount of personal vehicles on the roads and support METRO'S mission to provide environmentally sustainable transportation to Santa Cruz County.

For more information on Reimagine METRO visit scmetro.org/reimagine or for more information on METRO visit scmetro.org.

About Us

Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO)

Established in 1968, METRO'S mission is to provide environmentally sustainable transportation to Santa Cruz County. METRO directly operates county-wide, fixed-route and Highway 17 commuter service, with connections to Santa Clara County and Monterey Salinas Transit at our Watsonville Transit Center. The agency also operates ParaCruz paratransit service. Today METRO operates a fleet of 94 buses on 24 fixed routes and 32 paratransit vehicles.

Every ride on a METRO bus takes cars off the road, significantly reduces greenhouse gas emissions, and supports economic opportunity and quality of life in our community. Moving into the future, METRO strives to meet the following goals:

- Increase transit ridership to 7 million trips annually within the next five years
- Transition to a zero-emissions fleet with a mix of hydrogen and electric vehicles
- Increase affordable housing at METRO-owned transit centers to 175 units in the next 10 years.

For more information, visit scmetro.org.