



Reimagine METRO

Draft September 2024 Network

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1

Introduction

What is Reimagine METRO?

What is Santa Cruz METRO?

Santa Cruz METRO is the public transit agency for Santa Cruz County. Its services include:

- Local and regional bus routes, available to the general public.
- ParaCruz, a door-to-door paratransit service for passengers who qualify under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

How is METRO changing?

Reimagine METRO is a program to rethink where and how often buses run in Santa Cruz County. Key goals include:

- Increase the amount of service provided.
- Make transit service more relevant to the community's needs and desires.
- Adapt to post-COVID travel patterns.
- Create a network that is useful and attractive for many people's trips.

Phase 1 of Reimagine METRO has already introduced major changes, and will include new service additions in March 2024. These changes increase frequencies, create simpler and more direct routes, and improve transfers, within the limits of METRO's existing resources. Figure 1 (at right) is a map of planned service starting in March.

Phase 2 is a plan to use new funding and driver recruitment to increase service by over 50 percent this year. This will bring frequent service to many more places, improve weekend and evening service, and increase regional express service. Figure 2 on page 5 is a draft map of proposed service after these Phase 2 improvements, in September 2024.

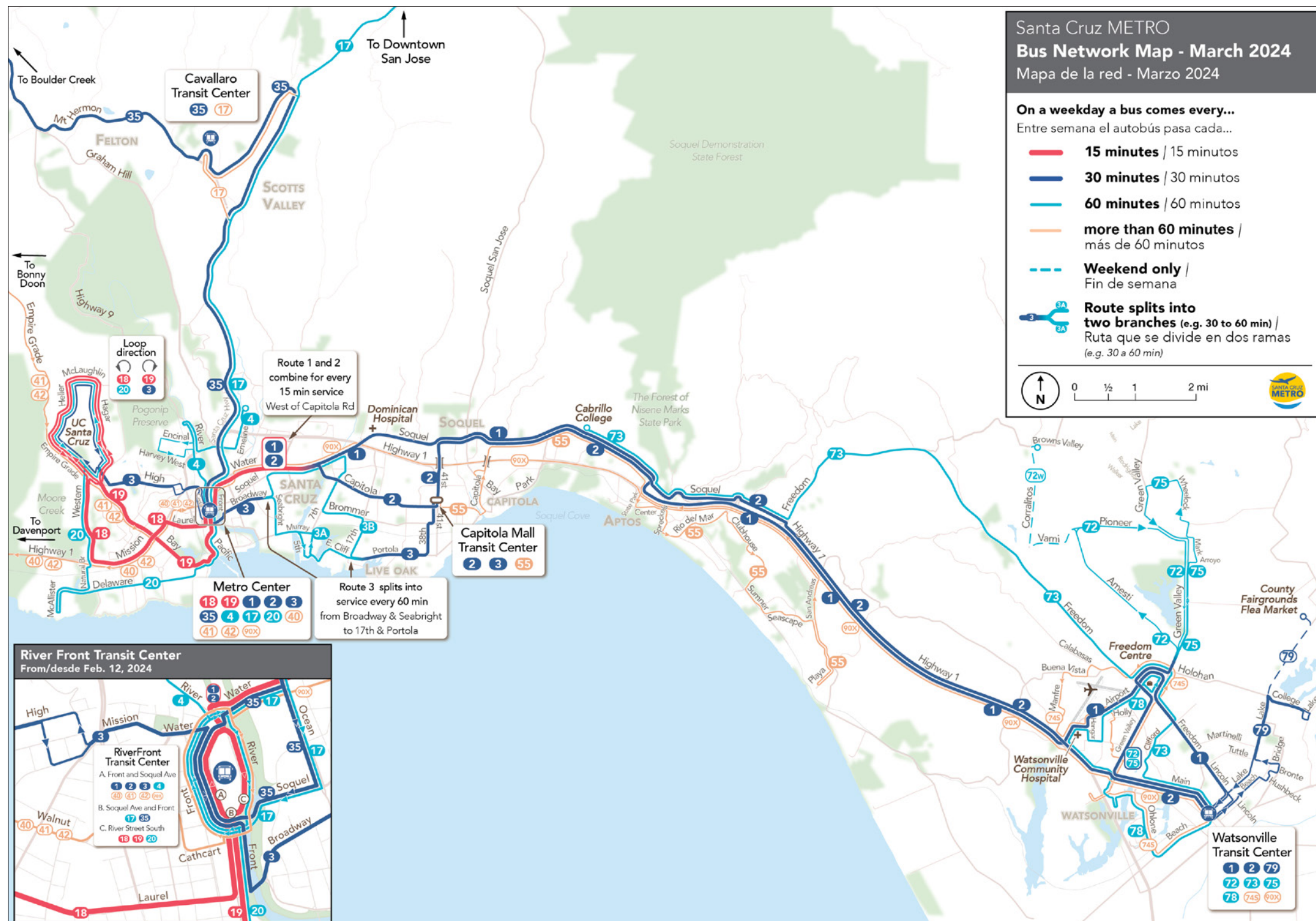


Figure 1: Santa Cruz METRO network map, as of March 2024. The first wave of Reimagine METRO service changes arrived in December 2023. Starting this March, METRO will also increase evening service on Routes 2 and 3B; add Route 78 in Watsonville; and make adjustments to Route 3A in Seabright and Route 72 in Watsonville. These changes will complete Phase 1 of Reimagine METRO.

Why is METRO service changing?

Responding to Public Needs and Priorities

Since early 2023, the Reimagine METRO project team has gathered input from hundreds of Santa Cruz County residents and organizations. This has included conversations with rider and stakeholder focus groups, online surveys, virtual public meetings and outreach at community events. Based on this work, METRO has identified issues with existing services and a clear set of priorities for improvement. These include:

- Higher frequency, wherever possible.**
 Buses need to come more often. Long waits make transit inconvenient. Buses that come every 15 minutes or better are easy to use for many purposes. High frequency is also essential to avoid bus overcrowding at the University of California - Santa Cruz (UCSC).
- Better weekend and evening service.**
 People's lives don't end at 6 PM, and many essential activities take place on Saturdays and Sundays. This is especially true for many low-wage and essential workers, who often bear the brunt of lower weekend and evening frequencies.
- More regional express service.** Many people rely on METRO for all-day travel between Santa Cruz and Watsonville, and to San Jose. These distances require non-stop service to achieve competitive travel times.
- East-West connections in Santa Cruz.** Increasing housing costs have required more and more West Side workers and UCSC students to live on the East Side and in Live Oak. As a result, enabling more direct and convenient east-west trips is critical to making transit more broadly useful.

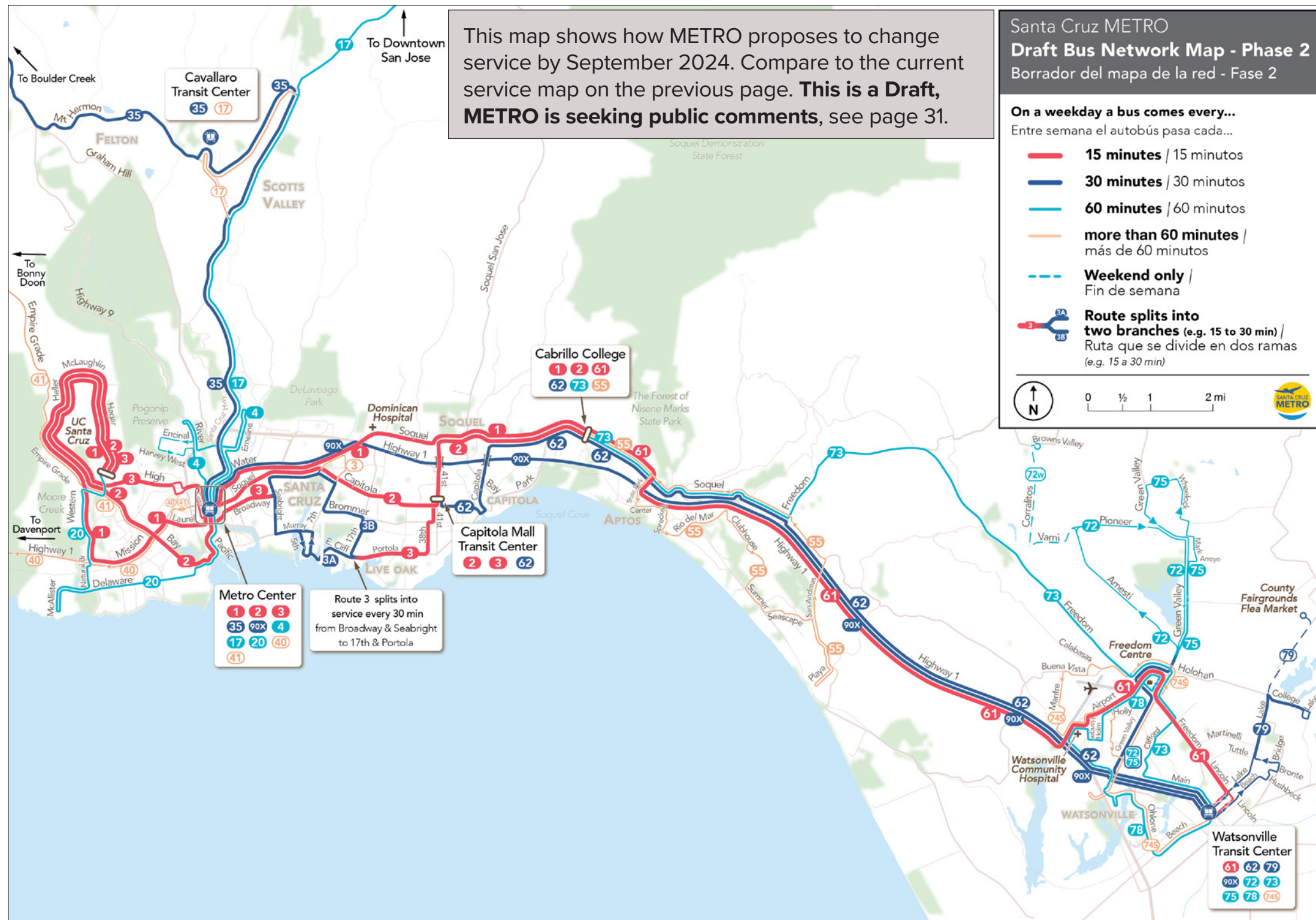


Figure 2: Proposed service in September 2024. Phase 2 of Reimagine METRO would increase service by 50% over the course of the next year to achieve higher frequencies, better weekend and evening service, more regional express service and better east-west connections.

How will this improve people's lives?

Allowing more people to access more opportunities in less time, without a car

Phase 2 of Reimagine METRO is based on the fact that transit becomes more useful when it can take more people to more places in a reasonable amount of time.

One way to measure this is to calculate how the proposed service changes would increase access to jobs, within 45 and 60 minutes¹. Access to jobs represents access to many kinds of opportunity, because most job locations are important for other reasons, like education, healthcare, shopping, public services and others.

In the urbanized areas of Santa Cruz County², if the Draft Network were implemented:

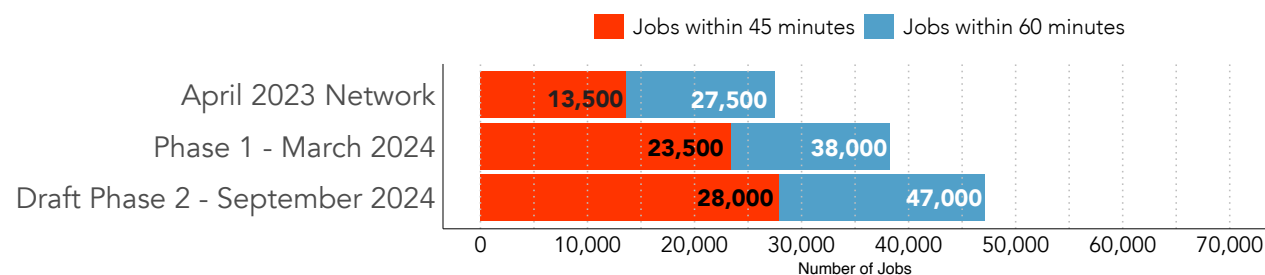
- For **67% of residents (and 77% of low-income residents)** access to jobs within 45 minutes would increase.
- For 77% of residents (and 85% of low-income residents) access to jobs within 60 minutes would increase.
- **The average resident could reach over 4,500 more jobs within 45 minutes and nearly 9,000 more jobs within 60 minutes.**
- The average low-income resident would over 4,000 more jobs within 45 minutes, and 16,500 more jobs within 60 minutes.

¹ This includes time spent walking, waiting, riding and (where necessary) transferring.

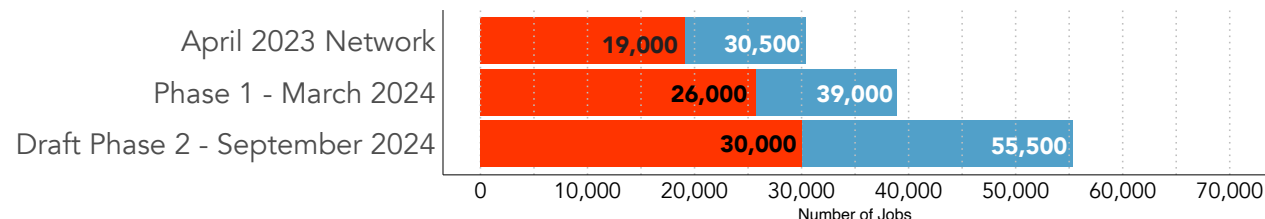
² Includes UCSC, Santa Cruz, Live Oak, Soquel, Capitola and Aptos; Rio del Mar and La Selva Beach; Watsonville, Freedom and Amesti; Scotts Valley; and populated parts of the San Lorenzo Valley.

Number of jobs accessible by transit within 45 and 60 minutes for...

...the average person:



...the average low-income person:



*In this report "low-income" refers to people living in households with an income below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level.

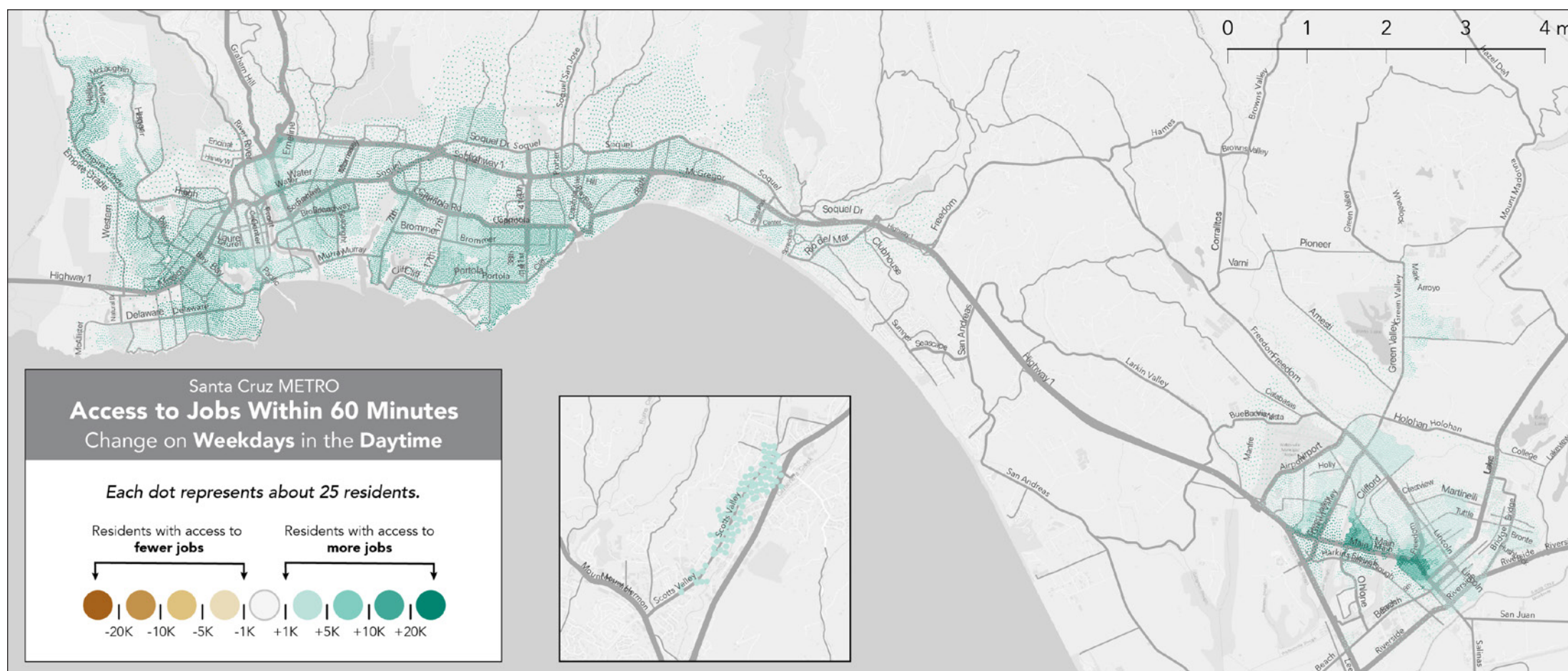


Figure 3: Map of change in access to jobs within 60 minutes by transit on weekdays, from March 2024 to September 2024, if the Phase 2 proposal were implemented. The number of dots in an area represents the number of people living nearby (1 dot per 25 people). The color of the dots shows whether they would be able to reach more or fewer jobs. Residents throughout the county would be able to reach many more places by transit, in a reasonable amount of time.



2

Proposed Network Changes

Phase 1 – METRO’s Existing Service as of March 2024

METRO’s services were improved in late 2023, including:

- **Higher frequency at UCSC.** In September 2023, METRO introduced service every 15 minutes on Routes 18 and 19.
- **Simpler and more direct service between Santa Cruz and Watsonville.** Routes 1 and 2 now offer faster service from Watsonville to Santa Cruz, by both taking Highway 1 between Watsonville and Aptos. Route 90X provides added express service at peak hours.
- **Simpler and more frequent service in Watsonville.** Most Watsonville residents now live near a route that runs at least every 30 minutes on weekdays.
- **East-west service in Santa Cruz.** Route 3 provides direct service between UCSC, Downtown Santa Cruz, and Live Oak.
- **More direct service between the San Lorenzo Valley and Santa Cruz.** All trips on Route 35 now head directly to Downtown Santa Cruz. Emeline St is served by Route 4.

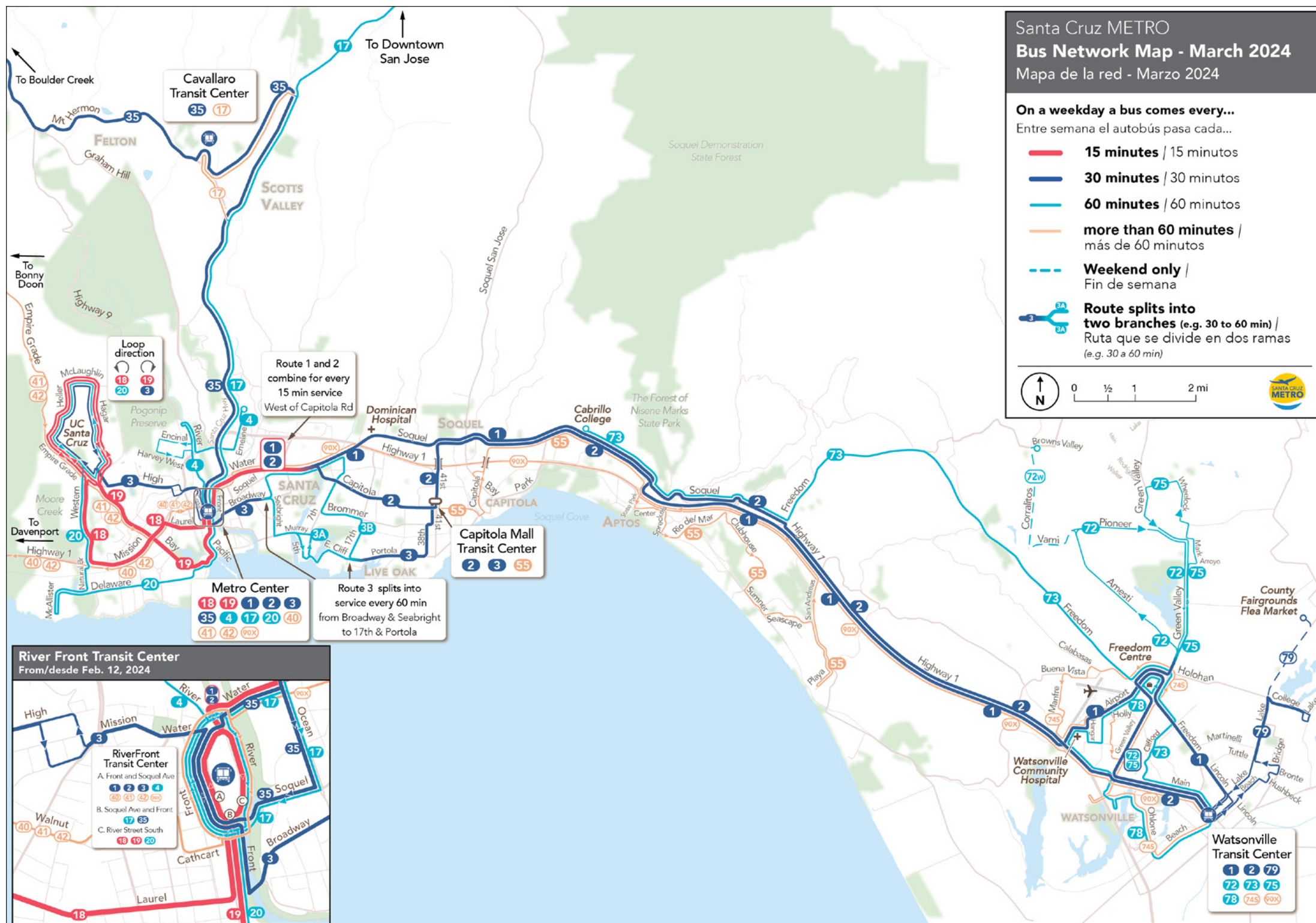


Figure 4: Santa Cruz METRO core network map, as of March 2024. This map features most of the urbanized areas in Santa Cruz County, including Scotts Valley, Santa Cruz, Watsonville, and all areas in between.

March 2024 Improvements

METRO will complete Phase 1 of Reimagine METRO in March with:

- **More evening service.** Routes 2 and 3B will provide service until midnight.
- **More express service.** Route 90X will operate 6 morning trips and 6 evening trips, in both directions.
- **New Route 78.** New all-day service on West Beach Street, Ohlone Parkway, and to the new County Social Service offices at Westridge. This route will also serve Watsonville Community Hospital and Freedom Centre.

Phase 2 – Draft Network Proposal – Improvements by September 2024

Major Service Increases

Santa Cruz METRO intends to increase service by over 50 percent in the next year, thanks to recently acquired new funding and intensified operator recruitment. This will make it possible to improve frequencies and increase service in many places. The Draft Network proposal includes:

- **Frequent service in Live Oak, Soquel, Aptos and Watsonville.** Routes 1, 2 and 3 would all be upgraded to run every 15 minutes, seven days per week, as would the new Route 61.
- **Saturday and Sunday frequencies that match weekdays on most routes,** including Routes 1, 2, 3, 17, 20, 35, 61, 62 and 75.
- **All-day express service between Watsonville and Santa Cruz on Route 90X,** every 30 minutes on weekdays and every 60 minutes on weekends.
- **More consistent service on Highway 17.** Non-stop service every hour from Santa Cruz to Diridon Station in San Jose. Additional peak-hour and special trips will continue to serve Scotts Valley and San Jose State University.

East-West Route Change

This proposal includes an important change to east-west service in Santa Cruz, and service between Watsonville and Santa Cruz:

- **More direct east-west service in Santa Cruz and Live Oak.** Routes 18 and 19 would be merged into Routes 1 and 2. Both routes would run from UCSC to Cabrillo College.
- **East of Cabrillo College, Routes 1 and 2 would become Routes 61 and 62.** Because a local route from UCSC to Watsonville would be too long to operate reliably, METRO proposes to end Routes 1 and 2 at Cabrillo College. Routes 61 and 62 would serve areas east of Cabrillo College. Route 61 would be upgraded to service every 15 minutes, seven days per week.

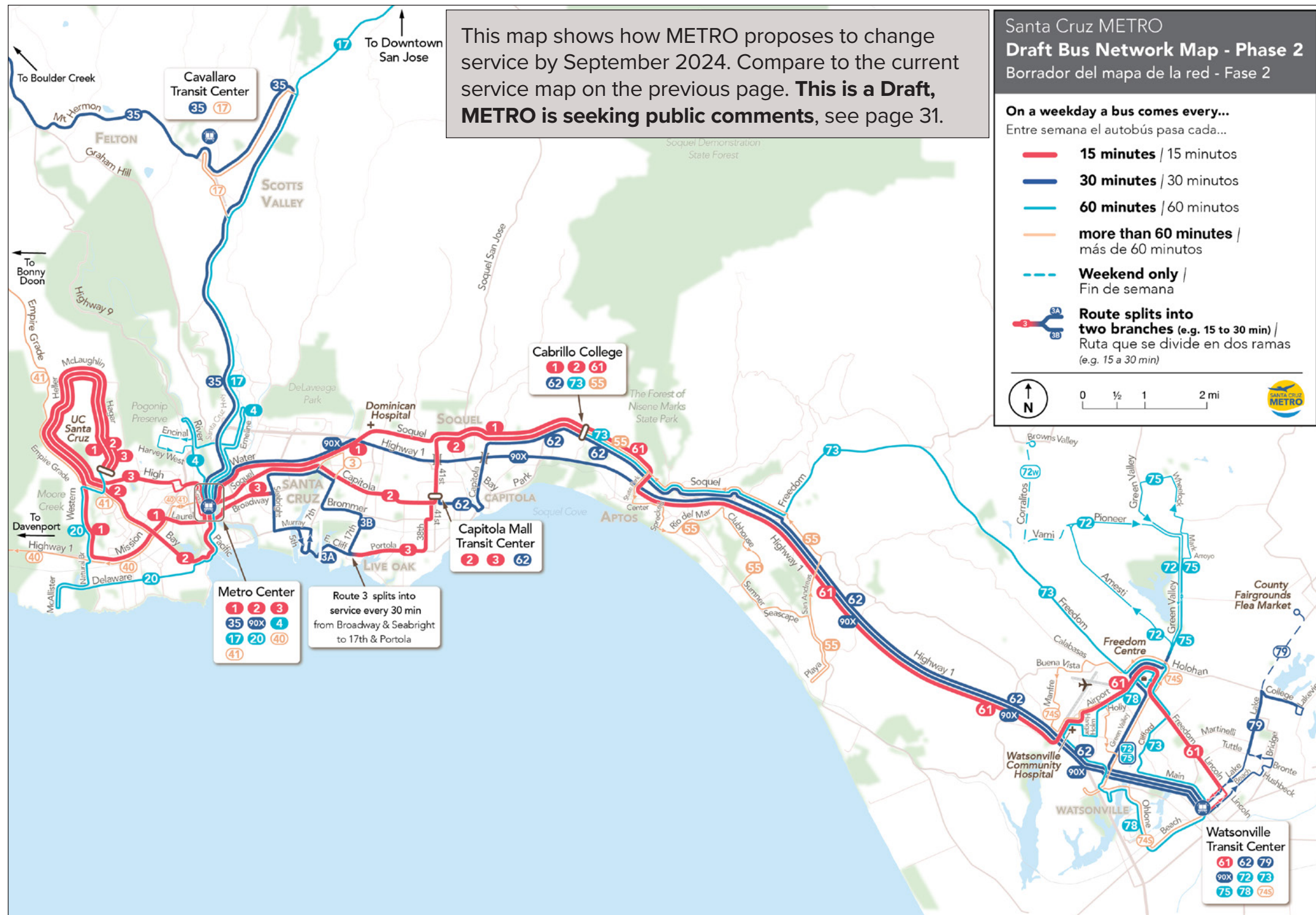


Figure 5: Draft Santa Cruz METRO Network, proposed for September 2024. This map features most of the urbanized areas in Santa Cruz County, including Scotts Valley, Santa Cruz, Watsonville, and all areas in between.

Phase 2 – Proposed Service in Santa Cruz, Live Oak, Soquel, and Capitola

Direct Service from UCSC to the East Side

- **Routes 1 and 18 would merge.** Route 1 would now serve UCSC, Western Ave, Mission St, Downtown Santa Cruz, Water St, Dominican Hospital and Soquel Dr to Cabrillo College.
- **Routes 2 and 19 would merge.** Route 2 would now serve UCSC, Bay Street, Downtown Santa Cruz, Soquel Ave, Capitola Rd and 41st St to Cabrillo College.
- **Routes 1, 2 and 3 would operate every 15 minutes, 7 days per week.**

Regional Express Routes

- **All-day express service to and from Watsonville on Route 90X.** Service would operate every 30 minutes until 7 PM on weekdays, and every 60 minutes until 7 PM on weekends. This route would continue to serve Downtown Santa Cruz, Water Street and Soquel Ave on the way to Highway 1.
- **Route 17 non-stop to San Jose.** Direct service would be provided at consistent hourly intervals, non-stop to Diridon Station, to make a timed connection with Caltrain.

Capitola Mall and Cabrillo College

- **Routes 1 and 2 would end at Cabrillo College.** Local service east of Cabrillo College would be on the new Routes 61 and 62. Route 61 would operate every 15 minutes, seven days per week.
- **Route 62 would connect Capitola Mall to Watsonville with no transfer.** It would replace Route 55 through Capitola Village, and Route 2 east of Cabrillo College. Route 62 would operate every 30 minutes.

Other Changes

- **Route 4 as a two-way loop.** A bus would leave Downtown Santa Cruz every 30 minutes to Emeline and Harvey West, alternating clockwise and counterclockwise service.
- At this time, Route 3A is intended to use the Murray St bridge and Seabright Ave. When the bridge closes for repairs, Route 3A will serve 7th Ave, Capitola Rd and Soquel Ave.

UCSC Loop Changes

- **Routes 1, 2 and 3 would enter and leave the campus via Heller Drive.** They would serve the campus loop clockwise arriving on campus, and counterclockwise leaving campus. This would provide the fastest service into Santa Cruz from the areas of campus with the most activity and residents.
- **Routes 1, 2 and 3 would combine to 12 buses per hour, in both directions,** doubling existing METRO service on campus.
- **Route 20 would end at the UCSC turnaround,** anticipated to be at the base of campus. Passengers continuing to campus would transfer to Routes 1, 2 or 3.

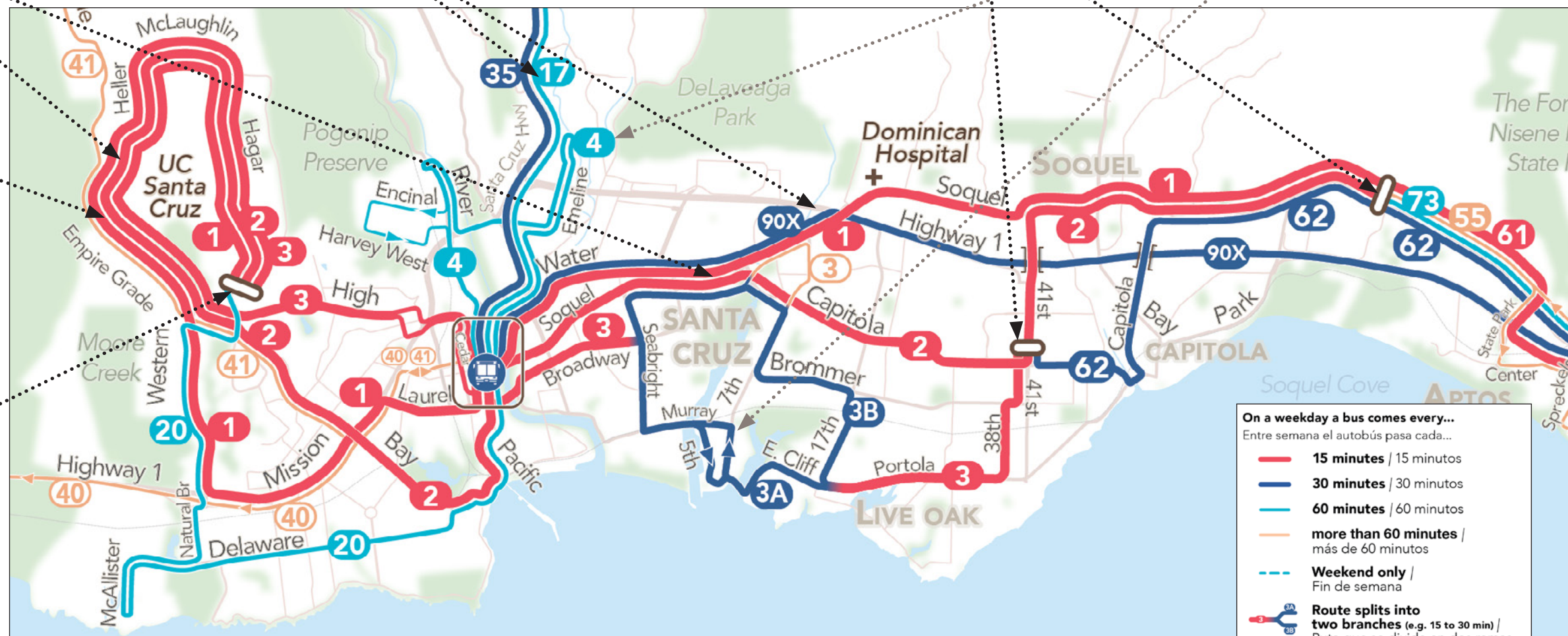


Figure 6: Draft Santa Cruz METRO network for areas west of Cabrillo College, proposed for September 2024.

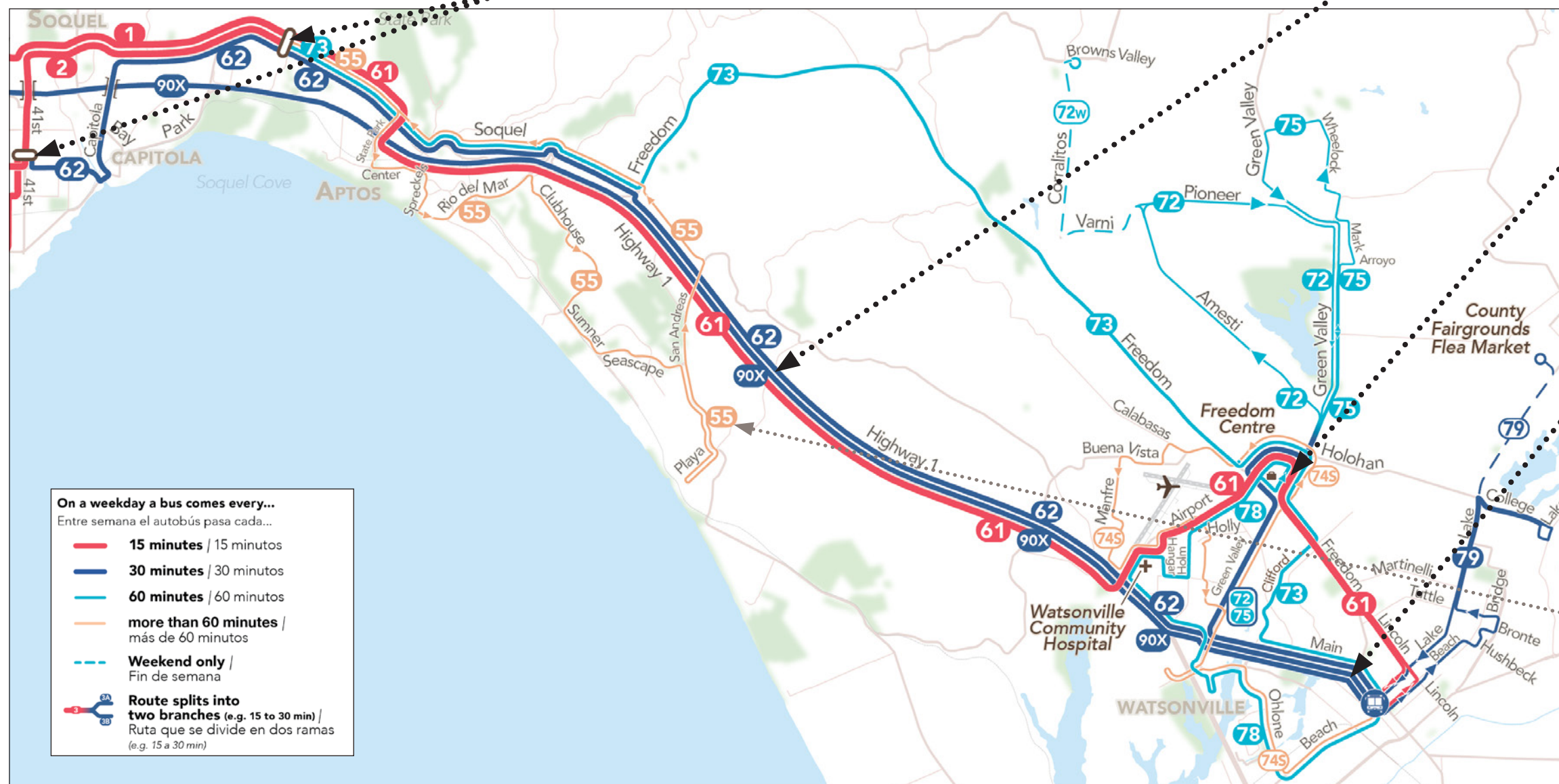
Phase 2 – Proposed Service in Watsonville, Freedom and Aptos

Capitola Mall and Cabrillo College

- **Frequent Route 61 would provide service from Watsonville to Cabrillo College. It would replace Route 1 in this area.** Passengers on Route 61 continuing to areas west of Cabrillo College would transfer to Route 1 or Route 2. The new Routes 1, 2 and 61 would all operate every 15 minutes, seven days per week, minimizing time at transfers.
- **Route 62 would provide service from Watsonville to Capitola Mall. It would replace Route 55 in Capitola Village, and Route 2 east of Cabrillo College and in Watsonville.** Passengers on Route 62 continuing to areas west of 41st Ave would transfer to either Route 1 (at Cabrillo College) or Route 2 (at Cabrillo College or Capitola Mall). Route 62 would operate every 30 minutes, seven days per week.

All-Day Express to Santa Cruz

- **Route 90X from Watsonville to Santa Cruz would operate all-day, seven days per week.** This would be an upgrade from the existing weekday peak-only service. Route 90X would operate every 30 minutes from 6 AM to 7 PM on weekdays, and every 60 minutes from 7 AM to 7 PM on weekends.



Local Service in Watsonville

- **Route 61 would run every 15 minutes, seven days per week, serving the same stops currently on Route 1,** including near Watsonville Community Hospital, Airport Blvd, Freedom Centre, Freedom Blvd, Lincoln St, Watsonville High School and Downtown Watsonville.
- **Route 62 would continue serving the same stops currently on Route 2,** every 30 minutes.
- All other routes would remain similar to routes existing in March 2024, including the new Route 78.

Other Changes

- **Route 55 would serve Aptos Village, and would end at Cabrillo College.** Passengers from Rio del Mar and La Selva Beach would transfer to Routes 2 and 62 at Cabrillo College to continue to Capitola Mall.

Figure 7: Draft Santa Cruz METRO network for areas west of Cabrillo College, proposed for September 2024.

Phase 2 – Proposed Service North and West of Santa Cruz

Scotts Valley and San Lorenzo Valley

- **Route 35 would become as frequent on Saturdays and Sundays as on weekdays.** This would provide weekend service every 30 minutes to Scotts Valley, Felton, Ben Lomond and Boulder Creek.
- Service on the Glen Arbor, Country Club and Mountain Store branches would continue to operate every 60 minutes. There would continue to be limited school-term service to Bear Creek and Sylvan.

Highway 17 Express

- **Non-stop hourly service from Downtown Santa Cruz to San Jose would not stop in Scotts Valley.** Accessing these trips from Scotts Valley and San Lorenzo Valley would require connecting from Route 35 in Downtown Santa Cruz.
- **Peak trips serving Scotts Valley.** METRO is monitoring Route 17 ridership at different times of day in Scotts Valley. At peak hours and other high-demand times, additional trips on Route 17 would continue to serve Cavallaro Transit Center and Scotts Valley Drive.

Empire Grade, Bonny Doon, and Davenport

- Route 42 would be replaced with afternoon and evening trips on Routes 40 and 41.

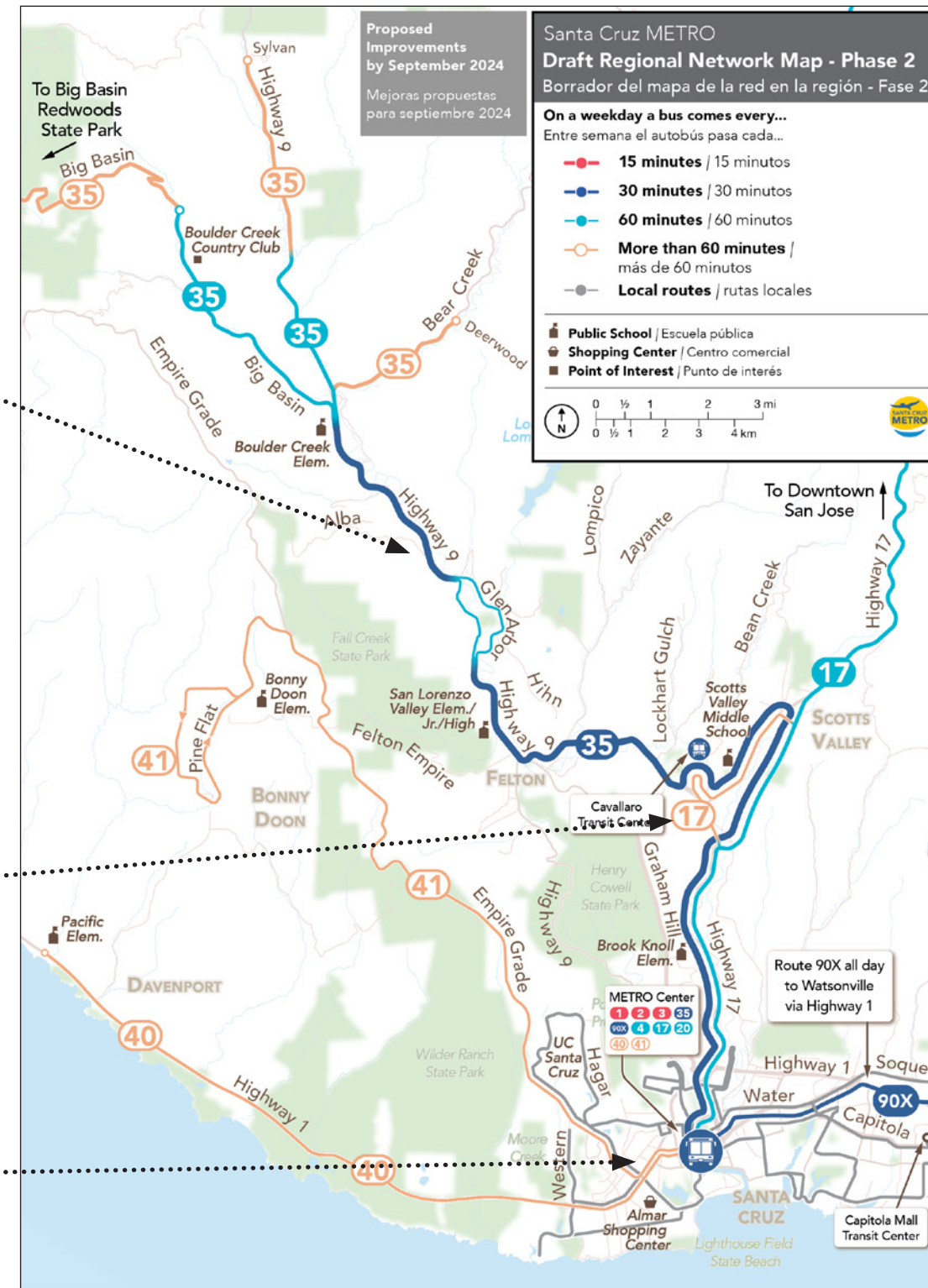
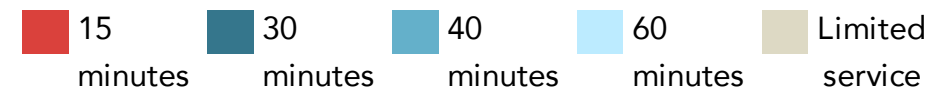


Figure 8: Draft Santa Cruz METRO regional network map, proposed for September 2024. This map focuses on areas north and west of Santa Cruz, and regional services.

Route Frequency Chart by Day and Time – March 2024

Phase 1 Service - March 2024

Transit comes about every:



WEEKDAYS

WEEKENDS

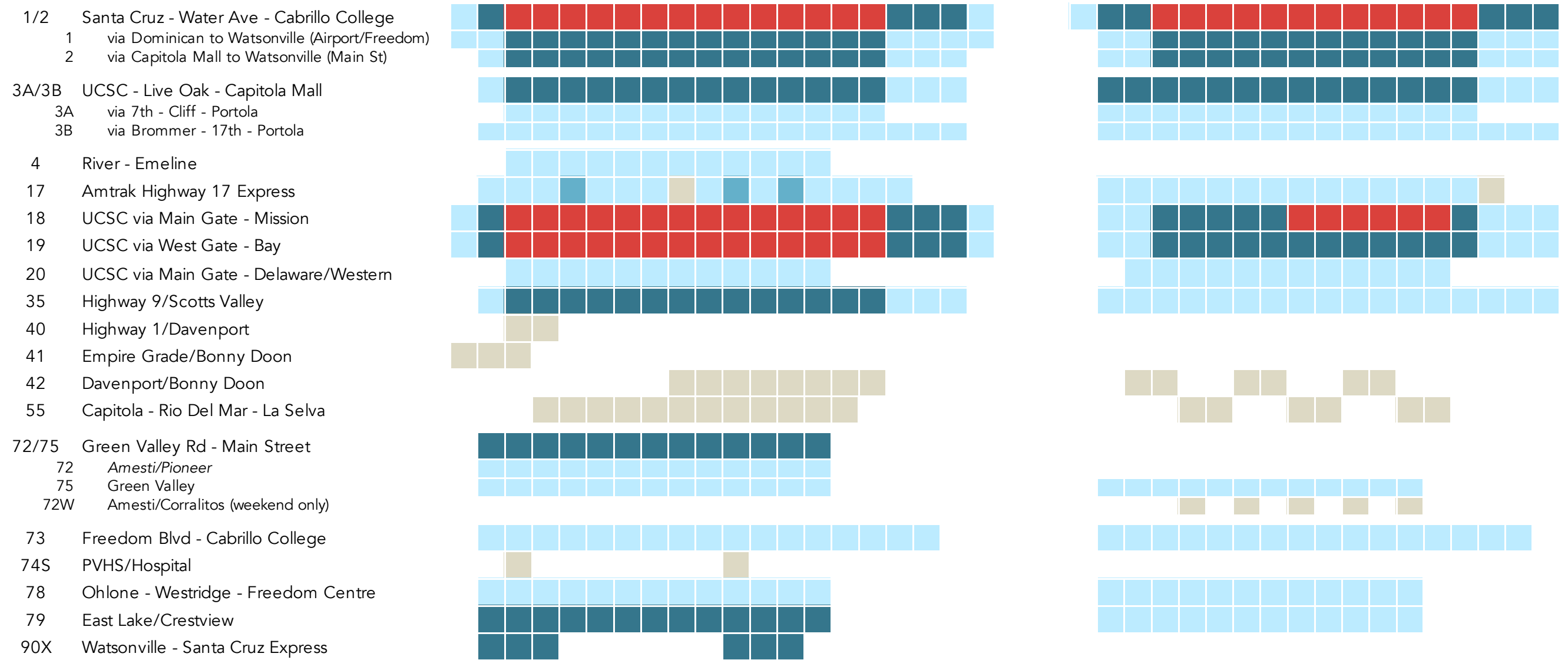
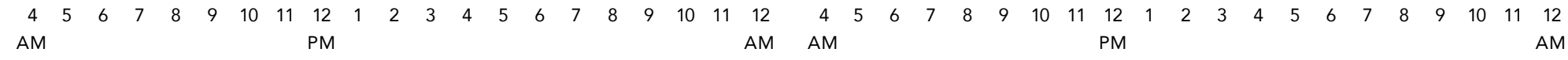
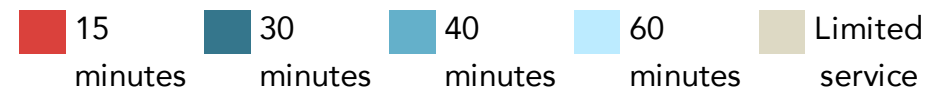


Figure 9: Chart showing service frequency by Santa Cruz METRO bus route, day of the week, and time of day, as of March 2024.

Draft Route Frequency Chart by Day and Time – Phase 2

Draft Phase 2 Service - September 2024

Transit comes about every:



WEEKDAYS

WEEKENDS

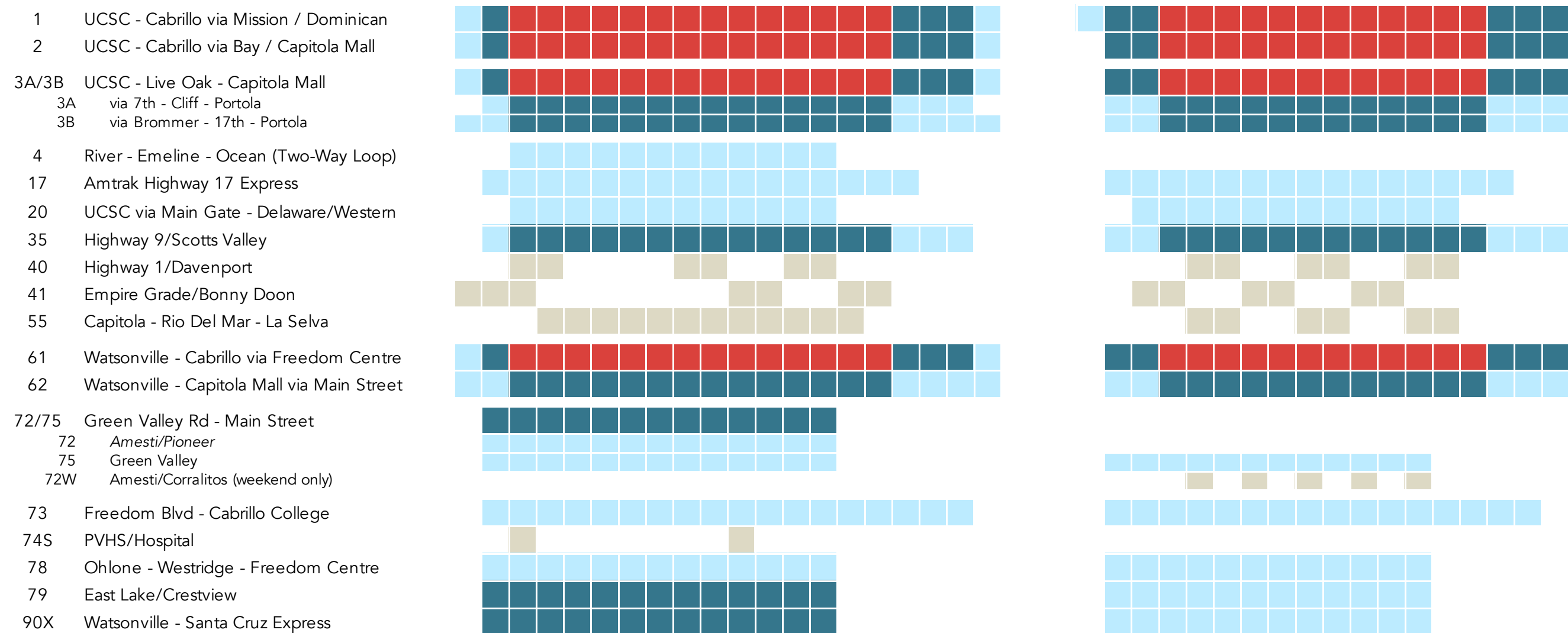
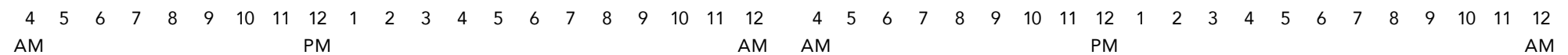


Figure 10: Chart showing proposed service frequency by Santa Cruz METRO bus route, day of the week, and time of day, as of September 2024, based on the current Draft Network.

Watsonville and Northwest Network Maps – March 2024

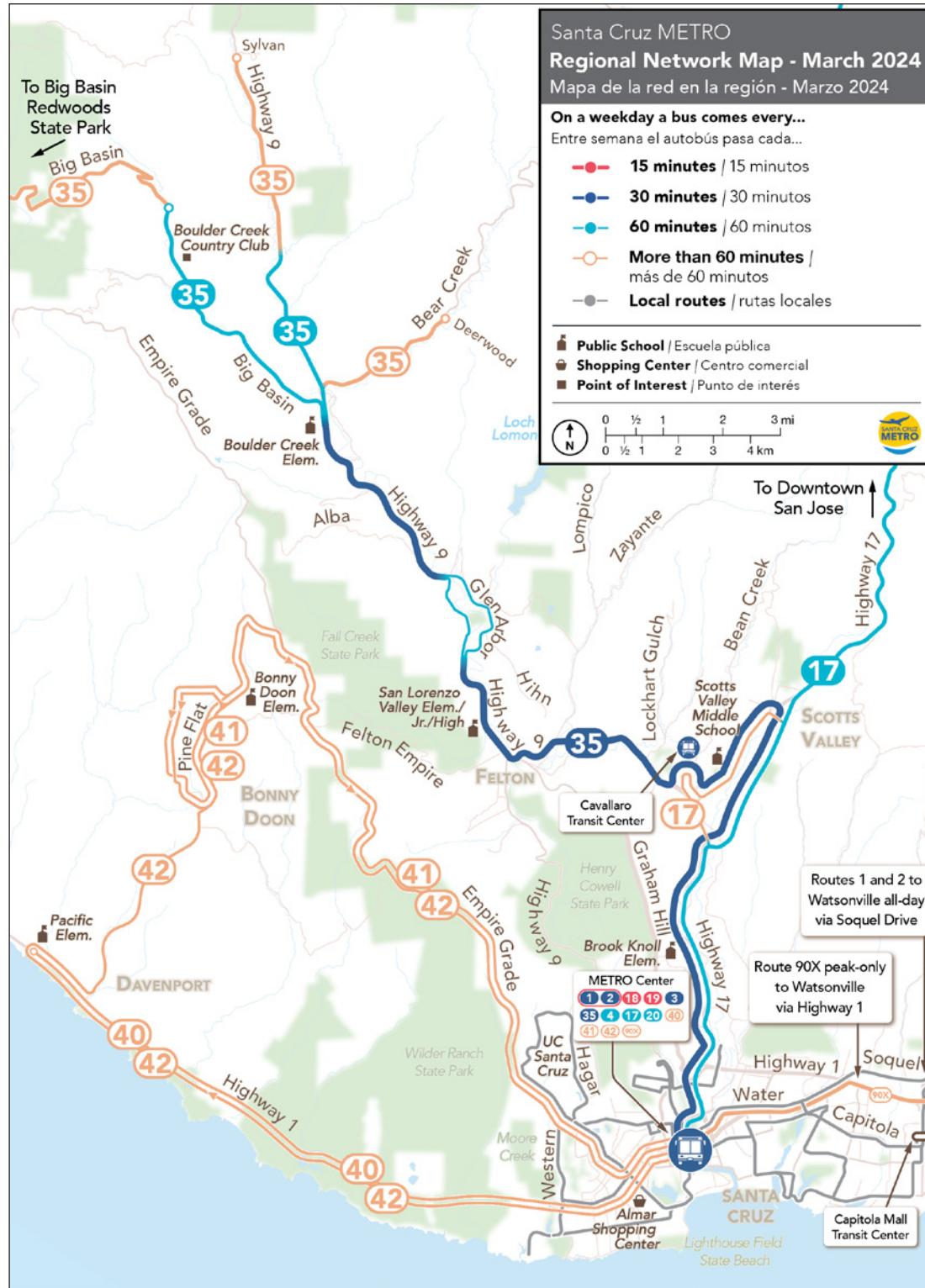


Figure 11: Santa Cruz METRO regional network map, as of March 2024. This map focuses on areas north and west of Santa Cruz, and regional services.

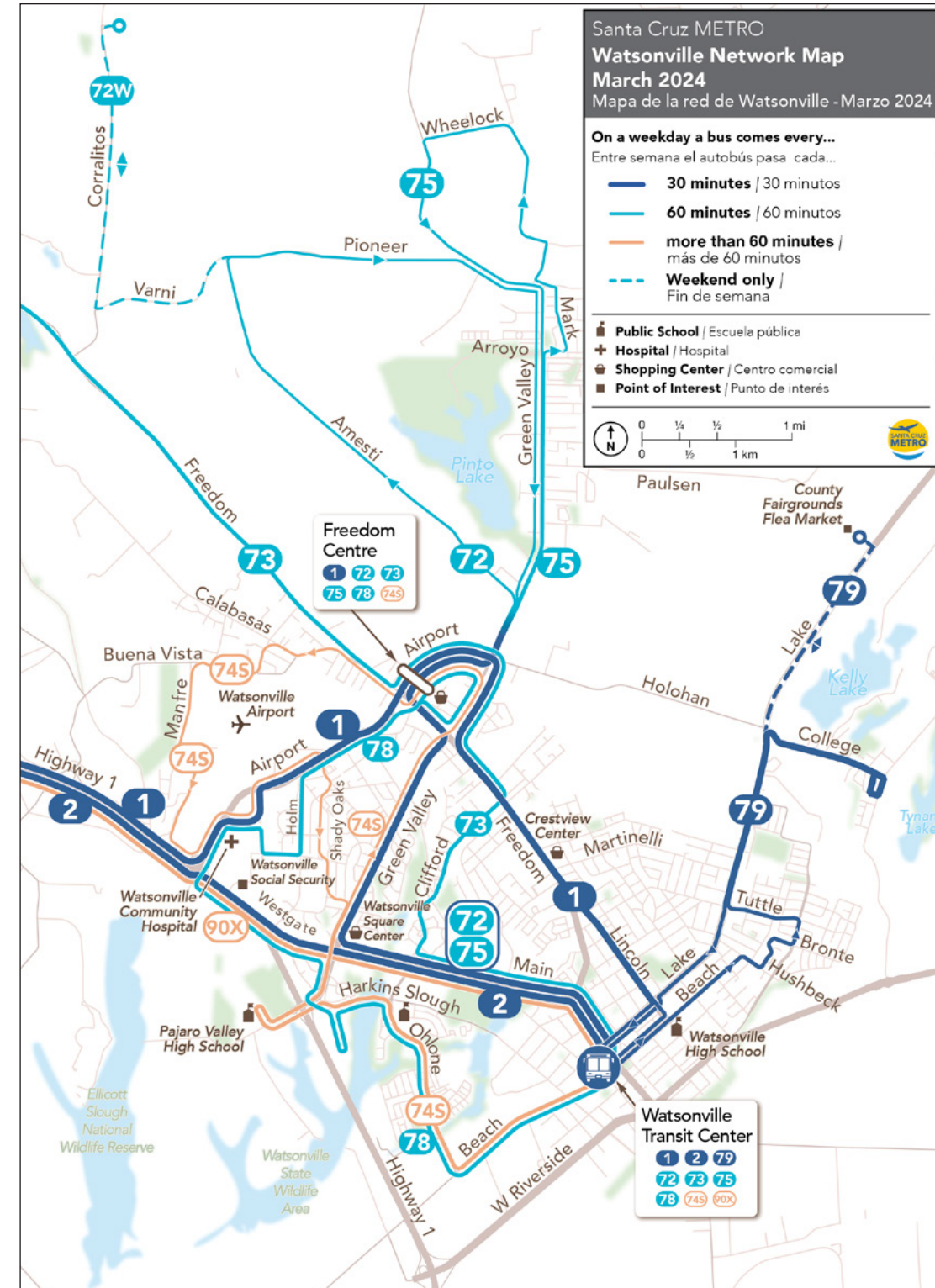


Figure 12: Santa Cruz METRO Watsonville network map, as of March 2024. This map focuses on Watsonville and immediately adjacent areas.

Draft Watsonville and Northwest Network Maps – Phase 2



Figure 13: Draft Santa Cruz METRO regional network map, proposed for September 2024. This map focuses on areas north and west of Santa Cruz, and regional services.



Figure 14: Draft Santa Cruz METRO Watsonville network map, proposed for September 2024. This map focuses on Watsonville and immediately adjacent areas.



3

Proposed Network Outcomes

More People and Jobs near Frequent Service on Weekdays in the Daytime

This page shows how many people would be affected by the changes to coverage and frequency in Phase 2 on weekdays in the daytime. The simplified maps below show, using color, the frequencies running on each segment of the network at that time. Service frequencies are indicated by the colors of the lines, corresponding to the legend below.

The bar charts below the maps show what percentage of people or jobs in the urbanized areas of Santa Cruz County would be near service at a particular frequency. The top line in each chart represents the total population, followed by low income residents, people of color, and finally jobs.

In the Phase 2 Draft Network, the number of people living near frequent service (in red) would triple compared to March 2024, to 47% of residents and 53% of jobs would be located within a half-mile walk of service every 15 minutes on weekdays.

The percentage of people near frequent service would be even higher for marginalized groups like low income residents (52%) and people of color (49%).

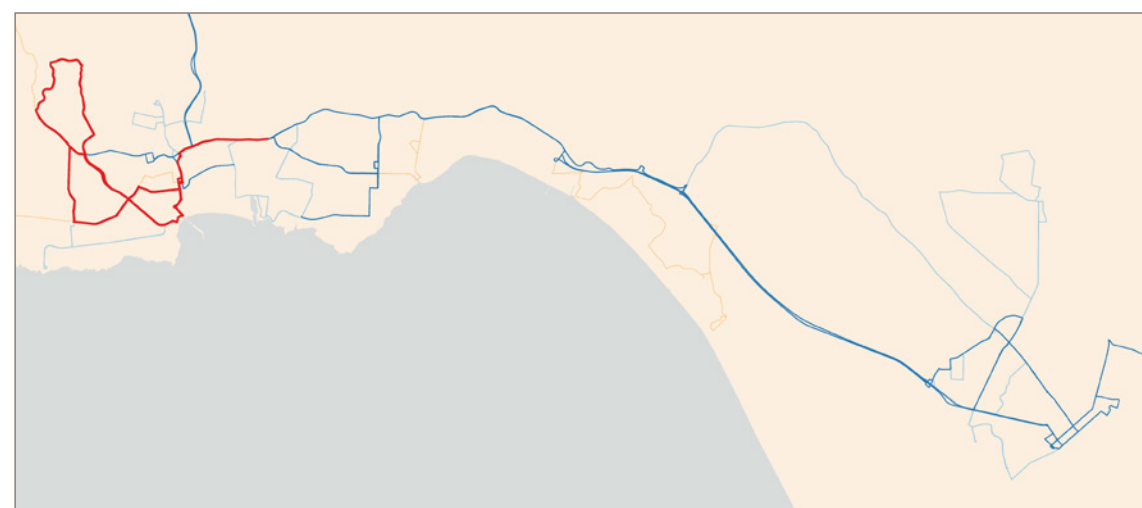
The percentage of residents (71%) and jobs (71%) located within a half-mile walk¹ from a bus stop with any service would remain the same as in March 2024.

¹ Note that these results in this page and the following are based on walking distance along the actual street network, not a straight line “as the crow flies” distance.

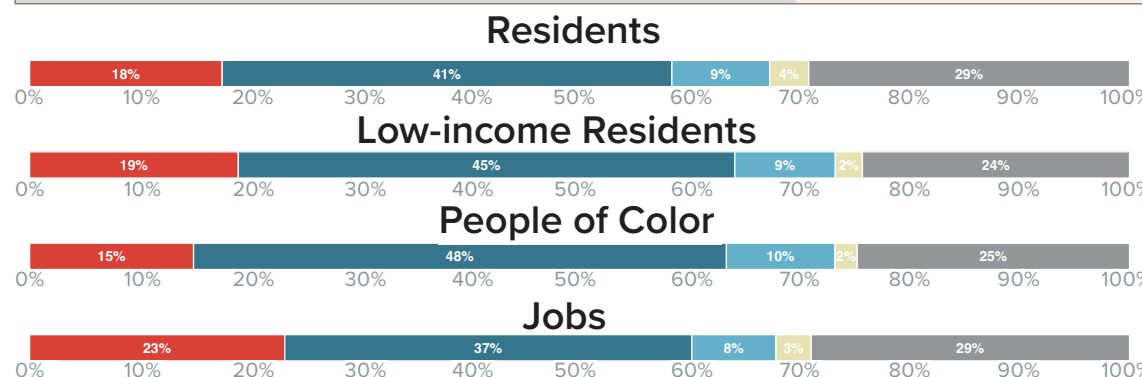
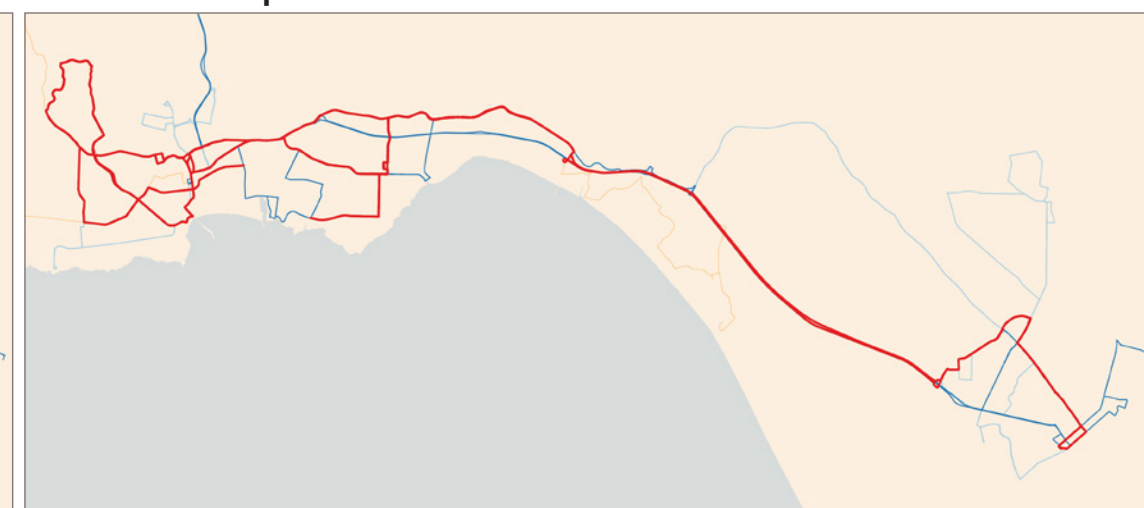
On Weekdays from 7 AM to 7 PM, How many people and jobs would be within 1/2 mile walk of service, coming every:



Phase 1 - March 2024



Phase 2 - September 2024



Note: Proximity is measured as being located within 1/2 mile of a bus stop. "Urbanized areas" means Census block groups with a population density at or above 1,000 residents per sq.mi or 1,000 jobs per sq.mi



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More People and Jobs near Frequent Service on Saturdays and Sundays

In the Phase 2 Draft Network, most routes would maintain the same frequencies on weekends and weekends. This would massively increase weekend service levels in most of METRO's service area.

47% of residents and 53% of jobs would be located within a half-mile walk of service every 15 minutes on Saturdays and Sundays (in red). This represents the population and jobs in the areas served by routes 1, 2, 3, and 61. This would be a **sevenfold increase in residents near frequent service, and a fourfold increase in jobs near weekend frequent service, compared to March 2024.**

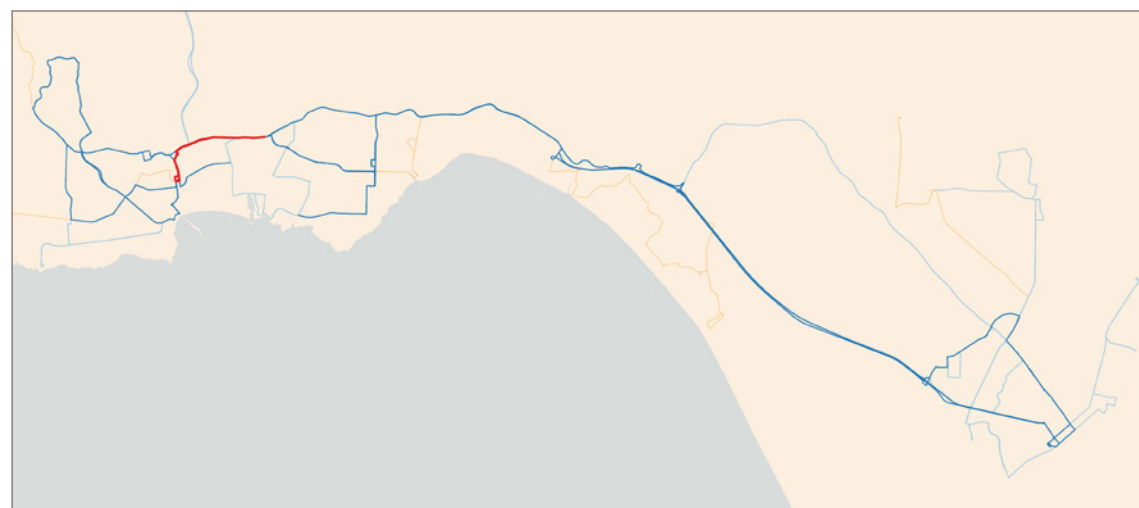
The percentage of residents living near service every 30 minutes or better on weekends would increase from 51% to 57%. This includes people in Scotts Valley, Felton, Ben Lomond and Boulder Creek who would be close to weekend service every 30 minutes on Route 35..

The percentage of residents (71%) and jobs (71%) located within a half-mile walk from a bus stop with any service on weekends would remain the same as in March 2024.

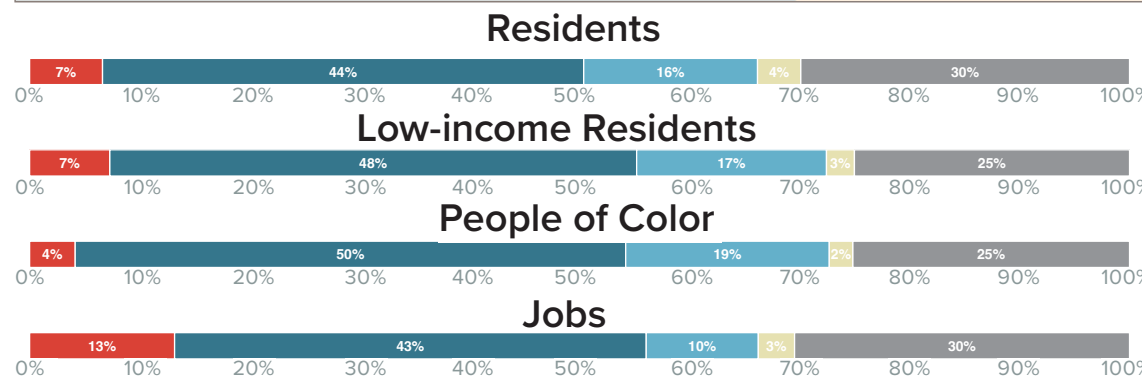
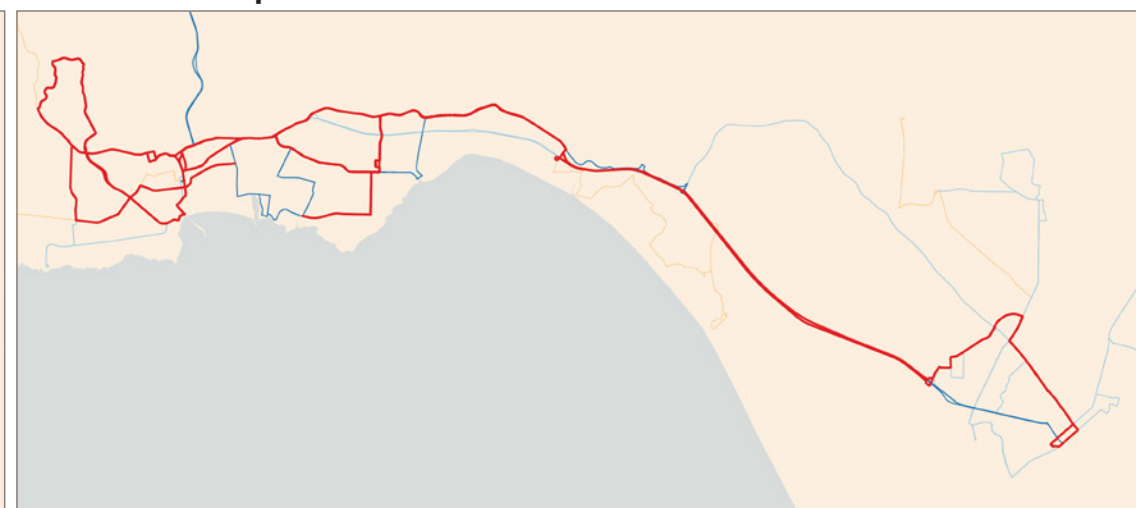
On Weekends from 7 AM to 7 PM, How many people and jobs would be within 1/2 mile walk of service, coming every:



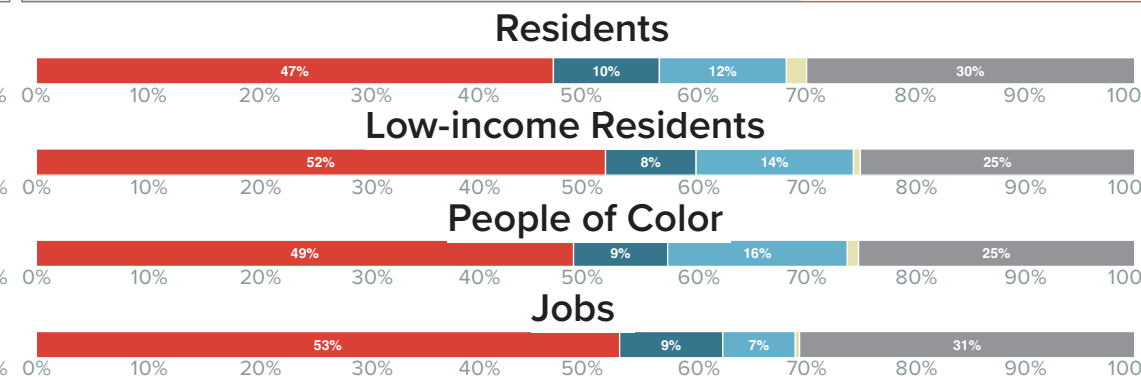
Phase 1 - March 2024



Phase 2 - September 2024



Note: Proximity is measured as being located within 1/2 mile of a bus stop. "Urbanized areas" means Census block groups with a population density at or above 1,000 residents per sq.mi or 1,000 jobs per sq.mi



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Better Service on Weekdays After 9 PM

Evening service rarely carries as many riders as daytime service, but it allows people to build their lives around transit. The Phase 2 Draft Network includes late evening service improvements.

Routes 1,2,3 and 61 serving key segments and high density areas would increase service from every 60 minutes to every 30 minutes. As a result, **in Phase 2, the number of residents near service every 30 minutes (in dark blue) would nearly triple.** 47% of residents and 53% of jobs would be located within a half-mile walk of service every 30 minutes (in dark blue), even after 9 PM.

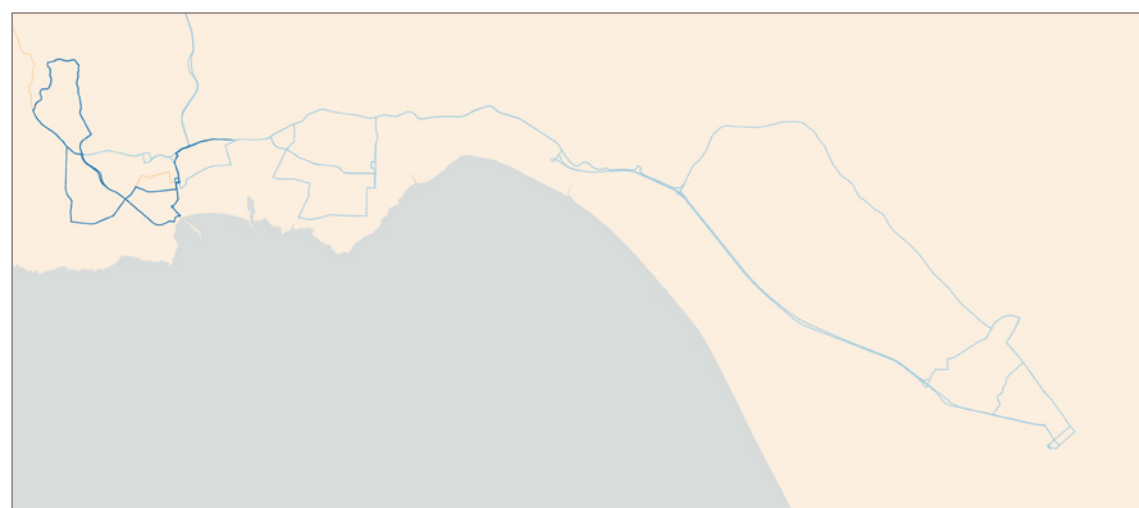
This includes most low-income residents (52%), and would be a substantial increase compared to 18% of residents and 23% of jobs near service every 30 minutes in March 2024.

The percentage of residents and jobs located within a half-mile walk from a bus stop with any service after 9 PM would also increase, from 56% to 58%. This is the result of extending the hours of Route 3A in Live Oak, and the new Route 62 serving Capitola Village in the evenings.

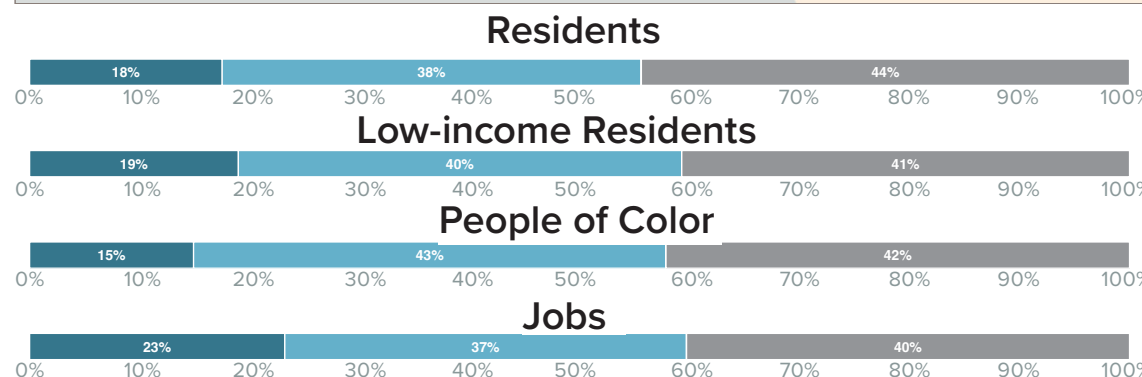
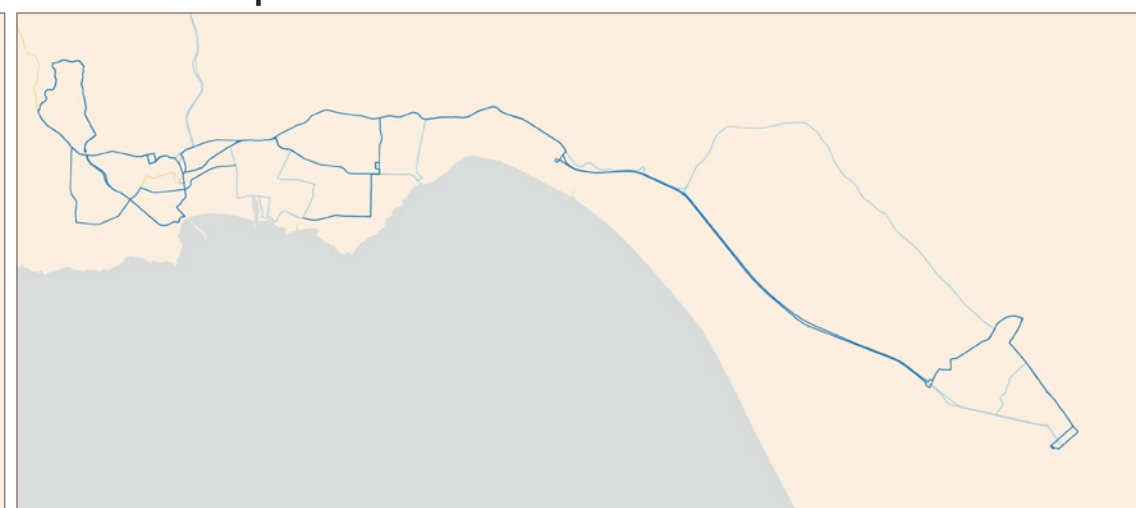
On Weekdays from 9 PM to Midnight, How many people and jobs would be within 1/2 mile walk of service, coming every:



Phase 1 - March 2024



Phase 2 - September 2024



Note: Proximity is measured as being located within 1/2 mile of a bus stop. "Urbanized areas" means Census block groups with a population density at or above 1,000 residents per sq.mi or 1,000 jobs per sq.mi



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Better Service on Saturdays and Sundays After 9 PM

The Phase 2 Draft Network would maintain the same levels of service on weekend evenings as on weekday evenings.

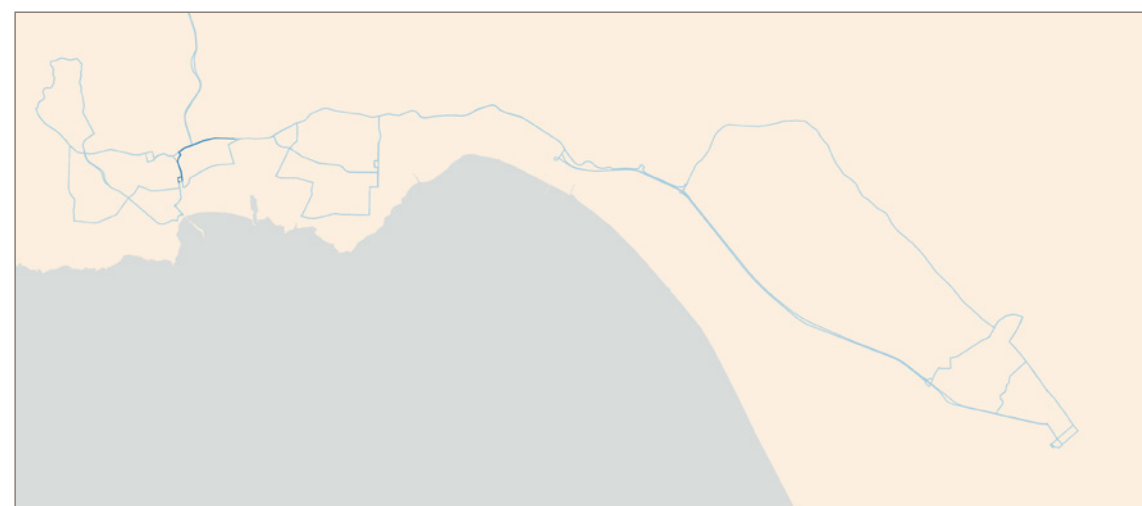
Like on weekdays after 9 PM, 47% of residents and 53% of jobs would be located within a half-mile walk of service every 30 minutes (in dark blue). This includes a majority of low income residents (52%).

This would be a sevenfold increase in the number of residents near service every 30 minutes on weekend evenings. Only 7% of residents and 13% of jobs will be near service every 30 minutes after 9 PM on weekends as of March 2024.

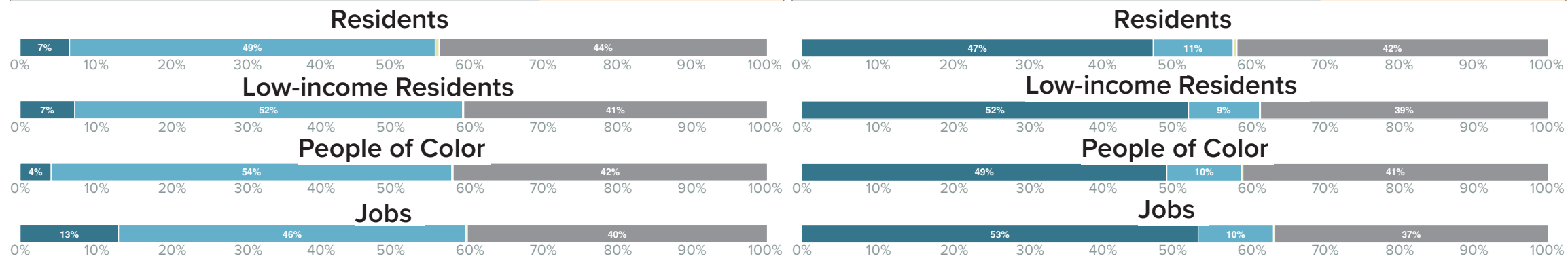
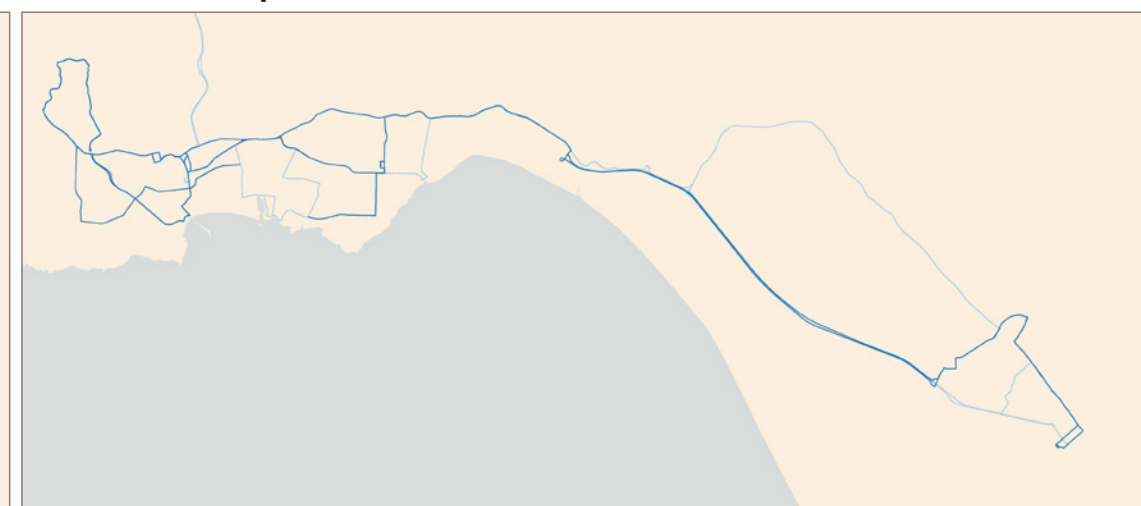
On Weekends from 9 PM to Midnight, How many people and jobs would be within 1/2 mile walk of service, coming every:



Phase 1 - March 2024



Phase 2 - September 2024



Note: Proximity is measured as being located within 1/2 mile of a bus stop. "Urbanized areas" means Census block groups with a population density at or above 1,000 residents per sq.mi or 1,000 jobs per sq.mi

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Transit would provide access to more opportunities and be useful to more people.

WHAT IS ACCESS?

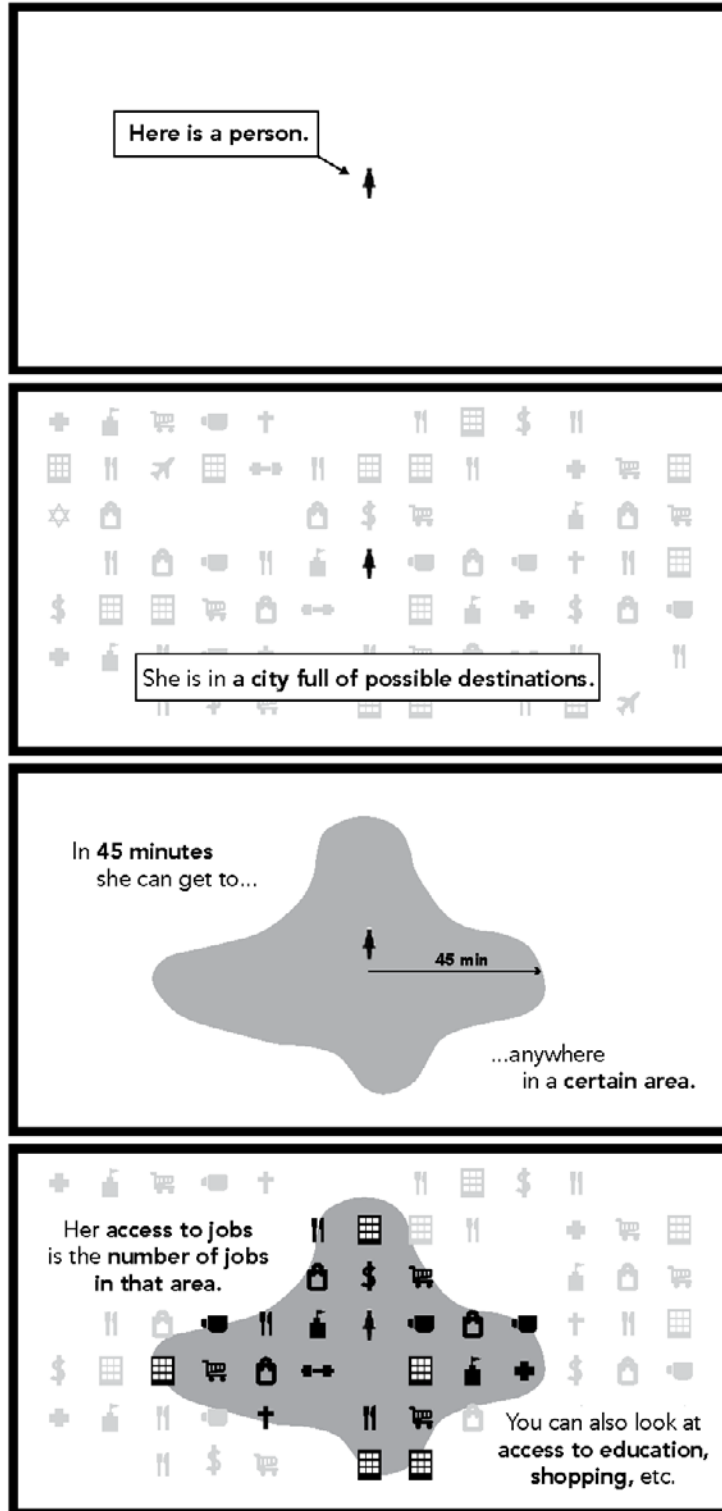


Figure 15: Illustration of the concept of access.

So far, this chapter has focused on measures of availability - where is service available and who is close to it. These measures help us understand how the network would change with Phase 2, but they don't help us gain a sense of what kinds of trips people would reasonably make on transit. For that, we need to turn to another set of measures of transit usefulness: access to opportunity.

Why Access Matters

Access is the core service METRO delivers to its customers. To measure it we ask: where can transit take you? Which opportunities can you reach? Can it take you to the places you need to go, in a reasonable amount of time?

Many factors affect people's decision to use transit, but the most important one is usually time. Most people have busy lives that may include working, studying, or raising children (or all three!). They have only a limited amount of time in their day to devote to traveling.

Even people who don't have the option to drive won't use public transit if it takes more time than they can spare. Long travel times are one of the most universally cited reasons not to use transit, even among people who would otherwise be open to it.

Measuring Access

As a result, **to assess the value of the Draft Phase 2 network, we need to describe the access it provides within reasonable travel times.**

Measuring access is a good way to capture how the design of the network leads to ridership. When access is high, it means that when someone looks up a trip they want to

make, they are more likely to find that it makes sense in their day. But increased access to opportunity is valuable for many other reasons. For example:

- In real estate, access contributes to the value of a location.
- Access to jobs and education is a critical need for people with low incomes, who are more likely to rely on transit, because transportation is a common barrier to these things.
- Access is a measure of how many options we have in our lives. In this sense, you can think of it as a measure of **freedom**, which needs no other justification.

Access and Travel Time

To fairly assess access to opportunity by transit, travel times must include the entire trip. A typical transit trip contains three types of time:

- **Walking**, or traveling to and from the stop by some other means. Although people do cycle, and sometimes drive and park to use transit, the vast majority of transit trips begin and end with a walk, whether on foot or with the assistance of a wheelchair or mobility device.
- **Waiting**. Waiting is any time spent outside the transit vehicle, and not in motion, as part of your trip. It can also be described as the difference between when you ideally want to travel and the time you can travel. On average, waiting time for a bus is half of the frequency on its route.
- **Riding**. Riding is all of the time spent inside the transit vehicle.

Travel times in this report include the sum of all three of these kinds of time.

Every transit trip is made up of walking, waiting, and riding.

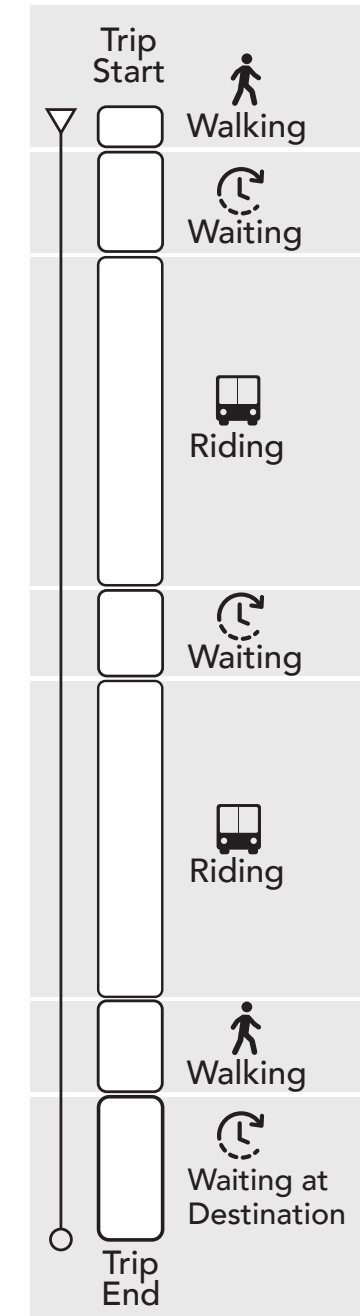


Figure 16: Elements of travel time in a typical transit trip, including a transfer.

Access to Opportunity: How Many People Would Benefit in 45 minutes

The map in Figure 17 (below left) shows where people would experience a change in the number of jobs they can reach within 45 minutes on weekdays in the daytime, from March 2024 to September 2024, if the Phase 2 Draft Network were implemented. On this map, each dot represents about 25 nearby residents.

- **For 67% of residents (green dots) access to jobs within 45 minutes would increase.** This includes 77% of low-income residents.
- **For 1% of residents (brown dots) access to jobs within 45 minutes would decrease.**
- Residents in areas that would experience little change are represented by light gray dots.

Measuring changes in access to jobs helps to understand access to many kinds of opportunity. This is because most job locations are important destinations for other reasons, like education, healthcare, shopping, public services and others.

This map therefore shows that in most of Santa Cruz METRO’s service area, transit would provide access to many more opportunities if Phase 2 were implemented as designed.

There is an area on the UCSC campus that would experience a small negative impact from the proposed service changes. This is a result of the choice that all routes would enter and leave campus via Heller Drive rather than Hagar Drive. This choice is related to the higher density of activities on the west side of campus.

The chart in Figure 18 (below right) summarizes the percentage of urbanized area residents who would experience different levels of access change.

On this chart, similarly to the map, **green bars** count residents in areas where transit would provide **more access**; **brown bars** count residents in areas where transit would provide **less access**. The grey bar in between counts the residents who would see little change in access.

This chart also shows that **many people would experience very large gains in access to jobs within 45 minutes (+10,000 or more jobs)**, including 27% of all residents, 25% of low-income residents, and 20% of people of color.

If the Phase 2 Draft network were implemented:

- The average resident could reach 4,500 more jobs (+19%)...
- The average low-income resident could reach 4,300 more jobs (+17%)...
- The average person of color would reach 3,700 more jobs (+16%)...

...within 45 minutes or less, compared to March 2024.



Figure 17: Phase 2 - Map of change in access to jobs by transit within 45 minutes, on weekdays.

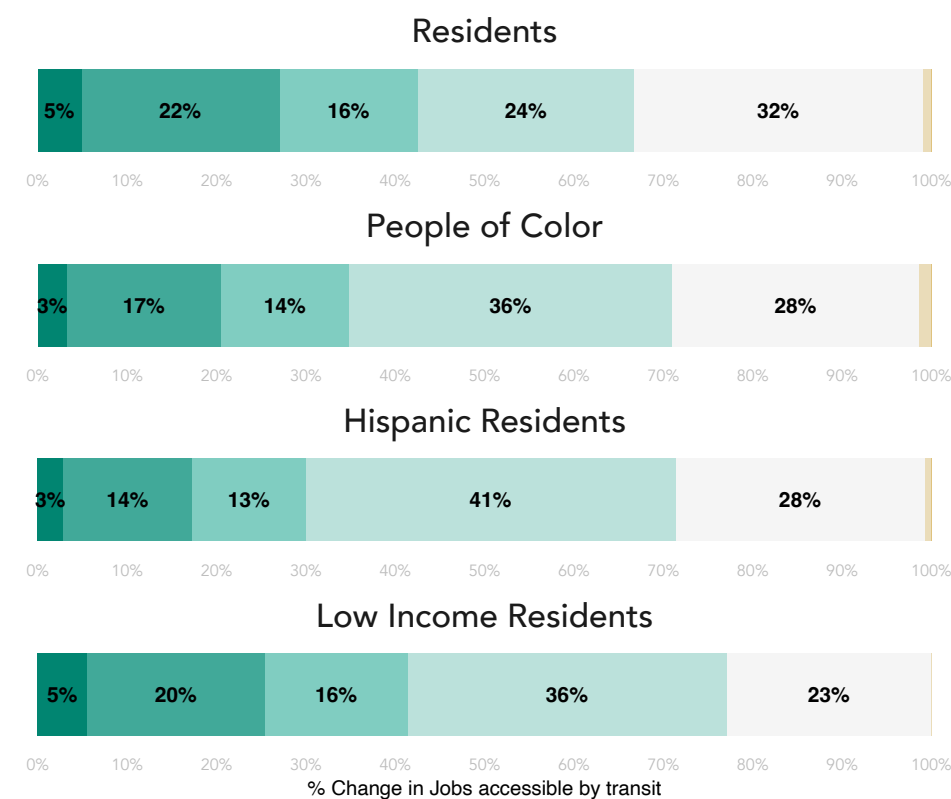


Figure 18: Chart showing the percentages of people experiencing different levels of change in access within 45 minutes, by demographic group.

Access to Opportunity: How Many People Would Benefit in 60 minutes

Why measure access within 60 minutes?

Very few people want to regularly spend more than 45 minutes going from one place to another. Nonetheless, many trips in Santa Cruz County require more than 45 minutes simply due to distances and traffic. Even direct car trips between Watsonville and Santa Cruz can take an hour or more at peak times.

Therefore, to understand how Phase 2 would change cross-county trips, it may be more relevant to measure change in access to opportunity within 60 minutes. This is particularly important in understanding improvements in **access from Watsonville to jobs and other opportunities in and near Santa Cruz.**

As on the prior page, the map in Figure 19 (below left) shows where people would experience a change in the number of jobs they can reach within 60 on weekdays in the daytime, from March 2024 to September 2024. On this map:

- **For 77% of residents (green dots) access to jobs within 60 minutes would increase.** This includes 85% of low-income residents.
- **Access to jobs within 60 minutes would decrease for 0% of residents (no brown dots).**
- Residents in areas that would experience little change are represented by light gray dots.

The areas with the densest concentration of increased access are near bus stops on Route 90X in Watsonville.

The chart in Figure 20 (below right) summarizes the percentage of urbanized area residents who would experience different levels of access change.

This chart also shows that **even more people would experience very large gains in access to jobs within 60 minutes** (+10,000 or more jobs), including 36% of all residents, 37% of low-income residents, and 30% of people of color.

If the Phase 2 Draft network were implemented:

- The average resident could reach 8,900 more jobs (+23%)...
- The average low-income resident could reach 16,500 more jobs (+42%)....
- The average person of color would reach 5,900 more jobs (+16%)....

...within 60 minutes, compared to March 2024.

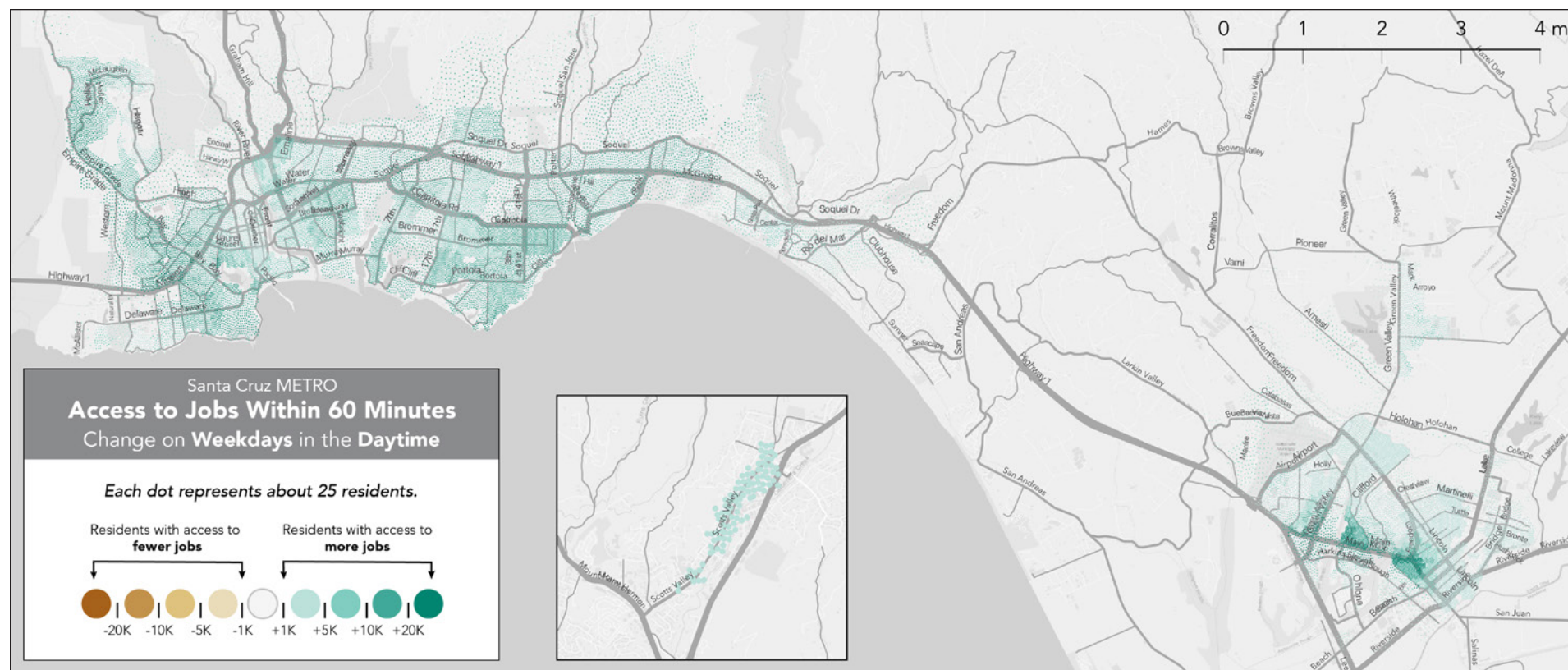


Figure 19: Phase 2 - Map of change in access to jobs by transit within 60 minutes, on weekdays.

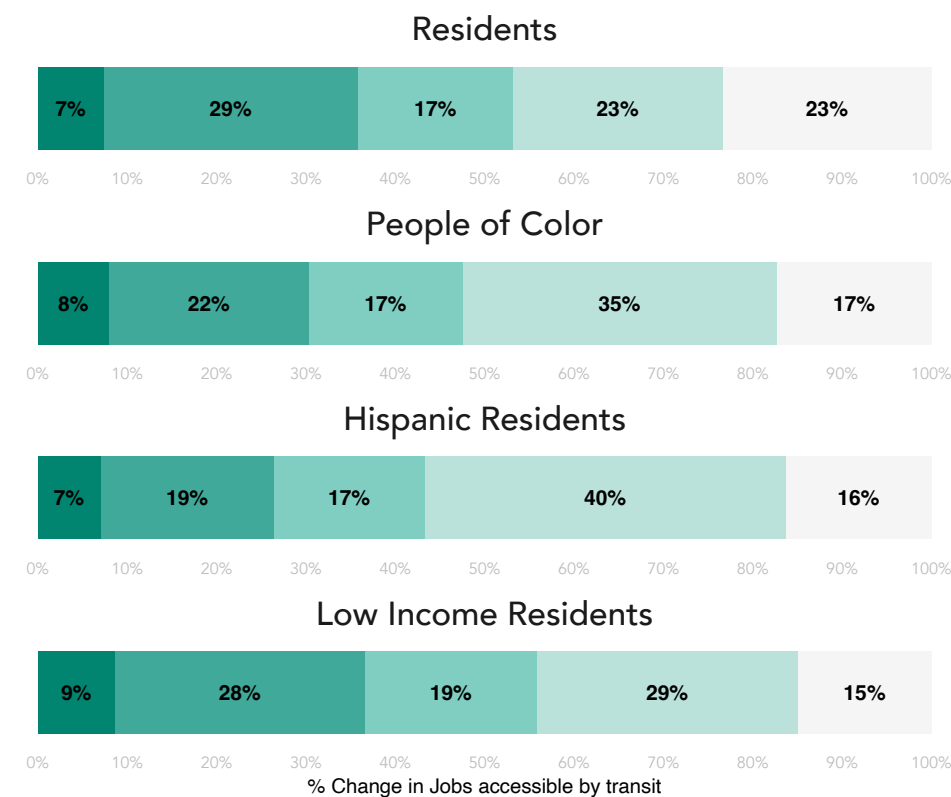


Figure 20: Chart showing the percentages of people experiencing different levels of change in access within 60 minutes, by demographic group.

Access Change From Downtown Santa Cruz in 45 and 60 Minutes

The next several pages show how access would change for major regional destinations including UCSC, Cabrillo College, Capitola Mall, and the downtowns of Santa Cruz and Watsonville.

For each location, we show the area that can be reached in 45 or 60 minutes, and how this changes. As with the general access calculations, these travel times include both walking time and average waiting time.

In each map:

- The **blue** areas are the places that would not be reachable in March 2024 (Phase 1) but would become reachable in Phase 2.
- The **purple** areas are places reachable in Phase 1 and Phase 2.
- The **red** areas are places that are reachable in Phase 1 that would no longer be reachable in Phase 2.

From Downtown Santa Cruz, access within 45 minutes would grow heading towards the east side heading toward Soquel **A** and Capitola as a result of more frequent service on Routes 1 and 2. Pleasure Point **B** would also be easier to reach in less than 45 minutes because Routes 3A and 3B would overlap to offer service every 15 minutes.

Within 60 minutes of travel time, it would become possible to reach parts of Watsonville near Main Street **C**, due to all-day express service on Route 90X.

As a result, from Downtown Santa Cruz:

- Within 45 minutes, it would be possible to reach 32% more jobs and 26% more residents in September 2024 than in March 2024.
- Within 60 minutes, it would be possible to reach 5% more jobs and 6% more residents in September 2024 than in March 2024.

Draft Phase 2 - September 2024

How far can I travel from **Downtown SC (Soquel Ave & Pacific)** in a reasonable amount of time?

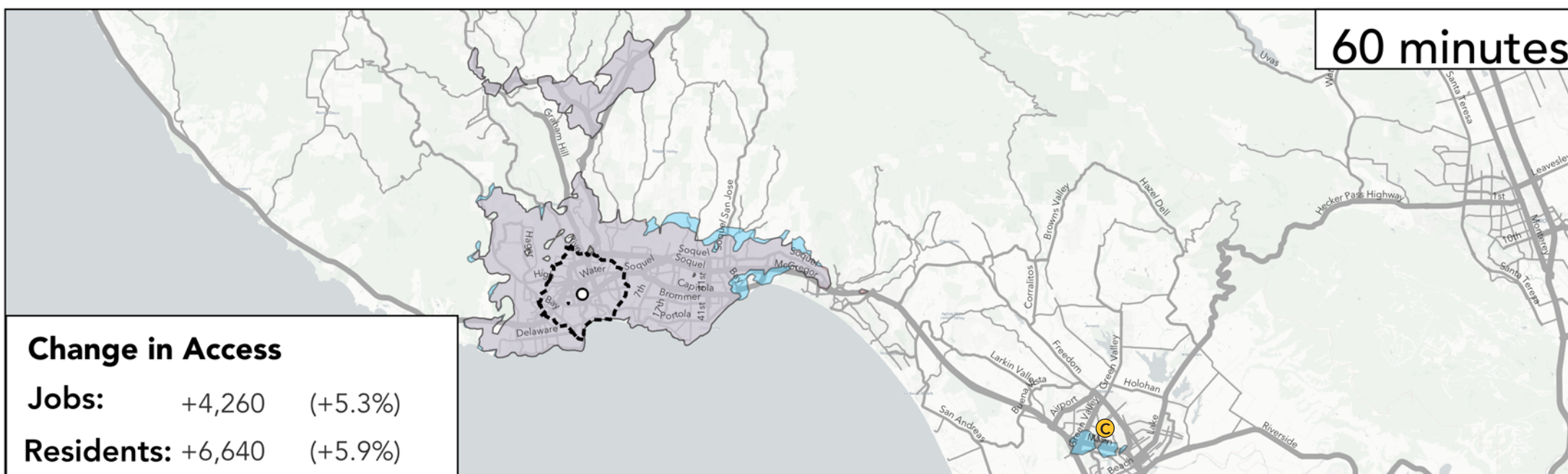
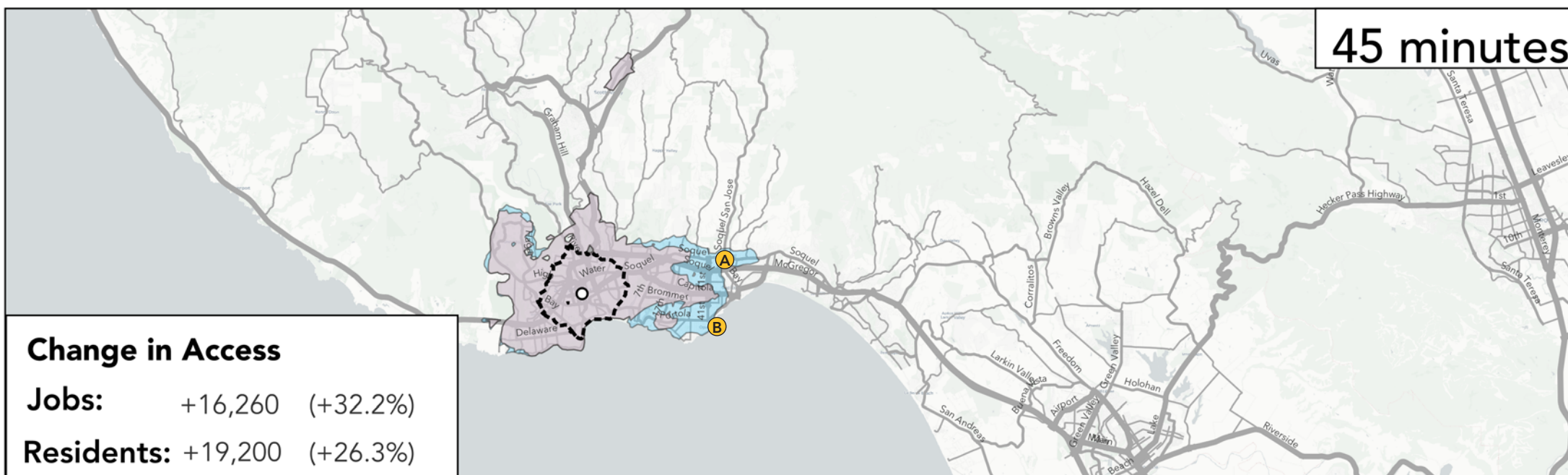


Figure 21: How many opportunities could a person reach in 45 and 60 minutes from Downtown Santa Cruz?

Access From UCSC in 45 and 60 Minutes

The University of California – Santa Cruz (UCSC) is the single busiest transit destination in the county, so access to and from this area is fundamental to the effectiveness of METRO’s network.

In Phase 2, Routes 1, 2 and 3 serving UCSC would all operate every 15 minutes, and would extend beyond Downtown Santa Cruz, providing frequent one-seat rides to east Santa Cruz, Live Oak, Capitola Mall, Soquel and Cabrillo College.

From the UCSC Science Hill bus stop, a person riding transit would gain access to most of east Santa Cruz **A** within 45 minutes.

Within 60 minutes, these gains would extend even further to areas along Soquel Drive, Capitola Road **B** and Portola Drive **C** would become reachable.

As a result, from UCSC Science Hill:

- Within 45 minutes, it would be possible to reach 29% more jobs and 37% more residents in September 2024 than in March 2024.
- Within 60 minutes, it would be possible to reach 34% more jobs and 37% more residents in September 2024 than in March 2024.

Draft Phase 2 - September 2024

How far can I travel from UCSC Science Hill in a reasonable amount of time?

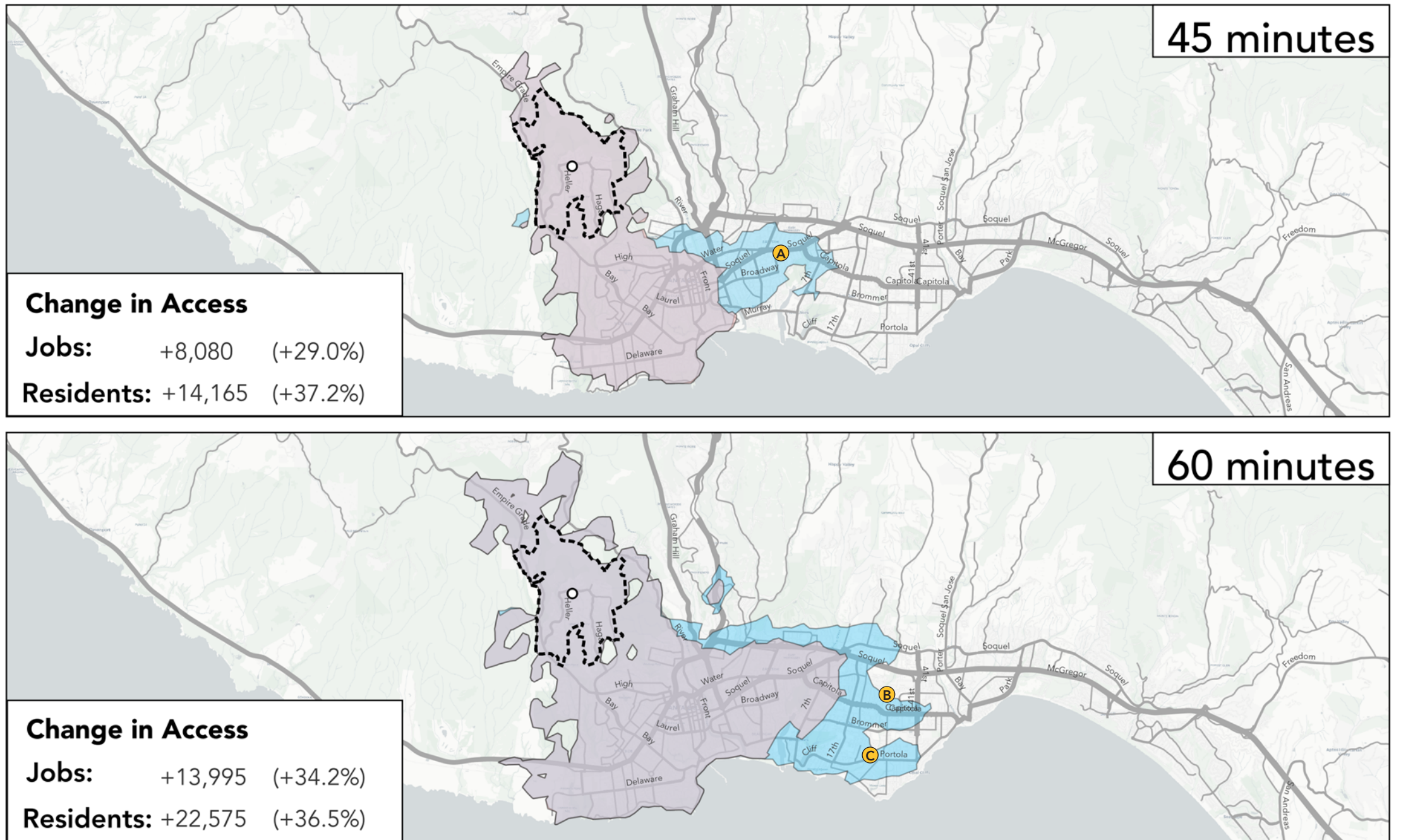


Figure 22: How many opportunities could a person reach in 45 and 60 minutes from UCSC?

Access From Downtown Watsonville in 45 and 60 Minutes

From Downtown Watsonville, it is already possible to reach most of Watsonville and Cabrillo College within 45 minutes in Phase 1.

Improvements to access in 45 minutes would be limited in Phase 2, except that the higher frequency on Route 61 (every 15 minutes, replacing Route 1 every 30 minutes) would now make it possible to reach Watsonville Community Hospital **A**. It would also be possible to reach the area near Harbor High School in Santa Cruz using Route 90X **B**.

However, within 60 minutes of travel time, Route 90X operating every 30 minutes all-day would enable access to many more areas of Santa Cruz, including key destinations like Dominican Hospital **C** and much of Downtown Santa Cruz **D**.

As a result, from Downtown Watsonville:

- Within 45 minutes, it would be possible to reach 11% more jobs and 2% more residents in September 2024 than in March 2024.
- Within 60 minutes, it would be possible to reach 49% more jobs and 22% more residents in September 2024 than in March 2024.

Draft Phase 2 - September 2024

How far can I travel from **Downtown Watsonville** in a reasonable amount of time?

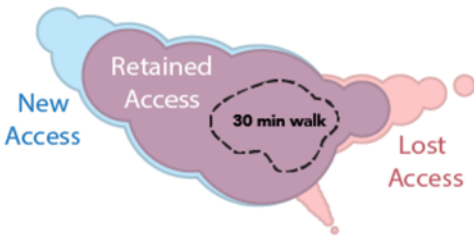


Figure 23: How many opportunities could a person reach in 45 and 60 minutes from Downtown Watsonville?

Access From Cabrillo College in 45 and 60 Minutes

Cabrillo College is a very important transit destination, drawing students and staff from throughout the county. As a community college, it offers training and education that are especially important for lower-income residents.

Because Cabrillo College would lie at the intersection of frequent services heading both east (Route 61) and west (Routes 1 and 2), it would become much faster to travel by transit to and from this location.

For example, increased frequency on Routes 1 and 2 would make for faster trips to Santa Cruz and UCSC. On average, a passenger would wait 7.5 minutes less for a bus heading to Downtown Santa Cruz **A**. Because of the lack of transfers, this passenger would wait an average of 15 minutes less for a bus to the west side of Santa Cruz **B**.

Similarly, increased frequency on Route 61 would make for faster trips to parts of Watsonville near Airport Blvd and Freedom Blvd **C** and Lincoln Street. Within 60 minutes, it would be possible to reach nearly all of Watsonville, including areas near East Lake Street **D**.

As a result, from Cabrillo College:

- Within 45 minutes, it would be possible to reach 63% more jobs and 75% more residents in September 2024 than in March 2024.
- Within 60 minutes, it would be possible to reach 21% more jobs and 33% more residents in September 2024 than in March 2024.

Draft Phase 2 - September 2024

How far can I travel from **Cabrillo College** in a reasonable amount of time?

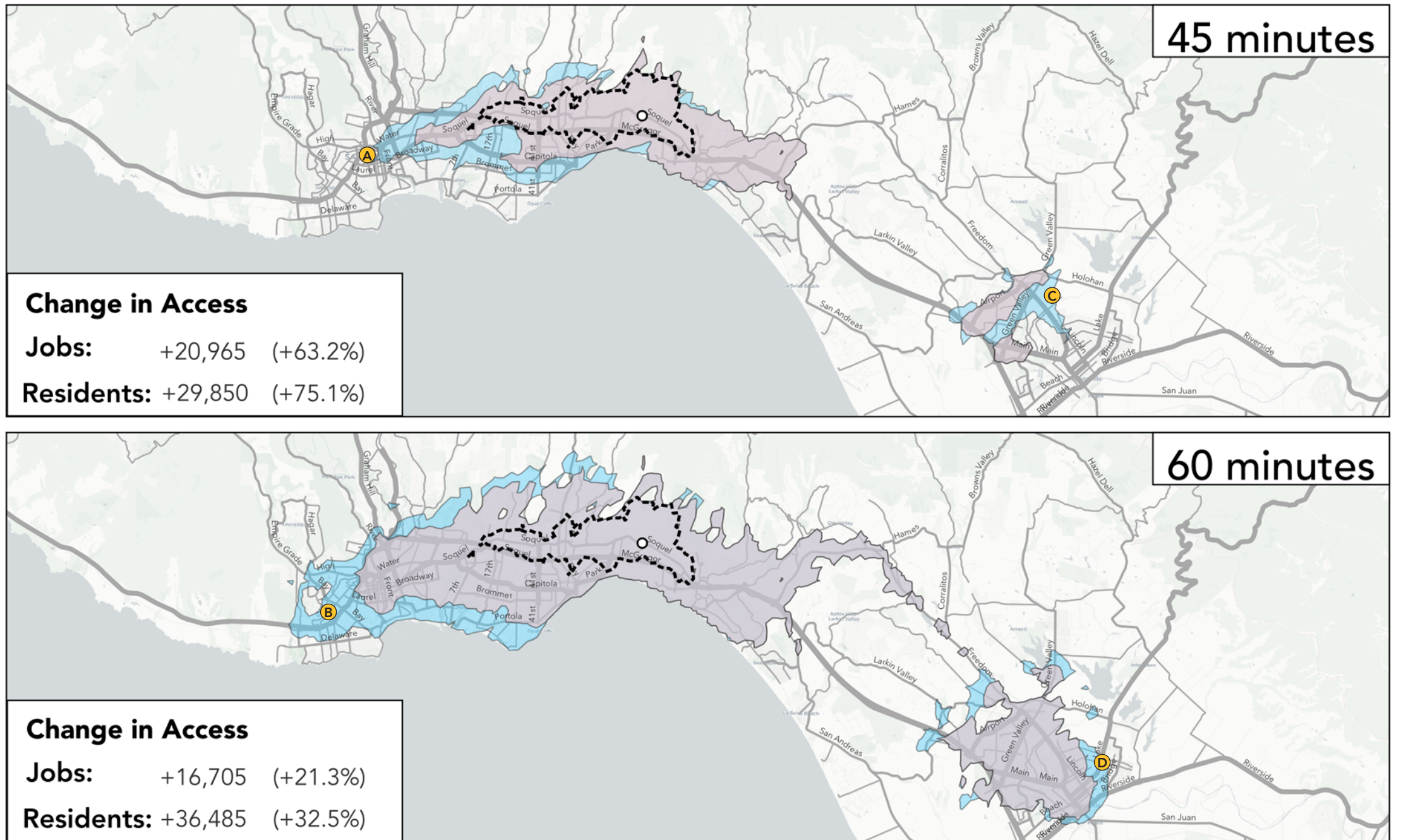


Figure 24: How many opportunities could a person reach in 45 and 60 minutes from Cabrillo College?

Access From Capitola Mall in 45 and 60 Minutes

Capitola Mall is a major regional employment and shopping destination, located at the center of an area with many other employers and retailers.

From Capitola Mall, the most notable change in access by transit within 45 minutes is the expansion of areas reachable in and near Downtown Santa Cruz **A**, Seabright and Twin Lakes as a result of higher frequencies on Routes 2 and 3.

Those higher frequencies would make it possible to reach most of the west side of Santa Cruz **B** within 60 minutes.

It would also be faster to travel from Capitola Mall to Watsonville. This would partly be due to direct service on Route 62, but within 60 minutes the biggest improvement would be due to faster transfers at Cabrillo College.

A trip from Capitola Mall to Watsonville that would require an average 30 minutes of waiting in March 2024, compared to an average 15 minutes of waiting for the same trip in September 2024.

As a result, from Capitola Mall:

- Within 45 minutes, it would be possible to reach 44% more jobs and 36% more residents in September 2024 than in March 2024.
- Within 60 minutes, it would be possible to reach 19% more jobs and 26% more residents in September 2024 than in March 2024.

Draft Phase 2 - September 2024

How far can I travel from **Capitola Mall (Capitola Rd & 41st)** in a reasonable amount of time?

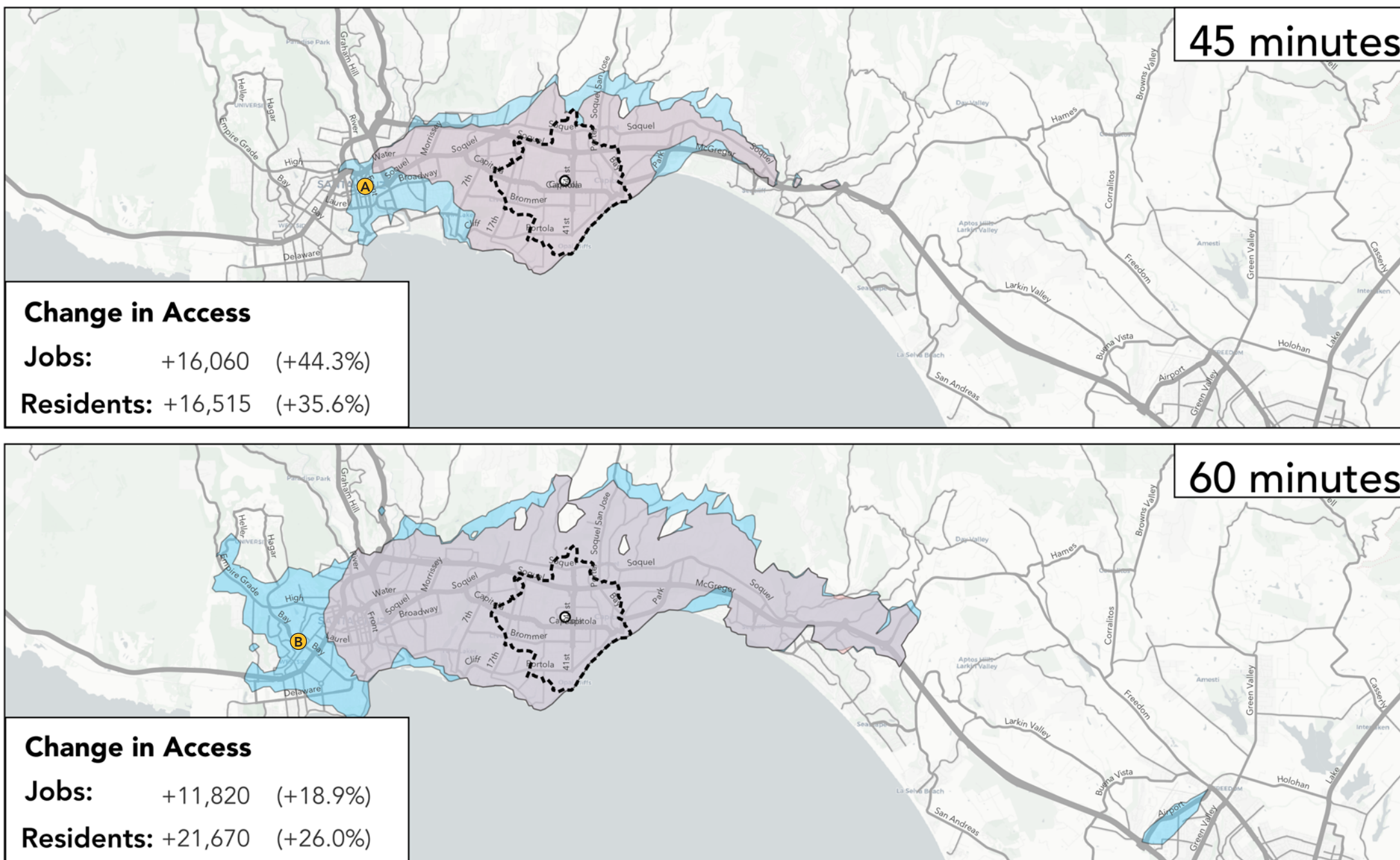


Figure 25: How many opportunities could a person reach in 45 and 60 minutes from Capitola Mall?



4

Next Steps

Let Us Know What You Think!

Public Outreach Plan

Reimagine METRO has gone through two prior rounds of outreach:

- In early 2023, the project team engaged METRO riders and stakeholders on the issues they experienced with existing services.
- In July and August 2023, the project team presented alternatives for service change by the end of the year. This process resulted in the Phase 1 plan. The first wave of Phase 1 service changes happened in December 2023 and the rest will happen in March 2024.

Santa Cruz Metro is now launching a third round of outreach to gauge public reaction to the Draft Network being proposed in Phase 2.

From early February to early March 2024, the project team will:

- Post this Draft Network Report on the project website, as well as summarized information on how service might change and key decision points.
- Hold three bilingual public meetings, on and around the week of February 19th. People will be able to attend online or in-person. These will be widely promoted through Santa Cruz METRO's contact lists, as well as the extensive lists of people who engaged in prior rounds of outreach. Exact dates, times, virtual meeting links, and in-person locations will be announced by early February.
- Provide an online survey for all interested members of the public to comment.

Key Questions

Public meetings and the survey will encourage both open-ended and structured comment. The project team will in particular be seeking input on the following questions.

Do you agree with the overall direction of change?

- 50 percent more service.
- Higher frequency on key routes.
- Better service on weekends and evenings.
- More regional express service.
- More east-west service in Santa Cruz.
- More transfers at Cabrillo College.

In the areas that matter to you, are the proposed changes better or worse for:

- You and your family?
- Your neighborhood and community?

...and why?

Santa Cruz METRO wants to increase service even more in the coming years. **What future improvements would make transit more useful to you and your community?**

Let us know what you think!

Learn more about the project and fill out the online survey at:

<http://www.scmttd.com/ReimagineMETRO>

Project Timeline

Reimagine METRO is combining technical analysis and broad-based community input to develop a plan to improve transit in Santa Cruz County in 2024 and beyond. This has included the following steps:

- **Spring 2023: Analysis, Fieldwork and Outreach.** A range of data-based analyses, field visits, and remote and in-person outreach activities to gain an understanding of current transit service conditions in Santa Cruz County.
- **Early July 2023: Alternatives Report.** This report described the project’s fact-finding and outreach process, and proposed two alternatives for service changes in late 2023.
- **September 2023: Board Direction.** Santa Cruz METRO’s Board of Directors provided direction for Phase 1 of service changes, including elements from both alternatives, and discussed pursuing work on a concept for added service in Phase 2.
- **December 2023 and March 2024: Phase 1 Service Changes.**
- **January 2024: Draft September 2024 Network Plan.** This report outlines the project team’s proposal for a major service increase from March 2024 to September 2024, taking advantage of new funding and intensive operator hiring efforts.
- **March 2024: Board Direction.** METRO’s Board of Directors will provide direction on Phase 2, based on the Draft Network Plan and public outreach conducted in February.
- **May 2024: Final Future Network Plan.** Based on public input and Board direction, the project team will make adjustments to plans for Phase 2, and outline potential future improvements.

