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Santa Cruz METRO Welcomes Corey Aldridge as New CEO

Santa Cruz, CA (Friday, March 8, 2024) – The Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO) welcomes new CEO, Corey Aldridge, to the agency. The announcement was made today during METRO’s Special Board of Directors Meeting held at the METRO Administrative Offices. Aldridge’s tentative start date with METRO is Monday, April 29, 2024.

As part of the recruitment process, the METRO Board engaged a recruitment firm to perform a nationwide search of candidates resulting in dozens of applicants. The Board also actively collaborated with a long list of stakeholders, union leaders, and METRO Advisory Committee (MAC) members in the process, which ultimately resulted in the selection of CEO Aldridge. Aldridge brings a wealth of experience that closely aligns with METRO’s three goals of increasing ridership, implementing the agency’s zero-emission master plan, and incorporating affordable housing into METRO-owned transit centers. This, coupled with Aldridge’s expertise in service increases, will be instrumental in the rollout of Phase 2 of Reimagine METRO scheduled to begin this summer with full implementation this September.

"I'm excited to announce that Corey Aldridge has been chosen as the new CEO of Santa Cruz METRO Transit District," said Kristen Brown, METRO Board Chair. "After a rigorous nationwide search, Corey emerged as the ideal candidate, bringing over a decade of successful leadership, including his current role as CEO of Mountain Line Transit in Missoula, Montana. Corey's experience aligns perfectly with our ongoing initiatives like Reimagine METRO, and his track record in overseeing ballot initiatives, implementing green projects, and fostering ridership growth will be invaluable. We look forward to having Corey's leadership at METRO."

CEO Aldridge has been a General Manager in public transit for over a decade. His most recent experience as CEO of Mountain Line Transit in Missoula, Montana, focused on overseeing a successful ballot initiative process, implementing zero emission vehicle procurements and infrastructure projects, implementing a free fare program, obtaining sizable state and federal grants, successful ridership growth initiatives, implementing strategic planning and rebranding initiatives, and leading transit-oriented developments. Additionally, Aldridge has a track record of building trusting relationships with employees, unions, leadership, and the community resulting in collaborative and inclusive partnerships.

Corey Aldridge, incoming CEO of Santa Cruz METRO, expressed his enthusiasm and vision for the role: "At the heart of every successful transit system is its people—both our employees and the community we serve. As the new CEO of Santa Cruz METRO, I am committed to fostering a work environment where every employee feels valued, supported, and empowered to excel. Moreover, I look forward to being an active part of the Santa Cruz community and continuing the great work already underway at METRO and beyond. Our collective success hinges on our ability to work as a unified team dedicated to serving our community's mobility needs, ensuring we not only meet but exceed the expectations placed upon us. Together, we will drive forward to a future where public transportation is not just a service but a pillar of community strength and environmental stewardship."

While CEO at Mountain Line Transit, Aldridge launched a 30% increase in service, after a successful ballot initiative, and secured almost \$40 million dollars in federal funds for the construction of a new maintenance, administration, and operations base, paving the way for future growth and service enhancements for the agency. This led to the agency being awarded the American Public Transit Association’s System of the Year Award for North America in 2021.

I’m pleased to hear that Corey Aldridge will be joining METRO as the new CEO,” said Daniel Zaragoza, METRO Interim CEO and Operations Deputy Director. “Aldridge’s vast experience as a General Manager in public transit will be an asset

in furthering METRO's key goals and vision. Additionally, Aldridge's experience in service expansion will be vital in the rollout of Reimagine METRO Phase 2 service improvements slated to begin this summer."

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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 at least 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.