

A Note from the CEO

It has been a little over a year since I was hired as CEO of **Santa Cruz METRO**. During this period of time customers often ask me what my vision is for **METRO**. This edition of my *CEO note* reflects some of my thoughts and vision for **METRO**. Of course I would be remiss if I did not point out that some of these concepts are subject to public process and **METRO Board** approval.



Santa Cruz METRO is a major positive economic, mobility, quality of life and air quality contributor to the region, employing 320 people and providing over 5.5 million trips a year with a budget of \$50 million in fiscal year 2016.

In answering this question, I first look to our **Mission Statement** for a foundation from which to build:

To provide a public transportation service that enhances personal mobility and creates a sustainable transportation option in Santa Cruz County through a cost effective, reliable, accessible, safe, clean and courteous transit service.



Safe, Accessible & Reliable Service

We will continue our safety first focus; we will operate fixed-route, commuter and paratransit services that are accessible; and will strive for accessible bus stops and facilities at all locations. We will continue to improve service reliability and on-time performance. We understand and respect that our customers have transportation choices, and in choosing **METRO**, they are placing their vote of confidence in our ability to get them to their destination on-time.

Financial Stability

We cannot keep riding this rollercoaster of financial instability. We will need to adjust our service levels and the efficiency of our operation such that recurring expenses mirror recurring revenues. Continuing to build a balanced budget by using Reserves is not a sustainable strategy. Resolving this challenge will require the help of our state and federal funding partners. Please take a moment to go to the **METRO** website and read my **Message to Congress** and my **Message to the State Legislature**. <http://scmttd.com/ceo>

Please also consider navigating to the **Stand Up 4 Transportation** website and signing the petition to Congress in support of transportation funding. <http://standup4transportation.org/>

Transparency

We will always welcome public comment and we will ensure that our proposals are always publicly vetted in Board meetings, community meetings or public hearings. We will strive to publish useful content on our website that provides our customers, stakeholders and other interested parties the information they seek.

Improved Customer Experience

- We will continue to invest in employee training, supplying them with the knowledge and tools needed to provide optimal service delivery, and to achieve a high degree of **Customer Service** satisfaction.
- **AVL** - We will continue to seek state and federal grants to purchase **Automatic Vehicle Locators (AVL)**. This technology will provide data that will be used to improve on-time performance. AVL uses global positioning satellite information that will also allow **METRO** to provide our customers with electronic signs and a smart phone application that will predict when the next bus will be at their stop.
- **Cruz Card** - We will continue to market our **Smart Card** fare media (plastic reloadable **Cruz Cards**) by working hard to attract more customers to this convenient fare media tool. If successful in doing so, we will reduce the time the bus must remain stopped (dwell time) while customers use cash and coins to pay their fare, thereby resulting in improved on-time performance. Please help us reduce dwell time by visiting our website to see how you can get your Cruz Card today. <http://scmttd.com/en/fares/buy-passes-online/cruz-cards>
- **Wi-Fi** - We will investigate adding Wi-Fi to other commuter-like service corridors.
- **Zero Emission Vehicles (ZEVs)** – **METRO** will study the possibility of augmenting our fleet with zero emission electric buses. We are hopeful there will be state and federal grants to help us procure these vehicles and the infrastructure required.

Operational Improvements

- **Bus on Shoulder** – We will investigate the feasibility of operating buses on the Highway 1 center median shoulder between the “fishhook” in Santa Cruz and Aptos. If successfully implemented, ridership in the Watsonville to Santa Cruz corridor could grow significantly since buses will make the journey quicker than all those single occupancy vehicles stuck in gridlock. Getting our customers to work and home quicker and less stressed provides them a quality of life benefit.
- **Systemwide Restructuring** – **METRO** will review the bus system to ensure our operational resources are allocated effectively and efficiently and that the costs of operating the system do not exceed available recurring revenues.
- **Capital Investments** – **METRO** will work towards achieving a state-of-good-repair. In a basic sense, the bus system is in a good state of repair when all maintenance is performed at scheduled intervals; all facilities are properly maintained and without deferred maintenance; and all vehicles receive scheduled mid-life overhauls and are replaced when they reach the end of their useful life.
- **Highway 17 Commuter Service** – We are investigating the possibility of adding larger buses with more powerful engines to this service, possibly electric powered. We currently operate compressed natural gas buses which have about 280 horsepower (HP). Buses with over 400 HP would perform better on the Highway 17 uphill grades.

Thank you for the opportunity to share a few of my thoughts and vision for **METRO** in the coming years.