

For Immediate Release
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**Santa Cruz METRO Announces Free Fares for the First Two Weeks of the Fall Schedule
September 15 – 29, 2022**

Santa Cruz, CA (Thursday, September 7, 2022) - The Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO) announces free fares countywide for the first two weeks of the fall schedule. Free fares will be offered September 15 – 29th on all services including Highway 17 and ParaCruz. Service to the County Fair will be free during this time, but only the 79F will offer free service to the fairgrounds on September 14th.

METRO is offering this two week free fare promotion to encourage ridership and allow riders to get acquainted with the new fall service changes. Due to an ongoing shortage of bus operators around the nation and at METRO, the agency is making some temporary route modifications on existing routes.

Temporary Changes to the Fall Service Include the Following:

Route 4 will operate only between Santa Cruz METRO Center and METRO Admin Offices on Vernon Street, serving the River Street corridor and Harvey West area in both directions. The Emeline Complex and Grant Street segment of Route 4 will be served hourly by Route 35 in both directions. Both segments will operate during the same hours of service as the current Route 4. Travel times will be consistent, and in many cases shorter, throughout the day. Afternoon trips from the Emeline Complex to METRO Center, for example, will take 15 minutes compared to 36 minutes today.

Route 35 will operate as Route 35E when serving the Emeline Complex. Route 35E trips between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. will end at Big Basin Way and Highway 9 in Boulder Creek and will not serve Country Club during these hours.

Route 22 will be temporarily suspended. Route 20 will provide service from UCSC and Metro Center to the Coastal Science Campus and the Seymour Center in both directions on every trip.

Clockwise direction trips on the Watsonville Circulator have been temporarily suspended. Alternate service is available in the counter-clockwise direction and on Routes 71, 72 and 75.

Minor schedule changes will also be made on Routes 18, 20, 35, 40, 42, 72, 72W, 75, 79 and the Watsonville Circulator to improve service reliability, as well as Route 35 "School Term" trips to match changes in bell times.

METRO's Fall Headways Bus Rider's Guide will be available on all buses & Transit Centers on September 8, 2022.

To view the fall service changes online visit <http://scmttd.com/en/metro-news-bulletins> or to preview the Fall Schedule before it is released visit <http://scmttd.com/en/routes/schedule/202310>.

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About Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District:

Established in 1968, Santa Cruz METRO provides directly operated fixed-route and Highway 17 commuter service throughout Santa Cruz County, with limited service connecting to Monterey Salinas Transit at our Watsonville Transit Center and Santa Clara County, transporting more than 5 million* passenger trips a year. METRO also directly operates ParaCruz paratransit service to Santa Cruz County, providing about 73,500* trips per year. METRO's operating budget in FY21 is almost \$55 million and is funded through a combination of farebox revenue, sales tax, and state and federal sources. Today METRO operates a fleet of 94 buses on at least 24 fixed-routes and 32 paratransit vehicles. For more information, visit www.scmtd.com. Like METRO on Facebook at www.facebook.com/SantaCruzMETRO or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/SantaCruzMETRO.

*Reflect pre-pandemic ridership numbers