

SANTA CRUZ METROPOLITAN TRANSIT DISTRICT

METRO PUBLIC MEETING

FORMAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

May 4, 2016

Felton Community Hall

6191 Hwy 9, Felton, CA 95018

1           CARTER FROST:  So I've lived in Felton my  
2   entire life.  I've been riding the Santa Cruz METRO  
3   buses for 12 years.  I'm -- I'm here today because I'm  
4   really fed up with the excuses of not enough funding.  
5   Do understand that there's certain funds that are  
6   earmarked for very specific purposes, especially  
7   graduates.  But I also feel -- I don't feel that that  
8   really explains the situation that we're in.

9           So sort of the first thing that I looked at was  
10  that the current CEO, Alex, that there was some sort of  
11  shady things that were occurring with METRO.  That they  
12  paid a lot of money as a severance to sort of get rid of  
13  him, and he was on the payroll with them and METRO at  
14  the same time.  And that he's also gotten a raise since  
15  he's been here, and that he's been using public funds to  
16  change aspects of his position at the federal level.

17          Also, the reductions of ParaCruz have caused a  
18  lot of my friends to not be able to have doctor's  
19  appointments and to have to depend on their friends to  
20  get them to those appointments.  And that's because  
21  ParaCruz is no longer offering services in their area,  
22  or they're not offering the proper times to pick them  
23  up, like in the middle of the day instead of the  
24  mornings, which is not feasible to get an appointment  
25  with the doctor.

1           Also, I feel that there's more buses than there  
2 are actual routes at any time. And that the cost to  
3 maintain those extra buses that aren't operational is  
4 probably substantial.

5           The METRO recently bought a ton of new buses.  
6 And they're not very comfortable. The seats are --  
7 aren't that comfortable. And I've seen them have  
8 nothing but problems with the electrical systems. Like  
9 there was a bus that had no speedometer. There's the  
10 indicator lights on the dash. Or the back door wasn't  
11 working or students were getting caught in the back door  
12 of the bus.

13           And even the fee receptacle wasn't working so  
14 people couldn't even pay to get on to the bus.

15           And in accommodation of did change of the  
16 routes 35 and 91X, or the cutting of 91X is actually  
17 going to almost double the time that it gets me -- that  
18 it takes me to get me to school, which is significant to  
19 me because time is important.

20           So speaking of school, Cabrillo had a student  
21 ballot for a mandatory fee of \$40 for all the students  
22 who don't even ride the bus. And if felt a little  
23 bit -- it didn't feel right that there were people in  
24 front of the school, passing out pamphlets on trying to  
25 encourage students to vote for the ballot. And there

1 was even a METRO bus in the middle of the quad right  
2 before -- right before the ballot measure. And I felt  
3 that that was not quite okay.

4 And then there was a study that was predicting  
5 that the total loss of riders that was done. And to me,  
6 that means that the METRO is intending on not meeting  
7 the needs of the community. And for me, that feels like  
8 it's not -- that doesn't serve the community.

9 Thank you.

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1           CATHERINE JAMES: Start with the 17 route. And  
2 this is concerning Saturday. And I require the 8:45  
3 leaving METRO Center on Saturday. This is the  
4 Highway 17.

5           Now, the next one is the 35. I need the route  
6 35 that leaves Country Club during weekdays at 9:35.  
7 It's important for me to get to work.

8           And then weekend route 35. Saturdays and  
9 Sundays, the bus that leaves the 35, that leaves  
10 Mountain Store at 8:02. That's also for work.

11           Okay. So that's it for me.

12           If I forgot that the 17 was also for work,  
13 these are all work issues for me.

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1           RICHARD BRANDT: The 35 bus into Santa Cruz in  
2 nonpeak hours, it tends to arrive at quarter past the  
3 hour or quarter till the hour. All right? My wife  
4 works in Capitola in the Capitola Mall. Two part-time  
5 jobs. And they often start -- they usually start on the  
6 hour, but not always peak hours.

7           So take, for example, the 68 currently leaves  
8 METRO Center at quarter past the hour, which means if  
9 the 35 is late, she misses the bus. She has to catch a  
10 second bus to -- from METRO Center to Capitola. That  
11 bus, 66, 68, or 69. So -- and she has to be there on  
12 the hour. Her work starts at 9 o'clock or 10 o'clock or  
13 11 o'clock or at noon, depending on the day or when they  
14 call her in.

15           So the 68 -- I mean, the 66, for example,  
16 leaves METRO Center at 45 minutes past the hour, which  
17 is exactly when the 35 is supposed to arrive. So often,  
18 she misses that bus.

19           The 68 leaves at a quarter after the hour. So  
20 she often misses that bus. If she takes the one that's  
21 supposed to arrive at that same time.

22           And the 69 leaves at :07 or :37. And it then  
23 arrives at Capitola at the half hour or at the hour. So  
24 in order to make a sure connection, which is the 69, she  
25 has to leave the -- say she needs to catch the then 37,

1 then she has to leave at 9:30 in order to make sure she  
2 catches the 10:37, and that doesn't arrive in Capitola  
3 until 11 o'clock. So it takes her an hour and a half to  
4 get into work.

5           If she can't leave on the half hour anymore,  
6 it's going to take her two hours to get into work on the  
7 bus. So if we -- it's important to have a clear  
8 connection, start times from METRO Center to Capitola,  
9 which is a big work area, so that we can get off the 35  
10 and catch the -- a bus that will go into Capitola and  
11 arrive on the hour would you tell us having to wait  
12 45 minutes for the last bus.

13           So, you know, it's especially important to have  
14 buses that will arrive on the hour, or preferably a  
15 little bit before the hour, in Capitola so that anybody  
16 coming from San Lorenzo Valley can get to work without  
17 taking two hours to get there.

18           And it would help to coordinate the leaving  
19 times, the times that 66, 68, and 69 leave, so that it's  
20 after the 35 arrives at METRO Center.

21           That's it.

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1            RICH DOE:  Let's talk about wages.  Now, I'd  
2 say you, for the most part, for any kind of life, you  
3 got to make 25, 30 bucks an hour to live here.  People  
4 say, well, property's going up, everything's going up.  
5 I will give you this -- an organization called Flow  
6 right here in Felton.  What happened is -- this is what  
7 the definition is.  Somebody got the idea, and it would  
8 turn out to be a foreign company, to buy the water  
9 company.  And why did they do this?  Something that you  
10 need, economics 101, inelastic demand.  What was 30  
11 bucks is now 60 or 70.

12            You can't say that the price of something went  
13 up.  It went up because somebody raised it to just make  
14 more money.  And when you do that, after awhile, people  
15 are -- start running out of money.  Or, as they say in  
16 economics 101, disposable income.

17            And this is really the problem with -- it's  
18 increasing property sales and this is the fractional  
19 banking system.  And that's really the problem.

20            And of course, I'm -- well, let's put it this  
21 way.  I'm 67 years old.  If I was of childbearing age,  
22 there were too many people -- I was here then, not only  
23 in Santa Cruz, but New York, Chicago, Florida,  
24 everywhere.  There's -- there's too many people.  There  
25 were too many people back then.  And I say this meaning,



1 for example, what they call the -- the vacancy rate was  
2 something like 10 percent. In other words, there were  
3 places.

4 Now, fast forward to 2016, all these people are  
5 having all these kids. And even if you've got a lot of  
6 money, there's still no place to live. And the people  
7 that are called financiers are taking advantage of it.  
8 You see, they're driving up the price of real estate.  
9 And that's, you know --

10 I'll bet if you didn't have this wage issue,  
11 that would be okay. And that's true of everybody. And  
12 that's one of the reasons they go to overseas. And  
13 you're just creating a ghoulish environment. And it  
14 just is reflected throughout the entire economic  
15 spectrum.

16 Now, I hope they don't, like, eliminate the  
17 late-night runs. One of the most crowded buses is  
18 weeknights and the 11 o'clock and the 9:30. They're  
19 usually packed to begin with. Now, you throw in less  
20 service and more people on the bus, you're going to --  
21 you're going to get more jostling and unhappiness.

22 Again, my solution, it's the fractional banking  
23 system, which basically means loaning people money they  
24 don't have. If you put up your house as collateral, for  
25 example.

1           And that's it. Okay? It really is.

2           I was complaining about those aspects of the  
3 bus. The security guards aren't -- I was a little  
4 unhappy, because this gentleman made me so mad. I  
5 wanted to say something to him. He was clearly on some  
6 type of substance. Perhaps alcohol. Who knows what.  
7 He was crazy. He was armed. And he was not stopped.  
8 Okay?

9           And, you know, I'm a rough tough up here like  
10 everyone else, but I don't want to tangle with somebody  
11 with a buck knife at a bus station at 11 o'clock at  
12 night.

13           Again, I would have reported it. But bus  
14 people won't answer their phone. Probably because  
15 they're overworked, too.

16           You know? Does that make any sense?

17           Another, thing, now, I went to a meeting in Odd  
18 Fellows in Boulder Creek, and I think Bruce McPherson  
19 was there. And they're talking about, you see -- well  
20 first of all, I believe he said something about cutting  
21 the, like the peak hour ones, where most of the bus  
22 system, most passengers are. Like at rush hour and  
23 during lunch time. You see, first of all, that's when  
24 most of your cash paying customers are available. Those  
25 are the ones you don't want to ride.

1           On the other hand, sometimes I take the 10:30  
2 bus on Fridays. I take it from -- well, I take it from  
3 the corner of Ocean and Water. I get off the 71. And  
4 very often, there's five or six people. In other words,  
5 maybe back -- if you want to cut something, cut then,  
6 not during the peak hours. Because, first of all,  
7 you'll lose cash paying customers.

8           I like the bus.

9           Another thing. If I just -- something that I'd  
10 like to mention, and again, because I can't get through  
11 on the phone most of the time. The handles on the bus,  
12 to open and close the windows, are very poorly designed.  
13 And it's been like that since I was in my early 20s. I  
14 remember the older buses. And it's -- new buses have  
15 the same problem. And as a -- as a high-tech mechanical  
16 engineer, there's a lot of noise in the bus, too. Which  
17 is just whining, which indicates that you've got some  
18 type of gear box somewhere in the transmission or engine  
19 or something. It may be a form of -- I don't know. But  
20 it doesn't have enough fluid in it. That have  
21 characteristics of that whining noise virtually always,  
22 meaning the gear box in question does not have the  
23 correct capacity fluid, which is usually ninety weight  
24 gear oil.

25           That's why we're -- I wear ear protection.

1 Even with my hearing problem, it's still really loud  
2 with the buses. Especially if you sit in the back. And  
3 I like the back because you're up high.

4 If you were going to ask me what I think is  
5 wrong, it's a form of fractional.

6 Another aspect is planned obsolescence. Now,  
7 at the Boulder Creek meeting, one of the issues that  
8 was -- they were mentioned in a pamphlet, was that the  
9 bus company has to buy new buses every eight years, or  
10 something like that. You see, this is also a function  
11 of the banking system. That's called planned  
12 obsolescence. And that started in the 1930s. That's  
13 called kaizen economics, and it's leading the  
14 industrialized world to destruction, in my opinion.

15 Why? Because we're burning so much fossil fuel  
16 to build machinery that could last -- instead of eight  
17 years, it could last 35 or 40 years. It's -- I disagree  
18 strongly with that.

19 In other words, getting back to that meeting,  
20 that they said that there were labor problems and  
21 replacing equipment. That's the result of the banking  
22 system we have. And again, I don't -- I don't know that  
23 this problem will be resolved unless somebody subsidizes  
24 the place. And to me, this is a legitimate use of,  
25 shall we say, taxpayer's money.

1           Yeah. That's it.

2           The main reasons I take the bus is because  
3 traffic here is murder, and it's usually -- I sometimes  
4 drive, for example, to Scotts Valley on a Monday morning  
5 at about 9:30 or so. And even then there's traffic.  
6 And I don't think I have the patience or the temperament  
7 to be a bus driver. I sympathize with those bus  
8 drivers. That's a tough drive. And I noticed that the  
9 turnover rate is pretty high, too. Which means that you  
10 probably have to spend money training new employees to  
11 begin with. That's probably part of it.

12           But, again, the culprit is -- goes back to the  
13 banking system.

14           It is extremely unfair that these people who  
15 need the bus the most are going to be hurt the most.

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1                   LAURA ZVAIGZNE: A suggestion: The last 35  
2 inbound could serve Scotts Valley Drive in the  
3 northbound direction so that people don't have to make a  
4 connection between the outbound and the inbound.

5                   I think that's it.  
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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

I, CAMMI R. BOWEN, Certified Shorthand Reporter  
in and for the State of California, hereby certify:

That said statements were taken down by me in  
shorthand, and were thereafter transcribed under my  
direction into typewriting; and that the foregoing is a  
full, complete, and true record of said proceedings.

I further certify that I am not in any way  
interested in the events of this cause, and that I am  
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CAMMI R. BOWEN, CSR 13492  
May 6, 2016