

SANTA CRUZ METROPOLITAN TRANSIT DISTRICT

METRO PUBLIC MEETING

FORMAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

May 5, 2016

Diabetes Health Center | Pajaro Valley Health Trust

85 Neilson Street, Watsonville, CA 95076

1           LOWELL HURST: I am the city councilman for  
2 this area over here, and I'm sorry to see that we are  
3 facing some pretty significant cuts and some difficult  
4 choices, and a tough time for METRO. But there's been  
5 tough times in the past and we'll probably have tough  
6 times in the future.

7           What concerns me most under these circumstances  
8 is they -- the shared pain is really shared primarily on  
9 the transit-dependent ridership, those that are -- that  
10 can't have an alternative or don't have an alternative  
11 to get to the doctor or to get to any destination at  
12 all, for that matter. And so, you know, it's the  
13 elderly and the disabled that are hurt the most out of  
14 this shared pain.

15           And so I'm glad to know that you're taking  
16 testimony today and that -- and that we've -- there  
17 might be some flexibility. And that depending upon the  
18 level of comments you receive, that there might be some  
19 way to rescue some of this service, but it is a tough  
20 deal.

21           And we know you didn't invent it, Mr. Emerson.  
22 That you came upon this scene and are trying to make it  
23 better. But it is a pain. And it's going to be a  
24 shared pain, but it's going to be placed on the burden  
25 of the elderly and the disabled and those that are

1 transit-dependent, primarily. And that's very  
2 unfortunate in this circumstance. Because they're the  
3 folks that need this service almost more than anybody  
4 else. And that's a difficult situation for them  
5 already, let alone to not be able to get to your doctor.

6 This is very difficult. So I'm glad you're  
7 here today. I'm glad to hear that there's some  
8 accommodation being made for medical facility and it is  
9 that there's not going to be any reductions, as I  
10 understand it, in ParaCruz. But there's still a large  
11 population that choose to have a car that are  
12 transit-dependent for one reason or another, and they're  
13 the ones that are going to suffer this problem that they  
14 did not create.

15 And so I hope that you'll get a lot of  
16 testimony and that it will be revealing. And, of  
17 course, I'm optimistic that there may be some other  
18 solutions available.

19 I would just say, in closing, that you depend  
20 upon your drivers to communicate a lot of information.  
21 Your drivers are some of the best spokesmen for the  
22 METRO. They're represented. For the most part, they're  
23 helpful, and they can be your ambassadors in this  
24 crisis. But I'm not sure they're all on board with the  
25 knowledge or the financial disclosure that could be

1 maybe more clear. You've got a lot of pages of  
2 financial reports here, but I'm not sure that the  
3 drivers have all the simple answers that they can pass  
4 on to the ridership. So I would just recommend to you  
5 that you continue to employ your drivers as ambassadors  
6 of the service and take advantage of their goodwill and  
7 their desire to try and make the best of that situation.

8 Thank you very much for letting me be here.

9 Don't forget the walkers and the wheelchairs.

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1           PATRICIA FOHRMAN: What I have to say is this:  
2   As we are to have these long waits at bus stops, we need  
3   to invest money that perhaps should have actually been  
4   put toward buses in making it possible to wait; in  
5   having bus stops where people in wheelchairs are not in  
6   danger from being hit by cars, which is a serious fear  
7   that many have. Many people have been hit by cars. And  
8   that there is enough space to sit down, because a lot of  
9   people are going to be waiting for a long time, so bus  
10  stops will have to be enlarged and improved so that  
11  people will not be standing in the sun or standing in  
12  the rain. And that people in wheelchairs will not be  
13  hit by cars.

14           So improvement in the bus stops if we have to  
15  endure these long waits. Because a lot of people will  
16  be far from home. They won't be able to wait inside a  
17  house until their bus comes.

18           And during the day, moms can't get kids from  
19  school. People who have a babysitter or have to bring  
20  small children from school, to cut service during the  
21  day is really a disadvantage to women who are having to  
22  deal with small children who can't walk long distances.

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1           EDDIE WONG: I live in north Monterey County,  
2 but I do rely on the bus system here, because I have to  
3 get to the doctor's office from downtown Main Street to  
4 Freedom Boulevard. But that gentleman that gave the  
5 presentation, he said I still would be able to get to  
6 Freedom and Green Valley. That's where I have to go.  
7 So I'll still be able to get around, but I'll just have  
8 to leave earlier. So burden probably would be mainly on  
9 me getting there.

10           I'd like to have them send me updated material,  
11 if they have a mailing list. And see what's going to  
12 happen between now and September.

13           I need to be reminded that the 74 is going to  
14 keep running. Because 74 and 69A, because both of them  
15 are on the same route and they come by the hospital.  
16 And I might have to come to the hospital in the future.  
17 And I just want to know that these routes are going to  
18 be available in the future if I need them. Because the  
19 cab fare is, what? 30, \$40, and I don't think I can  
20 afford that.

21           But I just want to know if the 69As are going  
22 to be available, and 74s.

23           I just need, because sometimes the 74S will run  
24 through here, too. But it's mainly 74 and 69 is what my  
25 concern is. Make sure I can still come over here and

1 just find out how often I can come over here, how late I  
2 can catch it and that type of thing.

3           And then I think the gentleman clarified that I  
4 would still be able to ride 71 from downtown Watsonville  
5 to go up to Freedom. So he mentioned that I think I  
6 could still ride. I'll just have to look at the  
7 timetable and the map. You know. Just to find out.

8           I think that covers it.

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1           JUDITH AIN: I'd like to say I'm really  
2 concerned about the loss of the 69A, or the cuts to  
3 that. And I -- I take the 69A from Freedom -- Freedom  
4 Boulevard; right by Freedom Center. I guess the corner  
5 of Freedom and Airport would be the way of saying that.  
6 That's the name of the stop.

7           And I use it to go sometimes to Capitola Mall,  
8 and then -- because there's things in that area that I  
9 want to do. And then I'm -- in order to go to  
10 Santa Cruz. And I know I can take the 71 from that same  
11 area to get to Santa Cruz.

12           But I'm really concerned that -- at the cutting  
13 of the schedule. I mostly ride it, sort of, in the  
14 middle of the day, which is when the schedule is being  
15 cut, or in the afternoon, like when it's being cut from  
16 every 15 minutes. It's always been every half hour when  
17 I've done gone, the parts of the day that I've gone from  
18 Watsonville to Santa Cruz.

19           I guess I'm concerned because I have a walker.  
20 And I -- and sometimes if there's like two wheelchairs  
21 on the bus, I can't get on. And, you know, sometimes if  
22 the driver is accommodating and has some flexibility and  
23 creativity, I can make myself fit on. We have -- I can  
24 find a place, a couple seats or whatever. You know, two  
25 seats where I can have my walker and be out of the way.



1           But sometimes I've had drivers, when there's  
2 like two wheel- -- I'm on the bus, I'm already on the  
3 bus, and we're going along. There's already one  
4 wheelchair on and another wheelchair wants to get on,  
5 and they kick me off because they weren't creative  
6 enough to help me get resituated right away to another  
7 bus.

8           I don't know. I think there's something about  
9 the policy of the way people deal with walkers on the  
10 bus is -- it needs to be fixed if the system is going to  
11 work, the new system.

12           I know that's not specifically about which  
13 route's going where, but it's a problem that's related  
14 to the crowding that going on on the buses, and my  
15 ability to count on the buses to get where I need to go.

16           And anyway, but -- I'm sorry I'm not more  
17 organized here. There seems like a lot. But it seems  
18 like in my experience, like Freedom Center has been like  
19 a hub. There's a number of buses that go by there. And  
20 I know it looks like in the new plans there's not going  
21 to be as many buses going by there, including the 69A is  
22 not going to be going there very much.

23           I know -- you know, I wonder why they can't  
24 reroute the 69W to go by there? So there will be just  
25 one 69. It will go the same. But there's other people

1 that won't like that.

2 But -- or either that or add in ten -- I guess  
3 I'm not sure where it leaves from. I think maybe it  
4 would be the 10:50 a.m. that leaves from downtown. I'm  
5 used to waiting for it at 11 o'clock at Freedom Center  
6 to go into Santa Cruz -- at Freedom and Airport to go to  
7 Santa Cruz. And 3:00 p.m., coming back -- I guess that  
8 would be called outbound from Santa Cruz to  
9 Watsonville -- 69A would make a big difference for me.  
10 If it can't be more regular, middle of the day.

11 And I guess I'm -- the other thing that I'm  
12 very concerned about has to do with being able to get to  
13 Five Branches Clinic, which is part of -- at Five  
14 Branches University, which is an acupuncture Oriental  
15 medicine college or university. They have a clinic  
16 which is very low priced. And a lot of people on the  
17 low end of the scale go there, so I'm sure a lot of  
18 people ride the bus, like me, to get there. And 68 is  
19 the only one that really goes close, and that's being  
20 chopped in the middle of the day, which is when I  
21 probably want to get there.

22 And I'm not well. So I can't just sort of go  
23 when -- you know, go four hours early and sit around. I  
24 don't have the energy to be able to do that. It's  
25 already difficult to get there and get back. And so I

1 would really like to see the 68A or the 68 brought back  
2 in to the schedule.

3           And I -- you know, I guess I know that -- I've  
4 talked to somebody who was saying, well -- and I guess  
5 I'm qualified for ParaCruz. I don't use it because I  
6 prefer riding the bus, but I -- and I hate to have to  
7 use it because I know it's going to be more expensive  
8 for you all if I use ParaCruz than if I ride the bus.  
9 And it's more expensive for me, but it's a lot more  
10 expensive for you.

11           So I don't know. It will be hard to get from  
12 Freedom Center to the Capitola Mall. Somebody suggested  
13 that I take the 72 to catch the 69W, but I -- I hope  
14 that there's going to be a good way -- it will actually  
15 connect so I don't have to go from sitting and waiting  
16 at one bus stop to sitting and waiting at another bus  
17 stop. Who knows if they'll connect.

18           So let's see.

19           I guess one other -- I don't know. This is a  
20 whole other tangential topic, sort of a concern that  
21 I've had. This is not specifically related to the  
22 routing, but it is materially related to the crowding  
23 that's going to be on the buses. So it would be really  
24 nice if the bus would ask people to ride fragrance-free  
25 to provide an accessible venue for those of us who are

1 sensitive to fragrances.

2           The other thing that I'm really concerned about  
3 is that we're at a time, you know, as we're moving, you  
4 know, the planet's warming, that that we need more  
5 people riding transit rather than less. And sort of  
6 with these changes to the system, it's going to make it  
7 harder to ride. And I'm -- I'm really sad about that  
8 and I guess I know that there -- I've talked to at least  
9 one member of the board who really is concerned about  
10 the whole. You know, I could tell he was concerned. I  
11 imagine a lot of you all on the board are concerned.

12           But, you know, I really hope we can come up  
13 with better plans to expand the system than cut it,  
14 because that's what we really need right now as a  
15 planet.

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1           CONNIE DAY: I would like to get all the  
2 information we can get for the reasons that we ride the  
3 bus all the time. And we don't want to be left out of  
4 anything that we should have known and nobody told us  
5 anything.

6           BARROW EMERSON: Let me jump in here, Connie.

7           So what I'd like you to write is: She said  
8 Barrow said if we give you the address, Barrow will mail  
9 the information to them. And I'll read the address off:

10           1955 Pajaro Lane, Unit 313, Freedom, California  
11 95019.

12           So, of course, the Internet doesn't work. It's  
13 just that we will mail them all the information. That's  
14 what she'd like me to do. Do you have any particular  
15 topic that you'd like to say to her or you just want me  
16 to send you the information?

17           CONNIE DAY: Send me the information as it  
18 comes.

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1           JUDITH AIN: In addition to my previous  
2 testimony, I remembered that one of the things that  
3 would be helpful and would make these changes less  
4 problematic for me, one of the problems that I have,  
5 that don't live in the mandate area. So in order to get  
6 to the bus, I have to drive to get to the bus. And then  
7 I have to park someplace. And it would be really  
8 helpful, you know, if there was some sort of a park and  
9 ride lot to be able to take the bus from, like, downtown  
10 Watsonville area. I mean, because there's a lot more  
11 buses that go from there.

12           Currently, I go from Freedom Center because  
13 that's -- that's the easier place for me to get to. I  
14 don't like driving in town. That's why I really prefer  
15 to go from where I'm going right now. And it would be  
16 helpful to have some legal park-and-ride from there,  
17 because there's no lot. There's no place where it's  
18 legal to park, you know, anywhere like that.

19           But that, I think that would be -- that would  
20 also be another way of trying to get people to ride the  
21 bus, if that was a -- if there were that kind of a  
22 feature.

23           And I guess that's also a reason -- the fact  
24 that I don't live in a mandate region is also a reason  
25 why. Trying to take the ParaCruz is really not very --

1 is not very efficient for me or very effective for me.  
2 Because it puts me in a position to be waiting God knows  
3 how long for ParaCruz. To go not from where I am, where  
4 I could be waiting in a comfortable place, to standing  
5 in a parking lot, getting -- having to get someplace  
6 really early and they may not get there until really  
7 late. Doesn't seem like a good option.

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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  
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I further certify that I am not in any way  
interested in the events of this cause, and that I am not  
related to any party hereto.

  
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CAMMI R. BOWEN, CSR 13492  
May 6, 2016