



DATE: August 27, 2021
TO: Board of Directors
FROM: John Urgo, Planning & Development Manager
SUBJECT: ACCEPT AND FILE THE METRO SYSTEM RIDERSHIP REPORTS FOR THE FOURTH QUARTER OF FY21

I. RECOMMENDED ACTION

That the Board of Directors accept and file the METRO system ridership report for the Fourth quarter of FY21

II. SUMMARY

- FY21 Q4 total ridership increased 138.5% (+176,426) compared to FY20 Q4. However, FY21 Q4 ridership is -78.6% (-1,116,688) compared to FY19 Q4.
- Non-student ridership increased 113.5% (+136,939) and is -51.9% (-278,400) compared to FY19 Q4.
- Highway 17 (Hwy 17) ridership increased 281.4% (+12,843) and is 76.3% (-56,140) compared to FY19 Q4.
- UCSC ridership increased 639.9% (+38,437) and is -94.5% (-767,588) compared to FY19 Q4.
- Cabrillo College ridership increased 141.7% (+1,050) and is -97.5% (-70,700) compared to FY19 Q4.

III. DISCUSSION/BACKGROUND

This report contains ridership summaries and ridership by route for Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO) fixed route bus service for the Fourth quarter (Q4) of FY21, April 1 – June 30, 2021. Quarterly ridership reports keep the Board of Directors (Board) apprised of METRO's ridership statistics and ridership trends:

- Attachment A shows system-wide and college student ridership statistics for Q4 of FY21 and makes year-over-year comparisons with ridership statistics.
- Attachment B shows the average ridership and pass/fare usage per route and system-wide.
- Attachment C shows the weekly ridership comparison for Q4 of FY21 and FY20.

FY21 Q4 total fixed-route ridership increased 138.5% compared to FY20 Q4. However, FY21 Q4 ridership is -78.6% compared to FY19 Q4.

Reason(s) include:

- End of Shelter-in Place directives and the State Tier System, loosening of carrying capacity restrictions, temporary fare reduction, and increased revenue service.
- METRO increased vehicle revenue hours operated by an average of 35.8% in the Fourth quarter of FY21, compared to Q4 of FY20. [April: +24.0%, May: +41.0%, June: +42.5%]
- Local ridership increased 133.2% [94.3% of total fixed route ridership] but is -78.7% compared to FY19.
 - Non-Student ridership on METRO's local system increased 113.5% [89.9% of local ridership] and is -51.9% compared to FY19.
 - Student pass usage increased 585.2% [16.1% of local ridership] and is -94.8% compared to FY19.
 - Total UCSC ridership increased 639.9% but is -94.5% compared to FY19.
 - UCSC increased the number of on-campus students in early spring of FY21. There were approximately 2,300 residential students and staff on campus by the end of Q4.
 - Total Cabrillo ridership increased 141.7% but is -94.5% compared to FY19.
 - Cabrillo student enrollment was down roughly 25% in FY21 compared to the previous spring semester. With most classes still taking place remotely and enrollment depressed, Cabrillo ridership in Q4 of FY21 did not increase at the same rate as UCSC ridership.
- Hwy 17 ridership increased 281.4% [5.7% of total fixed route ridership] and is -76.3% compared to FY19.
 - Shelter-in-Place directives were removed and the State Tier System ended in June. With the permission of Santa Clara County, carrying capacity restrictions were loosened in May.
 - As a result of lessened COVID-19 restrictions, more commute and discretionary trips were taken on the Hwy 17. Most college students were still taking classes primarily online, but it is expected that they will return to primarily in-person classes in the fall of 2021. However, there may be long-term negative impacts on Hwy 17 ridership due to continued use of telecommuting.
- Quarterly discounted ridership increased 522.8% [Passes +24.9% and Cash +895.2%] but is -63.1% compared to FY19 [Passes -95.1% and Cash -5.3%].
 - The temporary reduced fare program allowed all discounted riders to board for free on all routes. This program likely encouraged more transit

usage from this segment of ridership. This free discounted ridership was tracked by Operators under the reduced fare key, tracked as Discounted Cash Usage rather than Pass Usage.

- Regular pass and cash fares ridership increased 77.7% [Passes +67.8% and Cash +999.4%] but is -47.9% compared to FY19 [Passes -55.0% and Cash -41.0%].
- The temporary reduced fare program allowed all regular non-student riders to board at a 50% discount on all routes. The reduction in transit fare may have attracted former riders to return or encouraged more frequent transit usage from current riders.

Attachment C contains a weekly ridership comparison with Q4 of FY21 to Q4 of FY20. At the start of FY21 Q4, Santa Cruz County (the County) was in Level Orange of the Tiered Recovery Stages. By the end of Q4, the State Tier System was removed and the capacity restrictions on local and Hwy 17 buses were removed entirely and reduced, respectively.

- The County moved into the Yellow Tier in May of Q4, which loosened restrictions on local businesses. The State Tier System ended on June 15, 2021.
- Temporary reduced fares for METRO's riders were still in place in Q4 of 2021 to assist METRO's current riders during this difficult time and to attract more discretionary ridership.
- METRO operated 35.8% additional revenue service hours in Q4 [Local Service +31.8%; Hwy 17 Service +102.7%]
 - Local average weekday and weekend ridership increased 142.4% and 106.1%, respectively, from Q4 of 2020.
 - Hwy 17 average weekday and weekend ridership increased 253.3% and 365.4%, respectively, from Q4 of 2020.

Attachment B shows average ridership per trip for all weekday and weekend routes in Q4 of FY21.

- Total ridership per trip increased 30.5% [Weekday +31.2% & Weekend +28.5%] but is -71.9% compared to FY19 [Weekday -73.1% & Weekend -68.2%].
- System-wide, there were 8.6 riders on the average weekday trip and an average of 8.9 riders on a weekend trip.
 - Capacity restrictions were eased throughout Q4 of 2021. At the start of Q4 capacity restrictions on local 35' and 40' buses and Hwy 17 buses were 10-15 riders and 8 riders, respectively. In May, the capacity restrictions increased to 17-25 riders and 18 riders. In June, the capacity restrictions

were removed entirely from local routes and the capacity restriction on the Hwy 17 remained at 18 riders.

- The weekday route with the highest ridership average is the Route 69A [Weekday-14.7]
 - This route is an intercity route that operates round-trip service from Santa Cruz to Watsonville, serving Capitola Road. This route serves Neilson Hospital in Watsonville.
- The weekend route with the highest ridership average is the Route 69W [Weekend-13.6]
 - This route is an intercity route that operates round-trip service from Santa Cruz to Watsonville, serving Capitola Road and Cabrillo College.
- The weekday route with the lowest ridership average is the Route 41 [Weekday-1.2]
 - Route 41 serves Bonny Doon
 - Hybrid in-person classes resumed for Santa Cruz public schools on April 6th. Starting April 6th, we operated 2 morning trips per day to help Bonny Doon students get to Santa Cruz. Ridership on this route remained low in Q4 of FY21, however, as students were limited to in-person classes two days out of the week. The average trip ridership on this route is expected to increase when in-person classes resume full time for Santa Cruz and UCSC students in the fall.
- The weekend route with the lowest ridership average is the Route 79 [Weekend-2.6]
 - Route 79 serves local Watsonville along Pajaro/East Lake.
 - The service on this route was reduced by 50% in the Winter Bid to limit under-utilized service, while still maintaining some coverage in the Pajaro/East Lake area. Increased service to Watsonville in the fall, by way of the Watsonville Circulator, will allow for existing local Watsonville routes to be restructured to operate more efficiently.

IV. STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES ALIGNMENT

This report aligns with METRO's Service Quality and Delivery strategic priority.

V. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS/IMPACT

Revenue derived from passenger fares and passes is reflected in the FY21 operating budget. The COVID-19 pandemic fallout will adversely affect actual passenger fares in the remainder of FY21. To encourage ridership growth METRO implemented a temporary reduced fares program in the final week of Q4

FY21. Farebox revenue this quarter increased 334.2% compared to Q4 in FY20, as METRO employed a temporary free fare policy throughout the majority of Q4 FY20 to reduce passenger and operator contact. The magnitude of this negative impact will be realized in the coming months.

VI. CHANGES FROM COMMITTEE

N/A

VII. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

There are no alternatives to consider.

VIII. ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Quarterly System Ridership Summary for FY21 Q4 April 1, 2021-June 30, 2021

Attachment B: Quarterly Average Ridership by Route Report for FY21 Q4 April 1, 2021-June 30, 2021

Attachment C: Quarterly Ridership by Week for FY21 Q4 April 1, 2021-June 30, 2021

Prepared by: Cayla Hill, Planning Analyst

IX. APPROVALS

John Urgo
Planning and Development Director



Approved as to fiscal impact:
Chuck Farmer, CFO

Alex Clifford, CEO/General Manager

Quarterly System Ridership Summary

FY21 Q4 (April 1 - June 30, 2021)

Calendar Operating Days

	This Year	Last Year
Weekdays	65	65
Weekends	26	26
UCSC School Days *	0	0
Cabrillo School Days **	0	0

* No in-person classes, with limited exceptions

** No in-person classes, with limited exceptions

Discounted Pass Usage (Senior/Disabled)

	Quarterly Totals (Q4)			
	FY21 Q4	FY20 Q4	Difference	% Change
Total Pass Usage	5,169	4,139	1,030	24.9%

Regular Pass Usage

	Quarterly Totals (Q4)			
	FY21 Q4	FY20 Q4	Difference	% Change
Local Pass Usage	77,579	97,262	(19,683)	-20.2%
Hwy 17 Pass Usage	6,889	3,664	3,225	88.0%
Total Pass Usage	84,468	100,926	(16,458)	67.8%

Discounted Cash Usage (Senior/Disabled)

	Quarterly Totals (Q4)			
	FY21 Q4	FY20 Q4	Difference	% Change
Local Single Cash Fare	52,875	5,405	47,470	878.3%
Hwy 17 Single Cash Fare	2,191	128	2,063	1611.7%
Total Cash Usage	55,066	5,533	49,533	895.2%

Regular Cash Usage

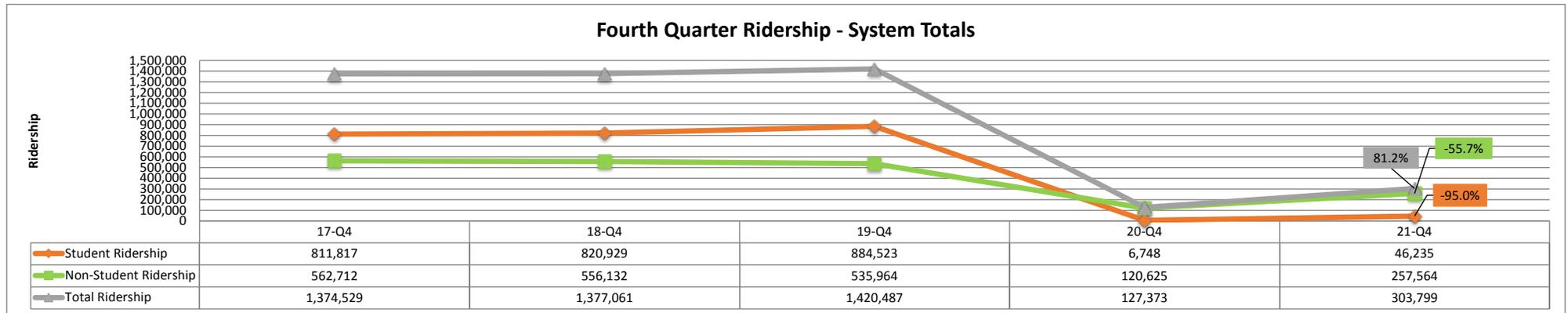
	Quarterly Totals (Q4)			
	FY21 Q4	FY20 Q4	Difference	% Change
Local Single Cash Fare	104,039	9,486	94,553	996.8%
Hwy 17 Single Cash Fare	9,085	804	8,281	1030.0%
Total Cash Usage	113,124	10,290	102,834	999.4%

System Totals

	Quarterly Totals (Q4)			
	FY21 Q4	FY20 Q4	Difference	% Change
Local Fixed Route	286,392	122,809	163,583	133.2%
Highway 17 Express	17,407	4,564	12,843	281.4%
System Total	303,799	127,373	176,426	138.5%

Student Pass Totals

	Quarterly Totals (Q4)			
	FY21 Q4	FY20 Q4	Difference	% Change
UCSC	44,444	6,007	38,437	639.9%
Cabrillo	1,791	741	1,050	141.7%
Student Total	46,235	6,748	39,487	585.2%



Quarterly Average Ridership by Route Report

Apr1, 2021 - June 30 2021		Average Weekday Ridership per Trip					Average Weekend Ridership per Trip				
Route	Corridor	Total Riders	UCSC Riders %	Cabrillo Riders %	Discount Fares and Passes %	Regular Fares & Passes %	Total Riders	UCSC Riders %	Cabrillo Riders %	Discount Fares and Passes %	Regular Fares and Passes %
UCSC											
10	UCSC via High St.	8.7	85.7%	0.3%	3.6%	10.5%	9.8	87.4%	0.6%	2.9%	9.1%
15	UCSC via Laurel West	-	-	-	-	-					
16	UCSC via Laurel East	10.4	80.4%	0.5%	5.5%	13.7%	9.2	89.4%	0.2%	4.0%	6.5%
18	UCSC via Main Gate-Mission	7.0	69.7%	0.3%	4.7%	25.3%	6.4	46.2%	0.1%	5.3%	17.9%
19	UCSC via Lower Bay	9.9	71.8%	0.3%	7.1%	20.8%	9.1	67.5%	0.4%	10.9%	21.3%
20	UCSC via West Side	10.1	63.9%	0.2%	8.0%	27.9%	10.5	72.9%	0.3%	9.1%	17.7%
20D	UCSC via West Side Supp.	-	-	-	-	-					
22	UCSC/Coastal Science Campus	-	-	-	-	-					
Intercity											
35/35A	Santa Cruz/Scotts Valley/SLV	7.3	2.1%	0.5%	21.6%	75.8%	9.9	1.9%	0.4%	24.9%	72.8%
69A	Capitola Road/Watsonville	14.7	2.5%	0.9%	21.6%	75.0%	12.9	3.6%	0.7%	27.5%	68.2%
69W	Cap. Road/Cabrillo/Watsonville	13.4	3.0%	1.0%	18.4%	77.6%	13.6	3.9%	0.9%	23.3%	71.9%
71	Santa Cruz to Watsonville	13.6	2.5%	0.9%	22.4%	74.2%	12.5	2.4%	0.8%	23.2%	73.6%
91X	Santa Cruz/Watsonville Express	5.0	4.0%	0.9%	23.2%	71.9%					
Rural											
40	Davenport/North Coast	3.0	3.5%	0.0%	6.5%	90.0%					
41	Bonny Doon	1.2	27.2%	0.4%	8.6%	63.8%					
42	Davenport/Bonny Doon	5.0	14.5%	1.0%	21.1%	63.3%	4.4	5.5%	0.4%	22.0%	72.0%
Local											
3	Mission/Beach	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	Harvey West/Emeline	5.6	2.5%	0.1%	39.3%	58.1%					
55	Rio Del Mar	5.2	3.9%	0.8%	31.0%	64.3%	4.1	0.0%	0.0%	31.1%	68.9%
66	Live Oak via 17th	6.7	6.0%	0.4%	23.7%	70.0%	6.1	0.7%	0.2%	32.6%	66.5%
68	Like Oak via Broadway/Portola	5.1	7.7%	0.2%	27.9%	64.2%	4.9	15.2%	0.9%	30.4%	53.5%
72	Watsonville Hospital/Pinto Lake	6.9	0.2%	0.6%	25.2%	74.0%	2.9	14.9%	0.5%	20.1%	64.5%
74S	PVHS/Watsonville Hospital	3.5	0.0%	0.7%	10.7%	88.6%					
75	Green Valley Road	4.0	0.6%	0.3%	24.0%	75.1%	4.0	0.5%	0.2%	43.0%	56.3%
79	Pajaro/East Lake	3.6	0.2%	0.1%	23.5%	76.2%	2.6	0.5%	1.0%	21.4%	77.1%
Highway 17											
Hwy 17	Hwy 17 Express	6.6	-	-	13.8%	86.2%	6.2	-	-	10.7%	89.3%
Avg. Ridership per Trip		8.6	14.2%	0.6%	19.4%	65.8%	8.9	16.6%	0.5%	21.5%	61.4%

0 * Calendar School Days of SJSU
 0 * Calendar School Days of Cabrillo
 0 * Calendar School Days of UCSC

* In-person Classes
 Suspended, due to
 COVID-19

Q4 FY21 Weekly Ridership

