

MINUTES*

MAC MEETING OF APRIL 16, 2025



The METRO Advisory Committee (MAC) met on Wednesday, April 16, 2025. The meeting was held as a hybrid meeting. *Minutes are "summary" minutes, not verbatim minutes.

1. **CALLED TO ORDER** at 6:02 PM by Chair Elsea.

2. **SAFETY DEBRIEF**

Gregory Strecker, Safety, Security & Risk Management Director, provided a safety debrief emphasizing the evacuation routes in case of an emergency.

3. **ROLL CALL** - The following MAC Members were **present**, representing a quorum:

Veronica Elsea, Chair
Joseph Martinez, Vice Chair
James Cruse
Jessica de Wit

Michael Pisano
Becky Taylor
James Von Hendy

4. **COMMUNICATIONS TO THE METRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Chair Elsea mentioned the Week Without Driving event, which will run in the Fall from Monday, September 29, 2025 to Sunday, October 5, 2025. She also asked if anyone was interested in volunteering at one of the promotional events taking place in April 2025. She mentioned METRO will be offering free fares on Earth Day, which will be on Tuesday, April 22, 2025. Chair Elsea also mentioned that she had received several questions about certain bus stops. Discussion continued on bus stops.

Mr. Cruse spoke of his experience in Palo Alto and Monterey, riding their paratransit service.

Mr. Von Hendy mentioned that he is part of a Facebook group called Ben Lomond Neighbors, and on that group, there have been several complaints about Bus 35 not stopping for students. Staff will look into this issue further.

Hearing nothing further, Chair Elsea moved to the next agenda item.

5. **RECEIVE AND FILE MINUTES FROM THE METRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF FEBRUARY 19, 2025**

MOTION: ACCEPT AND FILE THE MINUTES FROM THE METRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF FEBRUARY 19, 2025 AS PRESENTED

MOTION: PISANO

SECOND: CRUSE

MOTION PASSED WITH 6 AYES: Elsea, Martinez, Cruse, Pisano, Taylor, Von Hendy. de Wit was absent.

6. **COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE METRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Chair Elsea mentioned that she will be providing a semi-annual update to the Board of Directors (Board) at the Board meeting on June 27, 2025.

Hearing nothing further, Chair Elsea moved to the next agenda item.

7. UPDATE ON THE STATUS OF THE NEW METRO WEBSITE AND APPS

Communications & Marketing Manager, Michael Bois, provided an update on the new METRO website and apps. He reported that METRO is in the process of finalizing the notices and alert integration to the website to ensure that all service alerts are accessible. He also mentioned that METRO plans to begin testing in June 2025, with a tentative website launch set for late Summer 2025. METRO wants to make sure that the website is working as expected before the public launch. The website will include both the real-time module and service alerts.

Communications & Marketing Manager, Michael Bois, reported that the contract with the transit app, Transit Royale, was finalized. METRO is now moving into the implementation phase, with a tentative launch planned in about 6 to 8 weeks. The app will offer more features for riders and the community.

Hearing nothing further, Chair Elsea moved to the next agenda item.

8. UPDATE ON THE MOBILITY TRAINING COORDINATOR

Communications & Marketing Manager, Michael Bois, reported that the job description is currently under review. Discussion continued on the job description. Staff answered all questions and concerns.

Hearing nothing further, Chair Elsea moved to the next agenda item.

9. SERVICE PLANNING UPDATE

a. Quarterly Ridership Report

John Urgo, Chief Planning & Innovation Officer, provided an update on the quarterly ridership report. Overall, total ridership increased about 16.3% for Q3 of FY25. The full quarterly ridership report will be presented to the Board at the Board meeting on May 16, 2025.

b. Bus Stops

b.i. Update on Braille Bus Stop Signage

There are no new updates at this time. METRO will continue to work on this issue.

b.ii. Installation of Bus Stops on Islands

Officer Urgo discussed the two projects that are currently in the planning stages. The first project is located on the Bay Street corridor and the second one is on Soquel and Capitola Avenue corridor. The purpose of these projects is to speed up bus service. Discussion continued on bus stops, shelters, and islands.

c. Other Projects

c.i. Update on Reimagine METRO

Officer Urgo provided an update on Reimagine METRO. He reported that service has increased about 30%. He mentioned that the Winter 2024 service changes under Reimagine METRO were put on pause due to METRO's aging fleet. The increased mileage was putting a toll not only on the buses, but also on the maintenance shop's ability to keep up with the required maintenance.

c.ii. Update on River Front Transit Center

Officer Urgo provided an update on the River Front Transit Center. He mentioned that METRO will continue to monitor complaints that come in. No recent changes have been made to the bus stops in Area 1, 2, 3, and 4.

c.iii. Update on Pacific Station North

Officer Urgo reported that Pacific Station North is still scheduled to open in 2026.

c.iv. Update on Watsonville Transit Center

Officer Urgo provided an update on the Watsonville Transit Center. The project is moving into the design phase now. Discussion followed on affordable housing.

Hearing nothing further, Chair Elsea moved to the next agenda item.

10. COMMUNICATIONS TO THE METRO CEO/GENERAL MANAGER

None.

11. COMMUNICATIONS TO THE METRO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

None.

12. ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING AGENDA

- Service Planning Updates
- Quarterly Ridership Report
- Update on Reimagine METRO
- Update on Transit Centers (Watsonville Transit Center, Pacific Station North, & River Front Transit Center)
- Update on Mobility Training Coordinator
- Budget Update
- Update on Website & Apps

13. DISTRIBUTION OF VOUCHERS

Vouchers distributed by Elizabeth Rocha, Administrative Specialist.

14. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING

Chair Elsea announced the next MAC meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 20, 2025 at 6:00 PM at the METRO Admin Office, 110 Vernon Street, Santa Cruz.

15. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Elsea adjourned the meeting at 7:06 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Rocha
Administrative Specialist