



**SANTA CRUZ METROPOLITAN TRANSIT DISTRICT (METRO)
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES*
DECEMBER 16, 2022 – 9:00 AM
MEETING HELD VIA TELECONFERENCE**

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO) convened on Friday, December 16, 2022 via teleconference.

The Board Meeting Agenda Packet can be found online at www.SCMTD.com. *Minutes are “summary” minutes, not verbatim minutes. Audio recordings of Board meeting open sessions are available to the public upon request.

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- 1 CALLED TO ORDER** at 9:01 AM by Board Chair Pageler.
- 2 ROLL CALL:** The following Directors were **present** via teleconference, representing a quorum:

Director Kristen Brown	City of Capitola
Director Rebecca Downing	County of Santa Cruz
Direct Jimmy Dutra	City of Watsonville
Director Shebreh Kalantari-Johnson	City of Santa Cruz
Director Manu Koenig	County of Santa Cruz
Director Donna Lind	City of Scotts Valley
Director Bruce McPherson	County of Santa Cruz
Director Donna Meyers	City of Santa Cruz
Director Larry Pageler	County of Santa Cruz
Director Ari Parker	City of Watsonville
Director Mike Rotkin	County of Santa Cruz
Ex-Officio Director Dan Henderson	UC Santa Cruz
Ex-Officio Director Alta Northcutt	Cabrillo College
Michael Tree	CEO/General Manager
Julie Sherman	General Counsel

- 3 ANNOUNCEMENTS**
Today’s meeting is being broadcast by Community Television of Santa Cruz County.
- 4 BOARD OF DIRECTORS COMMENTS**
Director McPherson congratulated and thanked CEO Tree and Donna Bauer, Executive Assistant, for having a great holiday party for METRO employees. It was very well done and much appreciated by members of our team and everyone that attended.

Director Rotkin expressed appreciation on his reappointment by the County Board of Supervisors to the METRO Board. He acknowledged several members of the labor movement opposed this reappointment and he plans to make a serious effort to reestablish the good relationship that he has had with the unions for over 30 years while serving on the transit board. He believes it is important to recognize the contributions of our employees and their representatives in the union and is willing to meet with both groups to reestablish the confidence that they used to have in his performance.

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

5 ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair Pageler mentioned the additional written communication received by Tiffany Rodriguez on December 15, 2022 (attached).

Carey Pico spoke to his presentation in the agenda packet.

Brian Peoples, Trail Now, thanked Mr. Pico for sharing his presentation and then spoke to his slide in the agenda packet.

David Van Brink spoke of a recent trip taken from Yosemite National Park to his home in Santa Cruz by using five buses and a train to complete the trip. He thanked METRO for its on-time service and providing public transit to the Santa Cruz area.

Brett Garrett spoke of the Rail Corridor Automated Taxi (RailCAT) and suggested that it may work in Santa Cruz County.

Tiffany Rodriguez, San Jose State University (SJSU) employee, spoke to her letter submitted to the Board regarding the changes to the Highway 17 Express ending at Diridon Station in San Jose, CA and the reduction of stops at the Cavallaro Transit Center in Scotts Valley.

Teri Graziani, SJSU employee, spoke to her concerns detailed in her letters regarding the Highway 17 Express. Director Rotkin thanked her for her comments and said they would be taken under consideration.

Joe Martinez, Aptos resident, requested METRO to consider the comments made by Mr. Peoples and Mr. Pico and use that information to make transit decisions.

Gregg, Aptos/Seacliff resident, made the case for a demonstration trail from State Park Drive to downtown Aptos. Director Rotkin suggested Gregg contact the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC) because that organization controls the rail corridor and would make decisions regarding that area. METRO is not involved in those decisions.

Ryan Sarnataro, Aptos resident, supports a transit system that includes more than motorized vehicles (e.g., a bicycle infrastructure). He expressed environmental concerns over industrializing the rail corridor.

Buzz Anderson commented that any planning for a train and trail offset from the tracks invariably takes money and resources away from METRO and other communities. He emphasized that METRO is the future of mass transit in Santa Cruz County.

Shannon Miller, SJSU employee, thanked Ms. Rodriguez for her letter. It articulates many of the community concerns we have, both about discontinuing the bus from SJSU to Diridon Station and cutting service at Scotts Valley.

Maura Leonor, expressed her disappointment that Daniel Dodge was not chosen by the County Board of Supervisors to represent South County on METRO's Board of Directors. She also requested the Board to bring back the two Watsonville routes temporarily discontinued.

Barry Scott, Friends of the Rail and Trail, expressed support for all types of public transit and METRO's new leadership under CEO Tree.

David Tran, City of San Jose - Department of Transportation, echoed the comments made regarding the upcoming changes in the winter service, specifically around the Hwy. 17 Express. He strongly urged the Board and Transit District to reconsider the change.

Lani Faulkner, Equity Trust, said her organization would like to appreciate the work that the METRO Board, staff and CEO Tree are doing. Equity Transit supports a strong bussing program and a future with passenger rail that will support so many in the Santa Cruz community.

Chair Pageler asked METRO's Planning Director, John Urgo, to provide additional information regarding the winter service schedule. Mr. Urgo acknowledged that METRO does understand the impact these changes will have on its customers. We looked at adding the 5:30 PM trip back to Scotts Valley in this bid. Unfortunately, the Bus Operator is working an 11-hour shift, five days a week, and by contract, we cannot extend beyond 11 hours. The next service change will be March 16, 2023 and we are planning to add the 5:30 PM trip back to Scotts Valley. On the Watsonville and the 91X service, we also hope that will be a temporary change and mentioned that METRO has actually added service to Watsonville with the Circulator. He urged the public to bear with METRO as it continues to hire Bus Operators.

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

6 LABOR ORGANIZATION COMMUNICATIONS

James Sandoval, SMART Chairperson, Local 0023, acknowledged the holiday party was a great event. He also congratulated Director Rotkin on his reappointment and was glad to hear Director Rotkin is willing to work together with the union because he will do the same. As stated by Mr. Urgo, our Bus Operators are understaffed. The quick solution to bringing most of the service back is hiring more Bus Operators. We are recruiting right now; it is a great job and I highly recommend it to anybody. Please get the word out there to apply online.

Director Rotkin thanked Mr. Sandoval for his comment.

7 WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE METRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Having none, Chair Pageler moved to the next agenda item.

8 ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION TO SUPPORT EXISTING AGENDA ITEMS

Having none, Chair Pageler moved to the next agenda item.

CONSENT AGENDA

- 9.1 ACCEPT AND FILE: PRELIMINARY APPROVED CHECK JOURNAL DETAIL FOR THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER 2022
Chuck Farmer, CFO
- 9.2 ACCEPT AND FILE MINUTES OF:
A. NOVEMBER 18, 2022 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Michael Tree, CEO/General Manager
- 9.3 ACCEPT AND FILE: THE YEAR TO DATE MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT AS OF NOVEMBER 30, 2022
Chuck Farmer, CFO
- 9.4 APPROVE: CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION MAKING CERTAIN FINDINGS AND DIRECTING THAT THE BOARD AND ITS COMMITTEE MEETINGS WILL CONTINUE TO BE HELD VIA TELECONFERENCE
Michael Tree, CEO/General Manager
- 9.5 APPROVE: CONSIDERATION OF DECLARING VEHICLES AND/OR EQUIPMENT AS EXCESS FOR PURPOSES OF DISPOSAL OR AUCTION
Chuck Farmer, CFO
- 9.6 APPROVE: RECOMMENDED ACTION ON TORT CLAIMS
Curtis Moses, Safety, Security & Risk Management Director
- 9.7 APPROVE: CONSIDERATION OF AUTHORIZING THE CEO TO EXECUTE A 1ST CONTRACT AMENDMENT TO CONTRACT 23-05 WITH GILLIG, LLC TO INCREASE THE CONTRACT TOTAL PRICE BY \$270,344 FOR PURCHASE AND DELIVERY OF FIVE BATTERY ELECTRIC BUSES
Margo Ross, COO
- 9.8 APPROVE: CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ ECOPASS PILOT PROGRAM
John Urgo, Planning & Development Director

Director McPherson commented that it is great to see the pursuit of battery electric buses in Item 9.7. We are on the right track and these efforts are appreciated.

There was no public comment.

ACTION: MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS PRESENTED

MOTION: DIRECTOR LIND

SECOND: DIRECTOR DUTRA

MOTION PASSED WITH 8 AYES (Directors Brown, Downing, Dutra, Kalantari-Johnson, Lind, McPherson, Pageler and Rotkin). Directors Koenig, Meyers and Parker were absent.

REGULAR AGENDA

- 10 PRESENTATION OF EMPLOYEE LONGEVITY AWARDS (10 YEARS): CRYSTAL AYRES, PABLO BERRELLEZA, LORENA CALDERON, TRAVIS HAVENS, ALLISON HERNANDEZ-ADAIR, JOAN JEFFRIES, GERMAN LOPEZ, MICHELLE MARTINEZ, OSCAR MENDEZ, JAMES SANDOVAL, MICHAEL THORN, AND ROBERT VALDIVIA**

Chair Pageler read the bios available and congratulated all on their years of service.

- 11 RETIREE RESOLUTIONS OF APPRECIATION FOR: RHONDA CARTER AND EILEEN WAGLEY**

Chair Pageler read the bio available and congratulated both on their retirement.

ACTION: MOTION TO APPROVE THE RETIREE RESOLUTIONS AS PRESENTED

MOTION: DIRECTOR ROTKIN

SECOND: DIRECTOR DOWNING

MOTION PASSED WITH 8 AYES (Directors Brown, Downing, Dutra, Kalantari-Johnson, Lind, McPherson, Pageler and Rotkin). Directors Koenig, Meyers and Parker were absent.

- 12 APPROVE: CONSIDERATION OF AWARD OF CONTRACT TO JARRETT WALKER & ASSOCIATES, LLC FOR THE BUS NETWORK REIMAGINING PLAN NOT TO EXCEED \$411,570**

John Urgo, METRO Planning and Development Director, spoke to his presentation (attached) for the Bus Network Reimagining Plan. He outlined four key project outcomes:

- 1) A comprehensive evaluation and analysis of METRO's current fixed route system
- 2) Engagement with the public in a network planning exercise through two or more alternative scenarios that illustrate difficult trade-offs in transit planning
- 3) Review draft and final network scenarios matching possible financial projections—one with current resources and two with additional resources
- 4) A robust process of interaction with the stakeholders--city councils, METRO Board and the public to provide input to the plan throughout the process

The other piece that is driving this is METRO's 5-Year Strategic Plan goals presented by CEO Tree at the October workshop—increase ridership, purchase only zero-emission vehicles to convert fleet by 2037, and develop affordable housing at METRO Transit Centers.

Jarrett Walker and Associates, LLC was determined to be the highest ranked firm whose proposal fulfills the requirements of the RFP with costs that are fair and reasonable. Staff is recommending the Board award a contract to Jarrett Walker and Associates, LLC for the Bus Network Reimagining Plan as presented and authorize the CEO/General Manager to execute this contract.

Director Downing thanked Mr. Urgo for his presentation. She added that while she understands the ridership coverage challenges that are especially acute during our Bus Operator shortage, she's looking forward to seeing this project engage communities.

Director Kalantari-Johnson thanked Mr. Urgo for his presentation and mentioned that the County and City of Santa Cruz will be revising their housing element, which is very relevant to the goals METRO has set. She hopes that we can integrate what has happened with these housing elements with this reimagining plan.

Director Rotkin commented that Jarrett Walker and Associates, LLC is the preeminent transit planning firm and thanked Mr. Urgo for his presentation. He added the importance of working closely with the various cities within Santa Cruz County on upcoming housing opportunities and making affordable housing compatible with existing neighborhoods. He also added that METRO is planning to build housing units on its properties as well.

Director Dutra said this is a good idea to include many voices throughout the County in this discussion. He appreciates the support that our Chair and Board has given South County in addressing their needs.

Lani Faulkner, Equity Transit, supports Jarrett Walker's consultation services being awarded.

ACTION: MOTION TO AWARD A CONTRACT TO JARRETT WALKER & ASSOCIATES, LLC FOR THE BUS NETWORK REIMAGINING PLAN NOT TO EXCEED \$398,106

MOTION: DIRECTOR KALANTARI-JOHNSON SECOND: DIRECTOR DUTRA

MOTION PASSED WITH 8 AYES (Directors Brown, Downing, Dutra, Kalantari-Johnson, Lind, McPherson, Pageler and Rotkin). Directors Koenig, Meyers and Parker were absent.

13 CEO ORAL REPORT / COVID-19 UPDATE

Dawn Crummié, Human Resources Director, provided the CEO oral report on the following items:

Celtis Ventures, Inc. – Recently onboarded, this marketing firm will assist with marketing support, brand development, creation of a photo/video library, social media and the implementation of a new website.

One-Ride-At-A-Time Campaign – METRO's Marketing Department has been making great progress on this campaign. The campaign is a partnership with GO Santa Cruz County, a customer loyalty program that incentivizes riders to use this system by making a donation to one of the two local environmental, non-profits— The Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary or Bay of Life Fund. METRO plans to unveil the first two bus wraps featuring land and sea photos from National Geographic photographer Frans Lanting at his gallery opening on January 21, 2023 at the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History.

Grants – METRO is currently working on the TIRCP grant, a \$40 million grant at State level for hydrogen stations, buses and improvements to the Watsonville Transit Center.

Articulated Buses – METRO is in the process of acquiring 10 articulated buses from San Diego Metropolitan Transit System that are 10 years younger than our oldest buses in the fleet. This will help bridge the gap for when we order hydrogen buses and when we actually receive them.

Ms. Crummié thanked Mr. Sandoval for his shout out on recruitment of Bus Operators. We currently have six new hires in our training class. They will complete training in late January 2023. We are also running another recruitment through January 7, 2023. Ads are running on radio stations KSCO AM 1080, FM 104.1 and 95.7 and include testimonials from our current Bus Operators.

We are also hiring Mechanics. We currently have two Mechanics starting January 11, 2023 and we are looking for four more.

Director Rotkin asked Dawn to elaborate on the benefits of working at METRO as a Bus Operator. Ms. Crummié gave a brief description of the compensation package and benefits available to the new Bus Operators. We are currently hiring at Step 2, which is \$24.58/hour, a \$4,000 hiring bonus, a \$2,000 referral bonus to current employees for referring a Bus Operator or Mechanic recruit. METRO pays 95% of the medical plan premium chosen by the employee. METRO pays 100% of the dental and vision premiums. We also provide life insurance, the CalPERS pension, and longevity awards.

Lastly, METRO had a holiday party last weekend and it had a great turn out even with the rain. Approximately 115 people attended. A special thank you to Director McPherson for attending and greeting employees and a huge thank you to Donna Bauer for putting the whole thing together. The decorations were beautiful and the hor'dourves were great. Donna dedicated many hours in putting this all together and she did a wonderful job.

14 ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING

Chair Pageler announced the next regular board meeting will be held on Friday, January 27, 2023 at 9:00 AM via teleconference.

15 ADJOURNMENT

Chair Pageler adjourned the meeting at 10:26 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Bauer
Executive Assistant



TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS
One Washington Square, SU 1800
San José, CA 95192-0129
408.924.7433 | ts.sjsu.edu

December 15, 2022

To: Santa Cruz METRO Board of Directors:

On behalf of Associated Students (AS) Transportation Solutions at San José State University (SJSU), the City of San José, and its Highway 17 Express riders, we are writing to voice serious concerns regarding the schedule changes taking effect on 12/22. Specifically, we want to address the changes to end service at Diridon and the reduction of stops at the Scotts Valley Park & Ride. However, first, we want to thank Santa Cruz METRO's Board of Directors for listening to riders' concerns and adding a 5:30 pm run to the schedule, and we hope the Board will consider these additional requests.

With the impacts on ridership due to the pandemic, creating a customer-focused experience is critical to restoring ridership and trust and in transit. Riders rely on the Highway 17 Express to provide an easy, safe, affordable, and sustainable commute to work and school. The changes are detrimental to our plans to encourage and incentivize students and staff to explore alternatives to their single-passenger vehicles.

Continue Service to East Santa Clara St.- Ending Service at Diridon Station and requiring a VTA transfer further complicates the commute for those who already travel long distances. Many riders travel from as far as Monterey County, and studies show that complicated commutes and excessive transfers significantly decrease an individual's willingness to take transit. Our riders have expressed concerns about missing transfers, VTA service reliability, extended commute times, and safety concerns when traveling at night, all of which have them reconsidering their transportation options. They have shared that the commute at that point is not worth the time, and driving becomes the mode of choice. We also have several people who have no other way of commuting than public transportation, which adds another layer of stress and challenges to their daily lives.

Add stops in Scotts Valley- The Scotts Valley Park & Ride is essential to easing the commute of riders and is used by individuals who live not only in Monterey County, but also in the city of Santa Cruz, Scotts Valley, and the San Lorenzo Valley because of limited parking and options for first and last-mile connections. Commuters prefer the Scotts, Valley Park and Ride lot to the Pasatiempo Park & Ride because it has ample parking, provides a safe environment, and amenities for commuters that Pasatiempo does not offer.

AS Transportation Solutions has been a long-time supporter of Santa Cruz METRO, and SJSU subsidizes the 31-Day pass and 15-Ride pass to enable riders to enjoy a modest discount, which helps boost ridership and take cars off the road. The City of San José does not offer similar fare subsidies at this time. There is no doubt that these changes are not wanted by riders and will make promoting this service as a viable commute option increasingly difficult and lead to more automobiles, congestion, and danger on the road.

The City of San José has set ambitious goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions caused by commuters driving alone. The Highway 17 Express provides a crucial service to City staff, downtown employers, and SJSU students and staff that supports those goals. Having a service that extends to City


Attachment

Hall and the University, and doesn't require a transfer is key to the success of this service. We don't see the transfer as redundant service. We know that when there is a lack of seamlessness in a transit trip, it negatively affects passenger experience and consequently reduce ridership.

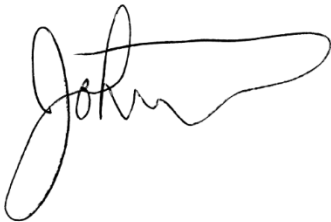
We have been informed these changes result from multiple challenges Santa Cruz METRO is facing, including a lack of access to safe and sanitary restrooms for operators, challenges with rest stop parking, and bus operator shortages. We are open to discussing ways we can collaborate on potential solutions for restroom access and rest stops , or any other barriers that METRO is encountering to maintain the quality and ridership potential for this critical service.

We hope you will take our concerns into consideration as you make your final decision.

Regards,

DocuSigned by:

7F8CD68FB3C1495...

Tiffany Rodriguez, Manager
Associated Students, SJSU
Transportation Solutions
Student Union, East Wing Room 1800
San José, CA 95192-0129



John Ristow
Director, Department of Transportation
City of San José
200 E. Santa Clara St. 8th Floor
San José, Ca 95113

SJSU supporters of this letter include:

Eric Cross, Parking Services Manager
Debbie Andreas, Senior Sustainability Lead, Office of Sustainability
David Chai, Chair, Sustainability Board
Harish Chander, Chair, Staff Council

Santa Cruz METRO 2022 Bus Network Reimagining Plan

Attachment

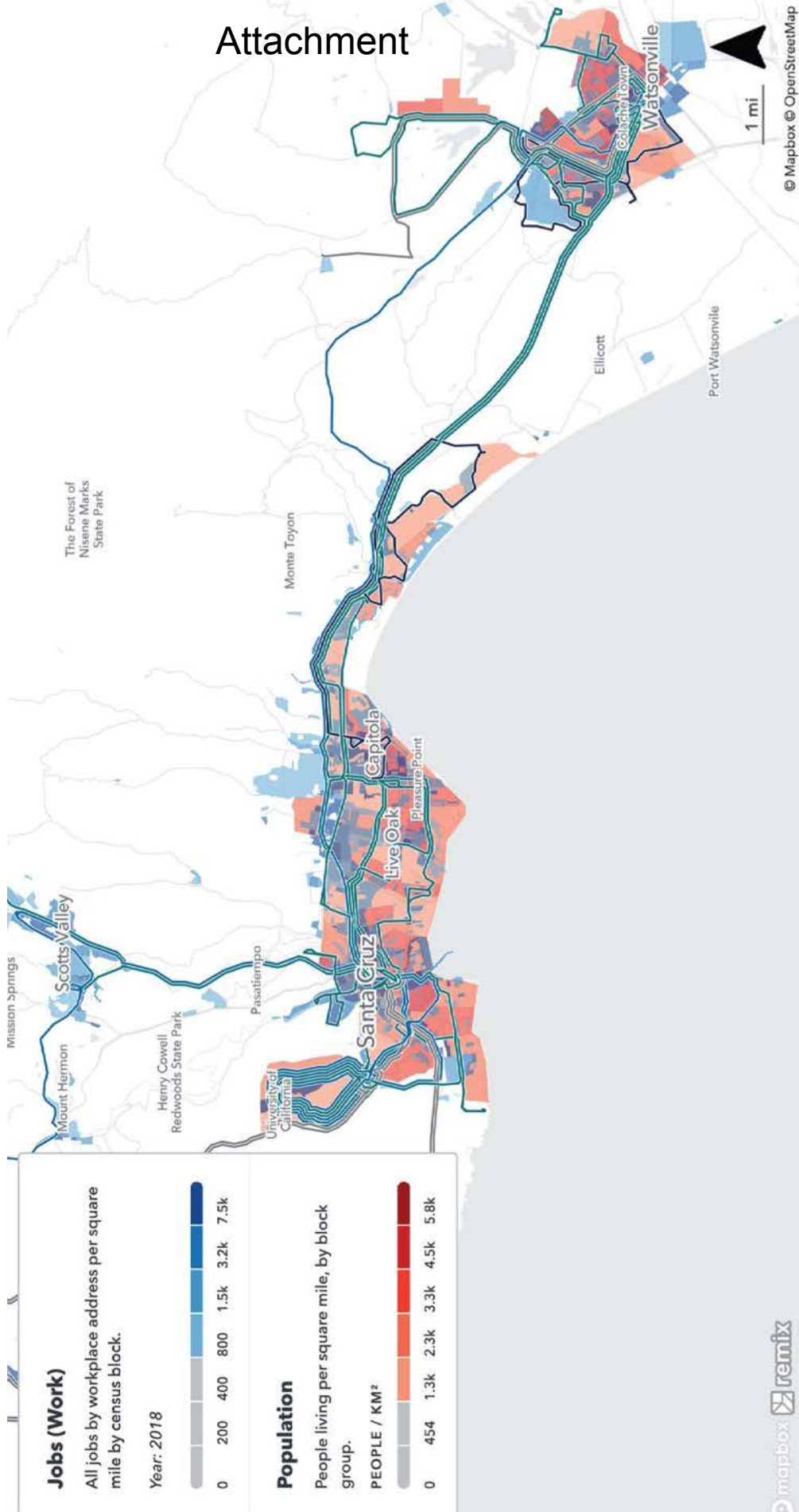


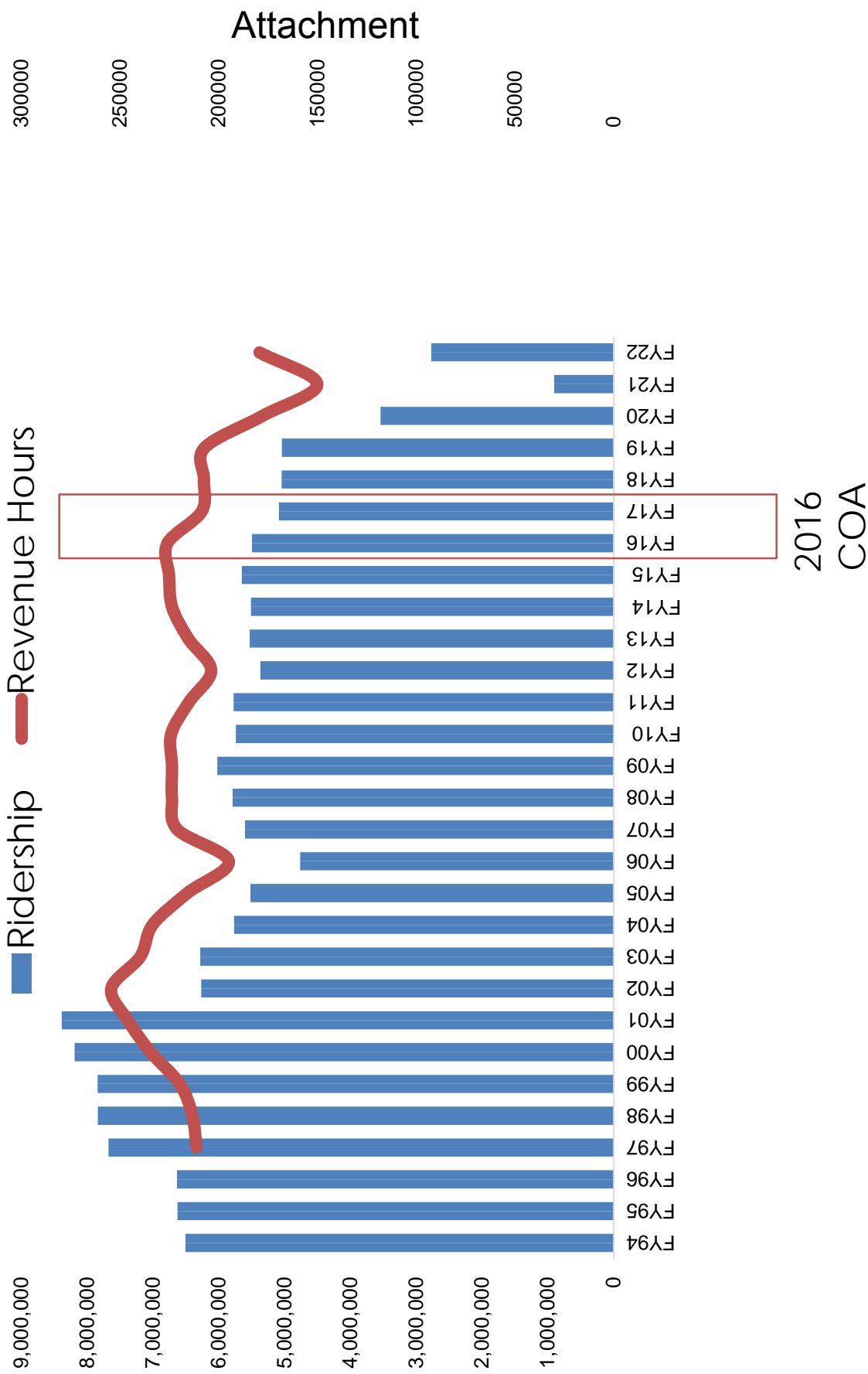
SCMTD Board of Directors
December 16, 2022



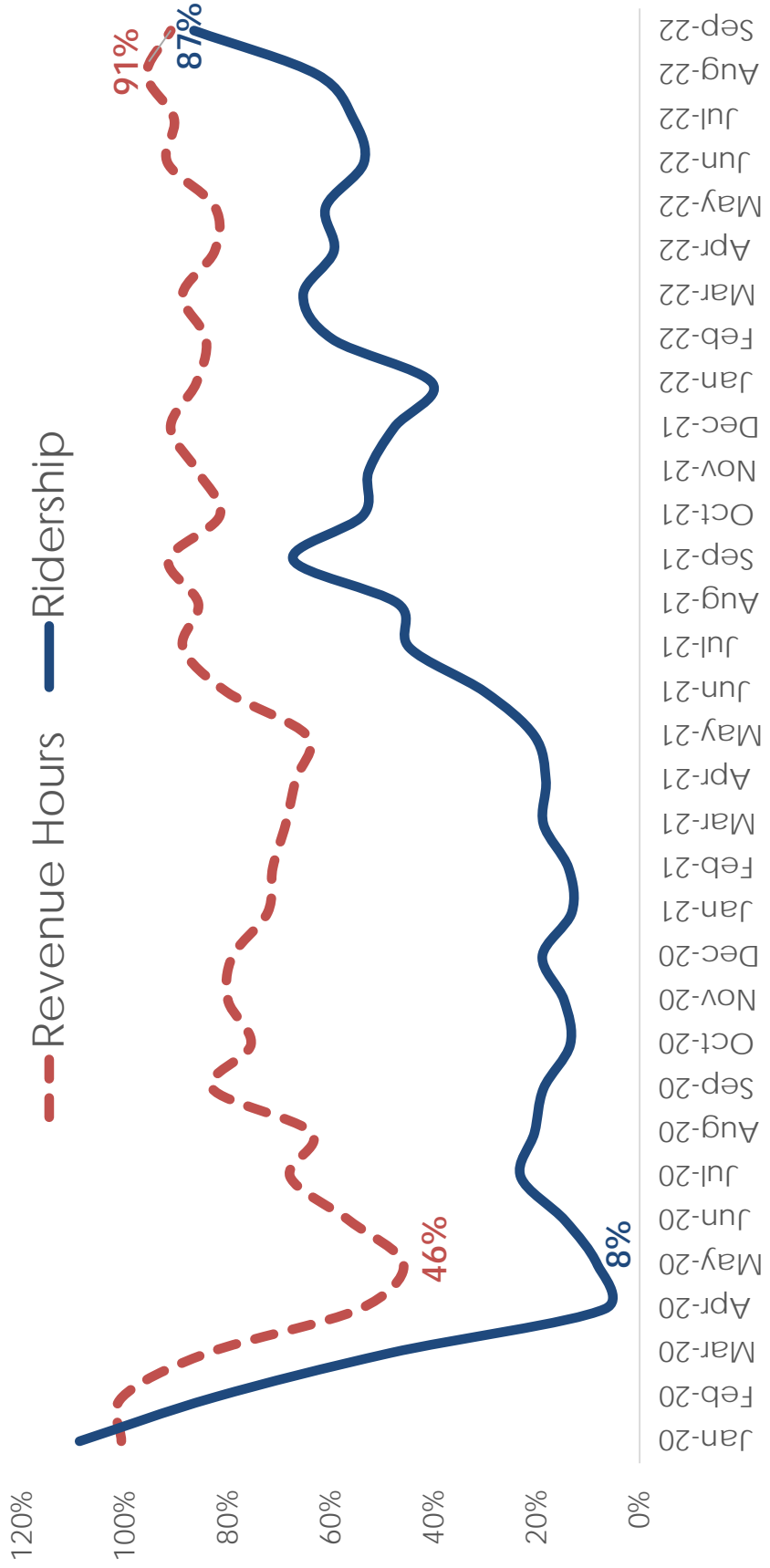
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1) An evaluation of METRO's current fixed route bus network





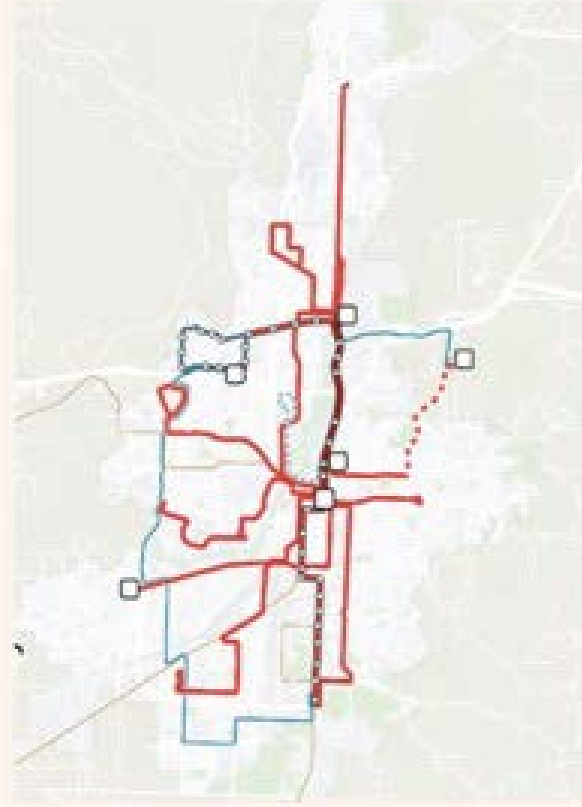
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2) Complete two alternative scenarios

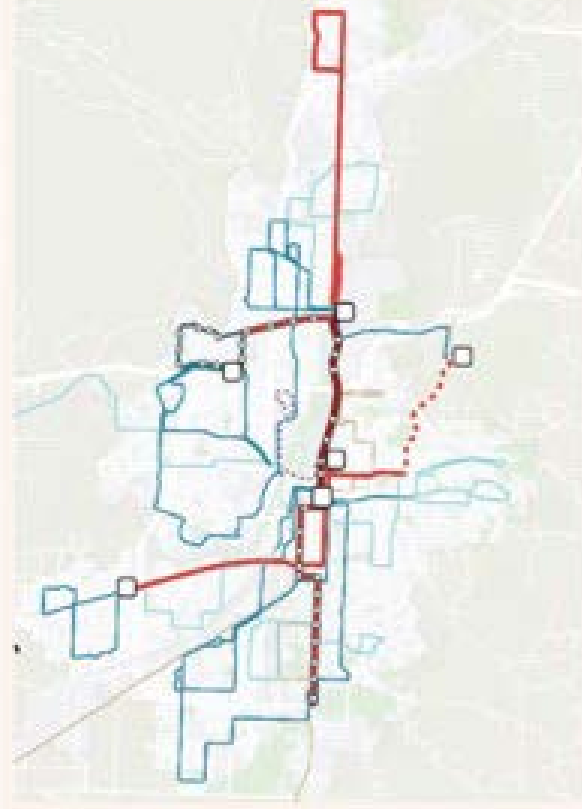
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Ridership



High frequency service on main streets. Connections enable faster travel across the metro area. Some areas lose service.

Coverage



Service in as many places as possible. Based on existing network, but more areas covered and lower frequencies in some areas.

There is a strong preference for frequent service over broad availability.

Santa Cruz METRO is a public agency spending everyone's tax dollars. It has only a limited number of buses and limited money to operate them. That means they have to make hard choices about how much service they can provide and where in Santa Cruz County they can provide it. With that in mind, which of the following options would you prefer?

Provide fast and frequent service, that comes every 15 minutes and takes the most direct routes, even if that means transit is only available in the areas where the most people live and work

OR

Provide service to as many places as possible, even if that means the bus only comes every hour or 2 and most trips take a very long time

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All Residents

69%

26%

Once a Month or More

68%

30%

A Few Times Per Year

63%

34%

Never

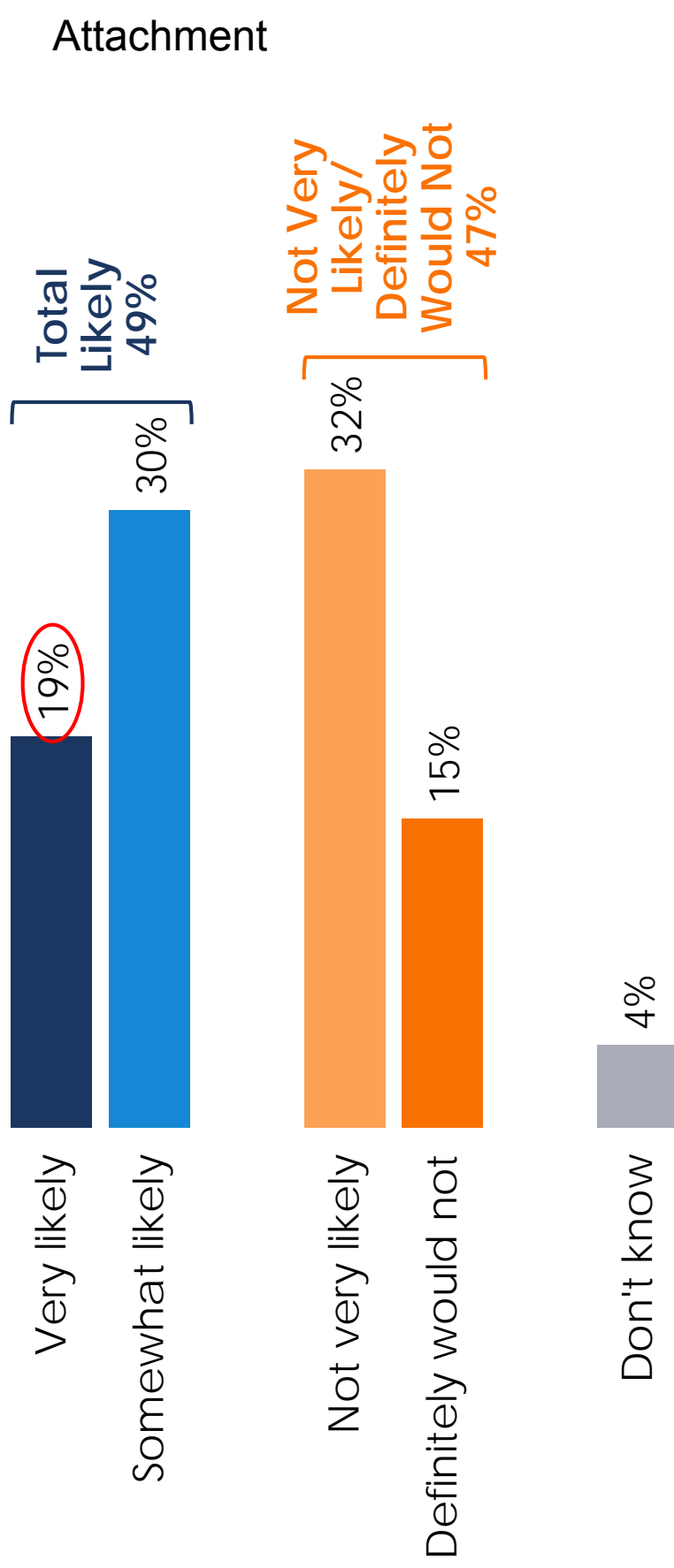
70%

24%

Nearly half of non-riders/infrequent riders reported they would be likely to ride METRO regularly if buses came more often and dropped off in more convenient locations.

If in the future, Santa Cruz METRO provides bus service within walking distance of your home that runs every 15 minutes, and could drop you off within a block or 2 of where you need to go, thinking realistically, how likely would you be to use that service once a month or more?

(Asked of Respondents Who Currently Ride METRO Less than Once Per Month, n=910)



3) Cost-neutral and future growth scenarios



Low

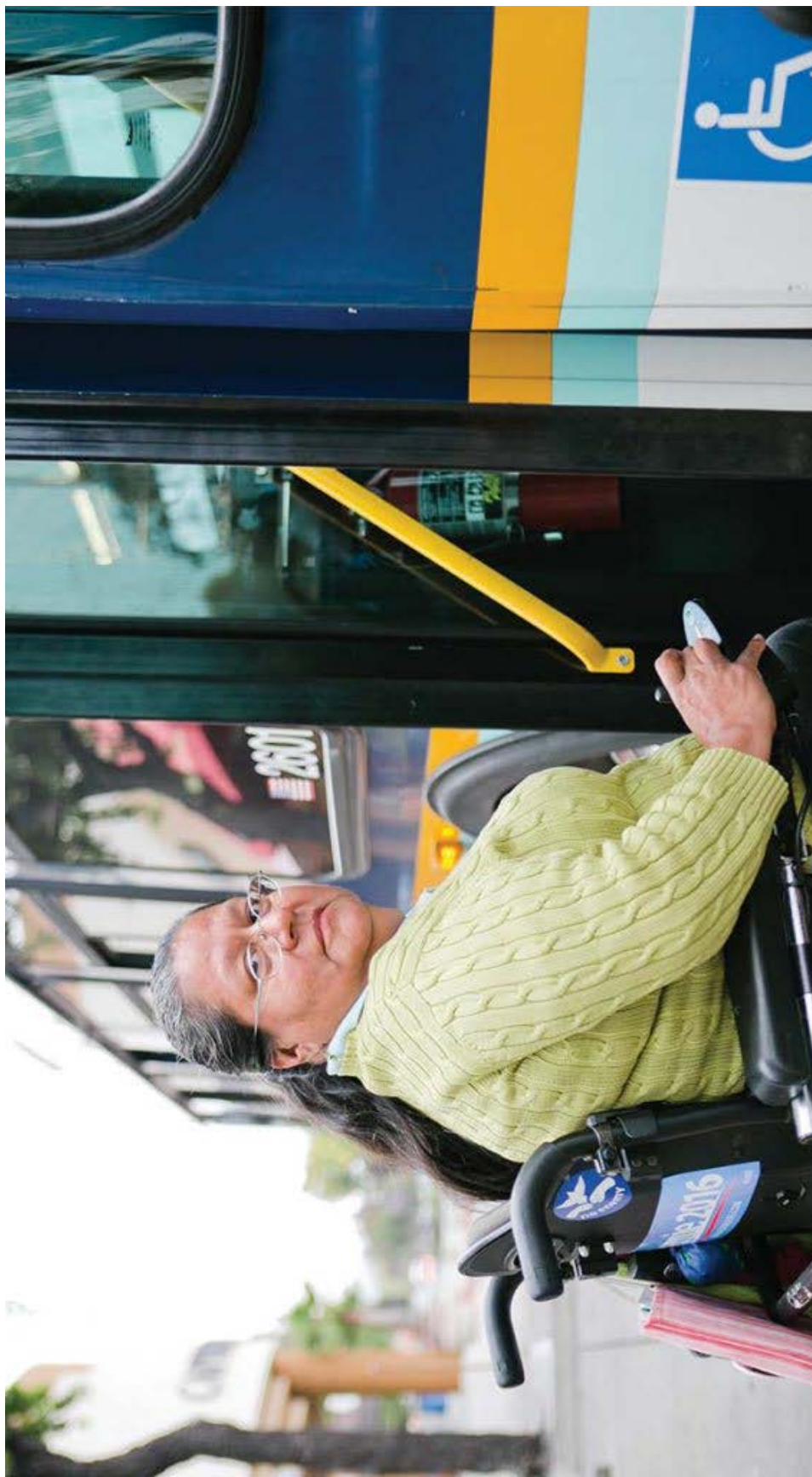


Medium



High

4) Robust community engagement



5-Year Strategic Plan Goals

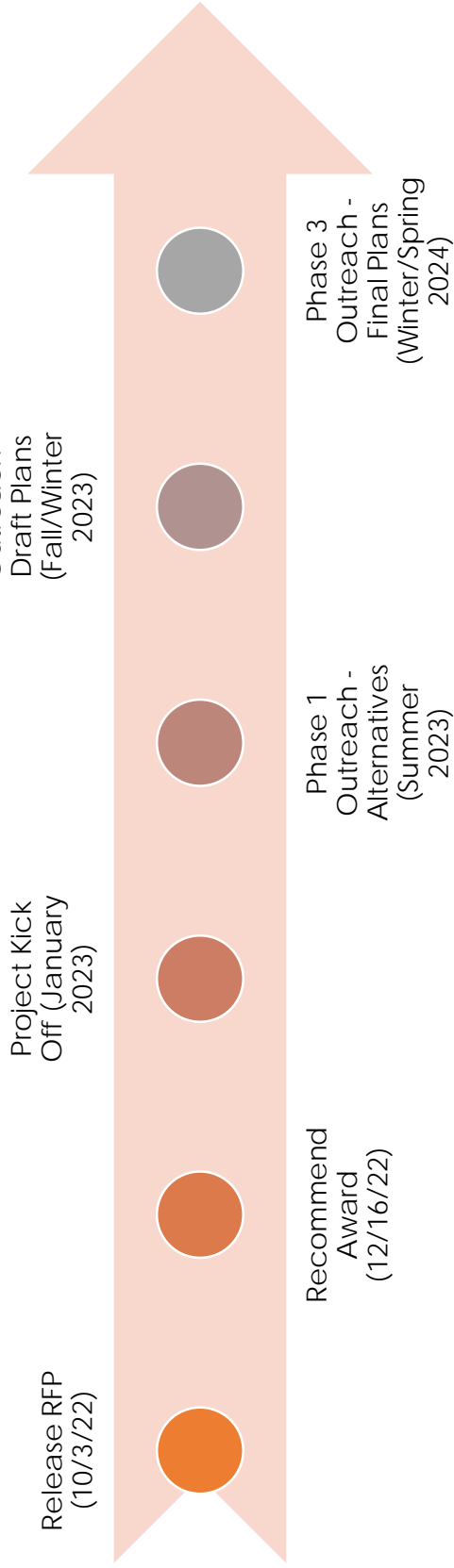
Ridership: 100% ridership increase within the next 5 years

Zero-Emission Vehicles: Purchase only zero emission buses moving forward, converting entire 96 bus METRO fleet by 2037

Affordable Housing: Develop 175 housing units at METRO Transit Centers within the next decade

Schedule

Attachment





Questions?