



Reimagine METRO

Phase 1 Proposal

December 2023 Service Changes

September 2023

What is Reimagine METRO?

- Santa Cruz METRO is re-envisioning **where** buses should go, and **how often** they should run.
- Key goals include:
 - Increase the amount of service provided.
 - Make transit more reliable, and relevant to the community's needs.
 - Adapt to post-COVID travel patterns.
 - **Create a network that is useful and attractive for many people's trips.**

How do we get there?

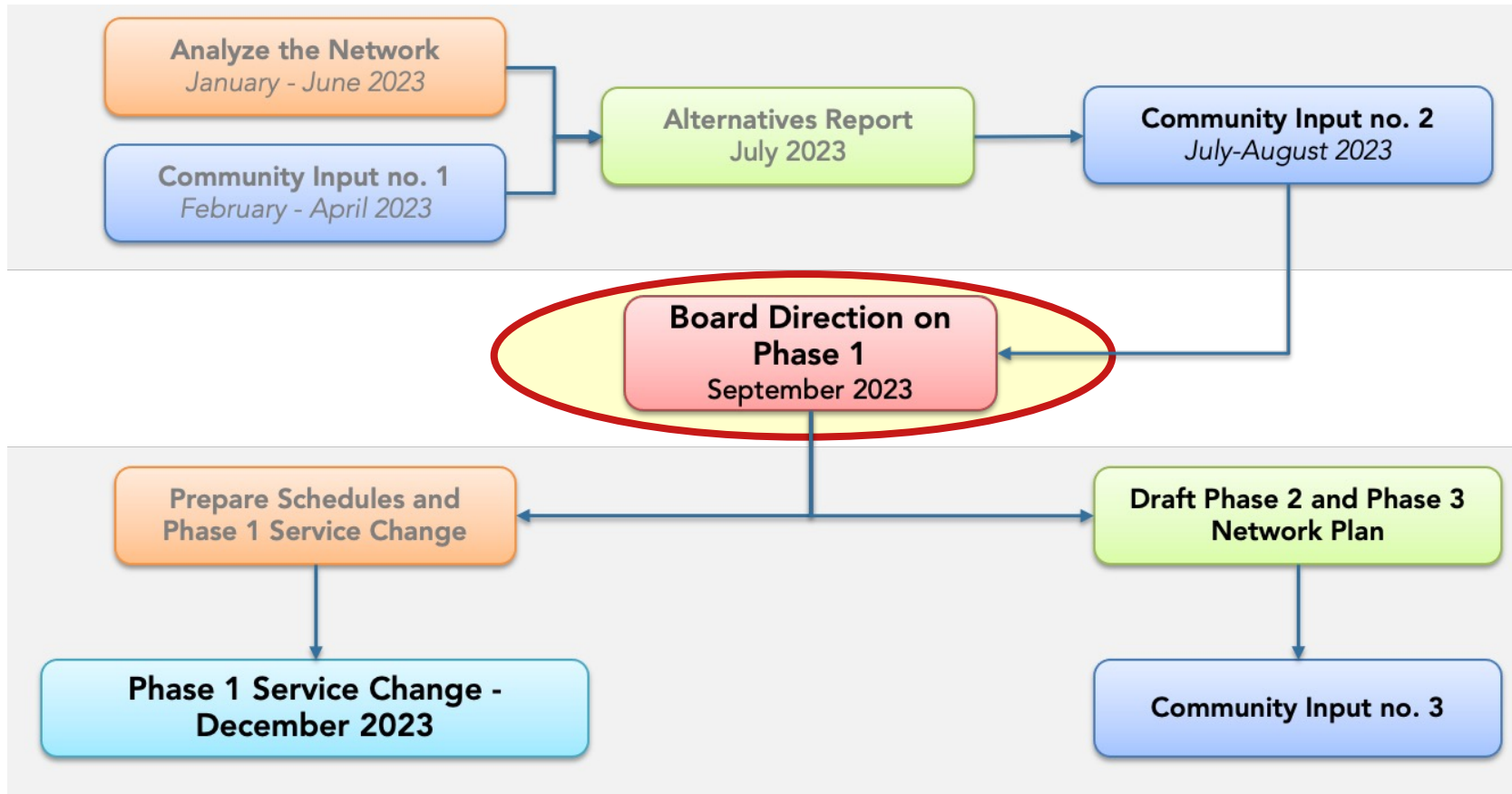
We are planning changes to the network that would come into service in three phases:

- **Phase 1 - December 2023**, with the operating resources that will be available by the end of this year.
- **Phase 2 – over the course of 2024**, based on additional funding and operators.
- **Phase 3 – long-range improvements**, once Phase 2 is complete and further resources become available.

Who is working on this?

- **Santa Cruz METRO**
- Consultant team led by **JWA** (Jarrett Walker & Associates) and **AMMA** Transit Planning
- Collaboration with **local agencies and jurisdictions**, including:
 - Cities of Santa Cruz, Watsonville, Capitola and Scotts Valley
 - Regional Transportation Commission
 - UCSC

Where we are now



What we're doing on Sept. 22

- Presenting public feedback received in July and August.
- **Presenting a recommended Phase 1 proposal and asking the Board for approval.**
 - This PowerPoint includes the Phase 1 proposal.
- Presenting the team's current intentions for Phase 2 and 3.
 - Phase 2 and Phase 3 concepts will be shown to the Board on Sept. 22, but not for approval. These will be subject to a separate public outreach process before being presented for approval.



Alternatives Presented in July and August

Both alternatives included:

- **More service.** ~10% increase overall.
- **Higher frequency** in areas with higher demand.
- **Simpler and more direct routes**, especially in Watsonville.
- **Better transfers.** Shorter waits, no second fare.
- **Some different route numbers** and names.
- **In some areas, change which streets** have bus service.

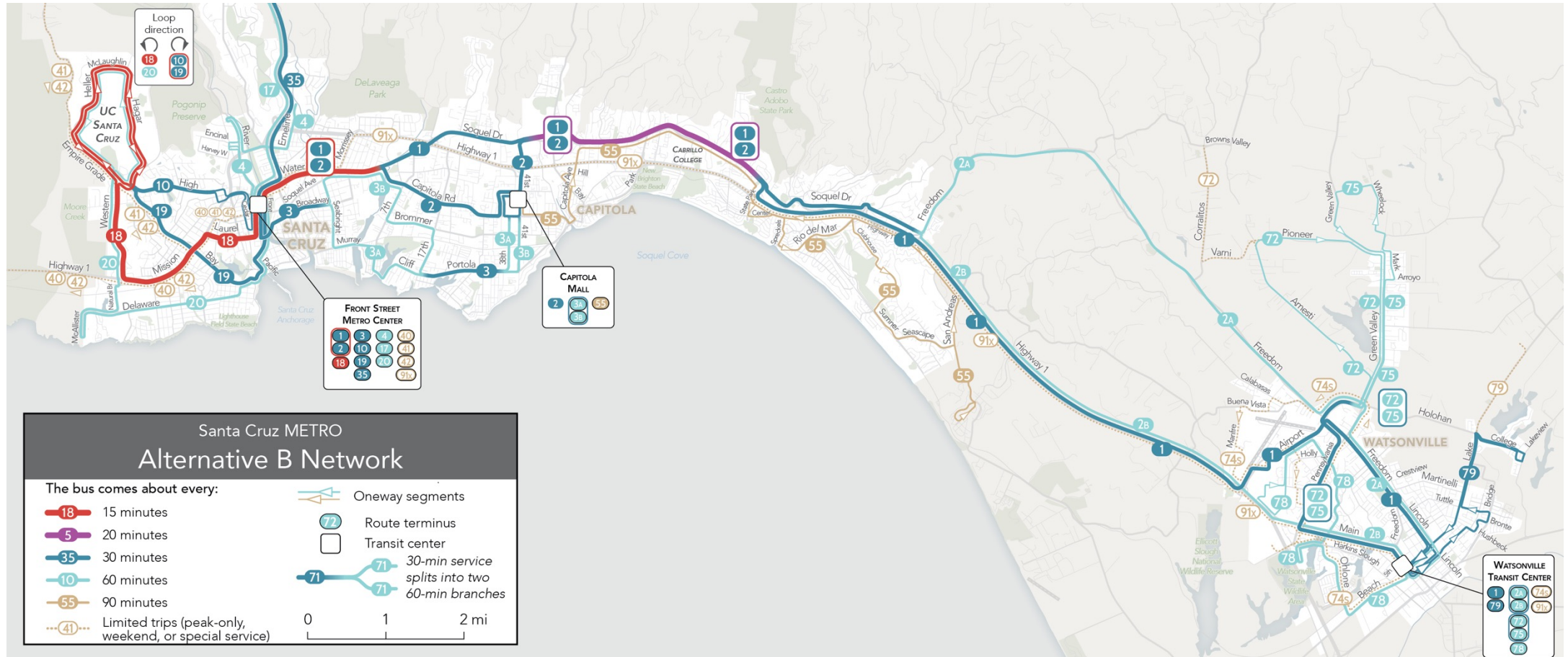
Existing METRO Service



Alternative A – Lean toward Frequency



Alternative B – Lean toward Coverage



Both alternatives reflected:

- **Operating Constraints.** 145 drivers by December.
- **No new infrastructure**, except for:
- **Temporary closure of Pacific Station.** Stops moving to Front Street in Santa Cruz.

Outcomes – Big Picture

- Both alternatives would provide similar overall coverage to the existing network. **Alternative B would provide service near slightly more people.**
- Both alternatives would make it possible to reach more places in less time. **Alternative A would increase access to destinations for more people.**



Public Input

Outreach Efforts

- **Online Public Meeting** – 90+ attendees
- **Stakeholder Conversations** – 20 organizations
- **Rider Focus Groups** – 30 riders from throughout the service area
- **In-Person Outreach** – 3 events in Watsonville, 1 in Live Oak
- **Online Survey** – 789 responses online, plus 15 in-person responses
- **Project Website** – 1,500+ unique visitors from July 1 to Aug 15.

High Level Takeaways

- **Positive Responses to Increased Frequency**
- Positive Responses to Simplified Service, esp. in Watsonville
- Concerns over potential loss of service on High Street (Route 10)
- Desire for return of Route 91X
- Some uncertainty about what's being proposed, and questions about how major service changes will be communicated

Survey Results reflect a diversity of county residents and METRO riders

- 804 responses
- Among those who reported demographic information:
 - 52% regular METRO riders
 - 45% people of color (30% Latino)
 - 40% from households earning less than \$50k/year
 - 40% don't have a car
 - 28% UCSC or Cabrillo College students
 - 15% have a disability that limits mobility

Most respondents agree service needs to change

“Do you agree that METRO service (where and how often the bus should come) needs to change?”

- **Yes: 78%**
- **No: 7%**
- **Not Sure: 15%**

n = 790 responses

At a very high level...

METRO is proposing to make changes including:

- **More service**, a 10% increase overall.
- **Higher frequency** in areas with higher demand.
- **Simpler service and more direct routes.**
- **Better transfers** with shorter waits and no second fare.

But to make this possible, METRO would need to:

- **Change some route numbers and names.**
- **In some areas, change which streets have bus service.**

...most respondents agree the proposed changes for December go in the right direction.

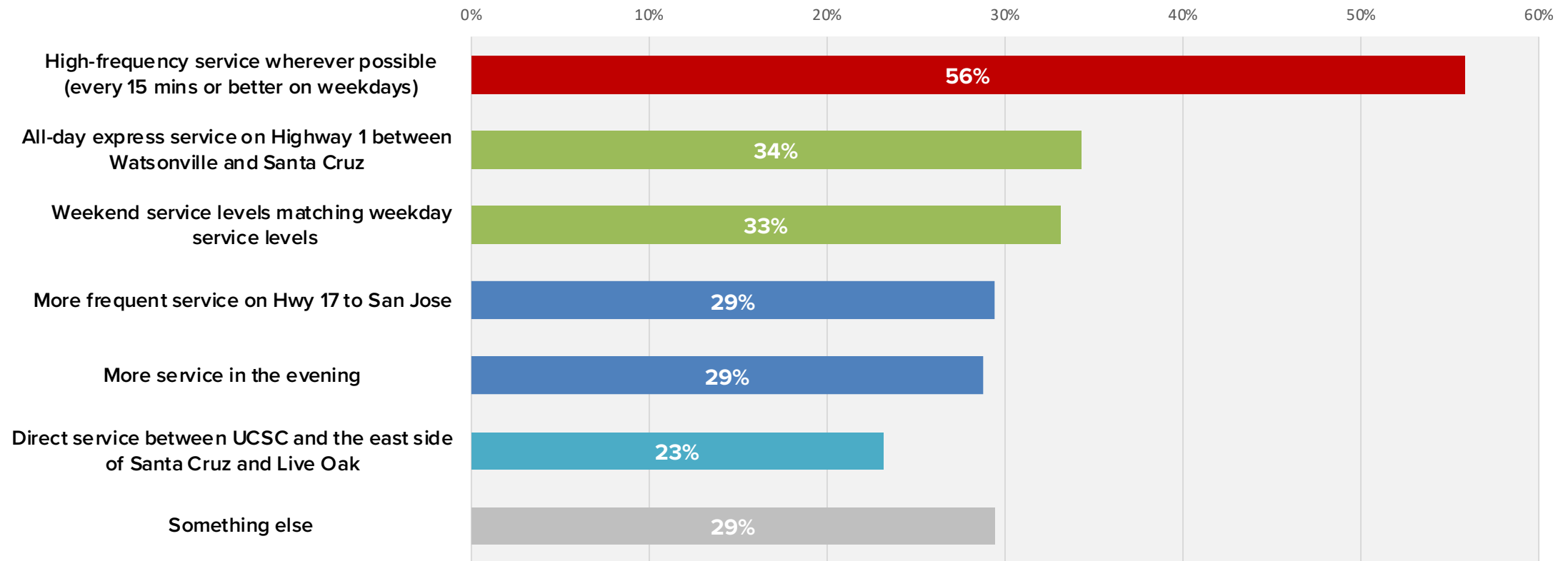
“Generally speaking, do these changes sound like a good idea?”

- **Yes: 84%** (definitely: 44%, probably 41%)
- **No: 5%** (definitely: 2%, probably 3%)
- Not Sure: 11%

n = 767 responses

For future improvements, high frequency is the public's highest priority.

Among the following improvements, which three are most important to you?



n = 622 responses



Feedback by Area

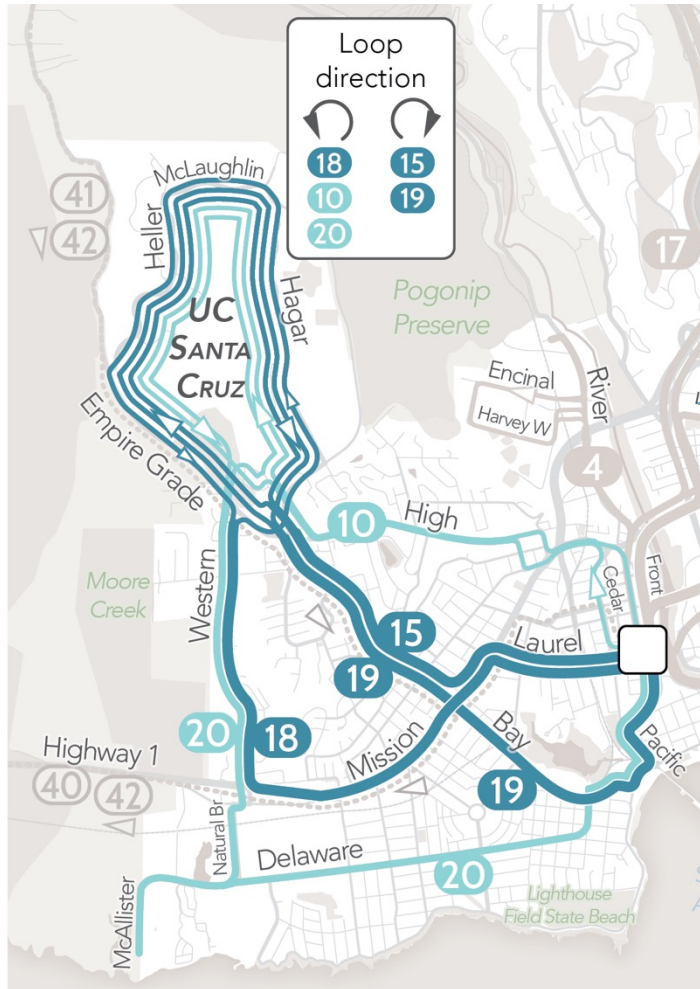
Important Reminder

On the maps shown in this presentation, **color means how often the bus comes***.

- **Red lines** come **every 15** minutes or better on weekdays.
- **Dark Blue** lines come **every 30** minutes
- **Light Blue** lines come **every 60** minutes
- **Tan or gold** lines come **less often** than every 60 minutes.

**The following slides present feedback for specific areas. Routes shown in grey are part of feedback received for a different area.*

UCSC and West Santa Cruz

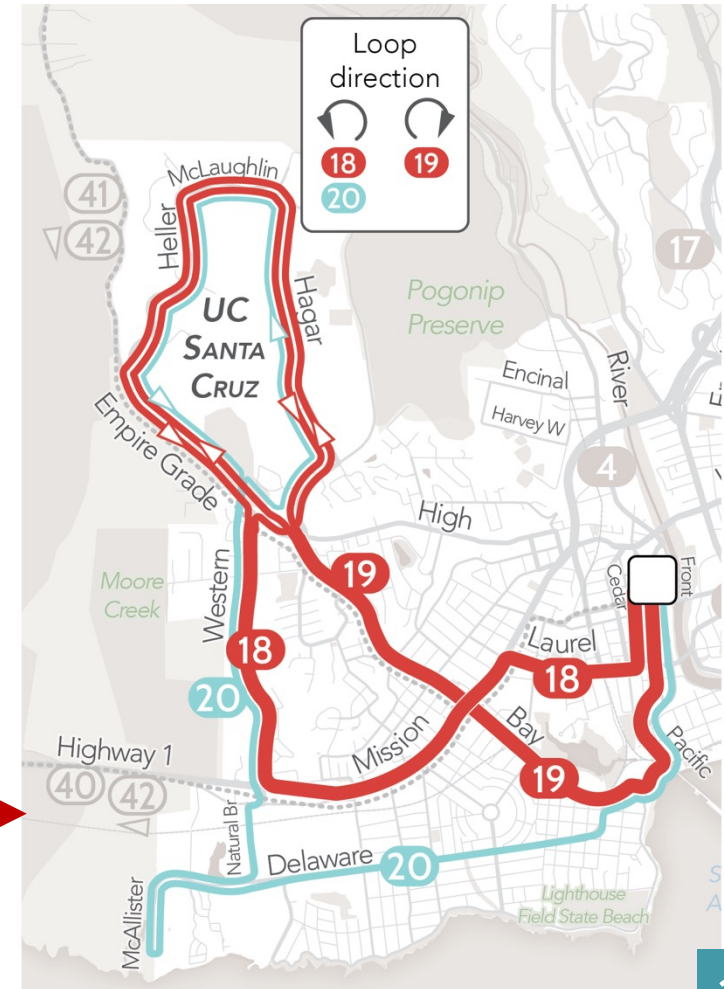


JARRETT WALKER + ASSOCIATES

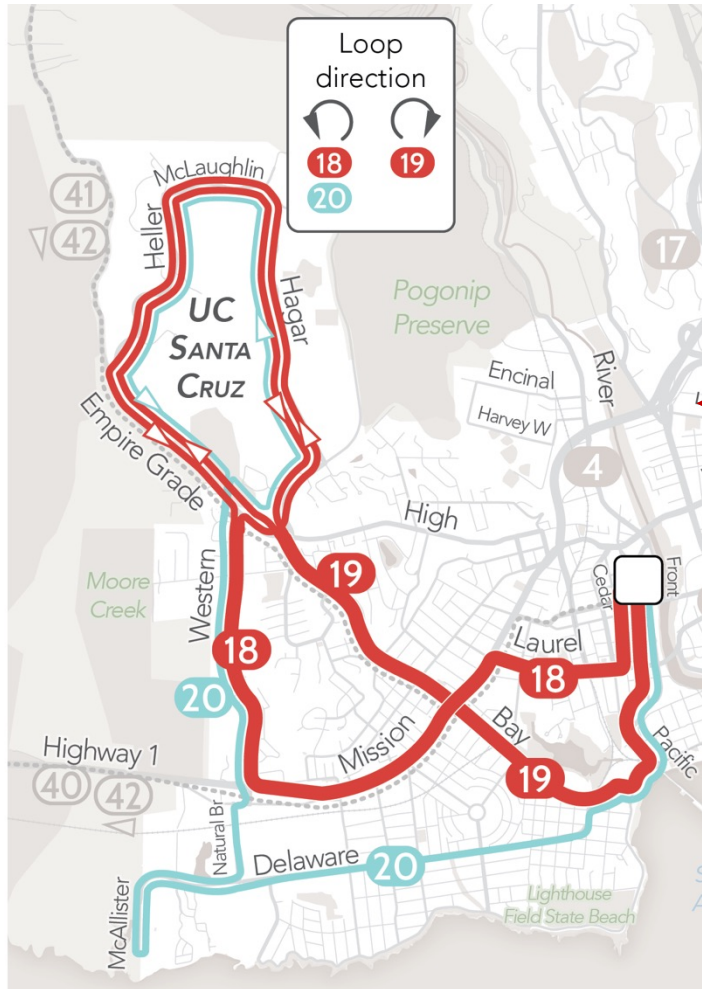
Existing Network
(spring 2023)

VS.

Alternative A



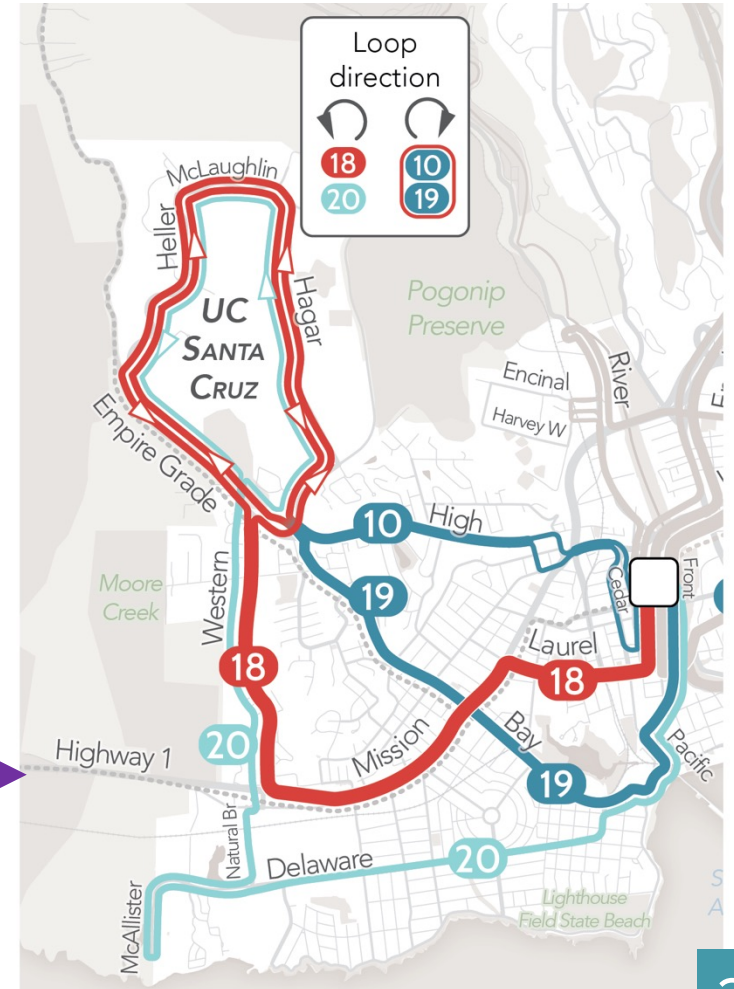
UCSC and West Santa Cruz



Alternative A

VS.

Alternative B



Survey responses lean toward Alternative B in this area.

“Comparing the two alternatives, which do you like better?”

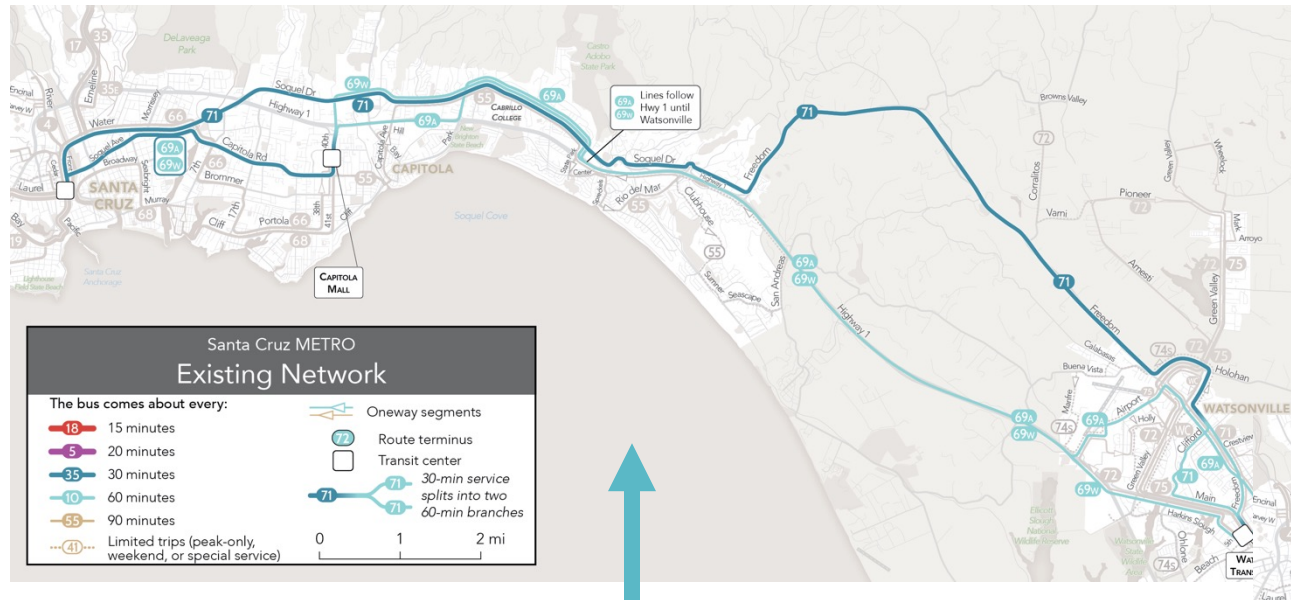
- **Alternative A: 35%** (definitely: 21%, somewhat: 14%)
- **Alternative B: 46%** (definitely: 30%, somewhat: 16%)
- Existing Service: 7%
- Not Sure: 12%

n = 336 responses

Detailed feedback suggests:

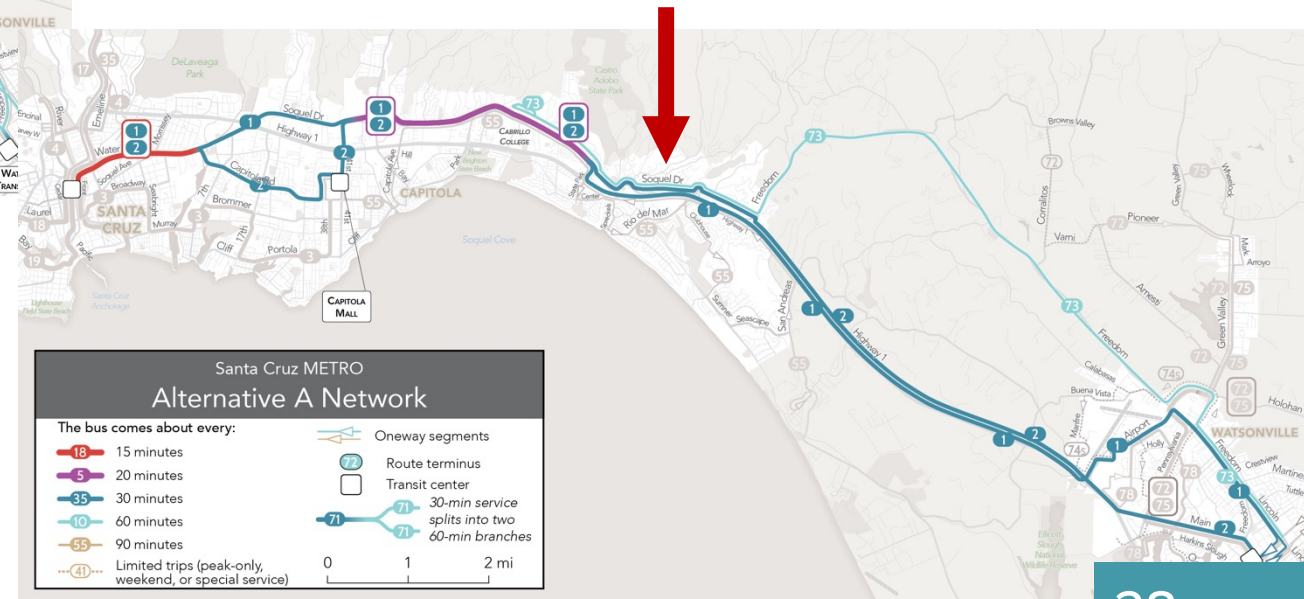
- **High Street matters.** Many people we spoke to considered this too big of a gap in coverage in Alternative A, and their reason for preferring Alternative B.
- **People still want the increased frequency.** All things considered, people would prefer more frequency on both the 18 and 19 and keeping service on High Street.

East – West Routes



Existing Network

Alternative A



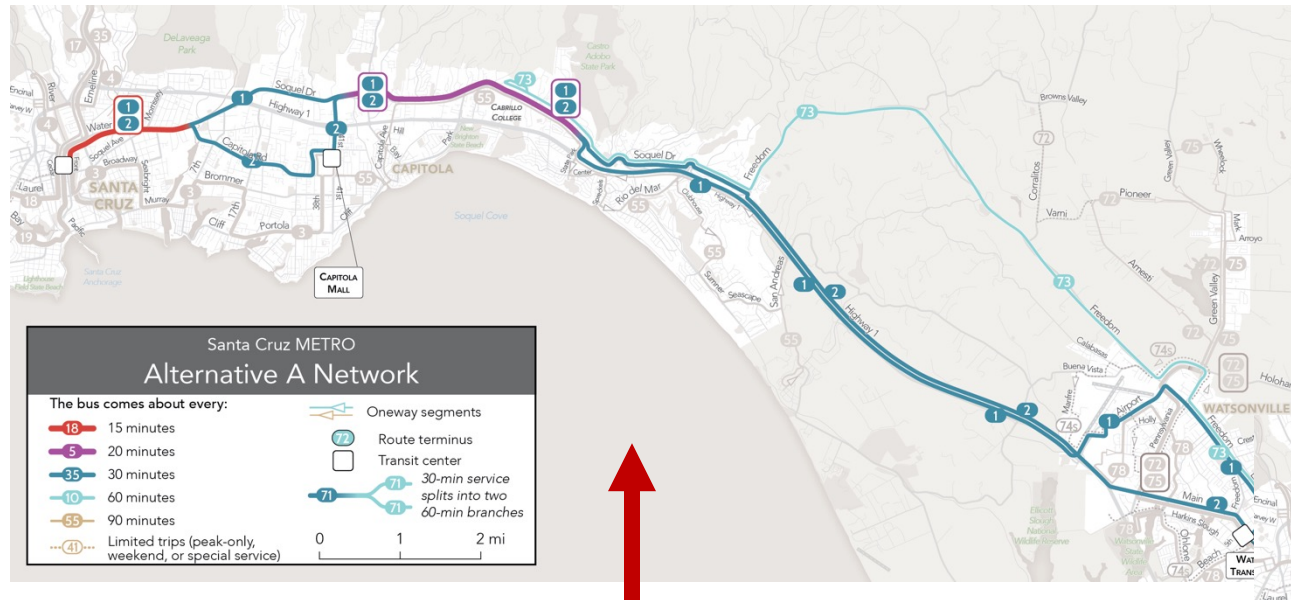
Most survey respondents agree Alternative A would be better than existing service for these routes.

“Compared to existing service, would Alternative A be better for you and your family?”

- **Yes: 60%**
- **No: 16%**
- **Not Sure: 23%**

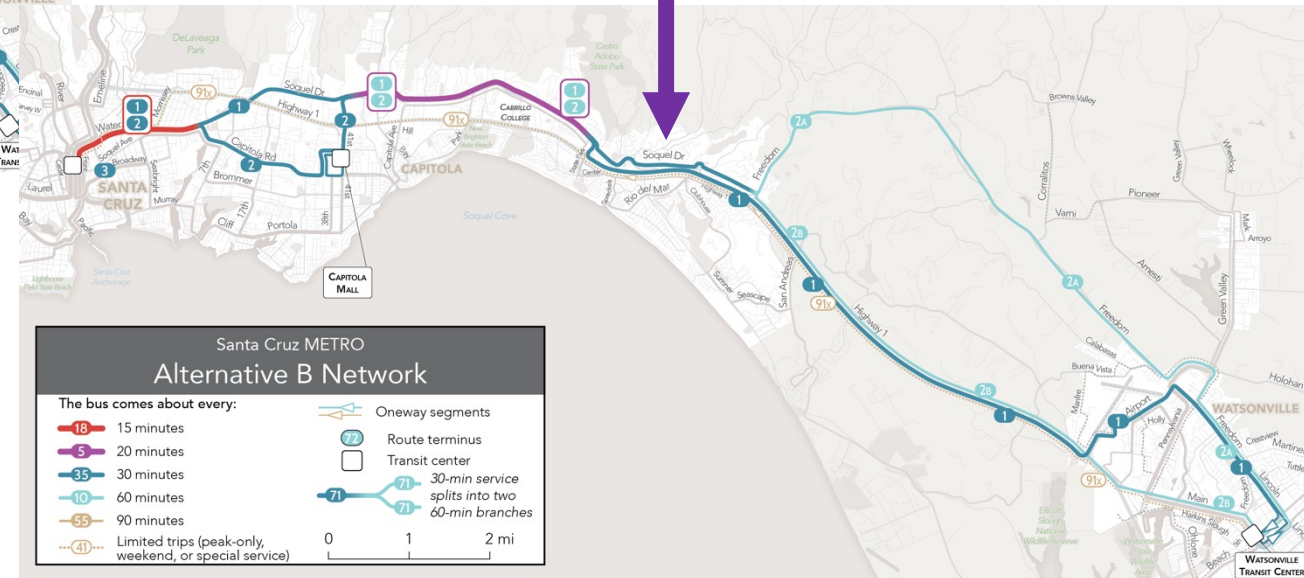
n = 444 responses

East – West Routes



Alternative A

Alternative B



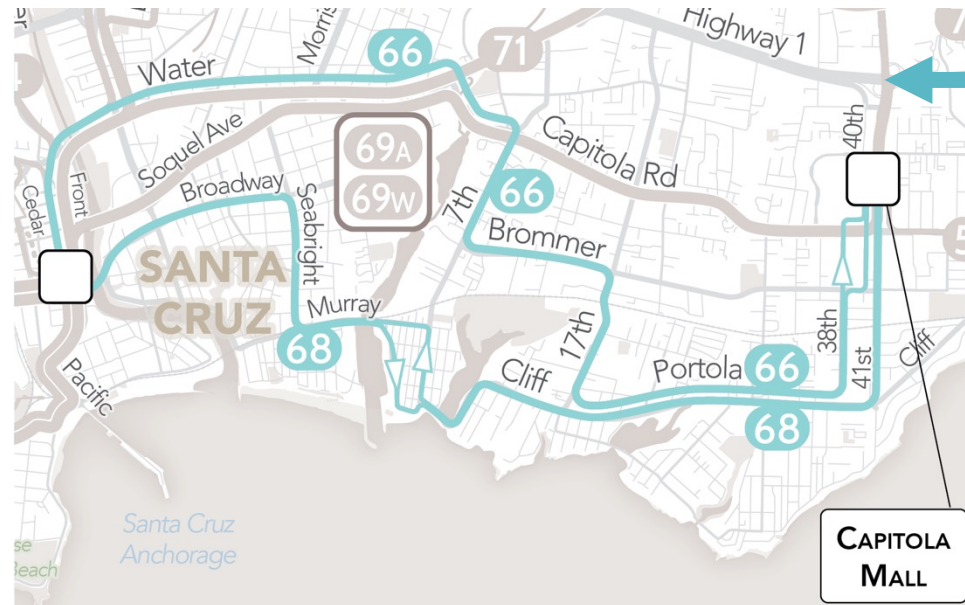
Survey responses lean in favor of Alternative A for these routes.

“Comparing the two alternatives, which do you like better?”

- **Alternative A: 44%** (definitely: 27%, somewhat: 17%)
- **Alternative B: 27%** (definitely: 11%, somewhat: 16%)
- **Existing Service: 6%**
- **Not Sure: 23%**

n = 452 responses

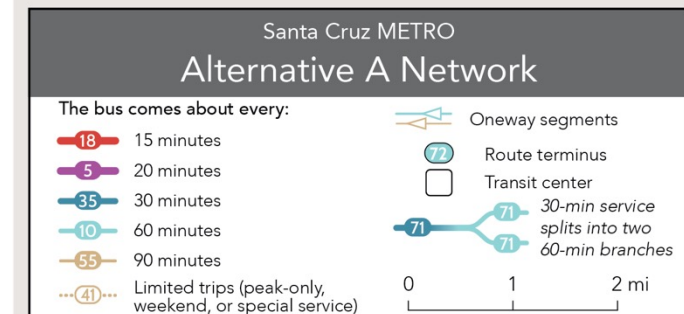
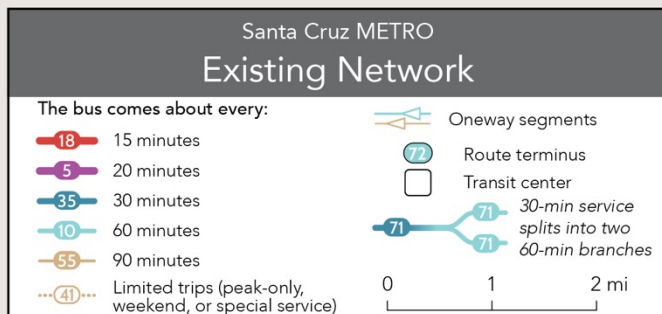
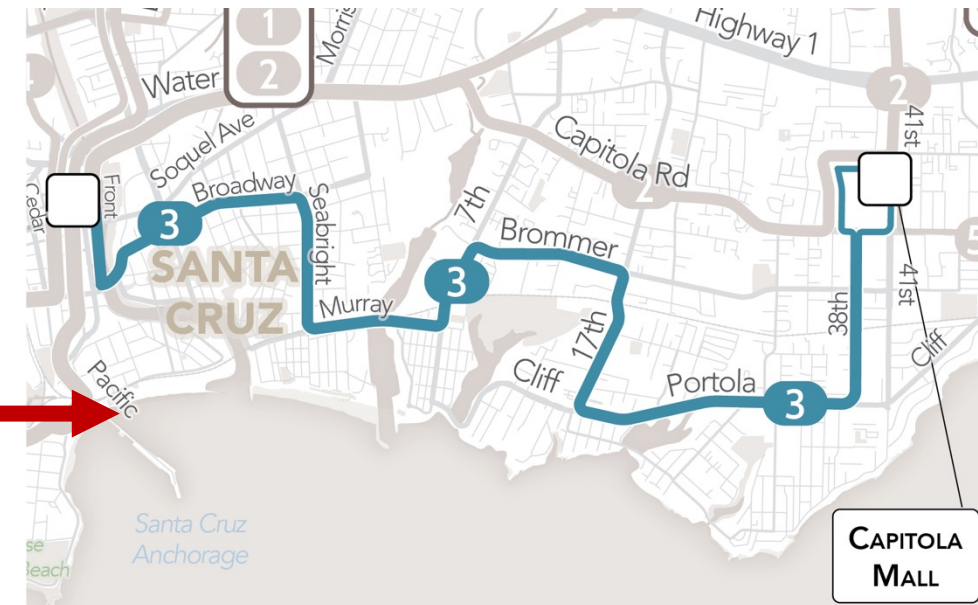
Seabright, Twin Lakes, Brommer Road, Pleasure Point



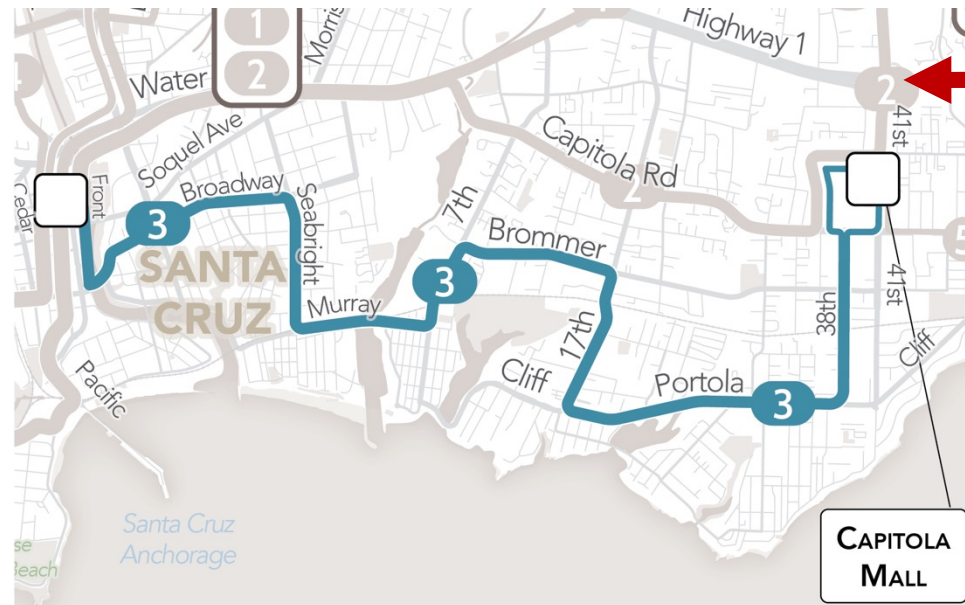
Existing Network

VS.

Alternative A

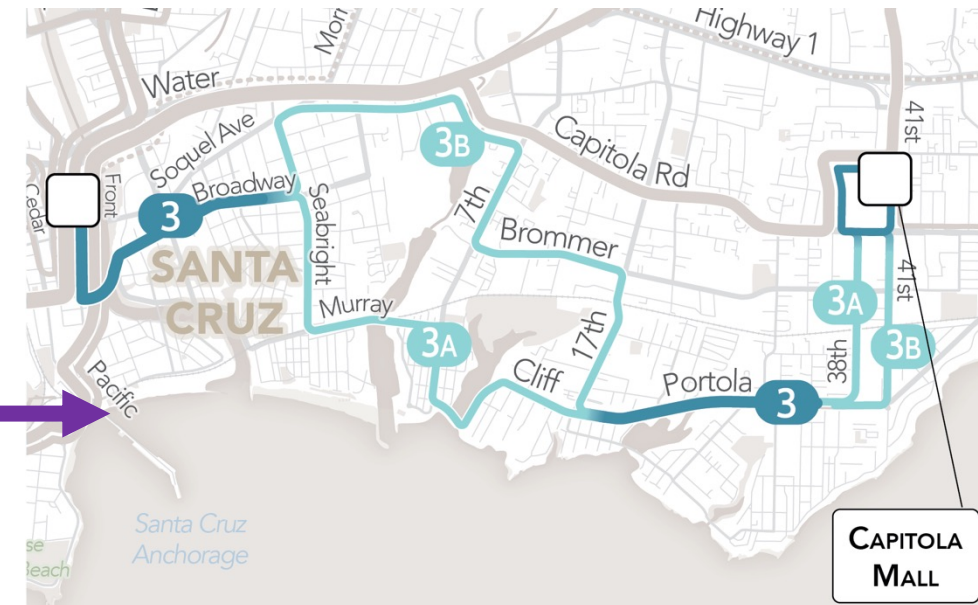


Seabright, Twin Lakes, Brommer Road, Pleasure Point



VS.

Alternative B



Santa Cruz METRO Alternative A Network

The bus comes about every:

- 18 15 minutes
- 5 20 minutes
- 35 30 minutes
- 10 60 minutes
- 55 90 minutes
- 41 Limited trips (peak-only, weekend, or special service)

- Oneway segments
- Route terminus
- Transit center
- 30-min service splits into two 60-min branches

0 1 2 mi

Santa Cruz METRO Alternative B Network

The bus comes about every:

- 18 15 minutes
- 5 20 minutes
- 35 30 minutes
- 10 60 minutes
- 55 90 minutes
- 41 Limited trips (peak-only, weekend, or special service)

- Oneway segments
- Route terminus
- Transit center
- 30-min service splits into two 60-min branches

0 1 2 mi

Survey responses on the alternatives are almost evenly split in this area.

“Comparing the two alternatives, which do you like better?”

- **Alternative A: 40%** (definitely: 27%, somewhat: 13%)
- **Alternative B: 40%** (definitely: 20%, somewhat: 20%)
- **Existing Service: 7%**
- **Not Sure: 13%**

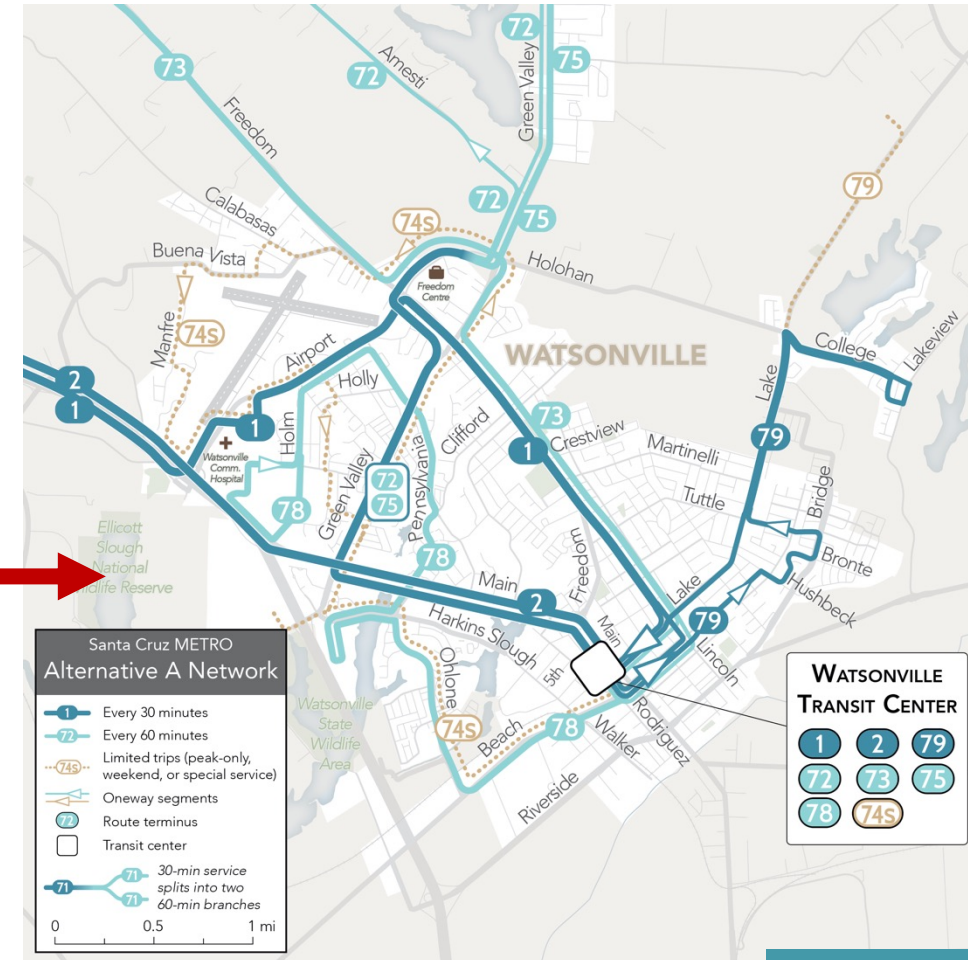
n = 241 responses

Watsonville – Local Service

Existing Network

VS.

Alternative A



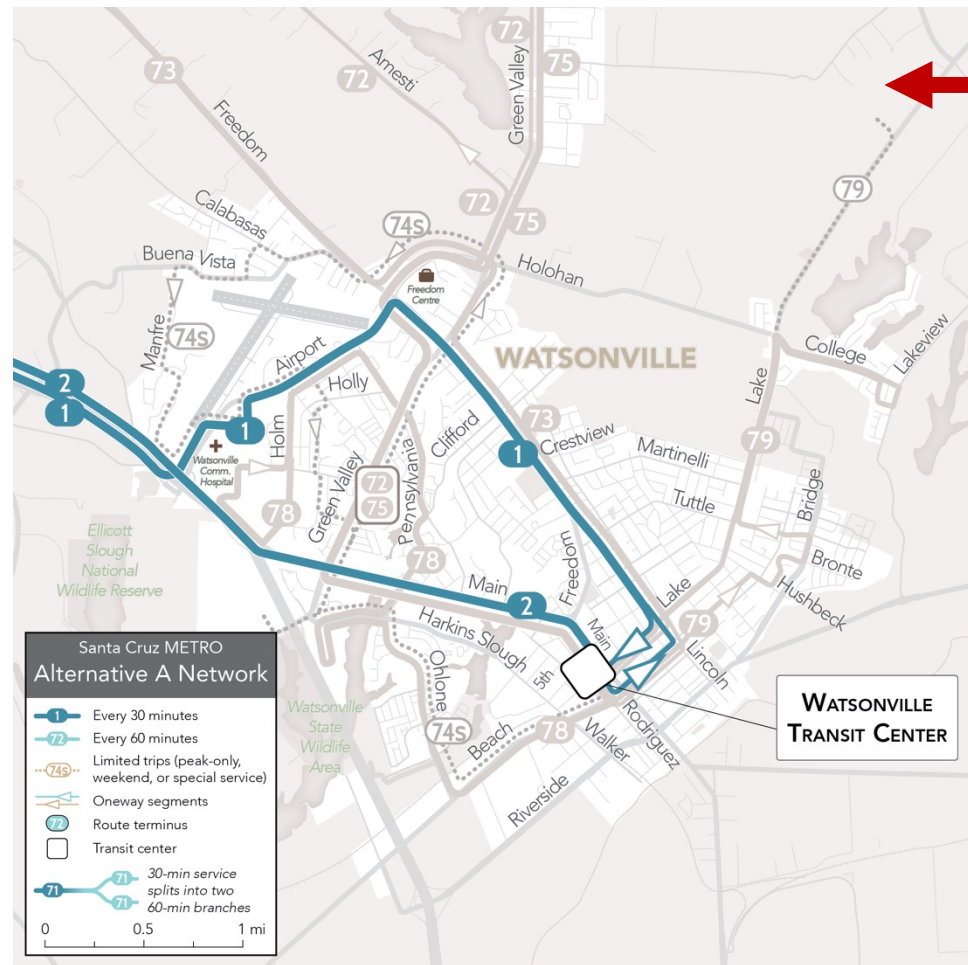
Most survey respondents agree Alternative A would be better than existing service for Watsonville.

“Compared to existing service, would Alternative A be better for you and your family?”

- **Yes: 53%**
- **No: 13%**
- **Not Sure: 33%**

n = 268 responses

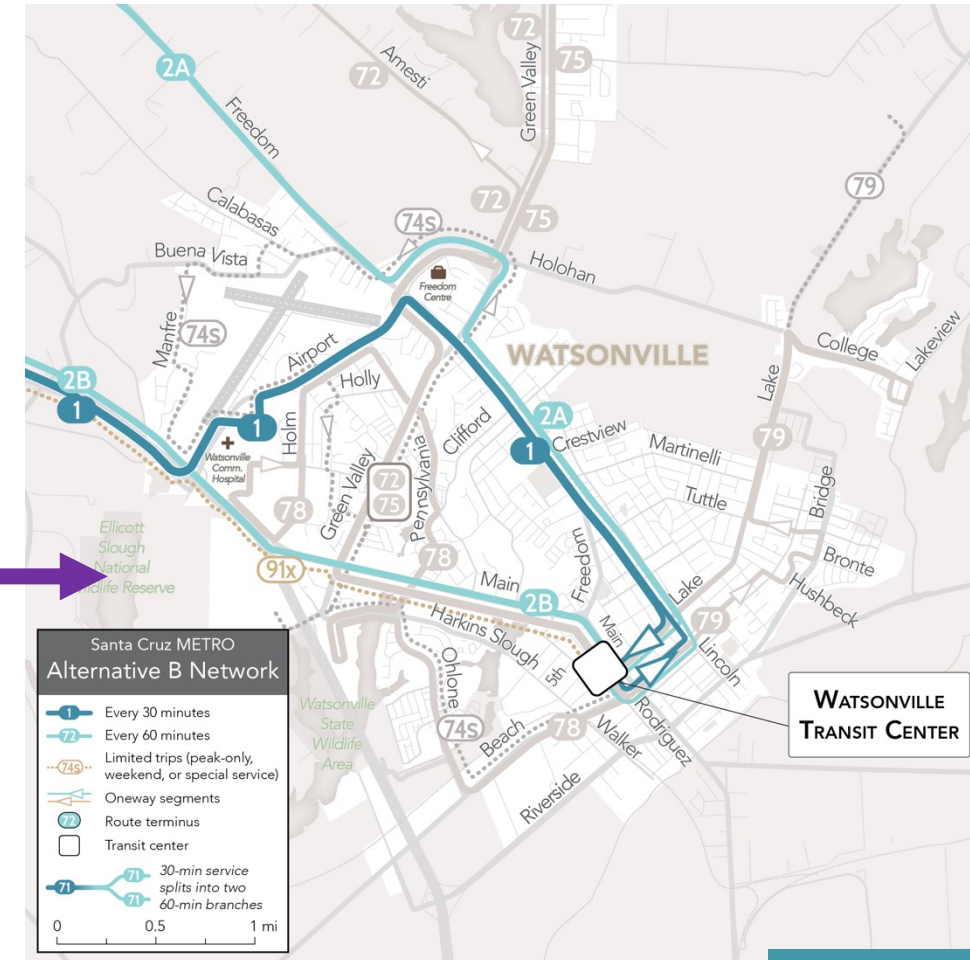
Watsonville – Regional Service



Alternative A

VS.

Alternative B



Survey respondents lean very slightly toward Alternative A in this area.

“Comparing the two alternatives, which do you like better?”

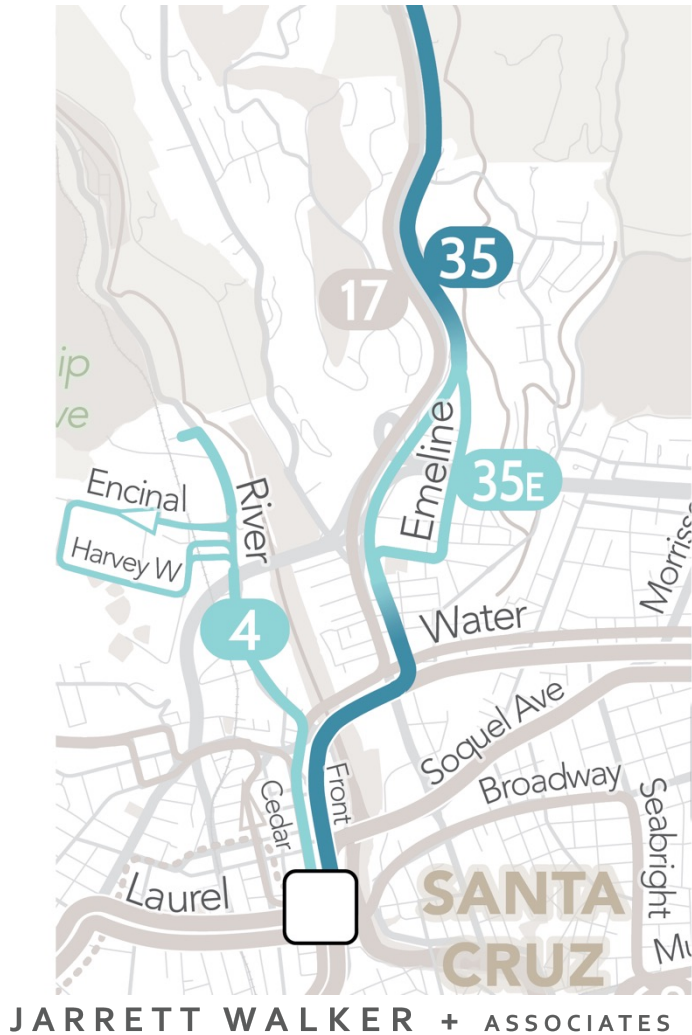
- **Alternative A: 37%** (definitely: 24%, somewhat: 13%)
- **Alternative B: 32%** (definitely: 17%, somewhat: 16%)
- **Existing Service: 5%**
- **Not Sure: 25%**

n = 260 responses

Detailed feedback suggests:

- **Route 91X matters.** Many people reported liking Alternative A better, except for the absence of an express service to Santa Cruz.
- Fewer comments than expected about proposed service reduction on rural Freedom Boulevard.

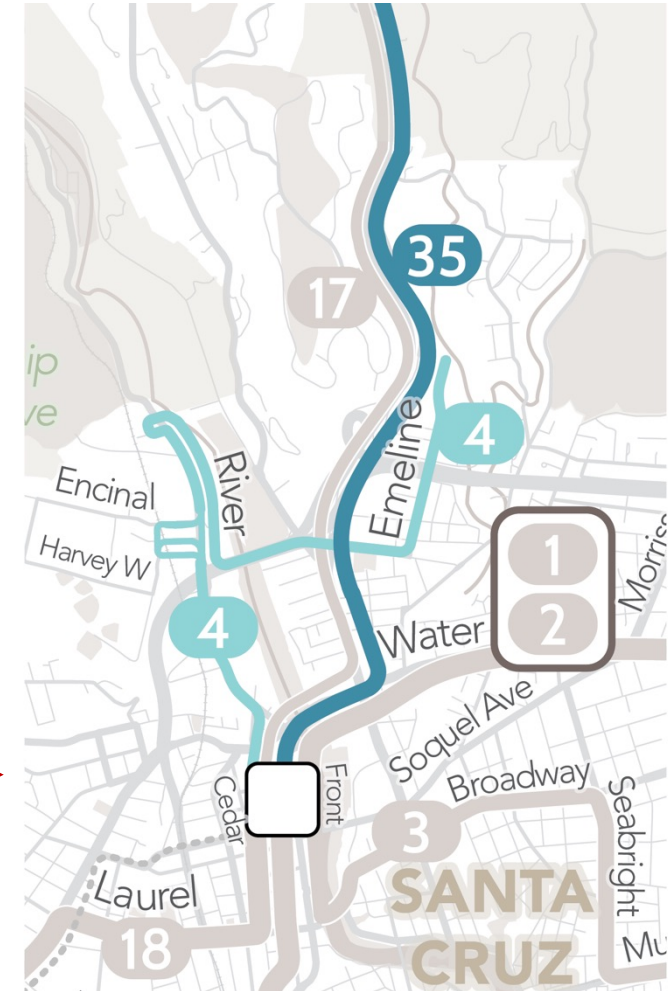
North of Downtown Santa Cruz



← Existing Network

VS.

Proposed →



Most survey respondents agree the proposed changes would be an improvement in this area.

“Compared to existing service, would these changes be better for you and your family?”

- **Yes: 55%**
- **No: 20%**
- **Not Sure: 25%**

n = 186 responses



Recommendations – Phase 1

December 2023 Service Change

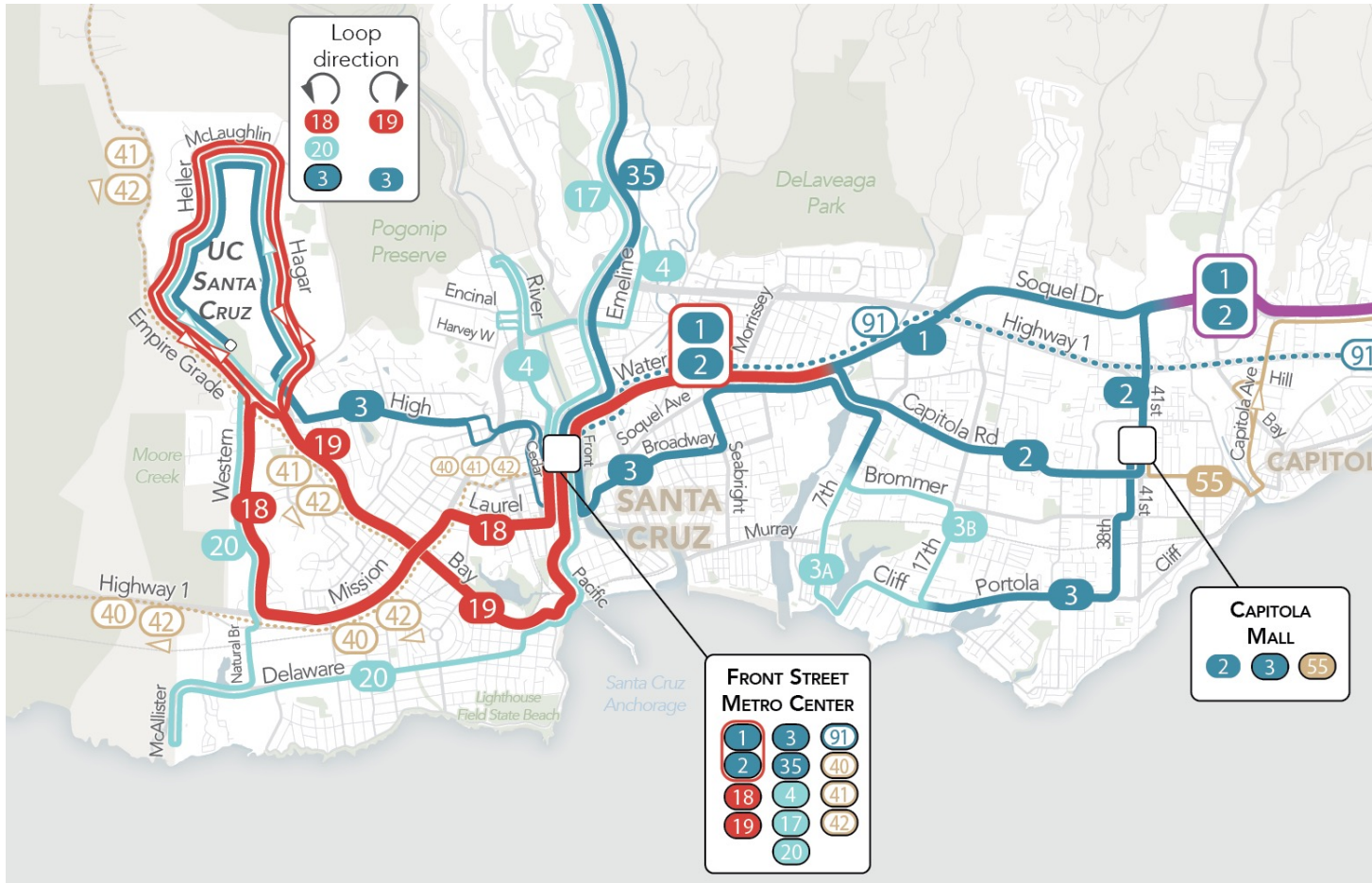
December – Updated Parameters

- **Return to a full roster of drivers.**
- New climate and ridership recovery funds from FY 23-24 state budget.
- This allows for **25% more service** compared to Spring 2023 (vs. 10% more in the alternatives).
- This makes it possible to incorporate the most popular elements of both alternatives.

Phase 1 Recommendation



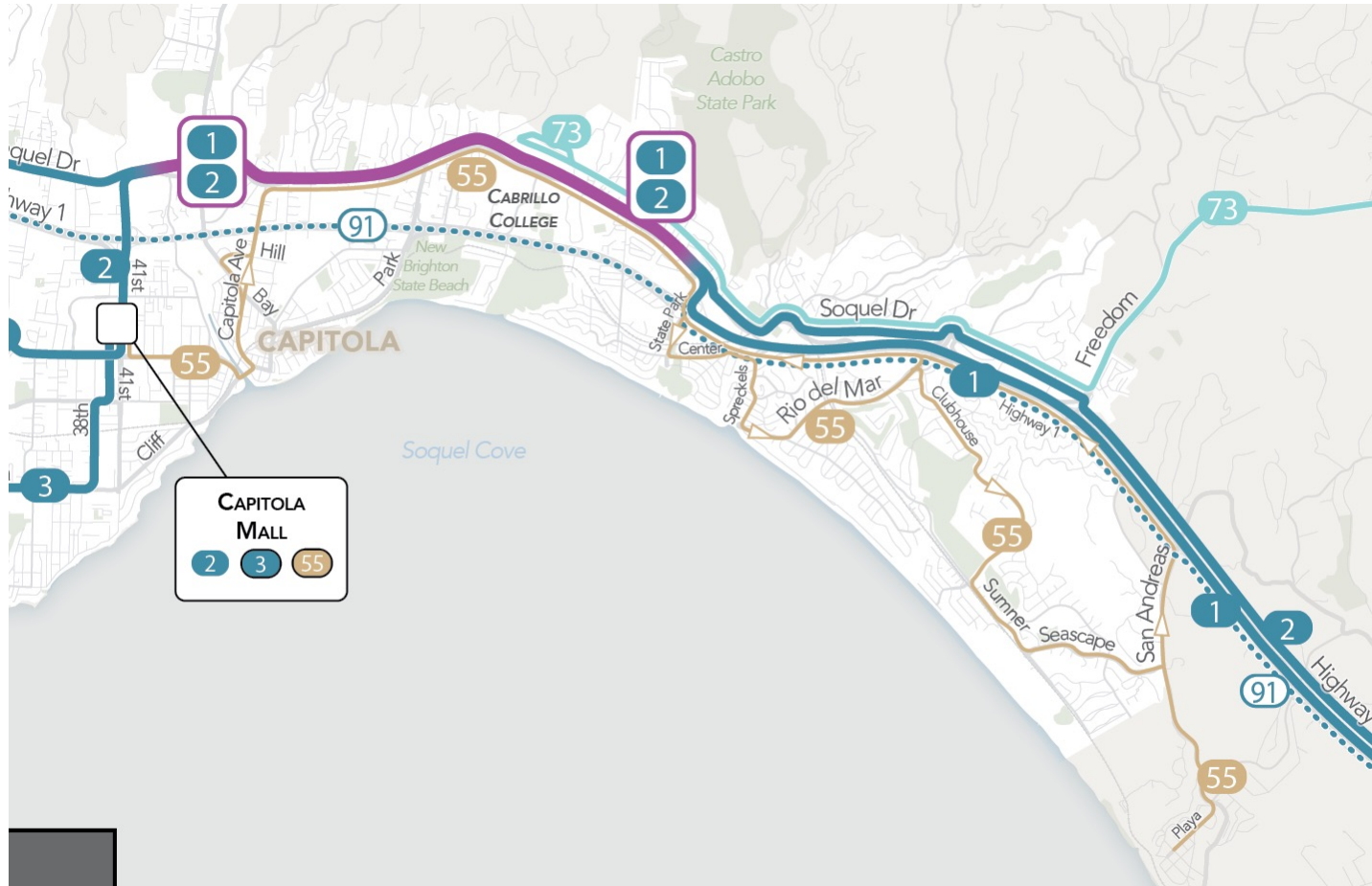
Santa Cruz and Live Oak



Elements of both Alternative A and B:

- Routes 18 and 19, both operating every 15 minutes or better
- Service every 30 minutes on High Street, connecting UCSC and parts of the East Side.
- Route 3 splits into Route 3A (Twin Lakes) and Route 3B (Brommer/17th)
- Route 91 peak express service from Watsonville to Santa Cruz

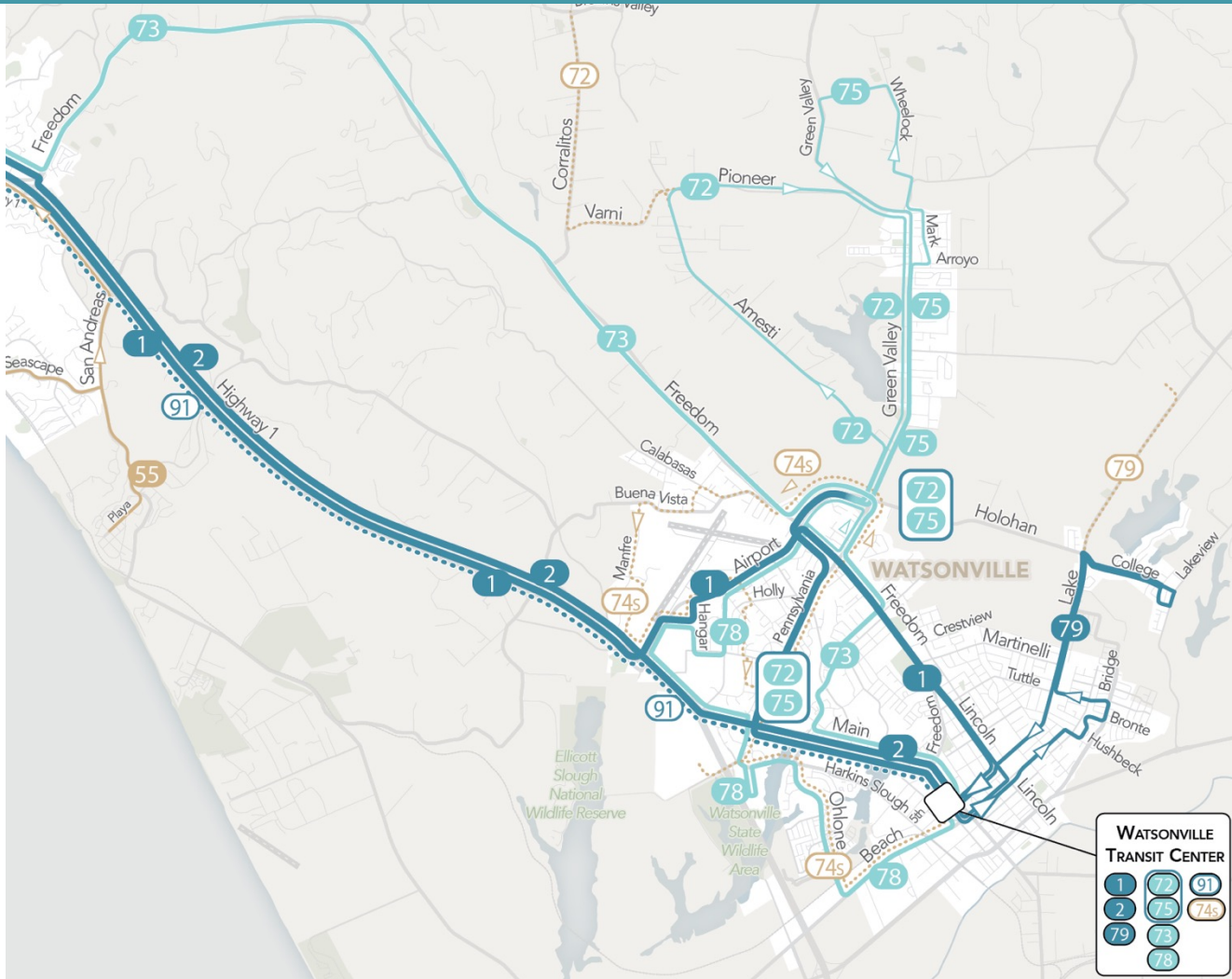
Mid-County



Similar to Alternative A in this area, plus:

- Route 3 on both 38th and 41st Ave
- Better evening service on Routes 1, 2 and 3.

Watsonville and South County



Similar to Alternative A in this area, plus:

- Route 91 AM and PM peak-hour express to Santa Cruz
- Better evening service on Routes 1 and 2
- Routes 73 and 78 adjusted to maintain coverage on similar streets

Other Improvements in Phase 1

- Routes 1, 2 and 3 would each operate:
 - Every 30 minutes until 9 PM
 - Every 60 minutes until midnight.
- In other words, until 9 PM, in both directions:
 - A bus every 15 minutes between Santa Cruz and Watsonville.
 - A bus every 10-20 minutes at Cabrillo College
 - A bus every 30 minutes or better on all of Soquel Drive

Next Steps

If the Board approves this recommendation, staff and the project team will:

- Develop schedules and prepare for the Phase 1 major service change in December
- Proceed with development of a Draft Future Network Plan for Phases 2 and 3.



Thank you!

Project Website

<http://www.scmttd.com/ReimagineMETRO>