



SANTA CRUZ METROPOLITAN TRANSIT DISTRICT (METRO)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES*

METRO ADMIN OFFICES, 110 VERNON ST., SANTA CRUZ, CA

SEPTEMBER 26, 2025 – 9:00 AM

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO) convened on Friday, September 26, 2025, as a hybrid meeting.

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.

This document was created with accessibility in mind. With the exception of certain third party and other attachments, it passes the Adobe Acrobat XI Accessibility Full Check. If you have any questions about the accessibility of this document, please email your inquiry to accessibility@scmtd.com.

1 CALLED TO ORDER at 9:00 AM by Board Vice Chair Koenig.

2 SAFETY DEBRIEF

Gregory Strecker, Safety, Security & Risk Management Director, provided a debriefing on safety, emphasizing METRO’s response to an active threat, fire, earthquake and/or medical emergency, and the evacuation routes.

3 ROLL CALL

The following Directors were **present**, representing a quorum:

| | | |
|--|------------|------------------------------|
| Director Rebecca Downing* | AR 9:35 AM | County of Santa Cruz |
| Director Jimmy Dutra | | City of Watsonville |
| Director Shebreh Kalantari-Johnson | | City of Santa Cruz |
| Director Manu Koenig | | County of Santa Cruz |
| Director Fabian Leonor | | County of Santa Cruz |
| Director Donna Lind | | City of Scotts Valley |
| Director Monica Martinez | | County of Santa Cruz |
| Director Scott Newsome | | City of Santa Cruz |
| Director Melinda Orbach | | City of Capitola |
| Director Quiroz-Carter | | City of Watsonville |
| Vacant | | County of Santa Cruz |
| Ex-Officio Director Alta Northcutt | | Cabrillo College |
| Ex-Officio Director Edward Reiskin* | | UC Santa Cruz |

*Attended using the “just cause” circumstance – announcements made by each Director pursuant to AB 2449.

| | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| Corey Aldridge | CEO/General Manager |
| Julie Sherman | General Counsel |

4 ANNOUNCEMENTS

4.1 Today’s meeting was broadcast by Community Television of Santa Cruz County.

4.2 Hector Guzman from Language Line Services provided Spanish interpretation services for today's meeting.

5 BOARD OF DIRECTORS COMMENTS

Having none, Board Vice Chair Koenig moved to the next agenda item.

6 ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Having none, Board Vice Chair Koenig moved to the next agenda item.

7 LABOR ORGANIZATION COMMUNICATIONS

Jaime Renteria, SMART Chairperson, Local 23, expressed concern about how service changes are being made after contractual timelines which has led to confusion and stress not only to the Bus Operators but to the public. Often the public will not use METRO's complaint system regarding these changes that affect them but instead air their grievances to the Bus Operator when they get on the bus. This creates an atmosphere of uncertainty and even hostility that the Bus Operators must address. Our Bus Operators are already facing high levels of stress from numerous construction projects, increasing traffic, and now every three months when the bid change happens.

Mr. Renteria thanked CEO Aldridge for keeping communication lines open and his willingness to discuss these issues.

A brief discussion followed on what led to the last-minute service changes, the purpose of SPRC (Service Planning and Review Committee), the current process in place and where improvements will be implemented moving forward.

Hearing nothing further, Board Vice Chair Koenig moved to the next agenda item.

8 ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION TO SUPPORT EXISTING AGENDA ITEMS

There was one additional communication to the Board of Directors received on September 25, 2025 and will be added to the agenda packet.

Hearing nothing further, Board Vice Chair Koenig moved to the next agenda item.

CONSENT AGENDA

All items appearing on the Consent Agenda are recommended actions which are considered to be routine and will be acted upon as one motion. All items removed will be considered later in the agenda. The Board Chair will allow public input prior to the approval of the Consent Agenda items.

9.1 ACCEPT AND FILE: PRELIMINARY APPROVED CHECK AND ACH JOURNAL DETAIL FOR THE MONTH OF AUGUST 2025
Chuck Farmer, Chief Financial Officer

9.2 ACCEPT AND FILE MINUTES OF:
A. AUGUST 20, 2025 METRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
B. AUGUST 22, 2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Corey Aldridge, CEO/General Manager

- 9.3 ACCEPT AND FILE: THE FISCAL YEAR END MONTHLY BUDGET STATUS REPORTS FOR JUNE 30, 2025 AND ADOPTION OF THE PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE OF RESERVE ACCOUNT BALANCES
Chuck Farmer, Chief Financial Officer
- 9.4 ACCEPT AND FILE: THE YEAR-TO-DATE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPI) REPORT FOR QUARTER FOUR AS OF JUNE 30, 2025
Chuck Farmer, Chief Financial Officer
- 9.5 APPROVE: RECOMMENDED ACTION ON TORT CLAIMS
Gregory Strecker, Safety, Security and Risk Management Director
- 9.6 APPROVE: CONSIDERATION OF AUTHORIZING THE CEO/GENERAL MANAGER TO EXECUTE A 3RD CONTRACT AMENDMENT EXTENDING THE CONTRACT FOR TWO (2) YEARS WITH CATTO'S GRAPHICS, INC. FOR FULL BUS WRAP SERVICES, INCREASING THE CONTRACT TOTAL BY \$380,001
Michael Bois, Communications and Marketing Manager
- 9.7 APPROVE: REVISED CLASS SPECIFICATIONS AND WAGE SCALES FOR HR ANALYST JOB SERIES WITHIN HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT
Dawn Crummié, Chief Human Resources Officer
- 9.8 APPROVE: CONSIDERATION OF AWARD OF CONTRACT TO RELIABLE MONITORING SERVICES D/B/A RMS LIFE SAFETY AND RMS CONSTRUCTION FOR MAINTENANCE FACILITY UPGRADE FOR HYDROGEN FUEL CELL ELECTRIC BUSES NOT TO EXCEED \$238,629
Freddy Rocha, Maintenance Deputy Director
- 9.9 APPROVE: CONSIDERATION OF AWARD OF CONTRACT TO KRAEMER ENGINEERING INC FOR BUS OVERFLOW PARKING PROJECT AT 809 W. BEACH STREET, WATSONVILLE, CA NOT TO EXCEED \$540,855
Freddy Rocha, Maintenance Deputy Director
- 9.10 APPROVE: CONSIDERATION OF AWARD OF CONTRACT TO FLYERS ENERGY, LLC FOR OFF-SITE FUELING SERVICES NOT TO EXCEED \$2,578,331
Freddy Rocha, Maintenance Deputy Director
- 9.11 APPROVE: CONSIDER AUTHORIZING THE CEO/GENERAL MANAGER TO EXECUTE THE 1ST AMENDMENT TO THE CONTRACT WITH CFM ADVOCATES FOR FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVE SERVICES TO EXTEND THE CONTRACT TERM BY AN ADDITIONAL TWO YEARS AND TO INCREASE THE CONTRACT TOTAL BY \$159,434
Corey Aldridge, CEO/General Manager

There were no public comments.

Hearing nothing further, Board Vice Chair Koenig called for a voice vote.

ACTION: MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS PRESENTED

MOTION: DIRECTOR MARTINEZ

SECOND: DIRECTOR LIND

MOTION PASSED WITH 8 AYES (Directors Dutra, Kalantari-Johnson, Leonor, Lind, Martinez, Newsome, and Orbach). Directors Downing and Quiroz-Carter were absent.

REGULAR AGENDA

10 RETIREE RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION FOR CINDI FARRELL, BUS OPERATOR

Board Vice Chair Koenig read the resolution for Ms. Farrell and expressed that METRO is grateful for Ms. Farrell's years of service.

There were no public comments.

Hearing nothing further, Board Vice Chair Koenig called for a voice vote.

ACTION: MOTION TO APPROVE THE RETIREE RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION FOR CINDI FARRELL, BUS OPERATOR

MOTION: DIRECTOR LIND

SECOND: DIRECTOR ORBACH

MOTION PASSED WITH 8 AYES (Directors Dutra, Kalantari-Johnson, Leonor, Lind, Martinez, Newsome, Orbach, and Quiroz-Carter). Directors Downing and Quiroz-Carter were absent.

11 HYDROGEN VEHICLE AND HYDROGEN FUELER UPDATE

Margo Ross, Chief Operations Officer, spoke to her presentation and provided an update on the hydrogen buses received, the testing involved before those buses can be placed into service, the new bus wraps, articulated buses ordered, and the status of the mobile and permanent fueling stations.

All available Bus Operators have been trained to operate the hydrogen vehicles and we are receiving positive feedback from them.

Discussion followed on:

- Silencers on the fuelers
- South County bus wraps
- Fuel costs analysis
- Challenges with the Proterra battery-electric buses and charging stations
- Survey on overflow parking and where it's distributed
- ARCHES (Alliance for Renewable Clean Hydrogen Energy Systems)
- Schedule for when the 44 buses will be in service
- Decommissioning older buses

Staff addressed all concerns.

There were no public comments.

Hearing nothing further, Board Vice Chair Koenig moved to the next item.

12 FACILITIES MASTER PLAN UPDATE

John Urgo, Chief Planning and Innovation Officer, provided a brief background on the process of this comprehensive review of operations and maintenance facilities capacity and the agency's long-term goals for service expansion, ridership growth, and the transition to a zero-emission fleet. METRO is currently performing surveys for the public's input, and those results will be brought back to the Board of Directors October 24, 2025. He introduced Edgar Torres, Transit Consultant at Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc., who spoke to the presentation. Mr. Torres covered the project background, objectives, and the timeline of the process. He reviewed the long-term needs of the agency and improvements needed. In conclusion, he discussed the phasing approach needed to implement the short-term, mid-term, and long-term needs. He also covered the cost considerations and funding opportunities.

Discussion followed on:

- Funding opportunities under current Federal Administration
- Prioritizing grants and local matching requirements
- Immediate needs
- Relocation of ParaCruz facility
- Quality of life benefits to employees
- Employee retention and recruiting in establishing a Watsonville facility

There were no public comments.

Hearing nothing further, Board Vice Chair Koenig moved to the next agenda item.

13 CEO ORAL REPORT

Corey Aldridge, CEO/General Manager, provided an update of the purchase of 809 W. Beach Street property in Watsonville. He continued with:

METRO Events:

- Over 100 employees participated in this year's Employee Health Fair on August 27, 2025 supporting METRO's ongoing wellness initiatives.
- METRO provided free fares to this year's Santa Cruz County Fair from September 10 – 14, 2025 and provided over 1,000 trips to the Fairgrounds.
- METRO's One Ride at a Time Program was honored with the APTA AdWheel Grand Award on September 16, 2025. This prestigious recognition highlights our commitment to excellence in marketing and communications within public transportation.
- National HR Appreciation Day is today, September 26, 2025. We recognize and celebrate our Human Resources team for their vital contributions to METRO's success. From recruitment and retention to employee engagement, labor relations, and wellness programs, our HR professionals work diligently behind the scenes to ensure our workforce is supported, respected, and empowered—while also keeping METRO compliant and competitive. We sincerely appreciate their dedication.

- METRO, the Santa Cruz County Department of Community Development & Infrastructure, and the Community Traffic Safety Coalition are hosting the inaugural Week Without Driving campaign September 29 – October 5, 2025 to encourage participants to experience life without a personal vehicle. We hope the campaign will spark long-term conversations about transportation equity, infrastructure investment, and inclusive mobility. METRO and our County partners are hosting a community celebration held at Capitola Mall on Tuesday, September 30, 2025 from 11:00 AM - 3:00 PM. The event will include an informational booth, interactive activities, and an opportunity to hear from local elected officials and county agencies. There will be two speaking slots during the event at 11:30 AM and 1:30 PM.
- Additionally, to support the Week Without Driving event, the Cities of Scotts Valley and Watsonville have organized ride alongs with local officials on board METRO routes to experience transit firsthand and interact with riders. We thank everyone for supporting this campaign and look forward to your participation next week.
- METRO has pledged to participate in California Clean Air Day by offering free fares countywide on Wednesday, October 1, 2025 to encourage the use of public transit in reducing air pollution.
- METRO will also be participating in UCSC's Sustainable Transportation Fair on October 1 from 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM to promote sustainable transit options.
- METRO will be onsite to support the Senior Resource Fair on October 3, 2025 from 3:00 - 5:00 PM in the Watsonville Community Room (275 Main Street, 6th Floor). This event brings together community organizations to share valuable resources with local seniors.
- METRO will participate in the Touch-a-Truck event on October 4, 2025 hosted by the Museum of Discovery at Capitola Mall, from 11:00 AM - 4:00 PM. The event offers children hands-on access to various trucks, engaging activities, and the annual pumpkin drop. METRO will have a bus on display for attendees to explore.
- The annual Bus Roadeo and Employee Picnic will take place on October 18, 2025. We are still seeking volunteers to serve as judges or announcers. Board Members who are available to participate are encouraged to contact Donna Bauer.
- METRO will be supporting two Trunk or Treat events on October 24th this year with decorated buses--one at the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office Headquarters on Soquel Ave from 5:00 – 8:00 PM and one at the Fairgrounds in Watsonville from 3:00 – 7:00 PM.
- METRO will have a Halloween themed bus on display at the Downtown Watsonville Candy Crawl on October 26, 2025.
- Three of METRO's marketing videos have been selected as finalists in the CPIO (California Association of Public Information Officials) Star Awards. These include METRO's "How To Ride" video, "One Ride at a Time",

and METRO's "Next Stop" video series. Final awards will be announced on October 2, 2025.

- Last week I was elected President to The Bus Coalition's Board of Directors. The Board of the Coalition remains steadfast in its commitment to elevating the presence and influence of bus transit within federal policymaking circles and the broader transit sector. Additionally, my appointment to the APTA Board of Directors was finalized. Both appointments will provide the opportunity to guide strategic direction, advocate for federal support, and foster innovation across the industry while also ensuring that METRO will have a strong voice in these conversations.

Several Board Members said they will be supporting the Week Without Driving campaign in various ways within their jurisdictions and congratulated CEO Aldridge on his appointments. Director Dutra suggested Board Members be invited to future APTA conferences. Board Chair Downing thanked the Board Members for their participation in the Week Without Driving event as well as CEO Aldridge, Danielle Glagola, Chief Marketing and Communications Officer, and Michael Bois, Communications and Marketing Manager, for their dedication and help in bringing this event to fruition.

There were no public comments.

Hearing nothing further, Board Vice Chair Koenig moved to the next agenda item.

14 ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING: Vice Chair Koenig announced the next regular Board meeting will be held on Friday, October 24, 2025 at 9:00 AM at the Board of Supervisors' Chambers, 701 Ocean Street, Community Room, Santa Cruz, CA

15 ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chair Koenig adjourned the meeting at 10:27 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Donna Bauer
Sr. Executive Assistant