



**SANTA CRUZ METROPOLITAN TRANSIT DISTRICT (METRO)  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES\*  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS CHAMBERS – COMMUNITY ROOM  
701 OCEAN STREET, SANTA CRUZ, CA  
OCTOBER 24, 2025 – 9:00 AM**

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO) convened on Friday, October 24, 2025, as a hybrid meeting.

The Board Meeting agenda packet can be found online at [www.SCMTD.com](http://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 9:07 AM by Board Chair Downing.

**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 ACKNOWLEDGE APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTOR**

Board Chair Downing welcomed Director Madrigal to the METRO Board of Directors.

**4 ROLL CALL**

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

<b>Director Rebecca Downing</b>	<b>County of Santa Cruz</b>
<b>Director Jimmy Dutra</b> <i>AR 9:32</i>	<b>City of Watsonville</b>
<b>Director Shebreh Kalantari-Johnson</b>	<b>City of Santa Cruz</b>
<b>Director Manu Koenig</b>	<b>County of Santa Cruz</b>
<b>Director Fabian Leonor</b>	<b>County of Santa Cruz</b>
<b>Director Donna Lind</b>	<b>City of Scotts Valley</b>
<b>Director Elizabeth Madrigal**</b>	<b>County of Santa Cruz</b>
<b>Director Monica Martinez</b>	<b>County of Santa Cruz</b>
<b>Director Scott Newsome</b>	<b>City of Santa Cruz</b>
<b>Director Melinda Orbach</b>	<b>City of Capitola</b>
<b>Director Quiroz-Carter*</b>	<b>City of Watsonville</b>
<b>Ex-Officio Director Alta Northcutt</b>	<b>Cabrillo College</b>
<b>Ex-Officio Director Edward Reiskin</b>	<b>UC Santa Cruz</b>

\*Attended virtually from 231 Oakes Road, Santa Cruz, CA

\*\*Attended virtually from 800 Asilomar Avenue, Pacific Grove, CA

Corey Aldridge  
Julie Sherman

CEO/General Manager  
General Counsel

**5 ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- 5.1 Today's meeting was broadcast by Community Television of Santa Cruz County.
- 5.2 Hector Guzman from Language Line Services provided Spanish interpretation services for today's meeting.

**6 BOARD OF DIRECTORS COMMENTS**

Ex-Officio Director Northcutt announced that the Cabrillo student body entered into another 3 years plus 1 year contract with METRO. Cabrillo also broke ground for housing that is scheduled to open in the Fall of 2027.

Board Chair Downing expressed appreciation to METRO staff for the Bus Rodeo event. She thanked Directors Lind and Leonor for joining her as judges. She also thanked those who participated in The Week Without Driving campaign. This was a good reminder of how transportation options affect access for the residents of Santa Cruz. She thanked Danielle Frost, Chief Communications and Marketing Officer, and Michael Bois, Communications and Marketing Manager, for their efforts in promoting both the countywide event and ride alongs as well as staff members who attended the Capitola Mall event.

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

**7 ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Brian Peoples, Trail Now, voiced concerns about the METRO appointed Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) representatives who are not advocating for METRO. He remarked that METRO cannot afford to have that representation on the RTC, especially with the tax measure METRO is proposing. He recommended that METRO appoint Directors to the RTC who have a financial understanding of transportation solutions.

Gwyn Rhabyt, Michael Nussbaum, and Jo Hamischek, representing the Ocean Street Neighborhood Association, requested the Board of Directors to agendaize the noise emitting from the temporary mobile fueler. They are concerned that the noise levels are getting worse and continue into the early morning hours. They also raised concerns about when the silencer will be installed. Mr. Rhabyt mentioned he sent a written complaint on June 20, 2025 to the full Board but did not see it added to the agenda.

A member of the public who lives at the Tannery also acknowledged concern over the fueler noise levels.

Director Kalantari-Johnson thanked the neighbors for joining the meeting and apologized that the solution to the issue is taking so long and affecting their everyday lives. She requested CEO Aldridge to provide a brief update on the silencer. CEO Aldridge said METRO has received a written timeline of when the silencer would arrive. The vendor is saying completion of the silencer will be November 7<sup>th</sup>, taken to Houston for a fit up, and freighted to METRO with the onsite commissioning beginning the week of November 17<sup>th</sup>.

Director Kalantari-Johnson gave direction to staff to investigate alternative sites for the temporary fueler and report back with their findings at the November 21<sup>st</sup> Board meeting.

Director Martinez asked for clarity on the protocol in place for the timing in using the fueling and if staff is following that and if there are any follow-up actions as a result of the timing. CEO Aldridge explained the current protocol in place. Margo Ross, Chief Operations Officer, added that some of the Vehicle Service Workers did not follow protocol and staff has reviewed the process again with them so that we are not venting after 10:00 PM. If the buses cannot be fueled prior to 8:00 PM, they are to be fueled by the maintenance staff the next day.

Director Martinez asked if the neighborhood has a point of contact at METRO? COO Ross said they have her cell number and CEO Aldridge's as well. COO Ross apologized to the association and reiterated that METRO is trying to mitigate the situation as best it can.

Director Koenig said he does not object to adding an item to the November agenda about moving the temporary fueler but feels the Board has received sufficient information from past meetings. There is a cost of moving the fueler and that can't be done overnight. He asked if METRO is planning the same sound mitigation for the permanent fueler. COO Ross said the mitigation is going on now at the yard and we are monitoring the sound so that we can let the City of Santa Cruz know what the sound will be when we install the permanent fueler.

Director Lind remarked that her understanding is that COO Ross and CEO Aldridge are putting pressure on the manufacturer. COO Ross responded that if she wasn't given a definitive date from the manufacturer, payment would be withheld.

Director Kalantari-Johnson added that METRO should seriously consider an alternative location if the sound issues are not resolved to its satisfaction.

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

## **8 LABOR ORGANIZATION COMMUNICATIONS**

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

## **9 ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION TO SUPPORT EXISTING AGENDA ITEMS**

There were no additional communications to the Board of Directors.

Hearing nothing further, Board Chair Downing 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.

### **10.1 ACCEPT AND FILE: PRELIMINARY APPROVED CHECK AND ACH JOURNAL DETAIL FOR THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER 2025**

Chuck Farmer, Chief Financial Officer

- 10.2 ACCEPT AND FILE MINUTES OF:  
A. SEPTEMBER 26, 2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
Corey Aldridge, CEO/General Manager
- 10.3 ACCEPT AND FILE: THE YEAR-TO-DATE MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2025  
Chuck Farmer, Chief Financial Officer
- 10.4 APPROVE: CONSIDERATION OF AUTHORIZING THE CEO/GENERAL MANAGER TO EXECUTE A 3RD AMENDMENT EXTENDING THE CONTRACT FOR TWO YEARS WITH CELTIS VENTURES, INC. FOR GENERAL MARKETING SERVICES, INCREASING THE CONTRACT TOTAL BY \$500,000  
Danielle Frost, Chief Communications and Marketing Officer
- 10.5 APPROVE: CONSIDERATION OF APPOINTMENTS TO THE METRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE (MAC)  
Corey Aldridge, CEO/General Manager
- 10.6 APPROVE: AUTHORIZE THE CEO/GENERAL MANAGER TO PURCHASE MIGRATION TO HASTUS-BY-CSCHED IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$500,000, INCLUDING PROJECT CONTINGENCY  
Margo Ross, Chief Operations Officer
- 10.7 APPROVE: CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE FY26 REVISED CAPITAL BUDGET/PORTFOLIO  
Chuck Farmer, Chief Financial Officer
- 10.8 ACCEPT AND FILE: FACILITIES MASTER PLAN FINAL REPORT  
John Uργο, Chief Planning and Innovation Officer
- 10.9 ACCEPT AND FILE: SANTA CRUZ METRO FACILITIES MASTER PLAN TITLE VI SITE EQUITY ANALYSIS REPORT  
John Uργο, Chief Planning and Innovation Officer
- 10.10 APPROVE: 2026 RENEWAL OF EMPLOYEE DENTAL INSURANCE AND 2026-2028 RENEWAL OF EMPLOYEE VISION CARE INSURANCE THROUGH PUBLIC RISK INNOVATION, SOLUTIONS, AND MANAGEMENT  
Dawn Crummi , Chief Human Resources Officer
- 10.11 APPROVE: CONSIDERATION OF AUTHORIZING THE CEO/GENERAL MANAGER TO EXECUTE CERTAIN REAL ESTATE CONVEYANCES TO PUBLIC UTILITIES IN CONNECTION WITH PACIFIC STATION NORTH PROJECT  
John Uργο, Chief Planning and Innovation Officer

Director Koenig asked for clarification on Item 10.6 regarding the HASTUS upgrade and how that is different than the ask on the consolidated grant applications which also includes a HASTUS upgrade. John Uργο, Chief Planning and Innovation Officer, said they are related. It is partial funding from one source and partial funding from another so the two together provide the full funding for the HASTUS upgrade.

Board Chair Downing mentioned that the METRO Advisory Committee nomination period is still open. METRO had a lot of applicants but none from south of Soquel and we are seeking a more geographic distribution of members.

There were no public comments.

Hearing nothing further, Board Chair Downing called for a roll call vote.

**ACTION: MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS PRESENTED**

**MOTION: DIRECTOR KOENIG**

**SECOND: DIRECTOR LIND**

**MOTION PASSED WITH 11 AYES (Directors Downing, Dutra, Kalantari-Johnson, Koenig, Leonor, Lind, Madrigal, Martinez, Newsome, Orbach, and Quiroz-Carter).**

**REGULAR AGENDA**

**11 CEO ORAL REPORT**

Corey Aldridge, CEO/General Manager, provided the following updates:

- METRO is proud to announce that its “One Ride at a Time” campaign video was honored with the 2025 STAR Award for Best Promotion of a Public Agency by the California Association of Public Information Officials (CAPIO).
- In addition to the top honor, METRO received the honorable mentions for two other standout projects:

“How To Ride” video and “Next Stop” social video series.

Each Board Member has been given a copy of the Fall Vibes Magazine. This issue highlights One Ride at a Time, Reimagine METRO, and our social video series “Next Stop.”

- The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) has awarded METRO the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for its budget document for the period beginning July 2025. This prestigious honor represents the highest level of recognition in government budgeting and marks a significant achievement for the organization. A big thank you to our Finance Team for their tireless work.

**METRO Events:**

- October 9, 2025 – Trades Day - Hosted at the Civic Auditorium in Downtown Santa Cruz, METRO joined other local agencies, companies, and organizations looking to share career and job opportunities with high schoolers. METRO staffed the event with a Bus Operator, Customer Service Representative, Mechanic, and a member of its HR team.
- October 16, 2025 - Sustainable Transportation Fair - Hosted by UCSC, METRO joined TAPS, BCycle, and other transit organizations at the Quarry Plaza to educate and showcase transportation options for students at UCSC. METRO brought a wrapped hydrogen bus and staffed a booth.

- October 17, 2025 – Soquel Elementary Fall Carnival - METRO's marketing team and a Customer Service Representative highlighted METRO's Youth Cruz Free Program which has resulted in a 536% increase in youth ridership and our Reimagine METRO campaign, which has brought a 43% increase in ridership.
- October 18, 2025 – METRO held another successful Bus Rodeo at the newly acquired Watsonville facility and brought together current and retired staff members. The event began with Lizzette Mendoza-Garcia singing the national anthem, followed by Hai Nguyen serving as Master of Ceremonies. Music was provided by Uriel Mendoza.

Special thanks to Board Members Rebecca Downing, Donna Lind, and Fabian Leonor for participating as judges for both the Rodeo course and METRO's first-ever salsa contest.

The success of this event was the result of a true team effort across multiple departments—Marketing, Operations, Fleet, Facilities, Safety and Admin.

The winners of the Rodeo:

Fixed Route:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Place: Sean Gibson
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place: Ben Finke
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Place: Mark Vasquez

Fleet:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Place: Tyler Williams
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place: Christian Mark
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Place: Walt Mancuso

ParaCruz:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Place: Saul Acosta
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place: Manny Diaz

Salsa Contest Winner:

Maria Hernandez

- October 20, 2025 – Fleet received METRO's final 40' new-build vehicle from New Flyer.
- October 24, 2025 – County Trunk or Treat. METRO will be supporting two Trunk or Treat events this evening with decorated buses, one at the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office Headquarters on Soquel Ave from 5PM - 8PM and one at the Fairgrounds in Watsonville from 3PM – 7PM.
- October 26, 2025- Watsonville Candy Crawl – METRO will have a Halloween themed bus on display at the Downtown Watsonville Candy Crawl.

Staffing Update:

- METRO has hired one Provisional Customer Service Representative.

SB 707 –Julie Sherman, General Counsel provided an update and commented that this is the largest Brown Act overhaul in many years. However, the bill has some vague provisions that we are still trying to understand and the effect it will have on METRO. The traditional teleconference rules of the Brown Act remain intact. The alternative teleconference rules that were set to sunset have been extended. There are some changes that I will outline in a detailed memo to share with staff to make sure the Board is doing everything to comply with the new regulations. I will keep everyone informed as the new legislation session attempts to clarify some of these provisions.

Discussion followed on:

- Clarity of traditional rules and alternative rules

General Counsel Sherman addressed all concerns.

There were no public comments.

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

**12 APPROVE: CONSOLIDATED GRANT PROGRAM – METRO PRIORITIES AND GUIDANCE TO SANTA CRUZ COUNTY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION REPRESENTATIVES**

John Urgo, Chief Planning and Innovation Officer, spoke to RTC's Consolidated Grants Program and asked the Board to give direction to METRO's representatives on the RTC as to which METRO projects to prioritize for funding. This is a competitive performance-based program that comes around every 2-3 years and approximately \$15 million in regional, state, and federal transportation funds will be awarded countywide in this cycle, including \$1.5 million specifically for transit projects. In the past few cycles, METRO has received zero funding from the regional pot. But this year we are putting together some strong projects for the RTC's consideration—the 90X Hwy. 1 Express, six ParaCruz replacement vehicles, West Beach Street lot improvements, and scheduling software upgrade (HASTUS). These four projects request \$1.98 million. This is one of the few local sources of discretionary funding available to METRO. The Board's guidance will help ensure METRO's voice at RTC is unified, strategic and focused on delivering reliable, sustainable transit for our community.

Discussion followed on:

- Explain who is on ITAC (Interagency Technical Advisory Committee) and their purpose
- Exercising METRO's power as a block
- Broaden support of the full funding for METRO by asking for the inclusion for projects that METRO touches (Bay Avenue Corridor, Soquel Drive Multimodal, Granite Creek Overcrossing, Clifford Avenue Road Rehabilitation and Traffic Calming, and Freedom Boulevard Road Rehabilitation and Traffic Calming).

- When was the last time that METRO received funding from the regional funding and when will this vote be taken by RTC?
- How can Cabrillo College leverage its support?
- How does METRO fund these projects if they don't receive funding from RTC?
- Prioritize the 90X Operations/Bus On Shoulder Project to connect North and South County.
- Road improvements that can help METRO.

Staff addressed all concerns.

There were no public comments.

Hearing nothing further, Board Chair Downing called for a roll call vote.

**ACTION: MOTION TO APPROVE GUIDANCE TO METRO'S RTC REPRESENTATIVES TO VOTE FOR 100% FUNDING FOR ALL METRO SUBMITTED PROJECTS AND A MINIMUM OF THE \$3.8 MILLION ITAC PROPOSED FUNDING FOR THE SOQUEL DRIVE MULTIMODAL PROJECT.**

**MOTION: DIRECTOR KOENIG**

**SECOND: DIRECTOR LIND**

**MOTION PASSED WITH 11 AYES (Directors Downing, Dutra, Kalantari-Johnson, Koenig, Leonor, Lind, Madrigal, Martinez, Newsome, Orbach, and Quiroz-Carter).**

**13 RECESSED TO CLOSED SESSION AT 10:12 AM.**

There were no public comments regarding the closed session case.

**CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – EXISTING LITIGATION (GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 54956.9)**

Graham Cridland, Partner, Lewis Brisbois

**NAME OF CASE: SALVADOR AGUIRRE JR. VS. SANTA CRUZ METROPOLITAN TRANSIT DISTRICT**

**RECONVENED TO OPEN SESSION at 10:31 AM.**

**14 REPORT OF CLOSED SESSION ITEM**

Rebecca Downing, Board Chair, stated that there was no reportable action taken during the closed session.

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

**15 ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING:** Board Chair Downing announced the next regular Board meeting will be held on Friday, November 21, 2025, at 9:00 AM at the Metro Admin Office, 110 Vernon Street, Santa Cruz, CA.

**16 ADJOURNMENT**

Board Chair Downing adjourned the meeting at 10:32 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Donna Bauer

Sr. Executive Assistant