



**SANTA CRUZ METROPOLITAN TRANSIT DISTRICT (METRO)
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES*
MARCH 24, 2023 – 9:00 AM**

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO) convened on Friday, March 24, 2023 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.

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1 CALLED TO ORDER at 9:06 AM by Board Chair Kalantari-Johnson.

2 SAFETY ANNOUNCEMENT

Curtis Moses, METRO’s Safety, Security and Risk Management Director, provided the safety announcement highlighting where the exits are in case of an emergency and the COVID precautions in place for this hybrid meeting.

3 ROLL CALL: The following Directors were **present**, representing a quorum:

Director Kristen Brown	City of Capitola
Director Rebecca Downing	County of Santa Cruz
Direct Jimmy Dutra* AR 9:07	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 Scott Newsome	City of Santa Cruz
Director Larry Pageler	County of Santa Cruz
Director Quiroz-Carter	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

*Attended via teleconference at 275 Main St., Watsonville, CA

Michael Tree	CEO/General Manager
Nicole Witt	General Counsel

4 RECESS TO SCCIC MEETING

Board Chair Kalantari-Johnson recessed to the SCCIC Meeting at 9:07 AM.

5 RECONVENE TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Board Chair Kalantari-Johnson reconvened the Board of Directors Meeting at 9:12 AM.

6 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today's meeting is being broadcast by Community Television of Santa Cruz County.

We had anticipated providing Spanish language interpretation services but due to unforeseen circumstances, we are not able to provide that service today.

7 BOARD OF DIRECTORS COMMENTS

Director Downing thanked METRO staff for all of the work performed during the winter storms and helping our community. She also thanked John Urgo, METRO's Planning and Development Director, for hosting the Reimagine METRO meeting on March 21, 2023 and allowing the public to weigh in with suggestions.

Director Koenig reported that he recently went to Sacramento as part of the Central Coast Coalition which includes representatives from the Counties of Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Monterey, San Benito and Santa Cruz. He talked to several State Representatives about transportation projects that will benefit the Central Coast Region. He also met with CalSTA (California State Transportation Agency) Undersecretary Mark Tollefson and talked about the TIRCP grant METRO has applied for to acquire hydrogen buses and a fueling station and was encouraged by the response.

Director Lind thanked METRO for its response in the recent evacuations and for Ronald Hernandez Rodas coming back to work at ParaCruz after getting his family to safety. It not only reminds us of the dedication of our Bus Operators but also the commitment from staff to support and raise funds to help its fellow employees who are struggling right now.

Director McPherson thanked staff and the administration at METRO for getting ahead of so many issues recently. He announced that on Tuesday, March 21, 2023 the San Luis Obispo County decided to join Central Coast Community Energy (3CE). 3CE now has 35 agencies that are participating to help us have a cleaner environment.

Board Chair Kalantari-Johnson also expressed appreciation to the Bus Operators and staff for the work done during the storms. METRO went above and beyond during these crises and showed the community it does more than provide bus transportation. It is also critical to public health and safety.

Hearing nothing further, Board Chair Kalantari-Johnson moved to the next agenda item.

8 ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Brian Peoples, Trail Now, spoke about the North Coast Rail Trail being delayed due to the close proximity to the ocean and restrictions by the California Coastal Commission.

Hearing nothing further, Chair Kalantari-Johnson moved to the next agenda item.

9 LABOR ORGANIZATION COMMUNICATIONS

James Sandoval, SMART Chairperson, Local 0023, congratulated Directors Kalantari-Johnson and Brown on their appointments as Board Chair and Vice Chair, respectively. He also thanked Directors Newsome and Quiroz-Carter for

meeting with him. He mentioned that negotiations start on April 6 and 7, 2023 and it has been great working together with CEO Tree this past year. He hopes these negotiations will go well and we can reach a deal to better recruit and retain Bus Operators.

Hearing nothing further, Board Chair Kalantari-Johnson moved to the next agenda item.

- 10 ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION TO SUPPORT EXISTING AGENDA ITEMS**
Having none, Board Chair Kalantari-Johnson moved to the next agenda item.

CONSENT AGENDA

- 11.1 ACCEPT AND FILE: PRELIMINARY APPROVED CHECK JOURNAL DETAIL FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY 2023
Chuck Farmer, CFO
- 11.2 ACCEPT AND FILE MINUTES OF:
A. FEBRUARY 15, 2023 METRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE (MAC) MEETING
B. FEBRUARY 24, 2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING
C. MARCH 10, 2023 FINANCE, BUDGET & AUDIT STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING
Michael Tree, CEO/General Manager
- 11.3 ACCEPT AND FILE: THE YEAR TO DATE MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT AS OF FEBRUARY 28, 2023
Chuck Farmer, CFO
- 11.4 APPROVE: RECOMMENDED ACTION ON TORT CLAIMS
Curtis Moses, Safety, Security & Risk Management Director
- 11.5 APPROVE: FY24 AND FY25 PRELIMINARY OPERATING BUDGETS AND FY24 CAPITAL BUDGET-PORTFOLIO FOR REVIEW AND TDA/STA CLAIMS PURPOSES
Chuck Farmer, CFO
- 11.6 APPROVE: CONSIDERATION OF AUTHORIZING METRO TO USE THE CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION FOR COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION (CALACT) VEHICLE CONTRACT FOR THE PURCHASE OF SEVEN PARATRANSIT VANS FROM CREATIVE BUS SALES IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$992,365
Eddie Benson, Maintenance Manager

There were no public comments.

Director Koenig requested Item 11.7 be pulled from the Consent Agenda for further discussion.

ACTION: MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA, EXCLUDING ITEM 11.7

MOTION: DIRECTOR ROTKIN

SECOND: DIRECTOR PAGELER

MOTION PASSED WITH 11 AYES (Directors Brown, Downing, Dutra, Kalantari-Johnson, Koenig, Lind, McPherson, Newsome, Pageler, Quiroz-Carter, and Rotkin).

REGULAR AGENDA

11.7 APPROVE: CONSIDERATION OF AWARD OF CONTRACT TO MILLER MAXFIELD, INC. FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING SERVICES FOR FUTURE REVENUE OPTIONS NOT TO EXCEED \$338,650

Director Koenig mentioned his concern about a sales tax measure for the 2024 ballot. Discussion followed on competition from other entities also placing revenue measures on the 2024 ballot and possibly extending METRO's measure to 2028 instead. Several Directors expressed concern with moving forward with the contract before seeing the polling results.

CEO Tree responded that the contract amount is task-order based so we would pay as we go and look into other revenue opportunities as well. Initial polling has been completed and is currently being analyzed. Our intent is to return to the Board once we see what the public sentiment is for a potential ballot measure. At first glance, the public is appreciative of METRO and sees value in investing in the maintenance and future improvements at METRO. We've also had discussions with City Managers and the County Administrator to get their input.

Director Dutra expressed concern about public trust after recently taking the 91X away.

Director Rotkin pointed out that polling doesn't determine what happens; the election does. METRO has not had a ballot measure for a general tax increase since 1978. The 2016 Measure D was not just for METRO. It benefited the Cities and County of Santa Cruz as well as Community Bridges Lift Line. The additional infusion of funding to METRO would make a huge difference in addressing agency issues.

Director Koenig asked if METRO could extend the contract after the initial three years to maintain the option of any efforts in 2028. General Counsel Nicole Witt responded that the parties can always agree to extend the contract by amendment but the question will be whether that action will need to return to the Board for approval due to any required increase in the total compensation.

Mr. Peoples told the Board Members that he will form a Political Action Committee (PAC) to oppose a sales tax measure if the METRO representatives who vote at the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC) meetings continue to support rail. Mr. Peoples followed up his comments with an email to CEO Tree and the Board Members (attached).

Brandon Freeman, SMART Local 0023, commented that this item has nothing to do with the train; this is about METRO and its bus system. We have an extremely aged fleet and staff shortages across multiple departments and the only way to fix that is to remain competitive. CEO Tree is trying to fix the problems METRO has and needs your support to get it done.

Director Koenig said he is willing to support this with the understanding that we are not actually agreeing to any specific expenditures today and to discuss this further with the Board.

Director Lind added that she's happy to hear there have been communications with our City and County jurisdictions to see what their plans are and supports the project.

ACTION: MOTION TO APPROVE AWARDDING A CONTRACT TO MILLER MAXFIELD, INC. FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING SERVICES FOR FUTURE REVENUE OPTIONS NOT TO EXCEED \$338,650 AND DIRECT STAFF TO DISCUSS EXTENSION OF THE CONTRACT TERM AND POTENTIAL COSTS INVOLVED

MOTION: DIRECTOR ROTKIN

SECOND: DIRECTOR PAGELER

MOTION PASSED WITH 11 AYES (Directors Brown, Downing, Dutra, Kalantari-Johnson, Koenig, Lind, McPherson, Newsome, Pageler, Quiroz-Carter, and Rotkin)

12 PRESENTATION OF EMPLOYEE LONGEVITY AWARDS: (10 YEARS) JAVIER FAVELA, JOSE ZAMARRIPA AND (15 YEARS) PATRICK FORTHUN, MAURIZIO ITALIA, AND JOHN NEVIN

Board Chair Kalantari-Johnson recognized and thanked each employee for their service at METRO.

Mr. Sandoval noted that the certificates used to be handed out in person at the Board Meetings and hopes we can get back to that when we become fully staffed.

13 RETIREE RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION: MARK SAUNDERS, BUS OPERATOR

Board Chair Kalantari-Johnson read Mr. Saunders resolution and expressed appreciation for his years of service at METRO.

ACTION: MOTION TO APPROVE THE RETIREE RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION FOR MARK SAUNDERS, BUS OPERATOR

MOTION: DIRECTOR PAGELER

SECOND: DIRECTOR ROTKIN

MOTION PASSED WITH 11 AYES (Directors Brown, Downing, Dutra, Kalantari-Johnson, Koenig, Lind, McPherson, Newsome, Pageler, Quiroz-Carter, and Rotkin)

Due to time constraints, Items 14 and 15 were switched on the Agenda.

14 ACCEPT AND FILE: STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE FROM SHAW, YODER, ANTWIH, SCHMELZER AND LANGE

Michael Pimentel of Shaw, Yoder, Antwih, Schmelzer and Lange, spoke to his presentation and provided the State legislative update. He spoke to the following transit-related bills: AB 463, AB 610, and AB 761. He provided a FY2023-24 budget overview, including proposed spending cuts for future funding cycles.

Discussion centered on AB 610 (Youth Transit Passes) and defining "youth" as it relates to California institutions, the current status of the bill and the opportunity to provide feedback, if there are state resources available for METRO's pilot program "Youth Cruz Free" under this bill, and the best way to let Sacramento know of METRO's successes with the pilot program.

Director McPherson said Santa Cruz County is considered a self-help county. Does that status need to be renewed? Mr. Pimentel responded if you currently operate

as a self-help county, you are categorized as that. He said the purpose for mentioning this term was to make us aware that money from Sacramento may not be forthcoming. If localities have interest in making further investment in transportation or public transit, most likely that revenue will have to be derived from the regions or localities.

Director McPherson said Federal legislation seems to be addressing rural as well as urban areas. Is there fairness established in consideration of funding? Mr. Pimentel responded that money will be released on a formula basis generally based on population but also on the revenues generated by the agencies in the region. That ensures funding across the state and not just to urban areas.

Director Rotkin thanked Mr. Pimentel and Mr. Giglio for their service to METRO. He asked about the state deficit of \$22 billion. After the proposed state cuts of \$3 billion to transportation, where are the remaining state cuts coming from? Mr. Pimentel said the remaining cuts will come from a variety of things like the energy programs, Pelton human services programs, and investment programs that are proposed to be rescinded.

Director Koenig expressed concern on the cuts to transit, making it harder for METRO to add zero-emission buses to its fleet because it takes sustained funding to make a difference to our agency and others throughout the state.

Matt Farrell, Friends of Rail and Trail, let the Board Members know his group has written letters to all state representatives encouraging them to support additional funding to TIRCP and support AB 610.

Hearing nothing further, Board Chair Kalantari-Johnson moved to the next agenda item.

- 15 ACCEPT AND FILE: FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE UPDATE FROM CAPITAL EDGE**
Chris Giglio, Capital Edge, spoke to his presentation and provided the Federal legislative update. He reviewed the FY23 Department of Transportation (DOT) Budget increases, the differences between the White House and GOP on spending, update on the infrastructure law, and the makeup of the 118th Congress and how that will affect passing legislature.

There were no public comments.

- 16 APPROVE: CONSIDERATION OF AUTHORIZING THE CEO/GENERAL MANAGER TO NEGOTIATE A LEASE AGREEMENT FOR 809 W. BEACH STREET, WATSONVILLE, CA**

Chuck Farmer, CFO, spoke to his presentation and summarized that METRO wants to lease this property as a parking lot and a staging location for new buses coming in and several agency projects where extra space is needed. METRO has explored various properties and this one is already a parking lot and does not require a substantial infrastructure investment.

Discussion followed on this expenditure being in the budget, terms of the existing Research Park lease, and the terms of this new lease. CFO Farmer addressed all concerns and CEO Tree added that Watsonville will be an advantageous location for METRO.

Mr. Freeman brought up needing a backup facility from an operational standpoint. With the CZU fires, we were able to use the Pacific Station as backup but that will no longer be an option come fall/winter 2023. We support this temporary lot as a necessity to guarantee operations will run on a daily basis.

ACTION: APPROVE AUTHORIZING THE CEO/GENERAL MANAGER TO NEGOTIATE A LEASE AGREEMENT FOR 809 W. BEACH STREET, WATSONVILLE, CA

MOTION: DIRECTOR PAGELER SECOND: DIRECTOR KOENIG

MOTION PASSED WITH 11 AYES (Directors Brown, Downing, Dutra, Kalantari-Johnson, Koenig, Lind, McPherson, Newsome, Pageler, Quiroz-Carter, and Rotkin)

17 REIMAGINE METRO ORAL UPDATE

John Urgo, METRO's Planning and Development Director, provided a brief background on the Reimagine METRO project before introducing Daniel Costantino of Jarrett Walker and Associates. Mr. Costantino spoke to his presentation (attached) and provided a brief description of what Reimagine METRO is and the key goals and phases of the process.

Discussion ensued on AMMA Transit Planning's contribution to the process, using real-time data currently being collected, renaming routes, using Google Maps to see real-time information, working with the various planning departments in Santa Cruz County on parallel projects, lack of bus shelters in Watsonville, frequency between Watsonville and Monterey Counties, the benefits of the Watsonville Circulator, the Soquel Rapids Project, and implementing 15-minute stop intervals and additional costs associated with that.

Several Directors thanked Mr. Costantino and Mr. Urgo for the presentation. Mr. Urgo reminded the Board Members that the fundamental point of this exercise is to make METRO more useful for more people. It is going to be really hard to grow ridership with our existing resources but we continue to look for ways to add service. Director Lind added that the articulated buses coming in will provide some relief for UCSC.

Director Rotkin said we need to figure out how much money we need to support a ballot measure just one time and not have to come back and ask the public for more funds. Director Lind said the public needs to see the efforts METRO is making to tackle these issues so that they will be more supportive of a funding ask.

Mr. Sandoval thanked Mr. Costantino for the presentation and suggested we shoot for the 15-minute interval target.

18 CEO ORAL REPORT

Michael Tree, CEO/General Manager, provided the following updates:

- Reimagine METRO – the public needs an improved bus system that is easy to understand, frequent and reliable in order to provide people equity and opportunity in Santa Cruz County.
- Ridership continues to grow and the Pre-COVID type of service provided on the weekends is up 15.5%.

- Youth Cruz Free Program – ridership is up 96% for K-12 Grades. It's a pilot program but students' reactions have been very positive.
- Floods – When the Watsonville Mayor called and requested help evacuating people and providing essentials to families that lost everything, METRO employees collected blankets, towels, toiletries, etc. to help out. Rina Solorio, Customer Service Manager, suggested METRO provide free 15-day passes to evacuees at the fairgrounds so they can have mobility. To date, we've provided 272 passes. Margo Ross, COO, customized Route 79 so that the fairgrounds had regular service during the day.
- Bus Operators – Five Bus Operators are being released to revenue service. There are six currently in training. Transit Supervisors Eduardo Montesino and Araseli Campos came up with a plan to take our training from four classroom cycles to nine during the year with the help of COO Ross. By the end of 2023, we want to be fully staffed.
- Annual inspection by CHP – this is a random inspection and was completed on March 23, 2023. They gave METRO the highest rating available which is satisfactory.
- Community Newsletter – METRO will start a monthly newsletter in April to inform the public on METRO's endeavors. We will also keep employees up to speed on activities and allow feedback for mutual dialogue.
- 3CE – We met with the CEO at 3CE and will work on a template that they can use to go out to other agencies to see how they can participate in a zero-emission bus program.

Director Dutra thanked CEO Tree for his hard work and bringing positive changes to METRO. He also thanked the Bus Operators and staff who stepped up during the flooding in South County to help those in need. He asked CEO Tree how METRO becomes more appealing to people to apply as one of our Bus Operators and suggested a referral incentive program. CEO Tree responded that we need to get out and talk to people and dispel misconceptions about becoming a Bus Operator. METRO provides a good starting wage and industry leading benefits. Dawn Crummié, METRO's HR Director, added that we are currently offering a \$2,000 referral bonus to employees who refer someone for the Bus Operator position. We also offer a \$4,000 sign-on bonus.

Director Rotkin said the public needs to know more about the nature of the job. Almost anyone can learn the skills to drive a bus but need a positive attitude in working with the public. Providing good customer service to the public is a key element of this position.

Ex-Officio Director Henderson asked if we do exit interviews with those candidates that start the process and then stop so we can find out why it is no longer appealing. CEO Tree said we are very interested when someone is walking out the door. Ms. Crummié said we do exit interviews if the exiting employee allows us to do so and gather that information.

Mr. Sandoval gave credit to CEO Tree for reaching out on the weekend when evacuations were happening and to his fellow co-worker, Ignacio Mata, who picked up supplies so that we could help as many people as possible. We are currently

meeting twice a week to tackle the retention and recruitment problem and working as a team to strategize. He provided a quick update on the recent bid change party. We normally collect money from those that attend to help offset the cost of the food; but this time, we provided the donations to our METRO employees in need of help after the evacuations. We raised almost \$3,000. The amount of gratitude received was awesome and just validates that METRO is a family.

19 REVIEW OF ITEM TO BE DISCUSSED IN CLOSED SESSION

General Counsel Nicole Witt announced that the Board will meet in closed session for a conference with Legal Counsel on existing litigation as described in the agenda.

There was no public comment.

Board Chair Kalantari-Johnson recessed to closed session at 12:34 AM.

SECTION II: CLOSED SESSION

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

NAME OF CASE: AMANDA JONES V. NATIONAL RAILROAD PASSENGER CORPORATION (“AMTRAK”), AND SANTA CRUZ METROPOLITAN TRANSIT DISTRICT

CLAIM NUMBER: 2001-A14001-C11/CLPA12033A1

SECTION III: RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION

Board Chair Kalantari-Johnson reconvened to open session at 12:46 AM.

20 REPORT OF CLOSED SESSION

General Counsel Nicole Witt announced there was no reportable action taken.

21 ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING

Board Chair Kalantari-Johnson announced the next Board Meeting will be held on Friday, April 28, 2023 at 9:00 AM at the METRO Admin Offices, 110 Vernon Street, Santa Cruz.

22 ADJOURNMENT

Board Chair Kalantari-Johnson adjourned the meeting at 12:47 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Bauer
Executive Assistant

Attachment

From: [Brian Peoples](#)
To: [Michael Tree](#)
Cc: boardinquiries@scmtd.com; [Shebreh Kalantari-Johnson](#); thekristenbrown@gmail.com; [Manu Koenig](#); [Bruce McPherson](#); [Gine Johnson](#); [Zach Friend](#); Robertpquinn@gmail.com; Justin.cummings@santacruzcounty.us; Felipe.hernandez@santacruzcounty.us; info@scrtc.org; sbrown@cityofsantacruz.com; eduardo.montesino@cityofwatsonville.org; jimmy.dutra@cityofwatsonville.org; [Donna Bauer](#); rj12@comcast.net; openup@cats.ucsc.edu; apedersen@ci.capitola.ca.us; vanessa.quiroz@cityofwatsonville.org; [Sarah Christensen](#); [Rachel Moriconi](#); [Shannon Munz](#); [Nathan Nguyen](#); [Matt Machado](#); [Yesenia Parra](#); [Grace Blakeslee](#); [Moroney, Ryan@Coastal](#); [Davison, Erin](#)
Subject: Santa Cruz Metro Sales Tax - debate over supporting
Date: Friday, March 24, 2023 12:00:43 PM

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~ Please exercise caution when clicking links or opening attachments. ~

Mr. Tree,

Today at the Santa Cruz Metro meeting, the Board discussed the idea of a sales tax measure to support Metro. As I mentioned during the meeting, Trail Now is very supportive of Metro. In fact, we believe more funds should be allocated to this valuable public service.

Trail Now will likely become a Political Action Committee (PAC)—and we will oppose a sales tax measure to support Metro. Our primary reason for opposing the sales tax measure is the current spending by the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) of 2016 Measure D funds—specifically, the millions of dollars being wasted on train studies, cost overruns on the construction of the Coastal Trail, delays in building the Coastal Trail, and the RTC continuing its plans to build a narrow, substandard Coastal Trail—to accommodate a train that will never arrive.

Metro representatives on the RTC Board have consistently voted for a train that is not possible or feasible. There will never be an electric rail system that runs along the Santa Cruz Branchline, a rail system that travels 20 feet from the Pacific Ocean in multiple locations, and travels through the Federally protected wetland Harkin Slough (photos attached). The last three coastal plans submitted to the California Coastal Commission by the RTC have either been rejected or had major restrictions cited by the California Coastal Commission. For example, the North Coast Rail Trail is only permitted to be constructed by building temporary retaining walls, making the construction and management of the trail very expensive. For this reason, the North Coast Rail Trail has been delayed for years.

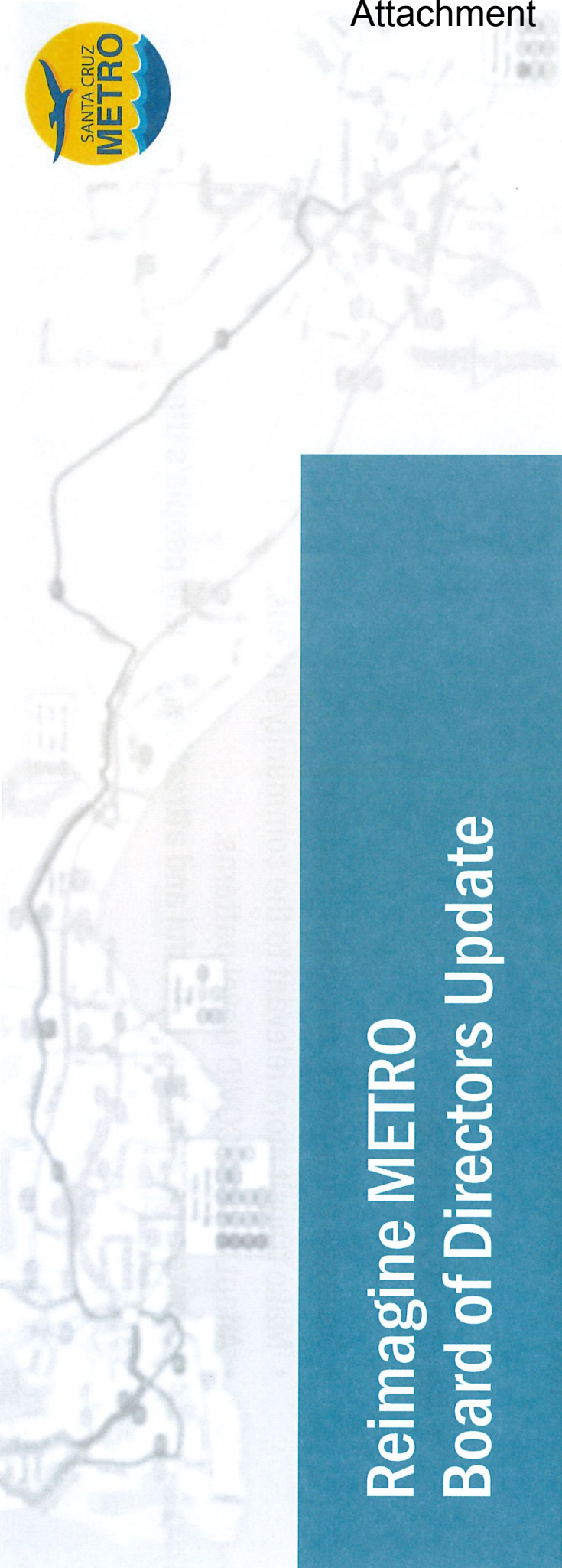
In the past, Trail Now has been a PAC for two local elections (2016 Measure D/Support, Supervisor Leopold/Oppose). It is not our intent to oppose Metro efforts to acquire additional funding, but as long as Metro representatives on the RTC Board continue to vote “rail at any cost”, we will oppose any Metro sales tax measure.

Attachment

Our goal is to gain approval of the Interim Coastal Trail which preserves the corridor for future transit while opening the corridor for active transportation in a timely, cost-effective and environmentally friendly manner. The fastest way to get Coastal Trail built from Watsonville to Davenport is the Interim Coastal Trail.

Best regards,

Brian Peoples
Trail Now



Reimagine METRO Board of Directors Update

March 24, 2023

JARRETT WALKER + ASSOCIATES

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 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?

- **Early wins.** How can METRO improve service in the next year, with currently available resources?
- **Alternatives.** What could a network with more service look like, depending on your policy priorities?
- **Draft and Final plan** based on community input and your direction. This plan may require additional funding.

Who is working on this?

- **Jarrett Walker & Associates and AMMA Transit Planning**
- We specialize in reimagining public transit networks in ways that center community input and balance many different goals.
- We aim for clear conversations, leading to confident outcomes.

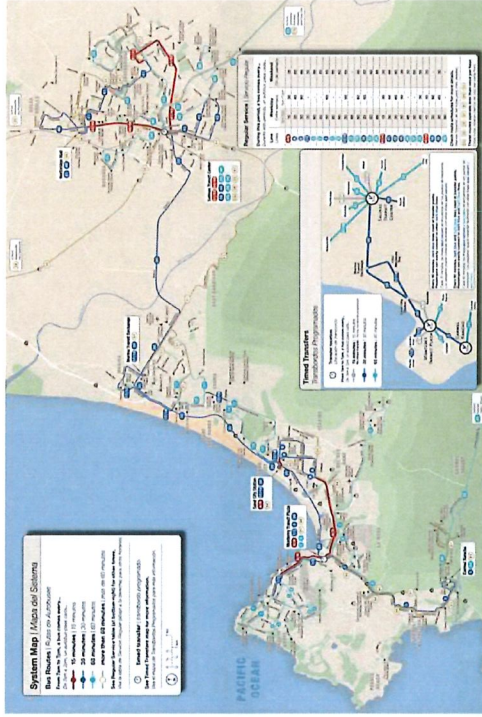
Places we've worked

JWA has worked throughout the US and overseas.

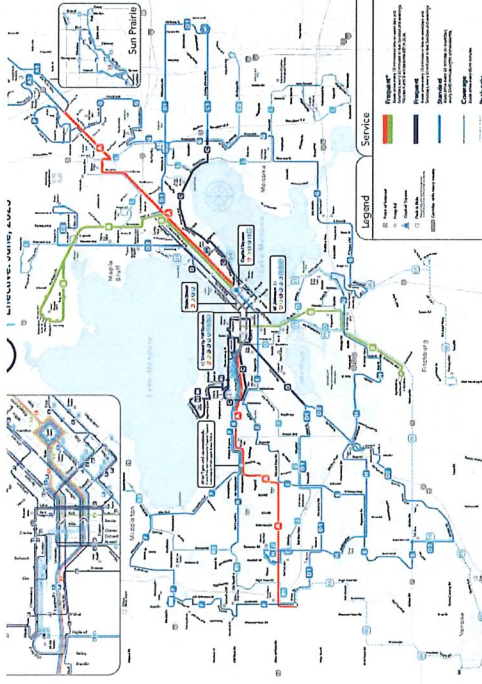
AMMA has extensive experience in public transit, public outreach and paratransit planning.

JWA and AMMA have worked together many times.

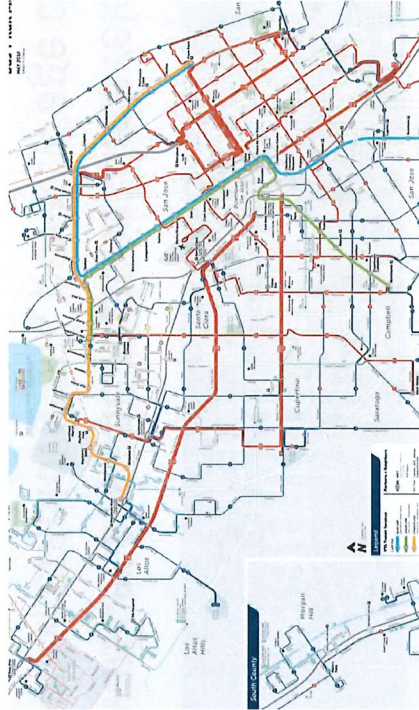
Monterey-Salinas (JWA/AMMA)



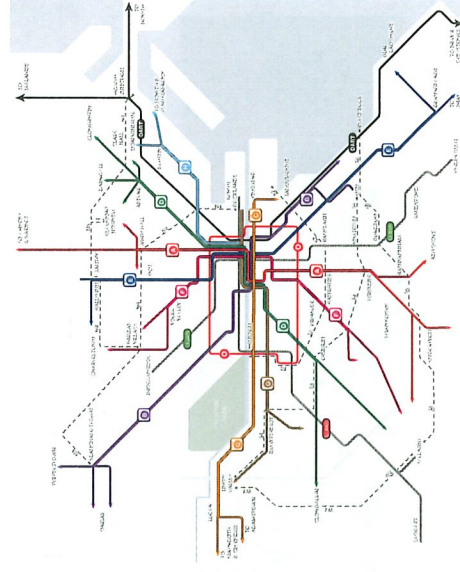
Madison, Wisconsin (JWA)



Santa Clara County (JWA)

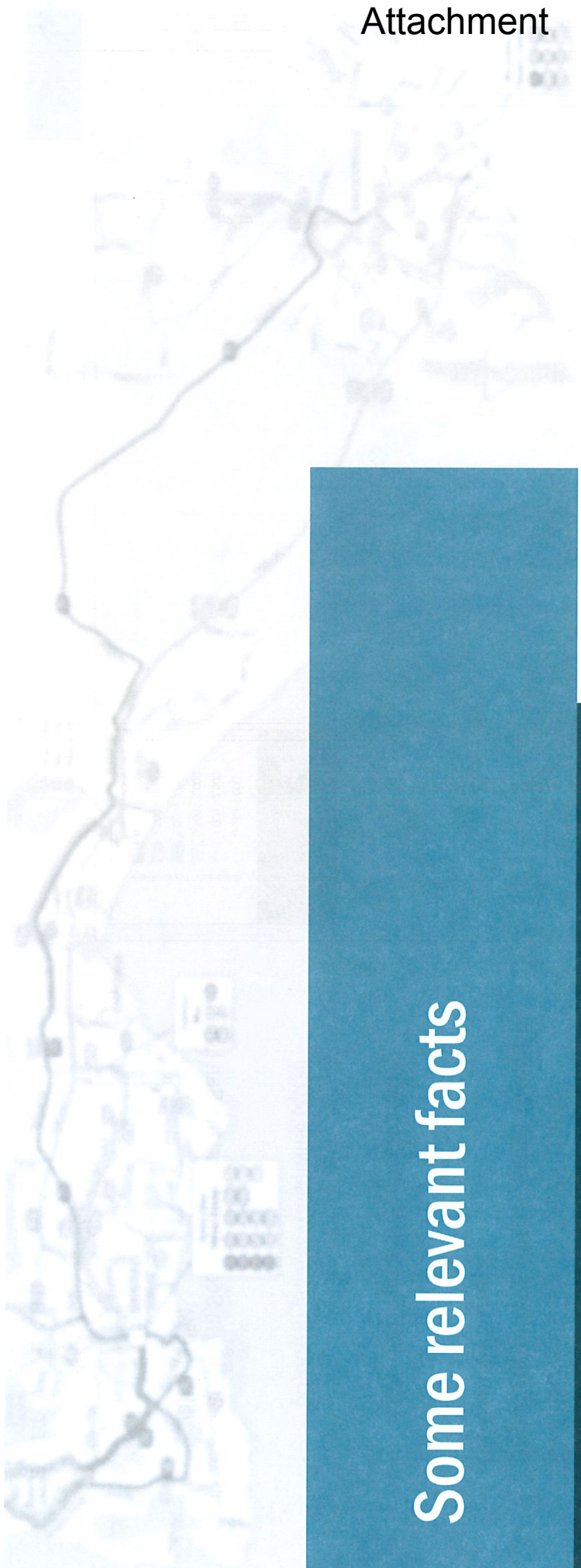


Dublin, Ireland (JWA)

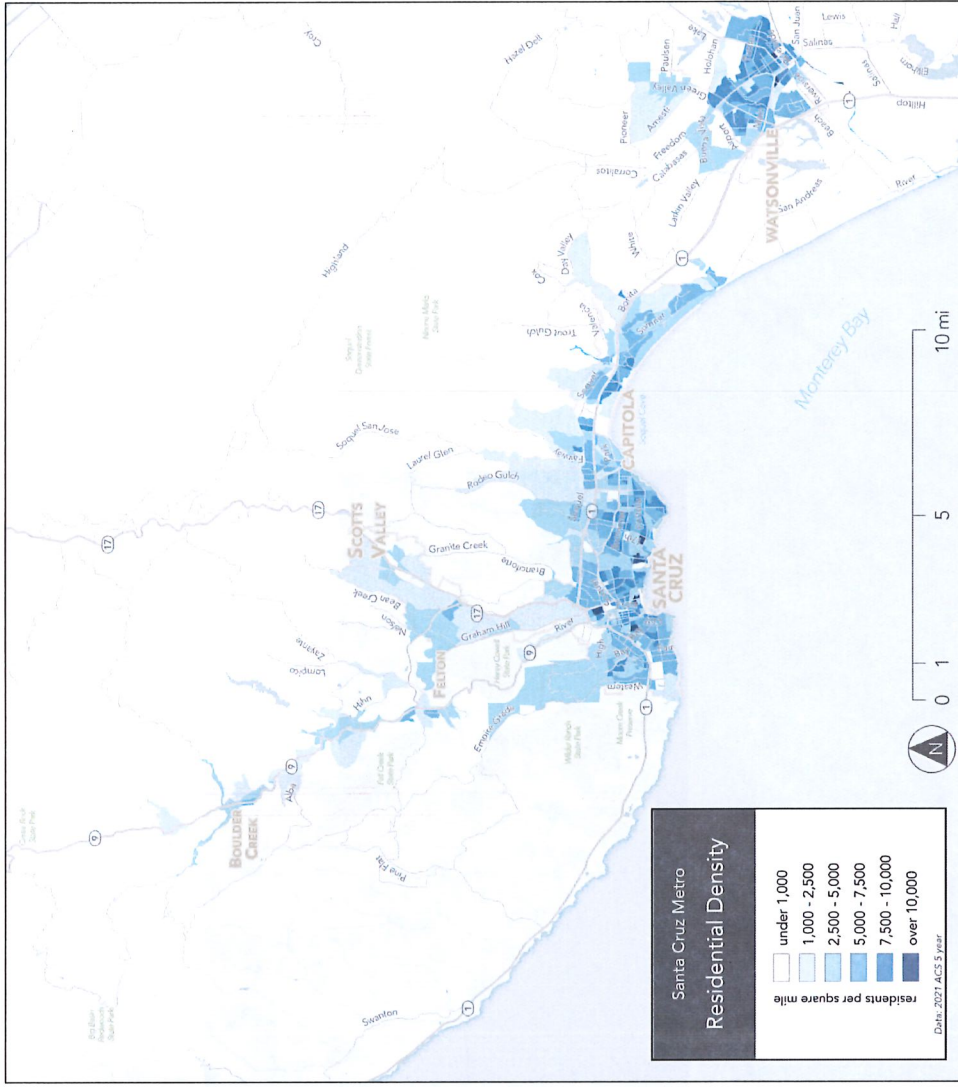


We've been learning about your communities

- We have **reviewed census and regional data** relevant to transit needs, like population density, employment, poverty, age distribution and others.
- We have **mapped and analyzed METRO's data** on service frequency, schedules and ridership.
- We are **engaging with riders and community groups** through surveys and focus groups.



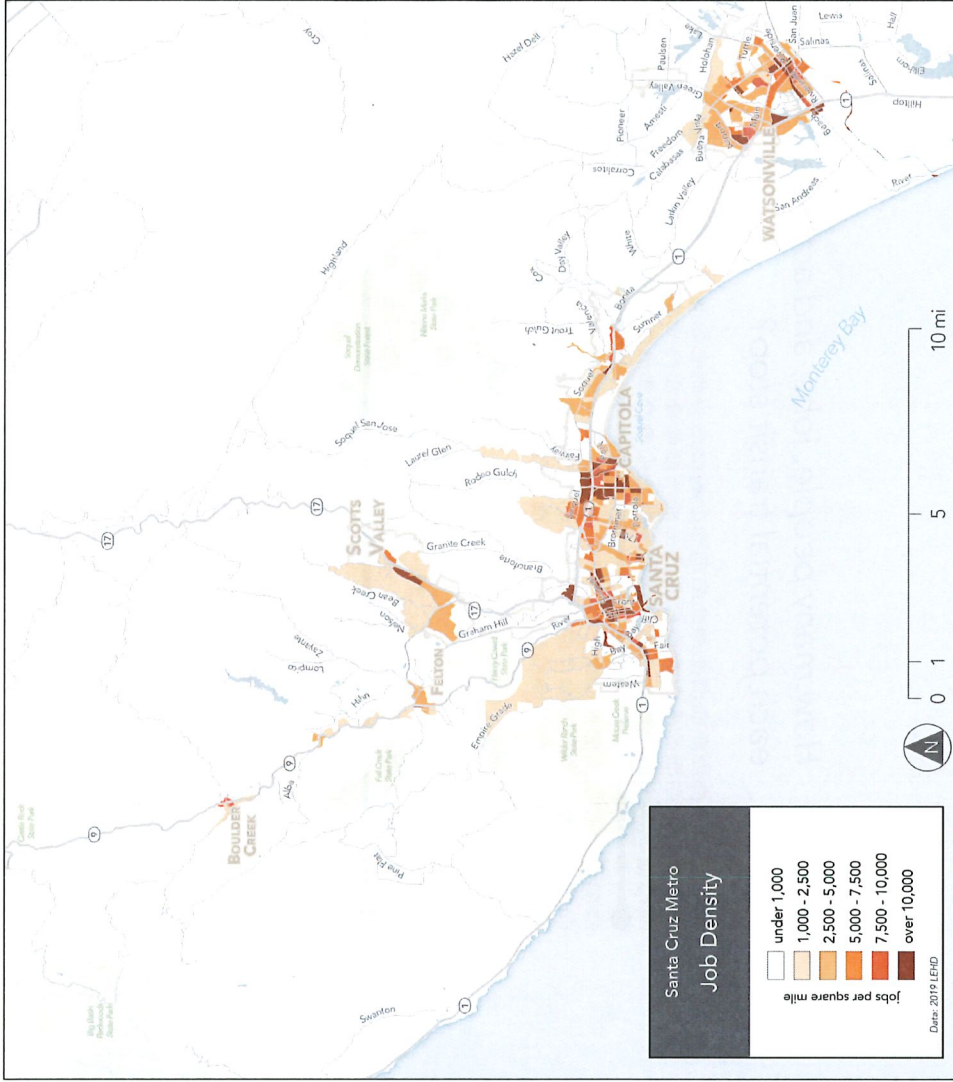
Some relevant facts



Residents are concentrated in urban areas

Over 80% of Santa Cruz County population lives in the areas shown in blue on this map.

- ~130,000 in greater Santa Cruz (50%)
- ~60,000 in greater Watsonville (20%)
- ~30,000 in Scotts Valley and the San Lorenzo Valley (10%)



There's no single place people are going most.

Key destinations are scattered throughout urban and suburban areas.

The largest job centers are:

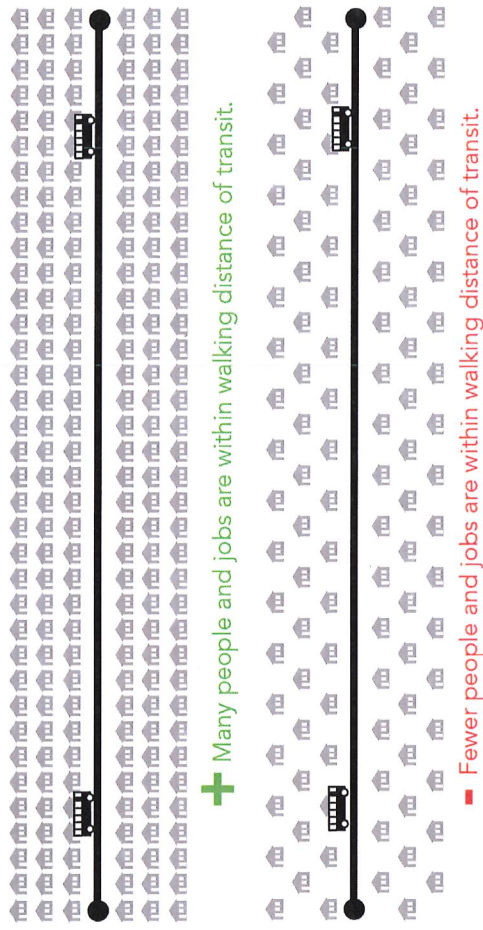
- UCSC
- Downtown Santa Cruz (and vicinity)
- 41st Ave
- Downtown Watsonville

... but these are by no means the only places with many jobs.

Why does this matter?

The more people and destinations are near transit, the more people are likely to find it useful.

DENSITY How many people, jobs, and activities are near each potential transit stop?



Why does this matter?

When people and destinations are scattered over long distances, it's more expensive to serve them all.

PROXIMITY Does transit have to traverse long gaps?



+ Short distances between many destinations are faster and cheaper to serve.



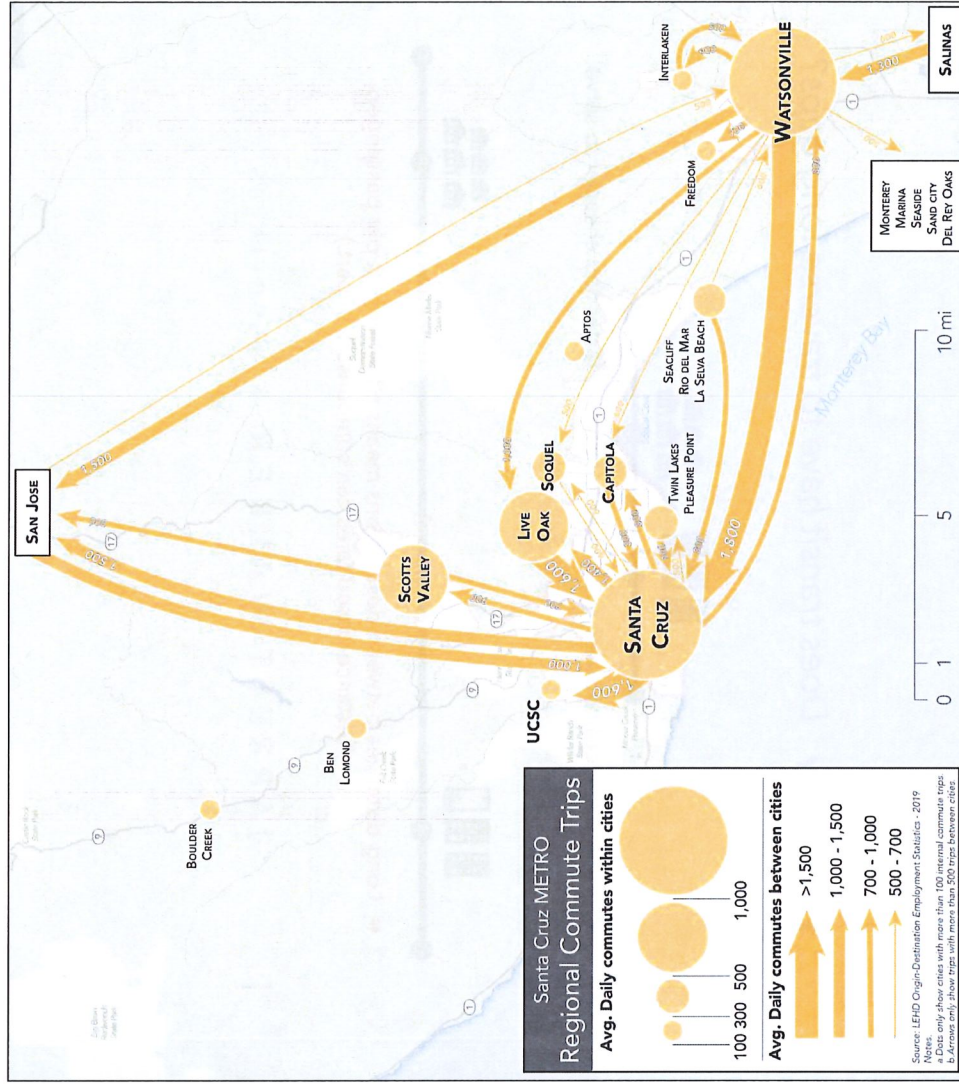
- Long distances between destinations means a higher cost per passenger.
(Distance-based fares can compensate in part.)

JARRETT WALKER + ASSOCIATES

Some large destinations are outside the county.

The majority of commute trips stay within Santa Cruz County.

But San Jose is also a major destination, from all parts of the county.



There are significant differences between communities.

This map shows where people of different races and ethnic groups live.

The stark differences on this map show up throughout indicators that are relevant to transit, like distribution of people in poverty, seniors, youth, and zero-vehicle households.



In a few areas, many people don't own cars.



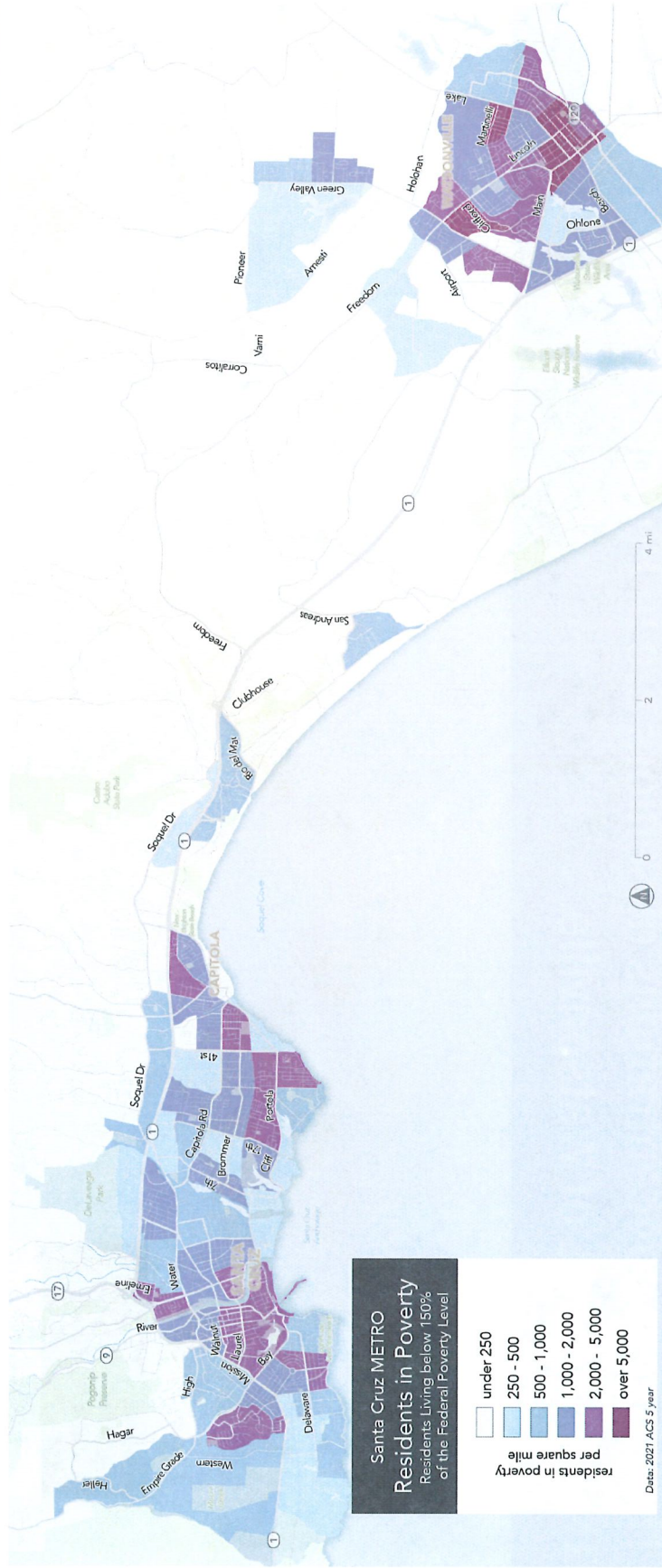
Many of these are also areas with large low-income populations.



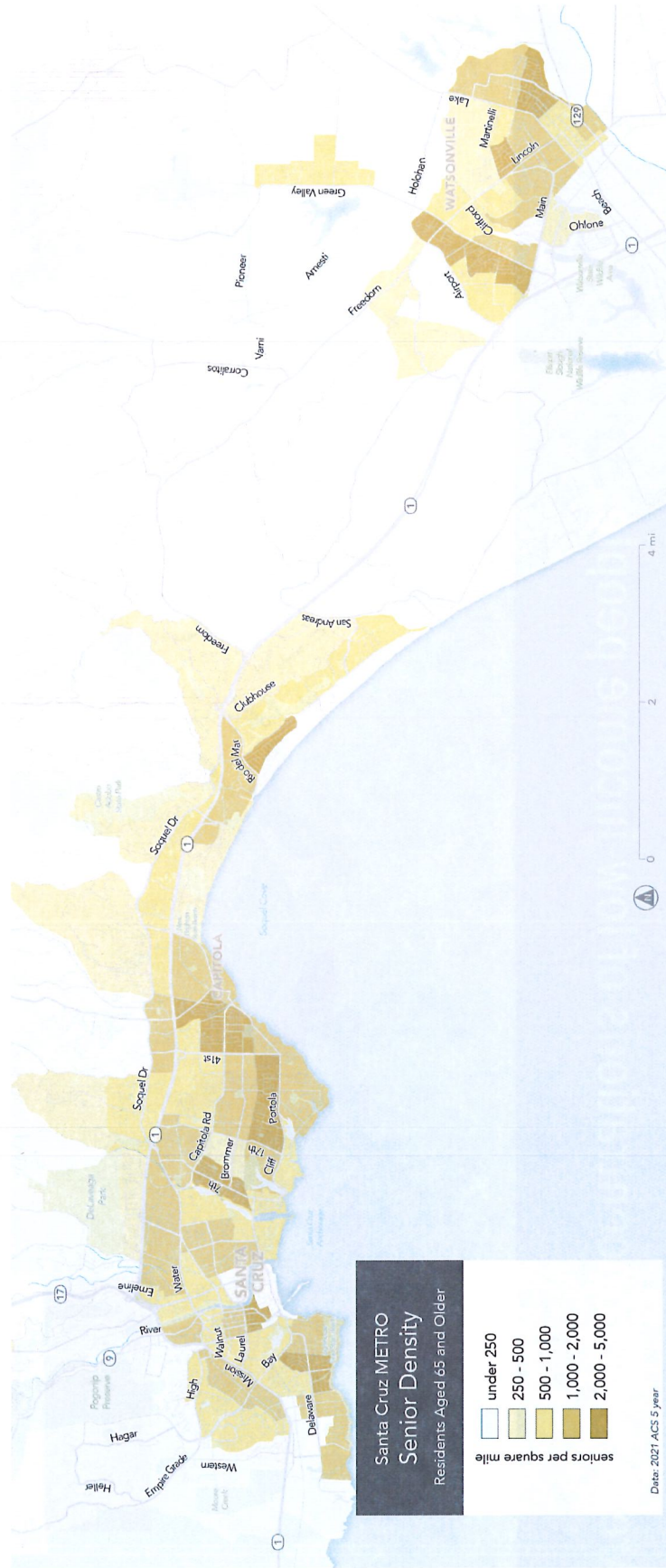
The highest concentrations of families with children are in Watsonville, parts of Santa Cruz and Live Oak.



Areas with concentrations of low-income people.



The largest concentrations of seniors are in Portola, Capitola, Live Oak and parts of Watsonville.



Areas where many people don't own cars.



The built environment matters

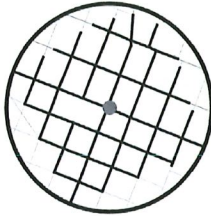
How hard is it to walk to a bus stop?

Wherever it's difficult for people to walk, it's difficult to provide adequate transit.

This is partly about distance, and partly about safety.

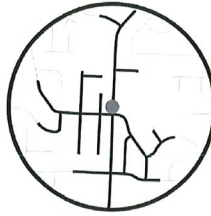
WALKABILITY

Is it possible to walk between the stop and the activities around it?



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The dot at the center of these circles is a transit stop, while the circle is a 1/4 mile radius. The whole area is within 1/4 mile, but only the black-shaded streets are within a 1/4 mile walk.



-

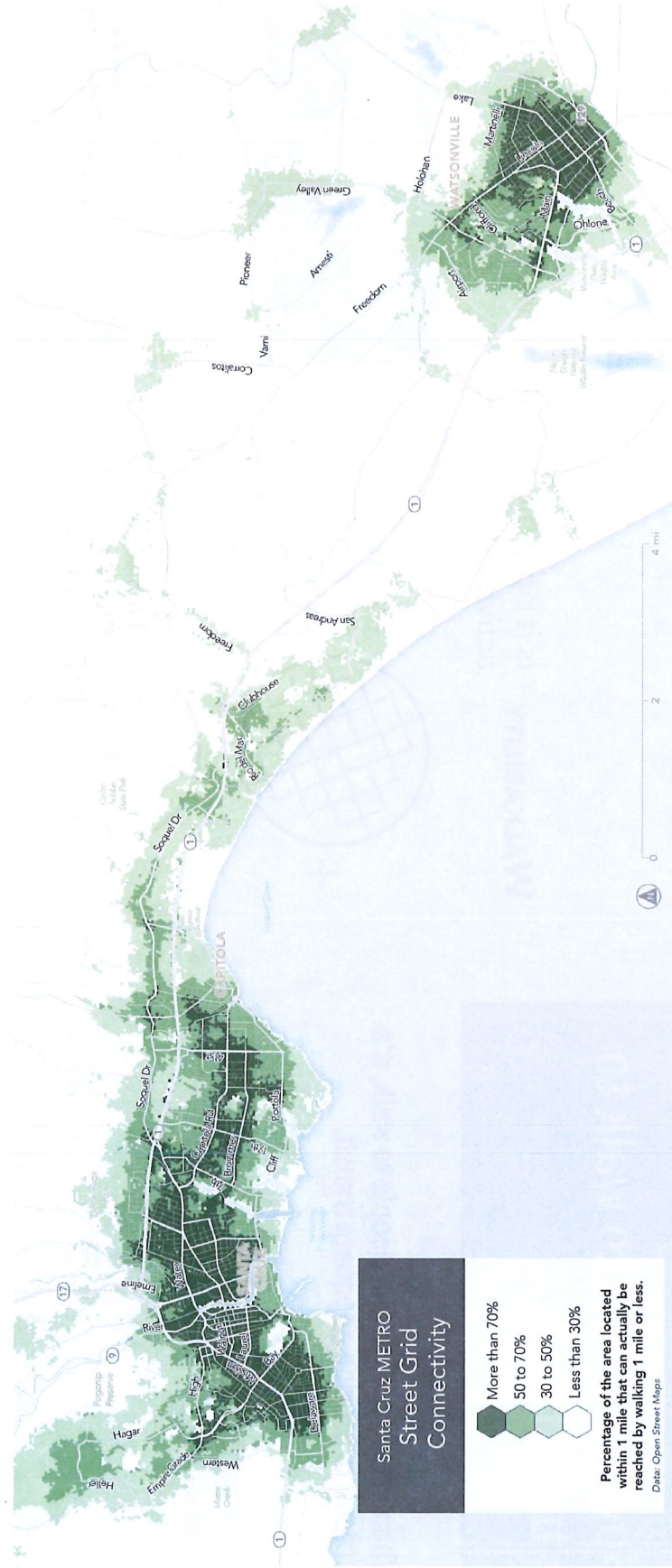
It must also be safe to cross the street at a stop. You usually need the stops on both sides for two-way travel!

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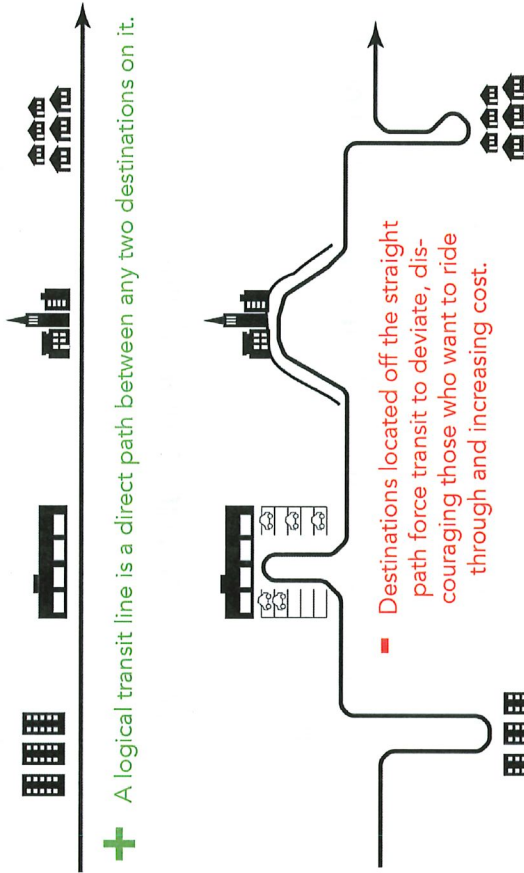
How easy is it to walk in different places?



Can many places be connected in a straight line?

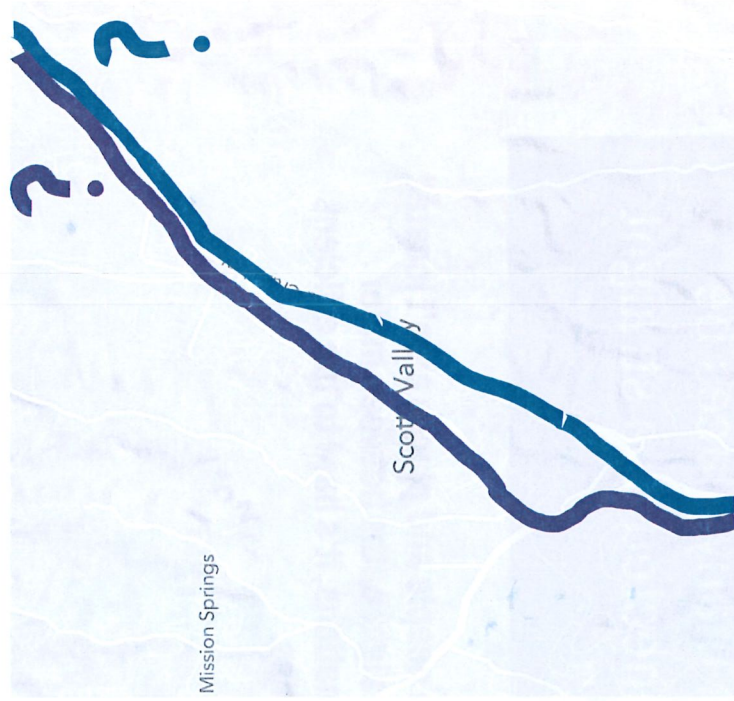
When people and places aren't located on straight paths between major destinations, it's hard to run efficient bus lines.

LINEARITY Can transit run in reasonably straight lines?



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In some locations, this means tough choices.



If a bus goes from Santa Cruz to San Jose, should it:

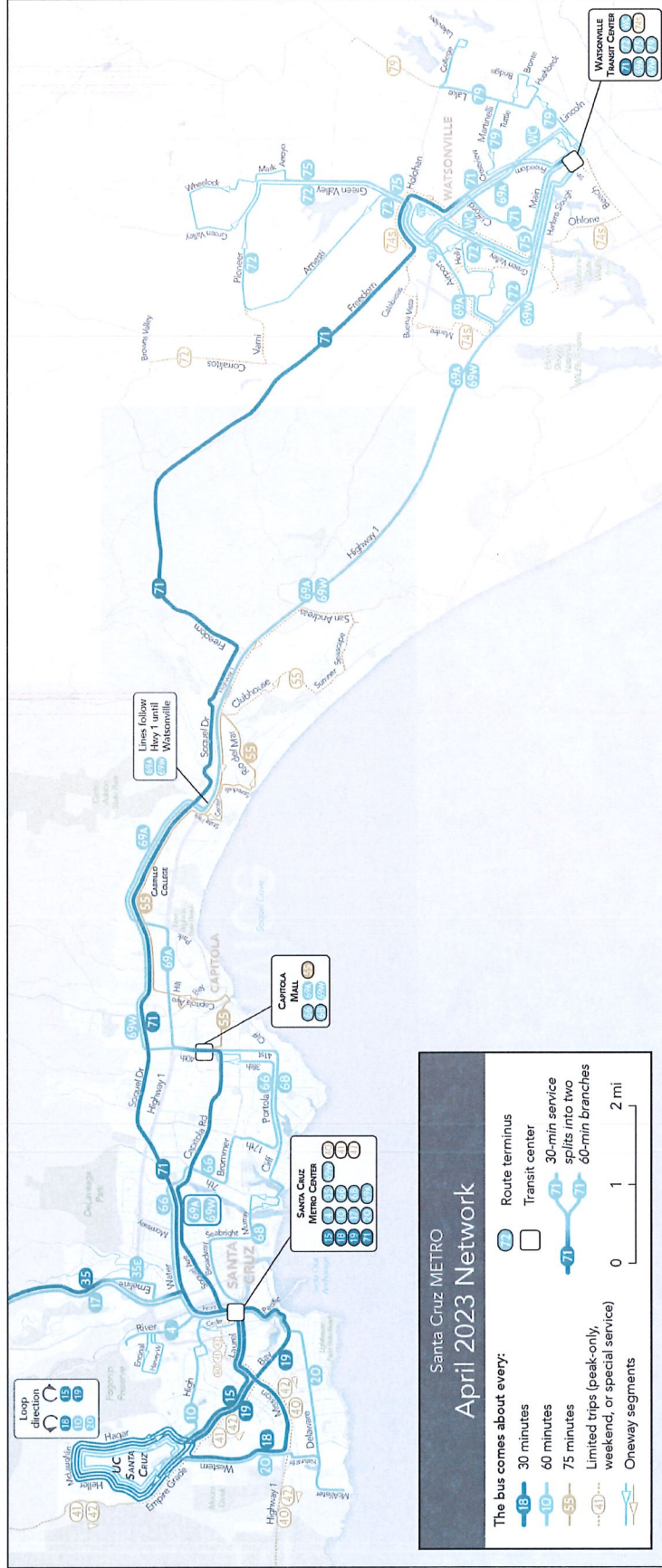
- Take the fastest possible route, by staying on the highway?
- Serve the many jobs located along the way on Scotts Valley Drive?

Both choices have value, but **the same bus can't take both paths.**

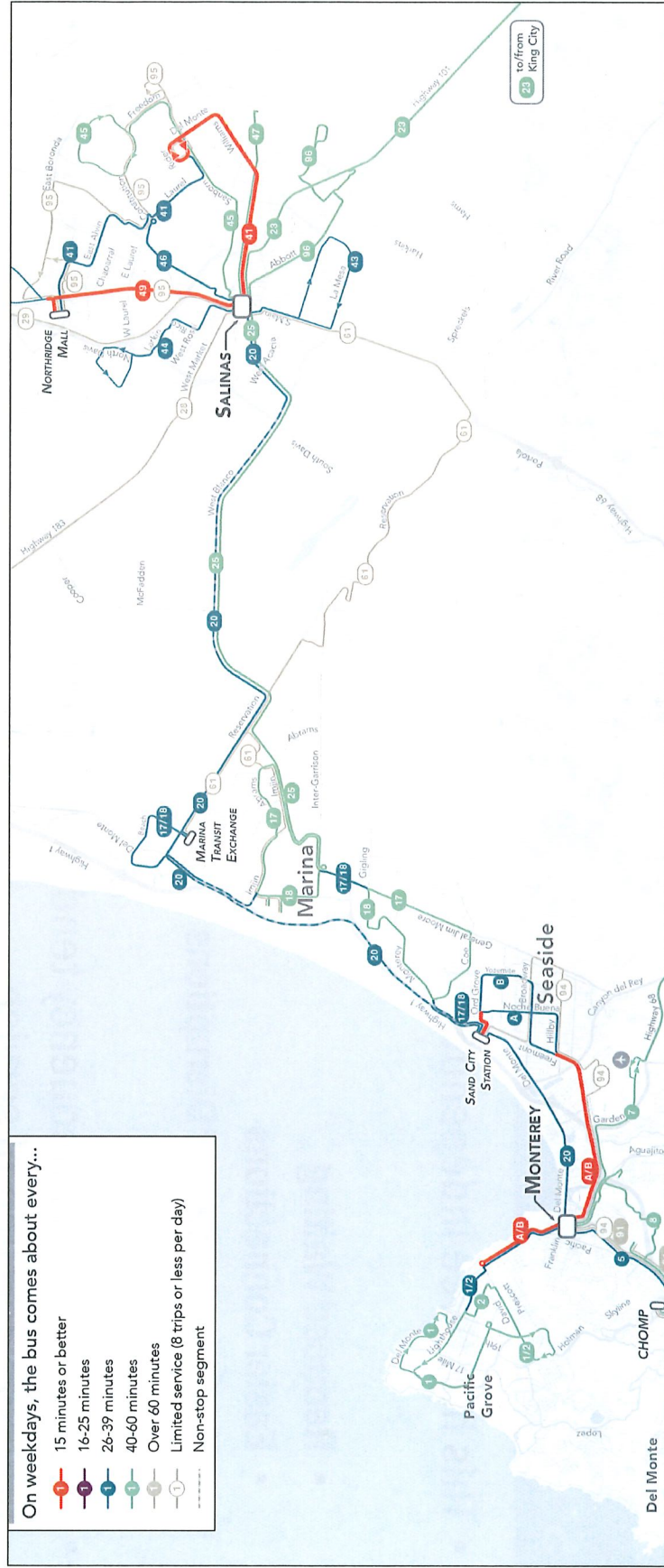


METRO's Existing Service

METRO runs many routes, but most are very infrequent.



How does this compare to Monterey County?



High frequency means the bus is always coming soon.

- This has three independent benefits:
 - **Reduced Waiting**
 - **Easier Connections**
 - **Reduced Impact of Disruptions**
- Lines with higher frequency tend to have not just higher ridership, but higher ridership per unit of service.

Ultimately....

Imagine a gate at the end of your driveway that only opens once an hour.

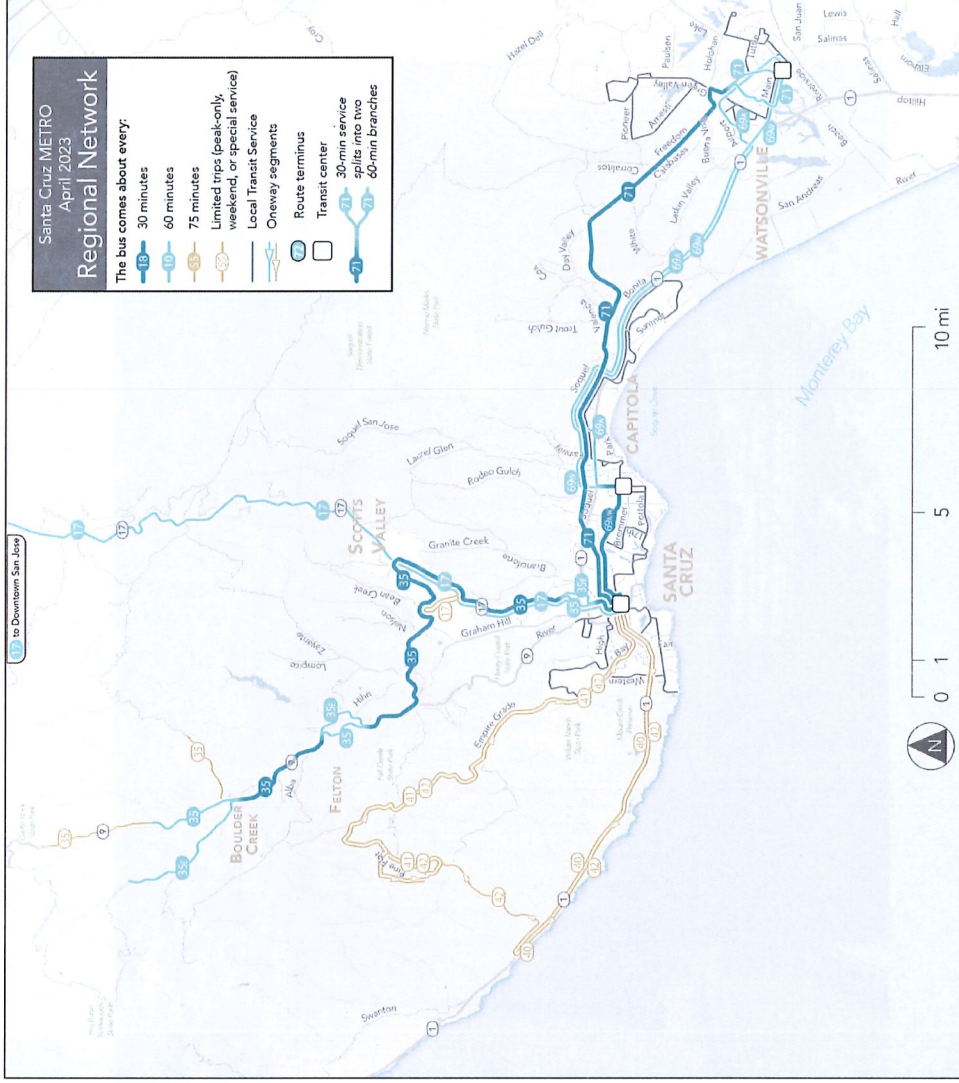
How useful is this service?

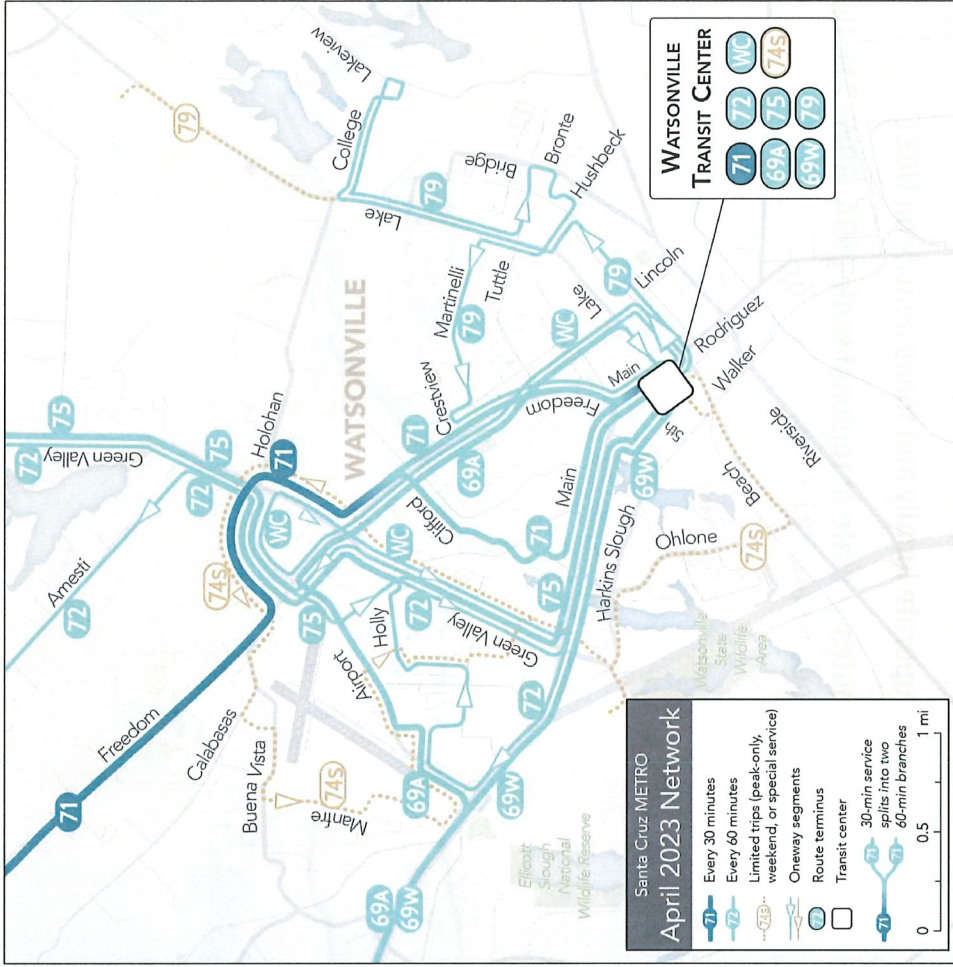


Regional Service

Among regional routes:

- Some connect out of county, like the Hwy 17 Express to San Jose.
- Some connect rural communities to Santa Cruz (e.g. 35, 40, 41, 42)
- Routes between Watsonville and Santa Cruz combine regional and local service.





Service in Watsonville

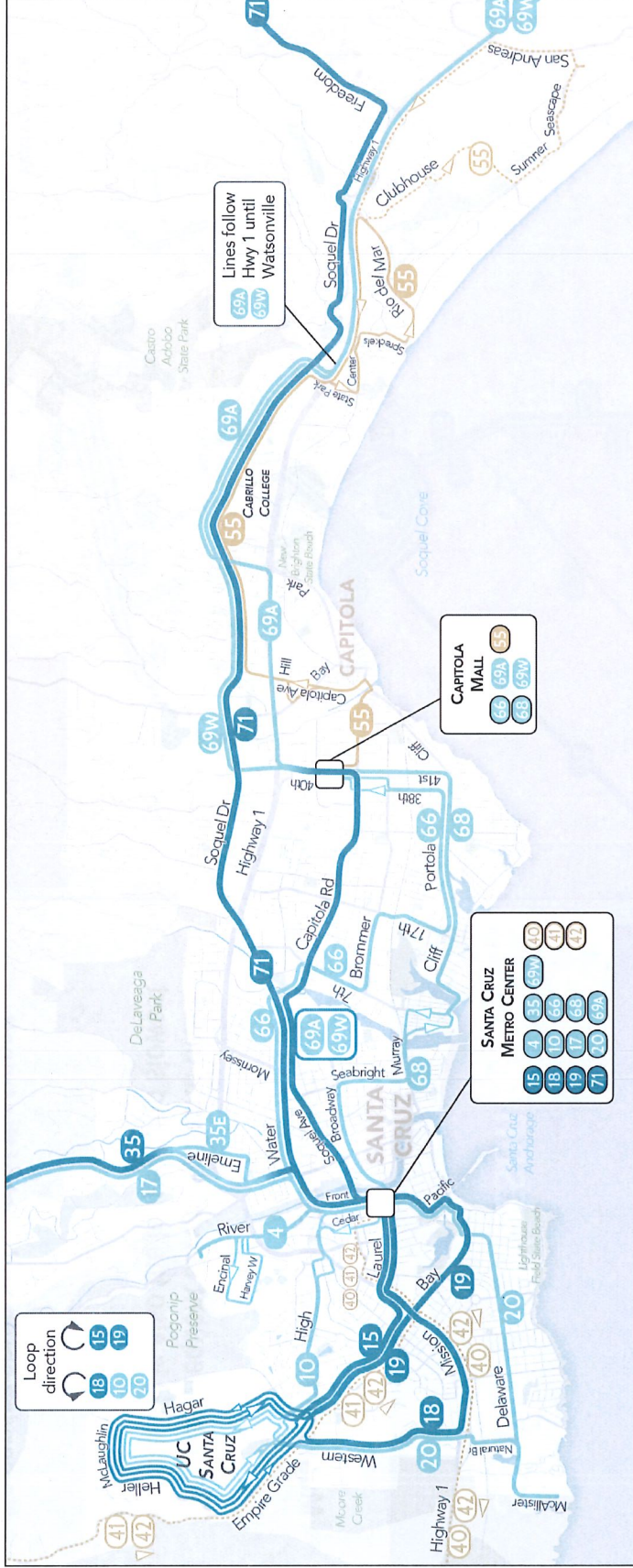
Many routes, but no high frequency.

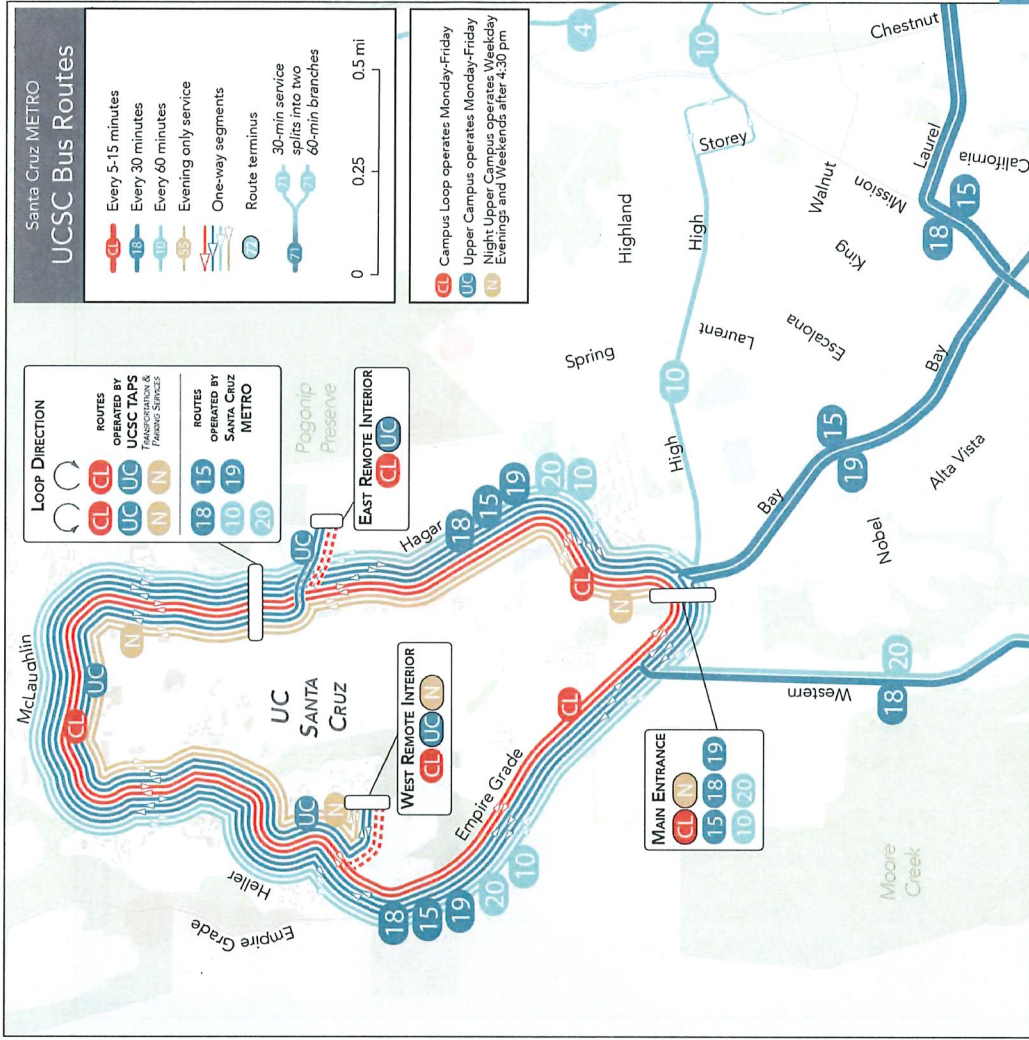
The most frequent service to Santa Cruz (Route 71) is also the longest and slowest route.

No service south and west of the transit center.

Service in greater Santa Cruz/Capitola.

Service divided between West and East sides.
 Westside routes operate locally and focus heavily on UCSC.
 Many Eastside routes operate at regional scale (69A, 69W, 71). Useful for direct travel, but reliability issues.





Service at UCSC.

~50% of METRO ridership on UCSC routes.

20 buses per hour on the loop.

METRO buses often overcrowded, campus shuttles have spare capacity.

Slow and unreliable service, due to huge demand at each stop, and no way for buses to pass each other.

Except for Santa Cruz Metro Center, no place with frequent service to campus.

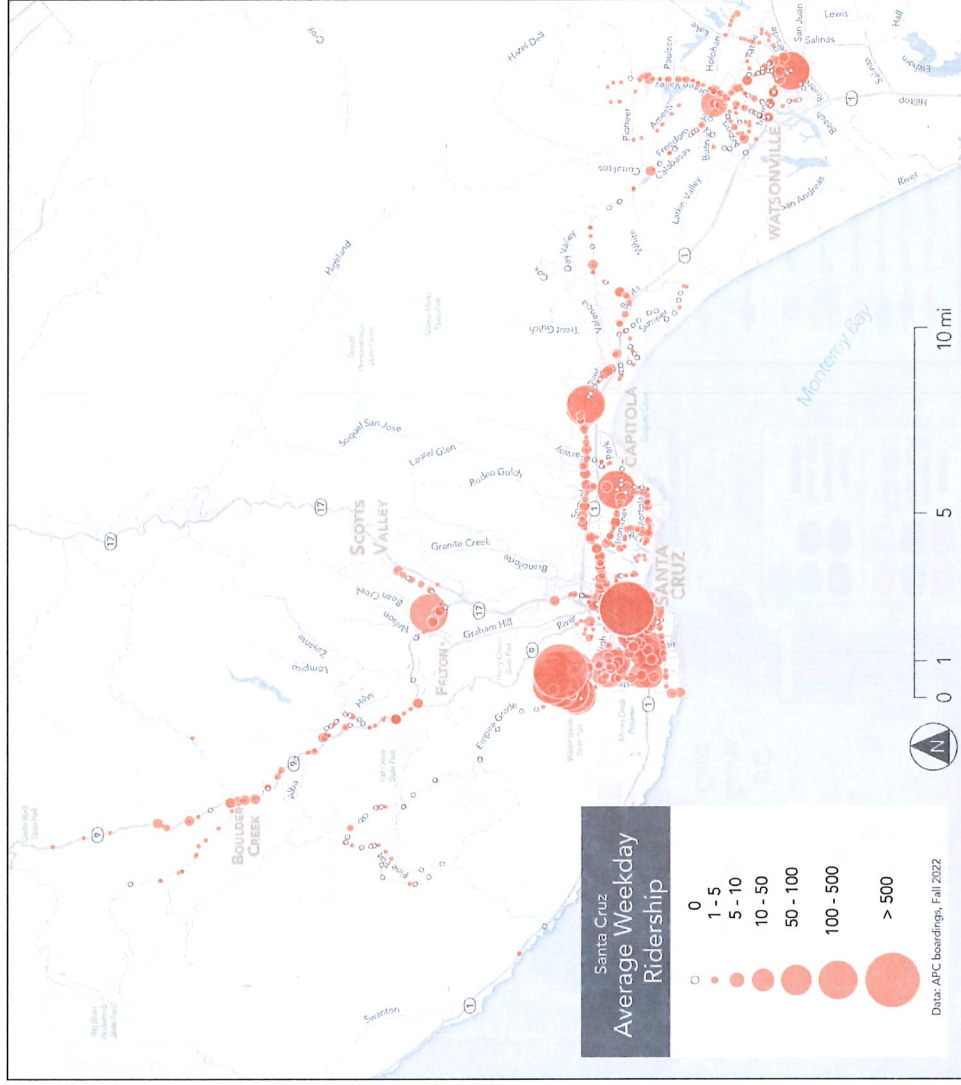
No direct service beyond the West side.

Ridership is concentrated in certain areas.

UCSC is by far the biggest attractor of trips on METRO.

A few other significant attractors:

- **Downtown Santa Cruz**
- **Cabrillo College**
- **Capitola Mall and vicinity**
- **Downtown Watsonville**
- **North Watsonville**



Some concerns we've heard

- **Reliability**, especially in Santa Cruz
- **Communications**, especially in Watsonville and in Spanish
- **Fleet age, condition, and maintenance requirements.**
- A broader sense of gradual service degradation that predates the pandemic.
- **Transfers**

Next Steps

- **May:** Early Wins defined
- **July:** Alternatives Report
- **July-August:** Public Outreach
- **November:** Draft Plan
- **Dec-Jan:** Public Outreach on Draft Plan
- **March 2024:** Final Plan