

MINUTES*

MAC MEETING OF AUGUST 21, 2019



The METRO Advisory Committee (MAC) met on Wednesday, August 21, 2019 in the METRO Administrative Office located at 110 Vernon Street, in Santa Cruz, CA. *Minutes are “summary” minutes, not verbatim minutes.

1 CALL TO ORDER at 5:59 PM.

ROLL CALL: The following MAC Members were present, representing a quorum:

Veronica Elsea, Chair
Joseph Martinez, Vice Chair
Jason Lopez

Michael Pisano
Becky Taylor

METRO EMPLOYEES AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WHO VOLUNTARILY INDICATED THEY WERE PRESENT (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER) THROUGH A SIGN IN SHEET OR VERBAL INTRODUCTION WERE:

Ciro Aguirre, METRO
Isaac Holly, METRO
Jayme Ackemann, METRO
Barrow Emerson, METRO

Rufus Francis, METRO
Pete Rasmussen, METRO
Virginia Vasquez, METRO
James Von Hendy, Public

2 COMMUNICATIONS TO THE METRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE

None

3 ACCEPT AND FILE MINUTES FROM THE METRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF APRIL 17, 2019

MOTION: ACCEPT AND FILE MINUTES FROM THE METRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF APRIL 17, 2019

MOTION: LOPEZ

SECOND: TAYLOR

AYES: MARTINEZ, LOPEZ, PISANO, AND TAYLOR

NAYES: NONE

ABSTAIN: ELSEA

MOTION CARRIED: FOUR IN FAVOR AND ONE ABSTAINING

4 COMMUNICATIONS FROM METRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Chair Elsea gave a brief synopsis of the semi-annual MAC update given to the Board of Directors on June 28, 2019. She informed them of some of the areas that MAC has been involved with: Code of Conduct Policy and marketing ideas for implementing the policy to riders; removal of benches/shelters; temporary Customer Service booth; reviewing the budget; ParaCruz on-time performance; Wi-Fi and new apps; and presentations from the public to MAC.

Mr. Pisano thanked Chair Elsea for her presentation to the Board. Chair Elsea commented that the Board was happy to get the detailed information.

Mr. Pisano asked if the Bus Operators see something (i.e., car fire), are they allowed to call it in. Ciro Aguirre, COO, said they are trained to report incidents.

Ms. Taylor expressed appreciation for METRO Bus Operators. Chair Elsea applauded the training the Bus Operators are getting in dealing with challenging passengers. COO Aguirre encouraged the MAC members to get a Bus Operator’s badge number, time of day and bus

route when they notice a Bus Operator doing an outstanding job so that METRO can recognize them. The same applies if there is an issue to report so that it can be addressed immediately. Chair Elsea commented that when she had recently reported issues, she felt her concerns were heard and action was taken. She said Customer Service is doing a better job now in handling complaints than 5-6 years ago.

5 UPDATE ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS (ITS) – AUTOMATIC VEHICLE LOCATION (AVL)

Isaac Holly, IT and ITS Director, explained that METRO is experiencing some integration challenges with the AVL and he has placed a temporary hold on vehicle installation until those issues are resolved. Mr. Pisano asked which software METRO is using and Director Holly explained the whole system is with the same vendor, GMV Syncromatics.

6 UPDATE ON ECOLANE DRT SOFTWARE FOR PARACRUZ

Director Holly handed out information on Ecolane's mobile application (attached) and explained that Ecolane is a scheduling software used by ParaCruz. It will give METRO the ability to batch-schedule rides and allow riders to see where their ride is in real time. Chair Elsea asked if this requires the rider to have a specific app. Director Holly said the rider would need the app to use the service; however, if a rider chooses to forego the app, they can still get paratransit service by calling and scheduling a ride. Chair Elsea recommended that a demo on accessibility be completed prior to the app going live to the public. Mr. Lopez asked if the rider has to pay for this app and Mr. Holly replied, "No."

Chair Elsea invited Director Holly to return in November to give a status update.

7 ORAL PRESENTATION REGARDING THE AUTHORIZATION OF A PUBLIC HEARING ON A FIXED-ROUTE FREE FARE PROGRAM FOR LEGALLY BLIND CUSTOMERS

Jayme Ackemann, Marketing, Communications and Customer Service Director, announced this item will go to the Board of Directors on August 23, 2019 to set a public hearing to consider a free fare program for legally blind customers. METRO continues to have accessibility issues related to the audio component of the Ticket Vending Machines (TVMs). After reviewing its options, METRO is proposing a free fare program to be in place until it can replace the TVMs with newer technology.

To be eligible for the free fare program, customers would be required to provide a Certificate of Legal Blindness signed off by their doctor. Discussion ensued on where to obtain the form, time consumed and the cost to the rider in acquiring a doctor to complete the form, and the public outreach needed for the program.

Chair Elsea encouraged MAC members to submit their concerns in writing by September 19, 2019 if they could not attend the September 27, 2019 Board of Directors meeting.

8 UPDATE ON SANTA CRUZ COUNTY FAIR – SEPTEMBER 11-15, 2019

Director Ackemann gave an overview of METRO's location at the fairgrounds as well as informing the Committee that bus service will be provided on all days of the fair. METRO will have paratransit and fixed route vehicles on display along with Bus Operators who can showcase them to the public and answer questions. There will be an information table, raffle prizes to give away, and special treats for children.

Vice Chair Martinez inquired if an electric bus will be on display. Barrow Emerson, Planning and Development Director, said the first electric bus is expected to arrive in February 2020. Director Ackemann added that METRO will have a special public event to celebrate that milestone.

Mr. Pisano expressed concern in using the trip planner at METRO's website. It does not give a direct route to the fair. Director Ackemann said these special events are not in our HASTUS system so will not show up in the trip planner. However, the schedule is in both the electronic and paper version of the Headways. Customer Service can also provide assistance. Mr. Pisano suggested putting something on the home page of the website.

9 SERVICE PLANNING UPDATE

Director Emerson gave a quick update on action items from the last MAC meeting:

- METRO is working with GFI on the expiring 31-day pass and change card.
- Facilities is working on lighting the bus schedules at the transit centers so they are more visible at night.
- METRO will not be competing for the Lift Line business used by Central California Alliance for Health. In order to do so, ParaCruz would have to increase staff.
- ParaCruz is fully staffed now which will help with on-time performance.
- METRO did not get the grant for the fast charger at the Watsonville Transit Center. Vice Chair Martinez asked if an arrangement could be made with Lift Line to use their chargers. Director Emerson said their chargers would not work for a full-size bus.
- METRO staff talked to Kaiser about their development on Soquel Avenue and discussed possible route solutions for their patients.
- Route changes to the San Lorenzo Valley frequency and adding service to Scotts Valley Drive and Enterprise Technology Center are still a priority; but will be pushed out to next year when we can add another Bus Operator to staff that route.

Director Emerson then addressed the agenda items:

- a. Update on bench/shelter removal and ridership feedback:
We have been able to put Simme-Seats in two locations (CVS downtown Santa Cruz and Felton Fair) where benches were removed. There have been no further complaints received. Mr. Lopez said he has noticed a positive change at the CVS location and it is a lot cleaner. Mr. Pisano thanked Director Emerson for the bench solution.
- b. Update on Capitola Mall rebuild and relocating METRO Transit Center:
METRO will have a bus station near the front door of Macy's in the proposed development. We are still in the design phase and working on the correct access/egress for the bays.
- c. Update on Pacific Station redesign:
METRO and the City of Santa Cruz are jointly applying for \$10-15 million in grants (one federal and one state) to rebuild Pacific Station. We are working with the City of Santa Cruz on the design so that in February 2020 we can submit the grant application to the California Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program. Next summer we will apply for the federal grant. Mr. Lopez asked what the timeline is for awarding the state money. Director Emerson said it takes approximately four months after the deadline passes. Chair Elsea asked if MAC could provide any support in the grant application process. Director Emerson said METRO would reach out to MAC, Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee (E&D TAC), and the Commission on Disabilities to make a few key points on why their committee supports this facility.

d. Tri MyRide on-demand transit:

Mr. Pisano said Try MyRide is an on-demand service used in Antioch and Cupertino. Director Emerson said the Planning Department would follow up on this and mentioned that METRO has a couple of pilot projects it is considering. One is to come up with an Uber/Lyft type program to cover south of Capitola where we had to cut Routes 54, 55 and 56. We also want to try another model with taxi service in the evening beyond Felton Fair and the Scotts Valley Transit Center. In this case, METRO would buy a few taxis for the night instead of running fixed route buses to service these areas. Look for these ideas to unfold early next year.

Last, Director Emerson gave an update on the ridership and reported that ridership is flat. We hope the new buses and mobile ticketing will improve ridership.

Mr. Pisano asked if METRO had thought about splitting Route 71 for Kaiser Hospital and Director Emerson said we are looking at variations to Route 69 instead. Mr. Pisano asked if we are involved in the Diridon Station remodel. Pete Rasmussen, Transportation Planner, said he is working with the City of San Jose on a bikeway on East San Fernando Street, which could impact the Hwy. 17 bus route. METRO is waiting for Google to go public with their development plans so that METRO can determine the next steps needed.

Vice Chair Martinez inquired about the number of Bus Operators currently enrolled in the training class. Director Emerson said we have 12 currently going through the course.

Mr. Lopez commented that he was able to ride the new diesel hybrid bus and it was very nice and was wondering if we plan to get more. Director Emerson explained that we got 10 used ones from VTA and there is no plan to acquire more at this time.

Mr. Pisano asked if Dominican Hospital would be interested in buying bus passes for its employees. Director Emerson said METRO has reached out extensively to Dominican Hospital to be a partner but at this time, there is no interest.

10 UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTING POLICY: USE OF FIXED ROUTE SERVICES AND TRANSIT FACILITIES, INCLUDING PASSENGER CODE OF CONDUCT AND SERVICE SUSPENSION/EXCLUSION

COO Aguirre provided an update on the Code of Conduct Policy. Our current class of Bus Operators is being trained on the policy. This class is scheduled to graduate mid-October. Once that happens, our two Training Coordinators will train the rest of the Bus Operators. Simultaneously Director Ackemann will devise an approach for informing the public.

COO Aguirre also gave an update on a new feature that will be on the six Gillig buses ordered. The forward facing seats after the securement area will now have flip up individual seats. You will be able to sit down and flip one seat up to fit a cart, or whatever you are carrying, so there is more aisle room. Ms. Taylor thought that would be good for Routes 4 and 66.

Ms. Taylor thought METRO should consider adding no sleeping on the fixed route front seats to the code of conduct. She went on to explain an encounter that took place on Route 71.

Chair Elsea asked at what point would it be good to have Director Ackemann give an update on the preliminary marketing plans for the Code of Conduct so that MAC can offer some input. COO Aguirre suggested doing that at the next MAC meeting.

11 COMMUNICATIONS TO THE METRO CEO

a. Proposed letter of appreciation

Chair Elsea requested Mr. Pisano explain the type of letter he proposed. Mr. Pisano recounted the incident that took place in April 2019 in Capitola. A decision was made to express a verbal appreciation for the tone of communication conveyed by METRO in the Santa Cruz Sentinel article following the incident.

12 COMMUNICATIONS TO THE SANTA CRUZ METRO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

None

13 ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING AGENDA

- Update from Marketing Director on implementation of the Code of Conduct Policy
- Update on AVL and Ecolane
- Update on free fare program
- Explore bio-based fuels from Blume Distillation for METRO's use
- Update on recent class of Bus Operators – how many graduated

14 DISTRIBUTION OF VOUCHER

Vouchers distributed by COO Aguirre.

15 ADJOURNMENT

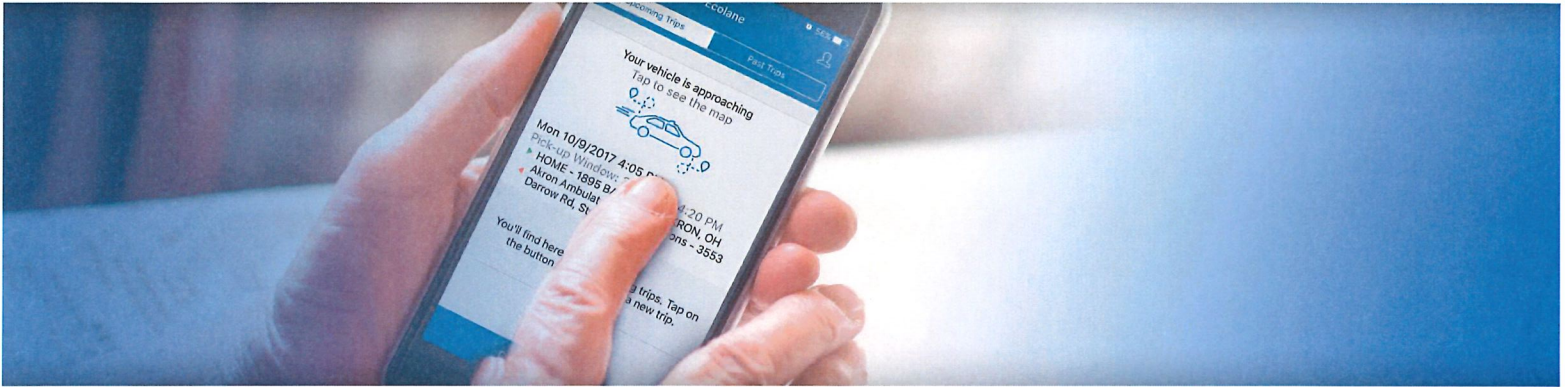
Meeting adjourned at 7:37 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Bauer
Administrative Assistant

Ecolane

The app you've been waiting for.



Check out why Ecolane's mobile app simplifies your life. You can book trips yourself in real-time without the need of calling the agency.

The simplest, most user-friendly mobile app giving you freedom to review and manage your personal transportation needs. Web-based self-service scheduling, Ecolane's mobile app gets you where you want when you want right from your own mobile phone.

Available now for both iOS and Android.

Rider Benefits



Flexibility to Manage Trips in Real-time

Empowering you with direct access to review and manage your transportation needs. You can view both upcoming and recently completed trips.



Simple Mobile Interface

Trip planning has never been an easier experience than with the Ecolane app. Reservations with a single tap, connected to the most powerful, industry leading scheduling and dispatch platform that performs continuous real-time optimization.



Convenient Trip Details View

Notifications remind you of trip pick-up windows. When your vehicle is on its way, you are able to follow your bus on a visual map.

Mobile App 2.0

Here's what's new with the latest update:

- View trip in progress (when on board, see my ETA and number of stops until drop-off).
- Share my ETA (when on bus, share your ETA with someone else using one of the other messaging apps on your phone).
- Quick link to trigger a phone call to your transportation agency for help or to reach out about a will-call trip.
- Integration with phone calendar so that you can see your appointments when booking a trip.
- Information to see vehicle ID number.

