

For Immediate Release



UPDATED: SANTA CRUZ METRO ANNOUNCES \$38.6M STATE FUNDING AWARD TO SUPPORT TRANSIT AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECTS

Funding supports new zero-emissions transit service and construction of 180 affordable housing units in Santa Cruz and Watsonville

APRIL 24, 2023 —SANTA CRUZ, CA— Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO) today announced it has been awarded more than \$30 million in state funding to purchase zero-emission hydrogen powered buses and associated fueling infrastructure to expand service frequency on Highways 1 and 17, as well as to redevelop METRO’s Watsonville Transit Center and Pacific Station in downtown Santa Cruz to include mixed-use and 180 affordable housing units.

The California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) made the award through its [Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program](#), with funding provided by the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund and SB1, during an event at Pacific Station on Monday. California State Secretary of Transportation Toms Ominshakin presented the \$38.6 million check to METRO board members and staff.

The METRO award will support the purchase of 24 hydrogen buses and construction of a hydrogen fueling station, as well as affordable housing construction, including at Pacific Station North in Santa Cruz and the Watsonville Transit Center. The improvements to the transit centers will also include implementation of real-time passenger information, bicycle amenities and other multi-modal improvements at stops.

“Thanks to this vitally important funding from the state, METRO can put forward innovative solutions for our community that will improve equitable access to transit, support creation of infill housing with improved transit access, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions,” said METRO Board Chair Shebreh Kalantari-Johnson.

The project will reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the region by helping convert 25% of METRO’s fleet of compressed natural gas and diesel buses to zero-emission hydrogen buses within the next 24 months. The project also includes construction of a hydrogen fueling station that will support the full transition of METRO’s 94-bus fleet to zero-emission technology by 2037, with enough capacity to support the zero-emissions fueling needs of local partner agencies and others.

In addition, the project supports expanded access to affordable housing integrated with improved transit access. METRO’s Pacific Station will be redeveloped to include a 120-unit, mixed-use, affordable housing development with a bike hub and other multimodal improvements. The Watsonville Transit Center will transform to include a four-story, 60-unit, net-zero-energy affordable housing development, serving historically disadvantaged community members.

The CalSTA award of more than \$38.6 million joins \$19.4 million invested by METRO, \$5.76 million in funding from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, and more than \$138 million secured through other grants and funding opportunities.

Announced today in conjunction with the funding for METRO, the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission was awarded \$3.45 million to support the Zero Emission Passenger Rail & Trail Project and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County was awarded nearly \$2.3 million for the Pajaro/Watsonville Multimodal Station Project.

ABOUT SANTA CRUZ METROPOLITAN TRANSIT DISTRICT (METRO)

Established in 1968, METRO'S mission is to provide environmentally sustainable transportation to Santa Cruz County. METRO directly operates county-wide, fixed-route and Highway 17 commuter service, with connections to Santa Clara County and Monterey Salinas Transit at our Watsonville Transit Center. The agency also operates ParaCruz paratransit service. Today METRO operates a fleet of 94 buses on at least 24 fixed routes and 32 paratransit vehicles.

Every ride on a METRO bus takes cars off the road, significantly reduces greenhouse gas emissions, and supports economic opportunity and quality of life in our community. Moving into the future, METRO strives to meet the following goals:

- Increase transit ridership to 7 million trips annually within the next five years
- Transition to a zero-emissions fleet with a mix of hydrogen and battery electric buses
- Develop 175 affordable housing units at METRO-owned transit centers over the next decade

For more information, visit scmtd.com Follow METRO on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).

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