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SANTA CRUZ METRO ROLLS OUT PLANS AND PATH TO FUNDING FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL SERVICE CHANGES

Ridership to double with “Wave Service” initiative that provides 15-minute frequency between buses, adds direct routes and returns popular express route between Watsonville and Santa Cruz

Nov. 15, 2023 —SANTA CRUZ, CA— Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO) today announced plans to roll out its new three-year initiative, known as *Wave Service*, which is envisioned to transform transit in Santa Cruz County. The *Wave Service* initiative is the result of a comprehensive community engagement process conducted in 2022 and 2023. *Wave Service* will be rolled out in two phases, with the first phase beginning in December 2023 and the second in 2024. At full implementation, systemwide ridership is anticipated to double to 7 million rides per year.

“*Wave Service* is all about responding to the needs of our community,” said METRO Board Chair, Shebreh Kalantari-Johnson. “People want to get to their destinations faster. They want to be able to rely on buses that arrive on-time. They want to ride directly from point A to point B, without making transfers from bus to bus. *Wave Service* will do all of that. We’re very excited about the opportunity to roll out this initiative over the coming months.”

“These service changes will be transformational for our community,” said METRO Vice Chair and Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission Vice Chair, Kristen Brown. “*Wave Service* will deliver dramatically improved service for riders, while creating dozens of new jobs and taking a stand against climate change. This is truly a win-win for our entire county.”

Path to Funding for Wave Service

On December 7, the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC) will vote on three areas of funding that, combined, will fully fund implementation of METRO’s *Wave Service* for the next three years. METRO-preferred funding sources and amounts include:

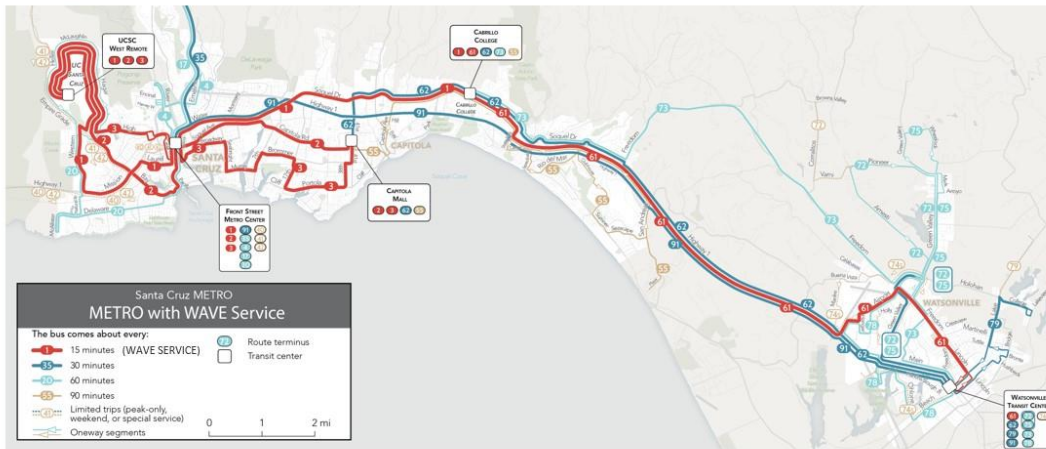
- \$27 million in Transit and Intercity Rail Capital funding from the State of California. The intent from the legislature and governor of this one-time funding is to help transit agencies build ridership.
- \$7 million in Zero Emission Capital funding from the State of California. The intent from the legislature and governor for this one-time funding is to help transit agencies with funding gaps in purchasing and building infrastructure for zero emission vehicles.
- \$5 million sourced from the \$27 million available in Consolidated Grant Funding from SCCRTC. This funding will support installation of “transit signal priority technology” at key intersections to provide buses with green lights, so they can keep moving on-time through traffic.

Wave Service Key Benefits

- **More Service:** Adds 43% more service for residents
- **More Frequency:** 15-minute all day service
- **Reliability:** Straighter routes with transit signal priority (TSP) at intersections to keep buses moving fast, frequent, and reliable.
- **Access:** In total, more than 100,000 residents will have access to *Wave Service* within a 5-minute walk.
- **Convenience:** One-seat ride (no need to transfer buses) from Capitola, Live Oak to downtown Santa Cruz, and the UCSC campus. From Watsonville, *Wave Service* will create a frequent local route extending to Cabrillo College where an easy, free transfer can carry them to destinations along Soquel Avenue, downtown Santa Cruz and on to UCSC.

- **Added Benefits:** Faster service from the San Lorenzo Valley area into Santa Cruz, as well as more frequent service on many of the routes in Watsonville, and the return of METRO’s popular all day express service from Watsonville to downtown Santa Cruz.
- **Job creation:** 64 new positions including 60 bus operators, two mechanics and two supervisors
- **Reduced traffic congestion** by reducing estimated annual vehicle miles traveled by 9,852,903 miles
- **Reduced greenhouse gas emissions** by cutting an estimated 40,068 metric tons of CO2 annually

The *Wave Service* name was selected because the service draws inspiration from the reliable and powerful waves that come in from the Monterey Bay. Santa Cruz County residents will be able to rely on frequent *Wave Service* all day, every day, driving powerful change in how our community utilizes transit.



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 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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