



DATE: November 18, 2022
TO: Board of Directors
FROM: John Urgo, Planning & Development Manager
SUBJECT: ACCEPT AND FILE THE METRO SYSTEM RIDERSHIP REPORTS FOR THE FIRST QUARTER OF FY23

I. RECOMMENDED ACTION

That the Board of Directors accept and file the METRO system ridership report for the first quarter of FY23

II. SUMMARY

- FY23 Q1 total ridership increased 33.5% (+158,081) compared to FY22 Q1. However, FY23 Q1 ridership is -27.6% (-240,697) compared to FY19 Q1.
- Local non-student ridership increased 30.2% (+292,996) and is -18.7% (-87,770) compared to FY19 Q1.
- Highway 17 (Hwy 17) ridership increased 170.1% (+15,171) and is -64.8% (-44,347) compared to FY19 Q1.
- UCSC ridership increased 33.8% (+146,163) and is -26.2% (-87,770) compared to FY19 Q1.
- Cabrillo College ridership increased 108.1% (+9,861) and is -72.4% (-49,708) compared to FY19 Q1.

III. DISCUSSION/BACKGROUND

This report contains ridership summaries and ridership by route for Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO) fixed route bus service for the First quarter (Q1) of FY23, July 1 – September 30, 2022. Quarterly ridership reports keep the Board of Directors (Board) apprised of METRO's ridership statistics and ridership trends:

- Attachment A shows system-wide and college student ridership statistics for Q1 of FY23 and makes year-over-year comparisons with ridership statistics.
- Attachment B shows the average ridership and pass/fare usage per route and system-wide.
- Attachment C shows the weekly ridership comparison for Q1 of FY23-19 and FY23-22.

Total Fixed Route Ridership

Compared to the previous fiscal year's first quarter FY23 Q1 total fixed-route ridership increased 33.5%. METRO operates 23 local routes and one commuter route over the Highway 17 (Hwy 17). Hwy 17 ridership increased 42.7% and Local ridership increased 33.0%. The Student Pass ridership, comprised of UCSC and Cabrillo riders, increased 38.2%. UCSC and Cabrillo ridership grew 33.8% and 108.1%, respectively, while the remaining local non-student ridership rose 30.2%.

The first quarter of FY23 total-fixed route ridership is still 27.6% less compared to Q1 of FY19. The Hwy 17 ridership has still not rebounded as well as the local route ridership, compared to pre-COVID data. Hwy 17 ridership decreased 49.5% compared to the same quarter in FY19, while Local ridership only decreased 25.8%. Student pass ridership decreased 35.7% and Cabrillo ridership showed a greater percent change than UCSC ridership compared to Q1 of FY19. UCSC and Cabrillo ridership shrunk 26.2% and 72.4%, respectively, while the remaining local non-student ridership decreased 18.7%.

In Q1 of FY22, carrying capacity restrictions were still negatively affecting overall ridership for part of the quarter. UCSC and Cabrillo had reduced demand as both were still holding the majority of their classes remotely and telework continued to Highway 17 ridership. However, the level of service was not dissimilar from Q1 of FY23 as METRO operated an average of 3.2% less vehicle revenue hours (VRH) compared to the current service level.

In Q1 of FY23, there were no shelter-in-place directives or carrying capacity. UCSC and Cabrillo returned to largely in-person learning. Most local non-student riders and many Highway 17 riders transitioned from telework to working at least part-time in the office. While, ridership demand continues to increase, operator shortages necessitated operating 8.5% less VRH compared to Q1 of FY19.

Regular and Discount Passes & Fares

The temporary fare reduction continued in Q1 of FY22, ending on the first day of the fall bid in mid-September. All discounted riders were allowed to board free and all discount ridership was recorded as a \$0 cash fare with no discount passes required to board. Due to this, documented discount pass usage increased 583.8% and discount "cash" usage decreased 38.3% compared to Q1 of FY22.

Discount ridership was 13.2% of total fixed route ridership in Q1 of FY23. However, this ridership segment is still 50.1% down compared to the first quarter

of FY19. Discount cash usage decreased 40.2%, whereas discount pass usage declined 56.1%.

Due to the temporary fare reduction in Q1 of FY22, regular riders boarded at 50% of the regular pass and fare prices until the start of the fall bid in mid-September. Regular passes at the discounted rate were only valid through the length of the temporary fare reduction and the ease of utilizing single dollar for the fare encouraged riders to use cash boardings over pass boardings. Compared to FY22, regular pass usage increased 267.5% and regular cash usage decreased 21.9%.

Regular ridership was 52.8% of the total ridership in Q1 of FY23. However, compared to FY19, there was a 19.8% decrease in overall regular ridership. Pass usage appears to be more prominent among this ridership segment in FY23, with pass usage increased by 2.2% and cash usage decreased by 43.9%.

Weekly Ridership Growth

For the first nine weeks of the Q1 of FY23, weekly ridership was on average 31.4% greater than year-over-year weekly ridership in FY22. In mid-September, weekly ridership increased as UCSC students returned for instruction and a free fares program was implemented to increase non-student ridership. With one additional instructional day compared to FY22, weekly ridership increased an average of 38.8%.

Compared to FY19, ridership for the first two months of Q1 FY23 was an average of 38.6% less. For the first two weeks of September ridership was only 29.8% down compared to FY19 September ridership over the same period. Due to 5 additional UCSC instructional days in FY23 weekly ridership over the last two weeks of September increased an average of 3.1%.

Trip Ridership by Route

FY23 Q1 average weekday ridership per trip on all routes was 16.9 riders and weekend ridership was 15.0 riders. Compared to Q1 of FY22, total ridership per trip increased 31.6%. Weekday riders per trip increased 33.5% and weekend riders per trip increased 19.3%. The weekday route with the highest average passenger load per revenue trip was the weekday-only route 15 UCSC via Laurel West with 57.5 riders per trip, in large part due to this route operating only during September when UCSC students are returning for instruction. The weekend

route with the greatest trip loads is the route 18 UCSC via Main Gate-Mission with an average of 25.9 riders per trip.

Q1 average weekday ridership per trip in FY19 was 22.4 and average weekend riders per trip was 18.0. Total riders per trip was still down by 29.1% in Q1 of FY19 compared to FY19. Weekday riders per trip decreased 28.3% and 20.7%, respectively. The FY19 weekday route with the highest trip loads was also the weekday-only route 15. The weekend route with the greatest trip loads was both the route 16, replaced with the route 18 in FY23, and the route 20.

IV. STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES ALIGNMENT

This report aligns with METRO's Service Quality and Delivery strategic priority.

V. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS/IMPACT

Revenue derived from passenger fares and passes is reflected in the FY23 operating budget. To encourage ridership growth, METRO implemented a temporary reduced fares program for the last two weeks of September in FY23, but revenues were still 64.9% greater than they were in FY22. This was largely due to a reduced fare program operating throughout the majority of Q1 in FY22 and ridership being 33.5% less. Compared to FY19, farebox revenue this quarter decreased 48.5%, though the free fares program likely contributed to this decrease. The COVID-19 pandemic fallout will adversely affect actual passenger pass and fare usage in the remainder of FY23. The magnitude of this negative impact for the fiscal year will be realized in the coming months.

VI. CHANGES FROM COMMITTEE

N/A

VII. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

There are no alternatives to consider.

VIII. ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Quarterly System Ridership Summary for FY23 Q1 July 1, 2022-September 30, 2022

Attachment B: Quarterly Average Ridership by Route Report for FY23 Q1 July 1, 2022-September 30, 2022

Attachment C: Quarterly Ridership by Week for FY23 Q1 July 1, 2022-
September 30, 2022

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IX. APPROVALS

John Urgo
Planning and Development Director

Approved as to fiscal impact:
Chuck Farmer, CFO

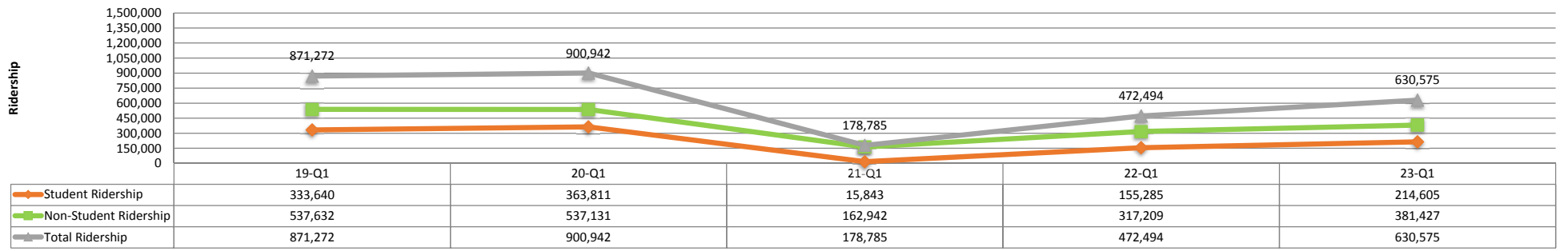
Alex Clifford, CEO/General Manager

Quarterly System Ridership Summary

FY23 Q1 (July 1 - September 30, 2022)

Calendar Operating Days			Discounted Pass Usage (Senior/Disabled)				Regular Pass Usage				
	This Year	Last Year	Quarterly Totals (Q1)				Quarterly Totals (Q1)				
			FY23 Q1	FY22 Q1	Difference	% Change	FY23 Q1	FY22 Q1	Difference	% Change	
Weekdays	64	64					Local Pass Usage	196,804	97,658	99,146	101.5%
Weekends	26	26					Hwy 17 Pass Usage	24,982	9,393	15,589	166.0%
UCSC Days of Instruction*	7	6					Total Pass Usage	221,786	107,051	114,735	267.5%
Cabrillo Days of Instruction **	24	28									
			Discounted Cash Usage (Senior/Disabled)				Regular Cash Usage				
	This Year	Last Year	Quarterly Totals (Q1)				Quarterly Totals (Q1)				
			FY23 Q1	FY22 Q1	Difference	% Change	FY23 Q1	FY22 Q1	Difference	% Change	
							Local Single Cash Fare	103,001	130,527	(27,526)	-21.1%
							Hwy 17 Single Cash Fare	7,930	11,513	(3,583)	-31.1%
							Total Cash Usage	110,931	142,040	(31,109)	-21.9%
			System Totals				Student Pass Totals				
	This Year	Last Year	Quarterly Totals (Q1)				Quarterly Totals (Q1)				
			FY23 Q1	FY22 Q1	Difference	% Change	FY23 Q1	FY22 Q1	Difference	% Change	
Local Fixed Route			596,032	448,281	147,751	33.0%	UCSC	459,212	44,444	414,768	933.2%
Highway 17 Express			34,543	24,213	10,330	42.7%	Cabrillo	17,177	1,791	15,386	859.1%
System Total			630,575	472,494	158,081	33.5%	Student Total	476,389	46,235	430,154	930.4%

First Quarter Ridership - System Totals

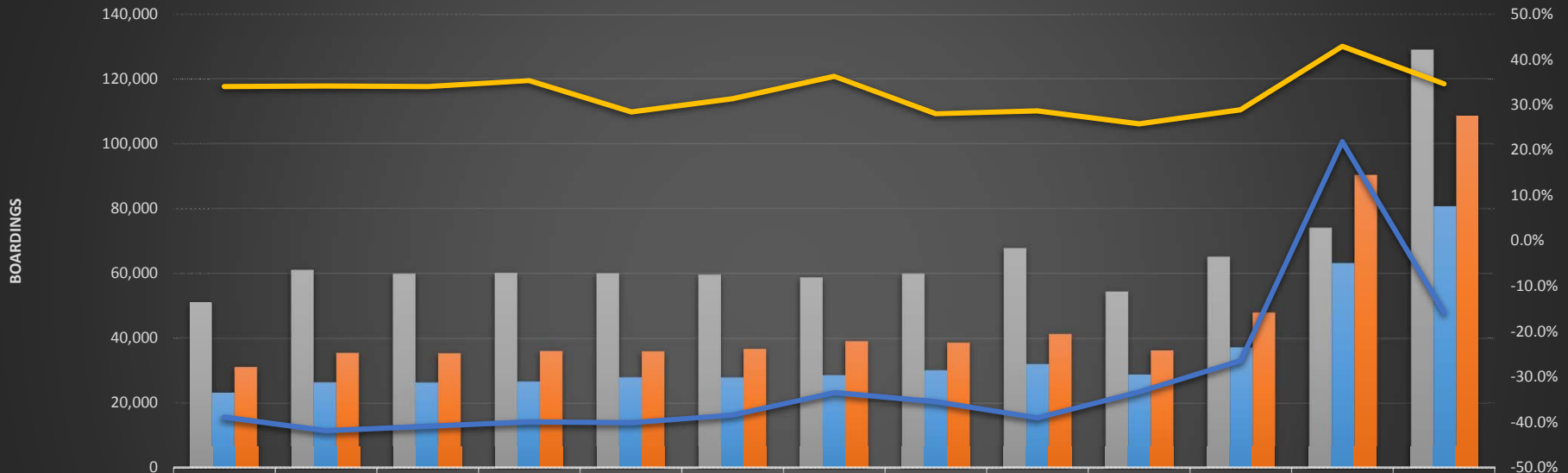


Quarterly Average Ridership by Route Report

July 1, 2022-September 30, 2022		Average Weekday Ridership per Trip					Average Weekend Ridership per Trip				
Route	Corridor	Total Riders	UCSC Riders %	Cabrillo Riders %	Discount Fares and Passes %	Regular Fares & Passes %	Total Riders	UCSC Riders %	Cabrillo Riders %	Discount Fares and Passes %	Regular Fares and Passes %
UCSC											
10	UCSC via High St.	23.4	85.7%	0.2%	3.0%	11.1%	22.2	70.7%	0.3%	2.6%	26.4%
15	UCSC via Laurel West	57.5	87.8%	0.2%	0.8%	11.3%					
18	UCSC via Main Gate-Mission	33.9	80.4%	0.6%	2.3%	16.7%	28.4	70.8%	0.5%	2.1%	26.6%
19	UCSC via Lower Bay	28.6	80.2%	0.4%	5.3%	14.1%	25.9	64.2%	0.3%	4.2%	31.3%
20	UCSC via West Side	25.4	77.5%	0.5%	6.5%	15.5%	25.2	67.8%	0.4%	4.0%	27.7%
Intercity											
35/35E	Santa CruB/Scotts Valley/SLV	11.9	2.7%	2.2%	19.6%	75.6%	13.8	2.4%	1.3%	20.7%	75.5%
69A	Capitola Road/Watsonville	19.6	4.8%	2.9%	22.4%	69.9%	17.3	7.9%	2.3%	19.0%	70.8%
69W	Cap. Road/CRillo/Watsonville	19.8	5.1%	10.2%	19.2%	65.4%	18.3	7.1%	2.2%	20.4%	70.4%
71	Santa CruB to Watsonville	21.1	3.0%	6.7%	19.6%	70.6%	15.9	2.9%	2.0%	23.7%	71.4%
North County											
40	Davenport/North Coast	5.6	3.6%	2.1%	61.4%	32.8%					
41	Bonny Doon	8.1	7.5%	1.7%	30.8%	60.0%					
42	Davenport/Bonny Doon	10.2	11.1%	0.3%	46.5%	42.0%	7.0	11.3%	1.1%	12.8%	74.8%
Live Oak											
66	Live Oak via 17th	9.8	9.7%	1.7%	41.7%	46.9%	8.5	9.7%	1.4%	25.2%	63.6%
68	Like Oak via Broadway/Portola	7.4	12.3%	1.8%	26.3%	59.6%	7.3	14.6%	1.0%	19.7%	64.7%
Local Santa Cruz											
4	Harvey West/Emeline	6.4	4.7%	2.5%	72.6%	20.2%					
Mid County											
55	Rio Del Mar	7.7	1.6%	18.0%	56.9%	23.4%	6.3	3.9%	6.1%	37.7%	52.3%
Local Watsonville											
72	Watsonville Hospital/Pinto Lake	10.4	0.7%	4.4%	17.6%	77.2%	5.8	1.3%	2.2%	27.8%	68.7%
74S	PVHS/Watsonville Hospital	9.7	0.1%	0.8%	6.5%	92.6%					
75	Green Valley Road	10.7	0.3%	4.0%	24.8%	70.9%	11.0	1.0%	1.1%	31.9%	66.0%
79	Pajaro/East Lake	5.1	0.7%	4.7%	16.2%	78.5%	5.5	0.2%	0.4%	24.8%	74.6%
WC	Watsonville Circulator	8.3	-	-	-	100.0%	7.1	-	-	-	100.0%
Express											
91X	Santa CruB/Watsonville Express	10.7	2.7%	22.8%	18.5%	55.9%					
Hwy 17	Hwy 17 Express	12.8	-	-	5.1%	94.9%	10.6	-	-	6.7%	93.3%
Avg. Ridership per Trip		16.9	32.3%	3.5%	14.9%	49.3%	15.0	25.5%	1.2%	14.3%	59.0%

24 Calendar School Days of Cabrillo
 7 Calendar School Days of UCSC
 21 Calendar School Days of SJSU

Q1 FY23-22/FY23-19 Weekly Ridership



	7/1-7/7	7/8-7/14	7/15-7/21	7/22-7/28	7/29-8/4	8/5-8/11	8/12-8/18	8/19-8/25	8/26-9/1	9/2-9/8	9/9-9/15	9/16-9/22	9/23-9/29
FY19	51,026	61,149	59,971	60,186	60,110	59,652	58,802	59,959	67,807	54,461	65,197	74,106	128,971
FY22	23,285	26,516	26,448	26,716	28,058	27,974	28,718	30,221	32,138	28,878	37,222	63,219	80,734
FY23	31,214	35,568	35,462	36,160	36,045	36,747	39,148	38,704	41,370	36,338	48,005	90,339	108,711
FY23-22% Change	34.1%	34.1%	34.1%	35.3%	28.5%	31.4%	36.3%	28.1%	28.7%	25.8%	29.0%	42.9%	34.7%
FY23-19% Change	-38.8%	-41.8%	-40.9%	-39.9%	-40.0%	-38.4%	-33.4%	-35.4%	-39.0%	-33.3%	-26.4%	21.9%	-15.7%