

MINUTES*

MAC MEETING OF FEBRUARY 19, 2025



The METRO Advisory Committee (MAC) met on Wednesday, February 19, 2025. The meeting was held as a hybrid meeting. *Minutes are “summary” minutes, not verbatim minutes.

1. **CALLED TO ORDER** at 6:01 PM by Chair Elsea.
2. **ROLL CALL** - The following MAC Members were **present**, representing a quorum:

Veronica Elsea, Chair
Joseph Martinez, Vice Chair
James Cruse
Jessica de Wit

Michael Pisano
Becky Taylor
James Von Hendy

3. **COMMUNICATIONS TO THE METRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Chair Elsea acknowledged the written communication in the packet.

Hearing nothing further, Chair Elsea moved to the next agenda item.

4. **RECEIVE AND FILE MINUTES FROM THE METRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF OCTOBER 16, 2024**

MOTION: ACCEPT AND FILE THE MINUTES FROM THE METRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF OCTOBER 16, 2024 AS PRESENTED

MOTION: PISANO

SECOND: CRUSE

MOTION PASSED WITH 6 AYES: Elsea, Martinez, Cruse, Pisano, Taylor, Von Hendy. de Wit was absent.

5. **COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE METRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Chair Elsea mentioned that she provided an oral semi-annual update to the Board of Directors (Board) at the December 20, 2024 Board meeting. Chair Elsea acknowledged the MAC members and thanked them for their active participation in the MAC meetings. She mentioned the items MAC has been working on and provided the 2025 meeting schedule. Chair Elsea reminded the Board that MAC’s purpose is to provide advisory support.

Hearing nothing further, Chair Elsea moved to the next agenda item.

6. **SERVICE PLANNING UPDATE**

- a. **Quarterly Ridership Report**

John Urgo, Chief Planning & Innovation Officer, reported that the quarterly ridership report will be presented to the Board at the Board meeting on February 28, 2025. Overall, total ridership increased about 10.5%.

- b. **Bus Stops**

- b.i. **Update on Braille Bus Stop Signage**

Officer Urgo said that there are no new updates at the moment, but we will continue to work on this issue.

During a recent call with the California Integrated Travel Project (Cal-ITP), they mentioned they are working on a project related to braille signage and are looking for agencies interested in partnering on those types of projects. METRO will be having another call with Cal-ITP to discuss this opportunity further.

c. Other Projects

c.i. Update on Reimagine METRO

Officer Urgo provided an update on Reimagine METRO. He mentioned that in March an update will be provided to the Board on the first 12 to 15 months of Reimagine METRO. Officer Urgo reminded everyone that the major service increase that was implemented in March 2024 was funded through one-time state funding, Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP). These funds are expected to last three to four years, we are currently on year two.

c.ii. Update on River Front Transit Center

Officer Urgo provided an update on the River Front Transit Center. An additional bus shelter was installed and fencing was added around the restrooms for the Bus Operators. He also mentioned that a dedicated security guard is now on site.

c.iii. Update on Pacific Station North

Officer Urgo mentioned that the Pacific Station North is scheduled to open in 2026. METRO has no additional details at this time.

c.iv. Update on Watsonville Transit Center

Officer Urgo provided an update on the Watsonville Transit Center project. It is moving along and it will include affordable housing units.

c.v. Update on Highway 1 Bus-On-Shoulder

Officer Urgo said that the Highway 1 Bus-On-Shoulder is still under construction.

Discussion ensued on service changes and bus shelters. Staff addressed all concerns.

7. UPDATE ON PARACRUZ ELIGIBILITY

Rina Solorio, Assistant Operations Manager, ParaCruz, reported that METRO has been using ADA Ride since November 2023 for ParaCruz eligibility. She introduced Art Hulscher, President of ADA Ride. Mr. Hulscher spoke to the presentation. He provided an overview of ADA Ride and focused on the ParaCruz eligibility process. The eligibility process has been the same and follows federal guidelines. Mr. Hulscher broke down the ParaCruz eligibility process into four parts: 1) Application; 2) Verification; 3) Evaluation; and 4) Notification. He also reviewed the recertification process. Discussion followed on the application process and how ADA Ride can help with completing the application. METRO's Customer Service can be reached at 831-425-8600 or ADA Ride at 877-232-7433 for assistance with completing the application.

8. UPDATE ON THE STATUS OF THE NEW METRO WEBSITE AND APPS

Margo Ross, COO, provided an update on the METRO website and apps. She reported that about 80% of the website has been completed. The remaining 20% has been delayed because we are working on a custom real-time tracker. Once that has been completed METRO will proceed to the internal testing phase. When METRO confirms that the website is working to its expectations, it will schedule the public launch. COO Ross also mentioned that we are in the contract phase of securing Transit Royale, which is the premium tier of the app. Transit Royale enables riders with enhanced trip-planning, real-time information, fare payment integration, automatic detour detection, and more, allowing for a better rider experience.

9. COMMUNICATIONS TO THE METRO CEO/GENERAL MANAGER

None.

10. COMMUNICATIONS TO THE METRO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

None.

11. ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING AGENDA

- Service Planning Updates
- Quarterly Ridership Report
- Update on Reimagine METRO
- Update on Transit Centers (Watsonville Transit Center, Pacific Station North, & River Front Transit Center)
- Update on Mobility Training Coordinator
- Preliminary Budget Review
- Update on Website & Apps

12. DISTRIBUTION OF VOUCHERS

Vouchers distributed by Elizabeth Rocha, Administrative Specialist.

13. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING

Chair Elsea announced the next MAC meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 16, 2025 at 6:00 PM at the METRO Admin Office, 110 Vernon Street, Santa Cruz.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Elsea adjourned the meeting at 7:36 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Rocha
Administrative Specialist