

# Does Santa Cruz County need podcars? (Personal Rapid Transit - PRT)



Presentation slides, Agenda, and facilitator script are on-line at  
[MilpitasPRT.com/cruzforum](http://MilpitasPRT.com/cruzforum)

# Does Santa Cruz County need podcars?

A public conversation about congestion, transit, and better transportation solutions.

6:30 pm - lobby opens with displays

7:00 pm - Welcome and Meeting Rules

7:10 pm - Where We Are, and How We Got Here

7:15 pm - Common Assents

7:20 pm - Intro to Mobility Options

7:25 pm - Options Moving Forward

7:40 pm - Does Santa Cruz County need podcars?

8:00 pm - Moving Forward (commitments)

8:20 pm - Wrap Up and Requests

8:30 pm - end of event; start of clean-up

# Welcome and Introductions

Moderator: **Stacy Hughes** (CRC trainer)

Panelists:

- **Rob Means** (LoopWorks, podcar advocate)
- **Lani Faulkner** (Equity Transit - Tránsito de Equidad)
- **Elaine Johnson** (Housing Santa Cruz County, NAACP Santa Cruz County Branch)
- **Hannah Fairbairn** (Vista Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired)
- **Matt Farrell** (Friends of the Rail & Trail)

# Meeting Rules

These **GROUND RULES** will support a civil discussion.

- **Step up / Step back** means shy people are urged to talk, and talkative ones to allow them.
- **Try on the process** asks you to suspend judgment about this process until later.
- **Don't interrupt / raise hands**
- **Turn off cell phones**
- **Leave your ego at the door.** We are here about our community and its future.
- **Lead by example**

# Corridors, Sprawl, and Networks



# Common Assents

- **Our Climate Crisis is worsening quickly.**
- **Shifting 10% of trips to public transit could substantially reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.**
- **Santa Cruzans want more and better public transit.**
- **RTC and METRO operations are currently funded with revenue from these sources at approximately these percentages:**
  1. 40% = Local sales taxes, especially Measure D
  2. 10% to 12% = Passenger fares (including UCSC and Cabrillo College student fees)
  3. 20% = California STA (State Transportation Agency) and TDA (Transportation Development Act)
  4. 12% = California TIRCP (Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program)
  5. 14% = Federal FTA (Federal Transit Administration)
  6. 2% (or probably more) = other misc

# Mobility Options

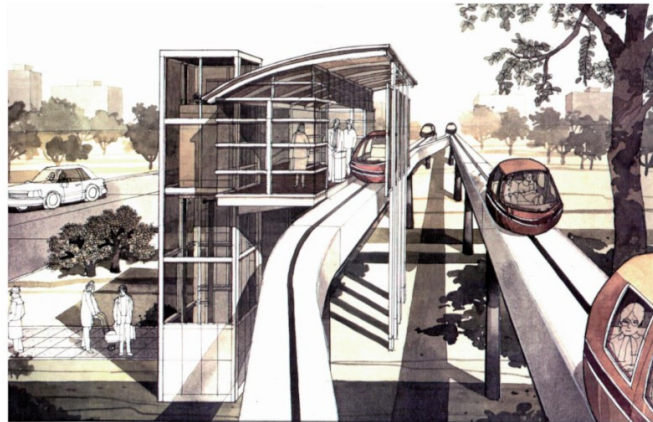
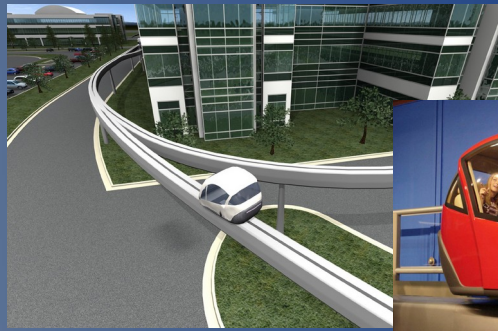
- Micro Transit (feet, bikes, scooters, BCycle)
- Personal Automobile
- Shared Cars (taxi cab, Uber/Lyft, car share)
- Buses and Bus Rapid Transit
- Light Rail Transit
- Commuter Rail/Subway (BART)
- Autonomous/Driverless Vehicles (robo-taxis)
- Personal Rapid Transit (PRT, podcars)
- Air Taxis

# Mobility Options

- Micro Transit (feet, bikes, scooters, BCycle)
- ~~Personal Automobile~~
- Shared Cars (taxi cab, Uber/Lyft, car share)
- Buses and Bus Rapid Transit
- ~~Light Rail Transit~~
- ~~Commuter Rail/Subway (BART)~~
- Autonomous/Driverless Vehicles (robo-taxis in **uncongested areas**)
- Personal Rapid Transit (PRT or podcars in **congested areas**)
- ~~Air Taxis~~

# PRT designs use:

- Guideways
- Cabs
- Podcar Stops
- Computer Control



# Guideway Designs



# PRT Benefits

- quicker and safer than driving
- energy efficient
- dependable trip time
- trip-time options (reading, working, relaxing)
- low-cost O&M
- Anyone can use it (young, old, disabled)
- Easy to use – get in and go (like elevator)

# Panel Discussion

## Does Santa Cruz County need podcars?

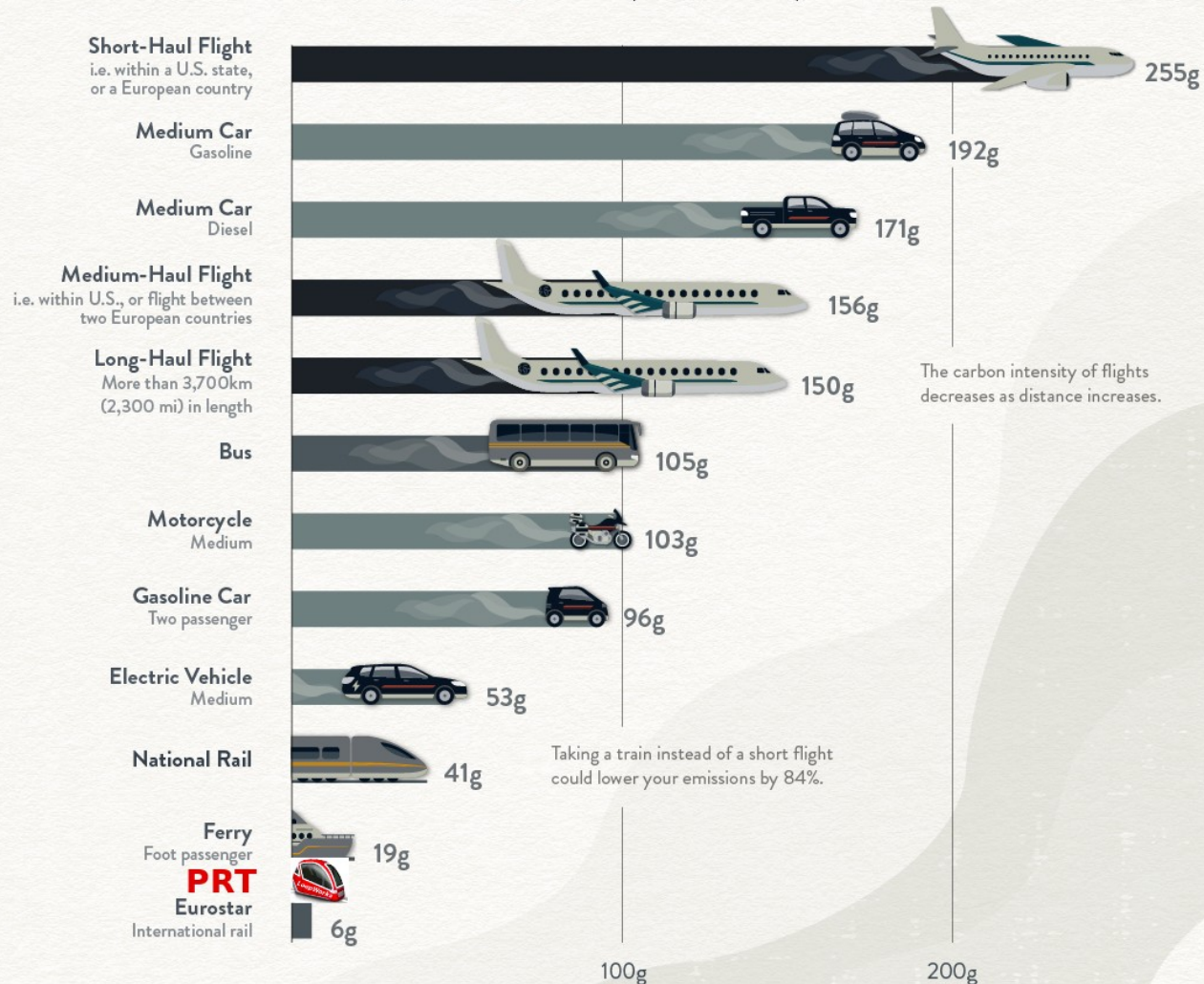
Some factors to consider:

- Congestion
- Climate Crisis
- Total trip time on transit
- Podcar costs (CapEx, O&M)
- Public transit costs and revenue
- Podcar impacts to existing options

# The Carbon Cost of Transportation

What's the lowest-carbon method of transportation? Here's the carbon footprint of travel for different vehicles, measured in grams of carbon dioxide equivalents per passenger-kilometer.

● Air Travel ● Private Transport ● Public Transport



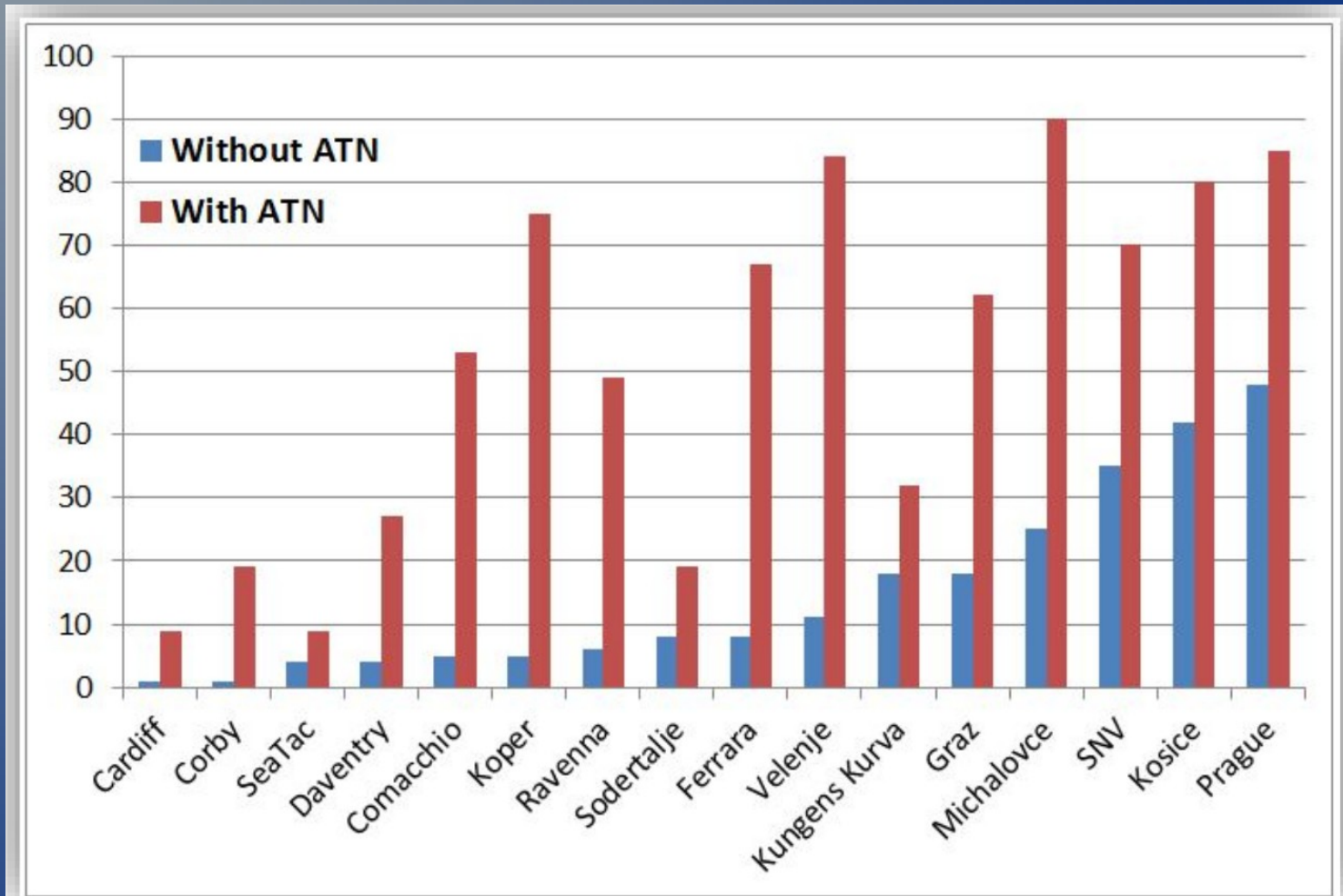
Source: UK Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy via Our World in Data

Flight labels have been adjusted to be more relevant to an international audience, from the original UK-based source.



# Podcar impacts to existing options

\*\*\* PRT induces a **ridership boom** for existing transit. \*\*\*  
(ATN = Automated Transit Network = PRT, GRT, or APM)



Impact of ATN on transit mode share

# METRO Financial Overview

## Budget in Brief

The adopted budget for FY2026 totals \$82.9 million for operations and \$84.2 million for capital investments. The combined spending authority in this budget is \$167.2 million. (Note: the [capital budget](#) is appropriated outside of the operating budget as consistent with accounting principles for enterprise funds.) The adopted financial plan is summarized below:

<b>Financial Plan Overview</b> (thousands)	<b>FY24</b> <b>Actual</b>	<b>FY25</b> <b>Budget</b>	<b>FY26</b> <b>Budget</b>	<b>Increase/ (Decrease)</b>		<b>FY27</b> <b>Plan</b>
				<b>\$ Var</b>	<b>% Var</b>	
<b>Total Revenue Sources</b>	\$ 74,908	\$ 81,863	\$ 78,905	(\$ 2,958)	(3.6%)	\$ 83,873
<b>Total Expenses</b>	\$ 65,131	\$ 78,969	\$ 82,919	\$ 3,949	5.0%	\$ 86,315
<b>Transfers to Capital</b> (Bus Replacement Fund)	\$ 2,796	\$ 2,351	\$ 2,578	\$ 227	9.7%	\$ 2,444
<b>Transfers to/ (from) Operating and Capital Reserves</b>						
Operating & Capital Reserve Fund	7,011	5,245	1,849	(3,396)	(64.7%)	1,697
UAL & OPEB	2,000	2,000	-	(2,000)	(100.0%)	-
Fuel Tax Credit	355	146	-	(146)	(100.0%)	-
Covid 19 Recovery Fund	2,385	6,847	8,441	1,593	23.3%	6,583
<b>Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>\$ -</b>

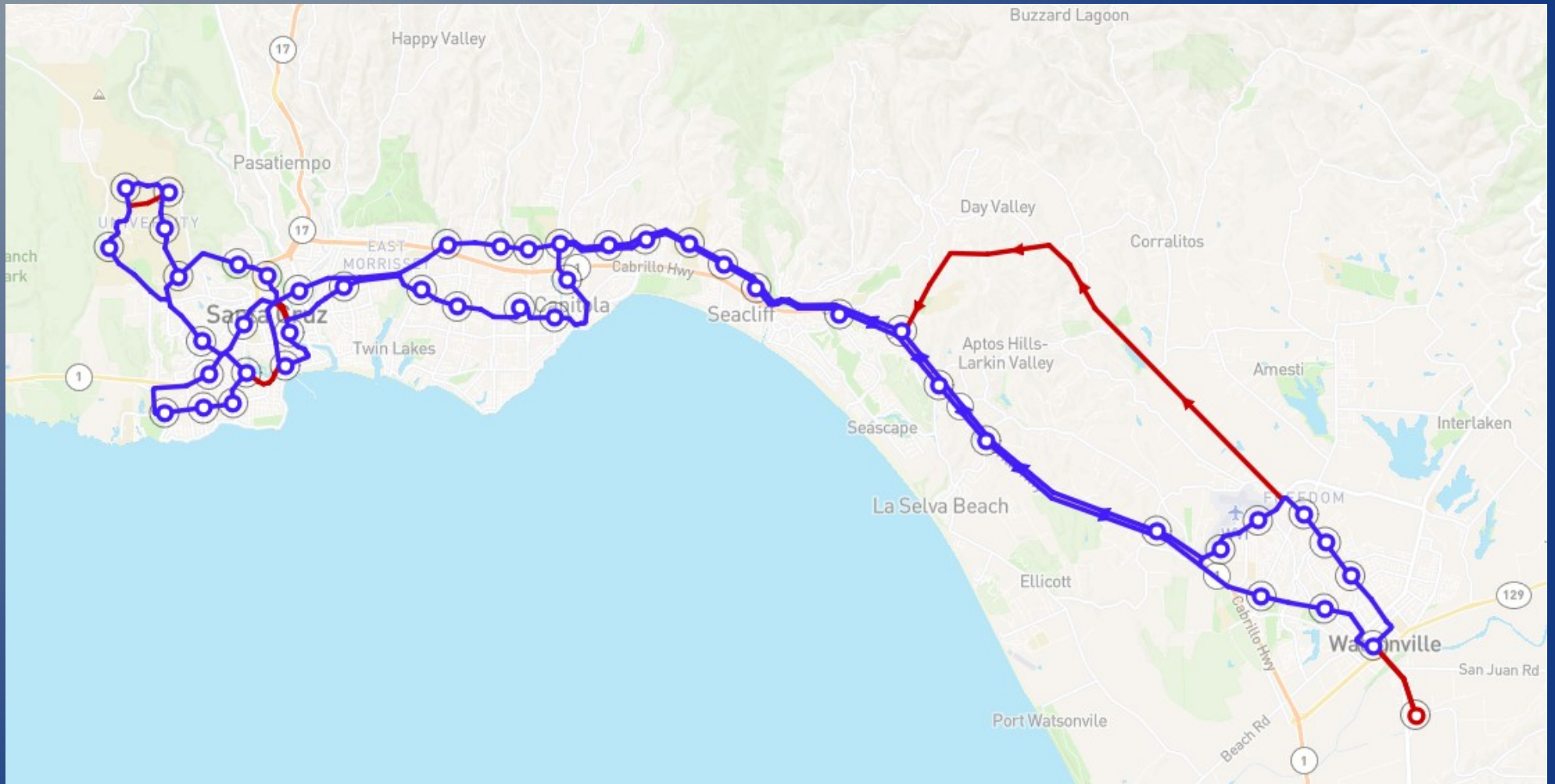
# METRO Operating Budget

Santa Cruz Metro – FY 2026-27 Budget and Financial Plan

## Operating Budget

(in thousands)	FY24 Budget	FY25 Budget	FY26 Proposed	\$ Difference FY 25 to 26	% Difference FY 25 to 26	FY27 Plan
<b>Operating Revenue</b>						
Passenger Fares	\$ 3,080	\$ 2,703	\$ 3,118	\$ 415	15.4%	\$ 3,367
Special Transit Fares	6,842	6,776	7,576	800	11.8%	7,811
<b>Total Operating Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 9,922</b>	<b>\$ 9,479</b>	<b>\$ 10,694</b>	<b>\$ 1,215</b>	<b>12.8%</b>	<b>\$ 11,178</b>
<b>Operating Expense</b>						
Personnel Costs	\$ 39,428	\$ 52,830	\$ 52,221	\$ (609)	(1.2%)	\$ 55,220
Non-Personnel Costs	17,706	16,772	20,208	3,436	20.5%	19,428
<b>Total Operating Expense</b>	<b>\$ 57,134</b>	<b>\$ 69,602</b>	<b>\$ 72,429</b>	<b>\$ 2,827</b>	<b>4.1%</b>	<b>\$ 74,648</b>
Operating Surplus (Deficit)	\$ (47,213)	\$ (60,123)	\$ (61,735)	\$ (1,612)	2.7%	\$ (63,470)
<i>Farebox Recovery</i>	17.4%	13.6%	14.8%			15.0%
<b>Non-Operating Revenue (Expense)</b>						
Sales Tax	\$ 31,808	\$ 31,808	\$ 30,536	\$ (1,272)	(4.0%)	\$ 37,145
Grants	29,628	38,080	35,432	(2,648)	(7.0%)	33,800
Retiree Obligations	(3,776)	(4,524)	(4,992)	(468)	10.3%	(5,561)
Debt Payments	(4,173)	(4,843)	(5,497)	(654)	13.5%	(6,105)
All Other	1,240	2,496	2,243	(253)	(10.1%)	1,749
<b>Total Non-Operating Revenue (Expense)</b>	<b>\$ 54,727</b>	<b>\$ 63,017</b>	<b>\$ 57,722</b>	<b>\$ (5,295)</b>	<b>(8.4%)</b>	<b>\$ 61,029</b>
Transfers and Other	\$ (7,514)	\$ (2,894)	\$ 4,014	\$ 6,908	(238.7%)	\$ 2,442
<b>Operating Surplus / Deficit after Transfers</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>		<b>\$ -</b>

# PRT Master Plan



# *Moving Forward*

Unified Corridor Investment Study (UCIS) goal is to “develop a sustainable transportation system which seeks to maximize benefits in terms of the natural environment, economic vitality, health and equity.”

**Our community needs alternatives to gridlock that can be implemented soon.**

*Forum slides, script, & video at*

***MilpitasPRT.com/cruzforum***

**Contact us**

**--- SantaCruzPRT.org ---**

**SantaCruzPRT.org/get-involved/contact/**