

# Building A Better Bus Network

CALACT 2023 Spring Conference

Carl Sedoryk, CEO  
Monterey-Salinas Transit

April 18, 2023



# MST By The Numbers

- 2 major urban areas – Monterey Peninsula and Salinas
- Multiple rural centers throughout the Salinas Valley
- 435,000 population
- 162 buses, 300 direct and contract employees
- \$58.7M FY 23 Operating Budget
  - FY 2019 4.5M boardings;
  - FY 2023 2.5M boardings (est)
- Fares were based on route distance per trip:  
\$1.50 / \$2.50 / \$3.50

December 2019

259 sq mi



March 2020

159 sq mi



- No local sales tax to support fixed route service – heavy dependence on partnerships
- 25% loss of hospitality workers; 30% drop in local college enrollment
- Partnerships with military ended March 2020 and not reinstated

# COVID-19 Made Us Respond to Social Inequities...



**Donated PPE/Test Kits**

**Delivered Meals**

**Mobile WiFi To  
Underserved Residents**

**Donated Buses for Mobile  
Testing / Vaccination**

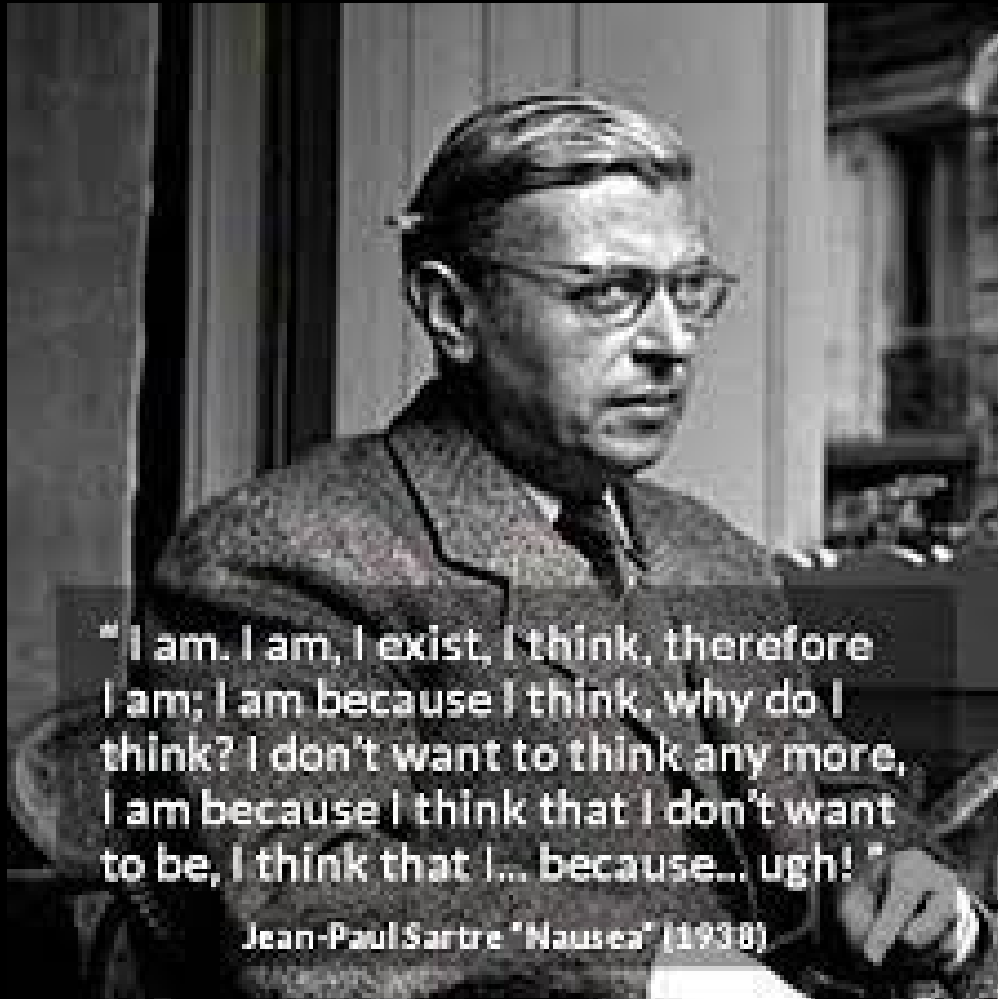
**Free Rides with Proof of  
Vaccination and Boosters**

**Community Vaccination  
Events at MST Facilities**

**Contactless Fare Payment**

...And Made Us Ask Existential Questions Like...

Why do we exist??



Partnerships with Military, Colleges, Universities, and Non-Profits and related riders disappeared virtually overnight.

Meanwhile...

Ridership dropped least in areas of high unemployment, low income, and high minority populations.

# Re examining our Vision, Values, Strategies



# MST Mission, Values, and Vision

➤ Mission: What lies at our heart?

**Advocating and delivering quality public transportation as a leader within our community and within our industry.**

➤ Values: The Truths About Us

- **Safety:** Caring for others, in all we do.
- **Friendliness:** Welcoming, helpful, and understanding.
- **Dependability:** Earning your trust, ever day.
- **Diversity:** Valuing our differences.
- **Achievement:** Aspiring to be better.

➤ Brand Vision: The Goals That Drive And Differentiate Us From Others

**Connecting communities. Creating Opportunity. Being kind to our planet.**

# Developing Strategies To Match The Vision

## Connecting Communities

- Better Bus Network
- Mobility Programs
- Vanpool Program

## Creating Opportunity

- Fare Capping
- College EcoSmart Pass
- Contactless Payments for Unbanked

## Being Kind To Our Planet

- SURF! Busway & Bus Rapid Transit
- Renewable Fuels
- Zero Emission Bus Plan



# The Better Bus Network



Save  
Time



Save  
Money



Save  
Our  
Planet

DEC  
10  
2022

More  
information  
[mst.org](http://mst.org)



- 1. 20 Years since last comprehensive system wide review**
  - Multiple interim reviews within specific urban / rural areas occurred every 5 years**
- 2. Most lines operating at low frequency overlaid with special partner funded services**
- 3. Low Frequency routes and lack of timed transfers resulted in longer trip times**
- 4. Where people live and work has changed with most growth occurring in Salinas Valley**
- 5. Demographics show unmet demand in City of Salinas**
- 6. The pandemic brought equity issues in to focus**



# The Better Bus Network



Save Time



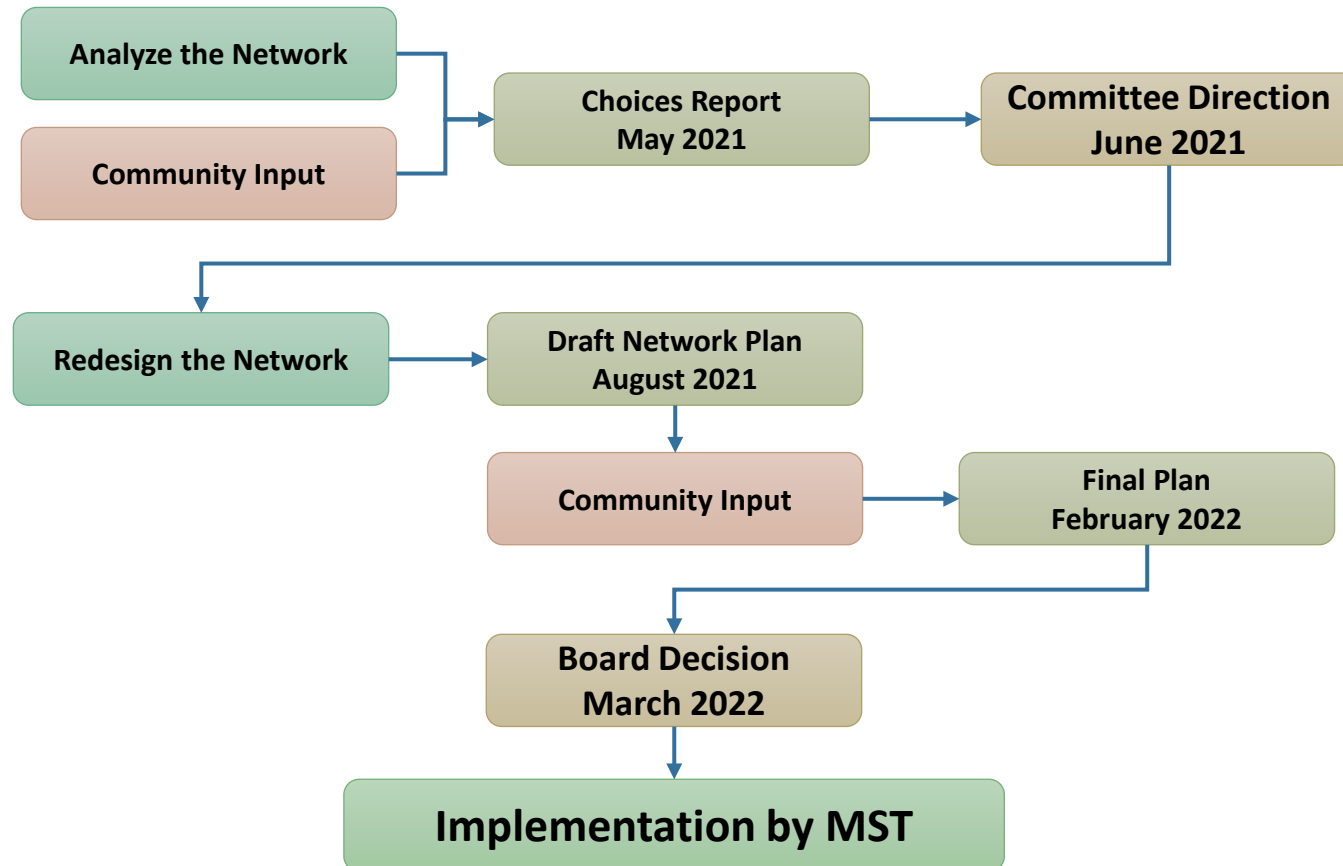
Save Money



Save Our Planet

DEC  
10  
2022

More information  
[mst.org](http://mst.org)





# The Better Bus Network



Save Time



Save Money



Save Our Planet

DEC 10 2022

More information [mst.org](http://mst.org)



## Extremely or Very Important for MST to provide

Routes tailored to needs of elderly and disabled	93%
Services where many people lack vehicles	90%
Routes that get workers to job centers	83%
Service to colleges and universities	83%
Routes that get people to shopping and appts	78%
Services to high schools	72%
Tourism focused services to reduce traffic	57%
Services to all regardless of ridership demand	54%

- **Stakeholder groups.** Small group interviews were conducted with over 80 community groups to secure their input regarding transit needs and priorities.
- **Regular MST riders.** Nine focus groups were conducted with English and Spanish-speaking MST riders to explore their experiences with and priorities for the transit network.
- **Members of the general public.** A statistically representative survey of 500 households throughout Monterey County was conducted via telephone, to assess how the general population believes MST should allocate services and resources.



# The Better Bus Network



Save  
Time



Save  
Money



Save  
Our  
Planet

DEC  
10  
2022

More  
information  
[mst.org](https://mst.org)



- Early rider feedback supports need for shorter, faster trips
- Board had to choose how to balance:
  - demand vs coverage / local vs regional /equality vs equity
- Board direction focus service on:
  - Highest need areas
  - High ridership and transit demand
  - Better Geographic balance towards work and home
- Developed a High, **Medium**, and Low service model based on resources



# The Better Bus Network



Save  
Time



Save  
Money



Save  
Our  
Planet

DEC  
10  
2022

More  
information  
[mst.org](https://mst.org)



Features of the new bus system:

- **Ridership over coverage**: focusing better and more frequent service where more people live and work rather than spreading minimal service to as many areas of the County as possible
- **Equity over equality**: targeting the areas that have the greatest need for public transit rather than spreading service equally among the population
- **Regional balance** of transit service



## Rebalance services

- 40% Monterey-Seaside
- 40% Greater Salinas
- 20% Regional

## Focus on High Demand

## Focus on High Need

## More Direct Routes

## Avg 30 min decrease in travel time

## 20% increase in residents and jobs near service 30 min frequency or better

## Lower Fares (\$2 / 2 hours)

## Subsidized Vanpools

## 5-minute transfer windows

## Timed Transfers

### Transbordos Programados



#### Transfer location

Ubicación de transbordo

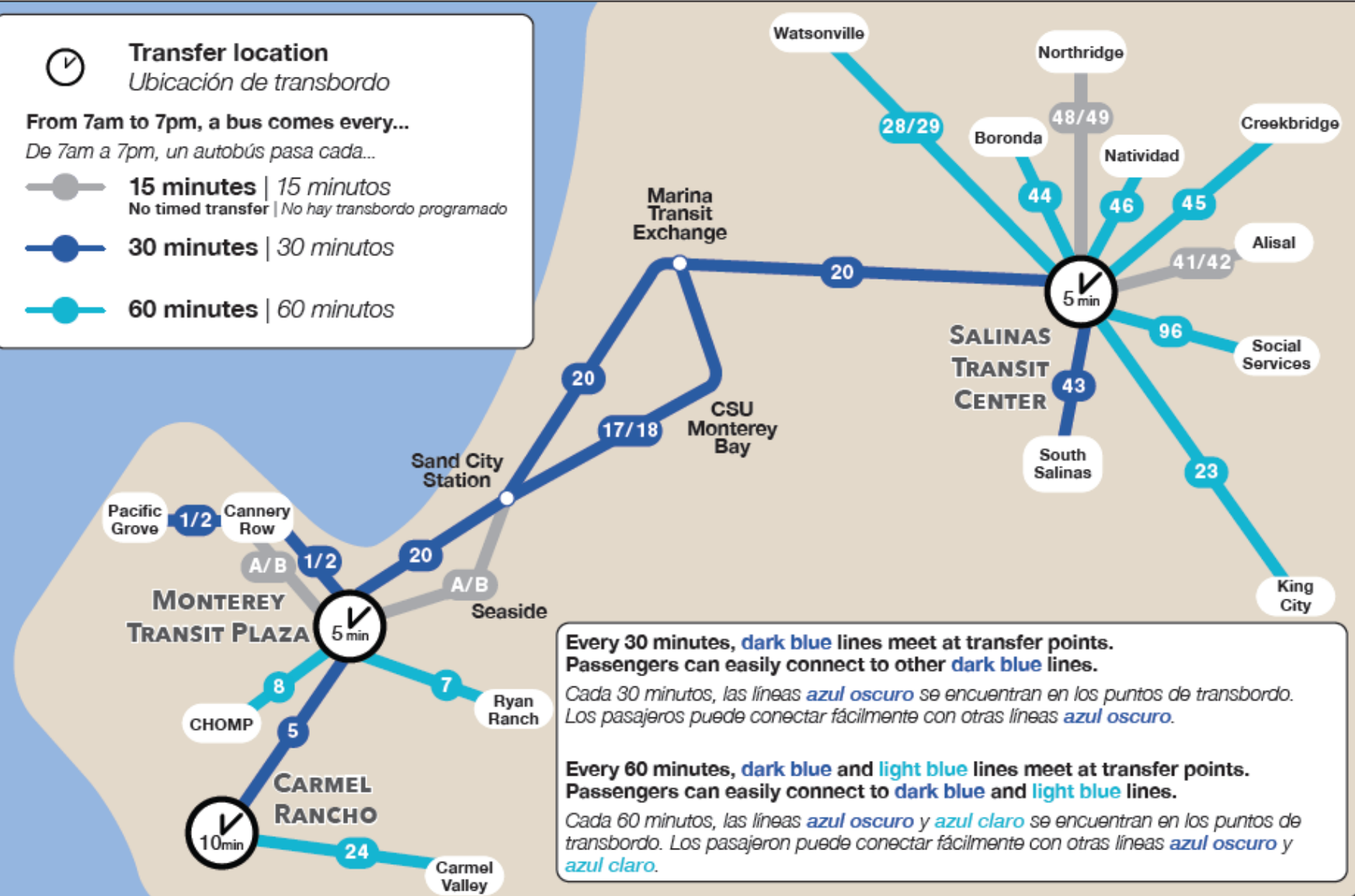
From 7am to 7pm, a bus comes every...

De 7am a 7pm, un autobús pasa cada...

—●— 15 minutes | 15 minutos  
No timed transfer | No hay transbordo programado

—●— 30 minutes | 30 minutos

—●— 60 minutes | 60 minutos







# The Better Bus Network



Save Time



Save Money



Save Our Planet

**DEC 10 2022**

More information  
[mst.org](http://mst.org)



Near service 30 minutes or better	Peninsula UZA		Salinas UZA	
	Before	After	Before	After
<b>Residents</b>	39%	51%	44%	66%
<b>Jobs</b>	41%	54%	29%	54%
<b>Persons of Color</b>	55%	62%	47%	66%
<b>Persons in Poverty</b>	55%	62%	55%	74%



# The Better Bus Network



Save Time



Save Money



Save Our Planet

DEC  
10  
2022

More information  
[mst.org](http://mst.org)



## GETTING THE WORD OUT

- [www.mst/bbn](http://www.mst/bbn)
- Press Release
- Social media posts
- Newspaper advertisements
- Internal bus advertisements (“car cards”)
- External bus advertisements
- A- frames at transit centers and major stops in south county
- Notifications at customer service windows
- Inactive bus stop notifications
- Onboard audio announcements in English and Spanish
- Onboard decals
- In-person assistance at transit centers beginning December 10th
- MST Board Members



# Trip Planner Tool Demonstration



MST Home

Better Bus Network

Contact Us

## Explore the MST Better Bus Network

### How Could Your Trip Change?

King City, California, Un...

Natividad Medical Cent...



#### Arrive By

01:00 PM

Weekday

### Options with the MST Better Bus Network



10:48 am - 12:34 pm

Line 23 ▶ Line 46

1 hr 46 min

[Show Detail](#)



09:48 am - 11:50 am

Line 23 ▶ Line 41

2 hr 2 min



08:48 am - 10:50 am

Line 23 ▶ Line 41

2 hr 2 min

### Options with the Old MST Network



10:31 am - 12:56 pm

Line 23 ▶ Line 95

2 hr 25 min

[Show Detail](#)



09:31 am - 12:55 pm

Line 23 ▶ Line 41

3 hr 24 min



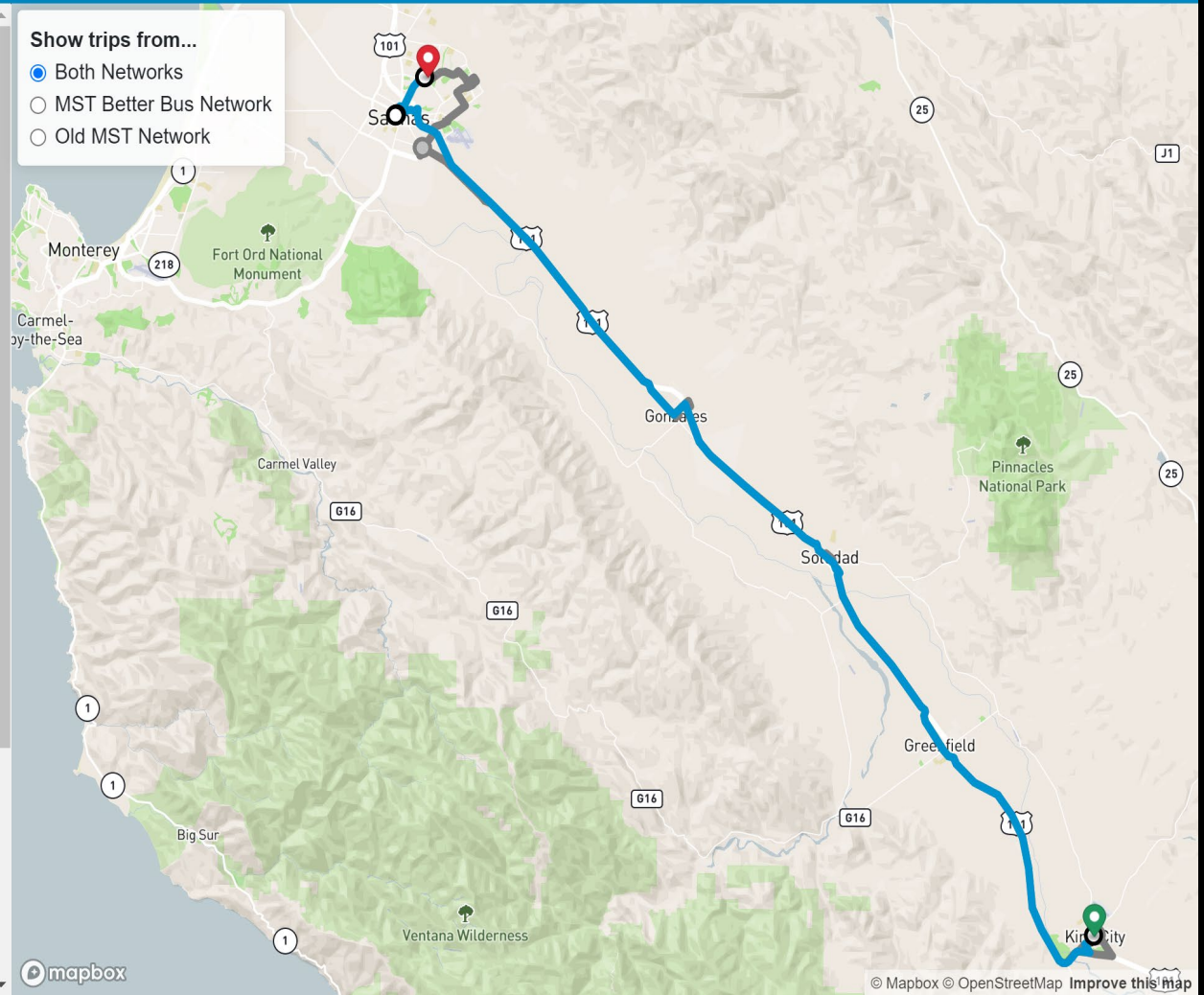
08:30 am - 11:56 am

#### Show trips from...

Both Networks

MST Better Bus Network

Old MST Network



© Mapbox © OpenStreetMap Improve this map

Save Money

DEC  
10  
2022

\$2 | 2  
Hours

Anywhere, Anytime



The Better Bus Network



Save Time



Save Money



Save Our Planet



For more information scan this QR code or go to [mst.org](http://mst.org)



GoPasses	Regular	Dec 10
Monthly Pass	\$95.00	\$70.00
Weekly Pass	\$25.00	\$20.00
Day Pass	\$10.00	\$6.00

98% Cash paying passengers will see a 36% reduction

Save Money

DEC  
10  
2022

\$2 | 2  
Hours

Anywhere, Anytime



The Better Bus Network



Save  
Time



Save  
Money



Save  
Our  
Planet



For more  
information  
scan this  
QR code  
or go to  
[mst.org](http://mst.org)

## Initial Results

- 70% Increase in Contactless Trips
- 47% Increase Contactless Fare Capped Trips
- 10% of Cash Trips used 2-hour fare cap
- 36.4% Reduction in Coin
- 12.9% Reduction in Bills
- 15.8% Reduction in MST Passes
- 1% decrease in Farebox recovery



# The Better Bus Network



Save Time



Save Money



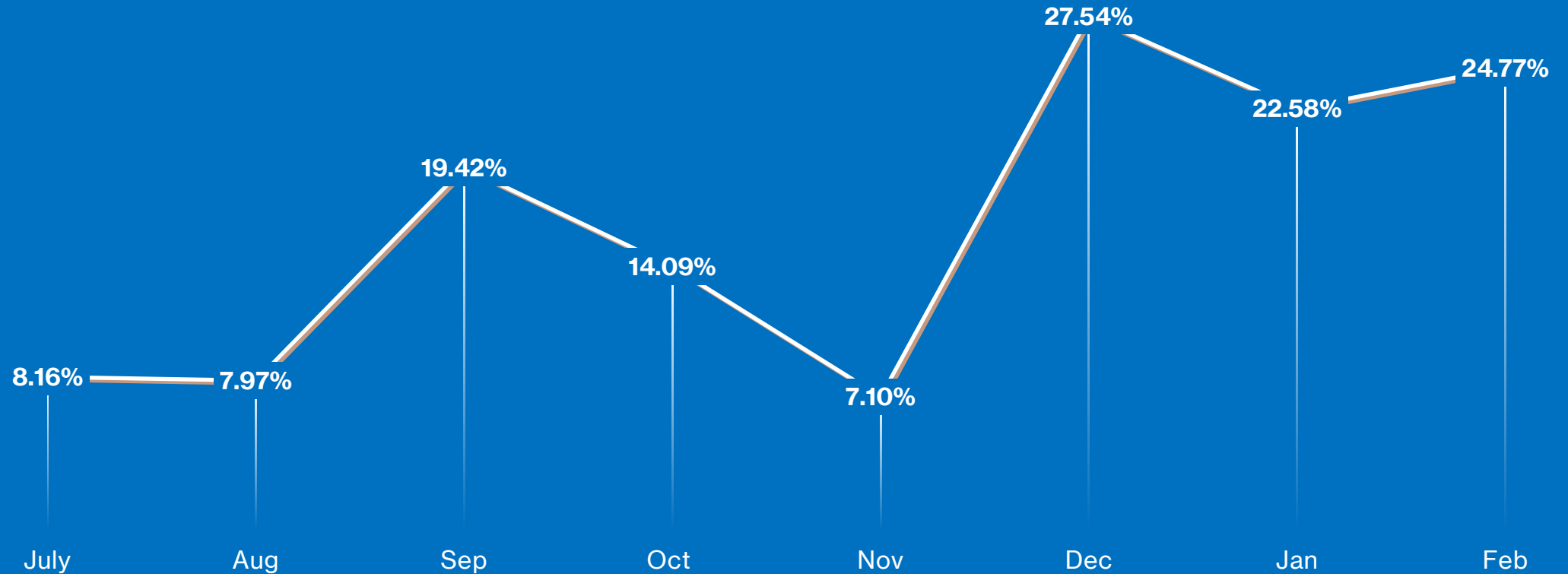
Save Our Planet

DEC  
10  
2022

More information  
[mst.org](http://mst.org)



## 25% INCREASE IN BOARDINGS FROM PREVIOUS YEAR





# The Better Bus Network



Save  
Time



Save  
Money



Save  
Our  
Planet

DEC  
10  
2022

More  
information  
[mst.org](http://mst.org)



## Measuring Our Success

- Board no longer interested in Pre COVID comparions
- Board reports focus on new metrics
  - People - impact on communities we serve
  - Planet - GHG and VMT reductions
  - Performance - safety, dependability, fiscal, snd boardings



**TEAMWORK!**

**Thank you!**

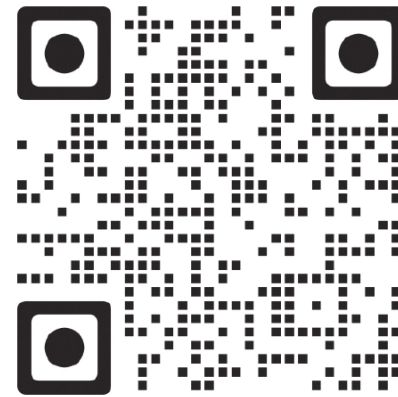
Michelle Overmeyer  
Director of Planning and Innovation  
[movermeyer@mst.org](mailto:movermeyer@mst.org)

Service  
Changes  
Start



**DEC  
10  
2022**

# The Better Bus Network



For more information  
scan this QR code  
or go to **mst.org**

