

An abstract graphic in the top right corner consisting of several overlapping, semi-transparent organic shapes in shades of purple, blue, green, brown, red, and yellow.

# Bridge to Fareless Board Report

## MOTION 22 – REPORT BACK

June 2024

# Background

- > September 2020: Fareless System Initiative (FSI) Task Force created to study the feasibility of removing fares for our most vulnerable riders.
- > May 2021: Motion 45 directed CEO to implement FSI, subject to a final funding plan, while pursuing cost-sharing agreements, and reporting to the Board on the development, launch, and performance.
- > September 2021: Motion 40 directed staff to double LIFE enrollment, while streamlining and improving the program
- > April 2024: Motion 22 requested staff to report back in June 2024 on opportunities to expand LIFE program enrollment and utilization.
- > This report is an update in response to Motion 22.



# Program Improvements

- ✓ Simplified and streamlined the loading of LIFE 20 free rides LIFE customer profile on taptogo.net.
- ✓ TAP Vendor locator map updated to include "LIFE" in TAP vendor details for vendors that offer LIFE passes.
- ✓ Beginning in April 2024, an email campaign was initiated to remind LIFE participants to load their free LIFE 20-ride passes. This will be an ongoing effort.
- ✓ In April, TAP began hosting TAP Vendor Pop-up events with the LIFE program to inform customers where to load discounted passes in their neighborhood.
- ✓ TAP has begun recruiting new TAP vendors in Equity focused communities
- ✓ LIFE Program administrator can now load LIFE 20-ride passes at their office and at events for customers who are already enrolled in the program to improve the customer experience as well as awareness of monthly program benefits.
- ✓ Future: Adding the 20-ride pass to be loaded on a LIFE TAP card at Ticket Vending Machines

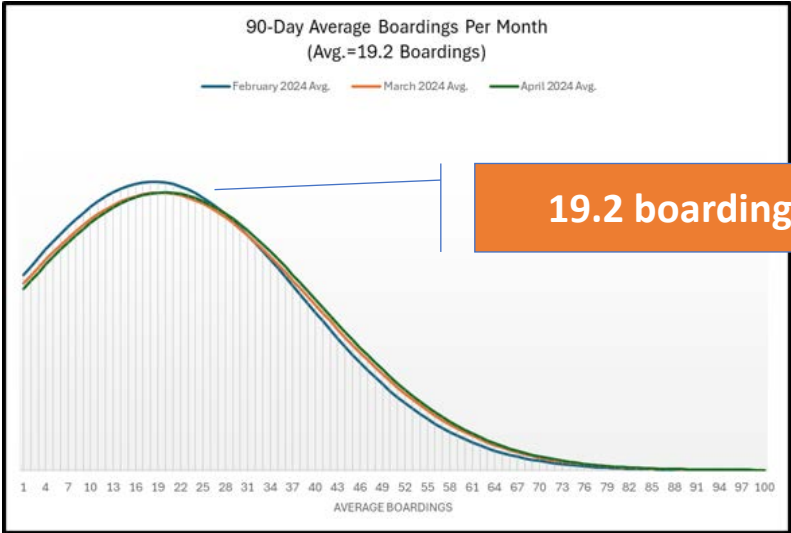
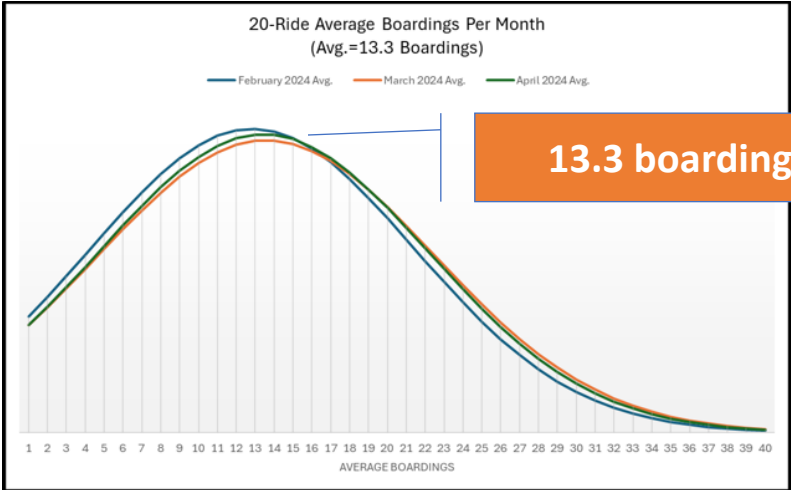
Average  
Weekly  
Enrollments:  
**2000**

Total LIFE  
Enrollments:  
**335,000+**



- Dedicated DPSS/LIFE Enrollment Portal
- Volunteer DPSS/LIFE Enrollment Agents at 18 DPSS Offices

# PROGRAM ANALYSIS



Save on fares  
with LIFE.

LIFE Program	Increase of Active Users	All Who Qualify
Enrollment	335,820	335,820
Active Users	167,910	335,820
Estimated # Annual Trips (based on avg. of 19 trips per month)	38 million	77 million
Estimated Costs	\$64.0 Million	\$123.3 Million

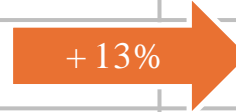
- ▶ All who Qualify: All currently enrolled in LIFE (335,820)
- ▶ Active users increased usage (half and total)
- ▶ Costs would increase if additional participants enroll in LIFE

# PROGRAM ANALYSIS

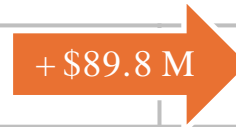


	LIFE Program	LIFE Unlimited FREE
FREE Trips	20 trips each month	Unlimited
Who Benefits	87% of enrolled riders	100% of enrolled riders
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allows for investments in service that can better serve low-income communities</li> <li>Ensures that many riders receive assistance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eliminate cost barriers</li> <li>Improves access to opportunity</li> </ul>

INCREASE  
RIDERSHIP



Cost	\$33.5 Million	\$64 Million - \$123.3 Million
Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moderately less investments in service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invests in free fares over current service and future service improvements</li> <li>Discontinue program if funding not available</li> <li>Potential misuse of system</li> <li>Without funding, tradeoffs will need to be made to continue program</li> </ul>
Risk Mitigation Efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Targeted and moderate subsidies help to ensure sustainability of the program &amp; many riders have assistance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and secure long-term funding</li> </ul>





# CHALLENGES



LIFE is a regional program

Impacts transit operators throughout LA County (CONSENSUS)



Unlimited FREE rides will negatively impact fare revenues for all transit operators



Significant cost increases (est. \$30.5M- \$89.8M annually)

No dedicated funding, LIFE program may not be sustainable



Cuts in operating budget

Negatively impact the quality & frequency of service

Unintentionally limit mobility options for those that need it the most



Budget shortfalls can impact transit access and opportunities undermining the main purpose of the LIFE Program

# REPLACEMENT REVENUES



## Local Return

- Eligible for transit fare subsidies
- No sunset sales tax
- Potential: \$90 million annually (10% of Local Return)



## Deloitte Report

- Future congestion pricing
- Voluntary Express Lanes toll round-up
- Fees to Metro contracts



## Federal & State Funding

- Challenging
- Does not offer long-term solutions – May not be consistently available every year
- Compete with other transit needs and other vital public services (i.e. education and healthcare)

# Next Steps

- ✓ Staff will continue to collaborate with social benefits programs and other transit agencies throughout LA County to expand LIFE program participation in ways that also preserve service and reliability.
- ✓ Additionally, staff will work to unify the qualifying senior age across the region to simplify and expand transit access for older adults. We will also continue to analyze lowering the enrollment requirement from full-time to part-time for college and vocational students to increase eligibility and potentially ridership. These efforts aim to enhance equitable access to affordable transit for all community members.
- ✓ Staff will conduct outreach with local cities and Councils of Government within Los Angeles County to express the importance of using Local Return and other dollars to subsidize transit.