



LIFE Program Motion 49 Response: Expanding the LIFE Program Through Technology

April 17, 2025

Operations, Safety, And Customer Experience Committee



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Board Motion Background

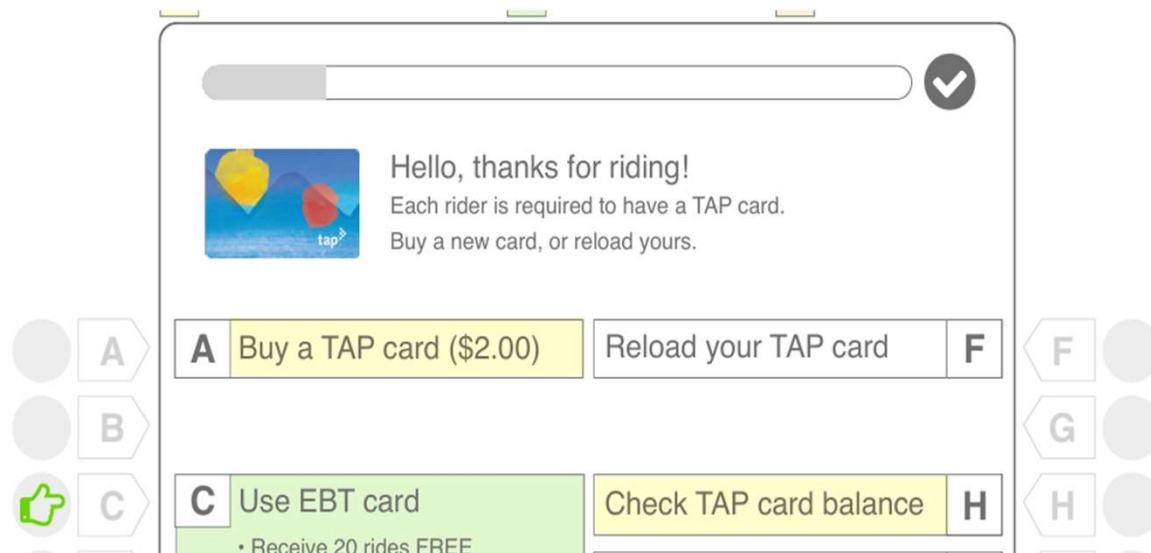
- June 27, 2024 - Metro Board approved TAP Plus Payment Program
- July 25, 2024 - Metro Board passed Motion 49, Expanding the LIFE Program through Technology, which asked staff to:
 1. Include social benefit cards as fare media as part of Phase II account-based system launch of TAP Plus.
 2. Coordinate with relevant federal, state, and County agencies, such as the Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services (DPSS), to make necessary technical and system upgrades to TAP
 3. Enroll members into LIFE upon qualification without undergoing an additional LIFE application
 4. Enable social benefit cards (when upgraded to contactless EMV - Europay, Master card, Visa) to be used in lieu of Metro fare media to access the Metro's system and LIFE's free and discounted rides.

Report Update

- Customer Experience collaborated with TAP and DPSS to identify social benefit programs (CalWorks, CalFresh, and Medi-Cal) as potential options for automatic LIFE enrollment and EBT card utilization as a fare media on the Metro system.
- DPSS and California Department of Social Services (CDSS) determined that they cannot legally share data with Metro under the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) rules. Data sharing is only allowed for the purpose of determining SNAP eligibility.
- California privacy laws and DPSS policies also prevent data sharing.
- Without DPSS sharing some data, such as name, address, etc., TAP is unable to implement auto-enrollment for eligible EBT customers.
- Even after implementation of TAP Plus, when Metro's fare system will recognize credit and debit cards for payments, EBT cards would need to be registered via web to function as fare media for specific fares/discounts.

Resolution

- **Approve verification of valid Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards for LIFE discounts on *taptogo.net* and at Ticket Vending Machines (TVMs).**
- Once the EBT card is validated, TVM will dispense a free TAP card with a one-time, free LIFE 20-Ride benefit loaded on it.
- EBT customers who receive this one-time benefit will be encouraged, via a printed link or QR code on the receipt, to sign up for the LIFE Program to receive ongoing LIFE benefits.
- Customers utilizing the one-time benefit online at Taptogo.net will be required to enter a TAP card number to receive the benefit.
- Metro will implement a marketing campaign in partnership with DPSS to promote this benefit to EBT customers.



Financial Impact

- The preliminary cost for software development to integrate social benefit card verification at Metro Ticket Vending Machines (TVMs) is estimated in an amount not to exceed \$600,000 and will be covered by the TAP budget under TVM Software Upgrades.
- Ridership may increase on bus and rail and add unanticipated costs to Metro and the LIFE Program budget.
 - Anticipated to support more than a million qualifying EBT cardholders in Los Angeles County.
 - Each EBT card will only be validated to receive the benefit one time. If the card entered has already received the benefit, the user will be notified of that and encouraged to apply for to the LIFE program to receive additional benefits.



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Next Steps

- Upon approval, staff will integrate verification of social benefit cards at the Ticket Vending Machines (TVMs) and on *taptogo.net* and conduct a marketing campaign when launched.
- Staff will continue to partner with Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) and other social service agencies to explore options to expand the LIFE program to reach potential customers across Los Angeles County.

