

## **Fare Capping Status Update June 2022**

### **Proof-of-Concept – Daily Capping**

Fare capping software for faregates was delivered and deployed to five rail gates at four Metro Rail stations as a proof-of-concept in January 2022. Ongoing testing feedback has remained positive.

For the proof-of-concept, TAP cards will require a “fare capping” configuration written onto the cards. Daily capping is configured at \$3.50 (two full fare rides with transfers), equivalent to the cost of a Day Pass for full fare riders with the current 50% off promotional pricing. After the cap is reached, subsequent rides are at no additional cost for the remainder of the day period.

With consistent results from testers and minimal issues with software and reporting, the fare capping software has been published to ten more rail stations throughout LA County as of March 2022. The proof-of-concept will soon grow to include Reduced Fare TAP cards, such as Senior/Disabled, Student K12, and College/Vocational.

TAP will continue with this proof-of-concept event as testing starts on new devices and the whole system. Once the entire system is complete, field testing will expand, followed by a broader public beta test.

### **Testing Methodology**

Implementing fare capping is a complex change that affects every part of the TAP system. Both TAP cards and fare collection equipment will require a fare capping configuration and new software development to read and update a card's fare capping status. The fare capping configuration will allow TAP cards to track fare deducted and counted towards fare capping buckets. Modified customer displays on TAP Vending Machines (TVM) and TAP vendor retail point-of-sale devices will guide customers to load Stored Value rather than passes in order benefit from fare capping.

The fare capping software will undergo several sets of testing to ensure the public launch provides customers with a seamless experience and the best fare for their rides:

1. The first series of tests consists of device level testing of each type of TAP equipment as the software is being developed.
2. The second series of tests is System Integration Testing to ensure all devices, equipment and subsystems are functioning properly with the fare capping application.
3. The third series of tests will ensure the fare capping software integrates with the existing TAP functionality without issues.

Each series of tests will verify accuracy of the functionality and ensure system integration readiness to support the public launch. Test cases will include scenarios to mimic customer purchases and uses of Stored Value on TAP cards, overall regression test, and field test.

After the software is approved for deployment, it will launch systemwide as a public beta pilot to all bus and rail devices, TAP app, *taptogo.net*, and TAP vendor retail-point-of-sale devices. The beta pilot will continue for at least one month. Field testing performance will be carefully tracked, and any necessary updates will be made at this time. Staff will carefully monitor the success of this process to ensure systemwide customer readiness prior to the full public launch.

### Marketing and TAP Card Accessibility

A thorough marketing and public information campaign will be necessary to ensure customers understand the benefits of fare capping and the pay-as-you-go model. TAP's communications strategy will begin with a regional campaign in Fall 2022, with the goal of first converting cash-paying customers to TAP. This will ensure cash-paying customers become familiar with TAP and enjoy existing benefits, such as free Metro transfers, discounted fares, and balance protection, as soon as possible and well in advance of fare capping. Messaging for this campaign will be consistent throughout traditional print and digital channels and will be available in English, Spanish and additional languages upon request.

In Winter 2023, a fare capping campaign will launch to officially introduce fare capping as an equitable fare payment option that offers customers the means to pay-as-they-go while earning a pass. Customers will no longer have to pay the full cost of a pass upfront. This feature allows everyone to benefit from traveling on Metro with the foreknowledge that they will pay the lowest price possible for travel.

The following key messages will be highlighted throughout traditional print and digital channels, including important customer education tools, such as video tutorials and in-depth FAQs:

- Pay-as-you-go for the lowest price
- Easy to pay and easy to understand
- Equitable fare payment for everyone
- Download the TAP app for real-time progress towards fare cap

Up to one million free TAP cards will be distributed to customers in advance of fare capping implementation, which has proven to be a successful strategy for converting cash-paying customers to TAP. The distribution of these free TAP cards will target high cash-paying bus stops, social service agencies and community events. Customers can also purchase and load Stored Value onto TAP cards with cash or debit/credit card at: over 1,000 TAP retail vendor locations; 495 TAP Vending Machines at rail stations, J Line (Silver), G Line (Orange), municipal bus transit centers; about 2,500 bus

fareboxes; online at *taptogo.net*; on the TAP app; or by calling the TAP Customer Service Center.

Training and Readiness

A successful transition to fare capping will also depend on the participation of internal Metro departments and external stakeholders that interface with Metro customers. TAP staff will prepare training materials to support ongoing in-person and virtual trainings for various Metro departments.

**###**