

RESULTS OF NOVEMBER 14, 2022, PUBLIC HEARING FOR FARE CAPPING AND FARE CHANGES

PUBLIC COMMENT

Out of an estimated customer base of over 870k daily transit riders, over 732 comments were received on the fare proposal.

Public Hearing

On Monday, November 14, 2022, a public hearing on fare capping and fare changes was held with a quorum of the Metro Board of Directors. The virtual public hearing had 102 people in attendance, where 77 people offered testimony, including 6 Spanish speakers.

In addition to the verbal testimony at the Public Hearing, 630 emails and other written comments were submitted into the public record on this subject. Collectively, 707 responses on the fare proposals were received by the close of the public record through midnight, November 14, 2022.

Below is a summary of the written and oral comments relevant to the fare capping and fare change recommendations.

Implementation of Fare Capping

Of the 236 comments received on this topic, 48 comments favored the recommendation to implement Fare Capping. 188 comments raised concerns with this recommendation. With consideration to the written and oral comments received on this topic, staff supports the original recommendation to implement fare capping as it remains the most equitable method of fare collection. A summary of comments and staff responses are highlighted below:

Summary of Comments

Comments	Staff Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree with fare capping for the flexibility, simplicity, and proven success in multiple cities across the US. • Enjoy the idea of a pay as you go model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fare capping ensures equity by ensuring all customers only pay for rides taken and never overpay. Fare capping also removes the requirement to pay upfront for the cost of a pass, while still earning free rides after the daily and weekly dollar cap has been met.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrequent riders and commuters may not benefit from the daily and weekly cap, making their fare cost increase. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The fare capping model ensures that the more customers ride, the more they will save on costs. • This model will incentivize ridership through the ability to earn free rides once a daily and weekly dollar cap is met.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower daily and weekly cap for all • Lower daily and weekly cap for senior/disabled only 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed fare structure offers a permanent reduction in cost for both the daily and weekly caps. • In order to move towards a simple and equitable fare structure, staff proposed one discount price for all reduced fare categories, including senior and disabled riders.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential financial impact on customers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Reduced Fares and LIFE programs offer discounted fares to eligible customers. • Additionally, free TAP cards can be obtained through the Reduced Fare program as well as digital TAP cards through the TAP mobile app and Apple Wallet.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loading Stored Value is less convenient than loading a pass, requires pre-planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In lieu of loading a pass, Metro customers can load TAP cards with the amount of Stored Value that aligns with the daily and weekly dollar cap. Or customers can load Stored Value throughout the day or week to avoid paying upfront costs.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If preferred, riders can load the value of 4 weeks, similar to loading a pass. Fare capping eliminates the requirement of customers having to load all costs upfront in order to benefit from unlimited rides. • Customers may utilize the fare calculator on metro.net/simple fares for assistance with determining the correct amount of Stored Value to load.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add a monthly cap 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers will earn toward the fare cap each week, so a monthly cap is not necessary, further simplifying the fare structure. • 4 weekly caps will amount to a month

Removal of Passes and Internal Transfers

Of the 180 comments received on this topic, 0 comments favored the removal of passes and internal transfers. 180 comments raised concerns with this recommendation. With consideration to the written and oral comments received on this item, staff recommends keeping internal transfers. A summary of comments and staff responses are highlighted below:

Summary of Comments

Comments	Staff Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel costs will increase for infrequent riders and commuters that rely on internal transfers • Small trips that include transfers but don't reach the daily cap become more expensive. • Internal transfers create a seamless, streamlined service. • Potential financial impact of Low-Income and Reduced fare riders. • LIFE customers will run through their rides quicker without internal transfers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given the overwhelming response against the removal of internal transfers, staff has amended the fare proposal to include internal transfers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior/Disabled prefer passes, specifically the 30-day pass 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior/Disabled riders will earn toward the fare cap each week, so a monthly cap is not necessary, further simplifying the fare structure.

Proposed Permanent Pricing

Of the 407 comments received on this topic, 5 comments favored the proposed permanent pricing. 402 comments raised concerns with this recommendation. A summary of comments and staff responses are highlighted below:

Summary of comments

Comments	Staff Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns of inequity across various groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fare capping corrects inequity by ensuring all customers only pay for rides taken and never overpay. Fare capping also removes the requirement to pay upfront for the cost of a pass, while still earning free rides after the daily and weekly dollar cap has been met. The proposed fare changes offer one discount price for all reduced fare categories related to age, disability and student status. The changes to LIFE program and the increased benefits, restores equity, providing more free rides and discounts to those that need it the most, low-income riders. Recommendations also include the removal of upcharges for the Metro J (Silver) line and Express Bus, creating one flat fare regardless of service level.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial Impact on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low-income riders Senior/Disabled LIFE Riders Infrequent/ Casual Riders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low Income/LIFE riders-Low Income riders who qualify for the LIFE program will receive 20-Free rides in addition to 2 hours of free transfers for each paid ride. Senior/Disabled riders- LIFE and Access programs are available for Senior/Disabled customers who qualify Infrequent/Casual riders- The fare capping model ensures that the more customers ride, the more they will

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	save on costs. This model will incentivize ridership through the ability to earn free rides once a daily and weekly dollar cap is met.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lower base fare or keep current pricing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Given the overwhelming response against the increase in fares, staff has amended to maintain the base fare and include internal transfers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Current post-pandemic economic climate• High increase after relief pricing, 50% off.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discount fare programs are being offered and promoted to accommodate the needs of low income riders• Staff has requested that the 50% off promotional pricing be extended until fare capping and fare changes are implemented. Permanent pricing in this fare proposal is more simple and equitable compared to fares pre pandemic.• The proposed pricing introduces a pay as you go system, with no upfront payment for a pass and no need to determine what pass you need ahead of time. Riders will always get the best fare.

LIFE Program Enhancements

Of the 108 comments received on this topic, 2 comments favored the LIFE program enhancements. 106 comments raised concerns with this recommendation. A summary of comments and staff responses are highlighted below:

Summary of comments

Comments	Staff Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Like the addition of 10 additional rides 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on TAP usage data, most LIFE riders will pay less with the implementation of fare capping With the inclusion of internal transfers, the additional 10 trips are not needed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LIFE customers will run through their rides quicker without internal transfers. Requests more rides to compensate for loss of internal transfers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given the overwhelming response against the removal of internal transfers, staff has amended the fare proposal to include internal transfers.

Reduced Fares: Create One Discount Level for All Reduced Fares

Of the 2 comments received on this topic, 0 comments favored creating one discount level for all reduced fares. 2 comments raised concerns with this recommendation. A summary of comments and staff responses are highlighted below:

Summary of comments

Comments	Staff Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LIFE should have additional discounts after rides are used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For LIFE customers who are also participants in the Reduced Fare program, once the 20 free rides are used, daily and weekly fare capping will be offered.

Senior/Disabled Riders: Create One Fare for All Times of Day

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Of the 5 comments received on this topic, 0 comments favored the creation of one fare for all times of day for senior/disabled riders. 5 comments raised concerns with this recommendation. A summary of comments and staff responses are highlighted below:

Summary of comments

Comments	Staff Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$1 is a large increase from current pricing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Given the overwhelming response against the increase in fares, staff has amended to maintain the base fare and include internal transfers.• Metro will continue to offer Senior/Disabled fares at 50% off full fares and create simple fare structure to understand.• Riders will no longer have to be aware of their travel times in order to pay the correct fare.• Recommendation also reduces conflicts with operators• To improve fare equity, the proposal focuses on providing discounts based on need. With the benefits offered through LIFE, low-income Senior riders will be able to receive 20 free trips a month.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Financial impact on the senior/disabled community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Senior/Disabled riders- LIFE and Access programs are available for Senior/Disabled customers who qualify

Lower Fares for Metro J Line (Silver) and Express Bus

Of the 3 comments received on this topic, 3 comments favored lower fares for Metro J Line (Silver) and Express Bus. 0 comments raised concerns with this recommendation. A summary of comments and staff responses are highlighted below:

Summary of comments

Comments	Staff Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree that this is an improvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The elimination of upcharges on the Metro J (Silver) line and the Express Bus will ensure a more simple and equitable fare structure across all Metro service level.

Increase the Life of the TAP Card; Continue Free Cards for Reduced Fares, TAP app and Apple Wallet

1 comment received on this topic, 0 comments favored the increased life of the TAP card and continuation of free cards for Reduced Fares, TAP app, and Apple Wallet. 1 comment raised concerns with this recommendation. A summary of comments and staff responses are highlighted below:

Summary of comments

Comments	Staff Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TAP cards without an expiration would be ideal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The life of TAP card increases to 15 years, while the free TAP mobile app incentivizes the shift to mobile cards, resulting in overall reduction of plastic waste

Reject proposal and offer free fares

308 comments received on this topic that called for rejecting proposal and to offer free fares. 249 comments were replicated and stated that Metro should move toward a fareless system. 1 comment stated that Metro should move toward free fares but until that point they agree with fare capping. A summary of comments and staff responses are highlighted below:

Summary of comments

Comments	Staff Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What happened to Metro exploring free fares? • Metro should move toward free fares • Objections to fare changes due to the economic aftershocks of the pandemic, including but not limited to the housing crisis and the rising cost of living, and the reasoning that Metro makes 70% of revenue from taxes already. • Metro should be made permanently fareless. • Reject the proposal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metro has sought funding to support a fareless system at both the state and federal levels over the last 18 months and have not been successful. • About 25.5% of local sales taxes are dedicated for Metro Transit Operations which funds half of the transit operations budget. • The proposal responds directly to the Board’s direction to permanently reduce the price of full fare passes.