

THIS PRINT COVERS CALENDAR ITEM NO.: 10.2

**SAN FRANCISCO
MUNICIPAL TRANSPORTATION AGENCY**

DIVISION: Finance and Information Technology

BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

Authorizing the Director of Transportation to request that the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) program \$1,127,352 in funds available under its Lifeline Transportation Program (LTP) for the SFMTA Essential Trip Card Program; and certifying that the SFMTA will meet project delivery and obligation deadlines, comply with funding conditions placed on the receipt of funds allocated to the LTP, provide for the required 50% local matching funds of \$664,638 in the Operating Budget and \$462,714 in Proposition K Sales Tax funds, and satisfy all other conditions set forth in MTC Resolution No. 4416.

SUMMARY:

- The MTC provides Lifeline Transportation Program (LTP) grant funds for capital and operating projects that improve transportation choices for low-income persons.
- The SFMTA seeks \$1,127,352 in LTP Cycle 6 funds for the Essential Trip Card (ETC) Program, which is a discount program to help seniors and people with disabilities make essential trips in taxis. The ETC Program uses taxis to take people to the grocery store, pharmacy, or to medical appointments, and customers pay \$12 for \$60 value or \$24 for \$120 value, depending on travel needs, for taxi trips on a debit card.
- MTC requires that the SFMTA certify that it will comply with various conditions placed on the receipt of LTP funds, include supplying local matching funds.

ENCLOSURES:


1. SFMTAB Resolution

APPROVALS:

DATE

DIRECTOR 

October 14, 2020

SECRETARY 

October 14, 2020

ASSIGNED SFMTAB CALENDAR DATE: October 20, 2020

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PURPOSE

This resolution will authorize the Director of Transportation to request that the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) program \$1,127,352 in funds available under its Lifeline Transportation Program (LTP) for the SFMTA Essential Trip Card Program; and certify that the SFMTA will meet project delivery and obligation deadlines, comply with funding conditions placed on the receipt of funds allocated to the LTP, provide for the required 50% local matching funds of \$664,638 in the Operating Budget and \$462,714 in Proposition K Sales Tax funds, and satisfy all other conditions set forth in MTC Resolution No. 4416.

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS AND TRANSIT FIRST POLICY PRINCIPLES

The SFMTA will further the Strategic Plan through acceptance of these funds:

Goal 1: Create a safer transportation experience for everyone.

Objective 1.2: Improve the safety of the transportation system

Goal 2: Make transit and other sustainable modes of transportation the most attractive and preferred means of travel.

Objective 2.1: Improve transit service.

Objective 2.3: Manage congestion and parking demand to support the Transit First Policy.

Goal 3: Improve the quality of life and environment in San Francisco and the region.

Objective 3.1: Use agency programs and policies to advance San Francisco's commitment to equity.

Objective 3.5: Achieve financial stability for the agency.

This item will support the following Transit First Policy Principles:

1. To ensure quality of life and economic health in San Francisco, the primary objective of the transportation system must be the safe and efficient movement of people and goods.
2. Public transit, including taxis and vanpools, is an economically and environmentally sound alternative to transportation by individual automobiles. Within San Francisco, travel by public transit, by bicycle and on foot must be an attractive alternative to travel by private automobile.
3. Decisions regarding the use of limited public street and sidewalk space shall encourage the use of public rights of way by pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit, and shall strive to reduce traffic and improve public health and safety.
4. Transit priority improvements, such as designated transit lanes and streets and improved signalization, shall be made to expedite the movement of public transit vehicles (including taxis and vanpools) and to improve pedestrian safety.

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5. Bicycling shall be promoted by encouraging safe streets for riding, convenient access to transit, bicycle lanes, and secure bicycle parking.
6. Parking policies for areas well served by public transit shall be designed to encourage travel by public transit and alternative transportation.
7. New transportation investment should be allocated to meet the demand for public transit generated by new public and private commercial and residential developments.
8. The ability of the City and County to reduce traffic congestion depends on the adequacy of regional public transportation. The City and County shall promote the use of regional mass transit and the continued development of an integrated, reliable, regional public transportation system.

DESCRIPTION

The MTC's Lifeline Transportation Program (LTP) encourages residents and other stakeholders in low-income communities to identify priorities for transportation improvements and provides funding to implement these priorities. The MTC initiated the sixth LTP grant cycle in June 2020, and delegated administration, including project selection and oversight responsibilities, to the nine Bay Area Congestion Management Agencies. The San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA) is the Congestion Management Agency for San Francisco.

Sixth Cycle LTP funding is available from Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5307 Urbanized Area Formula funds.

LTP projects must be consistent with community based transportation plans or other substantive local planning efforts involving focused outreach to low income populations. The subject LTP funding request is consistent with the MTC's Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (Coordinated Plan) published in February 2018. The Coordinated Plan includes valuable findings, including the following:

- The population of seniors in San Francisco is projected to grow from 14% in 2014 to 23% of the City's population by 2040.
- About 36% of San Francisco seniors are living in poverty.
- About 40% of San Francisco seniors do not have access to a vehicle, the highest in the San Francisco Bay Area.
- As the retirement population grows, there will be fewer workers to provide services and facilitate mobility among the aging population.
- Growing demand for mobility programs that target seniors and people with disabilities will generate increased funding requirements.

Furthermore, according to the Coordinated Plan, the major transportation barriers faced by seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income individuals include: 1) spatial gaps where there is a need for enhanced transportation to increase connectivity; and 2) increasing lack of access to health care.

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Consistent with the Coordinated Plan, the ETC Program improves access, especially for seniors and persons with disabilities, to medical facilities by augmenting the public transit system in their neighborhoods and throughout San Francisco. The Program will provide direct, convenient, and reliable transportation to medical facilities allowing riders to attend their appointments at the scheduled time. Participants can also use this program for trips to the grocery store or pharmacy which will also greatly contribute to their overall personal wellness.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been reductions to Muni bus and rail service. By September 2020, only 42 of the 89 bus and rail routes had been restored and operating as part of the Muni Core Service Plan. Because of budgetary shortfalls, connector and specialized routes that provide shorter service to a smaller number of people will be among the last routes to be restored. These are the types of routes that have historically been used by those with limited mobility and few alternative transportation options.

The Essential Trip Card Program (ETC Program) is a new citywide program that can help fill Muni service gaps. The Program will help seniors and people with disabilities complete essential trips, such as attending medical appointments or going grocery shopping, in taxis. Eligible participants pay 20% of the cost of a regular cab ride fare and receive a maximum monthly taxi allotment of \$60 to \$120, depending on travel distance and need. The ETC Program will mitigate the following transportation needs facing seniors and persons with disabilities:

- Spatial Gaps: ETC fills a service gap from the suspension of connector bus routes and improves connectivity between neighborhoods and key locations for seniors and persons with disabilities by providing direct, on-demand taxi service.
- Health Care Access: ETC improves access to health care for seniors and persons with disabilities by providing transportation to attend medical appointments and visit grocery stores and pharmacies.
- Muni Core Service Plan: ETC supplements the existing Muni Core Service Plan for seniors and persons with disabilities who have been impacted by service suspensions and may have greater difficulties accessing the Muni services due to service reductions.

The ETC Program was developed to help close these gaps and increase the availability of transportation for seniors and the disabled community by providing a low-cost, convenient, and flexible alternative. This is critical as seniors and persons with disabilities are facing greater difficulties accessing the Muni Core Service due to service suspensions of connector routes due to the pandemic. This program allows taxi trips to be offered at nominal cost for the most needy communities. It also increases the ability to connect to key locations within and beyond a person's neighborhood, especially for essential shopping and medical trips.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

In the 2018 Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (Coordinated Plan), several transportation barriers were identified, including transit service gaps where there is a need for other transportation options to increase overall connectivity. Thirty-five agencies, organizations, and advisory groups from all nine counties of the Bay Area provided input, captured in more than 300 individual comments.

The SFMTA and SF Paratransit is working closely to advertise the ETC Program to the senior and disabled community. The SFMTA is including a flyer announcing the ETC Program wherever it publicizes Muni service changes at each transit stop in the City. SF Paratransit staff are also participating in virtual outreach with the public and representatives from Community-Based Organizations to promote the service. There have been 11 presentations since the launch of the program. A majority of program applicants indicate that they heard about the program through either an informational flyer/poster or through their family and friends.

The SFMTA and SF Paratransit will continue to do public outreach by posting information flyers throughout the community to increase awareness of this program. The SFMTA and SF Paratransit will also provide updates to the Paratransit Coordinating Council, which is an advisory committee that includes paratransit consumers, social service agency representatives, and service providers.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Alternatives include declining these funds or finding alternative funds from other capital programs or operations to fund the proposed project. Declining these funds will either reduce or eliminate available ETC Program services or will require diverting other funds to the Program. Moving funds from other projects will ultimately delay their delivery.

FUNDING IMPACT

This LTP funding of \$1,127,352 will allow SFMTA to continue providing critical transportation services to those most in need of additional mobility options. Current ETC Program funding is expected to be exhausted in early 2021, and it is therefore essential that these additional funds are in place by that time. The anticipated funding for the ETC Program for 2021 through 2023 is as follows:

Lifeline Transportation Program Funding Profile	Local Match Amount (Sources include SFMTA Operating Funds and Proposition K Sales Taxes)	Total Project Funding
Lifeline Funding FTA 5307 Urbanized Formula Grants		
\$1,127,352	\$1,127,352	\$2,254,704

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ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The FTA has given the ETC Program a Categorical Exclusion under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and its regulations (23 CFR Section 771.117(c)).

On September 25, 2020, the SFMTA, under authority delegated by the San Francisco Planning Department, determined that the ETC Program is not a “project” under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations Sections 15060(c) and 15378(b). A copy of the CEQA determination is on file with the Secretary to the SFMTA Board of Directors and is incorporated herein by reference.

OTHER APPROVALS RECEIVED OR STILL REQUIRED

The City Attorney has reviewed this report.

The MTC is anticipated to adopt the LTP program and award funding for projects at its meeting on October 28, 2020.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the SFMTA Board authorize the Director of Transportation to request that the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) program \$1,127,352 in funds available under its Lifeline Transportation Program (LTP) for the SFMTA Essential Trip Card Program; and certify that the SFMTA will meet project delivery and obligation deadlines, comply with funding conditions placed on the receipt of funds allocated to the Lifeline Transportation Program, provide for the required 50% local matching funds of \$664,638 in the Operating Budget and \$462,714 in Proposition K Sales Tax funds, and satisfy all other conditions set forth in MTC Resolution No. 4416.

SAN FRANCISCO
MUNICIPAL TRANSPORTATION AGENCY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

RESOLUTION No. _____

WHEREAS, The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) has established a Lifeline Transportation Program (LTP) to assist in funding projects that 1) are intended to result in improved mobility for low-income residents of the nine San Francisco Bay Area counties; 2) are developed through a collaborative and inclusive planning process; and 3) are proposed to address transportation gaps and/or barriers identified through a substantive community-based transportation plan or are otherwise based on a documented assessment of needs; and

WHEREAS, Pursuant to MTC Resolution No. 4416, MTC has adopted principles to guide implementation of the LTP for Lifeline Cycle 6, and MTC has solicited applications from transit operators (eligible recipients of FTA Section 5307 funds) from each of the nine Bay Area counties to propose projects for Lifeline funding; and

WHEREAS, The SFMTA generally conducted a broad, inclusive public involvement process, and used multiple methods of public outreach in identifying projects for the LTP in San Francisco; and

WHEREAS, The SFMTA submitted the Essential Trip Card (ETC) Program in response to the solicitation of applications/call for projects; and

WHEREAS, The ETC Program is a discount program to help seniors and people with disabilities make essential trips in taxis; the program enables customers to pay \$12 to receive \$60, or \$24 to receive \$120 if the customer has greater needs or longer distances to travel, on a debit card to be used for taxis to the grocery store, pharmacy or to medical appointments; and

WHEREAS, The SFMTA has confirmed that the ETC Program is consistent with the LTP goals as set out in MTC Resolution No. 4416; and

WHEREAS, The SFMTA recommends that the ETC Program be funded in part under the LTP; and

WHEREAS, The SFMTA agrees to meet project delivery and obligation deadlines, comply with funding conditions placed on the receipt of funds allocated to the LTP, provide for the required 50% local matching funds of \$664,638 in the Operating Funds Budget and \$462,714 in the Proposition K Sales Tax Budget, and satisfy all other conditions set forth in MTC Resolution No. 4416; and

WHEREAS, The SFMTA certifies that the project and purpose for which funds are being requested is in compliance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.), and with the State Environmental Impact Report Guidelines (14 California Code of Regulations Section 1500 et seq.) and, if relevant, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 USC Section 4-1 et seq. and the applicable regulations thereunder; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the SFMTA Board of Directors authorizes the Director of Transportation to request that the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) program \$1,127,352 in funds available under its Lifeline Transportation Program for the SFMTA Essential Trip Card Program; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the SFMTA agrees to meet project delivery and obligation deadlines, comply with funding conditions placed on the receipt of funds allocated to the Lifeline Transportation Program, provide for the 50% required local matching funds of \$664,638 in the Operating Budget and \$462,714 in Proposition K Sales Tax funds, and satisfy all other conditions set forth in MTC Resolution No. 4416; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the SFMTA shall forward a copy of this Resolution, and such other information as may be required, to MTC, the San Francisco County Transportation Authority, and such other agencies as may be appropriate.

I certify that the foregoing resolution was adopted by the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency Board of Directors at its meeting of October 20, 2020.

Secretary to the Board of Directors
San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency