



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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***** PRESS RELEASE *****

**MAYOR LONDON BREED ANNOUNCES PROGRAM TO
PROVIDE REDUCED-COST ESSENTIAL RIDES TO SENIORS
AND ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES**

The Essential Trip Card provides eligible seniors and people with disabilities two to three round trips per month at 20% of the cost of a regular taxi fare

San Francisco, CA — Mayor London N. Breed and San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) Director Jeffrey Tumlin today announced a new temporary program to assist seniors and adults with disabilities who need to make essential trips during the duration of the Stay Home Order. The Essential Trip Card (ETC) program will provide reduced-cost taxi trips for older adults and people with disabilities who must travel for essential needs.

While the Stay Home Order directs older adults to remain in the homes, many still need to make essential trips. For older adults and people with disabilities who do not have assistance to get groceries and medicine or who need to go to the doctor's office, other transportation alternatives may not be physically or financially possible. The ETC program helps address this critical need.

“Our city and transportation system has been forced to adapt to deal with this pandemic, but people still need a way to get around to get groceries, pick up medicine, or go to the doctor,” said Mayor Breed. “While we’re working on expanding our grocery and meal support for older adults and people with disabilities, we know there are people who still need to take essential trips. With this program, we can continue to provide reliable transportation options for those who may have limited mobility and who don’t have other transportation options available.”

“Muni service reductions have hit District 8 residents who rely on public transportation to access food, medicine or other essential supplies particularly hard,” said Supervisor Rafael Mandelman. “Walking a half-mile to the nearest Muni stop is not an option for many seniors or disabled residents when that half-mile is up or down a steep hill in neighborhoods like Twin Peaks and Diamond Heights. I am grateful to the SFMTA for working with my office on the Essential Trip Card program, which provides a lifeline for residents who would otherwise be unable to make essential trips.”

“We’re proud to serve essential workers and help San Franciscans make critical trips as the rest of us shelter in place,” said Jeffrey Tumlin, SFMTA Director of Transportation. “However, this is a tough time for some of the city’s most vulnerable and we’ve been working on solutions to meet their needs. The Essential Trip Card is a lifeline for our vulnerable populations to access food and hospital trips during a time where minimizing risk is the greatest priority.”



The ETC will provide two to three round trips per month at 20% of the cost of a regular taxi fare. All taxis in San Francisco will accept the card to pay for essential trips like grocery shopping or medical appointments during the shelter-in-place period. Customers who pay \$6 will receive \$30 in value on a debit card or can pay \$12 for \$60 in value for taxi trips on a debit card. Cards can be re-filled once a month for each month until this temporary program ends.

Older adults (65+) and people with disabilities can apply for the ETC program by calling 311 and mentioning the program. Staff will be available weekdays between 9:00 a.m. and 4:45 p.m. to sign-up participants or answer questions. For additional program details, please visit [SFMTA.com/ETC](https://www.sfmta.com/ETC)

“Keeping our cities running during the COVID-19 crisis depends on providing safe transportation for essential trips,” said David Bragdon, Executive Director of TransitCenter. “That means giving everyone who must travel enough space to maintain physical distance on vehicles. The SFMTA has quickly adapted to orient its transit services around this imperative, and the “essential trips” program is a welcome addition to the toolkit, helping people at elevated risk travel safely while relieving pressure on the bus system.”

Last week, Muni temporarily implemented [significant reductions to Muni service](#) due to shortages of operators and other key staff. Muni is also encouraging people to only use the bus for essential trips and if they do not have any other option. This will save seats for those who absolutely need the bus.

San Francisco’s Department of Disability and Aging Services (DAS) is working with community partners to ensure older adults and adults with disabilities have access to food, home care, social engagement, and other essential support in response to COVID-19. The DAS Benefits and Resource Hub—(415) 355-6700—is now operating its telephone helpline seven days a week a one-stop-shop for information and access to services.

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