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**MAYOR VILLARAIGOSA TAPS INTO 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY WITH  
LAUNCH OF NEW REUSABLE TRANSIT FARE CARD**

***TAP, or Transit Access Pass, will eventually unify all Los  
Angeles County transportation through a single card***

LOS ANGELES – Mayor and Metro Board Chair Antonio Villaraigosa was joined today by Metro and county officials for a sneak preview of TAP -- the new tool Metro has developed to make paying for travel easier.

TAP, or Transit Access Pass, is the new payment system that will eventually unify all of Los Angeles County's transit operators through a single, reusable payment card. The goal is for transit patrons to be able to pay for rides on Metro Rail and buses, Metrolink trains and local municipal buses with a single, rechargeable card.

By late January, the more than 400 retail outlets and Metro Customer Service Centers that sell weekly and monthly Metro paper passes will sell only plastic TAP cards. While all regular passengers will be required to make the switch to TAP in January, recipients of senior or discounted passes will be eased into the program by June, 2009.

Cash fares will continue to be accepted on both bus and rail.

"TAP is revolutionary because it's more than just a fare payment card," said Los Angeles Mayor and Metro Board Chair Antonio Villaraigosa. "It's a system that will make transit easier and better for our riders as Los Angeles's public transportation system continues to expand."

Among the benefits of TAP:

- Money can be added to TAP cards via the Internet, as well as at ticket vending machines in all Metro Rail stations, so that customers can avoid standing in line at pass sales outlets. TAP cards can also be auto loaded each month, if customers set up the service on the Internet.
- TAP offers "balance protection," so losing a card doesn't mean losing all of the money on the card. Since TAP cards can be registered, whatever the value of the card the moment it is reported missing is the value the card holder will get back on the replacement card. Stolen cards can be quickly disabled.
- TAP technology makes it possible for Metro to partner with companies to reward riders with special discounts, deals and tickets to entertainment venues throughout Los Angeles.
- TAP can be used to collect ridership data so that transit service can be altered to meet changing travel patterns.
- TAP will soon allow seamless travel throughout the region on Metro, municipal operators and Metrolink, since riders will only need one type of payment for all systems.
- TAP frees up security personnel that is currently checking fares, so that they can be more focused on keeping customers safe.
- TAP is "green" because the same pass can be used month after month rather than being discarded after expiration.

Phasing in of TAP cards coincides with implementation of a gating system for Metro Rail. The agency currently relies on the honor system and fare inspectors to ensure that patrons pay their way. Metro estimates that TAP, coupled with the gating system, will help it recoup most of the nearly \$5 million lost yearly to fare evasion.

The 18-month program to design and install the gates in Metro Rail stations will launch next summer, with the opening of the Gold Line Eastside Extension. Installation on the Metro Red Line will follow, along with the Metro Green, Blue and Gold lines.

Roughly 250,000 TAP cards are currently in circulation, according to Jane Matsumoto, deputy executive office for Metro's universal fare system.

"TAP will bring Metro into the 21st century," Matsumoto said. "It's similar to the high-tech fare collection systems used by Washington D.C., New York, San

Francisco, Chicago and other large transit properties. Unlike those properties, in Los Angeles we're implementing a regional system that links together transit agencies, both small and large. We're confident that once we make the transition to TAP, our customers will enjoy the many benefits."

TAP is part of an \$89 million upgrade of Metro's obsolete bus fare boxes and Metro Rail ticket vending machines.

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