After pushback from states and cities, Amazon Go might accept cash

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According to CNBC, Amazon executive Steve Kessel told employees at a recent all-hands meeting that the company's brick-and-mortar, cashier-less Amazon Go stores would start accepting "additional payment mechanisms" to combat charges of discrimination.

An Amazon spokesperson later told CNBC that those additional mechanisms included accepting cash. "You'll check out, pay with cash, and then get your change," the spokesperson said.

Recently, Philadelphia and New Jersey passed laws prohibiting cashless retail stores on the grounds that they discriminate against the more than eight million US households who have no access to a debit or credit card, often due to poverty. Lawmakers also said that cashless stores needlessly deny customers the option to have their purchases be private. New York City and San Francisco have been considering similar rules. Cashless stores have been illegal in Massachusetts since the 1970's.

Kessel, who is Amazon's senior vice president of physical stores, told employees at the all-hands meeting that the company is currently running two pilot programs to broaden how

Amazon Go accepts payment. The first involves accepting government-issued SNAP benefits. The second pilot program is called Amazon Cash, and it "lets users add cash to their digital accounts by bringing money to a local store like 7-Eleven or CVS," according to CNBC. (Such a program may help serve the unbanked, but it likely does not assuage privacy advocates.)

Ars emailed Amazon to clarify whether an app like Amazon Cash would be required to shop at an Amazon Go store, and we will update if we receive a response. How Amazon might redesign its Amazon Go stores to support an exchange of actual dollars remains unclear. Amazon has remained mum on exactly how its camera-tracking system works, let alone how it will track customers who don't scan a barcode upon walking in.

Amazon has not stated a time frame in which it might incorporate cash acceptance into its stores.

- Amazon Go from the outside.
  Sam Machkovech
- The queue line, flanked by Amazon Go fresh-food chefs and packers.
- The exit side of the turnstiles. You don't have to hold your smartphone down to exit.
- There are a lot of cameras in Amazon Go.
- A teensy, tiny "cafe" room seats five people.

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