

June 22, 2021

MEMORANDUM

To: Transportation and Utilities Committee
From: Calvin Chow, Analyst
Subject: Authorizing Legislation to Establish a Large Event Parking Rate

On July 7, 2021, the Transportation and Utilities Committee will consider and possibly vote on legislation¹ to establish a new maximum on-street parking rate of \$12 per hour for large events drawing at least 10,000 people. With this authority, the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) would be able to enact higher parking rates for qualifying large events anywhere in the City. SDOT intends to use this authority to implement a proposed Uptown neighborhood parking and access plan in anticipation of the opening of Climate Pledge Arena in the fall of 2021.

Background

As authorized by [Seattle Municipal Code \(SMC\) 11.16.121](#), SDOT manages on-street parking and establishes on-street parking rates in support of policy objectives outlined in the SMC. The code language directs SDOT to manage parking so that approximately one or two open spaces remain available throughout the day to support neighborhood business districts, maintain parking turnover, encourage parking availability for a variety of users, and reduce congestion caused by drivers seeking parking. The maximum hourly parking rate authorized under the current code is \$5 per hour.

In 2017, SDOT began work with the Uptown community, Seattle Center, and the Oak View Group to develop a parking and access plan for events at Climate Pledge Arena. Climate Pledge Arena will open in the fall of 2021, and SDOT expects that the arena will eventually host between 200 and 250 large events (over 10,000 attendees) per year. These events will increase demand for parking in the surrounding neighborhoods. The cost to park at the Climate Pledge Arena garage (for a four-hour event) is expected to be between \$40 and \$80, depending on the type of event. Reservable downtown parking (with a Monorail trip to Climate Pledge Arena included) is expected to cost about \$20.

In December 2020, SDOT released a draft parking and access plan for community review and feedback, and announced a final [proposal](#) in May 2021. The proposed Uptown plan includes:

- a phased event parking rate of \$3 per hour for the first two hours, and \$8 per hour thereafter (maximum five-hour parking);
- expanded on-street paid parking areas;

¹ The legislation is awaiting introduction and referral and has not yet been assigned a Council Bill reference number at the time of writing.

- expanded Restricted Parking Zones (RPZs);
- dedicated loading zones and disabled parking locations; and
- a ride-hail management strategy for events (still in development).

Except for the proposed \$8 per hour event parking rate, SDOT can implement this proposed plan under existing SMC authority. SDOT would monitor parking usage during implementation and would make any adjustments to the plan administratively.

Legislation

The proposed legislation would establish a new parking rate for large events, defined as planned commercial or public events that are expected to draw at least 10,000 people. The legislation would establish a maximum parking rate of up to \$12 per hour for large events, and it would authorize SDOT to develop a Director's Rule to define how the large event rate will be applied and the geographic boundaries of the area subject to the large event rate. The proposed legislation would allow large event parking rates to be charged when events occur on legal parking holidays (which include Sundays and other specific dates established in SMC).

While the proposed legislation was prompted by the anticipated opening of Climate Pledge Arena in Uptown, the large event designation could be applied to other venue locations such as the SODO sports stadia. SDOT would develop a parking and access plan for other locations before implementing large event rates elsewhere.

Policy Considerations

1. Maximum Rate

The proposed legislation establishes a higher maximum parking rate (max \$12 per hour) than SDOT initially intends to deploy around Climate Pledge Arena (max \$8 per hour). The higher proposed rate is intended to allow SDOT some flexibility if observed parking utilization warrants a higher rate and to account for escalation of parking rates over time. Council may wish to consider establishing a higher or lower maximum allowable parking rate in the code than the proposed \$12 per hour.

Options:

- A. Higher maximum rate;
- B. Lower maximum rate; or
- C. No action (\$12 per hour maximum rate as proposed).

2. Geographic Limits

The proposed legislation delegates authority to the SDOT Director for establishing the geographic areas subject to the new large event parking rate. Initially, SDOT intends to implement large event rates around Climate Pledge Arena, but the proposed legislation would allow SDOT to implement large event rates in other areas of the city. Council may wish to consider establishing geographic limits for the application of the new large event parking rate.

Options:

- A. Establish geographic limits on where large event rates may be imposed; or
- B. No action (allow SDOT the authority to impose large event rates as proposed).

3. Parking on Sundays and Holidays

The proposed legislation would allow large event parking rates to be charged on legal parking holidays, including Sundays and other dates specified in [SMC 11.14.277](#). This is a policy change from the status quo which provides for free on-street parking during legal parking holidays.

Options:

- A. Do not change SMC to allow for large event rates to be imposed on Sundays and holidays; or
- B. No action (allow SDOT to charge large event rates on Sundays and holidays as proposed).

Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns regarding this legislation.

cc: Dan Eder, Interim Director
Aly Pennucci, Policy and Budget Manager