



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL

Legislative Summary

Res 31921

Record No.: Res 31921

Type: Resolution (Res)

Status: Adopted

Version: 3

Ord. no:

In Control: City Clerk

File Created: 11/26/2019

Final Action: 12/16/2019

Title: A RESOLUTION stating the City Council's intent to consider legislation in 2020 that would expand Chapter 14.30 of the Seattle Municipal Code to require employers to provide employees with transit subsidies, and to consult with City of Seattle departments and relevant stakeholders in the development of such legislation and related policies.

Date

Notes:

Filed with City Clerk:

Mayor's Signature:

Sponsors: O'Brien

Vetoed by Mayor:

Veto Overridden:

Veto Sustained:

Attachments:

Uploaded By: linda.diibon@seattle.gov

Filing Requirements/Dept Action:

History of Legislative File

Legal Notice Published:

Yes

No

Ver- sion:	Acting Body:	Date:	Action:	Sent To:	Due Date:	Return Date:	Result:
1	City Clerk	11/26/2019	sent for review	Council President's Office			
	Action Text: The Resolution (Res) was sent for review. to the Council President's Office						
1	Council President's Office	11/26/2019	sent for review	Sustainability and Transportation Committee			
	Action Text: The Resolution (Res) was sent for review. to the Sustainability and Transportation Committee						
1	City Council	12/09/2019	referred	Sustainability and Transportation Committee			
	Action Text: The Resolution (Res) was referred. to the Sustainability and Transportation Committee						
1	Sustainability and Transportation Committee	12/12/2019	adopt as amended				Pass
	Action Text: The Committee recommends that City Council adopt as amended the Resolution (Res). In Favor: 2 Chair O'Brien, Vice Chair Pedersen						

Opposed: 0

1 City Council 12/16/2019 adopted as amended Pass

Action Text: The Motion carried, the Resolution (Res) was adopted as amended by the following vote, and the President signed the Resolution

Notes: ACTION 1:

Motion was made by Councilmember O'Brien, duly seconded and carried, to amend Resolution 31921, by amending Section 1, first paragraph, as shown in the underlined language below:

Section 1. The City Council ("Council") intends to consider legislation in 2020 that would expand the Commuter Benefits Ordinance, Chapter 14.30 of the Seattle Municipal Code, to require employers to provide employees with transit subsidies, while taking into consideration the differing abilities of employers to absorb these costs and administer the transit subsidies based on the number of employees and other factors that could include the personnel resources available to administer the transit subsidies, the displacement risks facing the employer's organization or business, and other factors indicating or impacting the financial wellbeing of the employer's organization or business.

ACTION 2:

Motion was made and duly seconded to adopt Resolution 31921 as amended.

In Favor: 5 Councilmember Bagshaw, Council President Harrell, Councilmember Juarez, Councilmember O'Brien, Councilmember Pedersen

Opposed: 0

3 City Clerk 12/16/2019 attested by City Clerk

Action Text: The Resolution (Res) was attested by City Clerk.

CITY OF SEATTLE

RESOLUTION 31921

A RESOLUTION stating the City Council’s intent to consider legislation in 2020 that would expand Chapter 14.30 of the Seattle Municipal Code to require employers to provide employees with transit subsidies, and to consult with City of Seattle departments and relevant stakeholders in the development of such legislation and related policies.

WHEREAS, climate change is a defining crisis of our times, calling for urgent and decisive action by governments, businesses, and individuals; and

WHEREAS, the Seattle Climate Action Plan, adopted in 2013, establishes the goal that Seattle reach zero net greenhouse gas emissions by 2050; and

WHEREAS, in August 2019 the City Council (“Council”) unanimously passed, and the Mayor signed, Resolution 31895 calling for a Green New Deal, including the goal of making Seattle climate pollution-free by 2030; and

WHEREAS, the most recent report from the Seattle Office of Sustainability and Environment shows that Seattle’s greenhouse gas emissions rose from 2014 to 2016 by 2.5 percent, including a one percent increase in pollution from passenger vehicles, moving Seattle further away from its climate goals; and

WHEREAS, according to the April 2018 Seattle Climate Action Plan update, 50 percent of Seattle’s greenhouse gas emissions were from passenger transportation; and

WHEREAS, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation, on average, commuting by single-occupancy vehicle produces over twice the greenhouse gas emissions of riding public transit; and

WHEREAS, according to the Seattle Department of Transportation’s 2018 Traffic Report, 51 percent of Seattle commutes were drive-alone trips in 2017; and

1 WHEREAS, the 2015 Move Seattle Plan states, “Decisive action to meet our goal of 75% of
2 commuters getting to work without their personal cars by 2035 is needed to keep us on
3 track to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050”; and

4 WHEREAS, the “Seattle Squeeze,” a period from 2019 until 2024 when downtown Seattle will
5 experience massive construction and redevelopment, is expected to create particularly
6 challenging traffic conditions over five years, making it even more urgent to replace
7 drive-alone trips with more space-efficient modes such as public transit; and

8 WHEREAS, multiple studies indicate that employers can significantly influence their
9 employees’ commute choices through measures such as providing subsidized transit
10 passes, which reduces drive-alone commuting and increases transit use; and

11 WHEREAS, The City of Seattle’s Commute Trip Reduction program, a partnership between the
12 City, State, and Seattle’s employers, works primarily with a specific category of
13 employers—those with at least 100 full time employees arriving at a single worksite
14 between 6 a.m. and 9 a.m.—to reduce drive-alone commuting to those worksites; and

15 WHEREAS, many large employers do not fall under the Commute Trip Reduction program,
16 although their employees’ commutes may still contribute significantly to traffic
17 congestion, pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions; and

18 WHEREAS, the Commute Trip Reduction program does not currently have the capacity to work
19 with a much broader range of employers to reduce drive-alone commuting; and

20 WHEREAS, in August 2019 the Council unanimously passed, and the Mayor signed, a 2019-
21 2023 Commute Trip Reduction Strategic Plan that establishes drive-alone commuting
22 rate goals for “network areas” throughout Seattle, with an overall goal of achieving a 25
23 percent drive-alone commuting rate for Seattle by 2035; and

1 WHEREAS, in recent years Seattle voters have repeatedly approved major investments in transit
2 infrastructure and service, including establishment of the Seattle Transportation Benefit
3 District in 2014, the Move Seattle Levy in 2015, and the Sound Transit 3 ballot measure
4 in 2016; and

5 WHEREAS, in October 2018 the Council unanimously passed, and the Mayor signed, Ordinance
6 125684 (“Commuter Benefits Ordinance”), enacted by the City as Chapter 14.30 of the
7 Seattle Municipal Code, requiring certain employers with 20 or more employees
8 worldwide to offer employees the opportunity to use pre-tax earnings to purchase
9 commuter benefits other than parking, such as transit and vanpool expenses; and

10 WHEREAS, the Commuter Benefits Ordinance will become effective January 1, 2020; and

11 WHEREAS, the Puget Sound Regional Council’s 2017 Household Travel Survey showed that
12 higher income households were more likely to be offered free or subsidized transit than
13 low income households, concluding that “higher income households are more likely to
14 have additional transportation benefits such as subsidized transit and parking, which may
15 compound income inequality”; and

16 WHEREAS, the Pew Charitable Trusts reported in 2016 that lower-income households spend a
17 far greater share of their income on transportation than higher income households; and

18 WHEREAS, the Brookings Institution reported in 2015 that the typical commute distance for the
19 Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue area is nine miles and that lower-income workers have less
20 proximity to nearby jobs; and

21 WHEREAS, the University of Washington Evans School of Public Affairs reported in 2014 that
22 40 percent of those working in Seattle and earning minimum wage live outside Seattle,

1 and that low wages are more likely among women and people of color;

2 NOW, THEREFORE,

3 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE THAT:**

4 Section 1. The City Council (“Council”) intends to consider legislation in 2020 that
5 would expand the Commuter Benefits Ordinance, Chapter 14.30 of the Seattle Municipal Code,
6 to require employers to provide employees with transit subsidies, while taking into consideration
7 the differing abilities of employers to absorb these costs and administer the transit subsidies
8 based on the number of employees and other factors that could include the personnel
9 resources available to administer the transit subsidies, the displacement risks facing the
10 employer’s organization or business, and other factors indicating or impacting the financial
11 wellbeing of the employer’s organization or business.

12 A. The legislation should provide employers with a variety of methods for compliance
13 while also ensuring that the transit subsidies are easily accessible to employees.


14 B. The legislation should incorporate race and social justice principles and reflect the
15 application of a Racial Equity Toolkit to determine how requirements would impact employers
16 and employees.

17 Section 2. The Council should consult with the Office of Labor Standards and relevant
18 stakeholders, including employers and employees, in the development of the legislation.

19 Section 3. The Council should consult with the Human Services Department, and other
20 City of Seattle departments to develop solutions to ensure transit benefits can be provided to
21 employees of City of Seattle contractors.

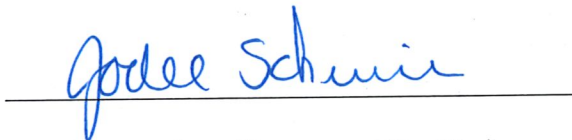
22 Section 4. The Council should consult with non-profits to develop solutions for providing
23 transit benefits to employees.

1 Adopted by the City Council the 16th day of December, 2019,
2 and signed by me in open session in authentication of its adoption this 16th day of
3 December, 2019.

4 

5 President _____ of the City Council

6 Filed by me this 16th day of December, 2019.

7 

8 *for*

Monica Martinez Simmons, City Clerk

9 (Seal)