

December 9, 2021

MEMORANDUM

To: Seattle City Council
From: Karina Bull, Analyst
Subject: Council Bill 120184: Juneteenth Holiday

On December 13, 2021, the Seattle City Council (Council) will discuss and may vote on [Council Bill \(CB\) 120184](#), legislation that would establish Juneteenth as (1) a legal holiday for certain City employees and (2) a parking holiday for on-street parking rates. This memo summarizes the background and content of the legislation. Central Staff has not identified issues or concerns for Council's consideration.

Background

Juneteenth marks the day on June 19, 1865, two and one-half years after the Emancipation Proclamation and over a month after the end of the Civil War, when a Union general arrived in Galveston, Texas, and informed enslaved persons in the state that they were free by executive decree. Since that day, June 19 has been celebrated in many communities across the nation as "Juneteenth" (short for June nineteenth) and is also known as Freedom Day, Jubilee Day, Liberation Day, Emancipation Day, and Black Independence Day.

Nationally, Juneteenth became a legal holiday for federal employees in 2021. In Washington State, Juneteenth has been a day of remembrance since 2007 and will be observed as a legal holiday for State employees beginning in 2022. King County and Bremerton public employees will observe Juneteenth as a legal holiday beginning in 2022. In Seattle, the Mayor and Council have issued several proclamations recognizing the historical significance of Juneteenth.

Council Bill 120184

The proposed legislation would establish Juneteenth as one of 11 legal holidays for City employees.¹ The legislation would automatically cover non-represented employees and would cover represented employees subject to their union's agreement. The legislation would not apply to uniformed police and fire employees as those employees establish their holidays by collective bargaining agreement.

The legislation would also establish Juneteenth as one of 10 parking holidays. As a parking holiday, the City would not collect parking revenue from pay stations or enforce parking restrictions on Juneteenth. The only legal holiday for City employees that is not a parking

¹ Under [SMC 4.20.190](#), the City's current holidays include (1) New Year's Day, (2) Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday, (3) Presidents' Day, (4) Memorial Day, (5) Independence Day, (6) Labor Day, (7) Veterans' Day, (8) Thanksgiving Day, (9) The day immediately following Thanksgiving Day, and (10) Christmas Day.

holiday is the Friday after Thanksgiving. In 2006, [Ordinance 122243](#) excluded the Friday after Thanksgiving to encourage efficient parking management (i.e., turnover of parking spaces) for businesses and their customers on one of the busiest shopping days of the year.

Financial Impacts

This legislation would result in direct and indirect costs. Direct costs would include additional pay for minimum staffing requirements (e.g., holiday pay for employees who work on the holiday) and the loss of on-street parking revenue for the parking holiday. Indirect costs would include loss of productivity (e.g., closure of community service centers on the holiday).

The City Budget Office (CBO) estimates that minimum staffing requirements for the City workforce, including employees covered by this legislation and those who may negotiate the holiday separately, would cost \$620,000. In the 2022 Adopted Budget, Council approved allocation of \$620,000 to multiple funds in Finance General (FG) Reserves to cover these direct costs.

CBO estimates that an additional parking holiday in June would typically cost about \$132,000. However, on-street parking revenues are currently about 75 percent of pre-COVID levels, and the cost could be as little as \$33,000 assuming a continuation of current parking trends. As on-street parking revenue is not allocated to any specific department, this cost would be absorbed by the General Fund.

Racial Equity Impacts

While over 155 years have passed since chattel slavery was officially ended in the United States, slavery has left a catastrophic and unrelenting legacy of trauma for generations of Black Americans and the nation continues to struggle with dismantling discriminatory systems and structural racism. Establishing Juneteenth as a legal holiday and parking holiday would bring awareness and consciousness to a crucial day in history and is a distinct step toward achieving racial equity, working toward an antiracist future, and ending the historical and continued harms of slavery.

Next Steps

If the Council votes to approve CB 120184, the Executive would transmit separate legislation to appropriate funding to relevant departments to cover the direct costs of the holiday for eligible represented and non-represented employees.

Please contact me if you have questions about this proposed legislation.

cc: Esther Handy, Director
Dan Eder, Deputy Director