

January 9, 2023

**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Transportation and Seattle Public Utilities Committee  
**From:** Calvin Chow, Analyst  
**Subject:** Council Bill 120493 - Shared Transit Stop Legislation

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On January 17, 2023, the Transportation and Seattle Public Utilities (TSPU) Committee will consider and possibly vote on [Council Bill \(CB\) 120493](#), authorizing the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) to institute a permitting program allowing employer shuttle buses to make use of transit stops for passenger loading. The proposal was previously [presented](#) as an informational item at the September 20, 2022 TSPU Committee.

**Background**

In 2017, SDOT initiated a pilot program to test whether employer shuttles could utilize transit stops for passenger loading. The program utilized SDOT’s existing code authority and authorized four shared stops for Seattle Children’s Hospital and eight shared stops for Microsoft (shown in Figure 1). Under existing code, employer shuttles pay a \$300 per vehicle permit fee; the pilot program did not charge additional fees for the use of the transit stops.

An [evaluation](#) of the pilot program in October 2018 found no major impacts to transit or roadway operations, but noted mixed public perception of the program. The report included recommendations for transit stop eligibility, reducing dwell time of vehicles, and reducing blockage of bike lanes. The pilot program remained in operation during the COVID-19 pandemic, and SDOT proposes to make the program permanent.

*Figure 1: Shared stop locations – 2017 pilot program*



**Source:** Nelson\Nygaard and TMS, Employer Shared Transit Stop Pilot Evaluation Report, October 2018

## **Proposed Legislation and Director's Rule**

The proposed legislation would make code amendments to clarify the distinction between bus zones (for public transit vehicles) and shuttle vehicle load zones (for employer shuttles) and make other changes to facilitate managing permits. The legislation would also update the associated permit fee schedule, establishing a new Shared Transit Stop permit fee. SDOT intends to administer the Shared Transit Stop permits through a Director's Rule and released a [preliminary draft](#) in November 2022.

The proposed Director's Rule specifies stop location criteria, outreach requirements, operating guidelines, and other permit administration procedures. SDOT has evaluated transit stops city-wide to identify stops that would be appropriate for shared use and to exclude stops with the highest potential for conflicts with transit and other modes. As a permit condition, SDOT proposes to require employer shuttles to report routing, ridership, and other data to facilitate SDOT's management of the right-of-way.

SDOT proposes to cap the total number of shared transit stops at 250 city-wide, with a maximum cap of 50 per applicant. The new Shared Transit Stop Use permit would be an annual, non-vesting, revocable permit.

In response to the draft Director's Rule, SDOT received comments from King County Metro, Microsoft, and Teamsters Local 117. These comments included a request to clarify procedures for coordination with King County Metro and suggestions for data privacy guidelines, both of which SDOT intends to address in the final Director's Rule. The comments also included a request to collect information on operator unionization status; however, because union status does not have a nexus with the regulated use (i.e., the permitted use of transit stops), SDOT is not including this request in the final Director's Rule.

## **Proposed Fee Schedule**

Under existing code, there is no permit fee for use of the shared transit stops under the pilot program. Permitted vehicles are still subject to the existing \$300 fee for a Shuttle Vehicle Permit.

The proposed legislation would increase the Shuttle Vehicle Permit fee to \$600 and would establish a separate charge for the use of the Shared Transit Stop. Employer shuttles that do not make use of shared stops would only require the Shuttle Vehicle Permit. If the legislation is approved, permittees currently operating under the pilot program would be regulated under the new permit requirements. The proposed fees are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Proposed employer shuttle and shared transit stop permit fees.

<b>Permit Type/Rate</b>	<b>Fee</b>
Shuttle Vehicle Permit	\$600
Shared Transit Stop Use	\$5,000
Shared Transit Stop Use (Reduced Fee)	\$2,500
Hourly Review and Inspection Rate	\$332/hour

For the Shared Transit Stop Use permit, the proposed fee schedule includes a reduced rate for entities with a Major Institution Master Plan and a Transportation Management Plan that specifically utilizes employer shuttles as a single-occupancy vehicle reduction strategy.

SDOT anticipates that the proposed fee schedule would fully recover costs for the permit program based on moderate permit activity (roughly double the existing pilot program size).

cc: Esther Handy, Director  
Aly Pennucci, Deputy Director  
Brian Goodnight, Lead Analyst