



Automated Traffic Safety Camera Local Legislation Preview

City Council Transportation Committee
April 15, 2025

Our Vision, Values, & Goals

Vision:

Seattle is an equitable, vibrant, and diverse city where moving around is safe, fair, and sustainable. All people and businesses can access their daily needs and feel connected to their community.

Values & Goals:

Safety, Equity, Sustainability, Mobility & Economic Vitality, Livability, Maintenance & Modernization, and Excellence.

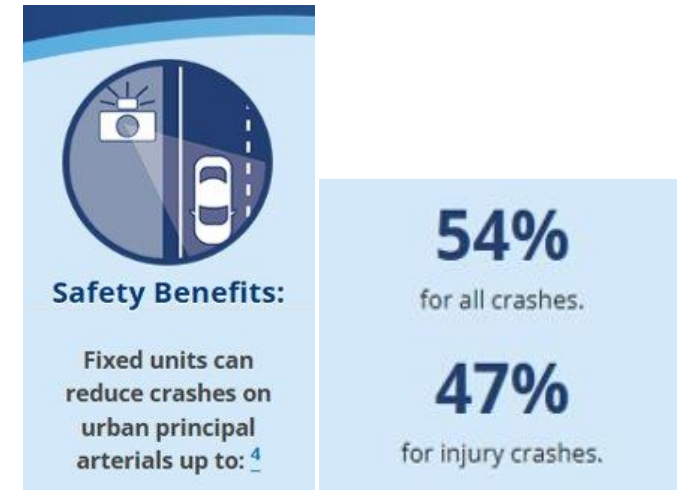
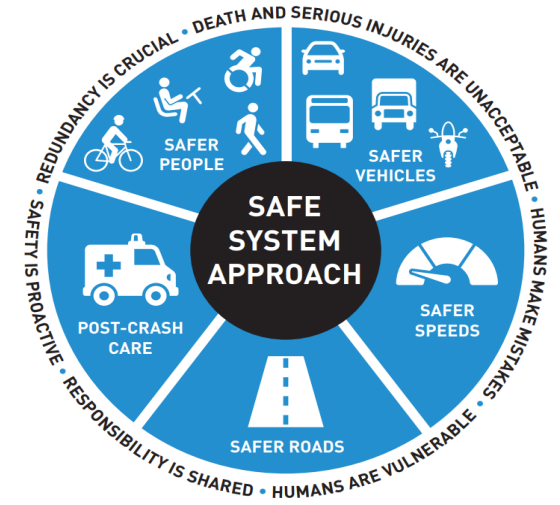
Presentation Overview

- Program background
- Key 2024 state law changes
- Allowable camera types
- Proposed code changes
 - SMC 11.50.570 – Automated Safety Cameras
 - SMC 11.31 – Disposition of Traffic Offences
 - SMC 5.82.010 – Financial Policies
- Programs to reduce fine impacts
- Privacy protection and data retention
- Safety camera implementation guidance



Program Background

- Safer Speeds a key element of FHWA's Safe System Approach
 - Speed safety cameras are a research-backed **Proven Safety Countermeasure** to reduce crashes
- Used in Seattle since 2006, currently operating:
 - 23 intersections with red-light cameras
 - 6 locations with public transportation-only lane (bus lane) cameras
 - 6 locations with block-the-box cameras
 - 19 locations with school speed zone cameras (with 19 new locations to be installed in 2025)
- 2024 state law changes are opportunity to update Seattle's safety camera program
- Administration is shared between SDOT, SPD, and Municipal Court



Graphic Sources: [FHWA Proven Safety Countermeasures](#)
[USDOT Safe System Approach](#)

Key 2024 State Law Changes

- Allows citation review by civilian employees
- Requires safety and equity analysis for siting new or relocating existing cameras
- Increases annual reporting requirements
- Permanently authorizes pilot authorities (block-the-box, public transportation/restricted lanes)
- Repeals racing zone speed camera authority
- Simplifies allowable types of full-time speed zone cameras
- May adopt ability-to-pay calculator to process and grant reduced penalties
- Requires granting 50% penalty reduction for first-violation to recipients of government assistance



Allowable Camera Types Under State Law

1. Red-Light
2. School Speed Zone
3. Restricted Lane (Deactivated)
4. Public Transit-Only Lane
5. Block-the-Box
6. Railroad crossing
7. Ferry queuing
8. Speeding:
 - High Crash Risk Locations
 - Park and Hospital Zones
 - School Walk Routes
 - Work Zones

Previously-deployed camera types



SMC 11.50.570 – Automated Traffic Safety Cameras

Required code changes to align with state law:

- Update code to adopt allowable camera types
- Remove racing zone cameras, which are no longer authorized under state law
- Add equity and safety siting analyses for new or relocated cameras
- Align annual report with state law requirements
- Clarify language on posting street signage 30 days before camera activation

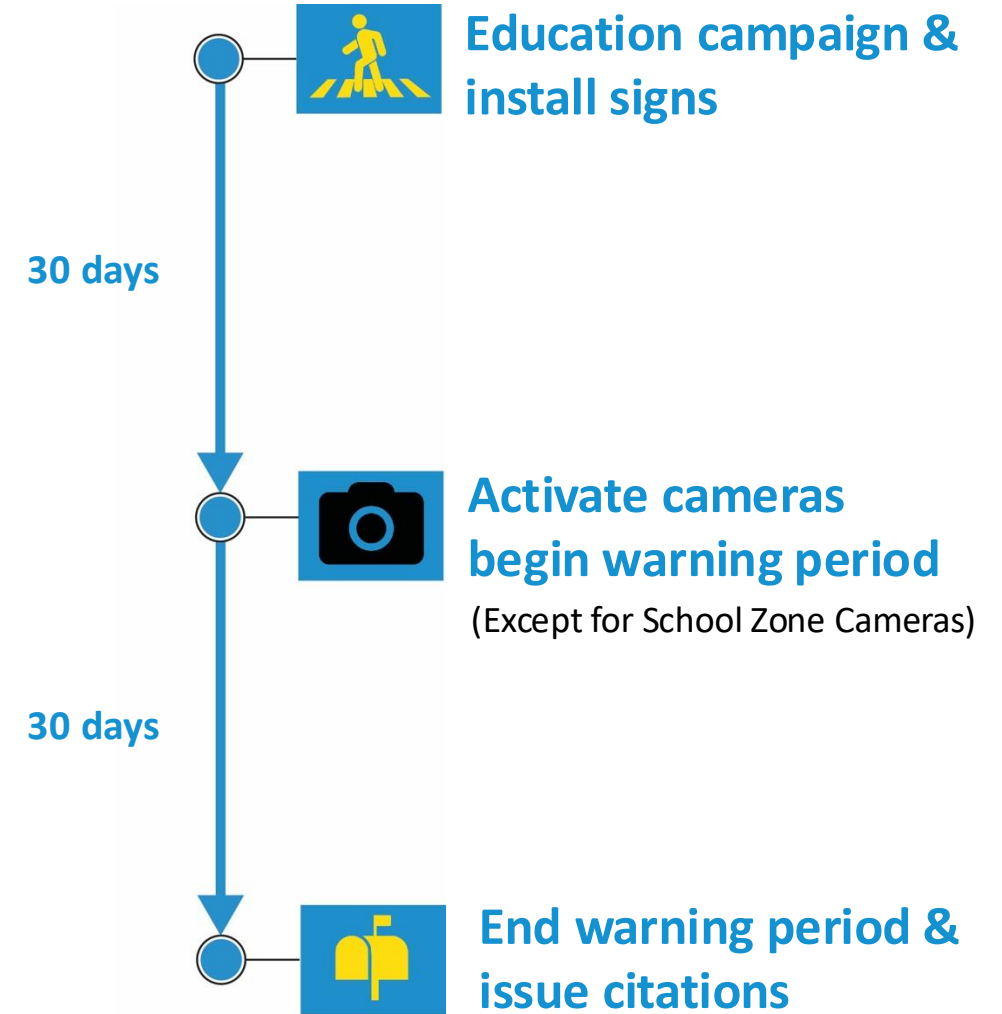


SMC 11.50.570 – Automated Traffic Safety Cameras

Additional changes (not required in state law):

Camera activation and warning period

- Update code to establish 30-day warnings-only period upon activation for all camera types, except school zone
- Repeal first-violation warnings for cameras (including school zone), block-the-box, restricted lane, and public transport-only lane



SMC 11.31 – Disposition of Traffic Offences

SMC 11.31.020/11.31.090 – Issuance of infractions

- Align with state law to authorize trained SPD and SDOT employees to review infractions

SMC 11.31.121 – Monetary penalties

- Update fine schedule for new camera types
- RCW 46.63.220 states:
 - Fines may not exceed \$145, except for school speed zone infractions
 - School speed zone infractions (shall/may) be doubled
 - Work zone infractions must be doubled (RCW 46.61.212)

SMC 11.31 – Disposition of Traffic Offences

SMC 11.31.121 – Monetary penalties

Municipal Code reference	Parking infraction short description	Base penalty amount
11.50.140	Red Light Camera Violation	\$139
11.52.040	Speeding Traffic Camera Violation	\$139
11.52.100	Speed School Crosswalks violation	\$237
11.53.230	High Occupancy Vehicle Lane Camera Violation	\$75
11.72.040	Block Traffic-Stop/Park Violation	\$75

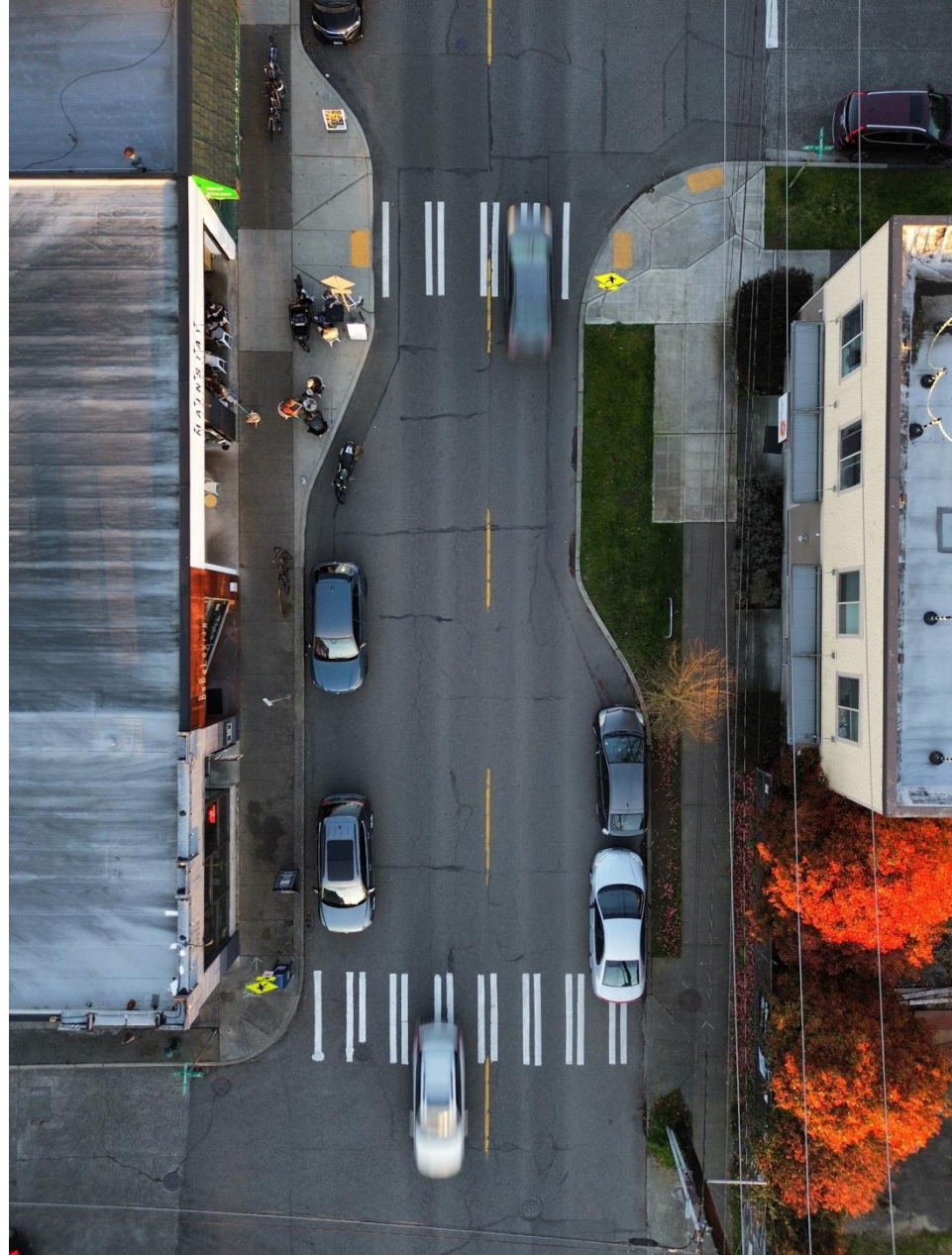
Existing – Fine Amounts

Municipal Code reference	Parking infraction short description	Base penalty amount
11.50.250	Signal Indicating Approach of Train Violation	\$139
11.50.260	Stop Railroad Grade Crossing Violation	\$139
11.58.272	Approaching Emergency or Work Zone Violation	\$237
11.58.295	Ferry Queue Violation	\$75

New – Fine Amounts

SMC 5.82.010 – Financial Policies

- Remove limitations on using revenues from one camera type to administer another camera type
- Create Automated Traffic Camera Safety Fund to replace existing School Safety Traffic and Pedestrian Improvement Fund
 - All camera revenues will be deposited in the Automated Traffic Camera Safety Fund
 - Except 80% of red-light camera revenues, which continue to go to the General Fund



SMC 5.82.010 – Financial Policies

- Net revenues in Automated Traffic Camera Safety Fund may be used for:
 - Traffic, student, bicycle, and pedestrian safety and directly related infrastructure projects
 - Operational and maintenance investments
 - Transportation improvements supporting equitable access and mobility for persons with disabilities
 - Transportation projects to reduce driver speeds
 - Pedestrian, bicyclist, and driver education campaigns



Programs to Reduce Impact of Fines

- **Ticket Debt Reduction Hearings**

- Eligible residents can apply for a debt reduction hearing for parking, traffic, or camera ticket debt >\$300

- **Payment Plans**

- Reduced monthly payment plans (\$25-50) are available for eligible residents to pay fines and fees

- **Community Service Plans**

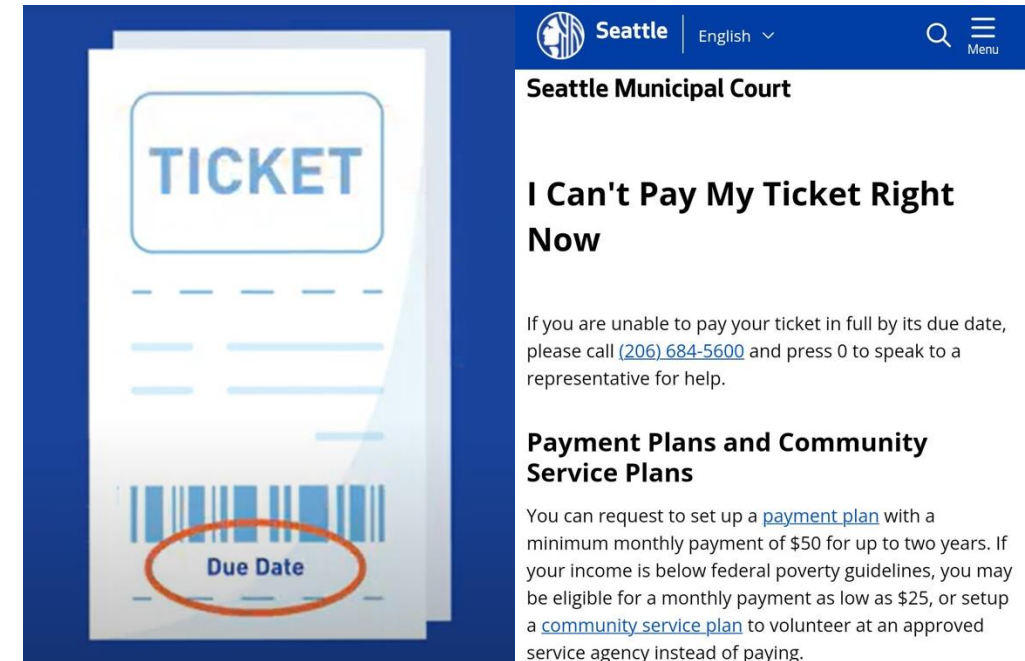
- Eligible residents may request to perform community service work in lieu of paying fines and fees

- **Unified Payment Program**

- Unpaid fines in more than one King County jurisdiction can be combined into a single monthly payment

- **50% First-violation penalty reduction**

- State law requirement - Recipients of government assistance may request reduction for first violations and those within 21 days of the first violation.



Privacy Protection and Data Retention

- Privacy requirements are unchanged :
 - Cameras only record images of vehicles and license plates while an infraction is occurring
 - Camera images cannot reveal the face of the driver or passengers
 - **Recorded images cannot be used for any purpose other than enforcing traffic violations under RCW 46.63.220**
- City specifies timelines for deleting recorded images:
 - 31-day retention for recordings that result in a warning/rejected event
 - 3-year retention for recordings that result in a citation

License Plate Image



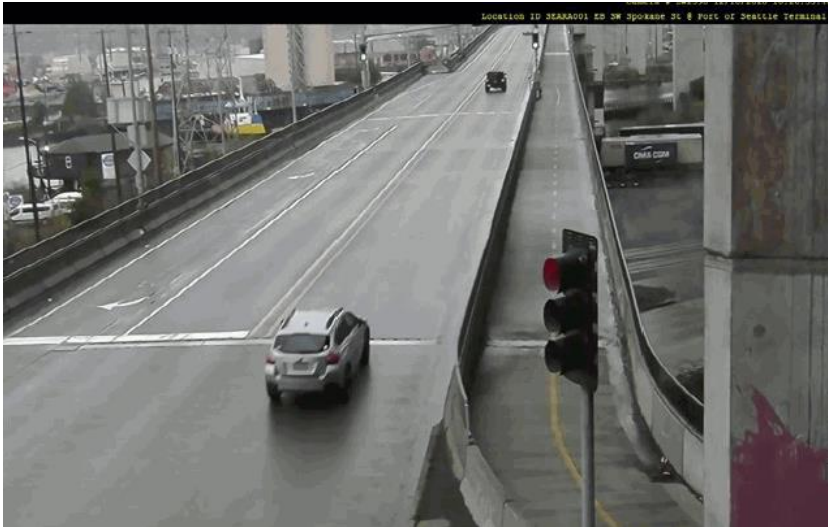
Vehicle Image



Privacy Protection and Data Retention



Red-Light Camera



Restricted Lane Camera



School Zone Camera

Draft Safety Camera Implementation Guidance

1. Program administration, annual report, and programmatic modifications

- Unified annual report
- Satisfy requirements of the state law on equitable use of revenues, safety and performance measures
- Evaluate to remove, relocate and add cameras
- Budget procedures for SDOT, SPD, and Municipal Court

2. Siting analysis procedures

- Safety needs analysis
- Equity analysis

3. Community Engagement strategy





From the entire SDOT Team
Thank you!