

SUMMARY and FISCAL NOTE

Department:	Dept. Contact:	CBO Contact:
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1. BILL SUMMARY

Legislation Title: AN ORDINANCE relating to automated traffic safety cameras; establishing additional uses for automated traffic safety cameras to increase safety; authorizing qualified civilian employees to review violations detected by traffic cameras; updating finance and fund policies related to the use of camera revenues; amending Ordinance 124230; amending Sections 5.82.010, 11.31.020, 11.31.090, 11.31.121, and 11.50.570 of the Seattle Municipal Code; and repealing Section 11.50.580 of the Seattle Municipal Code.

Summary and Background of the Legislation: This legislation amends Seattle Municipal Code provisions regarding use of automated traffic safety cameras to align with changes in state law that went into effect in June of 2024, after the state legislature passed Engrossed Substitute House Bill 2384 earlier that year.

The new state law consolidated several provisions of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) that had been enacted over the previous 20 years governing local use of several camera types, including red light and school speed zone cameras, along with newer camera types originally authorized by the legislature under the Move Ahead Washington Act, such as Park, Hospital and School Walk Zone cameras. The 2024 law also permanently authorized a 2019 pilot program that allowed the City of Seattle to enforce block-the-box, transit lane and other restricted lane provisions in the SMC Traffic Code with automated cameras. The new state law also authorizes trained police and transportation employees to review violations detected by traffic safety cameras, repealed authority for enforcing designated racing zone cameras and modified certain provisions governing the use of revenues collected through camera violations.

This legislation would align City code with the new state law by revising several provisions to SMC, including: (1) authorizing review of camera violations by trained SPD and SDOT employees, in addition to commissioned police officers; (2) aligning categories of camera enforcement authority in SMC with those in the newly enacted RCW 46.63.220; (3) repealing temporary pilot language no longer in effect after passage of ESHB 2384 so that the block-the-box and restricted lane cameras are a permanent program in SMC; (4) repealing racing zone enforcement provisions no longer authorized under the new state law; (5) adding or modifying penalty amounts that were changed or newly authorized by passage of ESHB 2384; (6) revising SMC Financial policies governing use of camera revenues to reflect the removal of pilot program restrictions and other changes under ESHB 2384; and (7) creating the Automatic Traffic Camera Safety Fund to replace the School Safety Traffic and Pedestrian Improvement Fund and reflect the repeal of fund restrictions specific to the block-the-box and restricted lane pilot program.

During the May 5, 2025, Transportation Committee, this legislation was amended as follows:

- Amendment 2 requested that SDOT evaluate previous restricted racing zone locations for camera deployment.
- Amendment 3 revised financial policies to clarify that authorized camera revenue spending for operations and maintenance was explicitly for traffic safety and vision zero; and provided guidance that camera revenues should be spent in the communities and locations where the cameras are located.
- Amendment 4 extended the 30-day warning period to all cameras (including school zone cameras)
- Amendment 5 emphasized the consideration of physical traffic safety mitigation measures in the analysis of potential camera locations.
- Amendment 6 restricts public disclosure of camera data and adds privacy and notification requirements for camera contracts.

These amendments do not substantively change the analysis included in this Summary and Fiscal Note.

2. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Does this legislation create, fund, or amend a CIP Project? ☐ Yes ☒ No

3. SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Does this legislation have financial impacts to the City? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Expenditure Change (\$); General Fund	2025	2026 est.	2027 est.	2028 est.	2029 est.
Expenditure Change (\$); Other Funds	2025	2026 est.	2027 est.	2028 est.	2029 est.

Revenue Change (\$); General Fund	2025	2026 est.	2027 est.	2028 est.	2029 est.
Revenue Change (\$); Other Funds	2025	2026 est.	2027 est.	2028 est.	2029 est.
	\$2,000,000				

Number of Positions	2025	2026 est.	2027 est.	2028 est.	2029 est.
Total FTE Change	2025	2026 est.	2027 est.	2028 est.	2029 est.

3.a. Appropriations

☐ This legislation adds, changes, or deletes appropriations.

3.b. Revenues/Reimbursements

☒ This legislation adds, changes, or deletes revenues or reimbursements.

Anticipated Revenue/Reimbursement Resulting from This Legislation:

Fund Name and Number	Dept	Revenue Source	2025 Revenue	2026 Estimated Revenue
ATSC Fund (18500)	SDOT	Automated Enforcement Cameras	\$2,000,000	\$0
TOTAL			\$2,000,000	

Revenue/Reimbursement Notes: Changes in revenue restrictions, financial policies, revenues, and appropriations related to deployment of new cameras will be appropriated in future budget legislation.

3.c. Positions

☐ This legislation adds, changes, or deletes positions.

3.d. Other Impacts

Does the legislation have other financial impacts to The City of Seattle, including direct or indirect, one-time or ongoing costs, that are not included in Sections 3.a through 3.c? If so, please describe these financial impacts.

This legislation would enact changes in financial policies regulating use of net revenues from Automated Traffic Safety Cameras and removes restrictions specific to the temporary pilot status of block-the-box and restricted lane cameras that are no longer required under the new state law. Changes in financial policies and conversion of the pilot camera program into a permanent program, along with deployment of new camera types, will produce additional revenues. Additional revenues, along with new appropriations necessary to deploy new camera types, will be addressed in future budget legislation.

If the legislation has costs, but they can be absorbed within existing operations, please describe how those costs can be absorbed. The description should clearly describe if the absorbed costs are achievable because the department had excess resources within their existing budget or if by absorbing these costs the department is deprioritizing other work that would have used these resources.

Additional costs for new camera deployments authorized by this legislation, along with additional costs to SPD and Seattle Municipal Court related to higher volumes of camera

violations requiring review and adjudication, will be funded by camera revenues deposited into the ATSC fund.

Please describe any financial costs or other impacts of *not* implementing the legislation.

Traffic safety enforcement cameras have proven to be an effective tool in both Seattle and nationwide in reducing speeding and the crashes – often serious or fatal – that result from higher speeds. The financial impact, as well as the emotional impact, of such crashes would be difficult to quantify but are, nevertheless, high. Additionally, net camera revenues under the modified financial policies will allow the City further improve safety, especially to the most vulnerable travelers, through improving pedestrian infrastructure and engineering changes in the right-of-way that encourage safer driver behavior and improve access for people with disabilities.

Please describe how this legislation may affect any City departments other than the originating department.

SPD owns and manages the contract with the City’s ATSC vendor and is the lead agency responsible for reviewing camera violations in determining whether a citation can be issued. Seattle Municipal Court is responsible for adjudicating challenges to camera citations. While camera revenues will cover their costs, more cameras will equal higher costs to SPD and Seattle Municipal Court, as well as to SDOT.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- a. **Is a public hearing required for this legislation?** No
- b. **Is publication of notice with The Daily Journal of Commerce and/or The Seattle Times required for this legislation?** No
- c. **Does this legislation affect a piece of property?** No
- d. **Please describe any perceived implication for the principles of the Race and Social Justice Initiative.**
 - i. **How does this legislation impact vulnerable or historically disadvantaged communities? How did you arrive at this conclusion? In your response please consider impacts within City government (employees, internal programs) as well as in the broader community.**

As encouraged under state law, camera revenues that support safety improvements will be prioritized in high equity impact areas of the City. Historically, a disproportionate number of cameras have been sited in communities with higher proportions of people of color that are also lower income. SDOT now has policies in place requiring a more equitable distribution of cameras and, consistent, with state evaluates potential camera locations through a racial equity lens. As part of the overall analysis for determining new camera locations, a racial equity, as well as traffic, analysis is also now required under the new state law.

ii. Please attach any Racial Equity Toolkits or other racial equity analyses in the development and/or assessment of the legislation.

SDOT analyzed the Racial Equity impacts of the School Traffic Safety Camera Program as a major component of its response to Statement of Legislative Intent SDOT-304-A-001-2023 Regarding the Expansion of Automated Safety Programs, which can be found at: https://clerk.seattle.gov/~CFS/CF_322726.pdf/ As required under the new state law, all future potential camera locations will be analyzed through a traffic and equity analysis.

iii. What is the Language Access Plan for any communications to the public?

At a minimum, SDOT conducts outreach with translated materials or interpreters if 5% or more of a community speaks another language, or upon request. However, in practice, SDOT typically works with Dept of Neighborhood Community Based Liaisons, with relevant language skills on major programmatic or project initiatives, such as expansion of deployment of expanded camera programs. SDOT most frequently provides its outreach materials with translated information in the highest prevalence languages within a project area, or the City's 15 most prevalent languages for citywide outreach.

e. Climate Change Implications

i. Emissions: How is this legislation likely to increase or decrease carbon emissions in a material way? Please attach any studies or other materials that were used to inform this response.

Auto-enforcement cameras are proven to reduce driver speeds which strongly correlates with reduced vehicle emissions for traditional internal combustion engine vehicles. Reduced crash rates can also allow more people to feel safer walking, rolling and riding bikes to nearby destinations.

ii. Resiliency: Will the action(s) proposed by this legislation increase or decrease Seattle's resiliency (or ability to adapt) to climate change in a material way? If so, explain. If it is likely to decrease resiliency in a material way, describe what will or could be done to mitigate the effects.

N/A

f. If this legislation includes a new initiative or a major programmatic expansion: What are the specific long-term and measurable goal(s) of the program? How will this legislation help achieve the program's desired goal(s)? What mechanisms will be used to measure progress towards meeting those goals?

Expansion of the ATSC enforcement is intended to reduce the number and severity of crashes. SDOT tracks the number of serious and fatal crashes. SDOT will know whether the program is helping the City achieve its Vision Zero goals by measuring the rate of these crashes by camera location and citywide. For example, since the start of Seattle's School Speed Zone Camera program the City has seen a 71 percent drop in collisions at camera activation areas, a 64 percent drop in the average number of camera violations per day. 90 percent of people who receive and pay camera citations do not receive another citation.

- g. Does this legislation create a non-utility CIP project that involves a shared financial commitment with a non-City partner agency or organization?**

No

5. ATTACHMENTS

Summary Attachments: None.