

SUMMARY and FISCAL NOTE

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

Legislation Title: AN ORDINANCE relating to Seattle’s Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) program; adopting an updated CTR Plan; updating references to state law; and amending Sections 25.02.020, 25.02.030, 25.02.040, 25.02.050, 25.02.090, and 25.02.100 of the Seattle Municipal Code.

Summary and Background of the Legislation:

This proposed legislation serves two purposes:

- 1) Adopts the City of Seattle’s 2025-2029 Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) Plan (“Plan”) as the local plan document guiding the program. The City of Seattle is required by the State of Washington to have an up-to-date local plan to govern its local CTR program (RCW 70A.15.4000 through 70A.15.4110). The previously adopted plan dates from 2019 (see Ordinance 125885).

The Plan adopted by this legislation includes:

- The summary of benefits derived from the CTR program
 - Updated CTR performance targets for Seattle:
 - By 2029, the citywide Drive-Alone Rate target is 20.3%
 - Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) per employee target is 3.22 by 2029.
 - Services and strategies used to achieve CTR targets
 - The 2025-2029 CTR Plan’s alignment with local and regional plans
 - Stakeholder engagement
- 2) Updates key definitions within Chapter 25.02 of the Seattle Municipal Code, including defining “affected employees” as employees who telework so long as certain conditions are met. These updates clarify existing program elements for the large employers affected by the CTR program. The legislation also adds subsidies for shared mobility memberships and the provision of assets for remote office setup as potential strategies to achieve CTR goals.

Background: SDOT has been an implementing agency of Washington’s statewide CTR program as defined by the state’s Clean Air Act since the Act’s passage in 1991. The CTR program was initially designed to reduce congestion, pollution, and consumption of resources – namely fossil fuels – in the most congested parts of the state by reducing the number of employees who commute in single occupancy vehicles (e.g. drive alone) to work at large worksites within affected jurisdiction. We now also note that reducing the use of fossil fuels and the number of single occupancy vehicles (SOVs) on the road contributes significantly to

Seattle's success in reaching goals established in the Climate Change Response Framework (CCRF), which was unanimously adopted by City Council in 2023.

The State of Washington requires that implementing agencies have an up-to-date local plan to guide its local CTR program. This legislation adopts Seattle's plan for the 2025-2029 biennia including updated drive alone rate targets; it also updates ordinance language to clarify program compliance elements for large employers impacted by state and local law.

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

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.

No.

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.

N/A

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

Yes. This ordinance is a requirement for renewal of WSDOT's biennial TDM / CTR Grant Program tied to implementation of the Washington State Clean Air Act, RCW 70A.15.4000 through 70A.15.4110. In 2023-2025, this biennial grant provided \$1,459,100 to the City of Seattle. For the City to continue receiving this funding for the 2025-2027 and 2027-2029 biennia, an updated plan is required and thus this legislation must be passed.

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

For Office of Sustainability and the Environment, the updated adopted plan lists key performance targets that are key to reaching climate and transportation goals expressed in the City of Seattle Climate Change Response Framework and the Seattle Transportation Plan that will also be reflected in the One Seattle Comprehensive Plan Major Update.

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.**

The Commute Trip Reduction Plan is citywide, though it is most impactful in the Center City, University District, Northgate and other centers/neighborhoods with high concentrations of commercial development and large employers. The proposed changes to the Seattle Municipal Code do not change the populations or communities affected by the original legislation. The reductions in air contaminants that come with reducing drive alone rates do provide a greater benefit in parts of the city closer to state highways and other commute corridors, such as the I-5, I-90 and SR 99 corridors. Communities of color tend to be more concentrated along these corridors and, therefore, bear more of the brunt of air quality impacts that are shown to be alleviated by CTR programs
 - ii. **Please attach any Racial Equity Toolkits or other racial equity analyses in the development and/or assessment of the legislation.**
N/A
 - iii. **What is the Language Access Plan for any communications to the public?**

Outreach is directed through designated representatives of eligible employers (100+ employees).
- 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.

This legislation enables continued implementation of a program that has well documented support of reducing carbon emissions. While the city continues to add employees and employers, the CTR program has supported lower greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions on a per employee basis.

Employers participating in the program have seen their per employee MTCO₂e* decrease from 1.43/employee/year in 2007/2008 to 0.73/employee/year in 2021/2022 and 0.66 MTCO₂e in 2023/2024 (note: WSDOT calculations integrated fuel source – e.g. electric vehicles – into surveys for the first time in 2023/2024). Not all of this change can be attributed specifically to the CTR program; however, the CTR program is what allows the City to measure this change at large affected employers who represent 225,000+ employees at 250+ worksites across the City. The CTR program’s regulatory framework and encouragement of sustainable trip making supports progress towards citywide climate targets.

** MTCO₂e= metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions*

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.

This legislation will continue an existing program that is key to increasing Seattle’s resilience in the face of climate change by promoting sustainable commute options for workers within the City of Seattle. The CTR program has successfully measured and participated in the material reduction in drive alone commute rates at Seattle-located large worksites from 37% of commuters in 2007/2008 to 28.4% in 2019/2020 (note: data is from 2019) and to 20.5% in 2021/2022. Following a return to office for many large employers during the 2023/2024 period, the drive alone commute rate was 32.1%. The CTR program allows for the City to directly communicate with these employers and employees to influence a return to pre-pandemic drive alone rates of below 29%, support adoption of new transportation options built since 2020, and communicate worksite commute benefits through CTR communications channels.

The program also requires large employers to maintain compliance via a good-faith effort to achieve targets at worksites, ensuring buy-in and partnership between the City and key private sector stakeholders.

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?

The City of Seattle Commute Trip Reduction Four-Year Plan Update adopted via this legislation updates the long-term measurable targets for the Drive Alone Rate (DAR) and

Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) by employees at program worksites. Data modeling completed for the City's Climate Change Response Framework ensured that these targets were feasible and recommended as part of the city's overall climate strategy, and a subset of citywide targets were developed to apply to only commute trips at CTR affected worksites. These goals and targets are required by the state in a compliant four-year CTR plan and are fully explained in the Plan document attached to this legislation. Beyond these targets, the City's CTR program also tracks a number of other key metrics related to its ongoing impacts, including: number of affected, engaged, and compliant worksites; number of employees at those worksites; industry type and worker demographics; Transportation Management Program compliance (requirements related to large building site Master Use Permits); qualitative data reflecting traveler and employer motivations; impact of transportation subsidies; equity impacts related to the program's reach within the City's Race and Social Equity (RSE) priority areas, and more. These metrics provide additional insight related to the programs ongoing impacts and efficacy beyond its core metrics (i.e., tracking drive alone rate and vehicle miles travelled).

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

N/A

5. ATTACHMENTS

Summary Attachments: None.