

March 25, 2022

MEMORANDUM

To: Seattle City Council
From: Karina Bull, Analyst
Subject: Council Bill 120286: New Holidays Ordinance

On March 29, 2022, the City Council (Council) will discuss and may vote on [Council Bill \(CB\) 120286](#), legislation that would authorize several actions related to new City of Seattle (City) holidays, including establishing Indigenous Peoples' Day as a legal holiday for certain City employees and a parking holiday for the public. This memo summarizes the background and content of the legislation and discusses its potential impacts. Central Staff has not identified issues or concerns for Council's consideration.

Background

In December 2021, the City enacted [Ordinance 126505](#) establishing Juneteenth as a legal holiday for non-represented City employees and a parking holiday for the public.

Juneteenth commemorates the emancipation of enslaved persons in the United States. On June 19, 1865, two and half years after the Emancipation Proclamation, a Union general arrived in Galveston, Texas, the last state in the Confederacy with institutional slavery, and informed enslaved persons of their freedom. Since that day, June 19 has been celebrated across the nation as "Juneteenth" and is also known as Freedom Day, Jubilee Day, Liberation Day, Emancipation Day, and Black Independence Day.

In December 2021, the City also enacted [Ordinance 126516](#), authorizing the execution of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the City and the Coalition of City Unions (Coalition) that established both Juneteenth and Indigenous Peoples' Day as legal holidays for represented City employees beginning.

Indigenous Peoples' Day commemorates the Indigenous communities who have lived in lands that would later become known as the Americas since time immemorial. The holiday honors the many contributions and deep cultural connections made to our community by Indigenous Peoples and recognizes the devastation to native populations after Christopher Columbus and other European explorers reached the continent.

Indigenous Peoples' Day was first proposed in 1977 by a delegation of Native Nations to the United Nations-sponsored International Conference on Discrimination Against Indigenous Peoples in the Americas. The first recommendation in the Conference's [Final Resolution](#) was, "to observe October 12, the day of the so called 'discovery' of America, as an International Day of Solidarity of the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas."

In 2014, the Mayor and Council adopted [Resolution 31538](#), declaring the second Monday in October as Indigenous Peoples' Day, reaffirming the City's commitment to promoting the well-being and growth of Seattle's American Indian and Indigenous community, and encouraging other institutions to recognize the day. Nationally, President Biden issued a [Proclamation](#) commemorating Indigenous Peoples' Day in 2021. To date, over 20 states, more than 130 cities, and growing numbers of school districts observe Indigenous Peoples' Day in place of or in addition to Columbus Day.¹

Although the City has already established Indigenous Peoples' Day as a day of observance and legal holiday for City employees represented by the Coalition, legislation is required to expand this holiday to non-represented City employees and establish a parking holiday.

Council Bill 120286

The proposed legislation would authorize the following actions for Juneteenth and Indigenous Peoples' Day:

1. Establish Indigenous Peoples' Day as a legal holiday for City employees

The legislation would revise [Seattle Municipal Code \(SMC\) 4.20.190](#) to establish Indigenous Peoples' Day, the second Monday of October, as one of 12 legal holidays for certain City employees beginning in 2022.² The legislation would automatically cover non-represented employees; represented employees would be covered 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.

2. Establish Indigenous Peoples' Day as a parking holiday

The legislation would revise [SMC 11.14.277](#) to establish Indigenous Peoples' Day as one of 11 parking holidays for the public beginning in 2022. As a parking holiday, the City would not collect parking revenue from pay stations or enforce parking restrictions on Indigenous Peoples' Day. The only legal holiday for City employees that is not a parking holiday is the Friday after Thanksgiving.³

3. Approve three memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with unions for two new holidays

The legislation would authorize the execution of MOUs between the City and the Seattle Police Officers' Guild; the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 77; and the Seattle Fire Chiefs Association, Local 2898. These MOUs would establish Juneteenth and Indigenous Peoples' Day as legal holidays for employees represented by these unions. With this legislation, over 90 percent of City employees would be entitled to these paid holidays.

¹ New York Post (October 11, 2021). [How Columbus Day Became Indigenous Peoples' Day Across the US](#); Indian Country Today (November 20, 2019). [Map: Making Indigenous Peoples' Day Official across the Country](#).

² 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) Juneteenth, (7) Labor Day, (8) Veterans' Day, (9) Thanksgiving Day, (10) the day immediately following Thanksgiving Day, and (11) Christmas Day.

³ 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.

4. Make technical updates to facilitate observance of Indigenous Peoples' Day

The legislation would include technical code revisions to facilitate observance of Indigenous Peoples' Day as a legal holiday. For example, the legislation would revise provisions in [SMC 3.06.015](#) on the hours of operation for the Applicant Services Center of the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections to allow closures on Indigenous Peoples' Day.

Impacts of CB 120286

Financial Impacts

Establishing Indigenous Peoples' Day as a legal holiday and parking holiday would result in direct and indirect costs for the City. Direct costs would include additional pay for minimum staffing requirements (e.g., holiday pay for employees who work on Indigenous Peoples' Day) and the loss of on-street parking revenue for the parking holiday. Indirect costs would include any loss of productivity (e.g., impacts from pausing City services, such as closing the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections' Applicant Services Center on the holiday).

The City Budget Office (CBO) estimates that minimum staffing requirements for the City's workforce, including employees automatically covered by a new holiday and those who may negotiate the holiday separately, would cost \$620,000. The 2022 Adopted Budget allocates \$620,000 to multiple funds in Finance General (FG) Reserves to cover the direct staffing costs for Juneteenth. CBO has confirmed that there are sufficient funds in FG Reserves to also cover these costs for Indigenous Peoples' Day.

CBO estimates that an additional parking holiday would typically cost about \$132,000. However, the cost would likely be lower in 2022 due to reduced parking trends during the pandemic. As on-street parking revenue is not allocated to any specific department, the cost would be absorbed by the General Fund.

Racial Equity Impacts

Seattle is built upon the homelands and villages of the Indigenous Peoples of this region.⁴ Establishing Indigenous Peoples' Day as a legal holiday and parking holiday would demonstrate the City's commitment to honoring the culture and contributions of Indigenous Peoples. As with the City's celebration of Juneteenth, Indigenous People's Day would also signal a commitment toward achieving racial equity, working toward an antiracist future, and ending the historical and continued harms toward Black Americans and Indigenous Peoples in this region and United States.

⁴ Native Land (accessed March 23, 2022). [Our Home on Native Land](#). Native Land is an app to help map Indigenous territories, treaties, and languages.

Next Steps

If the Council votes to approve CB 120286, the Executive would transmit separate budget legislation to appropriate funding to relevant departments to cover the direct costs of Indigenous Peoples' Day and Juneteenth. Revenue changes resulting from the parking holiday could be reflected in revised 2022 budget forecasts.

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

cc: Aly Pennucci, Deputy Director
Yolanda Ho, Lead Analyst