

CITY OF SEATTLE

ORDINANCE _____

COUNCIL BILL _____

..title

AN ORDINANCE relating to the Seattle Transportation Benefit District (STBD); authorizing a \$10 increase to the vehicle license fee for a total fee of \$50, pursuant to RCW 36.73.065 and 82.80.140.

..body

WHEREAS, The City of Seattle (“City”) has a responsibility for the improvement, maintenance, and protection of public ways within the corporate limits of Seattle pursuant to RCW 35A.11.020 and chapter 35A.47 RCW; and

WHEREAS, chapter 36.73 RCW provides for the establishment of a transportation benefit district (TBD) by a city or county, and authorizes TBDs to levy and impose various taxes and fees to generate revenues to support transportation improvements within the TBD; and

WHEREAS, in 2010 the City Council passed Ordinance 123397, which established the Seattle Transportation Benefit District (STBD), and although the STBD’s governing board was comprised of City Councilmembers, the STBD was a legally separate entity; and

WHEREAS, in 2010 the STBD’s governing board, by a majority vote, exercised its authority to impose a vehicle license fee of \$20 pursuant to RCW 36.73.065 by adopting STBD Resolution 1; and

WHEREAS, in 2014, Seattle voters approved STBD Proposition 1, which imposed an additional \$60 vehicle license fee pursuant to RCW 36.73.065 and resulted in a combined vehicle license fee of \$80; and

1 WHEREAS, in 2016, the City Council passed Ordinance 125070, which absorbed the STBD,
2 and vested the City Council with the STBD’s duties and authority, including the authority
3 to collect a \$20 vehicle license fee and the voter-approved \$60 vehicle license fee; and

4 WHEREAS, the voter-approved \$60 vehicle license fee was passed in 2014 (via STBD
5 Proposition 1) and expired on December 31, 2020; and

6 WHEREAS, in 2020, the City Council passed Ordinance 126234, which imposed a \$40 vehicle
7 license fee effective December 31, 2020; and

8 WHEREAS, pursuant to RCW 36.73.065 and 82.80.140, if a TBD has imposed a \$40 vehicle
9 license fee for at least 24 months, the governing board may, by majority vote, impose a
10 \$50 vehicle license fee; and

11 WHEREAS, RCW 82.80.140 requires a six-month period between the approval of the vehicle
12 license fee and the collection of revenue; and

13 WHEREAS, the increase in the vehicle license fee from \$40 to \$50 is anticipated to raise an
14 additional \$2 million in 2023, and an additional \$4 million in subsequent years; and

15 WHEREAS, the City Council intends for the initial funds from the increase in the vehicle license
16 fee to be used for Bridge Major Maintenance and the NE 45th Street overpass pedestrian
17 safety project; and

18 WHEREAS, the City Council intends for ongoing funds from the increase in the vehicle license
19 fee to be dedicated to pedestrian safety improvements and bridge safety projects; NOW,

20 THEREFORE,

21 **BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF SEATTLE AS FOLLOWS:**

22 Section 1. The City Council affirms that The City of Seattle will have imposed a \$40
23 vehicle license fee (authorized by Ordinance 126234) continuously for 24 months effective

1 January 1, 2023, and that the City Council may authorize a \$50 vehicle license fee pursuant to
2 RCW 36.73.065 and 82.80.140.

3 Section 2. An annual vehicle license fee in the amount of \$50 is established, consistent
4 with RCW 36.73.065 and 82.80.140, to be collected by the Washington State Department of
5 Licensing (DOL) on qualifying vehicles, as set forth in RCW 82.80.140 and chapters 36.74 and
6 46.16A RCW.

7 Section 3. The revenues generated by the vehicle license fee established in Section 2 of
8 this ordinance may be used for any purpose allowed by law pursuant to chapter 36.73 RCW.

9 Section 4. The City Council requests that the City Clerk:

10 A. Publish notice of the City Council’s intention to impose a \$50 vehicle license fee, in
11 one or more newspapers of general circulation within the Seattle Transportation Benefit District,
12 by April 1, 2023, pursuant to RCW 36.73.065(6); and

13 B. If there is no special election pursuant to RCW 36.73.065(6), notify the Washington
14 State Department of Licensing (DOL) of the change in the vehicle license fee established in
15 Section 2 of this ordinance and request that DOL take all steps necessary to implement collection
16 of this fee no later than July 1, 2023, in accordance with RCW 82.80.140.

17 Section 5. Any action consistent with the authority of this ordinance taken prior to its
18 effective date is ratified and confirmed.

