SUMMARY and FISCAL NOTE

Department:	Dept. Contact:	CBO Contact:
Seattle Municipal Court	Josh Sattler	Linda Taylor-Manning

1. BILL SUMMARY

Legislation Title: AN ORDINANCE relating to the monetary penalty for parking infractions; amending Section 11.31.121 of the Seattle Municipal Code to update penalties.

Summary and Background of the Legislation:
Seattle Municipal Court (SMC) judges set the fine amount for a number of parking violations via Seattle Municipal Court Local Court Rule (SMCLIR) 6.2(b). When SMC judges make a change to this court rule, City Council adjusts by ordinance the schedule included in Seattle Municipal Code Section 11.31.121. These fines have not been adjusted since 2011, when a $5 increase was applied to all fines. Based on historical data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the Consumer Price Index (CPI) in the Seattle area has increased by 50% from 2011 to 2024. CPI is a measure of the average change overtime in the prices paid by consumers.

This legislation would align parking fines with inflation and increase the monetary penalty of parking violations in SMCLIR 6.2(b) to the below amounts effective January 1, 2025:

a. Increase $29 fines to $43
b. Increase $44 fines to $65
c. Increase $47 fines to $69
d. Increase $53 fines to $78

Below are the eight most frequently issued parking citations from 2019-2023:

Violation Description	Violation Code	Fine Amount	% of Citations	# of Citations
PAY TO PARK VIOLATION	11.76.015	$44	30.49%	537,554
EXPIRED / IMPROPER PLATES	11.72.145	$47	15.67%	276,302
SIGN POSTED LOCATIONS	11.72.330	$47	13.26%	233,738
RESTRICTED ZONE	11.72.351A	$53	7.71%	135,868
OVERTIME	11.72.260	$44	5.17%	91,232
PEAK HOUR	11.72.300	$47	3.35%	59,057
FIRE HYDRANT	11.72.160	$47	2.61%	46,095
RESTRICTIONS - COMM LOAD ZONE	11.72.075	$53	2.48%	43,808

Reasons for a Fine Adjustment:

- The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) posits that the current fine amounts compared to parking rates is leading to parker behavior that disregards payment and parking rules. SDOT offered two examples: in South Lake Union generally and during events at Lumen Field and T-Mobile Stadium, parkers are not paying and ignoring parking rules.

- The increase to some fines will improve transportation freight movement and Vision Zero Safety.
- There have been significant changes to Seattle since 2011.
    - Seattle's population has grown 20%;
    - Street parking rates have increased;
    - Private parking facility rates have increased – current downtown rates are $15-17 for early bird parking and $24-30 for private parking;
    - There are relatively few on-street parking spaces downtown (~6,500);
    - Curb availability is more challenging;
    - Transportation options have improved with better and more reliable bus and light rail service, multimodal facilities, and active SDOT programs to provide safe, climate-friendly transportation options like scooters and bicycles; and
    - Inflation has increased – per the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Seattle has experienced an annual average inflation of 3.18% every year since 2011, meaning a $44 parking fine is $66.12 in today's dollars.

Parking Rates in Comparable Cities:

In late 2023, SMC conducted a preliminary review of parking fines for cities with similarities to Seattle. Because the cities do not all follow the same tiered penalty structure as Seattle, SMC analyzed the most basic and commonly known parking fine in each of the above cities, which are the "Pay to Park Violation" and "Overtime" citations currently at $44 in Seattle. Using Per Capita Personal Income (PCPI) and Regional Price Parities (RPP) data from the U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), below is a table that shows where Seattle ranks in terms of its current $44 parking penalty compared to other cities.

City Name	PCPI After Adjustments for Purchasing Power [a]	Basic Parking Fine	Fine to PCPI (to the 1/10,000)	Difference from Seattle
Portland, OR	$ 56,925	$ 65	11.4185	4.9407
San Francisco	$ 77,175	$ 87	11.2731	4.7953
San Diego	$ 54,167	$ 52.50	9.6922	3.2144
Washington D.C.	$ 63,227	$ 50	7.9080	1.4302
Minneapolis / St. Paul	$ 62,298	$ 45	7.2233	0.7455
Seattle	$ 67,924	$ 44	6.4778	0.0000
Boston	$ 70,903	$ 40	5.6415	-0.8363
Denver	$ 64,547	$ 35	5.4224	-1.0554
Austin	$ 62,597	$ 30	4.7926	-1.6853
Tacoma	$ 67,924	$ 25	3.6806	-2.7972

a. Figure reflects 2019 numbers – the latest available for all cities in one place

SMC then conducted a preliminary review of parking fines for the same cities, looking at factors like population size, density, median income, the city's operating budget, cost of living index, and percentage of population who are white. Seattle is the 18th most populous city in the United

States, and the city with the 3rd highest median household income amongst the top 25 most populous U.S. cities.

City Name	Population[1]	Pop Density ppl/sqmi[2]	Median Income[3]	Operating Budget $BB[4]	Cost of Living Index[5]	% White[6]
San Diego	1,381,162	4,255.9	$98,657.00	$5.9	95.1	42%
Austin	974,447	3,006.4	$86,556.00	$5.5	66	48%
San Francisco	808,437	18,629.1	$136,689.00	$14.5	122.5	38%
Seattle	749,256	8,791.8	$116,068.00	$5.9	100	61%
Minneapolis / St. Paul	728,272	7,142.8	$73,662.30	$2.4	64.5	56%
Denver	713,252	4,674.3	$85,853.00	$3.8	72.6	54%
Washington D.C.	671,803	11,280.7	$101,722.00	$15.4	102.9	36%
Boston	650,706	13,976.7	$89,212.00	$4.3	99.7	44%
Portland, OR	635,067	4,889.5	$85,876.00	$5.4	82.7	68%
Tacoma	221,776	4,412.2	$79,085.00	$3.0	79.8	57%

In terms of population and density, Seattle is most like Minneapolis and St. Paul combined. In terms of median income, Seattle is second to San Francisco at 15% less, and above Washington D.C. at 12% higher. Boston and Washington D.C. come the closest to Seattle in terms of cost-of-living.

With passage of this legislation, Seattle would move above Washington D.C but remain below Portland, OR, San Francisco, and San Diego.

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.

[1] U.S. Census QuickFacts, July 1, 2022 Population Estimates
[2] U.S. Census QuickFacts, Population per square mile, 2020
[3] U.S. Census QuickFacts, Median household income (in 2022 dollars), 2018-2022
[4] Published in various city websites relating to its budget
[5] https://money.cnn.com/calculator/pf/cost-of-living/index.html, based on C2ER Q3 2022 cost of living index, the latest available for free that covers all cities
[6] U.S. Census QuickFacts, % White alone, not Hispanic or Latino

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

Revenue Change ($); General Fund	2025 est.	2026 est.	2027 est.	2028 est.	2029 est.
	4,900,000	4,900,000	4,900,000	4,900,000	4,900,000
Revenue Change ($); Other Funds	**2025 est.**	**2026 est.**	**2027 est.**	**2028 est.**	**2029 est.**

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 Estimated Revenue	2026 Estimated Revenue
General Fund - 00100	SMC	Parking Fines	$4,900,000	$4,900,000
		TOTAL	**$4,900,000**	**$4,900,000**

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.
N/A

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.
N/A

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

a. Please describe how this legislation may affect any departments besides the originating department.
N/A

b. Does this legislation affect a piece of property? If yes, please attach a map and explain any impacts on the property. Please attach any Environmental Impact Statements, Determinations of Non-Significance, or other reports generated for this property.
No.

c. 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 Innovation and Performance (IP) team at the Mayor's Office conducted a Seattle Parking Fines Equity Analysis with SMC assistance. Although the City does not collect demographic information on individuals who receive parking citations, IP was able to assess RSJ implications by geocoding citations by Seattle neighborhoods (Community Reporting Areas) and the Racial and Social Equity Index (RSE Index) priority areas. In doing so, IP evaluated who is getting ticketed the most, what are they getting ticketed for, and how many tickets go unpaid, among other factors. IP successfully geocoded 98% of the citation locations and 24% of the registered address locations.

At a high level, IP concluded that the percentage of citations unpaid and the amounts owed are both higher in high RSE Index priority areas and lower in low priority areas. Specifically, in areas where home location is known (~24%), over 50% remain unpaid in high priority RSE Index priority areas. In high priority areas, the types of tickets with lowest payment include expired/improper plates (65% unpaid), sign posted locations (56% unpaid)[7], and Commercial Load Zone (56% unpaid).

[7] Sign Posted locations (Seattle Municipal Code Section 11.72.330) are where SDOT has installed "No Stop" or "No Parking" signs. These signs are installed for Vision Zero, Traffic and Transportation Movement/Safety. An example is downtown streets with "No Parking" signs to allow for transit and vehicle traffic movement.

What this indicates is that certain ticket types impact lower income neighborhoods more significantly. While acknowledging an increase to the parking fine amount can only increase the burden for those who do not have the ability to pay, the equity analysis recognizes the infraction mitigation process and the debt reduction hearings at the court provide a path for those who lack the ability to pay to resolve their citations.

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?
N/A

d. 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.
N/A

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

e. 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?
N/A

5. CHECKLIST

☐ **Is a public hearing required?**

☐ **Is publication of notice with *The Daily Journal of Commerce* and/or *The Seattle Times* required?**

☐ **If this legislation changes spending and/or revenues for a fund, have you reviewed the relevant fund policies and determined that this legislation complies?**

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

6. ATTACHMENTS

Summary Attachments: None.