



DRAFT Director's Rule – Licensed Parking Garage and Parking Lot Signage

Department: City of Seattle Department of Finance and Administrative Services	Rule No:	Supersedes: New
	Publication:	Effective: April 1, 2027
Subject: Licensed Parking Garage and Parking Lot Signage	Code and Section Reference(s): SMC 6.02.050 SMC 6.48.040	
Approved: _____ Division Director _____ Business Unit Officer _____ Kiersten Grove, Department Director	 _____ Date _____ Date _____ Date	

1. Purpose

This rule clarifies and establishes requirements for public notice signage for public garages and parking lots (hereafter “garages” and “lots”), consistent with Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) 6.48.040. The authority for this rule is established by SMC 6.02.050, which authorizes the Director of Finance and Administrative Services to establish administrative rules and regulations for the purpose of enforcing and carrying out provisions of the License Code.

2. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this rule:

Parking Rate: The amount charged for parking in a garage or lot for a specific time interval, usually hourly or daily.

Fee: Any amount charged that is additional to the parking rate.

Mandatory Fee: A fee that applies to all consumers parking in a garage or lot.

Situational Fee: A fee that does not apply to all consumers and is instead charged situationally, including, but not limited to overstay and penalty fees.

Remote Electronic Payment: Payment that is made electronically through a website or application.

In-Person Payment: Payment that is made in-person, through a kiosk or with a cashier.

Variable Pricing: Parking rates that change depending on demand, time of day, or other factors.

Static Signage: Printed, fixed parking rate signage that is not intended to be updated frequently.

Dynamic Digital Signage: Electronic parking rate signage that can easily be updated frequently.

Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) System: State law (RCW 10.130.020(4)) defines “automated license plate reader system” as a “system, software, or computer algorithm, whether used independently or in combination with one or more mobile or fixed automated cameras, that is used to convert images of license plates into computer-readable data.”

3. Rule

A. Disclosure of Fees Required on Parking Rate Signage

SMC 6.48.040 requires garages and lots to post signage disclosing parking rates and states “it is unlawful for any person to demand or collect any charge for the parking, keeping or storing of any motor vehicle in a public garage or parking lot in excess of the rates posted.”

Many garages and lots charge additional fees, such as service or convenience fees for electronic payments, overstay fees for exceeding prepaid parking time limits, penalty fees for lost tickets, or after-hours fees. It is important for consumers to have access to information about these fees before choosing to park.

This rule establishes that garages and lots that charge additional fees must inform consumers of such fees before payment is required and provide access to a list or schedule of all potential fees. For all garages and lots charging fees, parking rate signage must either state that additional fees may apply or list the amount of each fee and the situation in which it would apply at in-person payment locations or remote electronic payment screens. Garages and lots that provide receipts must itemize all fees charged on the receipts. The fee disclosure requirement will vary based on the type of fee and the mode of payment as reflected in this chart:

Type of Fee and Method of Payment	Disclosure Requirement
Mandatory, remote electronic payment	Fees must be separately listed on screen before payment, and itemized on electronic or printed receipts, if provided
Mandatory or situational, in-person payment	Fees must be listed on parking rate signage or a list that is clearly visible at each payment location, and itemized on electronic or printed receipts, if provided

Situational, remote electronic payment	A link to the fee schedule must be provided on the payment screen, and all fees charged must be itemized on electronic or printed receipts, if provided
--	---

If fees vary by method of payment, garages and lots must clearly indicate so on parking rate signage. For example, if there is no charge for in-person cash payment but a fee is charged for remote electronic payment, signage must indicate 1) that remote electronic payments will incur a fee, 2) the amount of that fee, and 3) that in-person cash payments will not incur a fee.

In all circumstances, as required by SMC 6.48.040, no charge may be demanded or collected for a vehicle that immediately exits a garage or lot following the reading of information regarding fees.

B. Variable Pricing

Not Allowed on Static Parking Rate Signage

SMC 6.48.040 requires that parking rate signs indicating more than one rate and time interval shall contain figures for each rate and time interval. Variable pricing or posting a range of rates for a given time interval is not allowed on static parking rate signage. Each time interval must correspond to one rate.

Allowed on Dynamic Digital Parking Rate Signage

Variable pricing is allowed on dynamic, digital signage, if only one rate per time interval is displayed at a time. The rate schedule that is displayed to a consumer upon their arrival at the parking facility determines the rate(s) they will pay for the duration of their parking in that facility. A consumer may not be charged a higher rate if the facility increases rates during the consumer's parking stay in the facility.

C. Public Convenience Information - Automated License Plate Reader Systems

SMC 6.48.040.E.5 permits the Director of Finance and Administrative Services to specify by administrative regulations a requirement for garages and lots to post a public notice containing any other information pertinent to their operation ("public convenience information").

State law regulates how state and local agencies may use automated license plate reader (ALPR) systems but does not currently regulate use by private entities. Many garages and lots use ALPR systems for parking access, monitoring, and enforcement. It is important that consumers know when ALPR systems are in use and how data from these systems is collected, used, stored, and shared.

Beginning April 1, 2027, public garages and parking lots that use ALPR systems are required to include a disclosure that such systems are in use on public convenience information signage. This disclosure must include an explanation of how data collected through ALPR systems is used, stored, and shared with third parties. A link to existing data and privacy policies is sufficient if it includes this information. Garages and lots are permitted to electronically post this information via a URL and/or QR code. If garages and lots accept only electronic payments, a link from the electronic payment screen to this information is sufficient and a separate URL/QR code is not required.

Payment methods that require customers to input license plate information must clearly state on the payment screen that such information must be entered exactly as it appears on the license plate.