

Seattle Department of Transportation

CURBSIDE MANAGEMENT CLIMATE PLAN



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Transportation

INTRODUCTION



The City of Seattle has set ambitious goals around climate to drastically decrease our emissions by 2030 and slow the effects of the climate emergency on our communities. In 2021, the City of Seattle created the [Transportation Electrification Blueprint \(TEB\)](#), which charts six key goals that span across City departments. Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) teams are actively working on each of these goals, leading projects, research, and community engagement to make Seattle streets safer, healthier, and more sustainable for future generations. More recently, SDOT launched the development of the Seattle Transportation Plan (STP), which will create a strategic vision for the future of our streets and public spaces.

The STP will be informed by SDOT's Climate Emergency Response Framework (CERF), which will be finalized in early 2023 and recommend SDOT-specific strategies over the coming years to address the climate emergency. Several of the CERF strategies will focus on how curbside management and pricing mechanisms can contribute to vehicle miles traveled (VMT) reduction and adoption of electric vehicles. Lastly, in late 2022 Mayor Harrell signed a new [Climate Executive Order](#), outlining key actions that City departments will pursue to prioritize work that equitably reduces or eliminates greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) from transportation. SDOT plans to work collaboratively with other workgroups to achieve these goals.

Curbside management plays a key role in contributing to positive change around climate and sustainability. Efficient use of curbspace is essential to support our growing urban centers, especially as new and emerging mobility, and electric vehicle (EV) industries continue to shift drastically. Curbside management includes many use cases for making sure people and goods can move efficiently throughout our city, including management of parking, transit, shared mobility, freight delivery, and providing for critical access needs such as loading. We regularly adjust street parking rates based on updated performance data, using pricing to manage the curb and prevent cruising for parking and its resultant impacts on congestion and emissions more effectively.

As we look to the future, climate needs to be a primary focus of workplans. This first iteration of the Curbside Management Climate Plan will take the overarching City and SDOT vision and goals and outline how we can better address climate at the curb through partnerships and programs. This strategic plan will be updated annually and will break down large emission reduction targets into work that staff feel empowered to lead. Through this plan, Curbside Management will work to create strategic policy changes at the curb focused on addressing our climate emergency.



BRINGING A CLIMATE MINDSET TO THE CURB



To move towards climate minded solutions and discourage old pathways, we need to continue to shift how we prioritize curbspace use and incentives. To achieve a curbspace more attuned to these priorities, we first need to break down the historic pathways that are not working towards our climate goals. In Seattle, these can be seen in:

- Dependency on fossil fuel vehicles
- High use of personal vehicle travel compared to public transportation
- Increased pressure for on-demand delivery
- Long-term and underpriced vehicle storage on city streets

SDOT Curbside Management has identified five key areas of our work in which we can more effectively embed a climate mindset into how we plan future projects and programs. These following five key areas consider our current portfolio of projects and the key pathways identified above that we would like to discourage as our transportation systems adapt.

1. Urban Goods Delivery

Efficient urban goods delivery is essential to support a thriving urban environment, in both our business districts that rely on timely deliveries and in our residential areas that increasingly rely on e-commerce for everyday needs. Effective

curbspace management supports more reliable space at the curb for commercial vehicles through programs like our Commercial Vehicle Load Zone (CVLZ) permits, designated truck zones and other load/unload zones that support delivery accessibility in areas with limited curbspace.

As we move forward, we plan to modernize our commercial vehicle permit program and explore changes that may be helpful to commercial delivery by working hand in hand with industry partners. This may include evaluating pay-per use structures for load zones, different pricing structures based on use cases, and automated payment systems. We are also actively developing a Curb Data Specification with the Open Mobility Foundation and other municipalities that will standardize curbspace data and make it more accessible to urban goods operators that utilize digital tools, modernizing access at the curb.

We also plan to support the shift to zero-emission delivery. One of our TEB goals is that 30% of goods delivery be zero emission by 2030. To achieve this, we need to bring new, innovative options to our business and freight partners that advance urban goods access at the curb. Pilots that support e-cargo bikes, climate friendly loading, and mobility hubs need to be explored and tested in Seattle in order to see which options will be most beneficial as we prioritize urban freight decarbonization.

2. On-Street Paid Parking

Our Curbside Management team is skilled at using up-to-date parking data to adjust parking rates at the curb by neighborhood and time of day, ensuring that one or two spaces are available on each block. This prevents drivers from circling and the resultant impacts on emissions and congestion. As we continue this practice, we





would like to consider an increasingly climate focused approach to how we use paid parking and identify areas of our city where we can adjust parking regulations and pricing to influence driving behavior.

As directed by the City Council in the Adopted 2023 Budget, Curbside Management plans to review our performance pricing rate setting program and related ordinance to recommend any changes to curbside management and parking rates, particularly related to traffic safety in a multimodal transportation system. SDOT may also want to think through the role that parking rates and the current ordinance play in SDOT's climate response. This may involve changes to rate allowances or to the data analysis process.

As part of our long-standing Community Access and Parking Program, we will examine neighborhood business districts and work with stakeholders to consider expanding paid parking where it makes sense to better manage access

at the curb, in addition to considering updates to other curb regulations. We will also continue working with other SDOT teams on transit, public space management, and multimodal projects to ensure they incorporate a holistic approach that accounts for paid parking as a potential curb management tool, along with other curb updates that address demands such as critical building access for loading. Curbspace Management can be used as a tool to incentivize other modes of transportation outside of driving a personal vehicle, and we hope to be an ally for our Transportation Demand Management team to explore ways in which we can incentivize further mode shift through curb management strategies.

3. Restricted Parking Zones

Our Restricted Parking Zone (RPZ) program prioritizes on-street parking for residents and short-term visitors in areas where neighborhood parking demand may also stem from a major institution or commuter parking generator like a college, hospital or business district.

As we think about climate in relation to RPZs, we plan to explore the ongoing car ownership question and how strategic policy changes to this program could result in positive climate effects down the road. In 2023, the RPZ permit fee increased from \$65/permit to \$95/permit. The two-year permit fee amount still reflects a relatively low cost for long-term vehicle storage in Seattle, especially in comparison to market rates for off-street parking. We plan to evaluate potential policy adjustments that would more effectively consider equity in terms of who pays for permits (some permits are subsidized by major institutions in some zones). We will also seek to update rationales for RPZs in policy language, clearly establish zone boundaries, and engage more frequently in comprehensive reviews of RPZs to determine whether changes may be warranted.

4. Electrification

Electrified transportation is critical to decrease our overall emissions in Seattle. While SDOT works to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and encourage public transportation and micromobility, we also recognize that personal vehicles will remain a way people get around for the foreseeable future. As Curbside Management professionals, we can advise on when right of way (ROW) charging can be an appropriate curb use for EV charging. In 2022, we partnered with Seattle City Light (SCL) to plan 30 curbside EV chargers in Seattle to serve residents who do not have access to charging at home. This pilot received massive interest from the community, with over 1,800 requests submitted, showing how critical this use case is to residents. As the pilot continues into 2023, staff will be ready to advise SDOT and SCL on trends that we see with this use of the curbspace and what our approach should be as we move forward.



As electrification gains traction, Curbside Management will advise on ROW charging for residential and commercial use cases and explore how we can support our freight partners as more delivery vehicles transition to electric. We expect to continue work with SCL as our utility charging network expands and explore partnerships with private companies that may express interest in curbspace electrification. All pilots and programs will inform the overall SDOT vision for ROW electrification and guide future curb regulations.

Electrification is also essential for our transit partners. Curbside Management continues to work with King County Metro (Metro) to plan bus layover zones. Metro's goal is to achieve a 100% zero emission fleet by 2035 and they have already started work to electrify their South Base Campus Facility. To support this project, Curbside Management will provide guidance on layover zones, electrification infrastructure in the ROW to support on-route charging, and additional planning needs as Metro incorporates new technology.

5. Off-Street Parking

While SDOT does not regulate parking garages or lots, the City does set requirements for new development in terms of the amount and design of parking, accessibility and loading required on private property, which has a direct impact on the use of the curb. Over the last 15 years, the City has changed the off-street parking regulations in the Land Use Code to make sure that regulations do not over-require parking and impact development costs, particularly for housing. Even with high construction costs and with maximum parking requirements, new developments in the Center City continue to build large amounts of parking for their building tenants and the public. Continued development of large off-street parking facilities creates a long-term drag on SDOT's efforts to build and operate a sustainable transportation system, particularly in the Center City.

Curbside Management will remain actively engaged with the City's Office of Planning and Community Development and the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections to consider how to reduce the amount of parking constructed in developments and encourage existing parking supply to transition to other uses. Off-street parking lots offer a potential resource for EV charging expansions, on-site loading, passenger and goods delivery pick up/drop off, and microhub pilots. We will explore new use cases and partnerships with stakeholders who are interested in trying something new.

PLAN IN ACTION



To jumpstart these curbspace management strategies, the Curbside Management Team will evaluate the best approaches for each of these topics based on project needs. We plan to outline clear metrics of success in partnership with our STP planning team and ensure that project priorities align with City and SDOT strategic goals.

This may include:

- Increased outreach and engagement with a wide variety of communities, businesses and organizational partners to better understand current challenges and opportunities for improvement.
- Supportive policy and legislation to integrate new mobility and updated uses of the curbspace into urban design plans, Streets Illustrated and the Seattle Municipal Code (where applicable)

- Identification of necessary budget, staff time, and potential grants to achieve project goals.
- Creative operations, technology, and pricing strategies
- Collaboration across departments to incorporate a One Seattle mindset.
- Working with the CERF team on relevant assumptions and technical modeling of potential impacts

We hope the Curbspace Climate Plan will increase awareness of projects underway and anticipated in Curbside Management's workplan and bring new opportunities to partner with other City departments and external stakeholders. Our charted priorities and projects for each year will provide tangible benefits to Seattle's decarbonization goals and further support our city as we adapt to a more sustainable future.

2023 PROJECT PLAN

The following projects outline our 2023 priorities and include both active engagements and new research efforts. Projects are listed in general order of priority and status.

Project	Description
2022 Seattle Climate Executive Order	The 2022 Climate Executive Order (EO) directs SDOT to “work with private-sector partners and others to explore ways to incentivize zero emissions freight options at the curb.” By Q2 2023, SDOT will identify mechanisms to promote the zero-emissions freight transition that advance City policy work to ensure access to new urban goods deliveries at the curb. This work will be closely coordinated with our ongoing C40 grant, e-cargo bike pilot designs, and other program explorations.
E-cargo bike pilot program	In 2022, Curbside Management was awarded \$85,000 from C40 to explore e-cargo bike program typologies to plan for future pilots in Seattle. In January 2023, our final report with Walker Consultants and C40 will outline recommendations for pilot implementation and continued community engagement. Our priorities for 2023 will include pilot development, continued stakeholder engagement, and potential launch of pilot offerings.
US DOT SMART Grant Project	SDOT Curbside Management was awarded a USDOT SMART grant to fund technology and program development for our commercial vehicle load zone permit program. In 2023/24, we plan to use SMART grant funds to prototype new program technologies that will help improve curb access, reduce congestion, and reduce the cruising time of commercial vehicles.
Climate friendly loading exploration	Climate friendly loading could provide priority access to the curb for zero emission vehicles. We will explore if SDOT is allowed to make distinctions between fuel types with permitting or sign regulations. In 2023, we will build upon our work with the C40 Zero Emission Freight project and evaluate policies and potential legislation. This will include a more thorough understanding of the state and federal issues regarding regulations.
Curbside EV Charging Installations: ongoing to 2026	Curbside Management will continue to work with SCL to support EV charging installations in the ROW. This will include site planning, permitting, and coordination for installations scheduled for Q2 2023. Once all sites are installed, we will track pilot success and start the evaluation and development for future curbside charging installations.

Project	Description
Paid parking management	<p>SDOT expects to continue its regular, three times a year review of measured occupancy in paid parking areas and make rate adjustments accordingly.</p> <p>In addition, staff will consider options for decision-makers to expand paid parking tools (e.g., paid days, event rates at other stadiums, adjusting minimum/maximum rates, expanding paid areas). These would ultimately involve community engagement and proposed legislation.</p>
Paid parking rate research	<p>As part of the 2023 Adopted Budget, the City Council directed SDOT to pursue paid parking analysis related to how we are meeting or need to adjust policies to meet performance goals listed in SMC 11.16.121 (authority for paid parking rate adjustments). This review will include whether current paid parking policy and programs should be updated to meet City Climate goals. The report is due to City Council by July 1, 2023.</p>
Community Access and Parking Program (CAPP)	<p>SDOT will develop curb management plans for several neighborhood business districts. In 2023, the program will focus on developing a data-driven project prioritization process to select neighborhoods warranting curb management plans more equitably for 2024 and beyond. Outcomes could include expanded use of paid parking, as well as enhancements to loading and micromobility access.</p>
RPZ climate and equity policy adjustments	<p>Our work in 2023 will build upon analysis already underway to determine the success of RPZ policies, and will include permit data review, re-consideration of zone boundaries, and approaches for RPZs that overlap with mixed use business areas.</p>
Strategic Planning	<p>Curbside Management will continue to provide guidance on City strategic planning, including the Seattle Transportation Plan, Transportation Electrification Blueprint, and 2022 Climate Executive Order, as well as updates to Streets Illustrated and other guiding policy and design documents.</p>

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