



# Metropolitan King County Council

## PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, Juneteenth commemorates the effective end of chattel slavery in the United States; and

WHEREAS, on January 1st, 1863, President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, declaring that “all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, henceforward, and forever free”; and

WHEREAS, on June 19th, 1865, two years after the Emancipation Proclamation was announced, General Gordon Granger went to Texas and issued Order No.3, which stated, “in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free”; and

WHEREAS, on June 19th, 1866, three years after the Emancipation Proclamation was announced and one year after Major Granger’s announcement in Texas, the freed African American men and women in the state of Texas held the first official “Juneteenth” celebration; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth was first observed as a federal holiday in 2021, 158 years after President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation; and

WHEREAS, the King County Council adopted Ordinance 19209 on November 17th, 2020, making Juneteenth an official holiday for King County employees, leading the State of Washington as the first local government to do so; and

WHEREAS, June 19th, 2026, marks the 161st anniversary of Juneteenth, a profound symbol of freedom, resilience, and the ongoing journey towards justice; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth is an important opportunity to reflect on the progress, achievements, and contributions African Americans have made and continue to make, and an occasion to look forward to the work that remains to reach full economic and social equity for the descendants of enslaved African Americans; and

WHEREAS, on Friday, June 19th, the Northwest African American Museum will host a Juneteenth celebration and FIFA World Cup watch party at Judkins Park in collaboration with King County, along with dozens of other celebrations around the region;

NOW, THEREFORE, we, the Metropolitan King County Council and King County Executive, proclaim June 19, 2026, as

### JUNETEENTH

in Martin Luther King, Jr. County, recognize its historic importance, and encourage all residents to join us in its commemoration.

DATED this NINTH day of JUNE, 2026.

Girmay Zahilay, County Executive

Rod Dembowski, District One

Jorge L. Barón, Council Vice-Chair, District Four

Claudia Balducci, District Six

Sarah Perry, Council Chair, District Three

Rhonda Lewis, District Two

Steffanie Fain, District Five

Pete von Reichbauer, District Seven