



KING COUNTY

1200 King County Courthouse
516 Third Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

Signature Report

Resolution 21-08

Proposed No. 21-08.2

Sponsors

1 A RESOLUTION strongly recommending helmet use as a
 2 tool to prevent injuries and fatalities associated with head
 3 injuries to bicycle and other wheeled device riders of all
 4 ages and a comprehensive approach to bicycle safety.

5 WHEREAS, bicycling is an important recreational activity and mode of
 6 transportation that provides valuable exercise and supports sustainable transportation to
 7 fight climate change and promote health, and

8 WHEREAS, head and brain injuries are a major cause of disability and death
 9 associated with the operation of a bicycle on public roadways and bicycle paths, and

10 WHEREAS, more than one thousand Americans die annually from bicycle related
 11 injuries. Approximately forty percent of those deaths are due to traumatic brain injuries,
 12 according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and

13 WHEREAS, a significant number of individuals who survive head injuries do not
 14 return to a normal life and are often left with profound disability and long-lasting
 15 conditions, and

16 WHEREAS, in 2020, thirty-nine individuals were injured or killed riding or as a
 17 passenger on a bicycle King County, four of which were fatal, and

18 WHEREAS, the total economic burden in King County to government and
 19 society from bicycle involved crashes, both helmeted and unhelmeted, averaged \$190 to
 20 300 million a year from 2010 to 2020, and

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21 WHEREAS, bicycle helmets prevent head injuries suffered by bicycle riders
22 during a crash or fall, reducing the risk of head, brain and severe brain injury by sixty-
23 three to eighty-eight percent according to a 2000 Cochrane review, and

24 WHEREAS, King County has been a leader in reducing preventable injuries and
25 deaths in children through the promotion of bicycle helmet use, and

26 WHEREAS, the King County Board of Health recognizes that a comprehensive
27 approach to bicycle safety must include helmet use as well as safe built environments,
28 access to helmets and education about use, and ensuring that all riders are able to safely
29 participate without the barriers imposed by racism, sexism and other forms of oppression,
30 and

31 WHEREAS, on June 18, 2020, the board passed Resolution 20-08 declaring
32 racism a public health crisis and committed to assessing, revising, and writing its policies,
33 including the Board of Health Code, with a racial justice and equity lens, and

34 WHEREAS, on June 17, 2021, the board heard Briefing 21-B10, a panel
35 discussion on enforcement of bicycle helmet laws in King County, which described the
36 disparate enforcement by police officers of the board's helmet regulation. Data presented
37 demonstrated that police officers issued citations more frequently to Black, Indigenous
38 and people of color more frequently than to white cyclists. Persons experiencing
39 homelessness also reported that police officers commonly cited the helmet requirement as
40 the reason for stopping the cyclists, and

41 WHEREAS, in his letter dated January 14, 2022 to the Office of Inspector
42 General, Seattle Police Chief Adrian Diaz announced the Department's policy to de-
43 prioritize non-criminal, low-risk public safety traffic violations, including bicycle helmet

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44 violations, and will not longer treat bicycle helmet violations as a primary reason to
45 engage in a traffic stop, and

46 WHEREAS, in November 2021, the King County Council allocated \$221,000 in
47 Ordinance 19364 to support bicycle helmet distribution with a focus on unhoused
48 individuals and individuals who historically have been disproportionately impacted by
49 inequities and discrimination, and

50 WHEREAS, helmet use can protect riders of a variety of vehicle types where
51 there is an increased risk of injury, such as bicycles, scooters, skateboards, roller skates,
52 rollerblades and other wheeled devices, and

53 WHEREAS, the board believes in an approach to helmet use that does not involve
54 law enforcement in order to ensure that Black, Indigenous and people of color do not bear
55 the burden of enforcement and the resulting risk of negative outcome and includes an
56 emphasis on education and access for all, and

57 WHEREAS, the board reaffirms its commitment to addressing racism as a public
58 health crisis;

59 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Health of King
60 County:

61 A. The board strongly recommends universal helmet use for all age riders in
62 King County.

63 B. The board members will support efforts that seek to expand availability of and
64 lower barriers for individuals of all incomes to have access to helmets.

65 C. The board commits to work with local community partners and jurisdictions to
66 expand access to low- and no-cost helmets, provide education on helmet safety and

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67 support the improvement of community infrastructure to support safety for bicycle and
68 other modes of active transportation.

69 D. The board encourages all local jurisdictions to actively promote universal
70 helmet use, and to take steps to ensure that helmet regulations are not being applied
71 inequitably.

72 E. The board encourages the King County Council to use the Council's budgetary
73 authority to support a study of helmet use among bicycle riders that may include a
74 periodic review of the Washington State Department of Health Trauma Registry over
75 multiple years to monitor and compare bicycle related injuries and outcomes before and
76 after the repeal of the Board's helmet law. The board recommends that any analysis
77 include an equity review with results presented to the board no sooner than 2024 and no
78 later than 2026 and also encourages the King County Council to use the Council's budget

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- 79 authority to support a public education campaign regarding bicycle safety and
80 particularly the use of helmets.

Resolution 21-08 was introduced on and passed as amended by the Board of Health on 2/17/2022, by the following vote:

Yes: 13 - Baker, Daniell, de Castro, Herbold, Honda, Kohl-
Welles, McDermott, Morales, Mosqueda and Zahilay

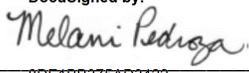
KING COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

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Joe McDermott, Chair

ATTEST:

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Melani Pedroza, Clerk of the Board

Attachments: None