



center for children's healthy lifestyles & nutrition

610 E. 22nd St. | Kansas City, MO 64108 | 816-234-9251 | www.chlnkc.org

October 8, 2019

Mayor Don Stielow and
North Kansas City Council
2010 Howell Street
North Kansas City, MO 64116

Dear Mayor Stielow and Members of the City Council:

The Center for Children's Healthy Lifestyles and Nutrition has penned the following letter to express our enthusiastic support for the new configurations to Armour Road. **North Kansas City has done something remarkable on this street for children and families, and that work needs to be preserved for them to enjoy.** Having access to safe places to bike for users of all ages and abilities is paramount to supporting health and equity in Kansas City area communities.

One of the most important things we have learned is that the built environment is a large driver of whether or not people are physically active. Youth and adults who live in bikeable and walkable communities are more likely to engage in active transportation and meet physical activity guidelines, and have reduced lifetime risk for chronic diseases.

We ask you to keep the facilities on Armour Road in place for the following reasons:

- **First, the changes to Armour Road make for a safer environment for children, particularly as they walk and bike.** The Federal Highway Administration has found that measures that design the street with pedestrians in mind improve safety. That may mean slower moving traffic that inconveniences drivers, but it's a small inconvenience that has been shown to save lives.
- **Additionally, a safer environment encourages more consistent physical activity.** When we invest in these changes, it really does benefit children. Our own data from the Kansas City metro show that **Kansas City metro children who have access to bike facilities are 15-20% less likely to have obesity than children without access to such facilities.** By making Armour Road safer, North Kansas City is creating a space where children can engage in the sort of physical activity that limits the possibility of preventable disease later in life.
- **Finally, this configuration increases connectivity and access to opportunities for children.** By creating a safer and healthier environment, the city has created an easily accessible opportunity for children to enjoy the streetscape. The bump outs and colorful crosswalks are in close proximity to a park and the community YMCA, and the bike lanes allow them to go even farther, in a safe, active manner.

The facilities on Armour Road are a critical step in building a safer and more equitable transportation network for everyone, including children. Without investments in such bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, North Kansas City will not be a safe place for active transportation and will continue to experience health disparities as compared to cities where biking and walking are safe and prevalent.



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There are plenty of reasons to celebrate and preserve the changes to Armour Road, but for our organization, the biggest reason is obvious: our children. **Our children have the greatest potential to benefit from these changes, and will undoubtedly be the biggest losers if we choose to reverse course.** Please vote to stay the course; please vote to keep the changes to Armour Road intact.

Sincerely,

Jordan Carlson, PhD | Associate Professor
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