



October 10, 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 Health Forward Foundation wishes to express its support for the Armour Road Complete Streets project that was recently completed. **Creating healthy communities means investing in healthy infrastructure, and the improvements to Armour Road accomplish this important task.** Further, we are happy to lend our voice to the chorus of supporters of this work for the reasons listed below:

- **Initially, configurations like those on Armour Road support efforts to combat preventable diseases.** Since 2009, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has identified Complete Streets approaches as one of the key strategies to prevent obesity in a community. Such prevention efforts are important, as obesity is often a catalyst for a number of prevalent, debilitating diseases, such as high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, and cancer.
- **Moreover, the project itself creates safe access to other healthy activities and resources.** The decorative crosswalks and bump outs are nice features, but they also connect to important resources for populations that are particularly vulnerable to prolonged inactivity. The *new* Armour Road makes it easier for children to access Dagg Park, while older adults now have an easier time to access the local YMCA. Creating a healthy community means creating access to healthy choices, and the Armour Road improvements make this possible.
- **Finally, there are health-related economic benefits that can come from these efforts.** There are real costs to not investing in active forms of transportation. By one estimate, overweight adults spend about \$395 more per year on health-related expenses than adults at a healthy weight. It is imperative for us to support efforts to improve the built environment, like on Armour Road, because it enables the types of physical activity that not only save lives, but save money as well.

Supporting efforts to develop healthier communities throughout the region is a key factor for why the Health Forward Foundation applauds the improvements to Armour Road. **The healthy activities the new streetscape support and increase access to have a real potential to improve both our waistlines and our collective bottom line.** It is important for us to keep these changes in place.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brenda Calvin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Brenda Calvin
Senior Program Officer
Health Forward Foundation