



March 29, 2021

TO: Transportation, Infrastructure and Operations Committee
RE: Support for Ordinance 210100

Dear Mayor Lucas and members of the committee,

KC Healthy Kids advances the health and well-being of kids and families through community-driven initiatives and advocacy where they live, learn, work, and play across the Kansas City region.

Physical activity, like walking and biking, benefits the physical, cognitive, and mental health of kids and youth. It reduces stress, improves academic performance, and instills healthy habits. Walking and biking are also affordable modes of transportation to school, the park, the bus, or a job. We want to ensure that when we encourage kids and youth to walk and bike, they are safe to do so.

Laws related to jaywalking, bike inspections, and dirty wheels do little to protect public safety. After analyzing five years of data, reporters in Jacksonville, Florida found "no strong relationship between where tickets are being issued and where [pedestrians] are being killed."¹

What they did find was that people in low-income neighborhoods and Black people were more likely to be ticketed for pedestrian violations than people in wealthy neighborhoods or white people. The same inequitable trends have been observed in other cities.

Because "these laws are enforced arbitrarily, with racially discriminatory effects to questionable safety benefit," street safety experts have argued for decriminalizing walking and biking.² There are better ways to decrease pedestrian injuries and fatalities, if that is in fact the intent of these laws.

It is unreasonable to punish people for walking in the street when many neighborhoods lack safe and accessible sidewalks, especially in under-resourced and Black and Brown communities. Instead, we should invest in the built environment to create streets and public spaces that are safe and accessible for users of all ages, abilities, and modes of transportation.

At KC Healthy Kids, we are doing our part by teaching kids and youth about the benefits and barriers to walking and biking and how to speak out for change in their community through our programs The Walking Detective and Champions for Health. Students from Center Middle School were among the 2021 Champions for Health winners and were awarded \$1,000 to lead traffic calming demonstrations on Linwood Boulevard between Center Middle School and Central Park.

We support Ordinance 210100 to decriminalize walking and biking so that all our kids and youth grow up to be healthy, active adults.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrea Clark".

Andrea Clark
Policy & Planning Manager

¹ "Walking While Black." *ProPublica*. 2017.

² "9 Reasons to Eliminate Jaywalking Laws Now." *Bloomberg News*. 2020.

