



March 22, 2021

TO: Federal Highway Administration, US Department of Transportation

RE: Revise the Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)

Secretary Buttigieg and Acting Administrator Pollack:

KC Healthy Kids advances the health and well-being of kids and families through community-driven initiatives and advocacy. Through our programs, we teach kids the benefits of and barriers to physical activity and how to speak out for change in their communities. With community partners, we have successfully advocated for Complete Streets ordinances in Kansas City on both sides of the state line to ensure streets are safe and accessible for kids to walk, bike and play.

Physical activity is good for kids' physical, cognitive and mental health. It reduces stress, improves academic performance and instills healthy habits with life-long benefits. Only 57.5% of kids in the Kansas City metro get enough daily physical activity, and that percentage gets smaller as kids get older. Just 5.7% of kids in the Kansas City metro walk to school. Traffic-related danger is one of the reasons parents are afraid to let their kids walk or bike to school.

We understand the agency is revising the MUTCD and are concerned about the current draft. The MUTCD is more than a technical document. As a regulatory tool, it can be a significant barrier to improving access to safe, accessible streets in our local community. The MUTCD prioritizes the flow of traffic over the safety of other users. It allows traffic lights to be installed without pedestrian signals and bans colorful crosswalks.

In December 2020, The National Association of Transportation Officials recommended five updates to the MUTCD that would address these issues. This is not only a matter of public safety, but also social equity. As pedestrian fatalities continue to increase, Black and Indigenous people and low-income communities are disproportionately impacted due to long-term disinvestment in basic infrastructure.

Along with our national partner America Walks, we ask the U.S. DOT to support community health and well-being by developing a MUTCD that:

- Ensures every urban and suburban signalized intersection has basic pedestrian infrastructure, like curb ramps, pedestrian signal heads and crosswalks.
- Gives local residents a voice in what kind of infrastructure is needed.
- Provides engineers flexibility to design urban streets that are safe enough for kids to navigate as they walk to school or the park.
- Allows public art in the roadway to calm and slow traffic and beautify the streetscape.

We ask that you revise the MUTCD so our streets are safe and accessible for all users regardless of age, mobility or mode of transportation.

Thank you,

Andrea Clark
Policy & Planning Manager