

Barbara Mitchell, MSW
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Johnson County Health Department

RE: Senate Resolution 1805

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Senate Transportation Committee,

I want to thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in support of SR 1805. My name is Barbara Mitchell, and I serve as Division Director for Health Education for Johnson County Health Department. This division is actively engaged in the promotion of healthy lifestyles that build a healthier community. In the department's recently completed Community Health Assessment, one of the three strategic priorities identified involves physical activity and nutrition.

In the Johnson County neighborhoods as in neighborhoods across the state, connectivity is critical to overall neighborhood health and sustainability. Livable streets – sometimes referred to as complete streets – are roadways designed to allow for safe and convenient travel by all users, including motor vehicles, pedestrians (including those with disabilities), transit vehicles and bicyclists both along and across the corridor. By making roads more accessible for all modes of transportation, livable streets provide safe and convenient travel for persons of all ages and abilities, including children and the elderly. Livable streets encourage active living, promote good health, provide economic benefits, make neighborhoods healthier and provide safer streets. The Board of County Commissioners for Johnson County adopted a Complete Streets resolution in late 2011, and some of its cities have adopted or are considering similar resolutions.

Since safe and livable bicycle, pedestrian and transit systems are important to the economy and economic development of Kansas, Johnson County Health Department would encourage the Kansas Senate to declare support for livable streets policies and urge their adoption at the local, metropolitan, regional, state and national levels.