From: Jonathan Cokely
To: Public Testimony
Subject: Please Oppose Ordinance #230092
Date: Wednesday, February 1, 2023 2:17:07 PM

Dear City Council City Council,

I am a resident of the 3rd district living in Pendleton Heights, and I am asking you to oppose Ordinance 230092. In the January listening sessions hosted by Councilwoman Robinson and Director Shaw, I heard business owners describe the reason that the bike lanes were hurting their businesses and needed to be removed, and I listened as those same business owners ignored a genuine proposal from public works to finish the project in a way that would resolve the implementation issues. During these sessions, many of the individuals that opposed the bike lanes made it clear that they oppose any traffic control solution that reduces parking or driving space along the corridor. They have acknowledged that drivers use Truman Road because they can drive in excess of 45 miles per hour and suggested increased policing to control speeding, which is obviously not a financially sustainable or viable solution. They have threatened to solicit a citizen petition that would remove all bike lanes in KCMO if their demands are not met, which is an excessive response from a group that claims to have no problem with cyclists. And they have, over the past few weeks, deliberately parked vehicles or instructed their customers and delivery drivers to park in the bike lanes to render them ineffective, a behavior that deters cyclists from using the new infrastructure on Truman Road.

To borrow words from Director Shaw, this is not about bike lanes. These business owners can sense that major change will come to Truman Road, the way that it has come to downtown and midtown, and they don't want their self-proclaimed industrial district to be affected. In light of recent concerns expressed about bike lanes as a mechanism for gentrification, I would remind the council that it was the suburbanization and urban development practices of the 20th century, which separated Northeast and East side neighborhoods from the rest of the urban core, that made a Truman Road "industrial district" viable today. Truman Road could be a corridor that connects Northeast, East, Downtown, and beyond, but to bridge that divide, it needs safe sidewalks, mixed use development, housing options, clean air, transportation options, access to job opportunities beyond what is currently available. I am not asking City Council to promote Truman Road as a major bicycling corridor, but I am asking for what investment has been made in the community to be sustained. If you remove the bike lanes, it may be true that some businesses will close their doors or relocate, but the enhancements can also lead to opportunity for revitalization that was not previously available.

In closing, I ask the Council to allow the policies developed by experts to improve safety on Truman Road and the quality of life for Northeast and East side Kansas City residents to be implemented as they were originally intended. Residents of the Northeast and East side deserve investment in their communities. To finally deliver a sliver of investment, only to have it withdrawn before the project is complete is a disservice to both residents and public servants.

Regards,
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