



October 17, 2023

Hon. Mark Kelly, Chair
Senate Environment and Public Works Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure
516 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Hon. Kevin Cramer, Ranking Member
Senate Environment and Public Works Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure
313 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: November 7, 2023, Hearing on Roadway Safety Measures and Interventions

Dear Chair Kelly and Ranking Member Cramer,

KABOOM! is the national nonprofit whose mission is to end playspace inequity in communities across the country. A critical aspect of this work is our advocacy for inclusive, child-centered traffic design features on the roads surrounding our playspaces. These can include, but are not limited to, the installation of speed-humps, painted crosswalks, and protected bicycle lanes. Children are an often-overlooked constituency when cities are developing their mobility plan. However, when those plans center children in the design process mobility options are expanded and the whole community stands to benefit. KABOOM! requests that the sub-committee examine this approach as a means of reducing the number of traffic-related injuries and deaths.

Studies have shown a decreasing number of children who independently travel outside of their home's boundaries because caregivers and parents feel increasingly unsure about their safety. Even in communities where crime is not a normal consideration or factor, fewer children are allowed to travel independently outside because of traffic safety concerns. This diminishes a child's ability to foster a sense of independence and build social capital, while also limiting the amount of time they have to engage in physical activity and outdoor play. Both factors can have a lasting negative effect on their mental and physical health.

However, these negative outcomes are preventable. Reasonable, inexpensive, and effective traffic control features can be installed in neighborhood streets and playspace adjacent roads. These will enable children to travel and explore on their own and widen their circumference of independence. Other residents will benefit from this approach to road design. For example, many of the mobility concerns children face are similar to ones faced by older adults; so, addressing them for one population helps the other. Increasing the range of children's independent travel can also assist parents because they will feel more confident letting their children travel to playgrounds and sports fields without having to be driven.

Finally, child centered street design will make roads safer for any pedestrian or bicyclist, regardless of age, which can enhance people's quality of life by reducing vehicular traffic and the amount of air pollution in residential neighborhoods.

Thank you for taking the time to consider KABOOM!'s comments on the issue of traffic safety. If you would like to discuss our recommendation further or have any questions please feel free to reach out.

Sincerely,

Lysa Ratliff
CEO