

May 8, 2023

Dear Council members:

Trailnet, the regional nonprofit advocate for safe street and sidewalk conditions, has reviewed County Council Bill #86 and wants to share our concerns with it.

First, as written, Council Bill #86 conflicts with various aspects of the 2021 [County Action Plan](#) for Biking and Walking in which Trailnet was involved, and Council members likely voted to approve. These would include, but not be limited to:

1. In many South and North St. Louis County areas, people do not have access to adequate (or any) sidewalks and therefore are forced to walk in the street. The attached map comes directly from the report. Mandating people to walk on either bad or nonexistent sidewalks is not good public policy, and frankly, the wording of the bill (adequate sidewalk) is unenforceable.
2. 57% of people surveyed for the Action Plan said County sidewalks do not connect to their destination, and 30% stated sidewalks are in poor condition. This means that while the council is trying to restrict the movement of people to sidewalks, residents believe sidewalks are a major problem in the county and hinder their movement.
3. Four of the top five infrastructure priorities have to do with improving sidewalk conditions, with the top one being to improve the sidewalk network. Again, this speaks to the fact that even government officials believe there is a strong need to build or rebuild the sidewalk infrastructure.

There also is the [St. Louis County Complete Streets Ordinance](#), which was adopted in 2014. By adopting this policy, St. Louis County explicitly joined a regional and national effort to achieve better and more equitable access to our streets for all pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and motorists.

The Complete Streets Ordinance was intended to:

1. Sets forth guiding principles, practices, and vision regarding pedestrian, cycling, and public transportation use of streets (in addition to regular motorized vehicle use) to be considered in St. Louis County Transportation projects;
2. Commits to assessing the applicability, practicality, maintainability, safety, and economic feasibility of Complete Streets on projects at the planning level; and

3. It laid a framework for forming two implementation teams.

County Bill #86 falls far short on each of these matters. It reneges on setting forth guiding principles instead of targeting a group of people, especially minorities, low-income people, and those who do not have vehicles.

County Bill #86 does not provide for the assessment of what has already been determined to be bad or nonexistent sidewalks, especially in South and North County (as shown by the previous map)

County Bill #86 needs to consider the previous legislation discussed in this letter, adopting a targeted approach that will fail due to a lack of clear enforcement.

Trailnet and others strongly recommend voting down County Bill #86 and working with us to develop strategies to keep pedestrians safe.

Please contact me at [Cindy Mense](#) and Policy Catalyst Charles Bryson at Charles@trailnet.org.

Thank you for your time and consideration.