

April 20, 2023

Dear Mayor Jones, Comptroller Green, and President Green,

Thank you for your support over the last year to improve the safety and experience of getting around our city by walking, transit, and bicycle. As you enter discussions about the Fiscal Year 2023 budget, we submit the following requests as critical opportunities to continue our trajectory of creating a St. Louis that allows people to walk, roll, and bike across St. Louis.

Expert staff to support walking, biking, and transit in the Streets Department

For efforts to improve safety and access to be successful, there must be staff who can focus their energy and effort on multimodal transportation within the Streets Department. We want to see this role have significant authority, to align with the other leadership roles in the Streets Department, such as the traffic commissioner and the streets commissioner. This person should serve not only as coordinator and contact point, but also as the accountable official for utilizing the historic resources we currently have available and for effectively supporting maintenance and implementation of infrastructure in the future. This role requires someone with project management and community engagement skills. The current auto-centric orientation of the Streets Department limits the opportunities, and we envision this new staff position playing a critical role in efforts like Vision Zero, mobility planning, and quick-build, high-impact traffic calming.

Funding for quick-build, high-impact traffic calming in dangerous locations

As you know, we have seen [other cities successfully respond](#) to dangerous conditions promptly and we hope to see changes that impact people's lives on the ground as soon as possible. We would like to see dedicated funding that can be utilized across the city to respond quickly to emerging dangerous conditions. We expect to see funds dedicated to the Board of Public Service and the Streets Department to create these interventions.

Funding for forward-thinking transportation initiatives: Vision Zero and Automated Enforcement

We want to see St. Louis move towards alternative models and approaches to curb traffic violence and dangerous road conditions. For this reason, we call for funding specifically dedicated to a Vision Zero effort that is coordinated with the already funded mobility plan. Ongoing funding to support Vision Zero could support data collection, analysis, and action beyond the timeline of the upcoming mobility plan.

In addition, we would like to see efforts to utilize enforcement that does not replicate the challenges with police-led practices. Automated enforcement may be an opportunity to address concerns. We make this request with some reservations. Any automated enforcement system must be carefully designed and assessed to consider equitable outcomes, including placement of cameras, levying of fines that are progressive based on percentage of income, and penalty for non-payment. Additionally, fine revenue must be spent in a transparent manner, ideally directed to infrastructure improvements aimed at curbing dangerous driving in the neighborhood where the fine was collected, rather than dispersed into the general fund or police budgets. We must also secure a camera operator who contracts based on a flat fee rather than a percentage of violations. We expect that automated enforcement data will be shared with the public and regularly monitored to ensure that existing disparities are not exacerbated.

Structural funding changes such as Ward Capital and the 50/50 Sidewalk Program

Beyond the budget allocations above, we would also like to see structural changes to funding that will lead to a more equitable and comprehensive distribution of resources across the City. In particular, we call for changes to Ward Capital that reduce the influence that the decisions of individual alderperson have over where, when, and how traffic calming, street, and sidewalk infrastructure is improved. There are several possible ways this could happen, and we look to the President of the Board of Aldermen to propose options that will result in a more comprehensive citywide approach to infrastructure.

Another opportunity for structural change is the 50/50 Sidewalk Program, which requires property owners to pay 50% of the costs for sidewalk improvements, while the local alderperson must allocate Ward Capital to cover the remainder. This program is limited in two ways: first, property owners who cannot afford this cost are not able to participate; and second, if alderpeople do not dedicate funds to the program, sidewalks are not improved. Complete and accessible sidewalks are critical to our transportation network, and should not be dependent on these factors. We would like to see the City prioritize making sidewalk funds available across all of our neighborhoods.

These investments and changes, combined with the investments already allocated from the budget and from ARPA funds, will tangibly improve the experience for people walking, utilizing transit, and biking in both the near- and long-term.

Thank you,

The Voting Members of the Community Mobility Committee

Judith Arnold
Denis Beganovic
Matthew Bernstine
Aubrey Byron
Christie Holland, co-chair
Jacque Knight
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