

I'm a Cooper Park resident and recent Milwaukee transplant. Moving in the midst of the early pandemic was hard; getting around by bike, bus, scooter, and on foot has been the primary way I have gotten to know Milwaukee and made connections with my neighbors.

Traveling like this, I notice details I would otherwise miss. I'm aware of the weather and the changing of the seasons. I meet my neighbors, their kids, and their dogs. I can stop to literally smell the roses, to check out local landmarks, and to chat with my kids. Active transportation is a deep wellspring of joy.

However, being car-light is hard in Milwaukee, even for someone like me with so many advantages: a flexible work-from-home job, high enough income to invest in an eBike, a home close to the Oak Leaf trail in a neighborhood relatively unscathed by roads and state highways. I'm often approached by others who are interested in biking for transportation but don't feel safe or don't know how to get started.

Further, mobility is an equity issue. The most vulnerable people in our city are the least likely to have a car, and the most likely to be impacted by traffic violence. I've lost count of the times I've seen folks with mobility aids in the street. When taking a wheelchair into a traffic lane on Vliet St is someone's safest and most comfortable option, we have failed them.

Of course, residential and educational segregation impacts transportation, as well. The mostly white, affluent school three blocks from my home is surrounded by quiet residential streets and has at least 3 crossing guards every day. My daughter's school is on a small triangular island bordered by 76th street, Congress, and Appleton, and has only one crossing guard. The kids at her school, 80% of whom are black, and 60% of whom come from low-income households, aren't safe walking to school. When they go outside for recess, they're exposed to far more air pollution from thousands of cars driving past.

I want a thriving Milwaukee that serves all of its residents. As a member of the pedestrian bike advisory committee, I want to advocate for safer streets in every neighborhood. I want car-free Milwaukeeans to be able to get around safely and everyone to experience walking, rolling, scooting and biking as safe and joyful modes of transportation rather than a last resort. Getting people out of cars is critical for decarbonization, and also to making our communities safer, more liveable, and more economically vibrant. The PBAC has a critical role to play in partnering with the city to move us in that direction, and it would be a joy to be a part of the effort.

Thank you for your consideration.