

June 30, 2017

WHY I JOINED THE TRAILNET PLANNING COMMITTEE

By John Kohler

As an employee for the City of St. Louis since 2004, I have witnessed an exponential growth and interest in bicycling in our community.

It has been a very rewarding experience to be involved with planning and implementing over 140 miles of on-street bicycle facilities and over 30 miles of shared-use paths, advancing bicycle initiatives, and developing Complete Streets and other bicycle-related legislation. Notably, the League of American

Bicyclists has recognized these accomplishments by designating the City of St. Louis as a Silver Level Bicycle Friendly Community in May 2017. These advancements have been successful due to the many private and public partnerships and dedicated staff that are motivated and engaged in fostering a multimodal culture and supportive infrastructure.

It is exciting that Trailnet has stepped forward to champion a vision of creating low-stress, protected bicycling and pedestrian corridors that further enhance our transportation network. I've been fortunate to cycle on facilities and experience the success that other cities such as Portland and Indianapolis have accomplished through the implementation of their attractive and functional shared-use paths. Building a similar system in the City of St. Louis will be a great asset for our community.

A protected facility will provide first-class accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians by incorporating a comfortable and physical separation between motor vehicles. Separated facilities will encourage more trips by alternative modes of transportation, and serve users of all abilities and ages. Additional benefits include bolstering economic development along the selected routes, the creation of exciting recreation and exercise opportunities, and attracting and retaining employee talent.

I am very enthusiastic to be part of the planning of this process and am honored to fulfill the role of Chairman for the Destinations and Routes Committee. Routes will be selected to compliment and expand upon the existing multimodal infrastructure that the City of St. Louis and partners have already implemented over the last decade. We will strive to connect schools, activity centers, parks, business districts, and key destinations. These routes will enhance access to opportunity for all St. Louis residents, and serve as a model for the entire region.

Connecting St. Louis with protected bicycling and sidewalk infrastructure will expand upon the ongoing innovative efforts to strengthen our community. I am proud to be part of Trailnet's Vision and will continue to strive to make a positive impact for all users of public infrastructure within the City of St. Louis.

