

My name is Rich Biedrzycki, and I serve as a leader of Strong Towns DMV, an organization dedicated to making our streets safer and our communities more financially resilient and affordable. We are commenting to support Bill 28-25 and the proposed ban on parking in bike lanes.

Over the past several years, the county has been investing millions of dollars to develop its bicycle infrastructure, with the goal of making it safer and easier for people to ride. This is a noble endeavor as bicycling comes with a number of benefits for the community. It is more equitable and accessible, as the cost of owning a bike is much smaller than the cost of owning a car. It is more environmentally friendly, as bikes do not produce carbon emissions or release harmful micropollutants like cars do. It is healthier, as riding a bike is more physically intensive than driving a car. With all these benefits, it only makes sense for the county to improve its bicycle infrastructure.

One of the ways this is being done is by installation of dedicated bike lanes for bicyclists to ride without constantly worrying if they will get to where they're going in one piece. However, it is common for riders to find vehicles parked in these lanes, blocking their path. This leads to unpleasant and dangerous options for the rider. One is to wait for the car to move, but this won't work if the driver is not there or refuses to cooperate. Another is for the rider to ride in traffic with cars, but this increases the risk for the rider's safety. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the majority of bicyclist fatalities occurred at non-intersections, where many of these blockages occur. The rider could also go on the sidewalk, but often there is not one, it is difficult to access, or it interferes with pedestrians.

While keeping bike lanes free of cars is essential, it is also vital that these lanes are kept free of other obstructions. Thus, we ask that, in addition to removing parked vehicles from the lanes, the County be diligent in keeping the lanes free of debris and managing nearby vegetation. Obstructions such as these lead to riders having to make sudden maneuvers to avoid collisions, increasing risks for riders and reducing safety.

We thank the council for listening to our comments. We would also like to thank Councilmember Glass for introducing this legislation and Councilmembers Friedson, Fani-Gonzalez, and Luedtke for co-sponsoring the bill. We hope our suggestions are taken into consideration and this bill is passed swiftly.