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**To:** [Transportation Commission](#)  
**Subject:** RE: 66589 - School Streets program  
**Date:** Tuesday, July 27, 2021 2:05:54 PM

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Dear Transportation Commission members,

On your agenda for Wednesday, you have a presentation on street safety around schools. While I support and appreciate these safety projects, I also want to make sure you're aware of the School Streets concept taking hold in other cities (primarily in the Pacific Northwest), and encourage you to explore how this could be implemented in Madison.

Here's a page on how this has been implemented in Seattle:

<https://www.seattle.gov/transportation/projects-and-programs/safety-first/safe-routes-to-school/school-streets>

Basically (as I understand it), it involves closing off car traffic from streets most heavily used by children entering/exiting schools. This would naturally have to weigh exceptions for residents on those blocks, as well as for children and parents with reduced mobility. Also, not every school may be a good fit, for example if it fronts on a major arterial.

Not only does this encourage active transportation from a young age, it will also make the area in front of the school safer for kids who may be less cautious/attentive. If the street in front of the school is car-free, that also frees up crossing guard resources to provide better coverage a bit further out.

While I'm not a parent myself, I support this idea, even if it entails not being able to drive down certain blocks in my neighborhood. It would take me less than a minute to go the long way around, and I would gladly do so, knowing that it was for the safety of kids attending the school. As a resident of Eastmoreland, I do think the street in front of Shenk Elementary would be a good candidate.

I emailed the Madison School Board about this recently, thinking they would be the ones to initiate a program like this, but since you all have street safety around schools on your agenda, this seems like the right time to bring this up with you as well.

There's a lot of community urgency right now around Vision Zero, but also a feeling that it isn't going far enough fast enough. Ending traffic deaths by 2030 would be great, but it doesn't do anything for the people dying on our streets in 2021, or their families and friends. While every human life is sacred, I think we do need to take extra care of kids, who on the whole lack an adult's experience with how to use our streets safely.

I want to encourage you to think beyond refuge islands and bump outs, and consider whether there are school-adjacent streets that don't need to allow car traffic in the first place.

Thank you for all that you do,

Nick Davies

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