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Presentation Title: Safe Streets Madison – Process Improvements

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Background: The Safe Streets Madison Program (SSM) was developed by the temporary Traffic Calming Subcommittee in 2020-2021. SSM consolidated several pre-existing programs, making evaluation methods and approval processes for potential infrastructure projects more efficient and consistent across programs.

The new SSM program is intended to fund projects that address traffic safety concerns and close gaps in the City’s pedestrian and bicycle networks. The program is committed to equity and encouraging more people of all ages and abilities to walk, bike, and bus more often. The Safe Streets Madison program prioritizes potential projects based on a benefit/cost ratio.

The Traffic Calming Subcommittee recognized that the Safe Streets Madison program and prioritization process would need to be updated and revised throughout the program’s lifespan. Scoring and program changes were intended to be approved by the Transportation Commission.

Discussion: Staff have identified several features of the current project prioritization process that could be altered to better reflect the program’s stated goals. These trends are listed below.

- School-related projects consistently do not rise to the top of the prioritization process. The department is wrapping up a Safe Routes to School planning process, in which numerous infrastructure projects have been identified. Safe Streets Madison would be an ideal funding source for these improvements, but these projects are unlikely to rise to rank highly with the current scoring system.
- Projects with low construction costs consistently outscore more expensive projects regardless of the project’s impact and the project’s true (lifetime) cost.
- Projects with high estimated costs score poorly, yet staff spend time scoring projects that are infeasible within existing program budget. Further, there is no established process for redirecting high-cost, high-impact projects to other programs.
- Projects that receive low prioritization scores remain on the candidate list indefinitely. This makes it difficult for staff to regularly re-score projects when new

data is available. Further, it leads to a public perception issue that “being on the list” is not a meaningful step towards resolution.

- Bumpouts and curb extensions are an effective solution for many safety concerns, but they are expensive and resource-intensive; a temporary quick-build project could immediately address these problems with a low construction cost. However, staff do not currently consider projects using temporary materials.

Recommendation: The staff recommend the Transportation Commission approve the following actions:

- School-related projects – Add 30% weight to a potential project’s benefit score for those projects identified through a Safe Routes to School planning process and dedicate a minimum of 10% of funding for each round to these projects.
- Lifetime project costs – Use anticipated 30-year cost in place of construction costs in prioritization process.
- Maximum individual project costs – Direct staff to stop scoring if a proposed project’s estimated lifetime cost exceeds \$200,000 *and* develop a formal process to redirect high-cost, high-impact projects to alternative programs.
- Low-scoring project migration – Migrate low-scoring projects from the candidate list to an archived list after 3 years; allow projects from the archived list to return to candidate list if warranted by new data.
- Quick-build projects – Direct staff to consider temporary paint-and-post construction for projects that have a high impact score but a low benefit/cost score.