

Traffic Calming Subcommittee Priority Recommendations

Creation of the New Program - Safe Streets Madison

TCS recommends that the following existing programs and projects be consolidated into a single new program called Safe Streets Madison (SSM). It is also recommended that budget accounts and/or funding for these existing programs and projects be consolidated into available funding for SSM.

- Neighborhood Traffic Management Program
- Pedestrian Bicycle Enhancements Program
- Safe Routes to School Program
- Vision Zero Projects
- Additional projects identified through SSM may also be funded through the following programs or budgets: Bikeways, Sidewalks, New Street Lights or New Traffic Signals

Safe Streets Madison Program Priorities

TCS recommends that SSM resources be focused primarily on projects that directly meet the program's two key priorities:

- Implement traffic safety measures in a fair and equitable manner to eliminate traffic deaths and serious injuries on City streets.
 - Data from the High Injury Network (HIN) would be used to determine where safety improvements should be made.
 - Improved traffic safety would also help foster walking, biking and transit in the city.
- Improving connectivity by closing gaps in the City's pedestrian and bicycle (ped/bike) networks to ensure that they are accessible for all ages and abilities.
 - Enhancing the ped/bike networks will encourage and facilitate walking, biking and transit; and it will improve safety for vulnerable users by creating low-stress networks.

SSM program priorities are designed to be in alignment with other ongoing City initiatives such as Vision Zero and Complete and Green Streets.

TCS recommends that the SSM program be implemented in a way that equitably distributes resources based on the program's safety and connectivity priorities and is transparent in all elements of the SSM program.

TCS recommends that the City prioritize street reconstruction in areas of the city which have safety issues (as determined by using data from the HIN) and/or have gaps in the ped/bike networks. In addition, when streets are considered for reconstruction for non-safety reasons such as pavement condition, the City should proactively consider the need for traffic safety improvements and filling gaps in the ped/bike networks.

Balancing Priorities in the Safe Streets Madison Program

TCS recognizes that there are motor vehicle speeding issues on most of our City's streets. However, with limited resources available to fund the SSM program, funding will be focused on SSM's two key priorities: 1) implementing traffic safety measures in a fair and equitable manner to eliminate traffic deaths and serious injuries on City streets, using data from the High Injury Network (HIN) to determine where safety improvements should be made; and 2) improving connectivity by closing gaps in the City's pedestrian and bicycle (ped/bike) networks to ensure that it is accessible for all ages and abilities.

Addressing known safety issues as identified through the HIN can include instituting interventions to reduce motor vehicle speeds on our roadways as an important component of SSM projects. However, while speeding

often exacerbates safety concerns, it is only one of many causes contributing to these known safety issues. So addressing speed alone will not be sufficient to achieve the two key priorities of SSM. SSM projects will consider potential solutions drawing from a large toolbox of resources; and TC will prioritize various interventions based on what is most efficacious as well as most cost effective.

Since SSM will assign the highest priority to projects addressing known safety issues as identified through the HIN, as well as ped/bike connectivity issues, SSM should not be expected to address the sole issue of speeding on a residential street. However, safety improvements or interventions on a residential street may be considered in the SSM program if the location is identified as part of the HIN or if the request is submitted identifying known safety traffic issues and/or gaps in the ped/bike networks.

SSM staff analyzes safety and connectivity issues from a broader zone perspective in order to mitigate any dispersal impact. For example, if measures to address speeding are initiated on a residential street, speeding typically migrates to an adjacent or nearby street and transfers the safety problem rather than resolving it. Therefore, speeding on residential streets needs to be addressed through this broader perspective. TCS supports “20 is Plenty,” the Vision Zero initiative being launched by the City which should help reduce motor vehicle speeds by changing the speed limit on residential streets citywide from 25 MPH to 20 MPH. In addition, as residential streets are resurfaced over the longer term, space on the street can be reallocated and crossings improved. During reconstruction of any residential streets, those streets will be redesigned to improve safety and connectivity and accommodate all ages and abilities. Madison’s Complete and Green Streets initiative is also addressing speeding on our City streets as it works to set a consistent vision for streets with safe access and movement for users of all transportation modes and for all ages and abilities.

Prioritizing and Evaluating Requests in the Safe Streets Madison Program

TCS recommends that requests for traffic safety improvements continue to be accommodated through all current channels (i.e., phone calls, emails, social media, CityWorks, Alders, City staff, events, neighborhood meetings, Neighborhood Resource Teams, community organizations, visual observation, etc.); however, staff should take a proactive look at crash data and the ped/bike network gaps, prioritizing those sources for potential projects. TCS feels that previous programs largely focused on local streets and did not necessarily address the most pressing safety and connectivity issues. Resident complaints alone should not be the primary driver of project priorities.

TCS recommends that SSM program staff proactively engage with the Neighborhood Resource Teams, the Alders, and other neighborhood contacts, in order to help identify areas where there are serious traffic safety concerns, where residents do not feel safe walking and/or biking, and gaps in the low stress all ages and abilities ped/bike networks. Strategies used should recognize that not all residents have equal access to technology, equal knowledge of City programs/processes, or equal access to City staff, boards, committees and commissions. SSM program staff should be transparent in all aspects of the program, so residents can understand current program priorities and the decision making process.

TCS recommends that Transportation Commission (TC) review and approval be required for requests made through the new SSM program. TC should consider all program priorities and evaluation criteria when making decisions regarding project prioritization and funding. As requests are evaluated, it is important to view traffic safety and ped/bike connectivity requests from a broader perspective (i.e., not just block by block) and to consider the impact on all modes of transportation.

Staff should bring requests under the SSM program to the TC for review and approval at least twice each year. Requests may be brought forward by staff to TC more frequently as appropriate. Relevant construction contract timing constraints should be considered when scheduling TC review and approval.

Consolidating multiple programs into SSM will create a single more efficient public engagement process. TC review can be used as an anchor point around which public feedback and input can be solicited. Public involvement will be fundamental to the success of the SSM program and should incorporate multiple elements, including consultation with Neighborhood Resource Teams (NRTs) and conventional City public outreach such as issuing press releases and communicating through Alders. TCS recommends that the degree and mechanism for public involvement be commensurate with the scale, impact, and type of project under consideration.

TCS recommends that some prescreening be done by staff to determine if the project would meet program priorities. It should also be determined if it would be more efficient to defer that request and address the issues in conjunction with a planned upcoming project. For projects which prescreen as meeting program priorities, a survey of stakeholders should be considered. It should be noted that TCS recommends discontinuing the current formal postcard voting process utilized in the Neighborhood Traffic Management Program, since it solicits feedback from a very narrow group. Stakeholders should be viewed as a broad group of potentially affected individuals and organizations and not merely neighborhood residents immediately adjacent to the project location.

TCS recommends that SSM program staff use data from the HIN and other sources to complete the SSM Ranking Criteria spreadsheet (as shown in Exhibit A). Staff and members of the Transportation Commission should consider the following as they prioritize and evaluate SSM requests, **with at least 50% of SSM annual funding dedicated to addressing known safety issues:**

- Funding projects to address or eliminate documented safety issues on roadways most impacted by injuries and fatalities, as determined by data from the HIN
- Funding projects which help fill gaps in the ped network, with the ultimate goal of creating low stress facilities that meet the needs of people of all ages and abilities
- Funding projects which help fill gaps in the bike network, with the ultimate goal of creating low stress facilities that meet the needs of people of all ages and abilities
- Multiple alternatives should be considered for an issue (i.e. interventions that offer different results, have different costs, etc.)
- Expected impact of the proposed solution on safety issues (i.e. estimated 0-100% resolution)
- Expected impact of the proposed solution on ped gap issues (i.e. estimated 0-100% resolution)
- Expected impact of the proposed solution on bike gap issues (i.e. estimated 0-100% resolution)
- Environmental justice and social vulnerability factors when prioritizing projects
- Cost benefit analysis for both large and small requests

As is current practice, different levels of problem solving would be utilized. As appropriate, staff will recommend using pilots or “quick builds” to test potential solutions using less expensive materials such as construction barrels, paint, etc. Smaller and easily resolved issues would be brought forward by staff as standalone projects which could be implemented immediately. Sometimes a series of potential interventions might be planned in phases or implemented over several funding periods (i.e. an iterative approach). Certain requests would be more efficiently addressed by incorporating recommended interventions into a planned full street reconstruction.

TCS recommends using the existing CityWorks program to track and display SSM requests on the City’s website.

Determining Solutions and Interventions

TCS recommends building a toolbox of best practices for potential solutions and interventions based upon NACTO and other relevant guidance, with best practices reviewed and updated periodically. Possible solutions

should be primarily evaluated based on how effectively they address the problem identified, as well as how cost effective they are projected to be. Whereas in the past, programs such as the Neighborhood Traffic Management Program have primarily relied on a narrow set of interventions such as speed humps and traffic circles, TCS recommends that all options for potential solutions and interventions should be considered on all types of streets (including collectors and arterials). This toolbox includes solutions which previously have not been considered because of concerns about and/or potential impacts on: motor vehicle level of service; access for fire/EMS; accommodating buses, snow plows, semis, garbage trucks, etc.; parking; acceptance by local residents; and capital and maintenance costs (i.e. lack of available funding).

Some examples of interventions that have not typically been considered or implemented include:

- Reducing turning radii at intersections to slow turning traffic
- Removing slip lanes at intersections to eliminate conflict points
- Using motor vehicle diverters to eliminate through-traffic and reduce traffic volumes
- Considering narrower street cross-sections to reduce speeds (“skinny streets”)
- Creating pinch-points (“chokers”) where two motor vehicles going in opposite directions cannot easily pass each other
- Removing on-street parking to improve sightlines (“daylighting”) or to add more space for walking or biking facilities
- Reducing the number of lanes on multi-lane roadways to reduce speeds and/or to create additional space for walking and biking facilities
- Creating physically protected bike lanes using flex points, barrels, or other low-cost separations
- Converting one-way couples into two way streets

Resources for Solutions and Interventions which can be utilized for improving traffic safety and enhancing ped/bike connections are shown in Exhibit B.

Barriers to Safe Streets Madison

As noted in the discussions regarding the acceptable level of danger on our City streets, as well as the sometimes competing priorities when considering different traffic safety interventions and ped/bike enhancements, the following potential barriers or obstacles to Safe Streets Madison were identified:

- Motor vehicle level of service (willingness to accept delays and a reduction in motor vehicle throughput)
- Access for fire/EMS
- Accommodations for buses, snow plows, semis, garbage trucks, and other large vehicles
- Demand for motor vehicle parking
- Capital costs and ongoing maintenance costs (i.e. lack of available funding)
- Lack of acceptance by local residents
- Jurisdictional issues (for example, when Wisconsin Department of Transportation highways and intersections are involved, or when streets that serve as a corridor cross municipal boundaries, etc.)

There are always priorities to balance when making transportation decisions; and the City will need to recognize and accept certain trade-offs. As the City works to achieve the key priorities of Safe Streets Madison, TCS recommends that policies be developed in Vision Zero, Complete and Green Streets, Transportation Demand Management, etc. to address and mitigate these barriers so the obstacles can be mitigated or removed.

Implementation of the Safe Streets Madison Program

TCS recommends that the new SSM program be approved as soon as possible, so implementation, outreach and education can begin as early as the fall of 2021.

TCS recommends utilizing a robust public education and outreach process to help facilitate communication about the transition to the new SSM program. TCS recommends developing talking points and a one page summary of SSM, in order to provide consistent communications about the new program through the following channels:

- City of Madison Press Releases
- Alders
- City Staff, Boards, Committees and Commissions
- Neighborhood Meetings
- Neighborhood Resource Teams
- Community Organizations
- Events
- Social Media and other Online Communications
- Phone Calls and Emails to Answer Questions
- New Safe Streets Madison Website (as developed)

TCS recommends that the TC perform an oversight role during the implementation process.

TCS recommends periodic review and assessment to evaluate the need for any enhancements to the SSM program. TCS also recommends that staff evaluate the effectiveness of individual interventions after project completion (on a targeted basis).