MEMORANDUM

TRANSPORTATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT *of* COMMUNITY *and* NEIGHBORHOODS

TO: Jen McGrath

FROM: Jon Larsen

DATE: September 13, 2019

RE: Livable Streets Program Proposal (Traffic Calming 2.0)

In June, the City Council allocated $100,000 in one-time seed funding into the FY2019-2020 budget for a traffic calming pilot program and asked that the Administration develop recommendations on how to reinstate a traffic calming program for the City. In addition, the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) has expressed interest in the City reinstating a traffic calming program. This memorandum summarizes a proposal to bring back the traffic calming program as a "Livable Streets" program.

For this program to succeed it is critical that the City manage expectations regarding the number of projects that can be implemented each year, and the amount of time it takes to develop community support, plan, design, and construct projects. A fully functioning program will be able to deliver a set of projects for approximately 1-3 neighborhoods per year. Planning, community engagement, design, and construction for a project generally requires a minimum of 2 years from idea to finished construction.

A fair, data-driven process is critical for this program as every neighborhood in the City has submitted requests for traffic calming. This program should be treated similar to other public infrastructure programs in the City. For example, the current traffic safety program uses a data-driven process based on crash history and known risk factors, and is then adjusted based on community feedback. The process for determining local streets for reconstruction with the Streets Bond was based on data, professional judgement, and equitable allocation by Council District.

Background

In the 1990s, the City had a fully funded traffic calming program. This included a full-time employee who administered that program, as well as between $200k and $300k per year in funding for implementation of projects. The program was discontinued in the early 2000's due to a funding shortfall combined with the sometimes controversial nature of slowing and diverting traffic. Speed humps can be particularly controversial. Another challenge was managing expectations when confronted with such a high quantity of requests, with the

resources to only implement a handful of projects each year. The process can get highly politicized when multiple neighborhoods are vying for limited resources.

On a positive note, over the past 10-20 years, the state of the practice has evolved considerably regarding traffic calming. The industry has more experience and data, as well as a wider variety of options available. More and more, cities are moving towards human-scaled "place making," and designing streets that are comfortable for all modes of travel. Note that our definition of "street" encompasses the entire public right-of-way which includes sidewalks, park strips and roadways.

The lack of a formal traffic calming program doesn't mean that the City isn't currently doing traffic calming. Traffic calming needs are often evaluated when doing Complete Streets analyses for street reconstruction projects. In addition, several "Neighborhood Byways" projects are in the planning and design phases, and Transportation is taking advantage of opportunities to maximize the traffic calming benefits of these projects. The City also has trailers and permanent signs that are radar equipped to provide feedback to drivers who are speeding. Regardless of what happens with the formal program, Transportation recommends integrating traffic calming and livable streets principles into every applicable project.

Need

The Transportation Division receives between 150 and 200 citizen requests per year related to speeding, traffic calming, and pedestrian safety.

The Transportation Division typically receives $300k-500k per year in safety funds through the CIP. These funds are allocated based on a data-driven process using crash statistics, as well as other considerations, such as speed, traffic volume, documented risk factors, and engineering judgement. The top priority is the reduction of serious injury and fatal crashes, the vast majority of which occur on arterial and collector streets. However, most of the citizen requests are related to residential streets, where few serious injury and fatal crashes occur. This doesn't mean that the concerns are not valid; simply that the vast majority of serious injury and fatal crashes occur on collector and arterial streets. Transportation focuses its limited resources where they are most likely to save lives and reduce serious injuries.

Lower vehicular speeds on residential streets is as much a quality of life issue as a safety issue. With this in mind, Transportation recommends bringing back the traffic calming program, but reworked with a more holistic emphasis. Traffic calming is an important element of creating a livable street, not necessarily an end unto itself. This new program should be aimed at empowering both staff and constituents to work together with a "yes, and" approach, where the conversation starts with the identification of a problem and leads to a collaborative package of solutions that improve the overall safety, livability, and attractiveness of the street and neighborhood.

Goals

The overarching goal for the program should be to improve the overall safety, livability, and attractiveness of neighborhood streets in Salt Lake City. The following table describes proposed characteristics of a successful Livable Streets Program.

Characteristic	Explanation
Develop a high level of collaboration and trust between City staff and constituents.	At times, constituents may feel that the City doesn't care about their problem because an immediate solution isn't available. Conversely, staff often don't have the resources or neighborhood support to implement potential solutions. A fair, open process which encourages dialogue and problem solving can help improve communication and trust between the City and the people it serves. Temporary "Pop-Up" designs could be implemented to try out ideas, get community feedback, and inform adjustments to the final design.
Provide a forum for communities to discuss concerns and solutions in order to build neighborhood consensus.	The projects that come out of this program impact the entire community. A successful program will mitigate resentment from residents of adjacent streets who may feel that traffic and speeding problems are being solved on one street at their expense. The broader context matters, and the entire neighborhood should have a voice in developing community-driven solutions. Implementation should be at the neighborhood level, not just the street level.
Incorporate a fair, transparent, holistic, and data-driven prioritization process for the prioritization of funding, while managing expectations regarding the number of projects that can be implemented each year.	While the prioritization process should include crash statistics, traffic speed and traffic volume, other holistic factors, such as urban design, should also be included to help keep the focus on overall livability. Neighborhood streets should be places where people of all ages feel comfortable walking, biking, and socializing; places that build and enhance a sense of community.

Process: How the Program Would Work

This section outlines the various steps in the process to take ideas and feedback and maximize the available resources to create tangible projects that improve the quality of life for residents of Salt Lake City. We recommend starting with a City-wide implementation plan, and then implementing at a neighborhood level, rather than one street at a time. This plan could be funded with the one-time allocation for traffic calming in the FY2019-2020 budget.

By starting the new program with a data-driven prioritization plan, the City will be able to shift to a position of being proactive in the pursuit of safer, more livable streets. City-wide public engagement will be integrated throughout the development of this plan.

1) Develop City-wide Implementation Plan

A) Development of Neighborhood Project Boundaries
One of the shortcomings of previous traffic calming efforts was that it often pitted one street against neighboring streets. Other cities have successfully overcome this issue by implementing projects in an entire project area all at once. We recommend this neighborhood-level approach in Salt Lake City. A key element of the implementation plan will be the identification of logical project boundaries throughout the City.

B) Data Collection
Data on the physical and operational characteristics of local streets throughout the City will be collected.

C) Analysis and Prioritization
A fair, transparent process for the prioritization of neighborhoods is vital to the success of the program. Factors that influence the prioritization process should include:

- Traffic speeds
- Traffic volumes
- Crash history
- Other documented safety risk factors
- Geographic equity
- Demonstrated community support
- Urban design factors, such as street width, trees, sidewalks, etc.

D) Project Selection and Prioritization
The Implementation Plan will provide a prioritized list of neighborhoods based on the criteria listed in section C. This list will be vetted through the Transportation Advisory Board, which is a City-sponsored, citizen-led board.

E) Development of a Neighborhood Street Livability Toolkit
The plan will include a toolkit of options that have been vetted by technical experts within the City, as well as City residents.

2) Implementation of Plan

A) Community Engagement
For this program to be successful, "project champions" from within the community need to step up to help develop community support and consensus. Controversial projects require a tremendous amount of time and energy from City staff and costs are often increased due to delays and redesigns. Projects should not proceed into the design phase until there is demonstrated community support. If a community is not supportive of implementing projects in their neighborhood, the next neighborhood on the list will move forward.

B) Design
Staff will work closely with the community to develop the right suite of projects that fit the needs and context of the neighborhood. The Transportation Division will use the Neighborhood Street Livability Toolkit to help guide the conversation and help the community understand and work through the options which are available to them.

C) Testing of Options
This is an optional step to be applied if necessary. Often, it will be helpful to test out options as part of the design and community involvement process. In Salt Lake City, and nationwide, we are seeing success with implementing temporary, "pop up" concepts to test designs and build community consensus. Appropriate data will be collected before and after the pop ups.

D) Construction
Once the design is finalized with assistance from the Engineering Division, the project will be built following standard practices in the City.

E) Evaluation
Soon after construction, and at regular intervals thereafter, Transportation will evaluate the success of each project, based on the same factors that were used in the prioritization process.

Resources (Funding and Staffing)
None of this is possible without funding and people. The following are the recommended resources necessary to run a successful program.

Capital Funding- A minimum of $1.2M per year should be allocated to this program, which would allow for implementation in approximately 1-3 neighborhoods a year, depending on the size and complexity of the neighborhood and projects.

Staffing- It is recommended that two full-time positions be created to manage and run this program: one Transportation Planner to manage the program and one Transportation Tech to assist with data collection. The combined cost for these two positions would be approximately $170,000 per year ongoing.

In addition, the Transportation Division would need approximately $100k in one-time funding for office remodeling to make space for the new employees.