



Department Source: Public Works

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: August 1, 2022

Re: Authorizing the City Manager to pursue a grant application to the federal Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant Program for partial costs associated with Vision Zero-related projects and activities.

Executive Summary

Staff has prepared for Council consideration a resolution authorizing the City Manager to apply for Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Program grant funding. The funding request will be used for various Vision Zero-related projects and programs throughout the City. The application request is for \$17,416,000 and would be an 80/20 percent match grant. The City would be responsible for funding \$3,483,200 if the entire grant amount was awarded. Notification of the grant award is estimated to be in early 2023 and if successful, staff will return to Council to accept and appropriate the grant funds.

Discussion

The federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), also referred to as the “Bipartisan Infrastructure Law” authorized and appropriated \$1 billion to be awarded by the US Department of Transportation for FY 2022 for the Safe Streets for All (SS4A) grant program (<https://www.transportation.gov/grants/SS4A>). The SS4A program will be used to fund local initiatives through grants to prevent roadway deaths and serious injuries. The program supports the US Department of Transportation’s National Roadway Safety Strategy and its goal of zero deaths and serious injuries on U.S. roadways. This philosophy is in line with the City’s Vision Zero resolution and resulting work over the last several years and funding from this grant would allow the City to move numerous Vision Zero projects and initiatives forward.

The purpose of SS4A grant is to improve roadway safety by significantly reducing or eliminating roadway fatalities and serious injuries through safety action plan development and implementation focused on all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, public transportation users, motorists, personal conveyance and micromobility users, and commercial vehicle operators.

The main purpose of this memo is to obtain direction from Council regarding the potential list of projects and initiatives so that staff can focus on developing specific detailed and thorough documentation and information for the grant application.

The SS4A program provides funding for two types of grants: Action Plan Grants used to develop comprehensive safety action plans and Implementation Grants to implement strategies or projects that are consistent with an existing action plan. Since the City has a qualifying action plan, we are eligible to apply for an Implementation Grant based on the information currently available.



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The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the grant was released on May 16, 2022 and the grant application is due September 15, 2022. The project awards will be announced in early 2023.

All FY 2022 SS4A funds must be expended within five years after the grant agreement is executed and the US Dept of Transportation obligates the funds.

The program is new and is expected to continue for at least five years, with up to a billion dollars being awarded nationwide each year. For cities awarded Implementation Grants, the minimum annual award is expected to be \$5,000,000 and the maximum award is expected to be \$30,000,000 for the first year. The maximum amount awarded to any one state is capped at \$150,000,000. An 80-20 match (with the City providing the 20% match) is required to receive the funding. The estimated total cost for projects and initiatives is \$17,366,000.

Funding for the City's 20 percent match will be funded by the ¼-cent Capital Improvement Program sales tax or other eligible sources. If awarded the full amount of the grant, the City's match would be \$3,483,200 and is will be due within five years of receipt of grant.

Information from Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the granting agency, indicates criteria for scoring grant applications are:

1. Safety impact (highest priority)
2. Equity, engagement and collaboration
3. Effective practices and strategies
4. Climate and sustainability, and economic competitiveness

Project readiness ratings and a plan to spend funds in underserved communities are also indicated as key components for evaluating applications. Information provided by FHWA also indicates that while specific projects may be included, items that help to make changes systematically across the network will be of particular interest.

The short time frame between the release of the NOFO and the application deadline has necessitated identifying projects for this first grant period very quickly. Staff considered the above criteria and sought input and assistance from the City's new Vision Zero Safe Systems Team to narrow down the list to those that would be a good first step toward improved safety. Through that process, staff has identified several Vision Zero-related projects and activities that support the City's Vision Zero plan and could help move it forward. Some of the funding would also be used to update and enhance the City's Vision Zero Action Plan moving forward.

Through the course of determining which projects/initiatives to include in this grant application, staff also identified several projects/initiatives that could be better suited (and more feasible) for future grant applications. Since this is a new grant, there are many unknowns. The grant selection will be a competitive process, likely with many applicants. The



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projects and initiatives as outlined have been selected based on documentation available and are believed to represent the strongest overall application to achieve the award of the grant and to produce the best result for all network users in Columbia.

Please see the attached exhibits for lists of potential projects/initiatives, as well as the estimated cost for each.

Attachment A includes the information for potential 2022 application items and Attachment B includes potential 2023 items. The lists are not all-inclusive, as there are many worthy projects throughout the City that could be considered. For this reason, staff felt it would be helpful for Council to see projects in Attachment B that were narrowed down from the universe of options and are being recommended for future consideration, rather than for this application. Staff will continue to evaluate initiatives and other potential projects as well. Some projects and activities should be ongoing; others are better candidates for more long-term solutions. While currently we believe the listed projects and initiatives would be eligible for this grant, as we continue to process information made available by FHWA regarding the grant application, some projects or initiatives may be found to not be eligible for this funding.

As an early adopter of a Vision Zero policy, Columbia has had the opportunity to build a good foundation for a Safe Systems approach to traffic safety. Our Vision Zero work has been multifaceted and makes us well positioned for this grant opportunity. Funding from the SS4A program could help us move toward safer streets for all of Columbia's transportation users. If not successful, it is thought that feedback about the grant application will be helpful for future applications. Regardless of whether this application is awarded, Staff will continue to pursue outreach efforts regarding potential future initiatives or projects and present that information to Council to see if a future grant request should be pursued.

Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: To be determined. If grant application is successful and fully awarded \$3,483,200.

Long-Term Impact: Unknown. Long term maintenance of some items unknown. Some items may lead to reduced or additional maintenance costs.

Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact

Strategic Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Reliable Infrastructure, Secondary Impact: Safe Neighborhoods, Tertiary Impact: Inclusive Community

Comprehensive Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Mobility, Connectivity, and Accessibility, Secondary Impact: Infrastructure, Tertiary Impact: Livable & Sustainable Communities



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Legislative History

Date	Action
06/21/2021	REP49-21: City of Columbia Vision Zero Program Update
08/19/2019	Vision Zero Action Plan Annual Update 2019 (Pre-Council)
02/18/2019	Vision Zero Crash Analysis Team Report
06/04/2018	REP51-18: Vision Zero Annual Action Plan Update
05/15/2017	REP37-17: City of Columbia Vision Zero Action Plan 2017-2020.
12/19/2016	PR178-16: Adopting a "Vision Zero" Policy; setting a goal of eliminating traffic deaths and serious injuries in Columbia by 2030. The vote on PR178-16, as amended, was recorded as follows: VOTING YES: TRAPP, SKALA, THOMAS, NAUSER, PETERS, TREECE, RUFFIN). VOTING NO: NO ONE. Policy resolution declared adopted.

Suggested Council Action

Adopt the resolution authorizing the City Manager to apply for \$17,416,000 from the Safe Streets for All (SS4A) funding program to support and further the City's Vision Zero work.