



Streets for People's 2024 Advocacy Agenda

Talk to residents in any part of the city, and one of the things they'll tell you is they wish drivers would slow down on the streets in their neighborhood. They'll tell you it's a problem on the block they live on, on the business corridors they frequent, and on the streets where their kids play in nearby parks. This isn't an urban or suburban problem, a poor or affluent problem. It's not even a Louisville problem. It's pervasive across the city and across the country.

[According to the CDC](#), motor vehicles are the leading cause of death in the US for ages 5-24, and the number 2 cause of death for people aged 25-44. In a country where gun violence is rightfully seen as a national epidemic (48,000 deaths per year), there is a nearly equal prevalence of deaths caused by motor vehicles (42,000 per year). These deaths are tragic events, and they're absolutely preventable.

Many US cities — Boston, Detroit, Cincinnati, Knoxville, Memphis, Greenville, Madison, St. Louis, among many others — have begun to respond to this problem by funding traffic calming infrastructure and removing the internal barriers for getting these projects approved and built. Louisville, unfortunately, still makes it very difficult for these kinds of measures to be implemented.

Locally, this problem is caused by two primary issues: First, the process for getting traffic calming projects approved by Metro Public Works is convoluted and unclear. It is difficult for citizens to navigate, and especially burdensome for citizens with low literacy or socioeconomic standing. Secondly, Metro Government does not have any dedicated funding source in its city budget for building these kinds of projects. When they do occur,

Overview

As we enter into 2024, Streets for People is calling on Louisville city officials to prioritize making our city streets safer and more inviting places for everyone. In order to accomplish this, Metro Government needs to fund traffic calming programs and revise traffic calming policies. We are proposing the following five solutions to help create more vibrant, welcoming streetscapes citywide:

Three Program Proposals

- (1) Slow Streets
- (2) Business District Beautifications
- (3) Pathways to Parks

Two Policy Proposals

- (1) Speed Hump Policy
- (2) Traffic Signal Conversion Policy

they are almost always paid for by the modest amount of discretionary funding that Metro Council Members receive.

It doesn't need to be this way. Other US cities have streamlined approval processes and funded these types of traffic calming projects — and the results have been astoundingly popular. These changes create a positive feedback loop: The popularity of the projects spurs more funding; funding promotes a clear, equitable process for implementation; and implementation makes these types of projects more visible and more popular.

We are confident that the same pattern would hold true in Louisville, and that is why we are advocating for a \$5 million allocation for traffic calming in Metro Government's Fiscal Year 2024-25 Budget. Our proposal breaks this allocation down into three new Metro programs — (1) Slow Streets; (2) Business District Beautifications; and (3) Pathways to Parks — to be accompanied by two revisions to Metro's traffic calming policies — (1) the speed hump policy and (2) the traffic signal to stop sign conversion policy.

Below, we have laid out these three programs and two policy proposals in greater detail:

Three Proposed Programs for Safer Streets

For the better part of a decade, Louisville Metro Government has been allocating about \$20 million per year to its repaving program. This past year, Fiscal Year 2023-24, established a new high water mark: the City set aside \$30 million for repaving projects.

In many ways, Metro Public Works' repaving program is a model of how a government program should operate: (1) It is popular with citizens and politicians; (2) it has consistent funding year-over-year in the City budget; and (3) it is implemented using clear, objective criteria.

While Metro's repaving program is well-run and efficient, Streets for People believes that Metro Government should also be funding Public Works programs that focus on improving safety, community health, and quality of life. As we enter into the budget cycle for FY24-25, S4P is advocating for the creation of three new programs and for funding in the capital projects budget.

S4P's Checklist for Successful City Programs

- ☒ Consistent Funding
- ☒ Political Support
- ☒ Transparent, Objective Process for Implementation

1) *Slow Streets Program*

The Vision: Calm neighborhood streets are safe for everyone — residents and visitors, pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers, kids and the elderly.

Suggested Allocation: \$2.5 million (\$2m for high volume corridors + \$500k for neighborhood streets)

Estimated Impact: 12-18 traffic calmed corridors + 150 speed humps

2) **Business District Beautifications**

The Vision: Tree-lined streets, vibrant streetscapes, and high-visibility intersections — everything that's needed to make the city's main streets inviting for patrons.

Suggested Allocation: \$1.5 million

Estimated Impact: 6-8 beautification installations each with 3 years of maintenance

3) **Pathways to Parks**

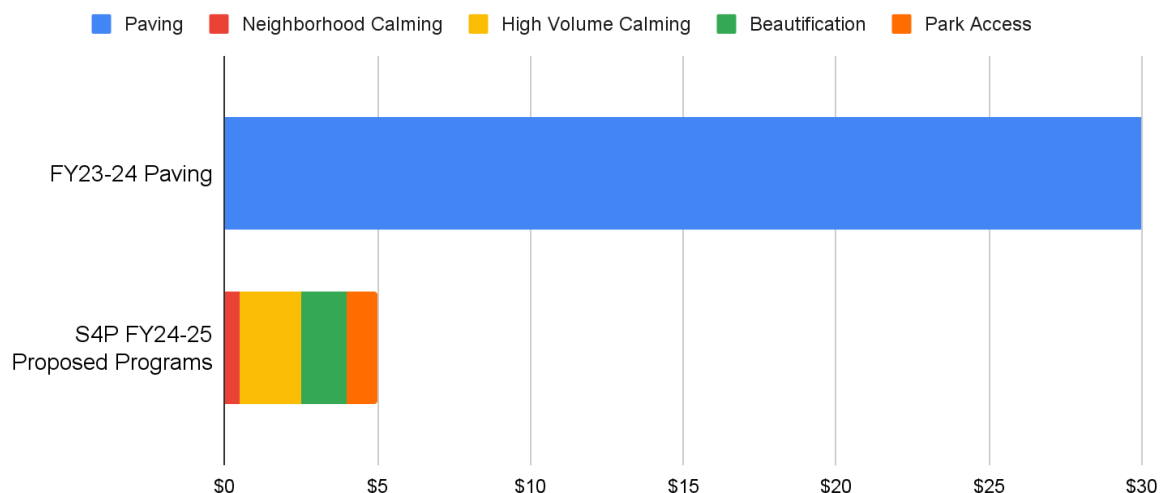
The Vision: Enhance Louisville's parks with connective paths and calm adjacent streets, allowing residents to safely and easily access the city's green spaces.

Suggested Allocation: \$1 million

Estimated Impact: 12-18 park enhancement projects

For these programs to be successful, they will need to follow the model established by the paving program. Once funding is in place, the process for completing projects needs to be transparent and objective. This will ensure the political popularity of these programs, which serve as a positive feedback loop and ensure that future funding is consistent and dependable.

Public Works Budget Allocations (millions)



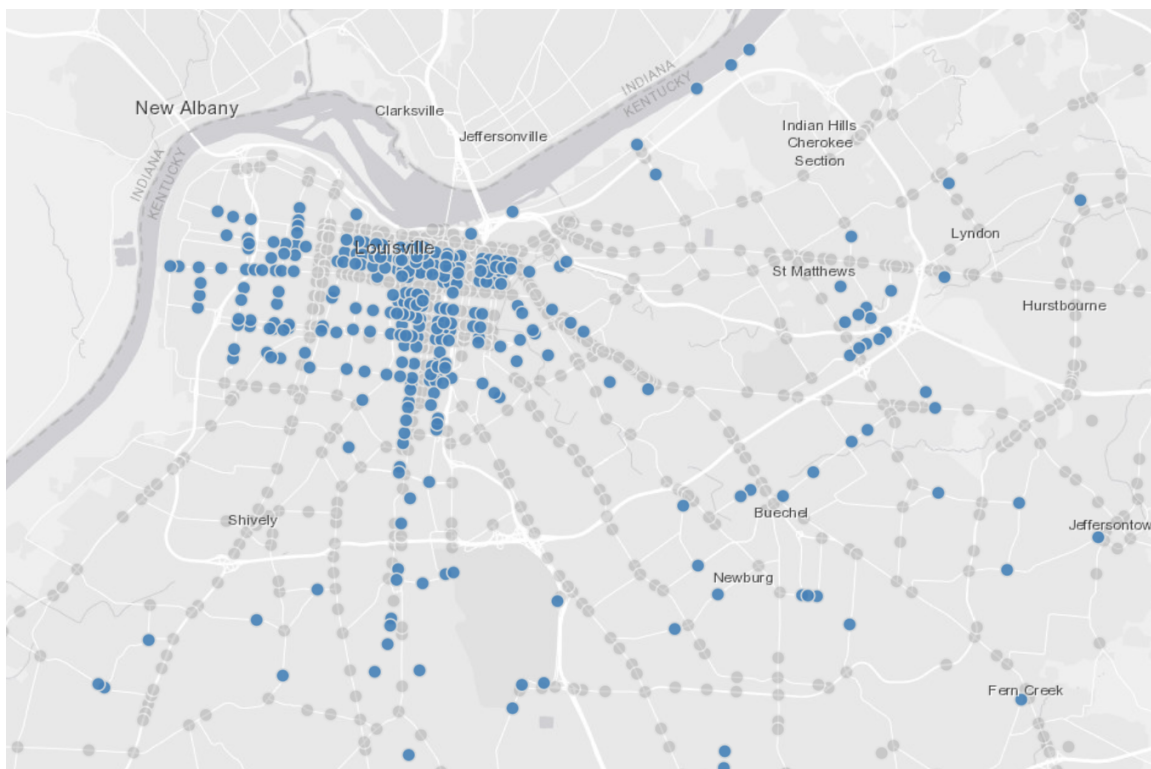
Two Policy Changes for Safer Streets

The second aspect of S4P's 2024 advocacy agenda is a change in two critical traffic calming policies: (1) the City's speed hump policy and (2) the City's traffic signal removal policy.

Louisville Metro's current speed hump policy is difficult to navigate and an extremely burdensome process for citizens.

- Requests for speed humps are considered only on a block-by-block basis, not for streets or neighborhoods as a whole.
- The policy requires that more than 70% of adjacent property owners approve a change before it will be considered.
- Roads where a majority of the homes are multifamily homes are not eligible for speed humps.

These requirements are socially inequitable, favoring streets with more affluent homeowners over those with lower income renters. Additionally, they're totally unnecessary. Louisville should follow the lead of cities like [Detroit](#) and [Cincinnati](#), where the governments have simplified the speed hump policy and request process. These changes have made traffic calming easier to implement for both the cities and their citizens. The City should also implement a policy of replacing traffic signals at intersections that could be more appropriately served by all-way stops. Traffic signals, many of which are on timers, encourage speeding. Studies have shown that replacing them with all-way stops decreases the number and the severity of crashes that occur.



This [map from the City's open data portal](#) shows the signals in the city maintained by Metro Government. Many of them are located in the central and western urban neighborhoods — areas like Old Louisville, Limerick, Russell, Shawnee, and California — and most of them do not meet the criteria to justify a signalized intersection. Removing them would save the City money and make streets safer for residents who live nearby.

Conclusion

Residents across the city want their streets to feel safe. The dangers of speeding cars are real, but without a funding source for traffic calming projects or a transparent process for implementing them, citizens are often left feeling frustrated and powerless in their attempts to find solutions.

It doesn't have to be this way. Many US cities invest budget dollars towards improving the safety and quality of life on neighborhood streets. Louisville should too.

For the last decade, the Metro Public Works budget has earmarked very little for these kinds of neighborhood-level safety projects. In most cases, if they are implemented, they are funded by the small amount of discretionary funds available to Metro Council Members. Streets for People proposes creating and funding three programs, each with a distinct area of focus: (1) a Slow Streets Program that focuses on neighborhood-level traffic calming; (2) a Business District Beautification Program that promotes vibrancy and walkability on local commercial corridors; and (3) a Pathways to Parks Program that enhances the safety near and accessibility to our city's park system.

Investment is one part of the solution; a clear process is the other. Metro Public Works needs to create transparent, concise processes for implementing these kinds of projects. The policies that exist today favor the well-connected and the affluent — those citizens who have the time and social standing to navigate a complex system. Streets for People recommends two specific policy changes: (1) The Public Works department should revise its outdated speed hump policy to so that traffic calming requests are easier to make and more likely to be approved. (2) Metro Government should enact a policy to proactively remove traffic signals that are no longer warranted, and replace these signals with all-way stops.

Streets for People Leadership Team

Chris Glasser

Jackie Cobb

Patrick Smith

Michael Schnuerle

December 2023

