



March 2, 2023

Mayor Levar Stoney
900 E. Broad Street, Suite 201
Richmond, VA 23219

Re: Street Safety for pedestrians and cyclists

Dear Mayor Stoney,

The Partnership for Smarter Growth is greatly concerned about the increase in fatalities and injuries for pedestrians and cyclists throughout Richmond. In 2022 alone, 10 pedestrians were killed when hit by cars and trucks, up from four the previous year. Already, just barely three months into 2023, there have been a number of pedestrian injuries and fatalities, including the death of a young VCU student.

With the \$8.8 million funding coming to the city from the Virginia Highway Safety Improvement Program it is an opportune time to implement safety changes that will have a real impact on increasing safety for pedestrians. The city must go beyond education and enforcement and invest in design changes to our streets, because safer designs are the most effective tool for reducing dangerous driving conditions for pedestrians and cyclists.

Our recommendations to help improve the safety of pedestrians are as follows:

- Narrow traffic lanes and turn radii, designing streets to ensure speeds of 25 mph or less
- Add curb extensions at corners
- Add medians and safety islands on wider roads
- Fix and connect sidewalks and make crossings safer including using high-visibility, raised crosswalks and zebra striping
- Remove high-speed one-way streets and convert them to two-way¹

¹ The 2009 Downtown Master Plan identified the dangers of Richmond's one-way streets with traffic signal sequences that allowed for drivers to travel at 35 mph. This remains the case and contributes to the very dangerous conditions on West Main Street and other streets in the city.

- Install a citywide network of protected bike/scooter lanes
- Prioritize transit with dedicated bus lanes and ensure pedestrian safety when walking to the station and boarding the bus
- Use leading pedestrian intervals, short traffic cycle lengths and/or slow signal progressions in downtown areas and networks with closely spaced signals

We are excited that the City has joined the National Association of City Transportation Officials and urge you to adopt and implement the recommendations in NACTO's Urban Street Design Guide² which offers a host of street design solutions for safer streets. We also encourage you and the city staff to consult Smart Growth America's 2022 Dangerous by Design Report about the scope of risks to pedestrians and the disproportionate rates of deaths for lower income people and people of color.³

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stewart Schwartz". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Stewart Schwartz
President

Cc: Richmond City Council
DPW Director Bobby Vincent

² Urban Street Design Guide & Design Controls, National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO). <https://nacto.org/publication/urban-street-design-guide/design-controls/>

³ Dangerous by Design 2022, Smart Growth America. <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Dangerous-By-Design-2022-v3.pdf>