

DRAFT PROPOSED DRAFT

Date: January 10, 2023

To: Mayor, Chief Operating Officer, Director of Engineering, Administrator Traffic Engineering, Bicycle Pedestrian Manager, Chief Communications Officer, Chief of Police, Deputy Chief of Police Investigative Services, Council Member Worth Morgan, Council Member Dr. Jeff Warren, U.S. House Rep Steve Cohen

From: Evergreen Historic District Association Board (EHDA)

The purpose of the EHDA is to maintain the area as a stable, residential neighborhood; to promote a sense of community with the area; and to advocate for Overton Park and the Old Forest as a valuable and natural setting.

The Association is contacting the City about neighborhood pedestrian safety. The Association believes streets serve as an important extension of our front porches and lawns – they are part of the fabric of our neighborhood. Our streets are a public asset and should be safe for all that use them. Streets are a common community connector that residents and citizens use every day.

- U.S. House Representative Steve Cohen (an EHDA resident) has promoted Complete Streets principles for many years.
- In 2015, the City identified and prioritized intersections to improve pedestrian safety as outlined in the Memphis Pedestrian and School Safety Action Plan.
- 64 fatalities in 2020 placed Memphis as the 3rd deadliest city for pedestrians (*Dangerous by Design* - Smart Growth America).
- 78 fatalities have occurred as of December 2022 (TN Department of Homeland Security – Daily Memphian). More than half of the incidents happened in the evening.

Two recent incidents are highlight the issue. Richard Meek, 76, died of injuries sustained after being struck by a car on his morning walk near North Parkway. Many Memphians have fond memories of his giraffe tours and Keeper Chats at the Memphis Zoo. On November 10, an EHDA resident was struck by a tow truck at the intersection of Overton Park Avenue and Evergreen Avenue. She was lawfully crossing the intersection while walking her dog, returning from a walk in Overton Park. She was hospitalized for almost a week due to injuries sustained.

The Association strongly believes residents should be able to safely use our streets minimally for morning walks, dog walks and spending time in Overton Park at all times of the day. These activities are great examples of the Association's key principles.

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EHDA believes it is imperative citizens actively engage in solutions regarding this public safety emergency and requests the following:

1. EHDA would like to meet with City officials to discuss safety issues. Specifically, we would invite the Mayor and Directors of Police, Engineering, Communications along with our City Council member to our monthly meetings to determine how we can work together and improve pedestrian safety in our city.
2. Allocate financial resources to implement right-sizing measures for Overton Park Avenue identified in 2015.
3. Prioritize updates and or upgrades to the traffic signal at the intersection of Overton Park Avenue and Evergreen Avenue by allocating appropriate financial resources.
4. Charge the Chief of Police and Deputy Chief of Investigative Services to review citations involving pedestrian-vehicle incidents for any gaps with Tennessee Code Annotated.
5. Provide appropriate crosswalks and signage to better protect our neighbors and Memphians who walk to neighborhood attractions like the Memphis Zoo and Overton Park.

EHDA strongly believes healthy neighborhoods are safe neighborhoods. We look forward to working together to make Memphis streets a safer place for our families.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Williams
President of the Board
Evergreen Historic District Association