

Dear Mr. Sanders, Councilors, and Mr. Freas,

We were saddened to hear of the [death of Mamawa Simai](#) on Thursday. Another pedestrian fatality or injury in Charlottesville is not acceptable. The stretch of roadway where she was killed on Elliott Ave is designed to move cars quickly, not keep pedestrians, cyclists, or people with mobility devices safe. It's vital to our community that people should be able to safely walk and roll to work, school, or anywhere else they may seek to travel without a car.

As we consider what comes next in the wake of this preventable tragedy, we have a number of requests of the City:

First, **we ask for quick improvements to this intersection and stretch of road**: bump outs to narrow the crossing distance, a raised crosswalk to improve visibility and slow down traffic, improved lighting, and signalization at the crosswalk. Adding protected bike lanes on Elliott between Ridge and 2nd Street will also help slow down cars by narrowing the width of the car lanes. This can be done easily on this stretch given the wide right of way and lack of on-street parking. As the South First Street redevelopment project wraps up, there will be even more people crossing this intersection. A [recent study published in the Journal of Urban Mobility](#) shows that delineated (i.e., protected) bike lanes have an overall traffic calming effect, and can reduce vehicle speeds by up to 28%.

Second, **we ask for quick solutions to ensure city staffing is adequate to move these intersection improvements forward**. We understand that city leadership is philosophically supportive of creating better infrastructure for rolling and walking around Charlottesville. However, it appears project completion is lagging due to the lack of a traffic engineer. We hope this position is filled soon. We ask that you look to quickly contract outside engineering work to ensure improvements to this intersection and other areas can happen as quickly as possible.

Third, **we ask for the FY 26 budget to reflect urgency in improving pedestrian, bike, and ADA infrastructure**. This should reflect both adequate funding for projects and for staffing to ensure these projects happen in a timely manner. Although Charlottesville has not formally committed to Vision Zero — a national program helping communities achieve zero pedestrian fatalities — we should be striving to ensure that traffic deaths and injuries do not happen here.

We appreciate the work that has been going into this area and look forward to supporting future efforts.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,

Matthew Gillikin and Steven L. Johnson,
Co-Chairs, Livable Cville