



One City for All People

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June 23, 2026

RE: Metro Human Relations Commission Statement of Concern and Call for Collaborative Action Regarding Pedestrian, Bicyclist & Student Safety

On May 4, Billy Ray Swaner was struck and killed by an 18-wheeler at the intersection of Trinity Lane and Gallatin Pike in East Nashville. Mr. Swaner was a familiar presence in the community through his work with The Contributor and, like every Nashvillian, deserved to be safe while navigating our streets and public spaces.

Just days earlier, on April 29, Larry Smith was struck and killed while riding his bicycle on 2nd Avenue North in Germantown, near the location where pedestrian Dot Dobbins was killed while walking her dog last year. On April 18, Hershel Trotter was struck and killed while bicycling on Harding Place in a hit-and-run crash.

These tragedies are deeply painful for the families, neighbors, and communities affected. They also reflect a broader challenge facing Nashville. The eighteen pedestrians and bicyclists who have lost their lives on Nashville roadways since the beginning of 2026 were not statistics. They were community members, workers, parents, neighbors, friends, and loved ones.

As Nashville enters the final year of its five-year Vision Zero plan, pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities remain at historically high levels. The Metro Human Relations Commission recognizes and appreciates the efforts of NDOT, Vision Zero, WeGo Public Transit, Metro Planning, the Mayor's Office, Metro Council, community advocates, and numerous other stakeholders. Additionally, current outcomes make clear that even more urgency, coordination, transparency, and investment are needed.

The Metro Human Relations Commission's mission includes promoting the safety, health, security, peace, and general welfare of all people in Nashville and Davidson County. Transportation safety and equitable mobility are directly connected to that mission. The ability to safely access employment, education, healthcare, housing, parks, transit, and civic life should not depend on whether an individual owns a vehicle, lives in a particular neighborhood, speaks English as a first language, is able-bodied, or has the financial means to absorb transportation barriers.

Unsafe transportation infrastructure disproportionately affects many of the communities MHRC serves, including people with disabilities, older adults, lower-income residents, transit riders, children, pedestrians, bicyclists, individuals experiencing homelessness, and immigrant and refugee communities.

As Metro finalizes the FY 2026-27 budget and continues implementation of Choose How You Move, Vision Zero, and East Bank projects, the Commission respectfully invites policymakers, departments, boards, commissions, and community stakeholders to engage in a citywide conversation regarding transportation safety, accessibility, and equity.

Specifically, MHRC seeks input from the Mayor's Office, Metro Council, NDOT, Vision Zero Nashville, WeGo Public Transit, Metro Planning, the Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency, Metro Public Health Department, Metro Social Services, the Office of Homeless Services, MNPS, MNPd, WalknBike Nashville, disability advocates, older adult advocates, neighborhood organizations, transit riders, and other community stakeholders.

We respectfully ask:

- What measurable goals will Metro establish to reduce pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities and serious injuries over the next one, three, and five years?
- What projects on the High Injury Network remain on schedule, and what barriers are delaying implementation?
- What resources are needed to accelerate safety improvements already identified through community engagement processes?
- How are transportation investments being evaluated for their impact on people with disabilities, transit riders, lower-income residents, seniors, unhoused residents, and other vulnerable populations?
- What immediate interventions can be implemented on corridors experiencing recurring pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities?
- How will future investments, including East Bank infrastructure and Choose How You Move projects, improve safety, accessibility, and mobility for all Nashvillians?
- How can Metro continue improving public communication regarding traffic fatalities in ways that are accurate, respectful, and centered on human impacts?

In addition to these questions, MHRC encourages continued investment in:

- Safety improvements along Nashville's High Injury Network;
- Accessible sidewalks, curb ramps, and pedestrian crossings;
- Safe and accessible transit stops and first-mile/last-mile connections;
- Protected bicycle infrastructure;
- Traffic-calming measures near schools, libraries, parks, public housing communities, and transit facilities;
- Safe Routes to School initiatives;
- Greenway connectivity and multimodal transportation options;
- Equitable transportation investments in neighborhoods throughout Davidson County.

The Commission also recognizes the significant contributions of community organizations that have elevated transportation safety concerns for many years. In particular, Walk Bike Nashville's annual Pedestrian Memorial serves as a powerful reminder that every traffic fatality represents a human life lost and a family forever changed. The organization has also helped advance public understanding of transportation safety through research, education, and advocacy, including its 2023 report examining pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries in Nashville. We are grateful for the work of Walk Bike Nashville, victim families, neighborhood advocates, disability rights advocates, transit riders, and others whose efforts have helped bring visibility and urgency to this issue.

The Metro Human Relations Commission offers these questions in a collaborative spirit, intended to promote discussion, invite expertise, and identify opportunities for partnership.

We recognize that many Metro departments, elected officials, boards, commissions, nonprofit organizations, and community advocates are already working to improve transportation safety throughout Nashville. Our intent is not to duplicate those efforts, but to better understand them, elevate community concerns, and explore how transportation safety intersects with equity, accessibility, public health, and quality of life.

We invite interested departments, agencies, organizations, and community stakeholders to share their responses with MHRC staff and, if interested, participate in a future Commission meeting to discuss ongoing initiatives, challenges, successes, and opportunities for collaboration.

Through these conversations, MHRC hopes to identify ways to support existing efforts, highlight best practices, facilitate communication across agencies and stakeholders, and help ensure that the perspectives of vulnerable road users – including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, people with disabilities, older adults, and residents experiencing economic hardship – are considered in transportation planning and policy discussions.

The Commission looks forward to learning from the expertise of our partners and working collaboratively toward the shared goal of making Nashville safer, more accessible, and more equitable for all.

Potential activities may include:

- Convening quarterly meetings among relevant Metro departments, boards, commissions, and community stakeholders;
- Identifying transportation safety issues that disproportionately affect vulnerable populations;
- Monitoring implementation of major safety initiatives and infrastructure commitments;
- Elevating accessibility concerns affecting people with disabilities and transit riders;
- Examining transportation barriers facing lower-income communities, older adults, immigrant communities, and residents experiencing homelessness;
- Encouraging collaboration among agencies whose work affects transportation outcomes;

As part of this effort, MHRC will explore the development of a Transportation Equity and Safety Scorecard tracking indicators such as pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities, accessibility improvements, sidewalk connectivity, protected bicycle infrastructure, transit access, High Injury Network investments, and other measures identified through stakeholder engagement.

The Commission believes that Nashville residents should be able to safely choose how they move throughout our city, whether by walking, biking, taking transit, using mobility devices, or driving. Achieving that goal will require sustained collaboration, transparent decision-making, meaningful community engagement, and a shared commitment to ensuring that all Nashvillians can safely access the opportunities and services that allow them to thrive.

We appreciate the work already underway and look forward to partnering with Metro departments, elected officials, community organizations, and residents to advance a safer, more accessible, and more equitable transportation system for everyone.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Davie Tucker, Jr.', with a stylized, cursive script.

Davie Tucker, Jr.
Executive Director
Metro Human Relations
Commission