



## Crash Analysis Studio – Memphis Session Transcript

### Introductory Trailer

**Chuck Marohn:** I want to give you two scenarios. Scenario number one a plane crashes. Scenario number two, two cars collide. In scenario number one, we pull out all the stops – we bring in the NTSB, we try to figure out exactly what went wrong. Scenario number two – we send out the cops, we sweep up the mess, and we go on our way.

**John Pattison:** If we, collectively – everyone on this call and the broader Strong Towns movement – if we do this right, we’re going to save thousands of lives.

**Edward Erfurt:** Mayors and local council members want to do the right thing. They have the ability to solve it. We’re going to help provide those tools for them.

### Session

#### **Text:**

Memphis Zoom Recording

Sat, Sep 13, 2025 12:15PM • 55:09

Okay. Hi everyone. I know people are still filing in, but I do believe I will slowly get us started.

So let me begin by saying thank you for joining us today, and welcome to this crash analysis studio session. We are really glad that you're here with us engaging in this conversation. And for those of you who might not know me, my name is Tony Harris, and I am the Community Engagement Coordinator with strong towns, and I have been invited by one of our members in



Memphis to help moderate this session today. So in a few moments, I will go ahead and introduce you to our experts, our panelists. But first, let's talk about why we're here.

So we know that over 40,000 people die in automobile crashes in the United States alone every year. We also know that 1000s more suffer traumatic injuries during these collisions. And despite the work of public safety officials, these crashes are still happening and they're affecting all of our lives.

Now there's a prevalent misconception that car crashes are caused solely by mistakes that drivers and pedestrians make. So looking at your phone, changing the radio, drinking alcohol and then getting behind the wheel, speeding. The North American response to crashes usually focuses on assigning blame, often to drivers and also often to pedestrians.

The reality, though, is that crashes are caused by multiple factors, and when a traumatic crash occurs, we need to identify all the contributing factors and learn all that we can so we can ultimately reduce the number of traumatic injuries and deaths that are plaguing our communities. So what you're going to see today is a session that follows the strong towns crash analysis approach. Our panelists are looking at a crash that occurred at the intersection of Vance Avenue and Walnut Street in Memphis, Tennessee.

So I'll start by introducing you to our panelists. Then we will review the facts of the crash itself, and then our guests here today are going to help us to assess the design factors that contributed to this collision. And let me emphasize one more time, our goal is really not about assigning blame. Rather, it's to learn as much as possible about what took place here and



identify factors and make some suggestions for improving safety at this crash location for all road users.

Okay, so let me begin by introducing our panel. First, I'm going to ask, Will Henke to join us? He is a licensed engineer in Tennessee and Mississippi with six years of experience in roadway and street design, engineering, project management and transportation safety projects. Will is passionate about creating multimodal transportation networks and encourages micro, mobility sensitive design dedicated to creating a safer community for all. Will has worked on engineering projects throughout the mid south in urban, suburban and rural contexts. He has been a strong towns member since 2019 and is currently pursuing TPCB's road safety professional level one certification. So welcome, Will.

Next we have Yvonne Bobo, who is the Executive Director of Off the Walls Arts, a studio that is nearby the crash location. Yvonne is a Memphis metal artist and owner of warehouse studios LLC, which is an artist collective and off the walls arts is a nonprofit that surfaces opportunities for artists and students through workshops, collaborative community art events and some other shared resources. And she also runs workshops herself and writes grants. And then next we have Brendan Duffy, who is also on screen with Yvonne Brendan is chairman of off the rails art line, which is a subcommittee of off the walls arts. Brendan is a visionary of the off the rails art line that runs along a decommissioned railroad in the heart of Memphis, near the crash location that we're looking at. And Brendan performs grounds maintenance for this project, and he is also a grant writer.

And then finally, we have Robert Noordermeer, who was born in the Netherlands and moved to the United States when he was two years old. He's been a Memphis resident for nearly 47 years, and for over 17 years, Robert has been a bike commuter. During the past decade, Robert has driven less than 3000 miles a year. He earned a bachelor's degree in logistics marketing



from the University of Memphis, and Robert has spent the last 27 years in the supply chain field, primarily focusing on outbound trucking. And then I think it's really interesting that for the past nine years, Robert has also participated in weekly calls at his job to analyze collisions involving delivery vehicles.

So I'm going to go ahead and walk us through the details of this crash in Memphis. I'm going to do that by sharing my screen, and you should be able to see a PowerPoint presentation on the screen now. And we'll start off with what we know. So we know that this crash took place at 6:21pm on July 14, 2025 an unidentified southbound vehicle was traveling on Walnut Street and struck William Gaines as he was cycling westbound on Vance Avenue. Now according to the crash report, Memphis Fire Department unit 11, arrived on the scene and transported Gaines to the hospital. Mr. Gaines, who also goes by the name Don I believe, had broken ribs and a partially collapsed lung, and to my knowledge, he has made a full recovery. Now, the crash report incorrectly stated that the point of impact with the vehicle was the front passenger side. I know when our applicant Kelsey, when she talked to Gaines, he indicated that it was actually the front driver side of the vehicle that struck him, so we just wanted to include that clarification point.

Now, weather reports indicate that it was in the 80s in Memphis on the evening of the collision, and the crash report states that it was daylight with no adverse weather conditions at that time.

Then a few additional details on the crash that we gathered. The Fire unit that transported gains from the scene of the crash reported seeing a red four door sedan with front end damage speeding southbound on Walnut away from the scene of the collision. So we don't know if that was the motorist who was involved in this collision or not, but it was a detail included in the crash report, so we wanted to make sure we covered that here too. Now, Gaines was listed as having a minor injury and traveling on the road outside of a crosswalk at the time of the collision, and the speed limit at this intersection is listed as 35 miles per

hour. So on this map, you can see the intersection of Walnut and Vance. So Walnut Street going north to south, Vance going east to west. And the approximate crash location is marked with that red pin.

And then, on this next slide here, this is the visual from the crash report itself that we pulled as you can see, the point of impact seems like it's labeled on the passenger side of the vehicle, according to Gaines, it was actually the driver's side that hit him. And then on this slide, I just put together kind of a simple illustration to show what we believe happened based on the information we have, right? So the orange shape here is meant to represent the unidentified motorist that was traveling south on Walnut, and then the slender blue shape is meant to represent Mr. Gaines as he was cycling westbound on Vance and then that approximate collision area is outlined in red.

Okay, so a little more on the overall conditions. Here you're going to see a northbound and a southbound lane on Walnut Street, and then Vance Avenue has lanes for eastbound, westbound and turning traffic the intersection itself does not have traffic signals. It is a four way stop, and you're going to see parallel line crosswalks there, but I don't believe you're going to see sharrows or signage that indicates the road should be shared by drivers and cyclists. Bike lanes are also absent in this area, to my knowledge. And then our applicant, Kelsey Huse, she pulled together some photos and footage of the crash location. I just want to take us through these briefly. I know plenty of people here are probably familiar with this area. As an out of Towner, it was helpful for me to get a feel for you know, the space that we're kind of dissecting. On this first slide, you can see the intersection from the east side of Vance Avenue. So we kind of liken this to the perspective that our cyclist, Mr. Gaines would have had as he was headed west. And then on this next slide, here you are looking south on Walnut Street from just north of the intersection. So we believe this would be similar to the point of view that that motorist

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would have had as they pulled up to and then pulled through the Vance and walnut intersection.

Now on this slide, you see two photos. One is from South walnut looking north, and that's on the left hand side, and then the other is from the west side of Vance Avenue, looking east, and that's on the right hand side. So we wanted to include these just sort of to give a feel for what the like opposite perspectives of our motorists and cyclists had. And then here you can see the intersection from the northeast corner on the left hand side, and the intersection from the northwest corner. On the right hand side, and then we did a similar layout here. On the left, you can see the intersection from the southeast corner, and then on the right, the intersection from the southwest corner.

And Kelsey helped us get measurements of the intersection itself too. So when we're looking at Walnut Street here, you're going to see five foot wide sidewalks on either side, and then that southbound lane for through traffic is 13 feet wide, and the northbound lane for through traffic is 20 feet wide. So that makes the total width across the pavement 33 feet, and then that width jumps up to 43 feet when you add in the sidewalks.

Now on Vance Avenue, you can see five foot wide sidewalks on either side. The westbound traffic lane is 19 feet wide, and the Eastbound traffic lane is 16 feet wide. That turning lane that I mentioned earlier is 12 feet wide, so that makes the total width across the pavement 47 feet and then when you add in the sidewalks, that jumps up another 10 feet to 57 feet.

Then I had a few notes about the development pattern here, and what you can expect to see as you're moving through this area. To my knowledge, it looks like there's a variety of land uses in the surrounding area of the crash location, right? So I think you can see some mixed income housing, some commercial buildings and some single family homes. And then there were a few things I wanted to point out on a map. So I'm going to take us ahead aside. Despite the fact that this crash location, like where the red pin is right, is inside of a neighborhood, you can kind of

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see a lot of regional traffic infrastructure, these yellow roads surrounding that neighborhood and like relative close proximity. So us, route 78 is a few blocks to the south, and then route 79 and 51 I believe, are north of the crash location. So I think 51 runs here. And then the interchanges for interstate 240, and 55 are also less than a mile away, and I'm going to take us back. There are some community destinations in the area nearby the intersection too. I noted down a few different churches and schools nearby walnut and Vance. And then there are also bus stops along Vance Avenue. And I'm just pointing out these, you know, different components to try and illustrate it's reasonable to expect a variety of road users in this area. I would say, pedestrians, potentially cyclists, public transit users, motorists. It seems like this place kind of has destinations. And yeah, characteristics that might make it a place well traveled by multiple types of people.

Okay. Now there is an upcoming project, the off the rails art line that I mentioned earlier, and we just wanted to cover this briefly, off the walls. Arts has ownership of the former railroad spur that runs across Walnut Street just south of the crash location and off the walls. Arts, to my knowledge, received some grant funding to turn this into an art line. And I think they've also received some additional funding for crosswalks on the west side of Vance. I think adding in, you know, different bright colored paints, making that area kind of a little bit more flamboyant to the eye, right as you're moving through as a motorist. So I think the intention with this project is to implement a speed table and some street murals on the section of the road that is diagonal to the van Sam walnut intersection. The last time I spoke with Yvonne, it sounded like there was city engineering approval kind of still pending. So that might come up a little bit during our discussion discussion portion, too.

And then, um, Kelsey and her colleague Danny also conducted a speed study for us. So they gathered speeds on Vance Avenue Late one afternoon on a Tuesday in August, and to my knowledge, it was pretty free flow traffic circumstances, right? So there weren't any like, major construction projects or any adverse weather taking place at the time. They gathered their data, and what they found, they tracked 201 cars, and 22% of them were going over the speed

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limit. Now only one car was found to be going 45 miles per hour or faster, and then the 85th percentile speed, that's the speed at which 85% of drivers were traveling at or below, was found to be 36 miles per hour.

So I'm going to go ahead and stop sharing my screen, and I'd like to turn to our panel, and maybe we can start with, will, will, what factors do you think might have led to this collision taking place, like, in terms of, you know, the environment and different types of user behavior?

**Will Henke:** Yeah, yeah. Can you all see my screen?

**Tony Harris:** Yep, I can see it. I.

**Will Henke:** Yeah. So looking at this, this corridor, definitely a couple of things stand out to me. But maybe before we get to the specific crash location, this is very similar map to the one that that Tony just shared. I wanted to show a little bit about what comes both before and after this particular stretch advance Avenue, specifically from Mr. Gaines point of view. So if we were to go east of here, Vance Avenue turns into Peabody Avenue just by name, but it's the same facility. And let me advance the slide.

Peabody Avenue to the east dead ends into Cooper Street in Midtown in Memphis. And if you're familiar with Memphis, there's a lot going on on Cooper Street today, particularly south of here is Cooper young fest.

And just in general, hopefully you all can see by the image, there is fairly consistent on street cycling infrastructure. There's painted conflict marking the green through the intersections. We've got on street bike lanes on Peabody in the north and south, along Cooper and most of Peabody looks like this up until a certain point. Here's a street view of the same thing. So the bike lane is between a traveling and a parking lane, but we've got a nice buffer between possible during zones. We've got overhead tree canopies for shade. We've got regular

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crosswalks, another location where we would expect a driver to to come into regular contact with or to to expect pedestrians and cyclists. I just think it's worth pointing out, and then on the other end of of Vance avenue that ends at the riverfront. This is the Mississippi River on the left. Really dead ends at the top of the bluff. And Vance Avenue actually turns into an accessible path down the bluff to Riverside Drive to Tom Lee Park.

And just showing an image of what this looks like, it's it's basically the one place for quite some distance along the riverfront that you could, you know, roll a bike down the switchbacks to get to the park and not have to carry it down or eventually up, up some stairs. So naturally, east and west of here, and lots of intermittent locations along the way, we've got destinations that would would make sense for for cyclists trying to travel throughout the city,

but in between, we have this configuration. This is a neighborhood that there's definitely some urban history that we could get into. It's not my expertise, so I won't go into the details, but I will point out Peabody Avenue as it comes up, used to have one lane each way and bike lanes. And now it's five lanes to each way, with a center turn lane and a pretty S curve, reverse curve in here, and then it opens up a long dance. There's sort of on street parking. It's not painted, but people will park there occasionally in the immediate vicinity of our intersection, though there's not really any use for the on street parking, and as a result, it turns into an oversized through lane.

So that's a little bit about the whole area, but what I want to zoom in on a little bit is what could be expected for cyclists using this facility. So as we discussed, it's a 35 mile an hour posted speed.

And I guess maybe before we move. Let me explain this. This table, this is this is a criteria that's often used to evaluate the level of traffic stress experienced by different road users. In this case, we're thinking about the cyclists point of view. And the different tiers here, one through four correspond to the level of confidence that you might have an expected road users and

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reasonably when we when we look at our condition, 35 miles an hour, one lane each way, we're in a condition where the facility is not Designed for anybody but the strongest and most fearless cyclists. And what that really means is that those cyclists would expect pretty regular conflict with either passing vehicles, or, in our case, specifically, intersections. It is not a comfortable environment for anybody riding a bike.

And I think maybe the biggest discrepancy here is a difference between what what really would be like a safe operating speed. We'll get to that in a second, and what is currently the posted speed, and as a result, the design speed. So this gets a little bit into the weeds, but I guess I would just point out that historically, setting speed limits has been a little bit of a reactive measure. It's been it's been engineering practice has been to assess how people move through space. In this case, it's mostly cars driving, and to take about the 85th percentile and to set that at the speed limit, expecting some deviant behavior, but most people to to not speed and that that naturally means that you will have some people that speed, but also that the posted speed. And as a result, what we eventually design around comes downstream of how people use the facility, rather than treating design like something that can and should influence the operating speed and so more recent engineering guidance, in this case, this is actually from the city's Complete Streets project delivery manual highlights the idea of a target speed, which is that, in this case, we're talking about an urban context where we where we are accounting for multiple different road users, transit facilities, fine grain land use patterns.

We should, we should really treat it the other way around, where design is something that that drives what becomes an operating speed. And you can see on the right there's some things that are proven to create some speed control measures, narrowing Lane widths on street parking, adding adding some some friction at the edges, so that you don't have a 19 foot wide lane that feels like an interstate. So this is a slide from the AASHTO Green Book. A little bit, little bit more of the kind of traditional roadway design guidance. And even even these resources are starting to recognize that. I'll just highlight the bottom it is important for the design of the thoroughfare to encourage an actual operating speed that equals the target speed.



So when we look at the target speeds here, we got 35 miles an hour east and west, 25 miles an hour, unposted speed limit, north and south. That is the standard in Memphis.

If we assume that all traffic laws are being followed and everybody stops at every stop sign, then this intersection actually meets the baseline for what's, what's called Intersection Sight Distance, whether you can see through the intersection. And if two people are stopped at at the intersection, they're probably about eight feet back from the stop bar. We're thinking about people sitting in cars here, and they could see one another, but I think it's worth recognizing that people won't always follow traffic laws, and if they did, we probably would have less less crashes on our city streets. And so the first question is, where could this go wrong? And I think what would stand out to anybody that's been through this intersection, or anybody that saw the pictures that Tony shared, is that we do have sight distance issues. In particular, this building on the on the northeast corner, prevent prohibits somebody waiting to go south from seeing far enough down Vance to effectively evaluate whether or not it's safe to cross, and that's assuming that somebody isn't going to stop here. And just reasonably, there's not a whole lot of ability to see what might be coming down the road. You have to peek out into the intersection before you can even really see if it's safe to go. And the same is true from the other direction.

You can very clearly see you can't see far enough. And really, this is our condition. This is this is moving westbound, expecting a car from the North to stop or to respect traffic laws, you're in the intersection before you can respond if that doesn't happen to be the case. And for the cyclist, I think it actually gets to be a little bit more tricky. So a cyclist coming up to this intersection, and in Tennessee, we don't have Idaho stop laws, so that the legal, the legal way of interacting with this intersection is to come to a complete come to a complete stop. If a cyclist stops here and enters the intersection, it would take about seven and a half seconds to get to about the point of collision. And conversely, somebody driving down the road that, let's

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just say they've already decided, I'm not going to stop. I might yield. I might wait and see if you know there's a conflict, but I'm not coming to a complete stop. I drive through here regularly. There's there's not an ability for a cyclist to effectively evaluate whether or not an oncoming vehicle is going to safely stop for them by the time they're in the intersection, they they have to rely on north and south vehicles to respect traffic laws, because they they can't see them in advance to know to yield to them, and so by the time a cyclist gets far enough to even see down the road, they're 10 feet further along. It's been three and a half seconds, and they're already up to about four miles an hour from a stop. It's not it's not easy to stop or to maneuver differently in this condition. I just think that's worth pointing out.

And so this is about the location that we'd be asking a driver to evaluate whether or not they can move through this intersection. The stop sign is in clear view, but we know that people run stop signs, and in this case, it seems like a stop sign, even a slow rolled stop sign is is a real problem for anybody else using this using this facility.

And it doesn't get a whole lot better because that corner is so tight. But if we were to design these streets to have an operating speed that does look different than what it does today, it gets marginally better, 20 miles an hour.

It for the operating speed, north, south, 15 miles an hour. We're getting a little closer. I think you all can see the point. This is about the spot where a cyclist has to make the decision whether or not they can enter this intersection. There's just not a whole lot of room to see. So

I've talked for quite a while. I will, I will turn it over to whoever comes next.

**Tony Harris:** Great. Thank you Will. That was very illuminating to hear. And it's it really stands out to me, too, when you have components of a neighborhood that are built out with great bike infrastructure, and then plop, there's an area that like doesn't have that type of infrastructure. I think one of my colleagues often, often makes the note was like, what is the

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expectation that bicyclists kind of magically disappear and then reappear back where there's Yeah, facility to cater to them? Yeah?

**Will Henke:** I think one last, I think it's worth saying that the law in Memphis is that cyclists are allowed to use facility unless specifically prohibited. And in this case, though there are no Sharrow so there's no dedicated bike lanes, this is a facility that cyclists are legally allowed to use, and in particular at this intersection, it's wide enough lane that theoretically a cyclist could ride and somebody driving a vehicle could safely pass them and and that then becomes the expectation that a cyclist is riding as close to the curb isn't safe, and that somebody driving past them is further to the left, which only compounds these issues. So I just would point out that this is a facility that we are allowing cyclists to use, whether or not we've we've signed or painted anything that makes it clear that there can be cycles here.

**Tony Harris:** Absolutely, thanks for adding that note in. Yeah. Yvonne and Brendan, could we come to you next on factors?

**Yvonne Bobo:** Sure, okay. You just want us to we have. I did send you the civil engineers drawings, the final rendition that we've gotten, but I just did it today, so you don't you haven't seen it, but we are proposing speed tables that would be perpendicular to the street where the railroad crossed. Traditionally, even though it crossed at a diagonal, they won't let us put in diagonal speed tables. But with the idea to force the traffic to slow down, we find that bumps and obstacles force people to slow down. Stop signs do not so if you're forced on the coming from the south, headed, you know, on Walnut, that's where ours would be, near off the walls, and the other one would be on the west side of the Vance intersection. And so you would have to slow down. It. It's not perfect, but maybe it helps forcing people to do that. So we, we all, every organization on Vance lives in fear of pedestrians getting run over. There are a lot of people who walk in this neighborhood crossing the street, and the people just fly downtown. They fly down there, and they've repaved it, and it's seen, we've seen more accidents and Don's accidents was one of those since the repaving and we've seen flipped cars. I mean, we've just a

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lot of, you know, people are not stopping. It's, you know, I guess they could put a light there or something. I don't know that's on the but that's what we're trying to do right now.

**Brendan Duffy:** from me being outside, a lot of observe the traffic and the intersection just because I'm out there, most likely the the vehicles that disregard the stop sign or going to East and West, most of the time, because that's the newly paved road. They don't have to worry about going over the tracks anymore. It's smooth. They just sort of either do a kind of even like a fast roll, or they don't stop. And it was good information to see that the the actual speed of the cars is mostly normal. So it does show that, like, even though people aren't speeding, that you know, it is what stop signs are there for, so that you stop and the the information that you gave earlier with the surrounding larger roads, and then you sort of filter into this sort of neighborhood and industrial area. It allows for people to feel like it's a cut through that they don't really need to. To strictly observe some of these signals, and so maybe making it a little more neighborhoody, making the roads more narrow, making things that maybe make them uncomfortable, cutting through, there would be the sort of goal to put the traffic burden somewhere else.

**Yvonne Bobo:** I did think it was interesting that we live on Peabody in the section that's more looks, you know, that has the bike lanes. Well, it sort of disintegrates right where we live, actually, like we go under 240 and they sort of go away, I think. And why they wouldn't sort of continue that sort of more bike friendly, because Vance is quite is very wide there and could accommodate more, you know, a place for for cyclists. And, you know, I like to see that, like continuity, as you say, going all the way downtown, because cyclists like to go there. I hadn't thought about, we go there all the time to watch the sunset at this park. But it's also the only access to ride a bike down to Tom Lee Park and enjoy the river. And that's, you know, just that seems a simple thing that should be done to paint this street so that it is, you know, the same all the way down and and we're putting also part of an initiative to put

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ours are speed tables so they will be raised, but we will also have crosswalks all along to draw attention to what goes on, because there are youth development centers, inner city rugby field, you know, We have churches and community organizations all the way down Vance and, you know, and we want to wreck, you know, people, to recognize people that are moving around and to take care of them. So we're trying with, you know, I mean, it's painting, is is nice, but I don't think it's effective. SB tables, you know, like, let's make them stop.

**Brendan Duffy:** And then the one thing I did notice in the photos that that were presented is that when it's probably at that time of day, also when Don was going with the sun, sort of in his face, and the visibility is already low. And so it was a challenge in that way, because we tend to think about when we're riding our bikes, if we're driving in a direction where there is sun that you have to assume that there's people that may not be able to see you as well as they could at other times of day, so that probably had some impact also.

**Tony Harris:** Yeah, absolutely. That's great to point out, and it's interesting, there's a route I specifically don't take during certain times of the year, in the morning, because it has that sun glare, right? I don't even think about it. I just, I just take the other route for a couple months. Yeah, interesting. Okay, thank you, Robert, can we come to you next on factors?

**Robert Noordermeer:** So as far as Vance is concerned, I cycle down it, you know, daily. And one of the things that I've noticed is you pointed it out, and I agree with what everybody said. I mean, it's, it's, it's all on point. But the the stop sign, for example, on the photo, when you're heading west, you know the color of that building, right? It's orange, right? That orange red, so that stop sign kind of blends in with the building. So, you know, most drivers don't really realize, or I'm assuming, they don't realize it's there until they're right up on it

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that and then the building itself. You know, whenever I'm riding my bike through there, I always slow down. I do more of the Idaho stop at it, but, you know, I come to a pretty slow stop because I know on the other side they can't see me until, basically, I'm almost past that stop sign. So that building kind of makes an illusion that there's not an intersection there as well, right? I mean, you know, look, you don't realize it until you're almost there. And drivers, you know, when they're going that way, most of them go that way every day. You know, I see the same cars going down there every day. So you know, they know it's there, but you know, there are drivers that don't see it as well. So, you know, I think that building is a contributing factor. I think either color the building could also be a contributing factor. Driver behavior is a contributing factor. And then, as mentioned before, the repaving, right? So Vance used to be not that pleasant to drive down or ride your bike down.

And I actually used to take Peabody, which was so you come up under the interstate, and instead of going straight, you take a right on. Well, you take a right on MLK. So I used to take MLK, you know, down to Peabody. Sorry, I got that wrong. But anyway, so you take MLK that way. But. Of conflicts there as well. And then, of course, once they repaved Vance. Now, Vance is my main line to get to work. It's fast. There's not a lot of, you know, intersections, you know. So you can kind of just speed all the way down there on your bike. But with that, I think other drivers as well have started using Vance a lot more. And I'm out there like in the prime time, so, you know, 730 to eight, and then you know, five to 530 so high traffic times. So what I've noticed, obviously, is, when you're riding down pants, especially between, you know, if it gets later or closer to eight, traffic tends to ramp up a little bit. You get a lot more cars. They're going a lot faster. Obviously, you know, who knows, they dropped their kids off and now they're trying to get downtown to work. So, you know, all that into the wider lanes. I mean, it kind of contributes to that whole, you know, rushing to downtown to get to work, kind of attitude that I tend to feel from the drivers as I'm commuting down that way.

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And, you know, it's just, I'm not really sure. I mean, I know the second part of this call is going over some of the ideas we could do to slow people down, but I think highlighting that intersection and making people realize that you know that it's coming up, and that they are aware that it's, it's, it's in proximity. I think a lot of times it's more of an afterthought, like, Oh, I got to stop. And then they don't really stop, and they just kind of roll into the end. Rolling through the intersection. So yeah.

**Tony Harris:** Well put, thanks for highlighting some of that. I think it's easy to forget about the experience of a motorist too, like as you're coming through an area, or if you travel through this place every single day, something that might feel commonplace to you but not be evident to somebody else, right? It can be easy to forget about those things.

Yeah, okay. Well, unless, if we have any further factors will, I'd be happy to pass it over to you for recommendations, if we're ready.

**Will Henke:** Yeah, sure, I'll reshare. So I think a couple of the suggestions already, already made specifically from from Yvonne, are really helpful. This is just one I found on on the internet from a from a somebody I know, loosely through LinkedIn, and I thought it was a decent example of what I think could be an immediate term short like very short term installation. This is a project happens to be in Indianapolis, but with with materials and labor forces that could be done almost ASAP. And really the goal with with this, and what I wanted to highlight, is that the current intersection footprint is significantly wider than it needs to be for the actual volumes that the intersection carries. I don't think this is really been said yet, but from what I've seen, Vance Avenue carries about 5000 vehicles per day, and walnut about 2000 so generally speaking, those are fairly low for a road that's that's built, you know, 50 feet wide.

And so I think even with the the outside edges of what kind of is a parking lane that's not officially striped, I think if at the intersection, you do anything to bring attention to the fact that there, there is an intersection here, there are other road users that will be navigating this

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intersection, and quite literally, these, these raised elements cause drivers to slow down because of the sense that there is some marginal consequence if I, if I don't navigate properly, at least more than there is today. So a quick build installation like this was the first thing that came to mind. I think the benefit, or the merit of this is that it's, it is temporary, and you could revisit the specific decisions later, but you could do this without, without a ton of need to you know, really have dived into the details, although some of the things that were discussed, like the the art Line project, I think would do this significantly, significantly better. But I also would point out that Memphis has a history of doing these things. So this is a an image of a group of people doing basically the same thing along Broad Avenue in Memphis about 15 years ago,

Broad Avenue was sort of an overbuilt street with a pretty fine grade land use pattern, at least on one side, and, you know, tactically using materials that they had on hand. A group went out to configure the road a different way and to get, you know, driver buy in and to make it safer for people using the road. And it was so successful that 15 years later, we've got, you know, a permanently constructed project. And if you can believe it, this is the same intersection.

So I think there's some track record and interest of this being successful, especially at a low stake starting point, but I think in a little bit more of the midterm timeline, because this particular one would be, would be long term, but the. Quick Build, very short term. Thank you for thinking midterm. Something that I would want to do is to come back to this, to this table and figure out, what can we do to bump down the level of traffic stress that people navigating this would feel, and in particular, we're thinking cyclists, that I think the same thing can be true for for vehicles. So what I would point out is that if we, if we lowered the target speed and designed the road in such a way that we achieved a 30 mile an hour prevailing speed limit, we would drop down minimally, because we're still, you know, we still have painted lines on the street, and we've got 5000 or so vehicles. It's still not, you know, safe for all ages, but it's, it's marginally better. And I think this is something that could be done fairly cheaply, although it is a little bit of a, I think, somewhat sad that the resurfacing has already recently happened and the project has been restriped in its kind of previous configuration.



So this would achieve an enthused and confident level for for cyclists. I would probably put myself in that, in that category, but I know a lot others. I wouldn't, I wouldn't want to bring my, my son along with me, on on this facility. But then try to think about, how do we get down to to one, to where this is suitable for anybody that want to that.

And I think one of the best ways to get there is just to consider what options are available for reallocating the curb to curb with that exists today. So even a bike lane that is not buffered, if the speeds are low enough, and if the bike lane is big enough, can achieve a level of confidence that more people would be willing to use, and as a result, would just experience less challenges. And I don't mean to say that you should be comfortable riding on this facility, but it does move the needle a little bit towards what I think would be a more desirable long term solution. And just to visualize this, I tried to take the intersection and sketch in what, what maybe this looks like. So this is an engineer's version of a of an exhibit. This is not normally my my job description, but I took a stab, and even using some, you know, conservative language, these aren't the absolute minimums for any one of these things. I think it would be pretty easy to to reconfigure the existing space, without having to do anything particularly complicated to to provide dedicated space for cyclists along this facility. I think one thing that this, something like this, could do that would be helpful, that is still fairly standard engineering practice, is using green bicycle conflict markings. It just draws a little bit more attention to the fact that there might be somebody else using this facility, specifically, if you're approaching the intersection from the north or from the south. And then I'm always a fan of the we call these longitudinal crosswalks, but the piano keys or the zebras, or anything more decorative if, if a local art studio wants to get on that.

So this is, this is one way of reimagining it. And then I know there's currently on street parking. It's sort of allowed and not prohibited, even if it's not regularly used. And if, for example, that became, you know, a really important piece of this is maintaining on street parking, or

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something like that. There are other ways to do the same thing. So this is just a rough example of what actual width you would need for the sake of cars navigating this intersection. And obviously there's trade offs in every direction here, but these could also be, in this very short term, the area in which we experiment with some more of the quick build very, very quick implementation ideas that that I think could move the needle here. So that's, that's what I have just for now.

**Tony Harris:** Great. Thank you Will. Yeah, as I was thinking about the on-street parking, I know some of the sessions we've looked at have even explored the idea of alternating parking, like from one side of the street to be to the next as you go block by block, just depending on like, what the need for parking is at certain times a day, or like, throughout the course of a week? Yeah, absolutely great. Okay, well, maybe let's go to Robert next for recommendations, and then we'll come to Yvonne and Brendan toward the end, if that's alright, Robert, I'm not hearing your audio.

**Rober Noordermeer:** Can you hear me now? [Yeah, I can.] yeah. So, you know, following kind of Wills line. You know, the things that I noticed there is, one thing is, when you're going east to west, we've got turning lanes there. And as we've talked about before, I'm not sure how important those turning lanes really are, you know. And if you narrow the street with bike lanes on on street parking, you know, and then removing the turning lanes, would that, you know, force people to slow down and stop, you know, because you'll have people turning left so the people behind them going straight still have to come to a complete stop before they can go through. The intersection. So that was one thought I had. The other one was, as Yvonne mentioned, you know, like a flashing red light sort of indicate that intersection is there. You know, sometimes you'll see, you know, I guess in your small towns or whatever, they had that one little red light blinking up there in the middle of the intersection. So that was also a suggestion that I had that might highlight that intersection. And then this one probably not, not a big fan of but I guess you would call them rumble strips. You know, sometimes they're actually in the indented into the road. Sometimes they're just those little reflectors that they

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stick across, you know, in like three or four rows before you get to the intersection, again, something to bring awareness to that intersection. Because I feel like riding through there daily, I just feel like that intersection is an afterthought to drivers. I don't think they're really thinking about it as they're approaching it. I think they're like, Oh, I'm here. Oh, I gotta stop, okay, I'll kind of stop and I'll go on through. So anything, basically to bring awareness, you know, painting, that's also a good suggestion, things like that. And I think, you know, like a flashing red light or rumble strips. I mean, that's pretty inexpensive, right? I mean, that's something you can do immediate or in the short term. So just thinking along those kind of lines,

**Tony Harris:** Thank you. Yeah, I know I've come across rumble strips that have jolted me back to attention when I've been on long drives in unfamiliar areas. So that's a great suggestion to bring up cool Yvonne and Brendan. Anything in the way of recommendations further that you'd like to mention or comment on,

**Yvonne Bobo:** I think the speed tables will be a big help, but I do agree with Robert that having something before you get to the intersection, especially coming west down Vance, would be important, whether it's visual and or physical, something to alert the driver, because that that is the problem, is that building and the the sight line. So having that be, you know, whether you have a sign that says low visibility, or you have a blinking red light, or you have something on the road, those things would help make somebody aware that that intersection is something they should pay more attention to. I think the rumble strips are awesome too, because our speed table will only be after the intersection, which would slow the people coming from west to east, but not the where the real problem of, you know, the East people, the people headed west. They're the people not stopping with no visibility. That's a big problem there. So maybe that it's a good addition to the changes that we're making there. So I like that and a light too. Like you say, like maybe, I mean, I feel like a lot of people disregard it. They know it's there. I mean, Robert, you see the same people. They know they're running the stop sign, but maybe the light makes them think someone's watching them. I don't know. So,



so I think those are great. We'll think about putting those in our plan.

I would love to send our plans to will, to look at what the civil engineer designed. We still have a option to change some things, and I like to get your input on the newest version. So I love some engineering drawings. Okay, Tony, I sent them to you either. Well, I'm sure we'll figure it out.

**Tony Harris:** Yeah, yeah. Happy to forward those along to, Will, absolutely.

**Will Henke:** One, one thing I think that that jives with what, what else has been said is, I'd be curious if there's any opportunities for some type of a gateway treatment, specifically coming west. I know that as as Peabody turns into Vance, and you come out of the S curve, and it lines up straight for a long ways, and you can kind of see the end goal in mind, and all that standing between, I'm thinking of as a driver here, between you and your destination is just, you know, how fast can I get from point A to point B? I'm curious if there could be any, any opportunity for some type of Gateway treatment, often times located on the side or maybe even overhead, specifically complementing the the local institutions the art line, as that project develops that would serve the purpose of somebody from the east approaching the intersection, just to break up the visual monotony of a of a, you know, 20 foot wide travel lane.

**Brendan Duffy:** Well, the one interesting thing that we do have going is the existing rail light. They're there. They're still there, and so we could use them because they're not using them as a rail crossing. Anymore. So we could, you know, theoretically use those because they are still there, and you could possibly put something there that would bring attention, because it's, it's already there. And we did try, although I feel like our banners were not quite large enough for the for Vance, but we did put some banners up on the, on the actual railroad, you know the framework and but connecting them and making like you're saying a gateway.

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**Yvonne Bobo:** I mean, we are the gateway to South Memphis. That South City begins there. That's our corner. We separate medical district from South Memphis there. And so building something across the road, and being able to have a greater sign. Because, you know, we our signs are only nine feet on either side, but we could make a much bigger sign if we cross the whole street. I think it's a really interesting suggestion. So, yeah, we also had an installation over in the edge district that was like, those kind of, like those old school things that people would use at a car lot. They were on cables that connected and they stretched across the intersection, and they had, you know, things that got your attention, hanging from there. Maybe there's a way you could put something, you know, between the two that spans them, that would like, Did you see that installation was like, almost like they took the car lot ribbons, you know, and, and they crossed a very weird intersection, nightmarish, you know, like seven roads coming together into stop signs and blend. I mean, just like, bad and, but it did, like everyone slowed down to just because they wanted to look at the wash of color over your head these, you know, so yeah, maybe we Yeah, maybe we do need to make an opportunity, an art opportunity there.

**Will Henke:** And this may or may not be helpful. I think it has come down, but we can go back in time. Oh, right, yeah, I Oh, there it is.

**Yvonne Bobo:** Oh, wow, brilliant. That's it, yep, now, but yeah, this was a real traffic disaster this area, and so they did a lot to sort of people. I'm pretty sure people were not speeding through there, and it was a good sort of way to draw attention to the intersection and people respect what's going on there.

**Tony Harris:** Yeah, absolutely. Thanks for pulling up that visual too. Yeah, it's

interesting what a little bit of color and like something over top of your head or on the periphery of your vision can do for for slowing down traffic.



Any other thoughts and recommendations before we before we wrap up?

Okay, well, I'm going to go ahead and take this and do a short closing. I just want to offer some acknowledgements and thanks, and then I will get you all out of here to enjoy the rest of your Saturday. So I first of all want to say thank you to our panelists, Yvonne will Brendan Robert, you know, this wouldn't have been possible without you all today. So thank you for being with us and helping prepare and everything up until this point. Thank you to Kelsey Huse and her colleague, Jackson McNeil, who assisted in the beginning with information gathering and kind of getting this crash onto our radar. Thank you to everybody that showed up to attend today. Community members and other folks that I know have been following the crash analysis studio for a long time. I'd like to offer some appreciation for our sponsor of the crash analysis Studio project and anonymous donor, and say thank you to strong town staff who have helped out leading up to this session today, so you can find a recording of this session and all of our studio sessions online by going to [strongtowns.org/crashstudio](https://strongtowns.org/crashstudio), and through our website, you can find more information on, you know, requesting assistance from strong towns to conduct an in person studio or a virtual studio. We have a Free Academy course for you know, conducting a studio on your own. And then you can also learn more about upcoming sessions online too.

If you're interested in supporting strong towns in our work for safe streets, please consider becoming a member by making even just like a small one time contribution, you can get access to some member only webcasts, discounts and some other fun perks. We actually have our local motive workshops this fall, free to our members as a benefit, and there will be different discussions around like parking, you know, traffic, street safety, housing. So if you're interested in learning more about that, you can go to [strongtowns.org/membership](https://strongtowns.org/membership) as well.

So on behalf of my colleagues on our panel here today, thank you again for coming and watching this session of the crash analysis studio really means a lot to us, and keep doing what you can to build a strong town. Take care. Bye.