

Flex Lane opens in mid-July along the Madison Beltline (US 12/18), Dane County



Submitted by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) is preparing to open the Flex Lane along US 12/18 – commonly known as the Beltline – in Madison. Crews improved the inside median shoulders, between the Whitney Way exit and the I-39/90 interchange, for use as an additional travel lane during peak traffic periods. The Flex Lane on the Beltline is an innovative solution to ease backups during the busiest times and provide reliability for motorists who use it every day for work or business.

While the Flex Lane is a first for Wisconsin, 17 states have implemented the concept including neighboring states: Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota and Ohio. Each state has found success with better travel time reliability and safer highways. During design of the Flex Lane, WisDOT staff proactively talked with counterparts in Michigan on their best practices of the US 23 Flex Route north of Ann Arbor.

Over the past few years, WisDOT staff have engaged Madison area stakeholders such as emergency responders, law enforcement, local and state officials, the business community and the general public. WisDOT also coordinated with the Dane County Sheriff's Office and Dane County Highway Department to provide timely response to potential incidents and maintenance efforts.

Coordination is underway among WisDOT, Dane County Sheriff's Office and Dane County Highway Department to conduct maintenance and testing of the Flex Lane. This process is a critical last step before the Flex Lane is fully operational. The Flex Lane is currently scheduled to open in mid-July. When in operation, use of the Flex Lane will only be permitted when the signs show a green arrow.

It's important to note the Flex Lane is one solution to improving transportation in the Madison area. WisDOT is collaborating with local stakeholders to examine all modes of transportation connected to the Beltline. Among the items being studied are improved transit, pedestrian and bicycle connections, park and ride connections, and new crossings and connections.

Learn more about the Flex Lane at wisconsindot.gov/FlexLane; watch how to drive the Flex Lane at <https://youtu.be/V46QJE9QLEc>.

