

City of Madison Streets & Urban Forestry Division

ONBOARDING VIDEO #4

Frequently Asked Questions – Streets Services

March 2026



- Weekly trash collection
- Every-other-week recycling collection
- By appointment large item collection
- Brush pickup
- Leaf pickup
- Drop-off sites operation
- Street sweeping
- Graffiti removal
- Median mowing



Who receives the trash & recycling collection from the Streets Division?



Per a 2010 resolution, the Streets Division can collect trash & recycling from residents of multi-family buildings of 8 units and fewer.

If a business can utilize our carts correctly and will pay the Resource Recovery Special Charge, we can collect from them as well.

What about private streets?



- Existing resolution that forbids Streets from collection solid waste from private roads.
- Adding these neighborhoods comes with additional costs that cannot be offset by special charges
- If carts are taken to a public street, services can be available to residents.

*The above snip is of a condo complex off Old Sauk Rd.
One of several similar developments in Madison.*

What about carriage lanes?

- Purchase agreements & developer agreements outline carriage lane collections are done by private hauler
- Adding them comes with budget implications.
- Services are available, just need to have carts at public street.



Above snip from development on far east side of Madison. One of several similar developments in Madison.

Why don't we have weekly recycling?

- Need to double recycling fleet
- Recycling weight will not double
- Other solutions available for homes that make an abundance of recyclables.



Why doesn't Madison have food scraps recycling like other cities?

Been over a decade of trying...and we're getting closer.

In 2026, we have four seasonal drop-off sites.

Dane County has additional drop-off opportunities

Details:

cityofmadison.com/FoodScraps



*Someone piled out junk and it's sitting for a long time.
What do I do?*



- Residents can contact Building Inspection to report items out for too long.
 - BI can issue orders for property owners to make work orders, and fines if they orders are not followed.
- Residents can also make work orders for their neighbors if they prefer.

Make the work orders for collection at
www.cityofmadison.com/LargeItemWorkOrder

Why can't big complexes make large item work orders?

In 2024, Council passed a policy that allows the Streets Division to restrict who receives large item collection services.

As the city grows, we cannot add staff & equipment to keep pace with demand for the service given the ongoing budget situation with the city.

Complexes over 8 units, for the most part, already receive private service since the Streets Division cannot collect their trash & recycling. Private companies all can provide large item pickup for the complexes they serve.



When is brush collection?

Get the exact dates when to put out brush at
www.cityofmadison.com/BrushCollection





*When are you picking up my leaves
and other yard waste?*

Residents can learn the exact dates
when to put their yard waste out at
www.cityofmadison.com/YardWaste

Leaf crews left a mess in the street!



- Street sweeping is the final step in leaf pickup.



The circled pile was dumped by a City of Madison packer truck used on leaf collection today.

- Capacity
- Efficiency
- Limitations on vacuum equipment
- Cost for a new single-use fleet

Why doesn't the Streets Division use leaf collection vacuums?



This is a maximum load of leaves that can be held by a vacuum leaf collection truck used by the City of Monona.

All about fall leaf pickup...

Every neighborhood has **three** leaf collection opportunities in the fall.

Collection opportunities start in early October when the honey locusts start to fall and end by first week of December when the threat of snow ramps up.

Set out dates are will vary by neighborhood.

Goal is to provide three collection opportunities before the snows arrive.

The same people collecting leaves are the same people driving the plows. & if you put out leave piles that get buried under snow, crews can't see them to pick them up.

If the weather allows us to do more than 3 guaranteed pickup rounds, we will announce the extra pickup chance or chances. But we can only guarantee three because we are racing the weather.



Why is the sweeper running at night!

Common spring time complaint.

After winter, sweepers run 16 hours a day to collect all the sand, salt, and grit that accumulates in the winter.

Crews work at night because there's less traffic making it safer for these slow-moving vehicles.



Who cleans graffiti?

The Streets Division cleans graffiti from many public areas as often as we can.

AT&T cleans the graffiti from their own utility boxes.

Madison Metro handles graffiti on their shelters.

The USPS handles graffiti on their mailboxes.

If the front of a traffic sign is tagged, that is referred to Traffic Engineering.

Private property with graffiti is up to the property owner to clean.



Drop-off site hours are not convenient for my schedule. Why aren't they open more?

- Common concern in the winter when hours are reduced.
- Staffing necessary to monitor activity – especially with electronics recycling.
- Expanded hours in summer possible with seasonal attendants





Why can't I put dog waste into public litter containers?

Dog waste needs to be hauled back to the home of the owner to be placed into the trash.

And you shouldn't put in trash cans found at the curb on your way home – that's just not neighborly.

Yes, there is at least one ordinance proper about dog waste disposal (MGO 7.322)



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