Impaired Driving in Madison:
Community Feedback and Recommendations

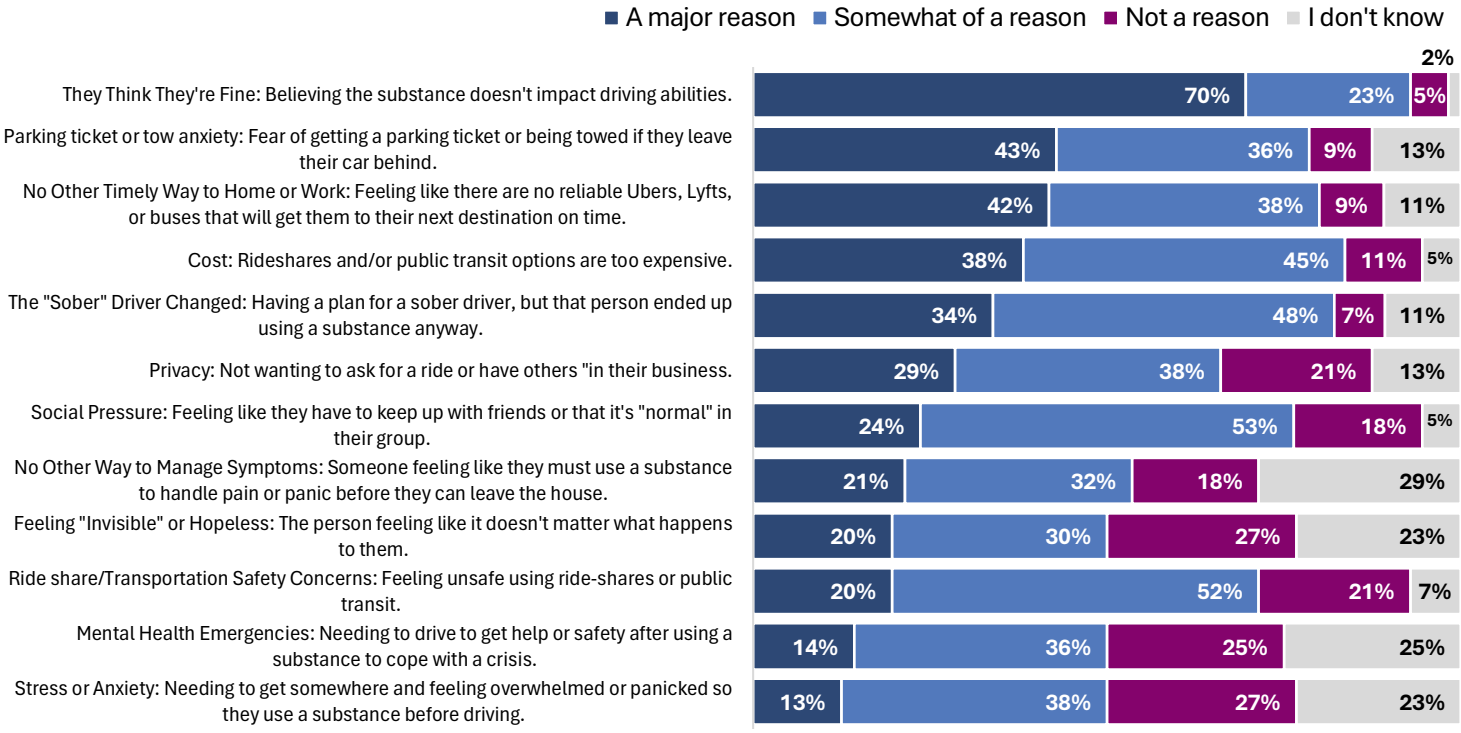
Vision Zero's Impaired Driving Reduction Program promoted a community survey and focus groups this summer that asked about why people drive while impaired and ideas to improve transportation in Madison. We're taking this information and launching a reduced cost rideshare program called the Safe Nights Network. The Impaired Driving Reduction Program is funded by the Federal High Way Administration's Safe Streets and Roads for All program.

Who We Surveyed and How They Get Around

- We received 63 responses to our survey. People who responded were diverse in age, race/ethnicity, and geography.
  - The most common age group was 35-54 years old.
  - 16% were Black, 14% were Hispanic/Latino/Latinx, 8% were Asian, and 3% were Native American, American Indian or Indigenous. Surveys were offered in English and Spanish.
  - 35% lived on the West side, 26% lived on the East side, 15% lived downtown, 11% lived on the South or Southwest side, and 10% lived on the North side of Madison.
- Most respondents had stable housing (85%).
- While men have a higher risk of driving impaired, survey respondents were mostly women (65%).
- Some respondents did not have a car, but most said they got around Madison using a personal vehicle.
- Aside from driving a personal vehicle, survey respondents travelled in and around Madison by walking, followed by bussing, cycling, and finally using ride shares.

Why People Drive Impaired

Across these categories, a majority of respondents said they drive impaired because people think they're fine.



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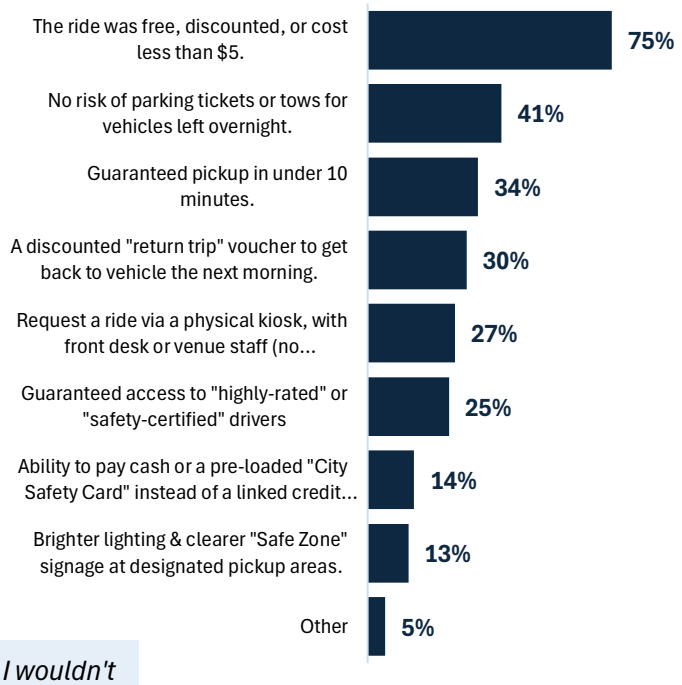
When asked why people drive impaired, 93% of people responded that it's at least somewhat because they think they're fine to drive, and that whatever substance they used doesn't impact their driving abilities. People also were concerned about parking tickets or getting their vehicle towed if they left it, and that there wouldn't be a timely way to get home without their car.

> *"It will be a situation where 'my friend does it all the time. They're safe and everything's going to be fine.' But again, all that does take is one instance where something happens for it to not be true."*
>
> ***--Focus group participant***

Improving a Ride Share Program

- Most people said a rideshare program should be free or discounted, followed by no risk for a parking ticket or a tow to leave their vehicle overnight.
- Focus group participants said having an app to track a driver's location and to choose a driver they want would help with personal safety concerns. Others had shared having multiple options to get a ride would be nice.
- Many had shared they want their local bartenders involved in ride share programs and available to help customers when needed.
- People indicated that the program needs to have a good reputation for people to use it. One person said: "Nothing kills a program quicker than word of mouth being bad. But at the end of the day, people find it a benefit, then they'll seek it out. But you really got to get your bartenders onboard from day one."

Respondents most wanted a ride share program to have free or discounted rides.



> *"I think that the more accessible [the program] is, the better, so I wouldn't limit it simply to an app, but I would try to include any different ways. It has to be something almost ubiquitous to be used by all age groups."*
>
> ***--Focus group participant***

What We're Doing

We'll be offering various versions of the Safe Nights Network ride share program throughout Madison, and our Federal Funding stream from the Safe Streets for All program ends in February of 2028. The Safe Nights Network offers $20 off ride share rides to customers who otherwise would drive impaired.

Based on the input we received from focus groups and survey responses, we'll offer a program with multiple options to get rides, not just scheduling rides through an app, so that people with varying levels of digital literacy can participate in the program. Bartenders will be well trained and prepared to spot when customers need a ride and cannot schedule one for themselves. **Thank you to everyone who gave input into the project!**

This work was done in partnership with Madison Public Libraries, UW Compass, and Access Community Health Centers. Thank you!

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Data Appendix

Table 1: In your opinion, how much do the following things play a role in why people drive within 2 hours of using substances?

Answer Choices	I don't know	Not a reason	Somewhat of a reason	A major reason
They Think They're Fine: Believing the substance doesn't impact driving abilities.	2%	5%	23%	70%
Parking ticket or tow anxiety: Fear of getting a parking ticket or being towed if they leave their car behind.	13%	9%	36%	43%
No Other Timely Way to Home or Work: Feeling like there are no reliable Ubers, Lyfts, or buses that will get them to their next destination on time.	11%	9%	38%	42%
Cost: Rideshares and/or public transit options are too expensive.	5%	11%	45%	38%
The "Sober" Driver Changed: Having a plan for a sober driver, but that person ended up using a substance anyway.	11%	7%	48%	34%
Privacy: Not wanting to ask for a ride or have others "in their business.	13%	21%	38%	29%
Social Pressure: Feeling like they have to keep up with friends or that it's "normal" in their group.	5%	18%	53%	24%
No Other Way to Manage Symptoms: Someone feeling like they must use a substance to handle pain or panic before they can leave the house.	29%	18%	32%	21%
Feeling "Invisible" or Hopeless: The person feeling like it doesn't matter what happens to them.	23%	27%	30%	20%
Ride share/Transportation Safety Concerns: Feeling unsafe using ride-shares or public transit.	7%	21%	52%	20%
Mental Health Emergencies: Needing to drive to get help or safety after using a substance to cope with a crisis.	25%	25%	36%	14%
Stress or Anxiety: Needing to get somewhere and feeling overwhelmed or panicked so they use a substance before driving.	23%	27%	38%	13%

Table 2: If someone in Madison does not currently use ride share services to get home safely after using substances, what changes would help increase the likelihood that they would use them?

Reason	Percent who agree
The ride was free, discounted, or cost less than $5.	75%
No risk of parking tickets or tows for vehicles left overnight.	41%
Guaranteed pickup in under 10 minutes.	34%
A discounted "return trip" voucher to get back to vehicle the next morning.	30%
Request a ride via a physical kiosk, with front desk or venue staff (no smartphone/app required).	27%
Guaranteed access to "highly-rated" or "safety-certified" drivers	25%
Ability to pay cash or a pre-loaded "City Safety Card" instead of a linked credit card.	14%
Brighter lighting & clearer "Safe Zone" signage at designated pickup areas.	13%
Other	5%