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Quarterly Newsletter

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Celebrating Pedestrian Safety Month in Madison

A message from Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway

October is a great time to get outside and explore the City of Madison on foot or by bike. It's also National Pedestrian Safety Month. The City is committed to making Madison a safer place for everyone, no matter how you choose to travel.

Walking can be a great way to get around the City, whether it be a leisurely stroll or with a destination in mind. Our neighbors should be able to get work, the grocery store, a place of worship or school on foot safely. If you are looking for some new ideas to get active outdoors in Madison, visit the City's Traffic Engineering's [Walk-tober](#) page. You will find a variety of suggestions to get outside, from exploring Madison Parks [Conservation Parks](#) and [hiking trails](#) to [self-guided neighborhood walking tours](#).

Families can also find a link to more information about the [Walk or Wheel Challenge](#) celebrating active transportation to and from school. Simply walking or biking to school contributes to the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity kids should get every day. Studies also show that kids who walk to school arrive with a clearer mind and are more prepared to learn. Some schools even have a [walking school bus](#) where kids walk together with adult volunteers.

We encourage you to get out on foot or by wheel and experience your city and remember why Madison continues to be voted one of the best places to live!



Badger Road & Rusk Avenue: Shared-Use Path Project

Reid Stiteley, City of Madison Engineering

The Badger Road and Rusk Avenue Shared-Use Path project will construct a new shared-use path along W Badger Road and N Rusk Avenue between the existing W Beltline Hwy pedestrian overpass bridge and Nygard Street. This project will fill a 0.4-mile gap in the bicycle network and provide a safe connection to both sides of the W Beltline Hwy for users of all ages and abilities.

The off-street path will be 10-ft wide and run along the north side of W Badger Road and along the west side of N Rusk Avenue. To fit the new path within existing right-of-way, W Badger Road will be partially reconstructed and narrowed to a 26-ft wide street (two, 11-ft travel lanes, no parking) and N Rusk Avenue will be fully reconstructed to a 32-ft wide street (two, 11-ft lanes, parking on west side) with new curb and gutter. Additionally, new sidewalk will be installed along the east side of N Rusk Avenue, connecting existing facilities and filling the sidewalk gap between Nygard Street and E Rusk Avenue.

Other safety improvements include:

- Installing new path lighting (downward facing LED) to illuminate the entire length of the shared-use path.
- Installing a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) across W Badger Road at the pedestrian overpass bridge to alert drivers of crossing bikes and pedestrians.
- Installing a raised path crossing at the intersection of W Badger Road and N Rusk Avenue.
- Reducing curb return radii to reduce the path crossing distance of W Badger Road and N Rusk Avenue.

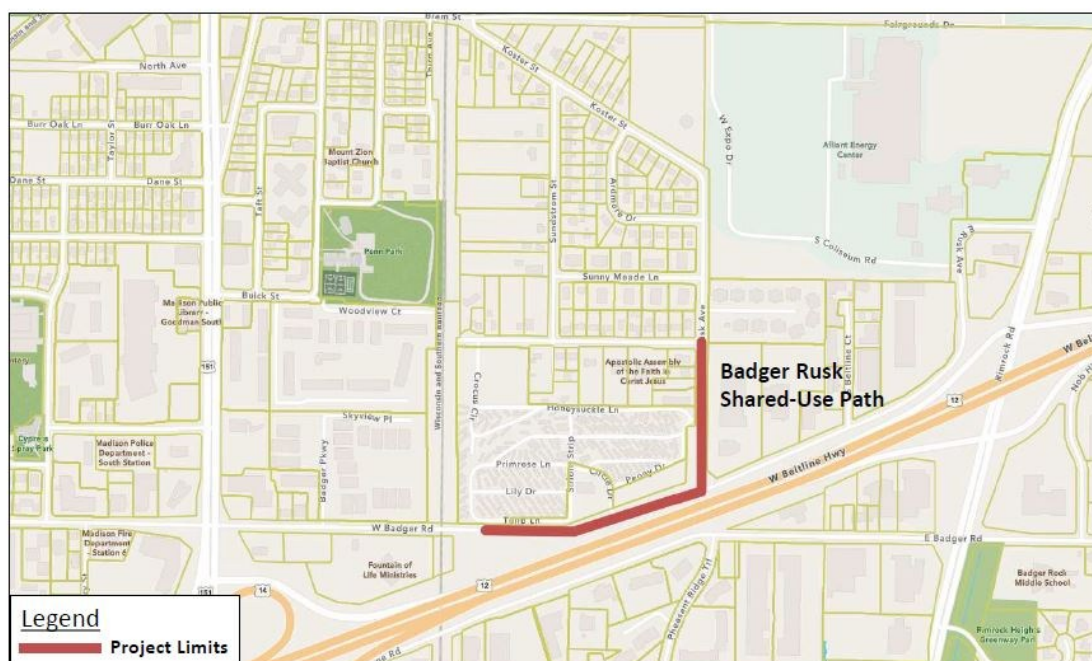
The project was approved for construction on [December 10, 2024](#) by the [Common Council](#).

Funding

The shared-use path is 60% funded by the Federal Transportation Alternatives Program and 40% funded by the City's 2024 Engineering—Pedestrian & Bicycle Capital Budget.

The street reconstruction portion is funded by the City's 2024 Engineering—Major Streets Capital Budget. Construction is planned for summer/fall of 2025 and will be completed by the end of the year.

Learn more about the [Badger Road & Rusk Avenue Shared Use Path Project](#).



Pedestrian Safety Infrastructure Helps Keep People Safe Who Are Blind or Low Vision

Brent Perzentka, Wisconsin Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired

For many people who are blind or low vision, walking is their main form of transportation. That's why the Wisconsin Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired understands the importance of pedestrian safety infrastructure.

The Council was founded in 1952 to promote the dignity and empowerment of people in Wisconsin with vision loss through advocacy, education and vision services. The Council works with people with vision loss every day to [help them learn](#) the skills they need to move through their homes and communities safely.

Many advances have been made to keep pedestrians safe around Madison in recent years. Accessible pedestrian signals, large pedestrian refuges, and lengthened traffic light timings help people with vision loss get where they need to go safely. But those improvements can only go so far, and that's where the Council steps in. The Council offers Orientation & Mobility (O&M) training to people

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who are blind or low vision, instructing them in everything from using their white cane effectively to finding their way across town to navigating grocery store aisles.

The goal of O&M is to empower people by giving them the skills they need to get around their homes and communities safely and confidently. This includes using public transportation. This starts by planning the exact route that they need to take to walk to the bus stop, get onto the bus, and then walk to their final destination. That means learning how to cross different types of intersections, both controlled and uncontrolled. O&M training can help even the most experienced travelers learn to navigate changes to the ever-evolving pedestrian landscape.

The Council is available for O&M training and a range of other services for the blind and low vision community. You can learn more on our website at [WCBlind.org](#).

Sidewalk Replacement Program

Grecia Izquierdo-Torres, City of Madison Engineering

The sidewalk replacement program aims to identify and repair defects in pedestrian infrastructure throughout the City. For the 2025 program, the scope will expand to include improvements to public transportation facilities.

These enhancements will feature new pedestrian crossings, new bus stop pads, and upgrades to existing concrete bus stop pads to ensure full compliance with [Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines](#). Key locations scheduled for improvement include W Beltline Frontage Road and Raymond Road, which serve Route H, and Schroeder Road, which serves Route D.

The addition of bus stop pads will provide safe and accessible spaces for public transportation users. These upgrades not only enhance accessibility but also help address gaps in the public transportation system, offering a more streamlined boarding and exiting experience. This will improve the overall efficiency of the transit network, encouraging higher ridership and reducing wait times for passengers. By equipping bus stops with accessible pads, the program contributes to a safer environment for all road users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers.

These improvements are in line with the Vision Zero initiative, which prioritizes safety and provides a dedicated space for users through strategic infrastructure design. Integrating these safety features into the

City's transportation network emphasizes the importance of creating a more inclusive, sustainable, and livable community for all.

The project was approved for construction on [January 28, 2025](#) by the [Common Council](#) and is funded by the City Engineering - Pedestrian & Bicycle Capital Budget.



Learn more about the City of Madison [Sidewalk Replacement Program](#)



Madison Lowers Residential Speed Limits for Safer Streets

Jeremy Nash, City of Madison Traffic Engineering

The City of Madison recently completed implementation of a new speed safety program under the [Vision Zero Initiative](#) called **20 is Plenty**. This program lowered the speed limit on local neighborhood streets from 25 miles per hour to 20 miles per hour.

The City started testing the program in 2021 with two trial neighborhoods. In 2024, after positive outcomes demonstrated in the original areas, the program rolled out to the remaining neighborhoods adding the new 20 mph speed limit signs across Madison.

Neighborhood Signs

New 20 mph signs are placed at the entrances to neighborhoods — where drivers turn off faster roads onto slower ones. Not every block has new signs installed, but all drivers should see one before entering a 20 mph zone.

If you want to support the program, the City is giving out free 20 is Plenty yard signs in English, Spanish, Chinese Mandarin, and Hmong. You can pick them up at the Traffic Engineering office or visit the City of Madison [20 is Plenty website](#) to learn more.

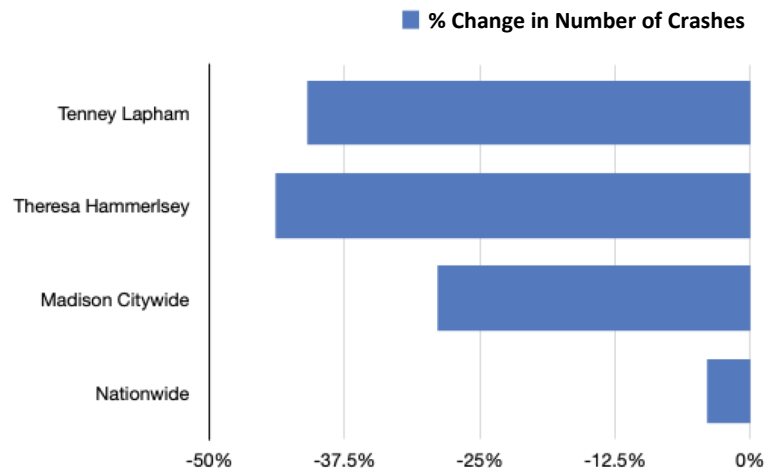


Lower Speeds Matter

Car crashes are dangerous, especially for people walking or biking. When a car hits a pedestrian at 20 mph, there is a 13% chance the person will be seriously hurt or killed. But if the car is going 30

mph, that risk jumps to 40%. Even though driving slower might add 30 seconds to your trip, it can save lives in the event of a crash.

Data Shows Positive Impacts



When comparing crash data from 2017-2020 to the crash data from 2021-2024, the City found that overall crashes in Madison went down by 29% between the two time periods. In the two 20-is-Plenty pilot neighborhoods, crashes dropped even more—41% in Tenney-Lapham and 44% in Theresa-Hammersley.

A Safer Future for Everyone

Whether you walk, bike, drive, or take the bus, everyone deserves to feel safe on Madison's streets. The 20 is Plenty program is helping the city move closer to its goal of zero traffic deaths.

Knutson Drive Reconstruction Project

Andrew Zwieg, P.E., City of Madison Engineering

Knutson Drive from Green Avenue to Northport Drive was a rural section of street with poor pavement and stormwater flowing off the surface to a ditch toward private property. The project replaced the gravel base and asphalt pavement as well as added new curb and gutter and sidewalk.

The project focused around safety for all: bicyclists, pedestrians, and motorists. It is an important route from Green Avenue to Northport Drive serving the Central Wisconsin Center, North Lake Mendota neighborhood, and the Mendota Hospital.

Construction was completed in early August 2025.



Knutson Drive before reconstruction

Safety improvements implemented include:

- Adding sidewalks on both sides of the street and separating pedestrians from vehicle traffic.
- Adding curb and gutter along the street keeps vehicles in their designated lane.
- Narrowing the Green Avenue and Westport Road intersections to shorten pedestrian crossing distances and reduce vehicle speeds.
- Widening of the sidewalk along the Knutson Drive bridge over the railroad to match the new sidewalk along the street, allowing for a connection to Northport Drive.



Knutson Drive after reconstruction

The work along Knutson Drive also included:

- Adding curb and gutter and storm sewer to reduce surface flooding in the neighborhood.
- Adding rain gardens to reduce stormwater runoff within the street.
- Improved pavement marking and signing.

The project was [approved for construction on March 5, 2024 by the Common Council](#) and was funded by the City's 2024 Engineering-Major Streets Capital Budget.

[Learn more about Engineering's Knutson Drive Project](#)

Vision Zero is a data driven strategy intended to eliminate traffic deaths and severe injuries on all roadways, bikeways and sidewalks by 2035.

The City of Madison Vision Zero initiative strives to improve safety for all roadway users throughout the city and improve the identified high injury intersections, all in an effort to prevent avoidable fatal crashes.

Safety starts with all of us.

We can't control human error, but we can help create more forgiving infrastructure and change systems to prevent crashes from being serious and fatal.

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