

City of Madison: Oct. 15 is White Cane Safety Day in Madison

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Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway and Common Council has proclaimed Thursday, October 15, 2020 as “White Cane Safety Day” in the City of Madison. White Cane Safety Day promotes awareness of people walking who use white canes or guide dogs to assist them and to increase awareness of [Wisconsin’s White Cane Law](#), which requires that motorists come to a full stop before approaching closer than 10 feet to a pedestrian who is using a white cane or service animal.

In a recent survey conducted by the Wisconsin Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired this year, nearly half of respondents said people in their communities were *somewhat unaware* or *completely unaware* of the White Cane Law.

“White Cane Safety Day is an opportunity to highlight the role that we all play in ensuring that our streets are safe for pedestrians, particularly those who are blind or visually impaired,” said Yang Tao, City Traffic Engineer. “As the recently launched Vision Zero initiative focuses on the City’s commitment to reducing all serious and fatal injuries while increasing mobility and equity for everyone, this is something we will continue to develop and focus on.”

The City of Madison has been incorporating accessible features in its transportation infrastructure to increase the safety of pedestrians who are blind or have a visual impairment. City staff frequently consult and collaborate with the Wisconsin Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired when making these improvements.

One example worth highlighting is that the City of Madison has been a leader in Wisconsin and in the U.S. in providing accessible pedestrian signals at signalized intersections throughout the city by request of residents. These devices help those with vision impairments find the pedestrian button and identify to them when it is

appropriate to begin their crossing by way of a locator tone on the button, audible messages and vibrating surfaces. The City has also begun to install accessible pedestrian signals in combination with Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons, which provide a locator tone on the pedestrian button and trigger an audible message when flashing yellow beacons are activated. Residents can request an accessible pedestrian signal by completing the form for an [Audible Pedestrian Signal PDF](#) and emailing [Traffic Engineering](#).

The City encourages its residents and visitors to learn about the White Cane Project and actively participate in creating a safe and inclusive community for people with disabilities. More information about the White Cane Project can be found at <https://wcblind.org/events/white-cane-safety-day/>.