

WisDOT: Flex Lane: Innovative solution improves travel times on Madison Beltline

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Preliminary data shows the Flex Lane is significantly improving travel times on Madison's Beltline (US 12/18) in Dane County. The Flex Lane opened in July 2022 as one solution to help ease backups and improve traffic flow on one of Wisconsin's busiest highways.

Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) Secretary Craig Thompson, Dane County Sheriff Calvin Barrett, Madison Region Economic Partnership President and CEO Jason Fields and a few Beltline drivers join WisDOT's latest ["Transportation Connects Us"](#) to discuss how the Beltline improvements are benefitting drivers, alleviating congestion and how an improved Beltline can aid economic development throughout Dane County.

"Our data shows that travel time reliability has improved along the Beltline by about 30%," WisDOT Secretary Thompson said. "That's a significant result. With the Flex Lane, we are alleviating congestion on the Beltline, which enhances safety and mobility for drivers who use it every day for work or business."

Drivers in Dane County are noticing the improvements.

"A year and a half ago, I had a commute from Watertown to Middleton and there was no Flex Lane. It was pretty terrible. Traffic was bumper to bumper. Took me twice as long to get home as it does now. I had to commute there this week in the same area for the first time since a year and a half ago, and traffic moved a lot better," Adam from Watertown told WisDOT.

Dane County Sheriff Calvin Barrett helps educate drivers about safe driving on the Beltline and explains safety is ultimately in the driver's hands.

"It's not a passing lane and it's definitely not a speed lane," Sheriff Barrett said. "So just keep that in mind as you're traveling in the Flex Lane. Please be sure to follow the directions on the signs because those signs let drivers know of what could be coming up."

Improved traffic flow and less congestion not only helps commuters, but it can also help attract and retain businesses to the region.

"Our job is to answer this question: is this a great place to live, work and play?" Madison Region Economic Partnership President and CEO Jason Fields said.

"Transportation plays a huge part and with the addition of the Flex Lane, it just adds on to the component of the quality of life that we have here."

["Transportation Connect Us"](#) is a podcast series produced by WisDOT which focuses on transportation safety, engineering, transportation investments and DMV topics. Download or subscribe wherever you find your podcasts.