

# WisDOT: Flex lane on the Madison beltline scheduled to open Wednesday

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The Flex Lane on the Madison Beltline (US 12/18), between Whitney Way and the I-39/90 interchange, in Dane County is scheduled to open Wednesday (July 13). The Flex Lane is designed to provide an additional travel lane during peak traffic periods, typically during morning and afternoon rush hours.

“The Flex Lane is an innovative way to keep people and commerce moving along the Madison Beltline during peak traffic hours,” Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) Secretary Craig Thompson said. “This will improve daily life for commuters, as well as visitors attending major area events. It’s one more way WisDOT is making Wisconsin’s highways safer and more reliable for everyone who uses them.”

The Flex Lane is one solution to improving transportation in the Madison area. WisDOT is collaborating with local stakeholders to examine all modes of transportation connected to the Beltline. Other strategies being studied to address current and future Beltline needs include potential enhancements to transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

## How to drive the Flex Lane

Signs located above the Flex Lane will indicate when the shoulder lane is available for use. [A narrated video is available on the WisDOT YouTube channel on how to drive the Flex Lane.](#)

- A green arrow will show the lane is open for travel. The lane will be used

during:

- Peak travel periods
- Special events
- Incidents impacting traffic
- A red X will be displayed when the lane is closed. When closed, the median shoulder should be used for emergency stopping only.

Cameras and sensors on the Beltline will give WisDOT traffic operators real-time views and data to efficiently maintain the Flex Lane system.

When traveling the Beltline, motorists are urged to buckle up, follow the posted 55 mph speed limit, pay attention to the road ahead and be courteous to other drivers.

### **What community leaders are saying about the Flex Lane**

“We all agree that the Beltline is in need of an overhaul but that may not be a reality for 10 or 15 years. Meanwhile, Madison Region businesses and our population continue to grow. For these reasons, the MadREP Board of Directors supports the Beltline Flex Lane initiative.”

- Jason M. Fields, CFEI, CCRS, Madison Region Economic Partnership President and CEO
- “As part of our Freeway Service Patrol, the Dane County Sheriff’s Office has a deputy assigned to the Beltline on weekdays (6 a.m. to 6 p.m.) to assist motorists, clear road blockages and keep traffic flowing. Although many first responders were initially skeptical about the Flex Lane, we educated ourselves and learned more about the plan, including how this traffic management strategy is used in other states. We also participated in numerous meetings with WisDOT and other partners. We look forward to the Flex Lane improving overall safety and reducing congestion on the Beltline.”
  - Dane County Sheriff Calvin Barrett
- “With traffic on the Beltline back to normal levels, reducing congestion is of critical importance to the community, including the thousands of Epic staff, customers, recruits, and service providers who use the Beltline every day. Once the Flex Lane opens, it will provide a solution to alleviate rush-hour congestion on an important transportation artery.”
  - Jim Schumacher, Director of Facilities, Epic

While the Flex Lane is a first for Wisconsin, 17 states have implemented the concept including neighboring states: Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota and Ohio. Each state has found success with better travel time reliability and safer highways. This measure is recognized as a safe and reliable way to alleviate congestion – especially during morning and afternoon rush hour.

Information on the Flex Lane can be found at [wisconsindot.gov/FlexLane](https://wisconsindot.gov/FlexLane).