

Dept. of Transportation: Data shows first year of Flex Lane decreased travel times, crashes

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Wisconsin's first Flex Lane opened one year ago today on the Madison Beltline (US 12/18), between Whitney Way and the I-39/90 interchange, in Dane County. Current data shows travel times have significantly decreased during peak Beltline hours – up to a 45% reduction. Preliminary analysis of crash data indicates more than a 20% decrease in total crashes along the Beltline over the first year of Flex Lane operations compared to pre-pandemic conditions.

“Over the past year, we’ve seen a considerable reduction in travel times along the Madison Beltline,” WisDOT Secretary Craig Thompson said. “Data is showing what drivers are witnessing firsthand – the Flex Lane is making travel on the Beltline more efficient and reliable. It’s saving drivers time compared to sitting in traffic backups. We are proud of this strategic investment to improve the daily life for commuters, regional traffic and visitors.”

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

- “Our job is to answer this question: is this a great place to live, work and play? 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.”
 - 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. We will continue here in Dane County to apply innovative and evidence-based solutions to roadway safety and traffic congestion. It has been an honor to be part of this new and innovative approach to traffic congestion.”

- Dane County Sheriff Calvin Barrett
- “Greater Madison continues to experience significant population and job growth, which is putting added demand on our existing infrastructure. Key transportation improvements like the Beltline Flex Lane are valuable to help our workforce and commerce move safely in the region.”
 - Zach Brandon, Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce President

WisDOT continues to collaborate 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.

The Flex Lane provides an additional travel lane during peak traffic periods, typically during morning and afternoon rush hours. WisDOT staff continually monitor the Flex Lane to determine best practices based on the traffic performance data. Information on the Flex Lane can be found at wisconsindot.gov/FlexLane.