



Office of the Mayor

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Mayor Announces New Efforts to Curb Congestion and Emissions from Traffic

Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway is announcing the launch of a policy effort aimed at curbing traffic congested and related emissions in Madison. Tonight, City transportation staff will introduce a proposed draft policy to the Plan Commission on "Transportation Demand Management" or TDM (summary attached). TDM refers to a range of strategies that can help support people to travel by means other than a single-occupant vehicles. Examples of TDM strategies include adding bike lockers and showers to an office building, giving every resident or worker a free bus pass, organizing a vanpool program for workers, and many others. Madison's current proposal is to require new developments to make investments in TDM strategies through a clear, flexible and predictable path.

"Madison continues to be one of the most attractive cities in the nation, and our population continues to grow. We need to find a way to accommodate that growth without worsening traffic congestion and air pollution," said Mayor Rhodes-Conway. "This proposal embeds solutions into new developments and creates flexibility and predictability on how each development will be asked to contribute."

Since 1970 American population has increased by 60 percent, yet annual vehicle miles traveled has increased by 190 percent – a difference by a factor of 3. Additionally, transportation makes up 41% of Madison's greenhouse gas emissions. We cannot get serious about addressing climate change without also addressing transportation.

Before the pandemic, our arterials such as the Beltline, East Washington Ave, and University Ave, were full, and we expect them to fill up again. There is no more room to expand. Yet Madison continues to grow, and this growth needs to be accommodated in an equitable and responsible way. That is what a TDM program aims to achieve.

Roughly two-thirds of work-related commute trips in Madison are single occupancy vehicle trips. By encouraging alternative ways to commute, city policies can alleviate congestion and reduce the negative impacts of traffic, such as air pollution, noise and congestion. We can also have a positive impact on public health, safety, livability, and access to different modes of transportation.

As Madison seeks to implement a new TDM program, we join a growing number of cities that have made real reductions in greenhouse emissions and congestion. Arlington County, Virginia, saw a 38 percent reduction in vehicle miles traveled from 2008 to 2014 through a TDM program. Cambridge, Massachusetts, has a TDM program that reduced single occupancy vehicle trips from 55% in 1990 to 39% in 2018. We can see these same reductions in Madison.

While this policy is newly proposed, the actions within it are not new to Madison. The City has been requesting TDM measures on new development for over 20 years. However, its application has been inconsistent, and developers do not start the permit process with an understanding of what TDM measures may be required, and Plan Commission and Council members struggle to determine how many measures are sufficient.

Madison's proposed TDM program addresses these issues. Under the proposed program:

- Developers have a consistent set of requirements to make decisions on. And they have choices on how to meet those requirements.
- Council and committee members have a metric that helps them understand how a development is reducing vehicle trips.
- Residents and businesses benefit from reduced traffic and emissions that would otherwise occur without a TDM program.
- Madison makes substantive progress towards addressing the global goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

With this proposed program, Madison will join a number of cities that are addressing congestion and climate change seriously. "Madison is excited to work with neighborhoods and developers as we forge a program addressing these challenges," says Tom Lynch, City of Madison Transportation Director. "This program complements the investments Madison has made over decades in our pedestrian, transit, and bicycling infrastructure." The City recently received a gold walkability rating, and has a platinum bicycling rating. The forthcoming Bus Rapid Transit system and Metro network redesign will support this program as well.

City staff are introducing the draft policy to the Plan Commission this evening for early feedback, and expect to propose a final program design to the Common Council this summer.

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