Quarterly Newsletter

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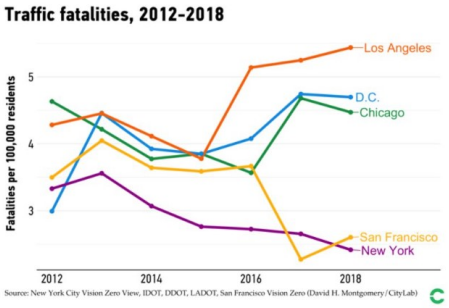
In This Issue:

Vision Zero: Perspective from New York City

New York City is the city that never sleeps, according to Frank Sinatra's hit song for the ages. NYC and its commuter suburbs are home to over 20 million residents, up to 70 million more annual visitors from around the world, and unbroken chains of automobile traffic that simply overflow 24/7, 365 days a year. This presents no small challenge. The volume of sheer motion makes traffic safety on the arteries of the Big Apple a constant matter of life and death, and the city government's efforts to prioritize this area have culminated in NYC Vision Zero, a plan launched in 2014 by Mayor Bill de Blasio and continuing through present under Mayor Eric Adams.



The NYC Vision Zero team launched one of the largest global cities head-on into this space, and has since served as a pioneering model for other municipalities joining the international Vision Zero movement through persistent innovation by the task force led by Mayor's Office of Operations, NYC DOT, NYPD, Taxi & Limousine Commission (TLC), Department of Health & Mental Health (DOHMH), NYC Fleet at Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS), District Attorneys, and many others. NYC early on adopted a data driven and research oriented approach, and welcomed ideas from key partners such as the nonprofit Transportation Alternatives. Another key pillar of NYC Vision Zero has been blunt public messaging on billboards, social media, etc.

Another impactful and low-cost strategy ushered in by NYC Vision Zero is the reduction of the speed limit on virtually all citywide roadways to 25 mph, which we hope to see Madison adopt ASAP as well. Under this speed limit, vs 30 mph, 35 mph, or above fatalities and serious injuries are greatly reduced according to data collected from numerous jurisdictions. As an added bonus, lower speed limits significantly save fuel and reduce greenhouse gas emissions too to bring safety *and* sustainability together under one policy shift.

Below: Example of NYC public messaging

NYC Vision Zero, like our very own Madison Vision Zero has publicly declared the lofty goal of eliminating roadway fatalities entirely by 2030 & 2035. Despite some notable successes to date, it will be very challenging in both cases to achieve, but we are confident that if the Vision Zero stakeholders in both jurisdictions work hard every day between now and then, we shall succeed in getting there together and win the race against time - under the limit of course.

Using Technology to Improve Street Safety

PROUDFIT & MAIN

The Proudfit Street & Main Street intersection will be equipped with a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) to help people walking and biking be more visible and improve driver yielding at the crosswalk. This crossing will be 'bracketed' by RRFB's located over the crosswalk facing each direction on Proudfit Street. This placement will allow for any button to activate all RRFB's and will warn drivers that people are attempting to cross in any of the crosswalks. Near side placement of the RRFB's should also help encourage drivers to stop well in advance of the crosswalk, and therefore improving visibility for pedestrians to the far lane of traffic.

People walking will be able to activate the flashing lights at the crosswalk by using pedestrian buttons, and those biking will be able to activate the lights from near the curb by pressing the button. Once the lights are flashing and traffic has yielded to crosswalk users, those walking and biking may cross Proudfit in the marked crosswalk.

4-INCH BICYCLE SIGNALS

The City of Madison will join other cities such as Portland, OR, Sacramento, CA, and Cambridge, MA in using supplementary 4-inch near side bicycle signals. The Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) Interim Approval for Optional Use of a Bicycle Signal Face (IA-16) suggests near side signals for crossings over 80 feet, and required for crossings exceeding 120. These signals will be mounted on the near side of the approach at a height of 4-ft to 7-ft, as opposed to higher up on the pole for 8 inch or 12 inch signal options required by the MUTCD.

The smaller bicycle signals mounted closer to eye level (compared to 7-ft per MUTCD) should be more visible to bicycle users, especially when viewed from the queuing area. Similar to vehicle signals, the redundancy of the supplementary signals also means that in the case of a knock down, the user should likely have another signal to guide them through the intersection. In addition to improving user visibility and safety, these devices should also be easier for our maintenance staff to install and maintain.

These signals will make their debut at the existing, but soon to be reconfigured Cottage Grove Road & Dempsey traffic signal, and the new bicycle signal at Junction Road & Watts Road as part of the West Towne Path extension project. Both signals will also include bicycle detection at the signal and advance of the signal to reduce bicycle delay and improve intersection efficiency and safety.

When paired with bike detection, these signals will help us improve safety and efficiency as we incorporate the needs of all roadway users into the design and function of our traffic signal operations.

Left: RRFB crossing, Williamson St, Madison

Below: Petru Sofio, Cedar St & Massachusetts Ave, Cambridge,

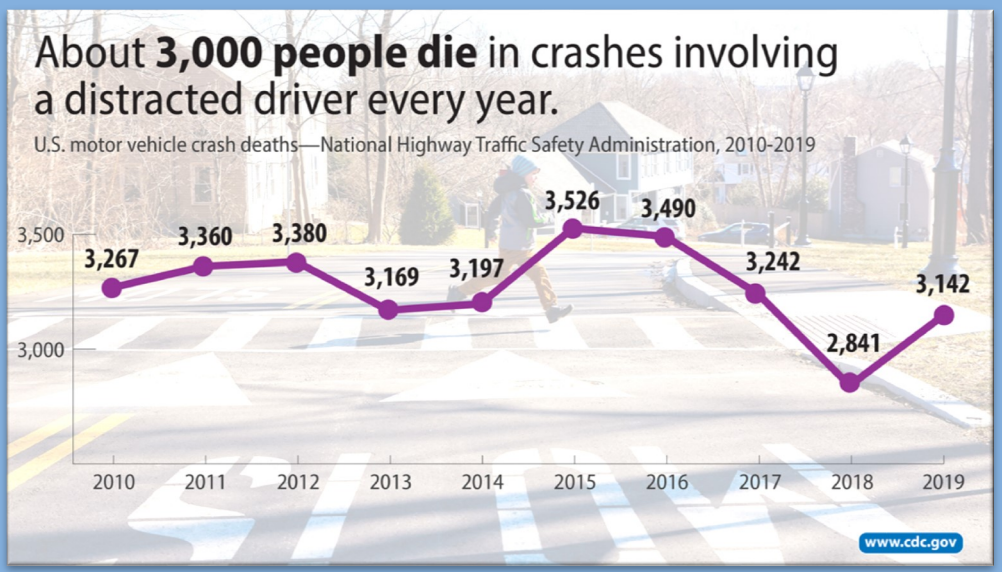
April is Distracted Driver Awareness Month

Anything that takes your attention away from driving can be a distraction. Sending a text message, talking on a cell phone, using a navigation system, and eating while driving are a few examples of distracted driving.

There are three main types of distraction:

Visual: Taking your eyes off the road
Manual: Taking your hands off the wheel
Cognitive: Taking your mind off driving

Any of these distractions can endanger you, your passengers, and others on the road.

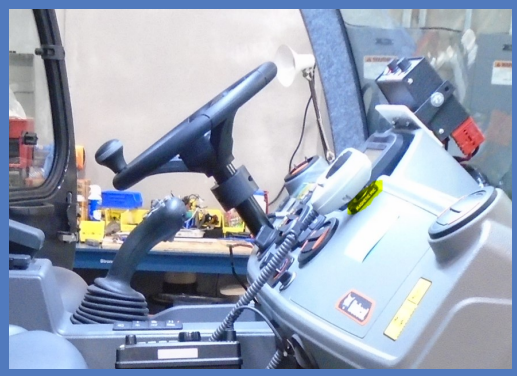


Madison Reduces Distracted Driving with Magnetic Radios

The City of Madison Communication section is responsible for equipping 100's of city-wide fleet and county vehicles with communication devices that range from emergency lighting, radios and sirens to mobile routers, laptop computers and other specialized vehicular devices. When a Madison Fire Fighter mentioned the difficulty returning the microphone back in the clip while driving, the communications section of the radio shop knew there had to be a safer solution.

After researching different types and styles of mounting systems, a magnetic system was determined would work, as this removes the added distraction of taking your eyes off the road when reaching for or replacing the microphone. A traditional mic clip requires the user to hook in the microphone, which can fall if not clipped in completely, further distracting the user during critical operational moments. With the change to a magnetic holder, a user can simply place the microphone near the mount and the magnet will guide it into a secure position. Removing the distraction of the task to improve the drivers focus on the road where it should be.

The success of the trial led to implementation that occurred across a variety of emergency departments throughout Dane County in the past 5 years, including the Madison Fire Department, Fitchburg Fire Department, Sun Prairie Police and Fire Departments. We are looking forward to working with other agencies to make their operation safer as well. Every agency that has installed microphone clips as a trial later integrated the magnetic tool across their entire fleet. Agencies have seen positive safety results from these adjustments, a reduction in preventable distractions.



Pictured: A Variety of Magnetic Radio Holders

Pleasant View Road Reconstruction Project

The Cities of Madison and Middleton, in partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), are planning a 2023 and 2024 construction project on Pleasant View Road from Timber Wolf Trail to USH 14 . The project focuses on safety for all: bicyclists, pedestrians and motorists. This main route along the west side of Madison, between City of Middleton and City of Verona, and serves Madison's west side businesses. Construction resumed in March of 2023 and is anticipated for completion in June of 2024.

Safety improvements being implemented include:

- Grade separated shared-use path Timber Wolf Trail to trail crossing near golf course along the west side
- New pedestrian and bicycle bridge over street at the trail crossing near golf course
- Dedicated left-turn bays for vehicles to get out of the flow of traffic when making a turn
- Improved sidewalk connections at all intersections
- Sidewalk on both sides of the street from the trail crossing to USH 14
- Improved pedestrian visibility at intersections
- New roundabouts at Blackhawk Road, Greenway Boulevard, and Quarry Road
- Grass/concrete median separating northbound and southbound traffic
- New street lighting

The work for Pleasant View Road also includes:

- Sanitary sewer and water main reconstruction
- New storm sewer to provide a heightened level of flood protection
- Reconstruction of the Swallowtail Pond to improve the storage capacity of the storm water structure based off the Pheasant Branch Watershed study
- Improved pavement marking and signing
- New retaining walls near the golf course
- USH 14 intersection improvements

Visit the project page for more information

Above: Image of Pleasant View Rd, Madison

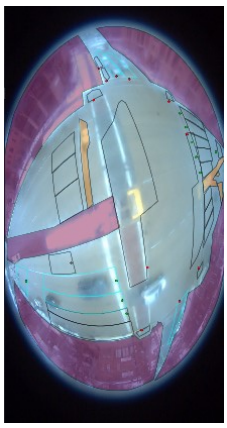
Physical Street Improvements for Safety

You may have noticed some unique safety measures showing up on streets in the past couple of years. These safety improvements, found citywide, are just a few of the new designs added to increase safety for all roadway users, especially for people walking and biking.

Raised Crossings

Raised crossings are areas where a crosswalk across a road has been elevated so there is minimal change in elevation for pedestrians and bicyclists using the crossing but vehicles have to slow down to drive over the elevated crossing, similar to a speed hump. This safety improvement helps draw a driver's attention to the crossing and forces them to slow down. Raised crossings are becoming more common in Madison and several were installed with road construction projects in 2022. Pictured, you can see an image of a raised crossings on the Capital City Trail at Russell St and at Ohio Ave.

Mid Intersection Bike Detection



Improved detection strategies, such as placing a detection zone in the middle of the intersection, helps us hold the green while bikes or pedestrians are crossing, but use a shorter green when there is only one vehicle present. This is helping us provide adequate crossing time for all users, and run shorter cycle lengths during off peak times to reduce bike, ped, and side street delay. Some cycle lengths are as short as 40 seconds. This mid-intersection bike detection strategy is being tested at East Washington & 6th, and East Washington & Milwaukee Street.

Bump-outs

on the Isthmus. Bump-outs, also known as curb extensions, are extensions of the curb that jut out into the street mainly at pedestrian crossings in intersections or at path crossings. This traffic calming tactic serves the purpose of slowing down traffic as well as making pedestrian crossings shorter. This form of traffic calming can be seen around the City, with many examples showing up at many Capital City Path crossings

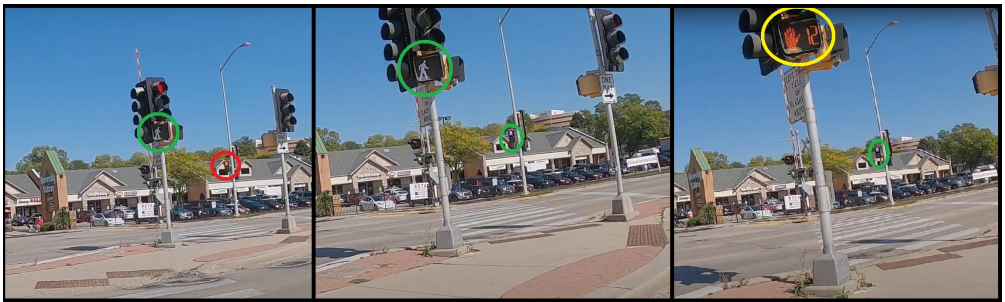
Flexible Delineators

"Tubular markers", also known as flexible delineators, are a type of roadway treatment designed to help protect and separate bike lanes from traffic lanes on a street. Adding this physical separation with a buffer helps protect the more vulnerable roadway users, such as bicyclists, from vehicles traveling down the same street. Separated bike lanes may be designed to accommodate one-way or two-way travel. This type of bike facility can be found on Bassett Street, and will soon be added to the bike facilities on Broom and Wilson Street later this summer.

Learn more about these, and other safety improvement types, by visiting the City of Madison Traffic Engineering website.

Sequential Multi-Stage Pedestrian Crossing

By wiring each individual pedestrian button separately to the controller cabinet, and using logic statements to operate pedestrian crossings, we are able to set up pedestrian crossings with walk progressions or variable walk times that are custom made for the direction each person is crossing. This is currently in operation at University Ave & Maple Terrace, and will be present in many new signals aligned with the new Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project.



Vision Zero is a data driven strategy intended to eliminate traffic deaths and severe injuries on all roadways, bikeways and sidewalks by 2035.

The City of Madison Vision Zero initiative strives to improve safety for all roadway users throughout the city and improve the identified high injury intersections, all in an effort to prevent avoidable fatal crashes.

Safety starts with all of us.

We can't control human error, but we can help create more forgiving infrastructure and change systems to prevent crashes from being serious and fatal.

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