



# Madison Bikes

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Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway  
Tom Lynch, Director of Transportation  
Yang Tao, City Traffic Engineer

Madison, April 8, 2020

## Creating Space for Rolling, Walking, and Biking During COVID-19

Dear Madam Mayor, dear Tom, dear Yang:

The COVID-19 pandemic has created enormous challenges for our city that impact almost every aspect of daily life, including transportation. Governor Evers's *Safer at Home* orders and current recommendations from our public health authorities allow people to use the many shared use paths in our city while practicing physical distancing. Madison has many people who already commute and travel to essential businesses by bicycle, and reduced Metro service has further increased the number of people who rely on bikes for transportation. The warmer weather has also increased the number of people using these paths and trails for walking and other activities to the point that it is becoming difficult to impossible to use these facilities while maintaining the required physical distance.

We greatly appreciate the measures you have already taken, such as changing signal cycles, deactivating “beg buttons,” and public outreach campaigns to promote safe and healthy behavior. However, there are limits

to what those measures can achieve. We encourage the City of Madison to identify select streets and lanes where motor vehicle traffic can be restricted in order to alleviate crowding on sidewalks and multi-use paths.

Madison Bikes, on behalf of our hundreds of members and thousands of people who use bikes for transportation or recreation in our City, request that you take bold steps to address the crowding on our paths and trails. Allowing crowding on our paths and trails is inconsistent with the recommendations of public health professionals, and closing or banning the use of the trails is inconsistent with our community's values toward equity, sustainability, and the health benefits of walking and biking. Fortunately Madison has extensive experience closing streets and car lanes so that bikes and pedestrians can use this public space, from the annual Ride the Drive events to our frequent marathons, triathlons and other public events.

Some areas that we have received specific feedback about and that we think may be good candidates for temporary closures:

- Cap City Trail from Williamson North Shore (and potentially Olin Park): To separate people on bikes and walking, repurpose a travel lane on John Nolen Drive, similar to what has been done during construction and flooding. Crowding is a huge issue here, it is an important transportation corridor, and there are no good alternative routes
- Vilas Park Dr and Arboretum Dr: These low traffic routes would be easy to block off and increase the availability of park and recreation space
- Atwood Avenue: Sidewalks are narrow, the parallel Cap City Trail is crowded, and adjacent park land reduces parking and driveway access issues
- Outer Capitol Loop: Consider maintaining the time-restricted bike lane all day
- Areas without a terrace between sidewalk and the roadway, or where sidewalks do not exist at all
- Access routes to hospitals and medical facilities

- Multi-lane roadways that have excess capacity for moving or parked vehicles
- Areas of the city with a high proportion of transit-dependent residents

Madison Bikes is prepared to help in this effort. We understand that you face constraints in terms of staff time, availability of materials, and competing priorities. As an all-volunteer non-profit dedicated to making Madison a community where anyone can ride a bicycle conveniently and comfortably to any place year round, we want to do our part. In the past Madison Bikes and our strong community have been a part of many efforts to promote and encourage people to bike even during difficult times. Madison Bikes has helped to identify impacted bike facilities and alternate routes during the 2018 flooding as well as working with the City and our partners on community-wide events like Madison Bike Week. We offer our assistance in identifying the paths, trails, and routes most impacted by crowding and working with our partners to find local equipment and volunteers to deploy street and lane closures. We have already begun to identify potential partners who can provide barricades and traffic cones used for events such as the Madison Marathon and are ready to offer the same volunteer force we have used at previous events. We will continue to work closely with you to amplify public health messaging about safe and healthy behaviors. We look forward to helping Madison respond to COVID-19 and address our short and long-term needs for healthy and safe transportation options.

Respectfully,



Harald Kliems, on behalf of the Madison Bikes Board of Directors

cc: Tom Wilson, Transportation Policy and Planning Board  
Renee Callaway, Bike and Pedestrian Administrator