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City Continues to Curtail Traffic Speeds on East Washington Avenue

As Madison Police investigate the death of a pedestrian killed by a hit-and-run driver in the early morning hours of Saturday, City staff continue to collaborate on a number of efforts to slow traffic on East Washington Avenue and crack down on erratic drivers or drivers operating under the influence. Last year, the City adopted to Vision Zero, a commitment to reduce traffic fatalities to zero by 2030. As part of this project, City staff have taken a number of actions to reduce traffic speeds on E. Washington Ave.

Last fall, speed limits were lowered on parts of the Avenue from 35 mph down to 30 and 25 mph in different locations. Staff have erected message boards to warn drivers, and adjusted traffic signals to slow motorists down. Traffic engineering has been using traffic calming devices to alter and narrow travel lanes in another effort to reduce speed. They have installed high visibility crosswalk marking along the corridor where there are high levels of pedestrian activities, including the East Washington Avenue and Patterson intersection, among others.

Supported by grant funding, MPD has been ramping up enforcement on weekend nights, and will continue that enforcement throughout the summer. Since May 1, the additional enforcement has resulted in 224 citations and 259 warnings. As the department works to allocate resources, there have been 41 targeted enforcement projects on E. Washington Ave, roughly one third of all projects citywide. There are an additional seven targeted enforcement projects scheduled for E. Washington Ave in July.

“We are sending a clear message,” said Mayor Rhodes-Conway. “Here in Madison, we prioritize safety. We will continue to use all our tools - education, engineering and enforcement - to keep our streets safe for everyone. The cruising on East Washington and surrounding neighborhoods is unacceptable. If motorists are coming into Madison from surrounding areas for this purpose they will face hefty tickets and could lose their license. If you are driving while intoxicated you can lose your license and incarceration.”

Speeding tickets could result in a fine of as much as \$435 and a six-point penalty on your driver’s license. Penalties for driving while intoxicated range from a forfeiture and license revocation for a first offense, to up to six years imprisonment and a lifetime license revocation for subsequent offenses. More severe penalties apply if injury or death results.

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City staff will continue to use a variety of approaches to deal with the speeding. In many instances, the speeders are young adults, often from outside of Madison, who are continuing a decades long tradition of increasing activity on East Washington Avenue on weekend summer nights.