



City of Racine
730 Washington Avenue
Racine, WI 53403
(262) 636-9171

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 9, 2025

CONTACT:

Leslie Flynn
Communications Director
(262) 636-9266

City of Racine to Begin Demolition of Former YMCA Building at 725 Lake Avenue

Sledgehammer Ceremony Set for Monday, May 12 at Noon

RACINE, WI – The City of Racine will officially begin demolition of the former Racine Family YMCA building at 725 Lake Avenue on Monday, May 12. A Sledgehammer Ceremony will take place at 12:00 p.m., marking a major milestone in the City’s ongoing effort to address public safety, eliminate blight, and prepare the lakefront site for future redevelopment.

Mayor Cory Mason and City officials will participate in a ceremonial “first swing” with a sledgehammer to kick off the demolition. Members of the public and media are invited to attend.

“The former YMCA building has been a long-standing safety concern and a barrier to progress on our lakefront,” said Mayor Cory Mason. “While no formal redevelopment plans are in place yet, taking this structure down is a critical first step in returning this property to productive use. This is about improving safety and opening the door to future opportunities for our community.”

The building, closed since 2019, had been on the market for years and steadily deteriorated despite community interest in its future. In 2023, the City’s Community Development Authority (CDA) entered negotiations with the Racine Family YMCA and received public input during a CDA hearing. The Common Council approved the purchase in late 2023, and the CDA completed the acquisition of the property in 2024.

Following repeated concerns from building inspectors and public safety officials, the City prioritized demolition to address hazards posed by the abandoned structure. The work will be carried out by New Berlin Grading, with active demolition expected to continue for several weeks. Site grading and clean-up will follow, with all activity adhering to applicable safety and environmental standards.

MEDIA EVENT DETAILS:

What: Sledgehammer Ceremony – Kickoff of YMCA Building Demolition

When: Monday, May 12 at 12:00 p.m.

Where: South Parking Lot – 725 Lake Avenue, Racine, WI

Please note: On-site parking is not available. Attendees should use on-street parking in the surrounding area. Do not park in the adjacent private lot.

Media are encouraged to arrive 10–15 minutes early for positioning and a safety briefing. Visual opportunities will include remarks from City leadership and the ceremonial first swing with a sledgehammer.

###

Racine, Wisconsin, is a thriving city located on Lake Michigan with a rich history and diverse population of about 78,000. Known for its historic downtown, award-winning architecture, top freshwater beach, strong community, and notable contributions to history and innovation, Racine is a wonderful place to live, work, and explore. From its progressive history as part of the Underground Railroad to its status as the Kringle Capital of America, there's always something new to discover in Racine.