



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 1, 2026

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Mayor Mason Announces Downtown Safety and Accessibility Improvements

New audible pedestrian signals and updated traffic timing make Main Street safer for everyone

Racine, WI – Downtown visitors may notice two important improvements designed to make Main Street safer and more accessible for everyone who walks, bikes, and drives through the area.

The City of Racine has completed the installation of audible pedestrian signals at six downtown intersections and implemented new traffic signal timing along Main Street between State Street and Seventh Street. Together, these improvements support safer travel for pedestrians while encouraging slower vehicle speeds through the downtown business district.

The new audible pedestrian signals provide locator tones and audible walk indications to assist pedestrians who are blind or have low vision in crossing the street safely. The improvements help make downtown more accessible and allow more people to navigate the corridor independently.

The updated traffic signal timing is designed to calm traffic by encouraging motorists to travel at a slower, more consistent speed. Drivers who attempt to accelerate between intersections to avoid a red light will instead encounter longer waits at the next signal.

The changes follow an evaluation of several options in response to concerns raised by downtown businesses and community stakeholders about vehicle speeds on Main Street. One alternative would have rerouted State Highway 32 off Main Street, but that option was estimated to cost more than \$1.5 million and would not have directly addressed speeding concerns. Instead, the City implemented a cost-effective solution that targets the issue by encouraging slower, steadier travel through the corridor.

Previously, traveling between State Street and Seventh Street during peak traffic periods took an average of about 83 seconds. With the new timing, the trip will take approximately 50 seconds longer on average, creating a safer environment for pedestrians and reducing the incentive to speed through downtown. Traffic analysis found the revised timing would increase travel through the corridor to approximately two minutes while maintaining acceptable traffic operations.

Mayor Cory Mason said the improvements reflect the City's commitment to creating a downtown that is safe, welcoming, and accessible for everyone.

"We've heard concerns about vehicle speeds on Main Street, and we wanted a solution that addressed those concerns directly," Mason said. "These improvements make downtown safer for pedestrians, improve accessibility for people with visual impairments, and encourage motorists to travel through the corridor at safer speeds, all in a practical and cost-effective way."

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***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.*