

# Dane County Traffic Safety Commission

## Co-Chairs

### **Sgt. Matt Meyer**

Dane Co. Sheriff's Office  
(608) 284-6876

### **Cheryl Wittke**

Safe Communities Madison-Dane Co.  
(608) 256-6713

## Members

AAA Wisconsin

American Family Children's  
Hospital / Safe Kids

Belleville Police Dept.

Blue Mounds Police Dept.

CESA 2 Driver's Education

Cottage Grove Police Dept.

Cross Plains Police Dept.

Dane Co. Court Commissioner

Dane Co. District Attorney's Office

Dane Co. EMS

Dane Co. Highway & Transportation

Dane Co. Sheriff's Office

DeForest Police Dept

DeForest Public Works

Fitchburg Police Dept.

Fitchburg Public Works

Greater Madison MPO

Madison Metro

Madison Municipal Court

Madison Police Dept.

Madison Traffic Engineering

Marshall Police Dept.

McFarland Police Dept.

Middleton Police Dept.

Monona Police Dept.

Mount Horeb Police Dept.

Oregon Police Dept.

Public Health Madison & Dane Co.

Safe Communities Madison-Dane Co.

Shorewood Hills Police Dept.

SSM Health

Stoughton Police Dept.

Sun Prairie Pedestrian Task Force

Sun Prairie Police Dept.

Sun Prairie Public Services

Town of Madison Police Dept.

UW Extension

UW Health Trauma Centers

UW Police Dept.

UW TOPS Laboratory

UW Transportation Services

Verona Police Dept.

Waunakee Police Dept.

WI Alcohol Policy Project

WI Bike Federation

WI Dept. of Transportation/  
Bureau of Traffic Safety

WI State Laboratory of Hygiene

WI State Patrol

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For Immediate Release (*See interview opportunities, page 2*)

For more information, contact:

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Executive Director, Safe Communities of  
Madison - Dane County

Dane County is experiencing an unprecedented number of fatalities from motor vehicle crashes involving both speeding and alcohol or drug use, according to Sgt. Matt Meyer, Dane County Sheriff's Office and co-chair for the county's Traffic Safety Commission (TSC). A summary at a recent TSC quarterly meeting showed that during the fourth quarter of 2021, two of every three fatalities on Dane County roads resulted from crashes where both were a factor.

From October to December 2021, ten deaths resulted from six fatal crashes in the cities of Madison, Sun Prairie and Middleton and towns of Montrose and Dunkirk. Six of these deaths occurred in crashes that involved both speeding and alcohol and/or drug use.

This continues a trend, Meyer said. "During all of 2021, we saw seven fatal crashes resulting in eleven deaths that involved both speeding and alcohol or drug use. This is an increase of over forty percent from averages in the past five years."

"Excessive speed or use of alcohol or drugs results in increased risk for traffic crashes. But the combination of these two factors is especially lethal," said Cheryl Wittke, TSC co-chair and executive director of Safe Communities of Madison-Dane County. "When a crash involves multiple factors, it dramatically increases the likelihood it will result in death. In Dane County we see our share of this, and no family should have to face the tragic results."

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The overall number of traffic fatalities also increased significantly last year. Meyer noted an average of 33 crash-related deaths annually over the past five years, but 48 deaths in 2021, a 33% increase. Almost half of these were speed-related, and fatalities occurred on all types of roads throughout the county, including in rural areas.

In response to the alarming trends in traffic safety, four TSC-member workgroups are developing strategies to address: (1) driving impaired by alcohol and drug use, (2) risky driving behavior, including speeding, distracted driving, and use of occupant protection measures, (3) pedestrian crashes, and (4) racial disparities and traffic injuries. Additionally, these workgroups will collaborate with community task forces meeting around Dane County to propose solutions for locally identified issues.

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The following members of the Traffic Safety Commission may be contacted for comment directly if desired:

- 1) Crash trends and Traffic Safety Commission: Sgt. Matt Meyer, Dane County Sheriff's Office, co-chair, Dane County Traffic Safety Commission, [meyer.matt@danesherriff.com](mailto:meyer.matt@danesherriff.com), (608) 284-6876.
- 2) Traffic Safety Commission role and membership: Cheryl Wittke, Executive Director, Safe Communities of Madison - Dane County and TSC co-chair, [cwittke@safercommunity.net](mailto:cwittke@safercommunity.net), (608) 256-6713.
- 3) Traffic crash data/trends: Jeremy Kloss, Program and Policy Analyst, WI Bureau of Transportation Safety and Technical Services, [jeremy.kloss@dot.wi.gov](mailto:jeremy.kloss@dot.wi.gov), (608) 709-0089, ext. 8539
- 4) Prevalence of excessive speeding on Dane County roads: Sgt. Adam Zoch, Wisconsin State Patrol, [ADAML.Zoch@dot.wi.gov](mailto:ADAML.Zoch@dot.wi.gov), (608) 846-8500, ext. 1003
- 5) Alcohol and driving: Maureen Busalacchi, director of the WI Alcohol Policy Project, [sbusalacchi@mcw.edu](mailto:sbusalacchi@mcw.edu), (608) 335-0005.