

Construction across the Madison-Milton bridge to finish, improve safety and traffic

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Commuters crossing the bridge from Milton into Madison, Indiana likely have experienced lane closures and heavy traffic this week. While this has been frustrating for many commuters, the changes will finish a multi-year project that has improved the safety of drivers crossing the bridge into Indiana. Previously, after crossing the bridge, there were three sharp 90 degree turns before reaching Madison's Main Street, which was particularly a hazard for semi-trucks and other larger vehicles.

The paving and striping comprise the final stage of the new approach to the Madison-Milton bridge designed to improve the traffic flow for drivers coming off the bridge into Madison. Named "Project 421: Gateway to Madison" after the US Highway number, construction began in 2019, though research and planning originates from 2015. The project was spurred by the late former Madison mayor Damon Welch, but the funding comes from the state.

Crews returned on Monday, April 12, 2021 on Main Street in Madison, performing dirt and sod work. Now, work on the final asphalt paving between Walnut St. and the bridge, followed by restriping to reconfigure Main St. near the bridge. Once this is complete, westbound drivers can expect an expansion to two lanes from one coming off the bridge, while eastbound drivers approaching the bridge will have only one lane.

Construction was delayed due to rain last week, but crews were able to work on Friday, April 30, which saw significant traffic back-up during rush hour in Milton. Drivers should expect daytime delays and increased traffic due to lane closures and flagging through at least Monday, May 10. The Indiana Department of Transportation (IDOT) reported Sunday, May 2 that during this time, no parking will be available on Harrison St., Main St., or 2nd St. in Madison in the affected area by the bridge.

Commuters to Indiana overall will benefit from the construction. The entire project overall is estimated to improve safety by 20%, travel time by 40%, reduce noise levels, increase commerce and economic development, and prevent negative environmental impact on National Historic Landmarks and other registered historical places. According to the IDOT, approximately 11,500 vehicles travel between Milton and Madison each day, with about 8,700 traversing the new connection between U.S. 421 and State Road 56/Main St. That area has already been made smoother with a four-way signal and widened intersection.

In addition to scheduling extra time or alternative routes due to expected delays, closures, and flagging, the IDOT advises drivers to "slow down, use extra caution, and drive distraction-free in and near all work zones." All projected dates are subject to change due to the weather.