

REVITALIZE

Hwys 89 & 19

WATERLOO

Waterloo, Wisconsin, a charming city in Jefferson County, blends small-town life with convenient access to Madison and Milwaukee.



The city is home to about 3,500 residents and a diverse mix of businesses, including manufacturing and food production companies as well as local shops. Some notable businesses include Trek Bicycle, McKay Nursery, Sussek Machine, Van Holten Pickles, and Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese.

State Highways: The Lifeline of Wisconsin Communities

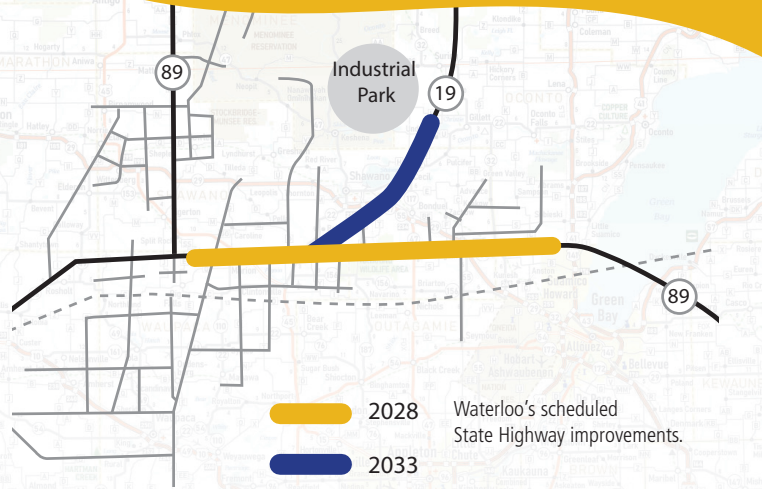
Like many small Wisconsin communities, Waterloo is linked to the state's transportation network through state highways. These roadways, which often take on local street names and characteristics within city limits, become integral to the community's infrastructure and strengthen connections to neighboring communities and businesses.

Although state-owned, these roads significantly influence the cities they traverse, either fostering safety and growth or hindering progress. Community leaders must advocate for the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) to prioritize improvement projects for these roadways in its six-year plan, as the WisDOT State Highway Rehabilitation budget struggles to meet the demands of an aging state highway system.

Waterloo's Road to Progress: Possibilities and Hurdles

Waterloo is better positioned than many cities, with two sections of its aging state highway system—State Highways 89 and 19—slated for reconstruction within the next decade. Upgrading these highways will allow the city to address the up to 75-year-old water and sewer infrastructure beneath the pavement, enhancing water pressure for residents, reducing the potential for system failures, and improving stormwater management.

Waterloo's Crossroads: Balancing Infrastructure and Funding Challenges



However, these opportunities come with trade-offs. The local share of these projects—covering pavement for parking, lighting, signage, sidewalks, and more—means that other urgently needed road improvements will be delayed. For instance, the local share for one of the projects, excluding subsurface infrastructure, equates to approximately one year of Waterloo's annual road budget, while the other represents three years.

Section of Highway 89 scheduled for reconstruction.



To manage these competing priorities, the City of Waterloo requested that WisDOT reschedule the Highway 89 project from 2031 to 2033. This decision was made with the understanding that funding uncertainties could potentially delay the project beyond 2033.



Local road potentially taking a back seat.

Waterloo's Transportation Funding Reflects Statewide Challenges

Wisconsin has long grappled with funding critical investments in state highways and local roads. Waterloo's experience reflects this statewide issue, viewed through a local lens. Without a sustainable, long-term transportation funding solution, both the state and its communities will remain trapped in a cycle where improvements to one system come at the expense of the other.