

Living in Madison Guide 2023

General Housing Information

Types of buildings

Many rentable housing options in the greater Madison area are double- or triple-deckers or single-family homes (some later divided into apartments), built in the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries. It can be hard to find one-bedroom apartments in areas where this type of housing predominates. Downtown Madison has plenty of apartment buildings, and there are several newer apartment buildings along Washington Avenue and Monroe Street, and near the Hildale Shopping Center on University Avenue. Depending on your budget, buildings built more recently typically have higher rental costs than the double- or triple-decker and single-family homes located a bit further from downtown Madison.

Lease Duration

Most leases in Madison, and especially near campus, extend from August to August. Don't be too surprised if your property management/landlord asks you if you'd like to renew your lease in December/January.

Finding Housing

[Off-Campus Housing Marketplace](#) is a university-run tool that can help you find housing, roommates, and sublets. You can also look on Craigslist, Zillow, Apartments.com, or [Madison Campus and Downtown Apartments](#). Or you can look up individual buildings in which you are interested. If you are apartment hunting from afar, you can also use the Google maps street-view function to "stroll down the street" to look at apartment building exteriors to find buildings. If you are interested in boarding with other La Follette students, consider posting in the La Follette Facebook Group.

[The Graduate School's Housing and Transportation web page](#) is also an excellent resource. The web page provides information regarding campus housing and off-campus housing, tenant rights, and Madison neighborhoods. The webpage also provides information on transportation options.

Tenant Resources

Your landlord is required to provide a safe, healthy home with working heat and plumbing. Your apartment should also have working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. It should be free from pests. Do not hesitate to seek help if these requirements are not met. [Tenant Resource Center](#) provides a variety of services to renters, awareness of tenant rights, conflict mediation and attorney

references. The City of Madison also offers [resources for tenants](#). You should always Google your prospective landlord before signing a lease.

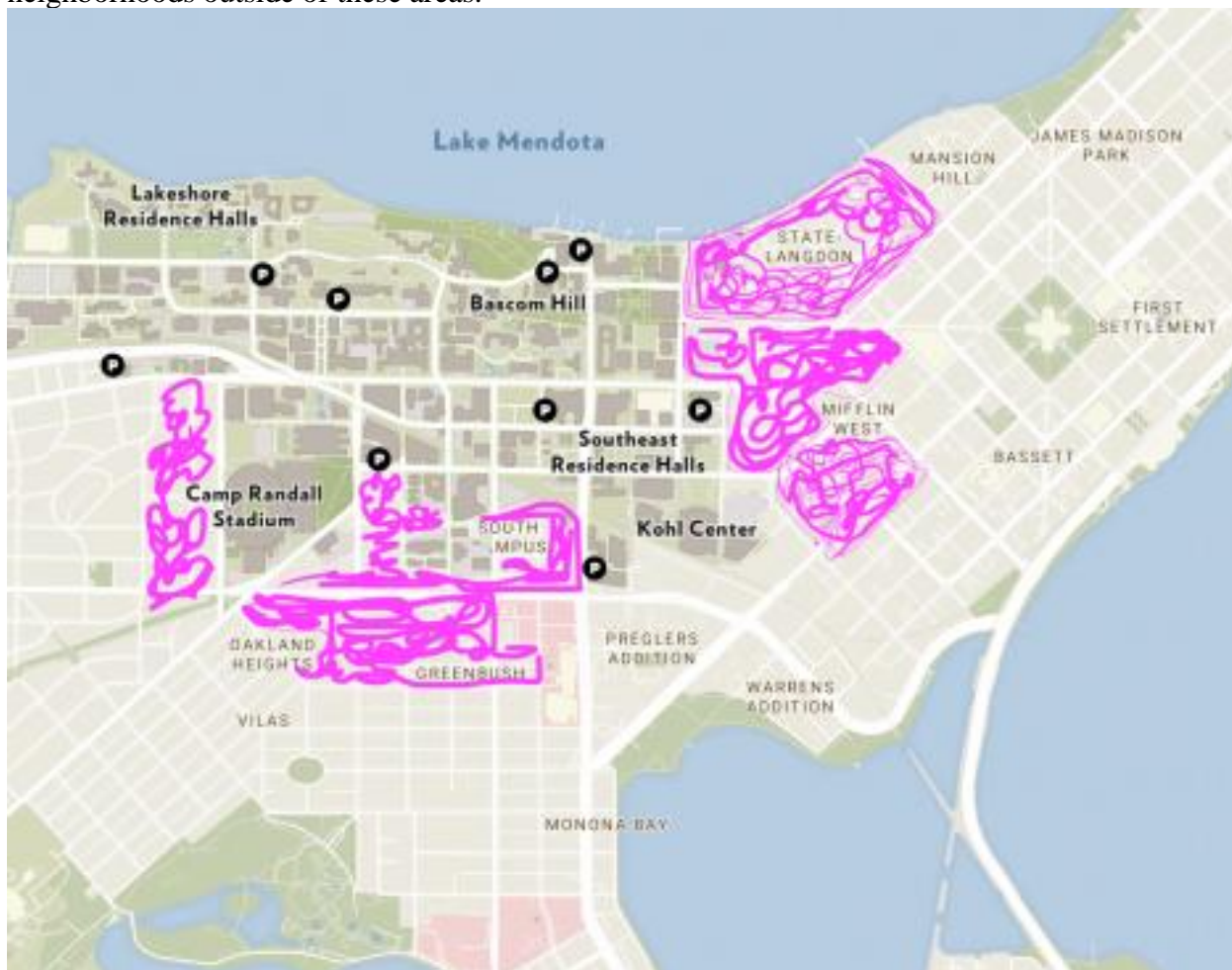
University Housing

Most students live in private housing located off-campus, but the university also offers convenient housing in three neighborhoods: Eagle Heights, University Housing, and Harvey Street Apartments. Eagle Heights and University Housing are great options for students with families, while single students tend to live in Harvey Street Apartments. More information is available on the University Housing [website](#).

Madison Neighborhoods

Undergraduate Neighborhoods

The pink shaded areas on the map below indicate where the highest concentration of undergraduates live. These areas tend to be more boisterous and active especially at night and on the weekends. If you prefer a quieter building or neighborhood, we recommend looking at neighborhoods outside of these areas.



Mifflin/State/Langdon

Lots of undergraduate housing, but close to campus. Close to many bars and restaurants.

University Ave/Hilldale/Near West

Extends far west of campus but is connected by the main thoroughfare of University Ave. Older rental housing, with several apartment buildings, is abundant along Old University; Hilldale has some new high-rises. This area is near the Hilldale Shopping Center, Target, and Whole Foods. There are fewer bars and restaurants in this area. The university-owned single graduate-student Harvey Street apartments are just off University Ave. There are many buses that run through this area, so it is easy to get to campus.

Eagle Heights

The largest area of university-owned graduate housing. This is a quiet area that does not have any bars, restaurants, or retail in walking distance nearby. It is adjacent to the Lakeshore Nature Preserve, which has beautiful trails for walks and runs and is located close to the University hospital.

Greenbush

This neighborhood is just south of campus and consists of many old houses with a few apartment buildings. The proportion of undergraduates decreases as you go further south. It is a short walk to campus. This area is also close to Vilas Park and the UW Arboretum.

Capitol Square/First Settlement/Bassett

Downtown area with lots of high-rises. Close to many bars, restaurants, coffee shops, and banks.

Mansion Hill

Old neighborhood with some very nice houses and several old apartment buildings. This is where the undergraduate-heavy Langdon neighborhood transitions to the more professional isthmus area. This area is very close to the Capitol.

James Madison Park / Old Market Place

This area is, of course, near the beautiful James Madison Park. East Johnson Street has several bars and restaurants. Festival Foods is nearby and has a mezzanine bar, so you can have a drink and watch people shop for groceries.

Williamson Street/Atwood Avenue

A long walk from campus, this area has a lot of old Victorians and a handful of apartment buildings. Willy Street has a lot of bars, restaurants, and retail and is home to the Willy Street Co-op.

Vilas / Monroe

There are many houses and a few apartment buildings. Monroe street is home to Trader Joe's, a great record store, two oriental rug stores and several coffee shops, restaurants, and more relaxed bars. This area is also close to Vilas Park and the UW Arboretum.

Banking

If you're looking for a Madison bank, UW Credit Union has the best branch service, with several locations near campus. Use LSSA's referral code (7B65B37C33) when setting up your account and you and LSSA will both get \$50.

Transportation

Check Google maps to see how long it would take to bus/bike/walk/drive from a neighborhood or prospective apartment to campus or other important locations (bars, grocery stores, coffee shops, jobs).

As noted above, the [Graduate School's Housing and Transportation webpage](#) has a variety of information on transportation. The website includes information on Madison Metro Transit, the Accessible Circulator Shuttle, bicycles, cars and parking, mopeds and scooters, walking, and traveling outside of Madison.

Car Ownership

Car ownership is definitely not necessary to enjoy living in Madison as there are numerous different modes of transportation available. Some La Follette students own cars while others do not.

Parking

Parking can be expensive downtown. If your property owner does not offer parking, you can find a spot from city garages, private garages, or on Craigslist. On-street parking can be a cheaper option if you are not downtown; however, this may require a parking permit. The University offers a variety of parking options students can purchase. More information can be found on their [website](#).

Buses

Every UW–Madison student, including La Follette Students, are provided with a free bus pass that allows for unlimited rides. This pass is provided by Associated Students of Madison (ASM) and paid for by segregated fees paid by each student with their tuition. Madison has a decent bus system. University Avenue, Monroe Street, Regent Street, Park Street, and all of downtown and the isthmus are well served by bus routes.

Bicycling

Buying or Renting a Bike

Cheap used bicycles can be bought from the nonprofit Dream Bikes or the city-owned Madison Bicycle Center. You can also build a bike for free (donation suggested) with Freewheel Bikes. These places also offer cheap service for bikes. Do not forget to check Facebook Marketplace for used bikes! New and more expensive bikes can be bought from REI, Erik's, Trek, or many local bike shops. These businesses also service bikes. Many bike shops also offer seasonal rentals of bikes.

Public Bike Sharing

The city has contracted with BCycle (a Trek subsidiary) to offer electric bike sharing. There are many BCycle stations throughout Madison where you can check out a bike and go! Prices vary depending on how long you rent the bike for. UW students are offered discounted memberships for BCycle, which includes 90 minutes free of riding per rental.

All BCycle bikes are electric, but still require pedaling. They are a speedy way to get to campus or shopping locations. You will not break a sweat going up a hill.

Because BCycle bikes can be checked out at one station and checked in at another, they can be very convenient for one-way trips, or trips where you want to bike to a location and walk or bus home, or vice versa.

Bike paths

Madison has plenty of bike paths that can get you through the city without spending too much time on streets. Many streets also have bike lanes. Some are very nice (like University Ave. eastbound), and others will make you fear for your life as buses and cars pass you on either side (like University Ave westbound).

The city bike paths also connect to state bike trails that can take you out of the city and into the countryside. The Capital City Trail is a nice loop along the city's southern edge, the Badger State Trail will take you as far south as Illinois, the Military Ridge trail will take you west as far as Dodgeville, the US Highway 12 Path will take you northwest along Highway 12. The Glacial Drumlin trail, which starts in Cottage Grove and does not connect to Madison, will take you east as far as Waukesha.