City of Milwaukee, Comparative Report on Crash History

(APR-SEP 2020 v. APR-SEP 2021)

Background

Included in this report is a comparison of City of Milwaukee reported crashes between April to September of 2020 and 2021. It is important to note that the numbers from 2021 are considered preliminary and could change if more crash reports are transmitted after this report is made. This report contains a summary on city-wide trends, in addition to the top ten crash hotspots in the city. The hotspots were selected based off an algorithm-based search generated from "Community Maps", a publicly accessible online application that can be utilized to search for crashes across Wisconsin. The search generated ten distinct hotspots that were identified as the areas with the highest density of injury (KABC) crashes per square mile during the relevant time frame. A map of these hotspots can be seen below.



<u>City-wide</u>

In the months of April through September of 2021, the City of Milwaukee reported a total of 9,536 total crashes resulting in 33 fatalities and 3,395 persons injured. While total crashes increased, injuries show little variation from the same six-month period in 2020 when the city reported 8,675 total crashes resulting in 53 fatalities and 3,437 persons injured. However, with fatal crashes we see a stunning decrease YoY.



Breaking down these crashes into three distinct categories of fatal crashes, injury, and property damage only, we see the following totals in the chart above. The City of Milwaukee recorded a modest increase in property damage only crashes (+13%) and non-fatal injury crashes (+1%) but recorded a significantly lower number of fatal crashes (-42%) YoY.

The exact reason for the dramatic decrease in fatal crashes YoY is difficult to determine outright, but it should be noted that the lions share of this decrease occurred in the month of July. In 2020, the month of July recorded a total of 14 fatal crashes in the City of Milwaukee but in 2021 there was only one fatal crash recorded. It is notable that in the month of July, the entire county only recorded three fatal crashes, with the other two occurring in the cities of Greenfield and Wauwatosa. The positive trend seen with fatal crashes in July can also be seen with injury crashes which recorded a 15% decline YoY, but not with property damage only crashes (+2% YoY).



The Hotspots

Zone	Total # Injury	Total # Injury	% Change in Injury	% Injury Crashes of Total
	Crashes (2020)	Crashes (2021)	Crashes (2020 v. 2021)	Crashes (2021)
City of Milwaukee	2,382	2,412	+1.2%	25.2%
All Hotspots (HS)	203	184	-9.4%	33.5%
Capitol Drive HS	89	79	-11.2%	31.9%
Fond du Lac Ave HS	77	74	-3.9%	39.5%
Interstate HS	37	31	-16.2%	27.2%

As seen on the map on the first page, the ten identified hotspots are concentrated in three different distinct "zones" in the city. Hotspots #1, 7, and 8 all involve intersections on W Fond du Lac Ave (WIS 145), Hotspots #2-6 are located on W Capitol Drive (WIS 190), and Hotspots #9

and 10 are located on I-43 and their immediate surrounding streets. In depth pictures of these hotspots can be seen in the appendix at the end of the report.

Looking at this report compared to the one issued for Q2, Capitol Drive went from 2 identified hotspots to a total of six. While this may sound alarming, the Capitol Drive hotspots actually recorded a double digit decrease in injury crashes and injury crashes as a percentage of total crashes in the area dropped from 39% to ~32%. Despite seeing less hotspot activity than usual on Fond du Lac Ave compared to Q2, the hotspots analyzed recorded the lowest injury crash decrease of the three zones. Hotspot #8 (W Fond du Lac Ave/Center St & N 27th St) continues to record at least twice the amount of injury crashes as any other hotspot, but even #8 recorded a 10% decrease in injury crashes. And finally, the interstate hotspot #10 (I-49 & W State St/W Highland Ave) has been a hotspot featured in every report since last year and recorded the largest injury crash decrease of all the hotspots, a stunning 33%.



On average, the ten hotspots recorded an encouraging drop in injury crashes from April to September in 2021 versus the prior year, with seven seeing a decrease and three an increase. The hotspots overall bucked the trend seen citywide and recorded a drop in injury crashes (-9.4%) as a whole YoY while the city recorded the slightest of increases (+1.2%). This divergence between the hotspots and the city is notable as previous reports typically indicated the hotspots were seeing an increase in injury crashes YoY that outpaced the city as a whole. As seen in the chart below, the hotspots saw their largest decrease YoY in the month of July with a whopping 41% reduction. In fact, looking at these six months July appeared to be the safest month in terms of injury crashes in the City of Milwaukee hotspots, a rarity for a summer month.



Conclusion

Compared to previous reports, the City of Milwaukee is seeing an encouraging decrease in fatal crashes based off reported crashes, with July being a key month. Meanwhile, injury crashes in the city saw did see slightly elevated levels compared to the same period in 2020, but that is accompanied with a reduction in injury crashes in the most dangerous crash hotspots in the city. While it is difficult to determine the exact cause of these trends, it is notable that 2021 numbers are looking more like crash numbers recorded in years prior to 2020. A rather noticeable increase in property damage only crashes YoY and the dramatic decrease in fatal crashes point to how a return to more normal traffic volumes and patterns in the city could have a direct impact on crash levels.

Appendix (Injury Crashes Only)







