

**JUST ASK US**

## When was the John Nolen Drive causeway constructed?



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**Q** When was the John Nolen Drive causeway constructed? Where did they get the fill from?

**A:** Long ago, commuters had to drive around Monona Bay to reach Downtown Madison. But in 1965 the city began construction of the John Nolen Drive causeway, cutting across the bay and slashing commute times.

According to an engineering report, **the causeway was built using sand fill that was dredged from the bottom of the lake.** The causeway was completed and opened in late 1967 with just two lanes, said Robert Phillips, Madison city engineer.

The road was widened to four lanes in 1975. It was reconstructed in 1995, though the original bridges remain, Phillips said.

The city has periodically had construction projects to raise the approaches to the bridges to compensate for the settling of the causeway fill, Phillips said.

Filling Madison's lakes has become politically unpopular.

In 2012, a Downtown Plan called for expansion of Law Park near Monona Terrace. The plan would have filled in two acres of Lake Monona to create a signature park with boat docks, a fishing pier, festival grounds, watercraft rentals and more.

The expansion of the park was removed from the plan by the City Council.