

Plan Commission  
Meeting of April 13, 2026  
Agenda #11, Legistar #91908

The letter of intent states: "The west side of the property will have a new 6'-0" wide bituminous path within a proposed 15'-0" wide storm sewer and path easement to connect the sidewalk along Helena Street to the city bike trail along the south side of Eastwood Avenue."

This connection would be through the public right-of-way with a relatively steep slope. As proposed, the path would drop 4 feet over a 30 foot length. This is a slope of 13.4%, per page 8 of the plans.

The City should not permit this path through the public ROW to be created. It would not be ADA compliant, it would put the health of the remaining trees at risk, and there are nearby connectivity points.

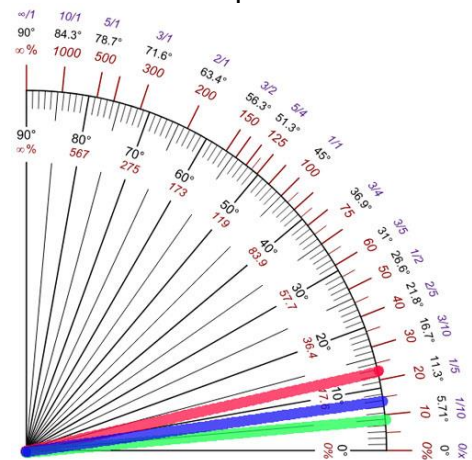
### 1. ADA compliance

Although this proposed path is called a bike path in the staff report, it is really a shared use path (unless pedestrians would be prohibited). The proposed path would not be ADA compliant. While the slope would be 13.4%, ADA limits walking slopes to a maximum of 5%. Ramps are limited to a maximum slope of 8.33% (and handrails are required for the ramp).

The City is looking to remove accessibility barriers, not create new barriers. And it is questionable whether this new path, constructed by a private party on public land, is legally possible under the ADA due to the steep slope.

The Engineering department does not address this issue in their proposed conditions, though condition #9 would require an 8 foot wide path rather than a 6 foot wide path and would require the sidewalk to be concrete rather than bituminous.

This is a visual representation of the difference.



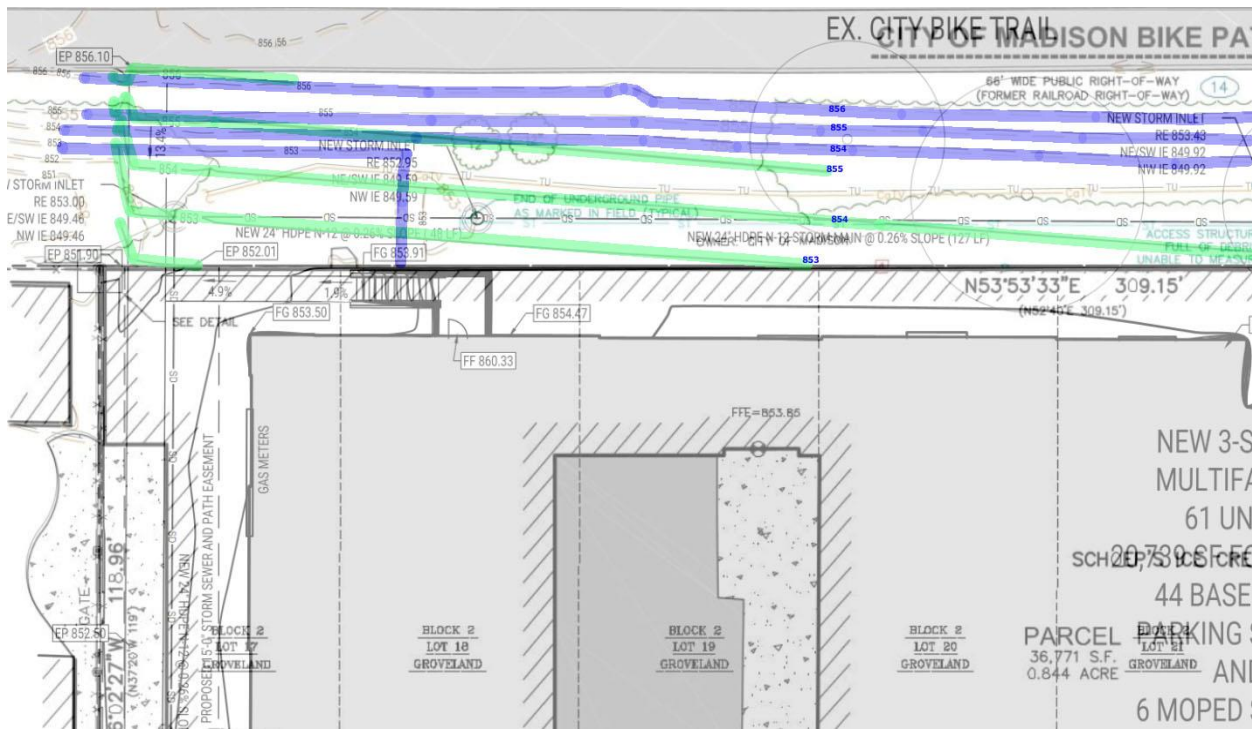
Red: the proposed slope  
Blue: ADA compliant ramp slope  
Green: ADA compliant sidewalk slope

## 2. Trees

The applicant is removing many trees in the ROW - the plans show only 4 trees will remain. The tree report states that 3 of these trees, the larger trees, "will suffer" if the grade is changed.

Now proposed condition #48 reflects that Forestry will give permission to remove all the trees near the property line. If it were not for the grading, these 4 trees could remain.

The image below shows the extent in the change of grade. The purple is the existing grade, the green is the proposed regrading. For example, a 10 inch DBH Black Walnut will have about another foot of soil placed over the tree's central area, including the trunk.



## 3. Connectivity

The entrance to the bike parking is at the easterly end of the building, a mere 150 feet from Division Street. A biker using the path would need to ride down the Helena sidewalk for about 290 feet before being able to access the parking garage entrance. (A biker could cross the street and ride down the street for the 290 feet, but that is unlikely to happen.)

A biker could enter through the rear, carry the bike up 13 steps and then carry the bike down the steps to the garage level.

The map below reflects the proposed path, in green, and the bike parking area, also in green.

The map below also reflects distances between existing connectivity points. The proposed path does not lead anywhere but to the Cap City path. There is no connection point to another

street/path on the other side of Eastwood, nor to another street/path on the other side of Helena. This path will primarily be for the supposed convenience of residents at the new building who bike, yet due to placement of the bike parking and lack of access other than the garage doors, it does not add convenience. There are likely a couple of residents along the middle of the 2000 block of Helena who would appreciate a new path, but it does not provide new connectivity for the rest of the neighborhood.



#### 4. Miscellaneous Comments

On both side of the ROW path the hillside will be built up. On the easterly side, that infill extends for 20-190 feet. On the westerly side, there is minimal infill. If someone steps more than a foot off the path they could go tumbling down the hillside.

Is there a risk that erosion, particularly on the westerly side, will undermine the path?

This would be another path for the City to maintain, including plowing in winter.

Proposed condition #9 states: "The applicant shall be aware that this sidewalk could potentially block the existing stormwater drainage patterns and that culverts or other storm sewer improvements will be required to correct the drainage issue created by the new sidewalk." This could disrupt other portions of the ROW and potentially place other trees at risk.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Linda Lehnertz

**From:** [Doug Johnson](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** 2066-2094 Helena Street #91908  
**Date:** Monday, April 13, 2026 8:48:38 AM

---

You don't often get email from johnson.douglas.n@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

City of Madison Plan Commission,

The Schenk Atwood Starkweather Yahara Neighborhood Association would like to express its support for the proposal from Hovde Properties for a multi-family development on Helena Street. We appreciate its integration into the neighborhood and its engagement with the Capital City Trail. We encourage special attention to using native plants in the landscaping plan and to the preservation and planting of canopy trees.

Please support the request for rezoning to TSS and the Conditional Use Permits necessary for this project to proceed.

Thank you,

Doug Johnson

SASY Neighborhood Association

Preservation & Development Committee

**From:** [Nicholas Davies](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Cc:** [eschwenker@hovdeproperties.com](mailto:eschwenker@hovdeproperties.com)  
**Subject:** Yes to housing at 2094 Helena Street (91908) ideally with commercial space  
**Date:** Sunday, April 12, 2026 10:59:20 AM

---

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear Plan Commission,

I support the addition of more housing units in the very walkable/bikable Schenk's Corners neighborhood. At three stories, the proposed building will be consistent with the single-unit residential on one side, and the existing multi-unit Velo 404 building on the other. 44 parking stalls for 61 housing units will mean that parking is unbundled, and the building will have very little impact (if any) on neighborhood traffic.

My one wishlist item for this project is some measure of commercial space, for it to be consistent with Traditional Shopping Street zoning. The Velo 404 location on the corner would've been an even better place to add commercial space, but this location would also be a great place to add this.

The Cap City Trail corridor already manages to support two coffee shops and two ice cream parlors within the span of two blocks. This demonstrates the high appetite for commercial destinations around this type of multi-modal corridor. Even a small unit of path-facing commercial space in this location could be put to great use.

Thank you,

Nick Davies  
3717 Richard St