

From: [Scott Hershberger](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Subject: Street tree protection (89254)
Date: Sunday, August 10, 2025 11:00:45 AM

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Dear Plan Commission members:

I am a Madison resident, and I strongly support the proposed amendments to Madison's general ordinances to enhance the city's street tree protection provisions and establish a Street Tree Replacement Fund.

Trees are the unsung heroes of our urban landscapes. They benefit our physical health by providing shade and cooling the city, they benefit our mental health through their green beauty, and they benefit the environment by filtering pollution, preventing erosion, providing habitat and food for wildlife and pollinators, and more. Many of these benefits are amplified for old, large trees that take several (human) generations to grow. By increasing our protections for street trees, we are investing in our current and future well-being.

I hope you will support the proposed amendments. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Scott Hershberger
702 Eagle Heights
Apt D
Madison, WI 53705

From: annewalker@homelandgarden.com
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Subject: Agenda item 2-street trees
Date: Sunday, August 10, 2025 11:34:28 AM

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Dear Plan Commission Members,

I strongly support measures to help better protect our canopy trees in both the terrace and the public ROW. Years ago, I was a part of the effort to protect terrace trees from street reconstructions and was dismayed that those same trees had so few protections when it came to development. We have lost so many trees in neighborhoods that are rapidly developing, and here in the isthmus they are very difficult to replace due to rules regarding planting under power lines, underground utilities, signage, lights, driveways, etc.

I would also ask that there be protections for trees from herbicide drift, which is a common problem in the public ROW and along the RR tracks. While I know that it can be quite difficult to try and work with the RR, herbicide drift is a common problem.

Additionally, trees in our public ROW and our parks and terraces are suffering avoidable injuries to their trunks and roots from weed whips and lawn mowers, which is a very common problem here in Madison and most cities. Please help!

Best, Anne Walker
District 6

From: annewalker@homelandgarden.com
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#); [Mayor](#); [Mayer, Davy](#)
Subject: City Trees, Downtown maintenance, Current development
Date: Sunday, August 10, 2025 2:21:58 PM

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Dear Mayor, PC Members and Alder,

An additional comment. As a professional landscaper, with a lot of experience working both Downtown and the Isthmus, I saw a lot of trees experience 'death by a thousand cuts.' I have seen outdoor cafe's use the trees to string up lights i.e. and the damage that can happen. Damage also commonly occurs when people use a tree to lock up their bike, or people double park a vehicle and smack into a tree trunk, as well as snap off branches.

In addition, the methods and products we use to keep the jewel that is our Downtown looking it's best are often not tree friendly. Sidewalks and plaza's are often cleaned using heated water, or products which are not plant friendly. Tree grates and gardens are often the place we send the wastewater, as well as into our lakes and streams. In example, Taste of Madison, while a lovely event, creates a lot of grease that needs to be cleaned off our sidewalks and streets. And, salt, as well as dog pee are taking a real toll too.

I work across the street from the development (in progress) next to the Tenney Locks, next to the Yahara River on Sherman Ave. There are, or were, 2 lovely Maple trees on private property. The trees are suffering. The soil is compacted, soil level altered, roots have been severed and branches broken. My fear is that what is being prioritized is the wonderful view that future tenants will have from their windows and balconies of Lake Mendota, the Capital, Downtown, and gorgeous sunsets..... and not the Maple trees, which might be considered to be 'in the way.' We are a tree deficient neighborhood, and the development is next to the Yahara River Parkway. It's a shame. We cannot continue to lose valuable canopy trees if we are serious about maintaining and increasing the canopy. Heat waves are the number one weather related killer, and those Maples were important partners.

Respectfully, Anne Walker

From: [Nicholas Davies](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Cc: [Martinez-Rutherford, Dina Nina](#)
Subject: Regarding street tree changes (89254)
Date: Sunday, August 10, 2025 12:13:55 PM

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Dear Plan Commission,

At the risk of trying to convey something nuanced:

I appreciate the intent of the proposed increased protections of street trees. In particular, I've noticed a trend of projects in the right-of-way that involve tree removals, and how those projects could achieve broader public support if they didn't have that net-negative impact on tree population. It's a real problem worth solving.

However, we need to be careful that the proposed changes won't tie the city's hands from doing important work. Therefore, I'd be more comfortable with these proposed changes if it was clearer how it would have affected recent past examples where street tree preservation came into conflict with other competing priorities.

* In item 88156, the city approved moving a house along W Main St, and through a portion of Brittingham Park. This involved removal of a couple of street trees already in poor health. This trade-off was ultimately accepted (which I concur with) because in this case, moving a historic house allowed for the creation of dozens of housing units on its previous parcel.

* The creation of a multi-use path along Mineral Point Rd required the removal of several street trees, which were largely low-value according to the arborist's testimony. Because of the staging of the BRT project, cyclists had already lost an on-street bike lane before the multi-use path was approvable. I believe this project achieved tree-neutrality through new plantings elsewhere.

* In recent neighborhood street reconstructions like Doncaster Dr (recently completed) and Davidson St (recently approved), adding sidewalks on both sides (a Complete Green Streets recommendation for accessibility) came into conflict with a neighborhood desire to preserve existing trees within the public right-of-way. The city resolved that conflict by adopting a compromise plan, where sidewalk would only be added on one side, and that sidewalk would be aligned to minimize tree impacts.

* At 3610 Atwood Ave, the multi-use path splits to go around both sides of a street tree, but only gives the tree a couple feet of clearance on either side.

Having read through the proposed changes in item 89254, I am no wiser about how these changes would have impacted these earlier decisions.

If street tree protections prevent the city from allocating the entirety of the public right-of-way for non-tree uses, some other use of the right-of-way will get squeezed. And because of fire department access requirements (and other considerations like transit routes), the city may be prevented from narrowing the motor vehicle roadway further than 26'.

This creates a situation where the street uses getting squeezed will be the uses that are already getting inequitably squeezed: cycling, walking, wheelchair use, etc.

In places like Davidson St, we are already sacrificing some accessibility for retention of some tree canopy. But if protection of street trees is treated as an absolute, without defining any check and balance on the rights of those trees, I worry how that will impact the city's decision-making. If wheelchair access is flexible/scalable, and tree impacts are not, will wheelchair access get sacrificed altogether?

In situations like Mineral Point Rd, the tree removals were actually the more climate-friendly option, since the resulting path enables people to switch their commutes away from car travel. I don't see anything in item 89254 that recognizes this as a potential upside of tree removal. (This is of course also a false dichotomy, since Mineral Point Rd also has redundant vehicle lanes.)

I value street trees highly. A canopy creates shade and cooling and better visibility by reducing glare. Street trees are available for everyone's enjoyment, as opposed to off-street trees behind a private property's fence line. I'm confident that there's something more we could do to promote and protect our tree population, but I'm not yet confident that this item, in its current form, is it.

Thank you,

Nick Davies
3717 Richard St