



Members of the Common Council,

On behalf of the La Crosse Housing Advocacy Committee, we write in support of the proposed ordinance to allow for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) in La Crosse. We are pleased that the City's unanimously approved Comprehensive Plan recommends allowing for ADUs and that the Common Council is seriously considering this proposal to improve housing access in our community.

The Housing Advocacy Committee is led by Habitat for Humanity of the Greater La Crosse Region and represents over twenty employers and non-profit agencies concerned about affordable housing. The committee previously submitted a letter to this body recommending four specific zoning updates—including ADUs—to address the housing crisis in La Crosse. Our justification for ADUs in our earlier letter remains the same: “ADUs are a very simple option for adding density and housing options with minimal impact. This is especially important for families requiring additional living space for aging parents or caregivers and adults who require family support to thrive.”

Additionally, we strongly support:

- Allowing **ADUs in any zoning district that permits single-family dwellings**. This ordinance is likely most beneficial to single- or two-family households with expansion needs, family changes, and ample space to support an ADU. ADUs offer property owners more flexibility in how their household evolves and expands, and they allow seniors to age in place with family members close by, without needing to navigate a complicated Conditional Use Permit process.
- Councilmember Mindel’s proposed amendment to this ordinance, which specifies that **existing accessory structures do not need to meet setback requirements**. The footprints of existing carriage houses, garages, and other accessory structures generally do not maintain new side and back yard setbacks, even though these structures are often ripe for conversion and already fit into the neighborhood fabric.

We see myriad additional benefits with the passing of this ordinance:

- ADUs can be built to be accessible for seniors or differently abled residents, whereas larger homes are not as conducive to such changes.
- ADUs’ co-location with an owner-occupied main house allows for more attentiveness to the rental units.
- ADUs cater to individuals and family types not currently supported by existing rental options.
- ADUs use a substantial investment from a homeowner and help increase our tax base, all while providing additional units of housing.

If passed as written, the ADU ordinance will not dramatically nor quickly change the fabric of La Crosse’s residential neighborhoods. It will, however, increase options for our current and future residents. It will be one more tool the City can use to support housing access for all.



Thank you for your work on this issue and your consideration of our position.

Sincerely,

Members of the La Crosse Housing Advocacy Committee