
From: melissa crook <crook6@att.net>
Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2024 10:54 AM
To: Sleznikow, Larry <sleznikowl@cityoflacrosse.org>
Cc: Acklin, Tim <Acklint@cityoflacrosse.org>
Subject: Fwd: NRC Legislated Parking

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Hello Larry,

I'm writing to you regarding the NRC meeting scheduled for tomorrow. While I was unable to attend the last two meetings (and videos aren't available on Legistar), I have been following closely the discussion regarding the removal of legislated parking requirements for residential dwellings. To date, the analysis has been completely one sided. There has been little, if any, thoughtful discourse on the unfavorable impacts of such an ordinance. I reached out to Jennifer Trost in May (see the forwarded email below) to voice my concerns, but I didn't receive a response. In order to fully vet this idea, it is necessary to analyze potential negative consequences. While a reduction in parking requirements may be warranted, the outcomes of removing all parking mandates could be a nightmare to residents in your district and other centrally located areas.

While I appreciate the dedication of the Commission to encourage more eco-friendly modes of transportation, some important points have been overlooked. Take for example the following:

- Several blocks of State Street and Main Street near West Avenue are congested on both sides with parked cars narrowing the road width so it is nearly impassible by two way traffic. I once thought that was due to students driving to campus for class, but it is not. Many of these vehicles are parked there day and night. They are likely residents of the multi-family dwellings that were not required to provide parking for tenants (either due to lack of code requirements when they were converted from single family properties or apt complexes that were granted code exceptions.) The newly completed Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan identifies these streets (HIN maps 3.1 and 3.2) as dangerous problem areas. The conditions created by parked vehicles are unsafe not only for drivers but for bikers and pedestrians as well. If given the choice, cyclists avoid streets like these over safety concerns. It is contradictory to say that removing parking requirements should encourage more cycling while at the same time enacting policy that creates more unsafe streets for those cyclists.

- Many Commissioners on the NRC are avid cyclists and choose that as a primary mode of transportation. Has this prompted anyone to get rid of their vehicles? If you have

not done so, then why would you assume that others would get rid of their cars because they can get around by bike or bus?

- Affordable housing developments will be disproportionately affected by removing mandated parking requirements. As developers look to cut costs, parking is one of the first things to go. Is it equitable to assume that those in lower income housing shouldn't be provided parking?

- As there is a push towards EVs, where will individuals without parking charge their vehicles overnight? Should multiple people be expected to jockey over a few spaces that provide this amenity?

These are just a few of the drawbacks that could come from removing all legislated parking requirements. More balanced discussion is required to draft an ordinance to benefit all citizens. This may be better if postponed and included in the upcoming zoning code update. It makes more sense to complete a comprehensive overhaul rather than breaking this piece out separately and then possibly having to revisit what was done. Additionally, this will save the Planning Department time and resources by not having to conduct individual public information sessions related to only one topic. After all, parking is just a small part of the affordable housing dilemma. Developing the most effective zoning code can only be done if it is approached holistically.

Best Regards,

Melissa Crook

Begin forwarded message:

From: melissa crook <crook6@att.net>
Date: May 3, 2024 at 10:38:31 AM CDT
To: Jennifer Trost <trostj@cityoflacrosse.org>
Cc: Tim Acklin <acklint@cityoflacrosse.org>, Sleznikowl@cityoflacrosse.org, gogqine@cityoflacrosse.org, woodardc@cityoflacrosse.org
Subject: NRC Legislated Parking

Hi Jennifer,

Thank you for arranging for Tony Jordan to speak at the NRC meeting. It was interesting to hear his perspective. While he made some valid points, I'm still not sold on the idea that removing all legislated parking

requirements is the right decision for LaCrosse.

As CM Woodard mentioned, it would be valuable to hear from the other mid-sized cities in Wisconsin that have embraced this idea. I also think it's important to present a balanced array of information to the Commission so that they can make the most informed decision. This can be done by inviting the following individuals (among others) to speak at future NRC meetings.

- Developers in our city who are against removing mandates. Understanding their professional opinions will help write an ordinance that best serves LaCrosse's specific needs.
- The Apartment Association of LaCrosse who has expressed substantial opposition to removing parking mandates as they don't believe it serves the tenants they represent.
- Residents of Elliot Arms or State St who may have parking challenges due to the multi-family buildings that were not required to comply with parking minimums in their areas.
- Bikers who have been injured while riding in congested areas or who have to avoid certain streets over safety concerns posed by parked cars.
- Former Council members such as Dave Morrison or Bill Harnden who were involved in the decisions to add legislated parking minimums to the municipal code. It's likely they had very valid reasons for the 1:1 parking ratio for multi-family dwellings and that they were not "arbitrary" as suggested by Tony Jordan.
- The City traffic engineer. I would like to hear an explanation of the opinion that car lined streets are as safe to drive as those that are not. Despite that individuals reduce speed in congested areas, there is a lack of visibility for pedestrians, bikers and drivers. In some areas, the road width is significantly narrowed by parked vehicles making them impassible by two-way traffic.
- An explanation from the Planning department of what has changed between 2021 when they stated "There was a considerable amount of opposition, particularly for the elimination of the (1:1) ratio for multi-family development" and "should the ordinance be submitted to the Council in its current form staff feels that there was enough opposition to prevent any form of this effort from moving forward" to now in 2024. Again, I don't believe that the political will of the current Council is a compelling argument to rush a vote on this issue.

I sincerely appreciate your passion and commitment to the environment. It's admirable that you have raised awareness and are encouraging others to choose more eco-friendly modes of transportation. However, the general public will be much more likely to embrace this initiative if they see that the NRC was encouraged to weigh both sides of the argument. As it stands now, solicited community feedback from 2021 is being completely

ignored. That is undemocratic and will eventually lead citizens to be distrustful of the process by which this ordinance was developed.

Sincerely,

Melissa Crook