

December 19,2023

To the Common Council,

I am writing to express my objection and concerns on the proposed ordinance submitted to allow Accessory Dwelling Units, ADU, in R-1 areas in the city. While I know a lot of work goes into developing an ordinance, I feel there are areas that have not been addressed.

Before an ADU ordinance is considered for approval the city needs to know what it already has. This would require the city to inspect all residential properties in La Crosse to know how many ADUs already exists. A change in ordinance should include plans for how it will address current ADU's and how to bring them up to code. If they are grandfathered in how to align the standards that each unit (resident) have separate service meters so that revenue can be collected for these services, ie. water and sewer? There should be a plan developed on how the ordinance will be enforced, and consequences for not complying with the ordinance. The costs associated for implementing and enforcement of the ordinance should be part of the review and approval process. The ordinance as written has the potential to increase city expenses. While property taxes will increase on these properties it will not cover the long-term cost of services. These issues need to be addressed prior to approval of any ordinance as increased service should not be passed on to the city or other taxpayers. The property owner who pursues this avenue of business revenue, needs to carry the burden of costs accrued for the service they receive. At today's rental rates the property owner can easily generate about \$12,000.00 per year in revenue.

*(2) Standards and criteria*

*d. In no case shall an ADU be more than the primary building's total floor area, nor more than 900 square feet. ADUs above a garage shall not count toward the maximum area for accessory buildings.*

If the ADU has a common wall with the garage, the area above the garage needs to be considered as part of the total square footage of the ADU. If the area above the garage is not considered it has the potential to surpass the proposed maximum 900 square feet with a 1500 +/- square foot ADU. or

*e. Minimum parking requirements in this chapter shall only apply to the primary structure. There shall be no minimum parking requirement for the ADU.*

The ADU is the same as a resident, therefore, should have the same parking requirements of any residential development. This creates consistency and fairness for all developers throughout the city. Many city streets are already difficult to travel during the winter months when there are cars parked on both sides of the street. Why is the

city making parking concessions for residents that are trying to earn an income off their residential property?

*Other considerations:*

1. What will the new address be for the new ADU, since most of them will be towards the back of the properties?
2. If the ADU access is via an alley, will the city be responsible for maintaining it?
3. Will the alley be renamed a "court", so the city then plows the court? Which is currently occurring.
4. How will the increase in garbage be addressed? For every new ADU (or old) there should be a line-item garbage service charge on the property tax bill for each dwelling on the property, thus two garbage charges. This shows transparency of cost for a service received. Recently the mayor and city officials made the decision to decrease the level of garbage service for 2024. This was part of the budget cuts the city felt it needed to make to remain fiscally responsible. Let's not make it worse by not planning appropriately for increased volume of waste or passing the cost on to all residents.

Rental companies have more resources and are buying up property in the city faster than young families. Does the city want the residential area to become predominately rental properties? The city needs to consider what ratio of residential property it will allow as rentals and/or multi-family properties. School attendance is already down as families are making decisions to purchase homes in neighboring communities who value stable neighborhoods.

While I get a sense that many feel passing this ordinance is long overdue, I feel it needs to be rejected. This will change the dynamics of the neighborhood even further with fewer young families having the ability to purchase a home within the city of La Crosse. Please consider a pause and make sure that good decisions are being made for the long term. Growth, fiscal responsibility, and accountability are part of the City Council's role and need to be part of a plan in developing any ordinance for ADU's.

Respectfully,

Clem Bott  
Ruth Hicks

cc: Jennifer Trost and Rebecca Schwarz