Bicycle Parking Ordinance Discussion

1) Secure Long-Term Bicycle Parking for Residential Development

2) Modernizing Short-Term Bicycle Parking Standards

1. Secure Long-Term Bicycle Parking for Residential Development

Statement of the Issue

La Crosse has invested in bicycle infrastructure and adopted goals to increase bicycling as a transportation option. However, many residential developments do not provide secure bicycle storage for residents. While some newer apartment developments voluntarily include bicycle rooms or secure storage areas, others provide only basic outdoor racks or no dedicated long-term bicycle parking at all.

As bicycles and e-bikes become more expensive and more commonly used for transportation, secure storage is becoming an important residential amenity. Residents are less likely to use a bicycle for transportation if they do not have a safe and convenient place to store it. The lack of consistent standards means access to secure bicycle storage varies significantly between developments.

Proposal

Establish a minimum expectation that new residential developments provide secure bicycle parking for residents.

Justification

Many developments are already moving in this direction because tenants increasingly expect bicycle storage as an amenity. A bicycle room or secured storage area is becoming as common as package rooms, fitness areas, and other features now routinely included in multifamily housing.

Peer Communities

- Milwaukee requires bicycle parking for multifamily and commercial developments and establishes design standards.
- Minneapolis requires long-term bicycle parking to be secure, weather protected, and accessible to residents.
- Burlington, Vermont requires long-term bicycle parking to protect bicycles from theft and weather.
- Madison incorporates bicycle parking standards into site design requirements.

References

Madison Bicycle Parking Requirements:
https://www.cityofmadison.com/bikemadison/documents/bikerackrequirements.pdf

Milwaukee Bicycle Parking Ordinance:
https://city.milwaukee.gov/ImageLibrary/Groups/cityDCD/planning/plans/Urban-Design-Components/Site/ApprovedBicycleParkingSpaceOrdianceEff.July282017.pdf

Minneapolis Zoning Code Bicycle Parking Requirements: https://cyclesafe.com/bike-parking-regulations/minneapolis-mn/

Burlington Integrated Development Ordinance, Section 8.2.8 Long-Term Bicycle Parking

https://sustainablecitycode.org/brief/bicycle-parking-minimums/

Concept Long-Term Bicycle Parking Standard

Long-term bicycle parking shall:

1. Security

Be located within:

- A controlled-access bicycle room;
- Bicycle lockers;
- A secure bicycle enclosure;
- A secured indoor parking area; or
- Another facility approved by the Planning Director.

2. Weather Protection

Provide protection from:

- Rain
- Snow
- Ice
- Sun exposure

through an enclosed structure or permanent roof.

3. Access

Long-term bicycle parking shall:

- Be accessible to intended users.
- Be available at all times to residents or employees.
- Not require the bicycle to be carried over multiple flights of stairs whenever practical.

At least **[X]%** of required spaces shall be accessible without stairs.

4. Location

Long-term bicycle parking shall be located within:

[X] feet of the primary entrance used by residents.

5. Lighting

Required bicycle parking areas shall be adequately illuminated.

6. Electric Bicycle Accommodation

For residential developments containing **[X] or more units**, bicycle rooms shall provide access to electrical outlets sufficient to serve electric bicycle charging.

7. Residential Restrictions

Required long-term bicycle parking shall not be located:

- Within dwelling units;
- On balconies;
- On patios; or
- In other areas not intended for shared bicycle storage.

2. Modernizing Short-Term Bicycle Parking Standards

Statement of the Issue

La Crosse's zoning code (Sections 115-514(g) and 115-552(g)) requires bicycle parking in many residential and commercial developments. However, the code does not clearly identify what constitutes acceptable bicycle parking and continues to reference rack types that are no longer considered best practice.

As a result, new developments continue to install bicycle racks that technically satisfy ordinance requirements but function poorly for users. Examples include wave racks, schoolyard racks, and other designs that do not adequately support a bicycle or allow a rider to securely lock the bicycle frame. Best practices for bike parking.

In some cases, developers are installing racks that meet the letter of the ordinance while failing to provide bicycle parking that cyclists actually want to use.

Proposal

Update zoning code language to reflect best practices for bike parking.

Most bicycle planning organizations now recommend performance standards rather than specifying particular rack types. Modern bicycle parking standards generally require that a rack support a bicycle upright, support the frame rather than just the wheel, allow the frame and wheel to be secured with a U-lock, and accommodate different bicycle types and sizes.

These standards are commonly used by municipalities, universities, and private developers and have largely replaced older rack designs that focus on quantity rather than functionality.

Things to Consider

- Should the ordinance prohibit specific rack designs, such as wave racks and schoolyard racks?
- Should the City maintain a list of approved bicycle rack types?

Concept Short-Term Bicycle Parking Standards

1. Location

Short-term bicycle parking shall:

- Be located in a convenient and visible location.
- Be located within **[X] feet** of a primary public entrance whenever practical.
- Be accessible without passing through a secured area.

2. Surface

Bicycle parking shall be installed on:

- Concrete;
- Asphalt;
- Pavers; or
- Other hard, stable surfaces approved by the Planning Director.

3. Lighting

Bicycle parking areas shall be adequately illuminated.

4. Clearance

Bicycle parking shall:

- Not interfere with pedestrian circulation;
- Not obstruct required accessible routes;

5. Rack Design

Required bicycle racks shall:

1. Support a bicycle in an upright position at a minimum of two points.
2. Permit the bicycle frame and at least one wheel to be secured with a standard U-lock.
3. Accommodate a variety of bicycle sizes and frame styles.
4. Allow independent use of each bicycle parking space.

5. Be permanently anchored.

6. Prohibited Rack Types

The following rack types shall not count toward required bicycle parking:

- Wave racks;
- Ribbon racks;
- Schoolyard racks;
- Comb racks;
- Wheel-bender racks; and
- Any rack that does not permit locking of the bicycle frame.

The Planning Director may determine that other rack designs fail to satisfy the standards for acceptable short term bike parking.

7. Alternative Compliance

The Planning Director may approve alternative bicycle parking designs when the applicant demonstrates that the proposed design provides equal or greater functionality, accessibility, and security than required by this section.