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From: cvm <cvanmaren@protonmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 12, 2024 4:23 PM
To: ZZ Council Members; ZZ City Clerk External
Subject: #24-1323 Lukewarm yes

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Dear Council Members,

I am writing to support, with some reservations, the parking minimums legislation, 24-1323. I know that [changing these requirements can make a big difference](#) in how much housing is available and how much it costs, but this should really be just one part of a larger package and plan to not only let developers build more apartments, but also to be mindful of the transportation challenges many in our community face.

I admit I have a pretty shallow understanding of zoning, housing requirements, parking rules, TIDs, and more. Maybe these issues are already being considered, but if not, I hope you will.

Low-income and disabled car drivers. I am a transit advocate and a user and supporter of the MTU. It is the best public transit system for a city our size in the state. But, it's not good enough for many, especially working students with tight schedules, families with young children, and people with disabilities to rely on for their everyday needs. Service is too infrequent and ends too early, and coverage is spotty. So, many people feel they must own a car even if they really can't afford it. If the availability of off street parking is reduced, will there be adverse consequences for them? Will their car insurance rates go up if they don't have off-street parking available? Will they be subject to more fees and fines or have more challenges with being plowed in on an overparked street or needing to park far from their homes? What problems might there be for low-income and disabled drivers? It's one thing to remove requirements from a business and service, it's another thing when it's your home. Many decision-makers are homeowners with off street parking. Have low-income drivers and those with disabilities weighed in?

Equity for non drivers. I know some people are concerned that their streets will become clogged with more parked cars, but my concern is that the city will be taking on the "storage costs" of more people's private vehicles because almost all of our street parking is free. And the up to 40 percent of city residents who don't drive have been subsidizing this for a long time while, if they are bus users, they must pay for every ride they take. (In his article, [It Shouldn't Cost 31 Times More to Take Transit Than Park](#), Joe Cortright notes that, "The way we price transit, and don't price private car storage in the public realm, is evidence of "Asphalt Socialism" — subsidies for cars and driving, and high prices and penalties for those who take transit.... the subsidies to parking are one of the most inequitable aspects of the urban realm.") It seems to me that a parking minimum elimination should be coupled with a comprehensive plan to charge the true cost of parking all over the city and use those funds to improve public transit so fewer people will feel the need to drive, non drivers will not be subsidizing drivers, and we can improve our public transit. Parking passes for low-income individuals and those with special needs could be available. Non drivers may benefit from lower rents. Can they also get better transportation options?

Other ways to the goal. Are there more direct approaches being considered in parallel with this? Rents are too high and the city is too meek in requiring affordable units in developments it subsidizes, I think. Do at least half of rental units the city helps fund cost less than \$1,000 per month? Could we remove limits on the numbers of unrelated people in a house to encourage and promote co-housing and long term rooming houses? What's happening with the Tribune building, Bridgeview Plaza, and K-Mart? Those places could host lots of housing, including [temporary housing for those without](#), but they are just sitting there. Is there any chance of getting [land-value taxes](#) or some other incentive (or penalties) for moving ahead? What about all the surface parking lots in the city? Couldn't some of those host more housing, maybe *public*

housing where making a profit is not the prime consideration? Is the new zoning going to reduce lot size and footprint requirements and allow for much more mixed-use development? These all need to be part of the plan, I think.

I do support this, but we can't just do one part of a good thing. All the steps need to happen, especially with housing and transportation so closely intertwined. So, I kind of encourage you to pass this, but whether you do or don't, I definitely encourage you to look at more direct, more equitable ways to get more really affordable housing into our community.

Thank you.

Cathy Van Maren, La Crosse