

**Agenda Item 23-1243 (Lewis Kuhlman)**

AN ORDINANCE to amend Section 115-390(1)d.3. and to create Section 115-405 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of La Crosse to allow accessory dwelling units.

**General Location**

Citywide

**Background Information**

An accessory dwelling unit (ADU) is a smaller residence separate from the primary residence on the same parcel. The American Planning Association (APA) says, “ADUs all have the potential to increase housing affordability (both for homeowners and tenants), create a wider range of housing options within the community, enable seniors to stay near family as they age, and facilitate better use of the existing housing fabric in established neighborhoods.” Staff looked at APA guidance and ordinances from nine Wisconsin Communities, including Onalaska. ADUs were discussed at neighborhood meetings regarding future land use in the Comprehensive Plan. In Dec. 2022, Habitat for Humanity’s Housing Advocacy Committee advocated for ADUs in a letter to the Common Council about increasing affordable housing in La Crosse.

**Recommendation of Other Boards and Commissions**

Staff discussed ADUs with the Neighborhood Revitalization Commission (NRC) and Community Development Committee (CDC) in Dec. 2022. Based on direction from those meetings, staff reported back to the NRC and the Economic and Community Development Commission (ECDC) in Apr. 2023. The NRC discussed ADUs at four more meetings, culminating in its recommendation to submit an ordinance to the Common Council in October 2023.

**Consistency with Adopted Comprehensive Plan**

This ordinance supports a Comprehensive Plan recommendation to increase the supply of rental units affordable to households making less than the area median income (AMI). In the Housing Section’s discussion on “missing middle” housing, ADUs are mentioned as a possible attractive housing type for 1- or 2-person households. It would fit in the low and medium density housing future land use category. The Climate Action Plan also recommends allowing and encouraging ADUs. This action supports land use and housing strategy to increase the number of housing units within the current city limits by 5% by 2030. This strategy’s intention is to preserve outlying undeveloped areas, reduce the cost and consumption of extending municipal infrastructure, and reduce transportation emissions.

**Staff Recommendation**

**Approval** – ADUs have the potential to increase affordable housing units within the existing city limits in a way that doesn’t dramatically change a neighborhood’s appearance.

**Routing** J&A 12.5.2023