

Agenda Item 24-1323 (Jenna Dinkel)

AN ORDINANCE to repeal and recreate Section 115-393 and amend Section 115-512 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of La Crosse regarding removal of all off-street parking requirements

General Location

Citywide.

Background Information

The Neighborhood Revitalization Commission (NRC) began discussions on deregulating off-street parking requirements in 2020. These discussions were in conjunction with, and continued after, the “Downtown Parking Study Update & Analysis of Expanded Areas” was complete. This study evaluated parking management in the Downtown District, University District, Gundersen-Mayo District, and the Northside District. The study found that at peak times between 8:00 am to 6:00 pm none of the studied districts reached parking occupancy capacity.

In 2021, the NRC explored the possibility of deregulating off-street parking in commercial and multi-family developments after the final report of the parking study. The Commission directed staff to gather feedback from Neighborhood Associations, the Apartment Association, and developers. A memorandum was provided to the NRC regarding the input received and is attached. The Commission recommended to move forward with an ordinance eliminating off-street parking requirements for commercial uses to the Common Council. In 2022, the Common Council adopted the ordinance removing off-street parking requirements in commercial areas.

In 2022, the NRC wanted to continue conversations and research on removing off-street parking in residential areas. Staff recommended to continue conversations after the Comprehensive Plan was complete.

The discussion was reintroduced at the Neighborhood Revitalization Commission this year and has been reviewed over the past eight months. The Commission directed staff to provide three or four different options for modifications to city parking requirements for residential zoning. The Commission moved forward with the option of eliminating all off-street parking requirements after five meetings of discussion with three meetings including input from the public. Commissioners discussed the benefits of deregulating parking as a beneficial housing initiative and discussed the development flexibility it could offer.

Recommendation of Other Boards and Commissions.

The Neighborhood Revitalization Commission recommended approval at their September 4, 2024 meeting.

Consistency with Adopted Comprehensive Plan

The City’s Comprehensive Plan notes that the City should evaluate barriers to development and housing that include off-street parking requirements. The topic of housing and development was further studied in the 2024 La Crosse Housing Study, which also recommends reducing minimum parking

requirements. Lastly, the Climate Action Plan offers the recommendation to reduce or eliminate parking minimums to assist with the goal of increasing the number of housing units in the city.

Staff Recommendation

Approval-staff recommends approval.

Municipalities across the country have been looking at reducing or eliminating minimum parking standards in an attempt to increase housing supply and reduce barriers to housing and development. In many cases, lenders and tenants require or create the need for minimum parking spaces, which developers often supply based on the known demand. Cities have begun to step away from the practice of regulation and allow the market to decide the necessary parking.

The League of Wisconsin Municipalities estimates the average cost of a paved surface parking space to be about \$4,000. The cost of unneeded parking can impact housing affordability. As stated in the 2024 La Crosse Housing Study, parking is the most expensive land use that is not an income-producing property and can lead to inefficient land development.

In alignment with the Comprehensive Plan, Housing Study, and Climate Action Plan, staff recommends approval.

Routing J&A 12.3.2024