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05 December 2023

AARP WISCONSIN COMMENTS ON ADU ORDINANCE DELIVERED TO CITY OF LA CROSSE JUDICIARY & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

AARP has a deep commitment to La Crosse through our engagement with local volunteers and community partners to empower residents to choose how they live as they age, the multiple AARP Community Challenge Grants the community has received, and the FitLot and related programming that we gifted to the city in the Trane All Abilities Park. It is this commitment that brings me here today to speak on housing.

We believe that the availability, affordability and variety of housing options support the widely held desire of residents to remain in their communities as they age. AARP views ADUs as one tool in the toolbox to address affordable housing availability in our communities. They also provide options for older residents who wish to live independently, but don't need a large home or provide opportunities for caregivers to live close by. We were pleased to be able to share our resources with staff at the beginning of the process and trust that they helped shape the ordinance that you see before you today. You can find all of our resources at www.aarp.org/adu.

AARP staff submitted comments to the most recent Neighborhood Revitalization Commission meeting suggesting a few changes and were encouraged to see one suggestion implemented, the inclusion of R1 districts. We would like to take this opportunity to highlight the other suggestions for consideration.

We do believe that you are off to a great start, but also wanted to share some recommendations based on our experience of working with similar ordinances across the United States.

- We noted an occupancy requirement which stipulates that the property owner has to live in either the main house or the ADU. We have seen this requirement as a limiting factor to ADU adoption. If completely removing the requirement is not an option, we would suggest a test period where ADUs are permitted without an owner occupancy requirement to determine whether problems with tenants justify imposition of an owner occupancy requirement.
- It was also noted that the proposed ordinance only allows for detached ADUs. This could also be a factor that limits adoption as it limits options for

homeowners. Their lot may not be suitable for a detached ADU but could support an attached unit. We've found that allowing property owners options is important to getting ADUs constructed.

- And lastly, I'd suggest that you implement a data collection and reporting process into the ordinance. Reporting back to Common Council, and applicable commissions and committees, the number of units applying for permits and the number constructed will allow policy makers to determine the effectiveness of the ordinance.

I know that you want this project to be successful and I believe that it will be with a few suggested tweaks. Please do not hesitate to reach out if I can be of any support, I stand ready to help however you'd find valuable. I may be reached at 608-286-6303 or dwasniewski@aarp.org.

Sincerely,

Darrin Wasniewski
Associate State Director- Community Outreach