

Craig, Sondra

From: Justin S McKnight <jsmcknight@viterbo.edu>
Sent: Monday, March 4, 2024 7:07 AM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: Support for REACH Center Rezoning Efforts

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To Whom it may Concern:

My name is Justin McKnight LPC, NCC and I am the Director of Counseling Services at Viterbo University. I wanted to write in support of the proposed re-zoning of the space on 11th Street. While I do not live in the neighborhood, my family works and attends school in the Washburn Neighborhood. Additionally, as a member of the La Crosse community, I find value in creative utilization of our limited spaces and value making essential services accessible to those who may struggle with transportation.

What makes this project particularly appealing is the provision of MA-funded dental services. Dental services provided by Scenic Bluffs in this space are difficult to obtain locally through the Wisconsin state health insurance program, especially with the recent closing of an office that provided such services. In addition, another provider of mental health services in this centralized location will continue to help those in need of life-saving supports. I do realize that this neighborhood struggles to balance elements of its residential character with rental properties and public services, but as others have noted in their letters of support, this building has been in long-term use as a clinical space. Investment in creating accessible essential health care in La Crosse is something that must be considered in the re-zoning of this space. Mayo Clinic, Coulee Recovery, Viaro Health, Gundersen Health Systems, etc. have all made their services walkable or easily accessed through bussing, removing the need to travel to spaces outside the city, which greatly limits access.

Careful planning and collaboration between members of the community, local businesses, city government and other invested parties seems to me to be an opportunity for the successful launch of this program and an opportunity to capitalize on underutilized space to offer care for our most vulnerable citizens.

Sincerely,
Justin

Justin McKnight LPC, NCC, ACS ([pronouns](#): he/his)

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