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Eau Claire City Council Members,

As the Zoning Code update comes to a close, the final item is approval of the fee schedule. While we understand the city must balance increasing costs with budget needs, we urge you to adopt a fee schedule that protects housing affordability for both homeowner and renters. *According to the 2025 Price Out Estimate, for every \$1,000 increase in house price, 31 households are priced out of affording a home.*

We are asking...

- **Park Impact Fees: Set at the lowest level possible**

Impact fees have proven to increase the cost of housing because the cost is directly passed on to the homeowner or renter. The Park Impact Fee Assessment outlines a variety of fee options based on the current standard of community parks and a total improvement value. However, keep in mind that a Park Impact Fee **can only be used for capital expenses**. This is only the costs to construct, expand or improve public facilities. This means that this fee cannot be used to support park services and that any new or upgraded parks will also require on-going maintenance by the city that cannot be covered with these fees.

According to the 2024 Development Report a total of 494 units were permitted. So even if the fees were set at the lowest amount listed in the Assessment (25%), this would have resulted in at least \$221,746 received in fees for capital park improvements (assuming all 3+ units in the report are calculated as Multi-Family units).

The financial impact on recent projects:

Development Project	# of Units	Cost impact at 100%	Cost impact at 25%
Cannery District Apartments (Located across from Cannery Park)	273 multi-family	\$459,186 Rent impact estimated: \$8-14 per month	\$114,797 Rent impact estimated: \$2-3.50 per month
Prairie West (Within ½ mile of Jeffers Park and Northwest Park)	96 multi-family 25 single family 102 twin homes	\$417,411 Rent impact estimated: \$8-14 per month	\$104,407 Rent impact estimated: \$2-3.50 per month
Sherman Creek Landing (within ½ mile of Sherman Creek Park)	38 twin homes	\$73,416 Lot increased by \$1,932	\$18,354 Lot increased by \$483

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The Chippewa Valley Home Builders Association (CVHBA) is a not-for-profit trade organization with a mission to promote a better area housing industry through promotion, advocacy and education. The CVHBA is affiliated with the National Association of Home Builders and the Wisconsin Builders Association.



- **High Value Tree Fee-in-Lieu: Kee at \$100 per inch as proposed**

Legally the fee has to be set no higher than it would cost the city to replace a tree. And if the funds are to be used for future public trees, that is just trees planted in the boulevards and parks. According to the City Forrester at a previous City Council meeting, they don't have the capacity to increase the number of trees in planting or maintenance, so we don't want a fee set so high that the funds can't realistically be used.

Tree Preservation in Practice

With the new landscaping standards, many new subdivisions can accommodate the needed trees.

CREEKSIDE SUBDIVISION – We used this development previously to show you the impact on an earlier version of tree preservation. If the Forrester did not include Red Pines as a High Value Tree then the subdivision would have enough room to replant the trees needed to meet the 30% replacement. However, if Red Pines were included as high value, then the replacement would increase by 2.3 times and would have to pay for 740" of tree inches that are unable to be planted (\$74,000).

Cost impact per lot:

- *If Red Pines are not included*, the added cost per lot would be \$2,589 for the cost of replanting trees and enough trees would be planted to meet the 30% canopy replacement.
- If Red Pines were included, then the cost per lot would increase by \$474 because there is not enough space to replant the trees needed.

IN-FILL LOT FORESTED PARCEL – We also looked at examples of a 2.5 acre and 4 acre forested parcel that may be used for small in-fill development (i.e. twin homes) or a multi-family unit. We assumed 170 trees per acre based upon a previous parcel development and that 5.5% of the trees on the parcel are over 12" and considered high value.

	2.5 Acres	4 Acres
Replacement inches at 30%	148.665	273.864
DBH of tree deficit	120	198
Cost of trees planted (estimated at \$300/tree)	\$8,400	\$12,000
Additional cost in tree fees paid to the City, in addition to trees planted	\$12,000	\$19,800
Total added cost	\$20,400 (\$2,550 per lot if parceled out to 8 lots)	\$31,800 (\$3,180 per lot if parceled out to 10 lots)

The added costs would also be passed on to renters as increased rental costs.



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These are already considerable fees for in-fill development. If this was increased, then it could make in-fill development much more difficult financially, and a goal of the City is to encourage in-fill development. New subdivisions have the space and ability to plant trees more affordably than smaller in-fill development can.

We respectfully urge the City Council to adopt a fee schedule that keeps housing affordability at the forefront and supports both new and in-fill development. We all want an Eau Claire that grows and continues to provide attainable housing for families while also improving the City of Eau Claire. Thanks for your consideration.

Pat Smith
Government Affairs Chairperson

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