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FEATURED

Parking ramp racing or not, city wants to put a stop to it

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The Galloway parking ramp is located near the Eau Claire Children's Museum. The City of Eau Claire is installing speed bumps and closing off the top floor of the ramp to discourage exhibition driving and reckless driving at night, something there have been increased complaints about since 2024.

By Angela Curio Leader-Telegram staff

EAU CLAIRE—The City of Eau Claire will be installing speed bumps in the Galloway, North Barstow parking ramp in downtown Eau Claire this week. The top level will also be closed except to accommodate special event parking.

This is in response to nearby residents' complaints of the ramp being misused for non-parking purposes.

"Our communications center and officers have noted a few complaints of vehicles squealing their tires and driving erratically in the ramp since 2018; however, the amount of complaints of incidents increased in 2024," said North District Patrol Lieutenant for the City of Eau Claire Police Department Bridget Coit.

"We've been hearing complaints from residents of the adjacent apartment buildings for probably a year now," said Deputy City Manager for the City of Eau Claire Dave Solberg. "I don't know if they've been going on since the ramp opened [in 2016] but they've become more troublesome with the sound component of it. It's been brought to our attention and we've been asked to look at solutions more frequently."

While Solberg and the City Manager's weekly update described the activity as parking ramp racing, the Eau Claire police department said that there aren't enough known details to describe it that way.

"There's minimal information that the vehicles have actually been racing each other," Coit said.

She described it rather as driving up and down the ramp with excessive speed.

"We've gotten multiple complaints from neighboring residents of vehicles accelerating in the ramp," she said. "Our officers have been patrolling the area as well as responding to those calls for service and finding vehicles in the ramp that are not there for parking reasons."

She said people have been congregating and speeding up and down the ramp.

"There have been some citations issued that would apply as exhibition driving, reckless driving, but no arrests have occurred," she said. "We're typically seeing it in the evening hours [and] the people that we have had contact with are typically younger."

Solberg said that if closing down the top level and speed bumps don't do enough to discourage the activity, the city will continue to seek stronger measures.

"We're trying to incrementally implement countermeasures," Solberg said. "We're starting right now to put in speed bumps so it's not as comfortable for people to go through there fast and then closing off the top deck so their unofficial race course that they like to go on is shortened."

When asked how this might negatively affect parking availability downtown, Solberg said, "The perception downtown is that there isn't adequate parking because everybody wants to park in front of the business that they're going to. The [parking] study identified that there's lots of parking spaces in the ramp. It's just that people would prefer to be on the street instead of the ramps. There's a lot of different aspects that go into that."

The top floor of the Galloway parking ramp will be opened for larger events.

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