



Memorandum



TO: Village of Lake Orion Planning Commission

FROM: Jake VanBoxel, MSA, Principal Planner
Sommer Nafal, Assistant Planner

SUBJECT: **Draft Accessory Use and Recreational Vehicle Parking & Storage Amendment**

DATE: January 29, 2026

BACKGROUND

Recently, the Village has received inquiries and complaints regarding the parking and long-term outdoor storage of recreational vehicles on residentially zoned parcels that do not contain a primary dwelling unit, particularly within the RL Lake Single Family Residential District. These situations most commonly involved vacant lots being used on a seasonal basis to park or store motor homes, trailers, boats, or similar recreational equipment.

During review, staff identified that this interpretation conflicted with the overall structure and intent of the Zoning Ordinance, which consistently treats outdoor storage of vehicles and equipment as an accessory use that is incidental to residential occupancy. However, because this principle was not expressly stated in Section 13.17 or cross-referenced to the accessory use provisions in Section 13.11, staff’s ability to enforce against storage on vacant parcels appears limited and potentially vulnerable to appeal.

The issue was brought into sharper focus by a specific RL-zoned property where a recreational vehicle was parked for extended periods throughout the summer months on a lot without a primary dwelling. This circumstance highlighted a gap between the ordinance’s intended residential character protections and its explicit regulatory language. Although other sections of the ordinance assumed the presence of a principal building, the absence of a clear statement within the recreational vehicle storage regulations creates uncertainty.

INTRODUCTION

At the February 2, 2026, meeting, the Planning Commission will review the proposed text amendment regarding accessory uses and prohibiting the parking and storing of recreational vehicles and similar items on a property without a principal residential building. The Commissioners should discuss the proposed text amendments and provide feedback and modifications to guide the development of these ordinance revisions. Should the Planning Commission find the text acceptable, a public hearing can be set for the Village Council to review and adopt the language recommended by the Planning Commission.

SECTION 13.11 TEXT AMENDMENT – ACCESSORY BUILDINGS, STRUCTURES, AND USES

The proposed text amendment would expand the scope of Section 13.11. The section title and operative language now expressly include “uses”, not just buildings and structures, reinforcing that accessory regulations apply to activities occurring on a lot, not only constructed improvements.

Additionally, a new section (H) identifies the parking and storage of recreational vehicles, boats, trailers, etc. as an accessory use. This addition will support the change in Section 13.17.



SECTION 13.17 TEXT AMENDMENT – PROHIBITING ON PARCELS WITHOUT PRIMARY BUILDING

The revised Section 13.17 retains the existing dimensional, numerical, seasonal, and district-specific standards for recreational vehicle storage, but adds a new and critical limitation: “The outdoor parking or storage of recreational vehicles, watercraft, vessel trailers, or similar items shall be permitted only on lots containing a lawful principal building used for residential purposes. Storage or parking of such items on vacant lots in residential districts is prohibited.”

This creates a new section (D) and shifts the rest of the text subsequently. Exact placement of the draft text can be reviewed and changed if deemed necessary.

The proposed text establishes a clear rule that recreational vehicle storage is not a stand-alone use of land and provides zoning staff with explicit ordinance language to support enforcement actions.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

The revisions clarify that the outdoor parking or storage of recreational vehicles and related items is an accessory use, not a principal land use, and therefore may occur only when a lawful principal residential building is present on the parcel. These changes align the ordinance with long-standing zoning principles and improve enforceability.

Additionally, the proposed revisions:

- Formally tie recreational vehicle storage to the accessory use framework already embedded throughout the ordinance
- Reinforces that accessory uses cannot exist independently of a principal use
- Ensures internal consistency between Sections 13.11 and 13.17
- Protects the residential character of the Village

We look forward to discussion of this amendment at the Planning Commission meeting on February 2nd. Following the discussion, if consensus from the Planning Commission is reached to move forward with the regulations as proposed, or with modifications, we will present the item at the next Planning Commission meeting as a public hearing for recommendation to the Village Council.

We look forward to reviewing these findings and recommendations with you. Please feel free to contact us with any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

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Jake VanBoxel, MSA
Principal Planner

Sommer Nafal, NCI
Assistant Planner