



Memorandum

TO: Village of Lake Orion Planning Commission

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

SUBJECT: **Accessory Mechanical Units – Standby Generator Regulations**

DATE: June 1, 2026

BACKGROUND

Recently, the Village has received complaints regarding the placement of Accessory Mechanical Units (standby generators). Village staff and members of the Planning Commission have asked to be provided with information regarding the current regulations, along with how other similar communities are regulating these items.

The Village’s current zoning ordinance language pertaining to standby generators is located in Article 13 General Provisions, Section 13.11 Accessory Buildings and Structures.

Standby generators are identified as “Accessory Mechanical Units” under section 13.11(E) and the section specifies regulations for both *single family residential* and *non-single family residential* uses.

At the May 4th Planning Commission meeting, the Commissioners reviewed ordinances from other nearby communities and discussed options for amending the ordinance. McKenna staff have provided the draft text amendment based on those change requests.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

- Removal of the noise decibel limit of 55dB at 10’
- Exclude egress windows from the 10’ location placement requirement
- Limit operations to only during power outages or during scheduled maintenance testing
- Limit scheduled maintenance testing to Monday through Friday between the hours of 12:00-4:00pm

PROPOSED DRAFT TEXT AMENDMENT

The Village’s current Zoning Ordinance language is provided below. Proposed text is provided in blue:

E. Accessory Mechanical Units

1. **Single Family Residential.** Freestanding heating, ventilation, standby generators, and air conditioning equipment may be located in any yard other than the required front yard of the principal structure, subject to the following requirements (window-mounted room air-conditioners are exempt from these requirements):
 - a) **Location.** Placement of accessory mechanical equipment shall not be permitted within 10 feet of a window on an adjacent dwelling, **excluding egress windows.**
 - b) **Screening.** Accessory mechanical equipment shall be screened in a manner which will reduce the noise output of the unit and to shield the equipment from view of any road, adjacent residence, or the



Lake. ~~The maximum noise output from any such unit shall not exceed 55 decibels, measured at a distance of ten (10) feet from the unit.~~

- c) Operations. Standby generators shall operate only during power outages, except as provided for testing and maintenance.
 - d) Testing and Maintenance. Automatic maintenance and routine testing of standby generators is limited to Monday through Friday between the hours of 12:00p.m. to 4:00p.m.
2. **Non-Single Family Residential.** Freestanding, roof or building mounted equipment (including air conditioning units, transformers, generators and similar) for all non-single family residential buildings and uses, and those on sites zoned non-single family residential districts shall be located in accordance with the following:
- a) Front Yards. Equipment shall not be located in a front yard except the Planning Commission may permit equipment to be located in the front yard upon finding that such location will meet the spirit and intent of the zoning district in which the building is located provided such equipment is not located closer than ten (10) feet from an adjacent residential dwelling or district.
 - b) Side and Rear Yards. Equipment shall be permitted in a side or rear yard provided such equipment is not located closer than ten (10) feet from an adjacent residential dwelling or district.
 - c) Screening. Equipment shall be screened from public rights-of-way and adjacent uses by evergreen trees or shrubs, walls, or berming. Alternative methods of screening may be approved by the Planning Commission.
 - d) Operations. Standby generators shall operate only during power outages, except as provided for testing and maintenance.
 - e) Testing and Maintenance. Automatic maintenance and routine testing of standby generators is limited to Monday through Friday between the hours of 12:00p.m. to 4:00p.m.
 - f) The Planning Commission shall have the authority to waive or modify the above requirements upon the determination that such waiver or modification meets the spirit and intent of the district in which the equipment is located.

NEXT STEPS

We are requesting the Planning Commission review the draft text amendments provided and discuss the changes during the June 1st meeting. Following the discussion, if consensus from the Planning Commission is reached to move forward with proposed revisions, the Planning Commission may vote to set a public hearing date.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

McKENNA

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