



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 #2**
DATE: August 27, 2026

BACKGROUND

Due to recent complaints received by Village staff regarding the placement of Accessory Mechanical Units (standby generators), the Village of Lake Orion Planning Commission requested information regarding the current regulations, along with how other similar communities are regulating these items.

May 4th Planning Commission meeting-

The Commissioners reviewed ordinances from other nearby communities and discussed options for amending the ordinance. McKenna staff provided the draft text amendment based on those change requests.

June 1st Planning Commission meeting-

The Commissioners reviewed and requested a slight revision to the draft text amendment provided. Following the discussion, the Planning Commission voted to schedule a public hearing for the proposed ordinance amendment.

July 6th Planning Commission meeting-

The Planning Commission approved the proposed ordinance amendment and voted to send to the Village Council for consideration of adoption.

August Village Council meeting-

The Village Council has sent the proposed ordinance amendment back to the Planning Commission with the instruction to include and/or revise the regulations regarding noise/decibel levels.

NEXT STEPS

The Planning Commission should review the draft text amendment and consider how to appropriately regulate noise beyond the steps already taken. While the draft amendment addresses location, screening requirements, and operational time restraints for testing and maintenance, the Planning Commission should reconsider the current noise requirements. Should the explicitly defined noise regulations remain, consideration should be given regarding the acoustic tools that will be required to enforce such standards.

Currently, the noise produced from standby generators is regulated not to exceed 55 dBA measured at 10 feet from the unit. This requirement could be challenging to administer, difficult to verify in the field, and may unintentionally prohibit many commercially available standby generators that otherwise meet industry standards.

Additionally, the 55 dBA regulation currently only applies to residential areas. The Planning Commission should consider limitations for non-residential areas as well.



Since the last revision, staff have made the following revisions:

- Separating screening and noise into two distinct subsections.
- Including text that limits sound levels to 65 dBA measured at the nearest property line. *This proposed revision is simply a placeholder until further discussion can be made during the September 8th meeting.*
- The use of “power outage” was replaced by “utility outage and emergency situations”.

PROPOSED DRAFT TEXT AMENDMENT

The most recent version of the proposed draft amendment is provided below. Proposed text is provided in blue:

SECTION 13.11 - ACCESSORY BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

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.
 - 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) **Noise.** Standby generators shall not produce sound levels exceeding 65 decibels measured at the nearest property line during operation.
 - d) **Operations.** Standby generators shall operate only during ~~power~~ utility outages and emergency situations, 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.
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 utility outages and emergency situations, 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.