



Memorandum

TO: Village of Lake Orion Planning Commission
FROM: Jake VanBoxel, MSA, Principal Planner
Sommer Nafal, NCI, Assistant Planner
SUBJECT: **Accessory Mechanical Units – Standby Generator Regulations #3**
DATE: October 5, 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 10th 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.

September 8th Planning Commission meeting-

The Planning Commission discussed the Ordinance amendment and deferred back to McKenna for a revised draft.

REVISIONS

As a part of this evaluation, McKenna reviewed ordinance language from comparing communities such as Bloomfield Hills, the City of Northville, Birmingham, Troy, etc. Commonalities were reviewed to determine the best practices for generator use, while also applying ideas to the context of small, irregularly shaped lots in the Village.

The setbacks proposed in this revision were taken from Section 12.02, Schedule of Regulations. McKenna planners feel these are the setbacks that shall be applied in order to ensure fairness among properties. The



Planning Commission should review if these setbacks are acceptable. Screening provisions have also been refined.

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 and shall not be located within the required side yard setbacks for the applicable zoning district, as follows.

- a. **RV District.** Minimum side yard setbacks shall be based on the width of the lot, as follows:

<u>Lot Width</u>	<u>Side Yards:</u>	<u>Least One</u>	<u>Total Two</u>
60 ft. and greater		10 ft.	20 ft.
50 ft. – less than 60 ft		5 ft.	15 ft.
Less than 50 ft.		5 ft.	10 ft.

- b. **RL District.** Setback a minimum of 5 feet from the side property line(s).

- 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. Units shall be screened by:

- a. Densely planted, well maintained evergreen landscaping (whose main structure is at least 1 foot taller than any part of the unit) that provides an immediate screening effect; or a
- b. Solid screen or masonry wall at least 1 foot higher than any part of the unit. (This shall contain the use of materials identical to those used in the adjacent building at the point of placement of the unit.)

~~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.**

- a. Standby generators shall not produce sound levels exceeding 65 decibels measured at the nearest property line during operation.
- b. A copy of the manufacturer's specifications that illustrate the decibel rating for the component must be submitted with the permit application.

- d) **Operations.** Standby generators shall operate only during 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 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.