

DATE: July 2, 2024
TO: Town of Loxahatchee Groves, Town Council
FROM: Complete Cities, Consultant Planner
Subject: Recreational Vehicle (RV) Ordinance Update

Background

The Town of Loxahatchee Groves began the process of updating its Recreational Vehicle (RV) regulations in the spring of 2023. A series of public workshops were held to collect feedback and information regarding resident's use of RVs, future needs, and permitting concerns. During that process, there was much concern for supporting the equestrian community. Temporary housing by way of RVs was expressed to be a critical component of the seasonal industry. Based on this input, the initial direction was to consider more lenient policies, perhaps considering annual RVs or increased allowances to support the need. However, through the public hearing process, residents expressed concern about the impacts to infrastructure, life safety, and community character, amongst others. Further, there did not seem to be the same resident support or need for expanded RV allowances during the hearing process. To the public, concerns largely outweighed the benefit of relaxed policies. Ultimately, a proposed ordinance was voted down in Fall 2023.

The Council has requested to revisit the RV policies to address reoccurring issues. It is well documented there are concerns with the application form itself. Further, code enforcement of the existing regulations has been a consistent challenge. The Council may consider a range of amendments, from simple modifications to the application process to reconsidering more impactful portions of the ordinance again, such as length of stay and number of vehicles.

June 18, 2024 Workshop

At the June 2024 workshop meeting, the Council determined staff should revisit the RV ordinance and provided initial direction for revised regulations. Importantly, all RV regulations should be combined into one section, including those relating to both occupied and unoccupied RVs. The Council also agreed regulations should be easy to follow and enforceable. Concern was expressed regarding the enforceability of certain policies such as time limitations. Discussion included how to incorporate inspections, both initial and periodic to ensure correct hook ups and safety. Safety of residents and ensuring tenants are vetted was a repeated discussion topic. Fees and vehicle allowances were also discussed. Consensus regarding the RV allowances would revise existing policies. In sum, Council determined all properties should be able to store at least one RV on their property, regardless of property size. Parcels measuring 2 – 5 acres would be eligible for two (2) RVs and properties more than 5 acres would be eligible for three (3) RVs. There would be no distinction between stored and occupied vehicles.

Public comment included concern regarding the appearance of relaxing regulations and assurance of strong enforcement options. Overall, the public echoed the request to keep the regulations simple but enforceable. Some were concerned with the impact to community character while others were concerned with the impending equestrian community and having regulations in place for that time.

Next Steps

Additional portions of the RV ordinance need review and discussion to provide staff direction, including but not limited to:

- Properties less than 1 acre, RV for storage only? Or, allowed to rent?
- Allowances for bona fide agriculture use / properties without a single-family residence
- Ability to use RV for grooms' quarter and/or caretaker quarter. Ability to compound allowances for RVs, grooms' quarters, and caretaker quarters on one property.
- Permit fees and registration
- Inspections (initial and periodic)