

DATE: May 28, 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 the equestrian community. RVs and temporary housing were 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 public support or need for expanded RV allowances during the hearing process.

Prior Public Hearings

The Town Council last considered the RV item at the October 23, 2023 public hearing. The minutes from that meeting are below. Ordinance 2023-06 was denied.

Initial Considerations

While the previous draft ordinance amendment trended toward increasing RV allowances, it should be noted, most communities are further restricting RVs for similar reasons cited at the last public hearings. The issues of perceived and real density, infrastructure impacts, life safety impacts, amongst others are valid. The Town has long had a one dwelling unit per five acre density maximum. Before increasing RV allowances, concerns regarding permitting requirements and code enforcement should be addressed. In fact, it seemed many of the equestrian community concerns could be addressed through permitting modifications and clarifications regarding certain restrictions rather than increasing the total number of permitted vehicles.

Careful use of RVs should continue so that RVs are not inadvertently used to circumvent density allowances. The Town does offer more permanent, alternative solutions such as accessory dwelling units, caretakers' quarters, and groom's quarters. If a demand from the equestrian community still exists, the Town may wish to consider addressing the need by re-evaluating these aforementioned alternatives.

Next Steps

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.