



City of Arts & Innovation

# Land Use, Sustainability, and Resilience Committee

**TO: LAND USE, SUSTAINABILITY, AND RESILIENCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS**      **DATE: MARCH 13, 2023**

**FROM: COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**      **WARDS: ALL**

**SUBJECT: UPDATE ON CURRENT ZONING REGULATIONS AND BEST PRACTICES FOR RECREATIONAL VEHICLE PARKING WITHIN RESIDENTIAL ZONES**

## **ISSUE:**

Update on the City of Riverside’s current zoning regulations for recreational vehicles within residential zones and best practices in similar jurisdictions related to recreational vehicle parking standards within residential zones.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That the Land Use, Sustainability, and Resilience Committee:

1. Receive and file an update on the City’s zoning regulations and regional best practices related to recreational vehicle parking within residential zones; and
2. Provide staff with direction on changes for future consideration.

## **BACKGROUND:**

At the December 20, 2022, City Council meeting Councilwoman Plascencia requested that an update be brought to the Land Use, Sustainability and Resilience Committee (Committee) related to the parking of motorhomes and other recreational vehicles within single-family residential zones. The update was to include the City’s current regulations, best practices in the region, number of code enforcement cases and future consideration items.

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **State Regulations and Licensing**

In California, a recreational vehicle is defined as “a motorhome, housecar, travel trailer, truck camper, or camp trailer; with or without motive power; designed for human habitation or other occupancy” (CA Health & Safety Code § 18010). State licensing requirements establish limitations on recreational vehicle usage based on type of license and recreational vehicle specifications. For example:

- Drivers with a Noncommercial Class C Driver’s License may:
  - Drive any housecar, more commonly known as an RV, that is 40 feet or less in length.

- Tow a trailer coach or fifth-wheel travel trailer under 10,000 Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) for personal use only but will require California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) endorsement.

Any recreational vehicle exceeding 40 feet in length but less than 45 feet or weighing more than 10,000 GVWR will require at least a Noncommercial Class A or B Driver's License and DMV endorsement. The operation of motorhomes between 40 and 45 feet may only be driven in approved State and Federal routes (CA Veh Code § 35400).

## **A. Title 19 – Zoning Code Regulations**

### Current Regulations

Within the Riverside Municipal Code, Chapter 19.910 (Definitions) defines a recreational vehicle as a “vehicle for noncommercial, recreational use, including a motor home, travel trailer, camper, fifth wheel, boats, watercraft, race cars, off-road vehicles, horse trailer or trailers designed to carry recreational vehicles such as watercraft or off-road vehicles.” Recreational vehicles are regulated within Title 9 – Peace, Safety and Morals; Title 10 – Vehicles and Traffic and Title 19 – Zoning.

Titles 9 and 10 regulate recreational vehicles within public parks, streets, and establish limitations on where they may be located on public property. Title 19 establishes specific regulations for parking and storing recreational vehicles within residential zones and codifies development standards for residential properties, including driveways, garages, and fencing. Chapter 19.580 (Parking and Loading) codifies specific parking locations and maneuvering areas for recreational vehicles in residential zones (Attachment 1).

Chapter 19.580 establishes standards for parking and storing recreational vehicles within single-family residential zones based on gross vehicular weight rating (GVWR).

- I. For recreational vehicles under 10,000 pounds GVWR:**
  - a. Allowed in all single-family residential zones.
  - b. Must be parked within a garage or carport and have a paved driveway to access the street it is served by.
  - c. Vehicles may also be parked or stored in the side and front yard but shall be paved and must comply with the permitted driveway location requirements.
- II. For recreational vehicles 10,000 pounds GVWR or more:**
  - a. Allowed only in the Rural Residential (RR), Residential Estate (RE), and Residential Agricultural (RA-5) zones.
  - b. Vehicles must be parked or maneuvered:
    - i. Within a garage or carport; or
    - ii. A paved surface in the rear or side yard areas, outside of required setbacks, provided:
      1. There are at least 15 feet of space between the nearest property line and nearest eave overhang;
      2. The side yard area remains accessible; and
      3. The vehicle parked in a side yard does not extend past the frontmost wall of the primary residence.
- III. All recreational vehicles, regardless of weight:**
  - a. Must be legally registered as applicable if parked outside of an enclosed garage or carport.
  - b. Motorized vehicles must be operable under their own power. Unmotorized vehicles must be movable by a vehicle used to tow the vehicle type.
  - c. May not be used as living quarters except in very limited circumstances on a

temporary basis.

Changes to Chapter 19.580 related to recreational vehicle parking and storage within residential zones were established in 2007 and have not substantially changed since then. The 2007 amendments introduced the regulation for vehicles above 10,000 pounds GVWR in residential zones. The weight threshold of 10,000 pounds GVWR was established in part to conform with State licensing regulations and to differentiate between noncommercial and commercial vehicles weighing an excess of 10,000 pounds. As a matter of information, Section 19.580.100 prohibits the parking or storage of any commercial vehicle (including trucks, trailers or tractor trailers) over 10,000 pounds GVWR, over 8 feet high or over 24 feet in length on any residentially zoned property Citywide.

### Volume of Code Enforcement Violations

On average, the Code Enforcement Division receives about 12,000 complaints on a yearly basis. Of these, the average annual volume of complaints related to recreational vehicle parking in single-family zones is approximately 18 complaints, or less than 1% of the total. As of the writing of this report, there are currently 7 active cases related to recreational vehicle parking in residential zones.

Most of these complaints are related to residents using a recreational vehicle as living quarters, which is prohibited per 19.580.070(A)(4)(b)(1)(c). A subset of these complaints are related to parking or storage of recreational vehicles over 10,000 pounds GVWR within residential zones or on unpaved front or side yards. Examples include a 12,000-pound GVWR motorhome or RV parked within the R-1-7000 single-family zone or a 10,000-pound GVWR motorhome parked within the required front yard setback area.

## **B. Regional Best Practices & Comparison**

To assess the City's regulations, a cross-jurisdictional analysis was conducted to determine best practices in the region (Attachment 2). Cities evaluated include Chino, Claremont, Corona, Ontario, and West Covina. Each city regulates recreational vehicles in residential zones but vary in extent. A summary of observations from the jurisdictions surveyed is provided below:

### **I. Parking in Residential Zones Allowed**

- a. Riverside
  - i. Recreational vehicles under 10,000 pounds GVWR allowed.
  - ii. Recreational vehicles 10,000 pounds GVWR and heavier only allowed in the Rural Residential (RR), Residential Estate (RE), and Residential Agricultural (RA-5) zones. Restrictions apply.
- b. Other Jurisdictions
  - i. All surveyed jurisdictions allow recreational vehicles within single-family residential zones provided all other requirements are met.

### **II. Location Requirements**

- a. Riverside
  - i. Recreational vehicles must be within carport or garage, on a paved surface and meet distance requirements based on zone.
- b. Other Jurisdictions
  - i. In Chino, Claremont, and Ontario, recreational vehicles must be within garage or screened from the public with decorative walls or fences and have a paved surface serving the property. The vehicle must belong to the property owner and may not be in an improper condition.
  - ii. In Corona and West Covina, a recreational vehicle must be parked on a paved area and cannot block access to the garage. Additionally, it must be in good condition.

### III. Other Requirements

- a. Riverside
  - i. No other additional requirements apply.
- b. Other Jurisdictions
  - i. Claremont codifies specific size restrictions for motorhomes and other vehicle types based on width, length, and height of the vehicle.
  - ii. In West Covina, an Administrative Use Permit (AUP) must be obtained for all motorhomes, recreational equipment, and trailers. Certain findings must be made prior to permit issuance (Attachment 3).

While the City uses 10,000 GVWR as a threshold for establishing permitted locations for recreational vehicles, all other jurisdictions surveyed do not codify weight thresholds in a similar manner. Instead, recreational vehicles are allowed within designated residential zones according to each jurisdiction's respective zoning code.

### ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION:

Depending on Committee direction, the following options are available for consideration.

#### I. **Maintain Current Regulations**

If the Committee is not interested in modifying the Zoning Code, then the City's current regulations would remain as is. Current code enforcement cases will proceed as usual.

#### II. **Modify Existing Zoning Code**

If the Committee is interested in exploring modifications to the Zoning Code, Staff will need direction on which areas to amend and identifying stakeholders needed for a community outreach process. Staff estimates this process could take approximately 6 months to complete, depending on staff workload and other legislative and policy priorities of the Council or this and/or other Committees.

A strategy to address ongoing code enforcement cases will also need to be identified should the Committee recommend pursuing modifications to the existing Zoning Code. This could include direction from the City Council to maintain enforcement activity on current and future code enforcement cases related to recreational vehicles until the code amendment process is complete.

### STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This item contributes to **Strategic Priority 2 – Community Well-Being** and **Goal 2.3** – Strengthen neighborhood identities and improve community health and the physical environment through amenities and programs that foster an increased sense of community and enhanced feelings of pride and belonging citywide, and **Strategic Priority 5 – High Performing Government** and **Goal 5.3** – Enhance communication and collaboration with community members to improve transparency, build public trust, and encourage shared decision-making.

This Project aligns with the each of the five Cross-Cutting Threads as follows:

1. **Community Trust** – The update on recreational vehicle regulations is presented at an open public meeting and contains transparent information on City processes and regulations.
2. **Equity** – The update on recreational vehicle regulations seeks to promote environmental justice so that impacts of recreational vehicle are minimized on residents within neighborhoods.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – The update on recreational vehicle regulations will not have any

fiscal impact to the City.

4. **Innovation** – The update on recreational vehicle regulations is seeking best practices that will innovate how the City addresses these vehicles in the future.
5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – The update on recreational vehicle regulations seeks to minimize environmental impacts on surrounding neighborhoods.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

Prepared by: Jennifer Lilley, Community & Economic Development Director  
Approved by: Rafael Guzman, Assistant City Manager  
Certified as to  
availability of funds: Edward Enriquez, Interim Assistant City Manager/Chief Financial Officer/City Treasurer  
Approved as to form: Phaedra A. Norton, City Attorney

**Attachments:**

1. Title 19 – Chapter 19.580 – Parking Requirements
2. Recreational Vehicle Regulations Comparison Matrix
3. City of West Covina – Vehicle Administrative Use Permit Application
4. PowerPoint Presentation