

*Item available for public inspection in the Clerk's office during regular business hours (Monday - Friday, 9 AM - 5 PM)*

**December 6, 2022**

**Regular Meeting**

**Item #7G. - Policy**

**Discussion on Use of  
Recreational Vehicles (RVs)**

**and Residences-**

**Community Development**

**(Agenda Item)**

**Wendy Sugimura, Director**



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## Background

- Board previously directed staff to return with this discussion – both limited use and expansion to generally allow had been raised.
- This item initiates the policy discussion to understand the issue, identify options, frame public outreach, and provide direction to staff.
- Recommend the issue be brought to the Regional Planning Advisory Committees (RPACs) for community input.

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## Definitions

- “RV” – generally used in this discussion to include recreational vehicles, mobile/tiny homes on a chassis, and camping trailers.
- Recreational Vehicles – defined by HSC §18010 and are “designed for human habitation for recreational, emergency, or other occupancy. RVs are not intended for occupancy as a permanent dwelling.”
- Tiny Homes – on a vehicle chassis, considered dwellings and must meet building codes to be legally occupied.

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## Historical Context

- Historically controversial policy issue
- Intent of current regulations:
  - Disincentivize widespread camping as a residential use
  - Incentivize structures subject to life safety standards (i.e., building codes)
  - Prevent impacts to residential and commercial areas such as noise and aesthetics.

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## Current RV Regulations

- As a primary residential use in designated RV parks and as farm labor housing in Agriculture (AG) land use designations (LUDs) – intended for wandering shepherders.
- In all other LUDs, RVs may be stored if a primary use exists on the property.
- On vacant property, overnight RV use may be permitted by Director Review/Use Permit during construction of a main use for up to one year.
- Long-term temporary use may be permitted by Director Review in designated hazard zones.

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## Current RV Regulations

- Residential RV use may be permitted for extenuating circumstances, such as recovery from a disaster.
- State Law: Two or more RVs on a property may trigger permitting by HCD.
- Tiny homes built on a foundation are allowed in all LUDs where residences are allowed subject to building codes.

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## Discussion

- Residential RV use – raised in response to the ongoing shortage of housing that is available and affordable to residents and the workforce.
- **Policy Question** – Could residential RV use provide needed housing for the intended populations without causing unacceptable or unintended consequences?

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## Benefits

- If property has been secured, RVs may provide a more affordable option for shelter.
- RVs may prevent homelessness and displacement.
- RVs may offer an option for businesses to provide (seasonal) on-site employee housing.

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## Concerns

- Recreational vehicles are not subject to basic livability, health, and life-safety standards.
- Tiny homes on a chassis would need engineering and a seismic foundation to meet building codes, which may be cost prohibitive.
- Enforcement proliferation – people tend to “do as they see.”
- Likely to be treated as camping, despite being in residential or commercial areas.

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## Concerns

- May encourage substandard living conditions.
- May disincentivize the construction of permanent structures meeting the building code.
- A program targeting prevention of homelessness and displacement would require significant investment.
- May be seasonal solution only due to inability to meet wind and snow loading.
- Visual, noise, etc. impacts to residential and commercial neighborhoods.
- Difficult to ensure the option is only available to the intended populations.

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## Option 1: Do Not Change Regulations

- Retain existing regulations.
- Focus on other programs to address housing needs:
  - Provide funding for construction of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs).
  - Encourage/rezone for additional RV parks: Planning could assist with redesignations, but new RV parks would require a private developer.
  - Construct safe parking areas.
  - Convert existing structures into the desired housing and manage it.

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## Option 2: Limited Residential Use

- Provides shelter options while limiting the potential impacts of widespread camping and focusing on workforce needs.
- Allow one RV on certain non-residential parcels with an existing business as workforce shelter.
  - Commercial, Mixed Use, Commercial Lodging, Rural Resort, Service Commercial, Multi-Family Residential-High
  - Other Land Use Designations can be considered

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## Option 2: Recommended Regulations

- Development standards must be met.
- Parking for one passenger vehicle.
- Utility hook ups (subject to building permit) and trash service.
- Secured immobilization device.
- No outdoor living areas – all residential use contained in RV.
- Exterior lighting – fully shielded, downward directed, not to exceed 3000K temperature.

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## Option 2: Recommended Regulations

- Maintain property in neat and orderly manner.
- Prohibit: generators (except for emergencies), accessory structures and attachments not sold with vehicle, fire pits.
- Limit to seasonal use (May-Oct) in high snow areas.
- Require Director Review permit with notice.
- Require property owner to sign indemnification.

## Option 2: Other Potential Regulations

- Skirting
- Design Standards
- Screening
- Deed restrictions to ensure availability only to certain populations: income qualifications, requirement that resident/renter be an employee of a local/onsite business, would business owners qualify?

## Option 3: Generally Allow RVs

- Likely to have more impacts related to general camping uses in residential and commercial areas.
- Enforcement issues will increase.
- Difficult to ensure those in need are the one benefitting, rather than being open to those who can afford to construct a compliant structure.

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## Option 3: Discussion Questions

1. In which Land Use Designations?
2. Allow on vacant parcels, or only with a primary use?
3. Seasonal use, require engineering, or other options for considering the safety issue of wind and snow loading?
4. Should deed restrictions of some type be required to limit availability to an intended population or situation?
5. Should an age limit on the vehicles be required?
6. Apply any of the regulations in Option 2?

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## Recommended Action

- Discuss the policy matter and provide initial direction to staff.
- Direct staff to conduct public outreach through the Regional Planning Advisory Committees (RPACs) and the Planning Commission, and return to the Board with the input for further discussion.