

# Memo

**To:** City Council  
**From:** Bryan Myrkle, Community Development Director  
**Date:** March 9, 2018  
**Re:** Recreation Vehicle Parking

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As you likely remember, the City of Charlotte Planning Commission recently conducted the required public hearing on the proposed changes to recreational vehicle parking regulations in the City. While there was not very many people present to speak on the issue, we have gathered quite a bit of feedback, both during the original drafting of the ordinance and during individual conversations thereafter, including from the Fire/Building Department.

While the ordinance was drafted based on Council comments during the work session and I believe it fairly represents the Council's input, there are several areas that may warrant further discussion:

- It was suggested the accessory building height limits be raised even further, to 24 feet and 20 feet respectively. While the City Council can consider this, it may not be necessary due to the way the City actually measures building height, which is at a point halfway between the eaves and the peak of the building. This means a 20-foot building by our definition is likely 22-24 feet high at its peak already, depending on roof pitch.
- Some concern has been raised about the need for parking on an improved surface. The intent of this is to prevent long-term damage to yards when parked on for an extended period. Based on the feedback we have received, I think the improved surface requirement should either be defined or eliminated.
  - Should you choose to better define improved surface, I would suggest something like the following:

*“Improved surface” means an area with a hard surface, including concrete, asphalt, or pavers, or any combination of these materials. Or, a surface that consists of loose stone or gravel material contained in a defined area of the property without spilling into the street, sidewalk, or adjoining property.*

- Some have asked for greater clarification regarding the term 'principal building.' I would suggest that be changed to 'main building' as that is clearly defined in our existing zoning definitions.
- The Building Department asked for greater clarification of residences that may not be 1 or 2 stories, but 1.5 or 2.5, or 3 stories. I would suggest that the regulations for 1 story houses, as proposed, be applied also to buildings 1.5 stories in height, and regulations for 2 story houses be applied to all residences of greater than 2 stories, as well. Stories and half-stories are already defined in our ordinance and do not need further clarification.
- The Building Department, like myself and others, is concerned about the very broad definition of recreational vehicles in our ordinance. This is an enforcement-based concern, as the definition remains so broad that the notion of enforcement still remains daunting. Of particular concern are the small utility trailers that are so prevalent throughout the community. We would like the City Council to consider whether these trailers should be removed from the definition, and if necessary, dealt with elsewhere in the code.
- The new section K(1)(a) is the proposed new rule for allowing people to host guests visiting in a recreation vehicle. Section L is the old rule, which should be eliminated from this new ordinance if adopted, as these two sections conflict.
- Finally, at the workshop, we discussed having this ordinance go into effect June 1, and that will need to be changed herein.

There are also a couple points of simple clarification that should be mentioned –

- Because this ordinance is longer than the current blanket prohibition on parking RV's anywhere but the rear yard (or side yard with special permission), it appears some people are assuming this is a stricter ordinance that will be harder to enforce. In reality, the entire purpose of this ordinance is to relax the standards a bit, so that residents have more available options for parking Recreation Vehicles on their property.
- Because this ordinance is included in the City's Zoning Code section that relates to accessory structures, some residents have assumed that this entire section is new, and have questioned elements of the ordinance that already exist and are not a part of this discussion (for example, the section covering satellite dishes is out of date and likely could be changed or eliminated entirely, but is not something currently under discussion). The proposed changes are only those highlighted items.