





MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: José G. Roig, Director, Development Services Department 

THROUGH: Veronica Briseño, Assistant City Manager 

DATE: October 25, 2023

SUBJECT: Deferral of code amendments for Recreation Vehicles

The purpose of this memo is to provide an update on code amendments initiated with Resolution No. 20230914-083 allowing use of recreational vehicles (RVs) as permanent dwelling units within single-family zoning districts.

Based on the results of a preliminary review of local, state and federal RV requirements, the Development Services Department (DSD) is recommending a more comprehensive analysis on the safety and feasibility of allowing use of RVs as permanent dwelling units. Please note that for the purpose of this memo, tiny homes are not considered RVs.

At the federal level, RVs are defined as vehicles or vehicular structures. By federal rule, they are not certified as manufactured homes and are designed only for recreational use, not as a primary residence or for permanent occupancy. At the state level, RVs are regulated by the Texas Department of Licensing and Registration and are not currently subject to building codes. When considered collectively, the existing regulatory framework could have life safety implications that would need to be addressed through additional City regulations. Staff needs to further assess federal and state regulations and how they are represented in RV manufacturer specifications to develop local regulations that would ensure RVs are safe for permanent residency. In addition, multiple City departments need to contribute to developing those regulations. At a minimum, DSD would need to consult with Austin Fire, Austin Energy, and Austin Water, on a wide range of regulatory considerations to arrive at a final recommendation.

Based on the preliminary findings detailed above, DSD recommends any potential code amendments related to RVs be considered in a future phase. This will allow city staff to work with partner departments to meet the requirements outlined in the resolution and ensure life safety measures are met for future occupants. If they cannot be resolved, staff may not recommend code amendments regarding RVs. As a result, RV related code amendments are not included in the set of amendments scheduled for Council consideration in the coming weeks.

Should you have any questions, please contact Brenda de la Garza, Assistant Director, Development Services Department at (512) 487-9815 or via email at brenda.delagarza@austintexas.gov.

Cc: Jesus Garza, Interim City Manager
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