

## Commentary

### ATTACHMENT B – LEWIS COUNTY CODE 17.144 RECREATIONAL PARKS AND CAMPGROUNDS

Section 16.14 is deleted from Title 16, Subdivisions, and added to Title 17, Land Use and Development Regulations, because RV Parks and Campgrounds are not subdivided creating individual lots. Instead, RV Parks and Campgrounds have campsites that are identified on the site plan but are not separate parcels. All campsites are under a single ownership. Therefore, it is more appropriate for RV Parks and Campgrounds to be addressed under Title 17, Land Use and Development Regulations.

Please note, this is a new Chapter of Title 17. However, for ease of reading the new text is not underlined.

*This is a new code section. For ease of reading, underlining is not used.*

*Changes to the June Draft proposed code are highlighted in **yellow**.*

## **Chapter 17.144**

### **RECREATIONAL VEHICLE PARKS AND CAMPGROUNDS**

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17.144.010 Purpose and Applicability.

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## Commentary

### **17.144.010 Purpose and Applicability**

Chapter 17.144 only applies to properties that create two (2) or more camping sites for a fee. An individual property owner may offer one (1) camping site for transient accommodations for a fee and not have to comply with this Chapter 17.144 LCC. Property owners that allow friends and family to camp on their property without a fee do not have to comply with Chapter 17.144 LCC. Use of an RV for full time occupancy, with or without a fee, must meet codes related to residential dwelling units found in Title 17, Land Use and Development Regulations, and Title 15, Buildings and Construction, LCC. Title 8, Health and Safety, LCC apply in all circumstances.

### **17.144.020 Administration**

Under former Chapter 16.14, Recreational Vehicle Park Divisions, which is being removed, all RV Parks and Campgrounds were required to complete a Binding Site Plan. This is changed to no longer requiring a Binding Site Plan and instead require a Special Use Permit. Binding Site Plans are appropriate for subdivision where individual lots and public streets are required. RV parks and campgrounds are not creating individual lots or public streets; therefore, a Binding Site Plan is not necessary.

Prior to the amendment, some zones permitted RV Parks outright which may not have required public noticing for the use; however, a Binding Site Plan was required and therefore a public notice and hearing was always required. This was confusing to applicants. The amendment makes it clear that all RV parks and campgrounds go through the Special Use Permit, which includes a noticing period and approval at a public hearing by the Hearings Examiner.

(3) When the allowed density is exceeded, the RV Park/Campground will be subject to the standards of 17.20E, Master Planned Resorts, which requires a Binding Site Plan. This provides additional oversight and requirements to ensure rural character is protected.

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## **Article I. Scope - Administration**

### **17.144.010 Purpose and Applicability.**

This chapter establishes a permitting process for recreational vehicle parks and campgrounds that create two (2) or more camping sites for purposes of transient accommodations. Recreational vehicle parks and campgrounds that create camping sites which may be leased individually, and the membership of that camping site may be transferred to another person, shall be considered Master Planned Resorts and must comply with Chapter 17.20E, Master Planned Resorts, LCC.

### **17.144.020 Administration.**

- (1) Recreational vehicle parks and campgrounds shall be processed as a Type III Special Use Permit application per Chapter 17.05, General Provisions, LCC.
- (2) Recreational vehicle parks and campgrounds that exceed the maximum density standards listed in 17.144.040 shall be administered as Master Planned Resorts and must comply with Chapter 17.20E, Master Planned Resorts, LCC.
- (3) Existing legal non-conforming recreational vehicle parks or campgrounds are allowed to persist in accordance with Chapter 17.155, Nonconforming Uses and Parcels, LLC.
- (4) Revisions to approved recreational vehicle parks and campgrounds shall proceed in compliance with the regulations and standards in Chapter 17.158, Special Use Permits, LCC in effect at the time of complete project application.
- (5) Revisions to existing legal non-conforming recreational vehicle parks or campgrounds shall proceed in compliance with the regulations and standards in Chapter 17.155, Nonconforming Uses and Parcels, LCC, in effect at the time of complete project application.
- (6) Existing recreational vehicle parks or campgrounds that were permitted through the Binding Site Plan process and found to be in violation of the Binding Site Plan shall be subject to the noncompliance and violation provisions in Chapter 17.07, Violations and Civil Penalties, LCC.

## Commentary

### Article II Standards

Two sections of former Chapter 16.14, Article II, included requirements that duplicated other Lewis County Code requirements and were redundant and sometimes conflicting. Sections related to the State Environmental Policy Act and significant natural features were not included in Chapter 17.144, Article II.

### 17.144.030 General

Former Chapter 16.14 included general standards that stated that all other applicable policies and rules apply. It is not necessary to state that all other applicable rules apply because it is true regardless of whether it is stated. Instead, the general standards are specific to RV Parks and Campgrounds without repeating other rules that apply.

- (1) Clarifies that other stricter standards take precedence. For example, Chapter 17.38 Critical Areas Ordinance contains standards related to wetlands, fish and wildlife habitat, aquatic habitat, geologically hazardous areas, critical aquifer recharge areas and frequently flood areas. The requirements of Chapter 17.38 are stricter than Chapter 17.144 and Chapter 17.38 takes precedence for the areas within which it applies.

Standards (2) through (6) are the same as what was in subsections 16.14.030 (4) through (8), with minor clarifications.

### 17.144.040 Density

(1) is the same requirement as former subsection 16.14.040 (3) and requires a minimum lot size of 2.5 acres. (1) is clarified that the lots may include one or more parcels under common ownership.

The maximum density described in (2)(a) and (b) is not changing from what was required by former Chapter 16.14.

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## **Article II. Standards**

### **17.144.030 General.**

- (1) In the event of a discrepancy between the standards established herein and those contained in any other applicable plan, control, or ordinance, the stricter standard shall apply.
- (2) Every camping site shall be, or consist of, at least 500 square feet.
- (3) All camping sites are subject to a minimum ten (10) foot setback between camping sites.
- (4) All structures, except cabins or yurts, are subject to a minimum ten (10) foot setback from any camping site.
- (5) All structures are subject to a minimum five (5) foot setback from any other structure, regardless of the size of the structure.
- (6) Each camping site shall be numbered, and the number shall be prominently displayed on the camping site.
- (7) Camping sites, caretaker accommodations, common facilities and accessory uses shall be maintained in functional and working conditions.

### **17.144.040 Density.**

- (1) A recreational vehicle park or campground may occupy a single parcel, or combination of parcels under common ownership, of which at least one (1) parcel shall be a minimum of two and one-half (2.5) acres; provided, a larger minimum parcel size may be required by the state or local departments for septage disposal, stormwater management, public water supply or applicable development regulations.
- (2) Maximum density shall be:
  - (a) No more than fifteen (15) camping sites per acre when a community septage system with individual camping site connections or individual holding tanks for each camping site are provided.
  - (b) No more than seven (7) camping sites per acre when a central septage dump station is provided with no individual camping site connections or individual holding tanks for each camping site.

## Commentary

### 17.144.040 Density

(2)(c) is a new allowance for cabins/yurts to be included in the RV Park/Campground. This allows for a recreational park model to be used that expands the diversity of transient accommodations provided by a RV Park/Campground. However, the majority of camping sites must be used for recreational vehicle or tent camping. Note, a yurt is treated the same as a cabin because it is typically a constructed structure made of fabric or pliable materials and a wooden or metal frame and is typically served by electricity, water and/or septage.

(2)(d) is a new standard that allows a higher density of camping sites when all sites will be used only for tent camping and no recreational vehicles will be allowed, except one for a permanent caretaker or manager. This is appropriate because tents are typically much smaller than recreational vehicles.

(3) is the same requirement as Chapter 16.14.040 (2), with the added requirement for tent-only campgrounds including that recreational vehicles are not allowed if the campground is designated as tent-only.

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- (c) Permanent cabins or yurts may be included.
    - (i) The total number of cabins or yurts shall not exceed 25 percent of the total proposed camping sites. When calculations result in a fraction, the result is rounded down to the nearest whole number. For example, if there are 25 total camping sites, six (6) of those may be occupied by a cabin or yurt. If a cabin or yurt is provided as caretaker accommodations, that cabin or yurt shall be counted towards the total number of cabins or yurts allowed.
    - (ii) The total floor area of each cabin or yurt shall not exceed 400 square feet, except a cabin or yurt provided as caretaker accommodations.
    - (iii) A cabin or yurt shall be completely contained within a single camping site.
  - (d) For campgrounds that create sites for tent camping only, or other similar accommodations, and no recreational vehicles will be accommodated at the campground, then a maximum density of 25 camping spaces per acre is allowed, except that one (1) camping site may be provided for caretaker accommodations.
- (3) No more than one (1) recreational vehicle may occupy a camping site at any given time. Camping sites occupied by a recreational vehicle may also be occupied by no more than one (1) passenger vehicle and one (1) appurtenance (e.g., a boat, an awning, etc.) at any given time.
  - (4) Camping sites that are occupied by a tent(s) may also be occupied by no more than three (3) passenger vehicles or two (2) passenger vehicles and one (1) appurtenance (a boat, an easy-up, etc.) at any given time. Recreational vehicles are not allowed to occupy tent-only camping sites.



## Commentary

### 17.144.050 Length of Stay

(1) This is a new code section that allows camping at a RV Park/Campground for up to 210 consecutive days, which is seven (7) months. This is increased from the allowance in former Chapter 16.14, which as 180 days. It was increased because the National Forest Service and Mount Rainier National Park both employ seasonal workers May through November annually. It is the intent is to allow seasonal employees to live at RV parks and campgrounds for the duration of their seasonal employment. If a RV Park/Campground intends to rent a camping site(s) for 211 or more consecutive days, then it will be treated like a Mobile Home Park and must meet all of the requirements of LCC 15.30.

The maximum length of stay does not apply to dwelling units, RVs or cabins/yurts that are occupied by a caretaker, ranger or manager. It is expected that the caretaker, ranger or manager will stay long-term in the dwelling unit, RV or cabin/yurt.

(2) Cabins and yurts are treated like short term rentals. The state definition of short term rental is "a lodging use, that is not a hotel or motel or bed and breakfast, in which a dwelling unit, or portion thereof, that is offered or provided to a guest by a short-term rental operator for a fee for fewer than thirty consecutive nights" Chapter 64.37 RCW.

### 17.144.060 Caretake Accommodations

This is a new code section that clarifies that an RV, cabin or yurt may be provided for use by a campground caretaker, manager or ranger. An existing legally permitted single family residence or accessory dwelling unit may also be used as caretaker accommodations. However, there may only be one caretaker accommodation per RV park or campground and if it's a new cabin or yurt it is limited to 1,296 square feet. The caretaker, manager or ranger may live in the accommodations long-term (greater than 210 consecutive days).

### 17.144.070 Accessory Uses

This is a new code section that clarifies accessory uses allowed in an RV park or campground. The primary purpose of the site must be a RV park/campground and there may be facilities, such as a "snack shack", that supports the RV park/campground use.

Recreational facilities that would otherwise be reviewed as a regional recreational facility in LCC (e.g., golf course, amusement park, etc.) must also be allowed within the underlying zoning designation and meet any applicable standards for the specific facility. For example, in the Crossroads Commercial zone, RV parks and campgrounds are allowed, but a regional recreational facility is not allowed. However, in the RDD-20 zone, both RV parks/campgrounds and regional recreational facilities are allowed through a Special Use Permit.

*This is a new code section. For ease of reading, underlining is not used.*

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### **17.144.050 Length of Stay**

- (1) The maximum number of consecutive days that a camping site shall be occupied by the same party in a recreational vehicle or tent is **210 days**, except one (1) camping site may be permanently occupied by a caretaker, ranger, manager or similar role. Recreational vehicle parks and campgrounds that allow stays longer than **210 consecutive days** shall be administered as a mobile home park and must be compliant with Chapter 15.30, Mobile Home Parks, LCC.
- (2) The maximum number of consecutive days that a cabin or yurt shall be occupied by the same party is 30 days, except one (1) cabin or yurt may be permanently occupied by a caretaker, ranger, manager or similar role.

### **17.144.060 Caretaker Accommodations**

Accommodations for use by a recreational vehicle park or campground caretaker, ranger, manager or similar role is allowed. Caretaker accommodations may include a recreational vehicle, a new cabin or yurt, or an existing single family residence or accessory dwelling unit. Caretaker accommodations are not subject to the length of stay limitations of subsection 17.144.050 LCC.

- (1) No more than one (1) caretaker accommodation per development is allowed.
- (2) The total floor area of a new cabin or yurt provided as caretaker accommodations shall not exceed 1,296 square feet in size.
- (3) An existing single family residence or accessory dwelling unit used as caretaker accommodations does not count towards the total number of cabins or yurts allowed in subsection 17.144.040 LCC.

### **17.144.070 Accessory Uses**

Accessory uses such as offices, maintenance sheds, swimming pools, playgrounds, restaurants, convenience stores less than 2,500 square feet, recreation facilities and other similar structures are allowed outright were directly connected with and in aid of the recreational vehicle park or campground. Accessory uses are required to be completely within the boundaries of the recreational vehicle park or campground.

## **Commentary**

### **Article III. Required Improvements**

Chapter 16.14 included multiple required improvements that duplicated other Lewis County Code requirements and were redundant and sometimes conflicting. Chapter 17.144 removed duplicative required improvements related to roads, off-site traffic impacts, bridges, signs, drainage, water supply, sewage disposal, service buildings and solid waste. All of these are already addressed in other chapters of the Lewis County Code and apply to RV Parks and Campgrounds.

#### **17.144.080 Fire Protection**

This section is the same as section 16.14.180 with minor clarifications.

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### **Article III. Required Improvements**

#### **17.144.080 Fire protection.**

- (1) Water supply adequate for fire protection is required and shall be consistent with the International Fire Code, fire district recommendations, and applicable state and local laws.
- (2) An approved firefighting vehicle and/or other permanent firefighting devices or equipment shall be installed within the confines of recreational vehicle parks or campgrounds when required by either the Washington State Department of Natural Resources, the U.S. Forest Service, the appropriate local fire district, or county fire marshal.
- (3) No more than one fire pit per campsite is allowed. See Figure 1 of this section.
  - (a) The fire pit must be no wider than three (3) feet in diameter and have a ring constructed of metal, concrete, stone, or brick at least eight (8) inches above ground grade.
  - (b) There must be an additional area surrounding the fire pit with a minimum two (2) foot width constructed of noncombustible material, such as concrete, rock, brick, or cement blocks.
  - (c) All fire pits must be equipped with a spark arresting screen or similar device.
  - (d) Trees, tree limbs and shrubs must be cleared within ten (10) feet in all directions around a fire pit.

## **Commentary**

### **17.144.080 Figure 1**

This is a new figure that depicts the dimensional requirements stated in subsection (3).

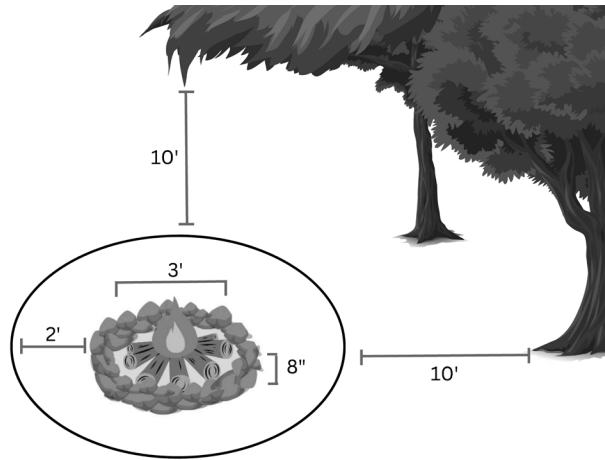
### **17.144.090 Electric utilities**

This section is the same as former subsection 16.14.190 with minor clarifications.

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**Figure 1: Minimum Fire Pit Dimensions**



- (4) Fire break trails shall be provided around the periphery of the development when required by either the Washington State Department of Natural Resources, the U.S. Forest Service, the local fire district, the county fire marshal or Hearings Examiner.

#### **17.144.090 Electric utilities.**

No recreational vehicle park or campground shall be serviced by overhead utilities, and all electrical utilities associated with or incidental to the development of camping sites or other facilities and accessory uses shall be designed, installed and maintained in conformance with the rules, regulations, and standards of the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries.

## **Commentary**

### **17.144.100 Screening and buffering**

This section is the same as former subsection 16.14.050 with an added purpose statement. The other requirements are substantially the same with the addition that the screening must be at least six (6) feet high and obscure at least 80% visibility. This will ensure that adjacent property owners have limited visual impact caused by the RV Park/Campground.

When a RV Park/Campground is along a stream, river, wetland or lake, the waterbody may be counted as part of the buffer and screening.

### **17.144.110 Common facilities.**

This section is the same as former subsection 16.14.060 with minor modifications, except that requirements related to paths and trails is moved to 17.144.120, Access and circulation, instead of 17.144.110, Common facilities.

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### **17.144.100 Screening and buffering.**

The purpose of screening and buffering is to protect the adjacent properties or roadways from unsightliness, visual distraction and/or noise impacts. The buffer area may be reduced where it can be demonstrated that alternative screening can adequately accomplish the purposes stated in this subsection.

- (1) Screening and buffering areas shall be established with a minimum width of 25 feet along all exterior property lines. If a recreational trail is included in the buffer, the minimum width must be no less than 50 feet along all exterior property lines that contain such a trail.
- (2) Screening and buffering may include fences, vegetation, earth berms, waterbodies or a combination of these methods.
- (3) The screening shall be at least six (6) feet high and shall obscure at least 80 percent visibility of all structures and improvements as seen from rights-of-way and adjacent properties, except when the buffer or a portion of the buffer is comprised of a waterbody, then the waterbody may be considered screening.
- (4) Screening and buffering areas shall not contain any constructed facilities or structures, erected or placed, with the exception of utility lines, fencing, security posts or trails.
- (5) Setbacks from adjacent Resource Lands must be in conformance with Chapter 17.30, Resource Lands, LCC.

### **17.144.110 Common facilities**

Common facilities such as service buildings, water systems, septage facilities, roads, paths, trails and other facilities shall be designed to accommodate maximum demand and occupancy.

- (1) Potable water shall be available within 200 feet of each camping site. Adequate disposal for faucet overflow shall be provided at each distribution point.
- (2) Service buildings containing toilet and handwashing facilities shall be available within 400 feet of each camping site.



## Commentary

### **17.144.120 Access and circulation**

This section is updated from former subsection 16.14.090. The updates provide additional requirements to reduce conflicts between lanes a vehicle travel and use of camping sites, paths and trails. Pedestrian paths and trails may not be co-located with lanes of vehicle travel but may be alongside and adjacent to lanes of vehicle travel when appropriately demarcated to ensure safety of the users. In addition, there is a new requirement related to providing pedestrian access from camping sites to common facilities.

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### **17.144.120 Access and circulation**

Access and circulation within a recreational vehicle park and campground shall be designed to accommodate maximum demand and occupancy, and with appropriate consideration for existing and proposed lanes of vehicle travel, anticipated traffic patterns, topographic and drainage conditions, pedestrian access and safety, and the proposed uses of the land served.

- (1) Lanes of vehicle travel within the confines of a recreational vehicle park or campground shall provide for access to each camping site, and ease of vehicular movement within the development. Lanes of vehicle travel shall be named and identified with appropriate signs approved by the county building official.
- (2) Traffic signs and safety devices shall be provided and installed by the applicant in accordance with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.
- (3) Common use facilities, such as potable water or toilet facilities, shall have pedestrian access by path or trail from each camping site to the facility and all of the following shall be met:
  - (a) Each path or trail shall be at least five (5) feet wide;
  - (b) Paths or trails shall not interfere with or cross camping sites; and
  - (c) Paths and trails shall not be co-located within a lane of vehicle travel. Paths and trails may cross a lane of vehicle travel if the path or trail is clearly marked.