Can an RV, boat, or utility trailer be stored on a residential lot?
Parking or storage of recreational vehicles, watercraft (whether mounted on trailers or un-mounted), or utility trailers is permitted in a residential (R-1 – R-30) land use district if they are stored in accordance with the restrictions listed in this handout. Certain storage and screening requirements have been established to balance the need to store these items with the need to reduce the aesthetic impacts of such storage on surrounding properties.

What is considered a recreational vehicle?
Any wheeled, motorized vehicle manufactured, converted, or altered to provide self-contained temporary living quarters for recreational, camping or travel uses and which does not exceed 40’ in length. Any vehicle manufactured, converted, or altered which has integral wheels for towing or can be mounted on a motorized vehicle to provide self-contained, temporary living quarters for recreational, camping, or travel uses.

What is considered a watercraft?
Any vessel used for water travel, sport, or pleasure which is greater than 12’ in length but does not exceed 40’ in length or 12’ in height as measured at the highest point when mounted on a trailer.

What is considered a utility trailer?
Any vehicle with integral wheels designed to be towed by a motorized vehicle to transport goods, property, equipment, or livestock.

Are canoes and kayaks considered watercraft?
They are watercraft. They are not required to be sight-screened from abutting properties if they are less than 12’ in length.

Are there size limits that apply?
Yes. An RV, watercraft, or utility trailer over 40’ in length is not permitted in any residential land use district (see figure 2).
Can an RV be used as a dwelling?
One RV may be used as a temporary dwelling on a lot already containing another dwelling unit. It may be used for up to 5 days without a permit and up to 30 days upon issuance of a temporary use permit, subject to the following:

- The permit must be affixed to the RV in a manner that it is prominently displayed and visible, to the extent possible, from a public right of way.
- RVs allowed as a temporary dwelling may be parked within a front yard, need not be sight-screened, and need not comply with accessory structure setback requirements for the effective period of the permit.
- No more than one temporary use permit may be granted within any 3-month period.

Where can these be stored, and what screening must be provided?
Several options exist (see figure 1).
Storage can occur:
1. In a vented garage.
2. In a carport.
3. In a side or rear yard if in compliance with setback requirements applicable to accessory structures (typically 5 feet).

Front-Yard Storage
(beyond the front-yard setback)
when there is no reasonable access to the side or rear yards.

(figure 3)

Front-Yard Storage
(within the front-yard setback)
when there is no reasonable access to the side or rear yards.

(figure 4)

If there is no reasonable access to a rear or side yard, one RV, watercraft, or utility trailer may be located in the front yard as follows:

4. In the driveway perpendicular to the right of way (see figure 3), provided setback requirements applicable to the primary structure are met and it is sight-screened from the closest abutting property.

5. In the required front setback area (see figure 4), provided it is completely sight-screened from the right of way and the closest abutting property. The sight-screening (see figures 5, 6, and 7) must consist of plant material; however, a gate is permissible if necessary for maneuvering.

Important conditions for the above options:
- For all storage options, all sides of a property which abut a right of way are considered to be front yards.
- Items stored according to options 2, 3, or 4 above must be sight-screened from abutting properties by solid board fencing or sight-obscuring landscaping at least 6’ in height (see figures 5 and 6).
be screened from the right of way and the closest abutting property by sight-obscuring landscaping or solid board fencing at least 6 feet in height.

- Where there is an elevation difference between properties, as shown in the example above, a fence located along the property line does not meet the RV screening requirement.

**Are there exceptions to the storage and screening requirements?**

During loading and unloading of an RV, watercraft, or utility trailer, the requirements do not apply, provided that the loading/unloading is completed within a 3-day period within any 2-week period.

During temporary use of an RV as a dwelling, as discussed below, the screening and setback requirements do not apply.

Vehicles with camper shells and watercraft moored over water are exempt from the requirements.

One RV (but not watercraft or utility trailer) per residence is exempt from the requirements if at least one occupant of the residence has a current windshield placard or special license plate issued to him/her by the State of Washington as a qualified disabled person in accordance with RCW 46.16.381. Persons claiming this exemption must apply to the director of Development Services for approval.

**What if I want to store it closer to the property line?**

An RV, watercraft, or utility trailer can be located up to the side or rear property line if a written mutual agreement of the affected abutting property owners is recorded and other requirements are met. See Land Use Code (LUC) 20.20.125 or Handout L-3 for more information.
What type of plant materials are acceptable?
The following is a list of suggested plants, which, according to Sunset’s *Western Garden Book*, are well-foliaged from the ground up and can provide a dense screen. This list is only a suggestion for suitable plants; other plants may be used if they provide the appropriate end result. Remember that plant spacing, height at time of planting, and ongoing care and maintenance are necessary considerations when determining if the required screening is provided. Where available, both the common and Latin names are provided.

Deciduous plants
(may not be suitable for year-round screening):
- Berberis (several types)
- Carpinus betulus (European hornbeam)
- Crataegus monogyna (Hawthorne)
- Liquidambar styraciflua (American sweet gum)
- Lonicera (several types)
- Thamnus frangula “Columnaris” (Tall buckthorn)

Evergreen plants:
- Bamboo (several types)
- Calocedrus decurrens (Incense cedar)
- Damellia japonica
- Camellia sasanqua
- Chamaecyparis lawsoniana (False cypress)
- Cupressocyparis leylandii
- Escallonia
- Euonymus kiautschovica
- Ilex (some) (Holly)
- Itea ilicifolia (Holly-leaf sweetspire)
- Juniperus (columnar types) (Juniper)
- Mahonia aquifolium (Oregon grape)
- Myrica californica (Pacific wax myrtle)
- Osmanthus heterophyllus (Holly-leaf osmanthus)
- Photinia
- Platycladus orientalis (Oriental arborvitae)
- Podocarpus (some)
- Prunus laurocerasus (English laurel)
- Pseudotsuga menziesii (Douglas fir)

Pyracantha (Firethorn)
Rhamnus alaternus (Italian buckthorn)
Sequoia sempervirens (Coast redwood)
Taxus (Yew)
Teucrium (Germander)
Thuja (Arborvitae)
Tsuga Canadensis (Canada hemlock)
Tsuga heterophylla (Western hemlock)
Umbellularia californica

Is charging others a fee for storage allowed?
Except for storage facilities provided exclusively for tenants of multifamily dwelling complexes, parking or storage of RVs, watercraft, or utility trailers for compensation is not permitted in a residential land use district.

What can I do if I think my neighbor is in violation of these requirements?
You may file a complaint with the city’s Code Compliance section. Call 425-452-4570 for more information.

Each application type (conditional use permit, design review, etc.) has criteria that must be met in order to be approved. If you object to a proposal, you may want to show where you believe the applicable criteria are not met.

Where can I get additional information?
- Handout L-3, Accessory Structures
- LUC 20.30M, Temporary Use Permit