

## **Introduction**

Below is a draft of the proposed Lake Ridge Estates Community Guidelines. Please review this draft and then use the following link to provide any feedback you may have, even if it is just to offer your support.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LREGuidelines>

### **Lake Ridge Estates Community Guidelines**

Due to the neighborhood being annexed by the City of Gretna in 2021 and the covenants then expiring in 2022, the ordinances which govern the neighborhood are City of Gretna ordinances. Some of these fall short of providing the guidelines many in our neighborhood found positive and protective. In 2024 a survey was sent out to gather input regarding what our neighbors thought was important in these regards, and the pulse of the neighborhood was taken to determine whether new covenants were desired.

There was not sufficient support for establishing a new set of covenants, but the survey did reveal common threads regarding what our neighbors thought was important for us to focus on. As a result, and in lieu of covenants, we have developed this set of voluntary guidelines as a way to encourage honoring the desires expressed in the survey and some of the most important aspects of the previous covenants. Although these are voluntary, we encourage you to review these and do your best to honor them so we can continue to operate as a tight knit neighborhood which holds itself to a higher level.

In all cases, the City of Gretna ordinances, which prevail, must be abided by and so this document is in no way intended to supplant these requirements. Refer to all City Codes before making any decisions regarding any of the foregoing topics.

### **Renovations, Extensions and Auxiliary Buildings**

It is encouraged that any external renovations, additions or auxiliary buildings be constructed in a way that matches and honors the existing exterior color or colors and architectural character or your current structures in order to establish a harmonious overall external design. Although the previous covenants had more strict requests such as ensuring the facia match the facia of the house and the roof lines be consistent in pitch, it is instead recommended that ideas like these be a guide. It is understood that at times variations can add to the character of a property and be more aesthetically pleasing. The overall goal of this guideline is to encourage people to strive for an overall complimentary design which honors the character of the current structure(s) and also the higher standards which guided the development of Lake Ridge Estates and helps to set it apart from other neighborhoods.

When considering the previous covenants, the newer construction in the neighborhood, the overall layout of the neighborhood and the current Gretna ordinances, the following are recommendations for setback requirements and drainage considerations.

- All dwellings shall be no less than 50 feet from the front lot line, no less than 25 feet from a side lot line, and no less than 35 feet from the rear lot line.

- All accessory buildings shall be no less than 50 feet from the front lot line and no less than 15 feet from any other lot line.
- No building shall be placed nor any Lot graded, to interfere with such water drainage plan nor cause damage to the building or neighboring buildings or lots.

It is important these setback requirements continue to be honored, especially in regard to the setbacks from the front lot line. This is to ensure that additional structures do not disturb the harmony and visual appeal of the surrounding area and so the drainage plan for the neighborhood is not disturbed.

The previous covenants required only one “dwelling” structure be constructed per lot. It is suggested this requirement continue to be honored to avoid the negative impacts of adding other dwellings such as “tiny houses” and the like. While some may add accessory buildings which can also act as guest rooms or in-law suites, we request these types of additions not be utilized to make properties multiple dwelling lots.

It is also recommended all improvements are suitable for a residential only neighborhood and do not reflect commercial uses. This would include items such as signage, commercial style construction and / or improvements which are intended to be focal points for in-person advertising and commercial display.

It is also encouraged that you consult your neighbors when making significant changes to your property, especially if they will abut a neighbor’s property. This is to encourage an open dialogue and neighborly cooperation, so people have the chance to chime in with their own thoughts and plans and so any changes made have the best chance at complimenting the goals and desires of those directly impacted.

### **Grading, Landscaping and Outdoor Maintenance**

A water drainage plan was established during the development of the neighborhood and by grading the properties and installing improvements and easements for storm drainage in accordance with accepted engineering principles. When considering any modifications to the grading of your property, be considerate and cautious to avoid any potential negative impacts on your neighbors which could also lead to personal liability.

Avoid plantings which can be considered invasive or noxious or which cannot be controlled so as to prevent plantings from spreading onto other properties. When making significant changes to landscaping, consider grading, drainage and the aesthetics and consult your neighbors if there is a chance these changes may have an impact on them. Rather than being restrictive, this guideline is intended to promote intentional planning which considers the impact personal choices may have on others and to promote communication and mutual respect between neighbors.

When considering yard maintenance, a generally recognized ordinance is to ensure that lawn heights never exceed 12 inches and, according to the University of Nebraska, it is recommended that mowing be done at least once per week with a mowing height of 3 inches or more to protect against erosion and the effects of drought. Also, maintain your property in a way that restricts

the collection of rubbish, debris or building materials except in cases where there is currently an active improvement project. Overall, help us maintain the high maintenance standards our community is known for. It benefits us all and is a source of pride for many residents.

If you notice a neighbor is struggling to maintain their property, consider reaching out and seeing if there is a way you can help. Our neighborhood has also thrived due to the close-knit relationships between neighbors which have developed over time and the neighborly attitudes which prevail. You never know when reaching out a hand to a neighbor may make a bigger difference than you could have anticipated.

### **Vehicle Storage and Maintenance**

To maintain the upkeep appearance of the neighborhood, refrain from storing outdoors any vehicles, trailers, boats, RVs or the like for any extended period (1 week or longer). Also, refrain from parking any larger vehicles on your property such as commercial trucks and the like as this as these not only can be visibly unappealing but can also contribute to noise pollution, especially in the case of diesel trucks which must be warmed up prior to departure. Any “project” vehicles, vehicles being repaired or those in disrepair indoors should be stored indoors, as these items outdoors can detract from the overall appearance of the neighborhood.

### **Other Improvements**

Improvements such as solar, wind generation and the like are not only trendy, they are potentially important contributors to our future. That being said, prior to installing such improvements, consult your neighbors and try to be accommodating so you can fully consider the impact your project may have on adjacent properties and on the neighborhood as a whole. As an example, solar panels mounted on a rooftop are far less conspicuous and unsightly than pole mounted arrays.

### **Peaceful Enjoyment**

Be considerate of your neighbors when engaging in activities which can be loud and potentially disturb their peaceful enjoyment of their property. This could include radios and music, lawn mowers and other equipment, automobiles with loud exhausts and parties. The City of Gretna has a noise ordinance which addresses “loud, unnecessary noise” and in general the requirement is that no noises which can be clearly heard 50 feet or further from a property are permitted from the hours of 11:00pm to 7:00am. The previous covenants required this timeframe to be from 9:00pm to 9:00am. Our recommendation is to go further than obeying the City of Gretna ordinances and to also consult your neighbors when you do intend on engaging in an activity which could be heard by neighbors after 9pm. Other activities such as those which could produce excessive light, smoke, dust or other irritants should be refrained from if they could become an annoyance or nuisance to your surrounding neighbors. This neighborhood is comprised of people of all ages and who operate on different schedules, and being neighborly and respecting your neighbors goes a long way in establishing and maintaining a cooperative and respectful culture in our community.

The use of drones, a hobby many enjoy these days, can also be a nuisance and cross boundaries, violating the privacy of others. Limit drone usage to the boundaries / airspace above your own

property. There are laws currently being established to govern such things. As an example, California now has a civil code that prohibits the “physical invasion of privacy” when a person knowingly enters the airspace above another person's land without permission. Although Nebraska does not yet have a law on this matter, it is important to honor your neighbor’s rights to privacy and peaceful enjoyment of their property.

### **Safety**

Monitor your speed when driving through the neighborhood and avoid driving while distracted. Speeding has especially been an issue in the neighborhood recently and because of this, several respondents to the covenants survey mentioned the desire to add speed bumps and the like to act as deterrents to this behavior. Remember that we share this community and there are many younger families who have joined our ranks recently. We all must work together to ensure this is a safe environment for others, especially our little ones, and this is even more important since there are no sidewalks for their use.

### **Conclusion**

These guidelines are suggestive only, but we hope you take them to heart and honor them to the best of your ability. We have a great neighborhood which has been kept this way for a long time due to the dedication of those living here and the high standards to which we have held ourselves. Now that our covenants have expired it is even more important we continue our efforts to maintain the high standards of our community and ensure the peaceful enjoyment of all who live here.