



3 January 2025

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

CITY OF SOUTHPORT

Rights-of-Way Ordinance Updates and Grace Period Announced

Contact: ChyAnn Ketchum, Public Information Officer

cketchum@cityofsouthport.com

O: (910) 457-7927 ext. 1040 | C: (910) 269-7300

Southport, NC – At the regular meeting of the City of Southport Board of Aldermen on Thursday, December 12, 2024, the Aldermen adopted updates to **Section 16-8, Obstruction of public rights-of-way, and Section 16-10, Existing Encroachments on rights-of-way**, of the City Code of Ordinances.

Any hardened structures within the rights-of-way, including, but not limited to, fences, walls, planter boxes, trellises, and parking delineation structures more than 2 inches above grade, must be removed by **June 12, 2025**. Voluntary compliance within this timeframe will not constitute a violation. Any open violations of this ordinance existing before December 12, 2024, will be enforced.

Exceptions for new vegetative and parking encroachments meeting development standards outlined in the ordinance may be considered case-by-case after submission of the new rights-of-way permit, which can be found on the city's website beginning Monday, January 6, 2025.

City Code of Ordinances Section 16-8 and 16-10

Section 16-8

No person shall place any obstruction above the horizontal plane of a City rights-of-way with the following exceptions:

- *New parking spaces are allowed that meet ordinance standards for size and surfacing.*
 - *Parking surfaces existing at the time of the adoption of this ordinance can remain so long that they are not a safety hazard and do not include obstructions 2 inches above grade.*
- *Vegetation and protective measures following current best management standards can be placed within a 10-foot radius around trees in the rights-of-way.*

Section 16-10

- *Vegetative encroachments existing at the time of the adoption of this ordinance may remain.*
- *Private installation of native trees in the rights-of-way is allowed when a tree must be removed for construction or if the tree is diseased or dead.*
- *Private fences and vegetation may be maintained if constructed on the private property side of a sidewalk where on-street parking has a curb.*
- *Walls and fences erected on or before December 31, 1980, can remain if they contribute to the historic character of the National Historic Register or local historic district(s).*

City staff, including the UDO Administrator, Director of Public Works, Code Enforcement Officers, and Fire Marshal will ensure the implementation of these updates. Approval will be made through the online permit portal as a standalone permit or associated with a building permit, similar to the existing tree removal permit process.

A full copy of the updated ordinance and public notices will be published on the city's website, <https://cityofsouthport.com/planning-services/#rights-of-way-ordinance-update>, and shared on the city's official social media channels on Facebook, Instagram, and Nextdoor. Specific questions can be directed to the Planning Services Department by emailing coms@cityofsouthport.com.

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910-457-7900

1029 North Howe Street, Southport, NC 28461

www.cityofsouthport.com