ORIGINAL

RESOLUTION NO.: R-2026-073

Establishment of a City of Columbia Flag Display Policy

WHEREAS, the City of Columbia, South Carolina ("City") establishes this Flag Display Policy to provide clear, consistent standards for the display of flags on City property and City-maintained rights-of-way. All of these are City-owned flagpoles that are designated exclusively for government speech. Flag displays communicate the City's official governmental messages, value, and identity via shared civic symbols, all of which the City strives to ensure represent all residents regardless of race, religion, or political affiliation; and,

WHEREAS, the following policies shall apply to flags flown by the City and on City property:

Definitions:

A. *Flag*. A flag is a piece of fabric, usually rectangular, with a distinct design and colors that is attached to a pole and used as a symbol of a nation, state, or municipality.

B. *United States Flag*. The flag of the United States of America as described in 4 U.S.C. §§ 1–2 and applicable Executive Orders.

C. *South Carolina State Flag*. The flag of the State of South Carolina as adopted under S.C. Code Ann. § 1-1-610, as amended.

D. *City of Columbia Flag*. The official municipal flag of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, as adopted by City Council.

E. *Government Speech*. Official expression by the City, including flag displays authorized under this policy that communicates the City's own message and does not create a public forum for private expression.

Application:

A. This policy applies to all flag displays on:

1. City-owned buildings and facilities, including City Hall, police and fire stations, parks, community centers, and public works facilities;
2. City-maintained rights-of-way where the City controls displays; and
3. City-owned flagpoles in public spaces and plazas.

B. This policy does not apply to:

1. Property owned or controlled by federal, state, county, or school district entities;
2. Rights-of-way under the jurisdiction of SCDOT or other agencies;
3. Private property; and
4. Event, program, or promotional banners displayed on City-owned light poles, banner brackets, or in designated commercial and entertainment districts (including but not limited to the BullStreet District, Five Points, Harbison, Main Street, and the Vista), which are administered under separate procedures and are not governed by this policy.

Authorized flags:

A. *United States Flag*. Displayed in accordance with the U.S. Flag Code (4 U.S.C. §§ 1–10)
B. *South Carolina State Flag*. Displayed in accordance with South Carolina law and state protocol
C. *City of Columbia Flag*. The official municipal flag adopted by City Council

Display Standards and Protocols:

A. Order of Precedence

1. United States Flag
2. South Carolina State Flag
3. City of Columbia Flag

B. Size and Condition

1. No flag may be larger than the United States Flag.
2. United States and South Carolina flags should be of equal size when displayed together.
3. All flags must be clean, intact, and suitable for display.
4. Damaged or worn flags must be promptly replaced and retired respectfully.

C. Time of Display

1. Flags are normally displayed from sunrise to sunset.
2. Flags may be displayed 24 hours if properly illuminated.
3. Flags should not be displayed during severe weather unless all-weather flags are used.

D. Half-Staff Protocol

1. The United States Flag shall be flown at half-staff in accordance with Presidential proclamations and orders from the Governor of South Carolina.
2. The South Carolina State Flag shall be lowered whenever the United States Flag is lowered.
3. The City Council may order half-staff displays upon the death of a City official, employee, or other circumstances deemed appropriate.

E. Raising and Lowering

1. Flags shall be raised briskly and lowered ceremoniously.
2. The United States Flag is raised first and lowered last.
3. When lowering to half-staff, flags shall first be raised to the peak before being lowered.

Prohibition on unauthorized flags:

A. *No Unauthorized Flags*. No flags other than those listed above may be displayed on City property or City-maintained rights-of-way.

B. *Enforcement*. Unauthorized flag displays shall be removed and appropriate enforcement action may be taken in accordance with City ordinances.

Administration:

A. *Responsibility*. The City Council shall:

1. Implement and enforce this policy; and
2. Coordinate with other agencies regarding jurisdictional issues.

B. *Flag Procurement*. All United States and South Carolina State flags purchased by the City shall be made in the United States, consistent with state procurement expectations.

C. *Maintenance*. The Public Works Department shall regularly inspect and maintain all City flag displays.

D. *Policy Changes*. The City Council may, when necessary, edit this policy so that it aligns with Federal, State, and legal guidance for proper display and care of flags.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and City Council this 6th day of October, 2026, that the above-stated Flag Display Policy is hereby APPROVED.

Requested by:
Councilman Tyler D. Bailey

Mayor

Approved by:

City Manager

Approved as to form:

City Attorney

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Introduced: 10/06/2026
Final Reading: 10/06/2026