

**CITY OF SEBASTOPOL
RESOLUTION NO. 6754-2026**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEBASTOPOL APPROVING A REVISED FLAG POLICY FOR THE
OUTDOOR DISPLAY OF FLAGS AND BANNERS ON CITY PROPERTY RELATING TO FLAGS AND BANNERS**

WHEREAS, the City of Sebastopol currently displays the United States Flag, the State of California Flag, and the City of Sebastopol Flag at City Hall and other City facilities in accordance with federal and state law; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has discretion to determine whether to display non-governmental or commemorative flags and, if so, which flags to display; and

WHEREAS, on October 21, 2025 the City Council adopted a flag policy establishing guidelines for flags on City flag poles and banners on public light standards; and

WHEREAS, the display of commemorative flags on City-owned facilities can raise First Amendment issues, and the City Council desires to ensure that any such displays are considered government speech, under which the City retains full discretion and control over the messages conveyed; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has determined that establishing a formal Flag Policy will:

- Clarify that City flagpoles and public light standards are not intended to serve as a forum for free expression or speech by the public;
- Establish a process for the City Council to approve commemorative flags and banners to be flown on City property to express the official sentiments of the City; and
- Provide clear standards for flag display and banners consistent with applicable federal, state, and local laws and agreements; and

WHEREAS, the City Council desires to adopt a revised Flag Policy to identify preapproved banners for the City's light standards, preapprove placement of flags along the right of way, and modify the provisions of the policy related to lowering flags in response to presidential or gubernatorial proclamations.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Sebastopol hereby:


1. Approves the Flag Policy attached hereto as *Exhibit A* and incorporated herein by reference.
2. Directs City staff to implement the Flag Policy and ensure that all flag displays on City property and within applicable rights-of-way comply with its provisions.

The above and foregoing Resolution was duly passed, approved, and adopted at a meeting by the City Council on the 5th Day of May, 2026.


I, the undersigned, hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was duly adopted by the City of Sebastopol City Council by the following vote:

VOTE:

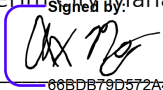
Ayes: Councilmembers Carter, Hinton, Zollman, Vice Mayor Maurer and Mayor McLewis
Noes: None
Abstain: None
Absent: None

APPROVED: 
7C6BCED0A8914A1

Mayor Jill McLewis

ATTEST: 
44C0774260FE430...

Mary Gourley, Interim City Manager/City Clerk, MMC

APPROVED AS TO FORM: 
80BDB79D572A4EB...

Alex Mog, City Attorney

Exhibit A – Flag Policy

FLAG POLICY
Effective May 5, 2026

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to establish guidance for the outdoor display of flags at City Facilities and public streets, including the display of commemorative flags and banners. Nothing in this Policy is intended to control the City’s indoor display of flags, including commemorative flags, within City Facilities. This Policy is commonly referred to as “Flag Policy.”

II. RESPONSIBILITY

The City Council serves as the final approval authority of the installation of banners and flags under this Policy. The Public Works Director is the approval authority for Encroachment Permits for the installation of banners and flags on City Facilities, City street right-of-way, and Caltrans street right-of-way (as permitted under a maintenance agreement with Caltrans for SR 12 and SR 116).

III. DEFINITIONS

The following definitions shall apply to this Policy:

“U.S. Flag” means the Flag of the United States, as defined by 4 USC 1.

“California Flag” means the State Flag of California (also known as the “Bear Flag”), as defined by California Government Code Section 420.

“Banners” means pennant, streamer, flag, sign, picture, figure or other object displayed over a public street, designed for decoration or advertisement.

“City Facility” means any real property that is owned or operated by the City.

“Commemorative Flag” means a flag other than the U.S. Flag or the California Flag. The display of Commemorative Flags constitutes official governmental speech. The display of Commemorative Flags serves solely as an expression of the City’s official sentiment and shall not create or serve as a forum for public expression. “Commemorative Flag” shall mean any flag which identifies with a specific date, historical event, cause, nation or group of people, whereby the City honors or commemorates the date, event, cause, nation or people by flying the flag.

“Sister City Flags” means the Sister Cities of the City of Sebastopol. The flags of the City of Sebastopol's Sister Cities ("Sister City Flags") may be displayed in accordance with this policy.

IV. STANDARDS

- A. Flags shall be displayed in accordance with Federal and State statutes and this Policy.
- B. Displaying the U.S. Flag and California Flag:

1. No other flag shall be placed above the U.S. Flag and no other flag shall be larger than the U.S. Flag. Other flags may be flown at the same height and in the same size, in accordance with this Policy. Where both the U.S. Flag and the California Flag are flown, they shall be of the same size.
 2. Flags should be hoisted briskly and lowered ceremoniously. The U.S. Flag should be hoisted first and lowered last.
 3. Flags shall be displayed during operating hours on all days on which the City is open for business, and on national and state holidays. Flags may be displayed twenty-four (24) hours a day as long as they are illuminated during darkness.
 5. Flags shall not be displayed during inclement weather. However, all-weather flags may be displayed twenty-four (24) hours a day as long as they are illuminated during darkness.
 6. The City shall display the U.S. Flag and the California Flag at City Facilities. The
 7. U.S. Flag shall be displayed in the first position of honor. The California State Flag shall be placed in the second position of honor.
 8. The authority of ordering flags flown at half-staff rests with the President of the United States, the Governor of the State of California, and the Sebastopol City Council. On behalf of the City Council, the Mayor may authorize flags to be lowered to half-staff. In the Mayor's absence, the City Manager, or his/her designee, may authorize the lowering. Upon issuance of a presidential or gubernatorial proclamation or order, the city will voluntarily comply with said proclamation, unless otherwise directed by the Mayor in consultation with the City Manager.
 - a) The flags may be displayed at half-staff upon the death of a government official or employee, past or present, in accordance with recognized customs or practices consistent with all applicable laws, regulations, and employee contracts.
 - b) The flags should first be hoisted quickly to the peak for an instant and then lowered to the half-staff position. The flags should be again raised to the peak before it is lowered for the day. 3
 - c) On Memorial Day, the flags should be displayed at half-staff until noon, then raised to the peak for the remainder of the day.
 - d) The flags, when flown at half-staff, will be flown from the time of death or the ordering to fly flags at half-staff until the time of interment, unless otherwise authorized by law or Presidential direction or order.
 9. Whenever the U.S. Flag is flown at half-staff, all displayed flags shall also be flown at half-staff. When lowering a flag to half-staff, the flag shall first be hoisted to its peak for an instant and then lowered to half-staff. At the end of the day, the flag shall again be raised to its peak before being lowered for the day. If any other flag is flown at half-staff, the commemorative flag will also be flown at half-staff.
- C. Displaying Commemorative Flags
1. Commemorative Flags must be either purchased by the City or temporarily donated for the City's use and must be clean, without holes and tears, and be made of an all-weather fabric.
 2. Commemorative Flags must be the same size or smaller than the United States and California flags that are flown and must be below the California flag.

3. The City will not be responsible for the condition of the commemorative flag once flown.
4. Commemorative Flags shall be displayed for a period of time that is reasonable or customary, but no longer than thirty-one (31) continuous days
5. A “Commemorative Flag” shall be consistent with the City’s vision, mission and priorities.
6. The following commemorative flags are authorized as part of this policy during the time periods indicated:
 - a) Children’s Memorial Day (Fourth Friday in April);
 - b) Progressive Pride (Month of June);
 - c) Women’s Equality Day (Week of August 26);
 - d) Sebastopol World Friends (Week of August 21);
 - e) POW/MIA (Month of September).
7. The following are not allowed as Commemorative Flags and will not be considered by the City Council:
 - a) Flags of a particular religious movement or creed to avoid the appearance of City government endorsing religion or a particular religious movement or creed;
 - b) Flags of a political party to avoid the appearance of City government endorsing a political party; and flags advocating a certain outcome in an election.

V. REQUIREMENTS FOR PUBLIC REQUESTS FOR HANGING OF FLAGS AND BANNERS

The City’s flagpoles and light standards are not intended to serve as a forum for free expression by the public. The City shall display commemorative flags and banners (whether commemorative or an advertisement) only if authorized by the City Council as an expression of the City Council’s official sentiments. Any such authorization shall be given at a duly noticed meeting of the City Council, unless explicitly preapproved by this policy.

- A. Within Caltrans right of way (SR. 116 and SR 12).
 1. The request must be from a non-profit organization
 2. The request is subject to approval by the City Council, unless approved by this policy.
 3. The following banners are authorized under this policy: 3rd of July Fireworks, Apple Blossom, Film Festival, Gravenstein Apple Fair, Ballet Nutcracker, Elder Abuse Awareness, Seasonal Happy Holidays, and Experience Sebastopol.
 4. Banners and flags must not contain private advertising whether in text or logo format.
 5. The banner must be of substantial material, such as cloth, canvas, or plastic.
 6. The lowest point of the banner or flag must be at least eighteen (18) feet above the highway pavement.
 7. Suspension or installation of banners or flags is prohibited on State-owned traffic signal poles or other State-owned facilities.
 8. The applicant must apply for a City encroachment permit and pay applicable permit fees, unless otherwise waived by the City, and provide insurance for the hanging of the banners.
 9. The display may be allowed two (2) weeks before the event and may remain in place for the duration of the event. However, the total period of display should not exceed six (6) weeks or as specified in Section VI, paragraph H, whichever is sooner. For additional

requirements pertaining to banners on Public Light Standards, see Section VI of this Policy.

10. If any of these requirements cannot be met, the applicant shall apply for an encroachment permit directly with Caltrans and provide proof of approved Permit to City.
11. For more detailed information, see Caltrans Encroachment Permit Manual, Chapter 5, Specific Encroachment Permits at the following link: Chapter_5.docx.
12. For additional requirements additional requirements pertaining to banners on Public Light Standards, see Section VI of this Policy.

B. Within City Street right of way.

1. Paragraphs A(1) through A(9) of Section V, shall apply.
2. For additional requirements pertaining to banners on Public Light Standards, see Section VI of this Policy.

C. City Facilities. Only the U.S. Flag and the State Flag can be displayed on the Corporation Yard and Police Station flagpoles. Commemorative Flags shall be displayed exclusively on the City Hall flagpole and shall not be displayed on other City facilities.

D. Flag Raising Ceremony Logistics. The Mayor is the organizing lead for flag raising ceremonies or if unavailable, the Vice Mayor (Organizing Lead). The Organizing Lead may also select a delegee from among the City Council to assist and shall inform the City Manager of the delegee. The Organizing Lead will coordinate with the City Manager's office to set the date and time of the ceremony, and be the lead for event coordination, including inviting speakers, providing any requested event information for public marketing. The Organizing Lead shall also inform the City Manager as soon as possible of any potential public safety issues as they become known.

E. Flag Raising Ceremonies are outdoor events held in in front of City Hall (7120 Bodega Avenue). Ceremonies are limited to one hour maximum and can accommodate approximately 30 people. Flag raising ceremonies shall make all efforts to be scheduled during normal City Hall working hours, at a date and time available to be supported by City staff.

F. Public Works Department shall maintain the flagpole located at City Hall and the Corporation Yard and the Police Department shall maintain the flagpole at the Police Station. Raising and lowering of flags shall be in accordance with City policies and/or Council resolution.

G. Scouting America's display of American flags and Women's Equality Day flags in the downtown area on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Presidents' Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth National Independence Day, Independence Day (Observed), Women's Equality Day, Labor Day, Columbus/Indigenous Peoples' Day, and Veterans Day is preapproved under this policy.

VI. ADDITIONAL POLICIES PERTAINING TO PUBLIC LIGHT STANDARDS

- A. The Public Works Department shall be responsible for installation and removal of banners of general seasonal or citywide interest ("Welcome to Sebastopol" or "Happy Holidays" for example).
- B. The time period between Thanksgiving and New Years shall be reserved for general holiday banners, as approved by the City Manager.
- C. Non-profit providing a public service may request the installation of banners on brackets not reserved for general interest banners for periods of up to thirty days, subject to approval by the City Council.
- D. Banner placement and removal by applicant shall require filing of appropriate encroachment permits, application fees, provision of insurance meeting City standards, and following installation and removal protocol established by the Public Works Department.
- E. Reservations for time period shall be on a first-come, first-serve basis with filing of a complete application being required to establish a reservation. All reservations are subject to the approval of the City Council to determine if the proposed banner is consistent with the City Council's official sentiments.
- F. A fee as outlined in the current and approved City Master Fee Schedule per banner installed shall be collected for banner bracket replacement/repair.
- G. Organizations installing banners shall also be responsible for their removal not later than thirty days from installation, or within seven days following any event advertised by the banners, whichever is sooner.
- H. Organizations installing banner shall not remove any existing banners without express written approval from the City.
- I. The application for banners shall include a drawing and description of the proposed banner.
- J. The size and materials of the banners shall conform to specifications of the Public Works Department, if not explicitly specified in this Policy.
- K. Banners installed in violation of these banner standards shall be subject to immediate removal by the City and may be subject to penalties, as authorized by applicable laws.
- L. The City Council welcomes donations for additional banner brackets in appropriate locations to allow expansion of the banner program.

This Policy supersedes Resolution 6701-2025.

**AGREEMENT WITH CITY OF SEBASTOPOL TO ISSUE ROUTINE
ENCROACHMENT PERMITS ON CONVENTIONAL HIGHWAYS**

THIS AGREEMENT, made and executed in duplicate this 6th day of February, 2008 by and between the State of California acting by and through the Department of Transportation, hereinafter referred to as STATE and the City of Sebastopol, hereinafter referred to as CITY.

WITNESSETH:

A. RECITALS

The Parties hereto desire to provide for the CITY to perform particular encroachment permit functions on State Highways 12 and 116 within the jurisdictional limits of CITY, to wit, the issuance of routine encroachment permits and the control and inspection of work performed pursuant to said permits, as provided for in Sections 130 and 676 of the Streets and Highways Code.

B. AGREEMENT

This Agreement shall supersede any previous AGREEMENT WITH CITY OF SEBASTOPOL TO ISSUE ROUTINE ENCROACHMENT PERMITS ON STATE HIGHWAYS and/or AMENDMENTS thereto.

- C. In consideration of the mutual covenants and promises herein contained it is mutually agreed that CITY;
1. Shall use State's Standard Encroachment Permit forms.
 2. Shall follow State's policies as contained in State's Encroachment Permit Manual. A copy of said Manual will be furnished upon execution of this Agreement.
 3. Shall follow State's design standards unless CITY'S standards are more restrictive. In the event of conflict as to interpretation, State's standards shall apply.
 4. May issue Encroachment Permits for the following routine encroachments without State's prior approval:
 - a. Temporary Banners, Signs, Decorations – New or Repeat
 - b. Curb, gutter, sidewalk (Removal or Repair of existing only)
 - c. Fence Repair (Removal or repair of existing only)
 - d. Mail or Newspaper Delivery Boxes
 - e. Driveway-Resurface, Reissue (for record purposes only)
 - f. Land Surveys
 - g. Minor building refurbishing, painting, window-washing or routine maintenance activities.
 - h. Cleaning or replacement of existing awnings or signs.
 - i. Sidewalk sales.
 5. Shall collect sufficient fees from the permittee to cover its cost of permit administration, inspection and other permit related costs. No cost for CITY administration, review or inspection shall be charged to or borne by the State.
 6. CITY shall assign qualified personnel to review permit application, plans and specifications, to revise plans and produce permit with appropriate specifications, and to provide construction inspection or monitoring and conduct final inspection of all work performed within the highway right-of-way.
 7. Shall keep on file, subject to State's inspection, all permits issued on State highways; and shall forward copies of all issued permits, along with Notices of Completion, As-Built plans (if any) and all other related data to State's District Permit Engineer immediately upon completion of the work permitted or upon the expiration of the permit.

D. LEGAL RELATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Nothing in the provisions of this agreement is intended to created duties or obligations to or rights in third parties not parties to this contract or affect the legal liability of either party to the contract by imposing any standard of care respecting the maintenance of State highways different from the standard of care imposed by law.

It is understood and agreed that neither the STATE nor any officer or employee is responsible for any damage or liability occurring by reason of anything done or omitted to be done by the CITY under or in connection with any work, authority or jurisdiction delegated to the CITY under this agreement. It is understood and agreed that pursuant to Government Code Section 895.4 CITY shall defend, indemnify and save harmless the State of California, all officers and employees from all claims, suits or actions of every name, kind and description brought for or in account of injuries to or death of any person or damage to property resulting from anything done or omitted to be done by the CITY under or in connection with any work, authority or jurisdiction delegated to the CITY under this agreement.

The CITY waives any and all rights to any type of express and implied indemnity against the STATE, its officers and employees arising from any work, authority or jurisdiction delegated to the CITY under this agreement.

E. TERMS OF AGREEMENT

THIS AGREEMENT shall become effective and shall remain in full force and effect until amended or terminated. This Agreement may be amended or terminated at anytime upon mutual consent of the parties hereto. This Agreement may also be terminated by either party upon thirty (30) days written notice to the other party.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have set their hands and seals the day and year first above written.



Approved as to form and procedure

[Handwritten signature]

Attorney
Department of Transportation

Approved as to Form:

[Handwritten signature]

City Attorney

CITY OF SEBASTOPOL

BY *[Handwritten signature]*
Mayor

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION

BY *[Handwritten signature]*
Deputy District Director,
Traffic Operations

RESOLUTION NO. 5645


RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING MAYOR TO SIGN
AGREEMENT WITH CALTRANS
(Agreement with City of Sebastopol to Issue
Routine Encroachment Permits on Conventional Highways)

WHEREAS, the CITY OF SEBASTOPOL desires to perform particular encroachment permit functions on State Highways 12 and 116 within the jurisdictional limits of the City, to wit, the issuance of routine encroachment permits and the control and inspection of work performed pursuant to said permits, as provided for in Sections 130 and 676 of the Streets and Highways Code; and

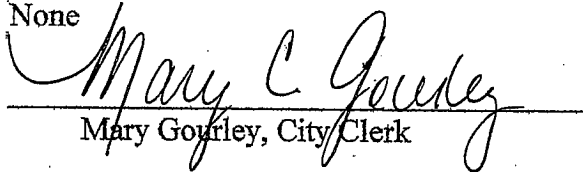
WHEREAS, Caltrans permits and legal staff and the City Attorney have reviewed and approved a form of Agreement for this purpose, which is attached hereto;

NOW, THEREFORE, the City Council of the City of Sebastopol hereby authorizes the Mayor to sign the Agreement with City of Sebastopol to Issue Routine Encroachment Permits on Conventional Highways.

IN COUNCIL DULY PASSED this 5th day of February, 2008.

APPROVED: 
MAYOR CRAIG LITWIN

- AYES: Councilmembers Robinson, Gurney, Pierce, Kelley and Mayor Litwin
- NOES: None
- ABSTAIN: None
- ABSENT: None

ATTEST: 
Mary Gourley, City Clerk



Scouting America Troop 27 - Sebastopol, CA **Golden Gate Area Council BSA / Pomo District**

Dear Sebastopol City Council,

Thank you for considering our requests and supporting Troop 27 as we work to continue to provide the valuable community service of putting up flags in central Sebastopol on federal holidays. Troop 27 as a whole is grateful for the opportunity to hopefully rectify the difficulties that we have been encountering with posting flags and for being able to speak at the City Council meeting on February 17th, 2026.

Unfortunately, Troop 27 has recently run into an issue where we potentially need a permit for each individual instance of posting flags, and as this is a lengthy process we have had trouble being able to carry out this service. Troop 27 would like to request the following.

Firstly, Troop 27 requests that the City of Sebastopol amend its ordinance regarding permitting the posting of flags within the City/CalTrans right-of-way on North Main Street and the surrounding area to allow the posting of American flags and Women's Equality Day flags on Martin Luther King Junior Day, Presidents' Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth National Independence Day, Independence Day (Observed), Women's Equality Day, Labor Day, Columbus/Indigenous Peoples' Day, and Veterans Day.

Second, Troop 27 asks that the service be conducted in perpetuity by an organization of the City's choice. We humbly ask that Troop 27 be designated as that organization, due to our history of providing this service and enthusiasm towards continuing to do so.

Flags would be posted on the aforementioned days at 7:00 AM, and taken down the same afternoon at 4:00 PM. This will happen only if weather permits it, meaning that we would abstain from putting up flags if it is not feasible or if the flags are in danger of becoming damaged. Additionally, on Women's Equality Day, Women's Suffrage flags will be posted alongside American flags.

The area in which we hope to post flags centers around the intersection of North Main Street and Bodega Avenue/Highway 12. The area extends 0.1 miles East along Highway 12 to the Goodwill - Redwood Empire thrift store, 0.2 miles North on North Main Street to the Safeway, 0.1 miles West on Bodega Avenue to the Sebastopol Regional Library, and 0.1 miles South on North Main Street to the Sebastopol Chamber of Commerce.

Thank you again for considering Troop 27's request.

Sincerely,

Russell Wettle
Troop Guide, Troop 27.