



**Agenda for Gig Harbor Planning Commission
Open Public Hearing
Gig Harbor Civic Center
Thursday, July 17, 2025 at 5:30 P.M.**

This meeting may also be accessed through Zoom at <https://zoom.us/j/95353411299> or by calling (253) 215- 8782 and entering Meeting ID 953 5341 1299. Please see the Public Comment & Decorum section at the end of this agenda for information on options to make public comment.

This meeting may also be viewed live in the Council Chambers at the Civic Center.

Call to Order/Roll Call:

Approval of Minutes: July 1, 2025

Agenda Items for Formal Review:

Amendments to GHMC 17.80 Sign Code Continued from July 1, 2025

- a. Announcement of Application
- b. Open Public Meeting Announcement
- c. Staff Report
- d. Applicant Introduction and Presentation
- e. Public Comment (See Assistance Memo)
- f. Discussion

Other Business Next meeting Thursday, August 7, 2025

Adjournment

PUBLIC COMMENT & DECORUM

The city desires to allow a maximum opportunity for public comment. However, the business of the Planning Commission must proceed in an orderly, timely manner. The purpose of a Planning Commission meeting is to advise on subjects prescribed by the City Council; it is not a public forum.

Public comment may be made in-person from the microphone, remotely via Zoom or by phone during designated portions of the meeting. To speak during the meeting via Zoom, press the Raise Hand button near the bottom of your Zoom window or press *9 on your phone. Please refrain from raising your hand until the Chair has announced that the Commission has opened the public comment portion of the meeting. Your name or the last three digits of your phone number will be called out when it is your turn to speak. When using your phone to call in, you may need to press *6 to unmute yourself. Speakers will be allotted 3 minutes per individual, unless revised by the chair. Comments shall be made, first giving the speaker's name and address. Anyone making "out of order" comments may be subject to removal from the meeting.

Instead of making oral comments, written comments may be submitted to the Planning Commission at PlanningComments@gigharborwa.gov.

All remarks shall be addressed to the commission as a body and not to any specific commissioner. All speakers shall be courteous in their language and deportment and shall not engage in or discuss or comment on personalities or indulge in derogatory remarks or insinuations with regard to any commissioner, or any member of the staff or the public.

There will be no demonstrations during or at the conclusion of any public comment. These guidelines are intended to promote an orderly system of holding public meetings, to give every person an opportunity to be heard and to ensure that no individuals are embarrassed by voicing their opinions.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES (ADA) ACCOMMODATIONS

ADA accommodations can be provided upon request. Those requiring special accommodations should contact the city clerk at cityclerk@gigharborwa.gov or (253) 853-7613 at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.



"THE MARITIME CITY"

**Minutes for Gig Harbor Planning Commission
Open Public Hearing
Tuesday, July 1, 2025 at 5:30 P.M.
Council Chambers**

Call to Order/Roll Call

Chair Krawczyk called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Commissioners Burcar, Jordan, Martin (virtually) Nasseh, Snodgrass and Tessicini were present.

Staff: Community Development Director, Eric Baker and Planning Technician, Michelle Thomas

Approval of Minutes

Motion: Move to approve minutes from June 18, 2025 (Snodgrass/Tessicini)

Vote: Unanimously approved

Agenda Items

Amendments to GHMC 17.80 Sign Code Proposal to amend language in Gig Harbor Municipal Code 17.80 - Sign Code. Community Development Director Baker introduced the amendment.

Public Comment

Alsaker – Gig Harbor

Commission Discussion Commission requested to keep the public comment period open until end of business on Wednesday, July 2, 2025 and continue the Public Hearing on the next schedule meeting date of Thursday, July 17, 2025 and make their recommendation at that time

Other Business

This was Chair Krawczyk's last meeting staff and Commissioners thanked him for his years of service. We will appoint a new Commissioner at the next meeting. Next meeting will be Thursday, July 17, 2025 Continuation of Public Hearing on proposed sign code amendments

Adjournment 6:30 p.m.

Michelle Thomas

Michelle Thomas
Planning Technician

SIGN CODE IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES AND POTENTIAL RESOLUTIONS



ISSUE #1: Sign Definition

The current definition is ambiguous and only clearly highlights commercial uses of signage in the definition. The Council's past direction and past application of the Code has been for the sign regulations to apply to all uses including, but not limited to, the full range of personal expressive speech, such as political, religious, directional, or other signage. Text in red is proposed for addition (underlined) or deletion (struck-through).

17.80.030 Definitions

~~40. "Sign" means:~~

~~a. Any visual communication device, structure, or fixture which is visible from any public right-of-way or waterway placed for the promotion of products, goods, services, events or to identify a building, using sign graphics or trademarks; or~~

~~b. Steel, plastic or similar panels displaying corporate colors, logos or trademarks and as are common on corporate signature buildings to give identity to the business (corporate colors which conform to the city's design manual requirements for color shall be excluded from this definition of a sign); or~~

~~c. Inflatable figures, balloons (in a display of six or more), festoons, streamers, spinners, product representations and advertisements for services which are attached to a fixed object or stationary vehicle.~~

40. "Sign" means any device, structure, fixture, placard, surface, awning, banner, balloon or thing using graphics, lights, symbols and/or written copy designed, used or displayed for the purpose of advertising, informing, identifying, attracting attention to, or promoting the interest of any person, institution, business, event, product, goods or services; provided, that the same is visible from a street, way, sidewalk, or parking area open to the public. Excluded are official traffic signs or signals, public notices, and governmental flags.

ISSUE #2: Location of Temporary Sign Areas

The definitions of temporary sign areas (GHMC 17.80.030.27 and 34) only reference public right-of-way (ROW) as where they apply. However, the temporary sign regulations (GHMC 17.80.110. A and B) reference these sign areas and include regulations on private property as well. This is how the regulations have been historically read (both ROW and private property), thus the language is proposed to be amended to reflect that intent. Text in red is proposed for addition (underlined) or deletion (struck-through).

17.80.030 Definitions

27. “Nonresidential temporary sign area” means the area within the public right-of-way immediately adjacent to or all private property within the public institutional (PI), downtown business (DB), neighborhood commercial (B-1), general business (B-2), commercial (C-1), residential and business 1 and 2 (RB-1 and RB-2), planned community development commercial (PCD-C), employment (ED), waterfront commercial (WC), waterfront Millville (WM), planned community business park (PCD-BP), and the planned community development neighborhood business (PCD-NB) zoning districts.

34. “Residential temporary sign area” means the area within the public right-of-way immediately adjacent to or all private property within the single-family residential (R-1), planned community development low density residential (RLD), medium density residential (R-2), planned community development medium density residential (RMD), multiple-family residential (R-3), and waterfront residential (WR) zoning districts.

17.80.110 Temporary signs

A. Temporary Signs in Public Right-of-Way.

1. Location. Temporary signs are prohibited from being placed within: roundabouts; medians; shoulders; travel lanes; and areas of the public right-of-way that are not accessible by a sidewalk or pedestrian walking path. Signs shall be no further away than 100 feet from the intersection. Placement of temporary signs shall only be permitted in areas identified on the director’s official map for temporary signs in the right-of-way as updated and maintained by the director. Temporary signs shall not be located in rights-of-way adjacent to city facilities or parks, or any other government-owned facilities and properties.

a. In addition to the standards above, temporary signs in the area on Harborview Drive from Soundview Drive to Rosedale Street, and on North Harborview Drive from Finholm Market to Peacock Hill Drive, are authorized to exceed the 100 feet from the intersection requirement, and these temporary signs shall obtain an encroachment permit in addition to the permit required in subsection (A)(3) of this section.

2. Safety. All temporary signs shall be placed in a manner that is safe for all users of the public right-of-way. Temporary signs shall not block access to structures, parked cars, block vehicular sight distance views at corners, intersections, or block pedestrian walking paths. No temporary sign shall mimic, or be attached to, official roadway signage (stop signs, yield, etc.).
3. Permitting. All temporary signs shall have an approved city permit attached to the sign face. Permits can be acquired online at the city of Gig Harbor website, or in person at the Civic Center at no cost. Permits are valid for 30 days at a time. All signs with expired permits or no permit attached will be removed.
4. Temporary signs in a residential temporary sign area are limited in size to four square feet per side, no more than eight square feet total and shall not exceed three feet in height from the ground when displayed consistent with 17.80.110.A.1.
5. Temporary signs in a nonresidential temporary sign area are limited in size to six square feet per side, no more than 12 square feet total and shall not exceed three feet in height from the ground when displayed consistent with 17.80.110.A.1.
6. No sign shall obstruct or impair access to a public sidewalk, public or private street or driveway, traffic control sign, bus stop, fire hydrant, bench, or any type of street furniture, or otherwise create a hazard, including a tripping hazard.
7. Temporary signs shall only be placed in the right-of-way if the sign owner has permission from the underlying property owner. Owners may remove signs without notice.
8. All signs placed or erected that do not meet the regulations will be removed without notice.

B. Temporary Signs on Private Property.

1. All signs placed on private property shall have owner's consent. Owners may remove signs without notice.
2. Temporary signs on private property do not require a permit.
3. Temporary signs in a **residential temporary sign area** shall not exceed six feet in height from the ground when displayed and shall be limited as follows:
 - a. For nonresidential uses, no more than one sign visible from the public right-of-way per tenant space is allowed. The sign is limited in size to six square feet per side, no more than 12 square feet in total.
 - b. For residential uses, no more than four signs visible from the public right-of-way per lot are allowed. The total size of all signs combined is limited to six square feet; in the case of double-sided signs, 12 square feet is allowed.

4. Temporary signs in a **nonresidential temporary sign area** shall not exceed three feet in height from the ground when displayed and shall be limited as follows:

a. For nonresidential uses, no more than one sign visible from the public right-of-way per tenant space is allowed. The sign is limited in size to six square feet per side, no more than 12 square feet in total. One temporary banner attached to the exterior of the business for which it applies is additionally allowed and shall be limited to 20 square feet in size. The banner may be displayed for a total of no more than 60 cumulative days per calendar year.

b. For residential uses, no more than four signs visible from the public right-of-way per lot are allowed. The total size of all signs combined is limited to six square feet; in the case of double-sided signs, 12 square feet is allowed.

SIGN CODE UPDATE – PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION MATRIX – 7/17/25

Code Topic	Issue	Review	Staff Recommendation	PC Recommendation
Sign Definition - Exemptions	Proposed definition includes exemptions which are also covered in GHMC 17.080.010. B – Scope.	<p>Draft code:</p> <p><u>40. “Sign” means any device, structure, fixture, placard, surface, awning, banner, balloon or thing using graphics, lights, symbols and/or written copy designed, used or displayed for the purpose of advertising, informing, identifying, attracting attention to, or promoting the interest of any person, institution, business, event, product, goods or services; provided, that the same is visible from a street, way, sidewalk, or parking area open to the public. Excluded are official traffic signs or signals, public notices, and governmental flags.</u></p>	<p>Exemptions should be solely located in GHMC 17.080.010.B – Scope. Remove final sentence of draft code definition as these are already included in this section of code (shown below).</p> <p>B. Scope. This chapter shall not regulate traffic and directional signs installed by a governmental entity; signs not readable from a public right-of-way or waterway; interior signs placed more than three feet behind a window or opening of a building unless within an enclosed display window; national flags; flags of a political subdivision; legal notices required by law; historic site plaques; gravestones; structures intended for a separate use, such as phone booths; or sign graphics or symbols painted directly onto or flush-mounted magnetically onto a motor vehicle operating in the normal course of business.</p>	

Code Topic	Issue	Review	Staff Recommendation	PC Recommendation
Sign Definition – Murals/Public Art	Concerns that murals and public art may be considered a sign and limited by code requirements	Proposed definition applies only to things “ <u>advertising, informing, identifying, attracting attention to, or promoting the interest of any person, institution, business, event, product, goods or services...</u> ” Murals or art that do not include logos, names or other elements are not covered.	After thorough legal review, staff does not recommend a language change as most murals and art of concern would not meet the definition. As was previously noted by the Planning Commission, any code specific to public art/murals would be extremely subjective and create issues for consistent and objective staff review.	

<p>Sign Definition - Flags</p>	<p>Concerns that flags supporting sports teams or academic institutions may be limited by code requirements in both size and height from ground.</p>	<p>Flags are included and unless exempted under GHMC 17.080.010. B – Scope would be limited to 6 square feet in size on private property which is less than many flags sold for sports teams, etc.</p> <p>Per recent federal court ruling, sign codes must be “content neutral” so identifying certain non-governmental signs as exempt based on what they say is a slippery slope.</p>	<p>No change is recommended by staff regarding size. Sports team and other flags are currently allowed but would just be limited in size. In permitted sizes are commonly available.</p> <p>As for height, staff recommends the following amendments to GHMC 17.80.110.B:</p> <p>3. Temporary signs in a residential temporary sign area shall not exceed six feet in height from the ground when displayed <u>unless connected to a legally-established flagpole</u> and shall be limited as follows:...</p> <p>4. Temporary signs in a nonresidential temporary sign area shall not exceed three feet in height from the ground when displayed <u>unless connected to a legally-established flagpole</u> and shall be limited as follows:...</p> <p>If the Planning Commission remained interested in a size revision, staff would recommend not exempting but increasing the allowed size for flags on private property. Doing so would require multiple amendments to GMHC</p>	
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Code Topic	Issue	Review	Staff Recommendation	PC Recommendation
			17.80.110.B.3 and 4 to allow flags to exceed the square footage limitation for temporary signs on private property (currently 6 sq. ft per side and 12 square feet total).	
Temporary Sign Requirements – Right-of-Way	Permit application and installation requirements are extremely detailed, impacting staff workload and applicant effort.	Public comment raised questions regarding the application of temporary sign permit process.	<p>The application process in code (GHMC 17.80.110.3) is relatively brief and straightforward. Staff would recommend reviewing our internal process but not reflect that in code to avoid regular required revisions.</p> <p>If the Planning Commission remained interested in a code revision, the permit validity could be extended (it would not be able to be changed through internal process updates).</p> <p>3. Permitting. All temporary signs shall have an approved city permit attached to the sign face. Permits can be acquired online at the city of Gig Harbor website, or in person at the Civic Center at no cost. Permits are valid for 30 <u>60</u> days at a time. All signs with expired permits or no permit attached will be removed.</p>	