

TOWN COUNCIL



STAFF REPORT DEPARTMENT OF GROWTH MANAGEMENT

MEETING DATE:	October 14, 2025
PROJECT:	An Ordinance Amending Chapter 26 Article II of the Town Code to Establish Rules of Operation for Specialized Vehicles – First Reading
PROJECT MANAGER:	Kevin Icard, AICP, Director of Growth Management

REQUEST: Staff requests that Town Council approve amendments to the Town's Code of Ordinances, Chapter 26 – *Traffic and Motor Vehicles*, in response to recent changes to Section 56-2-90 of the South Carolina Code of Laws. The amended law allows local jurisdictions to adopt ordinances regulating the operation of Specialized Vehicles, including restrictions on hours and locations of use, safety belt requirements for certain passengers, and other related matters.

BACKGROUND: On May 22, 2025, Governor Henry McMaster signed Act 64 of the 126th Session of the South Carolina General Assembly. This legislation includes provisions allowing local jurisdictions to regulate the operation of Specialized Vehicles. These provisions address hours of operation, restrictions on specific roadways, and safety requirements, such as mandatory seat belt use for certain passengers.

The intent of the new law is to enhance community engagement, improve mobility and accessibility, and contribute to the overall quality of life for residents and visitors.

Attached is the proposed ordinance, which includes definitions for Specialized Vehicles, registration and insurance requirements, mandatory equipment, limitations on use, and operational guidelines for public roadways.

Key Highlights:

- Children under the age of twelve (12) must wear a seatbelt at all times while riding in a specialized vehicle.
- The ordinance limits the use of specialized vehicles on certain high-traffic roadways and in roundabouts for safety reasons.
- Any Specialized Vehicle operating on a public roadway shall have proof of liability insurance in conformance with S.C. Code Ann. Sec. 38-77-40.

Town Council Workshop - At the August 12th Town Council meeting, Town Council discussed this item as a workshop agenda item. They directed staff to proceed with a public workshop prior to the regularly scheduled October Town Council First Reading.

Public Workshop - At the August 26th Town Council Public Workshop, staff provided an in-depth review of the state code related to Specialized Vehicles and the Town's proposed version of the Ordinance. Below is a summary of the discussion and direction for staff.

Night Driving: The public supported Town Council's view of allowing Specialized Vehicles to operate at night if equipped with headlights, taillights, and turn signals (retrofits may be required).

Road Restrictions: Only permitted on roads ≤35 mph and prohibited in roundabouts (exempted vehicles may enter roundabouts). May cross higher-speed roads only at intersections.

Safety Provisions: Seatbelts required for all passengers, restraints required for infants and small children. Prohibition on holding infants while driving (but chest harnesses acceptable). Limiting the number of individuals on a Specialized Vehicle based on the stated occupancy of the vehicle.

ACTION: As shown in the attached Ordinance, staff has included the following items that were discussed that needed additional research.

- All occupants in a Specialized Vehicle are required to use a seatbelt.
- Vehicles can only cross four lane highways at signalized intersections.
- All LSVs are required to meet the requirements of this Ordinance.
- If the Ordinance is approved in November of 2025, the Town will apply an effective date of January 1, 2026, to allow for time to educate the public and for individuals to retrofit existing Specialize Vehicles to meet all safety provisions.

NEXT STEPS:

Golf Cart Ordinance	Step Completed	Date Completed
Town Council Workshop	✓	August 12, 2025
Public Workshop	✓	August 26, 2025
First Reading	✓	October 14, 2025
Second Reading		November 13, 2025*
Implementation		January 1, 2026*

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Ordinance
2. South Carolina Act

