



Levy County Board of County Commissioners

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To: Levy County Board of County Commissioners
From: Mary-Ellen L. Harper, County Manager
Date: February 4, 2025
Subject: Removal of Unauthorized Signs

During the January 21, 2025 meeting, the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) received a significant amount of public comment about the enforcement of Section 50-433 of the Levy County Code Ordinances that allows Code Enforcement to remove unauthorized signs. As a result of this public comment, there was discussion among the Commissioners about the possibility of modifying the ordinance.

Local governments in Florida are required by law to create, adopt, and maintain a Comprehensive Plan. This plan serves as a blueprint for guiding future land use, development, and resource management within the community. Levy County must update its Comprehensive in 2026. Florida State Statutes 163.3177 (1) provides context for the magnitude of the work associated with updating the comprehensive plan:

The comprehensive plan shall provide the principles, guidelines, standards, and strategies for the orderly and balanced future economic, social, physical, environmental, and fiscal development of the area that reflects community commitments to implement the plan and its elements. These principles and strategies shall guide future decisions in a consistent manner and shall contain programs and activities to ensure comprehensive plans are implemented. The sections of the comprehensive plan containing the principles and strategies, generally provided as goals, objectives, and policies, shall describe how the local government's programs, activities, and land development regulations will be initiated, modified, or continued to implement the comprehensive plan in a consistent manner. It is not the intent of this part to require the inclusion of implementing regulations in the comprehensive plan but rather to require identification of those programs, activities, and land development regulations that will be part of the strategy for implementing the comprehensive plan and the principles that describe how the programs, activities, and land development regulations will be carried out. The plan shall establish meaningful and predictable standards for the use and development of land and provide meaningful guidelines for the content of more detailed land development and use regulations.

Levy County's **Comprehensive Plan** is a long-range planning document that outlines the county's vision, goals, objectives, policies, and strategies for its future development, growth, and preservation.

Levy County's **Land Development Code**, which includes the ordinance that allows for the removal of unauthorized signs, provides the specific tools to implement those plans.



Commissioners

Charlie Kennedy, District 1

Rock Meeks, District 2

Desiree Mills, Chair, District 3

Tim Hodge, Vice Chair, District 4

Johnny Hiers, District 5



As Land Development Code is required by law to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and not in conflict with state-level comprehensive plans, and because Levy County has a deadline before which the Comprehensive Plan must be updated and approved by the State, it would behoove Levy County to first focus its efforts on updating the Comprehensive Plan. Following the approval of the updated Comprehensive Plan, Levy County could then focus its efforts on updating the Land Development Code, which may include revisions to the ordinance that governs signs if that is the will of the BoCC.

There are seven types of signs that are prohibited by the Levy County Code Ordinances.

Sec. 50-413. - Prohibited signs.

The following signs are prohibited:

(1) Any sign which constitutes a traffic hazard or is a detriment to traffic safety by reason of its size, location, movement, content, coloring or method of illumination including, without limitation, any sign that obstructs the vision of pedestrians or vehicles using the public right-of-way; any non-traffic signs that use traffic control symbols, shapes or words, such as "stop," "look," "caution," "danger" or "slow"; any sign that obstructs a sign erected by a public authority for the purpose of giving traffic directions or instructions or other public information; and any sign prohibited by F.S. § 479.11.

(2) Signs attached to trees or utility poles.

(3) Signs attached to or painted on vehicles not regularly used by the advertised business and are parked in such a way as to advertise to the passing motorist or pedestrian.

(4) Private signs in public rights-of-way.

(5) Off-site signs.

(6) Animated signs and flashing signs.

(7) Any other signs that are not specifically permitted or exempted by this article.

Considering the public comment at the last BoCC Meeting related to the enforcement of the sign ordinance, I would suggest that Levy County consider focusing its pro-active sign enforcement efforts on those signs in section (1) that constitute a traffic hazard or are a detriment to traffic safety and section (4) Private signs in public rights-of-way. If this recommendation is approved by the BoCC, staff would issue a press release announcing that beginning on March 1, 2025, Code Enforcement will begin actively removing and discarding all signs in these two categories. This will give the owners of illegally placed signs more than three weeks to remove them before they are discarded.

While Levy County has the prerogative to determine **proactive** enforcement efforts, please be reminded that **the Code Enforcement Department is required to investigate all complaints that are filed with the office and to enforce the Code of Ordinances accordingly.** This includes all seven of the aforementioned categories of prohibited signs.