



Memorandum

To: Mayor Nelson and Members of the City Council
From: Daniel R. Buchholtz, ICMA-CM, Administrator, Clerk/Treasurer
Date: August 17, 2026
Subject: Ordinance No. 512 – Secondary School Stadium Video Displays

The City Council is asked to consider Ordinance No. 512, an ordinance amending Chapter 16 of the Spring Lake Park City Code to establish regulations for secondary school stadium video displays.

The need for the ordinance arose following installation of a new video scoreboard at Spring Lake Park High School. The City's existing regulations for dynamic displays were developed primarily for electronic message signs viewed from public streets and do not adequately address the operational characteristics of a stadium video display. Stadium displays are intended to provide scoring information, event information, live video, instant replay, player introductions and other visual content for spectators attending an athletic or school event. At the same time, their size, brightness, changing images and evening operation can create impacts for nearby residential properties.

Ordinance No. 512 creates a separate regulatory framework intended to accommodate the legitimate operational needs of a secondary school stadium while providing objective standards to protect surrounding residential properties and public safety. The ordinance also prevents a stadium display from being operated as a general outdoor advertising platform.

Proposed Regulations

The ordinance defines a secondary school stadium and stadium video display and establishes specific eligibility, dimensional, operational, lighting and enforcement standards.

A stadium video display would be allowed only as an accessory structure to a lawful secondary school use and only within a qualifying secondary school stadium. No more than one stadium video display would be permitted on a secondary school campus. The illuminated display face must be oriented primarily toward the competition field and spectator seating and located and designed to minimize visibility and illumination from nearby residential property and public streets. The illuminated face must be at least 150 feet from residential property located in front of or beside the display, while the rear and sides of the display must remain opaque and non-illuminated.

The maximum overall height of the display and sign apparatus would be 45 feet, with a maximum width of 35 feet. The dynamic video area would be limited to 650 square feet and the total copy and graphic area, including permanent identification and sponsor panels, would be limited to 900 square feet.

Operation would generally be limited to authorized stadium events. The display may begin operating no earlier than 60 minutes before an event and generally must cease operation no later than 30 minutes after the event. The display must normally be turned off by 10:00 p.m. Limited operation

may continue for an event extending beyond that time, subject to additional restrictions, with dynamic operation ending no later than 10:30 p.m. The ordinance also prohibits strobing, blinking, rapid full-screen flashing and similar effects and limits testing outside of authorized events.

The ordinance establishes maximum brightness levels of 5,000 nits during daylight hours and 1,000 nits during nighttime hours. These limits are regulatory ceilings and do not create a right to operate at those levels. The display must include an ambient-light sensor and automatic dimming controls, and the City must approve the maximum authorized nighttime setting. The ordinance also limits total illumination attributable to the stadium video display, stadium lighting and other campus exterior lighting operated in connection with an event to 0.5 foot-candle at residential property lines. The City may require a lower brightness setting if field measurements, observations, complaint investigations or other credible evidence demonstrate that additional reduction is necessary to comply with the ordinance.

Applications would be required to include a site plan, scaled elevations, manufacturer specifications, a photometric plan prepared by a qualified lighting professional, an operating plan, structural plans and other information necessary to demonstrate compliance. The City may also require independent professional review at the applicant's expense. Property owners within 350 feet of the secondary school stadium would receive mailed notice before City Council consideration of a new or materially amended sign permit.

The ordinance contains ongoing compliance, testing and enforcement provisions. The owner must document that required brightness settings, dimming controls and malfunction safeguards are properly programmed before regular operation. The City may investigate supported complaints, require professional testing, direct that brightness be reduced or the display shut off, and suspend dynamic operation following repeated substantiated violations.

Previously Installed Display

Because the Spring Lake Park High School display was installed before adoption of the ordinance and before all required City approvals were obtained, the ordinance specifically provides that its prior installation does not establish a vested right or legalize the display. The School District must obtain all permits and approvals required by law and demonstrate compliance with the amended City Code before the dynamic or luminous portion of the display may be placed into regular operation.

The School District will also be required to obtain the necessary building and sign permits. Because the structure was installed before the required permits were issued, the City's standard doubled permit fees will apply. The Building Official will require sufficient documentation to verify that the installed structure, including its foundations, complies with applicable building code requirements.

Planning Commission Review

The Planning Commission conducted a public hearing on Ordinance No. 512 on September 28, 2026. The Commission discussed the proposed operational and lighting standards, the effect of the display on nearby residential properties, the permitting history of the existing display and the requirement that the School District demonstrate structural and code compliance.

The Commission also discussed whether the display should be available for use during private rental events held at the stadium. Commissioners noted that stadium rentals are an established School District activity and provide revenue to the District. Following discussion, the Commission unanimously amended the proposed ordinance to remove private rentals from the activities excluded from the definition of an authorized stadium event. As amended, an "authorized stadium event" includes a private rental event authorized by the School District and conducted within the secondary school stadium. Practices, rehearsals, camps, classroom activities and routine maintenance and testing remain excluded.

The Planning Commission ultimately voted 5-0 to recommend approval of Ordinance No. 512, as amended.

Staff Analysis

Staff believes the ordinance establishes an appropriate regulatory framework for a type of sign that is substantially different from the City's conventional electronic message signs. Rather than attempting to regulate the stadium display through standards designed for highway-oriented commercial signs, the ordinance establishes objective requirements specifically addressing its location, dimensions, brightness, hours of operation, event-related use and impacts on neighboring residential properties.

The ordinance also provides the City with continuing oversight. Maximum brightness and dimensional standards are ceilings rather than entitlements, and the City retains the ability to require lower brightness, additional shielding, testing or other reasonable measures when warranted by actual conditions. The ordinance further establishes a clear complaint investigation and enforcement process if the display does not operate in compliance with the approved standards.

Staff believes the Planning Commission's amendment regarding private rentals is reasonable. A rental event authorized by the School District and conducted within the stadium is more comparable to other authorized stadium activities than to general commercial operation of the display. The ordinance continues to prohibit leasing or making the display available to a third party for use as a general outdoor advertising platform.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the City Council approve Ordinance No. 512, as recommended by the Planning Commission.

Recommended Motion: Motion to approve Ordinance No. 512, an ordinance amending Chapter 16 of the Spring Lake Park City Code relating to secondary school stadium video displays.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 763-784-6491.