

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-11

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE CITY VAN METER, IOWA, BY ADDING CHAPTER 174 - MAILBOXES

BE IT ENACTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF VAN METER, IOWA:

SECTION 1. The Code of Ordinances of the City of Van Meter, Iowa, as amended, is further amended by adding Chapter 174 - Mailboxes as shown herein:

CHAPTER 174 MAILBOXES

174.01 Purpose

174.02 Definitions

174.03 Visibility; Obstruction

174.04 Cluster-style Mailbox Required in New Developments

174.05 Cluster-style Mailbox Requirements

174.06 Curbside Mailbox Requirements

174.07 Custom-built Mailbox Requirements

174.08 Responsibilities of Property Owner

174.09 Responsibilities of City and/or Utility

174.01 PURPOSE.

The City's Right-Of-Way is held by the City primarily for the purpose of pedestrian and vehicular passage and for the City's provision of essential public safety services, including police, fire and emergency medical response services, and public health services, including sanitary sewer, water, and storm drainage. The purpose of this chapter is to provide standards for mailboxes in order to maintain the safety and the visual character of the City's Right-Of-Way.

174.02 DEFINITIONS.

For use in this chapter, the following terms are defined

1. "Breakaway support" means a supporting post which shall be no larger than a 4-inch x 4-inch wood post or a metal post with a strength no greater than a 2-inch diameter schedule 40 steel pipe and which is buried no more than 24 inches deep. Such a support post shall not be set in concrete unless specifically designed as a breakaway support system as defined in A Guide for Erecting Mailboxes on Highways published by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, May 24, 1984 (ASHTO).
2. "Clear zone" means an unobstructed flat area adjacent to the traveled portion of a roadway that is used for the recovery of errant vehicles.
3. "Cluster-style mailbox" means a style whereby mailboxes, meeting the specifications of the United States Postal Service (USPS) with the inscription plainly legible "U.S. MAIL" and "APPROVED BY THE POSTMASTER GENERAL," are assembled and grouped together on a single area of land so that they are regarded as one unit. Cluster-style mailboxes must be manufactured cluster-style mailboxes approved by both the City and the USPS.
4. "Curbside mailbox" means a mailbox consisting of a lightweight sheet metal or plastic box meeting the specifications of the United States Postal Service (USPS) with the inscription plainly legible "U.S. MAIL" and "APPROVED BY THE POSTMASTER

GENERAL," which is erected at the edge of a roadway or curbside of a street and is mounted on a breakaway support post, and is intended or used for the collection of mail and is to be served by a mail carrier from a vehicle.

5. "Custom-built mailbox" means a mailbox erected at the edge of a roadway or curbside of a street constructed using materials that do not meet the definition of a "curbside mailbox" and "breakaway support."

174.03 VISIBILITY; OBSTRUCTION.

All mailboxes must be erected:

1. Away from the intersection of any street and, in no case closer than 75 feet measured from the centerline of the intersecting street, in order to prevent obstruction of free and clear vision; and
2. Away from any location where, by reason of the position, shape, or color, it may interfere with, obstruct the view of or be confused with any authorized traffic control device.

174.04 CLUSTER-STYLE MAILBOX REQUIRED.

All new residential or commercial developments constructed after the enactment of the regulations contained in this chapter and which are situated on any public street, avenue, or other roadway that is maintained by the City and receive curbside delivery of mail shall have cluster-style mailboxes. Any housing development constructed and already receiving mail service before the regulations in this chapter are enacted is not required to have cluster-style mailboxes unless at the City's expense as a result of a City Public Infrastructure project including but not limited to road, water or sewer improvement projects.

174.05 CLUSTER-STYLE MAILBOX REQUIREMENTS.

Cluster-style mailboxes serving housing developments situated on any public street or roadway shall be located between the sidewalk and curb, outside of the three-foot (3') clear zone. Cluster-style mailboxes shall not be installed anywhere within a cul-de-sac bulb. Cluster-style mailboxes shall have a 4' concrete access from the public street and the public sidewalk. The location of the cluster-style mailboxes shall not exceed 300 feet from the property line of those residents served by that cluster-style mailbox. Cluster-style boxes shall be located on property lines on the same side as what the future no-parking areas will be, and the cluster-style mailboxes shall be located within 100 feet of intersections with existing pedestrian ramps when not in conflict with the previously stated requirements. The location of the cluster-style mailbox is to be approved by the City and by the USPS.

The cost of installation, including but not limited to box units and concrete pad, shall be borne by the developer unless as a result of a City sponsored project in which the City will bear the cost and subsequent maintenance shall be carried out by the USPS.

No driveway or street access shall be constructed within five (5) feet of a cluster-style mailbox.

174.06 CURBSIDE MAILBOX REQUIREMENTS.

While curbside mailboxes may be installed in developments constructed and already receiving mail service before the adoption of this chapter, the mailbox owner must comply with the following installation requirements:

1. The bottom of the mailbox shall be 42 inches from the top of curb. On streets without curbs, the bottom of the mailbox shall be 48 inches from the edge of pavement, as defined

by USPS installation requirements.

2. Lateral placement of the mailbox shall be 6 inches to 8 inches from the face of the curb, as defined by USPS installation requirements.
3. The mailbox support post shall be of a “breakaway support” design, as defined by AASHTO.
4. The post-to-box attachment shall be of sufficient strength to prevent the box from separating from the post if a vehicle strikes the post.

174.07 CUSTOM-BUILT MAILBOX REQUIREMENTS.

A custom-built mailbox may be installed in developments constructed and already receiving mail service before the adoption of this chapter if an application for approval of a custom-built mailbox is submitted to the City for review and is approved. A custom-built mailbox must conform to the following requirements and the rules set forth in the application:

1. The structure supporting the mailbox shall be at least 12 inches from the back of curb.
2. The mailbox structure shall not exceed the dimensions of 2 feet in width, 2 feet in depth, 5 feet in height.
3. The mailbox structure shall be located on a concrete pad, 2 feet 6 inches wide, 2 feet 6 inches deep, and 4 inches thick. The mailbox structure shall not be permanently affixed to the concrete pad in an attempt to make structure rigid.
4. The local postmaster shall approve and sign off on the application before submittal to the City.

174.08 RESPONSIBILITIES OF PROPERTY OWNER.

The purchase, installation, and maintenance of mailboxes are the responsibility of the property owner. When two or more property owners share a mailbox post, they are equally responsible for the purchase, installation, and maintenance of the post and each property owner is responsible for their individual mailbox.

174.09 RESPONSIBILITIES OF CITY AND/OR UTILITY.

Any type of mailbox located in the City Right-Of-Way is subject to damage or destruction, at any time, as a result of the City or a person with a utility easement entering upon the City Right-Of-Way to construct, repair or maintain the utilities located in the City Right-Of-Way or as a result of the City engaging in activities to maintain the public street or Right-Of-Way, such as snow removal, pavement repair or street cleaning. If any mailbox located in the City Right-Of-Way is damaged during such activities, the City or the utility that damaged the mailbox shall either replace the mailbox with a standard curbside mailbox that complies with Section 174.06 of this chapter or reimburse the property owner for the repair or replacement of the mailbox up to a maximum replacement amount set by the City Council in a resolution.

SECTION 2. Repealer. All ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict herewith be and the same are hereby repealed to the extent of such conflict.

SECTION 3. Severability Clause. If any section, provision or part of this Ordinance shall be adjudged invalid or unconstitutional, such adjudication shall not affect the validity of the Ordinance as a whole or any section, provision or part thereof not adjudged invalid or unconstitutional.

SECTION 4. When Effective. This Ordinance shall be in effect from and after its final

passage, approval and publication as provided by law.

Passed and approved by the Council on the 12th of May, 2025..

ATTEST:

Joe Herman, Mayor

Jessica Drake, City Clerk

First Reading: May 12, 2025

Second Reading: WAIVED

Third Reading: WAIVED

I certify that the foregoing was published as Ordinance No. 2025-11 on the ____ day of May, 2025.

ATTEST:

Jessica Drake, City Clerk