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**MEMORANDUM A**  
**RESEARCH**

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To: Lisa Walsh, Development Services Director  
From: Cassidy Kearney, Planner I  
Date: March 10, 2026  
Subject: Green Cove Springs Sign Ordinance Research Memorandum A

### **Introduction**

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Following the March 03, 2026, City Commission meeting, staff were asked to review the regulatory code for signs in Green Cove Springs, Florida. Staff reviewed both Green Cove Springs' regulatory language as well as the regulatory language for several municipalities in Northeast Florida, including Orange Park, Penney Farms, Palatka, Fernandina Beach, and Atlantic Beach. Regulatory language for Clay County and the State of Florida was also reviewed.

The purpose of this research is to compare the regulatory language of each municipality or governing body with the City of Green Cove Spring's regulatory language. The purpose of this research is to propose an ordinance revising Green Cove Springs' existing sign regulations for additional clarity, with specific interest in banner, feather, flag, or wind signs; signs within the right-of-way; portable signs; number of signs; and temporary signs.

### **Northeastern Municipalities**

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#### **Orange Park** (Population: 9,055 | Density: 2,488.7 people per square mile)

The Town of Orange Park includes regulatory language within their town code under Part III – Land Development Regulations, [Article VII – Sign Regulations](#). This article includes the following sections:

- Applicability
- Purpose and intent
- Definitions
- General sign provisions
- Prohibited signs
- Non-conforming signs
- Temporary signs
- Exempt signs
- Lighting of signs
- Substitution of noncommercial speech for commercial speech
- Content neutrality as to sign message (viewpoint)
- Permit required
- Sign permit application and issuance of sign permit
- Fees
- Conditions
- Building permits
- Appeals to the environmental quality board
- Variances
- Administration and enforcing official
- Failure to comply
- Violations and penalties
- Adoption of zoning regulations
- Residential districts
- Nonresidential districts
- Sign location criteria
- Miscellaneous
- Transition rules
- Severability

Under *section 7.03.00. – Definitions*, the following items can be found:

- *Banner* means any sign or string of one or more signs, usually made of cloth or other lightweight material, which is used to attract attention, whether or not imprinted with words or characters, including, but not limited to, balloons and pennants. "Feather" shaped signs (typically tall narrow and not attached to any structure) are considered banners for the purpose of this definition. Flags shall not be considered banners.
- *Flag* means a sign made of cloth, vinyl, fabric, or a similar pliant material that is attached on one wide to a flagpole and is designed to flow in the wind. (See also ornamental flag.)
- *Freestanding pole<sup>1</sup>* sign means any sign supported by a structure in the ground which does not meet the definition of a freestanding monument sign, and that is wholly independent from any building, fence or vehicle. A flagpole shall not be considered a freestanding pole sign.
- *Off-premises sign* or *off-site sign* means any sign relating in its subject matter to commodities, accommodations, services or activities on premises other than the premises on which the sign is located.
- *Portable sign* means any sign, banner, or poster that is not permanently attached to the ground or structure. For purposes of this article a cold air inflatable sign shall be considered to be a portable sign.
- *Temporary sign* means a sign intended for a use not permanent in nature. For the purposes of this article, a sign with an intended use of one year or less, or which may only be displayed during certain hours, shall be deemed a temporary sign.
- *Wind sign<sup>2</sup>* means any sign which uses moving air or wind to attract attention through means of moving air or wind aided movement, rotation, animation, or other similar actions.

Notably, many sign types have been prohibited under section 7.05.00. Notable sign types which were prohibited include:

- Wind signs
- Portable signs not otherwise authorized under this article
- Any sign in the public right-of-way, other than traffic control device signs, bus stop informational signs, warning signs or safety signs
- Any sign located on real property without permission of the property owner

Several sections under Article VII note that no signs are permitted within the public right-of-way or on public property, including temporary signs. Additionally, section 7.07.0. states that only two signs are permitted per parcel within all non-residential zoning districts. This regulation is inclusive of temporary signs, but not banners. Temporary signs are permitted for 60 days; however, one temporary sign may be displayed at all times.

Section 7.07.03 states that banner signs are allowed in non-residential zoning districts but are limited to one banner and two feather signs per parcel. Additionally, the allowable duration for each sign is 60 days. Banner signs are not permitted to hang over or extend into the public right-of way. Finally, banner signs must be maintained in good condition with no fading or fraying.

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<sup>1</sup> Closest definition to Green Cove Springs' *Ground sign*.

<sup>2</sup> Orange Park's regulatory language included a separate definition for *pennant signs*, but the definition for *wind signs* was more applicable for this report.

**Penney Farms** (Population: 642 | Density: 440 people per square mile)

The Town of Penney Farms dedicated [Article VIII](#) (page 85) of its Land Development Regulation code to Signs. Article VIII includes:

- General Provisions
  - *Relationship to building and electrical codes*
  - *No defense to nuisance action*
  - *Maintenance*
- Exempt Signs
- Permitted Permanent Accessory Signs
  - *Sign types allowed*
  - *Content*
  - *Permissible number, area, spacing, and height of permanent accessory signs*
  - *Signs at entrances to residential developments*
- *Sign area*
- *Number of signs*
- *Sign height*
- *Prohibited signs*
- *Freestanding signs*
- *Non-conforming signs*
- *Removal*
- *Continuance of non-conforming signs*
- Enforcement
  - *Notification*
  - *Variance and appeals*

No section within the Town of Penney Farms' Land Development Regulation code was dedicated to clarifying the definitions found under Article VIII.

Signs prohibited include projecting signs, roof signs, signs located on trees, in the right-of-way, on telephone poles, abandoned signs, and flashing lighted signs used more than 30 days. There was no mention of wind signs or feather signs.

Limitations for the number of signs for each sign category are defined under section 8.02.03, which states that buildings with frontage on the right of way under 300 feet are only permitted one ground sign. Those with frontages on the right way between 301-400 and 400+ are able to have two and three ground signs respectively.

Additionally, under section 8.02.09, it is noted that one freestanding sign per parcel located on the primary street frontage shall be permitted provided that it meets all requirements of the code.

**Palatka** (Population: 10,650 | Density: 1,080.9 people per square mile)

The City of Palatka dedicates [Chapter 62](#) to signs, which is broken down into the following:

- In General
  - *Definitions*
  - *Enforcement*
  - *Relationship of chapter to comprehensive plan*
  - *Maximum area of commercial advertising signs*
  - *Maximum number of signs at each place of business*
  - *Maximum height*
- *Construction of awnings and marquees*
- *Neon lighting controls*
- *Political signs*
- *Wall signs*
- *Wall graphics*
- *Permitted locations for billboards*
- *Flashing lights*
- *Landscaping around signs*
- *Prohibited signs and allowable locations for signs*

- *Sign setbacks*
- *Changing signs standards*
- *Off premise signs*
- *Altering an existing legal sign by changing its face or location*
- **Permits**
  - *Sign permits generally*
  - *Electrical permit required for certain signs*
  - *Double fee for commencing work without permit*
  - *Sign contractors to be licensed and insured*
  - *Standards for illuminated and electrical signs*
  - *Permit and inspection required for illuminated signs; electrical work to be installed by licensed electrician*
  - *Sign manufacturer's name to be shown on signs*
  - *Issuance of permits*
  - *Permit fees*
  - *Revocation of permit*
  - *Erecting or working on sign for which permit has not been issued*
- *Expiration of permit*
- *Exemption for repairs costing \$500.00 or less*
- **Minimum Requirements**
  - *Applicability of article*
  - *Hanging of signs*
  - *Prohibited contents*
  - *Structural requirements generally*
  - *Wind load allowance*
  - *Traffic safety requirements*
  - *Obstruction of doors, windows or fire escapes*
  - *Posting or painting signs on trees, utility poles, curbs or similar places*
  - *Projecting signs*
  - *Concealment of rear of sign structure; right of city to remove dilapidated signs*
  - *Removal of weeds and rubbish near billboards*
  - *General maintenance standards*
  - *Removal of unsafe or unlawful signs*
  - *Placing signs over water*
  - *Requirements for nonconforming signs*
  - *Continuation of nonconforming signs*

Within section 62-15, Palatka's Code states that any sign not defined and described in Chapter 62 are prohibited, and allowable sign locations are limited to what is specified in Chapter 62 and Chapter 94 (Zoning). Notably, wind signs or feather signs are not specifically included within *section 62-1. – Definitions*. However, these sign types may fall under the definition of some of the sign types described below:

- *Banner sign* means any sign possessing characters, letters, illustrations or ornamentations applied to cloth, paper or fabric of any kind, either with or without a frame. A banner sign shall be considered a temporary sign and shall be composed of durable and weather-resistant material such as canvas, cloth, heavy plastic, or similar materials, not exceeding 50 square feet in size. A banner sign shall not require a permit and shall not be included in the limitation of two signs per business.
- *Ground signs* means any sign which is supported by an upright, uprights or braces in or upon the ground.
- *Portable signs* means any sign or structure which is designed to be easily moved.
- *Sign, off-site* means any sign relating to products, accommodations, services or other activities not available to the public on the lot on which the sign is located.
- *Temporary signs* means any sign, banner, pennant, valance, or advertising display constructed of cloth, canvas, light fabric, cardboard, wall board or other light materials, with or without frames, designed to last 60 days maximum or less.

Palatka’s code states under section 62-16 that unless otherwise authorized in chapter 62, all signs other than signs affixed to buildings shall be set back at least five feet from the right-of-way and all other property lines. Additionally, the maximum number of signs at each place of business is limited to two signs, exclusive of owner identification signs for each street front at each place of business.

**Fernandina Beach** (Population: 13,420 | Density: 1,133.4 people per square mile)

Fernandina Beach includes its regulatory language under its Land Development Code, [Chapter 5 Accessory and Temporary Uses and Structures](#), *section 5.03.00 Signs* (page 13 of the PDF) and *section 5.04.00 Temporary signs* (page 24 of the PDF). Section 5.03.00 Signs included the following subparts:

- Applicability and findings of fact
- Purpose and intent
- Sign permits required
- Enforcement
- Prohibited signs
- Exempt signs
- Measurement determinations
- Design standards for all signs
- Specific provisions for shopping centers
- Specific provisions for residential districts
- Specific provisions regarding murals
- Violation constitutes nuisance; abatement
- Right of entry for inspection
- Procedure for appeal
- Severability

Section 5.04.00 *Temporary Signs* included the subparts below:

- Scope
- Findings of fact
- Purpose and intent
- Definitions
- Criteria required for temporary signs
- Prohibition of temporary signs on public property
- Duration for display of temporary signs
- Display of temporary sign requires permission of real property owner
- A temporary sign may not display any lighting and must remain static
- A temporary sign may not display any lighting and must remain static
- A temporary sign may not incorporate fluorescent color or exhibit fluorescence
- A temporary sign may not obstruct a permanent sign or the vision between pedestrians and vehicles
- A temporary sign may display multiple messages
- A temporary sign is not subject to permitting
- Chapter 5 5.04.00 not intended to regulate interior facing signage

Under 5.03.05 *Prohibited signs*, signs erected on public property including public right-of-way, apart from signs erected by public authority for public purposes, sandwich boards within shopping centers, and temporary signs as permitted in 5.04.00.

Section 5.03.05 also prohibits wind signs, which are defined as any device, including but not limited to, one or more banners, flags, pennants, ribbons, spinners, streamers or captive balloons, or other objects or material fastened in such a manner to move upon being subjected to pressure by wind.

Under section 5.04.04, the definition of a temporary sign states, “the term ‘temporary sign’ shall mean any sign that is not a permanent sign, and shall include a sign formerly or commonly known as a temporary election sign, a temporary political sign, a temporary free expression sign, a temporary real estate sign, a temporary

directional sign, a temporary construction sign, a temporary grand opening sign, or any other temporary sign unless otherwise provided herein. The term ‘temporary sign’ shall not include any substitution of message on an existing lawful sign or sign structure.”

The number of temporary signs per parcel depends on the zoning district, with the number of signs varying between four and eight. However, temporary signs on public property are expressly prohibited, excluding government signs displaying government speech. Temporary signs are only permitted for 30 days.

### **Atlantic Beach** (Population: 13,363 | Density: 3,630.4 people per square mile)

Atlantic Beach’s regulatory language on signs can be found under Chapter 17 – Signs and Advertising Structures of its Code of Ordinances. This chapter includes the following articles and sections:

- In general
  - *Intent*
  - *Definitions and references to other chapters within this code*
  - *Noncommercial signs and messages*
- Signs permitted
  - *Exempt signs*
  - *General provisions applying to all permitted signs*
  - *Signs permitted within residential zoning districts*
  - *Signs permitted within commercial and industrial zoning districts*
  - *Signs within special purpose (SP) and planned unit development (PUD) zoning districts*
  - *Signs within conservation (CON) zoning districts*
- *Signs placed on public buildings and structures and within public parks*
- *Temporary signs*
- Cause for removal of signs, abandoned signs and prohibited signs
  - *Removal of unsafe, damaged or poorly maintained, and abandoned signs*
  - *Prohibited signs and devices*
- Nonconforming signs and variances
  - *Nonconforming signs*
  - *Variances*
- Sign permits, enforcement and severability
  - *Permit required*
  - *Application*
  - *Calculation of permitted sign size*
  - *Fees*
  - *Enforcement and severability*

*Section 17-2. – Definitions and references to other chapters within this Code* includes the following definitions:

- *Banner*: A temporary sign made of weather-resistant cloth or other lightweight material, intended to hang either with or without frames or in some other manner, and possessing characters, letters, illustrations, or ornamentations applied to paper, plastic or fabric of any kind. "Feather" shaped signs (typically tall narrow and not attached to any structure) are considered banners for the purpose of this definition. Flags shall not be considered banners for the purpose of this definition.
- *Flag*: A piece of cloth or similar material attachable on one (1) edge to a pole or rope subject to movement caused by wind activation. Flags shall not be considered banners for the purpose of this definition.

- *Freestanding sign*<sup>3</sup>: Any sign, which is incorporated into or supported by structures or supports in or upon the ground, independent of support from any building. Freestanding sign includes pole sign, pylon sign, ground sign or monument sign.
- *Off-site sign*: Any sign which serves a property or business other than the property or business on which the sign is located and/or displayed.
- *Pennants*<sup>4</sup>: any lightweight plastic, fabric or other material whether or not containing a message of any kind, suspended from a rope, wire, or string, usually in a series, which will flutter or swing in the wind.
- *Portable sign*: A sign that may be mobile and has no permanent attachment to a building or to the ground by means of a footing, including signs with wheels designed to be pulled or towed on a trailer or similar towing device.
- *Temporary sign*: A sign intended to be displayed for a transitory or temporary period and not intended for use in a permanent nature. Any sign not permanently embedded in the ground or not affixed to a building or sign structure that is permanently embedded in the ground shall be considered a temporary sign, unless otherwise specified in this chapter. All banners, regardless of how they may be affixed to a building or structure or embedded in the ground, are classified as temporary signs.

Interestingly, Atlantic Beach’s code notes under section 17-42. – *Prohibited signs and devices* that temporary signs (except as otherwise authorized) are prohibited, as well as pennants, ribbons, balloons, streamers, wind-operated devices and similar elements that are intended to draw attention to a business or activity, either when used alone or incorporated into a sign. Additionally, portable and mobile signs are also prohibited as well as private signs on any public property or right-of-way, other than as specifically approved by the city commission.

Temporary signs are permitted for 60 days, however, one temporary sign is permitted to be displayed at all times within non-residential zoning districts.

## County and State Regulations

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**Clay County** (Population: 236,760 | Density: 391.6 people per square mile)

Clay County’s regulatory language on signs is found within its Land Development Code, [Article VII – Sign Regulations](#). Article VII includes the following sections:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Short title</li> <li>▪ Purpose, intent and scope</li> <li>▪ Definitions</li> <li>▪ Illustrations</li> <li>▪ Prohibited signs</li> <li>▪ Nonconforming signs</li> <li>▪ Exemptions</li> <li>▪ Building permits</li> <li>▪ Shielding of illumination</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Substitution of noncommercial speech for commercial speech</li> <li>▪ Content neutrality as to sign message (viewpoint)</li> <li>▪ Permit required</li> <li>▪ Sign permit application and issuance of sign permit</li> <li>▪ Fees</li> <li>▪ Conditions</li> <li>▪ Appeals to board of adjustment</li> </ul> |
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<sup>3</sup> Per Atlantic Beach’s definition of *Ground sign* as found in section 17-42: “see ‘Freestanding sign.’”

<sup>4</sup> Closest definition found within Atlantic Beach’s Code referencing pennant or wind signs.

- Appellate decisions deemed final, subject to judicial review
- Administration and enforcing official
- Failure to comply
- Violations and penalties
- Adoption of zoning regulations
- Freestanding signs
- Setback measurement
- Double-faced signs
- Illumination
- Time and temperature signs
- All districts
- Residential and agricultural zoning districts RA, RB, RC, A, AR-1, AR-2, AR, RE, RMHP and PUD (residential)
- Neighborhood commercial, private services, public ownership, and multi-family zoning districts BA, BA-1, BA-2, PS-1, PS-3, PS-4, PS-5, PO-1, PO-2, PO-3, PO-4, RD, and PUD (neighborhood commercial, private services, and multi-family)
- Intensive commercial and industrial zoning districts BB, BB-1, BB-2, BB-3, BB-4, BB-5, BSC, IA, IB, IS, BP, PCD, PID, and PUD (intensive commercial)
- Miscellaneous provisions
- Transition rules
- Severability

*Section 7-3. – Definitions* (page 3 of the PDF) has several notable definitions, including:

- *Banner* means any sign or string of one or more signs, usually made of cloth or another lightweight material, which is used to attract attention, whether or not imprinted with words or characters. Banners shall be securely fastened or mounted. Banners are allowed in commercial districts only. Flags shall not be considered banners.
- *Freestanding sign*<sup>5</sup> means a sign supported by structures or supports that are placed on or anchored in the ground or at ground level and which are independent of any building or other structure. Unless otherwise limited or restricted, a freestanding sign may either be a freestanding monument sign or a freestanding pole sign
- *Flag* means any fabric, or bunting containing distinct colors, patterns, or symbols, used as an ornamental flag or as a symbol of government, political subdivision, corporation or business or other entity
- *Off-premise sign* or *off-site sign* means any sign greater than six square feet relating in its subject matter to commodities, accommodations, services or activities on a premises other than the premises on which the sign is located
- *Portable sign* means any sign, banner, or poster that is not permanently attached to the ground or structure.
- *Temporary sign* means a sign intended for a use not permanent in nature. For the purposes of this article, a sign with an intended use of one year or less shall be deemed a temporary sign.
- *Wind sign* means a sign, which uses objects or material fastened in such a manner as to move upon being subjected to pressure by wind, and shall include pennants, ribbons, spinners, streamers or captive balloons; however, the term *wind sign* shall not include *flags*.

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<sup>5</sup> Closest definition to Green Cove Springs' *Ground Sign*.

Several of the sign types are further described under section 7-4. – *Illustrations* (page 12 of the PDF). *Section 7-5. Prohibited signs* describes signs prohibited within the unincorporated County, which include wind signs, portable signs, any sign within a sight visibility triangle that obstructs a clear view of pedestrian or vehicular traffic, any sign in the public right of way other than governmental, warning or safety signs, any sign located on real property without the permission of the property owner, and sandwich board signs. Section 7-27 notes that no more than two flags are permitted per parcel in all districts, with specific size constraints for residential, multifamily residential, and non-residential.

The most applicable section regarding temporary signs falls under Section 7-27(q). *Temporary grand opening signs*. This subsection states that freestanding signs must maintain a five-foot setback from all property lines and must be located outside of any traveled way or sight visibility triangle. Banners must not be within the rights-of-way. Enforcement Services Department is to be notified in writing as to the first date the grand opening sign will be displayed and removed immediately upon the expiration of the ninetieth day.

**State of Florida** (Population: 23,372,216 | Density: 435.6 people per square mile)

The State of Florida includes its regulatory language on signs within [Chapter 479 Outdoor Advertising](#). Sections include:

- Definitions
- Legislative intent with respect to regulation of signs in areas adjacent to state highways
- Duties of the department
- Commercial and industrial parcels
- Jurisdiction of the Department of Transportation; entry upon privately owned lands
- Business of outdoor advertising; license requirement; renewal; fees
- Denial, suspension, or revocation of license
- Sign permits
- Denial or revocation of permit
- Sign removal following permit revocation or cancellation
- Signs erected or maintained without required permit; removal
- Vegetation management
- Signs on highway rights-of-ways; removal
- Specified signs prohibited
- Specified signs allowed within controlled portions of the interstate and federal-aid primary highway system
- Outdoor advertising on highways
- Disposition of fees
- Harmony of regulations
- Local outdoor advertising or sign ordinances
- Wall murals
- Signs for which permits are not required
- Willfully or maliciously removing, destroying, damaging, or altering permitted signs; penalty
- Compensation for signs; eminent domain; exceptions
- Erection of noise-attenuation barrier blocking view of sign; procedures; application

Definitions included under *section 479.01 Definitions* relevant to the overall discussion of this report include the following:

- ”Premises” means all the land areas under ownership or lease arrangement to the sign owner which are contiguous to the business conducted on the land except for instances where such land is a narrow strip contiguous to the advertised activity or is connected by such narrow strip, the only viable use of such

land is to erect or maintain an advertising sign. If the sign owner is a municipality or county, the term means all lands owned or leased by the municipality or county within its jurisdictional boundaries.

Under section 479.11. – *Specified signs prohibited*, subpart (3) prohibits signs in the right-of-way of highway on the State Highway System, interstate highway system, or federal-aid primary highway system outside of an incorporated area. Section 479.15. – *Harmony of Regulation* includes language that prohibits a zoning board or commission or other public officer or agency from issuing permits to erect a sign prohibited under chapter 479.

### **Green Cove Springs** (Population: 10,044 | Density: 1,193.8 people per square mile)

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Green Cove Springs includes its regulatory language under its Land Development Code, [Chapter 125- Signs](#).

This chapter includes the following sections:

- General provisions
- Definitions
- Relationship to building and electrical codes
- Licensed contractors
- No defense to nuisance action
- Signs declared unlawful
- Abatement and removal of signs; fines; procedure
- Nonconformity by proximity
- Maintenance
- Exempt signs
- Administration, enforcement and violation (penalty)
- Nonconforming signs
- Permitted permanent signs
- Sign restrictions
- Sign permits, applications and fees
- Issuance of permit
- Effect of issuance
- Validation of permits by inspection
- Denial of permit; appeal
- Revocation and suspension
- Exceptions to permit requirement
- Construction and maintenance standards
- Construction specifications
- Advertising on bus benches, transit shelters, and recycling stations

Green Cove Springs under section 125-2. – *Definitions* includes the below items:

- *Banner sign* means any sign composed of lightweight material either enclosed or not enclosed in a rigid frame, secured or mounted so as to allow movement of the sign caused by movement of the atmosphere, possessing characters, letters, illustrations, or ornamentations applied to paper, flexible plastic, or fabric of any kind. National flags and flags of political subdivisions shall not be considered banners for the purpose of this code.
- *Flag* means a flexible, graphic device representing a government, business, or other identifiable entity
- *Ground sign* means a sign that is movable or permanently erected on a freestanding frame, mast, or pole and not attached to any building with a surface area of less than 100 square feet per side, exclusive of base, but including ornamentation
- *Off-premises sign* means any sign identifying or advertising a business, person, activity, goods, product, commodity, service, or entertainment not related to the premises on which the sign is located. For the purposes of this definition, easements and other appurtenances shall be considered to be outside such premises, and any sign located or proposed to be located in an easement or other appurtenance shall be considered an off-premises sign.

- *Pennant, streamer or balloon* means any fluttering or nonstationary device made of flexible materials designed, intended or used primarily to attract attention
- *Portable sign* means any sign which is not permanently affixed to a building structure or the ground or which is attached to a vehicle or, whether on its own trailer, wheels, or otherwise, is designed or intended to be transported from one place to another. It is characteristic of a portable sign that the space provided for advertising messages may be changed at will by the replacement of lettering or symbols.
- *Temporary sign* means a sign intended to display either commercial or noncommercial messages of a transitory or temporary nature. A portable sign or any sign not permanently embedded in the ground, or not permanently affixed to a building or a sign structure that is permanently embedded in the ground, is considered a temporary sign, excluding a window sign.

Under *section 125-13. – Permitted permanent signs*, no offsite signs, other than for nonprofit organizations, are allowed, subject to constitutional limitations. The sign code also prohibits projecting signs, roof signs, signs located on trees, snipe signs within rights-of-way, on telephone poles, temporary flashing lighted signs, offsite signs, and abandoned signs under section 125-14.

Per sec. 125-2, *Snipe signs* are a sign of any material that is attached in any way to a utility pole, tree, fence post, or other similar object, located on public or private property. The term “snipe sign” does not include small directional signs or “no trespassing”, etc. signs exempted from law.

*Section 117-816. – Sign encroachments* states that signs and awnings extending into the City right-of-way require a hold harmless agreement in a form acceptable to the City. This agreement must be signed by the owner and submitted to the City for approval.

Notably, section 125-14(e) includes special conditions for signs within the form-based code area and the gateway corridor neighborhood and gateway corridor commercial areas:

- Form-based code area
  - Freestanding signs
    - Freestanding signs are only allowed where the building or street wall are located more than ten feet from the public sidewalk, regardless of zone. Signs must be consistent with the materials and colors of the building, but no closer than five feet of the building.
    - *Freestanding sign* means a sign supported by a sign structure secured in the ground and which is essentially structurally independent of any building, structure or vehicle, excluding a monument sign.
- Gateway corridor neighborhood and gateway corridor commercial areas
  - Generally, signage shall meet requirements of chapter 125 with the exception that all ground signs be monument signs and that no more than one ground sign shall be permitted for each 200 feet of road, with a maximum of two ground signs for projects with over 400 feet of right-of-way.
  - Electronic signs are allowed and shall meet the requirements in chapter 125.

Section 125-14(g) states that temporary banners and special signs, not specifically provided for herein, may be erected noting public parade, public event, or public celebration of a period not to exceed 14 days, provided, however, the erection of such banner or special sign shall be approved by the administrator with a permit and displayed only at areas designated by the city manager or his designee. These temporary or special banners for city-sponsored activities may be located in the city right-of-way.

## Summary

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The City of Green Cove Springs' regulatory language for signs could benefit from additional clarity and revision, with specific regard to clarifying rules around banner signs, feather signs, temporary signs, portable signs, off-site signs, and signs within the right-of-way. This clarity shall enhance the interpretation of the code "in plain language," for easier understanding. A revision to the regulatory language could be made for chapter 125, within section 117-842 (sign regulations within the form-based code area), or Division 9 of Article IX (sign regulations within the gateway corridor).

Orange Park and Atlantic Beach both seemed to have utilized definitions from the same source and had similar requirements within their code. Penney Farms has the least amount of regulatory language within their code. Notably, Fernandina Beach did have more sign regulations than Penney Farm, but less than Palatka, Orange Park, Atlantic Beach, and Green Cove Springs.

All municipalities forbade permanent, portable, or even temporary signs within the public right-of-way and/or off-site signs without permission from the property owner. The language that supports prohibiting signage within Green Cove Spring's right-of-way could be improved, as the code states that "snipe signs within the rights-of-way" and "offsite signs" are prohibited. This could cause confusion as to signs other than snipe signs being permitted within the right of way without a hold harmless agreement approved by the City. Section 125-12 requires reviewers to infer that all signs must remain on-site of the parcel while Section 117-816 permits signage within the right-of-way with City approval.

Additionally, most other municipalities have very clear language on what is considered to be a temporary sign as well as restrictions on quantity and the length of time the signs are permitted. Although Green Cove Springs has a section that introduces requirements for temporary signage, most of the language seems to be designed to regulate signage notifying the public of public events or special celebrations. This language can be revised to be more generic to address temporary signage put out by businesses or organizations other than the City or City-sponsored events.

Several municipalities addressed "feather flags", including them within definitions for banners, flags, or wind signs. Due to the popularity of such signs within Green Cove Springs, the definition of these signs should be added as a new definition or as a revision to an existing definition.

Green Cove Springs' sign regulations are compliant with both Clay County and the State of Florida. Both institutions only provide guidance for unincorporated areas or areas within the rights-of-way of roadways.