
MEMORANDUM B
RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Introduction

Following the March 03, 2026, City Commission meeting, staff were asked to review the regulatory code for signs in Green Cove Springs, Florida. Staff compared the regulatory language of several municipalities with the City of Green Cove Spring's regulatory language. The purpose of this research was 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.

Green Cove Springs' Existing Regulations for Signs

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

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 125-12*. – *Permitted permanent signs*, no offsite signs, other than for nonprofit organizations, are allowed, subject to constitutional limitations. The sign code 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.

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 within the form based code area 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.

Proposed Recommendations for the Existing Sign Regulations

Section 125-2. - Definitions

Staff recommend revising several definitions under section 125-2 to provide additional clarity:

- *Banner sign* means any sign composed of lightweight material either enclosed or not enclosed in a rigid ~~frame~~ or semi-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. For the purposes of this definition, feather signs or flags, sword signs or flags, or any such portable sign designed to move with the wind and to advertise a business, person, activity, good, product, commodity, service, or entertainment shall be considered a banner sign and not a flag. Banner signs are temporary and portable signs. National flags and flags of political subdivisions shall also not be considered banners for the purpose of this code.



- *Flag* means a flexible, graphic device representing a government, business, organization, nationality, political subdivision, or other identifiable entity designed to move with the wind. Flags are typically attached on one side using rope, twine, or other flexible material to a flagpole or flag mount. For the purposes of this definition, feather signs or flags, sword signs or flags, or any such portable sign designed to

move with the wind and advertise a business, person, activity, good, product, commodity, service, or entertainment shall be considered a banner sign and not a flag.



- *Ground sign* means any 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, rights-of-way, easements, and other appurtenances shall be considered to be outside such premises, and any sign located or proposed to be located in a right-of-way, easement, or other appurtenance shall be considered an off-premises sign.
- *Permanent sign means any sign which, when installed, is intended for permanent use. Signs shall be permanently embedded in the ground or affixed to a building or sign structure that is permanently embedded in the ground. For the purposes of this chapter, any sign with an intended useful life in excess of 12 months from the date of installation shall be deemed a permanent sign and must be compliant with all permanent sign regulations.*
- *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 or by easily replacing or moving the entire sign.
- *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. *Temporary signs shall have an intended useful life of one year or less.*

Discussion regarding intended useful life timeframes needed.

Section 125-10. – Exempt signs

The following signs are exempt from the operation of the sign regulations of this chapter, and from the requirement in this subpart, provided they are not placed or constructed so as to create a hazard of any kind:

- (1) Signs that are not designed or located so as to be visible from any street or adjoining property.
- (2) Identification signs of two square feet or less.
- (3) Legal notices.
- (4) Decorative flags, bunting and other types of signs to not exceed 12 square feet for a celebration, convention, or commemoration of significance to the entire community ~~when authorized by the city manager or his designee for a prescribed period of time.~~
- (5) Religious displays.
- (6) Governmental signs for traffic control, street designation or directions to public facilities.
- (7) Under canopy signs less than four square feet.
- (8) Menu boards for drive-in facilities less than two in number for commercial enterprise.
- (9) Memorial signs or tablets when cut into masonry.
- (10) Murals approved by the city council, which do not propose a commercial transaction, but instead involve only the expression of ideas and beliefs.

Section 125-14. – Sign restrictions

(d) *Prohibited signs.* Certain signs are prohibited in the city, specifically: projecting signs, roof signs, signs located on trees, on telephone poles, temporary flashing lighted signs, and abandoned signs. Sign locations which are prohibited include:

- a. Any sign, including permanent, portable, or temporary, within a right-of-way or easement that:
 - i. Does not fall under the purview of section 125-10. – Exempt signs;
 - ii. Does not fall under the purview of section 125-12. – Nonconforming signs; and
 - iii. Is otherwise not permitted within a special zoning category or is not compliant with the regulations of the zoning category.

b. Any offsite sign.

~~(g) Temporary banners and special signs.~~

~~(1) 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 under the following terms and conditions:~~

- ~~a. Only county-based nonprofit organizations approved as section 501(c)(3) organizations under the Internal Revenue Code, county governmental entities and recognized churches located within the city limits may be allowed to erect temporary banners and special signs.~~

- ~~b. An administrative fee must be paid to the city before erecting a temporary banner or special sign.~~
 - ~~c. The size, shape and material of the banner or special sign shall not exceed 32 square feet for signs, and banners shall comply with current FDOT standards.~~
 - ~~d. Temporary banners and special signs may be displayed for no longer than 14 days.~~
 - ~~e. The applicant must sign a hold harmless agreement with the city for any and all damages related to the banner or special sign.~~
 - ~~f. While the banner or special sign is installed, displayed and removed, the city shall be named as an additional insured on any general liability insurance policy held by the applicant.~~
 - ~~g. The city reserves the right to limit the number of banners and special signs displayed at one time.~~
 - ~~h. Acceptance of applications for the display of banners and special signs shall be first-come, first-served.~~
 - ~~i. If banner or special sign are not picked up by the owner within 14 days, the banner or special sign will be destroyed.~~
- (2) ~~Temporary banners or special signs for city sponsored activities may be located in any city right-of-way.~~

Section 125-25. – Temporary, special, and advertising signs and displays

Temporary signs are permitted in all zoning districts and do not require a sign permit. Temporary signs shall not be illuminated and shall comply with the following:

- (a) Placement of temporary signs on private property may occur only with the expressed consent of the property owner.
- (b) It is prohibited and unlawful to place a temporary sign on or within public rights-of-way or public property unless the sign:
 - (1) Falls under the purview of section 125-10. – Exempt signs;
 - (2) Falls under the purview of section 125-12. – Nonconforming signs; and
 - (3) Is otherwise permitted within any form-based code zoning category, is compliant with the regulations of such zoning category, and has a hold harmless agreement with the City of Green Cove Springs.
- (c) Temporary signs shall be at least two feet from the edge of the sidewalk contiguous to the property line. If there is no sidewalk the signs shall be measured from the edge of pavement. The minimum setback from all property lines shall be 15 feet and shall not be located within any sight triangle or the public right-of-way.
- (d) No sign shall hang over or extend into any roadway.
- (e) Within all residential zoning districts, the following signs shall be considered as temporary signs and must meet the following standards:
 - (1) Temporary signs, other than banners
 - a. Maximum number allowed per parcel: three;
 - b. Maximum square footage allowed per sign: four square feet;
 - c. Maximum height allowed: four feet; and
 - d. Duration allowed for each sign:

1. Special event signs: 10 days or three days after the event, if applicable.
 2. Political signs: 90 days prior or seven days after a political event such as an election, fundraiser, rally, debate, town hall, convention, or other such event related to the political process, government, policy-making, or support of candidates running for office.
 3. All other signs shall be removed daily and are permitted to be returned the following day.
- (f) Within all non-residential zoning districts, the following signs shall be considered as temporary signs and must meet the following standards:
- (1) Temporary signs, other than banners
 - a. Maximum number allowed per parcel: two;
 - b. Maximum square footage allowed per sign: 24 square feet;
 - c. Maximum height allowed: seven feet; and
 - d. Duration allowed for each sign:
 1. Special event signs: 60 days or seven days after the event, if applicable.
 2. Political signs: 90 days prior or seven days after a political event such as an election, fundraiser, rally, debate, town hall, convention, or other such event related to the political process, government, policy-making, or support of candidates running for office.
 3. All other signs shall be removed daily and are permitted to be returned the following day.
- (g) Banner signs are only allowed in non-residential zoning districts, subject to the following requirements:
- (1) Banners in non-residential districts must meet the following standards:
 - a. Maximum number allowed per parcel: one banner or two feather signs;
 - b. Maximum square footage allowed per sign: 32 square feet;
 - c. Maximum number allowed for a multiple occupancy complex: three;
 - d. Duration allowed for each sign:
 1. Special event signs: 60 days or seven days after the event, if applicable. Signs shall be removed daily and are permitted to return the following day.
 2. All other signs shall be removed daily and are permitted to be returned the following day.
 - e. Maximum height for a freestanding banner sign (not including feather signs): seven feet;
 - f. Banner wall signs on multistory buildings are not allowed above the first floor; and
 - g. Maximum height for a feather sign: 12 feet.
 - (2) Banner signs shall not hang over or extend into public rights-of-way unless:
 - a. The banner sign is within a form-based code (FBC) zoning category;
 - b. A hold harmless agreement with the City has been acquired.
 - (3) Banner signs shall be securely anchored to buildings, poles, or suitable structural supports and shall not be attached to the roof of a building or exceed the height of such building or structure.
 - (4) Banner signs shall not be attached to trees, public buildings or structures, utility poles or any type of utility structure or equipment, including lift stations, fire hydrants, and the like.
 - (5) The following material and design standards shall apply to banners:
 - a. The sign and supports shall be constructed of durable material;
 - b. Edges and corners must be clean, trimmed and reinforced by the manufacturer. Frayed, damaged, ripped, torn, shredded, or significantly faded banners shall be removed immediately;
 - c. The banner shall be taut;
 - d. Wind slits are prohibited;

- e. Signs shall be maintained in good condition, with no visible fading or surface irregularities (for example: warping); and
- f. Sign copy shall be printed by a professional sign manufacturer (for example: digitally or transfer printed).