

To: Alex Rey, City Manager

From: Philip DiMaria, AICP, CNU-A
Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.

Date: Tuesday, October 4, 2022

Subject: Summary of Data Collection and Evaluation of Division 26 of St. Pete Beach's Land Development Code

As part of Task 2 of the Scope of Services executed on May 7, 2022 between the City of St. Pete Beach and Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc., Division 26 of the City's Land Development Code (LDC) (a.k.a. the Sign Ordinance) was evaluated for the purpose of identifying an approach to drafting Division 26 text amendments that will follow in Task 3. The existing text of the Sign Ordinance was evaluated on the basis of how well it meets the City's goals, as stated at the July 28, 2022 project kick-off meeting. Those goals included:

- 1) Having a procedure for compliance, enforcement, and administrative discretion;
- 2) Displaying the Sign Ordinance in a way that is clear, concise, and user-friendly for City Staff, architects, business owners, developers, and other interested parties; and
- 3) Providing specifications that address the quantity and quality of signage.

To evaluate the extent to which the existing text of the City's Sign Ordinance meets these goals, a "peer cities" analysis was conducted, which studied precedent sign ordinances enacted by four other municipalities: the Town of Longboat Key, the Town of Fort Myers Beach, the City of Miami Beach, and the City of Dunedin. Key findings are presented below, with a more detailed summary of the peer cities analysis and Division 26 evaluation to follow.

Key Findings

- The City of St. Pete Beach's Sign Ordinance does have procedures for compliance and enforcement that are comparable to other municipalities, but it does not have a procedure for granting variances specifically related to the size, design, or location of signage. However, applicants are entitled to apply for and receive variances under the "General Variances" procedure outlined in Section 3.12 of the City's LDC.
- St. Pete Beach's Sign Ordinance has more signage districts than other municipalities (15 total districts) and does not utilize tables or illustrations to organize its sign regulations. Other municipalities have between four and seven signage districts, and three of the four peer cities utilized tables and/or illustrations to demonstrate and organize signage regulations.
- St. Pete Beach's Sign Ordinance provides specifications for the quantity and maximum allowed height and area of signage, however there is a high degree of variation between signage districts for similar sign types (e.g. the maximum height and area of a freestanding monument sign for non-commercial uses in low-density residential districts is 6 ft and 18 ft², respectively, while the specifications for the same type of sign in the medium-density residential district is 8 ft and 24 ft²). The amount of signage districts and regulatory variations between the districts can be consolidated to create more consistency and standardization.
- St. Pete Beach's Sign Ordinance only provides guidelines on design/materials related to illumination. Three of the four peer cities evaluated provided language that either required signage to be constructed of specific

materials (e.g. wood, metal, stone, etc.) or for signage to match/be compatible with the architectural style of the building for which it pertains to.

Summary of the City of St. Pete Beach's Sign Ordinance (Division 26 of the LDC)

- **Date of enactment/last amendment:** 2013/2017
- **Presentation of sign ordinance:** Text and one illustration to demonstrate methods of measurement.
- **Organization of regulations and number of groups:** By zoning district, 15 groups.
- **Size and amount of signage:** Size regulated by maximum height and area that varies by sign type and between districts. Amount of signage is between one to four signs based on sign type and linear feet of building frontage.
- **Language pertaining to design and/or sign materials:** Only provides standards for illumination.
- **Procedure/conditions for variances from sign regulations:** The procedure for sign variances follows the same variance procedure that applies to all sections of the LDC, as outlined by Section 3.12 of the City's LDC. Applicants may seek unnecessary and undue hardship, practical difficulty, or administrative (*de minimis*) variances, which are reviewed and approved by the city manager or appropriate board of authority.

Summary of the Town of Longboat Key's Sign Ordinance (Chapter 156 of the LDC)

- **Date of enactment/last amendment:** 2018
- **Presentation of sign ordinance:** Text, tables, and multiple illustrations to demonstrate permitted sign types and maximum measurements.
- **Organization of regulations and number of groups:** By zoning district and specific land use, 4 groups.
- **Size and amount of signage:** Two thresholds of maximum sign measurements within the residential and commercial groups – parcels with 99 feet or less of street frontage follow one set of regulations, while parcels with more than 99 feet of street frontage follow another.
- **Language pertaining to design and/or sign materials:** Requires landscaping around ground-mounted signs and that ground-mounted signs are constructed of high-quality materials and finishes such as wood, masonry, metal, stone, glass, or ceramic; requires all signs to be constructed of the same materials, colors, and architectural style as the buildings on site.
- **Procedure/conditions for variances from sign regulations:** The Zoning Board of Adjustment may only grant variances related to sign setbacks (up to 20% less of the required setback) and area or height (maximum increase of 20% more than the maximum area or height allowed)

Summary of the Town of Fort Myers Beach's Sign Ordinance (Chapter 30 of the LDC)

- **Date of enactment/last amendment:** 2011
- **Presentation of sign ordinance:** Text and images showing examples of the three primary sign types to convey its sign requirements, along with graphics comparing desirable versus undesirable signage on a building.
- **Organization of regulations and number of groups:** By sign type, 5 groups.
- **Size and amount of signage:** Provides just one set of regulations pertaining to size, amount, and location per sign type, thus creating a high degree of standardization in signage across the township. Businesses can have multiple signs as long as the total area of all signage does not exceed the maximum area permitted.

- **Language pertaining to design and/or sign materials:** Provides standards for the type of wood that can be used (must be rot and termite resistant), does not allow signs to be suspended by chains, and provides additional guidance for electric signs and illumination.
- **Procedure/conditions for variances from sign regulations:** The procedure for sign variances is the same as the variance procedure for all other sections within the LDC, with the Town Council deciding and granting variances based on “exceptional or extraordinary circumstances inherent to the property in question.”

Summary of the City of Dunedin’s Sign Ordinance (Section 105-29 of the LDC)

- **Date of enactment/last amendment:** 2018
- **Presentation of sign ordinance:** Text only.
- **Organization of regulations and number of groups:** By zoning district and specific use, 7 groups.
- **Size and amount of signage:** Size regulated by maximum height and area that varies by sign type and between districts. Amount of signage can be one or more depending on street frontage or sign type (e.g. commercial uses can have one or more attached wall signs so long as the combined area for all signs does not exceed the maximum permitted area).
- **Language pertaining to design and/or sign materials:** Monument signs must be placed in a landscaped setting; tenant panels in freestanding signs must be constructed of the same materials; all signs must be compatible with the buildings to which they relate; paper, carboard, cloth, or plastic fabric banners can only be used as temporary signage for special events.
- **Procedure/conditions for variances from sign regulations:** The Board of Adjustment and Appeals may only grant signage variances from required setbacks.

Summary of the City of Miami Beach’s Sign Ordinance (Chapter 138 of the LDC)

- **Date of enactment/last amendment:** 2016
- **Presentation of sign ordinance:** Text, tables, and illustrations depicting examples of the three primary sign types (wall, projecting, and detached signs) and appropriate placement of all seven sign types.
- **Organization of regulations and number of groups:** By sign type, zoning district and specific use – 8 sign types, 4 district groups, 4 special use groups.
- **Size and amount of signage:** Size regulated by maximum height and area for all sign types; maximum area of wall signs determined as a ratio of linear feet of building frontage (e.g. 0.75 ft² for every foot of linear frontage, with a maximum area of 100 ft²). Across districts, each business may have one of each of the three primary sign types, and additional signage is permitted based on land use. For example, licensed commercial establishments in any district may have up to one window or door sign, restaurants in any district may have up to one menu board sign, and shopping centers with multiple tenants follow their own set of regulations regardless of the underlying zoning district
- **Language pertaining to design and/or sign materials:** Requires that the framework and body of signs be constructed of aluminum or similar alloy materials; provides minimum depth and mounting requirements for the lettering on wall signs; requires that all signs are compatible with the architecture of the building for which they pertain to.
- **Procedure/conditions for variances from sign regulations:** Provides several pathways for receiving a variance and allows for a relatively higher degree of administrative discretion compared to the other municipalities. The Board of Adjustment, Historic Preservation Board, or Design Review Board may grant a

variance for signage, and variances may pertain to maximum size, location, graphics, illustrations, or any other criteria set forth in the sign ordinance.

Recommendations and Next Steps for the City of St. Pete Beach's Sign Ordinance Amendment

Based on the peer cities evaluation presented above, the following recommendations may be incorporated into the City of St. Pete Beach's sign ordinance text amendment, pending the City Manager's approval:

- **Consolidate the amount of sign district groups and utilize tables and illustrations to present the regulations.** This will reduce the amount of variation between signage throughout the City and make the sign ordinance easier to read and comply with.
- In consolidating sign district groups, **consider allowing variation in size and amount of signage within each group based on two thresholds of linear feet of building or street frontage** (similar to Longboat Key). This will create a degree of standardization while still being sensitive to differences between parcels/buildings.
- **Provide one standardized set of regulations for sign types that pertain to specific uses rather than zoning district** (i.e. menu board signs, sandwich board signs, waterside identification signs, theater signs, and drive-thru signs). These sign types and their respective specifications are currently repeated throughout the sign ordinance, so pulling them out of the district regulations will improve the sign ordinance's concision and organization (thus creating a more user-friendly ordinance).
- **Provide language related to design and materials requirements.** Given that the City has expressed it wants to allow for some flexibility, language that requires signs to match the architectural features of the building is more desirable than requiring all signs throughout the City utilize the same materials, colors, and finishes.
- **Create a process for variances.** The City of St. Pete Beach stated a goal of administrative flexibility, so a broader variance procedure (similar to Miami Beach's) might be more applicable than other municipalities that only allowed variances for setbacks or size.

With this Summary of Data Collection and Evaluation executed, Kimley-Horn will proceed with Task 3 of the Scope of Services (proposed text amendments to Division 26 of the City's LDC) upon receipt of the City of St. Pete Beach's acceptance or rejection of the above recommendations.

Sincerely,



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Project Manager