

The background of the slide is a faded, grayscale image of a waterfront city scene. In the foreground, there is a body of water with several sailboats and their masts. In the middle ground, there are palm trees and a large, multi-story building with a prominent tower. In the background, more buildings and a bridge are visible under a hazy sky.

Review of Sign Regulations

Public Safety and Infrastructure Committee

August 25, 2011

Order of Presentation

- I. St. Petersburg vs. Clearwater Sign Regulations**
- II. Non-Conforming Signs**
- III. Specific Types of Signs**
- IV. Code Enforcement**
- V. Process Direction from Committee**

I. St. Petersburg vs. Clearwater Regulations



I. St. Petersburg vs. Clearwater Regulations

FREE-STANDING SIGNS

St. Petersburg:	Clearwater:
Residential Corridors	
48 square feet - Maximum area 10 feet - Maximum height	64 square feet - Maximum area 14 feet - Maximum height
Commercial Corridors	
64 square feet - Maximum area 15 to 20 feet - Maximum height	64 square feet - Maximum area 14 feet - Maximum height
Centers	
150 square feet - Maximum area 20 feet - Maximum height	64 square feet - Maximum area 14 feet - Maximum height
Industrial	
64-150 - Maximum area 10-20 - Maximum height	64 square feet - Maximum area 14 feet - Maximum height
Downtown	
48 square feet - Maximum area 10 feet - Maximum height	(Monument sign only) 10 square feet per face – Maximum area 20 square feet cumulative – Maximum area 4 feet - Maximum height

I. St. Petersburg vs. Clearwater Regulations

DESIGN STANDARDS

St. Petersburg:	Clearwater:
<p>The sign code includes a series of supplementary regulations for various types of signs. Also, the sign ordinance includes a series of design regulations for all types of signs. The combined effect of having both supplementary and design regulations for all sign applications guarantees a minimum design standard not required by the Clearwater sign ordinance.</p>	<p>The sign code has a limited number of supplementary and design regulations. The aesthetics typically required through St. Petersburg's base regulations are more likely achieved through Clearwater's Comprehensive Sign Program (see below) than they are through Clearwater's base regulations.</p>

I. St. Petersburg vs. Clearwater Regulations

CLEARWATER COMPREHENSIVE SIGN PROGRAM

- **Voluntary application process;**
- **Increased design standards;**
- **Greater flexibility including size, height and placement;**
- **Administrative / subjective process.**

I. St. Petersburg vs. Clearwater Regulations

OTHER DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS RE: GULF-TO-BAY BLVD.

- **Landscape medians (5 – 10 years);**
- **Enhanced green yards (Redevelopment);**
- **Reduction of impervious square footage (Redevelopment).**

I. St. Petersburg vs. Clearwater Regulations

CLEARWATER'S AMORTIZATION PROGRAM

Original Program Highlights:

- **Amortization enacted 1985;**
- **Non-conforming (on-premise and off-premise) signs removed after seven (7) year time period;**

I. St. Petersburg vs. Clearwater Regulations

CLEARWATER'S AMORTIZATION PROGRAM (cont.)

Issues faced by Clearwater:

- **Lawsuit by (off-premise) sign owners;**
- **On-premise removal actually 15 years;**
- **Strong opposition from business community;**
- **Variance requests (many approved);**
- **Increased staff costs to implement program;**
 - **Required up-front measurement of all signs in city.**
- **Comprehensive Sign Program may currently allow sign height and size previously amortized.**

II. Non-Conforming Signs

NON-CONFORMING SIGNS

- “A sign shall not be erected, raised, moved, placed, reconstructed, extended, enlarged or altered, unless in conformity with this sign code.”
- “Non-conforming signs may be maintained or repaired; however, if a non-conforming sign is relocated or replaced, or structurally altered by more than 25 percent of the replacement cost of the sign, the sign shall be made to conform.”

II. Non-Conforming Signs

NON-CONFORMING SIGNS (cont.)

- **“If an existing building or structure is demolished for redevelopment, any existing, non-conforming, free-standing on-premise sign shall be considered abandoned and shall be removed at the time of demolition.”**
- **“If a non-conforming, free-standing, on-premise sign is abandoned for six (6) months or more, such sign shall be removed.”**

II. Non-Conforming Signs



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CONSIDERATION TO AMEND REGULATIONS

Staff supports the following possible amendments:

- **Make repair threshold cumulative for all repairs;**
- **Prohibit EMCs and changeable copy from being added to non-conforming signs (policy currently in place prohibiting this activity);**
- **Prohibit any increase in illumination;**
- **Prohibit structural improvements;**

II. Non-Conforming Signs

CONSIDERATION TO AMEND REGULATIONS (cont.)

Staff supports the following possible amendments (cont.):

- **Require sign compliance with improvements to building or site over 50 percent of assessed value;**
- **Reduce enforcement time on abandoned signs from six (6) months to three (3) months and add a definition for abandoned sign;**
- **Retroactive standards for brightness & message duration.**

III. Specific Types of Signs

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION MEETING and EVENT SIGNS

- **Portable signs temporarily placed in the public rights-of-way is defined as a “snipe sign” by city code;**
- **Prohibited in the public rights-of-way;**
- **City cannot differentiate based on content;**
- **City would need to allow all snipe signs;**
- **Allowed as a “free-speech sign” on private property.**

III. Specific Types of Signs



III. Specific Types of Signs

INDIVIDUALS HOLDING and/or DRESSED AS SIGNS

- **Signs are permitted; exempt from permit requirements;**
- **Provision allows non-commercial & commercial messages;**
- **Commercial messages have First Amendment protections. Regulation will be found constitutional if:**
 - **Asserted government interest is substantial;**
 - **Regulation directly advances government interest involved; and**
 - **Regulation is no more extensive than necessary to serve government interest.**

III. Specific Types of Signs

INDIVIDUALS HOLDING and/or DRESSED AS SIGNS (cont.)

- **Clearwater and Pinellas Park currently prohibit these signs;**
- **City Council could prohibit signs. Staff recommends:**
 - **Collecting evidence of the traffic safety problems;**
 - **Narrowly tailored to remedy problems and harms.**

III. Specific Types of Signs



III. Specific Types of Signs

A-FRAME SIGNS

- **Prohibited prior to 2007 LDR Rewrite;**
- **Currently permitted in CCT and DC zoning districts;**
- **Specific size and location requirements;**
- **Some code enforcement issues regarding prohibited districts or locations.**
- ***Staff recommends no changes.***

III. Specific Types of Signs

ELECTRONIC MESSAGE CENTERS (EMCs)

- **2005 revision allowed EMCs in all non-residential districts:**
 - **Decreased minimum dwell time (15 min. to 6 sec.);**
 - **Maximum area allowed:**
 - **Max. area to 24 square feet;**
 - **Max. % of total sign area increased (25% to 50%).**
 - **Established design criteria.**

III. Specific Types of Signs

ELECTRONIC MESSAGE CENTERS (EMCs) (cont.)

- **2007 LDR text amendment:**
 - **Increased square footage from 24 to 32 square feet.**
- **Estimates 54 EMCs in city inc. time and temperature;**
- **2010: 34 code-compliance assistance citations for EMCs;**
- **Staff has provided several attachments comparing St. Petersburg regulations with other jurisdictions.**

III. Specific Types of Signs

ELECTRONIC MESSAGE CENTERS (EMCs) (cont.)

Findings of interest:

- **St. Petersburg and Pinellas County are the only jurisdictions reviewed that limit size of EMCs as less than allowable sign area;**
- **New Smyrna Beach was the only jurisdiction reviewed which has a separate requirement and a measureable standard for brightness;**

III. Specific Types of Signs

ELECTRONIC MESSAGE CENTERS (EMCs) (cont.)

Findings of interest (cont.):

- **Limit to specific roadways or districts:**
 - **New Smyrna Beach prohibits facing single-family.**
- **Few jurisdictions have design criteria;**

III. Specific Types of Signs

ELECTRONIC MESSAGE CENTERS (EMCs) (cont.)

Findings of interest (cont.):

- **Dwell Time:**
 - **St. Petersburg and Hillsborough County have the shortest duration time at six (6) seconds;**
 - **New Smyrna Beach appears to have no requirement so messages can constantly change;**
 - **Times ranged from eight (8) seconds to five (5) minutes.**

III. Specific Types of Signs

ELECTRONIC MESSAGE CENTERS (EMCs) (cont.)

Findings of interest (cont.):

- **All jurisdictions reviewed regulate the message complexity in some form; however, St. Petersburg is the only jurisdiction which requires text only;**
- **Clearwater and Gainesville prohibit EMCs:**
 - **Clearwater allows EMCs on public property (Brighthouse Field and Ruth Eckerd Hall).**

III. Specific Types of Signs

ELECTRONIC MESSAGE CENTERS (EMCs) (cont.)

Staff supports the following possible amendments:

- **Prohibit EMC's city-wide, except Performing Arts Venues;**
- **Prohibit in Traditional and Downtown zoning districts, except for Performing Arts Venue uses;**
- **Reduce size below thirty-two (32) square feet;**
- **Introduce a measurable brightness standard;**

III. Specific Types of Signs

ELECTRONIC MESSAGE CENTERS (EMCs) (cont.)

Staff supports the following possible amendments (cont.):

- **Require a longer message duration;**
- **Require that EMCs cannot face single-family;**
- **Permit static images along with text;**
- **Clarify existing policy, which prohibits EMCs from being added to existing non-conforming signs;**
- **Increase fines for EMC code violations.**

III. Code Enforcement

CITY ATTORNEY DISCUSSION:

- **Code Enforcement and Board Proceedings:**
 - **Code Enforcement Board;**
 - **Notification, time to cure, hearing schedule;**
 - **Notification, no time to cure, hearing schedule;**
 - **Hearing.**
- **Municipal Ordinance Violation (MOV's)**

V. Process Direction

- **Expand / Reduce review of issues identified;**
- **Meet with interested parties (for e.g. C.O.N.A., business community, sign industry, etc.);**
- **PS&I meeting or City Council workshop.**