

# VII. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION



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## VII. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

### A. INTRODUCTION

The Intergovernmental Coordination Element's purpose is to formulate improved coordination processes among adjacent local governments and with local, regional and state agencies. Very often, planning and management responsibilities fall under the jurisdiction of several agencies. The effective implementation of federal, state, regional and local planning policies requires:

1. The identification of all agencies with which the local government must coordinate;
2. A thorough understanding of the roles of each agency and that of the local government; and
3. The creation of adequate intergovernmental coordination mechanisms to carry out policies.

### B. CITY OF GREEN COVE SPRINGS

#### 1. General

The City of Green Cove Springs is situated in Clay County in northeast Florida. It has a population of 9,786 according to the 2020 Decennial Census. Clay County's population, in comparison, is about 218,245 persons.

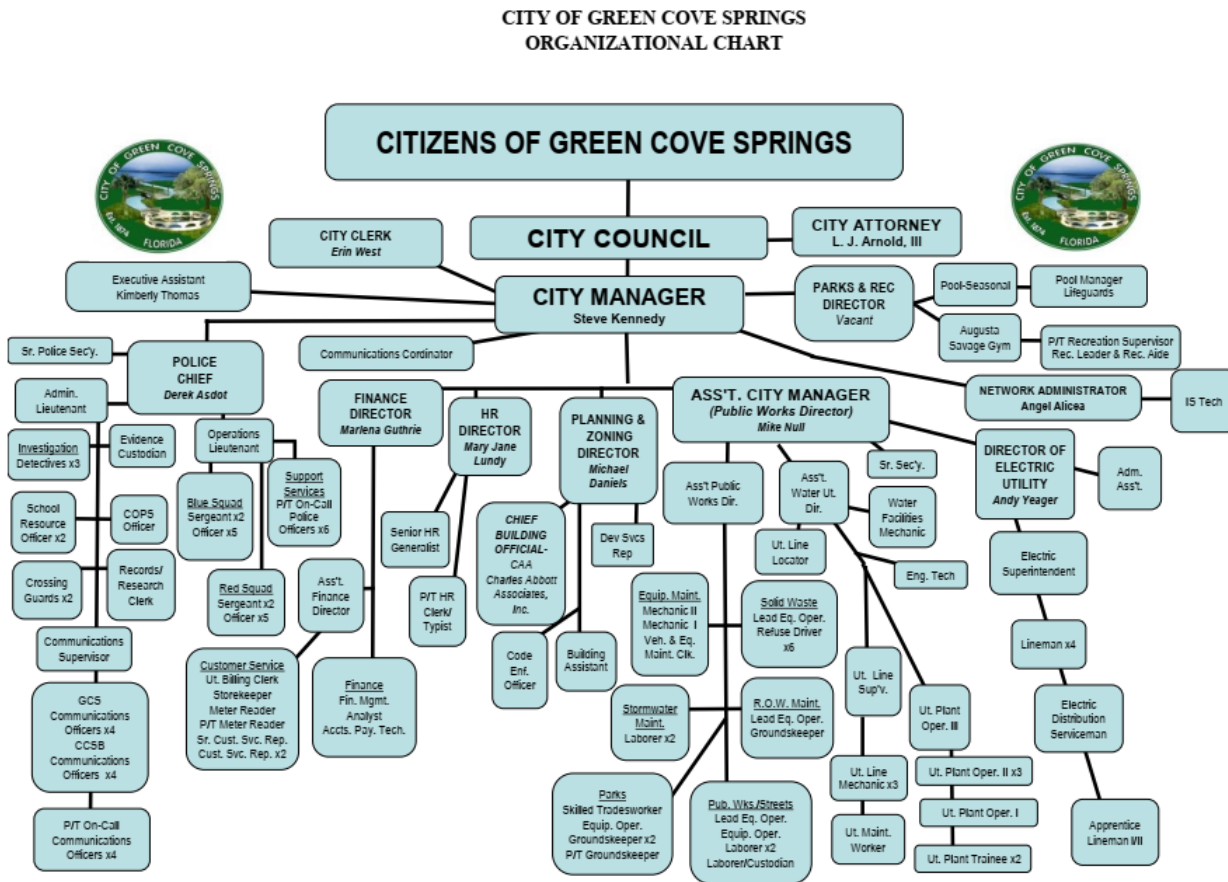
The City is governed by a five-member City Council and led by a Council-appointed City Manager. The City Manager is responsible for the following departments:

1. Development Services (Building, Code Enforcement, Planning & Zoning)
2. Public Works (Water, Wastewater, Solid Waste, Maintenance)
3. Electric
4. Finance
5. Human Resources
6. Police
7. City Clerk
8. Parks and Recreation

A City organizational chart is presented in Figure 1.



Figure VII-1. Organizational Chart



GCS Organizational Chart - Jun 2021[12024]

Source: City of Green Cove Springs, 2021

## 2. Boards

The following provides a description of boards which operate in Green Cove Springs.

### a. Planning & Zoning Board

The Planning and Zoning Board is responsible for the review of development related issues. The Board responsibilities were expanded with the adoption of the Land Development Regulations in 2000, when the committee assumed the responsibilities of the Board of Adjustment and the Tree Conservation Board. Both of these Boards were abolished to streamline the development review process.

The Planning and Zoning Board is the designated Local Planning Agency (LPA), as required by Chapter 163, Florida Statutes. The Board makes recommendations to City Council for Comprehensive Plan amendments, rezonings, and major site development plan approvals. The Board takes final action on special exceptions and variances.



The Board has 5 voting members who are appointed by members of the City Council. In addition to the voting members, the Clay County School District appoints a non-voting member to the Planning and Zoning Board as required by Chapter 163, Florida Statutes.

#### **b. Citizen Advisory Committee**

This committee, initiated in 2021, provides feedback on a variety of topics relating to City Operations, including projects, initiatives, policies, and issues brought before City officials and members of the City Council. Feedback given by the Citizens Advisory Committee may be taken into consideration by City officials and members of the City Council when making decisions on discussed topics. Members additionally support community outreach activities and meet with the Mayor, City Council, and City Manager as needed.

This committee is for residents and business owners passionate about Green Cove Springs and have a desire to learn more about how the City operates.

Presently, there are approximately 32 members on the committee. According to the posted by-laws, committee members serve two-year terms, subject to reappointment by City Council, with terms commencing in January. New members may be appointed throughout the year, however. Membership is limited to either: (a) residents of the city, (b) Clay County residents living within one (1) mile of the existing City Limits, or (c) business owners operating within the City Limits who have a current business tax receipt.

### **C. OTHER LOCAL GOVERNMENTS**

#### **1. Municipalities**

There are 4 other municipalities located in Clay County. They are the Towns of Keystone Heights, Penny Farms, and Orange Park. Clay County provides a variety of services, which are discussed further in this text, to all of the municipalities. The City is not contiguous with any other municipalities.

#### **2. Clay County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC)**

The BOCC provides a multitude of services to Green Cove Springs through an Interlocal Agreement that is annually negotiated and agreed upon by the Green Cove Springs City Council and the Clay County Board of County Commissioners. Areas included in the Interlocal Agreement include Public Works, Building Department, Public Safety, Traffic Signal Maintenance, Engineering Maintenance, Environmental Services, Wastewater Treatment, and Public Housing. In addition to the specific services annually negotiated by the 2 governmental agencies, the County provides funds to the City for special City projects. The County Administrator and the City Manager are the representatives from each government who are responsible for the implementation and the financial management of the Interlocal Agreement.

#### **3. Clay County School District**

The City and the School District, in conjunction with Clay County and the municipalities of Orange Park and Keystone Heights adopted the Interlocal Agreement for Schools as required by Chapter 163, Florida Statutes in 2008. This Interlocal Agreement requires the sharing of planning information.

#### **4. Clay County Utility Authority**

The Clay County Utility Authority is an independent special District created by the Florida Legislature to provide water and sewer service to unincorporated areas of Clay County. In 1998, the City and the Authority



entered into an Interlocal Agreement to designate the water and sewer service area for the City of Green Cove Springs outside of the City limits. It also outlines a Bulk Service Agreement for the City to sell the Authority unused capacity. The Magnolia West development is located within the city limits but is served by the Clay County Utility Authority. Recently, the City annexed property for a 2,100 unit subdivision, currently known as the Ayrshire project, located off of County Road 315, south of Green Cove Avenue. The property is outside of the City service area. For this development, the City and CCUA came to an agreement that the City shall provide water and wastewater services to CCUA for the project for the first wave of development. CCUA is building an additional plant in the area that will ultimately support the development's needs.

## 5. **Clay Electric Co-Op**

The Clay Electric Co-Op is an independent special District created by the Florida Legislature to provide electric service to the unincorporated areas of Clay County. The City and the Co-Op entered into an Interlocal Agreement to designate the electric service area for the City of Green Cove Springs outside of the City limits.

## D. **REGIONAL AGENCIES**

### 1. **St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD)**

SJRWMD is one of 5 water management districts in the State of Florida. It is responsible for managing water and related land resources in Northeast Florida. It is made up of all or part of 19 counties. The water management districts came about as a result of the Water Resources Act of 1972 by the State Legislature. The SJRWMD promotes the conservation, development and proper utilization of surface groundwater through regulation and research. The SJRWMD requires permits for water well construction, management, and storage of surface water (including stormwater), consumptive use, works of the District, and wells for artificial recharge. In addition, the District has the authority to declare and implement water shortage warnings, water shortages, and water use restrictions. The SJRWMD also has the authority to acquire land for flood control, water storage, water management, and preservation of wetlands, streams, and lakes. Through this authority, the SJRWMD has purchased lands to preserve wetlands and has provided funds to improve drainage and water quality. The City of Green Cove Springs has been the recipient of grants from the SJRWMD to improve water quality and drainage in Green Cove Springs.

### 2. **St. Johns River American Heritage Initiative**

The 310-mile St. Johns River in the State of Florida was officially designated an American Heritage River by the President of the United States on July 30, 1998 in recognition of its ecological, historic, economic, and cultural significance. As a result of the designation, partnerships of local, state, and federal officials have been formed to cooperatively work to improve the river.

### 3. **State Attorney**

The State Attorney for the Fourth Judicial Circuit, a constitutional officer under Article V of the State Constitution, serves Duval, Nassau, and Clay Counties. The State Attorney is elected for a 4 year term. While the State Attorney ordinarily relies on police and other investigative agencies for investigation of alleged criminal acts, he may initiate, within his own office, the investigation of suspected illegal activity, when necessary. The decision to institute criminal proceedings is primarily his responsibility. The Chief of Police for Green Cove Springs coordinates with the State Attorney for prosecution of criminals.



#### 4. **Public Defender**

The Public Defender, a constitutional officer under Article V of the State Constitution, serves the Fourth Judicial Circuit of Florida. The Public Defender is elected for a 4 year term. He represents indigent persons charged with felonies, misdemeanors or violations of City ordinances prosecuted in the County courts, and indigent juveniles alleged to be delinquent children. He employs assistant public defenders, investigators, a court reporter and clerical personnel to assist in representing his clients in the various divisions of the Circuit and County courts.

#### 5. **Northeast Florida Regional Council (NEFRC)**

NEFRC is a 7-county regional planning board. Local government contributions, state grants, and fees fund the agency. The NEFRC is charged with, among other things, addressing and planning solutions for greater-than-local problems, providing technical assistance to local governments, and reviewing applications for state and federal grants. It is responsible for regional reviews of DRIs and addressing regional issues. The NEFRC reviews local government comprehensive issue amendments. The NEFRC conducts many activities and programs are conducted through the following affiliated organizations. The agency provides programs in the areas of economic development, emergency preparedness, human services, transportation, data management, community development, and affordable housing.

#### 6. **Northeast Florida Transportation Planning Organization (TPO)**

The TPO is the independent regional transportation planning agency for Duval, Clay, Nassau and St. Johns counties. This organization satisfies the federal government requirement that areas developed around cities with 50,000 or more people have a metropolitan planning organization to coordinate planning and funding. Local elected officials and transportation agency representatives serve on the TPO Board and receive input from the TPO Technical and Citizens Advisory committees. The TPO is responsible for approving transportation projects funded with federal assistance regardless of the grant program. The City works with the TPO for local improvements.

### E. **STATE AGENCIES**

#### 1. **Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)**

FDOT is responsible for building and maintaining state roads and the drainage facilities for these roads.

#### 2. **Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV)**

The DHSMV is responsible for vehicle registration and driver licensing. This includes registration of mobile homes. The Florida Highway Patrol, under DHSMV, is responsible for patrolling state highways.

#### 3. **Florida Housing Finance Corporation**

The Florida Housing Finance Corporation is an independent agency housed in DEO that uses the sale of tax-exempt bonds to provide affordable housing to low and moderate income renters and first-time buyers. In homeownership, the agency provides below- market mortgages. For rental housing, developers are required to set aside a set percentage of rental units for low- and moderate-income families in order to use the tax-exempt financing to build their multi-family project.





#### 4. **Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO)**

The DEO is the state land planning agency. DEO will review local government comprehensive plans against established state criteria expressed in Rule 9J-5, F.A.C., and will provide an initial review to assure that local plans are consistent with the State Plan. DEO provides state assistance for the National Flood Insurance Program by promoting floodplain management and flood hazardous mitigation. DEO is also responsible for the Florida Building Code, which establishes minimum standards for buildings in Florida.

DEO operates housing assistance programs as well as programs that affect the provision of affordable housing. DEO administers the Section 8 Housing Assistance program; operates the rural housing program, which provides grants and loans to local governments, housing authorities, and non-profit organizations to help pay the pre-development costs for housing for rural residents and farm workers; conducts research; administers the Small Cities CDBG program; provides weatherization assistance; establishes minimum building standards; and certifies manufactured housing that meets safety standards.

#### 5. **Florida Department of Education**

For grades K-12, this Department funds and administers certain programs and projects (such as some school construction), coordinates other services such as guidance and psychological services, monitors education service provisions according to broad curriculum and graduation guidelines, and provides assistance through the development and dissemination of education modules for use in the schools.

#### 6. **Florida Department of State**

Through the Division of Cultural Affairs, this Department oversees and administers programs affecting the arts in Florida, and through the Division of Archives, History and Records Management is responsible for locating and preserving historic and archaeological sites.

#### 7. **Public Service Commission**

The Public Service Commission is responsible for energy utilities regulation, including monitoring utilities' mandatory energy conservation programs.

#### 8. **Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund**

This Board (The Governor and Cabinet) holds title to all state lands and is the policy body that makes major land management decisions regarding state lands and sovereign lands.

#### 9. **Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP)**

FDEP is responsible for surface and groundwater quality. DEP regulates various activities that can affect water quality and required permits for actions such as dredge and fill, the construction or upgrading of wastewater treatment plants, discharge of industrial waste, and landfills. It is also responsible for administering statutes and rules related to the Florida Coastal Management Program concerning water quality. Thus, DEP regulates discharge of domestic and industrial waste into state water bodies. The rule attempts to eliminate the effects of non-point pollution on the state water bodies. It is also responsible for enforcing the air quality standards established by the state and regulating disposal sites such as landfills. It also is the agency charged with the state's hazardous waste cleanup programs.

#### 10. **Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWCC)**

FWCC has an interest in conservation, particularly as it relates to wildlife management, and in regulating activities related to wildlife management, and in regulating activities related to hunting and fishing. FWCC



administers the Florida Endangered and Threatened Species Act and coordinates with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which operate similar national programs.

## **F. FEDERAL AGENCIES**

### **1. US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)**

HUD provides funding and regulates state administered programs such as Section 8 Housing Assistance and rent subsidies for qualified low- and moderate-income families.

### **2. US Department of Education**

This Department regulates and provides pass-through funding to the state for specified programs.

### **3. US Army Corps of Engineers**

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is responsible for maintaining navigable waterways and flood control processes and, when feasible, is authorized to dispose of beach compatible sand in areas slated for beach renourishment. The Corps has developed rules regarding permitting wetlands and requires dredge and fill permits.

### **4. US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**

The EPA coordinates government action to protect the environment by controlling pollution. The EPA is also responsible for air quality and has designated 6 pollutants that, in high concentrations, can have adverse human and environmental impacts.

## **G. INTERLOCAL AGREEMENTS**

In addition to the above described interlocal agreements maintained by the City of Green Cove Springs with local agencies, the City maintains the following regional or statewide interlocal agreements.

### **1. Florida Municipal Power Agency**

An interlocal agreement was created in 1981 among a number of municipalities, including the City of Green Cove Springs to establish the Florida Municipal Power Agency due to the national energy shortages, which were occurring during that time. Its function was to assure Florida citizens their energy needs would be met. All of the cities who are part of the agreement are authorized to join each other and any other electric utility for the purposes of jointly financing, acquiring, constructing, managing, operating, utilizing and owning any joint electric power supply project or projects. The Agency is located in Orlando, Florida.

### **2. Public Works Mutual Aid Agreement**

This agreement was formed in the event of a disaster, which may cause severe damage to public roads, utilities, buildings, parks, and other government-owned facilities. The intent of the agreement is that local governments who need assistance during times of emergency may enlist the assistance of other local governments in an effective and planned out manner. It is also the intent that local governments, which participate in the agreement, have detailed administrative procedures to be used during emergencies and effective communication is established between their public works personnel through the exchange of information.



### 3. Mutual Aid Agreement

The City of Green Cove Springs has a formal Mutual Aid Agreement with several cities within Duval, St. Johns and Nassau Counties. The agreements allow each city to receive and extend mutual law enforcement aid to adequately respond to intensive and emergency situations, as well as continuing multi-jurisdictional law enforcement problems so as to protect the public's safety. The Mutual Aid Agreement is on file with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement.

## H. ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section identifies specific problems and needs within each of the elements of the City of Green Cove Springs Comprehensive Plan that would benefit from improved or additional intergovernmental coordination. It also evaluates the need for improved or additional intergovernmental coordination with local, regional, or state units of government

### 1. Future Land Use

#### a. Development Review

**Issue:** The Clay County Development Review Committee (DRC) is responsible for approving all development in the unincorporated area of Clay County. The City of Green Cove Springs needs to be a member of the DRC for any projects that are within either of the utility service areas.

**Recommendation:** The interlocal agreement needs to be amended to include representatives of Green Cove Springs on the DRC for development that will occur in either of the Green Cove Springs service areas.

#### b. Blight

**Issue:** The City of Green Cove Springs has issues of blight, especially in the core city, which could be redeveloped with appropriate funding or catalyzation.

**Recommendation:** The City should explore the creation of a Community Redevelopment Agency. This exploration shall be done with Clay County to ensure regular communication and continued support.

### 2. Transportation

#### a. Traffic Volumes

**Issue:** The City hosts large amounts of traffic generated from outside of the City limits and future traffic volumes could impair the existing quality of life in Green Cove Springs. When development occurs outside the City but affects the traffic volume on its roads, the City will need to Coordinate with Clay County to ensure negative impacts are mitigated and avoided. When development occurs within the City that will impact traffic volumes, the City must include mitigation strategies as part of development review.

**Recommendation:** Traffic management on the part of the City of Green Cove Springs, Clay County and the State Department of Transportation should be coordinated prior to volumes reaching unacceptable levels of service - especially on U.S. Hwy. 17. An Interlocal Agreement between the City, County and the FDOT should be entered into to coordinate improvements, new roads, and land uses along the corridors as needed prior to or at the time of development impacts.



### 3. Housing

#### a. Affordable Housing

**Issue:** The City has an abundance of detached single-family homes, which make up the majority of the housing type therein. To promote affordability, the City needs a variety of housing types spread throughout its residential areas.

**Recommendation:** The City should explore incentivizing development of a variety of housing types that will support residents of all income levels.

#### b. Historic Preservation

**Issue:** The City of Green Cove Springs has a nationally registered historic district, but it is a district without regulation, leading to the demolition or modification of historic structures.

**Recommendation:** The City should explore the creation of a local register of cultural resources and methods of preservation. The City may coordinate with Clay County to promote or preserve culturally or historically significant sites.

### 4. Public Facilities

#### a. Service Areas

**Issue:** The City of Green Cove Springs and Clay County Utility Authority (CCUA) have extended public facilities (i.e., sewerage and potable water service) to areas outside the City limits. The City entered into an agreement with the Clay County Utility Authority establishing the service areas for both utilities. The portion of unincorporated Clay County, north of the City limits to Black Creek, is in the City of Green Cove Springs service area and the area annexed in the City limits west of Magnolia Point will be served by CCUA. Development in and around the City and the City's service area must be reviewed to ensure the servicing entity has the necessary capacity.

**Recommendation:** The City of Green Cove Springs and CCUA should meet annually to review the Interlocal Agreement and to make any revisions as necessary, as well as maintain communication regarding development in the pipeline along service area lines.

### 5. Conservation

#### a. Natural Resource Protection

**Issue:** The City's Conservation Element calls for coordination with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the US Department of Agriculture and other entities as applicable in their effort to identify and map the presence of threatened, endangered, or significant wildlife species as well as identify and protect environmentally sensitive lands located in Green Cove Springs.

**Recommendation:** An intergovernmental coordination mechanism should be established between all of the above listed government entities whereby, through joint efforts, the abovementioned activities are planned and responsibilities of each agency in regard to the efforts are clearly outlined.



## 6. Recreation & Open Space

### a. Decreased Recreation and Open Space

**Issue:** The closure of school sites to the public in 2018 decreased the available recreation and open space for the City of Green Cove Springs.

**Recommendation:** The City should work with Clay County to coordinate the development of a regional park or coordinate the acquisition of land in the City or land around the City which can legally be annexed for the creation of a community park, especially in the southwestern area of the City which was shown to be underserved.