



# City of Bellaire

## MEMORANDUM

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TO: Bellaire City Council

FROM: Cheryl Bright, Assistant Director Parks Recreation & Facilities

DATE: 1/17/2018

SUBJECT: Brand Identity Background and Process

In April of 2017, Allyson Lack, Creative Director with Design by Principle, presented a proposal to City Council regarding the advantages and proposed timeline related to branding, identity, and graphic design efforts for the City of Bellaire. The branding identity process began with the intent that the end product would produce a fresh look that would speak to the level of professionalism and refinement of a premiere City that is expected and desired by the residents of Bellaire. This look and feel would then be used to inform many other decisions including signage in the new municipal facilities buildings, parks, Newcastle trail, staff uniforms and more.

A summary of the phases of the in depth process used by the Principle Group to create a final product is outlined below. After feedback and refinement, a final brand identity recommendation slide show has been produced. This slide show has been included in the January 22, 2018 City Council packet for your review.

### Phase 1 – Audit, Interview, Research, Tour

The project kickoff included meetings to identify potential stakeholders in this process. Lists generated included City leadership, community leaders, partner organizations, and historical experts. Interviews were conducted with 25+ participants whose background and affiliation with the City ranged from elected officials to community volunteers. Research documentation was provided to the consultant to share history, standards, master plans, beautification studies, comprehensive plans and objectives, and notable events. Tours were conducted of City facilities in order to develop a baseline understanding of current inventory of the built environment.

### Phase 2 - Create & Focus

Borne from their findings in Phase 1, a verbal platform and six distinct visual identity directions were developed by Principle Design Group. Of the six initial options presented to the City, three were selected for further study and refinement.



# City of Bellaire

## MEMORANDUM

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A focus group was selected at random to gather feedback on these three options. Focus group participants were selected by an independent company, DCA Insights + Ideas, and included mixed male/female ratio, age, education level, income level, and time and area of residence in Bellaire. Twelve participants initially agreed to participate; eight were present for the final meeting.

Key findings from the focus group included:

1. Verbal identity was universally agreed to be on point.
2. Visual identities for all three solutions were met with many positive comments, as well as some constructive input that was considered during refinement phase.
3. Combined feedback from focus group, PGAL, Principle and City points to the friendly and forward-looking appeal of the “illustrative” solution, as it draws influence from the verdant beauty of Bellaire, merging a timeless B with a single leaf, imparting a peaceful feel and the notion of continued growth.

### Phase 3 - Refine & Recommend

Input received from the focus group was combined with input from City staff, City leadership, and representatives from PGAL, the Architect for the Municipal Facilities Project. Based on this collective feedback, one option was selected for further refinement, as it was determined it provides the best long-term aesthetic guidance for the City.

It is believed that the final product recommended by Principle, PGAL and city staff is clean, clear and represents the ideal that residents envision as the image of the City of Bellaire. This ideal was apparent in the results of both the citizen survey and the focus group conducted by Principle. Even the flooded residents in the focus group stated their desire for an image that fully reflects what the Bellaire community means to them. In the wake of the devastation of Hurricane Harvey, this fresh design represents the safe but rebuilt, stronger community Bellaire has come to be.

The City has a wonderful opportunity to reveal this image to the public with the opening of the municipal facilities buildings in the fall of 2018. The chosen font and logo used on the side on the buildings and on the directional signage inside the buildings will set the standard and open the door to the infinite possibilities for the City of Bellaire to present that desired updated image.

Future implementation of the brand identity will be defined by the Brand Identity Team comprised of city staff (Cheryl Bright, Diane White, Michelle Jordan and Raquel Porras). Items such as stationary, website design, staff uniforms, vehicle stickers and more will be considered when creating the brand identity implementation plan. Funding for many



# City of Bellaire

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of these items has been included in the operational budget and those identified items would normally be replaced on a regular basis. However, a key missing element needed to begin implementation of an image that accurately represents the City of Bellaire is a functional tool kit. This kit is designed to provide much needed guidance and leave no wiggle room for staff to deviate from the design thus providing image consistency across all departments.

This tool kit, or Brand Standards Guide, provided by the Principle Group, should cost no more than \$10,000 and it is recommended to utilize a portion of the Beautification CIP fund to purchase this guide. The Brand Standards Guide summarizes all of the newly designed brand elements for the City of Bellaire and includes specific fonts, images and colors crucial for consistency. It is important to note that licenses for the usage of certain fonts and images must be purchased by the City of Bellaire. This is also included in the cost of the Brand Standards Guide.

It's a new year and the Bellaire community is well on its way to rebuilding. This is the perfect opportunity to present an image that more accurately reflects the values of Bellaire as a whole. Values that we have discovered through this process to be representative of Bellaire, a safe community rooted in its history, happy with the quality of life families have experienced living here. An impactful first step should be the reveal of this refreshed image in the new municipal facilities buildings.