



Request for City Council Committee Action from the Department of Communications

Date: February 6, 2015

To: Mayor Betsy Hodges, Chair Executive Committee

Referral to: Committee of the Whole

Subject: **Approve the Visual Identity and Graphic Standards policy, requiring use of City letterhead, business cards and envelopes and requiring adherence to City graphic standards for all City materials**

Recommendation: That the City Council approve the Visual Identity and Graphic Standards Policy. This policy requires the use of the refreshed letterhead, business cards and envelopes for all official City correspondences, superseding all previous Council actions related to stationery use/standards. It also requires that all City materials follow the City graphic standards to project a cohesive, professional City brand and save dollars on printing costs and staff time.

Previous Directives:

2007, approve process for rebranding Minneapolis City government at no cost
2006, Council staff direction on research and development of new City logo at no cost
1995, 1990, 1985, 1984, 1976, 1974, 1973, 1967, various Council actions related to graphic standards for letterhead, envelopes, and business cards

Department Information

Prepared by: Bridgette Bornstein, Communications Department, 612-673-3763

Approved by: _____

Spencer Cronk
City Coordinator

Presenters in Committee:

Matt Laible, Interim Communications Director
Bridgette Bornstein, Communications Deputy Director
Cheryl Boe, Communications Graphic Designer

Financial Impact

- Reduced business card printing costs for City enterprise

Supporting Information

The official City of Minneapolis letterhead, envelopes and business cards have been in their current form for many years. With times, technology and communications needs changing, the Communications Department has refreshed these tools and developed accompanying

graphic standards that will apply to all materials created by City staff for internal and external communications.

Development of the art and graphic standards was led by Communications in partnership with an enterprise staff team comprised of representatives from the Clerk's Office, IT, Human Resources and Finance. In addition, feedback on how to improve the City business tools was gathered from City staff through the City intranet (CityTalk) and employee newsletter (Minneapolis Matters). The entire identity package, including the research, new art and standards manual, was developed utilizing the expertise and time of current staff, particularly the graphic designer in the Communications Department. There were no additional costs incurred.

An organization the size of City of Minneapolis government must have graphic standards for all communication materials to project a professional, cohesive image. A managed look also helps the public trust that what they are receiving is truly coming from the City. Among the key elements in the graphic standards: requires use of the City logo, color palette and select fonts for all City materials and prohibits the creation and/or use of any other logo/image/graphic elements to represent City departments or department divisions; restricts use of the City seal; puts in place an approval process before City resources are expended to develop custom looks, logos or other art for City programs/initiatives; requires use of a standard signature block on emails.

A component of the identity package is an evolution of the City logo that modernizes the look and improves usability issues with the current logo. It is 4-color and prominently features the word "Minneapolis," accompanied by the tagline "City of Lakes" and a small, refreshed sailboat image on the top right edge. The more prominent use of the word "Minneapolis" means the logo will reproduce better at a range of sizes, allowing the word to be read clearly regardless of the scale. Eliminating the thin lines in the current version of the logo will also make it more suitable for use in digital environments.

Through extensive research of best practices on brand identity for large organizations and businesses, staff determined that an evolution of the current logo would be far more effective and appropriate than developing a new image. The public has known and recognized the existing logo for decades, and given that it is associated so strongly with our organization, refreshing the logo was determined to be the best course.

To help implement the new graphic standards, Communications has created templates for use by City staff including fliers, PowerPoints, reports, posters, etc. This should not only help staff follow the graphic standards but also save considerable staff time. Staff is urged to use templates wherever possible instead of attempting to "design from scratch" or pay for contract design work.

The new 4-color, 2-sided business cards will cost less to print because they will be created through digital printing instead of the more costly thermography (raised lettering) process the City uses on its current business cards.

Staff is encouraged to use up their remaining supply of business cards etc. before placing a new order. In order to keep costs to a minimum, logo art on current fleet vehicles, trash cans, ID badges, etc. would not be replaced immediately but rather will be phased in over time, as those items come up for regularly-scheduled replacement. The current City logo, which has been used for many decades, is likely to remain on some objects that would involve considerable cost to replace, such as manhole covers and signage.