



THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF COURTENAY

STAFF REPORT

To: Council

File No.: 0620-20/1470-20

From: Director of Corporate Services

Date: August 30, 2023

Subject: Courtenay Branding and Templates Refresh – Core Brand Standards

PURPOSE:

To seek Council approval of updated Courtenay Core Brand Standards to be applied to various print and electronic materials.

BACKGROUND:

As reported to Council in the April 26, 2023 staff report, the City of Courtenay's current branding guidelines and associated templates were developed in 2014, the first formal brand guidelines ever developed for the City. These guidelines and templates are limited and require both updating and the creation of new templates including but not limited to: social media templates, pamphlets, forms, business cards, email signatures, and more.

Some current brand templates involve complex formatting, resulting in the need for additional staff support from the Communications Division to other departments impacting the efficiency of material development and dissemination through increased production time. The current limited branding guidelines have also resulted in inconsistent interpretation and application of the brand onto the wide variety of reports and publications produced by the City. There is also some overlap in the brand colours between Courtenay and other Comox Valley local governments which may cause confusion about the distinct services of each local government in the region.

The City's official crest was designed decades ago. Its complexity, colour, and detail make the crest difficult to interpret in both print and digital form, particularly at small sizes. The "City of Courtenay" wordmark developed through the 2014 branding update to accompany the crest is prominently featured on the website banner, but does not visually connect with the official crest.

Internal and external printers report that reproducing the current City crest is challenging due to the complexity of its design, particularly when reproducing the crest on materials other than paper. For example, the City's in-house sign service at Public Works Services is unable to easily reproduce the City crest on various sign materials due to its unusually high level of detail. External printers, such as the supplier of the City's new automated curbside solid waste collection bins being distributed to households this fall, have had to customize the City crest to meet their specific printing needs for "hot stamping" the crest on the new bins. Results of these individual customizations may vary.

This project was identified as one of Council's Strategic Priorities in 2022.

DISCUSSION:

Trapeze has created a singular brand identity, as represented in the presented Core Brand Standards (see Attachment A), to clearly and consistently communicate City of Courtenay initiatives, events, programs, and updates.

City Crest

Trapeze Communications has prepared a simplified version of the City crest to ensure it can be used more broadly and consistently across the City’s many communications platforms and materials. The updated crest maintains essential elements included in the City’s original crest in a visually pleasing design, while resolving the challenges with design and reproduction in digital and print materials. In addition to simplifying the City crest for standard purposes, the question of the suitability of the City’s crest as a representative icon of the community has been included in the 2023 Resident Survey. Results of the survey will be presented to Council in September this year and will report out on the public’s perception of the alignment of the crest with the City’s current identity objectives.

Original City Crest



Simplified Crest



Accessibility

The updated brand identity is centred around accessibility, with consideration for those with visual impairments including reduced vision and/or colour blindness. These considerations include colour, contrast, spacing, and optimal readability through typography, including font and formatting choices.

<h2>Appeal to the Board of Variance</h2>	<p>We would like to make some recommendations around typography and font usage to help with consistency and readability.</p>
<p>1924 Sussex Drive File No: Bov00022</p>	<p>Accessibility requirements strongly suggest using upper/lower type in all situations. All upper case text results in words with a uniform, rectangular shape, making them harder to read.</p>
<p>The City of Courtenay Board of Variance is considering a resolution to issue a variance to the owner of the above noted property to reduce the minimum rear yard setback from 7.5 m to 5.1 m for a covered porch addition.</p>	<p>Adequate spacing between lines of text and between sections of text allows readers to scan for information more easily and makes the text itself more legible. All text should be left-aligned.</p>
<p>The subject property is shown in bold on the adjacent map.</p>	<p>Highlighting sections of important text should be done with one difference – ie. bold, or italic. The goal is to reduce the number of different text sizes and weights in layouts to create a simpler typographic heirarchy that looks cleaner and is more legible.</p>
<p>Get More Information View relevant documents at City Hall from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday, excluding holidays until the Board meeting.</p>	
<p>Written submissions must be received by the City no later than 4:30 pm, Tuesday, April 25, 2023 to ensure their availability to the Board of Variance members at the meeting.</p>	

Efficiency

Trapeze is preparing a more manageable and practical set of guidelines and templates for the City of Courtenay to work with going forward, using a singular brand identity for consistency and simplicity. Elements include updated typography, graphics, and colour palettes, and templates for a wide array of uses, including print advertisements, pamphlets, presentations, display boards, various handouts, and social media. The new branding will also be essential prior to updating the City of Courtenay website in the future.

Next Steps

Upon approval of the Core Brand Standards, City templates will be updated and rolled out in early fall, along with a graphic standards document to guide use of the new materials.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

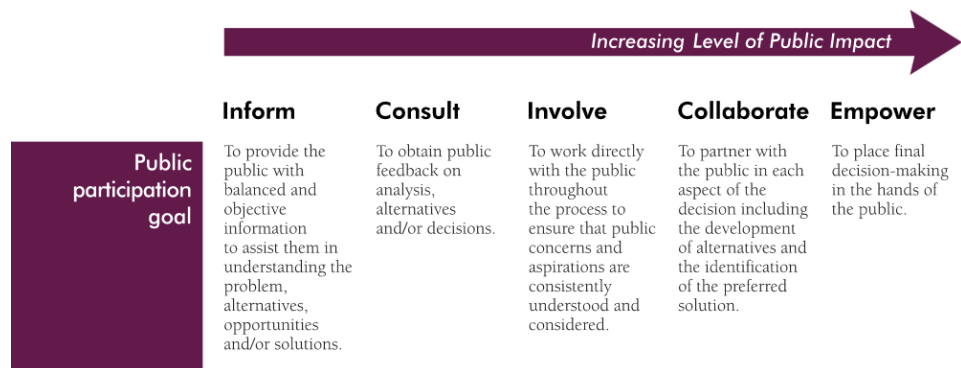
The total cost of the branding update is \$25,625, through the Corporate Services Department Communications Division. The budget for the branding update was \$25,000 which has been carried over from 2022. The remainder will be allocated from the Communications Division annual budget.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:

The Communications Division is coordinating the branding update project and liaising with the consultant, senior leadership, and other departments/divisions as needed. Additional internal consultation and guidance on using the updated branding and templates will occur prior to launching the updated branding. This brand update is one of the Communications Division’s key projects for 2023.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

Staff would inform the public based on the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation:



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OPTIONS:

1. THAT Council approve the updated Core Brand Standards.
2. THAT Council provide alternative direction to staff.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. City of Courtenay Visual Identity and Templates – Core Brand Standards

Prepared by: Anne Guillo, Manager of Communications
Reviewed by: Kate O'Connell, Director of Corporate Services
Concurrence: Geoff Garbutt, M.Pl., MCIP, RPP, City Manager (CAO)