

Mayor and Council

Council Chamber, First Floor of City
Hall
Bellaire, TX 77401-4411



Meeting: 06/19/17 05:00 PM
Department: Parks, Recreation and
Facilities
Category: Presentation
Department Head: Cheryl Bright
DOC ID: 2308 A

**SCHEDULED
INFORMATION ITEM (ID
2308)**

Item Title:

Presentation of phase one, brand audit report, of the City of Bellaire Brand Identity Project - Submitted by Cheryl Bright, Assistant Director of Parks, Recreation and Facilities; Presentation by Allyson Lack of Principle Design.

Background/Summary:

The purpose of this presentation is to report on the documentation phase of the brand identity project as experienced throughout Bellaire's built environment; online; existing surveys, plans, and studies. This information has been compiled through conversations with identified stakeholders, from a city-wide tour given by City of Bellaire, and various printed collateral and materials. Collecting these types of information will allow Principle Design to continue to examine how the different elements of the existing City of Bellaire brand are working or not working together and to determine where our system needs updating, rethinking, and re-designing.

Stakeholders interviewed for Step One:

- Bellaire Citizens
- Cultural Arts Board
- Citizens for a Beautiful Bellaire
- Bellaire Historical Society
- City Staff

Resources studied to inform Step One:

- Terrain Studios Urban Design Report
- Parks Master Plan
- Comprehensive Plan
- Municipal Facilities Project
- City of Bellaire promotional material, items, shirts, signs etc.
- Historical literature - Women's Club Cook Book, newspapers, etc.

Previous Council Action Summary:

In April 2017, Council accepted a proposal from the Design By Principle group to develop a cohesive brand identity for the City of Bellaire.

Fiscal Impact:

NA

City Attorney Review:

NA

Recommendation:

City Council to review and provide feedback as appropriate.

ATTACHMENTS:

- City of Bellaire Brand Audit (PDF)

PRINCIPLE

JUNE 19, 2017

DESIGN REPORT //

City of Bellaire | Brand Audit

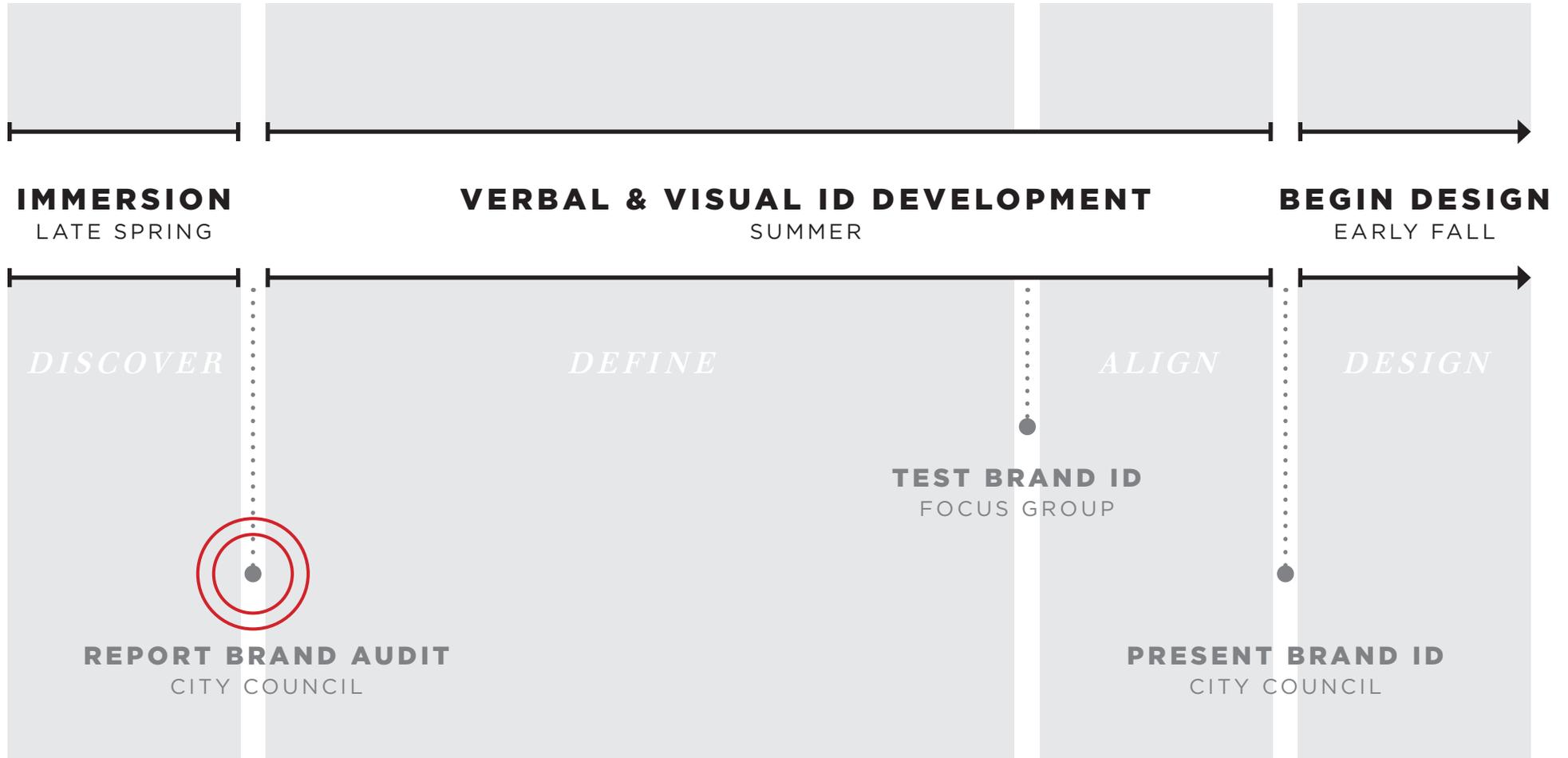
Why we're here:

TO DOCUMENT your brand as we've experienced it throughout Bellaire's built environment; online; existing surveys, plans, and studies; in conversation with city residents, staff, and stakeholders, and through various printed collateral + materials.

TO EXAMINE from both an up-close and macro perspective where and how the different elements of COB are working / not working together.

TO DETERMINE where the system needs updating, rethinking, and re-designing.

PROCESS TIMELINE



YOU ARE HERE

PRACTICAL IMPACT OF BRANDING

*A toolkit to inform visible,
functional design decisions:*

UPCOMING PROJECT EXAMPLES:

NEW MUNICIPAL FACILITIES
BRAND REPRESENTATION
(*INTERIOR, EXTERIOR*)

NEW PARK SIGNAGE SYSTEM
(*CITY-WIDE*)

CITY BRAND PRESENCE ACROSS
SPRUCE STREET UPGRADES

INTANGIBLE IMPACT OF BRANDING

*A visual/verbal articulation to
harness the “soul” of the city:*

“RALLY-THE-TROOPS” EXAMPLES:

INVOKES CIVIC PRIDE

INSPIRES INVOLVEMENT

ENHANCES EXPERIENCE,
SENSE OF PLACE

CLARIFIES
COB CULTURE

IT IS NEITHER OUR FOCUS nor intent nor field of specialty to propose solutions to or provide commentary on matters of city infrastructure, urban planning design, landscape architecture, etc.

That said, these topics were invariably discussed, as they are vital to people's perceptions of and pride in their city, and while we're not here to rebuild streets, rebuilding a brand requires a full sense of context and understanding.

This report includes a representative but not exhaustive compilation of our observations. Whether or not it appears in this document, everything we have absorbed will continue to be taken into consideration, particularly over the next few phases.

WHAT THIS AUDIT IS:

AND WHAT IT'S NOT:

A SUMMARY OF
INFORMED IMPRESSIONS

A CHECKPOINT

A MIRROR

AS OBJECTIVE AS POSSIBLE

OUR
CREATIVE
VISION

WHAT WE'VE HEARD

“We’re a small town in the hearts
and minds of our people.”



**TREE-LINED STREETS
IN POCKETS OF BELLAIRE**



**NEWLY BUILT, WELL-APPOINTED HOMES
CONTINUE TO BE THE TREND**



**ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC GREEN SPACES
FOR CITY PROGRAMMING**



FUTURE PLANS FOR REDESIGNED PUBLIC SPACES



**EXISTING AND NEW PUBLIC PARKS
CONTINUE TO DEVELOP**



**SMALL-TOWN SCENE: ANNUAL
JULY 4TH PARADE & FESTIVAL**

WHAT WE'VE HEARD

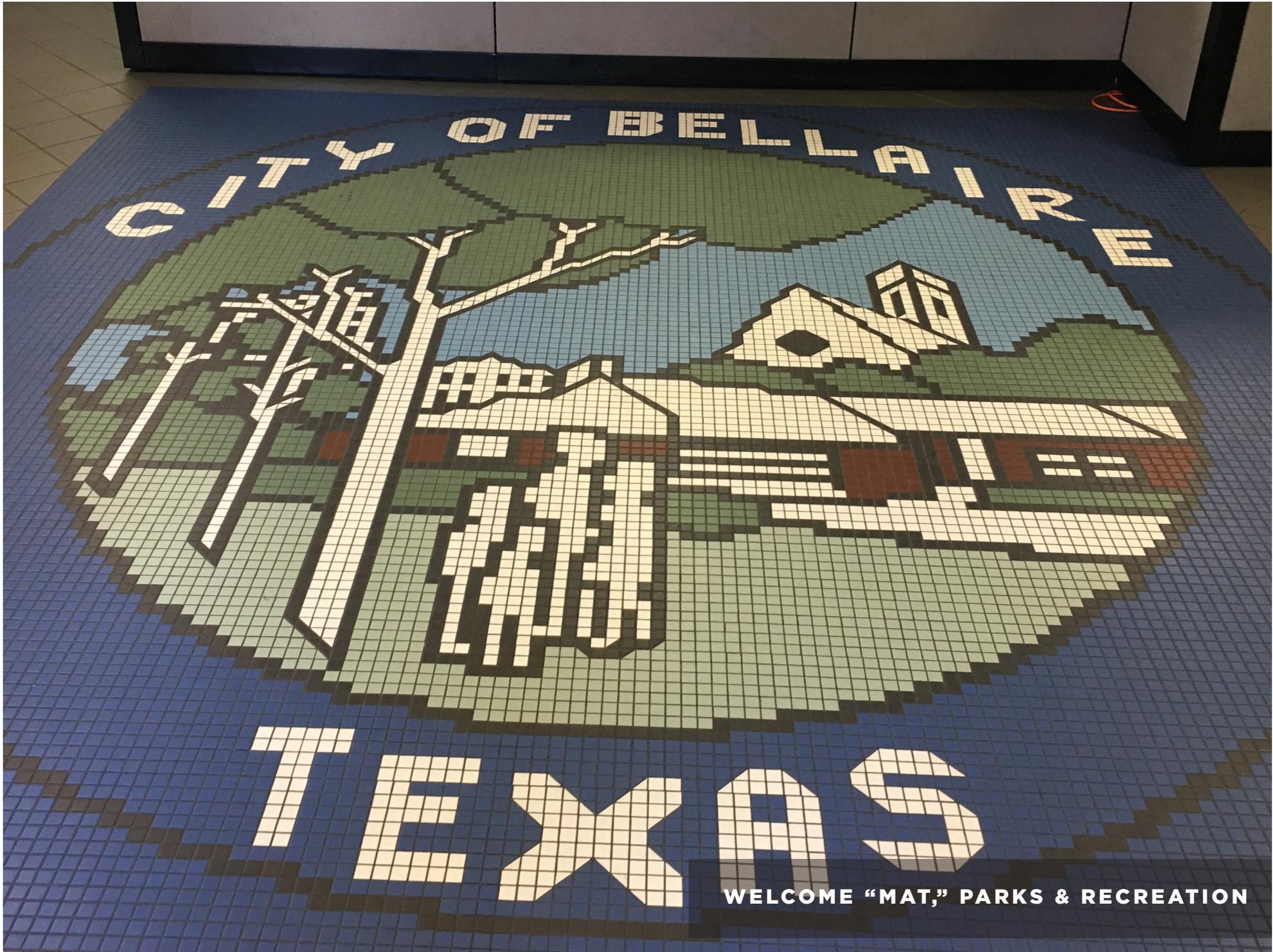
“Bellaire is losing its character,
losing its charm.”

WHAT WE'VE HEARD

“We’re being passed up.
Outclassed as a community.”

WHAT WE'VE HEARD

“There has to be a cohesiveness to the city if it's going to develop into something nice.”



WELCOME "MAT," PARKS & RECREATION



BANNERS ON BELLAIRE BOULEVARD



ENTRANCE TO BELLAIRE, BISSONNET



A CITY BISECTED BY A HIGHWAY

Current Brand Expressions

CITY OF BELLAIRE / SIGNAGE



CITY OF BELLAIRE / VEHICLE GRAPHICS



CITY OF BELLAIRE / VEHICLE GRAPHICS



NOTES:

- › No consistent font or use of materials / fabrication techniques.
- › Lacks systematic approach, e.g.:
 - “City of Bellaire vs. “Bellaire” — no naming convention
 - Title Case vs. ALL CAPS
 - Centered vs. left-aligned
 - Presence / placement of logo sporadic

CITY OF BELLAIRE / APPAREL



CITY OF BELLAIRE / APPAREL

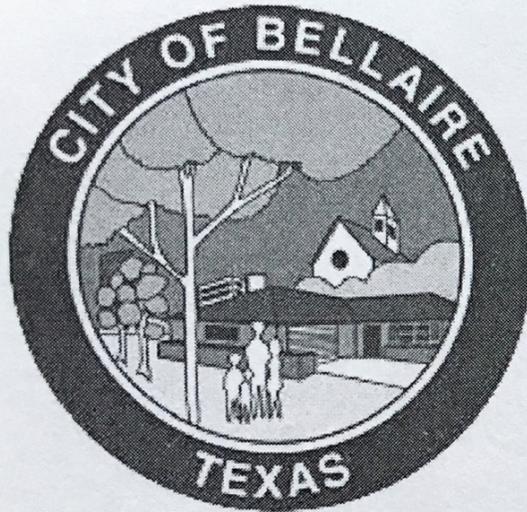


NOTES:

- › Departments creating their own lockups.
- › Colors and fonts chosen at random, no defined palette or standards to inform decisions.

WHAT WE'VE HEARD

“The focus is on the community...but we also want to improve the culture of the city organization as well. Be known as dependable, reliable, professional, consistent.”



The City of Bellaire

Utility Billing / Customer Service
PO Box 3946, Dept. 5150
Houston TX 77253-3946

Phone: (713) 662-8253 Fax: (713) 662-8264

Utility Bill Masthead

CITY OF

Bellaire

UTILITY BILLING

7008 South Rice Avenue • Bellaire, Texas 77401-4495

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Utility Bill Envelope

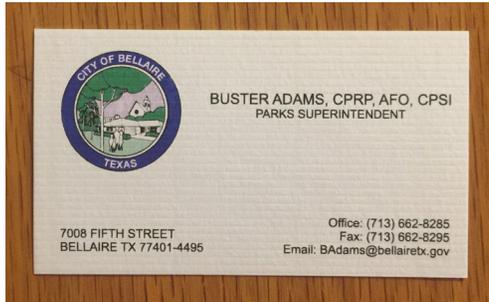
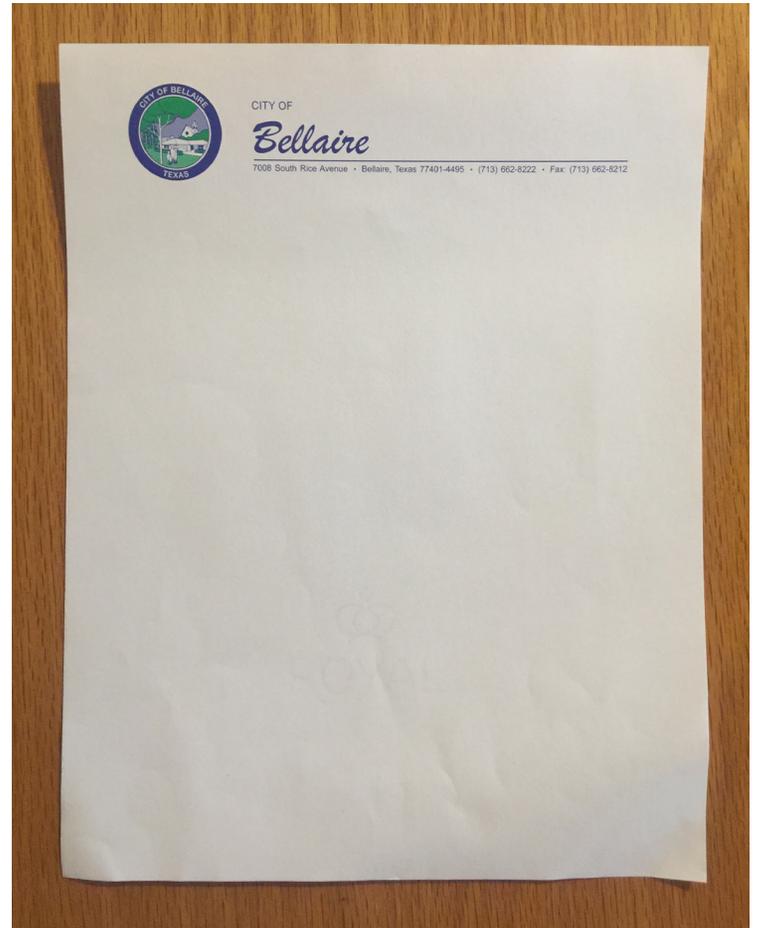


Utility Bill Masthead

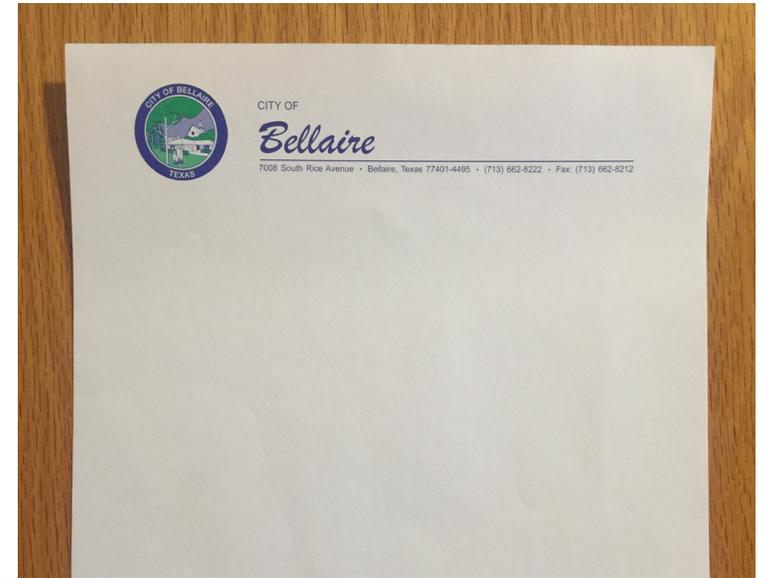
NOTES:

- › Logos don't match across the same piece of correspondence (between outer envelope and inner bill).
- › Irregular spacing, as though the "font" didn't load, creates poor impression.

CITY OF BELLAIRE / COMMUNICATIONS (STATIONERY)



CITY OF BELLAIRE / COMMUNICATIONS (STATIONERY)



NOTES:

- › One of your more consistent pieces, but still very generic.
- › Many city staff were unaware stationery exists — therefore create additional letterheads, envelopes, forms, etc. ad-hoc, which contributes to citywide lack of cohesion.

WHAT WE'VE HEARD

“Need to do a better job of promoting Bellaire....You have to make a real effort to go out and make contact, put yourself out there.”

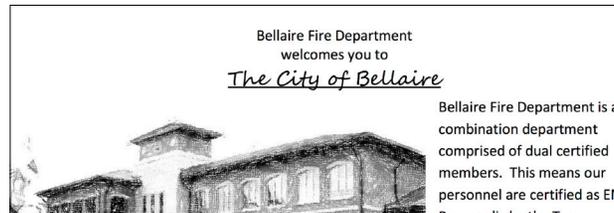
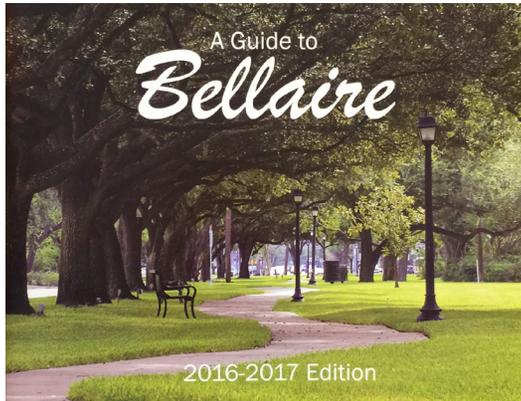
WHAT WE'VE HEARD

“People aren't sure how
to get involved.”

WHAT WE'VE HEARD

“We are missing a sense
of connectivity.”

CITY OF BELLAIRE / COMMUNICATIONS (EXTERNAL)



IN THIS ISSUE
B L L E S MOVING
MOSQUITO CONTROL
SUMMER READING
NEW DIRECTORS

A quarterly insight into the City of Bellaire services

The Boulevard

Volume 3 — Issue 2

BELLAIRE MOVING TO AUTOMATIC/DIGITAL METERS

The City of Bellaire currently has over 7,600 water meters within its utility system. Starting in April 2017, Bellaire will replace every water meter in the City. The new water meters are equipped with advanced metering infrastructure (AMI), which allows the City to automatically and electronically read meters. These readings will be uploaded to a customer portal which will provide real time information to each customer.

The City is working with Siemens and Pedal Valves (PVI) to replace each meter. The Siemens/PVI teams will be properly identified in trucks and uniforms with the SIEMENS/PVI Meter Team Logo (pictured). Residents will be notified by a door hanger approximately two weeks in advance of when their meter(s) will be replaced. The contractors will not have to come inside your home or in your back yard. If you have any special needs or considerations, please contact the City at 713-662-8170. We will be happy to accommodate you however we can.

With these new meters, residents will receive more accurate meter readings and access to their usage data. With this information, residents can get a clearer picture of their usage history, allowing them to better determine their water needs.

For more information on this project, please visit www.bellairetx.gov/meters, email pw@bellairetx.gov, or call 713-662-8170.

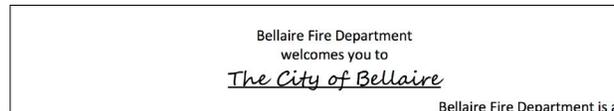
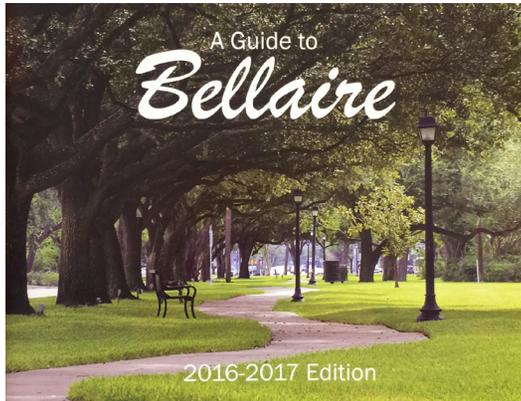
MAYOR'S CORNER >>>



It's springtime in Bellaire, which means it's time to come out and enjoy lots of great family-friendly events going on in the City. Our Party at the Pavilion series features live music, food and fun, the first Friday of every month at 7:00 pm in Bellaire Town Square. On April 1 at 9:00 am the Friends of the Bellaire Library will hold their Spring Used Book Sale, and at 7:00 pm PATRONS for Bellaire Parks will host their annual Wine & Tapas fundraiser benefiting Evergreen Park. This year's Trolley Run, a sanctioned 5K race and 1 mile fun run, is April 8 starting at 7:30 am, and will be followed by a post-race party that gets bigger and better every year.

We will also celebrate two very special, long-awaited community events this spring. Earth Day, April 22, is most fitting for the Grand Opening of Evelyn's Park, which we'll celebrate with a picnic, mini-farmers market, fitness and kids' activities and other festivities. And on May 9 we will at long last break ground on our new municipal facilities project at Bellaire Town Square.

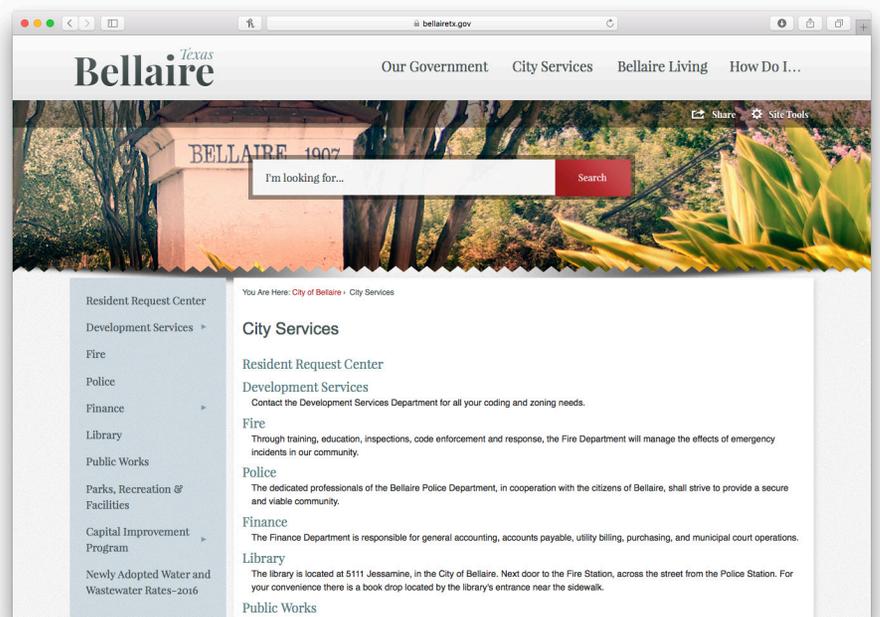
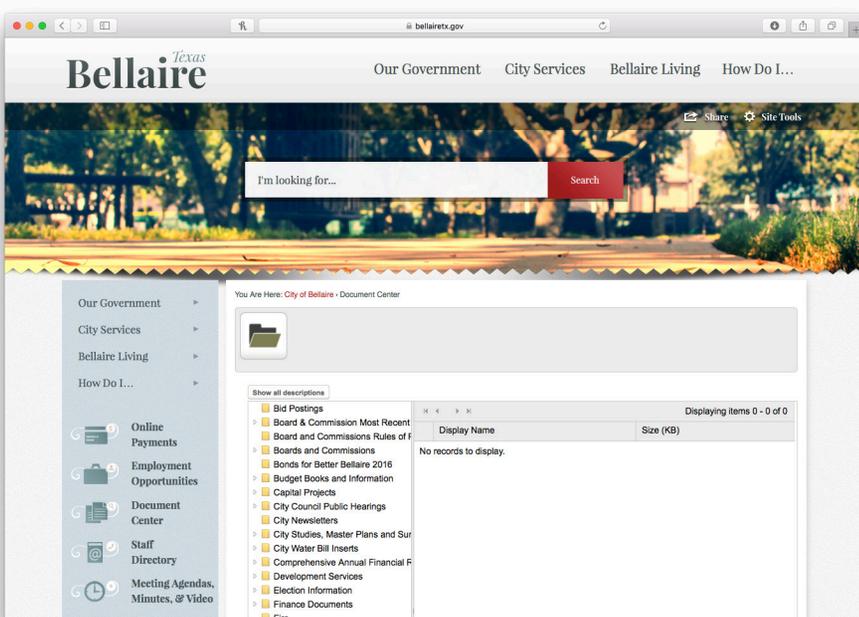
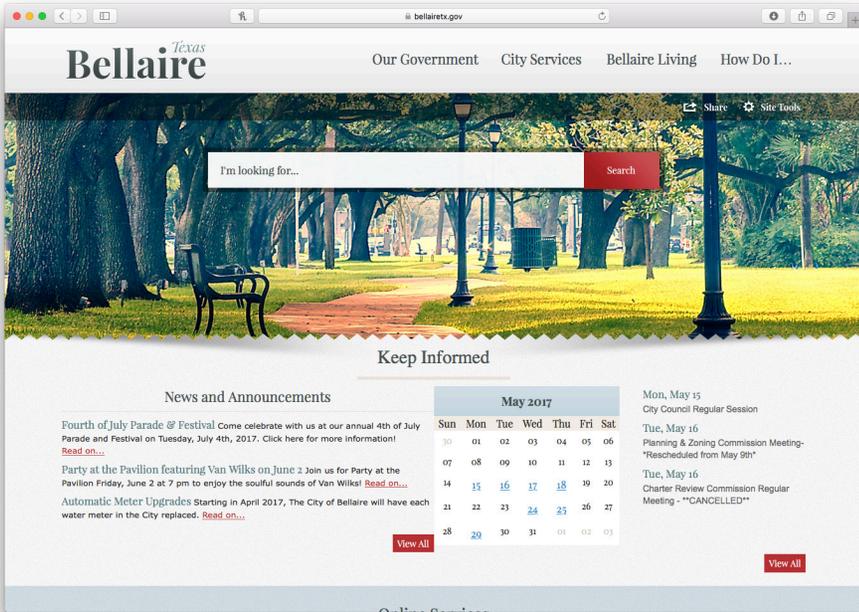




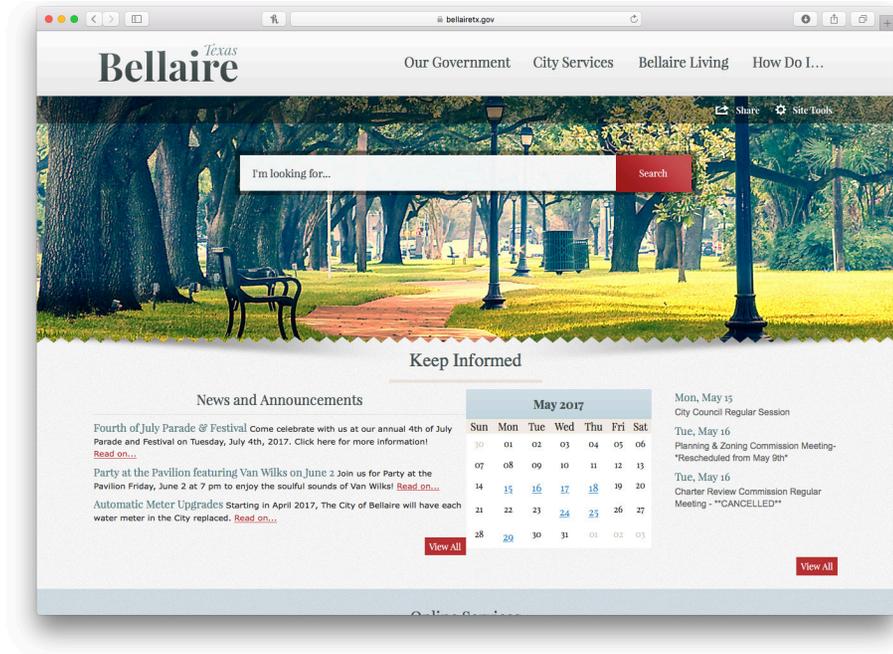
NOTES:

- › No visual cues link Bellaire mailers, magazines, banners, flyers, etc.
- › Materials inconsistently branded or unbranded completely — no voice that quickly announces, “Welcome to this event sponsored by the City of Bellaire.”

CITY OF BELLAIRE / WEBSITE



CITY OF BELLAIRE / WEBSITE

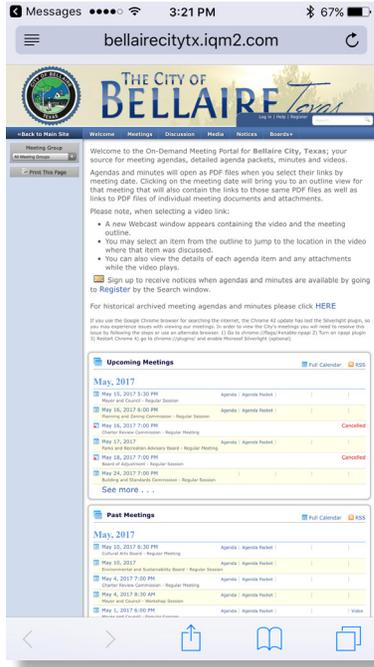
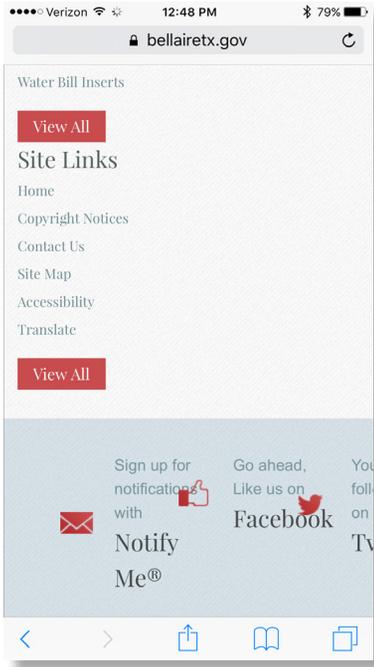
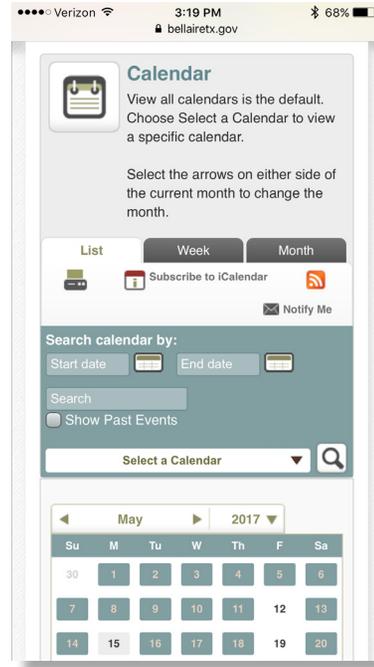
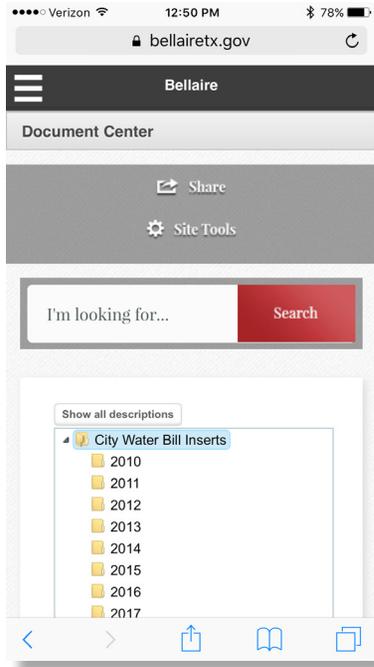
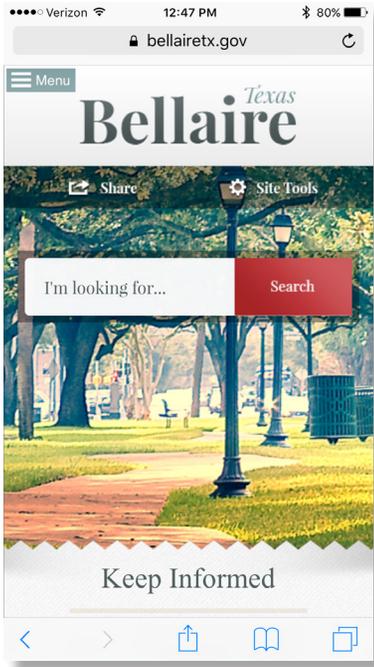


** Full-scale audit of website would necessitate separate analysis.*

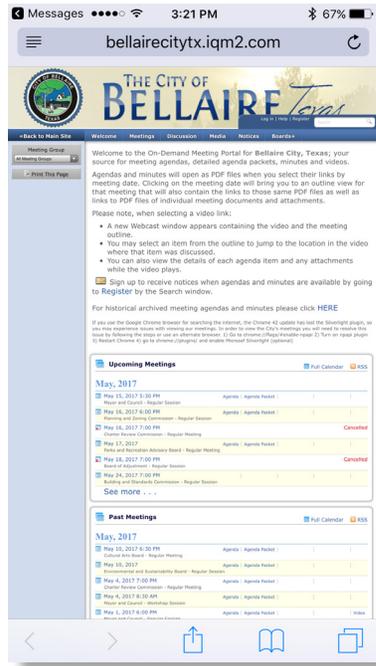
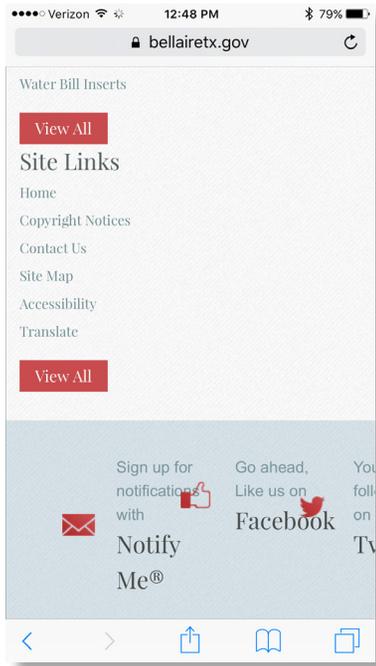
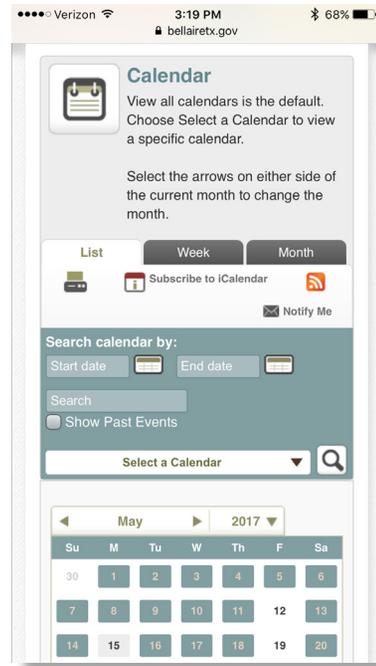
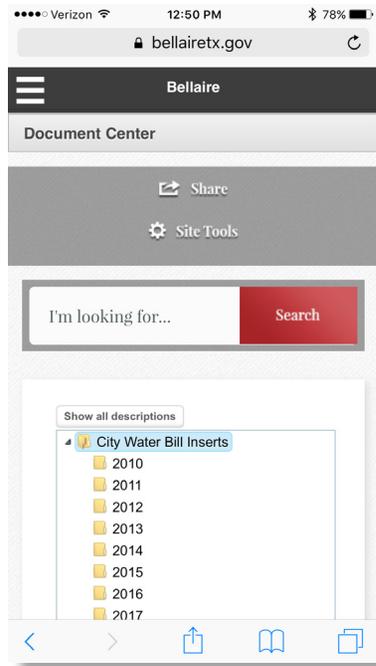
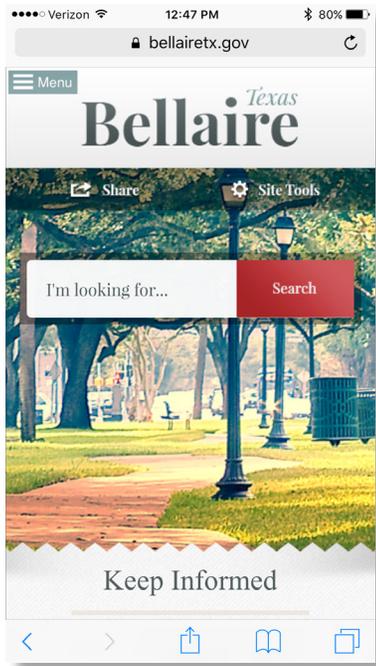
NOTES:

- › No sense of introduction or direction for first-time users.
- › Masthead identity, font, icons, textures, and lighter colors don't exist elsewhere in city materials.
- › Design of agenda calendar dated and different from other pages.
- › Dull; every page feels exactly the same.
- › In general, site needs "tightening," refreshing, rethinking.

CITY OF BELLAIRE / WEBSITE (MOBILE)



CITY OF BELLAIRE / WEBSITE (MOBILE)



NOTES:

› Website doesn't function well on mobile. Not fully responsive, so some pages revert to web view, with overlapping links and text.

› Difficult to navigate, e.g. each page buried under several layers of menu options.

WHAT WE'VE HEARD

“We’re a small town that’s
struggling to grow up.”

WHAT WE'VE HEARD

“We have an identity crisis.”

WHAT WE'VE HEARD

“We need guidelines.”

CITY OF BELLAIRE / PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

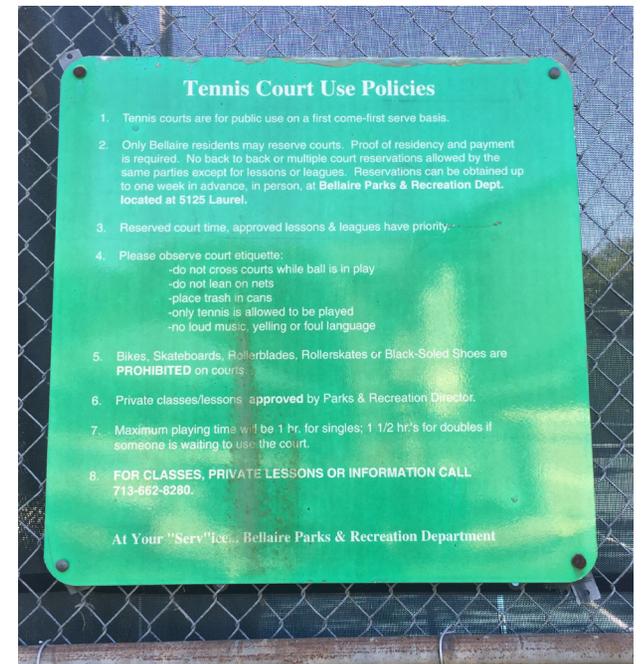
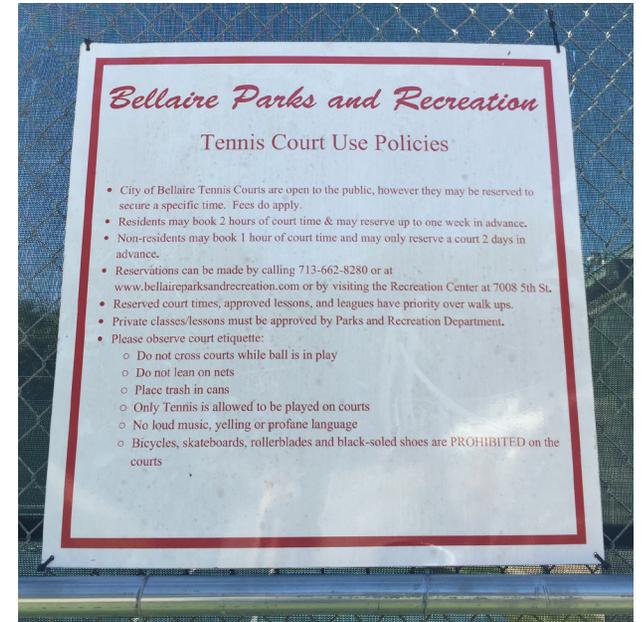
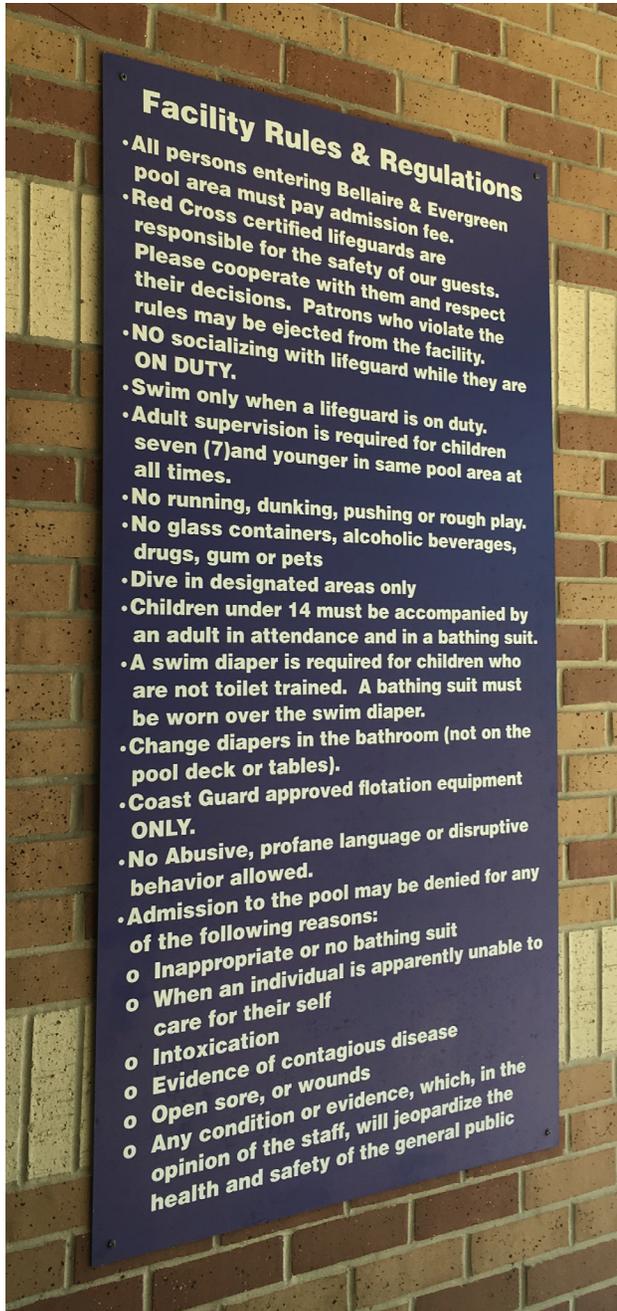


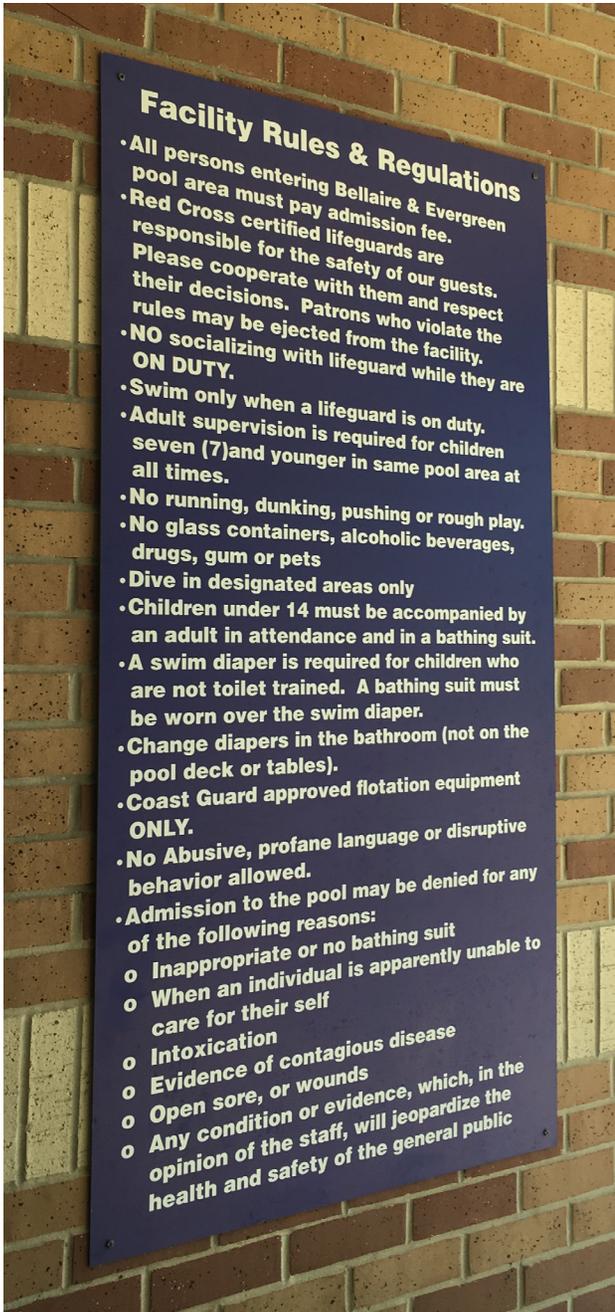
CITY OF BELLAIRE / PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS



NOTES:

- › Varying materials, style, and color lend an incohesive and unpolished effect to merchandise.
- › Are items for city staff or residents? “Parks, Recreation and Facilities Department” may not be necessary.
- › No clear association between Camp Paseo and City of Bellaire.





NOTES:

- › Size and style are inconsistent from piece to piece, place to place.
- › Establishing format will lend tidiness and uniformity to the city and make easier/ more pleasant for residents or guests to find their way around.

CITY OF BELLAIRE / SIGNAGE

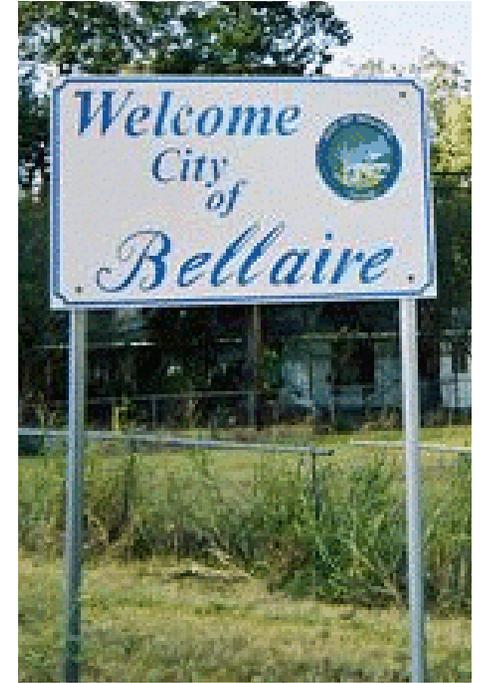




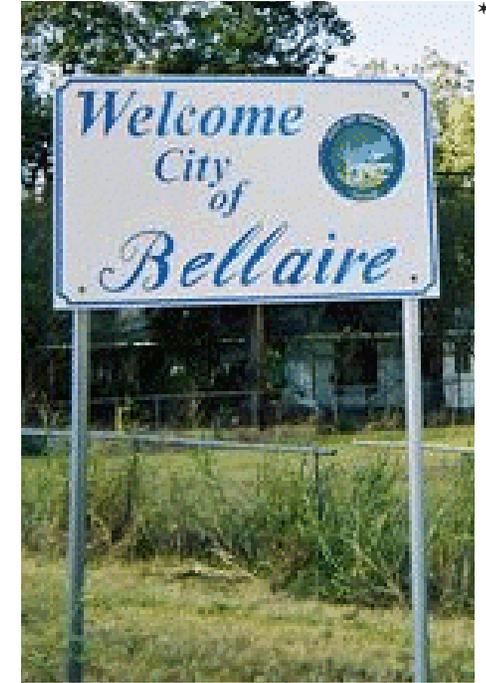
NOTES:

- › Park signage is consistent, but lettering style and material selection feel unrelated to any other COB touchpoints.
- › Worth considering material that weathers better, doesn't fade over time and ties back to the greater COB identity.

CITY OF BELLAIRE / SIGNAGE



CITY OF BELLAIRE / SIGNAGE



NOTES:

- › Few markers exist to welcome or reaffirm that you are in Bellaire.
- › Banner type feels small relative to speed of cars on busy boulevard.
- › Styling across all signage unlinked / unrelated to the current logo or to each other.

** Note: this sign no longer standing, but existed for many years*

CITY OF BELLAIRE / SIGNAGE

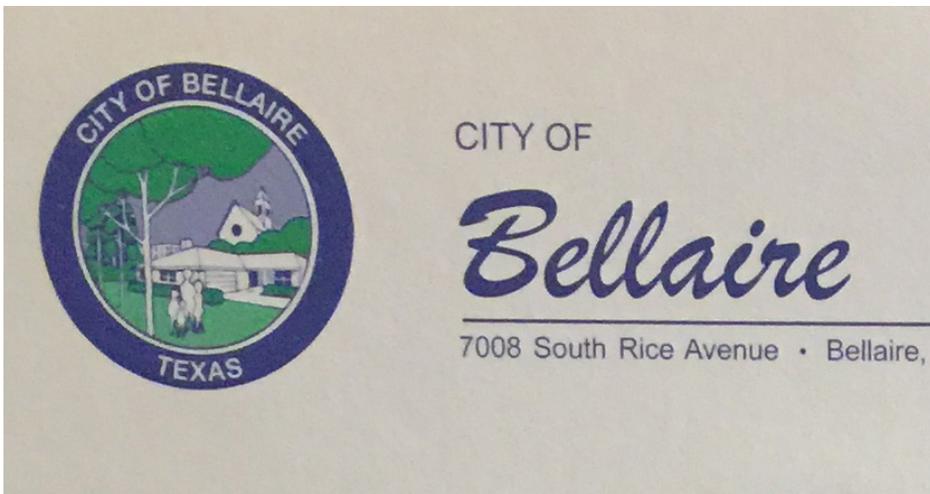




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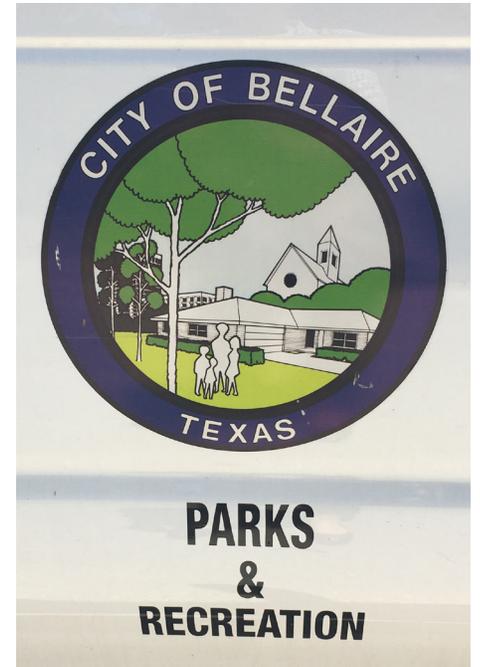
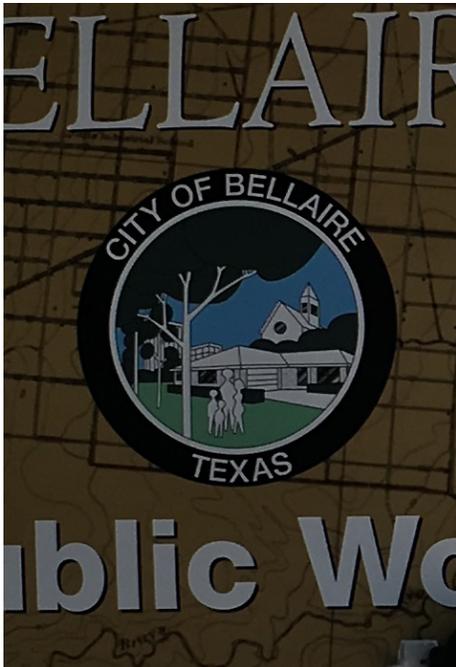
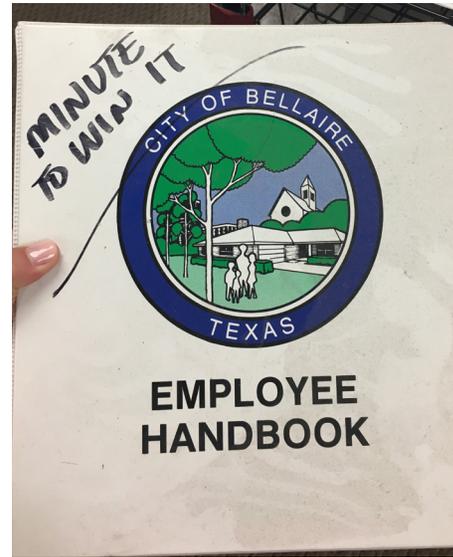
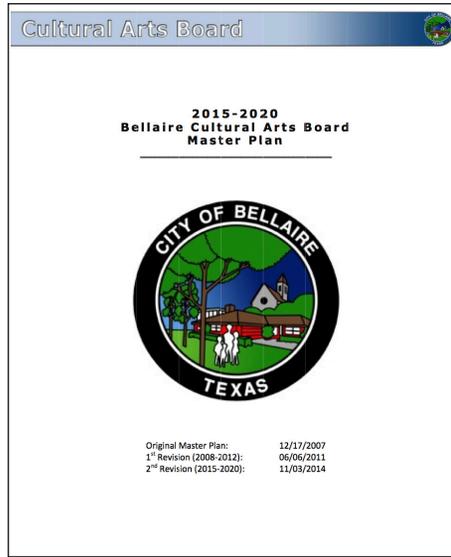
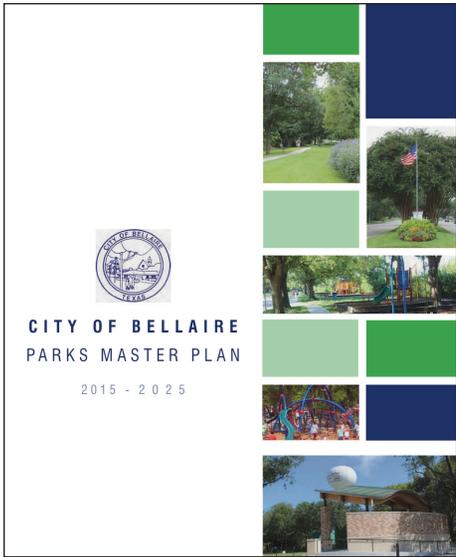
- › Red street signs are distinctive, but:
 - Nothing literally states “City of Bellaire” — meaningful only to those already “in the know.”
 - Unclear to most how color red links to city’s other branding.
 - Discrepancies between sign layouts (street suffixes; sign shape and white outline; arrows vs. fingers; Title Case vs. ALL-CAPS, etc.).

Bellaire Logo

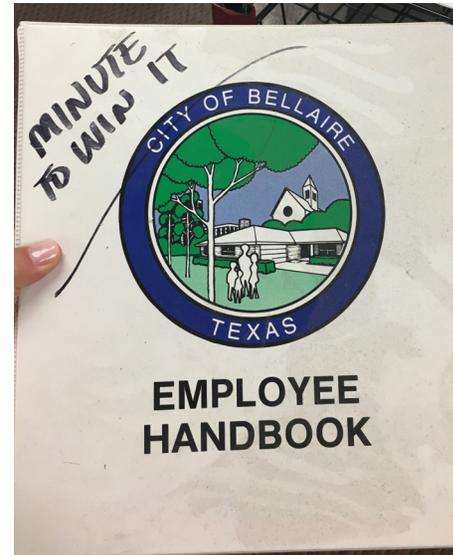
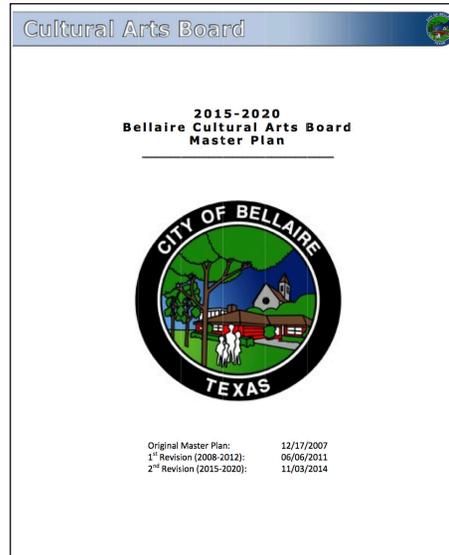
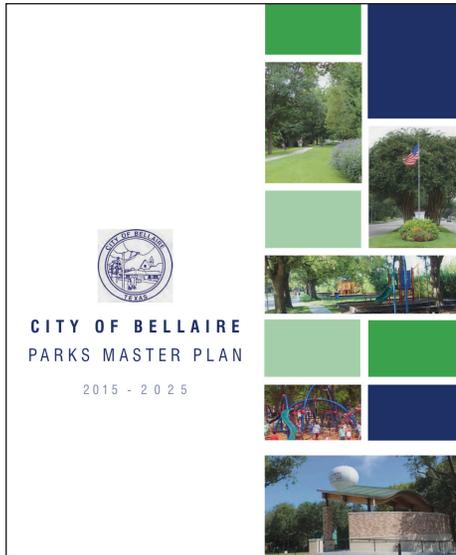


Texas
Bellaire

CITY OF BELLAIRE / LOGO



CITY OF BELLAIRE / LOGO



NOTES:

- › No uniform lockup between logo and color, typography, scale, alignment, and department names or titles.
- › Simplification and systemization will help reduce discrepancies.



*3-color logo
(more widespread usage)*



*5-color logo
(more rare usage)*

CITY OF BELLAIRE / LOGO



*1-color logo
(mixed usage)*

CITY OF BELLAIRE / LOGO



NOTES:

- › The logo looks different nearly every place we see it.
- › Even in one-color versions, the areas of “fill” (like outlines, the border, sky, and trees) differ across application.

WHAT WE'VE HEARD

“You can have oldness with character.
Or just oldness that means nothing.”

ON **COMPLEXITY**:

“It’s been a blob for so long that I don’t think we even pay attention to it anymore.”

“It’s really busy and from far away, hard to remember what’s going on in there.”

“Cluttered.”

“I think there can be a simplification but not a total and complete loss of history.”





ON **CONTENT**:

“Dated. Single-minded. Don’t think it represents the community that Bellaire is now. Bellaire in the past at least 10 years has changed... much more diverse, much more open, younger, fresher.”

“I don’t like it. Doesn’t do anything for me, doesn’t give me any emotion, don’t feel anything about it. I don’t pay attention to it.”

“It’s kind of blah. But I like the trees, homes... pretty reflective of Bellaire.”

“Why a blue and green logo but red street signs?”



ON PEOPLE:

“We are demographically changing in a way where having your 1950s, returning veteran, white Christian family doesn’t necessarily reflect who we are today or where we’re going.”

—
“Aliens.”

—
“Astronaut people.”

—
“Martians.”

—
“It’s making a family
‘this is what a family should be.’”

ON STRUCTURES:

“It’s sort of exclusive.
Not all churches look like that.”

“The purpose....was to try to emphasize the balance between family, home, church, and a very little office building in the background was the recognition that there had to be some degree of development.”

“The church isn’t representative of all the different types of religions here.”

“Basically, if you want to update the logo: the sky and steeple and the clouds and the trees you wouldn’t see anymore because you just make the house really big. And there you go.”





OUR TAKEAWAY:

People are drawn more to the small-town nature of the logo than the actual logo itself.

COMPOSITION

OVERLY INTRICATE, UNREFINED

Simplifying the artwork will prevent imagery from becoming blurred or “blobbed,” and help ensure the mark reproduces well at all sizes across various materials.

STYLING

GENERIC, UNINSPIRING

Thoughtfully selecting a palette and type unique to Bellaire will reduce widespread inconsistencies and dull, dated feel. Stark contrast of colors slightly reminiscent of sky before a storm.

SUBSTANCE

LITERAL, UNIMAGINATIVE

Exploring more interesting, creative ways to represent values and themes important to Bellaire can help freshen impressions and pique pride and interest. Can also alleviate concerns re: stereotyping.

WHAT WE'VE HEARD

“Something I think will be challenging....
to create something that pays homage
to the past with a vision into the future.
Something that will stick.”

WHAT WE'VE HEARD

“Bellaire’s problem is that it’s trapped
in our 1950s mindset.”

Bellaire is a
CITY OF HOMES.

RECURRENT DESCRIPTOR
1946 MAYOR

“It’s just what we’ve heard.”

“I don’t know what that means.”

“It’s been a great thing because
we’ve seen appreciative values.”

“The ‘City of Homes’
is too old — needs to speak
to the act of being here.”

Bellaire is a
CITY OF HOMES.

RECURRENT DESCRIPTOR
1946 MAYOR

“It’s confining, as though the city could never be anything else. Doesn’t speak to anything greater. Seems very flat.”

“‘City of Homes’ is used as a weapon to dispute what the Council is doing.”

“It’s a powerful thing. It creates a sense of warmth, of community, of safety, of security. But it is also narrow-minded. It stifles... everything that this place has a potential for.”

“I don’t know that it captures all facets of what we’re trying to do.”

WHAT WE'VE HEARD

“The city has struggled with this set of subjects for a long, long time....but it seems pretty evident to me that the missing piece, the very fundamentally important piece that’s *always* been missing, is: We don’t have consensus on what it is we want to look like.”

WHAT WE'VE HEARD

“We should be a place for residents
to dwell, not simply reside.”

WHAT WE'VE HEARD

“I feel a great sense of sentimentality and connection to my hometown. I want my kids to have that here.”

WHAT WE'VE HEARD

“We need to set Bellaire apart as being a special city to live in.”

Summary

Strengths

Both residents and representatives of Bellaire care genuinely and passionately about their city. There is not just consensus around the need for a brand shift, but a real thirst for a well-articulated identity that helps tie the city together.

Beautiful in many ways already, Bellaire's central location, small-town feel and reputation for good schools and safety will continue to attract educated and affluent families willing to support meaningful and appropriate progress. While the lifestyles here have changed between prairie- and present-day, the values have not. People who move to Bellaire aren't seeking hollow trends, they're seeking the true community they trust Bellaire can offer. The City is appealing to a generally captive, receptive and invested audience: people truly believe in Bellaire and its potential.

Weaknesses

Bellaire as a brand lacks depth, character, cohesion and refinement. The city's sense of place—and sense of self—suffers from disjointed design elements, from inconsistent color and typography to generally toneless touchpoints, like the city's signage scheme, website and overall narrative (or lack thereof).

A cluttered logo and de facto tagline feel somewhat myopic, with limited capacity to flourish within a flexible brand system or within the cultural expectations of an evolving community. There is a stark disconnect between the generic, dated commercial/ municipal buildings and materials we encountered and the sophisticated texture of striking homes, verdant grounds and an aesthetically-attuned population. Bellaire's sparkle is selective and, as such, less effective.

Opportunities

A buzz is in the air. With beautification top of mind and exciting redevelopments underway (town square, schools, Spruce St., etc.), conditions are ripe to reimagine Bellaire: to distill and clearly define its vision for itself; to arm the city with assets that begin to establish its signature look and feel—and even more than that—to reveal a story that’s always been there.

Bellaire has a longer and richer history than many of its neighbors, and the upcoming centennial of its incorporation offers a timely occasion to celebrate the city’s heritage as one particular way to reinforce civic pride and bring people together. Stronger communication in general will build stronger community. People often struggle to point to Bellaire as anything much more than a pragmatic decision. Developing a framework that helps overtly and implicitly communicate “Why Bellaire?” may be the inspiration the city needs to spruce its self-image.

Threats / Challenges

As Bellaire has transitioned from an agrarian to a blue collar to an increasingly upper-middle class community, each generation harbors a certain nostalgia for “the way things were.” It is as critical to pay homage to the city’s past as it is to honor the city’s progression.

Identifying—and uniquely rendering—a symbol or set of symbols that can serve as a longstanding bridge between the Then / Today / and Tomorrow of Bellaire will require creativity. Evoking Bellaire’s welcoming charm and small-town sentiment without pigeonholing the city as one-dimensional will require an open mind. Moving Bellaire forward will require constant collaboration. **Our purpose is not to erase, but to enhance the city’s character.** When that sweet spot becomes evident, Bellaire will have a brand that can be more than applied—it can be *absorbed*—into the fabric of the city. And everyone can take ownership.

Next Steps: Define, Align, Design

Over the new few months, we will be:

1. Creating your **VERBAL IDENTITY** — a messaging foundation that articulates who you are, what you stand for, why you matter, and where you're going.
.....
2. Understanding your **BRAND ARCHITECTURE** — the basic organization of your departments, auxiliary groups, programs, events, etc. that will help us build a clear and meaningful system.
.....
3. Designing your **VISUAL IDENTITY** — a unique logo for the City of Bellaire that visually reinforces your messaging, and demos how other entities will work alongside this identity or nest under it.
.....
4. Defining your **KIT OF PARTS** — typography, tone of voice, color palette, graphic or pictorial treatments, photography style, etc. that will embody your unique personality, help build brand recognition across all touchpoints, and serve as a go-to guide for design decisions.

Thank you for your time!