



# **CITY OF FERNDALE STYLE GUIDE**

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

- 1. Purpose and Introduction**
- 2. City Logos**
- 3. Email Communications**
- 4. Staff Reports**
- 5. City Correspondence**
- 6. Digital Communications**
- 7. Power Point Presentations**

## 1. PURPOSE AND INTRODUCTION

This handbook is intended to provide City staff with information and templates to utilize when creating city correspondence. Varied and inconsistent templates, fonts, and styles may give the appearance of shoddy, rushed, or outdated work that could lessen the impact of the content of the message. Having a consistent style requirement or method assures that all correspondence between the City and other agencies and the public is consistent and professional, and provides a unified identity, or “brand.”

The guidelines provided in this handbook create a framework where all City departments can present themselves to the community with a unified look, while still allowing some individuality among the different departments.

## 2. CITY LOGOS



The City of Ferndale has established graphic design standards to ensure the consistent use of logos, colors, fonts, and other branding elements.

Whenever possible, the City of Ferndale logo should be displayed on all products produced by the City of Ferndale. This includes but is not limited to newsletters, reports, publications, staff reports, business cards, letters, website materials and more.

When applying the City or Police Department logo to a document, please consider that it is a defacto endorsement of that document.

The key graphic branding element is the city’s official logo, which contains the city’s color scheme. It can be made larger or smaller but should not be distorted or altered without approval

The City logo can be rendered in Ferndale Green (Hex #00863d), black, or white.

The Police Department has a separate logo, which should be used for all police correspondence and forms. It should be rendered in full greyscale or black and white.

Alternative versions of the logo, for specific occasions or recognizing holidays, can be used with approval from the City Administrator.

Digital copies of all approved logos can be found at [www.cityofferndale.org/styleguide](http://www.cityofferndale.org/styleguide)

### 3. EMAIL COMMUNICATIONS

Email is a main method of City communication. For consistency and to keep residents, vendors, and co-workers from having to search for contact information, the following information should be included in all email signatures. This applies to both sending and replying to emails.

While email communication can be less formal than a staff report or publication, it is essential that all City employees remember that their emails are publicly disclosable and to uphold standards of professionalism in all their interactions over email.

When drafting an email about or to a person that has not yet been met in-person, consider using gender neutral pronouns rather than assuming the gender based on the name. For instance, “After checking with the concerned constituent online, I will follow up with **them** about a future meeting in person.”

**Standards:** Emails should be composed in Calibri or Aptos font at size 11, which is the default for almost all Outlook email. Other fonts are fine provided they are easy to read and not distracting from the subject material.

**Email Signature:** To update your email signature, search “signature” in the Outlook search bar and then click “signatures” under actions. From there, you can edit your email signature.

- First and last name, followed by any professional designation
- Title/Organization
- Preferred Pronouns (optional)
- Phone number/Website address
- Social Media links (optional)

Public disclosure notification is required on all City email communications, i.e. ***Please note that all emails to or from me are considered public records and are subject to public records requests or NOTE: My e-mails are subject to public disclosure.***

Email signature line should NOT include religious or inspirational quotations of any kind. Exception: Departmental motto, i.e. “Stronger Community Together” for the Police Department.

**Example:**

**John Smith, AICP**

*Community Development Director*

City of Ferndale

Male Pronouns (He/Him) **\*\* Optional\*\***

Phone: (360) 123-4567 - [www.cityofferndale.org](http://www.cityofferndale.org)

 [Facebook](#) |  [Twitter](#) **\*\*Optional\*\***

**NOTE: My e-mails are subject to public disclosure**

#### 4. STAFF REPORTS/ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS

Staff reports are the main tool for communicating policy issues to the City Council and a key resource for engaged members of the public to better understand city operations.

**General guidelines for staff reports and other city correspondence include:**

- Words like mayor, city council, city and departments (i.e. public works) are always lowercase when not used with “Ferndale.” i.e. “The mayor signed the proclamation.” OR “Mayor Hansen signed the proclamation.)
- Spell out whole numbers below 10 (one, six, nine). Use numerals for 10 and above (12, 25, 347.)
- In numbers more than one million (unless the exact amount is essential) round off to one decimal point. Write out “million.” (i.e., “The city received a grant for \$6.5 million.)
- “email” not “e-mail”
- a.m. and p.m. should be written in lower case with periods between the letters. (i.e. “8:00 a.m.” not “8 AM”) Exception: The Police Department uses military time (i.e. 0800 instead of 8:00 a.m.)
- Use bullet points when writing a list
- Use only one space after a period at the end of a sentence
- Remember to consider both the council and the public as the audience for all staff reports.
- Use a standard font that does not detract from your report (recommended: Arial, Calibri, Times New Roman. Not recommended: Papyrus, Comic Sans, Impact)
- Effective writing includes using the active voice. Example:

<b>Active Voice:</b>	<b>Passive Voice:</b>
Monkeys adore bananas.	Bananas are adored by monkeys.
The cashier counted the money.	The money was counted by the cashier.
The dog chased the squirrel.	The squirrel was chased by the dog.

**Standards:** All staff reports should include an approved city logo. Headings should be in all caps and bolded. Templates are available at [www.cityofferndale.org/styleguide](http://www.cityofferndale.org/styleguide)

The heading of all staff reports should include:

- **Subject**
- **Date** of meeting during which the staff report is being presented
- **From** i.e. who wrote the staff report
- **Presentation by** i.e. who will be presenting the report to Council

The body of all staff reports should include:

- **Recommendations** (i.e., “Council approval of...”) which should be no more than a paragraph.
- **Background** which should be a neutral description of the subject matter
- **Analysis** which is where staff can advocate for the recommended course of action
- **Alternatives Considered:** what other options were evaluated, and why were other options not recommended.
- **Fiscal Review** – if not relevant, put N/A rather than removing the section
- **Legal Review** – if not relevant, put N/A rather than removing the section
- **Equity**– this section specifically allows for examining how this may impact Ferndale’s most vulnerable, underserved populations or those who have been historically disenfranchised or excluded from the legislative process. This section may also include a general analysis related to fairness. For example, how are a proposal’s impacts distributed?
- **Conclusion** – final thoughts on the issue and the best place for advocacy for the administration’s position.

## 5. CITY CORRESPONDENCE

All formal city correspondence not in email format, such as printed letters should be on City letterhead.

**Standards:** The official font for city correspondence is Arial 12 pt. All department letterheads should contain the following:

- City or departmental logo
- Department name
- Address
- Phone & fax number(s)
- Website address

Approved letterhead templates can be found at [www.cityofferndale.org/styleguide](http://www.cityofferndale.org/styleguide)

## 6. DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS

**City Website:** The city's website is [www.cityofferndale.org](http://www.cityofferndale.org) and is administered primarily by the Communications Officer. All departments have contributors who have been trained on posting and editing content. If a department needs additional staff trained as a website contributor, contact the Communications Officer. Individual departments are responsible for reviewing material for accuracy and identifying material that has become out-of-date.

Material for the website should be concise, written in accessible language with limited jargon and, where appropriate, include links to further documentation for those interested in a deeper understanding of the material.

**Social Media:** The city maintains a strong presence on social media and responds to inquiries posted on social media. Departments will assist the Communications Officer in drafting responses to these inquiries. Information that should be posted to social media should be sent to the Communications Officer, who will schedule the posts and maintains the authority to shorten, rewrite, or change graphics as needed.

In consultation with the Communications Officer, police personnel schedule and monitor all posts related to law enforcement in accordance with the Police Department's Social Media Policy.

Employees are strongly discouraged from commenting from their personal account on City business, as it could be disclosable by public records request or create conflicting answers to the same inquiry.

## 7. POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS

Many public presentations necessitate the use of a PowerPoint presentation. An effective PowerPoint presentation uses slides to enhance the discussion, not as a replacement for public speaking. Here are some recommendations for building a presentation:

- All text should be inset one inch from the edges of the slide to ensure the information is not cut off on the screen/monitor.
- Do not use thin fonts such as Times New Roman which may be less visible from a distance away.
- Suggested fonts: Arial, Calibri, Helvetica, Palatino, Lucida Sans, or Tahoma.
- Avoid mixing font styles in the same visual.
- Minimum font size for legibility is 20 pt. 24 – 32 pt. is optimal.

- A mix of upper-case and lower-case lettering is easier to read than all upper-case.
- Contrast background with text to make the presentation more legible. (i.e. dark background with white or light text or light background with dark text). Presentations may appear differently when projected than when viewed on a computer screen
- Stick with a consistent visual theme with 2-3 colors for backgrounds, headings, etc.
- Less words are better – try to avoid reading your presentation. Use pictures and graphics to help articulate concepts rather than words to outline your thoughts.

**Standards:** The first page of all power point presentations must contain the following:

- Title
- Approved city logo
- Date of presentation
- Audience (i.e. City Council, City Staff, etc.)  
Presenter(s)