GREENSBORO

Communications Style Guide

Last Updated by Public Affairs on March 31, 2011

City of Greensboro Communications Standards Manual

PowerPoint

Style and Usage Standards

**This guide will be updated regularly on CityNet.
When major changes are made, new copies will be e-mailed to all staff.**

Introduction

The *City of Greensboro's Communications Style Guide* is intended to enhance the identity and professional image of the City by presenting a uniform, consistent look for all City communications. The guide provides clear and easy-to-use standards for printed pieces and the City's website, with details about proper use of the City seal and logo; formats for news releases, memos, faxes, and e-mails; and guidelines for punctuation, capitalization, spelling, hyphenation, and more. The online version of the guide will address new styles and graphics issues as they emerge. Following a consistent style gives City publications credibility, reliability and identity.

Who needs this guide?
The guide is for all City of Greensboro employees who produce written materials for internal and public use, as well as those who contribute to the City of Greensboro website.

Why is style important?
Content is *what* is written; style is *how* that content is written. Style has a major impact on whether people perceive content as authoritative, reliable, and believable. Keep in mind these general style principles:
- Write simply, directly and accurately.
- Focus on the needs of the audience and anticipate how it will receive the information.
- Establish a logical order.
- Avoid long sentences and long paragraphs; vary sentence and paragraph length.
- Use active voice whenever possible.
- Use adjectives and adverbs sparingly.
- Use headlines, summaries and bullet points.
- Avoid jargon.
- Above all, be consistent.

Communications Goals

All City employees have access to organizational information.

All employees have the information they need to perform their jobs in a safe, effective and efficient manner.

City communications are inclusive and reflective of the diversity of the organization.

Information is communicated in an accurate, consistent and timely manner.

Communications build cohesiveness and teamwork for the organization.

Communications are done in a cost-effective manner.

Communications reflect the City's four core values--- honesty, integrity, stewardship, and respect.

All communications follow the City of Greensboro's Style Guide.

Note from the City Manager's Office

When submitting documents for review to the City Manager's Office, in the top right corner include the date you submit the document and the date of any revisions to it, as well as the name or initials of the preparer. This helps the manager's office track changes to documents.

Using the City Logo

The design of the City logo represents the progress and growth our city has experienced over the years. The gracefully tapering branch, sprouting an oak leaf, forms the G in Greensboro's logo and suggests the steady growth and vitality that our City enjoys. The G is surrounded by a green field, but is not confined by it as it expands beyond its borders. The oak traditionally symbolizes wisdom, strength and durability for a modern, forward-looking city rooted in tradition and dignity.

- The logo should be reproduced in the official Pantone (PMS) color 349 or in a standard black and white format.

City Logo, Pantone (PMS) 349	
City Logo, Black	

- The logo includes both the "leafy G" and the word "GREENSBORO" underneath in the font Avant Garde. These elements are to be used together in most instances. The "G" may be used without the word "Greensboro" underneath if the document also contains the words "City of Greensboro."
- The logo is to appear on all printed materials representing the City, including stationery, business cards, brochures, banners, non-legal documents, specialty items, vehicles, signage, and external communication materials.
- Except as approved by the City Manager for special promotions or on the basis of business necessity, no logos or trademarks other than the approved City logo should be used on/for any City purpose or property.
- The logo should not be re-proportioned or modified in any way, other than making it proportionally larger or smaller.
- Do not reproduce the logo from a photocopy or color scan, and do not redraw it digitally. To access the correct logo, go to **http://citynet/News/Logos%20%20City%20and%20Departmental/Forms/AllItems.aspx** and look under Communications or contact Graphic Services or Public Affairs.

- Ink colors are affected by many variables, including printing method, paper color, texture, and conditioning. The City of Greensboro's objective is to achieve a very close color match to the official color palette within reason.
- The City logo is copyrighted and cannot be used by non-City organizations or businesses without permission. Non-City organizations or businesses wishing to use the City logo must provide a written statement of the intended use of the logo and must agree to use the logo only for the specified purpose.
- Variations of any type from the approved form of the logo will tend to dilute the effectiveness of the overall logo.

Using the City Seal

The City seal is authorized by Section 1.01 of the City Charter; it is to be affixed to official City documents, such as contracts, proclamations and letterhead for the Mayor and City Council. The seal can also be used on bills, parking notices/tickets, water/sewer notices, nuisance abatement notices, demolition notices, lien notices, and other legal documents. With the City's permission, it may also be used with projects co-sponsored by the City. For permission to use the seal, contact Jim Collins, Public Affairs, at 373-2105 or **jim.collins@greensboro-nc.gov**. The seal should be printed in either Pantone (PMS) 349 Green or in Black.

City Seal, Pantone (PMS) 349	
City Seal, Black	

Printing Specifications

General Guidelines

- The City logo is to appear on all internal and external publications representing the City, including stationery, business cards, bills, non-legal documents, newsletters, brochures, banners, reports, memos, and signs.
- All public communication materials should include an address, telephone number, fax number, and Web address.
- As a general rule, use paper made with recycled content for all internal publications. Make double-sided copies when possible.
- Use only one space after a period or other punctuation at the end of a sentence.
- All publications will strive to demonstrate the diversity represented by the residents of Greensboro.
- All artwork created by City staff members is the property of the City of Greensboro.
- When saving letter, memo, press release, and fax templates as a pdf, save no lower than 200 dpi. If you save any lower than that, the City's logo will appear blurry.

Business Letters

The format of a business letter is as follows:
- Flush left text, Times New Roman, 12 point
- Top margin should be 2 inches
- Left, right and bottom margins should be 1 inch each
- Use approved City letterhead stationery for business letters. Letterhead can be printed with the City's logo in green or black. It can also be printed with or without your department's name. If you're including your department name on the letterhead, type it in Times New Roman, 12 point.
- Get the business letter template with the City's logo in green at **\\Market\departments shared folder\Public Shared Folders\Templates\Letterhead Template - green.doc**
- Get the template with the City's logo in black at **\\Market\departments shared folder\Public Shared Folders\Templates\Letterhead Template - b+w.doc**.
- Get the template with the City's logo in green and department name at **\\Market\departments shared folder\Public Shared Folders\Templates\Letterhead Template - Dept. - green.doc**.
- Get the template with the City's logo in black and department name at **\\Market\departments shared folder\Public Shared Folders\Templates\Letterhead Template - Dept. - b+w.doc**.

To access the templates, copy and paste the links into your browser. Or get them on CityNet's Documents & Forms page under Public Affairs at **http://citynet/docandforms/Pages/home.aspx**.

The layout of a business letter should include the following:

- Date: Always date your letters. Never abbreviate the month. Return three times after the date, leaving two blank lines between the date and the address.
- Recipient's name and address: Always include the recipient's name, business name, address and zip code. Add job title if appropriate and double check the spelling of the recipient's name. Return twice after the address, leaving one blank line between the address and salutation.
- Salutation: Use a colon to close the salutation, not a comma. Dear Sir: or Dear Madam: or Dear John: or Dear Mr. Doe: Return twice after the salutation, leaving one blank line between the salutation and the body.
- Body: This will contain a number of paragraphs, each paragraph dealing with as few points as possible. Language should be clear and concise. As a general rule, letters should not exceed one page in length. Return twice between the body and the closing, leaving one blank line.
- Closing: Use "Sincerely," or "Sincerely yours," as a closing. Return five times, leaving four blank lines between the closing and signature.
- Signature: The signature should be clear and legible. Your signature should be followed underneath by a typed version of your name, job title and department/division. Do not include City of Greensboro as part of your signature. Also, do not include your department name if you're using the business letter template that includes the department name.
- Initials: Return twice after the signature lines. The sender's initials should be typed in upper case, followed by a back slash and the preparer's initials in lower case.
- Enclosures: If you include other material in the letter, type Enclosure, Enc, or Encs, as appropriate, immediately below the last entry.
- CC: If you are sending a copy of the letter to another person, return twice after the enclosure line and type "cc: Name." ("CC" is an abbreviation for "carbon copy.")
- *Note: You can change the footer at the bottom of the letterhead to match your department's PO Box address.*

A sample letter is shown on the next page.

January 1, 2007

John Doe
XYZ Corporation
5555 Anywhere Street
Greensboro, NC 27401

Dear Mr. Doe:

Welcome to Greensboro. It is my honor to welcome you to our city.

Greensboro has much to offer – beautiful parks and recreation areas, historic buildings, national landmarks, a superb educational community, and a multitude of businesses. Add to that our diverse and friendly population, and you'll see why people seek Greensboro as a place to visit often, as well as one to call home.

Greensboro city and county government, as well as the business community, work in partnership to maintain our unique sense of community and to provide a quality of life that many cities envy. To nurture this partnership, the City is constantly looking for ways to increase business opportunity by bringing new businesses to the area and helping existing businesses prosper.

Our objective is to continue to provide the residents of Greensboro with the best quality of life achievable. Thanks for making Greensboro your home. We know you will love it!

Sincerely,

Ms. Jane Doe
Director, Public Affairs

PB/cb
Enclosure

cc: Mr. John Wright, Manager

January 1, 2007

John Doe
XYZ Corporation
5555 Anywhere Street
Greensboro, NC 27401

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Sincerely,

Ms. Jane Doe
Director, Public Affairs

PB/cb
Enclosure

cc: Mr. John Wright, Manager

Memoranda

The format of a memorandum is as follows:
- ■ Flush left text, Times New Roman, 12 point font
- ■ Top margin should be 2 inches
- ■ Left, right and bottom margins should be 1 inch each

Memoranda should be printed in standard City of Greensboro memo format, using the fillable form that is located in the following folder:
\\Market\departments shared folder\Public Shared Folders\Templates\Memo Template.doc.
To access the template, copy and paste the link into your browser. Or get the template on CityNet's Documents & Forms page under Public Affairs at
http://citynet/docandforms/Pages/home.aspx.

- ■ Memo paper can be ordered from Graphic Services with or without the departmental name or you can just print your memo using the template above.
- ■ **Memos should be printed in black and white**, including the City logo, to avoid the cost of color printing.

The layout of a memorandum should include the following:
- ■ Date: Always date your memoranda. Never abbreviate the month. Return four times after the date, leaving three blank lines between the date and recipient's name.
- ■ Type the word "TO:" and then indent two times after the colon. Always include the recipient's name. Add job title if appropriate and double check the spelling of the recipient's name. Return twice after the recipient's name, leaving one blank line between the recipient's name and the sender's name.
- ■ Type the word "FROM:" and then indent one time after the colon. Always include the sender's name, followed by a comma and the sender's title. Return twice after the sender's name, leaving one blank line between the sender's name and the subject line.
  - ▪ Remember to include all the names of the recipients and senders in the TO: and FROM: lines (*look at sample memo below to see how*)
- ■ Indent two times before typing the word "SUBJECT:", then indent one time after the colon. Always include the subject of the memorandum. Hit return two times, leaving one black space between the SUBJECT line and the body.
- ■ Body: This will contain a number of paragraphs, each paragraph dealing with as few points as possible. Language should be clear and concise. As a general rule, memos should not exceed one page in length.
- ■ Initial: A printed signature is not necessary on a memorandum. However, the senders should include their **printed initials** next to their name in the FROM: line.
  - o Also, the senders and the preparer, if prepared by someone other than the senders, should include typed initials after the body of text. To do this, return twice after the body of the memorandum then type the sender's initials in upper case, followed by a backslash and the preparer's initials in lower case.
- ■ Attachments: If you include other material in the letter, type "Attachment," directly below the initials line.

- ■   CC: If you are sending a copy of the memorandum to another person, return twice after the signature/attachment block and type "cc: Insert Name." ("cc" is an abbreviation for "carbon copy.")
- ■   *Note: You can change the footer at the bottom of the memo to match your department's PO Box address.*

A sample memo is shown on the next page.

Public Affairs
City of Greensboro

November 6, 2009

TO: Mr. John Doe, Assistant City Manager

FROM: Ms. Jane Doe, Director
             Mr. Alice Smith, Assistant Director

             SUBJECT: Update of Style Guide

I wanted to let you know that the Style Guide has been updated with the new rules concerning stationery and memoranda. We should be ready to communicate the City Manager's wishes by the end of the day today. In addition, we will have samples and templates ready for use, and Graphic Services will have supplies of generic stationery.

JD/AS/cb
Attachment

cc: Mr. John Wright, Division Manager

Envelopes and Mailing Labels

- Use City-approved envelopes and mailing labels when sending letters and packages. Envelopes and mailing labels can be ordered by the box, as well as by the sheet for mailing labels, from Graphic Services, located on the LG (lower ground) level of the MMOB. E-mail Lisa Pitts, Graphic Services' administrator, at **lisa.pitts@greensboro-nc.gov**.

- For Post Office Box addresses, use PO Box XXX, not P.O. Box. The United States Postal Service prefers that addresses be printed in ALL CAPS with no punctuation:

<table>
<tr><td>CITY OF GREENSBORO
PO BOX 3136
GREENSBORO NC 27402-3136</td><td>CITY OF GREENSBORO
300 WEST WASHINGTON ST
GREENSBORO NC 27401</td></tr>
</table>

- You can customize your envelopes and mailing labels to include your department name, division and address:

  CITY OF GREENSBORO
  PUBLIC AFFAIRS/COMMUNICATIONS
  300 WEST WASHINGTON ST
  GREENSBORO NC 27401

  *Note: Do not exceed four lines.
  **Note: When including division name, abbreviate when necessary. Example: Instead of spelling out Criminal Investigations Division, use the acronym CID.

Fax Cover Sheets

- Fax cover sheets should be printed using the fillable form located at **\\Market\departments shared folder\Public Shared Folders\Templates\Fax Cover Sheet Template.doc**. To access the template, copy and paste the link into your browser. Or get the template on CityNet's Documents & Forms page under Public Affairs at **http://citynet/docandforms/Pages/home.aspx**.
  - The black version of the City logo should appear in the upper left corner of the fax cover sheet, 1 inch from the left edge of the page.
  - The following should appear at the bottom of each fax cover sheet, centered, bold in Times New Roman, 12 point:
    - Line 1: City of Greensboro, North Carolina, PO Box 3136, Greensboro, NC 27402-3136
    - Line 2: Phone: 336-XXX-XXXX   www.greensboro-nc.gov   Fax: 336-XXX-XXXX
    - *Note: You can change the information at the bottom to match your department's PO Box, telephone number and fax number*
  - Margins should be at least 1 inch on all sides.
  - In the interest of waste reduction, Post-it ® Fax Notes may be used in place of fax cover sheets.

GREENSBORO

Date:

To:

Company:

Fax #:

From:

Department:

Subject:

# of pages with

cover:

☐ *Urgent*   ☐ *For Review*   ☐ *Please Comment*   ☐ *Please Reply*

If the following is unreadable or incomplete, please call 336-XXX-XXX.

City of Greensboro, North Carolina, PO Box 3136, Greensboro, NC 27402-3136
Phone: 336-373-2489   www.greensboro-nc.gov   Fax: 336-373-4656

Business Cards

- All business cards should be printed on 80# white business card stock.
- Pantone (PMS) 349 and black ink should be used on all business cards.
- Recommended type for business cards is:
  - City of Greensboro: 12pt Garamond ITC Book BT Bold
  - Department: 10pt Garamond ITC Book BT Italic
  - Name: 12pt Futura Bold Condensed BT
  - Title: 8pt Futura Bold Condensed BT
  - E-mail, Address & Phone: Futura Medium Condensed BT

- Business cards are 2" x 3.5" with 1/4 inch margin all the way around.
- **Do not** include your department's Web address or your personal cell phone number on your business card. However, if you choose, you can include the City's Web address (*shown in the example below*) and your City-issued cell phone number.
- If you choose to include your division name, place it below your name and title.
- You do not have to use the City's physical address on your business card if you are located outside of the MMOB; use your department/division's address and PO Box if you desire.
- *Note*: Recycle all business cards that do not follow this style and have them reprinted with the appropriate style. Graphic Services can assist you with this.*
- *Note**: Police, Fire, Guilford Metro 9-1-1, the Coliseum, and GTA are the only departments that can use their own logos and department styles on business cards.*

See below for appropriate business card example.

News Releases

- News releases should be printed using the fillable form located at **\\Market\departments shared folder\Public Shared Folders\Templates\News Release Template.doc**. To access the template, copy and paste the link into your browser. Or get the template on CityNet's Documents & Forms page under Public Affairs at **http://citynet/docandforms/Pages/home.aspx**.

  - Set margins at 1 inch on all sides.

  - City logo (black and white or green) should appear in the upper left corner of the news release. The following departments may use the City logo in conjunction with their department logo: Coliseum, Guilford Metro 9-1-1, Greensboro Transit Authority, Greensboro Police Department and Greensboro Fire Department. All others can only use the City logo.

  - Contact information should always be included. Contact person and phone number will depend on the departmental contact for the event/program/initiative.

  - The headline of the news release should appear in Arial 12 point italics font, centered above the body of the news release.

  - The body of the news release should be written in Arial, 11 point font, with 1.5 line spacing.

  - The city and date should be included in the first paragraph, preceding the body of the news release. The date listed should reflect the date you send the release to the media.

  - If the news release is longer than one page, add the word – MORE – at the bottom of the first page.

  - The City of Greensboro boilerplate should appear at the end of every news release (see template, next page).

  - At the end of the news release, include three pound symbols, with one space between each: # # #.

  - Remember that external website pages must be updated with relevant information before a news release is sent out.

  - All news releases must be sent to the City's Global Media Distribution List. If you don't have permission to send e-mails to the Global Media Distribution List, contact Jim Collins, Communications Manager, at 373-2105. Also, if you have your own distribution list that doesn't include the same e-mail addresses as the City's distribution list, you can also send your releases to those contacts.

  - All news releases must be sent to City Council 20 minutes before they are released. Also, news releases should be sent to Assistant City Manager Denise Turner prior to being sent to Council and depending on the topic, the release may need to be approved by Denise before it is made public.

- Include the title of your press release in the subject line of your e-mail. The subject line should look like this:

  News Release: Title of Your Release

CITY OF GREENSBORO
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: John Doe
Phone: 336-373-2155

New State Law Requires Carbon Monoxide Detectors in Rental Properties, Homes

GREENSBORO, NC (Month, Date, Year) – Carbon monoxide is a silent killer. It's odorless, colorless and tasteless, and according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 400 people in the US die from carbon monoxide poisoning each year.

Because of the dangers of this toxic gas, beginning January 1, 2010, a new state law will require carbon monoxide detectors to be installed in all existing rental units with fossil fuel appliances or fossil fuel fired heating systems.

Specifically, the law requires that:

- Owners of existing rental units shall provide at least one carbon monoxide detector on each level of each unit.
- The detectors can be electrically hardwired or battery-operated.
- All detectors must be approved by a nationally recognized testing laboratory.

Also, beginning January 1, 2011, all new homes being constructed must have a carbon monoxide detector installed outside of each separate sleeping area.

Fore more information about this new law, call the City of Greensboro's Engineering & Inspections Department at 336-373-2155.

# # #

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Media Advisories

- Media advisories are used to send newsworthy information about an event or issue to the media for its use in covering the event or issue, but *not for public publication*. Public dissemination is the goal of a news release.

- Media advisories should be printed using the fillable form located at **\\Market\departments shared folder\Public Shared Folders\Templates\Media Advisory Template.doc**. To access the template, copy and paste the link into your browser. Or get the template on CityNet's Documents & Forms page under Public Affairs at **http://citynet/docandforms/Pages/home.aspx**.

  - Set margins at 1 inch on all sides.

  - City logo should appear in the upper left corner of the media advisory. The following departments may use the City logo in conjunction with their department logo: Coliseum, Guilford Metro 9-1-1, Greensboro Transit Authority, Greensboro Police Department and Greensboro Fire Department. All others can only use the City logo.

  - Contact information should be included on the right hand side. Contact person and phone number will depend on the departmental contact for the event/program/initiative.

  - The date should be included on the left hand side and should reflect the date you send the advisory to the media.

  - The headline should appear in Arial 12 point italics font, centered above the body of the media advisory.

  - The body of the media advisory should be written in Arial, 11 point, single-spaced. It should also be indented 1.25 inches.

  - The media advisory should only be one page.

  - The City of Greensboro boilerplate should appear at the end of every media advisory (see template, next page).

  - At the end of the media advisory, before the boilerplate, include three pound symbols, with one space between each: # # #.

  - If you include a link to the City's external website, the page you link to must be updated before the advisory goes out.

  - All media advisories must be sent to the City's Global Media Distribution List. If you don't have permission to send e-mails to the Global Media Distribution List, contact Jim Collins, Communications Manager, at 373-2105. Also, if you have your own distribution list that doesn't include the same e-mail addresses as the City's distribution list, you can also send your advisories to those contacts.

- All media advisories must be sent to City Council 20 minutes before they are released. Also, media advisories should be sent to Assistant City Manager Denise Turner prior to being sent to Council and depending on the topic, the advisory may need to be approved by Denise before it is made public.

- Include the title of your media advisory in the subject line of your e-mail. The subject line should look like this:
  Media Advisory: Title of Your Advisory

November 18, 2009   Contact: Kevin Elwood
                                                     Phone: 336-412-6309

GTA Groundbreaking Ceremony for New Facility

WHAT: Greensboro Transit Authority (GTA) will hold a groundbreaking ceremony for its new maintenance and operations facility and administrative offices, located on Meadowview Road between S. Elm-Eugene Street and Randleman Road.The new facility features major Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) attributes, which will be explained by architect Ken Mayer. Construction of the building will be funded, in part, with stimulus funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

WHEN: Thursday, November 19, at 2 pm

WHERE: 223 Meadowview Rd., between S. Elm-Eugene Street and Randleman Road

WHO: All media are invited to attend. Please wear shoes appropriate for walking on an active construction site. Also, parking for the event will be available in the Food Lion parking lot, located directly across the street from the construction site.

# # #

The City works with the community to improve the quality of life for residents through inclusion, diversity, and trust. As the seventh largest employer in Greensboro, the City has a professional staff of 2,800 employees who maintain the values of honesty, integrity, stewardship, and respect. The City is governed by a council-manager form of government with a mayor and eight council members. For more information on the City, visit www.greensboro-nc.gov or call 336-373-CITY (2489).

E-mail Standards

- Use Arial 10 point font (color: black) to write e-mails. E-mail replies should also be written in Arial 10 point font (color: blue or black).
- An e-mail signature should appear at the bottom of each initial correspondence in the following way:
    - **Name**, followed by title
    - Department
    - City of Greensboro
    - Your phone number and fax number
    - Address (you can use your department's PO Box if you choose)
    - City Web address

        - **Sample e-mail message:**

            Addressee's Name:

            Text of e-mail message appears here. E-mail messages should follow this format.

            Name, Title
            Department Name
            City of Greensboro
            Phone: xxx-xxx-xxxx; Fax: xxx-xxx-xxxx
            PO Box 3136, Greensboro, NC 27402-3136
            www.greensboro-nc.gov

E-mail Tips

- Be concise – e-mails are meant to be a quick read.

- Be sure to answer all questions asked of you in an e-mail. Include the previous e-mail in your reply, so the recipient can reference the past information on the subject at hand.

- Spell check before sending, and use proper grammar and punctuation.

- Make your message personal, but professional.

- Answer quickly – within 24 hours. People use e-mail because they need a prompt response.

- Use the "Out of Office" message when you will be out of the office for one day or more.

- Do not write text in all caps – IT SEEMS LIKE SHOUTING.

- Avoid abbreviations and emoticons (e.g., BTW for "By the way," or ☺ smiley faces).

- Use "urgent" and "important" **sparingly**. When all e-mails are marked as "urgent," you will lose credibility and your truly urgent e-mails will likely not receive the attention they deserve.

- Use "Reply to All" only if necessary and cc only those who truly need to see your message.

Guidelines for the Web

Web users want to find information easily and quickly. These guidelines are intended to make our website a more effective information and communication tool.

Issues Requiring Authorization

The following are items that require the authorization of someone above your department CMS representative and the Web Editor. To request any of the items below, contact the Web Architect, [April Craddock](#) and that person will move your request through the system and notify you of the outcome.

- **Technical issues with CMS and workflow changes**.
- **Exceptions to the [Web Linking Policy](#)**
- **Shortcut URL to a specific page wanted for print marketing purposes**, Debby Davis
- **Unique domain name wanted a specific Web channel/section for marketing**
- **purposes Custom website template wanted for a department/program**

General Content Guidelines

- **Update your site regularly**. An updated and maintained site enhances credibility.
- **Write clearly and concisely**. A general rule of thumb is to cut written copy in half, and ideally, in half again for use on the Web. Edit, edit, edit.
- **Write for the reader**. Use short paragraphs (two to three lines) that allow for skimming. Keep information simple and easily understandable. Use short words. If you use short words that refer to concrete, physical objects, words that most people can easily pronounce, and words that are used often, people will understand you. The fewer the syllables, the higher the impact.
- **Avoid "marketing fluff."** Don't make your readers spend extra energy filtering out the fluff to get to the facts. Make your case with nouns and verbs rather than adjectives and adverbs.
- **Use headings and subheadings that allow for skimming**. Use two or three levels of headings – a general page heading, plus some subheads, and occasionally some sub-subheads – to help readers skim your main ideas. These "nested headings" are also easily accessible by software used by visually-disabled Web users.

Formatting Guidelines

- **Add emphasis with boldfacing**. To add emphasis, use **boldfacing**, rather than underlining, italics, or ALL CAPS.
- **Do not spread text across the width of the screen.** Text that spreads from one side of the screen to the other is difficult to read. Place text in smaller blocks using indents or page

margins. You can also break up large blocks of text with subheadings, bulleted lists, and images.

- **Limit vertical scrolling when possible.** For Web pages, the area that appears in the first screen when a person loads a page is considered "above the fold," a term also used by newspaper editors to indicate the articles that will be seen when the newspaper is folded. This is important real estate since users are more likely to spend time viewing these parts while they wait for the remainder of the Web page to load and because users often do not scroll down.

- **Categorize like items and links.** When offering links, try to categorize them so the user can find information more quickly.

Linking Guidelines

- **Link only to PDF formatted documents**. To make sure the public can easily access documents linked to from the website and find specific information that may be contained in a document by using a search feature, all documents linked to should be saved as PDF files. Simply "Save As" your document as a PDF. This will allow the document's content to be found using standard Search functions. Avoid scanning documents and linking to them because the act of scanning basically turnings the document into an image and no content on the document will be searchable. (If your document can not be saved as a pdf, other file formats may be allowed.)

- **Name PDF files appropriately**. Avoid long URLs and avoid using non-alphanumeric characters (such as @ or *), which can cause problems in opening the document. Make all file names descriptive (so someone else could easily identify what the document is), but short. Ex.: *PublicProgramFlyerMarch2011Ver22Sec88R.pdf* is not appropriate. *PublicFlyerMarch2011.pdf* is much better.

- **Hyperlink to URLs, don't type them out**. To maintain a professional, clean look on our Web pages, **do not** print out a full URL address like this – www.greensboro-nc.gov/departments/publicaffairs/communications. Instead, use active words to direct a reader to click on the link and hyperlink to the appropriate person, place or thing.
  Ex: Contact [Suzie Que](#) at 336-333-3333.
    Visit the [Communications division's Web page](#).
    Review the [latest version of the report](#).

- **Exception to above rule**. The only exception to the rule above about not printing out a full URL address is when the address is one of the City's unique domain names, paid for and maintained by the City for marketing purposes. Because these names are used to market a section of the website, they should be used in full. Ex.: www.RideGTA.com and www.GreensboroReady.com.

- **Avoid saying 'click' here.** Use of the word 'click' when directing readers to a link is unprofessional and much overused. Spend an extra minute to come up with more active, creative verbiage to request someone access your link.

Departmental Intranet Sites

Each City department is responsible for maintaining and updating its intranet site, unless the department has requested maintenance assistance from Public Affairs. All departmental intranet sites should:

- strive to be a **resource** for all City employees by including useful and pertinent departmental information that is not available on the City's external website
- strive to meet the **informational needs** of the department's employees in a timely fashion; these informational needs may include but are not limited to:
    - minutes of meetings
    - committees
    - changes in policies/procedures
    - internal training opportunities
- provide access to departmental documents/forms, including those that would be beneficial to employees in other departments
- include contact information
- provide an opportunity for employee feedback

Web Graphics

The rule of thumb for **graphics** and **images** on the Web is "keep it simple." Generally, **graphics** are static or animated images created electronically, while **images** consist of pictures taken with a camera and either imported or scanned to be used online.

Non-important text can be put on graphics and images only if the text is also entered into the CMS system in the Alt Tag field. This is ADA-required.

Do not create text into a graphic or image. The text will not be readable by someone who has images turned off, or by screen readers, which could mean people are missing your important information.

Internet Images Guidelines

Because of the limitations of computer monitors, photos should be set at 72 dpi and compressed into a gif or jpg file.

- Photos and detailed artwork should be saved as jpgs. Simple graphics should be saved as gifs.

- Graphics and images need to be small on the Web, ideally less than 40K.

- Use close-up and medium-range pictures when possible. Wide shots do not work well on the Internet when they are viewed at high resolution.

- Use pictures showing a diverse range of people. Try to avoid pictures of empty parks, building exteriors, signs, and other static places or objects, unless that is the point of the photo.

- Do **not** interlace pictures.

- All images are subject to review for professionalism, appropriateness and size.

- Always assign descriptive alternative text to your images for those using readers or non-image browsers.

- **Resize all images and graphics to the size you want them before you insert them into the Web page, using either Photoshop or some other graphics program. Do not constrain a large picture on a Web page, because the entire picture must still be loaded. A picture may only be 25 pixels x 25 pixels and can still have a very large file size. The maximum pixel width of a photo 625 pixels.**

Image and Graphics Tip

- **Use the ALT attribute:** This attribute of the image tag shows text when hovering over an image, and also offers a description if browsers have images turned off and to screen readers for the disabled. ALT tags **must be used** to meet ADA accessibility standards. Use three to five words to describe the photo, like Workshop Attendees. Use of the words Photo of … at the beginning is not needed.

Accessibility Guidelines

For Printed Pieces

■ For visually-impaired readers, use oversized text in a 16-point or larger sans serif font, such as Helvetica or Arial. (Serif vs. Sans Serif). For optimum contrast, use black ink on white high-opacity paper.

For the Web

■ Provide a text equivalent for every non-text element (e.g., via "alt," "longdesc," or in element content). This includes images, graphical representations of text (including symbols), and image map regions, stand-alone audio files, audio tracks of video, and video.

■ For additional accessibility guidelines, visit **www.W3.org/WAI/**.

Using PowerPoint

1. Keep it simple. Don't put too much information on your slides.

2. When making a PowerPoint or other presentation involving slides, particularly one for which you have provided a handout showing each slide, do not read everything to your audience. Summarize as necessary, reserving a step-by-step recitation for key points.

3. Use consistent font sizes and types, and use only a few colors. Your PowerPoint should enhance, not detract from your presentation.

4. Test your slides for size and readability.

5. If a logo is used in the template for a PowerPoint Presentation, it should be the official City logo.

Quick Reference for PowerPoint Presentations	
DO:	**DO NOT:**
■ Prepare slides as an aid to your presentation.	■ Prepare too many slides for your allotted time.
■ Put a heading on each slide.	■ Use all capital letters, except as main headings.
■ Use short phrases for bullet items.	
■ Keep your slides simple.	■ Use sentences or paragraphs.
■ Test your slides for readability.	■ Use too many abbreviations.
■ Leave a lot of "white space."	■ Put more than three or four key points on one slide.
■ Know your material and which slide is coming up next.	■ Go off on another subject before you have finished discussing the current slide.
■ Discuss the slide being shown.	
■ Talk to your audience.	■ Talk to the screen.
■ Pace yourself through your presentation.	■ Wander off your planned talk.
■ Define abbreviations and acronyms.	■ Rush through your presentation.
■ Describe how your data leads to your conclusions.	■ Use the slide if you have to say, "Well, you can't really see it."
■ Practice your presentation in the room where you will be giving the presentation.	
■ Use a laser pointer.	

Alphabetical Listing of
Style and Usage Standards for Print and Web

abbreviations: Abbreviations of capitalized words should also be capitalized. Examples: *Aug. (August), Mon. (Monday), St. (Street).* Such abbreviations should be followed by a period. *See also* "acronyms," "dates," and "FAQs."

acronyms: Do not use periods between the letters in acronyms, e.g. *IRS, US, NC*.

academic degrees: Capitalize specific degrees and their abbreviations (no periods) following proper names; set general terms or the informal form of the degree *(bachelor's)* in lowercase. Examples: *Charles Smith earned a juris doctorate from Harvard Law. The Mayor graduated magna cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts in political science. Linda Evans earned a master's degree in public policy.* Use *BA, MA* and *PhD*, not B.A., M.A., and Ph.D.

am and **pm:** Use *am* and *pm*, not a.m. and p.m. Always include a space between the hour and the annotation, i.e. *7 am*. When the time is on the hour, use the number by itself, e.g. *6 pm*, not *6:00 pm*. Use *12 noon* rather than *12 pm* for the midday hour and use 12 midnight.

and: If space allows, use the word *and* in most titles rather than the ampersand (&). Do not capitalize in titles or headlines.

articles, conjunctions, prepositions: In headlines or titles, write articles, conjunctions, and short prepositions in lowercase (*a, an, and, at, for, in, of on, or, the, to*). Exception: capitalize conjunctions with four or more letters, except for *from* or *with*.

BlackBerry: One word, capitalize the two Bs.

blog: Capitalize first letter only at the beginning of a sentence.

Blu-ray: Hyphenate the word and only capitalize the first letter.

bulleted lists: Do not use periods at the end of bulleted text, *unless the bulleted items are complete sentences*.

> Examples:
> The company accepts the following forms of identification:

- Driver's license
- Birth certificate
- Social Security card

> When applying to college, it is important to be prepared:

- Find out application deadline dates.
- Schedule visits to several campuses.
- Choose at least one school that is a sure thing.
- Ask someone to edit or review your essays.

cell phone: Spelled with two words and not capitalized unless at the beginning of a sentence. Cell can also be used.

chair/chairman/chairwoman/chairperson: Unless a personal preference has been indicated, use *chairman* or *chairwoman* if the gender is known. For a neutral reference, use *chair*.

citizen(s): Use *resident(s). See* "resident vs. citizen."

City: Always capitalize when referring to the City of Greensboro organization. Example: "The City expects to increase police patrol of downtown Greensboro."

City Council: Always capitalize when referring to the Greensboro City Council.

citywide: One word. Do not hyphenate.

color standards: The City of Greensboro uses PMS 349 (green) in print and on the Web. Where PMS 349 can not be used, a color that most resembles PMS 349 should be used.

commas: Use commas to punctuate a series of three or more words, phrases, or thoughts and include a comma BEFORE the "and" or "or." Example: *Jeff was interested in the electronic, printed, and TV versions of Greensboro ConnecTV.*

dates: Whenever possible, spell out the month when writing a date, e.g. January 1, 2008. If space does not permit, abbreviate the month with a period after the abbreviation, e.g. Jan. 1, 2008. Do not use *st, nd, rd,* or *th*. When typing a date in which the apostrophe represents a century, e.g. Class of **'**99, be sure to use a **right** single quote (not "Class of **'**99"). An easy way to do this is to type two apostrophes, then delete the first one.

e-mail: Use a hyphen and no capitalization, unless it begins a sentence or is used in a headline. Use lowercase and hyphen for *e-government* and *e-commerce*. Do not underline e-mail addresses in printed publications.

Facebook: One word with the first letter capitalized.

FAQs: Most people familiar with the Internet know that this means "Frequently Asked Questions." Therefore, it is acceptable to use the abbreviation. Do not spell it out.

fax: *Fax* may be used as a noun, adjective and verb. Do not write FAX in all caps.

home page: Write as two words.

hyperlinks: *See* "links."

i.e.: Means "that is." If no other mark precedes the abbreviation, place a comma before it. No comma is necessary after the abbreviation. (Examples: *The City of Greensboro collects all refuse, i.e. bulk items, household trash, and hazardous materials.* [OR] *The City of Greensboro collects all refuse (i.e. bulk items, household trash, and hazardous materials.)*

in-house: Hyphenate.

Internet: Always capitalize.

intranet: Do not capitalize unless at the start of a sentence or in a headline.

it's: Do not use the contraction *it's* in publications or on the Web. Instead, spell out "it is." In general, avoid contractions. (Note: Use *its* for the possessive of it. Example: *A flower is known for its beauty.*)

kilobytes: Abbreviate with the capital letter K. When listing the number of kilobytes, do not space between the number and the K, e.g. *300K*.

LinkedIn: One word with a capital L and I.

links (on the Web): When linking to an e-mail address or another website, do not display the URL in the text. Examples: 1) E-mail the Department Manager for more information. 2) For more information, visit the City of Greensboro website.

lists: *See* "bullets."

logo: *See* "Using the City Logo."

Mayor: The word *Mayor* is always capitalized when it refers to Greensboro's Mayor: *Mayor John Doe*, or, *"Today, the Mayor was quoted…."*

MySpace: One word with a capital M and S.

news releases: See "News Release Guidelines."

numerals: Numbers from one to nine should be spelled out as a word (*one, two, three…*). Double digits are written as numbers, e.g. *10, 374, 28*, except at the start of a sentence. (Example: *Twentieth century art hangs on the walls of the MMOB.*) Use commas to separate thousands in number amounts, e.g. *1,000 or $15,335*). *Also see* "places."

online: Do not hyphenate. Use initial caps when appropriate.

percent: One word, spelled out in regular text. Example: *Only 45 percent of the electorate voted.* The symbol (%) is used in scientific and statistical text. Example: *She expects 23% of the results to be positive.* On websites, the tendency is to use numbers and symbols, especially in bullets and lists. It makes the information stand out, and it is easier to read or skim. But, it may be more appropriate to use the word, depending on the source, content, and tone of the material.

personal names: Omit the commas before and after *Jr.* and *Sr.* and after Roman numerals. Examples: *Charles Williams Jr. is the court's nominee. Charles Williams III is the court's nominee.*

phone numbers: The standard format is: *area code-xxx-yyyy.* If there is an extension, insert a space after the phone number and use *ext.* before the extension number. Emergency and non-emergency numbers should be used without dashes, e.g. *911* and *311*.

places: Spell out places (*first, second, third*) unless they refer to a street number. Example: *The City of Greensboro won first, second, and third place in the website contest.*

plural or collective nouns: Many words (including *faculty, committee, board, youth, staff, team, class, public, group,* and *data*) can be both singular and plural. The choice of a singular or plural verb depends on whether the intent is to refer to the group as a whole or to the members of the group. For clarity, it helps to add *members of* before the reference. Examples: *Our department's faculty is highly respected in international professional circles. Members of our faculty are highly respected.*

podcast: One word. Use initial capital when appropriate.

position titles: When referring to a specific City employee, board member, or other representative, capitalize the title if it precedes the name. Lowercase the title if it comes after the person's name. Generic titles should be lowercase. Exceptions: *the Mayor, Council member*.

quotation marks: Unless providing a direct quote, use quotation marks sparingly, opting instead for *italics* or an alternate sentence construction to call attention to a word or phrase. Place periods and commas inside quotation marks; place colons and semicolons outside quotation marks. (Example: "I want to place even more emphasis on a proactive role for the City," said

Assistant City Manager Denise Turner. The City Manager's vision for the City encourages a "proactive role"; his goals include strong economic development and comprehensive planning.) Place periods, commas, colons, and semicolons outside parentheses unless the text within parentheses is a complete sentence.

resident vs. citizen: Use *resident(s)*. Never use the word *citizen(s)* unless specifically referring to one group, as in "Only US citizens are able to vote in a presidential election." *See "citizen(s)."*

seasons: Do not capitalize unless part of a proper name or title. Use the season and the year. Examples: *She was elected in fall 2007. Visit our website to view the Fall Schedule of Activities.*

social media: Lowercase unless social is the first word in a sentence.

spacing: Use only **one** space at the end of a sentence (tap the spacebar once).

staff: *See* "plural or collective nouns."

state abbreviations: Use the two-letter United States Postal Service abbreviations without periods, e.g. *NC, VA, DC*.

temperature: When referring to temperature in degrees, insert the degree symbol and *F* after the number, e.g. *46°F*. The HTML code for the degree symbol is $ordm.

time: *See* "am and pm."

URL: Do not underline Web addresses or e-mail addresses in printed publications.

videocast: One word. Use initial capital when appropriate.

voicemail: Write as one word. Do not hyphenate.

website: One word, with no capitals (ex: webcam, webcast, webmaster). However, as a short form and when used with other words, use a capital W (ex: the Web, Web page and Web feed).

Wiki: One word. Always capitalize the W.

Wi-Fi: Hyphenate and use capital W and F.

YouTube: One word and use capital Y and T.