



City of Isle of Palms Branding and Identity Services Proposal

Emerge Design Group
David Linde
Principal

May 1, 2026

City of Isle of Palms
1207 Palm Boulevard
Isle of Palms, SC 29451

Dear Members of the Selection Committee,

The City of Isle of Palms is seeking to balance two identity roles at once, functioning both as a municipality and as a destination. I do not see this as some delicate balance, but as an exciting opportunity to bolster civic pride for residents and recognition to visitors.

Currently different applications across departments and public-facing materials have led to a lack of cohesion, which makes it harder to present a clear and unified image. At the same time, the identity needs to reflect the character of the City in a way that feels both familiar to residents and welcoming to visitors.

This proposal is focused on addressing that directly.

The goal is to create a single system that defines how the City looks and how it presents itself, and to make that system usable across everyday materials without ongoing interpretation. It needs to hold up in official use while also supporting how the City is experienced more broadly.

I recently completed similar work for the Town of Needham, where a unified identity system is now used across departments as the standard for day-to-day communication. The same approach can be applied here, adjusted to reflect the character and context of Isle of Palms.

When the system is clear and practical, it works. When it is not, it tends to break down over time.

Sincerely,



David Linde
Principal
Emerge Design Group
dave@emergedesigngroup.com
339.203.2123

www.emergedesigngroup.com



ASSIGNMENT

City of Isle of Palms

Branding and Identity Services Proposal

Project Understanding

The City of Isle of Palms is currently operating with multiple visual identities and inconsistent applications across departments and public-facing materials.

That creates two issues. Internally, staff are left to interpret how materials should look and how the City should present itself. Externally, inconsistency weakens credibility and makes it harder to present a clear and unified image.

At the same time, Isle of Palms carries a dual role. It functions as a municipality, but it is also a destination. The same identity needs to support both.

The challenge is not to create separate brands. It is to create one system that works in both contexts without conflict, so it holds up in official use while also presenting the City in a way that feels welcoming and recognizable to visitors.

Approach

This is not a logo project.

The work is to create a single identity system that defines how the City looks and how it presents itself, and to make that system usable across departments without ongoing interpretation.

Design and messaging are developed together. The identity establishes a clear and stable foundation, while the messaging allows for flexibility in how the City speaks to different audiences. That flexibility is controlled, not improvised.

The system is designed to function in two ways at once. It needs to feel appropriate and credible in official materials, and at the same time feel open, familiar, and appealing in how the City presents itself to residents and visitors.

Most of the work in a project like this is not designing the mark. It is making sure it can be used consistently by people who are not designers.

If the system is clear, it holds. If it is not, it breaks down.

Success

A branding system the City can actually use.

- A visual identity that is clear, flexible, and appropriate to City of Isle of Palms
- A communication framework that aligns messaging across departments
- A standards guide that is easy to follow, not theoretical
- Templates that staff can use without redesigning or rewriting from scratch

Most of the work in a project like this is not designing the mark. It is making sure it can be used correctly across departments by people who are not designers.

ASSIGNMENT

SCOPE OF WORK

Project Management

The project is led directly, with a single point of contact throughout. Meetings with City staff, Council, and key stakeholders are structured to move the work forward and keep decisions clear.

Branding and Messaging Development

The identity system will include a logo, color palette, typography, and supporting elements that can be applied consistently across all City materials.

A messaging framework will be developed alongside it to define tone, positioning, and language. This ensures the City can communicate clearly in official contexts while also presenting itself in a way that reflects its character as a coastal destination.

The goal is not to create separate voices, but to establish a consistent range within a single system.

Research

The work begins with a review of current materials and how the identity is used today. Conversations with staff, Council, and stakeholders help clarify what is working, what is not, and what needs to change.

This includes identifying the defining characteristics of Isle of Palms, from its natural environment and residential character to its role as a visitor destination. These elements inform the identity without overcomplicating it.

Deliverables

The final deliverables are built around usability and long-term consistency.

- A complete identity system with supporting elements
- A standards guide that is clear and practical
- Templates for common materials across print and digital
- Editable files for internal use

The goal is not to explain the brand, but to create something that can be used consistently across the City.

Implementation and Rollout

The system includes guidance for how it is introduced and adopted.

This includes a rollout approach that works for both internal use and public-facing communication, along with practical direction for maintaining consistency over time.

The focus is on making sure the system holds after the project is complete.

Project Timeline

The work is structured over approximately four months.

Month 1 focuses on discovery and research.

Month 2 is dedicated to identity and messaging development.

Month 3 builds the system, including standards and templates.

Month 4 focuses on implementation planning and final delivery.



ASSIGNMENT

Firm Qualifications

Emerge Design Group is led by David Linde, a Creative Director and Brand Strategist with over 20 years of experience developing identity systems for municipalities and public institutions.

The work focuses on creating systems that are clear, consistent, and usable across a wide range of applications.

Recent work for the Town of Needham, Massachusetts involved replacing the use of the Town seal with a new identity system supported by a comprehensive standards guide. The system is now used across all Town departments as the standard for signage, documents, vehicles, and digital communication.

Additional work for public institutions, including Rowley, Leominster, and Framingham Public Libraries, required similar coordination across staff and public-facing materials, resulting in systems that are actively used in day-to-day operations.

Communications strategy is supported by Goodwin Consulting, led by Tara Goodwin, whose work focuses on public sector communication, public engagement, and crisis response.

TEAM

David Linde leads all aspects of brand strategy, identity development, and system design.

Tara Goodwin leads messaging strategy and supports public-facing communication, ensuring the identity and language work together across both municipal and visitor contexts.

The work is developed as a single system, not separate tracks

Cost Proposal

Total Project Fee: \$45,000 - \$50,000

This includes research, identity development, messaging, standards, templates, and implementation guidance.

The scope is structured to deliver a complete system within the City's stated budget.

Closing

The City does not need separate identities for government and tourism.

It needs one system that works across both.

That system must be stable enough to support official use and flexible enough to represent Isle of Palms as a destination. More importantly, it must be clear enough to be used consistently over time.

That is the focus of this work.



MUNICIPAL REBRANDING AND STANDARDS SYSTEM

Town of Needham, Massachusetts

The Town of Needham wanted to create a new logo to replace the use of the town seal across all branding. This was only part of the assignment as the larger need was to develop consistency across the municipality.

Multiple departments needed a comprehensive and easy-to-use system that could be used to create consistency across all town branding and public-facing materials.

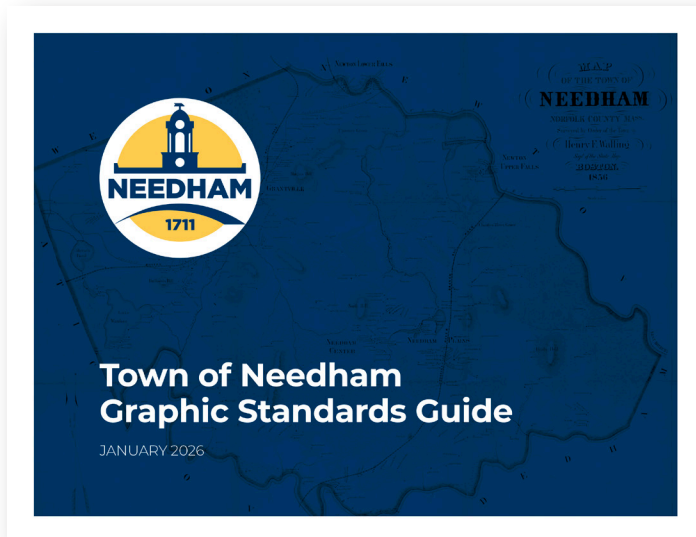
The work focused on building a standards guide that could be used by staff who are not designers.

The system included:

- clear rules for identity use
- templates for common materials
- real examples across applications

The goal was to remove interpretation.

Today, the system is used across all Town departments as the standard for signage, vehicles, documents, and digital communication. The value is not just the design. It is how reliably it holds up over time.



Logo Mark

FILE FORMATS
The logo was created in a vector-based program and saved as standard file formats.

PRINT USE (EPS, PDF)
EPS and PDF files are fully scalable and are the preferred file formats for vector graphics. EPS files are primarily used in physical print applications.

DIGITAL USE (PNG, JPEG, SVG)
PNG and JPEG are primarily used for digital and online applications. PNG files are transparent and can be placed on backgrounds. JPEG files are not transparent but are the preferred file format for email use. NOTE: Files should be used at correct size or smaller. Stretched digital files will lose clarity and become pixelated.

FULL COLOR
Standard colors in all digital online and most print applications (process CMYK printing).

1-COLOR
Used only in specialized circumstances where applications only.

FULL COLOR MARK

ONE COLOR

FULL COLOR BACKGROUND

ONE COLOR REVERSE

TOWN OF NEEDHAM GRAPHIC STANDARDS GUIDE | JANUARY 2026

Color Palette

PRIMARY PALETTE
For all colors to function successfully they must be used correctly and consistently. The logo should always consist of these colors.

PANTONE	CMYK	HEX	PANTONE	CMYK	HEX	PANTONE	CMYK	HEX
285	25	003366	122	34-20	556600	427	10-10	F08080
CMYK	C: 100	M: 25	CMYK	C: 50	M: 25	CMYK	C: 50	M: 100
HEX	003366		HEX	556600		HEX	F08080	

Secondary Palette

PANTONE	CMYK	HEX	PANTONE	CMYK	HEX	PANTONE	CMYK	HEX
307	30-100	008080	775	10-100	800080	196	10-100	800000
CMYK	C: 100	M: 25	CMYK	C: 50	M: 100	CMYK	C: 50	M: 100
HEX	008080		HEX	800080		HEX	800000	

Typography

In order to maintain consistency across all communications, both printed and digital, we chose one primary type: **Montserrat**, which has several weights. This will allow for flexibility in the hierarchy of our content.

Correspondence
Montserrat font should be used for Department names, addresses, etc. on letterhead. The font used for body text of documents, letters, etc. should be **Calibri** font size 9 whenever possible.

PRIMARY FONT
Montserrat Extra Bold
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
0123456789

Montserrat Bold
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
0123456789

Montserrat Regular
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
0123456789

TOWN OF NEEDHAM GRAPHIC STANDARDS GUIDE | JANUARY 2026

Departmental Mark Hierarchy - Vertical Stack - Circle Logo

This template is designed to keep departmental hierarchy visually consistent across Town Branding.

DEPARTMENT NAME TEMPLATE SPACING

EXAMPLES

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

INSPECTOR OF BUILDINGS

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

PUBLIC WORKS

Type Proportion = 80% size of NEEDHAM
ALL CAPS
Font: Montserrat Bold
Font Size/Leading: SAME

TOWN OF NEEDHAM GRAPHIC STANDARDS GUIDE | JANUARY 2026

Excerpts from the Needham standards guide showing identity rules, templates, and real world applications used across Town departments.

MUNICIPAL REBRANDING AND STANDARDS SYSTEM

Rowley Public Library

The Rowley Public Library needed a clear and consistent identity that could be used across programming, communication, and signage.

The work focused on creating an identity that fit the character of Rowley. Something grounded, recognizable, and appropriate to a traditional New England town setting, with a nod to the adjacent Great Marsh landscape.

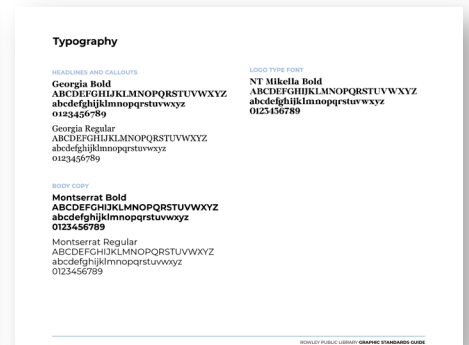
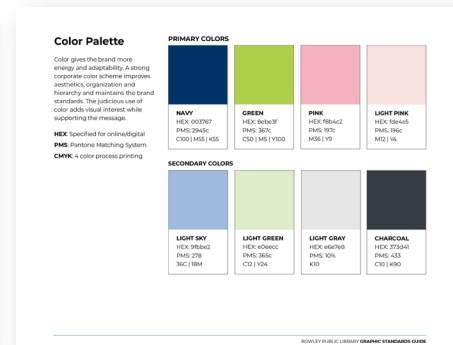
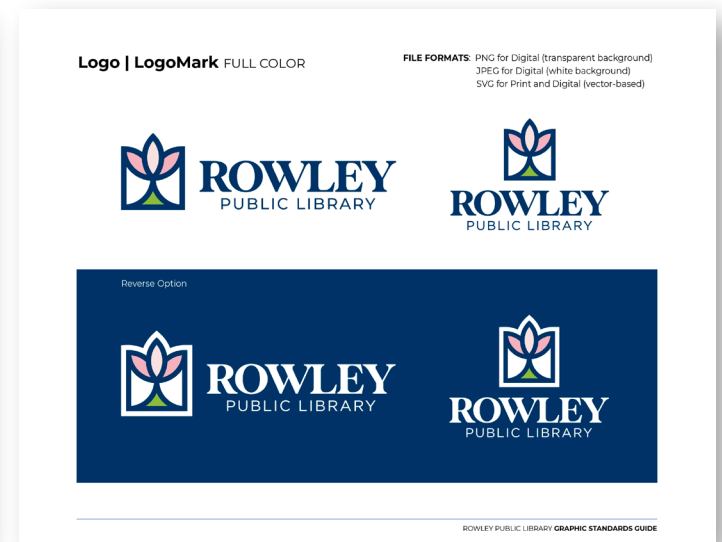
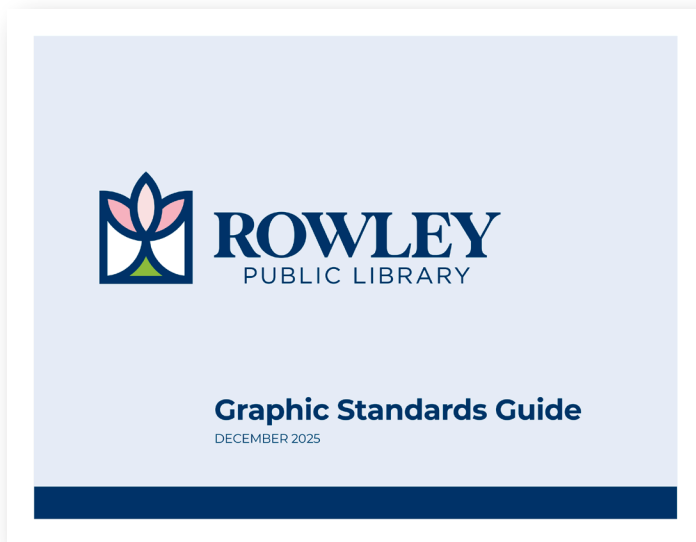
The system needed to work for staff and support a wide range of everyday needs, from event materials to signage and directional information.

The system included:

- a clear and flexible identity for print, digital, and signage
- standards for consistent application
- templates for programs and communication

The goal was to remove interpretation.

Staff should be able to create materials quickly and consistently without having to redesign or rethink the brand each time. Today, the system supports program promotion, wayfinding, signage, and day-to-day communication.



Excerpts from the Rowley Public Library standards guide showing identity rules, templates, and applications across programming, signage, and communication materials.



RFP 2026.02, City Branding

ATTENTION

Douglas Kerr
City Administrator
City of Isle of Palms
1207 Palm Boulevard
Isle of Palms, South Carolina 29451



RFP 2026.02, City Branding

ATTENTION

Douglas Kerr
City Administrator
City of Isle of Palms
1207 Palm Boulevard
Isle of Palms, South Carolina 29451
(843) 886-6428