



BRAND GUIDEBOOK

FALL 2020



Created for the City of Belmont, North Carolina by



2554 NC Highway 105, Boone, North Carolina 28607 | www.mosaiccivicstudio.com

with supporting market research, photography, & videography by



Boone, North Carolina | www.whiteblazemarketing.com

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CITY OF BELMONT Branding Committee

| Adrian Miller, ICMA-CM, City Manager
| Jamie Campbell, City Clerk & Public
Information Officer
| Phil Boggan, Downtown Director

| Cassidy Lackey, Community Events
Coordinator
| Angela Street, Main Street Advisory
Board Chair
| Kerri East, Belmont Tourism
Development Authority

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Atrium Health
Belmont Abbey College
Belmont Historical Society
Belmont Main Street Advisory Board
and Committees
Belmont Parks And Recreation
Advisory Board
Catawba River Outfitters
City Of Belmont Planning And Zoning

Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden
Gaston Techworks
Greater Gaston Development Corporation
Holy Angels
Keep Belmont Beautiful
Muddy River Distillery
Nellies Southern Kitchen
South Main Cycles/The Station

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
Background & Purpose	
Place-branding Goals	
Place-branding Process	
DISCOVERY	5
Competitive Analysis	
Target Markets	
Community & Stakeholder Engagement	
Analysis of Consensus	
EXPRESSION.....	17
Strategic Brand Platform	
Messaging	
Visual Identity & Graphic Language	
Brand Collateral	
CULTIVATION.....	41
Implementation Priorities	
Recommendations Matrices	

INTRODUCTION

IN THIS CHAPTER

| Background & Purpose:
Why brand?

| Place-branding Goals

| Place-branding Process

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE: WHY PLACE-BRANDING?

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Place-branding is a community-driven visioning process aimed at achieving consensus on a community's identity and aspirations.

The place-branding process prompts a community to answer three major questions: (1) Who are we?; (2) How do we tell our story?; and, (3) What do we aspire to become?

The process of answering these questions accomplishes five (5) key objectives:

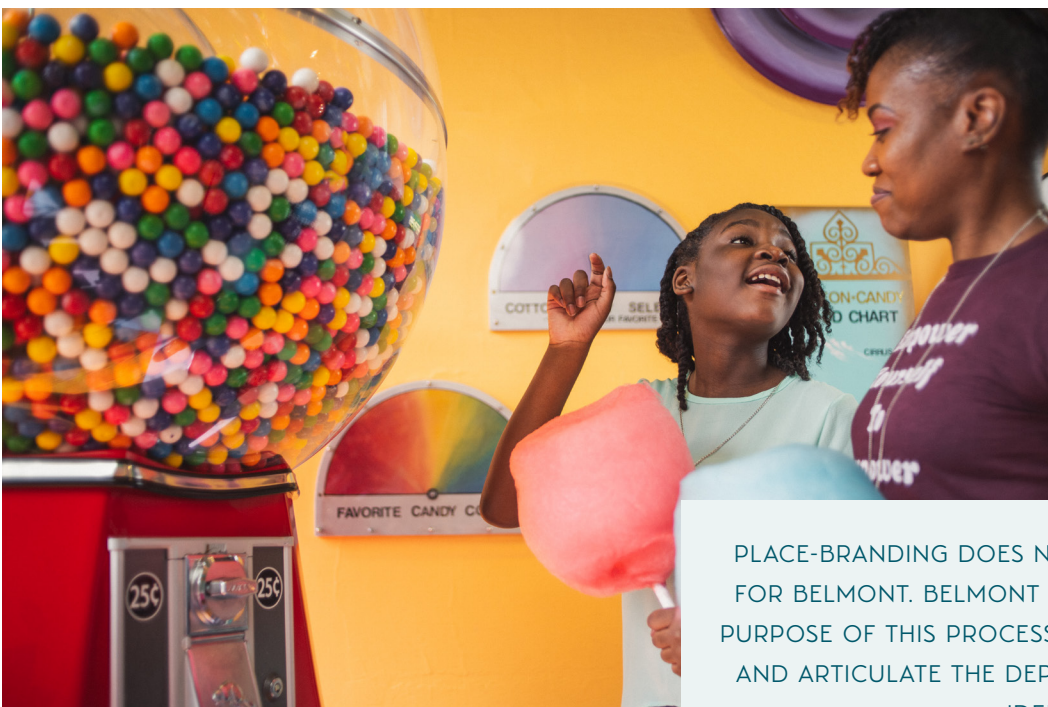
1. Establishes a unified vision for the future
2. Focuses community efforts toward initiatives and projects that are true to the city's identity or "on-brand"
3. Builds community pride
4. Increases community cohesiveness
5. Creates a shared vocabulary for how the city talks about itself

Most importantly, place-branding discovers and reinforces the personality, spirit, and character of a place while inspiring others to join in that spirit and provide new expressions of the energy, confidence, and ambition embodied by the city.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Place-branding is a useful tool for expanding the territorial competitive advantage of the City. The more visitors, prospective residents, investors, and entrepreneurs that the city attracts, the greater the positive economic impact.

However, a successful community-driven brand does more than just attract attention. It Inspires confidence in prospective investors or business owners. The brand conveys both what prospective investors can expect from the city and what the city will expect of investors or businesses as corporate citizens and contributors to the social fabric and well-being of the community. This leads to a higher likelihood of attracting new investment, businesses, and residents that are the right fit for the City of Belmont and whose values align with the city's brand.



PLACE-BRANDING DOES NOT CREATE A NEW IDENTITY FOR BELMONT. BELMONT HAS A BRAND IDENTITY. THE PURPOSE OF THIS PROCESS IS TO DISCOVER, ORGANIZE, AND ARTICULATE THE DEPTH AND DIVERSITY OF THAT IDENTITY.



Place-Branding Goals

- | Modernize Belmont's image while its honoring heritage
- | Express and build upon community pride
- | Establish a distinct and unified visual identity
- | Define a shared vocabulary for messaging and communication
- | Be relevant to existing residents and prospective visitors
- | Position the City to attract new businesses & investment that aligns with Belmont's core values

Place-Branding Process



BELMONT'S BRAND SHOULD BE
AUTHENTIC: TELLING A REAL STORY, NOT
A FAIRYTALE.

— FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

DISCOVERY

Community-driven visioning paired with data-driven analysis to define Belmont's identity and aspirations.

IN THIS CHAPTER

| Competitive Analysis
| Target Markets

| Community & Stakeholder
Engagement

| Analysis of Consensus



COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

KEY COMMUNITY ASSETS



HISTORIC DOWNTOWN BELMONT

ARCHITECTURE. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Belmont's walkable downtown recalls a distinguished era of commerce and social life. Restored turn-of-the-century storefronts are as vibrant as ever, bursting with local boutiques, cafes, and pubs.

STOWE PARK. Belmont's own "Central Park" opened in 1951 with a ferris wheel and carousel as regular attractions. A downtown icon, Stowe Park provides an unexpected respite in the midst of the city and a natural location for year-round community gatherings and events.

CULINARY HOTSPOTS. Downtown Belmont packs in nearly 20 locally-owned restaurants, cafes, cocktail lounges, specialty food stores, and craft breweries in less than a single square mile. These independent culinary destinations are the perfect complement to a day spent enjoying the city's shops and recreation offerings.



NATURAL RESOURCES & OUTDOOR RECREATION

PEDALERS. Five miles of purpose-built mountain bike trails are within a half-mile ride of downtown at Rocky Branch Park. Plans are in motion to further expand the system. The US National Whitewater Center offers 50 miles of single track within a 20 minute drive. Belmont's own independent bike shop supplies equipment and gear.

PADDLERS. With the mighty Catwaba Rivers to the east and west, and Lake Wylie to the south, Belmont is a flatwater paddler's paradise. The Belmont Rowing Center and Loftin Waterfront Park maximize these resources. The nearby Whitewater Center affords access to national-class whitewater kayaking & rafting.

PEDESTRIANS. Opportunities abound for runners, hikers, and walkers of all abilities. Hike miles of trail at Rocky Branch, the Whitewater Center, and Crowder's Mtn. State Park. Or take the Carolina Thread Trail and future Rail-Trail for a less technical journey. Notably, the Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden offers the perfect setting for a scenic stroll.



PROXIMITY TO THE QUEEN

EASY ACCESS. Belmont's proximity to the Queen City of Charlotte affords it's residents, visitors, and businesses the convenience of multi-modal transportation including Charlotte-Douglas International Airport, Interstate 85, and the future Lynx lightrail. Belmont might be easy to get to, but the city's charm makes it hard to leave!

JOB MARKET. The Charlotte metro has been experiencing record growth for the past decade. With unemployment below the national rate, the job market is a major draw for financial, science, and technology professionals. Belmont offers new residents the best of both worlds: competitive wages in an urban career and the comfort of small-town life.

CULTURAL ATTRACTIONS. Charlotte's major attractions draw visitors year-round and provide Belmont locals with the ability to enjoy national sporting events and world-class cultural experiences. Major attractions include: the Carolina Panthers NFL team, NASCAR Hall of Fame, and Blumenthal Performing Arts Center; plus numerous performance venues and museums.

COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

peer and "COMPETITOR" CITIES

BRANDING IS THE ART OF DIFFERENTIATION. The brands of several peer-cities were analyzed in order to understand Belmont's current market landscape. It's critical that Belmont's brand differentiates the city from these competitors.



DAVIDSON, NC

QUICK FACTS

MARKET AUDIENCE: Families, Active Adults and Retirees

POPULATION: 12,684

MEDIAN AGE: 36

DISTANCE TO CHARLOTTE:

21.8 miles (26 minute drive)

BRAND POSITION:

Family-friendly, small college town.

VISUAL STYLE:

Refined, Elegant, Subdued

TAGLINE: None

With its proximity to Charlotte, small college-town vibe, water frontage, and railroad through the center of town, Davidson exhibits strikingly similar characteristics to Belmont. It boasts comparable assets with access to outdoor recreation and a vibrant, revitalized Main Street that provides residents and visitors with a myriad of dining options.

With the exception of Davidson College faculty and staff, the town is primarily a bedroom community to Charlotte.



WAXHAW, NC

QUICK FACTS

MARKET AUDIENCE: Families, Supporters of the Arts, Active Adults, Entrepreneurs

POPULATION: 15,147

MEDIAN AGE: 38

DISTANCE TO CHARLOTTE:

30.1 miles (37 minute drive)

BRAND POSITION:

Friendly, vibrant, prosperous town where history and creativity build an enduring, safe and healthy community.

VISUAL STYLE: Historic charm

TAGLINE: None

Located south of Charlotte on the NC/SC state line, Waxhaw has embraced its history and creativity to foster a vibrant downtown scene. Waxhaw is a prime choice for professionals who work in Charlotte, but prefer small-town living.

With nearby access to the Catawba River and a downtown that has maintained its historic charm while embracing new restaurants and a brewery, it offers the best of small-town life and has quickly become one of the fast-growing Charlotte commuter-communities.





CARBORRO, NC

QUICK FACTS

MARKET AUDIENCE: Young Professionals, Active Adults, Innovators and Entrepreneurs, Supporters of the Arts

POPULATION: 21,544

MEDIAN AGE: 33

DISTANCE TO CHAPEL HILL:

1 mile (6 minute drive)

BRAND POSITION:

A progressive haven and remarkably diverse, exciting town with a difficult-to-articulate, but easy-to-feel identity.

VISUAL STYLE: Funky, playful, modern

TAGLINE: It's Carborro, feel free!

Located in the midst of the bustling Research Triangle, Carrboro shares a border with iconic college-town Chapel Hill. Carborro has capitalized on this close proximity by attracting eclectic and diverse businesses that all contribute to the town's distinct identity as a haven for free-expression and innovation. The town welcomes residents and visitors of all stripes and it has embraced young professionals that have been driven to the Triangle by the job market.

Historically, a small mill town, Carrboro weaves its history into its brand while infusing it with creativity and playfulness to create a truly dynamic messaging strategy that is appealing to a diverse constituency.



GAFFNEY, SC

QUICK FACTS

MARKET AUDIENCE: Active Adults and Retirees, Supporters of the Arts

POPULATION: 12,782

MEDIAN AGE: 37

DISTANCE TO CHARLOTTE:

54.1 miles (56 minute drive)

DISTANCE TO GREENVILLE:

49.8 miles (51 minute drive)

BRAND POSITION:

Charming, historic, elegant city with unparalleled history, arts, and culture.

VISUAL STYLE: Modern, playful

TAGLINE: Get into Gaffney

A notable exit on I-85 marked by the iconic Peachoid, Gaffney is located halfway between Charlotte, NC and Greenville, SC. Gaffney offers small-city living, a handful of mid-sized corporate employers, and access to larger job markets in Charlotte and Greenville-Spartanburg. As a very affordable city, a large percentage of Gaffney's residents are young parents who commute to their jobs in the larger metro-areas.

Boasting a downtown that embraces creativity, the arts, and history, Gaffney places a keen emphasis on its heritage and role in the Revolutionary War. The Overmountain Victory Trail and Kings Mountain National Military Park are national area-attractions closely tied to the city's identity. As a small college town, Limestone College and the Gaffney Little Theatre offer art showings & special events.

Honorable Mention

MOORESVILLE



KANNAPOLIS



WILSON



COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

Target Markets

The following target market personas represent specific audiences that are most likely to be consumers of Belmont's brand. Belmont is best suited for these target audiences based on its assets and the experiences the City can offer. Each profile explores the intrinsic attributes and motivations that compel a person to visit or live in Belmont.

LOCAL LISA



Age:

40-59 Years Old

Highest Level of Education:

Bachelor's degree

Social Networks:



Local Lisa has lived in Belmont for over ten years. She's watched the city grow and evolve, all the while maintaining its distinct identity and personality as a historic, down-to-earth community built on the principles of innovation and progress that began with the textile industry. Lisa cherishes this heritage. The rich history and creative spirit are part of what drew her to

the city in the first place. Lisa is concerned that continued development will cause the city to lose touch with its historic character and identity. She is active in the community; volunteering for the city and various civic organizations. Lisa's favorite part of Belmont is the energy and vibrancy of Main Street where she never meets a stranger, and the local shops and restaurants

offer an authentically-Belmont experience.

MARKETING CHALLENGES

- » Balancing the desire to retain Belmont's historic identity with the reality of growth & development

MARKETING MESSAGING

- » Modern sensibilities complement small town character.

MILLENNIAL MOM MEGAN



Age:

30 to 40 years

Highest Level of Education:

Master's degree

Social Networks:



Millennial Megan grew up in the east Charlotte area and couldn't wait to leave for college. Fast forward fifteen years: Megan has her Master's degree, got married, and has a lively young family. She wants to return close to home to raise her kids and contribute to the place that helped chart her path to success. Megan and her husband like Belmont for its walkable downtown neighborhoods, quaint shops, abundance of safe parks, family-friendly events, and access to the metro-area job

market. Megan and her husband are both looking for jobs in Charlotte, and they're attracted to Belmont for its access to free family-friendly outdoor recreation and active lifestyle. Millennial Megan strives for access rather than ownership when it comes to recreation, entertainment, and cultural experiences. In her opinion, the only thing Belmont lacks is more entertainment options for kids, especially indoor destinations like a children's museum or play-place.

MARKETING CHALLENGES

- » Balance between work, family, and community engagement
- » Access to a variety of activities for everyone in her family

MARKETING MESSAGING

- » Authentic activities and destinations the whole family can enjoy.

ADVENTURE AARON



Age:

26 to 39 years

Highest Level of Education:

Master's degree

Social Networks:



Adventure Aaron is the ultimate weekend warrior. He resides and works in the Charlotte suburbs, maybe with a young family or just his canine companions; but he lives for the weekends. After the work week you can find him living the multi-sport dream: Saturday he'll be shredding the trails on his mountain bike and cooling off with a crisp craft brew at the local pub. Sunday he'll relax a little with some

stand-up paddle boarding on the nearest river or lake. Aaron loves a weekend day-trip or overnight destination that he can keep coming back to with a culinary scene as diverse and exciting as the trails and rivers he loves so much.

MARKETING CHALLENGES

- » Downtown Product: Offering enough distinct local restaurants and shops

- » Recreation Product: Continue to expand access to natural resources and improvements to facilities in order to avoid the "one and done" mentality

MARKETING MESSAGING

- » Ride, Row, Run. The ultimate destination for living life to the fullest from the trails to the taps.



YOUNG PROFESSIONAL PAIGE



Age:
25 to 34 years

Highest Level of Education:
Master's degree

Social Networks:



Young-Pro Paige finished her master's degree a couple of years ago and she's just started climbing the career ladder with all the zeal of a twenty-something in her first real job. She works in downtown Charlotte and lives on the outskirts of the city where it's more affordable. She likes her job, the city's energy, and the multitude of entertainment options. Still, she feels a little socially isolated in such a big city with so many strangers. Paige wants to contribute

to a community where she has a sense of belonging and can make an impact through service. She's considering a move, but doesn't want to give up the liveliness of the city. Her perfect Saturday starts with farm-to-table brunch at a local cafe, followed by visiting her neighborhood's eclectic artisan market before heading to a food-truck rodeo in the park with live music. And you'd better believe she's Instagramming every second of it!

MARKETING CHALLENGES

- » Job opportunities
- » Finding enough to do in town
- » Striking the right vibe: Trendy, socially progressive, energetic

MARKETING MESSAGING

- » Proximity to big city attractions without sacrificing small town community and personality.

RETIRED RICK



Age:
65+ years

Highest Level of Education:
Bachelor's degree

Social Networks:



Rick and his wife want to retire to the Charlotte area to be closer to their children and grandchildren. They're looking for a city that is safe, stable, walkable, and offers housing conducive to seniors without much maintenance required. Rick is very active for his age and enjoys going for walks, leisurely bike rides, and fishing with his grandkids. Rick and his wife like to keep their social calendar busy with volunteering, church functions, and cultural events. They are big supporters of the arts and cultural destinations like the

Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden. They attend every theater and musical performance at the local college and have helped organize a summer *Shakespeare in the Park* event. Rick shops local as much as he can and prefers independent restaurants offering global cuisine where he knows the chef by name.

MARKETING CHALLENGES

- » Preserve small town charm and walkability
- » Housing options with low maintenance, accessibility, and easy access to amenities

- » Activities for grandchildren and seniors

MARKETING MESSAGING

- » Quintessential main-street America: walkable streets, friendly neighbors, plus a vibrant culinary scene, and a host of activities & events for all ages.

WHERE TO FOCUS

Belmont's numerous assets and current image are already successful in marketing the City to Local Lisa, Millennial Mom Megan, and Retired Rick. However, three target audiences that the City is well-suited to attract, but is currently under-performing are:

1. Adventure Aaron (Outdoor Recreation Tourism)
2. Young Professional Paige (Recent Advanced-degree Graduates)
3. Artists, Artisans, and their Supporters

The Belmont Brand should be leveraged to appeal to these audiences.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

STAKEHOLDER FOCUS GROUPS

BRANDING COMMITTEE

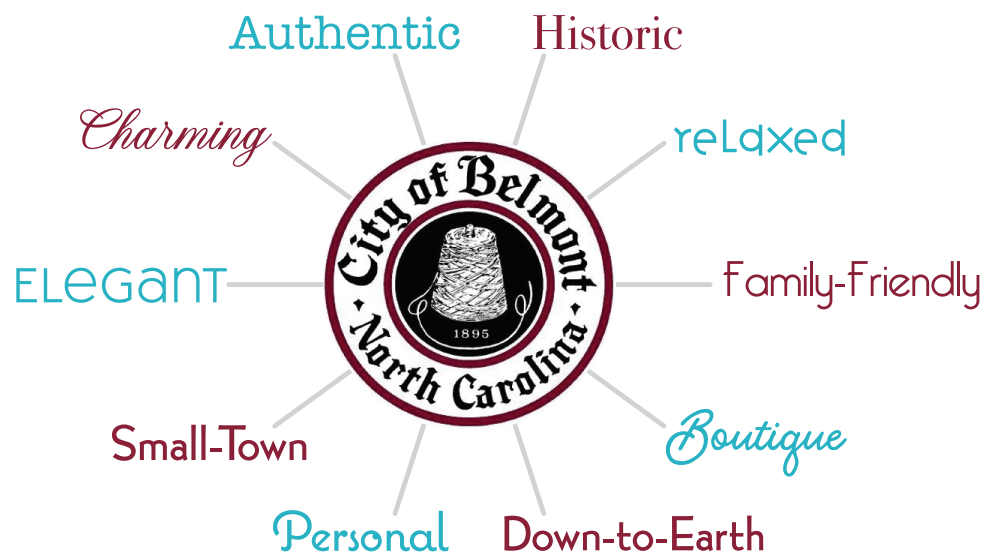
The Belmont Branding Committee is comprised of city staff and advisory board members from interrelated departments including Public Information, Planning, Main Street, and Tourism Development. At the November 2019 project kick-off, the Committee cited the need for modernized and unified city-wide messaging and visual identity as the impetus for engaging in the place-branding process.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- » Color palette should complement existing wayfinding signage and downtown kiosks
- » Brand should function to serve both locals and visitors
- » Brand must be an expression of both pride and unity for citizens and brand stakeholders
- » Belmont's top destinations & activities include: historic Main Street, Stowe Park, Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden, Belmont Abbey College, and the Catawba River
- » The brand should strive to attract: young, energetic professionals; people with an active lifestyle who are engaged in their community; people of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, supporters of the arts, specialty grocers, boutique merchants; independent businesses; and outdoor retailers

BEING BELMONT

The Branding Committee selected the following descriptors from a list of 80 as representative of Belmont's core identity, both traditional and aspirational.



BUSINESS OWNERS & CIVIC LEADERS

Belmont business owners and civic leaders from a broad cross-section of organizations including Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden, Belmont Abbey College, Atrium Health, Greater Gaston Development Corp., Holy Angels, and the Belmont Historical Society convened for a brand focus group in December 2019. The group described Belmont's rich traditions, small-town charm, and welcoming nature as some of the key characteristics responsible for the city's appeal to a broad audiences.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- » Belmont should strive to expand arts and cultural offerings
- » Expand communication strategies for reaching older residents without social media; young, busy families; and new residents
- » Coordinate marketing and communication strategies with Belmont Abbey
- » The railroad weaves Belmont's past and future together as a historic textile and railroad hub and now, the Carolina Thread trail, future light rail, and trolley will do the same
- » Rail & textile heritage are fundamental elements of the city's identity that should be remembered, but don't necessarily need literal representation in the visual brand
- » Nearly all of the organizations represented hope to incorporate Belmont's brand into their own messaging and promotions as way to champion the community as a whole

MAIN STREET COMMITTEES

In January 2020, representatives from the city's Main Street Advisory Board and sub-committees participated in a focus group at Gaston Techworks. When asked how they feel and want others to feel when visiting Belmont, they described the city's infectious energy and vitality, relaxed and welcoming vibe, and vibrant sense of community.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- » Belmont is not a "railroad town", it's so much more. Rail is not as much of a part of the city's identity as it once was.
- » The city is geared towards outdoor recreation and fostering downtown independent businesses rather than the tech industry.
- » Belmont Iconic images: the river, the outdoors, cycling, running, vibrant Main Street with citizens outside enjoying the city
- » Belmont's water frontage is a significant, untapped asset that should feature prominently in the city's identity
- » Historic charm is important to preserve, but the city must strike a balance by embracing a modern image and future
- » Invest in gateway signage and public art installations to curate the experience of entering Belmont

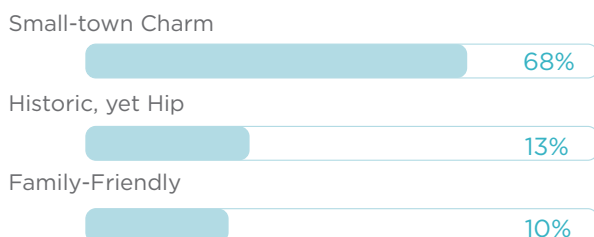
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

PUBLIC SURVEY RESULTS summary

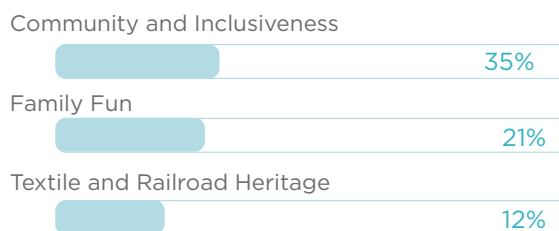
An online public survey aimed at gauging citizen and visitor perceptions and attitudes about the City was launched on December 13th. The five-part survey was open for one month and garnered 828 unique responses. The survey's success was a result of active promotion by the City through official communication channels such as Facebook, text notification, and utility emails. Results from key questions are summarized on the following pages. Full results of the survey can be found in the appendix of this report.

RESPONSES TO KEY QUESTIONS

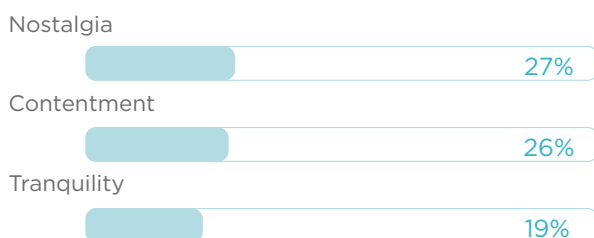
WHICH STATEMENT BEST DESCRIBES BELMONT'S VIBE OR PERSONALITY?



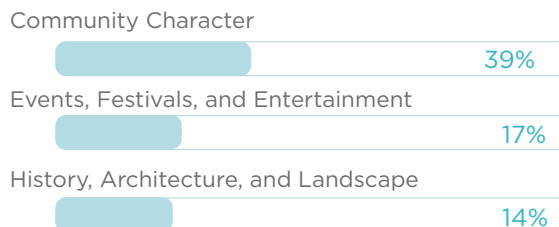
WHAT CONCEPT SHOULD THE CITY'S BRAND MOST EVOKE?



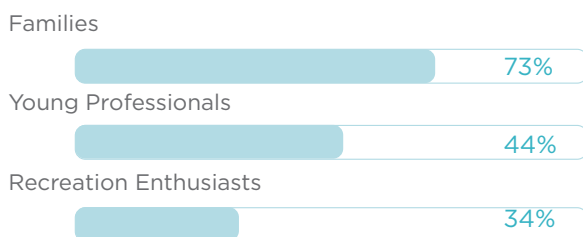
WHAT FEELING OR EMOTION DOES BELMONT MOST EVOKE?



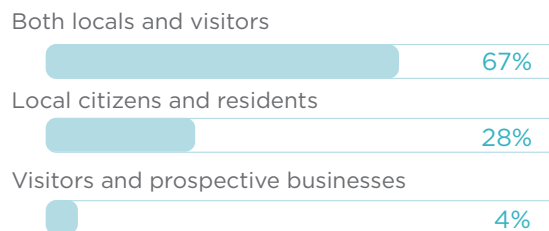
WHAT SHOULD BELMONT BE KNOWN FOR?



WHAT TYPES OF VISITORS OR NEW RESIDENTS DO YOU WANT BELMONT TO ATTRACT?



WHO SHOULD BE THE PRIMARY AUDIENCE FOR THE CITY OF BELMONT'S BRAND?



WHAT KIND OF BUSINESSES DO YOU WANT BELMONT TO ATTRACT?



HOW SHOULD BELMONT USE ITS NEW BRAND?



ANALYSIS OF CONSENSUS

A thorough comparison of the stakeholder focus group responses and public survey results reveals areas of consensus and potential incongruity regarding Belmont's brand purpose, identity, and target audiences.

BELMONT STAKEHOLDERS, CITIZENS, AND RESIDENTS AGREE ON THE FOLLOWING:

 **The Vibe.** Small-town charm; Historic, yet hip; Family-friendly; Down-to-earth



Representative Images. Historic downtown; Stowe Park; Vibrant streetscape; Outdoor recreation (running, walking, bicycling, paddling); Catawba River



Top Attractions. Historic downtown; Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden; Outdoor recreation and natural resources



Primary Audience. Locals; Visitors; Prospective businesses. Serve current residents while acknowledging the regional market.



New People. Families; Young professionals; Recreation enthusiasts, the Creative Class & arts supporters; Diversity of cultural backgrounds



New Business. Locally owned farm-to-table restaurants; Specialty grocery store; Independent businesses that double as a gathering place

As a whole, Belmont's brand stakeholders are aligned in their perception of the city's brand identity. However, a discrepancy exists between identified brand themes and target audiences identified by the focus groups, survey respondents, and through market research. Intentional forethought in creation of the brand strategy, careful messaging, and thoughtful design are required to address this nuance in a way that acknowledges Belmont's heritage while appealing to identified target audiences.



EXPRESSION

Articulating the defining traits of Belmont through written and visual mediums; telling the Belmont story.

IN THIS CHAPTER

| Strategic Brand Platform
| Messaging

| Visual Identity
& Graphic Language

| Brand Collateral

BRAND PLATFORM

BELMONT, NC

GOALS

1. Establish unified city-wide messaging and visual identity
2. Modernize the image of Belmont
3. Express city and community pride
4. Serve both local and external audiences

OBJECTIVE

The City of Belmont brand is a vehicle for declaring Belmont's identity to the world. The brand should reinforce the city's character; inspire community; provide a platform for promoting citywide events; and assist in recruiting new businesses, entrepreneurs, and visitors that are aligned with Belmont's values and aspirations.

ESSENCE

Belmont, North Carolina is a dynamic small city with a flourishing independent business and culinary scene complemented by diverse outdoor recreation offerings and a rich tradition of textile manufacturing.

THEMES

Historic and Hip
Authentic Small-Town Charm
Community of Neighbors
Recreation Refuge
Culture of Craftsmanship



POSITIONING SUMMARY

01

The City of Belmont's greatest opportunity for differentiation is the juxtaposition of an authentically charming and historic downtown with extraordinary access to a multitude of land and water recreation activities in the heart of North Carolina's most urbanized region.

02

Belmont's brand position is that of the city that has it all: metropolitan amenities with the comfort and simplicity of small-town life; a recreation oasis in the urban jungle; a strong connection to its history.

03

The City of Belmont will be known as a confident and welcoming community with a down-to-earth mentality; a premium hometown where multiple generations contribute to a high quality of life; and a desirable destination for regional recreation tourism and cultural events.

POSITIONING STATEMENT

Trace Belmont's historic roots and you'll find a distinguished textile and railroad hub that was home to the North Carolina textile industry's entrepreneurial legends. Mill-era charisma and upstanding community character pulse through Belmont today. Generation after generation has nurtured this bold spirit and creative spark to make way for a thriving historic downtown brimming with passionate local merchants and a burgeoning outdoor recreation scene. This vitality empowers Belmont citizens, entrepreneurs, and community leaders to continue advancing the city toward an ever-vibrant and exciting future.

BRAND PROMISE



MOVE AT THE SPEED OF LIFE.

An upbeat energy pulses through the air providing a rhythmic backdrop for life lived at just the right pace. The city's authenticity is palpable in a warm conversation overheard between neighbors, the scent of Main Street's well-worn brick in a summer rain, and the whisper of a cool breeze across the Catawba River. Tapping into this relaxed, but resolute vitality, Belmont's entrepreneurs, creatives, place-makers, and enthusiastic volunteers freely lend their time and talents to create a distinctive cultural landscape in the city they love. This energy reaches its height in Belmont's walkable downtown which is home to dozens of independently-owned shops, eateries, and cafés.



CULTIVATE COMMUNITY.

In Belmont, you'll never meet a stranger. Neighbors know your name and how you take your coffee. Even first-time visitors can immediately sense this friendly aura. A culture of craftsmanship, respect for our heritage, and a deep sense of commitment to each other are the common threads that weave us together. We are a community that values diverse backgrounds and new perspectives so bring your dreams and your big ideas and let's get started.




FEEL THE MOMENTUM.

A recreation refuge in an otherwise urban setting, Belmont's extensive riverfront and surprising abundance of serene landscapes provide ample opportunity for adventure and active living that appeals to all ages and abilities. From in-town mountain biking to a world-class botanical garden and the frequent weekend events in Belmont's central park, there is no shortage of opportunity to escape the metropolitan hustle without getting bored.


KEY MESSAGES

Belmont's key brand messages are categorized across four (4) topics. The City should continuously convey these messages about itself, emphasizing particular messaging depending upon the target audience.

1 DOWNTOWN CULINARY & INDEPENDENT BUSINESS SCENE

1. Belmont's historic and hip downtown invites you to explore the restored turn-of-the-century storefronts that are bursting with vibrant local boutiques, shops, and eateries. 
2. Downtown Belmont is a highly walkable culinary hotspot with nearly 20 locally-owned restaurants, cafés, cocktail bars, and craft breweries in less than a single square mile.
3. Experience the palpable, upbeat energy in this charismatic river city.

2 RECREATION

1. Belmont is a recreation refuge for a multitude of land and water activities that appeal to all ages and abilities. It's the perfect basecamp for adventure and active living in a relatively compact urban environment. 
2. Belmont is for pedalers: with in-town mountain biking at Rocky Branch Park, 50 miles of single-track at the U.S. National Whitewater Center, and a healthy road cycling scene.
3. Belmont is for paddlers: with the mighty Catawba Rivers to the east and west, and Lake Wylie to the south, Belmont is a flatwater paddler's paradise. The Belmont Rowing Center and Loftin Waterfront Park maximize these resources. The nearby Whitewater Center affords access to national-class whitewater kayaking & rafting.
4. Belmont is for pedestrians: Opportunities abound for runners, hikers, and walkers of all abilities. Hike miles of trail at Rocky Branch, the Whitewater Center, and Crowder's Mountain State Park. Take the Carolina Thread Trail and soon, the Belmont Rail-Trail for a less technical journey.
5. Belmont is home to the celebrated Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden which offers the perfect setting for a scenic stroll.

3 COMMUNITY & LIVABILITY

1. Belmont offers the best of both worlds: access to the Charlotte job market with competitive wages in an urban career and the comfort of small-town life. 
2. Belmont is easily accessible: enjoy the convenience of multi-modal transportation including Charlotte-Douglas International Airport, Interstate-85, and the future Lynx lightrail.
3. We are a friendly, multi-generational community of neighbors that values diverse backgrounds and new perspectives, so bring your dreams and your big ideas.
4. Welcome to a community of thinkers and doers. Entrepreneurs, creatives, place-makers, and enthusiastic volunteers freely lend their time and talents to create a distinctive cultural landscape and work hard for the continued success of the city they love.

4 CULTURE, ARTS, & HERITAGE

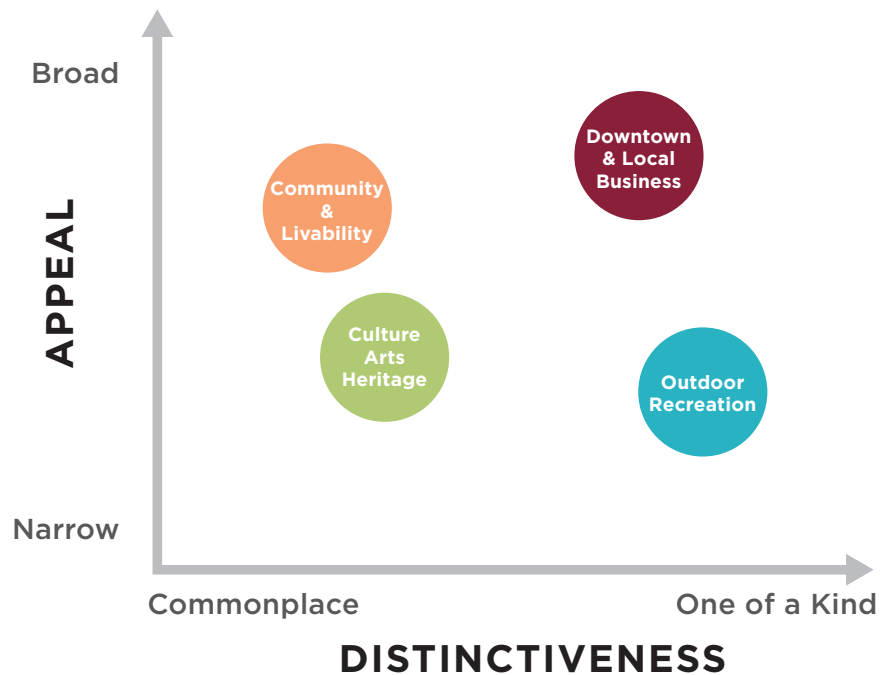
1. A culture of craftsmanship, respect for our heritage, and a deep sense of commitment to each other are the common threads that weave the community together. 
2. We are proud of Belmont's rich textile and railroad history that is still visible today throughout the city's architectural landscape: historic downtown storefronts, restored and repurposed mills, and quaint mill-village neighborhoods.
3. Our community has been creating since 1895 and we celebrate this tradition of craftsmanship with unique traditions, festivals, and parades.
4. Belmont Abbey College enriches the cultural landscape of the city with multiple performances and exhibitions each year from its renowned performing and visual arts programs.
5. The Belmont community regularly gathers in downtown Stowe Park to enjoy free concerts, events, and the company of neighbors.
6. Proximity to Charlotte affords Belmont locals the ability to enjoy national sporting events and world-class cultural experiences and performances.



HIERARCHY OF KEY MESSAGES

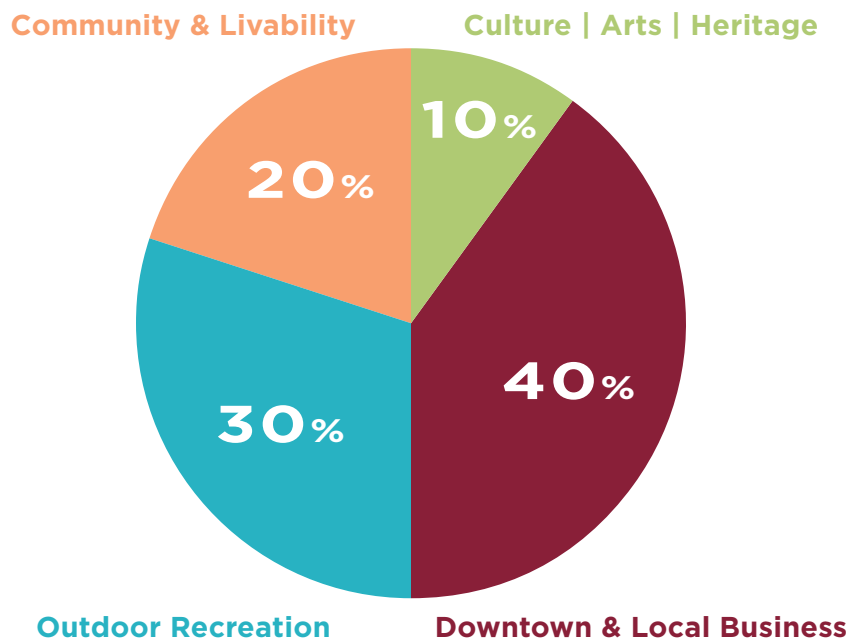
Key messages are organized into a hierarchy of significance based on two criteria: distinctiveness and appeal, shown on the x & y axes of the chart. Messaging that is centered on Belmont's most distinct assets with the broadest appeal should be most prevalent in the City's communications.

Belmont's downtown & culinary scene is both a distinct asset for the City and appeals to all of the City's target markets. Belmont's access to outdoor recreation, is an incredibly unique asset in the Charlotte-metro area, but it has a narrower appeal. Community culture & livability demonstrate broad appeal however, these characteristics are claimed by numerous other cities and are therefore, not as distinct. The same is true for culture, arts, & heritage messaging that will appeal to a more limited audience.











BUDGETING TIME & RESOURCES PER MESSAGING TOPIC

Belmont's communications budget should be guided by the messaging hierarchy with the greatest volume of messaging focused on the City's downtown & independent businesses. The pie chart suggests the percentage of external messaging that should be focused on each topic. This strategy should be updated every few of years to reflect changes in the City's assets and offerings



MESSAGE ARCHITECTURE








The Message Architecture is a guidance tool to ensure that everything the City communicates, regardless of channel, conveys a unified message. The Message Architecture summarizes a brand's prioritized communication goals into a short list of attributes and phrases. While it is not intended to serve as a complete glossary of words for use in marketing copy, all communications from the City should convey at least one of these traits about Belmont.

SMALL-TOWN	HISTORIC	HIP
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal• Welcoming• Genuine• Charming• Family-Friendly• Grassroots community <div> Local Lisa</div> <div> Millennial Mom Megan</div> <div> Retired Rick</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Authentic• Depth of character• Distinct• Original <div> Local Lisa</div> <div> Retired Rick</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vibrant• Artisanal• Progressive• Trend-setter• Non-traditional• Eclectic <div> Millennial Mom Megan</div> <div> Adventure Aaron</div> <div> Young Professional Paige</div>



The architecture helps guide communications that fall outside of the very specific messaging identified under Key Messaging. It helps internal teams decide what to communicate and how to communicate in terms of tone and voice.

Belmont's Message Architecture includes six (6) overarching categories of traits with subsequent themes listed below. Each category speaks to specific target audiences with certain key themes appealing to all target audiences.

CREATIVE	ADVENTUROUS	BOUTIQUE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energetic • Artistic • Playful • Innovative • Open-minded • Diverse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Down-to-Earth • Outdoorsy • Scrappy • Independent • Pioneering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Premium • Elegant • Sophisticated, but not snooty • Chic
 Millennial Mom Megan	 Adventure Aaron	 Millennial Mom Megan
 Young Professional Paige	 Young Professional Paige	 Young Professional Paige
		 Retired Rick

MESSAGING THEMES RELEVANT TO ALL TARGET MARKETS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal • Welcoming • Genuine • Authentic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depth of character • Vibrant • Artisanal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energetic • Down-to-Earth • Premium

Tagline

Belmont's tagline was selected by Branding Committee for its inclusive nature that represents the celebrated diversity of the City and its many offerings while honoring Belmont's heritage. The tagline provided a source of inspiration for a visual brand that incorporates the City's most defining features and signature qualities.

MANY THREADS,





ONE COMMUNITY

VISUAL IDENTITY & GRAPHIC LANGUAGE

LOGO SYSTEM

The primary logo has variations to accommodate different applications. The Belmont word mark utilizes a font style that is both playful and polished with a timeless mid-century feel. The sophisticated type combined with the organic, hand drawn lines results in a unique aesthetic that strikes the perfect balance of heritage, progress, and personality.

Primary Logo



Primary Logo With Tagline



Secondary



Icon



Pattern Motif



ANATOMY OF THE BRANDMARK

A pattern of hand-drawn threads represents the City's textile history and stands as a symbol of the diverse people of Belmont that are woven together to form a single community bound by their shared passion for the City. Embedded within the pattern are visual references to Belmont's many pathways and connectivity:



Rivers And Trails



The Railroad



Brick-Paved Sidewalks And
Buildings In Downtown

These many different threads, themes, and identities come together to comprise a unified community.



VISUAL IDENTITY & GRAPHIC LANGUAGE

COLOR PaLETTE



TURQUOISE

Pantone	2234 C
CMYK	67 20 34 0
RGB	86 163 168
Hex	56A3A8



TEAL

Pantone	3155 C
CMYK	100 0 25 47
RGB	0 98 113
Hex	006271



CRIMSON

Pantone	202 C
CMYK	1 98 58 44
RGB	134 38 51
Hex	862633



NAVY (BACKGROUND)

Pantone	4119 C
CMYK	83 75 50 55
RGB	37 42 59
Hex	252A3B



TYPE FAMILY

Use a consistent typeface to establish a recognizable visual identity.

BELMONT LOGO FONT

MB DECO (ALL CAPS EXCEPT FOR THE "J" AND "L")

Headline

Charoe semi BOLD

SUB-HEADLINE

Charoe medium (ALL CAPS)

Large BODY/Paragraph Header

Charoe regular

Decorative

Authenia

Body copy:

Gotham Book regular.

(sample) Eventi aliquo coremque nis
mintotae magnis rem que dionsed is-
cipsunt, et enem. Nequi ium vitatem re
nonsene stiaeped minum voluptat do-
luptatum nit aborporem quametur? Um ea
voluptat in cus eiciur res aceproreptia
doloria ide aut et res volende ipsa natiunti
offic tem doluptur aut ea cuptis conet
pos-tiusam etur as et odi que simos di
cusam si dendic tectureste ium enempos
quat id mintur?

DERIVATIVE LOGOS

DEPARTMENTS



COMMITTEES AND BOARDS



VISUAL IDENTITY & GRAPHIC LANGUAGE

LOGO MISUSE: MISTAKES TO AVOID!

Careful consideration was given to provide appropriate emphasis to each element of Belmont's visual identity. Therefore, City of Belmont logos must always be reproduced following the guidelines illustrated in this guidebook or the official style guide. Do not alter the font, color or proportional size of the City logo. The variations of the official identity illustrated here should be avoided.

DO NOT REPOSITION THE LOGO



DO NOT USE THE LOGO ON A BACKGROUND WITHOUT SUFFICIENT CONTRAST



*USE ONLY APPROVED BACKGROUND COLORS



DO NOT DISTORT THE LOGO



DO NOT CHANGE THE COLORS
OF THE LOGOS



DO NOT CHANGE THE FONT



BRAND COLLATERAL

OFFICE COLLATERAL



DOWNTOWN Banner



MANY THREADS, ONE COMMUNITY

united by a culture of craftsmanship

From textiles to rum, Belmont has always been full of makers, builders, and doers. Generation after generation has nurtured Belmont's bold ambitions and creative spark to make way for a thriving community of local merchants and artisans. A testament to the city's pioneering and entrepreneurial spirit, North Carolina's first legal rum distillery calls Belmont home. Born on the banks of the mighty Catawba River, the award-winning distillery is still 100% family-owned and operated. From its humble beginnings in the family kitchen to producing over 300 bottles a day in a re-purposed textile mill, this flourishing local business carries

Belmont's historic culture of craftsmanship to new heights. Steeped in history and saturated with laughter that echoes through the rum-soaked air, come sample the spirit of Belmont!



BELOMONT
NORTH CAROLINA



MANY THREADS, ONE COMMUNITY

from the trails to the taps

Close out a perfect day of epic adventures at one of the city's independent breweries, gastropubs, or cafés. Belmont is home to over 20 locally-owned culinary destinations within a single square mile of downtown – all of which are only a few pedal-strokes away from the city's purpose-built mountain bike trails at Rocky Branch Park. Get your pre-ride fuel, mid-ride gear, and post-ride refreshments all in one place at Belmont's iconic coffee shop/bike shop/craft beer pub located in the city's historic train depot. If ever there were a perfect basecamp for your next outdoor excursion, this is it. Belmont was made for pedalers, paddlers, and pedestrians of every ability, so grab your helmet or your paddle and get going!



BELMONT
NORTH CAROLINA

MANY THREADS, ONE COMMUNITY

of bold dreamers, big ideas, and bright smiles

Belmont is a community of neighbors where you'll never meet a stranger. Wander into the Cotton Candy Factory on Main Street and prepare to be welcomed like family! Operated by a local non-profit organization, the Cotton Candy Factory, along with a café and art gallery down the street, provides meaningful employment and vocational training for youth and adults who are differently able. The pure joy emanating from staff and nostalgic charm of the colorful atmosphere is utterly contagious and more than capable of coaxing a smile from anyone. Deeply committed to cultivating a community of inclusiveness and acceptance, Belmont welcomes everyone to our city of bold dreamers and bright smiles. Come on over, and experience the sweetness of life in Belmont!



BELOMONT
NORTH CAROLINA



PROMOTIONAL VIDEO

Belmont's visual brand collateral culminates in a promotional video featuring dramatic aerial shots of the City and scenes that capture Belmont's energy and vibrant lifestyle with custom animated graphics.



CULTIVATION: IMPLEMENTING THE BRAND

Introducing a place-brand is not a one-time event. A successful brand is nurtured and its reputation earned over time. Belmont's brand must be continuously cultivated through decision-making, targeted marketing and communication strategies, and community development.

IN THIS CHAPTER

| Implementation Priorities

| Recommendations Matrices

IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

TOP 5 PRIORITIES

The following matrices provide wide-ranging recommendations for implementing and expanding the reach and impact of Belmont's brand across four action categories: (1) communications; (2) brand management; (3) promotions; and (4) the built environment. Additionally, Belmont's top five (5) priorities are identified for immediate implementation.

TASK TYPE	PRIORITY	TASK OR PROJECT	COORDINATING AGENCIES	IMPLEMENTATION YEAR(S)
Communications	1	Develop press release and social media posts introducing Belmont's brand & new logo system; make Brand Guidebook available to the public	Belmont PIO	FY 20/21: Immediate
Brand Management	2	Provide logo files, office collateral templates, and style guide to all City departments to ensure visual & message consistency	Belmont PIO	FY 20/21: Immediate
Communications	3	Increase organic content on Belmont's Instagram Account with curated thematic post series and stories, in addition to ongoing regular announcements.	Belmont PIO	FY 20/21
Communications	4	Work with marketing agency or graphic design firm to develop brand-specific thematic templates for different content categories for each social media outlet.	Belmont PIO	FY 20/22
Communications	5	Update visitbelmontnc.org website with new visual brand, tagline, & messaging	Belmont TDA and City of Belmont PIO	FY 20/21





AUTHENTICITY IS THE BEDROCK
OF THE EXPERIENCE ECONOMY.

— PINE & GILMORE

IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

communications

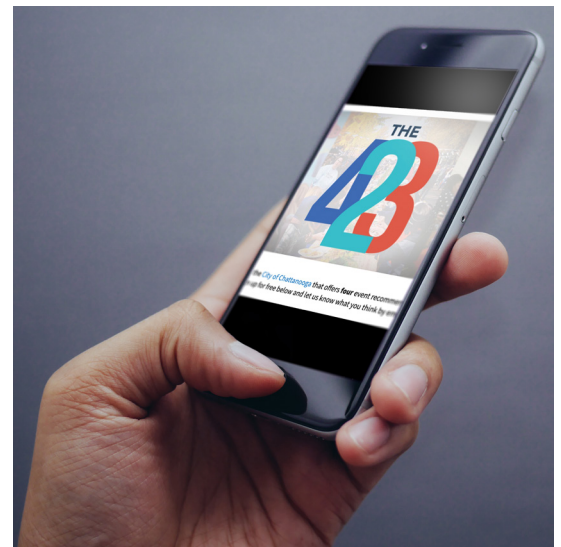
PRIORITY	TASK OR PROJECT	COORDINATING AGENCIES	IMPLEMENTATION YEAR(S)
1	Develop press release and social media posts introducing & explaining Belmont's brand & new logo system; make Brand Guidebook available to the public	Belmont PIO	FY 20/21: Immediate
2	Increase organic content on Belmont's Instagram Account with curated thematic post series and stories that highlight various businesses, local personalities, and events around the #manythreads1community hashtag	Belmont PIO	FY 20/21
3	Work with marketing agency or graphic design firm to develop brand-specific thematic templates for different content categories for each social media outlet. (public announcements, weekly content, etc.)	Belmont PIO	FY 20/22
4	Update visitbelmontnc.org website with new visual brand, tagline, & messaging	Belmont TDA and City of Belmont PIO	FY 20/21
5	Work with City's web developer to further incorporate visual brand identity into City website	Belmont PIO	FY 20/21
6	Develop & publish bi-weekly or monthly City e-newsletter	Belmont PIO	FY 20/21 and Beyond
7	Review Brand Messaging for continued relevance; update if necessary	Belmont PIO and Brand Committee	FY 22/23

CASE STUDY

COMMUNICATIONS RECOMMENDATION # 6

MUNICIPAL E-NEWSLETTER: CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE

In the public survey, respondents identified a direct, email newsletter as the 4th most preferred mechanism for receiving communication from the City of Belmont. (The City is already engaged in the top 3 methods: Facebook, website, local signage). The City of Chattanooga's weekly e-newsletter, The 423, is named after the city's area code and cleverly provides citizens with four event recommendations, two noteworthy news links, and three fun facts about the city. Citizens and stakeholders can subscribe on the city website.



Brand Management

PRIORITY	TASK OF PROJECT	COORDINATING AGENCIES	IMPLEMENTATION YEAR(S)
1	Provide logo files, office collateral templates, and style guide to all City departments to ensure visual & message consistency	Belmont PIO	FY 20/21: Immediate
2	Develop page for City website that is dedicated to the brand & logo with parameters for logo use by media & outside organizations	Belmont PIO	FY 20/21
3	Develop & publish bi-weekly or monthly City e-newsletter	Belmont PIO	FY 20/21
4	Work with graphic design firm to update all City event logos for brand consistency	Belmont PIO	FY 20/21 - FY 21/22
5	Work with operators of non-official Belmont social media accounts to either close down inactive accounts or eliminate their use of City emblems such as the official seal or logo. Update official City account profiles to state: "This is the official account of the City of Belmont, NC"	Belmont PIO	FY 20/21 & Beyond
6	Purchase domains relevant to City brand for brand identity protection and for potential tourism & community development use.	Belmont PIO or Belmont TDA	FY 20/21
7	Wrap City vehicles with new logo and brand-inspired designs. This can be achieved when new vehicles are purchased or existing vehicles are re-purposed or re-painted.	Belmont Public Works, Belmont Administration, individual City departments	
8	Consider contracting with a marketing agency or creating a new social media specialist/external communications position responsible for developing content and managing social media posting.	Belmont Administration & Belmont PIO	FY 21/22

CASE STUDY

BRAND MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS #2 & #3

PUBLIC USE OF MUNICIPAL LOGO: DENVER, COLORADO

Brand management is a critical component of cultivating the brand and maintaining the City's reputation. Brand management includes any and all actions that ensure consistent, cohesive on-brand communication from the City of Belmont regardless of written or visual medium. The City can preempt improper uses of its logos by educating potential users of the visual brand through the Brand Guidebook and Style Guide. The City of Denver provides would-be logo users with extensive resources and guidelines on the city website. While such efforts can't stop all inappropriate logo uses, they provide a proactive approach to ensuring the integrity of the city's visual brand is maintained. This technique is most effective when paired with an application for use of the city's official logos. Partner organizations or individuals wishing to use the city's logo are required to seek approval before receiving high-resolution logo files. The Town of Highlands, North Carolina and City of Simi Valley, California have developed effective applications to regulate use of their municipal logo systems.



IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

PROMOTIONS

PRIORITY	TASK OF PROJECT	COORDINATING AGENCIES	IMPLEMENTATION YEAR(S)
1	Create branded apparel and collateral such as stickers and other merchandise	Belmont PIO	FY 20/21
2	Partner with marketing agency to develop & execute digital promotional strategy including social media ad-buys, Google Targeted Advertising, and content marketing utilizing photography and delivered micro-content to target specific audiences with unique messaging.	Belmont PIO with support from Belmont TDA & Gaston County TDA	FY 20/21 & Beyond
3	Develop print marketing campaign and strategy with ads/advertorials in relevant publications such as Our State magazine.	Belmont PIO with support from Belmont TDA & Gaston County TDA	FY 20/21 & Beyond
4	Work with a marketing/PR agency to develop and execute story pitches to relevant media outlets for content development and earned media	Belmont PIO	FY 20/21
5	Partner with placebranding & design firm to develop print & digital Belmont Activity Guides around key brand themes: craft food & beverage; outdoor adventure; arts, culture & heritage	Belmont PIO and Brand Committee with support from Belmont TDA	FY 20/21
6	Partner with placebranding & design firm to develop a print & digital guide to "Doing Business in Belmont" for new business and entrepreneurial recruitment	Belmont PIO; Belmont Administration; Montcross Area Chamber of Commerce	FY 20/21 - FY 21/23
7	Explore feasibility of I-85 Northbound Billboard at or before Exit 26	Public Information Officer (PIO) with support from Belmont Tourism Development Authority (TDA) & Gaston County TDA	FY 21/22
8	Explore feasibility of I-85 Southbound Billboard at or before Exit 27	Public Information Officer (PIO) with support from Belmont Tourism Development Authority (TDA) & Gaston County TDA	FY 21/22

CASE STUDY

PROMOTIONS RECOMMENDATION #5

STORY PITCH: THE HORTON HOTEL

When the new Horton Hotel opened in downtown Boone, they needed to generate a buzz across the state. The hotel's owners worked with a professional marketing firm to create a story pitch for print and digital editorial outlets. The team identified publications and even specific journalists to target for the pitch. They were successful in communicating the Horton's key brand themes and storyline to *Our State* magazine resulting in a feature article detailing the journalist's stay at the hotel. Once published, the results were immediate and direct:

- | 75,000 Print Media Impressions
- | 1,725% Increase in Social Media Mentions
- | 950% Increase in Website Traffic



BUILT Environment

PRIORITY	TASK OR PROJECT	COORDINATING AGENCIES	IMPLEMENTATION YEAR(S)
1	Install brand-specific downtown Banners	Belmont Main St. Program	FY 20/21
2	Design & install brand-consistent monument sign for the new Belmont Cityworks	Belmont Administration; Belmont PIO; Belmont Planning Dept.	FY 20/21
3	Develop uniform design standards for City parks & facilities signage to be consistent with new brand	Belmont Administration; Belmont PIO; Belmont Planning Dept.	FY 20/21
4	Update and replace existing City parks and facilities signage based on new design standards for brand consistency	Belmont Administration; Belmont PIO; Belmont Planning Dept.; Belmont Public Works	FY 21/22 & beyond
5	Establish brand-consistent gateway signage, landscaping, & lighting at key entrances to Belmont	Belmont Administration; Belmont PIO; Belmont Planning Dept.	FY 21/22 - FY 22/23
6	Consider brand-consistent public art/sign installation in Stowe Park	Belmont Administration; Belmont PIO; Belmont Parks & Recreation	FY 21/22
7	Commission brand-inspired murals on City water towers	Belmont Administration; Belmont PIO; Belmont Public Works	FY 21/22
8	Commission public art and mural installations through the City including creative applications like electrical boxes. Consider Percent for Art program to fund commissions.	Belmont PIO; Belmont Community Development; Belmont Main St Program; Gaston Arts Council	FY 21/22 & beyond

CASE STUDY

BRAND MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATION #6

BRAND-INSPIRED PUBLIC ART: COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

The Commonwealth of Virginia's slogan, *Virginia is for Lovers*, is manifested throughout the state in the form of a simple public art installation bearing the word LOVE. Each installation offers a unique nod to the heritage of the area or location that it occupies, but the consistent messaging and visual cues tie the commonwealth's communities together in a memorable, photo-worthy way. A complete visual listing and map of Loveworks installations can be found at virginia.org/love.

The City of Belmont has an opportunity to effectuate a similar impact on the visual landscape through brand-inspired public art installations. Public spaces, such as Stowe Park and the CityWorks campus, provide the perfect canvas to make a statement with the Belmont's new logo and visual brand.



