



Legislation Text

File #: 23-130, **Version:** 1

2023 Carrboro Brand Guidelines

PURPOSE: The purpose of the 2023 Carrboro Brand Guidelines is to update the guidelines to include new Carrboro brands for seasonal observances that will be used in marketing, email signatures and Downtown banners. The update also creates a refresh of the Carrboro “Feel Free” tagline to “Feel Free to Be” and creates this message in additional languages including Spanish, Burmese and others.

DEPARTMENT: Communication & Engagement

CONTACT INFORMATION: Catherine Lazorko, Communication & Engagement Director,
clazorko@carrboronc.gov <<mailto:clazorko@carrboronc.gov>> or 919-918-7314

COUNCIL DIRECTION:

☒ Race/Equity ☒ Climate ☐ Comprehensive Plan ☒ Other

The update of the Carrboro Brand Guidelines will introduce new logos to communicate the Town’s alignment with and support of national observances such as Black History Month, Women’s History Month, Earth Month, Bike Month, Juneteenth, Hispanic Heritage Month, July Fourth, and Pride Month. Additionally, the guidelines include a refresh of the Carrboro “Feel Free” tagline to “Feel Free to Be” and creates this message in additional languages including Spanish, Burmese and others.

INFORMATION: Since 2013, the Town of Carrboro has relied on Carrboro Brand Guidelines (Attachment A) for consistent uses of the mark and tagline including color, placement and usage standards. In the 2022 Carrboro Brand Guidelines (Attachment B), the Town Council approved a new government logo and secondary department logos. Today, Town staff aim to develop a unique logo set for marketing of seasonable observances that have traditionally been followed by the Town of Carrboro.

Questions with regard to the “Feel Free” tagline were posed by the Council during its last review of the Brand Guidelines on October 18, 2022. A second part of this update proposes a refresh of the Carrboro tagline.

Town staff have worked with The Splinter Group on these various elements, which are proposed to be included in the 2023 Carrboro Brand Guidelines following the Council’s review. The Council is asked to consider the accompanying Decision Making for Racial Equity Tool (Attachment C) while considering adoption of the updated Brand Guidelines (Attachment D).

Seasonal Brands

The Carrboro brand has been shown broadly across the local community, town staff, and reaches beyond Carrboro through tourism and marketing outreach across North Carolina and the country.

Communication and Engagement staff believe there are additional opportunities for Town brand uses for:

Business Development, Tourism and Marketing (marketing and values brands). With this interest, Town staff returned to the Splinter Group, the design agency that created the original mark and tagline, to request additional guidance.

In response to this request, the Splinter Group has produced new Town of Carrboro logos with color gradients to symbolize different seasonal observances:

- Black History Month
- Hispanic Heritage Month
- Earth Month
- Pride Month
- 4th of July
- Bike Month
- Juneteenth
- Women's History Month

These new seasonal brands will be used for marketing purposes including downtown banners, graphics and email signatures.

“Feel Free to Be” Proposed Tagline

The Council expressed interest in its last review of the Town Brand Guidelines to revisit the “Feel Free” tagline. In response, The Splinter Group has slightly modified the tagline to “Feel Free to Be.”

Background about the development of the tagline is that the design agency conducted a nine-month campaign in 2013 to develop a brand identity including the “Feel Free” tagline for Carrboro in 2013. This included a two-month community engagement campaign called “Let’s Talk Carrboro,” featuring “idea stations” at 23 Carrboro business, an online survey, and group and individual interview sessions. In their presentation to the Town Council on Nov. 12, 2013, Lane Wurster and Steve Balcom explained that the “Feel Free” tagline is about liberty, encouragement, and hospitality. “It means more yeses than nos, to follow your heart, be yourself, loosen your tie.” Read more at <https://www.carrboronc.gov/2737/Carrboro-Brand-Guidelines>

The purpose of the tagline is to communicate with consumers about the Carrboro brand and create a memorable impression. Without context, “Feel Free” can hold a range of interpretations. While some will carry the meaning as a general statement about freedom, freedom for some is not freedom for all. Black Americans continue to struggle for freedom, justice, and equity as they face the toll of everyday racism.

To further provide context, “Feel Free to Be,” is proposed as an option to capture the community sentiment expressed during the original community engagement branding campaign. It also expands on its meaning to provide further context. By including “To Be,” the meaning expands to include a message about comfort with self and individuality, empowerment, confidence, worth and value, and freedom from discrimination in all forms. Carrboro is a community that encourages people to express themselves authentically. This is a place where you can discover your “true” self - the part of you that reflects your authentic passions and interests, and find a more fulfilling life.

2023 Carrboro Brand Guidelines

The update to the 2023 Carrboro Brand Guidelines includes the changes outlined above.

This update accomplishes the following:

- Establishes Carrboro brands for seasonal observances that will be used in marketing, email signatures and Downtown banners.
- Establishes additional secondary logos in five colors (copper, orange, purple, black and silver) to include “Town of Carrboro - NC.”
- Creates a refresh of the Carrboro “Feel Free” tagline to “Feel Free to Be” and creates this message in additional languages including Spanish, Burmese and others.
- Updates the Brand Guidelines with these changes.

FISCAL IMPACT: The Splinter Group has been under contract for \$1,750 to provide working designs for future use and to update the Town Brand Guidelines. Town staff are simultaneously working on banner designs, as well as acquiring approvals from Duke Energy prior to installing banner hardware on light poles. There are future budget implications to print banners for Downtown Carrboro.

RECOMMENDATION: The Town Manager recommends that the Council consider approving these changes to be incorporated into the 2023 Carrboro Brand Guidelines.