

CITY of SALEM FLAG HANDBOOK

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Contents

Overview: Project Scope	3
Overview: History of Salem’s Existing Municipal Flag	4
Vexillology: Best Practices in Municipal Flag Design	5
Principles of Good Flag Design and the Process	6
Five Basic Principles	6
Five Step Process.....	7
Testing the Process	11
Recommended Process.....	12
Appendix and Sources.....	13

Overview: Project Scope

Objective: To gain a clear understanding of the City of Salem's current Municipal Flag and determine whether or not it merits redesign. Develop a public process for the selection of a new municipal flag and prepare a guide of best practices in municipal flag design.

Overview: History of Salem's Existing Municipal Flag

The City of Salem's flag was originally adopted on August 14, 1972 after a contest which ran for just one month, from February 1, 1972 to March 1972. An outside local design consultant, Arvid Orbeck was hired to review the design submittals. After reviewing the submittals, Mr. Orbeck decided to combine features of several of the submitted designs. Mr. Orbeck's final design was submitted to a joint meeting of the Mayor's Flag Committee and City Council on May 4, 1972 and in August 1972 the Salem City Council adopted Ordinance 104-72 adopting the current flag as Salem's official municipal flag.

As Mr. Orbeck describes, the design symbolizes the essence of the City of Salem through the star at the center, which represents the city as the state capitol, which is represented below the star. The four broad lines converging at the star represent how decisions made here in Salem flow out of the city throughout Oregon, after input is received from throughout the state. The colors symbolize the colors of the seasons: summer is blue/water; autumn is golden yellow; white is the winter but also peace and honor and green reflects spring and eternal hope.

A local business, the Salem Federal Savings & Loan Association paid for the costs of the flag contest, including radio and television advertising and Mr. Orbeck's fee.



Vexillology: Best Practices in Municipal Flag Design

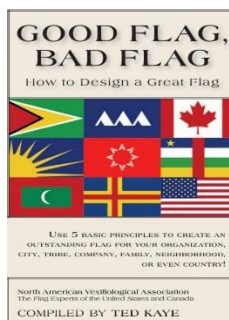
Vexillology is the study of flags. One of the first things our team did was to contact Ted Kaye, a vexillologist, and our local representative from the North American Vexillological Association (NAVA).



Mr. Kaye provided us with examples of good municipal flags and bad municipal flags. He also provided us with a brochure: “Good Flag, Bad Flag”, which provided us a great foundation of five basic principles of good municipal flag design.



Good Flag (Chicago)



Bad Flag (Milwaukee)

Principles of Good Flag Design and the Process

Five Basic Principles

The principles of good municipal flag design are simple. They are:

1. Keep it Simple
2. Use Meaningful Symbolism
3. Use 2-3 Basic Colors
4. No Lettering or Seals
5. Be Distinctive or Be Related

As demonstrated in all the examples of good municipal flag design, these basic principles ensure that flags are easily recognizable, can be easily reproduced and ensure that even a grade school child could draw the municipal flag.



Five Step Process

The principles for adoption of a municipal flag design are also simple and straightforward. They are:

1. Have a good reason
2. Get buy in from Decision Makers early
3. Use a well-Publicized Public Process to get Design Ideas
4. Establish a clear Process to Select Finalists
5. Ensure Decision Makers make the final choice

Reason

There has to be a good reason to redesign the flag in order to generate public and political support for the re-design. It can be a positive reason (ie. a specific big city-wide event? An opportunity for re-branding? It works best if its tied to a larger community/unifying effort; or it can be a negative reason (ie. our current flag had a poor evaluation from NAVA, and Portland's is better).



Chicago's Municipal Flag has tremendous public support

Political and Community Support

Prior to embarking upon our process, it's important that our City Council pass a Resolution (or some other action) authorizing the effort through appointment of a Flag Committee and asking this Committee to define a specific process/timeline and communications plan and method for adoption. The most successful method is for the City Council to establish a Flag Design Review Committee (5-7 members); representative of the community. Some municipalities and states have embarked upon the process of redesigning the flag without this political support and process being well defined, and ultimately the new design was not adopted.



Milwaukie's 2016 Flag Design Winner- not Adopted due to lack of political process and support

Public Outreach

Some ideas recommended for public outreach included having a contest that includes the schools, sponsored by a private business, the Chamber and/or the city newspaper. If we are interested in collaborating with the schools, Mr. Kaye recommended that we launch the contest in August/September with the designs due in November, and that we provide teachers with pre-formatted 8 ½ " x 11" paper divided into 1" x 1 ½ " rectangles and that some municipalities coordinated with their local college/University to work with the Elementary/Middle schools to convert children's ideas to CAD (digital design). It is recommended that our Flag Committee work in partnership with our Public Information Officer and the media to share the reason for the flag re-design and help explain the contest rules and criteria. The media can be a great partner as well in publicizing the results, especially, following up with great positive stories about the folks that designed the top 3 and sharing the winning design.



Interviewees from our Salem "Flag Poll", where we asked whether or not folks knew about Salem's Flag

Final Flag Selection: Criteria for Judging

In order to be fair, the criteria for judging the municipal flag design must be clear and objective. The initial evaluation can be done by the Flag Committee (with assistance from NAVA if needed). The best recommended procedure would be for the Committee to review all initial submittals and rate them within the 5 specific categories (criteria); giving them a score of 0-10. They can then narrow their choices down to the top five.

Example Scoring Sheet:

1. Keep it Simple						
	The flag should be so simple that a child can draw it from memory					
2. Use Meaningful Symbolism						
	The flag's images, color, or patterns should relate to what it symbolizes.					
3. Use 2-3 Basic Colors						
	Limit the number of colors on the flag to three, which contract well and come from the standard color set.					
4. No lettering or Seals						
	Never use writing of any kind or an organizations seal.					
5. Be Distictive or Be Related						
	Avoid duplicating other flags, but use similarites to show connections.					

Judge Name:	Give a score of 0-10 for each item (0 = Bad, 10 = Good).					
Design #	Simplicity	Symbolism	Colors	No Words	Distinctive	TOTAL

Final Opportunities for Public Participation

Once the final five designs have been selected, the public can be invited to participate in a “Public Flag Poll”. This would be an opportunity for the public to pick their favorite flag, rating the top 5 through an online poll, coordinated outreach with the paper. Once the feedback has been received, the Committee can forward the top three designs (based upon feedback from the public), to the City Council for their final review, selection and adoption.



TO PICK YOUR FAVORITE SALEM MUNICIPAL FLAG DESIGN!

Testing the Process

Our capstone team tested the process internally, by distributing a request throughout City departments and asking for volunteers to design a new municipal flag for the City of Salem.



We received a total of eleven entries, and our capstone team acted as the 'Flag Committee' and evaluated each submittal based upon the established criteria.



After eliminating eight of the entries for various reasons (too many colors; symbolism not relevant; complicated design), we narrowed it down to the final three. We forwarded these final three designs to the Department Directors, who then voted on their final design using Survey Monkey. Overall we found the process straightforward and easy to use, and strongly recommend it for use by the Flag Committee.

Recommended Process

We recommend the following:

1. City Council appoint a Flag Committee who then is responsible for:
 - a. Creating a Design Process with clear criteria.
 - b. Developing a Public Outreach Program that includes
 - i. Inviting the public to submit designs
 - ii. Inviting the public to judge the final 5 designs
 - c. Submitting Recommended Designs (3) to Council
2. City Council reviews the final 3 designs and adopts the new municipal flag.

Appendix and Sources

Capstone Team Video- Invitation to city employees to design flag: <https://youtu.be/gQLKQlxi9dw>

Interviews, Ted Kaye, Brian McKinley and Andrew Hendrie. Conducted May 2017.

North American Vexillological Association: NAVA has five different case studies on flag design available for our reference.

<http://nava.org/nava-digital-library-flag-design-resources/>

Portland Flag Association

<https://portlandflag.org/municipal-flag-improvement/>

Purcell, John M.; Croft, James A.; and Monahan Rich, *American City Flags: 150 Flags from Akron to Yonkers*, (New Jersey: North American Vexillological Association, 2003)

Roman Mars Ted Talk: Why City Flags May be the Worst Designed Thing You've Never Noticed:

https://www.ted.com/talks/roman_mars_why_city_flags_may_be_the_worst_designed_thing_you_ve_never_noticed?language=en

Salem Flag Redesign Video-- Interviews and Summary of Project Benefit:

Produced by Emily Fitzgerald, University of Portland student project: <https://vimeo.com/218211065>