

SUSTAINABLE



STILLWATER  
MINNESOTA

BRANDING AND MESSAGING  
GUIDEBOOK

LAST UPDATED MARCH 2020

The definitive guide on the look, the sounds, the read,  
and the style of Sustainable Stillwater Minnesota.

# BRANDING IS EVERYTHING. But, what does this mean?

## I. INTRODUCTION: BRANDING IS EVERYTHING

Everything we publish tells a story of who we are. Our brand presence has the power to inform, surprise, warm the heart, and inspire to take action. Using good design and a unified message is vital to setting the tone of our visual presence and telling our stories with purpose.

As an organization, how we present ourselves to the world must be responsive to our audience. Our duty is to keep a fresh look and provide a welcoming presence to our constituents, as well as future supporters and donors. Included are examples of how we will achieve this through both online and paper mediums.

Just as all staff should be in the know about what talking points to use when a supporter asks about us, all staff should be in the know about our latest uses of design and messaging that define our image. This guide has it all, and we'll keep updating it.

Consistency is key. It's important not only in how we sound, but in how we look as well. This Branding and Messaging Guidebook works to unify consistency of tone and voice with consistency in our visual imagery.

So, take a look around. Need an event flyer, or have a question about using our logo? Ask us. We're here to help.

Questions? Ask Kelsey Depew by email [kelsey@sustainablestillwatermn.org](mailto:kelsey@sustainablestillwatermn.org)

## II. EDITORIAL GUIDELINES

The following are Sustainable Stillwater MN's editorial guidelines. Please follow these guidelines when preparing any material to be published, whether in print or electronic form.

### A. TAG LINE:

#### THINK GLOBALLY, ACT LOCALLY.

Encapsulating everything our organization does, *Think Globally, Act Locally*. brings the ethos of Sustainable Stillwater MN into focus. We just research, converse, and plan, but we also take action in our local community to bring big ideas to fruition. This is why *Think Globally, Act Locally*. creates a strong brand personality. The alternate version *There's No Planet B, so Act Locally Now.* may be used to appeal even more strongly to supporters.

### B. BRAND PERSONALITY

Trustworthy, Hardworking, Authentic, Straightforward,

While sitting down with a SSMN supporter or staff member to sip a cup of coffee, the words above are the attributes you would use to describe them. You would ask this person to watch your home when on vacation and wouldn't be surprised if this person offered to help fix your truck. These human characteristics of our supporters and staff are what make SSMN unique and strong among other environmental advocacy organizations. Keep these characteristics in mind as you craft your messaging.

### C. POSITIONING STATEMENT

Thinking about and describing all the great work we do with Sustainable Stillwater MN can be a bit overwhelming when getting the question, "So, what does SSMN do?" Use the statement below to answer with a concise response.

"Sustainable Stillwater MN was founded by a concerned group of Stillwater students and residents. Today, we work towards strengthening our community's initiatives that promote social, economic, and environmental resiliency in Stillwater through our various workgroups. Overall, we want Stillwater to be sustainable and healthy place for all to live."

### D. TONE AND VOICE

We write and talk as real people, to and for other real people. We use a conversational tone in most speaking and writing. Give a preference to shorter sentence, smaller words, and frequent paragraphs (or pauses). When speaking,

watch out for nonwords that crop up to fill a space – Uh, ah, um. Those can be distracting to your listeners.

Sustainable Stillwater MN's organizational tone is like us, positive, practical, forward-looking. We don't avoid tough problems, but we do choose our narrative to offer hope and a vision that we can change the future when we all work together toward a common goal. When we do criticize or attack, we base it on a strategic decision to hold someone accountable, not merely on anger or annoyance. We don't complain about how bad things are, and we never whine. (who makes that strategic decision? When in doubt, go to the top.)

Overall, we live up to our image as an organization that is thoughtful, intellectually honest, challenging, principled, and feisty. We do our homework in an unbiased, non-ideological way that reflects our values.

We are local and practical (brilliant, too!), with something valuable to offer folks who share our values. Our integrity and fearlessness in standing for our values is best displayed when it is done in a way that reaches the hearts and minds of the Greater Stillwater Area people.

## E. SSMN IDENTIFIERS

Sustainable Stillwater MN should be identified consistently through its documents and publications. Write out the entire name for the first instance the organization's name is used in a document and use "SSMN" afterward.

Please do not use an article before SSMN. It should never read "the SSMN". Never use SS. (There is another Sustainable Stillwater located in Oklahoma. SS is their abbreviation.)

Please watch capitalizations when using the abbreviation. All letters should be in caps: SSMN. Never use SSmn.

## F. HISTORY

In April 2013, the Stillwater High School had a presentation from students who had attended a 2012 national Transition Towns conference. Two of SSMN's founders (Louise Watson and Roger Tomten) attended the Follow-up Transition Towns Meeting organized by the students which was assisted by the Alliance for Sustainability. After those students graduated and left town the fall of 2015. Louise and Roger tried to maintain connectivity with interested people on the Alliance's email list. It was then that Kevin Ritchey, a local person serving on the Alliance for Sustainability Board, began meeting with Roger and Louise to see how he could help organize an official group.

In January 2016, Louise and Roger began defining the new organization and named it Sustainable Stillwater MN, create a logo, and mission statement. They then began planning the formal Launch Party for June 2016.

Since then, our management team has added momentum to the many wonderful sustainability initiatives already in Stillwater, such as the downtown business waste management program S.E.E.D., promotion of energy management for carbon reduction, Safe Routes to School in partnership with Friends of Stillwater Trails, and the adoption by Stillwater of the GreenStep Cities plan.

On March 4, 2019, SSMN became a 501c3 nonprofit charitable organization.

**Done So Far:** Created the downtown business waste management program S.E.E.D.; promoted energy management for carbon reduction through public education workshops

and grants; participated in Safe Routes to School activities designed to promote biking; were instrumental in making Stillwater a Minnesota GreenStep City; successfully lobbied for traffic-calming measures downtown; did a public opinion survey to get data for a more bike- and pedestrian-friendly measures; installed dozens of cigarette disposal receptacles downtown; stenciled storm drains with “no dumping” warnings.

**Doing Now:** Seeking measures to have Stillwater designated as an Audubon “Bird City.” Working with the city and the Chamber of Commerce to encourage green businesses; working with the county to implement more recycling/composting/reduction of waste; working with the Stillwater’s GreenStep manager to encourage faster implementation of green measures.

## G. WORKGROUP NAMES

In general, avoid mentioning individual program names unless required or it adds clarity. They use a lot of real estate, and better branding is to acknowledge Sustainable Stillwater MN, from which all good things flow. GreenSteps is an exception because it is already a widely known program. Always make it known that GreenStep Cities is a Sustainable Stillwater MN workgroup.

Here are the full names of our workgroups:

- Green Business Directory (GBD)- <https://www.greenstillwater.org/>
- GreenStep Cities (GSC)
- Natural Resource Workgroup (NRWG)
- Bicycle Friendly Community (BFC)

## H. GENDER-NEUTRAL LANGUAGE

Use only gender—neutral language for Sustainable Stillwater MN's materials. The faces of Stillwater residence, local businesses, and other organizations are changing. We want to be as inclusive as possible.

Avoid the use of "he" (or "he/she" or "s/he") when the use of the "they" or repeating the noun is possible.

Other examples:

- Humanity (not mankind)
- People, humans (not man)
- Manufactured (not manmade)
- Staffed (not manned)
- Chair or Chairperson (not Chairman or Chairwoman)

## I. ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Limit the use of abbreviations and acronyms; they can be confusing for the reader, especially readers who are not specialists in your field. Also,

refrain from using abbreviations or acronyms if a name only appears once or twice.

When using abbreviations or acronyms is necessary, write it out the first time it appears in a document followed by the acronym in parentheses without punctuation or spaces.

Example:

- Stillwater Independent Business Association: (SIBA)
- Greater Stillwater Chamber of Commerce (The Chamber)

## J. SPACES

As controversial as it is for some, SSMN boldly asks that you please only use a single space after punctuation.

## K. HEADINGS

Heading and subheadings are not indented, italicized, bolded, or underlined. Special or complicated formatted only needs to be removed by the designer leading to longer production times.

## L. HYPHENS AND DASHES

Em dash: Can be used in place of commas, parenthesis, or colons. Should be limited to two appearances per sentence, and are used with no spaces.

En dash: Means "through." For example: January – February. We generally use "to" instead of an en dash.

## M. NUMBERS

Spell out numbers under 10, including quantities and units of time, except for the following situations:

Numbers that include fractions (e.g. 9.4 units)

Comparable numbers in the same sentence (e.g. We have 14 volunteers and 3 board members.)

Ages

Percentages, measurements, amounts of money, dates and times, and large numbers (e.g. 3%, 8 PM, \$5, 4 million)

## N. TITLES

Titles of reports and fact sheets are just like book titles and are written in all caps. Titles of blogs, newsletter articles, and press releases are like newspaper articles and are written in down style.

## Logo

Whenever possible, the primary lockup should be used. The secondary lockup should only be used when necessary due to space proportions or constraints.

For example:

The vertical lockup should be used with all printed materials such as business cards, brochures, handouts, etc. It should also be used on social media.

The horizontal lockup should be used for press releases and letterheads.

Link to Google Drive with logos:

### PRIMARY (VERTICAL) LOCKUP

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SUSTAINABLE



STILLWATER  
MINNESOTA

### SECONDARY (HORIZONTAL) LOCKUP

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SUSTAINABLE  MN  
STILLWATER

# Logo Color

The Sustainable Stillwater Minnesota logo contains two primary colors - #84c245 (green) & #00aacb (blue) - which should be used whenever the logo is on a light-colored background. If the background is brightly colored or busy, use the reversed-out version shown here.

## PRIMARY COLORS

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## REVERSED-OUT

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### Reversed-Out:

When placed over a brightly colored background of photograph, this all-white version of the logo is best.

# Color

One of the keys to successful brand implementation is selecting and using the right color mode and file format – doing so will ensure that the logo colors do not look “off”.

Secondary colors should be used in moderation.

## Primary Palette

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	Blue	Green	Black	White
RGB	R= 0 G= 170 B= 203	R= 132 G= 194 B= 69	R= 0 G= 0 B= 0	R= 255 G= 255 B= 255
HEX	#00aacb	#84c245	#000000	#ffffff

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# Typography

Sustainable Stillwater uses 2 primary typefaces: Open Sans Light for headlines, and Open Sans Regular for sub heads, body copy, and call outs. The type choices form a significant part of the brand identity and should be regarded as important as the mark itself.

These typefaces are to be used as specified in print and web materials. Links for download are as followed:

Open Sans Light and Open Sans Regular

<https://fonts.google.com/specimen/Open+Sans>

## HEADLINES AND SUB HEADS

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### Headline

**Open Sans Light** should be used for headlines (sentence case).

### Subhead

**Open Sans Regular** should be used for subheads (sentence case).

### Body Copy

**Open Sans Regular** should be used for subheads (sentence case).