

City of Bellevue Internet Style Guide

Bellevue's Internet site was revamped in 2006 to be a top resource for residents and other users. It was designed to be easily navigable and allow for immediacy on the home page. An online editor was hired to manage the content on the site and ensure that the information presented is useful and consistent across departments. If you need something posted right away, please let the online editor know.

This guide will hopefully make it easier for contributors to draft and revise web pages.

Basics

- Think from an impartial, impatient user's perspective. Write at least 50 percent less than you would if you were writing for print. Pleasing your supervisor or the representative of a program with unnecessary text and graphics about a program does a disservice to users.
- If there is a demand for very specific information, insert links to necessary documents in Word or PDF. When converting documents to PDFs, the conversion program should be set to tag content for accessibility.
- Write in the active voice and use simple sentence structure. Break up long paragraphs with bulleted or numbered lists.
- Use an informal and personal style of writing vs. legalese or bureaucratese.
- On the other hand, don't be too informal or cutesy. Avoid "you" and "we" and exclamation points.

Linking

- When you insert a link to a file or web page:
 - Avoid saying, "click here" or "go to."
 - Instead, specify the file or web page's name and include descriptive text.
Example: The [Internet Style Guide](#) provides complete information about writing for the city website. The [AP Style Guide](#) addresses commas.
- Only the most pertinent links should be part of the text.
- Less relevant (minor, illustrative, parenthetical, footnote) links should be included at the bottom of the page, maybe with bullet points, or in the related links section, where they are available but not distracting.
- If you are linking to a page on another website, make "_blank" the target, so the link opens in a new window instead of sending the user from a Bellevue page to the other site.
- If you are linking to a file, make "_blank" the target, so the link opens in a new window.
- When there are a variety of file and web links on a page, please include icons that illustrate what kinds of links each is.
- Please note a file's size in parentheses when it exceeds 10 megabytes. Example: *Park Plan (27 MB)*

Photos and graphics

- Most photos and graphics will be no more than 30 kilobytes in size to facilitate fast loading. To ensure this and make the picture fit, limit pictures to 300 pixels on the long side.

- When inserting a photo or other kind of image, add descriptive text in the field for “alt text.” This mouseover text provides accessibility for people with visual impairments who use electronic screen readers.
- Photos of people who are not staff should have signed releases

Style

Unless noted otherwise, content on the website is presented according to Associated Press (AP) style. Notably:

- **Commas** - Do not use serial commas (the ones between the second-to-last item in a list and the “and”). For example: *We saw coyotes in Wilburton, Cougar Mountain and Factoria.* not *We saw coyotes in Wilburton, Cougar Mountain, and Factoria.*
- **City v. city** - The word “city” is capitalized *only* when used in the proper name “City of Bellevue.” All other references to the city should be lower case unless the word begins a sentence or title or is used in the formal title of a document. This applies to all cities.
- **Not Web site** - We use “website” (lower case, one word).
- **Times** – Times are rendered without the “:00.” Go lowercase, with periods for the “a.m.” and the “p.m.” *Good:* 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. *Bad:* 9:00 PM to 5:30 PM.
- **Dates** – It’s May 24, not May 24th. When the time element is very current, you don’t need to include the year. “City Council approved the measure Tuesday, March 18,” not “City Council approved the measure Tuesday, March 18, 2007.” If the event is the week of the news release, only include the day, not the date.
- **Percent** - Always write out “percent” and use numerals with it: 1 percent, 50 percent, 17 percent.
- **Money** - With money, we don’t need to include “.00” if no change is involved. If the fee for a pet license is \$60, say “\$60,” not “\$60.00.”
- **Numbers** - Use words to represent numbers and ordinals up to the number 10, then use numerals. When you start talking millions, billions or trillions, use a numeral with million, billion or trillion. Examples: One, two, three, fourth, seventh, 10; 12; 15th; 27; 29,000; 5 million.

Accessibility

To ensure the City of Bellevue’s website is accessible to people with disabilities, content contributors are expected to do the following:

1. Include alt tags with caption information for all photos and other graphic elements.
2. Present PDFs and other kinds of documents with tags that allow screen readers to read the text and identify the photos. Most conversion software include a setting that applies these tags.
3. All links should be identified with the destination file or web page. “Click here” will not be used.