



Report on the SGPS Logo

Prepared at the request of SGPS Council for the September 2017 meeting

Background

The current SGPS logo was chosen from four student-designed submissions at the March 10, 2015 meeting of Council. 36 members were present.

“ BIRT Council select Option _____ as the new logo design for the SGPS ”



[Core Logo]



[Expanded Title Logo]



[Core Logo with CFS Affiliation]

Option A

Option B



Option C

Option D

The motion required a simple majority and was preceded by a fulsome debate. According to the minutes from the meeting, at least 14 members of Council participated in the discussion. Following the closure of debate, a straw poll was conducted that yielded two clear frontrunners: Option A and Option B. A formal vote between the two remaining options decisively revealed Option B as the favourite.

Straw Poll	Formal Vote
Option A – 14	Option A – 4
Option B – 16	Option B – 14
Option C – 3	Option C – N/A
Option D – 8	Option D – N/A

Once Option B was chosen as Council’s preferred logo, a further discussion considered what design tweaks needed to be made – this resulted in adjustments to the text, font, and colour of the rings. The final vote on Option B passed with an overwhelming majority (five members were in opposition), which set in motion a swift transition from the old SGPS logo to the current one.



Costs

Since implementation, the SGPS has heavily invested in its new logo. The remaining inventory of items that bear our logo is estimated to be \$6,000. This includes, but is not limited to: signage, banners, foam boards, presentation folders, padfolios, agendas, clothing, and a range of stationary. Many of these items were ordered in bulk, with the expectation that they could be used year after year.

If it is determined that the SGPS should rebrand again, initial costs are estimated to be \$3,000-\$8,000. At \$3,000, a barebones rebrand would allow the Society to replace all requisite materials and signage. Moving towards the upper projection of \$6,000, the rebrand could include promotional materials that more effectively introduces the Society's new look to the student body. It is also important to note that these estimates do not account for the \$6,000 of existing inventory that would need to be disposed of. Thus, the real cost of a rebrand is more appropriately estimated to range between \$9,000-\$14,000. These costs also do not account for shared items between the SGPS and AMS, or Queen's-owned items that contain our logo.

Should a rebrand be deemed necessary, the most cost-effective option would be to grandfather the implementation of the new logo to take effect at the start of the next executive term on May 1, 2018. This is because items that are ordered annually, including business cards, stationary, and orientation swag are already in circulation. Changing these items mid-year would double costs, which are not budgeted for, and would need to be taken out of this year's operating contingency.

Sample List of Costs (Non-Exhaustive)

Item	Cost
24" x 48" Foam Boards (x2)	\$336
30" x 144" Outdoor Vinyl Banner	\$113
Retractable Banner (x2)	\$270
Presentation Folder (x250)	\$395
"About the SGPS" Postcards (x500)	\$150
Pens (x3000)	\$1800
Business Cards	\$510
Miscellaneous Stationary (Cards, Envelopes, Return Address Labels, etc.)	\$500
Total	\$4,074

Trademarking

The Government of Canada describes a trademark as “a combination of letters, words, sounds or designs that distinguishes one company’s goods or services from those of others in the marketplace. A trademark is unique. It is important to a company because over time, a trademark comes to stand not only for the actual goods and services you sell, but also for your company’s reputation and brand.”

The primary reason to trademark a logo is that a brand, and everything it represents, is protected and operated solely by the organization. It is difficult to predict a circumstance where the Society would need to enforce our trademark, yet the unpredictability is precisely the reason for doing so. Trademarking is not an aggressive act, it is the exact opposite, it is a defensive measure.

The fee to trademark a logo is \$450. This is split into two components: \$250 to file the application, and \$200 for the trademark registration. A trademark registration is valid for 15 years, putting the annual cost at \$30. Following the 15-year period, it costs \$350 to renew a trademark for another 15 years.

At the August meeting of Council, debate surrounding trademarking arose due to a conflation of two issues: trademarking the SGPS logo, and similarities between the SGPS logo and Sustainable Kingston logo. To that end, Council tasked the SGPS Executive with contacting Sustainable Kingston to determine whether they have encountered problems as a result. While attempts were made to contact Sustainable Kingston, they were not successful.



It is important to note that while the two logos are indeed similar, there are key distinguishing factors. First, the rings of the Sustainable Kingston logo are brushstrokes of green, black, red, and purple. The SGPS meanwhile, uses smooth tricolour rings that immediately identify it as a Queen’s-related organization. Second, since both logos include the names of their respective organizations, there should be little concern about confusion between them. Third, the purpose and mandate of the two organizations are sufficiently different to avoid misunderstandings around what each does. The permanent staff at the SGPS have confirmed that, on the Society’s end, we have never received questions or complaints regarding this matter.

Executive Recommendation

While this report has sought to be neutral in its assessments, it is ultimately the recommendation of the Executive that we do not pursue another change to our logo. The current SGPS logo was selected two years ago by an overwhelming majority of Council. The logo is easily identifiable, clean, and versatile. It is important for brand continuity that a logo should only be changed in instances when it is deemed critical. Doing so at a high frequency only serves to diminish the recognition of the SGPS brand on campus. Circumstances in which a logo change should justifiably be considered are: (1) if the logo becomes noticeably outdated in style, (2) there is a significant and non-reconcilable perception issue amongst the membership and/or the administration, or (3) an unforeseen matter damages, beyond repair, the Society's brand. At this time, we do not believe any of those circumstances exist.