



## Section 4

# PLACEMAKING AND COMMUNICATION

Many of the development initiatives for the South Loop District are intended to transform the District's densities and character from suburban to urban and to establish and promote the District as a branded place emphasizing sustainability, quality, safety, and comfort. More specifically, South Loop is envisioned as a place where people come to explore, gather and linger in an environment that invites walking and street level activity. Ideally, it will be a place with a distinct identity and character where people choose to work, play, and live.

### 4.1 Name and Brand Identity

For many years, the portion of Bloomington east of TH 77 was referred to as the "Airport South District," although that was never intended as its permanent name. With planning efforts underway to transform the District into a sustainable, mixed-use neighborhood, the time was right to find a more relevant and captivating name.

In early 2009 the City embarked on a process to create a new name and brand identity to help distinguish the District as neighborhood and destination noted for quality, sustainability and accessibility. A task force of City staff and key stakeholders was formed to work with Bolin Marketing to rename and rebrand the District.

Initial efforts resulted in the identification of four terms that characterized the District's brand essence: *Confluence. Balance. Vibrant. Possibilities/Gateway.* The preferred brand message was "**Life. Uncompromised.**"

#### Finding a New Home

The task force reviewed dozens of alternative names and logos. Input was also received from a survey of residents, businesses and other organizations with ties to the District. The City Council ultimately approved the name "**South Loop District,**" which refers to the southerly terminus of the Hiawatha Light Rail Line that runs to the North Loop warehouse/riverfront area in downtown Minneapolis. Survey respondents noted that the name was "simple, urban, current, energetic and suggested a bustling, transportation-oriented Twin Cities district."

Credit: Big Stock Photos



#### *Life. Uncompromised.*

*A unique confluence of business, shopping and entertainment.*

*Where walking the nation's largest indoor mall meets walking the Minnesota River bluffs.*

*Where an urban experience meets a neighborhood feel.*

*Where local meets global and excitement meets serenity.*



## Logo

Once a name was selected, Bolin Marketing prepared several logo concepts, which were reviewed by the task force and approved by the City Council. The logo is evocative of the geography of South Loop and mimics the color scheme used in the City of Bloomington logo. The logo will be used in articles and videos about South Loop, on the City's website, and in presentations and print material for marketing as well as general informational purposes.

Ultimately, the logo will be incorporated into directional and wayfinding signs and other public improvements in the District. The City will also work with private property owners, developers, and partners such as the Bloomington Chamber of Commerce and Bloomington Convention & Visitors Bureau to incorporate the logo into promotional and advertising products.

## 4.2 Creative Placemaking

Creating a distinctive and appealing sense of place within the South Loop District will depend in part on providing public spaces and amenities that make the District aesthetically compelling and animated. These amenities include permanent and temporary public art, public spaces that invite and facilitate activity, and other unique physical features that distinguish the District. Creative placemaking can range from events, activities and temporary art pieces to permanent integration of art into streetscapes, parks, and buildings. One of the primary objectives of creative placemaking is to provide opportunities for discovery and delight that will create a lasting impression of South Loop.

There is growing research and practice around the role of creative placemaking in economic development, particularly in regard to attracting and retaining entrepreneurs, skilled workers, and residents. Many municipalities in our region and across the country have used creative placemaking to define and establish priorities for developing amenities and supporting activities that contribute to making interesting public spaces in their communities.

Common elements of successful creative placemaking include:

- Partnerships and collaboration with the existing arts and cultural community.
- Private sector support and buy in.
- Integration with existing governmental agency procedures and systems (e.g., routine infrastructure improvements, such as sidewalk replacement.)

- Assembling adequate financing.
- Clearing regulatory hurdles.
- Ensuring maintenance and sustainability.

The City of Bloomington does not have extensive experience in commissioning public art or incorporating placemaking into

public infrastructure projects. However, the South Loop District provides an opportunity to devise and implement innovative policies and procedures that explicitly integrate placemaking into public and private development throughout the District.



**Creative placemaking involves using art to add value and life to infrastructure, drive vibrancy, and increase activity and value in a place.**

## 4.3 Marketing Plan

A detailed marketing and communications plan defining target audiences, marketing touchpoints, and budget for promoting the District was developed. The plan's objectives include:

- Building awareness of South Loop;
- Conveying a vision for its future;
- Creating a sense of place that will build excitement and anticipation for South Loop development; and
- Integrating South Loop into greater Bloomington.

The intent of the various marketing tasks is to position South Loop as a unique, pedestrian-oriented, urban density district unmatched in the metro area. Tactics include viral marketing, social media, advertising and word of mouth. Long-term funding sources are identified in the implementation section as well as a coordinating entity for South Loop's marketing and brand-building efforts.

The marketing plan also discusses our partners' roles in branding and

promoting South Loop. Marketing efforts will take place over three phases, tracking the development of the area. The first phase, the pre-development stage, will target developers and brokers, employers, future residents and the general public. The plan will later be adjusted to accommodate marketing and communications needs generated by active development in South Loop.



