

Saskatoon

south downtown

**South Downtown
Marketing Strategy**
City of Saskatoon

October 29, 2004

Saskatoon south downtown marketing strategy





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Executive Summary

Tap Communications was contracted to develop a name, logo, and Marketing Strategy for Saskatoon's South Downtown.

All relevant materials and issues were reviewed by the agency, and the agency met with the Marketing Steering Committee numerous times throughout the process.

The marketing will be directed at specific target audiences: Saskatoon and Area Residents; Visitors / Tourists to Saskatoon; Stakeholders and Influencers; Advisors; and Investors and Developers. Goals and objectives were identified for each audience. Each target audience also has specific key messages that will be communicated in order to build an effective brand. Specific tactics are also identified in this document. The tactics are divided into categories according to the target audience reached, as well as by what phase in the development they will occur (pre-, during, or post-development/launch).



Background and Situation Analysis

Research & Review

The initial stage of development of this marketing strategy involved a thorough situation analysis. Tap Communications reviewed the following documents:

- South Downtown Concept Plan 2004
- Summary of Public Input
- Direct Control District One Guidelines
- The Moriyama Report
- Mayor's Task Force on South Downtown
- Architecture Control Guidelines

Tap Communications then gathered information about similar 'lifestyle centre' developments in Canada, including Granville Island (Vancouver), the Forks (Winnipeg), and various shopping malls. The visual identities, 'brands' and marketing tactics of each of these centres were researched and considered as indicators of previous successes that may be translated to the Saskatoon market.

On October 20, 2004, Tap Communications attended the Heritage Consultation forum held at Centennial Auditorium. This experience provided further insight into the development of the South Downtown and the early findings of the heritage interpretive process have been incorporated into this Marketing Strategy. When the interpretive report is complete, further integration may be warranted.





Saskatoon Shines!

The Saskatoon Shines! theme and graphic identity has become highly recognizable through its consistent use in materials and promotions by various businesses and organizations in Saskatoon. The success of this initiative is representative of the direction we will ideally achieve for the identity of the South Downtown. The focus on light, diversity and unity symbolized by Saskatoon Shines! are all considered contributions to its acceptance and success. The consistent use of the identity has also contributed to its recognition and acceptance.

Public Opinion

Due to the high profile of this project, community perceptions have already been developed. Many citizens and interest groups throughout Saskatoon have expressed their interests in the role of the new development. In particular, the business, culture and heritage communities are interested in how their areas will be represented.

Business / Commercial Opinion


The South Downtown development is a distinct urban precinct, representing both public and private sector interests. The marketing strategy is to brand the area as one, without an "east" or "west" section. The communications strategy for the commercial/business sector will consider both markets, educating them about the aspects of development to include all components in discussions of the project. It is only within the full scope of the development that the true commercial opportunity becomes apparent.

Branding and Key Messaging

The concept of 'branding' will be especially important to the strategic marketing of South Downtown development. The following definitions explain 'branding' and 'key messages', as these terms will be used throughout this plan.

Branding: Marion Morrison. John Wayne. They are in fact the same person, but only "John Wayne" evokes associations of "ruggedness", "all-American", and "hero". That didn't happen overnight. It took years of careful and consistent role selection, wardrobe – even the swaggering walk – to develop the associations that "John Wayne" now evokes. In essence, that is branding. This example points out that branding is much more than choosing a name. (In the beginning, "John Wayne" meant nothing more than "John Smith" to the general public.) It is all the associations that develop, over time, to a particular product, company, organization or person (or city, for that matter!) In the case of John Wayne, the desired branding was successful. The branding eventually meant that the name alone would make a movie into a box office hit.

In other cases, the branding may not be controlled or shaped by the person or organization being branded. "Branding" takes place nonetheless. Say "Pittsburgh" and certain emotions and images come to mind. Say "San Francisco" and different thoughts come to the fore. Opinions will be formed and reinforced. What leads us to particular conclusions is the "brand" – the cognitive associations, impressions and stakeholder/consumer assumptions – that an organization or product acquires, intentionally or not, over time.



At Tap Communications, "branding" is the active process of an organization to (a) determine what positive and influential "brand" associations can be or are attached to an organization or product, and then (b) the planned activities to reinforce this brand in the minds of stakeholders/consumers.

It is important to remember that branding has already taken place for any organization that has been in existence for any length of time. Any claims made by that organization that are notably inconsistent with its existing brand are likely to be rejected, or at best will take a long time to become accepted as valid. It took a long time, for example, for American auto manufacturers to make "quality manufacturing" a part of their brand in the same way that Japanese auto makers have it as part of their brand. To use another example, at a time when food quality might be a major concern and a factor in choosing a restaurant, the majority of people would readily accept a claim from McDonald's that their food was always prepared in an immaculately clean area, because that would be consistent with the McDonald's brand. However, it would be much harder to convince you that McDonald's was the perfect place to go for your wedding anniversary. "Elegant dining for special occasions" is not part of their brand.

Key Messages: Key messages are those which need to be repeated strongly and frequently to your stakeholders. Key statements are the most important messages that will positively influence your stakeholders. As stated earlier, a key message must be logically consistent with your brand or it won't be accepted. Key messages can and should be restated in many different ways, through words and through actions, and whenever the opportunity presents itself, in order to become embedded as part of the brand.

The Product

The product that this strategy will promote can be described as follows:

- One unit representing a combination of public and private interests
- A mix of product and properties which have been well-established and identified in the South Downtown Concept Plan

Target Audiences

Just as there are multiple objectives for the communication of the South Downtown, there are multiple target markets that will need to be segmented and addressed. This list of specific targets can be divided into five primary groupings : Saskatoon and Area Citizens, Visitors/Tourists to Saskatoon, Stakeholders and Influencers, Advisors, and Investors and Developers. For each of these groups, specific key messages will be required and the methods of communicating with them will be unique.

1. Saskatoon and Area Citizens

2. Visitors/Tourists to Saskatoon

3. Stakeholders and Influencers

- Current owners of businesses in the downtown area
- Current owners of business in other commercial districts e.g. 8th Street, Broadway, Riversdale
- Chamber of Commerce
- North Saskatoon Business Association
- Riversdale Business Improvement District
- Broadway Business Improvement District
- The Partnership
- Saskatoon Construction Association
- Meewasin Valley Authority
- Other groups that have been (or may be) formed in order to bring attention to the needs of specific social areas for representation in South Downtown: heritage preservation, the arts community, environmental groups, cultural interests, etc.





4. Advisors

- Commercial realtors
- Residential realtors
- Lawyers
- Accountants

This target group is defined as professionals who are paid to give their advice regarding property and commercial opportunities. The "commercial and residential realtors" do not specifically represent the South Downtown properties, but will advise and be bringing their clients to South Downtown based on the needs of the client.

5. Investors and Developers

- Business persons / companies that may invest in a coalition to bid on property in the South Downtown.
- Developers – from within or without Saskatoon – that may invest in properties. This group includes:
 - Commercial developers
 - Residential developers

The targeting of investors and developers will be the responsibility of the realtor hired for South Downtown; further definition of key targets and specific messages for this target will be identified by the realtor. For the purposes of this marketing plan, however, this group has been defined as one large target market, with the understanding that the realtor will be taking the lead in further refining the needs of this audience, the specific messages and language that will be most effective in speaking to this audience, the methods of marketing to them, and the communications vehicles used to approach them.

Goals and Objectives

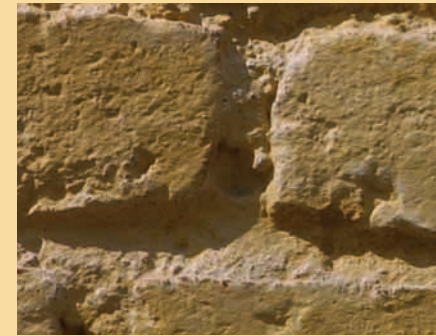
The overarching goal and objective is to ensure that the redevelopment of South Downtown becomes a major destination for residents and visitors alike.

For Saskatoon and Area Citizens:

- recognition and awareness of the area
- informed of news and events
- attendance and use of public facilities
- infuse pride, enthusiasm, and interest
- bring their visiting friends and family to South Downtown because it is a “must see”

For Visitors/Tourists to Saskatoon:

- recognition and awareness of the area
- informed of events
- attendance and use of public facilities
- the impression that South Downtown is a destination that is unique and a "must see" when visiting Saskatoon
- the impression that South Downtown is equal to or better than other similar developments in other cities, such as The Forks, Granville Island, etc.
- experience that leads to word-of-mouth referrals to other potential visitors ("you've got to visit South Downtown when you go to Saskatoon")





For Stakeholders and Influencers:

- a sense of pride, enthusiasm, and support for South Downtown initiatives
- recognition that the development of this area is a positive step for Saskatoon – both economically and culturally
- a sense of community and cooperation in creating an area that has considered and appreciated all opinions

For Advisors:

- knowledgeable about the development potential; able to give clients accurate and informed opinions and advice
- recognition and awareness of the area
- belief that South Downtown is a "good investment"

For Investors and Developers:

- investment in property and business operations within the project area
- support for the development of the project
- enthusiasm and interest
- belief in the process as fair and justified

Key Messages

The messages for this development are that it is Saskatoon's signature piece of riverfront; undeveloped property in the very heart of our downtown urban core that represents significant potential for a unique property. It is seen by many as the catalyst for a rebirth of commercial/retail/residential activity in the downtown core, much like the regeneration that has been witnessed in other cities. Most importantly, just like The Forks in Winnipeg and Vancouver's Granville Island, Saskatoon's South Downtown will be a unique experience place, a focal point in our city that will attract local citizens as well as tourists.

Overall, the appropriate "tone" of the messaging to the commercial / business sector can be described as more "business plan" than "promotional". Excessive hype and glossiness will not be particularly effective. Rather, a more low key approach, primarily in print form will have the greatest impact with this group.

For Saskatoon and Area Citizens:

- South Downtown is an exciting place to be; an "experience" place
- South Downtown has something for everyone
- South Downtown development brings prestige to our city

For Visitors/Tourists to Saskatoon:

- South Downtown is a "must see" destination
- an "experience" place





For Stakeholders and Influencers:

- The development deserves to be broadly and publicly supported
- The development is good for Saskatoon
- The South Downtown project represents a unique and distinct development that will enhance the overall community and the business sector in the city
- The development will consider the needs of everyone, with an outcome that is in the best interests of Saskatoon as a whole
- Through your support and advocacy, you will help to build a sense of pride and enthusiasm in all Saskatoon citizens

For Advisors:

- You should advise your clients that this development represents a very strong Return on Investment commercial / business opportunity
- You should advise your clients that this development represents a very desirable residential/commercial investment

For Investors and Developers:

- This development represents a very strong Return on Investment opportunity
- Your company should invest in property / a business operation within this development project



Name and Logo

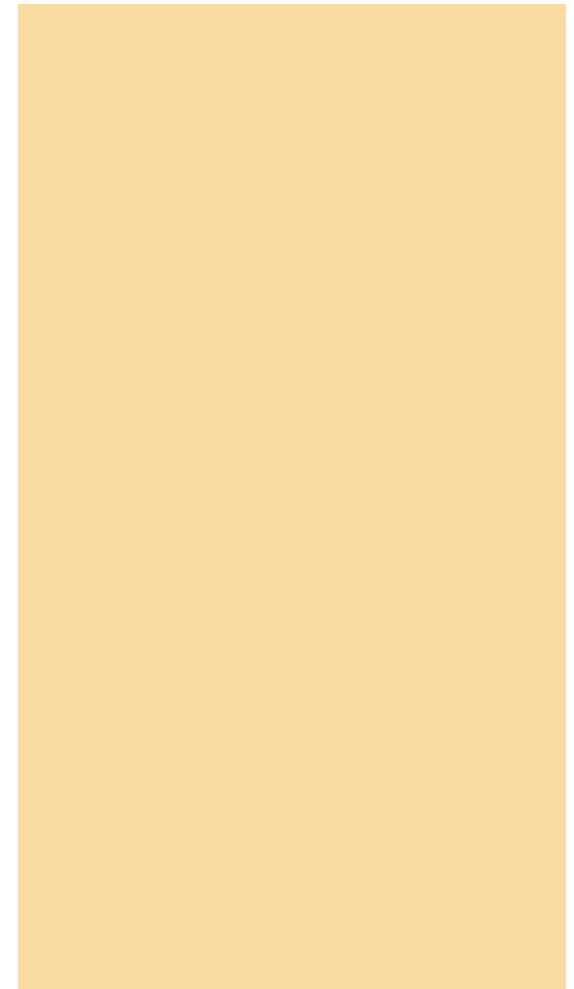
RIVER LANDING


In the process of developing a name for South Downtown, Tap Communications considered and reviewed all documents and met with the Marketing Steering Committee several times.

The name was selected because it is in many respects "a natural" and in fact was being used informally by other consultants. It was our first choice as a recommendation even before we knew it was one of the leading suggestions put forth by the general public in the Summary of Public Input document, and before we knew that it was being used by other consultants.

The Summary of Public Input document involved 507 residents attending two open houses, a Web response mechanism, public input forms available at public locations, individual presentations, and a total of 364 comment sheets. The top three name suggestions of the Summary were: 1) use the word "landing"; 2) use the appeal of the river; and 3) recognize the significance of bridges to the area. All three of those elements were incorporated into the name and logo, for good reason: to build a brand, the key messages must be consistent with expectations. If the public perception is that "River Landing" is a good name for South Downtown, people are much more likely to start using it, rather than if the name were counter-intuitive (calling it "Skyscraper Park" for example). If the majority of the public already feels strongly that the three elements must be associated with South Downtown, then that works in favour of building a strong brand.

The name works well because it describes very accurately what it is and where it is. It is also historically accurate, as this would have been a place where river boats might have landed and offloaded goods. In the very early beginnings of Saskatoon, goods were shipped from Medicine Hat to Saskatoon via the river, including the lumber and materials for one of the first permanent houses. The name "Landing" also suggests a meeting place, a public place and a market place where, "goods and services are transferred from water to land".





The name will be easily remembered, and no doubt in the future "River Landing" will often be referred to simply as the "Landing", as in, "We're going to the restaurant at the Landing." Thus, it works just as well as The Forks or Granville Island as a name. Also, the name works well, because of its simplicity and clarity, for retailers and others to use in conjunction with their own name, such as, "The Marriott at River Landing".

It is important to note that although the name of the development is an important element, the development itself is what provides the attraction. The name of the development provides a common identifier to the features of the development, while the features are what will draw a crowd. A similar comparison is any city name. People don't come to Saskatoon for our name, but for what we have to have to offer. The name Saskatoon identifies our location on a map, just as River Landing will identify the location of the south downtown project. The brand equity of the name, what people think when they hear "River Landing" one, five, or twenty years from now, will be a result of the marketing efforts to build the brand.

Logo

The objective of a logo is to represent a concept or brand through an image. The best logos are simple and stand the test of time: for example, McDonald's "golden arches" or the Nike "swoosh". The following informal "tests" are applied to determine if a logo is "good":

- can the logo be accurate and recognizable if drawn by hand?
- does the logo have the same impact if it is in black and white?
- is the logo recognizable even if it is very small?
- can elements of the logo be used for a variety of applications?

The River Landing identity represents the meeting place where the community and visitors enjoy year-round activities, shopping, and culture. The current trend in downtown developments is the move towards a focus on creating an "experience". The "levels" leading up to "experience" can be illustrated in this example: step one - buy a can of coffee and make it yourself; step two: go to McDonald's and have them make the coffee and serve it to you; step three: a visit to Starbucks, which has transcended the "good cup of coffee" to instead become an "experience". The goal is to ensure that an outing to River Landing is an experience; this identity embodies that feeling.

The curves at the top of the logo represent the bridges of Saskatoon (and, in particular, the Traffic Bridge that connects 3rd Avenue with Victoria Avenue). The curves also represent a sense of connection between both sides of the development, and of "bringing together". They are also a symbol of the sun as a source of light, warmth, and energy. This incorporates the "Saskatoon Shines!" theme and also represents an important symbol to First Nations and Métis people.



The waves represent the South Saskatchewan river, both River Landing's physical location as well as the basis of Saskatoon's beginnings. The three waves crossing together signify a meeting place. The style of the waves could also be interpreted as brush strokes, which is indicative of an Asian culture, incorporating another aspect of Saskatoon's origins and symbolizing a coming together of cultures. The waves are also a logo element that could be used independently on signage and streetscapes to represent "place" without the need for using the logo in its entirety.

The font for "River" shows sophistication, style, and fluidity. The font and treatment of "Landing" show tradition and a solid base and structure. The relationship of the two words, with "Landing" being larger, also lends itself to the eventual simplification in common use to become the "Landing".

When all the elements are combined together, they give the feel for what River Landing is: a destination for culture, recreation, shopping, dining, and enjoyment. In other words, a place people want to be; an experience destination.



Tactics, Strategies, & Events

Commercial / Business Sector

An important aspect of marketing the site will be communications and selling tactics to new tenants.

The City of Saskatoon will be retaining a realtor to acquire developers to the site. As previously discussed, the realtor will lead the segmentation and targeting of the market of potential tenants. The following support materials are suggested as tools that may help the realtor throughout the sales process:


- **Stationery** (letterhead, envelopes, and business cards) using the new visual identity.
- A unique **presentation folder** and **formatted insert sheets**. The folder would be used to hold all the information presented to potential tenants and developers.
- A **large wall map** showing the properties; the map could have a plastic overlay to allow the realtor to mark the sold properties.
- A **PowerPoint (CD) version** for presentations as well as to distribute to interested developers.

Other materials may also developed; this list is a suggested package and can be modified or added to as required.

The following advertising vehicles may also be used to achieve a broader audience of potential tenants. Where the tools above would be used to present information to individual prospects, these vehicles would present a general sales approach to the target audiences:

- **Listing(s) or small advertisement(s) in Property Guides** and other directories for site decision makers.
- **Direct mailing lists** can be compiled of key site decision makers across Canada and the U.S.





Subscriber lists are available for major industry publications, such as Plants, Sites and Parks.

- **Print advertising in selected publications** including Globe & Mail, with strong reference to the web site for more information. Suggested publications might also include The Western Investor and Saskatchewan Business Magazine.
- Participation in one or two selected **trade shows**. Since trade show participation would require the presence of the realtor, we recommend consulting with the realtor to identify potential opportunities at national trade shows. Trade show participation would possibly require a **display unit and design**.

Other resources will be available for the realtor's use and will be developed with their input. These marketing materials will also be provided to Advisors and Stakeholders within the general public target market:

- A detailed, full-colour, **large-format brochure/booklet**. This piece will be developed using a format similar to a standard business plan. It is recommended that it be attractive with compelling visuals to accompany the narrative but that it not be "overly glossy". A modest paper stock and format will help to portray a message of fiscal responsibility, and will allow the reader to focus on the content of the document, which needs to be professionally developed to maintain a consistent branding message. To allow for flexibility, the document could be bound using coil binding or binder inserts so that individual pages could be updated (e.g. the site map) as properties are sold. All information that readers will need and expect should be included in this document:

- a. Site information: plans (maps) & depictions so that the full extent of the development can be communicated.
- b. Demographic information – market size; traffic; population segmentation, etc.
- c. Marketplace trends
- d. Description – "the sizzle" – describing the attraction of the area
- e. Unique features and benefits
- f. Future plans

The material targeted to the Advisor segment should include a smaller, more **condensed brochure version** of the River Landing development plan which they can in turn, give to their clients. This brochure could be distributed by the realtor, or by use of a direct mail list of selected Saskatoon businesses (perhaps as identified through Chamber of Commerce membership list). This condensed version could also be made available at City Hall, or sent out to interested parties who request it via the web site.



General Public Sector

Marketing strategies for this sector will be focused on delivering key messages to the general public. Messaging and tactics used in the campaign will be designed to generate excitement about the River Landing development. Word-of-mouth and media communications will be enhanced by providing consistent messaging to the public and taking a proactive approach to generating publicity.

Most strategies should be consistently delivered from the pre-development stage through the finished development of the site. However, specific initiatives should be delivered specifically in pre-, during or post-development stages:

Pre-Development

- Develop a distinct **web site** for River Landing that contains background information and current updates. Set up a live webcam (see next bullet point) of the site and the river that people from anywhere can access online. This would be especially appealing for snowbirds and others outside of Saskatoon. Eventually, the site will feature all the venues and events, along with links to tenants' and organizations' own sites. This convenient collection of information will allow users to easily plan visits to the site. Prior to the development of the site, pages within the site can include the history of South Downtown development, information for developers and potential leaseholders, etc. A link to the site should also be added to the home pages of SREDA, Tourism Saskatoon, and all Business Improvement District (BID) web sites.
- Ongoing promotion of the site can be provided by a local TV station


through a potential arrangement already in consideration by the station. This arrangement would see the station providing **coverage of the site** through one of two ways:

1. a camera would be directed at River Landing, and would provide one still aerial shot of the site per day to post on the River Landing web site;

OR

2. a WeatherCam would be directed at River Landing to show daily progress of weather conditions. The WeatherCam feature would continue to be aired on the local station as regularly scheduled.

- A **general summary of the site's history and the current development** should be written and provided to tourism guides and publications, such as the official Vacation Guides for each province, Tourism Saskatoon, and the CAA guidebook, as well as Tourism Saskatoon Radio. The summaries should be made available to each BID for inclusion on their web sites. If a list is available, this information might also be sent to travel agents across the country, as well as to all hotels and convention centres in Saskatoon (as they could use the summary in sales material to promote Saskatoon as a potential convention site). Content for the historical perspective in this summary could be garnered from the results of the Interpretive Plan.
- **Local media** should be presented not only with **news releases** as they occur, but also with an initial **package of information**, including **historical summaries** in PDF format and **photos and logos** on CD. In particular, the photos and artwork made available to



each media should consider the potential usage. For example, the television stations should be provided with a "slide" that would be used during broadcasts (shown over the shoulder of newscasters as they lead into the report). This proactive approach would encourage each station to use the "official" slides (as opposed to designing their own slides), and will provide further consistency to the branding effort. These vehicles could include (but are not limited to):

- StarPhoenix/Sunday Sun/Real Estate Guide
- Life in the City
- Planet S Magazine (and sister publication in Regina, Prairie Dog Magazine)
- Neighbourhood Express
- Trader Publications (who publish Saskatoon Rental Guide, Renovation magazine, etc., available at various outlets in Saskatoon)
- Hi-Lites (a local real estate guide)
- MLS listing services
- Saskatoon Shopper
- Neighbourhood Association Newsletters (list available through City Hall)
- CTV
- Global Television
- CBC
- Shaw Cable Television
- Rawlco Radio (C95 FM, NTR 650 AM, ROCK 102 FM)
- HOT 93 FM/Magic 98.3 FM/CJWW 600 AM Radio
- Tourism Radio

- **A multimedia presentation** should be produced for delivery by designated speakers to business and stakeholders in the community.


Creation of this presentation will ensure that messaging from site 'ambassadors' to the public will be consistent and complete.

During Development

- Send out **news release updates** and organize **events** such as a sod-turning ceremony for the hotel development and other major signings.
- **Development updates** might also be sent to specific Stakeholders (as identified by the City) to encourage a supportive spirit for the site. This proactive generation of publicity will also discourage negative press and overcome the influence of naysayers. Each update would reiterate the key messages.

Post-Development / Launch

- The launch of River Landing should be publicized using an **insert in the Saskatoon StarPhoenix**. The insert should be a high-quality, durable piece that the public can keep for a long period of time and refer to for information when needed. It should announce the name, visual identity, the plans for the site, the history, the potential, and what it means for Saskatoon - especially the Downtown, Nutana, and Riversdale districts. This piece could also refer to the web site and solicit inquiries from the public. The target market for this piece is Saskatoon citizens—the ultimate consumers of River Landing. The timing for the release of this piece would be determined by the City, but is suggested to be at the same time as the first streetscapes are established and constructed.
- **National and larger publications in nearby provinces** (i.e. Globe & Mail, National Post, Calgary Herald and Sun, Edmonton Journal and Sun, Winnipeg Free Press and Sun) should be sent an official package of photos, logos, news releases, historical summaries, and current



information on the River Landing. All of the above-listed information could be burned onto one CD. The complete package, together with a letter of introduction and follow-up phone call, will ask the **publications to write articles** on the River Landing development. The exposure from any resulting articles would reach potential investors, developers, and tourists, and would add prestige to River Landing.

- Organize a **committee of site tenants** to discuss joint marketing opportunities. Equal funding contributions could be arranged to support promotional endeavors, with support from the City if appropriate. This committee should also include the site manager.
- The **Riversdale BID and The Partnership** should be very involved in joint marketing efforts with the River Landing tenants, to create joint promotions and marketing projects. Cross- and joint-promotion will also further enforce the message that River Landing is one precinct, with ties to Riversdale.
- Host **media and public events** at the site to increase its visibility to the community and keep it top-of-mind as a destination for residents and visitors. Suggestions of appropriate public events would be at the discretion of the City. Any event organizers should be provided with the official package of information (including official logos and guidelines) to maintain a consistent branding message and image.



Tenants / Property Owners

To best support the branding effort, tenants and property owners of the site should reflect the same messaging and visual identity used to promote the site as a whole when they develop promotional and business support materials. This suggestion of using official materials might be incorporated into RFPs that the City issues. To ensure that messaging and the identity of the site are communicated consistently, property owners / tenants should receive a package of information, including the following printed materials and digital files in PDF format, provided on CD:

- **Site signage** for each property developed, to indicate what will be built on respective sections of the site. If developers intend to produce their own signage, **guidelines for site signage** should be provided to ensure consistency. Digital high-resolution logos will be provided to developers for use on signage and on any of their promotional materials.
- As each site is developed, a **summary of the history** of the piece of land the development will stand on should be provided to the property owner. This will ensure consistency of the branding messages, and will hopefully result in the summary being used, for example, in restaurant menus, travel and restaurant guidebooks for specific businesses. As mentioned earlier, the content could be garnered from the results of the Interpretive Plan.
- Official logos, **site photos and / or conceptual drawings** should be made available, as these images might be included in guidebooks and on web sites and will prevent "unauthorized" and inconsistent imagery that might not show the site to the full advantage.

- **The Riversdale BID and The Partnership** should receive all official packages of information and photos, so that any cross-promotion activity can be consistent with the visual identity and messaging of River Landing. The Riversdale BID and The Partnership represent the two adjoining precincts and as promotional agents of their own districts, their marketing efforts will spill over to River Landing and provide additional benefit.