
Do the LOOP!



Branding a geographical destination

Case Study Category: Economic Vitality

City of New Smyrna Beach, Florida

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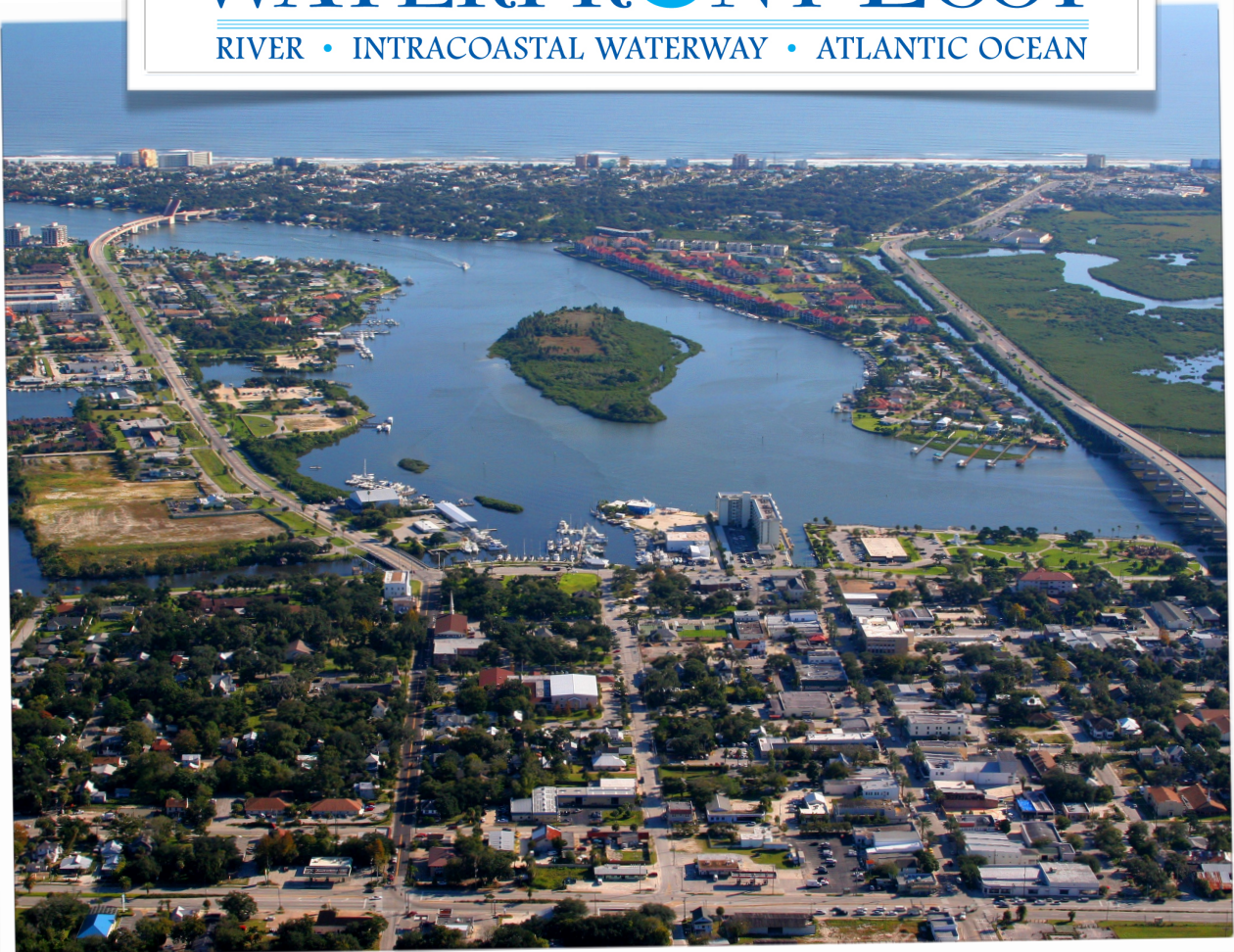
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NSB *Old Florida charm.
Endless possibilities.*
WATERFRONT LOOP
RIVER • INTRACOASTAL WATERWAY • ATLANTIC OCEAN



Summary of Presentation

In 2010, the New Smyrna Beach (NSB) City Commission adopted an updated master plan for the City's Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA). The plan included a directive to "Brand the (CRA) District." In addition to the challenge of initiating a marketing campaign for a previously un-branded area, the CRA contains four distinct character districts seen by residents and visitors as separate destinations of varying interest. Collectively these districts offer a variety of amenities and activities from shopping, dining, fine art, and water-related activities.

Revitalization of the area continues as a collaborative process between the City's CRA, City government, and local merchants.

Through the development of an integrated marketing plan, New Smyrna Beach has begun branding the area as the NSB Waterfront LOOP. While the City is spearheading the initiative, the process involves district business and non-profit representatives to assist in the extension of the brand and creating the "buzz."



After six months of marketing, businesses and event hosts have reported increased foot traffic and attendance, and the initial marketing catch phrase has residents and visitors saying "Do the LOOP!"

Synopsis

The City of New Smyrna Beach, Florida, is nestled on the Atlantic Ocean just south of Daytona Beach and northeast of Orlando. While many visitors are drawn to the city's white-sand beaches, others tout its historic significance as the site of the largest British attempt at colonization in the New World in 1768. The community takes pride in maintaining its genuine old-Florida charm but welcomes redevelopment efforts that preserve its character.

For nearly a century, much of the area encompassed by the current New Smyrna Beach CRA district has served as the focal point of the City's commerce. Residents enjoy three historic districts – Canal Street, Flagler Avenue and the Westside – which have served those inhabiting the surrounding residential areas, along with two additional commercial areas -- Third Avenue and the North Causeway.

As residential and commercial development extended westward from the City's core, new business followed. The historic areas that once were the hub of activity began to suffer economically. Storefronts were vacated. Properties fell into disrepair. Throughout these struggles, the New Smyrna Beach community has continued to value these areas for their history, their charm and character, and for their independent proprietors. It's here that generations of residents feel a true sense of connection with each other, the merchants, and their community.

In 1985, the New Smyrna Beach City Commission established the CRA. The agency will sunset in 2015.

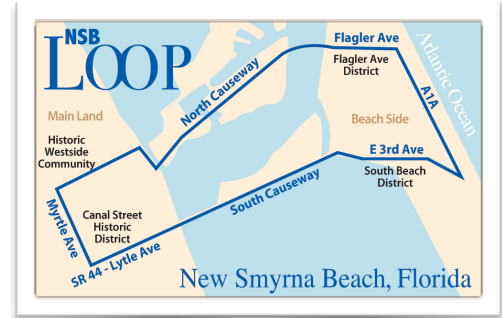
Marketing and promotion of the CRA district is one of the identified projects recommended in the adopted CRA Redevelopment Plan (2010). Prior to the initiation of this branding initiative, marketing of the CRA character districts had been conducted by volunteers and merchant groups and focused on the individual advertising of stand-alone events. No comprehensive marketing plan was developed or launched for any of the character districts or the CRA collectively. Yet most stakeholders agreed that "marketing" was necessary to bring "feet to the street" and new businesses to the district.

Objectives of the branding effort for the NSB Waterfront LOOP

As the CRA entered its last few years, the opportunity to build awareness of district assets and the district's redevelopment potential surfaced as an important element of overall strategy. Recognizing the area's circle geography, in 2010 the City Commission voted to brand character districts collectively as the NSB Waterfront LOOP (LOOP). The six-mile drivable route traverses historical areas while following the district's waterways. This also provided a geographical area that could be branded as a charming, old-Florida-style shopping, dining, cultural and outdoor-activity destination.

Following customer surveys and the establishment of a steering group comprised of character district representatives, the LOOP marketing plan was initiated in October 2011. Marketing objectives include:

- Increasing awareness, visibility, and a buzz of the LOOP and the experiences it offers.
- Engaging target audiences with the LOOP
- Creating opportunities to extend and manage brand uniformity across the district.
- Increasing awareness/understanding of CRA efforts.



Costs: For FY '12, the cost of LOOP marketing is nearly \$56,000 and includes production and/or maintenance of the tools/collaterals used for marketing campaigns. The City has budgeted \$60,000 annually for consultant fees.

Savings: Without incurring additional costs, the LOOP seeks extension of its brand by encouraging character districts, event hosts, and other entities that may benefit from increased promotion to display LOOP logos and collaterals.



Innovative characteristics:

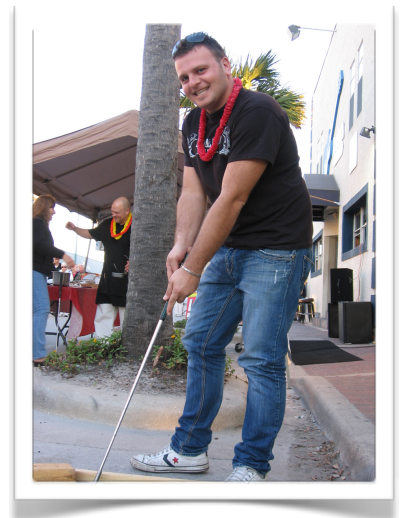
- **Feet on the street:** At the end of the first six months of the initiation of LOOP promotion, key players in the merchant's associations reported 20- 40 percent increase in event attendance and store traffic.
- **New technology:** While Facebook is not a "new" technology, its use is new to the City of New Smyrna Beach.
- **Consultant:** Due to limited staff availability and expertise, a marketing consultant developed the plan and campaigns and continues to coordinate and manage the development and distribution of all integrated marketing tools with paid vendors and merchant partners, when needed. Integrated marketing tools include:
 - a website
 - Facebook page
 - two monthly E-newsletters
 - event and outdoor (wayfinding) signage
 - print, radio and online advertisements
 - monthly event rack cards
 - cooperative advertising
 - news releases
 - individual event promotions.



Obstacles: No significant obstacles have surfaced in the initial year of LOOP marketing.

Anticipated and actual outcomes:

- The LOOP marketing initiative -- including the “Do the LOOP!” campaign, provided an avenue to build awareness of the LOOP geography and upcoming opportunities to engage through events.
- While the LOOP does not hold the responsibility for increased sales in district businesses, the LOOP strives to increase customer traffic by introducing area offerings to residents and visitors.
- For the first time, a single information source for planned events has been created and easily is accessible through print and online sources.
- The news media has begun to not only use the LOOP name in editorials, news and entertainment stories, but the CRA’s marketing efforts have been used as an example in the news media as a redevelopment initiative.



Results:

The NSB Waterfront LOOP marketing initiative is an example of finding common ground among disparate merchant groups/areas and using those commonalities to market the area collectively. By establishing a committee of character district representatives to participate in the development of the district’s brand, resultant marketing effort have been well received and ultimately appreciated by the business groups that benefit directly. These affordable efforts also have created a “feel good” buzz among residents and visitors who continue to recognize the areas unique assets and event schedule. New

LOOP business owners also have shared they chose their location to “be in the LOOP.”

Cities with more than one distinct character district/business association and counties that wish to brand and market themselves through affordable marketing strategies can utilize this methodology for creating a brand.

Private Consultant:

A private consultant is used to draft, implement and manage NSB Waterfront LOOP marketing. The consultant works with LOOP merchants and merchant associations to ensure a coordinated information source for LOOP activities and opportunities. As part of the day-to-day tasks, the consultant manages online content, seeks proactive news media opportunities, captures images, drafts monthly newsletters, responds to information requests, initiates creative services and advertisement purchases, oversees contract services for LOOP marketing tools, etc.

The NSB Waterfront LOOP marketing consultant is Holly Smith, of HS Consulting LLC. She may be reached at hsconsulting@cfl.rr.com.



Case study presentation:

If selected to present this project, the City of New Smyrna Beach will share results/outcomes that include integrated marketing tools (see samples attached) and examples of/results from proactive news media efforts.

A Powerpoint presentation that includes many visual representations will be delivered by City staff and will include sample collaterals as handouts.



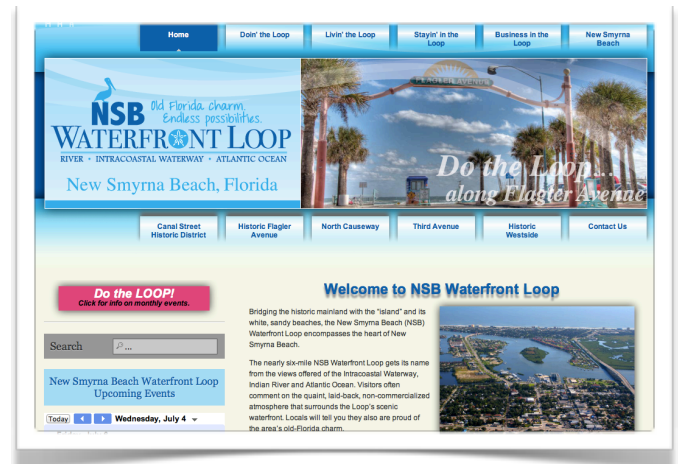
Integrated marketing tools:

The integrated marketing plan for the NSB Waterfront LOOP calls for the use of a variety of marketing and public relations tools. Throughout the “awareness phase” of the marketing effort, several affordable mediums have been used to carry the call to action phrase “Do the LOOP!” These mediums target residents and visitors with a 45-mile radius. Once “in” the LOOP, outdoor soft signage has been installed to add a sense of arrival and further extend the brand to locations and events.

Examples of marketing tools used to date include:

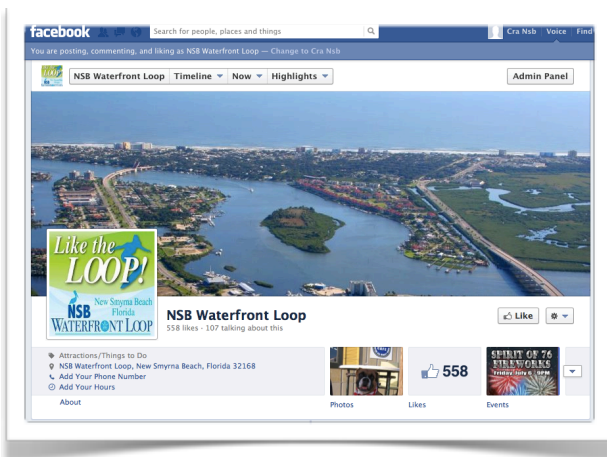
Website: www.nsbwaterfrontloop.com

The LOOP’s website not only has become a popular information tool for upcoming events, but it also provides information on/links to (when available) the LOOP’s character districts and related information sources.



Facebook: www.facebook.com/nsbwaterfrontloop

To extend the reach of the marketing effort to the LOOP’s demographic, a Facebook page was established to share LOOP images and upcoming events. The most popular demographic for this form of media parallels the LOOP’s target.



Soft signage:

- “You’re in the LOOP” vinyl banners are displayed at the weekly Farmer’s Market, at a monthly art stroll in the Canal Street Historic District, on a floating concession on the Intracoastal Waterway, and at various events.



- “Do the LOOP!” event-related roadside banners carry a consistent phrasing and design. Two weeks prior to an event, banners are installed in locations around the LOOP.



- Until “LOOP” banners can be purchased and installed on nearly 100 light poles around the district, temporary roadside banners announce to drivers that they are in the LOOP.



Rack cards: To coordinate the announcement of events occurring across the LOOP’s character districts, a monthly rack is developed and extends the LOOP’s outdoor banner design. Cards are distributed by merchants around the LOOP, beachside accommodators, the New Smyrna Beach Visitor’s Center, and others.

Print advertisements: Two advertising campaigns have been developed/launched since the plan's launch in October 2011.

“Do the LOOP for the holidays!” (November/December 2011) promoted a series of nine holiday events. Promotional efforts included print and local radio advertisements, rack cards, “free” postcards for mailing to friends/family/clients, proactive news media, and electronic media including website, Facebook, and an electronic newsletter.

**Do the Loop...
for the holidays!**

This holiday season, enjoy the old-Florida charm of the New Smyrna Beach Waterfront Loop. Quaint venues set the stage for a variety of events. While you're here, surprise those on your gift list by picking up something unique from Florida's East Coast. Bring a friend or the family. Stay for the day or a weekend. There are many ways to **Do the Loop** for the holidays!

Light up Flagler Avenue - 5:30 - 7:30 pm, Friday, December 2
Seaside caroling, illuminated businesses / Flagler Avenue

Christmas Parade and Boat Parade - 4 pm, Saturday, December 3
From Flagler Avenue to Canal Street. Boat parade follows at dusk

Taste of the Causeway - Noon - 3 pm, Sunday, December 4
Sample restaurants under the big tents / 440 E. Third Avenue

Girls Night Out Fashion Show - 7 pm, Wednesday, December 7
Refreshments, door prizes / Corner of Live Oak and Canal streets

Santa Run/Walk and Toy Drive - 6 pm, Saturday, December 10
To benefit Toys for Tots / Flagler Avenue

Bed and Breakfast Tour and Taste - 2 - 4 pm, Sunday, December 11
Walking tour, music, treats / Canal Street Historic District

New Year's Eve Party/Fireworks - Saturday, December 31
8 pm - 2 am Parties in 10 locations. 9 pm Fireworks / Flagler Avenue

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New Smyrna Beach, Florida
For more information on events or special discounts,
please log on to
www.nsbwaterfrontloop.com/holidays



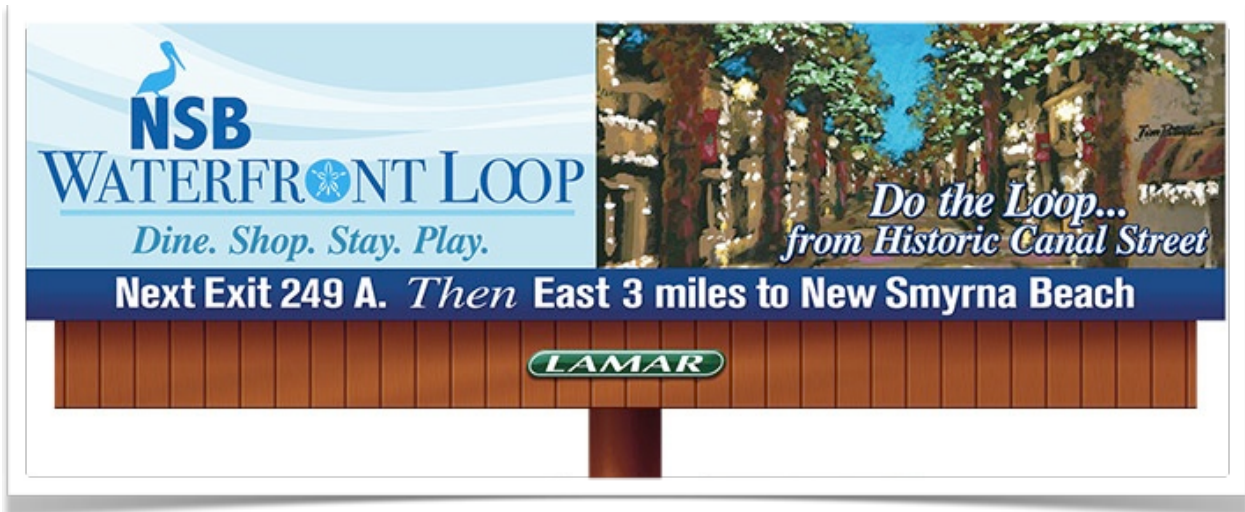
**Happy holidays...
from the Loop!**

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Online advertisement: “Do the LOOP” banner ads appear on the front page of websites for character districts, the local chamber of commerce, and as part of print ad purchases with the newspaper of record. Content varies while maintaining the consistent design and call to action, “Do the LOOP!” The ads, also used in print media, draw attention to the wide range of assets found in the LOOP.



Cooperative advertising: Through coordinated agreement with LOOP merchant groups, the cost of advertising is shared between the CRA and a merchant’s group. Ads extend the brand while building awareness of LOOP assets (ex. Historic Canal Street, a merchant’s group).



Wayfinding signage: Inclusion of the LOOP logo on new wayfinding signage further distributes the brand within the district.