



## **City of Lakeland Marketing Plan**

The central vision of the City of Lakeland is to proactively create and maintain a high quality of life for all of its citizens and to continually evolve as a city where people and businesses prefer to reside or visit. Quality of life involves one's perceived satisfaction resulting from many diverse factors including health, family, education, employment, wealth, religious provision, social interaction, environmental surroundings, safety, and respect. As Lakeland's Marketing Plan, this document serves as a guide to the City's leadership and appropriate stakeholders in the following overarching objectives: 1) Build awareness for the City of Lakeland, its values, and its assets, 2) Create a brand identity for the city that is consistent, positive, and promotes goodwill, 3) Create demand and encourage growth in both the residential and commercial sectors, 4) Proactively capitalize on opportunities that would best serve the citizens and businesses of Lakeland, 5) Facilitate and perpetuate the satisfaction of the city's residents, businesses, and visitors.

### **Introduction**

The City of Lakeland has recently begun to surface in local conversations due to some exciting developments including the construction of a new and improved I-40 interchange, the superior performance of its school district, the creation of a new middle preparatory school, and the proposal of a leading-edge mixed use development with an estimated value of \$400 million at the intersection of I-40 and Canada Road. Although somewhat unfamiliar to many, Lakeland finds itself in a prime location as a northeast suburb in the Memphis Metropolitan area. The City is uniquely positioned between the Wolfchase Retail Area, the most successful retail area in the Memphis Metro area, and Arlington, one of the fastest growing residential communities for young families. And, because of its access to I-40 and Hwy 385, Lakeland offers appealing drive times of approximately 30 minutes or less to almost all major employers and places of interest in the metro area. The city's proximity to I-40 and Hwy 385 also provide impressive traffic counts and will provide quick easy access to the planned Memphis Regional Megasite.

For many years, Lakeland has chosen to remain a "bedroom community", offering its residents low or no property taxes, low crime, and strict development guidelines. Remnants of a reputation also remain that the city is overprotective and difficult to work with. These tenets have resulted in very few local businesses, mediocre housing growth, and a growing amount of tax revenue leakage, as the surrounding areas effectively generate commercial and residential development. In the past, the city's prior strategy served the community well, but with the current focus on economic development in the Memphis Metro area, the saturation of the Wolfchase Retail Sector, and the explosive growth in north-east metro corridor, a plethora of

possibilities have emerged for this city rich in assets and natural beauty. The challenge is championing an evolving identity for Lakeland that allows it to continually better serve its current residents, while proactively creating and capitalizing on current market opportunities. The general consensus is that time has come for the city to grow and mature, striving to leverage its assets, serve its residents, and move toward reaching its potential.

This marketing plan includes an overview of the major objectives and various targets essential in enabling Lakeland to manage its own identity and progress as a city of opportunity, where quality is a way of life. The plan also defines multiple channels and initiatives instrumental in marketing to both internal stakeholders and external prospects. The goal is to reintroduce Lakeland as a city with a proud history, and to also newly introduce Lakeland as a city with a fresh vision for an exciting and prosperous future.

### **Major Objectives**

- 1) Vividly establish Lakeland as a preferred, upscale, growing suburb for residents, businesses, and visitors; consistently represent Lakeland via recognizable branding**
- 2) Proactively encourage and attract both residential and commercial growth**
- 3) Inspire pride in Lakeland's culture, assets, resources, diversity, and potential**
- 4) Inform and attract elements that establish Lakeland as a destination city**
- 5) Improve the quality and value experienced by Lakeland residents and businesses**

### **Supporting Goals**

- 1) Reach all demographics
- 2) Coordinate and utilize multiple channels
- 3) Develop systematic, timely, and consistent messaging
- 4) Remain predominately factual / limit subjectivity in all communications
- 5) Plan for and execute with financial efficiency
- 6) Develop strategic and collaborative relationships
- 7) Employ systematic review and assessment
- 8) Increase engagement of internal and external stakeholders

### **Strategic Messages**

- Lakeland is focused on providing a great quality of life for residents and businesses**
- Lakeland is business-friendly and poised for economic growth**
- Lakeland is builder-friendly and prime for residential growth**

- **Lakeland offers some of the best schools, neighborhoods, citizens, and community events in the mid-south**
- **(Internally) Take pride in Lakeland, engage in its activities, and support local businesses**

### **Supporting Tags**

- Where Quality is a Way of Life
- Discover Lakeland
- Come Grow with Us
- Aspire

### **Target Audiences**

Lakeland's marketing objectives are unique in the fact that they rely on both internal communications and external communications to be entirely successful. Therefore, the target audiences include both internal residents and external stakeholders/prospects. A coordinated message within the community is vital in defining and promoting a consistent brand image, as well as in delivering improving quality of life. Engagement in community affairs and community events is important in developing a highly-regarded community, and effective internal communication is imperative in engaging a community. To create a coherent identity and a successful external marketing strategy, the following target audiences have been identified:

- A) Location advisors and site selectors for commercial businesses
- B) Commercial real estate developers
- C) Residential real estate developers
- D) Commercial real estate agents
- E) Residential real estate agents
- F) Key local and regional officials and organizations
- G) Current local residents
- H) Potential residents
- I) Potential local business owners
- J) (As opportunity arises) Local colleges and trade schools

### **Marketing Channels**

People ingest information, research topics, learn of events, and stay abreast of news and current affairs via many different channels. Therefore, an effective marketing plan must

incorporate several diverse channels to effectively reach and engage its various targets. Repetition is also key to a marketing strategy and can be accomplished through coordinated messaging exported through multiple channels and utilizing systematic methods. This marketing plan incorporates multiple proven marketing channels, while maintaining a sharp focus on ROI and the budgetary restrictions of a relatively small, conservative city. Special considerations are given to cost, reach, focus, and utilizing currently successful and respected channels. The major marketing and communication channels employed in this plan include the following current channels and new channels:

- [www.lakelandtn.gov](http://www.lakelandtn.gov) website (current)
- Lakeland Economic Development website/microsite (new)
- Lakeland Currents website and push email communications (current and under further development)
- City of Lakeland push email communications (new)
- Social media coordinated through the City of Lakeland and Lakeland Currents (current and under further development)
- Nextdoor (current and under further development)
- Print collateral / marketing packet (under development)
- Advertising in appropriate publications (new)
- Representation at appropriate conferences and expos (new)
- Electronic surveys (new)
- 38002 (current and under further development)
- Direct mail (considered for special projects)
- Signage (current and under further development)
- Press Releases and local media (current and under further development)
- Video (considered based on budget and ROI)
- LinkedIn (considered)
- Apps, ex: interactive calendars (considered)

### **Key Performance Indicators / Metrics**

As Winston Churchill once said “However beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results.” Based on the major objectives of this plan, the following primary metrics should be monitored to provide objective measurements of performance:

- Property tax revenues / % growth / compared with peers

- Sales tax revenues / % growth / compared with peers
- Total roof tops or housing permits issued / % growth / compared with peers
- Total businesses or business permits issued / % growth / compared with peers
- Resident satisfaction – A short standardized survey should be constructed to measure various elements of resident and local business satisfaction. The survey should generate a numeric value, should be performed annually, and should be offered to a large group of recipients that is consistent, diverse, and inclusive.

Since these primary metrics are typically collected on an annual basis and may show significant lags in cause and effect, an additional tier of metrics should be established to measure more real-time performance with regard to secondary goals. Insight into the success of creating awareness and inspiring residential and commercial growth could be measured utilizing the following metrics:

- Google analytics for [www.lakelandtn.gov](http://www.lakelandtn.gov), [www.lakelandcurrents.com](http://www.lakelandcurrents.com), and the economic development microsite – total sessions, total users, avg. session duration, page views
- Net positive media impressions – TV, radio, newspaper, publications
- Approved residential lots
- Residential lots under construction
- Approved retail sites
- Retail sites under construction
- New occupied retail sites

### **Strategic initiatives**

- Update and reorganize the lakelandtn.gov website based on web-usability analyses and customer satisfaction surveys
- Create an interactive, stand-alone microsite devoted to the economic development of Lakeland
- Employ Search Engine Optimization (SEO) attributes on both web sites
- Design a systematic push-communication platform providing relevant information to internal and external stakeholders
- Proactively develop a comprehensive data base for a push-communication platform, including both internal and external stakeholders

- Create a portfolio of print and electronic marketing collateral to be utilized by the City of Lakeland, the Economic Development Committee, and the Lakeland Chamber of Commerce
- Create a real-time dashboard of Key Performance Indicators
- Conduct and promote a full rebranding of the City of Lakeland; create and rigidly adhere to comprehensive brand standards
- Establish best practices, channels, and accountability for proactive relationships with local media
- Develop resources needed to represent Lakeland at trade shows and conferences; identify and attend relevant events
- Develop a detailed budget for marketing expenses, including a 10% reserve fund for unexpected opportunities
- Aggressively and systematically pursue economic development grants
- Proactively and systematically pursue accolades for the city
- Consider researching relative “competitors” and establishing benchmark goals

Due to the comprehensiveness of the plan, it is recommended that the city stakeholders begin the marketing process by prioritizing these initiatives, developing a time line for their completion, and assigning resources, both immediate and ongoing. As parameters for the initiatives are established, tactics and specific action items will be appended, resulting in a detailed implementable plan.