The River District is an idea inspired by west Salt Lake City’s unique but often overlooked and forgotten asset—the gentle Jordan River which peacefully weaves and flows through this side of the city. In the interest of diminishing and eventually erasing the negative stigma that often plagues the “West Side,” the River District brand and logo can highlight the positive assets and values intrinsic to the river itself—and more importantly, the community surrounding its walls.

The River District brand has the potential to enhance the recognition and reputation of the west side of Salt Lake City. The brand can be used at the community’s events, businesses and neighborhoods to achieve local goals of making the area more economically and aesthetically pleasing, helping others to see the area as a safe and welcoming part of town. We were asked to participate in this project to explore the image of this Jordan River community and intend for the district to achieve greater success and growth through the use of a well-crafted, community-based logo and brand.

For any neighborhood, community or city that wants to improve its appearance, connect its citizens or increase its economic standing, a symbol that verbally and visually communicates its identity is essential. This unique emblem, sign, or logo can inspire all who live, work, and play within an area.
This workshop took students off campus and into the real world planning context, providing us an opportunity to practice planning skills as an educational experience.

We built awareness of the River District identity among community organizations this Fall. In doing so, we explored the perceived identity of the River District and the components which make up its brand or identity. We discovered the concepts, values and beliefs that matter most to its residents, a set of qualities that focus on places, people and their perspectives.
PROJECT FINDINGS: COMMUNITY IDENTITY

PRIDE
One of the most common themes from the community is a desire for the River District brand to get rid of the negative connotation the name “West Side” currently has throughout Salt Lake City. Many people view the River District brand as an opportunity for new life, and a new image. People are very proud of the communities within which they belong and one of the biggest hopes they have with the rebranding is a chance for others to see and feel that community pride. The community wants to see the logo transform the River District into a positive, desirable aspect of Salt Lake.

COMMUNITY
Community members repeatedly express their concern about having current neighborhood names be lost to the River District brand. They are, however, okay with the idea of attaching their neighborhood names to the River District brand— for example, ‘Rose Park at the River District.’

DIVERSITY/HISTORY
The community takes pride in the diversity and families and homes that have been in the area for a long time and don’t want to see that history lost. They want people to see the friendly, walkable, quiet little neighborhoods along the river. They want to highlight the diversity existing there, and their tight-knit community.

MOBILITY
Walking and biking was another common theme. Many community members walk and bike as their primary means of transport. They see the potential for these modes of transportation to be expanded within their neighborhoods and into downtown Salt Lake City.

GREENSPACE
Many people living in that area love and enjoy the river. They want the beauty of it to be represented in the logo, as they feel like it’s a big part of what makes their community special. Community members have spoken about the parks along the river and how that part of Salt Lake City has more parks and greenery than any other part of the city. They talk about the river’s beauty and its potential for both land and water recreation.

RECREATION
Parks and open space were heavily discussed in partner meetings. These folks appreciate the green space the River District offers and get excited over potential recreational opportunities. Many community members reminisced about boating on the river, saying that it was an escape from the big city. Many frequently bike, run, and bring their children to these areas.
PROJECT FINDINGS

COLOR
People like the idea of a mosaic of colors as it represents diversity of the community, and reflects the cultural influences and art throughout the River District.

**Utah Red** represents the native red rock in Utah

**Orange** represents the sunset and art in the community

**Yellow** represents the area’s vibrancy

**Green** represents the green river corridor and the many parks of the River District

**Blue** represents the river and the sky

BRANDING STATEMENT
The River District is a corridor located along west Salt Lake City’s portion of the Jordan River. The District highlights the communities, neighborhoods and businesses located along the river.

“We have a small town atmosphere where people know their neighbors, but we also have more acceptance of diverse cultures and beliefs.”

“It’s a safe and beautiful place.”

“A variety of ethnic communities from all over the world living in one place.”

“The west side of Salt Lake City is like the greenbelt.”

“I look forward to watching the sunset everyday - seeing the sun set over the mountains, you can only see its full essence from west Salt Lake.”
FINAL LOGO OPTIONS:

slcriverdistrict.com
for a printable version please contact NeighborWorks Salt Lake

SLC River District
Join the community in exploring the identity of the River District
Explore historical connections and community stories at slcriverdistrict.com
Logos can be placed on any product. Local shops or events can offer this merchandise.

Logos can be tailored to individual neighborhoods or specific needs.
LOGO RECOMMENDATIONS

WAYFINDING

Logos used in conjunction with wayfinding can highlight special places within the River District.

TRANSIT

Logos placed on new and existing transit lines can help spread awareness of the River District.
The UNP board members had great feedback about the River District. We were able to engage the participants in relaxed conversation about their feelings toward the River District and our efforts. Overall, we felt that this was a productive meeting. They praised our efforts to this point and requested that they be kept in the loop regarding future progress.

Teresa Molina, the assistant director – who had attended our first few presentations at NeighborWorks – commented that we had improved quite a bit over our first presentation. The feedback from Neighborworks was critical in our project’s evolution throughout the semester.

The group asked several questions about the information that was presented on the PowerPoint slides and asked us to revisit different slides throughout the presentation.

Kimberly Schmit, the partnership manager, commented on the logo from our Sacramento River District example. She felt that the logo could benefit from adding a location name; for example, adding Salt Lake City or SLC to the logo to differentiate it from other river districts.

Sarah Munro, the research director/partnership manager, was curious about the partnerships in the Sacramento River District redevelopment. We explained that it was a partnership between the grassroots organizers and the City of Sacramento.

Ms. Munro also asked if we had received feedback from anybody on the existing banners located on streetlights in the district. We told her that, to our knowledge, we had not. It struck me as something about which we should have asked other groups.

The board members offered insightful feedback when asked about the River District concept. They mentioned diversity, recreation, parks, and children at play as important aspects of the district.

When asked about colors, they referred back to our slide that contained a photo of the mural on the back of the Sorenson Center. It became clear to us that they liked the brightly colored murals, as the multiple colors were representative of the many different cultures in the area. They like the idea of using something similar to the Sorenson Center mural as a logo.
WEST HIGH SCHOOL
Wendi Schow-Sahleen and Adam Mendenhall
Meeting Date: November 5, 2012

• The meeting was truncated because they squeezed us in between a full day of school and a two-hour staff meeting. We passed out the cards with the link to the survey instead of the handouts due to the short amount of time we were given.

• There were actually very few teachers who lived in the proposed River District, though they were interested in the project and excited to participate.

• Participants thought that the Rose Park and Fairview neighborhoods should not be included in the River District. They expressed these neighborhoods would particularly be overshadowed by their inclusion in the River District because of their highly residential nature. They also mentioned that these two neighborhoods had worked very hard to differentiate themselves and did not want to see this work undone. These areas also have no space along the river, so it wouldn't serve them to highlight the river or its connectivity, and they don't have much space for new development.

• They definitely wanted to see and vote on several different logos before the actual River District was created.

SORENSON UNITY CENTER
Wendi Schow-Sahleen and Brianna LeRoy
Meeting Date: November 20, 2012

We held a small meeting at the Sorenson Unity Center. Community members liked the idea of the River District and how it can change the perceived image of the area.

They recognized that branding is a process and that it will be many years before the idea fully takes hold. It was also mentioned that community organizations are excited about the idea but it may take longer for residents to adapt to the idea. They recognized the importance of maintaining neighborhood identity and pride within their separate communities.

The meeting was successful. The idea of destination as a theme was an interesting idea that came up – one which we had previously not considered.
The majority of the feedback received included comments regarding the presentation itself rather than feedback from the activity questions. The committee commented that the questions were too general for people to give the feedback required to establish a branding logo. Some indicated that there should be more focus on the river itself and less on the area extending beyond the river.

Concern was raised about the possibility of a residential voice being left out of the process, and that the lack of this contribution to the logo or brand discussion could mean they may not even want one. The majority of the meeting attendees wanted to know more about the origins of the River District name and more background information about the project. The group would feel better about coming up with ideas for a brand or logo if they had this information.

- Involving individual communities to find a brand/logo for the area.
- Communities not losing their identity within the River District branding.
- A few of the committee members expressed concern that the River District was originally intended for a small area.
- Defining it as a large area could be problematic.
- Developing the geographic location of the River District. What areas to include or what areas to exclude.
- Acceptance of the River District as a name.
- Implications of the River District name – where it came from was questioned.
- Why the presentation was looking for feedback from stakeholders instead of individuals whom lived in the area.
There was a lot of talk about shortening the River District name and removing the ‘District’ part all together. We asked if the commenter felt it was a negative name, and why he wanted it removed. He did not have much of an answer but Jessi from NeighborWorks chimed in and said that the River District name is pretty much decided and all the advertising and webpage are already in the works. The rest of the group was on board with the name and was excited about its potential for use and what it is going to do for the communities. One gentleman said he was very excited about this and has been waiting for a project like this to happen.

They spoke a lot about parks and all the green space in the area, and especially its recreation potential.

Education was brought up several times; one attendee in particular – a resident from Glendale – is very excited about all their newly built/remodeled area schools and would like to see the education aspect in the logo, perhaps by including a book.
The Business Alliance was very excited about the new branding of the West Side as the River District. They talked a lot about the changes happening along North Temple and how they will positively impact Salt Lake City’s West Side. Much of the discussion centered on the opportunities the new bridge and TRAX line are going to bring to the community. They talked about it being the gateway to the rest of the city.

They talked a lot about connections. One member mentioned a north-south road corridor that would run through the District. The connections that North Temple is going to make were heavily discussed.

The group was very excited about the branding idea. They saw it as a great way to get away from the negative connotation that currently color the West Side name. They talked about the process that went along with a name change. They expressed that it is not something that will happen overnight, but that as time goes on the West Side will get a new name and a new image if the branding is done correctly. They discussed the recreational opportunities along the river and the open space and parks in the River District. They saw it as a very positive community aspect and highlighted it as an important part of the new brand.

The colors that they discussed were many. They talked a lot about the color red and how it reminded them of the state of Utah. They discussed green and blue as colors that represented the river and parks in the area. They also discussed the success previous banners have had in the area because of the multitude of colors they contained. They also like the colors that are frequently seen in the sunsets that are visible on that side of the city, but not on the East Side, which include the mountains along with the colorful sky.

Another aspect of the new branding that they discussed was making connections to the rest of Salt Lake City, such as the Gateway Mall and the University of Utah. They saw themselves as the Gateway to the city with the new construction that is happening along North Temple, which leads right to the heart of the city.

Overall they were very positive and excited about the branding of the River District. They are eager for the changes that will be happening on the West Side of Salt Lake City, and are hoping that the branding of the River District will play a role in the success they are expecting over the next couple of years.
The Northwest Recreation Center was very ambitious about the progress of the River District, but found a few issues in the mechanics of how the River District was being portrayed as a brand to the public. The first issue was the term “branding” in general. They felt this term sounded like a big corporation was coming into the area and taking over - a characteristic of our process we want to avoid completely. After further explanation about the logo and background information on the process, they came around to the term and were excited to see implementation.

The Advisory Council was very eager to see different logos presented to the community before deciding on just one. Their ideas for a logo focused on the river and possibilities for the future. They wanted the River District to be known as the “green part of the city” where people come and enjoy a unique ‘outdoors’ aspect of Salt Lake City.

Like many of the residents and community councils we visited, they too wanted to get away from any negative connotations associated with the name “West Side.” They loved the name “River District” and its potential to enhance their community. However, a few Advisory Council members were unsure of the term “district,” but they were still interested in giving the area a new name. The council also brought up the history of the area’s neighborhoods and how they wanted to see the community’s heritage incorporated into the logo - including its strong agricultural side which includes community gardens and park space.