

Julio's
BARRIO

Mexican Restaurant



2020 ANNUAL
report



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mission

Our mission is to foster a thriving business and destination district that is inviting to patrons, tourists, and businesses.

2020 Board of Directors

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

- Anastasia Arabia, Treasurer, Trend Research
- Kris Armitage, Chair, Knifewear & Kent of Inglewood
- Matt Chapman, Past Chair, Chapman Bros Ltd.

DIRECTORS:

- Al Gothjelpsen, Director, The Pint Whyte
- Nella Sabo, Director, Backbeat
- Ben Sir, Director, The Buckingham
- Adam Smith, Director, Strathcona Spirits

HONORARY DIRECTORS:

- Adam Mitchell, Fringe Theatre Adventures

OSBA Staff Team

FULL TIME STAFF:

- Cherie Klassen, Executive Director
- Alanna Morton, Membership & Marketing Coordinator
- Katelyn Arthurs, Marketing & Communications Manager (Jan-March)
- Jeff Samsonow, Marketing & Communications Coordinator (Sept-Dec)

PART TIME:

- Joshua Radostits, Community Economic Development Assistant (July-August)



Board Chair's Message

In 2020, our business community faced some of the biggest challenges in over a decade. We, at Knifewear and Kent of Inglewood also felt the impact of COVID-19. From having to lay off staff, to altering our business operations and investing in PPE, it created a lot of turmoil. Having said that, I've also seen tremendous support from our business community and patrons. We quickly adapted, and so did our customers. We kept them informed on how we were operating and consistently shared how we were keeping them safe. These changes made an impact on our relationships with customers and they have never been more loyal. Investing in our customers is always worth the time and energy, and we will continue to do so.

In response to the impact of COVID-19 in our business community, the OSBA board and staff worked quickly to ensure that businesses were up to date on all the resources, government programs and information that was rapidly changing. In May, we formed the Economic Recovery Task Force and set out a plan to focus on short-term initiatives to support businesses. This led to the expanded sidewalks and patios in our area, where we had nearly 30 businesses take advantage of them, the second highest number in the city! It also resulted in the investment of a mural in Spur Line alley, adding to the growing list of Instagrammable murals

and spaces in the district that give Edmontonians one more reason to visit. Over the holidays, our OSBA staff worked tirelessly to create a fantastic winter holiday campaign, despite numerous changes to public health requirements. We welcomed additional beautification with a Winter Whyte Art Bomb, added greenery in the area, and additional lights in McIntyre park. We also hosted several holiday contests and giveaways, investing \$8,000 directly in our businesses.

We are hopeful that 2021 is going to be a fantastic year for our area and I wish all of you success.

From one business to another – stay strong!



Kris Armitage, Board Chair



Executive Director's Message

To say that 2020 was a challenging year is an understatement. What I have witnessed from our business community has been incredible. So many of our businesses embraced pivoting and adjusting their business models in response to the ever-changing market and situation. Our businesses stepped up to meet customer's needs, and ensured their business was safe and accessible.

We, too, pivoted our plans quickly in the first quarter of 2020. We formed an Economic Recovery Task Force in the spring which led to the development of a short-term economic recovery plan for the year, and then later transitioned that committee into a Business Recruitment Committee, to develop a robust Business Recruitment and Retention plan. We will be utilizing the City's Economic Recovery Grant to support this plan throughout 2021.

Myself, as Chair, and my colleagues at the Edmonton BIA Council, which represents a collective of 4,000+ businesses, championed advocacy that led to relaxed patio permitting, municipal economic recovery support, and a ton of media attention drawing awareness to shopping local over the holiday season.

Lastly, I'd like to thank our Board of Directors, Economic Recovery Task Force and staff for their tireless work supporting this business community through likely the toughest economic year we've seen in decades.

The work of our Business Improvement Area (BIA) is more important than ever. When the first BIA was created 50 years ago, it was in response to an economic decline. Repeatedly, evidence shows that businesses in a BIA recover faster than those who are not.

Looking forward to 2021, there is hope. OSBA is committed to getting our district into recovery and thriving, stronger than ever.

We are going to get through this stronger!



Cherie Klassen, Executive Director





2020 PRIORITIES

This was the first year of a new three-year strategic plan. The plan includes operational targets in four areas for 2020-2022:

1. Strengthen the perception and reality of safety in the district.
2. Develop a strategy that supports a balanced business mix for the district.
3. Activate under-utilized spaces.
4. Foster a healthy and thriving business community.

Of course, the pandemic quickly altered plans for 2020. During the shutdown that began in March 2020, the board and staff dedicated time to supporting OSBA businesses and advocating for supports to ensure a safe and successful re-opening. A new Economic Recovery Task Force (ERTF) was brought together to help re-focus efforts for the year and became a committee of the board in late spring.

The ERTF was formed to help the OSBA develop an economic recovery plan to address impacts of COVID-19 in Old Strathcona. Its focus was on short-term goals to get businesses back open, and then revisit recovery efforts later in the year.

The ERTF identified key areas of focus, that still aligned with operational targets:

1. Public Realm Improvements & Safety
2. Collective Campaign / Grow Local
3. Business Recruitment

Resources to support these initiatives and the strategic plan included two full-time OSBA staff (Executive Director and Membership & Marketing Coordinator), and a part-time summer employee, hiring of a new Marketing & Communications Coordinator, social media accounts were managed through McQueen, in addition to their website maintenance. Despite being short one FT staff member, our team was able to increase our member communications and initiate a number of recovery efforts based on ERTF recommendations.

In the fall, the ERTF's mandate was shifted to that of business recruitment and retention, and the committee will work on those efforts in 2021 and beyond.

Our relationships with various community organizations and stakeholders informs our work across all strategic and operational goals. Strong rapport with these groups serves to enhance our ability to improve the Old Strathcona Business Improvement Area (BIA). Organizations include: City of Edmonton, Edmonton BIA Council, Old Strathcona Area Community Council (OSACC), Edmonton Police Service (EPS), Neighbourhood Empowerment Team (NET), The Mustard Seed, and surrounding Community Leagues.





STRATEGIC

plan

Strengthen the
perception and
reality of safety
in the district



OPERATIONAL
TARGET:

Enhancing and advocating for increased public space to enable a safe visitor experience

EXPANDED SIDEWALKS

Our expanded sidewalks were one of Edmonton's most visible examples of enhancing the experience and safety of everyone in 2020. We increased space for people to move around, and physically distance for COVID-safety, along the northside of Whyte Avenue between 103 and 105 Streets. This included the curb lane and one vehicle lane.

Surveys conducted with businesses and the public supported this effort, with a desire to make it a regular use of the street outside of winter, if not year-round. Hospitality businesses reported an increase in sales thanks to the expansion.



As the summer continued, we worked with Thirdspace Design and Zocalo to add planters, picnic tables with umbrellas, parklets and large flower planters (instead of rain barrels) to the expanded sidewalks. This allowed people to sit, and added to overall enhanced curb appeal.

PATIO PLACEMAKING

The City of Edmonton's streamlined approach to patio permits in 2020 allowed more businesses than ever to expand their seating, especially important with fluctuating public health restrictions and the public's comfort with indoor dining. We saw two dozen patios around Old Strathcona, our largest number ever.

MAIN STREET RENEWAL

2020 saw an overdue success with the City approving a new policy to incorporate main streets into neighbourhood renewal construction, due to advocacy from our Edmonton BIA Council. All BIAs in Edmonton should see upgrades and updates to their main streets and arterial roads within the next decade. This will bring much needed improvements to walkability and accessibility to Whyte Avenue, and potentially other portions of the business district.





OPERATIONAL TARGET:

Update and improve aesthetics of the avenue through placemaking projects

PUBLIC ART

We continue to add public art throughout the neighbourhood. As a sponsor of Grindstone Theatre's "Mural Massive" event, seven new murals were added in the East Whyte/Ritchie area. Thirdspace Design created "Rainbow Road" in Spur Line Alley by painting a Mario Kart-inspired walkway, and this became a summer destination for those looking to share some positive energy on social media. The Army & Navy building received some mural work after it was closed, turning a closed building into a bright spot of conversation.

In the spring re-opening, we worked with Wink Ink Design Co. to create chalk art on sidewalks to spread messages of COVID-safety and inspiration, welcoming visitors back to Old Strathcona.

Prior to the holiday season we worked with PARK and Cory Christopher to install temporary "art bombs" of winter greenery throughout the neighbourhood.



PRIDE CROSSWALKS

The City of Edmonton continues to support the OSBA's initiative to have crosswalks painted in Pride rainbow colours. Three crosswalks were given a fresh coat of paint in June.

LIGHTING

We added more lights to our holiday installation in McIntyre Park. Five Star Holiday Décor installed three new metal wire "light trees", and reinstalled string lighting on the gazebo.

FLOWERS AND GREENERY

We added more hanging baskets and barrels as part of "Bloomin' Boulevards" efforts, going from 40 to 62 total. We used eight of the City's skyline planters for larger planters at main intersections and purchased an additional 30 for the expanded sidewalk lanes arranged in blue rain barrels. For the winter, we re-planted the same skylines with greenery and installed 92 decorated hanging baskets, swags and barrels.

WAYFINDING

New wayfinding signage began to be installed in 2020 by the City. The new plinths will help visitors identify key areas of the neighbourhood, including arts venues.

NEIGHBORHOOD CLEANLINESS AND LITTER REDUCTION

In 2020, the Old Strathcona Clean Team employed up to 12 individuals each month, picking up litter 10 hours each week. This partnership with the Mustard Seed and City of Edmonton remains an excellent way to clean up litter, keep extra eyes on our neighbourhood, and employ individuals who are in need of work. The team members also helped safely discard of more than 50 needles, and made nearly 100 reports to 311 for items including graffiti tags and large garbage being dumped.

As one example of this program's successes, a member of the crew who was working to afford groceries began working closely with an employment coach. They were able to apply for jobs, practice interviews and get new work and interview-appropriate clothing. This individual has since found employment which also offers on-site housing. "I'm very excited to be finally working again. I now have a place to live and I'm really looking forward to this new chapter of life. I feel hopeful."

OPERATIONAL TARGET:

Showcase that OSBA is a champion for public safety

COVID SAFETY

In the spring, we created a “Welcome Back” campaign that included public health reminders about physical distancing, washing and sanitizing hands, wearing masks, and acting with kindness. Signs were printed and placed on Whyte Avenue and social media assets were used throughout the year.

We also created a COVID-19 business safety guide, with best practices for a variety of retail and hospitality spaces and more information and links on creating and maintaining safe workplaces. This was made available to all OSBA members and remained accessible on our website. Business members could also access printable signage, floor decals and sidewalk markers.



STAND
TOGETHER BY
STANDING
APART



HOUSING CRISIS

The OSBA, and Edmonton BIA Council, were publicly supportive of the need to fund transitional housing and supportive housing with wraparound services. Edmonton's housing crisis became more apparent during the pandemic and our advocacy will continue, as the business community benefits, as we all do, from everyone having a safe place to live.

PUBLIC WASHROOMS

We were supportive of a pilot program to have an attendant at the public washrooms on Whyte Avenue and ensured our members and the community knew about this initiative. It's important for destination locations to have public amenities that are accessible, clean and safe. The OSBA will continue to work with the City and related agencies to keep offering public washrooms.

NOISE ENFORCEMENT

The OSBA was pleased to see the City and Edmonton Police Service (EPS) undertake additional enforcement of speeding and stunting drivers, and the noise this causes. Efforts are ongoing to see this move beyond pilot programs and our advocacy with the Downtown Business Association (DBA) continues.



STRATEGIC

plan

Develop a strategy that supports a balanced business mix for the district



OPERATIONAL
TARGET:

Build business attraction plan

BUSINESS RECRUITMENT

While somewhat sidelined by reacting to COVID-19, the OSBA's business recruitment plans emerged late in 2020, strengthened by the events of the year. The Economic Recovery Task Force (ERTF) pivoted to become the Business Recruitment and Retention Committee and its efforts will be bolstered by a detailed plan throughout 2021. A successful application to the City's Economic Recovery Grant has doubled the budget of these plans, with market research to inform recruitment tools, a new member welcome package and storytelling campaign that highlights the success of business owners in our district.



DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING

The board began work in late 2020 on a new tool to more objectively gauge development applications in the business district. Based on the 2020-2022 strategic plan, this new approach will allow the board to champion projects that help the OSBA fulfill its operational targets for a vibrant, diverse and successful neighbourhood where businesses thrive.

Old Strathcona remains a desirable neighbourhood for investment. While the pandemic has delayed some work, a number of projects are expected to open, begin construction or seek permit approval in 2021:

- South Park – Main floor retail and residential units will be available in 2021.
- The Strathcona – A major renovation of the historic hotel is slated to open in 2021, after COVID delays.
- @81 – opened late 2020, this mixed-use building is home to Mr. Derk, which moves its men’s wear store across 81 Avenue. Additional commercial bays on the main floor will be leased in 2021.
- Scona parking lot development – Construction is expected to begin in 2021 on multiple mixed-use towers.

- Scona Garage/The Keg – Renovation of the historic building to be undertaken in 2021, bringing retail to the main floor and residential on the upper floor.
- The Mezzo – Application approved for a mixed-use development south of Whyte Avenue. Status is uncertain.
- The Baron – application submitted for a mixed-use tower on the site of the Archibald Block.
- Army & Navy – application expected to be submitted for a mixed-use development to incorporate the site of the retail building, historic bank building at the corner of Whyte Avenue and parking lot to the south.

The City is moving ahead with a new City Plan and an update to the Zoning Bylaw, new guiding documents which seek to simplify planning and create more walkable and visitable neighbourhoods and districts. Folded within the new plans, the Strathcona ARP will remain a key document in planning and development. The OSBA is eager to work with the City on an Old Strathcona Public Places Plan that creates a vision for our already active neighbourhood, prioritizing elements and projects that support the new guiding documents.



STRATEGIC

plan

Activate
under-utilized
spaces



ALLEY ACTIVATION

We continue to advocate for investment and enhancement in our back lanes and alleys. The OSBA successfully advocated to expand the City's Storefront Improvement Program to include businesses that front back lanes. A pilot will launch next year in the heart of Old Strathcona, for the alleys between 103 and 105 Street north of Whyte Ave.

In the same area, the Strathcona Backstreet project should begin construction in 2021. This is another successful effort from the OSBA, and community partners, to have this already-active alley renewed as part of the Strathcona community's neighbourhood renewal. New pavement and lighting will be installed, with potential upgrades possible through community funding.

WEST RITCHIE PUBLIC PLACES PLAN

OSBA worked with Urban Planning students at the University of Alberta to create a West Ritchie/East Whyte public spaces plan, as one of the program's design projects. The students created a plan that can now be used by the OSBA as a template for enhanced activity, future events and planning advocacy. With the City renewing Gateway Boulevard and the potential for Station Flats and Station Park developments just to the west of this area, the project will inform OSBA activity and actions over the next few years.

ARMY & NAVY BUILDING

Even though this iconic building closed early in the pandemic, it found new life throughout the year. OSBA connected mural artists with the property owner to add more colour to what could have been a long stretch of boarded up windows. And late in the year, Wild Heart Collective brought their now annual Xmas Market to the building, filling both floors with dozens of vendors, including a handful of OSBA members. We sponsored the event as it was an excellent opportunity to attract some additional visitors in what was to be a quiet holiday shopping season. We hope to build on our relationship with Wild Heart, as they hold the lease on the building through 2021 and they are a high profile event and community programmer which, thus far, has operated north of the river.



STRATEGIC

plan

Foster a healthy
and thriving
business district

OPERATIONAL TARGET:

Advocate and support collaboration among businesses

MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS

With the onset of the pandemic, member communications via our newsletter increased significantly. We went from monthly communications to weekly updates as emerging information was released regarding safety guidelines, government supports, and other resources. Over the year, we grew our newsletter subscribers by 5% and maintained a 36% open rate, even after more than doubling the total number of campaigns sent compared to the previous year.

New pages were created on the website for members to access registration and meeting info for the virtual AGM, a digital Winter Survival Guide, and COVID-19 resource page. These pages allowed members to access resources on demand like the OSBA COVID 19 Safety Guidelines, printable posters, financial resources, marketing tips, and Neighbourhood Response tools.





While 2020 did not offer as many opportunities to encourage collaboration between businesses and other organizations in Old Strathcona, we did see some successes. The Neighbour Centre and Grindstone among others, hosted a block party in July. Grindstone also brought together many stakeholders with their Mural Massive event in September. The OSBA will keep finding new ways to open up these opportunities for new relationships and which highlight our neighbourhood's energy.

BUSINESS TRAINING, WORKSHOPS AND GENERAL MEETINGS

In April, we hosted a virtual Coffee With A Cop which was originally planned as an in person event. Edmonton Police Services and the City's Neighbourhood Empowerment Team were on hand to answer questions related to safety in the district. This year saw us host our first ever virtual AGM on Zoom. Approximately 45 people were in attendance, our largest turnout in recent years.

Throughout the year we promoted workshops and trainings hosted by other organizations like Business Link, the ATB Entrepreneur Centre, and Business Development Bank of Canada.

In October, the School of Retailing at the U of A launched Making Edmonton Digital, a partnership between BIAs and the City of Edmonton to help businesses improve their online presence. More than 30 businesses signed up in the first 3 months of the program's launch to take advantage of this service.

We also partnered with Business Link to launch a BIA-focused YEG Recovery Program, offering one-on-one support to business owners, as well as training. OSBA members are among the most active participants across all BIAs to date.

EXPERIENCE WHYTE

The Metterra and Varscona Hotels partnered with other neighbourhood businesses for an "Experience Whyte" package in late summer and fall 2020. Guests who booked this package received deals and discounts at restaurants and shops around Old Strathcona, boosting the profile of the hotels and participating businesses.



**OPERATIONAL
TARGET:**

Promote and market Whyte as a destination shopping district and local hub of activity

SHOP LOCAL

Throughout 2020, Edmontonians heard repeated calls to shop and support local. The OSBA supported efforts in our neighbourhood with sustained online and social media marketing promoting our business members, and the variety of ways people could support them at every stage of opening throughout the year.

Some of the highlights include:

- SkirtsAfire Shop Hop – March 2020
- Here for Good (Print Machine, Explore Edmonton) – ongoing
- Welcome back to Whyte – summer 2020
- Winter Whyte Shop Hop – November 2020
- Whyte Wishes – November/December 2020
- Take-Out Tuesday – December 2020
- Xmas Market collaboration and cross-promotion – December 2020

*#Whyte
Wishes*



Through a combination of social media, advertising, blog content and campaigns like our holiday wish-granting Whyte Wishes that put money directly into OSBA businesses, we never stopped telling the story of Old Strathcona’s amazing businesses.

SELF-EXPLORATION

Event opportunities were limited in 2020, and will likely remain so in 2021. Throughout the year, we focused on self-exploration and visiting the neighbourhood in smaller groups. Partnering with Linda Hoang in August on a mural and food tour, built on Instagram-friendly programming that doesn’t require large groups to gather, and embraces outdoor spaces.

We also contracted PARK, an agency focused on public space activations, to place “Winter Whyte Art Bombs” around the neighbourhood – winter greenery that brought a bit of the forest to Whyte Avenue and McIntyre Park before the holiday season. Installations were created by a local floral artist and provided a unique photo background that truly embraces our winter city. The installation garnered some positive media attention prior to a key shopping period, and even featured in one happy couple’s engagement photos.

FESTIVALS

Most of the neighbourhood’s usual festivals were cancelled, or shifted to online programming, in 2020. We did sponsor most of the groups with regular and active presence in Old Strathcona, to enable them to

continue operations during a year of reduced income. This helped keep the OSBA connected to the festivals, and reminded the public this is where they’ll want to be once we emerge from COVID-19.

2020 Sponsorships:

- Ice on Whyte
- SkirtsAfire
- NextFest
- Edmonton Fringe
- Xmas Market

Our sponsorship of festivals and events is evolving into more reciprocal marketing, where we can promote and even tie-in OSBA businesses to boost activity.

DIGITAL AUDIENCE GROWTH

Thanks to the return to some businesses in the summer, and a digital focused campaign for the holidays, we continued to see growth of our online audiences. Instagram in particular saw more reach during the holiday season, and we ended the year with more than 9% new followers. Our Facebook and Twitter accounts also saw moderate growth, under 5%. These digital channels will continue to be integral in 2021 as the pandemic slowly subsides and more communication with potential visitors is required through social media.



FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

To the Members of the Old Strathcona Business Association

OPINION

We have audited the financial statements of Old Strathcona Business Association (the Association), which comprise the statement of financial position as at December 31, 2020, and the statements of revenues and expenditures, changes in net assets and cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Association as at December 31, 2020, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

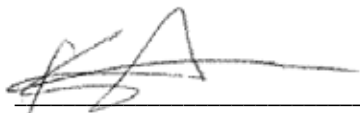
Excerpt from the Independent Auditor's Report
provided by Yates Whitaker LLP

Statement of Financial Position

DECEMBER 31, 2020

	2020	2019
ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Cash	\$ 424,227	\$ 310,859
Accounts receivable	630	1,000
Goods and services tax recoverable	3,202	3,276
Prepaid expenses	-	7,854
	428,059	322,989
CAPITAL ASSETS		
	1,971	1,741
	\$ 430,030	\$ 324,730
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Accounts payable	\$ 22,225	\$ 22,249
Wages payable	10,534	5,160
Deferred income	131,250	143,750
	164,009	171,159
NET ASSETS		
General fund	264,050	151,830
Net assets invested in capital assets	1,971	1,741
	266,021	153,571
	\$ 430,030	\$ 324,730

APPROVED ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD



 Director



 Director

Statement of Revenues and Expenditures

YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2020

	Budget 2020	Total 2020	Total 2019
REVENUES			
Special business levy	\$ 575,000	\$ 575,000	\$ 550,000
Grant revenue	10,000	3,647	7,686
Sponsorships	-	3,000	1,000
Interest income	-	158	1,447
Mural funds	-	-	15,000
	585,000	581,805	575,133
EXPENSES			
Employee salaries and support contracts	254,200	193,108	214,625
Programs, Projects and Product Development	220,100	167,699	227,274
Rental	50,200	43,771	46,530
Professional fees	27,000	43,372	31,238
Office	19,600	12,540	20,654
Telephone	5,500	5,069	5,352
Amortization	-	1,408	1,044
Insurance	500	1,326	2,525
Professional development	3,500	530	3,653
Interest and bank charges	300	309	343
Meetings	600	223	746
Travel	2,000	-	-
	583,500	469,355	553,984
EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES FROM OPERATIONS	1,500	112,450	21,149
OTHER INCOME			
Loss on disposal of capital assets	-	-	(2,919)
EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES	\$ 1,500	\$ 112,450	\$ 18,230



Old Strathcona Business Association

#402, 10314 Whyte Avenue, Edmonton, AB T6E 1Z8

oldstrathcona.ca