



Old
STRATHCONA
BUSINESS ASSOCIATION
DISTRICT
Whyte



2021 ANNUAL
report

DISTRICT

WHYTE

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OUR *mission*

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



2021 Board of Directors

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

- Anastasia Arabia, Treasurer, Trend Research
- Kris Armitage, Chair, Knifewear
- Alison Rees-Middleton, Vice Chair, Bryan & Alison's No Frills

DIRECTORS:

- Al Gothjepsen, The Pint Whyte
- Nella Sabo, Backbeat
- Rolando Sandrea, Avila Arepa
- Ben Sir, The Buckingham
- Emily Sommers, Healing Waters Spa

HONORARY DIRECTORS:

- Megan Dart, Fringe Theatre Adventures
- Travis Fong, YEG Garden Suites
- Ashley Salvador, YEG Garden Suites

OSBA Staff

FULL TIME STAFF:

- Cherie Klassen, Executive Director
- Alanna Morton, Membership & Marketing Coordinator
- Jeff Samsonow, Marketing & Communications Coordinator

PART TIME:

- Connor Marchand, Business Recruitment & Research Intern (January-December)
- Chelsey MacKay, Summer Ambassador (May-August)
- Alexander Voutchkov, Summer Ambassador (May-August)

Board Chair's Message

As we look forward with hope of what comes next, I couldn't be prouder of our business community for showing up every day and doing what you do to make Whyte Avenue all that it is. My wish is that those efforts continue to return to us all; and if you are struggling with difficult decisions that impact your business, families, and staff – know that you are never alone here in Old Strathcona.

I am proud to be serving a new term as Board Chair. My experience in this role has highlighted so much about what makes this team and their efforts so valuable to our district. From simple initiatives like adding greenery and art to beautify our streets to partnerships that keep the area tidy like the Old Strathcona Clean Team, and advocacy to the City of Edmonton for economic recovery support, infrastructure maintenance and more. On that note, I'm excited that our executive director, Cherie Klassen, and the BIA Council team were successful in their advocacy to have the City of Edmonton cover 100% of BIA levies in 2021 and 50% for 2022! This provides some financial relief to our businesses while ensuring our BIAs can continue their vital work. This is one more positive sign as we look to 2022 and beyond.



Your OSBA team was able to pull together some fantastic programming with the Winter Whyte Light Up event, holiday and summer shopping campaigns, the new Sweet Treats & Latte Festival, and patio and mural maps, all coming together to showcase Old Strathcona as a year-round destination. Edmontonians told us that this is the main street district they most look forward to visiting and the future remains bright for those of us across the Whyte Avenue corridor.

Thank you to our staff and board members for all of their support and commitment to this community. I wish continued success to all our member businesses – including all those who opened their doors in 2021.

From one business to another – stay strong!

Kris Armitage, Board Chair



Executive Director's Message

The commitment to keep this business community thriving never ceases to amaze me. Over the past two years of pandemic restrictions, we've seen businesses adjust operations over and over to keep the doors open as much as possible, and to serve this community. We see you showing up every day, not knowing what it might bring, but showing up nonetheless. This is the spirit of our community and one that I am proud to be a part of.

We took on some big projects in 2021, with direction and support from our fantastic Board of Directors and the Business Recruitment Committee. The City of Edmonton awarded us a matching \$75,000 Economic Recovery Grant based on our proposed Business Recruitment and Retention plan. I am pleased to share that we have since completed all our deliverables on this project! We now have a suite of resources at hand that will help the organization adopt an active role in building a more engaged business community through destination development, education, and recruitment.

There are a lot of good news stories to share as well. This year we celebrated **40 new businesses** opening in the district! This is on par with new openings in 2020, and we know there is more to come. The City of Edmonton's Economic Indicators show a vacancy rate of 7.8% which is slightly higher than usual, but a healthy position for the commercial interest in the area. We are also seeing retailers reinvesting in their businesses by

renovating, moving to a larger space and even buying property. This is a huge vote of confidence for the district and shows the desire to operate in Old Strathcona.

I am also proud of everything the Edmonton BIA Council has achieved. My colleagues and I represent a collective of 5000+ businesses across 13 Business Improvement Areas (BIA). We had the opportunity to educate our new mayor, city council, and city manager on the role that BIAs have as city builders and local economic development agencies. Together, we plan to engage in regular meetings with administration to ensure the voice of businesses across Edmonton's BIAs are heard at city hall.

Looking forward to 2022, there is hope. The OSBA is committed to getting our district into recovery and thriving, stronger than ever. Thank you to our Board of Directors, Business Recruitment Committee, staff, and stakeholders for all of their tireless work in supporting this community through incredibly challenging economic times. We will come out ahead and live up to being Edmonton's favourite shopping district!

Cherie Klassen, Executive Director



This was to be the second year of a three-year strategic plan. The plan has been extended through 2023 to account for emerging and shifting priorities of the pandemic. Core operational targets remain the same:

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.

In addition to the operational targets, the OSBA's

Economic Recovery Task Force worked in 2020 to identify additional and complementary strategic goals in to aid in pandemic recovery:

1. Public realm improvements and safety
2. Collective shop local campaign
3. Business recruitment and resilience

The Economic Recovery Task Force evolved into the Business Recruitment and Retention Committee (BRC) this year which led efforts to create a strategy around attracting new businesses to Old Strathcona and supporting the conditions for the success of businesses in the BIA.



RESOURCES TO SUPPORT INITIATIVES

The OSBA had three full-time staff members (Executive Director, Membership & Marketing Coordinator, Marketing & Communications Coordinator). Part-time staff included a Business Recruitment & Retention Intern and two summer ambassadors supported by the Canada Summer Jobs and Venture Canada grants.

We are proud to recognize the various community organizations and stakeholders who help inform our work across all strategic and operational plans. We value our relationships with these groups and their committed efforts to continuously improve the Old Strathcona Business Improvement Area: City of Edmonton; Edmonton BIA Council; Old Strathcona Area Community Council (OSACC); Edmonton Police Service (EPS); Neighbourhood Empowerment Team (NET); The Mustard Seed; Boyle Street, Paths For People, neighbourhood festivals; and surrounding community leagues.



STRATEGIC *plan*

Strengthen perception and reality of safety & public realm improvements



OPERATIONAL TARGET:

Advocate for expanded public spaces, improve quality of streetscaping and aesthetics of district



SEASONAL SIDEWALK EXPANSION

We expanded sidewalk space along some of the district's busiest blocks again this summer to create a shopping-friendly and safer experience for everyone. Thirdspace Design Group painted water barriers with bright colours and added hanging seating and tables to enhance the space. New ramps were also built to better accommodate those with physical disabilities and mobility aids like wheelchairs. We are grateful to the City of Edmonton for its support of this project through its Economic Recovery Grant.

This year's expansion garnered the district plenty of attention, including positive news coverage and social media sharing. We surveyed the public and businesses and support remains high for increased walkability and additional space for people to become a permanent feature of Whyte Avenue.

Organizations from outside the city have taken note of the success of the project as well. Cherie

was invited to speak at the BIABC + IDA Pacific Northwest Regional Conference about the expanded sidewalk project in a session titled, "Making Space for People."

PATIOS & PLACEMAKING

Our advocacy for business-friendly patio permitting was reflected in a summer with the most patios ever in Old Strathcona. There were 39 applications for the temporary patio program in 2021, compared to 24 in 2020. Across the district, more than 60 businesses offered patios and outdoor seating. With more options for outdoor dining than ever, we added a searchable patio map to our website. We continue to encourage the City of Edmonton to make outdoor dining and retail spaces as easy as possible for businesses to operate.

The City of Edmonton continues to support BIAs through various grant programs including the Storefront Improvement and Development Incentive Grant. Five businesses in our district took advantage of these opportunities to enhance, make repairs, or generally improve their storefronts. Two of the applications are part of an Old Strathcona-specific addition to the program offering funding for alley-facing businesses north of Whyte Avenue between 103 and 105 Streets.

STREET IMPROVEMENTS

With the City updating the neighbourhood renewal bylaw to include BIAs, our district has been approved for street and alley renewal. We anticipate road and alley construction will be completed in the 2027-2030 budget cycle. Other road work is currently underway with the Gateway Boulevard Reconstruction and Rehabilitation project taking place between 2022-2023. This is a positive move forward to make our area more accessible for all modes of travel.

As part of the City's Vision Zero strategy within Safe Mobility, two scramble crosswalks were

installed on Whyte Avenue at 103 and 104 Streets. These two locations are some of the highest collision intersections with pedestrians, which is why they were chosen to create a safer and more efficient crossing for all modes. We look forward a report from the City on how scrambles are affecting safety and movement along Whyte Ave, and how we might work together to gather pedestrian data to better inform infrastructure needs and development.

Paths For People, a local transportation advocacy group, released a survey that showed that the public and surrounding communities are looking for the Whyte Avenue corridor to become a more enjoyable place to walk and wheel. This supports our vision of building a more walkable destination and we will work with them to inspire further public engagement on the future of Whyte Avenue.



OPERATIONAL TARGET:

Enhance Beautification

PUBLIC ART

Old Strathcona is quickly becoming known as the place to experience public art thanks to 70+ murals across the BIA. We launched a mural map in digital and print format to document the growing number of locations in the district. A series of sold-out mural tours hosted by local influencer Linda Hoang were a hit and highlighted our walkable gallery. The map will become a centerpiece to our summer marketing, encouraging visitors to see art they can't find anywhere else and explore the many nearby businesses.

We supported this growing trend through sponsorship of events like Grindstone Theatre's Mural Massive, NextFest 2021, Edmonton Fringe and RADO Alley.

Other murals added in the neighbourhood include a full-wall piece at The Buckingham and new art at the Commercial Hotel. The SouthBARK pop-up dog park also included art from Curio Studio.

LIGHTING AND GREENERY

To celebrate our annual Winter Whyte Light Up we worked with Five Star Holiday Décor to bring back the "Mega-Trees" in McIntyre Park. A 10' tunnel made of string lights also created some buzz and provided a photo op for visitors throughout December.

Additional lighting in McIntyre Park remained up throughout the year.

With more people returning to in-person shopping and dining, we increased our summer greenery to beautify the district. More than 80 hanging planters, skyline planters and barrels added summer green throughout the neighbourhood. Winter greenery increased as well with more than 130 decorated skyline planters, hanging baskets, gnome swags, mini cedar trees and barrels.



- 12+ MURALS AT RADO ALLEY
- 2 FRINGE MURALS, WITH ARTIST MENTORSHIP
- 3 MURALS DURING MURAL MASSIVE
- NEXTFEST MURAL ON THE ARTS BARN

OPERATIONAL TARGET:

Partnerships and strategies to promote neighbourhood cleanliness

OLD STRATHCONA CLEAN TEAM

Despite reducing our budget for litter pick up, we managed to keep a consistent schedule of cleaning every month with our Old Strathcona Clean team. We are fortunate to have this tri-partite agreement with the City of Edmonton's Capital City Clean Up and the Mustard Seed.



- 1,400+ HOURS OF CLEAN UP
- 500 BAGS OF GARBAGE COLLECTED
- 100+ NEEDLES SAFELY DISPOSED

One former crew member, now thriving in their new position, shared this testimonial:

“[It] has given me the opportunity to work with and learn from different people. The coaches showed by word and deed that showing up every day and striving to do your best will give you the skills that employers value. It has taught me soft skills like communication are very important and can be improved upon. Because of the program, my confidence in who I am and what I can achieve has grown by leaps and bounds.”

This individual, along with The Mustard Seed and other participants, are very appreciative of the opportunity to contribute to the community and develop skills that will assist them in their long-term goals.

This work employed 30 individuals who face barriers to employment, including 8-12 working each month and 17 as part of a casual labour program. Employment with the Clean Team has helped people move out of shelters and into stable housing, find regular and new jobs and return to trades and industries they had previously been employed in.

PRESSURE WASHING

In addition to litter clean up, we contracted Hire Good with Boyle Street Services to complete summer pressure washing of high traffic sidewalks. We will continue pressure washing in 2022 to enhance cleanliness of our district, as we heard that cleaning and litter pick up are the top priorities for our business community in terms of BIA initiatives.

COMMUNITY CLEAN UPS

We continue to work with Capital City Clean Up and our business members on community litter pick-up. This Earth Day, more than 20 businesses picked up a cleaning kit and we shared their clean-ups on our social media accounts. The summer ambassadors also put in some time cleaning up and we plan to make some regular clean-ups part of the role in future.

The City completed an ashtray audit and installed 18 new ashtrays in the summer. Service to empty the ashtrays was increased to three times each week (up from twice weekly). We continue to work with the City on ensuring ashtrays are located across the district and in areas where they are most needed.

OTHER WORK WITH THE CITY OF EDMONTON

Rainbow crosswalks that celebrate Pride are a highlight of strolling through Old Strathcona in the summer. Three crosswalks were refreshed in their classic rainbow stripes and with a new chevron design in black, brown, blue, pink and white, representing queer people of colour and transgender individuals. This initiative, in partnership with the City of Edmonton, is just one way we are working to demonstrate our commitment to growing an inclusive community.



OPERATIONAL TARGET:

Maintain and enhance community stakeholder relationships

EDMONTON POLICE

On behalf of our members, we work to maintain a relationship with EPS and particularly with the officers working in the neighbourhood. We receive weekly updates from the EPS Beats team, meet with them quarterly, and encourage direct member engagement. Safety contacts and resources are updated and shared out to our membership regularly.

SOCIAL SERVICES

As the economy continues to struggle, there are signs of increased homelessness throughout the city. The BIA Council has consistently been advocating for solutions to all level of government, noting the need for permanent supportive housing with wrap around support services. While temporary shelters that operate in our area throughout the year provide some relief, they are inconsistently funded, leaving large gaps in service.

A nearby hotel located just outside of our BIA boundary is being converted into a permanent supportive housing development called Prairie Manor, opening in 2022. We believe this will have a positive impact on our community and help reduce the number of people on the streets. The development is being operated by The Mustard Seed, and we are working with them to keep the business community involved and ensure Good Neighbour agreements are in place prior to opening.

The Mustard Seed also piloted a project in partnership with Whyte Avenue Coin Laundry. The three-month project provided affordable access to



laundry services, which is a barrier to many people living in poverty, particularly those experiencing homelessness.

PRIDE CORNER

The Board supported efforts of the "Pride Corner" group to re-name a portion of the intersection of Whyte Avenue and Calgary Trail in a sign of inclusivity and against 2SLGBTQ+ hate. The group continues to provide a safe and inclusive gathering on Friday evenings.

BIA COUNCIL

Our executive director continues to serve as Chair of the Edmonton BIA Council, representing the interests of all 13 BIAs in the city. Recognizing that businesses still needed financial relief due to pandemic disruptions, the council advocated this need to the City. They were successful, and the City of Edmonton waived 100% of BIA taxes in 2021. Members will see a 50% reduction in their BIA taxes for 2022 as well, representing a second year of financial support from the City while we move towards economic recovery. The council also championed advocacy that led to another year of relaxed patio permitting, municipal economic recovery support, and continued calls to fund the City of Edmonton's permanent supportive housing strategy.



STRATEGIC *plan*

Activate under-utilized spaces

OPERATIONAL TARGET:

Identify areas that need support or advocacy for activation & development

SOUTHBARK

The lot that will become the second phase of the Southpark on Whyte development found a temporary life as a pop-up dog park called "SouthBARK." It opened to the public at the beginning of August, providing a space for the many neighbourhood office dogs to run free, and surrounding dog owning residents to enjoy. OSBA businesses with food trucks helped activate the park on weekends, and benches designed by Curio Studio filled the space. This former vacant lot is just one example of how we can transform underused spaces into something vibrant that attracts activity and business.

Across the street, the first phase of the development is renting to tenants and installed a temporary activation from Vignettes in its Whyte Avenue-facing windows when commercial leasing opened on the main floor.

WHYTE AVE. STREETCAR STOP

After many years of advocacy and work, the Edmonton Radial Railway Society (ERRS) extended the High Level Streetcar line across Gateway Boulevard and back to Whyte Avenue. A new platform was built on the northside of Whyte that will bring riders on this iconic mode of transportation up to our main street, beginning May 2022.

STATION PARK

Whyte Avenue will soon be home to Edmonton's first and only shipping container development. Beljan Development is already programming summer activations at the future site of Station Park located at the corner of Whyte Avenue and Gateway Boulevard.

STRATHCONA BACK STREET PROJECT

The Strathcona Back Street completed Phase 1 of its redevelopment thanks to the City of Edmonton's Strathcona neighbourhood renewal plan, EP-COR, and partial private funding from the OSBA, Old Strathcona Farmers Market and Old Strathcona Youth Society. The space has been transformed from a dirt lot and scattered parking into a pedestrian plaza. The alley is now home to three businesses, as The Woodrack Café opened in the Dominion Hotel, joining Sugared & Spiced and Boxer Kitchen. This space will become a growing centre of activity with opportunities for community activation and festival use. Phase 2 which includes lighting and other enhanced features is subject to funding.





STRATEGIC *plan*

Develop a strategy that supports a balanced business mix for the district and build a business recruitment plan

OPERATIONAL TARGET:

Build a business attraction plan

BUSINESS RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Our efforts to help encourage the recovery and prosperity of business in the district despite the COVID-19 pandemic is ongoing. The Business Recruitment and Retention plan (BRR) includes a full range of research, surveys, marketing campaigns, tactics, and content development. The launch of our recruitment package also received media coverage in tandem with reporting on Old Strathcona's strong economic recovery.

Here are some highlights of what we completed:

- Hired a Business Recruitment and Research Intern.
- Completed market research and two surveys to understand the value of Old Strathcona from business and public perspectives.

- Hired two summer students to engage with businesses and host a shopping event.
- Implemented a CRM and updated our member directory to tie into it.
- Implemented an enhanced sidewalk and placemaking program for summer.
- Developed and launched a comprehensive business recruitment package and industry-specific versions.
- Launched a business recruitment page on our website and sign-up form for recruiting.
- Developed a New Member package.
- Developed a foundational strategy for recruitment marketing.
- Produced an Old Strathcona Success Stories video series, shared publicly
- Developed and implemented a LinkedIn strategy
- Developed a "Shop in 3D" marketing campaign to support our businesses

141
RESPONSES
TO OUR
BUSINESS
SURVEY

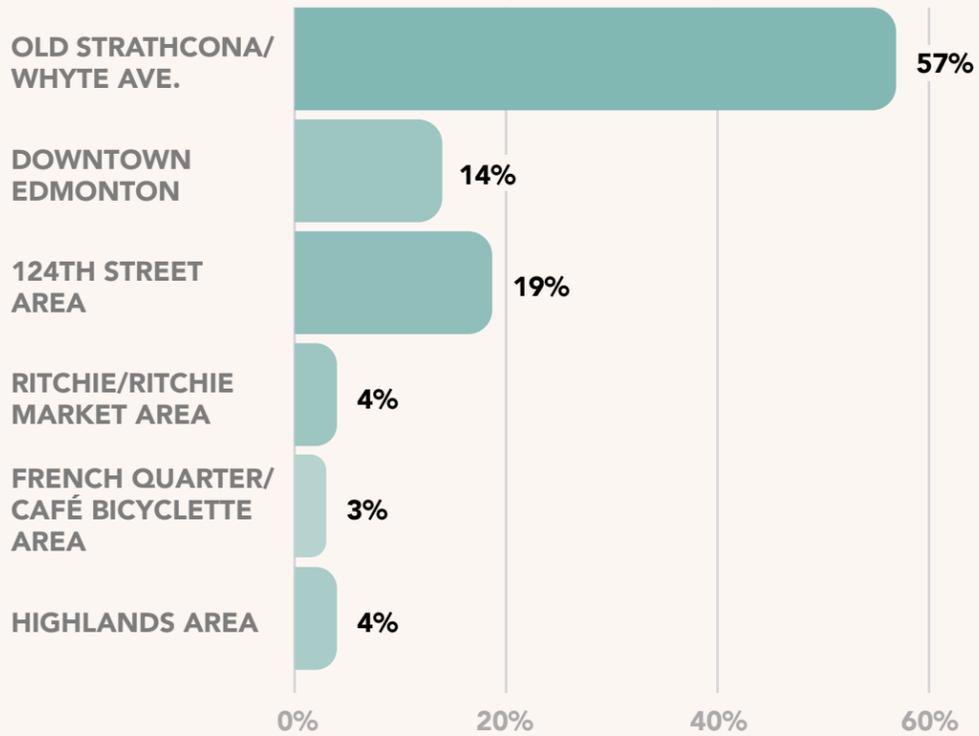
800
RESPONSES
TO OUR
PUBLIC
SURVEY

In the public survey, Old Strathcona was also chosen as **Edmonton's favourite main street district for shopping and dining**. Edmontonians chose Old Strathcona as the shopping district they visit the most and want to return to most often – more than all other shopping districts combined.

People said they come back to Old Strathcona again and again because it's a walkable business district, and they enjoy exploring the area for new shops and experiences. Even those who drive to the area want to walk around once they get here. A large majority of respondents say they visit more than one business every time they visit.

We launched the recruitment package via a media release that also highlighted new openings in the district, a strong sign of the desirability to operate here. The package builds on the foundation to actively bring the kinds of shops, services and dining to the neighbourhood that make the area the city's favourite. The BRC has now disbanded following the completion of all the goals set out by the committee. In 2022, we will hire a new intern to help in developing relationships with property owners, building managers, and developers and distribute our recruitment package.

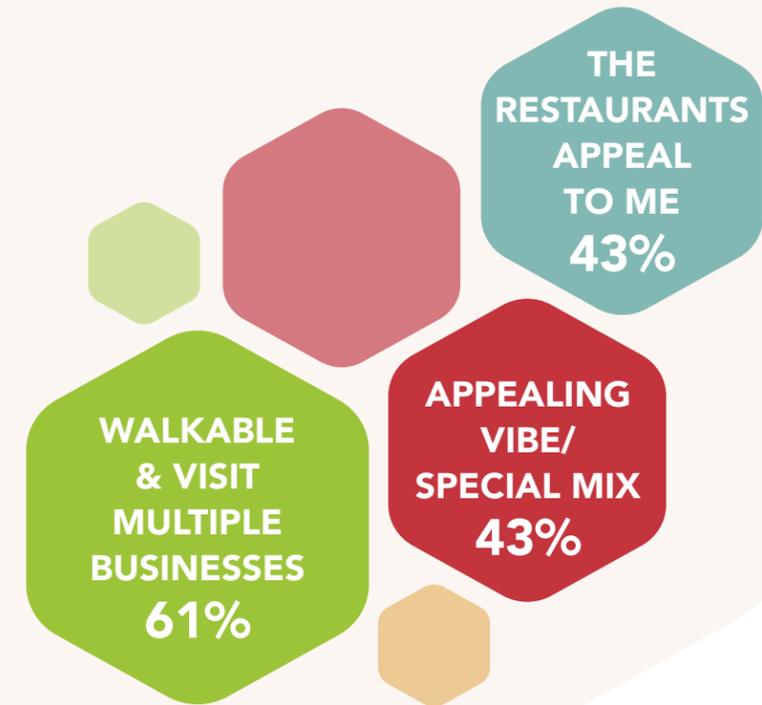
Of the districts you have visited, which one would be your favourite?



OLD STRATHCONA IS THE CLEAR FAVOURITE WITH MORE PICKS THAN ALL OTHER DESTINATIONS COMBINED.

TOP 3 REASONS FOR VISITING

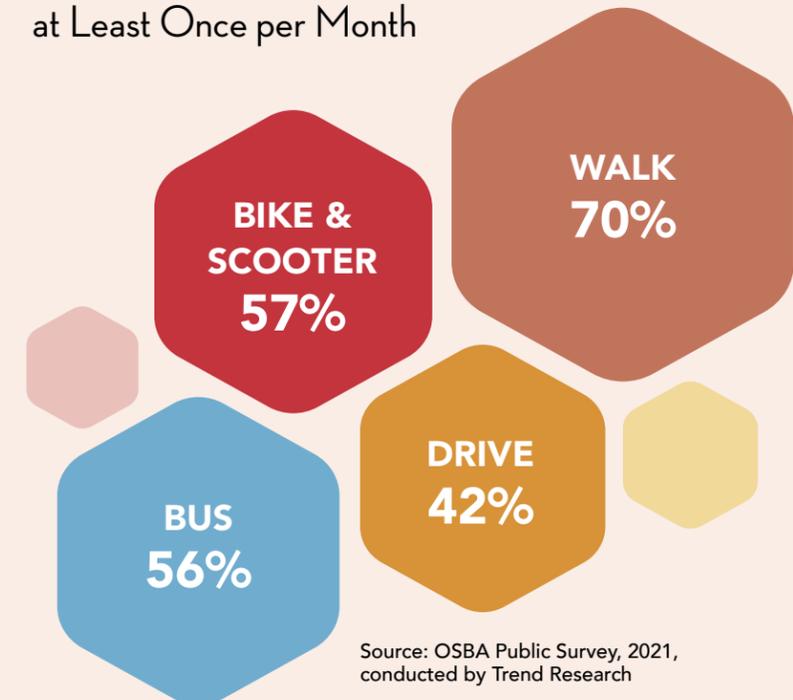
Edmontonians do not come to Old Strathcona to complete just one task or business visit. They come to explore the neighbourhood, often walking around to check out multiple businesses, and they keep coming back because of the business mix and an experience they can't get anywhere else in the city.



VISITING FREQUENCY

While the majority of survey respondents said they usually drive to Old Strathcona (87%), people who walk and bike to the business district visit more often. In fact, those who arrive on foot, bike and scooter visit at least monthly. Half of drivers (52%) visit a few times each year. Even those using public transit tend to visit more frequently than regular drivers (56% at least monthly). While the OSBA will continue to embrace its identity as a hub for festivals and incredible experiences attracting visitors from the Edmonton area, survey results point to marketing opportunities targeted at residents of Edmonton's core neighbourhoods and those using active transportation networks.

Visiting Old Strathcona at Least Once per Month

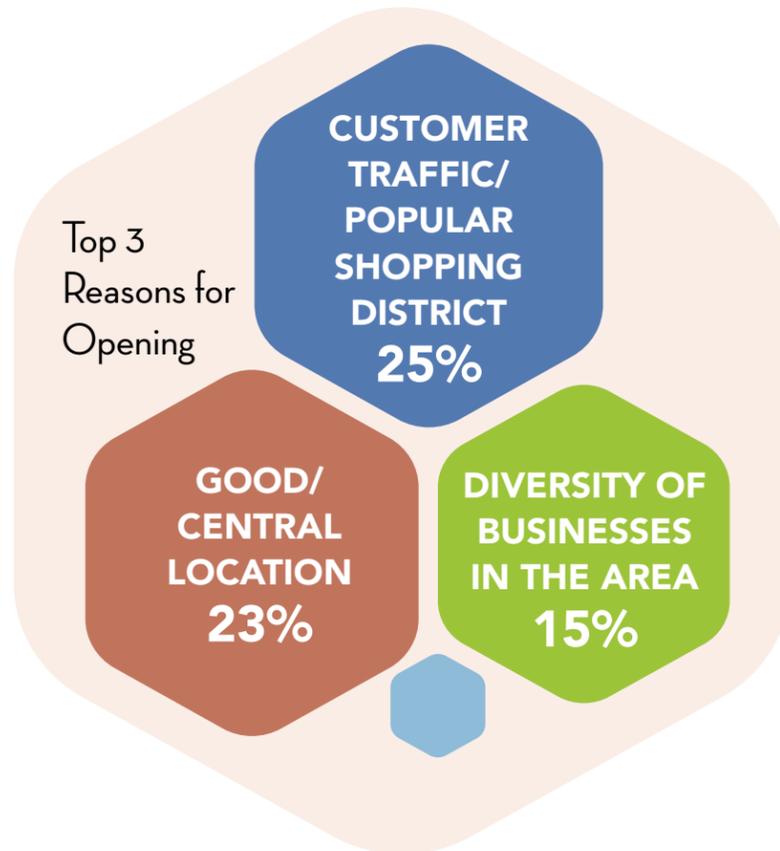


Source: OSBA Public Survey, 2021, conducted by Trend Research

Business Survey Highlight

TOP LOCATION TO OPEN

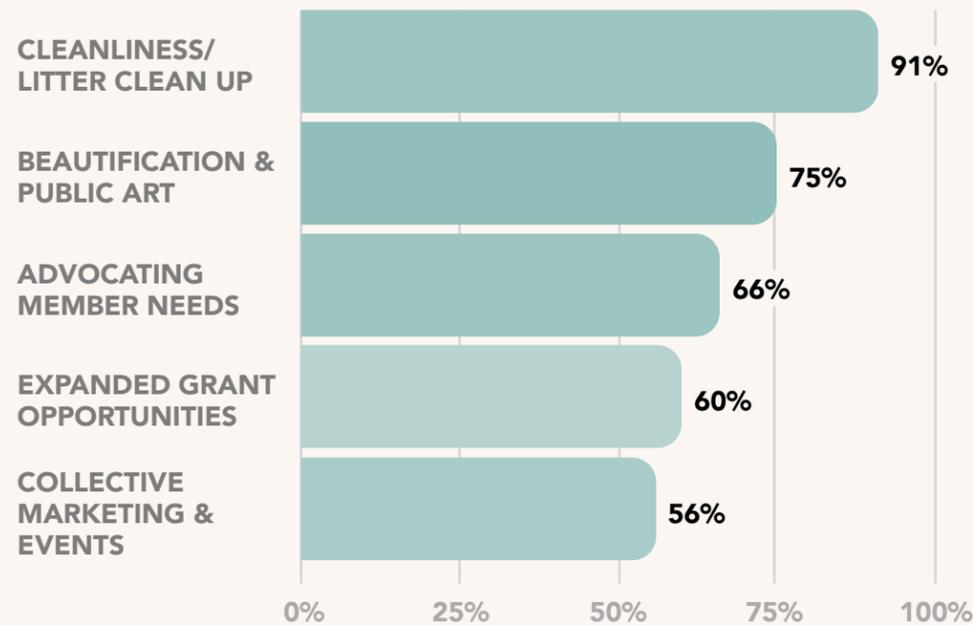
Most business owners in Old Strathcona knew they wanted to be here. The district was the first choice of 74% of members responding to our survey. Our members tell us that Old Strathcona's central location, mix of businesses and popularity as a walkable shopping district is what convinced them to open in our district. This is the same across different industries and businesses new and old. Many business owners also live close by, which is an increasingly important factor.



BIA INITIATIVES

We wanted to know what our members get the most value from when it comes to the OSBA's programs and activities. Making the business district look good to visitors is the top priority, and this is reflected in our increased cleaning budget and new mural map highlighting the abundance of public art. Members also value the OSBA's ability to advocate on their behalf for City programs and benefits. Retail businesses see the most value in collective marketing and events.

Most Important BIA Initiatives to Members



Source: OSBA Business Survey, 2021, conducted by Y Station

The OSBA again extends its thanks to the committee members for their support in making this strategy a reality.

BUSINESS RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION COMMITTEE:

- Matt Chapman, Chair, Chapman Brothers
- Anastasia Arabia, Partner, Trend Research, OSBA Board Treasurer
- Charles Gordon, Senior Planner, Local Economy and Investment Services, City of Edmonton
- Al Gothjelpsen, The Pint on Whyte, OSBA Board Director
- Amos Kajner-Nonnekes, Principal and Founder, Thirdspace Design Group
- Eric Slatter, Partner, Omada Commercial
- Heather Thomson, Executive Director, University of Alberta School of Business, School of Retailing
- Megan Dart, Executive Director, Edmonton Fringe, OSBA Honorary Director
- Connor Marchand, Business Recruitment & Research Intern, OSBA

The OSBA gratefully acknowledges financial support for the Business Recruitment and Retention plan was funded in partnership with the City of Edmonton through its Economic Recovery Grant.

2021 Business Stats

New businesses opening and expanding are a positive signal for the district. Vacancy rates remain slightly higher than typical ranging from 7-13% depending on the time of year. The City's 2021 commercial vacancy study in our district showed a vacancy rate of 7.8%. Leasing agents have shared that Whyte Avenue is a premiere location for businesses looking to open and expand. While there is more work to do, we are pleased to see so much interest in the area.



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 2020-2023 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 opened and expanded in 2021, with more slated to begin construction or seek permit approval in 2022.

Completed Projects:

- **The Strathcona Hotel** – A major renovation of the historic hotel with the first tenants opening for business in 2021
- **Southpark on Whyte** – Residents began moving in and main floor retail is available for lease.
- **@81** – Two new businesses joined anchor tenant Mr. Derk on the main floor.

New Projects:

- **Station Park** – Edmonton's first retail container park is slated to open in 2022.
- **Station Flats** – South of Station Park and the historic rail building (home to MKT), this residential building is approved for development
- **South Scona Parking Lot** – After pandemic delays, this parking lot will begin to be redeveloped into high-rise towers and main floor commercial in late 2022
- **Scona Garage** – Redevelopment work continues under new ownership.

Future Developments:

- **Army & Navy** – Still slated for redevelopment as a mixed-use project.

- **The Mezzo** – The site entered a court-ordered sale and future plans are unknown.
- **The Baron** – Developers continue to refine plans for this project, alongside a provincial heritage review.
- **Prairie Sky Gondola** – Feasibility study is complete, now working on detailed design and public consultations

The City Plan and an updated Zoning Bylaw are new guiding documents which will simplify planning and aim to create more walkable and visitable neighbourhoods and districts. Strathcona will continue to maintain area-specific designations under the changes, recognizing the neighbourhood's celebrated features. The OSBA is also eagerly anticipating engagement to begin in 2022 on a Public Places Plan that creates a vision for our already active neighbourhood, prioritizing elements and projects that support the new guiding documents.

The new City of Edmonton Business Bylaw 20002 was approved by City Council and went into effect in January 2022. The OSBA along with colleagues at the BIA Council of Edmonton have been engaged throughout the bylaw renewal process since 2018. The bylaw includes updated license categories with clearer descriptions and requirements, simplified fee schedules, and discounts for businesses that renew their license on time and for two years instead of one.



STRATEGIC *plan*

Foster a healthy and thriving business community, marketing, communications and campaigns

OPERATIONAL TARGET:

Enhance member communications to provide better support

GENERAL MEETINGS

We successfully hosted our Spring General Meeting in a virtual format with 42 attendees. The Annual General Meeting was also hosted virtually for the second year, with 47 total attendees including the board and staff.

SHARING BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The U of A School of Business, City of Edmonton, and Digital Main Street came together to create a support program called Making Edmonton Digital. The program offered services such as social media tactics and strategy, website design, e-commerce strategy, Google My Business support, photography, and copywriting. More than 55 businesses in our neighbourhood were engaged in efforts to help start or enhance their business' digital footprint.

OSBA members also participated in economic recovery programming offered by Business Link, with six businesses completing five hours of one-on-one business coaching to help navigate their operational needs. The program also provided all members with access to eight different webinar recordings, covering topics like Conquering Cash Flow and Building Customer Loyalty.



MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS

Our email newsletter continues to be a primary method of communicating with members. We share updates on our activity, news, opportunities and periodic surveys to understand member priorities and concerns. The newsletter maintains a consistently high open rate of approximately 40% among the 600+ subscribers. We started sending newsletters bi-weekly over the summer, which seems to be a better interval for communications, rather than weekly.

In the fall we launched a new member webpage with resources including information about our general meetings, business supports, COVID-specific resources, new member information, seasonal marketing and more. We encourage members to keep this page bookmarked on store/office computers so that information is accessible to all staff.

We also manage a private Facebook Group for business owners and operators to connect with each other. The group has grown to 122 members, an increase of 4% over the year. Engagement is also encouraged from members with us on all social media platforms by tagging our account or reaching out via direct message

Being able to bring back the summer ambassador team after a year on hiatus due to the pandemic, was a big push in being able to reach out to more businesses in person. The students delivered our Summer Survival Guide and connected with owners and staff at more than 450 businesses, that's ~82% of our membership! They also hosted a VIP Shop Hop where a limited number of free branded swag bags were gifted to registrants before sending them on their way to hop from shop to shop and discover exclusive deals.



OPERATIONAL TARGET:

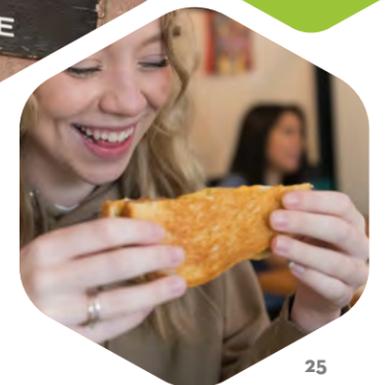
Promote and market Whyte Avenue as a destination shopping district and hub of local activity

SHOP LOCAL

With more people returning to in-person shopping and dining we increased our promotion of the BIA as a destination, supporting various locally operated businesses.

We hosted our first Sweet Treats & Latte Festival in February to kick off a typically slow season for restaurants and cafes. The campaign brought attention to the growing number of cafes, bakeries and ice cream shops that are quickly defining us a dessert destination. 13 businesses participated, with three of them brand new to the district. The festival created a lot of buzz for Old Strathcona, with increased website visitors and social media engagement, wide media coverage and hundreds of customers ordering the Sweet Treats feature items.

Explore Edmonton also launched an Old Strathcona Dining Pass, which has already had more than 1,500 people download the required app. The dining pass gives visitors deals and discounts at participating restaurants.



Other campaign highlights:

- SkirtsAfire: Skirts On Whyte
- VIP Shop Hop
- Mural & patio maps
- Mural & food tours hosted by Linda Hoang
- Whyte Wishes
- 10 Days of Giveaways Advent Calendar
- Xmas Market collaboration

WINTER WHYTE LIGHT UP

This winter, we hosted our third Winter Whyte Light up in McIntyre Park, closing down 83 Avenue to allow for social distancing, roving performers and fire pits. We welcomed nearly 5,000 guests to the event and had a lot of positive feedback. We partnered with the Old Strathcona Farmers' Market, Flying Canoe Festival, Ice on Whyte, Edmonton Fringe, Goodwill, and Edmonton Public Library for the event. Storytime and photos with Mrs. Claus were a hit and the holiday themed drag and burlesque shows sold out. A portion of all ticket sales were donated to Bear Clan Patrol, totalling just over \$800. Guests also had the opportunity to win a free OSBA toque, tote bag, mittens or gift cards and they were so popular we quickly ran out! The event also collected 60lb in food donations for the Edmonton Food Bank. We received sponsorship from Explore Edmonton for artists at the event and will continue looking at funding options in the future.



SPONSORSHIPS

We saw the return of festival activity in 2021! We look to support events that directly engage businesses and invite opportunities for them to capitalize on the increased number of visitors these events bring to the neighbourhood.

Some of these opportunities included SkirtsAfire storefront window displays at six member businesses, six new murals painted during three festivals, event ticket-specific discounts at member businesses, vendor opportunities for OSBA members, business and OSBA highlights shared on festival websites and social media, and activation of the Army & Navy building during multiple festivals.



Photo by Amber MacDonald Killins

2021 SPONSORSHIPS

- Ice on Whyte (Feb.)
- SkirtsAfire (March) 5,000 attendees (including online)
- Nextfest (June) 5,000 online views, 400+ artists
- Art Walk (July) 8,000 patrons, 350 artists
- Grindstone Comedy Festival (July)
- Edmonton Fringe (Aug.) 200,000 visitors, 900+ artists & volunteers
- Grindstone Theatre's Mural Massive (Sept.)
- Paths for People scooter mural tours (Aug-Sept.)
- Edmonton Christmas Market (Dec.) 5,000-10,000 visitors

Donations: The OSBA donated small amounts to Reach Edmonton, Goodwill Alberta and Bear Clan Patrol, all of which are active in Old Strathcona.

We also promoted pop-up markets and events hosted by our business members, including Boocha and BB Hair, and our members as vendors at other local markets such as the Edmonton Christmas Market and Royal Bison.

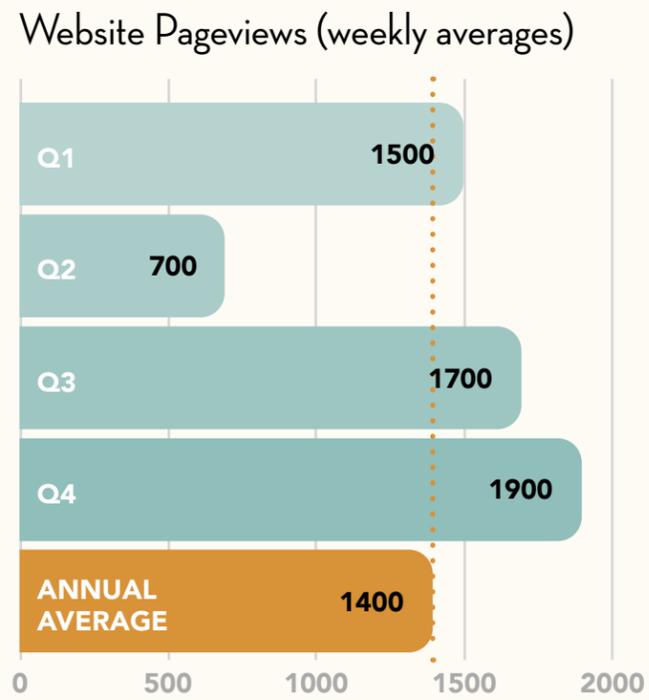
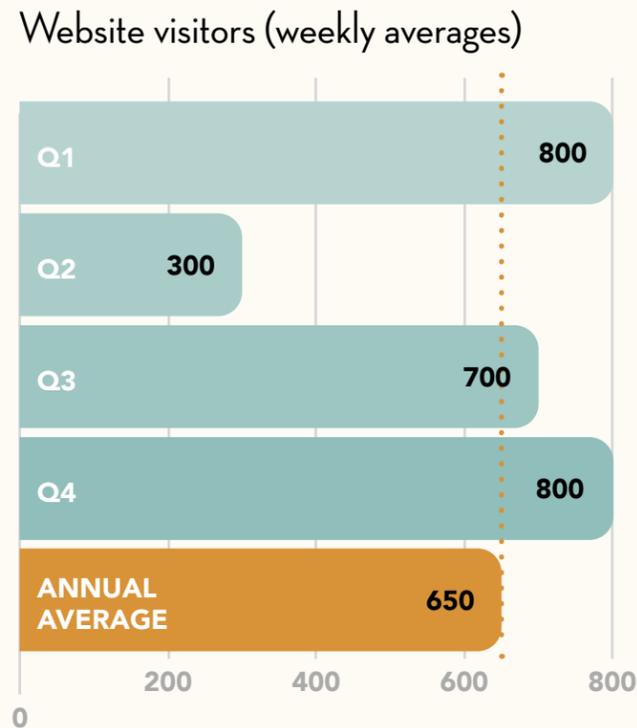


GROWING OSBA BRAND REACH THROUGH ORGANIC SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT & EARNED MEDIA

Over the last few years, under the Board’s direction, we’ve moved away from a dedicated paid advertising budget. The strategy has been to grow awareness and engagement through social media and media coverage driven by news releases, promotions, and events. 2021 was a successful year on all fronts.

DIGITAL AUDIENCE GROWTH

Our website, social media engagement and media attention increased around OSBA events and major campaigns. Web traffic was up to five times greater during Sweet Treats, Shop Hop and Winter Whyte Light Up. The mural map and business recruitment pages also saw spikes in website visitors, particularly after their launches.



TOP STORIES

- Sweet Treats
- Covid Updates
- Spring Patios
- Shop Hop
- Mural Map & Tours
- Business Recruitment
- Winter Whyte Light Up

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

Our social media audience continues to grow, particularly on Instagram and there was a noteworthy increase of more than 100% on LinkedIn after the launch of Business Recruitment and Retention content. We highlighted more than 30 new businesses across our social and digital platforms and this content consistently receives the most engagement from our audience who are keen to know what’s new and exciting in the district. Similar to our website traffic, Sweet Treats, Shop Hop and Winter Whyte Light Up drove engagement. Other notable posts included the refreshed Pride Crosswalks, a water-filling station installed by the City of Edmonton, a Hallowe’en costume of the Okuda mural, and holiday markets in the district.

- 16K FOLLOWERS** (+11%)
- 6.9K FOLLOWERS** (+5%)
- 21K FOLLOWERS** (+1%)
- 350 FOLLOWERS** (+128%)

SOCIAL IMPRESSIONS

- 1.2M IMPRESSIONS** (25K/WEEK, 7K ACCOUNTS REACHED/WEEK)
- 200K IMPRESSIONS** (4K/WEEK)
- 1.7M IMPRESSIONS** (33K/WEEK)
- 17K IMPRESSIONS** (300/WEEK)



GETTING ATTENTION

We began tracking media coverage in 2021 and noted 60 stories and interviews about Old Strathcona and the OSBA specifically, with an additional 37 blog and event articles and 35 newsletter mentions. Most of the media coverage of Old Strathcona, and OSBA initiatives, was positive and we hope to continue supporting our businesses with successful public messaging that garners them good attention.



financial STATEMENTS

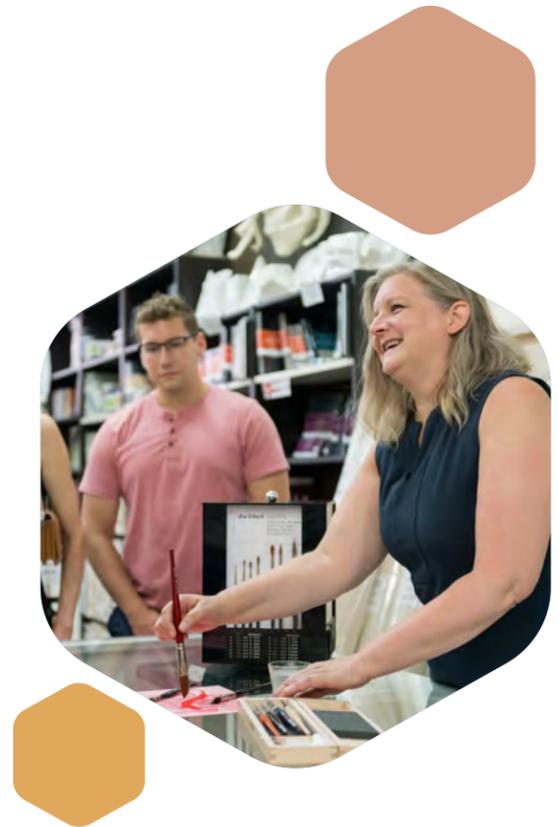
To the Members of the Old Strathcona Business Association

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, 2021, 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, 2021, 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.

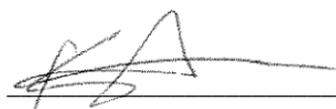


Statement of Financial Position

DECEMBER 31, 2021

	2021	2020
ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Cash	\$ 391,834	\$ 424,227
Accounts receivable	7,876	630
Goods and services tax recoverable	4,711	3,202
Prepaid expenses	126	-
	404,547	428,059
CAPITAL ASSETS	887	1,971
	\$ 405,434	\$ 430,030
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Accounts payable	\$ 36,241	\$ 22,225
Wages payable	11,984	10,534
Deferred income	131,250	131,250
	179,475	164,009
NET ASSETS		
General Fund	225,072	264,050
Net assets invested in capital assets	887	1,971
	225,959	266,021
	\$ 405,434	\$ 430,030

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD



Director



Director

Statement of Revenues and Expenditures

DECEMBER 31, 2021

	BUDGET 2021	TOTAL 2021	TOTAL 2020
REVENUES			
Special business levy	\$ 525,000	\$ 525,000	\$ 575,000
Grant revenue	6,750	117,389	3,647
Sponsorships	-	6,351	3,000
Office recovery	-	2,612	-
Interest income	-	215	158
Other income	35,000	-	-
	566,750	651,567	581,805
EXPENDITURES			
Programs, Projects and Product Development	217,500	299,870	167,699
Employee salaries and support contracts	238,500	294,198	193,108
Rental	46,800	43,324	43,771
Professional fees	25,000	28,991	43,372
Office	21,800	14,852	12,540
Telephone	5,500	4,724	5,069
Insurance	1,325	1,525	1,326
Bad debts	-	1,500	-
Amortization	-	1,084	1,408
Professional development	3,500	665	530
Meetings	500	573	223
Interest and bank charges	300	323	309
Contingency expense	5,000	-	-
Travel	1,000	-	-
	566,725	691,629	469,355
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUES OVER EXPENDITURES	\$ 25	\$ (40,062)	\$ 112,450



Old Strathcona Business Association
#402, 10314 Whyte Avenue, Edmonton, AB T6E 1Z8

oldstrathcona.ca