



2019



ANNUAL
report

TABLE OF *contents*

2
—

**BOARD OF
DIRECTORS**

3
—

**PRESIDENT'S
MESSAGE**

4
—

**EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR'S
MESSAGE**

6
—

**MAJOR
ACTIVITIES,
PROJECTS &
PROGRAMS**

7
—

**MEMBERSHIP
ENGAGEMENT**

10
—

**STAKEHOLDER
RELATIONSHIPS
& ADVOCACY**

12
—

**MARKETING
& BRANDING**

16
—

**STREETSCAPING,
BEAUTIFICATION,
WALKABILITY &
COMMUNITY
WELL-BEING**

20
—

**BUSINESS MIX,
NEW DEVELOPMENT
& AREA PLANNING**

21
—

**ADMINISTRATIVE
AND OPERATIONAL
EFFECTIVENESS**

23
—

**FINANCIAL
STATEMENTS**

OUR MISSION

To enhance, promote and protect the Old Strathcona Business Community for the common good of our membership.

OUR VISION

Following our mandate to enhance, promote and protect, our vision is of a diverse and sustainable business community that plays a significant role within the City of Edmonton and its economy. The business community will play an active role in enhancing the overall community well-being, while fostering an environment conducive to business prosperity.

OUR PROMISE

We promise that our residents and visitors will have a life enriching experience every time they are in Old Strathcona.

2019 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Executive Committee

Matt Chapman
President
Chapman Bros LTD

Kris Armitage
Vice President
Knifewear/Kent
of Inglewood

Anastasia Arabia
Treasurer
Trend Research

Mark Wilson
Secretary
Vivid Print

Directors

Adam Smith
Strathcona Spirits

Al Gothjelsen
the Pint on Whyte

Eden Tourangeau
South Side
Memorial Chapel

Ben Sir
The Buckingham

Mitch Boyd
Hudsons Canada's Pub

Miguel Murran
EXIT Edmonton

Honorary Members

Wanda Bornn
Ice on Whyte Festival

Jill Roszell
Ice on Whyte Festival

Adam Mitchell
Fringe Theatre
Adventures

OSBA STAFF TEAM

Full time staff

Cherie Klassen
Executive Director

Katelyn Arthurs
Marketing & Member
Engagement Manager

Bailey Richards
Office Manager (Jan-Apr)

Nikki Labatiuk
Membership & Marketing
Coordinator (July-Oct)

Ambassador Street Team (May-Aug):



L-R: Catherine Smyth, Liam Kachkar and Emily Machura

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

2019 was an exciting year for the Old Strathcona Business Association (OSBA), marked by several noteworthy accomplishments and memorable events. It's with pride that I serve my last term as Board President, but I leave the position in very capable hands. I look forward to continuing to serve in the role of Past President, as our new Executives transition into their roles.

I can say with certainty that this past year's Board of Directors has been one of the most engaged and passionate that I have had the pleasure of working with around the OSBA table. I have witnessed this board tackle historically challenging issues first-hand, and always with the best interests of the business community at heart. This passion and knowledge of the area and our business community makes it very easy for me to support our new three-year strategic plan.

I'd like to thank the office staff and our board for a year to be proud of! I look forward to watching our vision for Old Strathcona come to life.



Matt Chapman, Board President



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

This past year was packed with ambitious goals, and I'm very proud to share that we surpassed many of them! A big part of our focus this year was setting a vision, brand, and direction upon which to build a solid strategy for the next three years. This can be a daunting undertaking, but after some great work with our Board and committees, we're pleased to have developed a strategy that we think really serves our community.

One of our major initiatives in 2019 was developing a three-year strategic plan and revamping our brand to align with our vision. We worked closely with McQueen Creative to assist us in visualizing and determining what we want Old Strathcona to be in the next three to five years, and mapping out some goals to achieve on the way. We looked at how we want this vision to be represented in our brand and we think we struck the right note on our new look and feel.

We launched our second round of our summer Ambassador street team in May. Our street team was invaluable in helping us update contact information for our member database, increasing our newsletter subscriptions and planning and hosting a community-wide Shop Hop. Our member engagement increased dramatically through our newsletters, as we grew our subscription list by 250 members. We also achieved an average open rate of 37%, which is well above industry standard. In addition, I launched a quarterly ED News, which shares updates on our initiatives, strategic plan and goals.



After hearing from our board and business community that there was a desire for a more experiential holiday campaign, we set a goal to completely revamp our holiday programming. We had a jam-packed holiday season here in Old Strathcona, with some online contests (#WhyteWishes), a three-day Winter Whyte Shop Hop, our second Winter Whyte Light Up, weekly programming from November 30 – December 21, as well as a holiday Cheer Team. We've had tremendous feedback on this new strategy and are excited to build on this framework for next year!

Despite being short-staffed most of the year, our team managed to accomplish a great deal. Our small but mighty team never ceases to amaze me with all the creativity they bring to each task.

In 2020, we're excited to take on year one of our three-year strategic plan. Our mission to foster a thriving business and destination district that is inviting to patrons, tourists and businesses is a big one, and every bit of work coming out of our office will have this in mind. We can't wait to share more of our plans!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Klassen".

Cherie Klassen, Executive Director

MAJOR ACTIVITIES, PROJECTS & PROGRAMS

As an organization, the Old Strathcona Business Association (OSBA) tackles several multi-faceted issues for the benefit of our membership. 2019 was no exception as we tackled a wide variety of projects to enhance, promote, and protect our Business Improvement Area (BIA).

Our 2019 priorities focused on:

1 Membership Engagement

2 Stakeholder Relationships

3 Marketing & Branding

4 Streetscaping, Beautification, Walkability & Community Well-being

5 Business Mix, New Development & Area Planning

6 Administrative and Operational Effectiveness



MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT

One of our main goals continued to be engaging our membership and building a foundation of trust between OSBA and our member businesses. We reviewed our previous offerings, the results of our member survey conducted in 2018, and worked in partnership with other organizations to develop a more strategic and robust membership engagement strategy.

Member communications

- Started work on overhauling our welcome packages for new businesses in the area.
- Developed Summer and Winter Survival Guides containing timely information about events, festivals, road closures and how to leverage foot traffic during festival and holiday season. These were distributed along with Neighbourhood Response and Business Safety Matters booklets from the City of Edmonton listing contact information for all City and emergency contacts.
- OSBA Ambassador Street Team updated the contact information from our member businesses, and increased our newsletter list by approximately 250 new subscribers.



- Street Team was tasked with three separate projects over the summer: distribution of Survival Guides, updating member contact information database, and planning a neighbourhood wide Shop Hop. This ensured at least three attempted visits to each of our member businesses, which encouraged open communication and familiarity between OSBA and our members.
- A new communications piece, News from the Executive Director, was launched via MailChimp and released quarterly. This quarterly operations update had an average open rate of 47% and is in addition to our regular monthly newsletter to members.
- Implemented weekly business visits on Wednesday afternoons to chat directly with members and encourage more open communication between member businesses and OSBA staff.

Business education, training, workshops and general meetings

- We hosted three member events in 2019:
 - Hosted Reality of Retail workshop in partnership with Business Link, ATB Financial and the University of Alberta School of Retailing in May
 - Held Spring General Meeting in May
 - Held Annual General Meeting in October
 - Promoted business workshops and trainings hosted by other organizations in e-newsletters and via our member business Facebook group

Member benefits / loyalty programs

- Took a closer look at our loyalty programs and discovered that our previous affiliations were no longer best serving us. Therefore, we cancelled our gift card program due to increased customer complaints and rising costs, which we felt could better be spent elsewhere. We worked closely with our vendor to deal with any previously sold gift card balances.
- Started discussions with Benefex Consulting about the launch of an association health benefits plan. This was announced to our membership at our Annual General Meeting in October.



STAKEHOLDER RELATIONSHIPS & ADVOCACY

Establishing and maintaining strong relationships with our key stakeholders is imperative in achieving our mission of enhancing, promoting and protecting our business community. 2019 was no different, as we worked in tandem with multiple stakeholders, City staff, and community organizations towards mutually beneficial outcomes.

Participation in key city initiatives:

- Established a presence in the planning and implementation of many City projects such as the Recover: Urban Wellness Project, Plan Whyte and Strathcona ARP, business license renewal discussions, the City Plan and Nodes & Corridors, and parking requirements.
- Worked closely with the City to advocate for a safer public washroom facility. This resulted in the City piloting a 6 month, fully monitored public washroom program in our facility. The washroom is staffed by attendants from Boyle Street Ventures Inc., who monitor the facility 7 days a week, for roughly 16 hours a day.

- Advocated the interests of the business community to the City via various initiatives and speaking opportunities at City council meetings – most notably, reinstatement of ashtrays in the core of our district, despite the new 10 meter bylaw for smoking to support a cleaner street.

Stakeholder communications:

- Continued to meet with various city departments regularly on graffiti, ashtrays, operations, infrastructure renewal and lighting.
- Our Edmonton BIA council of 13 BIAs has written letters to City council supporting the City's permanent supportive housing initiative, changes to our façade and development incentive programs, as well as reaffirming our partnership with the City during budget deliberations.
- OSBA continues to build positive influential relationships with City administration and council.

Partnerships with other organizations:

- Partnered with Business Link, ATB and School of Retailing on May retail workshop.
- Worked closely with City Civic Events during the spring/summer to deal with overlapping festivals in July. Civic Events provided a landing page on their website promoting alternative forms of transit during an especially busy time, that coincided with neighbourhood renewal construction. Both organizations worked on distributing key messages, and our multiple-festival weekend ended up creating quite a buzz.
- Continued to work in partnership with Edmonton Tourism, who were integral supporters of our Winter Whyte Light Up this year.
- Quarterly meetings and strategic planning with BIAs via citywide BIA Council. All BIAs are aligned on supporting larger issues, and consensus has been helping achieve larger impact regarding issues such as crime, social disorder, and business licensing.





MARKETING & BRANDING

Continuing to shape the story of Old Strathcona and Whyte Ave through our marketing and branding initiatives.

As an organization dedicated to improving and supporting businesses, the OSBA has always appreciated and recognized the strength of community. It is through this collective strength that neighbourhoods thrive, relationships are built, and energy is articulated to move businesses forward. It was that same energy that sparked the concepts that ultimately led to the OSBA rebrand in 2019.

After careful consultation with community members, business leaders, and our Board, our agency partners, McQueen Creative, took all of those ideas, and concepts and crafted them into a sophisticated new brand that nods to the history and heritage aspects of our neighbourhood, while also providing a fresh forward momentum that will take us into the future. The overall message we are hoping to convey with our new brand is one of unity, bringing together the rich tapestry of our history, combined with the unique elements that make Old Strathcona and the Whyte Avenue areas such a magnetic and exciting destination in our city. From the vibrant nightlife, to the cafes, shops, and restaurants, and the arts, culture and festivals that inspire creativity and remind us to embrace innovation. The top part of the new logo design echos the historical street sign shape from a previous era in our past, and collectively as a badge, it unifies the community around a proud symbol.

Throughout the design process, we often considered the question "what is Old Strathcona to you?" and the answers reminded us, that Old Strathcona belongs to us all, and in all of the unique ways we interact with spaces, places, and shops it truly is about you experiencing our businesses your way.



Enhancing our online presence

WEBSITE UPDATE

Moving in to 2019, one of our main priorities was to update and revamp our website and make it more responsive across multiple platforms. OSBA conducted a thorough RFP process, and worked with our Board and marketing committee to launch our new and improved website in early November.

BRAND REFRESH

As a byproduct of our website overhaul, we also worked tirelessly on a brand refresh. Our previous brand was a few years old and wasn't reflecting our current neighbourhood or goals as an association. We were pleased to be able to work in partnership with McQueen Creative, our Board, and our marketing committee to come up with a fresh, new look that reflects the 'new' Old Strathcona. The branding is crisp and modern, with a nod to our historical ties that can easily be replicated through decals, tin signs, pins and several other fun branding accessories!

SOCIAL CHANNELS

Our social channels had a great year, with an overall growth rate of 15%, spread out over Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. While our Facebook and Twitter accounts saw modest growth, it was our Instagram account that was the runaway winner. We grew our account by an impressive 46% and it continues to grow at a steady rate.



Holiday Campaign

WINTER WHYTE LIGHT UP

2019 marked our second annual Winter Whyte Light Up. This year's event had an approximate attendance of 1000 festival goers, and had programming in McIntyre Park, the Old Strathcona Farmers Market, ATB Financial Arts Barns, and the Strathcona Branch of EPL. Attendees enjoyed firepits, outdoor light displays, extended hours at the Farmers' Market, kids programming in EPL, and an 18+ speakeasy and drag show in the Arts Barns.

WEEKEND PROGRAMMING

This year we were presented with an opportunity to pivot our programming efforts during the holiday season. Historically, OSBA ran horse-drawn sleigh rides on the weekends to attract patrons to the area and add to the holiday ambiance. This year, we decided to make our programming even more experiential and scheduled weekend events from November 30 to December 21. We partnered with the Leading Stars Arts and Education Foundation to bring Victorian carollers, Santa & Mrs. Claus, a holiday karaoke party, and a Breakfast with Santa to Old Strathcona!





#WHYTEWISHES

This online contest was brought back by popular demand! Running from November 16 to December 15, followers on our social media could wish for gifts for loved ones on their list by posting them to Twitter and Instagram, and tagging @oldstrathcona and the business that sold their wish. Over the course of the contest, we were able to grant 30 wishes and had just over 100 eligible entries.

Events and Festival Sponsorship

SHOP HOPS

Our first Shop Hop had over 70 participating businesses and received overwhelming positive feedback. Our second Shop Hop coincided with Black Friday and our Winter Whyte Light Up, and was a multi-day event.

FESTIVAL SPONSORSHIP

Old Strathcona is proud to be the home of many signature Edmonton events. Throughout the year, we worked in partnership with Ice on Whyte, Sand on Whyte, Nextfest, the Whyte Avenue Art Walk, the Edmonton International Fringe Theatre Festival, High Level Line Day, and Northern Light Theatre's Battle for the Limelight. Our partnerships with these festivals help us promote vibrancy within the community, as well as leverage our brand exposure.



STREETSCAPING, BEAUTIFICATION, WALKABILITY & COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

OSBA continues to work to enhance our district through beautification and streetscaping efforts, cleanliness, walkability and safety measures.

Lighting & Infrastructure

LIGHTING IN MCINTYRE PARK

As part of ongoing strategies as to how to improve safety in McIntyre Park, we were pleased to have the City partner with us on lighting up the park for our Winter Whyte Light Up, and all year round. This lighting strategy has resulted in a reduction of suspicious activity in the park, and feedback from all surrounding organizations has been extremely positive. While we add to the permanent lighting during the winter months, the park will continue to be lit through all four seasons.

ALLEY RENEWAL

The OSBA has been working diligently with the City of Edmonton as they confirmed funding for basic 'back street' renewal as part of Strathcona neighbourhood Renewal. The City has agreed to fund the basic renewal costs, but other stakeholders would need to fund enhancements. This back-alley renewal project has been shared publicly and has created excitement amongst community members as they imagine what the area could look like if it was redesigned as a community plaza and meeting space.



PUBLIC ART

OSBA continues to encourage the development of public art in our neighbourhood, and this year we assisted both Nextfest and Rust Magic in bringing five new murals to our community. These murals enhance vibrancy, bring a sense of community, help in anti-graffiti efforts, and also make lovely Instagram backdrops! We were pleased to have several stops in an Instagrammable Walls tour of Edmonton, and to be featured in a walking tour hosted by CBC YEG Walk.

FLOWERS AND GREENERY

We continue to beautify our main street district in partnership with the City's Bloomin' Boulevard program. We installed nearly 100 flower baskets and barrels in our area for the summer, and in the winter, enhanced our main street with decorative swags.

OSBA BANNERS

In conjunction with our re-branding project, we decided to remove our rather worn-out looking street pole banners. We'll be reconsidering our approach to banners and wayfinding in the near future.



Neighbourhood cleanliness and litter reduction

OLD STRATHCONA CLEAN TEAM

We continue to support our social enterprise with the Mustard Seed to keep our neighbourhood litter-free. The Clean Team provides us with monthly reports on cleanliness trends in our community and saw a marked increase in cigarette litter after removal of ashtrays in our main core due to the 10-meter smoking bylaw change.

REINSTATEMENT OF ASHTRAYS

After repeatedly hearing from businesses and the Clean Team about the increased amount of cigarette butt litter, OSBA advocated to City council to bring the ashtrays back to high-traffic locations. The ashtrays were replaced in August, and we immediately saw a large improvement.



GRAFFITI

2019 saw a large upswing in graffiti incidents city-wide. We worked closely with our EPS Beats Team and Capital City Cleanup on how best to communicate the issue, where impacted businesses could go for support, and tips for how best to avoid being a target. Our EPS Beats Team is to be commended for their tireless work on this, which resulted in five arrests and a significant decrease in incidents in our area.

Increasing accessibility and walkability

UPGRADED CROSSWALK

After several years of concern over the safety and visibility of the crosswalk at 82 Avenue and 102 Street, we were thrilled to see the City install a full crosswalk arm and better lights. This crossing has historically been a pain point in our community, and well-known as unsafe.

E-SCOOTERS

Once scooters were launched, OSBA worked in partnership with the City to spread messaging about safe and responsible scooter handling. We also had the chance to promote a safety workshop with Bird Canada in McIntyre Park.



BIKESHARE

OSBA worked in partnership with the Downtown Business Association, and University of Alberta urban planning students to develop a report and recommendations in implementing regulated bikeshare in our City. We worked with the City to advocate for the recommendations in the report, with hopes that bikeshare would be implemented in our two core business districts for summer of 2019. Regulated bikeshare and e-scooters were permitted late in the summer, with only e-scooters being implemented.

TRANSPORTATION

We continued to advocate for better transportation and accessibility in Old Strathcona working with a number of stakeholders. OSBA worked closely with High Level Line Society and Prairie Sky Gondola to learn how these projects could provide increased connections between downtown and Old Strathcona.

Community Well-being

SAFETY

OSBA continues to work closely with EPS and our Beat Teams, as well as social service agencies to remain informed of safety concerns and social disorder. OSBA has also been in regular attendance for the Recover: Urban Wellness Project meetings and attends monthly community council meetings to keep a pulse on what is going on in the neighbourhood.



BUSINESS MIX, NEW DEVELOPMENT & AREA PLANNING

As our community continues to evolve, many development projects are underway to help see it thrive. In 2019, we saw the following developments start to take shape or be approved:

- **Southpark** (condos and retail space) – 82 Avenue and 106 Street
- **South Scona Parking Lot** (condos and retail – proposed) – 8019 105 Street NW
- **The Strathcona** (renovation of the Strathcona Hotel – retail and commercial space) – 10302 82 Avenue
- **@81** – residential and mixed use commercial – 102 Street & 81 Avenue
- **Scona Garage** and **MKT** property have been purchased by developers

PLAN WHYTE & STRATHCONA ARP

Plan Whyte was accepted by City council in the summer of 2018 and draft amendments to the Strathcona ARP were reviewed this past year with additional stakeholder input. OSBA continued to participate in this engagement process.

BUSINESS RECRUITMENT

As new developments are taking shape, we have committed to the development of a Business Recruitment Plan to inform potential businesses about the advantages of setting up shop in this unique and growing business district. This will be a major focus in 2020.



ADMINISTRATIVE AND OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

With a small team, it is vital to keep improving on workplace efficiencies, and use staff and resources effectively. It is also imperative to establish a clear direction for OSBA staff to follow and implement to best serve our members. This past year, we made great strides in improving operational effectiveness, both at the staff and Board level.

Tightening operational efficiencies

- Implemented electronic payment system for payroll and expenses, drastically reducing time spent on issuing payments and cheques.
- Hired a contract Virtual Assistant to take on Board and event planning support to fill in for office being short-staffed for most of 2019. Hiring a Virtual Assistant to cover administration for our organization allowed us to create a new position to lead membership engagement initiatives and to support our marketing department.



Review and revision of operational guidelines

- Revised OSBA operational guidelines to follow best practices in governance in collaboration with the executive committee and City guidelines. Our new operating guidelines were approved by our membership at our AGM in October.

Exploration of grant opportunities

- Applied for Summer Temporary Employment Program (STEP) grant for our Summer Ambassador Street Team to offset staffing costs. Funding was received for all three staff, which allowed us to continue running the program as budgeted.

Development of new strategic plan

- Developed a new three-year strategic plan with OSBA Board. The Board worked with an outside facilitator to achieve strategic priorities for the next three years, focusing on safety, business mix, activating under-utilized spaces, and fostering a healthy and thriving business community.





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, 2019, 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, 2019, 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 Dorward & Company LLP.**

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION


December 31, 2019

	2019	2018
ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Cash (operating and savings accounts)	\$ 310,859	\$ 165,515
Accounts receivable	1,000	500
Goods and services tax recoverable	3,276	2,766
Prepaid expenses	7,854	-
	322,989	168,781
CAPITAL ASSETS	1,741	3,931
	\$ 324,730	\$ 172,712
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Accounts payable	\$ 22,249	\$ 33,433
Employee deductions payable	5,160	3,938
Deferred income	143,750	-
	171,159	37,371
NET ASSETS		
General fund	151,830	131,410
Restricted fund	1,741	3,931
	153,571	135,341
	\$ 324,730	\$ 172,712

APPROVED ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD



 Director



 Director

STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES

Year Ended December 31, 2019

	Budget 2019	Total 2019	Total 2018
REVENUES			
Special business levy	\$ 550,000	\$ 550,000	\$ 550,000
Programs, Projects and Product Development	-	15,000	-
Grant revenue	7,500	7,686	4,745
Interest income	-	1,447	1,327
Sponsorships	-	1,000	1,000
Rent recovery	-	-	4,460
	557,500	575,133	561,532
EXPENSES			
Programs, Projects and Product Development	250,900	227,274	230,949
Employee salaries and support contracts	218,100	214,625	211,748
Rental	39,500	46,530	52,038
Professional fees	20,000	31,238	24,514
Office	17,060	20,654	20,902
Telephone & Internet	6,500	5,352	5,485
Professional development	3,500	3,653	1,463
Insurance	1,000	2,525	421
Amortization	-	1,044	1,622
Meetings	300	746	334
Interest and bank charges	300	343	653
Bad debts	-	-	14
	557,160	553,984	550,143
EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES FROM OPERATIONS	340	21,149	11,389
OTHER INCOME			
Loss on disposal of capital assets	-	(2,919)	(26)
EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES	\$ 340	\$ 18,230	\$ 11,363



Old Strathcona Business Association
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oldstrathcona.ca