



OLD STRATHCONA BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

YEAR END REPORT

2007

Mission:

We enhance, promote and protect the Old Strathcona business community for the common good of our members.

Vision:

We will have the capacity to attract and support the growth and success of the business community, making Old Strathcona a local and global destination.

Board of Directors 2007

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STRATEGIC PLANNING OBJECTIVES: 2007-2010

The Old Strathcona Business Association Board of Directors developed a set of strategic objectives for 2007-2010. A strategic plan was developed and programming attached. The objectives are:

- **MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS**

The focus will be on the many positive and unique aspects of Old Strathcona, including the large retail sectors of fashion, health and wellness, values product, salons & spas, restaurants and entertainment. One of the major initiatives will be a south side box office for the Old Strathcona Theatre District and Events that will include a tourism centre.

- **MUNICIPAL SERVICES TO SUPPORT THE OLD STRATHCONA ECONOMY**

The Old Strathcona commercial area is primarily local and independent and, as such, contributes directly to the local economy supporting regional businesses that supply inventory and services. The estimated value of the local dollar infusion is over \$100, 000, 000 annually. As the economy of Old Strathcona grows, it is important to have the city services that are needed to grow and maintain the business area. These have been identified as better maintenance of the public realm, litter and graffiti control, policing, and night time transit/transportation.

- **COMMITMENT TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF EAST WHYTE**

The East Whyte area is seen by the BRZ as having potential to become a multi-use area with its own charm and as a destination for unique small shops, a historic industrial area, and good urban design in its scale and amenities. The Executive Committee of City Council and the Planning & Development Department supported a planning study for East Whyte, 104 St., south of 80 Avenue to 63 Avenue called the Strathcona Junction Planning Study.

- **EDUCATION OF AND ACCOUNTABILITY TO BUSINESS MEMBERS**

A new committee will be formed to supplement the current member services by designing learning workshops, mixers and trade shows.

- **MARKETING TO OBTAIN GLOBAL RECOGNITION**

Old Strathcona has a unique culture that can be marketed throughout Alberta, Canada and the world.

- **IMPROVEMENT AND REPLACEMENT OF AGING INFRASTRUCTURE**

As one of the first revitalization areas in Edmonton and arguably the most successful, Old Strathcona has infrastructure that has been overused and is need of replacement. This is necessary to maintain the economy of the area so that it contributes positively to Edmonton.

The Strategic Plan will be implemented on a year to year basis with an annual review of the programming by the Executive Director and the appropriate committee.

WE ENHANCE: 2007

BlockWatch Committee

Programs and Events

- The City of Edmonton hired the Whyte Avenue Facility Manager in the spring of 2007. Cindy Davies has the job of managing the public space as its own venue. She is working on lighting, programming public areas, graffiti clean up and all aspects of the public space.
- **Litter Removal** – OSBA has contracted a litter collector to work year round picking up litter in the mornings and vacuuming cigarette butts on weekends. In 2007, the City of Edmonton supplemented the OSBA program through Capital City Clean Up. An additional litter crew was provided throughout the week and on weekends, the end of May until the first week of September.
- **Façade Improvement Program** – the City of Edmonton matched up to \$20,000 in façade improvements within BRZs.

2007 Projects:

- > The Army & Navy applied, was approved, but did not proceed with work.
- > The Garneau Lofts/commercial replaced the deteriorating planters in front of their building.

* New funding for this project ended at the end of 2007.

- **Sidewalk Flushing** – the OSBA paid the City of Edmonton to flush sidewalks from the May long weekend to the end of September.
- **Flower Program** – the OSBA purchased hanging flowers and barrels for the area. Store owners purchased barrels, as well. The City of Edmonton was supposed to fertilize and water the plants. There was a problem with the program and many of the petunias died from neglect.
- **Lobbies:**
 - Graffiti Bylaw
 - Community Standards Bylaw
 - Maintenance and Repair of Street Elements

Challenges:

- **Litter – fast food and take out overwhelming the public bins**
- **City services for evenings & weekends**
- **Cigarette butts**
- **Graffiti**
- **Inappropriate signing**
- **Inadequate lighting on the main streets and alleyways**
- **Derelict private property**

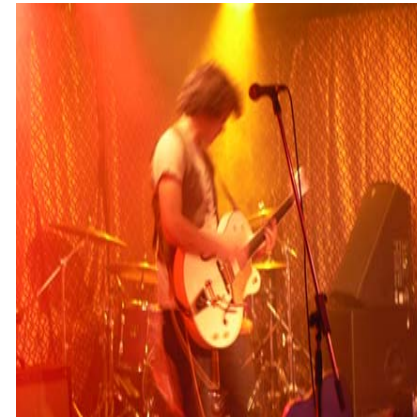


WE PROMOTE: 2007

- **Old Strathcona Magazine – 100K copies to municipalities outside of Edmonton, through the Edmonton Examiner, hotels, conferences and the U of A.**
- **Web Sites – www.oldstrathcona.ca was completely revamped in 2007. Each business has its own page on this site with current information and a connection to any private web site. www.osba.ab.ca is still under construction and should be completed in 2008.**
- **DVD & Photographs – the OSBA is working on a DVD and adds to the photo collection yearly.**
- **Theatre District Committee – the OSBA hosts the 8 theatre groups to produce mutual materials and promotions.**
- **Radio & Television – the OSBA purchases radio & TV at competitive rates to help small businesses afford advertising.**
- **Tourism**
 - **Member of the Edmonton Tourism Short Haul Committee**
 - **Part of the Edmonton Summer Guide**
 - **Host several familiarization tours of travel writers and agents. Many local restaurants and the hotels participate.**
 - **Tourism Brokerage initiative is still on the table.**

- **Events**

- **Ice on Whyte – January 17 – 27, 2007 >sponsored by the OSBA**



- **Silly Summer Parade – sponsored float prizes and recruited judges**
- **Whyte Avenue Street Sale – clearance event in July. Whyte Avenue was closed from noon to 5:00 pm.**
- **ArtWalk Festival – partnership with OSF and the Paint Spot. About 200 artists on the streets for the weekend in July.**
- **Sidewalk Sales – the OSBA buys a vendor permit allowing businesses to set up tables on the sidewalks throughout the summer weekends.**
- **Edmonton International Fringe Theatre Festival – program ad and select stores sell the program.**
- **Edmonton International Film Festival – sponsorship**

- **Walking Tours**
- **History Book**
- **Photographs/DVD**
- **Tote Bags**

Christmas

- ❖ **Santa's sleigh rides**
- ❖ **Sleigh Rides**
- ❖ **Santa's Helpers – give out candy, information, and plug meters**
- ❖ **Christmas Carollers**
- ❖ **Supported by radio and poster advertising**



WE PROTECT: 2007

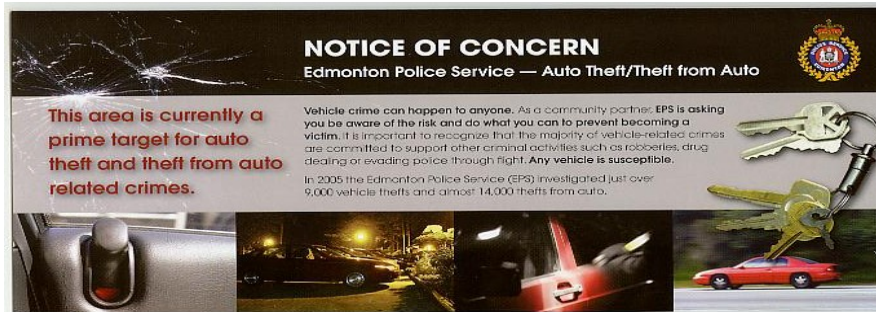
- **Work with Old Strathcona Area Community Council (OSACC) – representatives of 3 community leagues, churches, EPS, Fringe, market, OSBA, OSF, OSYS – on issues affecting the community.**
- **Adult Outreach Worker(s) Steering Committee**
- **Community Committee on Homelessness - Advocacy**
- **Old Strathcona Integrated Service Team – City depts. + stakeholders.**
- **Old Strathcona Youth Society Board**
- **Late Night Issues - Hospitality Resource Panel**
 - **A city wide Hospitality Resource Panel was formed to work on hospitality and late night issues – included were community, hospitality industry, safety and development representatives. City Council did not continue to fund this initiative for 2008.**
 - **Formation of a city wide coalition of hospitality businesses to deal with safety planning, best practices, training of staff, recruitment of staff etc. This is a challenge for hospitality businesses. The Old Strathcona Hospitality Association continues to work with approximately 2/3 of hospitality businesses in Old Strathcona.**
 - **Code Team and Business License Requirements – A team of safety representatives including EPS, Fire, AGLC, Planning, & Capital Health started work with businesses to produce a safety plan, help with education and will enforce infractions. Data collection on infractions will be at the municipal level and poor operators will go through a business license review.**

- **Manage the street as a venue – a street manager was hired to operate the public street as a facility creating budgets for operations and capital projects that cut across department silos.**
- **Patron responsibility campaign – Old Strathcona piloted a “Be a Lover, Not A fighter Campaign” that was aimed at the demographic that frequents the pubs & clubs and creates the demand for a night time economy. The concept was developed by young people at the University of Alberta for young people. One of the strengths of the initiative was the one on one interviews in the pubs and on the streets. Several other municipalities were interested in this program.**

- **Late Night Transportation**

- **Taxi Cab Initiative – the BRZ worked with EPS, the Taxi Commission and OSHA to encourage taxis after midnight. Six blocks on Whyte Avenue have become “No Parking” zones after midnight to facilitate quick and safe taxi service. The unfortunate result is that there are not enough taxis working at night to meet even a reasonable amount of the demand. Issues with the valet parking for the Metterra Hotel have arisen and the ticketing and towing without prominent signing has caused bad feelings. In the end, the experience has supported the supposition that taxis are not the complete or even primary solution to transportation at night.**

- **Theft From Auto Initiative**



The 2006 initiatives for prevention of theft from autos was successful as long as the police had an actual presence. Theft from autos continues to be a big concern, especially in parking lots and parkades. The OSBA tried to hire a security company to monitor the South Scona Parking Lot but was not able to get a sustained presence due to worker shortage and high costs.

- **Managing Large Street Events**

- **What do you do when a celebration becomes a street party?**
- **Have a plan for the immediate aftermath with a beginning, middle and an end.**
- **Take control of the program.**
- **What did we do wrong?**
- **No program, no plan.**
- **It was managed as a criminal event rather than a celebratory event.**

MEMBER SERVICES: 2007

- **Newsletter – it was decided that the newsletter become a bi-monthly event and that an electronic newsletter be developed. Due to the physical size of the expanded BRZ boundaries, the newsletters are mailed. The challenge is to work with and improve the mailing list for the new areas.**
- **Consultations with new businesses**
- **Advice and help with bureaucracy for businesses**
- **Partnerships with outside agencies to bring best practices and new information to businesses:**
 - **Responsible Hospitality Institute – the conference in Boulder was attended by Cindy Davies and Gary Goziuk from the Edmonton Police Service.**
 - **International Downtown Association Conference – September in New York – was attended by the Executive Director, Planning & Development and Cindy Davies. The information and best practices from all over the world was gathered.**

SOUTH SCONA PARKING LOT: 2007

- **The OSBA was not able to come to terms on a new parking lot management contract after the expiry of the contract in late 2003.**
- **The Department of Asset Management and Public Works wanted a substantial increase in the lease rate. The income from the parking lot did not warrant an increase and the OSBA would not sign a new contract that put the members at a financial risk.**
- **The mandate of the OSBA was to:**
 - **Support the local economy by making safe and reasonably priced parking available.**
 - **Provide safe and reasonably priced parking for employees and patrons at a time when there were no alternative transportation.**
 - **Protect the business community from the effects of predatory parking practices. i.e. businesses whose primary income is from ticketing and towing.**
 - **Provide enhanced services for the business community through monthly parking and validated parking.**
 - **Mitigate the impact on residential communities through:**
 - **Available public parking**
 - **Reasonably priced parking**
 - **Allowing overnight use without penalty**

- **Background conditions:**

- **The lease with the City included taxes, lease of \$6,000/mon. and 94% of the surplus for “additional rent”.**
- **The loss of the Legion and some office uses have made a substantial difference in the amount of daytime revenue.**
- **Evening revenue was steady but had to be sensitive to the competition of free parking in the neighbourhoods.**
- **The parking lot is a derelict property that has not seen any substantial re-investment by the City of Edmonton for a long time.**
- **A proposal to sell the lot for development came before Council committee on October 10, 2006.**
- **The decision was made to keep the lot for parking but to send it out for tender with the condition that the operator makes an investment in the repairs of the lot.**
- **This has effectively eliminated the OSBA from the process and will put pressure on any private operator to amortize the costs by raising parking costs. A private operator does not have a mandate to support the business community or to work with the residential communities.**
- **In 2007, the City of Edmonton had an engineering study done on the parking lot and estimated the capital costs to repair the lot at \$1.8 million. It was not funded in the 2007 budget and the OSBA continues to manage the lot through 2008.**

Old Strathcona Business Association

Dell Kronstedt, President

Shirley Lowe, Executive Director