

SOUTHAMPTON
BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA

ANNUAL REPORT 2025





CHAIR'S REPORT

2025 tested our resilience as a Downtown. The High Street reconstruction brought both necessary progress and undeniable challenges. While not all declines in sales could be attributed solely to construction, economic pressures were equally great but the disruption and public misunderstandings did weigh heavily on our businesses, on Council and Town Staff as well. Despite this, our community spirit never wavered. We found bright spots in the completion of the Bell Building mural, the about to be installed "South' LED light display, our Support Local campaign, and the many events that kept our downtown lively and connected.

The 2025 budget reflects BIA Board's promise in 2025 to maintain the same levy in 2026. Given the year's challenges, we felt it important to hold the levy at the current level to give property owners and businesses a chance to recover before any future adjustments.

We extend heartfelt thanks to Town Staff, particularly Amanda Monaghan, Lisa Billings, Corby Leitch, Dawn Mittleholz, Kristen Shrider, Lukas Heathers, Ruhul Amin, Mark Paoli and the Works department under Adam Parsons. They've been amazing partners and have readily communicated with the BIA and the public. We are grateful for all they do! We also appreciate the construction liaisons, Natasha x from MacDonnell and Murray from Burnside for helping keep us informed and connected through every stage of the project.

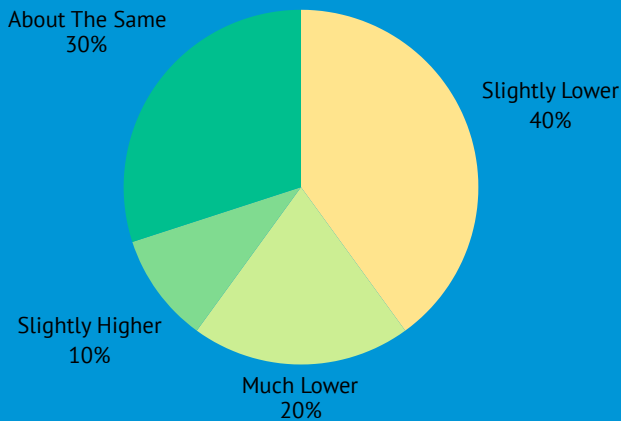
As we look ahead, we do so with gratitude and optimism. The work completed this year lays the foundation for a stronger, more vibrant downtown for generations to come.

Sara Porter
Southampton BIA Chair

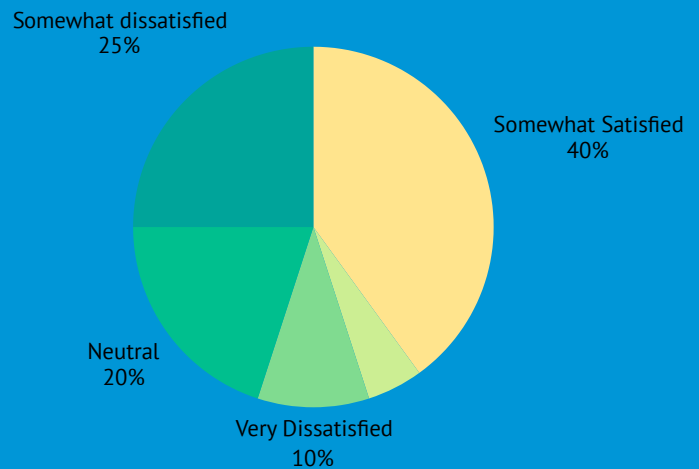
CONSTRUCTION IMPACT SURVEY

In September 2025, the Southampton BIA conducted a Construction Impact Survey targeting businesses located directly on High Street that were affected by construction activities and temporary parking adjustments. Businesses outside the construction zone were not included to ensure the results accurately reflected the direct impacts experienced by those most affected. 20 of our 34 businesses filled out the survey. Three of the 14 who didn't respond in writing gave verbal responses however that data was not included as it incomplete and not within the survey format.

How would you describe your business's sales this summer compared to last summer?



How satisfied are you with your overall summer season despite the construction?

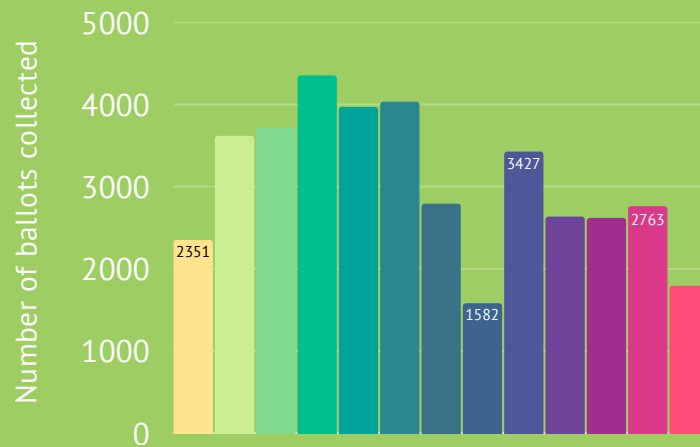


SOME COMMENTS FROM THE SURVEY

- "Wasn't great, Wasn't terrible, could've been much worse. Overall thankful for the effort to keep things open and ppl moving.
- My opinion is this years decline was more linked to the economy than the construction.
- We got very tired of unfair complaints and angry comments about the construction project
- Our business is different and while we were looking forward to walk in inquiries we are not retail so our daily operations and sales were not effected like many others.
- As we are in the service industry, we weren't effected like the other retail businesses. However, we have had a few patients with mobility issues that are postponing their treatments until construction is finished, and parking is fully restored.
- There was no parking on the street and it absolutely destroyed our business. We lost all our drive up traffic, all the elderly. 60% of our business is pull-up.
- For the most part, my summer was very successful. I feel I put the effort into promoting my business and making sure that we were getting those return customers. I am fortunate where my business has two revenue streams one that that doesn't require foot traffic in store. We tried to remain positive at all times about the construction because it is very important that it happens.

LOVE LOCAL CAMPAIGN

The data from the Love Local draw shows that July was a more economically impactful month than August.



DETAILS:

Contest Window: June – Labour Day (14 weeks)

Format: 1 ballot for every \$25 spent at participating businesses

Total Ballots Collected: 39,660

Estimated Local Spending Tracked: \$991,500

Number of Participating Businesses: 20

Key Insights:

- The contest successfully encouraged residents and visitors to spend locally during the busy summer months;
- Based on one ballot for every \$25 spent, the contest generated nearly \$1 million in measurable local economic activity within the downtown core;
- Participation levels were consistent with, or exceeded, what a typical “free entry” contest would achieve, demonstrating strong community engagement;
- The spend-to-enter model proved effective for both consumer motivation and data collection, allowing the BIA to quantify local economic impact – a valuable metric for Council and future grant applications.

Economic Impact:

This campaign showcased the tangible effect of local shopping initiatives:

- \$1 spent locally recirculates through wages, supply chains, and local services, multiplying community benefit.
- With nearly \$1 million spent locally through the contest period, the campaign helped support jobs, retain downtown vitality, and strengthen the small business ecosystem.

Looking Ahead:

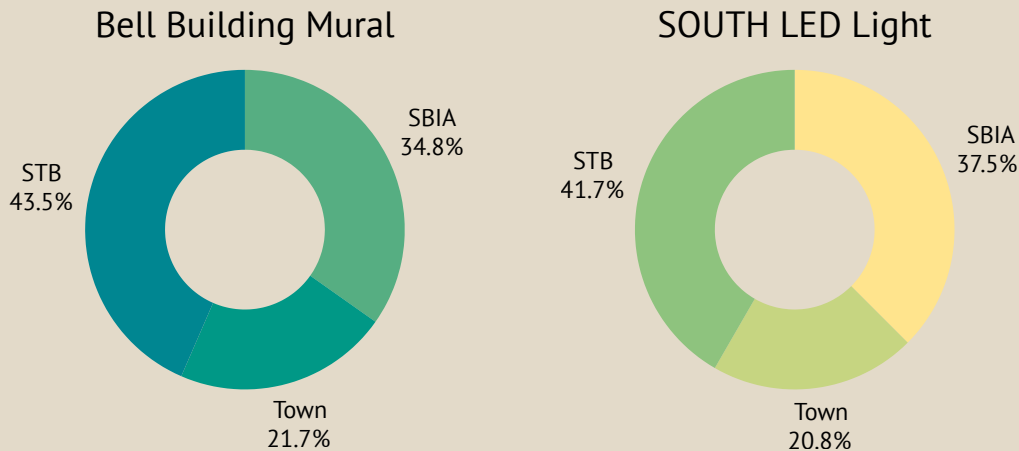
Winter 2025 Campaign

Building on the success of the summer contest, the Southampton BIA will relaunch the promotion in January–March 2025 to stimulate economic activity during the community’s quietest season.

Note: we understand that these numbers reflect 25 to 30% of actual dollars spent as some businesses did not participate, or some consumers did not participate, or purchase was less than \$25

STREETSCAPE

Funding sources for pubic art in 2025



PUBLIC ART INSTALLATIONS

In our Strategic Plan of 2024, we identified some key areas to focus Streetscape funds, not least being artwork in the form of banners, murals, and a light installation. We hope to add to the banner programme and other smaller initiatives in 2026.

The Land That Raised Us, Mural, 16 x 48 feet

Emily Kewageshig and Taylor Cameron from Saugeen First Nation No. 29 are the artists who created the mural installation on the west side of the Bell utility building at the corner of Landsdowne Street and Albert Street North. The artwork honours the ancestral territory of the Saugeen Ojibway Nation and invites reflections on our shared connections and responsibility to care for the land, the water and each other.

LED Light Installation

“SOUTH” to be installed on the west lawn of the Town Hall any day now! We are able to change the colours of the letters and will act as a gateway.



PROMOTIONS & EVENTS

WINE & CHEESE FEST

It was a fun Spring in Southampton with our first Wine & Cheese Fest that raised \$2410 with over 270 tastings. Local wineries, Coffin Ridge and The Roost, participated and look forward to being present again in 2026. The Fest also had a barrel making demonstrate and the cooper explained how barrels are built, what features are important for wine aging and even demonstrated searing the barrel interior, explaining how this also impacts the flavour of the wine. We look forward to this event again in 2026.

SOUTHAMPTON SHINDIG

Capitalising on the “Better Together Street Party ” in 2024 the BIA chose to reprise the Southampton Shindig on High Street. This fun, family friendly event was held in the half block from the mid-street bump-out to Huron Street. There were artists doing caricatures, sharpie tattoos, henna, crafts with the Southampton Arts Art Bike and the much loved Foaming Dragon. Musical artists Nuclear Vibes & Northern Mind provided a great evening of live music.

LADIES AT THE LAKE

2025 saw this Fall event revert to a business focussed event catering to women (mostly!). Several High Street merchants held events in-store and included a fashion show, a cooking demo, bath bomb making, a read and relax session, mimosas at the Gallery and discounts and promotions. Many businesses reported a very good weekend. We loved being able to put live music on the new curb extension on the SW corner of High and Albert and are looking forward to using these areas for creating activations and gathering spaces on High St.



PROMOTIONS & EVENTS

CHRISTMAS IN SOUTHAMPTON

Thursday November 20th is Southampton Sparkles, the kickoff to Holiday shopping in Southampton. 2025 will feature more Hallmark-style additions to build on the winter charm! On Saturday November 22nd the 2nd Christmas in Southampton Artisan market will take place in four locations from the Chantry Center to the Town Hall and venues are sponsored by the Marine Heritage Society, the Chantry Center, Southampton Rotary and the BIA.

FESTIVE FRIDAYS & WREATH WALK

Festive Fridays begin the week after Sparkles Night with horse drawn wagon rides on November 28, December 12 & 19. (The Rotary Santa Claus Parade is December 5th.) Wagon rides have become a tradition during the holiday season and are free with a donation to local food banks. We've taken hundreds of pounds of food each year since we began collecting three years ago.

New this year is a Wreath Walk. The BIA, along with Home Hardware, will be providing free wreaths to businesses to decorate in a way that best represents them! We invite business owners and residents to come downtown, shop and dine and to view our wreaths. *Special thanks to Sarah & Jeff at Southampton Home Hardware for their support in making this promotion possible.*

SANTA SUMMIT & WISHLISTS

Our Santa Summit Pub Crawl returns for its 3rd year and we look forward to seeing all the Santas, Mrs. Clauses, Elves and smiling faces taking in some festive cheer before the holidays begin.

We are adding the Wishlist activity this year as we work with the Port Elgin BIA on a broader collaboration. Wishlists can be picked up at local businesses with the intention that one partner fills it out with all the goods things from their favourite stores and restaurants for holiday gifting, and given to their significant gift giver. We hope this helps take the mystery of gift buying ensure the perfect gift is under the tree - while supporting local.



2026 PROMOTIONS & EVENTS

LOVE LOCAL CAMPAIGN

January - March : Ballots to Support Shopping Local during the quiet season

SWEET SHORE CHOCOLATE BY THE LAKE

February 6-8 : Participating businesses celebrates chocolate through creative tastings, experiences, and limited-edition treats.

WINE & CHEESE FEST

April 11-12 : 7-8 Tasting locations around town with unique Ontario pairings and unique activities.

SOUTHAMPTON SHINDIG

August 7 : Shindig on the street, Live Music, Activities and BIA Beer Garden

LADIES AT THE LAKE

October 16-18 : Shopping and Activities around town, Dance at the Town Hall and BIA Bar is back!

SPARKLES NIGHT

November 19 : Taking Sparkles up a notch this year. Be prepared for a little Christmas romance.

FESTIVE FRIDAYS

November 27, December 11 & 18 : Horse Drawn Carriage Rides

CHRISTMAS IN SOUTHAMPTON

November 21 : Artisan Markets around town

SIP & SHOP

December 2 : Wish lists after Dark. Fill out your Christmas wish list and provide to your partner.

SANTA SUMMIT

It's back again! Dress up and travel to our local pubs and restaurants in your festive suits.

WISHES & BREWS

Bring your partners wish list gifts for wrapping a free Brew. Giveaway for the Gift Pack at this time!

PLEASE NOTE:

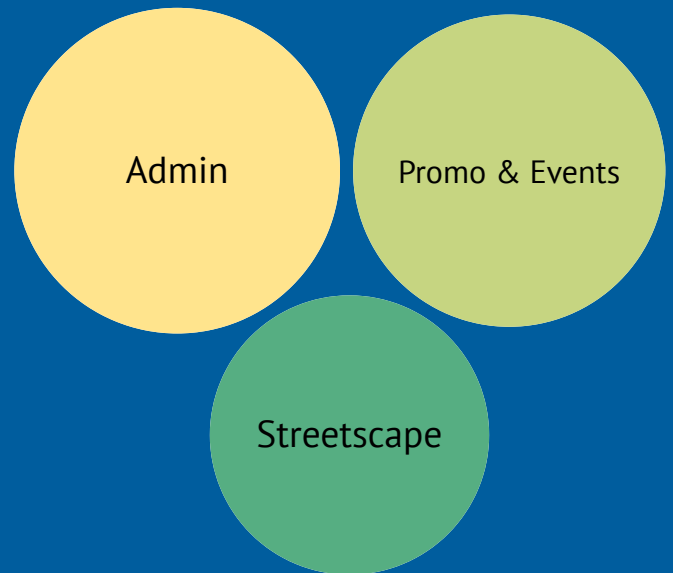
While it can be hard to decide in advance what promotion or event you may want to put on during events like Ladies At The Lake, without knowing participation it makes promoting the event very difficult. We will be asking for your participation by May so that we can promote throughout the summer. Being able to say "in store activities or promotions" is better than nothing.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Moving into 2026 with a Levy of \$58,700 we are proposing the same budget as 2025.

The Administration portion of the budget is just over 50%, with Promotions and Events coming in as the second largest category, based on where the Membership wishes to see funding be spent. (see below)

Streetscape will resume supporting the purchase of flower baskets along High Street in 2026 along with some smaller public art initiatives.



MEMBER FEEDBACK

What types of support would help you most right now?



PROPOSED BUDGET, 2026

| 2026 PROPOSED BUDGET - HIGH LINE VERSION | | |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| LEVY 2026 | RESERVE FROM 2025 | |
| \$58,700.00 | \$5,000.00 | |
| LEVY + RESERVE | 63,700.00 | |
| | | |
| | | 2026 ASSIGNED BUDGET |
| SPECIAL EVENTS & PROMOTIONS - 4310 | | \$20,000.00 |
| | Subtotal - Budget | \$20,000.00 |
| | Other income | 8,400.00 |
| | Subtotal P&E | \$28,400.00 |
| | | |
| STREETSCAPE - 4340 | | \$16,000.00 |
| | | |
| ADMINISTRATION - 5400 | | 22,700.00 |
| | Subtotal | \$58,700.00 |
| | | |
| | | |
| 2026 BUDGET SOURCES | | |
| 2026 LEVY | | \$58,700.00 |
| Reserves (YE 2025) | | \$5,000.00 |
| Revenue from Events | | 8,400.00 |
| Cash in Bank | | 200.00 |
| SUBTOTAL INCOME | | \$72,300.00 |
| Proposed Expenses | | \$67,100.00 |
| ESTIMATED BALANCE FORWARD DEC 2026 | | \$5,200.00 |

DIGITAL MAGAZINE

The BIA has been working at building a library of digital assets that feature our business owners, shots of businesses, High Street and events throughout all of the seasons. These are available on our website at www.southamptonbia.com. If you haven't accessed images of your business, let us know and we'll tell you how. If you would like to be featured in 2026 sessions, let us know!

On the website there will also be a link to a new digital magazine that we've compiled called *For the Love of Southampton*, with photos, interviews, Q&A's, itineraries and shout outs for places to see, things to do, where to shop and dine. Our inaugural issue is for the winter and you may look forward to another issue in mid 2026.



IMPORTANCE OF A BIA

Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) play a vital role in the success and sustainability of our local economies. They bring together business owners, entrepreneurs, property owners and the municipality to collectively invest in the vitality of our downtowns – the heart of our communities.

A strong BIA helps ensure that “main streets” are more than just a place to shop. A Business Improvement area, in our case all of Southampton, is a series of gathering spaces, a group of local employers, a reflection of community pride, and often, the first impression for visitors. BIAs take on the work of beautification, events, marketing, advocacy, and collaboration, things that no single business could achieve on its own.

Supporting small businesses within a BIA goes far beyond the simple act of shopping local. Every dollar spent downtown has the ripple effect of helping to keep the money in town to support jobs, support local suppliers, sponsor youth sports teams, fund community events, and keeping our neighbourhood vibrant and welcoming.

Small business owners are not faceless corporations: they are our neighbours, friends, and volunteers, who continuously reinvest in the community that supports them.

When residents, Council, and Town Staff work together with the BIA, we create a thriving, resilient local economy. Investing in our collective main street means investing in the spirit of Southampton and that ensures our town remains a place that people are proud to live in, work in, and visit for years to come.

The Southampton BIA is grateful that the Town of Saugeen Shores recognized the value of BIAs and is a member of the Ontario Business Improvement Association.



ON A PERSONAL NOTE...

I would like to thank Southampton BIA Board Members for their positivity, support, and dedication as *volunteers* on a board that continually works to make our community more vibrant and connected.

2025 was a hard year that came with challenges and criticism from many corners and there were moments where negativity had the potential to impact our businesses directly. The encouragement, optimism and solidarity of the Board and many BIA Members made it all worth it.

I'm looking forward to representing the Southampton BIA and the Ontario Business Improvement Area Association in my capacity as a Board Member there, on Parliament Hill and at the OBIAA Conference in 2026. I'll be advocating for BIAs and small businesses across Ontario and speaking specifically to the importance of collaboration between municipalities and their BIAs during revitalisation projects.

Together, we continue to prove that small communities can make a big impact when we work with heart, purpose, and unity.



Board of Directors:

Kendall Johnson - Sawyer, Streetscape Chair

Amanda Seaman, Membership Chair

Melanie Myers, Treasurer

John Divinski, Councillor

Gurwinder Singh

Sara Porter, Chair and Promotions and Events Chair





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