

Bridgeland BIA Chair's Report 2025

“After pushing on that flywheel in a consistent direction over an extended period of time, they'd inevitably hit a point of breakthrough.”

Jim Collins- Good to Great

Throughout the 2025 Year the Bridgeland BIA continued its behind the scene efforts to support area businesses. 2025 activities were primarily a continuation of 2024 projects mixed with a smattering of new initiatives. Don't look to us for a “Springer Dinger” Blue Jays fans- we're not looking to knock home runs out of the park. What you can and should expect from this organization is consistent, reliable forward progress towards making Bridgeland a GREAT place to do business both as an owner and a customer.

2025 Main Street Construction and Utility Work

Throughout the year Executive Director Jacqui continued to liaise with the City construction team managing the Bridgeland Main Street project. As we entered 2025 we were hopeful that construction could be wrapped up by season's end. Unfortunately a combination of heavier than normal rain in June, the discovery of Heritage trolley tracks during excavation, as well as Enmax and utility work that occurred outside of our planning control and influence. We now anticipate the project to finish road and sidewalk construction late Spring or early Summer 2026 with final touches to Banners and furniture infrastructure completed by the end of the season.

During the summer of 2025 we were successful in assisting our Member Maurizio Abdi of La Brezza in coordinating a City sponsored surface parking lot to help with overflow parking during the Mainstreet project. In 2026 we will continue to advocate for ongoing support of this space.

First Avenue Development

2025 saw us reviewing and commenting on a key development site along the North side of First Avenue. Early in the year First Capital had secured a major tenant (Shoppers Drug Mart) and had proposed an initial single story design for the property occupying the old Molson/City Bakery space. We were successful in influencing the developer to reconsider its original plain, one level design. Our negotiations resulted in them shifting to a two level design offering an additional 9000Sq feet of second level commercial space and an improved facade with interesting design features that interface well with Mainstreet upgrades. Unfortunately we were not able to influence any consideration for an underground parking structure.

Boundary Expansion

When the Bridgeland BIA was originally established the western boundary was established as 4th St NE (known to some as the southbound lane of Edmonton Trail). Unfortunately that left the businesses and streetscape on the West side of 4th without inclusion in the BIA while those on the east side would be represented. It became apparent as Mainstreams progressed that it made no practical sense to include businesses on one side of the street and not the other. A boundary expansion application was undertaken to include all businesses positioned within the natural geographic boundary that occurs at the bottom of the Edmonton trail hill extending west until encountering the curve of Memorial drive (the area historically known as Bridgeland-Riverside). On September 9 the boundary expansion application was approved by council.

New Bridge to St. Patrick's Island

The BIA Board was given a sneak peak into an upcoming multimillion dollar project that will see a new pedestrian and cycling bridge constructed from Bridgeland extending across Memorial drive and landing directly into St. Patrick's Island. The exciting design will improve recreational access to the island as well offer more direct pedestrian connections between the business communities of Inglewood and Bridgeland.

Sponsored Events

BIA sponsored activities this year included expansions to both Calgary Marathon Cheer stations and our ongoing support of the summer Busking Program.

Marathon morning included a BIA funded DJ to gather the crowds and get the party started. BIA volunteers were present to hand out cookies, hot chocolate and gift cards for ice cream. Bridgeland is now recognized as one of the top cheer zones for this signature Calgary event. Our 2026 plans and budget include further expanding support for the cheer zone.

The Summer Busking program again ran for 8 weeks beginning in June. This year's program included an expansion to include afternoon performances in the commercial zone in front of Village, Una and Phil and Sebastians. Positive feedback has led to plans to further expand this program in 2026.

Public Art

We received grant money in 2025 that facilitated the conversion of functional public furniture into interesting pieces of art. A committee was established to review artist applications and resumes. The selected artists completed their projects in a one day community event that left us with several new character spaces. The lifespan for the art pieces is expected to be three to five years leaving opportunities to refresh the look as new grant money becomes available.

Vandalism Assistance Program

2025 marked the first year of the BIA sponsored Vandalism Assistance Program. The program supports BIA businesses who have suffered graffiti incidents and broken windows and other vandalism throughout the calendar year. To date we have had 2 local businesses apply to the program. There is still time to apply for the current cycle if any additional businesses qualify.

Social Media 2025

We continued to engage both our business community and our customers using our social media channels. Throughout the year our messaging included:

- promotion of BIA sponsored events such as busking, marathon cheer station, and art bench painting
- promotion of new business openings
- information on construction progress and road closures
- Promotion of member business activities through cross posting

During the year we saw an increase in Facebook followers to 341 (from 148) and Instagram followers to 3389 (up from 2816). We have increased our Social Media budget for 2026 to allow further leverage with these medium. Please refer to the current Social media report for additional detail.

Budget Highlights

The BIA finished 2025 in a strong financial position with sufficient cash reserves to launch new projects in 2026. We have increased the total budget for 2026 by \$5000 but anticipate the individual member levy will remain stable given the new square footage coming online due to the boundary expansion.

Capital expenditures in 2025 included a significant investment in bike racks and branded banner infrastructure. We maintained our sponsorship of the BRCA and expanded several of the programs mentioned above. Additional streetscape and beautification spending is anticipated in the future as the City wraps up construction projects.

Shift Next Year

As main street construction comes to a close we will see a shift towards launching a signature community event in 2026. With less time and resources allocated to construction management we anticipate focussing our energies on promoting the refreshed face of Bridgeland.

Once again I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Executive Director Jacqui for her hard work and support throughout the year. As members generating ideas is the easy part. Having someone who understanding the various pathways to execution allows us to provide true value to our members.

Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions and I look forward to working with you all in 2026.

Chris Hankins
Chair,
Bridgeland BIA