South Orange
Village Center Alliance

# 2015 Review and 2016 Budget Presentation
## South Orange Board of Trustees
January 11, 2016

**SOVillageCenter.org**

South Orange
Village Center Alliance

# Board of Directors

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Trustee **Steve Schnall**
**Milt Westrich**, SO Parking Auth.
**Mark Packer**, SOPAC Rep*
**Adam Loehner**, Dep'y Village
Administrator*

**Bob Zuckerman,** Executive Director
**Melissa Hodge,** Event and Operations Associate
Meetings every third Wednesday, 8am at 76 SOA

*non-voting

# 2015 IN REVIEW

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# Events and Promotions

Play Day
SOUTH ORANGE
COME PLAY IN THE STREET!
presented by RITE AID PHARMACY

## Sept. 20

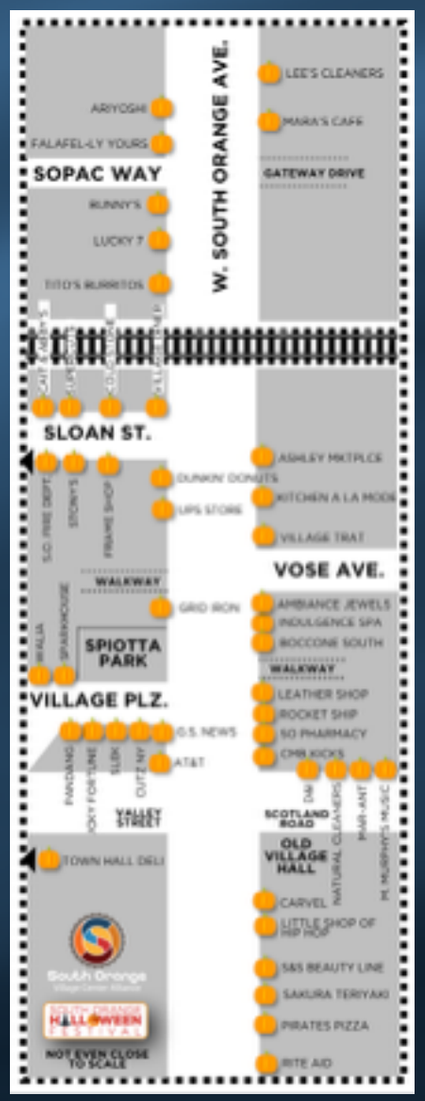
- 3,500+ attendees in year two, expanded footprint
- $25,000 cash sponsorship + $11,000 in cash sales
- True partnership across the entire Village

# Events and Promotions

- 80+ concerts, 2 venues
- New and returning artists

- Expanded with more diverse offerings
- Increased income from budget

# Events and Promotions



- 125+ kids and families in contest
- Largest-ever number of merchants involved for trick-or-treating
- Fully sponsored

# Events and Promotions

## SHOP SMALL. SHOP HERE. WIN $500.

- Join us on Small Business Saturday, November 28.
- Spend at least $25 at South Orange merchants on that day.
- Bring your receipt to the tent on Sloan Street and you'll be entered to win $500 in gift cards from South Orange merchants.
- The more you spend, the more chances to win.
- Thanks for shopping local!

#SHOPSMALL SOVILLAGECENTER.ORG

- Not as strong a promotion as in 2014
- No Amex contribution may be a factor as other communities experienced similar results

# Events and Promotions

POP 'N SHOP
South Orange

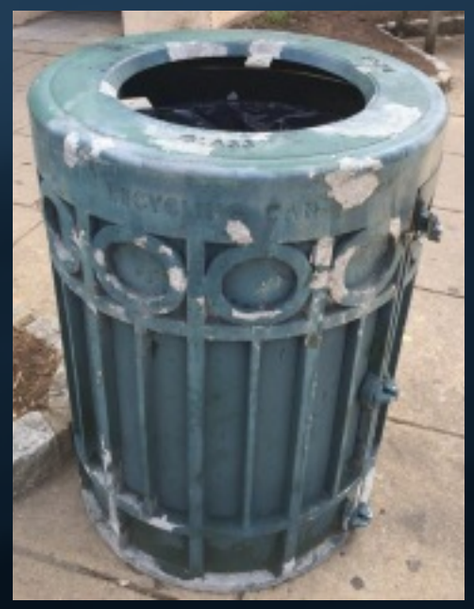
- 20+ local merchants
- 9 operating days
- Over $20K in sales
- Great communal atmosphere
- Paid for itself with % of sales
- Planning spring edition

# Events and Promotions

- 134 photos with Santa at the Firehouse (a record)
- Elf Parade up S.O. Avenue with firetruck and brass band
- Holiday Pop Up at gazebo
- Tree lighting with Santa and trustees

# Advocacy & Business Services

- Continue “code scrubbing” process with other partners,
- Continue to provide design consultations to businesses
- New trash and recycling receptacles throughout district
- Renewed push for simplified application for al fresco dining
- Development with partners of South Orange senior program
- Advocacy for businesses in Village Hall (ie Rite Aid extended hours, permit applications, violation mediation)



# Advocacy & Business Services

## What's Going on Here?

INVESTING IN South Orange Village Center

Buildings on this site have been demolished for future development. In the near term, the site will be used for parking. In the future, a private mixed-use development will take shape.

For more information on opportunities in South Orange Village Center, visit SOVillageCenter.org.

THE TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH ORANGE VILLAGE

SOUTH ORANGE SOPA PARKING AUTHORITY

EEA Industries

JarmelKizel ARCHITECTS AND ENGINEERS INC.

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# Marketing and Communications

- Public relations and advertising with local print and on-line resources, relationships with Village Green, TAP and Matters
- Maintenance of SOVC website
- Management of SOVC Facebook and Twitter feeds
- Creation and management of Village Vibe eNewsletter sent to 1,800+ people with an impressive open rate of 30% and 500 people each week
- Maintenance of 5 promotional kiosks throughout the Village Center and Flood's Hill with SOVCA information as well as information from other civic organizations

# Marketing and Communications

**South Orange Village Center** added **2 new photos.**
Published by Matt Glass [?] · December 14, 2015 at 1:42pm ·

We thought the old Blockbuster windows needed some sprucing up so we teamed up with local artist Bill Billec who created these great winter scenes. Thanks also to Alisa Aaronson for being Bill's assistant!

2,328 people reached **Boost Post**

Like Comment Share

Walter Clarke, Mary Elizabeth Barr Mann, Debi Picker Rednik and 84 others like this. Top Comments

3 shares

# Business Recruitment

- Active recruitment in surrounding towns and beyond (ie Jersey City)
- Continued solidification of relationships with commercial brokers, including annual broker outreach cocktail event
- Relationship building with retail landlords throughout the district
- Negotiation and management of process for the next phase of Blockbuster property
- Stewardship of new businesses for Third & Valley

# Every Day

- Clean the Village Center 7 days a week with a focus on Sloan and SOA
- Serve as an advocate for stakeholders regarding everything from permits to code issues to starting a new business
- Serve as a resource for other Village organizations for promotional, strategic or event help
- Serve as media spokespeople for issues regarding the Village Center
- Serve as liaison to Main Street New Jersey and National Trust for Historic Preservation

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# DISTRICT EXPANSION

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# Why Expand?

- Concept began with desire to offer our business recruitment, streetscape improvements and maintenance services to new development at 3rd & Valley
- Expansion concept becomes stronger with potential redevelopment of 4th & Valley
- Central business district is already expanding beyond its core area
- Retail footprint is expanding
- Definition of where “The Village” begins is changing

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# District Expansion Timeline

- **Late 2014:** Initial conversations begin with Jonathan Rose Companies
- **Early 2015:** Jonathan Rose Companies agrees to support proposed expansion with condition that no single property within District pays more than 20% of total assessment
- **Mid 2015:** SOVCA board task force studies and recommends expansion in consultation with Jef Bueher, MSNJ Director
- **October 28, 2015:** SOVCA mails letters (certified and regular) to all affected property owners and commercial tenants detailing expansion, budget and 3 week comment period
- **November 17, 2015:** Village Green publishes story on expansion
- **November 20, 2015:** Comment period concludes

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# Key Points on Expansion

- Support from Jonathan Rose Companies, BCB Bank, Work & Play and Meridia
- SOVCA taking measured approach on Valley Street
- Supplemental services, including maintenance and daily cleaning, will include the expansion area
- Marketing, business recruitment and streetscape improvements will include the expansion area
- SOVCA already working with numerous stakeholders in expansion area
- All one-and-two-family tax-exempt residential properties will not pay assessment
- Two letters of opposition received and both have received responses

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# Expansion Outreach Letter

South Orange
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October 28, 2015

Dear Property Owner:

This letter is to inform you that the board of directors of the South Orange Village Center Alliance ("SOVCA") is seeking approval from the South Orange Board of Trustees ("BOT") to expand the boundaries of the South Orange Special Improvement District (SID) to include your property. As an initial formal communication to the property owners in the expansion part of our district, we are writing to explain the rationale for expanding our district at this time, and to offer you an opportunity to comment on the proposed expansion before the ordinance to expand our district is introduced by the BOT.

On March 12, 2012, the South Orange BOT adopted Ordinance 2012-01 which created the SID within our central business district (also known as our Village Center) and also created SOVCA as a nonprofit organization to manage the district. The goals of the SID are to beautify and clean the district, to market our Village Center through social media, public relations, advertising and special events, to recruit and retain businesses and to advocate for the needs of our Village Center.

The enclosed map shows the current boundaries of the improvement district as well as the expansion area that would comprise our new boundaries. We strongly believe that, with the advent of the new development that is coming to our area as well as development that is being proposed, now is the right time to expand our district to include these properties so that they too can receive the same benefits from being in the SID that the rest of our district receives. Those benefits are numerous and include, but are not limited to the following:

**Cleanliness:** SOVCA has contracted with Commercial District Services, a company that specializes in supplemental cleaning and maintenance services for special improvement districts in New Jersey. Within our current boundaries, we have a professional cleaning staff that visits the area twice a day on weekdays and once a day on weekends to maintain our trash receptacles, clean our sidewalks, curbs and streets and help maintain our street furniture. As a result, our Village Center has become much cleaner and more attractive for shoppers, visitors and residents alike.

**Marketing:** SOVCA promotes the South Orange Village Center through a vibrant website, active social media accounts, print and online advertising and public relations campaigns. In addition we produce numerous special events throughout the year that bring thousands of residents and visitors alike to our downtown, including our new annual outdoor family event PlayDay, Halloween Festival, Hometown Holiday, Small Business Saturday, Pop 'n Shop pop up store, our Downtown After Sundown summer concert series and our Farmer's Market. We also provide holiday lighting throughout our district.

**Streetscape Improvements:** In 2015, SOVCA added 30 new trash cans and 10 new recycling cans to our district, replacing twenty year old receptacles that were in terrible shape. In 2016, we will be adding banners throughout our district promoting our Village Center, and we are developing a new plan for revitalizing Spiotta Park.

**Business Recruitment and Retention:** SOVCA has an active business recruitment program which includes holding special events for commercial brokers as well as conducting and disseminating survey research for landlords to use to help attract retail tenants. Numerous new businesses have opened or are planning to open in our district as a partial result of our efforts.

**Support and Advocacy:** SOVCA works on behalf of landlords and commercial tenants as a liaison with Village Hall, helping property owners and business navigate their way through the government and the municipal code. SOVCA is also taking the lead by establishing a Business Code Review Task Force which will act as a springboard for the BOT to revise our code to make it much more business friendly. In addition, SOVCA worked with the BOT to create a new grant program which will allot $25,000 in the first year for storefront improvements made by either property owners or businesses.

SOVCA's primary sources of revenue for its operations is from special assessments that are levied on the properties within the district's boundaries and funding from the BOT. In the current 2015 budget, SOVCA collected $64,483.72, or 22.3% of our $287,875 operating budget from special assessments. SOVCA also collected $160,075 or 55.6% of our budget from BOT funding, and the remainder of our budget was received through special events, corporate sponsorships and private donations.

The net taxable valuation of all of our collective properties this year was $131,599,400, and our properties paid a special assessment rate of $.049 per $100 of valuation. This means that, for example, a property that has an assessed value of $5,000,000 would pay $245 this year to the SID.

The proposed SOVCA budget for 2016 calls for a total assessment of $82,000 among all the properties, including the properties in our expansion area. It is not possible to predict with any certainty what each property's assessment will be for 2016 because, at this date, our budget has not yet been approved by the BOT nor has the expansion area been approved or even introduced yet. However, in 2015 the median assessment (meaning 50% of the properties paid more and 50% paid less than this number) is $354.61. We can say that larger properties with higher assessed values would certainly pay a higher assessment than smaller properties with much lower assessed values. Properties that are completely residential are exempt from paying an assessment. It should also be noted the ordinance we will be asking the BOT to introduce will place a cap at 20% of our total assessment, meaning that no single property will ever pay more than 20% of the total assessment, even if that property's valuation is higher than 20% of the total assessed value of the district.

We are sending all letters to the affected property owners by certified mail and ask that you **please comment on the proposed expansion by Friday, November 20th, 2015.** You can let us know that you support or oppose the proposed new boundaries, ask questions, or otherwise comment on our proposal. The BOT will take your comments into consideration as they gauge the level of support from the affected property owners in deciding whether or not to approve any expansion. Additionally, we will be contacting each stakeholder in our expansion area individually to explain our proposal and answer any questions that might arise. We will also be conducting outreach through our local media to give all the affected stakeholders an additional way to find out about the proposed expansion.

Once again, **please send your comments to me by Friday, November 20th**. You can email them to me at bob@sovillagecenter.org, send them by mail to us at SOVCA, 76 South Orange Avenue, 3rd floor, South Orange, NJ 07079, or call us at 973-763-6899. Thank you for your attention to this.

Sincerely,

Bob Zuckerman
Executive Director

# SOVCA Expansion Map

# 2016 BUDGET & GOALS

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# 2015 Budget Review

| | |
|---|---|
| 2015 Income Budget: | $285,875 |
| 2015 Income Actual: | $318,143 |
| | |
| 2015 Expense Budget: | $287,875 |
| 2015 Expense Actual: | $336,373 |

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# 2016 Proposed Budget

## INCOME:

| | |
|---|---|
| Assessment Revenue: | $ 82,000 |
| Donations: | $ 5,000 |
| Event Income: | $ 15,000 |
| Farmers Market Income: | $ 8,000 |
| Interest Income: | $ 100 |
| Promotional Goods Sale: | $ 1,000 |
| Village Reimbursement DAS: | $ 12,650 |
| Sponsorship Income: | $ 35,500 |
| Village Contribution: | $160,075 |
| **2016 Proposed Total Income:** | **$319,325** |

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# 2016 Proposed Budget

## EXPENSE:

| | |
|---|---|
| Administrative: | $183,075 |
| Advertising & Marketing: | $ 15,300 |
| Economic Development & Services: | $ 60,000 |
| Events & Promotions: | $ 60,950 |
| **2016 Proposed Total Expense:** | **$319,325** |

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# 2016 Goals: Events and Promotions

- Continue to grow our signature event, PlayDay South Orange, with at least a 10% increase in revenue from sponsorships and wristband sales
- Produce new “Taste Of” event to showcase South Orange restaurants
- Develop at least one merchant traffic-driven event with input from all stakeholders
- Valentine’s Day, Halloween Festival and Hometown Holiday all return and grow
- Enhance Downtown After Sundown to include more thematic programming, secure a presenting sponsor and enhance communications in order to increase audience
- Organize 2 Pop ‘n Shops: one for Mother’s Day and one during Christmas/ Hanukkah
- Continue to grow and expand Farmer’s Market with more new vendors
- Launch “Spiotta Plus” seating, game and dining area on Village Plaza during DAS concerts
- Engage more of our citizens as volunteers for our events

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# 2016 Goals: Marketing & Design

- Enhance website with more centralized and prominent community calendar as well as new interactive parking map and updated merchant and space available listings
- Increase “likes” on Facebook from 1200 to 1500 and Village Vibe audience from 1800 to 2000
- Install SOVCA-identified pole banners throughout district as placemaking initiative
- Create new wayfinding around the District, including “Walk South Orange”
- Work in concert with newly formed Design Review Board to identify buildings eligible for new storefront grants and to enhance aesthetics of the district
- Work with Village Hall and SOPAC to create new archway at One Sopac Way
- Increase PR efforts to include regional publications such as NJBIZ, New York Times, and New Jersey Monthly
- Work with Village Hall to create a plan for revitalizing Spiotta Park

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# 2016 Goals: Business Recruitment & Services

- Continue business code review with recommendations to BOT for amendments to ordinances by 2nd quarter of the year
- Create new guide to opening a business in South Orange for SOVCA website and for distribution
- Complete business recruitment materials
- Host third annual Brokers event for commercial brokers
- Cut ribbons for at least 5 new merchants who will open in the Village Center this year
- Continue to maintain and beautify the Village Center through daily cleaning and maintenance of street furniture
- Focus on services for smaller, less known merchants (ie Little Shop of Hip Hop, Bubble Pop, Word Cafe)
- Advocate for policies that will help both new and existing businesses thrive

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# 2016 Goals: Overall

- Increase our visibility as the go-to organization for everything relating to the Village Center and our central business district
- Continue to grow as an organization with a professional staff, an active board of directors, more volunteers and greater participation from all of our stakeholders
- Continue to manage our budget and our stakeholders' and taxpayers' dollars prudently
- Continue our excellent relationship with our governing body and Village Hall staff
- Continue to make South Orange Village Center the most vibrant, walkable, livable and diverse downtown in the region and in the eyes of our residents and visitors alike

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# ANNUAL PUBLIC MEETING

## MONDAY, FEBRUARY 1

| | |
|---|---|
| **7:00** TO **9:00PM** | **PAPILLON 25** 25 VALLEY ST. |

- **Review our 2015 progress**
- **Help us plan for 2016**
- **Meet our Board of Directors**
- **Give feedback and ask questions**
- **Enjoy free appetizers, soft drinks and a cash bar**
- **No RSVP required…just join us!**

SOVillageCenter.org | /SOVillageCenter

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