

# Community Connecting



## COMMUNITY CONNECTING

Spence neighbourhood residents are known for taking a proactive approach to safety. Current community connecting work comes out of longstanding community organizing for safety that was well established prior to SNA being incorporated. Indeed, some of the original Bear Clan activities involved key SNA leaders like Joan Hay and Melvin Swan and helped to increase community safety in the 1990s.

Safety organizing in the neighbourhood has sought to increase personal safety for residents, reduce property crime, reduce drug trafficking, sexual exploitation, and gang activity, and increase perceptions of safety to those who do not live or work in the area. Personal safety concerns include violence and abuse behind closed doors (intimate partner violence, sexual assault, conflict between residents, conflict between landlords or caretakers and residents, and police brutality) as well as violence that can happen out on the street in public places — muggings, sexual assault, gang conflict, and drug related violence.

Some residents experience more safety concerns than others. Youth, those who are sexually exploited, those with physical and or mental disabilities, those stigmatized because of colour, gender expression, sexuality, those who are homeless, live with housing instability or in unsafe housing, and the elderly all experience different kinds of safety concerns. This can change with circumstance- for example, during Operation Clean Sweep in 2006/07

(described below), most residents reported a decrease in drug and gang activity, while many Indigenous residents also reported feeling targeted by the police. After 9/11, local Muslims reported feeling unsure of whether they would be targeted.

Early versions of SNA sponsored community organizing work included an active Citizens on Patrol group which walked the neighbourhood, helping to problem solve as they went. Increased collaboration with the City of Winnipeg involved projects like ensuring that all properties had address numbers at the back and front of properties, and bulky waste disposal to decrease risk of fire and increase the ability of emergency services to locate critical incidents. There was also work done to increase the number of porch lights in working order at homes throughout the neighbourhood. SNA also had a role in establishing the Neighbourhood Livability Bylaw with the City of Winnipeg as a tool to address properties in disrepair, to reduce potential of injury; and played a role in supporting the establishment of the Safer Communities Act as a tool to address properties that host illegal activity.

Some of these examples involve SNA's adoption of principles of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design. As a result, SNA began organizing community members to regularly audit the neighbourhood for lighting, areas that lend themselves to hiding spots, sidewalks and crossways in disrepair, and other elements of the physical space that impact safety. Results of these audits have been used to push the city to trim trees, fix sidewalks, and increase public lighting. They have also guided pushes to increase access to bulky waste pick up, feedback to the City of Winnipeg on garbage pick up systems in the inner city, and ongoing support for neighbourhood fix up grants to increase safety and perception of care for the physical environment.

The Safety Committee, more recently named the Community Connecting committee to emphasize a purpose of inclusive problem solving,

has actively recruited tenants, landlords, business owners, homeowners, Winnipeg Police Service representatives, organizational representatives, and politicians to work together to make the community safer. It has also routinely collaborated with other Spence committees. This collaboration and commitment to inclusive problem solving has supported a number of successes including the Rooming House program, which supported physical improvements to the safety of rooming houses, and reporting properties that presented a safety concern to the Neighbourhood Liveability Bylaw, or Safer Communities Manitoba. Dozens of drug houses have been shut down in the neighbourhood due to SNA education about the Safer Communities Act, as well as Safety Coordinator work to report illegal activity. Yet, SNA has also played a role in supporting people impacted by property closure due to Safer Communities Act infringement- youth who have lived at these properties have been able to continue to access Youth Programming, and their guardians and other tenants have been supported to find alternate appropriate housing. The Committee has also played a role in advocating for the now established, and successful Police in Schools program with Winnipeg School Division Number One.

The Community Connecting committee has also played a role in organizing a response to critical community events. In 2006, Phil Haiart was shot and killed in crossfire from gang violence in the area. The event brought intense focus on the neighbourhood, which was characterized in the media as being a high crime area. Police responded with Operation Clean Sweep, a Winnipeg Police Service strategy that brought increased numbers of officers to patrol the area. There were a number of resulting impacts. Some kinds of crime did indeed, decrease. Yet, community members began reporting regular incidents of racial targeting, with some Indigenous community members being stopped multiple times a day while going about their daily business. In

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addition, community members expressed concern that when the initiative ended, certain kinds of crime would return to the neighbourhood. The committee worked to bring a local voice to what was happening, especially highlighting the danger of a full stop cancellation of the program advocating for community policing, including beat cops, as a more proactive, and culturally safe way of offering policing services. Under Police Chief Keith McCaskill, and later with Chief Devon Clunis, commitments and further steps were made towards community policing.

Later, in 2010, two young girls were shot at through the front window of their Victor St. home. Both girls sustained injuries that they later healed from. However, the incident motivated community members to come together immediately to speak out against ongoing violence in the neighbourhood and work together to prevent similar incidents from happening. SNA and the Safety Committee played a lead role in organizing hundreds of community members to come together in a march to "Stop the Violence" that has now grown into an annual four neighbourhood, collaborative event, the Communities March for Peace.

Recently, the Community Connecting Committee has taken on the Community Safety Charter Initiative- a document and tool kit promoting

everyone's active inclusion and responsibility to work for safety in the neighbourhood. Neighbourhood residents and businesses are asked to sign onto the charter, marking their commitment to work for peace and inclusion.

Building on the proactive efforts towards a safer community, the Community Connecting Committee launched a monthly Kitchen Circle program, where community members can meet and get to know one another while learning a healthy recipe from a neighbour and share a meal.

With the determination to ensure the safety of all the members of the Spence neighbourhood, in 2016 Community Connecting, with Daniel McIntyre/St. Matthews Community Association, launched a safe space in the West End dedicated to sex workers and experiential folks. The drop-in operates as a non-judgemental, come-as-you-are space, open to all genders, ages and Nations, and it offers dinner, harm reduction supplies and educational and cultural workshops to the participants.

Building on this longstanding work, Community Connecting workers and staff engaged community members through survey work, community mapping exercises, and safety auditing work to bring together the components of the next five years of community connecting work in Spence.



## GOAL ONE: Improve Physical Safety

| COMMUNITY STRATEGIES  | COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS  | FIVE-YEAR COMMUNITY RESULTS  |
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| <p><b>Improve lighting of sidewalks and back lanes and public spaces.</b></p> | <p>SNA Housing Dept<br/>Spence residents,<br/>DMSMCA<br/>City of Winnipeg<br/>Cindy Gilroy<br/>Manitoba Hydro</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Sidewalk/ public spaces are lit well and safe for all pedestrians</li> <li>▶ Streetlights are not blocked by tree canopy</li> <li>▶ Sidewalk/PS/Street Lighting Lighting Audit info.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measurements in lux. Note: measurements taken when little foliage on trees.</li> <li>• Baseline 2016 — get recommended lux level from city of Winnipeg</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ Backlane lights are all in working condition and keep backlanes lit for safety             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Backlanes, number of broken lights in backlanes, number of missing poles (MB Hydro-broken) (COW — distance between poles). Baseline: year 1</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ Increased lighting on residential and business properties. Motion detection lights available for community members free of charge (SNA office).             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Businesses/ West End Biz (numbers of lights given to business, or exterior lit businesses).</li> <li>• Baseline year 1 or data as available</li> <li>• Residential Small grants for lights available, measure # of lights given to residents for homes (possible partnership with housing). Baseline: year 1</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |

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| <p><b>Reduce arson risk caused by abandoned bulky waste</b></p> | <p>SNA Housing Dept.<br/>Spence residents<br/>West End Biz<br/>City of Winnipeg<br/>SNA Environment and Open Spaces<br/>Cindy Gilroy</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Reduced arsons and fire hazards in the neighbourhood<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Arsons: Crime stats/WPS/Fire Department number of arsons per year, percentage increase or decrease. Baseline: data available</li></ul></li><li>▶ Faster and more efficient response from City of Winnipeg for pick ups</li><li>▶ More efficient coordinated response to bulky waste and arson risks through partnerships in reporting and tracking 311 reports</li><li>▶ Partnership with organizations and community developed to remove bulky waste such as mattress recycling depot, routine bulky waste sweeps etc.</li><li>▶ Increased knowledge of arson risks for bulky waste, through pamphlets, door-to-door canvassing, and educational workshops</li><li>▶ Reduced reports of illegal dumping<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pick up response: pick up time reduced to within a week or reporting- track ourselves, and use WE Biz data, article out with data about response times in Winnipeg. Baseline: year 1/data available</li><li>• Bulky Waste: Compare info from safety audits through years, number of calls, community reports (volunteers). Baseline: 2016</li></ul></li></ul> |
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| <p><b>Reduce the number of discarded needles and used condoms in public spaces through harm reduction practices and community trainings</b></p> | <p>Street Connections, WCWRC, DMSMCA, West Central Connect agencies, West End Biz, City of Winnipeg, University of Winnipeg, Manitoba Housing, Winnipeg Housing, SNA Housing Department</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Increase the number of outdoor needle drop boxes in Spence</li> <li>▶ make harm reduction training available (i.e. safe disposal practices)</li> <li>▶ Partnership with street connections to locate areas with high concentration of discarded needles             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Needles: number of needle disposal locations (containers available at SNA, needle dropbox in community, street connections website has list), number of reported needles during walkabouts, collected at clean ups, calls to office. Baseline: year 1</li> <li>• Condoms: number of complaints/calls to office, number picked up during clean ups and safety audits (baseline year 1 — we have not done this to date).</li> <li>• Trainings: number of trainings, educational workshops, forums, etc and number of community members attending (baseline 2016 when harm reduction introduced to CC committee)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
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## GOAL TWO: Increase Social Safety for All

| COMMUNITY STRATEGIES   | COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS   | FIVE-YEAR COMMUNITY RESULTS   |
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| <p><b>Increase opportunities for community connections and create safe spaces for celebration of culture, community and diversity.</b></p> | <p>All SNA Departments<br/>                     Snowbird Lodge<br/>                     Mamawi<br/>                     West End Cultural Centre<br/>                     West End Commons<br/>                     WCWRC<br/>                     DMSMCA<br/>                     John Howard Society<br/>                     University of Winnipeg (Wii Chii-waakanak, Global Learning Centre)<br/>                     PFSS</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ More events and programming where people can learn about other cultures, Indigenous knowledge, etc. (BBQs, medicine walks, Indigenous teachings, art workshops and shows, community feasts, ceremonies, sharing circles)                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased number of events that celebrate culture, community and diversity. Baseline: year 1</li> <li>• Number of community members engaged, increase in community participation. Baseline: year 1</li> <li>• WPS attending events to learn about cultures and traditions. Baseline: year 1</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Create and increase support networks for community members.</b></p>  | <p>All SNA Departments<br/>                     Snowbird Lodge<br/>                     Mamawi<br/>                     West End Cultural Centre<br/>                     West End Commons<br/>                     WCWRC<br/>                     DMSMCA<br/>                     John Howard Society<br/>                     University of Winnipeg (Wii Chii-waakanak, Global Learning Centre)<br/>                     PFSS</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Support groups and sharing circles for community members facing similar struggles (mental health, addictions, women’s groups, parent groups, etc.)                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased number of created support groups based on community desire/need. Baseline: year 1</li> <li>• Increased number of partnerships with agencies that offer specialized support for groups. Baseline: year 1</li> <li>• Implementing community sharing circles as a response to conflict or need for debriefing for community members</li> </ul> </li> </ul>                        |

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| <p><b>Increase community learning opportunities through workshops, forums and community led events that build on or celebrate community knowledge.</b></p> | <p>Wii Chiiwaakanak<br/>Mamawi<br/>Ircom<br/>Winnipeg Central<br/>Mosque</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Educational workshops and forums in response to relevant issues of social safety (in response to safety concerns and incidents, etc).             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased number of learning opportunities and events for community members about cultures and traditions represented in neighbourhood. Baseline: year 1</li> <li>• Increased number of community members engaged, increase in community participation. Baseline: year 1</li> <li>• increased number of WPS attending events to learn about cultures and traditions. Baseline: year 1</li> <li>• Increased number of government attending forums around social safety issues. Baseline: year 1</li> <li>• Increased number of events that celebrate culture, community and diversity. Baseline: year 1</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Increase supports for seniors to reduce isolation and meet basic needs; establish a seniors' coordinator.</b></p>                                    | <p>City of Winnipeg<br/>Province of Manitoba<br/>Government of Canada</p>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Seniors are supported to contribute their gifts to community, are seen as an active part of the neighbourhood, and play a role in the community</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Increase access to gym equipment and physical activity opportunities for all ages in the community.</b></p>  | <p>City of Winnipeg<br/>University of Winnipeg</p>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Everyone has access to resources to increase physical health</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Continue to build local identity through story telling and celebration of historic landmarks.</b></p>  | <p>West End Biz<br/>Wii Chiiwaakanak<br/>Mamawi<br/>Ircom</p>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Maintain historic plaque program</li> <li>▶ Support storytelling and local cultural work</li> </ul>  |



## GOAL THREE: Making Spaces Safer

| COMMUNITY STRATEGIES  | COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS  | FIVE-YEAR COMMUNITY RESULTS   |
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| <p><b>Ensure safe spaces for everyone in spence neighbourhood. Maintain and expand existing safe spaces</b></p> | <p>Klinic<br/>                     DMSMCA<br/>                     Sunshine House,<br/>                     DMSMRI<br/>                     Province of Manitoba<br/>                     City of Winnipeg<br/>                     RAY<br/>                     Sage House<br/>                     Winnipeg Outreach Network<br/>                     WCWRC</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Increase number of participants through street outreach</li> <li>▶ Increased recruitment, awareness raising about existing safe spaces                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• number of folks connected to on outreach, number of outreach hours, number of participants/ new participants at safe spaces (stats, tracked hours). Baseline: 2016</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ Increase awareness around existence of safe spaces through outreach at agencies</li> <li>▶ Increased coordination of resources for wraparound support and efficient response to community needs                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• number of meetings/presentations with outreach agencies/tables at resource fairs. Baseline: 2016</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ Increase staff capacity through funding to expand hours of operations for Our Place SSSW                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• number of increased staff or number of weekly hours added designated to safe spaces. Baseline: 2016</li> <li>• increased number of partnerships for referrals, number of referrals (track through stats. Baseline: 2016</li> <li>• number of volunteers working in safe space. Baseline: 2016</li> <li>• Increased community engagement of safe spaces through volunteer opportunities</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |

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|   |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased opportunity for community feedback on rising need for specific safe spaces</li> <li>• number of consultations with community members both inside and outside of safe spaces include inventory and needs assessment of safe spaces</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Implement Community Safety Charter with buy-in from local businesses, community agencies, and residents</b></p> | <p>All SNA Departments<br/>           Snowbird Lodge<br/>           Mamawi<br/>           West End Cultural Centre<br/>           West End Commons<br/>           WCWRC<br/>           DMSMCA<br/>           John Howard Society<br/>           University of Winnipeg (Wii Chiiwaakanak, Global Learning Centre)<br/>           PFSS<br/>           Businesses<br/>           Residents<br/>           City of Winnipeg<br/>           Cindy Gilroy</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Community members, agencies and businesses sign commitment to follow community safety charter               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• number of signatures of dedication to values of safety charter. Baseline: 2016</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ Community members, agencies, and business active in taking ownership of their spaces to ensure               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that they are safe for all members of the community through self-identified ways</li> <li>• number of reports from community members about changes made in response to safety charter. Baseline: 2016</li> <li>• Businesses/ agencies hang safety charter poster in their spaces</li> <li>• number of community members/ agencies/ businesses attending safety charter reveal event</li> <li>• number of businesses/ agencies with safety charter poster hanging. Baseline: 2016</li> <li>• number of meetings with agencies, community members, and businesses around safety charter. Baseline: 2016</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |