ENVIRONMENT & OPEN SPACES
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
The Environment and Open Spaces (EOS) Committee works to provide community members with opportunities to access good food, places to be outside, places to grow food, enhanced waste management opportunities, and improves active transportation (walking, cycling, running).

SNA undertook consultations with community members in the spring and summer of 2016. People were asked to choose their top three priorities from a list of five (see methods section). The top three that were chosen are:

- Improve, maintain, and protect community gardens as well as parks and greenspaces.
- Enhance community waste management (clean ups, bulk waste, compost, e-waste).
- Work toward better food access and food skills (cooking workshops, Farmer’s Markets, etc.).
These three priorities will be given the focus of attention over the next five years, although that does not mean the other two are not important. The EOS staff and EOS Committee will continue to work towards ensuring our gardens, parks, and green spaces are maintained and improved by supporting returning and new gardeners, maintaining and building infrastructure, and promoting use of our open spaces. We will also endeavour to enhance community waste management by maintaining current initiatives such as community composts, while pursuing new opportunities, such as partnerships with existing organizations experienced in waste management. The third goal connects back to the first, providing people with the skills and tools to grow food is one way to address access to good food. We will create additional programming and partnerships to improve access to food. One such partnership will be with the Community Connecting committee and their already running Kitchen Circle; we hope to expand the workshops offered to give people food skills that they may have not had before.

As the EOS committee undertakes specific strategies and opportunities, we hope that they will all work in a holistic way to address the larger goals of benefiting our community to make it stronger, healthier, and more sustainable.

**BACKGROUND**

Incorporated in 1997, the Spence Neighbourhood Association (SNA) is a successful, grassroots-run, inner-city, renewal organization in Winnipeg. With 25 regular staff and over 150 regular community volunteers, SNA collaborates with the people of the Spence Neighbourhood to work in 5 key areas: holistic housing; community connecting; community economic development; youth and families; and environment and open spaces. The Spence Neighbourhood is bounded by Portage and Notre Dame Avenues, and by Balmoral and Agnes Streets.

SNA neighbourhood plans are community led and created through focus groups, consultations, meetings, surveys and testimonials from community. This 5-Year Green Plan is also the result of community consultations and input distilled through a deliberative process, to plan for the Greening of the community.

In 2001 there were more than 50 vacant lots within the neighbourhood. These were used as community dumping grounds and had a host of other problems. The original 2005-2009 Green Plan grew from community consultations during 2003-2004 in response to concerns brought forward by community members. This Green Plan led to the development and stewardship of many community gardens and helped to establish community events that are now mainstays in the community, such as the spring and fall neighbourhood clean ups.

The 2010-2015 Green Plan was the first neighbourhood Green Plan to be accepted by the City of Winnipeg. It sought to entrench the community garden spaces and gain city support for the work of the then Image and Greening Committee (now known as Environment and Open Spaces).

Key successes achieved based on the 2010-2015 Green Plan include skateboarding elements and a community garden in the Jacob Penner Park Redevelopment; the creation of Ogimaa Gichi Makwa Gitigaan (Chief Grizzly Bear’s Garden) on 561-569 Sherbrook with the guidance of Inner City Aboriginal Neighbours; and further development of already established community gardens.
METHODS

SNA staff and the EOS Committee worked together to choose five goals to put forward for the 2016-2021 SNA Green Plan. These goals were based on the work that EOS currently does in the areas of work that community members have asked SNA to work on over the last 20 years.

1. Improve, maintain, and protect community gardens as well as parks and green spaces
2. Enhance community waste management (clean ups, bulk waste, compost, e-waste)
3. Work toward better food access and food skills (cooking workshops, farmer’s markets, etc.)
4. Improve neighbourhood active transportation (cycling and walking, including wheelchairs, strollers, etc.)
5. Increase environmental education

These goals were ranked through a community-wide survey where the three top goals were chosen. More focused consultations determined the key objectives for each goal. These consultations included two community garden consultations with seven participants each, a more general consultation with 12 participants and an additional 50 people provided input through e-mails, informal interviews and street level surveying. A more in depth description of the consultation is provided in the consultation plan (Appendix A).

GOAL ONE: Improve, maintain, and protect community gardens as well as parks and green spaces

Much of the work of SNA’s Environment and Open Spaces committee focuses on supporting community volunteers and overseeing the ongoing maintenance and use of our 11 community garden spaces and green spaces. (Appendix B: Community Gardens and Green Spaces.) All of our community gardens are located on formerly vacant lots, which have been entrusted to our community by the City of Winnipeg, except for the Greenhouse site, which was donated to us by a private donor. Today, we have roughly 50 community gardeners who dedicate their time to planting, maintaining, and harvesting food from over 80 garden plots throughout the neighbourhood.

In addition to the community gardens, there are also a number of tot lots and parks in the neighbourhood, including Ogimaa Gichi Makwa Gitigaan (Chief Grizzly Bear’s Garden), which was completed in 2013 on the site of four formerly vacant lots. This grassroots project was initiated by Inner City Aboriginal Neighbours and carried forward in partnership with SNA, and Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre Inc.

Our community members have told us how important the gardens and green spaces are to them, as spaces that contribute to their well-being, sense of community, health, access to food, and connection with nature.

For a more detailed look at the current context for this goal, please see Appendix C: Current Context by Goal.
OBJECTIVES:

- Address long-term and short-term maintenance needs of the gardens
- Provide additional garden infrastructure with a focus on water access and garden security
- Through events and public engagement, ensure that community gardens and greenspaces are appreciated public spaces for all SNA residents
- Provide education and training for all community gardeners
- Dedicate yearly funds to the gardens
- Promote existing recreation infrastructure and look for ways to provide more recreation spaces

SHORT-TERM STRATEGIES (1-2 YEARS):

- Ensure gardens are maintained in accordance with SNA’s agreement with the City of Winnipeg
- Communicate regularly with gardeners to identify maintenance concerns (including, but not limited to repair of fences, raised beds, compost bins and rain barrels)
- Continue to use the support of summer staff, First Jobs 4 Youth, Youth Crew, community volunteers, gardeners, and external volunteer agencies to maintain the gardens
- Plan and support a variety of community events in the gardens and greenspaces (workshops, potlucks, knowledge-sharing opportunities, ceremonies, work days, etc.)
- Communicate with residents about the gardens in order to promote their security and stewardship
- Facilitate opportunities for new gardeners to meet veteran/expert gardeners in their garden and interact regularly
- Provide first-time gardeners with ongoing support and resources related to gardening practices
- Hold workshops for all gardeners related to topics of interest
- Provide workshops for all gardeners before, and after planting season (planning your garden, seed starting, and putting your garden to bed for the winter)
- Communicate about education and training opportunities through newsletters, posters in the gardens, and direct contact with gardeners

MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGIES (3-5 YEARS):

- Explore a range of funding/support opportunities for continued garden maintenance (small grants, contract services, donations, external grants, etc)

LONG-TERM STRATEGIES (GREATER THAN 5 YEARS):

- Attempt to install fencing to protect garden spaces from garden raiding while ensuring public spots remain open and accessible to everyone in the community

OPPORTUNITIES:

- Continued/expanded partnerships with partner agencies, and businesses to support the maintenance of community gardens through donations, volunteer labour, contract services, etc.
- Explore partnerships with other community and neighbourhood organizations to support more Spence residents having access to gardening as individuals or groups (daycares, immigrant and refugee organizations, school groups, youth serving organizations, etc.)
GOAL TWO: Enhance community waste management

Spence’s dense population of residents and businesses combined with the large amount of traffic moving through the neighbourhood create large amounts of waste in the neighbourhood. This waste includes loose litter, food waste, bulky waste, and e-waste.

For the past 20 years there has been an annual spring clean up with residents coming together to clean loose litter of the streets. While the clean up reduces the amount of litter on the streets, it is an ongoing process that needs constant attention. Spence residents regularly report illegal dumping of bulky waste to 311 and SNA. Bulky waste creates arson risks that negatively affect the safety of the neighbourhood.

Waste management in Spence is a large issue that residents are very concerned about. In the past Spence had a staff person dedicated to composts and a similar position dedicated to waste management overall would greatly benefit the community.

For a more detailed look at the current context for this goal, please see Appendix C: Current Context by Goal.

OBJECTIVES:
- Create a designated position to partner with Community Connecting and deal with neighbourhood waste
- Explore CED opportunities for managing community waste
- Increase neighbourhood opportunities for disposing of waste correctly through education and physical infrastructure

SHORT-TERM STRATEGIES (1-2 YEARS):
- Increase the number of waste disposal and recycling bins at community gardens and greenspaces
- Improve signage related to composting best practices in the community gardens

MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGIES (3-5 YEARS):
- Explore funding options and work with Community Connecting to develop expectations and job functions related to such a position

LONG-TERM STRATEGIES (GREATER THAN 5 YEARS):
- Work with the City of Winnipeg, community gardeners, and volunteers to develop a solution for organized disposal, and pickup of yard waste from community garden sites

OPPORTUNITIES:
- This past year, a new initiative by the City of Winnipeg began installing closed-circuit cameras in parts of the West End with high frequencies of illegal dumping. We look forward to seeing how this initiative works to cut down on illegal dumping in our community
- Strengthen our partnership with the City of Winnipeg to provide more public education related to waste management and disposal
- Explore opportunities to partner with Green Action Centre to provide more public education and resources related to waste management and composting for the community and local schools
- Liaise with the West End Biz and the City of Winnipeg to explore options for communication (posters, flyers, ads, etc.) related to waste management
- Pursue partnership with Recycle Everywhere to provide more recycling bins across the neighbourhood
GOAL THREE: Work toward better food access and food skills

Access to good food and food skills has been identified by the community as a top priority for this 5-year plan. In a neighbourhood that relies heavily on active transportation to access food, transportation to stores that sell food at affordable prices can be a challenge. Food prices in the neighbourhood are often high causing people who do not have means to go outside the neighbourhood to make hard choices about quality of food.

People who have busy lives often feel challenged to have the time to make good food. Having the skills to know how to make good food in an efficient and affordable way is important for community members to be able to make a difference in their lives.

Providing opportunities for people to access affordable, good food, while also providing opportunities for people to learn how to use food in cost effective, time efficient, and fun ways is an important step in community member’s improving the quality of food in their life.

For a more detailed look at the current context for this goal, please see Appendix C: Current Context by Goal.

OBJECTIVES:
- Continue to support food access programming while exploring opportunities for additional programs
- Explore CED options for food related programming
- Promote gardening in community plots and home gardens
- Provide and promote food skills workshops
- Increase participation in current food related programming

SHORT-TERM STRATEGIES (1-2 YEARS):
- Support additional programs that fill identified gaps in food related programming
- Continue to support and expand the West End Farmers Market
- Establish a grocery shuttle
- Research and develop opportunities for bulk purchasing models
- Establish partnership with HSC to increase use of Jacob Penner Park

MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGIES (3-5 YEARS):
- Explore options for food co-op models
- Economic feasibility study on the sale of perishable/non-perishable foods produced locally
- Develop markets for fresh herbs or other produce grown locally (seasonal/greenhouse)

LONG-TERM STRATEGIES (GREATER THAN 5 YEARS):
- Create year-round greenhouse to allow for continuous production of fresh food

OPPORTUNITIES:
- Continue to represent the interests of Spence residents and provide support to the Winnipeg Food Share Co-op as a Board member
- Pursue partnerships with grocery stores to overcome barriers to food access
GOAL FOUR: Improve neighbourhood active transportation

Many residents involved in SNA’s programming rely on walking or cycling as their primary mode of transportation. Feedback from neighbourhood residents indicate that personal safety (feeling safe) and physical safety (accessible sidewalks, safe road and traffic conditions) are the number one concern when it comes to active transportation in the Spence community. Infrastructure improvements, community patrols, more traffic calming, and better lighting were some of the suggestions coming forward from community members to promote and improve active transportation.

Recent improvements to cycling infrastructure including painted bike lanes along Maryland and Sherbrook are the beginning of further upgrades planned by the City of Winnipeg, including additional bike lanes (protected, and non-protected) to better link the neighbourhood with Downtown, West Alexander, and St. James (Winnipeg Pedestrian and Cycling Strategy). Moving forward, it will be important that these upgrades are coupled with improvements to sidewalks, back lanes, and local streets in order to make all aspects of our community more accessible.

For a more detailed look at the current context for this goal, please see Appendix C: Current Context by Goal.

OBJECTIVES:
- Partner with the City of Winnipeg to improve physical infrastructure implementation, maintenance and awareness for walking/biking
- Partner with Community Connecting to increase neighbourhood safety
- Provide opportunities and programs to promote biking and driver education
- Plan for and implement community-level physical infrastructure and maintenance to promote walking/biking

SHORT-TERM STRATEGIES (1-2 YEARS):
- Look at opportunities for community members to share neighbourhood concerns related to infrastructure with our local City Councillor (forums, budget consultations, etc.)
- Facilitate/host bike clinics
- Explore opportunities to offer free bike repair days similar to Orioles Bike Cage
- Communicate with neighbourhood residents about biking and driving best practices

MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGIES (3-5 YEARS):
- Work with our local City Councillor and the City of Winnipeg to explore traffic calming options on busy or otherwise dangerous streets
- Develop a strategy for recording and reporting potholes, sidewalk safety issues, and other infrastructure concerns to our City Councillor/The City of Winnipeg
- Advocate for additional bike lanes
- Explore ways in which EOS can support Community Connecting during Community Walk Abouts and in identifying and reporting neighbourhood safety concerns
- Liaise with Community Connecting regarding the possibility of a Citizen’s on Patrol Program
- Work with Community Connecting and the West End Biz to investigate the possibility of increasing the presence of West End Biz patrols in the neighbourhood
- Explore and support opportunities to increase neighbourhood access to bikes (adults and children) including the possibility of holding another SNA Bike Rodeo
- Enhance driver awareness/education
about cycling (newsletter content, local posters, etc.)

- Post community maps around the neighbourhood
- Look at ways to improve the safety and appearance of frequent cut-throughs to garden spaces (between apartment blocks, etc.)
- Explore ways to add more bike racks to busy areas of the community and provide information on low-cost options for installing bike racks to local businesses

LONG-TERM STRATEGIES (GREATER THAN 5 YEARS):

- Complete a neighbourhood accessibility audit, and provide information about programs that support accessibility upgrades to local businesses, organizations, and landlords

OPPORTUNITIES:

- Further proposed active transportation upgrades by the City of Winnipeg in the Spence-area include: protected bike lanes along St. Matthew’s, Wellington, Cumberland, and neighbourhood greenways with varying degree of traffic calming along Langside and Spence (Winnipeg Pedestrian and Cycling Strategy)
- Explore partnership with Green Action Centre around Active and Safe Routes to School
- Look at community education opportunities or resources available through Manitoba Public Insurance, Bike Week Winnipeg, and other organizations working on active transportation issues
- Explore information and support available from the Provincial Government for accessibility upgrades (wheelchair ramps, etc.)
- Pursue funding supports for additional bike racks through the City of Winnipeg

GOAL FIVE: Increase environmental education opportunities

Environmental education opportunities are important for members of SNA to improve and expand the skills of the community. Workshops are an important medium to address the learning desires of the community. Information sessions to get new gardeners up and running, or to communicate different ways of gardening to experienced gardeners allow for the community to continue to produce their own food in the neighbourhood.

Workshops related to topics outside of gardening are important pieces in helping the community determine what it can do to be more sustainable.

Partnerships with the University of Winnipeg have been developed to provide research opportunities in the neighbourhood while increasing the presence of the University in the community.

Achieving regular and high turn-out to workshops is often a challenge despite wide advertising of workshops. This shows the importance of facilitating workshops that have been requested by the community.

For a more detailed look at the current context for this goal, please see Appendix C: Current Context by Goal.

OBJECTIVES:

- Partner with schools to provide gardening related programs to school age kids
- Partner to provide and promote environmental education workshops

SHORT-TERM STRATEGIES (1-2 YEARS):

- Inventory existing environmental programming available for children, youth, and adults
- Identify opportunities for complementary programming to existing environmental programs
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- Identify new programming opportunities where existing programming is lacking by group (children, youth, adult) and by topic
- Identify key contacts at the University of Winnipeg and community organizations
- Facilitate relationship building between the University of Winnipeg and community organizations
- Determine what environmental topics are of interest to community members
- Development of environmental programming for children, youth, and adults

**MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGIES (3 - 5 YEARS):**

- Development of mentored programming (i.e. youth deliver to children, adults to youth, university to adults)
- Explore funding/support opportunities for environmental programming
- Facilitation and promotion of new and existing environmental programs

**LONG-TERM STRATEGIES (GREATER THAN 5 YEARS):**

- Develop packaged fee-for-service environmental programming available to public
- Sustainable mentorship based environmental programming offered on range of environmental topics

**OPPORTUNITIES:**

- Pursue more formal opportunities to partner with the University of Winnipeg students and faculty to facilitate environmental education opportunities with community members
- Look at further opportunities to partner with community organizations like West Broadway Community Organization, Food Matters Manitoba, Fort Whyte Alive, and Manitoba Eco-Network to offer locally-relevant environmental education opportunities based on community member’s interests and requests
APPENDIX A: Green Plan Consultation Plan

SNA staff and the Environment and Open Spaces Committee worked together to choose five goals to put forward for the 2016-2021 SNA Green Plan.

1. Improve, maintain, and protect community gardens as well as parks and green spaces
2. Enhance community waste management (clean ups, bulk waste compost, e-waste)
3. Work toward better food access and food skills (cooking workshops, farmer’s markets, etc.)
4. Improve neighbourhood active transportation (cycling and walking, including wheelchairs, strollers, etc.)
5. Increase environmental education opportunities (workshops, research, etc.)

These goals were ranked through a community-wide survey and were reduced to three main goals. Additionally, more focused consultations helped determine the key objectives for each goal.

METHODS

COMMUNITY GARDEN CONSULTATIONS

All of the community gardeners from the last five years were invited to one of two garden consultations. These consultations took place at the Greenhouse Site and the Young St. garden known as Sheba’s Paradise. All of the Community Garden neighbours (from houses on either side of each garden) were invited to the consultation. Consultation participants provided input on the actions for the five EOS goals and discussed the kind of improvements, maintenance and activities they would like SNA to provide for the community gardens. The informal discussion was facilitated by an SNA staff or a consultant. Notes were taken on a flip chart and the discussion questions were: What do you like about this garden space? If you could, what changes would you make to this garden space? What else could SNA provide to help community gardeners/gardens? This consultation will help collect information for Goal One. At least one community gardener speaks Swahili and a number of Syrian families speak Arabic. Newcomer feedback was provided through an interpreter.

GREEN PLAN SURVEYING

The community was surveyed to generate key objectives for all EOS goals. During the Aboriginal Music Week Block Party hosted by SNA, the August EOS Committee meeting, the Community Garden Consultations, surveying with SNA’s First Jobs 4 Youth staff, and through street corner consultations, community members were asked to provide the most important action SNA should take under any of the five EOS goals. This was done using sticky notes on flip chart paper during events or orally for street corner consultations. For the street corner consultations, volunteers asked community members about one selected goal at a time.

DOCUMENT REVIEW

Existing program evaluations, surveys and documents were reviewed to provide information for Goals 1-5. The documents and organizations that were consulted are listed in Appendix C.
APPENDIX B: Community Gardens and Green Spaces

GOAL ONE: Improve, maintain, and protect community gardens as well as parks and green spaces.

In 2016 there were roughly 48 community gardeners gardening in 81 plots. Garden plots have been advertised through newsletter content, posters around the community, and word-of-mouth, which resulted in recruiting 22 new gardeners in 2015. Although the number of plots being gardened in has remained fairly consistent over the last five years (due in part to a few ambitious gardeners, and partnerships with organizations like the West Central Women’s Resource Centre), the overall number of community gardeners has been in decline. This decline has been coupled with a high-turnover of gardeners, particularly at the Ashley Hudson Memorial Garden (607-611 Langside St.), the International Garden (446 Langside St.), and the Sunshine Gardens (635-637 Maryland St.). The Jacob Penner Park Community Garden was completed in 2012, and operates in cooperation with DMSMCA. It has been difficult to recruit and retain Spence community gardeners at this site as well. (SNA internal Community Gardener lists 2011-2016, anecdotal staff feedback and observations, EOS Neighbourhoods Alive! report 2015)

Feedback from gardeners, community members, and SNA staff indicates that vandalism is the biggest issue contributing to the high gardener turnover at these sites. Vandalism has included gardener’s plants being pulled up, communal perennial shrubs like rhubarb and strawberries being pulled up, vegetables getting stolen or destroyed, rain barrels being emptied, compost bins being broken or stolen, and garden beds being pulled apart. Another possible reason for this high turnover offered by long-time community gardeners is that many new gardeners require a higher level of community support and communication in order for their gardens to be successful and for them to continue year after year. (Gardener feedback, SNA Internal Garden Condition Reports)
Gardens that maintained a high level of community interest and participation, including Sheba’s Paradise (483-485 Young St.), and the garden at 559 Langside St., benefit from having a few long-time gardeners and community helpers whose hard-work, expert knowledge, and leadership make sure the gardens stay in excellent condition and are well-maintained. As well, these gardeners have become recruiters and mentors of new gardeners. These gardens also have more security through additional gates, concerned neighbours keeping an eye on things, and gardeners that visit frequently. (Anecdotal feedback from staff and gardeners)

In 2016, help from organizations and businesses like Urban Eatin’ Workers Co-op, Home Depot, Food Matters Manitoba, Boys and Girls Club, IRCOM, West Central Women’s Resource Centre, Long Term Growth Tree Services, Sage Garden Herbs, Jensen’s Nursery, and Spence Neighbourhood Association’s First Jobs 4 Youth Program have helped with community garden planting, maintenance, and new projects. This has resulted in garden bed repairs, new compost bins at 350-354 Agnes Street, water collection system repair, new soil and mulch for garden beds, new and rebuilt beds at the Kid’s Garden, seeds and seedlings for community gardeners, perennials to help beautify the gardens, and help with weeding, and pruning maintenance. A $500.00 donation from Home Depot this past gardening season meant that we were able to purchase new gardening equipment including an additional reel mower, a weed whacker, and a new garden cart. (SNA Annual Reports, anecdotal feedback from staff and gardeners, Neighbourhoods Alive reporting notes)

In recent years, SNA’s Summer Garden Coordinator, along with four youth through the First Jobs 4 Youth program, have been able to dedicate 14+ hours per week exclusively to garden maintenance. Getting the youth involved in maintaining the gardens by providing employment opportunities through the First Jobs 4 Youth program has been recognized and welcomed by the community. Community members have shared feedback like: “It was great to see the youth out in the garden working hard and only taking water breaks.” (EOS Neighbourhoods Alive! Report 2015)

Despite improvement and maintenance efforts in recent years, many garden beds and compost bins still need to be repaired or replaced due to the age and condition of the wood. (SNA Internal Garden Condition Reports)

In addition to our community gardens, Spence Neighbourhood Association also helps maintain aspects of other community parks and greenspaces. Improvements to Ogimaa Gichi Makwa Gitigaan (Chief Grizzly Bear’s Garden) at 561-569 Sherbrook Street were completed in 2013. Spence Neighbourhood Association maintains an active role on the Chief Grizzly Bear’s Garden Council, which organizes annual ceremonies at the Garden including the Summer Solstice, Fall Equinox, and Winter Solstice. The Garden is also used by community groups, like Snowbird Lodge on a regular basis for ceremonies, and Spence Neighbourhood Association has a firepit for community-lending for this purpose. SNA is also responsible for maintaining the perennial native plants and shrubs at the Park. Spence Neighbourhood Association is also responsible for the North perennial bed in Furby Park, which has been maintained by neighbouring community members, and First Jobs 4 Youth participants in the past. (SNA Annual Reports, anecdotal information from staff)

Hosting events in community gardens and parks in order to increase access to greenspace and build community has been maintained as a priority. In 2015, there were 29 events and official gatherings in the gardens and green spaces. These included: 7 work days (with gardeners, SNA staff, and Urban Eatin’ staff), 3 ceremonies, 2 committee meetings, 8 tree banding events, 6 community wide events and BBQ’s, and 4 workshops. (EOS Neighbourhoods Alive! Report 2015)
GOAL TWO: Enhance community waste management (clean-ups, bulky waste, compost, e-waste)

This year, Spence Neighbourhood Association partnered with DMSMCA and Johnson Waste Management to host the 20th Annual West End Spring Clean Up. There were 58 volunteers that came out to collect litter around the community. We were able to fill two large 30 cubic yard waste bins provided by Johnson Waste Management, cleaned up 3 back lanes of bulky waste, and cleaned all front streets in Spence of loose litter. All tree bands in the community were also removed. (SNA Small Grant 2016 Clean Up Report, anecdotal information from SNA staff)

Bulky waste, recycling and illegal dumping of bulky waste have been an ongoing challenge in the community. The Sunshine Garden at 635-637 Maryland and the garden at 547 Furby Street have been frequent sites for illegally dumping bulky waste over the past few years. We have received cooperation and support from the City of Winnipeg when we make reports about illegal dumping and bulky waste in the gardens and are not charged with a pick-up fee. However, residents in the community are still charged to have bulky waste picked up from their properties even if it has been illegally dumped. (Anecdotal information from staff)

An added challenge is posed by the high-turnover of residents from rooming houses. Furniture is often left behind in alleyways when tenants move out, and landlords have expressed that the garbage bins behind these properties are often overflowing and sometimes garbage is simply left around the bin instead of being properly disposed of. (SNA Internal Garden Condition Reports, SNA Waste Management Meeting Minutes)

In the summer months, regular Community Walk-Abouts organized and led by SNA’s Community Connecting committee, give community members a chance to learn about safety hazards in the community and record and report on bulky waste within the neighbourhood. Reports shared by Community Connecting indicate that in the summer of 2015, 41 bulky waste sightings over the course of 8 Community Walk-Abouts covering the Spence area were reported to the City of Winnipeg. Sightings and reports of bulky waste are accompanied by a flyer being placed in the mailbox of the property where the waste was sighted to provide information to the homeowner or tenant. (SNA’s Community Connecting 2015 Bulky Waste Report)

Outside the summer months, Environment and Open Spaces committee volunteers have also gone out to report incidents of bulky waste throughout the year. Of the recent bulky waste reports from SNA's Environment and Open Spaces committee, there were 79 incidents of bulky waste from all around the Spence neighbourhood reported to the City of Winnipeg. (EOS bulky waste reports)

Waste management in the community gardens has also been a challenge. Only four of our eleven community gardens have garbage bins available for gardeners and community residents to use. There are no recycling bins at any sites so recyclables like cans often end up in the garbage rather than being sorted. While the community garden compost bins at 559 Langside and 446 Langside are well used by community members and staff at the nearby Magnus Eliason Recreation Centre, many compost bins are used improperly, and people use them to dispose of garden weeds, branches, and even bulky waste. Several compost bins also need to be repaired or replaced due to the age and condition of the wood. SNA previously benefited from having a staff person dedicated to compost education, and maintenance, but changes to the staffing structure has meant that composts are not turned and maintained as often as they should be. (Anecdotal information from SNA staff and community members, SNA Waste Management Meeting Minutes)

Feedback from community members over the last five years indicates that there is a lack of education about properly sorting and disposing of
garbage, recycling, and yard waste. In the community gardens where there is an abundance of yard waste, gardeners do not always know how to properly dispose of leaves, weeds, twigs, plants, and grass clippings so they often end up in the garbage or the compost. Additionally, community gardens are sometimes missed during yard waste collection. (Anecdotal information from SNA staff and community members, SNA Waste Management Meeting Minutes)

Environment and Open Spaces staff have been a part of the Waste Diversion Advisory Committee with the City of Winnipeg which had been advising the City and sharing community feedback related to city-wide curbside organic waste collection. As part of this Committee, SNA had been provided with informational packages to deliver or make available to community members regarding waste management, however recently, there has been less focus on public education related to waste management. (EOS Neighbourhoods Alive! Report 2015)

GOAL THREE: Working toward better food access and food skills (cooking workshops, farmer’s markets, etc)

Community surveying over the past few years has told us that food access and food skills are the most important issue to people living in the Spence area. A recent report by Winnipeg Food Share Co-op indicated that 47 percent of survey participants from the Spence neighbourhood access a food bank. People in the neighbourhood purchase groceries from No Frills, Safeway, and Giant Tiger, and the majority of Spence residents involved in the Winnipeg Food Share Co-op survey also indicated that they use some form of active transportation to access food. Many participants indicated they often used multiple forms of transportation to access food. (Internal SNA 2 Year Green Plan Survey Results, Winnipeg Food Share Co-op Final Report, 2016)

We have heard time and time again from community members about the importance of community gardens in enhancing food security for neighbourhood residents. Gardeners have told us how the opportunity of gardening, especially for those living in apartments, has cut down on their reliance on food banks and helped lead to improved healthy diets. One community member remarked: “SNA has been wonderful to us these past few years by allowing my family the opportunity to grow fresh veggies.” (EOS Neighbourhoods Alive! Report 2015)

Efforts have been made to connect new gardeners with experienced gardeners through informal meetings at both the beginning of, and throughout the gardening season to help increase community knowledge and skill building with gardening. In 2015, our partnership with Urban Eatin’, allowed us to use work days in the garden as an opportunity to invite both new and expert gardeners to come together, share information, and help learn about garden maintenance. These work days also allowed gardeners to ask questions and get advice on making changes in the garden for the future. Despite existing networking opportunities for gardeners, information collected from year-end garden reviews has indicated that the majority of gardeners (65%) feel they had produced less produce than expected, indicating a greater need for gardener education, networking, and support. (EOS Neighbourhoods Alive! Report 2015)

In 2015, SNA supported cooking classes with the Winnipeg Food Share Co-op and West End Commons. SNA’s Community Connecting committee also hosts regular Kitchen Circle’s in which local volunteers teach community members how to prepare a low-cost healthy meal. (Anecdotal information from SNA staff, SNA 2015 Annual Report)

For the third year in a row, Spence Neighbourhood Association has supported the West End Community Market in partnership with Daniel McIntyre-St. Matthew’s Community Association, Winnipeg Food Share Co-op, and the West Central Mosque. The market runs on a weekly
basis throughout the summer months, and offers fresh fruits and vegetables from a local farmer, honey, and other crafts, and baked goods. In the summer of 2016, SNA attempted to partner with the University of Winnipeg to run a community market on university property, but due to poor attendance and vendor unavailability, it was decided that our time would be better invested supporting the West End market, and offering to give rides to the market for interested community members using SNA’s Community Wheels van. (Anecdotal information from SNA staff, EOS Neighbourhoods Alive! Report 2015)

Outside of the regular market season, SNA has participated in Winnipeg Food Share Co-op’s Good Food Box program as a neighbourhood depot, where residents can order and then pick-up a variety of low-cost fruits and vegetables. The University of Winnipeg was also another depot location. In 2015, SNA sold 109 Good Food Boxes. Unfortunately, the Good Food Box program has been on-hold since December, 2015 to allow Winnipeg Food Share Co-op the opportunity to determine the best way forward to increase access to healthy food across the city. Almost half of the people surveyed by Winnipeg Food Share Co-op, across all areas where the Food Box program operated, had never heard of the program, indicating a need for greater communication about these types of initiatives in the future. (Anecdotal information from SNA staff and WFC board members, EOS Neighbourhoods Alive! Report 2015, Winnipeg Food Share Co-op Report, 2016)

GOAL FOUR: Improve neighbourhood active transportation (cycling and walking - including wheelchairs, strollers, etc.)

When it comes to active transportation in the Spence community, safety is the number one concern among area residents. Feedback over the last year has told us that we should preserve and add: “walkable sidewalks”, “protected bike lanes”, “active transportation,” “close streets for day/week/weekend play,” “better lighting,” “community patrols,” and “more crosswalks.” Residents shared that: “high traffic streets,” and “unsafe streets” should be removed from our neighbourhood. (Internal EOS 2-Year Plan Feedback)

Many residents involved in our programming rely on walking or cycling as their primary mode of transportation, but we have heard how threats to personal safety can keep people in their homes, off the streets, and out of public areas, parks, and gardens, especially at night (Anecdotal information)

As an older neighbourhood, our sidewalks, streets, and back lanes are crumbling, and need better investment from the City of Winnipeg to be accessible to everyone who lives here. While our neighbourhood benefits from having sidewalks on both sides of the street, many sidewalks are inaccessible due to cracks, uneven concrete, missing concrete, ice in the winter, and large puddles in the springtime. (Anecdotal information)

Neighbourhood schools and recreation centres like the Magnus Eliason Recreation Centre, John M. King School, and Sister MacNamara School are located close to busy streets like Ellice and Balmoral, and community residents have expressed concerns about kids running across the street on their way to and from school, especially when crossing guards are off-duty. Traffic counts over the past two years from sections of Langside and Furby near the Magnus Eliason Recreation Centre, and the Kid’s Garden have been high at all times of the day, indicating a need for further traffic studies, and the possibility of adding traffic-calming features to these areas. (Anecdotal information from staff and residents, 2014-2015 internal traffic counts)

Recent cycling infrastructure upgrades in our neighbourhood like the painted bike lanes on Maryland, and Sherbrook are important steps
towards providing safer cycling routes for people traveling through and within the Spence neighbourhood. Further upgrades being planned by the city include additional bike lanes (protected, and non-protected) to better link the neighbourhood with Downtown, West Alexander, and St. James. (Walk/Bike Winnipeg Report)

GOAL FIVE: Increasing environmental education opportunities (workshops, research, etc.)

With the help and cooperation of SNA’s Building Belonging Program, Kid’s Garden Programming facilitated by Environment and Open Spaces staff at the 435 Furby Street community garden has continued on a weekly basis from spring to fall. In 2015, 57 hours of Kid’s Garden programming helped 140 kids ages 6-11 have fun, and gain experience, skills, and knowledge through activities like: berry picking, planting and maintaining the garden, community clean-ups, plant identification scavenger hunts, cooking classes with food from the garden, making art with flowers and leaves, learning about and then helping with composting, organic lawn care, and vermicomposting. SNA has also joined up with a botanist from the University of Winnipeg who led a Kid’s Garden field trip to the University’s greenhouse to learn about exotic and unique plants. (SNA 2015 Annual Report, EOS Neighbourhoods Alive! Report 2015)

A partnership with University of Winnipeg’s biology professor, Dr. Rafael Otfinowski and his summer students in 2015 used three community gardens to examine the best methods of organic weed reduction and its efficiency to gardeners in the community. The students shared this information with the community by hosting a table at the West End Community Market. Dr. Otfinowski is excited to continue this relationship with SNA and explore further ways to work with the community. (Anecdotal information from EOS staff, SNA 2015 Annual Report)

In 2015 and 2016, SNA hosted or supported a handful of workshops including: seed starting, an Inner City Edibles plant tour, and a two-day permaculture workshop. In 2015, 43 people participated in five different workshops. The number of workshops has declined from previous years, and staff have reported that some past workshops, like Organic Lawn Care had been poorly attended or had no community members show up despite being advertised on bulletin boards throughout the community, in the SNA newsletter, and by community gardeners being called or emailed about these events. More than anything, this has likely indicated that environmental education opportunities must be led by, or asked for by the community in order for them to be successful. (Anecdotal information from EOS staff, SNA 2015 Annual Report, EOS Neighbourhoods Alive! Report 2015)

In order to better support gardeners, more informal education opportunities have been offered through one-on-one, or group meetings with new gardeners, and by liaising with supporting agencies like the West Central Women’s Resource Centre around gardening techniques and support. Additionally, Environment and Open Spaces staff have recently begun sharing gardening tips and advice through the monthly newsletter as a way to communicate with the broader community. (Anecdotal information from EOS staff, EOS Neighbourhoods Alive! Report 2015)
APPENDIX C:
Neighbourhood Spaces

COMMUNITY GARDENS:
Sheba’s Paradise: 483-485 Young St.
Ashley Hudson Memorial Garden: 607-611 Langside St.
559 Langside St.
The International Garden: 446 Langside St.
The Kids Garden: 435-437 Furby
L’espoire du Demain (Hope for Tomorrow) Garden: 547 Furby St.
Sunshine Gardens: 635-637 Maryland St.
Green House: 689 Maryland St. (owned by Spence Neighbourhood Association)
448 McGee St. Garden (in cooperation with West Central Women’s Resource Centre)
Jacob Penner Park Community Garden (in cooperation with Daniel McIntyre/St. Matthew’s Community Association)
683 Agnes St.

GREEN SPACES:
Agnes Green Space (in cooperation with West End Commons, and St. Matthew’s-Maryland Community Ministry)
Cumberland Corridor

TOT LOTS/PARKS:
Furby Park Tot Lot (we maintain the perennial garden along the Northside of the Park)
Maryland/Wellington Tot Lot
Spence/Cumberland Tot Lot
Jacob Penner Park
Ogimaa Gichi Makwa Gitigaan (Chief Grizzly Bear’s Garden): 561-569 Sherbrook Street (we maintain the perennials)
Saigon Park on the corner of Spence Street and Ellice Avenue