

COMMUNITY *News*

FALL 2020



“These exhibits transform public spaces and engage audiences to promote an appreciation for contemporary art practices.”

– New Art in Placemaker Program, p. 8

Interagency Response Team

The Saskatoon Interagency Response to Covid-19 (Interagency Response) was an answer to the unprecedented crisis faced by vulnerable residents and the agencies who serve them. Including more than 50 agencies, the Response was formed after the Safe Community Action Alliance hosted initial sector conversations recognizing the unique challenges that the pandemic would present.

As the response to the pandemic became formalized locally through public health orders, the community's coordination responded in kind and an emergency response structure was adopted. With support from the City of Saskatoon's Emergency Management Organization (EMO), the structure was staffed by frontline community and government agencies; resulting in a 35-person Interagency Response Command and general staff.

Key supports to agencies included:

- Coordinated discussions and problem-solving to meet specific needs of vulnerable populations (housing-insecurity, food insecurity, sheltering when isolating, access to testing, harm reduction, etc.);
- Health and safety information, including regular group Safety Chats with a Medical Health Officer and on-site safety consultations;
- Hub services for clients — central locations with information on what supports were available and where;
- Procurement and distribution of personal protective equipment (PPE) and critical supplies; and
- Knowing they were not alone.

Many of the City of Saskatoon staff who were seconded to this Response Team came from our very own Community Development Section. Our staff represents diverse backgrounds, and their unique skills proved to be very beneficial to this team. The staff who joined this initiative were Tenille Thompson, Roy Lavallee, April Sora, Tracey Bert, Alicia Worm, Amanda Perreault, David Godwin, Heidi Estrada, Jan Cunningham and Shane Carter.

Please read about how five of these talented and skilled people made a difference:

Logistics Team Lead – Jan Cunningham

Jan Cunningham joined the Interagency Response in April, 2020. She led the Logistics Team in researching, sourcing, purchasing and distributing much needed PPE and critical supplies to the agencies serving vulnerable populations. Or, as Jan likes to say, “I take other people’s money, buy lots of stuff and give it away.”

Jan leaned on her accountancy background to implement a record-keeping system for tracking inventory, deliveries, purchases and dozens of funding sources. She also took advantage of her meticulous nature to delve into research and ensure purchasing met the approved standards. This was not always an easy task in the Wild West of pandemic procurement!

Jan has been very thankful for the chance to support community during the pandemic and values the relationships she has developed with many of the agencies. Jan also said, “To be completely honest, while it has been a lot of work, it has also been a lot of fun. Nothing gets your heart going like trying to find 60 infrared thermometers in the middle of a pandemic!”

Jan will remain with the Interagency group until the end of March. She is also looking forward to engaging with more of the community associations during the coming months. Watching them carry on connecting with community and working to offer recreation opportunities has been very comforting for Jan during the difficult days of the pandemic. “Keep being awesome!”

Safety Officer – Shane Carter

Shane Carter joined the Interagency Response as Safety Officer in the Incident Command Structure (ICS) in early April. With an educational background in Occupational Health and Safety, Shane was able to provide regulatory, industry standard and operational safety guidance to the ICS and to agencies directly serving vulnerable populations at the height of the pandemic. During the economy reopening phases, Shane and Cora Janzen of the Saskatchewan Health Authority conducted several site visits for non-profit organizations throughout Saskatoon. This consultative support played an integral role in ensuring agencies were able to re-open buildings and offer services in a safe and effective manner. Shane also played a key role in monitoring

mental wellness among Interagency Staff throughout the pandemic, while also providing mental health and wellness supports to more than 150 staff from various organizations.

Shane's secondment to the Interagency group will continue until the end of March. However, the shift to a monitoring and maintenance phase has allowed Shane to take back some responsibility in his role as a Community Consultant. Although Shane is excited to be back working in familiar territory with his neighbourhoods, he is equally thankful for the chance to continue his work supporting the community during the pandemic in a safety capacity.

Communications – April Sora

April joined the Interagency response during the last week of in-office work in March, 2020. Using her background in English as a Second Language, April led communications before stepping back to assist Molly Seton-Fast.

In the early days of the Interagency effort in March, the work was frantic and everything was urgent. As organizations began to change how and when they did business, it was critical to get the information out to community members who needed food and shelter. A central information point was needed to help people find services they relied on; hubs were opened on Saskatoon's east and west sides.

Banners were needed to advertise hub locations. Covid-19 protocol posters and handbills were needed to share with community. Everything needed to be reviewed for clear language. Thanks to the coordinated efforts of the Saskatoon Public Library, Mandy Fehr and several Community Consultants from the City of Saskatoon, handbills were delivered and posters were distributed.

Elders and seniors were having a particularly difficult time in isolation. The team wondered if they could relay the wise words of Elders and seniors to the community. The resulting "Front Porch Photos" were shared on social media, providing a much-needed sense of community and connection with our Elders and seniors. Deb Marshall from the Language Centre at the University of Saskatchewan and Derek Rope from the Saskatoon Indigenous Community Action Partnership led the Front Porch Photo project.

Days continued to be very long and work was so unpredictable and urgent. April feels it was a time she will never forget and is very grateful for the opportunity and privilege to contribute to such a strong community effort.

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Above: Examples of the "Front Porch Photos" campaign created to promote a sense of community and connection with Elders and seniors.

Interagency Response Team (continued from page 3)

Community Consultants – David Godwin and Heidi Estrada

David Godwin is the Community Consultant for the heritage neighbourhoods. He attended the Saskatoon Interagency Response to Covid-19 - Vulnerable Children and Youth Working Group's online meetings. David saw firsthand the huge level of caring action produced through this committee. His role was mainly gathering insight and sharing information that contributed to the greater good in Saskatoon. The biggest takeaway from the ongoing experience is the tremendous amount of need that is hidden from the general population. It would be so powerful for all of Saskatoon to acknowledge there is a vulnerable sector, especially children and youth. David eagerly watches as the Interagency Response continues to work together to reduce poverty, inequality and raise up those who need assistance so Saskatoon will continue without judgement of circumstances to help those in need.

Heidi sat for a brief time on the communications team. Her main role was to provide insight from the neighbourhood level on the best locations to hang community hub posters.

These posters informed people which agencies were offering which services. She also helped circulate this information to other Community Consultants who then forwarded on the information to the Community Associations.

Even now, the Community Consultants continue to assist in keeping valuable information flowing to neighbourhoods. Community Associations then share this with their community members thus making sure vulnerable people in their neighbourhoods know how and where to access services.

The Interagency Response was in maintenance mode and has now been reactivated to full status. The main financial supporters of the Interagency Response are the Saskatoon Community Foundation, United Way, Red Cross, City of Saskatoon and SHIP. Community Development has been proud to offer leadership and support to the community and will continue to do so as long as we are needed.

– Jan Cunningham, Shane Carter, April Sora and Heidi Estrada

Path to Reconciliation

Mè Ta Wè Tàn

Mè Ta Wè Tàn is Cree for “Let’s Play”

With everything from aqua fit for seniors to traditional Indigenous games, self defence to run club, Mè Ta Wè Tàn programs are a great way get active and try something new. The programs have a focus on Indigenous culture, healthy lifestyles and staying active; all while providing a welcoming environment perfect for connecting with others.

Mè Ta Wè Tàn programs are a fun way for all ages to get active in sport, recreation and culture. Check out the City of Saskatoon Leisure Guide and your Community Association Newsletter to find Mè Ta Wè Tàn programs for you. For more information, visit saskatoon.ca/metawetan or call 306-975-3378.

– Alicia Worm



Above: Little Sisters in Action* program

*Photo taken prior to COVID-19. Some programs have been modified.



Wîchitowin Indigenous Engagement Conference

Wîchitowin (wee-chee-HEE'-toe-win) is a Cree/Saulteaux term meaning "to help each other/to work together". This is the driving force for the planning committee to organize the conference each year. The conference began six years ago with a group of Saskatchewan Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations coming together to honour survivors of the residential school system, the Sixties Scoop and support the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. Each year, the conference provides teaching tools, stories, and information around the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.

The City of Saskatoon's Community Development Department continues to provide support to the Conference including involvement of several staff members that sat on the planning committee:

- Roy Lavallee – Social Development Consultant
- Tracey Bert – Indigenous Inclusion Consultant
- April Sora – Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion Consultant

This year, the committee had many challenges to overcome due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The conference was offered online at no cost on October 7 and 8. Close to 1,000 people from across Canada and around the world came together virtually for the first-ever online, land-based Wîchitowin Indigenous Engagement Conference.

"Like fire through a forest, COVID-19 is causing havoc on communities far and wide. It has made us rethink how we interact while continuing to support those in our communities who want to listen, learn, grow and support reconciliation efforts... This year's virtual conference provides us with an opportunity to share the teachings of Indigenous peoples across our nation and further to continue building an inclusive community."

– Neal Kewistep, Co-Emcee

Under Indigenous teachings of natural law, fire is believed to be the giver of new life where balance of Mother Earth is restored. From destruction comes rejuvenation and replenishment.

Videos from the conference are made available for viewing at wicheitowin.ca. Please see the website for some excellent information, teaching and time of self-reflection as you continue down your path to reconciliation.

If you have questions, comments or would like to be a partner investor, please email wicheitowinyxe@gmail.com.

– Tracey Bert



For more information about the Wîchitowin Indigenous Engagement Conference, contact Tracey Bert at 306-986-3093.

Saskatchewan Lotteries Community Grant Recipient – Saskatoon Youth Soccer Inc.

It was passing, corner kicks and fun in Saskatoon parks this summer with the 13th Annual Soccer Kids in the Parks welcoming 152 children and their parents to the free programming. Made possible by a \$5,000 Saskatchewan Lotteries Community Grant, the program ran from July 13 to August 20, 2020 in six different parks.

The Saskatoon Youth Soccer Inc. (SYSI) program was coordinated by four energetic Soccer Program Leaders with coaching certifications and a desire to make soccer fun and enjoyable. The program was modified to work within Covid-19 safety guidelines and successfully attracted the maximum participants possible during the pandemic. The activity was safe and children with their parents had a lot of fun.

The Soccer Kids in the Parks program is intended to increase the enjoyment and participation in soccer by removing financial and transportation barriers and providing positive mature role models for newcomers to the sport. The program also aims to increase interest for indoor soccer. SYSI received an overwhelming amount of positive feedback. Participants were thankful that the program was offered safely during the pandemic and strongly encouraged the organization to continue the program next year.

The purpose of the Saskatchewan Lotteries Community Grant program is to increase participation in Sports, Culture and Recreation. Programs like Soccer Kids in the Parks are an example of how organizations successfully fulfill that purpose.

– Kathy Allen



Community Recreation Programming

Despite the uncertainties and restrictions due to Covid-19 currently in place, Community Recreation continues to offer safe, affordable, high quality programming for Saskatoon's children and youth. The 2020 Summer Play Program welcomed 34,341 participants to free programming from June to September, and has a full line-up of winter programming planned.

Community Recreation will host a number of free children and youth programs during winter 2021, including the Winter Play Program and February School Break Camps. Specific program information, dates, times and locations will be posted on leisureonline.saskatoon.ca prior to winter registration on Sunday, December 6.

Community Recreation aims to engage children and youth between the ages of six and 14 to “find their fit(ness).” Throughout the year, Community Recreation partners with various organizations to offer 12 free programs and events with decreased participation barriers. By incorporating the

High Five Principles of Healthy Childhood Development®, staff and facilitators work to create a positive and non-threatening environment. They empower participants to try new sport and recreation activities while encouraging mastery of a specific physical skill. Equipment is provided for most events and food is served at all-day events.

During summer 2020, Community Recreation supervised 19 weekday paddling pool locations while the White Buffalo Youth Lodge operated Pleasant Hill's Spray Pad. The sites had a staggered opening between July 8 and 20, with most closing on August 25.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, there were a number of interim changes made to the Summer Play Program:

- The hours of operations were shortened and designated swim and cleaning times were introduced to allow for safe physical distancing and to ensure proper cleaning;
- Maximum capacity within the enclosed paddling pool and deck space was 25 participants per designated swim time;
- Children and youth aged 14 years and younger were to be accompanied by a parent, guardian or mature minor (14 or older) to adhere to Physical Distancing Guidelines;
- Water fountains were not operational and patrons were asked to bring their own water bottles;
- Washroom access was available during scheduled hours of operation. Access was restricted to allow for physical



distancing and disinfecting and only four people (or one family) could be in the recreation unit at a time;

- The City of Saskatoon did not provide any pool equipment but patrons were able to bring their own; and
- The sites were staffed with three leaders.

The City of Saskatoon also operated 18 unsupervised spray pad locations between June 23 to September 7, 2020.

– Amanda Gustafson



For more information about Community Recreation Programming contact Amanda Gustafson at 306-975-1429.

Community Gardens

Like with everyone and everything, Covid-19 had a massive impact on the 45 community gardens to which the City of Saskatoon provides direct and indirect support.

This impact was felt quickly as the spring thaw arrived. Each of gardeners felt the uncertainty: Will we be able to garden? And, can we do so safely?

Although Covid-19 has had life-changing effects, it also forced us to stop and consider what we do, how we do it and how our actions benefit the community as a whole. Once these questions were reviewed with gardening at the forefront, we

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Community Gardens (continued from page 7)

quickly determined that a plan was needed to allow gardening in public spaces to continue with every safety measure in place. With the assistance of CHEP and the City of Saskatoon's Emergency Operations Centre, the Community Development Division developed detailed guidelines for a community garden safety plan. It outlined additional cleaning of taps, scheduled and monitored gardening times, social-distanced gardening, watering schedules, cancellation of work bees and ensuring

tools were not shared between gardeners. Although many of these safe steps were challenging, the collectives worked hard to follow the plan to ensure the safety of all the gardeners.

Congratulations to the Collectives on this year's gardening season. It is my understanding that it was the year for zucchini.

— Shelly Panko-Schultz

What's New?

New Art in Placemaker Program

Happiness of the heart and world culture are reflected in the Placemaker Program's new art installation series. Saadat Qalbi/Miyawâtam 1, 2 and 3 will be installed around the city by summer 2021.

Saadat Qalbi/Miyawâtam translates to "happiness of the heart" or, "they are joyful or fun-loving." The art, created by Ruth Cuthand and Suada Jailan and Curated by Dr. Jen Budney, includes three hand-painted aluminium sculptures composed of floral motives inspired by both Cree/Michif beadwork and traditional East African henna design.

The artists created these works to acknowledge the importance of floral imagery in world cultures. The art also celebrates the labour of women in social reproduction and the teaching, care and nurturing done to keep communities and societies cohesive and strong. The art points to the possibilities for innovation through collaboration and cultural connections in Saskatoon.

Saskatoon architect and designer Henry Lau from ARTxygen Inc. assisted with the design, fabrication and preparation. Fabricated at the Riverbend Hutterite metal shop near Waldheim, Saskatchewan, the metal was welded by Ryan Gross in collaboration with Carson Rose Innovation.

The City, in consultation with the Business Improvement Districts, manages the Placemaker Program to add significance to civic spaces through temporary public art. These exhibits transform public spaces and engage audiences to promote an appreciation for contemporary art practices.

Saadat Qalbi/Miyawâtam 2 is on view in Riversdale at 602 20th St. W; Saadat Qalbi/Miyawâtam 3 is Downtown at 241 2nd Ave; and Saadat Qalbi/Miyawâtam 1 will be installed in Broadway at Main Street and Broadway Avenue in summer 2021.

— Alejandro Romero



Big Plans for a Little Park

Big Plans for a Little Park. That is the motto for the ambitious and innovative, community-led project that was recently completed at the Albert Recreation Park. Often described as a hidden gem, the Clarence Avenue and 14th Street park has been an important community hub for many years and was due for a face lift.

In 2015 residents and community association members from Varsity View and Nutana came together to improve their local gem with modern equipment and play opportunities. A committee was quickly formed to brainstorm best ways to improve their park and ensure many more years of enjoyment.

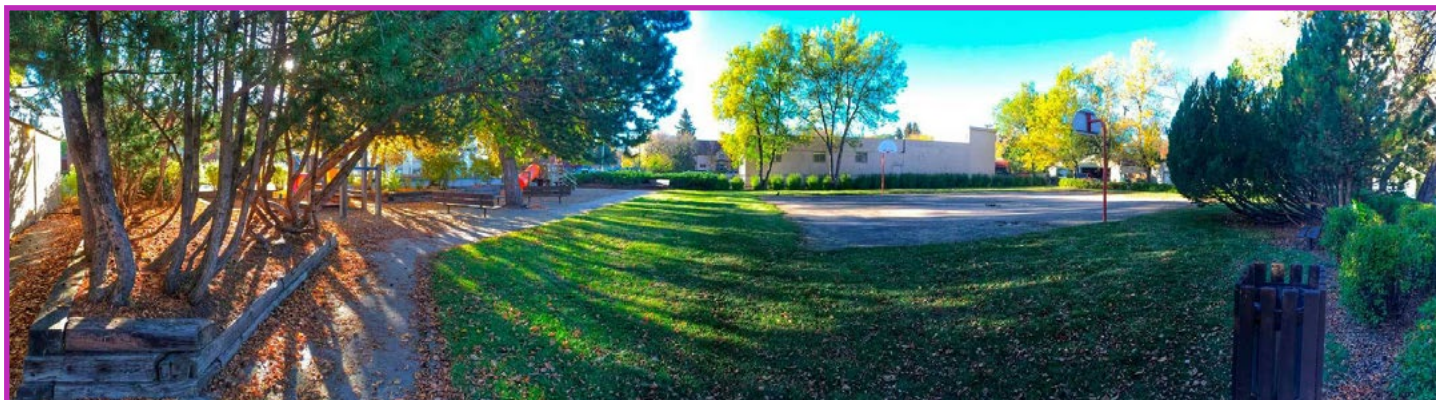
Ultimately the group, with support from Jim Siemens and Oxbow Architecture, put together a beautiful design and submitted an application to the Neighbourhood Services Section Park Enhancement Grant program. The application received overwhelming support and was approved for the full grant amount of \$25,000. The plan included new play equipment, a half-court basketball space, adult fitness equipment, twisty sticks for climbing and exploring and landscape work.

Over the next four and a half years, the group tirelessly held fundraisers to achieve their goal of almost \$300,000. In the summer of 2019, this goal became a reality with an anonymous donor making a significant donation. Work on the park began in the fall of 2019 and was completed in September of 2020.

As soon as the fencing came down, residents and families flocked to the new park and reported many positive reviews. The project is clearly a success and is enjoyed by multi-

generational families and the surrounding community. This project would not be possible without the countless volunteer hours and community donations. A special thank you goes out to the Albert Rec Committee members (Rahul Mainra, Jim Siemens, Sarah Williams, Roger Williamson, Beth Wall and Tanya Bell), the Nutana and Varsity View Community Associations, Oxbow Architecture, Strata Developments and City Gardens whose partnerships made this a reality.

— Kevin Ariss



Community Cleanups Continue

Without a doubt, Community Associations champion the neighbourhood back alley cleanup program they established many years ago. Community members still see the value in the program where neighbourhoods are cleaned and beautified. Each year, tens of thousands of kilograms of waste products are recycled, repurposed or taken to the landfill.

Groups who partner with Community Associations to help with the clean-ups are:

- Neighbourhood volunteers and businesses;
- Saskatchewan Health Authority needle pick-up information team;
- Local environmentally-conscious organizations, youth, church and service groups; and
- City of Saskatoon departments including Saskatoon Fire Department, Utilities & Environment – Water and Waste Management and Community Services – Neighbourhood Services Section.

Community cleanups usually occur in spring and fall. Spring 2020 started with a full slate of 17 planned cleanups. The Covid-19 pandemic brought preparations to a screeching halt with most Associations looking at postponement to the fall.

The Pleasant Hill and Meadowgreen Community Associations voiced concerns that missing the spring clean-up would have

detrimental effects on their neighbourhoods. The Cleanup Committee looked for solutions with the provincial and municipal Covid-19 responses and put together an approved safety plan. Pleasant Hill and Meadowgreen organized cleanups, embracing the plan's strict use of personal protective equipment, sanitization protocols, hand washing and physical distancing.

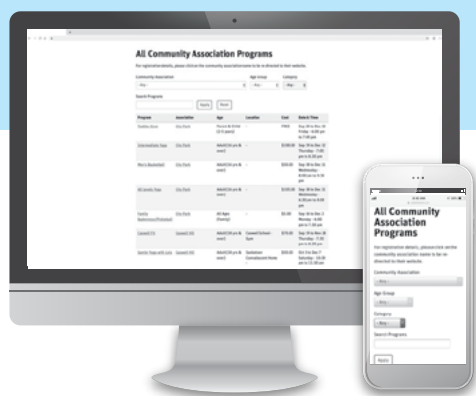
Their two pilot events were a success with volunteers sanitizing equipment, wearing masks, gloves and following physical distancing guidelines. Crews were organized into small groups and orientated on how to maintain physical distancing. They then went out and cleaned the alleyways. From both cleanups, 800 kg of metal was diverted, 967 kg of waste went to the landfill, 80 tires were recycled and various needles were disposed of properly.

Although the pandemic was a concern, it was met with safe, determined community action. Fall cleanups also were successful with seven neighbourhoods working to beautify their areas. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Principles (CPTED) state that community clean-ups function as an activity support that enhance positive community image, increase territoriality and improve cohesion and community culture. Beautification of the area also increases residents' feeling of safety and pride in the neighbourhood.

– David Godwin



For more information about Community Cleanups contact David Godwin at 306-975-3651.



New! Search Online for Community Association Programs Across Saskatoon

Check out the City of Saskatoon's new search tool at saskatoon.ca/communityassociations to find the best neighbourhood programs for your interests, age and location.



Training

Rink Coordinators Workshops are offered every second year by the Neighbourhood Services Section. This year the workshop was run through Microsoft Teams on Oct. 22. Organizers Heidi Estrada and Mark Planchot ran several dress rehearsals to ensure the technology would run smoothly for this first online workshop.

10 people representing 10 Community Associations attended the training which covered City procedures around annual grants, Covid-19 protocols, maintenance and flooding techniques. Although Rink Coordinators were not able to travel from rink to rink to learn from one another, we did offer virtual tours where we highlighted a new base surfacing product and pre-season prep tips. Rink Coordinators sent in videos highlighting their best tips and techniques. The magic of technology allowed us to continue working together to improve our neighbourhoods.

We look forward to meet together in person, ideally for the next Rink Coordinator Workshop.

We are working on other new training opportunities so keep your eyes open for these in the New Year.

Make it Happen!
VOLUNTEER

There are many ways you can volunteer for your Community Association:

- coach soccer
- clean up your park
- help organize special events
- help coordinate recreation programs
- write a newsletter article
- take meeting minutes
- flood the outdoor rink

...and more!

saskatoon.ca/volunteer 

Tips

During 2020, things have certainly been odd and unprecedented, and Community Consultants have been helping Community Association volunteers come up with unique winter programming. Since rental space in schools and other indoor facilities is limited and uncertain, groups have been encouraged to plan outdoor programs as much as possible. Offering outdoor programming is also a way to embrace the WinterCityYXE strategy. This strategy “celebrates what makes Saskatoon an inviting, vibrant, safe and prosperous place in the winter.” The full strategy document can be found at saskatoon.ca/wintercityyxe. Whether or not Community Associations will be allowed to run programs out of usual indoor spaces, we can embrace this opportunity to enjoy our winter city to its fullest.

Many volunteers already have planned winter programs, however, here are some last minute tips to consider:

- Do people in your neighbourhood have skills or hobbies to share? Your Community Consultant can help you put out an ad to call out for possible instructors. You may end up with someone willing to lead a learn-to cross-country ski program, a winter running program or something you never even thought of. Hidden talent is everywhere!
- Use your neighbourhood park to its full potential. Host a snowperson building or ice sculpture contest;
- Host physically-distanced sled races, either down your neighbourhood hill or encourage fitness by having the adults pull children on a sled through the park;
- Do not forget to advertise your rink in newsletters, on Facebook and on your website;
- As always, let people know it is their friendly neighbourhood Community Association volunteers who are offering all these great programs for them.
- Remember to follow the guidelines regarding safety due to Covid-19 for all your programming. The most current information can be found at saskatoon.ca/covid-19.



For information on upcoming training opportunities, please contact your Community Consultant.



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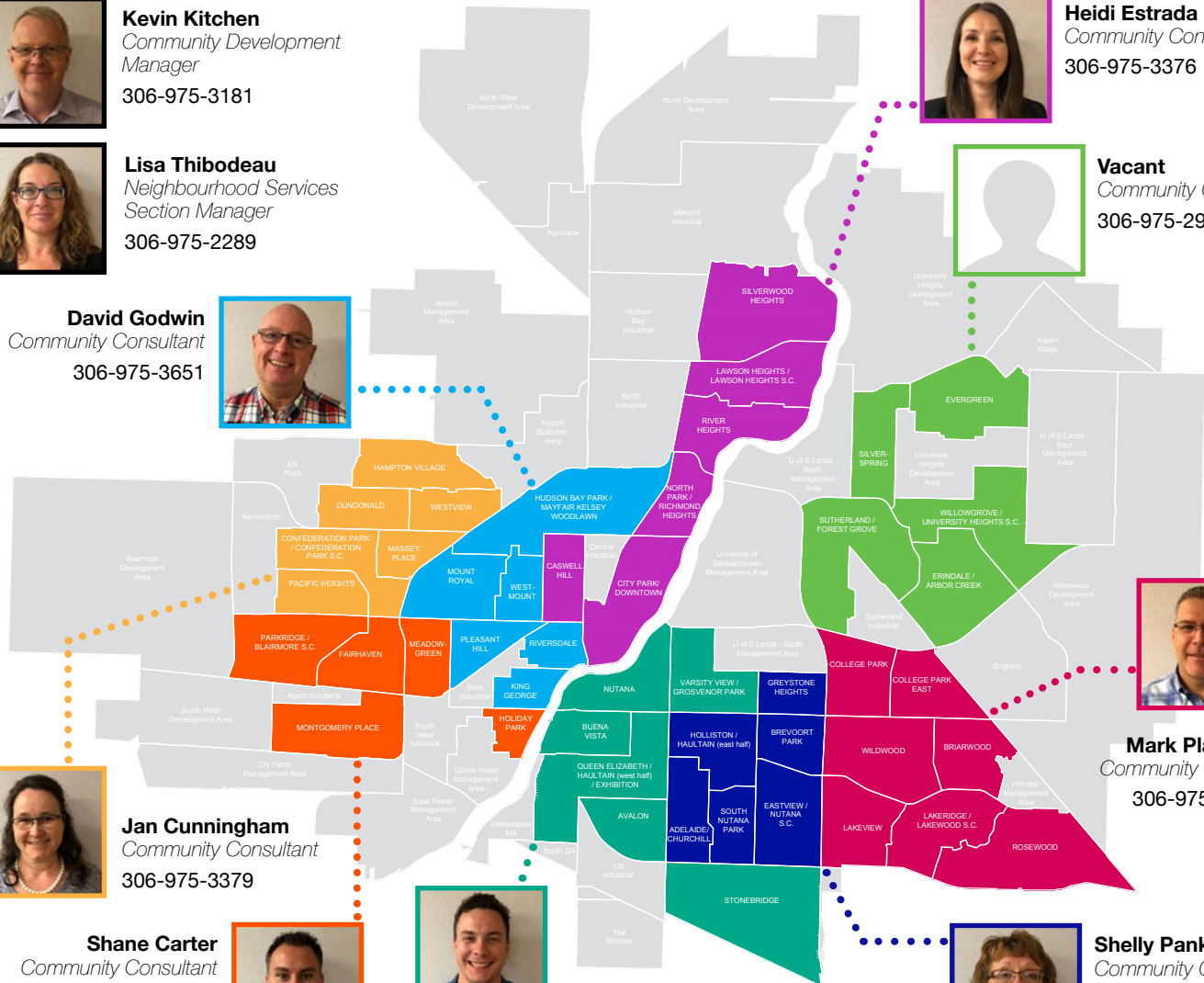
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