

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to inform Council about a research project that the Recreation and Community Services Department has been involved with, which may receive some public attention.

## **BACKGROUND**

In April 2020, The Recreation and Community Services department was invited to attend an information session about a new project that was launching in Yorkton - *Interventions to Enhance Social Inclusion of Older Adults with Dementia in Saskatchewan*. This project was for five years, is federally funded and focuses on improving the public's awareness of the stigma and social isolation experienced by people with dementia and their care partners. It focuses on supporting individual, community and organizational interventions to enhance social inclusion of older adults and their care partners in small cities and rural communities. The project is conducted by the Saskatchewan Population Health and Evaluation Research Unit, a bi-university health research unit based at the Universities of Regina and Saskatchewan, and is funded by the Government of Canada New Horizons for Seniors Program.

In March 2021, our department applied for and received funding for an "Indoor Public Facility Audit", to encourage our facilities to be more inclusive and accessible for seniors living in Yorkton, including those living with dementia. We engaged a Consultant, who had worked on a previous sub-project, to amalgamate two environment checklists - one from the Alzheimer's Society of Saskatchewan and the other from Age-Friendly Saskatchewan. She also reconnected with people from a previous project, two couples with lived experience with Dementia, to become our "Experts".

The Experts and the Consultant toured and audited each of our twelve public facilities, twice, using a different entrance each time, if possible. With each audit, observations began in the parking lot, and each entrance and exit were used at least once. The team role-played attending an event or accessing services and going through all the activities that would be involved in doing so. Additionally, the couples and the consultant, all resided outside of Yorkton making their experience that much more authentic.

The final report, attached for your information, will be used as a resource to inform our operations moving forward. It has their comments, observations, completed checklists and photos for each facility plus some info on other financial resources (grants) that might assist with implementation of their recommendations.

## **DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS/IMPACT**

The majority of recommendations are toward improvement of signage to assist people with navigating more independently and find services on their own. The most significant cost attached to recommendations is the addition of private family washrooms, as the majority of the facilities have gender-identified, accessible washrooms.

## **STRATEGIC PRIORITIES/OCP/COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION(S)**

This project meets the objectives of "seek partnerships that promote health, wellness and healthy lifestyles" and "community engagement provides opportunity for all members of the community to be involved, and supported" as outlined in the 2020 Strategic Plan goals of "promoting and building a healthy community" and "fostering a safe community that embraces cultural and social diversity by providing social, recreational and educational opportunities for all community members", respectively.

Additionally, it aligns with the Official Community Plan, Part Four “Our Healthy Community”, Goal 4.5 “Balanced strategies for a complete, healthy and livable community, ensuring that Yorkton continues to be a great place to live”, and 4.5.1. Public Health and Safety where our community strives to offer a wide variety of community-based services that are inter-generational, accessible, prevention-oriented, supportive, coordinated, responsive to change and effective.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**That Council receive and file this presentation and, furthermore, that organizations and businesses be encouraged to participate in the project “Interventions to Enhance Social Inclusion of Older Adults with Dementia in Saskatchewan” and learn more ways to enhance social inclusion of older adults with dementia in our community, by contacting the Saskatchewan Population Health and Evaluation Unit.**