



Agenda No: 8.1

Mtg. Date: Oct. 26, 2015

Regional Board Report

TO: Regional Board
FROM: Parks Services
DATE: October 19, 2015
SUBJECT: 2016 UBCM Age-friendly Community Planning & Project Grant

Purpose:

To seek authorization from the Board to support, and apply for a 2016 UBCM Age-friendly Community Planning & Project Grant.

Executive Summary:

The Regional District of Central Okanagan has increasingly become a very attractive location for people to reside. The median age of the Okanagan population has been higher than the BC provincial median age for over 20 years, due in part to the area's large retirement base. As a result there is becoming a greater need to provide support to an increasingly larger aging population demographic through improvements to our services. In Regional Parks we have and continue to work hard to improve our signage for users to find and navigate in the parks. To continue to improve our information to the public, staff is proposing to complete the Regional Park Age-friendly Recreational Access Project to manage and promote age-friendly hiking/walking opportunities in Regional Parks. In concert with the proposed 2016 Regional Parks Service work program, staff are proposing that an application for \$20,000 be made to the UBCM Age-friendly Community Planning & Project Grant Program to complete the project in 2016.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Regional Board approves staff to complete and submit a grant application to the 2016 UBCM Age-friendly Community Planning & Project Grant Program for \$20,000 of funding towards the completion of a Regional Park Age-friendly Recreational Access Project.

Respectfully Submitted:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Murray Kopp'.

Murray Kopp
Director – Parks Services

Prepared by: Wayne Darlington, Manager Park Planning/
Capital Projects/Visitor Services

Approved for Board's Consideration

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brian Reardon'.
Brian Reardon, CAO

Implications of Recommendation:

Strategic Plan: The Regional Park Age-friendly Recreational Access Project would support the following areas of the strategic plan:

- Social – maintaining high service levels and supporting a variety of user demographics, getting people active and into nature,
 - Environmental – connecting Canadians to nature and developing a green ethos,
 - Financial – supports in migration to the Central Okanagan and development of the local economy.
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Background:

The median age of the Okanagan Valley from the 2011 Census was 46.8 years of age, in comparison the British Columbia median age is 41.9, and the Canadian median age is 40.6 years of age (Economic Development Commission, 2015). In addition, 31% of Okanagan residents are between the ages of 45 and 64, and 21.6% of Okanagan residents are aged 65 and over. Therefore 52.6% of the population of the Okanagan Valley is aged 45 or older or 179,840 of the 341,818 residents in the Okanagan Valley are 45 or older.

In addition to the demographic information provided above, there are likely a number of non-resident property owners and visitors in the same age demographic as described earlier that visit the Central Okanagan and support the local economy. As part of our community, Regional Parks play an important role in making the area more liveable, more aesthetically pleasing, provides quality passive recreation opportunities for residents and tourists to stay active, and protection of biodiversity.

Given that the baby boom generation is getting older and contributing to the increased numbers of those older than 45, our services must reflect the needs to service this population group while at the same time providing quality services to the younger demographic. Therefore as an additional step towards better communication and improved access, Regional Parks would like to embark on the Regional Park Age-friendly Recreational Access Project to promote hiking/walking opportunities in Regional Parks. This project will involve the creation of public communication media (web and traditional formats), wayfinding signage, and trail improvements focused on highlighting age-friendly parks and trails. The intent of this project is to get more people active and connected to nature and will be of a benefit not only to those older demographics, but younger and those with physical and mental challenges will also benefit. In order to fund the project, staff are proposing to apply to the 2016 UBCM Age-friendly Community Planning & Project Grant Program for a \$20,000 grant, there is no requirement for matching or cost sharing, and \$20,000 is the total project value.

In conclusion, and as part of the grant requirements, staff are seeking approval from the Regional Board to make application to the 2016 UBCM Age-friendly Community Planning & Project Grant program for a \$20,000 grant towards the Regional Park Age-friendly Recreational Access Project. The project will assist in getting those 45 and older connected to nature and more active by being able to safely and confidently navigate Regional Parks.