

## **COUNCIL REPORT**

**To:** Mayor and Council

**From:** Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee

**Date:** April 24, 2025

**Subject:** 2025 - 1st Quarter Activity Report

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### **RECOMMENDATION:**

THAT Council receives this report for information.

### **BACKGROUND:**

The Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee (AIAC) is a Select Committee of Council established to provide advice and recommendations to Council on matters relating to citizens with disabilities, seniors and other citizens with access issues that may impede participation in everyday aspects of community living.

The AIAC mandate is as follows:

- a) To inform all citizens of the Committee's purpose and to identify existing social and physical barriers.
- b) To provide advice and information regarding future planning of municipal services, programs, and facilities.
- c) To work with the Council to increase public awareness of the issues of accessibility and inclusion for people with disabilities, seniors, and all citizens.

### **1st Quarterly Activity Report**

We welcome our newest committee member, Joy Davie. Joy will be a definite asset to the committee as she brings her vast experience, knowledge and her lived experience to support our endeavors.

Our committee continues to be present and active in the community. We continually promote access and inclusion whether it be at public meetings or individually at activities and events hosted in the community or as we individually participate in day-to-day activities. We are cognizant of barriers that can or may impede access or inclusion. Everyday is a learning day for

us whether it be by participation through a wide variety of meetings, in person activities, or our own research and readings. Our learnings are shared within the committee which result in us transferring the newfound information into action items where we attempt to invoke change that subsequently increases the quality of someone's life.

This quarter we completed another Walk and Roll site inspection at the Recreation Centre. We were at the Rec Center discussing WinterQuest when we decided to conduct an unscheduled follow-up to see if and how our recommendations for changes to the family change and other changing rooms have been implemented. We were pleasantly surprised that most if not all recommendations were acted upon. A verbal (followed by a written report) was shared with staff. A couple of minor tweaks were recommended as described in our report. Our hats are off to the staff. We also asked why the pool lift was not on the pool deck and we were advised that it was due to the curing of the new deck and would be relocated when the curing was complete. During this conversation we asked about a pool wheelchair for use by users. Kimberly explained how having a pool wheelchair was beneficial to the Rec Center and the user. Firstly, the chair would be waterproof and allow users to utilize the chair for accessing the pool deck and showering. The use of a personal wheelchair or mobility device inhibits the use of the shower and would mean users could be tracking outside dirt into the shower room and on the pool deck. Following our debrief, in addition to the written report, we supplied staff with information about a waterproof wheelchair and supplier

Apparently, the Access and Inclusion Committee is being recognized by council members and other organizations as we have been invited to attend meetings in person and online to share our perspective on various activities, and long-term planning processes. A couple of members participated in an online meeting regarding Outdoor Recreation hosted by Selkirk College. Very informative and we were able to add a different perspective to some ideas. We were also invited to attend the Enbridge Sunshine Expansion Project meeting and again we were able to provide valuable feedback for consideration.

Over the past couple of years we have discovered that there is a lot of overlapping by people being members of other committees in the community therefore we have the opportunity to share our view at these meetings i.e. Northern Health, Rural Health, Williston Lake Elders Society, Arts Council; trails, Autumn Lodge, and the monthly meetings with Northern Health to name a few. We believe that we are making a difference!

An example of a difference was noted during the Mackenzie Figure Skating Show where recommendations from the previous year were taken into consideration – designated, reserved seating for seniors (top row of bleachers near the elevators); reduced congestion and increased access in the foyers by moving flower sales and raffles to another room.

In addition, we were asked by the Recreation Centre to support and help develop the Side-by-Side rides for touring the amazing ice sculptures. We designed the application form, advertised the activity social media and through various organizations, and attended each ride to support

staff and riders. This event was very well received mostly by seniors however there was one youth who joined his dad to share the experience. We anticipate there would be a greater uptake had the weather been better. Recommendations included having more rides like this for events like the Ridgeline and Music in the Park. A few of the riders have lived in Mackenzie for years and have never been able to walk the trails, they felt a sense of inclusion and belonging.

The Access and Inclusion Committee thanks the district for sponsoring a booth in the upcoming Spring Expo. Our focus will be on Invisible Disabilities.

During the presentation at the Coffee Meeting on February 13<sup>th</sup> we listed some of the recommendations and changes that our committee has influenced and one of the items we identified was wanting to have Mobi mats installed at Morfee beaches. This recommendation was received with a loud round of applause therefore we will continue to lobby for funding to support this recommendation. This Coffee Meeting was hosted by Williston Lake Elders Society. There were 70+ attendees, mostly seniors.

Our workplan includes completion of our a preliminary "draft report" on the port-a-potties/outdoor washrooms. We hope our report will be released in the spring after one more final check comparing and confirming our findings in comparison to the accessibility code.

A complete list of activities for this quarter is attached to this document.

### **Committee Meeting Minutes**

The minutes from the committee meetings held on January 16, 2025, and February 19, 2025 have been attached for Council's consideration.

### **COUNCIL PRIORITIES:**

#### **Community and Social Development**

- Our investment in the municipality's services and infrastructure, our commitment to principles of social equity and well-being, and our belief in the value of resident engagement, creates a healthy community in which everyone feels valued and enjoys a high quality of life.

### **RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:**

Elizabeth Blackburn, Chair

**Reviewed By:** Corporate and Financial Services

**Approved By:** Chief Administrative Officer