

## OLIVER GETS AN AGE-FRIENDLY PARK



In November of 2014, members of the Oliver Healthy Living Coalition got some very good news. Their application submitted a month previous to the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) for a \$20,000 grant to install an Age-Friendly Outdoor Fitness Park had been approved.

Outdoor Fitness Parks have been a growing trend in communities across BC, and South Okanagan parks now include Peachland and Penticton. Like the others, the new Outdoor Fitness Park in Oliver will provide a free, year-round opportunity for older adults of all abilities to experience to benefits of physical activity and social inclusion. The new facility will be located in the south end of Lion's Park between the Oliver Visitor Centre and the Joel Waines Memorial Skatepark. This site was chosen for its proximity to Highway

97, the downtown core and Hike & Bike trail, as well as parking and washroom access. The fitness park will feature a 300m accessible pathway with outdoor fitness equipment installed on concrete pads along it, essentially forming a looped exercise circuit. Instructions for the safe use of each piece of equipment will be posted at each station. The physical health benefits from regular exercise include increased core strength, flexibility, coordination and cardio vascular health. Other benefits from the use of the new park by older adults may include an improved sense of belonging, accomplishment and connection with nature and community and better quality of sleep.

As part of the Age-Friendly Grant, 50 free orientation sessions with a fitness trainer will be offered to older adults in Oliver this fall (2015). It is always recommended to check with your doctor before trying any new physical activity, and park users will be encouraged to follow the safety instructions posted at each fitness station in the park, ensure appropriate footwear is worn and arrange to go with a buddy whenever possible for safety and the extra motivation.

The Oliver Healthy Living Coalition is committed to making Oliver an Age-Friendly Community, and the Outdoor Fitness Park project is the first step towards the overall vision for Lion's Park as a vibrant, active park for multiple generations to be physically active, socialize and connect with nature together. Be sure to give it a try this fall! **E**

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