

## **BRIEFING NOTE – UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY INVESTMENT IN RECREATION SPACES**

### **PURPOSE**

To brief the City of Spruce Grove, the Town of Stony Plain and Parkland County Council's on the research project 'Understanding Community Investment in Recreation Spaces'.

### **BACKGROUND**

Understanding utilization of municipal recreation spaces (indoor and outdoor) is essential for promoting health and active living among Albertans. Given the tremendous growth of Strathcona County and increasing demand for physical activity opportunities, the Strathcona County Council approved the Open Space and Recreation Facility Strategy (OSRFS). Strathcona County has invested \$40M in Phase 1A to revitalize existing indoor recreation facilities and outdoor recreation spaces. Phase 1A revitalization was completed in the Fall of 2013. This presented a time sensitive opportunity to evaluate the impact of this investment.

For this project the City of Spruce Grove, the Town of Stony Plain and Parkland County are ideal comparison communities because of location and similar recreation profiles. This creates a unique opportunity for these three communities to understand how residents use and don't use community recreation facilities and outdoor spaces.

### **THE PROJECT**

This project will evaluate the OSRFS implementation by examining barriers to access across the profile of current users relative to non-users in Strathcona County, in comparison to users and non-users of a community in similar size and facility profile (City of Spruce Grove/Town of Stony Plain/Parkland County). The initial phase of data collection occurred in the Fall of 2011 included two stages.

- (1) A 12-minute telephone survey with approximately 1050 residents in each community to understand what facilities and outdoor spaces are used, frequency of use and motivation for use.
- (2) Focus groups with current users, potential users, and non-users in both communities (adults and youth). Focus groups explored issues of who uses facilities (why/why not), preferences for and barriers to use, how people get to facilities, etc.

The follow-up phase of data collection will occur this Fall (2013) and will involve the same two stages of data collection as done previously.

### **TIMELINES**

#### *Stage One (Telephone Survey)*

September 3 – October 13, 2013 Post-Telephone Survey (anticipated dates)

#### *Stage Two (Focus Groups)*

November, 2013

Post- Focus Groups

### **PARTNERS**

The project is led by Dr. Candace Nykiforuk, lead investigator of the Policy, Location and Access in Community Environments (PLACE) Research Lab ([www.placeresearchlab.com](http://www.placeresearchlab.com)) at the Centre for Health Promotion Studies, School of Public Health, University of Alberta. Dr. Nykiforuk and her team have partnered with representatives from Strathcona County, Recreation, Parks and Culture, and the City of Spruce Grove, the Town of Stony Plain and Parkland County to conduct this project.

### **FUNDERS**

Funding for this project is being provided by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). Additional funding is being provided by Strathcona County, Recreation, Parks and Culture to help support the implementation of the telephone survey.

### **NEXT STEPS**

We anticipate that preliminary results will be ready to be shared back with the community in the Winter of 2014.