



## Community Connections and Community Projects

### Background

One important aspect of the larger Community Health and the Built Environment project was creating connections with the community. To do this in Bonnyville we partnered with a group of key community stakeholders. Our community partners represented the diverse nature of the community and included members from:

- Alberta Health Services,
- Bonnyville and District Chamber of Commerce,
- the church community,
- community members,
- Community Futures Lakeland,
- EmployAbilities,
- Family and Community Support Services, and
- Town of Bonnyville (Economic Development Office, and Development and Planning).

This group of representatives played a key role in helping to guide the research that was conducted in the community. In addition, they have been working with the researchers to develop various projects in the community. The projects help residents become more physically active and eat healthy food. Through conversations, the representatives from Bonnyville identified a number of directions for community projects: (1) a community survey, (2) benches in the community, (3) recreation amenity signage, and (4) a community walking map.

### Community Survey

The purpose of the Bonnyville community survey was to identify local walking routes that lead to enjoyable destinations within the community. The survey was sent to all Bonnyville households with the water bills in September, 2009. Surveys were also handed out at seniors' residences, apartment buildings, employment and immigration offices, and family and community service centers. Of the approximately 2000 surveys distributed, only 36 were returned (1.8%).

When asked to identify barriers to getting around the community, survey participants identified a few issues (listed below).

- Walking over uneven ground can be difficult, especially on roads where there are no sidewalks available on either side for part of the way. This makes walking in the winter difficult, since snow and ice make the road too narrow for cars and pedestrians. It was suggested that repairing the rough, old, worn-out areas of residential sidewalks would improve access for strollers and all residents.
- Having a second route to downtown aside from 46th street could improve access to shops and services.
- Low hanging tree branches that overhang sidewalks and boulevards are obstacles for the visually impaired.

The walking routes identified by participants and other information about the barriers are being used in the development of a community walking map.

