PEACE RIVER REGIONAL DISTRICT

REPORT

To: Broadband Internet and Mobility Committee   Report Number: ADM-BIMC-037

From: Administration   Date: July 16, 2025

Subject: Seniors Aging in Place - Low Income Internet and Mobility Plans

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Broadband Internet and Mobility Committee recommend the Regional Board authorize that informational pamphlets detailing the cellular and internet plans available in the Peace Region for low income residents be provided to Seniors Aging in Place clients as program delivery allows, to raise awareness for seniors of low-cost access to internet services.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

On April 30, 2025, the Broadband Internet and Mobility Committee (BIMC) received a presentation from Ian Hobbs from the Ministry of Citizens' Services regarding internet affordability. The presentation highlighted the importance of promoting low-income programs offered by Internet Service Providers (ISPs) within the Peace River Regional District (PRRD) and encouraged the PRRD to explore additional outreach methods.

Subsequently, on May 28, 2025 staff met with TELUS to review its low-income "Internet for Good" initiative and corresponding senior mobility plans. During a follow-up meeting with Rogers on June 25, 2025 the details of the Rogers "Connected for Success" program were discussed. For both programs, eligibility is required through a Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) data match for Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) or the CPP Disability Benefit.

While broad provincial-wide outreach is helpful, local promotion remains necessary to ensure all eligible seniors are aware of—and can easily apply for—these discounted services.

To strengthen local awareness, staff propose distributing printed pamphlets through the PRRD Seniors Aging in Place (SAIP) Program. PRRD staff have been provided pamphlets summarizing low-income internet and cellular options from TELUS and Rogers. Agencies and contractors who deliver SAIP services and who have direct contact with clients could share the pamphlets — not more than twice per year — when conducting regular meal deliveries, housekeeping or snow-removal visits and in the welcome packages given to new SAIP clients in Electoral Areas D and E. This low-impact approach places cost-saving information directly in the hands of local seniors, some of whom may be low-income, or have friends and associates with whom they could share the information as well. Program staff may be able to help eligible seniors navigate application processes and enroll in the programs, thereby reducing monthly connectivity expenses. Affordable, reliable internet and mobile service are key supports that enable seniors to remain safely and comfortably in their homes, and the SAIP bylaw authorizes non-medical services related to technology support.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

1. That the Broadband Internet and Mobility Committee provide further direction.

STRATEGIC PLAN RELEVANCE:

☒   Not Applicable to Strategic Plan

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION(S):

Function 135 – Regional Connectivity has a $5,000 advertising services budget (01-2-1000-5010-135) that allows for allocating a modest portion to print the PDF brochures supplied by the internet service providers.

COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATION(S):

If approved, Staff will supply the Seniors Aging in Place Program delivery staff with brochures provided by TELUS and Rogers for distribution to clients.

OTHER CONSIDERATION(S):

The Dawson Creek Society for Community Living is contracted by Peace River Regional District to deliver SAIP services. They will be asked to distribute the brochures to their contractors for delivery to clients.

External Links:
1. Seniors Aging in Place Information (PRRD web page)
2. Seniors Aging In Place Program Brochure (DC Society for Community Living web page)
3. TELUS Internet for Good or Mobility for Good
4. Rogers Connected for Success
5. Internet Affordability Presentation (April 30, 2025 BIMC Meeting, Agenda Item 6.1)