

RIDGE BUSINESS BUZZ

Department of Economic Development



Summer Edition - July

Message from Wendy Dupley, Director, Economic Development, City of Maple Ridge

It's a wrap. Marg Johnson, the City's long-time Film Liaison, is hitting the dusty trail and riding off in to the sunset!

It's both happy and sad news for all of us who have had the pleasure of working with Marg. Of course we're all happy that Marg will be able to spend her time enjoying time with family and friends, heading off on new adventures, or just kicking back and watching the sun set into the Salish Sea. Marg is incredibly well-respected in the film industry and with her friends and colleagues at the City of Maple Ridge. It is a sad time for us now that she is retiring, but to paraphrase A.A. Milne, we're all so very lucky to have known someone who makes saying goodbye so hard. Best wishes Marg!



Enjoy your retirement Marg

Speaking of goodbye (and in this case, good riddance), COVID-19 related infections, hospitalizations and deaths are all continuing their downward trend and vaccination rates continue to increase. We may not quite be at the end yet, but it's certainly well within sight.

As of July 1, the province is moving to Step 3 of the BC Restart Plan. In this step, all sectors will transition from COVID-19 Safety Plans to using communicable disease prevention guidance from WorkSafeBC. The government is continuing to recommend the public engage in careful social contacts and recommends the continued use of masks in public indoor settings for people who are not yet fully vaccinated.

Among the more notable changes in Step 3:

- Liquor service restrictions and seating limits for both indoor and outdoor dining will be lifted for restaurants
- Casinos and nightclubs will be allowed to re-open but with some sector specific restrictions
- Indoor fitness classes are allowed to re-open
- Businesses can again start to plan for larger meetings

As COVID-19 restrictions are eliminated, we want to make sure that we're ready to welcome back customers and staff in a safe manner and respects individual health concerns. It's important to remember there will be people who are still leery of public places and indoor spaces. Many of the practices we have adopted during the pandemic still make sense going forward—improved surface hygiene, curbside delivery, cashless payments, and e-commerce all can help attract and retain these "reluctant" customers. Communication, flexibility and respect for customers and staff will be even more important as we work through these final phases.

As always, your economic development department team is here to help and support you. #ForwardTogether

Sincerely,

Wendy



Economic Development Strategy Consultations Underway

The City of Maple Ridge is working with Rynic Strategic Solutions to develop Maple Ridge's first ever economic development strategy. The first phase of this process is collecting data from local businesses and residents to develop a blueprint to create and retain employment, while diversifying the local economy.

"This can be the one plan that answers the question: who is Maple Ridge in the future and why does it matter to us as residents, investors and visitors?" said Wendy Dupley, Director Economic Development. "We can embrace big ideas about the future, but we also need to focus on clear actions that generate progress toward our vision of the future."

"We are not a small community anymore – it's time for Maple Ridge to grow up and take our place in the region by building a sustainable city by 2050, where most of our residents will live, work and play within a 15-minute radius," said Mayor Mike Morden. "We want you, our citizens and businesses, to have your say. Help us shape the future we all want, as we strive to become the best little city in BC."

Additional consultation phases are planned in July and the draft strategy should be ready to present to Council in early fall. Please contact the Economic Development Department at invest@mapleridge.ca if you have any questions or would like to provide additional information.



Innovation Challenge Maple Ridge

The City of Maple Ridge is launching its first city-wide Innovation Challenge to celebrate and share innovative solutions that are created across our community, and for ideas that could be shared to improve services and the lifestyle for Maple Ridge residents.

The challenge is aiming to recognize and celebrate innovation in our community. We are seeking submissions that showcase ideas to improve services and/or the quality of life for residents of Maple Ridge, particularly those that develop operating methods in keeping with Council's strategic vision. To qualify for entry, you must represent a business/organization (all kinds and sectors are welcome) in Maple Ridge. Collaboration with organizations or people outside of Maple Ridge are acceptable as long as the benefit is to Maple Ridge residents.

Prizes are courtesy of our amazing sponsors: Telus, the Chamber of Commerce serving Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows, MLA Bob D'Eith & MLA Lisa Beare and the Rotary Club of Haney.

- **First Place: \$4,000**
- **Second Place: \$2,500**
- **Third Place: \$1000**



For more information or to submit your application, visit ***Innovation Challenge Maple Ridge***

BUSINESS



Economists Predict Provincial Economy to Rebound

As we start to re-open the economy, there's a growing consensus among economists that both the Canadian and British Columbian economy will see significant growth in the coming year.

TD Economics is predicting that BC will continue to have the strongest provincial economy in Canada, due to generally less stringent restrictions during the pandemic and a swifter re-opening plan. They point to BC's strong housing market, an unprecedented bull market in lumber, and the continued international demand for metals and natural gas as bright spots in the provincial economy. As a result, they expect the provincial Real GDP to grow by 6.7% this year and 4.2% in 2022.

Scotiabank Economics also sees a strengthening provincial economy and points to the province's strong technology sector—specifically the ICT sub-sector which saw output rise by 5.6%—as another bright spot in the BC economy. They are predicting slightly lower but still robust growth at 6.4% for 2021 and 4.4% in 2022.



Pandemic Results in Record Levels of Personal Savings

One unexpected result of the pandemic is that Canadians are sitting on record levels of personal savings. According to Statistics Canada, Canadians have amassed \$212 billion in savings last year compared to \$18 billion in 2019. Equifax Canada also reports that personal credit card balances are down with fewer people behind on payments and that credit scores are up overall. As pandemic-related restrictions continue to ease, economists believe we should see a significant increase in discretionary spending especially related to retail, restaurants and travel. RBC Economics notes that retail spending in Canada was up 5% in June before non-essential retailers in Ontario re-opened. They also pointed to increased discretionary spending in the hard-hit hospitality sector as spending at both restaurants and on lodging are tracking substantially higher in June.



Pandemic Brings Changes to the Restaurant Industry

The proliferation of patios is one of the most visible pandemic-related changes in the restaurant industry, but there's another less visible but potentially more profound change occurring—the replacement of printed menus with QR codes.

Printed menus have long been one of the pre-eminent marketing tools used by restaurants. In the "Belle Époque" era in the late 19th century, menu design was influenced by the Art Nouveau style and menus and restaurant posters were illustrated by artists that included Picasso and Toulouse-Lautrec. More recently, the principles of behavioural economics have been used to design menus that increase the sale of higher margin items on the menu.

The pandemic has accelerated the growing trend of replacing printed menus with QR-based online menus that include automated ordering

and payment systems. A recent CityLab *article* documents how this new technology is not only affecting labour and operational costs, but also allowing restaurants to track diner preferences and use "nudges" to increase sales by suggesting higher priced items and drink options based on your browsing history.

TOURISM



Mister Bentley – Celebrity Canine and Dog About Town

Mister Bentley, a helicopter-riding bulldog and Instagram star with over 450,000 followers, recently paid a visit to Maple Ridge as part of a promotional tour with the BC Craft Brewers Guild and the BC Ale Trail.

Mister Bentley and his crew started their day with a helicopter flight into the alpine region for a beer tasting and lunch courtesy of Ridge Brewing Co. and Humble Roots, followed by tasting trips to Foamers' Folly and Maple Meadows Brewing. The perfect day culminated in a special dinner (including a steak for Mister Bentley) prepared by Taco Fan and beer tasting on the patio at Silver Valley Brewing.

A dog-gone good time was had by all!



Quintessential Restaurants and Breweries

The Economic Development and Tourism Department is pleased to announce that they have recently been awarded a provincial government grant to highlight iconic food experience opportunities in Maple Ridge. Video footage featuring local restaurants with chefs talking about iconic dishes; outdoor patios in beautiful natural settings; images of farms that grow and supply local food; and compelling imagery that reflects our food diversity (dine around the world in your own backyard) are in the marketing plan for this fun new initiative.

Early plans include a photo shoot and social media posts depicting food and drink experiences in inspiring settings and craft brewers producing beer and serving customers outdoors. A Tastings Notes blog to be shared with our regional and provincial marketing partners will include restaurant reviews and stories, an itinerary and interactive map.

Now the call to action: if you could pick ten iconic food and drink establishments, which ones would you include? We would love to hear your suggestions for 10 quintessential cuisine experiences in Maple Ridge. Email Kathryn Baird, Tourism Coordinator: kbaird@mapleridge.ca

FILM



Film Industry Continues to Roll

Draeven McGowan, the new Film Production Liaison for the City, reports that the film industry is continuing to be active in Maple Ridge, "We've given out 103 permits to date, and film-related revenues are up by about \$10,000 compared to before the pandemic, powered by two bigger budget feature films—Sonic 2 and Heatwave—in addition to five TV series already filmed this year". McGowan also notes that the Christmas filming season is just around the corner so, once we're done with the heat wave, expect to see snow banks and Christmas trees appearing soon throughout the community.

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