



City of Maple Ridge News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Maple Ridge Council Moves Forward on Open Government Initiatives

Maple Ridge, BC: In a move to increase public accountability, transparency and citizen understanding of decision-making, Maple Ridge City Council is moving forward on implementing the goals of the Mayor's Open Government Task Force. Council directed City staff to develop cost estimates and a schedule to act on a number of recommendations that flow from a Citizens' Representatives Working Group Report completed in October of 2015.

The Citizen's Representatives Working Group came up with 58 recommendations to increase citizen participation, engagement and access to information while enhancing transparency and accountability of actions in our local government. Themes that emerged through this consultation with the public included:

- How do municipal processes work?
- How can I participate in those processes?
- Where can I find information on those processes?

A number of the citizen recommendations have been implemented by departments, including a 'Hot Topics' link mapleridge.ca/1155/Hot-Topics on the City's home page providing fast access to information on emerging issues. Remaining recommendations will be brought to Council for discussion.

Overlaid on the citizen recommendations were four staff objectives to achieve the goals of creating a more open government:

1. Improve the public's ability to interface with web-based information from the City in an intuitive and accessible manner.
2. Improve consistency, timeliness and responsiveness of correspondence with the public.
3. Increase the public's ability to find, understand and link information on topics and processes that are a priority to them.
4. Establish policies on open governance that meet legislative requirements and define standards of practice for information and data management.

These recommendations align with advice provided by David Eaves, a public policy entrepreneur and open government specialist who emphasized the value that open data can deliver to solve problems and improve processes within local government, while also providing an opportunity for the general public, educational, entrepreneurial or other enterprises to use the same data for new and innovative purposes.

Mayor Nicole Read, on behalf of Council, expressed appreciation for the work performed by members of the Citizens' Representatives Working Group.

The Open Government report and recommendations can be found on the Mayor's Open Government Task Force [webpage](http://mapleridge.ca/953) (mapleridge.ca/953).

The Staff Report and recommendations can be found [here](http://mapleridge.ca/DocumentCenter/View/1621) (mapleridge.ca/DocumentCenter/View/1621) starting at page 15.

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