



City of Maple Ridge News Release

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Council Moves Forward With Initiatives to Address Homelessness

Maple Ridge, BC: On Monday, July 4 Council will be reviewing a number of reports and recommendations related to homelessness. This includes initiatives designed to increase local public dialogue as well as regional conversations on this topic.

Council will consider submitting a request for funding to host a Mayor's Regional Summit on Homelessness. The objective of the Summit would be to create a dialogue to develop a regional position on homelessness, examine the drivers that are resulting in the number of individuals who are living on the streets and create coordinated approaches and actions that will lead to reductions in the incidence of homelessness across the region.

"It is time that regional leaders sat together to talk about an issue that is having a profound impact on our communities. Each community is facing significant costs associated with policing, bylaws and community impacts and there needs to be a strong regional voice to advocate for the resources to deal with this issue," said Mayor Nicole Read. *"This dialogue is long overdue."*

The second item on the July 4 Workshop agenda includes recommendations on Terms of Reference from the Social Policy Committee to develop and execute a community dialogue on homelessness. The proposal includes a Speakers Series open to all members of the community that would run in early fall of 2016. The Speaker Series would allow for the sharing of data and relevant information on the issues of homelessness, mental health and addictions, and would provide a forum for the community to have a dialogue on each topic.

The third item on the July 4 Workshop agenda is a report that responds to the concerns that businesses and residents near the temporary shelter raised during consultation sessions held in mid-June. The report offers a number of recommendations to mitigate impacts of the temporary shelter while it continues to operate over the next nine months. This period will allow BC Housing time to establish modular shelters at an alternate location that will remain in place for approximately three years. This will allow time for consultation and planning for a purpose-built housing and shelter facility. BC Housing has offered to invest 15-20 million dollars in Maple Ridge for a purpose-built facility.

“Council members heard, first hand, the impacts of the temporary shelter on the immediate area and are pleased that the Neighbourhood Advisory Committee has been established. These recommendations are a significant step forward to ensuring that we achieve a balance between supporting the delivery of housing and health services and the safety and security of all citizens,” said Mayor Read.

For more information about these reports or the City’s work on homelessness issues please contact Wendy McCormick, Director of Recreation & Community Services at wmccormick@mapleridge.ca or by phone at 604-463-5221.