



City of Maple Ridge News Release

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City of Maple Ridge Launches 'Forward 2020' Program to Frame Community Conversation around Homelessness

Maple Ridge, BC: In May, 2015 BC Housing made an offer to invest approximately \$15 million to build and operate a permanent housing facility that will contribute to a long-term solution around homelessness, addiction and mental health in the community. In order for the proposal to move forward the City had to provide a site for the facility. In August, 2016, the City acquired a site on Lougheed Highway in proximity to the Ridge Meadows Hospital.

In a report to Council, BC Housing recommended the proposed facility be a combination of minimal barrier housing and supportive housing with wrap around health services provided by Fraser Health.

On September 12, 2016, Council met with representatives of BC Housing and Fraser Health to discuss the recommendation in detail. Council then voted to accept the recommendation so BC Housing can proceed with design work as well as the formal Development Application process. More importantly, the vote means community engagement can now move forward.

In addition, Council endorsed a recommendation to draft Terms of Reference for a Citizen's Advisory Committee which will provide input throughout the approval process for the proposed facility as well as offer guidance to Council.

In addition to the public processes that are part of the Development Application process, Council has tasked the Maple Ridge Social Policy Advisory Committee to host a community dialogue on homelessness so the public has the opportunity to learn and engage in dialogue on this topic.

The topics and speakers for these sessions will be presented to Council for endorsement on Monday, September 19, 2016, the dates of the presentations will be announced soon after.

In order to strengthen the visibility and ease of access to information on the BC Housing proposal and SPAC Task Force forums the City has developed a new webpage and social media channels under the 'Forward 2020' banner. They will launch on Wednesday, September 14, 2016.

As the community conversation develops the new Forward 2020 webpage and social media sites will be updated with new information, including timelines for Council meetings and community forums.

For more details about the 'Forward 2020' program, the processes and engagement around the BC Housing proposal please contact Tony Cotroneo, Community Services Manager at tcotroneo@mapleridge.ca or by phone at 604-467-7392.