



City of Maple Ridge News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CITY OF MAPLE RIDGE SEEKS PUBLIC INPUT ON HOMELESSNESS FORWARD 2020: BETTER SOLUTIONS, TOGETHER

Maple Ridge, BC: In recognition of community concerns, the City of Maple Ridge has launched a community-wide initiative to get people talking about homelessness. **FORWARD 2020: Better Solutions, Together** encourages citizens to come together, get better informed on the challenging issue of street-homelessness and find creative solutions.

“The goal of this program is to foster a better understanding of the issues we face and generate constructive ideas that will help guide us as we move forward,” said Mayor Nicole Read.

Like many communities in British Columbia, Maple Ridge has come face to face with homelessness. In 2015, dozens of people without housing formed a camp on Cliff Avenue. Eventually the camp was removed following a commitment to provide a permanent housing facility. Last year, the Province of British Columbia announced it would provide \$15 million toward the proposed facility.

Through a series of four public meetings **FORWARD 2020: Better Solutions, Together** will explore street homelessness, its impacts, causes and potential solutions.

The Speakers’ Series consists of:

October 20: W5 – The Who, What, When, Where and Why of Homelessness

This session will have subject experts who will discuss the topic of homelessness with an emphasis on the causes and issues that contribute to homelessness.

October 26: Jurisdictional Matters – Challenges & Opportunities

This session will focus on the moral and legal responsibilities of government to assist in finding solutions for this difficult social issue.

November 3: Understanding Mental Health & Addictions

Homelessness is made more complex by mental health and addiction issues. This session will explore how these issues are related and reveal evidence-based and promising practices in the field of mental health and addictions.

November 9; Housing Solutions

The final session will explore some of the practices and approaches that have worked to address homelessness and create an understanding around the continuum of housing and the roles of each level of government.

Participants will have access to staff from BC Housing, the City of Maple Ridge and Fraser Health during these forums. Residents will get the background and facts needed to make concrete, informed recommendations to Council, before the proposed facility enters the city's development approval process.

To sign up for the Forward 2020: Better Solutions, Together weekly newsletter please visit <http://www.mapleridge.ca/list.aspx?ListID=301>

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Background:

Forward 2020: Better Solutions, Together - <https://www.mapleridge.ca/1489>

Community Dialogue on Homelessness - <http://www.mapleridge.ca/1537>