



# City of Maple Ridge News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date January 24, 2017 #17-09

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## **Brand Review Recommendations Endorsed by Council**

**Maple Ridge, BC:** Maple Ridge is one of the fastest growing communities in Metro Vancouver. The combination of housing affordability and the billion dollar investment by senior governments to improve access to the community have fueled this growth. These factors, plus the evolving regional economy, have brought an unprecedented level of change in the community.

Maple Ridge Council has made employment growth one of their key priorities. Recognizing that Maple Ridge is in a very competitive landscape, Council directed staff to undertake a review of the perception of the Maple Ridge 'brand' in 2015. Council asked the fundamental question, 'How do citizens of Maple Ridge and Metro Vancouver residents perceive Maple Ridge?' By understanding how the Maple Ridge brand is perceived, Council could then better determine how to best position and market our community to attract investment, stimulate employment opportunities and support the delivery of civic services.

Illuminata Marketing, a consulting firm that specializes in branding, was hired to undertake this work.

The project involved a comprehensive methodology which included focus group meetings, a random telephone survey, online surveys open to the entire community, one-on-one interviews and a review of the website, marketing materials and publications from across the organization. Illuminata Marketing carried out their field work during the summer of 2016 and presented their final report with findings and recommendations to Council on January 16, 2017.

The report identified seven key findings:

1. The overall impression of the City of Maple Ridge is positive among residents.
2. While the overall impression among residents is positive, there is room for improvement.
3. The beauty of Maple Ridge's natural setting and outdoor spaces resonates strongly across all audiences.
4. A wide divergence of views and perceptions was noted on other attributes of the City.
5. Metro Vancouver residents have a 'neutral' impression of Maple Ridge.
6. There appears to be a gap between the City's published 'vision' and perceptions among segments of the community.
7. The opportunity to strengthen the consistency around Maple Ridge's brand was identified.

The findings provide a clear path from which to build a stronger brand story for Maple Ridge, based on the City's amazing natural setting. As part of the final report, Illuminata Marketing outlined an action plan that sets out a path to achieving the goals of creating an authentic brand and story to market our community and strengthen civic pride. The recommendations include: Establishing a Brand Advisory Committee to drive a branding process, clarifying the broader vision and aspirations of the City and developing a brand story together with refreshed graphic symbols and communications materials, a launch event and rolling out the brand.

"The report provides Council with a foundation from which we can work with an engaged community to create an authentic brand story that resonates with all citizens and shows the region and the world what we already know - Maple Ridge is a great place to live, surrounded by natural beauty, with strong community connections and a richness of future potential," said Mayor Read.

Council endorsed the report and approved the recommendation to have an implementation plan developed which will outline the steps and financial implications for the project.

The implementation plan which will be brought back to Council in February of 2017 will propose a detailed framework for the work required to meet the objectives of strengthening the City's brand.

The Branding Review report is available on the City's website at [www.mapleridge.ca/DocumentCenter/View/12599](http://www.mapleridge.ca/DocumentCenter/View/12599)