



City of Maple Ridge News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**New Cultural Plan Community Forum –
Creating a Culture Forward Maple Ridge 2027 on **February 21 at 6:30 pm**
*Note: Date changed due to inclement weather forecasted this week.***

Maple Ridge, BC: What is the state of culture in Maple Ridge and what is the vision for the future? Culture defines who we are as a people; keeping alive our past, reflecting our values, articulating our dreams and fostering pride in who we are. It gives us our unique sense of place and identity that shapes our community. The City of Maple Ridge is developing a new Cultural Plan that will guide the City's role and investment in arts and cultural services over the next ten years. The Culture Plan Task Group and Public Art Steering Committee invite the community – artists, arts and culture groups, businesses, cultural industries, educational institutions and other stakeholders to the first ***Cultural Plan Community Forum on February 21 at 6:30 pm***, at the ACT Arts Centre. Everyone is welcome, please RSVP by email to submissions@mapleridge.ca or call 604-467-7342.

Cultural planning offers an opportunity for local government and cultural groups to develop a strategic plan that will integrate arts and culture more fully into the community and more specifically, to identify how cultural resources can support a range of community priorities and contribute to civic goals. While the 1996 Ridge Meadows Arts and Culture Plan is now outdated and many of the goals identified have been achieved, the cultural community has continued to develop and is at a point where a new strategic plan is instrumental to move the cultural development of the community forward. Recent projects such as the Cultural Mapping project and investment in new cultural grants including operating agreements and increased festivals funding, public art and the newly expanded Artist in Residence program have prepared a good foundation for this work. The cultural sector has grown in strength and it is ready to create a new vision and direction that would leverage opportunities in our growing community. The timing of

the new Cultural Plan will be beneficial in the development of the City's branding, tourism strategy, proposed civic infrastructure and other civic plans. The public engagement process will include the cultural forum on **February 21**, focus groups/workshops, a survey, pop-up displays with writing walls and a Cultural Champions Summit. A draft report will be presented to Council in early summer once the feedback from stakeholders and the public has been gathered and analyzed along with research and comparative data from other cities across Canada and internationally.

Mayor Nicole Read comments that "this is an exciting time for the City. Culture builds community, contributes towards cultural tourism and economic benefits and enhances quality of life in Maple Ridge."

For further questions, please contact Yvonne Chui at 604-467-7415 or yvonne.chui@mapleridge.ca.

Photos are available upon request.