



# City of Maple Ridge News Release

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## **City Mobilizes to Deal With Cliff Avenue Camp**

**Maple Ridge, BC:** Last week Maple Ridge Council approved funding for an integrated approach to deal with the issues around homelessness in the community, with a strong focus on providing outreach to help citizens who are suffering from addiction and mental health issues who have ended up on the streets. The resources expended to deal with these issues on a day-to-day basis impacts the RCMP, Bylaws, Parks and Operations Departments. In just a few days a camp has emerged along Cliff Avenue which requires that the full team mobilize to deal with the impacts for residents in the area.

“We will be ready to launch all facets of our Task Force initiative within a few weeks, however in just under one week of more relaxed enforcement a substantial camp has sprung up on a roadway near one of the service providers in our community, highlighting the very issues our Task Force is working to deal with,” said Maple Ridge Mayor Nicole Read. She adds, “We are in the process of informing the people that are squatting on the street that they will need to pack up their belongings and leave the area. Staff from the Maple Ridge Fire Department, Ridge Meadows RCMP, Maple Ridge Bylaws Enforcement and Maple Ridge Parks, will work in conjunction with community outreach workers to help connect the displaced people with services to deal with the issues that find them living on the street. Our short and long term approach is to deal with these people as individuals and with dignity and compassion.”

Later this month, Maple Ridge will launch an integrated program dealing with the broad range of issues that see the most vulnerable citizens of our community living on the streets. At the core of the program will be the Street Outreach Team that will see a one-to-one interaction with the people on our streets suffering from addiction and mental health issues. Clearly there are gaps in the provision of services to people on the streets. The temporary funding envelope allows the

City to step in and be proactive in connecting this vulnerable population with the services they need to move away from life on the streets.

Other components of the program will include community outreach to engage more citizens for such programs as Speed Watch, Block Watch and Citizens on Patrol programs. There's already work underway to ensure bylaw compliance around derelict properties and targeting the criminal element, particularly the drug culture, which preys on these vulnerable citizens.

"For most citizens it's hard to comprehend how one spirals into a life on the streets, and we understand the impatience that people have around this issue. It is jarring to see how failures in the social safety net and delivery of services run by the Federal and Provincial governments have failed these people," said Mayor Read. She continued, "Every community in the Lower Mainland is dealing with these issues and the public is tired of the finger pointing. Something needs to be done. In Maple Ridge we are taking action. And I want to be clear to our citizens, and those providing services in the community, that we will be assessing the delivery of services in this community. We want to make sure that we identify redundancies and gaps in service delivery in our community and ensure that the people who need help are getting it."

Details of the full Task Force work will be released on May 21. For more information please contact Mayor Nicole Read by email at [nread@mapleridge.ca](mailto:nread@mapleridge.ca) or by phone at 604-463-5221.