

Mayor's Q4 Update: Speaking Notes

We were elected a year ago and there is a long list of achievements that we have accomplished as a group.

We started our term with the development of the Council Code of Conduct to ensure that the work that we do here in Chambers is centred on respect.

The first part of any new Council term involves a lot of training for the new members and learning each other's strengths so that we can work together effectively as a team. Our citizens have selected a mix of new faces and past experience to take us through the next four years.

Our citizens gave us a strong mandate and we have acted on their wishes by developing our Strategic Plan for Maple Ridge.

Our work here in the City and in our advocacy to organizations outside the City is driven by our Strategic Plan and ensuring that we have the tools we need to deliver on the broad vision and our plan.

Inside the City we've been working to ensure that we have a strong and healthy organization. We've been dealing with a number of retirements in the organization and working with our Human Resources team to recruit strong leaders to move our Strategic Plan forward.

As a Council, we are working with the City team to look at how we can deliver services in an efficient and effective way, cost versus value, ensuring that we do our work with a strong customer service focus.

I may be the first Mayor to have worked with three CAOs in my first year, with the retirement of Paul Gill at the beginning of the year, and the work of Kelly Swift as our interim CAO while we did a cross Canada search for our new CAO, Al Horsman.

Al will bring his broad experience in public service to deliver on Council's long term plan for our community.

Council is working on our first business plan. This is not without challenges. We've had \$1.4 million dollars in hard costs related to the St. Anne Camp and \$1.4 million on managing the day-to-day impacts of this very dangerous situation.

Our council has inherited the \$50 million dollar recreation infrastructure program that's underway. We fully support these investments in our community and our youth, however we know that these investments have to be paid for in an environment where there is taxpayer fatigue. We need to make investments in our human resources, infrastructure and ensure that we have a strong and sustainable capital plan for our community.

I want to talk about what we've accomplished on our Strategic Priorities in the first year of our mandate.

Community Safety

This has been our highest priority. It's about managing aggressive, criminal, disrespectful and unsafe behaviour in our community.

Our approach is to reward the positive and deter the negative. We are implementing programs to take firm action to address individuals who are responsible for the negative behaviour and determine what is causing these problems and work to connect them with supports to change their lives.

The camp was closed by following a court mandated process. This was a significant milestone for our community and allows us to move forward with a full suite of actions to move Maple Ridge forward.

We've launched our Community Social Safety Initiative which is now known as 'LEAD Maple Ridge' and we've recruited two very experienced citizens to help us move that work forward.

We've moved forward with our Safer Streets Bylaw, we've modified our Highways and Traffic Bylaw back to the Provincial standards to ensure the safe use of our sidewalks and position our City for the micro-mobility ride sharing. We've added new private security resources for the Downtown, recruited and deployed new Bylaw officers and we are undertaking a police services review to assess resources, costs versus value and look at how we are deploying our resources.

These are some of the short term decisions that we've made and the long term roll out of the LEAD Maple Ridge will have impacts for many years into the future.

We need to deal with the holes in the local social safety net. There is a serious drug problem, specifically fentanyl, and the associated crime that's happening when people need to support their addictions. This has an impact on our citizen's sense of well being and our business community. There is a lack of accountability in how services are delivered and I want to be clear that we are going to deliver on our commitment to safer street and ensure that there are resources to help those who are struggling.

We are exploring partnerships to deliver a treatment centre and we have recently signed a memorandum of intention with the Community Land Trust to explore this kind of development. We have other work underway that is still under negotiation and we'll see this roll out over the next year.

We have policy work in effect to drive affordable housing projects through density bonuses with a goal of creating a permanent sustainable funding model to be able to acquire land for affordable housing partnerships.

We have 4 low barrier operations in our community now, two of them imposed by senior government, and this is not an acceptable situation in the long term. We estimate that there are over 800 people living in our community in scattered housing under provincial subsidies, and in our estimation we have done more than our share in the region.

We have a recovery/sober living housing Bylaw under development to ensure that we have a handle on the number of facilities operating in our neighbourhoods, and strong accountability in place.

Our Salvation Army is a willing partner and we know that there are other partners in the community. We are firm in our belief that there is a better way because what's being done in our

community and in the region is not delivering results – this needs to be about effective policy, not politics.

Last on the safety list is the outstanding work of our City team dealing with the impacts of the extreme weather incidents our community faced this year. From snowstorms to windstorms, our Operation crews did outstanding work to keep us safe and keep our roads open.

The next area is **Growth**:

The City of Maple Ridge has over 3000 housing units in the process along with 150,000 square feet of new commercial space as well as 300,000 square feet of industrial space. Creating new jobs and economic opportunity is important for our community.

We are moving forward with our work in the Albion Flats and northeast Albion planning processes. We're nearing completion of our Lougheed transit Corridor planning work and we're on the way to updates to our secondary suites bylaws.

We've taken steps to bring new housing forms to our community, courtyard style fourplexes, which will help bring density to neighbourhoods while preserving the character of our streetscapes.

Maple Ridge's population will grow to 130,000 by 2040 and half of this growth will happen right in our downtown. We are building on the foundation of past Councils to honour our Official Community Plan and building complete neighbourhoods.

We're making investments in our water system, our sewer system and other key infrastructure. These investments total \$160 million this year alone.

We saw 150 reports this year, we have 418 active development files and we issued over 5000 permits for \$185,000 of estimated value topping the 2018 total by \$15,000.

We are a partner in the Pitt Meadows Regional Airport where we are seeing \$20 million in new investments for our region.

Let's move on to **Transportation**.

We're in the midst of an update to our Transit Area Plan and we are looking at the impacts of traffic from the Golden Ears Bridge, the North Lougheed Corridor project discussion in Pitt Meadows and looking down the road to ensure that we have option for a mass transit corridor into our town centre to meet future needs.

We're driving density into our downtown and there has been significant population growth in Albion, and we're seeing 2000 new cars a year on our roads and so we need to be looking at ways to cure the congestion. We will continue to advocate for investments in our transportation infrastructure and we're moving forward with the plan to extend Abernethy Way, and you can see the work underway on the Haney Bypass and the preliminary work to expand the capacity of Lougheed Highway east of 272 Street.

Let's talk about **Recreation**:

This is a \$50 million dollar plan that Council supports, and our work will be ensuring that there is a sustainable plan to pay for these investments in our youth.

With the recent completion of the new fields at Telosky, we now have six turf fields to serve the field sports groups in our community. The new field house and realignment of the baseball diamond are nearing completion.

We are looking at upgrades to the Hammond Community Centre and the amenities at Larry Walker Field. We've recently upgraded the sports courts at Garibaldi Secondary School and the upgrades at the Maple Ridge Secondary track are coming soon.

Firefighters Park and the new Fire Hall #4 are under development.

Many of these facilities will be venues for the 2020 BC Summer Games that our community will be hosting in July of next year.

Finally, the upgrades to our Aquatic Centre are nearing completion and the facility will reopen in early 2020.

We have done a significant amount of **Community Engagement:**

We have reached out to the community for the Tree Bylaw consultation.

We engaged our business community and conducted a survey through our Business Walk program.

As part of the LEAD Maple Ridge program we sought to create the positive interactions in our downtown through the 'Happenings in the Park' program and some excellent community events such as Celebrate the Night, Car Free Day, Canada Day, The Maple Ridge Ale Trail and the always popular Farmers Market. These events make our downtown a safe and enjoyable destination for area families.

We endorsed the Youth Strategy for Maple Ridge and spent a lot of time reaching out to the many organizations working in our community, non-profits, the BIA, Chamber, volunteers and the Provincial and Federal representatives for our City.

That's a great segue to **Intergovernmental relations:**

We were very fortunate to meet with five Cabinet Ministers in meetings in Victoria this year and I had a wonderful opportunity to meet with the Premier to talk to him about our vision for being a demonstration City for service delivery.

We've enjoyed very positive relationships with our Member of Parliament, and I'd like to thank Dan Ruimy for his dedication and service to our community during his time as MP and welcome the newly elected Marc Dalton to this role.

I postponed a planned trip to Ottawa in order to give the newly elected Liberal government a chance to get their cabinet announced and get their new government up and running. The time wasn't right to head to Ottawa to lobby and I'm cognizant of the costs to taxpayers.

We continue to work with our neighbouring governments, specifically our First Nations, Pitt Meadows and Port Coquitlam. We were successful with our resolutions at the Union of BC Municipalities, particularly the one related to local government autonomy.

This has been a huge first year, we've laid out our plan and vision for a safer community and ensuring that there are resources to get people the help that they need.

The seeds of this work have been planted over the last year and we will continue to move forward and monitor the work, measure the results and adjust our plan as we go forward.

I want to talk about our work to change gears and start to focus on other aspects of our Community Vision.

Economic Development will be a priority area in the upcoming year.

We will be doing some visioning on that work, with a focus on building our local economy and jobs. We need to expand our commercial and industrial tax base. We need to look at how we create incentives to build a strong and diverse local economy.

We know our residential taxpayers are fatigued and we will explore new income streams and look at how we can build on our technological infrastructure. These were some of the topics that were discussed during our 'Innovation in Emerging Cities' event in 2019.

We will be moving forward with caution as we look at the impacts of the investments we are making in new facilities and the needs around infrastructure. Our new CAO will work closely with Council to implement our long term vision around the growth of our community and ensuring a sustainable financial plan.

Our community is a leader in **Open Government**.

We are committed to show you everything we can. We're working on a portal so you can engage with Council. We're working on some guidelines around petitions.

We're working on enhancement to the metrics that we use to measure our work. Council and our staff are very busy and we're committed to being transparent in our work.

Many people connect with us on social media and other ways. We read your comments, and while we may not respond on social media we are listening. We have updated our Council communications guidelines to make sure that you get a response to your emails and letters in a timely fashion.

I want to conclude by saying that I'm very proud of what we've accomplished as a group this first year of our term. I've listened to your comments and suggestions and I appreciate your perspectives on the issues our community is facing. You have all taught me a lot and you have all contributed to our accomplishments.

As we finish this first year we're transitioning from a reactive approach to a more proactive approach. We have laid the groundwork for a better future for our City.

I want to thank all of you around the Council table for your work as individuals, together, your support and a shout out to your families.

The trees we have planted together will bear fruit far into the future.

I want to talk about some specific work. Council conducted a review of our committee structure and terms of reference to ensure that there is alignment in delivering on our Strategic Priorities. Next we'll look at the external committees. I want to thank Councillors Dueck and Yousef for their work to guide this project.

I want to thank our staff who worked hard to deliver on our vision and I want to acknowledge their work outside of Chambers doing the work to keep our City running day-to-day.

Our CAO knows that we're not taking our foot off the gas. There's still lots of work to do for the taxpayers we serve. We know what we were elected to do and we will stay the course.

Our success will be measured by our collective work. We're walking in step together, working to build the greatest City in BC.

Finally a big thank you to the public for their patience, understanding and their ongoing support.

That concludes my update. Thank you taking the time to listen and you can reach out to us at mayorandcouncil@mapleridge.ca if you have comments or questions.