

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 4, 2023 #23-25

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Have Your Say on Maple Ridge Fire Services

Maple Ridge, B.C: The City is collecting data and input as it develops its new Fire Services Strategic Plan that will guide delivery of fire services over the next 15 years. Residents are invited to share their feedback from May 4 to 22 as part of the Plan's development.

Maple Ridge residents who complete the online survey at engage.mapleridge.ca/firestratplan by May 22 will be entered in a draw for a home emergency preparedness kit. Those attending this weekend's Ridge Meadows Home Show are also encouraged to drop by the Maple Ridge Fire and Rescue display to learn more and provide input.

Maple Ridge has changed significantly since the existing Fire Master Plan was adopted 20 years ago to serve what was then a largely rural community with mostly single-family neighbourhoods and a smaller urban footprint. Today, Maple Ridge is a community in transition that balances its rural heritage with urban-style development and growth as defined in the City's Official Community Plan.

While Maple Ridge Fire & Rescue Services has achieved many milestones over the years, including a transition to a composite staffing model with both career and paid-on-call firefighters, updated fire stations, improved training programs, and leading practice fleet and equipment programs, its staffing and response model have remained relatively unchanged amid the community's ongoing growth, changing neighbourhoods and evolving service demands.

"The new Fire Services Strategic Plan will be a roadmap to guide us into the future, keeping the best of our current fire protection system and enhancing it with strategic investments to meet current and future service demands," Fire Chief Michael Van Dop said. "We're looking forward to developing an updated approach based on data, standards and best practices."

Development of the new Fire Services Strategic Plan is taking place over the first half of 2023 and includes community and staff input, consultation with interested parties, performance assessment, data collection and assessment, modeling of future demand, and consideration of industry standards, best practices, City planning documents and Council strategic priorities.

Service-drivers being considered during the plan development include:

- Population growth over the next 20 years to 150,000 residents;
- More development density in the Town Centre and residential neighbourhoods, with a shift toward smaller lots and yards and more multi-family housing;
- Increasing growth in Albion, Silver Valley and southeast Maple Ridge;
- Potential employment and industrial growth toward the east, including the 256 Street industrial area, Thornhill Urban Reserve and Yennadon Lands;
- Rising demand for medical aid from vulnerable populations;
- Climate change impacts including growing risk of wildfires, floods and major storms; and
- Increasing tourism at Golden Ears Provincial Park and elsewhere.

The City has engaged FireWise Consulting, a respected BC fire service consulting firm, to conduct the research, analyze the data and make recommendations for an updated Fire Services Strategic Plan.

Following the community engagement period, the results will be considered and incorporated in the draft document to be presented in a Council report and publication in June.

For more information and to take the survey by May 22, visit engage.mapleridge.ca/firestratplan.