



# City of Maple Ridge News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **City Moves Forward With Injunction Against St. Anne Encampment**

**Maple Ridge, BC:** Maple Ridge Council unanimously decided to resume injunction proceedings to clear the St. Anne encampment.

“In June of this year, the City adjourned the injunction process against the camp to allow BC Housing and health care resources the opportunity to develop and implement a plan that would result in a voluntary decampment. Here we are in October and there has been no significant movement towards a decampment. In fact, the safety of people in the camp, the Fire Department, Police, other first responders and the surrounding neighbourhood has deteriorated. We have no choice but to seek an injunction for the camp to come to an end,” said Mayor Read.

The circumstances and concerns of the City include the following:

1. Growing Health, Safety and Fire Risks in the Encampment

A briefing report from the Maple Ridge Fire Department describes specific concerns around safety and fire risks for both the occupants and first responders. These concerns were raised with the camp leadership who have either ignored these requirements or otherwise chosen not to follow them.

2. Reports of Increased Criminal Activity

Reports of criminal activity at the encampment have increased and the RCMP confirm that they are concerned about increased weapons-related investigations and arrests at the encampment.

3. Shift in Attitude of Occupants and their Leadership

The Maple Ridge Fire Department was tasked by the City to lead regular inspections of the conditions at the encampment. Their briefing report describes a shift in attitude that

inspectors have experienced. The RCMP also report a significant increase in aggressive behaviour by occupants towards police.

#### 4. Increase in Public Complaints and Nuisances

From the outset of the occupation, the City has experienced complaints and concerns from area residents and businesses. As of late, these complaints and concerns have increased severely. At the October 24, 2017 Council meeting, Council heard a number of firsthand accounts about activities at the encampment and how they have affected the lives of those in the neighbourhood.

#### 5. Growth of the Encampment

The City had hoped for a general decampment as BC Housing worked to find solutions for those in the encampment. Instead, the encampment has continued to grow. The property is unsafe and incapable of safely supporting the number of occupants and tents located within the encampment. This growth and density further contributes to the rise in life-safety risks, criminal concerns, negative and aggressive attitudes and behaviours at the encampment.

“The decision to proceed with the injunction was not made lightly. Area residents, businesses and City Council have shown great patience but this patience has been exhausted. It is time to act,” said Mayor Read.

While the City is moving forward with the injunction proceedings, the underlying issues including poverty, housing, mental health and addictions will remain. These issues are the responsibility of the Province and Federal Government. The City implores the Province, through BC Housing, to lead community consultation efforts and find solutions for these very important issues.

The City of Maple Ridge’s legal counsel will be reaching out to area residents and businesses to update victim impact statements in preparation for the injunction hearing. If you are a business owner or citizen who lives in proximity to the St. Anne camp and have been impacted by the activity at the site you can contact the Clerks Department by email at [clerks@mapleridge.ca](mailto:clerks@mapleridge.ca) with your contact information and a brief outline of your experiences. Legal counsel will be provided with these emails and will be contacting people privately to record the information.

Additional updates will be provided as more information is available. For more information on this release please contact Paul Gill, Chief Administrative Office by phone at 604-467-7398 or by email at [pgill@mapleridge.ca](mailto:pgill@mapleridge.ca).