



City of Maple Ridge News Release

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Mayor Provides Status on Homelessness Solutions Task Force and Open Government Task Force

Maple Ridge, BC: On February 10, 2015 Mayor Read presented two reports and a series of recommendations to Council on two key task forces that were established at the beginning of their term. Council approved the recommendations unanimously to move this work forward.

“We are very proud to present the first reports on our Homelessness Solutions and Open Government Task Forces and begin the work to engage the community and key stakeholders to establish ourselves as leaders in both focus areas,” said Mayor Read. “I would like to thank my Council colleagues for their dedication and commitment to these task forces. Councillors Masse and Robson bring a great deal of expertise and passion to the Homelessness Solutions Task Force and Councillors Bell and Shymkiw are my partners on the Open Government Task Force. We are very proud to roll out some specific recommendations to start our work in this area.”

The resolution that Council passed establishes the Mandate for the Mayor’s Homelessness Solutions Task Force as;

- 1) Increasing access to treatment for people dealing with drug addiction
- 2) Increasing adequate support for people with significant mental illness
- 3) Increasing the sense of health and safety in the community

“One thing that we all heard during the election is that people are frustrated by the issue of homelessness in our community. Many of the people wandering our streets are dealing with mental health and addiction issues and seem to be falling between the cracks of the system that is there to help them,” said Mayor Read. “Further, there is a group of people in our

community, the criminal element, whose actions feed the problem. This task force is going to have a strong focus on helping these vulnerable citizens get access to treatment for addiction and mental health issues. It is important that our Police, Fire Department and Bylaws team coordinate their work to ensure Maple Ridge is unattractive to the criminal element that feeds off the most vulnerable people.”

The Mayor’s Homelessness Solutions Task Force will seek expert advice from working groups on outreach, prevention, education, shelter, enforcement and community standards. This task force will report back to Council on a monthly basis with a focus on solutions that will move people off the streets into housing and the treatments that they need to deal with mental health and addiction issues.

The Open Government Task Force mandate speaks to the goal of increasing citizen access to information, participation, engagement and collaboration in community issues. The mandate also speaks to the importance of transparency and accountability of actions. One of the key parts of this work is to engage the community to assess the openness of the City and provide feedback and suggestions to make Maple Ridge a leader in this field.

The Open Government Task Force plan calls for citizen representatives to be recruited and work alongside outside experts and internal staff to help develop recommendations.

Council passed two recommendations made by the Open Government Task Force to move to live streaming of Council Workshop and Committee of the Whole meetings at the earliest opportunity. In addition, Council has directed that basic information on contracts that the City has entered into be available and accessible to the public. As the Task Force working groups are established more recommendations will come before Council through the group’s monthly reports.

For more information about the Mayor’s Task Force on Homelessness Solutions and the Open Government Task Force please contact Mayor Nicole Read at nread@mapleridge.ca or by calling 604-463-5221.