2026 - 2031 Human Resources Strategic Plan

# Our People

## At the heart of service excellence



Maple Ridge

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**The City of Maple Ridge respectfully acknowledges that we are located on the traditional territories of the Katzie (q̓ i꞉ə̓y̓ ) First Nation and Kwantlen (qʼʷaːn̓ ƛʼən̓ ) First Nation.**



# The Heart of Maple Ridge

Every day in Maple Ridge, thousands of moments unfold that shape the life of our city. A lifeguard welcomes a nervous child into the pool. A bylaw officer listens patiently to a resident. A firefighter returns safely after a long night's call. An RCMP officer volunteers at a local school. Operations teams do the quiet, often unseen work that keeps the city humming. A city planner works closely with a contractor to finalize a new project. Building inspectors help ensure the safety of our buildings and infrastructure. Staff engage with the public through community meetings, focus groups, events, and at City Council meetings.

These moments add up to something extraordinary: the lived experience of our community. They are what make Maple Ridge not just a city, but a home. And at the center of it all is our people.

The 2026-2031 Human Resources (HR) Strategic Plan is, at its core, a people plan. It is about building a workplace where employees feel safe, supported, and inspired – because when our people thrive, our community thrives.






# Message from Scott Hartman



## Chief Administrative Officer (City Manager)

As the City of Maple Ridge continues its transformation, the next five years are about sustaining what we have built — embedding leadership, culture, and systems that will endure and evolve with our community.

Our organization has grown in both complexity and confidence. The work of the past several years has not only modernized how we serve but also re-defined who we are: an organization that leads with integrity, collaboration, and care. The challenge now is to ensure that these strengths remain consistent and scalable, regardless of who holds any given role.

*"Our goal is simple yet ambitious: to build an organization that leads confidently and compassionately, even as its leaders change."*

Human Resources plays a vital role in this evolution — not as the sole owner of culture, but as the architect and steward of systems that empower every leader to lead. The next HR Strategic Plan will focus on equipping managers and supervisors to think strategically, to act with courage and accountability, and to nurture teams built on trust and psychological safety.

We will continue to embed our values into daily practice: learning that encourages safe experimentation; recruitment that looks for curiosity and alignment with our purpose; and leadership that is both compassionate and decisive. These are the foundations of a resilient organization — one capable of adapting to change while staying grounded in its principles.

When leadership becomes shared, continuous, and contagious, we create a culture that lasts. That is the true legacy of this plan — and of our city.



# Message from Michelle Lewis

### Chief Human Resources Officer



As I reflect on the last five years at the City of Maple Ridge, I am most proud of the transformation we have achieved together. HR is seen as a trusted partner and a catalyst for change.  We are helping to shape the City of Maple Ridge as an employer of choice.

The 2026–2031 HR Strategic Plan — Our People's Plan — is about moving from building to embedding. It is not simply about HR initiatives; it is about creating an environment where every leader, every manager, every supervisor and every employee takes ownership of the culture that we have created together. HR's role is to enable, equip, and guide — so that leadership, engagement, and care become part of how we do business, not something delegated to one department.

We will continue to strengthen leadership capability at every level, modernize through technology and data, and champion psychological safety and belonging. But equally important, we will invest in developing confident, capable leaders who can carry this culture forward. Our work is to make sure the systems are there — the learning frameworks, the wellness programs, the recognition structures — so our leaders can bring them to life.

The city is moving quickly, and expectations are high. That pace requires courage and connection. It demands that we listen to one another, learn continuously, and lead with authenticity. HR will continue to be a catalyst for change, but lasting success depends on all of us — leaders who model our values, employees who share their voices, and partners who collaborate to make this a truly great place to work.

*"This plan is not about HR owning the culture — it's about every leader embodying it."*

This plan is our collective promise: that the people strategy of the City of Maple Ridge will not live only in policy, but in practice — woven into every conversation, every decision, and every act of leadership. Together, we will ensure our culture is embodied by everyone who calls Maple Ridge their workplace and community.

# CUPE Local 622

### Message from Neerje Harvey, President

As an employee of the City of Maple Ridge, as well as a Union leader, I have witnessed substantial change over the past five years. When I started in my role as Union President, it was difficult to get quorum in meetings; now we see strong attendance, active participation, and a sense that employees believe their voices matter. The biggest shift has been the collaborative relationship between the city and the union. We may not always agree, but there is respect, open communication, and a willingness to find solutions.

Looking ahead, sustaining that trust will be critical. Staff want transparency, fairness, and recognition – not just in words but in actions. They want managers who see them as people, not numbers. They want consistency in how we treat auxiliaries, full-time staff, and those aspiring to leadership. And they want to feel proud to work for Maple Ridge, knowing their contributions are valued.

For me, this plan is also about building beyond individuals. Trust cannot rest on one leader, one union president, one manager – it must be embedded in the culture of the organization.

Over the next five years, I hope to see us continue the momentum of what has been accomplished so far. I hope to see continued investment in youth, recognition, and wellness, but also in the small, everyday actions that show staff they matter.

When we walk the talk, when HR is visible in departments, when recognition is authentic – that is when One City truly comes alive.

CUPE 622
Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows



# IAFF 4449





### Message from Chris McKee, President, and Dave Samson, Fire Chief

The Fire Department's story over the past five years is one of transformation, cultural renewal, and a clear shift from conflict to collaboration. Where there once was distrust and distance in HR decisions, today there is open communication, mutual respect, and confidence in leadership appointments.

This progress has been built on consistency, respect, and a commitment to genuine dialogue. The opportunity is to embed this consultative approach into systems and processes, so it becomes a permanent part of the City's culture, not something reliant on individual leaders.

**Key opportunities:**

**HR Business Partner Model** – Deepening the model so the unique and complex realities of fire services are fully understood, supported, and incorporated into city-wide planning.

**Succession Planning** – Creating pathways to prepare the next generation of leaders, while making senior roles attractive and accessible. Emotional Intelligence and Leadership competencies will be as essential as technical expertise.




**Health and Wellness** – Building on the innovative work already underway in Fire Services. As a leader in employee wellness, there is an opportunity to scale these practices across the city.

**Celebration and Storytelling** – In the fast pace of emergency services, accomplishments can be overlooked. Taking time to recognize achievements builds morale, reinforces culture, and shows the value of collaboration in action.

Together, HR, IAFF and the Fire Department's leadership have laid a foundation of trust and partnership. That foundation is strong – and it positions both teams to continue building a culture where collaboration delivers lasting, city-wide impact.

# Reflection on the Human Resources Strategic Plan 2022–2025

### Strengthening Culture, Connection and Trust

Over the past five years, the City of Maple Ridge has experienced meaningful transformation, one grounded not only in strategy but in action.

What began as a strategic plan evolved into a shared commitment to strengthening culture, modernizing systems, and building an organization where people feel supported, valued, and connected to purpose.

This work has helped foster a more collaborative and connected workplace culture, while establishing Human Resources as a trusted partner to staff, management, and leadership.

The past five years have also seen the introduction of significant new HR programming, along with enhancements to existing programs, resources, and supports, to better serve employees across the organization.

As **Michelle Lewis, Chief Human Resources Officer**, reflects:



*"It was not just a document that sat on a shelf, but instead, a narrative that guided each step we took. It became a catalyst for new conversations, innovation, and passion."*

2026 BC's Top Employers

Together, these efforts have created a more open, respectful, and solutions-focused environment, strengthened the employee experience, and contributed to the City being recognized as one of BC's Top Employers for three consecutive years.



## Advancing the HR Business Partner Model

One of the most significant transformations has been the evolution of HR into a strategic business partner. Rather than operating solely as a centralized function, HR has partnered with departments and leadership to anticipate needs, solve problems, and co-create solutions. This evolution has been supported by:

- **Increased responsiveness and tailored support across business units**
- **Stronger alignment between people strategies and organizational priorities**

This shift reflects a broader transformation, from service provider to trusted advisor and strategic partner.

## Supporting Labour Relations and Workplace Responsiveness

Meaningful progress has been made in building more proactive labour relations practices, improving accountability, and supporting timely, respectful responses to workplace matters.

- **Facilitating collaborative discussions to resolve workplace issues and strengthen working relationships**
- **Strengthening responses to Respectful Workplace investigations, with attention to psychological Wellbeing**
- **Implementing an accountability tracker to support timely follow-up on labour relations inquiries**
- **Improving response timelines through clearer processes and consistent accountability**

*"We've moved from a culture of conflict to one of collaboration, where conversations happen, solutions are found, and everyone feels supported."*

**Chris McKee, IAFF 4449 President**

*"Building trust and community among staff isn't just about aligning with goals, it's about making people feel valued, heard, and invested in the work they do."*

**Neerje Harvey, CUPE 622 President**

These efforts have helped strengthen relationships, clarify accountability, and support a more responsive and constructive approach to workplace challenges.

## Enhancing Employee Experience and Engagement

Significant progress has been made in understanding and improving the employee experience.

Key accomplishments include:

- **Launching new-hire touchpoint meetings (30/60/90-day check-ins)**
- **Enhancing exit interview processes and corporate employee surveys to capture employee voices**
- **Implementing corporate employee engagement and diversity surveys to better understand workforce experience**
- **Developing and implementing an Employee Appreciation and Recognition Framework**

These efforts have strengthened feedback loops and created more opportunities for employees to be heard, recognized, and engaged.

## Embedding Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

The organization made meaningful strides in advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion:

- **Creation of an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Framework**
- **Launch of a cross-functional grassroots staff led Diversity and Inclusion Committee**
- **Integration of EDI into ongoing culture initiatives**

These efforts reflect a growing commitment to building an inclusive workplace where all employees feel a sense of belonging.






## Investing in Leadership and Talent Development

The past five years saw a strong focus on developing people and building leadership capacity:

- **Launch of a learning and development framework**
- **Delivering corporate training programs and leadership development aligned to organizational competencies**
- **Refresh and relaunch of the buddy program – Buddy Up @ OneCity Connect**
- **Supporting supervisory and management development through structured training programs, including BCIT leadership training and Hiring Manager Certification**
- **Launch of LinkedIn Learning to support foundational corporate and job-specific training across the organization**

These investments have provided an opportunity for staff across the organization to continue on their lifelong learning journey.

## Modernizing Talent, Systems, and Analytics

Progress was also made in strengthening foundational systems and decision-making tools:

- **Advancing recruitment and selection processes through continuous improvement and standardization**
- **Developing competency frameworks and structured talent practices to support hiring and development**
- **Developing HR analytics and metrics frameworks to support organizational decision-making**



## Strengthening Health, Safety, and Wellbeing

A continued focus on employee safety and wellbeing led to important advancements:

- **Reviewing and enhancing health and safety policies and programs to align with regulatory requirements**
- **Developing safe work procedures and strengthening workplace risk management practices**
- **Implementing safety metrics, audits, and reporting practices to monitor performance**
- **Increased workplace safety awareness and accountability**
- **Introduction of wellness programs and mental health supports**
- **Expansion of psychological and physical wellbeing initiatives**

These efforts reinforce the City's commitment to ensuring employees feel safe, supported, and well.

## Evolving Total Rewards and Compensation

Significant work was undertaken to modernize total rewards:

- **Completing compensation reviews and implementing updated salary structures**
- **Advancement of job evaluation processes and frameworks**
- **Market reviews and improvements to benefits and wellness offerings**
- **Conducting vendor reviews and exploring new systems to support total rewards programs**



These changes have strengthened the organization's ability to attract, develop, and retain talent.

## The Voice of Our People

While metrics, programs, and initiatives tell an important part of the story, they do not fully capture the impact of this work. Over the past five years, Human Resources has also focused on understanding the lived experiences of employees, ensuring that the voice of the people is reflected in how success is defined.

**One City: Our Voice**, features 25 employee stories from across the organization, bringing this to life.

These stories highlight:

- **Moments of growth and development**
- **Experiences of support, recognition, and belonging**
- **The impact of leadership, culture, and collaboration in everyday work**
- **The ways employees connect their roles to a broader sense of purpose**

Together, these voices demonstrate that the success of the strategy is not only found in completed initiatives, but in the experiences of the people behind them.

They reflect an organization that is not only evolving systems and programs, but also strengthening connection, culture, and community.

**Scan this code to read One City: Our Voice**



## From Reflection to Action

The past five years have laid a strong foundation, one built on trust, collaboration, and a shared sense of purpose.

As the City of Maple Ridge's HR department looks ahead to the next five-year strategic plan, this reflection is not just about what has been achieved, it is about recognizing the collective effort that made it possible and understanding how this work must continue to evolve.

**At its core, this is not just an HR plan, it is a people plan. And people are dynamic. Their needs shift. Their expectations evolve. And their experiences are shaped not only by the workplace, but by the world around them.**

This creates both opportunity and complexity. The work of supporting people, strengthening culture, and enabling performance is never complete. And while there is much to celebrate, there is also a clear recognition that:

- **Not every experience has been consistent**
- **Not every need has been fully met**
- **And not every challenge has been resolved**

This awareness is intentional. It reflects a commitment to staying grounded, to listening, and to holding ourselves accountable.



There are inherent risks in any people-focused strategy. Expectations evolve. Priorities compete. Capacity is tested. And without continued attention, even the strongest programs can lose their impact over time.

For this reason, it is more important than ever that HR and leadership across the organization keep their fingers on the pulse of the employee experience, continuing to:

- **Consult with staff and listen actively to their voices**
- **Seek out diverse perspectives and lived experiences**
- **Use data and insights to inform decisions**
- **Recognize where progress is being made, and where more focus is required**

The next phase of this work is not about starting over, but about building on what has been created, strengthening what is working, refining what is not, and ensuring that programs, practices, and culture continue to evolve alongside the people they are designed to support.

As the organization moves forward, one thing remains clear:

**The future of Maple Ridge will continue to be shaped by its people.**

And HR will continue to stand alongside them; as a partner, a guide, and a catalyst for what comes next.



# Our Commitment for 2026-2031

The next five years will be about sustaining momentum while ensuring our pace is balanced, our systems are modern, and our culture is deeply embedded:

We will expand corporate safety and wellness, building programs that prevent harm and support belonging and mental health.

We will embed recognition and employee voice into daily life, so appreciation and listening are not just events but habits.

We will invest in youth pipelines, apprenticeships, and career pathways, making Maple Ridge a first choice for young people starting their careers.

We will modernize through new systems and automation, freeing our staff to focus on strategic, high-impact work.

We will sustain a culture of authenticity and fairness, where issues are addressed directly, respectfully, and consistently.

We will continue to strengthen labour relations through transparency, creativity, and continuous trust-building.

We will foster and develop our talent, preparing our people for future roles and opportunities.



# A Vision Shaped by People

Our Mayor and Council have set out a clear vision: Maple Ridge will be a safe, thriving, and welcoming city. A great place to make a living, and a great place to make a life. Achieving that vision depends on the people who serve our residents every day.

As we look to the next five years and ensuring our people have what they need to deliver on the One City vision, our focus in HR is on embedding, sustaining, and elevating. The foundation has been built; the next cycle is about ensuring programs, practices, behaviours, and values are a part of the daily fabric of the organization. These six themes will guide our work:

1

**Safety and Wellbeing** – Not only physical safety, but also psychological health and a sense of belonging. With significant capital projects and front-line risks ahead, we will expand corporate safety programs and strengthen prevention measures.

At the same time, the scope of "total compensation" will continue to evolve into "Total Rewards and Wellbeing," encompassing benefits, wellness initiatives, and proactive mental health supports.





## 2

**Service Excellence** – HR's reputation has shifted to being a trusted, reliable, and responsive partner. Over the next five years, HR will deepen this role, looking to strengthen ties to the organization and our people.

Our service standards will remain the benchmark, while we continue to innovate and adapt to the needs of a growing city:

**We care**
**We are professional**
**We are open and approachable**
**We are reliable and courteous**
**We provide personalized service**

You can learn more about our service standards HERE.

## 3

**Strategic Business Partnership** – The City's rapid pace and growing complexity require HR to continue to be a strategic enabler of Council strategic priorities, organizational objectives and key results as well as the city's day-to-day operational needs. This means aligning HR initiatives with organizational goals, collaborating with our interest holders and equipping leaders with tools to manage people effectively.

As the CHRO stated: ***"we want to respond, to enable the business, and to be seen as a valued partner."***






4

**Embedded Programs and Culture** – From the Buddy Up @ One City Connect program to City Chase, and the new employee orientation engagement initiatives and learning and development programs, the emphasis for 2026-2031 will be on embedding programs into daily operations so they become part of our culture.

Programs such as engagement committees, learning and development frameworks, and recognition programs will not be one-offs, but sustained practices that define how Maple Ridge operates. The vision is clear: HR programs are not separate from the business – they are woven into the City's DNA.

5

**Data, Technology and Automation** – The implementation of a new Human Resources Information System (HRIS) and Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system is a cornerstone of this plan. These systems will modernize processes, automate repetitive manual work, and allow HR to move further from transactional to higher-value analytical work. And more importantly, this move will free up time and resources, allowing all our HR professionals to spend more time face-to-face with clients and providing additional services.

With stronger data and analytics, HR will provide leadership, management and supervisors with insights that support better decision-making. As one HR manager stated: ***"It's not just about numbers - it's about telling the story behind them."***

6

**Building the Next Generation Workforce** – The City is not only an employer of choice, but also a community builder. Over the next five years, we will expand youth pipelines, apprenticeships, co-ops, and internships, creating opportunities for the development of external talent pipelines within our local region, which will in turn support internal growth.

This investment responds to both community expectations and organizational needs. As one manager shared: ***"We are one of the largest employers in our city – why can't we be the place where youth start their careers and build pathways into the future?"***



# Your HR Team:
# Who We Are & How We Support You

At the City of Maple Ridge, Human Resources is more than a department, we are a team of partners dedicated to supporting you, your team, and the organization as a whole.

Whether you are:

- Starting your career with the City
- Supporting your team
- Navigating a workplace challenge
- Planning your next step
- Growing as a leader

**HR is here to help.**

We work alongside leaders, teams, and employees to create a workplace where people feel:

- Supported in their day-to-day work
- Valued for their contributions
- Safe in their environment
- Connected to something bigger



my HR EMPLOYEE LABOUR RELATIONS HEALTH & SAFETY

### Labour relations – Building trust through fair, consistent, and collaborative relationships

Builds strong, collaborative relationships between employees, leaders, and unions. Supports fair practices, conflict resolution, and consistent application of policies and agreements.

my HR EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE & ENGAGEMENT

### Strengthening engagement, belonging, and organizational connection

Shapes how employees connect, feel, and contribute at work. Focuses on engagement, recognition, belonging, and continuous feedback to strengthen culture and performance.




my HR EMPLOYEE LABOUR RELATIONS HEALTH & SAFETY

### Health & Safety Creating a safe, proactive, and accountable workplace culture

Ensures a safe and healthy workplace for all employees. Focuses on prevention, compliance, risk management and building a culture of physical and psychological safety.

my HR INTEGRATED TALENT MANAGEMENT

### Attracting, developing, and growing a high-performing workforce

Attracts, develops, and retains talent across the employee lifecycle. Covers recruitment, learning and development, leadership growth, and workforce planning.

my HR TOTAL REWARDS

### Supporting wellbeing through fair, competitive, and holistic rewards

Supports the overall value of employment through compensation, benefits, and wellness. Promotes financial, physical, and mental wellbeing to sustain performance and retention.

# Our Mission, Vision & Values

## Mission

**We empower the people of our organization to realize their purpose and potential by cultivating a respectful and authentic workplace where excellence and wellbeing drive our collective success — one person at a time.**

Our mission reflects our commitment to supporting every employee's journey – whether they are beginning their career, growing into leadership, or contributing decades of service to the community. We create the systems, relationships, and conditions that help people thrive. Through meaningful programs, thoughtful partnerships, and accessible support, we help shape a workplace where individuals feel valued, safe, inspired, and equipped to contribute their best every day.

## Vision

**A workplace that responds to the needs of our people with trust and innovation, where every individual belongs, thrives, and is inspired to make a difference every day.**

Our vision imagines a future where the employee experience is seamless, empowering, and deeply human. One where trust is earned through transparency and follow-through, innovation is embraced as a shared responsibility, and belonging is woven into the culture of every department and team. We envision an organization where people feel connected to one another, proud of their work, and confident that the City of Maple Ridge is a place where they can grow, contribute, and lead.



## Our Values

Our values guide our decisions, shape our culture, and define how we show up for one another and our community. They are commitments we embody—not only in what we deliver, but in how we work together every day.

### Accountability & Results

We take ownership of our work and honour our commitments. We act with clarity, consistency, and purpose, ensuring our decisions and actions contribute to the City's goals and strengthen organizational performance. We measure progress, follow through, and learn from experience so we can continually grow.

### Agility

We adapt quickly to evolving needs, shifting priorities, and emerging challenges. By staying open-minded and embracing creative, forward-thinking solutions, we maintain momentum and resilience. Agility helps us respond proactively - supporting departments, leaders, and employees when they need it most.

### Empathy

We recognize the diverse experiences, backgrounds, and perspectives of our workforce. Empathy shapes how we listen, support, and communicate. It ensures our policies and programs reflect the reality of people's lives and fosters an environment grounded in respect, compassion, and psychological safety.

### Collaboration

We build partnerships across teams, departments, unions, and the broader community. Collaboration means we share knowledge freely, welcome diverse ideas, and work together toward shared goals. When we unite our strengths, we create sustainable solutions and strengthen trust across the organization.

### Integrity & Transparency

We lead with honesty and act ethically in every decision we make. Transparency builds confidence —in our processes, communication, and intentions. By being open, fair, and consistent, we reinforce a culture where people feel informed, respected, and able to rely on their organization.

### Belonging & Inclusion

We are committed to creating equitable systems, accessible processes, and a workplace where everyone feels valued and connected. Belonging strengthens engagement, fuels innovation, and deepens trust. Inclusion is not just a principle – it is a daily practice that ensures every person feels part of something bigger.

DEPARTMENTAL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

# Employee Experience & Engagement

## Elevating the Employee Voice

The Employee Experience and Engagement Strategic Plan 2026–2031 represents the next evolution in how the City of Maple Ridge listens to, connects with, and supports its people. Building on the foundations of the 2022–2025 plan, it charts a course for how the organization will strengthen engagement, foster connection, and prepare its workforce for the future of work — one grounded in agility, inclusion, and belonging.

## An Evolution, not a Revolution

In many ways, the next five years are about evolution — refining and deepening the work that's already been done. The past plan established essential systems for employee engagement, including the launch of the City's first engagement surveys, the creation of engagement committees, and the development of a feedback infrastructure that continues to mature.

For **Sarah Mueller**, Manager of Employee Experience and Engagement, this plan is both deeply personal and profoundly organizational.



*"At the end of the day, engagement isn't just about how people feel at work. It's about how they connect to our purpose — to serve the community. When our people feel supported, trusted, and ready for change, that's when the organization truly thrives."*

The coming cycle builds on that momentum, introducing new ways to listen, act, and learn.

*"We've made huge strides in listening to our employees. Now the challenge — and the opportunity — is to make sure that feedback loops are faster, more transparent, and there's visible action. Engagement isn't a survey. It's a continuous conversation."*

## Strategic Focus Areas

| FOCUS AREA | DESCRIPTION |
|---|---|
| **Employee Feedback & Engagement** | Embedding continuous listening through surveys, pulse checks, stay interviews, and real-time feedback tools, ensuring insights lead to visible action and accountability. |
| **Connection, Belonging & Recognition** | Strengthening a culture where employees feel valued and connected through recognition programs, storytelling, and shared purpose. |
| **Growth, Learning & Development** | Expanding learning pathways including onboarding, leadership development, mentorship, and trades/apprenticeship programs to support growth at all career stages. |
| **Change Readiness, Communication & Enablement** | Building organizational agility by embedding change management practices, strengthening communication, and equipping leaders to guide teams through change. |
| **Strategic HR Partnership & Consulting** | Positioning HR as a proactive partner that aligns people strategies with operational goals through coaching, team development, and strategic support. |
| **Equity, Diversity & Inclusion** | Advancing inclusive hiring, equitable practices, and diverse talent pipelines, ensuring all employees feel a sense of belonging and opportunity. |



## Amplifying the Employee Voice

**Change readiness is the bridge between engagement and performance. It's not just about surviving change - it's about learning how to thrive in it.**

The plan reflects a powerful shift from measurement to meaning. Engagement data is only valuable when it leads to insight, and insight is only valuable when it drives action. Over the next five years, the city will continue to refine how it listens — not just annually, but continuously — through ongoing dialogue, accessible platforms, and visible follow-through.

One of the plan's boldest ambitions is to achieve Great Place to Work certification, validating what Sarah and her team aim for every day: to make Maple Ridge a city where employees themselves say it's a great place to work.

## Connecting with Community and the Future

The Employee Experience & Engagement Plan is about more than internal culture — it's about creating a ripple effect that extends to the community. The city recognizes that how employees experience their workplace directly shapes how citizens experience their city.

This plan introduces a renewed focus on youth and emerging talent, including apprenticeship and trades pathways. As one of the largest employers in the region, Maple Ridge is committed to nurturing the next generation of civic leaders.

*"We have so many young auxiliary staff, they're the future of our city workforce. This plan is about giving them a voice, engaging them early, and helping them see a future with us."*

## A Future Built on Agility, Trust, and Belonging

The coming years will challenge every organization to adapt faster, lead differently, and center people in every decision. For the City of Maple Ridge, this plan ensures that employee experience remains not a soft add-on, but a strategic driver of service, innovation, and excellence.

It's a plan that's both practical and aspirational — balancing data with empathy, and structure with humanity.



*"We're preparing our people for what's next. This plan is about ensuring we're not just keeping up, but leading with purpose, care, and courage."*

**Michelle Lewis, CHRO**



## Performance Measures

The success of the Employee Experience & Engagement strategy will be tracked through a balanced set of quantitative and qualitative measures:

| MEASURE | PURPOSE |
|---|---|
| **Employee Engagement Score** | The overall indicator of employee sentiment and connection. |
| **Great Place to Work Certification Status** | Reflects validated employee feedback on workplace trust, culture, and overall experience. |
| **Participation in Recognition & Feedback Programs** | Measures the visibility and uptake of engagement initiatives. |
| **EDI Metrics** | Tracks the progress in diversity, inclusion, and equitable outcomes. |
| **Learning & Development Participation Rates** | Indicates engagement in growth and development opportunities. |
| **Apprenticeships & Trades Participation** | Measures investment in future workforce and talent pipelines. |
| **Youth Engagement Metrics** | Tracks connection with emerging and early-career talent. |
| **Staff Confidence in Managing Change** | Assesses organizational readiness and adaptability. |

DEPARTMENTAL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

# Integrated Talent Management (ITM)

## Attracting, Growing, and Inspiring the Workforce of Tomorrow

The Integrated Talent Management Strategic Plan 2026–2031 represents the next evolution of how the City of Maple Ridge attracts, develops, retains, and supports its people. It builds on the foundations of a strong HR strategy, aligning recruitment, delivery of learning, and analytics to create a thriving, future-ready workforce.

For Orlando Cerrato, Manager of Integrated Talent Management, this plan is deeply personal — a reflection of his first transformative year with the city and his vision for the next five.

*"When I think about talent, I don't just think about who we hire, I think about the entire journey — how we attract, how we develop, how we measure impact, and how we show people that what they do truly matters."*

## From Recruitment to Retention: A Connected System

In many organizations, recruitment, delivery of learning, and performance are separate functions. Maple Ridge is changing that. The Integrated Talent Management (ITM) portfolio brings them together into one cohesive system — one that supports people from their first interaction with the city through every stage of their career.

This plan is not just about filling roles; it's about shaping experiences. It connects strategy, data, and purpose in a way that ensures every hire strengthens the organization and every employee has a pathway to grow.



*"What excites me most is that we're building something integrated and intentional. The people we bring in today will shape what this City becomes in the next decade — and that's a responsibility we take seriously."*

**Orlando Cerrato, HR Manager**

## Strategic Focus Areas

| FOCUS AREA | DESCRIPTION |
|---|---|
| **Recruitment & Selection** | Attracting and hiring top talent through consistent, fair, and modernized processes, including certification programs for hiring managers. |
| **Training & Development Delivery** | Expanding access to learning through internal platforms, leadership programs, and curated development pathways. |
| **People Reporting, Metrics, and Audit** | Using data, reporting, and dashboards to inform workforce planning, retention, and organizational strategy. |
| **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)** | Embedding EDI into hiring, development, and advancement practices to ensure equitable access to opportunities. |
| **Learning and Development** (Delivery of Apprenticeship, Co-ops, and Mentorships) | Continuous investment in early talent, ensuring programming is structured, consistent, and connected to service priorities. |



## A Vision for Tomorrow: Data, Delivery, and Discovery

The strategic vision for ITM over' the next five years is both bold and deeply human. It's about blending technology with empathy — using analytics to understand people, not replace them.

Central to this work is delivery — a theme echoed by CHRO Michelle Lewis and shared across the HR leadership team. Delivery means moving ideas into action, designing programs that don't just look good on paper but make a measurable difference in people's lives.

> *"This isn't about talking about strategy it's about doing it. It's about creating systems that last — that can be built upon for years to come."*
>
> **Orlando Cerrato, HR Manager**



## Collaboration and the One City Mindset

The Integrated Talent Management team's success depends on collaboration — not only within HR, but across every department. Orlando describes HR as a matrixed ecosystem, where recruitment, training delivery, data, and engagement all intersect.

## Measuring Impact: Meaning Beyond Metrics

Success will be tracked through both numbers and narratives. Key performance indicators such as time to fill, vacancy rate, retention, and training adoption will measure operational performance, while engagement surveys and people stories will measure cultural impact.

Ultimately, though, the measure of success will be meaning.

## Looking Ahead: Talent as Legacy

The Integrated Talent Management Strategic Plan 2026–2031 reflects a city that is bold, modern, and people-first. It's a plan rooted in excellence and driven by purpose — one that recognizes that every hire, every training opportunity, and every piece of data is part of a much larger story.

*"The future of Maple Ridge is in its people. Our job is to find them, support them, and help them grow — because when they thrive, the entire community thrives."*

## Performance Measures

The success of the Integrated Talent Management strategy will be tracked through a balanced set of quantitative and qualitative measures:

| MEASURE | PURPOSE |
|---|---|
| **Time to Fill from Postings** | Measures efficiency and effectiveness of recruitment. |
| **Internal/External Hire Ratio** | Tracks career progression and development. |
| **Total Hires/Rehires** | Measures workforce intake and organizational capacity needs. |
| **Training Program Adoption** | Indicates engagement in development programs. |
| **Retention Rate** | Measures onboarding and early experience effectiveness. |
| **ITM Audit Results** | Assess effectiveness and consistency of ITM practices. |
| **Vacancy Rate** | Tracks recruitment pressures and potential impacts on service delivery. |
| **Turnover Rate** | Measures retention trends and workforce stability. |






DEPARTMENTAL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

# Total Rewards & Wellbeing

## Building on a Strong Foundation

The City of Maple Ridge has always been bold in its commitment to its people. The Total Rewards & Wellbeing Strategic Plan 2026–2031 is the next step in that commitment — a roadmap designed not just to reward and recognize employees, but to strengthen the systems, structures, and supports that help them thrive.

For Cynthia Ulrich, Manager of Total Rewards and Wellbeing, this plan represents both continuity and transformation: a bridge between what the organization has built and what it must now sustain.

> *"When our people are well, they are better equipped to contribute meaningfully, support one another, and navigate change. Wellbeing is foundational to everything we do."*
>
> **Cynthia Ulrich, HR Manager**



## From Foundation to Flourish

Over the past half decade, the Total Rewards and Wellbeing portfolio has evolved from a primarily administrative function into a strategic driver of employee experience. The focus has expanded — from compensation and benefits to include organizational design, wellness, ability management, and now the ambitious ERP One City Foundation project that will redefine how HR operates.

This next phase is guided by a truth: the city has grown, and so must its infrastructure. Maple Ridge is no longer a small municipality; it's a complex, rapidly expanding organization with the expectations and challenges of a much larger city. Ensuring that its HR systems, policies, and people strategies keep pace is not optional — it's essential.



## Strategic Focus Areas

| FOCUS AREA | DESCRIPTION |
|---|---|
| **Total Compensation** | Ensuring competitive, equitable, and sustainable compensation frameworks aligned with market and internal equity. |
| **Organizational Design** | Partnering with departments to align structure and people strategy. |
| **Employee Wellness** | Creating a comprehensive Wellness Framework encompassing physical, mental, and financial health. |
| **Total Rewards Education and Document Management** | Building strong internal systems and educational resources for managers and employees, ensuring consistency and confidence in HR practices. |
| **Ability Management** | Strengthening recovery and return-to-work processes through improved systems, vendor partnerships, and proactive education. |
| **ERP – One City Foundation** | Implementation of a new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system that will revolutionize data integrity, efficiency, and reporting. |



## A Culture of Clarity, Care, and Connection

The Total Rewards & Wellbeing Strategic Plan is not just about systems or benefits — it's about embedding care into the organization's DNA. It recognizes that HR's success depends on its ability to serve both people and the organization, balancing empathy with accountability.

## Looking Inward to Look Forward

This plan also challenges HR to strengthen itself — to streamline processes, document best practices, and ensure every team member has the tools and knowledge to succeed. With new staff, new systems, and a new wave of leadership across the city, HR is in a period of renewal.

## A Future Rooted in Wellness, Data, and Partnership

The next five years will be both demanding and exciting. Between the ERP rollout, the wellness framework, and the continued evolution of compensation and benefits, the Total Rewards and Wellbeing portfolio will be central to how Maple Ridge defines its future as an employer.



## Performance Measures

The success of the Total Rewards and Wellbeing strategy will be tracked through a balanced set of quantitative and qualitative measures:

| MEASURE | PURPOSE |
|---|---|
| **Participation in Wellness Activities Events** | Measures engagement with wellness supports. |
| **Absenteeism & Disability Trends** | Indicates workforce health. |
| **Participation in Work, Life, Balance Programs** | Measures awareness, accessibility, and overall value of these programs. |
| **Disability Claim Duration** | Measures average claim length to monitor recovery, return-to-work effectiveness, and related organizational impacts. |
| **Number of Job Evaluations Complete** | Measures progress in maintaining fair, consistent, and up to date job classifications and compensation practices. |
| **Attendance at Total Rewards Training Sessions** | Tracks participation in learning opportunities to assess employee engagement. |
| **Benefit Satisfaction Score** | Measures employee satisfaction with benefits to evaluate whether offerings meet workforce needs. |

DEPARTMENTAL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

# Occupational Health & Safety

## A Culture of Safety, Accountability, and Care

The Occupational Health and Safety Strategic Plan 2026–2031 sets a clear direction for how the City of Maple Ridge will continue to build a safe, accountable, and caring workplace — one where every employee goes home safe, every day.

Rooted in the values of One City – Our Voice, the plan expands on the foundation built over the past five years, focusing on stronger systems, proactive risk management, and a workplace culture where safety is everyone's responsibility.

## A Legacy of Safety and Integrity

Chris Gonev's approach to safety is pragmatic, honest, and deeply rooted in both moral and legal responsibility.

*"We say our people are our greatest resource. That means we have both a legal and moral obligation to keep them safe. We're stewards of public money and public trust — that means we must lead by example."*



For **Chris Gonev**, Manager of Labour Relations and Occupational Health and Safety, this plan represents both unfinished business and a legacy in the making.

*"We've come a long way, but there's still work to do," Chris reflects. "We've built trust, improved accountability, and started turning things around — now it's about finishing what we started and leaving a lasting system that protects people for years to come."*

The plan reinforces that belief. It's not just about compliance — it's about building a culture of vigilance, care, and continuous improvement. It calls for a shift from reactive response to proactive prevention, ensuring that safety is integrated into every department, project, and decision.

## Strategic Focus Areas

| FOCUS AREA | DESCRIPTION |
|---|---|
| **Policies and Objectives** | Maintaining strong safety systems, policies, and regulatory compliance across all departments. |
| **Risk Management** | Proactively identifying and reducing risks through training, audits, and planning. |
| **Workplace Safety Culture** | Foster a culture where health and safety is understood as care, and not just compliance. A balance of leadership accountability, continuous learning, and engagement at every level of the organization. |
| **Injury and Claims Management (SAW/RTW)** | Continual enhancement of the City's Stay at Work (SAW) and Return to Work (RTW) frameworks, ensuring early intervention, modified duties, and education for managers and union partners on regulatory requirements. |
| **Performance Audit and Metrics** | Building and sustaining consistent performance measures, linking safety metrics directly to departmental goals and accountability frameworks. |





## Challenges and Commitments

The plan acknowledges the realities: limited resources, competing priorities, and the need for ongoing education across the organization. But it also lays out a clear path forward.

## A Culture of Courage and Care

Health and Safety at Maple Ridge aren't just about systems — it's about courage. The courage to call out unsafe practices, to ask difficult questions, and to make the right decision, even when it's not the easy one.

This mindset — shared by the City's leadership team — is what continues to transform Maple Ridge's culture. Leaders are modeling accountability, engaging in difficult conversations, and setting the tone for a safer, stronger organization.

## Looking Ahead: Leaving It Better Than We Found It

The Occupational Health and Safety Strategic Plan 2026–2031 is both a roadmap and a promise — a commitment to build a safety system that lasts well beyond this five-year horizon.

As the City continues to grow, the goal is clear: To lead by example, act with integrity, and ensure that every employee — from City Hall to the front line — has the support, training, and trust they need to go home safely, every single day.

*"Every dollar we spend on prevention saves ten in recovery. But more importantly, it protects our people — and you can't put a price on that."*

**Chris Gonev, HR Manager**





## Performance Measures

The success of the Occupational Health & Safety strategy will be tracked through a balanced set of quantitative and qualitative measures:

| MEASURE | PURPOSE |
|---|---|
| **Injury Rates** | Tracks safety performance and identifies areas for prevention efforts. |
| **Incident Reporting** (including near miss and "good catch" reports) | Measures and supports timely response, trend analysis, and continuous safety improvement and safety culture. |
| **WSBC Orders and Regulatory Compliance** | Measures compliance with WorkSafe BC requirements to reduce organizational risk. |
| **Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHSC) Participation** | Tracks engagement in JOHSC activities to support effective consultation, oversight, and shared accountability for workplace safety. |
| **Claims Severity/ Duration** | Measures seriousness and length of workplace injury claims to assess employee impact and effectiveness of return-to-work and recovery supports. |
| **External Audits** | Assess performance against external standards to identify compliance gaps and improvement opportunities. |
| **Inspection Results** | Measure findings from workplace inspections to monitor hazards, corrective actions, and overall safety conditions. |

DEPARTMENTAL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

# Employee & Labour Relations

## Building Trust, Accountability, and Collaboration

Over the past several years, the City of Maple Ridge has undergone significant transformation — not only in how it delivers services to the community but in how it works together internally. The Employee and Labour Relations Strategic Plan 2026–2031 builds on that foundation of progress, strengthening trust, consistency, and fairness across the organization.

At its core, this plan is about people — about creating a workplace where employees, leaders, and union partners can collaborate with integrity, respect, and shared purpose.

## A Culture Grounded in Partnership

The relationship between the city and its union partners has evolved dramatically. What was once characterized by formality and mistrust has become a model of collaboration and mutual respect. Through open dialogue, proactive problem-solving, and consistent follow-through, the city has set a new tone for how public-sector partnerships can work.

*"We've built something rare. Our union partners trust us, and we trust them. We don't always agree — and we shouldn't — but we're honest with each other. That's what collaboration really means."*



For **Chris Gonev**, Manager of Employee and Labour Relations, this plan reflects both a personal mission and a professional legacy:

*"Our focus was to rebuild relationships — to bring stability, consistency, and accountability back into how we work together. The next five years are about embedding that. It's about making sure the systems we've built don't just survive but thrive."*



Today, regular labour-management meetings, ad-hoc check-ins, and joint initiatives are helping to resolve issues early and strengthen communication. Departments like Fire and Operations exemplify this new model — where respectful disagreements lead to shared solutions, and relationships are built on credibility rather than hierarchy.

*"What we've done here is special. We're not perfect, but we're on our way."*

| FOCUS AREA | DESCRIPTION |
|---|---|
| **Labour and Employee Relationship Management** | Strengthening collaboration, communication, and trust with employees, managers, and union partners. |
| **Interest Holder Engagement** | Encouraging participation of all partners (employee, manager, union, City leadership) in onboarding, engagement committees and City-wide events, reinforcing the One City concept. |
| **Accountability and Performance** | Embedding accountability at every level of work, integrating values, policies and expectations consistently. Ensuring clarity and fairness in performance management and respectful workplace practices organization wide. |
| **Consistent and Fair Application of Policies** | Ensuring that policies and practices are applied equitably, consistently, and without bias, strengthening fairness and procedural integrity. |
| **Interest-based Collective Bargaining** | Aligning bargaining practices with the City's mission and values and ensuring long-term sustainability. Through a focus on joint interests (rather than opposing positions) we will achieve agreements that are competitive, equitable, and reflective of shared priorities. |



## Health, Safety, and Accountability: A Moral Responsibility

While labour relations remain a central focus, health and safety continue to be inseparable from this plan's success.

## From Reactive to Proactive

The shift toward proactive labour relations and safety management is one of the plan's defining themes. By addressing issues early — through dialogue, education, and accountability — the City aims to reduce grievances, prevent workplace conflicts, and improve overall morale.

Metrics such as the number of grievances, informal resolutions, participation in joint initiatives, and respectful workplace outcomes will serve as indicators of success. But for Chris, the most meaningful measure will be the culture itself.

## Courage, Candour, and Doing What's Right

The next five years will demand courage — to hold people accountable, to maintain standards, and to make difficult decisions when needed, that courage is a hallmark of leadership at Maple Ridge.

This candour — the willingness to engage openly, respectfully, and truthfully — has become a defining feature of the City's culture. It's what makes collaboration possible and ensures that fairness, safety, and accountability aren't just ideals, but everyday practices.

## Looking Ahead: A Legacy of Integrity

As the City moves forward, the Employee and Labour Relations Strategic Plan 2026–2031 provides a clear path for sustaining progress and continuing to evolve. It's a plan rooted in partnership, strengthened by principle, and guided by a shared belief that how the city works internally defines how it serves the community externally.

*"At the end of the day, this work is about legacy — leaving the organization better than we found it. We've come a long way, but there's still more to do."*

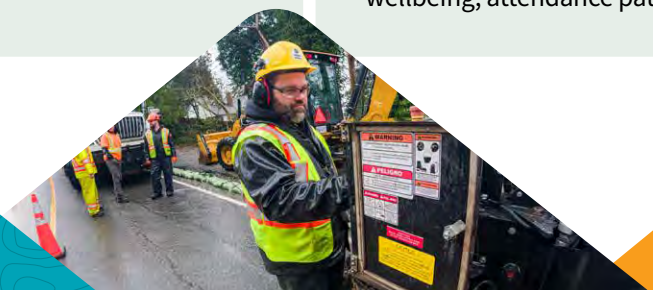




## Performance Measures

The success of the Employee & Labour Relations strategy will be tracked through a balanced set of quantitative and qualitative measures:

| MEASURE | PURPOSE |
|---|---|
| **Number of Grievances** | Tracks effectiveness of issue resolution and extent to which workplace concerns are being addressed before escalating. |
| **Number of cases proceeding to Arbitration** | Measures success of labour strategies to resolve disputes effectively through earlier-stage processes and collaborative problem solving. |
| **Participation in Joint Management/Union initiatives** | Assesses the strength of labour-management relationships and commitment to joint collaboration. |
| **Informal Resolution of workplace issues** | Measure the ability to address concerns early, constructively, and at the lowest appropriate level. |
| **Total interest holder inquiries** | Tracks demand for employee and labour relations support and identifies recurring issues. |
| **Number of Human Rights Complaints** | Measures effectiveness in fostering an inclusive, respectful, and legally compliant workplace. |
| **Number of Respectful Workplace Complaints** | Tracks workplace climate and the efforts to promote respectful behaviour and resolve interpersonal concerns. |
| **Absenteeism Rates** | Tracks employee absence levels to help monitor workplace wellbeing, attendance patterns, and potential organizational impacts. |



# A Final Message from Michelle… and an Invitation



As I reflect on this plan, I find myself thinking about legacy.

Over the years, I've often shared, sometimes half-jokingly, but always with a sense of truth, that this work feels like a bit of a swan song in my career. Not an ending, but a culmination. A moment to pause, look back at what we've built together, and consider what we are leaving behind for those who will carry this work forward.

But the more I sit with that thought, the more I realize this plan is not my legacy.

**It is ours.**

Every conversation, every moment of care, every decision made with intention, these are the things that shape who we are as an organization. Culture is not something that sits within a document or a strategy. It lives in the everyday. In how we show up for one another. In how we listen. In how we lead. In how we choose to be part of something bigger than ourselves.

The past few years have shown us what is possible when we lean into that shared responsibility. When we truly embrace the idea of One City, not just as a concept, but as a way of being.

And now, as we look ahead, I want to extend a simple but meaningful invitation.

## Be Part of This

Share your voice. Engage in the conversations. Take part in surveys like the engagement survey, not as a task, but as an opportunity to shape the future. Join committees. Participate in the Unions. Step forward. Stay curious. Speak up.

This plan is not something that happens to you, it is something that is created with you.

Each of us has a role to play in building the kind of organization we are proud to be part of. One where people feel valued, supported, and inspired. One where we continue to grow, challenge ourselves, and evolve. One where we don't just talk about culture…we live it.

I am incredibly proud of what we have accomplished together. And even more excited about what is still possible.

Thank you for the role you play in this story. Let's continue to build it together.

With gratitude,

Michelle



# Our Commitment Going Forward

Together, we commit to:

- Champion a safe, healthy, and supportive workplace, where wellbeing is a shared responsibility and a lived experience.
- Elevate service by being responsive, reliable, and aligned to the needs of our people and our community.
- Act as strategic partners who anticipate needs, solve problems proactively, and contribute meaningfully to City-wide priorities.
- Ensure our programs are deeply embedded into the systems, culture, and daily practices of the organization—not as extras, but as essentials.
- Harness data, technology, and automation to guide decisions, enhance transparency, and strengthen our operational excellence.
- Build trust through honest conversations, thoughtful collaboration, and clear processes that support both people and outcomes.
- Advance belonging and inclusion, ensuring every individual feels valued, respected, and part of something bigger.

Above all, we commit to living our mission every day:

*"To empower the people of our organization to realize their purpose and potential—one person at a time"*

This is our promise to each other, to our leaders, and to the community we serve. As One City, we step confidently into the next chapter—ready to shape a future where every employee can thrive, every voice is heard, and every contribution matters.

***Together, we are building what's next.***
***Together, we are Maple Ridge.***



*"It means a great deal to help shape the next five-year People Plan, bringing strategic HR leadership, experience, and genuine care to support a strong future."* **Michelle Lewis, CHRO**



*"I am energized by the vision of being agile - responding to changing needs and challenges, fostering creative solutions, and working together to support a people-focused organization."* **Dee Nagra, Senior HR Advisor**



*"I believe the success of any plan is rooted in truth, agility, and integrity. This plan embodies those qualities, and I look forward to contributing to the momentum that enhances engagement."* **Leanne Sojka, HR Associate**



*"Gone are the traditional workplace silos, replaced by "One City", an integrated, collaborative workplace where staff succeed together."* **Chris Gonev, HR Manager**



*"I'm excited to see deeper connections within our organization and community, where every one of us plays an important role in creating meaningful impact together."* **Joanna Ward, HR Coordinator**



*"I look forward to contributing to a workplace culture that supports our employees, values collaboration and reflects the pride we take in service our community."* **Camille Reforma, HR Advisor**



*"This plan reflects a strong commitment to employee wellbeing, safety, and the HR support needed to meet our responsibilities and sustain a healthy and safe workplace."* **Jason Goossens, Health & Safety Specialist**



*"Our plan reflects an exciting step forward for the City. I'm looking forward to the opportunity for continued employee development and a stronger future for our community."* **Catharine O'Neill, HR Associate**



*"I'm hopeful this plan will further strengthen the employee experience by building on the resilience, connection, and confidence of our people as we continue to navigate change together."* **Sarah Mueller, HR Manager**



*"I'm looking forward to advancing an empathy and wellness based strategy so staff feel valued, supported, and empowered through thoughtful rewards, processes, and tools"* **Cynthia Ulrich, HR Manager**



*"What excites me is the focus on people, purpose, and progress, and I feel motivated to help build a more inclusive, supportive workplace together."* **Kathleen Hernandez, HR Associate**



*"I'm looking forward to investing in our people, strengthening capability and connection to create lasting impact for our workforce and community."* **Orlando Cerrato, HR Manager**



*"I see this strategic plan as a practical, proactive, and people-centered commitment to building safer systems, stronger culture, and better support for staff."* **Jason Dallavalle, Occupational Health & Safety Advisor**



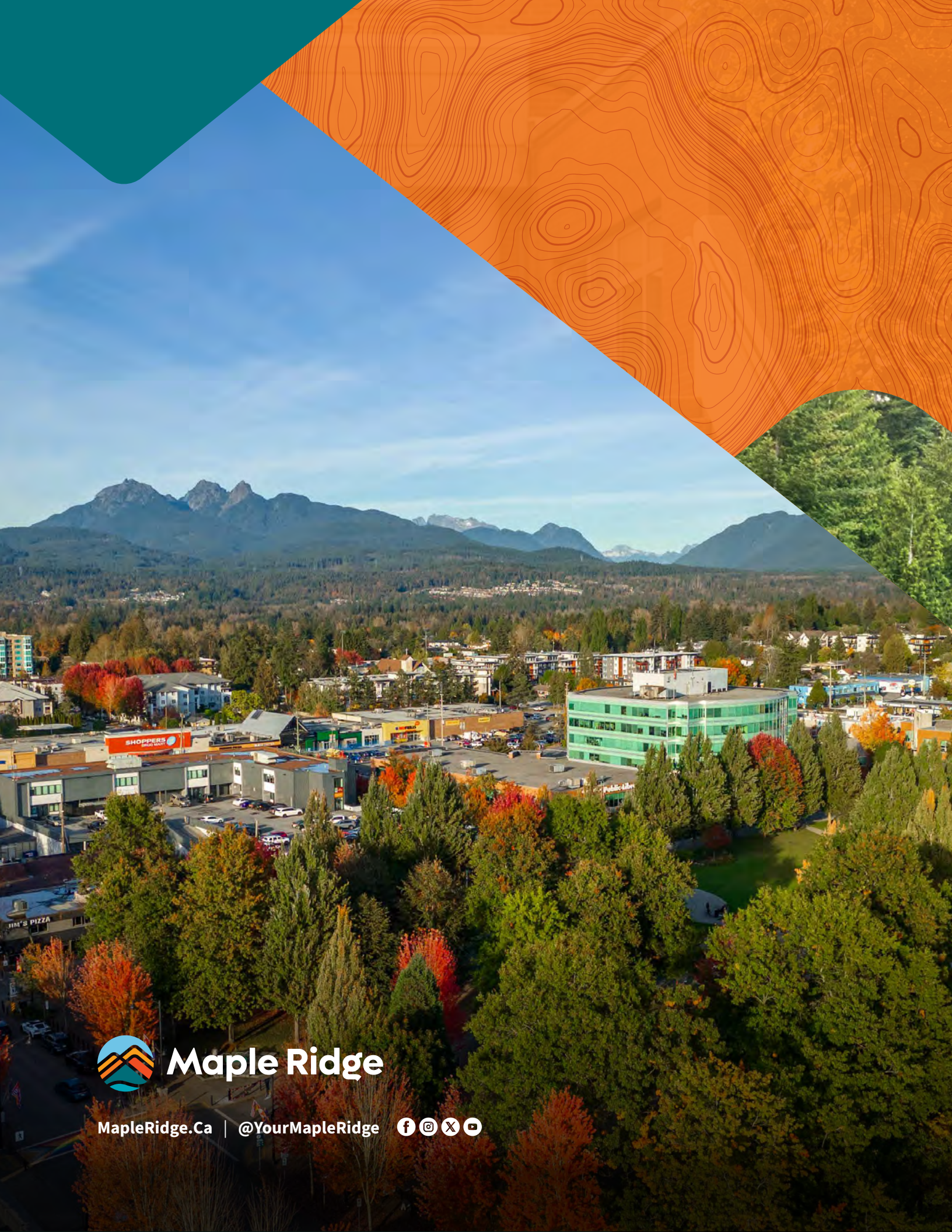
*"I look forward to empowering our employees to better serve the citizens of Maple Ridge with transparency, integrity, and responsible stewardship of public resources."* **Isabella Chu, HR Coordinator**



*"I value being part of a plan that prioritizes people and look forward to helping navigate complex situations with clarity, consistency, and confidence."* **Camelia Robu, HR Advisor**



*"I'm inspired by this plan because it honours our past, embraces possibilities, and fosters a people-centered vision for a shared and inclusive future for Maple Ridge."* **Amelia Libonao, HR Advisor**




Maple Ridge

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