

## **Maple Ridge Resilience Initiative: June 19, 2015 Update**

### **Outreach Support**

The highest priority is the work of the outreach team. The City has funded two outreach specialists working in conjunction with Alouette Addictions Centre and two outreach specialists who will be working in conjunction with the BC Mental Health Association.

This week the four person outreach team was fully deployed in the community working alongside outreach workers from other agencies. They have begun a detailed assessment protocol to determine the specific needs of each unsheltered person in our community. The highest priority is identifying the service model, housing and other supports, that each person will need to allow them to move off the streets.

### **Cliff Avenue Camp: Health and Safety**

Since early June, Bylaws, Parks, RCMP, Fire Department and Health Authority staff have implemented a regular cycle of visits to the Cliff Avenue camp to ensure that public health and safety issues are being addressed. Last week, the people in the Cliff Avenue camp were provided with specific information around safety and the team has been working to ensure that those instructions are followed. There will be a focus on ensuring that the road is passable and that basic fire safety standards are followed in the camp.

A portable toilet remains at the site. Private security remains in place to monitor the site.

### **Cliff Avenue Camp: Size**

There has been a growth in the number of tents on Cliff Avenue in the last week; however the most recent counts are below the numbers being circulated in some forums. There are approximately 30 tents and the number of people in the camps, based on staff counts throughout the week is approximately 60. People who have access to shelter come and go from the Cliff Avenue camp as they access services in the area which may be leading to the higher estimates. Part of the assessment work underway will be to determine who are in the camp because they have no alternative shelter, and who are coming in and out, but are sheltered elsewhere. The '100' figure that is being reported is not accurate.

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### **Cliff Avenue Camp: Where Are They From?**

The Outreach Team, as well as Bylaws and the RCMP report that there is no evidence that people are migrating to the Cliff Avenue camp from other communities. The people in the camp are people who have been in this area for some time, and may have been living in small camps throughout the community. It is likely that because they were largely 'out of sight' they did not register on our community consciousness.

### **Has There Been Any Success In Connecting People With Housing or Services?**

Since the launch of the Maple Ridge Resilience Initiative eight people that were part of our unsheltered population have been moved to services appropriate to their circumstances. The

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### **Has There Been Any Success In Connecting People With Housing or Services?**

Since the launch of the Maple Ridge Resilience Initiative eight people that were part of our unsheltered population have been moved to services appropriate to their circumstances. The outreach team is working closely with a number of other people who have indicated that they would like to access programs to change their circumstances.

### **What Are Senior Levels of Government Doing?**

The City has been working closely with BC Housing on a number of initiatives. They have come forward with rental subsidies to assist people who are currently in transitional housing to move into market housing. This will clear space for people who are currently unsheltered who choose to access services, and who will require transitional housing based on their specific circumstances.

We would like to acknowledge the support that we have been getting from BC Housing. They are a key partner in resolving the issues in our community.

Council met with the local MLAs and a representative of MP Randy Kamp on Wednesday, June 17. Council provided them with a briefing on the situation and some specific 'asks' to move this work forward. Here is a link to that meeting.

<http://media.mapleridge.ca/Mediasite/Play/6ff25da91c774613a583f5f2432f5d2a1d?catalog=5edbe186-9ec4-4ad9-ab81-cdcfe0767b63>

### **Why Is The City Stopping Other Camps From Forming?**

Currently, the City is moving quickly to limit the spread of other camps in the community. The City's approach is that the priority needs to be finding shelter for people, not move people to another location in the community. The City does not have the resources to manage multiple camps nor to provide services in multiple locations. There is no 'waiver' that a person can sign that relinquishes the City from our responsibilities. Our resources are fully deployed and focused on the outreach program that is in place.

There is a persistent rumour that City staff is sending people to Cliff Avenue. This is not the case. There has been a call from some advocates to set up another camp, or multiple camps, in the community. This was addressed in the initial letter given to the unsheltered population and posted online.

### **Has There Been Any Incidents At The Cliff Avenue Camp?**

Police, Fire and BC Ambulance personnel have responded to incidents on Cliff Avenue in the last two weeks. There have been some arrests from the site and there have been a number of drug related health issues. This highlights the need for shelter to be provided as quickly as possible, so the camp can be dispersed.

Council continues to monitor the situation and will be provided with more data on the needs of the unsheltered population as the outreach workers complete their assessments.

### **What Other Work Is Going On?**

As the outreach team completes their assessments, The City will be working closely with local and regional service providers to connect people who are unsheltered with the services they need to move from our streets into a continuum of care.

Council would like to thank the representatives of the Pivot Legal Society for coming to meet with them and providing their expertise and advice on dealing with the issues of unsheltered citizens in our community. In addition, Council and staff had the opportunity to meet with members of the Vancouver Police Department to learn about their work with the Oppenheimer Park Camp in 2014. Both of these organizations, coming from different perspectives, noted the need for communication and to focus on the provision of housing for the unsheltered citizens.

### **What Is The Long Term Plan For Maple Ridge?**

Council and staff are making contact and meeting with a number of organizations that specialize in transitional and low barrier housing to determine if there's a possibility of establishing programs in our community that will add to the non-market housing inventory.

Work continues on the Housing Action Plan for Maple Ridge, which will also be looking at the ways that our community can help establish affordable housing alternatives in the community.

Council is working on a bylaw amendment that will see close to 2000 homes be added to the list of properties where secondary suites will be allowed to develop. In addition to providing a mortgage boost for homeowners, these suites are an important component of the affordable rental housing in the community.

### **Future Updates**

We will provide updates every two weeks unless there is an emerging issue.

Please Like the new 'Maple Ridge Resilience Initiative' Facebook page, or visit the Initiative page on the website at [www.mapleridge.ca/954/Maple-Ridge-Resilience-Initiative](http://www.mapleridge.ca/954/Maple-Ridge-Resilience-Initiative) . There will be updates as new programs are rolled out that are part of the overall initiative.

If you have a question on the Maple Ridge Resilience Initiative, please call us at 604-467-7475 or email us at '[resilience@mapleridge.ca](mailto:resilience@mapleridge.ca).'

Please report any camping on public or private property to us using special email '[resilience@mapleridge.ca](mailto:resilience@mapleridge.ca)' or by calling us at 604-463-5221. Our City staff will direct your call to the appropriate staff members for action. After hours please call 604-463-9581.