

2025 Our Neck of the Woods Festival Summary

Recommendation:

THAT Council direct staff to bring forward for consideration hosting Our Neck of the Woods as part of the 2026-2030 Business Plan.

Report Purpose and Summary Statement:

To present Council with the 2025 post-event summary of economic and community impacts for Our Neck of the Woods and to seek direction to proceed with planning for the 2026 festival.

Financial Impact:

\$350,000/annually

Funding Source:

Accumulated Surplus

Strategic Alignment:

Engaged, Healthy Community; Diversified, Thriving Economy;

2025 Our Neck of the Woods Festival Summary

BACKGROUND:

Our Neck of the Woods 2025 was a large-scale festival held in Maple Ridge, welcoming over 20,000 attendees from across British Columbia. The event showcased top tier Canadian artists, local talent, Maple Ridge businesses, Indigenous culture, and community spirit through a diverse array of programming and engaging experiences.

ANALYSIS:

Discussion:

Our Neck of the Woods was designed to celebrate the unique identity, culture, and creativity of Maple Ridge. The 2025 event featured two dynamic music stages—Golden Ears Mainstage with top-tier Canadian headliners and the Alouette Stage showcasing emerging BC talent. The festival included a vibrant Shop Local Market with Indigenous creators, a variety of signature experiences such as the Soar Over Maple Ridge Zip Line, Happy Camper Fun Park, and The Outpost Social Corner, as well as a diverse selection of food trucks and craft beverage vendors.

Sustainability/Climate Impact:

The Car Free Street Party initiative, supported by TransLink, transformed 224th Street into a pedestrian-friendly zone, promoting sustainable transportation and reducing vehicle emissions. This initiative encouraged residents to consider alternative modes of transportation, contributing to the City's broader goals of reducing carbon emissions and promoting environmental sustainability.

The festival's emphasis on local vendors and walkability further supported climate-conscious practices including a bike valet, designated ride share drop-off/pick-up and a comprehensive waste management system.

Public Engagement:

Based on our day-of-event survey, 403 respondents indicated:

- 97.75% of attendees expressed interest in the festival's return.
- 88.27% were Maple Ridge residents, indicating strong community support.

Based on our online 2025 Our Neck of the Woods Feedback Survey (attached), 89 respondents indicated:

- 69.66% strongly agree that this event helped build community pride and connection
- 50.00% strongly agree that this event supported local businesses and artists
- 52.81% made a purchase from a local business during their visit to the event
- 76.40% would attend the event again

Our online and media coverage yielded:

- Over 563,000 online impressions and 34,000+ digital actions taken.
- Media coverage from CBC News, JR Country, Jack FM, and Concert Addicts amplified community pride and visibility.

Strategic Alignment:

Engaged, Healthy Communities

The 2025 Our Neck of the Woods festival fostered meaningful community engagement by celebrating local culture and promoting inclusivity. With programming that highlighted Indigenous traditions, local talent, and family-friendly experiences, the event contributed to a healthier, more connected community.

Diversified, Thriving Economy

Staging major events, such as Our Neck of the Woods festival, contributes to a variety of short-term and long-term economic benefits. These can be organized into the following categories:

Local Business Support: Local businesses benefit through several mechanisms as a result of events such as Our Neck of the Woods:

- Direct Sales: Economically, the festival supported local businesses, artisans, and food vendors, many of whom reported record sales and increased visibility. Event attendee spending flows directly to businesses in Maple Ridge, including (a) those businesses that participated in the event (e.g. local vendors that participated in the Indigenous Makers Market, food truck companies, and others), (b) businesses that were open near the site of the event location, and (c) businesses that service event goers before and after the event (accommodation, local transportation, food & beverage, retail, etc). This category also includes any direct service providers to the event organizers, such as security services, when procured locally.
- Promotion of Local Products: Event attendees become exposed to new local brands throughout the event. This can happen directly, such as through sponsorship by local businesses that increase awareness of that brand (e.g. breweries that participated in the creation of the Collab Beer), or indirectly through mechanisms such as social media reach when event photographs are shared, or when tourists discover a Maple Ridge brand that they would like to visit or purchase from in the future.

Tourism Development: Events are tourism draws. Based on the data from the 2024 Our Neck of the Woods event, 28% of attendees came from outside of Maple Ridge. While the 2025 data is still to be tallied, it is expected that the proportion of tourists of total event goers will be higher in 2025 than in 2024. Tourism is a significant benefit to the City's economy in several ways:

- Most tourism businesses in BC (92%) are small businesses that directly contribute to their local community economies.

- Tourism activity produces a measurable multiplier effect. That is, direct visitor spending at an event, or as part of subsequent visits, stimulates indirect and induced economic benefits as local businesses purchase supplies and employees re-spend their wages within the community. Research across Canadian municipalities shows that every tourism dollar can generate multiple dollars in broader economic activity, strengthening small businesses, supporting employment, and increasing local tax revenues.
- Events such as Our Neck of the Woods add new tourism draws to the City's overall inventory of tourism products. In other words, the more draws that a City has for tourists, the more likely that tourism will grow as an economic industry within the community, and the more likely visitors will attend the community multiple times. As the tourism economy grows, so does local employment grow within that industry. This leads to new job creation, establishment of new businesses, and growth of existing businesses.

Investment Attraction: Multiple facets of investment attraction are closely linked to arts, culture and events such as Our Neck of the Woods:

- Quality of Life and Talent Attraction: In the City's Investment Attraction Strategy, workforce attraction and retention are identified as critical attributes used by corporate site selectors in choosing an investment destination for a new facility, factory, or office. Ability to attract and retain a workforce for a given industry or employer, in turn, depends on factors such as housing affordability, education, healthcare, and lifestyle factors that include culture, events, and other elements that increase the City's attractiveness for new employees moving to the community.
- Place Brand and City Awareness: A strong City brand, like that of Maple Ridge, improves investment attraction by increasing awareness, confidence, and positive perceptions of the community, its services and amenities, and its vision for the future. Festivals and events play a key role in this by showcasing the City's vibrancy, amenities, and quality of life to residents, visitors, and potential investors. Increased visibility helps position the City as an attractive location for talent, businesses, and future development. These are key contributors to the broader investment attraction efforts.
- Economic Diversification through Creative Industries: The influx of regional visitors also positioned Maple Ridge as a cultural destination, advancing the City's goal of economic diversification and growth through tourism and creative industries. Events such as Our Neck of the Woods, along with other efforts that aim to build a strong and vibrant creative economy, will draw in more creators, entrepreneurs, and innovators to realize broader economic diversification.

Financial Impact:

The 2025 festival was funded through a one-time allocation of \$350,000 from the City's accumulated surplus. In return, Our Neck of the Woods generated significant economic benefits for the local community and demonstrated strong sponsor support.

The event secured \$120,000 in financial sponsorships from key partners including TransLink, Meadowridge School, BC Lottery Corporation, Chances Casino, and the Maple Ridge Downtown

Business Improvement Association. Local businesses experienced a notable surge in activity, with one restaurant on 224th Street breaking its all-time sales record and another reporting an 80% increase in revenue due to the influx of festivalgoers.

The market vendors and food trucks also reported record foot traffic and strong financial returns, underscoring the festival’s role in stimulating the local economy and supporting small businesses.

	2024	2025
Attendance	14,000	20,000
BIA Shop Local Market	41 Booths	50 Booths
Indigenous Makers Market	28 Booths	10 Booths
Liquor Sales	\$47,016	\$101,215
Food Truck Sales	12 Food Trucks = \$54,536.12	12 Food Trucks = \$63,357.25
Merchandise Sales	N/A	\$19,095
Local Businesses Supported	Collab Beer – The Patch, Switchback & Foamers Folly Food Trucks – TNT Wraps	Collab Beer – The Patch, Switchback & Foamers Folly Merchandise – Zone West Food Trucks – The Dog Father Performers – JIMI
Social Outpost Sales	N/A	156 Revenue Tickets = \$9,860.64 24 Comp Tickets Handed Out
Sponsorship	\$175,000	\$120,000

Applicable Legislation/Bylaw/Policy:

The event adhered to all relevant municipal bylaws and policies regarding public gatherings and traffic control. Collaboration with City departments like Operations, Engineering, Fire and Rescue, Bylaws and RCMP ensured compliance and safety.

OPTIONS & IMPLICATIONS:

To sustain the momentum and community impact of future Our Neck of the Woods productions, Council may consider allocating ongoing funding to support the festival’s return in 2026 and beyond. While the 2024 and 2025 events were made possible through a one-time allocation from the City’s accumulated surplus, future productions will require a stable funding model to maintain the festival’s scale and quality.

Building on the success of the 2024 & 2025 Our Neck of the Woods festival, early Council direction will enable staff to secure sponsorships and book talent on optimal timelines for 2026, with any budget implications brought forward through the Financial Plan process.

The 2026-2030 business planning cycle presents unique challenges, particularly due to the FIFA World Cup, which will result in a two-month vendor blackout period that may affect availability, logistics, and sponsorship opportunities. If the City cannot begin planning now, the success of a 2026 event is at risk.

CONCLUSION:

Our Neck of the Woods has proven to be a transformative event for Maple Ridge, fostering community pride, economic growth, and cultural celebration. The festival's success, both in attendance and impact, supports its continuation and potential expansion. Council's support will be instrumental in sustaining and growing this signature event into a cornerstone of Maple Ridge's cultural identity.

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Attachments:

(A) Engage Maple Ridge Form Results Summary for "Our Neck of the Woods Feedback Survey"

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	2025 Our Neck of the Woods Event Recap.docx
Attachments:	- 2025-11-10_Form-Results-Summary-ID-88_Our-Neck-of-the-Woods.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Nov 21, 2025

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

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