

**Request for Decision**  
**Northern Ontario Growth Plan**

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**Recommendation**

For Information Only

**Signed By**

**Report Prepared By**

Kris Longston  
Senior Planner  
*Digitally Signed Jan 6, 10*

**Division Review**

Paul Baskcomb  
Acting Director of Planning Services  
*Digitally Signed Jan 6, 10*

**Recommended by the Department**

Bill Lautenbach  
General Manager of Growth and  
Development  
*Digitally Signed Jan 6, 10*

**Recommended by the C.A.O.**

Doug Nadorozny  
Chief Administrative Officer  
*Digitally Signed Jan 7, 10*

## 1.0 Background and Purpose

The Province of Ontario has recently released a proposed Growth Plan for Northern Ontario. This is the second “Growth Plan” in Ontario, initiated under the “Places to Grow Act”, which became law in June 2005. The first plan was the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe in southern Ontario.

The Growth Plan for Northern Ontario differs significantly from its southern Ontario counterpart in that it is much less focused on land use planning and is more of a framework intended to set the northern Ontario economy on a strong, globally-competitive footing over the next 25 years.

The premise of the plan is based on the prediction that northern Ontario’s population will stop declining and stabilize over the next 25 years. The goal of the proposed Growth Plan is to bring together the building blocks needed to prepare the region for shifts in the economy by growing Northern opportunities, strengthening its workforce, and enhancing northerners' quality of life (Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure, 2009).

The 25-year plan proposes policies, programs and actions, and calls on governments and their northern partners to realize a shared vision. Key actions include:

- Maximizing the economic benefit of increased mineral exploration and production and strengthening the mineral industry cluster;
- Strengthening partnerships among colleges, universities and industry to support research, and to educate and train northerners for careers in growing fields;
- Building a new relationship with Aboriginal people to increase participation in the future economic growth of Northern Ontario and achieve better health status for aboriginal communities;
- Developing complete networks to support stronger communities such as an inter-regional transportation network, enhanced broadband service, and a broader transmission network to increase capacity for renewable energy development;
- Creating regional economic zones to help communities plan collaboratively for their economic, labour market, infrastructure, land-use, cultural and population needs; and
- Encouraging development and use of green technologies and demonstrating leadership in green building, and water and energy conservation (Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure, 2009).

The framework of the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario is outlined through over 100 action items categorized under 5 major headings:

- Building Towards a New Economy;
- Investing in People and Progress;
- Forging a New Relationship with Aboriginal Peoples;

- Connecting and Strengthening Northern Communities; and
- Promoting Environmental Stewardship (Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure, 2009).

The Province is currently soliciting comments from northern Ontario residents, youth, First Nations communities, community leaders, business, industry and other experts who have the opportunity to help chart the future of the region by providing input on the proposed plan. After the commenting period, a final Growth Plan will be put forward to guide future policy development and infrastructure investments by the province (Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure, 2009). It should be noted, however, that the 5 major cities were not engaged as a group to address urban issues, even though this is where almost half of northern Ontario's population is concentrated.

While the Plan does provide a strong focus on northern Ontario and establishes a mechanism to coordinate initiatives, it lacks key information on priorities, timing and funding. Given the broad nature, 25 year timeframe and funding implications of the document, it is imperative that the Growth Plan be enhanced to identify issues, priorities and implementation strategies that are critical for the future growth and development of the major cities in northern Ontario.

On November 19<sup>th</sup> City of Greater Sudbury staff attended a public meeting on the proposed Growth Plan for Northern Ontario that was put on by Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry and the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure. The purpose of the meeting was to solicit comments on the proposed plan, focusing on the positive aspects, the missing pieces and priorities for actions.

On December 3<sup>rd</sup>, the City of Greater Sudbury hosted a Regional Development Meeting to discuss opportunities for cooperation amongst the different interest groups to increase economic development and tourism in the area. This event attracted representatives from the surrounding municipalities, First Nations Communities and institutions including; Espanola, Killarney, French River, Elliot Lake, Manitoulin Island, Whitefish Lake First Nation, Whitefish River First Nation, Laurentian University, College Boreal, Cambrian College and many others. Included as part of this meeting, was a plenary session to recognize the importance of the Northern Ontario Growth Plan.

The purpose of this report is to summarize the issues and concerns put forward at these sessions regarding the Northern Ontario Growth Plan, outline areas of the Northern Growth Plan that would benefit from additional input from the City of Greater Sudbury, and to ensure that the Growth Plan objectives reflect those contained in the Greater Sudbury Economic Development Strategic Plan. These comments then need to be submitted to the Province prior to their February 1<sup>st</sup> deadline.

This report is structured such that the key components missing from the Growth Plan are identified first, followed by a review of key areas of the Growth Plan framework that need to be augmented to reflect the goals of the community.

## **2.0 Key Elements Missing from the Northern Growth Plan**

The proposed Northern Ontario Growth Plan is forward looking and broad in scope. It also shows a commitment from the Province to position northern Ontario at the forefront of tomorrow's economy, which will see increased globalization and a focus on green energy. There are, however, several key elements not mentioned in the Growth Plan that are of fundamental importance for the future of northern Ontario, including sustainable funding, increasing immigration and caring for an aging population.

### ***2.1 Sustainable Funding to Improve and Grow Communities***

The guiding principles of the Northern Ontario Growth Plan include the creation of a highly productive, self sustaining economy and improving quality of place. This is, however, very difficult for northern municipalities to accomplish without a consistent and sustainable source of funding for economic development and infrastructure. As with any sound commercial enterprise, the only way to improve quality and grow is to reinvest some of the revenue back into the business. This is currently not happening quickly enough in northern Ontario as the wealth generated by the forestry and mining industries isn't being reinvested back into the area.

Ontario's mining industry, 50% of which is located within the Sudbury Basin, sends hundreds of millions of dollars to the Federal and Provincial Treasuries. However, in urban locales such as Greater Sudbury, it is the municipality that delivers much of the infrastructure and services that allow mining companies to operate effectively and efficiently (Revenues, 2008). The strain on municipalities to provide infrastructure that benefits the mining industry is recognized by the Conference Board of Canada, which estimated that the City of Greater Sudbury requires an additional \$30 M annually to achieve long-term fiscal sustainability. This amount has been shown to be a fraction of the difference between what the mining industry pays to the Federal Provincial governments and what flows back into the community by way of Provincial transfer payments (Revenues, 2008).

Without the large commercial and industrial tax base that benefits southern Ontario, municipalities in the north are forced to rely primarily on residential property taxes and

transfer payments from the Province. The only revenues coming in to municipalities from the mining industry are property taxes, which have been steadily declining over the years as underground infrastructure is exempt from municipal assessment (Revenues, 2008). The current funding arrangement is not sustainable, especially in cities like Greater Sudbury, which is geographically larger than many southern Ontario Municipalities combined, but with only a fraction of their municipal tax base.

Lack of consistent, sustainable funding to improve deteriorating infrastructure and revitalize northern municipalities is the biggest impediment to achieving the goals and plans of action highlighted in the Northern Ontario Growth Plan. However, there are clear ways that the Plan can remedy this imbalance and allow the north to be economically and socially self sustaining, namely:

- Allocating a percentage of the mineral and forest revenue generated in the Northern Ontario Growth Plan Area to the municipalities in which the industries are located to create long term sustainable funding for municipal infrastructure and community development. This includes:
  - i. Recognizing the fact that it is the municipalities that provide the roads, water, sewer and other services that facilitate both the labour force and resource development for mining and forestry operations, while the economic return to the municipalities is only a fraction of that enjoyed by the Provincial and Federal Governments;
  - ii. Recognizing that there is currently a disconnect in Ontario legislation regarding how municipalities are compensated for resource extraction within their boundaries and that the Mining Act must be amended to ensure an appropriate level of revenue sharing for municipalities across the entire mining and resource sector; and
  - iii. Recognizing that precedents have already been established for a more equal process to allow municipalities to share in the wealth generated from the extraction of the mineral resources found within their boundaries (i.e. Peace River Regional District in British Columbia, Raglan in the Nunavik Territory of northern Quebec and the Voisey's Bay Project in Newfoundland and Labrador).

## **2.2 Increase Immigration in northern Ontario**

One of the fundamental underpinnings of the Northern Ontario Growth Plan is the expectation that the population will stabilize after declining for more than a decade. The plan credits this change with strong population growth among Aboriginal communities and a decrease in rate of people leaving the region. While this is encouraging news, the primary focuses of the Northern Ontario Growth Plan must also be growing the population of the north by way of immigration and the ability to relieve some of the growth pressures in southern Ontario through intensification in the north.

A community's capacity to sustain the size of its labour force can be measured as a ratio of the current population aged 0-14 to the current population aged 50-64. In effect, the measure compares the population poised to enter the labour force over the next 15 years to the one preparing to exit the labour force over a similar time frame. A ratio greater than one implies that a community's labour force will remain capable of supporting growth in the economy, whereas a ratio below one suggests a long-term contraction in the size of the economically active population in relation to young and retired individuals (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2009). Greater Sudbury's labour force replacement ratio was in decline between 2001 and 2006 and now stands at 0.85, meaning that there will not be sufficient workers entering the job market in Greater Sudbury to grow the economy (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2009). Immigration is an integral part of the solution for addressing local labour force shortages (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2009).

A growing proportion of knowledge workers are coming into Canada as newcomers. In many cases, these workers do more than fill occupational gaps, they contribute new perspectives and knowledge drawn from other places and they can enhance northern Ontario's innovative capacity (Social Planning Council of Sudbury, 2009). From 1996 to 2006, the immigrant population in Greater Sudbury decreased by 14% to 7%. This is well below the provincial average where immigrants make up 28% of the population (GSDC, 2009).

In 2006, there were 124 immigrant landings in Greater Sudbury and the visible minority population in the City was 2.1%. By comparison, Regina, another northern community with a similarly sized population, had 834 immigrant landings and a visible minority population of 7% (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2009). One could infer from the relatively small number of immigrant landings in Sudbury and the low visible minority population that additional work needs to be done to make northern Ontario and Greater Sudbury an attractive and welcoming destination for immigrant populations.

The Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration states that Ontario welcomes more than half of all immigrants to Canada and also that immigration is vital to Ontario's future. In recognizing the benefits of immigration the Ministry provides many programs and services to help newcomers settle, build their careers, further their education, and become a vital part of the community (Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, 2007). While the links between immigration and economic growth are recognized by the Province, there is currently no mention of immigration in the Northern Ontario Growth Plan. This situation needs to be addressed in the Growth Plan by:

- Acknowledging that immigrants play a key role economically, socially, and culturally in making northern Ontario strong and prosperous;
- Allocating funding to the five major urban centres to develop and implement immigration attraction strategies;
- Funding programs to make the City of Greater Sudbury and the other major urban centres welcoming and diverse communities for immigrants (i.e. expanding on the proposed Bridge Training Facility for Laurentian University);
- Including the need for skilled labour in the mining and forestry sectors as part of the Provincial Nominee Program;
- Funding labour force integration training for northern Ontario employers (specifically cultural intelligence and sensitivity training);
- Funding the development of retention programs for international students studying at northern Ontario post secondary institutions; and
- Funding to develop programs to attract the business class of immigrants to northern Ontario and connect them with local industries and businesses in need of succession planning strategies.

### **2.3 Impacts of an Aging Population**

Another key issue that is absent in the Northern Ontario Growth Plan, is a strategy to deal with the aging population. The Province of Ontario in its "Aging at Home Strategy" acknowledges that

*"Ontario's population is aging - recent estimates project the seniors' population to double in the next 16 years. It is therefore becoming vitally important to ensure that there are resources available to assist those who wish to remain at home." (Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, 2009)*

The City of Greater Sudbury and northeastern Ontario currently have a higher population of elderly adults than the rest of the province, 16.3% vs. 13.5% (North East Local Integration Health Network, 2009). This summer, the impacts of the aging population in Greater Sudbury were felt during an ALC (alternative level of care) crisis in the City's hospital where emergency rooms were filled and surgeries cancelled due to a lack of beds. Many of these beds were occupied by seniors who were not critically ill but did not have access to appropriate levels of care to meet their needs (i.e. supportive housing, assisted living, and nursing homes).

The lack of a strategy aimed at meeting the housing, income and mobility needs for an aging population is a rather glaring omission for a document such as the Northern Ontario Growth Plan, especially given its 25 year planning horizon. That being said the situation can be addressed in the Growth Plan by:

- Acknowledging that the health of an aging population is a fundamental issue confronting the economic prosperity of northern Ontario;
- Acknowledging that part of the solution to solving the ALC issue in northern Ontario lies in identifying the gaps in service delivery to this segment of the population and then developing and funding the programs needed to fill these gaps; and
- Developing and funding programs for affordable supportive housing and transportation for the elderly.

### **3.0 Strengthening and Enhancing the Northern Ontario Growth Plan**

The following sections deal with proposed improvements and modifications to the Northern Growth Plan to better focus the plans of action and address specific concerns of the City of Greater Sudbury.

#### ***3.1 Mining and Forestry***

Mining and Forestry are two of the oldest and most established industries in northern Ontario. However, the new global reality brings with it higher energy prices, the need to access the India-China nexus of growth and the give and take of job gains and losses as companies shift resources to minimize their cost structures. Successful regions will be those that compete less on cost and more on high skills and advanced manufacturing processes and technologies, to attract new businesses (GSDC, 2009). Greater Sudbury's rich mining history is the spring board for gaining world class recognition for mining and supply services. The future must lead to an expanding array

of businesses in Greater Sudbury and the surrounding area which will collaborate and compete to provide innovative and essential products and services to mining operations around the world (GSDC, 2009).

The Northern Growth Plan must take the necessary steps to ensure this future for northern Ontario and Greater Sudbury by:

- Recognizing Greater Sudbury as a leader in manufacturing cost-effective equipment and tools for deep mining, including mine safety, and innovative processing of natural resources;
- Supporting and enhancing the existing mining industry while also helping the City of Greater Sudbury maintain its status as a world class centre of mining excellence;
- Developing a strategic export marketing program for mining technology and services;
- Recognizing the impacts of globalization and global procurement practices on the mining industry and committing to develop strategic partnerships with other Canadian mining operations (e.g. Potash, Oil sands) to advance the mining and mining supply/services sector for northern Ontario;
- Recognizing that incentives to encourage more processing in Ontario's resource-based municipalities are crucial to bolster the mining industry and that northern Ontario municipalities would benefit from investments that expand the commercial life of the mines and protect the ample and relatively modern smelting and processing facilities that are already in place;
- Enacting programs and initiatives to see that resources which are extracted in northern Ontario are also processed and refined in northern Ontario; and
- Recognizing that there is a need to pursue economic development opportunities in northern Ontario municipalities beyond resource extraction and processing such as fabricating and manufacturing.

### **3.2 Green Energy**

The Province has made Green Energy a key pillar of its Northern Ontario Growth Plan. The recognition of the immense capacity for wind energy development in northeastern Ontario and the opportunities for Aboriginal communities in a green energy future that includes solar, biomass, and geothermal energy are an excellent starting point.

Additionally the investment in transmission line improvements will also open up the north for green energy development.

Many of the Green Energy Plan of Action items identified in the Northern Ontario Growth Plan, however, are already in place with the passing of the Green Energy Act, apply province wide and are not unique to northern Ontario. That being said, there are opportunities for the Growth Plan to be strengthened to realize this vision of northern Ontario becoming a focal point for the Green Energy industry of the future by:

- Locating the Renewable Energy Facilitation Office (REFO) in northern Ontario;
- Expanding on the domestic content requirements that are part of the feed-in tariff program by providing grants through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation to renewable energy equipment manufacturers to establish in northern Ontario. This action would ensure the creation of a green energy industry in the north and recognize northern Ontario as a logical choice for green energy manufacturing due to the close proximity to wind resources along the north shores of Lake Huron and Lake Superior, the availability of biomass from the forestry industry and the prospects of geothermal with the mining industry;
- Positioning the newly created Green Energy Industry in northern Ontario to service the needs of the northern United States as that country moves toward a green economy; and
- Establishing a Green Energy Research and Policy Institute in Greater Sudbury affiliated with post secondary educational institutions in the north. This will ensure that there would be research and development linked to an emerging Green Energy manufacturing industry in northern Ontario.

### **3.3 Tourism**

Northeastern Ontario and Greater Sudbury in particular are blessed with superior natural assets and a unique geological history which serve as an outstanding vacation destination. Exceptional major attractions such as Science North and Dynamic Earth, along with Greater Sudbury's reputation for environmental stewardship and outdoor recreation activities make it a world class tourist destination (GSDC, 2009).

In spite of these assets, tourism volume in northern Ontario has remained static for a number of years, particularly for those regions that rely on U.S. visitors (Lloyd Research & Haynes Marketing, 2008). The Northern Ontario Growth Plan can help northeastern Ontario achieve its tourism potential by:

- Acknowledging the need for up-to-date and timely market research and information, along with new methods of obtaining market data, is a priority to effectively plan for the future;
- Funding the enhancement of existing and the development of new world class attractions to create a critical mass of tourism opportunities;
- Funding the improvement of organizational capacity and effectiveness within the tourism sector, including building on the successes of Science North and Dynamic Earth as a provider of tourism consultation services;
- Funding strategic partnerships that contribute to the growth and sustainability of the tourism industry in northeastern Ontario and Greater Sudbury. While also focusing on existing gaps with market demand (e.g. culinary, trails, francophone and cruise ships visiting the north shore and Little Current);
- Funding the development of francophone and aboriginal tourism opportunities;
- Funding the development, expansion and upgrading of facilities and infrastructure to attract more conferences and events; and
- Implementing the recommendations of the “*Discovering Ontario: A Report on the Future of Tourism*” by Greg Sorbara and the Ontario Tourism Competitiveness Study.

### **3.4 Health**

The Northern Ontario Growth Plan recognizes that access to quality healthcare in a timely manner is of crucial importance to the development and prosperity of northern Ontario. Much has been done to improve the health of northern Ontario residents by way of the establishment of the Northern Ontario School of Medicine, the Northeastern Ontario Regional Cancer Centre and the Adult Regional Cardiac Program in Greater Sudbury. The Northern Ontario Growth Plan presents the opportunity to expand on these recent healthcare accomplishments by:

- Recognizing the City of Greater Sudbury’s role as a regional health and referral centre and maximizing the opportunities for health services and expertise;
- Creating a multi organizational/multi disciplinary association to advocate for and collaborate on improving northern Ontario’s health related industry;
- Identifying and filling gaps in areas of health care expertise that would enhance Greater Sudbury’s ability as a regional referral centre; and

- Supporting community efforts to address the Alternate Levels of Care crisis in both the short and long term.

### **3.5 Education**

Lower levels of literacy and education in Greater Sudbury compared to the provincial average make it difficult for the area to weather fluctuations in the economy. Referring to the Talent Index – a measure of the proportion of the population with a Bachelor’s Degree or higher – Greater Sudbury at 14.3% ranks well below the provincial average of 22.8% (Greater Sudbury Development Corporation, 2009).

To address this issue, the Growth Plan needs to focus on closing the gap in the proportion of graduate spaces between northeastern Ontario and the rest of the province so graduates do not have to leave the area to continue their studies. Also complicating the education issue is the fact that northern Ontario Universities are often at a disadvantage in accessing research funding when compared to the larger southern Ontario Universities that have a long history of research initiatives. The Northern Ontario Growth Plan can address this by:

- Funding additional centres of learning, non-traditional learning, lifelong learning and apprenticeship programs in northern Ontario, specifically the proposed Laurentian University School of Architecture in downtown Greater Sudbury;
- Expanding E-learning programs while understanding that they are not a panacea for solving the issue of distance learning;
- Funding the establishment of a Green Energy Technology Research Hub and Green Energy trade schools in northern Ontario and Greater Sudbury in particular, as with a university and two colleges, it is the centre of higher education in northern Ontario;
- Funding the creation of a world class Faculty of Mining; and
- Funding the development and advancement of Centres of Excellence where critical mass can be achieved and areas of expertise exist (i.e. Sustainable Energy Centre at Cambrian College, mining and occupational health).

### **3.6 Transportation**

The Northern Ontario Growth Plan recognizes the importance of transportation in linking the vast areas of northern Ontario to each other and to their key markets. The four laning of Hwy 69 is an excellent improvement to transportation issues in northern Ontario; however improvements still need to be made. To ensure that there is an

adequate transportation network in place to support the growth and development of northern Ontario, the Growth Plan should provide:

- A plan for improving transportation networks between Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie, including preserving the Huron Central rail link between Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie, as this is the closest border crossing to the United States for northeastern Ontario;
- An understanding that the frontiers of mineral exploration are further north and of the need for a plan to improve highway, rail and air links between Sudbury, Sault Ste. Marie, North Bay and Timmins in order to efficiently develop the natural resources of these areas and points further north;
- A plan for improving passenger rail linkages between Greater Sudbury and southern Ontario, including better scheduling and moving the terminal to a strategic location; and
- A focus on making rail and marine shipping a priority, including the establishment of a deep water port along the north shore of Lake Huron.

### ***3.7 Information and Communications Technology***

The Northern Ontario Growth Plan is clear on the need to extend broadband internet service to all northern Ontario, which is a fundamental requirement for the region to compete in the global economy. What is absent from the Plan, however, is a commitment to continue to develop, expand and improve Geographic Information Systems (GIS) in northern Ontario. The Northern Ontario Growth Plan could address this by:

- Funding GIS applications, data collection and innovation initiatives to provide an excellent web accessible base of information for investors, visitors and industries interested in northern Ontario.
- Promoting partnerships and information sharing between municipalities and other entities. This could include providing, through the Ministry of Natural Resources, digital products such as up to date aerial photography, digital terrain modeling, etc.

### **3.8 Quality of Place**

One of the most important features of the Northern Ontario Growth Plan is its commitment to quality of place. Improving the urban centres of northern Ontario is a key requirement to attracting and retaining people who will drive the future economy.

Part of improving quality of place is developing a thriving and sustainable professional and arts & culture community. Not only does a growing arts, culture and professional sector provide jobs and increase tourism, it also adds to quality of life and attracts talented people to those occupations that will nurture economic growth in the region. The creative class is composed of people who are paid to think for a living including people working in technology, arts & culture, professional, educational and health occupations (GSDC, 2009). Greater Sudbury's creative class as a percent of workforce is, at 26%, well below the 30%+ seen in similarly sized southern Ontario municipalities (GSDC, 2009).

The Northern Ontario Growth Plan is somewhat silent on the need to grow the creative class community in northern Ontario, and can be greatly improved by:

- Providing incentives and funding for Research Chairs in educational sectors and making other investments in talent in northern Ontario;
- Providing funding to position Greater Sudbury as the music, film and television industry leader of northern Ontario and to increase attraction and retention efforts to complement existing film, television and music industry partnerships;
- Strengthening the arts and culture sector through increased resources for infrastructure improvements and sustainability; and
- Providing funding to create and implement public art policies and to develop signature arts districts in the major urban centres in northern Ontario.

Another aspect of "Quality of Place" that needs to be a focus of the Northern Ontario Growth Plan is the revitalization of downtowns in the urban centres and the adaptive reuse of brownfield sites. Many northern Ontario municipalities, including Greater Sudbury, already have Community Improvement Plans, under Section 28 of the Planning Act, in place to address downtown revitalization, public art, neighbourhood improvements, affordable housing, and brownfield redevelopment.

Lacking in these Community Improvement Plans are the funding resources necessary to realize them quickly and on a large scale. An infusion of capital from the Province, as part of the Northern Ontario Growth Plan, into these existing Community Improvement Plans would create the critical mass needed to make cities in the north socially,

culturally and economically viable. The Province is in the position to provide an immediate kick start to redevelopment initiatives in northern Ontario by providing funding to municipalities to increase the level of incentives offered in their Community Improvement Plans. To achieve this, the Northern Ontario Growth Plan should be modified by:

- Acknowledging that the creation of affordable supportive housing for seniors is an excellent fit with downtown revitalization objectives and programs that are currently in place within many northern Ontario cities in the form of Community Improvement Plans under Section 28 of the Planning Act. And further, that these existing programs would benefit from direct Provincial funding to provide additional incentives to drive development; and
- Committing to inject Provincial funding into municipal Community Improvement Plans to provide an immediate and sustainable boost to downtown revitalization, public art, neighbourhood improvements, brownfield redevelopment and affordable senior's housing creation.

## 4.0 Summary

Through the Northern Ontario Growth Plan, the Province is committed to implementing an economic growth strategy for northern Ontario. The plan outlines numerous points of action that will involve collaboration between the Province, municipalities, aboriginal groups, industry and other stakeholders to ensure the prosperity of the north over the next 25 years.

That being said, the reality is that the Northern Ontario Growth Plan lacks key information on priorities, timing, funding, monitoring and most importantly implementation measures.

To address the gaps in the Northern Ontario Growth Plan the City of Greater Sudbury has outlined a number of areas in the Plan that would benefit from improvement to achieve the social and economic success it envisions. The City has also identified crucial elements that have not been addressed in the plan, namely; assuring sustainable funding for northern Ontario communities via the equal sharing of resource revenues, increasing immigration to grow northern Ontario and providing a concrete plan to meet the needs of an aging population.

The City of Greater Sudbury is encouraged by the efforts that have gone into the creation of such a broad and comprehensive document and welcomes this opportunity to work side by side with the Provincial Government to realize the vision of the Northern Ontario Growth Plan.

## **5.0 Recommendation**

It is anticipated that more comments on the proposed Growth Plan may be forthcoming from Council and other parties, which may necessitate some modifications to this report. As a result this report is presented for the information of Council at this point. However, once the report is finalized it will be brought back to Council in 2 weeks with the recommendation:

*That Council submit this report to the Province of Ontario and request that the proposed Growth Plan for Northern Ontario be amended by including and addressing the issues and points outlined in this report.*

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