



A new vision for **DOWNTOWN** Sudbury

Guiding Principles, Strategies, Projects
Programs

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PART ONE : GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Creating a New Vision for Downtown Sudbury

Background

In June of 2003, City Council adopted an Economic Development Strategic Plan for Greater Sudbury, entitled "Coming of Age in the 21st Century." The Plan identified five economic engines of growth which will enhance Greater Sudbury's core capabilities and provide a means of "shoring up" areas of improvement.

'A City for the creative, curious and adventuresome' is identified as Engine #2. Under this engine, Greater Sudbury will become an attractive "people" place that welcomes and encourages talented individuals of diverse cultural backgrounds and lifestyles. The under 35 generation will experience Greater Sudbury as a "youth-friendly" city with a dynamic urban environment. It will cater to a range of interests, provide supportive educational and technological infrastructure and policies, and offer an enviable quality of life.

In December 2004, the Greater Sudbury Development Corporation endorsed the proposal to develop a new vision for the Downtown. In part the idea behind the development of the new vision was to assist in achieving the goal of Engine #2. Downtown Sudbury was seen a natural place to develop a City for the creative, curious and adventuresome.

There have been other reasons to develop a new vision for the Downtown. Staff has been working on the development of the first Official Plan for the new City of Greater Sudbury. This exercise is currently underway and involves examining many issues throughout the community. A strong and vibrant Downtown is obviously important to the community as a whole. As such, the development of community consensus on the issues that are of importance within the Downtown was seen as integral to the development of a new Official Plan.

The Process

Developing community consensus around downtown issues was seen as critically important in terms of developing a new vision for the Downtown. Open dialogue amongst the various stakeholders was identified as an important part of the process. To this end, a series of facilitated meetings was held over a four-week period, which involved both large and small groups, key stakeholders, community institutions, and key decision makers.

The sessions developed consensus amongst the various stakeholders on core values around downtown issues. The sessions identified an overall vision and also the guiding principles to support that vision. It is important to note that there were many good ideas that came forward. The vision presented in this report attempts to reflect the key elements presented by stakeholders.

What is a Downtown, what is its value?

"The image that citizens and visitors have of a City is usually created by its downtown; it is a powerful symbol of the City's vitality or lack of it. A City's downtown is a center of its history, culture, and heritage."

Downtown Development Handbook, Urban Land Institute

Sudbury's Downtown has been referred to as 'Sudbury's first neighborhood.' Unlike other neighborhoods, however, this one is shared by the entire community. This neighborhood is unique in a number of ways. Its built form defines it as distinct and separate from the rest of the community. The wide range of uses and services that are present in the Downtown area attract a cross-section of the entire community. As Sudbury's first neighborhood, it enjoys a long and rich history - one which has touched everyone who has ever lived in this community.

As an urban space within a broader community, Sudbury's Downtown, more than any other neighborhood, belongs to us all. Therefore, efforts directed at ensuring the Downtown's continued viability, must involve the whole community. There are many opportunities and challenges facing our Downtown and there are many potential community-based solutions. Accordingly, the value of Downtown Sudbury is to the broader community.

Who has done what?

Many partners have participated in the evolution of Sudbury's Downtown. The Downtown Business Improvement Area (BIA), which is known as Downtown Sudbury, has represented downtown business interests for over 25 years. Downtown Sudbury's efforts have been focused on a range of projects which have included such things as streetscape improvements, the development of the Farmers' Market, the development of the Centre for Life, the Santa Clause Parade, Blues for Food and various business promotion and retention programs, to mention a few.

In all cases Downtown Sudbury has partnered with many other agencies, community groups and levels of government to achieve success in its various projects. Downtown Sudbury is an association of business people, which is managed under the provisions of the Municipal Act.

In the amalgamated City of Greater Sudbury, there are many Town Centres, each acting as the heart of the communities they serve. Sudbury's Downtown has expanded in part due to the expansion of the City itself. This larger community has many interests which affect Downtown, and some of these interests are at play outside of the borders of the BIA. In thinking of a strategy for the future of the Downtown, it is reasonable to consider partners outside of the traditional boundaries of the existing BIA.

What has been done?

In considering the development of a “vision” for the Downtown, one can look to the many studies and visioning exercises that have been undertaken over the years. As a rule, these activities were either focused on single issues or geographically focused within the boundaries of the Downtown BIA. In either case they have not involved the broader community in a holistic fashion beyond the boundaries of the BIA. However, it can be said that individually these studies have dealt with important elements of the broader vision in the absence of the larger community context.

The following is a partial list of the types of studies and visioning exercises that have been undertaken in the Downtown core:

- ▶ Borgia Area Urban Renewal Project - 1966
- ▶ Stage 1 Report Sudbury Railway Relocation Feasibility Study - 1972
- ▶ Rail Relocation Study Design Phase II -Interim report - 1979
- ▶ Sudbury Rail Relocation Study - 1981
- ▶ Economic Study of Downtown Revitalization Projects Phase 1 - 1986
- ▶ A Downtown Development Action program For the City of Sudbury. The Work Program - 1988.
- ▶ Sudbury Seniors Centre Study - 1991
- ▶ Older Adult Feasibility Study Phase II Report - 1993
- ▶ Sudbury Arts Complex Market and Feasibility Study - 1996
- ▶ Sudbury Metro Centre Community Improvement Plan - 1987 & 2003
- ▶ Developing a Convention Centre in Greater Sudbury - Overview of Market Support and Community Impacts - 2002
- ▶ Economic Impact Analysis for the Proposed YMCA Centre for Life - 1997
- ▶ Sudbury Play North Entertainment/Trade Centre - 1999
- ▶ Sudbury Downtown Hotel Project. - 1992
- ▶ Farmers’ Festival Market Background Study - 1990
- ▶ Results of the Strategic Issues Forum: Issues, Opportunities and Quick Wins for Downtown Sudbury – 2000

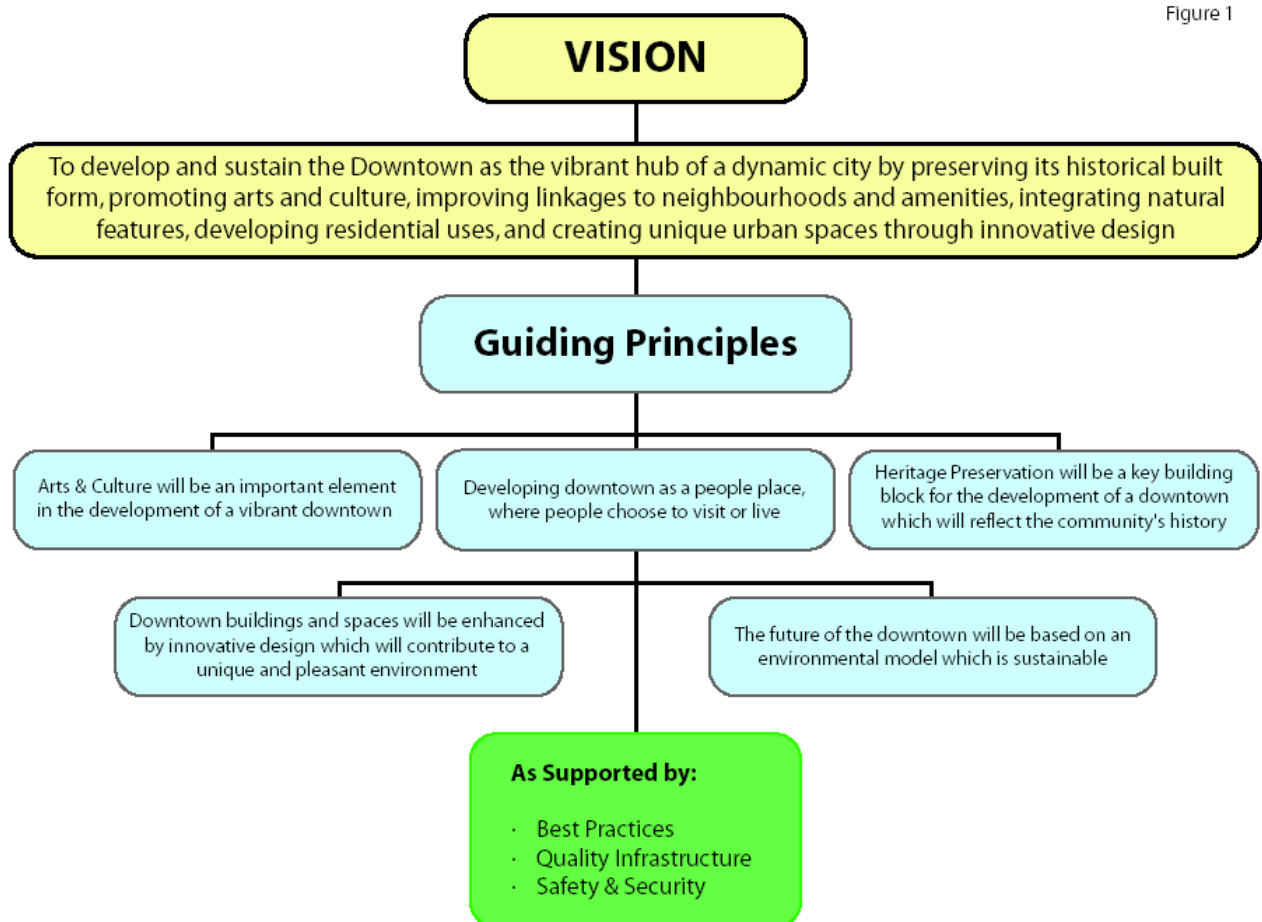
The Vision

The following vision was crafted and refined based on input from the facilitated sessions:

"To develop and sustain the Downtown as the vibrant hub of a dynamic city by preserving its historical built form, promoting arts and culture, improving linkages to neighbourhoods and amenities, integrating natural features, developing residential uses, and creating unique urban spaces through innovative design."

To help focus the vision, five guiding principles were also developed and are outlined in Figure 1 below. These principles were seen as assisting the achievement of the overall vision by pursuing specific themes at a project and program level. What follows is a more detailed examination of each of the guiding principles and the suggested strategies that may be used to help achieve the vision.

Figure 1



Guiding Principle #1

"Arts & Culture will be an important element in the development of a vibrant downtown."

"Social value is created when resources are devoted to generate improvements in the lives of individuals or society as a whole. Thus, investment in the arts generates results with high intrinsic value, that is, a social return on investment that is not easily quantifiable. Quality of life issues are enormously important to business throughout the Provinces in order to attract and retain employees and their families to live and work in our communities. This factor is just as critical for a small mill town as it is for a big city competing for major head office relocations. Families want to stay in communities that are rich and diverse with significant opportunities for personal development, including music, dance, drama, and visual arts."



The Canadian Chamber of Commerce, Policy Resolution: Investment in the Arts
<http://www.chamber.ca/article.asp?id=465>



The arts and cultural activities that we pursue are what make cities alive. In general, communities value the role of Arts & Culture whether professional or amateur.

People engage in Arts & Culture in many ways as audience members and as artists, teachers, students, amateur practitioners and supporters.

The Arts & Culture scene is valuable on its own terms but at the same time is inextricable from other community processes - the creation of a sense of community, group memory, ethnic pride, economic development, education - being held in a wide range of places from museums and concert halls to community centres, schools parks and churches.

There are many players ranging from the traditional larger scale institutions to small entities - a vibrant Arts & Culture community values all of them.

Perspectives held by the mainstream population typically guide policy discussions on the Arts & Culture sector. However these often include definitions which are far too narrow to capture the full range of ways in which Arts & Culture and creative expression can enhance a community.

Guiding Principle #2

"Heritage preservation will be a key building block for the development of a downtown which will reflect the community's history."

"A community is shaped by its understanding of the past and the physical surroundings of everyday life. Built evidence of the past, in the form of buildings, structures and areas of architectural historical and archaeological interest, provides significant insight into community history and identity. The evidence of evolving patterns of architectural design and the quality of workmanship of older buildings provides a rich visual texture that contributes to the quality of life."



Toronto Historical Board Mandate/Mission statement

All Cities have a unique heritage and identity. This identity is often reflected in the City's architecture. The downtown is almost always the oldest part of a community, as such its buildings are reflective of the evolution of the city. By preserving this heritage within the architecture of the Downtown we are essentially helping to define our identity for the world to see.

A new vision for DOWNTOWN Sudbury

The buildings that exist within our Downtown are the physical landscape upon which we wish to create a vibrant downtown. As such the enrichment of these buildings through preservation and enhancement provides us a strong basis upon which we can reinvent our Downtown.

Guiding Principle #3



"Downtown buildings and spaces will be enhanced by innovative design which will contribute to a unique and pleasant environment."

"A hundred years after we are gone and forgotten, those who never heard of us will be living with the results of our actions."

Oliver Wendell Holmes, U.S. Supreme Court Justice

Good urban design adds value by:

- ▶ creating well-connected, inclusive and accessible new places
- ▶ delivering development sensitive to its context
- ▶ enhancing the sense of safety and security within and beyond developments
- ▶ returning inaccessible or rundown areas and amenities to beneficial public use
- ▶ boosting civic pride and enhancing civic image
- ▶ revitalizing urban heritage
- ▶ differentiating places and promoting their value
- ▶ opening up investment opportunities, raising confidence in development opportunities and attracting grant monies
- ▶ helping create more livable areas
- ▶ developing a community's self-image



Guiding Principle #4

"Developing Downtown as a people place, where people choose to live or visit."

"We will create inviting places, both public and private, and will encourage the design of a pedestrian friendly downtown, by paying attention to urban design issues and the orientation of structures to their surroundings and environment, both natural and built. We will foster development of an array of housing options in and around our downtown. We will constantly seek stability, reinvestment and renewal of our downtown. We will create dense, busy, exciting, pedestrian oriented, mixed-use downtown."

Excerpt from the Tulsa Region Downtown Strategy.



Increasing the number of people who live in our Downtown will return our Downtown to a neighborhood. Neighborhoods are the building blocks of communities. Neighborhoods exist 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. A downtown that has activity outside of the business day will attract people and investment from across the whole community. Downtown will become the place where people will come to experience the unique qualities of an urban space which offers more than just shopping or living environments. Downtown will become the crossroads of the community.

Guiding Principle #5

"The Future of downtown will be based on an environmental model which is sustainable."

"Sustainability is a possible way of living or being in which individuals, firms, governments, and other institutions act responsibly in taking care of the future as if it belonged to them today, in equitably sharing the ecological resources on which the survival of humans and other species depends, and in assuring that all who live today and in the future will be able to satisfy their needs and human aspirations."

John Ehrenfeld, MIT

Why Improve the Urban Environment?

It is now widely recognized that cities play a vital role in social and economic development in all countries.

Urbanization builds diversified and dynamic economies, which raise productivity, create jobs and wealth, provide essential services, and absorb population growth, and become the key engines of economic and social advancement. Thus, efficient and productive cities and towns are essential for national economic growth and welfare; equally, strong urban economies generate the resources needed for public and private investments in infrastructure, education, health, and improved living conditions.

Sudbury is known for its leadership in natural environment restoration. This leadership can be focused on the Downtown. Environmental innovation can be used as a catalyst for downtown renewal. The innovative use of new environmental technologies, such as green buildings, green roofs and the reinvention of public spaces can be seen as opportunities to improve the Downtown.



PART TWO : STRATEGIES, PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS

Part Two contains suggested strategies, projects and programs that implement the guiding principles established in Part One of this report. Other initiatives may be added as a result of further dialogue within the community and among Downtown stakeholders.

Also included as an Appendix in Part Two is a Chart that illustrates the interconnections between the five Guiding Principles and potential projects and programs.

Guiding Principle #1

"Arts & Culture will be an important element in the development of a vibrant downtown."



Suggested Strategies

Advocacy

1. Inform elected representatives, government officials and the media on the value of Arts & Culture to the community.
2. Municipal decision-making should consider the role and value of Arts & Culture.
3. Arts & Culture advocacy should be proactive with a long-term perspective. The focus should be on the overall value of Arts & Culture as opposed to reacting to individual issues.
4. Consider developing community support for the Arts & Culture sector outside of traditional communities of support.
5. Arts and cultural issues are reflective of the diverse nature of our community.
6. A common voice and messaging from the Arts & Culture community will assist the broader community in understanding these issues and their importance.
7. Recognize the importance of the First Nations community and its role in Greater Sudbury's Arts & Culture community.

Projects & Programs

1. The City should establish a program of developing public art at various locations within the Downtown. The development of public art within the Downtown should be viewed as an opportunity to engage the community in creative ways. Public art within the Downtown should be reflective of the community and Northern Ontario.
2. The City should encourage street art in the Downtown. The creation of a Downtown artscape should begin with an initiative to locate public art on its property. It should also encourage other public agencies to do likewise.
3. The City should develop a Master Plan and criteria, which is based on community consensus, as to the locations for public art. In addition the criteria should also define what type of art should be considered for the Downtown.
4. The City should develop partnerships among private and non-profit sectors and with other levels of government to foster culture through renovated, expanded and new cultural facilities including the development of a Performing Arts Centre and an Art Gallery.
5. A new community partnership should be created to develop a festival of national prominence held within the Downtown focusing on Arts & Culture.
6. The City, its Downtown partners and the arts community should facilitate arts and cultural experience for youth within the downtown.

Guiding Principle #2

"Heritage preservation will be a key building block for the development of a downtown which will reflect the community's history."

Suggested Strategies

Assessment

1. The City should engage community expertise in undertaking an assessment of the architectural styles that exist within the Downtown.
2. The City should update the existing historical building database (registry), which provides key details regarding various buildings within the Downtown.

Advocacy

The City should establish a Municipal Heritage Committee to provide the City advice with respect to Heritage matters and to function as the focal point on heritage matters between the community and Council.

Financial Support

1. The City and its Downtown partners should seek funding to support various heritage preservation initiatives within the Downtown.
2. The City should consider developing a Community Improvement Plan that may allow for innovative uses of financial incentives with respect to heritage preservation.
3. The City should develop partnerships with other levels of government, outside agencies and the private sector with respect to heritage preservation matters.
4. The City should conduct a study that will bring forward a budget through the City's budget process to establish a grant or loan assistance program in accordance with Section 39 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

Guiding Principle #3

"Downtown buildings and spaces will be enhanced by innovative design which will contribute to a unique and pleasant environment."

Suggested Strategies

Education and Advocacy

1. The City should seek to further develop its in-house urban design expertise to provide advice to Council on urban design matters within the Downtown. This can be achieved in part through continued professional development.
2. Developers should be made aware of the value of good urban design that goes beyond the needs of their own corporate goals and extends value into the community.
3. The City should say no to developments within the Downtown that do not reflect good urban design features. Conversely, the City should be proactive and develop clear plan policies supported by design briefs and principles that deliver quality urban design.
4. Council and the community should be made aware that high quality urban design within the Downtown is an important component of an overall economic development strategy that encourages "quality of place."



Projects & Programs

1. Consider establishing an annual design award that recognizes the very best in urban design within the Downtown.
2. The City should engage the local architecture community and the community at large to develop a set of urban design guidelines that may be used within the Downtown.
3. The City should consider amending its planning documents to require that urban design matters are an important feature in any development approvals.
4. The City should lead by example and focus its efforts, in partnership with others, on the re-invention of public spaces in the Downtown based on the highest level of design principles.
5. The Downtown facade improvement program should be continued.
6. The City should build upon its past achievements and continue with a comprehensive streetscape improvement program for Downtown.
7. The City should update its Convention Centre Study and establish a partnership with the business community to develop a Downtown convention centre.

Guiding Principle #4

"Developing Downtown as a people place, where people choose to live or visit."

Suggested Strategies

Develop a Residential Downtown

1. The City and its Downtown partners should develop a profile of the residential population needed in the Downtown. For example this may include the targeting of the increase in the number of families within the Downtown, or it may target an increase in 'empty nesters', or both.
2. The City and its Downtown partners should form partnerships among interested bodies to develop a marketing plan which will promote the Downtown as a residential destination.
3. The City and its Downtown partners should identify what amenities are necessary to enhance the livability of the Downtown making it more attractive as a place of residence.

Financial Incentives

The City and its Downtown partners should consider what additional innovative financial incentives may be used to help achieve an increase in the number of residential units in the Downtown.

Planning Tools

The City should continuously review its planning regulations to ensure that they support the development of residential uses in the Downtown.

Projects and Programs

1. The City and its Downtown partners should create a partnership with the Colleges and University to develop a campus in the Downtown.
2. The City and its Downtown partners should investigate ways and means to improve/expand the Farmers Market.

Guiding Principle #5

"The Future of downtown will be based on an environmental model which is sustainable."

Suggested Strategies

Projects and Programs

1. The City and its Downtown partners should establish a program to recognize excellence in terms of environmental design within the Downtown.
2. The City and Downtown developers should coordinate their efforts to establish linkages to natural areas in close proximity to the Downtown, including Lake Ramsey and Junction Creek.
3. The City and other public agencies should use environmentally friendly practices with respect to the management of all public lands within the Downtown.
4. The City should increase the amount of trees in all public spaces to provide shade and to enhance the look and feel of the Downtown. This objective can be achieved through the streetscape improvement program.

Appendix : Downtown Guiding Principles and Potential Downtown Projects/Programs

This Chart is intended to illustrate the interconnections between the five Guiding Principles and the various projects and programs; it is not intended to be a comprehensive list of all potential projects for the Downtown.

Guiding Principles	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5
	Arts & Culture	Heritage Preservation	Urban Design	People Place	Environment
Art Gallery	X	#	X	*	# (green building)
Performing Arts Centre	X		X	*	# (green building)
Artscape/Streetscape	X	#	*	*	
Arts and Culture Festival	X			*	
Facade Improvement	*	*	X	*	
Streetscape Improvement	*	*	X	*	X
Convention Centre	*		X	*	# (green building)
Downtown College/University Campus	*		*	X	# (green building)
Farmers Market		#	*	X	
Linkages to Natural Areas			*	*	X
Parking Structure(s)			X	*	
Specialty Shops			X	X	
Condominiums			X	X	# (green building)
Lofts	X		*	*	
Aboriginal Centre	X	X	*	*	# (green building)
Sports Complex			*	X	# (green building)
Transit Shuttle				X	

Public Housing			*	X	# (green building)
Rail Station - Passenger		*	*	X	

NOTE:

The following symbols indicate the interconnections between guiding principles and projects/programs:

- X Primary
- * Secondary
- # Potential