

Mayor Lefebvre: State of the City Address

April 26, 2023

Good afternoon, Bonjour, Aanii. It is a pleasure for me to join you today as I deliver my first State of the City Address as Mayor of Greater Sudbury. Je suis très heureux de vous parler de l'état de notre ville, et ma vision pour notre future.

Before I begin, I would like to acknowledge that we are meeting on the traditional lands of the Atikameksheng Anishnawbek, and that the large area we consider Greater Sudbury also exists within and adjacent to the territorial lands of the Wahnapiatae First Nation and the Sagamok Anishnawbek. We honour, recognize and respect these Indigenous Peoples as the traditional stewards of the lands which we share today.

I would also like to acknowledge the Métis for their contributions to the land and our community.

Thank you to the Chamber of Commerce, Debbi Nicholson and Anthony Davis, for organizing this session and providing the opportunity for us to reflect on the state of our great City.

I would like to recognize my fellow councillors and elected officials in attendance today: Councillors Signoretti, Fortin, Parent, Lapierre, Labbee, Sizer, McIntosh, Cormier, Leduc and Landry-Altmann.

Merci d'être ici.

And thank you all for being here – for the care you demonstrate for our community, for the positive impacts you have on our local economy, and for

the ongoing spirit of innovation that, together, we all help foster here in Greater Sudbury.

So, I believe we need to start by determining what is Greater Sudbury's value proposition and how do we build positive awareness of the City, attract and retain the talent we require and drive business growth in our City.

A review of our Strengths, Challenges, and Opportunities, of Greater Sudbury.

Greater Sudbury is the hub for education, health care, arts and culture, government services in Northern Ontario. In the next decade the mining industry – through its service and supply business sector is projected to continue on a growth trajectory, the scale of which we have not seen in a generation.

On education, we are fortunate to have strong postsecondary institutions: Cambrian College, College Boreal, Laurentian University, Universite de Sudbury, NOSM U. We are a city of health care and medicine. Arts and Culture.

The current unemployment rate in Greater Sudbury is 4 percent, which is below the provincial average, and lower than it was pre-COVID. And there are a lot of job opportunities across many sectors in our city, with approximately 3,500 jobs to fill.

We have multiple major ongoing construction projects and many more starting in 2023. These include the increased bed capacity project at Health Sciences North, the Construction of Cambrian College's Battery Electric Vehicle Lab, modifications at the world-renowned SNOLAB, installation of

the steel gantry tower and the exploration shaft hoist house at Vale, the ongoing Science North and Dynamic Earth Go Deeper Project, the St. Joseph's Continuing Care Centre, and the Extendicare Long term care.

The City's Regional Business Centre is busy with many programs and supports local companies start up and expand. The city is once again bustling with in-person events, tournaments, and activities. The opening of Place des Arts has drawn people downtown once again, and the Downtown BIA fosters a bustling patio scene... and we will once again see Greater Sudbury featured in the hit Crave television series, *Shoresy*, which is filming its second season here currently.

After these few quiet years downtown, it is energizing to see so many employees returning to their workstations at Tom Davies Square! While remote work and hybrid situations will likely continue to be the everyday reality for so many businesses, we are seeing more team members in-person on a regular basis.

As we continue to support these organizations and initiatives in our community, we must ensure that we play to our strengths. At the same time, it is important to be aware of, and properly address, our current challenges.

Accommodating growth of the industrial, mining service and supply sector...

Housing opportunities and the rising cost of living...

Aging City infrastructure, our ability to maintain and renew it, while having low reserves...

Awareness and perception of developing real estate...

Perception of downtown...

The labour force challenges that we face are unprecedented.

These challenges are not unique to Greater Sudbury, but it is the manner in which we tackle them that will determine our success in the next decade.

Clearly, in order to address these challenges, we need to continue to grow our population and expand our tax base. Accordingly, I have announced my intention to increase our population to 200,000 by 2050.

Economic growth means more jobs, which leads to more opportunities for our current citizens – and will attract new citizens, which in turn will grow our tax base. A larger tax base will help us afford the services citizens rely on and will lead to increased community prosperity.

One of the first thing I did when I was elected was to meet with a number of large Sudbury-based Original Equipment Manufacturers. I see many of them here today. I wanted to hear firsthand about their plans: are they planning to expand, where does Greater Sudbury figure in their future... and how could Council help to make this investment a reality.

I came out of those meetings feeling very optimistic. All of them had plans to physically expand their operations, most of which is planned for Greater Sudbury. Just in those meetings alone, I counted a potential of 500,000 new sq ft of industrial buildings!

How do we ensure this happens? As was mentioned in all those meetings by our CAO, Ed Archer, if these projects do not move ahead, it is not going to be because of City policy.

One way we can continue to encourage investment and to demonstrate that we are preparing ourselves for growth is by increasing the supply of serviced industrial lands. There are a few items the City is moving forward on in 2023 that are particularly relevant here.

The first is to proceed with the Employment Land Strategy. This stage includes the detailed design of future infrastructure improvements required to service industrial lands to meet the unprecedented current demand. This endeavour will strengthen Greater Sudbury's investment readiness and competitive edge by ensuring there is a supply of shovel-ready employment areas.

One industrial area that will be receiving some interim repairs is Fielding Road, which will be re-graded and re-paved this summer. This work will ensure that the condition of this well-traveled road is greatly improved from its current state. The detailed engineering for water and wastewater servicing will be part of that Employment Lands Strategy design work and completed at a later date. Many other areas are in the works.

Council has also approved a financial incentive to accompany the Employment Lands Strategy. The Employment Lands Community Improvement Plan is the first CIP in the City's history that is focused on investment attraction and expansion. The CIP will offer Tax Increment Equivalency Grants (TIEG) to support industrial development, with an emphasis on targeted industries like clean tech and battery electric vehicle sectors, life science, and film and television.

Applications will be prioritized based on construction value, number of jobs created or retained, and location within strategic industrial areas. The CIP

will be available to support development in 8 strategic industrial areas across the city, including Fielding-Duhamel, Lasalle-Elisabella, Maley East, National St., the Kingsway, Ceasar Road, Coniston and the Valley East Industrial Park. The CIP may be combined with other incentive programs offered by the City and other levels of government which will help leverage our competitive advantage.

One suggestion for improving efficiency and predictability that is already being implemented is a self-service tool for building permit applications. I am pleased to share that a few weeks ago, I got a virtual “tour” of the new 24-hour online electronic permitting system, called PRONTO, which was made possible through the province’s Streamlining Development Approval Fund. It is currently being piloted with a smaller group of developers, to receive feedback and make changes, as required, before being rolled out to the general public later this summer or fall. Tools like this will ultimately help meet the opportunities for growth in the residential and commercial development sector.

I will soon be introducing a motion to create a special committee of Council with a mandate to ensure that our development services demonstrate best-in-class policies and processes and is well-prepared to support the anticipated growth in residential and non-residential development over the next 10 to 15 years. We will invite solutions-oriented feedback from local professionals and industry associations to advance development in our city. The Committee’s work will culminate in a report that includes examples of best practices from other municipalities across Ontario and how they will be adapted for Greater Sudbury.

Earlier this year, I introduced a motion for a Housing Supply Strategy, which would include a clear summary of the City of Greater Sudbury's current housing-related initiatives and recommendations on how Greater Sudbury can increase its availability of housing across the entire spectrum – from emergency shelters and transitional housing, to affordable housing, to single detached bungalows. This will ensure that Greater Sudbury is responding to local needs, as well as the province's goal of building 1.5 million new homes in the next 10 years, which they outlined in the More Homes Built Faster Act last November.

While we do not have hammers and an in-house construction company, through issuing permits and providing planning, zoning and engineering functions, the City impacts the pace and direction of private sector development. In 2022, 1,828 new building permits were issued. The combined value of construction for new and renovated residential projects was \$119 million, resulting in 46 secondary units registered and 457 units of new housing – the highest annual number in the last five years. Based on the numbers we have seen, and the anticipated growth, it is reasonable to conclude that the market will build between 2,000 to 2,500 new units in the next five years. My thoughts are always focused on how we can do more: let's aim for 3,000 to 3,500.

We need a robust supply of housing to accommodate the evolving needs and life stages of families, groups and individuals. Accordingly, the Housing Supply Strategy will include policy options to promote a true mix of housing types across Greater Sudbury's communities – including methods to increase and protect the number of affordable rental units.

This is necessary as Greater Sudbury is facing new and unprecedented opportunities to grow our businesses and attract new investment. These opportunities are dependent on our ability to attract and retain the talent in our community to support our local workforce needs.

Certainly, having adequate housing supply works hand in glove with attracting a diverse workforce. We need places for people to live – particularly if we are looking to bring more individuals and families to Greater Sudbury to fill existing and expected job vacancies. The City’s “Hit Refresh” campaign highlights to job seekers all the great opportunities and amenities we have to offer here in our City. And we are looking at doing more to support employers looking for skilled workers to meet their labour needs.

In coordination with Economic Development, I will be coordinating a Mayor’s task force on labour attraction to identify gaps in the current approach and see what Mayor and Council can do to help address it.

And as many of you know, Greater Sudbury is one of 11 Canadian communities participating in the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot (RNIP) program through Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. This program addresses local labour force shortages while encouraging immigration and population growth. In 2022, 265 people were approved to apply for permanent residency through the RNIP program in Greater Sudbury. This represents 494 new residents for our community, including family members. We have been allocated the full 325 spots we’d requested for 2023. Demand continues to be strong, with new applications arriving almost daily... And I am advocating for Greater Sudbury to be receiving an

allocation of 500 new permanent residents per year by the end of my mandate.

We need to ensure that we have the labour force to support the unprecedented opportunities related to the importance of critical minerals sector for Canada and Ontario's economies. We must work together to address this challenge, from the Chamber members, trade unions, the City and all employers.

I want to ensure that government leaders at **all** levels are aware of the great potential in our city. As Canada – and indeed the world – moves toward net-zero and low-carbon industries, greater electrification of vehicles, and more digital and innovative technologies, we can help.

Greater Sudbury's integrated mining industrial complex continues to be a world leader in mineral exploration, extraction, and processing but now... we are ready to be part of the added-value piece of the supply chain.

We have cutting-edge applied research happening in our city – for example, the important work to recycle or reclaim mine waste, which results in the win-win proposition of reclaiming additional mineral resources and reducing the environmental footprint of the mining industry.

I would like to highlight the work of Dr. Nadia Mykytczuk, Interim CEO of MIRARCO, who has partnered with Vale as the recently named Industrial Research Chair in Biomining and Bioremediation. Her pioneering research is part of what I believe to be the next generation of our Sudbury greening story.

I have shared these messages with the federal and provincial Ministers I have met with since taking office: we are ready. Increasingly, leaders from

the provincial and federal governments are visiting Greater Sudbury because they see it as a city of opportunity and growth for the Canadian economy. Last month, the Minister of Natural Resources, Jonathan Wilkinson, was pleased to see firsthand the promise of Greater Sudbury along the entire supply chain of critical minerals: from exploration and extraction, through processing, to value-added manufacturing and recycling.

This is all connected to the need to service industrial lands and ensure we have the necessary housing supply... and we must also foster a welcoming city. In my opinion, a welcoming city has a healthy, vibrant downtown.

We have opportunities to ensure our downtown is an attractive place where businesses want to set up shop and residents want to stop and stay awhile. Thank you to the downtown BIA for your leadership in this area.

I want to reiterate that I am in favour of an Art Gallery and Library and event centre in our Downtown and remain committed to review the options to achieve the goals of in a fiscally responsible manner.

While the decisions about locating these venues will not be easy, I am confident that council can work together to find solutions in a timely manner – we have already demonstrated how much we can accomplish by working together. Remarkably, we passed our first budget within the first 100 days of our mandate! I will admit that I did not expect to pass the budget so quickly, but it was possible due to the hard work of city staff and my fellow Councillors: they came to the table with an open mind, ready to ask the right questions. We were able to discuss our options in a productive manner, and work toward achieving results for all of Greater Sudbury.

And we continue to provide opportunities to hear directly from constituents. I announced my intention to hold town halls across all 12 Wards throughout 2023 – and I am happy to share that this goal is well underway. I have already co-hosted four successful town halls in four months – in Wards 3, 4, 5, and 9. I look forward to the town halls in the other 8 wards of the city and to learning more about the issues facing our distinct communities. It is important to me, that all Sudburians feel represented and heard by their Mayor.

In addition to building relationships with my colleagues around the Council table, I have started to foster a relationship with our Indigenous Partners, on whose land we live: Atikameksheng Anishnawbek and Gimaa Nootchtaï, the Wahnapiatae First Nation and Chief Roque, and the Sagamok Anishnawbek and Chief Toulouse. I look forward to continuing to build our relations in a right way. Miigwetch.

I continue to work with our elected officials in Ottawa and Toronto. To that end, I want to thank our dedicated parliamentarians for positively representing Greater Sudbury. I extend my gratitude to Members of Parliament, Viviane Lapointe and Marc Serré, and Members of Provincial Parliament, Jamie West and France Gélinas. They are strong voices for our city and region, and they continue to bring opportunity, funding, and attention to our great city.

One priority I continue champion is the importance of being a climate resilient community. To support this, I have asked for the creation of a Climate Resilience staff leadership position, and support for our community's dedicated volunteers with more direct help from City hall in a "one stop shop" for community-led initiatives.

For my part, I will continue to participate in community events to ensure that our residents feel supported by Mayor and Council. I will work with stakeholders across various sectors to ensure that businesses can access the services they need from City Hall. I will support the sustainable expansion and servicing of our industrial lands, so that we can be a leader in a green economy and the battery electric vehicle sector. I will continue to promote all the lifestyle amenities that are unique to our City – from our 330 lakes, the network of trails and greenspaces, and award-winning attractions like Science North and Dynamic Earth– everywhere I go, to ensure that everyone knows about us.

In closing, as you leave here today, I hope you are leaving with confidence and optimism about all that we can achieve. We are on track to welcome a growing population, increase our tax base, and expand economic opportunities across multiple sectors, and support our vulnerable citizens.

Greater Sudbury is truly the best place to live, work, and play – a City in which to invest and set down your roots and as Mayor, I will continue to work with you, because together, we are all making good things happen here in Greater Sudbury. Thank you, Merci, Miigwetch.