

State  
of the  
City



2019

État  
de la  
ville

Mayor / Maire Brian Bigger

June 27, 2019 / le 27 juin 2019

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Good afternoon everyone and welcome. Bonjour. Annii.

It's my 5<sup>th</sup> State of the City address as your Mayor - and I am so glad to be back here .... with you all again.

Before I begin, I want to recognize the territorial lands of the Robinson-Huron Treaty, shared with the people of the Atikameksheng Anishnawbek and Wahnapiatae First Nations and the Métis People.

It's an incredible honour having been the 1<sup>st</sup> Mayor in our amalgamated City's history to be re-elected.

I want to thank my wife Lori who's been by my side every step of the way. Through two elections and for being here today.

I'd also like to take just a moment to thank today's event sponsors - CN, Eastlink and Plan A.

If not for them, Debbi and the Greater Sudbury Chamber of Commerce would not be able to put on such a great event year after year.

To all of my colleagues on City Council and to all of the hardworking City Staff in attendance, I am thrilled to be able to continue our work together as we move our city forward.

And as I begin ..... after four years ... I'm taking a moment to brag ... about what we've been able to get done ... and where I see us going.

We've made great progress ...

We really are in a great place to live, invest, grow and prosper.

We are Canada's happiest city.

Within the last year we were identified as...the second most affordable city in Ontario.

According to Youthful Cities and RBC, we are the fourth best city in all of Canada for young people to work based on our affordability, access to leisure activities, and entrepreneurial opportunities.

Over the last four years ...We've been planning, building, growing

And now we have a vision.

A vision of how we want to guide our city ... to develop our economy, and control how the City spends your money ...

A vision that enhances services and focuses on the quality of life, and the quality of our environment for everyone in Greater Sudbury.

As the saying goes ... "It's all about the economy." But I say ... it's all about the people.

Cities and industries of the future are being built around expertise.

We have the greatest concentration of hard rock underground mining expertise in the world.

All of this, as transportation and industry shifts from fossil fuels to battery-electric technologies that require nickel, copper, cobalt, and lithium all extracted from within our city and Northern Ontario.

As communications and automation continue to advance globally, mines will be operated through control rooms in Copper Cliff or Onaping ... in mines ... anywhere around the world.

It will be an important part of our city's future.

We are promoting ourselves to the world, and the world is recognizing this.

We are growing and maturing as an international destination.

This is bolstered by our excellent and successful mining service and supply companies ... that are expanding in Greater Sudbury ... and working in dozens of countries on every continent.

We must continue to attract and retain the best and the brightest of the mining industry as a growing part of our global centre of expertise.

Fortunately we have been identified as an important and welcoming city for immigration through both the Northern

and rural immigration pilot, as well as Francophone Immigration initiatives by the federal government.

Our Workforce Development Strategy ... is working.

But getting here ... took a lot of work.

When I first became Mayor in 2014 ... our economy was sitting above a 6% unemployment rate.

In fact, we peaked at about 8.6% in May of 2016.

It was a challenging time for our community.

But as we all know ... we are as resilient as we are resourceful ...

And as our community has done time and time again, we found a way ... and came out on top.

And it's important that I emphasize .... It TOOK a community effort to get us there.

This time last year ... we were just shy of 7% unemployment.

And look at us now ...

The most recent labour force data available shows Greater Sudbury's unemployment rate at 5.1%.

This is the lowest level since August of 2008 and one of the lowest our community has ever experienced.

Our local economy is booming.

In fact ...since May 2019 ...We have been the 4<sup>th</sup> strongest growing community in all of Canada when it comes to employment growth.

Truly fantastic news.

What we are doing ... we are obviously doing right.

Few might know ... but based on the 2016 Census and the report prepared by Hemson, we are the only Northern Ontario municipality forecasted to grow.

But our success ... the success Greater Sudbury is enjoying today ... started not with acting ...

It started with listening.

From the Valley ... to Lively ... from Chelmsford and Lo-Ellen ... we heard.

People said they weren't getting the service they wanted from City Hall. They complained about communications.

So last fall, our City approved the 1<sup>st</sup> ever enterprise wide Customer Service Strategy.

What does this mean for you?

It means establishing standards like two-day response times for all emails and calls to City staff and improvements to 311 to answer more questions from the first point of contact.

Right after my second term began ... I followed up on my promise to work with those who share in the effort to grow, thrive and make Greater Sudbury a better and more modern city.

But that meant hearing from the experts ... and learning how we can work together.

I've now hosted two ... of what are now ...scheduled quarterly development meetings ...

I have met with as many as 40 investors, local developers and construction companies to hear directly from them about the issues they have been facing.

These people are building and developing in every part of City.

These meetings have been eye opening.

It's clear that our policies needed to be overhauled and our approach adjusted.

And we've already made great progress on that front.

For starters, the ones investing hard earned dollars, should not be the ones chasing city staff.

It's why we've assigned a full time Staff Liaison to be the point of contact to assist developers in navigating through the process.

We've modified the process of receiving and reviewing early development applications by the Sudbury Planning Application Review Team to better serve those looking to invest and help our City grow.

In the most recent election and during my inauguration ... I promised every resident of our City that I would do everything I can to make our City open for business.

And just a couple of weeks ago ... we reformed our bylaws regarding development charges.

Even though ... development charges have been a solution for many municipalities experiencing significant growth.

But we are not there yet.

Let's be clear. Development charges have an intended purpose and can be used effectively and strategically.

That said, I was told by many that development charges have hindered a number of projects from moving forward and have forced projects to scale back.

That's just not acceptable for a City looking to grow.

And I am proud that Council supported me in my efforts and voted to reduce development charges by 50%. This will stimulate growth.

We're also ... bringing people back to the core ... our plan to rejuvenate downtown.



The fact of the matter is ... that as a City, we have to do our part to stimulate private sector investment and growth to complement our own investments.

And we are ... when you look at Maley Drive and MR35 to community assets like the Junction, La Place des arts and the Kingsway Entertainment District.

We are investing hundreds of millions of dollars in capital infrastructure.

We all know that Greater Sudbury is a great place to do business and invest. And as a Council, we're doing everything we can to attract business here.

I know of at least one company that will be relocating here in the coming months, and we're very excited to see this happen.

We're working together ... private and public sectors ... to grow our City.

In addition to the promises I made to encourage growth and development in support of our local economy, I fully believe we must change how things work at the Greater Sudbury Development Corporation.

We all know there has been a lot of conversation about my motion and this was discussed with the other members of the GSDC on City Council.

Time is money. Delays in investments lead to 10's and 100's of millions of dollars lost to our community.

City Council is accountable to voters in our City and in fact the financial and investment decisions are already being made by City Council ... so let me be clear.

It's about working together sharing information, elevating economic development and improving the timeliness of our knowledge of and response to opportunities in our community.

I would like to thank the board for their hard work. It has been appreciated, and this community has many, many hardworking volunteers who help us each and every day.

I've asked for a deferral of my motion to September to allow staff, along with GSDC, the ability to provide a report to Council on a new governance structure and what this might look like.

This time will also allow staff to provide Council with a report, with terms of reference, detailing what a Cabinet might look like and how this would work.

I'm not going to apologize for always looking at new ways to make sure we're championing our city.

But being part of a community and leading a City can't only be about the bottom line.

I also promised to address community safety ...

During the campaign, I heard from many business owners and residents about the issue of security in our downtown core.

I discussed this issue during the election because it does impact business owners, it deters residents looking to shop...

To access services or enjoy the great food in the area and tourism as well.

I was very happy to see Chief Pedersen allocate more dedicated officers downtown.

We've got more feet on the street and ...

It's is a big step for addressing some of the challenges faced in the area but we know there is a lot more work to do.

And this includes the vital work of our Community Drug Strategy

The reality is ... that in our community ...

We are up against a drug crisis ... as well as homelessness.

We're taking concrete action with the Coordinated Access Program, Housing First Strategy and Homelessness Network to find sustainable options when it comes to the appropriate support and housing for those in need.

By working together with organizations across the community, we're now better able to draw together various services and provide a way to share information about people ... so they get the full range of assistance. There is a real crisis that is impacting people across our entire country.

And as I said, homelessness is a community crisis, and it's going to take a community response.

A perfect example of that community response is located at 199 Larch St.

With the City's Support and ability to provide this space and a strong partnership between the City, CMHA, Provincial Government and Sudbury District Nurse Practitioner Clinic, we are building a facility that will allow us to give our most vulnerable citizens better access to services and a chance at a better life.

We will soon be able to house the Off the Street Shelter, 15 supportive housing units for those in the Managed Alcohol Program, an Indigenous healing space and a Sudbury District Nurse Practitioner Clinic on the shared site.

We'll also be able to better address some of the safety concerns that residents have in our downtown core by addressing issues like improving the lighting, adding surveillance cameras and ensuring that things like needles are picked up and away from the public.

It's a truly innovative way of being able to provide care to those in need in Greater Sudbury and will serve as a critical piece of social and health infrastructure for decades to come.

Now I want to talk about another kind of infrastructure.

In particular our roads. Something we all depend on every single day.

I understand the concerns raised by all of you and know that we need to take a new approach ... if we're going to chip away at our infrastructure gap.

We've made progress and Council has increased the investment in road spending.

We're tendering approximately \$71M in road related capital projects this season.

In addition to that...

We also received an extra \$10M in gas tax from the Federal Government which will be spent on road projects including the Kingsway.

All this to say, it's going to be an incredibly busy construction season.

From Capreol to Chelmsford to Coniston ... we do need to do better ... we all know that.

And ... we need to explore new options, methods and processes to remedy our roads.

One process ... and it shows promise ... is called H.I.R.

**hot-in-place recycled asphalt**

It reuses the asphalt that we as taxpayers have already paid for.

Instead of paying for the cost removing old asphalt.

And then paying for new asphalt.

We will essentially recycle the asphalt in our roads and with H.I.R. - we get significantly more lifetime out of our existing assets.

This was a process used-up 'til 2003 in Ontario and is still used across North America

... including places like British Columbia that also experience very challenging winter periods.

The MTO has brought it back ... and we're reviewing it with our City engineers.

If it works ...this process could yield savings of roughly 40% of the cost of what we are currently paying to fix many of our arterial roads.

Think of the ripple effects ...

We could reinvest into repairing more of our roads ...

Which in effect will tackle our infrastructure gap...

Giving motorists ... and all of us ...the relief we've all been begging for.

And ... it's better all around for the environment.  
I truly believe this could be a big opportunity for our community to tackle our road challenges.

We're allocating some money to do a test this year, and

If I had a wish ... sharing the success of H.I.R. will make its way into next year's State of the City.

And as I conclude ... the final piece of the state of the city is a chapter we all must acknowledge.

The impacts of climate change are real and the City of Greater Sudbury takes this situation very seriously.

Together – we voted unanimously to address this situation.

We are seeing the impact that things like extreme weather events have on our infrastructure, buildings, tourism and emergency services among others.

Residents in Greater Sudbury take great pride in our environment, that is for certain.

And just as we did in the previous four decades with the world renowned greening program that saw over 10 million trees planted ... it's going to require a community

wide effort to ensure our city, our homes, our natural surroundings and our well-being is protected and resilient.

We have a number of plans that we are acting on that aim to reduce our own Greenhouse Gas Emissions and prepare ourselves to adapt to the future challenges posed by climate change.

In fact, the City is actively completing a Community Energy and Emissions Reduction Plan.

The plan is intended to provide real actionable strategies to make our community more sustainable, less reliant on external sources of energy, and to produce less harmful emissions.

Our Council clearly recognizes that a community can have a significant impact on becoming more resilient to climate change ...

By moving to a 1 bag limit per week, we will enhance waste diversion and to extend the life of our landfill.

Also among our efforts is a focus on transportation including public transit, cycling and increasing access to our trail networks across the community.

By September ...the Transit Action Plan will make it better to achieve many environmental targets.

Public transit is only one piece to our plan to change how we get around the community, to work and to school on time.



A great next step ... construction is slated to begin on one of the city's most ambitious cycling projects yet, the Paris-Notre Dame Bikeway.

Once complete, this will offer cyclists a separate, continuous, well-designed and comfortable route to travel that's never been seen before in our community – it will stretch from the 4 Corners to La Salle. A safe, and rider-friendly form of transit.

It's important to remember that in all of our efforts, we work to connect all systems including public transit, cycling and walking trails to allow seamless travel and a more modern city.

Finally ... and as I have said time and time again ... our City succeeds because of teamwork. Our Council is made up of myself and 12 hard-working and very dedicated Councillors who give so tremendously of themselves, their time and of their families ... all to benefit the City we all enjoy.

But we can't do it on our own. Private sector investments will grow our city and our economy.

Attraction and retention of people will be crucial. We will do this by creating the environment and the city that everyone wants to live in.

Friends ...the State of our City ... is frankly the best it has been in a long time.

That's the result of a shared effort.

Only together can we make it better ... for everyone.

Thank you. Merci Chii-migwetch ... have a great summer.