

State  
of the  
City



2021

État  
de la  
ville

Mayor / Maire Brian Bigger

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The material herein will be posted on the CGS website and also the Chamber website  
It was presented virtually on September 22<sup>nd</sup> from Tom Davies Square  
by Brian Bigger, Mayor, City of Greater Sudbury

Good afternoon everyone. Bonjour, Aanii, Boozhoo.

In keeping tradition, I recognize we are on the lands of the Robinson-Huron Treaty. Lands we share with the people of the Atikameksheng Anishnawbek and Wahnapiatae First Nations and the Métis People.

I am Mayor Brian Bigger and I thank you for attending this event. Thank you to The Greater Sudbury Chamber of Commerce, Debbi Nicholson and her dedicated and professional staff – and our event gold sponsor Canadian National Railway plus silver sponsors The Northern Ontario School of Medicine and The Sudbury Star.

The message I will share is important to not just the business and professional community, but to all residents of Greater Sudbury.

I thank the organizers and sponsors for this opportunity. I want to thank my wife Lori, who's been by my side every step of the way. Through two elections and for being part of my every day.

The results of the 2021 Election has created a new federal landscape.

We have over these years had a remarkably high-value positive relationship with MPs Marc Serre and Paul Lefebvre, and now... best wishes to our representatives in Nickel Belt and Sudbury.

To all those who have stepped forward in the federal election you have done a civic duty. To the Prime Minister congratulations.

To Paul Lefebvre, let us all give a round of applause for his commitment to this city, and to our country.

2020 and 2021 have been clouded with doubt, concern and many emotions.

Who expected in September 2021 we would still be talking about COVID-19. Didn't you think it was a blip, temporary, a few weeks, a month, or two?

First wave, now fourth wave. We continue to collaborate with all partners in shared communications to ensure we are providing the most accurate and consistent information possible.

We are fortunate that our community enjoys such a high vaccination rate. Of course, none of us is fully safe, until all of us are safe. We need people that haven't completed their COVID-19 vaccinations to do so as quickly as possible. Let's get from 85% to 90%.

With active cases and emerging variants we don't really know what is next. Many have been sick and relied on the vital life-saving services of HSN, or are suffering the effects of long COVID.

So many people have been impacted by the global Pandemic: firstly, those who have contracted the virus. Then the families and loved ones who could not be with elderly relatives, and the older adults themselves who experienced isolation and fear. Our younger adults who lost academic years and momentum. Our adolescents – and our younger members of our community who have had to miss the values of gathering in schools, at sports and for general socialization. Profound impacts on mental health have to be recognized.

If you have suffered the loss of friends or family in our community or across the globe let's take a pause to recall, reflect, and remember.

My own parents returned to Sudbury. I do what I can to support them in their own home. My Dad is 90. I intentionally reduce my own contacts for potential exposure. I've worked from home when able. I know not all of us can. Hospital staff, police and EMS, even our GOVA transit operators are there on the frontlines. And I appreciate that.

To all essential workers in retail, food service, pharmacies and grocery stores, let's send them our thanks.

I must commend the work of Dr. Penny Sutcliffe and her team at Public Health Sudbury and District, Dominic Giroux and his team at HSN, and our own dedicated employees at the City of Greater Sudbury; specifically Ed Archer who continues to identify what is important what steps are necessary to achieve our goals. Thank you to Paul Pederson for his efforts in dealing with significant additional demands on his resources. I must also thank the citizens of Greater Sudbury for their part in protecting others.

Our first meetings began in February of 2020. Long before the first cases were identified in our community we agreed on the importance of having one lead spokes person, and a single key source of information. HSN provided the testing solutions that were so important early on. As vaccines became available, mass clinics at Carmichael, Centennial, Dr. Edgar Leclair and Countryside arenas were very effective. Public Health managed the clinical aspects, and the City managed the logistics. Community visits, pop-ups and the use of the GOVA transit fleet, brought dedicated health-care staff to mall parking lots, grocery stores, municipal parks, and various locations throughout our city. We looked for barrier-free ways to overcome hesitancy, provide information, and encourage residents to play a part in reaching our vaccination goals and targets.

Early on, we also agreed on a precautionary response and approach to COVID-19. We tested our most vulnerable people in our LTCs, and identified asymptomatic cases prior to provincial direction to do so.

What about day-to-day services during the pandemic? The continuance of municipal services was important. Even marriage certificates were available throughout this period. GOVA transit continued with precautions, even though ridership fell significantly. Proactively adjusting to temporary service levels across the organization we successfully managed through a COVID-19 experience facing a more than \$20 million negative impact on City revenues and costs

Today, our city continues to be an industrial leader, a hub for mining, mine supply and services, for manufacturing, education, health care, innovation, for youth, and for those who struggle; for the many who have need.

COVID-19 illuminated weaknesses in federal and provincial support for those struggling with homelessness, addictions and mental health. Complex issues, as people were suddenly more isolated, and distancing requirements reduced the capacity of the existing service providers.

We have all seen the growing number of crosses on the corner of Paris and Brady. Despite all efforts, opioid deaths doubled over the last year. Individuals, families, community, are being touched by this crisis. The Crosses for Change is currently a memorial at its temporary location. This is not just a tragedy here, but in cities from coast to coast.

City Council is very focused on this growing problem and its impacts.

What do we do about drugs, addictions, and specifically tainted street drugs? We ask for expert advice.

We have good resources here. But not enough. We have asked the Provincial government for additional funding, on-going funding, and project specific funding. I have met with Associate Minister of Health and Addictions Michael Tibollo several times this summer searching for solutions and funding.

Is a Supervised Consumption Site part of the solution to some of this?

The need is for an identified location, a trained staff, and funding so our community can undertake support services. Council has proposed a site, and pre-approved capital and operational funding, anticipating successful operating support from the province. Public Health Sudbury and District have applied for federal permissions and provincial funding.

Is Transitional Clinical Support for the most acute addiction cases part of the solution to some of this?

Council has proposed a site. It is properly zoned and fully serviced Council has pre-approved capital and operational funding, and anticipating capital support through federal Canada Mortgage and Housing funding. City staff have applied for the required provincial funding, and such a facility will be operated by HSN.

Homelessness has also become a significant challenge. Council has taken action in addressing this. In place, we have had Winter Warming, and Summer Cooling. We have offered shelters, and beds. We even have acquired access to rooms in hotels to deal with expanded need. The offer is always available. A roof and facilities are always a good route to getting needed support and accessing programs.

Despite the challenges we face, due to the Pandemic, there much more work to do at City Hall. Overall, council has also been focused on making the citizen experience, easier, easier to navigate, more efficient, and doing it right.

Some of this is through the deployment of technology.

Did you know you can now even take a picture of your concern – say a pothole - with your cell phone and send to 311? You as a citizen can create a work order and even track the progress towards resolution. Send it to us and we'll get it investigated. You can also use Live Chat functionality – conversations with staff at 311 get answers and solutions.

City staff are here to respond promptly, courteously, and will listen and act on your concern no matter where their office may be. The new service format is currently in construction on the main floor of Tom Davies Square. This is what residents have been asking for, but is also an expression of a new way of ensuring accessibility.

The City of Greater Sudbury is a cohesive team. Councillors and City Staff work together, and work hard to deliver so many services. We pride ourselves in taking action now, while also planning for the future.

We have 58 lines of business, but I have only 20 minutes to talk about them. From recreation, to social services, to engineering, planning, and emergency services. It is a diverse portfolio.

Some you will be familiar with, others reflect the growing need for municipalities to take on as a response to changing circumstances. “Rubber meets the road” when you talk about what is considered core services such as waste, EMS, roads, parks, libraries, water... but there are others unseen or not in place until needed.

Just last month we examined winter sidewalk maintenance! With improved plans, well thought out and systematic routes - that will get the job done quicker and more effectively. We even have a new piece of equipment that can deal with icy sidewalks.

As head of Council I also read proclamations and raise flags for organizations. Recognizing good in our community this month included Muscular Dystrophy, and soon International Seniors Day.

We will add September 30<sup>th</sup> to our observances and recognize the history and horrors that befell our First Peoples. National Day for Truth and Reconciliation provides an opportunity to commemorate the tragedies and ongoing legacy of residential schools, and to honor their survivors, their families and communities.

There is good in our community, and it is important to know that. Good neighbors, great neighborhoods. Recently I toured Coniston and saw community gardens, the greenhouse, the splash pad and beautified walkways. I walked in Lively and sampled segments of the Rainbow Routes pathways that are part of the National Great Trail. I also took my Velomobile - a recumbent bicycle in a shell – for a spin from my home and throughout the downtown. I like to see things with my own eyes.

What do I see? Continuous reinvestment in the former towns, cities and major neighborhoods. Capreol's water's edge walkway is definitely one of the positive additions. There is the development of the Whitson Creek Trail in Chelmsford. I actually planted trees along that trail. Both the Delki Dozzi track renewal and lighting improvements, and the Fielding Park Trails Improvement Project in Lively are significant. A Therapeutic Pool in Azilda, and new leisure amenities in Lively are also currently in the works.

Thank you to this year's Re-greening Crew for planting over 70,000 trees and shrubs, liming over 4 hectares, harvesting and transplanting thousands of forest floor and lichen vegetation mats. Rewarding environmental work, lasting friendships formed, and great memories made. It is a process we have been carrying forward for decades. It has been a remarkable transition most visibly expressed in the restoration of our landscape. We have become a well-treed city and we will continue to plant trees long into the future.

Enhancements are happening everywhere. Council's focus on active Transportation has extended safe cycling along Notre Dame with reach to the Four Corners. The Kingsway now has sidewalks along both the North and South sides. We are constantly moving in the right direction. A recent Federal Government announcement will support the renovation and rehabilitation of one of the most loved parts of Sudbury's Quality of Life. This investment in the Bell Park Boardwalk will make it easier and better for walkers, strollers, seniors, everyone. Any morning, afternoon or evening hundreds of people, individuals, families, tourists enjoy a vigorous walk - or just reaching a bench to watch sunrise or sunset.

Over the last few years, we have created splashpads from Onaping to Capreol, and renewed playgrounds across the entire city as well. Other ongoing projects will see the revitalization of 14 outdoor tennis and basketball courts. Some will be converted for other recreational uses like pickleball, and skateboarding.

Our extensive parkland is a definite asset. Around us in all directions we have lakes and landscape. Kivi Park has made a significant contribution to the health and well-being of the community. It truly is a gem and has something for everyone in all four seasons.

Concerns about green space and the preservation of what we often have taken for granted come to us weekly. We, as a Council, understand the importance to our community of Laurentian walking and cross-country ski trails. We continue to

monitor the future of all Laurentian amenities. We will advocate for retention and investment in sports and healthy living facilities.

Rest assured we are also concerned about Laurentian, the former federated universities, faculty, the students, parents, and the future of post-secondary education in Sudbury. It is incredibly important to bring back valuable research and improve the prestige we as a community lost. We deserve the most exciting university experience possible. I support Francophone education and Indigenous learning.

Laurentian has been a major employer, but most importantly a leader, and the builder of dreams and futures, the result of decades of growth and leadership in our community. We cannot lose this.

Laurentian is - along with Boreal and Cambrian - a key attractant of talent and skills from across the globe. Work that stimulates innovation and inspiration. I am encouraged by what I hear in messages from business leaders. Peter Xavier's speech last week spoke of Glencore's commitment to transition from diesel to Battery Electric Vehicles. And there is Vale's new 5 year contract plus their ongoing deployment of smart ventilation. All three post-secondary institutions are supporting exploration in these areas.

Laurentian has been a vital contributor to more than knowledge transfer and acquisition. There is research in areas from mine tailings, to the dangers of workers' fatigue.

We actively support NOSM and physician recruitment. Both are vital to all of the North. And congratulations NOSM for becoming an independent institution.

Not all we do is apparent nor visible. It doesn't always make it to the news. Some may have already forgotten how we helped Evacuees. Evacuees from flooded communities in the north were a concern last year. This year, nearly 500 came to Sudbury escaping the fires that plagued north-western Ontario. I want to thank Angela Recollet and her team at Shkagamik-Kwe for their leadership and support.

We have made strides in projects. We look forward to future growth in our entertainment and hospitality sector. We hear much commentary around some decision-making. We experienced similar objections during other investments.

For example, now that Maley is built, drivers see the value of its construction. Much of its cost was borne by the federal and provincial government. COVID has



meant we have missed the window to ribbon cut and celebrate, but the volume and usage of Maley demonstrates how important it has become in the transportation network - not just in reducing flow and extending the life of Lasalle. Studies on the benefits of circles have proven their value on our roadways, and it is rewarding to have Sudbury drivers become used to, and advocate for, the benefits of traffic circles.

I also know the saying “If you can’t measure it, you can’t explain it” but really some things are just feelings. Okay, there are things we do measure like workforce, budgets, projects, success.

Here are some things and numbers that should demonstrate this: potholes. In total, in 2020, we placed over 2,400 tonnes of asphalt which represents about 60,000 potholes. To date, in 2021 the City has placed over 1,350 tonnes of asphalt which would equate to approximately remedying 34,000 potholes. This is a significant reduction from previous years. We are catching up and getting ahead.

With 3,600 lane kms of roadways we are looking at new ways of doing things, like deploying new technologies. Council just this month approved additional funds for purchase of an enhanced Python 5000 Plus Pothole Patcher that will not only repair damaged roadways quicker but in a way that is more long-lived. The intent is to postpone costly road resurfacing. Economically, and efficiently.

We can explore other options including Hot In Place recycling of asphalt. Recycling asphalt we have already paid for, is better for the environment, and at significantly lower cost than traditional road resurfacing methods.

Then there is “No Dig” relining of pipes. Instead of replacing them – the traditional method - this is a lower cost method get the job done

For 2021, I can provide the following about road repairs: To date the City has tendered 29 capital contracts with a value of \$68.4M. Some of these are multi-year contracts.

Major sections of roads have been repaved. Drive Ramsey, go to North Mine and Skead, head to Capreol, or travel to Onaping through Azilda. It has been a banner year for road surface improvements.

Coincidentally we also replaced all street lighting with LED. A cost savings and a demonstration of our commitment to our Community Energy and Emissions Plan.

Finding better ways to do any task includes the adoption of new technologies and methods.

We are continuously working to be more efficient, effective, economical and better for the environment. A few years back, we initiated a renewal of water meters across the entire city. Once completed, these “change outs” will certainly help in reduction in demand for treated water, as well as improve the sophistication and success of methods used to identify losses across the system. To leaks, and future breaks we intend to bring about a proactive not a reactive behavior. It will save money for years to come.

Yes, we are monitoring the state of our assets. Not just vehicles and buildings, but water and wastewater pipes, roadways, culverts, stormwater systems impacting watersheds, visible and invisible infrastructure. Knowledge of the state of health, the longevity, even the replacement costs help us make more effective use of assets. Our current asset management and capital planning tools and processes are more sophisticated today, than they have ever been in the past.

Here is another gap we have renewed focus on: Broadband! Not everyone has access. High priority areas within Greater Sudbury were identified and mapped by Blue Sky Net to support funding proposals. Public and private sector partners have actively participated and advocated for improvements to rural and underserved areas. Many thanks to FedNor for their support. I am pleased to see progress and collaboration in barrier identification, dollars to help with implementation, and a future report to council coming this fall.

What about summer 2021? Did you get out to a restaurant? Working with Downtown Sudbury - and across the entire city - the Patio Program allowed businesses to flourish. Through the BIA the process was simplified, streamlined and implemented quickly. Outdoor dining enlivened restaurant business across the city.

Here's to all the businesses across the city who have, survived, thrived or pivoted. There is a long list of courageous entrepreneurs who opened, expanded, launched. Look at the new Salute location on the Kingsway, Pizza Roma on Lasalle at Lansing, Little Guys Pizza in Azilda, and Papaya Pops in Chelmsford. They are but a few, and from only one sector. Laurentian Chrysler relocated to their new home on Falconbridge this year. Then there are institutions like the Plasma Donation centre who have put Sudbury on the map. We are a city that encourages new business, growing businesses, and a diversity in businesses.

We need a city and downtown that is welcoming and safe. I believe we need strong main streets in all our former towns, cities and neighbourhoods.

Council also moved towards reduction of development charges along many corridors. This is stimulus we need. We should be encouraging in-fill where development is adjacent to existing services. Building permits are up and year after year construction activity – almost across the board – residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional are trending upwards. Residential resale volume is consistently also rising. Just this month we made significant enhancements to our Community Improvement Program by increasing incentives.

As a municipality, it has meant changing how we do business to make it easier for key projects to keep moving in this changing landscape. The building activity numbers we saw in 2020 spoke volumes about the resilience of our community, about investor confidence in the local market, and our focus on economic vitality and growth. It's very encouraging to see those strong numbers continuing in 2021.

In 2019 we reported the lowest unemployment rate than we had ever experienced in the previous 3 decades. We were on a good trajectory. Then there was the arrival of COVID-19 and its impacts.

Sudbury has always survived. We have a skilled labour force and the right attitude. It is positive. This is why we are booming. We are still in the running for benefits from the potential treasure trove that is the Ring of Fire. Confidence and enthusiasm for Sudbury as a centre for mining expertise and technology is alive and thriving.

Statistics show overall construction values of \$322 million for the year, up 15.4 per cent over 2019. A total of 407 planning applications were received in 2020.

The new residential home construction sector showed a significant year-over-year increase in 2020, with 436 residential units created and an overall construction value of \$107 million.

Council reduced development charges for long-term care facilities and now we see that construction on Algonquin Road's Extencicare project is well underway. The institutional sector rebounded significantly last year, largely thanks to this new 256-bed facility, with a construction value of \$54 million. Overall, permits for new construction and renovations were valued at \$105 million in 2020, a 74.2-per-cent increase over 2019.

Also, Coniston Seniors will have a new option for living. A previous council provided the land for this affordable housing project and I was honoured to be there for the ribbon cutting; a project years in the making. The BAWA Group has also broken ground on the 2nd Avenue Sudbury Retirement Living project. These are all steps towards responding to a growing demand for housing for older adults, independent or supported living, or long-term care.

On the city side, Council is taking the lead on the Pioneer Manor reinvestment. It is a major capital venture. It will be a better space for residents to call home.

Maria Aprea, lives at Pioneer Manor and the president of Pioneer Manor Resident Council shares this: "On behalf of the Residents of Pioneer Manor we are all hoping and excited for a new building to give more light and space to our residents. There will be more opportunities to gather and enjoy activities."

People want to stay here, people want to move here, people want to call this home. Whether they are families, individuals, graduates coming back, new Canadians, or young professionals, Sudbury is an attractive destination.

The efforts of the Francophone community, the federal and provincial governments and Council have built Place des Arts to the west, and Junction East will house the new Library/Art Gallery, the MultiCultural Centre, and be connected with the existing Sudbury Theatre Centre. We will be talking more about Junction East over the coming months and calling for more public input into design.

Speaking of public input: a committee of Lively residents has been now assembled who will examine options for leisure services in that community. It was wonderful to see so much interest. Volunteers are a vital contribution to the well-being and decisions of this city. Citizens continue to have a voice in evaluating amenities impacting their neighbourhoods.

The City has embarked on a promotion of Sudbury as place to relocate to. "Hit Refresh" highlights improved quality of life, access to nature, and the reduced commute. The advertising campaign is targeting young professionals across the GTA. Primarily the messaging is that Sudbury is great place to call home. With proof that many of us can work successfully even if remotely, Sudbury is a highly attractive and less expensive choice for individuals and those with young families.

Certainly, amenities and ease of access are key. In showcasing nature on our doorstep and a healthy lifestyle it is evident that council and staff are making strategic moves.

Like the investment in transit.

Investment in Public Transit has resulted in the roll-out of GOVA. It was not just a name change. Bus patterns were realigned with current demand. Routing changes better addressed the needs of community and the Mainline concept means the system is working better, at same cost. Gas tax rebates have helped with purchase of new and more energy efficient equipment for the fleet. We can now offer earlier weekday service, and offering enhanced Sunday service resulted in significant increases in ridership.

There are so many great initiatives - happening right now - coming out of various departments. Let me highlight the following areas:

- MINExpo attendance
- the Community Economic Development Fund
- the Catalyst Fund
- the annual Starter Company Plus
- and a partnership in the Incubation Space
- the Tourism Development Fund
- Film-making
- the Arts and Culture Operating Grants
- The Employment Lands Strategy

We know there are other opportunities too. GSDC, Economic Development, Tourism, and Regional Business are actively pursuing them.

The shift to Electric Vehicles will grow the demand for Nickel and other critical and strategic minerals that come from the Sudbury Basin. A recent Financial Times article title was “Miners race for nickel as electric car revolution looms”. We are poised for growth and further prosperity.

We cannot look from one election cycle to next. And we haven't. This council works hard to be the best and do the best. We work collaboratively to address more than the issues of the day.

We are planning for now, tomorrow, and more importantly for many years forward. We are making investments. Smart investments on your behalf. Let's

acknowledge Sudbury is much more than sometimes what we think we are. Certainly more than the outside world imagines.

Home to over 160,000 we have a diverse population, and a vibrant and thriving economy. We have lots to celebrate. I am proud to call Greater Sudbury home. I am sure you are also.

I thank the Chamber again for hosting this. I thank you for viewing this presentation.

Yes, we are Greater Sudbury. Greater Together!