



**YMCA Northeastern Ontario**  
140, rue Durham Street  
Sudbury, Ontario P3E 3M7  
☎ 705-673-9136  
📠 705-675-8777  
[www.sudbury.ymca.ca](http://www.sudbury.ymca.ca)

January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Dear Mayor Brian Bigger,

On behalf of the YMCA of Northeastern Ontario I wanted to thank you for the support throughout the past year. Our Association is pleased that we have been able to work with you throughout the pandemic to support the vulnerable and homeless population with the Warming Centre (both throughout that day during the first lockdown and now overnight) as well as support the meal service at the Parkside Centre.

As a result of this successful partnership, I would like to ask for the City's support in working with the YMCA as a partner to reimagine how we operate the Centre for Life facility on Durham Street to ensure it is financially viable and can continue to play a vital role in building a healthy community in our downtown core for many years to come.

Our YMCA has been able to step up and adjust our program delivery in a multitude of ways across all our typical program and service areas (e.g., Virtual employment and immigrant settlement services, virtual health and fitness and even camping options; as well as providing child care through every phase of the Provincial Pandemic Response Plan). In addition to supporting new services, e.g., our DISCO Hub (Digital Inclusion, Social Connection and Opportunities for Seniors) and supporting the homeless community.

This ability to adapt and respond to ongoing and emerging community needs is what the YMCA is known for and yet we remain financially vulnerable as we head into 2021. Our team have worked hard seeking internal organizational efficiencies (including energy efficiency initiatives for Durham Street), seeking grants and launching a successful fundraising campaign 'My Y is resilient' to ensure that we complete our current financial year without incurring a financial deficit. Our 'My Y is Resilient' Campaign has raised \$1.3M (both received or committed donations) since its launch in September, 65% of our 2-year goal. This has all served to reaffirm that our communities need the Y and want the Y! However, our forecasts for the next financial year indicate we are still at risk and most notably the biggest expense we have, that cannot be easily removed, are the costs associated with the Durham Street Centre for Life in Sudbury.

This facility for the YMCA, is the face of our Association in Sudbury and is part of a Condominium that we share with the City of Sudbury. From the initial design concept 20+ years ago, the intention for the Centre for Life, was to provide a community centre in the heart of the downtown core, that would cater to the health and wellness of our citizens at all stages of life.

**YMCA Northeastern Ontario**

140, rue Durham Street  
Sudbury, Ontario P3E 3M7

☎ 705-673-9136

📠 705-675-8777

[www.sudbury.ymca.ca](http://www.sudbury.ymca.ca)

Currently, the centre houses a YMCA Child Care Centre, the YMCA Centre for Life, with Health, Fitness, Aquatics and Youth Programming, the Parkside Centre (Older Adult Centre) and the Cardiac and Pulmonary Rehabilitation Clinic (with Health Sciences North). During the pandemic, the service provision grew to include supports for the vulnerable/homeless population.

The fee for service programs operated by the YMCA cannot meet the revenue needed to offset the facility costs borne by the YMCA throughout 2021, where membership and child care demand is expected to remain significantly lower than Pre-Covid-19 numbers. We are forecasting a considerable deficit position by year end. In fact, membership revenue pre-Covid-19 while good and generated a positive net contribution, was not generating enough to support the necessary capital reinvestments required in the building. Therefore, while we could seek a similar Covid-19 Relief package, that our facility in North Bay successfully received from the City of North Bay – a similar package in Sudbury would not be enough to secure the long-term future of the facility.

Furthering the challenge of running a sustainable and long-term viable operation, is the changing dynamic in the City's core. The opioid and homelessness crisis combined with the impact of the pandemic has led to much more visible drug use and homelessness, particularly in and around the YMCA facility. This in turn is impacting the choice of parents and members, who are expressing their displeasure with this situation. For them, it raises concerns for their own and dependents safety, as well as concern for the safety of our YMCA staff. This will likely lead to permanent reductions in memberships/child care enrollment, as well as increased costs associated with security and repairs for damages caused by the homeless population.

On the other hand, we strongly believe that the programs and services are important, especially now more than ever and these services align perfectly with the YMCAs Mission and Charitable Purpose. These essential services are necessary to help our community recover from the pandemic and related recession, while also maintaining a vital heartbeat in the core of our City. Prior to the pandemic approximately 30% of our membership base required financial assistance, which the Y was able to provide in order to ensure access to our programs and services for all. We anticipate this need will increase as we come through and recover from the Pandemic. It is also a facility whose design supports inclusion, community building and whose esthetic features are ageing well.

To that end, I ask you to support our YMCA's request to partner with us to review how we can collectively reimagine the Centre for Life and ensure that it can continue to play an important role in Sudbury's future. Ultimately for the YMCA to remain financially viable we have two goals for the facility – we either need to increase revenue streams and/or reduce occupancy costs.



**YMCA Northeastern Ontario**  
140, rue Durham Street  
Sudbury, Ontario P3E 3M7  
☎ 705-673-9136  
📠 705-675-8777  
[www.sudbury.ymca.ca](http://www.sudbury.ymca.ca)

Our Board of Directors has had preliminary discussions and have identified four options as starting points for discussion, including:

1. **Transfer ownership of YMCA Units to the City of Sudbury**
2. **City of Sudbury take on ownership of Aquatics Centre, the YMCA operate**
3. **Repurpose Aquatics Centre +/- Squash Courts and Digital Classroom – to either rent out space and offset occupancy costs or to utilise space for alternative programming/service delivery and bring in different revenue**
4. **Reopen Condominium Agreements – to increase rental fees**

Naturally, there may be other options or hybrids models that could be considered. Our board along with senior management have formed a subcommittee to take on these issues and we would like to do this in partnership with the City.

Thank you for considering this option and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

**Helen Francis**

CEO & President

**YMCA of Northeastern Ontario  
Association Services**

140 Durham Street Sudbury, ON P3E 3M7

T: [705-688-7300](tel:705-688-7300) x. 7302

C: [705-918-2814](tel:705-918-2814)

E: [helen.francis@ymcaneoc.ca](mailto:helen.francis@ymcaneoc.ca)

CC: Board, Jenny Parisotto (CFO), Jacqueline Grube (VP Child Care, Youth and Family Development) and Kendra MacIsaac (GM Health, Fitness and Aquatics) YMCA of Northeastern Ontario

CC: Steve Jacques, Councillors (Fern Cormier, Deb McIntosh, Geoff McCausland, Mark Signoretti, Al Sizer)