

BACKGROUND

The next provincial election is scheduled for June 7, 2018. Elections are valuable opportunities to highlight the value of strong partnerships between all orders of government.

Greater Sudbury could communicate its views ahead of the provincial election to local provincial election candidates and their parties. This would focus on issues that reflect the highest priority needs for the city in a way that engages key government stakeholders and the broader community. While this has not previously been the city's practice, an ongoing advocacy program and/or development of a provincial election strategy is a typical practice among larger municipalities.

Communicating Greater Sudbury's priorities in anticipation of a provincial election represents an opportunity to engage candidates in a dialogue and establish a basis for discussion once the election is complete. By identifying its interest this way, the city also increases the potential for collaboration following the election with the provincial government, other municipalities and provincial associations.

ANALYSIS

Elements of a Provincial Election Strategy

A review of previous announcements about Greater Sudbury's, AMO's or FCM's position on issues informs a discussion about appropriate elements of a provincial election strategy. For example:

- The need for long-term, sustainable investments in municipal infrastructure has long been a priority for large and midsize Canadian municipalities, with advocacy by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO).
- The city's understanding of asset condition and renewal needs, while evolving, indicates there are significant long-term infrastructure gaps in areas such as roads, social housing and water/wastewater. Considering Greater Sudbury's role in northern Ontario, the need for provincial investment in highway infrastructure to support goods movement and our economy has been well documented. Asset renewal and infrastructure management could serve as a fundamental component of the city's advocacy based on the evolving dialogue about "smart cities" initiatives that anticipate the further integration of data, electronic workflows and e-commerce services, along with opportunities for continuing the development of energy-efficient and green building construction retrofits.
- There is continued need and support for immigration and workforce development (specifically working with northern cities on the Provincial Nominee Program), employment related incentives including skills development and diversity supports as well as supports for increased labour force participation for first nations.
- The province could be a source of financial support for the development of the planned Library/Art Gallery and Convention and Performance Centre.
- Province-wide bargaining for Police and Fire services and/or a commitment to a thorough review of the interest arbitration process could materially benefit municipal taxpayers.
- There are calls across the province for municipalities to have new revenue tools that help alleviate the cost of public services for taxpayers.
- Provincial commitment to support research and development in specific sectors could assist northern municipalities that have not realized the same level of economic growth experienced in other parts of the province.
- Provincial commitment to partner with and expand local, community-funded venture capital funds would promote sustainable economic development across northern Ontario.

- Collaboration between the province and Greater Sudbury on issues of common interest to all northern communities, taking advantage of the city's geography and infrastructure to make services accessible to smaller communities that could not afford them on their own could be further explored (for example, transportation subsidies for recycling or organics processing services that normalize the cost of such programs for small communities, with processing provided in Greater Sudbury, could advance provincial policy goals).

A platform also provides an opportunity to provide a variety of key statistics about Greater Sudbury's demographics, economy, employment and infrastructure as well as a message from the Mayor and a summary of all key platform recommendations.

Developing the Election Strategy

The goal of the city's provincial election strategy should be to familiarize key government stakeholders, political parties, Greater Sudbury Provincial Parliament candidates and the broader community (residents, businesses, community groups) with Greater Sudbury's infrastructure and social needs. The strategy is intended to influence policy development and political discussion in advance of the June 2018 Election.

Following Council's approval of this report, staff could prepare summaries of 5-7 key issues that would be compiled as appendices to a report for Council's approval in March. The focus would be on:

- Describing the issue and its importance to Greater Sudbury (for example, regarding infrastructure renewal, a brief description could be provided about the city's current asset condition, the effect of inadequate asset condition on current service levels, opportunities associated with establishing appropriate asset renewal practices and directions we are taking to realize them)
- Providing references to previous staff reports/Council motions on the subject, and
- Identifying a direction it would anticipate the next provincial government could take that would align with Greater Sudbury's needs (for example, regarding infrastructure renewal, a possible direction statement could be, "*The next Ontario government should ensure that infrastructure funding programs reflect collaboration with municipalities to address the city's most critical asset renewal needs, without incrementality requirements, to support appropriate long-term asset management practices.*")

The focus will be on creating awareness about the City of Greater Sudbury's perspective on topics that should be of interest to candidates and, ultimately, the next provincial government.

Strategy Execution

Communications and Community Engagement staff would be enlisted to prepare a document suitable for circulation among community stakeholders and published on the city's website as part of a communication plan to promote the city's position on each issue. This could, for example, be circulated to:

- a) All major political party leaders (Green, Liberal, Progressive Conservative, New Democratic)
- b) All Greater Sudbury MPP candidates
- c) Community Stakeholders including but not limited to: Chamber of Commerce, United Way, others
- d) Association of Municipalities of Ontario

Traditional media could be used to advance awareness of the city's issues (news release, op-eds) and the city's social media tools could also be employed. Communication with Greater Sudbury political party caucuses could be arranged to discuss the platform and provide more general information about the City of Greater Sudbury.

Staff could provide a verbal update on the plan's progress to the Finance and Administration Committee at each meeting leading up to June 2018. A staff report in June, following the Provincial election, could be produced to assess the plan's performance.

