

## **Accelerating Growth and Development in Greater Sudbury: 2024 Report of the Future-Ready Development Services Ad-Hoc Committee**

Presented To:	Future-Ready Development Services Ad-Hoc Committee
Meeting Date:	May 1, 2024
Type:	Presentations
Prepared by:	Renee Higgins Data, Analytics and Change
Recommended by:	Chief Administrative Officer

### **Report Summary**

This report provides thematic observations and 54 Calls for Action emerging from the exploratory work of the Future-Ready Development Services Ad-Hoc Committee from August to December 2023. It includes a detailed summary of feedback obtained through stakeholder and staff engagement as well as a discussion of the opportunities and current context of development processes in Greater Sudbury.

The report requests that staff prepare a follow-up report to be presented to the Committee no later than end of September 2024, and that such report includes a response to each of the individual Calls for Action and an Implementation Plan that includes short-, medium- and long-term action items.

### **Resolution**

THAT the City of Greater Sudbury directs staff to provide a report by September 30, 2024 responding to the report entitled “Accelerating Growth and Development in Greater Sudbury: 2024 Report of the Future-Ready Development Services Ad-Hoc Committee” presented by the Chief Administrative Officer at the Future-Ready Development Services Ad-Hoc Committee meeting of May 1, 2024 which, among other details:

- A) Comments on the feasibility and legislative ability of the municipality to adopt the 54 Calls for Action,
- B) Provides an Implementation Plan and estimate of resource requirements, and
- C) Includes a schedule for addressing each element of the Implementation Plan.

### **Relationship to the Strategic Plan, Health Impact Assessment and Climate Action Plans**

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan by ensuring that our development services demonstrate best-in-class policies and processes to support the anticipated growth in residential and non-residential development over the next 10 to 15 years.

Specifically, the report relates to Council's Strategic Plan objectives to “Reinforce Infrastructure for New Development” (1.4), “Demonstrate Innovation and Cost-Effective Service Delivery” (1.5) and “Strengthen Business and Development Processes and Services to Support Business Growth” (2.3).

## Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

## Background

As established at the May 29, 2023 City Council meeting, the mandate of the Future-Ready Development Services Ad-Hoc Committee is to “assess the potential for the City of Greater Sudbury’s development services to reflect leading practices that ensure support for growth is timely and efficient and the municipality has the capacity, best-in-class policies and processes to support anticipated growth in residential and non-residential development over the next 10-15 years.”

In line with the approaches approved at the July 11, 2023 meeting of this Committee, the project team conducted stakeholder engagement and additional research between August and November 2023. Following additional direction provided at the December 7, 2023 meeting of this Committee, the project team has completed a final report outlining the findings and recommendations emerging from this period of study.

## Report Overview

The report attachment, “Accelerating Growth and Development in Greater Sudbury: 2024 Report of the Future Ready Development Services Ad-Hoc Committee” describes the exploratory work undertaken by this Committee between July and December 2023. It provides a succinct overview of the Committee’s research process, discussion of the current context and opportunities of development processes in Greater Sudbury, as well as a detailed summary of ideas and feedback obtained through the Committee’s engagement phase,

While hundreds of comments and ideas were shared by stakeholders and staff throughout the study period, potential opportunities for improvement have been summarized within 54 Calls for Action, organized into six key themes:

### 1. Clarity and Consistency in Messaging

City employees and community stakeholders agree that messaging should be clear and consistent, including: clarity in the direction from Council to staff; user-friendly communications to the public about the steps and policies that inform the development process; a transparent agreement about terms of engagement; and sharing good news stories that encourage goodwill.

### 2. Transparent and Customer-Focused Process

This theme explores process improvements that may assist in meeting the needs of the customer, making it easier for them to understand and seamlessly access all steps of the development process. Supporting an applicant through the process may include assigning clear staff liaison responsibility, improving automation or self-serve options with supportive infrastructure, and encouraging pre-Consultation opportunities.

### 3. New Engagement Opportunities

Community delegations and key stakeholders consistently noted their desire for the City and the private sector to work together to achieve common goals related to growth and development in Greater Sudbury. There was an interest in revisiting the feedback mechanisms that currently exist and potentially extending the work of this committee in some manner, as many delegates thought that a Committee of Council was an effective way to continue working collaboratively.

### 4. Staff Empowerment and Internal Coordination

Most delegations reflected on the positive interactions they have with City staff, stating that they are well-informed and courteous. This was echoed in the Over To You Feedback. In particular, frequent comments suggested that frontline staff were knowledgeable and capable, but seemingly lacked the authority to make decisions or move files along without explicit permission from a managerial level. Another issue was around workloads; that perhaps some staff require extra training, or the suggestion that a different staff complement

would better support the kind of work that has the greatest volume.

#### 5. Continuous Improvement

The City of Greater Sudbury's Strategic Plan outlines a core value of innovation: "We continuously find improvements to meet our communities' changing needs." This section considers the suggestions received for Process improvements and Policy reviews that may assist in meeting the demands and ensuring that the City is capable of providing best in class services.

#### 6. Alignment with Broader Economic Development Goals

As we work toward ensuring Greater Sudbury has the best-in-class services, the Committee must consider the broader context of economic development – attracting and retaining individuals, families and firms to locate here. This includes ensuring our policies, land use designations, and development incentives are attractive to large employers that can create hundreds of local jobs.

Overwhelmingly, those who participated in the Committee's study were positive about the opportunity to provide their input, build relationships, and contribute to a collaborative strategy for development. Perhaps the most prominent commentary to emerge from the consultation process is that both City staff and community stakeholders have reiterated their commitment to helping grow, promote, and improve Greater Sudbury.

### Next Steps

To ensure transparency of the review process, the Committee is requesting a staff report by end of September 2024 that provides further analysis and an individual update on each of the 54 Calls for Action and ideas detailed in the "24 by 2024" section of the attached report. Staff will clearly note which ideas have been completed, which are already in progress, and which are planned for future implementation, as well as expected dates of completion for each. Reasoning or alternatives will also be provided for any which are unable to be implemented, for example, because they have significant financial implications, are not aligned with the Official Plan or previous Council direction, or are not within direct control of the municipality to implement as presented.

### Appendices

Appendix A – "Accelerating Growth and Development in Greater Sudbury: 2024 Report of the Future Ready Development Services Ad-Hoc Committee".

### Resources Cited

"Ad-Hoc Committee – Future-Ready Development Services Committee" Member's Motion, presented at the May 29<sup>th</sup> meeting of City Council. <https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=96af0c46-70d2-40c2-af87-4503dd72cf2c>

"Research and Feedback Approach" report, presented at the July 11, 2023 meeting of the Future-Ready Development Services Ad-Hoc Committee. <https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=2a27a45f-39ca-4d86-861d-ed0fe80293e2>

# Accelerating Growth and Development in Greater Sudbury

*2024 Report of the Future Ready Development Services Ad-Hoc  
Committee*



*May 1, 2024*

***Chair:*** Mayor Paul Lefebvre

***Members:*** Councillor Fern Cormier (Vice-Chair)

*Councillor Pauline Fortin*

*Councillor Michel Parent*

*Councillor Joscelyn Landry-Altmann*

## Executive Summary

The following report describes the exploratory work undertaken by the Future-Ready Development Services Committee between July and December 2023. It provides a succinct overview of the Committee's research process, a discussion of the current context and opportunities of development processes in Greater Sudbury, as well as a detailed summary of ideas and feedback obtained through the Committee's engagement phase.

While hundreds of comments and ideas were shared by stakeholders and staff throughout the study period, potential opportunities for improvement have been summarized within 54 Calls for Action, organized into six key themes:

### **1. Clarity and Consistency in Messaging**

City employees and community stakeholders agree that messaging should be clear and consistent, including: clarity in the direction from Council to staff; user-friendly communications to the public about the steps and policies that inform the development process; a transparent agreement about terms of engagement; and sharing good news stories that encourage goodwill.

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around workloads; that perhaps some staff require extra training, or the suggestion that a different staff complement would better support the kind of work that has the greatest volume.

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The City of Greater Sudbury's Strategic Plan outlines a core value of innovation: "We continuously find improvements to meet our communities' changing needs." This section considers the suggestions received for Process improvements and Policy reviews that may assist in meeting the demands and ensuring that the City is capable of providing best in class services.

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As we work toward ensuring Greater Sudbury has the best-in-class services, the Committee must consider the broader context of economic development – attracting and retaining individuals, families, and firms to locate here. This includes ensuring our policies, land use designations, and development incentives are attractive to large employers that can create hundreds of local jobs.

Overwhelmingly, those who participated in the Committee's study responded positively to the opportunity to provide their input, build relationships, and contribute to a collaborative strategy for development. Perhaps the most prominent commentary to emerge from the consultation process is that both City staff and community stakeholders have reiterated their commitment to helping grow, promote, and improve Greater Sudbury.

As a next step, the Committee is requesting a staff report by end of September 2024 that provides further analysis and an individual update on each of the 54 Calls for Action and ideas detailed in the "24 by 2024" section of the attached report. Staff will clearly note which Calls for Action have already been completed, which are already in progress, and which are planned for future implementation, as well as expected dates of completion for each. Reasoning or alternatives will also be provided for any which are unable to be implemented, for example, because they have significant financial implications, are not aligned with the Official Plan or previous Council direction or are not within direct control of the municipality to implement as presented.

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## List of Acronyms Used in the Report

CA	Conservation Authority
CIP	Community Improvement Program
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
CS	Conservation Sudbury
DLAP	Development Liaison Advisory Panel
FRDSC	Future-Ready Development Services Committee
GSDC	Greater Sudbury Development Corporation
LMIS	Land Management Information System
NOCA	Northeastern Ontario Construction Association
OP	Official Plan
OSS	One-Stop Services
RFP	Request for Proposal
SDLA	Sudbury District Law Association
SPART	Sudbury Planning Application Review Team
TIEG	Tax Increment Equivalent Grant

## List of Calls for Action

The Foundation: We are in this together	
<i>Getting to “Yes” and Fostering a Positive Mindset</i>	
<b>Call for Action 1:</b>	Revise corporate approach to risk management regarding development
Theme 1: Clarity and Consistency in Messaging	
<i>Council to set the vision, and lead with courage and integrity</i>	
<b>Call for Action 2:</b>	Council to publicly support staff
<b>Call for Action 3:</b>	Mayor to have quarterly updates with senior staff
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<b>Call for Action 5:</b>	Continue to publish real-time data and benchmark updates
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<b>Call for Action 8:</b>	Create a series of plain language guides
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<b>Call for Action 10:</b>	Develop measures of success that include customer satisfaction and relationships
<b>Call for Action 11:</b>	Institute a primary point of contact for each large development project file
<b>Call for Action 12:</b>	Have a public-facing, cross departmental development navigator at One-Stop Services counter
<b>Call for Action 13:</b>	Expand evening or weekend availability of staff
<b>Call for Action 14:</b>	Create a clear dispute resolution or complaints process
<i>Online Tools</i>	
<b>Call for Action 15:</b>	Create an app that asks users questions and directs them to the resources and answers they need
<b>Call for Action 16:</b>	Create online training videos for Pronto
<b>Call for Action 17:</b>	Improve visibility and tracking of the application progress on Pronto
<b>Call for Action 18:</b>	Increase digital notes on each file
<b>Call for Action 19:</b>	Increased collaboration with Conservation Sudbury

<i>Preconsultation</i>	
<b>Call for Action 20:</b>	Have senior staff continue to participate in SPART
<b>Call for Action 21:</b>	Comments to clearly differentiate between requirements and recommendations
<i>Proactively Addressing Legacy Issues</i>	
<b>Call for Action 22:</b>	Implement Financial Incentives for Closing Permits
<b>Call for Action 23:</b>	Apply an amnesty period to open permits or for past work on property
<b>Theme 3: New Engagement Opportunities</b>	
<b>Call for Action 24:</b>	Reconfigure Development Liaison Advisory Panel format and include Councillors in membership
<b>Call for Action 25:</b>	Mayor to hold open meetings with development professionals twice a year
<b>Call for Action 26:</b>	Clearly communicate that large project proponents may request in-person meetings
<b>Theme 4: Staff Empowerment and Internal Coordination</b>	
<b>Call for Action 27:</b>	Where appropriate, give staff more delegated authority
<i>Staff training and networking opportunities</i>	
<b>Call for Action 28:</b>	Staff to keep up with online training modules available to the public
<b>Call for Action 29:</b>	Quarterly meetings for managers across departments engaged in development
<b>Call for Action 30:</b>	Annual staff engagement sessions
<i>Staff Recruitment and Retention</i>	
<b>Call for Action 31:</b>	Increase Professional Engineer coverage
<b>Call for Action 32:</b>	Create Junior Planner staff position
<b>Theme 5: Continuous Improvement</b>	
<i>Timeline and internal approvals for committee report on eScribe</i>	
<i>Process Improvements</i>	
<b>Call for Action 33:</b>	Mayor to call special meetings of Council and/or Planning Committee, if required
<b>Call for Action 34:</b>	Continue to offer conditional permits
<b>Call for Action 35:</b>	Encourage the use of the Hold symbol
<i>Tenders and Procurement Processes</i>	
<b>Call for Action 36:</b>	Institute third party review of large projects and tenders
<b>Call for Action 37:</b>	Revise supplemental contract terms to share liability
<i>Policy review</i>	
<b>Call for Action 38:</b>	Continue to review and consolidate zoning bylaws annually
<b>Call for Action 39:</b>	Capacity for ongoing policy review and integration

<b>Theme 6: Alignment with Broader Economic Development Goals</b>	
<i>Corporate Organization</i>	
<b>Call for Action 40:</b>	Planning Services, Building Services, and Economic Development to work together in one Division
<b>Call for Action 41:</b>	Director of Planning and Chief Building Official meet with GSDC Board of Directors twice a year
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<b>Call for Action 42:</b>	Create a Mayor's Acceleration team to support large projects
<b>Call for Action 43:</b>	Create Business Retention & Expansion Red Flag team
<b>Call for Action 44:</b>	Continue with attraction marketing campaigns, champion immigration programs, and partner with post-secondary institutions
<b>Call for Action 45:</b>	Temporary housing solutions for newcomers and skilled workers
<i>Employment Lands Strategy</i>	
<b>Call for Action 46:</b>	Review rural lands as potential site for increased employment districts
<i>Incentives, Programs and Policies Should Support Desired Outcomes</i>	
<b>Call for Action 47:</b>	Continue to offer CIP TIEGs or other incentives for multi-residential and purpose-built affordable rental
<b>Call for Action 48:</b>	Continue to coordinate infrastructure upgrades (and funding asks) to support housing development in strategic areas
<b>Call for Action 49:</b>	Create and promote a municipal assistance program to incentivize secondary unit to home
<b>Call for Action 50:</b>	Adjust mill rate for purpose-built multi-residential
<b>Call for Action 51:</b>	Enhance grants for downtown office conversions
<b>Call for Action 52:</b>	Continue with Land banking strategy
<b>Call for Action 53:</b>	New TIEGs to address Greater Sudbury-specific challenges
<b>Call for Action 54:</b>	Review tax policy and possible introduction of new fees

## Introduction

The Future-Ready Development Services Committee (“the Committee”) is an ad hoc subcommittee of Council, created through resolution at the City of Greater Sudbury Council meeting on May 29, 2023. The impetus for the Committee was Mayor Lefebvre’s stated goal of cultivating renewed investment and economic growth within the City of Greater Sudbury, while simultaneously ensuring that conditions are amenable to the construction of residential units across the housing spectrum. Many Councillors similarly sought to uncover ways to reduce “red tape” and improve efficiency in development processes with an aim to support local economic development. A subcommittee of Council was determined to be the most appropriate avenue to undertake a detailed review and advise Council of its conclusions and recommendations. The Committee’s structure, workplan, and research methodology took inspiration from the House of Commons’ Committees, which examine issues related to their mandate in detail and report their conclusions and recommendations to the House of Commons.<sup>1</sup>

The Committee’s stated mandate is to

assess the potential for the City of Greater Sudbury’s development services to reflect leading practices that ensure support for growth is timely and efficient and the municipality has the capacity, best-in-class policies and processes to support anticipated growth in residential and non-residential development over the next 10-15 years.

The members of the Committee are Mayor Paul Lefebvre (Chair), Councillor Fern Cormier (Vice-Chair), Councillor Pauline Fortin, Councillor Mike Parent, and Councillor Joscelyn Landry-Altmann. The Committee was supported by staff from the Mayor’s Office and the Office of the CAO.

The Committee’s workplan focused on gathering information from a number of primary and secondary sources, as identified in Figure 1. The data collection included qualitative (analyzing interviews, presentations to Committee, employee feedback),

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<sup>1</sup> Parliament of Canada, Welcome to Committees: <https://www.ourcommons.ca/committees/en/Home>

quantitative methods (reviewing benchmarking data), as well as mixed methods (online survey). The data collection yielded hundreds of insights, comments and anecdotes; in determining which to include in the final report, the Committee considered the following criteria:

- *Repetition*: is the idea or comment mentioned by multiple informants?
- *Relevance*: is the idea or comment relevant to the Committee's mandate?
- *Scope and Authority*: is the idea or comment within the municipal scope of jurisdiction and consistent with the municipality's legislated responsibilities?
- *Impact and Implementation*: could the idea or comment be effectively implemented and, if so, is it expected to have a positive impact on the development process?
- *Broader Applicability*: was the idea or comment applicable to general policy, process, and communications changes, and not specific to any one identifiable project or person?
- *Strategic Alignment*: does the idea or comment align with the municipality's strategic goals or long-term vision for development?

## Approach/Next Steps



Figure 1: Staff Presentation: FRDSC meeting, September 28, 2023



The Committee held seven meetings between July and December 2023, and heard from 21 representatives from 14 *Community Delegations*: “A Community Delegation is any citizen or group of citizens who represent a recognized community group or organization who wish to make a presentation at a meeting to address existing or proposed municipal policies or initiatives.”<sup>2</sup> Throughout the report, direct quotes from these Community Delegations’ presentations to the Committee, as available on eScribe, are provided to present each delegate’s ideas in their own words. As such, these quotes represent the opinion of that presenter.

In addition to these Community Delegations, the Committee’s staff working group met with about a dozen additional stakeholders with qualifications, professional experience, and knowledge of the development services industry. These stakeholders preferred to provide their input to the Committee anonymously; the feedback from these interviews are thus captured more generally, rather than in direct quotes. The working group also had meetings with representatives from three other municipalities, in addition to reviewing strategic plans and documents of comparable Canadian municipalities with known leading practices.

The Committee hosted a survey on the City’s Over To You engagement portal for 12 weeks, between August and November 30, 2023. This survey was open to the public, entirely voluntary, and respondents could post anonymously and/or withdraw their participation at any time. While the 533 visits to the site and 44 survey submissions provide insights into respondents’ views, the comments provided reflect only the experiences of the respondents and are not representative of the community as a whole or of all professionals that engage with development services.

Finally, the Committee also hosted an ideation workshop in November 2023 for all City staff who deliver and support development services. The purpose of this workshop was to gather information from staff about how the City of Greater Sudbury is already implementing leading practices, based on their experience. It also provided an opportunity for staff to share feedback in a brainstorm-style session, and approximately

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<sup>2</sup> City of Greater Sudbury, Speak Before Council: <https://www.greatersudbury.ca/city-hall/mayor-and-council/speak-before-council/>

200 ideas were generated through this process. Individual staff names or positions are not disclosed in the report.

This report provides an overview and summary of what the Committee heard during the study period described in this report. Based on analysis of the comments and materials reviewed, the report identifies the emergence of six major themes that will support Council's stated desire to "ensure support for growth is timely and efficient and the municipality has the capacity, best-in-class policies and processes to support anticipated growth". Many of the themes align with the City's ongoing efforts to integrate leading practices in development services. The six themes include:

1. Clarity and Consistency in Messaging
2. Transparent and Customer-Focused Process
3. New Engagement Opportunities
4. Staff Empowerment and Internal Coordination
5. Continuous Improvement
6. Alignment with Broader Economic Development Goals

Embedded within these themes are specific Calls for Action that will be further considered by Council throughout 2024.

Anecdotes, ideas and opinions from community delegations and interviews, as well as insights from reports or other sources, are attributed in footnotes throughout. Links to the committee meetings that are cited can be found in [Appendix B](#).

## Development Context in Greater Sudbury

Greater Sudbury is a northern Ontario single-tier municipality with a population of approximately 167,000. Known as a globally significant mining centre, with expertise developed in Greater Sudbury deployed all over the world, the city is poised to capitalize on the global demand for critical minerals to support the transition to a battery electric future. The city is also a hub of healthcare, education, and government services for the region. It is the stated goal of Mayor Paul Lefebvre to grow the population to 200,000 by 2050.

Through the work of this report, The Committee seeks to complement existing planning and economic development reports and plans<sup>3</sup>, to develop conditions that support and encourage greater development opportunities. Some predecessors to the Future-Ready Development Services Committee include past iterations of the Red Tape Reduction Task Force (see Appendix C:1) in partnership with the Greater Sudbury Chamber of Commerce, and the Gearing up for Growth Advisory Panel.

The Gearing Up for Growth Advisory Panel was created in 2015 with “a four-part mandate designed to help Greater Sudbury become a more development friendly community.”<sup>4</sup> The Panel’s Calls for Action and outcomes generated processes and programs that have had a generally positive impact on development in the City of Greater Sudbury (for example, the creation of the Sudbury Planning Application Review Team, the development of the Pronto e-permitting system, and the Development Cost Sharing Policy).

Other complementary initiatives of this term of council that aim to support development include: the draft Housing Supply Strategy,<sup>5</sup> presented to Council in January 2024, with strategies for spurring development of additional residential units across the housing

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<sup>3</sup> For example: Innovation Blueprint; From the Ground Up; CGS Strategic Plan; The Housing Supply Strategy (due 2024); previous iterations of “Red Tape Reduction” Task Forces with the Greater Sudbury Chamber of Commerce;

<sup>4</sup> Gearing up for Growth Advisory Panel, Managers’ report presented to council June 14, 2016

<sup>5</sup> Over To You, Housing Supply Strategy: <https://overtoyou.greatersudbury.ca/housing-supply-strategy>

spectrum; the Red Tape Reduction report with the Greater Sudbury Chamber of Commerce; and the Mayor's Task Force on Labour Attraction and Retention.

Former Mayor of North Bay, Al McDonald, offered his perspective on the importance of Council clearly sharing its message of promoting growth and development:

"I think you're sending a really strong message to your community. And it's an encouraging one, and it's a united message to industry, to business and to the citizens of Greater Sudbury, that your Council is engaged and wants to maximize the opportunities to assist your citizens, your businesses and your industry to succeed... From what I can see, from the City of North Bay, you are doing extremely well, and I love some of the messages that are coming out of Sudbury... so I just want to say, your Worship, members of Council, and to your staff, well done. It's been noticed."<sup>6</sup>

While the Committee seeks to identify ideas for improvement and feedback on current processes, Greater Sudbury must adhere to all relevant provincial legislation and operate within specific confines, as outlined in the following subsection.

### *Responsibilities of Municipalities within the Province of Ontario*

Development in Ontario occurs in accordance with an array of legislation from all levels of government. Any municipality, including Greater Sudbury, needs to conform to legislation including but not limited to: *Municipal Act, 2001*; *Planning Act, 1990*; *Building Code Act, 1992*; *Development Charges Act, 1997*; *Environmental Assessment Act, 1990*; *Conservation Authorities Act, 1990*, and others. These Acts outline the responsibilities of municipalities in the building, planning, and development process.

Government is not the only stakeholder in the development process. Other public agencies, governed by independent Boards of Directors, and private companies also play critically important roles to make development happen.

More specifically, municipalities are responsible for ensuring that development adheres to applicable legislation, which includes life safety, environmental compliance, land use

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<sup>6</sup> Al McDonald, FRDSC meeting, October 12, 2023

compliance, and other public considerations. Municipal activities within the development process include, but are not limited to, coordinating the processing and approval of building permits, plans of subdivisions, and other planning applications. While a municipality's efforts influence development trends, the City does not have direct control over whether, or when, the developments and projects that have been approved actually get built.

To illustrate, there are units and buildings that are effectively “green lit” by the City but that do not come to fruition, for reasons that are outside the control of the municipality – such as wider supply and demand trends, or market and interest rates – issues that will be further discussed in section [“Trends influencing growth and development”](#).

In the case of Greater Sudbury, the municipality has fulfilled its obligations with respect to reviewing applications on projects that have not come to fruition for any number of reasons. Director of Planning Services at the City of Greater Sudbury, Kris Longston, notes:

“there are a number of subdivisions that have been in draft approval for years, if not decades. There are, about, at last count, close to 6700 units potential in draft approved subdivisions that are out there for various reasons... In some cases, there's a developer that has multiple properties and they only have the capacity to tackle one at a time.”<sup>7</sup>

The planning review process is subject to mandatory requirements that dictate some timelines and steps for the development process in all municipalities across Ontario. Mark Kivinen, Executive Director of the Northeastern Ontario Construction Association, sits on a provincial board for contractors. He confirms that his colleagues and peers across the province have reported long wait times to get the necessary approvals in their own communities.<sup>8</sup>

For instance, all planning applications require a public hearing for which sufficient notice has been provided in advance.<sup>9</sup> After the review process and recommendations by staff,

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<sup>7</sup> Kris Longston, FRDSC meeting, September 28, 2023

<sup>8</sup> Mark Kivinen, FRDSC meeting, November 9, 2023

<sup>9</sup> Ktis Longston, FRDSC meeting, September 28, 2023

there are approvals needed by Council, followed by a period with a timeline prescribed by provincial legislation where Council's decision could be appealed. When describing this process to the Committee, Mr. Longston notes,

“there's a lot of time that's 'baked into' that processing time that's actually provincially-mandated timelines... there's a lot of back and forth that goes on too; there's a need to go back and forth with the applicant [and other commenting agencies]... and then staff needs to take the time to actually write the report that goes to planning committee. At that point, it gets kicked into our eScribe system, and there's deadlines for eScribe as well; right now, we're several weeks out from when the meeting happens that [the documents] have to be on eScribe. So in reality, the amount of time that staff actually touch the application is relatively short. There's a lot of time that's baked in there that's provincially mandated for public consultation or administrative processes that need to happen as well.”<sup>10</sup>

While some of the steps outlined by Mr. Longston are provincially mandated, others are within the municipality's control. In particular, the timelines for internal approvals of staff reports are reviewed in the context of the work in Theme 5, under Process Updates. In certain cases, there is also a required additional review and approval by agencies external to the City. For example, Carl Jorgensen, General Manager of Conservation Sudbury identified the role of Conservation authorities in providing a permit if a building is in a hazard area such as a floodplain or wetland:

“*Conservation Authorities Act* is what's called 'applicable law' under the *Building Code Act*, meaning that [the Chief Building Official's] team cannot be issuing a permit if one is required, or some kind of permission is required from the Conservation Authority. So, if there's a natural hazard present on the property and it's not been addressed through a Conservation Authority permit or comment otherwise, then that permit is held. The application review relies on a combination of provincial standards and local policy and guidance.”<sup>11</sup>

These applicable laws and jurisdictional roles and responsibilities can be complex and may not be well-understood by those who are not subject matter experts in the field. A number of participants indicated that this can result in stakeholder confusion or

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<sup>10</sup> Kris Longston, FRDSC meeting, September 28, 2023

<sup>11</sup> Carl Jorgensen, FRDSC meeting, September 28, 2023

frustration, as stated, for example, by local real estate Broker, Chris Tammi (see Appendix C:2).

One factor contributing to the processing timelines is the obligation that discussions and decisions that advance the business of the municipality be undertaken in an open, public Council meeting. Former Mayor Al McDonald shared his perspective on how this hinders quick decision-making (Appendix C: 3).

### *Development Financing Policies*

The Province of Ontario has established that municipalities may generate revenue through limited means, primarily through property tax and user fees, as well as relying on funding transfers from other levels of government.

Development charges are considered discretionary fees, which “means that municipalities can choose whether to use development charges and, if they are used, which services or infrastructure they want to include from the list of eligible services in the *Development Charges Act, 1997*.”<sup>12</sup> Development charges complement user fees and property taxes, and are primarily a cost-recovery tool to fund the large upfront capital expense of new or upgraded infrastructure works (e.g., water treatment plant expansion, new trunk sewers, and roads and bridges) to support new development. These development charges thus fund a one-time investment before growth follows gradually: “Since growth occurs incrementally and is subject to municipal levies only after it materializes, it generates insufficient user fee and property tax revenue to fund up-front growth-related capital costs.”<sup>13</sup> Levying development charges also ensures that current taxpayers are not inequitably paying large sums today for the growth-related infrastructure that will primarily benefit future residents.

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<sup>12</sup> Government of Ontario: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/municipal-development-and-community-benefits-charges-and-parklands>

<sup>13</sup> Found, A. (2019). “Development Charges in Ontario: Is Growth Paying for Growth?” IMFG Papers on Municipal Finance and Governance, p. 2.

Mr. Longston explains that Greater Sudbury relies on development charges to pay for necessary upgrades to municipal services and/or infrastructure expansion to accommodate anticipated and planned growth:

“So, when you have a lift station that needs to be upgraded, because we do have, in some areas, developments that can’t go ahead because we don’t have the required downstream infrastructure or if you require a signalization of an intersection because of additional growth – that’s what those charges are intended to facilitate, or the additional infrastructure requirements we need to accommodate growth. I think you’ll always hear from the development community that getting rid of those charges would facilitate development. It probably would. The question then becomes, is how do you finance those infrastructure upgrades that you need? So it is a difficult question that I think every municipality struggles with.”<sup>14</sup>

Former Mayor of North Bay, Al McDonald, suggests that waiving residential and industrial development fees for a period of time in North Bay resulted in a spike of development activity. The development context in North Bay is influenced by several close neighbouring municipalities that compete for development. By contrast, former Greater Sudbury councillor Geoff McCausland, who was invited to participate as a member of the commercial real estate team at Mallette-Goring, suggests that the sheer geographic size of the amalgamated City of Greater Sudbury essentially eliminates such competition.<sup>15</sup> The demand for development remains in Greater Sudbury.

In consultations and conversations with local development stakeholders, the Future Ready Development Services Committee did not hear requests for the wholesale removal of Development Charges. Rather, tools that are tailored to achieve the kind of desired development, such as targeted Tax Increment Equivalent Grants (TIEGs), Development Cost-Sharing or Deferred Development Charges, were identified as favoured economic incentives.

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<sup>14</sup> Kris Longston, FRDSC meeting, December 7, 2023

<sup>15</sup> Geoff McCausland, FRDSC meeting, October 12, 2023



## *Other trends influencing growth and development in Greater Sudbury*

National and global factors also affect growth and development at the local scale. This subsection identifies macro-trends that are beyond the control of the municipal government but which influence development in Greater Sudbury. There may be opportunities for the private sector to review the root causes of these challenges and consider options to pursue to address these headwinds. A detailed discussion on the possible private sector opportunities for change is beyond the scope of this report.

David Chalmers, President (Canadian Residential) of Starlight Investments points out that many of the current challenges in Greater Sudbury are also being felt by organizations and cities across the country:

“The cost to build has gone up with rising interest rates, supply chain constraints and the access to contractors or taxes from all levels of government, municipal fees... time-consuming approval processes... all of these things together cause sort of major headwinds of developing anywhere in the country.”<sup>16</sup>

Chris Tammi, of the Sudbury Real Estate Board, has heard from colleagues across Canada about common challenges: “the experiences that we’re kind of facing here, they’re across the country. This isn’t a Sudbury-specific issue. It’s expensive to build across the country. Housing affordability is an issue across the country. Access to labour is an issue across the country.”<sup>17</sup>

Kevin Jarus, Senior Planner at Tulloch, agrees that there are commonalities in “higher costs, whether that’s labour costs, material cost, transportation cost, what have you.” But he goes on to differentiate and identify additional challenges related to the natural environment of Greater Sudbury, and the “lack of people in the north”<sup>18</sup> (Appendix C: 4).

Tracey Nutt, presenting on behalf of the Greater Sudbury Chamber of Commerce, confirmed that there is a lot of competition for the small number of skilled workers in

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<sup>16</sup> David Chalmers, FRDSC meeting, October 18, 2023

<sup>17</sup> Chris Tammi, FRDSC meeting, November 9, 2023

<sup>18</sup> Kevin Jarus, FRDSC meeting, November 9, 2023

Northeastern Ontario. Many skilled tradespeople are nearing retirement age, and these jobs have not been filled because, she suggests, young people have not had as much exposure to trades as a career choice in secondary school. She has seen that younger adults who have chosen to pursue skilled trades are often drawn to the higher level of pay that is offered by the mining industry rather than work in construction.<sup>19</sup>

The result is that large-scale development projects often require labour and expertise from outside Greater Sudbury. Zane Colt, Senior Government Relations Consultant for Extendicare, notes that their current long-term care home project on Algonquin Road, required tenders from companies from southern Ontario or Manitoba with the expertise and scale to take it on:

“These general contractors were asking to pay a premium for their out-of-town staff, including room and board premium for winter construction, which again, is a bit of a geographic or environmental challenge, noting the longer winters and added heating costs to be able to build during the winter. We’re also paying a premium for general contractors outside of Northern Ontario, as we end up finding ourselves competing with the mining industry or with hunting season, as well.”<sup>20</sup>

In summary, these factors, including volatility in supply chains, high inflation and economic factors, a shortage of skilled workers, the challenges of building in the geography of the Canadian shield, and the relatively short construction season in Northern Ontario all impact development trends in Greater Sudbury.

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<sup>19</sup> Tracey Nutt, FRDSC meeting, November 29, 2023

<sup>20</sup> Zane Colt, FRDSC meeting, November 29, 2023

## Thematic Findings from the Committee: Themes for Accelerating Growth and Development in Greater Sudbury

Key themes emerged from the Committee's consultations, identifying Greater Sudbury's strengths, opportunities, and challenges related to the anticipated growth in residential and non-residential growth in the next several decades.

The following section provides an analysis of the feedback received and leading practices reviewed. These insights can inform the City of Greater Sudbury's approach to development.

### The Foundation: We are in this together

Perhaps the most prominent commentary to emerge from the consultation process is that both City staff *and* community stakeholders have reiterated their commitment to helping grow, promote, and improve Greater Sudbury (Appendix C: 5; C: 6).

Those who participated in the work of the Committee understood that the development process will entail challenges and, sometimes, conflict. This inherent tension is recognized by city staff, as summarized by Mr. Longston:

"There are often frustrations, if you will, with development processes. Some of those are provincial legislation or municipal policy or municipal bylaws that are put in place to protect the environment, health and safety, avoid neighbourhood conflicts, that kind of thing. So there's often that push and pull where someone would like to develop their property, and there's policies in place that perhaps would guide it in a way slightly different than what the proponent would like to do, and there's that friction there that we try to do our best to work through to come up with something that's in the best interest of the community."<sup>21</sup>

Community delegations regularly reported that most City staff can also be described as local champions: "Everybody that we deal with at the City cares. They want things to be good, they want things to be better, they want to see growth. I don't think there's a lack

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<sup>21</sup> Kris Longston, FRDSC meeting, December 7, 2023

of desire for things to be better. I think a lot of it is just being given the platform to give observations.”<sup>22</sup>

Many thanked the Committee for the opportunity and the willingness to engage in frank conversations. Delegates said that they were participating because they ultimately see the relationship between City and development professionals as a collaborative one and saw themselves as valuable partners to achieve growth and success for the community (Appendix C: 7; C: 8).

The Committee received presentations that included aggregated and anonymized data from members of professional associations, such as the Greater Sudbury Chamber of Commerce, Sudbury District Law Association, the Northeastern Ontario Construction Association, Sudbury Real Estate Association. In addition, some delegations, like Amber Salach, Geoff McCausland, and Kevin Jarus, mentioned that they had incorporated some of their colleagues’ feedback while preparing their own remarks.

Some delegations and key stakeholders suggested there might be hesitation among the development community to accept the invitation to speak publicly. Amber Salach, Principal Architect and Partner at Bélanger Salach, stated that, in speaking with colleagues and peers in the industry, “A few that I talked to have declined because they were uncertain, and feeling a bit negative with how they would come [across].”<sup>23</sup> Ms. Salach noted that she worried that she herself would be perceived as having only negative things to say, and hoped that the Committee and staff did not interpret her comments only as criticism; rather, she suggested she is simply very passionate about her community. Ms. Salach elaborates her position:

“we all need to work on relationships. And as painful as it can be, staff working with consultants and vice versa – there’s no choice any longer. It cannot be the proverbial ‘us vs. them’. Truthfully, we, as consultants, feel as though, in the industry we just wait on bated breath to hear the bad news delivered by city departments. There’s got to be a better way.”<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Chris Tammi, FRDSC meeting, October 12, 2023

<sup>23</sup> Amber Salach, FRDSC meeting, October 12, 2023

<sup>24</sup> Amber Salach, FRDSC meeting, October 12, 2023

The sense of imminent “bad news”, red tape, and defensiveness was also captured in consultations with members of the Sudbury District Law Association (Appendix C: 9)

Former Mayor McDonald offered his interpretation of comments like those made by the Sudbury District Law Association members and Ms. Salach: “Even if [these meetings] are critical, just know that there’s a frustration from your citizens that truly care and just want the best for their community. That’s so, so important: the fact that they’re even here making these presentations tells you they care.”<sup>25</sup>

Staff have responsibilities to professionally and diligently address legislative requirements governing land use and construction. A key stakeholder suggested that staff have sometimes felt like they have been “thrown under the bus” by consultants who have themselves “dropped the ball,” and then blame the City for delays in order to save face in front of their clients.<sup>26</sup>

This sometimes leads to scenarios where staff may feel like they are personally attacked when upholding and implementing processes and timelines directed by legislation, bylaws, and policy decisions made by elected officials, as pointed out by Mr. McDonald:

“I think sometimes when you say ‘staff,’ they’re just this faceless group and there’s no empathy put forward from the position they’re in. And I think in every council that’s existed in the past 30, 40 years, they brought staff up to the front of the podium, trash them, throw them in the fire, because ‘the community says you should do this, you shouldn’t do that, and I’m standing up for my citizens.’ And unfortunately, what happens is your staff become paralyzed with fear... so what happens is, they pull back. And they just sit back, because quite honestly, councils come and go.”<sup>27</sup>

If all stakeholders are serious about working together to achieve growth and development that is sound, safe, and good for the community, there can be successful

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<sup>25</sup> Al McDonald, FRDSC meeting, October 12, 2023

<sup>26</sup> Interview 7

<sup>27</sup> Al McDonald, FRDSC meeting, October 12, 2023

path(s) developed to realize positive outcomes. This will be key to fostering trust and relationships for collaboration within the development sector in Greater Sudbury.

## Getting to “Yes” and Fostering a Positive Mindset

A critically important element is the focus on outcomes that produce growth. This element reflects the view that prospective developments should be designed with all legislative requirements in mind. Municipal staff, when presented with such development plans, review them with the expectation that developers share their interest in producing developments that reflect good planning and safe buildings.

One stakeholder told the Committee that perhaps Greater Sudbury could consider adopting the kind of “can-do” attitude of smaller municipalities that are trying to attract growth, rather than modeling processes and policies on southern Ontario models, where communities are looking to control and constrain growth.<sup>28</sup> One suggestion from Mr. McCausland, was to consider opening up certain development possibilities to occur “as-of-right”:

“How can we make changes so there *is* no development process? So that you can go and get a building permit, and that staff can say ‘yes, here’s what you can do,’ instead of, ‘well, we would support that. But you have to go through a bunch of flaming hoops first that cost tens of thousands of dollars,’ or whatever the case may be.”<sup>29</sup>

Willingness to embrace change and keep pace with changing industry needs was identified as key to facilitating growth and development, as was coming up with creative solutions and ensuring the right people are in the right positions to affect change.<sup>30</sup>

While the previous subsection, [Responsibilities of Municipalities](#), provides context of the limitations faced by municipalities in Ontario, key stakeholders reported that they believe the City’s interpretations of legislation, code and bylaws can be overly restrictive

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<sup>28</sup> Interview 2

<sup>29</sup> Geoff McCausland, FRDSC meeting, October 12, 2023

<sup>30</sup> Interview 7

and narrow. Ms. Salach provided her impression that the comments in a recent SPART meeting left the project team “worried about the fate of the project” (Appendix C: 10).

Anthony Davis, past Chair of the Greater Sudbury Chamber of Commerce, suggests that a “burdensome” permitting process has meant “smaller businesses are hesitant to even apply out of fear that it will hold up a job. And this leads to work done without permits, which leads to title insurance claims [and other issues]... The city needs to communicate and portray a culture of eagerness and understanding to eliminate the stigma.”<sup>31</sup>

Mr. Davis provides an opinion that the complex nature of the permit process may be a reason why a property owner would choose not to take out a permit – though this is a decision for which the property owner is ultimately responsible. The municipality investigates reports of work done without a permit and provides education and opportunities to bring projects into compliance. The availability of inspectors and other resources affect the ability of the municipality to address such reports in a timely manner.

Mr. Colt, of Extendicare, agreed that accelerating the municipal review process to ensure that all “permits and approvals in place by late summer so that we can break ground before winter sets in later in the fall”<sup>32</sup> would go a long way to assuring project proponents that the City is supporting forward momentum.

To demonstrate willingness to assist project proponents in meeting their goals, City staff have identified opportunities to enable quick start of multi-year projects while also ensuring due diligence is done. Guido Mazza, Chief Building Official at the City of Greater Sudbury identifies the example of a site alteration permit, which allows for blasting and clearing of the site in preparation even before the site plan control agreement is finalized. Similarly, a foundation permit may be issued “when the drawings weren’t completely ready for issuance.”<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Anthony Davis, FRDSC meeting, November 29, 2023

<sup>32</sup> Zane Colt, FRDSC meeting, November 29, 2023

<sup>33</sup> Guido Mazza, FRDSC meeting, November 29, 2023

Increased use of these tools may signal that Greater Sudbury is “development friendly,” while still managing risk. This could help address the comments made by some stakeholders that the City’s approach to development tends to be disproportionately risk-averse.

*Call for Action 1: Revise corporate approach to risk management regarding development*

Mr. Tammi explains: “I think ‘risk management’ is something that we hear a lot from the city, but the real risk that we need to manage is, what happens if we don’t get development? What happens if the tax base doesn’t grow? What happens if people continue to move [away]... that’s the real risk that we have to manage.”<sup>34</sup>

Mr. Tammi goes on to say that he feels that a declining and eroding tax base

“are legitimate risks, not, ‘this unit was previously a doctor and now it’s a chiropractor, so we needed this [study], because someone might be exposed to some risk.’ There’s a lot of interpretation of legislation that I think rooted in quote, unquote, risk management. But real risk is a lot more measurable when it comes to ‘what happens if we don’t’ [grow]?”<sup>35</sup>

On the same theme, Mr. McCausland suggests that, in any project, “There’s a potential for some unintended consequences; that’s always the case. But no one is going to die because we change the zoning on a house from allowing this many units to that many units, or the parking ratio from 1.5 to 1.2.”<sup>36</sup> Mr. Tammi and Mr. McCausland suggest that a culture of risk aversion leads to strict interpretations of legislative requirements, over-definition within bylaws, and many required studies to justify a development proposal (see Appendix D: 24 by 2024).

Specific to tenders and City projects, key stakeholders suggested that the City needs to directly review and change its tender terms, which they see as being so risk averse as

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<sup>34</sup> Chris Tammi, FRDSC meeting, October 12, 2023

<sup>35</sup> Chris Tammi, FRDSC meeting, October 12, 2023

<sup>36</sup> Geoff McCausland, FRDSC meeting, October 12, 2023



to be offensive to potential bidders.<sup>37</sup> They recommend bringing these terms in line with comparable terms across the province, advocating for a more acceptable level of risk to be shared between the city and the developer/proponent.<sup>38</sup> For more details, see [Call for Action 37](#).

## Theme 1: Clarity and Consistency in Messaging

City employees and community stakeholders agree that messaging should be clear and consistent. This includes: clarity in the direction from Council to staff; user-friendly communications to the public about the steps and policies that inform the development process; a transparent agreement about terms of engagement; and sharing good news stories that encourage goodwill.

A focus on clarity and consistency will help address resident concerns reported on Over To You that the development process was overly complicated and/or not transparent. Likewise, when it comes to development policies,

“there’s a clear perception out there, not so much from the Law Association, from the clients, and we hear the messaging’s not consistent. One project seems to have a certain set of rules, another project has a different set of rules, and there may be a good reason for that that, but there’s not a good *explanation* for that, so that when people are coming out and they’re doing that first rung of the ladder, they understand why. That’s what’s required to affect that behavioural change and provide transparency, consistency, and efficiency in the delivery of services.”<sup>39</sup>

Claude Lacroix, of the Sudbury District Law Association, reiterated that some proponents reported receiving different answers on the same project when they spoke with different people (Appendix C: 11). Professional judgement is applied to every decision, so reasonable variations can occur within these processes, as in other sectors. However, having consistent and clear guides available to all staff and

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<sup>37</sup> Interview 8

<sup>38</sup> Interview 6

<sup>39</sup> Claude Lacroix, FRDSC meeting, October 18, 2023

stakeholders may help address some of these reported challenges (see, Call for Action 8; Call for Action 15).

### *Council to set the vision, and lead with courage and integrity*

A foundation of clear communication is a clear and shared vision.

Former Mayor of North Bay, Mr. McDonald, elaborated that council and staff have distinct roles. Council is responsible for setting the direction and clearly establishing the vision for the municipality, while staff are the professionals who are then empowered by Council to carry out this direction.

The need for a clear vision, with action-oriented implementation, was supported by the Sudbury District Law Association members' "crystal clear" message that "we need council leadership and actual decisions and policy changes, as opposed to commitments and promises – with the vision and appetite to embrace a new collaborative strategy."<sup>40</sup>

### *Call for Action 2: Council to publicly support staff*

In order for Council's vision to be implemented, "You need to trust your staff, but the staff needs to be able to trust council, too."<sup>41</sup> Mr. McDonald urges all Councillors to give firm direction, but then to ultimately trust and publicly support staff, reminding the Committee that staff members are human beings with feelings, expertise, and professional credentials.

Mr. McDonald reiterates that, if Council determines the vision and staff are carrying it out,

"Then we can't be attacking our staff. We have to stand there when something isn't quite popular and say, you know what? We tasked our staff to bring forward those projects. And it was the right thing to do. If you're going to blame somebody, blame me, but don't blame our staff ... If you can change that culture

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<sup>40</sup> Claude Lacroix, FRDSC meeting, October 18, 2023

<sup>41</sup> Al McDonald, FRDSC meeting, October 12, 2023

so that your staff feel protected and supported, I guarantee you they're going to be in lockstep with you because they basically want the same things you do.”<sup>42</sup>

Public support and additional resources from Council would go a long way supporting the “fantastic” frontline staff, who are “doing the absolute best they can, given the circumstances of workloads, the systems of the city when it comes to the level of empowerment.”<sup>43</sup> Empowering and supporting staff who “want to make a decision, but don’t want to be the one to bear the wrong decision”<sup>44</sup> (and see Appendix C:12). Mr. McCausland referred to “recent events”<sup>45</sup> during which personal staff information was revealed to the public has contributed to staff trepidation: “That kind of stuff just causes so much damage so quickly. Trust takes years to build and a moment to break.”<sup>46</sup>

### *Call for Action 3: Mayor to have quarterly updates with senior staff*

While the Mayor and CAO are in regular contact, ensuring alignment between Council and senior staff may be improved through regular meetings and updates. For his part, Mr. McDonald said that regular meetings with senior staff enabled the building of trust during his terms as Mayor of North Bay.<sup>47</sup>

### *Call for Action 4: Council to clearly identify their own rubric of success*

By the end of Council’s term, there should be a clear method for measuring whether the Council has achieved what they had set out to accomplish:

“There needs to be a means for measuring the effectiveness of the strategy you guys direct the staff to implement. To be truly development ready, the timelines cannot wait... Not everything has to be tomorrow, but you need some stuff tomorrow. And you need some stuff in a year or two... and you are now at this

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<sup>42</sup> Al McDonald, FRDSC meeting, October 12, 2023

<sup>43</sup> Kevin Jarus, FRDSC, November 9, 2023

<sup>44</sup> Chris Tammi, FRDSC meeting, October 12, 2023

<sup>45</sup> Code of Conduct Complaint, November 2023: <https://pub-greatersudbury.escrimemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=51530>

<sup>46</sup> Geoff McCausland, FRDSC meeting, October 12, 2023

<sup>47</sup> Al McDonald, FRDSC, October 12, 2023

wonderful opportunity at the beginning of your terms, to really make that happen.”<sup>48</sup>

## Public Communication and Press Releases

There is increased opportunity to continue sharing updates and stories with the general public through a number of communication channels.

### *Call for Action 5: Continue to publish real-time data and benchmark updates*

Mr. Longston highlights that the municipality compares its performance against other municipalities, noting that we are above average or average on almost all of the metrics related to the timeliness of the processing of applications. In addition,

“We do, as a city, maintain our own dashboard on our website that has real time tracking of our development applications, planning applications. So you can go on that website, you have a map, you can zoom in on one of the icons and you can find out what the application is. We also track every single development application that we’ve processed since 2015, and you can sort by type – minor variance, zoning, any sort of thing like that – we track whether we meet our benchmarks.”<sup>49</sup>

### *Call for Action 6: Share stories of success and good news*

During the staff ideation workshop, participants reported that the general public seemed unaware of some of the major successes and “good news stories” in the development sector in Greater Sudbury. It was noted that not all members of the public are able to interpret the statistics and KPIs that are reported regularly; instead, sharing narrative stories or personal testimonials may foster greater understanding of the positive stories of collaboration and growth. These stories may be published on a fixed schedule or on an as-needed basis, in coordination with the Communications department.

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<sup>48</sup> Claude Lacroix, FRDSC meeting, October 18, 2023

<sup>49</sup> Kris Longston, FRDSC meeting, September 28, 2023

*Call for Action 7: Highlight new programs, policies, and legislative changes that affect the development process*

Similarly, the Committee heard that project proponents reported being unaware of new policies, programs, or legislative changes that may increase the viability of, or shorten the timelines of, their project. For instance, during the November 29 Committee meeting, CBO Guido Mazza confirmed that the Extendicare Algonquin project was among the first to use the City's Deferred Development Charges bylaw, which "allows for six payments of the development charges over the course of construction of the building, and it's at a rate of 0% interest over five years and six payments."<sup>50</sup>

Greater visibility, wider dissemination, and repetition of these leading-edge programs and policies will arguably lead to greater awareness and encourage development.

*Call for Action 8: Create a series of plain language guides*

Multiple staff members reported a desire to have more resource documents "at their fingertips" to provide to the public. Ideally, these primers and guides would be all available on one centralized site (see [Call for Action 15](#)) for easy referral. Andree Lacroix, on behalf of the Sudbury District Law Association, agreed, saying:

"One thing that came up is, it would be helpful to have a tip sheet developed to deal with frequently asked questions about permit requirements for decks, principal entrances, pool fencing, enclosures, finished basements, requirements for final inspections, etc., that would be available to frontline staff and could be shared with the public... you've got your frontline staff having really good information that they can provide to the public, but it also expedites things generally."<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Guido Mazza, FRDSC meeting, November 29, 2023

<sup>51</sup> Andree Lacroix, FRDSC meeting, October 18, 2023

Some of these guides could also be integrated into online training opportunities (see [Call for Action 16](#)) or linked with a “more information” icon on Pronto. The guides would include background information and explanations why certain rules apply (Appendix C:13) and how following the process can protect you and your property (Appendix C: 14), as well as step-by-step instructions on the steps within the development process.

Mr. McCausland suggests that some of these resources already exist and could be adapted or repurposed to suit the City of Greater Sudbury’s needs. For example, the City of Barrie has a set of guides that are “one to five pages per, [outlining], ‘here’s what we’re asking for, here’s why, here’s what it looks like, here’s consultants that can do it’.”<sup>52</sup>

Another illustrative example is the City of Kitchener’s series of instructional and educational videos that explain the planning and development process to the general public.<sup>53</sup>

*Call for Action 9: Create a simple document outlining roles, expectations, and rules of engagement.*

A participant at the staff ideation workshop suggested it would be helpful to have a document – almost a checklist – that clearly outlines roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders in the development process: for instance, the Applicant (or their consultant) is required to provide *a, b, c*; the Municipality reviews and approves *d, e, f*; the Province reviews and approves *g, h, i*.

The document might also serve as an opportunity to lay out expectations of the engagement, making clear that the quality of what is received impacts the quality of staff comments and the speed of decisions.

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<sup>52</sup> Geoff McCausland, FRDSC meeting, October 12, 2023

<sup>53</sup> City of Kitchener, “Land Use Planning and Development” YouTube playlist: [https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL-8QWaYyA3x6I51t25EWPo-Hg\\_QQBzUC&si=tCKXBEs3vyiD0Yp](https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL-8QWaYyA3x6I51t25EWPo-Hg_QQBzUC&si=tCKXBEs3vyiD0Yp)

## **Theme 2: Transparent and Customer-Focused Process**

This theme explores process improvements that may assist in meeting the needs of the customer, making it easier for them to understand and seamlessly access all steps of the development process.

Supporting an applicant through the process may include assigning clear staff liaison responsibility, improving automation or self-serve options with supportive infrastructure, and encouraging pre-Consultation opportunities. As Mr. Lacroix of the Sudbury District Law Association states, “We want good development – that should be tough, we should have checks and balances in place – but it should be reasonable for people to manage without having to have a group from MIT to sort of walk you through the process for the next three years.”<sup>54</sup>

There are already excellent examples within the City of Greater Sudbury of customer-focused process. The One-Stop Services counter for planning and development has provided an easier single access point for permits; delegates also reported that they anticipate that Pronto, the new online e-permit system will also improve access. The pre-consultation process, known as “SPART” has provided an opportunity to receive clarification prior to the submission of a Planning Application. The 311 system has increased residents’ abilities to access City services and report incidents, in general, in a user-friendly way.

When it comes to economic development, it has been noted that having a development officer, liaison or general point person to shepherd an application through the end-to-end process may increase success. An illustrative example comes from Leann Hackman-Carty, CEO of Economic Developers Alberta. She notes in an article for the Institute on Municipal Finance & Governance the difference between a customer-focused and organizational-focused approach to securing local economic development. The customer-focused approach resulted in a more straightforward process that would

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<sup>54</sup> Claude Lacroix, FRDSC meeting, October 18, 2023

bring all stakeholders together “to hear the investor’s story once, identify the types of support and incentives the broader community could provide, and propose a comprehensive response aimed at securing the investment.”<sup>55</sup> (see: Appendix C:15 for entire quote). While the customer-focused approach may have required slightly more effort at the outset, Ms. Hackman-Carty argues that the successful outcome is worthwhile.

The survey data collected from more than 200 global cities in the *Building a Future-Ready City* project by Hatch and ThoughtLab demonstrates greater partnerships between municipalities and business, with local governments “even potentially creating new roles such as a Chief Citizens’ Officer or Chief Citizen Experience Officer,”<sup>56</sup> according to Josh Lilley, Sudbury Operations Manager at Hatch.

### Customer experience is more than a timeline

Several delegates suggested that, while important to track and report, benchmarks and quantitative KPIs may not capture the nuance of “success” in development projects.

For example, as Mr. Longston points out, many applications that exceed the Provincial timeline benchmarks may have missed the window by only one to seven days, some of which was due to circumstances beyond staff’s control.<sup>57</sup> Or, the process may have taken longer but led to a more mutually-agreeable or positive outcome than would have been possible if the process were rushed. Building on this, Mr. Jarus suggests these considerations factor into the assessment of “success”:

“I would encourage the Committee and Council to stop focusing as much on timelines for approvals and denials for certain types of applications. Stop focusing so much on the benchmarking of ‘was an application heard within the timeframe as required under the Planning Act... it’s kind of the mindset that I’m alluding to. The numbers do not matter as much as the happiness [of the client]

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<sup>55</sup> Hackman-Carty, L. (2022). “Municipalities Should Be Local Champions for Economic Development”. From *Who Does What: The Municipal Role in Economic Development*. Institute for Municipal Finance and Governance. p.6

<sup>56</sup> Josh Lilley, FRDSC meeting, October 18, 2023

<sup>57</sup> Kris Longston, FRDSC meeting, September 28, 2023



does, or the quality of the service is, right? And I feel as though, to be honest, the focus on quantified benchmarking statistics sometimes hinder staff from being able to actually put out the best quality products or the best quality process.”<sup>58</sup>

Notably, Mr. Jarus has focused on both customer and staff well-being in this assessment, suggesting that staff may feel more comfortable and confident if they are given the time and other resources to ensure that they have been able to conduct a thorough review.<sup>59</sup>

*Call for Action 10: Develop measures of success that include customer satisfaction and relationships*

Create a measure of success that captures customer experience, either through a brief one- or two-question exit survey or other mechanism.

Providing an opportunity during the Pre-Consultation process for large projects to “identify overarching project goals to the city at the beginning of the project so that staff do not get buried in the weeds of technicalities”<sup>60</sup> might also strengthen a shared commitment among proponents and City staff.

*Call for Action 11: Institute a primary point of contact for each large development project file*

Ms. Salach mentioned that navigating through the steps of large development applications, which go through multiple departments, could be simplified through “project-specific single points of contact.”<sup>61</sup> Many delegations echoed this sentiment, with the Chamber of Commerce noting that “in earlier days, companies used to have one point of contact for all of their questions. This was not an efficient way to run, but it

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<sup>58</sup> Kevin Jarus, FRDSC meeting, November 9, 2023

<sup>59</sup> Kevin Jarus, FRDSC meeting, November 9, 2023

<sup>60</sup> Amber Salach, FRDSC meeting, October 12, 2023

<sup>61</sup> Amber Salach, FRDSC meeting, October 12, 2023

was very effective... assigning a file to a single staff member early on so that businesses know who to email simple questions to related to the file may save both the city and businesses time and reduce errors.”<sup>62</sup>

Having one point of contact coordinate between departments on a large development file would help address what the SDLA members expressed as a challenge when dealing with multiple departments:

“You may start with one department and think that you’ve achieved, or met, your goals. Or perhaps you’ve resolved some of the issues that you wanted to deal with. And then you have to go to the next department. And sometimes, I think, what clients are telling us is that it’s like they’re starting from scratch again when they go to the next department to deal with the other issue. There needs to be some consistency when you’ve got one development and communication between different departments.”<sup>63</sup>

To improve seamless transition should the point of contact be away from the office, Mr. McCausland suggested a “buddy system” could be implemented, requiring staff to cc another team member who could then easily review the file’s history and progress (see 24 by 2024).

*Call for Action 12: Have a public-facing, cross-departmental development navigator at the One-Stop Services counter*

It seems that the public-facing staff at the One-Stop Services counter with general cross-departmental knowledge could be assigned to a file as a point of contact or navigator for smaller applications, to address the recommendation from Mr. McCausland and Mr. Tammi’s 24 by 2024 that frontline staff should be “empowered to act as development ambassadors who oversee an applicant’s file from beginning to end, provide timeline accountability and a coordinated city response.”<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Anthony Davis, FRDSC meeting, November 29, 2023

<sup>63</sup> Andree Lacroix, FRDSC meeting, October 18, 2023

<sup>64</sup> 24 by 2024, submission by Mallette-Goring, Inc. – see Appendix D

While the SDLA suggested that not all frontline staff have knowledge of all steps of the process, or of bylaws regulating other City departments, additional training opportunities (see Call for Action 28) as well as the plain language guides (see Call for Action 8) could enhance their ability to navigate across different departments to find answers for an applicant.

### *Call for Action 13: Expand evening or weekend availability of staff*

To accelerate permit processing timelines, especially in preparation of short construction windows, it was suggested that hours of operations expand, as the development industry “is not nine to five. Expectations are high – for budgets, timelines, funding, submissions, approvals, tendering, et cetera. Motivation to get projects out of the ground is high.”<sup>65</sup> It is thus suggested that providing seasonal evening availability of staff could be one way to increase access for those who are unable to visit Tom Davies Square to speak with staff during traditional business hours. A review of other municipalities’ practices might provide insight into alternate hours of operation.

Some staff and community members recommended bringing back “Permit Palooza”, which was explained as one- or two-day events in the community (for example, at shopping malls or community centres) where residents could apply for straightforward permits, thus arguably making it easier and more accessible to the population to comply.

### *Call for Action 14: Create a clear dispute resolution or complaints process*

A staff member suggested during the staff ideation session that a clear dispute resolution process is required when an applicant receives an unfavourable answer from an inspector or reviewer. The applicant should have the opportunity to seek a “second opinion”, but at some point, the decision has to be binding – otherwise the process

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<sup>65</sup> Amber Salach, FRDSC meeting, October 12, 2023

consumes a lot of staff time and resources when the applicant requests reviews of the same issue over and over again.

Clarity is also sought on how developers and contractors can report their concerns and issues. Contractor Shawn Byrnes says, “We want to build a community here. And properly, safely. If I have a complaint, I want to go up to someone and say, ‘hey, this is not being done properly, what can we do to rectify it?’ And when I do that, my voice is not heard. I want my voice to be heard.”<sup>66</sup>

### Online tools

Generally, Pronto has been well-received by business, development and construction professionals, and delegations reported optimism that this process would continue to improve over time. The planned integration of online payments is eagerly anticipated by the development community. Mrs. Nutt, on behalf of the Chamber shared that, “We’re optimistic that, once Pronto is fully functioning, with all of the glitches fixed and everybody trained, it will streamline the process, improve communication and timelines, and increase the number of property owners who apply for permits.”<sup>67</sup>

Mr. Davis identified that City staff has already been responsive in fixing an identified issue with building and plumbing permits in Pronto: “That issue has been rectified, so that’s a great example of businesses and the City coming together to solve these issues that are being brought up by businesses.”<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Shawn Byrnes, FRDSC meeting, November 9, 2023

<sup>67</sup> Tracey Nutt, FRDSC meeting, November 29, 2023

<sup>68</sup> Anthony Davis, FRDSC meeting, November 29, 2023

*Call for Action 15: Create an app that asks users questions and directs them to the resources and answers they need*

City staff mentioned that a self-serve tool would go a long way to meeting customers' needs, by helping applicants directly navigate to resources with less frustration.

The various home pages for Planning Services,<sup>69</sup> Building Services,<sup>70</sup> and Economic Development<sup>71</sup> ("Invest Sudbury") are all generally user-friendly.

However, a kind of "quiz" format may be more accessible for applicants who are unsure what they are looking for. In this case, a user can answer a few questions about the nature and size of their proposed project, and then be served a tailored answer of next steps or additional information based on the type of project they are looking to develop. This would include directing the app user to the plain-language guides (Call for Action 8); the rules and responsibilities doc (Call for Action 9); training modules (Call for Action 16); good news stories (Call for Action 6) and others.

While this may be challenging to integrate into the City's IT infrastructure, there is an opportunity to partner with a postsecondary institution to develop a stand-alone application that can re-direct to the City pages accordingly.

*Call for Action 16: Create online training videos for Pronto*

The Chamber of Commerce said that among their members,

"An idea that came up pretty often was basic Pronto training. Step-by-step instructions. Utilize the city's website, social media, post step-by-step videos on social, on YouTube or online because we have business owners applying for permits that are already working 16 hour days – they're slammed. They don't necessarily have time to come for a luncheon or an evening seminar on how to use Pronto, so making it readily available to them at any time that they decide to

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<sup>69</sup> Planning and Development: <https://www.greatersudbury.ca/do-business/planning-and-development/>

<sup>70</sup> Building and Renovating: <https://www.greatersudbury.ca/live/building-and-renovating/>

<sup>71</sup> Invest Sudbury: <https://investsudbury.ca/>

long in and go through the process would benefit the business owner, as well as the city.”<sup>72</sup>

Thus, providing online training recordings for members of the public to access at their own pace and at a time that is most convenient for their schedule is anticipated to be well-received.

*Call for Action 17: Improve visibility and tracking of the application progress on Pronto*

One key stakeholder suggested that improving the tracking of the application process, by having every step, document, and comment catalogued and time stamped in the Pronto system, would go a long way to demonstrating transparency of the process.<sup>73</sup>

Mr. Kivinen suggested that a clear list for each application would be helpful:

“Having the ability to see the status of the drawings and documents that have been reviewed by the department – the status being either approved, under review, and/or incomplete. Something like a checkbox style. This could give the opportunity to correct incomplete documents during the process, and not later, at the end.”<sup>74</sup>

According to Mr. Mazza, the automation of the permit application and review process within Pronto reduces the time between one step and the next. Further, as additional departments are added and files digitized, some steps may be completed in parallel, resulting in anticipated efficiencies.

*Call for Action 18: Increase digital notes on each file*

Similar to the previous Call for Action, the committee heard that having inspectors’ comment digitally on a project would ensure that projects can seamlessly move forward when a different inspector is on site.

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<sup>72</sup> Anthony Davis, FRDSC meeting, November 29, 2023

<sup>73</sup> Interview 7

<sup>74</sup> Mark Kivinen, FRDSC meeting, November 9, 2023

Generally, the opportunity provided by Pronto to increase digitization of files (past files and on a go-forward basis) is seen as a positive step in accessing information in future, for example, resulting in ease of doing open permit searches or pulling documents for real estate transactions in the future.<sup>75 76</sup>

### *Call for Action 19: Increased collaboration with Conservation Sudbury*

The *Conservation Authorities Act, 1990*, outlines the role of a Conservation Authority in approving development in floodplains, wetlands, or other hazard areas. Delegates shared their perspective that this additional review process was onerous, adding time, additional studies, and associated costs to the application process. Those who spoke with the committee felt that Conservation Sudbury's requirements for additional studies, in particular, was overly restrictive and provided a significant barrier to development in many areas of the City. Other delegations suggested that the additional time they spent waiting for an answer – that Conservation Sudbury would do their review *after* the City had completed theirs – led to frustration and additional carrying costs.

Tracy Nutt, representing the Chamber of Commerce, says that “there needs to be a collaboration between the City and [Conservation Sudbury] through the application process, where right now they work in very separate silos.”<sup>77</sup>

One suggested method for decreasing the time associated with a back-to-back review process would be to enable the review to occur simultaneously in Pronto. As soon as an application is received that triggers review by the Conservation Authority, they would be immediately notified and able to begin their review process.

Ms. Nutt continues, stating that while she has been made fully aware of the Conservation Authority's provincial role, Conservation Sudbury has “lately paralyzed renovations, modifications, and restoration of buildings that reside within the flood

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<sup>75</sup> Interview 7

<sup>76</sup> Andree Lacroix, FRDSC meeting, November 9, 2023

<sup>77</sup> Tracy Nutt, FRDSC meeting, November 29, 2023

zones... they have no deadlines or even any requirement to close the permit... they can tie up a project indefinitely.”<sup>78</sup> She goes on to suggest that Conservation Sudbury

“should exercise flexibility in its consideration of what directives are appropriate. The disconnect between the need for more housing within the city and the [Conservation] Authority’s desire to remove basement apartments from multi-unit buildings in flood zones needs to be re-evaluated. Flexibility needs to be considered, not just a hard and fast rule about eliminating all basement apartments, particularly ones that have never flooded... so we’re losing housing as a result of it, and in some these cases, in buildings that had never, ever had issues with flooding or spring runoff.”<sup>79</sup>

This need to be flexible in interpreting provincial policy for the Northern Ontario context is consistent with the findings of a report from the Northern Policy Institute. The October 2023 report “Provincial Wetland Policy Dries Up Northern Economic Opportunities” recognized that there are challenges and opportunities for development in Northern Ontario that necessitate a different approach to development in wetlands (Appendix: C: 16). Specifically,

“This paper recommends that the restrictions on development of wetlands be limited to Southern Ontario... Local wetland protection would still be considered when approving development applications under the Planning Act... This approach would allow municipalities and other approval authorities to decide what wetland areas within their boundaries are locally significant and ensure that they are maintained as part of development approval processes. It will allow for a balancing of other factors such as economic growth and development to be considered alongside wetland preservation.”<sup>80</sup>

The City and Conservation Sudbury should continue to collaborate on mapping and local protection policies, as well as investigate a typology of suitable engineered solutions that would sufficiently mitigate the risks of flooding in areas adjacent to wetlands, rivers, and streams.

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<sup>78</sup> Tracy Nutt, FRDSC meeting, November 29, 2023

<sup>79</sup> Tracey Nutt, FRDSC meeting, November 29, 2023

<sup>80</sup> McConnell, D. & McConnell, K. (2023). “Provincial Wetland Policy Dries Up Northern Economic Opportunities”. Northern Policy Institute. p. 18



## Preconsultation

The pre-consultation process of the Sudbury Planning Application Review Team (SPART) has been generally well-received as a positive contribution to the development process. Pre-consultation is required for Official Plan Amendments, Rezoning, Subdivision Plans, Condominium Plans, and Site Plans.<sup>81</sup>

The SPART process also addresses an identified need from previous rounds of consultation with development stakeholders, as in the *Gearing Up for Growth* report. It is thus an example of continuous process improvement.

### *Call for Action 20: Have senior staff continue to participate in SPART*

The Committee heard that it was imperative that staff with the authority to make decisions were participating in the SPART meetings. The SPART meeting is seen by project proponents as an opportunity to gain clarity about the process and next steps; hearing, “I will have to check with my Manager and get back to you” was seen as a delay and frustration. Former Mayor of North Bay, Mr. McDonald, reiterated the importance of having high-level decision-makers around the table to keep projects moving forward in a timely manner.<sup>82</sup>

### *Call for Action 21: Comments to clearly differentiate between requirements and recommendations*

This is suggested by Mr. McCausland in the 24 by 2024 document. See Appendix D.

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<sup>81</sup> City of Greater Sudbury: <https://www.greatersudbury.ca/do-business/planning-and-development/start-a-planning-application/>

<sup>82</sup> Al McDonald, FRDSC meeting, October 12, 2023

## Proactively Addressing Legacy issues

A number of legacy issues were brought up to the Committee, particularly regarding the ongoing issue of open permits and incomplete building records from pre-amalgamation.

We have more than 13,000 open permits in our municipality, per a conversation between Councillor Fortin and CBO Guido Mazza at the November 29, 2023, Committee meeting.

The high number of open permits has contributed to Greater Sudbury being one of only two municipalities in Canada where you cannot get title insurance (Appendix C: 17 ; C: 18). There are also instances in which residents and businesses fail to take out a permit (Appendix C: 19)

This has resulted in greater risk to the individual homeowner or business owner and, according to some delegates, is dissuading some developers from investing here.

Mr. Mazza identified that this feedback was received from the Chamber earlier in the year, and that some of these issues are being addressed already, through the digitization of records using Pronto, and through the creation of a dedicated code enforcement inspector in the Building Controls department.<sup>83</sup> Mr. Mazza also referenced the City inspectors' approach to following up on open permits in their area during January and February of each year.

### *Call for Action 22: Implement Financial Incentives for Closing Permits*

A program to encourage timely closure of permits might help address the issue of open permits, and even lead to the insurance companies re-instating coverage in time.

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<sup>83</sup> Guido Mazza, FRDSC meeting, November 29, 2023

Ms. Lacroix suggests, “If you could develop a policy with incentives for people to close new permits, that would be great too. Maybe they get a portion of the cost of the permit back if they close it within a certain amount of time.”<sup>84</sup>

Mr. Mazza identified that a similar incentive is an emerging practice he has heard of in his Large Municipalities’ Chief Building Officials group, is that “some municipalities are looking at taking a deposit up front at the building permit stage that would only be refunded at the point in time when the building permit file would be completed.”<sup>85</sup>

*Call for Action 23: Apply an amnesty period for open permits or for past work on property*

Incomplete records from the pre-amalgamation municipalities affect building control searches done during real estate transactions. Mr. Lacroix explains that these searches are challenging and time-consuming for City staff and that they are not always complete. Rather, he suggests that the City might just be clear from the outset about the areas or dates for which there are incomplete records, for example, “if you’re in the Valley and it’s before amalgamation, there are no records.” According to Mr. Lacroix, this would be consistent with the approach in North Bay, where, if a project was done more than seven years ago, the files have already been “shredded.”

Ms. Nutt outlines that in their consultation with members of the Chamber of Commerce, they heard of many distinct projects that have been delayed due to past work done (improperly or unpermitted) on a property (Appendix C: 20). These issues come to light when the owner applies for an unrelated permit on the property. Ms. Nutt goes on to state that she believes that the applicants “should not be forced to pay for a retroactive permit, to pay a fine, nor to make any modifications to their property outside of the work that’s being included in the current permit at hand. They have not planned for it. They

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<sup>84</sup> Andree Lacroix, FRDSC meeting, October 18, 2023

<sup>85</sup> Guido Mazza, FRDSC meeting, November 29, 2023

have not budgeted for it. And nor should they be found to be responsible for any lack of control over the prior owner, the historical owner, or the historical event.”<sup>86</sup>

While bringing a building up to Code is required, the City should explore opportunities to waive fees associated with permits connected to past work, as requiring payments for past work is seen as penalizing those who are seeking to do work legally.

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<sup>86</sup> Tracey Nutt, FRDSC meeting, November 29, 2023

### Theme 3: New Engagement Opportunities

Community delegations and key stakeholders consistently noted their desire for the City and the private sector to work together to achieve common goals related to growth and development in Greater Sudbury.

There was an interest in revisiting the feedback mechanisms that currently exist and potentially extending the work of this committee in some manner, as many delegates thought that a Committee of Council was an effective way to continue working collaboratively (Appendix C: 21; C: 22; C: 23).

#### *Call for Action 24: Reconfigure Development Liaison Advisory Panel format and include Councillors in membership*

The Development Liaison Advisory Panel (DLAP) was created in 1996 with the aim of promoting dialogue, exploring process improvements, and educating stakeholders on updates. The intention was to provide a dedicated space for two-way dialogue, with an open agenda that would allow for all parties to share their ideas and concerns.

Subcommittees were struck that were effective in informing new policies.<sup>87</sup>

However, key stakeholders reported that the format of the Panel seems insufficient to meet the needs of today's development community, that the format was not conducive to open dialogue and suggestions, and that fewer development professionals were bothering to participate or attend the meeting.

One suggestion (which was echoed by a staff member) would see the creation of an online member site, where staff updates on policies and legislative changes would be shared, as well as online training modules (see [Call for Action 7](#); [Call for Action 16](#)).

Periodic meetings could be held as a means of relationship building and soliciting feedback on specific themes, much as this Committee has sought to do. Three

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<sup>87</sup> Interview 7

Councillors would join the Panel, as there are members of Council on several other Advisory Panels (for example, the Community Safety and Well Being Panel).

The work of subcommittees could continue or be re-instated to offer suggestions and work with Staff on the development and implementation of mutually-beneficial policy changes.

*Call for Action 25: Mayor to hold open meetings with development professionals twice a year*

An annual or biannual breakfast session with the Mayor, the members of Council who sit on DLAP and/or GSDC, senior staff, and key leaders in the development and homebuilders industry could serve as an opportunity to provide updates and report on the progress of the Calls for Action from this Committee, as well as hear ideas from the community.<sup>88 89</sup> According to Mr. McDonald, “the conversation needs to be about hearing and recording what red tape, the challenges and brick walls, that they see in the way of growth. And I suggest to you that this will be well-received and give confidence to your community and to your community leaders.”<sup>90</sup>

*Call for Action 26: Clearly communicate that large project proponents may request in-person meetings*

Mr. McCausland suggested that, for the purposes of attracting large economic development opportunities, it is worth providing the option for an initial in-person meeting with senior staff, and possibly the Mayor. In particular, he states that many developers and project proponents from out of town want to come in, shake hands, and get in some face time: “If we’re going to be investing all the staff time into getting

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<sup>88</sup> Al McDonald, FRDSC meeting, October 12, 2023

<sup>89</sup> Interview 7

<sup>90</sup> Al McDonald, FRDSC meeting, October 12, 2023

everyone around a table and doing this exercise, we should do it right. And that means creating that space for dialogue.”<sup>91</sup>

When it comes to site plan, for example, Ms. Salach reiterated that in-person meetings provide greater opportunities to clarify project goals “as opposed to being interpreted from just the documents that are in front of you.”<sup>92</sup> She clarifies that she wonders whether it would be possible that “roundtable discussions be coordinated for site plan agreement, reviews and submissions? Are there opportunities to review these comments in person, directly, to arrive at a conclusion?”<sup>93</sup> (Appendix C: 24; C: 25).

In response to Ms. Salach, however, Mr. Jarus offered his professional opinion that such in-person opportunities to discuss site plan be provided as an option, but cautioned that they should not be instituted as another mandatory requirement of the development process.

Ms. Armstrong pointed out that the Economic Development team does provide introductions to senior staff and, at times, the Mayor, through the Economic Development division’s Business Development Officers, who are responsible for building relationships with potential project proponents.

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<sup>91</sup> Geoff McCausland, FRDSC meeting, October 12, 2023

<sup>92</sup> Amber Salach, FRDSC meeting, October 12, 2023

<sup>93</sup> Amber Salach, FRDSC meeting, October 12, 2023

## Theme 4: Staff Empowerment and Internal Coordination

Most delegations reflected on the positive interactions they have with City staff, stating that they are informed and courteous. This was echoed in the Over To You Feedback.

Specifically, Mr. McDonald reiterated: “Your staff are professionals, they are knowledgeable, they’re experts in their field and they are truly dedicated to their city. You need to trust them.”<sup>94</sup>

In particular, comments that came up most often around “frontline staff” were that they were knowledgeable and capable, but seemingly lacked the authority to make decisions or move files along without explicit permission from a managerial level (Appendix C:26; C: 27).

Another issue was around workloads; that perhaps some staff require extra training, or the suggestion that a different staff complement would better support the kind of work that has the greatest volume.

### *Call for Action 27: Where appropriate, give staff more delegated authority*

This Call for Action will need to be further refined, but it bears deeper investigation, given the number of delegations that mentioned this.

This Call for Action centres around empowering frontline staff to make decisions on straightforward matters rather than sending it all the way up for approval would improve efficiency and speed (Appendix C: 28; C:29). Mr. Davis states that:

“I know that [staff] have the skill set and the knowledge to answer the questions. But they’re fearful or hesitant because they don’t have the right to answer that question, even though they know the answer... if we were just to empower those people just to take a little bit more responsibility on and answer those questions, I think it would not only speed the projects up, but would also give a great

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<sup>94</sup> Al McDonald, FRDSC meeting, October 12, 2023



motivation to contractors and homeowners to say, ‘you know what? I want to pull a permit because I know it’s not going to delay my project’.”<sup>95</sup>

Ms. Lacroix described the situation this way: “I mean, your top guy should not be dealing with decks and entrances, that’s all I’m saying, is that there may be a way to empower some of those frontline staff people who are competent and who have the abilities to be able to address some of these issues.”<sup>96</sup> Mr. Lacroix added, “You’re not having the owner of McDonald’s meet you at the drive thru window.”<sup>97</sup>

Mr. Mazza replied that, based on this feedback, his department is already “changing some of our job descriptions to empower some of the existing positions in my inspection area to deal with the open building permits, plus some of that process was already taking place by virtue of the digitization for the Pronto system.”<sup>98</sup>

### Staff training and networking opportunities

During the ideation workshop in November 2023, a number of staff members indicated interest in cross-departmental professional knowledge sharing and training opportunities. In particular, public-facing staff revealed an interest in learning more about the processes in other departments to increase their own knowledge and confidence when speaking to applicants.

Regular lunch-and-learn sessions or other opportunities for peer-to-peer knowledge transfer would provide staff these opportunities to learn more about their colleagues’ workloads.

Cross-departmental knowledge sharing may also help with succession planning and leadership development.

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<sup>95</sup> Anthony Davis, FRDSC meeting, November 29, 2023

<sup>96</sup> Andree Lacroix, FRDSC meeting, October 18, 2023

<sup>97</sup> Claude Lacroix, FRDSC meeting, October 18, 2023

<sup>98</sup> Guido Mazza, FRDSC meeting, December 7, 2023

*Call for Action 28: Staff to keep up with the online training modules available to the public*

Staff would complete the modules that are suggested in [Call for Action 16](#) and review updates in [Call for Action 7](#).

*Call for Action 29: Quarterly meetings for managers across departments engaged in development*

This Call for Action was derived from a comment by a staff member who indicated they would like to get to know other managers across the organization so that they can call upon one another as needed.<sup>99</sup> With the rise of work from home and hybrid schedules, staff mentioned they don't have the same opportunities to get to know colleagues across departments. A sense of collegiality and knowing "who to call" comes from regular and informal meetings.

*Call for Action 30: Annual staff engagement sessions*

The staff ideation workshop, hosted by Renee Higgins, was very successful at identifying internal process improvements and communication ideas, as affirmed by Mr. Mazza during the December 7 Committee meeting.<sup>100</sup> As pointed out by many of the delegations, "staff are the experts"<sup>101</sup> and it would be a great opportunity for Council and/or the new Advisory Panel (see [Call for Action 24](#)) to hear directly from them.

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<sup>99</sup> Staff Ideation Workshop, November 24, 2023

<sup>100</sup> Guido Mazza, FRDSC meeting, December 7, 2023

<sup>101</sup> Kevin Jarus, FRDSC meeting, November 9, 2023.

## Staff Recruitment and Retention

It is essential that the City maintains a complement of qualified professionals to ensure timely processing of development applications. As was mentioned early in the report, the lack of skilled and qualified personnel in Northern Ontario poses a potential liability that can impact the ability of the City to keep pace with anticipated growth.

It is also essential to consider broader recruitment strategies, comparative compensation levels, succession planning, and leadership development, which are aided by the City's HCMP and largely beyond the scope of this Committee. However, the following two Calls for Action have been identified as central to the work of the Committee, however.

### *Call for Action 31: Increase Professional Engineer coverage*

It is essential that the City has adequate coverage of professional engineers (P.Eng. designation), who are able to approve and stamp certain documents. If there is only one or two P.Eng. with the required qualifications or specialization (e.g., civil engineering, draining engineering, environmental assessment), any absence can create a bottleneck when waiting for their approval.<sup>102</sup> It is within the City's interest to increase P.Eng. coverage to ensure continuity of services and ability to adapt to greater demand.

### *Call for Action 32: Create Junior Planner staff position*

There is the possibility of bringing in "More junior staff in the planning group... Having more of a spectrum of experienced and less experienced staff will build capacity and allow for efficiencies internally to the city."<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Interview 7

<sup>103</sup> Kevin Jarus, FRDSC meeting, November 9, 2023

## Theme 5: Continuous Improvement

The City of Greater Sudbury's Strategic Plan outlines a core value of innovation: "We continuously find improvements to meet our communities' changing needs."<sup>104</sup>

This section considers the suggestions received for Process improvements and Policy reviews that may assist in meeting the demands and ensuring that the City is capable of providing best in class services.

As Mr. McDonald pointed out, it is not reasonable to expect things to change overnight, but City Council and staff can set timelines and communicate these with the community and stakeholders to hold ourselves accountable.<sup>105</sup>

### Timeline and internal approvals for committee reports on eScribe

The Committee heard from many delegations that reducing the long timelines of planning applications would be welcomed. This was specifically noted with respect to the process for submitting staff reports and applications through the eScribe online agenda system, as key stakeholders suggested other municipalities do not have a full one-month delay between submission of staff report to it being heard at Planning Committee.<sup>106</sup>

Specifically, internal City policy states that agendas and reports will be available publicly in advance, and there are additional days required to get all the levels of managerial approvals through eScribe. Such early availability of materials is due to a reported desire for greater public transparency and to enable Councillors to review things well in advance of their meetings<sup>107</sup>; however, it does add time to the entire process. While additional review is essential for quality assurance and quality control purposes, it

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<sup>104</sup> City of Greater Sudbury, Strategic Plan, [https://www.greatersudbury.ca/sites/sudburyen/includes/themes/MuraBootstrap3/js/pdfjs-2.8.335/web/viewer\\_even\\_spreads.html?file=https://www.greatersudbury.ca/city-hall/reports-studies-policies-and-plans/report-pdfs/revised-strategic-plan-2023/#zoom=page-width](https://www.greatersudbury.ca/sites/sudburyen/includes/themes/MuraBootstrap3/js/pdfjs-2.8.335/web/viewer_even_spreads.html?file=https://www.greatersudbury.ca/city-hall/reports-studies-policies-and-plans/report-pdfs/revised-strategic-plan-2023/#zoom=page-width)

<sup>105</sup> Al McDonald, FRSDC meeting, October 12, 2023

<sup>106</sup> Kevin Jarus, FRDSC meeting, November 9, 2023

<sup>107</sup> Interview 2; Interview 7

seems to be disproportionate and inconsistent with standards of other peer municipalities, who do not seem to require such long timelines and levels of approval.<sup>108</sup>

There is a question of timelines, but also on the level of approvals required as a general rule: why are so many managers reviewing planning committee materials when they don't have an expertise in the area?<sup>109 110</sup>

## Process Updates

*Call for Action 33: Mayor to call special meetings of Council and/or Planning Committee, if required*

To ensure timely decision-making in a short building season, Mr. McDonald suggests that

“If there are development applications that have already been approved by your planning development staff, the Mayor needs to call as many special meetings as necessary to approve or not approve these projects so that the homebuilders, businesses, and industry can move forward or change course... time is of the essence.”<sup>111</sup>

The need to call special meetings would be determined by the Mayor, and based on the number and size of projects and whether they can all be accommodated within regularly-scheduled Planning Committee meetings.

*Call for Action 34: Continue to offer conditional permits*

Mr. Mazza identified that the City has provided conditional permits, for example in the form of site preparation permits or foundation permits, which provide the project proponent the opportunity to begin moving forward on a multi-year project when final

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<sup>108</sup> Interview 2

<sup>109</sup> Interview 2

<sup>110</sup> Interview 1

<sup>111</sup> Al McDonald, FRDSC meeting, October 12, 2023

building permits or other application materials (e.g., site plan) are not ready to be issued.

Expanded use of conditional permits will rely on building relationships based on trust: the City will need assurances that the project proponent will submit the required information in a timely manner to continue moving forward, and proponents will want some assurances that they will not be hit with additional requirements once they're underway.

### *Call for Action 35: Encourage the use of the Hold symbol*

Mr. Jarus suggests the Hold symbol is a helpful tool in Planning applications, as it helps defer cost of certain studies until such time as the developer or project proponent has greater certainty in the intended use – for example, when a rezoning is required. It is not about doing fewer studies, but about waiting to incur the cost of the studies until such time as the project or principle of use is more defined and the proponent feels comfortable making the investment in the required studies (see Appendix C: 30).

He also mentioned that some of his colleagues specifically asked to “stop having to do detailed lot grading plans at the consent stages.”<sup>112</sup>

### **Tenders and Procurement Processes**

With respect to large City capital projects, Mr. Kivinen suggests that the City might “consider design build partnerships where contractors, developers, service providers can be involved in the early stages.”<sup>113</sup> (Appendix C: 31)

In addition, the multi-year capital budget and asset management processes provide an opportunity for the City to change the schedule and/or timing of RFPs and tenders. Offering additional lead time for local and external firms to review and bid on projects

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<sup>112</sup> Kevin Jarus, FRDSC meeting, November 9, 2023

<sup>113</sup> Mark Kivinen, FRDSC meeting, November 9, 2023

would potentially assist in scheduling and completing work: “the timing of our construction projects and our scheduling of releasing of the projects is really imperative so that we’re not stuck in the fall with paving in rain and snow – it’s just a recipe for disaster.”<sup>114</sup>

*Call for Action 36: Institute third party review of large projects and tenders*

Andre Bom, of WSP, pointed out that there are a number of considerations for engineering projects and that ideally projects would be “awarded based on experience, quality, not just the lowest bid.”<sup>115</sup>

Mr. Kivinen also suggested that

“an engineer could complete a thorough review of tender documents and drawings prior to issuing them for tender. This approach could help avoid misunderstandings, delays, and disputes, as well as ensuring that the project specifications are current and up to date... Consider adopting third party reviews of tender documents to provide an objective assessment of document accuracy.”<sup>116</sup>

Mr. Bom echoed the importance of third party reviews by qualified technicians and engineers as a quality assurance method to minimize delays, change orders, and cost overruns on City projects: “Somebody checking over the engineer or the contractor on a regular basis, as well as quality control testing by qualified technicians, engineering staff, making sure that it’s done correctly in the first place and not coming back and repairing.”<sup>117</sup>

Of course, additional reviews add cost, so the appropriateness for such a review on a given project must be considered. Perhaps a scoring matrix could be developed.

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<sup>114</sup> Andre Bom, FRDSC meeting, October 18, 2023

<sup>115</sup> Andre Bom, FRDSC meeting, October 18, 2023

<sup>116</sup> Mark Kivinen, FRDSC meeting, November 9, 2023

<sup>117</sup> Andre Bom, FRDSC meeting, October 18, 2023

Likewise, budget forecast accuracy should be considered. Accuracy of cost estimates for construction varies depending on the level of specificity requested (i.e., the four-level classification from Class “A” to “D”).<sup>118</sup> While Class A estimates are more accurate, they are significantly more costly. Regardless of the Class estimate requested, one key informant suggested the City work closely with estimators who are familiar with the Northern Ontario context, as local factors increase project cost when compared to projects in Southern Ontario (for example, the prevalence rock and wetlands, the limited number of skilled workers or available firms, and the higher costs of transporting materials or goods compared to southern Ontario).<sup>119</sup>

*Call for Action 37: Revise supplemental contract terms to share liability*

A number of key stakeholders raised their concern that the City’s supplemental contract terms “can be perceived to be one sided in favour of the owner or project sponsor [i.e., the City]. Some examples: extended warranty terms, whether it be monetary or duration. Unreasonable liquidated damages. Unforeseen condition costs. Non-responsible delay costs.”<sup>120</sup>

Another key stakeholder stated that these one-sided and “offensive” supplemental terms have been a significant disincentive for large construction companies looking to bid on City projects.<sup>121</sup> The high level of liability transferred to the contractor led to some top firms opting not to engage in some tenders. This results in fewer bids from qualified firms, which reduces the number and quality of bids from which the City may choose – a generally negative outcome.

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<sup>118</sup> Public Services and Procurement Canada (2018). Doing Business with PWGSC: Documentation and Deliverables Manual (p. 12-13):  
[https://buyandsell.gc.ca/cds/public/2020/01/28/1309436c314b43a9317acb80ee8fb9b4/ABES.PROD.PW\\_PWZ.B050.E10977.ATTA001.PDF](https://buyandsell.gc.ca/cds/public/2020/01/28/1309436c314b43a9317acb80ee8fb9b4/ABES.PROD.PW_PWZ.B050.E10977.ATTA001.PDF)

<sup>119</sup> Interview 6

<sup>120</sup> Mark Kivinen, FRDSC meeting, November 9, 2023

<sup>121</sup> Interview 6



Mr. Kivinen suggested that, to overcome this barrier, the City

“Consider working with industry partners on the additional supplemental contract terms to help minimize actual or perceived one-sided risks. This collaboration through communication will help ensure that all parties involved fully understand the project and the potential associated risks involved and share them accordingly.”

Mr. Kivinen says that, from his perspective in the construction industry, this kind of approach can help reduce delays and misunderstandings, and lead to better outcomes for all parties.

## Policy review

Dedicated review and directed consultation on specific policies could help identify whether there are any needed updates or improvements.

For example, the 2016 Policy on Development Cost Sharing<sup>122</sup> could be reviewed to determine whether it is meeting its stated aims, whether developers are aware of it (it is hard to find online, related back to Call for Action 15), and to recommend any changes that may lead to improved outcomes.

### *Call for Action 38: Continue to review and consolidate zoning bylaws annually*

The Committee heard the request that certain zoning bylaws be simplified and that some zones could be more permissive.

Reviewing and updating zoning bylaws regularly is in line with planned and ongoing work within Planning Services, according to Mr. Longston, as the department continues “updates to our zoning bylaw, looking at as of right zoning, there’s a lot of work that’s come forward over the last six months or so that was a direct result of the provincial

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<sup>122</sup> City of Greater Sudbury (2016) Policy on Development Cost Sharing:  
<https://www.greatersudbury.ca/do-business/planning-and-development/start-a-planning-application/planning-application-forms/policy-on-development-cost-sharing/>

streamline funding, and there's more to that work that's going to come forward in the new year, as well."<sup>123</sup>

*Call for Action 39: Capacity for ongoing policy review and integration*

During the staff ideation session, there was demonstrated interest in the creation of a Policy Integration position to undertake regular policy analysis and create plain-language explanations related to (economic) development. However, staff at the session suggested that additional capacity may be required to keep pace with the speed of change to keep Greater Sudbury at the leading edge of municipalities.

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<sup>123</sup> Kris Longston, FRDSC meeting, December 7, 2023

## **Theme 6: Alignment with Broader Economic Development Goals**

As we work toward ensuring Greater Sudbury has the best in class services, the Committee must consider the broader context of economic development – attracting and retaining individuals, families and firms to locate here. One key stakeholder suggested that, to meet the Mayor’s goal of increasing the population to 200,000 by 2050, the City should focus on attracting large industrial, manufacturing or institutional employers that can create hundreds of local jobs.<sup>124</sup>

Meredith Armstrong, Director of Economic Development, elaborates on the team’s approach:

“Our team will regularly reach out to businesses to understand where they’re at. And as Mr Longston has said, the decision to start a business includes development approvals but there’s so much more to it, right? Often, there is the need for financing, investment, workforce, all those kinds of things too. So our economic development team will regularly reach out to offer support for site selection or finding workforce. And as part of that, we will ask questions about the status of a [development] application.”<sup>125</sup>

There are a number of programs and projects that support economic development and aim to attract large firms to locate in Greater Sudbury. For example, the Innovation Blueprint, released in 2023, is a road map outlining short-term and longer-term actions to foster Greater Sudbury’s economic growth. It reiterates that we have the land, the talent, and the resources to be a leader in the battery electric sector and the critical minerals supply chain. The Employment Land Strategy is about identifying and preparing industrial areas to ensure they are investment-ready.

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<sup>124</sup> Interview 7

<sup>125</sup> Meredith Armstrong, FRDSC meeting, September 28, 2023

## Corporate organization

The organization of various departments varies across municipalities. Some, like Barrie, have one combined Director of Development Services, which includes both Building and Planning Services. Some delegations suggested that form should follow function and that it makes sense to reduce silos in order to achieve overall development success.<sup>126</sup> Previous organizational structures of the City of Greater Sudbury did include a General Manager of Growth and Development to oversee integration of Planning, Building, and Economic Development functions.<sup>127</sup>

### *Call for Action 40: Planning Services, Building Services, and Economic Development to work together in one Division*

Ensuring effective coordination among Planning Services, Building Services, and Economic Development teams was identified as a key necessity by several development stakeholders.

### *Call for Action 41: Director of Planning and Chief Building Official to meet with GSDC Board of Directors twice a year*

The Greater Sudbury Development Corporation is a not-for-profit agency that “collaborates with the City to promote community economic development by encouraging, facilitating and supporting community strategic planning and increasing self-reliance, investment and job creation in Greater Sudbury.”<sup>128</sup> While the Director of Planning Services and the Chief Building Official meet regularly with the Director of Economic Development, a key stakeholder suggested that their presence at board would ensure they are aware of the context of large projects and efforts to attract and

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<sup>126</sup> Interview 7

<sup>127</sup> Interview 2

<sup>128</sup> Greater Sudbury Development Corporation Board: <https://www.greatersudbury.ca/city-hall/get-involved/join-a-local-board-committee-or-advisory-panel/local-boards-and-corporations/greater-sudbury-development-corporation-board/>

retain large employers.<sup>129</sup> Likewise, the Chief Building Official and the Director of Planning Services would have the opportunity to present to the GSDC board on an annual basis.

## Business Development, Labour Attraction and Economic Expansion

Economic Development continues to champion a number of initiatives to attract individuals and firms to Greater Sudbury, such as the Hit Refresh campaign. Over the past five years, the City of Greater Sudbury has recommended over 1220 candidates through the Rural Northern Immigration Pilot Program, representing nearly 2400 new residents, including spouses and families.

Additional initiatives like the Mayor's Task Force on Labour Attraction and Retention, the Greater Together Project, and the Sudbury Local Immigration Partnership aim to create cooperation among individuals and agencies related to job creation, training, and settlement services. Still, many delegations pointed out that the demand for local skilled labour and development professionals far outstrips the supply (Appendix C: 32; C:33). The City arguably has a role to play in attracting and retaining firms, individuals and families.

### *Call for Action 42: Create a Mayor's Acceleration team to support large projects*

This Acceleration Team would be specific for large ICI projects that bring significant employment opportunities and/or for large residential projects. Demonstrating political leadership will help ensure these large strategic projects that are good for our community continue to move forward.<sup>130</sup>

Mr. McDonald reiterated the importance of the Mayor, specifically, being involved in moving forward large projects that are important for community prosperity.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Interview 7

<sup>130</sup> Interview 7

<sup>131</sup> Al McDonald, FRDSC meeting, October 12, 2023

*Call for Action 43: Create Business Retention & Expansion Red Flag team*

Mr. McDonald suggested that a dedicated Business Expansion and Retention “red flag” team would include three members of council and senior staff. They would hear from the City’s Business Development Officers who meet regularly with businesses and would be able to anonymously relay to members of the committee the feedback they have heard and the emerging trends. Together, the team could then come up with suggestions for policy and program updates that could be brought to Council or implemented in the Department’s usual course of business.

A version of this kind of feedback had been collected in an ad hoc way in 2023 with two joint consultations co-hosted with members of the Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Development department on efforts to “reduce red tape.” Extending this kind of collaboration, and including three members of Council on an official red flag team would support Economic Development’s existing efforts and facilitate regular conversation.

*Call for Action 44: Continue with attraction marketing campaigns, champion immigration programs, and partner with post-secondary institutions*

Mr. Colt, from Extendicare, spoke about their experience securing skilled trades for their project: “We note that there are fewer plumbers, electricians, HVAC technicians, drywallers, welders in Sudbury, for example. We’ve had to bring in folks from Quebec at a premium. So any encouragement of local apprenticeship opportunities to encourage folks to enter the subtrades would be beneficial to spurring development quickly.”<sup>132</sup>

Mr. Jarus points out that “we need more people here” and suggests that the City focus on the amenities, lifestyle, and career advancement opportunities available to young people as a means of attracting them to Sudbury. (Appendix C: 34). Mr. Bom echoed this marketing possibility: “I can’t speak enough about selling Sudbury to the south, about our green spaces and our biodiversity and our conservation, our beautiful

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<sup>132</sup> Zane Colt, FRDSC meeting, November 29, 2023

lakes.”<sup>133</sup> Ben Cortolezzis, Engineer in Training at Hatch, said when he spoke to fellow young professionals, they were interested in the good-paying jobs, the natural environment, and the relative affordability of housing when compared to Southern Ontario.<sup>134</sup>

The Committee suggests that Economic Development continue with the HitRefresh campaign<sup>135</sup> and expand the focus on attracting skilled workers from across the province, the country, globally.

The Committee also supports the RNIP program; the Greater Sudbury Chamber of Commerce has joined with other Chambers of Commerce to ask that the RNIP this program be made permanent. While recent media stories suggest that the local community is concerned about the end of the RNIP program,<sup>136</sup> there is indication that the federal government is reviewing the impact of RNIP to create a permanent program.

#### *Call for Action 45: Temporary housing solutions for newcomers and skilled workers*

One of the contradictions is that as crews come from Southern Ontario or further afield to help build new housing, we do not have adequate places for them to stay while they’re building.<sup>137</sup>

Mr. Colt says that it would be helpful for project proponents to know that there are “some sort of temporary housing units for transitional contractors to help offset the cost of developing in the North. Or a dedication of camping or trailer spots at Municipal campgrounds for use by project staff during the summer.”<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Andre Bom, FRDSC meeting, October 18, 2023

<sup>134</sup> Ben Cortolezzis, FRDSC meeting, October 18, 2023

<sup>135</sup> Invest Sudbury, <https://hitrefreshsudbury.ca/>

<sup>136</sup> Amanda Hicks, CTV Northern Ontario, January 23, 2024, <https://northernontario.ctvnews.ca/concern-in-sudbury-as-rural-and-northern-immigration-program-ending-next-month-1.6739282>

<sup>137</sup> Chris Tammi, FRDSC meeting, November 9, 2023

<sup>138</sup> Zane Colt, FRDSC meeting, November 29, 2023

Mr. Kivinen suggests looking to another sector for examples of how to accommodate skilled workers who are building large projects:

“How do we get skilled trade labour workers up to our area to build these projects? Right now, there really isn’t a solution. So, thinking outside the box is what everybody has to do right now... [in mine camps], there’s the portable housing that houses all these workers... could we do that here? Just transient units, not permanent, but portable... can that be done here?”<sup>139</sup>

## Employment Lands Strategy

The City’s Employment Land Strategy is an essential part of ensuring there is an adequate supply of land to accommodate anticipated demand for industrial, manufacturing and other commercial uses.

Community delegations reported experiencing challenges finding appropriate, available, serviced, investment-ready land. For example, Mr. Tammi has worked with many mining services and other businesses who “would love to expand and just don’t have space available to grow to. There’s a limited supply of serviced and zoned industrial land in our industrial parks, somewhat contrary to what the findings were in the Employment Land studies.”<sup>140</sup>

His colleague Mr. McCausland says that they have to turn away large employers regularly because of a lack of available lands or leasing opportunities (Appendix: C: 35). Mr. Lacroix also points out that investors with available capital for a shovel-ready project walk away from locations where a rezoning is required, as that adds time, cost, and uncertainty (Appendix C: 36).

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<sup>139</sup> Mark Kivinen, FRDSC meeting, November 9, 2023

<sup>140</sup> Chris Tammi, FRDSC meeting, October 12, 2023



### *Call for Action 46: Review rural lands as potential site for increased employment districts*

As a potential solution for meeting the demand for light industrial or manufacturing, particularly related to mining supply and services, Mr. Jarus suggests that

“Perhaps this committee could ask staff to investigate how to leverage our rural lands by potentially adding additional permitted uses that are, of course, permissive through the Provincial Policy Statement, and/or to add different permissions to those rural lands, so potentially even look at different rural designations, that would be based on the proximity to settlement areas, service levels, levels of connectivity of those rural lands, etc. So an example would be rural industrial areas along major or connecting roads, say, our highways that link all of our various communities that make up part of Greater Sudbury.”<sup>141</sup>

While it’s important to look at developing the future supply of Employment lands, it is also important to consider creative short-term solutions to meet the needs of today’s businesses, while ensuring these sites are still within the settlement boundary and meet relevant minimum separation distances and other requirements (see: 24 by 2024; Appendix C: 37).

### **Incentives, Programs and Policies Should Support Desired Outcomes**

This includes the creation of policy and incentives that support land use development identified within the Official Plan, such as infill development and gentle intensification, rather than greenfield development that will require new infrastructure development for its creation.

For instance, Mr. Longston describes how the City’s Development Charges bylaw works to guide development in specific areas, by waiving Development Charges (DCs) in

“traditional core commercial areas. They include the downtown and a few outlying areas. The Flour Mill is another area where those are DC exempt. The intention there is to use DCs as a policy tool to guide development to areas where the municipality would like to realize some additional intensification,

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<sup>141</sup> Kevin Jarus, FRDSC meeting, November 9, 2023

because we've already made those investments in our infrastructure, so there are sewers in the ground, there's transit, there's parks, there's libraries, that kind of thing.”<sup>142</sup>

Mr. Longston also points out the DC bylaw is also used to achieve other desired community outcomes, like encouraging the development of affordable housing and mixed uses (Appendix C: 38; C: 39).

Mr. McCausland also supported looking at DC reductions strategically, for example to increase multi-residential development in nodes and corridors. He suggests the City “look at what are the development patterns that create actual revenue and actual growth and are not a net loss, and subsidize those.”<sup>143</sup>

Mr. Estevez pointed out that, while some northern municipalities have removed DCs, carte blanche, for all projects, it is certainly not the case everywhere. Instead, targeted grants tailored to support specific development types seem to be more popular across the province, for example, to incorporate green elements into the design and build.<sup>144</sup>

*Call for Action 47: Continue to offer CIP TIEGs or other incentives for multi-residential and purpose-built affordable rental*

Tools like Tax Increment Equivalent Grants to support multi-residential developments in strategic areas and are welcomed by presenters like Mr. Chalmers<sup>145</sup> (Appendix C: 40), while others, like Mr. Tammi, do not feel certain programs go far enough to make development economically feasible (for example, the CIP program for office conversions to residential).

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<sup>142</sup> Kris Longston, FRDSC meeting, December 7, 2023

<sup>143</sup> Geoff McCausland, FRDSC meeting, October 12, 2023

<sup>144</sup> Luis Estevez, FRDSC meeting, November 29, 2023

<sup>145</sup> David Chalmers, FRDSC meeting, October 18, 2023

*Call for Action 48: Continue to coordinate infrastructure upgrades (and funding asks) to support housing development in strategic areas*

The City's Official Plan already outlines settlement areas and identifies where infrastructure capacity exists. As mentioned by Mr. Longston, supportive policies and incentive programs also aim to direct development to these areas.

When funding is available, for example from the provincial funding source related to the municipal housing pledge (3800 new units by 2030), this should be directed to strategic areas that can support additional residential density. Mr. Lacroix suggests looking at areas that need to increase Fire Flow to enable development, as examples of priority-setting (see Appendix C 41).

Mr. Tammi mentions that the Canadian Real Estate Association “recommends leveraging federal infrastructure funding with municipal, provincial and territorial partners to create more housing supply. So things like ... aligning infrastructure funding with new housing commitments and promoting innovation that could speed up housing development.”<sup>146</sup>

*Call for Action 49: Create and promote a municipal assistance program to incentivize secondary unit in home*

Mr. Longston pointed out that the demand for secondary unit permits has grown exponentially over the past few years, as it's “a really effective, efficient housing form. It's typically lower cost, the rentals are good, it aids people that want to supplement their income, their mortgage, or have a relative live at home with them.”<sup>147</sup>

The City was ahead of the curve, so to speak, by allowing secondary units as-of-right since 2016 (three units since 2020), and has updated parking requirements to enable some flexibility.

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<sup>146</sup> Chris Tammi, November 9, 2023

<sup>147</sup> Kris Longston, FRDSC meeting, December 7, 2023

The next step in a customer-focused process would include the creation of a City program to guide homeowners through the process of creating legal, permitted second (or third) units. This would include a dedicated expert staff liaison(s) within building controls who would assist homeowners in applying for permits, identify any relevant government funding or tax incentives, and have the authority to expedite the inspection process, if needed (Appendix C: 42). This would make it easier for those who may otherwise attempt to create secondary units without the appropriate permits, insurance, and inspections.<sup>148</sup>

There might even be an opportunity to create a TIEG or other incentive that could be offered through this program:

“Why can’t the City help to have a program to make it not only financially feasible but financially attractive to create that secondary unit in their home? And maybe not only provide a TIEG where it would be a forgiveness for a five or ten year period of the incremental increase in their property taxes, but perhaps could include a grant to allow them to take on the construction of that unit.”<sup>149</sup>

#### *Call for Action 50: Adjust mill rate for purpose-built multi-residential*

The "mill rate" refers to the property tax rate applied to the assessed value of a taxed property, such as homes or commercial buildings. It is expressed in mills, where one mill is equivalent to one-tenth of a cent (or \$1 levied per \$1,000 in taxable property value). The mill rate is a key factor in calculating property taxes and is determined by municipal governments to generate revenue for local services and infrastructure. The higher the mill rate, the higher the property tax bill for a given assessed value. Municipalities in Ontario set their own mill rates based on their budgetary needs and the assessed value of properties within their jurisdiction.

As pointed out by Mr. Chalmers, Greater Sudbury’s mill rate is much higher than in peer communities; he suggests specifically that “matching Barrie would be a good thing”<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Claude Lacroix, FRDSC meeting, October 18, 2023

<sup>149</sup> Chris Tammi, FRDSC meeting, November 9, 2023

<sup>150</sup> David Chalmers, FRDSC meeting, October 18, 2023

and that perhaps municipalities could look at a new category of mill rate that would make purpose-build rental housing more feasible (Appendix C: 43).

Mr. Tammi provides a simple question: “Another client has a great property in the South End, and we’ve been developing plans for 114 high-end apartments. Yet, the mill rate in Sudbury, I keep hearing over and over from him, is much higher than other municipalities. Why would he want to build here?”<sup>151</sup>

#### *Call for Action 51: Enhance grants for downtown office conversions*

Calgary has had successful uptake of their incentive program that has resulted in a great number of conversions of downtown office buildings into residential; Greater Sudbury should review that program and determine whether a similar CIP would be acceptable in our context.

While some incentives may already apply, the suggestion is that the per-door amount in Greater Sudbury is not high enough to incentivize this kind of conversion downtown: “There is an affordable housing CIP already in place that I think could use some retooling, offering some incentives to repurpose old schools, old churches, underutilized office space needs, to move the needle.”<sup>152</sup>

#### *Call for Action 52: Continue with Land Banking strategy*

The City already has a land banking strategy, which is seen as a good thing: “There’s a lot of city-owned properties that are accessible to transit, accessible to services, that could be granted or sold below market value or given away for a nominal amount, to people that would create new housing or affordable units.”<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Amber Salach, FRDSC meeting, October 12, 2023

<sup>152</sup> Chris Tammi, FRDSC meeting, November 9, 2023

<sup>153</sup> Chris Tammi, FRDSC meeting, November 9, 2023

*Call for Action 53: New TIEGs to address Greater Sudbury-specific challenges*

We heard from many presenters about the significant challenges with respect to the topography in Greater Sudbury. Mr. Colt told the Committee that the second long-term care home that Extendicare has been looking to develop in Greater Sudbury has been temporarily paused, as significant rock blasting is required and they've already had to alter plans to remove basement levels. The suggestion from Mr. Colt and his colleague, Mr. Estevez, was that some sort "grant or a made-in-Sudbury solution for a local challenge that could help with the added cost of rock blasting or vibration monitoring. It could take the form of a tax-increment equivalent grant, which would not require the city to outlay any funds, but rather forego future tax revenue for a period of time to help offset some of those geographic challenges."<sup>154</sup> (Appendix: C: 44).

*Call for Action 54: Review tax policy and possible introduction of new fees*

During the November 2023 Ideation workshop, staff repeated the suggestion that tax policy should be reviewed, updated, and better communicated.

Staff also indicated a desire to see the stormwater fees moving forward, as well as opportunities to identify possible new or restructured fees.

This should be reviewed with staff, as per [Call for Action 30: Annual staff engagement sessions](#).

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<sup>154</sup> Zane Colt, FRDSC meeting, November 29, 2023

## Next Steps: “Quick Wins” and future consultation

Following the presentation of this report at a meeting of the Future Ready Development Services Committee, senior City staff will be asked to provide a report responding to the Calls for Action.

This staff report will provide commentary on each of the Committee’s Calls for Action. This may include identifying whether any of the Calls for Action are already in progress, which ones have been considered in the past but ultimately deemed not practical, as well as a brief analysis of the feasibility of implementing each. In addition to their 54 Calls to Action, the Committee encourages staff to review the submissions provided directly by each delegation, and specifically requests that the 24 by 2024 suggestions (Appendix D) are included in the staff report.

This staff report is expected by Q4 2024, and will explicitly state which Calls for Action can be implemented in the short- (within six months), medium- (between six and 18 months) and long-term (more than 18 months).

## Appendix A: List of Community Delegations

### Al McDonald, former Mayor of North Bay

Date of Presentation: October 12, 2023

Written Submission through Clerks: Yes

<https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=51335>

### Bélanger Salach Architecture

Date of Presentation: October 12, 2023

Representative(s): Louis Bélanger, B.E.S., B.Arch., OAA, MRAIC, Principal; Amber Salach, B.A.S., M.Arch., OAA, MRAIC, Principal

Written Submission through Clerks: Yes

<https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=51336>

### Conservation Sudbury

Date of Presentation: September 28, 2023

Representative(s): Carl Jorgensen, B.Sc., General Manager

Written Submission through Clerks: Yes

<https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=51147>

### Extendicare

Date of Presentation: November 29, 2023

Representatives: Zane Colt, Senior Government Relations Consultant; Luis Esteves, Real Estate Planning Manager

Written Submission through Clerks: Yes

<https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=51815>



## Greater Sudbury Chamber of Commerce

Date of Presentation: November 29, 2023

Representatives: Anthony Davis, Tracy Nutt

Written Submission to Clerks: Yes

<https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=51814>

## Hatch Ltd.

Date of Presentation: October 18, 2023

Representatives: Josh Lilley, MBA, P.Eng., Sudbury Operations Manager; Ben Cortolezzis, Mechanical EIT

Written Submission through Clerks: Yes

<https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=51411>

## Mallette-Goring Real Estate Brokerage

Date of Presentation: October 12, 2023

Representatives: Geoff McCausland, Development & Project Manager; Chris Tammi, Director & Broker of Record

Written Submissions through Clerks: Yes

<https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=51407>

<https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=51341>

## Northeastern Ontario Construction Association

Date of Presentation: November 9, 2023

Representative: Mark Kivinen, Executive Director

Written Submission through Clerks: No

## Preeminent Construction Inc.

Date of Presentation: November 9, 2023

Representative: Shawn Byrnes, President

Written Submission through Clerks: No

### Starlight Investments

Date of Presentation: October 18, 2023

Representative: David Chalmers, President (Canadian Residential)

Written Submission through Clerks: Yes

<https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=51409>

### Sudbury District Law Association

Date of Presentation: October 18, 2023

Representatives: Andrée M. Lacroix, Claude F. Lacroix, James Carpino

Written Submission through Clerks: Yes

<https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=51413>

### Sudbury Real Estate Board

Date of Presentation: November 9, 2023

Representatives: Chris Tammi, Luc Bock

Written Submission through Clerks: No

### Tulloch

Date of Presentation: November 9, 2023

Representative: Kevin Jarus, M.Pl., RPP, Senior Land Use Planner and Project Manager

Written Submission through Clerks: Yes

<https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=51688>

### WSP Canada

Date of Presentation: October 18

Representative: André Bom, MASc, P.Eng., PMP, Senior Geotechnical Engineer

Written Submission through Clerks: Yes

<https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=51410>

## Appendix B: Committee Meeting Recordings by Date

July 11, 2023: <https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=2a27a45f-39ca-4d86-861d-ed0fe80293e2&Agenda=Agenda&lang=English>

September 28, 2023: <https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=242bb5c2-0f0b-4289-89a0-31f00d3362a6&Agenda=Agenda&lang=English>

October 12, 2023: <https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=ecab3566-7fdd-4b23-8be8-2bdaa48c5817&Agenda=Agenda&lang=English>

October 18, 2023: <https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=e24a29ec-677d-4315-ab18-9c0bb0ecc959&Agenda=Agenda&lang=English>

November 9, 2023: <https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=d00cb728-b0ce-47b7-9097-701488a553d6&Agenda=Agenda&lang=English>

November 29, 2023: <https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=ce351373-3f6a-4f54-9cf7-9fe57026a768&Agenda=Agenda&lang=English>

December 7, 2023: <https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=f35833c6-7242-4609-af9a-2c30217c04ce&Agenda=Agenda&lang=English>

## Appendix C: Additional Detailed Stakeholder Comments

### C: 1.

Tracy Nutt, Owner of Build North Construction, Service Master Restore of Sudbury and Service Master Clean of Sudbury, was the Chair of the Task Force red take task force of the Chamber from back in 2013, and was able to provide some insight on the past ten years – progress and what remains the same:

“There’s a difference in some of the pinch points now. Where ten years ago, items such as site plan deposits were a problem, that didn’t seem to be coming up with any of our members in their concerns. However, we are still hearing permitting application process issues – time consuming and confusing application processes – and of course, the new hot topic being Conservation Authority issues.”<sup>155</sup>

### C: 2.

Real estate broker Chris Tammi elaborates on stakeholder confusion and frustration regarding jurisdictions:

“There are sometimes conflicts between levels of government. So, we’ve seen this locally. Where, ‘we want to do something, but our hands are tied because of provincial policy,’ whether it’s the Building Code or the Planning Act or the Environmental Protections Act. So we’d say, ‘hey, we’d change it. But go talk to Mr. Ford over here or your MPP.’ So they say, ‘oh, well, we’d love to, but they’ve changed the transfer payment systems and the way things work between the feds and the province,’ and there’s always this kind of passing of the buck, almost, that happens.”<sup>156</sup>

### C: 3.

Former Mayor of North Bay, Al McDonald outlines the challenges of Council needing to always meet in public:

“Under the Constitution, as Canadians, we have the right to assembly – except if you’re a Mayor and Council, by the way. It’s just the way it works. Unfortunately, the province makes the rules, and that’s the rule. But can you image running a \$500 million corporation, and your board of directors can’t talk, or meet, or have any conversations? You can imagine the handcuffs that are on you as a Mayor and Council. The federal government can meet in secret. They can meet

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<sup>155</sup> Tracey Nutt, FRDSC meeting, November 29, 2023

<sup>156</sup> Chris Tammi, FRDSC meeting, November 9, 2023

between closed doors. As a matter of fact, it's mandated they can't say anything about those meetings. Same at the provincial level. But at the municipal level, for whatever reason, they've said, 'this is the rule.' So, unfortunately, you can't get away from that."<sup>157</sup>

#### **C:4.**

Specific to the Greater Sudbury context, Planner Kevin Jarus notes:

"There's a lack of people in the north. That's an issue across the province, across the country, certainly, but in Northern Ontario, I think that issue is even more acute. There's shorter construction windows, there's rock that we have to deal with, which is very expensive. There's a lot of swamp, or wetlands, I suppose. There are servicing issues, which is not specific to Sudbury. Many, if not most, municipalities have servicing issues, but I would say Sudbury's issues are quite acute, especially given our development history. There are species at risk, throughout the North and central Ontario. And of course, as I had said before there's a lack of people, and that's so critical."<sup>158</sup>

#### **C:5.**

Andre Bom, SR engineer at WSP\*, reports that he has had, "such great opportunities working with the city, for the city, and for projects around the city... As an engineer and citizen, I want to see this be a better place to live, a better place to grow and develop my family. And my children's family, hopefully."<sup>159</sup>

#### **C:6.**

Ben Cortolezzis, Engineer in Training at Hatch, stated: "I'm nearly a lifelong resident of Sudbury. I would like to stay here into the future. When I hear people talk about Sudbury, that's my name on the jersey. I want to say I'm from Sudbury with pride. And I want every Sudburian to feel that way."<sup>160</sup>

Mr. Cortolezzis also clarified that, as a young professional, "The fact that I'm speaking in front of this committee today – the fact this committee exists – is a good gesture to the next generation that we're actively trying to work on solving the problems that are in front of us today and the problems that are important to our generation."<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Al McDonald, FRDSC meeting, September 28, 2023

<sup>158</sup> Kevin Jarus, FRDSC meeting, November 9, 2023

<sup>159</sup> Andre Bom, FRDSC meeting, October 18, 2023

<sup>160</sup> Ben Cortolezzis, FRDSC meeting, October 18, 2023

<sup>161</sup> Ben Cortolezzis, FRDSC meeting, October 18, 2023

**C:7.**

While there may be “friction” and differences of professional and personal opinion, the Committee heard a lot of about the private sector’s shared commitment to supporting growth and development. Architect Amber Salach said that there’s “a lot of talent, expertise and vested interest in our city through local consultants. We are champions of the City.”<sup>162</sup>

**C: 8.**

Kevin Jarus:

“I hope that – and actually, I’m quite confident that – this committee and Council knows that those individuals [who have agreed to speak to the committee] have weighed many matters, or many things and many perspectives, both internally to their own world and externally to our shared development world. And that we know that they are trying their... absolute best to do good community building and good community planning, which is the end goal of this committee. Both municipalities and the private consulting industry have a very important and shared responsibility to make sure that the process works and is conducive to growth and development.”<sup>163</sup>

**C:9.**

The sense of imminent “bad news” and defensiveness was also captured in consultations with members of the Sudbury District Law Association:

“One of the comments that came out was that developers are frustrated and discouraged with city building services, planning and development departments. Messaging that is consistently telegraphed by clients to many members of the SDLA are that developers are met with the combative attitudes, red tape, whenever they approach the city about a project. That’s one of the comments that we received. Perhaps, from my personal perspective, I can say that I get excellent service from different people in the city. I think some of the frustration comes from putting those links together.”<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> Amber Salach, FRDSC meeting, October 12, 2023

<sup>163</sup> Kevin Jarus, FRDSC meeting, November 9, 2023

<sup>164</sup> Andree Lacroix, FRDSC meeting, October 18, 2023

**C:10.**

Amber Salach shares a recent experience at a SPART meeting:

“Our team and clients were incredibly excited about the redevelopment of a new, much needed, Salvation Army building in Sudbury, a huge community partner in the Flour Mill. And given the comments from staff, we are all now worried about the fate of the project. And I had two very bright interns with me, who were – or are, hopefully – working on the project. They said, ‘what on Earth was that? Is it always this depressing?’ And these are not my words, ‘is it the city’s goal to impose this criteria so that, at some point, it’s too cumbersome to bring a project off the ground?’ These are questions being asked by budding Architects in the City Greater Sudbury.”<sup>165</sup>

**C:11.**

Claude Lacroix indicated that members of the Sudbury District Law Association received conflicting information depending on who they were speaking with:

“There needs to be consistency in the development policy and process. I repeat that, and it’s not to be redundant, and it’s not a drafting error. It came up so often, [members] saying ‘can we please have, when we speak to Person A the same answer when we speak to Person A on the next project?’. Because what they don’t know is that, there are a number of projects that are in play right now, and people are getting different answers. Sometimes the clients will get more than one consultant, and they’re finding that it’s very, very challenging to get clarity.”<sup>166</sup>

**C:12.**

Mr. Tammi agrees that staff want to be empowered to make a decision, and are capable professionals, but that he perceives within the City

“a culture where people are afraid to take a stand and to say, ‘this is what we should do.’ I don’t know if it’s an issue of compensation and incentivizing staff in the right way, but there’s a lot of people who want to make a decision, but don’t want to be the one to bear the wrong decision. So, I think instilling a culture of, one, ‘how do we get to yes, how do we find the yes? And what’s the path to get there?’ That starts with the top down culture, I think, from Mayor and the CAO and spins down from there... incentivizing staff to be able to give their opinion, make a decision and not be burnt at the stake, so to speak, if the public doesn’t fully agree with the decision.... [but] I don’t think that’s necessarily just a Sudbury thing.”

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<sup>165</sup> Amber Salach, FRDSC meeting, October 12, 2023

<sup>166</sup> Claude Lacroix, FRDSC meeting, October 18, 2023

**C:13.**

Plain language guides could include a deeper explanation of why the rules exist, and which level of government controls the requirements. Kevin Jarus elaborates:

“The City’s official plan is relatively clear when it comes to *when* a study is required... what is not clear, and I think a point of frustration for a lot of my clients in the development industry, is *why* these studies are required. So, clarity around why is a noise study, why is a vibration study required, environmental compliance assessment, what have you... [that] these are required because of policies or provisions or guidelines or regulations that are outside the city’s ownership [or control].”<sup>167</sup>

**C: 14.**

These educational documents may also provide additional information that contributes to greater public adherence to the rules:

“Educate the municipality and inform businesses and homeowners on the importance of getting permits and how it protects them. Make it clear. If you do not pull a permit, here are the risks, and if you do, you have nothing to lose but everything to gain... the increased property value, the quality of workmanship. The inspectors, who are trained to find issues in your home. Showing your neighbourhood that you’re following the rules to ensure a safe and good workplace.”<sup>168</sup>

**C: 15.**

From Leann Hackman-Carty:

“A few months ago, I had the opportunity to pitch a significant investment opportunity to a community in Canada and in the United States... In the Canadian example, while all three orders of government regularly talk about economic diversification and innovation, none of them stepped up to champion this significant diversification and investment opportunity... On the other hand, the American community immediately appointed a local champion to bring together stakeholders who could potentially be involved with the investment. This champion quarterbacked the opportunity by coordinating an initial meeting between the interested investor and all relevant government, non-profit, and private-sector stakeholders. The goals for the initial meeting were to hear the investor’s story once, identify the types of support and incentives the broader

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<sup>167</sup> Kevin Jarus, FRDSC, November 9, 2023

<sup>168</sup> Anthony Davis, FRDSC meeting, November 29, 2023



community could provide, and propose a comprehensive response aimed at securing the investment. It should be no surprise which community received the investment. The difference between these two responses is clear. The American economic development group was *customer* focused. The Canadian group was *organizationally* focused. That explains why our American counterparts continue to realize much greater success when it comes to fostering community investment, economic recovery, and resiliency.”<sup>169</sup>

## C:16

The NPI report elaborates that

“Economic, environmental and social conditions are much different in Northern Ontario and different natural heritage policies and approaches to implementation are warranted. For this reason, the Province should look at wetland protection on a regional rather than a provincial basis... In effect, the PPS quashes any environmental, economic, or other benefits that may be realized by allowing a project to proceed and has very limited environmental benefits given the massive wetland areas in Northern Ontario.”<sup>170</sup>

## C: 17.

According to lawyer James Carpino,

“I’ve only been practicing for seven years, but even in those seven years, title insurance companies would provide coverage. They all got together and said, ‘there’s too many claims in Sudbury, we can’t afford to cover it. So we’re going to put a cap. And up until August of this year, it was 35K. Now it’s Ten K. Just for there permit issues, it’s virtually nothing, right? And that’s one company – one company gives \$10,000, some give zero.”<sup>171</sup>

## C:18.

The lack of title insurance coverage is highlighted by the Chamber of Commerce:

“So the fact that Sudbury is one of only two cities in all of Canada that has been blacklisted by all title insurance companies other than one, shows that there’s a systemic issue with people not wanting to pull permits. What has got us to this

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<sup>169</sup> Hackman-Carty, L. (2022). “Municipalities Should Be Local Champions for Economic Development”. From *Who Does What: The Municipal Role in Economic Development*. Institute for Municipal Finance and Governance. p. 6

<sup>170</sup> Don McConnell & Laura McConnell, NPI report, October 2023, p. 18

<sup>171</sup> James Carpino, FRDSC meeting, October 18, 2023

point? The fear and/or delays and increased cost of pulling permits by homeowners and contractors. When I say cost, I don't mean monetary costs. I mean time costs, delays in a project. This is proof that contractors and homeowners feel the permit process is burdensome."<sup>172</sup>

**C: 19.**

How to deal with the lack of permits?

"So the answer is difficult, but of it I think... is to get tougher on people who open permits. Maybe escalating fines if you don't close the permit in a certain period of time which some municipalities do. And more importantly, tougher on people who don't even take permits out and put up garages and pools and decks and all these things."<sup>173</sup>

**C: 20.**

From the Chamber of Commerce:

"There were numerous issues that were brought up during consultation from all contractors, developers, and consultants that sat in our group. All sector participants gave relevant and current examples of projects that were on the go with them that are held up for weeks, or more, because of issues with prior work on the property. They either did not have a permit issued, had an open permit that had never been closed, or changes to building code that is triggering an amendment to the project. These are items that have no connection to the permit application at hand. They're costly, often have no bearing on life safety, and are punitive to the current property owner, who is in no way responsible for the prior owner's lack of requesting or taking out a permit."<sup>174</sup>

**C: 21.**

From the Sudbury District Law Association:

"One of our recommendations is [this Committee] may not need to be 'ad hoc' forever. We may want something with a bit more permanency, because there's real potential here. I think that there's a commitment with a lot of the presenters,

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<sup>172</sup> Anthony Davis, FRDSC meeting, November 29, 2023

<sup>173</sup> James Carpino, FRDSC meeting, October 18, 2023

<sup>174</sup> Tracey Nutt, FRDSC meeting, November 29, 2023

at least the ones we've seen and the ones we've ready about, that have already presented before you, to continue working with the city to make it better."<sup>175</sup>

**C:22.**

Mark Kivinen:

"Would the city and development department see a benefit to forming a neutral entity, comprised of a small group of key stakeholders from both the city and the community, with the sole purpose of sharing, not only development concerns and issues, but also potential improvements and opportunities? In my opinion, this entity would also be an attraction."<sup>176</sup>

**C: 23.**

Kevin Jarus:

"I would very much encourage that this committee continue and not as ad hoc, even if that's maybe four times a year... there is always continual improvement to be made. Communication and discussions build upon one another. So the discussions that we're having here, others will hear it, and they will build upon that through future initiatives. So this cannot be looked at in a static way."<sup>177</sup>

**C: 24.**

Amber Salach:

"We think it would be an ideal situation, when we're ready to submit for site plan agreement, to come and make a presentation of what this site plan solution is, to the city. Come on in, and we would be able to describe what we're trying to achieve in this design, as opposed to being interpreted from just the documents that are in front of you. And that exchange could be quick, but it would be an opportunity for staff to understand, ask perhaps a few questions at that time that could speed up their review process. And if there was something significant, we would certainly adjust it before we would do that official first submission."<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> Claude Lacroix, FRDSC meeting, October 18, 2023

<sup>176</sup> Mark Kivinen, FRDSC meeting, November 9, 2023

<sup>177</sup> Kevin Jarus, FRDSC meeting, November 9, 2023

<sup>178</sup> Amber Salach, FRDSC meeting, October 12, 2023

**C: 25**

Amber Salach on the benefits of in person meeting:

“Certainly, we can pick up the phone and call and speak to somebody, but it’s usually like, ‘well, I have to speak to this department, I have to speak to this Department. And we wait and we wait and we wait. Let’s just talk about the project, talk about the goals of the project, talk about why it’s an important project for the city, and never let that sort of, thread, be removed from any project’s process.”<sup>179</sup>

**C: 26.**

Andree Lacroix, from Sudbury District Law Association:

“There are (too many levels of frontline staff who are very competent, engaged, able, responsible, but do not always have the authority to provide the service. So you feel like you’re dealing with the frontline staff, who seem to know exactly what should be done, but they don’t necessarily have the authority. And you know that they’ll say to you, ‘we’ll have to get back to you,’ and you know that they’re going to a second, third, maybe a fourth level of management to be able to provide you with a response. So I get that that... has to happen in some cases, depending on the level of development, how important it is. But, there’s certainly, I think, a way to give more authority to frontline staff to be able to make some of the decisions, so that you can save the time of the higher management to deal with some of the bigger projects. That would be one of the observations – I think that’s come up a lot from SDLA members. I think it would also achieve efficiencies.”<sup>180</sup>

**C:27.**

Anthony Davis, on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce:

“We, by far, have some of the best people working in this city. Empower them. Allow the people that are climbing up their career ladder to take new responsibilities to alleviate the higher level staff. Let them make judgment calls on the file for the most frequently asked questions that get kicked up the ladder – they’re already overbooked and genuinely trying their best to accomplish the goals they can. But they’re tied down by old regulations. But with the ease of access to information now, that entry level staff has the knowledge, but not the power, to assist with minor issues. And this can cause delays.”<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> Amber Salach, FRDSC meeting, October 12, 2023

<sup>180</sup> Andree Lacroix, FRDSC meeting, October 18, 2023

<sup>181</sup> Anthony Davis, FRDSC meeting, November 29, 2023

**C: 28.**

Sudbury District Law Association:

“Clients frequently comment on the many layers of bureaucracy. We made that comment earlier, and I’m unsure how many people fully appreciated it, but we have really good frontline people. We don’t need to go up to the third level of the ladder. You know what you’re doing... that’s what gives us the confidence that this committee has potential. Because we have the people to be able to do this work and to streamline these processes. There’s just too many layers, too much oversight, and some of the oversight is just completely redundant.” <sup>182</sup>

**C: 29.**

Councillor Signoretti was in attendance at the October 18 meeting, and said that he liked the example of McDonald’s drive through, saying that

“I think it was hopefully heard loud and clear that certain items that are smaller, that can be done by staff that have been in the organization for many years, should have that ability to implement in those situations. To sort of fast track it versus having to wait to – going up levels to the manager and their manager when the answer is probably the same thing from the person that’s right there on the front line.”<sup>183</sup>

**C: 30.**

Kevin Jarus on the Hold symbol:

“the reason that that’s so important to the development industry, is it defers the cost of certain studies that should not be required to establish the principle of use until after a decision is made on a rezoning application, and if there’s a hold symbol attached to that rezoning approval, that says, yeah we’re generally ok with what you’re going for here, but give us something that provies some technical specification is appropriate, or what have you. Then a developer can say, ‘that makes sense to me, I can spend that money now that I have the certainty of knowing that I will have an approval.’”<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> Claude Lacroix, FRDSC meeting, October 18, 2023

<sup>183</sup> Councillor Signoretti, FRDSC meeting, October 18, 2023

<sup>184</sup> Kevin Jarus, FRDSC meeting, November 9, 2023

**C: 31.**

Mark Kivinen on partnerships:

“Consider design build partnerships where contractors, developers, service providers can be involved in the early stages. This approach is being implemented on some major projects with parties such as Ontario Power Generation. This partnership could ensure thorough understanding of project goals, which could potentially lead to alternative strategies from the partners with diverse backgrounds of experience, such as mining, forestry, and the power sectors. Due to the design and construction activities being in parallel, giving priority to design-build applications could be considered”<sup>185</sup>

**C: 32.**

Chris Tammi on skilled professionals and consultants:

“There is a real gap in the market, from our perspective, in that there’s so much demand for consulting in Sudbury, and really, a very low capacity in terms of how much can the small teams in Sudbury really do? And they’re all bursting at the seams when we talk to Architects and engineers, and we talk to planners, we talk to surveyors, we talk to builders – they’re all looking for more help. They all need more people themselves. And the reality is, we really are in a position where we have to make it faster and easier, yes, but reducing the number of times someone needs a consultant would be welcomed by the consulting community as well, even though they like the revenue. There’s a tipping point where they can only do so much.”<sup>186</sup>

**C:33.**

Mark Kivinen on competition for skilled professionals:

“We must realize that the city is competing for contractors, developers, service providers and suppliers. There are more projects and opportunities, both large and small, inside and outside our community than ever before. At the same time, we have a shortage of labour resources that is not going to correct itself for a long period of time to come. To add injury, the cost of materials and equipment are also still at high levels. So what does this mean for our community? If we want to not only maintain, but to also attract business and development that the city requires now and also in the future, while also keeping cost escalations at a minimum and productivity at acceptable levels, there has to be an attraction for

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<sup>185</sup> Mark Kivinen, FRDSC meeting, November 9, 2023

<sup>186</sup> Chris Tammi, FRDSC meeting, October 12, 2023

business... without these attractions, developers will look elsewhere. Contractors, service providers, and suppliers, will take opportunities elsewhere. Bidders for tenders will decrease. And bid values will increase. Realizing that a review of the development services is warranted, creating the new Future Ready Development Services Committee, requesting feedback from the community key stakeholders is the right direction, is a great initiative, and *is* an attraction.”<sup>187</sup>

**C:34.**

Kevin Jarus on attracting people to grow their careers in Sudbury:

“We need more people because the level of activity that we’re seeing right now was never fathomed maybe even three years ago... the city could refocus the attention from the mining and resource sector from an economic development perspective, because I’ll be honest with you, the rest of the world knows that Sudbury is the mining capital of the world. People in Toronto do not know, though, that housing is affordable here, that we have the all lakes, that we have the nature right at your doorstep. They don’t know that you can move up faster in your career because there’s less fish in the barrel, they don’t understand that it’s more affordable that you can raise a family, etc etc. All the reasons that me and my family moved to this city, the rest of the world is not conscious of that. And the city can work on that.” <sup>188</sup>

**C: 35.**

Geoff McCausland on the demand for industrial space:

“You would not believe how often we get a call at Mallette-Goring, saying, ‘I want to have 15,000 sq ft leased for an expansion of our industrial business. We say, ‘there isn’t any, there’s not a thing.’ So we are, almost weekly, turning away large employment opportunities. Some of that is circumstances of rapid growth; some of that can be supported through some of these proposed changes, through changes about where we allow industrial, where we allow warehouse, allowing that to shift out of some of the traditional heavy industrial areas or large industrial areas, so that we can fill those with the staff that should actually be there as well.”<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> Mark Kivinen, FRDSC meeting, November 9, 2023

<sup>188</sup> Kevin Jarus, FRDSC meeting, November 9, 2023

<sup>189</sup> Geoff McCausland, FRDSC meeting, October 12, 2023

**C: 36.**

Claude Lacroix says of the additional hurdles of rezoning:

“The problem is that it’s now very common where people will say, ‘I’m ready to spend \$2 million. But if it requires a rezoning or site plan, not interested. By the time I pay the consultant \$50,000, go through a year and a half meetings, my interest rate changes – no longer interested’... it’s a real loss for the community because, years ago, those people would all come to present to Council, a committee of adjustment, anywhere else, themselves, without having an army of advisors around them to be able to do it. And they’re finding it incredibly challenging because they know what they’re doing. They just find the process and the actual flow chart of what they need to do absolutely cumbersome and overwhelming.”<sup>190</sup>

**C: 37.**

Making employment lands investment-ready is important for the future, but Kevin Jarus points out that if there’s a client with interest right now

“It does nothing for the community or for the development industry, if something is not for sale, right? The initiative to upgrade servicing make those areas more investment ready. It’s a fantastic long term play. Because eventually those serviced lands will be put for sale and someone will buy them and they will value-add, and they will intensify and add more jobs. But again, it’s a long term play. And when I was focusing on kind of the rural lands and being able to unlock what currently has enough infrastructure to service rural developments, like MR 35. That’s much more shorter-term, I would say, so it has to be looked at both ways.”<sup>191</sup>

**C: 38.**

Affordable housing is DC exempt:

“So we do have areas in the city that are exempt. WE’ve also used exemptions in the DC bylaw to achieve certain outcomes that we would like to see as a community. So, affordable housing is another one where the city instituted DC exemptions in 2019. So that if you do an affordable housing build and you get into an agreement with the city to provide those units at an affordable rate for a

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<sup>190</sup> Claude Lacroix, FRDSC meeting, October 18, 2023

<sup>191</sup> Kevin Jarus, FRDSC meeting, November 9, 2023



certain amount of time, you are exempt from DCs. There are reductions that we instituted for multi-res along the corridors.”<sup>192</sup>

**C: 39.**

Andre Bom of WSP says,

“We really need to see a better mix of our residential areas. That it’s not just segregated by income. And another very important use you in the larger cities is the non-residential and the residential development coming together so that you’re not again just committed to using a vehicle to go from your residence to a distance far away for your non-residential uses.”<sup>193</sup>

**C: 40.**

Affordable housing may be a focus and a desired goal, but David Chalmers argues that, by creating higher-end retirement rental options, it opens up more housing along the spectrum,

“When I say ‘new stock is good stock,’ I think part of the reason why – one of the things where, if you offer stock that’s good for empty nesters and this sort of thing, people could sell their homes, move into a rental solution, not have to worry about maintenance anymore and go travel, do whatever they want to do. And by having that kind of building put into the city, which, not very many exist in Sudbury, you automatically sort of create some other affordable options, which may be the duplex or whatever they might have owned before and gets bought by somebody else. So that’s one thing. The other could be other purpose-built solutions with CMHC financing that offer affordable options.”<sup>194</sup>

**C: 41.**

Fire flow:

“If we’re looking to develop, and somebody says, ‘I have the capitalization to do 40 units, but the Fire Flow will only allow for 20,’ my hope would be that somebody in that department would look and say, ‘what do we need to do to make that pipe bigger? It is 38 ft down the street? Is it 200 ft down the street? Is

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<sup>192</sup> Kris Longston, FRDSC meeting, December 7, 2023

<sup>193</sup> Andre Bom, FRDSC meeting, October 18, 2023

<sup>194</sup> David Chalmers, FRDSC meeting, October 18, 2023

there another development that I'm not aware of that's happening, that we might be able to build into so that we have it?"<sup>195</sup>

**C: 42.**

To support the creation of secondary units, Andree Lacroix suggests:

"There's some really great people in building controls who can give you information about what people need to do to create a secondary unit. That would be an amazing project within that Department, if you could have a team that just dealt with secondary units. Super fast inspections, where they told you, 'this is what you need to create a secondary unit in this structure.' We could certainly use it on our real estate deals... it might also provide an incentive for people to create secondary units, which could also provide some assistance in terms of the housing shortage."<sup>196</sup>

**C: 43.**

David Chalmers suggests

"One of the big initiatives maybe we think that could be done by municipalities would be to create a new mill rate in cities, maybe that targets the same timeframe as the HST omission program, where you have to have the new product, and this is for purpose-built only that I think should be considered, you have to have the new product in the ground by 2030 and completed by 2035 and maybe that becomes a new class of municipal tax mill rate to make it feasible..."<sup>197</sup>

**C: 44.**

With respect to TIEGs, Mr. Estevez says,

"TIEG doesn't have an immediate financial impact on the municipality. If you're collecting \$0, or little to \$0 on a piece of land from a tax perspective, and if you collect \$0 tax dollars over the next five or ten years to help a project proceed, it's better, probably, than a project not proceeding and still collecting \$0 on a land basis."<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> Claude Lacroix, FRDSC meeting, October 18, 2023

<sup>196</sup> Andree Lacroix, FRDSC meeting, October 18, 2023

<sup>197</sup> David Chalmers, FRDSC meeting, October 18, 2023

<sup>198</sup> Luis Estevez, FRDSC meeting, November 29, 2023

## Appendix D: 24 by the end of 2024 – Submission to the Committee by Mallette-Goring

### Changes for Greater Sudbury City Council to be Future-Ready for Development

#### Quick Wins

1. Round-Down. Our city is full of lakes, rocks, swamps, rail-lines, and mines. There is no shortage of challenging properties and unique circumstances. One of the simplest changes that can be made to the zoning by-law is a clause that whenever a requirement is calculated, the result is rounded down. This can help developments that are on the cusp make it over the finish line.

2. Increase Consistency in the Zoning Bylaw. Provide a standard and easily understandable/searchable approach. For example:

- a. Industrial Zones permit “Office”, but Commercial zones specify Business Medical and Professional Offices.
- b. Some definitions in the zoning bylaw are listed as “Recreational Vehicle”, and others as “Vehicle, Recreational”?
- c. Why “School, Commercial” and “School, Trade”, but “Automotive Leasing Establishment” and “Automotive Lube Shop”?

#### Support Today’s Needs

The world is changing faster than ever, and what the market needs today is not aligned with the zoning bylaws of yesterday.

3. Respond to demand for Industrial space is significant across the City, with almost zero supply. This is despite the Employment Lands Strategy claiming that “Greater Sudbury is currently well served with ample designated and zoned industrial and commercial land, both vacant and underdeveloped”. With a bottleneck holding back

the industrial marketplace, and a shifting retail landscape, we need to make changes that will allow existing buildings to be put to better use and the local tax base to expand. Here are some changes that would support local industry and market competitiveness:

- a. Allow Warehouse in the C2 and C5 zones. With the world shifting away from big box retailers toward online shopping, there is an opportunity to repurpose former retail spaces to meet the growing demand for warehousing.
- b. Allow Light Industrial uses in the C2 and C5 zones. The Official Plan permits general Industrial uses within the Mixed-Use Commercial designation areas subject to compatibility with surrounding uses. By allowing Light Industrial uses that are able to meet Ontario's D-Series guidelines, and coupling those protections with Noise and Property Standards Bylaw protections, more sensitive land uses can be protected and conflicts mitigated. Allowing low-impact Light Industrial uses in certain commercial zones would provide much-needed leasable space to support local industry and allow for the creation of employment hubs with good jobs well-connected by transit.
- c. Allow Industrial Use in the M2 zone. The Employment Lands Strategy identified M2 as "a very important zone category, as it can be expected to accommodate the more traditional industrial job types, including manufacturing", yet most manufacturing that would occur locally is not actually permitted in the M2 zone. Allowing Industrial Use in M2 would support local mining supply manufacturing and battery metal / electric vehicle opportunities.
- d. Allow Industrial Use in the Valley East Industrial Park. Presently, an Industrial Use is not permitted in the Valley East Industrial Park. Upzone the Valley East Industrial Park from M1 to M3 to provide much needed supply in the market.

4. Increase Flexibility.

a. Allow for flexibility in interpreting boundaries and permit minor adjustments. The Official Plan's Interpretation section states "consider boundary designations on the maps as general guidelines only, except where such areas or boundaries coincide with existing roads, railways, rivers, waterbodies and other defined features". The Official Plan also states "permit minor adjustments to the Plan, without a formal amendment, in its implementation through the passing of by-laws or carrying out of programs, provided the general purpose and intent of the Plan is maintained". Parallel language should be added to the Zoning Bylaw to increase flexibility.

b. Permit Minor Adjustments. Increase Flexibility in Rural Zones. For more intensive uses that do not require municipal services, are within the settlement boundary, and can meet relevant minimum separation distances, permit greater flexibility of use (salvage yards, specific light industrial uses, etc.).

5. Create Terms of Reference for Studies and Reports. The City of Barrie has an excellent set of 1-5 page PDFs with Terms of Reference for the various Studies and Reports they require for development applications. These Terms of Reference documents help to ensure that what the City is asking for is clear, concise, and consistent. They also provide helpful links to resources, directories of consultants, and other valuable information. Greater Sudbury should either create our own set, copy theirs, or at the very least direct people to Barrie's for reference.

6. Reduce Off-Site Infrastructure Deposits and Requirements. The cost of construction and borrowing is at an all-time high. Requiring deposits for 100% of the cost of providing City-mandated off-site infrastructure means that developers actually need to cash-flow 200% of the cost – enough to complete the work prior to having their deposit returned. At the beginning of a construction process this puts a huge amount of financial burden on developments, potentially rendering them unfeasible.

- a. Minimize Off-Site Requirements. The City should minimize off-site infrastructure requirements, only requiring infrastructure that is directly needed to enable development (like water/wastewater capacity), or when a significant negative impact would otherwise result.
- b. Reduce deposit requirements. It was not that long ago that the City only required a minor deposit for off-site works. The City should consider a more balanced approach where a portion of the estimated infrastructure cost is required as an up-front deposit, and the remainder accepted as a contractual commitment or registered on title.
- c. Partial Release of Deposits. The City should develop a framework for partial releases of construction deposits at certain completion milestones.

7. Improve Communication. Despite the creation of a One-Stop-Shop, communication between departments should be more consistent. The public or developers should not be expected to coordinate comments between planning, building services, and engineering. Some changes could be considered:

- a. Benchmark and track response timelines for correspondence and inquiries.
- b. Ensure that the front-line staff at the One-Stop-Shop are empowered to act as development ambassadors who oversee an applicant's file from beginning to end, provide timeline accountability and a coordinated city response.
- c. Implement a buddy system where a second contact is copied on all correspondence (which could be one of the development ambassadors), so that when someone goes on holidays, there is a seamless transition and service continuity.

## **Support Housing Creation and Home-building**

The cost of construction has risen to the point where it is very challenging for

multi-residential and subdivision developers to turn a profit. Rezoning, Site Plan Control and Plan of Subdivision applications take months or years to complete, and consultant costs to meet city requirements often add tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars. There is also not enough consultant capacity to meet our housing goals and timelines if every development needs a survey, traffic impact study, and planning justification report. The solution - Build as of right. That requires City Council to take a strong stand and direct staff to open up the potential of properties across Greater Sudbury.

8. Reduce the number of residential zones from 14 to 4 and make them as permissive as possible.

a. Move to a single low-density residential zone with the greatest permissions. There are currently ten low-density residential zones, although most properties fall into R1-5, R2-2 and R2-3. By giving every low-residential zone the allowances of the R2-3 zone, it would unlock gentle density and access to different built forms, allowing incremental development to take shape across the City where it makes sense. Properties will still need to meet parking, fire safety, setback, landscaping and more requirements to develop, but where the laundry list can be met, people should be able to build. This change will realize a more resilient, diverse, and affordable community.

\*Aligns with the Province's "More Homes Built Faster Act" and CEEP Goal 1.

b. Move to a single medium-density residential zone with the greatest permissions. This would support today's density needs and construction realities. It would also remove the 30 unit per building limit in R3 which contradicts the Official Plan's medium-density limits.

\*Aligns with Housing-as-of-Right Zoning Review, Employment Lands Strategy consultant recommendations, and CEEP Goal 1.

c. Reduce the Multiple Dwelling Minimum Parking Requirement from 1.5/unit to 1.2/unit. Forcing high parking requirements on buildings reduces affordability, increases flooding risk, and causes urban sprawl. The City's Community Energy and Emissions Plan's 1st Goal is to realize Compact,

Complete Communities. Reducing minimum parking requirements is one of the only ways to make that goal realistic. For Comparison, other municipalities multiple dwelling minimum parking ratios include:

- i. Guelph: 1.1/dwelling unit
- ii. Hamilton: 1/unit, and only 0.3/unit for small apartments
- iii. Kingston: between 0.55/unit and 1.2/unit, and 0/unit for affordable units and heritage buildings
- iv. Windsor: 1.25/unit
- v. Chatham-Kent: 1/unit up to 8 units, and 1.25/unit over 8 units
- vi. Sault Ste Marie: 1.25/unit or 1/unit for multiple detached dwellings
- vii. Kitchener: 1/unit to 1.15/unit

9. Support the creation of Laneway Houses, Carriage Houses, and Tiny Homes.

a. Amend 4.2.4 of the Zoning Bylaw to increase the height restriction for accessory buildings on residential lots from 5m to 8m. Allow people to build housing above garages, convert garages into laneway houses, and build Tiny Homes where they can meet all of the other zoning and building requirements.

\*Aligns with Housing-as-of-Right Zoning Review consultant recommendations.

b. Amend 4.15.2 of the Zoning Bylaw to change the minimum front-yard landscaped open area from 50% to 38%. This will permit two cars to park side-by-side in the front yards of most low-density residential lots.

c. Amend 4.2.3 of the Zoning Bylaw to increase permitted Lot Coverage of Accessory Buildings and structures on residential lots from 10% to 25%.

\*Aligns with Housing-as-of-Right Zoning Review consultant recommendations.

Streamline

10. Streamline Zoning Bylaw Definitions. The current bylaw includes 397 Definitions, and states “Any use not specifically permitted by this By-law shall not be permitted in the City of Greater Sudbury”. Despite all those definitions, there are



uses that often fall between the cracks, like an Auto Detailing Shop. The current approach is hyper-specific, highly exclusive, and leaves many prospective tenants walking away from a space that was otherwise a great fit because they aren't sure it's compliant. Others simply proceed with a lease while accepting the risk that their use might not actually be permitted. For comparison:

- a. Thunder Bay has 135 Zoning Bylaw Definitions
- b. North Bay has 219 Zoning Bylaw Definitions
- c. Kingston has 279 Zoning Bylaw Definitions
- d. Toronto has 199 Zoning Bylaw Definitions
- e. Ottawa has 230 Zoning Bylaw Definitions
- f. Owen Sound has 164 Zoning Bylaw Definitions
- g. Sault Ste Marie has 90 Permitted Uses and 54 Other Definitions (total of 144)

11. SPART is a very helpful process for a variety of developments, and can ensure that developers move forward with their eyes open. That said, there are a few considerations that should improve the process:

- a. SPART results should be reliable and realistic. The original intent for the process was to give clear requirements that would not change down the line.
- b. If requirements are missed in the original SPART process, and those requirements are not mandated by the province, developers should be exempt from those requirements.
- c. SPART comments should differentiate between requirements and recommendations. Each requirement should list the department/position that oversees approval and include a line or two explaining why that item is required (i.e. relevant provincial legislation/municipal bylaw).
- d. SPART should not be the only way to have development questions answered. While it is a valuable process, it also sets development back by at least a month. Staff should be available and able to provide answers to questions before, during

and after the SPART process when it makes sense.

e. Experienced developers should be exempt from SPART or have an alternate, expedited path.

12. Site Plan Control. The Site Plan Control process can set developments back a year, and increases costs by tens of thousands of dollars. Many developers will only consider building where they are exempt from site plan control, and some local consultants can no longer provide fixed fee quotes for site plan services, as they don't know if they will need to provide three rounds of comments or seven rounds of comments. Some changes should improve the process:

a. City Staff should only have one opportunity to provide comments on Site Plan Agreements, unless changes from the first round of comments significantly impact the second submission.

b. Site Plan Agreement comments that are minor in nature, such as incorrect tree species, should not cause a delay and require resubmission, but simply be a note on file.

c. Staff recommendations (that are not requirements) should be shared with applicants but not included in official City comments and hold up Site Plan Agreements.

13. Reduce Pre-Emptive Regulation. Leave development requirements to the latest stage possible, when they are actually needed. Leave the risk to developers and reduce up-front costs. Do not require significant studies and consulting expenses for a Draft Plan of Subdivision or Condominium when they could be a condition of the actual Plan of Subdivision, and when the Planning Committee may not even approve the Draft Plan. Detailed design, financial realities and other impacts could significantly alter the development as it progresses and require those costly studies to be redone, wasting large sums of money that could otherwise be put towards building houses.

14. Requirements only with specific and relevant justification. There are a variety of requirements that the development community has expressed frustration about, either because they are being asked for when other municipalities would not require them, or at a point where they will most likely need to be redone, wasting time and money.

a. Test Manholes are an expensive and time-consuming requirement. The unit alone will likely cost \$15,000+ and also requires excavation, time-consuming locates, and may require a portion of the street to be dug up and restored. Amend Bylaw 2010-188 to only require Test Manholes when there is specific and relevant justification (ie a chemical processing plant), or when wastewater connections are being altered/constructed.

b. Lot Grading is a consultant-intensive requirement that can cost tens of thousands of dollars. The City is currently requiring Lot Grading to permit some severances where the work is completely hypothetical and will need to be redone later for the actual development. Only require a Lot Grading Plan when a development is actually taking place. Lot Grading and required road grades should be adapted to a Northern context and the challenges of local topography.

c. Surveys are another consultant-intensive requirement, with a pool of practicing surveyors that is small and shrinking. The City should stop the practice of requiring a survey whenever a rezoning is taking place, as it can add tens of thousands of dollars of cost and months to developments. Instead, only require a survey when there is specific and relevant justification or a survey is actually needed for lot creation (ie. a Plan of Subdivision).

d. PJR only when needed. Planning Justification Reports for planning applications should not be a mandatory requirement without specific and relevant justification. Instead, ensure that applicants understand that a PJR is recommended to help set them up for success, but allow those who want to accept the risk to not get one and save thousands and months of delay.

e. Updates to reflect Ontario Bill 23. Local bylaws should be adapted to align with Provincial direction. Public Meetings should no longer be required for

Plans of Subdivision, and Conservation Sudbury should update their  
“Direction on the Administration of Ontario Regulation 156/06 – Wetlands”.

15. Eliminate the M1-1 Zone and convert those 65 properties to M1. Those properties would better serve the city and hold greater value as standard light industrial land.

\*Aligns with Employment Lands Strategy recommendations.

16. Combine Planning Services, Building Services, and Economic Development. The City of Greater Sudbury has made significant efforts to reduce siloed operation and those efforts are appreciated. There are some structural changes that could be considered that have benefited other cities in Ontario. The City should investigate combining the Economic Development, Planning Services and Building Services departments to operate under one director, so that the various departments’ efforts can be better synchronized and priorities aligned. The City would also be in a better position to analyze how delays to development projects also delay new property taxes, so that City development process streamlining could be evaluated from a Return-on-Investment basis.

### **Support Downtown**

Downtown’s problems are everyone’s problems. Open drug use on the streets makes many residents uncomfortable, buildings have been selling below assessment value, and there is limited demand for vacant spaces. The current property assessments downtown are at risk of falling at the next MPAC assessment, and if that happens houses and businesses across the city will see their taxes go up as a result. Protect property assessments by supporting Downtown Sudbury.

17. Create a Use of Public Property Bylaw. The City of Barrie’s Bylaw 2004-142 creates an avenue for Municipal Law Enforcement Officers and Police to respond to

issues on public property and at public facilities across the City. Creating a parallel bylaw should allow Greater Sudbury to better manage a variety of issues.

18. Create a “Big Dig” Program. The City of Kingston had four “Big Dig” programs between 2010 and 2018, guided by their Downtown Master Plan. They were focused on getting major infrastructure construction completed in a constrained business district with excellent communication, clear timelines, and minimized disruptions. Belleville, Kinkardine, Wiarton, Midland and St. John’s established similar programs, and Greater Sudbury would benefit from this type of coordinated approach.

19. Update the Strategic Core Areas CIP: Update the Business Improvement Areas Tenant Attraction Program to apply not only to office, but also to much needed retail and potentially other commercial uses. Increase the Residential Incentive Program to \$40/sqft. Expand the CIP funding pool to meet the increasing applications.

20. Combine Parking Operations and Transit Services. These departments are trying to solve separate issues that can be addressed together. The public feels that there isn’t enough parking downtown, Transit is trying to increase ridership, and CEEP Goal 7 aims to “increase transit mode share to 25% by 2050”. At present, with monthly parking passes downtown cheaper than Transit passes, city policies are not aligned with city goals. A coordinated approach would allow better understanding of the interplay between the different services and ensure that we are acting to realize our CEEP goals.

## **Plan for the Future**

21. Zone Specials in a more inclusive manner. At Mallette-Goring, clients are often looking to buy or lease properties with site-specific zoning. Many of them walk away from a perfectly-suited space because of the “Special” limitations that were determined through the rezoning process. Most prospective purchasers and virtually

all prospective tenants are unwilling to spend the time, money and effort needed to pursue another rezoning. When special zones are created, they should be as inclusive as possible to make them more future-proof and reduce the need for further rezoning applications. Examples:

- a. 1050 Lonsdale only permits offices, two dwelling units, and a Coffee Service & Supply Company.
- b. 1894 Lasalle permits a Delicatessen, despite there being no explanation in the zoning bylaw as to what that is.
- c. There is an empty property behind Place Bonaventure in Chelmsford that only permits a Bingo Hall, a Funeral Parlour, and a Special Needs Facility.

22. Create a Nodes and Corridors Parking Overlay (within 250m of corridors) that reduces parking ratios by 50%. If the city is to be accessible by active transportation and transit 50 years from now, that starts today. Parking Ratios increase costs, exacerbate flooding risks by requiring large impermeable areas, and cause urban sprawl. This reduction would not be intended to be combined with any other applicable parking reductions in the zoning bylaw.

\*Aligns with the Lasalle Blvd Corridor Study Recommendations and CEEP Goal 1

23. Expand the City's "Corridors" to include all Main Arterial and Secondary Collector roads. This will align our planning framework with our primary transit routes, primary snow-plowing routes, and encourage development around our established transportation network.

24. Empower Staff. It's the difference between Air Canada and Porter. At Porter the person in front of you is trusted and has the authority to actually help you with your problem. At Air Canada the employee and you both wait while they are on hold for half an hour just to get the clearance they need to help you the same way they could have from the get-go. One approach is based on risk aversion. It sees only problems

and makes for a frustrating experience for everyone involved. The empowerment approach increases customer satisfaction, employee satisfaction, employee retention, and gets things done faster and more efficiently.