

To Project 6 Million (P6M) City of Greater Sudbury from Friendly to Seniors - Sudbury:

This is a detailed summary of recommendations to “Project 6 Million” on behalf of Friendly to Seniors – Sudbury.

This exercise comes at a critical time in Sudbury with a number of factors impacting on our future as a city and our citizens and in particular those of low and fixed income, which includes not only many seniors but other demographic segments of our community. Ever increasing and compounding taxation affects not only the quality of life of individuals and families but also the viability of our city to attract new residents and business enterprises, plus maintain and grow those we already possess.

Preamble: What follows is or should be common knowledge but deserves review in context of the present exercise. Due to the inability to fully tax the mining industry and limited other major industrial sources, much of the income the city must collect to cover expenses comes from residential municipal taxation including water and wastewater charges, user fees etc, but all of course from the same taxpayer pocket. The more citizens can pay the more revenue that can be raised and that is the importance of population growth, although growth also requires infrastructure to support and service. Other special funding can come from development charges; however these are being questioned and in any event with limited development, revenues from this source cannot be guaranteed or are at best variable. Provincial transfer payments are in decline putting further need to fund from local sources.

Rational: It is important to consider the present and likely continuing situation with respect to population growth based on historical perspectives and current indicators. With a high percentage of aging and dying citizens and a continuing outflow of younger working age persons coupled with funding restraints in the health care sector, a low birth rate and a low level immigrant inflow, fewer students in elementary and high schools, technological changes in the primary extraction and processing industries and reduced residential and retail construction and limited new secondary industrial activity, how does the city planning department justify predicted population growth of 10,500 to around 170,000 (our high in 1971) by the year 2036 based on 2011 figures of 160,274, which is actually higher than our current estimated figures for 2015? Remember our population actually dropped to 152,470 in 1986. It would therefore be prudent to consider with caution any predictions with respect to population growth or decline, or for that matter any positive forecasts of an economic nature.

If savings are to be realized they must come from **both** the operation and capital budgets and these recommendations impact both of these areas.

Personnel costs: There are various measures to control costs in this area keeping in mind that the number of staff has actually increased by over 300 individuals since amalgamation and creation of the City of Greater Sudbury.

1. Salary cutbacks for senior staff of 3 to 5 percent (one time) followed by wage freeze.
2. Wage freeze for staff (with promise of no layoffs) for limited period followed by the next suggestion.
3. Acceptance of lump sum annual payments in place of compounding wage increases.
4. Wage and expense freeze for police, fire dept., health unit and all other city staffed organizations and groups.
5. The encouragement of increased “attrition” through incentives.
6. Downsize and consolidate employment functions through layoff options and severance.

Depending on the degree of acceptance and implementation of these suggested measures the savings in both the short and long term could be significant, likely in the several millions of dollars yearly.

Operation Costs:

1. Have each department show a cost reduction of 5 percent with limited impact on service or operation.
2. Institute “lean management” techniques to improve efficiency and service in all departments and areas.

3. Determine savings that could be realized by transfer of Pioneer Manor to third party not for profit operator and other city operations, services and properties that could better and more economically served by third parties.

Depending on the degree of acceptance and implementation of these suggested measures the savings could be significant both in dollars (likely millions) but also result in more operational efficiency and improved citizen and business services.

Capital Costs:

1. Repair and replace existing infrastructure before embarking on new projects as described below.
2. Curtail expensive (already several million dollars) and largely ineffective and potentially dangerous traffic calming measures (curb extensions etc.) such as on Kathleen and Attlee Street and elsewhere and instead create bike lanes at a fraction of the cost, which like in Thunder Bay have increased cycling activity and fewer cycling and motor vehicle accidents according to Thunder Bay city published statistics.
3. Reduce present and future traffic congestion on Second Avenue by creation of a modern roundabout intersection at Scarlet Drive eliminating the need for an expensive signaled intersection and unnecessary road widening with potential savings of \$2 to \$3 million from a \$6.6 million budget.
4. Careful consideration of the need for Maley Drive since the improvement of the Lasalle, Notre Dame Intersection and the observed and actual reduction of industrial trucking on this corridor. Even with Federal and Provincial financial assistance the local funding contribution would likely impact on overall debt, infrastructure repair and maintenance and/or other capital projects of more value.
5. Save projected cost of up to \$10 million to rehabilitate (re-green) old Jt. Joe's parking lot and keep this convenient and safe valuable asset (replacement cost of probably about \$3 million) for the demonstrated need of resident and tourist visitors to Bell Park during the summer festival season. Suggest use of estimated amount of \$350,000 to remove the parking area to instead be used to create attractive berm and planters along Paris Street and development of a sloping walkway access to Park.
6. Examination of all other capital projects planned on a cost/benefit/need basis.

It is recommended that the percentage of roads budget money for planned new roads and road widening be divided between an appropriation for repair and maintenance of present infrastructure and the budget reduction exercise. These two amounts could be in the several millions of dollars.

The removal of the Maley Drive project could immediately release over \$10 million to contribute to the budget reduction exercise and make available the ongoing commitment of several million dollars per year for this project and likely future cost overruns and maintenance.

Summary:

It is recommended that a permanent council sponsored and endorsed panel of citizens and staff with councillor representation be established to continue to review citizen budget saving suggestions on an ongoing basis and to make recommendations to council. The citizen representatives to be chosen from the general public though consideration of their expertise in areas to be of value to the panel.

Respectfully submitted to Project Six Million (P6M) cgsideas@greatersudbury.ca and Mayor and Council on the 30th of July 2015

Friendly to Seniors – Sudbury www.friendlytoseniors.ca

John Lindsay, Chair, 705-507-6037.