

## 2020 Greater Sudbury Budget Input: Friendly to Seniors Sudbury ... November 2019

We have elected to present our input in this format rather than through the templates provided on line as it is felt that citizens should not be made to judge budget items against one another as there are other ways to realize savings. In addition we feel that more public interaction with council and staff are required to further explore budget options.

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.

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 local students at all education levels, technological changes in the primary extraction and processing industries and reduced residential and retail construction and limited new secondary industrial activity it is doubtful according to reliable sources, that our population and therefore assessment base will not increase significantly over time and could possibly decline at time when revenues from higher levels of government are predicted to decrease.

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 hundreds of individuals since amalgamation and creation of the City of Greater Sudbury. This cannot continue and new contract negotiations will have to address this and future increases will have to be tied to the rate of inflation and the possible acceptance of lump sum annual payments in place of compounding wage increases. Increased "attrition" through incentives should be encouraged.

Have each department show a cost reduction of at least 5 percent with limited impact on service or operation; such has been done in other communities. Institute "lean management" to improve efficiency and service in all departments and areas. 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

**Capital Costs:** Repair and replace existing infrastructure before embarking on new projects such as any new road construction, various "legacy" projects such as the new combined library and art gallery as part of the Junction East project and the Junction West (KED) project and the Elgin "greenway" which are "wants" rather than "needs" and could negatively impact existing services and venues, including the proposed twin ice pad and associated amenities in the "valley". Priorities need to be established – should it be "legacy" projects or shelter for the poor and homeless?

Evaluate the cost/benefits of borrowing over \$200 million dollars on for the "big projects" including construction and ongoing CO2 emissions in the city recognized "climate change emergency" . Study is needed to determine the economic effect and cost to the community in increased taxation and debt, and to determine if a "do-nothing" option is the most prudent at this time. Also examine if a form of "de-amalgamation" with creation of local service centres to address concerns of citizens throughout the city who are dissatisfied with the present system.

**Conclusion:** Continued tax increases at above the rate of inflation, plus increased water and wastewater rates together with growing user fees can only have a negative effect, creating hardship and affect the quality of life for many of our citizens who will not "benefit" from proposed new and expensive projects which appear to be for special interest groups. The city should be looking at low cost improvements that benefit the majority of our residents.