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Addressing Poverty Together



Reducing Poverty - Municipal Role

Message from the General Manager, Catherine Matheson

Amongst a range of key municipal responsibilities is the delivery of services and poverty reduction strategies for the community's most vulnerable citizens. Poverty reduction is one of the 12 challenges identified by the Healthy Community Cabinet. While many organizations, volunteers, and levels of government play a key role in poverty reduction, the City of Greater Sudbury is charged with a legislated responsibility to deliver mandated services and with an ethical responsibility to care for the City's most vulnerable.

Beyond the legislated responsibility, the City of Greater Sudbury through direction of Council has taken on a key leadership role for building community capacity, integrating human service delivery, promoting leadership and collaboration amongst our community partners, with an aim to reduce poverty.

The Mayor and Council, as an elected board of governors, understand firsthand the impact of poverty on individuals, families and children. Whether it is constituents who are struggling to earn a living wage, find

suitable and affordable housing, or access food or affordable social and active living programs, the needs are clear. Poverty is not only doing without, it is the cause of lost opportunities for individuals and their families. Poverty is directly linked to increased social and health costs and, in general, the loss of human potential.

This newsletter will highlight some of the key roles and responsibilities of the Community Development Department toward poverty reduction. The Community Development Department role is not limited to the direct delivery of services such as Ontario Works, Employment Support Services, Childrens Services and child care subsidies. The Department also facilitates the development of community partnerships and collaborative efforts through areas such as the Healthy Community Cabinet, Community Action Networks, Best Start Networks, the Homelessness Network and the list goes on. Actions continue to be taken in a holistic approach towards improving human health and community sustainability.



Points about Poverty

National Initiatives

In 1989, the House of Commons pledged to eliminate child poverty by the year 2000; however, no action plan was developed and progress was not monitored. There has been a call from social advocates for a federal strategy, but nothing is in place at this time.

Provincial Initiatives

The Provincial Government is aiming to reduce the number of children living in poverty by 25% over five years through Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy. The initiative highlights that "building strong and safe communities is one of the best ways to help low-income families enjoy a better quality of life". Ontario joins Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador in proposing poverty reduction strategies.

Local Initiatives

The Community Strategy to Reduce Poverty in the City of Greater Sudbury, produced by the Social Planning Council of Sudbury, lists seven recommendations, many of which emphasize local action and community involvement. The Social Planning Council is also the lead agency for the Civic Engagement/ Social Capital pillar of the Healthy Community Strategy.

A presentation and information report will be brought forward to Council in the fall pertaining to the municipal role in assisting the provincial government reach its poverty reduction goals. It is noted in the report that there are many synergies between the report produced by the Social Planning Council of Sudbury and the responsibilities local governments will assume. Greater Sudbury is ahead of the process by having identified poverty as a challenge through the Healthy Community Strategy and working with the Healthy Community Cabinet to affect change.

**Healthy Community
City of Greater Sudbury**



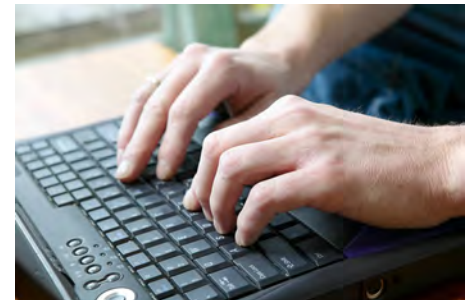
**Communauté en santé
Ville du Grand Sudbury**

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There are twenty CAP sites throughout Greater Sudbury

- The Canadian Hearing Society
- Centre de santé communautaire de Sudbury
- Collège Boréal
- The Independent Living Resource Centre
- Le Carrefour francophone de Sudbury
- Sudbury en ligne – Partir d'un bon pas pour un avenir meilleur
- The Sudbury Métis Council Office
- The Sudbury Public Libraries (13 in total).

Surfing the Internet at Community Access Program (CAP) Sites

The Government of Canada has initiated a program that provides the public with free internet access through CAP sites. Industry Canada is responsible for overseeing the program and connecting with communities to ensure Canadians have access to technology and supports for job-

searching and skills training. Also linked with CAP is a youth initiative (YI) for students, recent graduates and under/unemployed persons between the ages of 15 and 30 years. This initiative facilitates the transition to the labour market by employing youth as interns at the CAP sites.



Poverty: A Civic Engagement/ Social Capital Sustainable Development Challenge



The Healthy Community Strategy identifies “Civic Engagement/ Social Capital” as a strategic priority. Poverty is noted as one of the sustainable development challenges of this pillar. Although poverty is an issue that is shared globally, the focus of the Greater Sudbury Healthy Community Cabinet, who is overseeing the strategy, is to develop local programs to mitigate the difficulties experienced by members in our community.

The Social Planning Council of Sudbury is leading the activities of the Social Capital/ Civic Engagement pillar. They are currently in the process of building a community garden on land leased from the Roman Catholic Diocese of Sault Sainte Marie at the site of the former Foyer d’Youville orphanage, off of Ste. Anne Road downtown. A number of partnerships have been formed to facilitate the success of the project; numerous tools and supplies were donated by local businesses.

Approximately 50 volunteers gathered at the start of June to build twelve raised plots. All of the plots have been allocated for this growing season to a combination of individuals and social service agencies. ‘Unwaged’ individuals paid \$5 for a plot and ‘waged’ individuals were charged \$35. Gardeners are required to volunteer at least 12 hours over the gardening season for the maintenance and upkeep of the grounds. A ground plot is also being constructed to grow vegetables that will be donated to local charities.

Some of the goals of the Ste Anne Community Garden include to: support good health, build self-esteem, educate and supplement local food systems. Community gardens provide a social setting for people to grow healthy and nutritious foods. Aside from benefiting from locally grown produce, gardening is a relaxing and rewarding activity that helps people help themselves.

Feel Free to Feel Fit: Public Access Recreation Opportunities

No matter where you live within the City, free recreation opportunities are not hard to find. The City of Greater Sudbury operates and maintains a plethora of venues that are open and available to the public throughout the year. Residents of all ages are welcome to play on the fields, swing at the parks, cool-off at any of the beaches or feel the adrenalin at the height of the skateboard park. In fact, according to the Parks, Open Space & Leisure Master Plan, the supply of playgrounds in Greater Sudbury is “far and away” amongst the highest seen in Ontario municipalities.

Many of the community assets we enjoy for free are the result of community partnerships and volunteer involvement; for example, free skates are available through the Sudbury & District Health Unit Skate Exchange Program, nature trails are planned and carved by Rainbow Routes, playground equipment is often sponsored by non-profit organizations and installed by volunteers, and ball fields are shared with district school boards. Community involvement in Greater Sudbury is outstanding; there is a unified desire to ensure that opportunities exist for everyone – literally “building community together”.





Best Start Program Demonstrates Benefits of Civic Engagement

Best Start is an initiative designed to give Ontario's children the best possible start in life and help them achieve their fullest potential. Locally, the Best Start initiative is implemented by the Greater Sudbury Best Start Network, which is a group of agencies and organizations working together with the City to support families in Greater Sudbury. In many ways, this initiative is a great example of moving forward in civic engagement, one of the strategic priorities of the Healthy Community Strategy.

Best Start Hubs empower families to take ownership of their hubs. Hubs are family centres aimed at offering children and their families a place to meet, to learn and to grow together. A key element of Best Start is that parents are involved in directing the initiative. Parents play a pivotal role in their child's development as they are a child's first and most influential teacher; therefore it is crucial for parents to participate in the planning process of Best Start strategies. Parents are involved in directing what it is they need and have a voice when it comes to the programming and planning of each hub.

Best Start builds community pride and fosters a sense of belonging. This initiative is an integrated, community-driven one which builds upon the strengths of all its members. The four school boards, specialized service agencies, the Health Unit, Social Planning Council, provincial and municipal government and all other agencies working with and for the families of Greater Sudbury come together to move Best Start forward. Each year events take place to celebrate the successes within the Best Start initiative and foster relationships with all partners – these events bring together over a hundred people with a shared interest to serve families. The sense of partnership and success that these events promote are brought forward into the hubs by the hub staff who provide a welcoming and positive environment for all families.

Best Start provides access to services and supports for all families, regardless of individual, economic or social circumstances. Hubs offer free services to all families and provide access to specialized services as needed. In October 2008 there were approximately



4000 visits from adults & children to all hubs. Families of children with special needs can find the resources they need and low-income families can find resources to subsidies. Families do not need to meet any criteria – all ages and abilities are welcome.

Best Start recognizes that building a family-friendly community is a shared responsibility. The City is a facilitator with all local agencies and organizations who have an interest in serving local families. Together we create a Best Start for every child.

Creating Partnerships for Kids

The Leisure Services Division has developed partnerships with local agencies to give children in the community an opportunity to participate in summer programs. The Human League, the Sudbury-Manitoulin Children's Foundation, the Children's Aid Society, and the Greater Sudbury Housing Corporation (GSHC) all have programs that reimburse the City of Greater Sudbury for the

registration fees of underprivileged children in the community. The GSHC offers 100% subsidies for children aged 5-12 years living within its housing units and also offers space at Rumball Terrace (1960 Paris Street) for the Playground program. In order to ensure availability, the Leisure Services Division reserves spaces in various programs for subsidized participants.





Libraries: Unrestricted Access to Information

Our Libraries offer:

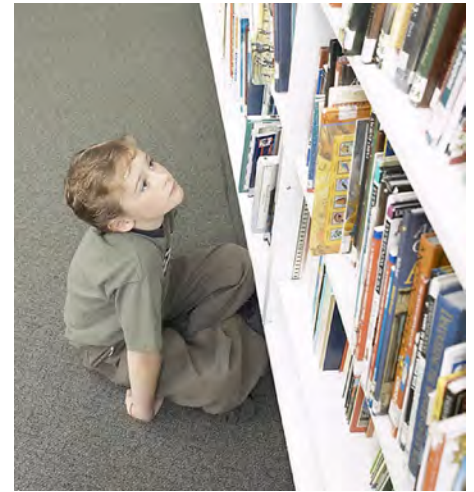
- Public lectures
- Information sessions
- Outreach programs
- 'Meet the author' nights
- Family 'story time'
- Movie matinees for seniors
- Wii days for teens
- Themed workshops
- Shut-in services
- Museum in a Suitcase presentations
- School and daycare visits
- Contest and competitions
- Crafts and games
- Reading clubs.

The presence of a library in our community dates back as far as 1897. Libraries offer unrestricted access to information through public use of various resources. There are thirteen libraries situated throughout the City of Greater Sudbury.

The Greater Sudbury Public Library offers more than books; patrons can find the complete DVD collection of popular television programs such as *Bones*, *CSI, 24*, *The Office*, *Lost* and *Ghost Whisperer*, to name a few.

Community involvement is key to the operation of the Greater Sudbury Public Library. Numerous public and private sectors have developed partnerships with our local libraries, including experts at Comics North and Chapters who offered free advice about titles for a graphic novel collection. Volunteers are important contributors

to the ongoing success of providing information and resources to the community. "But you don't have to take my word for it" as famously stated by LeVar Burton of *Reading Rainbow*.



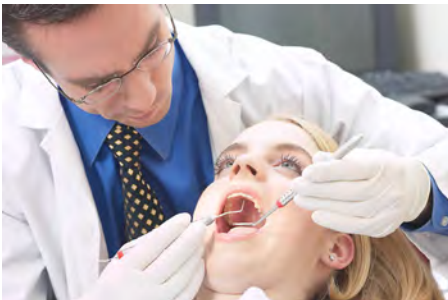
Ontario Works: Mandatory and Discretionary Benefits

Ontario Works is a provincial program offered by the Ministry of Community and Social Services. The City of Greater Sudbury Social Services Division is the local program administrator. Community members in need of temporary financial assistance can apply and be linked to the necessary resources, supports and services to meet basic needs and begin the transition to a more permanent source of income.

Ontario Works recipients are entitled to certain mandatory benefits, including: drug coverage, dental and vision care for children, eye examinations, childcare and start-up funds, preventing eviction or preventing the discontinuance of utilities.

Discretionary benefits are also available, including: dental and vision care for adults, prosthetics, funerals and burials, vocational training and moving expenses.

The Social Services Division has an annual budget of approximately \$101 million which includes both Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program. The Division is divided into five areas: income support, family support, employment support, homelessness initiatives and finance. As part of the Community Development Department, the Social Services Division works towards a common mission of "achieving service delivery excellence".





A Home for All: Pioneer Manor

Q: If there is a senior in the community who can't afford the nursing home rates at Pioneer Manor, what policies/ programs are in place to subsidize them?

A: At Pioneer Manor there are basic, semi and private rooms. The basic rooms are subject to a rate reduction based on the resident's notice of assessment from the previous year. If a resident wishes to come into a preferred accommodation (private or semi private) rate reduction is not available.

Q: Are residents who are subsidized permitted to have a little bit of spending money, like an allowance?

A: The rate reduction is based on the total income minus \$125 per month (increased every year) for comfort allowance. So, residents who qualify for a rate reduction would normally have extra money from their pension cheques once their accommodation is paid.

Q: Is there a waiting list for subsidized beds, like there is for rent-geared-to-income housing?

A: The waitlist is managed by Community Care Access and is over 500 right now, but they do not keep a separate waitlist for subsidized beds....if the bed available is a basic bed, then the next resident on the waitlist is offered the bed and then we would apply for rate reduction if a resident's pension was too low.

Q: Are nursing home rates standardized, or does each facility have its own fee structure?

A: The Ministry of Health and Long Term Care sets the rates for all nursing home beds in the province.

Q: Poverty encompasses more than income, are there residents who don't have any family or friends to visit them? What programs/ activities are in place to create a sense of inclusion?

A: There are very good activation programs at Pioneer Manor, which ensure residents are involved in some type of either individual or group activity on a daily basis based on the resident's desire to participate. For example, we have Bingo, movie night, tea parties, mass, school choirs, etc. At Christmas time, the staff from the Data Center bring gifts for the residents who do not have family, etc.

Q: Are there free activities at Pioneer Manor for residents who cannot afford to participate in paid outings?

A: Yes, on a daily basis there are activities for residents in-house and free of charge.

Q: Are prescription medications paid for by Pioneer Manor through the nursing home fees or is each resident responsible for paying for their own prescriptions?

A: The Ministry has the Ontario Drug Benefits "ODB" program that covers the medication orders for residents in LTC - this is billed through the Pharmacy directly to the Ministry. Our Physicians ensure they follow this formulary when prescribing medications for residents who do not have third party coverage (ie. Manulife for retired INCO employees). If the medication is not covered through ODB, they do not have 3rd party coverage and the resident requires the medication, the Physician will apply to the MOHLTC for funding.



Type of Accommodation

	Daily	Monthly
Basic	\$53.07	\$1,614.21
Semi-Private	\$61.07	\$1,857.55
Private	\$71.07	\$2,161.71

Q: Do you have equipment that residents can borrow rather than buy, like walkers for example?

A: Yes, all residents are provided the equipment that they require - if a resident does not have the funds to pay for a walker or wheelchair there is an inventory of donated equipment to lend to the resident. There is also an "Assistive Device Program" to help fund equipment for all residents in Ontario. Some Service Clubs donate to a specific resident (ie. MS Society for a resident suffering from MS).





Community Action Networks: Grassroots Involvement

CAN Activities

- Host annual Christmas parties for local children.
- Develop trails in cooperation with Rainbow Routes.
- Organize neighbourhood/highway/cemetery clean-up programs.
- Host activities for children/youth in partnership with Greater Sudbury Police Services.
- Assist local clubs and associations host annual community festivals.
- Volunteer to install new neighbourhood playground equipment.
- Maintain roadside planters for community beautification and pride.
- Develop local program opportunities for youth.

The Terms of Reference for the Community Action Networks (CANs) state that they “bring people together to build a Healthy Community”. These neighbourhood groups do more than simply advise the Community Development Department about important issues, they volunteer time to realize a vision for enhanced quality of life.

Community Action Networks are structured with an executive committee, including: a chairperson, co-chairperson, a secretary and a treasurer. The aims of the groups are to respond to identified community needs, facilitate and promote activities, work in partnership with necessary community agencies, undertake new initiatives in response to community priorities and recognize the focus of the Healthy Community Charter.

There are 15 Community Action Networks in Greater Sudbury, with membership numbering in the hundreds. Volunteers work cohesively as a team to build community pride, enhance livability, make changes and advocate for improved standards. Although there are no easy solutions for solving poverty, Community Action Networks offer a proactive way of addressing issues that result in improved community living for everyone.



Helping with Home Repairs

In January 2009, the City of Greater Sudbury Housing Services Section accepted applications from homeowners who needed financial assistance for home repairs. The Northern Home Repair Program was a joint effort between three levels of government: federal, provincial and municipal. In order to qualify for the program, applicants had to own and reside in their home, have an annual household income less than \$52,800 and the value of the house could not exceed \$175,000.

Eligible applicants were entitled to a maximum of \$10,000 for repairs in the following categories: structural, electrical, plumbing, heating, energy conservation and accessibility modifications for disabled residents. Cosmetic and aesthetic repairs were not eligible for financing.

A second initiative provided applicants with up to \$20,000 for constructing a new apartment in their home. The apartments had to be self-contained, have a separate entrance, the proper zoning and meet all of the fire and building code requirements in order to qualify.

The funds for both building projects were payable through a 20 year, interest free forgivable loan. The loans were secured by second mortgages registered against the homes; in the event of sale, the loans are required to be repaid.





Building Affordable Housing

The federal and provincial governments partnered to create the Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program in 2005 to help an estimated 20,000 Ontario households secure affordable housing by 2010. Northern Ontario (defined as north of the French River) was allocated \$20 million to encourage the repair or development of modest and affordable rental housing. The Housing Services Division of the Community Development Department is the Service Manager for Greater Sudbury. Under the Northern Housing Component of the initiative, \$7.175 million was made available to the community for 142 units.

A request for proposals was issued in July 2008 and was subsequently awarded to two non-profit housing corporations to build affordable housing units in Greater Sudbury. Capreol Non-Profit Housing Corporation is in the process of building 20 units for seniors and Raiffeisen Corporation Homes Inc. is building 80 mixed units.

Under the Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program, tenants cannot exceed annual income limits set by the City of Greater Sudbury (see below). As well, rental rates are required to be at or below the Average Market Rents defined by the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation based on the most recent survey of the year the units are occupied. Funding through the program cannot exceed \$50,000 per unit and the funds are forgivable and interest free. Forgiveness is earned at 5% per year over the 20 year affordability period. Occupancy of both projects in Greater Sudbury is expected at the end of 2009.



Income Limit by Bedroom Count		City of Greater Sudbury 2008 Average Market Rent, CMHC	
Bedroom Size	Maximum Annual Income Limit	Unit Type	Average Market Rent
1 Bedroom	\$36,000	1 Bedroom	\$651
2 Bedroom	\$42,750	2 Bedroom	\$800
3 Bedroom	\$46,100	3 Bedroom	\$917

Offering Families Support through Ontario Works



As a condition of eligibility, Ontario Works (OW) clients are required to pursue child and spousal support. Family Support Workers, employed by the Social Services Division, assist OW recipients by locating absent parents, drafting support orders and agreements, representing clients in legal proceedings and ensuring that single parents have the financial support for which they are legally entitled. Funds received from support payments are deducted from monthly entitlement cheques; however, no deductions are made if clients are not receiving support.

When support payments are in default, Family Support Workers assist clients by filing the necessary paperwork with the courts and with the Family Responsibility Office. The Family Responsibility Office tracks payors in default (including through posted profiles on www.goodparentspay.com) and enforces court-ordered support payments. Payments in default more than 60 days can be enforced by: garnishment, driver's license suspension, credit bureau reporting, reporting to the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation for seizing lottery winnings or a writ filed with the sheriff for seizure and sale.



Poverty Reduction Policy in Ontario

by: Annette J Reszczynski,
Senior Social Planner,
Social Planning Council of Sudbury

At the municipal level

Recently the City of Greater Sudbury officially added their name to the list of communities, citizens and organizations across the province and endorsed* the 25-in-5 Founding Declaration setting out three priorities for a Poverty Reduction Strategy which include:

1. good, sustaining jobs that lift working Ontarians out of poverty;
2. liveable incomes that adequately support those unable to work; and,
3. strong and supportive communities mean affordable housing, child care, public education and community programs that help people connect.

* Complete CGS declaration available at www.povertywatchontario.ca/motions-and-resolutions

At the provincial level

Bill 152 - The Poverty Reduction Act

Ontario has taken a historic step forward on poverty reduction with the all-party approval of Bill 152, the Poverty Reduction Act. The legislation requires Ontario to set a new poverty reduction target and plan of action at least every five years, and to consult regularly on its progress with low income people, groups at heightened risk of poverty, and other stakeholders.

Amendments were made to the original Bill after the Legislature's Standing Committee on Social Policy heard suggestions over two days of public hearings from two dozen community representatives, and received over 40 written submissions. Amendments that were advanced by community groups and accepted by the Committee include: a commitment to reduce adult poverty alongside child and family poverty; a recognition of the need to address discrimination and the barriers faced by disadvantaged groups; a requirement that Ontarians and, in particular, low-income people, be involved in design and implementation of poverty reduction strategies; and, specific timelines for annual reporting to the Legislature.

The 25 in 5 Network expressed disappointment that, "While the legislation falls short of envisioning a poverty-free province, Ontario has entered the field of jurisdictions with a legislative commitment to setting targets and timelines for poverty reduction and that is an important step," said Peter Clutterbuck of the Social Planning Network of Ontario.

Ontario Launches Province-wide Housing Consultation

The Ontario government has promised to develop a comprehensive plan to ensure everyone has "adequate, suitable and affordable housing" and it has launched a provincial consultation plan. Over the summer, provincial housing minister Jim Watson will be hosting regional meetings in 12 communities across Ontario including Sudbury on September 24th 2009; every MPP will be encouraged to host at least one meeting in their riding; and the government has launched a new web site to collect issues and solutions.

Put Food in the Budget

SPNO is working in partnership with the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHA), the Stop Community Food Centre and local poverty reduction groups and public health departments in communities across Ontario to urge the Ontario Government to introduce a \$100/month Healthy Food Supplement added to the Basic Needs Allowance of all Ontario adults on Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Supports Program.

The introduction of the Healthy Food Supplement as a first step toward income adequacy for people on social assistance would be a clear gesture by the Ontario Government that it is committed to serious transformative change in its planned Social Assistance Review.



Links



Poverty Watch Ontario
www.povertywatchontario.ca

25 in 5: Poverty Reduction Network
www.25in5.ca

Provincial Poverty Reduction Strategy
www.gov.on.ca/children/english/index.html

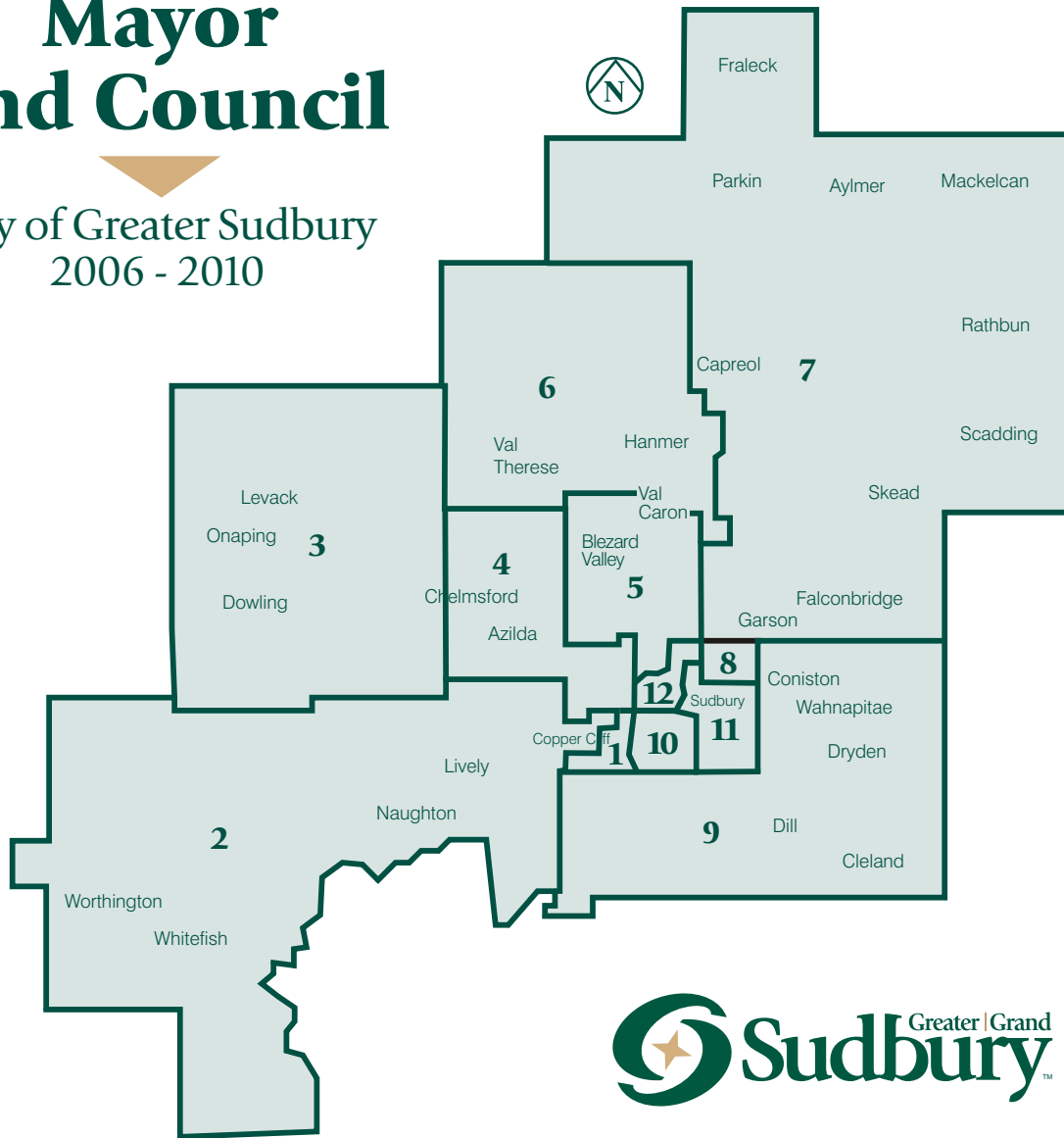
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
www.ontario.ca/housingstrategy

Housing Network of Ontario
www.stableandaffordable.com



Mayor and Council

City of Greater Sudbury
2006 - 2010



Mayor
John Rodriguez



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Jacques Barbeau



Ward 1
Joe Cimino



Ward 7
Russ Thompson



Ward 8
Ted Callaghan



Ward 3
Claude Berthiaume



Ward 9
Doug Craig



Ward 4
Evelyn Dutrisac



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