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## Greater Sudbury: A Strategy for Change.

By PAUL LEFEBVRE

The City of Greater Sudbury is ready for change. I can sense it when I'm out knocking on doors or speaking with citizens from all walks of life. I am running to be a part of that change.

But what will that change look like? Some say we should be halting all investment in our city, and instead hiring expensive consultants to perform long audits. But is this what Greater Sudbury needs right now? Will this result in reversing tax increases or cuts in services we have experienced over the last decade or so?

Certainly, we must also be mindful of how we spend tax dollars, but we do not need to put the city on hold for years of costly audits to do it.

We need to instill a 'value for money' culture throughout the organization. We must stretch every tax dollar and multiply every investment by obtaining maximum support from other levels of government. I have the personal experiences and relationships to make this happen.

I propose greater use of the city's internal auditor's office to look to best practices in Ontario municipalities, create benchmarks for performance, and monitor results. In short, build accountability into the system.

But this alone will not guarantee we control tax increases. For that we need to expand our tax base by taking advantage of the opportunities before us. Did you know that the population in Greater Sudbury has not seen a substantial change since amalgamation?

And that leads to the real change Greater Sudbury needs. It starts with setting a goal. One that is both ambitious and achievable. My goal is to grow our city to 200,000 citizens over the next 20 years. This will require a focus on sustainable growth, attraction of investment, talent, and building a city where people are drawn by the ability to work, live, and play. Sudbury must fulfill its potential to be one of the best places to live in Canada.

Sudbury is well positioned for sustainable growth. We are poised to be a leader in the green economy. The growth of the electric vehicle market, and other forms of electrification, have made demand for our resources and knowledge highly desirable. We have many of the critical minerals that will be required of the new economy.

Many of our existing businesses, and educational and research organizations are at the forefront of providing goods and services needed for this transformation. The resources are here; what is required, we hear time and again, are the people to power these businesses and organizations that will help them meet their full potential.

How do we make the changes at city hall to help make that happen? First, let's start with encouraging investment and development. And we do that in two ways: Promote and market the city; cut down on red tape that too often finds ways to delay projects, rather than promote them.

As Mayor I will take an approach that has worked in many communities – to ensure investors are guided through the city's process, not discouraged by it. I want these files on my desk, and I will take personal responsibility for them.

I will also make every effort to promote our city nationally and internationally – to investors, businesses, and individuals looking for opportunity. As Mayor, I will be Greater Sudbury's brand ambassador, promoting the city across Canada and around the world, as I did so enthusiastically as MP for Sudbury.

Lastly, as I have said, we need to invest in ourselves. These investments should be strategic, affordable, and desirable for existing and future generations. We need to follow best practises in urban planning that reflects the values of this generation: Create inviting spaces and facilities where people gather to work and play; provide a variety of recreational opportunities; and, ensure we are doing our best to protect the environment and promote sustainability.

The last council borrowed \$200 million to make big investments. It spent several million already on the KED project, and hopes to create new event and cultural spaces with what is left. I commit to reviewing these projects, to ensure meet our requirements, will leverage public and private investment, and are affordable to our taxpayers. We must invest in ourselves, and the money borrowed gives us a unique opportunity to do so, but at current interest rates there should be no additional borrowing - we will need to live within our means and deliver the best facilities we can within that budget or less.

It is within our power to take full advantage of our city's potential. And I have very personal reasons to make that happen.

More than 20 years ago, my wife I and chose to make our home in Greater Sudbury. I chose to practice law here and build my businesses here. My wife chose to establish her medical practice here. Together, we chose to raise our three children here ... and it has been terrific. Greater Sudbury offers an unparalleled quality of life for families.

Now, the greatest wish my wife and I have is that our children decide to stay and live their lives in Greater Sudbury - just as we did 20 years ago. In fact, we want that for every family in this great city. Our citizens, young and old, deserve to live healthy, prosperous lives in a city that values them. Our children deserve opportunities for the future and good-paying jobs.

I'm running to be your mayor because I believe these things are achievable ... and I am committed to working with all of you create the city we all want and deserve. I am committed to growing our tax base grow and strategic investments.

I am running for Mayor of the City of Greater Sudbury because I believe that, together, we can make good things happen.

*Paul Lefebvre is a candidate for Mayor of the City of Greater Sudbury.*