

**Report on FONOM Conference 2024
Sudbury, Ontario**

“Unlocking the North’s Potential”

May 6-8, 2024

Delegates:

Paula Summers, Deputy-Mayor

Betty Ann Dunbar, Councilor

(author of report: Sally Hagman, Mayor, who attended on behalf of ADSAB)

We would like to extend heartfelt thanks to Mayor and Council in supporting us to attend this Conference. It truly was an enlightening experience, not only hearing the speakers but also to meet other representatives from Northern Ontario municipalities.

The event opened with the singing of O’Canada followed by the Land Acknowledgment.

Paul Lefebvre, Mayor for the City of Greater Sudbury gave the opening remarks followed by a video welcome by the **Honourable Paul Calandra**, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Robin Jones, ROMA President, gave welcoming remarks on behalf of ROMA encouraging delegates to reach out through our representative Mark Wilson to advocate on our behalf.

Alan Carter, Global News Anchor gave the Keynote presentation where he spoke about massaging the message and getting the rest of the story out to television viewers.

Ahmad Al-Ali, Director of Business Development at OPG and **Paul Norris**, President of Ontario Waterpower Association gave an update on investing in a clean future and Northern Ontario opportunities in relation to wind, solar, water and nuclear power.

Honourable George Pirie, Minister of Mining, spoke of the mining industry and the increase in development in Northern Ontario as it relates to our province moving towards electric driven vehicles.

Honourable Stan Cho, Minister of Long Term Care spoke of the advancements and the recognition that there will be a demand for long term care support as the baby boomers age.

Honourable Michael Tibollo, Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions spoke of the opioid and fentanyl addictions and opening up more centres to deal with the increase of users but also educating young people of the dangers.

Honourable Graydon Smith, Minister of Natural Resources spoke of the opportunities for opening Crown Land for Housing Development.

Honourable Vijay Thanigassalam, Associate Minister for the Ministry of Transportation spoke of the addition of a third lane to Highway 11 North of North Bay and Highway 17 West of Kenora. The question was asked as to when we can expect the completion of the four lanes on Hwy. 69. This question was asked repeatedly over the course of the conference and an answer was not forthcoming giving a definitive date of completion.

The Minister's Forum allowed delegates to ask questions to the Minister's represented in relationship to our areas of concern.

NWMO sponsored a reception at Dynamic Earth.

Tuesday, May 7, 2024

Chad Evans, Ontario Northland Transportation gave an overview of how the agency will be modernized, building capacity ensuring it will be future-ready

- One railcar = 2.5 transports
- Ontario Northland has 950+ employees across the province and growing
- They provide motor coach and passenger rail services as well as rail freight, providing transportation services so people living in the north can easily access education, social services, airports and other transportation providers and more.
- They are in receipt of 2 accessible motor coaches in March with the purchase of 3 more motor coaches this year.
- Rail and ties replacement – plan to replace roughly 17 miles of rail and 57,500 at ties at various locations including Temagami, Kapuskasing and north of Cochrane
- Replacement of two bridges and rehabilitation of two bridges with in the Kapuskasing subdivision and rehabilitation of one bridge north of Cochrane
- Demolition and replacement of the storage building in North Bay
- Three New trains will have at your seat dining, Wi-Fi and entertainment options, comfortable seating, a focus on accessibility, business class options
- Construction of the Timmins-Porcupine Station set to begin in 2025

Wendy Landry, President of NOMA and Mayor of the Township of Shuniah, gave an overview from NOMA on initiatives that they are advocating on. Priority Issues include:

- Public health care including funding, human health resources and agency nurses/locums
- Northern Ontario road safety, maintenance and rest stops
- Retention of surplus proceeds from tax sales – NOMA requested the government to reinstate legislation permitting a municipality to retain surplus proceeds from tax sales and to use those additional funds to address housing and other needs in their communities.
- Women and other marginalized groups in politics
- Sale of Crown land for housing development – NOMA requested the province to conduct a survey and evaluate all crown land within municipal boards in Northern Ontario to determine if they are eligible to be sold for development.
- Railway costs – NOMA requested government conduct consultations with municipalities to discuss railway costs.
- NOMA – FONOM – NOSDA concerns of mental health, homelessness and substance use be revisited in Northern Ontario requesting support for new and existing housing first programs, long term funding for capital repairs on community housing units and establishing mandated mobile crisis intervention teams.

Ulf Stahmer, Senior Transportation Engineer, NWMO, gave an overview of used fuel transportation and the upcoming decision of NWMO for the location of the new storage site. The announcement will be coming in the Fall 2024.

- Our mandate is to develop and implement collaboratively with Canadian management approach for the long term care of Canada's used nuclear fuel that is socially acceptable, technically sound, environmentally responsible and economically feasible
- There will not be transportation for 20 years (2044)

Colin Best, AMO President, gave an overview of AMO's training initiatives for Mayors and Councilors. He also reminded delegates of the AMO Conference in Ottawa and the opening of applications for delegations.

- Municipalities are key partners in Ontario's prosperity providing critical services that are central to Ontario's economic competitiveness and quality of life - \$64 billion in annual investments and \$484 billion in infrastructure owned and operated for the public
- The municipal fiscal framework is broken – long standing structural problems have combined with growth pressures, economic factors and provincial policy decisions to push municipalities to the brink
- Municipal revenue does not grow with the economy of inflations – the annual inflation in 2022 was 6.8%
- Municipalities invest \$64 billion each year in services and infrastructure. Almost one third of annual expenditures pay for services at are provincial responsibilities everywhere else in Canada
- The provincial government offsets municipal investments in house, health and social services but only in part
- In 2022 municipal expenditures in these areas outpaced provincial grants by 3.8 billion and this doesn't include \$400 million on hospital capital for which communities are on the hook.
- Building 1.5 million homes by 2031 depends on building essential municipal infrastructure and public investment to support it.
- Ontario's municipalities are planning for capital expenditures of \$250 - \$290 billion over the next 10 years – over \$100 billion of this is growth related
- Municipalities can't fix the social safety net – in the last five years municipal expenditures on homelessness have increased by 200% - property taxes weren't built to fund systemic social change – as of 2021 Ontario's property taxes were already the second highest in Canada. In 2024 and beyond, many municipalities will be forced to raise property taxes at a time when many can least afford it.
- Ontario has been under-investing in programs for years. Ontario needs to spend about \$2,000 more per capita to catch up with the national average – real per capita spending in post-secondary education, children and social services and education have all declined by more than 10% since 2018
- AMO is the Government of Ontario to sit down with municipalities and work together on a joint review of revenues, costs and financial risks, including a detailed analysis of Ontario's infrastructure investment and service delivery needs. Ontario's municipalities are united and engaged. AMO's goal is government commitment to a social and economic prosperity review at the AMO Conference

Gail Spencer, Manager of Housing Stability and Homeless and **Cindy Junkala**, Coordinator of Shelters and Homelessness addressed Sudbury's approach to addressing homelessness

- Two key recommendations to the Ministry of Health
 - A comprehensive integrated health system is needed
 - Every OHT must have rural municipal representation
- Funding is provided from the federal, provincial and municipal governments – providing 2 community outreach teams and 3 emergency shelter programs (73 beds) including the housing First program, CHPI Homelessness prevention and extreme cold weather alert program
- As of May 1, 2024 there were 231 individuals actively homeless
 - 54 are staying in encampments
 - 70 unsheltered (abandoned buildings, cares, street)
 - 67 in emergency shelters
 - 40 are provisionally accommodated (couch surfing, hospital) or “unknown”
- Individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness are directed to community access points where trained staff use a common assessment tool to evaluate the individual's or family's need, prioritize them for housing and/or support services and match them to available housing that meets their needs.
- In order to participate in the Coordinated Access System and individual or family must have been homeless for 14 days or more, be unable to resolve their own homelessness and consent to having their name added to the by name priority list
- Community partners in the coordinated access system include: Canadian Mental Health Association Sudbury/Manitoulin, Centre de Sante Communautaire du Grand Sudbury, City of Great Sudbury Social Services, Elizabeth Fry Society, North Eastern Ontario, Health Science North, John Howard Society, Monarch Recovery Services, N'swakomok Native Friendship Centre, Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services, Reseau Access Network, Sudbury Nurse Practitioner Clinic, Salvation Army Cedar Place Women and Family Shelter
- Client navigators include 9 new positions to help people navigate the system from homelessness to housing by assisting them with getting ID, flex funds, addition to their name to the list connecting with OW.ODSP, social housing applications, annual reviews, case planning etc.
- Client navigators work collaboratively with: community outreach, indigenous partners, emergency shelters, housing services, healthcare partners, libraries, Ontario works, Ontario Disability Support Program and community housing
- Next steps: staff will be presenting a “roadmap to end homelessness by 2030” to Council on May 28, 2024 – housing is the only solution for homelessness, municipalities cannot solve homelessness alone; significant systems transformation needed with health care, corrections and mental health

MP Marc Serre, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, spoke about Natural Resources, Forestry and the Green Economy in Northern Ontario

Merit Stiles, Leader of the Ontario NDP, criticized the government for not finishing the four laneing of Highway 69 as well as addressing the housing shortage

Bonnie Crombie, Leader of the Liberal Party, provided a backdrop of her family and her interest in entering the world of politics. She stressed concern for the budget citing the 9 Billion Dollar deficit and the 214 Billion spent by the Conservatives. Housing, education and mental health and addiction are top priorities for the Liberals if elected as the next provincial party.

Alexandra Moskalyk, Sr. Manager for Community Relations and **Sanjiv (Sonny) Karunakaran**, Vice President, Strategic Projects and Partnerships spoke for Hydro One – Energizing Life for People

- Hydro One energizes life for people and communities helping Ontarians live a better and brighter future covering: 640,000km² of service territory, 1.5 million residential and business customers across Ontario, 30,000 km of high-voltage transmission lines, 9,300 skilled employees who live and work across Ontario, 125,000 km of local distribution lines, 306 transmission stations, 1.6 million distribution poles and over 100 years of experience!

Ian Dunn, President and CAO of Ontario Forestry Industry Association, **Steve Street**, Executive Director of Wood Works and **Terry Skiffington**, CEO of Green First's Kapuskasing Paper provided a Forestry Update based on the role of advanced wood products in recognizing the situation with homelessness, emergency shelters, supportive housing, subsidized housing, market rental housing and market home ownership. During COVID there was the added pressure of the high cost of borrowing money, incentivizing the correct kind of housing and the workforce declining – no work means a skilled workforce will look for new employment opportunities. Since the end of Covid, federal and provincial governments are actively creating housing policies, increasing productivity. City planning is recognizing existing infrastructure and community and family focus, thereby creating new manufacturing capacity and supporting expansion of existing infrastructure. There are now workforce opportunities to augment new and existing capacity providing skills development and expansion investment. The forest industry is providing new opportunities in construction looking at affordable. Ontario is expanding mass timber construction up to 18 stories. This will reduce costs over time while supporting good paying jobs in forestry, technology, engineering design and manufacturing. Currently Ontario's Building Code allows encapsulated mass timber construction buildings up to 12 stories tall. The province intends to amend the building code in the coming months to permit encapsulated mass timber construction up to 18 stories. Currently saw mills and pulp and paper mills are well balanced for chips and biomass. The effect of closing pulp and paper mills has affected the communities Terrace Bay, Espanola and Timiskaming leaving three pulp and paper mills in the province situated in Thunder Bay, Dryden and Kenora.

Alan Spacek, MPAC Board of Directors Chair, **Nicole McNeil**, MPAC President and CAO and **Carmelo Lipsi**, Vice President, Valuation and Customer Relations and Chief Operating Officer provided information on the provincial system review as it relates to the importance of regular assessments, information exchange for municipal partners and building enhanced services and products that meet the evolving needs of all those served. In 2023, 5.6 million properties were inventoried, 400,000 sales transactions processed, 160,000 property inspections, 17,500 severances and consolidations processed, 300,000 building permits processed, 87% of new assessments were added within one year of occupancy, 129,600 calls from property owners – emails and chats, 8,700 requests for consideration and 8,800 appeals closed. In Northeastern

Ontario there were 417 municipal engagements, 505 municipal tax applications, 6,339 sales reviews, 10,792 building permits completed, 415 requests for reconsideration and 248 appeals closed on 86 properties in 2023. There were 9,226 permits received in 2023 in Northeastern Ontario with Greater Sudbury (1,224), Sault Ste. Marie (1,120), North Bay (488), West Nipissing (378) and Timmins (350) being in the top five. There are resources, tips and more supporting property owners and municipalities on mpac.ca

Gimma Craig Nootchtai, Atikameksheng Anishawbek, **Chief Larry Roque**, Wahnapiatae First Nation, **Mayor Paul Lefebvre**, Greater Sudbury engaged in an open and transparent discussion on the relationship between First Nation Communities and the City of Greater Sudbury. Any changes to the community of Greater Sudbury are discussed first with First Nations recognizing and acknowledging the land and collaborating on initiatives.

Denise Jamal, Director, Community and Stakeholder Engagement and **Ahmed Maria**, Director of Transmission Integration representing the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) provided an update on Ontario's electricity system recognizing generators, transmitters, local distribution companies and energy consumers. In order to keep pace with growth, eliminate emissions from the grid and support increasing electrification, the IESO is supporting multiple nuclear, having the largest energy storage procurement in Canada, expanding conservation programming, having new electricity trade agreements with Quebec and exploring the potential of hydrogen. There is ongoing engagement with municipalities and Indigenous communities. Electricity planning includes provincial/bulk planning, regional planning and distribution planning. There are several transmission projects/studies underway including Watay Power, Waasigan Line, Mississagi to Third Line, Hanmer to Mississauga, Porcupine to Wawa and bulk system reactive requirements in Northern Ontario. Planning studies include Northern Ontario Connection and Bulk Studies happening in 2024-25. The Northern Ontario Bulk Study's purpose is to assess the ability to support power flow between Northern and Southern Ontario considering opportunities to preserve corridors for future transmission development. More information is available on the IESO website or by email communityengagement@ieso.ca

An evening reception and banquet was held at the Caruso Club.

Wednesday, May 8, 2024

Dr. Owen Prowse, Vice President, Clinical Partnership and **Dr. Celine Lariviere**, Provost and Vice President of the Northern Ontario School of Medicine, spoke about delivering on their mandate and beyond. NOSM's mission is to improve the health of Northern Ontarians by being socially accountable in our education and research programs and advocating for health equity. NOSM became an independent university with the special purpose of reversing the chronic physician shortage in the North. Their social accountability mandate is to improve the health of the people of Northern Ontario with a focus on Indigenous, Francophone and rural/remote populations. NOSM was created as a not for profit corporation affiliated with Lakehead and Laurentian universities for degree granting purposes. NOSM became a standalone University in 2022. NOSM U has dramatically improved access to healthcare in Northern Ontario with 88% of doctors who completed both their undergraduate and postgraduate education with NOSM U remaining in Northern Ontario, including 28% in rural and remote communities. Today a

significant number of patients (~ one half of the northern population) receive primary care from a NOSM University family medicine graduate. Many graduate are now practicing and teaching in the North. NOSM has the highest proportion of Indigenous students and the highest rates of Family Medicine as a career choice. 55% of the first-round MD graduates chose family medicine in 2024 (the National Canadian average was 30.3% in 2023) When tracking the graduates there are 902 MD graduates of which 73 are Indigenous and 179 are Francophone; 827 physicians have completed training in NOSM U's residency programs and there are 197 registered dietitians who have completed their program. 90% of NOSM students are from Northern Ontario. When considering students to the medical program NOSM looks for a northern background, rural background, Indigenous, Francophone and willingness to provide medical service to the north. NOSM is breaking down the barriers by casting a wide net to identify learners, looking at life circumstances as a factor. There is the acknowledgement that people in the North often have fewer education and preparatory opportunities than those in larger, mainly southern areas. In 2023 there were 1,692 students applying for 79 seats. Currently across Northern Ontario we need a minimum of 384 full time equivalent physicians, with more than half being family physicians. We need 180 Royal College specialists in a variety of disciplines with the highest numbers in psychiatry, general internal medicine, pediatrics, emergency medicine, anesthesia and OBs/Gyn. NOSM is poised for expansion with UME increasing from 74 in 2022 to 108 and PGME increasing from 60 in 2022 to 123. Communities can collaborate with other Northern communities to become truly competitive in the market for physicians ~ make your community attractive to work and live by providing housing, attractive schools, jobs for spouses, turnkey offices and lifestyle. Successful recruitment requires a well-organized and effective recruitment team, competitive offers (e.g. turnkey operations), strategic planning for success in practice development, sensitivity to the needs of the new hire. The investment is worth it. Doctors bring in jobs, taxes, other health care professionals and economic drivers.

The best practices for recruiters when welcoming new physicians include:

- Supporting new physicians with opportunities to visit their families with extended vacation periods and fund to travel or bring family to the community for key holiday dates.
- Be a connector! Help physicians integrate into the community by inviting them to events and then introduce them and connect them with others
- Consider non-financial incentives and supports such as housing, childcare and roles/employment for spouses.
- Help physicians transition successfully by helping to manage the expectations of the community for practice styles and size. Help them avoid taking on too much at the start so they don't get burnt out.
- Make sure the community is attractive to locums as a pathway to future recruits. And remember that locums talk to each other and word of mouth is valuable.

Superintendent Mike Maville and Superintendent Todd Proulx spoke about OPP Highway Closures providing statistics on roadway, off road vehicles, marine vessels and snow machines accidents. Highway closures happen in the event of hazardous road conditions or incidents requiring the closing of a highway. Each officer is mindful of the impact that any such closure has on a person(s) using these transportation arteries. All efforts are made to open the highway in whole or in part to traffic as soon as possible or establish alternate routes for the motoring public. A hazardous road condition pertains to any conditions which could adversely affect the

safe operation or movement of traffic on a highway including adverse weather conditions e.g. fog, rain, snow, freezing rain. Benchmark collisions may require OPP to close the highway in order to preserve evidence to further the investigation. Many of the investigations result in Criminal charges being laid (Criminal negligence causing death or impaired operation of a vehicle)

The 2025 FONOM Conference will be hosted by the City of North Bay.