

2023 Questions and Answers (Updated January 26, 2023)

Responses will be left blank until a response is provided. Questions and responses will be updated weekly.

1. Please provide the tax levy impact for the various scenarios below.

Essentially, a 3.7% tax levy change produces an increase in property tax worth \$53 for every \$100,000 of assessed value.

MPAC Assigned Current Value Assessment	3.70%	4.00%	4.50%	4.75%	5.00%	5.25%	5.50%
\$ 250,000	\$ 133	\$ 144	\$ 162	\$ 171	\$ 180	\$ 189	\$ 198
\$ 350,000	\$ 186	\$ 201	\$ 226	\$ 239	\$ 252	\$ 264	\$ 277
\$ 450,000	\$ 239	\$ 259	\$ 291	\$ 307	\$ 323	\$ 340	\$ 356
\$ 600,000	\$ 319	\$ 345	\$ 388	\$ 410	\$ 431	\$ 453	\$ 474
\$ 750,000	\$ 399	\$ 431	\$ 485	\$ 512	\$ 539	\$ 566	\$ 593
\$ 850,000	\$ 452	\$ 489	\$ 550	\$ 580	\$ 611	\$ 641	\$ 672

2. How many code "Red/0" have we had in 2021 vs 2022? (Paramedic Services)

3. Our SSP (System status plan) indicates a pattern of day shift and night shift staffing. How many shifts have we down staffed between the D and N rotation in 2021 vs 2022? (Looking for number of staff members that should have been on versus what we staffed). (Paramedic Services)

4. How much time (in minutes) have we spent on Off Load delay at HSN in 2021 vs 2022? (Paramedic Services)

5. How many missed meal claims have we paid in 2021 vs 2022? (Paramedic Services)

6. What would be the total amount we could borrow should a 1.5% special levy be approved for our larger asset needs? If you could include the estimated interest and payback over 20 or 25 years.

With an annual payment of \$4.7 million, the amount borrowed would potentially be:

- Between \$61.1 million and \$62.2 million for a 20-year term at an indicative rate between 4.35% and 4.55%. The estimated cost of interest would be between \$32.1 million and \$33.3 million for the term of the loan.
- Between \$69.6 million and \$71.1 million for a 25-year term at an indicative rate between 4.35% and 4.55%. The estimated cost of interest would be between \$46.9 million and \$48.4 million for the term of the loan.

7. Pages 355 and 357: Can we have the status of our Ontario Municipal comparators with regard to land fill fees covered in these two business cases?

8. Page 25: Paris Notre Dame Bikeway Funding: What is the timeline for this work to be completed? What is the status of the work to be completed on the Bridge of Nations?

9. Page 28 states that Greater Sudbury's population in 2021 is 166,044. Page 29 states that it is 173,000. Can you account for the difference in reporting?

The population data included on page 28 was gathered from Statistics Canada 2021 Census data which uses the Census Subdivision Boundary (CSB). This source does not provide data on population forecasts.

The population data included on page 29 was gathered from The Conference Board of Canada, Metropolitan Outlook 2 for Greater Sudbury. The Conference Board uses the Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) boundary, which includes the two adjacent First Nations communities (Atikameksheng Anishnawbek First Nation and Wahnapiatae First Nation) and the town of Markstay-Warren. This results in a variance in the population statistics compared to Statistics Canada. The Conference Board uses Annual Demographic Estimates, which is released every July by Statistics Canada. The CMA is the most commonly used boundary when comparing populations across municipalities in Canada. The Conference Board of Canada provides information based on their own market trends and research to forecast future populations. Bi-annually, the Conference Board of Canada releases key reports and provides additional information on GDP and Consumer Price Index for the community.

10. Page 36 reports that \$23.7 million has been allocated to Winter Road Maintenance (a 5.8% or \$1.3M increase over 2022). On page 46, it states that \$500k was removed from the budget to help meet the 2023 budget direction of "no more than 3.7% increase". Can you confirm that the original budget line for 2023 was \$24.2m or an 8% increase? What is the cause of this increase? Inflation, increased service levels, increased number/type of winter events?

The 2023 budget for Winter Road Maintenance was originally \$24.2 million. The increase from the 2022 budget is due to contractual obligations for existing contracts (such as annual price indexing) and new contracts coming in higher than previous years.

It is important to recognize the inherent difficulty in establishing a winter control budget. Several variables influence actual costs that are not within the corporation's control. Staff expect to maintain service levels throughout the winter control season. This budget change increases the risk that actual costs will be higher than the budgeted amount, but it does not reflect a change in planned service level.

11. Page 45: Under “Contribution to Capital” refers to the first quarter Non-residential Building Construction Index (NRBCPI); First Quarter of which year? “The NRBCPI was 17.2%” as of what date?

The reference to the first quarter 17.2% NRBCPI reflects the data available when the 2023 Budget Directions were prepared. That figure was released in May 2022 and covers January to March, 2022. The most recent NRBCPI is 12.6% for the third quarter of 2022.

12. Page 46: Under “Contribution to Reserves” our financial strategy to replenish reserves is to allocate 1% of the previous year’s tax levy to reserves” What would 1% represent in dollars?

A change in the tax levy of 1% represents \$3,145,588.

13. Page 52: Please provide examples of “Holding Reserves”.

The City has three Holding Reserves – Capital, Water, and Wastewater. They are described further in the Capital Budget Policy included as Appendix 1 and referenced here:

<https://citylinks.greatersudbury.ca/sites/eLinks/assets/File/Capital%20Budget%20Policy.pdf>

14. Page 75: Please provide examples of “Enabling Services” from the chart on this page. These include Information Technology, Human Resources, Accounting, Purchasing and Payroll, Financial Planning, Budgeting and Support Services, Fleet Services, and Communications and Engagement.

15. Page 392: I see investments in emergency service vehicles proposed in the capital budget. How would the consolidation of emergency service halls impact our need for emergency service vehicles in future?

16. What programs are available to help those struggling to pay their property taxes?

The following assistance options are available:

- Monthly pre-authorized tax payment plans
- Elderly Property Tax Assistance Credit (\$275 annually)
- Application under Section 357 for Sickness or Extreme Poverty (they would apply directly with the Assessment Review Board who would review and determine qualification)
- Low income seniors and low income disabled residential property owner’s deferral
- Registered Charity Rebate (40% of property taxes paid)
- Registered Daycare (100% of property taxes paid)
- Royal Canadian Legions and Similar Organizations - 100% rebate of property taxes paid. Please note that legions are now exempt from taxation but other similar organizations such as Polish Combatant’s Association may apply.
- Provincial programs such as Ontario Energy and Property Tax Credit available through completion of annual income tax return.

17. Why do we have reserves? If we have them, why aren’t we using them to reduce the tax levy?

Reserves are important as they:

- Provide flexibility to address opportunities that arise throughout the year, such as unplanned senior government funding programs that call for a municipal contribution as part of the eligibility requirements
- Offer protection against unanticipated expenditure requirements or lower-than-planned revenues. For example, reserves can be a funding source when an asset like a building or piece of equipment requires some unplanned repairs or replacement. Having reserves available avoids the need to take funds from some other services in the budget to offset the additional expenditure. Or, if user fee revenues are lower than forecast, reserves can help avoid in-year service level changes to offset the lower revenue.
- Provide an alternative to debt financing and an opportunity to “smooth” annual tax rate changes when larger expenditures or some unique, one-time costs are incurred.

Our budget is designed so that ongoing services are supported by ongoing revenue sources. If reserves were used to reduce the tax levy, we would find ourselves in a situation where the reserves would be depleted and the ongoing services would either need to be reduced or funded by a different source. Typically, that would result in a higher property tax levy change. With depleted reserves, it would also reduce Council’s flexibility to take advantage of senior government funding opportunities or provide a timely response to unplanned expenditure requirements.

Greater Sudbury’s reserve levels are relatively low. Considering known asset renewal needs, our policy guidance and in comparison to other similar municipalities, our reserve balances should be higher (in some cases, much higher) to reduce the risk that an unplanned expenditure creates service interruptions or financial challenges for the corporation.

18. Is the pandemic still having an impact on our operations?

Generally, no. While we are vigilant about the potential for a new variant to introduce significant impacts on operations and/or staff availability, we believe the pandemic’s effects are largely behind us.

19. Please explain how hiring four more FT firefighters will reduce Over Time incurred by this service. Is there a risk in hiring additional staff and O/T costs will not be reduced by at least the cost of salaries and fringe benefits of 4 new Fire Fighters?

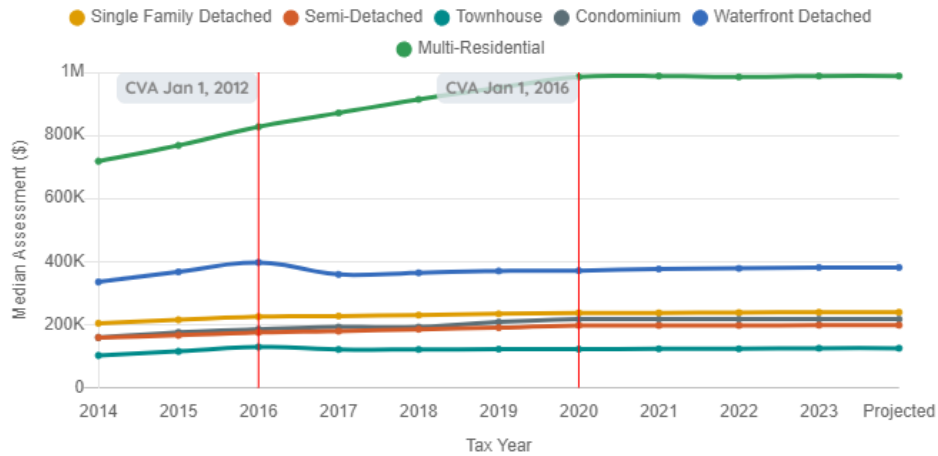
20. What is the average home valued at?

It is important to recall the assessed value of a home typically differs from a property’s market value.

The 2022 BMA study identifies the average assessment for a residential single detached home as \$223,000. The definition for this type of dwelling is a detached three-bedroom single story home with 1.5 bathrooms and a one car garage. Total area of the house is approximately 1,200 square feet.

Furthermore, MPAC also provides data for the median assessed value of a single family detached home (not waterfront) in Greater Sudbury which is \$239,000 (MPAC – January 2023).

Typical Property



21. Please provide more information about the additional FTE as well as current and past staffing levels annually from 2019. With usage still nowhere near pre-pandemic levels (less than 50% of 2019 visits was recently reported) why would more staff be necessary at this time? (Libraries)

22. Please provide the annual CGS operating grant for the years 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 as well as salaries and benefits expenses for the same periods plus 2023 budget. (Libraries)

23. Referring to the Highlights: Collections and Spaces pages for 2022 in your budget, please provide the same numbers for 2019 for each of the highlighted items. (Libraries)

24. Please provide 5 years of data on library cards – how many library cards are out there? What is the usage rate? Do we track monthly and/or annual usage? (Libraries)

25. Council guidelines were for a maximum 3.7% and the proposed budget is 7.4% which is roughly \$400,000 too high. What is the specific plan if Council approves 3.7%? (Libraries)

26. How much does the mobile hot spot program cost annually to operate, who is the typical user of this service and which libraries are the majority of these loans taking place. What are the expansion plans for this program and what is the budget amount? (Libraries)

27. The library system is the only area where user fees are not being charged. Our citizens pay to use space, facilities and services everywhere else in our communities. Are user fees permitted under Legislation for certain services such as Wi-Fi, mobile hot spot, space rentals and what amount of revenue could it generate with modest fees? Also, please provide information on the Provincial regulations regarding Library user fees in general and what the financial impact would be on grant eligibility if broader user fees were implemented. (Libraries)

28. Please provide current and previous five year data on the reserves and how much, if any, of the 2023 budget includes a change in the reserves. (Libraries)

29. Could we raise the Elderly Property Tax Rebate to \$350 or \$500? How many people apply successfully now? What are the financial implications of both scenarios?

30. Can you explain in more detail the need for the additional FTE? What would be the impact of delaying this hire one year? (Libraries)

There are a few different facets to this position, it was designed to address several critical needs within the Library.

The primary function of this position is to provide support to the Library Board and the CEO in carrying out the Library's governance processes and meeting the Board's statutory obligations. Historically the Board's governance processes were supported by the EA or AA of the CGS director acting as the Board's CEO at the time (e.g., the Director of Citizen Services). With the AG's Governance Audit of GSPL (2019), the subsequent shift of the Board to a fully outside board, and the hiring of a dedicated Library CEO (2021/2) the Board lost its administrative support. Some of the critical governance processes this position will support include:

- Board and committee meeting scheduling / logistics
- Recording-secretary for Board and committee meetings
- Maintaining the Board's official records as per Public Libraries Act and other legislation
- Assisting with the preparation of reports to the Board
- Responding to Board requests / inquiries

Currently the bulk of the above work is being done by myself or existing unionized staff which is not sustainable. Through 2022 we explored options for replacing this support by other means: partial

allocation of an existing non-union FTE at CGS, meeting assistance from Clerks, etc. None of these options were deemed viable.

The second major function is project support. The Library's work on Junction East has been supported by a contract position for the last two years, that contract not be renewed again given restrictions in the Collective Agreement (CUPE 4705 Inside). We still have significant work ahead on the Junction East design which requires at least a partial FTE. Once detailed design is complete we anticipate there will be numerous sub-projects related to Junction East (e.g. furniture, fixture, and equipment selection and procurement, decommissioning of the current Main Library, moving planning, opening day planning, etc.). To be as efficient as possible with this work we will be diffusing project management responsibilities to existing managers and unionized staff to the extent possible (rather than hire a dedicated Junction East project manager). We have identified that additional assistance to the management team to help coordinate the work will be required to carry out this distribution of responsibilities effectively. This approach to the Junction East project mirrors our planned approach to project management for GSPL generally and, again, this is a key position to ensure GSPL's projects are coordinated effectively and efficiently on an ongoing basis.

Finally, this position is intended to provide additional support to the Library's management team. In addition to the CEO the Library has two managers. It has been identified that those managers are spending a significant amount of time on routine tasks that could be more effectively delegated to a lower group non-union position. These tasks include the completion and organization of human resources processes and paperwork, routine correspondence, and contract management. These too are tasks that had been performed by an EA or AA when the Library was managed as a City department and lost during the recent transition to an outside Board.

I should note that the proposed position is a non-union position. Many of the responsibilities outlined cannot be appropriately delegated to unionized staff. We currently have 4 non-union staff (the CEO, 2 Managers, and a Coordinator of Public Service). We have investigated options for delegating these tasks to existing unionized staff but have determined it's not possible in most cases.

Regarding the impact of delaying: this position was identified to me by the Board as a priority when I began as CEO in 2022. I spent the year validating that identified need and exploring alternate solutions. In the end, in consultation with my colleagues at the City, I have recommended the position outlined above to the Board and the Board has approved that solution. The current temporary solutions we have in place to cover the outlined scope of work is inefficient and unsustainable. We are particularly concerned about the Library's ability to conduct the basic governance processes outlined above and to meet our required contributions to the Junction East project. In my opinion the current gap that the proposed position is intended to fill represents a risk to the Board and the organization.

Should Council direct the Library Board to reconsider its 2023 budget request I would advise the Board against delaying this additional FTE in order to reduce the budget. In that scenario my recommendation would be to utilize the Board's reserves funds to cover the position—in full or in part—for 2023 and then integrate the position into the operating budget the following year (or possibly over the course of several years). In lieu of utilizing reserves I would present a set of options for reducing the budget by other means but, again, would not recommend the option of delaying this position.

31. On page 45 of the 2023 Budget under Vacancy Management it says “Our service partners have also been asked to assist in managing vacancies in line with the proposed approach”. Does your 2023 budget reflect this management of vacancies? (Libraries)
Our partners at the City shared the direction regarding vacancy management with us and it is our intent to support the vacancy management process outlined in the Budget.

It is my understanding that anticipated savings from the vacancy management process are not reflected in our 2023 budget. The budget for vacancy management has been included in the Corporate Revenue and Expenditure Section. Any savings in the Library’s budget accumulated through the vacancy management process will be consolidated into the City’s enterprise approach.

32. On page 45 of the 2023 Budget under Vacancy Management it says “Our service partners have also been asked to assist in managing vacancies in line with the proposed approach”. Does your 2023 budget reflect this management of vacancies? (GSPS)

33. On page 45 of the 2023 Budget under Vacancy Management it says “Our service partners have also been asked to assist in managing vacancies in line with the proposed approach”. Does your 2023 budget reflect this management of vacancies? (PHSD)
The Board of Health approved budget includes a careful assessment of FTE requirements and related budgetary needs.

While there is not a calculated “vacancy rate” included in the 2023 budget, there a reduction in budgeted positions of almost 4 FTEs (of a total complement of about 225 FTEs) to result in a 3.75% (3.17% for CGS) increase in municipal funding over the 2022 level.

Note that we remain in unusual circumstances in that we are in a state of “overfill”. We recruit and hire more than the budgeted FTEs in order to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The provincial government funding policy remains that boards of health will have continued opportunities to request reimbursement of COVID-19 extraordinary costs not covered by the base budget in 2023. Further, given the service backlog and intensification of community needs, in addition to our ongoing COVID-19 response, our priority is to have a full complement of staff and act aggressively on any anticipated or known vacancies.

34. Page 519 of the budget binder shows full time positions increasing from 2022 budget of 403 to 405 for 2023, can you provide an updated number per the police budget approved by the Board? The base budget presented to the GSPS board discussed seven additional positions plus the employees for the enhanced plan of 24 over three years. I am looking for the increased employee numbers year by year and if they are all sworn officers or other relevant details on the increased staffing compliment. Also are all of the costs of the increased employees/officers noted in the base budget included as if those seven additional positions were included on January 1st or prorated and if so by how much. (GSPS)

35. Regarding the costs of equipping the 24 new sworn officers in the budget report – does that include capital costs? – like new cruisers or will there be an increased capital ask in 2024 onward? (GSPS)

36. On page 521 and 522 of the budget document – the City describes the work it has been doing with the User Fee Framework endorsed by Council. Has GSPS undertaken similar work to ensure that full cost recovery is achieved when warranted. (GSPS)

Note: Responses to questions about Service Partner budgets have been provided by the service partners and, for ease of reference, are presented here verbatim.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Capital Budget Policy