

2023 Questions and Answers (Updated February 2, 2023)

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

City of Greater Sudbury

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)

Code "Red/0" status is declared when there are no ambulances available to respond to calls within our community. Paramedic Response Units (PRU) are not included in the count and may remain available to service calls. A Code "Red/0" occurrence can result when:

- a surge of calls for service occurring in a short period of time
- transport ambulances are unable to Transfer of Care (TOC) to emergency department nursing staff, resulting in Ambulance Off-load Delay (AOD)
- reduced number of deployed ambulances due to staff not being available
- or a combination of these occurrences

In February 2022 Paramedic Services established a program to monitor Code "Red/0" occurrences. Prior to 2022 the Ministry of Health Central Ambulance Communication Centre was collecting this data, but the program was not sustainable and data for 2021 is not available.

In 2022 there were 143 Code "Red/0" occurrences, with an average length of 32 minutes. This means, out of 87,600 total service hours, 76 hours were in a Code "Red/0" state.

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)

The resources assigned to the satellite stations Levack, Chelmsford, Val Therese, Capreol and Lively are never down staffed. If there was a staffing issue at a satellite location, staff are re-deployed from Headquarters to fill a vacancy.

In 2021, Paramedic Services deployed 55 transporting units above the SSP deployment plan and also deployed 215 additional Paramedic Response Units (PRU's). (Figure 1)

In 2022, Paramedic Services deployed 199 fewer transporting units, but deployed an additional 138 PRU's. (Figure 1)

Paramedic Resource	Number of Units 2021	Days or Nights 2021	Upstaffed or Down staffed 2021
Transporting unit	5	Days	Down staffed
Transporting Units	60	Nights	Upstaffed
PRU	115	Days	Upstaffed
PRU	100	Nights	Upstaffed

Paramedic Resource	Number of Units 2022	Days or Nights 2022	Upstaffed or Down staffed 2022
Transporting unit	127	Days	Down staffed
Transporting Units	72	Nights	Down staffed
PRU	74	Days	Upstaffed
PRU	64	Nights	Upstaffed

**NOTE: Transporting unit requires two Paramedics and a PRU requires one Paramedic

In 2021, there were 325 occurrences (1 occurrence equals 12 hours), when the number of paramedics deployed exceeded the number outlined in the SSP.

In 2022, there were 260 occurrences (1 occurrence equals 12 hours), when the number of paramedics deployed was less than the number outlined in the SSP.

During the end of Q1 and the beginning of Q2 in 2022 Paramedic Services experienced staffing issues due to COVID, contributing to the number of down staffing occurrences.

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

An Ambulance Offload Delay (AOD) is a delay in the normal Transfer of Care (TOC) process between paramedics and emergency department nursing staff. Paramedic Services considers any delay of 10 minutes or more from the time paramedics arrive in the emergency department to transferring the patient to hospital nursing staff to be an AOD.

Sudbury Paramedic Services has been dealing with AODs since 2005. The principal cause of AODs is a lack of in-patient bed capacity at HSN, leading to high numbers of in-patients remaining in the emergency department (ED), thus resulting in overcrowding in the ED.

In 2021, Paramedic Services spent 3,680 hours on Ambulance Off Load Delay at Health Sciences North (HSN).

In 2022, Paramedics spent 3,881 hours on Ambulance Off Load Delay at HSN. This is an increase of 5.5% compared to 2021.

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

Paramedics work 12 hour shifts and are entitled to two 30-minute uninterrupted meal break periods throughout their shift. The first meal period is between 4 and 5.5 hours into their shift and the second meal break period is between 9 and 10.5 hours into their shift. If a paramedic is not assigned for a meal break period within the timelines, they are entitled to claim for a missed meal break.

In 2021 the average number of missed meals per 24 hours was 13.49 or 15 per cent of the total number of anticipated meal breaks, costing \$72,153.

In 2022 the average number of missed meals per 24 hours was 17.87 or 20 per cent of the total number of anticipated meal breaks, costing \$97,036.

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?

Refer to Appendix 2 for municipal comparison of disposal site fees.

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?

There is ongoing construction on the Paris Bridge project. The contractor is still working on the underside of the bridge within the City's road allowance. Platforms are being installed to continue the work into the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) right-of-way once the platform design drawings are approved by CPR. Work will commence on the bridge deck and traffic lanes in the Spring of 2023. The anticipated completion is Fall 2023.

We anticipate issuing and awarding the tender for the next phase of the Paris Notre Dame Bikeway from Wilma Street to Van Horne Street by the second quarter of 2023 and expect construction of this phase of the Bikeway to carry over into the 2024 construction season. This phase of the bikeway is approximately 2.4 km long and the largest phase of the bikeway. When these two projects are completed, approximately 2/3 of the bikeway will have been constructed. The remaining phases of the bikeway are from John Street to York Street and from Walford Road to Regent Street.

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?

Based on the current service model and age of apparatus, it is anticipated that 14 new pumper/engine apparatus will be required over the next 10 years. The consolidation of stations would allow for a reduction of front-line fire pumper/engine apparatus based upon the final number of consolidated stations. There is no reduction in fire tankers or fire support units anticipated, however the potential exists to reduce one pumper apparatus per consolidated station, resulting in cost avoidance of approximately \$950,000 per consolidated station. This would be phased in, based on age of existing pumper apparatus as consolidation is completed.

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?

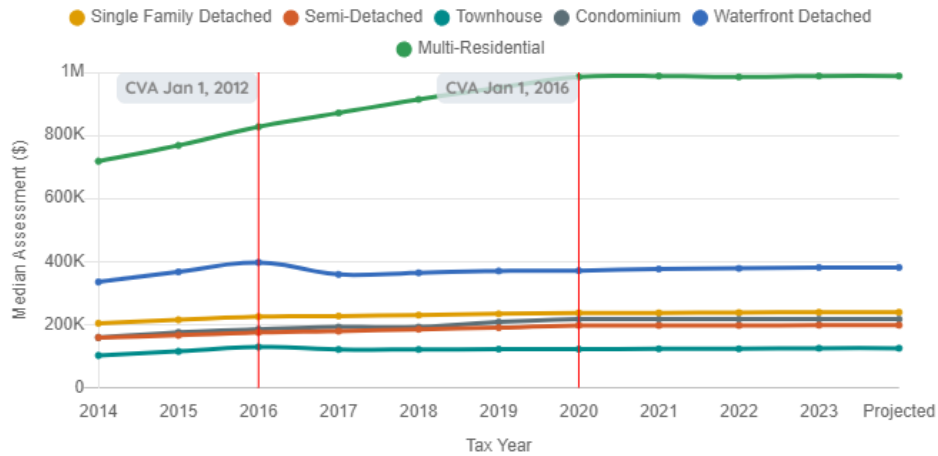
20. What is the average home valued at?

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. 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?

There are approximately 700 elderly rebates processed per year.

The cost for 2022 rebates at \$275 per rebate will be approximately \$172,000 to the municipality. At a rate of \$300 per rebate the estimated municipal cost would be \$204,000 to the municipality. At a rate of \$500 per rebate the estimated municipal cost would be \$340,000 to the municipality.

Please note that this is a rebate program, so the costs are shared with the school boards.

22. How many property owners applied for this \$275 credit in the past three years, and can you confirm that it has not been increased since 2012?

The Elderly Property Tax Assistance Credit is \$275 per year for qualifying property owners. This amount was last revised in 2012 from \$200 to \$275. No revision to this amount has been made since that time.

2022 Applications Received (approximately) 750

2021 Applications Received (approximately) 725

2020 Applications Received (approximately) 810

23. Related to Appendix 3: Could staff provide an update on how successful this program was? Were we able to get all of the 29 roads done? Did we run out of time and/or money? Is the incomplete work scheduled for completion when the 2023 season begins?

24. Related to Appendix 3: I see the money for this came from a Capital General Holding Account...can you provide a little bit of information about this account and how much money is in it?

25. Related to Appendix 3: Could you provide some information about the cost of each different type repair work on a per km basis?

26. Related to special levies: Are there any on the tax bills now? When was the last one, how much was it, how long and what was it used for? Do they have to be renewed each year or can they be set for a specific amount of time?

27. How much of the 2023 budget is being spent on road work and how much of this would be for local roads? Have the roads that are getting done been identified and if so what are they? If not, when and how does this process take place?

28. Going over budget documents and I had one question – Where do we include the funding for the MLEOs (municipal law enforcement officers) in the 2023 budget and how many officers (FTEs) does this translate to?

29. I also have some questions about what kind of flexibility we have when it comes to raising taxes. For example, when we are increasing taxes, let's say 5 %, does this have to be across the board or are we able to say exempt the first \$3,000 of property taxes and apply it to the rest? Are we allowed to have some sort of tiered increase? For example, can we increase taxes 3% on the first \$3,000 paid, 5% on the next \$3,000 and then 7% on the amount paid over \$6,000? Are we allowed to apply a temporary surcharge above a certain amount only, say \$3,000.

There are limitations on how taxes can be applied. Generally, we could not apply graduated tax levy rates as the question suggests. According to Section 307 (1) of the Municipal Act:

All taxes shall, unless expressly provided otherwise, be levied upon the whole of the assessment for real property or other assessments made under the Assessment Act according to the amounts assessed and not upon one or more kinds of property or assessment or in different proportions. 2001, c. 25, s. 307 (1).

30. I am also wondering if we are allowed to have ward-specific special levies that would apply to all wards but the money would stay within each ward?

Based on Section 307(1) of the Municipal Act (quoted in question 29 above) the City is not permitted to have ward specific ratios but it is permitted to apply different rates to the residential class on the basis of services provided. This is called "area rating", and we currently use this method. The City uses area rating for general services (fire and transit) provided currently in various areas. Also, the Healthy Community Initiative Fund supports ward specific projects, but they are a planned expenditure in the budget, not a special area charge.

The Municipal Act defines Area Rating or a Special Area Charge:

- Levied for a special service that is not received or will not be received in other areas of the municipality or is provided at different levels throughout the municipality.
- Calculated as a tax rate based upon the taxable assessment of the defined area
- The entire cost or a portion of the cost can be assigned to the special area levy
- Typically continues until the level of service changes or the area of the service provided is altered
- Examples – transit, fire protection, police protection, streetlights, sidewalks

Other municipalities do apply special levies to wards for specific projects but not in the manner defined in the question above. Section 307 would prohibit a municipality from applying different rates for the same bundle of services delivered to the residential class.