

2020 Vision

A Plan for the Future by Vic Fedeli





Vic
Fedeli

Mayor

Over the past year, I have been speaking with people every day, and the one thing I heard over and over, was that you want change.

Some of the best minds I know, from a cross-section of people in business, labour, community groups, sports organizations, health, and education, provided input and we developed this plan entitled **2020 Vision**. It's a *back-to-basics* plan for North Bay, and it really is a blueprint for the future. It's a flexible document – a guideline, that will provide a framework for council to plot a course and set our strategic direction over the next 20 years.

I am confident that this plan reflects the long-term lifestyle aspirations of all of our citizens and will deliver future *economic, environmental, and social* growth to the community.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vic" with a stylized underline.

The Plan recognizes three major elements: **economic, environmental,** and **social** leadership. Think of the structure as similar to that of a three-legged stool – if one of the legs is missing, the stool will topple over. All three are required to ensure that North Bay is a better place to live. Also, by assessing every future project against all three of the elements, you guarantee the outcome to be in the best interest of the citizens.

Let me give you a practical example: constructing the 7-storey City Hall building without adequate parking may have been a good economic move, but it didn't satisfy the social or environmental criteria. So now we have entire neighbourhoods that can't have guests visit, as there are no parking spots left on their streets. If all three elements were integrated in the decision-making process, a solution would have been found and the problem wouldn't be passed on from generation to generation.

Each of the three guiding principles would have key contributing factors:

Economic Leadership

- Management of the City
- Development and Growth
- Industry and Tourism



Environmental Leadership

- Water Quality
- Infrastructure Development
- Ecological Sustainability
- Heritage Preservation

Social Leadership

- Community Safety
- Education
- Health
- Leisure and Recreation
- Arts and Culture



Fundamentals of the Plan

Many of us have served on Agencies, Boards, and Commissions. It is slowly coming to light that some of these are highly paid positions. Some Boards pay thousands of dollars to their members, some pay benefits, one even pays for life insurance. This is ridiculous. There are many citizens for these Boards who will gladly serve without pay. **I will look to eliminate all pay, and all perks, for all Board members that the City appoints – not just Councillors, all members.** This is not just chump change. This is big money – hundreds of thousands of dollars annually.

The City is sitting on acres and acres of residential property they own from back taxes, property from developers in lieu of parks, and it goes on and on. **I will look to have an immediate, controlled sell off of absolutely every piece of surplus land.** This vacant land isn't doing us any good, and it costs money to maintain it. Now I'm not talking about access lanes to the lake, parklands, or any other vital piece of City land, just surplus residential property. Most of it is fully-serviced land, which means we don't have to spend any money to develop it – it's ready to go. As a restriction, the land would have to be built on within 12 months. That means the City gets money from the sale, and municipal taxes every year for the rest of time. Again, this is hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The industrial park was built 20 years ago, but today it's still 80% vacant. **I will look to create a Community Development Corporation (CDC) that would take over the land from the City, and market it.** CDCs are the result of a 5-year old change in the Municipal Act that gives cities an opportunity to *bonus land* – basically to compete with how other Provinces and U.S. cities attract industries. But North Bay has never established one. It would have the same structure as the highly successful Air Base Property Corporation, which I led for seven years. The CDC could sell industrial land at \$1 an acre, and as construction must be within one year, begin to collect hundreds of thousands of dollars of new industrial taxes, while creating new employment for our youth. If you realize it costs \$350,000 an acre for land in Mississauga, you have to wonder why companies keep putting up buildings there.

Operation Drumbeat is the name for my marketing plan to get out and literally beat the drums about North Bay. We need to tell companies down south that we have this inexpensive, fully-serviced land in a vibrant city, surrounded by lakes, with all of the amenities they would find in a city five times our size. A fabulous university and college, a modern airport with all the bells and whistles, a unique downtown core, and the list goes on!

The City constantly complains about provincial and federal downloading. Then they say, we either have to cut services, or raise taxes. So, they raise taxes – as if there are no other alternatives. Well, here's an alternative. The Heritage Fund and FedNor exist only for the purpose of giving money away in Northern Ontario. That's their mandate. We apply for these funds for mega-projects, but we do not tap them to the fullest. **I will look to create a Grant Accessing Program, or GAP.**

Right now, the City gives away hundreds of thousands of dollars annually to various groups. Instead of using local taxpayer's money, this office would meet with groups early on in their projects. Here's a practical example of GAP at work. One school recently approached the City for matching funds to build a soccer field. These hardworking people fundraised \$50,000 for their share. The City quickly matched their \$50,000 as it is a *good* deal for everyone. Under my GAP, it will become a *great* deal. Groups would approach the City early on in the game, and the GAP officer would look for matching funds. This group had \$50,000 cash – and cash is King. They would easily qualify for matching funding, and one of two things would have happened. Either their \$50,000 would be matched twice, giving them \$150,000, or they could have stopped fundraising after \$33,000, to get to their \$100,000. Either way, they get their field, and the City isn't out a nickel. And the government folks, whose only purpose is to give out money, are thrilled. Instead of complaining about downloading, this plan turns it around and begins uploading!



ECONOMIC LEADERSHIP

I see North Bay becoming a major economic, cultural, and social centre, providing leadership for the region. To get there, North Bay must be recognized as an innovative, vibrant, and attractive city.

We can achieve this by fostering partnerships and cooperation among the City's economic driving forces. We must ensure that our own attitudes, practices, and policies encourage acceptable development, as we promote the economy and lifestyle advantages of the city.

ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP

A well-maintained, modern infrastructure is critical to the successful functioning of the city. Our city streets, sewer and water assets, stormwater facilities, parks, and community buildings are all part of that infrastructure. Supplying and maintaining infrastructure that is able to support the city's economic, environmental, and social leadership will be a major challenge for the new Council. As well, the city's heritage must be recognized, valued, and conserved.

A comprehensive, integrated approach to the development, renewal, and maintenance of our assets must be embraced. The capital works program must be moved to the top of the priority list – quite simply we need our streets and sewers fixed!

SOCIAL LEADERSHIP

I see North Bay as a vibrant, healthy, safe community, with access to a diverse and innovative range of social, cultural, recreational, and educational opportunities. This will enhance our lifestyle, skills, creativity, character, and environment.

Our aging community will become a more important influence when planning services and, concurrently, requirements for youth and children's services will remain consistently strong. My goal is to see that the facilities and services match the needs of the community.

SOME OF THE THINGS I'D LIKE TO SEE DONE

As the lead servant to the people, I think it's important that you know how I work. I will continue my *open* business style that has served me well throughout my career. One of the first things I would do is hold two morning-long meetings with the entire staff. It's important that everybody know what the goals are and how to get there. It's equally important that I hear from them. It's this two-way communication that allowed my company to be listed as **One of the Top 50 Companies to Work for in Canada** – an honour I still cherish. I believe in empowering workers, advancing collaboration, and speeding decision-making.

I return my telephone calls immediately. I would insist that all telephone calls and inquiries be handled within 24 hours. It's common courtesy, and it sends a signal to the public that we're open for business.

I don't own a corporate rear view mirror. When people ask me about *this* City deal or *that* City deal, I tell them, "I'm a positive person. I don't look back at those deals, I prefer to look towards the future." I don't ignore the past, I learn from it.

We can flourish by growing our tax base – not with morale-sapping strategies like cut-backs. That's the old-style solution. I'm a builder, and believe we can grow our way out of our debt. We can't get by doing what we did yesterday – you can't cut your way back to prosperity.

Fastrack Ambassador

Everyone has their own story about dealing with City Hall. The focus needs to be on the customer, which in our case, is the taxpayer. **I will look to create a Fastrack Ambassador position at City Hall**, which will serve as a resource for people. This is the person who will help you cut through the red tape and help you get things done.

No Free Ride

People have told me, over and over, that they are tired of seeing paid officials getting something for nothing, while the rest of the community pays their way. **I will look to eliminate the acceptance of all free perks, including tickets, passes, wristbands, or gifts of any kind to elected municipal officials and all City staff.** It's just plain fair.

Kids Forums

Kids have plenty of ideas and enthusiasm. Let's harness that. **I will look to establish a series of Kids Forums** to bridge the gap between the City and our children. When it comes to parks, recreational facilities, bike paths and the like, who better than the primary users – the kids – to tell us what they want.

Youth Conferences

We know that our youth are leaving, but do we really know why? **I will look to engage teens and young adults in a series of Youth Conferences** to understand their job and lifestyle concerns. The goal, naturally, is to help retain our youth. Let's understand what employment and social opportunities fit their needs, so that staying here or coming back home is a viable option.

Think Tank

To succeed in growing North Bay, we can't just look around the corner for solutions -- we need to look around the world. There are many global business, education, and professional leaders who are from North Bay. They are well connected to various industries, and still have ties to their hometown. **I will look to establish an annual Think Tank**, bringing home these former North Bayites for an annual 2-day session, with the intent of attracting new industries and services to our city. Quite simply, they know what's great about North Bay, and they know what industries are on the move. Let's use their relationships to grow our tax base.



Historic Waterfront District

Let me say that I fully support the Community Waterfront Friends' (CWF) vision for the waterfront and I support the Downtown Community Improvement Plan. I will propose the integration of the CWFs' plans and the DIA's plans and **I will look to form an area called the Historic Waterfront District.** To help drive traffic to the new District, **I will look to introduce a program of distinctive entrance signs.** This simple, proactive change sends a message to the traveling public that a *destination* is around the corner. Also, **I will look to introduce a downtown banner program,** with school kids designing one-of-a-kind banners. Local art teachers will be asked to co-ordinate the program, which will involve young people in a government project and also give them some pride in beautifying our downtown.

I believe that Canadore College and Nipissing University are integral partners in the future of North Bay. I had the great pleasure of Chairing fundraising campaigns for both of these fine institutions, and know they are open to suggestions. **I will look to continue ongoing discussions with Canadore and Nipissing to open a downtown campus or build downtown residences for their students.**

These programs are designed to capture and maximize downtown market opportunities and to show confidence in our downtown.

Communities In Bloom

I could fill an entire book about the wonderful work all of the partners the Communities In Bloom family have done for North Bay. The groups are committed to fostering civic pride, environmental responsibility, and beautification through community participation and the challenge of a friendly competition. I continue to tell people, "It's not just about plants". Now that North Bay will become a *destination*, you can expect bus tours to arrive next summer. This is the economic spinoff that I spoke about as Honourary Chair of this fine group. As this is the request of the co-chairs, **I will look to the City to take the lead role in the Communities In Bloom program.** There can be no question of the City's commitment.

Communities In Bloom is not the only national program that North Bay should support. I'd like us to look at other success stories around the country, such as Habitat for Humanity, Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada, Junior Achievement, and other groups that could bring great value to our community.

Aerospace Centre

When CFB North Bay moved out of the hangars, this opened up a whole new opportunity for North Bay. I had the privilege of being the volunteer Chairman of the Air Base Property Corporation, the non-profit that created an aerospace industry in North Bay. Today, hundreds of people work in aerospace in the once-abandoned hangars. After all of the local available technicians were hired, the companies had to look far and wide for employees. Over 200 families moved to North Bay, and now they pay taxes, buy goods everyday, and have added a great deal to the economy of North Bay.

There are no more hangars left, and no serviced land available for any other companies to move here. **I will look to service 30 acres of airport land to accommodate additional aerospace companies.** The newly-created GAP office will investigate all sources of funding to assist in this important venture. North Bay is recognized as an aerospace centre, and as the world moves out of the post-9/11 aviation slump, more facilities will be required.

Underground Storage Facility

The Department of National Defense will be moving into a \$30 million above-ground facility in the near future. They will be negotiating with the City for the possible takeover of the underground facility. This is not something to be taken lightly. I know, as I led the 3-year long negotiations to take over the air base hangars. Simply put, I am the best person to lead the team to negotiate with them.

Once the City, or perhaps the newly-created CDC takes over the facility, **I will look to create a data storage facility in the former NORAD facility.** This offers the best use of the high-speed technology installed by the military, and will create hundreds of high-paying technician jobs required to operate the systems. The infrastructure costs millions to maintain, and only a global corporation or government has the dollars to operate such a massive facility. My vision is to offer the facility to a company like Microsoft or the World Bank, to be used as a secure storage facility for the world's data. Many of the pieces are in place to give this old facility a new role on the world stage.



CAMPAIGN REFORM

As part of my *back-to-basics* approach to leadership, I've developed two radically different campaign approaches.

Campaign Donations

All campaigns cost money, but I have developed a set of very strict guidelines:

- No donations accepted over \$100 including from myself and my family;
- Only personal cheques; no corporate donations will be accepted;
- No cash donations will be accepted;
- A complete Donors' List will be published before the election.

Sign Of The Times

As for signs, I'm as tired as you are of election signs on public lands. I will produce *only* lawn signs, and they will be placed *only* on private property, where people have made a personal choice to display a sign. No signs will be placed on public property such as the overpass or parks, no billboards will be produced, and absolutely no intersection or highway signs will be constructed.

If you like what you've read and want to help out, please drop by our Campaign Headquarters on Fisher Street, across from the old Hydro building. We would love to see you join our growing team. If you want to chat about anything, please feel free to call me at the Headquarters, or e-mail me anytime.

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North Bay already has its place in the history books.

Now we're working on the future.

Thank you for reading my **2020 Vision**. It is very broad in nature, provides many possible solutions, and offers the greatest flexibility for delivery. It's a working document that I believe captures the essence, or the spirit of what I believe is needed. These philosophies would be promoted by me in all areas that fall under the City's umbrella, even if they aren't covered in this booklet.

I'd like to thank the hundreds of people who contributed their thoughts towards this plan. Some concepts are new, some are tried and proven in other cities around the world. The dedication of my co-authors can never be truly articulated.

Thanks again to all of you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vic". The signature is stylized with a long horizontal stroke underneath the letters.

Pour vous informer en français sur la campagne de Vic, veuillez nous appeler et nous vous enverrons une copie de son discours de candidature; ou bien, rendez-vous à www.fedeli.com pour plus de détails.

Per leggere sulla campagna elettorale di Vic in Italiano per piacere chiamatemi per una copia del discorso che ha fatto quando ha annunciato la sua candidatura oppure andate sull'internet a questo indirizzo www.fedeli.com per avere più informazioni.