The Corporation of the City of North Bay

Mayoral Inaugural Address
As Presented By:

His Worship Mr. Al McDonald

On December 1st, 2014

Presented at 19:00 hrs that being 7:00 pm
in North Bay City Council Chambers

“We are a community that believes in working together and creating partnerships that foster success. We are North Bay and we love our city.”

Al McDonald, December 1, 2014
We live in a great city, one that is vibrant, inclusive, caring and safe. A city of 54,000 that is home to 73 parks, 30 lakes, a clean environment, a college and University, a beautiful waterfront, a live performing arts centre, nature trails, a modern hospital, a diversified economy, a new Airport Industrial Park and generous citizens. We are a community that believes in working together and creating partnerships that foster success. We are North Bay and we love our city.

Welcome Everyone.

We are honoured to stand before you as your newly elected Mayor and Council. We would like to thank the citizens of North Bay for their confidence and belief in us. We would like to thank our families for their support and understanding as this work will take us away from you for long hours at a time.

We wish to thank Sarah Campbell, Dave Mendicino and Judy Koziol for their combined 35 years of service. We wish them the very best for the future and we appreciate the long hours they served to make our city a better place.

We enjoy one of the safest communities in Ontario to live and a special city thanks to so many. Thank you to our police, fire and paramedics (our First responders) who put their lives in danger’s way to protect our families and the men and women of our Armed Forces who serve our country and protect our freedoms. We enjoy a strong arts and culture community that creates a wonderful vibrancy in our city and a downtown that is the heart and soul of our community. We celebrate culture, heritage, music, food, festivals, and different languages. We celebrate success of community partners. Our partners like the Davedi Club, under the leadership of
President Vince Orlando, promotes and shares their heritage and culture within our community. We often hear Vince say, “we live in the best city in the world and the Davedi Club is there to assist in making our community a better place.” Les Compagnons, who promote their language and culture and the host the largest Francophone Winter Carnival outside the Province of Quebec, help to make our city an attractive place to live. These Clubs bring a vibrancy and international presence to our city. The Multi-Cultural Centre continues to provide leadership and attract individuals to our city.

To our dedicated citizens, young and old alike, who volunteer, get involved, start and support local initiatives, such as Heritage Gardeners, anti-bullying campaigns, domestic violence prevention, to providing leadership in educating and promoting a better understanding of mental illness, to fundraising for a wide variety of worthwhile charities to name a few – thank you, thank you!

We are a city that faces our own fair share of challenges just like every other city in the world. We understand that we are just a small part of the global footprint. We understand that external forces and events beyond our control influence how we manage our budgets and plans. Our challenges are wide ranging from economic to social and to environmental. Federal and Provincial government deficits trickle down and affect us greatly. From the continued fight to support new investment at the ONTC, to the downsizing of government offices and public institutions, global marketplace demands and shifts, we fully realize that we are competing with every city in the world. The future is full of unknowns.

The global economy is just starting to show signs of recovery. We have positioned ourselves carefully in the last four years to take advantage of the opportunities as they present themselves. We have set the table for
growth, from reducing development charges; having one of the lowest industrial tax rates in the Province; opening our Airport Industrial Park; investing over $300 million in city infrastructure in the last 10 years; and, the fact we enjoy healthy credit rating of Aa2 stable, enables flexibility for future needs and opportunities.

We look to the future with determination and willingness to set a bold vision and plan. For our city and citizens to prosper, we need to focus on three key areas – economic, social, and environmental.

First of the three key areas is our need to protect our environment. North Bay is already a green, clean city. As a city, we have taken the following steps to reduce our footprint: state-of-the-art recycling centre and hazardous waste depot that has extended the life of our landfill; converting street lights to LED; moving to more fuel efficient vehicle and busses; putting in place non-idling policies to name a few processes in place to date. Municipal landfill sites are usually the most polluting source of any city. We took steps to capture the methane gas and converted it into energy, enough energy to power 900 homes annually. Our biggest challenge we face is the protection of our only source of drinking water. Protecting our drinking water is paramount to our future as a city.

The second key area is our social fabric. Our goal is to become Canada’s healthiest city. Healthy communities have a balance of affordable housing, access to quality medical care, fully accessible transit systems, good schools, access to post-secondary education, a food charter, active healthy lifestyles, recreation, a safe and inclusive city, and opportunities for everyone to achieve their personal goals. The goal of becoming Canada’s healthiest city will need to be drive by community members and organizations working together seeking community involvement and desire
to achieve this goal. While measurements are not easy and sometimes subjective, it sends a strong message to the world – our desire to have a city that truly embraces the health and welfare of its citizens.

The third key area is economic opportunities. Identify key industries that we can focus on as a city. We see great opportunity in mining, advanced manufacturing, aviation, aerospace, high tech, healthcare and education. With this in mind, with our new Airport Industrial Park, we have a great opportunity before us. This is the opportunity to create the next generation of jobs. North Bay is the ideal location for the creation of Canada’s first Commercial Air and Space port. The North Bay Air and Space port and our Airport Industrial Park activities envisioned around it would provide additional capabilities and support for our city’s aerospace strategy. We can leverage our aerospace assets, align industries, transportation, telecommunications and education facilities to provide a strong foundation for growth and to be a leader in Canada in aerospace and space-related operations. Commercial spaceport facilities are being established worldwide to service the variety of needs for space commercialization. With our strategic location in North America, we can become a major player in the aerospace sector.

Ladies and gentlemen, the next four years promise to be both challenging and exciting for our city. While I touched on the big picture, we cannot forget about the small things that make our city great. We all have a role to play in making our city a better place. It is an honour to serve and, while we may not agree on everything, we need to work together for the best interests of all. I, along with my Council colleagues, are proud of our city and look forward to working for you.

Thank you.