

## **A Green Agenda for North Bay**

**2008**

In 2005, Nipissing Environmental Watch (NEW) produced its first Green Agenda for North Bay . The document outlined suggestions of environmental action and policy that North Bay City Council could undertake. Green Agendas were presented to council in 2005 and 2006.

A number of Green Agenda items have been implemented by City Council including:

- the declaration of North Bay as a Nuclear Free Zone
- the creation of the Sustainable Communities Committee
- the expansion of products collected through the blue box program
- an increase in the amount of tree planting in 2007
- the energy audit of city-owned buildings and usage

Members of Nipissing Environmental Watch and the public are pleased with these accomplishments. We would like to continue to work with City Council to make North Bay greener. To this end, we have produced a new document for 2008. This agenda lists further areas of need and/or gaps in our existing municipal environmental programs and policy. The list is in no way comprehensive, however, we believe it provides a solid environmental platform for City Council to undertake in the near future.

Building on past successes, the City would do well to adopt the recommendations of the Sustainable Communities Committee into the Official Plan. The Planning Department tells us this is their intention and we are 100 percent in favour of this.

### **Waste**

Our landfill is now in its 14th year of operation. The life of the landfill was estimated at 20 years when it opened in 1994. It is in the best interests of the municipality to extend the life of the landfill from both financial and environmental perspectives. The following suggestions are made with these concerns in mind.

1. **User Pay.** Reduce curbside pick-up of garbage to two bags per week. Additional bags would be purchased from the city. This would be the most effective way to increase participation in the Blue Box Program.
2. **Improve recycling in the ICI (Industrial, Commercial & Institutional) sector, especially schools.**
3. **Build a new recycling facility.**

### **Air**

Air quality has been an increasing concern for the residents of North Bay as we have experienced considerably more smog alert days in recent years. As well, our concern has been heightened by the specter of global warming and the weather extremes we are experiencing.

1. **Urban tree by-law.** Develop a tree protection by-law to restrict indiscriminate tree removal. The intent of a city-wide tree by-law is to protect trees situated on private property from being damaged or removed unnecessarily and to ensure the ongoing health and well-being of the

City's urban forest. Additionally, a tree by-law provides a standardized and equitable approach to protecting the City's urban forest while helping to increase awareness of the environmental, aesthetic and economic benefits of trees. It will help North Bay move closer to becoming a park-like city.

2. **Institute an anti-idling by-law similar to Ottawa's.** This should include public awareness about the waste of gas at drive thru s and consideration of banning any additional drive thru s.
3. **Lights Out campaign.** This is a program running in Toronto since 2006. It helps reduce a leading cause of death for migratory birds by getting building managers and homeowners to turn out unnecessary lights. Toronto also passed a policy specifying that the needs of migratory birds be incorporated in facility lighting, including floodlighting. Another policy would be to replace all street lights with dark-sky-friendly models.

## **Energy**

1. **Enhance Public Transportation.** Create more routes and provide more energy efficient vehicles on less used routes. It seems reasonable to use some smaller buses on certain routes.
2. **Energy Efficient Fleet.** Phase in an energy efficient fleet of city-owned vehicles, using a combination of hybrid, natural gas and high-efficiency vehicles. Develop procurement and vehicle use policies that have emission reductions and fuel efficiency as a priority.

## **Water**

North Bay is surrounded by water. We rely on our lakes for our water supply and our fishery. It is imperative that we protect these resources.

1. **Increase enforcement of water use and pesticide by-laws.** The by-laws in place are fine and we applaud the hiring of the by-law enforcement officer. However, in 2007 there were no warnings or fines levied regarding pesticide use. The retailers are still selling large quantities of these products yet only 20 homeowners posted their do-it-yourself applications.
2. **Run-off issues.** Many people don't realize the effects of their actions on water that drains from their property. For example, the widespread use of weed n feed on lawns puts herbicide into our streams, salt use in winter damages plant growth when the ice melts and runs into creeks, and the failure to pick up dog waste results in bacteria washing into freshwater. The City could provide public education on these and other run-off issues.
3. **Toxic materials disclosure.** Every day, businesses and institutions in North Bay use hazardous products. What products they use, where they store them and how they are released is not well known. It is of particular interest to neighbours of the businesses and institutions. There are laws and regulations regarding the use and release of chemicals, but the information is often limited and not readily available to the public. Toronto is considering a by-law to require disclosure.