

**Mayor  
Matthew  
Shoemaker**



# Six Month Report

**Released Spring 2024**



# SIX MONTH REPORT

Sault Ste. Marie is facing its fair (and in some cases, unfair) share of challenges. While our situation is not unique, what makes us unique is our impressive collective capacity to continue rising to meet the obstacles in front of us. Time after time, Saultites have proven to be resilient, often times when the deck is most stacked against us.

The Sault YMCA provides a foremost example of this resilience. The YMCA announced on April 16th it was ceasing operations by May 15th. This tight timeframe required the City, the Y and the private sector to work tirelessly, and often times around the clock, to come up with a solution. A community group was formed and facilitated gatherings to draw attention to the issue, while providing support for Y members distressed about an uncertain future. The City presented a plan at Council's meeting on April 29th and funding was approved at the next Council meeting on May 13th. During this meeting, a local YMCA representative said this was the only instance across the country in which community rallied so quickly to save a YMCA. Sault Ste. Marie should be proud of that. I certainly am. We can be proud of our community while acknowledging our challenges.

We're in the midst of a Canada and Ontario-wide physician shortage that is even more precarious in Sault Ste. Marie. The mental health and addictions epidemic is affecting communities across the world, and Northern Ontario is at the epicenter of the Canadian crisis. We're experiencing a rise in petty crime and vandalism, and too many Saultites don't feel the safety and security enjoyed by previous generations. An increasing number of young professionals look at the rising costs associated with buying a home with pessimism about their ability to become a homeowner themselves. Sault Ste. Marie's economic potential and future growth is jeopardized by demographics resulting from past decades of youth outmigration coupled with a declining birth rate and rising death rate.

I am fully aware of these challenges and work hard every day to drive solutions. The six month report concept is directly related to that – I wanted to find a way to let the community know what we're working on because I know it is easier to hear about our problems than it is to learn about what we're doing to address them. We can - and we will - fix the problems we face and unlock our promise.

**Mayor Matthew Shoemaker**



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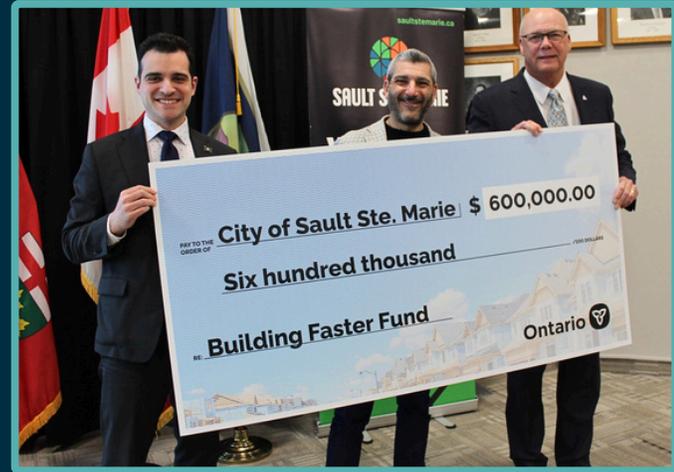
 [Instagram.com/SaultShoe](https://www.instagram.com/SaultShoe)

 [Twitter.com/SooShoe](https://twitter.com/SooShoe)

 [MatthewShoemaker.ca](https://www.MatthewShoemaker.ca)

# A PLAN FOR PROGRESS - IN MOTION

My 2022 Platform: **A Plan for Progress** offers a plan for Sault Ste. Marie rooted in community input, and throughout my mayoralty I will provide updates as we work to address our challenges.



## ○ PLATFORM COMMITMENT

Securing New Housing

### ✓ ACTION

We've made important progress to address the housing crisis. The City exceeded its provincially assigned housing target by nearly **200%** and we had another banner construction year with the value of building permits exceeding **\$148 million**. Council implemented 'as-of-right' permitting of multiplexes (provided set back criteria is met) in an effort to increase our housing stock – one of the most ambitious municipal planning changes in the country.

## ○ PLATFORM COMMITMENT

Lobbying the Provincial and Federal Governments for More Support

### ✓ ACTION

Aggressive advocacy resulted in important progress. The Federal Government announced its intention to make the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot Program (RNIP) permanent and Sault Area Hospital received Provincial funding for a temporary return of the addictions-focused Day Treatment Program until the end of March. SAH has continued to offer the program since March as it pursues permanent provincial funding.



## ○ PLATFORM COMMITMENT

Keeping Sault Ste. Marie Affordable

### ✓ ACTION

Inflationary pressures and important issues such as health care and policing posed major fiscal challenges, but Council worked hard to reduce the proposed 7.2% tax increase to 4.8%. I proposed **\$777,352 in savings** during budget deliberations.

# A PLAN FOR PROGRESS - IN MOTION



## ○ PLATFORM COMMITMENT

Adding to Our Cultural Vitality

### ✓ ACTION

The City held our community's first-ever public Menorah lighting in December to celebrate Hanukkah and the local Jewish community. On January 29th, 34 years to the day since the passage of what is commonly

referred to as the 'English-only' resolution, **City Council unanimously approved a resolution** that built upon the 2010 apology of Mayor Rowswell, and sought to ensure services are available to French-speaking residents in their language, at no cost to taxpayers.

## ○ PLATFORM COMMITMENT

Enhancing Our Quality of Life

### ✓ ACTION

Sault Ste. Marie's waterfront represents untapped potential, and we're looking to unlock it through the development of a new vision. We had almost 1,000 Saultites submit feedback already for the development of a Waterfront Design Plan to stitch together the great places along the water's edge and identify opportunities that **will transform the waterfront into a cohesive and vibrant place for all.**

## ○ PLATFORM COMMITMENT

Reconciliation and Relationship Building

### ✓ ACTION

The Mayor's Office has worked with our neighbours and community partners to facilitate Cultural Competency, Anti-Islamophobia and Antisemitism training opportunities for City staff. Recently, the Chiefs of Garden River First Nation and Batchewana First Nation attended at City Council to discuss the historic Robinson Huron Treaty Settlement distribution.



# A PLAN FOR PROGRESS - IN MOTION

## ○ PLATFORM COMMITMENT

Continued Electrification of City Small Engines and Vehicles

### ✓ ACTION

Nearly \$8 million in Federal, Provincial and Municipal funding will support the purchase of two new electric buses and an electric charging station as well as maintenance equipment/service vehicles. City Council also agreed to purchase the City's third electric Zamboni, to be used at the John Rhodes Community Centre. Two electric Zambonis are already in use at the new Northern Community Centre twin-pad.



## ○ PLATFORM COMMITMENT

Taking Action against Negligent Landlords

### ✓ ACTION

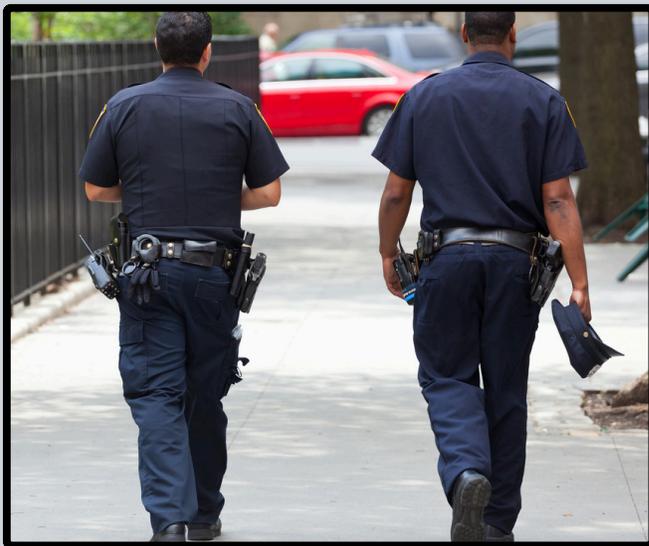
The City is committed to doing everything it can to ensure irresponsible landlords are held accountable, and staff were able to recoup \$616,000 in unpaid taxes from a group of out-of-town landlords that own 201 rental units in Sault Ste. Marie.

## ○ PLATFORM COMMITMENT

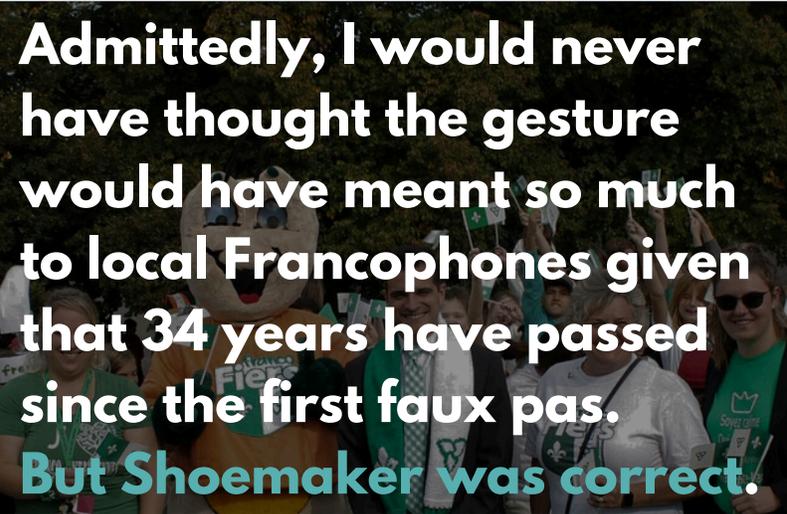
Supporting Public Safety and Downtown Revitalization

### ✓ ACTION

Council approved a pilot program that will see downtown security foot patrols taking place on a daily basis, starting this summer. The goal of the pilot is to provide an additional level of safety and security in the downtown area, and to help prevent vandalism and crime. Expected patrol hours are 11 am-3 pm and 6 pm-10 pm, seven days per week. The downtown police station is also expected to open this summer.



# MEDIA COVERAGE



Admittedly, I would never have thought the gesture would have meant so much to local Francophones given that 34 years have passed since the first faux pas.

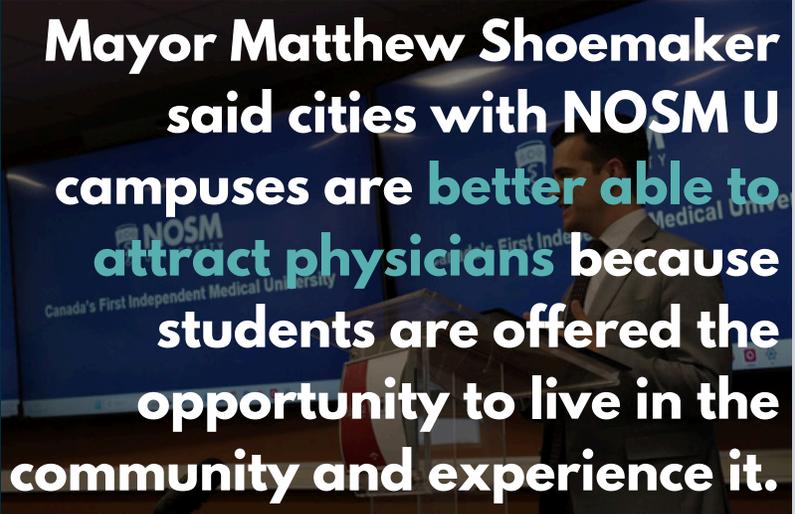
But Shoemaker was correct.

Shoemaker hopes that regional Francophones who may just “pass through” will now stop and visit. He is hopeful that they will feel a little more comfortable doing so.

IS THIS THE LAST CHAPTER OF THE DEFUNCT ENGLISH LANGUAGE RESOLUTION?

Sault Star, February 4, 2024

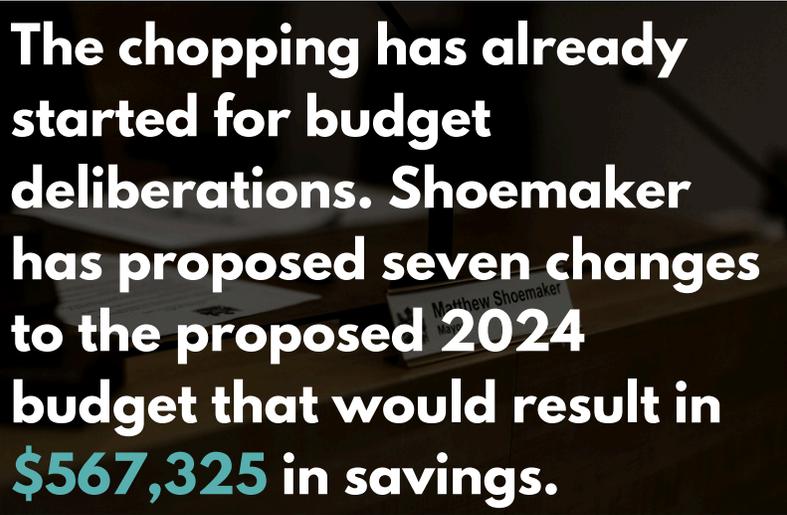
Under the proposal, the city will lead the charge and issue a request for proposal to hire a consultant to examine the potential to establish a new, innovative campus of NOSM U in Sault Ste. Marie.



Mayor Matthew Shoemaker said cities with NOSM U campuses are better able to attract physicians because students are offered the opportunity to live in the community and experience it.

CITY, NOSM U, EXAMINE POTENTIAL FOR SAULT CAMPUS

Sault Star, March 18, 2024



The chopping has already started for budget deliberations. Shoemaker has proposed seven changes to the proposed 2024 budget that would result in \$567,325 in savings.

The proposed \$216-million operating budget would increase the tax levy by 7.2 per cent. The mayor has said that's unacceptable.

HOW SHOEMAKER'S PROPOSING TO CUT \$567,325 FROM THE CITY BUDGET

SooToday, December 7, 2023

# MEDIA COVERAGE



Sault Area Hospital has received last-minute funding to operate about two months of programming in its **Concurrent Disorders Intensive Day Treatment Program.**

**Mayor Shoemaker has been advocating for the return of the program since beginning his campaign for the mayor's seat at city council.**

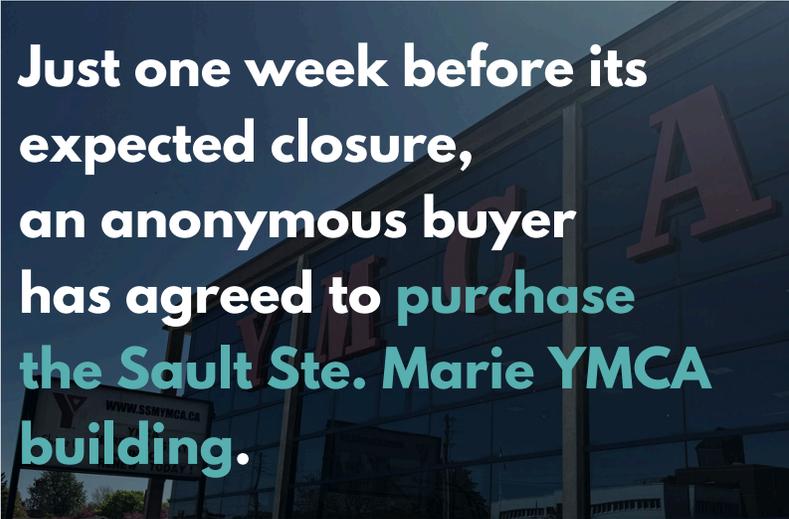
PROVINCE FUNDS LIMITED RETURN OF DAY TREATMENT PROGRAM  
SooToday, January 16, 2024

Mayor Matthew Shoemaker used Monday's council meeting to reveal that the city could be on the cusp of finding a way to **save the Sault YMCA.**



“The city is committed to continue to facilitate figuring out **both short and long-term plans**, and I have some cautious optimism we will have more news on the short-term plans.”

CITY OFFERS YMCA SUPPORTERS A SLIVER OF HOPE  
Sault Star, April 29, 2024



Just one week before its expected closure, an anonymous buyer has agreed to **purchase the Sault Ste. Marie YMCA building.**

Mayor Matthew Shoemaker said the local charitable foundation that stepped up to purchase the building **represents the best qualities of the Sault.**

ANONYMOUS BUYER STEPS FORWARD TO SAVE THE YMCA  
SooToday, May 7, 2024

# MEDIA COVERAGE



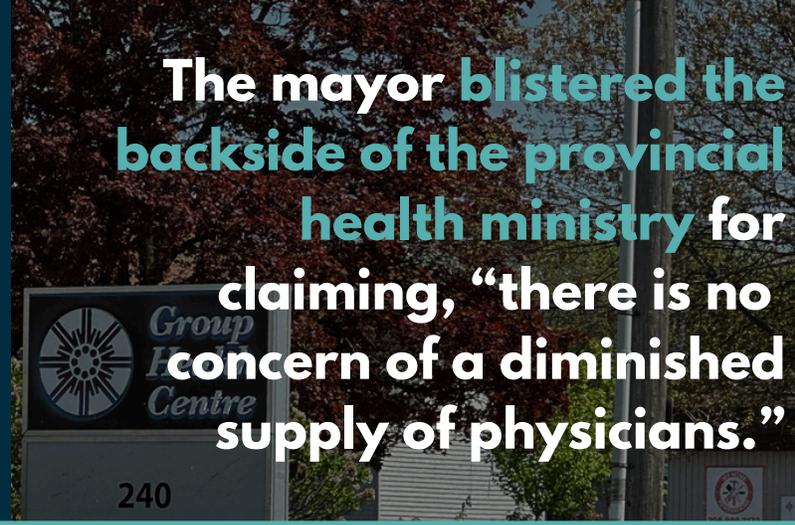
The days of free parking at the Civic Centre may be numbered. City staff have been instructed to prepare recommendations on whether municipal employees should pay to park there.

COUNCIL TO LOOK AT BUCK-A-DAY PARKING AT CITY HALL  
SooToday, December 17, 2023

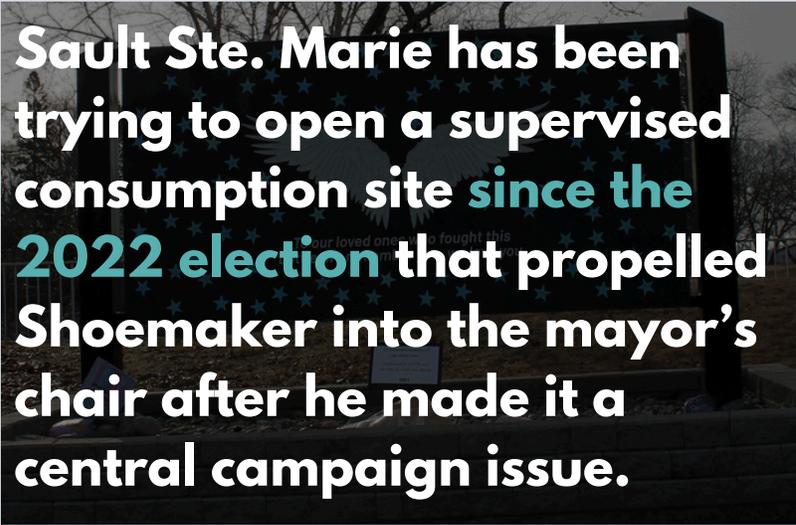
Mayor Shoemaker, who twice before has tried to persuade council to charge for parking, said he could support more than a dollar a day for city staff.

Mayor Shoemaker gave Doug Ford's Government of Ontario a choleric piece of his mind yesterday with 10,000 Group Health Centre patients two weeks away from losing their family doctors.

SHOEMAKER WONDERS WHY HEALTH MINISTER RESPONDS TO SOOTODAY BUT NOT TO HIM  
SooToday, February 15, 2024



The mayor blistered the backside of the provincial health ministry for claiming, "there is no concern of a diminished supply of physicians."



Sault Ste. Marie has been trying to open a supervised consumption site since the 2022 election that propelled Shoemaker into the mayor's chair after he made it a central campaign issue.

THE SMALL-TOWN OPIOID CRISIS HIDDEN IN THE BIG-CITY SHADOW  
Globe and Mail, March 12, 2024

"You can see, in fact, from the hospitalization data in Sudbury and Timmins, when they opened their supervised consumption sites in 2022, their hospitalizations dropped off a cliff."