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Report to council

Meeting of FCM's Board of Directors
and Advocacy Days 2019

November 26-29, 2019

Ottawa, Ontario

This document summarizes key themes from the most recent meeting of the Board of Directors and Standing Committees of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM). It is designed to support board and committee members in reporting back to their local/regional councils on their progress with FCM.

Report to Council (November 2019)

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Chateau Laurier, Ottawa: site of FCM’s November board meeting

Message from FCM's president

Dear board and committee members,

What a week! On the eve of a new parliament, it was only fitting for us to meet in the nation's capital. And together, we made our presence felt on the federal scene.

On November 28, we launched *Building Better Lives Together*, FCM's roadmap for the first 100 days of government. With concrete recommendations in 15 policy areas—from infrastructure to housing to broadband—it lays out how the federal government can work with municipalities to get more done for Canadians.

With keynote speeches from three federal parties, meetings with 11 cabinet ministers, including a roundtable discussion with the Prime Minister, our strong federal-municipal partnership was on full display all week. On Thursday, we explored how each one of you can bring FCM's first-100-days recommendations directly to your local MP. We're calling it *Advocacy Days in the Riding*. These first 100 days are critical, and your outreach will be vital to ensuring our message is heard.

The week also included the inaugural meeting of FCM's Western Economic Solutions Taskforce. Taskforce members began laying the framework for new solutions for the communities of Canada's struggling western regions. On Thursday morning, we all looked at how we can continue to improve FCM's governance. Your honest input is essential as we work to ensure our organization meets members' needs. And on Friday, we heard the news that our CEO, Brock Carlton, will retire on July 31, 2020. The search for his replacement will begin immediately. I'm sure you'll all join me in thanking Brock for his incredible contributions to FCM—and to Canada.

Throughout the week, one theme kept coming up again and again: unity. The fact is, our remarkable success is rooted in our strong and united voice. We may have different backgrounds and perspectives, but when municipal leaders come together through FCM, there's nothing we can't tackle. Thank you for your leadership and commitment. I'm excited for what we'll achieve next.

Sincerely,



Bill Karsten
FCM President
Councillor, Halifax Regional Municipality



First 100 days of government

This board meeting took place the week before the opening of Canada’s newly elected Parliament. We took the opportunity to release *Building Better Lives Together*—FCM’s call-to-action for the new government’s first 100 days.

This is a detailed roadmap to working with municipalities to build better lives for Canadians in every part of this country. It will be an essential tool for FCM members over the coming weeks and months, as we take our message to the federal government

This 43-page flagship document presents concrete municipal recommendations in 15 priority areas, including:

- **Strengthening local infrastructure**, from roads and bridges to water systems and arenas, by ensuring federal investments reach municipalities as intended.
- **Making housing more affordable** by building on the National Housing Strategy for lower-income households, while strengthening leadership on the wider housing crisis.
- **Modernizing public transit** for faster commutes and lower emissions, by implementing election platform commitments to launch a permanent, predictable federal transit funding mechanism.
- **Supporting local climate action**, both to protect our communities from extreme weather, and to unlock municipalities’ tremendous potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Championing rural communities** by urgently tackling the rural Internet access gap, while continuing to build a rural lens into the heart of federal policies and investments.

A minority Parliament brings fresh opportunities. More than ever, Canadians want to see their elected representatives working together to get things done. And these first 100 days are critical. This is where the next federal budget takes shape. This is where we make sure political Ottawa knows that working with municipalities is the key to delivering the results Canadians want.

Building Better Lives Together is a tool to get that message out—to parliamentarians, government officials, journalists and stakeholders. And we’re encouraging FCM members across the country to share this document with their own MPs—and use it to drive conversations about working together.



▶ [DOWNLOAD OUR FIRST 100 DAYS ROADMAP](#)

Visit BuildingBetterLives.ca to download our “first 100 days” roadmap. Click [Take action](#) to share it directly with your own local Member of Parliament.

FCM Advocacy Days 2019

Each November FCM board meeting features our annual Advocacy Days event. This is where we marshal the full force of our board and committee members—dozens of engaged local leaders from every part of Canada—to influence decision-makers in Ottawa.

With many MPs still making their way to Ottawa post-election, we took a new approach with this year's event. Instead of back-to-back political meetings, our schedule featured a wider range of sessions—to prepare ourselves to advocate effectively through the first 100 days of government.

On the **direct advocacy** front, FCM President Bill Karsten led a roundtable with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland. We engaged with nine other cabinet ministers, including Catherine McKenna (Infrastructure & Communities), Ahmed Hussen (Families, Children & Social Development), Maryam Monsef (Rural Economic Development; Women & Gender Equality) and Marie-Claude Bibeau (Agriculture & Agri-Food). We also met with opposition MPs—from Conservative Agriculture Critic John Barlow to Green Party Leader Elizabeth May.

Our full board delegation heard three **keynote addresses**. Infrastructure Minister Catherine McKenna laid out her government's broad objectives to get infrastructure built. NDP leader Jagmeet Singh committed to advocate for key FCM priorities in the new minority Parliament. And we heard fresh Official Opposition perspectives from Conservative MP Eric Duncan—a new parliamentarian with a wealth of experience as a municipal leader.

Another highlight was our **Advocacy Days in the Riding** workshop. Summa Strategies' Tim Powers offered a seasoned lobbyist's advice—on everything from the tone of effective political meetings, to using talk radio to get our rural story out. FCM staff walked board members through the tools available to take our First 100 Days message directly to our own local Members of Parliament.

Our **pundit panel** featured Paul Wells (*Macleans*), Heather Scofield (*Toronto Star*) and Ihor Korbabicz (Abacus Data). Each shared insider insight into today's federal political environment, the strategies of the federal parties, and opportunities for FCM and local governments to use this moment to drive progress for our cities and communities.



Western Economic Solutions Taskforce

This board meeting featured the first face-to-face session of the Western Economic Solutions Taskforce (or “WEST”)—formed on November 8, in the wake of the federal election.

Too many western communities are struggling through an economic downturn fuelled by unstable commodity prices, turbulent trade markets and other forces. No order of government has been closer to the real-life impacts on Canadians than municipalities. And no order of government has a stronger track record of pulling together in the face of difficult challenges to drive solutions.

That is the spirit and mandate of WEST.

This group of elected officials will convene important conversations between the municipal and federal orders of government to ensure the municipal perspectives of western communities are voiced. A central part of its mandate is to identify solutions to the economic uncertainty western communities face.

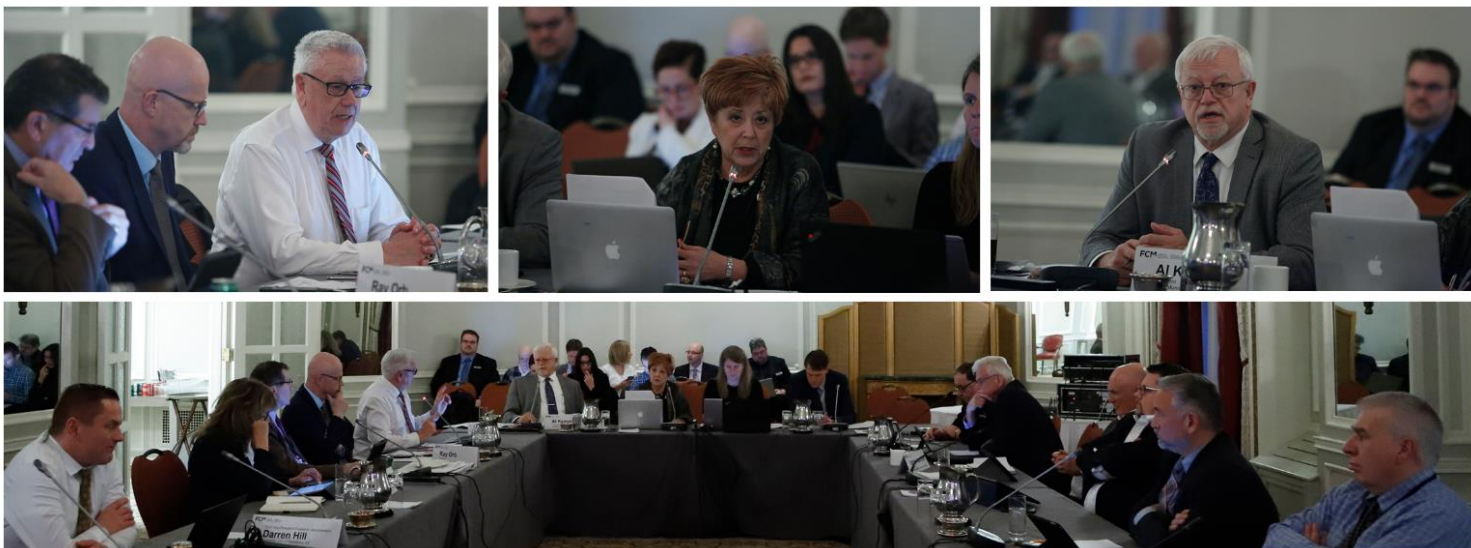
These will take the form of recommendations to the federal government and innovative practices to share across the sector.

At this inaugural meeting, WEST participants formally adopted their terms of reference. They also took a significant decision to expand the taskforce with representation from British Columbia—alongside Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

Then they got down to work building a framework to explore solutions in four focus areas:

- getting resources and products to market
- energy development, climate policy and regulation
- supporting communities to diversify economies
- municipal infrastructure and fiscal sustainability

WEST is chaired by Randy Goulden (Councillor, City of Yorkton, SK). The group is working on a plan to connect directly with members across the country in the weeks and months ahead.



Reviewing FCM’s governance

On the heels of unprecedented achievements for municipalities, FCM is entering an ambitious new phase, guided by a 5-year strategic plan.

As a national membership organization, effective governance is critical to our success on the road ahead. And so, since November 2018, the board’s **Governance Review Task Force (GRTF)** has been examining potential improvements to FCM’s governance.

These include ideas to strengthen decision-making processes; foster more in-depth policy discussions; reduce barriers to participation; strengthen the voice of those elected to governance bodies; and take better advantage of the Big City Mayors’ Caucus. The GRTF is also looking at how to equip FCM’s Board of Directors to respond nimbly to emerging issues, reflecting the growing prominence of our municipal order of government on the national stage.

In Ottawa, task force members presented preliminary recommendations for discussion by the Committee of the Whole.

Feedback was thoughtful and extensive, pushing the plenary session into overtime. Task force members committed to examining colleagues’ input, and continuing consultation and conversation at the March 2020 meeting of the Board.

In the words of FCM President Bill Karsten:

“FCM’s Board of Directors has distinguished itself as a force of progress, unifying communities of all sizes in every region of this country. Our board has presided over a period of unprecedented growth and change—for FCM and for municipalities. It’s inspiring, though never easy, to see this group bring that same lens of change to how we govern ourselves.”



CEO announcement

In our Friday board meeting, Brock Carlton announced his upcoming retirement as FCM’s Chief Executive Officer, after more than 12 years in the role. We’ll have plenty of time for proper farewells: While our search for his replacement begins immediately, Brock remains as CEO until July 31, 2020.

Brock joined FCM in 1991, bringing tremendous value to our international programs until the board appointed him CEO in 2007. Since then, he has presided over a period of historic growth—in membership, influence, effectiveness and concrete achievements for municipalities.

In his own words: *“I am tremendously proud of what our organization has achieved in the years I’ve had the privilege of serving our membership as CEO. This role has been among the most cherished of my career. I have grown as a leader and as a person, and have had the pleasure of developing friendships with people dedicated to community service and making lives better for Canadians.”*

► [Read Brock Carlton’s public statement](#)

Media impact

Our board meeting and 100 Days launch earned major coverage in Canada’s print and broadcast media.

- More than **439 news stories** mentioned FCM
- November 28 potential reach: **68,700,000 views**
- November 29 potential reach: **44,800,000 views**

FCM also generated significant attention on social media throughout the week (Nov 25–Dec 1).

- **FCM own tweets** received **648,000 impressions**
- **FCM’s Twitter accounts** were mentioned **2,045 times**, with a potential reach of **32,644,048 users**



MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Among our nearly 450 media hits:

- *Municipalities send Trudeau a wish list for first 100 days in office* (CP)
- *Municipal leaders gather in Ottawa to list priorities for the new minority government* (City)
- *Mayors urge Ottawa to get creative on infrastructure when provinces delay* (Globe)
- *Municipalities ask new Parliament to act fast on boosting direct infrastructure funding* (iPolitics)
- *Les villes canadiennes comptent profiter d'un gouvernement minoritaire* (PC)

► [View more images from FCM Advocacy Days 2019](#)

Key points to share

- **FCM’s Board of Directors met this November 26-29 in Ottawa, Ontario.** FCM unites nearly 2,000 municipalities of all sizes at the national level, representing more than 90 percent of all Canadians. FCM’s elected board and its committees provide strong direction to the organization.
- **We used this moment to launch *Building Better Lives Together*.** This is FCM’s roadmap for the government’s first 100 days. It presents recommendations to work with municipalities in 15 priority areas—from getting infrastructure built, to making housing more affordable, to championing rural communities.
- **This meeting featured FCM’s annual *Advocacy Days* event.** This is where we marshal our full board to influence federal decision makers. Our meetings included 11 cabinet ministers and the Prime Minister. National pundits shared insights on the political environment. And FCM staff presented new tools to take our “first 100 days” message to MPs in our own ridings.
- **We leave this meeting ready to seize the opportunity of this minority Parliament.** Canadians are looking for concrete results, and our message to every federal party is clear: *if you want to build better lives, you need to work with the governments closest to people’s lives*
- **FCM’s Western Economic Solutions Taskforce met for the first time here.** WEST’s mandate is centred on finding solutions for struggling western communities—and they’ll be raising the voice of those communities directly to the federal government.
- **FCM’s Governance Review Task Force presented preliminary recommendations for discussion.** The board’s objective is to ensure that FCM’s governance model is equipped to support members’ needs and the ambitions of our new 5-year strategic plan. GRTF will examine the day’s feedback, and continue the consultation at our March 2020 board meeting.
- **Brock Carlton announced that he will retire as FCM’s CEO on July 31, 2020.** Through more than 12 years in the role, Brock has presided over a period of unprecedented growth—in FCM’s membership, program delivery, federal influence, and concrete achievements. The search for FCM’s next CEO begins immediately.