

March 19, 2013

Chair and Members
Corporate Services Committee

RE: Report of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Board of Directors Meeting – Prince George, BC March 6-9, 2013

OVERVIEW

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Board of Directors meetings took place in Prince George, BC, from March 6–9, 2013.

Board members participated in Regional Caucus meetings, Standing Committee and Forum meetings, a Committee of the Whole meeting and the general Board meeting. Discussions covered a range of issues that affect FCM's member municipalities, from infrastructure and international development, to the environment and women in local government. Housing and policing were seen as important issues to be discussed in the coming months. The Board debated and considered 15 resolutions on a variety of important matters for FCM member municipalities. Of these, 11 were approved and adopted as policy.

The Board meeting was highlighted by discussions on the upcoming federal budget and what programs might be introduced to support municipal infrastructure investments over the long term. Board members have been provided with a series of key messages to draw on when discussing the budget with colleagues and local media.

Key messages on Budget 2013

1. FCM has one priority for the upcoming federal budget: to continue moving Canada's communities and economy forward.
2. The federal government must use this budget to break new ground in its partnership with local governments, and build on the investments we've made together in Canada's aging roads, bridges, water systems and public transit.
 - The budget must protect and extend core infrastructure investments, including the nine billion dollars in funding that expires next year when the seven-year Building Canada Plan comes to an end.
 - The budget must give municipalities a clear idea of what they can expect to receive in the future by providing them secure, predictable funding so they can budget more effectively for the long term while taking care of the roads, buses and water systems Canadians are relying on today.
 - The budget must give future governments the flexibility to build on today's investments as the country's financial situation improves. We have heard the minister of finance say how determined he is to eliminate the deficit in the next two years. As municipal leaders, we understand the challenge of balancing your books when times are tough. However, we also know that the longer it takes to solve our infrastructure challenges, the more it will cost taxpayers and our economy in the end.

3. FCM has worked closely with the federal government for more than a year to make sure this budget protects the local foundations of our national economy. After the budget is released, we look forward to continuing to work with the government, and all parties in the House of Commons, to put its investments to work on behalf of all Canadians.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

Standing Committees and Forums

FCM's standing committees and forums met to discuss the latest developments and to make recommendations to the Board of Directors. A summary of these activities is provided below.

REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SAFETY AND CRIME PREVENTION

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

The Chair welcomed new and returning Committee members.

The Committee discussed and made recommendations on five resolutions including resolutions on 9-1-1 pocket calls, Investments in Crime Prevention and the release of high-risk offenders.

Mr. Allen Benson, President of the National Associations Active in Criminal Justice made a presentation to the committee about a number of initiatives and programs supporting the successful reintegration of offenders back into our communities and the important role NGOs can play in making sure local governments have a full understanding of what is happening with ex-offenders in their communities.

The Chair led a discussion on FCM's participation in Public Safety Canada's Economics of Policing Summit held in Ottawa in January. Members who were at the Summit agreed that while the presentations at the summit were interesting, the federal government left out key issues in the debate about the economics of policing. Specifically, the summit, and federal commitments coming out of the summit, did not address how we fund police services, who is paying for policing and the changing roles and responsibilities of all orders of government in delivering police services in Canada.

Past President Berry Vrbanovic reported on his presentation on the economics of policing to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Safety. The Committee reaffirmed the need for FCM to continue to push the federal government to work with municipalities to address the growing costs of policing.

Committee Vice-Chair Bob Long provided an update on the Joint Committee on Community Corrections and noted the excellent presentation from Prince George volunteer, Ursula Morris and the work she does to support ex-offenders.

Committee member Dorothy Hector tabled the City of Kingston's Police Business Plan developed in consultation with community stakeholders and business leaders.

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for adoption:

1. Adopt the policy statement, as amended;
2. Adopt the policy forum agenda, as amended;
3. Maintain its membership on the Resilient Communities Working Group;
4. Provide the President with names of members interested in representing FCM on the Resilient Communities Working Group.
5. Direct staff to collect municipal police budget information from Committee members to inform future advocacy work on policing costs.

REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON MUNICIPAL FINANCE AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL ARRANGEMENTS (Member Joni Baechler)

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Committee Vice-Chair Roger Anderson welcomed returning committee members to Prince George and introduced the Vice-Chair Robert Coulombe.

The Committee approved the agenda and the Action Items Status Report. As per committee direction in November 2012, staff pointed members to Annex A: a copy of the most recent federal government analysis on public-private partnerships.

The Chair then welcomed the Honourable Ed Fast, Minister for International Trade and the Asia-Pacific Gateway, to the committee meeting. President Leibovici provided welcoming comments to the Minister and reiterated FCM's appreciation for the commitment the Government of Canada made last year to respect FCM's seven principles on international trade. Minister Fast updated the committee on the status of the negotiations between Canada and the E.U. on the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). Minister Fast reiterated that while the trade deal is still in the final stages of negotiations, he is confident that the final text of the agreement will adhere to FCM's position on trade. For example, the thresholds for municipal procurement would be high enough to exempt most of the day to day operations at the local level. Furthermore communities would still be able to use grants, loans and other fiscal incentives as well as set rigorous local criteria for procurement contracts.

Committee members then asked a number of questions to Minister Fast. Notably, Minister Fast commented that the recent launch of U.S. – E.U. trade talks both represented challenges and opportunities for Canadian negotiations – namely that closing the deal with the E.U. would offer a “first time mover” advantage to Canadian businesses over their U.S. counterparts. The Minister also recognized that continued pressure in the U.S. over Buy American provisions represent an ongoing challenge to cross-border trade and industry chains. President Leibovici thanked Minister Fast for taking the time to again meet with the committee and thanked the Minister for his continued interest in building stronger, more strategic relations between FCM and the Government of Canada. Staff will provide an email update to members on the key issues discussed during the call.

Staff provided an update on the strategic issues and opportunities that Budget 2013 will provide the sector in the weeks, months and years ahead. Much focus was given to designing better financial arrangements between all orders of government, including a more capacity-focussed approach to P3 investment. Furthermore, following the budget, there will be an opportunity for FCM to highlight the need for refreshing and refocusing the narrative around municipal fiscal balance. The committee directed staff to update the current research to date on municipal P3s.

Following this update, staff updated the committee on the current shape of the 2013 State of the Cities and Communities Report. The focus of this year's report will be to tell the municipal story around LTIP, and how our success as an organization has grown and evolved over the past number of years. At its heart, this report will trace the municipal sector's journey from “junior order of government” to key partner in designing the future of our communities.

Staff then provided a brief update on possible next steps on the committee's work to encourage greater collaboration and coordination between all levels of government in promoting trade and attracting investments into our communities. Near term action items were identified and the committee provided direction to staff to develop terms of reference for a renewed FCM-DFAIT joint working group alongside the Department.

The committee approved the proposed 2013 Policy Forum Agenda and Policy Statement.

Finally, Vice-Chair Anderson thanked those members of the committee who would not be continuing on following the Annual Conference for their dedication and valuable contributions to making our communities. The committee also thanked President Karen Leibovici and Past-President Berry Vrbancovic for their work over the past two years and their leadership.

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for adoption:

1. Adopt the policy statement, as amended;
2. Adopt the policy forum agenda, as amended;
3. Direct staff to continue to work with Government of Canada staff to develop revised terms of reference for a renewed and expanded Joint Working Group on International Trade;
4. Work with department staff to develop a strategy for a major municipal trade-related announcement as part of FCM's 2013 Annual Conference in Vancouver;
5. Endorse a 2013 Report on the State of Cities and Communities focused on telling the budget story;
6. Approve a release and distribution strategy to release the report the week of May 20 at a national media event and presidential keynote address to a national group in Ottawa; and,

Recommendations for referral to staff:

7. Direct staff to update the 2007 P3 report to update and bring focus to the capacity-building needs to plan for and implement viable, responsible and value-added P3 projects in our cities and communities and to report back to the committee at the September 2013 board meeting.

REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (Member Harold Usher)

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

The Committee Vice-chair began the meeting by welcoming members to the meeting and inviting new members to introduce themselves. The committee adopted the agenda and approved last meeting's report.

Soon after, the meeting moved to a presentation about GMF 2.0. The presentation, delivered by Alex Long from FCM's National Programs, provided an overview of the plans for GMF as the program goes through a redesign phase. In the subsequent discussion, members raised questions such as the need to provide more outreach to make GMF available to small rural communities, and the possibility of partnering with educational institutions to increase the capacity building components of the fund. After this discussion, the Chair announced that former policy advisor, Shannon Joseph, has moved to a new position as Manager, Research and Development with GMF. A motion was passed to thank Shannon for her contribution to the Committee.

The meeting continued with updates on a number of reports: Canada and climate change 2012-2013, the National Zero Waste Council, the changes in environmental legislation, Bill S-8, and the progress report on policy and advocacy priorities. Members had questions regarding the possibility to expand FCM's work on climate change, including updating the climate change report that FCM produced three years ago. They also had questions about the environmental regulatory changes, particularly the Navigable Waters Protection Act, and whether the amendments covered the issue of municipal infrastructure being deteriorated by heavy boat traffic.

Following these discussions, staff provided an overview of the research conducted by Natural Resources Canada, which looks at the possibility of incorporating energy consumption as a criterion in the municipal development process. Members were asked to fill out a survey and return it by March 31. As agreed in the meeting, the electronic copy of the survey will be e-mailed to the members.

For the next item, staff provided a summary of the Proposed Policy Forum Agenda for the upcoming AGM in Vancouver. Members suggested that the AGM participants need be reminded to review the Policy Statement prior to the meeting so that they are prepared to engage in more insightful discussions. FCM will be sending that reminder.

Towards the end of the meeting, there was a presentation about mountain pine beetle by Dan Adamson, the Community Forest Manager for the city of Prince George. Members had comments about the local work that is being done to prevent forest fires and the general environmental, economic and social impacts that forest fires and the pine beetle are having in BC and parts of Alberta.

The meeting ended with a request by one of the Committee members, Scott Pierce, regarding a possible federal funding initiative for septic tank upgrades in private homes. A private members motion calling to introduce this type of funding program will soon be discussed in the House of Commons. Councillor Pearce invited Committee members to contact their MPs to express support for the motion. FCM staff will provide a letter template for members to use if they wish to contact their MPs.

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for adoption:

1. Adopt the policy statement, as amended;
2. Adopt the policy forum agenda, as amended;
3. Continue to monitor the implementation of the environment related legislative changes;
4. Recommend that the Government of Canada develop a plan for implementation of Bill S-8 in collaboration with all orders of government, including First Nations, that establishes a framework, including conditions and funding support, for delegation of water service responsibilities to municipalities.

REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON INCREASING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

(Member Harold Usher)

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Committee Chair Erin Hogan welcomed everyone to Prince George and invited committee members and observers to introduce themselves. She highlighted International Women's Day this week as a good opportunity to take stock and recognize the great work our Committee and the contribution FCM is making both in Canada and internationally.

The committee then approved the agenda, the report from the Board of Directors' meeting in Ottawa, and its action item, which was to disseminate results of a brainstorming session on long-term funding to the committee.

The Committee received reports on recent international gender activities. FCM President Karen Leibovici presented on her experience at the United Cities and Local Government's Global Conference of Local Elected Women in Paris in January. At the conference, she summarized some of the work FCM has done on gender and local economic development in FCM's international programs and the Getting to 30% and Protégé programs. Mayor Debra Button then provided an update on activities in Ukraine. She highlighted the inclusion on women on the board of the Association of Ukraine Cities and the emphasis placed in the Ukraine program on including gender equality issues and perspectives in program tools and initiatives.

Councillor Pam McConnell, chair of the sub-committee on long-term funding, provided a verbal report on the recent meeting of the sub-committee. The sub-committee reviewed and provided comment on a concept paper that will be the basis for a discussion between FCM President Karen Leibovici and Rona Ambrose, Minister for Status of Women Canada. The concept note provides a framework for a longer-term program partnership between FCM and the federal government that would build on the past 10 years of women's programming to create a comprehensive program that would support the full "life cycle" of girls, young women and women in municipal politics. Committee members provided input on additional elements that should be included in new programming, to be included in the next draft of the concept note.

Alex Long, Senior Manager, National Programs, provided an update on the program proposal for funding submitted to Status of Women in August 2012. FCM staff will circulate a short note to the committee on the program scope in the coming weeks. Jennifer Mowbray, former Program Manager of Getting to 30%, will return on a short-term contract to implement the final campaign school in Ottawa and the Committee's activities during FCM's annual conference.

Vice-Chair, Deputy Mayor Shannie Duff provided the Committee with an update on the scholarships. She announced the decision of the Canadian Labour Congress to continue its support to sponsor the breakfast for the coming years. The Committee then held a discussion on the scholarships deadline and process. The scholarship sub-committee asked for volunteers, especially from Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Ontario, to review the applications next month.

The Chair, Deputy Mayor Erin Hogan, facilitated a discussion on the Committee's activities during the annual conference. A policy forum and the fundraising breakfast, where the Ann MacLean Award will be presented, will be organized during the conference. The Committee then held a brainstorming session asking for ideas for celebrating the past 10 years of programming, and on developing a vision for the next 10 years. The Committee approved the proposed policy forum agenda and the policy statement, as amended.

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for adoption:

1. Adopt the policy statement, as amended;
2. Adopt the policy forum agenda, as amended;
3. Direct the sub-committee on long-term funding to complete the concept paper and proposal prior to a meeting between FCM President and Minister Ambrose;

Recommendations for referral to staff:

4. Direct staff to review the timelines and process for the scholarships and present a revised strategy at the September 2013 meeting.

REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE RURAL FORUM

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Chair David Marit welcomed new and returning committee members to the Rural Forum, and Forum members and staff introduced themselves.

After approval of the minutes and the Action Item Status Report, staff provided a Progress Report on the 2012-2013 Policy and Advocacy Priorities. Councillor Olsvik requested that staff continue to focus resources on rural broadband and conduct a fulsome analysis of the final conditions for the 700 MHz spectrum auction. Chair Marit recognized Councillor Olsvik for his leadership on rural telecommunications issues.

Staff then provided update reports on the rural infrastructure advocacy and outreach campaign, and the rural research project. The Forum supported the staff proposal to structure the research project in two phases. The first phase will provide an overview of the state of rural communities, examining economic and demographic trends, while also presenting methodologies for defining rural communities and an overview of current and past federal programs for rural communities. The second phase will consist of theme reports on the topics of rural broadband, rural Canada's participation in the global economy, and supporting vibrant rural communities. Forum members agreed with the staff proposal to engage partners in delivering the rural research project.

An update on food policy was then provided. Staff will continue to monitor the work of the Conference Board of Canada's Centre for Food in Canada.

The Chair then welcomed Jeremy Cotton, General Manager for Government Relations at Canada Post, to the Forum. Mr. Cotton provided a presentation on Canada Post's commitment to Rural Canada and answered questions from Forum members on a variety of issues, including snow removal and the rural mail safety review.

The Forum discussed and approved the proposed Policy Forum Agenda and Policy Statement for the 2013 annual conference.

Mayor Pearce then provided an update on the issue of septic systems and a related motion currently before the House of Commons. Staff will provide committee members with a template letter for Rural Forum members to send to their Members of Parliament on this issue.

Staff then advised the committee of FCM's submission to a CRTC consultation on 9-1-1 service, and specifically, FCM's request that the government consider the specific needs of northern, remote and rural communities. Staff also advised members of a motion currently before the House of Commons introduced by NDP MP John Rafferty calling for long-term predictable funding for rural communities.

Further to requests at the November 2012 board meeting, staff then provided updates on changes to the Environmental Assessment Act and the Species at Risk Act, and on the National Airports Policy and Airports Capital Assistance Program. Forum members recommended that staff compile research to support the case for strategic federal investments in small and regional airports.

Finally, the Forum discussed a resolution from the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities concerning the Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements, which will be considered at the September 2013 board meeting.

FORUM RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for referral to staff:

1. Adopt the policy statement, as amended;
2. Adopt the policy forum agenda, as amended;
3. Direct staff to compile research to support the case for strategic federal investments in small and regional airports, and report back to the Forum at the September 2013.

REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (Member Harold Usher)

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Committee Chair Lise Burcher welcomed everyone to Prince George and invited committee members and observers to introduce themselves. The Committee then approved the agenda, as amended, and the minutes from the November 2012 Board of Directors' meeting in Ottawa.

The Committee received updates from FCM's International Program Governance Representatives. FCM's international programs continue to improve program coordination overseas with other donor countries. Due to the conflict in Mali, all missions to Burkina Faso and Mali have been postponed until at least April.

The Haiti-Municipal Cooperation Program received an extension from the Canadian International Development Agency and will now come to a close in June 2013. In the coming weeks, FCM, City of Montreal and Union des municipalités du Quebec will submit a revised proposal based on CIDA's comments. Alderman Brian Pincott, Governance Representative for the program asked the committee to support a call to the Minister of International Cooperation to give positive consideration to a second phase of the program.

The committee members were presented with an update on how local governments can effectively engage with the extractive sector by Vice-Chair, Cllr Garth Frizzell. The committee had a good discussion on a session related to the topic during the annual conference. The session will present positive examples of relationships between municipalities and the natural resource sector in Canada. Committee members asked staff to develop a communication strategy to promote the conference session. The task group will meet prior to the conference to provide feedback on the development of the session.

Cllr Dorothy Hector, Chair of the Natural Disasters Task Group, presented an update on the revised framework on responding to natural disasters, including the analysis done by staff on options for involvement in this sector and to consult key actors involved in disaster management.

The committee received a report on program development. FCM Past President Cllr Berry Vrbancovic presented a revised concept note on a renewed partnership with the Government of Canada, which has been presented to CIDA staff. FCM staff is also working on initiatives in northern Mali in response to the on-going conflict, South-east Asia and a renewal of the Ukraine-Municipal Local Economic Development (MLED).

The committee adopted the proposed policy forum agenda and proposed policy statement, as amended. In an effort to align international programming with FCM's Strategic Plan, Sebastien Hamel, Director of FCM International, suggested the development of a framework to guide FCM's international programs in the next 5 years. Committee members were asked to participate on a task group to lead the development of a framework and process and report back at the November meeting.

In December 2012, FCM and partners of the Municipal Partners for Economic Development (MPED) program attended the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) World Council and concurrent Africities Summit hosted by the African section of UCLG. FCM Past President, Cllr Berry Vrbancovic, provided members with an overview of the mission, including the adoption of the policy paper on development cooperation and local government. Committee members will be involved in the implementation of the policy paper and monitoring of an advocacy strategy in the coming year. FCM President, Cllr Karen Leibovici, provided an update on her recent mission to Paris to attend UCLG's Global Conference on Local Elected Women where she presented FCM's international programs and campaign tools developed through the *Getting to 30%* and *Protégé* programs.

Cllr Tim Stevenson raised a concern regarding a funding decision by CIDA related to human rights. The committee members asked staff to review the issue of diversity within its program proposals and policy statement and report back to the committee at the September meeting. The analysis will coincide with the review of FCM International's policy statement and framework.

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for adoption:

1. Adopt the policy statement, as amended;
2. Adopt the policy forum agenda, as amended;
3. That the Federation of Canadian Municipalities asks the federal government to give positive consideration to the request for Municipal Cooperation Program renewal within a time frame that will not lead to any loss of the achieved benefits.

Recommendations for referral to staff:

4. Direct staff to provide analysis on the inclusion of diversity in its programming proposals and policy statement and report back to the committee at the September 2013 meeting

REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (Member Joni Baechler)

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

The Chair welcomed the Committee to Prince George and wished all Committee members a happy International Women's Day.

The Committee discussed and approved with amendments, a resolution supporting national data collection of transient workers. The Committee also approved the proposed Policy Statement.

The Chair led a discussion about FCM's housing policy in order to bring some consensus around and provide direction to FCM's upcoming advocacy focus on housing. Members agreed that long-term, national strategies, matched by funding by all orders of government, remain at the core of meeting Canada's affordable housing needs.

The Committee recognized that moving forward, it is important to frame the housing debate in terms of sustainable solutions and the improved economic and social outcomes of meeting housing needs across the housing spectrum. It was also recognized that housing is not just the concern of larger cities but also for smaller, rural and northern communities. The Committee agreed that a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities for cities and communities lie in having the data and facts about the costs of both action and inaction.

Alex Long with National Programs provided the Committee with an update on the Municipal and First Nations Community Infrastructure Partnership Program and FCM's newest related program, the Community Economic Development Initiative. City of Vancouver Councillor Heather Deal took the opportunity to inform the Committee of Vancouver's proclamation of the "Year of Reconciliation" with indigenous peoples.

The Chair provided an update on the Urban Aboriginal Strategy Working Group. The Working Group is focused on bringing together best practices in working with and supporting aboriginal Canadians living in urban centres with the view to future policy or programs. The Working Group is inviting all interested committee members to meet again at the Conference in May to discuss next steps.

The Committee heard and discussed Red Deer Councillor Paul Harris's presentation on equity and inequality in setting policy. Councillor Harris highlighting the relation between income levels and social outcomes and invited members to consider framing our policy issues in terms of solutions and opportunities instead of problems.

FCM Policy Operations Manager, Shannon Watt, provided an update of FCM's work to monitor emerging food policy issues. The Conference Board of Canada is undertaking a three year consultation on a food strategy for Canada. FCM has been successful in pushing the Conference Board to broaden the scope of its study and to be more inclusive of a broader range of stakeholder groups. The strategy is expected to be released this fall. Updates are available on the Board's website at <http://www.conferenceboard.ca/cfic/foodstrategy.aspx>.

Vice-Chair Réjean Laforest led a discussion about recent changes to Employment Insurance regulations concerning seasonal workers and the impact on municipalities. Members agreed there are growing concerns around the issue that staff should investigate further. The Committee has referred the issue to executive for their consideration.

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for adoption:

1. Adopt the policy statement, as amended;
2. Adopt the policy forum agenda, as amended;
3. Direct staff to look into inviting a guest speaker to present to the Committee on issue around inequality and socioeconomic drivers of well-being.

Emergency recommendations for referral to the Executive Committee:

4. Direct staff to research the impacts of the new Employment Insurance regulations on municipalities and develop and propose a position and advocacy strategy as appropriate, to be presented at a future meeting of the executive committee.

REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON MUNICIPAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORTATION POLICY

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Committee Chair Doug Reycraft opened the meeting and introduced the Vice-Chair Councillor Brian Pincott.

Members approved the agenda and the report from the November 2012 Committee meeting.

The Committee considered five resolutions, including one emergency resolution from the Atlantic Mayor's Caucus on rail service frequency. The report on the Committee's decisions will take place during the report from the 2nd Vice President's report.

Staff provided an update on the strategies that will be employed following the announcement of Budget 2013, making specific reference for the need for collaboration between FCM and the Presidents of the Provincial/Territorial Municipal Associations on program design. Ensuring that the new federal programs are tailored to meet local and regional needs is paramount to the success of LTIP for members.

Staff then provided an update on the recent launch of the FCM-Canadian Wireless Telecommunications Association (CWTA) joint antenna tower siting protocol. The launch was a tremendous success and demonstrated FCM's leadership in collaborating directly with carriers to improve the local process of tower siting and address the most systemic challenges with locating these types of structures.

Staff provided an update on the future plans to continue development of the Canadian Infrastructure Report Card. The next volume of the report card will include chapters on public transit, municipal buildings as well as a more fulsome examination of the state of municipal asset management in Canada.

The Committee then heard an update on the new FCM-Railway Association of Canada (RAC) proximity guidelines report. Members were satisfied with the findings of the report and approved its continuation to launch.

Staff then provided an update on the City of Gatineau's application to the Rights-of-Way Legal Defense Fund and the legal challenge to its rights-of-way bylaw. Given the national significance of this case, the Committee approved the recommendation for FCM to request intervener status at the Quebec Superior Court.

The Committee approved the 2012-13 Policy and Advocacy Priorities update report as well as the 2013 FCM Proposed Policy Forum Agenda and Policy Statement.

Finally, the Committee endorsed an emergency recommendation to communicate to CN and VIA Rail the need to maintain and improve rail service frequency across New Brunswick, Atlantic Canada, and across all regions of the country.

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for adoption:

1. Adopt the policy statement, as amended;
2. Adopt the policy forum agenda, as amended;
3. Approve the updated *Guidelines for New Development in Proximity to Railway Operations*.

Emergency recommendations for referral to the Executive Committee:

4. Approve the recommendation for FCM to request intervener status in *Videotron et al. v. Ville de Gatineau*.
5. Support the efforts of the Atlantic Mayors Congress to request that CN and VIA Rail maintain and improve rail service frequency across New Brunswick, Atlantic Canada, and across all regions of the country.

REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE NORTHERN AND REMOTE FORUM SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

The meeting began with a welcome by Acting Chair Elaine Wyatt, after which Forum members and staff introduced themselves.

One change was made to the agenda, concerning FCM's support to the Nunavut Association of Municipalities. Staff provided the Forum with an overview of FCM's past and current administrative and capacity building support to NAM. In order to communicate the benefits of active participation in FCM, and the Forum's support for NAM going forward, the Forum agreed to send a letter to members of NAM's Board of Directors, including an invitation to the 2013 Annual Conference in Vancouver.

Following approval of the Action Item Status Report, staff provided an overview of the decision reports on northern housing and northern telecommunications.

The Forum identified the need for the housing report to reflect concerns around land development and the lack of apprenticeship opportunities for journeypersons, and directed staff to ensure the concerns raised are reflected in the final housing report. Members then approved the northern housing recommendations.

Staff then provided an overview of recent developments in northern telecommunications, and reviewed the proposed recommendations related to support of connectivity in the North as a means of fostering development including though increased access to telephone service. The Forum discussed the importance of placing connectivity at the centre of FCM's advocacy on this file, and ensuring that telecommunications services meet the requirements of public safety providers. The Forum approved the northern telecommunications recommendations.

The Forum then approved the Progress Report on 2012-13 Policy and Advocacy Priorities, and discussed the Proposed Policy Forum Agenda and Proposed Policy Statement for the 2013 annual conference. Members made a minor amendment to the policy statement to reflect the challenges of shortened construction seasons and reduced life of northern infrastructure assets, and approved the policy statement as amended.

FORUM RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for adoption:

1. Adopt the policy statement, as amended;
2. Adopt the policy forum agenda;
3. Adopt the following recommendations relating to housing in the North:
 - a. The federal government must work with local governments, provincial and territorial governments and the private sector in addressing market housing shortages in Northern communities – including through tax credits to developers, provision of low rate financing, etc.;
 - b. Development and funding of energy retrofit for existing housing to help address very high utility costs for all residents in the North;
 - c. Renewal of federal subsidy support to sustain existing social housing placed at risk due to expiring federal subsidy agreements;
 - d. Implementation of a permanent Northern Affordable Housing Program emulating the level of commitments provided under the recent trust fund, roughly \$100 million annually distributed across the three territories, and strategically directed to communities impacted by natural resource development;
 - e. Labour force initiatives to develop and expand construction skills through trades training and apprenticeship programs to build capacity in the home building sector in the north.
4. Recommend that the Government of Canada:
 - a. Implement the ACIA recommendation for ICT development in the territories and provincial north, and as a priority:
 - i. Develop a north-specific strategy with clearly defined rules, that articulates a sustained, multi-year funding commitment for communications network

development to meet connectivity standards enhancing both internet and voice services;

- ii. Commit to service parity among Northern communities, and set minimum connectivity standards that assure service parity to southern urban centres;
 - iii. Ensure there is a redundant connection into every Arctic community to avoid gaps in the provision of essential communication services;
 - iv. Investment strategies for Arctic communication networks must include provisions for the increasing rate of change of technology, and the continuous introduction of new consumer services and devices.
- b. Foster competition in ICT services in the North, including through a restructuring of the National Contribution Fund and implementation of recommendations 7 and 8 of the ACIA report;
 - c. Work with northern municipalities in developing its strategy for northern ICT investment and the development of ICT delivered services.

Recommendations for referral to staff:

5. Send a letter to the Board of Directors of the Nunavut Association of Municipalities reaffirming the Forum's support, and extending an invitation to FCM's 2013 Annual Conference in Vancouver;
6. Direct staff to ensure that the final report on northern housing reflects concerns raised by the Forum, in particularly around land development and the need for apprenticeship opportunities for journeypersons.

Respectfully submitted by:

Harold Usher
Councillor, Ward 12
FCM Board Member

Joni Baechler
Councillor, Ward 5
FCM Standing Committee Member