



FEDERATION  
OF CANADIAN  
MUNICIPALITIES

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CANADIENNE DES  
MUNICIPALITÉS

# Report to council

Virtual meeting of FCM's Board of Directors

September 8-11, 2020

*This document summarizes key updates 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 and regional councils on their progress with FCM.*

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*Governance in the COVID era: FCM’s first fully virtual Board of Directors meeting.*

## Message from FCM's president

Dear board and committee members,

Thank you for making FCM's all-virtual September board meeting such a success. Your resilient leadership is supporting 2,000 members through a deeply challenging pandemic—and helping to position communities of all sizes as key partners in Canada's recovery to come.

At this meeting, we reviewed and renewed our efforts to lead this nationwide pandemic response. We also took steps to strengthen our advocacy on everything from housing affordability to energy efficiency, active transportation, municipal cybersecurity, emergency management and the medical cannabis regime. We resolved to advocate federally for national utility corridors, while insisting on rigorous impact assessment and municipal engagement. We renewed our practical commitment to full bilingualism—and welcomed a long-term initiative to build an anti-racist equity lens into the heart of *who we are* and *what we do* as FCM. It was a productive week.

This document can help you share our progress with your own elected councils. After all, they make our work possible—and our work has never mattered more. This board has just played a key role in securing \$8.6 billion in emergency operating funding for municipalities. That helps our members maintain vital services, and it gives them the strength they need to start gearing up for tomorrow's recovery. And of course, we're well into working with our federal partners to shape those critical next steps as well.

My friends, our voice matters. Our voice is driving results, and its strength is grounded in unity: 2,000 local governments speaking together. Unity is hard work. This is a continuous work-in-progress driven by often-challenging discussions among this member-elected group. As my term as President draws to a close, I am so proud of the commitment and the grace that you've brought to the process all year.

So from the bottom of my heart: thank you. For your tireless efforts, for your resolve, and for your friendship.

Sincerely,



Bill Karsten  
FCM President  
Councillor, Halifax Regional Municipality



## Committees & forums

FCM's Board of Directors oversees various committees and forums that provide crucial direction and insight on a wide range of issues and priorities. Highlights from the September 2020 virtual meeting include:

**Election Readiness Working Group:** Received an update on recent changes to the federal cabinet; the upcoming Speech from the Throne and fall economic update; and the election of the new Conservative Party of Canada leader. The group discussed the successes of FCM's campaign to secure emergency operating funding and how future campaigns could align with and support perspectives and needs of members in different regions.

**Environmental Issues and Sustainable Development:** Updated FCM policy on the National Building Code to include consideration of affordability, long-term economic benefits, and municipal administrative responsibilities. Discussed environment-focussed COVID-19 recovery priorities. Gave consideration to FCM principles for federal impact assessments. Received an update memo on wastewater effluent regulations as well as updates on FCM's Green Municipal Fund and Municipalities for Climate Innovation Program.

**Increasing Women's Participation in Municipal Government:** Received an overview of the results of Toward Parity in Municipal Politics project, including the Run-Win-Lead framework, demonstration projects and knowledge hub. Discussed the results of the FCM's Women in Local Government Scholarships and Awards and plans for this year. Also discussed program development opportunities and FCM's international programming on gender equality.

**International Relations:** Received an overview of program development opportunities. Discussed international engagement in municipal networks, including the response to the COVID-19 outbreak and activities undertaken by Canadian municipalities. Governance representatives presented updates on program activities, with particular attention to adaptation in programming in response to COVID-19.

**Municipal Finance and Intergovernmental Arrangements:** Approved a decision to advocate for a federal cyber security certification program developed in consultation with, and delivered for, municipalities. Received an update memo on the Legal Defense Fund and a new

municipal data partnership between FCM and Statistics Canada. Finally, the Committee discussed and referred the resolution "Payments in Lieu of Taxes Revision" to staff for further analysis.

**Municipal Infrastructure and Transportation Policy:** Discussed and approved a set of recommendations for the Infrastructure Canada-led National Active Transportation Strategy. Discussed options for federal policy tools to help municipalities achieve transit-oriented affordable housing and development. Received an update on rail safety and the federal Grade Crossing Regulations.

**Northern and Remote Forum:** Discussed FCM's economic recovery recommendations as they relate to Canada's North. Received updates on the Arctic and Northern Policy Framework, broadband, and housing in the North.

**Rural Forum:** FCM CEO Carole Saab and Big City Mayors' Caucus Chair Don Iveson joined for a discussion on how rural priorities are critical to Canada's success as a country. The Forum discussed key priorities for FCM's economic recovery, including broadband, infrastructure, rural and regional bus service and federal support for the tourism sector. The Forum also discussed the importance of equitable access to rural healthcare.

**Social-Economic Development:** Updated FCM policy on the National Building Code to include a distinct focus on affordability. Discussed COVID-19-related priorities, including the pandemic's impacts on housing affordability, and the COVID-19 Community Response Fund for Vulnerable Populations. Received updates on the First Nations Community Economic Development Initiative and GMF's Sustainable Affordable Housing initiative.

**Community Safety and Crime Prevention:** Expanded FCM's policy on emergency management to include federal funding for volunteer fire department capital costs. Directed staff to return to the next Board meeting with a recommended approach to addressing the intersecting issues of anti-racism, mental health, police reform and drug policy.

# Resolutions

FCM members submit resolutions for the board’s consideration on subjects of national municipal interest. Our resolutions process recognizes diverse voices while providing a focus for building a united municipal voice to drive concrete action. Resolutions considered and approved at our September 2020 board meeting include:

**Transportation of Dangerous Goods by Rail:** Building on existing FCM policy, this resolution calls on the federal government to improve the TDG Program administered by Transport Canada, especially as it relates to spill preparedness, response and recovery.

**Improving the Medical Cannabis Regime:** In response to concerns that municipalities are currently limited in their ability to assert local authority over grow operations for medical use, this resolution calls on the federal government to create a committee of municipal, Health Canada and Justice Canada officials to develop amendments to the *Cannabis Act*.

**RCMP Community Policing:** To improve RCMP services, this resolution calls on the federal government to amend the definition of staffing levels, increase officer graduation rates, and work with municipalities to modernize the contract policing program—to ensure it provides not only police resources but also resources for partnership development with health and social service agencies at the local level, particularly those that are run by and serve Black, Indigenous and other racialized communities.

**Energy Infrastructure and Federal Environmental Assessments:** This resolution calls on the federal government to work towards a federal impact assessment process that improves predictability through timely approvals, appropriate community engagement and assessment scope; to approve national utility corridors within existing federal approval processes; and to repeal or amend the *Oil Tanker Moratorium Act*.

**Public Consultation on Telecommunications Infrastructure:** This resolution calls on Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED) to apply their public consultation policy consistently so that genuine public consultations are conducted when new telecommunication infrastructure is built.

**Indigenous Court System:** This resolution recognizes that Indigenous men and women are vastly overrepresented in federal and provincial incarceration systems, and calls on the federal government to fund and expand the Indigenous Court System that facilitates cultural and spiritual reconnection through the guidance of Indigenous elders and families.

Full text of approved resolutions  
[fcm.ca/fcm-resolutions](https://fcm.ca/fcm-resolutions)

## Key points to share

- **FCM's Board of Directors met this September 8-11.** Originally scheduled for Yellowknife NWT, this meeting moved to an all-virtual format to respect public health directives amid the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **FCM unites 2,000 municipalities of all sizes** at the national level, representing more than 90 percent of all Canadians. FCM's member-elected board and its committees provide strong direction to the organization.
- **FCM is supporting municipalities through the COVID-19 pandemic.** Most recently, our advocacy has secured \$8.6 billion in **emergency operating funding** for communities nationwide—plus more than \$1 billion to support **rapid housing solutions** for some of our most vulnerable.
- **Board members reached important decisions at this meeting** that will focus and strengthen FCM's advocacy in areas ranging from housing affordability and energy efficiency to active transportation, national utility corridors, municipal cyber security, emergency management and Canada's medical cannabis regime.
- **FCM's committees and forums** continued to study and recommend action on a wide range of priorities—from rural & northern issues through community safety, environmental issues, women's participation, international relations, infrastructure, municipal finance and social-economic development.
- **Guided by the Rural Forum**, the Board endorsed concrete advocacy priorities in areas including rural healthcare, rural/regional passenger bus service and rural tourism—including as part of a post-COVID recovery strategy.
- **FCM's Réseau francophone** reviewed recent progress toward ingraining bilingualism in FCM's culture—especially via the Board-staff working group created after the March 2020 board meeting. Réseau members also discussed the planned hiring of a Senior Advisor on Francophone Affairs.
- **FCM CEO Carole Saab updated the Board on FCM's anti-racism and equity initiatives.** We met Kofi Hope and Zahra Ebrahim—who will be supporting FCM's efforts to design an equity lens for our corporate and strategy planning. Their firm, Monumental, is focussed on helping communities and organizations lead an equitable recovery.