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Local Action, National Results: FCM's Annual Conference & Trade Show convenes in Toronto

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities convenes municipal elected officials from coast to coast to coast in Toronto



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Municipal leaders from across Canada gathered in Toronto, Ontario this week for *Local Action, National Results: FCM's 2023 Annual Conference and Trade Show*. More than 1,500 municipal elected officials gathered to engage national party leaders and representatives, to shape FCM's policy priorities, and to discuss the challenges and the opportunities that come with a rapidly growing Canada.

Through a new series of workshops, study tours and keynotes (including speeches by federal elected officials), municipal leaders discussed their priorities and exchanged ideas to draw a renewed roadmap for a better-working country – one that is ready to re-examine the fiscal framework that currently constrains municipalities.

“Canada’s municipal order of government remains the closest to the lives of Canadians”, said Scott Pearce, Mayor of Gore, Quebec and FCM President. “Canada is facing so many challenges, but also offers great opportunities. Municipal elected officials are driving local solutions to national challenges, whether it’s the need for tools to unlock the right kind of housing supply, tackling chronic homelessness, or addressing core infrastructure. This year’s Annual Conference sent a clear message to the country – municipalities are leading.”

This year’s event featured keynote addresses from Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Conservative Party of Canada deputy leader Melissa Lantsman, NDP leader Jagmeet Singh, and Green Party leader Elizabeth May. Delegates also had an opportunity to participate in workshop sessions focused on municipal realities, including intercommunity transit, climate adaptation and mitigation, building great community spaces and more. The Plenary stage hosted multiple presentations, including a Rural Plenary session on advocacy in Rural Communities, and a discussion on the need for a new fiscal framework for municipalities.

This programming was delivered against the backdrop of Canada’s largest city, with Toronto acting as host to municipal delegates from across the country.

“Toronto was delighted to host FCM’s Annual Conference and Trade Show and bring together local leaders from coast to coast to coast. This year’s conference has left me with an overwhelming sense of optimism, that together, we can tackle today’s most pressing challenges”, said Jennifer McKelvie, Deputy Mayor of Toronto. “No

matter the size of the municipality, the solution is the same: all governments working together. On behalf of the City of Toronto, I thank FCM for convening this forum to drive meaningful political change.”

FCM's elected leadership

Mayor of the Township of Gore since 2004, Scott Pearce was confirmed in elections today as FCM's new president. Delegates also elected new members to FCM's Board of Directors and its three vice-presidents:

- First Vice-President: Geoff Stewart (Deputy Mayor, Municipality of the County of Colchester, NS)
- Second Vice-President: Rebecca Bligh (Councillor, City of Vancouver, BC)
- Third Vice-President: Tim Tierney, (Councillor, City of Ottawa, ON).

During Saturday's Resolutions Plenary, FCM members also debated and voted overwhelmingly in favour of three key resolutions designed to address some of these modern national challenges:

- *Establishing an Urgent Intergovernmental Platform on Mental Health:* This resolution calls on the federal government to acknowledge mental health as a national emergency, to commit to tripartite policy discussions aimed at making mental health an integral part of Canada's healthcare system, and developing a comprehensive national mental health strategy.
- *Urgent Action Needed to Address the Crisis of Homelessness:* This resolution mandates FCM to call on the federal government to provide long-term funding and resource supports for local governments as they address homelessness, to ensure the sustainability of new supportive housing by urging provinces and territories to provide wraparound services, and to create a national strategy to support local efforts to scale up programs such as the Rapid Housing Initiative and Reaching Home.

- *New Growth Framework For Municipalities:* This resolution firmly declares that Canada needs a modernized fiscal framework for municipalities, that FCM shall lead the development of a Municipal Growth Framework that links municipal financial capacity to factors such as national population growth and economic growth, and that FCM shall call on the federal government to engage with FCM in the development of that framework with a focus on new sources of municipal revenue.

“If there has been one clear call to action through this year’s event, it is the message to the federal and provincial orders of government to engage with municipalities in a national conversation regarding a new fiscal framework for municipalities,” said Pearce. “From housing to a growing mental health crisis, municipalities are on the front lines of national challenges, but with outdated fiscal tools that are not designed to meet modern challenges. FCM is primed to lead the next steps of this work.”

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