

Local priorities take centre stage at national conference

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities Campaign to Build Better Lives

West Kelowna joined municipal leaders from across the country at FCM's 2019 Annual Conference to deliver a united message to the federal government. Support for local governments is critical to delivering results for Canadians. FCM is the national voice of local government, with members representing more than 90 per cent of Canadians.

"Whether it's better roads, transit, housing or water systems, local governments are building better lives. We make the most of the tools available, but the upcoming federal election needs to empower us to get even more done for our citizens and for Canadians across the country."

Held in Quebec City, Quebec and themed *Building Better Lives*, this year's conference showcased the power and influence of local government by bringing together 2,100 delegates representing communities from across the country. At the conference, attendees shared ideas about how to improve lives in their own communities.

The conference also provided opportunities for delegates to bring their diverse realities to discussions of some of Canada's most pressing issues, including housing affordability, national broadband and transit. Local leaders also explored ways to advance energy infrastructure while protecting the environment.

"I was inspired to see thousands of local leaders so energized and engaged," said incoming FCM President Bill Karsten. "The mutual respect and common experiences our delegates shared provided those in attendance with a deeper appreciation of their colleagues' work and an enriched understanding of our country."

The importance of this event and growing influence of the local order of government was highlighted further by the attendance of national party leaders including Green Party leader Elizabeth May, NDP leader Jagmeet Singh, Conservative leader and leader of the Official Opposition Andrew Scheer and, notably, Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

I was fortunate to attend one of the most popular study tours held at the Quebec City police station. The presentation by a police lieutenant, a social worker and a lawyer was entitled, "Assistance for people in vulnerable or crisis situations." Discussions on cooperation between police, frontline workers, support systems and partnerships were informative, educational and helpful.

Council members were able to meet with MP Francois-Phillippe Champagne, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities.

FCM represents the governments closest to people's daily lives. That's the message we delivered to the Prime Minister and the other federal party leaders. Colleagues and I left this conference united and determined to work for the quality-of-life and economic progress Canadians deserve.

Carol Zanon

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