



MEMO / NOTE DE SERVICE

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TO: Finance and Corporate Services Committee

DESTINATAIRE : Comité des finances et des services organisationnels

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**SUBJECT: FCM Annual Conference and Trade Show 2023 Delegate Report
(Councillor Kavanagh)**

**OBJET : Le rapport du délégué du congrès annuel et salon professionnel de FCM
2023 (Conseillère Kavanagh)**

PURPOSE

The purpose of this memorandum is to report to Committee following attendance at the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Annual Conference and Trade Show.

Pursuant to Section 4 of the Council Expense Policy, Members of Council who undertake City-funded travel must submit a written report to the appropriate Standing

Committee detailing their experiences, what they learned at the conference and how the City's position or interests were advanced.

BACKGROUND

The City of Ottawa is the fourth largest city in Canada and the second largest city in Ontario. As a leading municipality, Ottawa is a member of several municipal organizations responsible for advancing important priorities and engaging with upper levels of government. Our participation allows the City to influence policy development at the provincial and national level, while networking and learning from our peers. To this end, Members of Council are invited to attend various conferences, conventions, and meetings both within and outside the municipality.

The City of Ottawa is a Member of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), an organization representing more than 2,000 municipalities across Canada. FCM's Annual Conference and Trade Show gathers municipal leaders from across Canada each year to set common policy goals on key issues.

FCM hosted its Annual Conference and Trade Show from May 25 to May 28, 2023, in Toronto, Ontario. In addition to Mayor Mark Sutcliffe and Councillor Tim Tierney, the City's representative to FCM, the following Members of Council attended this event:

- Councillor Jessica Bradley
- Councillor Sean Devine
- Councillor Theresa Kavanagh
- Councillor Wilson Lo
- Councillor Shawn Menard
- Councillor Ariel Troster

DISCUSSION

This year's FCM Annual Conference and Trade Show in Toronto was an opportunity to learn what is happening in many facets of municipal policy. It also gave me the opportunity to hear from federal and provincial government leadership including the Prime Minister and other Leaders. I took advantage of the tours to see aspects of Toronto life in person.

Tours

I attended two city tours; one was a cycling tour of Road Safety Projects. I appreciated the emphasis on active transportation safety across the city. Toronto has transformed its central core to be bike friendly including an extensive bike share network that turned up everywhere we went. Much of the cycle infrastructure was installed in the last few years during the pandemic. Low rise concrete barriers, often decorated by local artists lined the bike routes on busier downtown roads.

The second tour was in the West Queen Street area where Toronto city planners showed us their successes of incorporating mid rise buildings for intensification along walkable tree lined streets with local shops. The planners also showed us the failed designs and pointed out why they did not work in this type of setting. I also enjoyed hearing how they could encourage small business growth by putting restrictions on the size of commercial spaces on the ground floor. This is an aside but I was thrilled to find out that I was actually walking through the neighbourhood I lived in when I was at the Ontario College of Art. Much has changed but surprisingly the character of the neighbourhood has been preserved. We also saw a modular unit building that was used as supportive housing for homeless persons in an established neighbourhood where residents were consulted and approved the project. It included a community garden for the residents.

National Adaptation Strategy to Local Climate Resilience Workshop

I appreciated hearing from this panel of experts on the impacts of climate change on municipalities. They spoke about the need to reduce disaster risk and increase resiliency. There is federal funding for this but is it enough for all that needs to be done? It was impressive to meet panelist, Julie Wright who is a Councillor in the city of Waterloo but also the Director of Partners for Action. She is an academic who by coincidence spent a lot of time in Bay Ward studying the effects of the 2019 flood. I enjoyed the opportunity to meet her. She will be publishing information from her studies in the near future, and I look forward to reading them to learn more about how my community was affected by the flood.

Toronto Community Crisis Service – Reimagining Crisis Response Workshop

This workshop was very timely in showing a new alternate approach to responding to someone in crisis that focuses on health, prevention and well-being. It was a pleasure to hear the results of Toronto's new municipal emergency response service that provides an alternative to police enforcement, creating a community-based client centred, trauma-informed response to non-emergency crisis calls and wellness checks.

This was an opportunity for Councillor Troster and I to ask questions on how this program is working with the hopes of using this as an example for Ottawa to emulate. It was pointed out that this program was funded by the city budget despite the fact that it lowered the burden on police calls. It was also mentioned that mental health and overdose crisis happen in every socio-demographic group. I felt encouraged and positive about the plans being made for Ottawa's own version of a Crisis Response to manage mental health and overdose calls.

Plenary Session

I enjoyed the positive energy of the plenary on the burden that municipalities have taken on after being on the front lines of the pandemic and extreme weather along with the shifting demographics, aging infrastructure, climate crisis and housing challenges all on the back of municipal budgets. This panel was led by FCM CEO Carole Saab talks about the need for a fiscal framework that takes cities, towns and rural communities to have the means to not only operate but to plan for the future. This includes keeping our communities not only healthy but thriving with strong infrastructure that can take on growth.

Women in Local Government Reception

I appreciated the opportunity to meet with my female/gender neutral counterparts from other cities and towns across the country. Numbers are growing and there are more and more women in leadership roles. I found it very helpful to meet with women who have decided to enter politics for a variety of reasons and motivations. Listening to the stories of other female municipal politicians can be very inspiring.

CONCLUSION

It is through the commitment of Members of Council, to attend conferences like the 2023 FCM Annual Conference and Trade Show, that the City of Ottawa's interests are advanced.

Theresa Kavanagh
Councillor, Ward 7 Bay