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TO: Finance and Corporate Services Committee

DESTINATAIRE : Comité des finances et des services organisationnels

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FILE NUMBER: ACS2023-OCC-CCS-0131

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

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

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 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

As this was my first time as a Councillor attending any such conference, it was certainly a very rewarding and eye-opening experience, to be able to meet with so many peers and counterparts from across the country, and to participate in so many workshops, info sessions and conversations about matters of municipal interest.

Here are some of my main take-aways from the FCM 2023 conference:

The most resonant conversation among all attendees was the need for "a new fiscal framework", which has become the FCM's core agenda item for the next year, it would seem. This was the subject of the keynote address by FCM's CEO Carole Saab, and it

was a dominant subject throughout the conference. At issue is the need for municipalities to have a different relationship with our federal and provincial partners when it comes to the unfair share of responsibilities (and financial pressures) put upon municipalities, who are absorbing far more than our fair share of the costs of growth. I'm confident that Ottawa will continue to play our role in advancing that conversation, even as we're currently lobbying our upper-level government partners for more support on some of our key fiscal challenges.

After that, the two most consistent themes of concern revolved – not surprisingly – around the need for housing, and the need for building climate resiliency. While many of my colleagues are more focused on the housing issue, and therefore focused in more on those conversations at the conference, I spent more time attending events and info sessions related to building more resiliency for our cities. There were a few info sessions and workshops focused specifically on climate resilient infrastructure, and the emphasis on spending more now to avoid paying more later.

Sadly, the other takeaway from the conference was the commonly-held perception that Ottawa was underperforming, when it comes to which cities are featuring most prominently in terms of being the nation's innovators, or the nation's leaders in governance. While there were numerous invitees and keynote speakers from other cities, Ottawa representatives didn't seem to feature as prominently on the guest list. I noted in several sessions speakers would refer to numerous innovative projects or accomplishments in other cities, but none referenced Ottawa. The only times I heard Ottawa mentioned, casually or formally, were about LRT.

Here's a summary of the workshops and sessions I attended:

- **Workshop:** Help FCM build a national climate resilience program
- **Study Tour:** Intensification and infrastructure development along The Bentway
- **President's Forum:** Building welcoming communities for a growing Canada
- **Study Tour:** Housing & Intensification in Established Areas - Mid-Rise Buildings in West Queen West
- **Workshop:** How to Build Great Public Spaces & Facilities
- **Workshop:** Finding Home: Canada's next generation of housing
- **Plenary:** A New Fiscal Framework for Municipalities
- Keynote address by PM Justin Trudeau
- Keynote address by MP Melissa Lantsman

While I met dozens of municipal counterparts, I had four meetings which ended up being the most productive, and which I hope will produce dividends:

I met with Duane Nichol, the Chief Administrative Officer of Selkirk, Manitoba. Mr. Nichol is a well-known figure when it comes to advancing climate-resilient infrastructure, and he and I have spoken numerous times since the conference.

I met with Phillip Brown, the Mayor of Charlottetown, and Alanna Jankov, the Deputy Mayor of Charlottetown. The areas of interest that I was pursuing with them regarded Charlottetown's proactive response to weather-related disasters, as well as Charlottetown's ongoing success with waste-to-energy technology. Both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor invited me to Charlottetown where they promised to bring me on tours of their facilities and successes, as well as help network between our two cities.

I met with Sylvain Ouellet, City Councillor for Montreal (and representative of the ward I used to live in). As he's a member of the same Projet Montreal party as Mayor Valerie Plante, and since I'm eager to advance the same kind of pedestrianization projects in Ottawa that Montreal has had so much success with, I'm looking to connect with Councillor Ouellet to discuss an outreach project in Montreal in Spring 2024 where I visit that city to learn of their success. My bilingualism will assist in that regard.

I met with Carol Belanger, Edmonton's City Architect. I've been looking to advance some of the success that Edmonton has had in terms of its development of municipal assets, and Mr. Belanger is one of the leading voices in bringing about Edmonton's success. I hope to leverage some mutual friends to continue building on the relationship with Mr. Belanger as I try to advance some local initiatives.

## 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.

Sean Devine  
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