



The Federation of Canadian Municipalities  
2015 Federal Election Platform

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# Strengthening Canada's Hometowns

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A Roadmap for Strong Cities and Communities

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# Setting the stage for strong cities, strong communities

**M**ayors and municipal leaders, working with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), have developed a bold vision to move our country forward. We call on all federal parties vying for government in this upcoming election to join us in making this vision a reality by strengthening our hometowns. Innovative solutions to our national challenges are found in our cities and communities.

Last fall, we invited Canadians to tell us what made them proud of their hometowns and ideas for what would make them better. People from across the country, of all ages and from all walks of life, shared their stories and ideas. Canada is a diverse, beautiful, proud and complex country and at the end of the day we all care about similar things.

We want to live and raise our families in vibrant and healthy communities. We care about our economy

prospering and jobs being created. We want to spend less time commuting and more time with our families. We believe everyone deserves to have a roof over their head. We want to protect our environment and believe that clean water should not be an issue in a country like ours. We value the safety of our communities. And, we know that as a country we can be leaders on the international stage and that we all benefit from connecting globally. These are goals that transcend jurisdiction and partisan differences; these are Canadian values.

FCM was inspired by what Canadians told us and our plan reflects their vision. Our Roadmap for Strong Cities and Communities is a plan to create local jobs and growth; to build livable, safe and environmentally sustainable communities; and to leverage our global connections.

FCM hopes this will serve as a guide for federal parties seeking winning solutions for national challenges. It is also a tool for Canadians to measure how the election commitments of the federal parties stack up against their priorities. We encourage all Canadians to refer to this Roadmap to help answer the questions that matter when voting in the upcoming federal election. Who has a plan to create local jobs by investing in your community? What party is working to solve the housing crunch? Who is going to make the investments needed to actually cut commute times? What federal party has the best plan to make life better in your hometown?

From now until Election Day, municipal leaders will work tirelessly to put the issues and solutions found in each section of the Roadmap at the heart of the federal election conversation. Community building is nation building. The debate starts here, in our hometowns.



# Hometown Solutions for Local Jobs and Growth



**Canadian cities and communities are engines of innovation and growth**

*“Modern and efficient infrastructure is a core component of a competitive economy. Public infrastructure such as roads, bridges, highways, water systems and the electrical grid provides services critical to economic competitiveness, sustainability and quality of life. Without sufficient investment and upkeep of public infrastructure stock, countries rapidly fall behind.”*

 **Canadian Chamber of Commerce**

**T**he country’s future relies on healthy job growth and sustainable economic development. And this starts with strengthening Canada’s hometowns.

Investing in local infrastructure provides a clear and measurable return on investment and addresses the biggest gaps hindering our economic competitiveness.

Improving our roads, bridges, and water systems is one of the best ways to create local jobs and generate \$1.20 in annual GDP growth for each dollar

invested. What’s more, predictable investments in core municipal infrastructure are vital to keeping goods moving, businesses operating and maintaining a high quality of life for Canadians.

Reducing crippling gridlock through improved public transit will return tens of billions of dollars in lost productivity to the national economy as well as improve our environment. Building and maintaining infrastructure that is resilient to extreme weather will help us tackle environmental and social challenges in the future, while saving taxpayers

and local businesses money in the long run. Upgrading important water infrastructure will allow communities to keep water clean without deferring other important infrastructure priorities.

Canada’s municipalities have consistently demonstrated that they get shovels in the ground quickly on major infrastructure renewal. In the federal election, we need further commitment to ensure long-term, predictable and sustainable investment in local infrastructure to build a stronger economy for all Canadians.

# Hometown Solutions for Local Jobs and Growth



## Federal Action Plan for Local Jobs and Growth

- Increase the amount of dedicated federal funding for **core municipal infrastructure** (roads, bridges, transit; other municipal transportation infrastructure; water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure) by \$1.5 billion annually through a predictable mechanism like the Gas Tax Fund.
- Maintain \$1 billion per year in permanent, dedicated funding for municipal **public transit projects** with the express goal of reducing congestion, improving local mobility and supporting sustainable growth.
- Address the largest source of water pollution and help address the cost of new federal wastewater regulations, with matching federal funding of \$300 million per year for 20 years for **clean water projects**.
- Ensure all federal investments in municipal infrastructure are **predictable and long-term**, with sufficient **flexibility** to meet the unique needs and circumstances of each municipality, in particular those in Canada’s North.
- Ensure that the New Building Canada Fund **benefits locally-identified projects** in a manner that reflects municipalities’ ownership share of Canada’s public infrastructure, remove eligibility restrictions, and retain local discretion on whether to pursue P3 procurement.
- Help **build the capacity of local governments** through support for **asset management planning**. This will improve how infrastructure is planned, built and maintained over the long term, and ensure every community, regardless of size, can benefit from well-developed asset management practices.

## Hometown Success Stories

**Edmonton**, Alberta collaborated with provincial and federal partners through the New Building Canada Fund and the PPP Canada Fund to build a 13-km light rail transit line to reduce congestion and improve local mobility. Over a 30-year operating period, the Valley Line will generate over 12,000 direct, indirect and induced jobs and over \$778 million in tax revenues for the federal government.

**Winkler**, Manitoba partnered with the provincial and federal governments to build a world class reverse osmosis water treatment plant. With funding from the Gas Tax Fund and the New Building Canada Fund, the new plant will provide up to 700,000 gallons of clean drinking water per day to 3,200 households and 287 local businesses and manufacturers.

“By reducing homelessness and housing unaffordability among the lowest quintile of renters, Canada can make real progress in encouraging transitions and alleviating poverty.”

FCM

Conference Board of Canada

# Hometown Solutions for Livable communities



**Let's make Canada a welcoming and affordable place for people to live and build a future**

Together we can ensure our communities are vibrant and welcoming to all. They promote an environment where people live and work, start businesses, build connections, and contribute to making community life vibrant and inclusive.

Municipalities are actively working to make communities livable for everyone by ensuring access to housing, creating opportunities for newcomers, closing the gender gap in municipal governance, and building partnerships with urban Aboriginal communities.

Housing that is affordable for newcomers, young people, the middle class and seniors alike is essential for a bright future for people and communities.

For too many Canadians, affordable homeownership remains out of reach.

Home prices have more than doubled since 2000. More than 42% of young Canadians currently live with their parents, in comparison to 26% who did so in 1980. Household mortgages make up 68% of Canada's record high household debt, one of the greatest threats to our economy according to the Bank of Canada.

Investments in housing make sense. With renting and construction included, housing makes up 20% of Canada's GDP. Housing that's affordable improves lives and strengthens communities.

Canadian municipalities are unable to keep up with the demand for affordable housing options. Saskatchewan, for example, needs 6,500 new housing starts a year to meet demand and attract the workers it needs. Vancouver alone needs over 1,000 new housing units to keep up. Housing in Canada's North has unique but similar challenges in housing its workers, families and growing population.

Protecting federal investments in social housing and creating incentives to increase rental housing will help keep vulnerable seniors in their homes and out of the health care system and, make housing more affordable for the one-third of Canadians who rent. These incentives

will also take the pressure off the housing market and household debt.

Canada's urban Aboriginal population is over-represented among the homeless and those in precarious housing situations. Protecting and expanding affordable housing options is critical to supporting the aspirations of Canada's growing urban Aboriginal population, a key contribution to dynamic cities. Already, FCM's Community Economic Development Initiative and award-winning Community Infrastructure Partnership Program are breaking down barriers and bringing neighbouring First Nations and municipal governments together to develop shared economic opportunities.

Creating livable cities must encourage women's voices in municipal governance. FCM has delivered a number of successful programs, Head Start for Young Women, and Regional Champions. Our first goal is to achieve 30% of women in elected municipal roles, on the way to full equality. Equality in decision-making is essential to closing the gender gap to ensure public policy represents women's perspectives.

Canada's municipalities are ready to work together to create healthier, more livable hometowns.

# Hometown Solutions for Livable communities



## Federal Action Plan for Livable Communities

- Protect Canada’s existing and longstanding \$2.12 billion annual **federal affordable housing programs and agreements**, including for existing social housing in the North.
- Preserve rent and operational subsidies for existing social housing as the need is identified and create a new **Capital Repair and Regeneration Program** with remaining funds.
- Preserve and increase affordable rental housing through innovative tax incentives including a **Rental Housing Protection Tax Credit** to preserve existing rental units, and an **Eco-energy Tax Credit** to encourage small apartment building owners to invest in eco-energy retrofits at a cost of \$400 million in reduced federal revenues.
- Introduce **trades training and apprenticeship programs** to expand skilled construction trades and develop greater capacity to build and improve homes.

- Build on proven practices like **Housing First** and other programs that provide housing support and reduce homelessness.
- Recognize the unique challenges and opportunities in the North through a supplementary long-term **Northern Affordable Housing Program** focused on communities affected by resource development.
- Collaborate with municipal governments and local settlement organizations to **provide newcomer services in urban and rural regions across Canada**, including matching skills and education to existing job opportunities.
- Increase national **focus and support** for the economic and social needs of **Canada’s urban Aboriginal people**.
- Strengthen representative leadership across Canada with successful programs to **increase women’s participation in government**.
- Begin to tackle food security and the high cost of living in the North with an increase to the residency component of the **Northern Residents Tax Deduction** to reflect its loss of value due to inflation; an increase of 50% would cost the federal government \$60 million.

## Hometown Success Stories

**Saskatoon**, Saskatchewan implemented an incentive grant and a five-year incremental tax rebate for purpose-built rental housing which saw new rental housing starts rise to 12.2%. Under the grant, new units remain rental for 15 years and conversions are not permitted.

**Medicine Hat**, Alberta helped 765 residents transition from homelessness to adequate housing and the city is on the way to achieve their goal of ending homelessness in 2015. With the introduction of the city’s Graduate Rental Assistance Initiative, 74 participants have benefited from ongoing financial support to maintain their housing stability after graduating from other Housing First programs.

**Vancouver**, British Columbia recently announced what’s being called a “game-changing” initiative, which leveraged a \$76-million private investment from non-profits and granted \$22 million in city land to partner housing providers. The housing providers will operate 350 social-housing units – most at well below market rates – with a revenue strategy.

# Hometown Solutions for Safe Cities and Communities

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**Canadians  
deserve to feel  
safe in their  
hometowns**

*“Rather than continually refining longstanding strategies, there is a need to fundamentally rethink how things are done. Police services must embrace structures and systems that advance innovation.”*

 **RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson,**  
**Summit on the Economics of Policing, Ottawa, January 2013**

**P**olice and emergency responders are on the frontline of keeping Canadians safe. These essential services are constantly adapting to new and more sophisticated crime and technology, new crime legislation and shifting federal policing priorities. Local police forces are increasingly being called upon to take the lead on counter-terrorism efforts, border security, cyber-crime, and the mental health crisis that’s unfolding in our communities – all without an increase in available funding.

This strain on local security resources reduces available funding for early intervention and crime prevention programs that have proven to be successful.

What’s more, the tragedy in Lac-Mégantic, the 2014 floods in Calgary, the 2015 oil spill in Vancouver’s English Bay and the destruction caused by multiple severe weather events across the country serve as an important reminder of one of the most fundamental responsibilities of all orders of governments: to keep Canadians safe when disaster strikes. Recent trends in climate patterns also mean that we must prepare for a future of further extreme weather events, be they floods, forest fires, droughts or storms.

Through investments in disaster mitigation, emergency response, proven crime prevention models, innovative policing practices, and evidence-based policy, we can start to address these challenges.

Emergency preparedness is of the utmost importance, and this work begins at the local level.

It is incumbent on all parties in the coming federal election to respond to a full range of public safety challenges, from our rail systems and the transportation of dangerous goods, to increasing extreme weather disasters.

A new approach to funding policing in Canada, new investments in disaster mitigation and evidence-based policy will allow us to start tackling these challenges. As a nation, we cannot continue to rely on property taxpayers to meet the public safety needs of Canadians.

# Hometown Solutions for Safe Cities and Communities



## Federal Action Plan for Safe Cities and Communities

- **Invest in local policing** to reflect the changing and increasingly complex nature of crime in Canada. These investments should recognize the growing municipal burden of combatting terrorism, investigating drug-related and organized crime, enforcing border security, monitoring cyber-crime and handling major international threats.
- Increase cooperation and collaboration between all orders of government in order to implement **proven crime prevention and early intervention policing models** such as the Prince Albert Hub model which mobilizes resources across multiple sectors to assist at-risk individuals.
- Consult with municipalities when introducing **new federal crime legislation**.
- Increase federal **collaboration on mental health services**, including implementing proven approaches like Housing First and housing that assist vulnerable populations.

- Expand the federal **National Disaster Mitigation Program** to include all natural disasters and flow funds directly to the impacted municipalities. This would allow more cities and communities to build the types of infrastructure and emergency systems needed to meet the pressures of climate change and changing demographics.
- Prevent downloading of **disaster relief costs** caused by recent changes to the Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements program.
- Ensure smaller communities have access to **national climate research and risk assessment tools**, databases and best practices.\*
- Reinvest in **heavy urban search and rescue** teams and reopen the **Joint Emergency Preparedness Program**, as recommended by the Elliott Lake Commission of Inquiry, to ensure municipalities have access to highly trained and equipped emergency responders.
- Consult with municipalities on the governance, design and protocol of Canada’s new **Public Safety Broadband Network** to ensure the perspective and needs of all regions – both rural and urban municipalities.
- Work with municipalities to take additional measures to improve

rail safety and the transportation of dangerous goods, including additional funding for **grade crossing improvements** required by new federal regulations.

## Hometown Success Stories

**Prince Albert, Saskatchewan** has introduced an alternative “hub” model for early intervention and crime prevention. By mobilizing resources from across municipal sectors, the city has been successful in assisting at-risk individuals and reducing overall crime rates. The model has been replicated in municipalities across the province of Saskatchewan and is now being adopted in communities across Canada.

\* See the following section: Hometown Solutions for Environmentally Sustainable Cities and Communities for further solutions related to climate change adaptation and mitigation.

# Hometown Solutions for Environmentally Sustainable Cities and Communities



**Changing global climate patterns pose a real risk to Canadians.**

*“City and subnational governments not only play an important role in implementing national government action, they also control policy levers and exert influence less available to national governments, making them key actors in mitigation action.”*

**Low Emissions Development Strategies Global Partnership**

**W**e have all witnessed the dramatic rise in weather-related emergencies across Canada, including the flooding of the Bow River, the ice storm in the Greater Toronto Area, forest fires and countless other disasters that have displaced people and families, damaged properties, and disrupted local economies.

While municipalities historically planned for “once in a century” weather events, they are now facing large-scale weather emergencies with increasing regularity. Local emergency responders, police and firefighters are often the first on the scene, but they cannot meet the challenge alone.

Floods in Calgary and Toronto contributed to \$3.2 billion in insurance claims by property owners

in 2013. Canada’s smaller, rural and northern communities face additional geographical and capacity challenges responding to these events.

The TD Bank Group estimates that extreme weather events alone will cost Canadians on average \$5 billion annually by 2020 and upwards of \$43 billion per year by 2050.

With proper funding, local solutions already exist. Simple measures can yield 10 to 100 times the invested capital in avoided costs. A strategically placed \$100,000 stormwater structure could mitigate between \$1 million and \$10 million in flood damage.

Rural communities, in particular, need the opportunity to build capacity to leverage reliable

and trusted risk assessment technologies to address the most vulnerable aspects of their infrastructure and protect their populations.

Infrastructure standards need updating to reflect future climate change, recognizing the past is no longer a valid indicator. A national focus to increase our long-term resiliency to extreme weather events and large-scale disasters must be a shared priority.

Unless we unite to meet the challenge of climate change head on, mitigating and adapting to change will become more and more costly and, increasingly difficult to achieve.



# Hometown Solutions for Environmentally Sustainable Cities and Communities



***Canada is well positioned to be a leader in clean technologies***

Investments in municipal public transit cut commute times and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and air pollution.

Cities and communities have the potential to supply between 20 and 55 megatonnes of GHG reductions. A significant stock of untapped municipal emission reduction opportunities are ready to be implemented using proven technologies, pushing Canada toward achieving our national commitments.

Through FCM's Green Municipal Fund, municipalities have constructed energy-efficient and resilient buildings, diverted waste from landfills, built better transportation assets, made previously unusable land available for development, and treated wastewater to the highest standard. In addition to

these direct environmental benefits, these initiatives can often generate community-level economic benefits that can be worth twice as much as the initial investment.

Our hometowns hold the potential to be catalysts for the emerging clean technology industry and as innovators in local renewable energy. Hometowns lead the way as providers of efficient transit systems, low emissions buildings, cutting-edge waste management and the highest quality water and wastewater treatment.

# Hometown Solutions for Environmentally Sustainable Cities and Communities



## Federal Action Plan for Sustainable Communities

- Implement and **expand incentives for renewable power production**, so that municipal services can be delivered with safe, reliable, clean energy.
- Maintain \$1 billion per year in permanent, dedicated funding to **expand public transit**, reduce car congestion, and cut commute times, energy use and emissions.
- Invest in a **green jobs skills program** to prepare for an increasingly competitive carbon-constrained economy.
- Support municipal energy-efficiency building retrofits, eco-energy retrofits for small apartment buildings and help **share proven municipal greenhouse gas reduction** initiatives.

- Support local governments to **build and adapt climate-resilient infrastructure**, and update national engineering standards to reflect future weather and climate conditions.
- **Build local capacity** to respond and adapt to climate change with asset management capacity at the local-level, and in research and innovation in local climate forecasting, climate change adaptation and disaster mitigation. Mobilize standardized risk assessment, planning and decision-making tools.
- Partner with municipalities to **update Canada's flood plain maps** to better understand and address risks.
- Enable municipal leadership, through programs like FCM's Green Municipal Fund, in building more sustainable, resilient and attractive communities for Canadians to live, create and prosper.

## Hometown Success Stories

**Mississauga**, Ontario has partnered with the Credit Valley Conservation Authority to use green infrastructure such as permeable surfaces and vegetation to retain and treat rainwater. By taking a new approach, existing infrastructure is better able to manage heavy rain events, which reduces the municipality's costs, improves the environment and better protects property during extreme weather. The partnership has resulted in the treatment of 82,000 m<sup>3</sup> of runoff annually, saving the municipality \$1.6 million.

**Nelson**, British Columbia adopted its corporate GHG reduction plan in 2010, and the city has undertaken building energy retrofits and green fleet initiatives. As well, the methane produced at the city's wastewater plant is used to heat city buildings. By 2013, Nelson had already reduced emissions by 20 per cent. Three of the city's energy-efficiency projects alone generated savings of \$100,000 per year and prevented 244 tonnes of GHG emissions.

# Hometown Solutions for Global Municipal Connections



**Canada's hometowns must be shining beacons to the world**

*“Towns and cities around the world are on the cutting edge of sustainable solutions on transport, shelter, jobs, water and much else.”*

**Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, Cities Leadership Day, June 21, 2012**

Canadian municipalities are globally connected. They are members of strategic alliances with thousands of communities world-wide, involved in a range of multilateral networks addressing global challenges. They have commercial ties that strengthen Canadian competitiveness in a global economy, and expertise and knowledge in areas of disaster mitigation and governance that are sought after around the world.

Cities and communities across Canada have partnered with the federal government to play a leadership role on the international stage, helping to solve practical problems confronting communities in emerging economies and developing countries.

In countries like Ukraine, Colombia, Brazil, India, Vietnam or China, Canadian municipalities have organized trade missions or established economic relations contributing directly to the growth of Canadian businesses in strategic overseas markets.

Local governments are leaders in the areas of democratic governance, environmental sustainability, and social service delivery. As part of an international municipal movement, they promote innovation and facilitate capacity development to build strong, inclusive and accountable municipalities. These initiatives have demonstrated the role local authorities play in alleviating poverty, promoting inclusive growth, and increasing environmental sustainability.

There is a growing recognition that local governments are part of the global solution to reduce GHGs. Municipalities are leaders in addressing environmental issues that affect citizens around the world. More than 270 local governments in Canada have joined FCM's Partners for Climate Protection program making commitments to reduce GHG emissions.

Canada's municipalities are ready to build on our expanding role to promote two-way trade and investment, to keep our cities and municipalities competitive, drive Canada's economy and be hubs for environmental and social innovation.

# Hometown Solutions for Global Municipal Connections



## Federal Action Plan for Global Municipal Connections

- Enhance the **cooperation between municipalities and the federal government** to make more effective and efficient the involvement of communities of all sizes across the country in advancing Canada's foreign objectives through the implementation of the formal **strategic partnership between FCM and the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development**.
- Strengthen Canada's economy and competitiveness by working directly with **cities and municipalities to attract trade and investment**.

- Promote and disseminate the **best local practices** developed and implemented by thousands of municipalities **to reduce GHGs**.
- Expand and build on FCM's successful and established international development programs **to assist more local governments in developing countries**, with a focus on democratic governance, economic prosperity, engagement of the private sector, disaster preparedness and response, and environmental sustainability.
- Develop **joint public engagement initiatives with the municipal sector** to promote and inform Canadians of the role Canada plays in international activities at the local level to address global challenges.

## Hometown Success Stories

Canadian cities and municipalities have been involved in international programs supporting local governments in more than 55 developing countries world-wide. These local governments have benefited from the experience and know-how of thousands of Canadian municipal staff and elected officials – from small, medium and large municipalities in all provinces and territories.



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# Strengthening hometowns and building Canada together

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## ***A strong Canada starts with strong hometowns***

Hometowns are the engines that drive our country forward, the places where we choose to work, raise families, contribute and engage with those around us. They are hubs of innovation, creativity, and community.

More than just geographical points on a map, our hometowns are true communities. Each of us has a story of lives being changed for the better by a teacher, librarian, firefighter, police officer, small business owner, artist, volunteer, entrepreneur, neighbour or friend.

We know, as Canadians do, that these local stories are the building blocks for what makes Canada great. That is why FCM believes the next federal election must focus on strengthening Canada's hometowns.

That's how we will move this country forward and ensure a better quality of life for all.

Canadians recognize that we need dynamic cities and communities that can compete with the best in the world.

Canadians rely on healthy communities, rural and urban.

Canadians expect governments at all levels to work together to build our economy from the ground up, and improve the quality of life in our hometowns.

With a federal election in 2015, we have an opportunity to truly build the Canada of tomorrow, a Canada where our cities and communities are growing and creating jobs. Together, we can make our hometowns more livable, safer, and places that contribute to a cleaner environment and a more connected world.

These are values that cross party lines. They are values broadly shared by Canadians. So let's use the coming election to set a course for a stronger, more livable Canada.

**It all starts in our hometowns.**



**FCM**

[hometownproud.fcm.ca](http://hometownproud.fcm.ca)  
[citiescan.ca](http://citiescan.ca)