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Building better lives with Budget 2020

Immediate next steps for our
federal-municipal partnership



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Ce document est aussi disponible sous le titre
Bâtir de meilleures vies au moyen du budget de 2020.

Building better lives with Budget 2020

A message from FCM's President



Finance Minister Morneau:

Our federal-municipal partnership through FCM has never been stronger. Over the past four years, your government has taken positive steps to empower municipa-

lities to build better lives for Canadians. And as our members work hard to strengthen our cities and communities across the country, they are delivering progress on national economic and climate objectives.

Our partnership is rooted in complementary strengths of two orders of government. Yours brings a national vision to the table, with a mandate and tools to bring it to life. Municipalities are the ones closest to people's daily lives—and we build cost-effective, real-world solutions that work. When we work together, we move this country forward.

In November, FCM shared [Building Better Lives Together](#), our comprehensive roadmap to ensuring this new Parliament delivers for Canadians. Today's companion document highlights immediate next steps for the upcoming federal budget.

Those steps start with **climate action that builds better lives**—from expanding clean public transit networks to boosting the energy-efficiency of rental housing across Canada. Two years into the National Housing Strategy, this first minority budget is exactly the right time to redouble **federal leadership on housing affordability**. And we have carefully selected additional measures to **strengthen communities of all sizes**—from shoring up key infrastructure tools to tackling economic insecurity across Western Canada.

Rural and urban, east and west, north and south, municipalities are united in our resolve to get things done—and bring Canadians together. That's what Budget 2020 needs to be about. Local leaders are ready to work with you to deliver progress that Canadians can see, feel and value in their daily lives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Karsten". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Bill Karsten

FCM President
Councillor, Halifax Regional Municipality



Climate action that builds better lives

Canadians want to see their governments working together to tackle climate change—in ways that improve their everyday quality of life.

Local governments are on the front lines as new climate extremes threaten families and businesses, costing our economies billions each year. We're also on the forefront of delivering solutions both to keep people safe and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Meeting Canada's climate targets is a generational challenge. As tough conversations continue about building a sustainable economy, local leaders have vital roles to play. With direct insight on how national strategies play out for Canadians on the ground, we're determined to see communities of all sizes and regions both lead and ultimately benefit from low-carbon transitions.

At the same time, Budget 2020 is an opportunity to drive immediate climate action through municipalities. It can provide the funding stability municipalities need to continue expanding transit systems for faster commutes and lower emissions. It can empower local leaders to continue protecting Canadians from new climate extremes. With innovation, it can marry the climate fight with renewed leadership on housing affordability.

This is climate action that builds better lives, here and now. This is climate action that all Canadians can get behind—delivered in partnership with the local governments that work closest to people's daily lives.



Modernizing transit

Efficient public transit is the backbone of the cities and communities Canadians want us to build: livable, affordable and sustainable. It's also fundamental to the ongoing modal shift in transportation we will need to meet Canada's ambitious emission reduction targets.

The Investing in Canada Infrastructure Plan's (ICIP) transit stream has been a game-changer: its predictable allocations are empowering local leaders to deliver major system expansions. Montreal is extending its Blue Line metro from Saint-Michel to St. Leonard and Anjou. Vancouver is building SkyTrain transit under Broadway Avenue, and between Surrey and Langley. Nationwide, municipalities are shortening commutes and bringing emissions down.

But building transit takes decades of continuous planning, design and delivery—and cities are already bumping into ICIP's 2027 sunset date. That's why three national parties, including the Liberal Party, committed in Election 2019 to *permanent* transit investment. Following through in Budget 2020 will empower cities to continue building 21st century transit, without interruption.

Layering on complementary new investment to speed transitions to zero-emission transit vehicles (ZEV), we can reduce carbon emissions by an *additional* 10.5 million tonnes within a decade. That's 13 percent of the additional reductions Canada needs to meet its 2030 Paris Agreement target. And the federal government can achieve even more by taking action to accelerate the adoption of ZEV in municipal corporate fleets.

Budget 2020 recommendations

Reiterate the commitment to a permanent transit fund in Budget 2020, with funding formally set aside in the federal long-term fiscal framework.

- Work with FCM to design the funding mechanism, and move forward with its implementation as quickly as possible to give municipalities the assurance necessary to plan the next generation of public transit projects.
- Ensure this new mechanism delivers predictable investment: maintain existing funding commitments through 2027–28, while committing now to at least \$34 billion for the decade following (with a consistent \$3.4 billion annual spending profile). This should include at least \$4 billion for a merit-based fund to support needs that can't be met by ridership-based allocations alone.

- Recognizing the diversity of local needs, eliminate the 15 percent cap on rehabilitation costs under ICIP's existing public transit stream.

Commit to investing at least \$2.7 billion over the next 10 years to accelerate the mass adoption of zero-emission transit vehicles (ZEV) across Canada.

- Support the replacement of half the 14,000 diesel buses currently on the road with fully electric or other ZEV models by 2030, reducing GHG emissions by 10.5 million tonnes.
- Ensure this funding is delivered on a predictable, long-term basis to all transit systems to support and rapidly scale up local ZEV strategies—addressing the full range of costs, including garage facilities, charging infrastructure, system interconnection, and planning and design.



Greening our homes and buildings

Residential, commercial and industrial buildings account for 17 percent of Canada’s GHG emissions, and municipalities can influence a significant portion. That makes evolving how we manage, heat and cool interior space another local key to tackling climate change.

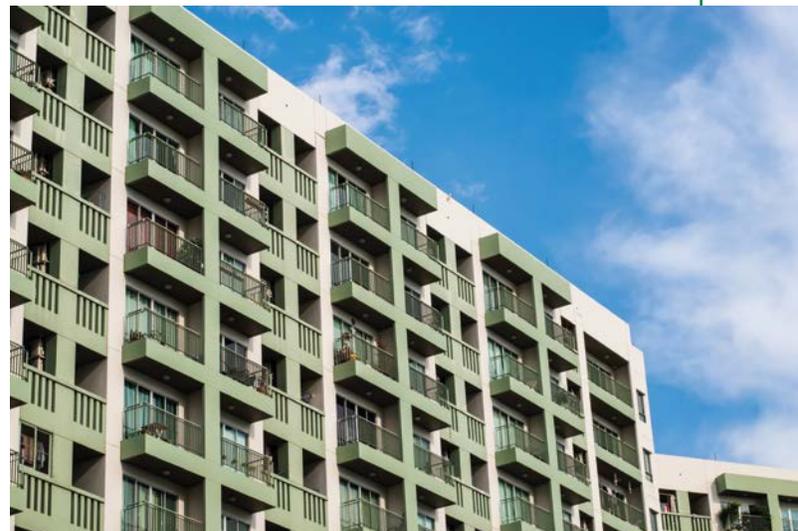
Budget 2019 invested nearly \$1 billion in FCM’s Green Municipal Fund (GMF)—to help drive cost-saving energy efficiency across Canada. This will mean greener community buildings and social/affordable housing, plus local programs helping families energy-retrofit their own homes.

Together, we’re building on proven success: Since 2000, GMF has brought life to 1,300 local sustainability initiatives, reducing 2.6 million tonnes of GHGs while building better lives.

Budget 2020 can take the climate fight to another key segment of Canada’s housing stock: *market rental housing*. We’re proposing smart incentives for landlords to repair and retrofit older, energy-inefficient rental properties. This is an innovative way to reduce GHG emissions *and* boost housing affordability—by lowering utility bills and discouraging the rent-inflating, tenant-displacing alternatives of “renoviction” and outright demolition.

Budget 2020 recommendation

Create a market rental housing preservation program incenting landlords to repair and energy-retrofit modestly-priced homes without increasing rents beyond inflation. This will discourage tenant-displacing “renoviction” while reducing GHG emissions, improving housing quality and lowering utility bills. Through a blend of tax incentives and grants, target 40,000 unit upgrades over the remaining eight years of the National Housing Strategy, at an estimated cost of \$250 million per year.





Protecting people and communities

From floods and wildfires to ice storms and melting permafrost, municipalities are on the front lines as new climate extremes threaten homes, businesses and local infrastructure—costing billions each year in property damage and lost productivity. And we're making the most of limited tools to build resilient communities to protect residents and local economies.

With support from FCM's federally-funded Municipalities for Climate Innovation Program, local leaders are conducting risk assessments, re-naturalizing floodplains, upgrading infrastructure and more. The federal Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund (DMAF) has unlocked major projects—from Saint John, New Brunswick's flood mitigation strategy, to northern Saskatchewan, where 141 wildfire fuel mitigation initiatives will keep 85 communities protected.

FCM continues to call for a long-term federal climate adaptation plan matching the scale of this national challenge. Research conducted by FCM and the Insurance Bureau of Canada estimates the need for investment at no less than \$5 billion per year. In the meantime, DMAF has moved to address a national need—with eager municipal partners. By the end of its very first application round, this 10-year program had already allocated two-thirds of its available \$2 billion to kickstart 39 projects.

Budget 2020 should refresh DMAF's depleted funding to keep ready-to-go adaptation projects moving. It should also unlock municipalities' tremendous potential as managers of natural infrastructure—from trees to grasslands to wetlands—that protects communities from weather extremes.

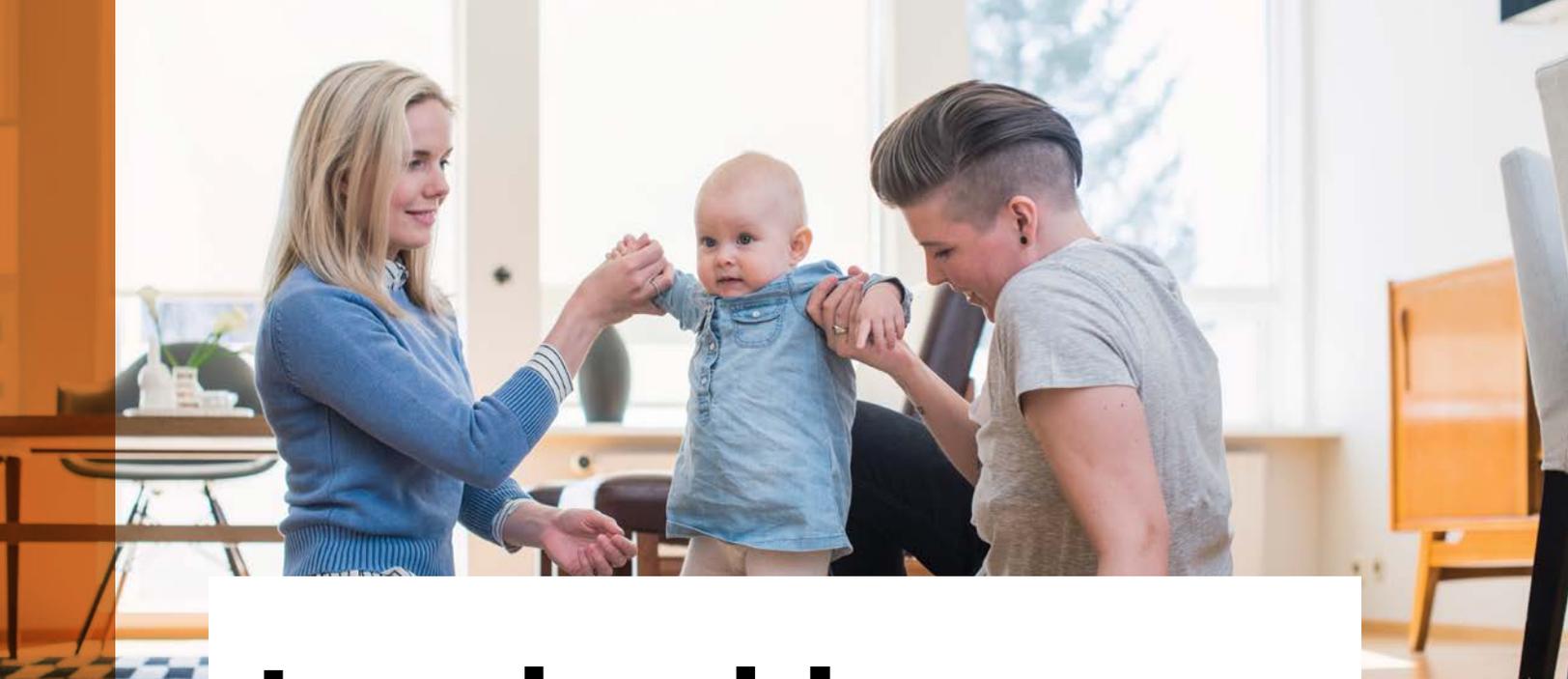
Budget 2020 recommendations

Urgently scale up dedicated funding for local disaster mitigation and climate adaptation by increasing the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund by \$2 billion over the next four years (2020-21 to 2023-24). At the same time, eliminate the \$20 million project eligibility floor that penalizes and excludes smaller communities

Commit to developing a long-term investment plan for disaster mitigation and climate adaptation that is commensurate with the need. Convene municipal, provincial/territorial and Indigenous partners to assess current adaptation efforts and estimate investment required to protect our communities over the long term.

And with FCM, explore the roles an **expanded Municipalities for Climate Innovation Program** can play in further building municipal capacity in adaptation and low-carbon resilience.

Leverage municipalities' expertise as owners and managers of natural infrastructure—from trees to grasslands to wetlands—by designing the proposed \$3 billion Natural Climate Solutions Fund in consultation with FCM, maximizing opportunities to work directly with the local order of government to scale up solutions that protect communities and reduce emissions.



Leadership on housing affordability

Working together to tackle today's housing challenges helps secure the foundation for tomorrow's livable and sustainable Canada.

Secure housing provides that basic sense of security we all need to raise healthy families, start businesses and contribute to our communities. Yet this country—from our biggest cities to our smallest towns—continues to grapple with a housing affordability crisis.

Local governments are working hard to foster solutions. Some deliver social housing and homelessness programs. Others are helping to preserve and build social and affordable housing—by reducing fees, expediting permits and providing lands for development.

But this national challenge requires national leadership, and the federal government has come to the table. The 2017 National Housing Strategy (NHS) has been a breakthrough,

and it's already enabling some repairs and construction of social and affordable housing. Now it's time to confirm that the federal re-entry into this space is built to last. That includes working with municipalities to ensure NHS funds flow efficiently—while continuing to grow the strategy to confront real-world realities.

In Budget 2020, that means filling key gaps in the NHS by investing in supportive housing and in social/affordable housing for Indigenous households in cities and communities. At the same time, we're proposing innovative next steps to safeguard lower-cost market rental housing—in a way that will also help Canada's achieve its emission reduction targets.



Building on the National Housing Strategy

The National Housing Strategy (NHS) has been a breakthrough for vulnerable Canadians—and for housing providers and municipalities working to build better lives. FCM significantly shaped its focus on protecting and growing Canada’s social and affordable housing supply.

The NHS is already driving outcomes. For instance, its National Housing Co-Investment Fund (NHCF) is supporting vital repairs to some 58,000 Toronto Community Housing homes—while enabling new construction like Nunavut’s first multi-stage transitional housing facility. As part of our continuing advice on flowing funds more efficiently, we’re calling for special attention in Budget 2020 to two areas of housing need that are falling through the cracks.

First, the relationship between mental health, substance use and homelessness is clear. According to the Mental Health Commission of Canada, up to half of Canada’s homeless population lives with mental illness. And as the opioid crisis persists, it is clear that growing the supply of **supportive housing** is core to our job of building paths out of homelessness.

We also face an urgent shortage of culturally-appropriate **social and affordable housing for Indigenous people** in cities and communities. Since 2006, the Indigenous population has grown four times faster than the non-Indigenous population. The majority of these households now live outside reserve and settlement communities—more than a third without decent housing they can afford.

Budget 2020 recommendations

To strengthen federal leadership for low- and moderate-income households through the National Housing Strategy (NHS), **increase funding and units targets to realize more social and affordable homes in the community housing sector, beyond current plans. Specifically:**

- **Establish a supportive housing construction fund** to benefit Canadians experiencing homelessness, mental illness, substance use and other challenges. Specifically support the construction of 18,400 additional supportive housing units over the remaining eight years of the NHS, at an estimated cost of \$365 million per year.
- **Create a new Indigenous social and affordable housing initiative.** Specifically support the construction of at least 8,000 additional homes for Indigenous households in cities and communities over the remaining eight years of the NHS, at an estimated cost of \$162.5 million per year. Develop and deliver this initiative in deep collaboration with the Indigenous housing sector.

Scale up and expedite the Federal Lands Initiative by empowering municipalities to identify surplus federal lands, while adjusting the Canada Lands Company’s mandate to prioritize provision of land for social and affordable housing.



Tackling the wider housing crisis

Strengthening the National Housing Strategy will help us build better lives in our communities—and confirm that the federal government is back in the social and affordable housing space to stay. This is also the right time to broaden that federal leadership, to confront the housing affordability crisis that weighs down a much wider spectrum of Canadian families.

Simply put, our country faces a growing disconnect between income levels, home prices and rents. As those gaps widen, more Canadians are forced to accept longer commutes to find decent housing they can afford—or put off saving for their retirement or for their kids' education. And our orders of government will need to work together to turn this around.

Mayors are leading national conversations on housing solutions, through forums like FCM's Big City Mayors' Caucus and The Urban Project—

convening thought-leaders from the public, private, business, academic and civil society sectors. And we continue to call for a formal intergovernmental forum to come together to coordinate action and analysis.

Budget 2020 can open a new front of leadership on affordability—targeting market rentals. With vacancy rates at 17-year lows, rents are rising much faster than inflation. That's compounded by the ongoing demolition and “renoviction” of modestly-priced rental housing. As a first step to preserve what we have, we are proposing carefully calibrated federal incentives for landlords to repair and energy-retrofit these homes. It's an innovative way to achieve simultaneous progress on two major federal objectives: housing affordability and emission reductions.

Budget 2020 recommendations

Create a market rental housing preservation program incenting landlords to repair and energy-retrofit modestly-priced homes without increasing rents beyond inflation. This will discourage tenant-displacing “renoviction” while improving housing quality, lowering utility bills and reducing GHG emissions. Through a blend of tax incentives and grants, target 40,000 unit upgrades over the remaining eight years of the NHS, at an estimated cost of \$250 million per year.

Launch an intergovernmental housing forum convening provinces/territories and municipalities, through FCM, to coordinate analysis and action on key issues—including speculation, demand-side measures, supply needs, short-term rentals, data gaps and the municipal toolbox.

Develop an “affordability indicator” by kick-starting a process that results in regular reporting on combined costs of housing and transportation at the household level—providing decision-makers with a fuller picture of affordability pressures and their linkages to GHG emissions.



Strengthening communities of all sizes

Our communities are where Canadians live, work and raise their families. Ensuring they thrive builds better lives—and a better Canada.

From Charlottetown to Churchill to Chilliwack, our cities and communities are where Canada's future will unfold. This is where we'll grow the economy and create the jobs of tomorrow. This is where we'll support key industries and spark new ones. This is where we'll raise people's quality of life—from coast to coast to coast.

With our frontline expertise, municipal leaders continue to be essential partners in turning national objectives into concrete results on the ground. And together with our federal partners, we've made significant progress in recent years—from building transformative infrastructure to bringing broadband Internet to more rural and northern Canadians.

Budget 2020 is an opportunity to build on this progress, and to continue moving forward in immediate and meaningful ways. That means ensuring the Gas Tax Fund keeps pace with real construction costs. It means driving progress in rural communities. And it means supporting western communities through continuing economic uncertainty.

When communities of all sizes grow, thrive and prosper—so, too, does Canada. By taking practical steps to deepen our federal-municipal partnership, this budget can ensure we continue to build better lives.



Infrastructure solutions

Strong infrastructure is the lifeblood of any modern community. Upgraded roads and bridges help businesses deliver goods and services. Quality water systems, recreation centres and libraries provide a better quality of life for families. Empowering municipalities to build and renew core infrastructure also delivers deep national impact: good jobs, higher productivity and more.

The Investing in Canada Infrastructure Plan (ICIP) raised the bar on infrastructure funding—through its scale, scope and 10-year horizon. Its higher federal contributions for rural and northern projects recognized the financial realities of smaller communities. And Budget 2019 went further by doubling the proven Gas Tax Fund transfer for

one year. That's helping communities nationwide build better lives—whether it's through thousands of kilometers of upgraded roads or a cost-saving solar roof on a recreation centre in Airdrie, Alberta.

Budget 2020 is an opportunity to take straightforward next steps together—from shoring up the Gas Tax Fund to ensuring infrastructure funds get to municipalities as intended. Municipalities own 60 percent of Canada's core infrastructure, but collect just 10 cents of Canada's tax dollar. So building on our federal partnership is key if we're going to meet Canada's growing infrastructure needs.

Budget 2020 recommendations

Strengthen the proven Gas Tax Fund transfer by increasing its annual escalator from 2 to 3.5 percent to keep pace with real construction costs—supporting vital local projects to renew roads, bridges, water systems and other core infrastructure. Also commit to exploring further options to maximize the impact of this proven funding model for communities of all sizes.

Ensure the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Plan continues to deliver results for Canadians.

In Budget 2020, that means reaffirming the election commitment to engage provinces and territories to ensure project priorities are approved by the end of 2021—with any remaining funds flowed directly to municipalities through the Gas Tax Fund transfer.



Driving rural progress

Canada's rural communities are essential to this country's economy and quality of life. They're home to key industries—from agriculture to natural resources to manufacturing—and drive nearly one-third of our economy. They also face unique challenges that can't be solved with cookie-cutter federal approaches.

FCM has worked with the federal government to secure new tools and a voice at the table for Canada's rural leaders. From dedicated funding for rural and northern infrastructure to the doubling of last year's Gas Tax Fund transfer, we've kick-started road and bridge upgrades, new water treatment plants, and more. Budget 2019's commitment to universal high-speed Internet access responded directly to FCM's call to bring better connectivity to rural homes

and businesses. And last June's rural economic development strategy signalled a deeper federal engagement with rural Canada.

We're looking to Budget 2020 for next steps in bringing rural realities and expertise to the federal table. That means ensuring broadband investments translate into high-speed connections for all Canadians. It means empowering smaller communities to adapt to new climate extremes. It means supporting a range of rural mobility solutions—from regional transit to safer rail crossings. And it means continuing to build a “rural lens” into the heart of government. Because fostering strong rural communities builds better lives for millions of Canadians and helps set the entire country on a path to sustainable prosperity.

Budget 2020 recommendations

Support a range of rural mobility and transportation solutions:

- Ensure a new permanent transit funding mechanism includes a merit-based component to support **rural mobility solutions** that can't be met by ridership-based allocations alone—including regional bus, paratransit and seniors shuttle services. (Also see *Modernizing transit*.)
- Support **rural and regional passenger bus solutions** by completing a national assessment of funds required to deliver adequate service to communities with demonstrated need; funding rural and regional transportation needs assessments and feasibility studies; and creating a federal government-led action plan following the release of the recommendations of the Intercity Bus Services Task Force.
- Continue to expand funding for **rail safety**, with a focus on upgrades at level crossings, supporting rural municipalities with improvements related to the Grade Crossing Regulations.

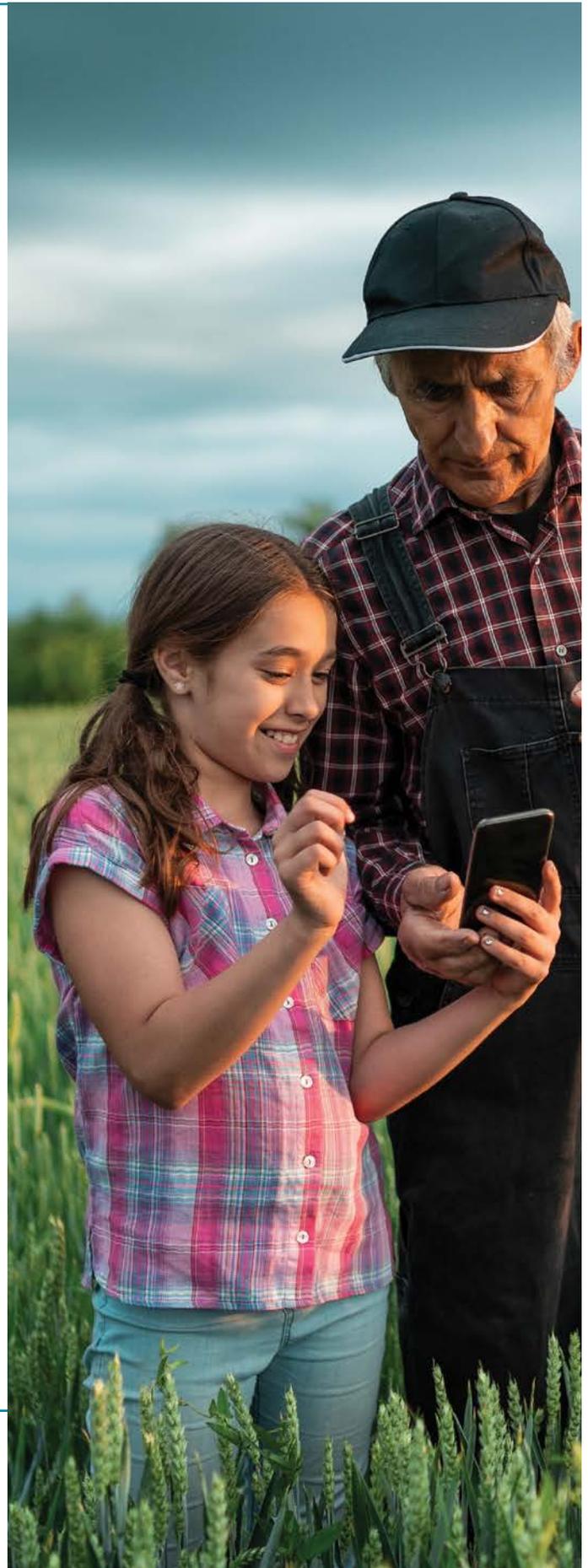
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Empower rural communities to adapt to climate extremes by increasing the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund by \$2 billion over the next four years (2020-21 to 2023-24)—while eliminating the \$20 million project eligibility floor that penalizes and excludes smaller communities. (Also see *Protecting people and communities*.)

Prioritize rural high-speed Internet access by engaging communities in the launch of the Universal Broadband Fund—ensuring clear standards and timelines for meeting CRTC speed targets in smaller communities.

Continue incorporating a “rural lens” into the heart of government, including through Canada’s regional economic development agencies. Build on the 2019 rural economic development strategy (*Rural Opportunities, National Prosperity*) by adapting programs and policies, and streamlining funding tools, to reflect the realities and expertise of rural communities.





Western economic solutions

Western municipal leaders are on the front lines of economic uncertainty. Every day, we see people losing their livelihoods, their homes and their hopes for the future. As the order of government closest to Canadians, we're determined to help build better lives.

That's why FCM created the Western Economic Solutions Taskforce (WEST), convening municipal leaders from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. With our unique ability to unite diverse local perspectives, FCM is tackling some of this country's most complex issues. And we're bringing a united municipal

voice to the table—one that's focused, driven and ready to work with the federal government to find solutions for struggling communities.

WEST is already bringing forward concrete recommendations for the federal government to adopt, starting with Budget 2020. This is an opportunity to drive immediate progress for struggling western communities. Moving forward, we'll continue to lead this federal-municipal dialogue, exploring a full range of medium and long-term solutions that the government—and municipalities across the country—can share and build on.

Budget 2020 recommendations

Create a federal program to support faster reclamation of abandoned oil and gas wells without relieving industry of its responsibilities.

This will create employment in the near-term, in regions facing the sharpest economic downturn, while tackling the potential environmental and safety risks these wells represent.

Create a rebate or similar mechanism to compensate farmers for the cost of carbon pricing on grain drying. This would provide a near-term boost to a sector that has been hit hard by trade disputes, transportation issues and extreme weather—through a mechanism that aligns with the federal approach to supporting households, municipalities and small business.

Immediately implement the Infrastructure Minister's mandate letter commitment to create a new infrastructure fund to support priority infrastructure and economic development projects in communities in oil and gas regions. To maximize impact, FCM and WEST stand ready to assist with the design and rollout of this fund.



About FCM

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities is the national voice for Canada's local governments.

FCM unites nearly 2,000 municipalities of all sizes, representing more than 90 percent of Canadians. That gives us unparalleled capacity to convene Canada's local order of government, and to help design and implement municipal-federal initiatives that build better lives for Canadians.

Municipal leaders work with FCM to collaborate on solutions that boost our economy and quality of life. We have a track record of

constructively shaping federal policy—from the Gas Tax Fund to the National Housing Strategy to the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Plan. Every year, FCM staff and its elected board of directors connect hundreds of times with federal officials at all levels, from policy specialists to the Prime Minister.

We're driving local solutions to national challenges.

FCM's **Big City Mayors' Caucus** (BCMC) convenes 22 large Canadian cities. BCMC mayors meet to drive action on national challenges—from affordable housing to cannabis legalization. Similarly, FCM's **Rural Forum** is a powerful advocate for rural communities and provides local governments in rural areas with greater access to FCM and federal decision-makers.

For more than 30 years, FCM has partnered with the Government of Canada to deliver **national and international programs**. These programs are building municipal capacity on everything from climate resilience and asset management to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

Since 2000, FCM's Green Municipal Fund (GMF) has brought life to more than 1,300 sustainability initiatives. In 2019, the Government of Canada

entrusted nearly \$1 billion more to scale up GMF's drive to boost cost-saving energy efficiency in communities across the country.

Budget 2019 also reinvested in FCM's Municipal Asset Management Program (MAMP), which helps communities optimize long-term planning to make infrastructure dollars go further. Similarly, our Municipalities for Climate Innovation Program (MCIP) provides funding, training and tools to municipal practitioners and local sustainability leaders.

FCM's international programming brings Canadian expertise to municipalities in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, the Caribbean and Eastern Europe—and fresh ideas back to Canadian local governments.



Building better lives together

Shortly after Election 2019, FCM released *Building Better Lives Together*. This comprehensive document is a unified municipal call to action for the federal government's first 100 days. It lays out concrete recommendations in 15 policy areas—from expanding public transit to making housing more affordable, from tackling climate change to strengthening rural communities

FCM's Budget 2020 recommendations flow directly from this document—and represent our most urgent calls to action. To read our full action plan for more ways the federal government can work with local leaders to get more done for Canadians, visit buildingbetterlives.ca.



Local governments are on the front lines of daily life and commerce.

Canadians benefit every day from the services and infrastructure managed by local governments. Their work drives economic prosperity, promotes citizen engagement and makes our communities livable.

Municipal responsibilities include:

- 60 percent of Canada's public infrastructure
- local policing and public safety measures
- local transportation, including road maintenance and public transit
- local social services and housing
- water and wastewater services
- waste management and recycling
- sustainability initiatives
- parks, recreation, libraries and culture
- public health, including school outreach programs and community vaccinations

Shared municipal-federal priorities include:

- job creation
- economic growth and productivity
- infrastructure renewal and expansion
- housing affordability
- disaster mitigation and climate adaptation
- environmental and climate stewardship
- immigrant and refugee settlement
- partnership and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples
- emergency management
- community safety
- crime prevention

Whether they are big cities that serve as hubs for business, innovation and tourism, or smaller communities that serve our resource, agricultural and manufacturing sectors, municipalities help drive Canada's long-term prosperity.



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