

FCM's Green Municipal Fund



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When the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) partnered with the federal government to create the Green Municipal Fund eight years ago, they were fueling the leading edge of an environmental sustainability wave.

"A lot has changed in eight years," commented Winnipeg Councillor and FCM Past President **Gord Steeves**, "back then there were just a few communities at the forefront, but now nearly everyone is working to make their cities and towns more sustainable."

FCM's Green Municipal Fund (GMF) has been a key resource supporting that change.

The Government of Canada endowed FCM with \$550 million to establish GMF to provide a long-term, sustainable source of financing for municipal governments and their partners. The Fund provides low-interest loans and grants, builds capacity, and shares knowledge to support municipal governments and their partners in developing communities that are more environmentally, socially and economically sustainable. To ensure the greatest possible impact, GMF invests in the best examples of municipal leadership in sustainable development – examples that can be replicated in other communities.

GMF funding is complemented by a capacity building program, which shares the knowledge and experience municipal leaders gain from GMF-funded initiatives. It informs, inspires and supports municipal



"GMF offers Manitoba municipalities with leading initiatives a unique funding resource and I would encourage all municipalities to take a look at what it can offer."

- AMM President Ron Bell

governments to implement environmental sustainability projects and practices.

Since the inception of GMF in 2000, FCM has committed more than \$460 million in grants and low-interest loans to support nearly 800 leading projects. These GMF-supported initiatives are leveraging almost \$2.4 billion of economic activity in nearly 350 communities across Canada, over one third of those communities are small, rural and remote municipalities.

In Manitoba, municipal governments from Morris in the south, Virden in the west, to the Interlake and beyond have been able to take advantage of GMF grants for sustainable community plans, feasibility studies and field tests, and low interest loans combined with grants for capital projects.

GMF grants for studies can be used to help fuel progress toward solutions in more difficult areas of municipal programming and service delivery. GMF low interest loans, or low interest loans combined with grants, are then available to implement those solutions.

"With effective interest rates that are often below 2%," says Steeves, "there is really no competition for borrowing." On a \$1 million loan over 10 years, that preferred rate can translate into over \$100,000 in savings.

FCM is increasing its focus on sharing the results and lessons from GMF-funded initiatives. To improve the value of that sharing, GMF is invested in initiatives that will produce useful lessons that apply to a broader number of communities.

By strategically allocating funds to the best projects and studies, and sharing the resulting lessons and expertise, FCM can provide direct support to an even greater number of communities. The Federation can continually push the leading edge of the growing sustainability wave while simultaneously broadening the impact of the Fund beyond those municipalities that receive direct financing.

GMF supports a number of related programs that help elected officials and municipal staff members set and meet their sustainability goals: Partners for

Capacity Building Webinars

FCM's Green Municipal Fund is also about capacity building and providing resources, including webinars and E-learning. Webinars are interactive, web-based workshops that are accessible to a wide range of communities since there is no travel or cost required.

Some recent past webinar topics include:

- *Set your sites on creative communities: the role of abandoned sites in stimulating economic development and community regeneration*
- *How Can the Ecological Footprint Tool Work for My Municipality?*
- *Greening City Hall: Policy Development for Municipal Green Buildings*

For more information and to view past webinars, visit:
www.sustainablecommunities.fcm.ca/Webinars/

Climate Protection, the Sustainable Communities Mission, the bi-annual Sustainable Communities Conference, the FCM-CH2M HILL Sustainable Community Awards and a popular online “webinar” series. Information about these and other programs are available through the FCM Centre for Sustainable Community development website: www.sustainablecommunities.fcm.ca.


As more and more communities adopt sustainability as a solution to promote cost savings, higher quality of life and better environmental management, FCM has adapted GMF to meet the growing demand. FCM has begun making new

improvements and adjustments to GMF based on input from villages, towns and cities across the country. Over the past year, for example, FCM has consulted extensively with leaders in brownfield remediation to modify the way projects are financed. Starting in July 2008, brownfield projects will be able to access low interest loans at any time of the year. Those loans will be disbursed at the remediation stage, when financing is otherwise more difficult to secure.

A similar consultation resulted in changes to grants and loans for sustainable transportation projects; the scope of

eligible projects has been increased and application timelines lengthened to allow greater flexibility.

FCM is also working to shorten decision time so that GMF applicants can confirm financing quicker, and to extend timelines to make it easier for municipal governments to prepare their applications.

As municipal governments continue to raise the sustainability bar with innovative, leading-edge studies and projects, GMF continues to evolve to keep pace with municipal leadership, and remains a valuable asset to communities across Canada. 

Federation of Canadian Municipalities honours municipal excellence

Winners of FCM’s 2008 FCM-CH2M HILL Sustainable Community Awards were honoured May 31 at a recognition ceremony during the Federation of Canadian Municipalities’ (FCM) 71st Annual Conference and Municipal Expo™ in Québec City.

Since 2000, FCM and CH2M HILL Canada Limited have recognized municipal governments across Canada with Sustainable Community Awards for leadership in environmental excellence and innovation in service delivery.

“FCM congratulates all the winners of the 2008 Sustainable Community Awards,” said **Gord Steeves**. “Each of the winners is helping to improve the quality of life for people in their communities. They are contributing creative and practical solutions to some of the critical issues of the environment and sustainable development the world faces today.”

The Awards are open to all municipal governments and their private sector partners. To be eligible, projects must have been completed within two years of the date of application, or be in the final stages of implementation, and must have achieved measurable results. Submissions are judged by an expert panel of judges.

Award winners

Winners of the 2008 FCM-CH2M HILL Sustainable Community Awards are:

- 1. Buildings:** City of Toronto, Ontario: *Arenas Energy Retrofit Project*
- 2. Energy:** City of Saint John, New Brunswick: *Municipal Energy Efficiency Program*
- 3. Planning:** City of Pickering, Ontario: *The Sustainable City Project*

- 4. Residential Development:** City of Kitchener, Ontario: *The Intowns*
- 5. Transportation:** Regional Municipality of Durham, Regional Municipality of Halton, City of Hamilton, City of Mississauga, Regional Municipality of Peel, City of Toronto, Regional Municipality of York, Ontario: *Smart Commute Initiative*
- 6. Water:** Regional Municipality of Peel, Ontario: *Water Efficiency Plan*
- 7. Waste:** Towns of Aurora, East Gwillimbury, Georgina, Newmarket and Whitchurch-Stouffville and Township of King, Ontario: *The Northern 6 Joint Waste Collection Contract and Green Bin (SSO) Launch Project*

- 8. Wastewater:** City of Québec, Québec: *Restoration of the Saint Charles river bank and the development of a linear park*

The FCM’s Green Municipal Fund and CH2M HILL Canada Ltd. are the primary sponsors of the Sustainable Community Awards.

For additional information, contact: **Green Municipal Fund and the Affordability and Choice Today (ACT) program:** www.sustainablecommunities.fcm.ca

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