



What We Heard: The Future Is Local Engagement Sessions

Executive Summary

At the Federation of PEI Municipalities (FPEIM) 2025 Semi-Annual Meeting, municipal leaders from across PEI gathered to share ideas, discuss priorities, and help shape FPEIM's work. Facilitated discussions with delegates produced key themes including strengthening collaboration and communication, expanding shared services, and ensuring municipalities have the tools and resources they need to meet growing demands.

Introduction

On October 18, 2025, FPEIM hosted its Semi-Annual Meeting in the Rural Municipality of Eastern Kings. The event brought together close to 70 mayors, councillors, staff, provincial officials, and partners to discuss issues that matter most to PEI municipalities. The agenda included two interactive *The Future Is Local* sessions, facilitated by governance expert Gordon McIntosh. Meeting delegates explored municipal advocacy and service needs, providing input to guide FPEIM's priorities.

Methodology

Feedback was collected through small roundtable discussions on topics with an Outward Focus (Advocacy & Relations) and a Member Focus (Services & Resources). Designated table representatives, including FPEIM board members and staff, took notes and presented the main discussion points. Special guest Craig Pollett compiled overarching observations. This "What We Heard" report provides a high-level summary of key themes and insights.

Key Themes and Insights

1. Advocacy and Intergovernmental Relations

- **Municipal Government Act (MGA) Review & Provincial Relations:** Delegates called for clearer, simpler MGA language and more consultation when provincial decisions affect municipalities. Stronger, more consistent communication with the Province and provincial leaders was a recurring priority. Delegates stressed that collaboration should be proactive and partnership-based. Strong municipalities can provide more benefits to the Province and Islanders.
- **Municipal Reform & Restructuring:** Delegates recognized the current system is not sustainable, but they noted residents may fear loss of local identity and increased taxes with restructuring. The importance of public education, partnerships, provincial policies that support reform, and fact-based analysis were underlined.

- **Provincial Land Use Framework:** Delegates highlighted equitable representation in planning, measures to address rural development pressures and loss of farmland, and mechanisms to fund services to unincorporated areas. Delegates emphasized that municipalities must be part of all stages of provincial land use plan development — not just consulted at the end.
 - **Municipal Revenue-Sharing:** A sustainable, predictable, long-term funding model remains a top priority. Delegates noted the challenges of late funding announcements, increasing operational costs, and limited fiscal flexibility. Concerns were expressed about downloading responsibilities to municipalities without providing adequate resources. Strong support was voiced for a renewed business case for municipal revenue-sharing.
 - **Targeted Advocacy:** Ahead of the next provincial election, delegates emphasized priorities such as housing, climate adaptation, policing, emergency services, a recreation tax, and restructuring. They also identified the need for greater access to MLAs and overall public education about municipalities.
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2. Member Services and Capacity Building

- **Land Use Planning Services:** Delegates identified growing demand for planning expertise, support for development control, and retention of qualified planners and development officers. Delegates agreed that FPEIM could help support municipalities through shared services. Councillor training on planning basics was also suggested.
 - **Post-Election Onboarding & Training:** Delegates recommended expanded training on governance, procedures, and the respective roles of councils and CAOs. Online modules, refresher sessions, and pre-election training were proposed.
 - **Shared Services:** Significant interest existed in shared services — such as IT, HR, asset management, planning and development, legal advice, and bylaw enforcement. Delegates also noted opportunities for shared grant-writing and administrative support.
 - **Leadership Development & Resources:** Future training priorities include meeting management, interpreting financial statements, and addressing online harassment and incivility. Delegates supported flexible delivery formats and practical resources like templates and fact sheets.
 - **Member Communication & Engagement:** Delegates appreciated FPEIM’s regular updates and newsletters but suggested other ways to connect, including brief board-meeting summaries, FAQs, and more direct communication to councillors. A “Did You Know?” campaign was suggested.
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Conclusion

Member engagement drives FPEIM’s strength by building the unified voice that represents municipalities across the Island. The engagement sessions underlined that PEI municipalities share common priorities — and that collaboration, communication, and capacity-building remain essential to moving these priorities forward.

Drawing on the meeting input, FPEIM refined its advocacy, service, and organizational priorities for 2025–2026. Through these priorities and our day-to-day work, FPEIM will continue to support strong local governments and help build resilient, vibrant communities for Islanders.