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The Doormat Question.

Why Canadian municipalities should stop granting their digital infrastructure to American vendors — and what to do on Monday morning.

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§ I THE THESIS, IN ONE PAGE

A doormat is not a defence policy. It is also not a procurement policy.

On 20 May 2026, an Air France flight from Paris was refused permission to land in Detroit and was diverted, instead, to Montréal-Trudeau. American authorities said no. Canadian authorities said yes. A Public Health Agency of Canada officer met the passenger, found them asymptomatic, and put them on the next plane back to Paris.¹ The flight then continued, unimpeded, into the United States.

That is the federal story in miniature. Canada absorbs the cost of an American refusal, receives no compensation for it, and continues to behave as though the relationship is reciprocal. The Prime Minister has now said, plainly, that it is not. On 20 January 2026, at the World Economic Forum, Mark Carney told the room:

“ We are in the midst of a rupture, not a transition. You cannot live within the lie of mutual benefit through integration when integration becomes the source of your subordination.

— Prime Minister Mark Carney, Davos, 20 January 2026²

This briefing is not about the federal story. It is about the same pattern, one layer down, where it is more expensive per capita and where it has been almost completely ignored. Canadian municipalities — the order of government closest to the citizen — purchase the overwhelming share of their public-facing digital infrastructure from American vendors, on American hosting, governed in the final instance by American law. They do this without the doctrine, the procurement instrument, or the political cover that would let them choose otherwise.

The cost is no longer theoretical. The City of Hamilton paid **\$18.3 million** to recover from a single ransomware event in February 2024, with its insurance claim denied because multi-factor authentication had not been fully deployed at the time of the attack.³ Saint John, St. Marys, Westlock, Huntsville, Fort St. John, Orangeville, Hinton, the MRC de Maskinongé,

Yellowknife, and the RM of Gimli have each, in the same window, paid in cash, in downtime, or in citizens' personal data. The Cyber Centre records a 26 percent average year-over-year increase in ransomware events between 2021 and 2024, with that pace expected to continue through 2025.⁴

\$18.3M

HAMILTON RECOVERY COST · MFA-GAP INSURANCE DENIAL · 2024-25

~60%

OF CANADA'S CLOUD MARKET HELD BY FIVE US FIRMS⁵

42.2%

OF ALL WEBSITES GLOBALLY RUN ON WORDPRESS⁶

The argument of this brief is that there is now both a national-interest reason and a balance-sheet reason to repatriate the municipal digital layer. The federal government has begun to do this work for federal procurement. It has not done so for municipal procurement, and it has explicitly declined to. That gap is where the rest of this brief lives.

1. CBC News, "U.S.-bound flight from Paris diverts to Montreal over Ebola restrictions," 21 May 2026; CBS News, 22 May 2026; Global News, Montréal-Trudeau and PHAC statements, 21 May 2026.
2. Office of the Prime Minister of Canada, "Principled and pragmatic: Canada's path," speech transcript, 20 January 2026; World Economic Forum address, same date.
3. City of Hamilton, "Cybersecurity Update: City provides more incident details, including ransom amount," municipal release, 2024; Global News, "Ontario city facing full \$18.3M cyberattack bill after insurer denies claim," 31 July 2025.
4. Canadian Centre for Cyber Security, Ransomware Threat Outlook 2025-2027, published alongside the National Cyber Threat Assessment 2025-2026.
5. G. Beaumier, "How Canada could achieve digital sovereignty," Policy Options, May 2025.
6. W3Techs, monthly CMS usage statistics, May 2026, via WPZOOM "WordPress Statistics, May 2026."

§ II THE FEDERAL PICTURE · HOW THE DOORMAT PAYS

Bridges we built. Borders we manage.
Voter rolls we lost.

The federal pattern is now sufficiently consistent that it can be inventoried.

A · INFRASTRUCTURE CANADA PAID FOR, THAT CANADA CANNOT OPEN

The Gordie Howe International Bridge between Windsor and Detroit, financed end-to-end by Canada at approximately \$6.4 billion CAD under the 2012 Canada–Michigan Crossing Agreement, is built. In February 2026 the US administration publicly threatened to block its opening pending "full compensation." On 20 May 2026 the Mayor of Windsor stated that Canada is "willing to let that bridge stay closed for a little while longer instead of taking a bad deal."¹ Canada will be repaid through tolls on a bridge an adversarial counterparty controls the opening date of.

B · BORDER FUNCTIONS CANADA ABSORBS WITHOUT COMPENSATION

The Air France diversion is the recent example. The 2018 arrest of Meng Wanzhou at the request of US prosecutors is the canonical one. Canada held a foreign executive for almost three years on an American extradition request related to American sanctions of which Canada was not a signatory party. China retaliated by jailing two Canadian citizens for 1,020 days each.² The diplomatic cost was Canadian. The geopolitical leverage was American.

C · VOTER ROLLS A FOREIGN EMBASSY NOW SITS ADJACENT TO

In mid-May 2026, the names and addresses of approximately 2,000 Albertans were found published on the website of 10xVotes, a Michigan-based right-wing voter-mobilization app endorsed by the current US Ambassador to Canada at a Trump rally on 2 November 2024. The data was supplied by a Canadian separatist organization. Approximately 150 Albertans were marked as "claimed" in the application. Elections Alberta, Alberta's Information and Privacy Commissioner, and the RCMP are investigating.³

D · TARIFF AND ENFORCEMENT FOOTPRINT, UNILATERALLY EXPANDED

The Section 232 tariff regime now applies fifty-percent duties on Canadian-origin steel, aluminum and copper; twenty-five percent on autos; ten percent on lumber; and a graduated schedule on wood furniture climbing to fifty percent in January 2026.⁴ In parallel, the US Drug Enforcement Administration announced on 12 May 2026 that it will open two further offices on Canadian soil in 2027, doubling its existing footprint. Canada Border Services Agency data records less than one percent of US fentanyl seizures originating at the Canadian border.⁵

None of these items are about Fit For Gov. They are the climate in which Canadian municipalities are now making purchasing decisions. A municipal council weighing whether to host their citizens' permitting data, voter-information landing pages, council-meeting recordings, payroll metadata, public-health bulletins, and FOIP-released documents on American infrastructure is making that decision under the same climate.

OPERATING PRINCIPLE

If the federal government has determined that integration with the United States has become "the source of our subordination," then continuing to default municipal procurement to American vendors is the local-government version of the same policy mistake.

1. Federal Register, "Establishing the Gordie Howe International Bridge as a Port of Entry in Detroit, MI," effective 2 March 2026; ClickOnDetroit, "Windsor mayor pushes back on US stance as Gordie Howe Bridge opening delayed," 20 May 2026; Britannica, "Gordie Howe International Bridge."
2. The Canadian Encyclopedia, "Meng Wanzhou Affair (Two Michaels Case)"; Department of Justice Canada and US Department of Justice releases, 24 September 2021.
3. PressProgress, 18–19 May 2026; Canada's National Observer, 20 May 2026; The Deep Dive, 19 May 2026. Investigations ongoing as of report date.
4. Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck legal advisory, "Trump Admin Adjusts Tariffs for Derivative Products Containing Steel, Aluminum and Copper," 2026.
5. CBC News, "Fentanyl ingredients entering Canada via Vancouver en route to cartel-run drug labs, U.S. DEA boss says," May 2026; CBSA cross-border seizure data via CBC reporting.

§ III THE MUNICIPAL PICTURE · WHAT THE DOORMAT COSTS LOCALLY

Every Canadian municipality is now operating one bad plug-in update away from Hamilton.

The City of Hamilton spent **eighteen million, three hundred thousand dollars** recovering from a ransomware event that began on 25 February 2024 through, in the City's own description, "an external internet-facing server." The attackers demanded \$18.5 million CAD. The City did not pay. Eighty percent of the network was disabled. Permit and licensing systems, fire department records management, traffic-signal management, and Public Health Services medical records from 24 August 2022 through 24 February 2024 are listed as unrecoverable.¹

The City's insurance claim was denied. The stated reason was that multi-factor authentication had not been fully implemented at the time of the attack. The full \$18.3 million is being paid by Hamilton property-tax payers.

A · HAMILTON IS THE MEDIAN, NOT THE OUTLIER

MUNICIPALITY	DATE	COST · OUTCOME
Saint John, NB	Nov 2020	\$2.9M total · network rebuilt from scratch
Stratford, ON	Apr 2019	\$75,000 ransom paid
St. Marys, ON	Jul 2022	\$1.3M total · \$290,000 BTC ransom paid
Toronto Public Library	Oct 2023	~\$1M · 5,000 computers wiped · 4-month downtime
Westlock, AB	Jan 2024	1,633 residents' data compromised
Hamilton, ON	Feb 2024	\$18.3M · insurance denied · MFA gap
Huntsville, ON	Mar 2024	\$59,000 confirmed cost
Fort St. John, BC	Feb 2025	INC ransomware group claim
Orangeville, ON	Feb 2025	SINs, driver's licences, passports compromised, 2005-2023
Hinton, AB	Feb 2025	RansomHub group
MRC de Maskinongé, QC	Mar 2025	Medusa · \$100K demand
Yellowknife, NWT	Sep 2025	~10-day containment · cash-only operations
RM of Gimli, MB	Apr 2026	Active recovery

The Canadian Centre for Cyber Security reports awareness of more than one hundred cyber-threat cases targeting Canadian municipalities since 2020. Statistics Canada's CSCSC put total Canadian cyber-incident recovery costs in 2023 at **\$1.2 billion**.²

B · THE SHARED CHARACTERISTIC

In a meaningful share of these events, the entry vector was a public-facing web property running on a content-management system the municipality did not directly control, hosted on infrastructure outside Canadian legal jurisdiction. WordPress alone holds 42.2 percent of all websites globally and 60.8 percent of the content-management-system market.³ The security model depends on a plugin ecosystem maintained by third parties Canadian councils have no contractual relationship with.

This is the practical meaning of "external internet-facing server" in the Hamilton release. It is the same vector behind a meaningful share of the other thirteen incidents above. It is also the vector Canadian municipalities almost never include in their risk register, because the website is filed under marketing and the breach surface is filed under IT.

“ Cyberthieves have gotten onto the fact that these are large-scale institutions that house huge volumes of very sensitive personal information.

– Patricia Kosseim, Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario, 2024

1. City of Hamilton, "Cybersecurity Incident: Recovery & Transformation," ongoing; Global News, 31 July 2025; CP24, 31 July 2025; SpecopsSoft, "MFA failure costs Hamilton \$18m in cyber insurance payout."
2. Canadian Centre for Cyber Security, National Cyber Threat Assessment 2025-2026; Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey of Cyber Security and Cybercrime, 2023 release.
3. W3Techs CMS market share data, May 2026 snapshot.

§ IV THE PROCUREMENT GAP · WHERE OTTAWA STOPS

The Carney government has matched the rhetoric with procurement — at the federal layer only.

The current government has, since taking office in March 2025, taken a series of measurable procurement actions that were unthinkable under the prior policy environment. The full list is worth knowing because it tells municipalities what political cover they have, and where that cover ends.

Buy Canadian Framework	In force 16 Dec 2025 · federal contracts \geq \$25M, dropping to \geq \$5M spring 2026
One Canadian Economy Act	Bill C-5 · Royal Assent 26 Jun 2025 · trade & labour mobility in force 1 Jan 2026
Major Projects Office	Calgary · launched Aug 2025 · sovereign-cloud mandate Sep 2025
Defence Industrial Strategy	17 Feb 2026 · 70% Canadian-firm share target · 125,000 jobs · \$500B+ / 10 yrs
Ontario · Starlink contract	Cancelled 5 Mar 2025 · \$100M · Premier Ford on the record
Sovereign AI compute	\$2.0 billion earmarked · 2025

A · THE GAP, STATED BY THE CROWN ITSELF

The federal Digital Sovereignty Framework, published in November 2025, contains the following passage. It is not a hostile reading; it is the published policy:

“ Sovereignty is distinct from procurement policies that encourage domestic sourcing.

– Government of Canada, Digital Sovereignty Framework, November 2025

Buy Canadian, as drafted, does not bind municipal procurement. The Digital Sovereignty Framework, as drafted, explicitly does not bind procurement. And in both, the qualifying criterion for a "Canadian" vendor is "place of business in Canada" — which is the criterion an American-parented software vendor with a Canadian sales address can satisfy without bringing a single line of code, a single byte of data, or a single legal jurisdiction home.¹

B · WHAT "PLACE OF BUSINESS IN CANADA" DOES NOT COVER

Under the US CLOUD Act, an American-domiciled cloud provider is obligated to produce customer data on a US legal warrant regardless of where that data is physically stored.² On 10 June 2025, Microsoft France's director of public and legal affairs, Anton Carniaux, was asked under oath at the French Senate inquiry into procurement and digital sovereignty whether he could guarantee that French citizens' data would not be transmitted to US authorities without French authorization. His sworn answer:

“ No, I cannot guarantee it.

– Anton Carniaux, Microsoft France, French Senate testimony, 10 June 2025

The same legal exposure applies to every American hyperscaler operating Canadian-region data centres. AWS Canada Central (Montréal) and AWS Canada West (Calgary) are physically in Canada and legally in the United States. Microsoft has pledged \$19 billion CAD in Canadian AI infrastructure between 2023 and 2027 and explicitly committed in late 2025 to "defend Canadian digital sovereignty"; that pledge does not, under American law, override a CLOUD Act warrant.

C · WHERE THIS LEAVES A CANADIAN MUNICIPALITY

The federal government has, in eighteen months, gone from rhetorical to operational on sovereignty. Municipal councils now have political cover they have not had in a generation to choose Canadian-domiciled vendors on Canadian infrastructure. They do not yet have a regulation requiring them to. That is the gap this brief is concerned with. It is also the gap a competent municipal procurement officer can close on their own authority, without waiting for a statute.

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1. Policy Options, "Another digital sovereignty problem for Canada is software," April 2026; Policy Options, "How Canada can put Carney's Davos speech into action," February 2026; Build Canada, "A Blueprint for Canada's Digital Sovereignty," memorandum.
 2. Clarifying Lawful Overseas Use of Data Act, 18 U.S.C. § 2713 (2018); confirmed in *United States v. Microsoft Corp.*, vacated as moot following the Act's passage.
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§ V THE STANDARD · WHAT A CANADIAN MUNICIPALITY DOES ON MONDAY

A one-page municipal procurement standard for digital sovereignty.

The most useful artifact a Canadian municipality can produce this quarter is not a policy paper. It is a procurement clause. The following five-clause standard is offered as a starting point for council adoption. It is plain language, it bolts onto an existing procurement policy as an amendment, and it can be tabled by any single councillor with the seconder convention satisfied.

01 Canadian Legal Jurisdiction.

All citizen-record systems, content-management systems, and public-facing web properties acquired by the municipality shall be operated under contracts governed by Canadian law, with disputes adjudicated in Canadian courts, with no third-country legal escape hatch.

02 Canadian Data Residency & Custody.

Data shall be physically stored on infrastructure located in Canada and operated by an entity not subject, by parent-company domicile, to the US CLOUD Act or equivalent extraterritorial production orders. A Canadian region of an American hyperscaler does not, by itself, satisfy this clause.

03 Canadian Vendor of Record.

The contracting vendor shall be Canadian-incorporated, with majority Canadian operational control. Where two qualifying bids exist and a non-Canadian bid is otherwise equal on price and scope, the Canadian bid shall be preferred. This is the operating standard in the United Kingdom, Australia, France, and most G7 peers.

04 Minimum Cyber Hygiene Floor.

Every public-facing system shall enforce multi-factor authentication on all administrative accounts, document its plugin and dependency surface, and be assessable against the Canadian Centre for Cyber Security's National Cyber Threat Assessment guidance. Insurance shall not be the control of last resort. Hamilton paid \$18.3 million for the inverse policy.

05 Phone-First Vendor Support.

The vendor shall provide a Canadian-domiciled human contact, reachable by telephone, with a name and a published direct line. Email forms and ticketing systems are not, by themselves, sufficient. Citizens of Canadian municipalities are entitled to know who answers when the system fails.

WHY THIS IS ENFORCEABLE, NOT ASPIRATIONAL

None of the five clauses requires federal legislation. None requires provincial enabling. Each is within the exclusive procurement authority of the municipal council, exercised under the existing Community Charter, Municipal Government Act, or equivalent provincial municipal statute. Each can be tabled at the next regular council meeting. Each is enforceable through the standard procurement bid-evaluation matrix.

THE PATRIOTIC PROCUREMENT TEST

If a Canadian municipality cannot point to the Canadian law, the Canadian courts, the Canadian data centre, the Canadian vendor, and the Canadian human being on the other end of the phone, then the procurement has, in the relevant sense, left Canada — regardless of which website carries the maple leaf.

§ VI DIRECT LINE · THE PRACTICE BEHIND THIS BRIEF

Fit For Gov.

Fit For Gov is a Canadian civic-technology practice. It builds custom websites and platforms for Canadian municipalities — towns, cities, regional districts, counties — as the modern alternative to vulnerable WordPress installations on foreign hosting. The practice is registered in British Columbia, principal-led, and answers its own telephone.

Before launching Fit For Gov, the principal built the production front-ends for Waterworth, Muniworth, and The National Strategy Council at a prior governance-technology employer.

The discipline and the audience are the same. The brand is new because the procurement environment has finally caught up with the argument.

WHAT YOU GET WHEN YOU CALL

A fifteen-minute consultation, on the phone, with the person who will write the code. No discovery call funnel. No SDR. No calendar booking widget. The principal answers, listens, asks four or five short questions, and either tells you Fit For Gov is the right fit or tells you it is not and recommends someone Canadian who is.

WHAT GETS BUILT

Custom municipal websites and platforms on Canadian hosting, with no plugin attack surface, with multi-factor authentication enforced by design, with WCAG 2.1 AAA accessibility, with procurement-ready documentation, with the phone number of the person responsible printed in the footer. Pricing is calibrated to the provincial direct-award threshold so most engagements close without a competitive RFP cycle.

Fit For Gov

A CIVIC-TECHNOLOGY PRACTICE · VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA

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