

One National Voice: 2020 Federal Pre-Budget Submission



WHO WE ARE

The National Network of IDA Canada represents the 500+ organizations across our country which manage Canada's business districts, making them vital places in the nation's identity and key centres of economic, cultural, and social growth.

Our members are business improvement associations/districts/ zones (BIA/BID/BIZs) and sociétés des commerces (SDCs in Quebec), with representation from every province. The skilled individuals who manage these organizations are committed to positive change within their communities and look for opportunities to collaborate locally, provincially, and nationally. The organizations we represent are comprised of over 100,000 businesses from coast to coast, with a combined property assessment in the billions of dollars. We are members of the International Downtown Association (IDA).*

2020 FEDERAL BUDGET

As part of this 2020 budget, IDA Canada is looking to work with our Federal Government to ensure commercial areas in cities and towns can be more socially balanced, economically energized, culturally dynamic, innovatively robust, and environmentally sustainable and resilient.

We are looking to our Federal Government to work collaboratively to conduct more research of city and town centres and commercial areas to support the development of effective policies and programs focused on these areas. We are seeking a stronger collaboration with all three levels of government and the private sector to strengthen re-investment in our urban cores. We are calling for enhanced engagement with our urban champions – those BIA/SDC leaders who deal with change every day on the streets and in their businesses – to identify where more effective partnerships can be established. In the

following pages, we identify five strategic areas which directly impact the vitality of the commercial cores of our communities. Overarching all of these areas is the overwhelming challenge of our global climate emergency. All solutions and associated actions must be shaped to mitigate further climate change.

CONCLUSION

Our downtowns and main streets are not only the economic engines of our communities, but they are the cultural, social, and iconic hubs of our country.

Most importantly, they are the critical barometers of health, prosperity and vitality in every community. We cannot allow them to slide as a result of changing times, practices, or circumstances. Our federal government is key to knitting this new network together with partners at all levels of government and with the private sector. IDA Canada and its members stand prepared to act now and utilize our intellectual and financial resources to affect positive change in our country. We have the means to facilitate, collaborate, and build partnerships in communities across the country. Please contact us to work with you!

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT

WEB www.downtown.org/ida-canada

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* The International Downtown Association is the premier organization for urban place professionals who are shaping and activating dynamic city centre districts. We represent an industry of more than 2500 place management organizations, employing 100,000 people throughout North America and growing rapidly around the world.



COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

PREMISE

For any community to thrive, it must ensure a healthy, stable and inclusive environment for residents and for businesses, co-existing in social and economic balance. This comes in the form of affordable housing, employment opportunities, food security, personal safety, and appropriate, sustainable and balanced taxes.

GOAL

To ensure Canada is comprised of healthy, thriving and inclusive communities in which there is respect, equal opportunities, affordable and accessible housing, and appropriate services to support community wellness and employment.

COMMENT

IDA Canada supports the Federal Government working with Canadians to re-establish and strengthen social housing and community wellness programs, social harmony and workforce education. This provides the basis for a stable environment in which our urban core business communities can thrive.

PROGRAM PROPOSALS

- 1 Provide \$2 million in funding to partner with the National Network of IDA Canada and its members, to research and track the health, well-being and prosperity of Canada's downtowns and commercial centres, and create an annual report to share this information (Please see: *The Value of Investing in Canada's Downtowns* www.downtown.org/ida-canada).
- 2 Commission a National Strategy on Mental Health. This commission should draw on the experiences of service providers, municipal councils & staff, business improvement associations, police, and the judiciary to create a co-ordinated five-year strategy which will result in increased, targeted funding to significantly reduce mental health issues.
- 3 Establish a National Task Force on the national and growing opioid crisis. The Task Force should focus on creating co-ordinated funding and solutions to mitigate the causes and effects of addiction.



COMMUNITY VITALITY

PREMISE

Communities at their core are shaped by people and defined by a sense of place based on a vibrant public realm, historic character, arts and culture, and unique, street-level and neighbourhood-serving businesses.

GOAL

To revitalize – without displacement – city and town centres and the public realm and socio-economic fabric which comprise them.

COMMENT

The right type of strategic Federal Government investment will help create employment and business opportunities, and kindle a new-found pride of community. The easiest and most fundamental action is placing federal offices in urban core, town centres, and traditional commercial areas. However, BIAs & SDCs are ready to work with the Federal Government as visionaries and catalysts to renew investment in community cores.

PROGRAM PROPOSALS

- 1 Allocate \$500 million to develop a minimum of five innovative, multi-faceted pilot Urban Development Agreements with the three levels of government and the private sector, focused on a holistic revitalization of weak city and town centres. This was initially done with creation of the Winnipeg Core Area Initiative which resulted in some transformational investments in that city core that serve as inspirations to this day.
- 2 Increase funding for arts and culture, with heightened emphasis in developing 'creative cores' and providing broader eligibility for groups which focus on collaborations.
- 3 Allocate \$100 million to partner with umbrella provincial and regional BIA/SDC organizations to renew 'Main Street' programs involving smaller communities and neighbourhood commercial streets, focusing on enhancing the appearance of store-fronts, strengthening local commerce, and intensifying upper floor uses.



URBAN MOBILITY

PREMISE

With the renewed strength of our urban centres in which organizations and individuals are increasingly conscious of environmental impacts, innovative and well-designed transportation networks and affordable transit are key to the on-going vitality and viability of communities.

GOAL

To create transportation frameworks designed to decrease dependence on individual vehicles while intensifying multi-modal transportation networks.

COMMENT

We urge the Federal Government to devote more resources to re-thinking and re-working our intra-urban and inter-urban transportation systems, and to strengthen rail connections between urban and rural communities, while removing dependence on fossil fuels.

PROGRAM PROPOSALS

- 1 Provide \$100 million in funding to a minimum of ten municipalities as an incentive for the creation of complete streets, designed to safely include pedestrians, public transit, bikes and cars, all in the context of improving civic sustainability standards and enhancing street amenities.
- 2 Accelerate the implementation and articulate the specifics of the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change to support an increasingly efficient and low-carbon transportation system.
- 3 Support, but carefully regulate, the proposed use of connected and automated vehicles as well as other new transportation alternatives.



INFRASTRUCTURE

PREMISE

An efficient community is comprised of infrastructure which is kept in top condition; public spaces and parks which are well-designed and maintained; buildings which exude the character of the community; and sustainability innovations are encouraged and supported.

GOAL

To strengthen the physical, social, economic and cultural role of city and town centres and traditional commercial areas through innovative federal investment programs designed to replace or create new infrastructure.

COMMENTARY

The National Network of IDA Canada can help orchestrate further tri-level government urban investment opportunities by helping to redefine relationships and transform programs.

PROGRAM PROPOSALS

- 1 Allocate \$1 billion to partner with provinces, municipalities and BIAs and SDCs to identify the means of making downtowns, main streets, and traditional commercial areas more sustainable and better equipped to face dramatic climate change. Incentives for burying overhead wiring would be a small case in point.
- 2 Partner with BIAs and SDCs to facilitate a new vision for our core communities as catalysts in re-defining identities and re-awakened cultural richness and social stability.
- 3 Prioritize the sustainable redevelopment of federally-owned urban lands for mixed-use development which complement adjacent areas and surrounding neighbourhoods.



ENTREPRENEURSHIP

PREMISE

To support and sustain entrepreneurship, our communities need to provide start-up business support, create incubation incentives and develop urban cluster strategies, all in the context of heightened sustainability objectives.

GOAL

To continue kindling the innovative and entrepreneurial spirit of Canadians by developing and expanding creativity hubs in urban cores by ensuring close working relationships with the private sector and the business improvement area associations which represent them.

COMMENT

Small business is the workhorse of the Canadian economy, employing approximately 70% of private sector workers and as such, deserves the fullest support of our Federal Government. Grants for big industry should be rethought and re-distributed to smaller companies for their growth.

PROGRAM PROPOSALS

- 1 Reinforce a culture of entrepreneurship through micro-loans and location grants targeting downtowns, main streets, and traditional commercial areas.
- 2 Provide a \$5 million pilot grant program for BIAs and SDCs to create local specific-sector training programs in partnership with local colleges, universities, and the private sector. An example of this type of creative thinking and training is the Downtown Victoria Business Association which created a Clean Team staffed solely by marginalized individuals who were given an employment opportunity, but were also provided a sense of pride and purpose through their work.
- 3 Partner with BIAs and SDCs to create capacity-building incubation centres for retail innovation in downtowns and on main streets. As part of this initiative, develop a microloan or loan guarantee program for the crafts and maker community.