

## Overview

This month, the Canadian government made significant moves in support of the development of green community spaces and tourism experiences. The 2024 Federal Budget reached new stages of the legislative process and key decision makers have been vocal about their thoughts on the bill.

## On the Hill

The House of Commons will recess for the summer in a few short weeks returning towards the end of September. During the recess, MPs will spend more time in their communities, connecting with local stakeholders. This summer recess is a critical opportunity for IDA Canada members to build relationships with their own MPs and discuss their shared goals of supporting downtowns and main street areas.

In April, the Federal government released the 2024 budget. Currently in its second reading, the budget is facing careful analysis from members of the house. The Opposition has been vocal about their disapproval of the budget, calling it an "[inflationary](#)" [fiscal plan](#). Moreover, members of the NDP note that while many of the items they have been advocating for were included in the budget, [they have been vocal in their ongoing discussions](#) with the Liberals over certain concerns. Once passed, commitments made through the budget will come to fruition in communities across the country.

## Downtown and Main Street Month Campaign & Media Updates

Mark your calendars! This August, IDA Canada launches its Downtown and Main Street Month campaign. We'll share details soon on how your community can connect with elected officials and celebrate Canada's vibrant main streets and downtowns. These aren't just places on a map – they're the beating hearts of our communities!

If you are launching an exciting project or initiative, let us know! IDA Canada continues to highlight member initiatives across the country on social media. To be featured in a post, please complete [this survey](#).

**For more information, please contact Impact Public Affairs:** Jayme Wilson, [jayme@impactcanada.com](mailto:jayme@impactcanada.com)

IDA Canada, a national coalition of the International Downtown Association, represents organizations across the country that manage Canada's business districts, making them vital places in the nation's identity and key centres of economic wealth and social and cultural growth. The National Network of IDA Canada has been created to provide a single voice for business district professionals while sharing best practices, experiences, and the tools to create more vibrant cores in our cities and towns. For more information: [www.downtown.org/ida-canada](http://www.downtown.org/ida-canada).

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April was a busy month in Ottawa. The federal government launched [Budget 2024](#), making several announcements on issues important to communities across the country, including housing, mental health, community infrastructure, and transit.

## On the Hill

On April 16, 2024, the federal government tabled Budget 2024 with the theme "Fairness for Every Generation," making several announcements about IDA Canada's priorities: housing, mental health, community infrastructure and transit.

Budget 2024 has made a substantial commitment to housing, setting a goal of building 3.87 million homes by 2031, with an average target of 550,000 per year – nearly double the current pace. This ambitious plan, supported by a \$6 billion infrastructure program, a \$400 million top-up to the Housing Accelerator Fund, and a \$15 billion expansion of the construction loan program, is a testament to the federal government's dedication to addressing the housing crisis. The Budget also includes measures to improve credit scores for renters and extend the amortization period for first-time homebuyers, further bolstering the housing market.

It also stated that communities seeking to secure long-term, stable funding through the forthcoming permanent public transit fund would be required to eliminate minimum parking requirements within 800m of high-frequency transit and allow high-density housing within 800m of high-frequency transit and post-secondary institutions.

The federal government pledged \$500 million for the creation of a new Youth Mental Health Fund and \$6.1 billion for a new federal benefit to support Canadians with disabilities against poverty. \$1.3 billion was dedicated to Infrastructure Canada to stabilize funding for the Reaching Home Program, which works to address homelessness.

## Media Updates

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In March, the federal government announced excise duty relief on alcohol that aims to support craft breweries, is investing in a project to boost women entrepreneurs, and has announced several measures for housing included in the 2024 Budget. IDA Canada is looking ahead to the federal budget announcement on April 16, which will inform our advocacy priorities going forward. This will also include the launch of a \$6 billion housing infrastructure fund. We are continuing to use Twitter as a forum for our members to share their challenges and successes.

## On the Hill

The 2024 Budget will be announced on April 16, outlining the federal government's priorities for the upcoming year. One major announcement from the upcoming budget is the launch of a \$6 billion housing infrastructure fund that aims to expedite construction and account for key upgrades to urgent infrastructure needs like waste and water systems. In order to access the funding, provinces and territories will have to agree to meet certain conditions like allowing "missing middle" homes and freezing development charges for 3 years for cities with over 300,000 people.

On March 9, the federal government announced [alcohol excise duty](#) relief that aims to support local craft breweries. For two years, inflation adjustment will be capped at two percent for beer, spirit, and wine excise duties, and half the excise tax duty on the first 15,000 hectolitres of beer brewed in Canada. This will provide a typical craft brewery with an additional \$86,952 in additional tax relief in 2024-25.

The Women Entrepreneurship Strategy Ecosystem Fund delivered \$3.7 million in funding to launch the [Maïa Inclusive Growth Project](#) that will focus on diversifying the supply chain to help women entrepreneurs secure contracts with major buyers through training and facilitating certifications.

## Media Updates

We are leveraging Twitter to connect with politicians and spotlight our members' work and advocacy efforts. As we head into the spring, we encourage you to tag @IDACAN\_Downtown in your posts and share what's going on in your community through this [Google form](#)!

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- ✓ IDA Canada is continuing to engage with elected officials on our advocacy issues ahead of the upcoming budget announcement.
- ✓ FedDev Ontario has opened a new round of applications for the My Main Street initiative, which provides funding for businesses and community projects in Southern Ontario.
- ✓ The Minister of Small Business announced funding for Indigenous entrepreneurship programs.
- ✓ Join us on Twitter to amplify initiatives in your community, and advocate for crucial issues facing our members.

## On the Hill

To advance our advocacy issues, IDA Canada has been conducting outreach to Liberal caucus chairs across the country, to set up discussions for opportunities to collaborate between our members and their federal representatives. The 2024 Budget will be announced on April 16, outlining the federal government's priorities for the upcoming year.

On February 22, the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario) opened another round of applications under the [My Main Street](#) initiative to provide a total of \$15 million in funding to businesses and placemaking projects in Southern Ontario. The Business Development stream will support brick-and-mortar businesses on main streets across southern Ontario, while the Community Activator Stream provides funding for not-for-profit projects focused on animating public spaces, like streetscape enhancements, and community events. Businesses, municipalities, BIAs, and other community organizations can apply until March 31, 2024.

Minister of Small Business Rechie Valdez announced [\\$2.5 million in federal funding](#) for the Indigenous Women's Entrepreneurship Program and to support the creation of the Indigenous Youth Entrepreneurship Program. These investments will break down barriers for Indigenous women and youth to start their own businesses, and support the strength of Canada's economy.

## Media Updates

We are leveraging Twitter to connect with politicians and spotlight our members' work and advocacy efforts. We're building our page as a central hub for members to showcase their initiatives, exchange ideas, and build our collective voice. As our social media presence expands, we encourage you to tag @IDACAN\_Downtown in your posts or feature your own initiative through this [Google form](#)!

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The IDA Canada leadership group is engaging with stakeholders and decision-makers as the House resumes. The leadership group continues to work to address nationwide concerns through ongoing meetings. FedDevOntario's recent \$15 million investment will support the continuing My Main Street program in 2024, providing support for community revitalization and economic resiliency.

## On the Hill

The IDA Canada leadership group is continuing efforts to advocate for solutions to build on the momentum generated during this fall's Hill Day, meeting with stakeholders and decision-makers across the country. Representatives from Atlantic Canada met with officials from the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency to continue discussions facing their region, while Puneeta McBryan from the Downtown Edmonton BIA met with Blake Desjarlais, a rising star in the federal NDP representing the riding of Edmonton Griesbach. We will continue to carry the energy generated through our coming submission to inform the federal budget and are in the preliminary stages of preparing for a spring Hill Day to continue to take action on the issues facing our members.

On January 16, FedDevOntario announced a \$15 million investment to continue the [My Main Street](#) program in 2024, delivered through the Canadian Urban Institute. The program provides direct-to-business and community support to main streets in southern Ontario, launching on February 15, 2024. Building on its original iteration, it will include the Community Activator stream, supporting placemaking and revitalization projects in 75 communities, and also introduce the Business Sustainability Program, which will provide non-repayable contributions of up to \$20,000 for productivity enhancements to up to 325 main street businesses in southern Ontario.

## Media Updates

We aim to use our Twitter to connect with politicians and raise awareness about the work of our members and the issues that we are advocating for on their behalf. We are also looking to grow the Twitter page as a hub for our members to promote their own initiatives, issues, and events, where members can share best practices and learn from each other. As we continue to grow our social media presence, we urge you to continue to tag @IDACAN\_Downtown in your posts, or please fill out this [google form](#) to be featured!

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