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New Cohort of Rising Stars Selected for IDA's 2026 Emerging Leaders Fellowship

Urban place management professionals convene to advance their leadership and place management skills

Arlington, VA – The International Downtown Association (IDA) selected 30 of the industry's brightest professionals for the 2026 Emerging Leader Fellowship (ELF) program. These senior staff members hail from 3 countries and 20 states and provinces including Newcastle, UK; San Diego, CA; Boise, ID; Reno, NV; Toronto, ON; Topeka, KS; and Chicago, IL. Alumni of the IDA Emerging Leader Fellowship program, launched in 2016, are fast becoming sought-after leaders for the future of city building worldwide.

"The success of our Fellowship program underscores how critical this training is to our growing industry," said David Downey, President & CEO of IDA. "This is the only program of its kind created specifically for urban place management professionals. IDA is looking to further illustrate the importance of our industry by elevating leaders with the necessary skills to champion inclusive city building. Professional development remains a hallmark of IDA."

The Emerging Leader Fellowship is a week-long experiential program bringing together a cohort of IDA professionals from within the urban district management industry. The fellows learn essential leadership and place management skills and gain practical tools in the areas of place-based economic development, the live-work-play experience, and public-private partnerships.

"I am grateful to be selected for the International Downtown Association's 2026 Emerging Leader Fellowship program. As the Business & Community Engagement Director of the Ballston BID, I have the opportunity to work closely with the people, businesses, and organizations that make Ballston such a vibrant and evolving district," said Pinky Advani." I'm excited to connect with peers from across the country, gain new perspectives, and bring back ideas that help strengthen relationships, support local businesses, and continue building meaningful community experiences in Ballston."

"The International Downtown Association is looking to build the future of our industry, and these accomplished executives are the rising stars of our profession," said Downey. "With this program, we're educating and inspiring the next generation of leaders."

The program takes place June 7-12, 2026, in New York City. Professionals from several place management organizations across the city provide technical in-the-field training. The event takes place at various locations throughout Manhattan with field visits provided by several local business improvement district (BID) leaders.

Congratulations to the 2026 Emerging Leader Fellowship cohort! For more information about this year's cohort, visit IDA's website. Washington, DC-based IDA is the premier organization for urban place professionals who are shaping and activating dynamic city center districts. Ballston BID is the urban place management organization representing the interests of property owners in Ballston, VA.

About Ballston Business Improvement District (BID)
The Ballston Business Improvement District is a public-private partnership dedicated to strengthening Ballston as a vibrant, innovative, and connected urban center in the heart of Arlington, Virginia. The BID serves a 25-block walkable neighborhood known for its mix of technology, education, defense, retail and hospitality businesses. The BID supports local businesses and enhances the neighborhood experience through initiatives that improve public spaces, advance mobility and placemaking, and produce community events that bring people together, helping position Ballston as a thriving destination for those who work, live, and visit the area. Follow **@ballstonbid** on Instagram and visit **ballstonva.org** for resources, events, and updates from Ballston's neighborhood

About the International Downtown Association
The International Downtown Association is the premier organization for urban place professionals who are shaping and activating dynamic city center districts. Our members are downtown champions who bring urban centers to life, bridging the gap between the public and private sectors. We represent an industry of more than 2,500 place management organizations, employing 100,000 people throughout North America and growing rapidly around the world. Founded in 1954, IDA is a resource center for ideas and innovative best practices in urban place management. For more information, visit downtown.org.