

News release

For immediate release

New federal funding for an improved performing arts facility in Saint John

Saint John, New Brunswick, October 29, 2024 — There will be growth in the theatre sector and better venues in southern New Brunswick after an additional \$12 million investment from the federal government under the Green and Inclusive Community Buildings Program in the Sydney Street former courthouse. This funding was announced by MP Wayne Long, Mayor Donna Reardon and Dr. Sandra Bell, Saint John Theatre Company Board Chair.

The project has evolved over the last 5 years and will result in an expanded performing arts facility, rehabilitating the old heritage courthouse on Sydney Street into a modern inclusive and accessible arts space. The centrepiece of the new facility will be a 250-seat venue. There will also be a secondary performance space as well as creative, rehearsal, training and administrative spaces.

The Saint John Theatre Company has designed the space to be a home theatre for the Atlantic Repertory Company (ARC). The transformed courthouse will house a range of cultural events, while bringing much needed opportunities for professional theatre artists to advance their careers, and training opportunities for theatre artists at all levels. The new facility is critical to close the gap in the cultural infrastructure that currently exists in Saint John and will maximize programming opportunities for the benefit and enjoyment of residents and visitors.

Financing for a more modest project was announced in 2019 by Canadian Heritage and the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) for the former Sydney Street Courthouse. This new funding allows for the expanded redesign of the project that will triple the size of the existing structure.

Quotes

“This new green and inclusive cultural space will really put Saint John on the map in terms of performing arts. As a result, the public will have access to more high-quality performances and theatre, and artists in southern New Brunswick will have more opportunities to develop their careers and showcase their talents.”

Wayne Long, Member of Parliament for Saint John–Rothesay, on behalf of the Honourable Sean Fraser, Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities

“The City of Saint John is proud to support the important work the Saint John Theatre Company is undertaking to revitalize the former Sydney Street Courthouse with a contribution of \$818,000 towards the new multi-purpose performance and event venue. This investment recognizes the key role that cultural infrastructure plays in the economic and social development of our city and will create a vibrant space where creativity and community can thrive. We are grateful to the SJTC for taking on the important responsibility of striving to protect and restore the architecture and craftsmanship of this significant building, preserving an important part of our city's historic uptown core and bringing a sense of pride to the local population.”

Her Worship Donna Noade Reardon, Mayor of the City of Saint John

“The Saint John Theatre Company is developing the Courthouse Stage to be the future permanent home of The Atlantic Repertory Company, creating a cultural epicentre for Atlantic Canadian artists. This state-of-the-art facility will retain local talent and attract national and international artists to New Brunswick. By expanding the community’s creative output, and creating a home for innovative artists, the Courthouse Stage will enhance the cultural vibrancy of our region.”

Stephen Tobias, Executive Director, Saint John Theatre Company

Quick Facts

- The federal government is investing \$12 million in this project through the Green and Inclusive Community Buildings (GICB) program. The Saint John Theatre Company is investing over \$13 million and the City of Saint John is contributing \$818,000.
- A total of \$2 million from Canadian Heritage and \$500,000 from ACOA were previously announced for [this project in April 2019](#).
- The GICB program was created in support of Canada’s Strengthened Climate Plan: A Healthy Environment and a Healthy Economy. It is supporting the Plan’s first pillar by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, increasing energy efficiency, and helping develop higher resilience to climate change.
- The program launched in 2021 with an initial investment of \$1.5 billion over five years towards green and accessible retrofits, repairs or upgrades.
- Budget 2024 announced an additional \$500 million to support more projects through GICB until 2029.
- At least 10% of funding is allocated to projects serving First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities, including Indigenous populations in urban centres.
- For more information, please visit the Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada website at: [Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada - Green and Inclusive Community Buildings Program](#).
- The funding announced today builds on the federal government's work through the [Atlantic Growth Strategy](#) to create well-paying jobs and strengthen local economies.

Associated Links

Green and Inclusive Community Buildings

<https://housing-infrastructure.canada.ca/gicb-bcvi/index-eng.html>

Strengthened Climate Plan

<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/environment/weather/climatechange/climate-plan/climate-plan-overview.html>

Housing and Infrastructure Project Map

<https://housing-infrastructure.canada.ca/gmap-gcarte/index-eng.html>

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