

## Letters of Support



May 14<sup>th</sup> 2020

Mayor Nenshi and City Council  
The City of Calgary  
P.O. Box 2100, Station M  
Calgary, AB, T2P 2M5

### **RE: CALGARY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT FOR DOWNTOWN ACCELERATOR PROGRAM – 1 MILLION SQUARE FEET**

Dear Mayor Nenshi,

We greatly appreciate the opportunity to outline points of alignment between the work of Calgary Economic Development (CED), our community's Economic Strategy, *Calgary in the New Economy* (which will serve as a blueprint for economic recovery in the COVID-19 response), and the Makespace and Calgary Downtown Association (CDA) 1M Accelerator.

With an office vacancy rate of 27.17% in the Downtown and Beltline areas, it shows just how much unoccupied office supply we have. It stands to reason that these numbers may increase post-COVID as companies look to cut costs and become more accommodating of employees with work-from-home preferences. Activating these spaces will require creative, tech-enabled solutions - solutions like 1M. We have worked closely over the years with Ken Bautista and Makespace and he has dedicated time and effort in serving on our Place Committee (and Industry Engagement Sub-Committee).

The 1M Accelerator also has direct implications for the **Talent, Place, Innovation, and Business Environment** pillars of Calgary in the New Economy. It is rare that projects move the needle across all four, and in a post-COVID Calgary, we must support our community's strategies with tangible action:

**Talent:** Our goal is to attract companies that serve as a magnet for talent, while empowering local Calgary creatives and skilled workers to help transform our city. 1M's focus on building talent density that gives our city and companies a competitive edge is incredibly important. Pre-COVID there were approximately 2,000 open technology jobs in the city and the pandemic has affirmed the importance of digital skills in Calgary's recovery.

**Place:** Our goals are to "accelerate urbanization and connectivity in the Core" and "target investment to build on existing assets." 1M aims to do exactly that. Their platform will activate one million square feet of vacant storefronts and under-utilized spaces, grow full-time retail tenants, and leverage private investment. With a current commitment of over 30 spaces (and direct investment forthcoming), we are confident that helping fund startup/operational costs will quickly accelerate 1M's impact on our downtown. Furthermore,

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the accelerator directly aligns with key placemaking initiatives like the Downtown Strategy, 9 Block, and the Future of Stephen Avenue.

**Innovation:** Our goal is to create the Calgary Innovation Corridor with an immediate need to "connect and expand innovation places and spaces in the downtown core" and "develop relationships within the innovation ecosystem." By working with multiple building owners one block at a time, 1M can establish connections between services and amenities that were previously disjointed. The model also rewards entrepreneurial operators who take risks in providing workers and visitors to downtown with unique experiences.

**Business Environment:** Our goal is to develop Calgary as a Living Lab to spur co-creation and innovation activities that support businesses (specifically in our downtown). Not only does 1M describe its platform as "a living lab for creators and consumers," but it allows property owners and developers to rapidly prototype ideas that ultimately increase dwell time and benefit tenants (e.g. small and medium-sized retailers who may continue to struggle post-COVID). Lagging investments in social infrastructure and slow growth in successfully developing a "nighttime economy" in Calgary's downtown require bold solutions like 1M. Focusing public resources, leveraged against private investment (especially post-COVID) will allow us to execute faster on key strategies and transformations in our city.

Thank you for your time and for helping us build a resilient and dynamic Calgary, which as you know, is not possible without a vibrant downtown. We look forward to supporting the Council Innovation Fund application in any way we can as we believe the project will provide socio-economic, financial, and cultural benefits to Calgarians. Please contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Moran". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Mary Moran, President & CEO  
Calgary Economic Development



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January 15, 2020

Attn:  
The City of Calgary  
Council Innovation Fund

To whom it may concern,

On behalf of the Calgary Downtown Association (CDA), please accept this letter in support of Makespace Group Inc. and the 1M project and space accelerator.

CDA's role is to spearhead prosperity for downtown businesses by intentionally shaping the character of Calgary, generating dynamic spaces, places and integrated communities.

We see a clear strategic alignment between 1M's objectives and our own goals to attract talent to the downtown, spark investment, fill vacant space, and create buzz and activity that makes Calgary's downtown a destination - all day, every day.

As we at CDA work with our other partners on public realm revitalization projects such as the Stephen Avenue Redevelopment, we recognize the need to engage and leverage private investment and initiatives that meet the immediate challenges for businesses, developers, and landlords suffering the effect of high vacancy rates in our downtown towers. It is our belief that 1M provides a tangible project for multiple stakeholders to participate in towards shared outcomes, creating compelling and diverse retail and amenity offerings that spark economic growth, creating a culture of entrepreneurship, and attracting more talent into downtown to build and transform our city.

CDA is therefore taking a leadership role in 1M alongside Makespace, providing funding, governance and strategic support, resources and expertise, and will serve as a champion and key communicator to our stakeholders and members.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marco DeJaco', written over a horizontal line.

Marco DeJaco  
Executive Director

Calgary Downtown Association [marcod@downtowncalgary.com](mailto:marcod@downtowncalgary.com)

**makespace.**

January 15, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

With over one million square feet of space in our portfolio, our company offers a unique perspective, blending insights around brand building, cultural activation and physical space to each project. We have gathered thousands of people through our spaces, using interactivity, programming, architecture and design to engage and inspire.

We're living in an era for cities where talent density and connectivity matters to company building. Modern creators and consumers need places to build, to create, to advance, to socialize, to grow and to share. This generation is driving a shift toward more flexible, entrepreneurial and collaborative work and life styles, transforming the way we work, build and gather together in our fast-growing cities.

In Calgary, we've reimagined retail spaces such as turning ATB branches into places to gather on Stephen Avenue and Eighth Avenue Place. We've worked with the Calgary Stampede on a new campus vision for youth, and recently, led the strategy and development of the new Platform Innovation Centre being built in East Village.

As an entrepreneur, I've built two tech companies, founded Startup Edmonton, home to over 800+ members and startups, started a seed fund called Flightpath Ventures, led entrepreneurship and innovation at Edmonton Economic Development, and was a founding advisor of the Startup Canada Communities initiative. This experience over the years has shaped a belief that innovation isn't about technology. **The twin drivers of innovation in cities are people and place.** It's this principle that led us to creating IM as an accelerator platform to advance the next wave of talent, retail growth and real estate value in modern cities and downtowns.

IM activates buildings with brands, experiences and services that align with the interests of modern creators and consumers in the area - filling vacant, ground level spaces and storefronts with transformational businesses and gathering spaces. IM invests aggressively and entrepreneurially into talent-focused infrastructure, alongside building owners, creators, startups and community partners like Calgary Downtown Association. IM is a downtown solution that isn't about 2 or 3 mega moves, but rather hundreds of small, fast, and visible moves meant to spark momentum.

Calgary has the potential to build a resilient, durable, confident and high performing innovation ecosystem, with downtown as its centre of gravity. With your support for IM, we're building a downtown for the next wave of innovation in this city - one block, one million square feet at a time.

Sincerely,



Ken Bautista  
CEO & Managing Partner  
Makespace Group Inc.  
ken@makespacegroup.com



*April 8, 2020*

**RE: LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR THE 1M CALGARY PROJECT**

To Whom It May Concern,

I wish to express my support of Makespace and Calgary Downtown Association's application for funding to initiate the 1M Calgary Project. We believe this initiative will add much-needed activity, vibrancy, and focus to Calgary's downtown. These are elements this district needs to address its relevancy for all stakeholders, now and into the future.

TrioVest has worked with Makespace previously and appreciate their unique understanding and approach to how we, as landlords, can best engage with users (tenants and occupants). We feel the platform they and CDA are creating with the 1M Calgary Project will not only have a positive impact on our properties in downtown Calgary, but should also address the relevance of downtown Calgary to all its users and will serve as a catalyst for our industry to invest alongside and help solve the many challenges we face as a city.

TrioVest is actively working to support the 1M Calgary Project through a combination of space and resources, built primarily around our investment in Stephen Avenue Centre (Stephen Avenue, between Centre First Streets West). We look forward to bringing new life to our properties and the street in an effort to drive foot traffic, experience, and, ultimately, deliver value for our tenants. We believe working with Makespace and CDA is a key tool to making that vision a reality.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Mannix", written over a horizontal line.

Mike Mannix  
Executive Vice President  
Portfolio Management, TrioVest Properties  
[mmannix@triovest.com](mailto:mmannix@triovest.com)