

BRIEFING

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Item # 11.2

Planning and Development Services Briefing to

Executive Committee

2022 May 17

ISC: UNRESTRICTED

EC2022-0468

Update on Council Innovation Funding for Downtown Accelerator Program

PURPOSE OF BRIEFING

The purpose of this briefing is to provide an update about the Council Innovation Fund grant for the 1 Million Square Feet Program (1M). On 2022 May 25, Council approved a grant from the Council Innovation Fund to the Calgary Downtown Association for a program intended to increase commercial and retail leases in the downtown – the 1 Million Square Feet Program. Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions applied to control the pandemic, the Calgary Downtown Association was unable to advance the program. The program has been officially terminated and funds have been returned to The City of Calgary's Council Innovation Fund.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

On 2020 April 27, Administration presented Council with an application for the Council Innovation Fund intended to support an economic revitalization program in downtown Calgary that would see the uptake of long-term leases in vacant or underutilized commercial and office spaces (C2020-0463). This program was intended to respond to the economic hardships that were being experienced uniquely in downtown Calgary and the high office vacancy rates. The program had three main objectives including: 1) accelerating and cultivating tenants into long term leases; 2) changing the image of downtown to a place of active and vibrant amenities; and 3) stimulating private investment into buildings and leasehold space by facilitating collaborative lease agreements.

Administration was directed to the 2020 May 25 Combined Meeting of Council to address questions about the program and a \$250,000 grant from the Council Innovation Fund was approved for the Calgary Downtown Association for the 1M Program (C2020-0600). A funding agreement between the Calgary Downtown Association and the City of Calgary was executed and specified that an initial \$100,000 would be released with additional funds released in a phased approach as the program progressed.

Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions, the Calgary Downtown Association was unable to advance the program and it was determined that the program would be cancelled. As per conditions and procedures within the funding agreement, the program has been officially terminated and the original grant amount of \$100,000 has now been returned to the City of Calgary's Council Innovation Fund.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Attachment 1 – Previous Council Direction
2. Attachment 2 – Supplemental Report Council Innovation Fund
3. Attachment 3 – Termination of Project Funding Agreement