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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CMLC, Arts Commons and City of Calgary announce design team for the  
Arts Commons Transformation**

*Local and international experts to reimagine Calgary's premier arts and culture centre*

(CALGARY, AB) • Calgary Municipal Land Corporation (CMLC), together with partners Arts Commons and The City of Calgary, is excited to announce the team that will lead the design for the expansion and renewal of Arts Commons, one of Canada's largest and most vibrant arts centres, through the Arts Commons Transformation (ACT) project.

Over the past year, the project partners have been working through the planning process—creating the functional plan and the business model for the expansion, conducting a building assessment and carrying out public engagement—effectively setting the stage for the prime design team to begin this next exciting chapter in the ACT story.

The ACT prime design team is an impressive collection of local and global leaders in architecture and design who will bring a rich variety of perspectives and specialties to this major civic upgrade.

Heading up the team is Toronto-based [KPMB](#), a pedigreed architectural firm with proven expertise in major arts and theatre projects, including Toronto's Massey Hall and the Allied Music Centre, the Royal Conservatory TELUS Centre for Performance and Learning, Minneapolis's Orchestra Hall, Toronto's TIFF Bell Lightbox, Boston University's Center for Computer and Data Sciences, and the Banff Centre for Arts & Creativity.

Working closely with KPMB at every step of the design phase will be [Tawaw Architecture Collective Inc.](#), headed by Calgarian (and Canada's first female First Nations architect) Wanda Dalla Costa. Tawaw will ensure the Indigenous perspective is thoughtfully and meaningfully woven into all aspects of the design.

Rounding out the project team are Calgary-based [Hindle Architects](#), a trusted local firm with a history of successful projects around Calgary, and [SLA](#), an internationally renowned nature-based design studio out of Denmark.

As ACT development manager, CMLC led the selection process, working with representatives from The City and Arts Commons in considering proposals from 29 firms vying to be part of this major renewal of a beloved and historic Calgary institution.

City of Calgary Mayor Jyoti Gondek spoke about Arts Commons Transformation and its impact on the city. "A thriving creative sector is essential to making Calgary a more resilient city. Arts Commons is one

of the main pillar projects that will give our city a much-needed boost — it will catalyze growth, diversify our economic drivers and draw even more people to the downtown core.”

Ward 7 Councillor Terry Wong agreed, saying, “located in the heart of downtown, the Arts Commons Transformation project will help to create the vibrant and active district envisioned in the Greater Downtown Plan.”

Arts Commons—currently home to five theatres and the world-class Jack Singer Concert Hall—will be transformed over two phases. The first phase—now fully funded—will see the expansion of Arts Commons, adding new performance venues and support areas with thoughtful connections to the current building. The second phase, the modernization of the existing Arts Commons, will follow once funding is secured. The project scope for KPMB and the design team encompasses both phases.

According to Alex Sarian, Arts Commons President and CEO, “ACT will help make Calgary an even more livable city by giving Calgarians and our visitors improved access to a wide variety of arts and culture experiences—and more formal and informal gathering spaces in which to enjoy them. Through this transformation, Arts Commons is committed to creating a diverse, inclusive and welcoming place for all—and to enhancing our citizens’ quality of life by expanding the ways they can connect with the arts and their community.”

Last spring, CMLC carried out a robust community engagement program, seeking input on ACT’s design through multiple channels. The findings from these efforts—over 2,000 individual responses—have been shared with the design team and will help ensure that ACT delivers responsive and attractive spaces for Calgary’s arts community and arts lovers alike.

Kate Thompson, CMLC President & CEO, spoke to the significance of the project to the city. “Today’s announcement sets in motion the eagerly anticipated design phase for our city’s premier arts and culture centre. The expansion and renewal of Arts Commons will not only be celebrated by the city’s arts community—it will also help fuel the bigger-picture efforts underway to diversify Calgary’s economy and enliven its downtown.”

KPMB, Hindle Architects, Tawaw Architecture Collective, and SLA speak keenly of their vital position in the project. “We are so pleased to be collaborating with CMLC, Arts Commons and The City to invest in and contribute to the transformation of cultural life in Calgary. Drawing from our deeply rooted practice and our extensive experience in this realm, our strong, creative and responsive project team is energized by the opportunity to revitalize Arts Commons and create an inclusive, vibrant and resilient place that will serve as both a catalyst for cultural growth and a healing force for Calgarians and the city—especially during these challenging times.”

Calgary-based PCL Construction, which was awarded the contract for the project’s pre-construction services, will work alongside the prime design team to ensure the design process is aligned with future construction planning.

Now that the prime design team is in place, its first step will be to initiate the ACT concept design phase. The team expects to reveal the new design in fall 2022. The first phase of construction is scheduled to begin in 2024.

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### **About Arts Commons**

[Arts Commons](#) is the largest performing arts centre in Western Canada and third-largest performing arts centre in the country, located in the heart of downtown Calgary. For over 35 years, it has been a key contributor to the social, economic, cultural, and intellectual life and well-being of Calgarians. It is home to six resident companies, including Alberta Theatre Projects, Arts Commons Presents, Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, Downstage, One Yellow Rabbit, and Theatre Calgary. It houses six gallery spaces, five theatres, and the Jack Singer Concert Hall, and promotes local, national, international, emerging, and established artists with a focus on inclusion, diversity, accessibility, and equity.

### **About CMLC**

Created and owned by the City of Calgary, [Calgary Municipal Land Corporation \(CMLC\)](#) exists to achieve the City's objectives for urban densification and community renewal, infrastructure investment and placemaking. An entrepreneurial group of hands-on doers and placemakers, CMLC's approach is rooted in community participation and designed to strengthen the connections between places, experiences and people. As the master developer behind Calgary's East Village and new Culture + Entertainment District, CMLC is leading over \$1 billion in city-building projects and is the project lead on pillar projects in Calgary including the Arts Commons Transformation, BMO Centre Expansion and the 17th Ave SE Extension and Victoria Park/Stampede LRT Station Rebuild.