

May 8, 2026

Dear City of Sutter Creek,

First and foremost, we wish to express our sincere gratitude for the time and care you are investing in this process. We recognize the responsibility that comes with contemplating a proposal such as ours and are grateful for the opportunity to submit this document for your review.

We would also like to emphasize that this is not an opportunity we take lightly, both because of the trust involved and because of the respect we have for the character and history of your community. What we are proposing is the creation of a retail environment that reflects local values: welcoming, thoughtful, and rooted locally. From compliance and security to customer service and local partnerships, every aspect of our plan has been built with long-term stewardship in mind. And above all else, what we hope has come through in our interactions to date and in this proposal is our character.

Our approach is grounded in a simple belief: that responsible destigmatization occurs when cannabis businesses operate as true neighbors – integrating into and ultimately benefiting the community beyond just the four walls of the business. Our track record in communities across California is demonstrative of that core belief, and it is that same track record of care and commitment that shapes our Sutter Creek proposal.

We also approached the City with this idea, holding central the firm belief that our proposal represents an opportunity to bolster public health and safety for Sutter Creek and area residents. As recent local enforcement actions demonstrate, cannabis is already accessible in Sutter Creek through the illicit market, which operates without ID verification, product testing, tax collection, or community accountability. Given our team's passion for seeing California communities thrive, we'd be remiss not to center that a well-regulated, locally accountable cannabis retail storefront provides a transformational alternative for adults, better protects local young people, and ensures that revenue generated here is reinvested here.

Importantly, this proposal has also been extensively shaped by local outreach and engagement. One of our team members was raised in Sutter Creek, and our efforts have been informed by his lived experiences. We also engaged in a local listening tour, including a community listening session, to ensure we heard diverse perspectives from throughout the Sutter Creek community. That feedback – both in support of local commercial cannabis retail and with trepidation about proposed operations – has been contemplated in what we have proposed here, from the site itself to security, neighborhood and community benefits plans and beyond.

We also understand that success is not measured solely by financial performance, but also by how well we integrate into the fabric of the community. We are incredibly proud of the community benefits programs we have developed in each of the communities we serve today, and of the community commitment we included in this proposal. This is an opportunity to demonstrate through action that a responsible cannabis business can integrate into the fabric of Sutter Creek and provide tangible benefits to local programs, services and priorities, including, as just one example, in helping to educate local youth.

Thank you again for your consideration. We believe our proposal reflects our capability and the experience we have gained serving other communities, as well as a plan for how that could look in Sutter Creek. We look forward to the possibility of earning your trust and serving your community.

In gratitude,



Lauren Carpenter
Co-Founder



Dustin Moore
Co-Founder

OWNER QUALIFICATIONS

While many of today's cannabis operators have participated in the regulatory development process either through lobbying or by providing public comment during the State's development of regulations, no team brings our unique combination of regulatory expertise in setting the foundation for legalization, writing and passing the law that legalized cannabis, and then working collaboratively with State agencies and local governments to ultimately further define and implement adult use cannabis in California.

After undertaking this policy development, our team members then spent approximately two years founding, operating, leading, managing, and advising dozens of licensed commercial cannabis businesses across cultivation, manufacturing, testing, distribution, retail, delivery, events, on-site consumption, and technology to gain lessons learned from these first movers.

Embarc was born out of these collective experiences and continues to be optimized and professionalized through our team's deep bench of traditional business experience. It is this combination that makes our team uniquely equipped to operate effectively in today's market.

Legalized Adult Use

Embarc's team members helped architect California's legal cannabis marketplace. Highlights of this experience include:

- Worked for then-Lieutenant Governor Gavin Newsom during the policy development of the Blue-Ribbon Commission on Cannabis, which led to the creation of Proposition 64;
- Assisted in the drafting and managed the passage of Proposition 64, The Adult Use of Marijuana Act, which legalized cannabis in California;

- Developed and continue to seek to refine the laws and regulations for cannabis in California;
- Advised local, State, and national governments on the development of cannabis regulations, including cities throughout California, and the countries of Canada and Mexico;
- Managed the compliance for over 200 cannabis licenses statewide including more than a million square feet of licensed cultivation; and
- Serve on Boards, Commissions, and Committees regarding responsible cannabis, including California's Track and Trace Advisory Committee.

Lessons Learned

Embarc was built on a foundation of real-life experience. Through operating our own businesses and helping dozens of cannabis companies navigate within the regulatory framework we created, our team has a lifetime of lessons learned. Highlights of this experience include:

- Significant traditional retail experience including as the former CEO of The Gap, who spent more than five years architecting California's cannabis supply chain via one of the State's largest full-service distributors;
- Former executives responsible for government, public, community, and regulatory affairs for some of the largest vertically integrated cannabis companies in the world;
- One of the most prolific brand builders in the cannabis industry, responsible for developing one of the State's top selling brands and executing the first legal consumption café in the country;
- Highly experienced supply chain executive with over 20 years of experience working with well-known global brands and startups in emerging industries, including many of California's leading cannabis supply chain companies; and

- Former law enforcement officer currently under contract with the cities of Dixon and Benicia Police Departments, training city staff, police, and code enforcement personnel on cannabis regulations, crime prevention strategies, crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED), and assisting with facility design review, security plan review, and both site and compliance inspections.

Optimized & Executed

Embarc's business model is informed not only by the lessons learned from operating within California's cannabis industry, but also from centuries of combined experience in traditional industries.

Highlights of our team's experience across diverse industries include everything from Postmates and Valero to South by Southwest and the NFL, from the White House and State Legislature to Wells Fargo and Facebook.

These lessons have been applied to our execution of Embarc, which brings experience operating 17 retail storefront businesses with several more on the horizon.

Meet the Team

Under the leadership of Lauren Carpenter and Dustin Moore, Embarc has successfully opened 17 legally permitted cannabis retail storefronts in communities across California. These locations demonstrate Embarc's comprehensive understanding of the nuanced requirements of different jurisdictions and the ability to operationalize cannabis retail businesses in a variety of communities. Lauren and Dustin are also currently operationalizing several additional retail and delivery licenses within the State.

Dustin and Lauren have assembled a leadership team with decades of combined experience in the legal cannabis market and more than a century of combined leadership in Fortune 500 companies. It is this experience that ensures we are historically

the first of our cohort to open our doors in the communities where we operate today, and it is this experience that helps us bridge the gaps between of operating within a nascent industry that does not yet have unified standards. In the absence of decades of established policy, it is our team who has developed hundreds of pages of internal processes, operating procedures and more.

To that end, Embarc has established itself as a leading provider of compliant and reliable cannabis across California, thanks to exceptional Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and vast experience in the market, both of which are used to continuously refine and optimize the business.

Lauren Carpenter – Owner & Chief Executive Officer

A Prolific Leader with a Proven Track Record of Cannabis Operations that Put Communities First

Lauren Carpenter is the co-founder and Chief Executive Officer of Embarc, a family of neighborhood cannabis shops that serve diverse communities across California. With more than 15 years of private-sector leadership experience spanning energy, education, technology, food and alcohol, retail, and now cannabis, Lauren has built her career on bridging complex regulatory environments with thoughtful community engagement. Her leadership reflects a deep belief that business success and social impact go hand in hand.

Before entering the cannabis industry, Lauren led strategic government, public, and community affairs efforts for more than a dozen Fortune 500 companies. She managed large-scale coalitions and statewide campaigns focused on highly regulated industries, overseeing multimillion-dollar budgets and diverse teams across political strategy, policy development, issue advocacy, and statewide ballot campaigns. These experiences taught her how to create alignment among business, government, and labor—including negotiating Project Labor Agreements, Collective Bargaining Agreements, and developing workforce programs that

expanded access to STEM education and quality employment opportunities.

Lauren's understanding of government and regulation began early, when she interned in the California Legislature, which led to nearly a decade of direct collaboration with state regulatory agencies across multiple sectors. This experience honed her ability to navigate complex regulatory landscapes, balancing compliance, innovation, and community priorities.

In 2018, after nearly a decade of traditional corporate work, Lauren turned her attention to cannabis. Having witnessed her husband, Dustin Moore, serve as campaign manager for Proposition 64, she recognized a rare opportunity to help shape a newly legal industry. She viewed this as a chance to help destigmatize cannabis and build an industry that reflected her values of integrity, education, and community partnership.

She began her cannabis career as California Political Director and then Director of Government Affairs for Western States for MedMen, one of the world's largest vertically integrated cannabis operators at the time, where she was responsible for political, government, public, and community affairs strategies at the state and local levels across the Western United States. In this role, Lauren worked with governments throughout California and across the western half of the country to implement responsible cannabis regulations—expertise she continues to leverage today.

Lauren then served as Chief Strategy Officer for Los Angeles-based cannabis retailer Sweet Flower, where she was responsible for creating and executing corporate strategic initiatives across community, regulatory, political, and business arenas. As part of a five-person team, Lauren engaged in the operationalization of retail stores in Los Angeles while honing the company's licensing strategy, community engagement programs, and government affairs platform. This experience at a start-up contrasted dramatically with her prior experience

at the world's largest cannabis company, providing unique lessons learned as the company transitioned from aspirational to operational.

Those experiences crystallized Lauren's vision for a different kind of cannabis company—one that put community at the center. Partnering with her husband, she co-founded Embarc, driven by the belief that cannabis businesses can do well by doing good. Under her leadership, Embarc has become one of California's most trusted independent cannabis operators, setting the standard for compliance, integrity, and community reinvestment.

Every Embarc store donates one percent of gross sales to a Community Investment Fund, governed by a local Community Advisory Board that directs funding to youth, public safety, and social service programs in its own city. To date, Embarc has voluntarily reinvested more than \$2.5 million in California communities, on top of the millions of dollars more in state and local tax revenues. In addition to direct funding, Embarc employees volunteer thousands of hours annually with local nonprofit partners, reinforcing the company's commitment to giving back in tangible ways.

As CEO, Lauren oversees Embarc's retail and delivery operations, finance, marketing, HR, legal and compliance, and community relations functions. She is deeply involved in the company—from meeting with regulators and city officials to leading workshops with employees and visiting locations across the state. Her leadership style is hands-on, transparent, and people-first. She believes compliance and culture go hand in hand and has built systems that empower teams to live Embarc's values every day. Even as Embarc has expanded statewide, Lauren remains closely involved in daily operations and meets regularly with district managers, store teams, and local partners to ensure the company's community-driven values are lived out on the ground.

Lauren also co-founded Embarc Events, a trailblazing cannabis concessionaire responsible for

integrating cannabis sales and consumption into some of California's most iconic events. Embarc Events has played a pivotal role in safely introducing cannabis at large-scale public gatherings, collaborating with major festivals such as Outside Lands in San Francisco, BottleRock in Napa, Cali Roots in Monterey, and the California State Fair in Sacramento. Since 2021, Embarc Events has served as the official cannabis concessionaire for Outside Lands, seamlessly integrating cannabis through Grass Lands, a designated cannabis area within the three-day music festival attended by over 200,000 people annually. In 2024, Embarc Events further solidified its expertise by spearheading the introduction of onsite cannabis sales and a consumption lounge at the California State Fair for its 17-day run—the first time in history that cannabis sales and consumption were permitted at a state fair anywhere in the nation. Embarc's founders were instrumental in developing the regulatory framework that made this milestone possible. In 2025, Embarc returned to the State Fair with a ten-fold expansion, a 50,000-square-foot footprint that included enhanced educational exhibits and a significantly expanded experience. These groundbreaking activations have redefined how cannabis is safely and responsibly integrated into mainstream culture.

Lauren's work has positioned Embarc as a model for safe, community-driven cannabis retail. Through licensing Embarc's 17 stores and multiple events, she maintains strong working relationships with the Department of Cannabis Control (DCC) and local regulators statewide. Under her direction, Embarc stores have hosted DCC inspectors for educational tours, collaborated on compliance training, and contributed to shaping a more transparent regulatory framework for California's cannabis market.

A respected thought leader and advocate for an equitable, sustainable cannabis industry, Lauren frequently participates in state and national industry panels, speaks on policy and advocacy, and mentors emerging professionals, particularly

women in cannabis. She is an active member of the California Cannabis Industry Association's Policy Committee and a participant in the Cannabis Executive Roundtable for C-suite leaders operating profitable enterprises across the industry. Her authenticity, transparency, and willingness to share both the highs and challenges of leading a cannabis company have made her a trusted voice among peers and policymakers alike.

Lauren also serves on the Board of the California Cannabis Industry Association (CCIA) and is a founding member of the California Cannabis Operators Association (CaCOA). Her leadership includes previously serving on the Fairfield-Suisun Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors and the UC Capitol Center Alumni Council. She continues to serve her local community as a board member of her neighborhood association. In recognition of her leadership and impact, Lauren was named one of the Sacramento Business Journal's 40 Under 40 honorees in 2025 and has been named to Forbes Magazine's list of the 42 most influential people in cannabis, twice.

A graduate of the University of California, Santa Barbara, Lauren holds a Bachelor's degree in Public Policy and History. Beyond her professional life, she is a devoted wife and the proud mother of a one and a half year old daughter.

Dustin Moore – Owner & Chief Compliance & Strategy Officer

Responsible for Legalization—and Now Navigating the Landscape He Created

Dustin has been a driving force behind California's efforts to legalize and regulate commercial cannabis for more than a decade. In 2011, while working for the Speaker of the California Assembly, Dustin developed legislation for medical cannabis regulations that served as the foundation for the regulatory framework in place today. In 2014, he began working to develop and ultimately served as Deputy Campaign Manager for Proposition 64, the successful ballot measure that legalized adult use

cannabis in California. No one is more familiar with Proposition 64's language and intended implementation than Dustin.

After Proposition 64 passed overwhelmingly in 2016 and having developed significant expertise in how to effectively regulate the cannabis industry, Dustin began working with local, state, national and international jurisdictions to assist in developing and implementing their regulatory and licensing programs, including in Canada, Mexico, and municipalities throughout California. Dustin is regarded as a subject matter expert whose advice and experience are sought by both the private and public sectors nationally and internationally. Dustin worked with Canada to develop their testing regulations and served as an advisor to the Mexican Senate in the development of Mexico's legalization legislation.

True to the intent of Proposition 64, Dustin specializes in policy development that prioritizes public health and safety. After nearly five years of cannabis policy development, Dustin became a founding partner at Axiom Advisors, the State's leading strategic consulting firm providing business and compliance services to professional cannabis associations, cannabis manufacturers, distributors, testing labs and retailers. The firm is responsible for managing compliance for more than 200 commercial cannabis license holders in California, including over three million square feet of licensed cultivation.

In recognition of Northern California's rich history in the cannabis agricultural sector, Dustin served as the volunteer Executive Director of the International Cannabis Farmers Association; a Northern California-based advocacy organization focused on creating equitable opportunity for California's small farmers.

Additionally, given his father has been a medical patient for decades, Dustin serves on the State of California's Track-and-Trace Advisory Committee,

ensuring that safe, tested products are available in the legal market.

As Co-Founder and Chief Compliance & Strategy Officer at Embarc, Dustin plays a central role in guiding the company's growth, regulatory integrity, and long-term strategy. He leads Embarc's compliance, licensing, and government affairs efforts alongside the General Counsel, ensuring that all operations align with state and local laws. Dustin oversees the development and construction of new retail locations, from real estate site selection and entitlement to buildout and launch, ensuring each store meets stringent regulatory and community standards. He also drives operational efficiency across Embarc's supply chain, technology, and brand partnerships, leveraging his decade of relationships to create sustainable systems for growth.

Alongside Lauren, Dustin co-founded Embarc Events, a leading cannabis concessionaire responsible for integrating cannabis sales and consumption into large-scale public events across California. Drawing on his deep expertise in compliance, licensing, and public policy, Dustin has been instrumental in collaborating with the DCC, municipal authorities, and event organizers to bring cannabis experiences to life safely and effectively. His understanding of regulatory frameworks ensures that these events meet strict health and safety standards while aligning with State and local laws. Dustin's leadership has driven Embarc Events' success at high-profile events like Outside Lands, BottleRock, Cali Roots, and the California State Fair.

Since 2021, Embarc Events has seamlessly integrated cannabis into Outside Lands through the designated Grass Lands area. In 2024, Dustin played a pivotal role in launching onsite cannabis sales and a consumption lounge at the California State Fair—a groundbreaking moment in the showcasing of cannabis as part of California's agricultural landscape. In 2025, he helped lead the expansion of Embarc's footprint at the Fair to include an enhanced educational cannabis exhibit and

larger-scale California Cannabis Awards, celebrating excellence in cultivation, innovation, and responsible production across the state's legal market. Through his extensive compliance background, Dustin ensures that Embarc Events operates responsibly, balancing public education, safety, and community engagement. His expertise helps demonstrate how cannabis can complement major events while generating economic benefits and maintaining a strong focus on public health and safety.

Dustin is a sought-after speaker and panelist on cannabis policy, compliance, and industry sustainability, frequently engaging with both policymakers and operators to promote practical, safety-driven regulation. He is also a founding Board Member of the California Cannabis Operators Association (CaCOA), an organization committed to reshaping the regulatory and operational landscape for California cannabis licensees across the supply chain.

Dustin's work has earned national recognition. In both 2023 and 2025, embarc's founders were honored on Forbes' "42.0" list, celebrating entrepreneurs transforming the cannabis industry through integrity, innovation, and community reinvestment.

Dustin holds a Bachelor of Science in Political Science from the University of California, Santa Cruz, and completed Public Policy coursework at the University of Southern California's Price School of Public Policy in Sacramento. Beyond his professional life, he is a devoted husband and proud father, finding balance and purpose in family life while helping lead one of California's most community-focused cannabis companies.

Key Leadership Team Members

Embarc has an approximately forty person team that supplements its in-store retail teams and guides its continued evolution. This robust corporate infrastructure developed and continues to

refine our tools, processes, procedures, and resources in service to our retail teams.

This infrastructure plays an important role in ensuring our local teams have the support and accountability they need to run the day-to-day components of the business. As such, resume summaries for key leadership team members have been included here for reference.

Jeff Kirwan — Chief Operating Officer

Jeff brings more than 30 years of national and international experience developing and implementing best practices for some of the world's leading omni-channel retailers, including The Gap, Old Navy, and Target. He has held Senior Vice President, President, and CEO positions at Fortune 500 retailers and spent over 14 years with The Gap.

As the Global President and CEO of the Gap Division at The Gap, Inc. from December 2014 to February 2018, Jeff adeptly led a global team of over 45,000 employees, managing the brand across multiple channels and geographies with exceptional leadership and strategic vision.

Before becoming Global President and CEO, Jeff served as President of Gap Inc.'s Greater China business from 2011 to 2014, overseeing all brands and channels in mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. Under his leadership, the company's presence in China expanded to include Gap, Old Navy, and Gap Outlet brands, amassing over 100 stores across 25 cities within just four years. Jeff also managed e-commerce channels for Gap and Old Navy. Joining Gap Inc. in May 2004 as Senior Vice President of Stores & Operations for Old Navy in the U.S. and Canada, Jeff played a crucial role in driving operational advancements, including enhanced marketing, customer engagement, increased traffic, and improved sales and digital business growth. This experience showcases his expertise in developing and scaling retail operations in complex, ever-changing regulatory environments. Before joining Gap Inc., Jeff served as the Regional

Group Director for Target Corporation's Western Region.

In 2016, Jeff began his foray into the cannabis industry, serving as one of the founding members of HERBL Distribution. HERBL emerged as the largest full-service provider of distribution services and developed the only retail services arm in California cannabis distribution, customizing unique insights typically only used in scaled traditional retail environments to measure efficacy of procurement. He also served as a Board Member for HERBL Distribution, thereby continuing to develop and provide unique insights into navigation of California's complex cannabis supply chain.

In 2023, Jeff assumed the role of COO of Retail Operations at Embarc, demonstrating a hands-on leadership style that is pivotal to the company's day-to-day operations. Committed to engaging with employees at all levels, Jeff ensures that all critical business aspects function smoothly and effectively. With a comprehensive involvement in operational management, Jeff is responsible for guiding retail strategies while collaborating closely with senior management to uphold and enhance quality standards across the organization.

Jeff's impressive executive experience with multinational retailers, deep understanding of customer needs, and robust consumer marketing and sales expertise make him an invaluable asset to Embarc. With his exceptional traditional retail background and significant cannabis industry knowledge through his role at HERBL Distribution, Jeff brings a unique blend of experience to Embarc.

Jeff holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Business Communications from Rhode Island College and a Master of Business degree, focusing on Human Resource Management, from the University of Maryland.

Tessa O'Dowd – Chief Financial Officer

With a career spanning over two decades, Tessa O'Dowd combines her financial expertise with in-

depth knowledge of California's regulated industries to drive Embarc's fiscal strategy. As CFO, Tessa's acumen is central to Embarc's fiscal health, guiding the company through the intricacies of the cannabis sector with adept financial reporting, insightful analysis, and comprehensive strategic planning.

Tessa has nearly a decade of experience as a financial executive in the cannabis industry, beginning in 2018 with her role as Chief Financial Officer at Plus, a California cannabis edibles company. Following Plus, Tessa held the position of Interim CFO and Senior Vice President of Finance at Lowell Farms Inc. Her role entailed the strategic and executive leadership of financial functions such as accounting, controlling, treasury, finance, credit, and collections. Tessa focused on refining processes to enhance efficiency at the company's then-current scale, while also laying the groundwork for future expansion. She played a vital role in overseeing the preparation of all financial statements, including reports for shareholders and government agencies.

As the Controller at Bare Snacks, Tessa was a critical force in shaping the company's financial direction. In collaboration with the COO and CEO, she was responsible for driving financial management strategies that supported Bare Snacks' operational and growth objectives. Tessa adeptly worked on developing and implementing operational systems plans, preparing annual budgets, and continuously improving accounting SOPs. Her role also extended to managing significant external relationships, including audits, tax preparations with tax firms, and ensuring compliance with state and federal laws. Tessa maintained current knowledge of organizational policies, state and federal directives, and accounting standards, ensuring all financial activities met legal and regulatory standards. Internally, her focus on process enhancement included cash flow analysis, applying accurate depreciation rates to assets, and directing month-end and year-end closing processes in line with GAAP. She also managed off-shore accounting teams, aligning all

financial department efforts, especially with the supply chain team, to ensure a synchronized approach to Bare Snacks' financial management.

Tessa began her career in the wine industry in 2003 at JUSTIN Vineyards and Winery as the Inventory Control and Account Receivables Manager. She then moved on to the role of Controller at Cameron Hughes Wine, where she was responsible for overseeing various financial functions critical to the winery's success. Her role covered an expansive scope, managing financial accounting areas such as accounts payable, accounts receivable, payroll, sales, and inventory control, as well as supervising both direct and indirect reports, ensuring that daily financial operations were executed flawlessly. Tessa oversaw the cost accounting process, which is fundamental in the wine industry, ensuring the accuracy of costing for finished goods, winemaking, packaging, and handling.

Tessa's academic credentials include a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with a focus on Human Resource Management from California Polytechnic State University, and a Master's in Business with a specialization in Accounting from Keller School of Management. Her educational background provides a solid foundation for her strategic approach to financial management and her capacity to lead complex financial operations.

Courtney Zalewski – Chief Brand & Marketing Officer

Courtney serves as the Chief Brand and Marketing Officer at Embarc. Prior to joining Embarc, Courtney co-founded and served as managing partner of The Cannabis Café, a first-of-its-kind fully licensed cannabis consumption space and restaurant. In her leadership role, Courtney assisted in capital fundraising and oversaw the build out and design of the establishment—successfully opening the Café's doors in just six months. The Café was first business of its kind to open nationwide and the first to open its doors in West Hollywood, a testament to her operational expertise.

Courtney was also responsible for hiring and assembling the team, overseeing the buying and menu curation, developing relationships with partner brands and vendors, creative direction, marketing and day-to-day operations. Courtney worked alongside retail, compliance and legal experts to develop first of their kind comprehensive SOPs for sales and consumption. Courtney's leadership ensured the Cannabis Café was operating smoothly, compliantly and profitably; as well as ensuring the company followed through on promises made in the initial application, including hiring a diverse staff and partnering with local businesses and purveyors.

Prior to The Cannabis Café, Courtney was a founding team member and served as the Vice President of Product and Design at Lowell Herb Co., one of California's most recognized brands. Courtney was responsible for the management and execution of all touchpoints of the brand including in-store marketing, digital marketing, branding and packaging. Her department was also responsible for product sourcing and development of new SKUs based on sales data and industry trends. During her time with the company, Lowell gained national praise for its design, creativity and impact within the cannabis industry which helped define the pre-roll market with elevated branding and packaging.

Separately, Courtney and her wife co-founded and ran a creative studio dedicated to the cannabis industry, working with several the top selling brands within the State and country. Courtney is fully entrenched in the cannabis industry and her expertise goes beyond marketing and design; her operational experience will help Embarc maintain best-in-class operations.

Courtney also boasts an impressive background in business operations, employee management, marketing strategies, creative direction, and UX design, making her a powerhouse in her field. Courtney has excelled in various roles, such as Director of UX at Pager, an early-stage healthcare start-up in New York City. There, she expertly managed

consumer-facing products and internal tools for medical professionals, concentrating on chat and artificial intelligence technology. Courtney's efforts went beyond product design, driving the company's positioning, marketing, and branding to create an approachable, user-friendly, and effective product.

Courtney's academic credentials include coursework in graphic design, web design, and motion design from institutions such as the ArtCenter College of Design in Pasadena, California; the Art Institute of California, Los Angeles; and the College for Creative Studies in Detroit.

Eric Lightman – General Counsel

Eric has carved out an impressive career as a skilled attorney, representing technology companies and working in corporate finance. With a keen understanding of the complex legal and financial landscapes, Eric has provided valuable counsel to an array of clients and demonstrated an unwavering commitment to community service.

As West Coast counsel for the New York-based law firm Masur, Griffiths, Avidor, LLP (MGA), Eric served as outside general counsel to early and mid-stage growth technology companies based in San Francisco. In this role, he provided expert guidance on employment law, litigation matters, and financing transactions, helping these companies navigate their legal and financial challenges.

Before joining MGA, Eric honed his skills as a commercial litigator and labor and employment lawyer at a law firm in Oakland. His legal acumen was further complemented by his experience in corporate finance at leading companies such as The Boeing Company and Paramount Pictures.

Eric currently serves as General Counsel at Embarc, where he drives the company's dynamic growth strategy, risk mitigation, and ongoing legal affairs. Prior to joining Embarc, Eric served as General Counsel and later as Vice President of Legal at The Shryne Group (owner of the popular brand

“STIIIZY”), where he was part of the legal team that helped to form the company in 2018.

As Shryne's first in-house attorney, Eric was tasked with supporting the company's growth from the ground up, developing the policies, practices, and procedures applicable to all areas of the business including compliance, retail operations, manufacturing, distribution, and human resources. During his tenure, the company went from a single store in Los Angeles with a handful of employees to the largest vertically integrated cannabis company in California with 20+ stores, 100+ cultivation licenses, distribution and manufacturing facilities throughout the State, and a staff of nearly 3,000 employees.

As head of legal at Shryne, Eric ensured that the day-to-day operations ran smoothly, compliantly, and without incident. He oversaw a legal team of six attorneys and five licensing analysts and staff to support the company in all respects, including day-to-day operational support, social equity program development, regulatory and compliance monitoring, local and State licensure, community benefits and outreach, risk management, mergers and acquisitions, financing transactions, in and out of State expansion efforts, real estate financing, litigation, business development, and much more. It is this track record of hands-on leadership, in-the-trenches development, and sound business strategy through scale that Eric brings to Embarc, where he oversees legal, risk management, and regulatory affairs in much the same capacity.

Eric's dedication to community engagement has been a hallmark of his career. He is an active participant in the annual Constitution in the Classroom event sponsored by the American Constitution Society, where he helps educate elementary school students about the law and the Constitution. He is also a member of the Justice and Diversity Center, part of the Bar Association in San Francisco.

Eric earned his Juris Doctorate degree from Santa Clara University School of Law and holds a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in Finance and International Business from Penn State University. Throughout his distinguished career, Eric has proven himself to be a dedicated legal professional with a passion for innovation, community impact, and justice.

Jason Frie – Vice President of Retail Stores & Operations

Jason is a seasoned retail executive with nearly two decades of experience leading high-growth, multi-unit retail organizations and building brands that balance operational excellence with exceptional customer experiences. As Vice President of Retail Stores and Operations at Embarc, Jason oversees the company's 17 retail dispensaries, guiding every aspect of operations from store performance and team development to customer experience.

Jason leads Embarc's district and store leadership teams, ensuring operational consistency across all locations. He plays an integral role in the company's expansion strategy, leading the hiring, training, and operationalization of new stores to ensure every location opens successfully and maintains Embarc's high operational standards. Jason works cross-functionally with the development and compliance teams to align operational practices with facility design and regulatory requirements, ensuring each new store launches efficiently, compliantly, and ready to deliver an exceptional customer experience. He also oversees employee development across the retail network, cultivating strong leadership pipelines and consistent performance across all locations. Under Jason's leadership, Embarc's retail operations embody the company's core values of integrity, inclusivity, and community partnership, with a focus on delivering safe, educational, and accessible cannabis retail experiences.

Before joining Embarc, Jason served as Head of Retail and Real Estate at The Great / Emily + Meritt, where he led the company's evolution from a

single boutique to a nationally recognized lifestyle brand. During his tenure, he oversaw the expansion to seven retail locations, driving a tenfold increase in sales while managing all aspects of operations, visual merchandising, and real estate portfolio growth. His leadership emphasized not just expansion, but creating a customer experience that was both aspirational and deeply personal.

Previously, Jason held senior leadership roles with James Perse and rag & bone, two of the most respected names in luxury apparel. As Vice President of Brand Operations at James Perse, he directed global operations across retail, wholesale, e-commerce, and hospitality channels, and successfully launched the brand's flagship furniture concept store in Los Angeles. At rag & bone, he led Global Direct-to-Consumer Operations and Loss Prevention, where he implemented omni-channel strategies that connected physical and digital retail experiences, developed operational playbooks for global consistency, and helped achieve some of the strongest inventory accuracy and shrink reduction results in the industry.

Earlier in his career, Jason held key operations roles at Tory Burch, Joe Fresh, and Club Monaco, where he managed large-scale store openings, developed leadership training programs, and streamlined operational frameworks across North America and Europe. His early experience building retail infrastructure from the ground up honed the skills that now define his leadership: a focus on people, process, and performance.

At Embarc, Jason brings this deep expertise in scaling and refining premium retail environments to the regulated cannabis industry. He is passionate about applying lessons learned from decades in traditional retail to streamline the cannabis customer experience—ensuring that Embarc stores operate with the same precision, service standards, and brand integrity expected of any leading retail organization.

Jason's leadership has been instrumental in strengthening Embarc's statewide operations, integrating data-driven management systems, and enhancing store performance while maintaining a steadfast commitment to compliance and community engagement. His experience building global retail brands and his ability to translate that success into California's cannabis market make him an invaluable member of Embarc's team.

Alyson MacMullan – President of Inventory Management

Alyson is a senior retail and cannabis executive with more than 25 years of experience leading merchandising, planning, and commercial strategy for multi-store retail organizations. As President of Product at Embarc, she is accountable for product strategy and merchandising with a focus on driving inventory productivity, margin performance, and sustainable growth across the portfolio.

In her role, Alyson leads forecasting, inventory, pricing, buying, promotions, and vendor economics, bringing analytical rigor to every layer of Embarc's retail business. She leads the buildout and scaling of a rigorous merchandise planning function, owning product assortment, pricing, and vendor strategy to improve inventory productivity, margin, and sell-through across all stores. Alyson works cross-functionally with the marketing, finance, and retail operations teams to drive demand, optimize inventory deployment, and deliver profitable growth, ensuring that every decision, from assortment architecture to promotional cadence, is grounded in clear commercial logic and aligned with broader strategic goals. Her approach turns detailed product and sales data into clear commercial direction, using modeling, Key Performance Indicator (KPI) frameworks, and performance diagnostics to identify the levers that materially shift margin, cash flow, and productivity.

Before joining Embarc, Alyson founded, built, and led Higher Growth Advisors, a cannabis-focused consulting firm, for more than a decade. Through Higher Growth, she advised cannabis investors and

multi-store operators navigating growth, transition, and financial pressure, leading retail performance stabilization and commercial planning engagements that restored predictability across sales, inventory, margin, and cash flow. Her work enabled leadership teams to move from reactive decision-making to disciplined execution. Across engagements, she reduced aged inventory to below 15% of total inventory and expanded gross margin by more than 200 basis points, while partnering directly with owners, executive teams, and boards on annual plans, rolling forecasts, and performance reviews. Many of these engagements supported acquisitions and turnarounds, including pre- and post-acquisition analysis, integration planning, and performance resets for underperforming dispensaries.

Earlier in her career, Alyson built a deep foundation in large-scale retail merchandising at some of the country's most respected organizations. As Merchandise Planning Manager – Direct at Nordstrom, she designed cross-channel financial plans, presented strategic direction to leadership, and optimized performance across merchandise classifications to drive profitable sales and maximize return on inventory investment. As Senior Merchandise Planning Manager for White House | Black Market at Chico's FAS, she executed top-down and bottom-up merchandise financial plans across 13 departments, pioneered a monthly buy process bridging direct-to-consumer and frontline store teams, and developed an Open-To-Buy tool for the online channel that integrated traffic, conversion, and average order value metrics. Earlier still, Alyson built her analytical and financial foundation at Target and in investment banking at Piper Jaffray—experience that continues to shape how she evaluates inventory risk, capital deployment, and performance tradeoffs today.

Her ability to translate complex retail data into clear commercial direction, combined with a decade of exclusive cannabis experience and a career built at brands like Target, Nordstrom, and Chico's, makes her a foundational leader as Embarc brings

its model to new communities. A graduate of the University of Denver, where she earned her BSBA in Finance and Marketing magna cum laude, Alyson pairs analytical rigor with a conviction that disciplined retail systems create the conditions for lasting community impact.

Kevin Schmidt – Head of Regulatory Affairs

Kevin Schmidt is a fourth-generation public servant with the institutional knowledge necessary to navigate California's complex political and regulatory landscape. Beginning his public service career with the California Senate Majority Leader, Kevin worked on a broad array of topics including agriculture, water, and energy. Kevin then served for five years as Policy Director for then-Lieutenant Governor Gavin Newsom, focusing on energy, natural resources, economic development, higher education, and other policy issues. Kevin represented Lt. Governor Newsom on the California Coastal Commission, the California State Lands Commission, and the Ocean Protection Council, and in those positions was responsible for decision-making on important statewide policies and multibillion-dollar State Budgets. During his time with the Lt. Governor, Kevin spearheaded the Blue Ribbon Commission on Cannabis and served as a senior advisor to the Proposition 64 campaign. Kevin has since become a founding partner of Axiom Advisors, the leading cannabis compliance, regulatory and political consulting firm in California. In this capacity, Kevin has developed deep relationships both within the cannabis industry and within California government which are critical to his role as Head of Regulatory Affairs for Embarc.

Manisha Marquez – Director of Human Resources

Manisha brings more than fifteen years of diverse human resources experience, including nearly eight years in human resources within California's legal cannabis industry.

She served as the Director of Human Resources at Avitek Recruit for over two years, where she

collaborated with senior leadership to develop and implement staffing, recruiting, and retention strategies. Manisha was responsible for overseeing a wide range of HR functions, including compensation, benefits, performance management, and compliance with federal and state regulations. Prior to Avitek, she held multiple roles at HCRC Inc Skilled Nursing, including Business Office Director (HR) and Human Resources Administrative Assistant. In these positions, she managed HR operations, provided guidance to management on policy development, and ensured legal compliance. Throughout her career, she has demonstrated exceptional skills in human resources management, organizational strategy, and employee relations, making her a valuable asset.

Manisha also has nearly eight years of experience in the cannabis industry, having served as the Director of Human Resources at vertically integrated cannabis operator Perfect Union, and now, as Director of Human Resources at Embarc. While at Perfect Union, Manisha oversaw HR operations across California, New Mexico, and Rhode Island, managing a union workforce of over 350 employees. Manisha led various initiatives, including the development and implementation of competitive compensation, benefits, performance appraisal systems, and employee incentive programs. She also played a crucial role in negotiating Collective Bargaining Agreements and fostering strong partnerships with UFCW locals. Manisha was instrumental in implementing the WURK (cannabis payroll provider, dispensary workforce management, and cannabis compliance) human resources information system (HRIS) across all entities, including retail, grow, and distribution divisions. Under her leadership, the organization saw improvements in talent management, organizational effectiveness, employee benefits, and HR compliance. Her skills in talent management, succession planning, HRIS database management, cannabis, and training and development make her a valuable expert in the rapidly expanding cannabis industry – and are particularly valuable as she oversees these functions within Embarc.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this proposal. We are enthused at the prospect of operating a local cannabis business that will serve as a true partner to the Sutter Creek community.

Embarc was founded by Lauren Carpenter and Dustin Moore, a wife and husband team with a passion for cannabis and a commitment to community-driven operations. Our team brings diverse backgrounds and professional experiences to this endeavor, but we are united by a shared belief in the importance of cannabis businesses that integrate into and ultimately benefit the community.

We like to think of ourselves as the Goldilocks of cannabis companies – big enough to have trusted, tested systems, but small enough that when you pick up the phone and call us, it's one of the founders who answers the phone. As such, Embarc is deliberate in its growth, focusing not on expansion into each California community but rather on integration into communities who will appreciate and ultimately share those same values.

The beating heart of Embarc's business model are our Community Advisory Boards, which give diverse local stakeholders a seat at the table in ensuring our business integrates thoughtfully into the community they call home. It is these folks who hold use accountable to our commitments, and it is these committed local residents – not our leadership team – who identify priority local causes and allocate our Community Investment Funds accordingly. Through this partnership, our local community benefits commitment remains truly local.

In a nascent and rapidly shifting industry, integrity matters. We are very proud to be an operator who says what we mean and mean what we say. This track record of integrity is evident in our existing operations, which include **17 legally permitted cannabis retail storefronts in communities across California**, as well as several additional stores currently in development. In many ways, we are more

than just proven cannabis operators; we are trusted partners in the communities we call home.

Ultimately, if selected to operate locally, Embarc will bring to Sutter Creek the same commitment to compliance, customers, and the community that are hallmarks of our business model and evident in existing operations. Cornerstones of this proposal, and of our commitment more broadly, include:

- **UNPARALLELED CANNABIS & TRADITIONAL BUSINESS EXPERIENCE:** Embarc's team brings over three centuries of combined business experience in cannabis, retail, supply chain, and other highly regulated industries – all of which informs and enhances our operations.
- **SOUND FINANCIAL PRINCIPLES:** Embarc is well capitalized, operates with sound financial principles, and has a realistic plan to scale. Our growth to date has been thoughtful and deliberate to ensure we remain responsive to the communities we serve.
- **COMPLIANCE TEAM LED BY THOSE WHO ARCHITECTED CALIFORNIA'S LEGAL CANNABIS INDUSTRY:** Embarc has significant expertise navigating the complex legal and regulatory framework for cannabis as our team members effectively wrote and implemented legalization. Embarc shaped and continues to refine the cannabis regulatory landscape in California, a competitive advantage in a frequently changing field.
- **BEST-IN-CLASS EMPLOYER WITH A TRACK RECORD OF EMPOWERING EMPLOYEES:** Embarc has a proven commitment to its employees with industry-leading wages and benefits, meaningful education and training, and career advancement opportunities for its workforce. We are one of only a handful of cannabis operators who have Collective Bargaining Agreements with the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW) across our operations – ensuring our employees are represented

fairly, transparently, and in the spirit of collaboration. This is particularly important in a nascent industry that lacks uniform standards, training and education.

- **SAFETY AND SECURITY PLANS DEVELOPED BY LEADING EXPERTS IN PROTECTING PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY:** Embarc's Safety and Security Plans are developed by subject matter experts and tested through existing operations to ensure robust safety measures are at the forefront of operations. These plans rely heavily on technology to reduce human error, increase human safety, and contribute to public safety beyond the four walls of the dispensary.
- **A PROVEN BENEFIT TO NEIGHBORHOODS:** Embarc's comprehensive Good Neighbor Policy has been proven through existing operations to proactively address community questions and concerns, and our store teams are trained to be both proactive and responsive to the communities we serve. While legal cannabis retail may be new to many communities, we bring a track record of existing operations that have demonstrated a true benefit to our neighbors, from increased lighting and beautification to heightened security infrastructure and responsiveness.
- **PHILANTHROPIC ETHOS WITH A TRACK RECORD OF COMMUNITY BETTERMENT:** Embarc has developed meaningful partnerships with communities and has built engagement into our business model in significant ways. This results in tangible economic benefits for the City, its residents, and local nonprofit partners. The depth and breadth of our local Community Advisory Board will be a testament to this proactive approach and is bolstered by our commitment to this community's public health and safety as detailed throughout this proposal.
- **OPERATIONAL LEADERS WITH SIGNIFICANT LEGAL CANNABIS RETAIL EXPERIENCE:**

Embarc is committed to bringing best-in-class practices and the experience of a team that has operated legal cannabis dispensaries since legalization. We have a proven track record of delivering on promises to residents, officials, community leaders, neighbors, patients, and customers. Ultimately, this is how cannabis retail can and should operate in Sutter Creek and beyond.

Ultimately, Embarc seeks to redefine the relationship between cannabis and the community by demonstrating through action that its business can seamlessly integrate into, and benefit, Sutter Creek. Embarc achieves this goal elsewhere in various ways, including through the creation of a Community Advisory board comprised of longtime local residents and community leaders, a proven commitment to community engagement, a tangible benefits plan developed in coordination with members of the community, and through our fundamentally different approach to consumers.

Embarc provides safe and reliable access to medical and adult use cannabis through a warm and inviting retail expression and highly trained, professional staff. Our plans are designed to comply with Sutter Creek Municipal Code, all applicable rules and regulations, and all State laws. It is a realistic model of operations developed through a collaborative process that leverages the expertise of our seasoned team, existing cannabis retail operations, and best practices from the cannabis industry and beyond.

Our team brings extensive experience managing operational and regulatory compliance plans in the cannabis industry and over three centuries of combined expertise in operations, finance, retail, supply chain, and management across cannabis and traditional industries, coupled with experience operating dispensaries since day one post-legalization. The depth and breadth of this experience uniquely equip our team to execute our plan and begin safely serving patients and customers

efficiently and with more community sensitivity than other operators.

We will operate a world-class dispensary with core values rooted in our deep respect for and understanding of this community, including a focus on health, wellness, and community education.

Mission Statement

Embarc redefines the relationship between consumers and cannabis, focusing on health, relaxation, recreation, wellness, and approachability rather than just the traditional emphasis on “getting high.” We believe a cannabis company can do well while doing good, integrating into, and enhancing the local community while operating with integrity and transparency.

We effectuate this mission through three key values that serve as the basis for everything we undertake as a company:

ENRICH RATHER THAN ALTER: Whether a medical or adult use consumer, all cannabis is about wellness and is just one component of an individual’s health and wellbeing journey. Whether using cannabis for a specific ailment, general aches and pains, anxiety, or sleeplessness, at its root, cannabis use is about enriching one’s life.

We believe in embracing that core truth through a focus on cannabis as a way of integrating into one’s existing lifestyle rather than altering it. We will offer a highly curated selection of consciously crafted cannabis products, ensuring the use of cannabis achieves our goal of enrichment of the self, one’s lifestyle, and the broader community.

COMMUNITY FIRST: While cannabis has existed in communities for decades, legal, regulated cannabis is still an emerging market. Communities are grappling with how to best integrate commercial cannabis activities into neighborhoods, balancing the economic opportunity of this industry with a desire to protect public health and safety.

Embarc understands that operating such a business is a privilege and not a right and that a successful business model is predicated on the ability to consistently engage the community to ensure communication, transparency, integrity, and collaboration.

By putting the community first, Embarc ensures a positive relationship with government, community leaders, and the neighborhood, ultimately allowing us to give back to the community in meaningful ways.

EXPERIENCE MATTERS: Experience and best practices matter. Embarc has unparalleled experience operating compliant retail dispensaries and brings centuries of combined business and public health and safety experience, representing the vision and operational track record of executive-level leadership in cannabis, retail, supply chain, and other highly regulated industries. This expertise is integral to the development and execution of a cannabis dispensary that communities can be proud to host.

APPLICATION CONTENT

Below is a summary of various key components included this application.

QUALIFICATIONS OF OWNERS

This section highlights the ownership team’s experience in operating licensed retail cannabis businesses and their overall knowledge of the cannabis industry. It outlines how industry best practices and regulatory requirements have been successfully implemented in prior operations, as well as the ownership team’s involvement in day-to-day management and oversight of the proposed storefront.

BUSINESS PLAN

The Business Plan provides a comprehensive overview of financial planning, operational strategy, and regulatory compliance for the proposed retail cannabis storefront. This includes detailed

budgeting and a projected timeline for construction, improvements, and commencement of operations.

Daily operations are outlined in alignment with industry best practices, including customer check-in procedures, delivery protocols, point-of-sale systems, and integration with the State's track-and-trace system. The plan also details inventory tracking and diversion prevention measures, compliance with local and state regulations, among other key considerations.

LABOR & EMPLOYMENT PLAN

The Labor and Employment Plan outlines our approach to workforce development and employee support. This includes recognition of collective bargaining rights, projected staffing levels at opening and full capacity, and clearly defined employee roles and responsibilities. The plan also details employee benefits, including healthcare, leave policies, and other support programs.

SECURITY PLAN

The Security Plan details measures in place to ensure the safety of individuals, property, and inventory at the retail cannabis storefront. Operational security protocols address access control, visitor management, inventory control, and employee procedures. The plan also includes detailed cash handling processes, perimeter security measures, lighting design, and on-site security personnel coverage.

NEIGHBORHOOD COMPATIBILITY PLAN

The Neighborhood Compatibility Plan outlines proactive measures to ensure the retail cannabis storefront operates in a manner that is respectful of and compatible with the surrounding community. This includes strategies to mitigate potential impacts related to noise, lighting, odor, traffic, and loitering, as well as clear protocols for responding to community concerns. The plan also incorporates youth prevention measures and an Odor Mitigation Plan, which outlines systems to prevent detectable odors outside the premises.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS PLAN

The Community Benefits Plan outlines our commitment to supporting the local community through financial contributions, active participation in community-based initiatives, and dedication to protecting youth through an accredited youth drug prevention and education program. This includes support for nonprofit and civic organizations, as well as employee volunteerism and cross-promotion of local businesses.

LOCATION PLAN

The Location Plan provides an overview of the proposed site and planned improvements. This includes the site address, current use, surrounding businesses, and photographic documentation.