

NordSpace Opens Ottawa Office with Former Transport Canada Executive & Commercial Space Launch Lead as Vice President

New office in the nation's capital advances NordSpace's push to secure sovereign orbital launch with architect of Canada's commercial space launch framework

OTTAWA, ONTARIO, CANADA, July 2, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [NordSpace Corp.](#), Canada's only

“

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*Elsa Henchiri – Vice President,
Policy and Government
Relations*

vertically integrated space missions company, announced today the opening of its new Ottawa office in the nation's capital. The office opens on Canada Day, and represents the company's fourth national location, alongside Rocket Factory 1 (RF-1) in Markham, Ontario, Area 66 in Eastern Ontario, and the Atlantic Spaceport Complex (ASX) in St. Lawrence, Newfoundland and Labrador. The Ottawa office will be led by Elsa Henchiri, one of Canada's most experienced aviation and space policy leaders, joining NordSpace as Vice President, Policy and Government Relations to advance the policy, regulatory, and business development work required to bring sovereign Canadian orbital launch capability online by 2028.

Elsa joins NordSpace after 25 years of federal service across aviation and space policy, primarily at Transport Canada. She led the development of Canada's commercial space launch safety and security program from inception, including the regulatory framework underpinning the Canadian Space Launch Act. She is one of a very small number of Canadians who has directly authored the rules that will govern this country's first commercial orbital launches, and she joins NordSpace as those rules move from paper into practice. Her previous roles include Director of Safety Policy and Intelligence at Transport Canada, Head of Aviation Security Risk at Transport Canada, Chief of Civil Aviation Safety Policy at Transport Canada, and senior analyst positions at the Department of National Defence. Across every one of those postings she has worked at the intersection of regulation, operations, national security, and industrial capability, and has done so within the specific policy ecosystem in which NordSpace now operates.

"I helped write the regulatory framework for this industry. Now I want to help build it. Sovereign

launch capability is critical for Canada, and NordSpace is making that possible," said Elsa Henchiri, Vice President, Policy and Government Relations at NordSpace.

As Vice President, Policy and Government Relations, Elsa will lead the company's strategic engagements across the full slate of federal and provincial files that touch a Canadian launch and space missions company. This includes the Canadian Space Launch Act and its implementing regulations, NATO STARLIFT, the Defence Industrial Strategy released in February 2026, the Remote Sensing Space Systems Act (RSSSA), the BOREALIS program, spectrum coordination and licensing with Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED), airspace and range management coordinated with NAV Canada and Transport Canada, and the growing set of federal launch, satellite, and lunar opportunities administered by the Canadian Space Agency (CSA) and the Department of National Defence (DND). Elsa's mandate is to help NordSpace accelerate its launch licensing and public safety approvals with Transport Canada, expand the company's engagement across DND and CSA programs spanning launch, satellites, and lunar exploration, and grow NordSpace's federal footprint as the company establishes itself as Canada's newest space prime.



Elsa Henchiri, NordSpace's Vice President of Policy and Government Relations and Former Transport Canada Executive

NordSpace's engagement with the Government of Canada to date has been productive and constructive across every federal department relevant to its mission, including DND, Transport Canada, the Canadian Space Agency, Global Affairs Canada (GAC), the National Research Council (NRC), ISED, and NAV Canada, alongside the provincial governments of Ontario and Newfoundland and Labrador. These relationships have already yielded landmark outcomes for the company. The Ottawa office formalizes that engagement in the city where the majority of decisions relevant to space launch are made, and where the next generation of NordSpace's federal work will be shaped.

"Getting sovereign launch right for Canada requires vertical integration at every level, not just in the rockets we build but in the policy, regulatory, and stakeholder work that surrounds them. Front-loading these matters is vital, because a rocket that is ready for the launch pad but unable to fly is not a launch capability. Orbital space launch is completely new for Canada, and to succeed the government side of the equation has to move in step with the industrial side. That requires the people writing the rules to be talking to the people actually building the vehicles.

Elsa brings both sides of that equation to NordSpace in a capacity no other launch operation in Canada does or has. Making Canadian rockets and spaceports a reality by 2028 will take a full court press across every level of government, and we are optimistic. This is the moment to invest in the people who can carry that work, and we could not be more pleased that Elsa has chosen to build the next chapter of this industry alongside us," said Rahul Goel, CEO and Founder of NordSpace.

The Ottawa office is complementary to the company's ongoing scale-up at its other sites. Rocket Factory 1 in Markham serves as the company's headquarters and 60,000 sqft advanced manufacturing campus, producing the light-lift Tundra and medium-lift Tundra+ orbital launch vehicles, the patent-pending Hadfield-150 engine line, and space systems satellite and robotics products. Area 66 in Eastern Ontario is the company's 50-acre propulsion test range, home to the Darkhorse engine test cell, with the Blackhawk test cell scheduled to reach operational readiness later this summer in preparation for the largest rocket engine test in Canadian history. The Atlantic Spaceport Complex (ASX) in Newfoundland and Labrador is NordSpace's commercial spaceport and the most capable launch site in Canada in terms of inclination range, safety distances, scalability to medium and heavy-lift vehicles, and supported launch cadence, with construction across SLC-01 and SLC-02 continuing through the summer.

NordSpace's upcoming suborbital launches of its Taiga pathfinder rocket from ASX will serve as a critical operational test bed on both sides of the equation the company is now building for. On the technical side, Taiga will retire risk on flight technologies critical to the orbital-class Tundra vehicle, including propulsion, avionics, guidance, and recovery systems. On the regulatory side, Taiga will provide the first real-world exercise of Canada's Commercial Space Launch licensing regime, range and airspace management procedures, day-of-launch coordination between operator and regulator, and public safety frameworks. Each Taiga launch is designed to build institutional muscle memory across NordSpace and its federal counterparts ahead of Canada's first sovereign orbital launches. The Ottawa office and Elsa's leadership will directly support that work.

The Ottawa office's initial focus is government relations, policy advocacy, regulatory advisory, and business development. Over time, the office is planned to expand into specific research and development operations unique to the Ottawa-Montreal corridor and to access the substantial aerospace, defence, and mission-critical software talent pool available in the region. The Ottawa office also strengthens NordSpace's ability to support the dual-use defence and commercial priorities at the centre of its mission, including responsive launch for DND under the IDEaS Launch the North program, NATO STARLIFT, NORAD modernization, Arctic surveillance, wildfire detection, secure connectivity, and Earth observation, as well as commercial customers requiring sovereign, ITAR-free launch services from Canadian soil.

For more information or to explore partnership opportunities, visit www.nordspace.com or contact contact@nordspace.com.

About NordSpace

NordSpace Corp., established in 2022, is a fully Canadian-owned aerospace and defence company developing vertically integrated solutions across responsive orbital launch vehicles, spaceports, turnkey satellites, and mission-critical software systems. Its hardware is designed, built, and flown in Canada, with the mission of advancing life on Earth through space and delivering innovation, jobs, national security, and sovereignty.

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