



The 215 Centre for Social Innovation

Bringing Social Innovators Together

The mission of the 215 Centre for Social Innovation is to catalyze, inform, and support innovative initiatives that advance the social, environmental and economic well-being of Canadians.

The 215 Centre for Social Innovation will:

1. **Offer co-located office space** to organizations with a commitment to social innovation in a beautifully restored heritage building in downtown Toronto. Building on Margie Zeidler's success with 401 Richmond, the 215 will be home to a diverse mix of creative organizations. It will provide amenities such as technology, boardrooms and a kitchen, allowing tenants to reduce their overhead costs while accessing a greater range of services and a network of other social innovators.
2. **Host educational events**, workshops and seminars that support innovative thinking, capacity-building and networking within the greater non-profit and mission-driven business sector. The 215 will be partnering with a range of existing event series and will be working with experts to develop and offer an extended range of educational opportunities to meet the sector's needs.
3. **Present programming** to raise the profile and accessibility of socially innovative practices within Canada. Projects might include highlighting case studies that demonstrate social innovation, building a network of experts and practitioners, and incubating innovative projects.
4. **Develop a Centre for Social Innovation Advisory Council** that will meet regularly to provide advice, guidance and connections to the 215 tenants and the community at large.

These initiatives will be developed over time. The primary focus in 2004 will be on the implementation of the co-location initiative and coordination of shared amenities.

Services to Tenants

Tenants of the 215 Centre for Social Innovation will be organizations that are innovative in their work in the social economy, have experience collaborating with other groups, and are committed to building better communities. The 215 seeks groups that support capacity building and innovation within the social, environmental and cultural sectors. This includes non-profits, for-profits, networks, and bridging organizations.

Tenants will be able to move into the 215 between June and August 2004. The units can accommodate between one and five people.

About the Robertson Building

Located at 215 Spadina Avenue, between Dundas and Queen, the Robertson Building features 15 ft ceilings, large windows and beautiful wooden pillars throughout. In a similar style to the 401 Richmond building, it promises to be a creative and inspired space. The main entrance's 'living wall' is the first of many unique elements. The Robertson Building is home to tenants such as Cuppa Coffee Animation, Oxfam and the Theatre Alliance.

Space

The 215 will occupy 6,000 sq ft on the first floor of the Robertson Building and will be wheelchair accessible. The basic offering is an enclosed office (or two) with a window, glass walls and a door. Each office can comfortably accommodate 2-3 people. Offices will include 'overflow' space for use by additional staff or visitors when needed.

Reception

A reception desk will be available with the receptionist to be hired by the tenants at separate cost. In its implementation phase, the 215 will have a coordinator to provide some tenant services.

The 215 Centre for Social Innovation is designed to reduce overall administration and overhead costs by sharing space with like-minded social innovators. The 215 will also help foster collaborations, build capacity in the target sectors, and raise the profile of social innovation in Canada.

For more information, please contact:

Tonya Surman @ tonya@commonsgroup.com, 416-760-2887 ext.222
Annie Hillis @ annie@istar.ca, 416-258-0084.

Board Room

A large boardroom will be available to tenants. In order to accommodate a wide range of events, the 215's boardroom will transform into theatre style seating for as many as 100 people. The space will also be able to transform into four large, separate meeting rooms.

Kitchen

The 215 will feature a modest kitchen that can support both the tenants as well as the various events that will occur within the space. A lounge area is also planned to enable tenants and visitors to meet in less formal surroundings.

Shared Amenities

The founding tenants will have an opportunity to decide if there is an interest in sharing additional costs such as photocopiers, fax machines, Internet access, printers, telephone services, etc. All of these could be shared among some or all of the tenants. These would represent additional costs. Tenants might also be able to pool existing machines and leases for greater cost reduction.

Tenant Composition

The 215 will be a shared space facility for socially innovative, mission-driven, not-for-profit and for-profit organizations. Criteria for selecting the right tenant mix is informed by needs assessments of target sectors, recent research into shared space facilities, and the experience of the 215 Working Board, which includes the experience of the 401 Richmond building.

In its current design, the 215 features 14 enclosed office units, limiting both the number of organizations that can be accommodated and the size of those organizations. The following general criteria will be considered in the selection of tenants:

The organization serves the social, environmental or cultural sectors. The 215 is seeking a combination of tenants with a social mission where there may be opportunities for collaboration and innovation. We are particularly interested in those organizations that bridge organizations and sectors.

The organization demonstrates a strong commitment to social innovation. Social innovation is a broad concept with many different interpretations. For the 215, social innovation is understood as the application of creativity, entrepreneurship and collaboration to developing and implementing initiatives to advance the social, environmental and economic well-being of Canadians.

The organization has a track record of operation and is financially sustainable. In order to ensure the sustainability of the 215, organizations with a demonstrable record of service to their sector, progress in their mission, and a sustainable financial position will be prioritized for tenancy. To a lesser degree, there will also be room for emergent organizations. The merits of an anchor will also be considered.

The organization fits the capacity and design of the Centre. The 215 will be a shared space facility with limits on both the number of tenants and the number of staff per tenant. Under the current design, the maximum number of workspaces for any single organization is 8. More typically, an organization would have space needs for between 1 and 5 people.

Tenant Selection Process

The 215 will be ready for occupancy in June 2004. Organizations interested in tenancy should contact the organizers and complete a 'tenant survey.' Community information sessions will be conducted in February and March. Tenant selection will occur between March and April. The 215 Working Board will make recommendations for tenant selection; all final decisions will rest with the landlord.

Please feel free to forward information to potential tenants.

Governance Model

The governance structure for the 215 Centre for Social Innovation is currently being developed. While certain details remain to be resolved, here are the guiding principles.

1. The 215 Centre for Social Innovation will be registered as a non-profit organization and will hold the primary lease on the space. Its mandate will be to support the collaboration of the tenants in the co-located space and to facilitate the programming at the centre. It will pursue various partnership and funding opportunities in order to accomplish this mission.
2. Tenant leases will be for a one-year renewable term. There will be a standard agreement that all tenants agree to share the space and adhere to the agreed upon contract.
3. Staff will be hired within the non-profit to coordinate the space, manage the events, develop and deliver the programming and pursue the development of the Social Innovation Advisory Council.
4. The 215 Centre for Social Innovation will have both a board of directors (which will include at least the landlord and tenant representative of the space) and an advisory committee of experts to provide guidance and mentoring opportunities.
5. On-going management of the space will be the responsibility of the 215 Centre for Social Innovation staff and board of directors. They will ensure the long-term success of this project.
6. A tenant committee will be formed to ensure the smooth day-to-day operation of the space and to determine shared use policies. The committee will also play a role in developing further initiatives for the 215 such as programming and community outreach.

We are exploring various incorporation options and will finalize these arrangements by April 2004.

Who is behind the 215 Centre for Social Innovation?

Much work has been done in Toronto and elsewhere on the merits of shared space facilities and the needs of social innovators. In recent months, consensus has emerged among many interested parties that the time was right for a scaled pilot project. The 215 Working Board is: Margie Zeidler, owner of 401 Richmond, Tonya Surman of the Commons Group, Patrick Tobin of the Department of Canadian Heritage, and Eric Meerkamper of D-Code.

Margie Zeidler is the owner of **401 Richmond** – a building that showcases the coming together of community, culture and creativity in a co-located space. The owner of the Robertson Building at 215 Spadina, Margie is taking a lead role in the development of the 215 Centre for Social Innovation.

Tonya Surman is a senior collaboration consultant with the **Commons Group**. Tonya turns collaboration and partnership visions into reality with projects such as the Canadian Partnership for Children's Health and Environment, www.rabble.ca, and 'The Garden' Cooperative Day Care. Tonya is playing a lead role in the development of the 215.

Patrick Tobin manages the Planning, Policy and Priorities Unit for the Ontario Region of **the Department of Canadian Heritage**, where he has directed public policy research into shared space facilities in the cultural and social services sectors.

Eric Meerkamper is a Partner at **D-Code**, creator of the "Social Innovators Summit" which brings together people who are developing innovative solutions to social and environmental challenges. D-Code has also authored the Social Innovation Centre report, which explores models for how to bring the concept of co-location to life in Toronto.

What we need to make this happen...

Organizational co-location will ensure the sustainability of the shared space facility at the 215 but we will need additional support to bring the full vision of the 215 Centre for Social Innovation to life. To this end, we are seeking funding, sponsorships and in kind contributions such as those outlined in the following list:

- Lease hold improvements and build-out of the space
- Sponsorship of the 'common' areas of the 215 in order to reduce the rent
- Salary for a coordinator to manage the space and develop the events program
- Office equipment and computer for coordinator
- Rent subsidy for low income tenants
- Bringing events series to our space
- Paying for the development of the 215 Centre for Social Innovation Advisory Council
- Sponsorship of the board room, kitchen and reception areas (furniture and technology)
- Providing in kind services/donations such as board room furniture, A/V equipment and IT support.
- Seconding a staff person to the Centre

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