

Pillar Nonprofit Network – Public Participation Meeting

January 22, 15

David Billson, Board Chair

Slide 1:

Dear mayor, city councillors, city staff and members of the public in the gallery, it is my pleasure to be here today to present to you today. I am presenting in my capacity as Board Chair of Pillar, but I am making a request on behalf of our community.

I am here to speak on behalf of our partners, our future tenants and the 50+ members of our community that took the time to write their support for this project.

It is an important distinction as we are not requesting funding for Pillar, but for the community project that Pillar has undertaken as the backbone organization in a true community collaboration. When I say things like “our mission, our vision” a little later on, I am not referring to Pillar’s view exclusively, but to the views of the community collaborative.

We understand and support the city’s objectives to tie any new strategic funding priorities to their 4 year plan. As such, we have modified our original funding request and deferred our operating funding request until you have completed this process.

We have left our one time capital request for an investment of \$339,000 - mostly for accessibility upgrades to the building. As we are making decisions in the next few months about the actions taken on the building, we unfortunately can not defer this request until the next budget year.

If you’re sitting there thinking “But wait! I want to invest more money into this initiative!” don’t worry, we will return in the 2016 budget process as we believe this shared space aligns perfectly with the strategic priority areas the city has already identified.

Slide 2:

Our mission for the shared space: : To Spark Social Innovation and Change

Our bold Vision: The Social Innovation Shared Space will create a place for co-working, nurturing new ideas and fostering social innovation and positive community change. This is about job creation, economic growth, downtown revitalization and social impact.

Slide 3:

This will all happen in our new home at 201 King Street, The Garvey Building. We currently own this building with Goodlife as our only tenant until our shared space opens in April 2016.

Once renovations are done and our business model is up and running we will have 300 new clients of the shared space. What does this mean for London? It means that we will have 300 of the most passionate, engaged and intelligent change agents in our city in one place - we put them together, remove the barriers, shake it up and watch the magic happen.

Slide 4:

While the building provides the structure, it's the people that provide that magic. Hosted within the building we will have the new London Life Solutions lab - a place for workshop, events and activities where community change-makers from all sectors can develop more powerful ways of collaborating to advance transformational change.

I hear you thinking - "Ideas are great, but they don't always result in action" - and we could not agree more!

Slide 5:

Within the building we will also have the social enterprise lab that supports both for-profit social purpose businesses and non-profit enterprises so that those ideas can be incubated and spun out into our community. Services will include the infrastructure benefits of shared space, coaching and connections to resources in our community.

"That's all fine and good, but new organizations need capital" you think again - and again, we couldn't agree more.

Slide 6:

Enter VERGE - a community capital collective housed within the Social Finance Lab that will help social enterprise grow and flourish in our community.

Pillar is a co-founder of VERGE, which connects local caring investors with enterprises that have a social or environmental mission at their core.

Slide 7:

To date we have raised 1.5M in donations and grants. \$1M has been raised from outside of the city and represent new dollars flowing into the community. We have raised funds from federal and provincial governments, the philanthropic sector with Ursuline Sisters, and our regional corporations with London Life and McCormick.

One of the reasons that the Pillar board agreed to be the backbone for the project is our track record of finding and leveraging dollars that are available to benefit our community. Having an investment from the City of London will help us leverage other opportunities and this is a local project and should have local municipal investment.

Slide 8:

Our building is secured with a first mortgage from Libro and three social investment loans from CAIC, Sisters of St. Joseph and Chris & Lina Bowden

Slide 9:

We are raising a further 1.5M for renovations to the building, of which the \$339,000 ask for investment from the City is \$289,000 to help cover the accessibility costs for the renovation and \$50,000 towards one time start up costs such as permits and fees.

We believe that in order to have a space that is able to be transformational to our community we need it to be vibrant, inclusive and diverse. To this end, we are planning renovations to ensure that as much of the environment as possible is barrier free and open to individuals of all abilities.

After the city funding is approved, we have an additional 1.1M in fundraising to do before our space opens; having the city involved will assist us in leveraging all the existing investments to further raise capital.

Slide 10:

We have deliberately used the word investment; we are asking the city to invest in a project that we believe will have a positive long term economic benefit to our city.

We believe this initiative is on point for the city's 4 strategic priorities. We believe that by having the combination of shared infrastructure, community and financial support we will create 50 new social purpose businesses and social enterprises, creating 50-100 new social purpose jobs.

Slide 11:

As I said earlier, I am here representing a larger community initiative. We have over 30 organizations and entrepreneurs who have signed an intent to lease private offices, individual or clusters of flex desks. These groups will be able to cut costs and enhance operational efficiencies by leveraging shared community assets within the building.

Slide 12:

And within your package you have testimonials and support endorsed for over 50 individuals expressing support for this initiative.

I am pleased to introduce Marlene Janzen Le Ber of the Centre for Research on Health Equity & Social Inclusion to speak as a confirmed tenant on the value of the Social Innovation Shared Space.

Slide 13 (if time):

In closing, I would ask our regional government to join with the community foundations, non-profit organizations, philanthropic community, business community, federal and provincial governments in helping us assure the space is an inclusive, vibrant, diverse and purposeful agent for change in our community. Thank you.

Marlene Janzen Le Ber, Professor Brescia College, Centre for Research for Health Equity and Social Inclusion

Shared concerns among London community leaders and London researchers about our intractable community issues of health equity and social inclusion has led to the development of a new proposed Centre for Research on Health Equity and Social Inclusion.

Community agencies that want good evidence upon which to base their programs and services and researchers who want their research to be relevant to practice goes a long way to bridging the gap between practice and research.

The Social Innovation Shared Space offers an ideal platform to build this community-university collaboration, and is the reason that we have identified this space as the location for our new proposed Centre for Research on Health Equity and Social Inclusion.