

## **Proposal #2 in the Asylum management's devious plans to Increase Revenue while Generally Making Stuff Better\*:**

**Accept an offer from our new neighbor, clean-tech business incubator [Greentown Labs](#), for a short-term (2-3 year) lease of about 9,000 square feet of space in their new building, accessible to us through the tunnel out the back of Building 8, which we would use to provide (more) immediately available studio space to the large population of people on our waiting list.**

### **Current features of this plan:**

- *Provide What?*
  - +64 new spaces, at standard rates: 28x 50 sq ft spaces, 28x 100 sq ft spaces, and 8x 200 sq ft studios ([draft diagram & spreadsheet available for download here](#))
  - Spaces would have power, and backbone and intermittent walls, in order to keep buildout costs low and move-in rapid. Users could choose to build out additional dividers if they so chose.
  - A small social area/common workspace
- *For Whom?*
  - Some of the 110 as-yet-uncontacted people on our waiting list, while they wait to get a studio in the main buildings.
- *How would they access the space?*
  - Through our front door, all the way through Building 8. No access would be available through Greentown's space.
- *What happens at the end?*
  - At the end of two years, move out of the space in stages, allowing us to arrange for space in the main buildings for most if not all occupants when the lease expires.

### **Advantages of this plan:**

- More Revenue, less impact on you!
  - This plan would allow us to increase net revenue in the coming two years by about \$200,000, ([diagram & spreadsheet available for download here](#)) giving us the time and flexibility to explore possible new sources of contributed income and new revenue streams as alternatives to raising rates on our existing users.
- That increased revenue would be put towards some subset of the following long-term investments:
  - New tools/physical infrastructure
  - Part-time development/fundraising staff
  - Building up cash reserves for times of emergency
- Decrease the waiting time to get a space at the Asylum, increasing our successful new member recruitment (many people who have to wait 10-11 months to get space here end up finding alternatives elsewhere).
- Deepen our relationship with Greentown Labs, an organization with a closely related mission and a lot of common interests, as well as some resources that might be useful to our members, and help them succeed in their new Somerville home.

**Possible problems/risk factors of this plan:**

- Crowded Shops:
  - Would having another 70-100 individuals (assuming shared spaces) with spaces at the Asylum finally overload our shops, which already see some times of the week where it's hard to get access to the tools you need?
- Increased Risk of Theft/Accident:
  - Would a space that far away seem "unobserved", leading to increased risk of theft or unsafe activity?
- Temperature/Energy Cost Impact:
  - Having to keep the uninsulated tunnel open at all times for access might make it more difficult/more expensive to heat Building 8 in the winter and cool it in the summer.
- Cultural Saturation:
  - Will simply having that many more people in our community cross a threshold of size that would dramatically change the small-town, everybody knows your name feel of the community?
- Inappropriate pricing?
  - Is it appropriate to charge the same amount for someone who's an extra 3 minutes away from the shops and possibly has fewer walls?
- Can we fill it?
  - Given that not everyone on our waiting list actually takes a space when it's offered to them, what happens if we don't have enough people to fill the 64 spaces?
- Short-term solution to long-term problem?
  - Shouldn't we be thinking about long-term revenue generators, not short-term fixes?

**Actions we're taking to mitigate risk:**

- Crowded Shops:
  - We're proposing a revision to our membership structures (stay tuned) that would make it convenient for studio-occupying members and non-studio-occupying members alike to use the shops during low-volume times.
- Increased Risk of Theft/Accident:
  - We would set up a regular circuit of supervision that would include a walkthrough of the Greentown Labs annex. Users would be welcome to set up video surveillance in their own spaces, and with 64 occupants the space is unlikely to feel vacant or abandoned.
- Temperature/Energy Impact:
  - There are relatively inexpensive actions we can take to help mitigate this impact, including plastic curtains at each end of the tunnel.
- Cultural Saturation:
  - Whether or not this plan moves forward, we intend to organize more social events for the Artisan's Asylum community this coming year, to help people meet one another and continue to make the community feel intimate, even as it grows.

- Inappropriate Pricing:
  - We would consider dropping the price on these annex spaces, but considering that their environment will be quieter, cleaner, have natural light, and only be an extra couple of minutes' walk (less on a scooter) away, it is unclear that they're getting a noticeably worse deal.
- Can we fill it?
  - Recent statistics: out of the most recent 40 people who've been waiting 10-12 months for space, 15% have said they're no longer interested, another 20% have said they'd like to take a space 3-12 months from now, 13% have simply not responded, and 50% have taken/are claiming space. And we haven't had a single month in the past year in which we had fewer than 10 signups for our waiting list.
  - If these statistics hold firm, and we have then perhaps 55 people on our existing list that would likely take a space in the new building, and it would take at most another two months to fill the remaining spaces.
  - If we cannot fill the space with studio users, then there are plenty of other useful things we could consider putting in the open space: coworking area, phone booths, conference room, additional computer lab, fiber arts area.
- Short-term solution to long-term problem?
  - Although this revenue would only be available short-term, we would *\*only\** put it towards long-term investments (see above) that would help to increase revenue streams and maintain a higher level of financial security even after the arrangement came to an end.

**Where we are in the decision-making process:**

- Staff and Board have all agreed that this would be, from our perspective, the appropriate choice for Artisan's Asylum, but given the large-scale nature of the decision, and the recent concern over community being left out of decision-making, we are putting the proposal to a vote of the community.
- Greentown Labs would like to move quickly, but are aware that we are putting this through a community process.
- We'd like to coordinate the vote on this issue with the Board and Officer elections, running October 20th to November 3rd.

**How you can participate:**

- If you have any concerns, questions, ideas, or other feedback about this proposal that are not addressed here and that you'd like us to take into consideration before putting the proposal to a vote, please [send your input to us through this form](#).
- Express your opinion by participating in the voting process October 20th - November 3rd!

\*If you believe that this proposal fails in its stated goal to Generally Make Stuff Better, please don't hesitate to use the form linked above to let us know!  
Thanks! And stay tuned for more proposals and updates.