



# Cosmopolis Collaboratory Centre:

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## An introduction and an invitation

### Background

Cosmopolis 2045 is the name of a website under development that encapsulates the activities, social institutions and organisations of fictional community thirty years into the future. At the heart of this imagined future (circa 2045) is a very strong belief that how we communicate with one another is “fateful” (i.e., has consequences for what happens next, opens up new possibilities while simultaneously closing off other possibilities). In other words, that we “make” both the present and the future of our social worlds together, one conversation at a time. That the manner and modes in which we communicate with each other matter as much, if not more, than the content of what we happen to say.

The website is being developed as a collaborative thought-experiment about forms of social interaction and the institutions that we make together. We have a number of different sites already under development but we are now inviting further collaboration in the aptly named Cosmopolis Collaboratory Centre (CCC). Below we offer our preliminary conception of the CCC. This is a draft of the story as it will be appear on the website. We invite potential contributors to consider if they wish to be part of this centre. Various options for collaboration are possible.

### Introducing the CCC

#### How it came about

When Cosmopolis was first established as a city in 2017, the community worked together over a sustained period to develop a master plan that would create a more sustainable, net-zero energy, and thriving social learning environment.

The final master plan was based on six pillars and two, in particular, were the driving force behind the establishment of the CCC:

- **Fostering an educating community**

Early on in the formation of Cosmopolis, the idea of a community learning and acting together was central to what evolved. This experience is championed in the master plan’s emphasis on fostering a transformation in the way people learn as part of everyday life in the community. To bring this about the city government invited and encouraged innovative education developments.

### ■ Building an economy on our social capital

Recognizing that Cosmopolis was built from within a cosmopolitan communication framework that fosters and draws upon many forms of social capital, the city believes its future lies in sharing what has been learned here. As a result, the plan calls for the city to become a magnet for consultants, retreat centers, educational practices, and even the manufacturing and sale of products that enhance and facilitate the development of social capital.

As with other early initiatives, a consortium of interested community members was formed to pursue the idea of building the social and intellectual capital of Cosmopolis, while at the same time fostering a learning community. The consortium proposed the establishment of an overarching organization that would attract and nurture innovative ideas for “products” or services that encourage better communication practices. The consortium also recommended that the organization:

- should be self-supporting and not-for-profit
- be linked to the Lyceum and Book Club (one of the distinctive features of Cosmopolis community life)
- develop relationships with appropriate universities and other centers of learning and development
- contribute to the schooling and education in the community in Cosmopolis

The consortium approached the city government with their ideas and the council agreed to support the development of this organization in three ways:

- offering the organization a free lease on one of the old warehouse buildings in the brownfield area of the city—to be reviewed after 10 years.
- overseeing and covering the cost of a call of interest in establishing the organization based on the recommendations of the consortium.
- partially supporting the selected party/person for the first six months of establishment.

Following the call for interest the city government appointed a practical scholar who had previous experience in establishing a self-funding not-for-profit communication research organization. It was on the basis of her recommendation that the organization was created as a collaborative centre of excellence in good communication practices. The Cosmopolis Collaboratory Center was finally established in 2027.

## What it does now

### *How it works*

The CCC is organized on co-operative principles, whereby each participating person, collective or organization contributes to the upkeep of the centre in return for the space made available and the supporting infrastructure.

Over the years, the centre has also attracted the ongoing financial support of a number of innovative organizations, in return for specialized staff training and development by

members of the collaboratory and priority access for proposing new ideas for development.

In addition, the centre offers the following facilities or activities:

- regular forums for all collaborators to work collectively on each other's ideas
- open public forums where collaborators can talk about their developments and invite community responses
- access to network of practical scholars in communication from around the world, that can be drawn upon in innovative and development activities
- a large meeting space for activities of the community, including the Lyceum and Book Club
- a large free-form studio space for the development of material prototypes, that is also made available for community-wide activities (eg building floats for the annual Festival of Frames)
- open school days for children from the local schools
- help in establishing productive ventures independently of the centre (the Mediapolis Institute was one such venture that has become independent).

The CCC is located right next door to the dialogic kitchen (a multi-function food hub established to sustain the community through good food) and over the years, a covered walkway has been built to facilitate ease of access. These days, the above functions are as likely to occur in the kitchen as much as in the more formal spaces of the CCC building.

### *Collaborating partners*

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## Invitation

We invite collaboration in the CCC. We envisage this could be in one of two forms:

- An outline, or story, of an innovative product or service that could be “incubated” at the CCC (this requires far less work than the development of a separate entity on the website)
- An idea that we could develop for inclusion in this CCC site.

If you are interested please talk to:

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