



**TO:** Elizabeth Pauli, Interim City Manager  
**FROM:** Ricardo Noguera, Director, Community and Economic Development Department  
**COPY:** Economic Development Committee  
**SUBJECT:** Creative Space Development, Alma Mater  
**DATE:** February 6, 2017

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**SUMMARY:**

Tacoma's creative community continues to grow. Creative space where artists can perform, work, exhibit, and collaborate is much needed. Alma Mater will transform the former Carpenter's Union building into a creative enclave including a music venue, recording studios, studio rentals, co-working and community programming space, a café and cocktail lounge and micro-hotel. It is slated to open Fall 2017.

Amy McBride, Tacoma Arts Administrator, will introduce Alma Mater leadership Jason Hemminger and Rachel Ervin.

**BACKGROUND:**

Alma Mater at the former Carpenters Union Building located at 1322 Fawcett is an artist-driven work, performance, and gathering space opening in Tacoma later this fall. The idea for a building that encompassed an incubator for artists, areas to perform and display their work, and an economic engine to support them was activated by Alma Mater Director, Jason Hemminger's own creative journey after a three-year stint in Colorado working in education. In the summer of 2015, Jason brought on long-time friends and like-minded thinkers Aaron Spiro and Rachel Ervin to help develop his vision into a concrete plan. Since then, the Alma Mater team has received generous investment, support, and excitement for what's to come.

Alma Mater is designed to be a lasting, sustainable model that doesn't rely on non-profit funding cycles and the whims of a fickle creative market and unlike many arts organizations is a for-profit (or slim-profit) organization that will be an ecosystem of artists, programming, hospitality, and the public.

The first floor of the Carpenters Building will house all public spaces and programming: a venue that will hold up to 500 people, an all-day café with an adventurous chef at the helm, a cocktail lounge, day time co-working (and evening community programming), and an outdoor green space. Recording studios, shared artist work space, and individual studio rentals will live on the second floor and a newly constructed nine-unit micro hotel will make up the third.

Alma Mater is looking to hire 35 people to support the facility and is taking submissions for a variety of positions currently. [www.almamatertacoma.com](http://www.almamatertacoma.com)



A panel of four speakers will provide insights into Tacoma's information technology ecosystem:

1. Jason Hemminger, Director, Alma Mater
2. Rachel Ervin, Assistant Director, Alma Mater, Outreach and Communications

**ISSUE:**

Creative Space development is essential to the successful and sustainable growth of our creative sector and creates destination quality activities for the community.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

No alternatives are presented. This is a briefing only.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

This is a briefing only.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

This is an information briefing only. There is no recommendation.