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## **Innovative Reuse of Kaiser Center's Mall Complete With Opening of *The Port Workspaces Campus***

OAKLAND, CA – June 1, 2016 – Oakland's iconic Kaiser Center today cements its reputation as a leading edge commercial location with the opening of The Port Workspaces, a three-story, vertical entrepreneurs' campus providing workspaces for individual entrepreneurs, start ups, small and mid-sized companies as well as chefs, artisans and makers.

The third location for Oakland-born Port Workspaces, the Kaiser Campus occupies 60,000 square feet in Kaiser Center's former mall area, a portion of the one million square foot property which itself has had a storied history. When Kaiser Center was first occupied in the early 1960's as the headquarters of Henry J Kaiser's industrial empire, the mall housed a department store, the White House. In later years, the mall was converted to a multi-tenant building and other retailers, including Joseph Magnin, Grodin's, Casual Corner and Nesbitt's, came and went. As retail trends shifted, the tenant population of the mall dwindled and much of the three-story mall space, particularly space without exposure to the street, remained vacant.

That is, until recently. According to Deborah Boyer, executive vice president of The Swig Company, discussions with several parties about utilizing the previously unused mall space have occurred over the years but the collaboration with Port Workspaces brought the most creative and innovative adaptive reuse opportunity.

"Port Workspaces is Oakland grown and understands what it means to create a vibrant, diverse coworking community in our city. The Port had the clearest vision for the space. Were he here today, Henry J's entrepreneurial spirit would applaud the Port's designers for successfully reimagining the mall as a coworking campus that responds to today's demand for enriched and flexible work environments."

Port Workspaces' flexible workspace concept fits perfectly into the space, providing three separate floors with a variety of flexible formats and amenities for a wide range of users. The facility includes a roof terrace, a commercial co-working kitchen, [The Port Kitchens](#), conference facilities, a bar/lounge and event space.

The Port Workspaces - Kaiser Campus renovation features a variety of visually stunning new design features. Visitors at the first floor main entry are greeted by a “valley” of custom-made, sit-stand-lean workstations resembling icebergs, dyed terrazzo flooring and a massive 3D themed mural by renowned Oakland artist Sean Griffin. Other unique features include a towering LED-lit fountain, offices in former retail stores and meeting rooms made from a former walk-in restaurant refrigerator and from freight containers. An escalator (remnant of the building’s department store days) rises to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor and The Port’s own 40-seat computer programming school, [the Port Academy](#), a yoga studio, a presentation theater, and 180-seat “team room” – designed with bendable partitions and color-changing lighting for on-the-fly teamwork configurations. On the 3rd floor, Port entrepreneurs enjoy a 4,500 square foot private bar and lounge, private offices, coworking spaces overlooking the 3-acre Kaiser Roof Garden, and a vast private terrace with Lake Merritt views, a 24-seat thatched Tiki bar, artificial turf and rolling lounge “hills.”

“Thanks to the forward-thinking leaders at The Swig Company, we’ve had a wonderful opportunity to bring leap-ahead workspace design and use to this hidden gem of a property,” says Port Workspaces CEO and founder Joel Pool. “We could hardly believe it when we saw these soaring, unobstructed spaces, next to BART, with lake views and a 3-acre roof garden for a backyard. Both the space and owners provided remarkable freedom to explore a range of layouts, technologies and aesthetics. There’s no other place in Oakland we could have realized this concept of a multi-industry entrepreneurs’ campus, on the scale needed – and certainly not in such a gorgeous setting. It’s been an honor to work with The Swig Company, to put so many resources under one roof for Oakland’s innovators. We can’t wait to see what they create here.”

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#### **About The Swig Company:**

[The Swig Company, LLC](#) is a privately-owned, San Francisco-based real estate operator with a 75+ year history of investment, development, partnership and management of commercial real estate properties in major US markets. Founded by Benjamin H. Swig in 1936, The Swig Company is guided by a long-term investment perspective that has proven adept at stewarding investors safely through multiple market cycles. The company’s vertically-integrated operational platform, which includes investment, asset and property management, and leasing expertise, uses flexibility, generational thinking and sensitivity to sustainable practices to stay at the forefront of emerging trends in the commercial real estate industry. For more information, visit: [www.swigco.com](http://www.swigco.com).

#### **About The Port Workspaces**

The Port Workspaces was founded in Oakland, California in 2012, to repurpose vacant historic buildings as accessible and inspiring workplaces for independent businesses. Oakland’s largest coworking community, The Port serves several hundred entrepreneurs, technologists, professionals and artisans in three locations: a 1921 broom factory, a 1909 railroad hotel made famous by Jack London, and a 1960 department store in the heart of downtown. The Port offers offices, coworking space, meeting rooms, member-only bar & lounges, extraordinary indoor-outdoor event space, presentation theater, yoga room, locker rooms, mail services, as well as educational and networking programs. The Port community also includes Port Kitchens LLC, Oakland’s largest coworking kitchen and culinary incubator.