

# Mill and Make Open Shop

## Omni Commons Project Proposal

We propose to create a shared carpentry and woodworking shop, as a fiscally sponsored project of the Omni Commons, to serve as a resource for our neighborhood and the Omni Commons community. This proposal is intended to generate interest and determine whether this project will be beneficial and welcomed to Omni and the neighboring community. It is also a working document used to outline start up funding plans and establish a set of ground rules regarding physical safety and safe space policies.

We will wait to finalize plans for internal organization and access rules until we have more people committed to stewarding the space. However, we aim to organize in a way that prioritizes access and training for those excluded from the woodworking craft, as well as those excluded from owning space or tools in the neighborhood due to the ongoing housing crisis and gentrification in Oakland. We plan to do this through specific programming, shop hours, orientations, and scholarships for individuals from BIPOC, immigrant, queer, trans, and low income communities.

We are excited to build this group inside of Omni Commons because of our shared goals of collective ownership and community involvement. We reject the anti-social societal expectation that fabrication and building belongs only in the workplace, or as an individualist hobby for a privileged few.

### **WHO ARE WE**

Currently, the founding organizers (stewards) would be:

- Paige - involved with Sudo Room since 2021, and active part of the Omni Building Working Group since the Summer of 2023. Paige works full-time at a fabrication shop, where they regularly give wood shop safety orientations. Paige has also worked as a studio operations technician in the industrial arts.
- Klea - has been introduced to Omni Commons by attending a few Sudo Room events, and has helped the building working group with consult. Klea has experience starting-up and running multiple woodshops, and currently works full time as a woodshop manager.

*TODO: List people interested in membership*

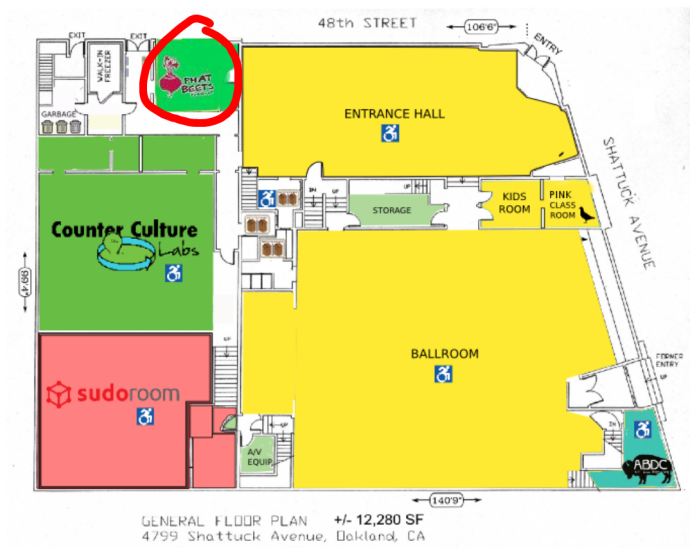
### **LOCATION and RENT**

Our preferred location would be the room formerly rented by ANV, located on the ground floor near the freezer room and trash room. We are interested in this room because it has enough power and outlets suitable for a woodshop, an air exhaust fan, and is on the ground floor providing easy material/machine loading and wheel chair/limited mobility accessibility. We understand this is the main electrical room

and are willing to negotiate access requirements (i.e., locks, alarms, etc.). We understand this room shares a wall with the entrance hall, but believe we can coordinate with events so as to not disrupt them with loud power tool usage.

Our budget for the former ANV room is \$600/month, with the ability to pre-pay 2 months of rent. Our preferred move in date would be December 1st.

*Recent photos of this room, and location on building map:*

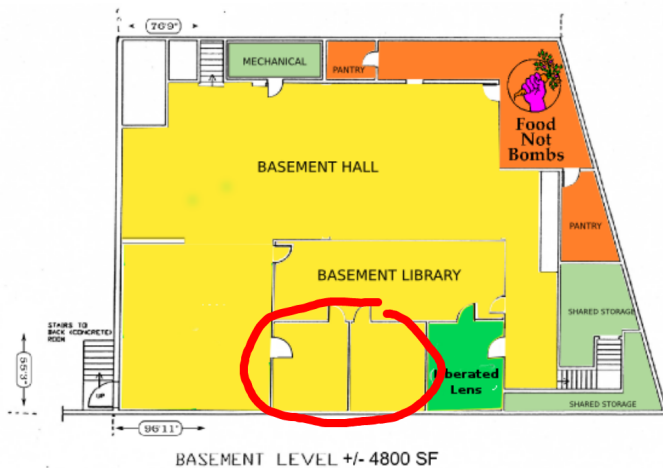


Alternatively, we would consider the two small open rooms in the basement. Currently the electrical in these rooms is not adequate - running a carpentry shop from these rooms would require adding new circuits. Paige has electrical experience and could do this labor, but we would request discounted rent in the space while this work is being done. There is extra space for breakers in Panel AB, but more research is needed. We tested sound isolation by running a table saw in the room, and found that we could not hear it at all from the ballroom above it, and

could hear moderate but not disruptive noise from the media lab. However, we heard a considerable amount of sound in the adjoining basement rooms.

Our budget for these two basement rooms combined is \$150 for the first month while electrical work is completed, and \$300/month after, with the ability to pre-pay 2 months of rent. Our preferred move in date would be December 1st.

*Recent photos of these rooms, and location on building map:*



## ACCESS

We will need to restrict access to the shop via key, alarm, or code, in order to:

1. Reasonably guarantee that dangers associated with improper tool usage and maintenance are mediated by training and/or supervision.
2. Collect membership fees to keep the shop running

However, by providing frequent trainings, open shop hours, and scholarships, we aim to make access as open as possible while keeping the shop safe and financially able to run.

We will refer to those who use the space as:

1. Teachers: stewards who are using the space to teach classes.
2. Stewards: members who are authorized to run orientations and safety-tests. Stewards would be paid \$30/hr for running orientations.
3. Members: users who have completed a shop orientation given by a steward. Members may use the space unsupervised if unlocked, but if requested, can receive a shop key upon completion of a safety test, and endorsement from 2 stewards.
4. Users: people who drop-in to use the shop space during open hours. Users must sign a shop agreement form and safety waiver.

The delineation between types of shop users is meant to help everyone keep track of who should be using tools with supervision, who does not need supervision, and who is able to supervise and train. From prior woodshop experience, we know an individual's woodworking skill does not necessarily correlate with how safely they work or their ability to communicate risk adequately to less experienced members. Shop stewards will be trained and well-versed in general woodshop safety practices, as well as the specific rules agreed upon in the code of conduct.

## **HOURS**

The shop will be open to key-holding members 24/7.

Open shop hours tentatively will be Tuesdays 7PM-9PM and Fridays 3:30PM-7PM. Stewards are encouraged to communicate what time they plan to use the space to welcome users in via calendar/website.

## **GOVERNANCE and COMMUNICATIONS**

Membership meetings will happen weekly. Any item for the meeting that requires a vote should be communicated online at least 2 days before the meeting. Votes are encouraged to be made in person but may also be made online. All members receive 1 vote, and any member can bring forward a proposal. If no items are brought forward 2 days before the meeting, the meeting will be canceled.

Meetings will have a rotating notetaker, facilitator, and stack-taker.

Some examples of what will be voted on by membership:

- class proposals
- how net revenue is spent (i.e., how much to consumables, new tooling, scholarships)
- changes to code of conduct, governance, communications, membership fees, etc.
- safe space concerns, bans

The only decision we expect to be made by stewards only is key-access . The idea being, stewards are those responsible with safety trainings, and will have a good idea of any shop-safety concerns with the applicant.

## **OPERATING COSTS**

We expect monthly costs to range from \$200-\$500. Costs include: consumable restocks, replacement parts for tools, scholarships, and tool insurance.

Additionally, as a project of Omni Commons, 7-10% of all donations will be given back to Omni Commons. *TODO: clarify, does "donations" mean net revenue?*

To pay for monthly costs and rent, we plan to raise money through:

- Shop access fees
  - Stewards and members will be required to pay a sliding scale access fee. Tentatively this will be: \$20/month minimum, \$50-\$80/month recommended. >\$100/month encouraged to pay it forward.
    - We recognize this is a small shop and will be limited as such, but we still think this is a low access fee, given other shops in the area typically charge >\$100/month for limited hour access
- User one time donations
  - \$10 per day recommended drop in fee, though no one will be turned away for lack of funds
- Grants and general donations
- Classes
  - Teachers will be asked to pay a percentage of the revenue from their class back to the wood shop. Upon approval of members, this payment may be waived depending on the class's benefit to the community. (i.e. BIPOC student/teacher class)

We hope later on, costs and rent can be sustained solely from membership fees and grants (as opposed to relying on money given back from teachers). As we begin, however, we plan to run classes frequently in order to bring in funds and to begin outreach. We hope students from the classes will be interested in becoming members.

## **TOOL DONATIONS/LENDING**

Tools may be donated or lent to the woodshop.

- Donated tools become common property of the members of the woodshop.
- Lent tools may be used by any trained member of the shop, but remain the property of the lender, and are subject to be returned to the lender at any time.
- Depending on the value, donated tools may be put towards individual monthly access fees.

Damages to tools should be reported online to the membership list. Authorization for payment and repairs will be determined by the membership.

## **EXCESS FUNDS**

We prioritize expanding access over expanding space or equipment.

## **CURRENTLY OWNED TOOLS and WANTED DONATIONS**

We currently have:

- Table saw
- Bandsaw
- Drill press
- Joiner
- Planer
- Dust collector

We are seeking:

- SawStop table saw
- router
- Additional dust collectors
- Additional Shop Vacs
- Pedestal or bench top sanders
- Battery powered drills and impact drivers
- Clamps
- Hand tools
- Blades, wood glue, hardware

*TODO: add picture of current shop tools*

## **CODE of CONDUCT (much borrowed from Sudo Room <https://sudoroom.org/wiki/About>)**

### Safer Space Policy

Everyone in the wood shop must abide by Omni Commons' Safer Space policy:  
[https://omnicommons.org/wiki/Safer\\_Space\\_Policy](https://omnicommons.org/wiki/Safer_Space_Policy)

### General Physical Safety

- Seek training and stay alert
- *Never do anything which you aren't certain is safe.* If you're unsure, ask. Frequent communication about safety is critical in keeping both you and other shop users safe.
- No power tool usage by non-members unless approved and supervised by a shop steward. No hand tool usage by non-members unless approved and supervised by a member.
- Do not use space if under influence of drugs or alcohol, or if sleep-deprived. This can hinder the ability to work safely.
- *No working with stationary power tools in the woodshop alone.* At a minimum, there needs to be another person in the building who is both aware that you are in the space, and agrees to remain in earshot while you are using the

space. In case of injury, having someone else around to assist or call for medical help can be life-saving.

- *Report any broken tools to members online immediately.* If able, lock and tag out the equipment.
- *Clean up after yourself.* A dirty shop can lead to tripping and fire hazards. See the CLEANING section.
- *No work that creates fires or sparks* (i.e., metal cutting or grinding) is allowed. This is a fire-hazard given the amount of wood dust produced.
- *Limit fumes, dust, and other health hazards appropriately.* Always use dust collection, fume extraction and/or respirators when necessary.
- *No smoking in or near the woodshop.* If you're going to smoke, smoke outside on the sidewalk, at least 15 feet away from open doorways. This includes all substances, including tobacco and marijuana.

## PPE and dress

- *Safety glasses or goggles must be worn by everyone in the wood shop* when power tools are in use
- *Closed toe shoes are required in the woodshop* whenever tools are in use.
- Hearing protection is recommended for everyone in the woodshop when power tools are in use.
- *No gloves should be worn while using stationary power tools* (drill press, band saw, table saw, planer, joiner). Gloves can be caught in machines and pull the person's hand into the machine.
- *Long hair, dangling jewelry and clothing must all be tied back securely.* Dangling items pose a risk of getting caught in machines, and may pull the wearer into a moving part.

## Cooperation

- This is a small, communal shop. *You may not run a business out of it.* Large scale projects that require considerable tool usage and/or storage require approval from a majority vote (not including proposing members) in a membership meeting.
- Exercise consideration and respect in your speech and actions.
- Attempt collaboration before conflict.
- *Be mindful of your surroundings and of your fellow participants.* Alert the community if you notice a dangerous situation, someone in distress, or violations of this Code of Conduct, even if they seem inconsequential. Anyone failing to follow these common expected behaviors should be asked to stop, and is expected to comply immediately.
- *Do not disturb or disrupt events at Omni.* If an event is going on in a nearby room, check-in to see if noise from the woodshop will disrupt. Work around events if possible. Scheduled events are listed here <https://omnicommons.org/blog/calendar/>
- *Be respectful of others' desire not to be bothered.* If someone wants to focus or finds conversation to be unwanted either typically or on just a given day, we recognize that and enthusiastically accommodate that. We make an effort to directly communicate our wishes, and we also each make an effort to be mindful of body language. If we're uncertain of someone's wishes, we ask.



- *Keep info dumps brief.* Again: be aware of others wishes, and don't force someone to be your audience
- *Ask before playing music* or audio if others can hear it. Music should never be loud enough that people are not able to communicate in case of emergency.
- *Don't take other people's stuff.* If you're unsure if something belongs to someone, ask.
- *Clearly label your materials.* Any unlabeled material in the shop is free to use, so if it is you do not want it used, leave it in a space designated as yours or mark it clearly with your name, a way to contact you, and the date.
- *Pets must be well behaved and under control.* If you bring a pet to the wood shop, please ask others in the space if it is OK with them, and please do not stay with your pet if anyone objects.

## Cleaning

Everyone is expected to clean up after themselves. This includes:

- Vacuuming/sweeping up sawdust from the floor and machines
- Throwing away any trash
- Returning tools to their designated storage space

Additionally, users are expected to help keep the space clean by helping with routine clean up and maintenance tasks such as:

- Emptying dust collector, shop vacs, and trash when full
- Taking inventory, making purchase requests
- Taking part in scheduled full shop cleans
- Machine and tool maintenance (if trained)

Teachers are expected to do a full shop clean after each class session. 15-30 minutes of the class should be set aside to do a full sweep and vacuum of the shop. All tools and materials need to be put back in storage locations, and machines should be reset to standard set up.

## 501c3 status

The wood shop and Omni Commons must not be involved in any activities which could affect legislation or political campaigns, with certain limited exemptions. While not illegal, these activities may be grounds for the IRS to revoke our tax exempt status. Talk to the officers of the corporation for guidance if you are unsure whether your proposed activities will be exempt or not.

## Reference

<https://omnicommons.org/wiki/Governance/Proposal> joining as projects/tenants  
<https://omnicommons.org/wiki/Join> joining as a collective  
<https://sudoroom.org/wiki/About> Sudo Room code of conduct  
[https://omnicommons.org/wiki/Safer\\_Space\\_Policy](https://omnicommons.org/wiki/Safer_Space_Policy) Omni Safer Space policy