



# Amazon Doubles Down on Boston With Full-Building Lease at Seaport Square

E-Commerce Giant Commits to Second Office Tower in Waterfront District



The e-retailer and technology giant, Amazon, is aggressively expanding its technology hub in the Boston region. (iStock)

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Amazon has claimed another big chunk of a 33-acre redevelopment project called Seaport Square on the South Boston waterfront, where the tech giant plans to significantly grow its tech operations.

The Seattle-based company said it has agreed to take all 630,000 square feet in a planned 17-story office building at 1 Boston Wharf Road that allows the company to increase its Boston workforce by 3,000. The lease is Amazon's second at Seaport Square where it agreed to take more than 430,000 square feet in a different building in 2018.

Amazon executives said the new Boston building is planned to house both general corporate functions and teams dedicated to developing and refining a variety of technologies, ranging from software development to artificial intelligence to machine learning, as it plans to add more than 3,000 new jobs over the next several years at its Boston tech hub.

“Much of the technology that makes [Amazon's voice-activated virtual assistant] Alexa smarter every day is invented in Boston,” Amazon's vice president and head scientist for Alexa, Rohit Prasad, said in the statement. “Our teams here play a key role in driving Amazon’s innovations – from Alexa to [web services] to Amazon Pharmacy.”

The deal ups the ante on Amazon's already considerable presence in Boston and Massachusetts at large. Its Boston Tech Hub current employs about 3,700 people. Statewide, the company said it has generated more than 20,000 jobs in its fulfillment operations, retail business, and corporate administration.

On a whole, since 2019 Amazon has been [expanding at a rapid-fire clip nearly everywhere](#), though its expansion has been most intense in the suburbs of Washington D.C. where it is planting its HQ2, its primary logistics hubs in Tennessee, and on its original home turf, the Puget Sound region in Washington state. The company increased its total real estate footprint and headcount by 50% in the first three quarters of its current fiscal year, and now has more than 1 million people on its payroll.

The 1 Boston Wharf tower is planned to include a new performing arts center with a traditional 500-seat theater venue and a 100-seat black box theater as well as a dog park, ground-floor retail, and innovation labs, according to [a statement](#) from Amazon.

Construction on the new office building is expected to wrap up in 2024. The statement did not disclose when work on the building may start, and neither Amazon nor the developer immediately responded to a request for more information from CoStar News.

It is just one piece of Seaport Square's sweeping master plan, spearheaded by Boston-based WS Development, which calls for a total of 7.6 million square feet of new

commercial real estate. The revitalization scheme includes residential developments, hotels, office, retail, entertainment, civic and cultural buildings, public space and parks.

WS Development describes it as "the single largest active development project in Boston's history."

In [2018](#), the tech giant signed for 430,000 square feet of office space at Seaport Square's 111 Harbor Way, a 17-story, 525,000-square-foot building that is currently under construction on a lot adjacent to 1 Boston Wharf. WS Development expects to finish up work on that building later this year. Once done, about 2,000 Amazon employees will be based there.

Greater Boston has long been home to one of the most robust life science and medical technology sectors in the U.S., according to a [Jan. 15 report](#) from the brokerage CBRE Group, a strength that propelled its office market to unprecedented heights prior to the arrival of the coronavirus pandemic in March 2020.

That portion of Boston's economy actually gained momentum during the outbreak because of new demand for research and development of vaccines and treatments tied to the illness. Over 2020, Boston's life science firms attracted more than \$6.25 billion in venture capital, a record for the region, the report said.

The demand for lab space has been a boon to an otherwise slack market for office space CBRE analysts continued. About 2 million square feet of office inventory is being converted to laboratory space, which will give demand a much needed boost.

The region is also seeing more interest from West Coast-born technology companies like Amazon, which are themselves dipping their toes into medical ventures.

In [November 2020](#), Amazon officially rolled out a company-branded online pharmacy that offers home deliveries of one-time prescriptions as well as medications needed to manage chronic illnesses. Over 2020 it also [created its own coronavirus testing labs](#), intended only for employees so far, and opened a network of in-house medical clinics, again saying that the services were an extension and enhancement of its employee



Amazon has signed a full-building lease for a 17-story tower planned for a site at the Seaport Square development known as the L5 Block. Courtesy of Amazon

**benefit package.**