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Boston law firm, developer in waterfront deal

Goodwin Procter to anchor Fan Pier site

By Casey Ross

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The law firm Goodwin Procter LLP is moving to the massive Fan Pier development on the South Boston Waterfront, where it will occupy a new 17-story office and hotel building overlooking Boston Harbor.

The deal is another blockbuster for developer Joseph F. Fallon, who is already constructing two large office buildings at Fan Pier for drug giant Vertex Pharmaceuticals Inc.

It also brings another larger employer to the waterfront, adding to a construction boom in the neighborhood.

Goodwin Procter has signed a letter of intent to be the anchor tenant in a 500,000-square-foot building, which will be located next to the Institute of Contemporary Art.

The building, to feature generous amounts of glass, will house a 135-room hotel and retail spaces on its lower floors.

“We’re starting to see the area shape up as a real growth district,” said Fallon, who is also planning to start construction of a condominium building next year. Once completed, his [21-acre Fan Pier development](#) along Northern Avenue will include eight new buildings with offices, condominiums, a hotel, restaurants, and retail shops.

Construction of the building Goodwin will occupy is expected to start next fall. Fallon is currently nearing completion of his second and third buildings — both for Vertex — and has already opened a marina and several restaurants on the property.

A partner with Goodwin Procter said the Fan Pier site offered the firm a chance to build something distinctive and be part of the waterfront’s rapid growth.

“Our desire is to have a building that is very interesting and iconic, and fits within the environment as well,” said Alex Randall, head of Goodwin’s real estate leasing practice and lead partner for the project. He said Goodwin, now located at 53 State St., expects to move to Fan Pier in early 2016.

Fallon said he is working with BBG-BBGM architects of New York to design the new building.

Goodwin Procter will bring another 860 employees to the building, advancing Mayor Thomas M. Menino’s effort to transform the waterfront into a new business district that will also attract retail stores, restaurants, civic spaces, and homes. The mayor has renamed the area Boston’s Innovation District.

“We continue to push the South Boston Waterfront to be something more than just ‘anywhere USA’ and continue to attract companies that can work in collaboration with each other to grow,” Menino said in a statement Tuesday. “Goodwin Procter is a fitting addition.”

Founded in Boston, the global law firm focuses on a number of different practice areas, including private equity, technology, intellectual property, and life sciences. It joins a growing roster of companies moving to the waterfront, where rising rents and a shortage of space are beginning to fuel more construction activity.

In addition to Vertex and Goodwin, State Street Corp. is building a new office complex at the Channel Center complex along A Street.

A number of new technology companies have also moved to the area, and hundreds of apartments are under construction.

Fallon said the hotel in the Goodwin building will offer amenities to the law firm and eventual condominium owners at a site next door. He said he is developing the hotel under the Fan Pier brand and has not decided whether to partner with a hotel company.

Next year is shaping up to be a busy year on the project. In the summer, Fallon is planning to move forward with construction of a 15-story condominium building adjacent to the Vertex offices, and will start the Goodwin office and hotel building soon after. He is also negotiating leases with several restaurants.