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# WeWork, on expansion tear in Austin, signs lease for fifth location

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Austin has a highly crowded co-working scene, with scores of options for entrepreneurs looking to rent a single desk or small companies in need of a base of operations. There's no sign yet of a slowdown — in fact, WeWork Cos. just signed another big lease.

The co-working unicorn will occupy all of 801 Barton Springs Road, a 90,500-square-foot, mid-rise office building going up across the street from the Palmer Events Center. It will be WeWork's fifth Austin location and is scheduled to open this summer.

News of the deal comes just a few months after WeWork said it would lease four floors within the downtown Chase Tower. In another sign of WeWork's growing presence in the Texas capital, it recently hired Matt Glazer as community director. Glazer, previously executive director of the Austin Young Chamber of Commerce, will be responsible for overseeing WeWork's Austin locations and facilitating connections with other players in the local business world, Austin Inno reported in December.

801 Barton Springs Road is being developed by Generational Commercial Properties with financial support from HTZ Investments of Houston.

WeWork is handling the interior design of its latest co-working space while PGAL is the architecture firm and Rogers O'Brien Construction Co. Ltd. is the general contractor. Aquila Commercial LLC brokered the lease; agents Jay Lamy, Matt Wilhite, Max McDonald were involved on the tenant side and Chad Barrett, Bethany Perez and Bart Matheney on the landlord side.

The overall architect for 801 Barton Springs is Runa Workshop.

WeWork, which was founded in 2010 and is based in New York City, has other Austin locations at 600 Congress Ave. downtown, 11801 Domain Blvd. in The Domain and 3300 N. I-36 in University Park.

WeWork has 175,000 members leasing co-working space in 200-plus locations around the world. It raised \$4.4 billion of venture capital in 2017, which reportedly gave it a valuation of about \$20 billion.



NICK SIMONITE/ABJ

WeWork Cos. opened its first co-working space in Austin in February 2015 at 600 Congress Ave., pictured. It now has three locations up and running and two more planned.

Some have questioned that sky-high valuation for what they see as essentially a short-term real estate rental business, the [Wall Street Journal reports](#). But WeWork's founders have pushed back against the classification, claiming they bring a disruptive, technology-driven platform to a staid sector.

Austin is awash in co-working options. Capital Factory, a tech startup incubator and accelerator, has long offered co-working in downtown. But the concept reaches outside the urban core as well: Greenway Central opened last year at 1139 W. Braker Lane, a couple of miles east of The Domain.

"We understand that our physical location is perfect for those who are trying to create something new and special and would rather not commute downtown to work or to attend meetings," Alex Longoria, community/operations manager for Greenway Central, said in an email.

There are different co-working spaces based on niche and price point. Impact Hub has multiple locations citywide with co-working space for mission-driven companies. Meanwhile, FirmSpace last fall [opened an upscale take on co-working](#) inside the new 500 West 2nd skyscraper where [Google Inc.](#) calls home.

In other WeWork news, an Austin entrepreneur is headed to New York City this week to compete for up to \$1 million in a competition run by the co-working giant. Samantha Snabes is co-founder of re:3D Inc., a nonprofit that creates large three-dimensional printers and [was honored in June 2017](#) at WeWork's Austin Creator Awards, when it won \$180,000.

Snabes and six others were chosen from a pool of 150 regional winners to advance to the Creator Awards Global Finals, being held Jan. 17 at Madison Square Garden in New York.

WeWork entered Austin in February 2015 on Congress Avenue, then followed with the spots in University Park and The Domain in 2016.

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