

Weinberg Wheeler Moves Miami Office to New Coconut Grove Project

The firm has leased space at the One Cocowalk mid-rise underway as part of the larger CocoWalk overhaul.



Law firm Weinberg Wheeler Hudgins Gunn & Dial is moving its Miami office to Coconut Grove's new One Cocowalk building less than a mile from the firm's current location.

Weinberg Wheeler is to move early next year into a 13,539-square-foot office it leased on the penthouse after it finishes the internal build-out of the space.

One Cocowalk, a five-story office building with floor-to-ceiling windows, is to be completed this month as part of the overhaul of the bigger CocoWalk, long a shopping and dining destination in Coconut Grove.

A development trio that bought the 3-acre CocoWalk five years ago is leading the revamp by reducing retail space, adding homegrown and edgy shops and restaurants, and including office space with the construction of One Cocowalk.

Weinberg Wheeler, which didn't disclose its lease duration and rate, is attracted to the new building and also to the area that will offer attorneys and support staff members walkability to dining and coffee shops.

The firm now is a few blocks north at 2601 S. Bayshore Drive.

The new space is roughly 1,500 square feet smaller than its current office, yet it's designed in a way to accommodate more attorneys as the firm recruits more hires, Lawrence Burkhalter, managing partner at the Miami office, said in an interview.

This is in part because the new space is designed with smaller individual offices for partners, although they still will have slightly bigger offices than associates, Burkhalter said.

"Coconut Grove with its prime location, just moments away from Miami's principal business hubs, has proven to be the ideal location for our firm," Burkhalter said in prepared remarks. "As Weinberg, Wheeler, Hudgins, Gunn & Dial continues to expand its international trial and transactional practice, so has our need for additional office space. One Cocowalk's central location, upscale finishes, and easy access to dozens of retail and dining options has made this building a natural choice for us."

Weinberg Wheeler's Miami office currently has 10 attorneys and the new space will have offices for 18 attorneys. The firm's 12 support staff members will also be moving.

The firm will next obtain construction permits as it completed the design of its space.

Weinberg Wheeler's design features reflect some of the latest trends in law firm offices. **A CBRE Group Inc. study showed law firms increasingly are decreasing their overall footprint** with some reducing the attorney office size, while adding more common areas and conference rooms. Several South Florida law firms have implemented same-sized offices for attorneys regardless of seniority in a push to have a more egalitarian feel.

Weinberg Wheeler is reducing the partner office size, but not quite making it the same size as that of associates. The firm is embracing more common areas creating space where attorneys and support staff can collaborate.

CocoWalk's reinvention is led by real estate companies Grass River Property based in Miami. The Comras Co., based in Miami Beach, partnered with retail investment trust Federal Realty Investment Trust in Rockville, Maryland, on the CocoWalk redevelopment.

They bought CocoWalk in August 2015 for \$87.5 million.

CocoWalk, on the north side of Grand Avenue, originally had 198,000 square feet of shopping and dining. The development trio downsized the retail portion 150,000 square feet and is completing the 85,762-square-foot One Cocowalk.

Weinberg Wheeler's lease drives up potential occupancy at the building to 80%. Some of the other tenants who have signed up include co-working company Spaces, which is affiliated with Luxembourg-based co-working and office space provider Regus, and investment-focused private equity firm Boyne Capital Partners LLC, which currently also is located nearby in Coconut Grove.

Lease negotiations are ongoing with others as two 3,500-square-foot suites on the penthouse are up for grabs, as well as offices on lower floors ranging from 2,000 square feet to 3,800 square feet.