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## **Vital Proteins Moves Headquarters to Peppercorn Capital's 30 N. Racine Building.**

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A fast-growing dietary supplement seller is joining the wave of businesses setting up shop in the West Loop while it eyes a possible long-term home in the heart of the Fulton Market District.

Vital Proteins, a four-year-old company specializing in collagen products designed to improve skin, bone and joint health, has signed a lease for about 10,000 square feet at 1201 W. Washington Blvd., the company and property owner confirmed.

The company next month plans to move its headquarters and 55 employees from its current offices in Wicker Park to the three-story office building on a 15-month lease, filling space previously occupied by a unit of retailer Crate & Barrel.

But that space is meant to be temporary. Vital Proteins has been negotiating with the owners of a rehab project at 939 W. Fulton St. to be the anchor tenant of a redeveloped 49,146-square-foot **mixed-use building**, according to sources familiar with both parties.

That property, which is owned by New York-based Madison Capital, is under construction at the southwest corner of Fulton and Sangamon Streets, one block from Google's Midwest headquarters.

The West Loop neighborhood **has become especially trendy** for companies seeking creative office space, which developers have been serving up in former industrial properties.

Madison Capital's building is a prime example: The real estate investor **paid \$26 million** in 2015 for the former meat-packing building it's in the process of converting into offices, retail space and a rooftop deck, plan renderings show.

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Vital Proteins' new lease in the West Loop, meanwhile, marks a return for the company to the rapidly changing neighborhood. Prior to spending the past year in 6,000 square feet at 1564 N. Damen Ave. in Wicker Park, the company was based out of the West Loop location of co-working company WeWork.

Since then, it has seen explosive growth: The company said it had four employees when it sold its first product in January 2014; had 30 full-time workers a year ago, and has since expanded to more than 100 employees, between their headquarters in the city and a warehouse in Elk Grove Village. Its products are sold at 8,000 retail stores nationwide including Whole Foods, Vitamin Shoppe and Fresh Thyme Farmer's Market.

"We're kind of bursting at the seams and needed to find a more permanent location that was a place we could grow into," said Vital Proteins spokeswoman Shannon Race.

It's unclear where the company's negotiations with Madison Capital stand, but Race said a deal at 939 W. Fulton is a "no-go." A Madison Capital spokesman was not immediately available for comment.

Vital Proteins new home on Washington Boulevard is fully leased, according to owner Phil Denny of Chicago-based real estate investment firm Peppercorn Capital. In addition to its newest tenant, the building is home to a Goodwill store and donation center, project management software company Basecamp (formerly 37Signals) and the **new offices of the Chicago Sun-Times.**