

RISING STANDARD

# Tech and Wellness Intersect at One Congress

Office Tower Implements Best Post-COVID Practices

By Oliver Carr | Special to Banker & Tradesman | Feb 21, 2021 | [Reprints](#) | [Unlock Link](#) | [Print](#)



**An outdoor terrace connects to the 1 million-square-foot One Congress office tower under construction at Bulfinch Crossing in Boston. Images courtesy of HYM Investment**

Across the U.S., commercial real estate projects have ramped up to implement new technology to ensure a gold standard of wellness. One Congress, the highly anticipated office tower that will serve as an anchor to the larger Bulfinch Crossing development, is no exception.

Amidst the pandemic, the One Congress ownership and development teams from [Carr Properties](#), [National Real Estate Advisors](#), and [HYM](#) had the opportunity to rethink elements of the building's design, with a refreshed focus on the increased need for customer wellness. With the mission of creating the next generation healthy building, wellness technology has become top of mind for the One Congress team. Here are some key initiatives we are pursuing at One Congress:

Touchless technology can be used to help mitigate the spread of germs and bacteria. Even beyond COVID-19, touchless technology will continue to play an important role in mitigating the spread of germs during flu season and maintaining everyday cleanliness.

At One Congress, our customers can expect to utilize touchless turnstiles and doors, limiting the potential for germs to be spread through surfaces. The building's elevators will utilize a destination dispatch mode in which passengers are assigned an elevator cab by destination, limiting idle waiting time spent in a closed space with other guests. The elevator will also utilize mobile technology so customers can select their floor destination directly from their phone, eliminating the need to interact with high-touch surfaces, like a standard elevator button.

## **Frequent Turns of Outside Air**

Hospital-grade air filters are worth the additional investment, providing increased air quality and circulation. Knowing the benefits of frequently circulated fresh air, our team made the decision to proceed with an advanced heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC) system that will include MERV-15 level of filtration, which is one of the most advanced levels of air-filtration available.

The One Congress HVAC system will capture airborne viruses and 95 percent of particles including auto emissions, mold spores, cement dust, bacteria, smoke, carpet fibers and more. MERV-15 filtration is so efficient at capturing airborne viruses that they are frequently deployed in settings such as hospitals.

In addition to offering state-of-the-art filtration, our HVAC system will ensure there are four turns of outside air per hour, providing One Congress customers with the freshest air quality possible. This level of fresh air turnover is improved two times over what is available in office buildings built in the last 20 years. We believe that this additional fresh air will add immeasurable value and will add to the mental and physical wellness for all of our One Congress customers.

## **Construction Practices Adapt**

Construction safety protocols should be assessed frequently during this challenging time and into the future. Of course, when COVID-19 began, Carr Properties, National, HYM, and our construction partners at John Moriarty & Assoc. (JMA) proactively examined the safety and wellness processes in place to see where we could improve. COVID-19 presented us with an opportunity to step up to the plate and provide the best work environment possible.



**Oliver Carr**

As part of that, we increased sanitization requirements and made thoughtful changes to the ways in which employees entered and exited the construction site. Outside of mandated temperature checks and personal protective equipment, JMA instituted a mobile check-in process to help ensure employees are kept safe. Construction team members became required to scan an on-site QR code and fill out a brief questionnaire about their COVID-19 risk factors in order to gain entry. This has made the contact tracing process smooth and efficient and ensured that risk is assessed before a construction crew member enters the site, limiting potential COVID-19 exposure and spread.

In keeping health and wellness top of mind, both for our construction team now and long-term office customers in the future, we have utilized technology to reimagine the future of One Congress. While COVID-19 accelerated the implementation of these wellness initiatives, we are confident that the healthy experience they provide will prove to be impactful and positive for years to come.

*Oliver Carr is CEO of Carr Properties.*