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Seaport to host tech research campus

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Bioscience labs are springing up on the South Boston waterfront, promising a high-tech future for an area once dominated by the marine industry.

Developer Related Beal broke ground yesterday on the \$73 million first phase of Innovation Square, a research campus in the Raymond L. Flynn Marine Park that will be anchored by an expansion of bioscience accelerator Mass Innovation Labs.

Stephen Faber of Related Beal said the project would spark “research and development on the South Boston waterfront against the backdrop of ongoing, vibrant heavy industry,” adding it will have “researchers and ironworkers working harmoniously side-by-side.”



Mass Innovation will occupy 54,000 square feet of the 125,000 square feet of available lab space on Tide Street in the first phase of the project. The second phase calls for an additional 250,000 square feet.

Faber said it has recently been near impossible for small- and medium-size ventures to find lab space in Kendall Square's epicenter of bioscience as larger companies such as Merck set up beachheads in the neighborhood and gobbled up office space.

"The release valve for Kendall Square has been the suburbs," which lack much of the urban appeal and mass transit amenities of a Boston location, Faber told the Herald.

Construction on the first phase of Innovation Square begins this month, and the project is set for completion in mid-2019. The location on Tide Street was where the city deposited snow during the winter of 2015. The resulting pile didn't melt until July.

Mass Innovation CEO Amrit Chaudhuri said the company he founded in 2015 is primed to expand into the Seaport, where it can continue to nurture life science companies hunting for breakthroughs on cancer research, rare disease and gene editing.

“Fifty percent of our clients are early-stage companies,” Chaudhuri said. “They are the two guys coming out of an academic lab that have an idea and they say, ‘Hey I want to go cure cancer,’ and we have a rare opportunity — and a privilege, really — to be able to nurture that group.”

Mayor Martin J. Walsh hailed the development as evidence that Boston’s growth isn’t reliant on any one sector.

“As we grow the city, we are growing it in ways where we are not depending on one type of industry,” Walsh said. “Innovation Square will further position Boston as a leader in the life sciences industry, attracting new companies and a range of job opportunities.”