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Will a New Biotech Cluster in Boston Challenge Kendall Square?

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The Boston area, specifically Cambridge, has the highest **concentration** of biopharma companies in the U.S. As a **BioSpace** HotBed, it is known as **Genetown**. Within Cambridge, the Kendall Square neighborhood has been dubbed “the most innovative square mile on the planet.”

Kendall Square is also such a desirable location for biotech startups that there are almost no vacancies.

Now, three Boston-area developers, **King Street Properties**, **Mugar Enterprises** and the **DiStefano** family, have **proposed** a possible new life sciences campus in the area to compete with Kendall Square. It is a 607,900-square-foot campus on a 4.3-acre site in Allston, an officially recognized neighborhood of Boston.

The campus would include laboratories, research,

development, office, residential and civic space in three buildings. It would include 5,000 square feet of open space and 885 parking spots. It has, to date, been called NEXUS – The Allston Innovation Corridor.

“The proponent is expert at accelerating emerging nodes such as the life science cluster that is developing in this area, and has a successful track record of attracting growing life science companies to areas outside of Kendall Square,” the three groups wrote in a project notification form filed November 6 to the Boston Planning and Development Agency.

The Corridor proposal is near **Harvard University**’s School of Engineering and Applied Sciences and half-a-mile from both New Balance’s global headquarters and a new MBTA Commuter Rail station.

In the PNF, the developers wrote, “The project will transform an underdeveloped and outdated streetscape into a dynamic hub of research, residential housing, and retail activity.”

The planned campus would include a seven-story, 130-foot building with 319,000 square feet of laboratory and office space and 6,000 square feet of retail/restaurant space at 250 Western Avenue; a five- to six-story, 60- to 72-foot building with 40 residential units, 5,500 square feet of retail and restaurant space at 280 Western Avenue; and at 305 Western Avenue, they propose a six-story, 116-foot building with 220,400 square feet of laboratory and office space, and 9,600 square feet of retail restaurant space.

Overall, the project would have 539,400 square feet of laboratory, research, and office space, 40 residential units and 21,100 square feet of retail and restaurant space.

King Street Properties specializes in life science real estate. It is developing the campus with Mugar Enterprise and the DiStefano family. The DiStefano family has owned the site for more than 50 years. The architect is **DiMella Shaffer** of Boston.

In the PNF, the developers wrote, "As the uses along Western Avenue have transitioned from intensive, industrial uses, the family recognized that the current uses are outdated and began a process to determine how the family wanted to redevelop the project site. After meeting with Mugar Enterprises and King Street Properties, which has a long track record of success in life science development, the family determined that a project anchored by an innovative commercial research and development use was the best direction for the future reuse of the project site."

They propose building in two phases, with 250 and 280 Western Avenue going first. If the project is approved, construction will take approximately two years to complete.



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