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Boston life sciences predictions for 2015

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Biotech is one of the hottest, fastest growing industries in Boston, with a record-breaking 16 biotech IPOs in 2014, a 78% increase over 2013. As we look ahead to 2015, here are some trends we're keeping our eye on in the life sciences industry.

1. There will be more biotech startups. Several local venture capital firms including: Atlas Venture, Third Rock Venture and Flagship Ventures are nurturing biotech ideas by funding research and development. As these portfolio companies grow, they will need real estate space. This ground-breaking approach to startup support, often seen mostly in academic settings for biotechnology, is further making Boston a hotbed of life science startups including Seres Health, Scholar Rock and Unum Therapeutics to name a few.

2. A focus on immunology. Throughout Boston, whether a startup or an established life sciences company, there has been a focus on immunology drug development. Could this be the next big focus for life science companies in Boston? A ton of funding and focus is dedicated to this area and young biotech companies such as Enumeral Biomedical Corp. and Unum Therapeutics value real estate space focused on this - and we don't see the trend slowing down.

3. Life science companies are looking for affordable space with like-minded companies surrounding them: When it comes to hot areas that provide ample space and great value in Greater Boston area, pay attention to:

* Watertown: Close to Cambridge, Watertown has become a hot spot for tech and life sciences companies looking to escape expensive rents. There are also several industrial buildings that are being converted or retrofitted to fit the need of biotech companies. Companies can get a space at low-mid-\$40s per s/f, not including taxes, insurance and maintenance (known as a triple net lease).

* Needham: South of the Mass. Pike - especially Needham - is seeing a cluster of life sciences form. Rents are \$30 per s/f triple net.

* West Cambridge: If you want to be in Cambridge - check out the Alewife area in West Cambridge. It is more affordable and has space available for the next big biotech company. Rents are in the mid-\$40s psf, triple net.

* Drydock Avenue: 27 Drydock Ave. in the Innovation District comes in at a low \$30 per s/f, triple net.

We'll be monitoring these trends throughout the year and can't wait to see what 2015 brings.

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