

Shire gets a little bigger

Meghan B. Kelly
Lexington Minuteman
August 20, 2009

Lexington - Shire signed a new lease last week to expand at Lexington Technology Park, adding an additional 160,000 square feet of office and lab space, which was approved by Town Meeting several years ago.

“[The new building] will be the final push out of Cambridge,” said Jessica Cotrone, a spokesperson for Shire. The company’s offices are split between Lexington and Cambridge, and it’s looking to have everything except a manufacturing plant in Lexington.

The move will make Lexington Shire’s official headquarters and will accommodate the company’s rapid growth. Cotrone said Shire has been hiring about 10 people a week for the last year, adding to its almost 1,000 employees.

“We’re very excited to have everyone in one space,” she said.

The move to expand in Lexington is part of Shire’s overall strategy to expand, said Cotrone. Last year, Shire told Massachusetts it would bring at least 680 jobs to the state by 2012, and has hired about 300 people so far, said Cotrone.

Shire will be moving into what’s called Building 200, located on the eastern part of the property, next to the current Building 300.

The lease is for 15 years and the building will house research and development, labs and offices.

“We’re executing our original strategy,” said Joe Zink, a principal at Patriot Partners. “[This] expansion is really just a continuation of it.”

Construction likely wouldn’t begin until the second quarter of 2010, said Zink, and would take at least 12 to 18 months from that to complete.

Constructing Building 200 is part of an overall strategy that includes Patriot Partners’ bid to expand even more, with a proposal scheduled to come up at a Special Town Meeting in November.

That proposal calls for adding an additional 380,000 square feet from two buildings — Building 100 and Building 600 — and increasing the floor area ratio (FAR) from .15 to .24.

Zink could not say what affect, if any, Shire's signing for Building 200 would have on November's proposal. Shire has often been rumored to be the tenant for the proposed expansion but representatives from both companies have always declined to confirm the rumor.

Both Cotrone and Zink praised Lexington for welcoming life sciences and biotech companies with open arms.

"When Shire first came, they felt very comfortable that Lexington understood their business," said Zink. Other towns and cities have attempted to attract life sciences companies but lack the track record Lexington has, he said.

"It's been a great partnership with the town," said Cotrone.

Reporter Meghan B. Kelly can be reached at mkelly@cnc.com.