

After months of uncertainty, a tentative agreement has been reached to build UMass Dartmouth's proposed multimillion-dollar biomanufacturing

facility in Fall River on land that, while originally intended for the project, had more recently been slated for a casino, university and city officials confirmed Wednesday.

A final decision will be made after additional review and discussion at the state level. State Secretary of Housing and Economic Development Gregory Bialecki met with university and city officials on Wednesday and will brief Gov. Deval Patrick on the progress that has been made, officials said.

"I would hope that — not barring any issue that comes up that needs more information — that in the near future we ought to be able to announce that we're back on track and going for broke to make this happen," UMass Dartmouth Chancellor Jean MacCormack said.

The \$22 million facility, which would be funded with a mix of state and university money, was originally planned as the anchor tenant in a proposed 300-acre BioPark in Fall River.

However, the decision by the Fall River Redevelopment Authority in May of last year to sell the original site to the Mashpee Wampanoag for development as a resort casino threw the location — and the project itself — into question.

This week, city officials, faced with a deed restriction prohibiting a casino on the site and ongoing legal challenges, announced they had taken the Mashpee's offer off the table and were returning to the BioPark concept.

In the months following the Fall River RDA's initial decision to sell the land to the Mashpee tribe, the university did solicit proposals for other sites, including one from the city of New Bedford, but always maintained that the initial site was the best-suited location for the project.

"Our vision has (been) to have sort of a research triangle within the region that attracts new kinds of business," said MacCormack, pointing to SMAST and the Advanced Technology and

Manufacturing Center as two legs of that triangle.

"We think the BioPark will give us that life science momentum in the region. ... We want them all going at the same time."

Under the tentative agreement reached between the university and the city, the Fall River Redevelopment Authority would donate several acres of land to UMass for the facility; the facility would be sited closer to the front of the park than planned originally, according to MacCormack.

The remainder of the 300-acre park would be developed by the Fall River RDA as a biotechnology business park. In addition to the research overlay district zoning that governs what types of companies can locate at the park, covenants further reinforcing the biotechnology focus of the development will be written into the deed, MacCormack said.

"The covenants will run with the land, and I think what they will do is, for tenants that are looking to locate up there, it will give them the assurance that there will be other like companies as their neighbors," said Ken Fiola, executive vice president of the Fall River Office of Economic Development.

Kofi Jones, a spokeswoman for Bialecki's office, said the meeting on Wednesday between state, university and city officials was a good sign of forward momentum; everyone left the meeting feeling very positive about the project, she said.

"I think that we are appropriately optimistic," she said. "As you know, there have been starts and stops before, so we would want to proceed appropriately."

```
<![CDATA[ .jsk-CommentFormButton{display:none;}  
.js-singleCommentReplyable{display:none;} .jsk-CommentFormSurface{display:none;}  
#ReaderReaction{display:none;} ]]>
```

[Business Forum](#) | [Christian Forum](#) | [Coupon Forum](#) | [Discussion Forum](#) | [Gamers Forum](#)
[Legal Forum](#) | [Politics Forum](#) | [Sports Forum](#) | [Teen Forum](#) | [Webmaster Forum](#)

Deal back on for UMass biotech park in Fall River - SouthCoastToday.com

Written by Administrator

Wednesday, 19 January 2011 23:46 -

Source: <http://news.google.com/news/url?sa=t&fd=R&usg=AFQjCNHob4740mXl1MOnsq0f2eJxvXVqpg&url=http://www.southcoasttoday.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20110120/NEWS/101200331/-1/NEWSMAP>