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HYNES CONVENTION CENTER TO UNDERGO MAJOR RENOVATIONS ADDING RETAIL SPACE, UPDATING FACILITIES

Renovations to update security, technology features and make building more "green."

Boston- The Massachusetts Convention Center Authority today announced an \$18 million renovation plan for the John B. Hynes Veterans Memorial Convention Center that will generate new revenue and capitalize on the facility's success by creating retail and restaurant space in the prime Back Bay location. The proposed plan also include updates to the facility's security and technology features and are the first major renovations done at the Hynes since it opened as a convention center in 1988.

"The Hynes is already a vital part of the life and economy of the Back Bay and Boston and the addition of retail and restaurant space will make it a more exciting place for conventioners, residents and people enjoying Boston," said James Rooney, executive director of the MCCA. "The upgrades to the Hynes' technology features will make it even more appealing and useful to the medical and high-tech conventions that continually return to the Hynes or seek it out for their first meeting in Boston."

"The investment we are making in the Hynes will allow it to generate new revenue and ensure its future viability," said Gloria Larson, chair of the MCCA Board of Directors. "We are glad to be contributing to the life of the city while also improving the experience conventioners have when conducting business or enjoying Boston during their visit."

The proposed renovations follow a report by a special legislative commission released in December of 2006 that concluded that the Hynes remains a viable convention and meetings facility but that the MCCA should explore opportunities to enhance the revenue performance of this real estate asset. Over the next five years, the Hynes is expected to host an average of 120 events per year generating approximately 300,000 hotel room nights on an annual basis. As is the norm in the convention industry, the Hynes receives an annual operating subsidy which has averaged \$2.5 million in recent years down from nearly \$10 million per year during the 1990's.

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“The introduction of retail space will generate \$1-1.5 million per year in additional revenue from this MCCA asset reducing the amount of required subsidy and, bringing us closer to having a convention facility that on an operating basis breaks even or turns a profit. It is bold, but it is our goal to reach that point within five years,” Rooney added.

The proposed retail space will be located in three areas on the first and second floors of the convention center; two new spaces will be along Boylston Street at the east corner of the building adjacent to the Prudential Plaza and the west corner at Dalton and Boylston Streets. A third interior location will be on the second level of the Hynes along the main corridor in space currently used as a cafeteria supporting conventions and other events. Each of these spaces will be approximately 10,000 square feet. The 30,000 total square feet in retail or restaurant venues will generate additional revenue for the Hynes and enliven Boylston Street without interrupting or negatively impacting convention bookings or business.

The MCCA will also update the technological and audio /visual capabilities making the facility more engaging and functional for the increasing number of high-tech and medical conferences booking the Hynes. These upgrades include improved wireless and cell service, visual information systems in common areas, and a complete overhaul of the facility’s audio systems.

The Hynes’ safety and security systems will be upgraded to more current standards by replacing the fire alarm system, installing life safety equipment stations, new room security systems in all exhibition halls and meeting spaces and a complete upgrade of the internal security camera and communications systems.

To return the Hynes to its award-winning architectural state, the renovation plan also includes aesthetic updates such as replacing the carpet and paint in common areas and meeting rooms, which have not been changed since the facility was opened in 1988.

In addition to these improvements, the MCCA will implement environmentally friendly changes to the Hynes such as new lighting, insulation, air and water systems that will increase the building’s energy and water efficiency making it more “green.”

No date has been set for the renovation project that must still receive final authorization from the Governor and Legislature but all work is expected to be completed within a two year timeframe and will be scheduled so as not to interrupt events booked into the Hynes. The MCCA plans to work closely with the City of Boston, local neighbors and businesses through the design, development and implementation process.

The John B. Hynes Veterans Memorial Convention Center had been operating as Boston’s premier convention facility since 1988. It is located in Boston’s Back Bay neighborhood and is connected to a complex of 3,500 hotel rooms and two malls with more than 200 retail stores and restaurants. It was first opened in 1965 as the John B.

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Hynes Veterans Memorial Auditorium and later remodeled and opened as a convention center in 1988. In 2006, the Hynes Commission, citing overwhelming evidence, determined that the facility was successful in the convention industry and a significant economic generator for both the city and state.

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