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MCCA SELECTS LOCAL FIRM TO LEAD BCEC SITE PLANNING

Sasaki Associates/TVS/CSL Chosen to Analyze Meetings Market and Develop Future Program

BOSTON- The Massachusetts Convention Center Authority (MCCA) today announced that the MCCA Board of Directors voted to hire a team of consultants led by Sasaki Associates of Watertown, MA to develop a master plan for the 62-acre South Boston Waterfront site of the award-winning Boston Convention & Exhibition Center (BCEC). Through comprehensive analysis of BCEC performance to-date, industry trends and an assessment of the current property, the consultant team will help the MCCA determine if and when an expansion of the facility will be necessary to ensure that Boston remains competitive in the meetings and convention marketplace as clients demand more space and better amenities now and in future bookings.

The analysis and master planning effort is expected to begin by December 1, 2007 with at least preliminary findings and recommendations completed by June 1, 2008. If an expansion program is recommended, an appropriate public review and legislative approval process will follow.

“I will look to the Sasaki team of experts to provide rigorous market analysis for us to make an informed decision on whether or not to expand the facility, and if so, to determine the most effective way possible,” said James E. Rooney, Executive Director of the MCCA. “I feel confident that the master plan created through this effort will be one that enhances Boston’s ability to compete and to continue to generate significant economic impact for the region.”

Legislation approved in 1997 authorized the MCCA to assemble a 62-acre site in the emerging South Boston Waterfront district for the construction of a convention center and to allow for future expansion. The current BCEC complex, including the Westin Waterfront Hotel, occupies approximately 40 acres. The larger site was acquired with the intention of eventually creating additional exhibition and meeting space on the remaining 22-acres. A 1300 car parking lot temporarily sits on most of the expansion space.

The MCCA requested proposals from firms or teams with the capacity to provide an analysis of existing land and buildings, demonstrate if and when additional facilities are necessary, define measures used to demonstrate the need for and financial impact of facility expansion, and to analyze traffic, environmental and neighborhood considerations.

“The MCCA saw in the Sasaki team many qualities that we believe are crucial to giving us guidance and developing a master plan that best suits our mission to increase future business at the BCEC as we compete with cities and expanding convention facilities across the world,” said Gloria Cordes Larson, Chairman of the MCCA Board. “We look forward to working with Sasaki Associates to creatively and thoughtfully utilize and develop the space available at the BCEC to produce the maximum benefit for taxpayers.”

The MCCA Designer Selection Panel, chaired by Rooney and consisting of five local outside, non-MCCA, design and development professionals, reviewed seven proposals that were discussed under predefined application criteria and guidelines. The Panel viewed the Sasaki Associates proposal as having the most effective team including experienced architects from Thompson, Ventulett, Stainback (TVS) based in Atlanta and the highly regarded business consultant John Kaatz of Convention Sports & Leisure (CSL) from Minneapolis. The Panel found the background and experience of CSL, convention industry market experts and economic consultants, proposed by Sasaki particularly valuable.

Since the opening of the BCEC in June, 2004, Boston has proven itself to be a desirable convention destination because of its rich history and demographics, but the city is competing with top tier cities across the country where convention centers are larger or expansion plans are already underway, as in the cases of New York and Philadelphia. The BCEC ranks only as the 28th largest exhibit hall in the United States according to the 2007 edition of *Tradeshow Week Major Exhibit Hall Directory*. In fact, when compared to facilities in the *Tradeshow Week Top Ten Convention Cities*, the BCEC at 516,000 square feet is the smallest convention center. By comparison, the Las Vegas Convention Center comprises of 1.9 million square-feet of exhibition space, Chicago’s McCormick Place makes up 2.7 million square-feet and the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, FL boasts 2.1 million square-feet of exhibition space.

“The Sasaki team is excited to work with the MCCA and provide them with expert analysis and planning so they make the best informed decisions to effectively remain competitive in the convention and meeting marketplace,” said Fiske Crowell, principal in charge of the project. “We know at the end of this process that a plan will be put forward that makes Boston an even more desirable destination for the industry.”

For over a half a century, Sasaki Associates has been involved in substantial master planning projects both nationally (Corpus Christi Bayfront; Americas World Trade Center, Puerto Rico); and locally (Boston College; Technology Square@MIT). TVS has vast convention center design experience, having performed services for the MassMutual Center in Springfield, MA, Pennsylvania Convention Center, Puerto Rico Convention Center, Connecticut and Raleigh Convention Centers among others. CSL’s John Kaatz is the former head of Cooper & Lybrand Sports and Leisure Facility Practice and has provided economic and planning advice concerning the Pennsylvania Convention Center, the Jacob Javits Center, the Washington (D.C.) Convention Center, the Miami Beach Convention Center and the Gonzalez Convention Center in San Antonio, TX.

About the BCEC

Welcoming hundreds of thousands of attendees each year, the BCEC, named Convention Center of the Year by *Event Solutions* magazine, a leading trade publication is the largest convention center in New England, sitting on 62-acres of land and providing unparalleled meeting and exhibition opportunities. The building offers more than 516,000 square feet of contiguous exhibition space, 160,000 square feet of flexible meeting space, more than 300,000 square feet of function and registration space, 86 meeting rooms and a dramatic 41,000 square foot ballroom overlooking the Boston skyline. The BCEC offers valet parking and on-site parking for over 1,200 vehicles. The BCEC hosted 145 events over the past year with nearly 370,000 attendees, generating more than \$147 million in direct spending.

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