

**TO:** BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY AND  
PETER MEADE, DIRECTOR

**FROM:** KAIROS SHEN, CHIEF PLANNER  
RICHARD MCGUINNESS, DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR WATERFRONT  
PLANNING  
TAD READ, SENIOR PLANNER III

**SUBJECT:** AWARD OF CONTRACT TO MCMAHON ASSOCIATES FOR THE MT.  
VERNON STREET 25% DESIGN

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**SUMMARY:** This Memorandum requests authorization for the Director to enter into a contract for consultant services with McMahon Associates for engineering, landscape design, and urban design services to develop an approved 25% design for Mt. Vernon Street in Columbia Point. The contract shall be for an amount not-to-exceed Four Hundred Nine Thousand and Five Hundred Dollars (\$409,500).

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**INTRODUCTION**

On October 17, 2013, the BRA Board authorized the Secretary to advertize a Request for Proposals (“RFP”) for engineering, landscape design and urban design services for the redesign of Mt. Vernon Street in Columbia Point. Since that time staff has issued the RFP and overseen a consultant selection process, resulting in a recommendation to enter into a contract with McMahon Associates to develop the desired 25% design.

**BACKGROUND**

Located within two miles (and three subway stops) from downtown Boston, Columbia Point is home to some of Boston’s most venerable institutions: the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum; the State Archives; the University of Massachusetts, Boston (“UMass Boston”); The Boston Globe; and, Boston College High School, among others. It is also home to the approximately 3,500 residents who live in the Harbor Point community.

In 2011, the BRA Board approved the Columbia Point Master Plan (“Master Plan”). The Master Plan was as response to individual, uncoordinated plans for major new development on the part of different stakeholders in Columbia Point. In particular, UMass Boston was preparing its own 25 year campus master plan. The Corcoran Jennison Companies was planning a major new development for the former Bayside

Exposition property. And the MBTA was entertaining the possibility of air rights development over JFK/UMass Station. A primary purpose of the Master Plan was to coordinate planning and development on the peninsula.

New development has followed quickly on the heels of adoption of the Columbia Point Master Plan and UMass Boston's campus master plan. UMass Boston will complete a new 220,000 square foot Integrated Science Center in fall 2013 and a new 190,000 square foot General Academic Building in 2015. By 2025, the university plans to increase its student population from its current 16,000 students to 25,000 students. In addition, private developments including Synergy Investment LLC's 278 unit housing development at 25 Morrissey Boulevard and Corcoran Jennison's 184 unit University Place Residences were recently approved. Finally, the new 40,000 square foot Edward M. Kennedy Center of Senate Studies is slated to open in 2014, promising to attract a new wave of visitors to the peninsula.

This is all to say that the transformation of Columbia Point through new development is already tangible.

The Columbia Point Master plan envisions a redesigned Mt. Vernon Street to sustainably knit together existing and future development. Specifically, policy 4.3.4 calls for a, "Redesigned Mt. Vernon Street...with generous tree-lined sidewalks and a cycle track in each direction." With its main campus at the southern terminus of Mt. Vernon Street and a new campus at the northern terminus, Mt. Vernon Street will assume an even more important role for UMass Boston students and employees – not to mention the residents of Harbor Point and students at Dever Elementary and McCormick Middle Schools – providing safe, commodious transportation for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit, and automobiles.

The design for Mt. Vernon Street has been advanced recently by The American Cities Coalition ("TACC"). TACC is a Columbia Point based non-profit organization founded by Joe Corcoran of Corcoran-Jennison that has worked since 1994 to advance and transform distressed communities. TACC develops and implements initiatives to de-concentrate poverty, increase education and economic opportunities for families, and facilitate partnerships between stakeholders to support neighborhood transformation. In 2012 TACC enlisted the services of Utile, Inc. to develop a conceptual design for Mt. Vernon Street. At the time, Mount Vernon Street did not have any vehicular striping or lane delineation. The study therefore initially focused on the midsection of Mount Vernon Street to address safety concerns by residents of Harbor Point and the Dever-McCormack School about unsafe roadway conditions. However, development pressure around the JFK/UMass T Station and construction by UMass Boston the EMK Institute precipitated a more comprehensive look along the length of Mount Vernon Street. Using the Columbia Point Master Plan as starting point, the conceptual design adheres closely to the city's Complete Streets Guidelines. The only city-owned street on Columbia Point, Mt. Vernon has a significant right of way. Consequently, the conceptual design was able to reduce vehicular travel lanes, widen sidewalks, introduce a landscape zone, add enhanced intersection and mid-block crosswalks with curb

extensions, and introduce a cycle track along both sides of the street. Utile's concept design was developed in consultation with the Harbor Point Resident's Association and the Dever-McCormack School. The concept design has also been presented to Columbia Point Associates, a group representing all major institutions and stakeholders on Columbia Point.

In early 2013, TACC approached the Boston Transportation Department and BRA with the concept plan for Mt. Vernon Street. The design sought to create a better entry to the UMass campus, while also creating a gateway to the cultural institutions at the end of the peninsula, such as the JFK Presidential Library and Museum, State Archives, and the new Edward M. Kennedy Institute. With its strong emphasis on balancing all transportation modes, and with its generous accommodation for pedestrians and cyclists, the concept plan set forth a compelling and more sustainable vision for the future of Columbia Point.

While the BRA will lead the initial concept design and public planning process, staff will be collaborating closely on every step with the Boston Transportation Department and Public Works Department. As the design progresses into the engineering phase, the BRA will relinquish its management to the appropriate City departments.

### **SCOPE OF SERVICES**

The scope of services for the Request for Proposals ("RFP") includes four major components: (1) analyze and document existing conditions; (2) develop a concept design; (3) prepare 25% design development and submittal; 4) manage public participation and agency coordination. A major goal of the project will be to create a 25% design consistent with the City's Complete Streets Guidelines and befitting Columbia Point's diverse communities and well known institutions.

### **FUNDING**

Funding for the Mt. Vernon Street Redesign in the amount of \$500,000 has been approved in the City's Capital Budget. The BRA is designated as the Managing Department.

### **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

On October 17, 2013, the BRA Board authorized the Executive Secretary to advertise a Request for Proposals ("RFP") to engage a consultant team for engineering, landscape design, and urban design services for the redesign of Mt. Vernon Street. In consultation with the Public Works Department and Boston Transportation Department, BRA staff has determined that the design process should occur in two phases. The first phase will involve developing an approved 25% design. The second phase will take the approved 25% design to a full 100% design to allow the project to be bid for construction. The RFP issued on November 12, 2013 was for the first phase.

## CONSULTANT SELECTION

The RFP selection committee evaluated the proposals based on the following criteria: qualifications and experience, technical qualifications, response to the scope of work, consultant team qualifications and experience, and allocation of resources and schedule. As a result of this evaluation, McMahon Associates was selected. McMahon Associates brings with them the following highly qualified subconsultants: HDR Engineering, Inc.; Crosby/Schlessinger/Smallridge; OMLOOP Design; Surveying and Mapping Consultants, Inc.; and, The Street Plans Collaborative.

## RECOMMENDATION

The BRA staff requests authorization for the Director to enter into a contract for consultant services with McMahon Associates for engineering, landscape design, and urban design services to develop an approved 25% design for Mt. Vernon Street in Columbia Point. The contract shall be for an amount not-to-exceed Four Hundred Nine Thousand and Five Hundred Dollars (\$409,500).

An appropriate vote follows:

**VOTED:** That the Director be, and hereby is, authorized to enter into a contract for consultant services with McMahon Associates for engineering, landscape design, and urban design services to develop an approved 25% design for Mt. Vernon Street in Columbia Point in an amount not to exceed Four Hundred Nine Thousand and Five Hundred Dollars (\$409,500).