



CITY OF BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS
Office of the Mayor
Thomas M. Menino

PRESS RELEASE

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Urban Marketing Collaborative to Lead Downtown Crossing Initiative

*BRA Selects International Firm to Help Create Branding
& Identity Strategy for Boston's Retail District*

The Boston Redevelopment Authority Board today awarded Urban Marketing Collaborative (UMC) with a contract for services to create a branding and identity strategy for Downtown Crossing, Boston's historic retail district. The BRA has committed \$250,000 in resources for the six to nine month contract. The UMC team demonstrated a complete understanding of the area and showcased a comprehensive approach to the identity and branding process, building upon their proven track record in other cities. UMC carefully selected an international team of experts to provide creative, out-of-box thinking to address the challenges and opportunities in Downtown Crossing. The team will respect the historical and cultural heritage of the area in its planning while providing tested, state-of-the-art solutions. UMC plans to take advantage of the new opportunities that face the area – like the sale of the Filene's building and the Crossroads Initiative – and believe that these must be addressed creatively in order to maximize their impact. UMC's results-oriented approach will provide the City with a blueprint for implementation.

“Downtown Crossing is one of Boston's beloved shopping districts, but it is in need of revitalization,” said Mayor Thomas M. Menino. “Urban Marketing Collaborative will bring new energy, ideas and an exciting new brand to Downtown Crossing. We're looking for a Downtown Crossing that takes full advantage of its resources and includes a real mix of retailers.”

Mayor Menino added, “just today Macy's answered the City's call to open up their storefront with windows along Washington Street – unveiling beautiful floor to ceiling windows with great views into the store – creating a more pedestrian friendly streetscape.”

To kick off the consultants work, the BRA will host two visioning sessions with the business and retail community in the next couple of months. UMC will complete a broad-range survey, which will assess the needs of shoppers, retailers, residents and developers. The visioning sessions and survey will directly form the foundation for the consultants to develop a branding strategy for Downtown Crossing. The consultants will work hand in hand with an internal City team. Once a branding strategy is formed, the BRA and the consultants will present the branding concept and action plan to the public for feedback. It is expected that this timeline will take six to nine months to complete.

UMC and their sub-consultants, Moore Iacofano Goltsman Inc., BSC Group, Intelligent Space Partnership, and 160over90, have the expertise in creating branding and imaging strategies, downtown land use planning, interpreting retail trends, downtown revitalization, urban design, market and financial

feasibility, and programming and planning of mixed use development projects and districts that is required for the successful planning of a revitalized Downtown Crossing area.

Based out of Toronto, Canada, UMC has extensive experience in working with urban retail markets in the United States as well as around the world. Collectively, the team has successfully worked on the following downtown retail districts – Denver, Pittsburgh, Providence, Harlem, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Los Angeles, Houston, Miami, Sacramento, Long Beach (CA), London (U.K.), Montreal, Toronto, Canberra (Australia), Edinburgh (Scotland) and Boston. They also have tremendous experience in dealing with pedestrian movement modeling and community visioning. Additionally, the team has relationships with a variety of internationally known retailers and developers, which will aid in trying to attract new retailers to Downtown Crossing while also working with existing ones.

The BRA issued a Request for Proposals on June 5, 2006 asking for a consultant that could assist with phase two of Mayor Menino's Downtown Crossing Initiative. The majority of the RFP called for a consultant that could create a new branding and identity strategy for the retail district – in addition the RFP asked for a team that could meet the following tasks:

- create a public space model – this will examine how people walk the area, where they walk, how they enter buildings and what would improve their experience as pedestrians in the district
- economic investment strategy – this piece asks the consultants to explore pedestrian malls and how they have evolved in other cities, whether or not they are still in use. This piece also asks the consultants to examine alternative space in the district – lower and upper level space as well as MBTA space that is not currently used.
- action plan for implementation – this piece asks the consultants to estimate rough costs in a budget, develop recommendations as well as create a timeline for implementation

The Downtown Crossing district, centered at the intersection of Summer and Washington Streets, comprises over 1.65 million square feet of retail space, has over 100,000 people a day pass through it, and has, over its 100+ year history, been the center of retail activity for the City and region.

In November 2004, Mayor Menino announced the creation of the Downtown Crossing Economic Improvement Initiative, signaling the importance of a physical upgrade of the district. The initiative is a private/public partnership of the BRA, Boston Transportation Department, Inspectional Services Department, Public Works Department, Basic City Services Department and Downtown Crossing property owners. The Downtown Crossing Economic Initiative is comprised of an ongoing streetscape improvement plan in addition to the current comprehensive branding approach for the district.

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