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Parsons Brinckerhoff awarded contract for the planning and design of roadway improvements to Union Square

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The city of Somerville has awarded a contract to Parsons Brinckerhoff for the planning and design of roadway improvements to Union Sq., a business district within the city.

The purpose of the study is to assist the city in a public outreach process that will develop a recommended design for roadway and utility improvements in and around Union Sq. The study will identify a design alternative that will improve all modes of transportation, including vehicular, pedestrian, bicycle, bus, and the 2016 opening of a Green Line light rail station at Union Sq. It will also identify municipal utility system improvements necessary to support the anticipated redevelopment following the opening of the Green Line station.

The project's goals are twofold: Above ground, the goal is to maximize public open space in the square and create a distinctive destination point for visitors to the area. Below ground, the goal is to upgrade the stormwater, sanitary sewer, and water supply systems.

Previous studies for Union Square identified several potential options to improve transportation traffic flow, bus service, pedestrian and bike safety, and open space. The current study will include a reevaluation of all findings and identification of additional design alternatives.

Parsons Brinckerhoff will lead a team of planners and engineers in executing the study, which will include traffic and transportation services, evaluating the operations of major intersections, proposing alternative traffic patterns, and working with the local transit agency, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, on possible new routes for buses through the square. The traffic work will be performed in a complete streets context, giving equal emphasis to accommodations for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and motorists. Civil engineering services will involve the design of the reconstructed streets, as well as improvements to storm drainage, sanitary sewers, and water mains.

The project also will entail extensive public outreach with a series of public meetings planned to solicit stakeholder input.

Following acceptance of the plan, Parsons Brinckerhoff will work with the city and all other partners to develop a phased plan for the design improvements. Implementation will likely begin in 2016 to coincide with the new Green Line station opening.

Parsons Brinckerhoff is a leader in developing and operating infrastructure around the world, with 14,000 employees dedicated to meeting the needs of clients and communities in the Americas, Europe, Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and Australia-Pacific regions. The firm offers skills and resources in strategic consulting, planning, engineering, program/construction management, and operations for transportation, power, mining, water/wastewater, and community development projects. Parsons Brinckerhoff is the professional services division of Balfour Beatty, an international infrastructure services organization that also provides construction services, support services, and

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