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Eastern Bank selects Margulies Perruzzi Architects to design "Branch of the Future" at 265 Franklin St., Boston

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Margulies Perruzzi Architects (MPA), one of the city's most innovative architectural and interior design firms, has been selected by Eastern Bank to provide interior design and graphic design services for the company as it redefines its retail branch banking program and develops ideas for more self-service, high-tech branches. Eastern Bank also collaborated with MPA to redesign the lobby of its corporate headquarters in the city in conjunction with the establishment of the company's new innovation lab, Eastern Labs.

MPA re-designed Eastern Bank's corporate headquarters at 265 Franklin St. to complement this new "branch of the future" concept. The 4,500 s/f, two-floor executive office space features a giant nine-screen video wall that displays Eastern Bank's technology-focused marketing messages and provides AV capability for videoconference calls. A circular, grand staircase connects the reception and lobby areas, and the office features a mix of management offices and open collaborative space for the bank's innovation center, Eastern Labs. Two conference rooms and a boardroom adjoin the second-floor reception area, with the boardroom's sliding glass walls opening for use as a multi-purpose space. A mobile reception desk provides flexibility for events, and branding panels with collaged images promote the bank's branding message of quality service, community, diversity, and sustainability.

With an eye towards re-imagining the future of branch banking, Eastern Bank selected MPA to help it design its "branch of the future" prototypes, more interactive, technology-enhanced, and branded branch environments that can serve as models for future locations. Throughout its history, Eastern Bank has had a strong appreciation for technology and how it affects interactions between staff and customers. MPA's workplace design translates this embrace of technology and customers' changing branch usage into a uniquely branded and expressive workplace design for Eastern Bank.

"The world of retail banking is changing rapidly, as customers ask for more electronic tools and digital channels to meet their banking needs," said Tom Dunn, senior vice president, Eastern Bank general services department. "The MPA design team understands our longstanding commitment to individualized service, and collaborated with us to design a new branch concept that melds technology with an enhanced customer service experience."

MPA's projects for Eastern Bank include:

* "Branch of the Future" Prototype in Cotuit, Mass. - MPA provided retail design services for Eastern Bank's first "branch of the future" prototype in Cotuit, Mass, a 2,100 s/f branch that serves as a new model for interactive technology, benefiting both staff and customers. Providing a more self-service banking model in the Cotuit location, MPA updated the traditional teller counter, opting instead for multiple kiosk type stations on the branch floor. The kiosks are staffed with employees who can

assist customers with all their banking needs or direct them to a virtual expert in a private room for more information on a banking product or service. An interactive table with a touch-screen keyboard is available to customers who want to independently complete a transaction. A community wall with multiple touch screens offers alternate access points to information on banking products, tips for setting up banking apps, local news feeds, and video games like "Design a Dollar" for children accompanying their parents to the bank.

* Micro-Branch in Lawrence, Mass. - MPA recently completed Eastern's second "branch of the future" prototype on the campus of Northern Essex Community College in Lawrence, Mass. Located at 420 Common St. in the heart of downtown, the "micro-branch" location shares space with a casual restaurant in the college's redesigned student union building. Touch screens on the walls provide students and visitors with lessons on maintaining their finances, and a bank associate conducts transactions through a laptop anywhere, eliminating long lines. With couches and high top chairs in the seating area connecting the branch and the restaurant, the compact 350 s/f space offers accessibility and convenience for students, and provides the bank with an innovative design to replicate in other new branches.

* Branch in Melrose, Mass. - Incorporating many of the design features utilized within Eastern's first "branch of the future" prototype in Cotuit, MPA recently designed a new Eastern Bank branch in Melrose, Mass., which is currently under construction.

* Administrative Center in Lynn, Mass. - To better support Eastern Bank's IT department in its main administrative center in Lynn, MPA designed a space that continues the bank's unique branding style. Featuring movable bench seating, team rooms, and conference rooms, the open and collaborative workspace was increased to 17,000 s/f to accommodate growth in the bank's customer-focused technology group.