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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****MMPI AND CUYAHOGA COUNTY ANNOUNCE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE TEAM FOR CLEVELAND MEDICAL MART AND CONVENTION CENTER**

**CLEVELAND, OH (April 29, 2010)** – Renowned landscape architecture firm Gustafson Guthrie Nichol Ltd (GGN) of Seattle, Washington and Cleveland, Ohio-based McKnight Associates, Ltd. have been selected as the urban design/landscape architecture team for the Cleveland Medical Mart and Convention Center project, as announced earlier today at the Cuyahoga County Commissioners meeting.

The selection of the urban design/landscape architecture team reflects the project's importance as a significant public space and outdoor mall originally planned by Daniel Burnham in 1903.

"Our priority in this stage of the process was the pairing of a local partner with an internationally-renowned landscape design firm, insuring extensive local participation and input into this project," said Mark Falanga, senior vice president, MMPI. "Everyone involved is very pleased with the pairing of and expected outcomes from GGN and local partner McKnight Associates."

A selection committee consisting of representatives from LMN Architects, the overall design architect for the project, MMPI, Cuyahoga County, the City of Cleveland Planning Commission, ParkWorks and Cleveland Public Art sent out a RFQ in March to eight nationally-known firms for a lead landscape architect for Cleveland Medical Mart and Convention Center. The selection committee interviewed three finalists in Cleveland and unanimously selected GGN, a firm known for its experience in designing high-use landscapes in complex, urban contexts. GGN is collaborating with local landscape architecture firm McKnight Associates, who will serve as Collaborating Landscape Architect for the project.

About Gustafson Guthrie Nichol Ltd: The designs of Gustafson Guthrie Nichol (GGN) express the sculptural qualities of site-specific, contextual landscape. GGN's multi-disciplinary work strengthens each site's identity of culture, nature, history, and function. GGN offers special experience in designing high-use landscapes in complex, urban contexts. Their work involves substantial collaboration with other disciplines. On rooftops, over freeways, between buildings, or suspended in the air, GGN's unusual landscapes are designed as sensuous, connected settings for diverse and ever-changing activities. GGN's recent project highlights include the Lurie Garden in Chicago's Millennium Park, North End Parks in Boston, CityCenterDC and The Smithsonian's Kogod Courtyard in Washington, DC, Seattle City Hall Plaza, Arthur Ross Terrace at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, and the new Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation headquarters in Seattle. GGN is part of the competition-winning team for the new Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture.

Recent project awards include the ASLA National Award of Excellence and Award of Merit for Design, multiple WASLA Honor and Merit awards for Design, the Tucker Architectural Award. GGN has also been a two-time finalist for the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Award.

"The Mall expresses Cleveland's rich history of progressive urban-design plans and development partnerships," said Shannon Nichol, GGN principal on the project. "We are honored to be able to have a part in this extraordinary project, to celebrate the heritage of the Mall while renewing its role as Cleveland's central landscape of welcoming, inspiration, and usefulness to both residents and visitors."

About McKnight: McKnight Associates, Ltd. is an award winning Cleveland-based Landscape Architecture firm initiated by James McKnight in 1987. McKnight has partnered with numerous national firms on local projects, including Perk Plaza (with New York City-based Thomas Balsley Associates), the Rockefeller Park Master Plan (with Charlottesville, Virginia-based Siteworks Studio), and Uptown Plaza in University Circle (with CMG of San Francisco). In 2009 McKnight Associates received a National Honor Award from the ASLA for its work with Siteworks on the Rockefeller Park Strategic Plan. Previous McKnight recognitions include a 2006 Honor Award from the Ohio Chapter of the ASLA for the Greenspace at Zone Recreation Center in Cleveland and another Honor Award from the OCASLA in 2002 for work on the Orchard School Community Park in Cleveland. McKnight received a Merit Award for the Shaker Heights Community Park "Round the World" Playground in 1996 and the Ohio Park and Recreation Association Design Award for the Geauga Park District Amphitheatre.

"Our firm is rooted in northeast Ohio, expanding from a sole proprietorship to a diverse practice with projects that range from grassroots vacant lot improvements to the complex urban sites of our city park systems," said Jim McKnight. "We are absolutely thrilled to be partnering with GGN on such a historically significant project for Cleveland."

The firm recently completed construction of the Horseshoe Lake Park Site Improvements and the Shaker Median Trail in Shaker Heights and local site development projects include the Solon City Hall, the College Commons/Library Site Improvements for Hiram College and Coleman Commons, the central commons space at the University of Akron. McKnight has also aided in preservation efforts at the Dunham Tavern Museum and the Sarah Benedict House Garden for the Cleveland Restoration Society. McKnight has also been involved in many local sustainability projects including site design improvements for the St. Luke's Redevelopment, one of Cleveland's first LEED certified neighborhoods.

#### **ParkWorks to steward design process for the Malls**

MMPI also announced that it has engaged ParkWorks, Inc., in partnership with Cleveland Public Art, to help steward the design process for the Malls. ParkWorks and Cleveland Public Art are Cleveland-based nonprofit organizations highly regarded for their work in designing and creating public spaces in Cleveland. The design of the public spaces is a priority for MMPI and its design team, as the Malls will be one of the most visible elements of the project. ParkWorks and Cleveland Public Art have been brought on to assure that design of the public spaces meets important civic objectives and to ensure that the Cleveland community is actively involved with the design process.

#### **Local Consultants Announced**

In addition to McKnight Associates and ParkWorks, several Cleveland-area consultants were announced at the County Commissioners meeting, including LMN local consultants Karpinski Engineering (MEP and Fire Protection), Osborn Engineering (Structural and Civil Engineering), Barber & Hoffman Inc. (Structural Engineering), Ralph Tyler Companies (Civil Engineering), Roberts Engineering (HVAC and Electrical), Sandhu & Associates Inc. (Plumbing and Fire Protection Engineering), Van Auken Akins Architects LLC (LEED Consulting), and McKnight Associates Ltd. (Urban Planning / Landscape), along with MMPI local consultants ParkWorks (Landscape Consultant), URS Corporation (Traffic Consultant), and EA Group (Environmental Consultant).

#### **Public Forum on Mall Landscaping set for May 6**

A Public Forum titled "The Future of the Malls" will be held Thursday, May 6 at 5:30 p.m. at the Louis Stokes Downtown Public Library, 325 Superior Avenue. Cleveland's historic Malls will be redesigned as part of the new Medical Mart and Convention Center. The community is encouraged to attend to meet and listen to members of the design team from LMN and GGN and to share ideas and participate in a dialogue about the future of Cleveland's downtown malls. The forum is free and open to the public. The Public Forum is presented by the Cleveland Public Library, Cleveland Public Art, ParkWorks, Cleveland State University, Cleveland Restoration Society, AIA: Cleveland, Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative, Downtown Cleveland Alliance, Green City Blue Lake Institute, Cleveland Mall Beautification Fund, MMPI, and Cuyahoga County.

**About MMPI**

**MMPI** is a trade show and property management firm, specializing in managing buildings devoted to wholesale showrooms and commercial office space. MMPI produces more than 300 trade shows, market events and conferences each year.

MMPI manages The Merchandise Mart and 350 West Mart Center in Chicago; Market Square, the Suites at Market Square, Hamilton Market, Plaza Suites, Furniture Plaza and the National Furniture Mart in High Point, N.C.; the Architects & Designers Building, 7 W New York, and Piers 92 & 94 in New York City; the Boston Design Center in Boston; the L.A. Mart in Los Angeles; the Washington Design Center in Washington DC.

Vornado Realty Trust, owners of MMPI, based in New York City, is a fully integrated equity real estate investment trust. Vornado's common shares are listed on the New York Stock Exchange and are traded under the symbol VNO.

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