



Architect: Springfield's Union Station must draw people and make money

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By



submitted photo

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SPRINGFIELD – The architect hired to design the long-stalled reconstruction of Springfield’s Union Station said Monday his first job is to find profitable uses for the massive and long-vacant depot.

“Office space, retail,” said Donald A. Warner, senior vice president of **HDR Architecture Inc.** in Boston. It’s a historic project, but we need to remember we are building a 21st century facility.”

Warner said he expects construction to begin on the \$70 million project in the summer of 2012. Plans call for renovations to the 200,000-square foot main terminal building and a refurbished passenger train platform. The existing freight building will be demolished and replaced with a 23-bay bus terminal topped by a 400-space parking garage.

Warner expects work to be finished in 2015.



Donald Warner

He spoke Monday following a City Hall news conference announcing that his design firm has been hired for the Union Station Regional Intermodal Transportation Center.

The contract calls for HDR Architecture to earn \$4.2 million for basic design services.

Skanska USA Building Inc., an international firm with offices in Boston, has been hired to oversee construction at a cost of \$1.05 million, the city announced Monday.

Springfield Mayor Domenic J. Sarno said he can understand that people are skeptical about Union Station's future. Plans to refurbish it have been kicking around for more than 30 years.

"The stars are aligning," Sarno said.

In October, The federal government committed \$120.9 million for improvements for the passenger rail line from New Haven north to Springfield.

Vermont received \$50 million for work on the line in that state, and Connecticut has already received \$40 million for track work.

John D. Judge, the city's chief development officer, said workers have already started drilling for an environmental review of the site.

The Union Station project is expected to cost \$70 million. There are \$50 million in state and federal earmarks for it in place, although some have expired, Judge said. Judge hopes Massachusetts can capture additional federal rail passenger money refused by states such as Florida and Ohio.

"If they don't want it, we will take it," he said.

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