

The Boston Globe

Death of the Hynes would cap the neglect of a valuable resource

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Governor Charlie Baker's bid to sell the Hynes Convention Center in Boston has generated debate over the future of the Back Bay site. JONATHAN WIGGS/GLOBE STAFF

Re "Back Bay's white elephant has got to go" (Editorial, April 22): The Hynes Convention Center has been allowed to deteriorate because, as the stepchild of the Massachusetts Convention Center Authority, it has been denied the resources needed to successfully compete for convention business. The MCCA has directed conventions to the Seaport facility, for which it seeks justification and funding to expand.

Unlike the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center, the Hynes has superior transit connections, more than 5,000 class A hotel rooms within walking distance, and retail and cultural facilities that are a strong complement and attraction to the Hynes meeting facilities. The professional medical and scientific associations interested in coming to Boston are attracted to the Hynes and the Back Bay as opposed to the impersonal, gate-show facilities of the Seaport meeting complex.

The death of the Hynes would negatively affect the retail, cultural, and economic vitality of the Back Bay and undermine Boston's attraction to the professional community. The city would have everything to lose and little to gain by allowing the Hynes Convention Center to close.

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The writer is a former planner (1969-94) at the Boston Redevelopment Authority (now the Boston Planning & Development Agency), and was responsible for market studies that supported the decision to invest in Hynes expansion.