



**Agenda for Union Square's Public Benefits Process
Strategic Planning Implementation Session #1
November 18th, 1 PM- 9 PM
Aldermanic Chambers, Somerville City Hall**

Public benefits strategic planning is meant to determine where Union Square as a walkable urban place is going in the long term (30-40 years) and how it will get there in practical terms over the next 3-5 years. This time frame is generally selected since it is long enough to get substantive items complete yet short enough to not overwhelm citizens. The strategy is meant to help achieve the goals outlined in SomerVision and complement the aspirational vision set out in the recently released Union Square Neighborhood Plan.. The public benefits strategic planning process is a “real world” effort that gives citizens the authority to take charge of getting strategy items done. It is consensus driven, working under the assumption that there is an “optimal” or “best” strategy for Union Square and any group of informed citizens would probably come to a similar set of strategies to implement the Neighborhood Plan. It will also help lay the foundation for a community benefits agreements (CBA) established with all developers in the near and long term to help implement different aspects of the Neighborhood Plan. A common CBA framework will provide assurance and increased predictability to both the community and the future developers, lowering the risks for all.

Finally, it is hoped that a “place management” organization will either be established or an existing organization will take on the role of place manager. Walkable urban places work best if the day-to-day management and overall “keeper of the flame” of the strategic plan rest in a place management organization. This organization tends to take the form of a Main Street program, like Union Square has, a Business Improvement District (legal but needs reform in Massachusetts), a Community Benefits District (does not exist yet in Massachusetts) or some other type of organization. Place management is a critical yet missing level of “governance” in our society.

The first day of the strategy process on November 18th is meant to be educational but it is also meant to increase the level of trust between members of the community. The strategy process has been shown to work, achieving consensus, when informed citizens gather in an atmosphere of trust to determine the optimal strategy and action plan to achieve a walkable urban place and the best type of place management implementation organization to monitor progress and uphold accountability to the strategy developed.

Day #1 Work Plan

1. Introduction of Public Benefits Strategic Planning Process and facilitating team from LOCUS
2. Introduction of Strategy Leaders and the organizations/issues they represent
3. Review of Briefing Book

[BREAK]



4. Community Input that was not covered by Briefing Book
5. Review of Neighborhood Plan
- [BREAK]
6. Introduction of Fiscal Model of the Neighborhood Plan
7. Community input on Neighborhood Plan and discussion of how neighborhood plan will fit into the public benefits strategic planning process
- [DINNER BREAK]
8. Place Management 101, an overview of regionally significant place management in the metro Boston context
9. Community Input that relates to Place Management 101
10. Distribution of Strategy Cards to Strategy Leaders and explanation on their use
- [BREAK]
11. Suggested use of time between November 18th and January 13th/14th for Strategy Leaders, plus support provided by LOCUS and City staff
12. Overview of January 13th and 14th Sessions