

# Union Square Strategies and Public Benefits

January 13, 2016 – Somerville City Hall

January 14, 2016 –Argenziano School

**LOCUS**



**Smart Growth America**  
Making Neighborhoods Great Together



# Agenda

## (First Half of Session #2)

- Welcome and Announcements
- GLX Update (Brad Rawson)
- Strategy Leader (re) introductions
- Overview of Session #2
- Fiscal Modeling Introduction (Carson Bise)
- Working Dinner Break

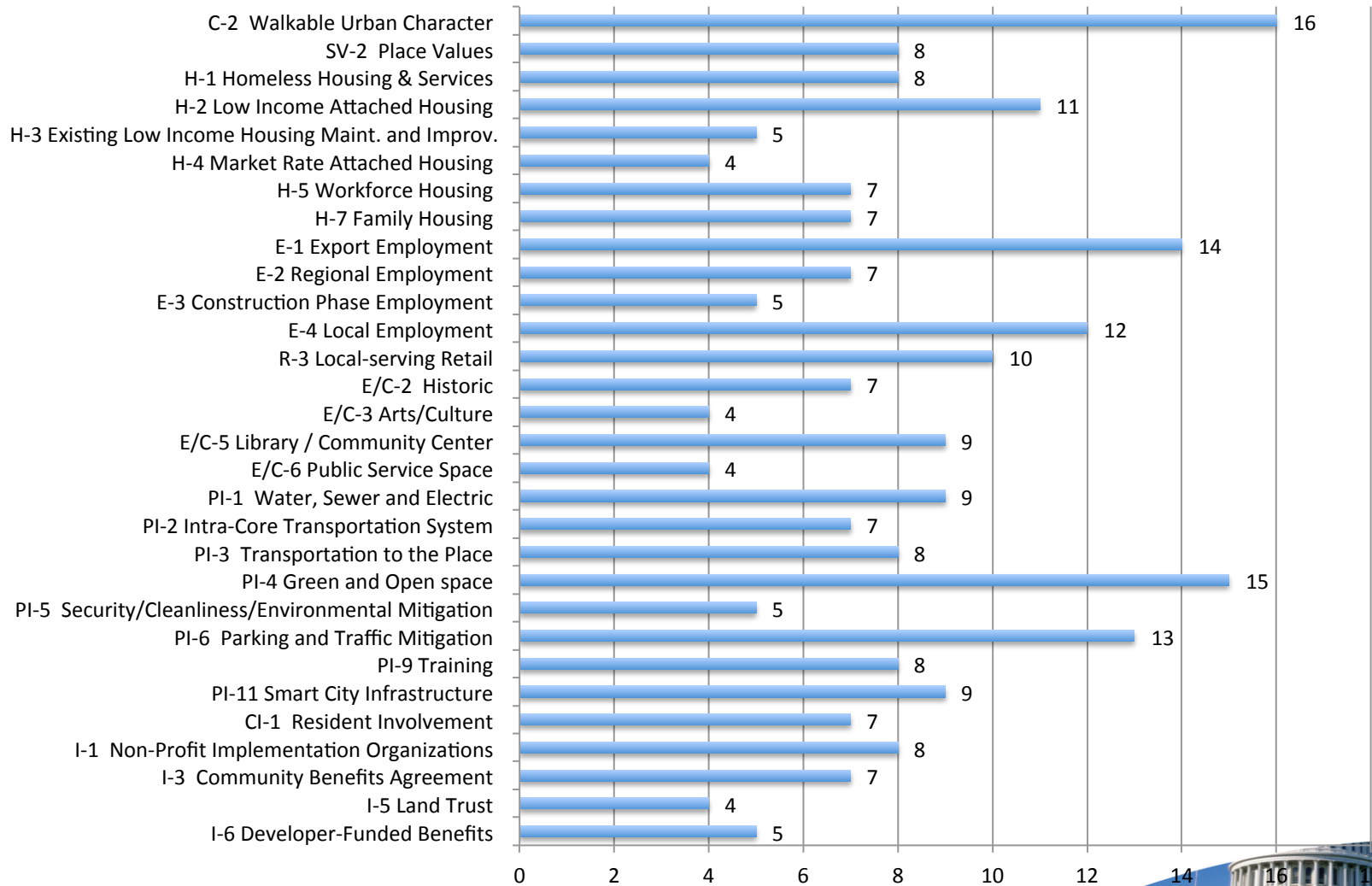


# Union Square Strategy Cards

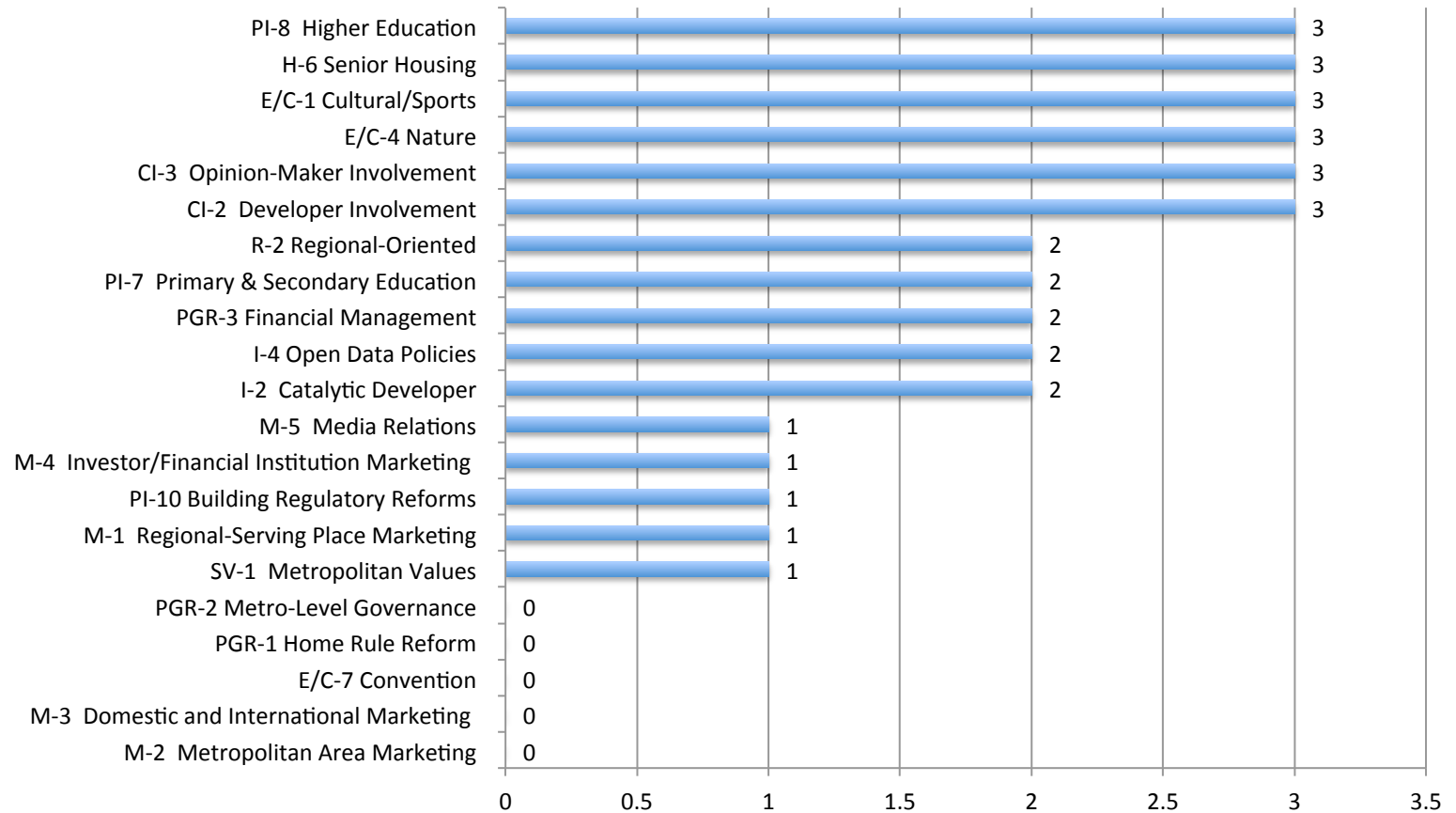
- Strategy Leaders and members of the public selected the cards that reflect the future strategy of Union Square; economic, social equity, community benefits, infrastructure, etc.
- In total, 11 Broad Categories with 51 Strategy Cards
- Each strategy card was edited by Strategy Leaders to reflect specific goals and objectives for Union Square



# Strategy Card Submissions <4



# Strategy Card Submissions >3



# Strategy Card Submissions

- 23 Strategy Leaders submitted their choices for strategy cards
- Top 10 strategy cards all with 9 votes or greater listed below for discussion
- Related cards are shown to facilitate conversation around similar topics at same time.



# C-2 Walkable Urban Character

- Increasing foot traffic to support retail and cafes during the day as well as the evening
- Supporting the arts & creative economy
- Supporting a child friendly city
- Supporting a senior friendly city
- Supporting the immigrant community through ESL classes, technology classes, public access computers, and support for job applications
- Support public space including access to public library, public meeting and gathering space etc.
- Variety of use in different locations: toddlers playing, sunbathers reading, office workers picnicking
- Preserve community scale of buildings, avoid mega blocks when possible. There should be setbacks when abutting adjacent residential uses.
- Food trucks, water features, street vendors, street performers
- Seasonal change: holiday lights, tree light, hanging baskets, street light, street light banners
- Lighting for people as well as vehicles
- Isolate pedestrian and bicycle access from vehicle traffic when possible
- Include exclusive pedestrian access between buildings and within the urban fabric as much as possible
- Manage parking for the short, medium and long term employing shared parking strategies, prioritizing pedestrians and
- developing strategies to reduce parking over time.
- Preservation of historically significant architecture.
- Diverse architectural styles; avoid monolithic architecture; create spaces welcoming to folks of many backgrounds
- Integrate the built environment with green and open space to the maximum extent possible



# E/C-5 Library/Community Center

- Encourage the incorporation of meeting rooms, performance space and other civic spaces into library/community center
- Provide access to technology in meeting spaces (video conferencing, simulcasting, etc)
- Encourage the creation of performance space
- Exhibit space for local artists
- Access to focused collections of books, DVDs, music, etc., and as a pick-up and drop-off location for materials from other Minuteman Network libraries
- Staffing by trained information specialists dedicated to the local community
- Collaborate with SCAT to provide community access to software and hardware resources
- Use space to bring civic services into community (city services, aldermen office hours, etc)
- Offer education amenity spaces to bring classroom learning opportunities into the community and provide alternative spaces to school classrooms
- Community space to include a community kitchen
- Enhance and encourage youth programming
- Provide educational, recreational, and entertainment type programming and classes targeting all age groups and socio-economic levels
- An Integrated Community Center (immigrants/ non-immigrants) for sports/ recreation (indoor soccer), kitchen, ESOL classes, space for children/elderly to play/spend time, with information available about city/nonprofits/other agencies services - open to everyone- services in several languages





# Related Selected Cards

- SV-2 Place Values
- E/C-2 Historic
- E/C-3 Arts/Culture
- E/C-6 Public Service Space



# PI-4 Green and Open Space

- Keep working toward SomerVision target for open space, close to 20 acres for Boynton and Union square.
- Encourage investment in large scale city green and open space (example: Foss Park)
- Create active parks, playgrounds, sports fields
- Create passive parks / open space
- Create plazas, areas for people to gather, sit, eat lunch etc.
- Create ecological space
- Community gardens
- Create bike/greenway
- Create Shared Open Space which is shared between pedestrians, bikes and vehicles emphasizing sidewalk gardens and other green spaces instead of concrete.
- Consider publicly owned open spaces vs. privately owned open spaces vs publicly accessible open spaces (with restricted hours of access for public)
- Encourage green roofs / rooftop gardens
- Encourage green alleys/pedestrian walkways
- Opportunities for street activities, festivals, arts programming, celebrations etc.
- Stormwater as a resource not a nuisance including plans for all new building
- Develop incentives for development of different types of spaces
- Encourage buildings to be set back from roadways and for sidewalks to be separated from auto and bicycle traffic by grass or plantings
- Tree wells with native trees
- Bioswales; Rain gardens; Green walls



# E-1 Export Employment

- Ensure there is substantial commercial development as compared residential development (ensure a balance along the lines of the SomerVision goals for Union Square)
- Encourage small start-up type employment with high export products
- Create, attract and retain locally owned export job businesses
- Encourage diversity in businesses to prevent against market changes impacting one particular business type
- Support businesses unique to Union Square, building upon existing strengths (Artisan Asylum, Greentown Labs, etc.)
- Determine scale of export employment needed. Is convention or corporate headquarters an appropriate scale or market opportunity for Union Square
- Encourage preference for local hiring practices
- Develop creative solutions to generate Class B office space on spec that is flexible and can rent for the equivalent of
- Renovated or converted older, fully depreciated office or industrial space
- Develop zoning alternatives for truly mixed-use space (office / residential) that has convertibility within certain covenants
- Discourage any job creation that brings low-wage jobs or jobs in sub-standard environments



# E-4 Local Employment

- Ensure there is substantial commercial development as compared residential development (ensure a balance along the lines of the SomerVision goals for Union Square)
- Create legacy district historic fund (based on San Francisco model offering financial assistance to landlords giving long term leases to legacy businesses)
- Support local incubators and the spaces they occupy; including multi-use food incubator space
- Develop preferences for local hiring and workforce training programs
- Support for local businesses during pre-construction, construction phases (temporary signage, promotions, bridge financing etc) and post-construction phases of the development
- Support local artists and continue to foster creative economy
- Preserve independent retail, discourage chain retail
- Develop a loan fund for providing capital loans for start ups start-ups or business expansions in Union Square
- Expand Small Business Assistance Program to fund technical and financial mentoring to current local, small, and minority-owned businesses
- Prevent small business displacement by subsidizing rents for local businesses in a designated percentage of commercial space
- Discourage any job creation that brings low-wage jobs or jobs in sub-standard environments
- Establish minimum hiring requirements for people of color, women, and Somerville residents
- Promote and fund technical assistance to cooperatively owned business start-ups or cooperative business conversions
- Create subcontracting and purchasing policies that allocate a certain percentage of contracts awarded and purchases made to local businesses, women-owned businesses, people of color-owned businesses, worker-owned businesses and businesses complying with green practices
- Recognize the benefits a library in Union Square can provide the local business community, *free of charge*
- Support living wage provisions
- Support collective bargaining



# Related Selected Cards

- E-2 Regional Employment
- E-3 Construction Phase Employment
- PI-9 Training



# PI-6 Parking and Traffic Mitigation

- Develop parking strategy for short, medium and long term which can adapt as parking demand changes (and likely diminishes) over time
- Require developers to engage in documented traffic studies prior to approval, and perform monitoring of traffic levels after the fact.
- Studies should relate to overall, comprehensive parking strategy, and avoid requiring each new project to create new parking in an uncoordinated fashion.
- Collect funds for traffic mitigation implementation if levels are above the agreed rates and allow for refunds or other transfers if they are not necessary.
- Investigate use of innovative parking solutions such as automated parking towers
- Create strong programs to encourage alternative modes of travel to, from and throughout Union Square
- Consider parking as part of the larger walkable urban character discussion rather than treating it as an independent issue.
- Develop traffic circulation strategy that discourages high-speed through traffic by cars and encourages comfortable pedestrian and bicycle traffic.
- Immigrants travel a distance to purchase specific cultural items, consider parking affordability and of easy accessibility, as well



# PI-1 Water, Sewer and Electric

- Integration of Community with Routine DPW Work – The City of Somerville currently integrates the community for long-term projects, but often daily DPW maintenance provides opportunities to improve our city, particularly our residential neighborhoods.
- Rather than defaulting to always putting things back the way they were (paving), the City should implement innovative processes to make incremental improvements. This ranges from planting (or at least not cutting down) greenery, to more broad-reaching issues such as traffic calming measures.
- Known processes should be established for a residential street to request and coordinate with the City (including at the DPW level) to implement traffic calming and other micro-local measures when roads and sidewalks are torn up.
- Set up a website to provide accurate and up-to-date status reports and projected outage times for current and upcoming road and sidewalk projects or other DPW work which impacts residents.

# PI-11 Smart City Infrastructure

- Develop programs to support the physical implementation plan to develop the “backbone” connection to the Internet, fiber optic connections, and community broadband
- Improve and expand open data and smart sensor technologies, which don’t necessarily require new services and more about increasing efficiency



# Related Selected Cards

- PI-2 Intra-Core Transportation System
- PI-3 Transportation to the Place
- PI-5 Security/Cleanliness/Environmental Mitigation





# H-2 Low Income Housing

- Determine specific percentage of new housing, both rental and ownership units, to be developed for low and moderate income housing (80% or below AMI). A low percentage of these units to be available to Somerville residents.
- Ensure family housing to be built as part of low income attached housing (see below for specific Family Housing Strategy Card)
- Require variety of housing types/incomes to be constructed jointly rather than as separate developments
- Agree upon a percentage of affordable units to be reserved for seniors and people with disabilities
- Require just-cause eviction clauses for all affordable developments
- All affordable units are permanently affordable
- Create provisions whereby tenants of affordable units whose income or assets increases have their rent readjusted to reflect a higher income-tier of affordable housing, and tenants whose income decreases are eligible for lower income-tier units or rents on their current unit
- Affordable units be preferentially available to Somerville residents at risk of displacement and those who have been recently displaced.
- Establish a Land Trust to own and operate low- and moderate-income housing (see below for specific Land Trust Strategy Card)
- Investigate the possibility of funding the construction of low-income housing through the allocation by developers of future revenue from low-income-housing tax credits they will receive
- Preserve the diversity of Union Square by creating conditions for people from diverse backgrounds to stay there- affordable housing is fundamental also for local businesses to survive



# Related Selected Cards

- H-1 Homeless Housing & Services
- H-3 Existing Low Income Housing Maintenance
- H-4 Market Rate Housing
- H-5 Workforce Housing
- H-7 Family Housing



# R-3 Local Serving Retail

- Ensure there is substantial commercial development as compared residential development (ensure a balance along the lines of the SomerVision goals for Union Square)
- Encourage missing level of services in Union Square including hardware store, pharmacy
- Provide affordable space for key local-serving service businesses
- Develop programs to help current small retail businesses and prevent being priced out due to rent increases
- Create robust support system, training and coaching for small businesses
- Prevent small business displacement by subsidizing rents for local businesses in a designated percentage of retail space
- Conduct community surveys to determine desired retail use
- Give priority in the new spaces to local entrepreneurs



# Place Management Cards

- I-1 Non-Profit Implementation Organizations
- I-2 Catalytic Developer
- 1-3 Community Benefits Agreement
- I-4 Open Data Policies
- I-5 Land Trust
- I-6 Developer-Funded Benefits



# What is Missing?

## New Card: Sustainability/Climate Change

*Ensure that all practices from planning, through construction and up to implementation take into consideration environmental sustainability, reduction of carbon use, and preparation for future climate change.*

- Reductions in greenhouse gas emissions in existing and future buildings
- Ensure that infrastructure is built using environmentally-friendly building practices
- Ensure that all landscaping follows sustainable landscaping methods
- Ensure that all buildings take into consideration future climate change
- Promote transportation modes that decrease greenhouse gas emissions in Somerville

