

Dear Friend of Union Square,

Union Square Main Streets accomplished a great deal in its first year thanks to the committee members and other volunteers who dedicated hundreds of hours of their time, strong board leadership, dynamic committee chairs, and our tireless Executive Director Mimi Graney. We could not have begun and persevered without the vision and commitment of Mayor Joseph Curtatone and the City of Somerville's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development who recognized Union Square as the next great opportunity for Somerville.

Some highlights of our work in 2005 include:

Union Square Farmers Market In conjunction with the City of Somerville and the Federation of Massachusetts Farmers Markets, the new farmers' market in the heart of Union Square generated an economic impact of over half a million dollars.

Visioning Project We recruited a Technical Assistance Panel from the Urban Land Institute who provided innovative designs and pragmatic advice on development of the eastern end of Union Square.

Union Square Business Analysis Our business inventory and customer intercept survey provide invaluable data to assist current businesses and guide our recruitment of new businesses.

ArtsUnion This collaborative project led by the Somerville Arts Council leveraged Somerville's cultural resources to boost economic development in Union Square.

Promotion Increased community awareness, civic pride and excitement about the Square garnered more than two dozen articles in local and regional media. *Stuff at Night* declared Union Square "Hot Neighborhood for 2005."

Looking ahead to 2006, we plan to:

- Promote businesses and develop membership in Union Square Main Streets through the "Attracting Attention" Discount Card.
- Expand the Union Square Farmers Market with more vendors, a longer season and greater community participation.
- Advocate for the Green Line extension, greater pedestrian safety and improved traffic flow.
- Recruit new, viable businesses to improve the business mix and improve the commercial potential of existing merchants.
- Enliven the streetscape by supporting creative window displays, additional public art and cultural festivals.
- Encourage the City to maintain its vision of Union Square as a high priority for investment.
- Most importantly, draw and engage human and financial resources for the advancement of our goal: an even more energized and thriving Union Square in 2006.

Sincerely,



Livingston Parsons
President Board of Directors

The historic crossroads of Somerville, Union Square is the oldest and largest commercial district in Somerville and a significant Revolutionary War site. The commercial center has a variety of well-managed retail businesses, nonprofit organizations and small offices while residential areas have a high proportion of owner-occupied homes and a diverse population.

A non-profit organization initiated by Mayor Joseph Curtatone, Union Square Main Streets provides merchants and community residents with the tools for the neighborhood to advance its own redevelopment. With a shared vision, Union Square Main Streets leverages the resources at hand—private and public, human and financial—to improve the neighborhood in the near and far term.

- We help Union Square grow as a thriving, safe, friendly business district providing diverse cultural offerings and a variety of independent businesses to both serve and employ residents.
- We strive to make Union Square cleaner and more pedestrian-friendly.
- We seek to improve the storefronts of Union Square with better signage and a cleaner appearance.
- We promote Union Square, so that people will want to live in Somerville and shoppers will come from other areas to enjoy its vibrant arts, retail and entertainment offerings.
- We foster local leadership and cooperation of residents, businesses and landlords to build a healthy, economically vital Union Square.
- We recognize that there are no magical, overnight solutions for reviving Union Square, just a gradual process of effective transformation. Revitalization comes both through cooperative planning for the future and creating visible change now.

"The success of Union Square as a vibrant, multi-faceted community is essential to Somerville's future—and Union Square Main Streets will play a leading role in making that success possible."

—Mayor Joseph Curtatone

Union Square Main Streets follows a proven national model. Begun in 1977 by the National Trust for Historic Preservation initially to protect historic commercial architecture, the Main Street program is a comprehensive revitalization strategy to stimulate economic development in traditional commercial districts like Union Square. Currently the National Main Street Center administers the program in 40 states and over 1600 communities in the US, most notably with a citywide network of Main Street districts in Boston. The Main Street model is a framework for restoring a community's economic vitality then maintaining these positive changes.

Union Square Main Streets increases the vibrancy of this Somerville neighborhood by enhancing its business district and surrounding areas through active community collaboration.

THE MAIN STREET APPROACH: FOCUSED COMMUNITY COMMITTEES

- Economic Restructuring
- Promotion
- Design
- Transportation
- Organization





“Union Square already has lots going for it. For openers there’s an eclectic mix of small groceries, including Italian, Portuguese, Middle Eastern, Indian and Asian food markets. . . . A wide variety of restaurants compliment the ethnic grocery stores.”

—*Boston Herald*

Economic Restructuring Committee

Supports and helps grow Union Square as a thriving business district providing diverse cultural offerings and a variety of independent businesses to both serve and employ residents.

Chairs Livy Parsons and Susan Crandall

Goals

- Improve the retail mix in Union Square
- Provide technical assistance to local businesses
- Provide resources to developers and provide direction for appropriate real estate development
- Recruit businesses to reduce vacancies

Economic Restructuring Committee Projects in 2005

1. **Business Inventory** Conducted detailed business inventory of the Central Business District and developed database of all businesses in the NRSA of Union Square. Tabulated information and presented as part of the Union Square Visioning Project in September and October.
2. **Survey of Union Square Users** Developed and implemented Customer Intercept Survey in Union Square. Presented information as part of the Visioning Project and made data available on-line.
3. **Zoning Use Survey** Participated in ArtsUnion Task Force and at community meetings to advise on zoning and permitting changes to create an overlay district that fosters cultural uses and overall economic development.
4. **Business Networking and Informational Events** Sponsored two breakfast gatherings for businesses on proposed reconstruction of Somerville Avenue.
5. **Foster New Businesses in Union Square** Began detailed research for the fostering of innovative business models such as a Kitchen Incubator, a shared commercial kitchen for new businesses. Attended Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals and Licensing Board meetings to assist business development. Advised businesses one-on-one as needed.



Promotion Committee

Strengthens and markets Union Square’s image so that residents and people from other areas enjoy its vibrant retail, arts, and entertainment offerings.

Chair Ken Kelly

Goals

- Develop a unified Union Square identity promoting the promise of Union Square to shoppers, investors, new businesses, and visitors
- Emphasize the historical significance of Union Square
- Coordinate and encourage Union Square events
- Promote Union Square through the media and other sources

Promotion Committee Projects in 2005

1. **Union Square Farmers Market** Co-led weekly market with the City of Somerville and The Federation of Massachusetts Farmers Markets. Grew attendance to over 1,300 each week. With ArtsUnion expanded market to include 6 Crafts Markets. Achieved total economic impact of over \$500,000.
2. **Media Outreach** Secured local and regional coverage in print and electronic media including numerous articles in the Boston Globe, Boston Herald, Stuff at Night, Improper Bostonian, Somerville Journal, Somerville News, Somerville Classifieds, and Weekly Dig. Presented USMS projects on five cable access programs.
3. **Newsletter** Produced monthly e-mail newsletter. Developed distribution to 1,300.
4. **Special Events** Hosted Launch Party in February. Sponsored two mini-festivals to open the Farmers Market and in August to mark Back to School. Supported the 11 ArtsUnion festivals.
5. **Winter Craft Market** Hosted Union Square Winter Craft Market in mid December with a dozen vendors and a holiday decoration lighting.



**UNION SQUARE
Farmers Market**



**Hot Neighborhood 2005:
Catch Union Square now
because it's poised
for big change.**

—*Stuff at Night*



Design Committee

Pursues urban design and improvement projects that create a unified square, define the area as a commercial center, and that are aesthetically pleasing.

Chair Jodi Hullinger and Ben Dryer

Goals

- Advocate and assist in the appropriate reuse of historic buildings
- Create coordinated building design guidelines
- Improve public spaces
- Promote and assist storefront and façade improvements
- Involve local resources in community improvements

Design Committee Projects in 2005

- 1. Beautification** Sponsored and assisted in three neighborhood clean up efforts. Planted shrubs along Prospect Street. Created and implemented Spring Flower Barrels and other plantings with Ricky's Flower Market.
- 2. Streetscape Improvements** Advised and supported ArtsUnion on the selection, placement and installation of artist created street furniture. Consulted with City planners on the selection of streetscape elements such as bus shelters and reconstruction of Somerville Avenue.
- 3. Committee Education and Visioning** Held a charrette for committee members to learn and brainstorm about Union Square.
- 4. Mural Project** Initiated mural creation for fence behind 90 Union Square. Secured five sponsors and recruiting skilled artists.



Transportation Committee

Advocates and facilitates for an efficient and thorough system of transportation that balances the needs of all modalities and pedestrian users.

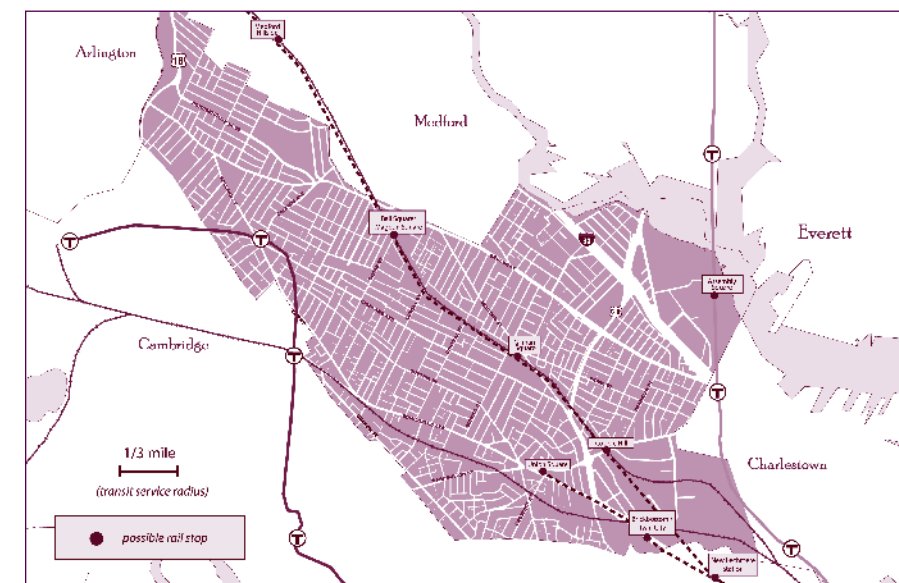
Chairs Jim McGinnis and Peter Varga

Goals

- Enhance pedestrian accessibility and safety
- Increase accessibility and access to public transportation
- Improve traffic patterns and access to parking
- Provide public updates and comments on transportation issues

Transportation Committee Projects in 2005

- 1. Promote the Green Line Extension and Other Public Transportation** Assisted efforts by STEP (Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership), City of Somerville and others to bring light rail service to Union Square by promoting and attending more than five public hearings and a press conference. Met with liaisons at the MBTA and MPO on improving public transportation to the area.
- 2. Improve Vehicular and Pedestrian Movement and Safety** Advocated for effective snow removal and street maintenance to Head of Department of Public Works and Aldermen. Advised City Planners on repainting of lanes, turning and crosswalks.
- 3. Signage** Conducted two tours of business district to determine signage needs including street names, parking areas and destinations outside the square. Seeking funding for signs to assist pedestrians on bus routes, nearby businesses and walk times to other areas.



**“As we’ve seen in
Davis Square since its
Red Line station was
built, train service can
help businesses grow
and bring critical tax
dollars to the city to pay
for needed services.”**

—*Somerville Transportation
Equity Partnership*



**“We’ve heard for years
that Union Square is on
the verge of taking off.**

Now it’s happening.”

—Ken Kelly, *The Independent*

Organization Committee

Fosters local leadership and consensus based cooperation of residents, businesses and landlords and city government.

Chair Joe Thompson

Goals

- Build consensus and cooperation among the Union Square business district stakeholders
- Recruit board members and committee chairs, assist with placement of appropriate committee members
- Provide organizational, administration and financial oversight of Union Square Main Streets program
- Raise funds for Main Streets program and for special projects

Organization Committee Projects in 2005

1. **Board and Committee Development** Developed board to 10 members and 3 ex officio members. Board Recruitment Handbook created. Initiated committees with over 70 people participating in at least one committee meeting.
2. **Membership Development** Recruited 25 Business Members and 53 Resident and Supporting Members. Developed and implemented an “Attracting Attention” Discount Card as a membership benefit.
3. **Visioning Project** Coordinated Union Square Visioning Project with a dozen window displays in area businesses and a gathering event in October. Recruited Urban Land Institute’s Technical Assistance Panel to advise on development issues related to city owned parcels in Union Square. Organized day long panel and presentation in December.



ArtsUnion

ArtsUnion recognizes the value of our community’s cultural resources to spur and sustain the economic growth of Union Square. The Somerville Arts Council and the Mayor’s Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development created this project, in partnership with Union Square Main Streets, ArtSomerville, Brickbottom Artists Association, Groundwork Somerville, the Somerville Historic Preservation Commission, the Somerville Chamber of Commerce, and Somerville Open Studios. ArtsUnion provides new economic opportunities for local artists. It celebrates and promotes our unique community, strengthening the regional identity and long-term appeal of Union Square as a buzzing cultural destination.

Somerville was one of 22 communities to receive funding from the Massachusetts Cultural Council and its John and Abigail Adams Arts Program for this initiative.

2005 ArtsUnion projects included

- **Mini-Festivals** Nine events including L.O.V.E.: History of Hip Hop; Bhangra Bash; Noite Nordestina; Music and Dance from the Brazilian Northeast; and KNOW Movement with their screening of the silent film classic *Man with a Camera* with live music accompaniment.
- **Craft Market** For 6 Saturdays a dozen craft vendors joined the produce vendors at the Union Square Farmers Market
- **Cultural Tours** 3 tours and 2 reenactment events led by the Somerville Historic Preservation Commission drew new visitors to Union Square to learn about the neighborhood’s role in American political, cultural and industrial history.
- **Streetscape** ArtsUnion commissioned local artists to design and fabricate new benches, trash barrels and information kiosks for installation in the spring of 2006.
- **Zoning** With the assistance of Jay Wickersham of Noble & Wickersham ArtsUnion conducted a zoning and regulation review and is proposing changes that will further support the arts in Union Square and new development.

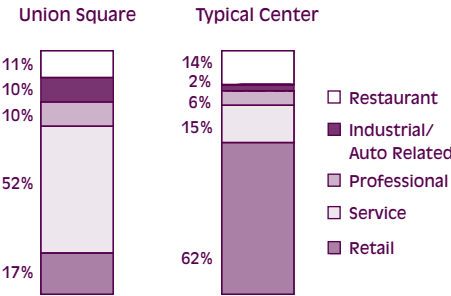




In the summer of 2005 the Economic Restructuring Committee of Union Square Main Streets conducted three studies. The information collected supplies Union Square Main Streets with baseline data on Union Square, a means to determine the best types of businesses to recruit to join the neighborhood, and a guide to determine the priorities and goals of the organization.

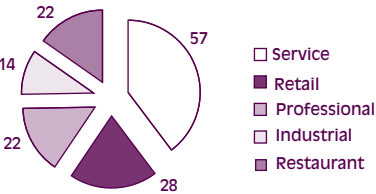
The Business Inventory catalogued all the parcels, buildings, and businesses in the Central Business District of Union Square as well as the businesses of the extended Union Square area. The database created provided us with an overview of Union Square and easy means of comparison with other commercial centers.

HOW UNION SQUARE COMPARES TO THE TYPICAL COMMERCIAL CENTER



Comparison of Total Leaseable Commercial Area

TYPES OF BUSINESS IN THE UNION SQUARE BUSINESS DISTRICT



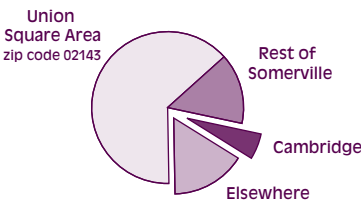
Total number of businesses in Central Business District: 143

NEW AND EXPANDING BUSINESS OPENINGS SINCE JANUARY 2005

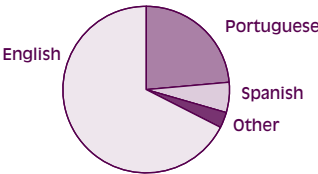
- Roque Bakery and Café
- Pao de Acucar Market
- Cleo's Fashions
- Real Meals
- Union Square Chiropractic
- Moda Brasil
- Union Mart/Subway Sub Shop
- Third Life Studio: performance space added

The Customer Intercept Study surveyed passersby on who they were, how they shopped in the Square and what they thought of the business district. Volunteers provided the fifteen question sheets in four different languages and collected 278 surveys in July, August and September 2005.

WHERE UNION SQUARE CUSTOMERS LIVE



LANGUAGES UNION SQUARE CUSTOMERS SPEAK AT HOME



CUSTOMER OPINIONS ABOUT UNION SQUARE

- Customers Most Liked:
- Neighborhood Diversity
 - Merchant Friendliness and Helpfulness
 - General Safety
- Customers Most Disliked:
- Public Transportation in the Area
 - Access to Convenient Parking
 - Physical Appearance of Buildings



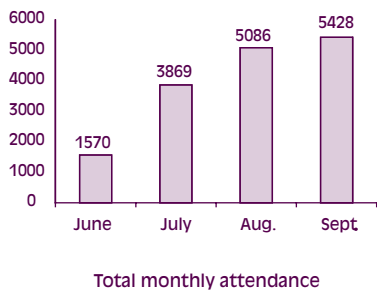
“Whether you need baby bok choy and Easter egg radishes, or handmade yarn and a stylish collar for your preppy pet, or a piece of art for the wall in the guest room, you can shop for it smack in the center of Somerville’s ‘other square.’”

—Boston Globe Calendar



The **Farmers Market Survey** was conducted of market customers on Saturday mornings, one each in June, July, August and September. For consistency we selected only days when there were no craft vendors at the market. We collected in total 186 surveys.

ATTENDANCE AT UNION SQUARE FARMER'S MARKET



AVERAGE TOTAL AMOUNT SPENT DURING VISIT TO UNION SQUARE

- Farmer's Market Customer \$28.05
- Typical Union Square Customer \$21.09

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF UNION SQUARE FARMERS MARKET

For Farmers Market vendors (June through September)
Number of attendees times average amount spent at Farmers Market:
\$259,700

For area businesses (June through September)
Number of attendees times average amount spent at Union Square businesses:
\$227,330

Total Economic Impact of Union Square Farmers Market
for the 2005 Season:
\$578,350

Board of Directors

President
Livingston Parsons
ACCION USA

Vice President
Kenneth Kelly
The Independent

Treasurer
Jack Hamilton
Community Action
Agency of Somerville

Clerk
Joseph E. Thompson
FiDough

Ben Dryer
Sherman Café

Genevieve Jones
Resident

Edson Lino
International Optical

James McGinnis
Resident

Peter Varga
Resident

Don Warner
Warner + Associates

Ex Officio
Carlene Campbell
Community Relations
City of Somerville

Kristi Chase
Historic Preservation
City of Somerville

Staff

Mimi Graney
Executive Director

Farmers Market

Mary Cat Boyett, Market Manager
Annie Christian, Outreach &
Community Facilitator
Sylvia Cardim, Outreach &
Community Facilitator
Lissette Yanes, Market Assistant

Interns

Tali Rausch
and
Nate Flannery
Ryan Lawlor
Allison Lawlor
Dara Olmsted
Meghan Welch

Collaborating Organizations

ArtSomerville
Brickbottom Artists Association
City of Somerville:
Mayor's Office
Strategic Planning and
Community Development
Arts Council
Health Department
Historic Preservation
Community Action Agency
of Somerville
Community Growing Center
Federation of Massachusetts
Farmers Markets
Groundwork Somerville
Somerville Chamber of Commerce
Somerville Community Corporation
Somerville Open Studios
Urban Land Institute

Income and Expenses Report

INCOME

Government Grants	\$75,000
Foundation Grants	\$12,488
Memberships	\$ 2,275
Fundraising & Donations	\$ 3,855
Other	\$ 3,240
In-Kind	\$ 8,236
TOTAL INCOME	\$103,094

EXPENSES

Personnel	\$55,028
Staff Development	\$1,577
Professional Fees & Contractors	\$4,248
Facilities & Equipment	\$2,100
Communication	\$1,133
Supplies	\$8,513
Fees, Memberships & Interest	\$316
Other Expenses	\$1,787
In-Kind Expenses	\$8,236
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$83,942

This is an unaudited financial statement.



**BECOME A MEMBER OF
UNION SQUARE MAIN STREETS**

Union Square Main Streets members are key community collaborators in making Union Square a more vibrant neighborhood.

Anyone can become a member. Resident and Supporting Membership is \$25 per year. Business Membership is \$50 per year.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

- Free “Attracting Attention” Card providing deep discounts at Union Square businesses
- Subscription to monthly email newsletter
- Invitations to Special Events and reduced costs for USMS programs
- Recognition for Business Members in USMS materials

**“Union Square
Main Streets has
had a great first year;
they’ve earned both
our congratulations
and our continuing
support.”**

—Mayor Joseph Curtatone

Resident and Supporting Members

Marya Axner	Paul Griffiths
Scott Baranyi	Linda Gritz
Susan Baranyi	Melissa Haber
Kristin Blum	Jack Hamilton
Carlene Campbell	Geoff Hardagon
M. Teresa Cardoso	Patricia Hardagon
Kristi Chase	Maryann Heuston
JoAnne Coppolo	Shawn Hockert
Susan Crandall	Jodi Hullinger
Jim Cypher	Jacy Ippolito
Beatrice de la Torre	Victoria Ippolito
Craig Dorfman	Phillip Jeffries
Steven Evitt	Patricia Jehlen
Kim Fabio	Genevieve Jones
Selena Fitanides	Michael Katz
Emily Glasgow	Ken Kelly
Ezra Glenn	Claire Kozower
Kathe Gregory	Jeffrey Levine

Business Members

A-1 Plumbing and Heating Supply
Boynton Yards Associates
Braz Transfers
Community Action Agency of Somerville
Community Builders Corp
Community Growing Center
Costume Works
FiDough
Green Cab Company
Hemlock Ink
The Independent
Kimo Griggs Architects
Riverside Motorcycles
Sherman Café
Somerville Bicycle Committee
Somerville Chamber of Commerce
Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership
Somerville Veterans Coalition
Taqueria La Mexicana
Toast Lounge
Union Square Chiropractic
Union Square Pizza and Subs
J.J. Vaccaro Construction
Vango Convenience Store
Warner and Associates

Rekha Madan
Christopher Maffucci
Jim McGinnis
John Murphy
Mark Neidergang
Livingston Parsons III
Liz Perlman
Joseph Raffone
Marc Rudnick
Jeff Shumaker
Carrie Sousa
Dennis Sullivan
Timothy Toomey
Peter Varga
Sheila Walsh
Patricia Wild
Brandon Wilson

