

11/9/16

To the members of the Board of Aldermen:

Union United would like to thank you for the opportunity to present to you at a public hearing on community benefits agreements (CBAs). We have discussed the issue with many of you individually and trust that you are committed to upholding our shared values. We are all committed to preventing and mitigating displacement, empowering residents to create and sustain community; and enhancing the quality of community life.

We want to clarify the request that we are making to you as our elected representatives. **We need to have a representative, independent, democratic group of Union Square stakeholders as an equal party in negotiations with US2 regarding a community benefits agreement.** This group should represent low-income renters, homeowners, and businesses, immigrants, and people of color – those who are often disenfranchised and who are most at risk of displacement. It should also represent people and groups committed to affordable housing, good jobs, support for small businesses, green and open space, public safety, culture and the arts, climate and sustainability, and participatory planning.

We are asking you to ensure a written commitment to a community benefits agreement negotiated with such a group before any zoning for Union Square is approved. Otherwise, there is no accountability mechanism to ensure that the development enabled by the zoning will uphold the values of the neighborhood and the City.

We believe the best way to accomplish this is through a memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed by the relevant community stakeholders, US2, the administration, and the board of aldermen. The MOU should establish that

- 1) It is imperative that the community participate in the Union Square CBA
- 2) The City and US2 agree to negotiate in good faith with the community to prevent displacement
- 3) The City and US2 agree to include the community as a party and signatory to the CBA

Please find attached some handouts for tomorrow's hearing.

Thank you again for your support and dedication to the future of Union Square.



Our Story

Union United is a coalition with a plan to prevent displacement. We believe that we can have development without displacement. But it requires the community to play an active role in the decision-making process. All community members should have a role in the process, because our lives will be affected by the redevelopment. We believe the best way for community members to engage in the process is through a community benefits agreement.

A community benefits agreement (CBA) is a legal contract between a community coalition and a developer. Our proposed CBA includes specific requirements that will ensure anti-displacement measures are part of the redevelopment. If we have a seat at the table to ensure that these goals are met, all community members will be able to take advantage of the benefits that the Green Line and the redevelopment will bring.

For too long, low-income people and immigrants have been displaced from our neighborhoods. We envision an equitable development that benefits everyone and keeps Union Square diverse, affordable, and accessible.

Our Principles

- Affordable Housing
- Local Jobs
- Workers' Rights
- Local businesses
- Green and open space
- Community resources
- Arts and Culture
- Public Safety
- Participatory Planning

Our Members

- Union Square residents & businesses
- Community Action Agency of Somerville
- Concord Avenue Community Space
- Fr. Brian McHugh and Fr. Richard Curran
- St. Joseph's, St. Catherine's, St. Ann's
- Groundwork Somerville
- Haitian Coalition of Somerville
- Immigrant Service Providers
Group/Health
- IBEW Local 103
- Last Hour Ministry Casa de Oração
- Massachusetts Senior Action Council
- Ruby Rogers Center
- Somerville Community Access Television
- Somerville Community Corporation
- Somerville Homeless Coalition
- Teen Empowerment
- UNITE HERE Local 26
- The Welcome Project