

March 2011

The Mayor's Other Research Bureau Speech

Issues of health insurance and collective bargaining in addition to the Dudley Plan

The media coverage of Mayor Menino's [speech](#) at the Research Bureau's Annual Meeting on March 3 focused predominately on his introduction of the Dudley Plan, but he also spoke about current issues tied to health insurance and collective bargaining that deserve note.

The Dudley Plan

The Dudley Plan described by the Mayor is a multi-faceted plan for public investment and consolidation to spur development. Main features of the plan are:

- Use City capital funds to renovate and expand the Ferdinand Building and move BPS headquarters there. With a private developer, use first floor for retail space. A new police station will open in the area this summer.
- Reduce city administrative office buildings from 9 to 4 to control maintenance and operating costs
- Move Fire Headquarters to 1010 Massachusetts Avenue, opening the Newmarket area site for development
- Make improvements to the Dudley Library
- At the corner of Washington St. and Melnea Cass Blvd., three parcels can be the site of new retail and commercial uses

Dudley Square should be an attractive site for development given its close proximity to downtown Boston. However, economic development studies generally indicate that

public offices are not a strong incentive for creating private development in a city.

Local Health Insurance Reform

On health care reform, Mayor Menino talked about the need to make changes to meet current times. That meant cities and towns having "flexibility in plan design, giving cities the same power the state has." He noted cities could not afford the benefits of past years and could not "do new things the same old way." The Mayor talked about his plan to authorize Boston to create a local Group Insurance Commission that would have administrative authority over plan design. Union representation would be the same also. With this plan, he estimated the City could save more than \$12M annually.

Boston Collective Bargaining

The Mayor stated that he believes in collective bargaining. He noted that we are living in different times, and so negotiations have to meet new needs. He stated that the City can be "fair and flexible" if the unions work collaboratively. For the teachers' contract, the Mayor indicated a need for changes such as:

- The flexibility to assign teachers where they are needed
- An improved teacher evaluation process
- A lengthened school day

He emphasized the importance of a contract that focused on student achievement and away from adult interests.