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The Rest Of The Story

Other issues raised in the Mayor's Chamber speech

The Mayor's recent proposal to sell City Hall and build a new one in South Boston dominated the news media, but other important issues were raised in the Mayor's speech to the Chamber of Commerce that received little attention. These issues include:

- **Local Health Insurance** – The Mayor discussed the skyrocketing costs of employee health insurance and the City's limited ability to control those costs. As reported in the *Research Bureau's* most recent report, the Mayor compared the City's 92% increase in health insurance spending over the past six years with the state's increase of 61%. He noted the difference was primarily due to the fact that the Commonwealth has the ability to make changes in plan design administratively while Boston and other cities and towns must negotiate every aspect of employee health insurance with each of its unions. He requested greater flexibility in managing these costs consistent with the state's authority. [*Soaring Health Insurance Costs Threaten Boston's Competitive Edge*](#)
- **Municipal Flexibility** - The Mayor talked about the City of Boston being poised to become even greater than it is but having to operate under an outdated structure imposed by Beacon Hill on cities and towns. He talked about the need for greater flexibility to enable municipalities to "respond and adapt to today's economic landscape." He also

called for a better system with the state that allocates more resources to stimulate growth.

- **Community Colleges** – The Mayor challenged the two community colleges in Boston, Roxbury CC and Bunker Hill CC to improve their services to train Boston students for the jobs needed by Boston employers. The Mayor indicated a willingness by the City to help fund sector-specific programs at the two schools tied to skills required for jobs in Boston. On a different front, the Boston Public Schools would like to work with one of the community colleges to establish a grade 13 and grade 14 to better prepare its graduates to be successful at the college level.
- **Business Involvement** – On a few occasions in his speech, the Mayor stressed the importance of the private sector being engaged in the public issues that will sustain growth in the city. He argued that making Boston work better is as beneficial to businesses as it is to residents.

With all the time the Research Bureau staff spends at City Hall, we certainly are aware of the problems of the building and are pleased that the Mayor wants to address them. As the center of the downtown between the Back Bay and Seaport District, Government Center remains the logical area for City Hall because of its location and accessibility.