

## Winthrop Square Garage Sale

*Use of proceeds from the garage operation and sale requires a public discussion*

On May 11<sup>th</sup>, Mayor Menino announced his proposal to apply the proceeds from the operation of the Winthrop Square Garage after July 1st to support Boston Housing Authority (BHA) police services for the next two years and later use the proceeds from the sale of the garage to upgrade BHA facilities. Resources would also help fund human service programs in elderly and family housing communities. The Mayor's proposal identifies an important community issue but it can only be considered a proposal until a formal public process is established to evaluate it against other public needs and to determine the best use for the non-recurring garage resources.

**Garage Operations** - Actually, the Winthrop Square Garage project is of two parts. The first part deals with the operation of the garage after June 30<sup>th</sup> when the current garage lease expires. The Mayor has requested the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) to acquire a leasehold interest in the garage in order to issue a request for proposal (RFP) for the continued management of the garage operations until the sale is completed. Proposals are due by June 11. The parking fees will be increased and the additional amounts received will be deposited in an escrow account separate from BRA operations.

If the FY08 federal funding of the BHA budget on October 1 is insufficient, the Mayor has proposed continuing to support BHA police services from the revenues in the escrow account. The Mayor and City Council approved a supplemental appropriation of

\$2.1M in January to fund these police services until October.

**Garage Sale** – The second part is the process for allocating the proceeds from the sale of the garage. The garage is owned by the City of Boston and there are two options the Administration can follow. The more traditional process established by city Charter involves the Off Street Parking Facilities Board and Public Facilities Board in declaring the garage excess, securing City Council approval, selling the garage and placing the proceeds in the Surplus Property Disposition Fund for capital purposes unless the Mayor and Council agree otherwise. That process was used in the sale of the Fort Hill Garage (International Place), St. James Avenue Garage (500 Boylston and 222 Berkeley) and the Kilby Street Garage (75 State Street).

The other option, used more recently for the sale of Hayward Place, is the BRA taking the property by eminent domain and, with the Mayor, determining the allocation of funds. This option involves an expedited public process. Sale of the Kingston-Bedford Street Garage (1 Lincoln) followed a hybrid approach involving parts of both options.

The City has a pending agreement to sell the Winthrop Square Garage to Trans National Properties. The final sale could take a few years which affords time to decide on the sale process and the disposition of the proceeds. A public discussion about how to best utilize the proceeds from the garage operation and sale should be part of that process.