

2024 UNION SQUARE INSIDER'S GUIDE

Discover your next adventure at one of the many sweet sights or spirited events in the Square.

Table of Contents

01	Friendly welcome	1
02	Union Square Main Streets	3
03	Explore Union Square	8
04	Keeping Small Strong	13
05	General resources	18
06	#LoveUnionSquare postcard	20
07	#LoveUnionSquare magnet	22

Union Square Main Streets is a 501(c)3 working to strengthen the dynamic neighborhood of businesses and people in Union Square.

[@unionsquarems](#)

[unionsquaremain.org](#)

[usms@unionsquaremain.org](#)

USMS is a proud supporter of the local creative economy!

Design: [Lucy Nguyen](#)

Photography: [Carlos Ly](#)





Friendly welcome

from *Keeping Small Strong* Chair, **Jen Palacio**
and USMS Executive Director, **Jessica Eshleman**



Hi Neighbor!

Union Square's sense of discovery makes this neighborhood a truly exceptional place. To help connect you with Union's treasures, we're thrilled to share this insider's guide to our neighborhood. We'd also like to introduce ourselves!

I'm Jen, owner of Tiny Turns Paperie & a Somerville resident. I opened my business in 2019 because after spending so much time in Union, I wanted to be a bigger part of the dynamic and vibrant community.

I'm Jess, your Union Square Main Streets executive director since 2018. What a joy it is to share this unique and spirited neighborhood of businesses and people with you. Union really is a place for all.

We wanted to share some of our favorite things in and about Union Square with this guide. We hope you enjoy it, and can't wait to see you in the Square!

#LoveUnionSquare,

Jen & Jess



Jen Palacio

Tiny Turns Paperie Owner
Keeping Small Strong Chair
USMS Treasurer



Jessica L. Eshleman

USMS Executive Director

P.S. Love what you see and want to know more? Sign up for the *All Things Union* [e-newsletter](#) and stay connected with us on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) to receive the latest news about the Square.





SERVING
UNION SQUARE
& SOMERVILLE
SINCE 2005

About Us

Union Square Main Streets is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization working to strengthen the dynamic neighborhood of businesses and people in Union Square by:

- 01 Promoting and celebrating the unique and spirited character of Union Square
- 02 Advocating for and assisting local businesses
- 03 Working to create welcoming public spaces
- 04 Fostering connection and collaboration among diverse stakeholders and partners



In the following pages, we'll share with you some tactics we use to achieve these goals and objectives that have informed our Keeping Small Strong pilot project. For the full list, visit [the website](#) and look at our 2020-2023 Strategic Plan

01

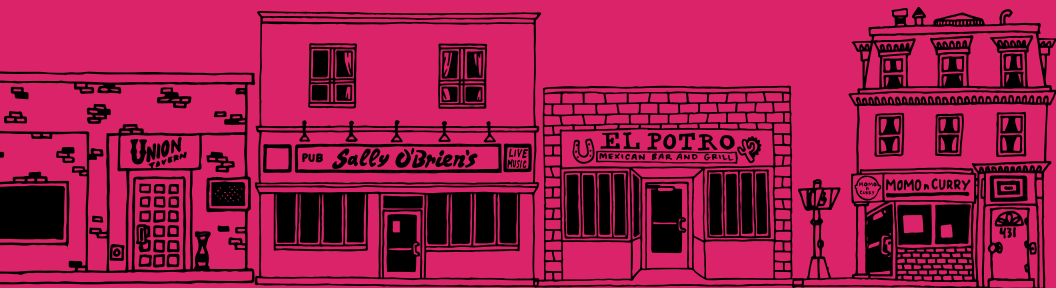


Promoting and celebrating the unique and spirited character of Union Square

- ◆ Create events that celebrate the character and heritage of Union Square
- ◆ Tell the stories of business owners
- ◆ Sustain, evaluate, evolve, and promote Fluff Fest, the Farmers Market and other events to:
 - * achieve 30% participation rate at minimum from business owners & vendors of color
 - * continue expansion of diverse programming connected to existing businesses to the greatest extent possible

02 Advocating for and assisting local businesses

- ◆ Dedicate 90% of bilingual Small Business Liaison's focus to serving independently-owned businesses owned by immigrants and BIPOC individuals
- ◆ Provide regular feedback and recommendations to the City on business concerns
- ◆ Promote businesses to increase community visits to Union Square businesses, including events and features in the ***All Things Union*** newsletter
- ◆ Share the impact of shopping local for small businesses



03 Working to create welcoming public spaces



- ◆ Establish district-wide projects that upgrade the look of the Square
- ◆ Add/improve multilingual wayfinding systems, plantings, lighting, green space and seating
- ◆ Collaborate with local grassroots traffic calming and pedestrian safety community initiatives
- ◆ Train Board & volunteers to walk the Square to report concerns to 311 & USMS
- ◆ Encourage landlords not planning imminent development to make improvements



Fostering connection and collaboration among diverse stakeholders and partners

- ♦ Cultivate collaborative relationships and mentorship among local businesses
- ♦ Mitigate commercial displacement by assisting businesses with technical assistance
- ♦ Document and communicate to stakeholders the nature of the character we want to preserve
- ♦ Work with the City, neighborhood groups, local businesses, and the public to build consensus on a description of Union Square's character using survey data and other input as appropriate; explicitly include diversity of business ownership to ensure inclusion of People of Color (POC) and Black and Indigenous POC

Get Involved!

Love Union Square & want to contribute to your community?

Volunteering is a great way to meet fellow neighbors, support local businesses & learn more about what makes Union Square so great!

♦ Community Action Agency of Somerville

caasomerville.org/volunteer

Economic injustice-focused non-profit promoting opportunities for all Somerville residents in the education, employment, housing, and health realms

♦ Community Cooks

communitycooks.org/become-a-cook

Food justice non-profit matching volunteer cooks with partner agencies to provide home-prepared meals for neighbors facing food insecurity

♦ Groundwork Somerville

groundworksomerville.org/get-involved/volunteer

Environmental non-profit focused on youth empowerment, urban farming, equitable food access, and community engagement

♦ Somerville Community Corporation

sommervillecdc.org/get-involved

Organization offering services that support low- and moderate-income Somerville residents in their efforts to achieve economic sustainability and increase civic participation

♦ Somerville Community Growing Center

thegrowingcenter.org/volunteer

Outdoor community center providing a hands-on learning environment for local preschool children and people of all ages to learn about the natural world and urban agriculture

♦ Union Square Main Streets

unionsquaremain.org/volunteer

Economic empowerment non-profit hosting year-round events to promote and celebrate the unique and spirited character of Union Square including the Union Square Farmers Market, *What the Fluff?* Festival, and Holiday Stroll

♦ Union Square Neighborhood Council

sites.google.com/view/usnc

Membership is open to all residents, property owners, business owners, workers, and volunteers in the Union Square neighborhood, though all are welcome to attend and participate in meetings

Your feedback matters!

Your investment in your neighborhood helps make Union Square the unique, dynamic, and thriving place it is today! Your input over the course of the Keeping Small Strong pilot is incredibly important to the future of our Square

Go to the [website](#) and tell us what makes Union the Sweetest Square in Somerville and be entered to win Fluff stuff!



Keep in touch!

Community meetings, surveys, and updates on this project will be shared in the [All Things Union e-newsletter](#) and on [social media](#)

Sign up and follow us today!

[@unionsquarems](#)

[unionsquaremain.org](#)

[usms@unionsquaremain.org](#)

USMS is a proud supporter of the local creative economy!

Many thanks to these artists whose contributions made this Insider's Guide to Union so special

Design: Lucy Nguyen

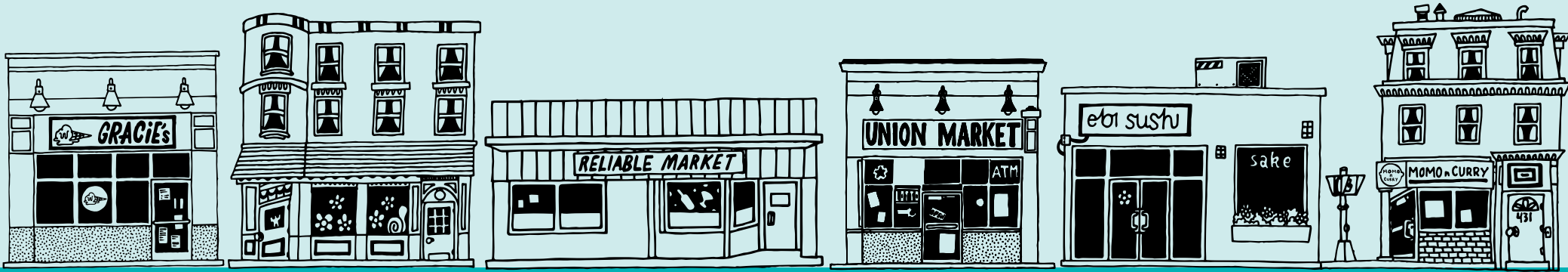
Photography: Carlos Ly, Kristin Chalmers

Illustrations: Ben Jundanian

Engagement Packet Team: Lizzie McCarty, Debbie Musnikow, Lucy Nguyen, Voravut Ratanakommon, Kait Stinchcomb



#LOVEUNIONSQUARE



EXPLORE UNION SQUARE

STAY LOCAL



HI NEIGHBOR!

Union Square's sense of discovery makes this neighborhood a truly exceptional place. To help connect you with Union's treasures, we're thrilled to share this insider's guide to events and local business highlights!

SHOP THE GLOBE IN UNION SQUARE

Did you know that Union Square has **7 international markets**? Get a flavor for the neighborhood by trying out a recipe featured on collectable recipe cards!



RELIABLE MARKET

Reliable Market has been a long time beacon of diversity in Union Square. As the area has evolved, so has the market by expanding its offerings from just groceries to craft beers, home goods & prepared foods. A visit here can take you on many culinary adventures. Visit Reliable Market & the many other diverse international markets in Union to try your hand at a dish you've never made before.

Try out a recipe inspired by Reliable Market's family favorite, Kimchi Pancakes.

In the spirit of their Korean roots, sharing food is sharing love.

Learn more about Reliable Market's Korean Roots

KIMCHI PANCAKES

INGREDIENTS*

- ½ lb well-fermented napa cabbage kimchi, chopped into small pieces, plus 2 tbsp of the brine
- 3 scallions, chopped
- ½ tsp sugar
- ½ c all-purpose flour
- ½ c water
- 4 tbsp vegetable oil

DIRECTIONS

- Combine kimchi, brine, scallions, sugar, flour, and water in a medium bowl and mix well with a spoon
- Heat a 12-in nonstick skillet over medium heat. (If you don't have a 12-in skillet, use a smaller skillet to make 2 pancakes)
- Add 2 tbsp vegetable oil and swirl to coat the bottom of the pan
- Pour batter into pan and spread with the back of a spoon or a spatula to make a large circle
- Cook until the bottom is golden brown and crisp, 3-5 min
- Carefully turn pancake over. Drizzle the remaining 2 tbsp oil around the edges of skillet, then lift pancake with a thin spatula to allow oil to run underneath and tilt pan to spread it evenly
- Cook until the bottom of the pancake is light golden brown and crisp, 3-5 min
- Flip pancake one more time and cook for another min
- Slide onto a large serving platter and serve immediately

EVENTS

Celebrate Union's character, meet more neighbors, and help make local businesses' registers sing!
For more details, check out our [website](#) or follow us on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#). See you in the Square!

♦ SUMMER ♦

Union Square Farmers Market

Union Square Main Streets

Shop local every Saturday **May through October** with open air access to fresh, local, healthy food in the heart of the Square with a \$15 SNAP match

Nepal Festival

Somerville Arts Council

Celebrate the Nepali cultural community in Somerville at this free festival showcasing Nepali culture, cuisine, music, folk songs & cultural dances. Have yummy Nepali food, peruse the craft vendors tables, and join for dancing and fun!

Big Gay Dance Party

Somerville Arts Council

A special event celebrating Pride month, this outdoor dance party features music, comedy, and drag performances, as well as local LGBTQ+ craft vendors and community tabling.

This event is free and open to all LGBTQ+ individuals and allies!

Festa Junina

St Anthony's Church

Join Somerville's Brazilian Community in a celebration featuring delicious native foods, live music, dancing, and raffle prizes

♦ FALL ♦

Evolution of Hip Hop Festival

Somerville Arts Council

This showcase of hip hop music, dance and culture displays the immense creativity throughout the region. There will also be live art, interactive activities & local community groups. Come support your local hip hop artists!

19th Annual *What the Fluff?* Festival

Union Square Main Streets + Somerville Arts Council

This madcap festival celebrates the invention of Marshmallow Fluff and Somerville's proud tradition of innovation with live music, fluffalicious feasts, games, zany happenings, and much more

IGNITE!

Somerville Arts Council

IGNITE! A Global Fire and Food Festival brings you an evening of international eats, fire throwers, roving entertainment, and a raucous celebration of global culture!

SomerStreets Monster Mash

Somerville Arts Council

A free and family friendly event! Dress up in your best Halloween costume and show it off at the Halloween Parade led by School of Honk. Check out activities, vendors, and live music galore!

“

Get to know the people whose businesses make your neighborhood so uniquely Union

Meet more business leaders by checking out our website!



Himalayan Kitchen

40 Bow St

“We firmly believe that the success of Himalayan Kitchen lies not only in the authenticity of our flavors but also in the relationships we have fostered with our patrons, partners, and associates—making us proud leaders in our industry.”

—Uttam Shrestha, co-owner of
Himalayan Kitchen

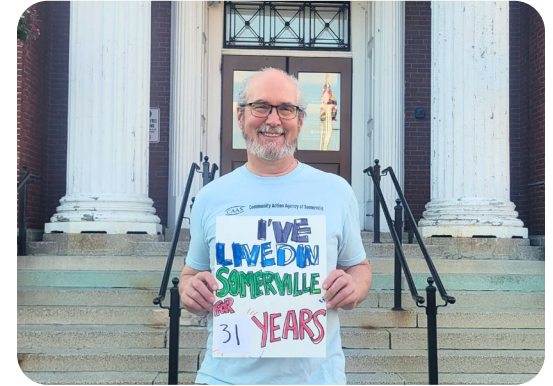


Machu Picchu

307 Somerville Ave

“I love my everyday conversations with our neighborhood! We are so lucky to be in a community where folx take a genuine interest in the businesses around them...A melting pot of many diverse cultures live in this city and it makes me very proud to be a part of its community”

—Rosy Cortez, owner of Machu
Picchu Restaurant



Community Action Agency of Somerville

66 Union Square

“If we want to have a healthy community—one where children can succeed in their schools, people can go to work, and we can all enjoy being part of our incredible community—we need to make sure our city is able to meet the needs of its people.”

—David Gibbs, Executive Director of
Community Action Agency of Somerville

”

USMS celebrates businesses who offer services in multiple languages

In addition to English, these businesses provide services in...



Community Action Agency of Somerville: English, Español, Haitian-Creole kreyòl ayisyen, Português, interpreters available for other languages upon request

El Potro Mexican Grill: English, Español

Di'Adara Salon & Spa / Tama Multiservices: English, Español, Português, Jamaican Patois

Machu Picchu: English, Español

Neighborhood Restaurant: English, Español, Português

NU Kitchen: English, Español

Quanta Landing: English, Español

Reliable Market: English, Korean

Siam Ginger Thai Cuisine: English, Thai

Somerville Community Growing Center: English, Español and Português translations available at events

Somerville Media Center: English, Español, Português

Vera's: English, Español

& more!



Use the [interactive map on our website](#) to explore Union Square

Keep in touch!

Sign up for our e-newsletter or follow us

unionsquaremain.org | [@unionsquarems](https://twitter.com/unionsquarems)

USMS is a proud supporter of the local creative economy!

Many thanks to these artists whose contributions made this Insider's Guide to Union so special

Design: Lucy Nguyen

Photography: Carlos Ly

Illustrations: Ben Jundanian

Engagement Packet Team: Lizzie McCarty, Debbie Musnikow, Lucy Nguyen, Voravut Ratanakommon, Kait Stinchcomb



BROUGHT TO YOU BY

UNION SQUARE

MAIN STREETS

AN ARPA FUNDED PILOT

What is *Keeping Small Strong*?

Keeping Small Strong

Union Square Main Streets is grateful for the City of Somerville's investment in your community by awarding USMS an ARPA-funded grant to embark on a pilot project called **Keeping Small Strong: a sustainable path forward for recovery + resilience**



Who does the pilot serve?

This pilot is a journey for USMS, local business leaders, nonprofit community partners, property owners, employees, employers, the City, and folx who **#LoveUnionSquare** like you to go on together

ARPA: American Rescue Plan Act—

legislation passed by Congress providing economic relief to address impacts of the pandemic

The goal?

Learn what business model a nonprofit like ours can have that would best serve your favorite Square businesses and your rapidly-developing neighborhood

What do we know so far?

After chatting with more than 500 Union Square community members for our most recent strategic plan, we learned that folks deeply **#LoveUnionSquare** and feel protecting the character and connectivity of your community is more critical than ever during this immense period of transformation.

Your priorities included:



Multilingual wayfinding to make Union Square more welcoming, attractive and increase its walkability



Increased community connections with local businesses to strengthen your neighborhood's resilience and pandemic recovery



Enhanced collaboration with nonprofit partners dedicated to equitable economic opportunity to enable us to serve more vulnerable members of our community

Your feedback has driven USMS to expand the impact of our equitable, place-keeping, and partnership-focused programs.

Thank you for helping co-create USMS' future service to Union Square

There are many types of business models that USMS could grow into to offer these services, but based on your feedback so far, the best fit *might* be a **Business Improvement District (BID)**

What is a BID?

BID: Business Improvement District

A dynamic partnership between community, property owners, and businesses to bolster the economic and social vitality of a neighborhood through supplemental services

The focus of Keeping Small Strong is supporting **small businesses** disproportionately impacted by the pandemic

BIDs provide a unified voice on issues that are important to the neighborhood and are specific to the needs of that community



BIDs have been proven to help increase the speed of sustainable recovery for small businesses impacted by the pandemic

Did you know...

There are many BIDs in Massachusetts! Some examples include Central Square, Downtown Boston, Amherst, Springfield, Hyannis, Worcester, Hudson and Boston Greenway

So what does this have to do with Keeping Small Strong?

Keeping Small Strong gives the neighborhood the ability to “try out” some of the services a BID would provide while we learn alongside each other if it’s the right fit



♦ **Look for Union Square Ambassadors in the yellow shirts!** These are members of Block by Block, who will welcome you to the Square with smiling faces and help you with what you need

- Need a recommendation of where to go for dinner?
- Forgot your umbrella?
- Need help finding your way to Market Basket?

Union Square Ambassadors are here for you! [Check out our website for more info](#)

♦ **Want to know which businesses are in the Square and learn the stories of the people behind them?**

- Read about business leaders’ passion for community in the stories shared in this Union Square insider’s guide
- Try your hand at a family favorite recipe
- Attend Square events happening throughout the year
- And don’t forget to say hi when you see these folk around the Square!



♦ **[You’re in the Square, now where do you go?](#)**

- Starting this spring, look for multilingual wayfinding signs that will help guide you along your way

What’s next?

The Keeping Small Strong pilot project will progress through the end of the grant period on **June 30, 2024**

Fall/Winter 2023

- Block by Block Street Team Ambassadors begin
- Community engagement begins

Winter 2023/Early Spring 2024

- *Insider’s Guide to Union* distribution
- Wayfinding signage design finalized
- Reflection of community engagement
- Evaluation and refinement of the pilot

Late Spring/Early Summer 2024

- Wayfinding signage installed
- Block by Block Street Ambassadors conclude work
- Presentation of the pilot evaluation results to the community, further refinement based on community feedback

Your feedback matters!

Your investment in your neighborhood helps make Union Square the unique, dynamic, and thriving place it is today! Your input over the course of the Keeping Small Strong pilot is incredibly important to the future of our Square

Tell us what makes Union the Sweetest Square in Somerville and be entered to win Fluff stuff!

Keep in touch!

Community meetings, [surveys](#), and updates on this project will be shared in the *All Things Union* e-newsletter and on social media.



Sign up and follow us today!

[@unionsquarems](#)

unionsquaremain.org

usms@unionsquaremain.org

USMS is a proud supporter of the local creative economy!

Many thanks to these artists whose contributions made this Insider's Guide to Union so special

Design: Lucy Nguyen

Photography: Carlos Ly, Kristin Chalmers

Illustrations: Abby Woodward

Engagement Packet Team: Lizzie McCarty, Debbie Musnikow, Lucy Nguyen, Voravut Ratanakommon, Kait Stinchcomb

This project is supported, in whole or in part, by federal award number SLFRP1753 awarded to City of Somerville, Massachusetts by the U.S. Department of the Treasury.





GENERAL RESOURCES

Compiled by
Union Square Main Streets

Looking to learn more about Somerville?

Our friends at the City of Somerville have a guide just for you! Click the links for the following:

- * Moving to Somerville? [A Resident's Guide](#)
- * Oh the places you'll go!
[Getting around Somerville](#)
- * Light out? [Submit service requests + sign up for City alerts](#)
- * Hazard ahead! [Construction Updates](#)
- * [Somerville Schools](#)
- * [Somervision 2040](#)
- * [Union Square Neighborhood Plan](#)
- * Fire (non emergency)
(617) 623-1700 x8101

Be sure to check out these partner organizations supporting Somervillians:

- * [Community Action Agency of Somerville](#)
- * [Community Cooks](#)
- * [Parenting Journey](#)
- * [RESPOND Inc](#)
- * [Somerville Community Corporation](#)
- * [The Welcome Project](#)
- * [Union Square Neighborhood Council](#)

**KEEP
SMALL
STRONG**

**IN UNION
SQUARE**

FROM A LOCAL BUSINESS THAT LOVES YOU

**MANTENHA
NEGÓCIOS
LOCAIS
BEM-SUCEDIDOS**

**EM UNION
SQUARE**

DE UM NEGÓCIO LOCAL QUE AMA VOCÊ

**APOYE LOS
NEGOCIOS
PEQUEÑOS**

**DE UNION
SQUARE**

CON MUCHO AMOR PARA USTEDES
DE SU NEGOCIO PEQUEÑO DE LA VECINDAD

**APOYE LOS
NEGOCIOS
PEQUEÑOS**

**DE UNION
SQUARE**

CON MUCHO AMOR PARA USTEDES
DE SU NEGOCIO PEQUEÑO DE LA VECINDAD

**KEEP
SMALL
STRONG**

**IN UNION
SQUARE**

FROM A LOCAL BUSINESS THAT LOVES YOU

**MANTENHA
NEGÓCIOS
LOCAIS
BEM-SUCEDIDOS**

**EM UNION
SQUARE**

DE UM NEGÓCIO LOCAL QUE AMA VOCÊ

#LOVEUNIONSQUARE

**KEEP
SMALL
STRONG**
IN UNION
SQUARE
FROM A LOCAL BUSINESS THAT LOVES YOU

**MANTENHA
NEGÓCIOS
LOCAIS
BEM-SUCEDIDOS**
EM UNION
SQUARE
DE UM NEGÓCIO LOCAL QUE AMA VOCÊ

**APOYE LOS
NEGOCIOS
PEQUEÑOS**
DE UNION
SQUARE
CON MUCHO AMOR PARA USTEDES
DE SU NEGOCIO PEQUEÑO DE LA VECINDAD

IONSQUARE



**Download this print-ready PDF
to get your own postcard!**

For best results print on cardstock.

**APOYE LOS
NEGOCIOS
PEQUEÑOS**
DE UNION
SQUARE
CON MUCHO AMOR PARA USTEDES
DE SU NEGOCIO PEQUEÑO DE LA VECINDAD

**KEEP
SMALL
STRONG**
IN UNION
SQUARE
FROM A LOCAL BUSINESS THAT LOVES YOU

◆ #LoveUnionSquare ◆



@unionsquarems | unionsquaremain.org

USMS is a proud supporter of the local creative economy!
#LoveUnionSquare Flyers Design: Ryan Habbyshaw, Loyal Supply Co.



LOVE UNION SQUARE

unionsquaremain.org | [@unionsquarems](https://twitter.com/unionsquarems)



Get your own magnet!

Email us at usms@unionsquaremain.org for details

While supplies last