

June 30, 2025

Executive Board
Worcester Square Neighborhood Association
Worcester Square
Boston, MA 02118

Dear Executive Board and Members of the Worcester Square Area Neighborhood Association,

Thank you for your partnership and for inviting me to join an open discussion last week about the serious challenges to public safety, health, and quality of life in the neighborhood. The day after the WSANA zoom, BPD zone commander Deputy John Brown and team returned to the neighborhood for a walk through, and earlier this evening I joined Commissioner Cox and the department for another walk with WSANA representatives. As promised, I'm writing to follow up on some of the questions from last week and reiterate some of what we discussed today.

Open substance use in any part of Boston is illegal and unacceptable. Our goal is to use all levers of City authority—public health, public safety, and public works—in partnership with the community, providers, and the State, to end congregate substance use in Boston and the criminal activity that supports it. You can read more details about the coordinated response plan that's been in place in [this update sent to the City Council](#) earlier this year. Seven days a week, our police, public health, public works and coordinated response teams are working to achieve these goals, and I'm grateful for the significant steps forward citywide in building up pathways to recovery and permanent housing, passing legislation and ending permanent encampments, and building up a coordinated response team (CRT) for the first time to provide coordinated services citywide. Even as we mark these important steps, we recognize that quality of life impacts have gotten worse in certain areas, which is not acceptable. Dealing with the nationwide opioid epidemic at the local level is complex and challenging, but we won't quit and I'm thankful for your partnership in doubling down on immediate and long-term actions.

Recognizing the concentrated impacts on certain streets, Commissioner Cox and BPD will be ramping up police presence and visibility as staffing levels allow. This will include officers assigned to bike units, drug control units, and Community Interaction Teams (CITs). We will also deploy some of the effective strategies used in the downtown area and in our other partnerships with the District Attorney's office to identify individuals whose repeated actions may be driving the impacts.

Our CRT, BPHC, and the Mayor's Office of Housing will also be working with state and trusted health partners on establishing an updated by-name list, with a goal of developing a treatment and recovery plan with every individual regularly observed in the area. Consistent with the goals of Recover Boston, the City believes that connecting individuals to highly-distributed treatment sites, through diversion, sectioning, and voluntary navigation, is a critical complement to enforcement. The City has worked successfully with the Pine Street Inn on by-name lists in the past, and has secured funds to launch an expanded collaboration with the Gavin Foundation to

provide transportation and immediate recovery services to individuals. We will ask all service providers in the area to join us in this focused effort and will seek additional support from our state partners to prioritize resources.

As one part of our focus on quality of life, we will continue working closely with the Newmarket BID and other partners to implement new strategies to safely and quickly collect needles and reduce the number of needles discarded in the area. We will also identify options for adding new lighting and additional monitoring to areas heavily impacted by congregation and other conduct. The City will also proactively waive any fines mistakenly applied to properties in the area.

Finally, even as we address immediate safety and health concerns, thank you for also keeping a focus on long-term infrastructure and resources. We will continue working with the larger working group to identify funding and pathways to the public health recovery campus that is needed to provide true systemic solutions.

I look forward to continuing to hear directly from residents on our progress and seek your feedback as we implement new strategies and approaches in the area.

Sincerely,

Michelle Wu
Mayor of Boston