



BOSTON CITY COUNCIL

Committee on Public Safety and Criminal Justice
Henry A. Santana, Chair

One City Hall Square 5th Floor, Boston, MA 02201 ♦ Phone: (617) 635-3040 ♦ city.council@boston.gov

REPORT OF COMMITTEE CHAIR

August 25, 2025

Dear Councilors,

The Committee on Public Safety and Criminal Justice was referred the following docket for consideration:

Docket #1356, Message and order in accordance with the Ordinance on Surveillance Oversight and Information Sharing, Boston City Code Section 16.63 (“the Ordinance”), review and consideration the proposed Surveillance Use Policy for the Rodent Monitoring Camera System, submitted in partnership with the Boston Housing Authority.

This matter was sponsored by the Administration and was referred to the Committee on July 7, 2025.

Summary of Legislation

Docket #1356 is correspondence from the Administration, submitted in accordance with the Ordinance on Surveillance Oversight and Information Sharing, Boston City Code Section 16-63 (“the Ordinance”), requesting the Council’s review and consideration of the proposed *Surveillance Use Policy for the Rodent Monitoring Camera System*, developed in partnership with the Boston Housing Authority (BHA). Under the Ordinance on Surveillance Oversight and Information Sharing, city departments, including Boston Housing Authority must obtain City Council approval before acquiring or using new surveillance technology. A Surveillance Use Policy must clearly outline the purpose of the technology, authorized and prohibited uses, types of data collected, who can access the data, and safeguards for data protection, retention, and deletion. It must also address public and inter-agency data sharing, required training, oversight and compliance mechanisms, relevant legal authorities, and specific considerations for data involving minors.

Through this correspondence, the administration is proposing the use of *the Rodent Monitoring Camera System* which would involve deploying the Rodent Monitoring Camera System to detect and track rodent activity around trash receptacles at BHA sites in support of targeted pest control. The system uses AI-enhanced cameras owned and operated by Extrasense Technologies, and captures short, motion-triggered clips of rodents. These clips are securely transmitted for analysis, with the goal of helping the City of Boston and BHA improve public health, sanitation, and operational efficiency through data-driven mitigation strategies.

The Council must vote to approve or deny the policy within 60 days of submission by simple majority. If not approved, the policy is referred to the Surveillance Oversight Advisory Board for recommendations to the Mayor, who may choose to submit a revised policy to the Council for reconsideration.

Information Received at Hearings

The Committee held two hearings on Tuesday, August 12, 2025, and Tuesday, August 19, 2025. The panelists included Luke Hines, Special Projects Manager, Mayor’s Office of the Operations Cabinet; John Ulrich, Assistant Commissioner, ISD; and Kenzie Bok, Administrator, BHA.



BOSTON CITY COUNCIL

Committee on Public Safety and Criminal Justice
Henry A. Santana, Chair

One City Hall Square 5th Floor, Boston, MA 02201 ♦ Phone: (617) 635-3040 ♦ city.council@boston.gov

Mr. Hines outlined the Rodent Monitoring Camera System, to be deployed at Boston Housing Authority sites, which uses AI-enhanced cameras to detect rodent activity near trash receptacles. The system supports targeted pest mitigation, public health, and sanitation while maintaining strong privacy protections. As part of the City of Boston Rodent Action Plan (BRAP), the Extra Sense Motion Camera pilot will be first deployed at the Ruth Barkley Housing Development in the South End. Mr. Hines also highlighted other tools, including 275 micromotion sensors in bait boxes, rodent-resistant barrels, and sewer traps in the North End, with planned expansion to the South End and Chinatown.

Mr. Hines and Administrator Bok explained that the cameras monitor only rodent activity in low-foot-traffic areas, do not record audio, collect biometric or personally identifiable data, and automatically delete any footage that could identify a person. They stated that irrelevant footage is deleted after 15 minutes, and recordings are retained for a maximum of 30 days. Access is limited to credentialed Extrasense staff and select BHA personnel, with encrypted, logged, and two-factor authenticated storage. Aggregated reports and heatmaps may be shared for transparency, but raw footage is not publicly accessible and is not shared with law enforcement or private entities. Staff receive training on privacy, data minimization, and secure handling, and audit logs ensure oversight. They also mentioned that cameras are not placed near schools or areas with minors, and the system does not target protected characteristics or discriminate.

It was explained that the system is designed to complement ongoing community engagement educating residents on proper trash storage and sanitation. Committee members asked about citywide implementation, AI functionality, and data privacy; officials clarified that the system does not capture conversations and data is not shared with BRIC. Administrator Bok noted the cameras may also detect illegal dumping and highlighted the use of Burrow RX with ISD to apply carbon monoxide in rat burrows. Councilors recommended same-day trash pickup, particularly for commercial areas, to further reduce rodent activity.

Committee Chair Recommended Action

Docket #1356 presents a practical and well-considered use of technology to address a clear public health need. Rodent activity is a persistent challenge in many neighborhoods, particularly in areas managed by the Boston Housing Authority, and the proposed Rodent Monitoring Camera System provides a targeted, data-driven response. The Administration and BHA have demonstrated that this system is designed with privacy in mind, avoiding collection of personally identifiable information, limiting access to authorized personnel, and ensuring rapid deletion of irrelevant footage. It also complements ongoing community engagement efforts to improve sanitation and trash management. This approach will enhance pest control, support public health, and maintain strong privacy safeguards. As Chair of the Committee on Public Safety and Criminal Justice I recommend moving the listed docket from the Committee to the full Council for discussion and formal action. At this time, my recommendation to the full Council will be that this matter **OUGHT TO PASS**.

Henry A. Santana

Henry A. Santana, Chair
Committee on Public Safety and Criminal Justice