

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS FLYNN, CULPEPPER, DURKAN, FITZGERALD, MURPHY, PEPÉN, SANTANA, WEBER, AND WORRELL



CITY OF BOSTON

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY SIX

ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING THE OFFICE OF PEST CONTROL IN THE CITY OF BOSTON

WHEREAS: The issue of pest control is an important quality of life issue, as it impacts public health, as well as the cleanliness and sanitization of our streets and neighborhoods; *and*

WHEREAS: There has been a dramatic rise in rodent and pest activities in our neighborhoods in the past five years as a result of the pandemic, with residents and businesses reporting to 311 about the increase of rats and other rodents on our streets and homes; *and*

WHEREAS: Recently, a Tufts University study on the Boston Urban Rat population found that rats in Boston are carrying and spreading leptospirosis, a bacterial disease that impacts both humans and other animals. Leptospirosis is spread by the urine of infected animals through contact with infected soil and water; *and*

WHEREAS: It is important that the city has specific measures in place to adequately address neighborhoods' individualized needs in managing the persistent increase in rodent activities; *and*

WHEREAS: Currently, pest control is cross-departmental effort in the City of Boston, with Inspectional Services, Public Works, Boston Water and Sewer Commission being the main points of contact on this issue; *and*

WHEREAS: Having a dedicated City department on pest control would allow us to better focus and coordinate services on the issue, provide a more streamlined and coordinated process in reducing pests, and come up with more innovative ways in prevent pest infestations; *and*

WHEREAS: It is critical that the City of Boston devotes the necessary resource and attention to this significant quality of life and public health crisis, and an Office of Pest Control will not only allow the City to better address concerns with rodents, but will also signal the City's commitment in curbing rodent population; **AND NOW
THEREFORE BE IT**

Be it ordained by the City Council of Boston as follows:

That the City of Boston Code, Ordinances, is hereby amended in Chapter XI by inserting the following new section after existing Section 11-11:

Ordinance creating the Office of Pest Control in the City of Boston

SECTION 1: Purpose

The purpose of this ordinance is to create an Office of Pest Control in the City of Boston. Pest control is an important quality of life and public health issue for the residents of Boston, and there needs to be adequate resources to address this issue, including a dedicated office to coordinate multi-departmental efforts to reducing rat and pest population, develop overall pest control strategy, and conduct outreach to residents on rodent mitigation methods.

SECTION 2: The Office of Pest Control

1. Establishment of the Office of Pest Control.

There shall be established in the City of Boston the Office of Pest Control, hereafter referred to as the Office, which shall be under the charge of an Officer known as the Director of Pest Control (hereafter called the Director), who shall be appointed by the Mayor.

2. Definitions

“Pest” means a living animal or insect that negatively impacts the quality of life of humans, particularly ones that cause damage to property, create chronic nuisance, or harm public health. Pests include, but are not limited to: rats, mice, bedbugs, mites, fleas, ticks, and cockroaches.

“Pest control” means managing the response process to complaints of insect, rodent, and other animal infestation in the City of Boston, and preventing pests from negatively impacting the quality of life and public health of residents.

“Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan” means an effective and environmentally sensitive approach to pest management that relies on a combination of strategies tailored to the needs of every neighborhood in Boston.

3. Director Responsibilities.

The Director shall have direct responsibility for the organization, administration, and operation of the Office. The Director shall also have the ability to hire staff or contract out services as required in order to carry out its purpose. The duties of the Director, or designee, of the Office shall include, but not limited to:

- a. Act as the central point and dedicated person in developing and implementing long term and short term Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plans for individual neighborhoods based on their specific needs;
- b. Evaluate local pest control service providers to determine providers best suited to implement IPM plan for each neighborhood;
- c. Respond to constituent pest control requests by coordinating with relevant city departments and recommending treatment services pursuant to the neighborhood IPM plans;
- d. Coordinate with the Inspectional Services Department to manage the implementation of short-term and long-term Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plans for individual neighborhoods based on specific needs;
- e. Conduct outreach and awareness campaigns to educate residents on pest control and mitigation methods, including how to properly dispose of trash, containing food sources, sealing openings, and other preventative measures;
- f. Work with city agencies, the private sector, and community organizations to identify model practices and innovative strategies in reducing rat and pest populations;
- f. Advising city agencies and departments on issues pertaining to pest control; and
- g. Perform such other duties and functions as may be appropriate to pursue the policies set forth in this section.

3. Enforcement Powers.

- a. The Director, or designees of the Office shall have the power to enforce the IPM plans related to this ordinance.
- b. The Director, or designees of the Office are authorized to enter into agreements necessary to effectuate programs and projects related to its purpose, and, in connection with agreements entered into under this Ordinance, to enter into and execute all such other instruments and to perform any and all acts, including the allocation and expenditure of duly appropriated funds, as shall be necessary or advisable in connection with the implementation of such agreements and any renewals thereto.

SECTION 3: Severability

The provisions of this ordinance are severable, and if any provision, or portion thereof, should be held to be unconstitutional or otherwise invalid by any court of competent jurisdiction, such unconstitutionality or invalidity will not affect the remaining provisions, which will remain in

full force and effect.

SECTION 4: Effective Date

This ordinance shall be effective within six months of passage.

Filed in City Council: February 9, 2026