

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS ED FLYNN, ERIN J. MURPHY, BREADON, COLETTA ZAPATA, CULPEPPER, FITZGERALD, LOUIJEUNE, MEJIA, PEPÉN, WEBER, AND WORRELL



CITY OF BOSTON

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY FIVE

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO DISCUSS WATER AND SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE IN CHINATOWN AND THE LEATHER DISTRICT

WHEREAS, In April 2025, there was a water main break in Chinatown, causing extensive flooding and evacuation of residents. Three properties were impacted and six units were displaced. The burst pipe was a six-inch fire sprinkler water pipe, and it was unclear what caused the break; *and*

WHEREAS, Over the last few years, there have been several other water main breaks in Chinatown, including a 12-inch water main break in August 2023 at the intersection of Harrison Avenue and Beach street, and another 12-inch water main break in September 2022 at the intersection of Washington and Kneeland Streets. This has impacted traffic, services and businesses in and around Chinatown; *and*

WHEREAS, In 2024, in the Leather District, residents complained that tap water temperatures were reaching nearly 100 degrees, and shared concerns regarding the adverse effects of high groundwater levels on civil infrastructure; *and*

WHEREAS, A number of potential factors can lead to water main breaks, including aging pipes, soil corrosion, construction, and traffic weight; *and*

WHEREAS, The Boston Water and Sewer Commission actively monitors the health and function of its systems via pipe relining, pipe replacement and other preventative maintenance programs, including water main flushing, pipe cleaning, catch basin cleaning, among others; *and*

WHEREAS, In 2016, it was estimated that 22% of water pipes in Boston were more than a century old, with fewer than 100 miles of the city's water pipes relined. Last year, at a meeting with residents of Chinatown and the Leather District, Boston Water and Sewer Commission announced their plans for Capital Improvements and Stormwater Remediation Installation in the area; *and*

WHEREAS, In Chinatown, scheduled improvements, including recent projects to replace a 100-year-old water main on Hudson Street was completed in 2023, and another project to replace a 100-year-old sewer main on Tyler Street was completed in 2024. In the Leather District, a new project to replace a water main along Essex Street from Lincoln Street to Washington Street in Chinatown is scheduled; *and*

WHEREAS, Water and sewer pipes are critical infrastructure to the health and quality life of a city. There is a need for comprehensive planning and collaboration to address aging infrastructure and slow processes due to design work, and a need to ensure traffic and small businesses are minimally impacted by any construction; *and*

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED:

That the appropriate Committee of the Boston City Council holds a hearing to discuss the Water and Sewer Infrastructure in Chinatown and the Leather District. Representatives from the Boston Water and Sewer Commission and other relevant and interested parties shall be invited to testify.

Filed on: February 25, 2026