



Boston City Council
ED FLYNN
Councilor - District 2

July 30, 2026

Commissioner Michael Cox
One Schroeder Plaza
Roxbury Crossing, MA 02120

RE: Increase in Phone Theft, Financial and Related Scams

Dear Commissioner Cox,

After speaking with residents from Downtown and Chinatown about ongoing phone thefts, as well as financial and related scams, I am respectfully requesting additional police resources, increased patrols, and a comprehensive public awareness campaign on both social and traditional media outlets. Residents have described a pattern of recurring crimes using very similar tactics. It is critical that we educate the public and prevent our most vulnerable residents from being targeted.

At my on-site public safety meeting at the Chinatown Gate on Monday, residents shared several alarming scams that are affecting our seniors and children. One resident described a tactic in which a suspect approaches someone and asks them what time it is. When the victim takes out their cellphone to check the time, the suspect grabs the phone and runs away. Residents reported that children have been targeted by this scam.

Residents also described incidents involving elderly residents being approached by someone claiming they need to borrow a cellphone to make an emergency call. Once the suspect has access to the device, they access banking information, transfer funds, or obtain sensitive financial information before returning the phone.

Another scam particularly targets our elderly residents in Chinatown who have limited proficiency in English. According to residents, while in their vehicle, the suspects lure the residents to their car and offer them a necklace as a gift. While putting the necklace on them, they remove the resident's genuine jewelry and drive away.

With these increasing reports of theft, it is evident that we need stronger enforcement and proactive public education. Working in partnership with the Boston Police Department, community organizations, neighborhood associations, and residents could help residents identify these common scam tactics before they themselves become victims. I am respectfully requesting additional police resources, increased patrols, and a comprehensive public awareness campaign on both social and traditional media platforms.

Sincerely,

Ed Flynn
Boston City Councilor, U.S. Navy (Retired)