



City of Boston, Massachusetts
Office of the Mayor
MICHELLE WU

August 8, 2022

TO THE CITY COUNCIL

Dear Councilors:

I hereby transmit for your review the Surveillance Use Policies from each City department or agency subject to the Ordinance on Surveillance Oversight and Information Sharing, Boston City Code Section 16-63 (the “Ordinance”). I am grateful that the City Council worked diligently to pass this transformative Ordinance to enhance oversight of the City’s use of surveillance technologies and remain deeply committed to its thorough implementation. I look forward to working with this body to bring public accountability and transparency to the use of surveillance in Boston.

The attached Surveillance Use Policies and supplemental materials reflect the documents received from the seven (7) City departments and agencies subject to the Ordinance: the Boston Police Department, the Boston Parks Department Park Rangers, Boston Public Schools, Boston Public Health Commission, Boston Housing Authority, Boston Municipal Protection Services, and the Office of Emergency Management. My team and I have worked with each department or agency to add clarity or additional detail to particular policies in order to provide a full accounting of how Surveillance Technologies have been used in Boston to date. I am eager to work with the Council to ensure that the City of Boston’s surveillance technologies are governed by the strongest possible protections for privacy, civil rights, public safety, and racial and immigrant justice, and to work with you on further policy reforms.

Review and potential reform to Surveillance Use Policies will also involve collaboration with partners in government, including the Boston School Committee and the Metro Boston Homeland Security Region (MBHSR) Jurisdictional Point of Contact Committee, which sets policies governing MBHSR Technologies. It is my expectation that the forthcoming discussions in the City Council will better position the City to participate in regional discussions.

Technology underpins everything that the City does, and in many cases, surveillance technology is essential to delivering effective City services to our residents – from transportation planning,

to air quality monitoring, to responding to natural disasters. As reliance on such technology and the capabilities of our tools increase, we need clear safeguards in place to ensure that the Surveillance Technologies used by the City are deployed with transparency, public accountability, and democratic oversight. I am grateful to the advocates and residents who have fought for these protections for many years. In partnership with the City Council, I look forward to thoughtful and honest conversations about how our use of technology can better center the needs of our neighborhoods and communities in Boston.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michelle Wu', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michelle Wu
Mayor of Boston