



City of Cambridge

Executive Department

YI-AN HUANG
City Manager

CMA 2025 #308
IN CITY COUNCIL
December 22, 2025

To the Honorable, the City Council:

Please see attached a memo from Public Works Commissioner, John Nardone, in response to Awaiting Report #25-61 regarding cleanliness and safety in the area on Alewife Paths near Russell Field.

Very truly yours,

Yi-An Huang
City Manager





City of Cambridge
Department of Public Works

147 Hampshire Street
Cambridge, MA 02139
theworks@cambridgema.gov

John F. Nardone, Commissioner

Voice: 617 349 4800

TDD: 617 499 9924

To: Yi-An Huang,
City Manager,

From: John F Nardone
Commissioner DPW

Date: December 17, 2025

Re: POR 2025 #142 : That the City Manager is requested to work with relevant departments, state agencies, and the property owner IQHQ to provide an update on efforts to maintain cleanliness and safety in the area on Alewife Paths near Russell Field.

In response to the Council's request regarding safety and public health conditions in the vicinity of the Alewife MBTA station headhouse and surrounding public facilities, including Russell Field, Linear Park, the Minuteman paths, and adjacent recreational areas—the City offers the following update.

City staff have continued to work closely with our partners at the MBTA, the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), and IQHQ to address concerns raised by residents and community members. This area presents unique operational challenges due to overlapping jurisdictional responsibilities, ongoing construction activity, and the high volume of daily users, including many children and families. Despite these complexities, the City remains committed to maintaining safe, clean, and accessible public spaces for all.

Over the past several months, the City has taken the following steps:

- **Enhanced Coordination:** Public Works, Police, Human Services, and Public Health staff have met with MBTA, DCR, and IQHQ representatives to identify issues, share information, and coordinate maintenance and response efforts.

• **Increased Monitoring and Maintenance:**

- **Public Works** continues weekly litter sweeps and general cleanup of the Russell Field complex. Trash collection has been increased in high-use areas, and staff are monitoring conditions more frequently, particularly near the station plaza and along key pathways.
- **MBTA** has identified several locations where brush and tree clearing may help deter unwanted behavior. With guidance from the City's Conservation Commission, this work has begun and will continue as needed. MBTA crews have also increased cleaning efforts around their property, including the areas around Alewife station, their headhouses and adjacent paths.
- **DCR** has placed the Alewife Reservation on a regular monitoring and cleanup rotation, conducting cleanups approximately every three weeks. DCR is also reviewing its sharps cleanup protocols and has been responsive to City requests, addressing issues outside scheduled hours.
- **IQHQ** even though most of its land is privately controlled, IQHQ monitors publicly accessible portions of its property weekly for cleanliness and lighting,

• **Public Safety Efforts:** Cambridge Police continue targeted patrols and outreach in the area, focusing on addressing unsafe or disruptive behavior while connecting individuals in need with appropriate services.

The City will continue to collaborate with our state partners and IQHQ to refine these efforts and identify potential additional opportunities to improve safety and cleanliness in the Alewife area.

