

Madalyn Letellier

From: Greta Pintacuda [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, September 4, 2025 12:33 PM
To: Ben Ewen-Campen; Alicia Privett; Colin Zeigler; [REDACTED]
Cc: Public Comments; All City Council; Yenah Lakes
Subject: Follow-up on Escalating Public Health & Safety Concerns at Union

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Hi All,

I'm following up on my note below where I raised concerns about persistent bird feeding in Union Square, which is worsening rodent infestations, creating public health risks, and harming both wildlife and pets.

I appreciate the plans Ms. Privett shared with me, including creating signage and connecting with local businesses — they all sound very sensible. However, I regret that after almost nine months, none of these measures have been implemented. I fully understand that the city council is managing many priorities during challenging times, but the situation at Union has continued to escalate.

The attached photos from yesterday illustrate conditions that now occur on an almost daily basis. This has become unsustainable, unsanitary, and, frankly, a waste of city resources — including repeated spending on rat traps and related efforts — without addressing the root cause.

If it would help, I am more than willing to print and hang flyers myself, provided you can share the materials electronically and formally delegate permission to do so.

I would greatly appreciate an update and next steps at your earliest convenience.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Best regards,

Greta Pintacuda

On Jan 28, 2025, at 10:01, Greta Pintacuda <[REDACTED]>

Dear Somerville City Council,

I hope this email finds you well. I am writing to bring to your attention an issue of growing urgency, particularly in light of the concerning threat of a potential bird flu pandemic. I reside near Union Square, where I frequently observe individuals feeding wild birds—especially pigeons—by scattering bread, seeds, cakes, and other food on sidewalks and public spaces. While I appreciate that these actions often stem from kindness and a love for animals, I am deeply concerned about the unintended consequences:

1 Increased rodent activity – The food left out for birds also attracts rats and mice, exacerbating an already critical infestation.

2 Public health risks – Pigeons, in particular, are known carriers of disease, including Cryptococcosis, Histoplasmosis, and Psittacosis, with their droppings contributing to unsanitary conditions on sidewalks and public spaces.

3 Harm to wildlife – Feeding wild birds human food is detrimental to their health and disrupts natural foraging behaviors.

3 Danger to pets – Leftover food on sidewalks is often consumed by dogs, posing a serious health hazard. I personally experienced an emergency when my puppy ingested chocolate cake crumbs scattered in Union Square.

Given these concerns, I urge the city council to take initial steps to address this issue. At a minimum, placing informational posters in Union Square discouraging the feeding of pigeons would help educate the community and curb these behaviors.

I appreciate your time and consideration and hope the city will take action to mitigate these risks. Please let me know if there are any existing or planned initiatives related to this issue.

Best regards, Greta Pintacuda

[REDACTED]
Somerville





