

EMERGENCY EXECUTIVE ORDER ON DOWNTOWN **PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Pursuant to the authority vested in me as the Chief Executive of the City of Lynn, I, Jared Nicholson, Mayor of Lynn, hereby declare and order as follows:

DECLARATION

WHEREAS, the City of Lynn is confronting overlapping crises of homelessness, substance use disorder, and mental health, particularly in our downtown that have escalated to a point demanding immediate enhancement of public action; and

WHEREAS, the City recognizes and values the humanity and dignity of all its residents and appreciates the important contributions of our various service providers that support our residents in need; and

WHEREAS, the escalating triple crises of homelessness, substance use disorder, and mental health means unacceptable suffering for those individuals in crisis and escalating risks to the public health and safety of our community; particularly in our downtown; and

WHEREAS, the City appreciates the progress our community has made in combating one of those triple crises in particular, substance use disorder, in the drastic reduction of opioid overdose deaths from the year 2017, when there were seventy opioid overdose deaths, to today, when so far this year, there have been four and that, still, one death is too many, and, given the prevalence of Narcan and the changing mix of substances in use, those numbers alone cannot convey the extent of the crisis; and

WHEREAS, while the City is home to a regional shelter and a District Court, which, as is to be expected, are utilized by people from other communities, another community improperly or inappropriately dropping people off without the right notification and coordination is not acceptable; and

WHEREAS, the City is eager to work with neighboring communities to enhance our regional collaboration to facilitate the establishment of much-needed resources for residents of those communities as well in support of our broader regional public health goals; and

WHEREAS, ultimately homelessness represents a shortage of housing, there being a strong correlation between the cost of housing and the number of unsheltered people; and in contrast to the perspective that denigrates the development of affordable housing, the City recognizes that what is considered “affordable” varies significantly, including workforce housing for people who fill jobs that are important to our local economy but do not pay enough to cover market rate rents, and even still, providing affordable housing the lowest levels of affordability helps people with very low incomes live in homes instead of on the streets; and

WHEREAS, the City has made and is making significant progress addressing the underlying housing need, including the opening of Catalyst by the Haven Project and Harborlight (twenty-four units for young adults experiencing homelessness with case management/day programming); the redevelopment of the Hennessey House (fifty four units with wraparound services for extremely low-income individuals under construction from LHAND); the conversion of the Armory into 54 units supportive housing for veterans; Commonwealth Land Trust's 21 Oxford (forty units with wraparound services for individuals with history of homelessness; and Atlantic Investment's project at 57-61 Liberty St (forty-four units for Eliot Human Services transitional housing); and

WHEREAS, the Lynn Police, particularly the bike unit, responds to the issues downtown every day and night; Public Health, LPD's Behavioral Health Unit and Behavioral Health Intervention Program, and the Calm Team frequently respond as well; and these teams engage individuals regarding available services and treatment options, address violations and other public-safety concerns as appropriate, and continue to document and report environmental and quality-of-life issues, while DPW is often called to clear debris; and

WHEREAS, the City has taken a number of public-safety focused steps, including, installing community cameras around downtown, enhancing downtown enforcement operations, increasing bicycle patrols and new motorcycle unit conducive to more community policing, outreach to Essex County District Court, Probation Department, and Sherriff on sentencing and reentry; recommendations to private property owners to improve security; increased coordination with transit police on MBTA property; and

WHEREAS, the City taken a multi-faceted approach to public safety that priorities equity, most notably in the launch of the Calm Team, an unarmed response team formed as an independent alternative to policing focused on downtown as another option for homelessness, mental health, panhandling, public intoxication, and substance use; and

WHEREAS, the City has also taken steps to change the built, physical environment to improve downtown quality of life, including the string lights on Union Street, Central Ave, Washington, Exchange, lighting for train underpasses on Silsbee Street, Central Ave, Market Square, a multi-year agreement with ROCA for street cleanup team; billboard barrels around downtown to improve cleanliness, increased downtown street sweeping, and more; and

WHEREAS, the Lynn Department of Public Health has also taken steps to address the public health implications of the downtown challenges, including: the Lynn Shelter Association, in collaboration with Public Health utilizing Opioid Working Group and other public health funding to open an expanded day program, similar to a "Living Room" model, 7 days a week from 9 am to 5 pm as an alternative to hanging out on the street or loitering/trespassing, that is "low threshold" but with ample access to treatment and outfit the courtyard with furniture to make utilization of the space comfortable, provided porta-potties to support adequate restroom availability as well as equipment for a medical room at LSA; enhanced collaboration among service providers; utilization of "problem property" designation for particular sites requiring extensive public resources; needle disposal boxes installed around downtown; vending machines with essential items to improve hygiene; opening a Public Health Resource Room with showers, food as well as sleep/quiet/self-care space for women facing homelessness and/or substance use disorder; and

WHEREAS, leaving needles around is not acceptable and while needle exchange programs take responsibility for that, as residents can call Healthy Streets, the Calm Team, or the Public Health Department when they encounter needles, still our community struggles with the proliferation of used needles on our sidewalks and in our parks; and

WHEREAS, the City has cleared major encampments that had developed over several years on private parcels on the Lynnway and an MBTA-owned parcel behind 195 Market Street; but smaller encampments continue to spring up around the downtown despite everyone's best efforts to provide better alternatives; and

WHEREAS, the City hosted a listening session at the Lynn Shelter Association with shelter and unhoused residents and they were also dissatisfied with the status quo approach; and

WHEREAS, the City has received a notable increase in complaints about downtown quality-of-life and public health from residents, businesses, and employees of large downtown employers, including our healthcare and arts and culture organizations, of threats to public health and safety, including property damage, theft, public urination and defecation, and physical violence; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor upon advice of the Chief of Police and Chief of Health and Human Services has determined that the aforesaid issues pose a present and reasonable imminent danger to public health, safety or general welfare of the people or their property so that it has become necessary for the Chief of HHS to utilize and coordinate the services, equipment, supplies and facilities of existing departments, offices and agencies of the City for the purposes of emergency management; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor has determined that immediate public action is needed to prevent, minimize, or mitigate damage to the public health, safety or general welfare of the people of Lynn or their property which may otherwise result from the above described crises and that taking the time required to comply with the various state and local procurement laws would endanger the health or safety of the people or their property; and

WHEREAS, the people of the City of Lynn; should be able to depend upon guidance from their chief executive officer, Mayor Jared C. Nicholson,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that I, Jared C. Nicholson, Mayor of the City of Lynn, Massachusetts, hereby issue this emergency executive order that as of 8:30 AM on October 2, 2026. This emergency executive order shall remain in effect until further notice is given, pursuant to my judgment, that the emergency status no longer exists; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Chief of Police and Chief of Health and Human Services are hereby directed to assemble and co-chair a Downtown Lynn Health and Safety Task Force ("DLHS Task Force"); and be it further

RESOLVED, that the DLHS Task Force shall deliver a plan for addressing the aforementioned crises in our downtown within ninety days, including a presentation to the Lynn City Council; and that such plan shall include; better collaboration with treatment programs, healthcare providers, relevant state agencies, landlords and businesses, residents, surrounding communities, and the criminal justice system; and be it further

RESOLVED, that DLHS Task Force recommendations requiring funding that fits the parameters of the opioid abatement settlement funds shall be encouraged to receive consideration from the City's Opioid Working Group; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the DLHS Task Force shall host a townhall listening session for local businesses and residents and solicit input, including written comment, from the public.

Witness my hand and seal this 2nd day of October, 2026.

Date: _____

Mayor of Lynn