

From: ["Levitt, Karen" <karen.levitt@vancouver.ca>](mailto:karen.levitt@vancouver.ca)

To: ["Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"](#)

Date: 8/17/2021 10:14:48 AM

Subject: [Memo - Vancouver Bird Strategy - Rodent Control Practices \(RTS 14257\)](#)

Attachments: REFM - Memo to Mayor Council - Rodent Control Practices - RTS 14257.pdf

Dear Mayor and Council,

Please find attached a memo from Nick Kassam in response to Council's Recommendation D (rodent control practices) to staff's Vancouver Bird Strategy Update and Implementation report (RTS 14257). This memo serves to:

- ☐ Update Council on currently available best management practices to reduce rodent populations;
- ☐ Update Council on the Provincial ban on second generation anticoagulant rodenticides; and
- ☐ Describe how a rodenticide-free program will be implemented at City sites, along with cost implications.

Should you have any questions, please contact Nick Kassam at Nick.Kassam@vancouver.ca.

All the best,

Karen

Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager (she/her)
karen.levitt@vancouver.ca

The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm/Musqueam, Skwxwú7mesh/Squamish and səliłwətaʔ/Tsleil-Waututh nations

MEMORANDUM

August 17, 2021

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Paul Mochrie, City Manager
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk
Lynda Graves, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Maria Pontikis, Director, Civic Engagement and Communications
Anita Zaenker, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Neil Monckton, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Alvin Singh, Communications Director, Mayor's Office
Donnie Rosa, General Manager, Park Board

FROM: Nick Kassam
General Manager, Real Estate and Facilities Management

SUBJECT: Vancouver Bird Strategy Update and Implementation – Update on Recommendation D (Rodent Control Practices)

RTS #: 14257

Purpose

The purpose of this memo is to respond to Council's request for information on currently available best management practices to reduce rodent populations, including alternative rodent control solutions in and around municipal facilities that do not require anticoagulant rodenticides, and, with a communications strategy to encourage the use of best practices elsewhere in the city.

Background

Real Estate & Facilities Management staff oversee the pest control program at 117 City sites. These sites include mixed-use buildings, residences, fire halls, non-market housing, engineering yards, vacant lots, theatres and VPD sites. Park Board staff oversee an additional 100 sites, including recreation facilities, PB Administration buildings, field houses, service yards, concession stands and parks.

Due to the specialized nature of work for pest control, the City and the Park Board engage with a vendor to provide this service under a consolidated contract, with City costs approaching

\$190,000 in 2020 (annual City and Park Board costs from 2016 to 2020 are included as Attachment 1).

The vendor works closely with site staff to develop rodent management strategies for each location based on a site assessment. These strategies include a combination of bait traps (rodenticide), mechanical snap traps, live traps, and, until recently, glue boards; however, the vast majority of sites include rodenticide as part of their rodent management strategy. Pest control technicians are instructed to minimize the use of rodenticides and use alternatives when the effectiveness of the program is not impacted.

The use of rodenticides is considered to be the most effective method of rodent control as one bait station remains effective for multiple rodents until the bait is gone (20-40 rodents). It is also the most cost effective strategy as pest control technicians typically only need to visit sites once per month to replace the bait. However, the impacts of rodenticide use on local wildlife (owls, eagles, raccoons, cougars and even cats and dogs) can be devastating, leading to secondary poisonings.

During the first quarter of 2020, all rodenticide bait traps installed in Park Board facilities were replaced with non-toxic baited snap-trap devices. This shift in rodent management practices required an increase in service levels as the snap traps needed weekly inspections. This led to a cost increase from \$83,000 in 2019 to just over \$220,000 in 2020. However, all Park Board facilities have since run a very successful rodent control program, rodenticide-free.

Provincial Ban on Second-Generation Anticoagulant (SGAR) Rodenticides

In response to the increased risk of primary and secondary poisoning in raptors and other birds of prey, including owls, as a result of the use of SGARs, the Province has imposed an 18-month ban on SGARs ([Ministerial Order No. M305 Integrated Pest Management Act¹](#)) effective July 21, 2021. While this order is in place, the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy will be conducting a scientific review to make recommendations for future use of rodenticides in BC.

First generation anticoagulant rodenticides have not been banned. These rodenticides usually require several feedings to deliver a lethal dose (unlike the SGARs, which only require a single feeding). They are considered low to moderate risk for both primary and secondary poisoning to mammals and birds. In contrast, SGARs are considered moderate to high risk for primary and secondary poisoning.

Next Steps: Implementing a Rodenticide-free Program at City Sites

REFM staff are working with our vendor to implement a rodenticide-free rodent control management program at all City sites as soon as possible. While the Provincial Order does allow for first generation rodenticides and exemptions for essential services that could apply to City facilities, such as fire halls and portions of some Arts, Culture & Community Services sites, REFM staff will endeavour to implement rodenticide-free strategies at all City facilities.

The City's rodent control program will follow industry best practice, which is to implement an integrated pest management framework for rodent control. This framework uses a combination

¹https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/environment/pesticides-and-pest-management/legislation-consultation-new/ministerial_order_rodenticides_ipm_act.pdf

of prevention, monitoring, and control strategies depending on the site, and risk and status of infestation.

1. Prevention

- Sanitation
 - Remove food sources: keep exterior trash handling areas clean
 - Remove water sources: fix plumbing leaks and improve drainage around the building
 - Remove potential burrows: eliminate clutter in and around buildings; remove or trim vegetation that obscures the ground
- Exclusion
 - Prevent entry: seal openings that could be used as entryways, such as those in foundations, walls, fascias, windows, doors, and roofs.

2. Monitoring

- Inspecting for signs of rodent activity, such as rodent droppings, damaged and contaminated insulation, burrows, gnawed building material, seeing a rodent etc.

3. Control

- Physical/Mechanical measures such as snap and electronic traps

A rodenticide-free rodent control program will incur higher costs as a result of increased technician visits. Where non-rodenticide strategies are used, technicians are required to check, reset traps and remove trapped rodents on a weekly basis (or more frequently, as needed). Once a trap has been triggered, it will be ineffective until it has been reset or replaced.

Based on the Park Board's experience with switching over to a rodenticide-free program, staff forecast an incremental annual cost of ~\$450,000 to the program for the 117 City sites managed by REFM. This would include regular planned servicing of the traps, reactive service on an as-needed basis, and regular site assessments to adjust the program based on emerging needs.

Please contact me should you have any questions.



Nick Kassam
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Attachment 1: Pest Control Annual Costs – 2016 to 2020

Year	Park Board	City of Vancouver (managed by REFM) ¹	TOTAL
2016	\$ 66,281	\$ 117,508	\$ 183,789
2017	\$ 81,685	\$ 158,840	\$ 240,525
2018	\$ 82,949	\$ 136,214	\$ 219,163
2019	\$ 83,040	\$ 167,145	\$ 250,185
2020	\$ 222,291 ²	\$ 188,394	\$ 410,685

Notes:

1. Building size is a key driver of rodent control costs. While the number of facilities REFM manages (117) is comparable to the number managed by the Park Board (100), the REFM-managed portfolio is more than twice the square footage of the Park Board-managed portfolio.
2. The Park Board implemented a rodenticide-free rodent control program for 2020 leading to a significant cost increase from prior years.

¹https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/environment/pesticides-and-pest-management/legislation-consultation-new/ministerial_order_rodenticides_ipm_act.pdf