

**From:** "Johnston, Sadhu" <Sadhu.Johnston@vancouver.ca>

**To:** "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"

**CC:** "City Manager's Correspondence Group - DL"

"Pickard, Gail" <Gail.Pickard@vancouver.ca>

"LaClaire, Lon" <lon.laclaire@vancouver.ca>

**Date:** 3/11/2020 3:53:06 PM

**Subject:** Memo - Update on Rodent Related Issues

**Attachments:** Memo to Mayor and Council - Rodents - March 11, 2020.pdf

Greetings Mayor and Council,

Please see the attached memo from Lon LaClaire regarding an Update on Rodent Related Issues.

- This memo is in response to a request for info on rat-related issues, specifically relating to the green bin program
- Through the 311 phone line, the City reviewed all complaint cases received from 2015 to 2019 and received an average of 1000 rodent-related cases in this timeframe
- The City takes an integrated approach to managing Rodent issues and a number of departments work together to share information and address rat concerns
- In 2018, the City began an extensive research project in collaboration with the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative and a team of leading experts in this field. The project concludes in 2020 and the strategy aims to put the City in a better position to understand rat infestations and support future policies and programs

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Lon LaClaire at 604-873-7336 or [lon.laclaire@vancouver.ca](mailto:lon.laclaire@vancouver.ca).

Best,  
Sadhu

Sadhu Aufochs Johnston | City Manager  
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Pronouns: he, him, his



*The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples.*

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## MEMORANDUM

March 11, 2020

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Sadhu Johnston, City Manager  
Paul Mochrie, Deputy City Manager  
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager  
Lynda Graves, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office  
Rena Kendall-Craden, Civic Engagement and Communications Director  
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk  
Anita Zaenker, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office  
Neil Monckton, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office  
Alvin Singh, Communications Director, Mayor's Office  
Jon McDermott, Solid Waste Program Branch Manager, Solid Waste Programs

FROM: Lon LaClaire  
General Manager, Engineering Services

SUBJECT: Update on Rodent Related Issues

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Recently there has been a request for information on rat related issues, specifically relating to the green bin program. A similar inquiry was received in 2015. The green bin program has been in place since 2013; in 2015 staff engaged a pest control specialist to assess if the green bin was a contributing factor to rat calls. The conclusion of the study undertaken was that Green Bins for food scraps were not a contributing factor to rat problems and if properly managed may in fact be reducing problems as in most cases the bins are closed, were generally in good order and kept in a tidy condition. This was formally addressed with Council in February 2016, through a memo to Council. For Council's reference, a copy of the 2016 memo can be found here.

The purpose of this memo is to provide an update on rodent related calls through 3-1-1 compared to previous years, including the nature of the call and source of the issue.

### *Call Volumes*

The City currently relies on its 311 phone line and online reporting system to receive rat related complaints. The 3-1-1- Contact Centre reviewed all complaint cases received from 2015 to 2019 containing the keywords rat, rodent, mouse, and mice to identify trends and types of complaints.

Using those keywords, we can see from the table below that the City has received an

average of 1000 rodent-related cases per year for the past 5-years. In 2019, the City received a total of 222,000 animal related cases and 1067 of those were rodent-related.

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Average
Rodent-Related Cases	1,103	1,054	958	854	1,067	1,007

The public reports rodent cases in relation to a variety of issues with the largest amount related to private property (42%) followed by dead animal pickup requests (21%) and abandoned garbage pickup requests. The chart below provides a breakdown of the 2019 calls by case-type.

311 Case Type	2019	Proportion
Property Use Complaint Case	445	41.7%
Dead Animal Pickup Case	228	21.4%
Abandoned Garbage Pickup Case	112	10.5%
Citizen Feedback Case	53	5.0%
Cart - Green Case	40	3.7%
Commercial Waste Container Request	39	3.7%
Street Tree Work - Urban Forestry Case	30	2.8%
Building Inspection Complaint Case	26	2.4%
Cart - Garbage Case	22	2.1%
Streets - General Issues	18	1.7%
Hoarding Concern Case - Fire	14	1.3%
Street Cleaning & Debris Pickup Case	14	1.3%
Animal Control General Inquiry Case	9	0.8%
Cart Complaint (Garbage, Green) Case	7	0.7%
PUI Noise Complaint Case	5	0.5%
Sanitation General Inquiries Case	3	0.3%
Street Litter Can Cleanup Case	2	0.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,067</b>	<b>100%</b>

The majority of complaints are received in the summer time when rodent activity is more frequently observed due to increased outdoor activities. Cases occur throughout the City and there does not appear to be any specific trends in location.

#### *Cross-Departmental Involvement*

The City takes an integrated approach to managing Rodent issues and a number of departments work together to share information and address rat concerns in the City: 3-1-1 Contact Centre receives calls and passes on to either Engineering if the issue is on streets, sidewalks or laneways, Park Board for issues in parks and, Property Use and Development Services for issues on private property including those related to building/construction sites. A summary of each department's role is provided in Appendix A.

### *Strategic Approach*

In 2018, the City began an extensive research project in collaboration with the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative and a team of leading experts in this field. The Vancouver Rat Project involves a comprehensive review of scientific literature and existing municipal programs and policies from seven municipalities including New York City, Philadelphia, Chicago, and Seattle, and will result in the development of an evidence-based strategy for a City-wide approach to track, address, and prevent rat infestation, as well as an implementation plan. The project concludes in 2020. The strategy aims to put the City in a position to better understand rat infestations and support the development of future policies and programs.

If you receive any calls directly regarding Rodents, please direct them to 311 or forward any emails to [info@vancouver.ca](mailto:info@vancouver.ca) to have the appropriate department respond. The public is also encouraged to contact the City directly through the VanConnect app or 311. If you have any questions or concerns or need any more detail, please feel free to contact me directly at 604.873.7336 or [lon.laclaire@vancouver.ca](mailto:lon.laclaire@vancouver.ca).

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

Lon LaClaire, M.Eng., P.Eng  
General Manager, Engineering Services

604.873.7336 | [lon.laclaire@vancouver.ca](mailto:lon.laclaire@vancouver.ca)

## Appendix A - Rodent Memo

### Summary of Department Roles

- Engineering Services, Streets, Traffic and Electrical Operations
  - Address complaints regarding Rodents in the public realm.
  - Actions typically involve cutting back vegetation and filling nesting holes with gravel.
- Engineering Services, Zero Waste and Resource Recovery
  - Address issues in the public realm related to commercial containers, Green Bin and abandoned waste.
  - Actions typically involve inspection, requiring haulers and owners to secure and clean up, enforcement and clean up by City crews.
  - Oversees the Vancouver Rat Project as part of the Street Cleaning Grant Program.
- Park Board
  - Address issues in parks and park facilities.
  - Actions typically involve investigation and use of a pest control contractor.
  - Staff awareness and education on minimizing food sources through operational practices.
- 3-1-1- Contact Centre
  - Receive calls on Rodent issues and forwards service request to respective departments.
  - Record and report on statistics.
- Property Use
  - Address issues on private property.
  - May involve building interior and yard areas.
  - Actions typically involve investigation and process of escalating enforcement as needed including requirements for owners to retain pest control management.
- Development Services
  - Ensure a comprehensive maintenance and security plan is in place for vacant buildings.
  - Provide education and a handout to property owners and developers at first contact with the City regarding development.
  - Bylaw Inspections and Enforcement to ensure compliance with the Standard of Maintenance and Untidy Premises Bylaw. Action may include requiring contractor to retain pest management as needed.
  - Liaison with the pest control industry, other municipalities and the Ministry of Environment.
- Civic Engagement and Communications
  - Liaises with Coastal Health when mutual issues arise.
  - Supports departments with web content and key messaging as required