



December 8, 2020

MEMO TO : Park Board Commissioners
FROM : Donnie Rosa, General Manager, Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT : Pest Control Management – Board Briefing Memo

Dear Commissioners,

The purpose of this memo is to report back on the March 2019 Board motion titled Assessment of Pest Control Policies, which directed staff to review pest control management strategies for wildlife and rodents and to assess the viability of including BC SPCA AnimalKind Wildlife and Rodent Control standards into pest control contract language.

Pest Control Management Overview

The Vancouver Park Board looks after a myriad of different facilities, structures and habitats. With the wide variety of human activities occurring in and around parks and recreation facilities, and the close interface between urban and natural environments, robust wildlife and rodent management practices are needed.

- Wildlife Management - involves live trapping and animal relocation, followed by structural modification of the facility to exclude or deter the animals from returning;
- Rodent Management - involves killing and/or excluding rodents from facilities.

Due to the specialized nature of this work, wildlife and rodent management for the Board of Parks and Recreation is carried out by an external contractor. In 2016, all City of Vancouver pest control contracts were merged into one, which resulted in considerable city-wide savings.

TABLE 1: Pest Control Annual Costs - 2016 to 2019

Table with 4 columns: Year, Park Board, City of Vancouver, TOTAL. Rows for years 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019. All data cells contain redacted information (s.21(1)(a)).

Wildlife Management – Parks and Recreation

Wildlife management only occurs when wildlife takes up residence in a Park Board facility and poses a health risk and/or causes damage to the facility. When wildlife issues are reported, the Contractor's wildlife technician conducts an inspection and provides recommendations for dealing with the immediate problem and also how to prevent reoccurrence.



screens and securing access points). Wildlife management strategies include live trapping and relocation, and exclusion, with the most common exclusion strategies involving installation of screens, nets, or bird spikes.

Rodent Management – Parks and Recreation

There are currently 103 locations under active rodent management for the Board of Parks and Recreation. These locations include Park Board administration buildings, service yards, recreation facilities, concessions, fieldhouses, and parks. The Contractor's technicians work closely with staff to develop rodent management strategies for each location following onsite assessments. Recommendations may include alteration of human activities, structural modifications or repairs to the facilities (e.g. screening vents, installing door sweeps) and quantity and placement of baited trap boxes.

From 2016 to 2019, most locations had poison-baited traps as rodent control devices, however certain sites (Bloedel Conservatory, Stanley Park, and VanDusen Botanical Gardens) had baited snap trap devices due to sensitive habitats and/or environmental considerations. While these devices looked similar to the poison-baited ones, they contained a mechanical snap trap with no pesticide. During the first quarter of 2020, all poison-baited traps installed in Park Board facilities were replaced with baited snap trap devices. This shift in rodent management practices required an increase in service levels as poison-traps only need to be inspected on a monthly basis, while snap trap devices must be inspected weekly. This resulted in a significant increase in monthly pest control costs, going from \$211(a) to \$211(a) per month.

While this has been a positive change overall, it has also created some challenges. One of the issues staff have to address is aging structures. Some Park Board buildings have deficiencies that allow rats and mice to invade them, however it is not always possible to correct them without major structural work and large costs. Also, usage patterns of some facilities may make them vulnerable to rodent invasions. In some locations, the move to non-pesticide traps has led to a significant increase in the rodent population. Staff are investigating various non-pesticide based methods to bring these infestations under control, but may be forced to return to poison-baited traps in some circumstances.

BC SPCA's AnimalKind Wildlife and Rodent Control Standards

Most of the Park Board's pest management practices follow BC SPCA AnimalKind standards, which provide a framework to manage wildlife and rodents humanely. With the current pest control contract ending in September 2021, staff are preparing to go out to market early next year. Procurement guidelines will identify that contract bids should incorporate AnimalKind standards, however due to the size of our organization, the diversity of facilities and buildings, and the complex and diverse usage patterns of our facilities, it may not be possible for the Park Board to fully adopt AnimalKind standards.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donnie Rosa".

Donnie Rosa (she/her they/them)

General Manager - Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

/sd/clc

Copy to: PB Senior Leadership Team, PB Integrated Pest Management Coordinator, PB Communications