



MEMO / NOTE DE SERVICE

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TO: Environment and Climate Protection Committee

DESTINATAIRE : Comité de l'environnement et de la protection du climat

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DATE: October 17, 2017

17 octobre 2017

FILE NUMBER: ACS2017-PWE-GEN-0031

**SUBJECT: Rat Baiting in Sewers Program**

**OBJET : Programme de mise en place de ratières dans les égouts**

PURPOSE

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an update on the progress towards the development of a proactive rat baiting and monitoring program in response to Councillor Hubley's motion at City Council on May 24, 2017:

*Therefore be it resolved that staff report back to the appropriate Standing Committee on the establishment of a proactive monitoring and baiting program as part of a longer-term comprehensive strategy for determining baseline rodent population, and potential funding sources for such a program, in advance of development of the 2018 draft budget.*

BACKGROUND

The Water Services service area of Public Works and Environmental Services currently responds to requests for services from residents relating to rodents in sewers and provides baiting services, as requested, through 311. In 2015, Water Services received 162 rodent related service requests and in 2016, it received 159.

Currently, the City of Ottawa does not have a mechanism in place for rodent population tracking; however, the respective service areas involved in responding to rat control issues track their response to rodent related requests for service. The following departments are involved in rat control:

- Ottawa Public Health (OPH): the main role of OPH is to educate, in collaboration with City partners, those experiencing rodent issues and to raise public awareness.
- Emergency and Protective Services (EPS): EPS administers the Property Standards By-law, which requires that residential and non-residential properties be maintained free of vermin, including rats and rodents, and that entry by vermin into dwellings and onto properties, such as through windows and walls, be prevented by various means, as provided in the by-law.
- Public Works and Environmental Services (PWES): Water Services responds to requests for services from residents relating to rodents in sewers and provides baiting services as requested; whereas the Roads and Parking Services and Parks, Forestry and Stormwater Services may respond to requests within public spaces.

PWES conducted a scan of other municipalities' rat control practices and discussed opportunities to enhance the current practices in Water Services and City-wide. On September 13<sup>th</sup> 2017, PWES staff met with Councillor Hubley to discuss approaches for proactive monitoring and baiting, and determined the priority is to improve rat control in sewers and begin building the data framework for a possible City-wide approach to rat control.

## DISCUSSION

In order to improve rat control in sanitary sewers, Public Works and Environmental Services propose to undertake a two-year pilot that will include:

- Observing the rat population in sanitary sewers through Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) footage
- Baiting proactively in sanitary sewers

### Observing the Rat Population in Sanitary Sewers

CCTV cameras inspect the City's sanitary sewer system for condition assessment purposes. An external contractor reviews the CCTV footage and will document rat sightings to provide staff with data on rat activity in sanitary sewers. The data will allow Public Works and Environmental Services to determine hot spots for proactive baiting and to support rat control efforts in the future.

### Baiting Proactively

Public Works and Environmental Services staff will conduct proactive baiting in sewers based on the monitoring data collected through the CCTV cameras and with 311.

Baiting will also continue to take place based on service requests.

## CONCLUSION

The pilot will be an enhancement to the current approach to rat control in the City's sanitary sewers. It will begin in Q1 2018 and will run for two years. Costs associated with the pilot will be absorbed in existing budgets and staff will use the pilot as a baseline to determine costs for the ongoing program.

A longer-term comprehensive strategy for determining City-wide baseline population and the potential implementation of appropriate control measures would be an interdepartmental effort, requiring dedicated resources and the identification of an according funding source through the annual budget process. Should enhanced reporting and proactive monitoring identify the need for a comprehensive strategy, the appropriate staff will collaborate and bring forward recommendations to Council in future years.

Should you have any further questions regarding this information, please contact Kevin Wylie, General Manager, Public Works and Environmental Services by telephone at 613-580-2424 extension 19013 or by email at [Kevin.Wylie@ottawa.ca](mailto:Kevin.Wylie@ottawa.ca).

Regards,

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