



**Council Member Motion
For the Committee of the Whole Meeting January 22, 2026**

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** January 16, 2026
From: Councillor Hammond
Subject: Request City staff to find best practises to implement Rodent Abatement Program & Bylaw

BACKGROUND

Last year, a significant number of residents in North Park reported a substantial increase in rats in and around their properties during and after the demolition of the building at 926 – 930 Pandora. Taking people at their word that the additional rodent problems began due to the demolition, Councillor Hammond met with the North Park Neighbourhood Association (NPNA) Executive Director, other members of the Board, Land Use Advisor, and a resident. They relayed the extent of the new “invasion” of rats and harm it has caused residents. They also relayed the unfortunate result of individuals having to pay out of pocket for pest control services, despite the issue being unrelated to any action on their part.

Representatives from NPNA summarized that during and after the demolition of this property took place:

“Key issues and themes we have heard from neighbours regarding the influx of rodents include:

- Rats being visible throughout the street and in backyards during both daytime and nighttime hours
- Foraging in sheds and basements, resulting in hundreds of dollars’ worth of material damage
- Chewing through vehicle wiring; One resident reported their entire Toyota Highlander was destroyed due to rats nesting under the hood for warmth and chewing the wiring
- Every household along Mason Street reporting a minimum of \$500 spent on personal pest remediation
- Two separate residents noted garden lattice collapsing during the day due to the number of rats climbing and hanging from it
- Widespread rat feces across properties, preventing families from allowing their children to play safely in their yards”

Councillor Hammond enquired with senior City of Victoria staff, who directed him to Bylaw Services staff for assistance. In an email, Bylaw Services staff forwarded the following information:

“Further to the earlier emails regarding rat issues, I looked at a few other municipalities and had a chat with colleagues in permits and inspections on this issue. I also owe a debt to AI technology in gathering this information together.

Some approaches I found were to regulate rat abatement by making it a requirement of the demolition permit process. Richmond requires a rodent abatement and control declaration from a licensed pest controller that a building is free from rodents before a demo permit is issued [Richmond Rodent Abatement Bulletin](#). Coquitlam has a mandatory [Rodent Inspection and Control Declaration](#) that is part of their demolition permit application. Licensed pest control professionals must confirm the property is rodent-free using integrated pest management techniques.

Some municipalities have gone further and the District of North Vancouver has a [Rodent Control Bylaw](#) which prohibits creating conditions that provide shelter or food for rodents. Their bylaw requires removal of waste, debris, and vegetation that could harbor rodents, and for demolitions, a Rodent Abatement Report is required before issuing permits. Enforcement includes inspections and written orders by health officers or bylaw officers. I would imagine they had close cooperation with health when constructing the bylaw.

Further afield I found that Lakeshore Ontario has a [Rat Abatement Pilot Program Municipality of Lakeshore](#) that offers rebates for extermination services but ties eligibility to compliance with property standards bylaws (yard maintenance, waste storage).

It's also worth noting that rat poison use in B.C. is legal but heavily regulated under the Integrated Pest Management Act and Pesticides Regulation. Only licensed professionals or trained individuals can apply rodenticides, and signage is required for outdoor use. The Province has strict limits on second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs) to prevent secondary poisoning of wildlife which has been a particular problem among populations of birds of prey such as owls and hawks.

The BCSPCA also has published best standards and practices recommending humane, prevention focused approaches [AnimalKind-Wildlife-Control-Standards.pdf](#).

Lastly I found other municipalities that have gone the route of providing helpful information to their residents in the form of brochures and I found this one from Ottawa [Rodent Control Final ENG Aug2019.pdf](#).

This information above demonstrates that other municipalities have implemented rodent abatement programs to address issues related to rat and other vermin. It will be worthwhile to explore a few examples and find out which have been most successful and that could best fit for Victoria.

In addition, the staff email noted the following cautions:

When speaking to colleagues in Building and Inspection Services some concerns that we thought of were, creating another level of regulation that could potentially be a further hurdle for development in terms of costs, time, and bureaucracy. It's unclear what administrative burden this would place on staff, we have issued approximately 50 demo permits so far in 2025. In terms of enforcement concerns generally centre around satisfying a burden of proof and what evidence gathering to do that would entail. How would we prove that a particular rat came from a particular development in a city where rats are everywhere.

As previously mentioned, I'm not actually sure if the requirements above would have prevented this situation as if I'm correct we were the owners of the building and as such would be exempt from our own bylaws. In addition, the building was structurally unsound, and I don't think pest control would have been able to safely enter.

These are valid concerns and cautions, however, it seems a well-designed bylaw could be structured using common sense, such as, acknowledging that while rats are throughout Victoria, certain, or perhaps all demolitions can lead to an increase in rodent displacement that shifts the burden and expense of rodent abatement to other residents and businesses, when it was not due to their behaviour or negligence. As for the City being exempt from our own bylaws, most residents would not be pleased to know the City imposes reasonable and common sense legal requirements on its residents and businesses, but thumbs its civic "nose" at its own behaviour that would otherwise be against the law and also shifts burdens and expenses onto others.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1) That Council request City Staff to investigate best practices for rodent abatement bylaws in other municipalities, when it relates to demolition or other major renovations where rodents may be expected to congregate and disperse into the community.
- 2) That City Staff come back to Council with bylaw and/or program suggestions that would suit the City of Victoria.
- 3) That either before bylaw/program suggestions to Council or as part of the recommendations, the City consult with those affected by any suggested bylaws/program for feedback, including the public.

Respectfully submitted,



Councillor Stephen Hammond