

## **Cambridge Rodent Control Program**

### **Background:**

The Inspectional Services Department receives in excess of 100 complaints annually from Cambridge citizens and businesses relating to rodent activity. When a complaint is received, be it over the counter, a phone call, or in writing, it is entered into the ISD data base, and assigned to an inspector for investigation and follow up action as described below.

We have no studies or accurate data that would reliably indicate that the rodent population across the City is either increasing or decreasing. It is possible, however, that localized road related construction, as well as building demolition and construction projects, could increase rodent activity as their habitat is being disturbed. This could result in a perception that the population is increasing.

### **Construction:**

Concerning construction, the Public Works Department includes rodent control provisions in their road and sewer contracts. They also have in place a service contract for dealing with rodent control, baiting, etc. in the public ways and in other public areas and buildings. For demolition of buildings, the demolition contractor is required to have a certification from a qualified pest control contractor that the site has been inspected and baited as necessary and is free of rodents before the demolition permit is issued. For construction projects, the construction contractor is responsible for taking appropriate rodent control measures during construction.

### **Restaurant Inspections:**

Restaurants are inspected on a routine basis at least twice annually by ISD. A principal focus of the inspections is evidence of rodent activity, cleanliness of storage and disposal areas, suitability of rodent control plans, and review of pest control reports prepared by the certified pest control contractor. Violations are cited and aggressive action is taken to insure compliance with the State Sanitary Code.

### **Complaints(routine):**

Investigation of a routine complaint generally involves a survey of the immediate area for evidence of rodent activity(burrows, droppings, etc.) and violations of the Sanitary Code

### **Cambridge Rodent Control Program(cont.)**

that could provide harborage or food for rodents(debris, improper trash and garbage storage, etc.). When violations are found, the owner, or responsible party, is cited under the provisions of the State Sanitary Code and a re-inspection scheduled. If the investigation indicates that trapping or eradication is warranted, the person responsible is required to secure the services of a licensed pest control contractor and provide appropriate documentation to the inspector. In those cases where corrective action is not taken or initiated within a reasonable time, a complaint is initiated in accordance with the provisions of the State Sanitary Code with the District Court.

#### **Area Wide Complaints:**

Repeat or numerous complaints from the same area are indicative of an area wide problem. In such situations, ISD will conduct an area wide inspection and solicit the cooperation and involvement of a number of parties in bringing the problem under control. This would typically involve, in addition to area residents and property owners, the Public Works Department, Traffic and Parking Department, MBTA, tenant and neighborhood associations, the School Department, contractors, and restaurants and businesses in the area.

Prior to, or in conjunction with the area wide inspection, ISD would distribute a memo and information packet to all residents and businesses within the area of concern. Actions taken by the City might involve baiting of catch basins and intensive cleaning of public ways and parking lots. Similar actions would be required of private property owners. It should be noted that inspectors do not have the authority to enter private property without the permission of the property owner. This is usually not a problem, however, as all concerned are generally cooperate in these surveys. Area wide problems require continuous monitoring and follow-up over several weeks, or even months, until the problem is brought under control.



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE • EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

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June 16, 2003

To the Honorable, the City Council:

In response to Awaiting Report # 03-64 regarding a report on the issue of rodents in the City, Public Works Commissioner Lisa Peterson and Inspectional Services Commissioner, Bob Bersani report the following:

There are a number causes for increased rodent activity. In general, this is related to:

- \* Spring breeding. A rainy spring or summer brings more weeds (shelter), water, and natural food sources (seeds, insects, etc)-thus more rodents will breed and survive, particularly between the months of May and July.
- \* New construction projects, demolition, foundation work, basement work, or any activity that requires excavation of soil will also attract rodents. Normal paving work on the street (grind and overlay work) does not disturb the soil and is not the cause of increased rat activity.
- \* Fats, oils and grease (FOG) that accumulate in the City's catch basins are another attraction for rodents. It is a violation of the City sewer use regulations for restaurants or property owners to deposit fats, oil or grease into catch basins. Unfortunately though, this does happen and rats are attracted to the FOG and food that may be included with it.
- \* Rodents are also attracted to improperly stored trash.

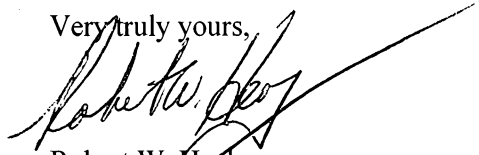
There are a number of ways the City prevents or corrects rodents infestation problems.

- \* The Inspectional Services Department requires that a protocol for control of rodent infestation be established prior to approval of demolition permits and building permits involving excavation.
- \* All Public Works contracts which deal with excavation or underground utilities include rodent control in their specifications. Roadway, sidewalk and remedial sewer repair contracts address rodent control as a result of the construction activity. Control measures begin taking place once noticeable rodent activity is identified. During our larger construction projects, where prolonged and extensive excavation takes place, construction areas are baited before, during and at the completion of construction.
- \* Public Works also has a contract for rodent control services, which is used when a report of rodent activity does not fall into the "construction" category, or in areas which have historically had rodent problems.
- \* Regularly scheduled cleaning of catch basins is done in coordination with the City's Street Cleaning schedule.

Recent complaints from residents in the Area 4 Neighborhood have been brought to the attention of the Inspectional Services Department. Inspectors are canvassing neighborhoods, inspecting private and public property, speaking to residents and businesses and leafleting the area on the causes of rat infestations. In addition, DPW has instructed its contractor to bait the catch basins and sewers on a number of the neighborhood streets.

Attached is a copy of the Rodent Control Program that was provided to the City Council in response to a previous Council Order.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert W. Healy", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Robert W. Healy  
City Manager

RWH/mec

S-211

**Consent Agenda #3**

Transmitting notification from Robert W. Healy, City Manager, relative to **Awaiting Report Item Number 03-64**, regarding a report on the issue of rodents in the City.

**In City Council June 16, 2003**

**PLACE ON FILE**