

**2018-2023 SBP Update
Reduction Option Template**

Cost Reduction: Decrease investment in rodent control #1	Owner: Linda Jones/Rose Ann Lopez
Focus Area: Public Health and the Environment	Sponsor: Susan Sanchez/Madeline Goddard
Risk Level: MEDIUM	Rate Path Option: 5.4

1. Short summary of the cost reduction (suitable for using with Customer Review Panel and other members of the public, plus additional specifics required for clarity of action).

This reduction option would decrease annual spending on rodent control by \$241,000. This is a 50% decrease. SPU has two contracts with Seattle-King County Public Health to provide rodent control services; one for above ground rodent control and one for below ground rodent control. Public Health's work includes managing, responding to and tracking customer complaints, conducting investigations to determine causes of rodent problems, baiting to better control rodent populations (below ground), and providing general education to help customers address rodent issues. The above ground rodent contract also includes Public Health educating property owners on how to abate rodents on their own properties (including encampments) and the enforcement of King County Board of Health Code 8.06, which enables Public Health to access private property and assess liens.

2. What are the impacts or risks of this cost reduction? How will you mitigate these risks?

The reduction would directly affect staff hours available to complete rodent control activities. This would likely cause:

- Longer response times to customer complaints. In 2016, Public Health worked on 317 complaints and performed 332 site visits for above ground, and received about 45 new below ground complaints. Additionally, Public Health responded to 7 incidences at encampments. Roughly one-third of the existing work is based on continued response to past complaints.
- Reduced time to respond to complaints at sanctioned and unsanctioned encampments.
 - The County has stated that, by not responding to rodent infestation complaints at an encampment means that the rodent infestation could spread throughout the neighborhood, resulting in more complaints with other properties surrounding the encampment-
- Fewer below ground maintenance hole baiting. In 2016, over 1,800 maintenance hole locations were inspected for evidence of rodents and over 1,100 were baited to control rodent populations in the sewer system.
 - Less maintenance hole baiting may lead to more complaints about above ground rodent activity.
- Increased community concerns regarding rodent activity and potential public health nuisance.
- Reduced effectiveness of rodent control activities.
- Potential adverse public perception related to sanitation and overall cleanliness of the city.

To migrate some of these risks SPU could request that King County Public Health prioritize the largest impact events first, such as complaints at encampments.

3. Implementation plan and timeline.

King County Public Health has existing below ground contracts from March 2016 – 2019 and above ground January 2017 – December 2018. To meet our contractual obligations, it is recommended that we reduce funding with the next contract, which would be in 2018, for the above ground contract, and 2019 for the below ground contract.

4. Budget and FTE changes

Changes (relative to baseline)

<i>Below Ground Rodent</i>	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
O&M (Non- Labor) Budget Change		(100,000)	(100,000)	(100,000)	(100,000)	(100,000)
CIP Budget Change						
FTE Change						

<i>Above Ground Rodent</i>	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
O&M (Non- Labor) Budget Change	(\$136,591)	(\$140,689)	(\$144,909)	(\$149,257)	(\$153,734)	(\$158,346)
CIP Budget Change	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
FTE Change	0	0	0	0	0	0

NOTE: The above ground rodent reduction will impact the general fund budget, thus has no impact on the SPU rate pathway options.

5. Identify possible race and social justice implications for this reduction. How will it impact service equity and how will you resolve this impact?

Rodent control is largely complaint driven. Some claim analysis by SPU has demonstrated that claims are not equitably distributed and that the same may hold true for complaints. However, an analysis of the complaints and how that overlaps with household income or communities of color has not been conducted.

The [2015 complaint data](#) shows a broad distribution, which may also be related to multi-family areas and restaurants. It is uncertain how reducing the program may impact service equity, but it is likely that those in multi-family areas, around restaurants, and encampments may see a larger impact than other areas of the city.

Research has shown that underserved communities are less likely to report rodents and other problems. If the residents in underserved communities who do report rodents, notice there is not a service to address the issue, the likelihood of these community members continuing to report rodents decreases. This is an issue because unreported incidences of rodent activity can lead to a rodent infestation in the community, which is a public health risk.

6. Describe your plan for evaluating the impacts of this reduction. Include any metrics you have.

- Number of customer complaints (above and below ground)
- Number of maintenance hole inspections (below ground)
- Number of maintenance hole baiting (below ground)
- Number of hours spent on responding to complaints (above ground)
- Type 1 complaints (vulnerable populations) responded to in less than 5 days (above ground)
- Type 2 complaints (identifiable food source) responded to in less than 10 days (above ground)

- Type 3 complaints (identified rat harborage) responded to in less than 14 days (above ground)
- Average time to close a complaint (above ground)
- Number of Notice of Violations (above ground)
- Number of civil penalties (above ground)