

## **Customer Experience Division Annual Report - 2023**

**Date:** March 5, 2024

**To:** Service Excellence Committee

**From:** Executive Director, Customer Experience

**Wards:** All

### **SUMMARY**

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City Council, at its meeting on September 30, 2020, requested the Executive Director, Customer Experience, formerly known as the Director, 311 Toronto (311), to provide information on trending issues received via the Customer Experience Division (CXD), on a yearly basis. The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of CXD's services, contact centre volumes, projects, and divisional collaborations in 2023.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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The Executive Director, Customer Experience recommends that the Service Excellence Committee receive this report for information.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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There is no financial impact from the adoption of the recommendations in this report. The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer have reviewed this report and agree with the financial impact statement.

### **DECISION HISTORY**

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At its meeting on September 30, October 1 and October 2, 2020, City Council adopted Motion MM24.11, "Annual report to City Council by 311," which directed the Executive Director, Customer Experience to submit an annual update report to the General Government Committee outlining important service issues and trends:

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2020.MM24.11>.

### **COMMENTS**

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On January 1, 2023, CXD, formerly known as 311, was launched. The evolution of 311 to CXD brought three Corporate Services groups together under one division: 311, the Customer Experience Transformation Program and parts of the Customer Experience and Innovation team. The new division is committed to leading a corporate-wide, structured approach to drive consistent customer experience standards, policies, processes, and platforms. Outcomes will result in public access to inclusive, accessible, integrated services through channels of choice. CXD's objectives are to:

- Improve access to City services – design services for the public that are accessible, equitable and easy to navigate and that allows residents, businesses, and visitors to access services when, how and where they want to.
- Provide a consistent customer experience – develop corporate standards and processes to enable consistency across City divisions, services, and channels.
- Optimize services and deliver in a cost-effective manner – build processes and tools that enable a seamless and efficient service and that prevent unnecessary escalations and confusion for residents, businesses, and visitors.
- Build trust and confidence in City services – ensure there is access to data and metrics to report on progress towards customer experience objectives, build accountability into the City's customer experience practices and ensure expectations are met.

In 2023, CXD experienced a number of successes while working towards improving the overall experience for residents, businesses and visitors when accessing City services. Internally, a City-wide collaborative customer experience governance structure was established, a refreshed Service Promise was established to bring about a cultural change at the City, post-contact surveys were introduced to allow customers to provide feedback on their experiences related to general inquiries and services requests (SRs), and new, modernized payment options were introduced for specific services. These accomplishments, along with many others, will be described in greater detail in this report, in addition to an overview of the excellent service experiences provided through 311's existing world class operations.

## **Service Requests and General Inquiries**

311 remains a recognizable brand in providing residents, businesses, and visitors with easy access to non-emergency City services, programs, and information, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This access is achievable through several channels, whether it be online, via phone or through 311's mobile app.

CXD responds to SRs on behalf of its five integrated service divisions (ISDs) - Solid Waste Management Services, Transportation Services, Toronto Water, Municipal Licensing & Standards (including Toronto Animal Services) and Parks, Forestry and Recreation - Urban Forestry. An integrated service refers to services whereby the public can request work to be completed and/or investigated by CXD and the request flows

back to the integrated divisional system in a seamless process. Examples of these integrated services include: pick up of recycling material, pruning of a City tree, complaints of long grass and weeds on a private property, plowing of snow, etc. A full listing of service categories can be viewed on [CXD's online self-serve portal](#).

In addition, CXD has the capacity to send requests to several non-integrated divisions and agencies - Court Services (call-back requests), Toronto Public Health (after-hours support), and Revenue Services (Vacant Home Tax escalations). These requests are created internally and sent to these areas via email. SRs can also be created internally for complaints, compliments and suggestions regarding CXD services.

In 2023, the number of SRs created totalled approximately 487,000, representing 37% of the total interactions with CXD in 2023. These SRs were initiated via phone, website, and mobile app. Just over 110,000 of these SRs (23% of all SRs) were submitted via self-serve options on the toronto.ca portal or the 311 mobile app, representing a 33% increase in the number of self-serve requests compared to 2022.

Table 1: 2023 Service Request Submissions by Channel and Top 5 Service Requests

Channel	Number of Service Requests Created	Top 5 Service Requests Created (From All Channels)	
Phone	361,752	Residential Bin Lid Damaged	19,781
Web	92,948	Pothole on Road	18,585
Mobile	17,409	Injured Wildlife	17,055
Email	14,053	Dead Wildlife Pickup	15,380
Twitter	1,022	Property Standards & Maintenance Violations	15,231
Live Chat	41		
Counter	18		
<b>Total SRs Created</b>	<b>487,243*</b>		

\*Includes SRs created for integrated and non-integrated divisions.

In addition to creating SRs for its ISDs, Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) also respond to inquiries from the public regarding City services and programs offered by all City divisions. 848,000 general inquiries were handled in 2023, with Property Tax Billing and Vacant Home Tax (VHT) being the most popular topics. There were approximately 44,000 general inquiries at counters, representing only 5% of all interactions handled by CXD in 2023.

**Phone Channel and Service Level Trends**

The target service level (SL) that CXD aims to achieve on its phone channel is to respond to 80% of calls within 75 seconds. In 2023, CXD responded to 1.31 million phone interactions and achieved an average SL of 81%.

Table 2: 311 Main Phone Line Call Answer & Handling Times

Year	Average Speed of Answer	Average Call Handling Time
2023	0:00:46	0:04:53

In 2023, Toronto experienced three major snow events, (January 25-27, February 22-23, and March 3-4) resulting in heavy snow accumulation on all three occasions. During these three events, CXD experienced sudden spikes in call volumes for a total of 28,180 calls handled with an average speed of answer of 3 minutes and 4 seconds, impacting the year-to-date service levels. Despite this, CXD was still able to meet the Council-mandated service level by Q3 of 2023.

Another event driving increased demand was the 2023 Mayoral by-election, where 311 received 6,321 inquiries through the phone, email, social media, and live chat channels. The most common inquiries from the public were related to applying for elections jobs, requesting mail-in voting cards and inquiries about polling station locations.

The VHT program also impacted 311, resulting in 49,903 general inquiries from the public. The VHT program aims to increase housing supply by discouraging owners from leaving properties unoccupied. CXD partnered with Revenue Services to set up a direct line for VHT inquiries to 311 and an escalation phone line and email address were made available for the Office of the Mayor and Councillors.

Despite impacts to the SL due to spikes in demand, CXD continued to realize efficiencies due to process improvements with the Enterprise Customer Relationship Management System, including a 9% reduction in talk time.

Please refer to Appendix A: CXD-311 Toronto Key Metrics Report - 2023 or Appendix B: CXD-311 Toronto Key Metrics Report – 2023 TEXT ONLY for a year-to-year look at volumes that were received via the phone channel.

CXD's knowledge base (KB) houses information on City services and programs. It is used by CSRs to respond to customers' questions and is also available on the division's self-serve portals where the same information can be accessed by the public. CXD continues to work with its partners in Technology Services to enhance the KB, 311's website and the mobile app. To view the top KB pages and topics that were viewed by the public in 2023, please see Appendix A: CXD-311 Toronto Key Metrics Report – 2023 or Appendix B - CXD-311 Toronto Key Metrics Report – 2023 TEXT ONLY.

## Capabilities

### Closing the Loop

The Closing the Loop project is focused on improving the end-to-end SR experience for residents, businesses, and visitors, while streamlining internal workflows. The following progress was achieved in 2023:

- **SR Notes and Status Updates:** Successfully enhanced integration, providing staff and customers with more meaningful and accurate updates.
- **Improved Inter-divisional SR Transfers:** Launched an automated SR reassignment and transfer process between Transportation Services and Toronto Water, eliminating the need for SRs to be manually closed by one division and re-opened in another, thus improving messaging to customers.
- **Service Insights Survey and Feedback Management:** Successfully launched new Service Insights Surveys on December 18, 2023. The post-contact survey provides customers who interact with 311 the opportunity to provide feedback on their 311 and ISD experience.

In 2024, a collaborative effort will be initiated between CXD and its ISDs to co-create a feedback management plan which will leverage survey results to continuously improve service delivery. The plan will outline staff expectations around analyzing customer feedback to identify and implement improvement strategies.

### Complaints & Compliments

The Complaints & Compliments project aims to create a more customer-centric, consistent, and scalable complaints and compliments process for Toronto's residents, businesses, and visitors. The following progress was achieved in 2023:

- **Design & Development:** Through design sessions with project-participating divisions (Municipal Licensing & Standards – Animal Services, Solid Waste Management, Toronto Water, Transportation Services – Operations and Maintenance and the City Manager's Office), new business processes were designed to better manage the complaints lifecycle and centralize communications handling with customers. This transition to a unified system of record will enhance transparency, accountability, and insights generation throughout the end-to-end process.
- **Simplified Complaints Content:** Developed prototypes of new complaints-related webpages, content on toronto.ca and the mobile app. The new content simplifies and standardizes the process for submitting complaints among the participating divisions. Prototype research was conducted with members of the public to provide feedback on simplified complaints intake self-serve webpages.
- **Phase 1 Launch:** A soft launch is scheduled for February 24, 2024, to pilot the initial implementation before communicating improvements to the public.
- **Post-Launch Planning:** After Phase 1 launch, staff will complete an evaluation of the results of the pilot implementation, begin planning for future improvements, and onboard additional divisions in 2024.

## **Digital Payments**

The digital payments project has been run in collaboration with Revenue Services and the Technology Services Division (TSD), resulting in the creation of MyToronto Pay, a collaboration between the City of Toronto and PayPal, enabling residents and businesses to make payments to the City for property taxes, utility bills and parking violations. Key 2023 and upcoming highlights include:

- February: Launch of e-billing feature, offering residents an electronic billing option, with 30,000 subscribers to date.
- August: Launch of Pre-Authorized Utilities Payments (PUP), offering residents and businesses an end-to-end digital experience for utilities payments and reducing enrolment times from 4 weeks to 3 days. In the last 4 months of the year, nearly 5,000 customers signed up for PUP, one third of which were new to MyToronto Pay.
- December: Initiated the transfer of credit card fees for parking violations to customers on MyToronto Pay.
- Totals: By the end of 2023, there were 1.1M transactions processed on MyToronto Pay, with 420,000 customer accounts created. Property Tax payments more than doubled to a 6% adoption rate, with Utility payments trending similarly since launch.
- Q1, 2024: Pre-Authorized Property Tax Payments will launch, with a new, online monthly installment plan.

To support the expansion of the City's digital payment capability, CXD will evaluate the lessons learned since the launch of MyToronto Pay and develop a City-wide understanding of digital payment requirements in partnership with TSD and key divisions that receive payments. Staff will report back to Council in Q2 of 2024 to provide an update on this work and recommend a go-forward plan.

## **Public Digital Access**

CXD, in collaboration with the Chief Information Security Office, TSD and Children's Services, worked to develop the capability enabling the public to use a single username and password to access multiple City services conveniently and securely. CXD led the design of the user experience by conducting research and developing the customer-facing content. In December 2023, the team successfully launched a beta of My Child Care Account (MCCA), allowing project teams to test and refine the customer experience, business processes, and technical implementation.

In 2024 the team plans to conduct detailed usability testing in preparation for migrating 30,000-40,000 active accounts to the new single sign on system.

For more information on CXD capabilities, please see Appendix C: CXD-311 Toronto Annual Dashboard – 2023 or Appendix D: CXD-311 Toronto Annual Dashboard – TEXT ONLY.

## Partnerships

CXD, in partnership with the Human Services Integration (HSI) and TSD teams, is creating a user-friendly digital tool, the HSI Online Hub, for easy access to Toronto's human services. The Hub will connect residents to programs, services and benefits provided by the City in one centralized, online resource and will allow residents to explore and quickly review available supports, while also providing:

- Quick benefit comparisons
- Personalized lists of available supports
- Multiple access channels
- Reduced call volumes for staff

In 2023, usability testing with residents was completed in order to finalize the Hub design and ensure user-friendliness. The project received a nomination for the Ontario Municipal Social Services Local Municipal Champion Award, underscoring its commitment to excellence and innovation.

The team is working towards a launch date in Q1 of 2024.

## Parks, Forestry & Recreation (PFR)

CXD and PFR have collaborated and are working on an assessment for expanding 311 support and intake for SRs related to the operations and maintenance of parks and facilities within them. Through Q1 the teams expect to be able to evaluate the following:

- The types and volumes of requests received
- Current business processes in place to support these requests within both 311 and PFR
- Future state recommendations
- Forecasted/estimated financial implications to support the expansion

CXD and PFR are expecting to complete this assessment by Q2 2024, with CXD to report back to GGC in Q2, 2024.

## Bicycle Safety SR Category Improvements

CXD collaborated with Councillors and the Toronto Centre Cyclists group to improve the online SR category related to bicycle safety concerns. Changes were made to improve the overall experience for cyclists, including updating cycling related resources, creating a new sub-category for "Bicycle Safety Issues and Concerns," and grouping cycling-related SRs together, making it easier to identify appropriate SRs related to cycling.

## CaféTO

The CaféTO Program provides restaurants and bars in Toronto with the opportunity to leverage public space to expand their outdoor dining through sidewalk cafés, curb lane cafés or patios on private properties.

In 2023, CXD conducted research into the applicant/operator experience for the CaféTO digital application and program, created process maps identifying points of intersections and barriers, and provided insights into improvement opportunities for a better overall customer experience.

### **DonateTO Refugee Support**

311 has actively participated in the City's response to provide shelter and support for refugee claimants by providing general information to the public about donor opportunities and ways to offer shelter and support through DonateTO. In 2023, 311 received 73 inquiries from the public, which included offers of housing support, such as vacant units, and requests for information on ways to support or donate. Additionally, 311 has featured recorded promotional messages on the 311 phone system and utilized social media to inform the public about ways to support refugee claimants.

### **Fire Services Phone Line Transition**

CXD, in partnership with Toronto Fire Services (TFS), transitioned the TFS general inquiry line to 311. The line provides non-emergency information about TFS programs and services, was historically managed by TFS office staff, and received approximately 8,000 calls annually. Now, when residents, businesses and visitors call 338-9050, they will be advised that their call will be routed to a CSR who can provide necessary information, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. This change improves the customer experience for non-emergency inquiries and allows TFS staff to focus on their core responsibilities. In 2023, 311 received 9,079 general inquiries related to the Fire Services phone line transition.

### **Housing Data Hub**

CXD collaborated with the Housing Secretariat and TSD to launch the Housing Data Hub as part of the Housing Action Plan 2022-2026. The aim of the Hub is to enhance the City's accountability and transparency by tracking Toronto's progress towards approving 40,000 affordable rental homes by 2030 and consolidating key housing data, which can be downloaded via the City's Open Data portal.

The project involved building three user-friendly and accessible dashboards, as well as a map to showcase the City's approach to enabling housing production to achieve or exceed the provincial housing target. To ensure usability and accessibility, CXD held pop-up sessions with People with Lived Experience at five Community Centres and Toronto Public Libraries, as well as 10 virtual usability testing sessions with academics, housing researchers, and advocates.

### **Improvements to Needle Cleanup SRs**

CXD collaborated with a Councillor's office to make it easier to find and make needle cleanup SRs on the 311 online portal and mobile app. Improvements include changes to navigation, content, and category labels.



## **Alcohol in Parks Pilot Project**

311 supports the Alcohol in Parks pilot project by handling general inquiries regarding pilot locations and guidelines, and by creating SRs for bylaw enforcement. 311 also responded to inquiries on how to share feedback through the Alcohol in Parks Feedback Survey. The City plans to evaluate the impact of the pilot on park users and neighbouring communities through 311 reporting, survey results and divisional observations and feedback.

## **Transportation Services**

CXD collaborated with Transportation Services to introduce 29 new problem codes for Traffic Systems Operations. The codes are related to transit signal codes and gather information regarding system communication issues, timing requests and general information related to a signal. This work will continue in Q1 and Q2 of 2024 and will introduce an additional 9 codes to be integrated. Staff also updated 21 Transportation Services problem codes to improve operations. Changes included streamlining customer service standards (i.e., expected timelines to investigate a request), clarifying eligibility questions or service criteria, and improved status messaging.

## **Winter Maintenance Requests**

CXD collaborated with Transportation Services to improve the customer experience for winter related SRs in preparation for the City's response to winter maintenance related inquiries. Key activities included:

- Establishment of a staff working group which meets every 3 weeks to review and improve the intake and handling of winter-related requests.
- Reviewing and enhancing 20 winter-related SRs to improve intake content, service standard information and key messages included in status updates to customers to better inform and manage customer expectations.
- Ensuring the 311 KB, online portal, and mobile app provide clear and user-friendly information for winter-related requests.

In addition, CXD and Transportation Services made enhancements to the flow of information between Maximo and Salesforce for a better “Closing the Loop” experience with customers. As a result of this enhancement, 311 staff now have access to field investigator notes and can better update the public regarding the status of their SRs.

## **CXD Maturity**

### **Governance**

Throughout the year, CXD hosted three ongoing governance tables with divisional representatives from across the City to provide information and seek alignment about customer experience initiatives. Members of the Strategic Alignment Table, Corporate Advisory Table, and Customer Experience Leads Committee attended monthly

meetings in order to learn about customer experience projects and divisional partnerships, and to discuss risks, priorities, goals, and future plans.

## **Intake**

CXD has developed an intake and prioritization framework to identify projects that significantly impact the customer experience across the City. The following progress was achieved in 2023:

- Created a framework to help divisions understand the customer impacts of projects and established a standardized process for project prioritization, planning and resourcing. The framework also assists in assessing the impacts and efforts of long-term strategic projects.
- Evaluated projects submitted through TSD's Strategic Technology Initiatives Executive Committee (STIEC).

In 2024, CXD will continue to work with TSD to improve the framework for the continued evaluation and prioritization of projects that have an impact on the customer experience.

## **Service Promise**

Driven by Councillor requests and the Corporate Leadership Team's priorities, CXD was asked to refresh and post an updated Service Promise that will be applicable on a City-wide scale and act as a guideline for staff interactions with one another, Councillors, and the public.

CXD formed the City-wide Service Promise Refresh Network with representatives from 40 divisions to gather feedback about the refreshed Service Promise language and expectations. This City-wide input, along with jurisdictional research findings, is currently being used to evolve the Service Promise to reflect a consistent, One Toronto approach to service delivery while also ensuring operational flexibility when necessary.

In 2024, the team will be working to validate Service Promise wording with Members of Council, and then with the public before broader publication.

## **Other**

### **Business Intelligence Training and Outreach**

The Business Intelligence (BI) tool houses SR data and allows users to run reports on volumes by division, ward, location, and problem type. CXD staff, ISDs and Councillor staff can access it after completion of a 3-hour online training session. In 2023, 6 training sessions were conducted, training 41 Business Intelligence users of which 26 were from Councillor's offices.

### **New CXD Intranet Site Launched**

CXD's new intranet site has been successfully launched, merging content from the former Customer Experience Transformation Program and 311 intranet sites. The new site is available to all City staff and provides an opportunity to learn about CXD's projects and service delivery.

### **Transition to Bell from Centrex**

CXD collaborated with TSD and Bell Canada to migrate 311's end-of-life backup legacy Centrex-based phone system to a modernized Bell system. This transition has allowed for increased concurrent call capacity, minimized disruptions for the public, and ensured higher availability of the 311 service for the public.

### **Outreach and Tours**

CXD welcomes Councillor staff to a tour of the 311 Contact Centre at Metro Hall and an overview presentation of 311's services. If interested in arranging a tour, please contact CXD's Executive Director's Administrative Assistant ([christina.grandal@toronto.ca](mailto:christina.grandal@toronto.ca)).

### **Summary**

In 2024, CXD will be focusing on many priority projects that will build key customer experience capabilities in order to provide residents, businesses, and visitors with consistent, equitable and integrated City services across multiple channels. For these capability projects, corporate standards are being developed to ensure consistency across the organization and that the City's key principles of equity, responsiveness and One Toronto are upheld.

CXD will also continue to provide an excellent service experience through 311's operations and will work with divisions to consider opportunities to integrate additional services and merge contact centres in order to create more efficient processes and space utilization.

Lastly, CXD will continue to expand partnerships with divisions across the City to transform the enterprise customer experience and ensure a centre-led, cohesive, customer experience practice at the City.

Further information about the upcoming and in-progress projects highlighted within this report will be provided in the Q1, 2024 CXD Briefing Note that will be emailed directly to Councillors in Q2, 2024.

### **CONTACT**

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### **SIGNATURE**

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## **ATTACHMENTS**

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Appendix A - CXD-311 Toronto Key Metrics Report - 2023  
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Appendix C – CXD-311 Toronto Annual Dashboard – 2023  
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