

## **Audit of Parks Branch Operations - Phase 1 & 2: July 2025 Status Update**

**Date:** June 26, 2025

**To:** Audit Committee

**From:** Acting General Manager, Parks and Recreation

**Wards:** All

### **SUMMARY**

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On October 7, 2024, the Auditor General released a report entitled "*Audit of Parks Branch Operations - Phase 1: Improving Oversight of Day-to-Day Maintenance Helps to Ensure City Parks are Beautiful, Clean and Safe*", which was considered by the Audit Committee on October 15, 2024, and City Council at its meeting on November 13 and 14, 2024. Thereafter on February 5, 2025, the Auditor General released a report entitled "*Audit of Parks Branch Operations - Phase 2: Supporting Vibrant Parks by Improving Park Asset Management and Repair Processes*", which was considered by the Audit Committee on February 12, 2025, and City Council at its meeting on March 26 and 27, 2025.

City Council subsequently adopted various recommendations aimed at improving how the Parks branch performs maintenance operations and repairs to keep parks clean, safe and beautiful.

One such recommendation directed Parks and Recreation (PR) to report to the Audit Committee in December 2024, as well as July and November 2025 with a status update. This report outlines steps taken to implement both phases of the audit.

Implementation of the Auditor General's recommendations is proceeding as provided by management in their response to both phases of the audit. While longer term technological improvements are in development, interim processes to improve accountability and oversight have been implemented.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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The Acting General Manager, Parks and Recreation recommends that:

1. City Council receive this report for information.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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There are no financial impacts as a result of the recommendations within this report.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the Financial Impact section.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

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At its meeting on November 13 and 14, 2024, City Council considered the Auditor General's audit "AU6.1 - Audit of Parks Branch Operations - Phase 1: Improving Oversight of Day-to-Day Maintenance Helps to Ensure City Parks are Beautiful, Clean and Safe".

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.AU6.1>

At its meeting on December 17 and 18, 2024, City Council considered Parks and Recreation's December 2024 Status Update "AU7.5 - Audit of Parks Branch Operations - Phase 1: December 2024 Status Update".

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.AU7.5>

At its meeting on March 26 and 27, 2025, City Council considered the Auditor General's audit " AU8.4 - Audit of Parks Branch Operations - Phase 2: Supporting Vibrant Parks by Improving Park Asset Management and Repair Processes".

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.AU8.4>

## **COMMENTS**

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In response to, and concurrent with the Auditor General reports of October 2024 (Phase 1, Parks Operations) and February 2025 (Phase 2, Technical Services [asset repairs] and Complaints), Parks and Recreation (PR) has taken significant steps to improve systems and processes related to park maintenance and repair activities. Interim measures are now in place to address immediate accountability gaps identified by the Auditor General while longer term digital transformation is occurring.

This report provides a summary of activities undertaken to date aligned to the Auditor General's recommendations. Progress taken to date on implementation of the two phases of the audit will be reported out together in this and future report backs.

### **Progress Overview**

The Auditor General made 18 recommendations across Phase 1 and 2 of their Audit. Work is underway on implementation of all recommendations and are currently in various stages of progress.

As reported to Audit Committee in the December 2024 status update, PR has implemented a new Parks Quality Assurance Framework which includes the Daily Activity Sheet (DAS) Administrative Review and Supervisor Quality Check. Since December, additional work has been initiated on DAS accuracy against telematics data.

## **Quality Assurance Framework**

### ***DAS Administrative Review***

#### ***(Phase 1, Recommendations #2,5 and 6; Phase 2, Recommendation #7)***

To improve the quality of DAS, enhanced training has been provided to all parks staff through annual orientation and tailgate sessions. Revised training has reinforced clear guidelines for taking and documenting acceptable stops and breaks, and the parks operation handbook has been updated to clarify these expectations. All business units are now using DAS on a consistent basis, using templates harmonized across functional units and updated to include odometer readings.

Parks Branch has implemented a DAS Accuracy Audit that scores weekly samples of paper DAS for accuracy and completeness - providing standardized, ongoing feedback to supervisory staff who in turn provide regular feedback to forepersons and leadhands. At time of writing this report, 5 review cycles have been completed. Each review cycle is 4 weeks in duration; each employee completing a DAS in that cycle has at minimum one of their DAS reviewed by the Quality Assurance team. To date, over 1800 DAS have been reviewed for accuracy and completeness covering 5 cycles from January to May 2025.

At the end of each cycle, a report is generated and provided to supervisory staff for their respective areas on the accuracy and completeness of their staff's DAS. Management staff then follow up with employees where deficiencies are noted in their paperwork. The Parks Quality Assurance team also undertakes branch-wide analysis on trends, including common deficiencies, and communicates these to branch leadership. Initial results of the DAS quality assurance program show improvements to documentation practices:

- In the first cycle of review, 83% received a passing score (16/19, or 80%); by cycle 5 that number was 96%.
- In the first cycle of review, the average number of deficiencies on a DAS was 1.58; by cycle 5 that number was 0.91 (a 42% decrease in deficiencies).

### **Supervisor Quality Check**

#### ***(Phase 1, Recommendation #8; Phase 2, Recommendation #5b)***

A Supervisor Quality Check has been developed and implemented to standardize and strengthen on-site inspections of work stated to be completed on DAS. Training and guidelines for Supervisors on what to observe and document and how often to conduct visits have been developed and delivered. Since November 2024, almost 1900 such inspections have been logged, representing a substantial increase in documented on-site validation of work. Initial data indicates that 96% of inspected crew work has been

completed as assigned, with less than 4% either partially completed or not completed as assigned. These inspections are followed up by supervisors.

### **Leveraging GPS**

#### ***(Phase 1, Recommendation #1,3,4; Phase 2 Recommendation #7c)***

At the time of the audit, not all Parks vehicles were equipped with telematics/GPS. In response to the auditor's recommendations, and on an accelerated timeline, all parks class 1-8 vehicles were equipped with telematics devices by January 2025.

Parks Branch has implemented a manual cross-reference of random DAS to GPS records. A subset of DAS scored for the accuracy audit are to be checked against GPS data for anomalies such as time or location discrepancies, or extended stops at non-work locations. Any anomalies found are sent to the appropriate management staff for a more detailed review and follow up. Currently this spot-check is largely manual and time consuming. As more digital work management tools become available, the program and processes will mature to leverage this data. Results of the interim spot-check program will be reported on in the scheduled November 2025 report to Audit Committee.

While this Quality Assurance process is being developed and refined, Supervisors continue to leverage GPS data to support investigations where required as a result of complaints or where anomalies are identified.

### **Additional Work Underway**

#### **Park Inspections and Actioning Repair-Related Deficiencies**

##### ***(Phase 2, Recommendation #1 and 2)***

Parks has delivered refresher training on parks inspection requirements, including follow up and handoff requirements, and is establishing a process to track deficiencies noted from identification through resolution. A system for documenting hand-off to other responsible parties is under development. Parks has also completed a review of all deficiencies noted through inspections for the previous year, and is documenting action, resolution and/or hand-off of the identified deficiencies.

#### **Work Order Creation, Prioritization, and Resolution**

##### ***(Phase 2, Recommendation #3 and 5a)***

Review of all open historical work orders in the current SAP PM system is complete. Work orders where work has been completed have been closed with any remaining identified for further action. This clears out old data and addresses the backlog, preparing the system for interim work order management improvements to be completed this year.

Improvements are being made to existing manual work order and repair tracking processes to improve oversight. These processes are in development, with a new interim tracking system, policy and compliance procedures on track for a Q3 implementation.

## **Tracking of complaints and service requests from public, and review and revise PR complaint policy (Phase 2, Recommendations #8 and 9)**

Integration of Parks with the City's 311 program is in progress, enabling residents to submit parks' service requests online (mobile and web) or by phone by the end of Q3 2025. This initial integration is a step towards a comprehensive system for receiving and monitoring public issues which will track requests from intake through to closure, recording key data to enable reporting and dashboards for monitoring complaint types, volumes, aging, and trends.

Work is also underway to update the divisional complaints policy, scheduled for completion in Q4 2025.

## **Culture Change**

As a result of the audit, Parks Branch is actively working to strengthen a culture of individual and collective accountability, and pride in our capacity to provide critical services and high-quality public spaces for Toronto residents.

Parks Branch is nurturing cultural change by engaging staff about the auditor's findings, communicating the importance of change, communicating clear expectations, preparing staff for upcoming technological changes, and providing frontline staff and supervisors with opportunities to share their challenges and suggest how the division can support them.

In April 2025, listening sessions were conducted as an initial step in these culture change initiatives. In total, 6 separate listening sessions were held with 194 staff engaged. Of the 194 attendees, 136 were forepersons or leadhands and 58 were supervisors or General supervisors.

These sessions aimed to update branch staff on the audit findings and response work, including timelines and planned actions. They also provided a platform for staff to share barriers and potential solutions related to meeting the Auditor General's recommendations.

Feedback from these sessions highlighted areas of challenge for staff in doing their work and management is working to leverage both short- and longer-term opportunities to improve how work is managed. Feedback is being rolled up and management will engage with staff through the summer and fall to provide tangible actions to support staff.

## **Next Steps**

PR will continue implementation and monitoring of the work described above. These interim processes, albeit manual, are an important on-ramp to the upcoming technological changes that will modernize our work processes and systems, and provide valuable data to be able to document, analyse and demonstrate quality work. PR, in partnership with Technology Services Division, are continuing to advance

implementation on the following which will be reported out in future status updates to the Audit Committee:

- Use Technology to Digitize Daily Activity Sheets (*Phase 1, Recommendation #7*), Q4 2025
- Update and Measure Against Standards and Benchmarks (*Phase 1, Recommendation #9; Phase 2, Recommendation #6*), Q2 2026
- Integrate work order management and time management (*Phase 2, Recommendation #4*)

## **Conclusion**

This report outlines actions PR has taken to date to address the recommendations made by the Auditor General. PR will continue to implement the Auditor General's recommendations to improve how Parks and Recreation performs maintenance operations to keep parks clean, safe and beautiful.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Tom Azouz  
A/ General Manager, Parks and Recreation

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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