

Audit of Parks Branch Operations - Phase 1 & 2: November 2025 Status Update

Date: October 21, 2025

To: Audit Committee

From: Interim General Manager, Parks and Recreation

Wards: All

SUMMARY

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 provides a summary of activities undertaken to date aligned to the Auditor General's recommendations.

Since the most recent management update in July 2025, work has advanced including park service request integration with the Customer Experience Division (CXD), finalization of Quality Assurance processes related to Daily Activity Sheet accuracy as well as tracking of repair related deficiencies. Upcoming work focusses on the initial rollout of digitization of daily work for crews (Q4).

While longer term technological improvements are in development, interim quality assurance processes will provide accountability and compliance aligned to audit recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Parks and Recreation, recommends that:

1. City Council receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

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

At its meeting on July 23 and 24, 2025, City Council considered Parks and Recreation's July 2025 Status Update "AU9.12 - Audit of Parks Branch Operations - Phase 1 and 2: July 2025 Status Update"

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.AU9.12>

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>

At its meeting on February 11, 2025, City Council considered "CC27.1 - Budget Implementation Including Property Tax Rates, User Fees and Related Matters"

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.CC27.1>

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 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>

COMMENTS

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] Parks Audit - Phase 1 & 2: November 2025 Status Update

and Complaints), and as directed by City Council, Parks and Recreation (PR) continues to implement improvements to systems and processes related to park maintenance and repair activities. Measures are now in place to address immediate accountability gaps identified by the Auditor General while longer term digital transformation is occurring.

Progress Overview

The Auditor General made 18 recommendations across Phase 1 and 2 of their Audit. City Council adopted these recommendations and provided an additional 5 directions to phase 1 of the audit. Work is underway on implementation of all recommendations and are currently in various stages of progress.

As reported to committee in the December 2024 and July 2025 Status updates, PR has implemented a new Parks Quality Assurance Framework which includes the Daily Activity Sheet (DAS) Administrative Review and Supervisor Quality Check. Since July, additional work has been completed on the DAS Accuracy Review process as part of the framework. Additionally, improvements to managing and resolving park service requests have been implemented.

Quality Assurance Framework

DAS Administrative Review

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

Daily Activity Sheets (DAS) are used to schedule and track daily work completed by crews. This process is currently paper-based. Parks Branch has implemented a DAS Administrative review process which scores a subset of DAS completed by staff on a regular basis for accuracy. At the time of writing, over 4100 DAS have been reviewed for completeness over 9 cycles.

Results of the DAS quality assurance program continue to show improvements to documentation practices:

- The pass rate of DAS from the most recent cycle of review (September), is 97%, up from 83% in the first cycle (a 17% increase).
- The average number of deficiencies on a DAS was 0.65 the latest cycle, compared to 1.58 on the first (a 59% decrease in deficiencies).

Supervisor Quality Check

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

Parks Branch has implemented a Supervisor Quality Check to standardize and strengthen on-site inspections of work detailed on DAS. Since implementation, and as of time of writing 3407 such inspections have been logged, representing a substantial increase in documented on-site validation of work.

- In the most recent cycle (data from September), 99% of inspected crew work has been completed as assigned, with less than 1% either partially completed or not completed as assigned
- Initial data reported in July found that 96% of inspected crew work was completed as assigned, with less than 4% either partially completed or not completed as assigned

Based on all Supervisor Quality Checks logged to date, data indicates that deficiencies are generally related to litter picking being incomplete (1.1% of total inspections), trimming and pruning not achieving standard (0.9% of total inspections), and weeding and edging not meeting standard (0.7% of total inspections). Inspections which do not meet standard are followed up by supervisors.

DAS Accuracy Review

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

The DAS Accuracy Review program is the third pillar of the Parks Quality Assurance Framework and is designed to validate the accuracy of paper DAS submitted by crews. As reported in the July management update, a manual review process had been newly implemented to validate DAS against GPS data. Following the initial implementation, it was determined that further work was required to refine the process and methodology. This adjustment in process was required due to the complexity of the review, the manual nature of the data preparation and reviews including detailed cross-referencing with telematics data.

The updated DAS Accuracy Review program using the refined methodology will be implemented by mid-November 2025. The review process compares reported work locations and time entries with telematics GPS data from on-road vehicles to identify discrepancies such as unverified stops, unrecorded visits, stop duration discrepancy, and inefficient routing. It also includes detailed sampling and randomization methods to ensure equitable coverage across supervisor areas. The process remains highly manual due to limitations in automation and system integration. Until the implementation of the updated review is complete, Parks continues to utilize telematics GPS to address identified anomalies.

This program will strengthen oversight, improve data integrity, and support continuous improvement in operations, though it currently demands significant staff time and effort. As the program evolves and technology modernization is implemented, lessons learned through the interim program will guide future program enhancements. Additionally, work on the corporate Telematics Policy which will guide the use of GPS data across divisions is underway and may impact future program updates. This policy is drafted and undergoing review with Legal and Labour Relations. It is on track to be released along with accompanying procedures, in December 2025.

Improvements to Managing and Resolving Parks Service Requests

Tracking of complaints and service requests from public, and review and revise PR complaint policy

(Phase 2, Recommendations #8 and 9)

In September 2025, Parks Branch service requests were integrated with the Customer Experience Division (CXD), marking a major milestone in modernizing the branch's work management. This integration enables customers to submit parks-related service requests through 311 online, by email, by phone or via the mobile app, track progress in real time, and receive clear updates on resolution status. It also standardizes intake and

tracking across all service request types, enabling consistent service delivery and improved data collection.

As of October 9, 2025, the Parks Branch has received approximately 1,022 (Sept 16 - Oct 9) service requests, with the three most common service request types being Litter and Garbage, Lighting Maintenance and Playground Repairs. This integration improves responsiveness and supports data-driven planning across operations.

Additionally, Parks and Recreation is updating the Division's complaints policy in alignment with the City's corporate customer service standards and will be developing a staff training and compliance monitoring plan to support the implementation of the updated policy. Implementation will aim to leverage organizational and technological changes, including integration with 311 Toronto, to improve consistent and timely documentation and resolution of complaints. The policy update is targeted for Q4 completion.

Deficiency Identification, Work Order Creation, Prioritization, and Resolution (Phase 2, Recommendations #1, 2, 3 and 5a)

To support consistency and accountability, procedures have been created to establish a standardized, centralized process for identifying, submitting, assessing, and resolving repair needs across City parks. A newly developed deficiency tracker is being implemented within Parks Branch as a tracking tool to monitor repair related deficiencies identified through inspections, daily work, and 311 requests. These efforts create an integrated process for tracking service requests from initial identification through to resolution. This work introduces clear documentation standards, consistent prioritization criteria, and improved tracking of repair-related deficiencies.

Automated notifications and centralized tracking will enhance timely communication and oversight, promoting greater transparency in addressing public complaints, managing asset deficiencies, and coordinating repairs across Divisions. The rollout of the new procedures and processes has begun and will be implemented across all operational districts by the end of October 2025. Additionally, Quality Assurance processes embedded in procedures will provide oversight and compliance monitoring. This process will ensure transparency, accountability, and alignment with service delivery standards until the process is fully integrated into future Enterprise Work Management System (EWMS) via future work packages.

Additional Work Underway (City Council direction (CC27.1))

Interim quality assurance processes have been implemented by the Parks branch to enhance quality assurance, accountability, and oversight on existing processes, however these remain largely manual. The reviews associated with the quality assurance framework demonstrate a commitment to implementation of audit recommendations in the short term while foundational investments to increase capacity are required to support long-term transformation. These interim processes have not yet resulted in measurable efficiencies or in-year savings, owing to the quality assurance

framework's focus on improving paper-based process. Further investment will be required to fully implement audit recommendations relating to modernization and system transformation which may result in operational savings over time.

A key barrier to quantifying efficiency gains is the absence of baseline data, due to legacy paper-based work management systems. As part of audit implementation, these systems are being replaced with a digital platform using the Enterprise Work Management System, which will enable tracking of service delivery volumes beginning in 2026. This data will serve as a baseline for future measurement and monitoring of operational efficiencies as audit recommendations from both phase 1 and 2 are implemented.

Next Steps

PR will continue implementation and monitoring of the work described above. These manual processes are an important on-ramp to the upcoming technological changes that will modernize work processes and systems, and provide valuable data measure, update and manage service levels. PR is continuing to advance implementation on the following:

Digitize Work Management

(Phase 1, Recommendation #7; Phase 2 Recommendation #4)

Work continues to fully modernize work management for Parks Branch via the Enterprise Work Management Solution (EWMS) program. The digitization of daily work is on track to begin deployment in Q4 of this year and the program will continue onboarding business units through 2028.

Standards Benchmark and Measurement

(Phase 1, Recommendation #9; Phase 2, Recommendation #6)

Work continues on benchmarking Parks' standards across peer jurisdictions. Data accrued as the branch modernizes its services through digital platforms will allow for robust measurement of service delivery, and updates to the service standards will be informed by this data. Projected timeline for completion of KPIs is contingent on implementation of digital tools and availability of data but will begin in Q2 2026 when initial data will be available.

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.

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SIGNATURE

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