

## **Customer Experience Division Annual Report - 2024**

**Date:** February 13, 2025

**To:** Service Excellence Committee

**From:** Executive Director, Customer Experience

**Wards:** All

### **SUMMARY**

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The Customer Experience Division (CXD), through 311, provides access to non-emergency City services, programs, and information 24 hours a day, seven days a week. 311 offers assistance in over 180 languages over the phone, and online through self-service options using the City's website and the 311 mobile app, and through email specifically for general inquiries or requests for information. This report responds to Council direction to provide an overview of trending issues received by 311 on an annual basis.

In 2024, CXD continued to provide timely, supportive, and effective customer service. CXD received 1.29 million interactions, comprising mostly of general inquiries (62%) and service requests (SRs; 32%), with fewer requests for status updates on existing service requests (6%). Notably, CXD saw a shift towards more online interactions, with increased visits to the City's 311 website, as well as additional use of the live chat feature, and the 311 mobile app. Most individuals interact with 311 over the phone, and in 2024, CXD answered 82% of calls within 75 seconds, exceeding established service level standards. CXD also demonstrated its ability to respond to events that created a surge in inquiries, increasing staff resources to assist with calls related to the summer rainstorm event and the rollout of the Vacant Home Tax (VHT). For these events, CXD also updated the pre-recorded introductory message received when calling 311 to provide key information and set expectations regarding call response times.

CXD continues to track top SRs received by 311 for all Wards and integrated service divisions (ISDs), (Solid Waste Management Services, Transportation Services, Toronto Water, Municipal Licensing & Standards, including Toronto Animal Services, and Urban Forestry within the Environment, Climate, and Forestry Division), with more information available below and in Appendix A: 311 Toronto Key Metrics Report 2024 or its text only counterpart, Appendix B.

In 2024, CXD continued to strengthen partnerships and make several enhancements to track and support the resolution of key issues. This included the introduction of new SRs related to noise and excessive heat, among others. CXD also collaborated with several City Divisions, the Toronto Police Service, and Toronto Community Crisis Service to renew the Make the Right Call Campaign to help build public awareness on when to call 911 versus other non-emergency services.

CXD also continues to advance several improvement initiatives, including service integration with Parks & Recreation, making customer experience improvements to the digital channels, rolling out a streamlined complaints and compliments process, and improving the updates provided to customers about the status of their service requests.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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The Executive Director, Customer Experience recommends that:

1. 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 recommendation in this report. The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees 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 MM24.11, "Annual report to City Council by 311," which directed the Executive Director, 311 Toronto (now known as the Customer Experience Division) to submit an annual update report outlining important service issues and trends.

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

## **COMMENTS**

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In 2024, CXD achieved several successes while working towards improving the overall customer experience for those accessing City services. This report will highlight key trends, enhancements, and partnerships.

### **General Inquiries and Service Requests**

In 2024, CXD had 1.29 million interactions, comprising mostly of general inquiries (62%) and SRs (32%). Notably, in 2024, CXD saw a shift towards more online interactions compared to 2023, with increased visits to the City's 311 website (+2%), as well as additional use of the live chat feature (+10%), and the 311 mobile app (+22%).

## General Inquiries

311 Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) respond to general inquiries from the public regarding City services and programs offered by all City divisions. In 2024, 886,000 general inquiries were addressed, with Property Tax Billing and VHT being the most popular topics.

CSRs use the CXD Knowledge Base (KB), which houses information on City services and programs, to respond to inquiries from the public. The KB is also publicly available online on the [311 self-service portal](#), enabling the public to independently access relevant information. CXD collects data on the top viewed KB pages; in 2024, most public views related to recreation program registration, information for municipal offices within and outside the GTA, and oversized waste collection items. The top 10 KBs viewed by the public can be found in Appendix A: 311 Toronto Key Metrics Report 2024 or its text only counterpart, Appendix B.

## Service Requests

CXD responds to SRs on behalf of its five ISDs: Solid Waste Management Services, Transportation Services, Toronto Water, Municipal Licensing & Standards (including Toronto Animal Services) and Urban Forestry within the Environment, Climate, and Forestry Division. A full listing of service categories can be viewed on the [311 self-service portal](#). In 2024, the total number of customer-initiated SRs decreased by 5% to 463,000, compared to 487,000 in 2023.

The table below provides an overview of the top service requests, offering insight into the issues that matter most to Torontonians contacting the City through 311. This data helps ISDs better understand community needs, identify emerging concerns and trends, and align divisional workplans with resident priorities.

Table 1: 2024 Top 5 Service Requests

Top 5 Service Requests (From All Channels)	
Residential Bin Lid Damaged	22,647
Dead Wildlife Pickup	19,791
Injured Wildlife	19,119
Property Standards & Maintenance Violations	16,297
General Pruning	13,335

Phone Channel Service Levels

Most interactions with 311 occur through the phone. CXD aims to meet a Service Level of answering 80% of phone calls within 75 seconds to provide prompt customer service. CXD exceeded this service level in recent years, with a Service Level of 81% in 2023, and 82% in 2024.

Table 2: 311 Phone Channel Call Answer & Handling Times in 2024

Average Speed of Answer	Average Call Handling Time
0:00:47	0:04:52

In 2024 there were two events that led to an increase in customer outreach to 311:

- Summer Storm Event:** On July 16, 2024, Toronto experienced a record-breaking rainfall event, leading to significant flooding around the city. Power outages left up to 167,000 homes and businesses without power. Impacts to 311 included:
  - Higher than normal call volumes.
  - A surge in service requests for Sewer Service Line Blocked (basement flooding) with over 700 requests by 4pm.
  - Over 200 service requests for Catch Basin Flooding by 4pm.
- VHT Inquiries:** 311 experienced an increase in inquiries related to VHT. In Q1, 311 received 21,950 phone inquiries, and in Q2, there were 21,064 phone inquiries.

During these events, 311 increased staff resources to help support the surge in call and email volumes and ensure residents received required information and support. CXD also updated the introductory messages to the Interactive Voice Response system, to provide callers with additional information and set customer expectations regarding response times.

Please refer to Appendix A: 311 Toronto Key Metrics Report 2024 or its text only counterpart, Appendix B for additional information on call volumes in 2023 and 2024, and other key metrics.

**Partnerships and Enhancements**

Vacant Home Tax

CXD partnered with the Revenue Services Division to improve the self-serve experience for homeowners declaring the occupancy status of a property. A dedicated support line for VHT inquiries was established, including an option in the 311 Interactive Voice Response system to request to speak with a 311 CSR. This dedicated line was launched on November 1, 2024, and in its first two months, handled 23,537 calls, with

call handle times under 6 minutes. Over 99% of the calls were handled without transfer, and for over 50% of the calls, the VHT declarations were completed by staff on behalf of the resident.

### New Excessive Heat Service Requests

In July 2024, CXD launched the following new SRs to address heat related concerns in rental units:

- **Excessive Heat in a Rental Unit:** Residents in rental units equipped with air cooling equipment provided by the property owner can submit an *Excessive Heat in Rental Unit Service Request* if the property owner fails to maintain an indoor temperature below 26°C between June 2 and September 14.
- **Non-Enforceable Excessive Heat in a Rental Unit:** Residents living in rental units that are not equipped with air cooling equipment can report when they consider their units to have excessive heat. This is currently not enforceable and used only for data analysis purposes.

### Complaints, Compliments and Escalations for City of Toronto Vehicle Drivers

In July 2024, CXD launched the following new Complaint, Compliment and Escalation SRs related to City of Toronto drivers operating City vehicles:

- **City of Toronto Vehicle Driver Complaint:** The public can submit a non-emergency complaint about a City driver who operates a City of Toronto vehicle. Examples of complaints can include driver attitude, unsafe driving behaviours, parking violations or property damage. Vehicle Driver Complaints are forwarded to the appropriate division/supervisor to address.
- **Escalation – Fleet Services:** If a customer is unsatisfied with the outcome of their City of Toronto Vehicle Driver Complaint, they can escalate the issue by submitting an Escalation – Fleet Services request. To escalate, the customer must provide the reference number from the original complaint.
- **City of Toronto Vehicle Driver Compliment:** The public can submit positive feedback about a City driver operating a City of Toronto vehicle. The licence number or unit number is not mandatory in this case. The compliment will be shared with the supervisor of the operator.

### New Noise Service Requests

New SRs were established to collect noise complaints during permitted hours or for activities exempt from the Noise Bylaw. While these SRs are not considered by-law violations, these new categories help the City collect data on noise concerns to guide future policy and enforcement initiatives. The new SRs are:

- Construction Noise – During Permitted Hours
- Construction Noise – Government Work or Safety Measures
- Power Device Noise – During Permitted Hours
- Vehicle Repair Noise – During Permitted Hours
- Loading and Unloading Noise – During Permitted Hours
- Delivery of Goods – To Retail Establishments
- Waste Collection – Noise Exemption

### Non-Emergency Call Response Steering Committee

CXD continues to work with partners on a variety of non-emergency service opportunities, through the Non-Emergency Call Response Steering Committee, which is comprised group of members from CXD, Toronto Police Service (TPS), Municipal Licensing and Standards, and Strategic Public & Employee Communications. Areas of focus in 2024 included enhancing collaboration between partners and improving service to customers with respect to noise complaints, parking infraction reporting, call transfer processes between 311 and TPS Non-Emergency line, and overall public awareness of non-emergency services, through a public awareness campaign. Work of the committee included assessing and streamlining service criteria and triaging processes, reviewing and improving website information and other communication materials, to enhance overall access and experience for customers with non-emergency service issues.

### Make the Right Call Campaign

In 2024, the City, in partnership with TPS, Toronto Fire Services, Toronto Paramedic Services, and Toronto Community Crisis Service, renewed the Make the Right Call Campaign, to help build public awareness on when to call 911 versus other services. Through the campaign, residents were provided with guidelines to better understand the differences between 911, TPS non-emergency line, 311, and 211. Data from the campaign is currently being assessed and insights will be available in the future.

### Monthly Business Improvement Area Reports

CXD continues to collaborate with Business Improvement Area (BIA) groups to understand service request trends and issues in each BIA. Insights on quarterly and year-to-date SRs created by BIA members are shared regularly with the BIA representatives that CXD meets with. BIAs use these trends and issues data to identify where to focus efforts and where follow up may be required with members and/or the City. The collaboration also allows BIAs to provide feedback to CXD regarding the online SR portal and mobile app. CXD also meets with representatives from the Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas to support them in understanding City processes and provide an opportunity to share feedback and ask questions.

### Winter Snow Clearing Services

Transportation Services and CXD have mobilized for the 2024/2025 winter season. CXD and Transportation Services have collaborated to establish clear criteria for emergency requests during hold periods (the period when plowing is being completed after snow accumulation reaches benchmark levels) during which winter-related SRs (e.g., snow clearing, salting) are not created, except in urgent cases. These criteria help prioritize calls from customers in need of immediate assistance. These calls will be further assessed by the 311 Coordinator/Supervisor team and escalated to Transportation Services as needed.

### Staff Training – Gender-Based Violence & Intimate Partner Violence

CXD is working with the Gender Equity Unit within the People & Equity Division, to help bring awareness to frontline staff on how to respond to requests from customers experiencing gender-based violence or intimate partner violence. In 2024, an e-learning presentation was shared with all frontline staff, and a KB article was created to guide CSRs in situations where a referral is needed. More detailed training is planned for 2025.

## **Ongoing Improvements**

### Parks Services Integration

CXD, Technology Services (TSD) and P&R have collaborated to assess expanding 311 support and intake for SRs related to the operations and maintenance of Parks. The launch is planned for late 2025. CXD will continue to work with TSD and P&R for further inclusion of other services related to recreation. Additionally, CXD continues to review opportunities to integrate other Tier 1 inquiries (e.g., those that are routine and transactional, and do not require specialized training or service area expertise) with 311 so that common and frequent requests can be easily reported and tracked through 311 and sent to service divisions for fulfilment.

### Digital Channel Improvements

CXD continues to make customer experience improvements to the digital channels to support customers in shifting to self-serve options where possible. An example of these improvements includes the improved navigational and category sections for self-serve bike inquiries to make it easier for customers to report service requests, and enhancements to the mobile app to improve the ease of creating a service request.

### Complaints & Compliments

CXD launched a new Complaints & Compliments process for six participating divisions (CXD, Municipal Licensing and Standards – Animal Services, Solid Waste Management Services, Toronto Water, Transportation Services – Operations and Maintenance and

the City Manager's Office), simplifying and streamlining the reporting process for the public and these divisions. CXD continues to explore potential enhancements.

### Closing the Loop

Last year, CXD in collaboration with TSD introduced improvements that would allow for better status information to be provided back to 311 in relation to Service Requests. These improvements, known as Closing the Loop, included service notes and attachments, including pictures depicting work at various stages of the service request lifecycle. These enhancements allow 311 to provide more meaningful information about the status of Service Requests when Customers call 311 for an update.

CXD continues to work with the ISDs and TSD to provide further enhancements such as improved content and format of service request notes, improved customer notification processes and templates, more descriptive status updates, and for a select group of service requests, has launched a pilot project to make pictures of completed work available to customers online.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Executive Director, (Interim) Customer Experience

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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Appendix A - 311 Toronto Key Metrics Report 2024  
Appendix B - 311 Toronto Key Metrics Report 2024 (text only)