

## 311 Customer Communications

**Date:** June 23, 2026

**To:** City Council

**From:** Executive Director, Customer Experience Division

**Wards:** All

### SUMMARY

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This report responds to a request from the Executive Committee for the Executive Director, Customer Experience Division (CXD) to share sample standard simple public messaging for 311 inquiries and detail the approach to service request prioritization. CXD has been working to enhance public messaging for 311 service requests (SRs) to clearly show priority and timelines for completion. This report highlights the progress on these enhancements and outlines future improvements that are underway over the next 18 months.

311 communicates with customers at key points in their service request journey. Currently, when customers submit an SR they will receive a confirmation email for their SR submission, and if customers opt-in to updates, they will also receive status updates and closure updates. Customers may also track their service requests on demand by using the [Track a Service Request](#) page on the 311 website or by calling 311 for updates. As of May 28th, 8 priority SRs (potholes/road damage, sidewalk damage, general pruning, tree emergency clean-up, park pathway maintenance, playground repairs, dead animal pickup, and property bylaw) now also receive milestone updates, giving customers clearer visibility into progress and how their request will be completed.

311 communications include information on how service requests are prioritized by the Divisions responsible for addressing their request. CXD works closely with Integrated Service Divisions (ISDs) including Solid Waste Management Services, Municipal Licensing and Standards, Toronto Water, Transportation Services, Urban Forestry (within Environment, Climate and Forestry), and the Parks Branch (within Parks and Recreation) to provide general descriptions of how priority levels are set for each service request. Divisions set priority levels and the information collected for each service request based on their operational needs and work programs.

CXD, in partnership with ISDs and the Communications Division, and informed through customer feedback and user testing, is strengthening customer communications in three ways:

- **Content Review and Governance:** Applying writing guidelines and plain language standards to ensure information shared with customers is accurate and helpful. Updated 311 confirmation emails using this language will be implemented across all service requests by end of 2027, aligned with Closing the Loop release dates.
- **Enhanced Digital Communications:** Working with the Technology Services Division to enhance the tools available for CXD to communicate with customers, like new communication templates and enhancements to the [Track a Service Request](#) page, to enable more visual, dynamic updates. An enabling technical enhancement is scheduled for Q4 2026, with improvements being implemented across service requests in a phased approach, aligned with the Closing the Loop program.
- **Timely and Meaningful Updates:** Through Closing the Loop, CXD is replacing generic status updates with milestones and notes that provide more tailored, service-specific details, giving customers clearer insight into how their requests are progressing and being resolved. Initial improvements have been implemented across select high-volume, high-impact SRs, with additional improvements being implemented in a phased approach by end of Q4 2027.

These improvements will build on recent changes to deliver a more modern, transparent, and intuitive experience, that aligns with customer expectations. This report provides samples of how these communications have been enhanced for high priority service requests, using Potholes/Road Damage as an example.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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The Executive Director, Customer Experience Division recommends that:

1. City Council receive this report for information.

## FINANCIAL IMPACT

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There is no additional financial impact resulting from the adoption of the recommendations in this report beyond what is included in the 2026-2035 Capital Budget and Plan for the Technology Services Division.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact statement

## DECISION HISTORY

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Executive Committee, at its May 16, 2026 meeting, requested the Executive Director, Customer Experience Division, to report directly to the June 24, 25, and 26, 2026

meeting of City Council with a sample of standard simple public messaging for 311 inquiries for the public to understand that there is a cascading approach to all service requests based on urgency, size, danger and the effect on timelines.  
<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2026.SE12.1>

Executive Committee, at its September 29, 2025 meeting, requested the Executive Director, Customer Experience (311), the General Manager, Parks and Recreation, the General Manager, Toronto Water, the General Manager, Transportation Services, the General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services, the Executive Director, Municipal Licensing & Standards, and the Executive Director, Environment, Climate and Forestry to report back to the Service Excellence Committee by the second quarter of 2026 with a proposed plan and phased approach to simplify the 311 service intake process, starting with Parks Operations, by streamlining public-facing service categories and consolidating service codes where appropriate.  
<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.EX26.7>

City Council, at its June 15 and 16, 2022 meeting, adopted item 2022.GL31.11 "311 Toronto Annual Report", requesting the City Manager to work with all City Divisions to adjust 311 Toronto's response process to ensure that 311 Toronto is made aware of the conditions under which their service request tickets are closed.  
<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2022.GL31.11>

## **COMMENTS**

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CXD is enhancing public messaging for 311 service requests to clearly communicate service request prioritization and timelines for completion. Enhancements are being developed as part of CXD's broader work to [Simplify the 311 Intake Experience](#).

### **How Service Requests are Prioritized:**

The information a customer provides in their service request is used to determine the priority of the request for fulfilment. Each ISD defines their own prioritization frameworks. Frameworks vary by division but are generally determined based on the type of service, divisional budget and resources, and the impact of the service request to customers. Most divisions assign a higher priority to requests with risks to safety and well-being.

The role of 311 in service request prioritization is to clearly and accurately communicate information about the priority of their service request with the customer in a way that sets realistic expectations about the timelines and steps to complete their request.

The priority framework and service standard for the service request is currently provided in the confirmation emails customers receive from 311. ISDs may reassess and reassign a service request after investigation. Today, customers are often not aware when their requests are reassigned and timelines are impacted. CXD is introducing an enhancement by the end of 2026 to notify customers when SRs are reassigned to the appropriate division. This will improve transparency on timelines and ensure customers are provided with updates.

## **Current Status: How 311 Keeps Customers Informed:**

311 provides customers with information at key points in the service request customer journey:

**1. Immediate Confirmation:** When customers submit a service request, regardless of the 311 channel they use, they will receive key information about their request. This information is provided either verbally or digitally depending on if they call 311 (an agent will provide the information verbally) or use a self-serve option (the information is provided on the confirmation page at submission along with a confirmation email and/or SMS text, if the customer provides contact information). The information provided includes their service request number, the expected timelines, and details on how the request will be handled. These details cover prioritization criteria and associated timelines, as well as the next steps in the process.

**2. Proactive and On-demand Tracking:** If customers opt-in to receive updates, they will also receive status updates by email and/or SMS text as their request progresses and once their request is closed. Customers are also able to look up the status of their request on demand using the [Track a Service Request](#) page on the 311 website or by calling 311.

CXD's team of customer experience experts has been working with ISDs and the Communications Division to improve the clarity of 311 communications. Ongoing testing with customers is directly shaping communications enhancements, delivering clearer information, more visual updates, and more accurate estimated completion dates. The following sections outline the work underway to enhance 311 communications and provide better service for 311 customers. CXD will continue to gather feedback from customers and refine as needed.

## **Improving Customer Communications in 311**

CXD, in partnership with ISDs and the Communications Division, and informed through customer feedback and user testing, is strengthening customer communications in three ways:

### **1. Content Review and Governance**

Previously, for all SRs, 311 shared division-provided content with customers in their confirmation email, with little standardization in format or clarity. See *Appendix A* for an example.

CXD is now applying plain language and writing standards to customer communications to ensure they are clear, accurate and helpful. CXD's Service Design Team is conducting user research to test this new standard with customers and ensure the content provides the right level of detail, while remaining clear and easy to understand. CXD is establishing a more robust governance framework that requires divisions to review and validate content quarterly, ensuring information across the 311 website, customer communications and the 311 contact centre remains accurate, relevant and

up to date. ISDs remain accountable for content accuracy, while CXD and Communications ensure that information is relevant, clear, consistent, and intuitive.

CXD has been working closely with the ISDs to implement the new standard of communication in 311's confirmation emails. New confirmation emails have been designed for 74 service requests to date (top service requests by volume, all Parks and Recreation service requests, and all winter operations service requests), with plans to implement across all SRs by end of 2027, aligned with Closing the Loop release dates. See *Appendix B* for an example of recently updated emails, aligned with the new standards.

## **2. Enhanced Digital Communications:**

There are certain limitations today that impact the flexibility CXD has in designing clear, simple communications to our customers. CXD is currently working with the Technology Services Division, ISDs, and vendors to improve communication templates and the [Track a Service Request](#) page, which will provide greater control over design and content, and introduce clearer, more visual updates to customers, based on user testing and feedback.

Some enhancements to the status lookup tool have been enabled, including new visual features like location maps and visual milestone tracking. Through Closing the Loop, these features were implemented with 8 high-volume, high-impact service requests (potholes/road damage, sidewalk damage, general pruning, tree emergency clean-up, park pathway maintenance, playground repairs, dead animal pickup, and property bylaw) to test and refine prior to expansion to others. See *Appendix C* for examples of the before state and *Appendix D* for examples of the improvements made to date for the 8 high-priority SRs launched on May 28th.

Upcoming enhancements to the status lookup page will include the ability to add photos of completed work, and dynamic fields that will allow for updates to expected completion dates as work progresses. See *Appendix E* for an example of planned future enhancements.

New email templates are also being designed to support more customization of content and layout. New functionality will enable CXD, in partnership with ISDs, to automatically use customer-provided information to determine an expected completion date based on priority level, which will be provided to the customer in the confirmation email, making it more clear to customers how their requests are being prioritized. This technical enhancement is scheduled for Q4 2026, with improvements being implemented across service requests in a phased approach, aligned with the Closing the Loop program.

## **3. Timely and Meaningful Updates:**

CXD is replacing generic status updates with more tailored, service-specific communications, giving customers clearer insight into how their request is progressing and being resolved. This provides an experience similar to what customers are used to

with everyday services like tracking food delivery or a package arrival, and ensures clarity, especially when priorities or timelines change.

These updates are being rolled out as part of the Closing the Loop project and are being phased with services within ISDs based on volume, complexity and need. Two releases have occurred to date:

- **Parks Notes:** As of April 28th, 2026, all 26 Parks service requests include notes from staff during status updates, providing customers more specific information on how their request was handled. An example of this enhancement can be found in *Appendix F*.
- **Milestones:** As of May 28th, 2026, 8 high-volume, high-priority service requests (Potholes/Road Damage, Sidewalk Damage, General Pruning, Tree Emergency Clean-up, Park Pathway Maintenance, Playground Repairs, Dead Animal Pick-up, and Property Standards) have unique milestones specific to their request, providing customers with more details about each step of the process and icons indicating which milestones have been reached and when. These enhancements can be seen in the example provided in *Appendix D*.

Launching these two enhancements with a limited number of service requests allows CXD to monitor impact and use feedback to continue to refine for future rollouts.

More enhancements planned for these status updates include:

- **Accurate timelines (Q4 2026):** Expected timelines will be reflective of the request priority and updated if requests are reassigned, ensuring customers have relevant and accurate timelines throughout their service journey.
- **Visual progress updates (Phased rollout to select service requests, with initial launch August 2026):** Photo updates will be sent to customers, where appropriate, to show how work was completed.
- **Clear outcomes (Phased rollout across all service requests by Q4 2027):** All service requests will receive more information on the outcome of their request. Some service requests will receive detailed staff written notes, where situations are more complex, and others will receive outcome reasons that describe how their request was handled. In April 2026, detailed staff written notes were implemented for all Parks service requests.
- **Continuous visibility (Coming in Q4 2026):** Customers will remain in the loop and receive status updates, even when their request is a duplicate or reassigned across divisions. Today, these requests are often cancelled and customers cannot see progress, even when work is still being completed. In the future, if a customer is in the process of making a duplicate request, it will be flagged for them that the request has already been made, and they will have the option to continue tracking the existing request. When a service request is reassigned across divisions, the transition will be seamless for the customer, where they will continue to get progress updates until the service request has been fully addressed.

A visual example of these enhancements is provided in *Appendix E*.

## Case Study: Potholes and Road Damage

Transportation Services prioritizes requests based on safety level, which is determined based on the size of the pothole and the type of road. Proactive pothole repair is also factored into their prioritization framework. This work is done with an equity lens towards repairs in priority neighbourhoods. Transportation Services proactively repairs more potholes through proactive work than those based on service requests, which accounts for only 5% of total pothole repairs.

CXD and Transportation Services have been working closely to ensure that potholes are one of the first services where enhancements to the customer experience are fully implemented. Examples of enhancements can be found in *Appendices A through E* of this report.

Prior to May 28, 2026, customers who provided an email address when submitting a Potholes/Road Damage service request received a confirmation email that lacked clear organization and structure. It included a table with the road type, traffic volumes, and timelines for all pothole types, leaving it up to the resident to interpret the expected timeline for their particular service request. Customers could also opt in for email or SMS updates throughout their service journey.

As of May 28th, 2026, as part of the launch of enhancements to the 8 high priority SRs, the potholes confirmation email has been updated to follow the new CXD standard, and a new milestone tracker has been implemented to provide customers more insight into how pothole requests are being managed. If customers opt-in for email or SMS updates, they will receive a link to the new milestone tracker on the [Track a Service Request](#) page and can follow their request through the different milestones and notes as they are completed. If steps are skipped or not required, the tracker will indicate this as well. An example of these enhancements can be found in *Appendix D*.

Each pothole request has 4 milestones with accompanying notes:

1. Service Request received: Customer is notified that their service request has been received and is waiting to be reviewed.
2. Inspected: Transportation Services inspects the pothole to confirm the location and decide what repair is needed.
3. Follow up Repair: Repairs are done based on road priority and service needs.
4. Closed: The pothole repair is completed if required.

Further enhancements are coming by the end of the year. In Q3 2026, photo updates will be provided to customers to show how work has progressed. In Q4 2026, customers will receive a more accurate expected completion date at submission, based on the location of the pothole indicated during submission, and updated based on investigation from Transportation Services. In 2027, if adjustments to timelines are required as work progresses or investigations indicate a need to reprioritize work, customers will be kept informed with new expected completion dates. These changes improve expectation setting to reduce customer confusion and follow up inquiries. An example of these enhancements can be found in *Appendix E*.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Danielle Seraphim  
Executive Director, Customer Experience Division

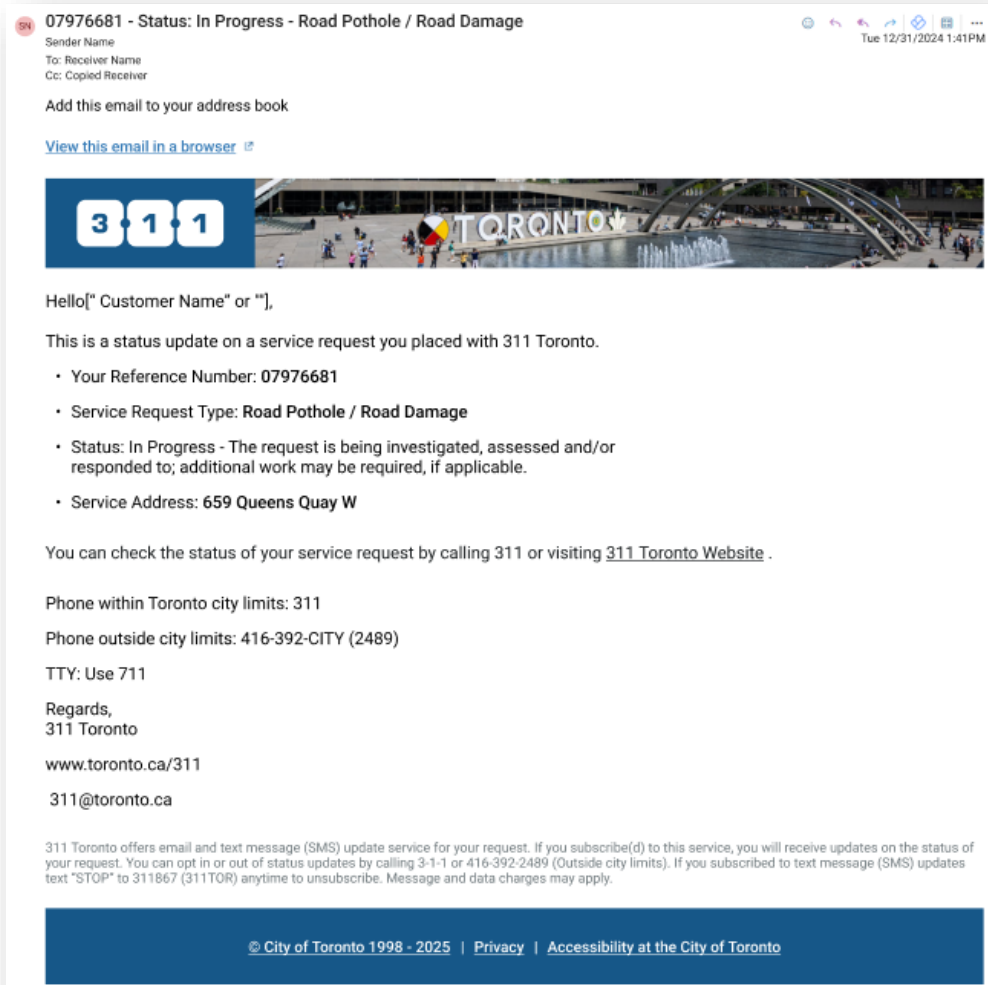
## **ATTACHMENTS**

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Appendix A: Email Examples - Before  
Appendix B: Email Examples - After  
Appendix C: Track a Service Request Page - Before  
Appendix D: May 28th Enhancements  
Appendix E: Future Enhancements  
Appendix F: New Status Emails with Staff Notes

## Appendix A: Email Examples - Before

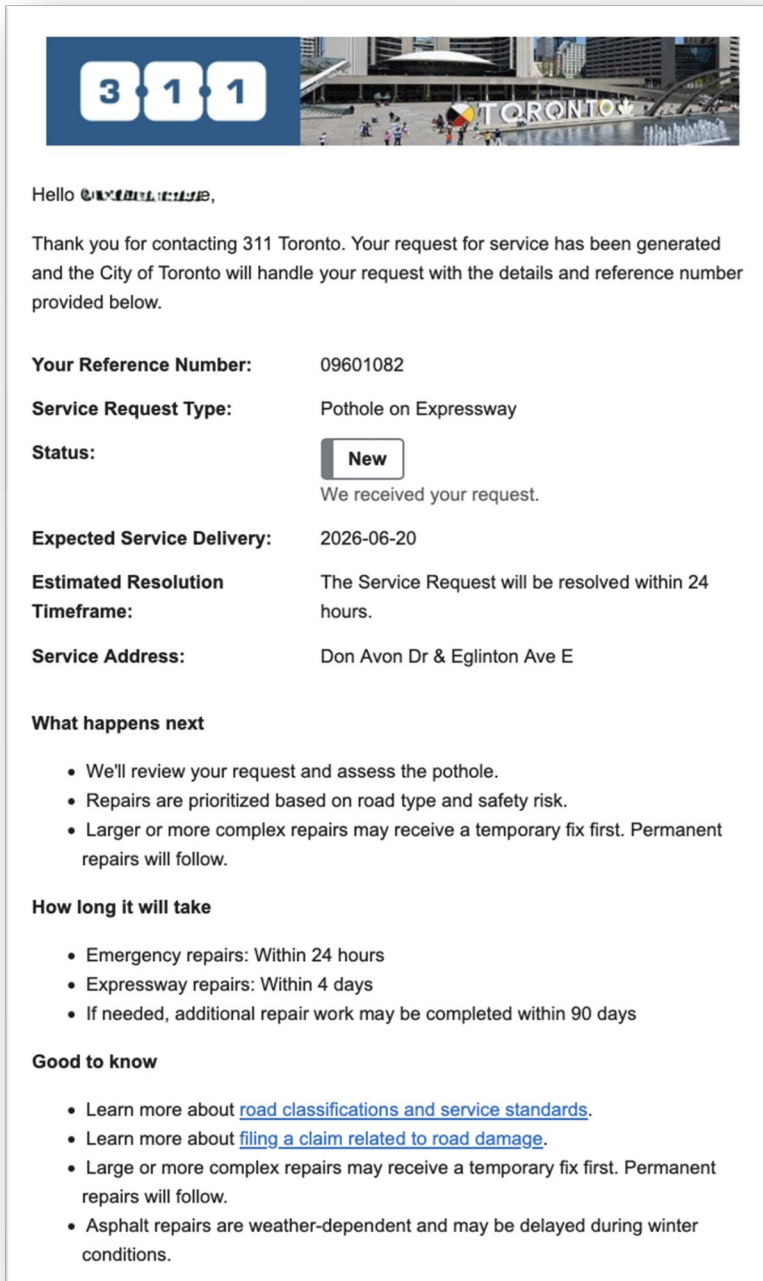
Prior to recent enhancements, customer emails provided only basic information about a request, such as the service request number, expected delivery date, and general work status. They offered limited visibility into next steps or how the request would be reviewed, prioritized, and completed.



## Appendix B: Email Examples - After

CXD has applied a new standard to 311 customer communications, informed through user testing with customers, to ensure all communications, regardless of service request or division, are relevant, informative, and structured to support customers in understanding what's coming next, how long it might take and has a clear, scannable structure to find information quickly.

Future improvements are also coming at the end of 2026 as CXD migrates to new email templates. This will give CXD more freedom to improve the messaging and the look and feel of the information provided in customer emails.



The image shows a screenshot of an email from 311 Toronto. At the top, there is a header with the 311 logo and a photo of a Toronto street scene. The email body contains a greeting, a thank you message, and a list of service request details. The details include the reference number, request type, status (marked as 'New'), expected delivery date, estimated resolution timeframe, and service address. Below the details, there are three sections: 'What happens next', 'How long it will take', and 'Good to know', each with a bulleted list of information.

**3 1 1** TORONTO

Hello **OXFORD@311**,

Thank you for contacting 311 Toronto. Your request for service has been generated and the City of Toronto will handle your request with the details and reference number provided below.

**Your Reference Number:** 09601082

**Service Request Type:** Pothole on Expressway

**Status:** **New**  
We received your request.

**Expected Service Delivery:** 2026-06-20

**Estimated Resolution Timeframe:** The Service Request will be resolved within 24 hours.

**Service Address:** Don Avon Dr & Eglinton Ave E

**What happens next**

- We'll review your request and assess the pothole.
- Repairs are prioritized based on road type and safety risk.
- Larger or more complex repairs may receive a temporary fix first. Permanent repairs will follow.

**How long it will take**

- Emergency repairs: Within 24 hours
- Expressway repairs: Within 4 days
- If needed, additional repair work may be completed within 90 days

**Good to know**

- Learn more about [road classifications and service standards](#).
- Learn more about [filing a claim related to road damage](#).
- Large or more complex repairs may receive a temporary fix first. Permanent repairs will follow.
- Asphalt repairs are weather-dependent and may be delayed during winter conditions.

## Appendix C: Track a Service Request Page - Before

Prior to Closing the Loop, CXD's Track a Service Request Page provided general information about the service request, informing customers if their request was in-progress, cancelled or completed, without further insight into how the request would be handled or the outcome of the request.

The screenshot shows the City of Toronto 311 Toronto website interface. At the top, there is a breadcrumb trail: "City of Toronto / 311 Toronto / Find Service Information". Below this, the main heading reads "Search Results for '08999095'". A search bar contains the text "08999095" and a "Search" button. The search results are displayed in a card format with the following details:

- Road Pothole / Road Damage**
- Reference Number:** 08999095
- Status:** Completed (indicated by a green box). The text below states: "The request has been concluded."
- Resolution Date:** May 19, 2026 at 1:49 p.m.
- Expected Service Delivery Date/Time:** April 7, 2026 at 12:35 p.m.
- Service Address:** 166 Plunkett Rd, Toronto M9L 2J6
- Submitted:** 2 months ago

## Appendix D: May 28th Enhancements

Enhancements were made to the [Track a Service Request](#) page on May 28th, 2026 for 8 high-volume, high-priority service requests to provide more visual, service-specific milestones, that give customers more insight into how their request is being handled and progress made towards completion. The new page also includes a visual location map.

### Track a Service Request or Feedback


Enter the reference number that you received from 311 to check the status of your service request. You can also view currently open requests by [Exploring Your Neighbourhood](#).

Enter a request reference number  
*Request # e. g. 10001234*

X Q Search

#### Road Pothole / Road Damage

Reference Number	09421180
Status	<span>Completed</span>
Resolution Date	May 29, 2026
Last Updated	May 29, 2026
Submitted on	May 28, 2026
Location	Exbury Rd & Gatesgill Cres



#### Status tracking

- ✓ **Service request received** May 28, 2026  
We received your service request and it's waiting to be reviewed.
- ✓ **Inspection** May 29, 2026  
We inspect the pothole to confirm the location and decide what repair is needed. Sometimes repairs are done right away. In other cases, the area may be marked with paint and/or a cone to make it safer.
- ✓ **Follow-Up Repair** May 29, 2026  
We repair potholes based on road priority and safety needs. This may be a temporary repair, like asphalt, until more permanent work can be done.
- ✓ **Closed** May 29, 2026  
We closed your request. The pothole repair was completed if needed.


Customer emails were also improved to make updates clearer and more visual, with a prominent link to the Track a Service Request page and colour-coded progress statuses that help customers quickly understand where their request stands.

**07976681 - Status: In Progress - Road Pothole / Road Damage** Tue 12/31/2024 1:41 PM

Sender Name  
To: Receiver Name  
Cc: Copied Receiver

Add this email to your address book

[View this email in a browser](#)



Hello[" Customer Name" or ""],

This is a status update on a service request you placed with 311 Toronto.

**Your Reference Number:** 07976681

**Status:** In Progress  
We're reviewing or working on your request.

**Service Request Type:** Road Pothole / Road Damage

**Expected Service Delivery Date/Time:** 2026-01-14, 4:13 p.m.

**Estimated Resolution Timeframe:** The service request will be resolved within 14 days.

**Service Address:** 659 Queens Quay W

**Check the status of your service request:**

- Visit the website to see the full history of updates.
- Call 311 to speak with a representative.

[Check My Status](#)

**Contact Information**

**Phone within Toronto city limits:** 311

**Phone outside city limits:** 416-392-2489

**TTY:** 711

**URL:** [www.toronto.ca/311](http://www.toronto.ca/311)

**Email:** [311@toronto.ca](mailto:311@toronto.ca)

311 Toronto offers email and text message (SMS) update service for your request. If you subscribe(d) to this service, you will receive updates on the status of your request. You can opt in or out of status updates by calling 3-1-1 or 416-392-2489 (Outside city limits). If you subscribed to text message (SMS) updates text "STOP" to 311867 (311TOR) anytime to unsubscribe. Message and data charges may apply.

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# Appendix E: Future Enhancements

Future enhancements through Closing the Loop will make the [Track a Service Request](#) page more visual and informative for customers, including the addition of photo updates, staff notes, outcome reasons and updated estimated completion dates as work progresses.

The screenshot shows the 'Service Request Status' page for a 'Road Pothole / Road Damage' request. The page includes a search bar, navigation menu, and a detailed status overview. The status is 'In Progress' with an estimated completion date of August 7, 2026. A map shows the location at 699 Queens Quay W. The 'Status Tracking' section provides a timeline of events: 'Service request received' (Jan 1, 2026), 'Inspection' (Jan 2, 2026), 'City Staff Notes' (Aug 5, 2026), and 'Repair' (Jan 6, 2026). A 'What To Expect' section explains the process, including review, prioritization, and repair timelines for different road types.

**Service Request Status**

Your reference number is required in order to check the status, make changes or cancel the request.

**Search by reference number**  
 Enter your 8-digit Reference Number (starting with 0)

08483264

**Road Pothole / Road Damage**

Reference number: 08483264  
 Status: **In Progress**  
 Estimated completion date: August 7, 2026 1:33 PM (Updated)  
 Last updated: August 4, 2026 1:33 PM  
 Submitted on: August 1, 2026 1:33 PM  
 Location: 699 Queens Quay W

**Contact Information**  
 Name, Position Title, Division, Section Unit, Street Address, Toronto, ON Post Code, Hours of Operation, Telephone, TTY, Fax, Email

**Related Information**  
 Useful links: How we protect your data, Terms & Conditions, Policies

**Status Tracking**

**Service request received**  
 Completed: January 1, 2026  
 We received your service request and it's waiting to be reviewed.

**Inspection**  
 Completed: January 2, 2026  
 We inspect the pothole to confirm the location and decide what repair is needed. Sometimes repairs are done right away. In other cases, the area may be marked with a cone to make it safe.

**City Staff Notes**  
 August 5, 2026  
 A cone has been added to keep the area safe.

**Repair**  
 Completed: January 6, 2026  
 We repair potholes based on road priority and safety needs. This may be a temporary repair, like asphalt, until more permanent work can be done.

**City Staff Notes**  
 August 6, 2026  
 The pothole has been repaired.

**Closed**  
 Public

**What To Expect**

**What happens next**

1. We'll review your request and assess the pothole.
2. Repairs are prioritized based on road type and safety risk.
3. If you signed up for updates, we'll notify you when we begin the work.

**How long it will take**

- Emergency repairs: Within 24 hours
- Arterial roads (such as Yonge St): Within 4 days
- Collector roads (such as John St): Within 14 days
- Local streets and public laneways: Within 21 days

**Good to know**

- Learn more about road classifications and service standards.
- Learn more about filing a claim related to road damage.
- Larger or more complex repairs may receive a temporary fix first. Permanent repairs will follow.
- Asphalt repairs are weather-dependent and may be delayed during winter conditions.

**Your request may show as 'completed', 'closed' or 'cancelled' if:**

- We fixed the pothole with the necessary repairs to make it safe.
- We could not find the pothole and were unable to contact you to confirm the location.
- We determined the road is safe and no repair is needed.

If you have questions or would like more information, please call 311 and we'll be happy to help.

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## Appendix F: New Status Update Emails with Staff Notes

On April 28th, 2026, CXD launched notes for Parks service requests, enhancing the level of information that customers receive during status updates for these requests. Prior to this launch, customers would have received a generic status update indicating the request was "in-progress" without further insight into how the request is being handled.

