

Leveraging Toronto Water's Data to Improve Customer Service

Date: June 19, 2026

To: Service Excellence Committee

From: General Manager, Toronto Water

Wards: All

SUMMARY

Toronto Water is one of the largest water utilities in North America, providing water, wastewater and stormwater services to millions of residents and businesses, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Service delivery, customer feedback, and operational performance data is used by Toronto Water to monitor and improve customer service, with the focus of this report being service quality and timeliness of service requests managed in partnership with 311.

Toronto Water works closely with 311 which supports the intake, customer communication, and tracking components of the service request process. While 311 serves as the first point of contact for customers Toronto Water's Customer Care Centre triages service requests, validates customer and service information, confirms account and address details, assigns staff to resolve requests, and escalates issues to subject matter experts. Toronto Water uses multiple data sources to improve service delivery, including 311 service request data, internal work management and field force automation systems, customer satisfaction surveys, and operational and regulatory compliance data to monitor service response times, identify trends, inform resource allocation, and support continuous improvement.

Customer experience in Toronto Water is assessed across five key areas: reliability, water quality, service quality, timeliness of service, and rate (cost) for value, with this report focussing specifically on service quality and timeliness as they relate to the division's work with 311 on service requests. The report highlights examples of data-driven improvements (including core services delivered) and future planned work to strengthen how data is used to enhance service quality, timeliness, and overall customer experience.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Toronto Water recommends that:

1. The Service Excellence Committee receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of the recommendations contained in this report.

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

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on April 14, 2026, Executive Committee considered and adopted Item [2026:EX30.8 - Leveraging Data to Drive Service Excellence in Parks and Recreation and Transportation Services](#) requesting the General Manager, Toronto Water, the General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services and the Executive Director, Environment, Climate, and Forestry to report back to the July 6, 2026 meeting of the Service Excellence Committee on how they use 311 data, as well as other data sources, to identify trends and make service improvements.

At its meeting on March 23, 2026 the Service Excellence Committee considered Item [2026.SE11.2 - Leveraging Data to Drive Service Excellence in Parks & Recreation and Transportation Services](#)

At its meeting on July 19, 2024 the Service Excellence Committee considered Item [2024.SE4.2 - Sewer Line Block Service Standards and Improving Response](#)

COMMENTS

Background

Toronto Water manages one of the largest water, wastewater and stormwater systems in North America, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Its services ensure that approximately 4 million residents and businesses in Toronto and portions of York and Peel Regions have access to safe drinking water, safely treated wastewater and stormwater management.

Toronto Water's water treatment and supply services provide over 435 billion litres annually of safe potable water to water account holders and water consumers through the continuous distribution of potable water through over 6,100 kilometers of

watermains and City-owned water services. Wastewater collection and treatment services return over 400 billion liters of treated wastewater annually to Lake Ontario through over 5,600 kilometers of sewers, serving wastewater account holders, wastewater producers, and public and private landowners. The Division also provides continuous conveyance of rainwater and melted snow to public and private landowners through over 4,900 kilometers of storm sewers.

In 2012, Toronto Water developed and introduced internal key performance indicators. Since they were initially developed, targets, metrics and performance trends have been reported annually in divisional budget submissions. For example, the cost of unplanned wastewater main repairs, water treatment plant compliance rates, the percentage of time the drinking water distribution system operates within target pressure limits, and the percentage of blocked service lines responded to on the first call.

Toronto Water works closely with the Customer Experience Division to process and resolve Service Requests (SRs). 311 is the initial point of contact for the customer, providing general information about services offered by Toronto Water and creating SRs. Toronto Water's Customer Care Centre (TWCC), a Tier 2 customer care centre, verifies customer identity, service address, water account details, and provides additional information related to the SR such as water meter number, property type, and any access constraints. TWCC uses data gathered by 311 as well as Toronto Water data to identify what the possible underlying reasons for the customer's issue could be and sets or adjusts SR priority within Toronto Water's work management system. TWCC then assigns appropriate resources to deliver the service via its field force automation system. Updates to the SR status updates in Toronto Water's field force automation flow to the work management system are synchronized back with 311's service management system.

Interactive dashboards generated by 311 enable Toronto Water to view service information by service category, time period and ward, as well as summarizing top service requests and how the division is doing in terms of meeting service standards. As an example, Toronto Water's top 5 service requests in 2025 were blocked sewer service lines, requests to turn a water service on or off, leaking water service lines and possible watermain breaks.

Toronto Water assesses customer experience and service value across five key areas: reliability, water quality, service quality, timeliness of service, and cost and rate value. This report focuses on service quality and timeliness of service areas, as they are closely related to SRs that 311 and Toronto Water manage. Toronto Water leverages information from these five areas to identify trends, drive continuous improvement initiatives, support evidence-based decision-making, and ensure that rate-supported services deliver value while meeting customer expectations, operational requirements, and regulatory obligations.

Data Sources

Toronto Water collects and analyzes data from a number of sources to sustain, optimize and enhance its assets, operations and customer experience.

Since 2008, Toronto Water has collected front-line service delivery data using its work management system. In 2022, Toronto Water implemented field force automation software that provided additional data from those working in the field, integrated with the existing work management system. Data from these systems is used to evaluate service request completion rates and complaint acknowledgement timeliness against established standard response times. Toronto Water's work management system is also integrated with the customer relationship management system (Salesforce) used by the Customer Experience Division, providing visibility on service request status and delivery results to 311 agents.

Toronto Water conducts customer satisfaction surveys following delivery of services requested through 311 and ensures enough customer satisfaction data is collected from these surveys to reliably reflect the voice of the customer. For example, in 2025, Toronto Water surveyed 8,040 customers and had a 19% response rate (1,512 customers). This data is coupled with TWCC telephone system data to monitor and evaluate service quality (e.g. average wait times, speed of answer, calls abandoned in queue, etc.). Together, these data sources are analyzed to compare service and complaint responses to standard response times, overall customer satisfaction and customer experience. By bringing these sources together, the division is able to track performance, identify trends, and support data-driven decision-making to improve service delivery.

How Data is Used

Customer Service Management Framework

Toronto Water has established a Customer Service Management Framework, a management control and reporting structure that integrates people, process and technology. The framework supports the review of customer-centered data and analysis, helps identify root causes of performance trends, and drives continuous service improvement. Through this framework, Toronto Water assesses customer experience and service value across five key areas, using this information to identify trends, support evidence-based decision-making, and ensure rate-supported services deliver value while meeting customer expectations, operational requirements, and regulatory obligations. The five key areas are outlined below:

- **Reliability** – Toronto Water manages, monitors, and reports on the reliability of its core services, including drinking water delivery, wastewater treatment, and stormwater management, ensuring these essential services remain available, resilient, and dependable
- **Water Quality** – Water quality is maintained through a comprehensive framework of regulatory compliance, testing, monitoring, and public reporting to ensure safe and high-quality drinking water and environmental protection
- **Service Quality** – Service quality and customer satisfaction are assessed through customer feedback, surveys, complaint analysis, and ongoing engagement activities to identify opportunities for improvement
- **Timeliness of Service** – Service timeliness is tracked through Toronto Water systems and monitored using operational performance measures. Performance

information is shared with 311 to support responsive customer service and timely resolution of service requests. This report focuses on this key dimension.

- **Cost/Rate Value** – Toronto Water monitors the cost of delivering services and evaluates performance against approved rate-supported budgets to ensure services are delivered efficiently, sustainably, and in a manner that provides value for money to ratepayers

Continuous Review and Improvement

Toronto Water leverages information from the key five areas of the framework to monitor performance, including service timeliness and service quality data. Some examples of customer service performance monitoring include measures such as complaint volume, escalated complaints, timeliness of complaint acknowledgement, average call wait times, abandoned call volumes, call answer timeliness, proactive customer notifications, and customer satisfaction.

Data is regularly reviewed to identify trends or changes in service quality and timeliness. TWCC reviews telephone and field force automation system data daily, identifying sudden changes in service types or volumes, and assign resources where they are needed most. Broader trends in service quality and timeliness are reviewed on a monthly and quarterly basis to identify long term trends and corrective actions, tactically and strategically.

Toronto Water takes action to address identified issues, which may range from targeted staff retraining to more comprehensive process reviews. Continuous improvement is supported by tracking and monitoring action plans and taking steps to confirm whether the actions taken have had the expected impact

Specific Examples of Data-Driven Improvements

Examples of data-driven service improvements realized by Toronto Water are provided below.

Core Service Reliability

Toronto Water's approach has demonstrated improvements in areas of core service reliability over time. Since 2007, Toronto Water has improved service reliability by realizing a 57% reduction in the trend of service interruptions due to watermain breaks (see Figure 1). Watermain breaks have steadily improved over time as a result of increased investment, additional resources, operational efficiencies and improved approaches to maintenance. These figures will continue to vary from year to year.

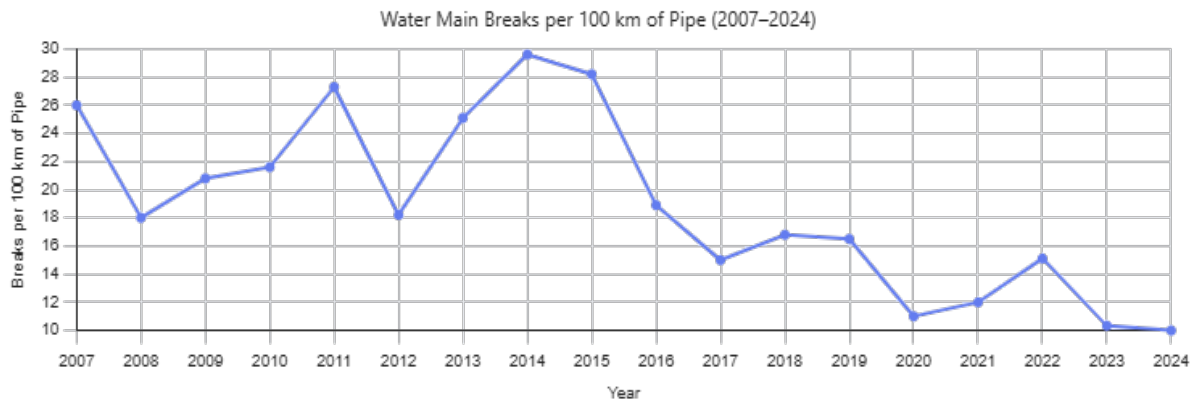


Figure 1: Watermain Breaks per 100 Km of Pipe from 2007 to 2024

Sewer main backups trends show a reduction by 93% since 2014, improving wastewater system reliability for all customers (see Figure 2). Toronto Water has been increasing capital investments in wastewater infrastructure to mitigate the rise in expenditures associated with emergency wastewater repairs. The City also continues to perform regular preventative maintenance and inspections, as well as leverage technology (CCTV for inspection, smart sensors), which provides essential information to help drive resource allocation and ensure the system is reliable.

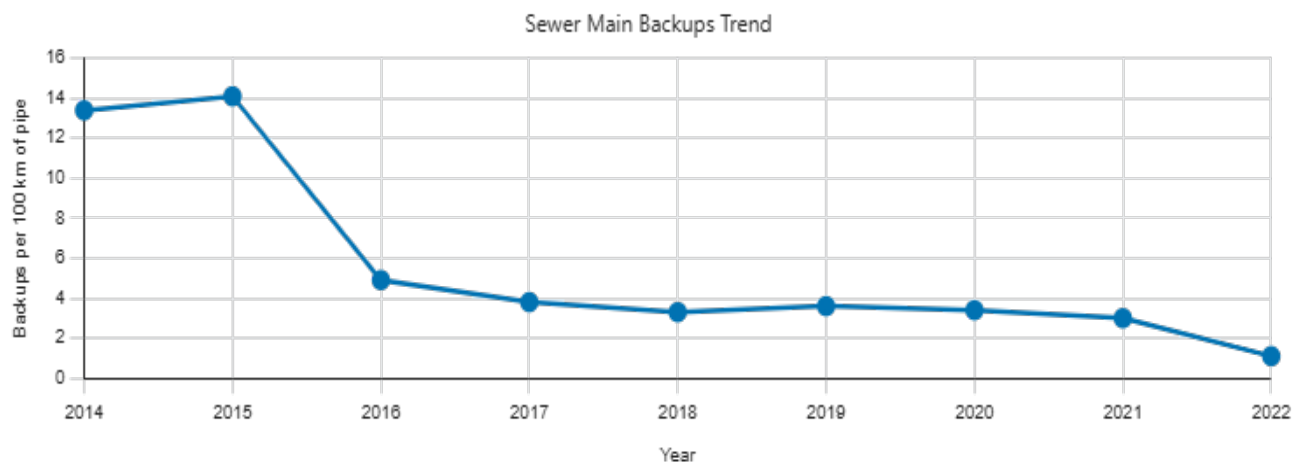


Figure 2: Sewer Main Backups from 2014 to 2022

Customer Satisfaction

Following the establishment of baseline data in 2022, Toronto Water implemented a customer satisfaction survey program for a sample set of services requested through 311 to assess overall customer satisfaction and identify key satisfaction drivers. The survey program is modelled after public sector surveys conducted by the Institute for Citizen-Centred Service. The overall customer satisfaction score indicates a long-term pattern of gradual improvement (see Figure 3).

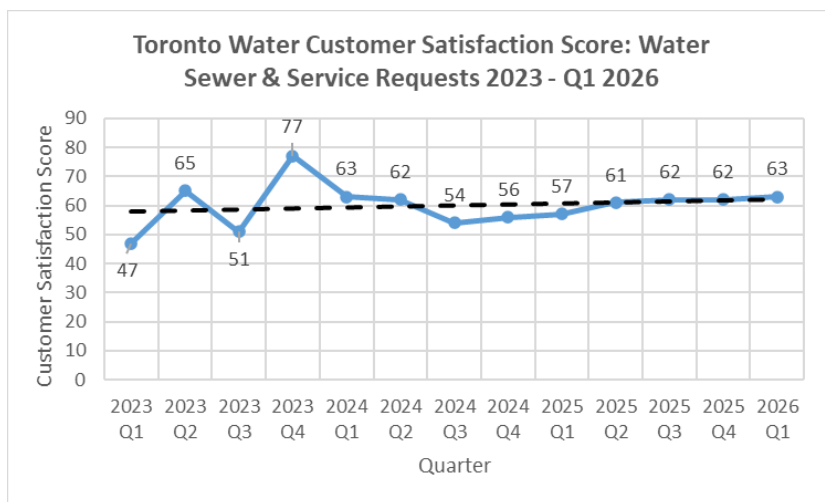


Figure 3: Customer Satisfaction Score: Water and Sewer Service Requests 2023 to Q1 2026

Service Request and Complaint Response Timeliness

Toronto Water delivered services within established service levels between 61 and 81 per cent of the time from 2024 through the first quarter of 2026 (see Figure 4). Analysis of service timeliness relative to service request volumes indicates that the Division has generally maintained performance despite fluctuations in demand and stable staffing levels.

Service request volume and response timeliness can vary in response to specific operational events. For example, in Q3 2024, two major summer storms led to a surge in service requests due to sewer backups and flooding. Operational staff were redeployed to ensure this spike in service request volume could be addressed, which affected service response time overall but only for a short duration.

In contrast, increased service request volumes in Q1 2026 were driven by prolonged winter storms and extreme cold. Requests related to water service lines - such as frozen services, leaks, and loss of water - typically increase during extended cold weather periods, as seen in January and February 2026. Successive heavy snowfall events also affected citywide mobility and access to infrastructure. As a result, travel times increased, site conditions became more complex and hazardous, and service requests requiring in-field work took longer to complete. These factors contributed to a more sustained impact on service timelines and performance.

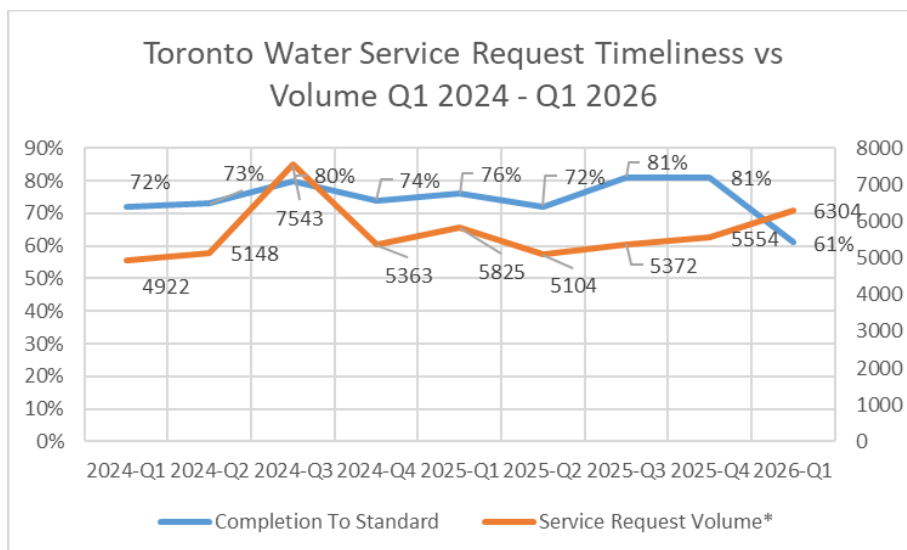


Figure 4: Service Request Timeliness vs Volume 2024 - Q1 2026

Following the identification of low completion-to-standard rates for responding to customer complaints, Toronto Water implemented measures to improve this performance metric. To date, these efforts have resulted in a 34 per cent improvement in complaint response timeliness (see Figure 5). Complaint response timeliness is a narrower and more controllable process measure undertaken by Toronto Water and includes consideration of more operationally complex field work and data related to Toronto Water's service delivery.

Quarterly reports are prepared and provide Toronto Water leadership with a comprehensive view of complaint volumes, resolution performance, and timeliness across business areas. This includes tracking the number of complaints received and closed, whether service standards are met, and trends in complaint types and escalation. This reporting enables Toronto Water to identify performance gaps, recurring issues, and operational pressures affecting response timelines. These insights support targeted process improvements, operational adjustments, and focused follow-up where service standards are not consistently achieved. By using this structured, data-driven approach, Toronto Water is able to continuously refine its complaint management processes, contributing to measurable improvements in complaint response timeliness.

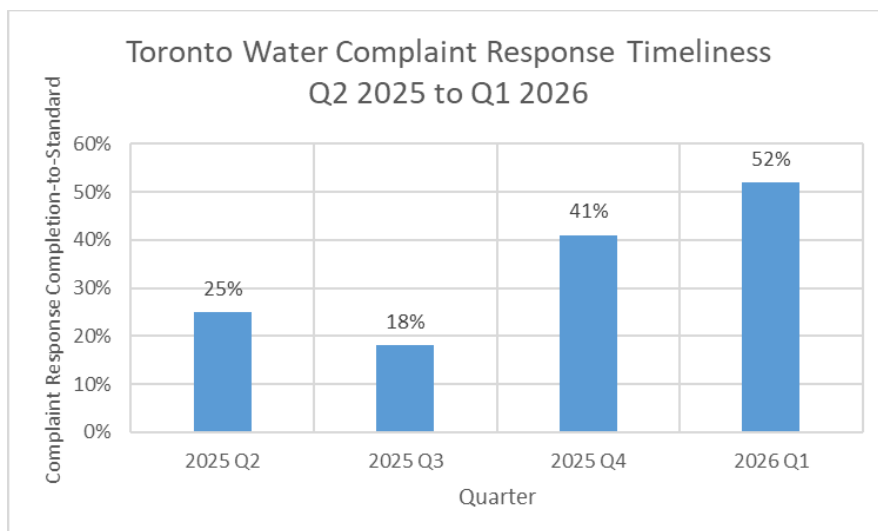


Figure 5: Toronto Water Complaint Timeliness Q2 2025 to Q1 2026

Future Work and Continued Partnership

In 2026, Toronto Water initiated a Service Standards Review project to assess and establish realistic and reliable standard response times to drive customer satisfaction and continuous improvement. Services provided to customers by Toronto Water will be reviewed for alignment with operational capacity and customer expectations. Any recommended changes will be reviewed and approved by Toronto Water senior leadership through a governance framework that is being established through this project. With focus on a select high-priority services, the outcome is expected to improve standard response time performance, reduce timeliness-related complaints, and improve customer satisfaction.

Toronto Water remains committed to collaborating with our customers and customer service delivery partners, such as the Customer Experience and Technology Services Divisions, to improve and expand our capacity to gain actionable customer experience and service quality improvement insights from service delivery, customer feedback, operational, and compliance data.

CONTACT

Kirill Cheiko, Manager, Delivery Planning Governance & Reporting, Toronto Water,
Kirill.Cheiko@toronto.ca, 416-338-5556

Sam Zurzolo, Director, Technology and Customer Experience, Toronto Water,
Sam.Zurzolo2@toronto.ca, 416-397-7336

SIGNATURE

Lou Di Gironimo
General Manager, Toronto Water

ATTACHMENTS
