

## Utility Construction Photo Documentation

**Date:** October 22, 2025

**To:** Audit Committee

**From:** Acting General Manager, Transportation Services

**Wards:** 1 - Etobicoke North, 2 - Etobicoke Centre, 5 - York South-Weston, 14 - Toronto-Danforth and 23 - Scarborough North

### SUMMARY

---

Transportation Services maintains City roads and sidewalks to ensure they remain safe and accessible for all users. Integral to this, the Division must also manage the impacts of utility work, an essential service that supports the daily lives of residents and businesses across Toronto. Each year, Transportation Services issues approximately 35,000 utility cut permits.

While utility work is essential to delivering vital services, it can also disrupt traffic and generate public complaints related to noise, dust, and uneven surfaces. As such, effective oversight of the utility cut process is critical to protecting City infrastructure and minimizing public impact.

This report provides an update, as requested by City Council (2024.AU9.7), on the recent enhancements to the City's Road Disruption Activity Reporting System (RoDARS), which now requires utility companies to submit before-and-after photos of their work and includes photos showcasing utility work completed by contractors in Wards 1, 2, 5, 14 and 23. Having utility companies submit photos of completed work through the online form enhances transparency and supports more efficient compliance monitoring, ultimately improving accountability.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

---

The Acting General Manager, Transportation Services recommends that:

1. The Audit Committee receive this report for information.

### FINANCIAL IMPACT

---

There is no financial impact from this report.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

---

On July 23 and 24, 2025 City Council adopted Audit of Transportation Services: Improving the Utility Cut Permit Process and Inspection Processes (2025.AU9.7). City Council directed the General Manager, Transportation Services to submit a follow up report to the November 05, 2025 Audit Committee meeting including photos available for work completed by utility contractors for utility work in Wards 1, 2, 5, 14 and 23. <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.AU9.7>

On May 11, 2022, City Council adopted the report, Oversight and Accountability within the Utility Cut Process (2022.IE29.11). The report provides an overview of the City's process for managing utility cuts in the City's right of way, due to utilities' need to access underground infrastructure. <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2022.IE29.11>

## **COMMENTS**

---

Utility companies play a vital role in delivering essential services such as clean water, electricity, and communications that support daily life and economic growth. They are also key partners in advancing major City priorities, including new housing and transit expansion.

Much of their infrastructure is located within the public right-of-way, both above ground (e.g., poles, cabinets) and below ground (e.g., pipes, cables). To maintain, upgrade, or expand these networks, utility providers often need to excavate portions of the roadway or sidewalk, resulting in utility cuts. Before beginning this work, utility companies must obtain a Utility Cut permit from Transportation Services. In addition to receiving a utility cut permit, they must also obtain a road occupancy approval through Transportation Services, Road Disruption Activity Reporting System (RoDARS).

Each year, Transportation Services issues approximately 35,000 utility cut permits to utility companies. While this work is necessary, it generates a significant volume of construction that can also be disruptive to residents and businesses.

In 2024, Transportation Services piloted a new online booking system through the RoDARS, enabling all entities who want to work in the public right of way, including utility companies, to submit applications, book road occupancies in advance, and receive approvals directly online. This functionality was not available in the previous process, which relied on manual submissions and approvals. The system was fully implemented with fees in 2025 and provides a foundation for ongoing process modernization and data integration across the Division and with external partners.

The first major enhancement to the RoDARS system began in 2025 with the development of a new post-completion form, which utility companies are required to complete once their work in the right-of-way is finished. The form requires applicants to:

- Confirm all work has been completed and that materials/equipment have been removed from the site;
- Provide details of the individual utility cuts performed; and
- Submit before-and-after photos to document restoration conditions.

Attachment 1 includes sample photos of work completed by utility companies, featuring both submissions received through the post-completion form and images captured during City staff inspections. This enhancement strengthens accountability, improves transparency, facilitates compliance monitoring and supports the City's ability to ensure that restoration work meets required standards.

The post-completion form is required to be submitted through the RoDARS portal and became available to Toronto Public Utilities Coordination Committee (TPUCC) members on September 8, 2025. To facilitate the rollout and engagement, Transportation Services presented the initiative to TPUCC members on September 3 and hosted townhall meetings with industry representatives on September 5 and 8. These sessions have helped introduce the new process and provided an opportunity to collect early feedback.

Industry partners expressed general support for the initiative, recognizing the benefits of improved transparency, while also noting that additional time and resources may be needed to comply with the new requirement.

As this initiative is still in the early stages, the number of submissions remains limited. However, Transportation Services continues to work closely with utility partners to support adoption, gather feedback and identify further opportunities for process improvement and data collection.

This work represents an important step toward greater transparency and accountability for utility construction activities performed within the right-of-way. By formalizing post-completion documentation through the RoDARS, the City is better positioned to monitor compliance, verify restoration quality and promote consistent, high-standard restoration practices across the City. Transportation Services will continue to oversee the use and effectiveness of the post-completion process, using the information collected to evaluate outcomes and identify opportunities for continuous improvement.

## **CONTACT**

---

Antonia Markos  
Director, Street Permits  
Transportation Services Division  
Tel: 416-392-5209  
E-mail: [Antonia.Markos@toronto.ca](mailto:Antonia.Markos@toronto.ca)

## **SIGNATURE**

---

Ashley Curtis,  
Acting General Manager, Transportation Services Division

## **ATTACHMENTS**

---

Attachment 1: Utility Construction Photo Examples