

Supplementary Report – Utility Photo Documentation, Traffic Control Device Removal and Utility work in Ward 14

Date: February 12, 2026

To: Infrastructure & Environment Committee

From: General Manager, Transportation Services

Wards: All Wards

SUMMARY

At its meeting on July 23 and 24, 2025, City Council adopted Item 2025.AU9.7, titled “Audit of Transportation Services: Improving the Utility Cut Permit Process and Inspection Processes”.

This supplementary report provides an update on the continued implementation of enhancements to the City’s Road Disruption Activity Reporting System (RoDARS), including the requirement for utility companies to submit post-completion forms with before-and-after photos once work has been completed.

This report also provides an update on permits, scheduling and coordination of utility work in Ward 14, specifically on Woodfield Road, Riverdale Avenue, Grant Street, and Danforth Avenue. In addition, it outlines updates regarding the removal of traffic control devices following the completion of construction.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Transportation Services recommends that:

1. The Infrastructure & Environment Committee receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial implications for this budget year resulting from the recommendations included in this report. The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

On July 23 and 24, 2025 City Council adopted the report, “Audit of Transportation Services: Improving the Utility Cut Permit Process and Inspection Processes” (Item 2025.AU9.7). City Council directed the General Manager, Transportation Services to submit a follow-up report to the November 5, 2025 Audit Committee meeting including photos available for work completed by utility contractors for utility work in Wards 1, 2, 5, 14 and 23 and an update on the request for a list of permits for all utility work on four streets in Ward 14 including Woodfield Road (Dundas Street East to Fairford Avenue), Riverdale Avenue (Broadview Avenue to Carlaw Avenue), Grant Street (Queen Street East to Kintyre Avenue), and Danforth Avenue (Jones Avenue to Ladysmith Avenue). <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.AU9.7>

On November 12 and 13, 2025 City Council considered the report “Utility Construction Photo Documentation” (Item 2025.AU10.9) and referred this item to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee for consideration. <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.AU10.9>

On May 11, 2022, City Council adopted the report, “Oversight and Accountability within the Utility Cut Process” (Item 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

Update on Post Completion Forms and Photo Documentation

Since City Council’s consideration of Transportation Services’ staff report, “Utility Construction Photo Documentation” (Item 2025.AU10.9), Transportation Services has continued implementing the post-completion form requirement and associated photo documentation. Supplementary materials in Attachment 1 provide additional examples of post-work condition photographs.

As implementation has progressed, Transportation Services has identified opportunities to strengthen both submission timelines and the consistency of post-completion forms. In response, staff have introduced targeted system enhancements that provide automated reminder notifications to reinforce compliance and clarify expectations for permit holders.

Effective February 5, 2026, automated reminder notifications were implemented within the Road Disruption Activity Reporting System (RoDARS). Applicants now receive notifications on the permit end date and three days after the end date, reminding them to submit the post-completion form. Additional development is underway to introduce a

further reminder ten days after the deadline. These enhancements are intended to strengthen compliance and reinforce post-completion documentation requirements.

Transportation Services continues to work closely with the RoDARS system developers to implement additional improvements that support timely submissions and reduce the need for manual follow-up.

To support consistent review practices, Transportation Services has developed new guidance for Intake Coordinators. In parallel, we continue to work with the RoDARS system developers to obtain more direct and efficient access to the post-completion data collected through RoDARS. While progress has been steady, full implementation will continue through 2026.

To support continuous improvement, Transportation Services is conducting a RoDARS user feedback survey, with the results informing upcoming system updates. Stakeholders will also be invited to RoDARS improvement workshops to reinforce post-completion reporting requirements and provide further clarification on expectations and processes.

Removal of Traffic Control Devices after Construction

Traffic control devices, including cones, barrels, delineators, and temporary signage are essential for maintaining safe conditions around construction and utility work zones. They are used by a range of parties, including contractors working on behalf of the City, City divisions such as Transportation Services and Toronto Water, utility companies and their contractors, private construction firms, and organizers of temporary road closures for activities such as special events and filming. Their use is mandated under provincial standards, including the Ontario Traffic Manual Book 7, to protect workers and road users and to clearly communicate temporary traffic conditions. While most commonly associated with construction sites, City staff may also place these devices to alert the public of potential safety hazards.

Although these devices are critical for safety, they can sometimes remain in place after work has been completed. This often occurs when construction or utility work is carried out in multiple stages, such as excavation, concrete placement, and asphalt base and surface installation, with different crews attending the site at different times. In these cases, devices may remain in place between phases to maintain safe conditions. In other instances, devices may be left behind due to contractor oversight or the assumption that another crew will retrieve them.

To address concerns about traffic control devices remaining on-site after they are no longer required, Transportation Services has implemented measures to strengthen compliance and reinforce accountability among all parties working within the public right-of-way. A formal reminder was issued to all members of the Toronto Public Utilities Coordinating Committee reiterating the requirement under Municipal Code §743-30 to remove all materials, equipment, and traffic control devices immediately upon completion of work. These expectations have also been reinforced across City divisions responsible for construction delivery. Where these requirements are not met, the City may carry out cleanup or restoration at the permit holder's expense.

To further support the timely removal of traffic control devices, Transportation Services is using the post-completion reporting requirement recently introduced in RoDARS. This requirement enables verification that cones, signage, and other temporary devices have been removed once work is complete. Utilities must confirm that all traffic control devices have been cleared from the site, improving compliance monitoring and helping ensure that construction sites are left in an acceptable condition.

Furthermore, Transportation Services is adding dedicated resources to strengthen monitoring of RoDARS compliance, conduct site visits, and respond to complaints. Concerns about abandoned traffic control devices can be reported through 311. When a complaint is received, staff determine whether the devices are still required for safety, identify the responsible party using permit information and recent work records, and coordinate removal if they are no longer needed. If no responsible party can be identified, staff may remove the devices directly.

Together, these initiatives will strengthen accountability for utility companies and contractors and support the timely removal of cones and other safety equipment once work is complete. These measures will also improve responsiveness to resident concerns, clarify responsibility and promote consistent and reliable practices across all users of the public right-of-way.

Utility Permit Review of Requested Street Segments in Ward 14

This section responds to the request for a review of permits issued to utilities on the following four street segments within Ward 14 (See Attachment 2):

- **Danforth Avenue** (Jones Avenue to Ladysmith Avenue)
- **Woodfield Road** (Dundas Street East to Fairford Avenue)
- **Riverdale Avenue** (Broadview Avenue to Carlaw Avenue)
- **Grant Street** (Queen Street East to Kintyre Avenue).

Although Transportation Services issues utility cut permits through RoDARS, the Division does not control when utilities apply for permits or undertake work within the right-of-way. The timing of utility work is typically determined by utility companies based on operational requirements, including customer service needs, emergency repairs, business continuity considerations, and major infrastructure or transit projects.

Transportation Services reviewed all utility cut permits issued between 2018 and 2025 for the identified street segments. This review analyzed permit volumes, distribution by utility company, and the permit application streams under which the permits were processed. A total of 196 permits were issued for utility work across the four street segments during this period. Table 1 summarizes permit volumes by year and street segment.

Table 1: Volume of Permits Issued to Utilities 2018 to 2025

Ward 14 – Street Segments	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Total
Danforth Avenue, from Jones Avenue to Ladysmith Avenue	16	9	5	8	20	13	18	1	90
Woodfield Road, from Dundas Street East to Fairford Avenue	6	8	11	11	9	1	9	1	56
Riverdale Avenue, from Broadview Avenue to Carlaw Avenue	-	-	8	7	3	8	7	1	34
Grant Street, from Queen Street East to Kintyre Avenue	6	1	-	3	-	2	3	1	16
Total:									196

The review found Toronto Water accounted for just under sixty per cent (60%) of permits issued across the four street segments. Enbridge accounted for approximately twenty-three per cent (23%) of permits issued; this figure includes instances where work could not be completed within the original permit period and additional permits were required once conditions allowed work to proceed. The permits issued reflect work necessary to maintain, repair, and upgrade essential utility infrastructure that supports residents, businesses, and the daily city operations.

The review also found that 36 permits (representing 18%) were issued for permanent restoration following earlier utility cuts. Since 2018, utility companies have been responsible for permanently restoring City infrastructure impacted by their excavations.

Table 2 – Distribution of Permits Issued by Utility 2018 to 2025

Utility Name	Number of Cut Permits	Percentage (%)
Toronto Water	114	58%
Enbridge	46	23%
Bell Canada	16	8%
Toronto Hydro	15	8%
Rogers Communications	5	3%
Grand Total:	196	

In addition to permit volumes, the application streams under which permits were processed were reviewed. The City’s Municipal Consent Requirements establish three

application streams for Utility Cut Permits, including Full, Short, and Emergency, each designed to reflect the scope and complexity of the work.

These streams determine review timelines and processing standards, which range from two business days for emergency repairs to up to twenty business days for larger Full Stream applications:

- **Full Stream:** required for work that may take multiple weeks to complete such as large-scale construction of new underground or surface infrastructure, and any work not classified as emergency or short stream.
Application Processing Time: 20 business days
- **Short Stream:** required for localized maintenance and repair works such as boreholes, replacement of existing infrastructure, customer service disconnection/reconnections.
Application Processing Time: 5 business days
- **Emergency:** required for work done within two days, in response to a failure that has the potential to result in danger to the public, loss of an essential service or damage to infrastructure.
Application Processing Time: 2 business days.

Table 3 - Distribution of Permits by Utility and Permit Stream 2018 to 2025

Utility Name	Permit Stream			Total Number of Cut Permits
	Full	Short	Emergency	
Toronto Water		63	51	114
Enbridge		45	1	46
Bell Canada	2	13	1	16
Toronto Hydro		15		15
Rogers Communications	2	1	2	5
Total:	4	137	55	196
Percent Total:	2%	70%	28%	100%

The review found that ninety-eight per cent (98%) of permits issued for the identified street segments were processed through the Short and Emergency application streams. These permits are typically associated with reactive or time-sensitive work, such as maintenance, repairs, and service-related work. As a result, there are limited

opportunities to coordinate long-term planning or align these works with other construction projects.

Once a utility cut permit has been issued, utility companies are required to obtain a RoDARS approval from Transportation Services before beginning any work within the right-of-way. As part of this process, utility companies submit detailed information regarding proposed timelines, traffic impacts and traffic management plans. Transportation Services reviews these submissions to ensure work can proceed safely, maintain appropriate spatial and scheduling separation between construction activities, and to minimize disruptions to the road network. This review is conducted in accordance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act and supports the safety of road users, workers and the public realm.

Overall, the review indicates that utility work on the selected street segments in Ward 14 between 2018 and 2025 was primarily driven by operational, customer service, or infrastructure maintenance requirements. Utility companies, as owners and operators of essential infrastructure, are responsible for determining when work on their assets is required. Transportation Services' role is to review and process permit applications once they are submitted. Under Municipal Code Chapter 743 (Streets and Sidewalks, Use of), the General Manager, Transportation Services is required to issue a permit when all required information and applicable fees have been provided.

Transportation Services will continue to refine system functionality, clarify guidance and engage with utility companies to support consistent post-completion reporting and effective permit administration, while continuing to administer utility permits in accordance with council-approved policies and municipal code requirements.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Supplementary Sample Photos Utility Construction Photo Documentation

Attachment 2: List of Permits on four Street Segments within Ward 14 from 2018-2025