



Report
Staff Report
 The Corporation of the City of Brampton
 6/10/2024

Date: 2024-06-04

Subject: **By-law Enforcement: Property Standards Audit**

Contact: Claire Fang Mu, Director, Internal Audit, fang.mu@brampton.ca

Report number: CAO's Office-2024-522

Significant Improvement Required


RECOMMENDATIONS:



1. That the report titled: Property Standards Audit 2024 Report, to the Audit Committee Meeting of June 10, 2024, be received and the recommendations contained in Appendix 1: Property Standards Audit 2024 Report be approved.

OVERVIEW:


- The report highlights findings that impact the effectiveness and efficiency of property standards enforcement, including managing and responding to service requests.
- The overall audit was rated as **“Significant Improvement Required.”**
- The issues and associated management action plans are detailed in the body of the audit report located in **Appendix 1: Property Standards Audit 2024 Report.**
- See **Appendix 2** and **Appendix 3** for the criteria for rating findings and audit report rating.
- Please also see **Appendix 4** for the presentation slides for this audit report.

Internal Audit discussed the following improvement opportunities with Property Standards.

Process	Finding	Rating
Service Requests	Service requests added onto existing requests are not being actioned. We sampled 50 complaints added onto existing requests from the audit period and found that	 P1

	<p>none have been actioned by officers. These requests span all categories and were added onto requests from as far back as 2009.</p> <p>New service requests are added directly to an officer's "Task List"; however, there is currently no report that specifically shows add-on requests.</p>	
Open Service Requests	<p>A consistent process for reviewing open service requests is not in place.</p> <p>There is no consistent process in place for reviewing dated open service requests. The timing and extent of reviews depend on individual officer preferences, and in many cases, older open requests are not reviewed regularly. The following was also noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open basement apartment service requests are not periodically reconciled with building permit data • Over 1400 driveway service requests are still open due to officers holding off on addressing these complaints until ward specific zoning and boundary reviews are completed • Service requests for "Grass" and "Refuse" assigned to summer students are not always promptly closed when students depart in September. 	
Service Request Assignment	<p>Officers on extended leave still receive service requests.</p> <p>We Reviewed 11 extended leaves of 5+ weeks among 9 employees. In 6 instances, officers continued to receive service requests while on leave with the average period of absence being 3.5 months. An average of 48 service requests were assigned during these leaves.</p> <p>Requests remained unactioned until the officers' return, causing delays.</p>	

<p>Service Request Response Time</p>	<p>Property Standards does not track service request response time against the target.</p> <p>Based on standard operating procedures, the current target to respond to a call is within 7 days. We obtained data from IT and calculated the response time from the day that the service request was created to the day of the initial action.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For exterior offences, 61% of service requests are responded to within 7 days, and 91% are responded to within 30 days • For interior offences, 43% of service requests are responded to within 7 days, and 73% are responded to within 30 days. 	<p>P2</p>
<p>Recovery of Clean-Up Costs</p>	<p>The City did not fully recover the costs incurred to clean up private properties.</p> <p>There is no reconciliation between invoices paid (PeopleSoft) and invoices manually added to the property tax summary spreadsheet.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2023, 2 out of 156 invoices (\$1,079 total) were not added to the “Addition to tax roll” spreadsheet • In 2022, 4 out of 139 invoices (\$1,826 total) were not added to the “Addition to tax roll” summary. 	<p>P2</p>
<p>Cancelled Service Requests</p>	<p>Service requests that have been cancelled do not always contain complete information in Amanda.</p> <p>Amanda is the City’s By-law Enforcement service request tracking software.</p> <p>We randomly selected 15 cancelled service requests from the audit period and noted:</p>	<p>P2</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 cancelled service requests (“Duplicate Call”) did not reference the related service request number • 1 cancelled service request contained no notes indicating the reason for the cancellation and did not reference the related service request number. 	
Service Request Category	<p>Service requests for exterior offences are not always assigned to the correct offence category.</p> <p>We randomly sampled 15 “Property Standards Exterior Offences” from the audit period and noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 should have been categorized as “Refuse” • 2 should have been categorized as “Excessive Grass/Weeds” <p>Refuse or Grass complaints incorrectly categorized as “Property Standards Exterior Offences” cannot be actioned by summer students since they are only authorized to action Refuse and Grass service requests.</p>	
<p>These issues and associated management action plans are discussed in more detail in Appendix 1. These issues are rated as per the criteria described in Appendix 2.</p>		

CONCLUSION:

Overall, property standards has an adequate framework to receive, investigate and enforce property standards violations. Service requests are automatically integrated into Amanda and assigned to officers, while steps taken to conduct investigations, enforcement, and subsequent investigations adhere to standard operating procedures, and evidence is uploaded to Amanda.

The audit noted that officers' enforcement approach aligns with the department's objective of compliance through education, and officer duties are performed with professionalism and courtesy.

However, there are opportunities for By-law Enforcement to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of property standards enforcement by enhancing processes around managing and responding to service requests.

Additionally, staff should improve the process for reconciling paid contractor invoices to ensure that the City fully recovers clean-up charges from offending property owners and should also work with Service Brampton to ensure service requests for “Grass” and “Refuse” are properly categorized.

Acting on these recommendations will strengthen property standards enforcement processes and improve service delivery to residents.

The overall report rating is determined per the audit report rating criteria explained in **Appendix 3**.

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Attachments:

- Appendix 1 - Property Standards Audit 2024 Report
- Appendix 2 - Criteria for Evaluating Audit Findings
- Appendix 3 - Criteria for Audit Report Rating
- Appendix 4 - Presentation Slides