

City of Brampton Internal Audit – Parks Maintenance
Private & Confidential

Audit Name	Parks Maintenance		
Sponsor(s)	Marlon Kallideen, Commissioner, Community Services; Edward Fagan, Director, Parks Maintenance & Forestry; Jim Pitman, Manager, Parks Maintenance		
Business Unit	Parks Maintenance & Forestry	Date Issued:	August 19, 2022

1.0 Executive Summary

Audit rating: Processes and controls around Parks Maintenance activities were rated as "Improvement Required" (See **Appendix 2** for the criteria for audit report rating).

The inherent risk was assessed as a medium based on the operating budget, capital assets employed, and complexity of processes and activities.

Based on our review of processes, controls and sample testing, we observed the following strengths:

- The required frequency of grass cutting at sports fields (1x per week) is being met.
- The required frequency of garbage bin pick-ups at parks (1x per week) is being met.
- The required frequency of playground and water safety station inspections (1x per month) is being met.
- All employees performing playground inspections have CPSI (Certified Playground Safety Inspector) or OPA (Ontario Parks Association-Playground Practitioner) certifications.
- Documentation to support all snow removal activity (Snow logs) is properly completed and maintained.
- All park maintenance equipment (Fleet & Small engine) contains asset tags.
- Purchase orders are in place for all vendors with expenditures over \$25K in accordance with Purchasing By-law 19-2018.
- Grass-cutting invoices are appropriately supported (Completed assignment sheets) and approved before payment.
- Snow removal invoices are appropriately supported (Completed snow logs) and approved before payment.
- Staff demonstrated a commitment to learning and adopting the newly implemented Cityworks system.

Internal Audit staff discussed the following improvement opportunities with Management:

- Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are not in place or are outdated for some processes.
- Inspections of vendor grass cutting are not always performed or completed promptly.
- Tracking new grass areas added to existing contracts needs to be strengthened.
- The quantity of park equipment (benches, bleachers) in asset records is not always accurate.
- The process for tracking park maintenance equipment needs to be strengthened.
- The status of resolved service requests is not always up to date in Cityworks.
- Vendor performance evaluations for grass-cutting vendors have not yet been completed.

2.0 Background, Objectives, and Scope

Background

Parks Maintenance is a sub-service of the Parks Maintenance & Forestry department which operates under Community Services. The 2022 operating budget for Parks Maintenance is \$10.8M, and park assets' total value is approximately \$518M. The unit is responsible for the maintenance of all parks, sports fields, and boulevards, including:

- 4,110 Hectares of parkland
- 835 Parks, Open Spaces, and Valley Lands
- 328 Sports Fields
- 279 kilometres of Recreational Trails
- 261 Shade Shelters
- 13 Spray Pads
- 4 Leash-free areas.

The main activities to support these public spaces are grass cutting (parks, sports fields, boulevards), sports field maintenance, turf maintenance, recreation trail maintenance, emptying garbage bins, and park inspections. Inspection staff are responsible for inspecting park infrastructure and responding to internal or external (311) service requests or complaints.

There are 62 full-time (permanent) employees in Parks Maintenance. However, every spring, approximately 250 additional seasonal employees are hired. Most of these seasonal employees are students and are used to help meet the increased demand for park maintenance activities in the spring and summer months. In 2019, the City cut the budget for seasonal staff by 22% on the west district and 29% on the east district.

The COVID safety protocols also had a significant impact on seasonal staffing levels. The safety protocols restricted the number of employees in any work vehicle to just one, so all candidates applying for seasonal positions had to have a "G" license as well as a full "DZ" license (motor vehicles over 11,000 KG). These requirements reduced the number of eligible candidates and hires.

Parks Maintenance is also responsible for the winter maintenance of all City owned parking lots and recreation trails. Recreation trails on the west are maintained by park maintenance staff, whereas outside contractors maintain all trails on the east.

Outside contractors are hired to ensure maintenance objectives are met, and service levels are maintained. The main areas where contractors are used are grass cutting and snow removal. The total cost of outside contractors in 2021 was approximately \$3.67M (grass cutting – \$3.5M, snow clearing – \$0.17M).

The system used to track Parks Maintenance activities is currently in transition. Most tasks are still tracked manually using crew cards; however, by the end of 2022, all maintenance activities will be managed through the Cityworks system.

Cityworks is a work management system under the GIS Asset Management framework. The system creates efficiencies by streamlining operations and allowing users to manage assets, work orders, schedules, activities, inspections, and service requests from any location in real-time. Currently, all service requests (311), garbage bin service, and park inspections are managed through Cityworks.

Objectives

This engagement aimed to determine whether proper oversight and controls were in place for Park Maintenance activities and to assess if current processes were designed to optimize service delivery. The review assessed whether:

- Standard Operating Procedures are in place and current for all park maintenance activities
- Maintenance activities comply with city By-laws and legislative requirements
- Park asset inventory records are accurate and properly maintained
- Park Maintenance activities are appropriately scheduled, performed, and tracked
- Work performed by outside vendors is appropriately scheduled, performed, and tracked
- Contracts with outside vendors are in place and monitored for compliance
- Systems are fully utilized to enhance the efficiency and transparency of park maintenance operations
- Park Maintenance activities align with the City's strategic direction (Parks and Recreation Master Plan, Eco Park Strategy, etc.)

Scope

Our audit focused on Parks Maintenance activity from January 1, 2020, to June 30, 2022.

The following areas and functions were excluded from the scope of this audit since they operate independently of Parks Maintenance.

- Forestry, Horticulture, Cemetery
- Peel Village Golf Course
- Salaries and related expenditures
- Employee expenses

3.0 Detailed Audit Findings, Recommendations, and Proposed Management Actions

Ref #	Findings	Rating	Recommendations	Management Response and Due Date	Responsible Party
1	<p><u>Standard Operating Procedures</u></p> <p>Some processes within Parks Maintenance have no Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). Some SOPs are outdated.</p> <p>1. Some core activities do not have a standard operating procedure. Areas without formal SOPs include grass-cutting, garbage pick-up, sports field maintenance, and playground inspections.</p> <p>2. Some existing SOPs have not been updated for over ten years.</p> <p><u>Potential Exposure</u> Missing or outdated SOPs can result in inconsistent or inappropriate execution of processes that do not meet current standards.</p>	P2	<p>Management should work with operations staff and administration to create and update necessary SOPs.</p> <p>Input for these SOPs should be obtained by internal staff, interfacing departments, and other municipalities, if necessary, to ensure SOPs are updated, and complete in relation to core activities, and reflect best practices.</p>	<p><i>Budget cuts and Covid impacts delayed the review of the SOPs.</i></p> <p><i>Staff is Currently working on reviewing and updating the SOP's. Full review, aiming to complete Q3 2023.</i></p>	<p>Manager, Parks Maintenance</p>
2	<p><u>Grass Cutting Inspections – Contractors</u></p> <p>Parks Maintenance performs grass-cutting for all sports fields. Outside contractors, currently four in total, handle grass-cutting for the majority of tableland, all boulevards, medians, and curbs.</p> <p>Every day, contractors update an "Assignment sheet" on SharePoint showing what grass they cut. Parks Maintenance grass inspectors use the information on the assignment sheet to inspect the</p>	P2	<p>To properly assess the quality and completeness of grass cutting, staff should complete inspections within one day of the cut.</p> <p>Staff reported that due to limited resources, complete and timely inspections of all grass areas had been a significant challenge.</p>	<p><i>Ideally the department should Hire additional resources with the goal of having the appropriate number of Inspectors to inspect Contractors work in a timely manner. This will be requested in the 2023 operating budget.</i></p>	<p>Manager, Parks Maintenance</p>

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	<p>cuts and ensure cuts are complete and meet standards.</p> <p>As per Parks Maintenance guidelines, inspections are to be performed for every single location cut by each contractor the next day.</p> <p>We reviewed the process for tracking and inspecting grass-cutting by contractors for May 2022 and noted the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not all grass-cutting areas were inspected. City staff inspected 1,266, or 81% of 1,560 grass-cutting areas. 2. There are often excessive delays between when the grass was cut and when it was inspected. Staff conducted inspections, on average 7.7 days (including weekends) after the grass-cutting, with the delays ranging from 1 to 15 days. <p>Potential Exposure Missing inspections increases the risk that incomplete or sub-standard grass-cutting will not be detected. Excessively delayed grass-cutting inspections serve little or no purpose.</p>		<p>In order to optimize the coverage of grass inspections, Parks Maintenance should;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify the most critical grass areas based on pre-determined factors such as size, use, condition, and visibility and ensure the consistent and timely inspections of these prioritized areas. 2. Ensure that grass inspections are not missed for the same area in consecutive cuts in order to ensure no areas are being neglected by the contractor. 	<p><i>In the interim, Staff will identify the most critical grass areas and ensure the consistent and timely inspections of these prioritized areas.</i></p>	
3	<p><u>Grass Cutting Additions – Contractors</u></p> <p>Since the start of current grass cutting contracts (2020), additions of parks, valleys, and boulevards resulted in an increased grass-cutting workload. All grass locations cut by contractors are tracked in the "Assignment sheet;" and all additions to</p>	P2	<p>A reconciliation between the "Added hectares" spreadsheet and the respective "Assignment sheet" should be performed at least annually.</p>	<p><i>Additional Hectares are added every year without additional resources. The department is currently reviewing the structure and operational model so that Moving forward</i></p>	<p>Manager, Parks Maintenance</p>

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	<p>existing grass areas are tracked in the "Added hectares" document. The two documents should reconcile with each other.</p> <p>Our review of additional hectares and the corresponding assignment sheet for one of the areas (Area 2) found that 12 new grass areas were added to the assignment sheet since 2020, but only 11 are showing on the added hectares document. The missing grass addition was identified as Rhapsody Park, now called Hon. Gurbax Singh Malhi Park.</p> <p>No reconciliation was done to ensure that hectares added to an area in the year equal to the total hectares of that area in the "Assignment Sheet" at the end of the year.</p> <p>Potential Exposure Reconciling the "Added hectares" sheet with the respective "Assignment sheet" ensures that all hectares added throughout the year are approved and accurate. Lack of reconciliation can mean potential overpayment for the contractors.</p>		<p>Completing this reconciliation will ensure that all additions have been captured in the "Added hectares" document and thus approved. It will also increase the transparency of total hectares and allow staff to detect input errors and avoid overpayment to contractors.</p>	<p><i>we will ensure that reconciliation of documents are complete. Q2 2023 depending on budget approval.</i></p>	
4	<p><u>Assets - Park Equipment</u></p> <p>Park equipment (Playgrounds, splash pads, sports fields, bleachers etc.) assets are tracked by administrative staff in the "Lifecycle tracker" spreadsheet.</p>	P3	<p>1. Staff should perform physical counts of assets at all parks periodically. It is important to have an accurate inventory of park assets, including small assets. Staff report the values of park assets such as bleachers in the Corporate Asset Management Plan (CAMP) and</p>	<p><i>1. The department proposed new structure will have accountability for asset management and for collecting and tracking small assets. In the interim, a contract resource will be allocated to assist in</i></p>	<p>Supervisor, Parks Administration, Contracts & Asset Mgmt.</p>

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	<p>We reviewed the lifecycle tracker as well as physical counts of park equipment at ten parks and noted the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The quantity of small park assets shown in the lifecycle tracker is not always accurate. Our physical count of park equipment at ten parks found that there was at least one small asset discrepancy at eight parks. All discrepancies found were for player benches, park benches, and bleachers. 2. Listing of flower beds is not broken down by park. All flower beds in the City are broken down between non-irrigated (Approximately 980 beds at \$2K/bed) and irrigated (Approximately 220 beds at \$8K/bed), but are not listed by park. <p>Potential Exposure Outdated or lack of detailed asset inventory can result in inaccurate asset quantities and values.</p>		<p>these values are used for budgeting purposes. Small asset quantities may also be used to track park service statistics such as park benches per hectare, bleacher seats per sports field among others.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Based on aggregated value of flower beds (\$3.72M), these assets should be itemized by park to increase visibility of flower bed locations. 	<p><i>this area. Process review will take place prior to Q2 2023 upon budget approval.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. <i>Staff supports this concept, however, not all flowerbeds are associated with a Park. With regards to recommendations Parks will amend the flowerbed list to include the park/location name. Aiming for Q2, 2023 completion.</i> 	
5	<p><u>Assets – Fleet & Small Engine</u></p> <p>Assets used for park maintenance operations are categorized as either fleet such as riding mowers, aerators, and rototillers; or small engine equipment such as push mowers, grass trimmers, and backpack blowers.</p> <p>These assets were tracked in the M5 system by Public Works until Parks Maintenance moved from Public works to Community Services. Assets over \$1.5K are still tracked in M5 by Public works and</p>	P3	<p>Parks Maintenance should use the M5 system to track all fleet and small engine assets.</p> <p>Prior to importing asset information into M5, a physical count should be performed on all assets to ensure asset quantities, condition and attributes are up to date.</p>	<p><i>The process to implement small engine equipment into M5 has begun. Physical counts are being performed and condition attributes are being updated.</i></p> <p><i>This responsibility will be moved under the Asset Management area in 2023 depending on budget approval.</i></p>	<p>Supervisor, Parks Administration, Contracts & Asset Mgmt.</p>

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	<p>assets under \$1.5K are tracked by parks maintenance in an Excel spreadsheet.</p> <p>We randomly selected 20 items (10-fleet, 10-small engine) for a physical count. Although we were able to locate all items with the assistance of operations, we found that asset information is not always complete or accurate. For example;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The manufacturer of one of the assets was different from the manufacturer shown in the master spreadsheet. 2. Master spreadsheet showed two assets with the same unit # (#813). 3. We physically located one of the assets that was shown as "Missing" on the master spreadsheet (Unit 1013-Honda Generator). 4. Some items over \$1,500 are tracked in M5 and the master spreadsheet, while others are only tracked in M5. <p>Potential Exposure Incomplete or inaccurate asset information can confuse staff and result in erroneous asset values.</p>		Using M5 will reduce the risk of entry errors, centralizes asset information, provides system controls, and makes it easier to track asset history.		
6	<p><u>Service Requests - Status Review</u></p> <p>Any park issues or deficiencies observed by employees or residents can be reported to the City through 3-1-1 (Service Brampton). A "Service Request" is created for all reported issues and is sent to the appropriate department within the City.</p>	P3	Open service requests should be reviewed monthly by the respective Foreperson and the status of all resolved service requests should be updated to "Completed" or "Closed."	<i>Supervisor to review & ensure that the foreperson have closed off monthly outstanding SR's. Going forward, investigate the feasibility of Integrating Parks Maintenance into City Works for work orders. Q2, 2023.</i>	Supervisor, East Parks Maintenance and Supervisor, West Parks Maintenance

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	<p>All service requests are tracked in the City works system.</p> <p>Our review of open service requests noted that some service requests that have been resolved are still showing as outstanding ("Assigned" or "In Progress") in Cityworks.</p> <p>We also found that some Forepersons did not perform periodic reviews of open service requests.</p> <p><u>Potential Exposure</u> Not updating the status of resolved service requests promptly results in an inaccurate snapshot of outstanding service requests and can impact resource planning.</p>				
7	<p><u>Vendor Performance Evaluations</u></p> <p>Per the Vendor Performance Evaluation SOP, after August 1, 2021, a vendor performance evaluation is required for all service contracts over \$100K.</p> <p>We reviewed the vendor management process and noted that although there is a process for tracking performance deficiencies of grass-cutting vendors, a formal performance scorecard has not yet been completed.</p> <p>Currently, four vendors are providing grass cutting with contract values ranging from \$535K to \$1.3M annually. Based on the requirements of the Vendor Performance Evaluation SOP, Staff should have completed an interim performance scorecard for</p>	P3	<p>Staff should complete the vendor performance evaluations for each vendor per the required frequencies outlined in the Vendor Performance Evaluation SOP.</p> <p>Staff should forward these evaluations (Interim and Final) to Purchasing for review and consideration in future tenders.</p>	<p><i>This will be the responsibility of the contract supervisor moving forward upon budget approval.</i></p> <p><i>In the interim, the managers will ensure that Parks Maintenance Vendor Performances are completed for Contracts in Q4 of 2022 and sent to Purchasing.</i></p>	<p>Supervisor, Parks Administration, Contracts & Asset Mgmt.</p>

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	<p>each vendor, given the length and value of these contracts.</p> <p><u>Potential Exposure</u> Not completing performance evaluations for all required vendors may result in poor performance not being communicated to procurement promptly.</p>				

Report Distribution List	
Paul Morrison	Interim Chief Administrative Officer
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