



City of Edmonton Office of the City Auditor

Parks and Roads Services Yard Operations Audit

April 1, 2019



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REPORT SUMMARY

Yard Operations Audit 2019

Planning

There has not been a comprehensive and coordinated planning process to assess and identify future yard needs.

Recommendation: Develop a plan for yards



Authority and Process

Processes and practices are inconsistent between yards due to unclear authority and responsibility.

Recommendation: Clarify authority and processes



Yard Conditions

There is considerable variation in yard conditions including bathrooms, showers, lockers, office spaces, and workspaces.

Recommendation: Develop a standard and prioritize improvements



Optimizing Space

Yards are congested and space is not optimized.

Recommendation: Review and optimize existing yard space



Security

Security is inconsistent in the yards.

Recommendation: Assess security risks and implement security practices



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Objectives

To review the yard operations for the Parks and Roads Services Branch and assess:

- If there is adequate planning to address future yard needs
- If yards are efficient, effective, and safe

Scope

The scope of this audit included the yard operations of 22 yards that are managed by the Infrastructure Operations and Infrastructure Maintenance sections of the Parks and Roads Services Branch.

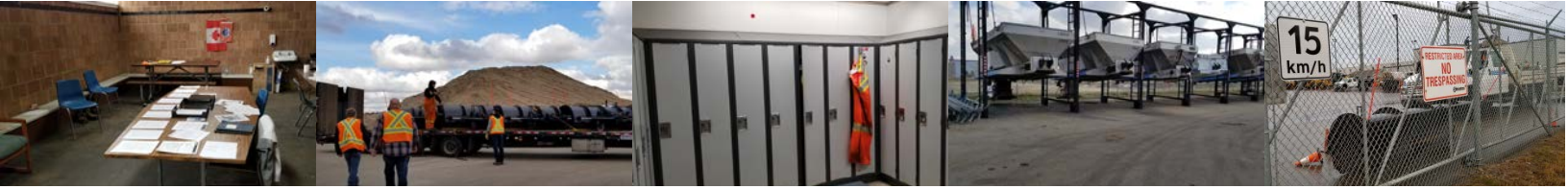
This scope included the operations that occurred within the fences of the yard (such as general storage, vehicle movement, and equipment movement and storage) and did not include activities performed by crews after leaving the yards (such as the act of mowing, plowing, trimming, clearing paths, pruning, etc that occur in the communities).

Methodology

To complete this audit we visited 19 of 22 yards between August and December 2018. We spent a day at each yard where we observed traffic flow, visitors, on-site work, and any other activity that was occurring that day. At each yard, Crew Leads, Team Leads, and other employees provided us with their insights about what worked well in the yard and where there were opportunities for improvement.

Statement of Professional Practice

This project was conducted in accordance with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing

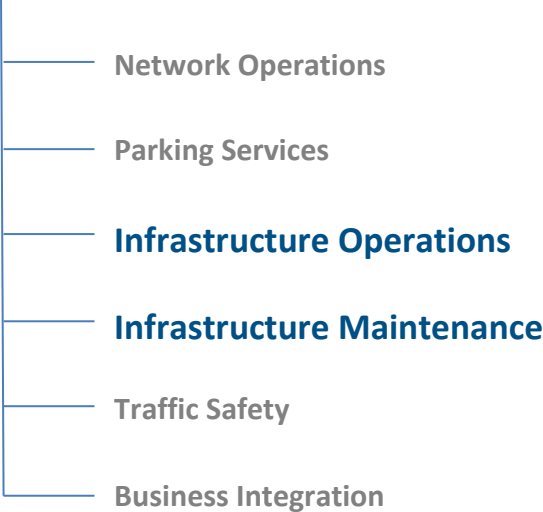


Background

Branch information

Infrastructure Operations and Infrastructure Maintenance are two sections in the Parks and Roads Services Branch of the City Operations Department. These sections repair, service, or refurbish City assets related to City parks and roads. Prior to reorganization in 2017, this work had been divided between the former Transportation Department that was responsible for roads, and the former Community Services Department that was responsible for parks.

Parks and Roads Services Branch



Currently, these two sections manage the 22 yards that are in scope of this audit. Five of these yards were inherited from the former Transportation Department and most of the work in these yards is still focused on roadways. The remaining yards were inherited from the former Community Services Department and the majority of work out of these yards continues to relate to servicing parks, greenspaces, and vegetation.

City employees provide public services from the yards including:



maintenance projects involving asphalt, oil/gravel, and concrete



maintenance of structures and open spaces such as public stairs, guardrails, benches, playgrounds, sports fields, and fences



snow and ice control services



sweeping and cleaning services for roads, pathways, and parks



horticulture, turf, and forestry services

Yard operations

Inside the yards, a variety of activities occur. This includes:

servicing equipment like cleaning mowers or sharpening blades

parking vehicles and mobile equipment when not in use

providing a **muster location** for employees before and after shifts

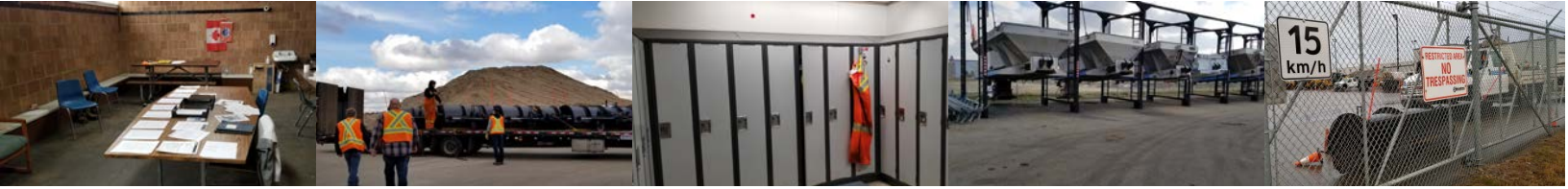
providing a location for employees to access services like **washrooms, lunchrooms, and training**

providing **short-term and long-term storage** of small equipment and tools like blowers, trimmers, hand tools, and paint

providing storage **space for materials** such as mulch, sand, salt, calcium chloride, fuel, and plants

providing **workshops** for building and repairing assets like benches, picnic tables, signs, and playground equipment

providing a location for **public access** to programs like Root for Trees or sand for icy sidewalks



Planning for Yards

Summary of findings

There has not been a comprehensive and coordinated planning process to assess and identify future yard needs, optimal yard locations, or necessary infrastructure for Parks and Roads Services yards. This lack of systematic planning in the past is one of the root causes for some of the issues with the current yards including the variation in yard condition, space use in yards, and location decisions. In turn, these issues impact the efficiency, effectiveness, and safety of yards.

As part of the ongoing work to align teams, processes, and assets that had previously been managed by different departments, in 2018 the City Operations Department, which includes the Parks and Roads Services Branch initiated a project to develop a Service Operations Strategy. This Service Operations Strategy will be used to assess the current and future state of operations and will serve as a reference document for facility and yard capital investments and operational plans. This project is expected to be complete by January 2020.

Service demand and locations

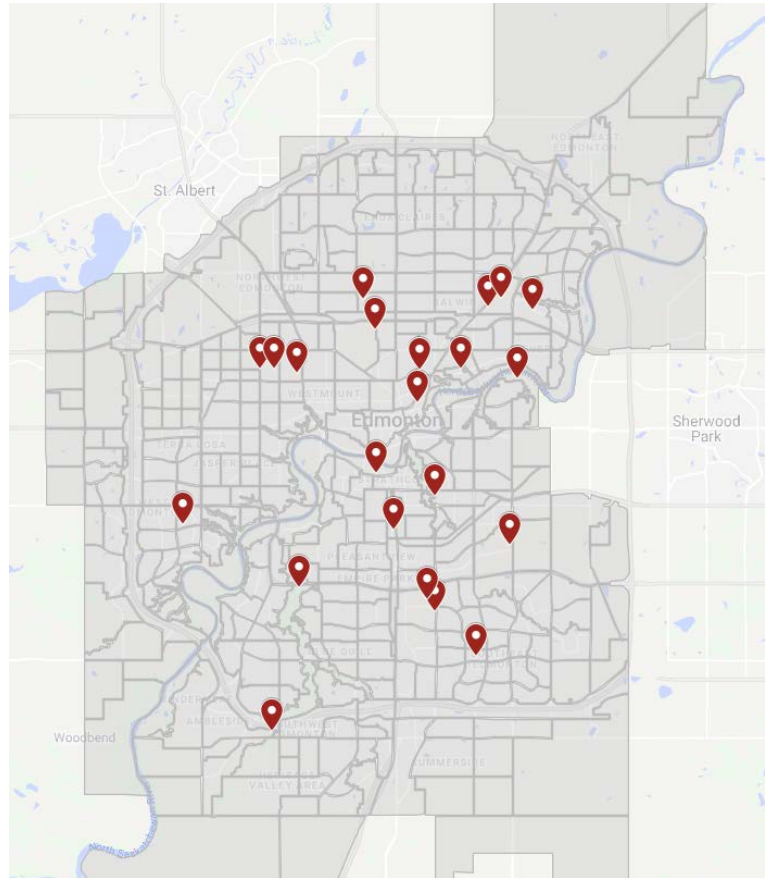
There is not an effective method of projecting future service demand for Parks and Roads Services Branch services. Nor is there a process that integrates anticipated service demands into a plan for yards.



The Branch has prioritized the need for a location strategy. This is one of the components of the Service Operation Strategy.

As a result of the lack of planning based on service demand, the Branch is unable to establish yards in ideal locations to efficiently meet service demands in new or growing neighbourhoods in the City. To meet service demands in new areas, such as maintaining sports fields, maintaining parks, or sweeping roads, equipment must travel from existing yards that are a significant distance away. This travel time is not an effective or efficient use of staff time or equipment.

Each marker on the map is a current yard. Neighbourhoods on the outer edges of the City are served by yards that are a significant distance away.



The shapes outline on this map show neighbourhoods within the City of Edmonton boundaries as of December 2018

-Source: Edmonton Open Data

Yard occupancy

Yard occupancy at the time of this audit generally reflected the status quo prior to creation of the Parks and Roads Services Branch. A rationale for the placement of functional groups, crews, or items in the yards based on efficiency, effectiveness, or other operational factors has not yet been developed. The current occupancy contributes to the congestion in some yards.

The majority of yards are occupied by more than one functional group. For example, a yard may have crews that mow grass, prune trees, repair playground equipment, build benches, do weed control, and clean up rubbish in parks.

It is clear why some of the functional groups occupy existing locations. For example, mowers need to be located in yards that are close to the areas they are mowing; otherwise there is a significant loss of efficiency due to travel time.

However, there are some functions where the reason for their current location is less straightforward. For example, the efficiency of building park benches or picnic tables close to where they may be used is less clear and there may be efficiency gains by centralizing this type of work in better equipped spaces.

Benches, picnic tables, and other items are built in various yards in the City. These require shops that have appropriate equipment for carpentry, staining, and assembly. This workshop is being used to build benches; however there is very little space to assemble them here. Additionally, employees walk through this space to access other areas of the yard creating issues with keeping materials clean.



Without a rationale and plan for locating various functional groups in different yards throughout the City, safety risks increase due to congestion in some yards and there is a risk that yards are not being used as efficiently or effectively as possible.

Yard investments

Making decisions about improvements and enhancements to existing yards is not currently managed in a strategic way. Because there is no strategic plan for yards, there is no long-term vision to support investment decisions. For example, without a long-term plan indicating whether or not a yard is identified to be decommissioned, it is difficult to make informed decisions about how much should be spent to improve the current state of the yard.

In lieu of a long-term plan, upgrade work in the yards has been prioritized based on safety and security. Since mid-2017, at least 16 yards have had upgrade work performed including:

- lease of a washroom trailer to comply with OHS requirements
- installation of lights, fencing, signage, heaters, and ramps
- installation of electronic access gates
- parking lot asphalt
- security cameras and intercom systems

Additional work to upgrade washrooms, ventilation, and other changes to meet OHS requirements or safety codes is planned for 2019.

These upgrades are likely to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, safety, or security of an individual yard. However, a long-term strategic plan would inform upgrade decisions by helping to ensure the City receives the most benefit from limited funds over the long term and across all yards.

A strategic plan defines how different functional groups are going to provide services and from where. It provides a basic level of information that can be used when developing new yards. It also helps ensure appropriate lead-up time to go through the necessary budget requests and approval processes. The lack of a strategic plan was one factor that contributed to a yard being built without going through the proper approvals and processes.

Yard built without proper approvals and processes

Callingwood yard was built as a temporary yard in 2007 to address service complaints and efficiency issues around that location. It was built without proper approvals and process, and it lacks basic amenities, such as running water.



In the summer there are two trailers in the yard to serve as a lunchroom, locker room, and administration space. One of the trailers is leased and all contents are emptied into a garage for the winter before being put back again for the next season. The other trailer has a door that doesn't always close properly and where a space heater cannot be run at the same time as the microwave without overloading the electricity.

There were approximately 60 turf and horticulture employees based in this yard in the summer of 2018 and the space was extremely congested with equipment and vehicles.

Due to a lack of proper planning and process to build this yard, continuous improvements and investments have been required. This includes yard lighting upgrades in 2018 due to poor visibility, and installation of a leased bathroom trailer to replace porta-potties.

There are no indications that this yard is actually temporary. Due to its location, closure of the yard without appropriate replacement would significantly impact the efficiency of the services provided by turf and horticulture crews as a result of increased travel time.

Recommendation 1

Develop a plan for yards

Recommendation

Develop a comprehensive, coordinated plan for yards including:

- a) identifying the long-term vision of each yard to support better investment decisions
- b) developing and implementing a method to identify changing demands for service, and incorporate this information into yard planning
- c) developing and implementing a method of allocating functional groups and employees to yards that optimizes available yard resources



Responsible Party

Branch Manager, Parks and Roads Services



Accepted by Management

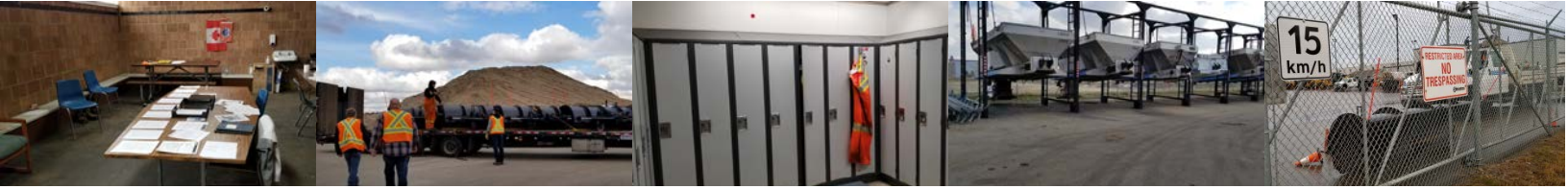
Management Response

Administration has begun work on a City Operations workspace location strategy that will take an integrated approach to facility and yard planning, and will be complete by February 2020. The strategy will be used to inform the remaining actions in Recommendation 1, to be completed by June 2021, with alignment to the next capital and operating budget cycle.



Implementation

June 2021



Authority and Process

Summary of findings

Processes and practices are inconsistent between yards. Even when standards exist, the enforcement of these standards is inconsistent due to unclear authority and responsibilities. This increases employee risk in the yards when the authority or responsibility is related to yard safety. It also reduces the efficiency and effectiveness of the yard as decisions may not be made by the right people as quickly as they should be.

Responsibility and accountability

The Parks and Roads Services Branch began implementation of a consistent, branch-wide supervisory structure in 2017, after parks and roads functions were moved from their previous branches.

In the new structure, supervisors are responsible for functions – like turf maintenance or paving operations – rather than being responsible for individual yards and everything that happens in them. The objective of this change is to improve the consistency of services across geographic boundaries.



Good Practice

The Crew Leads in one yard supported a culture where employees could take the initiative for simple yard improvements. To avoid the unnecessary work of having to separate different types of garbage, an employee made hand-written signs and attached them to the fence over separate garbage bins. These were effective in getting other employees to separate oily and greasy rags from garbage and grass.

At this point in the implementation, responsibility and accountability is unclear in some yards for shared spaces, and the decision-making process was unclear to some supervisors.

In most yards, supervisors of various functional groups had collaborated to make decisions about space allocation in yards (like who gets what storage space and where different functional groups should park); however, this was not universal. Responsibility for things like cleaning and organizing shared spaces (like bathrooms, or storage areas), and security of the yard were not always addressed. Even when they were managed through group decision making, it was still unclear who was ultimately accountable.

Supervisors in the various yards generally indicated that they had the authority to make changes in the yards, provided that costs were minimal. However, there was little clarity on how other decisions about the yard were made and who ultimately made those decisions.

Decisions that did not get made, or that got made by groups or individuals without accountability for those decisions resulted in issues in the yard. This included storing items in the yard that were unused and unclaimed, poor condition of storage spaces, and common spaces that were not cleaned or maintained.

At least 3 yards had old signs that had been removed and kept in the yards. It was unclear who is responsible for these.



Operational processes and practices

There was inconsistency in processes and practices in the yards related to:

- Personal protective equipment expectations and enforcement
- Back up procedures
- Use of parking cones
- Designated parking areas
- Sharing sites with internal or external users
- Equipment use and sharing
- Visitor sign in procedures and orientation
- Vehicle and key security
- Access to high value assets
- Management of store inventory

Because there is variation in yard design and yard conditions, it is reasonable to expect some variation in how the yards operate. However, the greater the variation in processes, authority and decision making, the more likely there is that some yards are not operating as efficiently, effectively, or safely as others. It also increases the likelihood of the development of operational silos where areas begin operating independent of one another.

Even when there were corporate or branch standards in place (such as with personal protective equipment use, back up procedures, and use of parking cones), the enforcement of standards tended to differ depending upon how clearly the responsibility for the enforcement was defined.

Personal protective equipment use

Supervisors and employees in the yards indicated that all employees were responsible for safety. However, a number of Crew Leads – the senior supervisor in many yards – indicated or demonstrated that they were unsure of their authority to enforce personal protective equipment use for individuals in the yard that were not part of their branch.

If they observed an employee from their own branch not wearing the required eye protection, protective footwear, or high-visibility vest, they indicated that they would raise it with the employee or the employee’s supervisor.

However, if the employee was from another area of the City (such as Fleet Services or Facility Maintenance), some Crew Leads indicated they were not confident that they had the authority to address this directly with the employee.

By establishing clear authority over the yard and all employees who are in it, management may be able to reduce safety risk and improve the consistency of standards enforcement.



Store inventory

Some yards have stores on site that distribute tools, equipment, and materials needed by crews. In June 2018, there were changes to corporate procurement processes resulting in the elimination of Central Stores. In response to this change, the Parks and Roads Services Branch is developing new processes for the yard stores.

When we conducted our yard visits in the fall of 2018, store processes were not consistent between yards. Orders were made based on the needs of an individual store and order coordination was done informally between stores. Costs for items ordered may be paid by one functional group (like Park Servicing), but those items may be distributed to a different functional group (like Horticulture). Additionally, there is currently no centralized system that allows the Branch to know what inventory is available without contacting each store. This can result in inventory not being distributed effectively and efficiently throughout the Branch, and increase costs due to unnecessary ordering.

As the work related to managing stores progresses, standardizing processes around ordering, expensing, and centralized tracking of inventory can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of store processes and ensure that inventory is managed to reduce waste and cost.

Tie-down straps

On October 2, 2018, the Parks and Roads Branch mobilized snow and ice control equipment to send to Calgary to assist with a major snow event. During this mobilization, we observed strong teamwork as equipment was identified and readied, employees were prepared to deploy, and employees, supervisors, and managers engaged in problem-solving together.



To ensure safe transportation, employees from one yard were sent to purchase heavy-duty tie-down straps to secure blades on the back of a large truck.

In the following weeks, we observed that the store at a different yard had a large supply of tie-down straps. If these straps would have met the need of the other yard, this could have improved deployment time and eliminated an expense.

There is currently no inventory system that the Branch could have accessed to determine if appropriate straps were available at another yard.

Recommendation 2

Clarify authority and processes

Recommendation

Clarify authority over the yard space as a whole, and processes related to enforcement of operating standards, and escalated requests and decisions.



Responsible Party

Branch Manager, Parks and Roads Services



Accepted by Management

Management Response

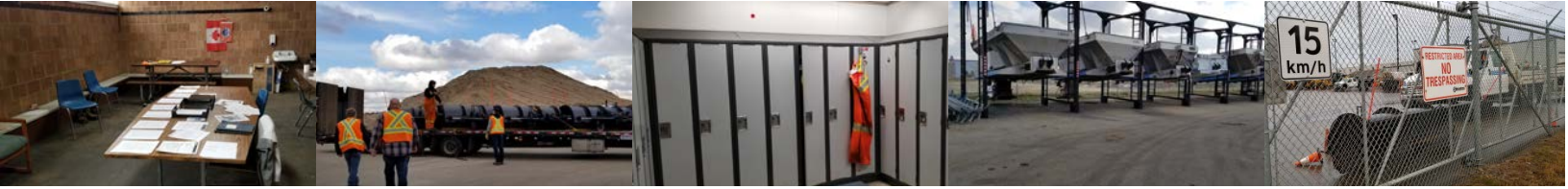
Administration will clearly identify, document, and manage functional accountability and associated standard operating procedures, including:

- Operating processes and practices related to safety and security
- A centralized inventory control process for tools and materials
- Decision-making process related to local yard improvements
- Defining responsibility and accountability for shared space in yards



Implementation

February 2020



Yard Conditions

Summary of findings

There is considerable variation in the condition of yards. This includes staff amenities like the availability of bathrooms, showers, and lockers; as well as office spaces and workspaces. Safety equipment was an exception as it is consistently available and accessible within yards.

In relation to yard conditions, a common phrase heard was “We make do”. This indicates a lack of planned, strategic investment in these facilities and spaces.

The condition of the yards impacts the efficiency and effectiveness of employees by delaying employees waiting to access equipment, space, or amenities; or by requiring them to complete their work using sub-optimal methods.

Workspace issues

Both indoor and outdoor workspaces differed from yard to yard.

Although employees in almost all yards indicated that they had sufficient tools, employees in approximately half of the yards indicated that they had issues with workspace or equipment. This included:



Good Practice

One yard has a single service bay for equipment. This can result in a line-up of employees waiting for access. To reduce the wait, employees stay in touch with one another while out on the road to coordinate their return to the yard.

- Insufficient office space
- Insufficient indoor workspace
- Insufficient outdoor workspace
- Insufficient heated workspace
- No running water
- Insufficient servicing space or space for cleaning equipment
- Improper ventilation system for painting
- Yard is mudhole after rain
- No forklift

Without a common set of standards to understand what workspace or equipment is expected in each yard, it is not possible to determine if making changes such as those suggested by employees are reasonable.

This yard is not paved and has very little gravel. It remains wet and muddy for days after it rains limiting outdoor workspace and resulting in dirty indoor spaces.



Safety equipment

Almost all yards had well-marked and accessible safety equipment, such as eyewash stations, first aid kits, fire extinguishers, and automated external defibrillator machines. Additionally, there was very high compliance with employees wearing personal protective equipment when working.

Most yards had requirements for personal protective equipment clearly posted at the yard entrance. Employees in all yards are required to wear eye protection, foot protection, and high-visibility vests.



Some yards set up a competition with each other. Each month the yard reporting the most near misses wins a pizza party. This incentivizes employees to report potential safety concerns before incidents occur.



Employee amenities

Employees identified insufficient amenities at 12 of the yards. Example of issues include:

- Not enough toilets (at all or by gender)
- Condition of bathroom was unacceptable (wasn't clean, didn't lock)
- Outhouses located in distant or inconvenient location

Prior to the installation of this leased bathroom trailer, this yard had 3 toilets for up to 150 employees working from this location during the summer season.



Some functions require access to shower facilities, such as those with employees working with chemicals or other hazardous materials. However, it was not clear if shower facilities were a necessary amenity for yards without these functions. Employees in some yards indicated they had shower facilities that were never used, while others indicated they would travel to yards with showers when they needed a shower (such as when they were covered in 'garbage juice'). In some yards, employees indicated that large shower facilities were not used because they had a communal design with no privacy.

There was also significant variation in change room facilities. Some yards had large change rooms with lockers, while others did not have either change rooms or lockers.

In response to inadequate workspaces and employee amenities, employees in at least three yards indicated that they regularly use adjacent public facilities.

Employees in two yards regularly access bathrooms and change rooms of nearby City-owned, public facilities. A crew in another yard has appropriated underused public change

room facilities adjacent to the yard. This space is used for crew meetings and as a locker room for employees.

This change room was built for public use. Due to lack of space in the yard facilities, it now serves as crew meeting/office space.



There was no indication that employee use of these facilities has been problematic. From an economic perspective, using these spaces reduces the need for costly improvements to the yard. However, there is a risk that there may be conflict with the public regarding this use of space. By developing guidelines or standard operating practices to manage this type of space use, management can assess the risks of using public space against potential efficiency, effectiveness, and cost benefits.

Recommendation 3

Develop a standard and prioritize improvements

Recommendation

Develop a minimum or optimum standard for yard conditions against which to assess and prioritize improvements and upgrades to the individual yards.



Responsible Party

Branch Manager, Parks and Roads Services



Accepted by Management

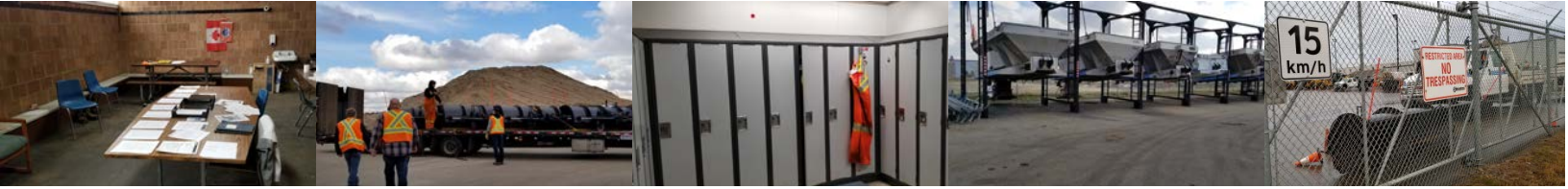
Management Response

Administration will develop a universal standard that addresses criteria to prioritize improvements based on employee safety, amenities, workspace, and yard space



Implementation

October 2020



Optimizing Space

Summary of findings

The capacity of individual yards has not been established and many of the yards are congested with vehicles, equipment, storage units, materials, and buildings. Congested yards increase safety risks to employees who must navigate around vehicles and equipment. Congested and crowded yards also reduce the efficiency and effectiveness of the operation by limiting the ways that space can be used.

There are also yards that share space with external organizations which increases security risks.

Yard design

The design of the yard space impacts the efficiency and effectiveness of the use of that space. Most yards had some element of their design that impacted the efficiency of the yard such as:

- Parking of vehicles and equipment restricting traffic flow within the yard
- Dumpsters located far from one another in the yard, requiring a truck to move from one location to another when unloading, or located in difficult to access places in the yard
- Entrance and exit gates not wide enough to allow two-way traffic, or visitors blocking the entry prior to gaining authorization to enter
- Parts of the yard fenced off to provide dedicated spaces, restricting travel paths and reducing useable space overall



Good Practice

The Crew Leads at one yard moved the dumpster outside of the fence. They decided the risk of public use of the dumpster was an acceptable trade-off for the benefits of reducing yard traffic and freeing up space in the yard.

There are yards that could be reconfigured to improve efficiency and effectiveness. However, for some yards, the ability of management to reconfigure the space is limited by permanent buildings, utilities, and very small yard footprints. Where there are limitations, it would be valuable to identify the maximum capacity of each yard to avoid crowding and congestion.

Storage spaces

In just over half of the yards, storage was reasonably tidy, well-organized, and secure. In the remainder, there tended to be specific storage spaces that were not well-organized – like sheds or garages that were used for long-term storage of small items, or items that were being held in the yard for disposal.

Having organized storage improves efficiency and effectiveness in a yard. It ensures that the equipment and materials that are used on a regular basis are easy to access.

These bikes and shopping carts were collected over two seasons and take up space in the yard.



Some yards also had items that were large, rarely used, or seasonal stored in the yard. This includes green sheds, stacks of picnic tables, and unused materials. Storing these items in the yard can take up needed space and increase congestion.

These green sheds are stored in a leased yard. They impede traffic flow and take up needed operational space for vehicles and equipment.



Employees in the majority of yards indicated that their storage space was insufficient. This was due to issues with access, a lack of specific types of storage (secured, covered, etc), or storage spaces that were poorly configured (multiple small rooms or in poor locations).

Currently, when a yard has a need for storage that they are

unable to meet in their own yard space, items can be stored in other yards. Although this approach can be considered an effective use of space overall, it can also be a workaround that avoids taking a strategic look at the congested space. If there are more people, vehicles, or equipment in a yard than it can safely hold, management needs to ensure that everyone and everything in the yard needs to be there, and that the existing space is used effectively.

By identifying yard storage needs, capacity, and configuration, there is an opportunity to use existing storage space in yards more efficiently and effectively

Vehicles and equipment

In the majority of yards, congestion is primarily caused by vehicles and equipment. Vehicle and equipment congestion increases safety risks to employees and reduces the space available to move around the yard and conduct other activities.

Small yards park up to three vehicles deep against fences or buildings, and may intentionally block in vehicles and equipment in order to fit everything in. In these yards, attempting to designate parking spaces may not be successful as the space is inadequate.

Multiple vehicles are parked behind each other in this yard in order to accommodate them all. To access specific vehicles and equipment, other vehicles must be moved.



In some of the larger yard spaces, or those with a more flexible configuration (like rectangular shaped rather than square), efforts have been made to organize parking. This includes roping off 'parking lots', and designating parking spaces.

In this yard, vehicles have parking spots designated by vehicle size and type marked along the fence line.



In some yards, personal vehicles inside the yard add to congestion and take up space that would otherwise be available for operational purposes. Although some yards have available public parking outside of the yard for employees, others have designated employee parking lots inside the yards when sufficient parking for employees is not available outside of the yard.

By identifying and assessing employee parking options, there may be an opportunity to reclaim operational space currently used for employee parking and reduce congestion in these yards.

Sharing space

Five of the nineteen yards we visited share space with external organizations or with City business areas outside of the Parks and Roads Services Branch. Some of these shared space arrangements have formal leases or written agreements, while others are the result of historical 'handshake' agreements.

Sharing space increases the complexity and risk of yard operations due to issues with congestion, safety, security, and contractual arrangements.

Some issues we identified related to shared spaces include:

- Increased safety risk as external organization employees may not adhere to City safety standards in the shared space
- Increased security risk as external organization employees/volunteers have access to City assets within the shared space

- Increased congestion in the shared space due to external organization assets and equipment
- Increased security risk for external organization as City employees require access to their spaces

Additionally, the shared space agreements that are currently in place were implemented under the previous organizational structure. The rationale for making these agreements was often related to the priorities of the previous departments.

The Parks and Roads Services Branch is now managing these spaces and, in addition to the specific issues related to shared spaces, must also address:

- Sharing yard and facility space with organizations doing work unrelated to the work the Branch is doing in that space.
- Risks and benefits to changing long-standing agreements with non-profit organizations

As the Parks and Roads Services Branch moves forward with their planning project, there may be an opportunity to simplify yard operations and improve operational space use by reviewing shared space arrangements.

Shared space risks

In one yard, the City leases building and yard space in a commercial space with other lessees. There are common access gates and roads into the City's yard spaces. The City has no control over the activities of other businesses in the shared or adjacent spaces. This includes regulating vehicle speeds, storage of attractive assets, and encroachment into common spaces. These activities increase the risks to the City's operations in the leased space.

At another yard, the City leases space to an external non-profit organization. The organization has a large sea can storage unit behind the dumpster in the City's fenced yard space. They can access the yard space through a shared bathroom in the building. This yard is also in a high-traffic, recreational area of the river valley. This increases the risk of unauthorized access through both City-controlled access points and organization-controlled access points into the yard.



Recommendation 4

Review and optimize existing yard space

Recommendation

Review and optimize existing yard space for efficiency and effectiveness including:

- a. Identifying yard capacity and reconfiguring spaces to be more efficient, effective, and safe
- b. Managing storage spaces
- c. Addressing vehicle and equipment parking needs
- d. Rationalizing and formalizing shared space arrangements



Responsible Party

Branch Manager, Parks and Roads Services



Accepted by Management

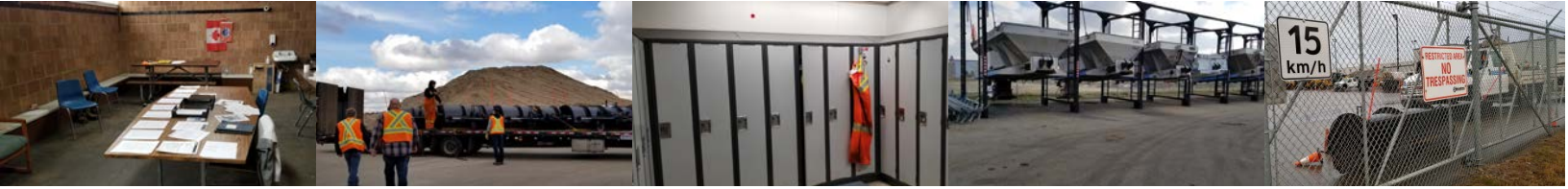
Management Response

Administration has started to review existing yards in relation to the audit recommendations, and the information will be used to inform Recommendation 1 (develop a comprehensive, coordinated plan for yards).



Implementation

October 2020



Security

Summary of findings

All of the yards operated by the Parks and Roads Services Branch contain valuable assets. This includes vehicles, equipment, materials, tools, technology, and information.

There is no consistent approach to yard security. This includes managing access to the yards, as well as securing assets, and reporting security incidents.

Ineffective security in the yards increases the risk of theft or damage of assets and can impact safety in the yard.

Yard access



One yard indicated they regularly connect with some people who live in the park. In turn, these individuals communicate issues or problems to the staff.

Most yards leave access gates open during operational hours. This included yards that had electronic card access, and those that were secured by padlock. In some yards, gates were left open even when no workers were present in the yard and in locations where trespassing was identified as a concern.

Leaving access gates open improves efficiency by allowing employees quicker entrance and exit from the yards; however, it is not clear that this convenience is significant enough to outweigh the safety and security risks associated with unrestricted yard access.

Vehicles and keys

Given the accessibility of the yard space, it is critical that vehicles and equipment are secure. The City has a directive that requires that vehicles are locked with the keys removed when they are not in operation. In 9 of the 19 yards, vehicles were unlocked. Although no keys were left in these vehicles, any items in the vehicles were easily accessible.

Within most the yards, vehicle keys are accessible to all employees. They are managed using electronic key boxes, pegboards, bulletin boards, metal key boxes, and wooden key boxes. There is no consistent practice to secure vehicle keys when not in use, and it is difficult to ensure that keys are returned after use.

Keys are kept in key boxes, electronic key boxes, and bulletin boards.



Vehicles are a high-value asset in each yard and need to be secured. By implementing and enforcing security procedures for vehicles and keys, the Branch can reduce the risk of loss and theft.

Tools and small equipment

All yards have portable small equipment, materials, and tools. These items will generally have a relatively low individual monetary value, but are required for efficient, effective day-to-day work.

Each yard secures these items differently. There are no guidelines or operating procedures that define how to secure these items. As a result, some yards are at a greater risk of loss and theft than others. By developing standard procedures for securing these items based on risk and value, the Branch may be able to better protect these assets.



Good Practice

Small hand tools may have a low monetary value, but spending time finding them when they are missing reduces efficiency. A team in one yard colour-coded hand tools to more quickly inventory their tools and proactively identify missing tools.

Securing tools

The workshop space of one yard was highly organized. It was clear that each tool had a dedicated storage space and these spaces were often labelled. This yard had identified that power drills were attractive assets for theft. A cupboard in the workbench was dedicated to storing these and there were a few designated individuals with the key.



The workshop space of another yard was not organized. It was clear that at one time, there were places where tools were supposed to be put, but this was not happening regularly. Power tools were not secured. This yard would have difficulty identifying if tools were missing, misplaced, or stolen.



Inspections

Yard inspections are intended to proactively identify issues before they become problems, and identify opportunities to improve on the current state. Although environmental and safety inspections occur regularly as per legislation, other inspections are not completed regularly and consistently at all yards. As such, there may be risks and issues in some yards that are not being detected.

Previous inspections did not identify that a low, large ventilation window in a yard building was secured by a small, broken latch. By removing a screen and old wooden vent slats, an individual could have easily accessed the building in which vehicle keys and other City assets were stored.

This access point has since been secured.



In 2016 the Parks and Roads Services Branch developed a guidance document related to inspections. However, most supervisors indicated they were unfamiliar with the document. Updating and communicating the information in the inspection guidance document would help ensure consistent inspection processes are followed in all yards.



One yard indicated they have issues with people cutting the fence to break into the yard. Supervisors in this yard established a rotating daily inspection to check the fence and ensure vehicles are locked.

Developing a system to track compliance with the inspection types would also help to ensure that required inspections are occurring regularly and consistently in all yards.

By regularly and consistently inspecting the yards, and managing that information in a systematic way, the Parks and Roads Services Branch can help ensure that their sites are safe, secure, effective, and efficient.

Information management



One yard has an exceptionally well-organized bulletin board where employees can easily access forms, policies, and other information.

In 2018, the Safety Data Management System (SDMS) was launched to capture safety inspection data. At the time of the audit, it was difficult to identify the type of inspection entered into the SDMS. This was due to inconsistent form names entered into the system. As the use of this system continues to be refined, consistent form names and data entry protocols will significantly increase the usability and data quality.

Corporate Security has an online reporting system for employees to report security issues such as trespassing, vandalism, and theft. However, Branch employees are using the SDMS to capture and track incidents of theft. Management identified the lack of awareness of the Corporate Security reporting system as the reason for this.

By using the SDMS system to track theft rather than the Corporate Security system, security incidents are under-reported to Corporate Security and safety incidents can be over-reported for OHS purposes.

By ensuring that security incidents are consistently reported to Corporate Security using their system, more accurate security data will be available to the Corporation and the Branch. This would allow the management of Parks and Roads Services Branch to identify higher risk yards or assets and develop targeted, cost-appropriate strategies to make the yards safer and more secure.

Recommendation 5

Assess security risks and implement security practices

Recommendation

Work with Corporate Security to assess the security risks in the yards, and develop and implement appropriate security practices including:

- a. Yard access procedures
- b. Securing vehicles and mobile equipment
- c. Securing small assets
- d. Clarifying yard inspection protocols
- e. Reporting security incidents



Responsible Party

Branch Manager, Parks and Roads Services



Accepted by Management

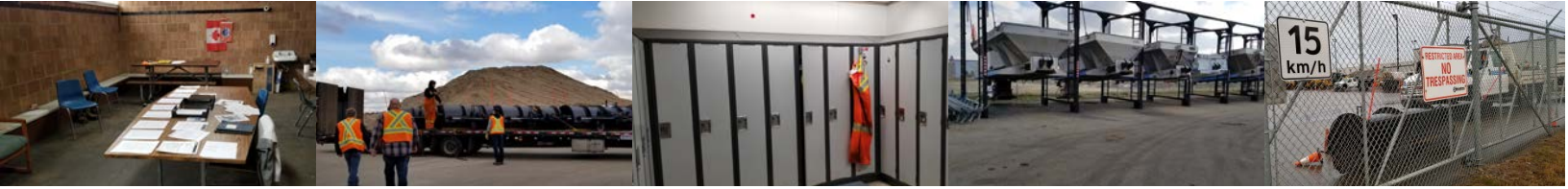
Management Response

Administration will review and update the standard operating procedures related to yard security, determine the right level of security required for each yard, and address specific issues identified in the audit report. Administration also plans to increase communication about the existing standard operating procedures in Q2 2019 to increase compliance for security considerations.



Implementation

February 2020



Conclusion

The objectives of this audit were to review the yard operations for the Parks and Roads Services Branch and assess if there is adequate planning to address future yard needs, and if yards are efficient, effective, and safe.

There has not been a comprehensive and coordinated planning process for yards. The lack of planning is one root cause of current issues with yards including yard location limitations, inconsistent yard conditions, and a lack of information to support investment decisions. The City Operations Department, which includes the Parks and Roads Services Branch, has initiated a project to develop a Service Operations Strategy. This Service Operations Strategy will be used to assess the current and future state of operations and will serve as a reference document for facility and yard capital investments and operational plans. We recommend that the Parks and Roads Services Branch develop a plan for yards.

As part of the ongoing work to align teams, processes, and assets that had previously been managed by different departments, in 2018 the City Operations Department, which includes the Parks and Roads Services Branch initiated a project to develop a Service Operations Strategy. This Service Operations Strategy will be used to assess the current and future state of operations and will serve as a reference document for facility and yard capital investments and operational plans. This project is expected to be complete by January 2020.

The Parks and Roads Services Branch is in the process of integrating functions, assets, and teams that were previously part of different departments and branches. At this time, processes and practices are inconsistent between yards, and authority for enforcing standards and making some decisions is unclear. This can increase safety risks and reduce the efficiency and effectiveness of the yard. We recommend that the Parks and Roads Services Branch clarify authority and processes for the yards.

There is considerable variation in the condition of yards including bathrooms, showers, office spaces, and work spaces; however, safety equipment tended to be consistently

available and accessible. Improvements to some yards have been implemented and are planned for 2019 to address OHS requirements and safety code issues. However, there are also yard conditions that impact the efficiency and effectiveness of employees, such as working in yards that lack amenities, or with workspace limitations. We recommend the Parks and Roads Services Branch develop a standard for yard conditions and prioritize improvements using that standard.

The capacity of individual yards has not been established and many of the yards are congested with vehicles, equipment, storage units, materials, and buildings. Congested yards increase safety risks and reduce efficiency and effectiveness. Sharing yard space with external organizations or business areas also impacts the use of space in a yard and increases risk. We recommend the Parks and Roads Services Branch review and optimize existing yard space including identifying yard capacity and addressing shared space arrangements.

There is no consistent approach to yard security. Access gates are typically left open and assets inside the yard are not consistently secured. This increases the risk of theft or damage of City assets, and can impact safety in the yard. We recommend the Parks and Roads Services Branch work with Corporate Security to assess security risks and implement appropriate security practices.

Throughout our yard visits we also identified good practices that are in place in some yards that could potentially be expanded to other yards. Some of these include:

- incentivizing the reporting of near misses to improve safety reporting,
- making decisions about yard layout that actively considered risks and benefits,
- developing relationships with the public to improve operations, and
- developing a simple, cost-effective method of tracking low value tools.

We would like to thank the employees, supervisors, and managers in Parks and Roads Services who shared their knowledge with us throughout this audit and who were open and receptive as we shared our observations with them.