



Hub's 'scorecard' rates Menino's urban mechanics

By Jessica Fargen / In Your Neighborhood | Sunday, April 10, 2011 | <http://www.bostonherald.com> | [Local Coverage](#)

Neighbors who think the city isn't responding fast enough to their pothole reports or trash complaints can now find out exactly how hard (or not) the city is working for them.

Mayor **Thomas M. Menino** is taking the unusual step of posting internal reports online that show how fast the city responds to neighborhood blights such as unsafe sidewalks and dead animals.

"It will be a scorecard for us to demonstrate how seriously we take the cases they submit," said Justin Holmes, the city's director of constituent engagement, who leads a biweekly meeting in which he dissects the data with department heads.

The move comes as the city is seeing an explosion in complaints, thanks to improved software that better tracks requests, the CitizensConnect phone app, and changes to internal record-keeping.

"Part of what we are seeing is residents feeling engaged, and seeing the city as even more responsive to their issues," said Chris Osgood, co-chairman of the mayor's office of New Urban Mechanics. "The city is holding itself publicly accountable."

The number of complaints, or what the city calls "service requests," jumped from 64,395 in 2009 to 109,429 last year.

In the first two months of 2011, there were 30,796 service requests, including nearly 2,400 from CitizensConnect.

The new monthly online reports are the boldest step yet to make the city's response to constituents more transparent. Already, the city posts online all the messages and photos snapped by CitizensConnect users.

Dan Sullivan, 35, was so happy with the city's response to his CitizensConnect message about offensive graffiti at a South Boston park last month that he sent a thank-you e-mail. The graffiti was cleaned up in about four days.

"You can see that people are actually listening," said Sullivan, who takes his dog and toddler son to the park frequently.

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