

Request for Authority to Enter into 311 Routing Agreements with Neighbouring Municipalities

Date:	March 17, 2009
To:	Government Management Committee
From:	Sue Corke, Deputy City Manager
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

This report is to request Council approval for the delegation of authority to City staff to enter into agreements with bordering municipalities/regions for 311 routing arrangements as required under the CRTC's General Tariff, Item 6001 (the "311 Service Tariff").

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Deputy City Manager recommends that:

- (1) Council authorize the Deputy City Manager (Cluster A) to negotiate and enter into agreements with bordering municipalities/regions for 311 routing arrangements as required under the Bell Canada General Tariff, Item 6001 (the "311 Service Tariff") on such terms as may be satisfactory to the Deputy City Manager and the City Solicitor, to address the issues as discussed in this report; and
- (2) Council authorize the 311 Project Director to a) direct Bell Canada to implement such routing arrangements as may be agreed to and b) pay any applicable rates and charges under the 311 Service Tariff.

Financial Impact

The total annual cost to implement these agreements will be less than \$10,000 based on current data provided by Bell Canada and estimate of calls per impacted customers. This expense has been included in the 311 2009 Recommended Operating Budget.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

City Council approved the 311 Customer Service Strategy at its meeting of September 28, 29, 30 and October 1, 2004. The 311 Customer Service Strategy described a consolidated Contact Centre for the City and the benefits of having a simple, easy-to-remember, three-digit number for residents to call to access City services and information.

As part of the implementation of this strategy and activating the three-digit number, there is a requirement to negotiate telephone routing agreements with municipalities that share borders with the City of Toronto.

Staff require authorization to negotiate these agreements, hence this report.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The CRTC approved the use of the 311 number for access to non-emergency municipal services in 2004. Subsequent to that decision, Bell Canada applied for and obtained approval from the CRTC for a 311 Service Tariff which would permit Bell Canada (as contemplated in the CRTC's 311 decision) to recover the costs of certain special routing arrangements where a telephone wire center boundary did not correspond to municipal borders.

Prior to the 311 number being activated by Bell Canada for the City of Toronto in June 2009, the Bell Canada 311 Service Tariff as approved by the CRTC requires the City of Toronto to have signed agreements with neighbouring municipalities on how to arrange routing where wire center boundaries do not align with municipal boundaries.

COMMENTS

In December 2008, Bell Canada informed the City of Toronto that certain wire center boundaries do not match the municipal boundaries and routing arrangements are therefore required in a number of cases with municipalities that border the City of Toronto.

The 311 Service Tariff indicates that agreement by all the municipalities are required for the routing arrangements before Bell Canada will implement a call routing arrangement and activate 311 service as contemplated under 311 Service Tariff.

The parties are required to decide whether they wish to have basic routing (i.e. “Area Code/Exchange Routing”) or enhanced routing (i.e. “Municipal Boundary Routing”). The implementation of enhanced routing will require both municipalities pay certain rates and charges as set out in the 311 Service Tariff. It is expected that the total cost to the City of Toronto will not exceed \$10,000 annually.

Investigation by 311 Project staff and City Legal staff indicate that authority has not previously been delegated for the purpose of entering into an agreement with other municipalities on routing arrangements and that further authority from City Council is required. Therefore, staff require a Council resolution for the authority to enter into these agreements.

It is proposed that “template” style of agreement be used which include terms addressing the following:

1. The agreement shall identify all shared wire centers and indicate the agreement of the parties with respect to the routing arrangements for each wire center area.
2. Where a wire center has been identified as requiring basic routing, the full wire center area shall be routed to the 311 call centre of the municipality within which the wire center is located, and that municipality shall undertake the live transfer of calls from a non-resident customer to the neighbouring municipality.
3. Where a wire center has been identified as requiring enhanced routing, calls will automatically be routed to the 311 call centre for each municipality.
4. A process for addressing future conversions from one routing option to the other where in the interests of both municipalities to do so.
5. Responsibility for the costs incurred by the parties in implementing and operating their 311 service, on the principle that neither party shall have any claim against the other with respect to such costs.
6. The conducting of period review(s) of the 311 arrangements to ensure that the chosen routing option is still appropriate.
7. Given the urgency of finalizing these agreements, which are currently required by Bell Canada at least one month prior to the Toronto 311 launch (scheduled for June 19, 2009), staff are requesting the authority to negotiate the terms required to allow the 311 project to proceed as scheduled.

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SIGNATURE

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