



# AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

## 311 Toronto – Full Potential For Improving Customer Service Has Yet To Be Realized

<b>Date:</b>	October 17, 2011
<b>To:</b>	Audit Committee
<b>From:</b>	Auditor General
<b>Wards:</b>	All
<b>Reference Number:</b>	

### SUMMARY

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The Auditor General's 2011 Work Plan included a review of 311 Toronto. The review objective was to assess the operating effectiveness and efficiency of 311 Toronto. The audit results are presented in the attached report entitled "311 Toronto – Full Potential For Improving Customer Service Has Yet To Be Realized."

### RECOMMENDATIONS

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**The Auditor General recommends that:**

1. City Council request the Director, 311 Toronto Division, to take steps to reduce call wait time and call abandoned rate (i.e., percentage of calls not answered). Such steps should include but not be limited to:
  - a. Increasing the number of calls answered per staff per day;
  - b. Addressing the daily absenteeism issue among contact center staff; and
  - c. Ensuring effective monitoring measures.
  
2. City Council request the Deputy City Managers, in consultation with the Director of 311, to conduct a comprehensive review of business processes of the call centers operated by Solid Waste Management, Municipal Licensing and Standards, and Urban Forestry, with a view to streamlining processes to effect a consolidation of operations.

3. City Council request the Director, 311 Toronto Division, in consultation with the General Managers/Executive Director of Solid Waste Management, Transportation Services, Toronto Water, Municipal Licensing and Standards, and Parks, Forestry and Recreation, to improve the service request status information such that customers are provided with accurate and clear status information on-line.
4. City Council request the Director, 311 Toronto Division, to ensure timely response to divisional change requests such that information used by 311 agents is up-to-date to meet both divisional and customer needs.
5. City Council request the Director, 311 Toronto Division, to expedite the finalization of a Service Level Agreement with the five City divisions whose service requests are created by 311 Toronto. Protocol and procedures relating to updating divisional information, reporting frequency and criteria, and dispute resolution are to be adequately addressed in the Service Level Agreement.
6. City Council request the Director, 311 Toronto Division, to review daily call patterns and staff levels to ensure an appropriate level of staff coverage.
7. City Council request the Director, 311 Toronto Division, to ensure cost-effective deployment of staff in alignment with workload for the overnight shift.
8. City Council request the City Manager, in consultation with the Chief Information Officer and the Director of 311, to review the level of information technology staff resources in the 311 Toronto Division to identify cost saving opportunities. Such a review should include assessing the merits of merging 311 Toronto information technology resources into the Corporate Information and Technology Division.
9. City Council request the Director, 311 Toronto Division, to develop a business case on incorporating telephone self-serve technologies into 311 operation where necessary to improve service level and reduce call wait time. The business case should outline short-term and long-term costs and potential benefits.
10. City Council request the Director, 311 Toronto Division, to consider including a customer satisfaction survey questionnaire in the 311 Toronto website to facilitate timely customer feedback. The survey results be periodically analyzed and reported on the 311 website or through other means.
11. City Council request the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division, to assess the need for carrying forward the balance of the fund in the 311 Customer Service Strategy sub-project to 2012 Capital Budget. Should the fund be carried forward to future years, the General Manager of the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division ensures consultation and coordination with the Director of 311 Toronto Division in future expenditures of the fund.

12. City Council request the Director, 311 Toronto Division, in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer, to ensure that the inter-departmental charges to divisions are based on updated and accurate information supporting the basis for funding and cost recoveries.

## **Financial Impact**

Implementation of the recommendations in this report will improve the operational efficiency of 311 Toronto. The extent of any resources required or potential cost savings resulting from implementing the recommendations in this report is not determinable at this time.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

The Auditor General's 2011 Audit Work Plan included an audit of 311 Toronto. The Auditor General develops an annual work plan based on results of a detailed risk assessment conducted by the Office every five years. The last risk assessment was conducted in 2009.

## **ISSUE BACKGROUND**

In September 2004 City Council adopted a 311 Customer Service Strategy that defined the vision, mission, strategic goals, and design elements of a new 311 model of customer service. Further development of the Toronto 311 Strategy was guided by a Council-Staff Working Group comprised of elected officials and senior management staff. A 311 Project Management Office was established to manage the implementation process.

The City launched 311 Toronto in September 2009. Located in the former Metro Hall Council Chamber, 311 Toronto Contact Centre provides the public with one easy-to-remember phone number to obtain non-emergency City services and information 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

In addition to answering general enquiries, 311 Toronto has the capacity to electronically create service requests for the following five City divisions:

- Solid Waste Management Services
- Transportation Services
- Toronto Water
- Municipal Licensing and Standards
- Urban Forestry (part of the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division).

311 Toronto is currently working on adding Animal Services and recreational program registration to the 311 service request menu.

## **COMMENTS**

As 311 Toronto is entering its third year of implementation, this review offers a timely and objective evaluation of service level and operating efficiency, as well as opportunities for cost-savings. Implementation of the 12 recommendations contained in this report will help improve 311 Toronto's customer service and efficiency.

The audit report entitled "311 Toronto – Full Potential For Improving Customer Service Has Yet To Be Realized" is attached as Appendix 1. Management's response to the audit recommendations is attached as Appendix 2.

## **CONTACT**

Alan Ash, Director, Auditor General's Office  
Tel: 416-392-8476, Fax: 416-392-3754, E-mail: [AAsh@toronto.ca](mailto:AAsh@toronto.ca)

Jane Ying, Audit Manager, Auditor General's Office  
Tel: 416-392-8480, Fax: 416-392-3754, E-mail: [Jying@toronto.ca](mailto:Jying@toronto.ca)

## **SIGNATURE**

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Jeff Griffiths, Auditor General

11-TIS-01

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Appendix 1: 311 Toronto – Full Potential For Improving Customer Service Has Yet To Be Realized

Appendix 2: Management's Response to Audit Recommendations on 311 Toronto