



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Update on Call Centres and Counter Service Review

Date:	September 30, 2013
To:	Government Management Committee
From:	Neil Evans, Director, 311 Toronto
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	P:\2013\Internal Services\311\Gm13003-311(AFS 18280)

SUMMARY

This report provides information on divisions that have call centre or customer information functions that are not integrated with 311. This report also provides a status update on the Counter Service Review.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Director, 311 Toronto recommends that:

1. The Government Management Committee receive this report for information.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications arising from this report at this stage.

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

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on September 9 2013, Government Management Committee adopted motions requesting the Chief Corporate Officer to report to Government Management Committee on:

- Divisions that have call centre or customer service information functions that are not integrated in 311; and
- A status update on the Counter Service Review.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.GM24.15>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Following a recommendation in the 2011 Core Service Review to "*consider reducing or eliminating the 311 development capacity when the model is fully implemented*" and the subsequent approval by Council to eliminate all new 311 development as of 2013, the 311 Toronto Division no longer has the capacity to build and implement new service integrations.

By removing new 311 developments, the 2005 and 2009 Council approved 311 Customer Service Strategy with phased implementations of future City services ended.

COMMENTS

In 2005, Council approved the 311 Customer Service Strategy as a phased implementation to optimize existing City resources, mitigate risks and to build early public confidence in 311. 311 was approved as a single point of access with an integrated (telephone, email/fax, web and counter) service delivery model for customer service across divisions.

The 2009 approved capital plan built on the initial implementation to include additional phased integration of 311 services with City divisions. Following a recommendation in the 2011 Core Service Review to "*consider reducing or eliminating the 311 development capacity when the model is fully implemented*" and the subsequent approval by Council to eliminate all new 311 development as of 2013, the 311 Toronto Division no longer has the capacity to build and implement new service integrations.

Existing Divisional Call Centre/Customer Information Functions

311 Toronto provides a single point of access to non-emergency City of Toronto program and service inquiries for all residents, businesses and visitors. In the 2005 Council-approved 311 Customer Service Strategy, service integration was highlighted as "best in class", effectively and efficiently providing end-to-end service fulfilment. As part of that approved strategy, 311 initially integrated with five divisions (Toronto Water, Transportation, Solid Waste Management, Forestry and Municipal Licensing and Standards). 311 continues to leverage the technology and expand on these initial

integrations as part of the 311 operational workplan. Service integrations are prioritized based on their ability to improve divisional efficiency and customer service.

As approved in the 2009 capital budget, 311 has or will complete additional integrations with Toronto Animal Services (September 2012), Facilities Room Bookings (December 2013) and Recreation Registration (deferred to 2015 to align with corporate Information and Technology initiatives). Two additional integrations with City divisions were planned as a phased implementation in 2014, 2015 and 2017 but will not be realized due to the elimination of new developments from the 311 approved capital plan as of 2013.

The following divisions provide substantial call centre or customer information service, but are not integrated with 311 Toronto:

- Toronto Public Health;
- Toronto Employment and Social Services;
- Parks and Recreation;
- Court Services;
- Revenue Services;
- Children's Services;
- City Clerks;
- Economic Development and Culture;
- Shelter Housing and Support;
- Municipal Licensing and Standards (Licensing);
- Facilities Management (Custodial Requests); and
- Toronto Building.

Counter Service Update

While the 311 Customer Service Strategy approved by Council described a multi-channel approach to customer service, 311 Toronto's focus to date has not included a counter service strategy. In fact, the division has not operated a counter service since 2010 when

its operations at the front counters of City Hall and Civic Centres were discontinued as part of a budget cut.

For the most part, the City's counters (400+) are divisionally operated and not corporately consolidated. Building on the City's significant improvements to the phone channel through the implementation of 311 Toronto, and the recent improvements to the City's website, the City Manager's Office retained a consultancy firm in late 2012 to conduct a Service Efficiency Review of the City's counter services.

The firm conducted extensive research and review of the City's counter operations. The consultants identified several opportunities for the City to improve its counter operations, including consolidating counters, rationalizing services, improving efficiency of existing services, shifting interactions to lower cost channels and pursuing partnership opportunities with other sectors.

The consultant's findings were generally supported by all the stakeholder divisions that were part of the Review, but all stakeholders acknowledged that further extensive analysis and review is required before the City can consider proceeding on any of the opportunities identified.

A number of divisions have explored options for, implemented or have initiatives underway to improve counter service. Two examples are:

- The work being done by Court Services and Revenue Services to consolidate their service counters at the York Civic Centre; and
- Toronto Children's Services has integrated the front counter of two offices with Toronto Employment and Social Services. This has reduced City counters by two. The divisions now share integrated reception areas in two locations (Metro Hall and Malvern). Through service integration, city residents have access to a wider range of services in one location, and staff have developed a greater understanding of other each other's services.

These are just two examples of the cross-divisional work being done to modernize counter delivery in the City.

Additionally, the Counter Service Steering Committee, co-chaired by Deputy City Manager Brenda Patterson and City Treasurer Guiliana Carbone, further identified the need to establish a clear lead and governance structure for a formal corporate counter service improvement project and to prepare a capital budget submission for such a project as part of the 2015 budget.

A small team of staff, under the direction of the Chief Corporate Officer, will identify next steps with respect to counter service improvement. In addition to establishing a lead and budget submission, the team will review the opportunities identified by the consultant in more detail before any action is considered. It is anticipated that staff will be prepared to report to Government Management Committee on their findings and recommendations for next steps by mid-2014.

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