

City-wide Service Promise Refresh Initiative Update

Date: May 16, 2024

To: Service Excellence Committee

From: Executive Director, Customer Experience

Wards: All

SUMMARY

At its meeting held March 19, 2024, the Service Excellence Committee requested the City Manager, in consultation with the Executive Director, Customer Experience (311), to report back to the Service Excellence Committee by May 31, 2024, with an update on the development of the City's Service Promise, and outlining the specific principles being considered for interactions across all service channels, including staff-to-public interactions and staff-to-staff interactions.

The Executive Director, Customer Experience (311) will deliver a presentation to the Service Excellence Committee in response to this request to provide an update on the Service Promise Refresh Initiative and outline the principled statements that make up the refreshed Service Promise. This report serves to complement that presentation by summarizing the work to date and outlining next steps.

The Service Promise Refresh Initiative is part of the City of Toronto's journey towards greater service excellence. It will renew the City's guidelines for professional and consistent service in daily interactions with the public, Members of Council and each other. Significant progress has been made to refresh the Service Promise and City-wide Service Standards, collectively referred to as the Service Promise, and to plan for implementation - first with staff internally, and then to Members of Council and the public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Director, Customer Experience (311) recommends that:

1. The Service Excellence Committee receive this report and presentation for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact statement.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting held March 19, 2024 the Service Excellence Committee requested the City Manager, in consultation with the Executive Director, Customer Experience (311), to report back to the Service Excellence Committee by May 31, 2024 with an update on the development of the City's Service Promise, and outlining the specific principles being considered for interactions across all service channels, including staff-to-public interactions and staff-to-staff interactions.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.SE2.1>

COMMENTS

Background

The refreshed City-wide Service Promise brings together two previously existing documents: the Customer Promise, developed by the Toronto at Your Service (TAYS) Program and published internally, and the Corporate Customer Service Standards, developed by the City Manager's Office and published on the City of Toronto website. It also acts in complement with the Service User Code of Conduct that is published on the City of Toronto website, which outlines unacceptable behaviour when interacting with City staff and how staff are protected when that occurs, based on the [Human Rights and Anti-Harassment/Discrimination \(HRAP\) – City of Toronto](#).

With the evolution of the City's customer experience program and the establishment of the Customer Experience Division in January 2023, the City decided to take steps to refresh its Customer Promise, in alignment with current operations and language. This began by combining the previously existing Customer Promise and Corporate Customer Service Standards to create the City-wide Service Promise.

The resulting Service Promise was published as a 'preview' internally in July 2023, and will be published on the City of Toronto website in Q4 2024 for the public to easily access, following internal validation and implementation.

City-wide Staff Consultation

In October 2023, City staff formed the City-wide Service Promise Refresh Network with representatives from 40 divisions to gather feedback about the Service Promise language and expectations. Three key themes emerged:

- **Support for greater internal consistency.** Staff place high value on having City-wide standards, alongside the desire to maintain room for operational realities when necessary.
- **Need for clearer internal service wording.** Staff indicated a desire for wording to better reflect the experiences of staff-to-staff interactions in addition to staff-to-Councillor and staff-to-public interactions.
- **Importance of sustainment actions.** Staff emphasized the need for intentional efforts and accountability to build and sustain awareness and application of the Service Promise over time.

A Refreshed City-wide Service Promise

This City-wide input from the Service Promise Refresh Network, along with jurisdictional research findings, was used to evolve the refreshed Service Promise to reflect a consistent, One Toronto approach to service delivery while also ensuring operational flexibility when necessary.

The refreshed City-wide Service Promise can be found below. Additionally, the Appendix to this report includes a side-by-side comparison of each statement in its original form and its refreshed form. Also included are notes highlighting the changes between the two and the reasons behind those changes.

Publishing on the City of Toronto website is forthcoming in Q4 2024, following engagement with Members of Council and senior leadership, and communications to City of Toronto staff. Concurrently, divisions will be provided with support materials as they prepare for the public launch of the Service Promise.

Service Promise & Standards

A Service Promise guides how City of Toronto staff interact with each other, Members of Council, residents, businesses, visitors and partners. It serves as a guideline for delivering professional and consistent service across the organization.

While exemplifying the values and commitments within the [Toronto Public Service By-Law](#), we promise to:

1. Treat you fairly with dignity and respect.
2. Make your experience as simple and convenient as possible.
3. Provide choice, accessibility, and flexibility, where possible, in accessing our services.
4. Be knowledgeable, professional, and help you find the information you need.
5. Offer responsive and reliable services, following the City-wide Service Standards.
6. Protect your privacy and personal information.

City-Wide Service Standards

City-wide Service Standards provide a guideline for delivering professional and consistent service across the organization. The following standards detail how

staff can demonstrate their commitment to the customer experience and work together to uphold the City's refreshed Service Promise.

1. Inquiries and requests, including those received by phone and email, should be acknowledged within two business days, or 48 hours where services operate on a 24-hour daily cycle – unless business needs vary, which should be stated in staff- and public-facing service standards communications.
2. An out-of-office voicemail greeting and an automated email response message should be activated as needed, providing the name and contact information for a co-worker, or an alternative contact.
3. Email signatures will be used by staff in all internal and external communications, following the Corporate Identity Program's email signature guidelines.
4. Participation in meetings should align with the [Hybrid Work Program](#), including requirements to attend in-person or on-camera, where specified.

Phased Implementation

Before the Service Promise can be published publicly on the City of Toronto website, it must be validated with Members of Council, and City of Toronto staff and divisions must have an opportunity to build awareness and readiness to apply it in their work. To that end, the implementation of the refreshed City-wide Service Promise is a three-phased approach:

- **Phase 1:** Consult internally with City staff to refresh the language (complete).
- **Phase 2:** Share with Members of Council and build leadership support for staff awareness and application (in progress - Q2-Q3 2024 anticipated).
- **Phase 3:** Implement with the public and continue leadership support for staff awareness and application (forthcoming - Q4 2024 anticipated).

Next Steps

Planning for the following activities is currently underway as the Customer Experience Division, along with its partners, continues to drive towards service excellence in the form of professional and consistent service delivery City-wide:

- **Division-led Implementation and Sustainment:** Actions and materials to build staff awareness and application of the Service Promise in their work.
- **Share with Members of Council and their Offices:** Enhance awareness of the Service Promise.
- **Public Implementation:** Following necessary preparation City-wide, publish the Service Promise and Service User Code of Conduct on the City of Toronto website.
- **Progress Measurement:** Work with divisions to explore opportunities for progress measurement to assess the service experience from a Service Promise lens.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Appendix 1 - Presentation: City-wide Service Promise Refresh Initiative Update
Appendix 2 - Side-by-Side Statement Comparison: City-wide Service Promise