For Information Only

Customer Service Issues and Principles

Presented To:	Finance and Administration Committee
Presented:	Tuesday, Apr 17, 2018
Report Date	Monday, Mar 26, 2018
Type:	Presentations

Resolution

For Information Only

Relationship to the Strategic Plan / Health Impact Assessment

This report relates to the pillar "Responsive, Fiscally Prudent, Open Governance" in that it outlines the development of a customer service strategy for the City.

Report Summary

The purpose of this report is to share with Council the issues and principles identified as priority areas to enhance the organization's customer service culture. The issues below have been identified as those that an enterprise-wide customer service strategy needs to address, while the principles are those that should be used to guide the development of such a strategy.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Signed By

Report Prepared By
Eliza Bennett
Director of Communications and Community Engagement
Digitally Signed Mar 26, 18

Division Review
Eliza Bennett
Director of Communications and Community Engagement
Digitally Signed Mar 26, 18

Financial Implications
Jim Lister
Manager of Financial Planning and Budgeting
Digitally Signed Mar 27, 18

Recommended by the C.A.O.
Ed Archer
Chief Administrative Officer
Digitally Signed Mar 26, 18

Customer Service at the City of Greater Sudbury: Issues and Principles

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to share with Council the issues and principles identified as priority areas to enhance the organization's customer service culture. The issues below have been identified as those that an enterprise-wide customer service strategy needs to address, while the principles are those that will be used to guide the development of such a strategy.

Background

In January 2018, staff presented a report to Council entitled "Evolving Service Strategy and 311". This report, and the subsequent presentation made to Finance and Administration Committee on February 6, provided an overview of the strategy staff are developing to establish clear expectations about the service experience people have when doing business with the City. As part of that report, staff identified that focusing on transaction-oriented business processes, including a particular focus on 311 services, will allow staff to produce a series of plans to evolve the organization's policy, process design, technology utilization and staff training, all of which will assist us to ensure that service promises are consistently delivered.

Customer Service Issues at the City of Greater Sudbury

This section describes issues associated with customer service practices at the City of Greater Sudbury and identifies approaches that could be considered to address them. The basis for determining the issues and approaches is a review of a number of sources, including:

- Employee feedback
- Citizen survey (2016)
- Data from 311 and call centre statistics
- Best practice review including contact with other municipalities and review of other municipalities' customer service strategies
- Review of findings from the *7th Citizens First* report on drivers impacting customer satisfaction from the Institute for Citizen-Centred Service (ICCS). The ICCS is a Canadian institute established in the late 1990s to sustain and further develop efforts to improve citizen satisfaction with public sector service delivery in Canada. Their national study, the *Citizens First* report, has

been published at regular intervals since1998 and analyzes what people think of customer service delivery in Canadian government agencies and what the priorities are for improvement.

These sources help identify the organization's "current state" as well as the issues to be considered when assessing the City's fit with leading, contemporary customer service practices. The detailed research conducted to inform the analysis of the priority areas presented in this report can be found in Appendix A.

Based on the information available, staff have identified five issues that the City should address in order to improve the customer service experience.

1. Policies, Standards and Workflow

Customer service has been identified as a priority by Council, the City's Executive Leadership Team, and municipal employees. It was a key principle associated with the organizational restructuring that occurred in 2016. It was also identified as one of the organizational areas of focus in response to the 2016 employee survey. It is a core mandate of the organization, reflected in the City's Vision, Mission and Values. Finally, Council's Strategic Plan *Greater Together* identifies "refocus on customer service" as a priority.

However, the City does not currently have a common set of policies, standards or workflows that reflect an enterprise approach to customer service. Historically, departments and divisions had little standard guidance to follow when determining customer service approaches. This resulted in inconsistencies and gaps that did not support effective service delivery across the whole organization. In leading organizations and in the data provided by *Citizens First*, it is clear that some additional level of corporate guidance in the form of policies, standards and workflows should exist to ensure the customer experience reflects a "best practice" example.

The City of Greater Sudbury could address this issue by:

- Comparing existing policies, standards and workflows with best in class examples to identify gaps, modifications or other changes that ensures Greater Sudbury's approach aligns with contemporary leading practice
- Identifying data requirements for work processes that are considered important for the customer service experience to facilitate performance measurement and feedback with a view to ensuring sufficient, appropriate information is in the right staff's hands, at the right time, to support a focus on service outcomes
- Regularly seeking and acting on customer service feedback from citizens and employees

2. Service Consistency

This issue reflects not only the absence of corporate guidance described above, but it also reflects the perceived gap between frontline employee survey feedback and the overall corporate perception of the relative priority that "customer service experience" has among a list of corporate issues. *Citizens First* and best practice municipalities indicate that service design across channels needs to reflect a consistent experience. Similarly, the nature of staff interaction in the customer service experience should reflect a

consistent level. For example, a relatively new employee should be just as prepared for common customer service interactions as a seasoned, longer-serving employee so that a customer has a consistent experience with either one.

One of the key issues identified as part of the research conducted in examining customer service issues relates to the lack of regular, routine measurement of our customer service performance. Without reliable, regular data, it is difficult to identify issues – and therefore difficult to devise solutions to resolve them. Measurement is the foundation of a customer service strategy. As noted in Appendix A, the City does not have an entire corporate view of our customer service performance due to missing data on several levels and for different reasons (e.g., different tracking systems, etc.).

The City of Greater Sudbury could address this issue by:

- Establishing standards for customer service that focus on timeliness, accuracy, and responsiveness;
- Agreeing on a set of key performance indicators and a regular reporting framework on those KPIs for customer service
- Defining "first call resolution" and measuring accordingly
- Developing a process that effectively addresses issue resolution including cross-departmental collaboration, training, process flow charts, and timeline standards
- Establishing and measuring against customer service response standards

3. Training and Development

While some areas of the organization have localized customer service training and have been very successful in making changes to meet the needs of their specific stakeholders, there remains a need to identify an approach for an enterprise-wide customer service program. Similarly, in the 311 area, training has historically been done on a peer-to-peer basis following an in-house manual. There is an opportunity to review what the training covers, how it covers it, and how it is delivered. Recently, job responsibilities in 311 have been rearranged to ensure that responsibility for the development and implementation of training and quality assurance programs for 311 staff is a specific accountability, to ensure that we can conduct consistent training that allows us to improve on performance over time.

The research also shows that although the leadership competency of "citizen/customer focus" is included in the City's talent management competency dictionary, we lack systems to identify, foster, and grow that competency in our employees (current, future and potential).

Finally, interdepartmental collaboration is improving; however, there are process enhancements that can still be made. For example, there can be improvements in the flow of information to and from 311 and operations, to reduce the potential for information and process gaps.

Key actions that could address this issue include:

- Include customer service competencies in all recruitment processes
- Recognize and celebrate customer service best practices across the organization

- ♦ Source and implement an enterprise-wide customer service program along with a leadership support toolkit
- Establish a customer service commitment statement for leaders and employees to create a sense of accountability and a guiding principle for service expectations
- Review 311 and operating department business processes related to customer service
- Ensure a rigorous and effective issue resolution process
- Empower employees to provide excellent customer service and provide them with the tools to do so effectively
- Establish clear service expectations with the community through a combination of education, communication, and standards.

4. Technology Support

The City currently uses Active Citizen Requests (ACR) as its Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software. This system is used by many, but not all areas, which means that in some cases informal methods of communication are used to receive, handle, and close citizen inquiries. A number of areas are working to establish processes to use ACR (at all, or more effectively). Ultimately, this will result in improved customer service and will also allow for improved tracking of information such as number of calls, escalation of calls, and the rate of inquiries closed (on time and late).

311 service request calls are tracked using ACR, while public works cases are tracked internally through different software, CityWorks. The two systems are integrated at a number of levels but there remain opportunities for stronger integration.

Technological integration will be a significant factor in the discussions associated with the change in CRM over 2018-2019. As Council is aware, the company that developed ACR is no longer supporting the system and a new customer relationship management system must be sourced. As an initial step in that process, an RFP was issued to retain a consultant to develop a CRM business plan and that work will begin shortly. This process will provide an opportunity to look at how CityWorks can be integrated within a new system to streamline the customer service experience.

The drive to change our customer service processes, compounded with the need for a new CRM platform, presents a number of opportunities and challenges. The market has evolved significantly since 2007, and CRM software now offers improved functionalities. The City's ACR currently has limited capacity to integrate with other CGS software. The opportunity exists given the changing market to identify a CRM solution that would assist the City in achieving its customer service, engagement, and operational goals and requirement, while streamlining our CRM processes further.

Key actions that could address this issue include:

- ♦ Continue the process to source a new CRM system
- ♦ Ensure buy-in and commitment to a standard tool for the handling and resolution of requests and complaints by all departments

- Review and assess technological integration with other City systems that perform or are related to customer service for alignment and consistency

5. Role of the 311 Call Centre

Municipalities with an enterprise-wide customer service strategy use their call centres differently than the City of Greater Sudbury does. Needs, trends, and operational and community requirements have evolved over the last several years, and there is an opportunity to adapt the 311 call centre operations to match those changes. Data shows that 311 operators have the required capacity to implement those changes, and there is an opportunity to review the team's structure to more clearly emphasize customer service excellence and process improvement. This is currently underway, with the successful recruitment of a new Manager of 311 and Customer Service and by focusing the role of an existing staff member on training and quality assurance.

There are, equally, opportunities to create consistency in 311's processes, and in how departments deal with and involve 311 and opportunities to more consistently track and use 311 data, both as it relates to call centre performance and customer trends and satisfaction.

After-hours calls to 311 are handled by a third-party contractor. This can lead to differences in customer service standards, and ultimately decreased customer satisfaction. A review of data from after-hours calls is currently being conducted, and service recommendations will emanate from that review later within the next few months.

Key actions that could address this issue include:

- Continue to review the structure, roles and job descriptions in 311 to maximize resources available and align roles with organizational need and community expectations
- Establish a training and quality assurance program for 311 staff
- Establish processes to integrate 311 operations with operators to ensure accuracy and timeliness associated with responses
- Review operating hours for the 311 call centre with a focus on customer satisfaction and cost effectiveness

Customer Service Principles

This section describes a set of customer service principles informed by from the issues described above. These principles are those that staff believe should apply to the development of a customer service strategy for the City of Greater Sudbury, and should be reasonably expected to address the issues identified above.

Recommended Principles

1. We have agreed upon standards for customer service.
2. We recruit, train and empower employees to provide great customer service and recognize those who go the extra mile.
3. We resolve issues on a first contact basis where possible.
4. Our staff are knowledgeable and consistently have the information they need to provide the right answer.
5. We are committed to measuring and improving our customer service performance.
6. We use technology to effectively leverage customer service opportunities and address customer service issues.
7. A positive customer service culture is part of the City of Greater Sudbury brand.

None of the above principles can stand alone: they are all interconnected. For example, resolving an issue on the first call (principle 3) cannot reasonably be achieved without measuring our success (principle 5), ensuring that staff have the knowledge to resolve the issue (principle 4), the support of the senior leaders in the organization to go the extra mile (principle 2), and the training and the technology to support their work (principles 2 and 6).

Each of the principles is outlined in more detail below.

Principle 1: We have agreed upon standards for customer service.

The City of Greater Sudbury has committed to customer service excellence in a number of foundational documents. However, there remains a need to clearly identify through policies, standards, and processes what that commitment means. The lack of such tools has historically led to inconsistent customer service practices across the organization, which in turn leads to citizens not knowing what to expect when they engage with the municipality.

As shown in Appendix A, the Institute for Citizen-Centred Services (ICCS) identifies “delivery timeliness” as one of the top two drivers for customer satisfaction. The report also identifies that customer expectations are increasing as it relates to the amount of time they expect to wait to receive a service or have an issue resolved.

This first principle also addresses issues associated with access and consistency of service. As has been shared previously with Council, customer service is provided across the City of Greater Sudbury thousands of times each day in several ways using a variety of media: indirectly (users of municipal infrastructure), directly (in person, in the field, by phone, email, social media or website). The level of service is changeable based on *how* citizens access the service.

By establishing standards for customer service, which are supported by policies, workflow processes, training, and appropriate technology, the City of Greater Sudbury can address a number of issues outlined earlier in this report. Customer service standards will ensure that employees and citizens alike will know

what customer service expectation they should have when engaging with the municipality – no matter which area of the organization they are engaging with.

Principle 2: We recruit, train and empower employees to provide great customer service and recognize those who go the extra mile.

Organizations that excel at customer service have developed or sourced a formal, enterprise-wide customer service training program that is delivered to all frontline employees and that emphasizes the organization's customer service philosophies. Recruitment tools and processes in these organizations routinely address the need for customer service skills, either through interview tools, assessment tools, or reference checks.

The City of Greater Sudbury's talent management framework includes a "customer/citizen focus." It is defined as, "The desire to work closely with internal and external customers (e.g., citizens of CGS, residents, patients, colleagues, other divisions/departments, community partners, key stakeholders, etc.) to meet and exceed their expectations. It is the ability and willingness to understand and address their needs and continually provide high levels of service by keeping customer needs at the forefront of activities. Individuals with high levels of this competency demonstrate a strong commitment to delivering excellent service and achieving customer service outcomes to a high standard of quality." This competency includes the following key behaviours:

1. Takes personal responsibility for delivering quality service.
2. Addresses underlying customer/stakeholder needs.
3. Monitors and improves quality of customer service.
4. Uses a long-term perspective; acts as a trusted advisor.

Recruitment and retention that establish a baseline of customer/citizen focus, supported by formal and ongoing training, is by the senior levels of the organization. The training should include at a minimum decision-making, communication, conflict resolution, positive body language and other important customer service skills. These components are vital to ensuring that City of Greater Sudbury employees are capable of, and supported in, providing great customer service.

In addition, in organizations where customer service is prioritized, employees who provide exceptional customer service are recognized in a public setting and celebrated for their efforts. The City of Greater Sudbury WISE recognition program speaks to customer service excellence; however, this principle decentralizes the responsibility for recognizing – both identifying and celebrating – customer service to all staff, and to citizens as well. Celebrating customer service excellence should reasonably be expected to positively impact on the organization's reputation.

This principle also incorporates one of the City's underlying customer service philosophies, which equates respect with service. This means that just as staff are empowered to make customer service decisions, they are equally empowered to cease the delivery of service when dealing with violence, harassment, or otherwise unacceptable behaviour in the workplace.

Principle 3: We resolve issues on a first contact basis wherever possible.

In their 2014 report, the ICCS identified "issue resolution" as the second of the top two drivers that impact customer satisfaction. This driver is a composite of factors that include:

1. I have confidence that any future issues will be addressed to my satisfaction.
2. Any issues I encountered in the service process were easily resolved.
3. Any complaints I made about my service experience were addressed to my satisfaction.

They note that the strong impact that issue resolution has on satisfaction is a major new finding for the 2014 study, and the ICCS recommends that all jurisdictions should take action to address issue resolution, and citizens' perceptions of it.

The supporting data in the ICCS report indicates that issue resolution has much to do with resolving barriers to getting service (such as finding the information they need, knowing where to go and what the process is), and issues with staff, as it does with timeliness (ie, having to wait too long to have the issue resolved).

Additionally, first call resolution is a criterion associated with customer service excellence in high performing organization, and clear definition of the term, along with clear targets, are key elements of a service strategy driven by citizen needs and expectations.

By addressing issue resolution, the City will be addressing one of the primary drivers associated with customer satisfaction with government services. It is worth noting that the ability of staff to resolve issues on a first contact basis speaks to a variety of underlying support structures and needs, including: appropriate issue identification, appropriate knowledge base, appropriate training, appropriate leadership support and buy-in, and appropriate tools to measure and track success.

Principle 4: Our staff are knowledgeable and consistently have the information they need to provide the right answer.

The ICCS 2016 report identifies "staff knowledge" as one of several factors that should be improved across government services to positively impact on customer satisfaction, specifically as it relates to citizens' perception of their interaction with staff.

Customers expect staff who are providing service to them to have the information they need to provide the service. They expect the information they receive to be accurate. They expect that staff are both knowledgeable and competent, and they expect to be able to trust the information they receive.

The City should increasingly focus on creating pathways for the effective transfer of knowledge to those who provide frontline customer service. At the City of Greater Sudbury, there are a number of elements that would seem to indicate that our interdepartmental collaboration processes do not easily allow for knowledge to be transferred to those involved in customer service.

Increasing the knowledge of staff to be able to address issues – or, equally, to be effective navigators to direct people to the right person immediately – will build the City's capacity to enhance customer satisfaction.

This principle addresses issues associated with resolution rates (that is, case closures) as well as some of the issues associated with the role of the 311 call centre who may be, at times, unable to provide information – or up-to-date information – to residents.

Principle 5: We are committed to measuring and improving our customer service performance.

One of the key issues identified in the customer service issues is the lack of formal, routine measurement of customer service performance at the City of Greater Sudbury. As noted previously, organizations that excel at customer service measure and evaluate the customer experience within their organization. This includes regular surveys using a variety of tools such as mystery shoppers and quantitative data such as first call resolution ratios.

Identifying key performance indicators that speak to our performance as an organization is a foundational element of a customer service strategy. Regular reporting on performance allows us to be responsive to needs and trends, and informs our decision-making.

Measurement is not only on a quantitative level: there are also improvements to be made by measuring and analyzing qualitative efforts. For example, the ICCS recommends that issues faced by clients be tracked and analyzed to identify potential improvement strategies.

Organizations with high customer service performance measure themselves against standards that they have defined for themselves as well as standards accepted as "best practice" in the industry. Measuring our performance means that we can recognize where we are doing well and improve where there are gaps. It also means that we can participate in processes such as the Service Quality Measurement (SQM) Group and other recognizes quantitative analyses.

This principle underlies and informs all other proposed principles.

Principle 6: We use technology to effectively leverage customer service opportunities and address customer service needs.

The ICCS 2014 report identifies a growth in customer preference for accessing government services online. This is in line with the increase that has been seen in the use of mobile technology to access the City's digital platforms (website, etc.) over the last two years. Currently, more than 53% of users access our services through a mobile platform and that number will continue to grow.

Social media inquiries and complaints account for a small but growing number of ACR cases created. More than 300 emails are sent to the @311 email address each month. As well, e-government services are

becoming a must-have rather than a nice-to-have for all levels of government. Finally, as outlined previously, the City's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is at the end of its useful life.

This principle speaks to the potential that the City of Greater Sudbury has to leverage technology differently than it has in the past. Specifically, there is alignment between the development of a new IT Strategy and the opportunity to leverage technology and technological through the sourcing of a new CRM system that should allow the City to more effectively identify, track, and resolve issues – all in the service of meeting customer needs and expectations.

The effective use and deployment of appropriate technological solutions is also an underlying principle that will allow for other principles – like rigorous measurement – to be fully established and successful.

Principle 7: A positive customer service culture is part of the City of Greater Sudbury brand.

This principle differs from the previous six in that it is both a principle and an outcome of adopting a strategy that encompasses the recommended principles. By developing – and marketing – a City of Greater Sudbury brand that includes a positive customer experience, we state that the customer experience is part of the planning process for all departments of the City of Greater Sudbury. Whether it be a communication program, a recreation program, a new sign-up process, a Council report, or a direct customer service interaction, this principle states that the customer experience is at the heart of what we do.

Next Steps

The principles described above will be used as the basis for the development of an enterprise-wide customer service strategy. This work is currently underway. A steering committee has been established to lead that process, in parallel with the work being conducted on the replacement of the City's Customer Relationship Management system. While these projects require separate workflows and processes, they are intrinsically connected and must evolve in parallel: a new CRM will support the City's customer service vision, approach, principles, and strategy. Equally, the City's customer service strategy will rely on technology to deliver appropriate, timely, and relevant data to support our work.

Resources Cited

City of Greater Sudbury Citizen Service Policy. https://www.greatersudbury.ca/linkservid/5F3604D8-E1DB-580B-68019C491790EAEA/showMeta/0/

"Evolving Service Strategy and 311". Report on Council meeting of January 23, 2018. http://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=feed&action=file&agenda=report&itemid=5&id=1234

2016 Citizen Survey Results. https://www.greatersudbury.ca/city-hall/open-government/surveys/2016-citizen-satisfaction-survey-results/

2016 City of Greater Sudbury Employee Engagement Survey Results. CityLinks.

7th Citizens First Study. Institute for Citizen-Centred Service.

Appendix A: Research and Data

Purpose

The purpose of this appendix is to provide an overview of the research conducted and the findings informing the identification of issues related to customer service for the City of Greater Sudbury.

Employee Views of Our Customer Service Capacity

Frontline employees generally see a need for change in the corporation's customer service approach. Although this item scored ninth highest in grand driver averages in the 2016 employee survey, it accounted for the third highest decrease since 2014, with a decrease of 5.1%. It also received the least number of responses in the question of things "most in need of change" at the organizational level, with only 49 respondents identifying it as one of the two most important (1.7% of responses). However, this item received the lowest score when comparing the City of Greater Sudbury response to the municipal database of the survey service provider, Metrics@Works, with a difference score of 13%. This driver was proportionally more important to frontline employees.

The same was true in the 2014 employee survey: while customer service culture did not rank highly in terms of importance, there was a significant (11 percentage point) drop from 2012 to 2014. It also scored low in comparison with the municipal benchmarking database from Metrics@Works.

As data from the Institute for Citizen-Centred Services (ICCS) shows, the relatively low overall placement of "customer service culture" in the employee survey in the list of important issues is an indicator of a need for change. High-performing organizations place a high value on, and understand how to influence, customer service culture.

Based on feedback from employees, when an internal community engagement task force was established in 2015, it was quickly expanded to include customer service as these were seen to be intrinsically linked. Work conducted in that group identified a number of themes associated with what was perceived as an organizational gap related to customer service and community engagement. These themes were: the ability to respond quickly and consistently to issues, the availability of processes to support consistent responsiveness, the availability of appropriate training for staff on facilitation, conflict resolution, customer service, and engagement, and the need for ongoing education to citizens about what they can expect from the City.

Citizen Views of Our Customer Service Capacity

In 2016, the City conducted a citizen perception survey, which surveyed 1,200 random households for levels of satisfaction with local quality of life and opinions on municipal services.

- Half of residents that were surveyed (50%) said they had need of some kind of customer service contact with the City over the previous year.

- A large majority of the customer service contact over the previous year was via telephone – in fact, more than three-quarters of residents who contacted the City had contact by telephone (77%).
- Most residents were satisfied with the customer service they received.
- 78% of residents were either 'very' satisfied (47%) or 'somewhat' satisfied (31%).

This perception to some extent points to a need to delve more deeply into the citizen experience of the City's customer service capacity. As an example of how other data may mitigate the findings of the Citizen Survey, the ICCS report establishes that one of the key drivers of customer satisfaction is timeliness of response: regular feedback received to the City of Greater Sudbury indicates that there is an opportunity to enhance our consistency in the delivery of accurate information.

The qualitative feedback received about the City's performance at a general level through different mechanisms (eg, through social media, media stories, calls to staff, letters to the editor, public engagement sessions, anecdotal evidence) reflects a neutral to negative perception of the City's capacity to deliver service. This can reasonably be considered to extend to our capacity to deliver customer service.

It is noteworthy that the City of Greater Sudbury's only recent source of quantifiable data relating to customer service is from the 2016 Citizen Survey. This speaks to the need to undertake more routine measurement of customer service satisfaction. As part of this effort, a 2018 Citizen Survey is to be launched imminently.

311 Data and Call Centre Statistics

The City's 311 service is one of the first points of contact with residents across the community, providing first-contact customer service on over 18,000 calls and 350 @311 emails each month. The 311 Call Centre is staffed by 7 full-time Call Centre Representatives, supplemented by 3 part-time positions, as well as an ACR Software Administrator and a Supervisor. Calls are answered by 311 staff between 8 am and 4:30 pm, with after-hours service provided by a third party contractor.

There is a significant volume of data that is available about the 311 system, including:

- Calls – volume, topic, department, number of calls after hours
- Type of call – transfer, ACR, information
- Customer experience – on-hold time, call abandonment rate, first call resolution rate
- ACR cases – resolution on time, case escalation rate, late resolution
- Call centre performance – agent active time, agent talk time.

An average of data pulled from 311 over the last year shows that the rate of "ACR cases closed on time" varies significantly from one department to the next. This is reflective of the fact that different departments have different standards for "closing" a case, as well as different definitions of what "closing" a case means. It is also worth noting that an IT issue in the ACR system impedes the City's ability to accurately measure the Roads and Water/Wastewater "closed on time" data and the current

"closed on time" data is thought to include cases wherein no metrics are associated (that is, cases where we do not have a definition for "closed on time").

Some data for the past 12 months from 311 is as follows:

	For the Past 12 Months (March 1st 2017 - February 28th 2018)
# of calls answered by 311	218,557 (average of 18,213/month)
% first call resolution	39%
% direct transfers by name/extension	26%
French Calls	3.80%
Heaviest Day	13-Apr 1,242 calls answered
Average Talk Time	54
% Abandoned Calls	1.78%
Active Time per day	41.96% 27.83%
Calls Answered After Threshold (20 seconds)	6.46%
Calls Abandoned After Threshold	1.08%
Top 5 Calls by Department	Solid Waste Tax Department Building Services Roads Department By-law Enforcement
# of calls received After Hours	31,320
# of ACR case created by 311	28,213
Top 5 ACR Case Types	Potholes Blue Box Request Green Cart Request Garbage Collection Plowing
Emails Received @311 (started tracking in May 2017)	4,752

Best Practice

Assessing "best practice" included a review of other municipalities and organizations that have reviewed their customer service approaches and established customer service strategies. These include: Windsor, Ajax, Barrie, Brantford, Regina, Markham, Kawartha Lakes, Oshawa, and Halton Region.

Common themes found as part of this best practice review include:

- **Consistency across channels**: organizations embarking on customer service strategies recognize the importance of ensuring a seamless experience for the customer, regardless of which channel they use to engage with the municipality (ie, website, telephone, email, in person).
- **Role clarity and staff empowerment:** organization leaders must be role models when it comes to customer service and understand and support a customer-oriented service standard. This is demonstrated in several ways, especially with training and tools for staff who deliver customer service, and by processes and a culture where staff are empowered to make decisions "in the moment" about how to provide excellent customer service.
- **Timeliness:** there is a substantive focus on standards designed to ensure that responses are provided within a reasonable timeframe and that issue resolution is timely. This is supported by a framework to guide the consistent provision of quality customer service.
- **Rigorous measurement and benchmarking**: organizations that excel at customer service measure and evaluate the customer experience within their organization. This includes regular surveys using a variety of tools such as mystery shoppers and quantitative data such as first call resolution ratios. Employees who provide exceptional customer service are recognized in a public setting and celebrated for their efforts.
- **Access:** several examples exist of municipalities enhancing the customer experience by adopting different operating hours, expanded services at some locations, and "one-stop shop" counters. This is consistent with, for example, the City of Greater Sudbury's current approach of using Citizen Service Centres throughout the community in various municipal service buildings.

Staff also interviewed several other municipalities and conducted a site visit at Halton Region. Halton is an example of a municipality that is recognized for its customer service excellence. It has been awarded the Service Quality Measurement (SQM) Group's annual award for the highest customer service in government, for a number of years. This recognizes government organizations based on their rate of First Call Resolution (FCR) – which is the number of calls required to resolve an issue, answer a question or receive a requested service. The data from Halton reflects a high performing call centre:

- 90% of Halton Region callers made only one call to get their matter resolved. The average top performing call centre FCR score is 84% and the average government FCR score is 76%.
- 92% of callers were satisfied overall with their call centre experience.
- 96% of customers were satisfied overall with the customer service representative who handled their call.

Citizens First Study

As noted in the full report, the ICCS is a Canadian institute established in the late 1990s to sustain and further develop efforts to improve citizen satisfaction with public sector service delivery in Canada. The *Citizens First* study is a study that has been conducted every couple of years since 1998. It establishes measures with respect to citizens' satisfaction with and expectations of service from Canadian

government, at all levels. It notes that the five drivers of client satisfaction that represent the greatest opportunity to improve the service experience are:

- Service design
- Delivery timeliness
- Staff interaction
- Channel functionality
- Issue resolution

Twenty-one components are considered within the five drivers of satisfaction. The components were scored on a matrix that measures impact (high to low) and performance (high to low). The 21 components associated with the five drivers are below, ordered from highest to lowest in terms of their impact on overall customer satisfaction.

1	Confident future issues will be resolved	11	Staff were knowledgeable
2	Issues were easily resolved	12	I received the service I was seeking
3	Amount of time to receive the service	13	Amount of time to get access to the service
4	Amount of time to get help	14	Staff understood my needs
5	Complaints were addressed	15	Staff treated me fairly
6	Received needed information	16	Process to access to the service was easy
7	I felt good about my staff interaction	17	Staff treated me with courtesy
8	Staff made every effort to address my needs	18	Achieve needs by my preferred channel
9	Satisfied with my experience using the main method	19	Easy to access the service by my preferred method
10	The process to receive the service was easy	20	Knew where or how to find the service
		21	My personal information was protected

As can be seen, of the 21 issues, five stand out as priorities for improvement by Canadian governments. The five are related to the drivers of issue resolution and delivery timeliness.

- Confident future issues will be resolved
- Issues were easily resolved
- Amount of time to receive the service
- Amount of time to get help
- Complaints were addressed

A sixth component – “Received needed information” – also ranks in the high impact/low performance quadrant. This implies that staff are properly trained to recognize what information to share with

customers and have the ability to do so. These components provide a solid basis for identifying priority issues for the City of Greater Sudbury to consider as part of a customer service strategy.

The study also outlines the difference between service standards and service expectations – for instance:

- Most expect to wait on hold for no more than 2 minutes (with a shift toward only 1 minute in the most recent study). Demand for wait times under 1 minute has doubled since the previous study, from 16% to 33%.
- When it comes to expectations for receiving a call-back in response to a message left at a government office, there has been a significant increase in expectations of hearing back within the hour (from 24% to 36%) and the expectation to hear back within the next business day has shifted down from 23% to 14%.
- The average number of minutes Canadians are willing to search for information for a routine service on a government website is 6.5 minutes which reflects a shift toward even shorter times in the most recent study.
- The average number of web pages Canadians are willing to search is 3-5 pages. The proportion expecting to search only 1 or 2 pages has increased from 27% in the 6th Citizens First Study to 35% in this most recent report.
- Most citizens (57%) hold the view that the hours at government offices should be more flexible.