



CITY OF VANCOUVER

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: September 12, 2006
Author: Marg Coulson
Barb Pearce
Phone No.: 604.871.6421
RTS No.: 06139
VanRIMS No.: 04-4400-50
Meeting Date: September 26, 2006

TO: Vancouver City Council
FROM: City Manager
SUBJECT: Improving Citizen Accessibility to Information and Services

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT Council approve in principle the plan to implement a consolidated citizen service centre and 311 service for Vancouver as described in this report;

AND THAT the City Manager report to Council no later than November 30, 2006, with the complete business proposal, implementation strategy, operating and capital costs and the sources of funding for the project, for Council's final consideration.
- B. Council approve capital funding in the amount of \$200,000 as advance funding for interim activities, source of funding to be the inflation funding in the 2006-2008 Capital Plan and allocation in the 2006 Capital Budget.
- C. THAT Council authorize the City Manager and the Director of Legal Services to give notice to telephone service providers that Vancouver wishes to implement 311 service within the Vancouver telephone exchange, and to proceed with necessary any applications to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC).
- D. THAT Council authorize staff to prepare and issue Requests for Proposal related to site preparation, workstations, hardware and software, subject to Council approval of related awards of contract, as required.

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

As previously reported to Council, city staff has been assessing the feasibility of the implementation of 311 service in the City of Vancouver. That study is nearing completion. It is important that Council indicate its preference to move ahead with this initiative in principle before more work proceeds.

The findings of the study indicate a need to increase citizen service at the City of Vancouver. Public expectations are increasing. After assessment of a number of service options, the recommended option of a consolidated citizen service centre has been identified. The 311 service described in this report will improve the way the City of Vancouver deals with its citizens. Citizens will have increased accessibility to city information and services, and will be provided timely and consistent information. Accountability to citizens is provided through tracking systems and staff and Council will benefit through improved reporting on service requests and delivery. These changes are in keeping with the mission, values and objectives of the City of Vancouver and will enhance its reputation as an organization with award-winning service delivery.

While the benefits achievable in this model are significant, the magnitude of the change should not be understated. Every department will be impacted by the transition to this service model, resulting in business process reviews and change management. However, the change will also allow the organization to develop a centre for citizen service excellence, and enable departments to concentrate on service delivery. The success of this service model is evident through reports from the 311 cities, and further justified through the number of cities across Canada that are in process of investigating or implementing 311 service.

The initial estimate of the project, as detailed in the report, indicates \$10.7 million for implementation, \$11.8 million for transition, and \$5.7 million per year for ongoing sustainment. The source of funding will include departmental savings, reallocation of funding in the Capital Plan, and an increase in the operating budget. Within the next 90 days, staff will continue to firm up the cost estimate.

Staff will also be reviewing other system implementation initiatives to ensure that all these initiatives do not offer competing customer service solutions, that all these initiatives are developed in a way that provides maximum benefit to the organization, and that sufficient resources are in place.

The last step of the feasibility study is to finalize the business case, implementation plan and funding proposals for Council's consideration. This proposal will come before Council by the end of November. At that time, Council will be asked to consider final approval of the 311 service.

The approval of Recommendations A to D will enable staff to move forward on a number of critical tasks. With approval in principle, staff will proceed with the necessary applications, requests for proposals, and project team creation and other planning to implement 311 in Vancouver, if Council gives final approval.

The City Manager recommends approval of A through D.

COUNCIL POLICY

There is no applicable Council Policy.

SUMMARY

This report seeks Council authority to approve in principle the implementation of a consolidated citizen service centre accessible by dialling "311" in the City of Vancouver. The initiative - called *311 Access Vancouver* - represents a very significant step in improving service and making information and services more accessible to all of Vancouver's diverse citizens. Implementation of a 311 service would allow the City of Vancouver to lead the way for 311 in British Columbia, and keep pace with other Canadian cities that have adopted, or are planning to adopt, a 311 service.

This is an opportunity for the City of Vancouver to transform how citizens obtain services from the City. 311 is about citizen service. The vision for this model is to offer Vancouver citizens single-point-of-access to most City information and services. A 24/7 call centre would be designed to allow efficiency, quality, and consistency in responding to the 1.4 million citizen requests received by phone annually. Emails that flow through general inquiry mailboxes would be processed by the call centre skeleton staff during night shifts.

The centre would be staffed by up to 54 highly trained City employees of a new classification called Citizen Service Representatives (CSRs). CSR's would accept calls on all City issues. The 311 software is proposed to include a knowledge base, allowing all CSRs to quickly respond to questions and service requests for a wide variety of city matters. The 311 service objective would be to answer 80% of the calls within 30 seconds.

When the business unit is fully established - likely by 2010 - it is estimated that 70% of calls will be closed at the completion of the citizen call to a CSR. Calls that cannot be closed by a CSR would either be "warm transferred" (CSR stays on the line until a departmental employee is reached), or the citizen would be provided a tracking number and an estimated completion time for their request. The file would then be referred for departmental action and, on completion of the request, closing of the tracking number.

Target performance goals, set by departments, and corresponding performance measures captured by the 311 software would be produced. This reporting has proven invaluable to other implemented 311 cities, and significant savings have been achieved by using the data to allocate resources more effectively.

To better serve our diverse population, the 311 call centre would employ CSR's fluent in Vancouver's predominant languages. The centre would also have available over-the-phone interpretation services in over 150 languages.

The report provides a high-level overview of the 311 feasibility study conducted between September, 2005 and August, 2006. The study showed that Vancouver's decentralized model for citizen service offered significant opportunity for improvement. The feasibility study team, in conjunction with departmental and board staff and subject matter experts, completed a draft business proposal. Options were weighed and a consolidated service model was selected as a platform for 311, providing the best value to citizens and the City. A draft

implementation strategy and estimated capital and ongoing costs have also been compiled. If Council authorization to proceed with implementation of 311 is received, comprehensive information and technology, human resources and communications strategies will support and guide the project.

The request for Council approval of the final business proposal, implementation strategy, capital and operating cost estimates, and recommended funding sources will be presented in a separate report to Council prior to November 30, 2006.

PURPOSE

This report seeks Council approval in principle of the plan to implement a consolidated citizen service contact centre and 311 service for the City of Vancouver, including the provision of notice to telephone service providers of intent to implement 311, authority to issue RFP's for goods and services, and approval of \$200,000 interim funding pending a final report back to Council by November 30, 2006 on final cost estimates and funding sources.

BACKGROUND

"311" is a single-point-of-access phone number for non-emergency municipal government services. Like its companion numbers such as 911 for emergency services and 411 for directory information services, it is a short, easy-to-remember number intended to facilitate citizen access. Also like its companion numbers, it represents a convenient gateway into a single-point-of-access citizen service model.

The United States commenced use of the 311 number in 1997. Numerous U.S. cities, from small counties to major urban areas such as Chicago, Los Angeles and New York, now provide access to municipal information and services through the 311 number. In November, 2004, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) approved 311 for use in Canada. Calgary was the first Canadian city to offer 311 in May, 2005, followed by Ottawa, Windsor and Gatineau. Many Canadian cities are in the process of planning and implementing 311 services, including Edmonton, Winnipeg, Hamilton, Halton, Peel, Sudbury, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax.

Following the successful 311 service implementations across the United States and Canada, and observing the resultant benefits to both the citizens and local government organizations, the City Manager asked staff to assess the feasibility of a 311 service for Vancouver. With the guidance of a consulting firm experienced in 311 implementations, staff has worked with business units across the organization to map and collect observations and metrics from the City's current service model.

A review of established 311 best practices was also undertaken. As part of that review members of the City's Corporate Management Team (CMT) and representatives of Council visited Calgary's 311 operation and met with Calgary officials in March, 2006. The City Manager provided a written update to Council on April 10, 2006, describing the feasibility study progress, planned activities and timeframe before a formal report to Council, and feedback from the Calgary visit attendees.

The draft business proposal, implementation strategy and cost estimates have been developed based on best practices of established 311 operations, current state research, input from the 311 Feasibility Study Steering Committee, the CMT, City subject matter experts, and feedback from City attendees of the Calgary 311 tour and orientation. The cost estimates contained in this report are the most conservative estimates.

Between July and September, 2006, the Library and Police Boards were briefed on the 311 feasibility study activities and the intent to bring a recommendation before to Council. A Park Board meeting was planned and will be rescheduled.

A copy of this report has been provided to the applicable unions and staff associations.

DISCUSSION

311 Feasibility Study

The first challenge encountered in undertaking the feasibility study of a 311 for Vancouver was the realization that 311 operations can differ significantly behind the scenes. In a simple 311 model, calls placed to 311 arrive in a small call centre where one or more operators transfer the calls to the correct department. In a more developed 311 operation, the Citizen Service Representatives (CSR's) are professionally trained and may be multilingual. They may be enabled with corporate knowledge base information about programs and services, have access to over-the-phone translation services, initiate or completely handle service requests, and produce service request statistics. In a fully developed 311 operation, efficiencies are maximized through workforce and call management tools and citizens are offered 311 services through various channels including the web.

Staff assessing the feasibility of implementing a 311 service in Vancouver found that the work had relatively little to do with the logistics of applying for 311 service-provision. Rather, the feasibility study focused more on close examination of current citizen service processes throughout the organization, identification of possible candidate processes for migration to 311, and the exploration of organizational commitment to an improved service model.

The feasibility study was completed in two phases. From September 2005 to March 2006, the first phase of the feasibility study focused on examining 311 operations and best practices. With representation from all City departments and Council, a 311 model was examined and assessed at a high level for suitability in Vancouver. The result of phase one was that most participants felt that 311 afforded a significant opportunity for Vancouver to improve its service delivery model. In order to present a meaningful proposal to Council, however, metrics were required so that scope could be determined and cost estimated.

Phase two of the feasibility study took place from March to August, 2006 and involved the detailed collection of metrics through citizen process mapping, surveying of citizens, the collection of cost estimates, financial planning and finally the development of a 311 implementation strategy.

The next sections will provide an overview of the study findings on the current citizen service, discuss options examined, and recommend a service model for 311. Further detail is will be provided when the complete 311 business proposal is forwarded for Council approval.

Overview of current citizen service model: The City of Vancouver provides service to citizens through eleven departments, service groups and boards. The organization currently operates with a decentralized citizen service model with some small independent calls centres. There are approximately 57 areas within the city that act as contact centres for citizen information and services. In addition, community centres, recreation centres and libraries act as citizen contact centres. Each department and/or business unit operates independently and many have differing procedures, service hours and available service channels (i.e. phone, walk-in, fax, email, web access and e-commerce).

Each department and board has slightly different approaches to providing customer service, and many have embarked on citizen-service improvement initiatives in the past. All departments have an interest in providing a high level of customer service to the citizen. However, departments have identified available resources, information challenges, and communication issues as their key concerns when reflecting on their service to citizens.

Citizen service process mapping: From May to July 2006, the City's current state of phone service delivery was examined through a process-mapping exercise. The objective was to document all telephone citizen contact processes (e.g. a need for service, such as a burned out streetlight, or to make an inquiry, such as hours of operation for a community centre). To gain a complete understanding of the workload and to measure work effort, detail was also collected on each type of call including volume, frequency, average handle time (during and after call), seasonality, risks, resource requirements, technologies, and escalations (if service representative escalates issue to a subject matter expert or specialist).

Data collected during the process mapping exercise yielded the following information regarding the current state of the City's citizen service. This data should not be interpreted as critical of the efforts of our current staff. Public sector organizations in Canada have only recently begun making strides in citizen service improvements through service model efficiencies in conjunction with the use of corporate knowledge bases and case management software.

- approximately 1.4 million calls per year are received (citizens must search over 550 "blue page" numbers in the phone book)
- approximately 400,000 (29% of service requests) are for general inquiries
- average call handle time is about 4 minutes - 311 cities average call time is between 2 and 3 minutes with 80% of the calls usually being answered within 30 seconds
- an estimated 155 employees are involved in citizen service by phone
- similar projects at comparable Canadian cities have resulted in between 250-325 service process maps, Vancouver had over 400 different citizen service request processes (demonstrating the complexity of the decentralized organization and the resulting challenge in navigating the city for our citizens)
- in numerous instances, specialists are the main resource for call handling regardless of the complexity (project consultants noted a higher-than-average use of voicemail, due to the use of specialists as direct contacts)
- call data was noted as an issue - with information regarding call statistics and service requests not available in some areas, it is challenging to accurately track resource requirements and to optimize workflow

- different centres are currently handling service requests related to similar issues - for example, three different areas handle service requests related to trees and two handle service requests related to street cleaning
- total misdirected (i.e. arriving in the wrong business unit) calls city-wide is over 120,000/year or almost 10% of overall phone calls, representing considerable duplication of effort for city staff and frustration for citizens

Once maps were completed and validated by departmental staff, the 311 consultants assessed processes for suitability in a 311 environment. Criteria for the assessment included 23 factors including improvement to citizen service (accessibility/quality/consistency), effectiveness and efficiency (cost avoidance or cost savings), and ease of migration (risk, privacy concerns). Each of the 400 processes was tentatively identified as “full” or “partial” 311 candidate processes, or “transfer to department” processes, and call efforts were calculated based on the metrics previously collected. Departmental staff provided feedback on whether, in theory, they agreed with the consultant’s recommendation and changes to designations were made accordingly.

Based on the total work effort calculated (with adjustments to accommodate departmental feedback), and using the Erlang C algorithm (an industry standard method of calculating call centre staffing requirements) it was determined that the City would require up to 54 CSR’s to assume the workload currently being performed in departments.

Customer experience program: As part of the 311 feasibility study, a Customer Experience Program (CEP) was undertaken to help assess the services provided through the current model. To assess the service currently provided, actual calls from the public were recorded and monitored to determine their ranking against industry standards and leading practices.

The results of the CEP indicated that the level of service provided by the City could be greatly improved. An opportunity to improve efficiency was also observed in instances of staff “downtime” during long gaps between calls. Specific recommendations from the CEP were:

- establish organizational citizen service standards and policies
- provide effective citizen service agent training

In addition to the specific findings from the process mapping and the Customer Experience Program, the consultants made these observations:

- the City’s decentralized model requires more staff due to the number of locations and the need to manage “peaks and valleys” at each location
- departments currently utilize a wide variety of information sources and technical applications to provide service - time and effort is spent gathering/entering information in a number of places
- the city’s service level is inconsistent among the points of contact reached
- there is limited capacity for interaction or coordination between access points for the public
- there is limited integration between current work order systems, dispatch operations, and information systems
- there is limited capacity for the City to track service outcomes on behalf of the public resulting in a possible perceived lack of accountability for service delivery.

It was concluded that the City's decentralized service model put Vancouver at the low end of the effectiveness and efficiency ranking scale developed for assessing contact centre best practices. Citizens are faced with an organization that, though committed to public service, can be difficult to navigate, evident by the volume of misdirected incoming calls and the number and complexity of service processes. There is limited coordination between departments, limited tools to support citizen service staff, limited performance standards, and varying technologies.

Citizen survey: In order to determine the current satisfaction levels and expectations of City of Vancouver citizens regarding service standards and access to city information and services, a public opinion survey of 604 citizens was conducted by telephone in July 2006 by Synovate, Inc, a professional market research firm. The survey objectives were to evaluate citizen satisfaction and expectations regarding access to information and services, determine actual and preferred communication channels, and identify priorities for improvement.

Key findings from the survey that assisted staff in developing a vision of the future citizen service model were:

- the question with the highest discrepancy between level of satisfaction and expectation was "I waited a reasonable amount of time" (i.e. for service from City Hall)
- next highest gaps between satisfaction/expectation were related to "Hours of service", "Staff went the extra mile" and "I was able to get through without difficulty"
- most preferred method of accessing information or service is by telephone (39%), followed closely by the internet (36%)
- though many contacts last year were in person, this is not the preferred method (only 15%)
- seven in ten citizens surveyed feel that it is important that the City of Vancouver provide information and services in languages other than English
- 85% of citizens have access to Internet, while 15% indicated they did not have access to that channel
- six in ten Vancouver citizens surveyed believe having a centralized centre with one telephone number for citizens to call to access all city information and services would be effective. Main reasons for believing a centralized contact centre would be effective is that it would replace the need to call different departments and that a single number would be easier to remember
- citizen survey results were compared with three groups (by the Institute for Citizen Centred Service): other municipal governments, other public sector organizations, and all other organizations (public, private, not for profit, and non-governmental). Overall, benchmarking indicated that the citizens of the City of Vancouver are less satisfied with service than those surveyed in all three comparison groups.

Options examined

On a continuum from the status quo to a fully consolidated customer service model there are a number of options. Three possible citizen service models were assessed:

- the status quo decentralized model with modifications
- a "take and transfer" model
- a consolidated contact centre model.

Retaining the current decentralized model was not favoured because it did not address the shortcomings described in the preceding section. The current model could be improved by developing and applying corporate citizen service standards and working more aggressively to reduce “blue page” listings. However, the current decentralized model is inherently more prone to duplication of efforts and could not support the introduction of the 311 number.

The take and transfer model would involve the establishment of a new group of operators layered on the existing decentralized model. The new group would allow for a centralized area to receive 311 calls and would eliminate many of the misdirected calls. The take and transfer model is relatively inexpensive and easy to implement, and would put a more consolidated “face” on the City’s service. The consolidated experience would be short-lived, though, as the operators could only be equipped to transfer calls into the existing decentralized system. Citizens would have to explain their issue to the operator, and then explain it again to the receiving department. Given the City’s current volume of 1.4 million calls per year, the value of a model that forces each caller to repeat their issue is limited. This model would represent only a small improvement to citizen service.

The last system examined and the model that is recommended is the consolidated contact centre model.

Recommended option: Fully consolidated citizen service model

The 311 Feasibility Study team, with input from the Steering Committee and the Corporate Management Team, is recommending the adoption of a fully consolidated citizen contact model.

The vision of Vancouver’s 311: Access Vancouver

The vision for this model, called 311 Access Vancouver, is to offer Vancouver citizens single-point-of-access to most City information and services. A 24/7 call centre would be established and equipped with a call centre suite, a corporate knowledge management system and a case management system that allows efficiency, quality, and consistency in responding to the 1.4 million citizen requests received by phone annually. Emails that flow through general inquiry mailboxes would be processed by the call centre skeleton staff during night shifts.

The centre would be staffed by up to 54 highly trained City employees of a new classification called Citizen Service Representatives (CSRs). CSR’s would accept calls on all City issues. The 311 software is proposed to include a knowledge base, allowing all CSRs to quickly respond to questions and service requests for a wide variety of city matters. The 311 service objective would be to answer 80% of the calls within 30 seconds. The City of Vancouver currently has no such service standards set, or any way to track or measure response time.

When the business unit is fully established, it is estimated that 70% of calls will be closed at the completion of the citizen call to a CSR. Calls that cannot be closed by a CSR would either be “warm transferred” (CSR stays on the line until a departmental employee is reached), or the citizen would be provided a tracking number and an estimated completion time for their

request. The file would then be referred for departmental action and, on completion of the request, closing of the tracking number.

Target performance goals, set by departments, and corresponding performance measures captured by the 311 software would be produced. This reporting has proven invaluable to other implemented 311 cities, and significant savings have been achieved by using the data to allocate resources more effectively.

To better serve our diverse population, the 311 call centre would employ CSR's fluent in Vancouver's predominant languages. The centre would also have available over-the-phone interpretation services in over 150 languages.

Benefits

The following comparison table, contrasting the current and proposed service model summarizing the primary benefits:

Vancouver's current citizen service model	Proposed 311 consolidated service model
Highly decentralized info/service offerings through over 400 unique processes in over 57 physical centres	311 service model could potentially consolidate 83% of the current processes
Over 550 "blue page" numbers	311 will accept all citizen calls
Close to 9% of current calls are received in the wrong business unit	When a transfer is necessary it will be done consistently and reliably
Many citizens are transferred repeatedly and/or reach voice mail	311 citizen service rep can stay on the line until desired department or staff member is reached
No ability to track info or service requests	Case management system tracks every call and produces reports for departments
Multiple, independent sources of information	Knowledge base contains information, decision trees and scripts
Service is offered 8.5 hrs/5 days a week	311 call centre is proposed to run 24/7 with Citizen Service Reps answering emails during the night shift
Service is offered in English, with call-back voice mail options in 4 languages	Citizen Service Reps will be hired with languages to reflect Vancouver's predominant languages; 311 will offer "conferenced" over-the-phone interpretation services in over 150 languages
No ability to monitor quality or apply service standards	311 will establish standards and quality monitoring & citizen call-back surveying
Limited opportunities for many service staff to upgrade skills	4-5 week mandatory professional service training, coaching
Decentralized, differing data sources not a conducive environment for converting applications to web	311 knowledge base and case management systems may be converted to web applications though NOT IN SCOPE for the 311 initiative

311 Access Vancouver would represent an incremental step toward a number of the City's corporate priorities and toward our information and technology strategy. Further, the proposal exemplifies a number of the corporate values.

Numerous corporate initiatives are currently examining ways of improving accessibility and creating an inclusive culture. 311 Access Vancouver supports those goals through simplified,

24/7 access to information and services in over 150 languages. The table which follows, prepared by the City's Planning Department, shows the predominance of languages other than English spoken in the City. The consolidated service model allows the organization to hire Citizen Service Representatives with predominant languages spoken in Vancouver for immediate service provision in other languages. Examining the table below suggests that a significant number of 311's CSR's should speak Chinese languages. Removing the language barrier for our citizens, allowing them to conduct their business and gain civic information in their own language, is a major step towards a truly inclusive local government.

The languages spoken in Vancouver have changed 1991-2001:

	1991		1996		2001	
Population with single language response	455,245		495,960		528,910	
English	255,575	56.1%	256,655	51.7%	261,365	49.4%
Chinese	90,750	19.9%	121,840	24.6%	139,865	26.4%
Punjabi	12,545	2.8%	12,885	2.6%	14,290	2.7%
Tagalog	7,500	1.6%	9,665	1.9%	12,665	2.4%
Vietnamese	6,895	1.5%	10,155	2.0%	11,640	2.2%
French	7,060	1.6%	7,805	1.6%	8,850	1.7%
Spanish	6,255	1.4%	6,830	1.4%	8,065	1.5%
German	9,500	2.1%	8,140	1.6%	7,090	1.3%
Italian	8,300	1.8%	6,830	1.4%	6,560	1.2%
Japanese			6,015	1.2%	5,885	1.1%
Korean			3,575	0.7%	5,400	1.0%
Hindi			4,755	1.0%	4,580	0.9%
Portuguese	3,780	0.8%	3,780	0.8%	3,125	0.6%
Persian (Farsi)			2,355	0.5%	2,995	0.6%
Polish	4,270	0.9%	3,755	0.8%	2,785	0.5%
Russian			1,090	0.2%	2,590	0.5%
Greek	3,215	0.7%	2,740	0.6%	2,570	0.5%

note: Chinese includes Cantonese, Mandarin & Chinese

The 311 consolidated model has been used extensively in other cities as an integral part of emergency planning. Following Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans's disaster recovery plan included the immediate implementation of a 311 system to communicate with citizens as they rebuilt the city. In implemented 311 cities, 311 services are routinely used for providing back-up communication to 911 during call spikes related to such events as power outages, storms, traffic obstacles, and local events.

311 provides a fast, reliable and consistent communication channel to citizens, whether the issue is an emergency or simply a call response related to a media broadcast.

The consolidated 311 service model for business provides a superior partner to improvement in the organization, opening opportunities that other service models could not. Data collection and consolidation for the 311 knowledge base will position the organization to further service-related technology goals, such as increased web self-serve applications. Technological improvements, in turn, will allow the 311 operation to leverage further efficiencies with planned technology initiatives such as Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), web content management, and the introduction of middleware solutions.

The following table illustrates the “evolution” of service models and the relationship between consolidation and opportunities to leverage organizational efficiencies and technology:

Spectrum of customer service models:	Fully decentralized service model	Decentralized with a few small call/email centres	Consolidated centre (calls & email for info and transfers)	Consolidated centre (calls and email for info, service request initiation/handling for some departments and transfers)	Consolidated centre (calls and emails for info, service request initiation/handling for all possible departments and transfers)	Consolidated service centre with integrated service channels (phone, email, web*, faxback, etc.)
Opportunity to leverage organizational efficiencies and technology	Negligible	Low	Limited/Moderate	Moderate	High	Excellent
Timeline:		2006	311 in 2008	311 in 2009	311 in 2011	311 enabled from 2009+

↑
Vancouver is here

* Note that web integration is not in scope for the 311 project proposal

It is important to note that technology initiatives such as VoIP, web content management and middleware are not in scope for this project and that, while they will greatly benefit 311 operations, 311 is not dependent on these technologies to function. As the organization moves toward increased web offerings, 311 will be a key corporate stakeholder. Implemented 311 centres that are starting to offer web service channels have CSR's moving between phone calls, emails, web “chat” streams, and assisting citizens with completion/follow up of on-line transactions.

311 Access Vancouver model exemplifies a number of the corporate values, particularly:

- Responsiveness: To listen to all the people we work with and serve and to act in a timely and sensitive way
- Excellence: To strive for the best results
- Leadership: To set examples that others will choose to follow.

311 provides Vancouver with an opportunity to turn these values into actions.

Commitment and steps required to capitalize on benefits

The shift from a decentralized service model to a consolidated model opens up significant opportunities for efficiency within the organization, within the consolidated model and by building on the electronic data compiled for 311 use. The greater the degree to which the organization utilizes the consolidated service model, the greater the opportunity for efficiencies. Unfortunately, the converse is also true. Should the organization invest in a consolidated citizen service model, and then only nominally utilize the system by failing to migrate all suitable processes into the model, inefficiency through duplication of effort and cost will result.

Because it is important to use the model as fully as possible to achieve the greatest benefits, it is proposed that the 311 Project Charter include a commitment from all departments and boards to use the 311 shared service, and to use it to the greatest degree possible. General Managers have agreed in principle to commit to using the 311 service wherever possible, following:

- a final, detailed review of each citizen service process tentatively assessed during the Feasibility Study as a suitable 311 process; and
- further review of the potential to migrate police non-emergency calls to 311; and
- approval from Library, Police and Park Board on the transfer of board processes to 311.

As described earlier in this report, the Feasibility Study work concluded with recommendations regarding each of the mapped processes as to whether the work was suitable for transfer to 311 (based on the consultant's criteria formulated from the experience of other 311 cities). Should Council provide approval in principle to proceed with 311 implementation, a more detailed review of each of those processes will be undertaken to agree on what a "future state" for the process would look like in a 311 environment. Working with the 311 Project Team, departments and boards will determine whether all, part or none of the process should be moved to 311. Impact of process transitioning will be assessed and a tentative timeline for the transition will be assigned.

This review provides a foundation to the project and will take many months to complete. The information derived from the review will drive a number of other factors:

- the minutes of work effort transitioning to 311 will be tallied for each department and board, and will form the basis for allocating operating budget cost recoveries (described more fully in the Financial Implications section below)
- the schedule of process transitioning will determine the three year phasing plan to take 311 to into full operation, and the timing of when departmental operating budget recovery may take place (which, in turn, impacts 311 start-up transition costs)
- the cumulative minutes of work effort and schedule of process transitioning will drive the number of Citizen Service Representatives needed
- the identification and timing of system integration points.

It was recommended that this segment of work take place following Council's approval in principle of the 311 project because it is beyond the scope of the Feasibility Study and represents a significant amount of work requiring an extended project team.

The outcome of the review may impact the estimated amount of work identified for transfer to 311, the amount each department will be asked to reduce in their operating budget, and the amount of start up transition capital required for 311. For this reason, the most conservative cost estimates have been provided in this report. Additionally, the 311 implementation is scalable. In other words, should the work effort for 311 in the final analysis be less than identified in the Feasibility Study, then fewer operators would be required, and transition capital required would be reduced. While the scalability of the project mitigates risk in conducting the review within the implementation phase, it clearly underlines the importance of commitment on the part of the organization to maximizing use of the shared, consolidated service.

The Feasibility Study concluded before a full review of the potential to migrate police non-emergency calls to 311 could be completed. Based on the experience of implemented 311's the number of candidate calls for transfer to 311 could be significant. Because the results of this review could significantly impact the total effort of work being transferred to 311 and, thereby, department and board's respective allocations, this is an important piece of work to be conducted as soon as possible following project initiation.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The *311 Access Vancouver* business proposal and implementation plan is supported by a draft financial strategy that is currently under discussion with the City Manager, the Corporate Management Team and the Director of Finance. The conclusion to these discussions will be reported to Council in the recommended report back from the City Manager by November 30, 2006.

Interim Funding Request

Council is not being asked to approve the total funding for 311 Access Vancouver at this time.

However, in order to continue 311 Access Vancouver planning while arrangements for funding sources are finalized, Council approval for interim funding of \$200,000 is requested. The interim funding is for project staff, contract and consulting resources, and workspace. The recommended source of funding for these costs is the unallocated inflation allowance provided in the 2006 - 2008 Capital Plan and allocated in the 2006 Capital Budget. This allocation will not immediately impact on any project in the Capital Plan.

Overall Project Capital and Operating Costs

The following summarizes the capital and operating costs that have been identified in the draft financial plan:

There are three categories of cost associated with the implementation: implementation costs (space, hardware and software purchase and configuration); transition costs (business continuity costs associated with the transition of information services to the 311 centre) and operating costs (the ongoing costs of operating and sustaining the 311 centre).

At present, the team developing the business proposal have indicated that the following one time implementation costs to establish and implement the 311 citizen contact centre over the phase-in period from 2008 through 2010:

Project Component	Capital Costs
Hardware / Software	\$ 3,918,300
Technical Support, Consulting & Training	1,510,000
Project Team	2,925,500
Call Centre Facility	1,270,000
Contingency	1,094,200
Total Direct Implementation Capital	\$10,718,000

Once in full operation (2010), the ongoing operating costs are estimated to be \$5.7 million annually - generally as follows:

Cost Component	Operating Costs ¹
Hardware and Software Maintenance	\$ 630,200
Sustainment Team	321,400
Call Centre Staffing and Administration	3,995,100
Training	286,500
Telephone and Translation Services	151,300
Facility Costs	316,900
Annual Operating Costs	\$5,701,400

1. *Operating Costs would be phased in between 2008 and 2010 as call centre functions are shifted from departments to the 311 centre.*

Implementing citizen service delivery of this magnitude must be accomplished over a period of time. The ability of departments to absorb the change and re-engineer work will happen over a three year period. Additionally, the start-up of the citizen service center requires take-up of calls from departments progressively, from simple ones at the beginning, through to the more complex ones as experience is gained and processes solidify.

Based on the most conservative estimate of roll-out timeline, these one-time transition costs are in the range of 11.8 million between 2008 and 2012.

Transitional costs	\$11,800,000
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Funding Plan

The Corporate Management Team, in consultation with the Capital Plan Staff Review Group and the Director of Financing are currently reviewing options for reallocating capital funding within the 2006 - 2008 Capital Plan to provide for the implementation and transition costs, without impacting significantly on achieving the overall objectives of that plan. The proposed funding sources will be identified in the report back by November 30, 2006.

Once 311 system goes live (estimated spring, 2008), the draft implementation plan contemplates that citizen service functions and resources will be transferred from departments to the 311 centre over a three year period, completing in 2010. These transfers will result in savings within departmental budgets that can be transferred to the 311 centre, however, some duplication of effort should be anticipated as operational and human resource issues are resolved.

The draft financial plan under discussion by CMT proposes two funding sources to partially offset the ongoing operating costs (\$5.7 million) of the new service centre. First, direct cost savings within departmental budgets would be transferred to the 311 initiative. These savings represent approximately 50% of the ongoing operating costs of the centre. Second, it will be

proposed that Council approve an increase in the operating budget of \$2.85 million on an ongoing basis to offset the balance of the costs and reflecting the customer service improvement component of the initiative.

The increase in the operating budget in 2008 by \$2.85 million, three years before the full operating costs of the centre are required would fund approximately \$9.5 million of the anticipated transition costs. As with the balance of the implementation costs, funding sources will be reported back at the time Council is asked for final project approval.

To summarize, the estimated funding requirements are as follows:

Costs Component	Funding Requirement	Proposed Funding Source
One time Implementation Costs	\$10.7 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reallocated funding from the 2006 - 2008 Capital Plan
One time Transition Costs	\$11.8 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Operating Budget increase of \$2.85 million to generate \$9.5 million from 2008 to 2010 ○ Reallocated funding from the 2006 - 2008 Capital Plan of \$2.3 million
Annual Operating Costs ¹	\$5.7 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Departmental operating savings of \$2.85 million annually (50%) ○ Operating Budget increase in 2008 and ongoing (50%)

1. *It should be noted that factors exist in some departments and boards that may impact their ability to recover resources. Circumstances such as the percentage of calls which must be transferred back to a department from 311, the physical decentralization of some departments' service areas, and previous re-engineering initiatives may be considered by the Corporate Management Team in determining the contributions to ongoing departmental operating costs of 311. The commitment, none-the-less, is to cover 50% of 311 operating costs through departmental operating savings.*

While understanding the costs associated with a 311 implementation is an important consideration in the decision to move forward, it is equally as important to consider the non-financial benefits that the initiative will deliver to the organization. 311 Access Vancouver represents a significant increase in service to our citizens and our staff. This increase arises because of the improved quality, accessibility and accountability of our citizen service, the value of service standards and the value of timely, relevant performance data that will allow continuous improvement in our operations. A 311 implementation may also provide a platform through which further service improvements may be sought.

These kinds of "soft" benefits, though reported by most implemented 311's, are difficult to quantify in the context of a traditional business case, however they should be included in any assessment of the 311 business model because of the overall value to the City of Vancouver and improvement of service to its citizens.

TECHNICAL IMPLICATIONS

A 311 implementation would involve two kinds of software:

- Telephony hardware infrastructure, acquisition and configuration of a call centre suite, and applications for services (i.e. provision of 311 routing), including Automated Call Distributor (ACD), Integrated Voice Response system (IVR), and Computer Telephony Integration (CTI).
- 311 operations software including standard desktop applications and the acquisition and configuration of customer relationship software (enabling the issuance of service requests to departments) and a knowledge management system.

The technical component of a 311 implementation plan is significant. First steps would be to develop a detailed technical project plan including the plan for integrating 311 with other City applications and information sources, and collect business and technical requirements for RFP's.

The objectives of any technology plan supporting the 311 project would be to:

- adhere to the Corporate technology standards and policies
- adhere to the Corporate security standards and policies
- implement 311 software so that it can take advantage of other corporate technical initiatives as they roll out, such as:
 - Voice over Internet Protocol
 - Web initiatives including Content Management
 - The use of middle ware technology to provide integration with other city applications and data bases for use in 311.

It should be noted that the technical plan will need to include detailed technical design and cost estimates associated with such initiatives.

PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

The migration of work load to 311 from departments will result in splits in departmental processes and related gaps in existing position descriptions. It is proposed that a 311 project team member specializing in process review and re-engineering be available to departments. The re-engineering specialist would review processes with departmental supervisors and managers and make recommendations for streamlining and, if necessary, re-bundling of position duties to reflect the refined processes.

Wherever individual positions and/or incumbent employees would be impacted, the departmental Human Resource Consultant (HRC) would be involved to ensure that consistent HR policies are applied and collective agreements are adhered to. Given the possible impact on positions, discussion with the unions may be required. In some cases, the process migration to 311 and subsequent re-engineering may result in whole or partial position redundancy. Departmental supervisors and managers, in consultation with the HRC and the employee, would be asked to explore a number of options:

- transition of employee to an existing vacant position

- offer the employee CityLearn courses or “311 gap” training (bridging the knowledge/skill gap between many existing front line positions and 311 CSR positions) to better position employees for upcoming general and 311 CSR competitions
- explore other options of interest to the employee and assist in coaching towards those goals.

As employees are transitioned into alternative duties and positions become vacant, wherever possible capturing the savings will be done in a manner to avoid layoffs of regular full time staff.

New training programs

Two kinds of training programs would be designed and offered in relation to 311:

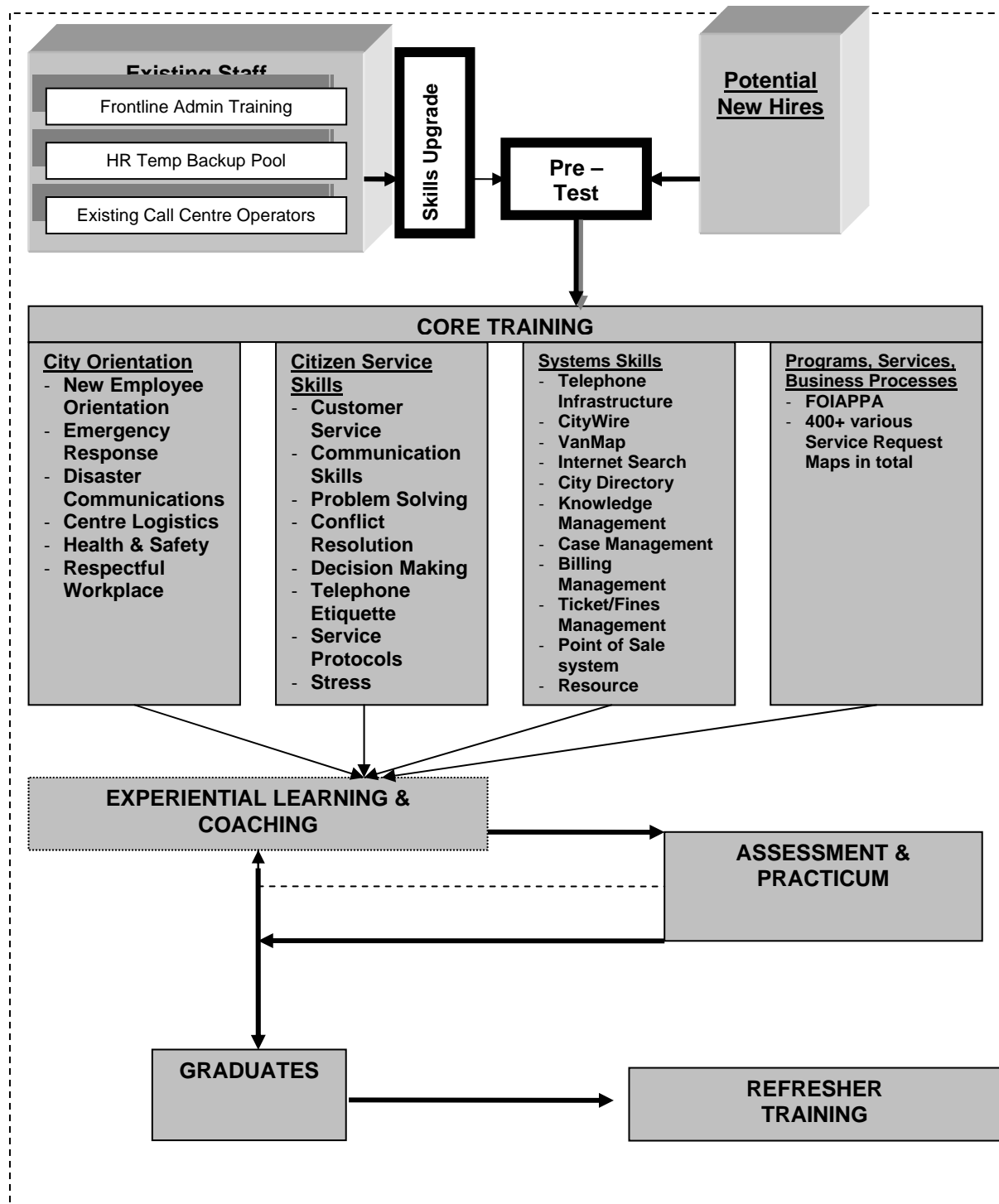
- courses to increase the knowledge/skill set of existing City resources
- comprehensive training program for 311 CSR's.

Skills improvement training: The existing CityLearn program of training already includes a frontline administrative training module, which would be augmented with further courses to bridge the knowledge/skill gap between existing front line staff qualifications and the proposed qualifications for a 311 CSR. This training would be planned to commence in conjunction with migration of processes to 311 and any re-engineering activities.

Citizen Service Representative program: The provision of quality, relevant training to the CSR's is fundamental to the success of the 311 initiative. The program of training will take 4-5 weeks to complete and is proposed in four modules:

- City orientation
- Citizen service training, including 311 logistics and equipment, verbal communication skills, problem-solving, decision making
- Systems training, including 311 software and any corporate applications to be accessed
- Practical - knowledge retention exercises and talk/type keyboarding practice.

Training resources would be coordinated through Human Resources Staff and Organization Development group, but would work in conjunction with the 311 project Change Manager. Both of the training programs would be offered on an ongoing basis post 311 implementation, as “batch” hiring of new CSR's takes place. An overview of the training strategy is presented in the diagram which follows.



IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

A detailed implementation plan and Project Charter would be developed as a first step if the 311 Access Vancouver project is approved in principle by Council. A comprehensive implementation strategy highlighting project deliverables and major phases of work has been drafted as part of the Feasibility Study, and will be presented to Council with the final report. The following is an overview of deliverables and risks, critical success factors and a discussion regarding the rationale of a phased 311 implementation.

Proposed project deliverables

- Establishment of a call centre site, equipped to accommodate up to 54 CSR's and 6 administrative staff
- Provision of 311 service for the Vancouver telephone exchange and establishment of an alternate 10-digit number for out-of-exchange/cell calls
- Acquisition and configuration of a call centre suite of telephony software and 311 call centre knowledge management and case management software
- Development of a knowledge base to populate software and replication of data to the City's web site wherever possible
- Development of the Citizen Service Representative classification of employees and related supervisory position descriptions
- Development of citizen service standards
- Development and delivery of 2 ongoing training programs
 - Comprehensive 4-5 week training for CSR's
 - Skills upgrade training for existing City staff wishing to compete for CSR positions
- Delivery of an internal communication plan and a public education and advertising campaign on 311
- Establishment of a 311 business area, including development of business work plan and call centre staff procedures
- Re-engineered departmental processes where migration of processes to 311 results in process/position fragmentation
- Migration of 50% of 311 operating budget offsets from departments/boards to the 311 business area within five years of 311 inception

It is anticipated that a "soft launch" (test period prior to "go live") of 311 Access Vancouver would be operational approximately eighteen months into the project. If approval is received in September 2006, soft launch would be in March, 2008.

Risk mitigation

A table detailing risks and risk mitigation strategies follows. The project will also be piloting Corporate Services' Enterprise Risk Management initiative as an additional risk mitigation measure.

Risk	Threat	Mitigation Strategy
Specialist and internal resources may be unavailable due to competing demands and timelines	Moderate; High risk to timeline	Seek external (private and consulting) as well as internal resources; contract for implementation partner including specialist resources
Effort required to build knowledge base will not be fully known until processes are identified and project is underway	Moderate	Though not desirable, phasing of migration could be slowed and 311 resource estimates reduced to allow additional time
Ability to migrate processes and transition positions may be impaired due to numerous factors (e.g. departmental physical site decentralization, HR challenges, previous re-engineering)	Moderate	Departments may have to find efficiencies in other areas where 311 efforts to re-engineer fail (risk to operating budget recovery); recovery has been set at a reasonable effort-for-effort ratio (i.e. 50% of operating)
Departments may not be able to deliver services at a level consistent with 311 services	Moderate	Manage citizen expectations during start-up; utilize 311 reporting to reallocate resources to high service request areas
Departments may fail to utilize 311 to the greatest extent possible	Moderate	General Managers have agreed to committing to the shared model in the 311 Project Charter
Duplication of effort may exist between several corporate initiatives (IMS, ERDMS, other technical initiatives)	Low	A high level of communication between the project directors and possible co-location of some projects may be considered
Notice to telecom orgs re: 311 service provision may trigger obstacles related to overlapping telephone exchange boundaries	Low	Telecom organizations are required to provide service within six months of application; some negotiation issues could be worked on concurrent to basic service provision
May be challenges in integration of technologies	Low	On-going communications between project leads and Information Technology Division will identify synergies and obstacles; CSR's can be designated as users of required applications; contingency allowed for licenses
Citizens confused between e.g. 211, 311, 511, 811, and 911	Low	All "N11's" committed or required to extensively advertise distinctions between numbers; strategy to have high-profile table of n11's in Vancouver phone books and on-line look-up tools
Citizens dissatisfied with 311 offering phone and email channels before integrated web, counter, etc.	Low	311 business area plan will include strategic planning toward development of a comprehensive Citizen Service Strategy (out of scope for 311 project); 311 project and business area will work with I.T. to further accessibility of other service channels

It is typical for newly implemented 311 operations to experience a spike in calls as citizens try out the service or act on concerns that they previously did not know how to direct. This spike has been anticipated in the 311 staffing model. The ability of the organization to meet the surge in demand will require a balance of communication, managing citizen expectations and careful planning of the phasing of processes and staff resources.

Critical Success Factors

In order to determine the impact of implementing a consolidated citizen service centre, it is necessary to identify the critical success factors. These measures will enable the organization to report on the success of the initiative post-implementation.

Citizen Satisfaction

- Objective: Increase satisfaction levels to 80%, close gap between City of Vancouver satisfaction and benchmark groups, and eliminate performance gaps
- Measured By:
 - Annual Phone survey - Repeat Citizen Access Survey on annual basis, and utilize benchmarking service to compare results to other public sector organizations.
 - Periodic Call-backs - Carry out periodic call-backs to determine satisfaction levels with contact centre experience.

Level of Consolidation

- Objective: Optimize Consolidated Contact Centre capacity
- Measured By:
 - Number of services/processes delivered via 311 Contact Centre. 333 of 411 service processes identified as potential "Full" transfers. Target transfer of 80% by end of 2010.

Information Management

- Objective: Increase the quality and consistency of information at the City of Vancouver
- Measured By:
 - Level of integration of systems
 - Ability to monitor information

Service Levels

- Objective: Increase Accessibility for Citizens
- Measured By:
 - Response Time (80% of all calls will be responded to within 30 seconds)
 - Average handle times (average handle time will be reduced by 30 seconds)
 - Misdirected calls (misdirected calls will be eliminated)
- Objective: Increase Accountability for Citizens and City of Vancouver
- Measured By:
 - Development of Service Level Agreements for all services delivered through Consolidated Contact Centre
 - Development of Performance Reports on all service requests

Phased approach to service channel integration

The experience gained in studying the best practices and lessons learned from implemented 311 centres was extremely valuable in developing the implementation strategy. One key lesson was to take a deliberate, phased approach to adopting the consolidated model or “walk before trying to run”.

Ultimately, it is anticipated that the 311 centre will integrate all service channels - phone, email, faxback, web and e-commerce. To try to implement too much too quickly would add considerable risk to the project. It is proposed that phasing proceed as follows:

- “soft launch”, pilot redirection of internal calls
- establish citizen service centre for phone and email and phase in increasingly complex work over 3 years
 - 1st - general inquiries and requests for transfer to a specific employee (approx 48% of call load)
 - 2nd - complaints and requests for a basic service (e.g. garbage collection, pot hole or street lamp replacement)
 - 3rd - requests for licenses, permits, booking facilities, course registration, billing inquiries or payment requests
- participate in corporate initiatives to develop other service channels, such as web chat responses, web self-serve applications and e-commerce.

The recommendation to first establish a consolidated call centre then focus on enhanced web offerings, was reinforced not only by the experience of other 311 cities, but by the survey data. In addition to showing that phone service continued to be the service channel of choice, the data showed that 15% of survey respondents had no access to the internet. Further, the demographics of those 15% of respondents aligned with the demographics of the population who are most likely to benefit from the simplified accessibility and language offerings of the 311 call centre.

Citizens First 4 survey results also support implementation of 311 Access Vancouver first through telephone service rather than web service. Visits to a website are more common in support of other channels and to find information. For the services rated and described in Citizens First (government services), the Internet is rarely the only channel used. Its use is more common when other channels are used, and most often when 3 or more channels are used.

It is important to note that complete integration of the web applications is not in scope for this project. Furthering of web services is a corporate initiative which will benefit many parts of the organization including 311.

As 311 processes are being defined for transition, and knowledge base data and flex questions are developed, 311 project staff will be looking for opportunities to update current web information so that the web information available to citizens aligns with information provided through 311.

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

If 311 Access Vancouver is approved in principle, the Corporate Communications branch would work with the 311 project team to develop a detailed communications strategy. The objectives of a communications plan supporting the 311 project would be to:

- facilitate a smooth transition for the staff and the work/process changes that will be necessitated
- build awareness in the public of 311 and its benefits; and
- manage the expectations of the public on what information will be available during the first phase of implementation of 311.

The Corporate Communications Division would develop a detailed strategy and implementation schedule for the time leading up to and including the first 18 months of the launch of 311. The plan anticipates using a wide variety of tools to communicate both internally and externally, and to ensure outreach to key communities with English as a Second Language.

Implementation for internal communications will include but not be limited to: web pages on the intranet explaining the project, its goals and benefits to the organization and to the public (including Q+As, timelines); briefings for supervisors and interested staff to understand more about 311 and its uses in other cities; communications support for change management exercises within the organization; key messages to senior managers for sharing with staff; display table at staff events to offer information on 311 project.

Implementation for public communications will include: the creation of slogan and a visual identity for all Vancouver 311 materials (including a logo, themes for ads); advertising (print, movie theatre, transit shelters, bus sides; and interior transit); posters at civic facilities; postcard to all households; a 311 web site; news release and earned media (including media and talk show interviews); and changes to Telus blue pages. Key advertisements and communications pieces will be translated into other languages.

CONCLUSION

Modern governments are striving to adapt and respond to public needs and expectations. In the municipal world, the City of Vancouver has been a leader in many areas. The City is known internationally for many of its programs and approaches to citizen involvement and public policy. In considering 311, the City can take the next step in evolving to superior public service delivery. 311 is a significant step toward a single front door to City Hall. It enables the City to adapt to the complexity of its demographics by making language response economically feasible. 311 provides the infrastructure that, over time, will enable public programs and services to be changed and adapted to public needs based on evidence.

Adoption of 311 Access Vancouver represents an opportunity and an investment in our commitment to citizen service. It will demonstrate Vancouver's commitment to quality, accessibility, inclusivity, and accountability, and our commitment to be an employer of choice. The exemplary citizen service model will affirm Vancouver's position as a leader in local government improvement initiatives.

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