



CITY OF VANCOUVER

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ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: May 29, 2008
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Meeting Date: June 24, 2008

TO: Vancouver City Council

FROM: Program Director - Access Vancouver

SUBJECT: Authority to create 311 Contact Centre Sustainment Positions - Phase One

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council approve the creation of 15 Regular Full-time sustainment positions for the 311 Contact Centre Phase 1 operation as outlined in Table 1, subject to classification by the General Manager of Human Resource Services, at an estimated annual cost of \$891,600 (including benefits); source of funds to be:

- \$176,500 (pro-rated for 2008) from the 311 Project Capital Budget; and
- \$891,600 be added to the 2009 Operating Budget and fully offset by operational efficiencies to be identified within departmental budgets as part of the 2009 Operating Budget process.

There will be no net cost to the City related to the creation of these positions.

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager supports this recommendation.

COUNCIL POLICY

The establishment of full time positions requires Council approval.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to request Council's approval to establish fifteen new regular full time positions for the 311 Contact Centre for the first phase of Contact Centre operations.

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.

On November 30, 2006, Council approved the implementation of a consolidated citizen service centre and 311 Service for the City of Vancouver including the source of funding. In addition, Council approved as a policy objective that all citizen services that can be delivered using the 311 model be accessible through the new service centre unless it would lead to a diminished service to citizens; and that the 311 Service should be self-funded through operational efficiencies.

The 311 Contact Centre is a new service area for the City of Vancouver, and will be placed within the new Business Planning & Services organization. The personnel required for contact centre operations have been identified, and include a Manager, Team Leads, and Citizen Service Representatives. Further positions will be finalized closer to launch date of 311 (June 2009).

The 311 Contact Centre will be implemented in three phases. The strategy to roll-out this service in three phases was developed to allow the City of Vancouver to become accustomed to this new citizen service model. Phase One (January 2009), which is also known as the "Soft Launch", is an internal re-direct of a number of phone lines within the City of Vancouver to the new 311 Contact Centre. The phone calls are primarily informational calls, and constitute approximately one-third of the total volume of citizen calls. The public will continue to use the 10 digit telephone numbers currently in place, and are not aware their call is being answered by a central contact centre. The hours of service will be the current hours of service offered to the public through these phone numbers (Monday-Friday, 8:30-5:00).

Phase Two (June 2009) is the public, or "Hard Launch" of the 311 Contact Centre. There will be a communications campaign publicizing the availability of the service, and the hours will be extended to 24/7 at this point in time. A further one-third of phone calls will migrate to the 311 Contact Centre during this phase. Citizen Service Representatives will begin to take service-related phone calls, assisting citizens with requests which will be actioned by service departments such as Engineering.

Phase Three (June 2010) is the last stage of migration of calls to the 311 Contact Centre. The calls that will be taken in this phase are the more complex inquiries and service requests, and require complex integration with departmental legacy systems. The last one-third of citizen calls will be answered by the Contact Centre.

DISCUSSION

The 311 Contact Centre will require personnel to be hired in three phases to match the operational requirements of call volumes, with phase one personnel hired in mid-late 2008. The staffing requirements for phases two and three have been estimated, but will be refined based upon actual call volumes and operational needs closer to the launch dates of those phases. For Phase One, fifteen positions have been identified as required to respond to citizen calls to the City of Vancouver.

The 311 Contact Centre will require a Manager, who will be hired in the summer of 2008. The Manager will become an integral member of the 311 Project Team, assisting with initial set-up of the Contact Centre and recruitment and hiring of future Contact Centre staff. The Manager will be responsible for the operation and management of the 311 Contact Centre, including the development of effective operational policies and procedures, and service delivery teams.

The 311 Contact Centre will require up to four Team Lead positions, which are required to manage the day to day operations of the Contact Centre. One Team Lead position is required for Phase One, and will be hired in August 2008 in anticipation of the recruitment of the Citizen Service Representatives.

There will be two types of Citizen Service Representatives. Citizen Service Representative I positions will provide professional customer service through a variety of telephone interactions, receiving and processing non-emergency calls from citizens, businesses and visitors. The 311 Citizen Service Representatives will use their superior judgement and analytical skills to determine the citizen's needs, and to take appropriate actions to facilitate the call completion to the citizen's satisfaction. The 311 Contact Centre will require 13 CSR I positions in Phase One, and these positions will be recruited in September 2008; with an approximate start date of mid-November, 2008.

The Citizen Service Representative II positions will also provide professional customer service through a variety of telephone interactions, receiving and processing non-emergency calls from citizens, businesses and visitors, and in addition will perform a variety of specified supervisory tasks on an assigned shift. There will be no CSR II positions created until Phase Two of the 311 Contact Centre.

The need for Business and Information Technology sustainment teams have been identified and included in the operational plan for the 311 Contact Centre, and will be brought forward for Council's consideration in advance of the launch of Phase Two.

All new positions will be subject to classification through Human Resources, in accordance with its level of authority and responsibility.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The annual cost (including benefits) for the fifteen positions is estimated at \$891,600 (2008 salary rates) as follows:

Table 1:

	Year and Funding Source	
	2008	2009
311 Contact Centre Phase One Positions	Capital Budget	Operating Budget
Contact Centre Manager (BND 11) - 1 position	\$61,200	\$126,700
Contact Centre Team Lead (BND 7) - 1 position	\$32,700	\$81,100
Citizen Service Representative (GR 17) - 13 positions	\$82,600	\$683,800
Total	\$176,500	\$891,600

Note: All positions identified in Table 1 will be subject to classification by the General Manager of Human Resource Services.

The costs for personnel hired in 2008 (\$176,500) will be paid for by the 311 Project Capital Budget as 2008 activities are project implementation activities.

In January 2009, the fifteen positions will begin operational activities. The annual cost of \$891,600 will be added to the 2009 Operating Budget and be fully offset by operational efficiencies to be identified within the departmental budgets and reported back to City Council as part of the 2009 Operating Budget process. This is in line with Council's decision of November 30, 2006 that the operation of the 311 Contact Centre is to be self-funded. There will be no net cost to the City related to the creation of these positions.

PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

Establishing the positions will provide the 311 Contact Centre with the necessary staff to provide services for Phase One of the implementation. Further positions required for Phase Two and Three will be finalized and reported back in early 2009. Relevant positions will be posted as per collective agreement once the positions are approved.

CONCLUSION

Establishing the new positions for the 311 Contact Centre will ensure that the contact centre has the required regular staffing support to provide reliable, consistent citizen service for Phase One of the implementation.

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