



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: Update on Progress of 311 Implementation

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council receive this report FOR INFORMATION.

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager RECOMMENDS approval of the above recommendation.

COUNCIL POLICY

There is no Council policy on this matter.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the implementation of the 311 Contact Centre.

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.

The benefits of the new citizen contact service model are substantial. For the citizens of Vancouver, it will now be easier to contact City Hall. Informational and service related calls will be handled by a highly trained Citizen Service Representative ("CSR"), and when a transfer is necessary it will be done consistently and reliably. A case management system will track every citizen request and will provide the ability to produce reports for departments. Citizens will be provided a tracking number for service requests and an estimated completion time for their request. The 311 Knowledge Base will be a central resource for city information and services, ensuring the same information and processes are followed every time. Access to City of Vancouver information and service will be enhanced for citizens through increased hours of service and enhanced language service.

DISCUSSION

Since November 2006, a number of key activities have been initiated to fulfill Council's direction to open the 311 Contact Centre by mid-2009. The first key activity was to establish a project team, which reports directly to the City Manager's Office. The Access Vancouver Program is responsible for the implementation of three approved business initiatives that impact all City departments and service groups: the 311 Contact Centre, the Voice over Internet Protocol system (VanPhone+) and the Electronic Records and Document Management System (VanDocs). The mission of all three projects is to enhance access to and quality of service and information for all City of Vancouver stakeholders. Each project maintains separate business teams, while shared Change Management, Training, and Technical Teams allow the Program to optimize staff resources and share knowledge across all three projects.

Communication and Change Management are critical aspects of the 311 Contact Centre implementation, and a number of activities are underway to share information, understand organizational challenges, and develop mitigation measures to facilitate the migration of telephone citizen service to the central contact centre. The 311 Steering Committee was established in the spring of 2007, with senior level representatives from all City departments and boards. The Steering Committee attends monthly meetings to receive status updates, provide strategic advice on policy issues, and receive quarterly budget updates. In addition, a 311 Business Readiness Network has been established to increase communications between the 311 Project Team and departments. This group of employees will assist in the change management issues and ensure two way communication between staff and 311. The Network will also provide advice to the 311 Project Team on matters such as CSR Training.

The identification of the business processes and technological requirements for the 311 Contact Centre has been a significant workplan item for the Project Team. The 311 Project Team has conducted a thorough documentation of 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). The documentation includes workflow, 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).

End state workflow documentation has been created for the 311 Contact Centre, and the technical requirements have been defined and documented in two formal Request for Proposals, both of which were opened to the vendor community in May 2007. Solutions have been selected for a Contact Centre System (CRM) and a Call Centre Suite are currently being implemented. The knowledge base data required to enable 311 CSR's to handle inquiries and service requests is being documented and entered in the 311 CRM system. In the system, the information will be retrievable through search keys, decision trees and questions and scripted information. The primary source of information utilized by the CSRs will be the city website. This will avoid duplication of information that should be readily available to citizens, and will ensure that both citizens on-line and CSRs have access to the most up to date information available.

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. 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. Phase Three (April 2010) is the last stage of migration of calls to the 311 Contact Centre.

The facility which will house the 311 Contact Centre is currently under renovation. 1800 Spyglass Place will be the site for the Contact Centre, and the design process included varied City of Vancouver stakeholders, including the City's Ergonomist, Facilities Development Project Management staff, 311 Project Team staff, and staff from front-line operations throughout the City. The renovation began in late-April, 2008 and will be complete by August, 2008.

The personnel requirements for the 311 Contact Centre have been developed in tandem with the Migration Plan. The call volumes and average handle times for each process transferring from departments to 311 have been estimated, and will be validated throughout the implementation. As the call volumes and average handle times are estimates, the personnel requirements will be refined post-implementation to ensure the staffing requirements are suitable. Therefore the personnel requirements identified herein may change slightly throughout implementation due to operational needs. Personnel will include the 311 Contact Centre Manager, Team Leads, Citizen Service Representatives (I & II), and Sustainment Teams (Business, Technical and Training). The 311 Contact Centre will require on-going support from business, technical and training personnel. Estimates for these functions have been provisioned in the operational plan and budget, and will be finalized after the Phase One launch.

The training plan for the Citizen Service Representatives is currently in development. The formal training will be 5 weeks in length. A separate training program ("Citizen Service Skills Training") was conducted for city staff between March-June 2008. The 311 Project Team and Human Resource Services, together with the BCIT Call Centre for Excellence, developed a 4.5 day citizen service skills training program tailored specifically for City of Vancouver staff. The training program was initiated with the express purpose of introducing the City of Vancouver staff to the types of positions available in a contact centre environment, the skills necessary for such positions, and to provide an opportunity for employees to assess their own suitability for these positions. The training was available to all city employees, and between March and June 2008, a total of 140 city staff attended this training opportunity.

Financial Update

(a) 311 Operating Budget

The 311 Operating Budget has been refined and reduced since the initial estimates made to Council in November 2006. The reductions in operating costs are due to lower maintenance costs for software, lower facility costs, and lower personnel costs. The Operating Budget will continue to be refined throughout implementation. Current Operating Budget estimates are as follows:

Operating Cost Component - Annual Costs of operation	Original Estimates	2011
Hardware and Software Maintenance	630,200	226,870
Sustainment Team	321,400	354,862
Contact Centre Staffing and Administration	3,995,100	4,228,460
Training	215,400	
Telephone and Translation Services	151,300	101,846
Facility Costs	316,900	238,703
Annual Operating Costs	5,630,300	5,150,741
*Note - 2011 Contact Centre staffing includes Training		

(b) Resource Recovery Model

As directed by Council in November 2006, the operating costs of the 311 Contact Centre will be offset by seeking operational efficiencies and by transfer of at least equivalent funding from existing departmental budgets such that the service is self-funded. Options for the resource recovery have been developed and refined with the 311 Steering Committee. Final approval of the resource recovery for 311 Operating costs rests with the Corporate Management Team and will be finalized by August 2008.

(c) Project Budget Update

The 311 Project is within the One-Time Implementation Costs of \$12.3 million approved by Council in November 2006. The actual costs are updated in the following table:

Project Component	Approved Budget (2006)	Actual & Committed
Hardware / Software	3,918,300	2,304,900
Technical Support, Consulting & Training	1,042,800	372,200
Project Team / Change Management	3,202,400	1,049,000
Call Centre Facility	1,270,000	1,270,000
Contingency	1,043,100	-
Total One Time Implementation Costs	10,476,600	4,996,100
Enhancement Fund	1,830,000	-
Total	12,306,600	4,996,100

Update on Implementation Plan

The 311 Project is on schedule for the first phase, "soft launch", to be live in January 2009, followed by the "hard launch" in June 2009, and the final migration of processes to 311 by April 2010.

The high level implementation plan is:

PHASE	TIMELINE
Build/Configure System	June- October 2008
System Testing	July - November 2008
Contact Centre Agent Training	October - November 2008
Acceptance Testing	November - December 2008
Phase 1 - Soft Launch	January 2009
Phase II - Hard Launch	June 2009
Phase III - Processes Migrated	April 2010

CONCLUSION

Council directed staff to provide updates on the 311 Contact Centre implementation annually. This report provides a project status report as well as descriptions of specific project items underway.

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