



## ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: June 3, 2009  
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Meeting Date: June 16, 2009

TO: Vancouver City Council  
FROM: General Manager, Business Planning & Services  
SUBJECT: Update on the Progress of 311 Implementation

### **RECOMMENDATION**

*THAT Council receive this report FOR INFORMATION.*

### **COUNCIL POLICY**

There is no applicable Council Policy.

### **SUMMARY**

The 311 Contact Centre implementation is on time and under budget. The migration of business areas into the new service model is underway, and a communications campaign is planned for September 2009. As of June 15, 2009, callers within the City of Vancouver can dial 311 and will be routed to the Contact Centre.

### **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 to information and services. 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. Council directed that the 311 Contact Centre be in operation by mid-2009.

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. Access to City of Vancouver information and service will be enhanced for citizens through increased hours of service and language service. A case management system tracks citizen requests and provides 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 system will be a central resource for city information and services, ensuring the same information and processes are followed every time.

### *DISCUSSION*

Since the last project update in June 2008, significant progress has been achieved:

#### 1. Facility

The 311 Contact Centre is located in a city-owned facility at 1800 Spyglass Place. Renovations to create the centre were completed in August 2008 on time and under budget. The 311 facility became operational in February 2009 based on an operating model that conforms to best practices for call centres. The facility was designed as an open-concept space with sound mitigation devices being used to reduce transmission of voices. Workstations are fully adjustable, there is a training facility on-site and sustainable materials were utilized throughout.

#### 2. Technology

There are two significant systems that have been implemented to support the new Contact Centre. The Lagan Enterprise Case Management software which was purchased in 2007 and by summer will have been configured with over 750 distinct business processes (issue response protocols) to assist citizen service representatives in dealing with issues raised by callers. The Lagan system will also provide significant information about these business processes, including the nature of requests and their frequency, geographic origination of requests and request status.

The Cisco Unified Contact Centre Enterprise telephone system has been in operation since late 2008 and provides improved call routing, tracking and measurement capacity. These two systems are integrated in the 311 Contact Centre and will allow 311 to report on such measures as call handling times for specific processes.

The telephone routing system that will enable 311 dialling has been finalized by the local telecom providers. The City of Vancouver sent out formal notice of our intent to use the 311 number effective June 15, 2009. Each provider was required to configure their landline and cell systems to route 311 calls to our Contact Centre. Calls made by landline and cell within the City of Vancouver boundaries will be directed to the 311 Contact Centre. Callers from outside the City of Vancouver limits can reach the service through a ten digit number (604-

873-7000). Due to the location of some cellular towers, cellular calls made from locations close to municipal boundaries may not be routed to the 311 Contact Centre.

### 3. 311 Contact Centre Operations Team

Two previous reports to Council provided approval to hire the 311 Operations Team. To date, there are 36 full-time permanent staff employed in the 311 Contact Centre:

- 1 Contact Centre Manager,
- 3 Team Leads,
- 8 Citizen Service Representative II's,
- 22 full-time Citizen Service Representative I's,
- 1 part-time Citizen Service Representative I, and
- 1 Administrative Assistant.

An additional seven Citizen Service Representative I's (3 RPT and 4 RFT) begin training on June 29, 2009.

The response to the hiring process was gratifying as there were over 4,451 internal and external applicants to the CSR postings. The hiring process included testing, interviews and reference checks. Eleven staff hired were already employees of the City of Vancouver, while 32 are new employees.

### 4. Business Migration

#### i. Phase I

The 311 Contact Centre began operations on February 16, 2009 with hours of operation from 8am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. This phase did not introduce 311 dialling but focused on providing information and taking switchboard calls ("take and transfer" calls) and allowed the Contact Centre to pilot the technology and make operating adjustments where needed. Increasingly the citizen service staff have been able to deal directly with callers' inquiries and service requests.

#### ii. Phase II

Phase II of the implementation is scheduled to begin on June 1, 2009 and proceed over the next six months with migration of increasingly complex business processes to the Call Centre. The majority of Phase II business areas will migrate to the 311 Contact Centre on June 15, while a number of others will migrate at one of the following times: June 1<sup>st</sup>, August 4<sup>th</sup>, September 14<sup>th</sup>, and November 23<sup>rd</sup>. The rationale behind the staggered approach to migration is to address training, configuration and integration requirements.

As noted, "311" dialling becomes effective in the City on June 15, 2009, beginning the replacement of multiple numbers that citizens and visitors must locate to access City information and services. In addition to the additional services being hosted by the 311 Contact Centre in Phase II, the hours of service will also gradually increase. Effective June 15, hours of operation are 7am to 10pm, 7 days per week. On the same date the Contact Centre will have access to a third party translation services to assist with callers who do not speak English. The translation service will select the correct language and will provide a

qualified interpreter. Average connection time to the interpreter is under one minute and over 170 languages will be available.

Then on September 14th, the hours of operation of the Contact Centre will extend to 24/7. High volumes are not expected in the overnight hours, but the 24/7 service will support departmental processes that occasionally need to be actioned outside of normal work hours.

Finally, the 311 project team is currently preparing for the potential call load, information requirements and staffing impacts of the 2010 Games on the 311 Contact Centre. Understanding call loads and the questions and requests that might be generated will ensure that appropriate internal and external knowledge sources can be accessed as part of established business protocols.

### iii. Next Steps

Two major elements of the project remain on the project workplan. First, a plan to finalize the requirements for the remaining members of the 311 operations team, including contact centre staff, the technical and business sustainment team is underway and will be reported to Council later in 2009. It is estimated that the business and technical teams will require 8 FTE positions. Phase III of the Contact Centre will require the additional of approximately 12 FTE CSR's. The exact number of positions is dependent upon call volumes experienced. Second, the migration of the Phase III processes (scheduled for 2010) will commence upon the completion of Phase II in November of this year.

## 3. Experiences and Lessons Learned to Date

### i. Project Team

The 311 Project was initiated as part of a broader program to enhance access to and quality of service and information for all City of Vancouver stakeholders. The "Access Vancouver" project is made up of three projects, including the 311 Contact Centre, the Voice over Internet Protocol system (VanPhone+) and the Electronic Records and Document Management System (VanDocs). Each project maintains separate business teams consistent with their unique requirements. However, shared Change Management, Training and Technical Teams has allowed the program to optimize staff resources and share knowledge across all three projects. The benefits of this program have been significant: These have been both financial (approximately 400K in savings to projects due to shared positions, administrative costs and rent) and qualitative. There are issues common to both VanPhone+ and 311 that the teams are able to collaborate upon and use time in more efficient manner. This approach to coordinated technical and business sustainment will be the basis of recommendations to Council referred to above.

### ii. Metrics

One of the significant benefits of the 311 system was intended to be the information that would be provided from the issue and contact centre systems being implemented. The Lagan System and the Call Center Telephone Management System have already begun to provide valuable data to the City. Metrics currently available are both specific to the Contact Centre (call volumes, arrival patterns, etc) and to business areas (for example, frequency of specific request types).

The anticipated annual call volume for the 311 Contact Centre at each phase are as follows:

Phase I			176,000
Phase II	an additional	714,000	Total 890,000
Phase III	an additional	300,000	Total 1,190,000

From February to June, the estimated daily volume for Phase I was 704. The actual volumes are on average 649/day.

See Appendix A for further discussion of 311 Contact Centre metrics to date.

As more services migrate to the 311 Contact Centre, the quality and quantity of that data will significantly improve and will inform contact centre operations by tailoring staffing models to the workload demands, it will also provide valuable information about City operations and stakeholder priorities which could eventually be utilized to assist with departmental service strategies, communications and resource allocation.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

#### **i. Project Budget (Capital)**

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:

	<b>Council Approved</b>	<b>Actual &amp; Commitments to May 2009</b>	<b>Estimate to Completion</b>
Hardware & Software	\$3,918,300	\$2,537,800	\$2,591,100
Technical Support, Consultants, Training, Communications	1,042,800	789,300	1,129,700
Project Team Costs	3,202,400	2,865,300	4,150,400
Call Centre Set Up	1,270,000	1,238,500	1,238,500
Project Office Rent	0	244,500	287,200
Project Office Renovations	0	104,700	104,700
Emergency Power (NEU)	0	92,700	92,700
Contingency (other)	1,043,100	0	187,300
Enhancement Fund	1,830,000	287,600	1,000,000
	<b>\$12,306,600</b>	<b>\$8,160,400</b>	<b>\$10,781,600</b>

The table indicates some changes in approach to the implementation process all within the overall project budget. Project team costs are higher than in the initial budget as the 311 Project team took on more responsibility for the setup and configuration of the new systems rather than contracting to the software vendors. This cost increase directly offsets the lower than anticipated software/hardware costs.

To date, the 311 Contingency Budget has been accessed for three items:

- the 311 Project contributed to the costs of the Neighbourhood Energy Utility backup generator. This partnership provides assurance that the 311 Contact Centre will be operational during power outages. Cost estimates for a dedicated generator for the Spyglass Call Centre was estimated to be between \$200,000 and \$300,000. This equates to a savings of at least \$100,000.
- Project Office rent and renovation costs were not anticipated when the business case was developed as it was expected that space would continue to be available in a rent-free city-owned facility.

## ii. 311 Operating Budget

The 311 Operating Budget is phased in over three years to match the expansion of the Centre. The anticipated annual operating budget of \$5.63 million reported to Council as part of the original business case has been reduced to \$5.15 million at full implementation. The following table summarizes the original and current operating budget estimates:

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		

Hardware and software maintenance include the annual maintenance cost of the Lagan Enterprise Case Management system, the call centre applications such as workforce management and call recording, and provision for hardware replacement and upgrades. The sustainment team costs are the salaries for the technical staff required to support the systems. Contact Centre Staffing, the main component of the budget, contains the salaries for all Citizen Centre Representatives, Team Leads, Manager and Business Analysts. The telephone and translation services line item will ensure adequate budget is available for the third party translation service and TTY services. Facility costs are the costs of rent at the Contact Centre.

Notable changes from the original estimates include: software maintenance costs were significantly lower than budgeted, and rental costs were lower than anticipated. Training costs were rolled into "Contact Centre Staffing" as training is being conducted by city staff rather than by external trainers.

### iii. Resource Recovery Model

As directed by Council in November 2006, the operating costs of the 311 Contact Centre will be offset by transfer of at least equivalent funding from existing departmental budgets and then by seeking operational efficiencies such that the service is self-funded. Departments have been notified of the budget allocations that will be transferred to the 311 Operating Budget between 2009 and 2011. The allocations were based upon estimated usage/volume of calls handled on behalf of departments. The 2009 allocation transfer is complete and the details of the budget reductions made by departments to achieve these allocations is detailed in Appendix 5 of *2009 Interim Budget Estimates Update and Public Consultation Results* report (RTS08004). The portion of the 311 Operating Budget from operational efficiencies for 2009 is detailed on page 13 of the *2009 Operating Budget: Interim Estimates* report (RTS07864). Cost allocations in 2010 and 2011 will be reported to Council as part of the annual operating budget process.

### *COMMUNICATIONS PLAN*

The introduction of "311" calling in the City will be accompanied by an extensive communications plan beginning in mid September, 2009. This delay after the introduction will ensure that the complex task of integrating new business processes into the Call Centre can be appropriately tested and confirmed before broad information is made available.

The elements of the campaign will include:

- direct mail to all residents and businesses within the City of Vancouver,
- creation of a brief video outlining the 311 service, and
- a media launch event at the 311 Contact Centre.

One key element of the campaign is to clearly articulate to citizens the differences between 311 and 911. Other key messages for the external communication campaign will include:

- Service - 24/7, accountable, responsive, one call
- Vancouver only - inform Vancouver specific residents/citizens of service
- Non emergency - continue to call 911 for life and limb

Following the official public launch of the service, the 311 number will be used when the City of Vancouver communicates with citizens. A logo integrating the 311 number with the City of Vancouver emblem is in development.

### *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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