

**To:** SPECIAL COUNCIL  
**Meeting Date:** 1/31/2023  
**Subject:** Enhanced Customer Service Review  
**Submitted By:** Sheryl Ayres, Chief Financial Officer  
**Prepared By:** Wade Novak, Manager of Revenue and Service Cambridge  
**Report No.:** 23-077-CRS  
**File No.:** C1101  
**Wards Affected:** All Wards

### **RECOMMENDATION(S):**

THAT Report 23-077-CRS Enhanced Customer Service Review be received;  
AND THAT staff prepare further analysis and resourcing recommendations based on the workplan to be provided by Blackline Consulting.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

#### **Purpose**

A requirement of the Provincial Audit and Accountability Intake 3 funding the City of Cambridge received is to submit a final report to the Province no later than Feb 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023. Blackline Consulting was contracted to complete a review and documentation of key City of Cambridge customer service processes and to provide recommendations for modernizing and improving service delivery, which are included in the attached report.

#### **Key Findings**

- Comprehensive review of current customer service practices and data.
- Customer journey mapping for several key services.
- Review of CRM system and a market scan for alternatives.
- Recommendations for improvements to customer services.

#### **Financial Implications**

There are no current financial Implications and future financial implications will be explored as the recommendations presented are reviewed for implementation.

## **STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT:**

- Strategic Action; or
- Core Service

**Objective(s):** Not Applicable

**Strategic Action:** Not Applicable

**Program:** Service Cambridge

**Core Service:** Service Cambridge

## **BACKGROUND:**

A centralized service model (Service Cambridge) at the City of Cambridge was launched in 2019. The initial launch included several of the City's core services (tax, water, switchboard as well as general City enquiries) and established a mandate to continue onboarding additional services through 2020/21. Service Cambridge now includes the intake streams for Public Works, Recreation and Culture as well as service elements of Building, Bylaw, Clerks, Planning and Engineering.

In an effort to ensure continuous improvement of this customer service model, the City received funding through the Government of Ontario's Provincial Modernization Grant program to review and modernize its customer services. Blackline Consulting were contracted to complete the work.

## **ANALYSIS:**

In 2022 the City completed a Customer Satisfaction Survey to solicit feedback on areas where the City could focus resources in order to improve service levels. Through this survey customer service ranked high in terms of satisfaction and was also noted as one of the top three areas of importance to residents. Therefore, as Service Cambridge matures in its service offerings, investments in improvements to our customer service model will drive greater satisfaction to residents in the community.

Seeing this feedback as an opportunity, the City engaged the services of Blackline Consulting to complete an Enhanced Customer Service Review. The objective of the customer service review focused on the following aspects:

- Review current customer service processes and data,
- Consider service modernization opportunities like a customer relationship management (CRM) system, 311 and existing online strategies, and

- Document and define the customer journey through various interactions and document existing processes (known as customer journey mapping).

The review was completed using the principles of Lean/Six Sigma methodology, where applicable, and provided recommendations for future customer service enhancements, key performance targets and other areas of potential improvement.

The review completed by Blackline Consulting focused on three major questions.

1. What are the City's customer service demands?
2. What is our customer service experience like?
3. How effective is Service Cambridge?

The review process included engagement with various levels of staff, post service customer interaction feedback and a peer municipal survey distributed to the following Municipalities.

- |                    |                  |
|--------------------|------------------|
| 1. Brantford       | 8. Mississauga   |
| 2. Brampton        | 9. Oakville      |
| 3. Chatham-Kent    | 10. Peterborough |
| 4. County of Brant | 11. Toronto      |
| 5. Guelph          | 12. Waterloo     |
| 6. Kingston        | 13. Windsor      |
| 7. Kitchener       |                  |

### **What are the City's customer service demands?**

- Service Cambridge receives similar service volumes as compared to its peers.
- Service volume has slightly increased over the past year, specific areas have seen large increases such as enforcement requests (up 821%), transfers to internal employees (up 78% year to date), pool, aquatics and swimming lesson inquiries (up 105%), and other general information (up 153%)
- The most common inquiries relate to water and taxes (accounting for 55% of all inquiries).
- The dominant service channel is phone calls, with email requests comprising only 14% of inquiries.
- Where possible Service Cambridge should seek to shift volume to lower cost channels and optimize its practices to maintain its ratio for managing future volume.

### **What is our customer service experience like?**

- Customer journey mapping of priority services indicates that 27% of steps are prone to pain points. Most of these pain points relate to process issues particularly with handoffs to other departments. Improving Service Cambridge knowledge articles, analyzing trends and having CRM functionality that allow staff to lookup previous call information can mitigate this issue.
- Service Cambridge does a good job of catering to its customer base however, service hours and language support may need changes in the future.

### **How effective is Service Cambridge?**

- Peer analysis indicates that Service Cambridge is processing an average ratio of customer interactions.
- The City's CRM system, Maximo, may not be fit for purpose and contributes to service fractures (hand offs between Service Cambridge and other City departments).
- There are several activities that can enhance the effectiveness of Service Cambridge such as establishing service levels, standard response times, formalizing continuous improvement and updating knowledge articles.

### **Recommendations Provided**

A series of recommendations have been provided by Blackline Consulting in this report that will be useful in helping to further enhance the customer experience provided at the City of Cambridge. Tracking the customer service journey and seeking ongoing feedback will continue to ensure efficient and effective performance by further developing high performance KPI's. Some of the recommendations have previously been identified by staff and are already part of the Service Cambridge work planning process. Blackline Consulting will be providing a supplementary workplan proposal that will help to prioritize and group the steps into an implementation plan. Staff will be receiving the implementation proposal in late January and will review to identify any resource requirements. Next steps with associated resourcing needs will be provided to Council as staff move through the next phases of the Service Cambridge program.

### **EXISTING POLICY / BY-LAW(S):**

There is no existing policy or bylaw.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

There are no financial implications

## **PUBLIC VALUE:**

### **Sustainability:**

- Focuses on the responsible management of financial resources, ensuring transparency and accountability

### **Collaboration:**

- Encourage a culture of innovation and engagement that allows all staff to contribute to the ongoing renewal of city services, programs and resources

## **ADVISORY COMMITTEE INPUT:**

Not Applicable

## **PUBLIC INPUT:**

Posted publicly as part of the report process

## **INTERNAL / EXTERNAL CONSULTATION:**

Internal, peer and customer consultations were completed as part of the review process and is outlined in the report prepared by Blackline Consulting, attached as Appendix A.

## **CONCLUSION:**

This review has provided some excellent information related to customer feedback, peer benchmarking and a LEAN view of our systems and processes across the full customer experience journey. It has clearly laid out the need for cross divisional corporate customer experience metrics and consistent and clearly defined expectations of customer service levels. Systems that are not purpose built (CRM) and a lack of integration had been identified as a key element for this review and the findings are in-line with staff expectations.

Some of the recommendations are already part of the Service Cambridge work planning process and the review by Blackline Consulting helps to focus and prioritize the next steps in the ongoing rollout of the central service model.

## **REPORT IMPACTS:**

Agreement: **No**

By-law: **No**

Budget Amendment: **No**

Policy: **No**

**APPROVALS:**

**This report has gone through the appropriate workflow and has been reviewed and or approved by the following as required:**

**Director**

**Deputy City Manager**

**Chief Financial Officer**

**City Solicitor**

**City Manager**

**ATTACHMENTS:**

**When naming attachments please use the following format:**

1. 23-077-CRS Appendix A – Customer Service Review