Minutes – Executive Policy Committee – December 7, 2005

REPORTS

Minute No. 71 **Red Tape Commission Recommendations –**
No. 24- "Build a Better Front Door"
File GG-5

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

The Executive Policy Committee received the administrative report as information and endorsed the ongoing customer service initiatives outlined in said report dated September 12, 2005.

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by Councillor Magnifico,

That the administrative report be received as information and the customer service initiatives outlined in said report dated September 12, 2005 be endorsed.

Carried

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On October 19, 2005, the Executive Policy Committee laid over consideration of the matter for sixty (60) days.

On July 20, 2005, the Executive Policy Committee referred to the Chief Administrative Officer for review and recommendation the following first phase recommendation of the Red Tape Commission, said report(s) to be submitted to the Executive Policy Committee for consideration in September 2005, namely:

- Recommendation 24
  Build a better "front door" to City services through a series of small but important changes to improve the welcome for citizens and business customers.

REPORT

Re: **Red Tape Commission Report: Recommendation 24 - "Build a Better Front Door"**

For submission to: **Executive Policy Committee**

Original report signed by: **Chief Administrative Officer**

Report date: September 12, 2005

Recommendation(s):

1. That the Administration promote consistent, quality customer service across the organization by implementing a series of improvements in the immediate term (e.g. setting standard response time to acknowledge citizen inquiries, voice mail greetings and email signatures, posting organization charts of Departments on the Web and reviewing and enhancing customer access at City Hall and Fort Gary Place) and by developing an action plan for improvements over time.
2. That the Proper Officers of the City of Winnipeg be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

REPORT SUMMARY

Key Issues:

- **Customer Service Standards:** To ensure citywide consistency in design and delivery of customer-service related experiences, including communications and signage. Customer Service Standards are needed to address the planning and implementation issues and dependencies inherent in Recommendation 24.

- **Overlap with 311:** There is a natural overlap between the goal of this recommendation and that of Recommendation 25 related to the creation of a 311 Customer Service Initiative. It may be prudent to refer some of the initiatives identified under Recommendation 24 to the 311 review.

Implications of the Recommendation(s):

General implications:

	None
X	**For the organization overall and/or for other departments**
X	**For the community and/or organizations external to the City of Winnipeg**
	Involves a multi-year contract

Comment(s):

Implementing customer service improvements that will promote quality and consistent customer service practices across the organization will introduce change internally and externally.

Policy implications:

X	**No**
	Yes

Comment(s):

Environmental implications:

X	**No**
	Yes

Comment(s):

Human Resources implications:

X	**No**
	Yes

Comment(s):

Will utilize existing resources.

Financial implications:

X	**Within approved current and/or capital budget**
	Current and/or capital budget adjustment required

Comment(s):

Additional funds may be required in the future to implement customer service improvements; however, these will be addressed through the normal budget process.

REASON FOR THE REPORT:

At its meeting of July 20, 2005, the Executive Policy Committee received as information the Final Report of the Mayor's Red Tape Commission, dated June 28, 2005. Furthermore, EPC referred to the Chief Administrative Officer for review and recommendation a series of first phase recommendations of the Red Tape Commission, one of which was Recommendation 24, namely:

Recommendation 24
Build a better "front door" to City services through a series of small but important changes to improve the welcome for citizens and business customers.

It was directed that the report be submitted to Executive Policy Committee for consideration in September 2005.

HISTORY:

On November 23, 2004, the Mayor officially established a Red Tape Commission, chaired by Councillor Franco Magnifico, to review City operations and regulations in order to improve customer service while granting administrators more freedom to innovate.

The Red Tape Commission submitted a final report, dated June 28, 2005, containing 30 general recommendations, each with numerous more detailed sub-recommendations.

DISCUSSION:

Under Recommendation 24 in the Red Tape Commission's Report dated June 28, 2005, there are seven more detailed recommendations, i.e. create onsite and online maps of City facilities; create online and onsite maps of customer service processes and transaction information; create online organization charts; embed all City emails with customer service contact information; adopt standards for all customer correspondence, phone responses and voicemail responses; and develop a formal review process for customer service access and reception for all buildings.

Response:

It is a reasonable expectation on the part of citizens and business customers that City offices and all points-of-service for the public result in a positive "customer experience."

The following are important customer service objectives identified by the Commission and a response to each:

- IMPROVE ORIENTATION: A great many facilities provide contact points between the City and its customers; from the Planning, Property and Development offices at Fort Garry Place to our police stations; from City Hall to our public libraries; from the City's golf courses to our pools and arenas. In terms of orientation, some of these are admittedly confusing, while others are relatively straightforward. A list of these contact points will be developed, as well as priorities for improvement based on the amount of

public interaction (number of customers and volume of activity), the nature of the interaction (permit application versus leisure, for example), and an assessment of current signage. The two City Hall buildings and as Fort Garry Place (which already has a building map for visitors on its Web site) will be priorities. While posting additional information on the City's Web site is a relatively straightforward process, developing and placing on-site signage can take considerable resources. Wheelchair-accessible computer kiosks, similar to the one City Clerk's currently offers on the second floor of the Council Building, may be preferable to printed signage which typically has to be updated and reprinted periodically.

- IMPROVE UNDERSTANDING OF PROCESSES: Some departments such as Planning, Property and Development have documented the processes that their customers currently have to go through to get what they need from the City. This has provided valuable insight as to how improvements can be made. In addition, customers can get more information on where to go, what they need, etc. The City will review customer processes and identify where improvements can be made. Consistent customer service standards at all points-of-service, and evaluate these on the basis of the tactics recommended in Recommendation 24, such as customer service transaction displays and customer service process charts.

- STANDARDIZE CONTACT INFORMATION: An Administrative Directive will be issued to promote high quality and consistent customer service relative to customer contact and including: standard response times for acknowledging citizen inquiries, voice mail greetings and email signatures. Over time, the other aspects of customer contact may be included, for example, letter mail inserts, letter correspondence, (Interactive Voice Response) menus, etc. Such standards will be consistent with other customer service strategies.

- ENHANCE ONLINE ACCESS: Organization charts for each department will be posted on the Web to provide greater transparency for the public about structure and accountability within the City of Winnipeg. Personal privacy and security issues will be a consideration in terms of posting staff photos.

Proposed Strategy:

In order to "build a better front door" that enables the City of Winnipeg to welcome and guide citizens and businesses who deal with the City, the following strategy is proposed. As well, this strategy would help the administration determine which sub-recommendations proposed in Recommendation 24 are feasible and manageable with regard to available city resources, departmental customer service strategies, emerging technology and the 311 initiative referenced in Recommendation 25.

A Customer Service Standards Team will be developed to advance the customer service goals described above. The Team will action the specific items referenced above, undertake a more detailed review of current customer service practices and opportunities and develop a work plan for additional improvements in all areas over time. As per Recommendation 24, the team will solicit input from citizens and from members of the private and public sectors as much as possible. The work of the Team will provide some valuable research that could be used should a 311 Customer Service Initiative, as per Recommendation 25, be developed at the City of Winnipeg.

Responsibility:

Chief Administrative Officer to appoint a lead for the Customer Service Standards Team

Timeline:

- Organization charts will be posted to the City of Winnipeg's Web site by November, 2005.
- An Administrative Directive concerning consistent voicemail greetings, email greetings and response times for acknowledgement of public inquiries will be issued by January, 2005.
- The Customer Service Standards team will report to the CAO on its strategy, priorities and phased workplan in March, 2006.

IN PREPARING THIS REPORT, THERE WAS CONSULTATION WITH AND CONCURRENCE BY:

CAO Secretariat Department
Community Services Department
Planning, Property & Development Department
Water and Waste Department

THIS REPORT SUBMITTED BY:

CAO Secretariat
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File #: