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BRIEFING NOTE

TO: Chair and Members of Budget Committee

SUBMITTED BY: Jerry Blackwood, Director, Corporate & Customer Services

DATE: May 22, 2020

SUBJECT: Response to request for information in relation to Customer Service Centres and 311 – hours of operation including After Hours

ORIGIN

On May 19, 2020 the Budget Committee requested information in relation to the proposed service changes which included closing the Scotia Square and Acadia Customer Service Centres and reducing after hour services at 311 Customer Contact Centre.

Information requested:

- Transaction volumes (#'s and %'s) for Customer Service Centers.
- 311 – hours of operation and After Hours

BACKGROUND

2020/21 Recast Budget Discussion

Corporate Customer Service – Proposed Service Changes

Close Scotia Square and Acadia Customer Service Centres – This would impact 6 Customer Service Representatives

Reduce Hours – 311 – Reduction of current after-hours service

DISCUSSION

There are currently four full-service Customer Service Centre locations and one satellite office. Although volume appears high at Duke Street, the proposed closure of Duke Street and Acadia Customer Service Centres is in alignment with the Corporate Customer Service Strategy, Corporate Accommodations, Planning & Development front counter intake of permits and promotes the on-line customer service channel. The proposed changes align with changing behaviors, respecting Council's Investment in technology & digital strategy (Parking technology, Transit Fare Management, P&D Permit & Licensing, and SAP).

Another item considered in the proposed change is the Scotia Square lease. Leased area for the Storefront is 6,010 sf (usable), however this footprint is divided between Customer Service (1950 sf), Legal Services (2460 sf) and ICT (1600 sf). If the Corporate Accommodations Program is able to proceed (subject to Corporate Accommodations Briefing Note to Regional Council), then Legal Services and ICT will vacate this space, leaving 4,060 sf vacant. If Customer Service at Scotia Square is also closed, then the lease costs for the Storefront which are carried in W202

could offset some of the proposed new lease space required for the Corporate Accommodations Program. The current annual lease cost for the Storefront is \$207,824.96 plus net HST. (CSC share of the lease is \$67,430.72)

The proposed date for this service change would see the two proposed centres not reopening to the public.

Transaction Volumes and Revenue

Acadia – Customer Service Centre

Year	Transactions	Trans %	Revenue	Rev %
2019	13,917	13%	\$ 9,869,843	5%
2018	15,893	18%	\$ 11,813,983	7%
2017	15,991	17%	\$ 11,964,175	9%
2016	17,587	18%	\$ 11,626,740	8%
2015	16,833	18%	\$ 11,744,189	9%

Scotia Square - Customer Service Centre

Year	Transactions	Trans %	Revenue	Rev %
2019	30,629	29%	\$ 89,886,835	46%
2018	22,660	25%	\$ 61,264,965	38%
2017	22,123	24%	\$ 48,679,266	35%
2016	25,710	26%	\$ 56,632,946	38%
2015	25,568	28%	\$ 57,980,410	42%

311 After Hour Calls

The proposed date for this change is August 1, 2020

After hours services provide customers with support and assistance for urgent issues related to transportation, municipal operations, facilities, animal control services and illegally parked vehicles, after the full-service 311 Contact Centre closes. The proposed service change would eliminate on-site contractual full-time after-hours coverage of calls through the 311-telephony system.

With the proposed service level change, urgent municipal service calls will continue to be supported after hours, but on a reduced scale by outsourcing services to handle safety critical and urgent calls that require immediate dispatch only. This service charges by call. The proposed outsource service is currently being used by Halifax Water for after-hour urgent calls.

People who call 311 during off-hours will be prompted to call a dedicated phone number for after-hour inquiries that are urgent. All other calls will be provided information only via after-hours Interactive Voice Response (IVR) and instructed to call back for non-urgent issues during regular 311 hours.

311 will provide additional agent coverage as needed for extended hours during weather events.

311 directly connects residents to important municipal services and information. This critical service is available in more than 150 languages, which is especially important during times of crisis. 311 core hours will remain the same during this fiscal. However, we will continue to monitor data, including call volumes, abandonment rate, Q&A and peak times, and may revisit service levels and hours of operation to present to Regional Council next fiscal.

Afterhours Call Volume Fiscal 2019													
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total / Avg
AH Call Volume	515	405	570	730	612	1,208	432	585	722	738	564	410	7,491
Total Call Volume	30,976	31,714	32,643	42,169	34,984	51,370	35,302	32,090	28,420	34,572	27,309	29,802	411,351
Percentage of AH Calls	1.66%	1.28%	1.75%	1.73%	1.75%	2.35%	1.22%	1.82%	2.54%	2.13%	2.07%	1.38%	1.81%
Average AH Calls Per Day	17	13	19	24	20	40	14	20	23	24	19	13	
Afterhours Timeframes													
Monday - Thursday 8:00 PM - 8:00 AM													
Friday 8:00 PM - 9:00 AM													
Saturday 5:30 PM - 9:00 AM													
Sunday 5:30 PM - 8:00 AM													

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