

# Branch — Customer Information Services

## Introduction

Customer Information Services (CIS) manages the 311 contact centre, corporate web office, and Inside Information. Both 311 and the City's website provide citizens with 24-hour access to information relating to all City departments, programs, and services. 311 agents offer personalized services for citizens including program registration, transit trip planning, and inspection bookings.

2011 saw unprecedented growth in call volumes of almost 20% and this trend is expected to continue in 2012. The addition of new call centre technology in the spring of 2011 has resulted in efficiencies that partially offset the impacts of the volume increase. Other strategies, including overtime and temporary staff, were required to maintain service standards and minimize impacts.

A conservative projection of growth suggests that there will be more than two million calls to 311 in 2012. This budget provides the resources necessary to respond to 1.83 million calls within the current service standard of 25 seconds or less. As a result, citizens can expect an average wait time of over one minute for service. This is likely to result in an increased number of abandoned calls. An increased wait time to access 311 is expected to negatively impact satisfaction with this service and with the City's reputation for responsiveness.

The City's website features convenient online self-service options including program registration, individualized transit trip planning, bylaw ticket payment, and license renewals. Continual improvements to the site have led to a significant increase in web visits over the previous year. CIS expects the edmonton.ca website to reach 10 million visits in 2011. This represents a 30% increase over 2010.

*"The staff that work in the contact centre are truly ambassadors for the City. These are the people that make it possible for our citizens to move around, find events, learn about facilities...really take advantage of all of the services our tax dollars pay for. When Edmontonians call in and have a chance to talk to our Customer Service agents, they know that we can not only answer their immediate question, but provide information that shows them what a great city this is to live, work, and play in."*

*-Rob Klatchuk, Manager,  
Customer Information Services*

## In 2011 ...

- In 2011, 311 is projected to have answered almost two million calls for a wide variety of city programs and services
- 311 responded to over 300,000 calls for program registrations and for information on city attractions and recreation facilities
- Citizens called 311 for transit information over 800,000 times
- The Web Office updated the city's web pages over 20,000 times this year to ensure the visitors to the site got the most updated information
- Citizens also accessed edmonton.ca to use Trip Planner over 2.9 million times
- Inside Information helped over 10,000 employees get the services they needed for their job



**CIS places an emphasis on delivering efficient and cost-effective services with a focus on customer service and satisfaction.**

**Inside Information and the *ecity internal website* continues to provide employees with information and services needed to carry out their job requirements.**

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## Opportunities and Challenges

Calls volumes to 311 continue to grow year over year. 2011 is trending to 20% above 2010 call volumes. Increased citizen use of the 311 channel and unpredictable events led to the large increase. 311 has been able to meet its services goals through operational efficiencies, overtime and additional temporary agent positions. The additional overtime and temporary positions will not be available in the 2012 budget to meet the expected volumes.

311 will continue to look for efficiencies within the operation. Reducing call handle times and promoting self service channels will be the key focus. Trending data does show a risk of continued increases in call volumes which will result in a reduction in our current service standards for 2012 (i.e. long wait times for citizens).

Customer Information Services is committed to provide efficient, cost effective services for the citizens of Edmonton and to connect citizens with the services that they require. The goal is to provide increased access to programs and services, through self service options, while reducing overall costs to support the outcome of having citizens leverage Customer Information Services channels to access municipal information and services.

Customer Information Services will continue to evaluate and work with client areas to develop self service options for citizens requesting City of Edmonton information, programs, and services.

Customer Information Services is challenged to maintain service standards. City programs and services are constantly changing to meet the requirements of business, citizens and other levels of government.

Customer Information Services will continue its work with its client departments on the development of collaborative solutions for the introduction of new services and in the handling of services changes.

Adapting to continuous changes in technology is an ongoing challenge for Customer Information Services. Technology and computer applications are constantly changing and need to keep pace with business demands.

Customer Information Services will continue its work with IT and the client departments in coordinating the introduction of new technology and application systems to ensure minimal impact

while maintaining service standards. This helps to ensure that Customer Information Services is a valued partner in enabling employees in the delivery of municipal programs and services.

## Service and Budget Review

The reduction of 12.3 FTEs from the adjusted base is expected to result in an average wait time of at least 60 seconds and an increase in abandoned calls.

The resources proposed in this budget are not sufficient to maintain the service targets (average wait time of 25 seconds or less) that are in place.

The introduction of new call centre technology into Customer Information Services has enabled a reduction of \$96 in vendor support costs producing an operating budget reduction.

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## Approved 2012 Budget – Branch Summary (\$000)

	2010 Actual	2011 Budget	\$ Change '11-'12	2012 Budget	% Change '11-'12
<b>Revenue &amp; Transfers</b>					
User Fees, Fines, Permits, etc.	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Grants	-	-	-	-	
Transfer from Reserves	0	-	-	-	
<b>Total Revenue &amp; Transfers</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	
<b>Expenditure &amp; Transfers</b>					
Personnel	11,849	13,927	361	14,288	2.6
Materials, Goods & Supplies	293	609	(87)	522	(14.3)
External Services	303	771	12	783	1.6
Fleet Services	-	-	-	-	
Intra-municipal Services	45	593	16	609	2.6
Utilities & Other Charges	380	331	(13)	318	(3.9)
Transfer to Reserves	-	-	-	-	
Subtotal	12,870	16,231	289	16,520	1.8
Intra-municipal Recoveries	(661)	(1,565)	(649)	(2,214)	-
<b>Total Expenditure &amp; Transfers</b>	<b>12,209</b>	<b>14,666</b>	<b>(360)</b>	<b>14,306</b>	<b>(2.5)</b>
<b>Net Operating Requirement</b>	<b>\$ 12,209</b>	<b>\$ 14,666</b>	<b>\$ (360)</b>	<b>\$ 14,306</b>	<b>(2.5)</b>
<b>Full-time Equivalents</b>	202.1	202.1	(1.0)	201.1	

Office of the General Manager is included for budgeting purposes.

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## Budget Changes for 2012 (\$000)

### Expenditures & Transfers - Changes

#### **Personnel \$361**

Movement within the salary ranges, changes in benefits, and the last year of a 3-year 1% LAAP contribution increase account for \$534. There is also an additional \$652 in historical adjustments for additional support for the Transportation department. This is offset with a \$175 reduction in personnel costs identified in the Service and Budget Review for organizational realignment savings. The additional reduction in the Service and Budget Review is \$652 to reduce 311 service levels.

#### **Material, Goods & Supplies (\$87)**

Identified inflationary measures of 2.65% account for \$17 increase, which is offset by a \$96 Service and Budget Review reduction for telephones and an \$8 reduction in corporate opportunities savings for computer equipment.

#### **External Services \$12**

Inflationary increases account for a \$12 increase for contract, consulting, and general services.

#### **Intra-municipal Services (\$633)**

There is a \$14 inflationary increase to intra-municipal charges for parking, printing and on-demand building maintenance costs. This is offset with a \$647 increase from intra-municipal services to Drainage, Waste, Current Planning, and Fleet Services.

#### **Utilities & Other Charges (\$13)**

Inflationary measures increased training, general and utility costs by \$8. This is offset with a \$21 identified telephone savings through the corporate opportunity exercise.

### Full-time Equivalents - Changes

There is a decrease of 1 FTE for organizational efficiencies identified in the Service and Budget Review. In order to achieve the 311 call centers 25 second answering time 12.3 FTEs are required if these are reduced answering call times would increase to 60 seconds.