
REVIEW OF THE CITY'S TELECOMMUNICATIONS

TECHNOLOGY REVIEW

November 2002

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Introduction

In phase 1 of this project the cost of cellular phones was reviewed to determine if existing practices were adequate to determine if their usage by City staff is justified and reasonably controlled. A report recommending strengthening controls for the acquisition and use of cellular telephones was issued in March 2002.

During initial discussions on cellular telephones, the Office of the City Auditor (OCA) was advised that work had commenced on the development of a long-term Corporate Telecommunications Strategy. It was agreed that the OCA would assume a proactive role in the development of the strategy and provide quality assurance feedback on its completeness and ensure that business and financial risks associated with telecommunication have been considered.

Background

Prior to the privatization and sale of EDTEL in September 1994, the City of Edmonton relied on EDTEL for in-house guidance and expertise in the area of voice, data and wireless communications. These services were designed and provided by EDTEL to meet individual department requirements and resulted in some differences in implementation of telecommunication services within the Corporation.

In 1995, a Telecommunication Services Office (TSO) was established to provide the following business functions:

- **Advisory and Consulting Services**
Provide consulting and advisory services to City departments and their stakeholders to assist in making cost-effective and innovative use of telecommunication.
- **Vendor Management**
Establish, negotiate, and manage vendor/supplier master contracts and monitor the effectiveness of service delivery.
- **Strategic Planning**
Establish measurement information to monitor the effectiveness of telecommunication uses within the corporation and to establish a strategic direction for the corporation.

Methodology and Scope

The OCA reviewed the documents prepared by the TSO, met with the TSO representative, attended an interview with a department representative, and provided feedback on an ongoing basis.

TSO documents reviewed included:

- The project scope
- The questionnaire used to facilitate discussions with departments
- Documentation of research on telecommunication trends and external factors that influenced the TSO recommendations
- Cost information accompanying the recommended strategy
- The draft report, and
- The final Telecommunications Technology Strategy (TTS) and recommendations that were supported by the Senior Management Team at their September 20, 2002 meeting

The TTS sets out the direction that the City should take for the replacement of existing centrex services. An implementation plan for the TTS will be developed once funding for the acquisition has been approved.

A second project for the replacement of two-way radios is also being undertaken at this time. The administration recognized the potential for overlap on these two projects and appointed an individual to coordinate telecommunication projects to ensure strategies are compatible and duplication of effort is minimized. Further, an external review on the reporting relationship of the TSO has been completed. As an outcome of this study the TSO will be transitioned into reporting directly into the Information Technology Branch.

Conclusion

The OCA is satisfied that all significant aspects of telecommunication services have been considered in the development of the TTS and the appointment of a telecommunication project coordinator will reduce the risk of incompatible strategies. The TSO also has plans to complete a telecommunication station review which will address the convergence of voice, data and wireless technologies reducing the risk that there is duplication of service.