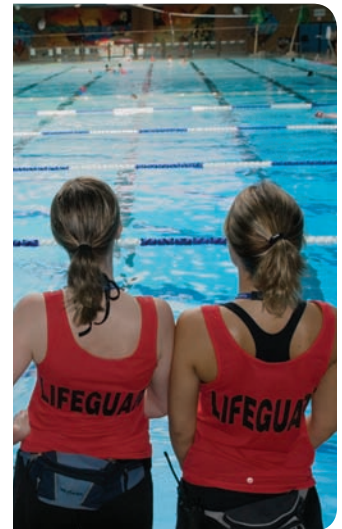


City Government Working For You



THE CITY OF VICTORIA'S CUSTOMER SERVICE ACTION PLAN



Table of Contents

Introduction	3	Goal One:	
Our Service Principles	4	Maximize Customer's Ability to Access Information	
Service Highlights	5	and Services.....	6
		Goal Two:	
		Design Business Processes	
		with the Customer in Mind	8
		Goal Three:	
		Foster a "Customer-Focused" Organization.....	10
		An Action Plan Designed for Results.....	12



Introduction

As a local government we interact with thousands of customers each day. And each day countless others are receiving City services yet don't interact face to face with staff at all. All are our customers.

From the new business owner who visits City Hall to apply for a business licence, to a parent enrolling their children in recreation classes; from the neighbour who appreciates their neighbour having a tidy yard, to the company looking to relocate their head offices in Victoria, we serve a variety of customers and needs.

Customer service has always been at the forefront and it is part of everything we do. As times change we recognize that the needs of our customers change and we must adapt to sharpen our focus on how we provide service. This plan is designed to do just that.

Our focus is always our customer and our strength is our people.

There is a team of City professionals in place to support the Capital City. Some you see in the community each day and some are the behind the scenes team who support the front line services being delivered effectively each day. City of Victoria employees take great pride in both the external and internal customer service that they provide and the role they play serving the Capital City. We aim to be responsive to the needs of all of our customers and we're going the distance to provide easy access to information and services.

How we conduct our business is as important as the business we conduct.

This plan is the culmination of extensive consultation, a review of best practices and a thoughtful look at how your local government can support customer needs the most. Our journey towards customer service excellence never ends and this action plan will guide our collective efforts for the next five years.

Our Service Principles



We are an Organization and Community Built on Strong Values

Value for money – We strive to deliver high quality services and excellent value for your tax dollars.

Responsiveness – We go the distance to provide easy access to information and services.

Continuous Improvement – We embrace innovation, best practices, and continuous learning.

Open and Accountable – We listen, continually measure our performance and communicate the results.

Future oriented – We consider the needs of future generations when making decisions today.

Service Highlights

- Over 200,000 people work, play or visit the Capital City each day
- We roll out the welcome mat for over 3 million tourists each year
- City Hall Public Service Centre serves 5,000 people in person each month. This swells to 9,000 during tax season.
- The Development Services serves 2,500 people each month
- www.victoria.ca serves over 60,000 unique visitors each month, over 8,000 are on a mobile device
- Garbage is collected from over 14,000 households
- Over 9,00 business licences are issued annually
- Each year Beacon Hill Park hosts over 1 million visitors
- Over 3,900 construction permits processed in a year
- Issue nearly 200 special event permits each year
- Over 4,000 sports field bookings each year
- Streets cleaned to support 1,400 downtown businesses opening their doors each day
- Crystal Pool welcomes over 300,000 people annually

GOAL ONE

Maximize Customer's Ability to Access Information and Services



Providing customers with clear, easy to access services and information has a significant impact on the customer experience. From ensuring that our physical space within public service areas is tailored to the needs of the customer, to ensuring that our information is easy to understand and available through a variety of ways; this is a major focus.

Starting immediately:

- 1 To the greatest extent possible maximize the use of “in-person” reception at main City Hall Public Service Centre and the switchboard.
- 2 Make enhancements to the website and prioritize the creation of new applications and enhancements that “save customers a trip” and/or have high customer service impact such as introducing an online garbage pick-up calendar and Bylaw directory.
- 3 Introduce a new phone application to facilitate customer’s ability to pay for parking.
- 4 Raise awareness about online transaction and payment options to save time and add convenience for our customers.
- 5 Invest in information technology to connect customers to information and services faster in a way that enables a shift from in-person transactions to online.
- 6 Routinely measure the frequency and types of customer interactions at the switchboard, Public Service Centre and other service areas to continuously improve and be responsive to customer needs.

Starting immediately and completed within 12 months:

- 1 Develop and maintain a robust www.victoria.ca website to foster expedited customer service and access to information.
- 2 Introduce intranet that serves as one-stop location for organizational updates, provides information about functions within departments and creates a resource for staff to quickly access “need to know” information.
- 3 Make City Hall more accessible and easier to access service by seismically upgrading as well as improving customer and employee accessibility and reconfiguring customer service areas.
- 4 Establish a Development Centre on the second floor of City Hall to integrate business and development services with a convenient single point of contact.
- 5 Improve and maintain internal staff directories by including staff photos and descriptive information, to enable frontline and switchboard staff to connect customers with correct staff. Update and improve phone tree
- 6 Create a central database of frequently asked questions to support all staff in finding answers to customer queries.

Long term:

- 1 Expand the range of services offered at the Public Service Centre with value added focus.
- 2 Improve the main Public Service Centre to enhance customer experience in this area.
- 3 Improve all City service centres to enhance customer experience in those areas.

GOAL TWO

Design Business Processes with the Customer in Mind



New technology and changing times have initiated the review of many City processes. Recognizing that time is at a premium for everyone, we are focussing on ways to “save the customer a trip” where possible and reduce steps to simplify process and increase certainty for the customer.

Starting immediately:

- 1 Redesign the Business Licence Application process to streamline and improve level of service offered to customers. Adopt “value added” approach to doing business with the City, connecting businesses to resources and information to be successful.
- 2 Establish formalized review processes and target turn-around timelines for applications managed through Permits and Inspections and Engineering.
- 3 Revise the Building Bylaw to better address roles and responsibilities of all parties involved in the building permit and inspections processes to clarify outcomes and accountabilities.
- 4 Implement technological improvements that enable more efficient and effective application processing and customer's access to information.
- 5 Integrate web-mapping capabilities into the Geographic Information System to facilitate customer's ability to access spatial information and regulations that detail development regulations associated with each property.
- 6 Enable the ability of basic query functions associated with web-map so customers can more easily determine appropriate locations for business and residential investment and development opportunities.
- 7 Update and revise components of the Zoning Regulation Bylaw pertaining to commercial zoning, especially Downtown to simplify and give greater certainty to a businesses' looking to set up or build in Victoria.
- 8 Continue to simplify and clarify the regulations contained in the Zoning Regulation Bylaw so that it is a more user friendly document.
- 9 Investigate the feasibility of delegating authority to staff to issue development permits and heritage alteration permits in order to streamline and accelerate the development permit and heritage alteration permit application processes as per Council's direction.
- 10 Implement strategies and enhance communication with residents and business owners to minimize disruption and inconvenience associated with planned maintenance and public works.
- 11 Improve key forms and information sheets to make them more user-friendly and use new technology to facilitate improved distribution.

Starting immediately and completed within 12 months:

- 1 Create dedicated Engineering Customer Service Representative for the Development Centre to provide convenient customer service and to free up time for technical staff to focus on processing engineering permits.
- 2 Develop and implement categories to stream processing of less complicated Building, Electrical and Plumbing Application types such as:
 - tenant improvements
 - demolitions and “strip outs”
 - blasting
 - restorations
- 3 Consider establishing other application streams based on feasibility and complexity of application type.
- 4 Implement file management to coordinate review of building, electrical, plumbing and engineering permits.
- 5 Explore opportunities for establishing a protocol and cost recovery method for offering expedited service for time critical inspections.
- 6 Make simple housekeeping improvements to the Sign Bylaw to clarify meaning for users.
- 7 On an ongoing basis, survey our customers regarding their satisfaction levels and experiences accessing information and service to ensure that our business processes meet their needs.

Long term:

- 1 Conduct a comprehensive review of Schedule C (Off-Street Parking Regulations) of the Zoning Regulation Bylaw and update accordingly.
- 2 Review the outdated Sign Bylaw and update accordingly with an eye to improving the content and ensuring the processes are as straightforward as possible.
- 3 Review and update the Sidewalk Café Bylaw and refine the process for Sidewalk Café applications resulting in increased coordination for customer.
- 4 Over time consider integrating additional information layers into web-mapping that will provide customers with details related to Engineering and Parks such as depth of underground services, location of connections and protected trees.

GOAL THREE

Foster a “Customer-Focused” Organization



Empowering staff to be innovative and make the best use of technology and resources represents one way of maximizing our organizational capacity, at the same time it fosters a highly engaged work force committed to continuous improvement. Supporting the City team of employees with the training and technology needed to meet this objective is essential.

Starting immediately:

- 1 Promote corporate learning and development programs as well as mandatory new customer service training program for every employee.
- 2 Enhance communication that focuses on organizational updates and celebrates customer service achievements. Identify ways for employees in satellite offices to be more connected to City Hall activities.
- 3 Refine Human Resource processes and systems to ensure focus on excellence in customer service. Highlight City's commitment to customer service within job descriptions and recruitment process and reinforce through annual performance reviews.
- 4 Assess and monitor the corporate culture to better understand behaviours that influence excellence in customer service.

Starting immediately and completed within 12 months:

- 1 Develop and implement service delivery standards establishing response targets.
- 2 Develop a corporate program to encourage and celebrate excellence in customer service and foster a highly-engaged, customer-focused workforce.
- 3 Update employee orientation program to introduce customer service standards from day one and emphasize organizational commitment to excellence in customer service.

Long term:

- 1 Continue to provide staff training and reinforce organizational customer service expectations and philosophy on an ongoing basis to establish a culture of enhanced customer service.

An Action Plan Designed for Results



Monitoring this action plan to ensure the strategies are responsive to customer need is necessary and ongoing.

- Established baseline measures for all main service areas and tools (web, phone, customer service counters)
- Customer service training program established with high participation among employees
- Customer service support tools in place and working effectively (intranet, new telephone system, enhanced website)
- Shift in in-person visits to online visits for simple transactions
- Improved perception, both anecdotal and quantified through surveying overall and with key stakeholder groups
- Improved employee feedback, both anecdotal and quantified through employee engagement surveys
- Customer service satisfaction
- Customer satisfaction overall



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