



Office of the City Manager

INFORMATION CALENDAR

December 13, 2005

To: Honorable Mayor and
Members of the City Council

From: *PK* Phil Kamlarz, City Manager

Submitted by: Fran David, Director, Finance

Subject: Customer Service Level Evaluation

INTRODUCTION

In July 2005 Council directed staff to conduct a comprehensive assessment of Customer Service levels, response time and customer service courtesy throughout City Departments.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

Staff developed a survey to gather constituent perceptions of service levels in the areas of courtesy, professionalism, knowledge, prompt response, and first contact problem resolution. The survey was posted on the City's web site at <http://www.cityofberkeley.info/ServiceSurvey>, and a press release was published with the web site address and details of the survey to encourage constituents to fill out the survey on line. A copy of the survey is also included in the City of Berkeley annual newsletter, which will be mailed out to over 50,000 households by the end of December. In addition, surveys have been placed at various customer service counters throughout the City: City Center, Parks and Recreation, Police, Planning, Finance, Health and Human Services, Rent Board, Housing, the Corporation Yard, and Marina.

BACKGROUND

The need for a comprehensive customer service survey was evidenced by the number of calls, emails and other correspondence from constituents who expressed concern over responsiveness of City staff. The City has recently introduced several new self-service options to increase the level of customer service to the community. Services now available include online plan check status, online maps, and multi-language (Spanish and Cantonese) support for telephone payments and parking citations inquiries. An online payment option for refuse bills is expected to be available in January 2006. The customer service survey is intended to identify the current perception of service provided by the City, and provide an avenue for citizen feedback that will allow us to develop additional improvement plans for appropriate departments and services.

The City has also contracted with Weston Solutions, Inc. to conduct a needs analysis to help us better understand and improve our work order and infrastructure/asset maintenance and management systems. To date, 17 interview workshop sessions have been held with staff in key

departments. This project is part of the larger Citywide Customer Service Improvement Initiative to move the City towards a CRM (Community Relationship Management) system. CRM is an enterprise approach to improving customer service, work processes, information sharing and asset management that will provide maximum access for customers and improved work tools for employees. The findings and recommendations from the Weston needs analysis study will be used to help refine requirements for the RFP for CRM. We are continuing our research and evaluation of CRM systems and will be submitting our formal RFP in January 2006.

The City has also conducted internal stakeholder meetings with representatives from City departments to discuss the Customer Improvement Initiatives and identify how the CRM and Web Content Management (WCM) systems will improve their service delivery. Additional meetings are scheduled in 2006.

Planning Department Survey:

The City Manager asked the Planning Department to provide customer feedback about the Permit Service Center (PSC), which has been open for just over nine years. During the summer, an intern conducted face-to-face interviews with approximately 140 randomly-selected PSC customers. They were asked to rate staff courtesy and professionalism, technical expertise, and problem solving; consistency and reliability of information provided; provision of all needed services at the PSC; satisfaction with application review time; and telephone service. Responses were generally positive, and recommendations for areas of improvement are being further evaluated.

This fall, the Planning Department held two focus group meetings to provide PSC customers with the opportunity to have a more in-depth conversation with staff and to get direct feedback about their experiences, issues, and ideas for improvement. The focus of the meetings was on the building permit process, which includes review of building permit applications and plans by staff from Zoning, Building and Safety, Public Works, Fire, Traffic Engineering, and other divisions. Fifty people were invited to participate based on our records of frequent customers during the past year, as well as members of the original Permit Center Task Force. Nine people attended and provided many positive comments, as well as ideas for improvements.

POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

Staff considered a “secret shopper” approach to better evaluate customer service throughout the city; however, budget constraints did not allow this option to move forward. The estimate for a “secret shopper” evaluation and analysis system is \$60,000. No funding is currently identified for this use.

Staff will continue to track survey responses, and will provide a more detailed follow up report with survey results and status of Customer Service Improvement Initiatives to Council in February 2006. Staff can also provide more detailed information about the Permit Service Center survey and focus groups at that time.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

Cost of survey and staff time to evaluate responses.

CONTACT PERSON

Susie Monary-Wilson, Customer Service Manager, Finance, 981-7229

Attachments:

1: Customer Service Survey



How Are We Doing? Rate The City's Services!

It will take only five minutes to mark the department you would like to rate, check the level of service you experienced, and make any comments below.

Carefully pull out the survey and mail it. The survey is self-addressed and stamped for your convenience.

City of Berkeley Customer Service Survey

1. Please check the service you are rating (select only one):

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Animal Services | <input type="radio"/> Graffiti | <input type="radio"/> Noise/Nuisance | <input type="radio"/> Police |
| <input type="radio"/> Birth/Death Certificate | <input type="radio"/> Health Services | <input type="radio"/> Paratransit Services | <input type="radio"/> Refuse/Recycling |
| <input type="radio"/> Building Permits | <input type="radio"/> Housing | <input type="radio"/> (Taxi Vouchers) | <input type="radio"/> Senior Services |
| <input type="radio"/> Business License | <input type="radio"/> Library | <input type="radio"/> Parking Enforcement | <input type="radio"/> Street/Sign/Sidewalk Trees |
| <input type="radio"/> Fire | <input type="radio"/> Marina | <input type="radio"/> Parks and Recreation | <input type="radio"/> Other _____ |

Please rate your recent experience with the City of Berkeley in the following categories: Disagree Somewhat Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

2. I found that City staff were courteous and professional
3. I found that City staff possessed the knowledge necessary to help me
4. I found the wait time was acceptable for:
- | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-------|-----------------------|-------|-----------------------|-------|-----------------------|
| Telephone Answer..... | <input type="radio"/> | | <input type="radio"/> | | <input type="radio"/> | | <input type="radio"/> |
| In-person/Counter..... | <input type="radio"/> | | <input type="radio"/> | | <input type="radio"/> | | <input type="radio"/> |
| Email: | <input type="radio"/> | | <input type="radio"/> | | <input type="radio"/> | | <input type="radio"/> |
| Voicemail: | <input type="radio"/> | | <input type="radio"/> | | <input type="radio"/> | | <input type="radio"/> |
5. I reached the correct person on my first attempt and did not need to be transferred.....
6. I am a (check all that apply):
- Resident Property Owner Business Owner Student Visitor
7. Overall, my impression of City Customer Services leaves me:
- Dissatisfied Somewhat Dissatisfied Satisfied Very Satisfied

8. Please note any additional comments: _____

9. Would you be interested in participating in future discussions regarding Customer Service improvements? If so please note your Name: _____ Telephone number and/or email address: _____

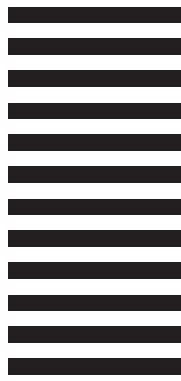
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