The City of San Diego

REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

DATE ISSUED: May 30, 2007 REPORT NO: 07-102

ATTENTION: Public Safety & Neighborhood Services
Agenda of June 6, 2007

SUBJECT: Quarterly Report on Constituent Services
Fiscal Year 07 Quarter 3, from January through March, 2007

SUMMARY

THIS IS AN INFORMATION ITEM ONLY. NO ACTION IS REQUIRED ON THE PART OF THE COMMITTEE OR THE CITY COUNCIL.

BACKGROUND

In October of 2005, it was recommended that the Mayor's Office and Citizens' Assistance provide a quarterly report on constituent services. Since that time, Citizens' Assistance has become part of the larger Department of Customer Services, and the objective of these quarterly reports has become to provide a comprehensive account of the status of customer service improvement initiatives in the organization.

This quarterly report includes information on:

- Customer services initiatives completed during the Fiscal Year 07 Quarter 3, from January through March, 2007;
- A status of citizen concerns submitted to the organization via Route Slips during that period and improvements to that process; and
- The customer service initiatives planned for upcoming quarters.

DISCUSSION

We all have different functions in our organization. Some people staff public counters, some fix water pipes in the field, some fight fires, some run departments. Whatever our function is, great customer service is how we do what we do each day. It is how we can make a positive impression on both our internal and external customers during every single interaction.

The Customer Services Department was established in early 2006. One of our responsibilities is to create and deploy programs that will support all the City employees in their efforts to provide World Class Services to our customers. To help us in those efforts, there is a Customer Service Liaison Network, with representatives from all of the departments.

The Quarterly Report on Constituent Services presented in January 2007 outlined several key planned initiatives that were scheduled for deployment during the time period between January

and March 2007. The Customer Services Department and Customer Services Liaison Network are pleased to report the successful implementation of these initiatives, including:

- The Customer Services Summit (March 15, 2007)
- The Citywide Customer Satisfaction Survey (March 19-29, 2007)
- Completion of the 3-1-1/Call Center Feasibility Study
- Quality customer service delivery modules added to New Employee Orientation and Supervisor's Academy
- Basic customer service best practices developed and deployed
- Creation of organizational customer service performance measures

The Customer Services Summit

On March 15, 2007, almost 300 people dedicated the day to focusing on how best to deliver services, specifically "what does great service look like?" for the City of San Diego. What can we do to improve the way we do what we do everyday?

The attendees included staff representing every level of the organization, and external customers known for their leadership, creativity, and emphasis on great service in their own businesses. Our activities at the Summit centered on how we do things versus the services or programs themselves. The ideas, information, and suggestions gathered are being used as the basis for a two year strategic plan for customer service initiatives in the City.

The first tangible outcome of the Summit was the establishment of a Customer Service Vision for the City of San Diego. People brainstormed, debated, and finally voted to stand behind the newly crafted vision of "America's Finest Service for America's Finest City." That vision statement will be the guiding force for the continued emphasis on providing great service to our customers, both internal and external to the organization.

Additional data gathered included leverage points that should be used to build on the great service delivery efforts already happening in many areas of the City; cautions in going forward (potential pitfalls); and future projects needed to continue to support these efforts. The ideas for projects were voted on, categorized and prioritized based on the number of votes each received. Those suggestions under the umbrella of customer service projects and initiatives will be implemented organizationally through the work and dedication of the Customer Service Liaison Network. Additionally, two continuing committee efforts were suggested, and are being formed. First, there will be a committee to identify and review antiquated policies with the intent to sunset or revise those policies. This activity will be lead by the Business Office, and will further support the spirit of business process reengineering and eliminating waste from our systems. The second committee will be a customer services external advisory board. This effort will be lead by the Customer Services Department. This committee will be used as a sounding board/advisory panel to ensure that as initiatives designed with the intent of improving service quality are developed, ensuring that we are solving the right problems, and addressing the concerns our customers have in a way they would like to see the issues addressed. This committee's activities further promote transparency in government, and reflect the true spirit of customer-focused government – for the people and by the people.

Citywide Customer Satisfaction Survey

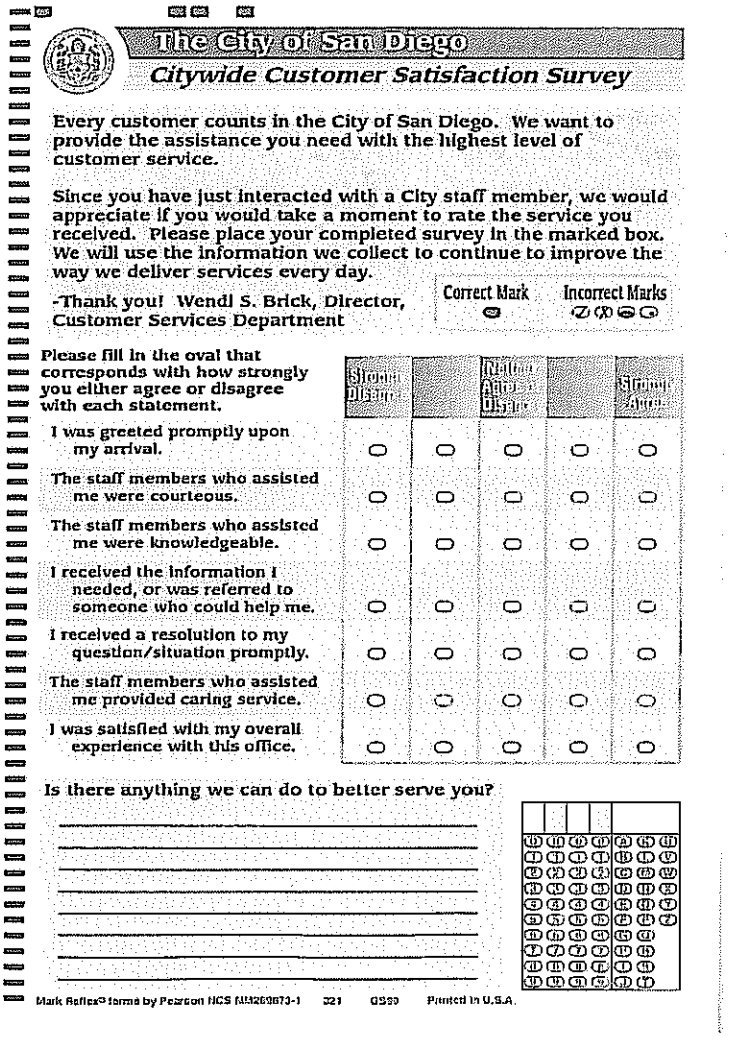
The Citywide Customer Satisfaction Survey (CwCSS) was developed during this quarter, and placed on most public counters during the weeks of March 19-29, 2007. A total of 22,000 surveys were prepared based on foot traffic estimates at each of the public counters during this time period. Approximately 4600 surveys were returned completed. Those blanks remaining will be stored and used during the next survey period. Results of the CwCSS will be analyzed and reported back to the City Council via the Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee in an upcoming Quarterly Report (projected for Fall 2007).

The CwCSS will be placed on public counters around the City for a two-week period every nine months. With this rotation, we will be able to survey seasonal visitors and users of our services, thereby painting a more comprehensive picture of customers' satisfaction than by issuing the survey during the same designated time period over and over each year.

The CwCSS facilitates and promotes public comment based on face-to-face contact with a given employee during a specific interaction. The CwCSS is designed to evaluate the three basic components of excellent service delivery: courtesy, knowledge, and promptness. This triad of principles is integrated into all aspects of the customer service initiatives, and is directly promoted and developed through the training classes now offered by the Customer Services Department staff. Hosting a survey of this kind gives the City a direct opportunity to gauge satisfaction from our customers' perspective. Surveys were available at all locations in both English and Spanish.

This Customer Satisfaction Survey, which provides feedback to improve the quality of direct customer service contacts, will replace the use of the outdated recollection survey that was previously posted on the City's web site (June 2006). The online SERVey was the City's first attempt to collect customer satisfaction data for the entire organization, but found that a survey that provides input on a specific contact at a specific point in time was more useful at continuously improving service efforts in specific locations. Staff will continue to look for additional ways in which to measure aspects of great service delivery to provide feedback for improvement.

Figure 1: Citywide Customer Satisfaction Survey



The City of San Diego

Citywide Customer Satisfaction Survey

Every customer counts in the City of San Diego. We want to provide the assistance you need with the highest level of customer service.

Since you have just interacted with a City staff member, we would appreciate if you would take a moment to rate the service you received. Please place your completed survey in the marked box. We will use the information we collect to continue to improve the way we deliver services every day.

-Thank you! Wendi S. Brick, Director, Customer Services Department

Correct Mark | Incorrect Marks

Please fill in the oval that corresponds with how strongly you either agree or disagree with each statement.

	Strongly Disagree		Neither Agree Nor Disagree		Strongly Agree
I was greeted promptly upon my arrival.					
The staff members who assisted me were courteous.					
The staff members who assisted me were knowledgeable.					
I received the information I needed, or was referred to someone who could help me.					
I received a resolution to my question/situation promptly.					
The staff members who assisted me provided caring service.					
I was satisfied with my overall experience with this office.					

Is there anything we can do to better serve you?

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Drafting of the 3-1-1/Call Center Feasibility Study

A draft 3-1-1/Call Center Feasibility Study was completed during this quarter. The vision of the project was to provide "One City, One Call" service to residents, visitors, vendors, businesses and the City's other customer groups. By creating a 3-1-1/Call Center knowledge base, a customer care representative, operator, or any City employee could access answers to frequently asked questions in seconds. These "FAQ" type questions constitute approximately 40% of the calls received by department call center staff, while another 7% were classified as "misdirected."[1] There were an additional 36% of calls classified as requests for service. Should a robust electronic work order management system be available with a new call center, between 70% and 90% of calls could be answered with one-call service for our customers.

With approximately 1.3 million residents, San Diego is the second largest city in California and the eighth largest city in the United States. Today, approximately 24 City departments/divisions

[1] These numbers exclude public safety calls, and are based on a recent internal polling of City contacts.

handle an average of 2,576,450 non-emergency calls (*1,775,450 excluding Public Safety*) annually from citizens and businesses requesting services ranging from trash pickup and building licenses to inquiry about library books and recreation. San Diegans face significant challenges under the current setup as the City operates more than 33 formal call centers (*31 excluding Public Safety*) and 40 informal call centers that are operationally and physically separate. A recent count in the City government section of the white pages uncovered approximately 706 published phone numbers representing various City offices. By moving towards a "One City, One Call" service model, the City could potentially save over one hundred thousand dollars in misdirected calls alone, and tremendously improve first-call service resolution.

Currently, the City uses several Customer Relationship Management (CRM) applications and Call Management Systems (CMS) to support call center operations. These CRM/CMS applications were either purchased or custom built to support the specific needs of individual departments. Through the years, they have evolved into a complex series of highly customized applications and disparate databases. Many of the applications used by the City lack critical features that are needed to improve customer service and enhance performance management. For example, advanced search tools developed within a comprehensive knowledge base would allow for faster access to frequently asked questions and optimal solutions to enable real-time decision making. In addition, they do not all contain work flow capability, and those that do, will likely not "talk" to each other.

Local government has traditionally adopted a service-centric model whereby the citizen makes a request and the appropriate department reacts. The service-centric model is a "one-size-fits all" approach accommodating day-to-day operations, but resulting in internally focused processes that are frequently in conflict with other aspects of organization. Research shows that many municipalities implementing call centers are now adopting citizen-centric business models. Although citizen-centricity is a fundamental change for government its key benefits include:

- Improved service delivery to citizens, including greater personalization and service integration.
- Reduced cost of delivery of services, particularly as government attempts to deliver more with less.
- Improved delivery of public policy objectives leading to increased trust and satisfaction

This project is currently in a pending status, and is largely dependent on the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) efforts currently underway in the organization. Should the concept of the "One City, One Call" Call Center project be directed to move forward, the next step would be to form an operational team to continue down the road of making this concept a reality.

<u>Basic customer service best practices developed and deployed</u>

Every time we interact with a customer, they form an impression of us as a person, as a City employee, and of the City as a whole. During that moment, each individual <u>is</u> the City to that person, and the impression they make is lasting. We have the ability to influence whether that impression is positive or not. The more aware we all are of this reality, the more positive impressions we can make. All of these impressions string together to affect the reputation of the

organization. So every customer, every day, every interaction is critical to our success, and to our standing in the community we serve.

The first step in ensuring these interactions are positive, is to define best practices in customer service. Regardless of the situation, either in person, over the phone, or via email, there are basic guidelines that will promote great impressions. These guidelines are being distributed at every training session. A copy of these guidelines is attached (Attachment A).

Quality customer service delivery modules added to New Employee Orientation and Supervisor's Academy

Courtesy, knowledge, and promptness are the three core pillars of providing great service. Modules have been added to both New Employee Orientation and Supervisors' Academy to allow employees to internalize these concepts, and understand how we each have the ability to provide the highest quality of customer service.

In New Employee Orientation, 30 minutes is spent discussing why customers may perceive bad service, and how we can re-focus our efforts to ensure all customers receive good service. We hand out the Best Practices sheet, and let all our new employees know that there is an expectation that employees of the City provide "America's Finest Service for America's Finest City."

In Supervisor's Academy, we also spend time discussing these basic tenets. This two hour conversation/training also includes a section on the criticality of building a strong team, and on a supervisor's power and responsibility in providing a supportive environment, thereby setting the tone to empower their employees in providing outstanding customer service. This module has received very high ratings from the supervisors that have attended to date.

Creation of organizational customer service performance measures

The Customer Service Liaison Network crafted a series of performance measures for customer services activities and for monitoring the satisfaction of the City's customers. These performance measures will be used as the foundation to the Customer Services Department's Balanced Scorecard performance measures and will be used by the CSLN members as they assist their departments in crafting departmental tactical plans, including performance measures.

Objectives for Next Quarter: Customer Service Initiatives

During FY07 Quarter 4 (April through June, 2007) the Customer Services Department will continue to improve the City's responsiveness to its citizens, as well as further improve customer service delivery. Some of the projects that are scheduled during this period include the following.

- Analysis of the Citywide Customer Satisfaction Survey data
- Avaliability of Citywide customer service skill building training
- Development of next level service delivery training
- Deployment of CityNet and external Customer Services Department web pages
- Assistance with coordination of telephony systems
- Additional detailed best practices service standards

Route Slips

Route Slips are concerns or requests for services received by the Mayor or City Council. The Route Slip program was developed to provide a centralized mechanism for these concerns to be quickly routed to City staff for resolution. Route Slips are coordinated by the Citizens' Assistance Program of the Customer Services Department, and are sent to the responsible departments for citizen follow up and resolution. Route Slips represent a portion of the service requests that a department may be resolving at any given time. Often, inquiries and requests are submitted to the departments directly by the citizen, as opposed to first being submitted to an elected official, and then routed to the department as part of this Route Slip process.

The Route Slip process uses an electronic application called CompleteGov. This system provides Council members the ability to electronically forward and monitor constituent issues, and receive responses to those issues. It also allows examination of the types and numbers of concerns being received in any given time period.

For the reporting period January 1 through March 31, 2007, 390 Route Slips were generated. This represents a drop in Route Slips from the previous periods, although we have not been tracking Route Slips in this manner long enough to propose a reason for this change (i.e. seasonal decline, etc.).

The eight most common issues raised by constituents over this quarter include Potholes/Resurfacing (15%), Street Lights (9%), Code Violations (8%), Traffic Calming Measures (7%), Sidewalk/Curbs (5%), Other (5%), Trash/Debris (3%), Weeds/Trees (2%).

Last reporting period (Two combined quarters – July 1, 2006 through December 31, 2006), Traffic Calming Measures were the number one reported concern, representing 10% during the period. Congratulations to each involved department, as all areas of concern improved their "average number of days until closure" during this period, and maintained similar "mode of days until closure", as compared to the previous time period (Table 2).

Table 1: Current Quarter: Route Slip Breakdown (January 1, 2007 through March 31, 2007)

Concern/Request Category	Number of cases during this time period	Average Number of Days Until closure	Mode of Days until closure
Potholes/Resurfacing	59	17	14
Street Light	36	17	14
Code Violations	32	20	20
Traffic Calming Measures	30	28	25
Sidewalk/Curbs	20	20	14
Other[2]	19	21	14
Trash/Debris	13	15	14
Weeds/Trees	11	18	14

[2] The category of "Other" includes questions about current events such as the Rock 'n Roll Marathon, the Charger ticket guarantee, or items that require a response but are not reoccurring questions.

Table 2: Previous Quarters: Route Slip Breakdown (July 1, 2006 through December 31, 2006)

Concern/Request Category	Number of cases during this time period	Average Number of Days Until closure	Mode of Days until closure
Traffic Calming Measures	126	33	29
Codes Violations	115	22	20
Potholes/Resurfacing	107	25	14
Weeds/Trees	96	17	15
Trash/Debris	86	18	13
Other[2]	79	26	14
Street lights	76	18	15
Sidewalks/Curbs	73	18	15

Several changes in the Route Slip process were proposed in the report to the Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee (January 25, 2007). Those changes were implemented on April 2, 2007. The next quarterly report will include three months of the new pilot Route Slip process. The biggest change includes sending an interim letter (or making a phone contact) which notifies the reporting constituent of:

- the department working on their concern,
- a contact person and phone number, and
- the date by which they expect the concern to be addressed.

The goal is to communicate the interim response within seven calendar days from the date the Route Slip is received by the department. This is an opportunity to provide better customer service to our constituents. In some cases the departments will be able to resolve the constituent concern within this seven day time frame.

Three training sessions have been offered to departments to learn the new pilot route slip process. The next Quarterly Report on Constituent Services to the Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee will include an update on the progress of the pilot route slip process.

CONCLUSION

Providing superior quality customer service benefits City employees, the customers of the organization, and the organization itself. City departments and employees have been very supportive of the Customer Service Initiative projects, and have been pro-active in requesting training sessions for staff throughout the organization.

The Customer Services Department will continue to provide "America's Finest Service for America's Finest City" through direct interactions with customers through our Citizens' Assistance and Community Service Center programs, work of the city employees and the Customer Service Liaison Network, and create and deploy new and exciting training opportunities through the Citywide Training Program. The Customer Services Department, the Customer Service Liaison Network, and the department Route Slip Coordinators will continue to connect the dots between the needs of the citizens, the services provided by local government, and the high quality service delivery goals of World-Class organizations.

FISCAL CONSIDERATIONS: N/A

PREVIOUS COUNCIL and/or COMMITTEE ACTION: June 15, 2005, City Council Transition Committee, Subject Constituent Services; January 25, 2007 Public Safety & Neighborhood Services, Quarterly Report on Constituent Services.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND PUBLIC OUTREACH EFFORTS: N/A

KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND PROJECTED IMPACTS: Citizens and Employees

Customer Services
Originating Department

Deputy Chief/Chief Operating Officer

ATTACHMENT A: Basic Service Delivery Practice