

Report to Community and Protective Services Committee

To: CHAIR AND MEMBERS
COMMUNITY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE

From: GEORGE KOTSIFAS, P. ENG., DEPUTY CITY MANAGER,
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Subject: PARKING SERVICES – SERVICE INTEGRATION AND DIGITAL
MODERNIZATION REVIEW

Date: NOVEMBER 23, 2021

Recommendation

That, on the recommendation of the Deputy City Manager, Planning and Economic Development, the attached Appendix “A” City of London Parking Services Integration and Digitization Future State Recommendations Report by MNP **BE RECEIVED** for information.

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to present the findings of a service review of the Parking Services area focusing on integration and digital modernization. Three general themes were identified: staff duties, customer service and technologies. Short term and longer-term opportunities were identified. Civic Administration supports implementation of the findings pending further internal cost /benefit reviews.

Linkage to the Corporate Strategic Plan

Council’s 2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan identifies “Leading in Public Service” as a strategic area of focus. This includes increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery by conducting targeted service reviews.

Analysis

1.0 Background Information

1.1 Audit and Accountability Fund

On May 21, 2019, the Province announced the creation of the “Audit and Accountability Fund,” making funds available for large urban municipalities to undertake third party reviews to identify potential savings, while maintaining vital front-line services. On November 17, 2020, the Province announced a second intake of funding applications noting that the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are making it more important than ever for municipalities to deliver modern, efficient services that are financially sustainable. In December 2020, Civic Administration submitted two applications for consideration as part of the second intake process:

- City of London Parking Services Service Integration and Digital Modernization Review
- City of London Procurement Process Assessment Review

On February 26, 2021, the City of London received approval for both projects.

1.2 Previous Reports Related to this Matter

Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee, (SPPC) March 9, 2021, Agenda item 5.1, Service Review: Audit and Accountability Fund Applications & Single Source 21-14 Procurement Process Assessment Review: <https://pub-london.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=78181>

1.3 Scope of Parking Review

The following scope of review is summarized from the March 9, 2021, SPPC report:

The City will contract an audit firm to undertake a service review of Parking Services to explore opportunities to improve service integration with other City services and examine opportunities to modernize service delivery. Currently, the City is utilizing one location to administer all activities related to municipal parking at 824 Dundas Street (Court House building). As part of the scope of work, a review will be undertaken of existing processes to determine opportunities to integrate parking payments/disputes with other City services and locations (i.e., City Hall). This review will also examine opportunities to modernize service delivery in Parking Services by identifying opportunities to digitize existing services.

The full audit is attached to this report.

2.0 Discussion and Considerations

Based on consultations with City staff from a variety of service areas (People Services, Information Technology), a municipal scan and operational review, the auditor identified three general themes:

- staff duties
- customer service
- technologies

For each of the themes, opportunities were identified and assessed based on implementation benefits and complexity.

Staff duties

- Update the Parking Customer Service Representative (CSR) job description.
- The Screening Officer should not be the first public point of contact.
- The Parking CSR should be the first public point of contact for customer service.
- Use generalized CSR job descriptions.

Customer Service

- Close the payments counter, drive payments via phone and online.
- Implement a parking customer service kiosk tablet at City Hall.
- Train the CSRs in City Hall to direct customers to use the new kiosk tablet.

Technology

- Investigate technology to automate and integrate the intake process for screenings / hearings and complaints / inquires.
- Drive customers to use the online services by developing communications.
- Include general information and online services from other departments in the customer service kiosk tablet.

The auditor undertook a benefit / complexity review categorizing each opportunity.

The highest benefit with the lowest complexity is to close the Parking Services payments counter and direct payments via phone and online. Related to this recommendation is to realign the first point of contact for customer service inquiries from the Screening Officers to the CSR who could respond to all phone inquiries/emails and log parking complaints. With the expansion of AMPs for over 20 non parking related by-laws, the volume and complexity of screenings will continue to increase. Previously, there were two distinct counter areas in the parking office: one for parking

inquiries and one for payments. Previous audits recommended this set up to ensure that payments were controlled and reconciled in one area. Civic Administration previously closed the parking inquiry counter in 2019, when AMPs were implemented, at a relatively low cost and in short order. Civic Administration concurs with this recommendation and agrees that this minor realignment of duties will assist in customer service recognizing that during the pandemic, most parking enquiries and payments were conducted by phone or online.

The opportunity with the highest benefit and highest complexity is to implement a customer service kiosk tablet at City Hall where customers could access Parking Services digitally. This would require IT resources as well as staff training to direct and assist the public. Civic Administration views this opportunity as longer term recognizing that IT costs would need to be identified in a business case for the subsequent multi-year budget. Further, there could be some relocations of parking staff as part of the Master Allocation Plan which could assist with enhancing customer service; no decisions have been made at this time as to the cost/benefit or timing. As pre-pandemic hearings on parking matters were held at City Hall and where several decisions resulted in the requirement for payment of an AMP, payment opportunities were made available at City Hall in addition to the Parking Office at 824 Dundas Street. This payment option could be further explored at the Service London counter at City Hall.

Another high benefit with medium complexity opportunity is to investigate technology to automate the screening and hearing review process. Civic Administration was already undertaking a municipal scan on the screening and hearing process in 2019/2020. These processes were conducted virtually during the pandemic and efficiencies were identified which could be implemented moving forward. There are opportunities in automating the screening request process which are currently being considered. The scope of IT resources related to this opportunity will require further internal discussions.

The identified opportunity of consolidating job descriptions for CSRs is a longer term task involving a number of service areas, including People Services.

Conclusion

A service review of the Parking Services area was undertaken funded by the Provincial Audit and Accountability Fund. Three general themes were identified: staff duties, customer service and technologies. Short term and longer term opportunities were identified and Civic Administration supports phased implementation pending further internal cost /benefit reviews.

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Appendix “A”
City of London Parking Services Integration and
Digitization Future State Recommendations Report