

INNOVATION FUND REPORT - ROADS ONLINE SERVICE REQUESTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Roads leveraged a one-time grant of \$185,000 from the Council Innovation Fund to purchase 127 iPad devices. The purpose of this grant was to improve the effectiveness of Roads in responding to citizen requests by enhancing service request processes, work order workflows and upgrading mobile technologies. Since 2012 July, there have been several additional enhancements to Roads' customer service request (CSR) process including the 311 Migration Project and the release of the handheld 311 app.

From 2011 to 2013, Roads received approximately 218,000 service requests through the 311 platform. During this period, the average monthly number of escalations and duplicates declined with the exception of major weather events (June 2013 flood / December 2013 winter storms).

Staff satisfaction is very high as the CSR response process became faster by enabling direct updates from the field. Roads will continue to leverage mobile tools to efficiently respond to 311 requests, complete field work and explore innovative uses of technology.

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION

That the Priorities and Finance Committee recommends that Council receive this report for information.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE PRIORITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEE, DATED 2014 APRIL 08:

That the Administration Recommendation contained in Report PFC2014-0253 be approved.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY

On 2012 July 30, Council approved the report Council Innovation Fund, Roads On-line Service Requests (Councillor Demong and Lowe), PFC2012-0509 to provide funding in the amount of \$185,000 for one-time funds to pay for the 2012 purchase and 2013 operating costs from The City of Calgary Council Innovation Fund.

BACKGROUND

In June 2012, Notice of Motion 2012-29 was approved by Council to develop action plans specifically to address citizen centric solutions for all City operations. The recommendation of the process review recommended to increase the use of the Corporate Motorola platform (311) would improve communications, processes and sharing of information between Roads divisions, other business units and the public.

In 2012 July, Roads applied to the Council Innovation Fund to support the Online Service request project.

In September 2012 a pilot study within the Traffic Engineering group was conducted using the CSR migration software. From this pilot, there were a number of successes and benefits identified by using the CSR platform to process service requests with Roads:

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- Caller escalations decreased
- There were improved response times for work completion (open to close)
- There was an improved Service Level Agreements (SLAs) when employees used the same system as 311 employees

The migration to the 311 Motorola system (311) was initiated to ensure Roads operational and reporting needs were supported and enhanced. The majority of the divisions completed the transition to this process by the end of 2013. Roads staff using 311 have the potential to serve citizens faster with more timely information flowing to the citizen (Attachment 1). Other benefits were fewer potential escalations and the ability to easily view pictures and map out service request locations for the creation of work lists.

INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

Roads was able to leverage the purchase of the iPads by replacing the formerly used Panasonic Tough Books, which had reached the end of their life cycle. The network capabilities of the Tough Books needed improvements to allow for faster response times. The cost to replace a Tough Book was approximately \$4000 compared to the cost of an iPad at \$815. The pilot project allowed Roads to phase out a more expensive technology and realize operational efficiencies.

The combined benefits of the iPad tool and 311 Migration project allow staff to action requests and organize work more efficiently (Attachment 2). The use of iPads is not limited only to the 311 CSR platform and has provided an additional range of work activities. Maintenance vehicles are being equipped to hold the devices for easy reference and quick access. Roads staff are able to remotely access desktop applications, perform field inspections, review maps or permits and organize work activities. During the June 2013 flood, many staff members worked remotely with the iPad to coordinate response activities.

When canvassed, additional benefits that Roads employees identified by using the CSR platform to process service requests were:

- Potential to respond to citizens quicker (via email rather than by phone)
- Simplified service request assignment and operational activity flows for Foreman
- Staff are able to see citizen attached photos of the issue when they are added at time of submission to better aid prioritization and response
- Image and video documentation of field conditions and situations including live video coverage of field conditions (the latter is not often used)
- Video and audio connection from the field

Mobile learning presents another opportunity to use the iPad tool. Roads Business Services Division is investigating this area to facilitate training anywhere and to access learning and reference materials on demand. Once a mobile GIS application on iPad is available, the iPad's native capabilities such as GPS and camera, can enable the integration of location recording, asset image, incident or work result to the asset/work record.

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Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication

Roads staff regularly receives training to learn how to utilize the iPad tool. A staff satisfaction survey (Attachment 3) confirmed that the majority of staff prefer using iPads and have noticed an improvement in their ability to manage 311 service requests. A recommended next step is to expand the pilot project for the use of iPads across the Business Unit so more field staff can realize the benefits of the tool.

Strategic Alignment

This report supports Transportation 2012-2014 Business Plan objectives:

- 2M1.2 Review and improve processes to reduce the cost of services provided, including judicious use of technology to improve processes
- 2M4 Provide transportation services that address customer needs and feedback
- 2M4.1 Continue to respond to customer concerns and inquiries (example: 3-1-1)

This project aligns with the Council Innovation Fund purpose of one-time start up or “seed” funds for initiatives or programs which will support or contribute to Council's priorities.

Social, Environmental, Economic (External)

Customer responsiveness and expediency are a primary focus for Roads staff. Allowing staff to manage work requests more efficiently through current technologies support the priorities of this project and of Council.

Financial Capacity

Current and Future Operating Budget:

The Roads Online Service Request project was managed within the approved total budget of \$185,000. The estimated operating charges are \$55 per month, per device which includes Citrix connections and IT service support. An annual operating budget adjustment for Roads of \$194,000 for ongoing operating will be brought forward as part of Action Plan 2015 - 2018.

Current and Future Capital Budget:

The project does not require a capital budget. Ongoing costs related to this project will be funded through operations.

Risk Assessment

Employees can leverage modern technology to expedite workflows and respond to citizens more efficiently. Utilizing the Corporate CSR platform promotes consistency and reliability of reporting information.

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REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION:

The objectives of the Roads Online Service Requests Project have been met based on an assessment of project goals and enhancements to the CSR reporting process and Roads recommends that this report be received for information.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Roads Service Request Statistics 2011 - 2013
2. Service Request Workflow
3. Roads Employee Satisfaction Survey