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Customer Service Department 2023 Year End Results Information Report

Report Number: INFO-2024-06

Department(s): Customer Service

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Date: March 19, 2024

In accordance with the Procedure By-law, any member of Council may make a request to the Town Clerk that this Report be placed on an upcoming Committee of the Whole agenda for discussion.

Purpose

This report provides Members of Council with the highlights, overall results, and trends, as well as the key areas of focus in 2023, for the Customer Service Department

Background

The Customer Service Department provides Members of Council with the quarterly and year-end results which includes volumes, trends, key project updates, and highlights related to service delivery.

Discussion

The attached graphics represent service requests as captured in our CRM system by either Customer Service staff or by staff in the Mayor and Councillors' offices.

Some of the highlights in the Customer Service department are as follows:

Overall Volumes and Trends

- The Customer Service Centre fielded over 75,747 contacts in 2023. With programming and drop-in activities back to pre-pandemic attendance, Customer Service Kiosk staff served over 302,855 visitors, patrons, customers, and users at our Recreation facilities.

- The total contacts between the Town Hall Customer Service Centre (CSC) and Kiosks increased significantly in 2023 compared to previous years. There were over 114,000 additional contacts between 2022 and 2023. The highest amount of customer contacts to date.
- Customer Service Email volumes increased in 2023 from the previous year. 7,564 emails were serviced by Customer Service in 2023. This total was double the amount received and serviced before the pandemic in 2019.
- Average Handling Time (AHT), or the average talk time on calls to customer service, continues to hover at over 4:00 minutes average per call, averaging 4:03 minutes per call. This number increased during the pandemic and remains high, indicating the increasing complexity of issues that residents report.
- Request for Parking Enforcement (1,288) was the highest type of service request across the whole Town of Newmarket in 2023, followed by Forestry service requests (1,242) and Bylaw/ Property Standards service requests (1,194), respectively.
- The number of Service Requests reported to the town of Newmarket has continued to increase since 2016. In 2023, 12,085 Service Requests were reported to Customer Service - 1,201 more than the previous year. This is mainly due to the introduction of new programs – Animal Services and Private Tree Protection.
- Customer Service achieves an 84% resolution rate on first contact, redirecting only 16% of inquiries to other departments in 2023.
- During the pandemic, more people started using online transactions for regulatory services. There were 10,597 online transactions for regulatory services in the last year, increasing significantly by 30% compared to the previous five-year average of 7,733.

Revenue and Cost-Saving Opportunities

- Jamie Boyle, the Customer Service Supervisor, is virtually leading the "Enhanced Customer Service Training for the Public Sector" program. This program has been well-received and is available to all staff. It is considered mandatory for all Town of Newmarket employees, and six individual sessions were offered twice in 2023. Since 2020, over 300 TON staff from all levels of the organization and 120 N6 staff have completed the course.
- Newmarket has been offering customized 'Enhanced Customer Service Training for the Public Sector' training to municipalities and government agencies outside the N6 region. This training program is a revenue-generating opportunity for Newmarket, and it's becoming more in demand due to positive word-of-mouth. In 2023, the Township of Georgina and Seneca College's Judicial Service Diploma Program are some of the agencies that received customized public sector service training from Newmarket.
- In 2019, a partnership was created with Seneca College's Public Administration Program. Workshops were created and delivered focusing on best practices in municipal service delivery, our centralized customer service model and career development panels with Town of Newmarket municipal professionals from across the organization.
- Seneca College's "Excellence in Municipal Government" program has been successful, resulting in a flourishing partnership with the Town of Newmarket. The program, now in its third year, has been included in the post-graduate curriculum, providing students with an opportunity to work on topical municipal challenges. The various town departments'

staff act as Project Advisors, providing support to the students throughout the course.

Continuous Improvement – 2024 and beyond

- Collaborate to best deliver on the Council’s “Customer First Way of Life” Priority by providing user-focused input and data-driven decision-making to objectives, including the Corporate App and redesigned website.
- The next semester of the Seneca College/ Town of Newmarket Public Administration partnership continues from January until April 2024. Delivered weekly through Seneca College’s learning platform, this partnership increases Newmarket’s standing as a learning organization, continually striving to share our practices and experiences with future municipal professionals. In addition, Jamie Boyle continues to grow the partnerships with post-secondary institutions like Seneca by offering future public service students focused customer service training.
- Continue to provide strong support to several Corporate and stakeholder projects, including the new Fitness Centre at the Ray Twinney Recreation Complex, the installation of high-speed fibre internet (telMAX), Smart Water Meter deployment, and the launch of the Automated Speed Enforcement program.
- Explore tools to measure customer satisfaction to be utilized within the CS Department.

Conclusion

The Customer Service Department remains committed to providing Council with the most recent trends and statistics by ward and the Town of Newmarket as a whole.

Business Plan and Strategic Plan Linkages

Tracking and reporting on trends and customer feedback supports the Town’s strategic directions of being Well-Equipped and Managed by demonstrating Service Excellence.

Consultation

Not applicable to this report.

Human Resource Considerations

Not applicable to this report.

Budget Impact

None

Attachments

Year end 2023 overall volumes and trends (2 Pages)

Approval

Hayley Fryer, Supervisor, Customer Service Centre

Jamie Boyle, Supervisor, Customer Service Kiosks

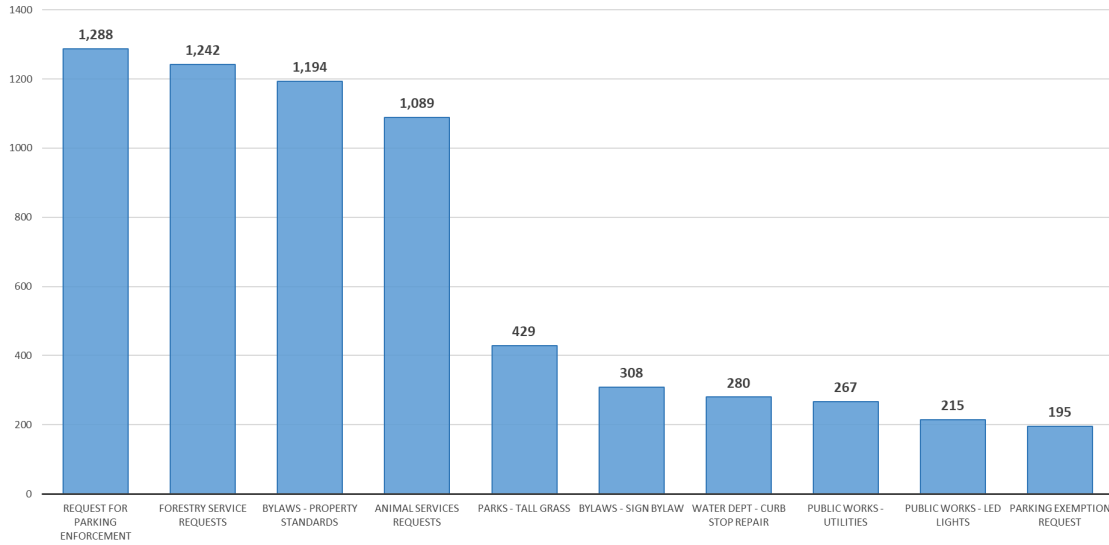
Bonnie Munslow, Manager, Corporate Customer Service

Contact

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2023 Overall Volumes and Trends

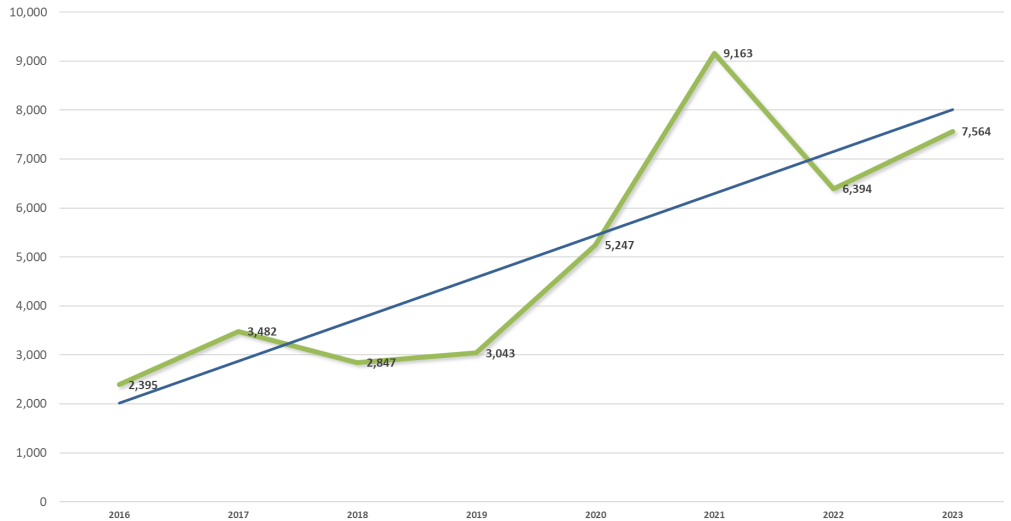
Top 10 Service Requests
2023



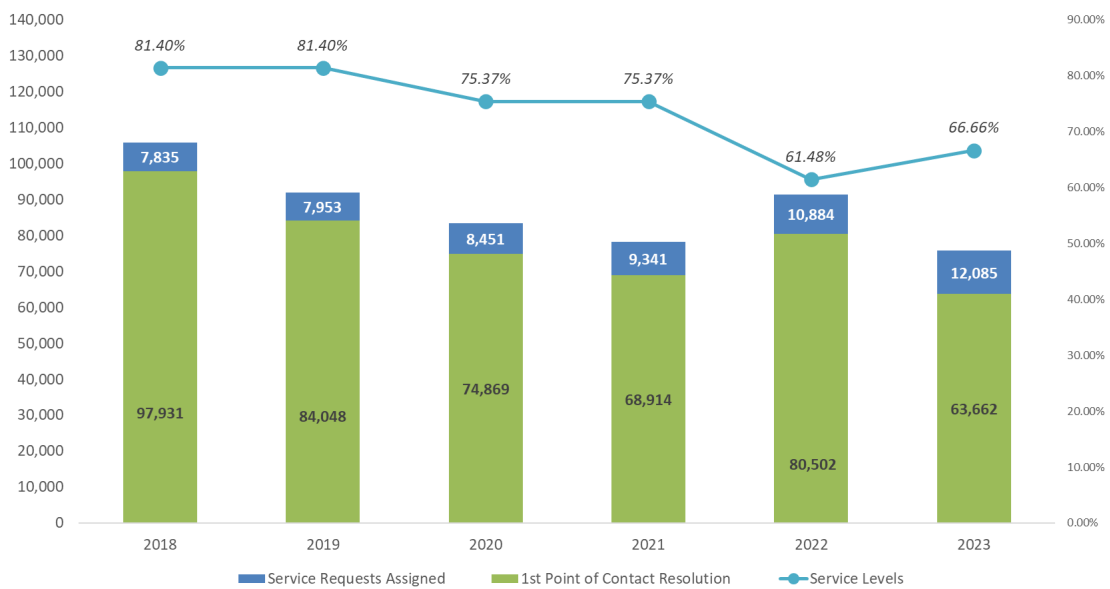
The CRM software used by Customer Service enables us to track all service requests, which helps us report any trends happening within the Town of Newmarket. In 2023, the highest type of service request across the whole town was for Parking Enforcement, with a total of 1,288 requests. This was followed by Forestry service requests (1,242), Bylaw/Property Standards service requests (1,194) and lastly, Animal Services requests (1,089).

Customer Service experienced an increase in email volumes in 2023 as compared to the previous year. According to the latest statistics, a total of 7,564 emails were handled by the Customer Service team in 2023, which is twice the amount of emails received and handled before the pandemic in 2019. The annual email volumes reflect the longer term trend toward preference for on-line customer services.

Total Email Volumes to Customer Service

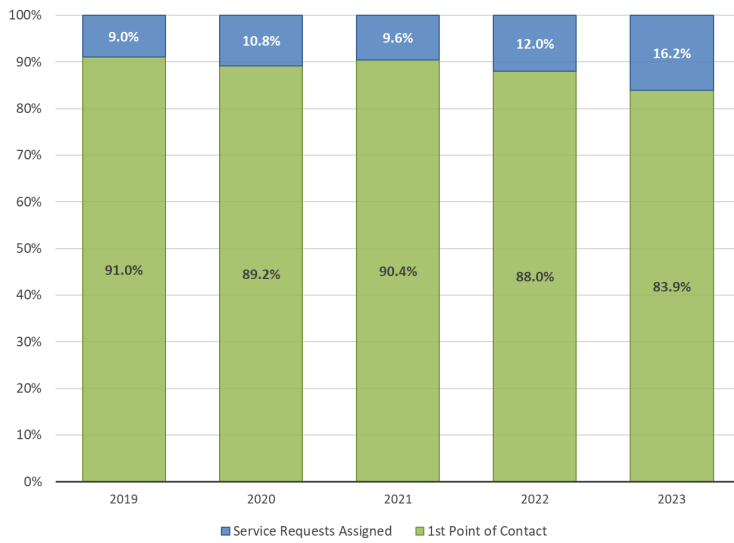


First Point of Contact Resolution



Over the past few years, the town of Newmarket has experienced a significant increase in the number of Service Requests reported. In 2023, the number of Service Requests reached 12,085, which is 1,201 more than the previous year. It is worth noting that the Customer Service team was able to resolve 84% (63,662) of these requests on the first contact, and only 16% (12,085) of inquiries were referred to departments (captured by the Customer Service Associate, assigned to another department, monitored for resolution and then ensuring that appropriate updates were provided and the file subsequently closed). However, the increase in service requests has resulted in an increased talk time and ticket duration has increased due to the growing complexity of issues. This has led to an increase in the overall length of calls per contact. As a result, the Service Levels have diminished.

1st Point of Contact vs. Service Requests



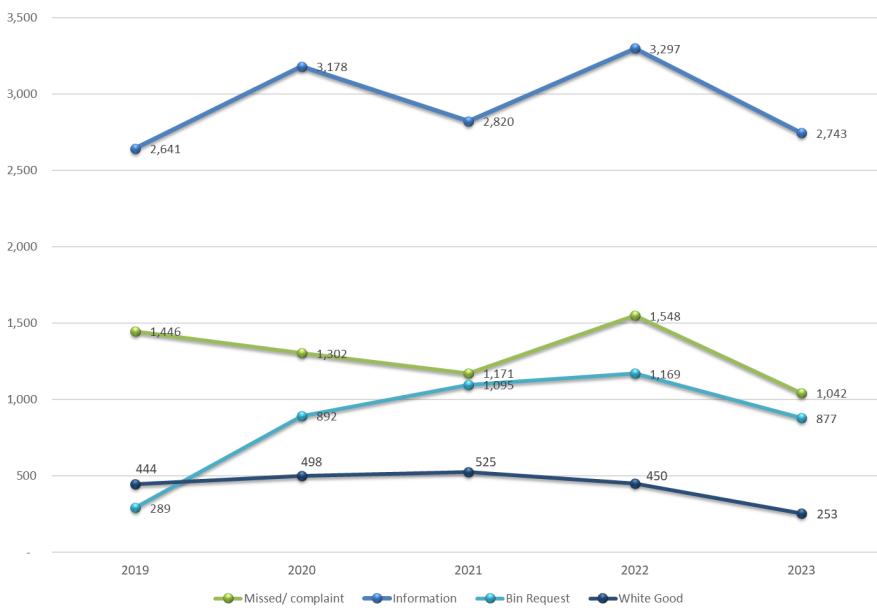
The Customer Service Centre aims to resolve customer queries at the first point of contact, which means the customer's issue is solved by the initial associate. Since 2018, the Customer Service Centre has achieved approximately 90% first point of contact resolution rate, which means that 90% of all customer queries were resolved by the Customer Service Associate during the initial interaction. However, in 2023, this rate dropped to just below 84%. This decline is mainly due to the introduction of new service programs like Animal Services and Private Tree Protection, which led to an increase in service requests and the need for assistance from other departments through a CRM service request.

The Customer Service Centre received slightly fewer Customer Contracts than before the pandemic in 2023, in line with a year-over-year declining trend. Nonetheless, CSC still handled more than 75,747 Customer Contracts in total. Recreation activities and drop-in sessions are now back to their pre-pandemic attendance levels. This year, there was an increase in the number of visitors, patrons, customers, and users served by the Customer Kiosk staff. In 2023, the total number of people served was 302,855, which is the highest number since staff started tracking customer services provided at the satellite kiosks in 2014.

Total Customer Contacts
Customer Service Centre vs. Kiosks



GFL Call Types



Waste is collected weekly from over 28,000 residential homes in Newmarket throughout the year for 52 weeks. The collection process involves removing four separate streams: Blue Bin, Green Bin, and Garbage. Yard waste is also collected from April to October.

Green for Life provides waste management services and tracks customer interactions, including waste disposal information and missed collections notifications. GFL reported the lowest number of missed collections in Newmarket in the past five years in 2023.

There has been a considerable rise in online transactions in Newmarket, primarily due to the increased availability of online services. In 2023, there was a 30% surge in online transactions for regulatory services such as parking and bylaw infractions, compared to the previous 5-year average. Conversely, there was a slight decrease in the number of transactions made in person at the Customer Service Centre compared to the 5-year average.

Transactions with Online Option (Regulatory Services Only)

