



**City of Kingston
Report to Council
Report Number 19-125**

To: Mayor and Members of Council
From: Peter Huigenbos, Acting Commissioner, Community Services
Resource Staff: JC Kenny, Director, Communications & Customer Experience
Date of Meeting: May 21, 2019
Subject: Channel Management Strategy – Open Government Kingston Work Plan

Executive Summary:

On October 20, 2015, Council received a presentation titled Open Government Kingston Work Plan as the proposed implementation plan for the Open Government strategic priority ([Report Number 15-414](#)). Council also endorsed the vision, guiding principles and elements of the Open Government Framework which identified four (4) main themes:

1. Open Engagement;
2. Open Governance;
3. Open Programs and Services; and
4. Open Data

Strategies, such as the Public Engagement Framework (Open Engagement), Outreach Strategy (Open Governance), Customer Experience Strategy (Open Programs and Services) and Information Management Strategy (Open Data) underpin the Open Government themes and drive specific plans and actions which help ensure the desired outcomes.

A full staff report providing a status update of the Open Government Kingston Work Plan was received by Council on April 4, 2017 and is outlined in [Report Number 17-064](#). This update included information on Open Programs and Services, including the framework for the Customer/Citizen Relationship Management (CRM) system and a Channel Management Strategy. These are components outlined in the Customer Experience Strategy endorsed by the Corporate Management Team (CMT) in 2016. Further updates to the Open Government Kingston Work Plan were incorporated into the Strategic Priorities updates sent to Council on [December 19, 2017](#) and [November 20, 2018](#), and included updates of the CRM system implementation progress.

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To date, the work of City staff has focused on the implementation of the CRM, which launched its first phase in June 2018. It is anticipated that the full implementation of the CRM will be completed by 2021. The phased-in approach to the CRM includes defining service level standards for a number of City services. Several City services already have fully detailed standards because the standards are legislated. Some examples include Housing & Social Services, Rideaucrest Home and Building Services. Complete service level standards for other departments continue to be developed.

The Open Government Kingston Work Plan update ([Report Number 17-064](#)) identified three (3) channels of interaction for the provision of customer service under a Channel Management Strategy:

1. Online service;
2. Phone service; and
3. Counter service.

This report provides the opportunity for Council to adopt a Channel Management Strategy to ensure a consistent experience and service delivery model. In support of building a responsive multi-channel service delivery model, the Channel Management Strategy aims to provide quality customer service across all channels – online, phone and counter – that results in consistent and integrated service built around user needs while leveraging existing corporate assets and resourcing.

The strategy will ensure that services are delivered via the channels most effective for customers and most efficient for the City so that online services continue to grow, access by phone is simplified, and the number of services provided at counter locations expand.

Recommendation:

That Council receive and adopt the Channel Management Strategy attached as Exhibit A to Report Number 19-125.

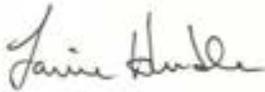
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Authorizing Signatures:



**Peter Huigenbos, Acting
Commissioner, Community
Services**



**Lanie Hurdle, Acting Chief
Administrative Officer**

Consultation with the following Members of the Corporate Management Team:

Gary Dyke, Commissioner, Corporate Enterprise Services



Jim Keech, President & CEO, Utilities Kingston



Desirée Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer



Sheila Kidd, Commissioner, Transportation & Public Works



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Options/Discussion:**Background**

One of the four desired outcomes from the Open Government Kingston Work Plan is Open Programs and Services. Open Programs and Services are driven by a customer-centric service delivery model, proactive and targeted communication on the impact and delivery of programs and services, and data-driven service delivery decisions. In December 2016, CMT approved a Customer Experience Strategy and a supporting high-level implementation road map for the City of Kingston. The strategy reflects input from the public, staff and a review of best practices from across the province, the country and the private sector.

Improving the customer experience increases customer satisfaction, creates internal efficiencies, improves employee morale and engagement, and increases confidence in the City as an organization. The Customer Experience Strategy provides a common vision of what the City of Kingston's customer experience will be and provides a set of principles and guidelines to inform decisions related to customer service.

In alignment with the Open Government Kingston Work Plan and the Customer Experience Strategy, staff have prepared a Channel Management Strategy for Council's adoption.

Channel Management Strategy

Technology has dramatically changed the way people access information and services. In response to the raised expectations of individuals and businesses, a consistent, responsive and customer-centric approach to managing interactions with the City is critical to achieving high levels of customer satisfaction in the future.

The Channel Management Strategy provides a framework that is designed to maintain transparent and measureable multi-channel service delivery while promoting a corporate environment that continues to offer elevated customer experience by:

- **Offering consistency in interactions** – professional and courteous staff deliver quality, accurate and timely information.
- **Promoting self-serve options** – increase access to online services while supporting people who require assistance by phone or in person.
- **Expanding customer service locations** – increase the number of locations and hours where services can be offered through the introduction of Customer Service Hubs.
- **Leveraging data** – measure how satisfied people are with services; use technology to collect and analyze data to inform decision-making.
- **Staying agile** – be open to other opportunities that may materialize to better serve customers in the most efficient and effective way for the City.

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Online Service

Online interaction plays an integral role in the City's Channel Management Strategy as the City continues to seek ways to improve and enhance the customer experience. Social media platforms, in particular, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, provide ever-increasing methods of communication between the community and the City, and the City continues to seek feedback on how to create a more efficient and effective website, one that allows people to quickly and easily access information.

The CRM is an integral part of the Channel Management Strategy, a system that acts as a central hub for a growing list of web applications. The CRM brings several capabilities that are foundational to Open Programs and Services, including:

- Increased access to online services via self-serve options;
- Open access to current and accurate information for customers and staff;
- A mechanism for soliciting and collecting feedback through surveys; and
- A centralized place for customer information and interaction with the City.

In keeping with the City's commitment to measure satisfaction, the City must understand who the customers are; how they use City services; and how staff can continue to improve the way they interact with and serve them. With CRM, the City has the ability to create, maintain and share information across departments with the goal of providing better service. Customer feedback surveys collect data on service usage, effectiveness and customer satisfaction.

The new cloud-based CRM system was introduced in June 2018 to replace the out-of-date work order system in order to provide an improved streamlined customer experience.

Staff use CRM to create service requests, track progress and document resolutions in a number of departments/divisions/business units including Engineering, Forestry, General Reception, Information Systems & Technology, Kingston Transit, Parking, Property Taxes, Roads and Sidewalks, Solid Waste and Transportation. More departments will be added over time.

CRM also allows the City to track those service requests and leverage the resulting data to improve the City's ability to deliver services and information.

Staff are also working to simplify access to online self-serve options through the use of Single Sign-on (SSO) technology under the domain name: mykingston.ca. This will enable people to register for programs, access forms and submit service requests using the same secure online profile (one user ID and password). With SSO, people will be able to access web applications from their SSO dashboard using a single user ID and password.

The City of Kingston website and CRM system will be the first applications included within SSO, with the potential for applications to be added over the next several years as follows:

- GetInvolved Kingston: getinvolved.cityofkingston.ca/;
- My Neighbourhood: <https://apps.cityofkingston.ca/MyNeighbourhood/>;
- Open Data Kingston: <https://opendatakingston.cityofkingston.ca/pages/welcome/>;

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- Pet Licensing: https://kingston.docupet.com/en_CA/signup/info; and
- PLAY: <https://www.CityofKingston.ca/PLAY>.

Over time, the above list will undoubtedly grow to include more web applications that could be accessed as part of the SSO portal.

Phone Service

While online platforms have become part of the fabric of society, the phone remains another key form of communication in the Channel Management Strategy.

Customer Services Representatives (CSRs) offer first point-of-contact support for people requesting information or assistance by phone related to all City services and programs. An interaction generates a service request with an associated reference number for tracking and reporting purposes. Requests and inquiries are either resolved immediately with support from CSRs or transferred to subject matter experts in the various City departments for further assistance.

The City is also exploring ways to strengthen its existing partnership with 211. This program connects people to a full range of non-emergency community, social, government and health service information, and complements the City's existing call centre. It provides 24/7 access, multilingual service (150+ languages), additional phone support during and following emergencies, and demographic information. People calling into the City for assistance may be better supported from the broader community services accessible through 211. Conversely, some callers to 211 are better suited to be directed to the City's CSRs.

Part of developing the phone service involves the enhancement of existing technology infrastructure. An upgrade to the voice recognition system in March 2019 allows for ongoing enhancements and ensures effective and efficient phone service to keep pace with the changing needs of a diverse community. Ongoing changes to the daytime and after-hours messaging system ensures calls to the City are handled in an efficient manner.

The City has accumulated 70+ phone numbers in addition to individual extensions. A full audit is required to reduce the number of City phone numbers that are advertised to the public. Generally, the goal is to have a central administrative number to reach City staff and departments and a second number to access City services and programs. Some departments will likely need to maintain their own public-facing numbers to meet their operational needs (i.e. Rideaucrest Home, Kingston Fire & Rescue).

Counter Service

Traditionally, Kingston City Hall has been the only place where people can access a multitude of City services. This Channel Management Strategy is about changing the way the City does business in an effort to provide quality customer service for people in different forms and at additional locations. Currently, there are other City sites where some products and services are available but typically they operate during traditional business hours, Monday to Friday, and staff know people are increasingly looking for services at different hours of the day and night and as such, the City continues to move in that direction.

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Accordingly, the City has a plan to expand counter service to complement City Hall by introducing four (4) additional Customer Service Hubs:

- Artillery Park Aquatic Centre;
- INVISTA Centre;
- Rideau Heights Community Centre; and
- Kingston East Community Centre (2021).

These locations provide varying services now, but over time, additional services will be available at these counters. The menu of services at each location may change from time to time to accommodate the needs of the customers and the customer service hub location.

The hubs will ensure that there are counter locations spread throughout the urban area of the City, two of which are within close proximity to the 401. The intention is to broaden the services offered in-person at service hubs that are already open weeknights and weekends. In summary, the implementation of the Channel Management Strategy aligns with the vision outlined in the overall Customer Experience Strategy to create a customer-centric organization that looks at service delivery from the customer's perspective. This means that all processes are designed with the customer in mind. Establishing an integrated service delivery model enables the City to be more responsive, accountable and efficient in the way it provides access to City services. All departments continue to work collaboratively toward building a multi-channel service delivery model where online services continue to grow, customer access by phone is simplified and services provided at counter locations expand.

Existing Policy/By Law:

Not applicable

Notice Provisions:

Not applicable

Accessibility Considerations:

Consultation has occurred with working groups from the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee on a number of customer service initiatives, including CRM development, web applications such as My Neighbourhood and Open Data, as well as self-serve forms.

The existing and proposed Customer Service Hubs are in accessible locations.

Financial Considerations:

The financial implications of expanding service delivery options will be reviewed prior to implementation and assessed based on the extent of customer demand, cost effectiveness and budget. Staff will work on maximizing existing resources and implementing within the Council approved taxation targets.

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Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted:

All City Directors

Exhibits Attached:

Exhibit A Channel Management Strategy



Channel Management Strategy



Enhancing Access through Multi-Channel
Service Delivery

About This Strategy

The City of Kingston Channel Management Strategy provides a framework that is designed to maintain transparent and measurable service delivery across the City's channels of interaction – online, phone and counter – to elevate the customer experience.

This is a guiding document that defines, underscores and maps out the City's commitment to provide quality multi-channel service delivery by:

- **Offering consistency in interactions** – professional and courteous staff deliver quality, accurate and timely information.
- **Promoting self-serve options** – increase access to online services while supporting people who require assistance by phone or in person.
- **Expanding customer service locations** – increase the number of locations and hours where services can be offered through the introduction of Customer Service Hubs.
- **Leveraging data** – measure how satisfied people are with services; use technology to collect and analyze data to inform decision-making.
- **Staying agile** – be open to other opportunities that may materialize to better serve customers in the most efficient and effective way for the City.

Commitment to Customer Service

Technology has dramatically changed the way people access information and services. In response to the raised expectations of individuals and businesses, a consistent, responsive and customer-centric approach to managing interactions with the City is critical to achieving high levels of customer satisfaction in the future.

Multi-Channel Service Delivery

Establishing an integrated service delivery model enables the City to be more responsive, accountable and efficient in the way it provides information and services that are designed around user needs seven (7) days a week. Efforts are focused on ensuring consistency across three (3) main channels:

1. Online service
2. Phone service
3. Counter service

Online Service

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System

Online interaction plays an integral role in the City's Channel Management Strategy as staff continue to seek ways to improve and enhance the customer experience.

The cloud-based CRM system acts as a central hub providing several capabilities, including:

- Increased access to online services via self-serve options;
- Open access to current and accurate information for customers and staff;
- A mechanism for soliciting and collecting feedback through surveys; and
- A centralized place for customer information and interaction with the City.

With CRM, the City has the ability to create, maintain and share information across departments with the goal of providing better service. Customer feedback surveys collect data on service usage, effectiveness and customer satisfaction.

CRM replaced the out-of-date work order system in order to provide an improved, streamlined customer experience. Staff use CRM to create service requests, track progress and document resolutions in a number of departments/divisions including Engineering, Forestry, General Reception, Information Systems & Technology, Kingston Transit, Parking, Property Taxes, Roads and Sidewalks, Solid Waste and Transportation. More departments will be added in the future.

CRM will continue to roll out in phases with additional City services integrated over time.

Single Sign-on (SSO)

Customers will have 24/7 access to information and self-serve options through the use of a new Single Sign-on (SSO) solution, under the domain name mykingston.ca, using one user ID and password.

With the introduction of this unified access model, people will be able to register for programs, access forms and submit requests for City services using the same secure online profile. The direction toward offering more online services, leveraged through CRM, aligns with the City's vision of streamlining interactions with the customer.

Looking further out, mykingston.ca will be used as the umbrella brand for other touch points including counter service locations.

Integration with Web Applications

The intent is to offer people the ability to access web applications from their mykingston.ca dashboard. The City of Kingston website and CRM system will be the first applications integrated, with the potential for applications to be added over the next several years as follows:

GetInvolved Kingston | getinvolved.cityofkingston.ca

Through the City's public engagement platform, people can follow and participate in engagement opportunities to help shape projects, policies and initiatives. Residents are encouraged to share ideas for making Kingston a better place to live, work, study and play.

My Neighbourhood | <https://apps.cityofkingston.ca/MyNeighbourhood/>

My Neighbourhood uses geo-enabled information to create an interactive map that gives users the ability to search City programs, services, facilities and projects within an area of Kingston. Starting with an address, users can easily search and access available public information online, specific to a geographic area.

This platform aims to:

- Present geo-enabled information;
- Provide a framework to guide the release of future datasets;
- Simplify the user experience by centralizing data in one place; and
- Integrate with the City of Kingston website and provide linkages to other relevant City systems and resources.

Open Data Kingston | <https://opendatakingston.cityofkingston.ca/pages/welcome/>
The *Open Data Kingston* portal allows users to access and download open datasets pertaining to City programs and services. New datasets will be added regularly over time.

Pet Licensing | https://kingston.docupet.com/en_CA/signup/info

The City of Kingston provides an online pet registration, identification and rewards program solution for pet owners.

PLAY | <https://www.CityofKingston.ca/PLAY>

PLAY is a cloud-based application that makes it easier for residents to access recreation services online. Through a public-facing portal, residents can purchase memberships, lessons, classes, camps and book recreation facilities, and browse the City's full offering of recreation registered and drop-in programs.

Over time, the above list will undoubtedly grow to include more web applications that could be accessed as part of the SSO portal.

Website

The City's website will continue to evolve to meet changing user needs. Ongoing enhancements will ensure information is current and readily accessible using a limited number of clicks. Staff continue to seek feedback on how to create a more efficient and effective website, one that allows people to quickly and easily access information.

Social Media

Social media platforms, in particular, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, provide ever-increasing methods of communication between the community and the City. Other City of Kingston platforms include LinkedIn, YouTube and podcasts.

Statistics are used to measure the effectiveness of each platform to better understand audience behaviour and how information is consumed. Success will be measured through reporting on followers, reach and impressions.

Phone Service

Voice Recognition System

Part of improving interactions with customers involves enhancing the existing phone technology infrastructure. An upgrade to the voice recognition system allows for ongoing enhancements to increase opportunities for effective and efficient interactions that keep pace with the changing needs of the City's diverse community.

Ongoing changes to the daytime and after-hours messaging system will ensure calls to the City are handled in an efficient manner.

Limiting City Phone Numbers

The City has accumulated 70+ phone numbers in addition to individual extensions. A full audit is required to reduce the number of City phone numbers that are advertised to the public. The goal of the audit is to have a central administrative number to reach City staff and departments and a second number to access City services and programs. Some departments will likely need to maintain their own public-facing numbers to meet their operational needs (i.e. Rideaucrest Home and Kingston Fire & Rescue).

Customer Services Representatives

Customer Services Representatives (CSRs) offer first point of contact support for people requesting information or assistance related to all City services and programs.

CSRs can be reached at 613-546-0000 or at contactus@cityofkingston.ca, Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

An interaction by phone or email generates a service request with an associated reference number for tracking and reporting purposes. Requests and inquiries are either resolved immediately with support from CSRs, or transferred to department subject matter experts for further assistance.

211

The City is also exploring ways to strengthen its existing partnership with 211. This program connects people to a full range of non-emergency community, social, government and health-service information and complements the City's existing call centre. It provides:

- Around-the-clock access: available 24/7/365;
- Multilingual service: capable of serving in more than 150 languages;
- Additional phone support: during and following emergencies; and
- Demographic information: shared with the City to provide better service.

People calling into the City for assistance may be better supported from the broader community services accessible through 211. Conversely, some callers to 211 are better suited to be directed to the City's CSRs.

Counter Service

Broadening In-Person Service

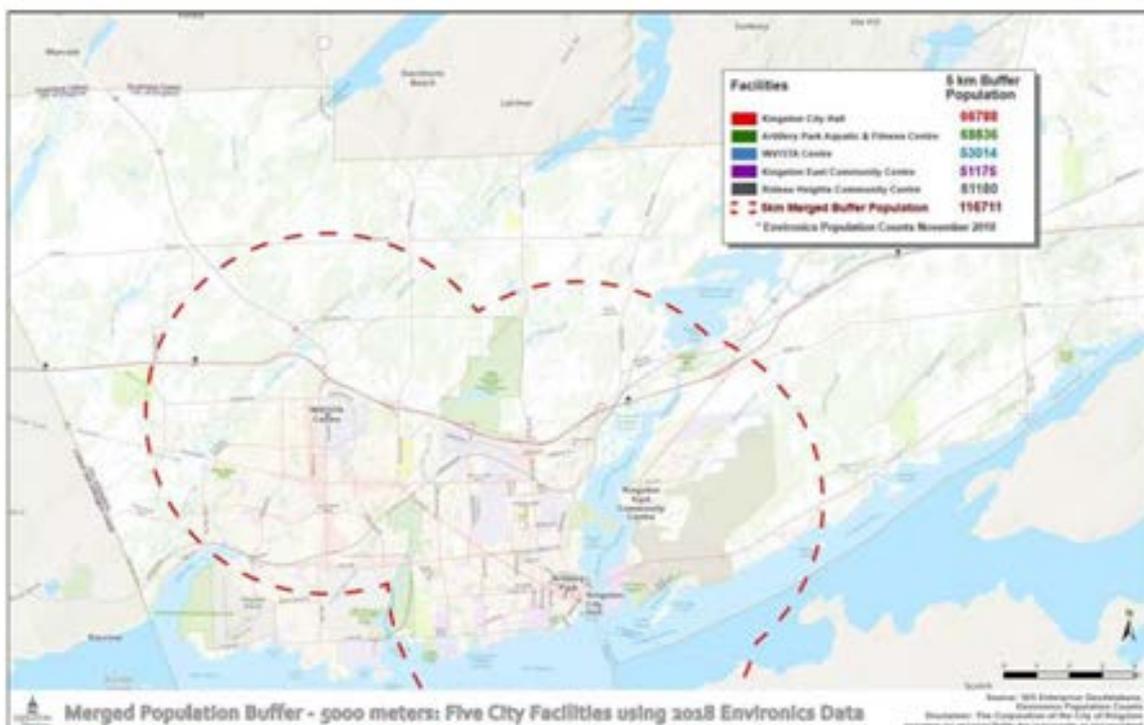
Traditionally, Kingston City Hall has been the only place where people can access a multitude of City services. This Channel Management Strategy is about changing the way the City does business to provide quality customer service for people in different forms and additional locations. Currently, there are other City sites where some products and services are available, but typically, they operate during traditional business hours, Monday to Friday. People are increasingly looking for information

and services at their convenience; therefore, the City continues to move in that direction.

The plan is to expand counter service to complement City Hall by introducing four (4) additional customer service hubs:

- Artillery Park Aquatic Centre
- INVISTA Centre
- Rideau Heights Community Centre
- Kingston East Community Centre (2021)

Customer service hubs are defined as recreation centres where expanded counter service will be introduced over time. The City will ensure there are counter locations spread out throughout the urban area of the City, two of which are within close proximity to the 401. These hubs will broaden in-person service delivery to include evenings and weekends. Hours of operations may be amended.



The following chart illustrates existing and potential services. The menu of services at each location is subject to change and will be implemented over time. Services will be added or removed as the City conducts analysis based on customer needs and business requirements.

	City Hall	Artillery Park Aquatic Centre	INVISTA Centre	Rideau Heights Community Centre	Kingston East Community Centre (2021)	Online Services
Hours of operation (weekdays)	8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.	6:00 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.	8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.	8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.	8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.	
Hours of operation (weekends)	Closed	8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.	8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.	8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.	8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.	
Accounts receivable	✔					
Business license renewal payment	✔	★	★	★	+	◻
Commissioner of oath	✔					
Death certificates	✔					
Garbage bag tags	✔	✔	✔	★	+	
Kingston Transit monthly passes (photo required)	✔	★	★	★	+	
Kingston Transit multi-ride cards	✔	★	✔	✔	+	
Marriage licenses	✔	★	★	★	+	
Renew current parking permit	✔	★	★	★	+	◻
Parking ticket payments	✔	★	★	★	+	◻
Pet licensing renewals	✔	✔	✔	✔	+	◻
Property tax payments	✔					◻
Recreation fitness memberships	★	✔	✔	✔	+	
Recreation programs and services	★	✔	✔	✔	+	◻
Recycling bin pick up – blue, grey	✔		★	✔	+	
Utilities Kingston payments	✔					◻

The implementation of the Channel Management Strategy aligns with the vision to create a customer-centric organization that looks at service delivery from the customer’s perspective. This means that all processes are designed with the customer in mind. Establishing an integrated service delivery model enables the City to be more responsive, accountable and efficient in the way it provides access to City services. All departments continue to work collaboratively toward building a multi-channel service delivery model where online services continue to grow,

customer access by phone is simplified and the number of services provided at counter locations expands.