March 29, 2023

To: Mayor and Members of City Council

202300983

From: Sheryl M.M. Long, City Manager

Subject: Improvements to Customer Service Response System

Reference Document #202300439

On February 1, 2023, City Council referred the following motion for a report:

> **MOTION**, dated January 26, 2023, submitted by Councilmember Jeffreys, **WE MOVE**
> that the Administration provide a report within sixty (60) days on:
> - Reviewing the most recent Resident Survey Findings Report on satisfaction of constituents with various public services ranging from public health, neighborhood cleanliness and appearance to street & sidewalk services and public safety. The purpose of this review is to identify the top areas of improvement in constituents Customer Service Responses.
> - Based on that review, share what a plan will be to leverage a Lean Six Sigma process to eliminate resource waste and improve outcomes for constituent Customer Service Responses. That plan will include the timing and costs of using a Lean Six Sigma process, a process that will include setting specific benchmarks for customer satisfaction across these metrics as well as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) against which to measure performance.

Overview—Community Perceptions Survey and Customer Service Request System

Community Perceptions Survey Results

The City of Cincinnati conducted an initial Community Perceptions Survey in 2021 and results were presented to City Council in April of 2022. Four top areas of opportunity were identified by residents through the initial survey: (1) Maintenance of Streets, Sidewalks, & Infrastructure; (2) Police Services; (3) Neighborhood Services; and (4) Communication & Engagement. In the Fall of 2022, another survey was conducted to understand the resident perception in the top four areas at a deeper level. The results of the deep-dive survey will be presented to City Council on April 3, 2023. Both efforts align with the overarching goal of the current Administration to place the priorities and needs of our residents at the center of the work we do to serve our community. The current intention is to continue offering the full survey on a bi-annual basis, alternating each year with an opportunity to scope a targeted survey for a specific set of programs or services. This will ensure the Administration stays informed of the changing priorities of the community, can track improvement of service delivery with historic benchmarks, and has the needed information available to help guide complimentary programmatic and budgetary decisions.

Customer Service Request System

The Customer Service Request (CSR) system was initiated by City Council and went live in September 2004 at the Department of Public Services call center with over 1.6 million service requests processed through these years. The system on average handles over 100,000 service requests a year with participation from 15 departments and around 400 different service request types. Currently around 50% of these requests are made though online channels like the web and mobile app with the rest coming through calls or generated by staff. The CSR system is an enterprise system integrated with many departmental processes fostering

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communication and coordination. The key strengths of the CSR system include the ability to assign work directly to the person performing it and strong integration with Geographic Information System for identifying location-based information for effective response. Examples include dispatching the right field personnel based on their service district, alerts if a request falls within special zones, identifying private versus public property, etc.

Ongoing CSR System Enhancements

Beginning in the fall of 2022, at the direction of the City Manager the Office of Performance and Data Analytics (OPDA) began a process to identify opportunities to improve the CSR System. Similar to the lean six sigma approach, this process has included analysis of current processes, performance issues, and available data.

To gather user feedback on the CSR system, a user survey is utilized. The original CSR survey ran from 2015 to October 2022 and was delivered to users via email when their service request was marked as 'closed' in the system. Users answered six questions with the ability to provide additional feedback. This survey saw low participation rates of ~4% each year and due to the format did not provide clear insights. OPDA helped identify opportunities to improve the survey to collect information aligned with community concerns, boost participation, and provide actionable insights. A new survey has been created and launched. The new survey is simplified to 3 questions, depending on the response, and will help increase participation and identify opportunity areas for improvement in service delivery and the CSR system itself.

YEAR	UNSATISFIED	SATISFIED	PARTICIPATION RATE
2015	33%	66%	1%
2016	32%	67%	5%
2017	33%	67%	4%
2018	32%	68%	4%
2019	35%	64%	3%
2020	35%	65%	5%
2021	33%	67%	6%
2022	36%	64%	4%

In addition to the survey, the following CSR process enhancements are underway to bolster data accuracy and allow for better analysis to inform the need for process improvement in the future:

1. Resident concerns about the user interface are being addressed through simplification of the web and mobile portals.
2. Communication lapses between departments' in-house project management systems and the central CSR system are being solved by exploring integration options.
3. Each CSR request has a unique lifecycle that residents do not currently have knowledge of, making expectation setting difficult. Research is being conducted through resident interviews and data analysis to provide residents with the right information at the right time. The survey redesign will allow for continuous improvement on the issues most important to residents.
4. A soft voting classification machine learning algorithm has been trained on eight years of historical CSR data for early prediction of problematic CSR requests. After completion this algorithm will allow for deeper investigation of CSR problem areas and could be used to notify stakeholders in advance of CSRs that may need extra attention.
5. Call center staffing and training is increasing data accuracy and customer service satisfaction.
6. The CSR database is being cleansed of historical records left in the 'open' status to allow for accurate performance management measurements and optimizations.
7. Problems with cross departmental handoffs and communication stem from the lack of a venue for coordination and are being addressed through routine 311 user group meetings and data-driven performance management facilitations.
8. OPDA has established a project plan to build a citywide CSR monitoring dashboard as part of its performance agreement.

Performance Management Overview

OPDA has three performance management programs: 1) the Department Performance Management Process, 2) Performance Agreements, and 3) Strategic Initiative Executive Tool (SIET).

Through the Department Performance Management process, departments update their mission statement, create a service catalog and identify key performance indicators (KPIs), which are reported on a PowerBI dashboard. For services with CSRs, KPIs often include the amount of time it takes to complete a step in the response process.

Performance Agreements accompany the budget process. There is an annual agreement between the City Manager and department directors on projects or metrics the department is expected to report on throughout the fiscal year. The FY24 agreements have a CSR component. In addition to department-wide metrics, departments select up to three specific CSR types to monitor and set goals. Departments will report the following CSRs metrics quarterly:
- Average number of days to close
- Open date of oldest open CSR
- Number of CSRs received by month
- Number of CSRs closed by month
- Number of staff processing (the CSR)
- Percent met of goal

SIET convenes departments on a regular basis around pressing initiatives. One of the initiatives currently covered under SEIT is addressing data accuracy issues in CSRs caused by duplicative usage of multiple systems of record. City Administration is working with CAGIS, OPDA, and all relevant departments to standardize data entry for CSR closures moving forward. In addition, OPDA is creating a dashboard around closure rates that will be reviewed quarterly as part of Executive Reviews tied to the administration's Excellent and Equitable Service Delivery goal. This transparency is intended to create more accountability and ultimately improve service delivery.

cc: William Weber, Assistant City Manager
        Eric Jamison, Director of the Office of Performance and Data Analytics