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Customer Service Department 2021 Q1 Results Information Report to Council

Report Number: INFO-2021-18

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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 for the first quarter of 2021 for the Customer Service Department.

Background

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

Discussion

The attached graphics (**Attachment 1**) 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 Department fielded over 3,500 inquiries related to the COVID-19 Pandemic between January and March 2021
 - The highest volume of inquiries were related to 'Vaccination Inquiries', largely a result of residents calling the Ray Twinney Complex regarding the Vaccination Centre located at the site

- Total contacts continue to trend downward while the length of calls and complexity of each contact continues to trend upward, as does the percentage of service requests. Decreased volumes are largely due to the closures of the Customer Service Kiosks at the Magna Centre, Ray Twinney Complex and the Seniors Meeting Place.
- Q1 2021 calls offered (12,838) are higher than Q1 2020 (11,999)
- As a result of the pandemic, the overall volume of emails in the 1st Quarter has increased substantially: 2,067 email in Q1 2021 vs. 799 in Q1 2020
- Length of each call has almost doubled from Q1 2020 (4:06 per call in Q1 2021 vs. 2:16 minutes in Q1 2020)
- Request for Parking Enforcement (205) is the highest type of service request across the whole Town of Newmarket in Q1, followed by Bylaw Infraction requests (197) and requests related to the COVID-19 pandemic (179);
- Request for Parking Enforcement is the top service request in every ward, except Wards 1 & 2;

COVID-19 Pandemic

- CS Associates & Supervisors continue to answer calls, emails, and social media requests remotely.
- A limited number of staff continue to work in the office to offer services that require on-site resources.
- Processes are continuously being evaluated and streamlined to ensure that all services are available in the most efficient manner for our residents. All payments are processed by credit card over the phone and paper-reliant processes have been modified and moved to electronic means where possible.
- A “walk up” window was installed in the fall of 2020 in the Customer Service Centre. This window allows essential services which were previously “in person” to be completed without contact; the Town of Newmarket is one few municipalities who continue to offer these important services during lockdown. Marriage licenses and commissioning of documents are currently offered by appointment only at the Customer Service window.
- 192 marriage licence inquiries & bookings were made in Q1
- Customer Service Kiosk staff have been trained and continue to back up CSC staff. Kiosk staff are the first line of contact for all payments; as well, they monitor and respond to emails and voicemails as appropriate. Over 3,500 payments were taken by phone and drop box in the first quarter with the majority being processed by Kiosk staff.
- Staff who are working in the office have been provided with appropriate materials and protocols to ensure safety; protocols have been adjusted as necessary in accordance with all Provincial guidelines or restrictions.
- Customer Service Supervisor, Jamie Boyle, is leading the “Enhanced Customer Service training for the Public Sector” program virtually. This program has been

very well received and is available to all staff across the N6 municipalities. The course is considered 'mandatory' for Town of Newmarket staff and 5 individual sessions are offered throughout 2021. Seventy-three staff and N6 participants completed the course in 2021 to date. Over 310 participants have successfully completed the program to date.

- In 2019, two partnerships were created with Seneca College's Public Administration and Government Relations Programs. Workshops were created and delivered for both programs focusing on best practices, our centralized customer service model and career development panels with municipal professionals. These workshops were very successful and lead to a 2-day course being developed and offered in January 2020 as part of Seneca's Public Administration Program. The course titled "Excellence in Municipal Government" was well received and the partnership has continued was delivered again in early 2021. These workshops and courses were all developed internally and then delivered by Jamie Boyle.

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

Detail the internal and external stakeholders that contributed to the content of this report.

Human Resource Considerations

Not applicable to this report.

Budget Impact

None.

Attachments

Attachment 1 - Q1 Volumes and Trends Graphics

Contact

For more information on this report contact: Jamie Boyle (jboyle@newmarket.ca or extension 2254) or Bonnie Munslow (bmunslow@newmarket.ca or extension 2251).

Approval

Jamie Boyle, Supervisor, Customer Service Kiosks

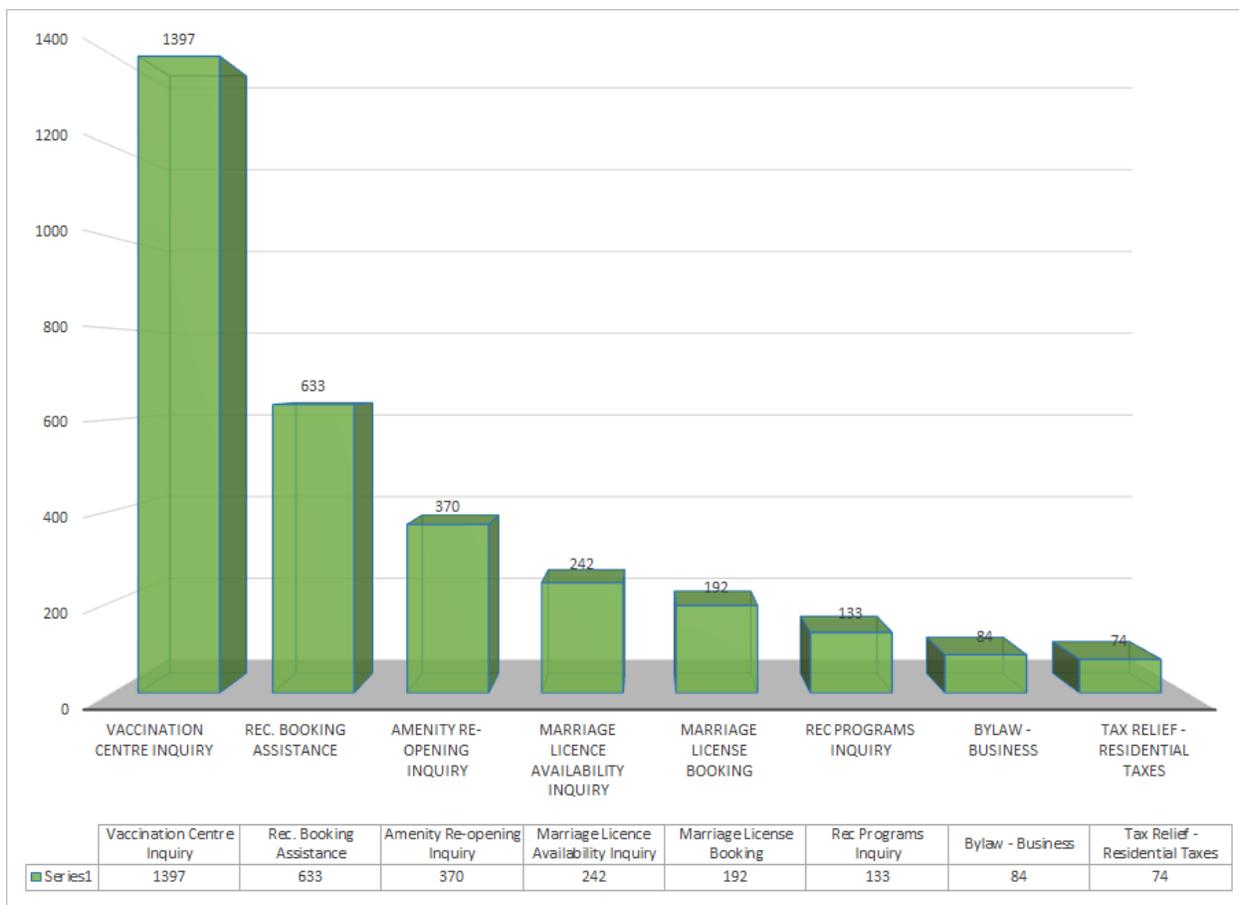
Hannah Grant, Supervisor, Customer Service Centre

Bonnie Munslow, Manager, Corporate Customer Service

Ian McDougall, Commissioner, Community Services

Overall Volumes and Trends

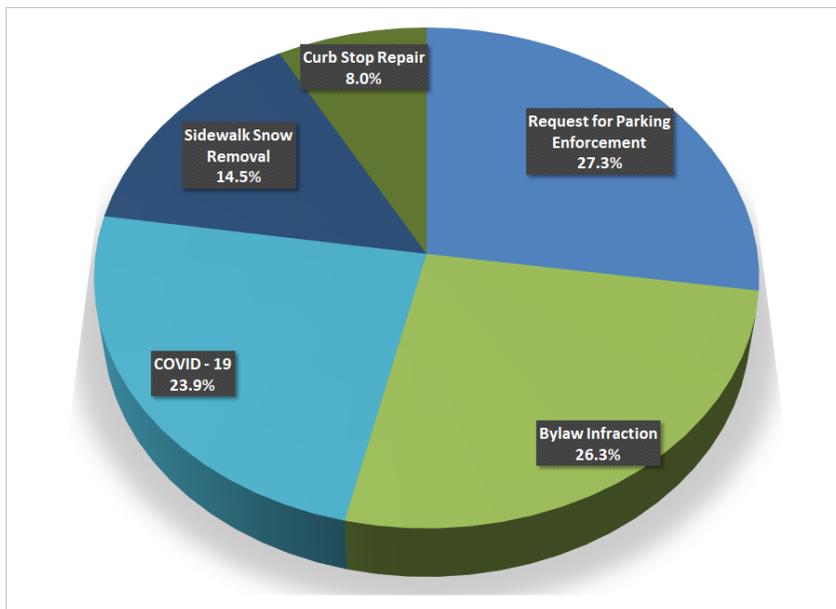
January—March 2021, COVID-19 Inquiries



Over 3,500 calls, emails, and social media inquiries related to the COVID-19 Pandemic were fielded between January and March 2021. The most requested information was related to Vaccination Inquiries. Recreation programming, facilities and assistance with new booking procedures. Marriage licensing was also a highly sought after service. At the start of the pandemic, marriage licenses were arranged only based on urgent circumstances. By the end of the summer, licenses and commissioning were provided by appointment to all qualifying couples. The installation of a “walk up” window at the Customer Service Centre has allowed us to continue to offer this contactless service, even during the lockdowns in the fall and winter. The Town of Newmarket is one of few municipalities that has offered continuous marriage licensing service throughout the pandemic.

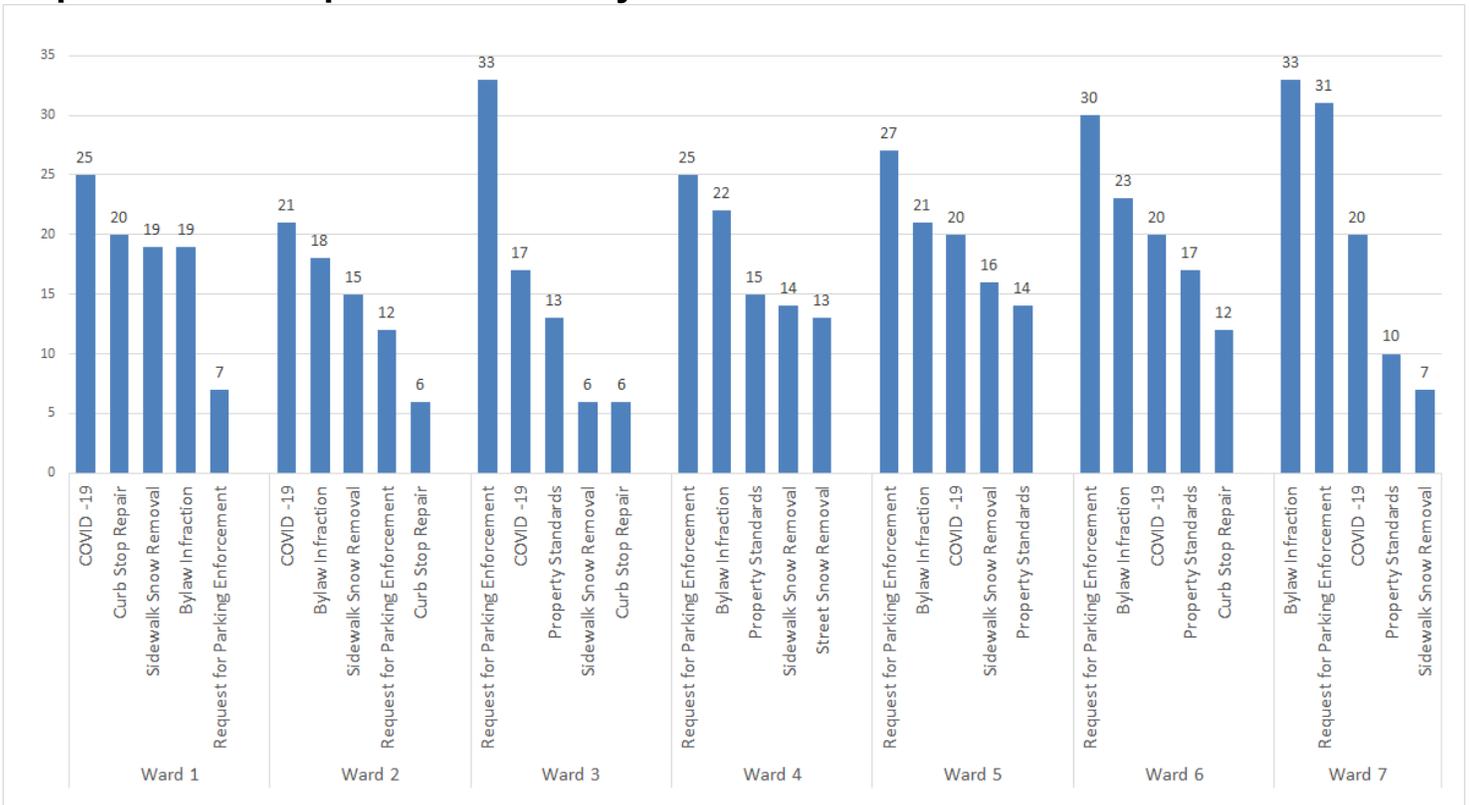
Town Wide Top 5 Service Requests for Q1 2021

Town wide, the top service requests in Q1 2021 were for parking enforcement followed by COVID-19 reports & property standards investigations. This is consistent with previous years data. A breakdown of these requests shows that the highest COVID-19 related service requests were for by-law related business complaints (236), social distancing (183) and park usage (85). Service requests related to routine curb stop repairs and sidewalk snow removal/ sod repair were all consistent with previous years data.



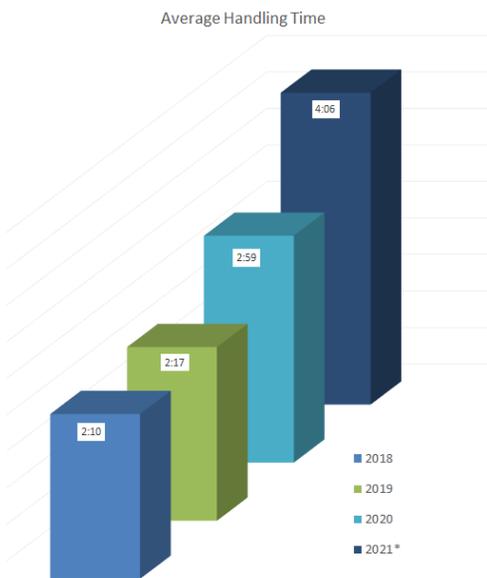
Overall Volumes and Trends

Top 5 Service Requests for 2021 by Ward



COVID-19 related enforcement requests are prevalent across almost all wards in the 1st Quarter of 2021. The majority

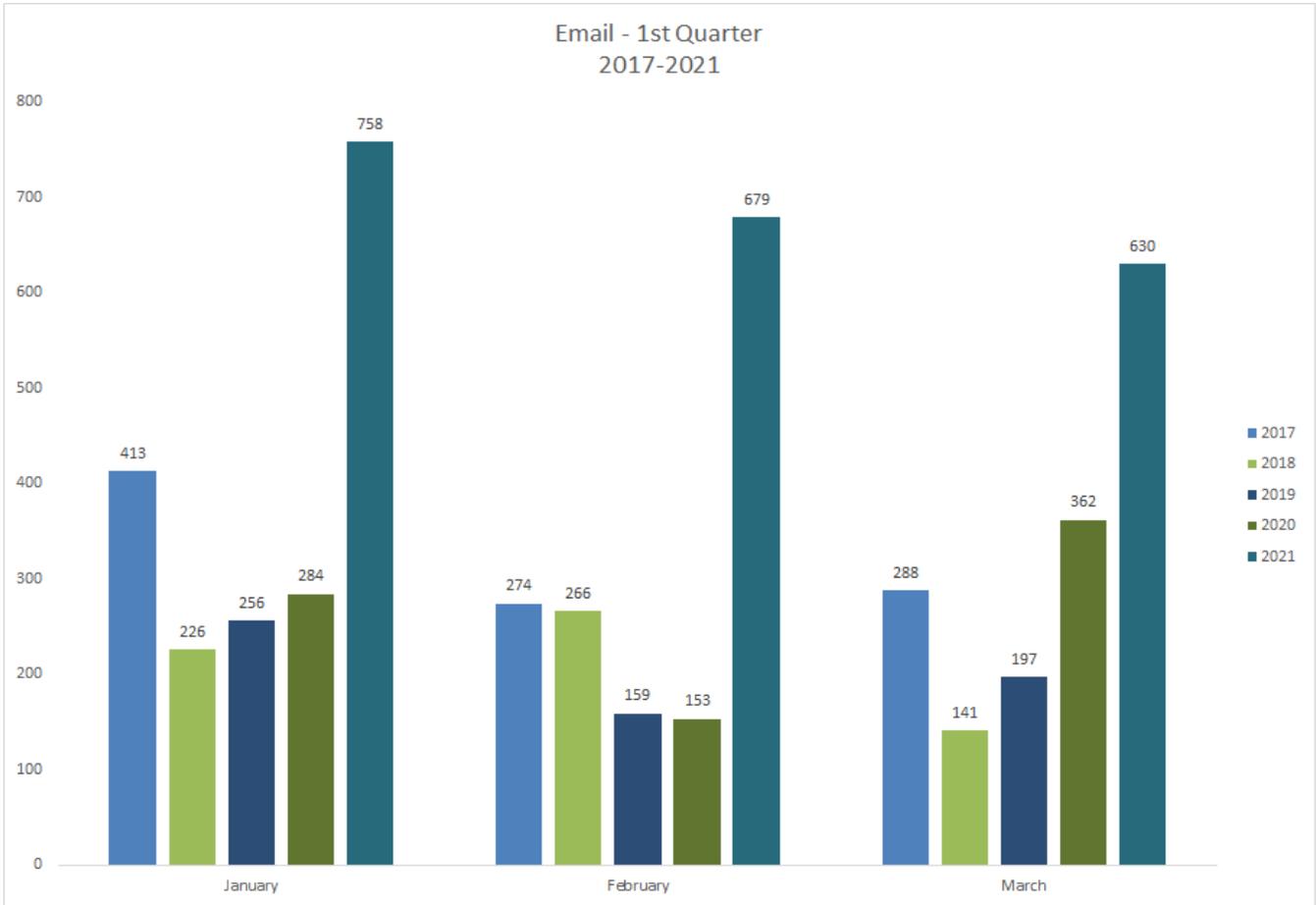
Average Length of Call



The average time spent on each incoming phone call to the Customer Service Centre increased significantly in Q1 of 2021 from the 1st quarter of 2020. This is a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic, and also, the increasing complexity of the subject matter and service requests that associates deal with on a regular basis. The pandemic has increased the length of calls for a variety of reasons including the vast amount of ever changing information that associates are expected to provide. Verifying information from the Ontario Regulations and local sources has increased talk time. In addition, many processes which were once available in person have been moved to the phone. Examples include Recreation booking assistance and payments for a variety of services including waste bin and stickers. The average length of each call increased significantly in April 2020 and has continued to trend upward.

Overall Volumes and Trends

Email Volumes



As a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic, email requests to the Customer Service Centre have increased substantially. Customer Service Kiosk staff have been trained to respond to general inquiries and have contributed greatly to the management of these volumes. This has allowed us to maintain our service goal of responding to most email inquiries and service requests within one business day.