The City of San Diego

REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

DATE ISSUED: February 27, 2008 REPORT NO: 08-026

ATTENTION: Public Safety & Neighborhood Services Committee Meeting of March 5, 2008

SUBJECT: Quarterly Report on Customer Services Projects, Programs and Initiatives Fiscal Year 08, Quarter 2, from October 1 through December 31, 2007

SUMMARY

THIS IS AN INFORMATION ITEM ONLY. NO ACTION IS REQUIRED ON THE PART OF THE COMMITTEE OR THE CITY COUNCIL.

BACKGROUND

In October of 2005, the City Council adopted Ordinance 19430 which was recommended by the City Council Strong Mayor-Strong Council Transition Committee that the Citizens' Assistance Program Manager provide constituent services quarterly reports to the Council Committee that oversees Neighborhood Services. Since that time, Citizens' Assistance has become part of the larger Department of Customer Services, and the objective of these quarterly reports has become to provide a comprehensive account of the status of customer service improvement projects and programs. These projects and program also include the two other Divisions of the Customer Services Department: Community Service Centers and Citywide Training. In addition, this report documents the progress of the many Customer Service Initiatives designed to continuously improve the quality of services to all customers, both internal and external.

This report summarizes occurances during the second quarter of the FY2008; and represents a rolling log of projects that have been completed to date. Items reported as completed in previous quarters are not duplicated in this report.

Customer Services staff were committed to emergency assistance both during the landslides and then even more comprehensively, during the disaster relief and recovery efforts addressing the 2007 Wildfires. Due to this reassignment of duties, the FY2008 Quarter 1 Report is presented as an attachment to this report, rather than having been reported separately on a previous date (Attachment 1: Quarterly Report on Customer Services Projects, Programs and Initiatives Fiscal Year 08, Quarter 1, from July 1, 2007 through September 30, 2007).

This quarterly report includes information on:

- Customer services initiatives and citywide training accomplishments completed during the Fiscal Year 08 Quarter 2, from October through December, 2007,
- A status of citizen concerns submitted to the organization via Route Slips during that period, and improvements to the Route Slip process,
- Statistics on direct customer assistance via the six Community Service Center locations. The customer service initiatives planned for upcoming quarters.

DISCUSSION

During this quarter, the Customer Services Department, completed work on our Tactical Plan goals and objectives, which are summarized here.

1. All departments will have the tools to practice excellent service.
The Customer Services Department provides updated resources for employees in departments to use to provide excellent customer service to our citizens. Some of the tools include training, monthly tips, information resource directories, and frequently asked questions.

The Department will move toward accomplishing this goal by focusing on the following objectives.

- Ensure customer satisfaction information is provided to all departments.

2. The City will have a customer-focused culture that is recognized for excellent customer service.
Being known for providing excellent customer service to our customers and benefits everyone in the organization, and everyone that interacts with the organization.

The Department will move toward accomplishing this goal by focusing on the following objectives.

- Ensure we are accessible and responsive to our internal and external customers.
- Support a customer-focused workforce.
- Heighten awareness and set example regarding the value of delivering high quality customer service.

3. Our citizens will have easy access to City Services.
We strive to provide a variety of methods that our customers can access our service.

- Continue and enhance public outreach to ensure our customers are aware of City services.
- Continue to improve methods of service offerings so that customers have easy access to all City services.

4. The Customer Services Department will deliver its services in an efficient, effective manner.

The Customer Services Department strives for continuous improvement, evaluates progress, and implements changes necessary to continue efficiency and effectiveness.

The Department will move toward accomplishing this goal by focusing on the following objective.

- Affect positive change on the organization as a result of customer service programs and activities
- Promote continuous improvement and the use of best business practices in customer service

We will also continue to work toward two internal Department goals.

5. *The Customer Services Department will be valued as a core component of the City's organization.*
6. *The Customer Services Department will create a Department culture where employees are valued and where people want to work.*

Citywide Training

Most training in the City organization was put on hold during this quarter due to the two disasters our City experienced – landslides and wildfires. Many of the Customer Services Department team were called into action to staff these two events. Despite the extraordinary circumstances, Citywide Training continued to work toward its objective of providing City employees with the skills they need to provide excellent customer service.

Ken Blanchard-developed Customer Focused Culture Training Series

The first open classes were attended in November. Employees from all City departments are now able to register for the General Sessions at their convenience. Open sessions continue to be held monthly and all City employees are encouraged to attend.
The current schedule of classes is updated regularly and is available on the Customer Services City Net site [http://citynet/customerservices/pdf/070921training2.pdf], along with the enrollment form
[http://citynet/customerservices/pdf/070921blanchardsign_up.doc].

These General Sessions are intended for all employees, from front line providers to Directors. These sessions emphasize the building blocks of a customer-focused culture including the importance of Vision and Values – both the organization's, and your own; Policies and Practices that help or hinder service providers; being attuned to customers; and taking care of yourself so you can care for your customers.

In addition to the general sessions, two other sessions are available upon request – one session specifically for those who supervise, and one for front line providers.

Customer Service Skills Based Training

The Customer Service Department continues to create and deploy programs to support all the City employees in their efforts to provide World-Class Services to our customers. Many employees had registered to take the customer service skill-building trainings, and although some had to be postponed due to the disasters, we still trained over sixty employees during this quarter.

Other Citywide Training

Citywide Training continued its ongoing efforts to provide City supervisors with critical skills through the 7-day Supervisors Academy, and Discipline and Rewards Training, and to start new City employees off on the right track with a comprehensive New Employee Orientation.

Citizens' Assistance

Route Slips are concerns or requests for services received by the Mayor or City Council. The Route Slip program was developed to provide a centralized mechanism for these concerns to be quickly routed to City staff for resolution. Route Slips are coordinated by the Citizens' Assistance Program of the Customer Services Department, and are sent to the responsible departments for citizen follow up and resolution. Route Slips represent a portion of the service requests that a department may be working to resolve at any given time. Often, inquiries and requests are submitted to the departments directly by the citizen, as opposed to first being submitted to an elected official, and then routed to the department as part of this Route Slip process.

For the reporting period October 1 through December 31, 2007, 306 Route Slips were generated. This represents a decrease of 183 route slips from the previous quarter. For the same period in 2006, there were 451 Route Slips, which is a difference of 145 Route Slips. The large decrease in route slips could be as a result of the October wildfires. Many of our San Diego residents were evacuated, or housing evacuated residents whose homes were at risk, or assisting as a volunteer at one of the many fire survivor shelters.

The nine most common issues raised by constituents over this quarter ending December 31, 2007, include:

- Sidewalks and Curbs 11%,
- Potholes/Street Resurfacing 11%,
- Traffic Calming Measures 10%,
- Street Light 8%,
- Weeds/Trees 8%,
- Code Violations 8%,
- Fire Hazards 5%,
- Street Signs 4%, and
- Water Leaks 4%.

Table 1: Current Quarter: Route Slip Breakdown (October 1, 2007 through December 31, 2007)

Concern/Request Category	Number of cases during this time period	Average Number of Days Until closure	Mode of Days until closure
Sidewalks & Curbs	35	21	13
Potholes/Street Resurfacing	34	16	17
Traffic Calming Measures	31	51	51
Street Light	27	24	8
Weeds/Trees	26	21	27
Code Violations	23	28	27
Fire Hazards	16	18	13
Street Sign	11	26	24
Water Leaks	11	27	27

Table 2: Previous Quarter: Route Slip Breakdown (July 1, 2007 through September 30, 2007) (As reported in Attachment 1)

Concern/Request Category	Number of cases during this time period	Average Number of Days Until closure	Mode of Days until closure
Code Violations	49	22	27
Trash/Debris	44	15	7
Potholes/Street Resurfacing	40	17	16
Traffic Calming Measures	38	30	29
Weeds/Trees	38	21	10
Sidewalks & Curbs	29	21	28
Public Safety	26	27	27
Street Light	23	23	23

The following six types of issues have remained in the top eight categories each quarter for the past six quarters: Code Violations, Potholes/Street Resurfacing, Sidewalks & Curbs, Street Light, Traffic Calming Measures, Weeds/Trees. This represents a steady state in the types of issues that concern our external customers most consistently, regardless of season or other variables.

In addition to Route Slips, Citizens' Assistance also staff the main information counter in the City Administration Building Lobby, and answer the main phone line for City Information (619.236.5555). The staff members also maintain the Information Resource Directory (IRD) making frequent updates. The IRD is an electronic subject directory that

can be accessed via CityNet or the Internet (http://www.sandiego.gov/citizensassistance/resource.shtml). By entering a topic, the user will be able to access the phone number and/or the address. This quarter, we started adding website addresses to the directory, to provide more complete information for a full service customer experience.

Community Service Centers

From October 1, 2007 to December 31, 2007, the six Community Service Centers processed a total of 19,140 customer transactions. The table below shows some of the different types of transactions processed during this period.

Service Provided	Number of Transactions
Water/Sewer Bills Payments Accepted	14,517
Passport Applications Processed*	3,037
Business Tax Certificates	354
Parking Citations	523
Personnel Applications Accepted	160
Community Room Meetings Held	256
Residential "E" Parking Permits	18
Employee Transit Passes	275

* Each passport processed generates revenue for the City

In October 2007, Community Service Center staff were relied upon heavily to provide assistance to customers during the emergency situations that occurred in the City. Community Service Center Managers were public liaisons for the families affected by the La Jolla landslide. They were then re-assigned to be points of contact for the major areas of operational support at Qualcomm, reporting directly to the Incident Commander. During the recovery efforts, staff throughout the Centers, and the Department, were redirected to coordinate staffing, and provide staffing, for public interface and support at the Rancho Bernardo Local Assistance Center. Additionally, the Community Service Center Program opened and staffed the Rancho Bernardo Community Service Center as an annex to the Local Assistance Center, providing residents with useful resources related to fire recovery.

CONCLUSION

Providing superior quality customer service benefits City employees, the customers of the organization, and the organization itself. City departments and employees have been very supportive of the Customer Service Initiative projects, and have been pro-active in requesting training sessions for staff throughout the organization.

The Customer Services Department will continue to provide "America's Finest Service for America's Finest City" through:

- Direct interactions with customers through our Citizens' Assistance and Community Service Center programs;
- Work of the City employees and the Customer Service Liaison Network; and
- Creating and Deploying new and exciting training opportunities through the Citywide Training Program.

The Customer Services Department, the Customer Service Liaison Network, and the department Route Slip Coordinators will continue along with all City employees to connect the dots between the needs of the citizens, the services provided by local government, and the high quality service delivery goals of World-Class organizations.

FISCAL CONSIDERATIONS: N/A

PREVIOUS COUNCIL and/or COMMITTEE ACTION: June 15, 2005, City Council Transition Committee, Subject Constituent Services; January 25, 2007, June 6, and September 12, Public Safety & Neighborhood Services Committee, Quarterly Report on Constituent Services.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND PUBLIC OUTREACH EFFORTS: March 15, 2007 Customer Service Summit; June 26, 2007 Customer Service External Committee Meeting,

KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND PROJECTED IMPACTS: Citizens and Employees.

Respectfully Submitted,

Customer Services Director

Deputy Chief Operating Officer

Attachments: FY 2008 First Quarter Report