BLACKLINE CONSULTING

A Higher Standard

Customer Service Review

Municipality of Middlesex Centre

Final Report

December 2022

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/ CONTEXT

The modernization grant focuses our review on identifying efficiency gains and cost savings

Background

In response to the Government of Ontario's Provincial Modernization Grant, the Corporation of the Municipality of Middlesex Centre ("MXC" or "Municipality") received funding to review and modernize its Customer Services. Blackline Consulting ("Blackline" or "we") were contracted to complete the work.

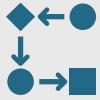
According to Statistics Canada, between 2016 and 2021, there was a 10% increase in the Municipality's population. The number of private dwellings over the same period increased from 6,139 in 2016 to 6,845 in 2021, a 12% increase. A study by Watson & Associates in 2021 for the Municipality estimates an additional population growth of 41% to 87% over the next 25 years. This anticipated growth likely to increase the pressures on the ability of the Municipality to provide effective, efficient customer service to its current and future residents.

Scope

The scope of this review includes four main aspects:

Review current customer service practices

Recommend improvements to the efficiency of existing software platforms



Recommend new policies and procedures

Recommend service delivery improvements

Objective

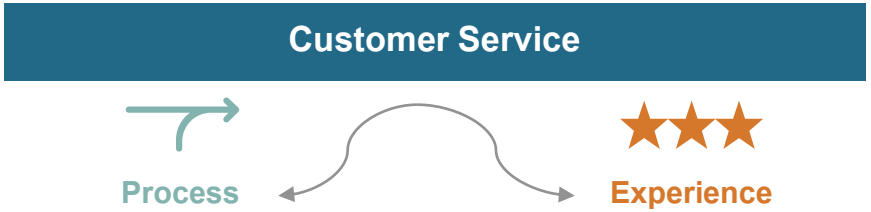
The objective of this document is to provide the Municipality with our analysis and recommendations to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the Municipality's customer services.

Our scope focuses on customer service activities across the Municipality

This report focuses on a subset of all customer interactions

A significant portion of customer interactions involve the direct delivery of municipal services to customers.

- All interactions between staff and customers should offer a consistent customer experience while being mindful of how the service in question dictates the process followed.
- In contrast, a core customer service process involves a set of steps that are well-defined and repeatable across the Municipality.
- An example of this is installing a water meter. The service is installing the water meter, but during the delivery of that service, the Public Works employee should ensure the customer service experience aligns with the Municipality's broader service objectives.
- Whereas the process to book a water meter install should be consistent with booking any other service with the Municipality.



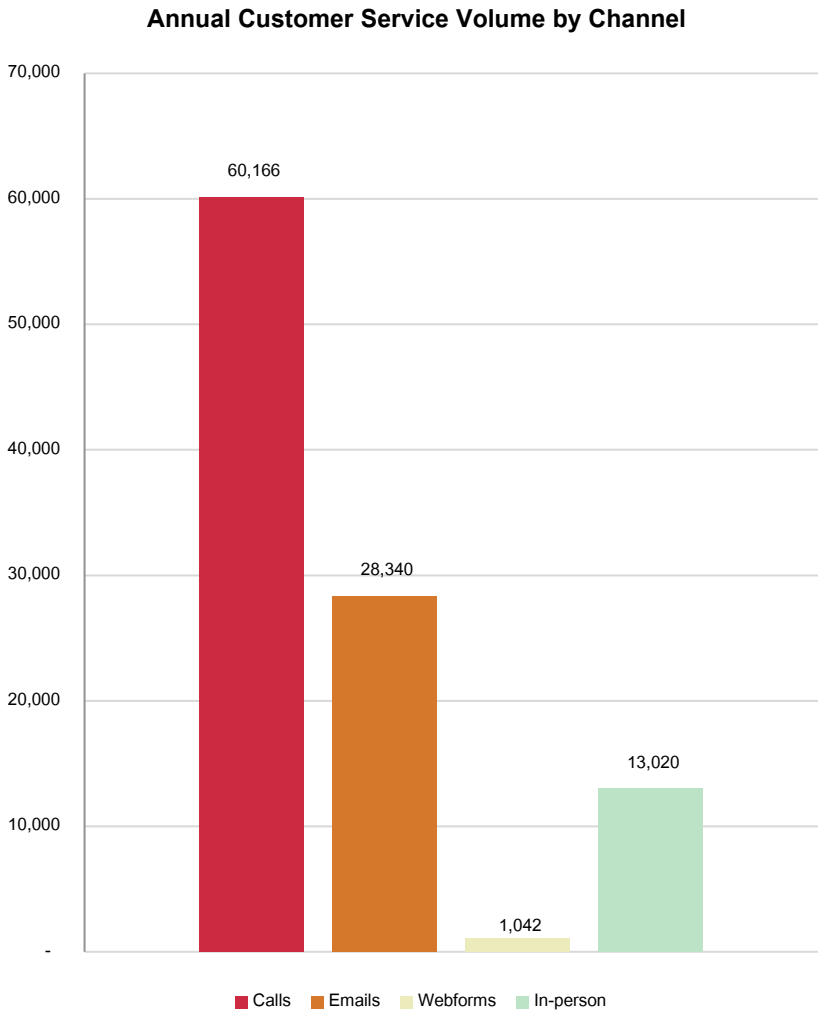
A repeatable set of steps to address the needs of a customer as they relate to information, receiving a service, taking payment or addressing a complaint. It should be largely consistent regardless of whoever and wherever it is delivered across the Municipality.

The characteristics of how customers are treated, anytime they interact with staff at the Municipality. The experience should be consistent for the customer no matter what they are interacting with the Municipality on, however, the process that address their service request, payment or complaint may be different depending on who and where in Middlesex Centre the interaction is taking place.

To assess and quantify the opportunities we need a firm understanding of the customer service demands and effort

Customer Service Demands

- The Municipality has some limitations when it comes to creating a complete picture of customer service demands. Limitations on the data include a lack of precision (e.g. calls and emails are not categorized as being customer-service related) and the scope is not comprehensive (only generic emails were included, not individual staff mailboxes). Nonetheless, we believe that the graph to the right provides a summary of key channel volume.
- Phone calls make up 59% of the total volume of customer interactions. This is double the next channel (email at 28%) and last is webforms only makes up 1% of the total transaction volume. Note that the complexity of webforms varies significantly in complexity, from dog tabs to building permits. See the appendix for further details.
- Given the Municipality's project growth and demographics, the phone service channel can derive significant value for both residents (service effectiveness) and staff (efficiency).
- Achieving this will also require addressing some gaps, specifically, we believe there are three factors:
  - The Municipality does not have a person responsible for customer service across the organization
  - Process steps do not require staff to capture relevant metrics
  - There are system gaps that make it time intensive to capture such metrics
- A deeper analysis into the staffing model, metrics and customer service work drivers will help the visualize customer service within the Municipality.



Note: email data is collected from general email addresses.

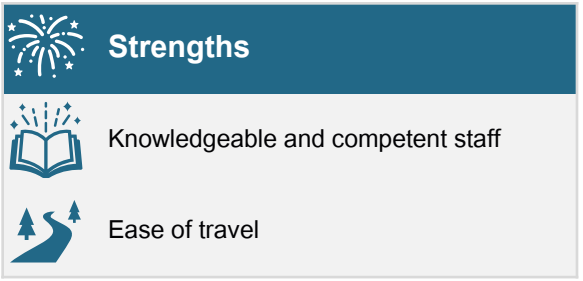
Most respondents are satisfied with customer service at the Municipality

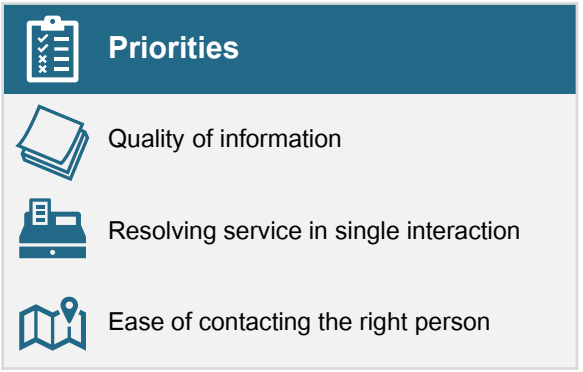
Improve overall customer satisfaction through resolving more service requests in a single interaction, improving the quality of information and making it easier to find the right person

- The results of the customer service survey indicate that respondents are generally very satisfied with the customer service they receive from the Municipality.
- Most respondents are satisfied overall with the customer service they received, and few are unsatisfied. Overall satisfaction is driven mostly by perceptions of knowledgeable and competent staff.

Phone and email are the most common and preferred contact methods to reach the Municipality

- The most common reasons for customer service were paying taxes and utility bills. Respondents' preferred payment methods are bank websites/apps and pre-authorized payments.
- One-third of respondents called or visited the Municipal Office in the past six months, most often by phone. Most agreed the hours of operation are convenient.
- One-third of respondents called or visited the Komoka Wellness Centre in the past six months, most often in-person. Almost all agree it was easy to find where to go, and that it was easy to travel to.
- Two-thirds of respondents have visited the Municipal website in the past six months. Most agree the website is good overall and for finding information.
- Respondents express the most interest in automated emergency alerts, a centralized customer service, and virtual town hall functionality.
- Interest in a municipal mobile app is relatively low. Of potential app functionality, interest is highest for community events and public notices and updates.





/ EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

While residents are generally pleased with customer service, automation and technology are levers that can help improve staff efficiency

Staff provide good Customer Service (CS), but are often reliant on manual processes with limited capability for analysis

Below are key observations from our review.

Email and phone are the channels with the largest volume

- Relatively limited use of webform submissions is an opportunity to increase efficiency and ability to process service requests.
- The Municipality's website does provide the ability to apply for building permits using the Cloudpermit system).
- Customers' most preferred service channels are phone and email, which the Municipality provides. They also express a preference for paying through a bank website or app, or through pre-authorized payments.
- As the Municipality grows, limited self-service options will place a greater burden on staff time.

Customers are broadly satisfied with the service they receive

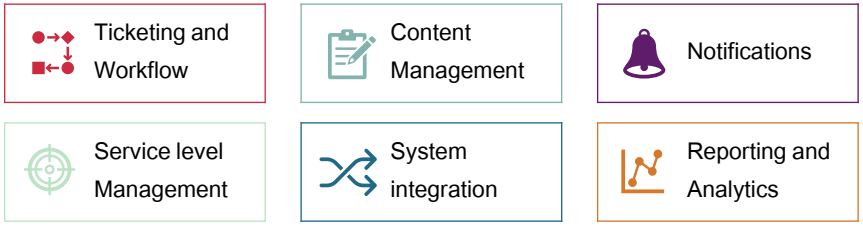
- Staff have a customer service mentality and customers are broadly satisfied with the service they receive from staff. Overall satisfaction is driven by perceptions of knowledgeable and competent staff.
- However, opportunities exist to improve overall satisfaction through resolving more service requests in a single interaction and improving the quality of information and the ease of contacting the right person.

Limited data to support changes to customer services

- The current systems and processes in place limit staff's ability and capacity to analyse service requests by category or to forecast future demand. This makes enhancing the customer experience difficult.
- Customer service process documentation varies between departments. Some areas have shared a knowledge base, while others have nothing.
- Some departments have begun to set customer service standards, however few are documented and monitored.

However, the Municipality may not be ready for a Customer Relationship Management System at this time

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems commonly provide six key functions



The Municipality has some of this functionality today and plans for enhancing / replacing some systems

- The Municipality is working to expand the functionality of Cloudpermit for planning and development applications. This will help improve the customer experience and the ability to track development and planning applications.
- The Municipality is also planning on replacing its accounting system. This may enhance aspects of customer service particularly for property tax and water billing.
- Asset Essentials, the Municipality's asset management system, has web-integrated reporting functions for services. The Municipality plans to manage service requests by leveraging this functionality, with anticipated roll out to the public in 2023.
- The Municipality will be launching BookKing in December 2022 as its new recreational management system. Given the timing of implementation it is not included in this analysis.

Efficient use of a CRM requires integration

Most municipalities will already be using a variety of systems. A CRM will not replace all these systems and therefore it is common to integrate it with key systems (for example):

- Geographic Information System
- Work order and asset management system
- Permitting system
- Recreation system (programs and facility booking)
- Phone system
- Economic development

However, the Municipality has very little integration today

- While the website supports submission through online forms and some other online services (e.g. recreation, parking), there are few integrations with other applications and submissions require manual work by staff to process.
- Lack of integration tends to increase data duplication, manual effort and the likelihood of errors and omissions, e.g. conflicting data in different systems.

Consequently, there is a risk that by adding another system (that has overlapping functionality) without integrating them will result in an under-utilized investment (the CRM system).

We propose a phased implementation of recommendations over three years

A key event will be the result of recommendation #6 and whether a positive business case exists to implement a CRM

Below is a proposed implementation plan. Takes into consideration urgency, dependencies and estimated effort. We recommend that following acceptance of this report, the Municipality commit resources and funding to the recommendations they feel are beneficial, and revise the timeline based on corporate priorities. They should also (where possible) validate the supporting assumptions, develop more detailed implementation plans and create capital projects to implement those recommendations deemed appropriate.

		Relative Timing		
		Year One	Year Two	Year Three
1	Establish Service Standards and Begin Tracking			
2	Enhance CS Training Material			
3	Customer Service Awareness Campaign			
4	Launch an Customer Service Survey			
5	Update County GIS Maps			
6	Go-to-Market CRM / ERP Systems			
7	Update Website			
8	Pilot the use of a Resident Portal			
9	Pilot the use of Robotic Process Automation			
10	Pilot the use of Chatbots / Live Chat			

See Appendix B for details of the potential savings the recommendations may deliver.

/ RECOMMENDATION DETAILS

#1 – Establish Service Standards and Begin Tracking (1/2)

Situation

- The current systems and processes in place limit staff's ability and capacity to analyse service requests by category or to forecast future demand. This makes enhancing the customer experience difficult.
- Some departments have begun to set customer service standards, however few are documented and monitored.

Recommendation

- Establish a set of service standards and measures that each department will track. Provide guidance on how and what to track.
- Assign accountability to collate and review service standards performance.

Actions

Step 1: Identify what is important to the customer when receiving a service

- The Municipality should leverage information from the customer journey map and Blackline's assessment to determine customers expected outcomes from interaction with the Municipality i.e. understand what the customers want. Some of this information includes:
  - Minimum expected wait times
  - Minimum number of interactions the customer needs to complete
  - Maximum number of forms the customer expects to fill etc.

Step 2: Create service standards

- After determining what is important to the customer, the Municipality should gather a list of potential metrics that align to the service. For example: Response times (e.g. resolving a request, answering a phone, etc.), hours of availability or the number of times a request has been transferred to another department.
- Determine hours of operations for customer service. Residents were generally satisfied with current hours of service, though providing longer customer service hours of operation through a four day workweek or other scheduling pattern have the potential to reduce internal costs.
- We recommend that the Municipality start with a few common metrics first to get accustomed to them and focus on responsiveness and resolution.

Step 3: Create an expectation or objective for that measure

- Having set the service standard, the Municipality now needs to set an expectation. The two key inputs will be – what customers want and what the Municipality can deliver. As such, the Municipality should start measuring the service standards without an objective to gain enough data on the current objective. For example, on average how quickly a request is resolved. Using this information establish an expectation. Over time the Municipality can improve this and gather data from customers to understand their expectation and the gap.

#1 – Establish Service Standards and Begin Tracking (2/2)

Step 4: Determine how best to track service standards

- The Municipality should investigate the extent that its existing tools can be used to not only track and report on service standards. For instance, the Municipality should leverage its systems to track the date and time of actionable customer feedback and the length of time to close it. Another example is tracking the wait time on the phone.

Step 5: Establish monitoring and reporting on performance

- The Municipality should also identify a person responsible for monitoring and reporting on service standard performance across the Municipality. This individual will be a single point across the organization that is accountable for customer service e.g. Customer Success. Based on our understanding, the Director of Corporate Services should be responsible for this corporate-wide function until sufficient work volume exists for the responsibility to be assigned to a dedicated staff position.
- Establish a process for collecting and presenting this information. This process should include information such as frequency of running and presenting reports, process of reporting on issues etc.

Benefits

- Better alignment between Municipality services and customer expectations.
- The Municipality will be able to evidence its value and customer service.
- Department will be able to improve their ability to measure performance.

Cost

- We assume the Municipality will be able to complete this initiative with internal resources.

Key Assumptions

- Onetime effort to create and rollout the service standards will involve 18hrs of effort. Tracking will use an Excel template.
- Ongoing effort will include 1hr / week for each of the 8.65 FTEs involve in customer service today.
- Collating reports will occur quarterly with an addition 2hrs / department head.

#2 – Enhance CS Training Material (1/2)

Situation

- While Corporate Services currently has a training program for new staff, the Municipality does not have a CS policy, therefore departments may provide customer service to different standards.
- Currently, the Municipality does not have a CS policy and training mostly occurs via shadowing senior staff and a binder of procedures for reference.

Recommendation

- Revise CS training program to be periodic and revise CS material and procedures binder.

Actions

Step 1: Develop knowledge articles / decision-trees

- Revise the CS procedures to include knowledge articles (how-to) for handling the various inquiries, complaints and service requests. Provide decision-trees for staff to be able to consistently handle calls / emails. This content should be available internally for staff to easily access (e.g. HRIS site, network drive, SharePoint site). Ideally this would be searchable, so staff are able to find the information quickly.
- Annually the Municipality should review the knowledge articles and decision-trees to ensure they are accurate and up to date.

Step 2: Develop additional CS training material

- The Municipality will also need training material that covers the new CS policy and procedures. This should include a material for onboarding staff as well as an annual refresh for all staff. Ideally the training material will be available via in person training, videos and documentation. This will help ensure the various staff members have access to the material.

Step 3: Rollout CS training program

- In addition to the knowledge articles and decision-trees staff will also need training on the new CS policy, procedures, staff code of conduct and customer code of conduct. The Municipality should provide staff with the necessary training, for example, staff from all departments should undergo CS policy training annually and as part of onboarding processes so they are aware. Other staff that are directly involved with customer service on a regular basis should undergo more detailed training as it relates to procedures, knowledge articles and services standards (see Recommendation #1).
- The Municipality should consider using basic testing for staff that are more highly involved in customer service to ensure they meet minimum knowledge standards.

#2 – Enhance CS Training Material (2/2)

Benefits

- By improving the quality of the material, staff will be more efficient in delivering customer service.
- Training all staff on the new CS policy will help ensure they understand the staff / customer code of conduct and what to do if there are any issues.

Cost

- We assume the Municipality will be able to complete this initiative with internal resources with no additional expense, however staff time will need to be allocated, as below.

Key Assumptions

- The Municipality will be able to create the training content (documentation, videos, etc.) using existing software and tools and current staff time.
- We assume each staff member will need to undertake 0.5hrs of training annual on customer services. In addition, the 8.65 FTEs that are directly involved in customer service will require an additional 2hrs per year in training.

#3 – Customer Service Awareness Campaign (1/2)

Situation

- Unlike other businesses (e.g. banking, commerce, etc.) that use their website as a main customer channel, many residents may not visit the Municipal site often or perform the same transaction regularly. This means that residents may not be aware of changes on where to find information or how to complete transactions.
- In addition, our analysis indicates that most of the customer interaction is on the phone or email.

Recommendation

- Develop a communications marketing campaign to deliver targeted messaging to improve residents' awareness of customer services.

Actions

Step 1: Determine campaign scope and objectives

- Our analysis indicates several potential campaigns each with a different objective. They include:
  - General awareness of pending changes to customer service (see Recommendations #2, and #6, #10)
  - Targeted customer segments, to convert residents to e-billing, or increase the use of online payments

Step 1: Continued

- There are other potential awareness campaigns. The Municipality should use the output from a biannual customer service survey as a source for other ideas.
- Management should then prioritize the list of campaigns.

Step 2: Develop campaign content

- Working across departments the Municipality should develop the campaign content, use of medias (social media, paper, phone, physical locations). If necessary, the Municipality can leverage third parties to help them develop the content or graphics (depending on the campaign).

Step 3: Launch campaigns and measure performance

- Once the campaign is approved, the Municipality should monitor progress, communication channels and seek input from residents as to whether it is helpful information and any ideas for improvement.
- Once the campaign closes, the Municipality should summarize the results of the campaign. Key measures include, number of residents contacted, their perception (before and after) and whether they noticed an improvement based on the objective.

#3 – Customer Service Awareness Campaign (2/2)

Benefits

- Campaigns can help raise awareness and adoption of changes to customer service.
- Input from residents can help improve rollout of future customer service changes.
- Raising awareness will provide residents with an easier, more effective service experience, potentially reducing call volume, emails and / or complaints.

Cost

- We assume the Municipality will be able to complete this initiative with internal resources and no additional expense.

Key Assumptions

- The Municipality will be able to gather feedback regarding the effectiveness of each campaign.
- The Municipality will assign a staff member accountability for overseeing the campaigns.
- There will be a campaign each year with a different scope / objective.

#4 – Launch a Customer Satisfaction Survey (1/2)

Situation

- The Municipality's Complaint Handling Policy is its main form of formal customer feedback collection. Beyond this however, the Municipality does not currently have a comprehensive method of gauging customer satisfaction across the Municipality.

Recommendation

- Introduce an online biannual customer satisfaction survey. Track the results over time.

Actions

Step 1: Draft a customer satisfaction survey

- Corporate Services should review customer satisfaction surveys at peer municipalities to get a sense of the standard questions to include.
- Draft the customer satisfaction survey and present it to the department directors and CAO for comment.
- Collect and incorporate the feedback from these stakeholders.
- Next, the Municipality should distribute the survey amongst staff with duties focused on customer service for any final comments they might have.

Step 2: Launch the survey online and promote it

- Launch the survey online, ensure it is readily accessible from the website's homepage. Make sure it is mobile device friendly.
- Promote the launch of the survey using a variety of channels such as:
  - Social media (website, Facebook, Twitter)
  - Email residents
  - Include a link to the survey in any newsletters that go out
  - Post written materials about the survey at the Municipal Office and recreation centres
  - Town hall events
  - Remind staff answering the phones

Step 3: Collect survey results, analyze and present findings

- After the survey period is over, compile and analyze survey results. Corporate Services will want to establish beforehand what this analysis will entail. The general quantification of customer satisfaction is a starting point. But department specific data points and detailed customer feedback will be invaluable.
- Present these findings to management and create a list of actions – either further investigation into certain trends or actions to improve customer satisfaction. This action should (where possible) align with the reporting from Recommendation #1.
- Prepare a presentation to Council of the survey results and action plan.

#4 – Launch a Customer Satisfaction Survey (2/2)

Benefits

- Satisfaction surveys can help measure year over year improves and changes in resident perception.

Cost

- We assume the Municipality will be able to complete this initiative with internal resources with no additional expense.

Key Assumptions

- There will be sufficient resident interest in the survey to collect a representative number of responses.

#5 – Update County GIS Maps (1/1)

Situation

- Analysis indicates that staff respond to repetitive inquiries from customers regarding zoning, while zoning data is available on the County's website.

Recommendation

- Improve accessibility of zoning information.

Actions

Step 1: Work with the County to regularly update the maps

- Building Services should work with the County Planners to identify areas of inaccuracy on the Municipal zoning maps. Update the maps accordingly.

Step 2: Improve accessibility of zoning data to the public

- Next, the Municipality should work with County IT to regularly update the web GIS with zoning changes and include plain language descriptions and relevant links to Municipal bylaws.

Step 3: Direct customers to the newly available zoning data

- Make announcements about the update on social media and on the Municipal website.
- When customers contact Building Services with zoning questions, refer them to the GIS maps.

Benefits

- Building inspectors will need to field fewer zoning questions.

Cost

- We assume the Municipality will be able to complete this initiative with internal resources with no additional expense.

Key Assumptions

- As we do not have data around the number of zoning questions the Municipality receives, we assume that the volume is impactful.
- 2-3% of Building complaints / inquiries and address changes area a result of customers unable to find zoning information.

#6 – Go to Market for a CRM / ERP Systems (1/2)

Situation

- The Municipality does not have a CRM, staff have been predominantly tracking customer service requests in spreadsheets, which adds manual effort, limits data analysis.
- In addition, we understand that the Municipality has reasonable functional system coverage that in some cases have CRM type functionality e.g. Cloudpermit. However, the Municipality is planning on replacing its accounting system in the near future.

Recommendation

- As the Municipality goes to market for replacing its accounting system expand the scope to include software suites that also have CRM functionality.

Actions

Step 1: Gather requirements

- Collect requirements for replacing the accounting system. The main functionality should include (but limited to):
  - Key ERP processes include: utility and tax billing / payment, accounts payable / receivable, financial reporting
- In addition, gather CRM requirements such as service request tracking, customer history, self service tools.
- Define CRM integration requirements (See System Implications section).

Step 2: Create an RFP and go to market

- Create an RFP and go to market in line with the Municipality's procurement guidelines / bylaws. Ensure the RFP includes CRM requirements and a request that respondents (where possible) highlight their products ability to provide CRM functionality. In the event the vendor does not have CRM functionality the RFP should provide the option for respondents to co-bid with a CRM vendor.
- The priority should be on the accounting system but a preference for respondents that can cover both the Municipality's accounting and CRM needs.

Step 3: Evaluate and select a vendor

- Evaluate vendor proposals. This work will require input from a variety of stakeholders – staff, senior management and County IT.
- Select the vendor who scores highest as per the evaluation criteria.

Step 4: Create a business case for implementing a CRM

- Based on the findings from vendor evaluation the Municipality should create a business case for acquiring a CRM.
- At this stage the Municipality will need to answer a critical question: is a standalone CRM system worth acquiring? It will be vital to bear in the mind any overlaps in functionality that it would be best to avoid.

#6 – Go to Market for a CRM / ERP Systems (2/2)

Step 5: Select the system that best meets the organization's needs

- Finally, the Municipality should select the software product that best meets its needs. It will be important to coordinate with County IT on implementation. Having a strong understanding of the way the new system(s) will integrate with the Municipality's broader application architecture will be important at this stage.

Benefits

- Performing a joint RFP process (accounting / CRM) will reduce the staff effort (in comparison to two separate RFPs). It will also help the Municipality ensure key integrations between their new accounting system and CRM exists.
- For accounting processes such as registration for e-billing, tax and water payments staff will see a significant boost in efficiency with a more supportive system that reduces the manual intervention required.
- For customer service processes staff will be able to better meet customer needs with access to customer history, service request status etc.

Cost

- There will be onetime expenses for the procurement, setup, configuration and training/rollout of the CRM (assuming a positive business case).
- In addition, there will be ongoing licensing fees for the CRM software. See the System Implications section of this report for more details.

Key Assumptions

- We assume the Municipality has the resources to perform step 1-5, though implementation will require additional resources and staff effort.
- If a positive business case for the CRM does not exist, the Municipality will still be able to move forward with replacing the accounting system.

#7 – Update Website (1/2)

Situation

- Currently the website provides a source of information for customers, however our analysis suggest that there is relatively limited use of webform submissions. This is an opportunity to increase efficiency and ability to process service requests.

Recommendation

- Revise the website to enhance its ability to provide more self-service functionality.

Actions

Step 1: Collate list website changes and prioritize

- Our analysis indicates the following changes to the website would be beneficial:
  - Building Services webpage: Revise Building Services webpage to include contact details of other municipalities at the top of the page (rather than a hyperlink to the table). Consider also providing pricing as a web page / drop down rather than in a PDF.
  - Use online forms in areas like license applications. A service request system to intake these forms would cut out manual data duplication work.
  - Implement a self-service booking system so that rental bookings are contained in a single intake stream

Step 1: Continued

  - Design website with search navigation in mind. Search engines place more weight on the words contained in higher level heading tags (BC Ministry of Citizens' Services, 2022). Review written materials on the website with a focus on creating webpages based on descriptive content, especially descriptive page titles and section headings.
  - Instead of different webforms (e.g. for "Report a Concern", and "Compliments and Complaints") and by-law complaints, create one dynamic form that uses branching and skip logic present relevant fields and information based on the customer issue.

Step 2: Engage web designer

- In addition, the Municipality should consult with a web designer to review the click-thrus and current website set up.
- Determine the extent of the changes to the website, and ensure that the current website will support additional functionality. If a new website is required, more effort and costs will be incurred, although designing a new website could provide integration with a hybrid municipal app (see below).

Step 3: Establish trigger points for webform creation

- Lastly, the web redesign should also consider how best to use webforms versus PDFs for submitting information (e.g. request forms). This should include setting an annual volume number at which specific PDF forms are updated as webforms.

#7 – Update Website (2/2)

Step 4: Update website

- The Municipality, County IT and the web designer should work together to make the agreed changes. Initially the web designer should create a list of the for the website updates changes and mock-ups for major changes, such as revised mobile functionality. Once approved, the web designer can begin making the changes or begin fleshing out the new website if that is the route the Municipality takes.
- The Municipality and County IT will then test to ensure the changes are appropriate and in good working order.
- Prior to launching the website, the Municipality may wish to pilot some of the new functionality with the public.

Step 5: Launch website and monitor results

- Once ready, the Municipality should launch the updated website and monitor its use. Where possible, report on the impact of the changes.

Benefits

- Diverting volume from phone calls / emails will help reduce staff effort.
- Provide a more robust customer service to residents.

Cost

- There will be additional expenses to the Municipality including:
  - Onetime expenses for the website updates
- Additionally, there will be a need for internal resources to assist throughout the steps (1-4).

Key Assumptions

- The focus of the redesign is on quick wins to improve self-service / content. Larger more expensive changes, such as a new website altogether, should wait until a second phase after the Municipality decides on whether to proceed with a CRM solution.

#8 – Pilot the use of a Resident Portal (1/2)

Situation

- Excluding recent activity such as the rollout of Cloudpermit for Building Services, there is a limited ability for residents and customers to access their information, and request and access municipal services online.

Recommendation

- Pilot the use of a resident portal with a segment of Municipal customers. Based on the pilot's success, rollout the portal to all customers and extend its functionality.

Actions

Step 1: Gather requirements for a resident portal

- Collect requirements for the portal. The main functionality should include being able to book a timeslot with a particular department, create and track a service request (this will vary across departments), the ability to receive notifications from the portal and being able to pay for related service.
- Include requirements around privacy, data storage and accessibility.

Step 2: Create an RFP and go to market

- Create an RFP and go to market in line with the Municipality's procurement guidelines / bylaws. Ensure that the RFP includes specifications around integration between the vendor's solution and relevant municipal systems.
- The scope of this RFP should also clearly state that it is for a pilot program and its use is dependent on the success of it.

Step 3: Evaluate and select a vendor

- Evaluate vendor proposals. This work will require input from a variety of stakeholders – staff, senior management and County IT.
- Select the vendor who scores highest as per the evaluation criteria.

Step 4: Configure the resident portal

- Working with the vendor and County IT, to configure the portal. The Municipality should select two-three use cases to be able to test the viability of the product. The configuration should focus on those use cases. A key component of the configuration should include:
  - The ability for customers to use smartphones and the web
  - Integration with any key systems the Municipality has to log and track a service request
  - The functionality of the portal should work with low bandwidth
- Working with the same stakeholders, the Municipality will go through a beta version of the portal for feedback before proceeding to the next stage.

#8 – Pilot the use of a Resident Portal (2/2)

Step 5: Pilot the resident portal

- The Municipality should work with the vendor to set clear goals for the pilot. This will include a set length of time for the pilot, expectations for functionality, and a target for number of users onboarded.
- Roll the application out to a set number of users and perform the pilot study. Be certain to arrange formal feedback mechanisms.

Step 6: Create a business case for Municipality-wide rollout

- Informed by the pilot results, the Municipality should create a business case for using the portal across other services and allowing any customers to use it.
- At this stage it will be valuable to gain insight on the experience of staff in responding to customer needs as they feed in through the portal.

Step 7: Rollout portal

- Assuming a positive business case the Municipality should roll out the resident portal across Middlesex Centre and promote its use.
- It will be important to survey customers who participated in the pilot to refine the portal's features. Staff experiences will be critical too, any feedback they have can be leveraged to align work processes with the new channel of service access.

Benefits

- Self-service will eliminate manual effort for staff such as responding to inquiries about request status, data re-entry and data collection / metric tracking.

Cost

- There will be additional expenses to the Municipality including:
  - Onetime expenses for the setup and configuration of the portal
  - Onetime expense to train staff
  - Ongoing software licensing and hosting fees
- Additionally, there will be a need for internal resources to assist throughout the steps (1-7).

Key Assumptions

- The Municipality has gone to market for a CRM system and has not acquired a product that includes a resident self-service portal.
- Building and Clerk services will be most impacted.

#9 – Pilot the use of Robotic Process Automation (1/2)

Situation

- Currently, there is very little workflow automation with respect to customer service at the Municipality. In addition, the Municipality's IT Master Plan highlights several use cases for using Robotic Process Automation (RPA) to automate certain process activities.

Recommendation

- Use RPA to automate workflows for common customer service processes.

Actions

Step 1: Gather CS use cases

- The scope of the pilot should focus on specific use cases that will help the Municipality with current manual CS activities. Based on our analysis there are several areas that could be candidates for RPA:
  - Inputting emails into an Excel workbook for tracking purposes
  - Inputting data from emails / files into systems (e.g. service requests from a web form into a work order system)
  - Collating CS metrics into a monthly report

Step 2: Select an RPA platform

- Given the Municipality's use of Microsoft products it should consider using Microsoft's RPA product. This will help the speed to which the Municipality can pilot the use of RPA.
- Once selected IT should undergo some RPA training to ensure they are able to develop appropriate RPA scripts.
- Finally, IT will need to install the software, so it is able to learn the RPA platform and train.

Step 3: Perform RPA pilot

- From Step 1, the Municipality should have a list of process improvement areas to use as a basis for selection. Once selected, IT should work with the appropriate stakeholders to document the current process steps, then assess to what extent the RPA platform and automate those activities.
- IT should then begin developing RPA scripts to automate the in-scope activities and determine its feasibility. To test its feasibility, we recommend a dual run approach – performing the process with no change and concurrently running it using the RPA platform and checking the results. For processes where there is a successful pilot, the Municipality should continue to step 4, otherwise it should capture the reasons for the pilot's failure in case factors change in the future.

#9 – Pilot the use of Robotic Process Automation (2/2)

Step 4: Create a business case for Municipality-wide rollout

- Informed by the pilot results, the Municipality should create a business case for using RPA across other areas. The case should quantify the benefits (compare the current process time, effort, etc.) to the pilot results. This will serve as a baseline on the impact of the change.

Step 5: Rollout RPA

- Assuming a positive business case the Municipality should roll out RPA for other user cases. The rollout should include documenting the new process activities (using RPA tool), ensure appropriate training to staff occurs and roll out the change once the staff are ready.
- Over a set period (determined based on the frequency of using the RPA scripts), IT and the involved staff should monitor the processing closely to ensure it is operating correctly and where necessary make adjustments.

Benefits

- Reduce staff time / effort to complete tasks.
- Completes activities in a consistent business rule driven approach.

Cost

- There will be additional licensing costs for the RPA product as well as training for staff and IT to develop and test the scripts.

Key Assumptions

- The Municipality has gone to market for a CRM system and has not acquired a product leaving many of the customer service tasks still manual.
- The RPA platform can be used for non-customer service-related processes also e.g. accounting, HR, etc.
- Clerk, Community Services and Corporates Services effort would be most impacted by the automation of CS activities.

#10 – Pilot the use of Chatbots / Live Chat (1/2)

Situation

- Currently the main channel for customer service is phone and email. While data is not available to determine the amount that is complex requests / inquiries managing phone calls and email can be time consuming. Emails can also lead to back and forth.
- Additionally, the Municipality's average age is in their early 40s and tend to be technology literate.

Recommendation

- Pilot the use of a chat system on the Municipality's website and promoting its use will divert call and email volume and reduce staff time.

Actions

Step 1: Gather requirements

- Work with IT and the various departments to develop a set of chat requirements (both functional and technical). Key requirements should include its ability to provide both a chatbot and live chat functionality.
- Ideally integration with the Municipality's collaboration systems (e.g. phone system, internal chat, file storage).

Step 2: Create an RFP and go to market

- Create an RFP and go to market in line with the Municipality's procurement guidelines / bylaws.
- The scope of this RFP should also clearly state that it is for a pilot program and its use is dependent on the success of it.

Step 3: Evaluate and select a vendor

- Evaluate vendor proposals. This work will require input from a variety of stakeholders – staff, senior management and County IT.
- Select the vendor who scores highest as per the evaluation criteria.

Step 4: Configure the chatbot system

- Working with the vendor and County IT, configure the chatbot. The configuration should focus on:
  - Activating the chat system to connect residents with municipal staff on the Municipality's website or through a mobile app, and
  - Implementing a business rules-based AI chat system to answer and divert common inquiries or issues from being handled manually.
- The live chat system should be implemented first. Strategies for ensuring use may include adding a prominent button or link to the chat system on the front page of the Municipality's website.
- Working with the same stakeholders, the Municipality will go through a beta version of the chat system for feedback before proceeding to the next stage.

#10 – Pilot the use of Chatbots / Live Chat (2/2)

Step 5: Pilot the chat system

- The Municipality should work with the vendor to set clear goals for the pilot. This will include a set length of time for the pilot, expectations for functionality, and a target for customer chats to complete.
- Roll the chat system out to a set number of customers and perform the pilot study. Be certain to arrange formal feedback mechanisms.

Step 6: Create a business case for Municipality-wide rollout

- Informed by the pilot results, the Municipality should create a business case for using the chat system (including the AI) across other services and allowing any customers to use it.
- At this stage it will be valuable to gain insight on the experience of staff in responding to customer needs as they use the live chat or chatbot.

Step 7: Rollout chat system

- Assuming a positive business case the Municipality should roll out the chat system. This may occur in two phases, the first focusing on the live chat and the second the chatbot. This phased approach may be required to ensure the chatbot has sufficient data / information to appropriately address customer inquiries.
- It will be important to survey customers who participate in the pilot to refine the features. Staff experiences will also be critical, any feedback they have can be leveraged to align work processes with the new channel of service access.

Benefits

- Live chat allows a staff member to manage several customer requests at one time.
- Chatbots can operate 24/7 and scale quickly.
- Chatbots provide additional language coverage.

Cost

- There will be additional ongoing expenses for the chat software (licensing) as well as onetime expense to setup and configure the software.

Key Assumptions

- The Municipality has gone to market for a CRM system and has not acquired a product that includes a live chat / chatbots.
- Based on experience with other municipalities' live chat and chatbot systems, achievable time savings range to 10%-20%.
- The Municipality will be able to leverage decision-tree information from Recommendation #2 to help guide the Artificial Intelligence (AI).

/ SYSTEM IMPLICATIONS

This section focuses on how technology will figure into the Municipality's future delivery of customer service

Technology is a key component to modern service delivery

The Municipality recognizes the importance of technology as seen in its recent IT Master Plan and also through this review. Technology will be an enabler for the Municipality to provide efficient services as it grows in population.

- For Middlesex Centre's customer an effective digital process means that irrespective of what service they are accessing, they can begin and complete that process entirely online.
  - There is a single-entry point by which customers request the service they need.
  - The status of a service request is automatically updated throughout the process, cutting down on customer uncertainty and inquiries concerning their request.
- For staff, an efficient digital process means reducing the amount of manual intervention required to meet customer needs.
  - Staff do not need to re-input customer data from a source into the system required to complete the process.
  - The tools staff need to provide service are accessible and reliable: customer history, up to date knowledge articles, clearly defined workflows.

Keystone is a critical system across for Municipal staff

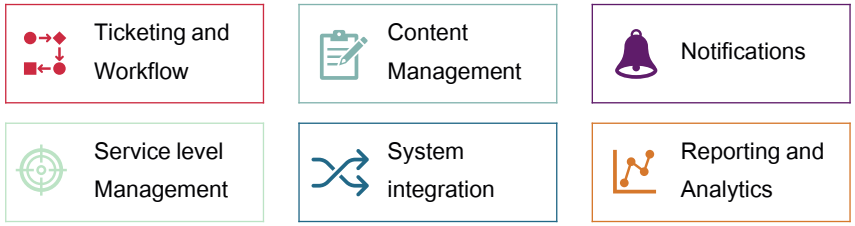
- Middlesex Centre wishes to understand its options to integrate Keystone with any CRM system it acquires. If this is not possible, the Municipality is looking for information on what ERP system support exists with other CRM software.
- We have written this section conscious of the Municipality's IT Master Plan that recommends replacing Keystone.

Based on our research the extent to which Keystone can integrate with a modern CRM is limited

- Blackline was not able to find information regarding Keystones integration capabilities (in general and specific to any CRM).

The Municipality may not be ready for a CRM at this time

CRM systems commonly provide six key functions



The Municipality has some of this functionality today and plans for enhancing / replacing some systems

- The Municipality is working to expand the functionality of Cloudpermit. This will help improve the customer experience and the ability to track development and planning applications.
- The Municipality is also planning on replacing its accounting system. This may enhance aspects of customer service particularly for property tax and water billing.
- Asset Essentials, the Municipality's asset management system, has web-integrated reporting functions for services. Middlesex Centre plans to manage service requests by leveraging this functionality, with anticipated roll out to the public in 2023.

Efficient use of a CRM requires integration

Most municipalities will already be using a variety of systems. A CRM will not replace all these systems and therefore it is common to integrate it with key systems (for example):

- Geographic Information System
- Work order and asset management system
- Permitting system
- Recreation system (programs and facility booking)
- Phone system
- Economic development

However, the Municipality has very little integration today

- While the website supports submission through online forms and some other online services (e.g. recreation, parking), there are few integrations with other applications and submissions require manual work by staff to process.
- Lack of integration tends to increase data duplication, manual effort and the likelihood of errors and omissions, e.g. conflicting data in different systems.

Consequently, there is a risk that by adding another system (that has overlapping functionality) without integrating them will result in an under-utilized investment (the CRM system).

There are hundreds of CRM solutions

While we cannot assess them all, we have complied a list of CRM solutions using three criteria

- Evaluation companies such as Gartner Software Advice PC Magazine and Software Connect ranking.
- The public sector (Federal, State, Provincial, Local government) in North America are known to use.
- Your peers are using them.

The table to the right lists the CRM vendors (alphabetically) by source with a summary of the most commonly reoccurring.

Gartner	Software Advice	PC Magazine	Software Connect	Peer Analysis
► Appian ► Cherwell ► Creatio ► CRMNEXT ► eGain ► Freshworks ► Microsoft ► Oracle ► Pegasystems ► Salesforce ► SAP ► SugarCRM ► Verint Systems ► Zendesk ► ZOHO CRM	► Capsule ► Microsoft ► FreeAgent CRM ► Gold-Vision CRM ► Less Annoying CRM ► Method CRM ► Nutshell ► OpenCRM ► Really Simple Systems CRM ► Solve CRM ► ZOHO CRM	► Act! CRM ► Apptivo CRM ► Freshsales CRM ► Insightly CRM ► Less Annoying CRM ► Pipedrive CRM ► Salesflare ► Salesforce ► SugarCRM ► Zendesk ► ZOHO CRM	► AdaptCRM ► Aptean CRM ► BOA CRM ► FiO CRM ► InfoFlo ► Infor ► Maximizer CRM ► Results CRM ► Sage CRM ► Salesforce ► SAP ► SugarCRM ► ZOHO CRM	► AlphaKOR Group ► Freshworks ► Infor ► Microsoft ► MuniPaaS ► Oracle ► Salesforce ► Verint Systems ► Zendesk

Most Common Vendors*

- ZOHO CRM (4)
- Salesforce (4)
- Zendesk (3)
- Microsoft (3)

*Includes the top reoccurring vendors from the sources listed

CRMs can also come as part of a suite

CRM solutions fall into two categories; stand-alone and suites

- Suites typically provide a range of functionality. They can cover finance / accounting, human resources, asset management, work orders, etc. In many cases these solutions are module by design, so that organizations can choose to opt-in or out on certain functionality and avoid higher licensing fees.
- Stand-alone are the complete opposite, they focus purely on CRM functionality.

Both categories have pros and cons. While not always the case, it commonly comes down to an debate over efficiency versus effectiveness:

	Pros	Cons
Suites 	**More efficient for an organization:** - Avoids custom integration, easier data flow and workflow within the suite - Provides basic CRM functionality - less effort to setup - Reduce overall employee training – similar look / feel - Can help achieve better pricing (scale of economies)	- Smaller market and likely trade-off will occur on functionality - Typically more rigid /difficult to customize - May not provide advanced functionality - Requires greater coordination / governance on decision-making within the organization (e.g. changes and releases)
Stand-alone 	**More effective for an organization:** - Larger market and variety of solutions to select from - Provides advanced CRM functionality - More flexible for customization / configuration - Easier decision-making and managing upgrades	- Can lead to expensive integration - Can create a more fragmented application architecture for IT to manage and sustain

The following page provides an overview of some suites that have CRM functionality.

/ CRM MARKET ANALYSIS

We structure our CRM product analysis by common functionality

Common Functionality	Description
Reporting and Analytics	Generate reports, dashboards and ability to analyze data to identify trends and see impact of changes.
Ticketing and Workflow	Create tasks and / or tickets to manage requests. Automate activities such as approvals, notifications assigning tickets using workflow.
Content Management	Create, approve, organize, and share content easily with various stakeholders – creators, agents, customers.
System Integration	The ability to integrate with core systems the Municipality uses, its phone system and website.
Service Level Management	Set deadlines for ticket response and resolution based on different business hours or categories.
Notifications	Notify customers and agents automatically.

Salesforce provides a suite of services, ZOHO includes integration with key systems

The following provides an overview of the key sales features of each product*. Please note these have not been audited or validated by Blackline Consulting.

Product & Vendor	Overview
ZOHO CRM	▸ ZOHO's drag-and-drop interface editor allows users to customize their CRM interface. ▸ From the Marketplace tab administrators can access ZOHO's library of app integrations including partners like Microsoft 365. ▸ Centralize customer communications across a various communication channels. ▸ Manage emails to residents with complete history of your correspondence. ▸ The ability to set different data permission levels across ZOHO's modules can be leveraged to create customer self service portals. ▸ ZOHO's AI powered analytics platform drives analysis of customer trends.
Service Cloud	▸ Gartner ranks Salesforce as a leader for CRM solutions, it is also in use by other municipalities. ▸ The system's features are relative customable and are usually catered to the municipal and public sector needs. Typically used it for client management, donor management, service requests, and employee tracking. ▸ Service cloud helps with ticketing requests, case management, and can also integrate with your phone system and build associated reports. ▸ Connect every channel with a platform for consistent, convenient service. Omni-channel customer experience. ▸ Ability to unlock legacy customer data for a unified, 360-degree customer view (self service). ▸ Adapt service to business needs quickly. ▸ Ability to preform reporting and analytics.

*Information is from publicly available sources

Dynamics 365 includes a broad scope of suite features, Zendesk offers built-in live chat feature, not all CRMs do

The following provides an overview of the key sales features of each product*. Please note these have not been audited or validated by Blackline Consulting.

Product & Vendor	Overview
MS Dynamics 365 	Microsoft Dynamics 365 is suite providing a range of functional services and is used by other municipalities. ► Finance and Operations: budget planning tools, custom financial reporting tools which can pull from work in Excel and Power BI, dashboard of key performance indicators with customizable display, handle payments and approvals. ► Human Resources: employee self-service tool, training and certification tracking, connect to payroll, manage vacations, compensation and benefits, utilize analytics tools to leverage your HR data. ► Field Service: resident self-scheduling and post service surveys, mobile application with offline access to bookings, work orders and assets, access to resident data and maps, scheduling tools for dispatchers. ► Supply Chain Management: the asset management module allows for standard features around maintaining assets, creating work orders and work order reports, forecasting preventative maintenance, integrate with finance and operations application.
Zendesk 	► Seamless channel integration, Zendesk Support allows your customers to connect with you through web or mobile, or start a conversation directly through email, Facebook, Twitter, or any other channel you want. ► Ticket forms that can create multiple support request forms that show a unique set of ticket fields, making it easy for your agents to know what kind of support your customers need. Also, create conditional & custom ticket fields. ► SLA views let your team easily see SLA status and avoid breaches. Apply them based on the conditions you set and then track metrics to the minute. ► Performance Dashboards and Custom Reports. ► Customizable and configurable to meet your needs.

*Information is from publicly available sources


/ CRM INTEGRATION

A stand-alone CRM solution may require significant resources to achieve desirable levels of integration

There are two aspects of integration the Municipality should think about as it considers a CRM solution

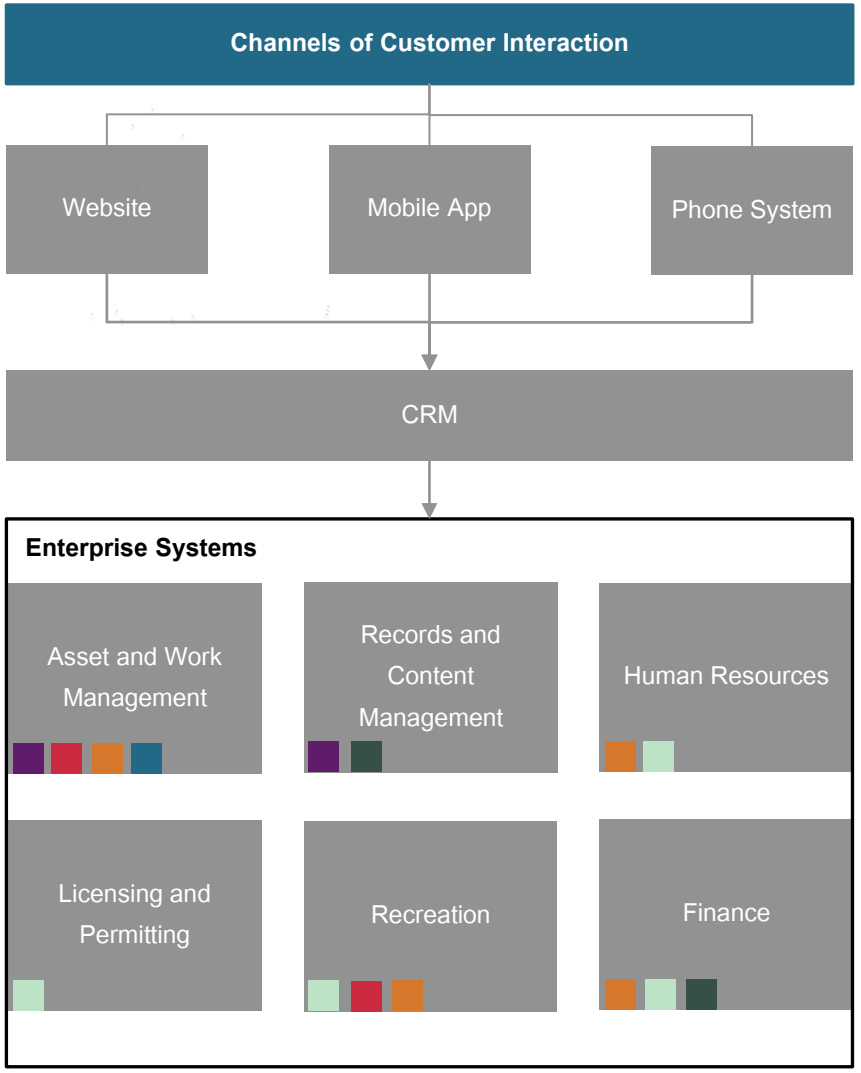
- The Municipality's current ability to integrate and share data
- The benefits of integrating a CRM with other Municipality systems / data that comes through various customer channels. Given that the Municipality is considering a CRM solution, the categories of data for sharing may include:

Type of Data	# of System Potentially Using
Location	5
Asset characteristics	4
Financials	4
Personal details	1
Service requests	2
Property details	3

To the right we illustrate the potential for data sharing between the CRM solution and other Municipality systems.

An additional complication of integration is the frequency of updates

Organizations will have less control over the timing of upgrades. This needs to considered for the ongoing maintenance and cost of ownership.



In addition to Keystone, we believe integration is crucial for a CRM system to meet the Municipality's needs

If the Municipality is to continue using Keystone, it will want to maximize the degree to which the system supports modern customer service processes

Otherwise, there is a risk that Keystone hamstrings the benefits a new and highly connected CRM system can offer.

- A streamlined and automated CRM will fail to deliver if it needs data from Keystone and staff must manually collect and import that data.
- Through reviewing available documentation and reaching out to Keystone's contacts we have found limited evidence of integration capabilities.
- The Municipality could potentially integrate Keystone with a new CRM product with a substantial amount of customization work, the cost of which would fall on to the Municipality.
- The Municipality will need to be mindful of its planned future use of Keystone. The resources spent on tailoring a new CRM system to work well with Keystone will be squandered if the organization intends to moves to a new ERP product or a suite with the same functional coverage.
- Another alternative to integrate Keystone to other systems (e.g. CRM) could be from using RPA. However, this would need further investigation and may still require human intervention.

Another important integration aspect for a CRM is the phone system and collaboration tools

The Municipality uses most Microsoft collaboration tools and Cisco for its phone system. Both have robust integration functionality.

- As a unified communications manager Cisco Jabber can be integrated with many off the shelf CRM products using an Application Programming Interface (API).
- Microsoft's Telephony Application Programming Interface (TAPI) is a popular tool for these sorts of integrations.[1]
- TAPI is used for computer telephony integrations (CTI), which the Municipality likely already has in place to use Jabber on its computers.
- For CRM software from larger companies there are supports in place for CTI such as the Cisco Unified CallConnector for Microsoft Dynamics.[2]
- For less commonly used CRMs it will be valuable to ask vendors about their integration partners.
- In the attached CRM Requirements document we have included requirements on integration with Middlesex Centre systems.

1. Microsoft Telephony Overview
2. Cisco Unified CallConnector

/ CRM COST ESTIMATES

We estimate that the Municipality will require between 9,200 to 11,000 hours for the implementation effort

While the implementation effort varies between vendor solution. We have estimated the amount of staff time required for a successful implementation.

Staff have the knowledge of the processes and are needed to share that knowledge, approve changes and test implementation at the very least.

- Additionally, the Municipality must provide project management oversight.
- The table to the right shows our initial estimate of the amount of staff time likely required.

Total FTE based on the amount of effort required to configure system, processes and activities involved, reporting, testing and training.

Department	Total hours	Breakdown
County IT	1,400-1,800	IT Project Coordinator (350 hours) IT Technical Team (800 hours)
Customer Service	5,700-6,600	Corporate Services* (1750 hours) Community Services* (875 hours) Building Services* (875 hours) Public Works and Engineering* (875 hours) Fire and Emergency Services* (440 hours) Clerk Services* (875 hours)
Procurement	350-700	Director of Corporate Services (350 hours)
Project Management	1750	Full-time Project Manager (1750 hours)
Total	**9,200-11,000**	

*Potential required FTE could vary depending on the amount customer service interaction and processes

The characteristics of the client, and its functional needs, drive the price vendors charge

The three factors we find have the largest impact on price are functionality, complexity and number of users

The table below expands on these factors and indicates where the Municipality fits against these criteria.

Factor	Drivers	Implications to the Municipality
Breadth of functional coverage	The number of processes to be supported by the new solution. Simplistically, the more processes you implement the more elements of the system you will require often translating into module costs and implementation costs.	**Moderate:** The Municipality is seeking functionality to cover a moderately narrow amount of processes.
Complexity of processes	While somewhat difficult to define, complexity is the degree to which your processes vary from the common practice implemented within the vendors solution. Typically, variation comes from needing to accommodate exceptions to a standard process.	**Less complex:** The processes we identified were not overly complex or uncommon. The exception is that process are not consistent across the Municipality, but this can be rectified.
Number of users	While license models vary greatly between vendors, they all attempt to quantify the amount of 'work' the system will do. A simple measure of this is the number of users. With evolving technology, vendors have created models based on transactions, system processors and virtual instances. Number of users remains a good proxy to any of these license models and with the continued emergence of cloud, likely will become the predominate license model again.	**Few:** The Municipality is a small sized municipality in Ontario. The users of the various system is likely to range from 20 to 30.

Cloud solutions change the structure of pricing

Cloud is increasingly the preferred option of many organizations - in fact, most vendors primarily promote their cloud implementations

Cloud changes the pricing structure substantially. The primary change is to recover the costs through the annual user access fees, rather than upfront licensing costs.

- The table to the right shows how the costs would differ in a theoretical example.
- The key differences you will see are the zero licensing costs for the cloud option, the lower design and implementation costs reflecting less customization and the higher annual costs.
- In this example, the total cost of ownership of the two solutions is the same after six years at approximately $2 million. With on-premise solutions, most of our clients undertake a material refresh or upgrade after around six or seven years, making the total cost of ownership of both models similar.

	Cloud	On-premise
Licensing	$ -	$ 320,000
Design	$ 75,000	$ 150,000
Implementation	$ 170,000	$ 270,000
Training	$ 40,000	$ 40,000
Support (per annum)	$ 160,000	$ 100,000

Should the Municipality expect to purchase a cloud solution, the amount of money it sets aside in its capital budget can be more limited, but it will need to increase its forecast of its operating budget.

We expect the Municipality's CRM solution costs to be at the lower end of the ranges we have identified

Through our experience and research, we were able to identify four priced proposal spanning three different CRM vendors

Predominately the examples related to monthly users fees in some form of cloud implementation.

- For CRM, fees ranged from $50 to $140 per user per month, which would translate to between approximately $18k and $50k per annum for the Municipality, assuming around 30 of the staff were users.
- Implementation costs in the examples we identified ranged from $250k to over $400k. These relatively high figures represent the degree of configuration required of CRM systems. With our current understanding of the Municipality's needs, we would expect implementation costs to be at the lower end of this range.
- The pricing we present here are the vendor costs only, it does not include the internal costs the Municipality would incur for a successful implementation, such as project management or backfilling staff. Additionally, vendors do not typically include the cost of data migration or the cost of staff training in their implementation costs.

/ TOWN HALL APP

At this point in time, the Municipality does not require a mobile app

In our work for other municipalities, we've noticed commonalities in their approach to mobile service

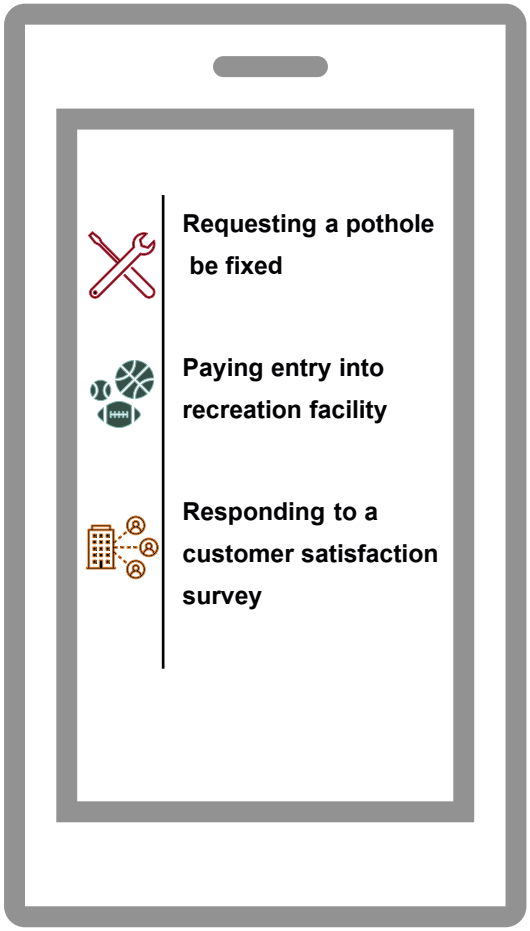
We have often found gaps in the municipal mobile applications we've reviewed.

- Often municipal apps are little more than another way to access the mobile version of a municipal website. A customer will click on a service and be redirected to their default browser. To access some services customers must log into their accounts on the browser within the application on which they are already logged in. This experience can make the application ineffective.
- Some mobile apps do include native access to at least core services. The application will feature the mobile UX design elements one would expect. For example, for one municipality we found that from their app's homepage a user needs to press two buttons to access a city map, where they can drop a pin at the site of a pothole they want fixed. Hitting "Next" takes the user to a page where they can add supplemental information and attach photos from their phone's camera roll.

Based on our Municipal Service Index, we've derived a set services that are "mobile friendly"

In addition, we have observed other larger municipalities offer these services to their customers.

- Not all services are best accessed via smartphone. Mobile applications privilege simplicity and expediency. A complicated building permit application would be difficult to offer in a truly mobile fashion and is unlikely to be well utilized by residents. As such, the Municipality should focus on three general service categories: service requests, recreation and civic engagement.
- Examples of each category are listed on the right. In the Appendix we detail municipal services that are well-suited to inclusion in a mobile app.
- The following page details the options the Municipality has for implementation of a mobile app.



The Municipality has three distinct options for implementing a Town Hall application

- The first option is to use a business system (e.g. CRM) that includes mobile self-service features as part of its product (e.g. a recreation system that both CSRs and customers can use to manage bookings). Some systems in this report include this feature such as MuniPaaS.
- Another option is to develop a fully customized mobile application. This would most likely require a third party.
- The final option is to develop a simpler mobile application which redirects to an embedded version of the municipal website. If the Municipality goes this route only a handful of services would be offered natively on the app itself.
- Findings from the Customer Service Survey indicate low resident desire for a town hall mobile app.

	Pros	Cons
1. Business system mobile service portal (Packaged product)	▸ Avoid development costs, mobile accessible self-service is a bonus that comes with system acquisition ▸ Ultimately, there would be one less system to manage	▸ Functionally the Municipality may be constrained (this is largely dependent on the CRM) ▸ In selecting a system with a mobile application, the Municipality might compromise on business needs by missing out on a functionally stronger system
2. Fully customized mobile application	▸ Customized to the needs of residents ▸ Designed with the Municipality's broader application architecture in mind	▸ Cost of development would be significant ▸ The application would require updates across both iOS and Android
3. Hybrid option	▸ Requires less resources to develop ▸ An efficient way to move customer service volume towards digital self-service	▸ May fall short of user expectations for mobile service, with variation in navigability ▸ The application would require updates across both iOS and Android

/ APPENDICES

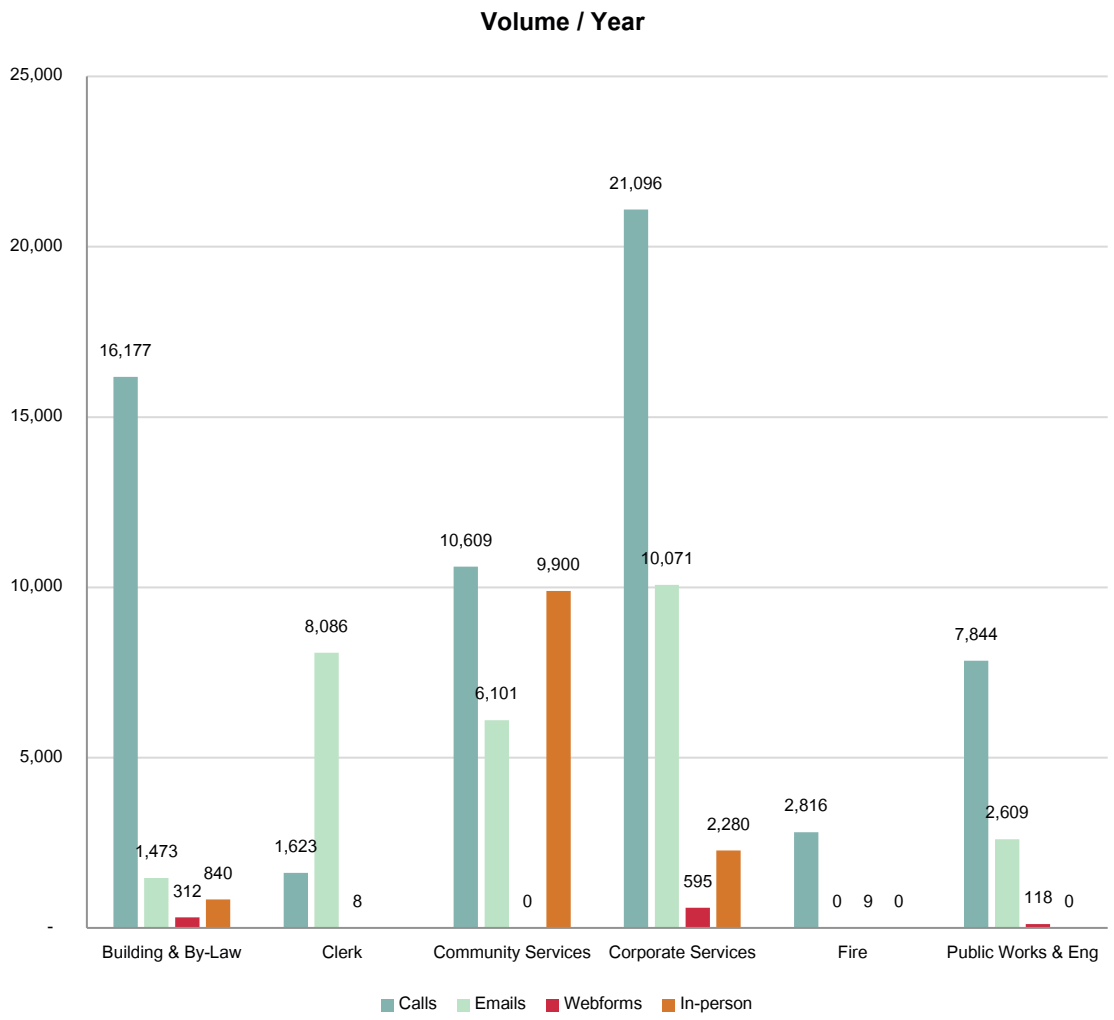
Appendix A

Channel Volume 2022

The main channel of choice of residents is phone

- Phone calls make up 59% of the total volume of customer interactions. This is double the next channel (email at 28%).
- Webforms only makes up 1% of the total transaction volume. Given the Municipality's project growth and demographics this is a channel that can derive significant value for both residents (service effectiveness) and staff (efficiency).
- Achieving this will also require addressing some gaps, specifically, we believe there are three factors:
  - The Municipality does not have a person responsible for customer service across the organization
  - Process steps do not require staff to capture relevant metrics
  - There are system gaps that make it time intensive to deliver customer service
- Addressing these gaps will provide the Municipality with deeper insight to optimize customer service at the Municipality.

Note: email data is collected from standard email addresses.



Productivity and Cost Savings (1/2)

Below we provide an estimate of savings and our key assumptions

#	Recommendation	Assumption	Effort Change* (FTEs)		Annual Operating Expense Change	
			Base	Stretch	Base	Stretch
1	Establish Service Standards and Begin Tracking	Net increase in effort (no savings).	0.36	0.36	$ 25,370	$ 25,370
2	Enhance CS Training Material (internal)	Net increase in effort (no savings).	0.12	0.12	$ 8,456	$ 8,456
3	Customer Service Awareness Campaign	2% efficiency gain by decreasing call / email volume.	-0.17	-0.17	-$ 12,192	-$ 12,192
4	Launch an Annual Customer Service Survey	Net increase in effort (no savings).	0.10	0.10	$ 7,047	$ 7,047
5	Update County GIS Maps	1-2% efficiency gain from portion of Building effort (0.55 FTEs).	-0.01	-0.02	-$ 775	-$ 1,163
6	Go-to-Market CRM / ERP	Reduces recommendation #1 effort via automation and self reporting functionality.	-0.36	-0.36	-$ 25,370	-$ 25,370
7	Update Website	1-2% efficiency gain from diverting staff time from phones and emails.	-0.09	-0.17	-$ 6,096	-$ 12,192
8	Pilot the use of a Resident Portal	2.5-5% efficiency gain from Building CS effort.	-0.03	-0.07	-$ 2,290	-$ 4,581
9	Pilot the use of Robotic Process Automation	10-20% efficiency gain by automating staff activities in Clerk, Corporate, and Community Services.	-0.40	-0.80	-$ 28,013	-$ 56,026
10	Pilot the use of Chatbots / Live Chat	10-20% reduction in staff time for answering calls.	-0.20	-0.40	-$ 14,095	-$ 28,189
Total Change			**-0.68**	**-1.41**	**-$ 47,958**	**-$ 98,840**
Percent of Current CS Effort (8.65 FTEs)			**7.9%**	**16.3%**		

*Effort change is the net change in staff effort to deliver the service resulting from our recommendation.

Productivity and Cost Savings (2/2)

A CRM would result in significant costs to the Municipality

- For CRM, fees ranged from $50 to $140 per user per month, which would translate to between approximately $18k and $50k per annum for the Municipality, assuming around 30 of the staff were users.
- Implementation costs in the examples we identified ranged from $250k to over $400k. These relatively high figures represent the degree of configuration required of CRM systems. With our current understanding of the Municipality's needs, we would expect implementation costs to be at the lower end of this range.

CRM Expense type	Per user cost	Number of users	Monthly cost	Total cost
Per-user fee (low)	$50	30	$1,500	$18,000
Per user fee (high)	$140	30	$4,200	$50,400
Implementation cost (low)	--	--	--	$250,000
Implementation cost (high)	--	--	--	$400,000

Appendix C

Mobile Friendly Services (1/2)

Service	Sub-service	Customer Service Transaction
Winter Maintenance	Snow removal, Salting, Sanding	Information on snow removal location / status
Road / Sidewalk Management	Road Maintenance	Request removal of road debris
		Notify Municipality of a pothole
	Sidewalk Maintenance	Request repairs to a damaged sidewalk
Parks	Grounds Maintenance	Notify Municipality of maintenance (e.g. grass care, damage to park property)
		Notify Municipality of garbage removal
Stormwater Management	Storm Water Management Facility Maintenance	Service Request – flooding / storm damage
Tourism Promotion & Visitor Info	N/A	Tourism Information / Municipal Events
By Law Enforcement	By-Law Enforcement	File a Code Compliance Complaint

Appendix C

Mobile Friendly Services (2/2)

Service	Sub-service	Customer Service Transaction
By Law Enforcement	Parking Enforcement	Parking Complaint Form
Council Services	Council and Citizen Committee	Petitions to Council
Communications	Key stakeholder and Media Relations	Resident Feedback Forums
Human Resources	Recruitment	Municipal Job Board
Community Service	Arenas	Sports Registration
	Sports Fields	Reserve Sport fields
	Tennis Courts	Reserve Tennis Courts
	Summer Camps	Camp Registration

Appendix D

Customer Service Survey

Context

The Municipality initiated a customer service review to ensuring an effective customer service model is in place. As part of the project, Blackline conducted a survey of residents to understand their attitudes, expectations and preferences regarding customer service at the Municipality.

Details of the survey

- The online, opt-in survey was available from May 2 to May 18. The Municipality advertised the survey through a local newspaper, through its social media accounts and website, and through its mailing lists. Respondents were provided with an anonymous survey link.
- There is a total of 185 responses from residents.
- The 55 variables were created from the survey for analysis. The median length of time to complete the questionnaire was 7 minutes.
- As an online, opt-in survey no margin of error can be assigned to the results.
- Responses are unweighted.

This appendix presents selected results from the survey.

The table below summarizes the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Region	Survey %	N
Ward 1	24%	44
Ward 2	11%	20
Ward 3	12%	22
Ward 4	23%	44
Ward 5	8%	14
Prefer to not say	23%	42
Gender		
Male	48%	89
Female	39%	72
Prefer to not say	13%	13
Age		
18-34	9%	16
35-59	37%	69
60 and older	50%	94
Prefer to not say	3%	6

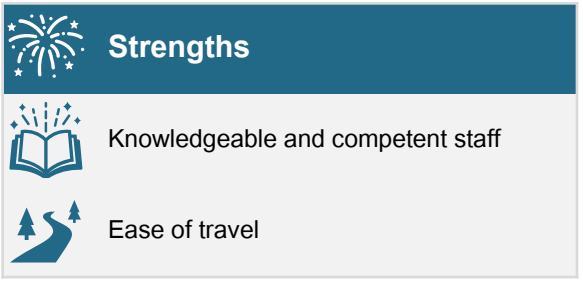
Most respondents are satisfied with customer service at the Municipality

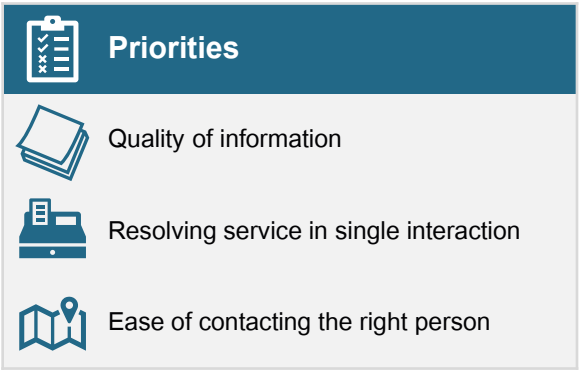
Improve overall customer satisfaction through resolving more service requests in a single interaction, improving the quality of information and making it easier to find the right person

- The results of the survey indicate that respondents are generally very satisfied with the customer service they receive from the Municipality.
- Most respondents are satisfied overall with the customer service they received, and few are unsatisfied. Overall satisfaction is driven mostly by perceptions of knowledgeable and competent staff.

Phone and email are the most common and preferred contact methods to reach the Municipality

- The most common reasons for customer service were paying taxes and utility bills. Respondents' preferred payment methods are bank websites/apps and pre-authorized payments.
- One-third of respondents called or visited the Municipal Office in the past six months, most often by phone. Most agreed the hours of operation are convenient.
- One-third of respondents called or visited the Komoka Wellness Centre in the past six months, most often in-person. Almost all agree it was easy to find where to go, and that it was easy to travel to.
- Two-thirds of respondents have visited the Municipal website in the past six months. Most agree the website is good overall and for finding information.
- Respondents express the most interest in automated emergency alerts, a centralized customer service, and virtual town hall functionality.
- Interest in a municipal mobile app is relatively low. Of potential app functionality, interest is highest for community events and public notices and updates.

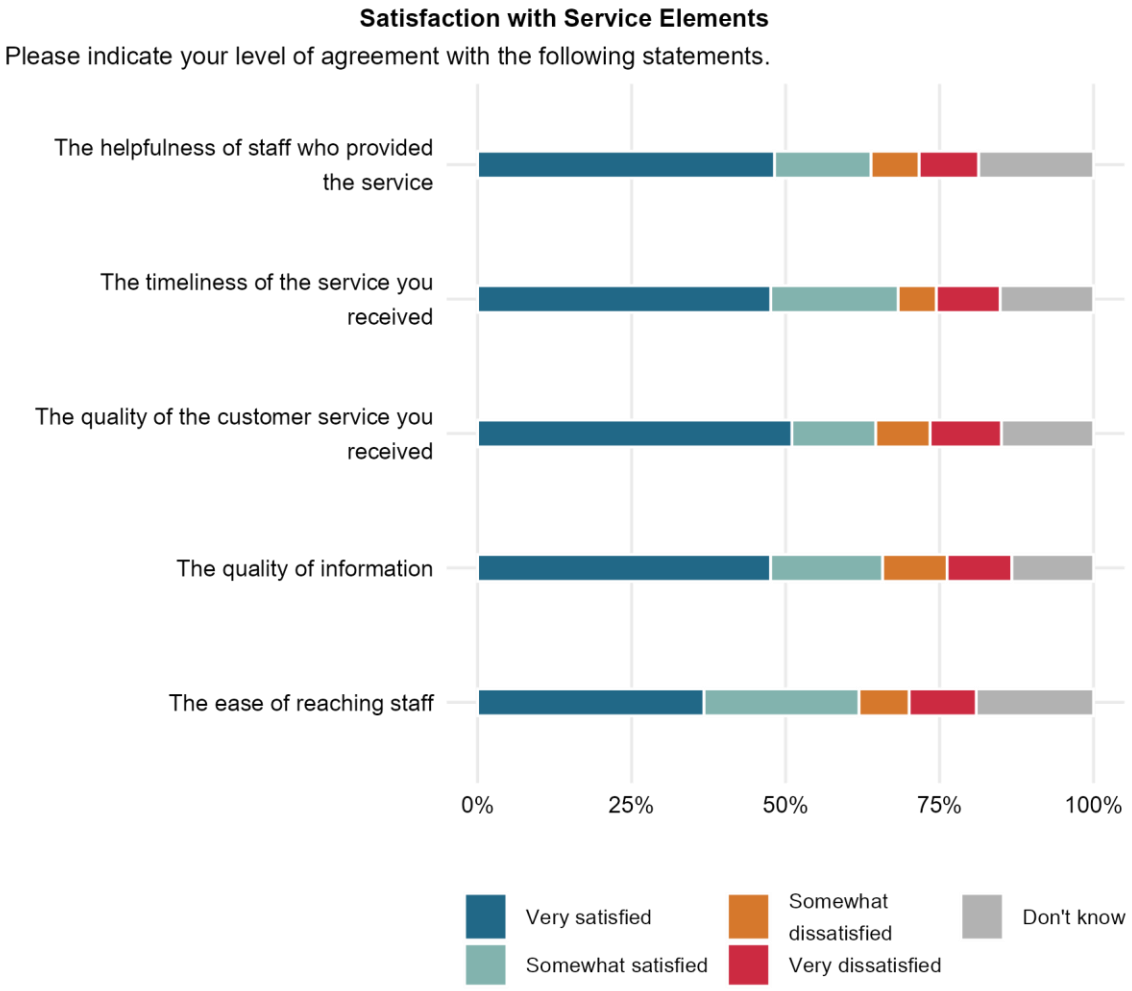




Satisfaction with Service Elements

Almost all respondents were satisfied with elements of service they received

- While satisfaction with each service element was similar, it is highest for timeliness of service.
- Few were dissatisfied with any service element.



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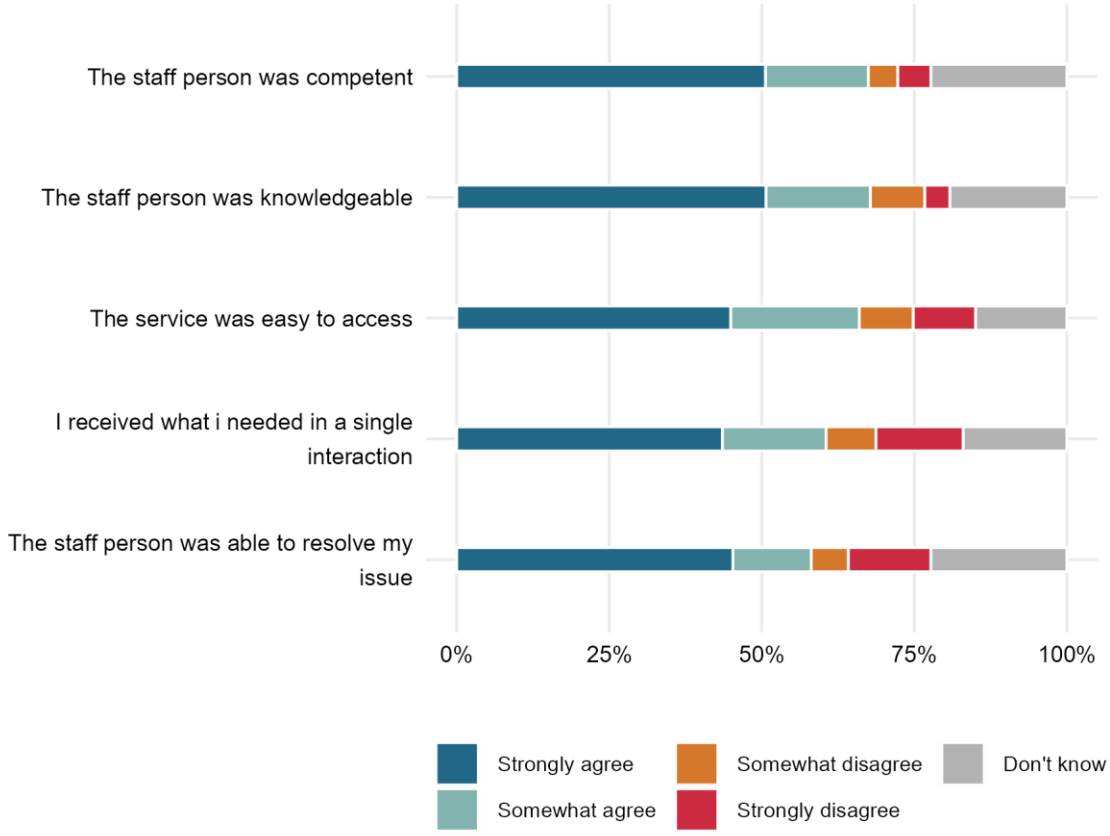
Perceptions of Service

Most respondents have positive perceptions of Municipal staff and agree their service was easy to access

- Few respondents have negative perceptions of staff members. However, disagreement is slightly higher regarding respondents receiving what they needed in a single interaction.

Perceptions of Service

Thinking of the most recent service you received from the Municipality of Middlesex Centre, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



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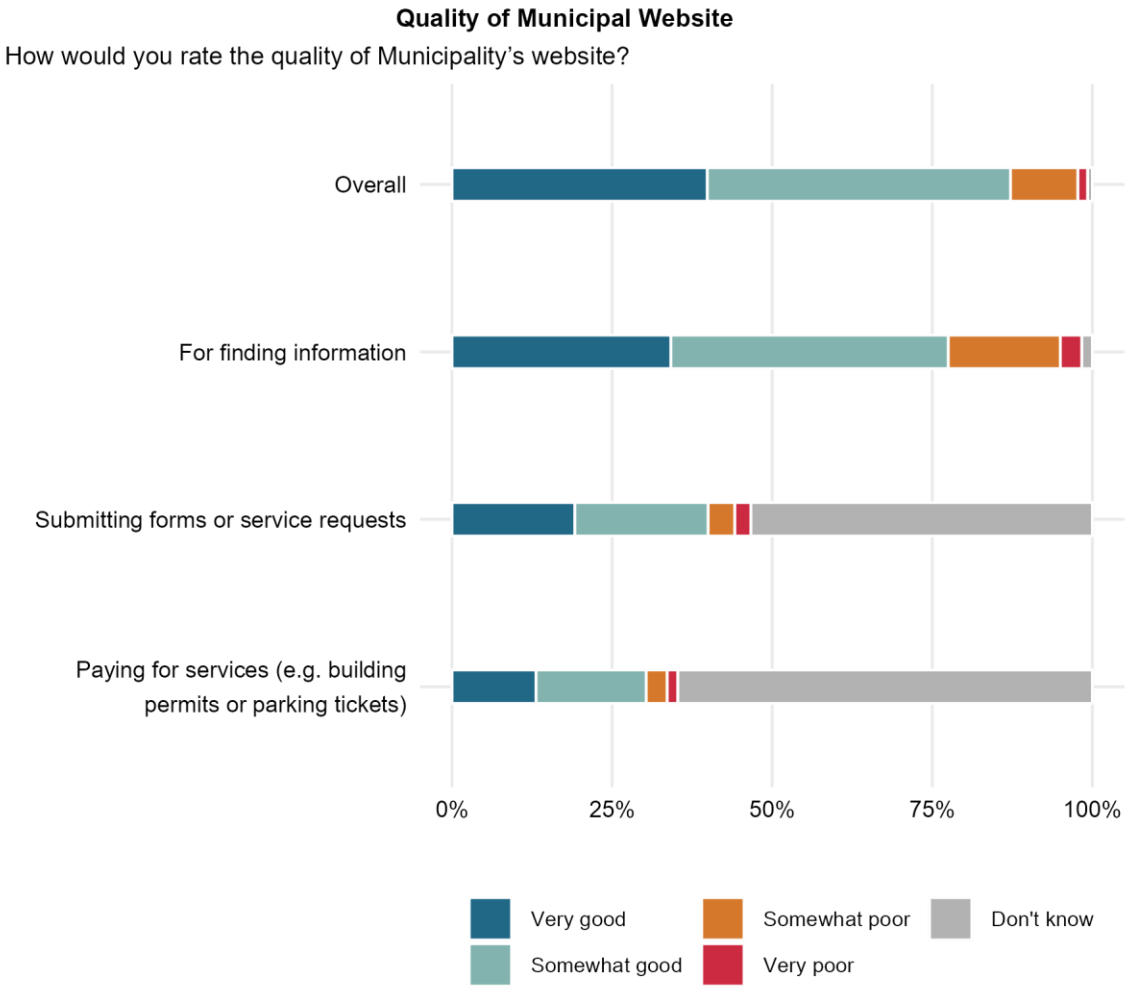
Quality of Municipal Website

Almost all residents say the Municipal website is of good quality

- Almost all agree it is good for funding information
- Most respondents do not have an opinion on how well the website is at submitting forms or service requests.



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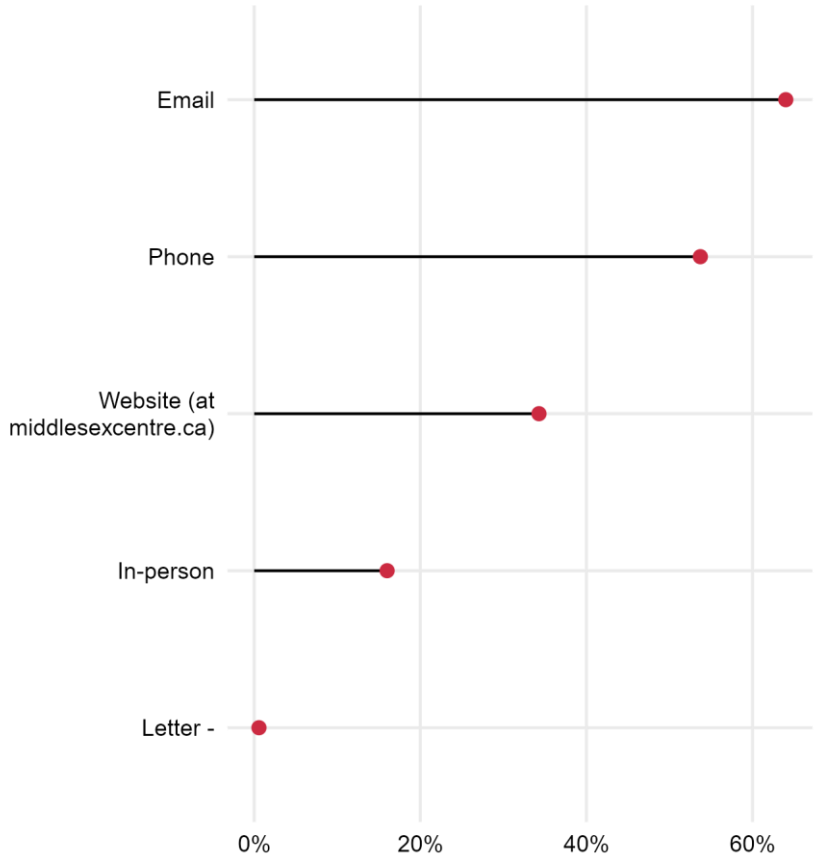
Preferred Contact Methods

Respondents prefer to contact the Municipality through email and by phone

- Contact with the Municipality in-person and through mail are least popular

Preferred Contact Methods

What are your preferred methods of contacting the Municipality of Middlesex Centre?



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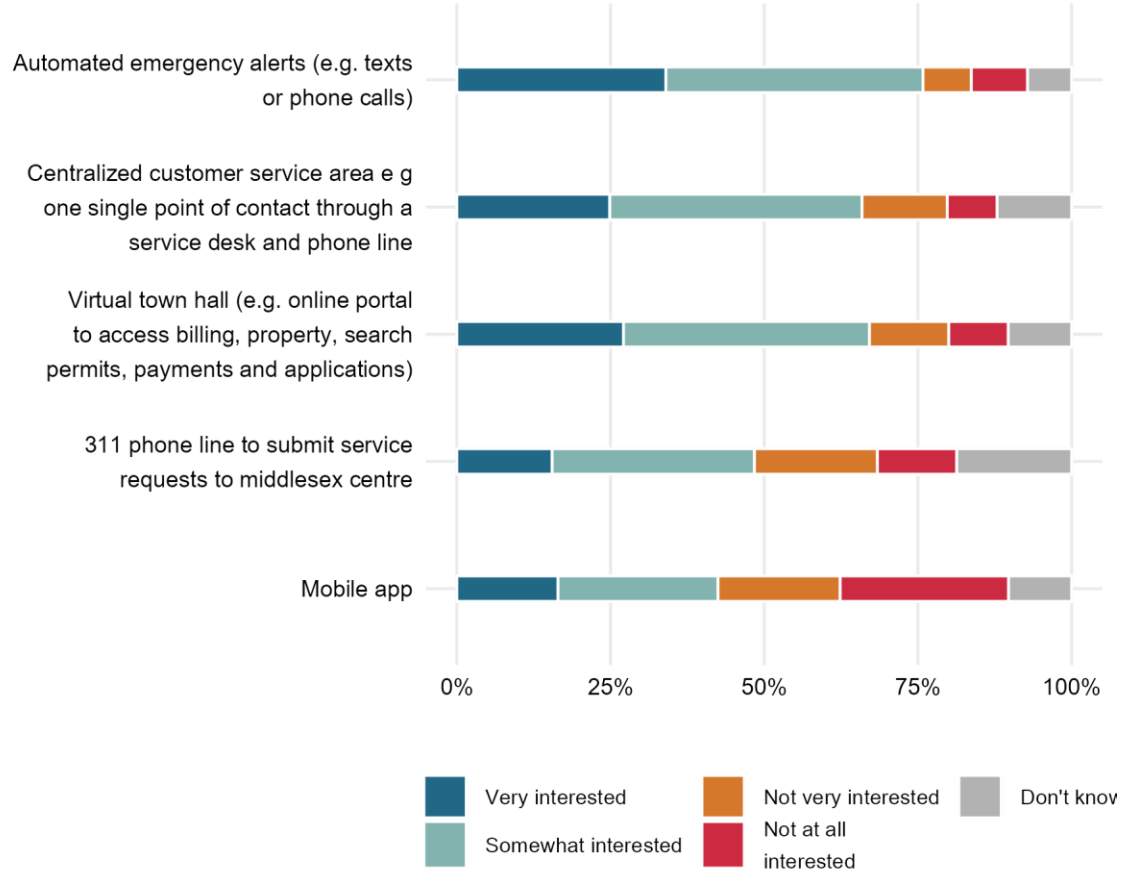
Interest in Customer Service Options

Most respondents are interested in automated emergency alerts, a centralized customer service, and virtual town halls

- Fewer than half of respondents are interested in a mobile app for the Municipality

Interest in service options

Please indicate your level of interest in the following potential future service options.



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