

AUDIT TEAM

Jim Williamson, CPA, CIA, City Auditor

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**CITY-WIDE RESPONSES TO
CITIZEN CONCERNS**

JANUARY 5, 2016

MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

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January 5, 2016

The Mayor and City Council:

The Office of the City Auditor has completed an audit of the efficiency of processes used City-wide to respond to citizen concerns.

Based upon the results of our audit, we believe that processes are adequate to provide for an efficient response to citizen concerns as of June 30, 2015, except for the lack of integration between certain software systems used to manage citizen concerns and departmental workflows.

Significant recommendations for improving responsiveness to citizen concerns, discussed in more detail in the attached report, are summarized as follows:

- The Information Technology Department should continue working with department representatives to connect the City's primary software system used to manage citizen concerns with other significant software systems used in receiving citizen concerns and managing departmental workflows. See Recommendation 1.
- The Action Center should organize periodic meetings with department representatives to discuss the citizen concern process, identify problem areas, and develop solutions to improve efficiency and citizen satisfaction. See Recommendation 2.

The content and emphasis of the items in this report have been discussed with appropriate management representatives to assure a complete understanding of the recommendations and observations arising from our audit. Management responses are attached to this report in their entirety.

Handwritten signature of Justin Miller in black ink.

City Auditor

Handwritten signature of Marilyn J. Dillon in black ink.

Marilyn J. Dillon
Audit Manager

City-Wide Responses to Citizen Concerns

AUDIT OBJECTIVE

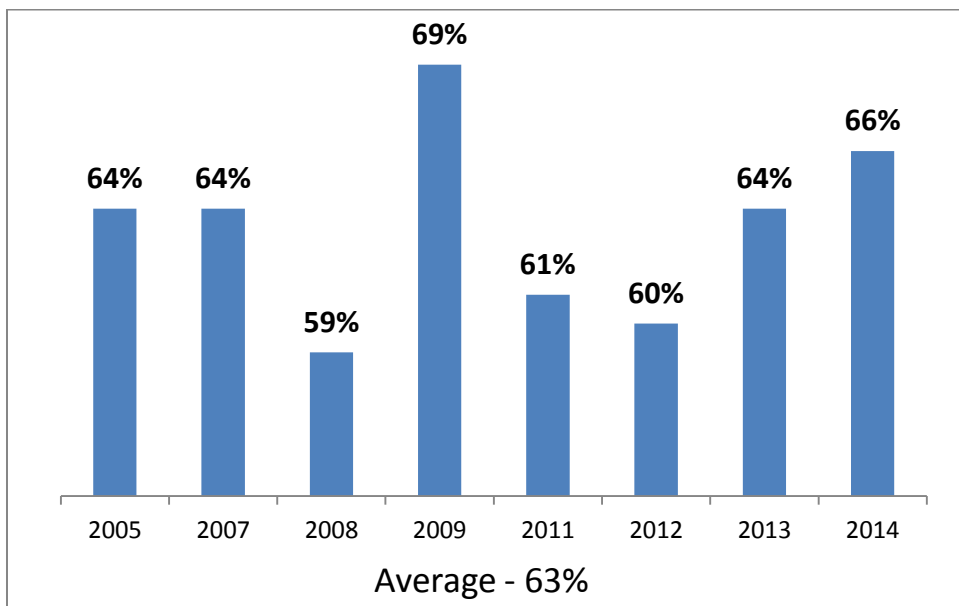
The objective of this audit was to evaluate the adequacy and efficiency of the processes used City-wide to respond to citizen concerns as of June 30, 2015.

BACKGROUND SCOPE and METHODOLOGY

The City of Oklahoma City provides many services to citizens including street maintenance, nuisance abatement, code enforcement, inspecting and permitting, water and trash service, and public safety services. Often, the City relies on the public to report a concern or request service. The Public Information and Marketing Department's Action Center was created in 1976 to provide a one-stop contact point for citizens to request services, receive information, provide feedback and suggestions, and submit complaints. Citizens may contact the Action Center via telephone, email, or fax; and technology enhancements allow citizens to submit requests through the City's website or mobile application.

Since 2005, the percentage of citizens satisfied with the quality of customer service they receive from City employees has remained high, averaging 63% yearly (see Figure 1). The 66% satisfaction rating in 2014 was 18% higher than the national average for large cities.

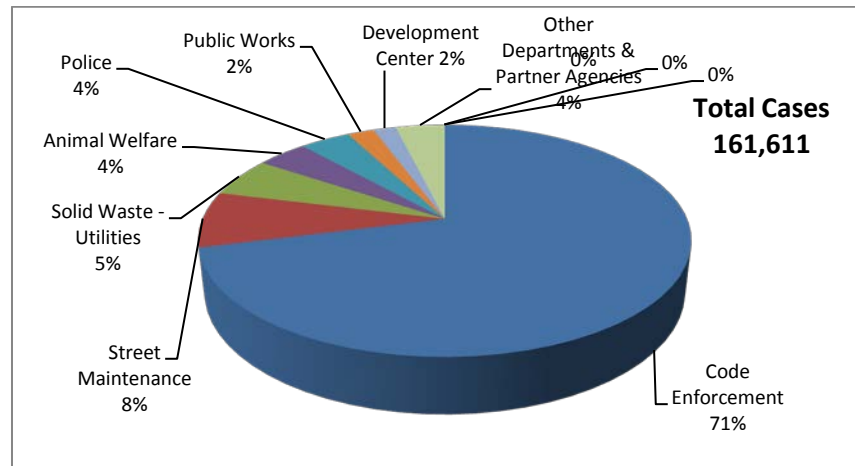
Figure 1 – Customer Service Satisfaction Ratings, Annual Citizen's Survey



Source: OCA analysis of Annual Citizen Survey results (note – no survey conducted in 2006 and 2010)

Action Center employees created 161,611 cases from citizen contacts between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2015, an average of 6,733 per month (see Figure 2). That total does not include citizen contacts made directly to City departments and/or City leaders. The same or multiple citizens may contact various City personnel regarding the same issue. This places departments at risk of duplicative responses.

Figure 2 – Action Center Cases by Service Area for FY 2014 and FY 2015



Source: OCA Analysis of Action Center Data

We assessed processes for receiving concerns and distributing cases to responding departments, systems used for managing citizen concerns and departmental work flows, and procedures for reporting response outcomes. For the purposes of this audit, concerns were defined as contacts from a citizen that require an action or response from City staff. Concerns, as defined, did not include citizen informational inquiries, comments, or suggestions.

The service areas included in the audit scope were:

- Public Works Department
 - Field Services Line of Business
 - Engineering, Traffic, and Drainage Lines of Business
 - Streets, Traffic and Drainage Maintenance Line of Business
 - Storm Water Quality Line of Business
- Parks Department
 - Grounds Maintenance Line of Business
- Development Services Department
 - Code Enforcement Line of Business
 - Animal Welfare Line of Business
- Office of the City Manager
 - Public Information and Marketing Line of Business
 - Action Center
 - Policy and Executive Leadership Line of Business
 - Office of the Mayor
 - City Council Office

- Utilities Department
 - Solid Waste Management Line of Business
 - Line Maintenance Line of Business
- Police Department
 - 911 Communications Program (non-emergency and animal welfare calls only)
 - Patrol Program

Procedures performed during our audit included interviews, discussion, and process evaluations with key employees in multiple City service areas that have a high level of citizen interaction. Topics included current processes, procedures, controls, software systems, and data collection methods. Interviews were conducted with Information Technology Department staff regarding the various software systems and databases used to track citizen contacts.

Software system evaluations were limited to assessing functionality, interoperability, and sufficiency of the systems to compile cases and manage responses. We did not evaluate the timeliness or effectiveness of departmental responses to reported concerns nor did we confirm the accuracy of recorded departmental actions in response to concerns.

We conducted this audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. These standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our audit findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

The following section of this report includes recommendations intended to provide constructive suggestions for improving current systems and processes. Included in the body of this report are *management responses* to each recommendation. The entirety of *management's responses* is attached to this report.

RESULTS OF WORK PERFORMED

Processes are adequate to provide an efficient response to citizen concerns as of June 30, 2015, except for the lack of integration between certain software systems used to manage citizen concerns and departmental workflows.

Software Systems

A variety of software applications are used to manage citizen concerns and departmental workflows. Citizen concerns received in the Action Center are entered into the Accela software system, creating a case that is forwarded through email notification to the responsible department. Citizen concerns received in the Action Center via the City's website are entered automatically into Accela through a connection between the systems. Citizen concerns received through the City's mobile application must be entered manually into Accela because the two systems are not connected. After a department updates the Accela status to indicate that the case has been *resolved*, further manual steps are required to transfer this information back to the mobile application where it can be viewed by the citizen. Since being launched in October of

2014 through the end of the audit period, 4,015 citizen concerns have been received through the mobile application. The Information Technology Department is working on a project with the Public Information and Marketing Department to connect Accela and the mobile application.

Manual processes extend to those departments utilizing the CityWorks work order management software system. Because CityWorks is not connected to Accela, these departments must retrieve service requests from Accela and enter them manually into CityWorks to generate work orders. Once the work order is complete, information recorded in CityWorks must be transferred manually back to Accela where it can be viewed by the citizen via the City’s website. Table 1 reflects those departments using CityWorks with a large number of service requests received through Accela. The Information Technology Department has preliminarily evaluated a project to connect CityWorks and Accela.

Table 1
Action Center Cases Received – July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2015

Department – Line of Business	Action Center Cases
Public Works – Street/Traffic/Drainage Maintenance	22,926
Parks – Grounds Maintenance	2,026
Utilities – Line Maintenance	1,715

Source: OCA analysis of Accela Historical Data

Manual processes also extend to the Police Department’s Patrol Program. Because it is not feasible to connect all patrol officers to Accela, a SharePoint workflow/data system is used in the patrol briefing stations to assign and track citizen concerns. Because the Police Department’s SharePoint workflow/data system and Accela are not connected, Police Department staff must retrieve service requests from Accela and enter them manually into their SharePoint system. Upon resolution, the manual process must be reversed to report the department’s response in Accela. From July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2015, the Police Department received 11,080 citizen concerns through Accela.

The lack of connectivity between software applications used to manage citizen concerns and departmental workflows requires unnecessary staff time to manually transfer information between systems, may delay departmental responses to citizen concerns, increases the risk of data entry errors, and may delay feedback to citizens regarding actions taken to address their concerns.

Recommendation 1

The Information Technology Department should:

- Continue to work with the Public Information and Marketing Department to connect Accela with the City’s mobile application.
- Work with departments using CityWorks to connect that system with Accela.
- Work with the Police Department to connect their SharePoint workflow/data system to Accela.

Information Technology Department - Response 1

Agree with recommendation. IT has the following related projects:

- #71264 - Contract with and implement PublicStuff for Action Center App integration with Accela; this project has recently been started with a target completion in Q1 FY 16-17.
- #71245 - Create integration between Accela and Cityworks for appropriate Action Center cases; this project is in proposed status with a start date to be determined by customer department priority and IT staff resources.
- #71382 - Work with the Police Department to connect their SharePoint workflow/data system to Accela; this project is in proposed status with a start date to be determined by customer department priority and IT staff resources.

Police Department - Response 1

Agree with recommendation. The Police Department will work with the Information Technology Department to integrate our dispositions of citizen concerns from SharePoint to Accela. Completion will depend on the City's Information Technology Department timeline.

Inter-Departmental Communication and Collaboration

We noted areas where improved inter-departmental communication and collaboration could enhance responses to citizen concerns received through the Action Center.

Various departmental personnel informed us that some cases are received from the Action Center without sufficient information for an appropriate response. Needed information on specific concern types could be obtained through scripted questions for use by Action Center staff as well as prompts to elicit the information from citizens requesting services using the website and/or mobile application.

Action Center personnel stated that the definition of a *resolved* Action Center case can vary by department or program service area. Some service areas create a work order but do not mark the Action Center case as *resolved* in Accela until all work has been completed. Other areas create the work order and then mark the case *resolved* in Accela before any work has commenced. Citizens may become confused or frustrated when they see the status of the case via the website or mobile application is marked *resolved* but no work has been completed. This may result in the citizen calling the Action Center to report the problem again or escalating their concern to City leaders. The lack of process consistency could be addressed through standardized definitions and procedures for *resolving* an Action Center case.

Action Center personnel also noted that many of the comments posted by departments when *resolving* an Action Center case in Accela are generic and do not include sufficient explanatory information to the citizen on what action was taken. This is a particular concern when 'no violation' without explanatory comments is used. This may result in citizens becoming confused or frustrated due to a lack of understanding regarding City ordinances and a perceived lack of action on the part of the City to address their concern. Additional comment information could be

provided through expanded drop-down selections for departments when *resolving* cases, including a web-link to a list of common code violations within the text of the final response letter/email that is sent to the citizen following the resolution of an Action Center case or providing this link on the case status screen of the website and the mobile application.

Solid Waste Management staff informed us that, because scripts and information gathering methods in Utility Customer Service exist to obtain needed information and enter a service request into the SAP software used by the Utilities Department, the response process would be streamlined if citizen calls related to Solid Waste Management were transferred by the Action Center directly to Utility Customer Service.

Recommendation 2

The Action Center should organize periodic meetings with departmental representatives to discuss the citizen concern response process, identify problem areas, and develop solutions to improve efficiency and citizen satisfaction with the City's response. Initially these meetings should address the items discussed above.

Public Information and Marketing Department - Response 2

Agree with recommendation. Starting in 2016, the Action Center manager will organize periodic meetings between IT's Accela team and departmental Accela users.

Leading For Results Performance Measures

The Action Center has a performance measure related to citizen concern responses: *% of service requests received through the Action Center acted upon within 10 working days*. Staff uses a data query of the Accela software system to report this measure monthly. Using June 2015 as a test month, performance was reported by management as 93%, but our analysis found that 88% of the cases recorded a first staff action within 10 working days.

Meetings with Action Center personnel and representatives from the Information Technology Department revealed that the report query is generating data inconsistent with the wording of the performance measure due to the following:

- The query is not capturing all Action Center cases that are *acted upon* by City staff.
- The query is not excluding weekends or holidays in computing *working days*.

Recommendation 3

Action Center management should work with representatives from the Information Technology Department to accurately capture data that is representative of the performance measure.

Public Information and Marketing Department - Response 3

Agree with recommendation. The Action Center manager will continue to meet with IT staff to accurately capture data that is representative of the performance measure. Reports should be corrected no later than January 31, 2016.



MEMORANDUM

The City of
OKLAHOMA CITY

TO: Jim Williamson, City Auditor
THROUGH: James D. Couch, City Manager *JDC*
FROM: Schad Meldrum, IT Director *WSM*
DATE: December 21, 2015
SUBJECT: Response to Auditors Report #15-04 "City-Wide Responses to Citizen Concerns"



IT's Response to Auditors Report #15-04 "City-Wide Responses to Citizen Concerns" final draft 12/4/2015:

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY RESPONSE (1)

Agree – It has the following related projects:

- #71245 *Create integration between Accela and Cityworks for appropriate Action Center cases* (Project Management Program); this project is in proposed status with a start date to be determined by customer department priority and IT staff resources.
- #71264 *Contract with and implement PublicStuff for Action Center App integration with Accela* (Project Management); this project has recently been started with a target completion in Q1 FY16-17.
- 71382 *Work with the Police Department to connect their SharePoint workflow/data system to Accela* (Data Management Program); this project is in proposed status with a start date to be determined by customer department priority and IT staff resources.



MEMORANDUM

The City of
OKLAHOMA CITY
Police Department



TO: Jim Williamson
City Auditor

THROUGH: James D. Couch
City Manager

FROM: William City
Chief of Police

DATE: December 8, 2015

SUBJECT: Audit of City-Wide Responses to Citizen Concerns

The City Auditor's Officer has completed an audit regarding City-Wide Responses to Citizen Concerns. The objective of the audit was to evaluate the adequacy and efficiency of the processes used City-wide to respond to citizen concerns as of June 30, 2015.

Recommendation one of the audit stated "the Information Technology Department should work with the Police Department to connect their SharePoint workflow/data system to Accela." The Police Department agrees with the City Auditor's recommendation and will work with the Information Technology Department to intergrate our dispostions of Citizen Concerns from SharePoint to Accela. Completion will depend on the City's Information Technology Department timeline.



MEMORANDUM

The City of OKLAHOMA CITY

To: Jim Williamson, City Auditor

Through: Jim Couch, City Manager *JC*

From: Kristy Yager, Director *KY*

Date: December 18, 2015

Subject: Action Center Audit Response for City-Wide Responses to Citizen Concerns



Recommendation 2

Agree with recommendation. Starting in 2016, the Action Center manager will organize periodic meetings between IT's Accela team and departmental Accela users. During meetings we will discuss the citizen concern response process, identify problem areas and develop solutions to improve efficiency and citizen satisfaction with the City's response.

Recommendation 3

Agree with recommendation. The Action Center manager will continue to meet with IT staff to accurately capture data that is representative of the performance measure. Reports should be corrected no later than January 31, 2016.