

Supplementary Budget – Briefing Note

2020 Budget

Work Order Backlog Reduction

Briefing Note required for:**-items >\$50,000****-changes in FTE**

Dept	Division	Business Unit	Item	Base Supp	Amount	FTE Impact
IES	General Manager		Costs to reduce the work order backlog in IES and improve customer response	S	\$850,000	0

Background:

Infrastructure and Engineering Services (IES), along with the Customer Services Division (from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday) and an after-hours call centre provider (from 4:30 p.m. to 8:30 a.m. daily and weekends/holidays), manage customer complaints and requests through a computerize database called Active Citizen Request (ACR). ACRs are created when a resident or Council request maintenance or an investigation to a concern.

Approximately 27,000 telephone calls are received annually, which generate 9,000 ACRs. These requests are over and above the work orders generated by internal staff via road patrols and regular maintenance requirements. In total, 20,000 work orders are managed by IES staff on an annualized basis.

Throughout 2019, the number of outstanding ACRs has consistently exceeded 2,000 resident requests. This is a case where demand for service is exceeding C-K's ability to supply. The result is that residents become frustrated by the time required for IES to respond to a request. Further, existing work orders are continually reprioritized to ensure emergency and safety related issues are resolved before all others.

Under non-agenda business, Councillor Crew asked what actions were needed to improve response time to residents and reduce the outstanding ACR issues to a more reasonable level. A detailed report was submitted to Council on January 13, 2020.

Work requests continue to escalate year over year due to the following reasons:

- 1) Municipal infrastructure lifecycle is funded at approximately 50%. As infrastructure deteriorates and ages, maintenance repair work must increase to compensate.
- 2) Emergency flooding events, storm frequency and intensity, along with climate change, continue to divert IES resources away from normal maintenance work.
- 3) The quantity of service requests from residents and Council is increasing while staffing levels and equipment investment has remained stable.
- 4) An overall increase in the complexity of the complaints has been experienced.
- 5) The Minimum Maintenance Standards (MMS) requirements have recently been revised to a higher service level (sidewalk salting and weather notifications).

Comment:

IES has an annual budget that is used to fund resources and equipment to maintain C-K's \$5B of assets. Based on an analysis of the outstanding ACRs, the January 13, 2020 Report to Council recommends two investments during the 2020 calendar year to reduce the backlog of 2,000 work orders and improve service.

First, an estimated \$700,000 investment is required for field operations to secure additional outside contractors, temporary municipal employees or overtime hours for current employees above the current budget. The costs incurred include internal wages, contractor fees and the cost of equipment.

Secondly, the addition of two IES Operations Support staff are recommended at a fully burdened cost of \$150,000 for a one year trial period. The Customer Support Analyst (CSA) will be an expert in all operations and initiatives of IES divisions including Public Works, Parks and Recreation, Cemeteries, Engineering and Transportation and Drainage, Asset and Waste Management. The CSA's role will be to:

- Proactively communicate emergency events, service level changes and MMS requirements to residents and the media. It is anticipated that the number of public requests will decline with an enhanced level of proactive information, further, a higher level of customer satisfaction will result
- Attend Customer Information Centres and provide follow-up to actions identified by the public
- Assist in the management of changes to recycling collection commencing in July 2020 which will result in an increase in calls from all property owners requiring clarification and additional information.
- Provide second level customer support to Customer Service Representatives and the after-hours Call Centre, allowing operational field staff to remain focused on the highest priority work orders thereby completing work orders more efficiently and reduce the need for overtime.
- Analyze the barriers to complete the outstanding work requests; recommend specific actions to optimize resources
- Follow-up with customers as required.

In summary, it is recommended that a one-time infusion of \$850,000 be used to eliminate the backlog of 2,000 requests. In January, 2021, a report will be provided to Council updating the state of the outstanding work orders, the return of this investment and if further investment is recommended for the long-term.