



Memorandum

TO: Smart Cities and Service Improvements Committee
FROM: Councilmember Matt Mahan
SUBJECT: City Roadmap: San Jose 311 and Service Delivery Status Report
DATE: September 2, 2021

APPROVED:

RECOMMENDATION:

Accept the status report and direct the City Manager to ensure that the next San José 311 (SJ311) and Service Delivery Status Report, currently scheduled for December 2, 2021, includes:

1. A proposed performance target for response times and customer satisfaction (e.g., $\geq 80\%$ Good-to-Excellent rating) for each existing 311 service, and a proposed third performance metric that connects to the equitable delivery of each service. Efforts would benefit from coordination with the Office of Racial Equity.
2. For each existing service not currently achieving performance targets, a description of efforts to improve and what would be required to deliver the service at or above target performance levels.
3. Current and proposed performance targets for potential new services for Council input on additions to SJ311 and a qualitative assessment of the relevant departments' ability to fulfill each service at high performance and satisfaction levels.
4. Improving the customer satisfaction scoring to balance positive-neutral-negative scores by using research-based scaling.

BACKGROUND:

Thank you to staff for their tireless efforts to improve and expand SJ311 and the City's ability to address the customer service needs of the City's residents. I greatly appreciate the in-depth status update, especially the data relating to performance metrics. The 30-point customer satisfaction gain produced in the past year and a half represents fantastic progress.

As this Committee and Council as a whole continue to provide direction to staff on how best to improve and expand 311 services, it is vital that we have a shared vision for successful service delivery. With our two-year IT strategy and funding approved for FY2021-2022 and FY2022-2023, we have an opportunity to invest in performance and continuous service improvements that will better serve our residents and build public trust in their city government.

For Recommendation 1, an established performance target for resolution times and customer satisfaction of current and future 311 services will enable us to know if our actions lead to positive, negative, or neutral impacts on our ability to both respond in a timely fashion, as well as deliver on high customer expectations of our services. We should also establish a metric and target related to equity so that we can know and track how we are performing across the City and how equitable access to the optimal utilization of 311 services can be achieved.

For Recommendation 2, it is vital that we know what it takes to ensure each 311 service remains successful. Continuous improvement allows the City to iterate on and experiment with service delivery in order to reach specific target performance goals related to ticket resolution, customer satisfaction and the equitability of service access and quality.

For Recommendation 3, it is important to know in advance the performance targets for any new product and/or features as we manage City services and our teams' ability to deliver on high standards. As we have learned, customers of 311, understandably get frustrated when a service does not meet their expectations. Follow-through and follow-up contribute directly to high satisfaction, continued use of SJ311, peer-to-peer promotion of SJ311, and avoidance of inefficient complaints directed at the Council District Offices.

As this Council Committee weighs the balance between adding new features and optimizing existing services to meet our standards, we must have a clear understanding of relevant departments' actual ability to implement and sustain new features at high service standards. The success of our efforts hinge on customer satisfaction, and we need to ensure that residents, businesses, and City staff who are part of SJ311 have faith that their local government delivers.

For Recommendation 4, we should balance the customer satisfaction scale and limit response bias by reformulating the scale to offer a more symmetric set of evaluators. This can be achieved by making the middle evaluator neutral and the two evaluators on each side of the middle evaluator proportionately worse than average and better than average. Currently, we provide two scores titled "Average" and "Fair," which imply similar levels of neutral satisfaction, with one score, "Poor" below these neutral scores and two scores, "Good" and "Excellent" above them. I propose that SJ311 update our customer feedback form to reflect a research-based approach, such as a Likert-type scale, that will be longitudinally valid¹. Staff should also explore local government performance benchmarking standards, if applicable.

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Likert_scale

CONCLUSION:

Establishing formal performance targets and additional metrics, including equitable access and quality of service, will enable the City to effectively and strategically achieve our objective of powering the nation's premier municipal application that digitizes City services for all of our residents and businesses.

I urge my colleagues to support the adoption of this memorandum and thank them for their consideration.