



Department of Public Works

Jeffrey J. Mantes
Commissioner of Public Works

James P. Purko
Director of Operations

TO: Honorable Tom Barrett, Mayor
Members of the Common Council
Mayor's Cabinet Members

FROM: Jeffrey J. Mantes, Commissioner of Public Works *JJM*

RE: Call Center Improved Citizen Access

DATE: April 23, 2009

As a follow-up to a recent Southside Organizing Committee meeting, the Executive Director asked whether the current menu approach for 286-CITY could be eliminated.

As you may know, if a citizen contacts the Call Center, they are given seven different options with up to 4 sub-options per Department (copy attached for your reference). Also, citizens may not recognize which Department is in charge of what service, nor which sub-option is relevant for their concern. Those who are most familiar with the system (44%) bypass the menu by hitting zero and going directly to a Customer Service Representative.

Simultaneously, there are consultant reviews and a discussion occurring regarding improving the Call Center and consolidating the City's various call-in portals into one. The consultant that reviewed Call Center operations strongly recommended elimination of the menu because 80% of all incoming calls are handled by Call Center staff. Those that have been involved in the consolidation discussion, including Nancy Olson of ITMD and Erick Shambarger of the Budget Office, concur, as do the Call Center Manager, Anthony Sherwin and Alderman Witkowski.

Many phone calls are placed every day to most places of business in which you must wait for a lengthy menu recitation, push one of the options, and then be connected to a real person. Most likely you yourself have experienced and been frustrated with this proliferation of automated answering and menu selection systems. It would be nice for our citizens if contacting the City for service information would be an exception to this cumbersome process. The menu change will not result in increased staffing for the Call Center and the 20% of calls not typically addressed directly by them would still be transferred to the appropriate agency. Options would still exist for special messages to be played for events like Elections, Health concerns, or other Emergency situations.

The schedule for a potential change has not been set. Your input is requested in consideration of this matter. We would appreciate hearing from you by May 7th. If you would like more information, please contact Shirley Krug at x-5582. She would be happy to brief you further. If you would like to just register your comments, approval or disapproval, email her at skrug@milwaukee.gov.

JJM:SK:ph