




City of San Diego
MARK KERSEY
CITY COUNCILMAN, FIFTH DISTRICT

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 5, 2015

TO: Chair Todd Gloria
Budget & Government Efficiency Committee

FROM: Councilman Mark Kersey 

RE: Establishment of a 311/Centralized Customer Service System

I respectfully request that the Budget and Government Efficiency committee docket a discussion on the establishment of a centralized customer service system, known as a 311 system, in the City of San Diego.

A 311 system provides a one-stop contact for residents to gain access to necessary city services. Initially intended to help divert non-emergency calls from 911, these systems have expanded so that residents can seamlessly engage with city departments, gain access to open data reports, and have improved accessibility to elected officials. According to the International City/County Management Association, 42 percent of U.S. local government are either considering implementation of a centralized customer service system or have already successfully established a 311 system, including New York, Minneapolis, and Philadelphia.

Currently, the City of San Diego has multiple numbers for multiple city departments, and navigating the city to get a hold of the appropriate city service is its own endeavor. The City has one number to call to report a broken traffic light and a different number to report a broken street light. Whereas New York City residents utilize NYC 311 system to access city services, obtain municipal ID cards, gain information on affordable housing, and apply for civil service exams. Residents in Minneapolis can use 311 to request a speed trailer on their street, get information on road closures, and even submit for a home improvement permit. While services provided through 311 vary by agency, all have seen increased engagement with residents and tracking of services.

The City of San Diego should consider all options in implementing a 311 system efficiently and effectively. This can include online systems and interfaces, mobile applications, and other technologies. The City should also consider working with other local governments and outside

organizations throughout the county. If implemented properly, metrics could be automatically generated from the system to help meet the mission of the Performance and Analytics Department. With the City's recent accomplishments in open data and government transparency, such a system can increase accountability and customer satisfaction.

cc: Mayor Kevin Faulconer
Honorable Councilmembers