



Town of Newmarket
395 Mulock Drive P.O. Box 328,
Newmarket, Ontario, L3Y 4X7

Email: info@newmarket.ca | Website: newmarket.ca | Phone: 905-895-5193

Customer Service Department 2022 Year End Results

Information Report

Report Number: INFO-2023-06

Department(s): Customer Services

Author(s): Hayley Fryer, Supervisor, Customer Service Centre and Jamie Boyle, Supervisor,
Customer Service Kiosks

Distribution Date: March 23, 2023

In accordance with the Procedure By-law, any member of Council may make a request to the Town Clerk that this Report be placed on an upcoming Committee of the Whole agenda for discussion.

Purpose

This report provides Members of Council with the highlights, overall results, and trends for 2022 as well as the key areas of focus in 2023, for the Customer Service Department

Background

The Customer Service Department provides Members of Council with the quarterly and year-end results which includes volumes, trends, key project updates, and highlights related to service delivery.

Discussion

The attached graphics represent service requests as captured in our CRM system by either Customer Service staff or by staff in the Mayor and Councillors' offices, as well as data from our software systems including telephony system and Point of Sale terminals..

Some of the highlights in the Customer Service department are as follows:

Overall Volumes and Trends

- The Customer Service Centre fielded over 136,145 contacts. Total contacts to the CSC increased significantly in 2022 from previous years. Almost 60,000 additional contacts were made between 2021 and 2022, representing the highest amount of customer contacts since 2009;
- The Kiosk Customer Service saw an increase in customers to the Recreation facilities. With programming and drop-in activities increased, Customer Service Satellite Kiosk staff served just over 215,000 visitors, patrons, customers and users at the counters located

at the Magna Centre, Ray Twinney Recreation Complex, Seniors Meeting Place and Gorham Pool;

- Email volumes decreased in 2022 from the previous year. The 6,396 emails serviced by Customer Service in 2022 were still double the amount received and serviced prior to the pandemic in 2019 though;
- Average Handling Time (AHT) on calls to Customer Service continued to increase in 2022. The average length of each call rose from 3:15 minutes per call (2020) to 4:02 minutes (2021) to most recently 4:08 minutes per call in 2022;
- Request for Parking Enforcement (1,411) was the highest type of service request across the whole Town of Newmarket in 2022, followed by Forestry service requests (1,224) and Bylaw/ Property Standards service requests (1,016) respectively;
- Request for Parking Enforcement, Bylaw/ Property Standards and Forestry service requests are the three top service request in every ward;
- In 2022, Customer Services worked closely with Legislative Service newest municipal service: Animal Services to launch their program and establish work flows between the two departments. Training was provided to Customer Service Associates so that when residents call in, they are able to share the process with them and let them know what will happen and where the animal will be transported. Customer Service took 736 Animal Services inquiries and service requests in 2022.

Revenue and Cost Saving Opportunities

- Customer Service Supervisor, Jamie Boyle, continues to lead the “Enhanced Customer Service training for the Public Sector” program virtually. This program has been very well received and is available to all staff across the N6 municipalities. The course is considered ‘mandatory’ for Town of Newmarket staff and 6 individual sessions were offered throughout 2022. Over 200 TON staff representing all levels across the organization and 120, N6 staff have completed the course since 2020.
- “Enhanced Customer Service training for the Public Sector” customized training has started to be offered to municipalities and government agencies outside of the N6, as a revenue generating opportunity, and word-of-mouth is increasing the demand for Newmarket to lead the way in public sector service training. The City of Barrie’s taxation department, Customer Service and Finance staff, Town of Aurora’s Kiosk and Library services, and Seneca College’s Judicial Service Diploma Program are some of the agencies Newmarket has offered customized public sector service training for in 2022;
- In 2019, a partnership was created with Seneca College’s Public Administration Program. Workshops were created and delivered focusing on best practices in municipal service delivery, our centralized customer service model and career development panels with Town of Newmarket municipal professionals from across the organization.
- The Seneca College course titled “Excellence in Municipal Government” has been very well received and the partnership has continued to grow. The Town of Newmarket & Seneca College are in the second year of a multi-year partnership whereby this program is now included in the post-graduate program curriculum. These workshops and courses were all developed internally and delivered by Jamie Boyle, Supervisor Customer Service Kiosks. Town staff from across the organization are involved in the program as Project Advisors, providing support to students as they work on one of several municipal challenges currently facing our municipality.

Continuous Improvement – 2023 and beyond

- Collaborate with other departments in order to move the Digital Strategy forward in a manner that best represents opportunities for improved efficiencies and more streamlined service delivery.
- The next semester of the Seneca College/ Town of Newmarket Public Administration partnership continues from January until April 2023. Delivered weekly through Seneca College's learning platform, this partnership increases Newmarket's standing in the community as a learning organization, continually striving to share our practices and experiences with future municipal professionals.
- We continue to play a key role in the launch of the Smart Water Meter program, with mass deployment continuing in 2023.
- Through requests of various department heads the CS department will create and deliver targeted 'learning bursts' to support staff development of skills related to improved service delivery. Examples of recent requests include dealing with volatile customers, Difficult customer and difficult situations "refresher" learning bursts. Customer Service in email writing, and service delivery for front line summer staff will be some of the topics;
- Continue the rollout of corporate-wide, and N6 municipalities' Enhanced Customer Service training.
- Support the launch of the Automated Speed Enforcement program through staff training, creation of FAQs and review of resource requirements to de-escalate issues and educate customers.

Conclusion

The Customer Service Department remains committed to providing Council and staff with the most recent trends and statistics by ward and the Town of Newmarket as a whole.

Business Plan and Strategic Plan Linkages

Tracking and reporting on trends and customer feedback supports the Town's strategic directions of being Well-Equipped and Managed by demonstrating Service Excellence.

Consultation

Not applicable to this report.

Human Resource Considerations

Not applicable to this report.

Budget Impact

None

Attachments

Overall Volumes and Trends Graphics (4 Pages)

Contact

For more information on this report contact: Hayley Fryer (hfryer@newmarket.ca or extension 2706), Jamie Boyle (jboyle@newmarket.ca or extension 2254) or Bonnie Munslow (bmunslow@newmarket.ca or extension 2251).

Approval

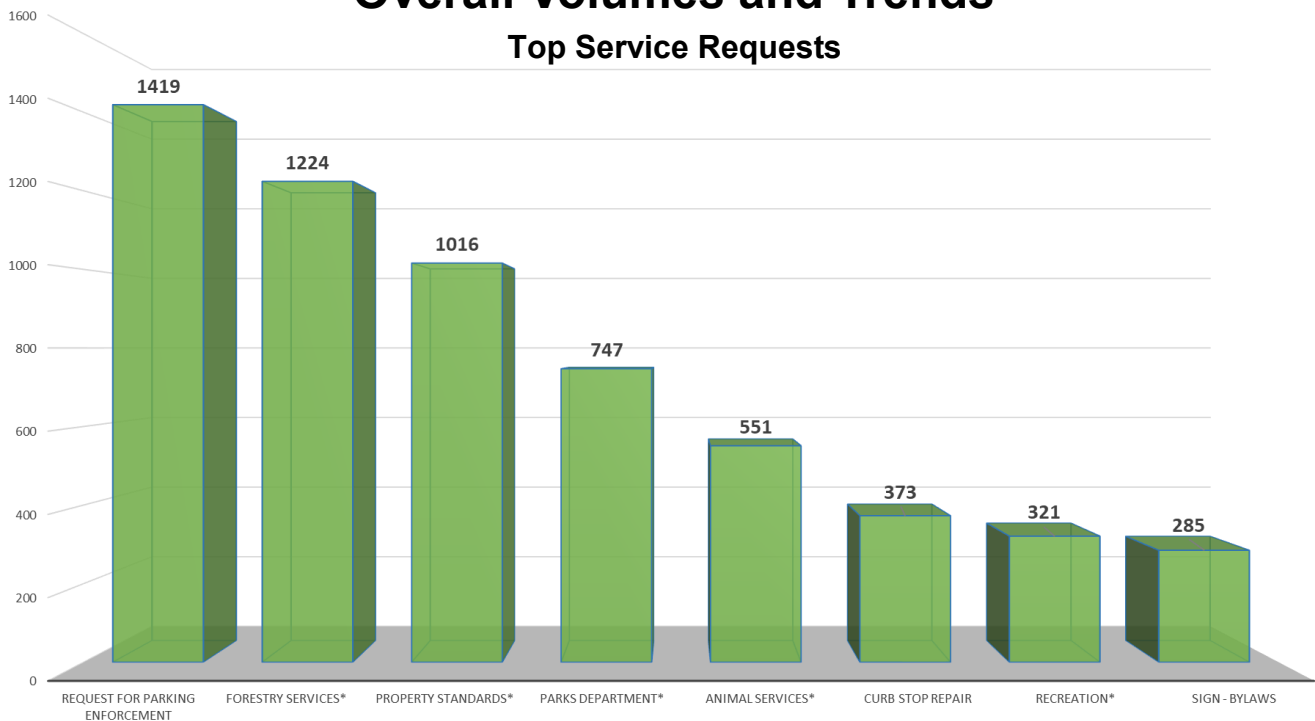
Hayley Fryer, Supervisor, Customer Service Centre

Jamie Boyle, Supervisor, Customer Service Kiosks

Bonnie Munslow, Manager, Corporate Customer Service

Overall Volumes and Trends

Top Service Requests



Town wide, the top service requests in 2022 were for Parking Enforcement, followed by Forestry, Property Standards, and Parks department service requests. For the most part, this is consistent with previous years data.

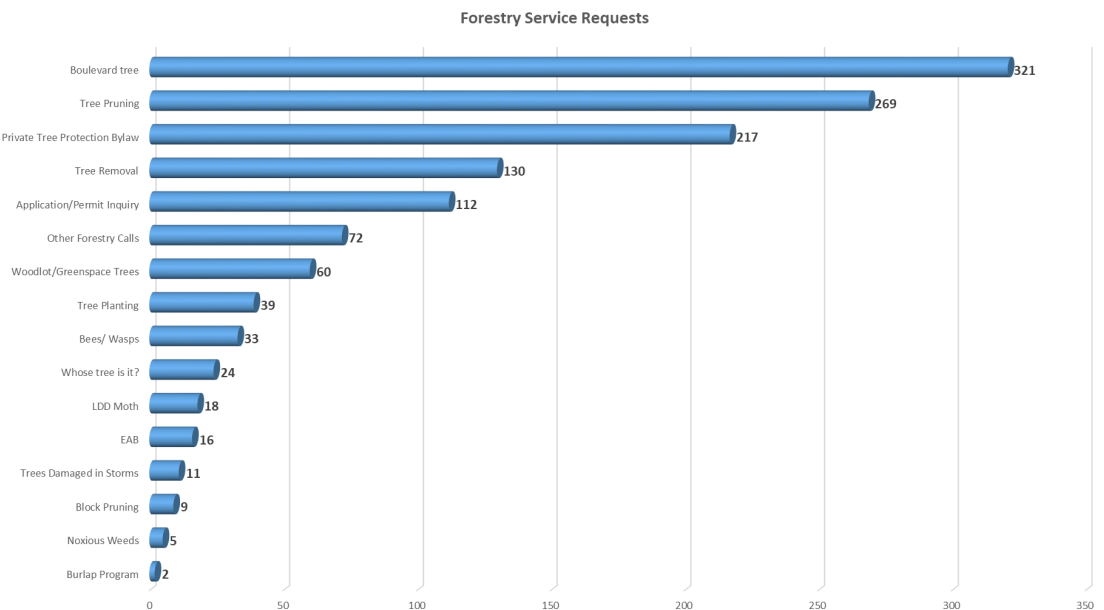
“Request for Parking Enforcement” remains the top specific service request, with 1,411 requests in 2022. Property Standards related service requests jumped significantly again in 2022, from 705 requests in 2020, to 923 in 2021 and 1,154 in 2022. This increase was mainly due to a spike in reported ‘Tall grass’, and Garbage related complaints.

Forestry Related Service Requests Continuing to Increase

Of significant note, the 2nd highest service request in 2022, was Forestry service requests. This is the second year in a row that Forestry have made it into the top 3 service requests by residents.

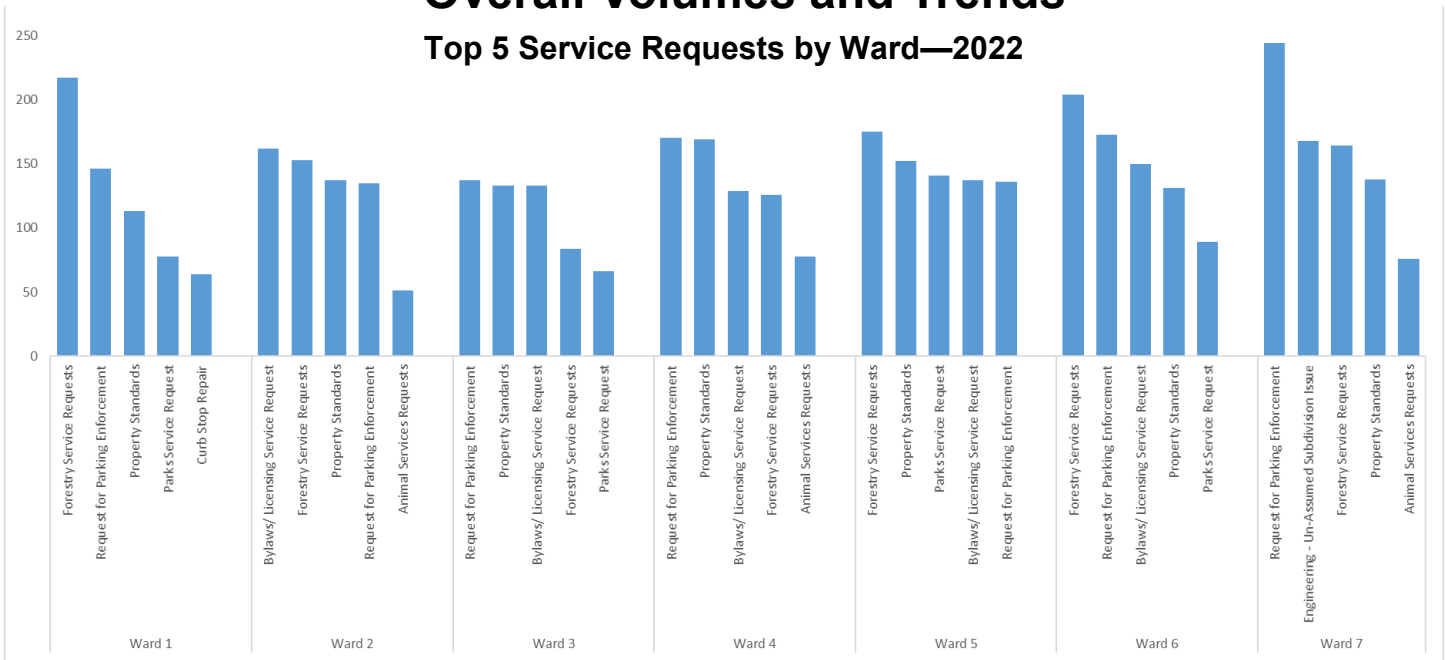
The Forestry division & Parks department had almost 2,000 service requests issued to them via Customer Service.

Boulevard tree and tree pruning requests and the Town’s new Private Tree Protection bylaw represent the highest service requests for Forestry crews at 807 requests.



Overall Volumes and Trends

Top 5 Service Requests by Ward—2022

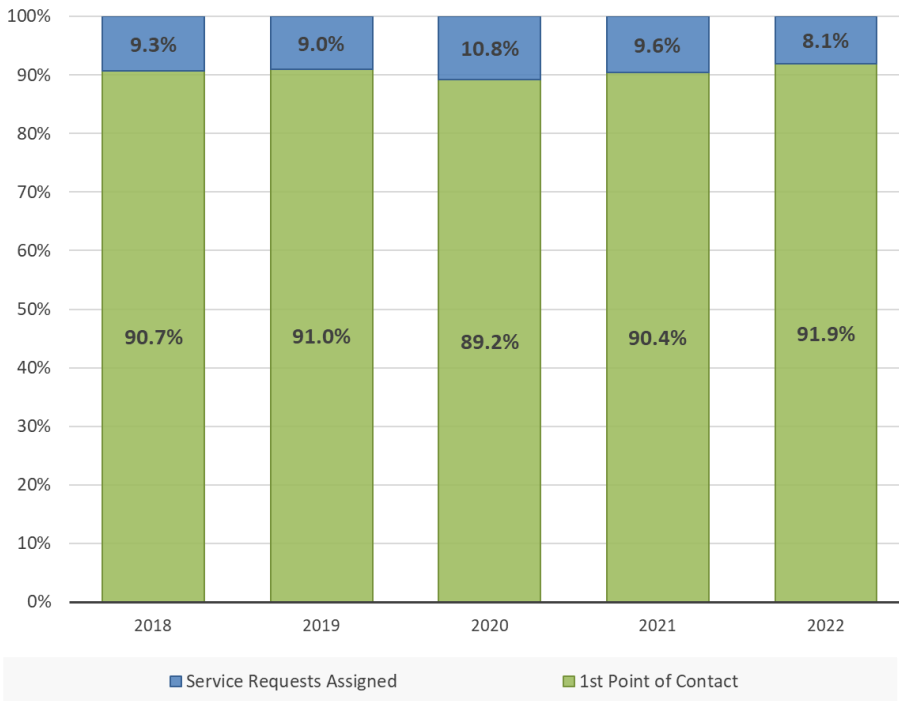


Service requests in 2022 varied between wards. Most were related to Property Standards complaints, Requests for Parking Enforcement & Forestry service requests. While still the top service request town wide, this is the second year in a row that ‘request for parking enforcement’ was not highest in each ward. A large increase in requests for Forestry work is attributed to requests for tree trimming and boulevard tree issues.

In Ward 7 the service requests in “un-assumed” areas refer to complaints and inquiries mostly related to construction, grading/ drainage and fencing and are lower than reported in 2020 & 2021.

CSC achieves highest 1st Point of Contact in over 10 years

1st Point of Contact vs. Service Requests



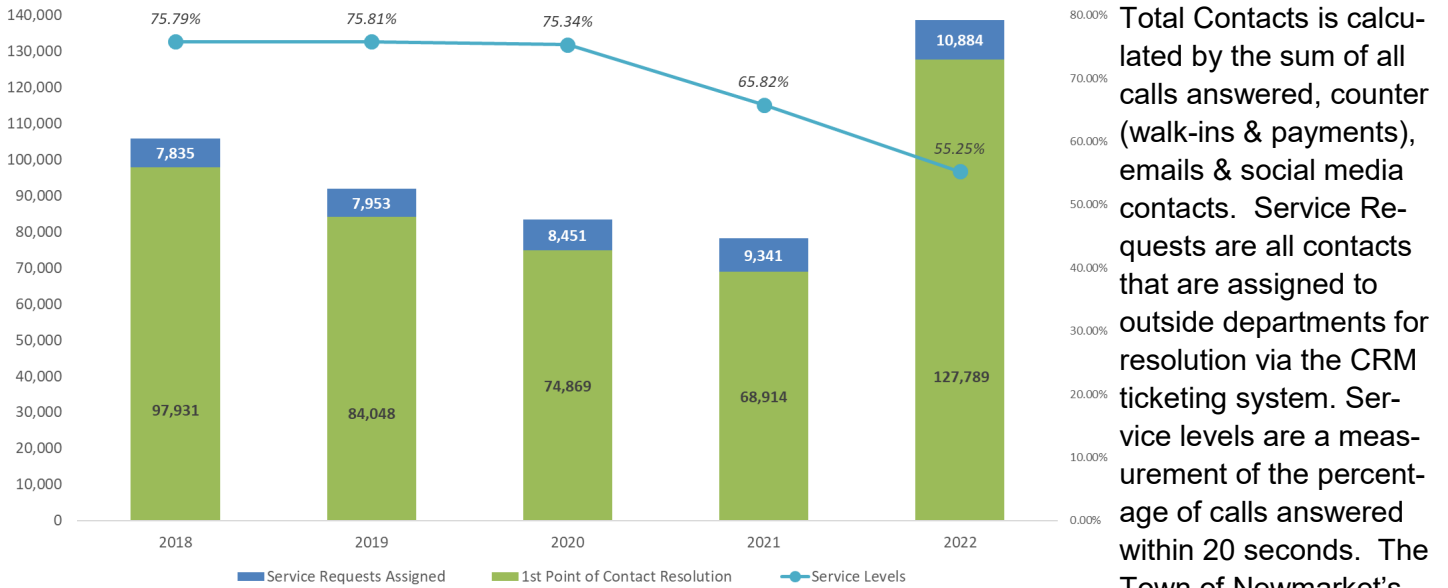
1st point of contact resolution measures how many customers the Customer Service Centre provides services for versus customer requests that require action outside of the Customer Services department via a CRM service request or “ticket”.

Since 2018, the Customer Service Centre has averaged between 89% – 92% 1st point of resolution. This means 90% of all contacts that come to the CSC via phone, walk-in, email and social media are resolved on the spot, by the initial associate.

In 2022, Customer Service achieved its highest 1st point of contact percentage in over ten years. Handling 91.9% of all contacts at the first point of contact, thus not assigning the customer to outside departments to service.

Overall Volumes and Trends

Customer Service— Total Contacts, Service Requests and Service Levels



goal has been 80% of all calls answered in 20 seconds.

Service Requests requiring outside resolution, result in a longer call duration. Contacts that are assigned past a 1st level of resolution, require CS Associates to spend longer on each assignment. Investigation, monitoring, action and resolution can take hours, days and sometimes months from 1st point of contact to resolution, and the customer updated, depending on the issue. Increased demand and complexity of requests from residents has led to longer one-on-one handling time with each contact, thereby impacting service levels.

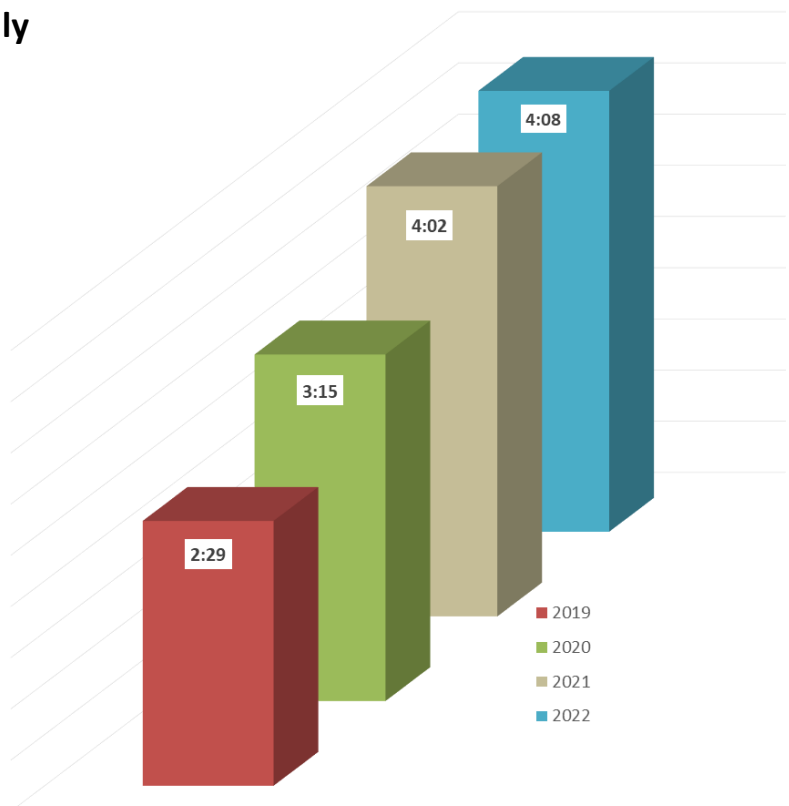
Average Call Length Increasing Annually

Average Handling Time (AHT) is a metric that tracks the average amount of time spent on each call answered by the Customer Service Centre. The higher the number, the great amount of time associates are spending with each caller.

With increased requests for service, more detailed information being provided to residents over the phone, more details regarding policy changes and other matters, the amount of time spent on average for each call has gone up again in 2022.

Customer Service Associates spent a great deal longer per call with customers than in previous years, and the highest average handling time to date.

Average Handling Time

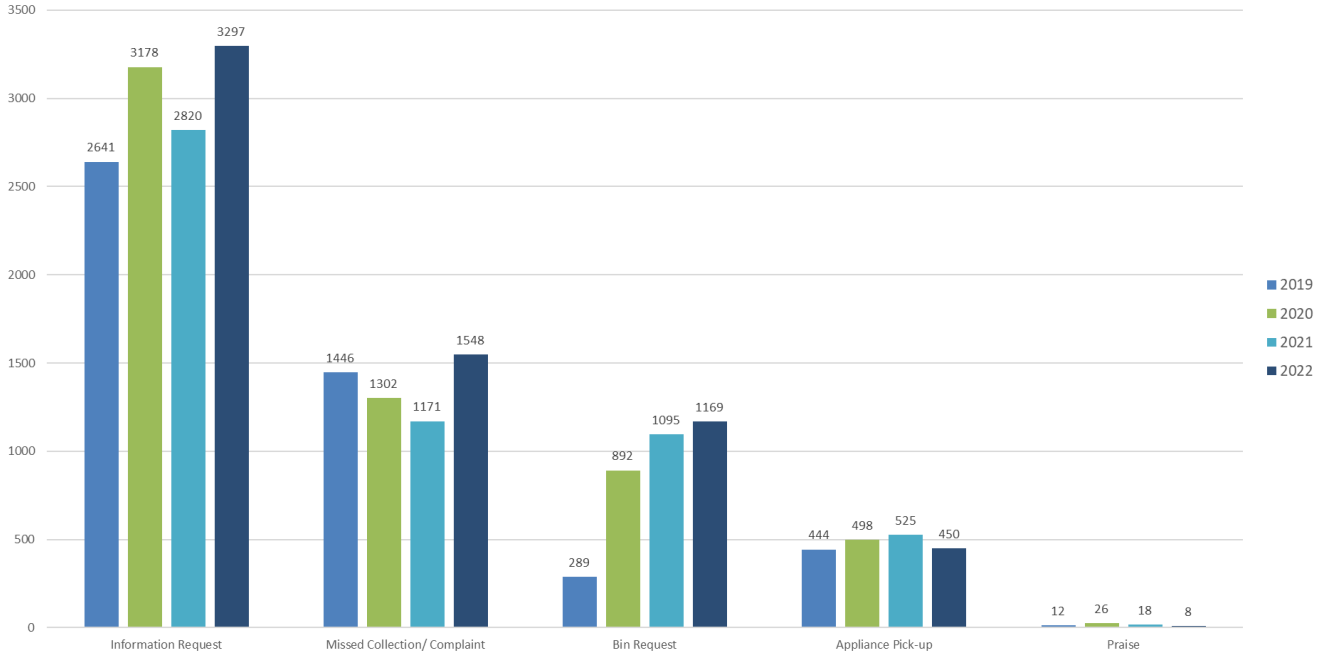


Overall Volumes and Trends

Green For Life Call Breakdown
2019 -2022

Note: Greater than 27,000 residential locations collected 52 times a year

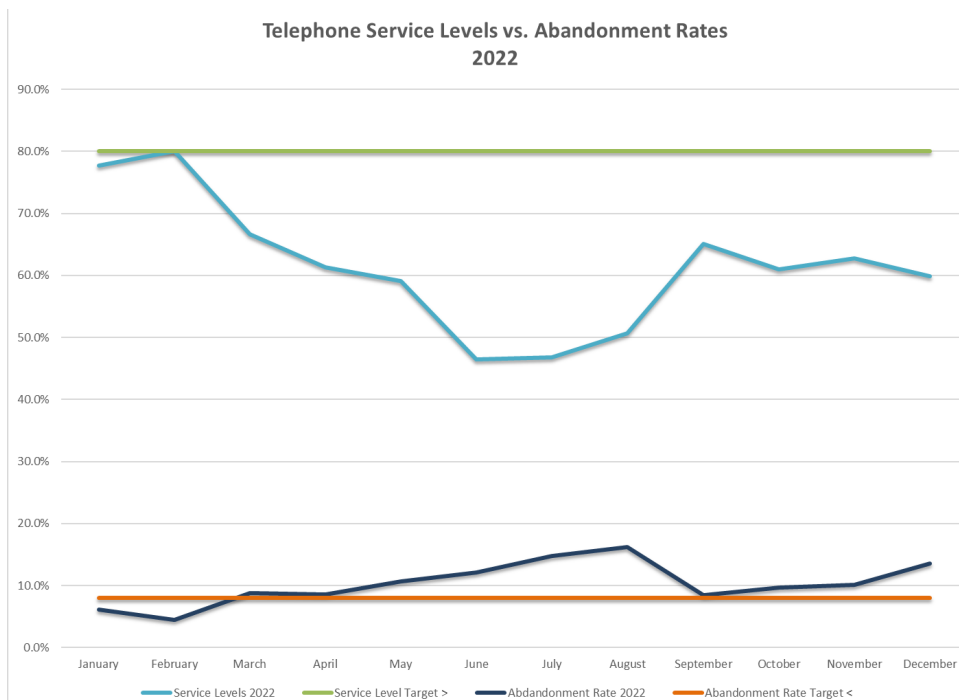
Waste Collection



The town’s waste collection is conducted by Green for Life. Equipped with their own customer Call Centre, GFL shares their reported data with all N6 municipalities including Newmarket.

Waste is collected at over 27,000 residential homes per week in Newmarket, 52 weeks a year. Each collection removes 3 streams, Blue Bin, Green Bin, & Garbage (yard waste also collected from April - October). These streams are collected using two different types of trucks to make collection more efficient. Missed collection/ complaints increased 377 complaints from 2021, or 7.3 more reported collection issues per collection.

Service Levels & Abandonment Rates



The Customer Service Department aims to answer 80% of incoming calls within 20 seconds (Service Level) and have no more than 8% of callers hang up before reaching an associate (Abandonment Rate). Generally, in the prior to the pandemic, the department was able to perform within these parameters.

However, since then, the length of time spent with each call (on average) is increasing. Coupled with a continued increase in service volumes, this has resulted in service levels (blue line) dropping well below the established threshold. Abandonment rates

(in dark blue) were also affected. Callers were waiting longer to speak with an associate which resulted in more residents hanging up prior to be served.