

Committee of the Whole (2) Report

DATE: Tuesday, April 8, 2025

WARD(S): ALL

TITLE: SERVICE VAUGHAN 2024 UPDATE

FROM:

Micheal Genova, Deputy City Manager, Strategic Initiatives

ACTION: FOR INFORMATION

Purpose

To provide an update on Service Vaughan's 2024 operations, including call volumes, wait times and initiatives to enhance the public's experience interacting with their local government and achieving first-point-of-contact resolutions.

Report Highlights

- Service Vaughan is the public's first point of contact with the City, with thousands of interactions every year. In 2024 alone, it received 175,314 calls (with an average wait time of six minutes), 25,248 emails, 12,293 in-person visits to the Welcome Desk at City Hall and 8,983 calls to the overnight contact centre.
- A critical milestone for Service Vaughan in 2024 resulted from a corporate reorganization that moved the contact centre into the Communications, Marketing and Engagement department to centralize and enhance the City's communications and customer service offerings.
- Highlights from 2024 include progress being made to improve centralized services for in-person service delivery; the continued expansion of the Citizen Relationship Management (CRM) tool across the corporation; the launch of a new telephone system with additional features; and continued progress on the internal audit management action plan.

Report Highlights continued

- The Communications, Marketing and Engagement department operates four corporate social media sites – Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and X – with a combined total of 87,632 followers as of Dec. 31, 2024. Staff respond to thousands of inquiries over social media each year, in collaboration with Service Vaughan, with every effort made to resolve matters on the first point of contact (via social media in this case). This is example of the synergies leveraged through Service Vaughan's reorganization into Communications, Marketing and Engagement.
- Staff will bring a report to Committee of the Whole in Q1/Q2 2026 to report on Service Vaughan's 2025 metrics, trends and highlights.

Recommendations

1. That the Service Vaughan 2024 Update be received.

Background

Findings from an audit conducted by the City of Vaughan's Internal Audit department for Service Vaughan were presented to Vaughan Council in June 2022. At that time, Service Vaughan staff committed to increasing engagement with the Mayor and Members of Council and City staff, including annual reporting to Council, given the critical citizen experience function it provides the public.

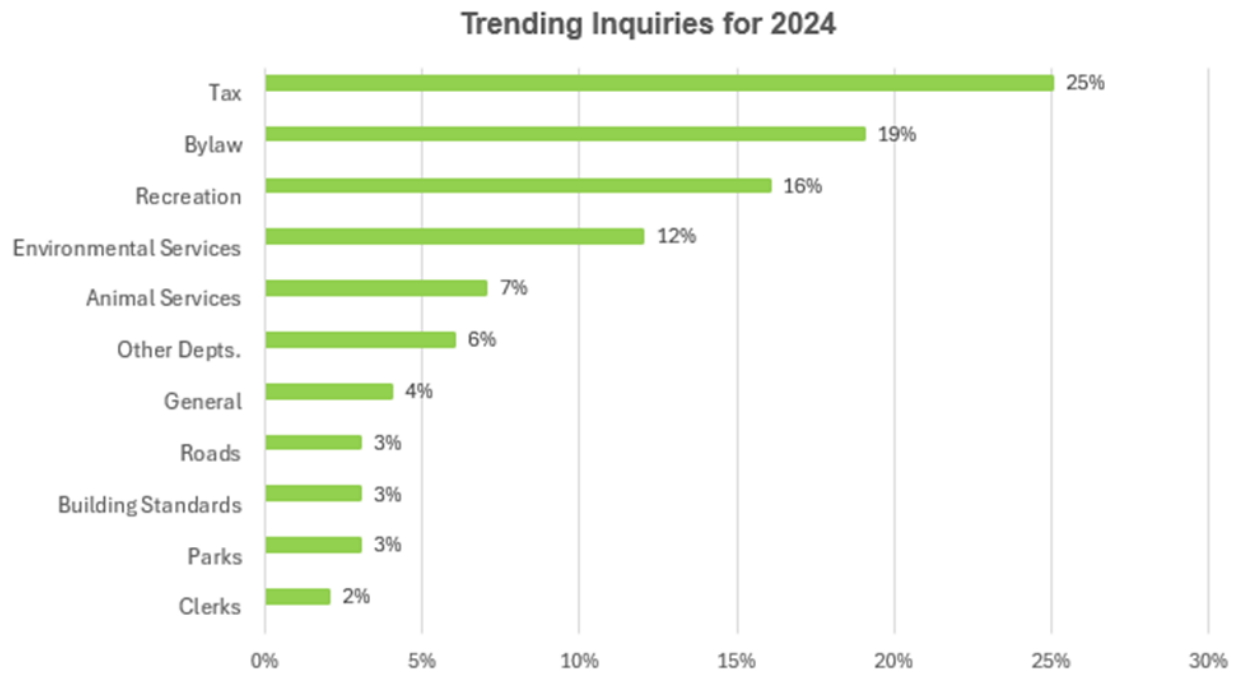
The timing of this report coincides with critical milestones for Service Vaughan, including the July 2024 organizational restructuring that moved the contact centre into the Communications, Marketing and Engagement department to centralize and enhance the City's communications and customer service offerings. Other highlights include progress being made to improve centralized services for in-person service delivery; the continued expansion of the Citizen Relationship Management (CRM) tool across the corporation; the launch of a new telephone system with additional features that have further improved the citizen and agent experience; and continued progress on the internal audit management action plan.

These milestones and all Service Vaughan operations are informed by the extensive data collected and analyzed throughout the year. The department generates a wide variety of data, which is analyzed by staff to inform and enhance accurate and responsive management of operations and guide how the contact centre will expand its services.

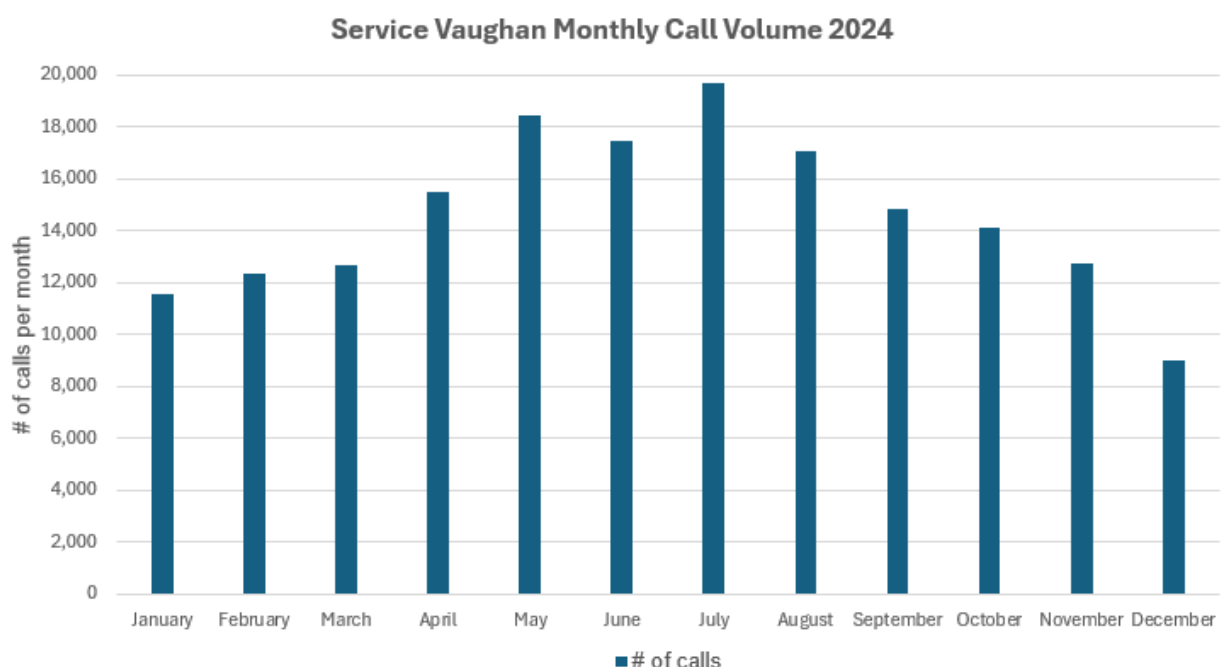
Here is an overview of key metrics and trends from January to December 2024:

Service Vaughan contact centre (Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.)	
Wait time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average six-minute wait time overall
Call volume	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 175,314 calls received • 128,778 calls responded to <p><i>Examples of unanswered calls include unintentional dialing, resolved matters and preference to call back later</i></p>
Email volume	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25,248 emails received and responded to
In person at City Hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12,293 in-person visits to the welcome desk at City Hall
Resolution rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 59 per cent of calls, emails and in-person visits were resolved at the first point of contact <p><i>In this context, resolution is not intended to mean all work regarding the inquiry and/or request has been completed</i></p>
Trending inquiries	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Financial Services: overdue accounts, late payments and arrears 2. By-law and Compliance, Licensing and Permit Services: booking/cancelling parking ticket dispute appointments 3. Recreation Services: program registration, drop-in activities and fitness memberships 4. Environmental Services: waste collection and set-out requirements, requests for blue and green bin exchanges, and reporting missed waste collection
Overnight/weekend contact centre weekly overview	
Wait time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average two-minute wait time overall
Call volume	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8,983 calls received
Trending inquiries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal Services: reports of injured/dead wildlife • By-law and Compliance, Licensing and Permit Services: parked cars and parking permits

Here is a breakdown of the trending inquiry topics from January to December 2024:



Call volumes vary throughout the year and tend to be cyclical in nature – based on seasons, tax billing cycles, recreation program registration dates and more.



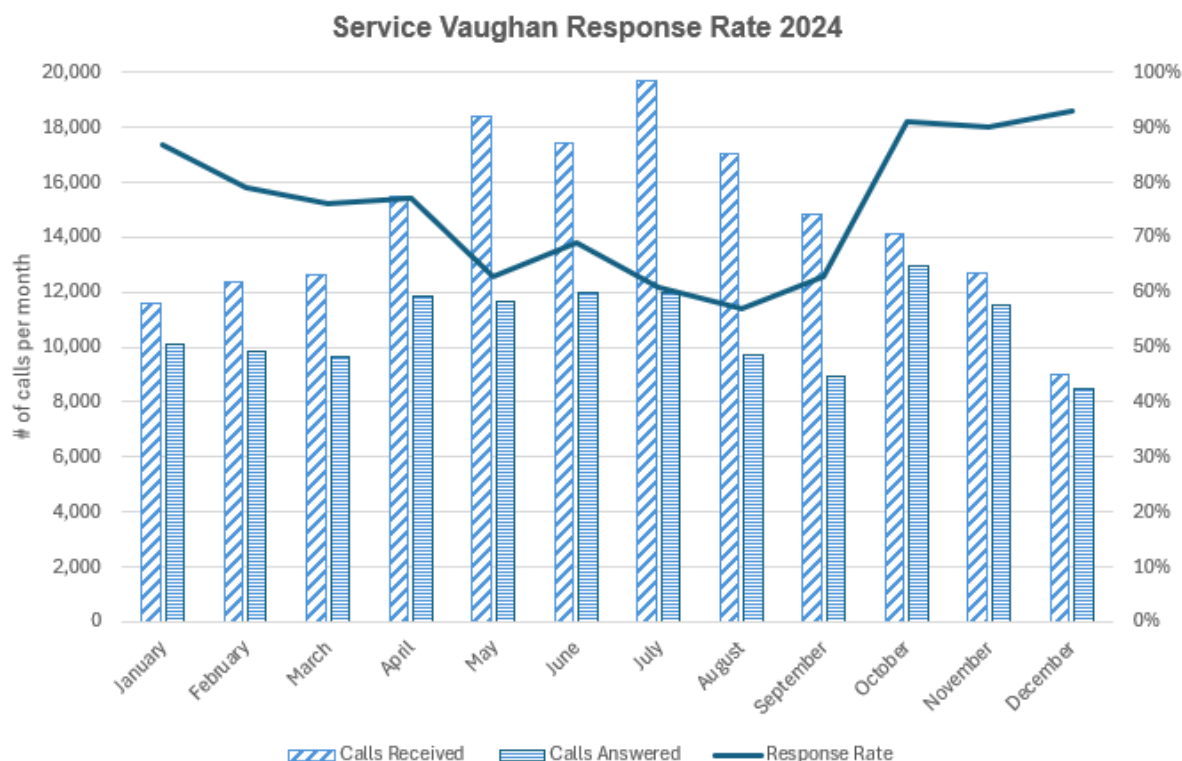
In 2024, Service Vaughan received 175,314 calls, up from 169,330 in 2023, which reflects a 3.5 per cent increase. The overall monthly call volume average for 2024 was 14,610.

Service Vaughan routinely experiences an increase in call volumes in March due to the first property tax installment due date and then in July due to the first installment of the final tax bill. Calls also increase in May/June when the weather improves as residents spend more time outdoors and are more likely to submit requests for seasonal maintenance, like tree pruning or grass cutting. Recreation program registration periods also result in increased calls.

The Communications, Marketing and Engagement department, including Service Vaughan, meets daily to monitor these trends and tailor communications campaigns throughout the year to address issues that are top of mind for residents. This includes a monthly *You Asked, We Answered* campaign on the top resident inquiries over the past month.

As well, the Communications, Marketing, and Engagement department employs campaigns to encourage residents to leverage the self-serve options available on the Service Vaughan portal. The expansion of online service offerings has also contributed to high volumes of email inquiries to Service Vaughan.

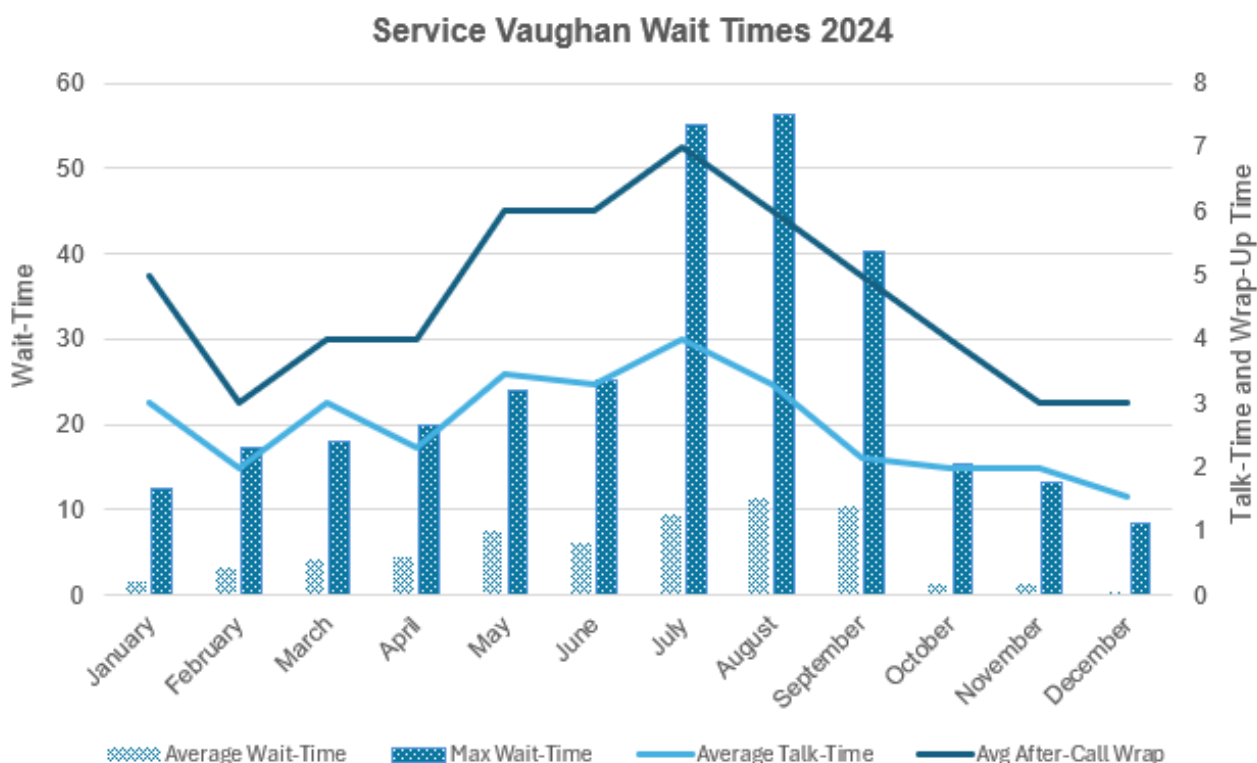
Response rates vary from the number of calls received for a variety of reasons, including the inquiry being addressed by on-hold messaging, technical issues and misdialled numbers.



This graph shows the calls received and responded to from January to December 2024. The number of calls is shown on the left y-axis (horizontal striped bar) and the percentage of calls answered (or response rate, the solid black line) is shown on the right y-axis.

The difference between the number of calls received and responded to is the result of a number of factors. For instance, a caller may hang up if their inquiry is addressed through the on-hold messaging. Other factors include technical issues, the resident dialing an incorrect number or choosing to call back at a different time. All callers that remain on the line are connected to a Service Vaughan agent and receive an action or response to their inquiry.

Keeping call wait times as low as possible is a top priority for Service Vaughan.



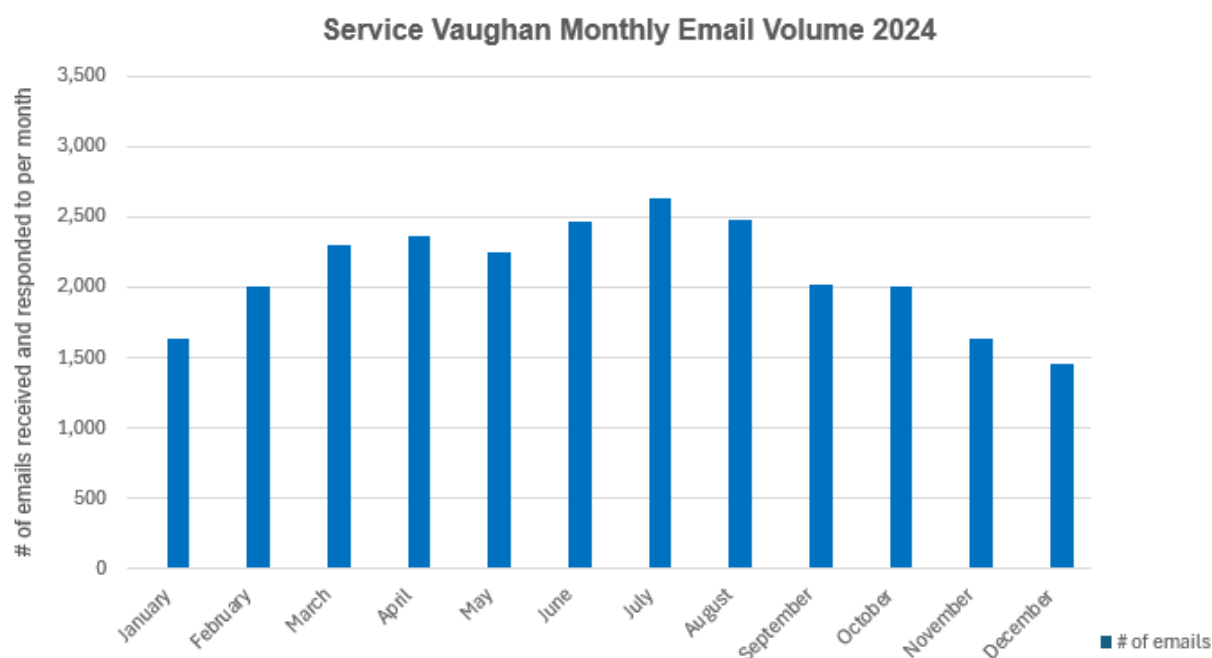
This graph shows the average wait time (lattice line), maximum wait time (adjacent to lattice line), average call length (horizontal grey line) and the average after-call wrap for agents to complete (horizontal black line) from January to December 2024.

Call length reflects the time an agent spends with the caller, while the after-call wrap time reflects what the agent needs to do to complete service delivery. For example, creating and assigning files, tracking interactions and communicating with other City staff. Service Vaughan responds to a variety of inquiry types; some types exclusively require information sharing to achieve first point-of-contact resolution. Other types require information sharing and additional action.

A key trend to note is after-call work is highest in January, May, June and July due to the winter, spring and summer weather; almost every call relating to weather requires a file to be created and assigned for investigation and service delivery. It is important to note the **average** wait time for telephone service reflects more commonly what residents are experiencing when they call Service Vaughan. In contrast, the maximum wait time reflects the **longest** possible wait time during that month.

The average wait time in 2024 was six minutes. As part of the commitment to keeping wait times low, Service Vaughan requested an additional Citizen Service Specialist as part of the 2025 Budget, which was approved by Mayor and Council. As well, during peak call and email periods, contract work surges are brought on to support operations.

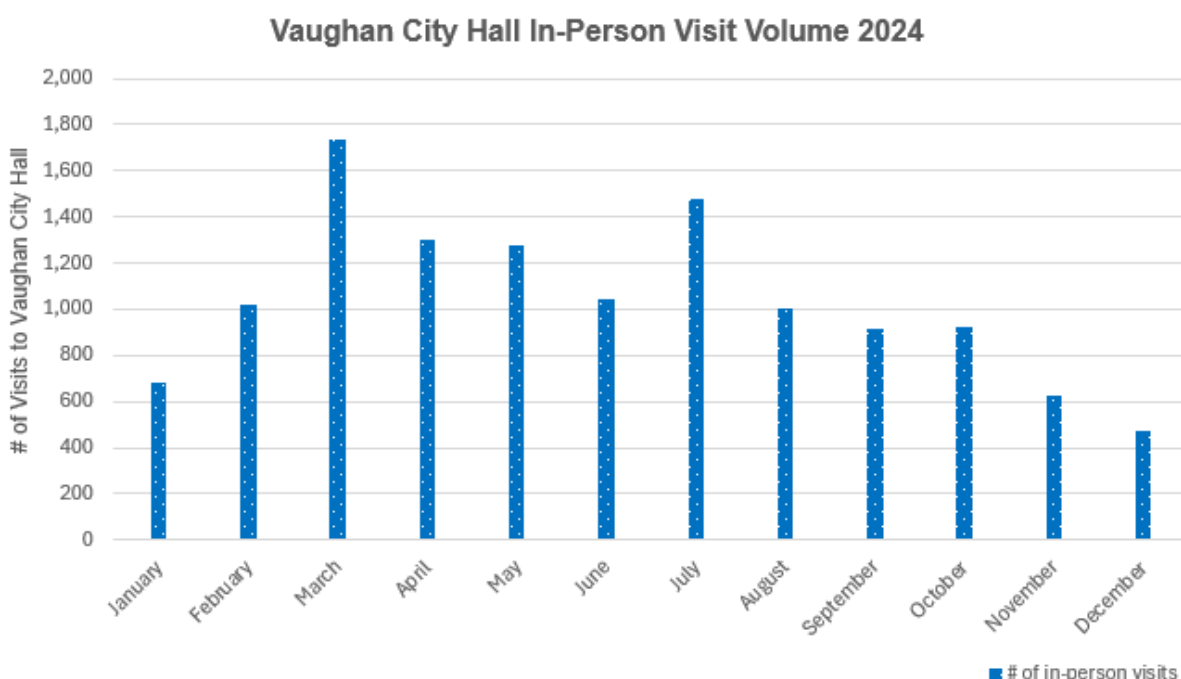
In 2024, the number of emails received by the contact centre remained consistent with 2023 with 25,248 received and responded to.



This graph shows the total number of emails (actioned or responded to) received by Service Vaughan from January to December 2024. The team typically experiences an increase in emails in March due to property tax inquiries, with residents requesting to join the Pre-authorized Tax Payment (PTP) program before the first interim bill installment due date. The same is experienced in June and July, with residents requesting to join the PTP program before the first final bill installment due date.

In addition to emails, the Communications, Marketing and Engagement department operates four corporate social media sites – Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and X – with a combined total of 87,632 followers as of Dec. 31, 2024. Staff respond to thousands of inquiries over social media each year, in collaboration with Service Vaughan, with every effort made to resolve matters on the first point of contact (via social media in this case). This is another example of the synergies leveraged through Service Vaughan’s reorganization into Communications, Marketing and Engagement.

In 2024, there were 12,293 in-person interactions at the welcome desk at Vaughan City Hall which is consistent with 2024.



This graph shows the number of people who visited City Hall for in-person service delivery from January to December 2024. In addition to an increase in emails, Service Vaughan experiences an increase in in-person visits in March and July because of tax bills. In-person volume continues to be monitored to identify areas for improvement.

Progress is being made to improve centralized in-person service delivery.

Service Vaughan has a dedicated tax service specialist as in-person data continues to show steady volumes and interest in tax-related visits. In 2024, Service Vaughan helped resolve and triage 6,006 in-person tax-related requests.

A recent service improvement by Service Vaughan was providing agents with the ability to provide citizens with tax statements directly from the service counter. Before this improvement, citizens had to wait to meet with a tax specialist directly to obtain a statement. Requests for tax statements continue to be the top in-person tax-related service request, with Service Vaughan assisting with 1,228 tax statement inquiries in 2024. The streamlining of this process has improved the citizen experience, decreasing the amount of time citizens wait to receive a statement. This is especially evident during high-volume periods, when queues to speak with a tax specialist may be long, as citizens can now receive their statements directly from the service counter.

With the continued expansion of the Citizen Relationship Management (CRM) technology throughout the corporation, Service Vaughan is further improving front-line service to the public.

CRM is a tool that allows Service Vaughan agents and other City staff to:

- create resident profiles and maintain a centralized database across the organization.
- create case files to receive and respond to resident reports of issues throughout the city.
- manage communication and interactions with Vaughan residents.
- generate performance reports to track case volumes, resolution timelines, and resident satisfaction.
- improve resident satisfaction with a more accurate and efficient response to reported issues.
- improve the efficiency of administrative tasks associated with case management.

The City's CRM tool was introduced in 2019 through Service Vaughan and Environmental Services. After a successful launch, plans were made to onboard Parks, Forestry and Horticulture Operations, Transportation and Fleet Management Services, Water and Wastewater Services and the winter operations team. These were onboarded between 2020 and 2022. In 2022, this expansion of the CRM was leveraged to provide new self-serve options to the public online at vaughan.ca/ServiceVaughan. Examples of self-serve options include reporting missed waste collection, reporting a pothole and requesting tree pruning. In 2023, CRM technology was expanded to include Development Engineering and Infrastructure Delivery. In 2024, the expansion continued with the addition of Parks Infrastructure Planning and Development. With the Office of the Chief Information Officer staff managing the CRM project and configuring platform changes, the Parks Infrastructure team can now create, update and track case files within the CRM.

As the CRM software is adopted by more departments within the corporation, the delivery of services and the ability to resolve resident inquiries at the first point of contact will improve, as all information is housed in a central repository.

In 2024, Service Vaughan launched a new telephony system to further improve the citizen experience.

In Q3 2024, with facilitation by the Office of the Chief Information Officer, Service Vaughan launched a new call centre solution. With the introduction of this new system, a callback feature was introduced that allows citizens to opt for a callback to avoid waiting on the line. Additionally, a feature was also introduced that updates callers in real-time on their position in the queue.

This solution also offers agents the ability to view the number of calls waiting in the queue, agents logged in, and the wait-time for internal partner queues. Service Vaughan agents can also view their personal call history, review their own call recordings and view their caller's ID where available. The new phone system also provides Work Force Management software that will streamline the creation of agent schedules and further track agent productivity. The configuration and launch of the Work Force Management software is scheduled for Q3 2025.

Service Vaughan continues making progress on the internal audit management action plan.

Service Vaughan management has developed and implemented various operational and staffing strategies to improve service levels in line with the recommendations of the 2022 audit by Internal Audit. Service Vaughan has reviewed, and will continue to review, key metrics, including the data capture and reporting requirements from the after-hours contact centre and improvement opportunities.

Stakeholder consultations and evaluations of service standards and performance metrics for optimal service standards for this project were completed in Q4 2023. In the short term, these efforts will further inform reporting requirements and staffing strategies for peak business periods and provide context for a longer-term staffing strategy based on business demand, which continued in 2024 and was reflected in the 2025 Budget process with the request for an additional Citizen Service Specialist.

In Q4 2023, the audit also led to a winter operations pilot project with the after-hours contact centre to improve customer service during winter storms when inquiries typically spike. The project was created in collaboration with Procurement Services, the Office of the Chief Information Officer and Transportation and Fleet Management Services. It leverages the after-hours contact centre service provider during Service Vaughan's weekday operational hours throughout inclement weather to respond to winter-related inquiries. In Q1 2025, Service Vaughan transitioned to a new afterhours provider and is working to continue this practice going forward.

Furthermore, Service Vaughan management is developing Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) – step-by-step instructions for responding to citizens – and improving the staff training program. The training developed for payment processing functions is also translated into an SOP. All SOPs will be developed for the Service Vaughan team of agents, fully outlining the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities. Further reviews of the SOPs and performance evaluation methods are anticipated to be completed by Q4 2025 and will be ongoing, as required.

Ongoing training of Citizen Service Specialists is a priority. All calls are recorded for quality control purposes and many are routinely listened to by management to identify

areas for coaching. A plan to conduct periodic performance assessments was completed in Q2 2024 to continually improve staff training. Specialists receive weekly summaries of their performance metrics with goals and coaching provided as required.

Keeping Members of Council informed about Service Vaughan operations is essential. Communications, Marketing and Engagement staff meet monthly with Council office staff to discuss planned communications and call volumes, among other initiatives.

These briefings include updates about planned communications, call volumes, wait times and emerging and trending issues, among other initiatives. It is also an opportunity to receive feedback from Council staff on matters that require enhanced communications based on what Members of Council hear directly from their constituents. Council staff provide valuable situational analyses that help Communications, Marketing and Engagement prioritize work and messaging.

As well, every week, Service Vaughan management updates the Mayor and Members of Council and the Senior Leadership Team on key metrics related to the contact centre. This information includes average wait times, calls received and responded to, emails received and responded to, visits for in-person services and trending inquiries. This is intended to complement the standing monthly briefings to ensure open and effective communication on an ongoing basis.

Previous Reports/Authority

[Service Vaughan Audit, Audit Committee Report, September 19, 2022](#)

[Service Vaughan 2023-2024 Update, Committee of the Whole \(2\) Report, March 19, 2024](#)

Analysis and Options

Continuous improvement is critical to implementing the City's mission statement: *Citizens first through Service Excellence*. Service Vaughan continues to pursue its mandate of maintaining low wait times and increasing first-point-of-contact resolution rates by expanding the department's work scope through partnership integrations. This facilitates continuous improvement within Service Vaughan, ensuring residents receive the most efficient and effective service delivery, which remains a top priority.

Service Vaughan staff continue to collaborate with the Internal Audit department to fulfill the priorities within the management action plan.

The scope of the management action plan includes the following components:

- Develop effective and operational staffing strategies.
- Leverage technology.
- Develop SOPs and improve the agent training program.
- Develop a strategy to engage service partners.

These components are aligned with Service Vaughan's mandate. Delivering on this action plan will result in the continuation of effective wait time management, improved first-point-of-contact resolution and expansion of the CRM technology.

Financial Impact

None.

Operational Impact

None.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

The Service Vaughan Leadership Team represents the City's contact centre at the York Region Customer Service Best Practices Group. This customer service group includes all the leadership personnel of all the municipal contact centres in York Region. The group meets to discuss new and ongoing trends, contact centre metrics and contact centre business practices within York Region and beyond.

The Service Vaughan Leadership Team also represents the City's contact centre at the Municipal Services Delivery Officials (MSDO) Association. MSDO brings together senior service delivery professionals for educational and professional development. It also provides municipal representation in federal-provincial-territorial service delivery initiatives. The association focuses on contact centres, service centralization, digital service delivery and emerging technologies.

Conclusion

Service Vaughan, part of the Communications, Marketing and Engagement department, continues to be dedicated to ensuring the public receives timely, accurate and responsive information and service – whether by phone, email or in person. Service Vaughan collaborates with other departments to find process efficiencies and develop partnerships that will continue to improve the resident experience through increased first-point-of-contact resolution.

The Service Vaughan team continues to leverage technology, operational and staffing solutions to ensure low caller wait times and quick email response times. Reviewing and analyzing all data points related to the public's interactions with the contact centre continues to be integral to operations and continuous improvement efforts.

The Communications, Marketing and Engagement department ensures Members of Council receive ongoing reporting about Service Vaughan operations. Continued collaboration with Council offices remains essential to these operations.

Staff will bring a report to Committee of the Whole in Q1/Q2 2026 to report on Service Vaughan's 2025 metrics, trends and highlights.

For more information, please contact: Jennifer Ormston, Chief Communications Officer, ext. 8039.

Attachments

N/A

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