

# Customer Service

Each department was requested to respond to the following three questions:

- How has your department improved customer service?
- If your department had positions removed, how is it impacting your department?
- What does your department lack to improve customer service? (employee(s); software; equipment; etc.)

## ◇ UTILITY BILLING ◇

### **How has your department improved customer service?**

Our department is committed to maintaining high-quality customer service, even as we face the dual challenge of reduced staffing and a continuously growing population. As the community expands, we are responsible for managing more meters, more accounts, and a higher volume of customer inquiries. This increased demand requires the same level of accuracy, responsiveness, and follow-through as our customers expect, but with fewer staff available to deliver it.

To uphold service standards, our team has streamlined workflows, prioritized essential tasks, and maximized efficiency wherever possible. However, there are operational limits to what can be sustained long-term without impacting service quality. Growing account volumes require more time for meter management, billing oversight, issue resolution, and customer support. With fewer employees, each team member is carrying a significantly larger workload, which increases the risk of delays, errors, and service inconsistencies.

Despite these challenges, our team continues to perform at a high level, but maintaining this standard with decreasing personnel and increasing population growth is not sustainable without additional support or resources. To protect customer satisfaction, minimize service disruptions, and maintain the accuracy and reliability expected of our department, it is essential to align staffing levels with the growing operational demand.

### **If your department had positions removed, how is it impacting your department?**

#### **1. Higher Workload for Remaining Staff**

When the third person was removed, their tasks didn't disappear — they were redistributed. This has led to:

- Slower response times
- Overworked employees
- Staff feeling stressed or burned out

#### **2. Longer Wait Times for Customers**

- Longer phone hold times
- Slower email or ticket responses
- Delays in resolving issues

### 3. Reduced Personal Attention

- Employees have less time to give individualized help
- Interactions can feel rushed or less friendly
- Follow-up may slip through the cracks

### 4. Decreased Service Quality

- Issues may be resolved incompletely
- Customers may need to call back multiple times
- Details can be overlooked

### 5. Loss of Role-Specific Expertise

The third clerk position had specialized knowledge—billing, technical support, new service, etc. (that the receptionist does not have or can help with)

### 6. Lower Employee Morale

- Feel undervalued
- Worry about job security
- Become disengaged

**Removing this position is already having a negative impact on customer service.**

The responsibilities handled by this role have not disappeared; they have simply been redistributed among the remaining staff, who are now operating at or above capacity. As a result, response times are increasing, follow-through is decreasing, and employees have less time to give customers the thorough, personalized support they expect.

Additionally, this position provided specialized knowledge (billing, new service support, technical support, ext.) that ensured issues were resolved accurately and efficiently that a receptionist who helps the department does not have. Without that expertise, more cases require escalation or additional research, leading to longer resolution times and inconsistent service quality. This creates frustration not only for customers but also for employees who are struggling to keep pace.

Also, due to ongoing staffing shortages and increasing departmental workload, the supervisor has been required to provide frequent frontline support to maintain daily operations and service levels. While this has helped ensure that immediate customer needs are met, it has also limited the supervisor's ability to fully perform essential supervisory responsibilities—such as staff development, process oversight, quality control, and strategic planning.

The continued need to shift the supervisor into direct operational tasks is creating gaps in these areas and reducing overall efficiency. To sustain the level of customer service expected and to prevent long-term impacts on performance, it is important to address staffing capacity so the supervisor can resume their full scope of responsibilities.

Finally, the increased workload and pressure are contributing to lower morale, which has inevitably affected how staff interact. These factors will continue to erode customer satisfaction, reduce trust, and increase the risk of service failures.

In summary, the removal of this role is creating operational gaps that directly compromise service quality, efficiency, and customer experience.

**What does your department lack to improve customer service? (employee(s); software; equipment; etc.)**

The Utility Billing Department no longer has the staffing necessary to maintain the level of customer service and operational efficiency that we provided in the past. As account volumes, meter counts, and service demands have steadily increased, our team size has not kept pace. The result is a growing workload that exceeds the department's reasonable capacity, even with improved processes and staff working at maximum efficiency.

Previously, adequate staffing allowed us to provide quick response times, accurate billing, proactive issue resolution, and consistently positive customer experience. With fewer employees, those standards are increasingly difficult to uphold. Essential tasks are taking longer to complete, follow-up is harder to maintain, and the risk of errors or delays has risen simply because the workload is too large for the remaining team.

Despite these challenges, staff continue to perform at a high level, but the current structure is not sustainable. Without sufficient personnel, the department cannot continue delivering the same reliability, accuracy, and customer support that residents have come to expect. To preserve service quality and safeguard operational integrity, it is critical to align staffing levels with the demands of our growing community.

## ◇ EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ◇

**How has your department improved customer service?**

We have updated our webpage to ensure that residents have direct access to information they need to prepare for and respond to emergencies. We routinely seek opportunities to build relationships within the community with our vulnerable populations and those that serve them so that they will have a trusted conduit for information and resources during disasters.

**If your department had positions removed, how is it impacting your department?**

We have not lost a position, and staffing is adequate for the current size of the City and scope of responsibilities.

**What does your department lack to improve customer service? (employee(s); software; equipment; etc.)**

Just time. I am working through a backlog of necessary actions but progress is being made that will give me more time for forwarding looking projects to build capacity in the future.

## ◇ MUNICIPAL COURT ◇

**How has your department improved customer service?**

Our department has improved customer service by increasing accessibility for defendants with disabilities and language barriers. We now use iPads equipped with Language Line services to assist

Spanish-speaking defendants and defendants who are deaf or hard of hearing. This allows us to communicate more effectively at the service window, ensures accurate information is provided, and helps us better meet the needs of all individuals we serve.

In 2025, Municipal Court was honored as the recipient of the Municipal Traffic Safety Initiative Award. This recognition provided an opportunity to highlight our ongoing efforts to engage the community on the importance of traffic safety. Our team works diligently to communicate with the public and promote understanding of the court's role in ensuring community safety.

Municipal Court is currently undergoing training to implement paperless court hearings, improving response time for defendants between appearing before the judge and completing final paperwork at the service window.

**If your department had positions removed, how is it impacting your department?**

When positions in our department are removed or frozen, it has a direct and significant impact on our daily operations. Being short a clerk affects our ability to manage court days, approve vacation requests, and maintain adequate staffing at the customer service window, especially on specific Fridays where only one employee is working and the court closes for lunch. This has also had an impact on our current employees, who are continually required to make do, which has negatively affected morale.

**What does your department lack to improve customer service? (employee(s); software; equipment; etc.)**

Municipal Court could significantly alleviate operational constraints by lifting the freeze on the vacant clerk position. Additionally, allocating funds to support enhanced customer service and team-building training would strengthen staff effectiveness.

## ◇ CITY SECRETARY'S OFFICE ◇

**How has your department improved customer service?**

Over the past year, our department has enhanced customer service by streamlining internal processes, strengthening communication, fostering team collaboration, and prioritizing professional development. In addition, our office has participated in ongoing, job-specific training to ensure a clear understanding of roles, responsibilities, and procedures. These efforts have enabled us to respond to customer inquiries more accurately, resolve issues more efficiently, and reduce errors that can lead to delays or frustration.

On December 3, our office, with assistance of Martha Eighme, arranged mandatory customer service training for all employees. We invited Julie Burch who came highly recommended by other cities where she designed the training specifically for Angleton to promote consistent service standards across departments.

**If your department had positions removed, how is it impacting your department?**

The City Secretary's Office has not experienced any position reductions; however, we have felt the impact of staff shortages in other departments through the support we have provided.

**What does your department lack to improve customer service? (employee(s); software; equipment; etc.)**

The City Secretary's Office does not interact with Angleton residents as frequently as other departments, as the majority of our customer service is provided internally. Much of this internal work is currently handled through manual processes, including tracking and executing contracts and managing Boards and Commissions volunteer applications. Implementing dedicated software to support these functions would significantly improve efficiency. The time required to manually track and record these items is substantial, and with only two staff members in the department, automation would allow us to reclaim valuable staff hours and focus on higher-priority responsibilities.

The City Secretary's Office would benefit from the addition of an employee. At present, staffing limitations restrict our ability to complete key projects, including mandated annual Records Management training for employees, Records Room organization and indexing, Laserfiche initiatives, and the revision of several outdated ordinances such as the Records Management Policy, Council Rules and Procedures, Boards and Commissions guidelines, and etc.

## ◇ PARKS AND RECREATION ◇

**How has your department improved customer service?**

- Incorporated a customer service focus into all ARC monthly staff meetings.
- Increased on-shift engagement by professional staff to provide frontline employees with immediate feedback, guidance, and support.
- All full-time staff completed the Citywide Customer Service Training to promote consistent service standards across the department.

**If your department had positions removed, how is it impacting your department?**

- Park Crews
  - The loss of two Parks crew positions has impacted mowing schedules and the department's ability to complete projects in a timely manner.
  - Elimination of a beautification-focused position has reduced landscaping, garden bed maintenance, and detailed park upkeep.
  - Current staffing primarily limits crews to weed control and pesticide application, which is less visually appealing and not ideal for long-term landscape health.
  - Recent land acquisitions at Abigail Arias Park and Bates Park, along with upcoming construction, will further increase maintenance demands and staff workload.
  - Remaining staff have absorbed additional responsibilities, creating operational strain while working to maintain service expectations.
- Assistant Director
  - The Assistant Director position previously provided critical operational and project management support, allowing leadership to remain visible, responsive, and accessible to staff and the public.
  - Responsibilities formerly shared across two leadership roles were consolidated under the Director, increasing workload and reducing capacity for direct customer service engagement and staff support.

- The expanded leadership scope affects the department's ability to balance major capital projects, park development efforts, strategic initiatives, and ongoing service and facility improvements.
- The absence of an Assistant Director reduces organizational flexibility and responsiveness when addressing emerging issues, peak workload periods, and new initiatives.
  - Restoring the Assistant Director position would enhance customer service by increasing leadership availability, strengthening staff support and accountability, improving responsiveness to community needs, and allowing effective planning for future projects, goals, and initiatives.

**What does your department lack to improve customer service? (employee(s); software; equipment; etc.)**

- Staffing levels sufficient to return the department to previous service and maintenance standards, including two Parks crew positions and the Assistant Director role.
- Recommend continued investment into Citywide staff training on an annual basis to reinforce importance across the City and set a specific standard for Angleton.

**Overall Impact on Customer Service**

- Reduced staffing levels within Parks & Recreation affect the department's ability to consistently maintain previous service standards while managing a growing system of parks, facilities, programs, and capital projects. While staff continue to prioritize customer service through training, engagement, and responsiveness, limited operational and leadership capacity reduces flexibility, slows response times, and limits proactive service improvements.

These constraints also impact coordination with other City departments. As staffing and leadership availability are stretched, collaboration with other City departments may require additional time, affecting service timelines for shared projects and resident requests that span multiple departments.

Restoring key operational and leadership positions would enhance service by improving responsiveness, strengthening staff support, and increasing organizational flexibility, while also improving interdepartmental coordination and the City's overall ability to efficiently serve residents and advance shared goals and initiatives.

## ◇ PUBLIC WORKS ◇

**How has your department improved customer service?**

The public works department has improved customer service by providing feedback on work orders that are entered. Customers will now receive notification on the status of changes to their work orders. PW has also begun a ditch maintenance and sweeping schedule that will be implemented in January 2026. This will provide residents with a monthly look at the schedule of these events. From 2024 to 2025, PW lowered the average turnaround time for all work orders by 2 days.

**If your department had positions removed, how is it impacting your department?**

N/A

**What does your department lack to improve customer service? (employee(s); software; equipment; etc.)**

For our department to improve customer service further we will need additional employees and equipment.

## ◇ COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING ◇

**How has your department improved customer service?**

Customer service is delivered primarily through **clear, timely, and proactive communication** with residents, businesses, and visitors. Strategic messaging helps keep the community informed, engaged, and—when necessary—safe, while reinforcing transparency and trust in City operations.

Communications are shared across multiple platforms to ensure accessibility and responsiveness, whether related to daily services, special events, or time-sensitive situations. Recent initiatives include the addition of *Council Connection* and *What's on the Agenda* communications, along with the proposed development of a *Shop Local - Dine Local* campaign aimed at supporting local businesses and encouraging community engagement.

In 2025, the department expanded its event programming with the addition of the Artisan Market, further supporting tourism, small businesses, and community connection. Across Angleton Markets, the department communicates with a combined total of more than 275 vendors. Consistent outreach and targeted marketing efforts have contributed to strong vendor participation and continued shopper turnout, supporting the ongoing success of these events.

**If your department had positions removed, how is it impacting your department?**

The removal of a full-time support position has reduced capacity and operational redundancy, particularly during emergencies and peak event periods.

Previously, this position provided backup support for the Public Information Officer, including alternate shift coverage during Emergency Operations Center activations and assistance with strategic communications. The role also supported planning and implementation for major city events such as Angleton Market Days, Freedom Fireworks, Artisan Market, Concerts in the Park, and Heart of Christmas.

While services continue to be delivered at a high level, the department now operates with less flexibility and surge capacity during high-demand periods.

**What does your department lack to improve customer service? (employee(s); software; equipment; etc.)**

At this time, the department does not identify additional needs related to software or equipment.

Looking ahead, a future consideration would be the reinstatement of a support position to provide backup for the Public Information Officer and assist with communications and event

implementation. This would strengthen continuity during emergencies and support the City's expanding portfolio of events that contribute to economic vitality and community connection.

## ◇ HUMAN RESOURCES ◇

### **How has your department improved customer service?**

HR has not improved since we only were a department of 2 and are now a department of 1, when I must be out of the office, take PTO or attend training the department is closed. I am unable to offer in-person open enrollment this year and have put training on the back burner.

I have not been able to conduct exit interviews for every employee.

I have had to ask for help from other departments when overwhelmed. HR is unavailable to employees as it used to be.

### **If your department had positions removed, how is it impacting your department?**

See above.

### **What does your department lack to improve customer service? (employee(s); software; equipment; etc.)**

An LMS system that would assist a 1-person department provide training.

Staff backup so the department does not have to close when I am not in the office.

An open door to HR. I have been told several department heads have directed staff never go to HR, always go to the director and this should not be the case if the person has a concern or wants to discuss a private matter.

## ◇ INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ◇

The Information Technology department has always strived to provide excellent customer service. Customer service training helped to remind us of the key aspects of providing good customer service. Having staff who enjoy helping others has proven effective in receiving positive feedback in our department.

However, there are areas where support could be improved using technology and additional staff.

With tight budgets, some projects are just too costly to maintain through 3rd-party contractors. Inflation and tariffs have hit the tech industry hard, and quotes are reflecting those increases. Recent quotes for access control and security cameras have increased between 30-50%. Additional staff would help complete these as in-house projects more



quickly and allow for faster response times. Having additional staff could reduce juggling of highest priority projects and allow for project focus and efficiency.

## ◇ DEVELOPMENT SERVICES ◇

### **How has your department improved customer service?**

Customer service remains one of the top driving focuses of the Development Services Department as we remain to be the *front door* to the development process.

We have perfected our predevelopment process, as all persons interested in developing land are required to submit a (*DAWG/Developing Angleton Working Group*) meeting request with the review team, in order to be informed of what is expected before grand opening or certificate of occupancy.

We have made the necessary process improvements on the permit side, as we celebrate the 1-year anniversary of our ***My Government Online Portal***. We will continue to perfect and streamline that process on behalf of our customers.

### **If your department had positions removed, how is it impacting your department?**

The removal of our part-time permit clerk has tremendously impacted the department's efficiency and response time during peak development periods. We had to replace the supportive position of Development Coordinator, which acts primarily as a Planner 1 and supports the director with the planning and zoning functions. When Grace Garcia was promoted to the *Development Coordinator* role, Linda Brock was hired into the *primary permit clerk role*, which left our back-up part time position vacant and frozen at the same time. This negatively affects the workflow on every layer, especially during peak submittal periods when the case load gets heavy as we have seen in the December 2025 and January 2025 public meetings with multiple agenda items.

Customer service occurs at multiple thresholds such as over the phone engagement, front counter visits (not only for Development Services, but for other departments); person-to-person meetings/public meetings, and online permitting (where hundreds of applications have to be received, verified, communicated, routed, reviewed and coordination of inspections and final close out of Certificate of Occupancies).

We remain to have gaps where the front desk operations do not function as efficiently as it was meant to. Hence, we have to use the "bell" approach when the permit clerk position person either has to take a break, has Friday off, or vacation etc.

### **What does your department lack to improve customer service? (employee(s); software; equipment; etc.)**

At this time, Development Services has been equipped with state-of-the-art software, procedures, and tools that make the process work well. We will continue to build the portal to roll over an improved level of automation on the nuisance inspections, and Planning, Zoning and Platting level. We are challenged by recent State Law changes that will trigger pending new ordinances, fee changes and procedures, and we look forward to continued legal direction.

However, the only area needing further improvement would be the front desk replacement of the part-time role in Development Services. This will not only help the team manage the high capacity of permit processing and inspections, but it will aid in having human presence for City Hall fully each day of the week and also will dovetail the functions of the part-time receptionist that was hired in Utility Billing. One last suggestion that has helped me in other cities is a Team Visit to at least two (2) local comparable peer municipalities to network, and see what works better in other places.