

Online service to streamline citizen complaints

iCARE allows residents to follow up on their file

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Kirkland Mayor John Meaney (right) answers questions about a new online service for citizens Monday morning at Kirkland Town Hall.

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Are there too many potholes on your street? Have stray cats taken over your backyard? Grass at your local park getting too long? Kirkland residents now have an online tool to register their complaints, requests, and suggestions with the town, and do not even need to worry about what person or sector to address it to.



The iCARE (Computer Automated Request Exchange) system, which can be accessed through Kirkland's official website, automatically forwards the file to the appropriate department. The system then assigns a file manager who will follow the case from beginning to end.

iCARE also provides residents filing complaints in the system with an estimated date the problem will be solved and a reference number which can be used to follow the case's progress.

"This is an important step for our municipality," said Mayor John Meaney, adding it would often take residents a few tries to get a response after filing complaints over the phone, through mail, or in person. "The iCARE system is there to give residents a solid feeling their complaints are being followed up."

Developed and implemented by business process management and integration solutions specialist Techtra Inc., the \$20,000 project went through a three-month internal trial period in Kirkland before being publicly launched at a news conference

on Monday. In those three months, the town logged 500 complaints and 275 requests.

"There are always the usual complaints, but there are some very unique ones . . . and it's interesting to see how they are followed up," Meaney said.

Kirkland's information technology expert Nabil Takla demonstrated how the iCARE system works: residents, town employees, and elected officials register their complaints through one of five online forms and are then sent an e-mail confirmation with a reference number and a web address where they can follow up the progress of

their request. The file is automatically sent to the person responsible for such requests, who will receive an electronic notice they have a new file to deal with.

The iCARE system is also open to non-residents of Kirkland, in case they have any information requests or concerns about something in the municipality that might affect them.

“We’ve got a good product here,” Meaney said, adding the iCARE system is unique to Kirkland. He also pointed out

the mayors of Beaconsfield, Dollard des Ormeaux, Pointe Claire, and Montreal West attended the press conference to find out more about the new system.

People can access iCARE 24 hours a day, seven day a week from Kirkland’s website www.ville.kirkland.qc.ca) through the front page icon or the “online services” tab. Anyone without Internet access can still file their complaints, suggestions, or requests by telephone, in person, or by mail.