

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY

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January 21, 2020  
Start: 10:47 AM  
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HELD AT: 250 Broadway - Committee Rm.  
14<sup>th</sup> Fl.

B E F O R E: FERNANDO CABRERA  
Chairperson

ROBERT F. HOLDEN  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Ben Kallos  
Alana N. Maisel  
Bill Perkins  
Keith Powers  
Ydanis A. Rodriguez  
Kalman Yeger  
Diana Ayala  
Costa G. Constantinides  
Peter A. Koo  
Brad S. Lander  
Eric A. Ulrich

## A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Joe Morrisroe, Executive Director, New York  
City 311

Dominic Burg, Acting Deputy Commissioner,  
Department of Information Technology and  
Telecommunications, DOITT, for Business  
Solutions Delivered

Nickolan Plumber, Director of Barrier Free  
Living,

Marsha Collette Davis

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2 COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY 3

2 (sound check) (pause) (gavel)

3 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Good morning. I am  
4 the Chair of the Committee on Governmental Operation,  
5 Council Member Fernando Cabrera, and I am pleased to  
6 be joined today by colleague Council Member Robert  
7 Holden, Chair of the Committee on Technology along  
8 with colleagues Council Member Rodriguez, Kallos,  
9 Yeger, Koo, and Perkins. Today we'll be conducting  
10 oversight on the 311 Call Center as well as hearing a  
11 package of related legislation. I will speak briefly  
12 on the bills before the Governmental Operations  
13 Committee, and let Council Member Holden speak to the  
14 bill in the Technology Committee. We will also allow  
15 for bill sponsors to make statements on their bills.  
16 Introduction No. 462 sponsored by Council Member  
17 Dromm will prevent the 311 staff from refusing to  
18 enter complaints into their database if the customer  
19 is unable to provide an address or other locations  
20 recognized by the database utilized by 311. Proposed  
21 Introduction No. 1420-B sponsored by Council Member  
22 Matteo will require the Mayor's Office of Operations  
23 to report on the number of-of unsubstantiated 311  
24 complaints made against private properties, among  
25 several other items related to unsubstantiated 311

2 complaints. Proposed Introduction No. 1525-A  
3 sponsored by Council Member Koo will require the 311  
4 Customer Service Center to conduct at least five  
5 annual customer satisfaction surveys. These surveys  
6 would need to be conducted in the top 10 designated  
7 languages for the city in addition to these. These  
8 will also require an annual report. Introduction No.  
9 1830 sponsored by Council Member Ayala will require  
10 311 to maintain each service level agreement it has  
11 with city agencies on its website, and finally  
12 Proposed Introduction No. 1832-A sponsored by myself  
13 will require 311 to notify each agency when a  
14 customer's request for service or complaint has not  
15 been closed within the number of days specified in an  
16 existing service level agreement. Service level  
17 agreements between city agencies and 311 set the  
18 number of days within which each agency will respond  
19 to and close a request for service or complaint.  
20 Currently, if a customer places a 311 complaint they  
21 are able to track their complaint through 311  
22 website, through 311's website and Smart Phone app.  
23 The Online Complaint Tracker shows the service level  
24 agreement, complaint type. If the complaint is in  
25 "in progress" and how many days remains—and how many

3 days remain with given a service level agreement.

4 However, it is impossible to know what happens after

5 the service level agreements expire such as whether

6 311 notifies agencies that they are late on resolving

7 specific complaints. It's also difficult to know if

8 certain types of complaints are regularly resolved

9 early or late based on existing service level

10 agreements. I'm proud to sponsor Proposed

11 Introduction No. 1832-A, which works along side with

12 my colleagues Council Member Ayala's bill

13 Introduction No. 1830. These bills in particular will

14 make the existing resolution timelines between 311

15 and city agency more transparent. Today's also an

16 opportunity for the Governmental Operations Committee

17 to check in with 311 on issues raised in our 2019

18 oversight hearings with 311. These issues include

19 language access, agency responsiveness, agency

20 reporting. In addition to the technology updates and

21 disability issues that my Co-Chair will discuss, 311

22 is the average New York phone line to city

23 government. It is important that we get this right.

24 I've enjoyed working with the administration on this

25 issue touring the 311 Call Center, and I look forward

to today's discussion, and the work we still have to

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3 do. With that, I will hand it over to, um, hand it  
4 over to my Co-Chair Council Member Holden.

5 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Thank you. Good  
6 morning. I'm Council Member Robert Holden, Chair of  
7 the Committee on Technology. I am pleased to join the  
8 Committee on Government Operations chaired by my good  
9 friend Council Member Fernando Cabrera. Thank you  
10 all for being here today for this hearing. Today, we  
11 will be conducting oversight on the 311 system as  
12 well as hearing a package of related legislation  
13 including Intro 62 sponsored by Council Member Robert  
14 Cornegy, which would allow individuals to access the  
15 311 Website app and phone lines to be able to request  
16 that snow and ice be cleared from pedestrian bridges.  
17 Very timely. The 311 system serves as a crucial link  
18 between New York City residents and city agencies.  
19 New Yorkers use 311 to address essential concerns  
20 related to city services and infrastructure as well  
21 as to promote accountability within the city's  
22 agencies. With 311, residents can also call  
23 attention to problems in a neighborhood and help city  
24 agencies identify and eliminate public safety  
25 hazards. Residents can use 311 to address illegal  
parking, poor road conditions, waste disposal,

2 heating problems in buildings, noise complaints—and  
3 noise complaints among others. 311 can also be used  
4 for general information about the city including  
5 alternate side of the street parking, jury duty,  
6 government-government benefits, and cultural events.  
7 Clearly 311 serves an important purpose in New York  
8 City. In fact, 311 has had had five years of  
9 consecutive growth setting a new record in 2018 with  
10 44 million customer interactions. However, even  
11 though New York City employs the largest and most  
12 comprehensive 311 service in the nation, there are  
13 still areas where it fall behind other cities. For  
14 example, while cities such as San Francisco, Chicago  
15 and Los Angeles allow users to submit photos for all  
16 of their requests on their website and mobile  
17 platforms, New York City does not have this  
18 capability for its website and most of the complaint  
19 categories on its Mobile App. The process of  
20 submitting complaints can be confusing to navigate  
21 depending on the category, and in some cases like  
22 with illegal dumping requests lack a dedicated  
23 response form. Being a leader in these areas is  
24 crucial for New Yorkers especially because many  
25 resident like those in my district rely on 311 every

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3 day to bring attention to the problems we witness in  
4 our city. It is our hope that New York City  
5 continues to be a leader in 311 service-services  
6 moving forward. An enhanced 311 system would allow  
7 agencies to more accurately identify and address the  
8 essential needs of New York City residents and  
9 promote accountability and transparency between city  
10 agencies and the general public. We look forward to  
11 better understanding how the city can better serve  
12 its residents through improving its 311 services as  
13 well as understanding the current state of NYC 311.  
14 We wish to work together with the Administration on  
15 this important issue and look forward to hearing the  
16 valuable testimonies from the Administration experts  
17 and community advocates. I'd like to thank the staff  
18 of the Committee on Technology, Counsel-Counsel Irene  
19 Byhovsky, Analyst Charles Kim, Finance Analyst  
20 Florentine Gabor. Also, my Chief of Staff Daniel  
21 Kurzyna and Communication Director Ryan Kelly. With  
22 that, I would like to introduce Council Member Peter  
23 Koo who will speak on his legislation.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: (off mic/inaudible)

24 So, I didn't turn on the mic (laughs) Yeah, okay.  
25 It's now on. There are so many different ways for

3 residents of New York City to interact with the  
4 government. Almost too many. So, 311 is a wonderful  
5 customer service tool for New Yorkers, but anyone  
6 familiar with constituent services can also give you  
7 a laundry list of complaints from New Yorkers who are  
8 dissat-dissatisfied with 311. In immigrant  
9 communities one of the top reasons is language  
10 access. So we need to gain a greater understanding  
11 of how 311 is serving our immigrant communities and  
12 all the New Yorkers who may not speak English as a  
13 first language. We need to make sure our residents  
14 understand how to interact with our city agencies  
15 when they have a question about applying Universal  
16 Pre-K, when they have a question about their property  
17 taxes, when they have a complaint about a pothole.  
18 Just as important, we need to make sure we as the  
19 city of New York understanding and reacting to their  
20 concerns. This is a common sense bill look to any  
21 major corporations that deals with a large number of  
22 customer interactions. They all conduct customer  
23 surveys. So, we need to do the same. We need to do  
24 it in the language of New Yorkers. Thank you.  
25

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2 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Thank you Council  
3 Member Koo. I also want to recognize and introduce  
4 Council Member Matteo who will speak on Intro 1420.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER: MATTEO: Thank you,  
6 Chair Holden and Chair Cabrera and good morning to  
7 everyone. I'm speaking today on one of my bills,  
8 Intro 1420-B which would require the Mayor's Office  
9 of Operations to engage in a study of several years  
10 of 311 complaints, disaggregated by various criteria,  
11 but most importantly, whether were substantiated or  
12 made anonymously. I have long held that our 311  
13 system needs to be reformed. When I first ran for  
14 office, I pledged to my constituents that I would  
15 seek changes to protect them from 311 abuse. As a  
16 staffer and now as a member, I've heard stories from  
17 constituents that are detailed how the 311 system was  
18 used to harass them. Individuals who may have a  
19 vendetta often because they themselves were issued a  
20 violation due to a 311 complaint used the 311 system  
21 to send the resources of the city against their  
22 neighbors. Inspectors come out on a regular basis to  
23 investigate conditions that simply do not exist or  
24 are not violations of the law. This wastes their  
25 time, the city's resources, and negative affects the

3 quality of life of the residents themselves.

4 Sometimes inspectors will even issue a violation on

5 an unrelated matter simply so that stop being sent

6 back to the same place. That is why I introduced

7 legislation to suspend the use of anonymous

8 complaints for 90 days against specific properties

9 that are subjected to three unsubstantiated anonymous

10 complaints in a six month period. This term that

11 Intro is 188 of 2018. However, some of the

12 Administration questioned the data. That is why I

13 introduced the legislation being heard today. I

14 believe this study will provide the data we need to

15 address this larger issue, I ask my colleagues to

16 support both of these bills and look forward to

17 testimony today. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Thank you. We've

19 been joined by Council Member Rodriguez, and I want

20 to introduce the—where did it go—the panel. We have

21 with us on Panel 1 Dominic Burg who—from DOITT,

22 Deputy Commissioner and Joe Morrisoe, 311 Executive

23 Director, and you can—do you want to start?

24 LEGAL COUNSEL: Well, you'll be sworn in

25 firstly.

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2 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Okay, I'm, I'm  
3 sorry.

4 LEGAL COUNSEL: If you could both put up  
5 your hands. Do you swear that the testimony you  
6 provide this committee is truthful to the best of  
7 your knowledge, information and belief, and that you  
8 will respond honestly to Council Member questions?

9 PANEL MEMBERS: (in unison) Yes.

10 LEGAL COUNSEL: And if you could  
11 introduce yourselves before you begin speaking.

12 (pause)

13 JOE MORRISROE: Okay, got it. Thank you.  
14 I'm Joe Morrisroe. I'm the Executive Director of New  
15 York City 311.

16 DOMINIC BURG: I'm Dominic Burg. I'm the  
17 Acting Deputy Commissioner from the Department of  
18 Information Technology and Telecommunications.

19 JOE MORRISROE: I'd like to start off.  
20 First, good morning, Chair Holden, Chair Cabrera and  
21 members of the City Council Committees on  
22 Governmental Operations and Technology. As  
23 mentioned, my name is Joe Morrisroe, and I am the  
24 Executive Director New York City 311. Thank you for  
25 the opportunity to testify today on 311 operations.

2 As mentioned, I'm joined today by Dominic Burg, the  
3 Department of Information Technology and  
4 Telecommunications Acting Deputy Commissioner for  
5 Business Solutions Delivered. I'm honored to serve  
6 as an Executive Director of 311 since 2008, and to  
7 represent the women and men of the 311 team. Since  
8 2010, 311 reports direction to the Mayor's Office of  
9 Operations, an alignment that underscores the  
10 importance of this operation and service to the city.  
11 Prior to that, 311 reported to DOITT. DOITT  
12 continues to provide technology services and general  
13 services administration and support for the 311  
14 organization, and works collaboratively with 311 in  
15 the Mayor's Office on the continual evolution and  
16 enhancements to the service delivery custom  
17 experience of 311. As Executive Director, I oversee  
18 all aspects of 311 from the operation of the most  
19 familiar component, the Call Center, to the creation  
20 and implementation of multiple customer-facing  
21 channels, performance results and quality control  
22 measures, interaction with city agencies and  
23 compliance with regulatory requirements and data  
24 collection. New York City is one of the most diverse  
25 places on the planet, and its—and its diversity is

2 what makes it the greatest place to live and work. I

3 Thank the Council for inviting me to discuss how to

4 311 provides quick and easy access to New York City

5 government services and information with the highest

6 possible level of customer service to New York's

7 diverse community. 311 is available 24 hours a day,

8 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Customers can get

9 help in up to 180 languages by calling 311. People

10 who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired can

11 con-can contact us using a video relay service or

12 using TTY or Text Telephone. The 311 process relies

13 on systems supported by DOITT in partnerships with

14 city agencies to ensure a customer has access to

15 information assistance and services through a variety

16 of channels including the Call Center, 311 online,

17 text, Mobile App and social media. To understand 311

18 operation and customer experience, it is helpful to

19 understand the flow of 311 service delivery from the

20 custom inquiries and requests to the answers provided

21 and actions taken, and the confirmation provided.

22 With few exceptions, public interactions with 311

23 result in one of the following outcomes: First, a

24 service request where the city needs to do something.

25 Number 2, an information request. As an example,

2 when is my recycling pickup date, and third, a  
3 referral to an outside entity such as the MTA or the  
4 State of New York. Since 311 was launched in March,  
5 2003, it has received of 295 million calls and an  
6 additional 105 million customer contacts in our  
7 digital channels. Originally launched as a call  
8 center, New York City 311 has evolved into the most  
9 comprehensive municipal government service platform  
10 in the nation, available 24/7 in 180 language and  
11 multiple channels, 311 received 36 million customer  
12 contacts in 2019. On an average day, 311 interacts  
13 with over 100,000 customers in an average month 311  
14 receives 1.6 million calls, 1.2 million on line  
15 visits, 185,000 Mobile App touches, 12,000 text  
16 messages, and serves 2,300 customers on social media  
17 in addition to publishing city programs, information  
18 and services to over 50—excuse me. Information and  
19 services to over 580,000 of our social media  
20 followers. For further context, on an annual basis  
21 New York City 311 receives more calls than all other  
22 US city 311s combined. The 311 mission is aligned  
23 with the Administration's goals and vision on equity  
24 and most notably focuses on—focuses on providing the  
25 public with equitable service delivery through quick

2 easy access to all New York City government services  
3 and information while maintaining the highest  
4 possible level of customer service. The 311 team is  
5 focused on meeting our customers where they are by  
6 providing an array of channel options to contact the  
7 city ranging from the robust self-service solutions  
8 to outstanding customer service delivered by  
9 professional, polite and well trained  
10 representatives. Over the last nine years in annual  
11 custom satisfaction surveys conducted by the CFI  
12 Group, 311 ranked equal to or better in delivering  
13 customer service than the best contact centers in the  
14 private sector, and also far surpasses the best in  
15 government sectors. In 2019, 311's aggregate  
16 Promoter Score known as NPS the leading metric for  
17 gauging customer satisfaction across all industries  
18 in the US exceeded the leaders such as Apple and Jet  
19 Blue. This outstanding performance reflects the  
20 dedication and commitment of the women and men who  
21 work at 311 and proudly serve their fellow New  
22 Yorkers. It is for these reasons the New York City  
23 311 is the recognized model for service delivery and  
24 performance reporting for governments across the  
25 nation and around the world who study the New York

3 City 311 model when considering launching their  
4 customer service platforms. I'd like to speak on  
5 language access as well. Local Law 30 requires  
6 covered agencies to appoint language access  
7 coordinators, translate commonly distributed  
8 documents into 10 designated languages, provide  
9 telephonic interpretation in at least 100 languages  
10 and develop a language access implementation plan  
11 among other requirements. 311 is in compliance with  
12 this law. 311 provides telephonic interpretation in  
13 up to 180 languages through a third-party vendor,  
14 Language Line. Language Line provides interpretation  
15 and translation services for up to the 180 languages  
16 and is available for free 24 hours a day, 7 days a  
17 week. 311 provides additional options for customers  
18 who speak a language other than English or may be  
19 limited English proficient. For the phone channel, a  
20 customer can access announcements and messages in the  
21 Language Integrated Voice Response, IVR for short,  
22 system. Spanish speakers can utilize the Natural  
23 Language Understanding application to receive  
24 information and answers to frequently asked questions  
25 without having to wait to speak with an agency.  
Spanish speakers also can be serviced by a 311

3 customer service representative who speaks Spanish.

4 Annually, 311 services approximately one million

5 calls in languages other than English and has

6 provided service in 133 non-English languages over

7 the years. The Language Access Initiatives: We

8 understand that serving such a diverse customer base

9 comes with challenges and that there is more work to

10 be done. To address this, 311 has partnered with the

11 Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs to review how 311

12 engages with customers with limited English

13 proficiency and recommend better customer experience

14 handling and have already made an improvement in

15 working and working on several others. Based on the

16 Council feedback last year, 311 was able to implement

17 a technology enhancement in October 2019 that gives

18 the ability for language names to be passed to the

19 call center representative when a customer selects a

20 language option. Now, when a customer presses a

21 language option like Russian or Korean, the

22 representative receives a pop-up that indicates the

23 language preference. This allows faster connection

24 to an interpreter, and a better customer experience.

25 311 has also begun work—a work effort to increase the

language prompts to represent the 10 citywide

2 languages mentioned in Local Law 30. The increase  
3 language options will allow speakers of the above  
4 mentioned language to access one of the most  
5 requested pieces of information for 311, that is  
6 alternate side parking status in their language. The  
7 customer language choice will also be presented to  
8 the customer service representative for quicker  
9 service, And lastly, 311 is also working on the  
10 creation and implementation of surveys in the 10  
11 designated citywide languages that will leverage our  
12 technology and align with our business practices. We  
13 look forward to learning directly from the LEP  
14 community in what areas we are doing well in, and  
15 what areas we need improvement. We look to roll out  
16 these initiatives in the second half of 2020. I will  
17 now turn to the pieces of legislation associated with  
18 this hearing. Intro 1420-B. This bill would present  
19 substantial operational challenges to 311. As an  
20 example, there can be cases when a customer files a  
21 service request for a legitimate condition, but the  
22 reported condition is remedied before a city official  
23 inspects the complaint. There is no way for 311 to  
24 filter out this type of situation when reviewing the  
25 final resolution status as reported by an agency.

2 311 continuously works closely with agencies to  
3 provide them the information they need to action the  
4 service request. Intro 1525-A. As I mentioned in my  
5 opening remarks, 311 will implement customer  
6 satisfaction surveys in the ten designated citywide  
7 languages that will provide valuable feedback on how  
8 we deliver information and services to our customers.  
9 We look forward to rolling these out in the second  
10 half of 2020. Intro 1830. 311 realizes the value of  
11 this information and will seek to add this  
12 information to 311's Open Data Set of service  
13 requests. Intro 1832 the design of the 311 system  
14 makes available to all agencies the status of their  
15 service level agreement with respect to a customer's  
16 complaint. Therefore, 311 does not see the need to  
17 provide additional notification to agencies. I'd also  
18 like to mention for Intro 62 and Intro 462, we will  
19 gladly take a look at-at-excuse me. We will gladly  
20 take a look at them after this hearing and get back  
21 to you with our feedback and comments. I apologize  
22 for not having more information on those at this  
23 point in time. In closing, on behalf of my  
24 colleagues, I want to thank Chairman Cabrera and  
25 Chairman Holden, committee members for your time and

2 the opportunity to testify. I'd like to take this  
3 opportunity to also extend an invitation for you to  
4 come and see and observe and interact with the hard  
5 working women and men of 311 at our location, and I'm  
6 happy to take questions.

7 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Thank you for the  
8 testimony, Director and I just have a few questions  
9 and I'll turn it over to my colleague, but, um, when  
10 did the new and updated 311 application officially  
11 roll out? Other than what you mentioned with the  
12 languages, when did the change happen.

13 JOE MORRISROE: Ah, we changed over on  
14 June 29, 2019.

15 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Right, there were--  
16 there were some changes that I noticed. I use the  
17 app, and, um, when we've--in the old app we used to  
18 complain. Obviously, you made a complaint let's say  
19 was for illegal parking. You'd get a notice right  
20 away emailed back to you that you filed a complaint.  
21 Then you got--you got an update halfway through that  
22 the police are looking at--essentially a second email  
23 that the police were looking at, and then when it was  
24 resolved, you got another email. Right now you don't  
25 get that. Is there a reason for that?

2 JOE MORRISROE: Yes, there is. Thank you  
3 for--

4 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Okay.

5 JOE MORRISROE: --for calling that to our  
6 attention. Clearly an area for improvement, and  
7 something we realized after we launched and received  
8 feedback from--from you and from some others as well.  
9 We introduced a new function with the new system. We  
10 call it a CRM a Customer Relationship Management  
11 system. I tend to use that acronym, sorry, and that  
12 was something known as account management where you  
13 can create your own account. We linked setting up  
14 email notifications with creating an account. We did  
15 that based on some research and best practices that  
16 other companies in both government sector and the  
17 private sector use. Looking at it now, it's  
18 something we need to fix. As you pointed out, you're  
19 used to getting an email update. We should not be  
20 limiting that pending you setting up an account. So,  
21 one of the things we're looking this year is to  
22 restore, if you will, the capability of providing  
23 email updates--

24 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: And even--and even  
25 checking is hard because there is a little link that

2 says here if you want to check your status of your  
3 complaint, you know, click here--

4 JOE MORRISROE: Right.

5 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: --and it's really  
6 kind of buried. It's a poor design actually.

7 JOE MORRISROE: Right.

8 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: If you want to--that  
9 should be larger. You know, if--if you didn't have an  
10 answer or we're not going to get an email, but you're  
11 saying we're going to get an email in the future?

12 JOE MORRISROE: Yes, what's--what's, um,  
13 the process we rolled out we need to fix.

14 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Correct. Yes, okay.

15 JOE MORRISROE: So, we will--we will  
16 address that.

17 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Alright, I don't  
18 want to, you know, but, so are there any other  
19 differences that--I mean I--I told you one difference,  
20 but do you have others?

21 JOE MORRISROE: Um, the fundamental  
22 difference, and I'll speak to it from a, you know,  
23 from a business user perspective rather than  
24 technology perspective. We had previously been using  
25 a system that was 16 years old. So, it was extremely

2 limited especially with anything new that would come  
3 along be it ne programs and information, but also new  
4 technological advances. What this system does is  
5 provide the foundation to add and expand as need be.  
6 So, that may not be a singe specific item or a single  
7 specific example, but from an operations perspective  
8 that's pretty significant and one of the main reasons  
9 we went forward with this program.

10 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Okay. Um, during the  
11 January 17, 2009 hearing when asked about video and  
12 photo hosting capabilities on the NYC 311 App, you  
13 claimed that the new system will have the option to  
14 upload videos and pictures. However, the app is  
15 currently only accepting pictures for parking meter  
16 complaints, potholes, street lights, trees, food  
17 establishments, abandoned vehicles and abandoned  
18 vehicles without New York State license plates. In  
19 other words, of the 28 complaint categories present  
20 in the app, only six of them have the option to  
21 upload a photo. Moreover, Local Law 8—and it's okay.  
22 I'm going to stop there. Alright. So, do—do you  
23 have, you know, sort of you had promised that we'd  
24 get more, and we got actually a lot less.

2 JOE MORRISROE: Okay. I appreciate that  
3 as well. Yes in the design of our program we were—we  
4 we had build the functionality to do that. Um, it's  
5 taking longer than we expected, and to be able to go  
6 out and enable the function—enable the capability of  
7 submitting pictures or videos with complaint types.  
8 As we move forward both with the new system, the new  
9 CRM, and the Mobile App, we're working with DOITT to  
10 go through the process to enable customers to submit  
11 pictures and video. We also work with the city  
12 agencies that receive them and are responsible for  
13 actionining to make sure that we're getting their  
14 requirements and able to submit what they're looking  
15 for as well.

16 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Yeah, we're going to  
17 have to make sure the agencies are looking at the  
18 photos that we send them because my experience in the  
19 past was with especially with Sanitation they weren't  
20 looking at them. I would send a number of pictures  
21 of trash dumped all over let's say a site a location,  
22 and I would get an email back maybe a week or two  
23 later saying that the inspector found nothing wrong  
24 with the site when there was trash still all over the  
25 place, and then I—I gradually found out from just my

2 inquiries that they weren't looking at the photos,  
3 and possibly not even visiting a site. So that's why  
4 I think the agencies—I know how you follow through  
5 with that, but I mean there has to be complaint  
6 driven, but we were getting misinformation, but I  
7 felt nobody was looking at the photos. So, we need—  
8 we need to make sure that when we do roll it out,  
9 that we have the—that the agencies actually look at  
10 it. So, when—when can residents expect to have the  
11 video—photo and video upload capabilities for all  
12 complaint categories in the app? I mean is that only  
13 for the app or, um, can we do it other ways, to--

14 JOE MORRISROE: Um, a couple---

15 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: to the website?

16 JOE MORRISROE: A couple of pieces there.  
17 So, it can be done. You can take complaints and then  
18 attach photos or videos through the Mobile App as  
19 well as the website.

20 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: You can do the  
21 websites. Okay.

22 JOE MORRISROE: So, those work, but in  
23 each case we are going through the process now of  
24 enabling that capability, and I don't have a time  
25 frame from you on that. I'm sorry.

3 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Okay, um, we are  
4 aware that some of the features may not temporarily  
5 work on the app such as fire hydrant or illegal  
6 dumping. We kind of ran into a dead end on that. We  
7 have-I think we have a video to show what. Um, do  
8 you guys have the opportunity to conduct user testing  
9 on the app before it's rolled out to the public?

10 JOE MORRISROE: Yes, we do. It's part of  
11 the design. We'll do a process to build a new, um,  
12 CRM system. We were able to do different types of  
13 user testing. Um, certainly with the wide array of  
14 all the complaint types we won't necessarily be able  
15 to test all, but we have looked at that. We also  
16 look at that from both feedback as well as our own  
17 customer experience process. Internally, we have a  
18 team know as the Customer Experience Group that  
19 actually goes through something called Customer  
20 Journey Mapping designed to put themselves in the  
21 shoes of the customer to see how the process works,  
22 which may make sense in one way, but when you put the  
23 customer lens on it may reveal that it needs to be  
24 much better.

25 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Um, according to  
311's Open Data Set, the number of complaints to the

2 Department of Sanitation dropped significantly  
3 specifically for illegal dumping. However, the city  
4 still has a huge problem with street dumping  
5 especially in my district. I have a number of street  
6 that are—it's increased. I would like to show you  
7 the problem. Please look at the screen.

8 JOE MORRISROE: I'm looking.

9 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: On this side there's  
10 been a report of a number of illegal dumping going  
11 on. I mean people just stop by and will take  
12 something and just wheel it down the street, you  
13 know, in a cart and then dump additional material  
14 there. But when we tried to do the complaint, we  
15 ran into a dead end. Um, do you want—(background  
16 comments)

17 FEMALE SPEAKER: We just want to  
18 demonstrate on the screen. Charles will assist with,  
19 um, my beginning.

20 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Okay. I hope it's  
21 large enough, though, please.

22 FEMALE SPEAKER: Maybe we should enlarge.

23 CHARLES: It's still crowded.

24 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Can we expand that?  
25 Yeah.

2 JOE MORRISROE: If you don't mind I'll  
3 look here and

4 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Yeah you can turn it  
5 around.

6 JOE MORRISROE: In this one you tend to  
7 see enough. (laughs)

8 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Oh, yeah, that one  
9 is-(pause) Are we going?

10 JOE MORRISROE: There we go.

11 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: No, actually, that's  
12 not the one. We showed that already --(background  
13 comments/pause) So, we make the complaint, and it  
14 actually tells you what?

15 FEMALE SPEAKER: So, basically this is--  
16 that is our IT data.

17 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: That's the dead end--  
18 it's

19 FEMALE SPEAKER: This is main--

20 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: If you try--yeah,  
21 try--I would suggest that your agency try reporting  
22 illegal dumping. Maybe that's why the complaints are  
23 down because we run into a dead end.

24 FEMALE SPEAKER: In the data cycle.

25 JOE MORRISROE: I'll confuse--

2 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: A dirty sidewalk.  
3 It's almost impossible.

4 JOE MORRISROE: I-I am struggling to see  
5 the screen at times-

6 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: I know, I'd say it's  
7 the technology.

8 JOE MORRISROE: I will take that.

9 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Let's put it that  
10 way. We're--

11 JOE MORRISROE: I appreciate that.

12 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: --we have to get  
13 that together, but it is--there are a lot of dead  
14 ends, by the way, on the 311, and that's why we need  
15 some kind of--somebody to look at this and go through  
16 every--I know it's tough to go through every  
17 complaint, but there's a lot of complaints that are  
18 not being logged because there's as dead end like--and  
19 so illegal dumping that's happening is that we're not  
20 getting probably half the complaints that we should.  
21 (background comments/pause) We would also like to  
22 demonstrate the difference in the process of  
23 submitting the same types of complaints in other  
24 cities. Um, if you let me, I-I think we can try to  
25 demonstrate this one. This is San Francisco 311 app,

3 which is much more user-friendly I think. It too  
4 under 30 seconds to make a complaint with only four  
5 fields needed: Photo, address, the problem  
6 description, object. That and you could upload  
7 photos, too. So, that's—that's much better than  
8 ours. I mean just looking at it, it took so—it took  
9 30 seconds to make a dumping complaint and—and you  
10 can also—I don't know on that one, but is that the  
11 one that where you could see other people's complaint  
12 or was that Los Angeles.

12 FEMALE SPEAKER: Yes, I believe so.

13 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Yeah, set it up, and  
14 there's—there's some that other cities that you can  
15 look at, other people's complaints with similar  
16 problems and see how those resolve with photos. So,  
17 there's just that ours looks so backwards. I mean  
18 you said that 311—ours we get great responses, but  
19 just in the design of it, just in how intuitive San  
20 Francisco and Los Angeles, we are way behind, and I—  
21 I—I'm a designer, a graphic designer. I looked at it.  
22 It's much better to use, much easier to use, and more  
23 complete and more thorough, and you can actually—you—  
24 you would see, um, much more efficient use of—of the  
25 app if it was designed better. You have to go through

3 a lengthy—On New York City's 311, you have to go  
4 through a lengthy process, and then many times you  
5 run into a dead end. Um, so, are there any plans to  
6 streamline the complaint submission process in 311?  
7 You mentioned before, but up—upgrading it, and so  
8 answer that question, and I will have a few others,  
9 but--

10           JOE MORRISROE: Yeah, sure, um, so from  
11 the time—from going into the transition from the old  
12 system to the new system, which is now the current  
13 system, um, we did adjust or have to change some of  
14 the features and the offers on the mobile app with  
15 the plan being to add them back into their original  
16 state, which is more the traditional app like look  
17 and feel. Um, we were not able to do all of them at  
18 the time, and we are building them back. In the  
19 interim what we provide and we'll always provide on  
20 the app is the customer to link directly to the 311  
21 online website, which renders an immobily optimized  
22 view so the customer can continued doing that  
23 process, but for a number of complaint types, um,  
24 that we're relying on now to go through a link, we'll  
25 be adding those back in the more traditional look and  
feel of an app. So, those are some of the

2 enhancements. I certainly take your counsel with  
3 respect to design. I have colleagues at San  
4 Francisco 311 and LA 311 and I'd be happy to-to  
5 follow up with them right after this and we'll start-  
6 -

7 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Have you--have you  
8 looked at Los Angeles and San Francisco and other--

9 JOE MORRISROE: I have looked at San  
10 Francisco.

11 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: And do you think  
12 ours is better?

13 JOE MORRISROE: Okay. I--I always think  
14 311--I always think New York City has the best.

15 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: So, you think it's  
16 better? The 311--our 311?

17 JOE MORRISROE: I did--

18 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Because I just want  
19 to--

20 JOE MORRISROE: I think I--we--

21 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: --because it's not  
22 even--in my--when I looked at it, it's not even close.

23 JOE MORRISROE: Okay.

24 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: It's like we're so  
25 behind.

2 JOE MORRISROE: I think the total package  
3 that New York City 311 offers to customers is very  
4 good.

5 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Okay, how do I do a  
6 complaint on the app on a crosswalk, somebody  
7 blocking a crosswalk?

8 JOE MORRISROE: Um, so it's not going to  
9 be one of the featured, um, item—oh, sorry. Um,  
10 parking complaint—a parking complaint?

11 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Yeah, a park—let's—I  
12 have—in my district I have a lot of people parking in  
13 crosswalks and in New York City we have that.

14 JOE MORRISROE: Yes.

15 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: But yet, it's not  
16 one of the drop down menus. Blocking a bike lane is.

17 JOE MORRISROE: I see, okay.

18 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: A bus lane is but  
19 blocking a crosswalk, which happens everywhere.

20 JOE MORRISROE: Okay. I'll take a look  
21 at it. I know the illegal parking would be the  
22 overarching, um, um, complaint type. So, I'll take a  
23 look at what is underneath that and see if it's  
24 available.

2 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: And then you have a  
3 pull down thing where it says reoccurring problem.  
4 If I'm complaining about—I mean what do I have to  
5 answer? I can't move forward if I have to—if I  
6 can't—if I don't answer it's a reoccurring problem--

7 JOE MORRISROE: Okay.

8 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: --which is to me a  
9 waste of time because we—we know for a fact that the  
10 Police Department doesn't even care or look at that.  
11 they don't even look at half of these things that we—  
12 we're pulling—we're takin—we're asking a question  
13 that the Police Department will not even see, and  
14 most of the complaints, you know, on 311 are police  
15 related, aren't they--

16 JOE MORRISROE: Yes, a large volume are.

17 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: --by far. Yes, by  
18 far.

19 JOE MORRISROE: Our complaints usually  
20 dealing with them.

21 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: So, there are—I mean  
22 there's a way to streamline, but a reoccurring  
23 problem I could click on that and—and answer if I  
24 wanted to, but if—if I don't want to answer it, I'm  
25 stopped. You know, I'm stopped automatically and I

3 have to back up and answer it. So, that is a  
4 problem. Um, one other and then I'll give it over to  
5 some of my colleagues and then I'll come back, but  
6 for the second round I guess, right. Um, but when a  
7 user downloads a 31 app—the 311 app, they must agree  
8 to the app's term of service. The terms of service  
9 refers to a privacy policy, which is not available in  
10 the app. Other cities 311 apps such as Chicago and  
11 San Francisco directly veil their privacy policies in  
12 the applications. The Committee searched for this  
13 privacy policy—policy online, and found different—  
14 different versions that could all be related to the  
15 311 applications. Which one is the right privacy  
16 policy in 311?

16 JOE MORRISROE: Uh-hm, um, we do have a  
17 privacy policy. It could--

18 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: But we don't know--

19 JOE MORRISROE: --clear-clearly your  
20 ability to get there was not-was not optimum. I will  
21 commit to going back after this to take a look at  
22 both (1) the app situation and then if there's any  
23 confusion to clear that up.

24 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Alright, we had the  
25 opportunity to review the 311 Task Order provided by

2 DOITT last year. According to the Task Order, there  
3 were no provisions for patches or updates to the 311  
4 app in the contract. Are patching mechanisms  
5 addressed in the current IBM contract in New York  
6 City 311?

7 JOE MORRISROE: I understand your  
8 question, but I'm not sure I have the answer to that  
9 question.

10 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Okay, 'cause you'll--  
11 you'll get back to us or just---

12 JOE MORRISROE: I'll get back to you on  
13 that, Uh-hm.

14 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Does DOITT have it  
15 or--

16 JOE MORRISROE: Should we get back?

17 DOMINIC BURG: Yeah, I would want to get  
18 back to you and--

19 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Alright.

20 JOE MORRISROE: --actually have the  
21 contract in front of me.

22 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: (background  
23 comments)

2 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: That's it? Okay.

3 Alright, um, Council Member Koo, do you want to talk  
4 about your--?

5 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Yes, I do.

6 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN:

7 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Okay.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: [off mic/inaudible]

9 So, my question is about [off mic/inaudible] [on mic]

10 So, how many--my question is related to the customer  
11 self-expression surveys. So the first question I  
12 will ask is how many total customers satisfaction  
13 surveys that 311 conducted in the last fiscal year?

14 JOE MORRISROE: I don't know the exact in  
15 both hand, but in the last fiscal year we likely  
16 covered one for everyone of our channels. So, at  
17 least six or seven different surveys, and an  
18 additional one for the Call Center. I would say at  
19 ten different surveys sometimes multiple times.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: How many callers were  
21 included in each survey?

22 JOE MORRISROE: Um, so surveys are done  
23 across the different channels. Sometimes it's callers  
24 in the call center. For a survey on text for  
25 example, it would be someone who uses text or someone

3 online, you know, someone who—who just uses the  
4 online service. It does vary. I can tell you for the  
5 Annual Call Center Survey that we do, we contract  
6 with a vendor know as C-F-I. They typically sample  
7 over 700 New Yorkers and ask a 25-question survey.  
8 For a number of other surveys we use—we do them  
9 online. We present them to the public via promotion  
10 through social media or just availability online and  
11 those can range in responses from anywhere to  
12 hundreds to thousands. You know, the prior year I  
13 think about 2018 because I have the number in my  
14 head. We did over—we received responses from over  
15 30,000 customers to our surveys.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: So, um, were any  
17 surveys conducted in the language other than English?

18 JOE MORRISROE: To date they've all be  
19 conducted in English.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Oh. Besides  
21 reference in the MMR, has 311 released the results of  
22 any surveys it has conducted?

23 JOE MORRISROE: I'm not sure if we've  
24 released. We've—we've referenced and—and talked  
25 about them. I'm not sure necessarily if they've been  
released?

2 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: No. Does 311  
3 anticipate any issues with conducting surveys in the  
4 ten designated citywide languages?

5 JOE MORRISROE: We don't anticipate  
6 issues. There's always challenges when we're  
7 introducing something new. It would be a new area  
8 for us. We'll rely on expertise from partners who  
9 will help us. We mentioned the Language Line in the  
10 past as part of our interpretation services. They're  
11 a valuable asset for us in understanding how to  
12 communicate, um, and how-how the best practices work.  
13 We'll partner with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant  
14 Affairs, who we're already working with to look at  
15 how best to communicate and then I think the other  
16 challenge will be reaching customers, you know, in  
17 order to get a substantial enough response that (1)  
18 you get a response and (2) that it's--there's  
19 statistical validity to it.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Thank you.

21 JOE MORRISROE: Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: I normally go after  
23 the chair, but I'm going to give it to the other  
24 sponsor to the--of the bill, Council Member Matteo.

25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Thank you, Chair.

3 I appreciate that. So, let me—let me just begin by  
4 saying I'm not against the 311 system. Obviously the  
5 311 system is an effective tool. Um, Chair Holden  
6 brought up some extremely good points on how to make  
7 it even better. So, I'm not here to bash 311. I  
8 think it's a valuable tool for New Yorkers. However,  
9 I—I believe that there is a harassment component, and  
10 I obviously not the fault of 311. That's not—that's  
11 not the intention. I understand, but I want to read  
12 to you real quickly a section of the—of an article in  
13 the Staten Island Advance from last week when they  
14 were covering my bill, um, and this was in—this was  
15 in so I could say the name since it was in the paper.  
16 William Nolan of Gaston Place in Springville who in  
17 2018 was charged with possessing a loaded firearm in  
18 his home was arrested on over 90 new counts after he  
19 made numerous state 311 complaints impersonating his  
20 neighborhoods and sent the 311 message intended—  
21 intended for Mayor Bill De Blasio in the guise of an  
22 NYPD official, among other crimes authorities allege.  
23 From December 2017 to November 2018, authorities  
24 allege that Nolan made multiple 311 complaints  
25 through email while using the personal information of

3 is neighbors including their names, email addresses,  
4 phone numbers and the contact information. The  
5 complaints range from no heat grievances, which  
6 prompted the Gas Company to respond to his neighbor's  
7 home to teen-agers drinking alcohol and smoking on  
8 the street causing follow-ups with the provided  
9 contracts, all which were fraudulently made by Nolan,  
10 the criminal complaint alleges. One new Springville  
11 resident who allegedly received a trove of phone  
12 calls from Nolan with no legitimate purpose and was a  
13 target of multiple 311 complaints, said that he has  
14 been dealing with the alleged harassment for the last  
15 couple of years. "It's been hard" said the man who  
16 wished to remain anonymous to speak about an ongoing  
17 case adding that a variety of organizations,  
18 companies and city agencies have arrived at his door  
19 because of the fraudulent complaints. As a result,  
20 the man said he had to leave work to deal with  
21 responses to his home adding that Nolan's alleged  
22 anti-antics have cost him thousands of dollars over  
23 the years. So, that's just one point that I wanted  
24 to make that this is an issue, and I have a prior  
25 bill that we heard last year, and I thank the chair  
for that—that deals with stopping anonymous

2 complaints after a certain amount of unsubstantiated  
3 complaints against the same property. I know this is  
4 difficult. I know that this is not easy to stop, but  
5 I think we need to either move forward with a  
6 compromise on that bill or this bill to get the data.  
7 Um, and in that bill, you know, what we—we—my staff  
8 and—and—and your staff, the Administration talking  
9 about flagging. And so, could we---is the 311 system  
10 flagged for agencies when a particular property has  
11 been the subject of multiple unsubstantiated  
12 complaints? Is that something that we can move  
13 forward with trying to figure out, and coming onto  
14 some sort of agreement on that?

15           JOE MORRISROE: I appreciate the  
16 opportunity to respond to this broader issue as well  
17 as the specific question. Um, as you asked the  
18 question with respect to flagging, um, I'll speak  
19 first just to capability rather than a raw position.  
20 Um, if I understood correctly as you described it, it  
21 was flagging without no—I will say that you would not  
22 know when something was or wasn't unsubstantiated.  
23 There wouldn't be the ability to flag at the point of  
24 intake the 311. 311 focuses on the customer  
25 reporting and incident or situation, does the intake

2 and then sends that information onto the agencies.

3 The intelligence of—of historical interactions of  
4 investigations or inspections lies with the agencies  
5 at that point. So, at the front end where the  
6 customer is talking to a call center representative  
7 or the customer is using the mobile app or online  
8 self-serving, um, that current information is not  
9 there. It's not capable of doing that.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Okay. So, if I  
11 call 311, I go onto the app, and I call my good  
12 friend Council Member Yeger and I say, it's an  
13 illegal deck, and then you out and he tells us. It's  
14 an illegal occupancy. He lets you in, you gain  
15 access. He doesn't. Damaged sidewalk. You go out  
16 again. No damaged sidewalk. Um, you know, rodents  
17 in his back yard. The house goes out. At what point  
18 do we say this is a problem, and we need to flag this  
19 for all the agencies. So, and then I call a week  
20 later and I do the same thing. You guys already went  
21 out there numerous times. At this point, this  
22 harassment, and he calls and well Matteo's got this,  
23 Matteo's got that, his address and make an anonymous  
24 complaint. That's the situation that we need to fix  
25 because we're not only harassing the homeowner, the

2 property owner some who rents and anybody who wastes  
3 the resources or some time where—there the good folks  
4 at the agency could be dealing with illegal dumping.  
5 Um, so that—that's the point, um, and I think we need  
6 to continue to work together to really try and come  
7 up with a way to—to stop that, and again the prior  
8 bill and I understand the language. You don't put in  
9 the language right away to—that that may happen with  
10 that exact language. We have to come to a point  
11 where I think agencies need to at least be flagged  
12 that this property has over 20 unsubstantiated  
13 complaints and they were made in the last three  
14 weeks. I mean, it—it becomes harassment. Um, so a  
15 couple question. Do you know how many anonymous  
16 complaints, um, 311 has received?

17 JOE MORRISROE: I don't know how many we  
18 have received. Over the years in the past we've done  
19 some sample studies, um, so there's different  
20 numbers, but I don't know off the top of my head how  
21 many anonymous versus non-anonymous.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Are complaints  
23 really anonymous? Do you track the number? Do you—I  
24 mean if I call and I say anonymous, do you have my  
25

2 number that I'm calling from? Is there--is there a  
3 way to say we know who is?

4 JOE MORRISROE: The--for standard service  
5 requests again 311 is following the requirements that  
6 the agency sets for data collection where anonymous  
7 is an option, and sometimes it is and sometimes it  
8 isn't. The information that's obtained is typically,  
9 the what, the where, the when of the incident. A  
10 telephone number is available, and it one of the data  
11 elements that the agency requests and is captured.  
12 Um, beyond that there's--if it's listed as anonymous  
13 it remains as anonymous. s

14  
15 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: So, 311 will  
16 never require anyone to leave their name?

17 JOE MORRISROE: No, I wouldn't say we  
18 never require anyone to leave their name. If someone  
19 is requesting an item that needs to be sent to them--

20 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Obviously.

21 JOE MORRISROE: --for example, um--

22 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: I mean for  
23 complaints that are right. If I need, you know, a  
24 SCRIE form--

25 JOE MORRISROE: Right.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: --I mean I'll  
3 just have to give my name?

4 JOE MORRISROE: Yes. I'll just answer it  
5 a little bit different. It depends on what the  
6 agency's requirement is. If the agency requires a  
7 name a customer contact name, then that's what we  
8 will ask the customer for. If it's not required and  
9 the agency supports anonymous reporting, then we'll  
10 collect it as anonymous reporting.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Okay, and so-so  
12 then at this point the agency doesn't have any  
13 guidelines for identifying properties that have been  
14 the subject of multiple-multiple unsubstantiated  
15 complaints?

16 JOE MORRISROE: On the 311 side, we do  
17 not.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Okay, so these  
19 are I think the issues that we're trying to bring  
20 together here. Um, so do you-I guess-do you  
21 understand the frustration that I have for my  
22 constituents and we call them the neighbor verse  
23 neighbor complaints.

24 JOE MORRISROE: I do understand --

25 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Yes.

2 JOE MORRISROE: --the examples that you  
3 shared and I can—I can understand the—the frustration  
4 an individual would have. (pause)

5 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: So, do you keep a  
6 record of properties that say have one, two, three or  
7 four complaints so at intake would then be able to  
8 know that Andy Wilson Street in Staten Island has had  
9 four or five complaints in the last two weeks. Do-  
10 just does—is that possible? Do they do that now?

11 JOE MORRISROE: If I may, I'll speak to  
12 the process of 311 and what (coughs) may exist for  
13 that situation. On data one side from an intake  
14 perspective, again whether it's an agent handled or a  
15 self-service, um, there's not a—is that a flag or a  
16 reconciliation to that effect. if any incident is  
17 taken, it's taken the first time it's committed. If  
18 it's the second time it's coming, it's taken the same  
19 way. Um, complaints are made available to the public  
20 through the Open Data. There is information that's  
21 available on the location for—for some or many of  
22 those complaints. Um, that would allow someone to  
23 look at a particular location to see if there's  
24 multiple complaints there, but it's not a function

2 that happens at the point of a customer or an agent  
3 submitting a service request into the 311 system.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Can you get  
5 software to do that?

6 JOE MORRISROE: Um, from a 311  
7 perspective that's not necessarily within our charge.  
8 I imagine from an open data perspective folks are  
9 already doing that using software.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: In your testimony  
11 you said as an example there can be cases where a  
12 customer files a service request for a legitimate  
13 condition, but the reported condition is remedied  
14 before a city official inspects the complaint. So  
15 wouldn't that be substantiated that complaint?

16 JOE MORRISROE: If it's considered to be  
17 a-I'm sorry. it substantiated?

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: So, I'm just  
19 reading from your testimony. You said when a  
20 customer files a service request for a legitimate  
21 condition--

22 JOE MORRISROE: Right.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: --but the  
24 reported condition is remedied before a city official  
25

2 inspects the complaint. My—I'm asking you isn't that  
3 a substantiated complaint then?

4 JOE MORRISROE: If the inspect-my-my-if  
5 the inspector from the agency goes out and there's no  
6 evidence of the condition, then it could be  
7 considered unsubstantiated.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Well, what if I  
9 call for a stop sign that's down and then by—and then  
10 by the time 311 gets there, DOT already did it or  
11 then they sent DOT out. Is that substantiated then?

12 JOE MORRISROE: In that example I would  
13 say yes that is substantiated.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Okay, so, um,  
15 listen, I think the two bills that I have are—are  
16 trying to remedy the problem. I'm—I'm going to ask  
17 that you work with us and that we continue this  
18 dialogue because I think it's a real issue. I think  
19 what I described from the Staten Island Advance  
20 article really shows how people harass. They're  
21 wasting money, wasting city resources. We either  
22 need to flag these city agencies and find a way to do  
23 that with software or—or something or we at least  
24 need to get the—more information, um, from the bill  
25 at hand whether we need to amend and talk about how

3 we do that. I think we do and I'm committed to doing  
4 that. So, I appreciate the testimony, appreciate the  
5 back and forth. Chairs Holden and Cabrera, I thank  
6 you both, and I will pass it back to you.

7 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much  
8 and it just seems common sense to all of us for  
9 those bills to pass. Let me recognize that we've  
10 been joined by Council Members Powers, Ayala and  
11 Adams. Let me start with my set of questions. One  
12 is related to Council Member Dromm's Bill Intro 462,  
13 and I just shared some of my own experience that I  
14 had recently in speaking to residents of City Island  
15 where they tried to--well the call 311 with complaints  
16 of people, you know, those party boats they'll come  
17 around the island in jet skis, you know, making a  
18 tremendous amount of noise and some of the  
19 circumstances ,and one in particular there was  
20 somebody I guess in a party boat went into the water.  
21 The jet skis started turning around. This is all in  
22 videos, and some of these noise complaints go all the  
23 way to 3:00, 4:00 in the morning, but there's no  
24 track record from what the residents are telling me  
25 from 311, and this is why when I heard about Council  
Member Dromm's Bill 462, I just wanted to put my two

2 cents in is that it makes just a lot of sense for us  
3 to be able to track the level of complaints where  
4 very acute and around City Island. So, if you could  
5 take that into consideration. Let me jump to—  
6 actually since I'm on it, um, do you record—I'm  
7 assuming you don't, but do you—you don't record—if  
8 you don't have an address, do you record the  
9 complaint and forward it to an appropriate agency?

10 JOE MORRISROE: Um for complaints again  
11 we will have agency requirements, but what they  
12 specify needs to—to receive and resolve a complaint,  
13 um, location is necessary in almost every situation.  
14 I'm not sure if any of the locations is not required.  
15 That's typically an address, but it could be  
16 alternatively an intersection for example. I guess if  
17 the agency requires a location, the 311 does take  
18 that whether again it's through the Call Center or  
19 whether through a self-service option.

20 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: But why not just  
21 put it down. I mean if they don't require it? I  
22 mean it might be, um, necessary. For example, later  
23 on in an investigation. Maybe, um, the agency didn't  
24 seem deemed to be important in that moment, but later  
25 on it was important, and yet wouldn't have the

2 address, it would seem logical and reasonable to me  
3 that the, you know, at least we are able to track  
4 down the location.

5           JOE MORRISROE: I-I follow you and I  
6 understand the nature of that. In partnership with  
7 our agency partners I would have to defer to them in  
8 terms of when-why they need, when they need and in  
9 this case when they would not necessarily need a  
10 location information.

11           CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: But you could do it  
12 as a default, right? You don't need their permission  
13 in order to have that.

14           JOE MORRISROE: In order to make sure our  
15 process works for both the customer on the intake  
16 side as well as on the fulfillment side, and I'll say  
17 that I learned that the agency is responding.

18           CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Uh-hm.

19           JOE MORRISROE: We do have to work wit  
20 them. We have to make sure we're collecting the  
21 right information that meets their requirements so a  
22 customer whose reported something knows what to  
23 provide and that the agency has what they need to go  
24 do their job.

3 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: But don't you  
4 collect some data that—that you might deem important  
5 that you're forecasting in the future might be  
6 important, and not requested by the agency?

7 JOE MORRISROE: I can think of an example  
8 where we would do that for trends, different call  
9 types come in. We forecast staffing and things of  
10 that nature. So, whether it be winter weather,  
11 whether it be summer weather, um, you know, that's  
12 information that we don't necessarily need location,  
13 and in turn we don't have an agency requirement to  
14 collect. So through our own devices focused on our—  
15 our volume with—through our call volume we're able to  
16 do that.

17 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Can you put—if  
18 someone is in a 311 using the app, is there—are you  
19 looking forward to having like a pin? You know like  
20 you put a pin? Can you do that, and would that be a  
21 possibility to use in cases like this as a drop?

22 JOE MORRISROE: Yes, that is a capability  
23 that exists today. You can pin drop or you can enter  
24 a specific address.

25 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Okay, um, alright.  
Let me move onto, um, my—my bill here. Let me just

2 hit a couple of questions before related to Cornegy's  
3 bill when 311 receives complaints about snow and ice  
4 removal and for additional bridges, what happens to  
5 those complaints?

6 JOE MORRISROE: Yeah, I am—thank you for  
7 the question. I heard that at the time of the opening  
8 statement. I am not sure myself so if I try to go  
9 down that path, I'll probably misspeak.

10 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Got you.

11 JOE MORRISROE: If you don't mind, I'd  
12 like to follow up with you separately on that action.

13 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Good. I'm assuming  
14 with the same question we'll probably get the same  
15 answer. What is currently being recommended to  
16 residents just to make complaints about snow and ice  
17 covered pedestrian bridges? I'm sure it's the same  
18 answer.

19 JOE MORRISROE: Yes.

20 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Alright. (pause)  
21 Council Member Ayala.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Yes.

23 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Oh, you were over  
24 there. You did a trick on me.

25 MALE SPEAKER: Yeah. (laughter)

2 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: You're amazing.  
3 You're amazing. (laughter) Okay, I'm going to—I'm  
4 going to come back, um, and I'm going to pass it  
5 onto—

6 MALE SPEAKER: Adams.

7 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Adams. I'm going to  
8 pass it onto Council Member Adams. You guys are  
9 making me do an exercise here. (laughter) Good  
10 choice. Thank you.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: Thank you very  
12 much, Mr. Chair, and I—I thank the chairs for this  
13 opportunity today, and I apologize for coming in a  
14 little bit late. We do have back to back hearings  
15 today. So, I'm just going to get to it. Um, I  
16 responsible for District 28, and that district  
17 suffered and South Ozone Park suffered the worst  
18 disaster as far as DEP has seen on the day after  
19 Thanksgiving, and during that time frame it's been  
20 substantiated that there was a significant breakdown  
21 between 311 and DEP during that emergency situation.  
22 So, first of all I'd like to know if you're aware of  
23 the situation. Are you aware—are you aware of the  
24 issues surrounding the situation as it pertains to  
25

2 311, and the communication between the two—the two  
3 offices?

4 JOE MORRISROE: Thank you for the  
5 question, and I will answer in order. Yes, I am  
6 aware. I was aware when the situation occurred.  
7 Subsequently myself and my team have talked with  
8 Department of Environmental Protection. We've also  
9 been working with the Office of Emergency Management  
10 on the After Action Report that they're doing to  
11 share 311's intake and referral process during that  
12 event as well as our overall process.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: Okay, um, it's  
14 extremely concerning to me, the whole situation was,  
15 but to hear the feedback from my constituents as far  
16 as response from 311 number one, and—and not really  
17 understanding the gravity of the situation. Um, and  
18 not really being sensitive to the situation at hand.  
19 At one point, one of the operators actually said to  
20 my constituent that it was actually not—it wasn't the  
21 word privilege, but it was some other word that was  
22 used that the call was even being take. So, I was  
23 astounded by that response. So, I'm very curious to  
24 know what type of training is available in emergency  
25 situations. Was this a situation? Well, obviously

2 it was where—where this was not particularly seen as  
3 an extreme, as extreme as it was. Um, oh, the word  
4 was courtesy. Yes, she was told that that it's—it  
5 was even a courtesy that her call was even being  
6 taken by 311, um, which was, you know, insensitive  
7 and it doesn't even—doesn't even encompass a response  
8 like that. So, um, you mentioned that since we're  
9 followed up on, I'd just like to hear specifics.  
10 What specifically was done as far as follow-up? Was  
11 there any particular change in customer service, um,  
12 responses. Two calls in emergency situations Was  
13 there any change in actually realizing what type of  
14 situation we're dealing with because we know that DEP  
15 referenced a cluster. They didn't realize that this  
16 was a cluster situation as far as the emergency  
17 situation. So, I would just like to feel a level of  
18 comfort coming back to my constituents and saying  
19 that yes 311 gets it. Yes 311 understands the  
20 gravity of the situation, um, and yes they are indeed  
21 apologetic for the way that my constituents were  
22 treated during that emergency situation.

23 JOE MORRISROE: Right. Thank you for the  
24 question and thank you for the opportunity to respond  
25 in total on this particular item and some of the

2 specific questions. I'll go through in beginning. I  
3 would like to start, though, first to address the—the  
4 specific example to use where your customer—the  
5 custom had an interaction with 311 that certainly is  
6 not our standard, and it's certainly nor our  
7 expectation. On behalf of 311, I do extend our  
8 apologies for that. Um, with regard to the incident  
9 itself I can give you a little bit of background on  
10 how 311 handles the process, and the works through.  
11 That will show kind of how it feeds to through the  
12 process, and then I'll—I'll go to entertain your  
13 question with respect to, um, you've about training,  
14 what kind of training that occurs. Um, if I may,  
15 I'll recap what 311 did during the course of that,  
16 um, that Saturday. It was mostly throughout the day.  
17 That's adamant. Um, 311 handled the intake and the  
18 submission of service requests and provided the  
19 customers with confirmation numbers. That's our role  
20 in the upfront process. After that handling  
21 resolution, it's dependent on the agency. So, in  
22 311's case we processed and submitted 173 citywide  
23 sewer related complaints to DEP on November 30<sup>th</sup>. Of  
24 those, 128, as you probably already know, were  
25 addressed—were addresses directly affected by the

2 sewage condition. All of those we went back through  
3 after the fact. We looked to see did 311 perform  
4 it's task? Did it accept the information from the  
5 customer, fill it out correctly, submit it correctly  
6 to, in this case the agency was the Department of  
7 Environmental Protection. We confirmed that on all  
8 128 service requests. Further, we looked at what was  
9 311's accessibility like on that day? Was it busy?  
10 Were people having to wait longer or not. Um, the  
11 wait time was—was very minimal that day. If someone  
12 was calling it was under ten seconds I believe. Our  
13 role in that area is to do the intake and referral.  
14 We don't have a mechanism that would identify a  
15 cluster. Our agents are handling input from across  
16 the city. What we really focus on is making sure  
17 we're getting it right on the upfront piece, and  
18 we're getting that to the agencies. We do have  
19 mechanisms if a service request is not going through  
20 electronically to an agency from agency notices that  
21 or of our IT systems would flag that. Those are—  
22 would have brought to our attention. That did not  
23 happen in this case. So, we know the service requests  
24 that we were taking were being submitted to DEP.  
25 Beyond that we're very limited in being able to add

3 anything to the real time situation. We certainly can  
4 help after the fact, and go through and after action  
5 if there's an opportunity to improve, and we can  
6 certainly help with the training site. You did  
7 mention training and—and that we share. We—we do  
8 have standard training programs obviously for  
9 anything from a new hire to ongoing training to up-  
10 training, but one of the things we do each quarter is  
11 do what we call a table talk drill, emergency  
12 management table top drill to put our—our staff, our  
13 collective staff in the mindset of how do you respond  
14 to something that's unusual. That doesn't necessarily  
15 address the situation, but I wanted to add it in as a  
16 result of the training piece. So, that's some of the  
17 information we have. I gave you a lot there, but if  
18 there's further questions I'm happy to take those as  
19 well.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: Thank you. I  
21 appreciate your response to that. On a personal  
22 level where do you see the breakdown in communication  
23 for that experience?

24 JOE MORRISROE: Um, I don't insight into  
25 where a breakdown may have occurred. I know what we  
26 handle. I don't necessarily know the inside work of

2 an agency person, whatever the agency may be. So, I  
3 don't think I'm really privy to be able to focus on  
4 that. I-I may be participating in future after  
5 action reports. So, I'll get more information on  
6 that with an eye towards is there something 311 could  
7 do to help.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: In your purview  
9 just looking out into the future if this were to  
10 happen again tomorrow do you see this instance  
11 happening again the way that it happened in November?

12 JOE MORRISROE: I-I think from the little  
13 bit I do know, from-from the coverage and from some  
14 of the actions that the city has already taken I  
15 don't imagine that would happen again.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: Okay, and just one  
17 final question a little bit off because I-I am a  
18 frequent user of the app, um, that I do find useful.  
19 There is--there is one thing that--that puzzles me,  
20 though, and that is the closure of--of a complaint,  
21 and sometimes as a user I feel that I'm being left  
22 just hanging and it's closed. I'm sure you hear this  
23 a lot, and it's just closed with no explanation.  
24 Sometimes I don't know if it's been sent to the  
25 precinct. Sometimes I don't know if it's been sent

2 out to an agency. I don't know anything except it's  
3 closed, but when I look around my district, the issue  
4 was still there. It's still prominent. So, can you  
5 talk to that just a little bit?

6           JOE MORRISROE: Yeah, I could talk to  
7 that from-through on perspective, and I can  
8 appreciate the frustration that—that any user would  
9 have in that situation. We do work with the agencies  
10 to understand what we call a resolution status. A  
11 service request is taken by 311. A confirmation  
12 number is given to the customer. That service  
13 request goes to the agency. The agency has that same  
14 confirmation number. At that point 311 is reliant on  
15 the agency to provide the status that comes next  
16 whether it be an interim step, as Chair Holden had  
17 mentioned earlier in his experience or whether it be  
18 a final step such as a closure. We do work the  
19 agencies on what I'll call language to—to address  
20 those-to-to ideally put it into what we call plain  
21 language standards. So, it's not government speak,  
22 but it's actually something that's the general public  
23 will comprehend. But as far as the status that is  
24 owned by the agency, we're—we're dependent on the  
25 agency's information that gets updated whether it's

2 something that you see yourself on the mobile app or  
3 whether a customer would call us and ask us for the  
4 status.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: So, and I don't  
6 know—apologies to Chair Holden, if you've already  
7 gone through this series. So that pretty much leaves  
8 the users still just twisting in the wind in a lot of  
9 cases then?

10 JOE MORRISROE: If—if they don't feel  
11 they have resolution or they have insight to the  
12 resolution, we—we do experience that where customers  
13 may contact us, and I'll use the example of the Call  
14 Center directly. Um, we were able to work through a  
15 couple of scenarios that tried to help. In some cases  
16 it may just be a reiterating what the service level  
17 agreement is. The customer may not—may not remember  
18 that it takes X number of days in stead of what their  
19 expectation was. So, we'll make sure the expectation  
20 is clear. If they're not satisfied with the outcome,  
21 we will then—I will offer to submit another service  
22 request, and then we also offer to provide the  
23 customer with what's known as a comment for the  
24 agency or a comment for the agency head that a  
25 customer can, you know, free form and giving kind of

2 verbally relay what their concern is, what their  
3 question is, and then is submitted to each agency to  
4 go to the Commissioner's office of each agency. So,  
5 that's just some of the steps that we can at least  
6 take to help a customer in that situation.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: Okay. Thank you  
8 very much for your responses today. I appreciate it.  
9 Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Just to follow up on  
11 that, Adams—Council Member Adams with the Police  
12 Department. Since the Police Department are getting  
13 the most complaints by far of any agency, some of the  
14 responses I guess that the police give are that the  
15 condition was corrected, they'll say or something to  
16 that effect, but we don't know what—what happened,  
17 and with the placard abuse bill that were just  
18 recently passed through the City Council, um,  
19 addressing police placard abuse, which we have a lot  
20 of still, some of the answers—like I had one the  
21 other day where somebody was parked in a no standing  
22 zone, and I complained on the app, and it didn't give  
23 me that the car was summonsed. It just said it was  
24 corrected. Now, that's where we could have the  
25 placard abuse continue when we don't get a definitive

2 response from especially the Police Department. So,  
3 we're going to have to—I think 311 if you can revisit  
4 that and ask for a more specific solution to the  
5 response that the 311 callers or app users get  
6 Because it is disheartening when they just say it's  
7 handled, and many times it wasn't really handled or  
8 sometimes it is, and we don't see the car parked  
9 there any more, but that could be again covering up  
10 on placard abuse. So, we're going to need a little  
11 bit more information if you can look into that.

12 JOE MORRISROE: I appreciate that and  
13 I'll take that back. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Okay, Chair Cabrera,  
15 you want to--?

16 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Council Member—

17 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Okay, Council Member  
18 Yeger wants to ask a question. Okay.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: Thank you, Mr.  
20 Chairman and Mr. Chairman. I'd like to follow up in  
21 Leader Matteo's absence some of the colloquy that he  
22 was going through with you in relation to his two  
23 bills only one of which is being heard today, but as  
24 you know, there was substantial administration  
25 objection to Intro 188. It think it's a good bill. I

3 co-sponsored it, but I understand the objection. What  
4 I don't understand that I'm trying to see if you can  
5 perhaps explain it in better language than these six  
6 lines in your testimony what your objection is to  
7 Intro 1420, and I want to be specific about what my  
8 question is. The bill requires that unsubstantiated  
9 complaints be listed on the report. You give the  
10 report, you put it up on a website. Everybody's  
11 happy. We go home. You say, this bill would present  
12 substantial operational challenges to 311. Okay,  
13 point one. As an example, there can be cases when a  
14 customer files a service request for a legitimate  
15 condition, but the reported condition is remedied  
16 before a city official inspects the complaint. So,  
17 what? Who cares? It's unsubstantiated. I don't  
18 care if it got fixed. I don't think Leader Matteo  
19 cares if it got fixed. It's unsubstantiated. What  
20 is the operational deficit, the operational challenge  
21 to 311 to putting that on a piece of paper and  
22 throwing it up on a website?

23                   JOE MORRISROE: I appreciate the question  
24 and I appreciate the clarification and taking it  
25 through the detail. From an overall 311—I'll speak  
from an overall 311 perspective. It's not an

2 apparatus that we currently have, and that's what  
3 drives an operational challenge. I appreciate the  
4 distinction of whether it is or isn't  
5 unsubstantiated. What you're asking for is to report  
6 on it.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: Okay. Let me—let  
8 me answer, if I may, to that.

9 JOE MORRISROE: Sure.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: I, um, I have to  
11 file like most Americans a tax return for my 2019  
12 income. I do not currently have Turbo Tax for 2019.  
13 I do have it for the previous years, but the previous  
14 years Turbo Tax won't allow me to file my 2019 Tax  
15 Return. So, I'm going to go to Staples, and I'm  
16 going to slap \$100 on the desk, and I'm going to walk  
17 out with a piece of software. What is the problem,  
18 the operational challenge to 311 in the \$95 billion  
19 organization that the City of New York is to being  
20 able to develop some kind of tool to spit out a list  
21 of complaints that weren't substantiated?

22 JOE MORRISROE: So, from a 311  
23 perspective the service request process we make it  
24 available through open data. We handle the intake  
25

2 and referral process, but we don't have a layer of  
3 management or analysts that compile--

4 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: So, you got to  
5 hire a guy?

6 JOE MORRISROE: I don't know what it  
7 would take do that. I can't answer that.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: Okay, so how  
9 quickly could you find out what it is? Because this  
10 bill was not introduced five minutes ago. We've had  
11 knowledge of the bill. What--how long would you need  
12 to be able to come back to the Council and tell the  
13 Council what it is that's missing in the \$95 billion  
14 organization of the City of New York is to being able  
15 to provide a list. So, by way of example, I  
16 frequently ask the Department of Transportation to  
17 provide things that my constituents point out to me  
18 that I see myself, a stop sign here, a speed bump  
19 there, and I keep a list in my office, and I know  
20 that the DOT doesn't d' anything. So, I follow, and  
21 I have a list of things that we've requested and then  
22 a column for when DOT did it or got back to us, and  
23 that column is blank. So, I can with a push of a  
24 button in under 30 seconds spit out a report that  
25 says: DOT didn't do anything that I asked them to do.

2 It's simple. Now I'm not a genius by any means. I'm  
3 probably not one of the smarter people on this  
4 committee, but surely if I can put out a report that  
5 says these are the things I asked for, and these are  
6 the things I didn't get, 311 should be able to push  
7 some kind of button. I don't know how it works  
8 there, but there's got to be a button that can be  
9 pushed, and if not, how long would it take to find  
10 the button, install the button and get the guy who  
11 can pus the button?

12 JOE MORRISROE: Again, I appreciate the--  
13 the description of the situation, and, um, I can  
14 follow along on that. There is not a button I can  
15 say in current state, and I don't know what it would  
16 take.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: Okay, so-

18 JOE MORRISROE: You're describing--

19 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: --can you find out  
20 within like tomorrow?

21 JOE MORRISROE: I will attempt. I will  
22 leave this committee hearing, and I will take this an  
23 action item. I don't know how long it's toing to  
24 take. I don't even know how long it will take--

25 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: By Thursday?

2 JOE MORRISROE: --for it. Again, I  
3 think--what I said is that I--

4 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: What--what--how long  
5 do you think--let me ask the following question. It  
6 will be my last question, Mr. Chairman. By what time  
7 do you think that if you don't have the answer, um,  
8 it's past the due date of when the answer ought to  
9 have been given to the City Council

10 JOE MORRISROE: I apologize. I didn't  
11 track that question.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: Okay.

13 JOE MORRISROE: Could you please repeat  
14 it?

15 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: I have 720 or so  
16 days until the people of this city lose my great  
17 service, a lot of members of this Council also do  
18 because our terms expire. So, somewhere in the next  
19 720 days I'm hopeful you're able to get it. How long  
20 do you think you need? I know you can't say you're  
21 going to get it by tomorrow. You're going to get it  
22 by the day after, the day after that. When do you  
23 think you would be able to get because this is really  
24 simple, and this is the kind of stuff that the  
25 Council goes through all the time not just with your

2 agency. It happens to be the guy sitting here today,  
3 but the agency sees a bill being introduced, and it  
4 just gets introduced and it floats around, and all of  
5 a sudden a hearing comes, and then the agency walks  
6 in and says: We can't do this. When can it be done?  
7 No answer. How? What do you need to get it done?  
8 No answer. What kind of resources to you need? No  
9 answer. Ho much money? No answer. You have  
10 infrastructure people? No answer. So how long do  
11 you need? Do you need two weeks, three weeks to get  
12 the answer? I'm not saying to turn on the thing, but  
13 how long does it take you to get an answer of what it  
14 is that you need?

15 JOE MORRISROE: I will be able to pursue  
16 it, but I do not know how long--

17 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: Okay.

18 JOE MORRISROE: --it will take me to give  
19 you and answer.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: Thank you very  
21 much, Mr. Chairman.

22 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Council Member  
23 Ayala.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Thank you. I'm  
25 actually going to piggyback off of Council Member

2 Adrienne Adams' line of questioning, but in relation  
3 to 311, do you have the—does 311 have a breakdown by  
4 agency of the percentage of 311 requests that are  
5 resolved within the service level of three-minute  
6 timeline for this fiscal year?

7 JOE MORRISROE: No, we do not.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Do you intend to  
9 get one or is that--? Why-why not?

10 JOE MORRISROE: Well, it's not a standard  
11 report that we've produced.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: (off mic) No, it's  
13 not going stay. (sic) So, what mechanism exists to  
14 keep an agency accountable is one that does not meet  
15 its SLA deadline.

16 JOE MORRISROE: So, the 311 process  
17 handles the intake and referral of customer  
18 complaints. We make sure the front side, if you will  
19 is accurate from both working the customer through  
20 whether the customer is self-serving on one of our  
21 digital channels or whether they're talking with an  
22 agent, and they're making sure all the requirements  
23 that the agency needs to fulfill are collected.

24 (background comments/pause)

2 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Yes, so to be  
3 clear, there's no follow-up with the agency?

4 JOE MORRISROE: 311 does not have a  
5 direct follow-up on each complaint with the agency.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: So, how do you  
7 keep track of what's done and what isn't?

8 JOE MORRISROE: Um we actually submit the  
9 request to the agency through--again, through any of  
10 the channels. A confirmation number is provided to  
11 the customer, and the agency has that same  
12 confirmation number. 311 does not continue in that  
13 process--

14 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: How do you make  
15 sure that it's accurate, that the information that  
16 they're providing is accurate? I mean do we just  
17 hope?

18 JOE MORRISROE: No, that's responsibility  
19 of the agency to be able to fulfill on that request.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: But the  
21 responsibility of the agency is also to fulfill it  
22 within a certain time frame.

23 JOE MORRISROE: Yes, when are there  
24 service agreements in most, obviously--

2 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: (interposing) But  
3 there's no mechanism to ensure that.

4 JOE MORRISROE: 311 does not have a  
5 mechanism to ensure that. No, we do not.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Does anybody else  
7 have those mechanism?

8 JOE MORRISROE: I would have to defer to  
9 my agency colleagues to see whether they have an  
10 internal tool or mechanism that they're using.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Are any of the  
12 agency colleagues here to respond to that?

13 JOE MORRISROE: I do not believe so. I  
14 don't expect that to be the case, but no.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: So, can 311 new  
16 software automatically notify agencies when they are  
17 beyond their SLA deadline? No? I'm just looking at  
18 this.

19 JOE MORRISROE: We will answer that a  
20 little bit of a different way. We effectively  
21 already do. Because the agency has set the Service  
22 Level Agreement, they have that information. When we  
23 submit a complaint, they have that. So the agency  
24 actually has the two known values: The time the  
25 complaint was filed, and the Service Level Agreement

2 for each one. We don't have access to that, but  
3 agencies do.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Okay because some  
5 of the deadlines require responses in a day or even  
6 hours. Should the bill require notification if the  
7 agency has not resolved the complaint by the next  
8 calendar day?

9 JOE MORRISROE: I'm sure I'm tracking the  
10 question.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: I mean you're  
12 saying that there's no--there's no--there's no  
13 timeline, right, that's provided?

14 JOE MORRISROE: Well, there is. The  
15 agency has a timeline. They know that--

16 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: (interposing) Is  
17 that--is that being SLA?

18 JOE MORRISROE: That--yes, that's  
19 considered. In each complaint type that an agency  
20 handles there is an SLA, Service Level Agreement. So,  
21 and agency would know how much time it has an needs  
22 to fulfill on a request that--that countdown mechanism  
23 or that--that, you know, timing mechanism would be  
24 internal to the agency.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Okay. In January  
3 of 2019, the Speaker recommended that agencies  
4 convene and interagency working group to streamline  
5 agency reporting on 311 agency requests. Did such a  
6 group convene, and if so, what has the group  
7 accomplished since last year?

8 JOE MORRISROE: I can speak on somewhat  
9 of a high level. I'm not involved in the details,  
10 but I do know there were follow-up meetings from the  
11 agencies and 311 that were there. I believe there  
12 were a number of reporting items that were identified  
13 curing that hearing that questions how-how data was  
14 provided and reported. I know some of that has been  
15 followed up. From a detailed perspective, I'd be  
16 getting a little bit too far along without having the  
17 right recall.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: So, is it possible  
19 you could get back to us with more information on  
20 what inevitably happened with that recommendation?

21 JOE MORRISROE: Yeah. I believe I  
22 certainly could. I can go back and check with the  
23 folks that were involved in that.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: I appreciate it.  
25 Thank you.

3 JOE MORRISROE: Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much.

5 Let me recognize we've been joined by Council Member  
6 Costa, and before I turn to Powers just so we could  
7 have a good transition here, it seems that there is a  
8 glaring problem of what Council Member Ayala's bill  
9 and my bill seeks to resolve, and I'm—I'm hopeful  
10 that the Administration will really look at this  
11 because it's going to be able to bring more  
12 confidence, and our constituents feeling that they're  
13 getting the proper information that there is a  
14 complete circle in terms of a solution that was  
15 founds, and it was the proper respondents that my Co-  
16 Chair was alluding to as well earlier. It just—it  
17 just—it keeps coming up. I mean this is not like one  
18 or two, you know, problems that keeps surging. So,  
19 please if you guys could look at these bills very  
20 carefully because it will solve the problem. There  
21 is no cost to this, and you could do this internally.  
22 It's—it's—it's not a big lift. It really is not.  
23 Um, and with that, let me just turn it over to  
24 Council Member Powers.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Thank you. Just  
a couple follow-up questions from before to talking

3 about Adams' related to the issues in her district  
4 with the flooding. I think it was 123 or 120  
5 something 311 complaints that came in that were-  
6 seemed relevant to the issue that she was discussing,  
7 and I think the discussion or the statement was that  
8 there's no kind of way internally to measure whether  
9 there is a cluster of issues and problems. There  
10 probably should be or there should--there could be.  
11 I'm wondering if there could be, but I--I certainly  
12 think there should be particularly in a place like  
13 again like her district where this was a, um, a major  
14 incident happening. What would it take for the, um,  
15 for 311 to have a mechanism by which you could  
16 identify clusters in real time to flag any particular  
17 issues in the district that's happening?

18           JOE MORRISROE: I appreciate the question  
19 and--and going back to the--the example that was used,  
20 um, I'd be speculating a little bit, but, um, the  
21 process as we handle it, um, and if you think of it  
22 from a call center perspective, I'll use that  
23 particular channel, and I'll use this example where  
24 there are over 100. I believe it was 128 complaints.  
25 Um, those would have been received and filed by many  
different call center agents over the course of the

3 day. So, no one agent is going to have that  
4 knowledge and say I've gotten, you know, six of these  
5 in a row or something to that effect. Um, we also  
6 lose visibility once we submit something to an  
7 agency. They may have different protocols to  
8 prioritize, to-to classify something. You know, we  
9 handle the intake and referral to make sure we're  
10 getting that piece, but there's no called added  
11 intelligence that 311 would have once we've submitted  
12 it to an agency. Um, so you would feel that to try  
13 to put something in place on the 311 side to go with  
14 your point, you know, could or should, not to dispute  
15 that, but I'm not sure of the value that that would  
16 offer, um, because again the agency is going to have  
17 the full suite of information, the location  
18 information, the response information, et cetera.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: But then I just  
19 follow up with that. You know, I understand that  
20 there's a human element here people taking calls  
21 individually from people at different times of the  
22 day, but that is--that's why software and technology  
23 exist to solve--solve problems, and-and to help  
24 coordinate issues like this. It does feel like--and  
25 it does feel like to me like it should be on the 311

3 side where you are receiving these and able to  
4 evaluate location and, you know, similar issues and a  
5 similar geo—you know, geographical location to see if  
6 there is a particular incident that's occurring and  
7 where the thresholds lie. We think that's to be in  
8 discussion, but what—so what—what would it take today  
9 to be put in place if one desires to have some  
10 ability to identify clusters?

11           JOE MORRISROE: Well, again, appreciate  
12 the question and I would say I believe coming out of  
13 the after action work that is being done for this,  
14 that's I'm going to assume something that's being  
15 looked at. If you're asking me what would it take  
16 from a 311 perspective specifically, um, a couple of  
17 things that we don't have today. Um, so it's outside  
18 of our core competency as you described, you know,  
19 someone looking at it. I get that and I understand  
20 that, but that is a skillset that is a resource that  
21 is a discipline, if you will. There would also need  
22 to be reporting. There would need to be coverage  
23 issues. It's more than a single report, and it's  
24 right for something again that goes beyond our kind  
25 of focus and our key—our structure even that, it  
would—I fall back on it would be outside of our core

3 competency. So, it would be something unlike anything  
4 we do today, and would require us to look at that,  
5 and I would then say: Does it make the most sense to  
6 have something like at 311 or is there a better way  
7 to leverage that through what exists already across  
8 city-city agencies, across Emergency Management,  
9 across other areas that are probably more focused and  
10 more in tune with that type of work.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Okay, I respect  
12 that. I do think it's worth pursuing or looking at  
13 and—and I think it actually is better at the upfront—  
14 well I think it's actually better situated with you  
15 because you are sort of doing this for all agencies  
16 rather than having to do it a sort of agency base  
17 level. But I just have one more question following up  
18 with Council Member Holden's questions earlier about  
19 parking and illegal parking and placards. I believe  
20 you have a—Council Member Holden has a law that was  
21 just signed into law related to illegal parking, if  
22 I'm correct, and so I'm sorry if I missed this part  
23 of the questions earlier, but there will be now  
24 moving forward an opportunity, an ability for  
25 individuals at some point in time to be able to

3 upload photos to 311 of illegal parking. Is that  
4 correct?

5 JOE MORRISROE: Yes, that is correct. I  
6 did mention earlier, it's—it's not in effect yet.  
7 It's something we are working on, but it is something  
8 that will be in the effect.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Okay, and do we  
10 have an understanding of when that occurs and  
11 somebody takes—let's say it's a placard. Somebody is  
12 parking in a spot, has a fake placard or a  
13 handwritten note or, you know, whatever may be that  
14 they believe gives them the ability to park in an  
15 illegal spot. Does that—would that rule still  
16 require the agency to come out and enforce against  
17 that? So it's basically you're reporting, but you're  
18 not triggering an automatic enforcing mechanism. You  
19 are essentially still reporting this to NYPD. They  
20 have to send somebody out to enforce it. Is that  
21 correct?

22 JOE MORRISROE: Okay, I do understand  
23 your question, and I believe—I'm tapping my own, um,  
24 my own knowledge here. I believe it's that latter.  
25 It's that it will be sent. It will be considered  
illegal parking. In this case it may have an added

2 element to it, which you mentioned, but it would go  
3 to NYPD for juris--NYPD for jurisdiction.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Is there--and  
5 maybe this is actually an NYPD question, but is there  
6 an opportunity to ability for that to--I guess I sent  
7 a picture in of a illegal--a car with an illegal  
8 placard and the signage there applies or even an  
9 legal placard, but they're not in a--they're not in a  
10 legal spot. Um, there could potentially be an  
11 opportunity to do just automatic enforcement against  
12 that. I know that causes some concern about, you  
13 know, how you do enforcement, but is that possible?

14 JOE MORRISROE: I--I would be beyond my  
15 headlights and be able to answer that, but I would be  
16 able to take that back and share it with our liaison  
17 at NYPD.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Okay, good. Thank  
19 you.

20 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much.  
21 Let me, um, go over some rapid fire questions here--

22 JOE MORRISROE: Okay.

23 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: --just so we could  
24 go over some of the questions that we haven't  
25 covered, but before we do that, I really appreciated

2 the tour that we took last time at 311 Center. It's  
3 a very impressive place, and operation that you have,  
4 but as you recall, we had—I had mentioned that there  
5 were some complaints about people calling in for the  
6 Spanish--

7 JOE MORRISROE: Yes.

8 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: --um, you know, for  
9 a translator, and as we were there the time kept  
10 actually increasing, and I went all the way to ten  
11 minutes waiting. How—do you have data that you could  
12 give us regarding how long it takes for someone who  
13 needs a 311 operator who speaks Spanish?

14 JOE MORRISROE: I could speak to that in  
15 terms of what we—we have. Um the process for a  
16 customer who speaks Spanish and contacts 311 can go  
17 one of several paths, and a large number of customers  
18 are actually served, and not ever have to talk to an  
19 agent. They will call like many customers wanting to  
20 know alternate side parking information, which is  
21 always on a daily basis the number one thing people  
22 want to consume from 311. So, we have that  
23 information recorded in an announcement. Um, we also  
24 have what's known as a Natural Language Understanding  
25 Application specific to Spanish speaking customers

2 who can, um, state what they're interested in and get  
3 what we call directed answers back in language—in  
4 Spanish in natural language that will either answer  
5 the question right there and then for the customer  
6 They don't need to speak to an agent or in some case,  
7 if it may need to be a transfer, it will perform the  
8 transfer for that customer. An example of the  
9 transfer may be MTA because 311 doesn't handle the  
10 day-to-day business of the MTA.

11 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: But to start—that's  
12 not cutting into the waiting time.

13 JOE MORRISROE: No, no, no.

14 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Okay.

15 JOE MORRISROE: I'm sorry. This is the--  
16 the process leading up to that.

17 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Okay. Got you.

18 JOE MORRISROE: Once a customer goes  
19 through that, um, there are options then. We—the  
20 preferred option is to be able to handle that by a  
21 311 bilingual speaking agent. So, the customer  
22 doesn't need to have a translator brought out. If a  
23 bilingual agent is not available, then the customer  
24 will be, um, given the opportunity to—we'll move them  
25

2 to bringing on the Language Line trans—the Language  
3 Translation vendor know as Language Line.

4 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: But why for  
5 example, you know we saw it live in action. Why did  
6 it take somebody ten minutes?

7 JOE MORRISROE: Um, as my—as I recall  
8 from that day and after you—when you were there we  
9 went back and took a look at that. I believe it was  
10 over the lunch hour when you were there, and there  
11 was a promotion run on I believe it was Telemundo  
12 referencing 311. So, we did get a spike in calls  
13 that was not anticipated. We also took a look at  
14 staffing to make sure do we have enough Spanish  
15 bilingual speaking agents, English and Spanish  
16 available. Um, we have since taken efforts to  
17 improve that.

18 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: And, um, so what  
19 does—what does that translate? How many more people  
20 did you hire to do that job?

21 JOE MORRISROE: Um, it's terms of—I don't  
22 have the actual number off hand because we do have a  
23 hiring process, and so yeah, I don't know the number  
24 of people.

3 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Have-have the  
4 numbers gone down significantly or it's still the  
5 same because you haven't been able to make the hires  
6 so you have attrition?

7 JOE MORRISROE: I-I could say the-the  
8 example you saw was an exception, then the numbers  
9 are not-the performance over the course of the year  
10 is-is in line with our total call handling. Um,  
11 we've managed to service levels and average speed of  
12 answer. Average speed of answer objective is 30  
13 seconds. On the Spanish language calls that are  
14 identified as Spanish language, that is right in line  
15 with our total call volume. The wait time is right in  
16 line with the overall total call volume for 311.

17 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: It is?

18 JOE MORRISROE: Right, this past year the  
19 calendar year was 27 seconds, again sometimes--

20 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: With Spanish?

21 JOE MORRISROE: Sorry. No, the total was  
22 27 seconds and Spanish, which is a subset of the  
23 total is right in line with that. I don't have the  
24 exact number, but it's right in line with that. It's  
25 close to that 30-second agenda.

2 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: It's close to 30  
3 seconds?

4 JOE MORRISROE: Yes, yes.

5 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: I mean that was--  
6 you're saying that that was an anomaly?

7 JOE MORRISROE: On that particular day  
8 that was an anomaly. We-we have other anomalies that  
9 are--

10 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: (interposing)  
11 Because a lot of people, you know how I--you know why  
12 I asked because a lot of people who work for 311  
13 approached me and told me: Watch that number. And  
14 so that's why, you know, I was particularly==

15 JOE MORRISROE: Right.

16 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA:--you know had laser  
17 focus--

18 JOE MORRISROE: Sure.

19 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA:--that day, and so  
20 I'm--I'm hoping that that was just an anomaly, um, but  
21 the operators themselves are telling me.

22 JOE MORRISROE: It's okay. Their feedback  
23 is--

24 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Is-is-is--

25 JOE MORRISROE: --and we--

2 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: --It's a concern.

3 JOE MORRISROE: Sure. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Um, so, I'm hopeful  
5 that we can make those hires, um, sooner rather than  
6 later. You know the questions that, um, in terms of  
7 my Co-Chair just so wisely pointed out regarding  
8 what's available now. I know we had the previous  
9 hearing on 311, and in the summer in June is when it  
10 went on. Do you think that that project was too  
11 ambitious in terms of what you took on, and having  
12 the deadline for June because it seems that most of  
13 the features are not on.

14 JOE MORRISROE: Again, appreciate the  
15 question, and, um, considering the scope of the  
16 project, which had covered quite a bit of time, um,  
17 our main focus throughout and my colleagues at DOITT  
18 will know that this is what, you know, I shared and  
19 they shared along the way was we wanted to bring our  
20 new system up for the public. We had been on an old  
21 system, 16 years old, very difficult to maintain.  
22 Um, we wanted to be able to not only have growth for  
23 the future, which this new system has, but to get  
24 onto a stable new environment. So, that was—that was  
25 a driver for sure. Um, but we did rigorous testing

3 all the way through the process. We may have  
4 identified areas that could have been addressed after  
5 the fact. Right? Let's move forward, and take care  
6 of this after the fact, a conscious decision as  
7 opposed to a gap. Um, but I do feel that we had the  
8 right rigor. I feel like we did the right amount of  
9 testing, and—and frankly more and more testing. Um, I  
10 felt like we were ready to go when we went.

11 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: But you—were you  
12 aware of what was missing. As for example the points  
13 that my colleagues and Chair pointed out, as you were  
14 moving forward this is something that your—the  
15 person—the company you had a contract with was  
16 alerting you along the way?

17 JOE MORRISROE: Oh, yes, I—I think I'll  
18 use the example of the Mobile App where again I said  
19 this earlier, um, there's a suite of options for  
20 complaints. You know, in the typical—I call it the  
21 Devides (sic) format and we—we had—I believe we had  
22 22 or 24 of those. We knew some of them weren't  
23 weren't going to be able to work until we could  
24 reconfigure them. We didn't want to wait to delay  
25 the entire project for a hand full of those. What we

2 did with that offer was you can still submit it, but  
3 you'd get a link to go to 311 online. You'd land--  
4 from your mobile phone you'd land on 311 online in a  
5 mobile optimized page so it's easy navigate. That  
6 became somewhat of a surrogate for a few of those  
7 types rather than waiting and holding up the process,  
8 but yeah, I-I think we were--made conscious decisions  
9 in that point.

10 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Out of--out of--what  
11 was it, 28 there were six, um, what do you call it?

12 JOE MORRISROE: Complaints.

13 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Complaints--

14 JOE MORRISROE: And taps.

15 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: --that--that you can  
16 make of your, you know, you could upload video. Why  
17 is--why--if it's the same type of software application  
18 why not just--why--why does it take so long to get the  
19 other points--

20 JOE MORRISROE: (interposing) I can--

21 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: --before, I mean  
22 it--

23 JOE MORRISROE: I can--I can appreciate  
24 the question and I can appreciate framing it as  
25 such. I know there are challenges. I can share that

2 in terms of being able to incorporate that. Some of  
3 this was new. Um, so we—we went in with a plan, and  
4 some of it was new, and you've got to be able to  
5 adjust once you have something new. Um, and it's a  
6 technical lift. Um, so it does take some time, and I  
7 believe one of the challenges we have is—is  
8 addressing each one sort of one by one.

9 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Okay, so it wasn't  
10 a capacity problem in terms of being able to absorb  
11 that, you know, that—the bandwidth that you were  
12 going to need, and the amount of bits that it's going  
13 to take in space.

14 JOE MORRISROE: I-I would not be able to  
15 address that.

16 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Okay.

17 JOE MORRISROE: That's beyond my—my  
18 comprehension.

19 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Alright let me just  
20 address quickly here some language and here comes the  
21 rapid fire. Does 311 have a breakdown on how many  
22 calls it has taken this year, fiscal year in each  
23 non-English language?

24 JOE MORRISROE: Yes, we do.  
25

2 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Can you provide us  
3 those?

4 JOE MORRISROE: I-I could provide that  
5 after the fact, yes.

6 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Okay, thank you so  
7 much.

8 JOE MORRISROE: I'm sorry. You said  
9 fiscal year?

10 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Fiscal year. Yes.

11 JOE MORRISROE: Fiscal Year. Okay.

12 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Yes, um, what steps  
13 has 311 taken to minimize caller confusion and caller  
14 wait time when an operator needs to call in a  
15 Language Line Translator?

16 JOE MORRISROE: Oh, so, if I may, it may  
17 not be too rapid, but--

18 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Okay.

19 JOE MORRISROE: --I will--I will give you  
20 it.

21 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: No, no, we want the  
22 right answer.

23 JOE MORRISROE: Okay, um, we--I'm pleased  
24 to share that we've taken some steps following last  
25 year's hearing and we have some plans going forward

3 as well. Specifically, where things for the  
4 languages where a customer can use the prompt to  
5 identify and hear their language and now select a  
6 prompt, when they do press the button now: 4, 5 or 6  
7 that information does pop up to the Call Center  
8 representative so they know the customer has selected  
9 Russian or Korean, and then that agent then knows to  
10 immediately bring on Language Line for that language.  
11 So, that was a very good piece of input from Council  
12 last year, and one that once we launched the new  
13 system we were then able to connect the new system  
14 with the Telephony system, and deliver that  
15 capability.

16 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Do have—do you have  
17 like a live video capability? I mean we have some  
18 language here today for those who are calling in, um,  
19 and they would like to communicate using sign  
20 language?

21 JOE MORRISROE: We don't have the live  
22 video capability.

23 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Is that something  
24 you're looking forward to do in the future.

25 JOE MORRISROE: One of the things we are  
always looking at—I'll go back the aforementioned new

3 CRM platform. One of the other reasons for building  
4 that not that it delivers live video or other  
5 features you may hear of, but it gives us the  
6 foundation. So, if we're going to expand or look to  
7 do that, we already—we now have a modern system that  
8 could be the—the platform the use for that.

9 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Yeah, I would think  
10 that would be something that hopefully we'll make it  
11 a priority in light of the fact especially with all  
12 of the challenges that we're going to hear about in  
13 the next panel. According to a recent media report  
14 when some callers use their automated systems to like  
15 one of the six prerecorded languages, they were still  
16 directed to an English speaking operator who did not  
17 know that the caller already selected the language.  
18 There appears to be an ongoing problem in how the  
19 automated system communicates with 311 operators.  
20 How is 311 addressing this ongoing problem?

21 JOE MORRISROE: I appreciate that as  
22 well, and I would like to share what the process is.  
23 The customer would land with an English speaking  
24 agent. That's part of the existing process. What  
25 we've tried too do over the years and the enhancement  
that I mentioned earlier with pressing the right

3 button, um, is to set the expectation for that  
4 customer in their language. So, the announcement  
5 that they will hear if they press, again I'll use  
6 the--the answer I--the example I used before say press  
7 4 for Russian, I'll say in English what the customer  
8 would hear in Russian, but they will get the  
9 information on alternate side parking. They will  
10 also be told you can visit 311 online for fast and  
11 easy service. The website can be translated to  
12 Russian.

13 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: This is in Russian?

14 JOE MORRISROE: This is all in Russian in  
15 this example--

16 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Oh, okay.

17 JOE MORRISROE: --and continuing in  
18 Russian would be this call may be recorded for  
19 quality purposes. Now, you will be connected with an  
20 English speaking representative. Tell the  
21 representative the language you speak and the  
22 representative will bring an interpreter on the line.

23 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Okay. So I'm a  
24 little confused. If it's so--it's already--(laughs)--  
25 I'm starting to laugh, but if I already pressed for

3 Russian, shouldn't it just automatically go to a  
4 Russian translator?

5 JOE MORRISROE: I-I can-can say in order  
6 to then service the customer, we need 311 to be  
7 engaged in the process. 311 would-then has to  
8 contract with the-with the interpreter.

9 Unfortunately, we don't have the-the two services in  
10 one place, if you will. We don't have a 311 agent  
11 and a Language Line interpreter. So, it's necessary  
12 to bring 311 on first, turn (sic) the interpreter on,  
13 and then 311 agent is able to navigate the  
14 conversation.

15 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: But I mean couldn't  
16 you contract out that it will go straight to the  
17 language company that you're using let's say for  
18 Russian, um, and they just go, and then you have a  
19 tracking that happens automatically that indicates  
20 the same tracking that you're using right now from  
21 English to-to Russian.

22 JOE MORRISROE: Sure, sure. I follow  
23 that. Um, in that scenario again we still need the  
24 311 agent who is proficient in how to take the-to  
25 share the information or take the customer's request.  
So, we're looking-we do look at different options. Is

3 there a better way to do that. We're constantly  
4 looking to improve that process. One of the things  
5 we're doing with MOIA is to do some work in that area  
6 to kind of get some feedback. Um, I'll take what you  
7 say. You know, the example that you just gave and see  
8 if there's another way to do that.

9 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Please. How many  
10 non-English callers have dropped their 311 call  
11 before making a complaint of service request?

12 JOE MORRISROE: So, one of the things we  
13 do is track to the extent possible dropped calls, and  
14 we call it abandoned calls in the industry. Um, and,  
15 um, looking at that for the past calendar year not  
16 the fiscal year, but the calendar year, the total for  
17 311 was 2.6% of calls, and then looking at our  
18 Language Line—our language Channel, if you will, it  
19 was 2.9% so materially the same.

20 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Okay, has 311  
21 sought feedback from local community organizations to  
22 access quality of its pre-recorded messages in  
23 language other than English?

24 JOE MORRISROE: Um, that is one of the  
25 things we're doing now with MOIA. We're going to a

2 service design project, and hoping to be able to—to  
3 be able to talk to customer and get that feedback.

4 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: What is the—I'm  
5 just going to go into some general questions real  
6 quick. What is the turnover rate for 311 non-  
7 supervisor staff?

8 JOE MORRISROE: So, the, um—I'll answer I  
9 this way. The average tenure for a call center  
10 representative is at 311 is 47.6 months. In terms of  
11 turnover on a monthly basis, that varies some months  
12 more so than others. For last year calendar year I  
13 believe it was anywhere from 9 to 10 CC—sorry—CCRs,  
14 Call Center Representatives per month.

15 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: And what's that—  
16 what's the base salary?

17 JOE MORRISROE: Um, sorry. I have that  
18 and I should look it up rather than tell you off the  
19 top of my head. Um, it's—I apologize.

20 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: That's okay. Take  
21 your time.

22 JOE MORRISROE: It's—I believe—if I can—  
23 for now if I can say it's just under \$40,000. I can  
24 get the exact figure for you. I got it somewhere.

2 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Why is it so low?  
3 I mean it's almost close to minimum wage.

4 JOE MORRISROE: Um, the salary has  
5 progressed over the years in terms of what--what--what  
6 stepping stones have been for each one, and, um, you  
7 know, it's something that for the skill set it's the  
8 starting point.

9 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Hm, I would hope  
10 that that would go up because it seems rather low for  
11 the amount of responsibility they have. According to  
12 the MM--actually-- (pause) Let me pass it onto my  
13 colleague. He has some questions. Eric Ulrich--

14 COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: Thank you, Pastor  
15 and thank you Chair.

16 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: --he probably makes  
17 around five star.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: Thank you, thank  
19 you, Chairs for hosting this hearing. I apologize  
20 for being late today, but it's a very important topic  
21 for a lot of our constituents and New Yorkers who  
22 rely on 311 to report quality of life complaints and  
23 also bring attention to areas of city government that  
24 perhaps need improvement. I encourage my constituents  
25 on a regular basis at community meetings and civic

3 organizations to download the app and to use it  
4 because I use it myself. There are dozens of  
5 complaints that I file. It's an opportunity for me as  
6 a—as a s citizen and a public official to hold  
7 agencies accountable because then I can forward  
8 service request number to the appropriate agency for  
9 follow-up later on if I don't see any improvement,  
10 and I have to say that with respect to some agencies,  
11 they are very quick to respond, and they're very  
12 thorough in their response, and they don't always do  
13 what I want them to do, but they—they do go out and  
14 investigate whatever it is I'm trying to report, but  
15 not all agencies are created equal and not all  
16 agencies are the same. I think we can agree on that.  
17 You know Sanitation is great, Parks is—is good, it  
18 could be better, but DOT needs a lot of improvement,  
19 and there are a lot of street conditions and other  
20 things that you can't use the app for that you should  
21 be able to use the app for so for instance, one of  
22 the, um, complaints that a lot of people have in our  
23 districts is shoddy utility work. You know, the—the  
24 utility will perform a gas or electrical work. They  
25 have to cut up the street, and then they subcontract  
out to some other company to come in and patch it up,

3 and, um, you know you have to actually go on DOT's  
4 website on a desktop to report that type of  
5 complaint. They don't make that available on the—you  
6 would have to put it in as a porthole or—or some  
7 other street cave-in or some other way to report it  
8 on the app. So, I think that the agent also catch  
9 basins, you know, with DEP. I love DEP. I think  
10 Commissioner Sapienza does a terrific job and we're  
11 very grateful for the hard work that the—the men and  
12 women of the department put in, but not all DEP  
13 complaints are able to be submitted on d 311 app  
14 including catch basins, which is probably one of the  
15 top complaints that that we get when there's—after a  
16 rain storm or there's a clogged, um, catch basin or  
17 if someone sees someone dumping any hazardous  
18 chemicals or grease or paint or things that someone  
19 shouldn't be dumping in a catch basin. How do you  
20 report that? They make it very hard. So, for a lot  
21 of the very common complaints that our offices have  
22 to deal with, um, we can't even submit on the app,  
23 and I—I would encourage the—the Department and the  
24 Administration to really take a look at that because  
25 you have to make this a lot—a lot more functional  
and, um, and make it user—you know, user-friendly for

3 the things that people want to use it for. Not  
4 everybody wants to request a bike lane. Not  
5 everybody wants to request a new street tree. You  
6 know, not everybody is—is using it to report a  
7 blocked driveway, but there are a lot of other  
8 complaints that are not able to be entered into the  
9 system, and we would like to see that, and we'd also  
10 like to see, and I've talked to especially Council  
11 Member Holden about this because I know he cares very  
12 deeply about this. We would like to see a lot more  
13 public awareness about the 311 app. We would like to  
14 see commercials on NYC to channel that. We would  
15 like to see it on kiosks. We would like see it in  
16 different languages so that people know that this is  
17 available at their fingertips, and it doesn't cost  
18 them anything. They can download it, and they help  
19 us improve quality of life conditions in the  
20 community. There isn't a great deal of outreach. I  
21 think DOITT does not do a very good job of promoting  
22 this, and—and I think that they need to do a better  
23 job of doing that, and also again getting back to the  
24 user-friendly aspect, there are a number of  
25 complaints that are very important especially in the  
Outer Boroughs that you can't even input using the

2 current apps. So, I would encourage you to do that as  
3 well.

4 JOE MORRISROE: Alright. Thank you very  
5 much for the feedback, and—and we'll take that  
6 feedback.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: Thank you very  
8 much. Thank you, Chairs. Thank you..

9 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much.  
10 Just a couple more questions, and then we have more  
11 panels. According to the MMR, the 311 app is used  
12 much less than the phone number or website. What do  
13 you think—why do you think this is and does the 311  
14 have a plan to increase the mobile app use?

15 JOE MORRISROE: Um, we, um—we're actually  
16 pleased with the growth of the 311 mobile app over  
17 the last several fiscal years. 2.3 million I think  
18 was the last year. I think this calendar year was  
19 2.6 million users, but—but in the same ball park.  
20 Um, but that has grown significantly since we've  
21 relaunched it in 2014 when it was less than a million  
22 users. Um, and to us that's a—it's a very good  
23 number. Um, it's—we find that that based on the—the  
24 feedback we do get, customers do like it, customers  
25 do use it. The feedback from—from Holden, feedback

2 form Council Member Ulrich included with all the  
3 other pieces here that we'll take back, there's  
4 always an opportunity to improve it. I appreciate the  
5 -the recognition of outreach. Duly noted, and that  
6 may help increase the users, but we—we certainly are  
7 open to trying to make it more known and more  
8 available and also it's more available, but more  
9 known and something more people can realize they can  
10 use.

11 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Yeah, maybe that's  
12 the problem because I mean the number one reason why  
13 people are calling in that you mentioned earlier is  
14 alternate side of the street. All you got to do is  
15 look at your app

16 JOE MORRISROE: It's prominently featured  
17 right on the—right on the front page.

18 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Right, it's right  
19 on the front—front page, which tells me that more  
20 likely people either they don't have access, but many  
21 people do, which makes me wonder why they don't go to  
22 the app instead of making the call, which it might be  
23 that they don't know about the app. Maybe we should  
24 do a campaign, you know.

2 JOE MORRISROE: That's certainly good  
3 feedback and something we can take a look at.

4 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much.

5 One of the most popular complaints related to 311 is  
6 tree-tree related complaints. In fact, in 2019  
7 according to the 311 Open Data Set, 71,733 trees  
8 complaints were received. Do you know if any or  
9 these complaints asked about tree ownership and upon  
10 receiving these complaints did you refer them to the  
11 Parks Department?

12 JOE MORRISROE: I can address that  
13 probably at a high level, and then get a little bit  
14 too deep for my knowledge or a little too risky for me  
15 to talk too much in detail. So, we do accept tree  
16 complaints, and they do go to the Department of Parks  
17 and Recreation. There was--like all agencies there is  
18 a standard protocol for a service request what they  
19 require. I--my knowledge is that yes there is a  
20 distinction of whether it's a privately owned tree  
21 versus a city owned tree because there would be  
22 different actions in that respect. Um, and those are  
23 submitted, as I said, through a service request  
24 process. That's probably about as deep as I can go  
25 on tree particular issue.

2 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Got you and the  
3 last question so we can move on, but we got all the  
4 questions done. Is the city still in its post-  
5 production contract with 311 or has DOIT taken over  
6 Product Support?

7 JOE MORRISROE: It's the post production  
8 contract with 311?

9 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Yes, or has DOITT  
10 taken over product support

11 JOE MORRISROE: If I may ask, are you  
12 referring to the new system, the new system.

13 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Yes, this is.

14 JOE MORRISROE: Oh, okay for it.

15 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Yes.

16 JOE MORRISROE: Um, it probably would be  
17 best to ask my colleague, Dominic to answer that  
18 question.

19 DOMINIC BURG: Sure. DOITT definitely  
20 takes responsibility for working with 311 and agency  
21 customers and supporting the product and the  
22 different channels made available by the-by the  
23 system. Um, the-the vendor who implemented it is  
24 still onboard, but working at their-at the direction  
25 of DOITT.

2 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Okay, thank you.

3 Um, it's late. I would say it was the last question,  
4 but Council Member Holden has one and the legal  
5 Counsel just advised me we missed a question here.  
6 Local Law 70 or 2017 requires that DOITT create a  
7 notification system whereby business owners can sign  
8 up for a notification. In fact, 311 complaints lodge  
9 against them. Since enactment, how many business  
10 signed up for alters?

11 JOE MORRISROE: I don't have information  
12 on that. I'll have to look into that.

13 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Can you—can you get  
14 us that? You're going to have a full report for us  
15 by the time we—we're done here. Let me pass it off  
16 to my co-Chair.

17 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Thank you, Co-Chair.  
18 Just a couple more questions. How does—how does the  
19 information the information trickle down to the 311  
20 operators when things change or new laws are created?  
21 And we have one that we came across in my Council  
22 office. Somebody called and said they couldn't put a  
23 —somebody paved over their entire property which is  
24 illegal. The Department of Buildings was—it was a law  
25 that was created well over a decade ago. It says you

3 can't pave over your entire property. You have to  
4 keep a percentage of—of dirt or grass so that the  
5 storm water can drain off, and that's why we created  
6 bioswales or rain gardens because too many—too—many—  
7 especially when a storm hits a lot of water and  
8 combined sewer—sewage goes into waterways like the  
9 New Town Creek in Queens. So, um, there's a specific  
10 regulation in the Department of Buildings that  
11 prohibits that. Yet, when the caller or my  
12 constituent called 311, the operator, the 311  
13 operator said, you can do anything you want with your  
14 property. You can pave over your property. So that  
15 was improper. So then we did it—we called at our  
16 office and we got a similar response that there's no—  
17 they couldn't it. We tried to do it on the app and  
18 it's impossible. So, there are laws that are not  
19 trickling down or at least regulations that—and—and  
20 it should be—you should be able to find out with a  
21 search. The 311 operator should get a search and it  
22 should come right up and that's a big, big deal when  
23 the operator gives false information or won't take  
24 the complaint, and we've seen that in a number of  
25 cases. This is just one, but how do you—you know, do

3 you get these? I mean this should be--this should  
4 come up in the system--

5 JOE MORRISROE: Uh-hm.

6 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: --that certain laws  
7 are not being actually enforced.

8 JOE MORRISROE: Sure and I appreciate the  
9 opportunity to respond to that, and first, I  
10 apologize for the answer that you received and the  
11 call that you made, the test that was made. I agree,  
12 you know the current information, the existing  
13 information, well new information that we do pride  
14 ourselves on making sure we have it available. So,  
15 clearly an opportunity to--to improve based on the  
16 examples you provided. I'd like to take a minute  
17 just to share with you some of the structural process  
18 for that. In the 311 Database as you referred to it  
19 being able to search, our Knowledge Management  
20 System, there are over 2,000 unique pieces of  
21 content. We happen to call them knowledge articles  
22 but, you know, discrete items. Clearly no agent  
23 working at 311 or anyone could know all of them. So,  
24 our training process, our coaching and development  
25 process is all geared towards using that search,  
using that system, working with the customer to make

2 sure you're understanding their question correctly,  
3 and then selecting the right answer. Supporting that  
4 we have a group that is focused on what we call  
5 agency relations, a relatively small group at 311  
6 each with a portfolio of agencies. So, you know, on  
7 the one hand they have infrastructure and one they  
8 have Social Services, one they have Emergency  
9 Management Services and their job is to liaise with  
10 every city agency. They have colleagues at each  
11 agency, um, dedicated resources usually in a  
12 significant position, you know, under a commissioner  
13 or at a communications channel who on a daily basis  
14 for the large agencies are working with each other to  
15 make sure our content is the most current, is  
16 updated. If an agency is aware of something new,  
17 they give it to us hopefully in advance so we can  
18 have that. If something comes up and we don't have an  
19 answer to that, we have an internal process we use a  
20 certain quality check first. Let's make sure it's-  
21 it's missing as opposed to just the agent not knowing  
22 it, and then feed that to the agency relations group.  
23 All that works together to then make sure we have the  
24 most current content in the system, and having the  
25 mechanism if we don't. Um, if there are mistakes, if

2 errors are made, we have a feedback process as well.

3 We're able to have that through our quality assurance  
4 and our Customer Experience Team. So, we're happy to  
5 dive into it, and that particular example for sure.

6 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Yeah, so--so in your  
7 data base if I typed resident paving over property,  
8 this--this laws should come up?

9 JOE MORRISROE: Okay, if I may. I don't  
10 believe that it would come up as this law with the  
11 title of the law, but based on your search if you  
12 were to use--

13 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: It's a Building  
14 Department complaint, and three operators did not  
15 know it.

16 JOE MORRISROE: Right. So, clearly  
17 something we can--

18 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: (interposing) And-and  
19 that is serious--no, but that's serious.

20 JOE MORRISROE: Uh-hm.

21 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: I'll give you  
22 another example. The DOE and Department of Education  
23 at the beginning of this school year had lead  
24 testing, free lead testing they said for it because  
25 there was so much--so many schools that had lead

3 content in the paint that they provided free lead  
4 testing and so we called and residents called 311 and  
5 they said no that you have to go to your emergency  
6 room or go to your own doctor. We—we and then we had  
7 journalists contact 311. Six or seven operators that  
8 we checked did not know about free lead testing and  
9 steered the person in the wrong direction. Go to  
10 your—go to your own doctor. So, that became an  
11 article in the newspaper. It was corrected, but when  
12 you get information like this from DOE or any other—  
13 like you said, agency that should go right into the  
14 database, and then there wouldn't be a problem. So,  
15 why do we find these problems then?

16           JOE MORRISROE: I—I agree with you. It  
17 should go right to the database, and our process is  
18 designed to do that. There is not a, um, a delayed  
19 mechanism or anything to that effect. As we get that  
20 information, we go through a process internal to—to  
21 make sure that—the information the agency provides us  
22 is crafted in a way that we call plain language  
23 standards. So that's a—that's just a style if you  
24 will not so much the substance as you're just talking  
25 about here, but I'll certainly go back and take a

2 look and understanding that there is not a barrier  
3 for information to get from agencies to 311.

4 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Well, I just want  
5 to—I think we—so--see things like this we need some  
6 kind of investigation as to how, why, this is  
7 happening, and not just we'll look into it. There  
8 has to be an explanation from 311, DOITT, or DOE. If  
9 DOE made a mistake and didn't notify you guys, we  
10 need to know that information so it doesn't keep  
11 happening because it is happening a lot, and, um, if  
12 you on the front lines of the Council, but you guys  
13 are on the front lines obviously with 311, but if  
14 you're in a Council Office and we run into these  
15 roadblocks, we tell you, but then particularly my—my  
16 comment about filing a complaint on crosswalks, I  
17 told DOITT Commissioner before about this, over a  
18 year ago, and it didn't trickle down. It didn't get  
19 our or the crosswalk complaints still cannot be made  
20 on the app on the scroll down, and it's should have  
21 been because that's a common problem. So this is what  
22 I mean that we need to have some accountability from  
23 311 from DOITT, and from the agencies as to why the  
24 information is not trickling down to operators or to  
25 the apps or to the website. Um, okay, we—I think

2 we—we thank you very much for your testimony, and I  
3 think we put you through enough today, right.

4 JOE MORRISROE: I'll—I, um, I'll—I'll  
5 close. I appreciate the opportunity to—to share the  
6 information and most importantly I would also like to  
7 say I'll take a moment just to recognize the—the  
8 really hard working women and men of 311. Their  
9 dedication to service delivery is outstanding and  
10 their commitment to their fellow New Yorkers is  
11 something that's worth recognizing, and I'd like to  
12 take this moment to do that here.

13 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Yeah, we acknowledge  
14 that definitely. Thank you.

15 JOE MORRISROE: Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Thanks for your  
17 testimony.

18 JOE MORRISROE: Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Okay our next panel,  
20 Panel 2 is Nickolan Plumber from, um, representing  
21 Barrier Free Living and Marsha Colette Davis. This  
22 is-- (background comments/pause) If somebody from the  
23 Administration can stay. There's only one panel.  
24 Anybody else would like to sign up to speak? Okay,  
25 alright, whoever wants to start.

2 Um, good morning everyone. Good morning  
3 Chairperson—

4 MALE SPEAKER: Please turn the mic on  
5 where the light is.

6 NICKOLAN PLUMBER: Hello, hello. Good  
7 morning—good morning everyone. (background  
8 comments/pause) Okay. Good morning chairperson and  
9 council member and I'm Nickolan Plumber—I'm Nickolan  
10 Plumber as you know the Director of Barrier Free  
11 Living. We serve people with a barrier. We started  
12 with people recovering from domestic violence.  
13 That's one of my specialties, but our program is—it  
14 be for—it's a non-profit organization who is trying  
15 to help New Yorkers with disabilities to live  
16 independently in a community. On behalf of the  
17 disability community I want to address that  
18 approximately 500,000 are close to us , close to us  
19 with primary communicating and start with us—primary  
20 communicating start with us, partners with us with  
21 the main chamber, struggles with the same systems.  
22 The following systematic barriers that they are  
23 struggling with, and the following systematic  
24 barriers are that caller primary close to the relay,  
25 do the relay and public services and where they

3 community in sign language to a-down to an  
4 interpreter who interpret their voice right with the  
5 interpreter saying voices to the 311 operators, and  
6 firstly, a lot of time when I get her calling to the  
7 relay calls. 311 operators consistently hang up on  
8 the calls or comments. They consistently hang up the  
9 call with me, and they do not allow a call  
10 interpreter like and Asian interpreter—I mean  
11 American sign language interpreter to communicate it  
12 to the video relay and very consistent hang up on the  
13 call, and the 311 operator do not allow the video  
14 relay interpreters just lay on the communication and  
15 place the calls how the system works for them to  
16 interact with that caller. Another thing that a call  
17 line is a lot of time it was a 311 operator hang up  
18 because they say that I'm a menacing (sic) caller,  
19 but a menacing call it's not a menacing call. I don't  
20 know how they operate, but I think it's very  
21 important for 311 to have a better understanding how  
22 the relay operator work and how that system, um,  
23 operate inviting customers. That's the first time I  
24 communicated. A lot of times when I just call  
25 sometimes after the operator explains to the 311  
operator about the system, most likely were times

3 where the calls to someone who is not answering the  
4 phone for the last 30 minutes, which means there is  
5 no one answering the phone when 311 transfers the  
6 calls. I think that's very unacceptable, but that's  
7 very commonality, and it tells me that that caller  
8 with a long time along with us they maintain English  
9 and language barriers trying the 311 system, 311  
10 online didn't inform us. Online that's the hard of  
11 hearing could ask us the 311 online-311 online system  
12 because there's a language barrier. This means the  
13 inquirers on this call is what I say they didn't  
14 inform us. It's not really acceptable. This means  
15 that must I to incorporate a video where that just to  
16 have a direct contact with the employees who  
17 communicate in sign language, and with a video, it's  
18 a-it's video that's really acceptable where they can  
19 communicate through their hands, speak through their  
20 hands. Sometimes I cannot speak over phone to real  
21 certainly to have a direct contact with some who can  
22 make sign language directly to a deaf caller, and I  
23 just don't know mentioned bilingual, but I know that  
24 the hiring process I think it's very important to  
25 hire a deaf and hard of hearing candidates who  
communicate in sign language I mentioned for Spanish

2 speaker. I think that also applies to deaf and hard  
3 of hearing candidates work at the 311 Center to can  
4 best serve the services to the deaf community.

5 Having an a star video in place at the 311 Center it  
6 will elevate beyond the communication if that is for  
7 deaf users to converse directly with the best  
8 employees for needed services. In closing, thank you  
9 for listening. I hope—I do hope you will consider  
10 creating employment opportunities for deaf and hard  
11 of hearing candidates to provide 311 services to the  
12 deaf community. I think that will minimize the  
13 confusion, and I think it's very important look into  
14 that area because it's very challenging for the  
15 community to ask that the information especially it's  
16 more—if the more time they get close to the third  
17 party in your relay that 311 is going to be in-person  
18 inaccessible. If they're to be in-person,  
19 inaccessible, why can't you create a job opportunity  
20 for deaf and hard of hearing candidates to work  
21 there, and be more accessible for that community?  
22 Thank you for your time, again.

23 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Very good  
24 suggestions right there, and hopefully the 311 will  
25 listen and—and give more employment opportunities for

3 the hard of hearing and actually provide better  
4 service. So, we thank you. We thank you for your  
5 testimony. Next.

6 MARSHA COLLETTE DAVIS: Hello, good  
7 afternoon, Council. My name is Marsha Collette  
8 Davis. As a deaf woman, I'm here to really represent  
9 black deaf community, and all of the subsets within  
10 it. Part of what I wanted to share today in my  
11 testimony was concern about that 311 service. Now,  
12 prior to the apps existence and prior to its release,  
13 I had moved here from the Midwest, and somebody  
14 mentioned to me that if I needed more information  
15 about services offered by the city or other agencies  
16 within it, I should get in touch with 311. So, of  
17 course, it was one of my first resources to reach out  
18 to, and in first reaching out to 311, I realized that  
19 I had to use my regular mobile phone. I also tried  
20 calling through video relay service, which is a  
21 service provided by the FCC, which offers me an  
22 interpreter to make a phone call. I give the  
23 interpreter the phone number 311, and the interpreter  
24 attempts to make the call, but realizes that they  
25 need nine digits. Now, keep in mind that this was  
before the existence of the app, but also before the

3 existence of the ASL Direct program here in New York.

4 So, my only option was through video relay service

5 and yet, I couldn't get through. So, I had gone

6 through a first, a second and finally a third party

7 in order to get information that I could have gotten

8 directly from 311, and meeting this I was able to

9 contact agencies directly through their number, but

10 it was such a task just to try to find nine digits in

11 order to get in touch with 311. It took me about a

12 day of being on the phone just for one specific piece

13 of information that would unlock information about

14 New York City, and all just in an effort to live

15 here. Now, in addition when the app—when the app

16 first was released and came out I thought it was

17 incredible, but, of course, in reading the app I

18 realized like many of you that the information on it

19 was so limited, and that it referred me to a computer

20 to pull up more websites and more information meaning

21 I now have to give up my time say if I'm on the

22 street heading to work for example and I need to use

23 the 311 app because either I need some vital

24 information or something critical is happening or I

25 need to take a photo that's time sensitive or yada

yada, right? I now have to run to the closest office

3 find a way to use a computer and pull up this  
4 information, and the problem is still in existence  
5 outside, and unfortunately makes no sense to me. Now,  
6 also with the app I didn't notice just recently that  
7 there were some clickable links that would refer you  
8 to police or fire, but seeing not what I'm looking  
9 for, it's quite a mass of confusing information, and  
10 as a deaf person looking at this app who can read  
11 English quite well, and certainly can understand  
12 this, I'm still trying, right, to teach other people  
13 about this app. I'm still trying to teach them coming  
14 from often times a place of confusion, right? We  
15 have thousands and thousand and thousands of deaf  
16 people who live in this great city of New York,  
17 52,000 and yet so many of them don't actually have  
18 access to 311 whether it's looking for agencies that  
19 might provide services for the deaf or other city  
20 services, and it's not their responsibility to reach  
21 out and find their own accessibility. It should be  
22 the responsibility of 311 to provide that  
23 accessibility and showing where to go piece by piece  
24 and step by step like they do for all New Yorkers  
25 living here, right? As we often say, all New Yorkers  
should have equal access to these services. We

3 shouldn't be individually bothered finding our own  
4 accessibility just simply trying to find a language  
5 that meets our needs like American sign language. Now  
6 there's million of concerns. Did you have any  
7 questions before I proceed? No. Okay. Now within  
8 the myriad of concerns that I have about the app, one  
9 thing I can't help but wonder is-- Well, actually  
10 to--to add on to my previous comments, every time that  
11 the 311 app is updated, I always make sure to check  
12 if there is going to be access to the deaf community.  
13 The deaf/blind community, and other communities, but  
14 with each update I see that it's only more  
15 information for the hearing public. It seems that my  
16 community is a part of those update delays, and that  
17 all of these releases are being provided to the  
18 hearing public to support 311 and its updates to  
19 provide more accessibility to other agencies so the  
20 hearing people can use it everyday, but what about  
21 us? What about the issues that face us, and why is  
22 it that we seem to be last on the list of priorities,  
23 and educating less about services and agencies that  
24 are available to us, and I want to thank the Council  
25 for its time.

3 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Well, thank you both  
4 for your testimony. Um, I just want one—I have one  
5 question, you said you ran into a dead end on—the  
6 app. Could you tell us what that dead end was where  
7 you couldn't get the information because many of us  
8 have experienced this. So, I just want to give  
9 feedback to the 311 Director about what dead ends  
10 have you found.

11 MARSHA COLLETTE DAVIS: In search of the  
12 housing resources more specifically, there are  
13 sections for homelessness those who are experiencing  
14 it and shelters, but nothing really specific to  
15 housing resources. In order to find exactly what you  
16 need and—and finding any sort of support in housing  
17 you have to be using a desktop computer or laptop.  
18 So, if I were say to engage assignment or a client or  
19 a consumer of mine, the only information that I'd be  
20 able to show them on the app anywhere that I was  
21 mobile would be about homeless resources and  
22 unfortunately not housing or housing/board resources.  
23 It's incredibly limited on the app as of right now,  
24 and which is why I said the app is incredibly limited  
25 in general. Now, online, there is definitely a lot  
of searching that you can do to find the specific

2 resource or the specific place to report something or  
3 perhaps just specific documents give you the  
4 information you need, but unfortunately it's  
5 unavailable on app yet.

6 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Great. Well, again  
7 we recognized that there's huge problems with the app  
8 that 311 says is great, and we're not finding that,  
9 and we've testified today. We heard testimony, but  
10 we also have yours that the 311 app needs vast  
11 improvement, and it's not the best in the United  
12 States. It's not the best in the world. It's actually  
13 way down the list in my opinion. There are many more  
14 cities that have more advanced apps on 311 than we  
15 do. So, we have a lot of work to do to—to fix it,  
16 and you heard some testimony today, but they have to  
17 go a long way in at least my view to fix the app.  
18 Thank you again. Alright, one other question.

19 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Right. Thank you  
20 for coming. So, grateful that you could be here  
21 today. I wanted to ask you do you still need to use,  
22 just for a point of clarification, the nine digits?  
23 Is that still required?

24 MARSHA COLLETTE DAVIS: Yes

3 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Yes. Well,  
4 interesting. Do you know what the number is?

5 MARSHA COLLETTE DAVIS: No. To expand on  
6 that jut a little bit, the Video Relay Service is  
7 only able to reach two other three digit numbers,  
8 which is 911. There's not 311. Unfortunately,  
9 there's no access to 411. Additionally 711 is not  
10 available. It seems just 911 at the current time.  
11 Now, as a New Yorker, as a resident of New York I  
12 should be able to call just about anyone through  
13 Video Relay Service, but in reaching interpreters on  
14 any service I still always reach the same kind of  
15 message back is that you need the nine digits, and so  
16 it then falls on the caller to find online a nine  
17 digit number that may or may not be 311, and I know  
18 we've both been through this experience where we are  
19 then placed on hold for much longer than 20 minutes.  
20 Sometimes it's 45 minutes before finally being  
21 transferred to the representative. In addition, once  
22 we're finally transferred, we often get disconnected  
23 because the representative assumes it's a  
24 telemarketing call, and unfortunately, I just don't  
25 think there is any excuse for it, and often once I've  
wasted 45 minutes of my time, I'm not going to spend

2 any more, which is really what urged me to bring this  
3 to here to share. You know, I do have better things  
4 to do than waiting 45 minutes on the phone for basic  
5 information that I should have access to as a deaf  
6 person, and certainly as anyone in the deaf/blind  
7 community may even? Right? I mean consider the fact  
8 that a deaf/blind person would then have to go to a  
9 location physically to get this information that they  
10 should be having online.

11 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Appreciate that  
12 answer. I wanted to ask you regarding the question  
13 that I asked to the Executive Director regarding life  
14 application. Would this be the best way to go about  
15 it in an ideal situation? Should that be our goal to  
16 have a live—just a live chat with a 311 operator? Is  
17 that the best way to go about it?

18 NICKOLAN PLUMBER: Are you talking about  
19 lines

20 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Yes.

21 NICKOLAN PLUMBER: Have it post there?

22 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Yeah.

23 NICKOLAN PLUMBER: Well, it depends.

24 It's clarified because the number isn't free—isn't a  
25 free call to the line operator. It doesn't say—it

3 doesn't mean that always understanding an  
4 interpreter, but I think it's very important to hire  
5 to have an employee who communicates in their  
6 language where they can have a direct contact instead  
7 of going through a relay call.

8 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Yeah, I mean it  
9 will be—

10 NICKOLAN PLUMBER: The language line on  
11 the 311 app, okay if you want the 311 app, it's  
12 important to incorporate video. Videos if possible.

13 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Yeah. I don't know  
14 how it will work, but basically it's just like, you  
15 know, if I want to facetime my wife, right, I—I get  
16 that visual, something that leads me to that through  
17 the app that will take me and maybe there's a place  
18 that for those who are hard of hearing to press it  
19 and you will get a live person already, who already  
20 knows sign language to be able to communicate, and  
21 you don't have to go through the whole thing that you  
22 go through right now, which is—is sad. It's a sad  
23 commentary to what's happening at 311.

24 NICKOLAN PLUMBER: Okay. I just think if  
25 it's important to you that language interpreter, we  
don't want to deal with live-live representatives

2 like someone who—who a robot. We don't want it  
3 connecting--

4 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Well, a reel  
5 person.

6 NICKOLAN PLUMBER: --extending  
7 information. We want to have a direct time to expand  
8 this call.

9 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Right. No, it will  
10 be a live person with no sign language. Not an  
11 operator who doesn't know sign language. It will go  
12 directly.

13 NICKOLAN PLUMBER: We want an operator  
14 who can sign. Also to have a video, and that's fine,  
15 the kind of direct transfer if I'm a app user and I'm  
16 calling 311 directly, that 311 operator to be able to  
17 communicate with me through sign language. There has  
18 to be another set of implementation for those users  
19 to have a direct contact with someone who is  
20 communicating in sign language, not someone who  
21 communicates with the phone and we cannot see their  
22 face—their face. That's when we would rather have a  
23 direct time face-to-face conversation not someone who  
24 talks to you over the phone.

25 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Right.

2 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Well, thank you so  
3 much again for your testimonies. We appreciate it,  
4 and it's going--hopefully go a long way to improve the  
5 311 system. Thanks again, and this hearing is closed.

6 [gave]

7 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you to all  
8 the staff. You did a marvelous job as always. Thank  
9 you so much Daniel Collins and--

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date January 29, 2020