

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

----- X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS
JOINTLY WITH THE COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY

----- X

JANUARY 17, 2019
Star: 1:17 P.M.
Recess: 3:24 P.M.

HELD AT: COUNCIL CHAMBERS - CITY HALL

B E F O R E: FERNANDO CABRERA
Chairperson

PETER A. KOO
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Ben Kallos
Alan N. Maisel
Bill Perkins
Keith Powers
Ydanis A. Rodriguez
Kalman Yeger
Robert F. Holden
Brad A. Lander
Eric A. Ulrich

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

Joe Morrisroe, Executive Director, New York City 311

Samir Saini, Commissioner, Department of Information
Technology and Telecommunications, DOITT

Dominic Berg, Acting Deputy Commissioner for
Business-Business Solutions Delivery, Department of
Information Technology and Telecommunications, DOITT

Rajan Mamoot, Director Health Services, Salvation
Council for Social Services, SACSS

Louie Sawi, Policy Coordinator Coalition for Asian-
American Children and Families, CACF

Jujan (sp?) Kim, Project Coordinator, Korean
Community Services

3 [sound check]

4 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Good afternoon. I'm
5 Corey Johnson Speaker of the New York City Council
6 and acting Public Advocate for the City of New York.
7 I want to welcome you all to this first of two
8 oversight hearings on 311 the city's non-emergency
9 hotline and notification service. I want to thank
10 Governmental Operations Chair Fernando Cabrera and
11 Technology Committee Chair Peter Koo for their
12 leadership today in calling this joint hearing and
13 their commitment to ensuring that the people of New
14 York City have easy and ready to access to their
15 government through 311 and we are also joined today
16 by Council Member Kalman Yeger from Brooklyn and
17 Council Member Eric Ulrich from Queens. As laid out
18 in the city's charter, the Public Advocate is the
19 ombudsman for the city of New York, and has the
20 responsibility to "monitor the operation, service
21 complaint programs of city agencies and make
22 proposals to improve such programs." This role of
23 the Public Advocate is complementary in many ways to
24 the oversight authority—authority of the City
25 Council. So, I'm here today in both of my roles for
the discussion about how 311 system is functioning

1 and how it can get even better. In a couple of
2 weeks, we will have a second hearing agency response
3 to 311 service complaints, what agencies do once they
4 get a 311 request. So, I would ask that we focus on
5 how the 311 system is functioning today, and wait to
6 engage on agency response times at the next hearing
7 that we're going to have. After it launched in 2003,
8 our 311 system quickly became the largest non-
9 emergency call center in the nation. We consolidated
10 more than 40 different city hotlines down to two
11 numbers: 911 for emergency services and 311 for all
12 other service requests. Since the 2003 Northeast
13 Blackout, 311 has been a constant companion to New
14 Yorkers in times of borough wide and citywide crisis.
15 It is through service requests that the city is able
16 to quickly analyze data on problem areas in the city
17 and we hope respond in a timely and appropriate
18 manner and I guess that's going to be the big
19 question for the next hearing. Our 311 system
20 fielded over 42 million contacts in 2018. That is
21 the most contacts of any city in the United States by
22 far. Other big cities who have 311 systems don't
23 even come close to that volume. The city of Chicago,
24 the city of Los Angeles, the city of Washington D.C.

3 and the city of San Francisco none of them came close
4 to reaching 4 million calls in each of those cities
5 in 2018. So we are almost 10 times that in the volume
6 that we received. It is an impressive volume of
7 contacts that our system handles, but what is less
8 impressive is how outdated our system is. The
9 solutions and technology of 2003 are serving New
10 Yorkers in 2019 and that I believe is unacceptable.
11 Other cities are moving past us and showing us the
12 areas where we can and must improve. For example
13 Chicago, Los Angeles, Washington, D.C. and San
14 Francisco all the cities I mentioned before all allow
15 you to set up a 311 account online where you can
16 track all of your service requests in one place.
17 Only our 311 mobile app lets you do that, and then it
18 only allows you to do requests you submitted through
19 the mobile app, not through telephone or not through
20 the website. I understand that 311 is trying to
21 upgrade our technology to support this right now, but
22 we need to move faster to make that happen. Our
23 mobile app is also severely limited compare to the
24 other cities that I mentioned. It doesn't offer all
25 of the complaint options that are available online or
on the phone so it doesn't match in anyway what

1 people see when they go to the website or they call
2 in 311. For example, if I have a problem with mold,
3 or bed bugs in my building, there is no option to
4 submit that complaint on the mobile app. I can only
5 submit it online or on the phone. It doesn't make
6 any sense, but it's not acceptable in 2019. Perhaps
7 not surprisingly given its limitations our mobile app
8 has very low usage compared to phone calls and online
9 311. The first way to address this problem I believe
10 is to allow all complaints to be made through the
11 mobile app. It's also very important that we take
12 fully advantage of the Smart Phone platform by
13 allowing photos and videos to be attached to more
14 complaints such as for rodent conditions, blocked
15 driveways, or noise complaints. We need to improve
16 and publicize this app so New Yorkers will actually
17 want to use it. Washington, D.C. lets you live chat
18 with a 311 agent online. So, if you have any
19 questions while submitting your complaint they can be
20 answered on the spot. Our system doesn't allow that,
21 but it should. Finally, it is that we ensure that
22 language is not a barrier for any New Yorker trying
23 to access services or make a complaint. Both the 311
24 website and the mobile app only seem to accept
25

3 complaints in English. On the telephone the
4 automated system provides a few options for other
5 languages, but then it reverts back to English after
6 giving you options for other languages and no matter
7 what language you suggest—no matter what language you
8 select, so if I selected Russian or if selected
9 Haitian Creole, or I selected another language that's
10 available for an interpreter, that choice is not
11 shared with the operator. So, you get on the phone
12 with the operator and you chose Russian, and if
13 you're someone who speaks Russian, and you start
14 speaking in Russian, they start saying to you: What
15 language are you speaking even though you just
16 indicated on the dial tone that you are looking for a
17 Russian interpreter or translator. The caller is
18 then forced to ask for a translator again while the
19 operator is guessing what language they are speaking.
20 We've done a few trial runs on this, and sometimes
21 it's been okay. Other times it's—it's not been okay.
22 Last week we had a staff member here at the Council
23 who's Armenian, call up and request Armenian and they
24 were on the phone for 17 minutes just speaking in
25 Armenian over and over and over again and the
operator who got them just kept saying: What

3 language? What language? What language? That's not
4 the way to run a system like this in the most diverse
5 city in the world, and I don't think I need to
6 explain to anyone why that is completely unacceptable
7 for Language Access in our city. We are the most
8 diverse city in the United States, and we are proud
9 to be the home of millions of immigrants. The fact
10 that we're not operating at the top of our game when
11 it comes to language services 311, it's frankly a
12 serious problem. This is New York. End of story. We
13 have to do better. We need a cutting edge system for
14 311 that's responsive, adaptable and able to mobilize
15 city resources to resolve an issue quickly. We need
16 to move fast to make the improvements of 311 that our
17 city needs. I look forward to hearing from 311
18 Director Joe Morrisroe and Department of Information
19 Technology and Telecommunications Commissioner Samir
20 Saini--Commissioner, thank you for being here--about
21 the ways in which the 311 platform is being improved
22 to meet the changing needs of New Yorkers so we can
23 remain a national leader in city responsiveness. So,
24 I look forward to hearing your testimony today.
25 Before we go to your testimony I, of course want to
turn it over to my great co-chairs and I also want to

3 recognize that we have Deputy Commissioner from DOITT
4 with us, a friend of mine. Someone I've known a long
5 time a great guy Dominic Berg. So, thank you for-for
6 being here Dominic. It's too to see you. So, at
7 this point I want to turn it over to our Governmental
8 Operations Chair, Chair Cabrera.

9 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much,
10 Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon. I am the Chair of the
11 Committee on Governmental Operations, Council Member
12 Fernando Cabrera. We are pleased to be joined today
13 by the speaker and acting Public Advocate Corey
14 Johnson and the Committee of Technology Chair and my
15 colleague Council Member Peter Koo. Today, we will
16 be conducting oversight on the customer experience
17 and operations of 311 itself. Although many of us
18 have questions on agency responsiveness to request
19 311-to request 311 receives, we are asking that those
20 questions be held for the follow-up hearing soon to
21 be scheduled. We are also hearing two pieces of
22 legislation today, one in each committee. The first
23 being heard by the Committee on Governmental
24 Operations is Introduction 188 of 2018 sponsored by
25 Council Member Matteo in relations to procedures to
be adopted by the 311 Call Center for responding to

2 certain repeat anonymous complaints against the same
3 property. This bill will require a 311 to identify
4 private properties that are subject to repeated
5 unsupported anonymous complaints, which might
6 represent a pattern of harassment and to hold off on
7 referring additional complaints of similar type to
8 agencies for a period of time thereafter. The second
9 is being heard by the Committee of Technology in
10 relation to 311 and Language Access, and will be
11 discussed in further detail by my co-chair and the
12 sponsor. However, as the Committee on Governmental
13 Operations heard at our recent hearing on City
14 Language Access Law 3-Access Law, 311 is vital for
15 making the-the law succeed. If a New Yorker wants to
16 make a complaint about the lack of Language Access
17 services at an agency, they are told to call 311. If
18 when they call 311, they cannot express their
19 complaints to 311 because the process for reaching
20 and interpret-interpret is too difficult, then our
21 ability to identify Language Access gaps in agency
22 services will disappear as well. I look forward to
23 our-our discussions today on these and other topics
24 of importance related to 311 operations. I would
25 like to thank the Speaker and Acting Public Advocate

1 COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS JOINTLY WITH
COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY 12

2 Corey Johnson for joining us today, my co-chair,
3 Council Member Koo for the importance he is placing
4 on getting 311's technologies right, and the sponsor
5 of the legislation being heard today Council Member
6 Matteo and Menchaca. I would also like to thank our
7 staff who work—whose work made this hearing possible,
8 Brad Reed, Elizabeth Cronk, Emily Forgione, Zach
9 Harris, Irene Vikofsky (sp?), Patrick Mulvihill and
10 Sebastian Baki (sp?) as well as my own Legislative
11 Director Clare McLeveighn. I will now turn the
12 microphone over to my Co-Chair to make an opening
13 statement.

14 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you, Chair
15 Cabrera. Yeah. Good afternoon. I am Council Member
16 Peter Koo, and I am the chair of the Committee on
17 Technology. I want to welcome you all to our
18 hearing. We are pleased to be joined today by the
19 Speaker and Acting Public Advocate Corey Johnson, and
20 the Committee on Government Operations Chaired by
21 Council Member Fernando Cabrera. As mentioned by the
22 Speaker and Council Member Cabrera, the hearing will
23 focus on 311 operations and customer service, and how
24 the system could be improved to better serve New
25 Yorkers. 311 works as an important link between city

3 government and the public. New York City consists of
4 immigrants from all over the world, which speak many
5 different languages. Ensuring that 311 provides
6 Language Access for all New Yorkers wishing to use
7 these services should be a priority. The current 311
8 system is based on old technology and needs to get
9 updated. In 2014, the contract was signed with IBM
10 to replace the old system with a new customer
11 oriented system. As part of the contract, IBM will
12 create a system that will include a story-design for
13 telephone, and mobile applications. Today, we will
14 also discuss how the implementation of the new system
15 will improve customer satisfaction and maintain New
16 York City leadership on 311 customer service
17 technology. The committees will also hear the
18 introduction of 2019 in relation to the
19 identification of languages spoken by callers to the
20 311 Customer Service Center sponsored by Council
21 Member Menchaca. This bill will require 311 to
22 implement a protocol for identifying the languages
23 spoken by a telephone call to 311. As we learned in
24 the private hearing on Language Access, the process
25 for connecting callers to interpreters is too
long, too inaccurate and too relying on the called

3 knowing at least some English. I look forward to
4 hearing from the panels today, and would like to
5 thank the Technology Committee staff Patrick
6 Sebastian, and Ivy for putting together this hearing.
7 I would also like to recognize the Technology
8 Committee members, Council Member Ulrich, Yeger and
9 also members of the Committee on Government
10 Operations, Council Member Powers. Thank you and I
11 look forward to hearing testimony on 311 and the
12 bills today.

13 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair Koo.
14 Before we go to your testimony, we're going to have
15 the Committee Counsel swear the three of you in
16 today.

17 LEGAL COUNSEL: Please raise your right
18 hand. Do you swear or affirm to tell the truth, the
19 whole truth and nothing but the truth in your
20 testimony before these committees, and to respond
21 honestly to Council Member questions?

22 JOE MORRISROE: I do.

23 LEGAL COUNSEL: Thank you.

24 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Great. You may begin
25 in whatever order you'd like. You just identify
yourself.

3 JOE MORRISROE: Good afternoon, Speaker
4 Johnson, Chairman Cabrera, Chairman Koo and members
5 of the City Council Committees of Governmental
6 Operations and Technology. My name is Joe Morrisroe.
7 I am the Executive Director of New York City 311.
8 Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on 311
9 customer experience and operation. With me today are
10 Samir Saini, Commissioner of the Department of
11 Information Technology and Telecommunications known
12 as DOITT and Dominic Berg, DOITT's Acting Deputy
13 Commissioner for Business-Business Solutions
14 Delivery. I'm honored to serve as the Executive
15 Director of 311 since 2008 and to represent the women
16 and men of the 311 team. Since 2010, 311 reports
17 directly to the Mayor's Office of Operations, an
18 alignment that underscores the importance of the
19 operation and service to the city. Prior to that,
20 311 reported to DOITT. DOITT continues to provide
21 technology services and general services
22 administration and support for the 311 organization,
23 and works collaboratively-collaboratively with 311
24 and the Mayor's Office on the continual evolution and
25 enhancements to the service delivery and customer
experience of 311. As Executive Director I oversee

2 all aspects of the 311 from the operation of the most
3 familiar component the Call Center to the creation
4 and implementation of multiple customer facing
5 channels performance results and quality control
6 measures, interactions with city agencies, compliance
7 with regulatory requirements, data collection and
8 most importantly serving our customs, the millions of
9 residents, thousands of businesses and numerous
10 visitors and commuters to New York City. The 311
11 process relies on systems supported by DOITT and
12 partnerships with city agencies to ensure our
13 customer has access to information assistance and
14 services through a variety of channels including the
15 Call Center 311 online, text, mobile and social
16 media. To understand 311 operation and customer
17 experience, it is helpful to understand the flow of
18 311 service delivery form customer inquiries and
19 requests to the answers provided and the actions
20 taken as well as the confirmation provided. With few
21 exceptions, public interactions with 311 result in
22 one of the following outcomes: One is a service
23 request, a situation where the city needs to do
24 something. Second is an information request. For
25 example, when is my recycling pickup day? And the

third may be a referral to an outside entity such as the MTA or New York State. Since 311 launched in March 2003, it has received over 275 million calls, an additional 89 million customer contacts in our digital channels. Originally launched as a call center, New York City 311 has evolved into the most comprehensive municipal government service platform in the nation. Available 24/7 in 180 languages and multiple channels, 311 received 44 million customer contacts in 2018. On an average day 311 interacts with over 120,000 customers and for an average month, 311 receive 1.7 million calls and 1.7 million online visits to the companion 311 online website, 172,000 mobile app touches, 19,000 text messages, 23,000 online chats and serves 1,800 customers on social media in addition to publishing city programs, information and services to over 500,000 of our social media followers. For further context on the annual—sorry, for further the context on an annual basis New York City 311 receives more calls than all other U.S. city 311s combined. The 311 mission is aligned with the Administration's goals and vision on equity and most notably focuses on providing the public with equitable service deliver through quick

1 and easy access to all New York City government
2 services and information while maintaining the
3 highest possible level of customer service. The 311
4 team is focused on meeting our customers where they
5 are by providing an array of channel options to
6 contact the city ranging from robust self-service
7 solutions to outstanding customer service delivered
8 by professional, polite and well trained
9 representatives. Over the last eight years an annual
10 customer satisfaction survey is conducted by the CFI
11 Group. 311 ranked equal to or better in delivering
12 customer service than the best contact centers in the
13 private sector, and also far surpasses the best in
14 the government sector. In 2018, 311's aggregate Net
15 Promoter Score, NPS, a leading metric for gauging
16 customer satisfaction across all industries in the
17 U.S. exceeded the scores of Apple and Jet Blue. This
18 outstanding performance reflects the dedication and
19 commitment of the women and men who work at 311 and
20 proudly serve their fellow New Yorkers. It is for
21 these reasons that New York City 311 is the
22 recognized model for service delivery and performance
23 reporting for governments across the nation and
24 around the world who studied the New York City 311
25

3 model when considering launching their customer
4 service platforms. Customer Experience. The success
5 of New York City's 311 customer service platform over
6 the years is tied to the ability to evolve and expand
7 the—to meet ever changing needs. To accomplish this,
8 the 311 organization collaborates with numerous
9 groups to constantly evaluate the current state,
10 receive and respond to feedback that drives
11 improvement and to partner and to—to partner to
12 design and create new initiatives that better serve
13 the city and our customers. There are many partners
14 involved with the ongoing tuning and enhancing of the
15 311 platform. A notable list includes the following:

16 The Mayor's Office of Operations for
17 Strategic Direction and Policy.

18 DOITT on technology initiatives and
19 production support.

20 City Agencies for programmatic and
21 procedural information.

22 Elected officials and community boards
23 for feedback and insight.

24 Open government and open data advocates
25 who provide fresh ideas and perspective.

3 We also gain insights from the frontline
4 team at 311. These are the people who understand
5 interactions between New York City and its
6 constituents very well because they do it on a daily
7 basis. Above all, we listen to the feedback of
8 customers who contact us every day. The caring that
9 goes into providing both the customer service agents
10 and the public with the right information is the same
11 level of attention and detail to make sure the data
12 intake and collection throughout the 311 process is
13 accurate and complete. A few examples of how we have
14 enhanced customer experience based on this critical
15 feedback: Adding a bike lane as a new category of
16 illegal parking. Enhancing our content to include
17 the NYPD's D Unit, and adding taxi complaint to the
18 mobile app. The new 311 System Platform. As I'm
19 sure the Council is aware, DOITT is leading and
20 effort to deliver a new Customer Relationship
21 Management, CRM platform to replace 311's 16-year-old
22 system. The main purpose of this project is to
23 completely replace the back-end technology. Although
24 many of these changes will not be visible to the
25 public, a new offering will be Customer Account
Management functionality. A customer will be able to

3 build and maintain their own account in the CRM so
4 they can effectively manage their relationship with the
5 city as they choose.

6 Data and Performance. Another important
7 aspect of 311 is providing data and performance
8 results that focus on ensuring transparency in city
9 government by making information that might be
10 helpful and relevant to the public accessible and
11 understandable where permitted by law. This effort
12 includes organizing the 311 resources and
13 organization structure to ensure proper collective
14 and cat-sorry. Proper collection and cataloging of
15 information received as well as the data input to the
16 system and DOITT's work in building and maintaining
17 the technology and tools that make the data
18 available. Whether and interaction is performed with
19 the assistance of 311 representative or the customer
20 self-serves by a 311 online or the 311 mobile app,
21 the same data elements are captured and fed to the
22 business intelligence platform. This is a critical
23 and deliberate consideration that ensure consistency
24 in data fields and lists of values and
25 standardization in structure and formatting necessary
for users to access and utilize these data sets and

3 reports. 311 works with city agencies to ensure the
4 most up-to-date information about city services and
5 resources is available and disseminated across the
6 various custom channels. The agency information
7 presented to the customer and the representative
8 follows a plain language standard to promote
9 understanding and clarity. The information captured
10 by the system and fed to the agencies and the
11 centralized business intelligence tool is formatted
12 in standards that allow cataloging, compilation and
13 publication. The 311 content management team
14 structures the information for every city service
15 over 5,000 unique pieces of information in a way that
16 makes it unique and accessible to use it in the Call
17 Center or with the mobile app and by the Business
18 Intelligent System. The careful design and regular
19 curating of the content ensures that the information
20 provided to the public is correct and the resultant
21 data is useful, accessible and understandable for our
22 customers. The 311 Quality Assurance Department
23 further ensures the accuracy and credibility of data
24 by inspecting and measuring the intake process with
25 customers and the data entry process performed by
representatives or customers. The quality control

1
2 strep is—is vital to the subsequent use of
3 performance results and data. Consumers of 311 data
4 include members of the public such as residents,
5 business owners and visitors as well as city agencies
6 and elected officials. 311 data is available in a
7 variety of options. These include da suite of
8 offerings known as Citywide Performance Reporting,
9 which is managed by DOITT and available and
10 summarized on the Mayor's Office of Operations
11 website on NYC.gov. A sampling of these offerings
12 shows the scope of data sharing and multiple uses of
13 the source data, and include NYC Open Data, the NYC
14 Open Data Tool managed by DOITT increases the
15 accessibility of public data generated by 311 and
16 various Yellow Cabs agencies as part of an initiative
17 to improve accessibility, accountability and
18 transparency in city government. The catalog supply
19 is access to a repository of government produced
20 machine readable data sets. The data sets do not
21 include personally identifying information. Over the
22 past 365 days there have been 2.8 million page views.
23 The 311 Service request map is a visual
24 representation of the location, frequency and
25 concentration of service requests filed through the

3 311 system at street or intersection level as well as
4 by zip code, Community Board and City Council
5 District. Regarding Intro 188 Anonymous Complaints,
6 while 311 understand the intent of the proposed bill
7 we believe that what this bill proposes would have
8 two unintended negative consequences. First,
9 property owners could potentially gain the system and
10 skirt city code and law requirements by calling in
11 false complaints and then receive immunity for three
12 months. Second, it would impact a—it would impact a
13 constituent's right to freely report a quality of
14 life issue without fear of retaliation or harm.
15 Customers at such risk by a change to anonymous
16 reporting criteria are many, but two tangible
17 examples are immigrants and tenants. Additionally,
18 Council recently passed new—new local privacy
19 protection laws that endorse a minimum necessary
20 standard of collection and disclosure of personally
21 identifying information by city agencies, and which
22 underscore the importance of anonymizing such
23 information where appropriate as would certainly be
24 the case for circumstances involving risk of personal
25 harm. Regarding Intro 1328, Language Access, 311
wholeheartedly agrees with the spirit of the

2 legislation and share the same passion for providing
3 access to city information and services to those who-
4 who English is not their primary language In fact,
5 311 services over one million calls in 2018 in
6 languages other than English. For context on an
7 annual basis New York City 311 receives more calls in
8 languages other than English than the city of Los
9 Angeles 311 receives total calls for all languages.
10 The proposed law would require 311 to implement a
11 process for identifying non-English speaking
12 customers. 311 has a process in place with our
13 interpretation services vendor to provide an initial
14 interpreter who will identify the spoken language or
15 dialect of a customer. This is a requirement of the
16 Citywide Language Services Contract. The proposed
17 bill would also require that 311 examine every
18 disconnected call and determine the cause of the
19 disconnection. 311 has a robust quality assurance
20 program that reviews calls of all types to ensure the
21 best customer experience for every customer contact.
22 I have spoken to industry leaders in voice
23 recognition and interpretation services, and the
24 consensus was that the technology to support the
25 bill's requirement is not yet available and not

3 expected to be for many years. Finally, on behalf of
4 my colleagues, I thank the Speaker, Chairman Cabrera,
5 Chairman Kook and Committee members for your time and
6 the opportunity to testify. Before I turn it over
7 for questions, I would like to personally extend an
8 invitation to all members of the committee to visit
9 311 to see the operations and meet the dedicated city
10 employees on the front lines of Customer Service. I'm
11 happy to take any questions.

12 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you very much,
13 Mr. Morrisroe. Before we go to question from
14 committee members I want to acknowledge that we've
15 been joined by Council Member Powers, Council Member
16 Maisel, Council Member Perkins, Council Member
17 Holden. Council Member Rodriguez was here, and I
18 want to turn it over to Council Member Menchaca who
19 is, as you mentioned sponsoring a bill that's being
20 heard today, the author of a bill, if he wanted to
21 make some opening remarks on the bill.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Thank you
23 Speaker and to the Chairs thank you for your
24 testimony. Looking forward to discussing that. I
25 wanted to start about or I want to start with the
just the sheer fact that we're so—all so proud of the

1 work that we do here in New York City to really
2 ensure that we take care of and protect the rights of
3 our immigrants. Everyone has the dignity to be heard
4 and every—every day we’re trying to figure out how
5 that can happen in their preferred language and we
6 know so many of them are here alive and well in our
7 city. In the interest of making that true for other
8 New Yorkers’ interaction with the city agencies we—we
9 passed Local Law 30 in 2017 to guarantee Language
10 Access for all New Yorkers making it a requirement
11 for city agencies to provide their services in ten of
12 the city’s most commonly spoken languages. However,
13 back in October I held a joint hearing with my
14 colleague Council Member Cabrera, the chair of the
15 Government Ops Committee on this Language Access
16 requirement to review whether the city agencies were
17 really living up to it. I know your testimony kind
18 of started pointed to some of that, but what we
19 discovered was that many service providers on the
20 ground reported clients were not attended to by city
21 agencies with proper Language Access. Yet, the city
22 claimed they had never received any complaints on
23 this issue. And so, since the complaints for the
24 lack of language of Language Access are supposed to
25

3 be lodged with 311, we received the city's 311 data
4 to see if--we reviewed it to see if a large number of
5 Language Access complaints were actually filed.

6 However, the data appears to reflect that very few,
7 if any complaints for Language Access had been filed.

8 Investigating further, we discovered that the 311
9 phone system is set up in such a way that it hinders
10 the access to language assistance in the following

11 ways: (1) When first call 311, an automated system

12 asks you to select between six languages not ten

13 required by Local Law 30 of 2017. If you select one

14 of the six languages, after hearing about alternate

15 side parking in your chosen language, you are

16 connected to an English speaking operator with no

17 idea that you've selected and option other than

18 English. It can be incredibly frustrating and it

19 requires minimum--some minimum English to attempt to

20 communicate that you need and interpreter--that you

21 mention in your testimony--with a 311 operator. If

22 you select 'other' from the menu of languages, and

23 I'm happy that you guys are listening to this because

24 I just want you to see how important what so many New

25 Yorkers are going through right now that once you

selected 'other' you're again connected to an English

3 speaking operator with no idea that you've selection
4 an option other than English. If the caller remains
5 on the line long enough to speak with a
6 representative Language Line, and I—I'm already
7 frustrated reading this, the live interpretation
8 service it can another five minutes to determine
9 which interpreter matches the language spoken by the
10 caller, if the caller cannot speak in English. Now,
11 you mentioned that you talked to some of the leaders
12 in industry, and I get that there's a challenge here.
13 This is what it looks like to a New Yorker. So, it
14 became clear attempting several language different
15 languages with 311 that perhaps the lack of data on
16 Language Access complaints is not to the perfect
17 language offered by the agencies, but a faulty 311
18 protocol that is a barrier to language. Hence the
19 bill. In this Intro 1328 would change that by
20 requiring 311 to create a protocol for ensuring that
21 callers easier access to at least the top 10 language
22 if not 20, then requiring 311 to track how many times
23 a call is dropped in the process of determining an
24 individual's preferred language. We have the means
25 to hold the house—the city accountable, and the last
thing I want to say before I hand it back to the

2 Speaker is the Mayor and your agencies do not create
3 policy. You are not the policymakers. We are the
4 policymakers. We represent the people. You execute.
5 And do the fact that his design exists out there
6 right now has nothing to do with the fact that we can
7 pass this bill and really force you all in a room to
8 figure this out with the industry and make it happen.
9 That's our job. Thank you. I'm looking forward
10 contacting with you.

11 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you, Council
12 Member Menchaca. So, I'm going to get into the
13 questions right away. I'm going to try to breeze
14 through them so there's plenty of time for the
15 Council Members and committee members that are here
16 today. Number 1, does 311--does the Customer Service
17 Center, Mr. Morrisroe, that you mentioned have enough
18 personnel to handle the volume of phone calls and
19 online inquiries? Do you need more headcount? Do
20 you have enough headcount? Is the exact headcount
21 you have right now sufficient to be responsive in a
22 timely and efficient manner to the over 40 million
23 contacts that come in?

24 JOE MORRISROE: Yeah, thank you for the
25 question and yes it is.

3 SPEAKER JOHNSON: You have enough?

4 JOE MORRISROE: We—we work with—through
5 the city process to make sure we have the appropriate
6 staff. So, yes.

7 SPEAKER JOHNSON: You don't need any more
8 staff?

9 JOE MORRISROE: I have a request in for
10 in the—in the plan for—in the January Plan for some
11 new needs that's being considered, and that would be
12 helpful, but we handle—we meet all of our service
13 level agreements now with the staff that we have.

14 SPEAKER JOHNSON: In that request you
15 made is it for additional staff?

16 JOE MORRISROE: It is for additional
17 staff. It is headcount specific to the emerging
18 social media channel.

19 SPEAKER JOHNSON: So, you do need more
20 staff?

21 JOE MORRISROE: To handle social media
22 yes, Uh-hm.

23 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Okay. According to the
24 Mayor's Management Report, 311 conducts Customer
25 Satisfaction Surveys. How did you conduct your 2018

3 survey, and how often is this survey—a survey of this
4 type conducted.

5 JOE MORRISROE: Okay, if I can break it
6 into two components. There are two main surveys that
7 are done. The first one is through a contract the
8 vendor CFI Group, Incorporated. They are the
9 industry leader in gauging customer satisfaction. We
10 call it the Customer Satisfaction Index. We do an
11 annual survey with them, which they created. It
12 consists of 25 questions and we contact over 750
13 customers who have called New York City 311 within
14 the prior 48 hours, and they sent and then their
15 satisfaction is then rated through that survey. CFI
16 then produces the report. In my opening statement I
17 mentioned 311 is rated equal to or better than the
18 best in the private sector, and those are the results
19 that come out of that particular report. In addition
20 to that, we have a small group within the
21 organization that is proficient and—and familiar with
22 surveys and we conduct multiple surveys over the
23 course of the year. We group them into quarters and
24 we do a survey either by our phone call, a robo call
25 an online survey, a mobile app survey or a text
survey to customers across all of those channels at

3 least four times a year, and go through a process,
4 which is know a customer satisfaction survey--

5 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Uh-hm.

6 JOE MORRISROE: It can consist of, you
7 know, generally how you--how would you rate something
8 on a scale of, you know, agree, strongly agree, that
9 type of a survey scale, a Likert Scale as it's
10 called, and then we also add a question at the end,
11 which is know as the Net Promoter Score Survey
12 question, which is essentially how--how satisfied are
13 you with the service? Would you recommend the
14 service to a family member or a friend? That one
15 question at the end that Net Promoter Score Survey is
16 something the industry uses for customer satisfaction
17 whether it be, you know, commercial or private
18 government, non-government and it's very effective at
19 being able to ask a single question and gauging
20 someone's result and satisfaction. That's the one
21 that I mentioned earlier that our results in 2018 in
22 the Net Promoter--Net Promoter Survey score actually
23 passed Apple and Jet Blue who are some of the
24 industry leaders in customer satisfaction. In total,
25 those surveys over the course of 2018 we contacted--

2 sorry. We were able to receive responses, survey
3 responses from over 39,000 New Yorkers.

4 SPEAKER JOHNSON: So, the Mayor's
5 Management Report states that the response pool was
6 796 individuals.

7 JOE MORRISROE: That is correct. That's
8 the aforementioned CFI Survey that we contact and go
9 through that process.

10 SPEAKER JOHNSON: The Customer
11 Satisfaction Survey?

12 JOE MORRISROE: The Customer
13 Satisfaction Survey.

14 SPEAKER JOHNSON: So that is a
15 negligible-negligible percentage of the annual total
16 number of calls received, which is over 20 million in
17 calls as you mention in your testimony. Do you think
18 that this survey is representative of the pool of 311
19 callers given what a miniscule tiny percentage that
20 is if you take in 796 individuals?

21 JOE MORRISROE: The—the absolute number
22 as well as the relative number to the—to the—to a
23 denominator, if you will, don't reflect the feedback
24 that we get from CFI, which provides a confidence
25 factor and accuracy rate. So, by sampling over 500,

2 in this case 796 I believe the number was they can
3 use that sample basis—I'm sorry. They can us that
4 number as a sample to represent with a degree of
5 confidence that I believe is plus or minus 3
6 percentage points, and a degree of confidence that it
7 is over 95%. So, while the number may be small, we
8 do believe it reflects the customer experience with
9 calling New York City 311.

10 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Well, I'll just tell
11 you you'll be happy to hear this. Last week or
12 earlier this week we were preparing for this hearing,
13 and we were taking about some of the Language Access
14 issues, which I detailed in my opening statement and—
15 and Councilman Menchaca just spoke eloquently about
16 those. Putting those to the side, which are very
17 important, and we'll get to that, when we did get the
18 individual, the operator on the phone with the
19 translator, a translator that was speaking Russian,
20 and translating from the individual here who was
21 asking questions in Russian, the—the person who was
22 speaking English was incredibly thorough. I mean
23 more thorough than I could possibly believe. The
24 person speaking Russian on our end kept saying:
25 Okay, thank you for the information, you know, I got

3 it, and the—the 311 operator kept coming back and
4 saying actually I have more information. You can go
5 to Best Buy to drop your television off, but it's \$50
6 or you can go—and he kept coming back and back and
7 back with additional information, which I was
8 annoyed, but impressed by his persistence. So, I
9 though you would like to hear. I don't know what the
10 gentleman's name was, but he did a very good job, and
11 was very, very thorough in communicating that
12 information through the Russian translator and
13 interpreter back to the staff member here who was
14 basically doing the—the call just to check on
15 translation services. I want to just jump to some
16 other questions so I can get to my colleagues. I
17 want to again just go back to Language Access.
18 Council Member Menchaca said it, I said it in my
19 opening when a non-English speaker calls 311 and
20 needs an interpreter to make a request, 311 has an
21 automated recording in six languages, as we've said,
22 where a caller can select that language if they want.
23 Yet, if they reach through an operator, the
24 operator's answers are in English, and they don't
25 seem to know what language the caller is speaking in,
if it's a non-English language caller. If the caller

2 does not know the English word for the language or
3 struggles to communicate it, then the 311 operator
4 has to guess that language. They have a letter here.
5 Oh, Brad, if you can give me that letter. So, we
6 have a letter here that was submitted for the record
7 from Indian Home, which is a wonderful non-profit
8 here in the city. It does fantastic work, and they
9 wrote in their letter they said: Our community
10 members have reported unsatisfactory experiences when
11 attempting to access services in 311 and forgive me
12 if I—if I mispronounce any of these language dialects
13 wrong. In Canada Telugu, Gira Hadi (sp?), Sinhala,
14 and Marati just to name a few languages. As such,
15 stating access that's available in 175 to 200
16 languages is incorrect. In other instances, getting
17 a translator takes too much time, and the community
18 member feels helpless and frustrated. Also getting
19 the proper language translator is another problem.
20 As an example: One of our clients who speaks Telugu
21 was seeking assistance for housing, but did not
22 receive service in his language. Rather he received a
23 translator of Hindi. Unfortunately, he does not
24 speak Hindi, and he could not understand, and the
25 translator would not understand his needs to the

3 service provider. Finally, the call was
4 disconnected. Our client did not receive the service,
5 and we provide multiple examples that even South Asian
6 adults the dialect difficulties they're facing when
7 accessing 311 telephone-telephonic interpretation
8 services. So what would you say to that? I
9 mentioned that in my opening. Councilman Menchaca
10 mentioned it. What would you say on what we need to
11 do to fix that?

12 JOE MORRISROE: Well, first I would say I
13 can empathize with and appreciate the frustration any
14 customer would have in reaching 311 in any language
15 for any-any subject. I frequently listen to calls.
16 So, I can make sure I am familiar with the process
17 and understand that. We've been working Language
18 Access for a long time to try to make it as effective as
19 we can be, and it can be predating the-the Local
20 Access Law that was previously mentioned, and we work
21 very closely with the two resources that are-a-re
22 most accessible to us, our own staff who listen,
23 evaluate and monitor call on an annual-on a regular
24 basis and also with our vendor-vendor Language Line.
25 Language Line is the largest translation and
interpretation services vendor in the country. I

3 believe they have over 10,000 clients. This is their
4 core business. We really work with them to
5 understand how do we handle the situations that have
6 been described here where a customer may not be able
7 to speak even the name of their language in English,
8 how do we get them from that phone call to an
9 interpreter that can help. The process does work.
10 We have received calls in languages—in many different
11 languages over the course of the year and years. The
12 process that's set up is by design, designed to allow
13 the customer to get through to an agent who in turn
14 can go—who can conference on Language Line. Local
15 Law is required to provide what is known as triage
16 operator, and then an operator on their end who
17 speaks up to five languages, and can understand or
18 attempt to understand the language the customer is
19 speaking.

19 SPEAKER JOHNSON: But I just want to just
20 quickly. I don't want to get too far in this. When
21 we called in and we hit the button for Russian, when
22 the operator picked up, they didn't know that we hit
23 the button for Russian. That is very basic. Why is
24 that the case?

2 JOE MORRISROE: In that case, I'm not
3 familiar-

4 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Interpreter. It's very
5 rudimentary. It happens every time. You can do it
6 today. You can call 311, you can hit the language
7 that you want, and when the English operator gets on
8 the phone they ask you the language and they don't
9 know that you just hit the button the for the
10 language that you're requesting. It doesn't make any
11 sense.

12 JOE MORRISROE: I-I don't disagree with
13 you there. It is a limitation of our telephony to
14 our Customer Relationship System how the data is
15 passed. What we do have is when Russian is
16 identified, when we do contact Language Line, there
17 is an automated process where they can select Russian
18 as the language so then it goes right to the Language
19 Line interpreter for Russian.

20 SPEAKER JOHNSON: I-I don't want to paper
21 over this. It-it is sort of unacceptable that today
22 in the most diverse city in the world with hundreds
23 of languages spoken, just on the languages that you
24 accept to push the button on that the operator
25 doesn't know you pushed the button on that language.

3 I mean that's so basic, it should—there's no way to
4 fix that immediately?

5 JOE MORRISROE: I will definitely go back
6 and take a look and see if anything we've tried is—if
7 there's anything else beyond what we've looked at and
8 if there is any other possibility on that.

9 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Okay. Will the new
10 system upgrade allow the 311 operator to know if a
11 caller has selected a non-English language?

12 JOE MORRISROE: The new system will focus
13 on the back end of 311, the—the application itself.
14 When we have the new system and then subsequently
15 when we upgrade a Telephony system, that merger—
16 that's—that's a connection, if you will, will allow
17 us to do that.

18 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Council Member Menchaca
19 I'm surer is going to ask about the ten designated
20 languages. So, I'm not going to get to that. He
21 mentioned it in his opening. I just want to end with
22 the mobile app. Why does the mobile app have a small
23 universe of possible complaints compared to—that you
24 can submit on compared to online?

25 JOE MORRISROE: Um, the--

2 SPEAKER JOHNSON: [interposing] Why does
3 that match?

4 JOE MORRISROE: The mobile app offers
5 just about two dozen complaints. So, it is less than
6 what' available online and certainly what's less than
7 available in the call center. Some of that
8 limitation is due to the current system, the 16-year-
9 old system in order to be able to build out how to do
10 the intake for some complaints while matching it to a
11 mobile app while meeting the standards that the
12 mobile app has required for Apple and Google are very
13 limited. So, that's one portion of it. The other is
14 it's-it's-it's just a matter of resource on the
15 actual app itself, right. So, right now we have a
16 process the app lists in order with some groupings of
17 the different types of complaint types such as
18 quality of life versus infrastructure, but at some
19 point it would continue to scroll and scroll and
20 scroll if we were allowed to have all of them, and
21 the app doesn't have that current capability. Sorry,
22 we don't have that current capability to put that on
23 the app and then be able to receive that through.

24 SPEAKER JOHNSON: It's not possible to
25 have that capability?

2 JOE MORRISROE: It's something we've not
3 pursued because it would allow you to go down and
4 would just list and list and list the number of
5 complaints that are out there, and it would not give
6 the order so customers would be able to scroll
7 through. They would just continue to scroll through
8 X number of--

9 SPEAKER JOHNSON: interpreter There's no
10 way? There's not any system that handles this?

11 JOE MORRISROE: Well, I think it's a
12 question of designing the system. I think we looked
13 at it from what's the highest demand and being able
14 to provide that out to customers in the mobile app.

15 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Do—but is it your
16 belief that the mobile app should match what's
17 available on a web browser, on a computer, on—the
18 telephone line?

19 JOE MORRISROE: In most cases I would say
20 yes, but not in all cases. There can be different
21 things that you can do online that maybe not
22 necessarily something you would do on a mobile app.
23 Our current limitation there with the mobile app is
24 tied to our current existing system since it serves
25 as the back end.

3 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Are you building a new
4 system for your mobile app?

5 JOE MORRISROE: The new system that I
6 mentioned, and that being able—probably likely talk a
7 little bit more about new CRM system is going to give
8 us more flexibility to then redesign the mobile app.
9 So, we fix—we upgrade the CRM, then we can revisit
10 the mobile app.

11 SPEAKER JOHNSON: When—when will that
12 happen?

13 JOE MORRISROE: Uh-hm.

14 SPEAKER JOHNSON: [interposing] When can
15 people expect a new system, a new mobile app that is
16 more flexible?

17 JOE MORRISROE: Uh-hm. I would say that
18 the sequence is the new CRM system first, then the
19 mobile app, and I would defer to my colleague on
20 that.

21 SPEAKER JOHNSON: [interposing] And
22 what's the timeline on that?

23 JOE MORRISROE: I'll defer to my
24 colleague Commissioner Saini for the timeline on the
25 CRM.

3 COMMISSIONER SAINI: Great. Good
4 afternoon. The—from a timeline standpoint we're
5 looking at rolling out the—the new modern platform,
6 the CRM platform and all the components with it by
7 the middle of this year. So, we're 80% complete with
8 the solution as of today. What that means is we've
9 completed the design phase, which is the—the initial
10 phase along with our software Development lifecycle.
11 We've completed the build phase, which is it means
12 all the development and the coding and configuration
13 of-of the solution, and we are now in the middle of
14 the testing phase. So, we're 80% there. We've got
15 20% left. We're going to go live in the middle of
16 the year.

17 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Great. Okay, I think
18 that's all the question I have. I would hope
19 Commissioner and Director that as you all start to
20 finish with that 20% given this hearing today, given
21 the feedback you're going to receive from the public,
22 and from folks that have had issues with 311, given
23 feedback that Council Members will have, given the
24 experience we hear from our constituents, and the
25 experience our staff that has used one (sic) that
there will be a meaningful way for you to include and

3 be open to some of the ideas and feedback that we
4 have as you begin migrate over and upgrade into a new
5 system beyond the 2003 system. So, can we look
6 forward to that type of partnership in working
7 together?

8 COMMISSIONER SAINI: Yes, we certainly
9 can. I think so. (sic)

10 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you very much. I
11 want to turn it over to Chair Cabrera.

12 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much,
13 Mr. Speaker. I want to follow up with something that
14 the Speaker mentioned in his opening remarks.

15 Regarding Washington, D.C. they have video
16 capability. Will the new system have that option?

17 JOE MORRISROE: Video capability? To-

18 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: [interposing] To
19 be able to see yeah. To be able to see the operator,
20 and there's a--there's a reason why I'm asking this
21 question.

22 JOE MORRISROE: I'm not sure I can answer
23 all of that, but I can definitely address the second
24 part you just mentioned that it will not have the
25 ability--the new system will not give us the ability
for a customer to use their Smart Phone and see or

3 interact visually with the-with the customer service
4 agent. That's not capability that's being built in
5 the new CRM.

6 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Is there a
7 particular reason why that was not implemented?

8 JOE MORRISROE: I don't know if there was
9 a particular reason why it was not. No.

10 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Okay. Let me give
11 you the reason why I think it makes sense. We all
12 have been discussing here so far dealing with the
13 language access the amount that we have, and-and it's
14 not an easy-it's not an easy situation, but if I go
15 to most of our immigrants they go to a non-profit and
16 they know they're given a card to be able to say hey
17 this is the language that I speak. It will easily-it
18 will make it easier for your operator to quickly be
19 able to direct the caller to an interpreter. Do you
20 see that as an added value?

21 JOE MORRISROE: I would certainly see
22 that as an added value from both a customer's
23 perspective as well as customer service delivery.
24 Professional have advantage-that would be a benefit
25 for sure.

2 COMMISSIONER SAINI: And I just want to
3 comment on that as well.

4 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Yes, please.

5 COMMISSIONER SAINI: From a—from a
6 technology perspective knowing what plat—what modern
7 platform we're moving to, I can tell that's a
8 capability that we—we would have. We would have that
9 ability to deploy that feature if we—if we—if we
10 wanted to we'll have that ability. In the current—
11 current platform it will be impossible, but in the
12 new platform yes.

13 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: And the new one
14 how—is—is it—what would it take to go to the next
15 level? Is it funding, and if it is, how much more?

16 COMMISSIONER SAINI: So—so the—I think
17 Joe already mentioned that the priority right now is
18 to—is to migrate off of this legacy 16-year-old
19 highly customized Siebel on Prem (sic) application,
20 right to the new—the new platform, which again will
21 be deployed in the middle of the year. Once that's
22 done, there's already a que of enhancements, right
23 and features that we've already received from
24 numerous sources that we want to quickly roll up our
25 sleeves and start deploying on an iterative—in an

2 iterative way and the routine and routine cycles into
3 production. I think the--the question and the thing
4 that--that Joe and myself and others are working on
5 right now is how do prioritize the list, which will
6 be an ever-growing list of enhancements that New
7 Yorkers--the Council--the City Council, 311 and others
8 seek, right, to deploy in a way that makes everyone
9 happy, but also in a way where we can deploy these
10 things quickly, and, you know, on a continuous basis.

11 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: You know, I would
12 think not only for 311 and I don't know if you have
13 relationships with the people at PSAC and dealing
14 with 9/11. Imagine an 9/11 call you're able to see
15 that person, and their condition. Alright, they're
16 able to speak but you see their condition and you're
17 able to more quickly assess the situation, and I
18 would think that this will be a priority for 311 and
19 appreciate that what you just mentioned right now was
20 a priority. For us in the Council this is a priority
21 for people to be able to have access to the language.
22 I have to tell you I just called about a situation.
23 I won't mention what the situation was because I'm
24 going to leave it for the next hearing, but it was a
25 bit frustrating from my experience. I have not

2 called 311 in a long time, and it—first it says, you
3 know, it takes 40 something seconds before I talked
4 to an operator. I said alright, and it just, you
5 know and then going through all those languages, you
6 know, I just—it—it was—it was a bit frustrating and
7 that at least—so let me just close this loop of
8 questioning. So, can—can we expect after this summer
9 when we have the getting out the new system to make
10 the video option a priority?

11 JOE MORRISROE: I think as the
12 Commissioner said, we have a number of items that
13 would be after we go live after this summer. They
14 would all have to be assessed and understood and—and
15 kind of a combination of prioritization of need, but
16 also ability. Some—some could be done faster than
17 others perhaps.

18 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: What would be one
19 point of this? I'm just curious. What would be some
20 of the other items like you have in the pipeline?

21 JOE MORRISROE: Off the top of my head,
22 I—I—I don't know. I don't have a list of those items
23 nor would I be able to do a comparison in real time,
24 but I can appreciate the request and it's something
25 that we would consider.

3 COMMISSIONER SAINI: So, I-I-I can share
4 one I think we already described, which is the new
5 Mobile App.

6 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Okay.

7 COMMISSIONER SAINI: And-and all the
8 features that we want to deploy there. Again, just
9 to clarify, when we go live the middle of this year
10 with-with the new platform, the new CRM platform,
11 the-well, I've overhauled the back end, the-the
12 current 311 Mobile App will-will still remain, and
13 that's on purpose because we want to make sure
14 there's no disruption, right---

15 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: [interposing]

16 Right.

17 COMMISSIONER SAINI: --in-in current New
18 Yorkers using the-the current 311 App. In parallel we
19 are working on developing the new mobile app that
20 will work with the new platform, and that I think
21 it's-that is certainly going to be a major priority,
22 right, for us post the shift, right to the new
23 platform.

24 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: I-I used to be the
25 Chair of Technology so many moons ago, and-and here
in Council, and I was pretty impressed with DOITT's

3 ability to handle multiple projects at the same time.

4 So, if you're dealing—you know where I'm going with
5 this—if you—can you—don't you have the ability to be
6 able to handle the app plus the video at the same
7 time and/or be able to license, you know, whoever—the
8 vendor that is providing Washing, DC one that—instead
9 of recreating, you know—

10 COMMISSIONER SAINI: [interposing] Sure

11 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: --this one, why not
12 just incorporate that?

13 COMMISSIONER SAINI: Sure, so—so I'll say
14 this, it's absolutely noted to two-way video chat,
15 right, for a 311 session, right will be added to the
16 list, right of enhancements that we have. We'll do
17 our best, right to do what DOITT does best, which is
18 everything at once--

19 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Yes.

20 COMMISSIONER SAINI: --for multiple
21 agencies, and from there, we'll—we'll see where it
22 goes.

23 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Okay, thank you.

24 COMMISSIONER SAINI: Great.

25 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Just—just do it.
No, I'm just kidding. So, let me go to like a couple

2 of quick questions, and then I'm going to pass it
3 onto my co-chair. Council Member Menchaca mentioned
4 that and as anybody who will go on 311 and go through
5 a whole list, right now we have six languages. The
6 law requires ten. Is there a particular reason why
7 we're not up to ten? Is it the system? What-what's
8 holding it up?

9 JOE MORRISROE: Well, I think we are
10 covering the ten, the access to 180 languages is
11 designed to be able to reach others like six and more
12 than ten. The six that have been mentioned are what
13 we call the automated system. The upfront it's known
14 as a IVR. It stands for Integrated Voice Response
15 Unit. That was designed based on demand not on
16 adhering to a number of six or ten, et cetera. It's
17 also limited by the number of times, number of
18 prompts you can actually press, but the-the
19 satisfying the ten languages is done by offering up
20 to 180 languages.

21 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: My last question
22 and that is as the Speaker was asking, you go down
23 you're listening to the-to a different language to
24 the options, the automated one. You press that
25 button, and then it goes to an English speaker, but

3 I'm a little confused, right. If somebody closed my
4 office and pressed 2 and, you know, if you Speak
5 Spanish for example and it takes you to a different
6 phone number right? Why not just assign the
7 interpreter who speaks Russian right? Doesn't it go
8 directly there? I'm just didn't catch why some—like
9 that's a simple, right, thing to do.

10 JOE MORRISROE: I—I-I agree it sounds like
11 a simple thing to do. Alas, it is it not in our
12 current system. Our Telephony system and our CRM
13 system are both aged, as we mentioned a few times.
14 There's a technology interface between the two.
15 It's—I don't want to get too deep, but—

16 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: [interposing]
17 Alright. No, I appreciate that.

18 JOE MORRISROE: --CTI. We need upgrades
19 on both ends in order for that data stream, that data
20 information to be able to be passed along with the
21 call. That data doesn't get passed today.

22 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: But you will have
23 data in your new technology right?

24 JOE MORRISROE: The—the new CRM
25 technology gives us one piece of that. We still will
leave it on the toe (sic) for the site.

3 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: What--what is that?
4 The--the--?

5 JOE MORRISROE: The new CRM will give us
6 one piece of that technology. There's another piece,
7 which is called the telephone system, for lack of a
8 better word.

9 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Right.

10 JOE MORRISROE: We need to add it to that
11 as well. We need to add the capability on that.

12 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: And that will come
13 online this summer, too, to be able to have that?

14 JOE MORRISROE: I don't know. That's a
15 different project, and a different timeline.

16 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: That's a different
17 test so that's another one on your list of
18 priorities.

19 JOE MORRISROE: Right.

20 COMMISSIONER SAINI: That will be a
21 priority as well.

22 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Okay. Thank you so
23 much. Very informative. With that, I'm going to
24 pass it onto Council Member and my colleague and Co-
25 Chair Peter Koo.

2 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you Chair
3 Cabrera. Yeah. Thank you for all coming, and I know
4 it's a long day. Yeah. So, one of the goals of the
5 new replacement system for the old system is to have
6 more customer-oriented cost-effective system that
7 offers communications between city staff and
8 customers who are at different channels of
9 communications. So, how does the current contract
10 with IBM address these issues? [background comments]

11 JOE MORRISROE: I'll—I'll start and then
12 I'll ask my—my colleague and commissioner to—to weigh
13 in. We agree with your—your statement and that it
14 will provide more customer access—

15 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: [interposing] Yeah.

16 JOE MORRISROE: It will continue. I
17 should say provide more—will continue to provide
18 access to the customers which is—is the main part of
19 our mission and our goal. We do have the current
20 system. We've been able to build out channels such
21 as online mobile text, et cetera. They're not all
22 integrated, which makes it challenging. One of the
23 things the new system will do is allow us to have
24 better integration, but I'll defer to my colleague to
25 discuss the IBM contract.

3 COMMISSIONER SAINI: That's right. So-so
4 in short the IBM contract is primarily the-leveraging
5 their expertise as a system integrator to transition
6 as from Legal Siebel platform, right, to new
7 Microsoft Dynamics platform. It doesn't include
8 scope of work around new channels or new-new features
9 that we have in the queue that we want to deploy.
10 We'd have to actually-we will be figuring out our
11 resource plan for post-IBM internally how we are
12 going to manage deploying these new features and new
13 channels by ourselves. So, again IBM contract is jus
14 to get onto the new platform. All new features.
15 We're going to be handling internally by ourselves or
16 with a new system integrator that can help us so we
17 can move faster.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: So, with the data
19 from the old system, they transfer it into the new
20 system?

21 COMMISSIONER SAINI: Absolutely. There
22 will be no data loss. It will be seamless transition
23 from the old to the new.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: So, we are-we are-we
25 want to acknowledge that we have-we have Council
Member Lander and Kallos. Yeah, so thank you. So-so

3 what are the new features that 311 will offer
4 customers.

5 JOE MORRISROE: The main new feature
6 again we've—we've talked a lot about enhancing the
7 back end and being, you know, an upgrade there, but
8 the main new feature will be the introduction of
9 Customer Account Management. So, today and I think
10 the Speaker mentioned this in his opening as well.
11 You can't manage your relationship with the city by
12 building your own account. This is something that is
13 obviously beneficial to customers. It would also be
14 beneficial to the city to allow customers to do that.
15 So, the new technology gives us that capability.
16 Customers will be able to opt in, be able to build
17 how they want. Do they want to get track of this
18 service? Do they want to keep track of that service?
19 Do they want to keep track of their service request.
20 They can do all of that themselves and as they define
21 it. So, that's a major change for 311, and that's
22 what the new—one of the things the new system will
23 provide.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Well, that's only
25 for online, though, right?

3 JOE MORRISROE: It would be done online
4 yes.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: But when you call
6 it, they don't—how can you get a service—that
7 information?

8 JOE MORRISROE: So, if you call we have
9 the ability to look up your previous request and your
10 previous complaints, if you will, and get status.
11 So, we always have that capability, but to build your
12 own account, and to keep in mind privacy obviously,
13 we are looking at that as something that will be
14 available to the customer online.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: So, would the
16 customers be able to upload pictures or videos to
17 support their complaints?

18 JOE MORRISROE: Yes, in some cases
19 customers can upload pictures and videos today to
20 support their complaints, and we would continue where
21 that exists.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: On the new system,
23 right?

24 JOE MORRISROE: Yes.
25

3 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: But would there be
4 limitations there if the file is too big and you can
5 upload or what?

6 JOE MORRISROE: I believe there might be
7 a file limitation size. I'm not exactly—I'm not
8 proficient on that so I don't know if my colleague
9 could assist with them providing some context on
10 that?

11 COMMISSIONER SAINI: Yeah, I mean I—I
12 don't believe there would be a technical limit—a
13 significant technical limitations, right for adding
14 multi-media features, right into the new platform. I
15 think the real question will be from a business
16 perspective and from an agency perspective whether
17 those agencies are seeking to allow and support
18 multimedia right, to be uploaded along with the
19 service request. There won't be a technology issue.
20 It's really just a business decision.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Okay. So I call
22 with a request for assistance on integration service.
23 The city plans to use the new system to offer these
24 services through text, chat and social media. So,
25 how does the current contract with IBM address the

3 implementation of such channels? Can we do a text
4 now, though, right?

5 JOE MORRISROE: I can answer some of
6 that. So, the contract is to build out the current
7 system. Our ability to then integrate say the text
8 channel already exists to an extent. Our 311
9 operators receive a text. They access the current
10 system, and they get answers and they text the
11 customer back. That will continue in the new system.
12 They'll still be able access it and provide answers.
13 Further down the line—I don't have details—but
14 further down the line we can even further integrate
15 that through the Telephony system and the CRM system,
16 but what exists today at a minimum will continue
17 tomorrow or continue in the future state.

18 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Alright, so-so-so if
19 customers are going to Dayville (sic) to settle
20 accounts on online to set up accounts online, and
21 what personal information will be required to set up
22 the account?

23 JOE MORRISROE: Whatever is necessary to
24 set up the account will be in strict compliance with
25 privacy laws, whatever privacy laws exist.

3 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Just name and phone
4 number?

5 JOE MORRISROE: Yeah, I-I don't-I
6 wouldn't make a-I wouldn't want to make a blanket
7 statement without going through it, but-but clearly
8 there will be a requirement that-that PII and privacy
9 law is-is paramount in setting up an account.

10 CHAIRPERSON KOO: But-but what about some
11 customers they don't want to set up. Can they remain
12 anonymous?

13 JOE MORRISROE: Well, in many cases
14 customers can remain anonymous when they're filing a
15 complaint. Yes.

16 CHAIRPERSON KOO: So, I have one more
17 question. This is on the translation, right. When
18 you go online suppose you want to do Chinese or
19 Koraen, right, and my staff, too, is in Korean. She
20 want the report of Catch Basin, but the-but the
21 translation is that good. Catch Place-Basin it
22 translates as: Go Catch the Natural Depression.

23 [laughter] Uh-hm, yeah. So, I know there are
24 limitations in translation. I don't know what-what
25 are your services. You probably use Google
Translation or what?

3 JOE MORRISROE: Yes, for online both in
4 terms of adhering to the Language Access Law, but
5 also to serve our customers, we've consistently
6 looked at what's the best available tool out there.

7 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Yeah.

8 JOE MORRISROE: And while I can
9 appreciate the--the customer frustration--

10 CHAIRPERSON KOO: [interposing] Yeah, so
11 have rated this one right?

12 JOE MORRISROE: Right, yeah, you--

13 CHAIRPERSON KOO: [interposing] So, how--
14 how do you improve on that because this is s big
15 complaint in my neighborhood?

16 JOE MORRISROE: Sure.

17 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Yeah, catch basins are
18 clogged. You know, they are not draining.

19 JOE MORRISROE: I think one of the
20 opportunities we have is the tool that we use, which
21 I'll say is used kind of government--many governments
22 and many businesses use is Google Translate. I think
23 a way to improve that, and I think Commissioner, you
24 may have a sense of that better than I do.

25 COMMISSIONER SAINI: Sure. So, again
Google--Google Translate is the primary translation

2 engine that we use online. It's used in the private
3 sector. It's used in the public sector. It's
4 considered one of the best out. To answer your
5 question about how this would get better, the good
6 news about Google Translate is the underlining
7 technology behind it, which leverages artificial
8 intelligence and machine learning and natural
9 language processing. It means—all that means that it
10 gets better over time exponentially.

11 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Yeah.

12 JOE MORRISROE: So, for any deficiencies
13 we see in translations today, I have a high
14 confidence that those things will only get better
15 over time because of the—the—the kind of technology
16 Google is using for their translation engine.

17 CHAIRPERSON KOO: So, with the mobile app
18 that has an audible language option allowing the
19 customer to submit complaints in different languages?
20 Right now there's only English, right.

21 JOE MORRISROE: Yeah, right now it is
22 only in English, and again we're—we're faced with
23 some of the same challenges that we are looking at
24 what tools out there could exist to do translation.

25

2 So it's something that we recognize the need for, and
3 we have to address as we go forward.

4 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Are you going to do the
5 other mobile app in other optimal languages?

6 JOE MORRISROE: I—I think what we would
7 look at is what can we do--

8 CHAIRPERSON KOO: [interposing] Yeah.

9 JOE MORRISROE: --in that area once—once
10 we—once we're at that stage.

11 CHAIRPERSON KOO: So, my last question
12 here before I go to Council Members, according to New
13 York City 311 IBM task an order for post-production
14 period. It's only 12 months. What would happen after
15 this period—this period ends? Would the city need to
16 re-enter into a new contract with IBM for additional
17 support?

18 COMMISSIONER SAINI: Yeah, I can—I can
19 answer that question. So, DOITT will be taking over
20 production support right for the new platform after
21 IBM finishes, right their work as outlined in the
22 contract. So, we do not see an extension right of
23 IBM or—or seeking IBM to write production support on
24 an ongoing basis. That will all be done in-house by
25 DOITT resources. Part of that involves retraining

2 our current resources that support this—the current
3 Siebel Platform on the new technologies that we're—
4 we're—we're going to be deploying very soon.

5 CHAIRPERSON KOO: So, you don't need like
6 any of the contractors' support post-production?

7 COMMISSIONER SAINI: After the—after the—
8 after the 12 months--

9 CHAIRPERSON KOO: [interposing] Yeah.

10 COMMISSIONER SAINI: --we'll at that
11 point—we'll be in a position to handle support on an
12 ongoing basis internally with DOITT resources.

13 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Okay, Council Member
14 Kallos, do you want to ask questions

15 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: I want to thank
16 our chairs Cabrera and Koo and in particular Council
17 Member Carlos Menchaca and his trust for me. I have
18 one question that I have been following up with 311.
19 Jim Morrisroe, I'm—I'm a big fan of yours and what
20 your operators do. If I click Homeless Outreach
21 Assistance, it's my most frequent request in my
22 district, and the person doesn't have an address
23 because they're homeless, it creates a GPS address,
24 but I can't drag and drop to where they are. Can you

3 please fix it so that everyone make a 311 request can
4 just drag and drop onto the map?

5 COMMISSIONER SAINI: Yeah, so I—I can
6 answer that. So, the—the feature to drag your finger
7 and drop a pin, right to determine your location
8 verse putting in an address, will be a priority
9 feature that will be deployed in the initial rollout
10 of the new app, which will be after we redeploy the
11 new—the new platform. I totally recognize the—the
12 advantage, right—of that feature.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Okay, thank you.

15 Council Member Menchaca.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: I want to thank
17 Council Member Ben Kallos for keeping his word, and
18 our chairs. It's important. It's really important.
19 So, I want to say thank you again for—for engaging us
20 and clearly there's—there's a lot of excitement here
21 to make this better, and that's really where this is
22 coming from. The Speaker spoke to some of the pieces
23 that I was going to ask. So, I'm going to ask a
24 little bit of a deeper question regarding the ten
25 designated languages related to our law our access
law, and really thinking about languages that are

3 supposed to be covered yet out telephone automated
4 recording only offers six languages as options, and I
5 don't know if you answered it before, but I want to
6 get you on the record to ask this. Will you be
7 expanding it to cover all ten languages?

8 JOE MORRISROE: So, I would ask a
9 clarifying question. You're expanding the automated
10 messaging? I that-

11 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Yes, as part of
12 our Local Law-Local Access Law.

13 JOE MORRISROE: Okay, so as part of the
14 Local Law, the availability of the ten languages is
15 covered under the umbrella of the 1809 languages of
16 Language Line. Whether we do or don't have the six
17 languages in the IVR system, every language all-the
18 ten languages and more are available to meet the
19 language access needs. The languages in the IVR
20 system were-are built in sequence based on volume,
21 they're designed to be able to help the system move
22 through efficiently.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Well, and just
24 to get-to get a sense. So, essentially you're saying
25 that it's a six because the volume is at six? Is
that-is that what I'm hearing?

3 JOE MORRISROE: It's at six because
4 initially there were six languages that turned out--

5 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: [interposing]
6 Before the law, and now there's ten.

7 JOE MORRISROE: Correct, and then the
8 volume, though, aligns with the six languages.
9 There's significant drop-offs between language
10 number--non-English speaking Language No. 1 and No. 2--

11 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: [interposing]
12 Yeah.

13 JOE MORRISROE: --and then a significant
14 drop-off between number 4 and number 5--

15 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Right.

16 JOE MORRISROE: --and then further no
17 down. The other limitation is actually a practical
18 matter because there's only a certain number of
19 prompts and you can't hit one zero as prompt. There
20 are limits right there.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Got it, got it.
22 Okay. Well, but it doesn't mean that it's not
23 possible, and so what I'm hearing from you just so we
24 can--I want to get to a couple other questions.
25 You're saying there are some--there are some limits to
the technology and how we can kind of get to ten. We

2 have six. There's a drop-off. I think we've—we've
3 been clear that the drop-off is not necessarily
4 because there is not people speaking X language
5 because people are frustrated and never going to call
6 back. That relationship we just talked about is very
7 important and we lose them almost immediately from
8 their first initial experience. That's how customers
9 are. They go somewhere else. They're not going to
10 come back to 311. So I really do hope that—that-we
11 can work with you on ten, and I'm just not—I'm not
12 hearing a no. I just want to get a clarity. Can we
13 get to ten? Is there a plan we can work together?

14 JOE MORRISROE: We—I can commit that we
15 can work together. We can look at understanding
16 what—what we can do. I—I will say it may not be
17 capable until—it won't be capable until we've
18 upgraded both the CRM system and then look at our
19 Telephony system as well. I mentioned they're
20 separate.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Yes.

22 JOE MORRISROE: So, the example of not
23 carrying the fact that someone put in this number.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: [interposing]
25 Yeah, right and that's—that was—that was my next

2 question, because I want to see if you can explain
3 that a little bit in-in depth when the non-English
4 speaker selects a language and hears a message in
5 their own language, they are then transferred to
6 English and the Natural Language Interactive Voice
7 the IVR System you just mentioned before they can
8 reach an operator, but if they have already indicated
9 that they do not speak English, why are they then
10 being sent to that English only system? So, can you—
11 can you explain that—that piece and that send-off?

12 JOE MORRISROE: Yeah, I think it's—the
13 manner—the way it's currently setup in the sequence
14 anyone who either goes through the language option or
15 doesn't choose to go through a language option and
16 just waits, has to get routed back to that same point
17 before it's passed off to the agent. So, it's a—it's
18 an end point whether you speak English or not or a
19 language other than English, but you land there and
20 you get asked the question again. Then you get
21 transferred or get connected I should say to the
22 agent who will then be able to service you or bring
23 on Language Line to service you.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Got it and—and
25 so we clearly see that as a problem, and is there—is

3 there a commitment to kind of look at that flow and
4 just find another flow that prevents that additional
5 step?

6 JOE MORRISROE: Yes. I can—I can say that
7 it's something we've looked at over quite a few
8 years.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: [interposing]
10 Okay. So this is not a new problem for you?

11 JOE MORRISROE: Right, it's something
12 we've been trying in the—in the full scope of
13 language access and the sequence of how customers go
14 through combined with how much the system, the
15 telephone—I call it Telephony, the telephone system
16 can actually process. 311 receives 55,000 calls on
17 an average day basis. If it snows, we can have
18 250,000 calls. There's a processing element to those
19 calls that could for lack of a better description,
20 you know, kind of clog thing.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: [interposing]
22 Yeah.

23 JOE MORRISROE: So, a lot of the design
24 is looking at just that. That said, when it comes to
25 language access, I fully appreciate and can empathize
with the customer who, you know, doesn't understand

3 the language that they're hearing, and needs to reach
4 someone. We've talked a lot with Language Line, who
5 I've mentioned a few times and take a lot of what
6 they give us as counsel. Their direction has been—
7 we've been able to take their direction and their
8 suggestions into this flow that you currently
9 experience. So, while I don't—I recognize it's not
10 satisfactory to some customers, it has been enhanced
11 and it's one of the things that Language Line advises
12 is, you know, have it there. A customer will stay
13 online if you can say please hold or ask for the—ask
14 for the language. It allows a communication to
15 happen even if it's in a language you don't
16 understand while we're trying to get to that triage
17 operator. So, we've been looking at the technical
18 flow of his as well as the process flow of this for
19 several years, and it's a challenge. You know, we
20 have our commitment to try to work and—and improve it
21 wherever we can.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Got it. Okay,
23 well, that's something, and we're going to follow up
24 on that, and I want—I want to spend some time
25 thinking about that with you, but I will remind you
of what I said earlier that we—we set the policy for

2 your execution, and so this law is really in that-in
3 that vein, a-a-an opportunity for us to set that goal
4 post, and right now the goal post is based out of I
5 don't know what it is, but it's not based out of law,
6 and so the law gets us there, and that's why we're-
7 we're here talking about this. So, can you just
8 please describe the training 311 operators receive in
9 handling calls where the caller needs an interpreter.
10 Give us a sense about that training and are you aware
11 of any existing software that would automatically
12 detect a caller's language? Have you explored
13 adopting any of the software?

14 JOE MORRISROE: Great. I can address all
15 of that. I'll talk to training both broadly as well
16 as then specifically with-with language. So for a
17 new hire employee, which is through a Civil Service
18 list process, the training consists of initially four
19 weeks of classroom training. We call it experiential
20 training where they're actually working on the system
21 and doing role play in customer service skills rather
22 than using a manual or a binder or something to that
23 effect. It's very immersive over the four-four-week
24 period, and it's really the focus of the agent to be
25 able to handle any call whether it be an English

1 call, whether it be a non-English language call.
2
3 Whether it be something that is transferred to 911
4 because it's an emergency or whether it's a service
5 request or an information request. So, the training
6 is comprehensive. For language, for English—I'm
7 sorry. For languages other than English there is a
8 little extra training that goes into it. I mentioned
9 before we work with Language Line quite a bit to get
10 some of their best practices. Again, they have
11 10,000 clients around the world. They—this is their
12 business. They can share a lot of that with us. So,
13 we focus in on what tips they may have given us, and
14 in turn do that with the agents. So, that's—that's
15 the starting point for training, but my trainers
16 would appreciate me saying this: Training doesn't
17 end after four weeks. It continues. So, we have—we
18 have a Quality Assurance Program and a Customer
19 Experience program, which provides ongoing coaching
20 and developing of all ages. One of the things we can
21 do if a problem occurs either with a new program that
22 maybe we don't have—we're not communicating correctly
23 of if an agent is struggling on a particular type of
24 call or a particular type of condition, we have
25 staff. We have a professional staff that can coach

3 that agent through a variety of means. We have
4 ability to monitor those calls. We also have a
5 customer experience team that will actually document
6 what we call the Customer Journey Map so they can see
7 where the pain points may be in trying to (1) reach
8 311, but (2) also even understand the information
9 that we're providing. So, we really surround the
10 agent with as many tools and as much support as we
11 can both structured, but also some that aren't
12 structured in order to be able to answer those, to be
13 able to be well trained and be able to serve the
14 public.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: What about the
16 software automatically detecting a caller's language?

17 JOE MORRISROE: So, we've done a lot of
18 work with a vendor known as Nuance. They're the
19 industry leader in what's known as natural language
20 understanding. We think of it as interactive speech.
21 We have two natural language understanding
22 applications already in our system, one for English
23 speakers, one for Spanish speakers. We asked them
24 the question about language identification software.
25 The-the consensus is that there may be items where
you can submit text, and it can be deciphered as to

3 what language that is. So, when I say text, an image
4 of the text, you know, a card or a picture as-as
5 Chairman Cabrera had mentioned earlier, but that's
6 not available in real time as far as identifying the
7 language. As far as real time understanding of
8 deciphering what a customer is saying and figuring
9 out what language that is, both nuanced and the
10 aforementioned Language Line have told us that is not
11 something that they currently have or is offering and
12 didn't have a foreseeable future timeframe for it.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Got it. Okay,
14 so that's going to be exciting for us to kind of
15 think about and explore with you and learn and help
16 us understand that, too, and I want to follow up with
17 you on that. The-the bill itself 1328 would require
18 to keep records of calls that get disconnected due a
19 language barrier issue. Do you already keep any
20 records of that kind?

21 JOE MORRISROE: Once-if a record is
22 dropped or disconnected it exits our system and
23 there's no tracking, no processing or tracking of it
24 at that point. At level of performance measurements,
25 performance metrics we know what percent of calls
fall into that category, and we made--

3 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: [interposing]
4 Into the language issue?

5 JOE MORRISROE: We know it for English
6 speaking customers who use the English speaking
7 option, and for customers who use the previously
8 mentioned Language IVR. We know it for that as well.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Got it. So,
10 it's kind of—it sound a little blunt. It's like a
11 blunt. It's not giving you kind of texture data. It's
12 just saying okay. So someone who went on this route
13 dropped, and we don't know why, but—but that's the
14 data that you have right now?

15 JOE MORRISROE: That's the data that we
16 have now. Yes.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Okay, cool.
18 The bill I think is a little bit different, and—and
19 so that's what the bill would—would—would require.
20 How much does a 311 caller make—a caller-operator
21 make?

22 JOE MORRISROE: I don't know the answer
23 off the top of my head. There is an entry level.
24 It's a Civil Service position. It's known as the--

25 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: [interposing]
Yes. Can you get that? I'm just kind of curious.

3 JOE MORRISROE: Oh, sure. We could—we
4 can—I—I—I can get that.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Okay.

6 JOE MORRISROE: I wouldn't want to quote
7 it without knowing. I will say the—the 311 agent is
8 known as a—is a civil service title. It's call
9 Center Representative. So--

10 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: [interposing]
11 Okay,

12 JOE MORRISROE: --but I can get you the-
13 the salary part.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Thank you so
15 much, Chair for the generous time. [pause]

16 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Chair Cabrera, do you
17 have any questions? No. Okay. Councilman Yeger.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: Thank you, Mr.
19 Chairman and Mr. Chairman. I'm privileged to serve
20 on both committees with you. I apologize if you
21 asked this while I stepped out of the Chamber for a
22 few seconds. Does the caller ID function populate
23 any fields for record keeping when somebody calls
24 into 311?
25

3 JOE MORRISROE: When someone calls 311,
4 the caller ID is captured, but it is not—and—and it
5 is—but it is not something that is shared.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: Okay, so to—to
7 Councilman Menchaca's point and on his legislation of
8 trying to go back and try to figure out how calls get
9 dropped, are you able to save that image. I'm not
10 saying share it with me. I don't need it, but are
11 you able to keep that information somehow and then go
12 backwards and track what happened if that call gets
13 dropped?

14 JOE MORRISROE: For the most part, no. W
15 are--

16 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: [interposing] So
17 911 when you call they get your number, they get your
18 name that the number matches to, if it's available,
19 the address, et cetera. A map, you know, and
20 obviously they have more important things to do than
21 the calls that come to 311, but the technology is
22 there, isn't it?

23 JOE MORRISROE: I understand what you're
24 saying with respect to describing 911. I don't know
25 it personally. For us it's a matter of the amount of
data that we process if a call—currently if a call

3 drops, while there would be a caller ID associate
4 with that, we don't have reports that go through and
5 poll those individual calls.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: I wonder just you
7 have--what would be so difficult about--I'm not saying
8 turn it on tomorrow. I know it's not a switch, but
9 how complicated can it possibly be to--a call comes
10 in, a number pops up on the screen. If the call
11 drops, something populates a record and says "call
12 dropped" and move on. Everybody goes on about their
13 day.

14 JOE MORRISROE: Right. I will--I don't
15 know and I will go back and take a look.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: I'm not as smart
17 as Council Member Kallos, and he has a lot of
18 technological things he's probably shown you and, you
19 know, you should get him to go over and help you guys
20 because he's good on the tech stuff. But my point is
21 that some of these things that--and I think--I think
22 the Speaker made this point, and I think Council
23 Member Menchaca made this point. Some of the things
24 we're talking about seem to perhaps to novices as
25 kind of easy, and then we say well, you know, our
systems can't do that and--and we're sit here and

2 listen to okay they can't do that. We don't—we think
3 you're truthful, we know you're truthful. We don't
4 think you're misleading us, but why can they? I mean
5 if I were to call my credit card company and they—
6 they matched my number, they asked me to punch in the
7 last four digits of my Social Security number and by
8 the time I get to a representative without me ever
9 having to put in my account number, they already know
10 who I am, and I've verified myself to them. That's—
11 that's available technology. It doesn't only belong
12 to the bank.

13 JOE MORRISROE: No. I agree and that
14 large part of the reason that doesn't exist here is
15 because we don't capture customer information. We
16 don't build customer account information as the
17 example you just used.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: Right. Maybe we
19 should.

20 JOE MORRISROE: Well, in the future CRM
21 system that we talked about, the customer will have
22 the ability to build their own account if they so
23 choose to have that known to us when they call as
24 opposed to just going online, we could start to do
25 that.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: Why do we want it
4 to be up to the customer and not up to the city of
5 New York?

6 JOE MORRISROE: In large part just focus
7 on customer privacy and being able to have the
8 customer be able to--

9 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: [interposing] But
10 aren't we more concerned with it's a government
11 telephone. It belongs to the government. It belongs
12 to the people. Do we believe that--I mean 911 isn't
13 anonymous. They record the telephone number. Why do
14 we think that, you know, if somebody calls my office
15 and doesn't give their name and number, there's
16 nothing I could do for them. Why would we think that we
17 don't want that information to be maintained? What
18 privacy concern are we--I'm not saying take the number
19 and put it in the newspaper, but what privacy concern
20 do we have?

21 JOE MORRISROE: From my perspective, the
22 privacy concern is being able to allow customers to
23 feel comfortable if they call New York City 311 and
24 not have that information be taken from them or--or to
25 have to provide that information. The idea of being
able to remain anonymous has been something from the

3 start of 311 and if you could 311 and the city well,
4 that people feel comfortable that they don't-that
5 they're not being tracked, if you will.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: Well there's a
7 level leniency (sic) that comes with simply not, you
8 know, you—you can—you can tell the operator I want
9 this to be an anonymous call, but not keeping the
10 information that is actually being brought in. I'm
11 not say delve deep and say can you give me your
12 address? Can you give me your date of birth? But
13 I'm saying keeping the information that you're
14 already getting doesn't violate any sort of privacy
15 right in my view of being deliberately set up as an
16 anonymous system unless somebody chooses to opt to
17 not being anonymous I don't think is necessary. It's
18 the government, right?

19 JOE MORRISROE: Right.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: Okay, alright. I
21 must need (sic) it really bad. I'm just making my
22 point. I have a question about your opposition to
23 Introduction 188, and that property owners could
24 potentially gain the system. It skirts city codes and
25 law requirements by calling in false complaints and
then receiving immunity for three months. I think

3 the point to that sentence is that the property owner
4 would all in complaints on themselves, and then,
5 therefore, kind of have this three-month period that
6 nobody can come and look at them.

7 JOE MORRISROE: That—that is a scenario
8 that could happen, yes.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: Okay, I'm going to
10 ask you a question. Have you had any conversations
11 with anybody in the Council about this bill prior to
12 today?

13 JOE MORRISROE: No, I have not.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: Okay, the sponsor
15 of the bill? No—no—none of the Council here?

16 JOE MORRISROE: I didn't. No, I know
17 who—

18 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: [interposing] The
19 bill was introduced here in the Council on—I want to
20 get this date right because I like to speak—Joe, do
21 you have something to tell me?

22 JOE MORRISROE: Yeah, I'm sorry, I—can I
23 mend that--

24 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: [interposing]
25 Sure, please.

3 JOE MORRISROE: I have not had a
4 conversation with anyone. My understanding is the
5 representatives of the city have had conversations
6 with Council Member Matte on this particular subject.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: And--and the bill
8 remains the same. The bill was introduced on January
9 31st of 2018, about a year ago. So, you've had
10 conversations with--with Leader Matteo and the bill
11 hasn't changed. So, you're here with your objections
12 today--

13 JOE MORRISROE: Yeah.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: --and the
15 objection is in essence that the--well it's what we
16 discussed: Freely report a quality of life issue
17 without fear of retaliation or other harm. I mean I--I
18 don't think, you know, even anonymous complaints are--
19 would classify as--as a harassment case. So, there's
20 no retaliation issue if the complaint is anonymous
21 and even if you were to record the information of
22 who's calling, it's not necessarily available to--to
23 anybody else and, in fact, if you were FOIL'd for
24 that, it would be unwarranted--in my view, if I was
25 the recipient of FOIL request and I worked for you, I
would respond and say that that would be an

3 unwarranted invasion of person privacy and not
4 subject to the FOIL Law. So, I don't think that your
5 objection in Paragraph 2 is necessarily noteworthy
6 for the sponsor to amend the bill accordingly, and
7 with respect to the first paragraph where you
8 indicated the gaming of the system is a concern of
9 yours, I would just say I'd like to roll the dice
10 here, and see if that really happens. Our concern,
11 as you know, is we just came off a several month
12 debate here in the Council and we just passed the
13 bill last week with regard to the signs, right? Now
14 we all now what happened there. Some—some fine
15 people decided to make complaints we believe about
16 the signs, and then the Department of Buildings sent
17 out their troopers, and their troopers came pounding
18 through the neighborhood and wrote everybody up.
19 Now, was that smart of the Department of Buildings?
20 No, it was dumb. They should have used their
21 discretion to decide whether or not something was
22 necessary for a violation. But the first fail, of
23 course, was the 311 system not recognizing that wow
24 all of a sudden in Bay Ridge these signs are just
25 like all over. People just hung up signs all over
the place, and you guys don't know that because

3 you're not tracking it. I think the notion of some
4 kind of harassment prevention tool—I actually don't
5 think this bill goes far enough. I'd like it to be
6 crime. If somebody calls in a false complaint to
7 311, I'd like it to be a crime. They should be
8 found. They should be prosecuted because they're
9 abusing the tools that we as taxpayers have created.
10 I'm only in office for a year so I'd like to consider
11 all the taxes I paid prior to last year as having
12 built 311. When Mayor Bloomberg created this. It
13 was a very smart investment in the future of our
14 city, and we created this not so that it can be used
15 to harass people. So when Leader Matteo proposed this
16 bill back in January right at the beginning of this
17 session of the Council, it's not something that he,
18 you know had epiphany he dreamt of. This is a
19 problem that's been going on in neighborhoods all
20 across the city, people using you to harass. They're
21 using your office. They're using our tax dollars.
22 We should be in a position where we're tracking that,
23 where we're preventing it, and where we're doing it
24 in a proactive way to make sure that people's lives
25 aren't being made miserable by the government that
they paid for. So, I would encourage you to revisit

3 your objections to Intro 188. I think it's a valid
4 bill, and that's why I joined my colleagues in
5 supporting it and I have one other note here, but I
6 don't remember why I wrote it. So, excuse for a
7 second. No, I asked it. Okay, very good. I don't
8 prepare that much in advance with written stuff. So,
9 I just come here and do it on the fly, but I really
10 appreciate your time. I-I recognize, by the way, and
11 I want to say this publicly and with gratitude for
12 the Chairs for giving me time and indulging me. I-I
13 don't want my words to come off as a criticism of 311
14 to the system it is today. When Mayor Bloomberg
15 created this it was visionary, it was revolutionary.
16 Mayor de Blasio has expanded it, and again in a
17 visionary and revolutionary way. I know Los Angeles
18 he mentioned has it. I didn't know that, but it
19 didn't then. We were the first if I know-if I
20 remember, and we do it the best, and yes we get more
21 calls than Los Angeles, but we're better than them,
22 and so we can handle it, but 311 is-today, it is such
23 an important tool. I was on a community board for 18
24 years. So, I was there prior to 311 and through its
25 creation and to the point today where our community
boards know that it's almost just as easy to go to

3 311 with a complaint that the they receive from a
4 neighborhood resident than to go through internal
5 channels, because it's where we get the tracking
6 number, and we can kind of watch it through the
7 system and then we can, you know, cry about it when
8 some city agency, not you, doesn't do its job, which
9 is what always happens. So, again, I-I do want to
10 thank you very much for the efforts, but I would
11 encourage you to-to-to take our desires to improve
12 311 to heart and to use us to help you, and not to be
13 reflectively in opposition to wise ideas that come
14 from this body like so many other sister agencies do.
15 Not everything that comes out of this Council is
16 dumb. Some things make sense and I would encourage
17 you to join with us, and try to make it a little
18 better for the people. And with that, I'm grateful
19 again to the chairs. Thank you very much.

20 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you, yeah. Chair
21 Cabrera.

22 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much
23 to the Chair and thank you so much Council Member
24 Yeger. You always ask informing questions in this
25 committee. I just had two more questions and one is
regarding your app. We can't seem to find the option

3 for any other language. I that because there is not
4 or, you're not looking?

5 JOE MORRISROE: That it--it is only
6 available in English at this point.

7 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Do you have plans
8 to provide it in other languages?

9 JOE MORRISROE: I think one of the things
10 if I can reference what the Commissioner mentioned
11 earlier. It's kind of a sequence again, right. We
12 need the new CRM system. We need to then upgrade the
13 Mobile App itself, and then we need to look at what
14 options exist to be able to do enhancements including
15 potential for language.

16 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Are you going to
17 have to hire more developers?

18 JOE MORRISROE: I don't know.

19 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: [laughs] Is that
20 what we need or what we know to--

21 JOE MORRISROE: [interposing] Probably
22 not.

23 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: --work in this
24 area? I mean this is not--this is just translating
25 and it--and--and we have one option a drop option
right. Is that--?

3 COMMISSIONER SAINI: So-so without
4 getting into the-the-the-the technical aspect of how
5 to enable multi-language on at-on native app, I can
6 tell you the-the capability to do so will be a
7 priority and-and as we talked about earlier--

8 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: [interposing] Okay.

9 COMMISSIONER SAINI: When we deployed
10 that-that app into-that new 311 app into production.
11 Recognizing multi-languages is our priority for-for
12 this-for the same.

13 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: I appreciate that,
14 and my last question. As a matter of fact, let me
15 read this statement first in the most recent MMR. 311
16 responded-reported that the average wait time during
17 Fiscal 2018 was 28 seconds, an increase of 10 seconds
18 from Fiscal 2017, although this number is below the
19 30-second wait time mark, it is the highest increase
20 in wait time since Fiscal 2014. Can you give us an
21 explanation for the increase, the new variables that
22 came into being?

23 JOE MORRISROE: Yeah, sure. I'm happy to.
24 Appreciate you noting it is within the standard, the
25 objective of-of being under 30 seconds. The
companion measurements to that is the service level.

2 It's also listed in the MMR, which is 80% of calls
3 being answered within 30 seconds. So, it's a key
4 metric for us on how we managed the call center to
5 manage customer access. The noted increase is in
6 part due to the time period last January. If you may
7 recall it was quite different than this January in
8 terms of temperature. The first part of the season
9 was incredibly cold and a significant increase in
10 heat and hot water complaints over the course of that
11 time that has then caused more people to call during
12 that particular period. The other thing is that
13 during the course of last year, we started to take on
14 appointment requests for both item collection.
15 Previously, you could put your bulk item out. Now
16 you go through a process that you make a request for
17 that. You make a-an appointment. So that added
18 some, you know demand onto our-onto our capacity.

19 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: So, did-were you
20 able-did you have to hire more people to compensate I
21 mean in light of the fact-I mean we're getting ready
22 to go through our vortex. What do they call those?
23 Are called vortex, cold weather vortex for next
24 month. So, it seems to me that we're going to be
25 having this-I mean what do you do during this time?

3 So, I mean do you have temporary help or how does
4 that work?

5 JOE MORRISROE: Yeah, our—our main
6 approach in that we do know it happens. To some
7 extent it's extreme, as I mentioned last year, but we
8 have a seasonal staffing model. So, we're able to
9 use the existing resources we have, and sometimes we
10 pivot them. In the winter months we tend to have more
11 staff on earlier in the day. In the summer months we
12 have thunderstorms in the afternoon and resulting
13 issues we have more staff in the afternoon. So,
14 we're able to modulate in order to meet those
15 objectives that are in the MMR.

16 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: What's the waiting
17 time after 12:00 p.m.?

18 JOE MORRISROE: After 12:00 p.m.?

19 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Yes.

20 JOE MORRISROE: The waiting time is on
21 average always under 30 seconds.

22 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: But I mean like
23 what's the average? Do you have that number? If you
24 don't—if you could sent it to us.

25 JOE MORRISROE: [interposing] I—yeah,
we—we—we do—we could look at data by what we call

3 arrival pattern, but-but in general whether you call
4 in the morning, the evening or overnight, that-the
5 objective is the same. It's under 30 seconds.

6 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Who came up with
7 the 30-second mark? I mean what makes 30 seconds
8 like it's set to go wrong versus 29 seconds, 20
9 seconds 40 seconds?

10 JOE MORRISROE: People probably cringe
11 when I start to answer this because I could spend
12 hours telling you about the history of the Call
13 Center industry that I was proudly a part of.

14 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Okay.

15 JOE MORRISROE: But it's an industry
16 wide measurement that looks at both either service or
17 sales. Service-Sales is a little bit more
18 aggressive, and service is considered-but it's really
19 said what's the right tolerance level for a customer
20 to be comfortable and not even realize that they're
21 waiting.

22 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Well, you guys have
23 got it pretty easy compared to Council Members.
24 There's-I won't mention the newspaper, but it's a
25 newspaper that part of the way they-they judge us is
if we don't pick up the call within two rings, then

3 we get a demerit [laughs] and like that criteria
4 system. So, you know, 30 seconds. So this is
5 nationwide. It doesn't matter. This is business
6 related, business world, private--

7 JOE MORRISROE: [interposing] Yeah, the--
8 the--

9 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: [interposing] -
10 companies? So, that's the standard.

11 JOE MORRISROE: The standard for the
12 private sector is generally what we call 80/30, 80%
13 of calls answered in 30 seconds with the average wait
14 time of 30 seconds or less. For government, my
15 colleagues and other 311s there's no one with a more
16 aggressive wait time or with more aggressive
17 measurements than we do, and most actually have a lot
18 longer time. They--they manage to a longer wait time.

19 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Do you know what it
20 is in L.A.?

21 JOE MORRISROE: L.A. is 90--I'm sorry, 80
22 seconds and 80% of the calls in 60 seconds.

23 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: And that's why I
24 moved from L.A. to Yellow Cabs, come on. [laughter]
25 I used to live out there. So, I'm going to turn it
back to the chair, but I want to thank you all. The

3 information you provided is very useful. I'm looking
4 forward to seeing the unveiling of your new system
5 coming, and even more the creating of the system was
6 dear to my heart. Here is the video component, and
7 if your head of 911, I would love to see this in 911,
8 and also our call centers, and that's more directed
9 towards. You had—you worked with the PSAC.

10 JOE MORRISROE: I do.

11 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: And so that way we
12 could literally save lives. Sometimes people could
13 dial. Instead of call 911, they're calling 311. I'm
14 sure you had these and emergencies, but it even, you
15 know, the PSAC II that that could implement, and I
16 really appreciate that, you know, this is going to be
17 part of your discussion, and—and see what's priority
18 and also when it comes to the app for language
19 access, and so with that, I'll turn it back over to
20 my Co-Chair.

21 CHAIRPERSON KOO: [coughs] Thank you,
22 yeah. So, I have one more question before we go to
23 the public participation. So when you—when you said
24 when customers call you answer in less than 30
25 seconds and you—is the operator pick up in less 30
seconds. Does she?

3 JOE MORRISROE: Yes, that—that is the
4 measure from the time the customer calls and—and
5 there are a series of announcements that some—that
6 every customer hears. Some customers are satisfied
7 with that and they hang up. So, from the end of the
8 announcement to the time the agent picks up the
9 phone, 30 seconds.

10 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Because I thought
11 their—their advertisements it was more than 30
12 seconds, and there's alternate parking and whatever
13 the city is doing they do a lot of announcements?

14 JOE MORRISROE: Yes.

15 CHAIRPERSON KOO: A couple of minutes
16 they're there.

17 JOE MORRISROE: Yes, going through the
18 alternate side parking piece is 37 seconds.

19 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Yeah.

20 JOE MORRISROE: A couple of years ago we
21 had many prompts. We've eliminated that now with the
22 natural language application, but yes, you would hear
23 that first. There's necessary announcements. You
24 identify as 311, hang up and call 911 if it's an
25 emergency. Obviously that's a critical item. So,
those announcements that you do here. The

2 measurements that we use that I mentioned is from the
3 time those announcement end to the time the agent
4 picks up.

5 CHAIRPERSON KOO: But the problem is like
6 when people don't speak English, right? So, if they
7 speak Chinese or Korean, it probably would take more
8 than 30 seconds.

9 JOE MORRISROE: It could but the same
10 metric is the same and even with Language Line when
11 we bring Language Line on, we have a contract with
12 them that holds them accountable for being able to
13 respond in a-in a-in-in 30 seconds in a performance
14 metric time.

15 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Because we have-in a
16 complaint from one of the constituents when the
17 called in Chinese, and they get transferred all the
18 time, and finally they gave up, you know.

19 JOE MORRISROE: Oh, God. I would know
20 anything about that.

21 CHAIRPERSON KOO: And they get
22 transferred and then they put them on hold and
23 transferred again and they put them on hold again.

24 JOE MORRISROE: Right, I-I-if you had
25 that circumstance we'd-we'd be more than happy to

2 take a look at examples. Through that type of
3 feedback we were able to look at is there an issue
4 with, you any--any aspect of the process of the
5 technology.

6 CHAIRPERSON KOO: So, you mentioned
7 before that, and you have been a customer in the
8 Discretion Survey, and you very, very high. Have you
9 done surveys other than English, in Chinese, in
10 Korean?

11 JOE MORRISROE: We have not yet--

12 CHAIRPERSON KOO: [interposing] Yeah.

13 JOE MORRISROE: --this year.

14 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Yeah, because I-I think
15 in English you probably do very good, but in other
16 languages it's probably not that good. So, I think
17 you should do a survey with how--when you do in like
18 the most--top five languages and like is used in the
19 city.

20 JOE MORRISROE: [interposing] Right.

21 CHAIRPERSON KOO: You can see how they
22 feel. Is there one page you have to do it to allow
23 improvement.

24 JOE MORRISROE: I appreciate that
25 feedback and it is something we look at is how can we

2 expand our survey capability to languages other than
3 English.

4 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Okay.

5 JOE MORRISROE: So thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON KOO: So, Commissioner and
7 Director and Director, right? Thank you for your
8 patience and time, and now we go a public
9 participation. Thank you

10 COMMISSIONER SAINI: Thank you.

11 JOE MORRISROE: Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON KOO: We have a second panel
13 coming, yeah. [background comments/pause] Okay. So,
14 the second panel will be Mr. Mamoot. (sp?) Sorry if I
15 mispronounced your name, and Mr. Sawi and Ms. Kim.
16 [background comments/pause] [gavel] Okay, so Mr.
17 Mamoot is from the South Asian Community Center; and
18 Louie is from APA.

19 MR. LOUIE SAWI: CACF

20 CHAIRPERSON KOO: CACF, and Ms. King is
21 from APA--KCS, right?

22 MS. KIM: KCS.

23 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you. So just
24 identify yourself and since that maybe Mr. Mamoot you
25 want to start.

2 RAJAN MAMOOT: Sure. My Name is Rajan
3 Mamoot and I'm the Director Health Services at SACSS
4 Salvation Council for Social Services. SACSS focuses
5 on three key areas: Healthcare access and benefits
6 enrollment, senior services and food security SACSS
7 also provides youth leadership programs, civic
8 engagement, free ESO and computer classes. We thank
9 the City Council for giving us this opportunity to
10 testify at this extremely important hearing. 311 is
11 the key help line, which has been linking residents
12 of New York City to vital services and provides
13 important information. Though we have seen
14 tremendous improvement on how 311 is being operated,
15 still there are issues which are clients have
16 identified while calling 311. These are not finding
17 an individuals who speaks the language, longer wait
18 time, unprofessional individuals, and rude behavior
19 especially with seniors. Most annoying for our
20 clients is hanging up the call as the caller fails to
21 speak English. Here I would like to share a few
22 experiences. One of our clients who only spoke Hindi
23 called 311 to complain about her building's elevator
24 which was out of order for many days and the landlord
25 did not repair it. The client got confused as she

2 heard the parking rules. She hung up thinking that
3 she had called NYPD. After a while she called again
4 and waited for the parking rules announcement to end.
5 She got connected to a 311 representative—a
6 representative and started talking in Hindi. The
7 person at the other end did not understand her
8 language, and hung up. The client came to our
9 office. She was assisted by one of our case managers
10 to directly file a complaint with the New York City
11 Department of Buildings. Another client who spoke
12 Telugu, which is another South Asian language, and
13 understood very little English, found it hard to
14 communicate with the 311 operator. The way he was
15 translating the whole situation of the client being
16 unable to pay his rent was totally different from
17 what the client was trying to say. He only wanted
18 someone to help him if he can get housing assistance
19 from an organization who spoke his language. It is
20 crucial the 311 be able to help those vulnerable
21 clients who do not speak English and so come across
22 forbidding challenges in access services. Thank you.

23 LOUIE SAWI: Sure. Do Good afternoon.

24 My name is Louie Sawi and I am a Policy Coordinator
25 of CACF, the Coalition for Asian-American Children

2 and Families. I would like to thank the Governmental
3 Operations and Technology Committee in holding this
4 important introduction of amending an Administrative
5 Code of the City of New York, which would develop a
6 protocol for identifying languages spoken by callers
7 to 311. CACF builds a community too powerful to
8 ignore. It is the nation's only Pan-Asian children
9 and families advocacy organization and leads the
10 fight for improved and equitable policy, assistance,
11 funding and services to support those in need. We
12 work with almost 50 Asian-Pacific-American--also
13 known as APA--member organizations across the city to
14 identify and speak out on many common challenges our
15 community faces including language access. There are
16 over 100 Asian languages and dialects spoken in the
17 United States and at least 40 Asian languages and
18 dialects spoken in New York City. The diversity of
19 languages and dialects spoken by APA families makes
20 access to government services and information
21 challenging and without language accessibility these
22 communities will continue to be isolated. Our APA
23 community is growing and we're growing quickly.
24 According to the U.S. Census in 2014, 35% of APAs in
25 NYC were linguistically isolated, which means that no

1 one in the household above the age of 14 speaks
2 English well. Most recently, the percentage of APAs
3 who are limited English proficient in New York City
4 rose to almost 45%. That is nearly half of the APA
5 community. This means that in our families children
6 often have no choice but to serve as interpreters
7 causing additional stress and anxiety for them and
8 their family. Last week, I myself attempted to call
9 311 speaking Kensadalug (sp?) the native tongue of my
10 parents. The automated service didn't recognize the
11 language and failed to respond to me accurately.
12 Immigrants must have access to quality translation
13 and interpretation services in order to be able to
14 ask questions or raise concerns about their housing
15 situation, locate the nearest health clinic if they
16 become ill, report when their garbage is not
17 collected by the Department of Sanitation or
18 understand the services and resources they are
19 eligible for in this city CACF fully supports bill-
20 Intro 1328, which puts in place an automated system o
21 more accurately identify languages requested of 311
22 and also creates a system of reporting incidences of
23 call disconnects due to the failure of 311 providing
24 appropriate language support. Such a software must
25

2 be able to distinguish multiple languages more than
3 what is currently identified including Asian
4 languages. Data collected would be very useful in
5 determining language needs of callers including Asian
6 languages many of which are currently unknown. Data
7 collected would also help inform the system ad to
8 beneficial changes that can be made to fully serve
9 all limited English proficient New Yorkers. New York
10 City has been a leader on language access, and we
11 hope the 311 Customer Service Center will continue to
12 honor this commitment by ensuring accessibility of
13 quality information and resources to limited English
14 proficient speakers. We welcome the opportunity to
15 speak with further about these issues. Thank you for
16 considering our concerns, and considerations.

17 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you. Ms. King.

18 JUJAN KIM: Uh-hm. Good afternoon. My
19 name is Jujan (sp?) Kim and I'm a Project Coordinator
20 at the Korean Community Services. I'd like to first
21 thank Chair Cabrera and Chair Koo as well as the
22 members of the Committee Technology and member of
23 Governmental Operations for holding this public
24 hearing today. So for over 40 years, KCS or the
25 Korean Community Services of Metropolitan New York

3 has been operating under the mission of empowering
4 immigrants so that they become independent and
5 thriving members of the community. KCS primarily
6 services the Korean-American community through its
7 diverse programming in the areas of aging, education,
8 immigration, workforce development, public health and
9 mental health. For Koreans, language access is one
10 of the countless barriers that they face. As of last
11 year, almost 70% of Koreans in New York were foreign
12 born, and more than half of Korean new worker, New
13 Yorkers were limited English proficient. So, this
14 language and cultural barriers that they face are
15 compounded by the fact that they are often unfamiliar
16 with the city agencies or the city Social Service
17 systems and processes. This demonstrates the vital
18 nature of language services provided by Yellow Cabs
19 particularly through 311 Language Line. The
20 provision of language access services by New York
21 City is commendable, and it illustrates how committed
22 the city is to serving its diverse population. In
23 order to help improve the customer service experience
24 an the quality of services provided through the
25 Language Line I would like to share a few anecdotes
with you. As the Project Coordinator that works

3 directly with the Korean community, I have come
4 across and heard of many unfortunate customer
5 experiences with the 311 Language Line. Many of my
6 clients explained that they have a very difficult time
7 navigating the all. Also, they tend to avoid it
8 altogether because it's so frustrating. So, one of
9 the reasons is when they call, it takes some time to
10 get to the Korean language option, and once they have
11 the patience and they know to wait and press the
12 option, which is number 7, the alternate side parking
13 rule are announced in Korean, but it is very muffled
14 and it has a very thick dialect. I have called as
15 well as well as my other coworkers who say that it's
16 not standardized Korean. They recognize the thick
17 accent and sometimes they don't even understand what-
18 what she's saying. So, the quality of the voice
19 recorded messaging is very poor to the point where
20 people feel very awkward. They feel like it's very
21 awkward. Moreover, when the wait time until they are
22 connected, our call is connected to an interpreter
23 can be very, very expensive, which leads to a caller
24 just dropping the call thinking they were ignored or
25 they just—they don't have the time. It's very, very
hard for especially seniors to wait on the line when

1 they're not—they don't know that they are being
2 connected, and they're confused once again when it's
3 an English speaking, you know, counselor on the phone
4 asking what they—what language you're speaking
5 because they expect it to be in Korean. Anyway, so,
6 callers with limited English proficiency this is a
7 very trying and confusing experience, and they tend
8 to avoid these services that they critically need.
9 So, it's not only the provision of language services,
10 but the quality of language services that is
11 important for our community especially for New
12 Yorkers with language, limited language—English
13 proficiency to access services and stay informed. So
14 it is imperative that New York City expands its
15 language services and develops a better software to
16 accommodate. So, in the spring we'd like to suggest
17 the following: Consult community based organizations
18 like KCS and others here to ensure the quality of
19 voice automated messaging, voice recording of any
20 non-English languages before they are put into use.
21 Also, we support the bill that introduces the
22 implementation and introduction of a language
23 identification software. Lastly, expand language
24 access to more languages and New York City has always
25

2 been a leading example in providing language access
3 services to its immigrant populations and we hope
4 that New York City continues to honor this commitment
5 through considering these adjustments that we
6 outlined. We welcome the opportunity to discuss this
7 further with you and thank you for this opportunity.

8 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Chairman Cabrera.

9 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Yeah, absolutely.

10 Thank you. I want to take a moment to thank you all
11 and all the advocates because part of the reason
12 we're having this hearing today was as a result of
13 previous hearings that we had had, and it was the
14 advocates who brought the attention of the problems
15 we were facing—our people are facing when it comes to
16 language access, and as a result of that it led to
17 other things that our—our awesome staff was able to—
18 the Council staff were able to discover. So, I salute
19 you all. I want to thank you for your advocacy and
20 your leadership. I did want to ask you, you—I know
21 you've been waiting very patiently here, but you
22 heard from the Director of 311 the Commission from
23 DOITT. Is there anything in particular any red flags
24 that came mind when you heard the testimony, anything
25 that you said, hey, we could do better in this area?

3 Any suggestions, anything that fell through the
4 cracks that we did not address today?

5 JUJAN KIM: I think I agree with what
6 Chair Koo brought up about them using the Google
7 Translate. I—I understand that it will exponentially
8 get better with deep learning, but as of now it is so
9 inaccurate sometimes. So, I don't know if that's the
10 best way to rely on Google Translate when I don't
11 even do it to translate what I'm translating because
12 it's always, there's context that's missing, and the
13 gross inaccuracies like that can lead to a lot of,
14 you know, somebody losing their services.

15 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Indeed. Anybody
16 else?

17 RAJAN MAMOOT: Yeah, so what we think is
18 crucial for 311 is to have staff who are bilingual
19 who speak multiple languages because the language
20 line that they use the integrator all the people
21 there, they're not trained by the city. They—maybe
22 they're—they're in some other state or some other
23 country. So, it's better to have staff members on—
24 on—on their—on their staff who speak different
25 languages. There are a lot of people in New York
City who are born and raised in New York. They

3 speak multiple languages. I myself speak three
4 languages other than English. So, if 311 directly
5 trains them they know how to handle the calls. They
6 will be able to speak in different languages to the
7 times. That would be easier for everyone to
8 understand, and especially our clients because
9 sometimes the dialects that the individuals use is
10 very different to the dialects that the client is—is
11 talking in. So, I think it would be very like
12 important and would benefit—benefit our clients
13 that—if 311 has staff on land that are bilingual.

13 LOUIE SAWI: And just to add onto what
14 Rajan was saying, it's also important for the
15 interpreters that speak these languages to be
16 culturally competent because you're talking to
17 immigrants some of them who just—literally just
18 migrated to the United States, and haven't figured
19 out the cultural norms of interacting within the
20 American context. So, it's important that it have
21 interpreters that can accommodate those that
22 literally just came into the United States and work
23 with them within their culture.

24 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: I know this is
25 anecdotal but [coughs] have you found that a lot of

3 the interpreters they just learned the language, but
4 they don't know the culture? Is this an anomaly?
5 What are we talking about? Is this a pattern or--

6 LOUIE SAWI: This is just an anomaly.

7 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Okay.

8 LOUIE SAWI: So,

9 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Okay, alright.

10 Thank you so much to my Co-Chair. I'll give it back
11 to my Co-Chair.

12 CHAIRPERSON KOO: [coughs] Thank you for
13 your time and patience, you know. This--this will be
14 the last panel unless there is any more public
15 participation? No, Thank you very much.

16 LOUIE SAWI: Thank you very much.

17 CHAIRPERSON KOO: So, we can conclude the
18 public testimony. Yeah, the meeting is adjourned.
19 Yeah. [gavel] [background comments] [gavel]

20

21

22

23

24

25

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 24, 2019