

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

----- X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY

----- X

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2024

Start: 1:24 p.m.

Recess: 2:32 p.m.

HELD AT: COMMITTEE ROOM - CITY HALL

B E F O R E: HON. JENNIFER GUTIÉRREZ, CHAIR

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

ERIK D. BOTTCHER

ROBERT F. HOLDEN

VICKIE PALADINO

JULIE WON

## THE COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY

**A P P E A R A N C E S**

## ADMINISTRATION TESTIMONY:

Robert Barbera,  
Deputy Commissioner of Public Safety and  
Emergency Management from The New York City  
Office of Technology and Innovation (OTI)

## PUBLIC TESTIMONY:

Michele Blondmonville,  
Lead for Humanity

Nicolyn Plummer,  
Community Advocate behalf of the deaf and hard of  
hearing community

Marsellette Davis (via translator),  
President of New York City Black Deaf Advocates

THE COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY

**BLANK PAGE**

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

THE COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY

4

SERGEANT MORENO: This is a microphone check on the Committee on Technology, located in the Committee Room, (BACKGROUND NOISE) recorded by James Marino on November 25, 2024.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good afternoon, and welcome to the New York City Council Hearing for the Committee on Technology.

At this time, can everyone please silence your cellphones. If you wish to testify, please go up to the Sergeant at Arms' desk to fill out a testimony slip. At this time, and going forward, no one is to approach the dais, I repeat, no one is to approach the dais.

Chair, we are ready to begin.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: (GAVEL SOUND) (GAVELING IN) Thank you, and good afternoon, I'm Council Member Jennifer Gutierrez, Chair of the Committee on Technology.

Today, we will be discussing several bills, all of them addressing improvement to the accessibility to city services:

Introduction 138, sponsored by Council Member Brooks-Powers, in relation to sign language public

1  
2 service announcements for persons who are deaf or  
3 hard of hearing on LinkNYC kiosks.

4 Introduction 646, sponsored by Council Member  
5 Riley, in relation to accessibility for the deaf,  
6 hard of hearing, or deaf-blind community in the  
7 implementation of text-to-911.

8 Introduction 197, sponsored by myself, in  
9 relation to requiring text to 911 and next generation  
10 911 to be available in the designated citywide  
11 languages.

12 In our diversity, accessibility must extend  
13 beyond physical spaces. It is about ensuring that  
14 everyone, regardless of their abilities or the  
15 language they speak, can fully access the resources,  
16 information, and services that the City offers. This  
17 includes people who are deaf or hard of hearing,  
18 individuals with visual and other disabilities, and  
19 the growing number of people who speak languages  
20 other than English.

21 By improving accessibility, we are not only  
22 addressing barriers, but also building an inclusive  
23 and equitable community where everyone belongs.

24 Today, I want to hear from the Administration and  
25 disability advocates about the changes we can make to

1  
2 improve accessibility into critical services, like  
3 911, and make a real difference in their daily lives.

4 I'd like to thank the Technology Committee staff,  
5 policy analyst Erik Brown; legislative counsel, Irene  
6 Byhovsky; and my senior adviser, Anya Lehr for their  
7 work in putting this hearing together.

8 I'd also like to recognize the Technology  
9 Committee members who are here with us today, Council  
10 Member Erik Bottcher, and via Zoom, Council Member  
11 Bob Holden.

12 And, lastly, I would just like to remind folks  
13 that we have ASL translation available today. So  
14 reminder - and a reminder to myself, certainly, to  
15 speak clearly and slowly so we can capture  
16 everything.

17 Today, we will hear testimony from Office of  
18 Technology and Innovation, thank you for being here,  
19 followed by testimonies from the public.

20 Now, I want to welcome Robert Barbera, Deputy  
21 Commissioner of Public Safety and Emergency  
22 Management.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair. Mr. Barbera,  
24 I would like to ask you to raise your right hand. Do  
25 you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and

1 nothing but the truth, before this committee, and to  
2 respond honestly to council member questions?

3  
4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: I do.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, you may begin your  
6 testimony.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: Good afternoon,  
8 Chair Gutiérrez, and members of the City Council  
9 Committee on Technology. My name is Robert Barbera,  
10 and I am the deputy commissioner of Public Safety and  
11 Emergency Management for the Office of Technology and  
12 Innovation, OTI.

13 Thank you for the opportunity to discuss our  
14 progress on Next Generation 911, also known as NG911,  
15 and future opportunities to expand language access  
16 for our city's 911 system.

17 OTI, in collaboration with the New York Police  
18 Department, NYPD, and the Fire Department of the City  
19 of New York, FDNY, oversees the technology  
20 underpinning New York City's vast 911 system.

21 Our city's 911 system is the largest and most  
22 complex emergency communication system in the nation,  
23 receiving over nine million calls and handling nearly  
24 45,000 text sessions a year.

1  
2 For several years, all three agencies have been  
3 collaborating to migrate the legacy 911 system to a  
4 modern, IP-based, all digital network called Next  
5 Generation 911.

6 This project has been essential to ensure a  
7 resilient and modern technical foundation of one of  
8 our city's most critical services, while continuing  
9 to provide essential, uninterrupted emergency  
10 response services.

11 The establishment of critically needed, modern  
12 infrastructure can also pave the way for other  
13 enhancements and benefits, including the acceptance  
14 of multimedia data, for example, text, photos,  
15 videos, etcetera, improved interoperability between  
16 all public safety agencies that share a 911 system,  
17 improved call routing between neighboring  
18 jurisdictions, and greater accuracy when identifying  
19 a caller's location.

20 While we knew the full implementation of NG911  
21 would take years, we also recognized the urgency  
22 behind establishing Text-to-911 within the legacy 911  
23 system in the intervening period. To that end, we  
24 launched Interim Text-to-911 in June of 2020. Since  
25 then, NYPD has fielded over 175,000 text sessions.



1  
2 Although NG911 has not yet been completed, the public  
3 has been able to text 911 for over four years, which  
4 has proven to be a worthwhile investment.

5 Since the last update, we provided to the Council  
6 and the public, via our annual progress report on the  
7 implementation of NG911, pursuant to Local Law 78 of  
8 2016, in December 2023, we had projected that the  
9 full launch of NG911 would happen by the end of 2025.

10 We are still on track to achieve this goal  
11 cutting over systems in phases. In October, we  
12 completed the cutover of the location database, which  
13 call takers use to identify the location of a caller.  
14 Just last week, we also began cutting over  
15 originating service providers from selective routing,  
16 which will happen incrementally through May of 2025.

17 Other core system components on track to be  
18 completed by July 2025 include network core  
19 infrastructure services, technology used for logging  
20 and recording calls, texts, and other media in order  
21 to enable NYPD and FDNY to research incidents,  
22 analyze data, and prepare reports, and the integrated  
23 solution for GIS data management, including the  
24 aggregation of address points and emergency service  
25

1 boundaries. Finally, call handling is on track to be  
2 fully cut over by the end of December 2025.

3 I will now turn to the legislation on today's  
4 docket.

5 Introduction 138 would require a certain  
6 percentage of the City's public service announcements  
7 on LinkNYC Kiosks to be in American Sign Language,  
8 ASL. Since my role at OTI focuses on the provision of  
9 the City's emergency communications, I would have to  
10 defer to other colleagues on the merit of this  
11 particular proposal to assess whether it's  
12 technically practicable for the LinkNYC program.

13 However, I'd be happy to collaborate with NYPD and  
14 the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities, MOPD  
15 on a Text-to-911 public awareness campaign on LINKNYC  
16 kiosks as a way to test and evaluate how public  
17 service announcements in ASL may be implemented in  
18 the future.

19 Next, Introduction 197 proposes to require OTI to  
20 report on the future availability of Text-to-911 in  
21 the designated city languages.

22 Today, on-site language translation support for  
23 911 callers and texters is in Spanish, with other  
24 language translation services supported through  
25

1 LanguageLine. There is no anticipated change to  
2 language availability when the first phase of NG911  
3 is completed next year. However, one of the major  
4 advantages of Next Generation 911 is that the  
5 foundation of a modern system allows us to evaluate  
6 newer technologies to continue to enhance callers'  
7 and texters' experiences.

9 While our focus and priority at this stage in  
10 implementation is to make a seamless cutover to the  
11 new IP based system, acquiring technology that would  
12 be able to translate Text-to-911 in real time is in  
13 our roadmap for future enhancements. Reporting our  
14 progress on this endeavor could be folded into our  
15 existing reporting schedule to keep the Council and  
16 the public informed.

17 Finally, Introduction 646 would require OTI to  
18 expand our annual NG911 reporting to include outreach  
19 efforts to the deaf and hard of hearing experts in  
20 addition to public education plans related to Text-  
21 to-911.

22 As mentioned earlier, Text-to-911 was fully  
23 implemented in June of 2020, and we are in the  
24 process of cutting over to Next Generation 911. Since  
25 we already have begun the cutover, we are now

1  
2 planning for Phase Two. As we look towards Phase Two  
3 of NG911, we will be gathering information on  
4 potential future enhancements, which will include  
5 outreach to the deaf and hard of hearing communities.

6 Our annual report has already included  
7 information about our consultation with this  
8 constituency to gather requirements for the interim  
9 Text-to-911 solution. Therefore, we would agree to  
10 including information about such outreach in future  
11 reporting about the program.

12 Thank you, once again, for your attention to this  
13 critical program, I will now take any questions you  
14 may have.

15 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you so much.

16 (PAUSE)

17 Oh, I'd like to recognize committee member, uh,  
18 Council Member Vickie Paladino, who's joined us.

19 And, thank you, Deputy Commissioner, for your  
20 testimony.

21 I wanted to start by asking just a couple of  
22 clarifying questions from your testimony about NG911.

23 So, just so that I'm clear, the anticipation, the  
24 anticipated full launch is by the end of 2025, or  
25 that's the end of Phase One, is 2025?

1  
2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: Phase One is the end  
3 of 2025.

4 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, but in the original  
5 Local Law projected everything... the full launch by  
6 the end of 2025?

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: So, in the report,  
8 it calls out NG911 as program...

9 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Mm-hmm?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: It's not separated  
11 by phases. The initial phase, it's called Phase One,  
12 is the migration from an E-911 system to a Next  
13 Generation 911 system, and that will completed by  
14 December 2025.

15 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, and are... How  
16 many... How many phases are you all anticipating for  
17 a full program?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: We added Phase Two  
19 as a path for a roadmap to implement enhanced  
20 services on top of the 911 system once migrated. We  
21 don't have any plans at this time to go beyond that  
22 second phase.

23 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: But as technology  
25 matures, we would reevaluate that.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: So, it's a phase to update  
3 kind of in real time?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: One the critical  
5 backend infrastructure is in place, and we are fully  
6 operating within the Next Generation 911 system, then  
7 we could evaluate other enhancements to put on top of  
8 that.

9 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. Alright, I have some  
10 questions about the legislation, but let me start  
11 with, uh, specific... Oh, no, let's start with  
12 Intro... Introduction 138, which is the bill about  
13 the City's public service announcements on LinkNYC  
14 kiosks in ASL, I know that we may have some response  
15 from LinkNYC, but maybe these are some questions that  
16 you can answer.

17 According to the most recent amendment to the  
18 franchise agreement between, OTI and CityBridge, 25  
19 percent of kiosk advertisements are allocated to the  
20 City for promoting civic engagement.

21 Does the City... does the advertising program  
22 utilize the full amount of allocated screen time?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: I would have to take  
24 that question back to the Franchise Division and get  
25 back to the Committee.

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

THE COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY

15

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, do you know who decides what content is displayed on the kiosks by the advertising program?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: Again, I would have to take that back to the Franchise Division.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay.

And, then, if you can take another question back to them is, uhm, how do they determine the location and timing of that placement?

Okay, let me just go ahead with these questions also about LinkNYC. And, then, we will wait for their response back if you can't answer them.

Do LinkNYC kiosks have video call capability?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: There are video relay services at the LinkNYC kiosks.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Do you know the software that's used for video or video relay?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: I would have to take that back to Franchise and get back to you.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: I do think those questions were shared in advance, though. But you don't have the answers with you about the software that's used, correct?

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

THE COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY

16

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: I wouldn't want to provide incorrect information. I would need to check with Franchise.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. And the same for what software do you use to display ads?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: (NO AUDIBLE RESPONSE)

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. What about the operating system used by LinkNYC?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: I'll check with Franchise, and we will circle back with the Committee.

(PAUSE)

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. The last question, if you can take it back, LinkNYC kiosks display advertisements as static images on the screen. Could they display moving images?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: (NO AUDIBLE RESPONSE)

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Could you... would you be able to speak to the compliance of CityBridge with OTI in respect to the National Historic Preservation Act and the National Environmental Policy Act?



1  
2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: I would not. I would  
3 have to engage Franchise and then get back to the  
4 Committee.

5 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. For... so for Intro  
6 138, you don't feel capable of answering the  
7 questions about the legislation since Franchise isn't  
8 here?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: Since LinkNYC is  
10 outside the scope of my normal responsibilities, I  
11 wouldn't feel comfortable answering.

12 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay.

13 Let's move then to Introduction 197, which  
14 proposes, uh, OTI report on the future availability  
15 of Text-to-911 in the citywide languages.

16 In your testimony, you included that the onsite  
17 language translation is, for text... callers and  
18 texters is in Spanish, with other translation  
19 services supported through LanguageLine.

20 Now, can you explain for us, so that we have it  
21 on the record, what that looks like for someone  
22 trying to text in Haitian Creole, for example, a  
23 language that is not covered through the text  
24 services, through NextGen, how LanguageLine plays a  
25

1  
2 role in them being able to text their emergency to  
3 911.

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: So, the LanguageLine  
5 services primarily are utilized within the voice  
6 component of the 911 call path. And they're engaged  
7 for any languages that are not supported onsite,  
8 which are only English and Spanish at this time.

9 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Into text, currently,  
10 though, it is only English and Spanish?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: Yes.

12 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay.

13 So, the bill is asking OTI to report on the  
14 viability of the future of including at least the 10  
15 designated languages in the City.

16 So, I'm unclear from your testimony whether that  
17 is part of this existing plan, if it's something  
18 that, you all feel you can support. I mean, in your  
19 testimony, you've detailed, the, you know, close to  
20 200,000 text sessions since you were fully launched  
21 in 2020. You said it seems to be a very worthwhile  
22 investment.

23 So curious where the Administration stands on  
24 expanding this worthwhile investment into the  
25

1 remaining designated languages for the city of New  
2 York?

3  
4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: So, with the  
5 transition from the E911 to NextGen 911, the current  
6 tech service availability will remain the same as  
7 part of Phase Two. We... (CROSS-TALK)

8 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Will remain English and  
9 Spanish only?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: Yes. As part of  
11 Phase Two, we will explore the use of advanced  
12 technologies to accept and translate additional  
13 languages.

14 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Would you be able to share  
15 how many audio calls you all receive in the remaining  
16 designated languages?

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: I'm sorry, you say  
18 remaining?

19 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Yes, so, there's 10, I  
20 think, designated by the city of New York, which is  
21 what this bill is trying to include for text, or just  
22 in other languages, then we can...

23 (PAUSE)

24 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: And, just, also, if you...  
25 if you can, curious what you think some of the

1 challenges are in trying to include that into to  
2 Phase One, or what you anticipate challenges are to  
3 do that into Phase Two?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: So, overall, within  
5 the top 10 languages received that were translated  
6 within 911 in this current year to date, uhm, it's  
7 about 234,000+ calls that were translated.

8 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Audio calls? Right?(CROSS-  
9 TALK)

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: Audio calls.

11 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, in... in 2024?

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: Currently this year,  
13 yes.

14 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. And would you be  
15 able to... do you have that other number of texts  
16 that were sent just for this year?

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: The number of... to  
18 date this year, we've had a little over 46,000 unique  
19 tech sessions.

20 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: And not you're not sure  
21 how many are in English or in Spanish?

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: No, I do not have  
23 that information.

24 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay.

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

Okay, and, again, just in Phase One, I know that in your testimony you shared kind of what will be included in the remaining of Phase One... Phase Two. And just from your perspective, what are... I know it's not part of the plan, but what are some of the challenges that exist to not be able to include at least one additional language as a text capability for NextGen?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: The plan for Phase Two would involve evaluating additional technology to be layered on top of the NextGen 911 system to translate incoming languages, transcribe them, and then translate them back. This, the current E911 system, nor the current next gen 911 system has that capability today. It's something that we would have to evaluate and test.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Does have or does not have, I'm sorry...(CROSS-TALK)

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: Does not have.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: And but it does have it for Spanish?

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

THE COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: It cannot automatically translate any languages...

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Mm-hmm?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: The Spanish support is provided by Spanish speaking call takers.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: I see. But, it... And you don't have that capability to do the same for a person in that additional language?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: So, from an operational staffing perspective, that is supported by NYPD and FDNY...

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Mm-hmm?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: We'd have to take that question back to the agencies and get back to you.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. Because my understanding is that they do have... Obviously they have persons or people to do those translations in those languages, I don't know... I am not sure if it's necessarily LanguageLine. So, that is why I am asking logistically how that's transcribed. From someone texting in Spanish to 911, you're saying it's a person, it's someone who is able to interpret and translate?

1  
2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: Correct, English and  
3 Spanish only.

4 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. I am going to pass  
5 it off to Council Member Paladino who I know has a  
6 couple of questions and has to leave, and, then, I'll  
7 come back.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: Good afternoon,  
9 Commissioner. Thank you very much, Chairwoman.

10 I have to say, I'm a little disappointed with the  
11 lack of answers that you're able to give us today.

12 This sounds like something... these three bills  
13 sound like something that's extremely important to a  
14 great many New Yorkers who are suffering with or born  
15 with these disabilities.

16 Let me just say, I drove an hour and a half to  
17 get here today, and my Chairwoman here is gonna have  
18 a baby anytime. So, I would've... I know, but I  
19 would've hoped that you would've been just a bit  
20 better prepared for us.

21 So, with that being said, I have to leave  
22 because, I have to drive another two hours home, and  
23 thank you very much.

24 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Any questions?

25 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: Not at the moment.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Oh, thank you for that  
3 Council Member. No, I appreciate it, thank you.

4 I want to ask, if... Has OTI or 911 met with any  
5 disability advocates regarding the rollout of NextGen  
6 and, you know, have you all met... have you all been  
7 able to meet with these advocates?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: Yes. During the  
9 planning of interim Text-to-911 and the initial  
10 planning for NG911, there were consultations with  
11 advocates in the community.

12 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. And is there... have  
13 those meetings stopped, or are they kind of  
14 consistent meetings that you're having with  
15 advocates?

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: I'm sorry, can you  
17 repeat that?

18 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Have the meetings... have  
19 you stopped the meetings with advocates or are they  
20 consistent?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: So the, uh, the...  
22 since the planning phase for implementation, we have  
23 not had reengagement, because there's no new features  
24 to be added at this time. However, in Phase Two, we  
25 would look to reinitiate those engagements as we try



1  
2 and determine what capabilities could be added to  
3 Next Generation 911.

4 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: And the planning phase was  
5 between the legislation being passed in 2020?

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: Was in 2020,  
7 correct.

8 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. So, for Phase Two,  
9 those are the Administration's intentions to meet  
10 with advocates?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: Yes... (CROSS-TALK)

12 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Uh, pre... Pre planning?  
13 Okay. Do you have any experts on accessibility  
14 for the deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf blind  
15 community on staff to assist with 911 or 311  
16 accessibility?

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: Not part of the, 911  
18 staff, no.

19 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. But, do... and do  
20 you have these members from the community on just the  
21 OTI staff? You're saying just not assigned to  
22 NextGen?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: Many of our  
24 engagements are through MOPD. For interim Text-to-

1  
2 911, we did have a advocate as a consultant on  
3 staff.

4 (PAUSE)

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: And they're no  
6 longer... are these still on staff?

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: No, once interim  
8 Text-to-911 was implemented, there were no further  
9 enhancements being made at that time. So there was...  
10 the advocate was no longer on staff.

11 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. And how do you all  
12 kind of test these services? So from at least  
13 speaking to Phase One, since you all... the last time  
14 that maybe you met with advocates was in 2020, has  
15 there not been any communication since the full  
16 launch to just check in to see if, you know, it's in  
17 fact kind of meeting what you all discussed, or if...  
18 there if, to date, if advocates have any issues with  
19 the existing phase of NextGen? Has there been any of  
20 that level of engagement?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: There were several  
22 briefings held since 2020 to give a status on where  
23 the program is and its progress towards completion.

24 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Mm-hmm. And how was that  
25 received by advocates, for example?

1  
2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: I believe it was  
3 well received. It was organized by MOPD.

4 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: And how many... How many  
5 progress reports has the Agency released?

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: We release an annual  
7 report every December or beginning of the year.

8 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Mm-hmm. And how many have  
9 you released?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: Uh, since... We have  
11 been releasing them annually since 2016.

12 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, do we have that from  
13 2016?

14 (PAUSE)

15 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, great.

16 (PAUSE)

17 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: For Introduction 197...  
18 excuse me, back to the, the text messaging in  
19 multiple languages, can you also share, I know  
20 NextGen is also expected to allow people to share  
21 recorded and streaming videos over SMS messaging.  
22 Where are we in that process? Is that still...

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: Are we... I'm sorry  
24 are you asking specifically about video streaming?

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Yeah. So, my understanding  
3 is that the intent... the idea was that there would  
4 be, a capability to share videos over a text message.  
5 Is that still something that that you are all looking  
6 to do?

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: We are technology  
8 ready to accept multimedia from texters as part of  
9 the interim Text-to-911. It does not support live  
10 video streaming, as the legacy 911 system and the  
11 interim tech system aren't able to support that.

12 Sharing of multimedia also depends on the  
13 carrier's, ability to provide that service. Many  
14 carriers are waiting until municipalities are  
15 migrating over to the NextGen 911 platforms to be  
16 able to send that information in.

17 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: So they're... but are they  
18 allowed to share videos, not streaming, just, like,  
19 recorded videos?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: So, as of this time,  
21 we are technology ready, but we are not accepting  
22 multimedia.

23 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. And not accepting it  
24 because it depends on the carriers, or why not?

1  
2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: Some carriers do not  
3 support it. Uh, currently, AT&T supports it. Any  
4 question regarding from a staffing perspective, or  
5 operationally why we are not supporting, I would have  
6 to engage NYPD and then follow up with you.

7 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, so... Okay.

8 So, at this point, recorded videos - I am clear  
9 the streaming - recorded videos are not allowed? Your  
10 capable... It's capable of receiving it, but not  
11 allowed, and that's with... That decision is with PD  
12 at this point?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: I would say  
14 multimedia in general - photos and recorded video,  
15 it's... We are technology ready for that, it is just  
16 not supported operationally at the moment. And not  
17 all carriers are actually supporting that service and  
18 would not be able to deliver it.

19 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: And do you know which of  
20 those carriers are not supported?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: The only carrier  
22 that is supports it today is AT&T.

23 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, now I know in other  
24 parts of the country, uh, where next NexGen exists, I  
25 think there is that capability, uh, is there

1 something specific to New York? Because, these  
2 carriers are providing... are allowing for that  
3 compatibility in other cities is what I am saying.  
4 So, I am just curious why it is not being allowed  
5 here in New York?  
6

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: I wouldn't be able  
8 to comment on the other municipalities.

9 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Are... Is OTI involved in  
10 the conversation the carriers at all, or is it just  
11 PD?

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: No, OTI is in the  
13 conversation with all of the carriers tracking  
14 progress. Uh, and ,you know, obviously, with Next  
15 Generation 911, it will change how we communicate  
16 with the carriers. So, additional services will  
17 become available in the future, as well as in Phase  
18 Two, we would look to enhance our multimedia support.

19 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Mm-hmm?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: As well as part of  
21 the enhancements that we are going to make broadly  
22 across the system.

23 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: I understand. So, the  
24 reason I am asking if OTI was involved, just because  
25 if OTI is involved, then I was hoping for some kind

1  
2 of an answer on why... Because, my understanding is  
3 that the agency has been ready since the launch to  
4 receive multimedia. Is that correct?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: Correct, and we were  
6 receiving multimedia from Sprint...

7 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Mm-hmm...

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: prior to its merger  
9 with T-Mobile...

10 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Yes...

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: And then the service  
12 was, uh, disabled by... (CROSS-TALK)

13 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: By the carrier, or by...

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: By the carrier at  
15 that time.

16 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Uhm, so, because, and I am  
17 asking because we... we have had conversations.  
18 Obviously I'm invested in this, so I have had  
19 conversations with individual carriers. And just  
20 trying to figure out where the bottleneck is. So, if  
21 you are saying that OTI is involved, and you're  
22 ready, it sounds like PD specifically is the agency  
23 that has got the specific issue with the service  
24 being available?

1  
2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: From an operation  
3 support perspective, that would have to be commented  
4 on by NYPD.

5 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Is there a role that  
6 they... OTI plays in operational support moving  
7 forward with this capability?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: From a call taker  
9 and dispatcher perspective, that is supported by the  
10 NYPD and FDNY. The systems and infrastructure and  
11 operational support of the infrastructure is provided  
12 by OTI.

13 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. I know that in  
14 the... the annual reports that have been released,  
15 they've been pretty similar year to year. We've  
16 noticed that, obviously, the deadline, has been  
17 pushed out. The 2022 report promised completion by  
18 2024, and now the 2023 report promises completion in  
19 2025.

20 Do you all anticipate pushing that deadline back  
21 any further for the completion of the first phase?

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: No, at this time, we  
23 are on schedule with that projected date.

24 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. And just for my  
25 clarity, do you does the agency intend to keep Phase



1  
2 Two open ended? Is there a deadline that you all are  
3 imposing on yourselves for a completion of Phase Two,  
4 knowing kind of what you've shared today about what  
5 the intent is for Phase Two?

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: As of today, it is  
7 not... It's not... It doesn't have a definitive date  
8 wrapped around it, it's open ended based upon our  
9 evaluation of enhancements that could be made within  
10 NG911.

11 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Mm-hmm.

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: And depending on our  
13 findings, we would have to then build a schedule  
14 around how we would test and implement that.

15 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. And for Phase One,  
16 you're anticipating the completion of infrastructure  
17 services to be completed by the end of by July 2025?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: Correct.

19 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, I'm going to pause  
20 and pass it to my colleague, Council Member Bottcher,  
21 who has questions.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Hi, I find in my  
23 experience that a lot of New Yorkers don't know that  
24 texting 911 is an option. They still don't know that  
25 that option exists. And among the New Yorkers who do

1 know about it, there seems to be confusion about  
2 whether they should text 911 or call 911.

3 On the City website, it says, don't call... don't  
4 text 911 unless you need to, you should call unless  
5 you need to call... unless you need to text. Could  
6 you clear that up for us?

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: I believe that the  
8 reference that you're making is, "Call if you can,  
9 Text if you can't", which is the campaign that was  
10 utilized, very similar to the same... the campaign  
11 that's used in other municipalities.

12 A voice call is faster in processing generally  
13 than a text call, so we advise most people to make  
14 the voice call if they can. But for some reason, if  
15 they're unable to, to text 911.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHE: Why is a voice call  
17 faster in processing?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: The call taker is  
19 able to ask direct questions and get responses faster  
20 than messaging going back and forth.

21 To give you an example of that, with the 175,000+  
22 text sessions that were received so far, it's  
23 required almost 3.8 million messages to go back and  
24 forth for those 175,000 sessions. So it's much faster  
25

1  
2 to process a response during a voice call than it is  
3 with a text session.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: So in other words, when  
5 you have someone on the phone, you can quickly ask  
6 them the questions you need to know the answers to,  
7 rather than sending them a text and waiting for them  
8 to type the answer, and then asking another question,  
9 asking them to type the answer.

10 The campaign you referenced, "Call if you can,  
11 text if you can't", where and when did that campaign  
12 run?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: I believe that  
14 campaign was launched during the launch of Text-to-  
15 911 in June of 2020.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: And was it a limited  
17 run, and are you considering bringing that campaign  
18 back?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: We are in  
20 conversations with NYPD and FDNY about expanding that  
21 campaign. One of the reasons, uh, from a legacy 911  
22 perspective that we prefer voice calls, obviously, is  
23 call takers... with the with the legacy system, call  
24 takers can only be logged into a voice queue or a  
25 text queue, switching them back and forth.

1  
2 With Next Generation 911, they'll be logged into  
3 both, so the increased volumes of texts are easier to  
4 process at that time.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Talk about that more.  
6 What do you mean by they can only be logged into a  
7 phone queue or a text queue?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: In order to  
9 implement an interim Text-to-911 system, before Next  
10 Generation 911 was completed, there were very  
11 technical limitations of the legacy E911 system,  
12 which is over 20 years old, where a call taker cannot  
13 be logged into the text and voice queues to handle  
14 incoming calls for service at the same time.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Are there specific  
16 situations in which you'd recommend someone consider  
17 texting other than being obviously, if you're a  
18 person who's hearing impaired, what about... are  
19 there other situations, like someone's in a situation  
20 where they don't feel safe making a phone call?

21 Do you have a list of those kind of scenarios  
22 where people should consider texting?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: I mean, those are  
24 the scenarios that we recommend people texting.

1  
2 I could check with NYPD and see if they have a  
3 list of types of calls for service that would fall  
4 into that category.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Are there other  
6 municipalities that have gone further with texting  
7 911? Are there other municipalities that have gone  
8 further than the call if you can, text if you can't?

9 In this day and age where more and more people  
10 feel quite frankly, they often feel more comfortable  
11 texting or chatting than using the phone. Are there  
12 other cities (TIMER CHIMES) that have expanded on  
13 this to make it faster and easier to correspond via  
14 text?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: I wouldn't be able  
16 to comment specifically to any difference in service  
17 that other municipalities are, uh, have implemented.

18 I will say that, from our experience, since Text-  
19 to-911 has gone live, that, we're able to support  
20 this as an interim system. And, again, once we get to  
21 the Next Generation 911, we can look to build upon  
22 that. It's something that the legacy 911 system  
23 cannot support today in terms of future enhancements.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: I think there's  
25 potential there. The generation that's coming up now,

1 the idea of making a phone call is not something  
2 they're used to, quite honestly.

3  
4 So we should be thinking about how we can lean  
5 into other forms of communication with 911. And I  
6 think we should be looking at what they do in other  
7 cities around the country, constantly updating what  
8 we do here in response, seeing what's working  
9 elsewhere, what's not working.

10 I'd love to hear more about that as we move  
11 forward.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you, Council  
13 Member.

14 Deputy Commissioner, I think, unfortunately, a  
15 lot of the questions, that we had were specific to  
16 LinkNYC, for example, for the purpose of the bill and  
17 just, uh, for the space that we wanted to create for  
18 advocates.

19 I'm hopeful that in the future, there'll be more  
20 concrete movement or information regarding expanding  
21 the tech services to additional languages, and that  
22 we don't have to wait until 2025 to hear what those  
23 might look like.

24 I think, obviously, the data that you all have of  
25 the amount of calls that you've received in multiple

1  
2 languages, 234 just for this year, and plus the  
3 amount of texts that you've gotten is a really good  
4 indicator of kind of the services that we could be  
5 opening up for more New Yorkers.

6 And I think any opportunity we have to say that  
7 we are the most accessible, or that we're doing the  
8 most to provide more resources for the community that  
9 needs more accessibility is something that we should  
10 be striving for.

11 So, right now, it feels like we are not in... I  
12 think we're in a position, like, we're doing the bare  
13 minimum is what I want to say. I feel like there's a  
14 lot of potential there, and I'm not necessarily  
15 hearing that.

16 So, if there's anything else that you want to  
17 say, before we move on to public testimony, about how  
18 you can help... how you think the Administration or  
19 the Agency is moving NextGen in a position to meet  
20 those expectations, you certainly have the floor.

21 If not, I'm ... I think now is a good time to  
22 move on to public testimony.

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: I would just say  
24 that, uh, the core component of this program is to  
25 move off of a legacy 911 system, that has very

1 limited capabilities, and has supportability issues  
2 long term. Uh, moving on to that modernized, Next  
3 Generation 911 system, and completing that  
4 transition, that will open a door for us to really  
5 begin to explore capabilities that would best serve  
6 New Yorkers.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. And you are  
9 saying that by next year, there will be a much better  
10 sense of what that looks like?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: So, Phase Two would  
12 begin, uhm, directly after the completion in December  
13 2025. And we would begin in 2026 to start to evaluate  
14 options... (CROSS-TALK)

15 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: The planning...

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: (INAUDIBLE)  
17 services.

18 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Is the... In 2026 is when  
19 you will start the planning process?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: We will start an  
21 assessment of available capabilities that may be  
22 available for integration.

23 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: And when do you think that  
24 you would start working with advocates again, for  
25 example? Is that in 2025?



1  
2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: That would be in the  
3 beginning of 2026 when we start Phase Two.

4 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. Okay. Alright, well,  
5 thank you so much...

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: I appreciate your time.  
8 Looking forward to the responses from the Franchise  
9 team.

10 I now open the hearing for public testimony. I  
11 remind members of the public that this is a formal  
12 government proceeding and that decorum shall be  
13 observed at all times. As such, members of the public  
14 shall remain silent at all times.

15 The witness table is reserved for people who wish  
16 to testify. No video recording or photography is  
17 allowed from the witness table.

18 Further, members of the public may not present  
19 audio or video recordings as testimony, but may  
20 submit transcripts of such recordings to the Sergeant  
21 at Arms for inclusion in the hearing record.

22 If you wish to speak at today's hearing, please  
23 fill out an appearance card with the Sergeant at Arms  
24 and wait to be recognized. When recognized, you will  
25

1  
2 have three minutes to speak on today's hearing topics  
3 on 311, Intros 138, 197, and 146.

4 If you have a written statement or additional  
5 testimony you wish to submit for the record, please  
6 provide a copy of that testimony to the Sergeant at  
7 Arms.

8 You may also email written testimony to  
9 Testimony@council.nyc.gov within 72 hours after the  
10 close of this hearing. Audio and video recordings  
11 will not be accepted.

12 Our first panel is Michele Blondmonville from  
13 Lead for Humanity. And I'm sorry if I mispronounced  
14 your name. Michele, you can start when you are ready,  
15 you have three minutes.

16 MICHELE BLONDMONVILLE: Thank you. First I would  
17 like to thank you for your servitude. I'd in these  
18 difficult times....

19 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Is the mic on? Michele,  
20 I'm sorry, the... Is the light on, on the microphone?  
21 Yeah?

22 MICHELE BLONDMONVILLE: I'll just bring the mic  
23 up closer.

24 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, thank you.  
25

1  
2 MICHELE BLONDMONVILLE: I would like to thank you  
3 for your servitude in these difficult times. On  
4 behalf of everyday people, who are Havana Syndrome or  
5 anomalous health victims, some knowingly and others  
6 unknowingly, I'm here to represent them.

7 With the glaring awareness of the benefits  
8 afforded to our diplomat counterparts, we certainly  
9 hold fast to the notion that one day, we too will be  
10 recognized and compensated.

11 Every day Havana Syndrome victims, are comprised  
12 of diagnosed, victims who have been unlawfully  
13 experimented on and subsequently targeted in various  
14 nefarious manners.

15 These heinous crimes include, but are not limited  
16 to, organized stalking, smear campaigns, noise  
17 harassment, electronic assaults from directed energy  
18 weapons, consensual human experimentation, and other  
19 and AI as well.

20 They are remotely accessing the public's bodies  
21 and biometrics. We support your bill to monitor and  
22 set standards for AI implementation used by various  
23 agencies, and would like other bills also that  
24 protect our neural rights, like the Colorado bill,  
25 24-1058, and the California bill, SB 1223.

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

And I'm just making it short and sweet, that people are being experimented on, and it's very necessary that we have these bills that protect us from various agencies around the city. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you.

(PAUSE)

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Our next witness to testify is Nicolyn Plummer.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

(PAUSE)

NICOLYN PLUMMER: Good afternoon...

(PAUSE)

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: We can hear you, you can start.

NICOLYN PLUMMER: Hello? Can you hear me? Good afternoon...

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Oh...

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin, yes, we see you.

NICOLYN PLUMMER: Good afternoon...

(PAUSE)

My name is Nicolyn Plummer, I am a (INAUDIBLE) community service (INAUDIBLE) on behalf of the deaf and hard of hearing community. First, I must say that, I am one of... one of the advocates who was

1 of project of 911 many years ago, and I have worked  
2 collaboratively with the New York City Department of  
3 Information, Technology and, Communications.  
4

5 Unfortunately, they have been... there has been a  
6 disconnection between the community and the New York  
7 City Department of Information, Technology and  
8 Innovation.

9 We have been working a long time with the  
10 commissioner Jessica Tisch on this particular  
11 project, uh, Text-to-911 tool that went live in June  
12 of 2020. Going forward we did not have an opportunity  
13 to work with Commissioner Robert Barbera since  
14 Jessica Tisch left. For some reason they have not  
15 been working with us, working with the advocates and  
16 stakeholders, for us to strengthen in their project,  
17 uh, Next Generation 911. Since they took over, there  
18 has been no meetings, no meetings for us to  
19 (INAUDIBLE) to go forward, and I don't know why. So,  
20 there has been no progress, when we have all the  
21 information and knowledge that we could have guided  
22 the new commissioner on how to move forward with the  
23 project on Next Generation 911. But, now it's 2024  
24 (TIMER CHIMES)...

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you...

1  
2 NICOLYN PLUMMER: (INAUDIBLE)...

3 SERGEANT AT ARMS: your time has expired...

4 NICOLYN PLUMMER: I never met Robert until today  
5 through the Zoom, until today when he testified.

6 (INAUDIBLE) we did have advocates (INAUDIBLE) to work  
7 with the Office of Technology and Innovation on this  
8 particular project...

9 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you.

10 NICOLYN PLUMMER: I don't know why they stopped  
11 using the advocates on the project, but going  
12 forward, there has been nothing that has been taking  
13 place. Nothing. And that is unfortunate. And they  
14 are... The way that they are operating now, it's a  
15 disservice, because it's inappropriate to implement  
16 a project and not work with the advocates...

17 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Mm-hmm?

18 NICOLYN PLUMMER: what they need to strengthen the  
19 program...

20 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you, Nicolyn. Thank  
21 you... (CROSS-TALK)

22 NICOLYN PLUMMER: to make Next Generation 911  
23 accessible...

24 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you, we have one  
25 more person testifying, Nicholyn, thank you, I do

1  
2 have a few followup question, but we have one more  
3 person to testify. Give me one second.

4 I want to call witness Marsellette Davis.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

6 MARSELLETTE DAVIS: (NO RESPONSE)

7 (PAUSE)

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You can unmute and begin when  
9 you are ready.

10 MARSELLETTE DAVIS: Okay, uhm, can you hear me?

11 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Yes.

12 MARSELLETTE DAVIS: Okay, hello, hello, this is  
13 Marsellette... Marsellette Davis speaking, and I am a  
14 representative for myself today, and I am an advocate  
15 for the deaf community as a whole. I'm an advocate,  
16 and I also work with the commissioner of Technology  
17 and I did before. I had left, because they were  
18 unwilling to work with us. I have not heard anything  
19 about them going through with the project Operation  
20 911 Tech Support for Deaf And Hard of Hearing to make  
21 sure that there was improvement with the technology  
22 service for deaf and hard of hearing.

23 You know, we are the individuals here that would  
24 be using the LinkNYC billboards, and deaf individuals  
25 that I work with, that use sign language, that take

1  
2 classes for technology, and also the Department of  
3 Hearing Services have an ongoing agreement that ASL  
4 is the language for deaf individuals and it's their  
5 human rights, when they're walking by a billboard,  
6 that they should be able to see a billboard that's  
7 displayed in their own language. You know, after all,  
8 this is what we work for. You know? We've put a lot  
9 of work, and this is something that... it has many  
10 components to it, and often we feel forgotten. And so  
11 now, it is 2024, and we do hope that, uh, we want to  
12 continue to work on this, so that we can get this  
13 smoothed out technology wise and have visual  
14 technology. Thank you so much for your time.

15 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you both. I really  
16 appreciate your testimony (TIMER CHIMES) this  
17 afternoon, your patience. And we are listening and  
18 very much aligned in our disappointment with the  
19 agency's responses today, for their inability to  
20 really talk us through their vision for increased  
21 accessibility moving forward. I also just want to  
22 thank you for all the time that both of you put in  
23 before this administration to ensure that the rollout  
24 in 2020 provided some level of accessibility. It is  
25 very much my goal (BACKGROUND NOISE) to demand more



1  
2 to ensure that they are talking and working with  
3 advocates. You all are the experts, I certainly am  
4 not one. And we need you and your voices and your  
5 perspectives to improve this.

6 Uhm, so, my question to the both of you is  
7 particularly in reference to 911 systems.

8 Do you believe that what exists today, in 2024,  
9 provides adequate accessibility for deaf individuals?  
10 You heard the administration today, you heard their  
11 responses, what do you believe could be improved? And  
12 do you think that their use of multimedia files, like  
13 videos or images, would improve accessibility?

14 Okay, we'll start with Nicholyn first, is that  
15 okay, Mandy?

16 TRANSLATOR: Sure.

17 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay.

18 NICOLYN PLUMMER: I'll start. Uhm, to answer that  
19 question, we... We gave them all that information,  
20 and if they had continued that relationship, they  
21 would have had all the knowledge they needed to  
22 strengthen their system.

23 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Mm-hmm.  
24  
25

1  
2 NICOLYN PLUMMER: But, they choose to disconnect  
3 us (INAUDIBLE) to move forward if they don't want to  
4 implement the program without the community feedback.

5 (PAUSE)

6 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. And,  
7 Marsellette, did you want to respond?

8 TRANSLATOR FOR MARSELLETTE DAVIS: Yes, uhm,  
9 alright, so before 2020, we already made an  
10 agreement...

11 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Mm-hmm.

12 TRANSLATOR FOR MARSELLETTE DAVIS: and we wanted  
13 to make sure that both, uh, live, uh, both the City  
14 and the general public work together. Because that's  
15 what we really care about. That's what we really  
16 invested in, but we... we got nothing in response.  
17 The benefit was missed, so that's that.

18 Now, to answer your other question about, uh, the  
19 911, the point of the 911, we need more. We need more  
20 improvement, and the reason for that is because it's  
21 still the case that many different people in other  
22 cities, we are comparing, right? You said in our  
23 city, New York City, right now, the service here, the  
24 911, right? For example, a person who is in a town  
25 that needs to text 911 right away, right, let's say,

1  
2 they have the police and the ambulance to help them,  
3 and they are deaf and they need Human Services and an  
4 advocate to fight for them - let's say it's a serious  
5 emergency at that time, right? They need the  
6 emergency vehicles to arrive on site to get to save  
7 them for the emergency, uh, to be able to explain  
8 what's going on, because it will save time. It will  
9 also save money, because the service is already  
10 there, everyone is able to respond to the deaf  
11 person. And ,you know, New York doesn't realize ,you  
12 know, we have the money, we are paying for the  
13 ambulance service already to come. Right, 911, uhm,  
14 there's \$25 million that spent - I don't actually  
15 know the statistic, but, again, itself... You know,  
16 the other services for the deaf and hard of hearing,  
17 by no comparison, we don't have as much, and it needs  
18 to be improved. And other states do, yes, to answer  
19 your question, they already have implemented more  
20 services and more technology - and capability -  
21 compared to what we have here. You know, if we  
22 compare their... this state to other states...

23 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you. Thank you both  
24 so much. I hope to stay in contact with the both of  
25 you. We will continue to work on this issue. We have

1  
2 the three pieces of legislation with the intention to  
3 increase and improve accessibility, both for 911 and  
4 LinkNYC kiosks. And I think the message is very clear  
5 that they have not been... that OTI has not been, in  
6 earnest, working with advocates and experts, uh, in  
7 over four, probably close to five years, uh, to roll  
8 out Next Gen in the best possible way, both for the  
9 use of...

10 TRANSLATOR FOR MARSELLETTE DAVIS: Right,  
11 they're... They're... for 30 years, let's say...  
12 Let's call it 30 years behind, we'll say 30...

13 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thirty years behind...

14 TRANSLATOR FOR MARSELLETTE DAVIS: Yes, so there  
15 is a lot of work they have to do, and that is because  
16 ,you know, we have been out of the picture. Right?  
17 Now, if you put us in the picture, if we're the  
18 frontrunners, right, we will meet them halfway.

19 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Right.

20 TRANSLATOR FOR MARSELLETTE DAVIS: But, if you  
21 keep the deaf and hard of hearing professionals out  
22 of the picture, they will keep staying behind. So...

23 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Yes...

24 TRANSLATOR FOR MARSELLETTE DAVIS: So, we will  
25 never catch up to the other cities...

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: (INAUDIBLE)

3 TRANSLATOR FOR MARSELLETTE DAVIS: You know, we  
4 were working hard to make sure that those citizens  
5 have the services that they need. Uh, it is possible  
6 that we can meet the expectations and be on board,  
7 the same way the other cities are, but serving our  
8 citizens better...

9 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: I hope so... (CROSS-TALK)

10 TRANSLATOR FOR MARSELLETTE DAVIS: in less time,  
11 right? Which would mean, what? Which would mean that  
12 we would be involved, and you, uh, the city of New  
13 York, would be working with the deaf and hard of  
14 hearing communities in tandem...

15 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Yes.

16 TRANSLATOR FOR MARSELLETTE DAVIS: Right? Because,  
17 we have that, we have that capability to work as a  
18 team. And we are not doing that right now. And I am  
19 curious, uhm, you know, in this area, this region,  
20 the relationship, right, with the disability  
21 community, you know, we have many people who have  
22 many different language, uh, skills and assets, who  
23 speak many different languages.

24

25

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: That's right, that's right. We will stay in communication, and we are going to continue to put...

TRANSLATOR FOR MARSELLETTE DAVIS: Hold on, hold on, hold on... She's saying hold on, the interpreter missed that... Who would have many different experts...

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Right.

TRANSLATOR FOR MARSELLETTE DAVIS: Not curiosity, misinterpreted, uh, with many different experts.

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. Yes, so, we are going to wrap up this hearing. Thank you both so much for staying, for your testimonies, for your advocacy, uh, and we will continue to put pressure on the Administration to bring you back into the fold, uhm, so that we can do this right, and that we can be an example.

If we have inadvertently missed anyone who is registered to testify today, and has yet to have been called, please use the Zoom hand function, and you will be called in the order that your hand has been raised...

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I see none...

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: None?

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

TRANSLATOR FOR MARSELLETTE DAVIS: (INAUDIBLE)

switch interpreters...

CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you, everyone, for  
your testimony today. The hearing is now adjourning

(GAVEL SOUND) (GAVELING OUT)

TRANSLATOR FOR MARSELLETTE DAVIS: Okay.

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 December 4, 2024