

**TESTIMONY OF JOSEPH R. MORRISROE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – NYC311  
BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL  
OPERATIONS AND THE COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY – JANUARY 21, 2020**

Good morning Chair Cabrera, Chair Holden and members of the City Council Committees on Governmental Operations and Technology. My name is Joe Morrisroe, I am the Executive Director of New York City 311. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on 311 operations. With me today is Dominic Berg, the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications' Acting Deputy Commissioner for Business Solutions Delivery.

I'm honored to serve as Executive Director of 311 since 2008 and to represent the women and men of the 311 team. Since 2010, 311 reports directly to the Mayor's Office of Operations, an alignment that underscores the importance of this operation and service to the City. Prior to that 311 reported to DoITT. DoITT continues to provide technology services and general services administration and support for the 311 organization and work collaboratively with 311 and the Mayor's Office on the continual evolution and enhancements to the service delivery and customer experience of 311. As Executive Director, I oversee all aspects of 311, from the operation of the most familiar component, the call center, to the creation and implementation of multiple customer-facing channels, performance results and quality control measures, interaction with City agencies, compliance with regulatory requirement and data collection.

New York City is the one of the most diverse places on the planet and its diversity is what makes it the greatest place to live and work. I thank the Council for inviting me in to discuss how 311 provides quick and easy access to NYC government services and information with the highest possible level of customer service to New York's diverse community. 311 is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Customers can get help in 180 languages by calling 311. People who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech-impaired can contact us at using a Video Relay Service or using TTY or Text Telephone.

The 311 process relies on systems supported by DoITT and partnerships with city agencies to ensure a customer has access to information, assistance, and services through a variety of channels including the call center, 311 Online, text, mobile app and social media. To understand 311 operation and customer experience, it is helpful to understand the flow of 311 service delivery, from customer inquiries and requests to the answers provided and actions taken, and the confirmation provided. With few exceptions, public interactions with 311 result in one of the following outcomes:

1. Service Request (the City needs to do something)
2. Information Request (when is my recycling pick-up day?)
3. Referral to an outside entity (MTA, NY State, FCC)

Since 311 was launched in March 2003 it has received over 295 million calls and an additional 105 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 customer service

platform in the nation. Available 24/7 in 180 languages and multiple channels 311 received 36 million customer contacts in 2019. On an average day 311 interacts with over 100,000 customers and for an average month 311 receives; 1.6 million calls, 1.2 million online visits to the companion 311 Online website, 185,000 mobile app touches, 230,000 text messages and serves 2,300 customers on social media in addition to publishing city programs, information and services to over 580,000 of our social media followers. For further context, on an annual basis New York City 311 receives more calls than all other US City 311's 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 delivery through quick, easy access to all New York City government services and information while maintaining the highest possible level of customer service.

The 311 team is focused on "*meeting our customers where they are*" by providing an array of channel options to contact the City ranging from robust self-service solutions to outstanding customer service delivered by professional, polite, and well-trained representatives. Over the last 9 years in annual customer satisfaction surveys conducted by the CFI Group, 311 ranked equal to or better in delivering customer service than the *best contact centers in the private sector* and also far surpasses the best in government centers. In 2019, 311's aggregate Net Promoter Score (NPS), the leading metric for gauging customer satisfaction across all industries in the U.S., exceeded the scores of Apple and JetBlue.

This outstanding performance reflects the dedication and commitment of the women and men who work at 311 and proudly serve their fellow New Yorkers. It is for these reasons that New York City 311 is the recognized model for service delivery and performance reporting for governments across the nation and around the world who study the "New York City 311 model" when considering launching their customer service platforms.

## **LANGUAGE ACCESS**

Local Law 30 requires covered agencies to appoint language access coordinators, translate commonly distributed documents into 10 designated languages, provide telephonic interpretation in at least 100 languages, and develop a language access implementation plan, among other requirements. 311 is in compliance with this law.

311 provides telephonic interpretation in up to 180 languages through a third-party vendor, Language Line. Language Line provides interpretation and translation services for up to 180 languages and is available for free 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

311 provides additional options for customers who speak a language other than English or may be limited English proficient. For the phone channel, a customer can access announcements and messages in the language Integrated Voice Response (IVR) system; Spanish speakers can utilize the Natural Language Understanding (NLU) application to receive information and answers to frequently asked questions without having to wait to speak with an agent. Spanish speakers also can be serviced by a 311 customer service representative who speaks Spanish.

Annually, 311 services approximately 1 million calls in language other than English and has provided service in 133 non-English languages over the years.

## **LANGUAGE ACCESS INITIATIVES**

We understand that serving such a diverse customer base comes with challenges and that there is more work to be done. To address this, 311 has partnered with The Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs to review how 311 engages with customers with limited English proficiency and recommend better customer experience handling and have already made and improvement and working on several others.

Based on Council feedback last year, 311 was able to implement a technology enhancement in October 2019 that gives the ability for the language name to be passed to the call center representative when a customer selects a language option. Now, when a customer presses a language prompt option, like Russian or Korean, the representative receives a "pop-up" that indicates the language preference. This allows faster connection to an interpreter and a better customer experience.

311 has also began a work effort to increase the language prompts to represent the 10 Citywide languages of Local Law 30. The increased language options will allow speakers of the above-mentioned language to access one of the most requested pieces of information of 311 – alternate side parking status – in their language. The customer language choice will also be presented to the customer service representative for quicker service.

Lastly, 311 is also working on the creation and implementation of surveys in the 10 designated Citywide languages that will leverage our technology and align with our business practices. We look forward to learning directly from the LEP community in what areas we are doing well in and what areas we need improvement.

We look to roll out these initiatives in the second half of 2020.

I will now turn to the pieces of legislation associated with this hearing.

### **Intro. 1420-B relates to reporting on unsubstantiated 311 complaints.**

This bill would present substantial operational challenges to 311. As an example, there can be cases when a customer files a service request for a legitimate condition, but the reported condition is remedied before a city official inspects the complaint. There is no way for 311 to filter out this type of situations when reviewing the final resolution status as reported by an agency. 311 continuously works closely with agencies to provide them the information they need to action a service request.

### **Intro. 1525-A relates to conducting 311 customer satisfaction surveys in designated citywide languages.**

As I mentioned in my opening remarks, 311 will implement customer satisfaction surveys in the 10 designated Citywide languages that will provide valuable feedback on how we deliver

information and services to our customers. We look forward to rolling these out the second half of 2020.

**Intro. 1830 would require 311 to maintain on its website each service level agreement it has with agencies.**

311 realizes the value of this information and will seek to add this information to 311's open data set of service requests.

**Intro. 1832-A would require 311 to notify each agency when a request for service or complaint has not been closed within the number of days specified by such agency's service level agreement.**

The design of the 311 system makes available to all agencies the status of their service level agreement with respect to a customer's complaint, therefore 311 does not see the need to provide additional notification to agencies.

Finally, on behalf of my colleagues, I thank Chairmen Cabrera and Holden, and Committee Members for your time and the opportunity to testify. I am happy to take any questions.

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**Communities of Maspeth Elmhurst Together, Inc.**

**C.O.M.E.T.**

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**Testimony Regarding Intros 62 & 462**

We would like to express our support for the following Intros:

**Intro 62**

This bill would allow residents to call 311 to report snow, ice and other conditions on overpasses and pedestrian footbridges. If passed, residents in our community will be able to report conditions on the numerous overpasses in our area that are used to get to work, school and shopping. We presently must contact our elected officials and have them reach out to the appropriate agency.

**Intro 462**

This bill, if passed, will not only assist us in reporting pedestrian bridges and overpasses, it will help us address multifarious quality of life problems that exist along cemeteries, the Long Island Rail Road, the Long Island Expressway and outside of parks and other areas that do not have addresses. We have a chronic problem with illegal dumping, abandoned vehicles, overnight commercial parking and graffiti along these strips.

Roe Daraio, President

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1393A Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 4/3/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ELLEN KOZADEK

Address: 23-35 BROADWAY ASTORIA

I represent: FLUSHING TOWN HALL

Address: 137-35 Northern Blvd

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 1/21/20

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dominik Berg

Address: 2 Naro Tech

I represent: Do/IT

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 1/21/2020

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Joe Morrisroe

Address: 59 Maiden Ln

I represent: NY311

Address: 59 Maiden Ln

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Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Marsellette Davis

Address: 2265 Fifth Ave, 4G

I represent: Self

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

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# THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: 1/22/20

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nicolyn Plummer

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Barrier Free Living

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms