



**For Immediate Release**

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## **Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications Issues Request for Information for Next Generation 911 System**

***New Platform Would Support Capabilities Including Text, Photos, and Full-Motion Video Transfers to 911***

***Aligns with Ongoing City Council Efforts to Provide Text-to-911 Capability***

The Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT) today issued a Request for Information (RFI) to identify possible paths to implementation of a Next Generation 911 system in New York City. Next Generation 911 (NG911) provides for seamless transfer of digital information, including voice, photos, text messages, and video, from the public to emergency responders through the 911 network. Today's RFI will help drive the City's decisions around NG911 solutions by surveying experts across the industry and assessing options for seamlessly integrating the processing of traditional voice calls with various types of modern and emerging forms of communication. Responses will also inform the City plans for a NG911 system that ensures the highest standards of public safety and emergency response – all within the framework of 911's operational needs and specifications. The RFI was published today in [The City Record](#) and is available on DoITT's [website](#).

"Next Generation 911 represents the next stage in the evolution of emergency communications, expanding the ways in which life-saving services can be requested by the public," said **DoITT Commissioner Anne Roest**. "With today's announcement we're taking an important step to assess the very best technologies available as we further develop New York City's plan for full NG911 implementation. We thank our agency partners at the Police and Fire Departments for their work on this initiative, as well as the City Council for its attention to and valuable input on this issue."

"The NYPD continues to integrate new technologies into policing. Next Generation 911 would provide first responders and the public the ability to communicate via text in emergency situations, among many other improved capabilities. We look forward to exploring these new possibilities with the city," said **Police Commissioner William J. Bratton**.

"The FDNY is always seeking to leverage technology to improve the life-saving services we provide," said **Fire Commissioner Daniel A. Nigro**. "Next Generation 911 will not only offer more access for all New Yorkers to emergency response through texts, photos and video, it will make our members that much more prepared for the thousands of fires and medical emergencies they respond to each day."

Over the past decade, public use of various mobile technologies like text, video, Voice over Internet Protocol, and high-speed broadband has increased dramatically, changing expectations about how people communicate with each other – and with their government. To accommodate these new communication habits, 911 systems in cities across the country require upgrades to their digital based network infrastructure, all while continuing to provide essential, uninterrupted emergency response and services.

Accordingly, with the Mayor's Office, Police Department, and Fire Department, last summer DoITT began work to develop a strategy for upgrading New York City 911 to an IP-based switching infrastructure and call handling systems that would allow it to incorporate a range of next generation applications. In addition to capabilities such as photo, text, and video, the RFI asks for, among other things, ideas about transferring and receiving 911 calls from neighboring jurisdictions, participation of other city, state, and federal agencies, and interoperability with external data sources such as home alarm and commercial fire alarm services.

Issuance of this RFI aligns with the New York City Council's ongoing efforts to consider possibilities for allowing New Yorkers to text 911 for emergency assistance. While DoITT is currently working with NYPD and FDNY to identify a short-term texting solution that could be integrated into a new NG911 system, it has also incorporated feedback from the Council's recent hearing on this topic in today's RFI. This includes questions about training considerations – i.e., curriculum, class size, etc. – for 911 call takers and dispatchers on the front lines of emergency response.

"We are very glad that DoITT is taking steps to bring this technology to the City," said **City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito**. "The implementation of the next generation of 911 is of critical importance and we will work with the Administration to ensure this effort moves forward expeditiously."

"This RFI is a great step of progress in recognizing the value that next generation technology can bring to the existing emergency system," said **Council Member Vanessa L. Gibson**, Chair of the Committee on Public Safety. "We look forward to gaining a greater understanding of the technological advancements in this field and enhancing the emergency system that works day in, day out to keep New Yorkers safe. I thank my Council Colleagues, the Administration, and DoITT for supporting the exploration of next generation 911 services and look forward to working with all stakeholders as we explore next steps."

"Next Generation 911 reflects the technological advancement that has occurred in all aspects of our daily lives," said **Council Member James Vacca**. "There are many more methods of communicating than in previous times and the government must stay as up-to-date as possible. As Chair of the New York City Council Committee on Technology, I held a hearing exploring the need for this type of advanced emergency communication. Many people will benefit from the addition of a text-based system, including the deaf and hard-of-hearing community, along with victims of domestic violence. I applaud the administration for issuing this RFI and look forward to the outcome."

"We live in the largest municipality in the United States where New York's Finest and Bravest, through the guidance of dedicated 911 call takers and dispatchers, save thousands of lives every year," said **Council Member Laurie A. Cumbo**. "Our ability to communicate with one another has increased exponentially from voice calls to text, photos, and videos. Recognizing the importance of bringing our emergency communications system into the 21st century, I introduced Intro 868, a bill with Council Members Levine and Gibson, to close the widening gap that has left victims of domestic violence, undocumented immigrants, the Deaf, youth, and LGBTQ who are less inclined to call 911 in dire circumstances without an alternate way to seek help. It is vital that as technology continues to evolve, we must learn how to adopt more modern resources that will enhance our capacity and capability to serve every New Yorker – without discrimination - in any emergency. The Next Generation 911 RFI will help us understand current practices nationwide and assess how we can adapt them to meet the unique needs of our growing and diverse population."

"New technology is making it safer and easier for people in cities across the country to receive help during an emergency," said **Council Member Mark Levine**. "We have an opportunity to implement the latest technologies that will ensure access to police, fire or emergency medical services is available to every New Yorker. I applaud

DoITT and public safety leaders for partnering in this effort and taking this critical step toward establishing a truly modern emergency communications system.”

The largest and most complex system of its kind in the nation, New York City 911 handles approximately 10 million calls each year. Today’s RFI, responses to which are due on February 26, 2016, will provide a fuller understanding of the benefits, challenges, risks, and issues associated with migrating to a NG911 platform. It will also help the City profile the range of possible vendors and technical solutions, refine its NG911 project plan and timeline, and prepare for the possible development of a Request for Proposals.

The City’s information technology agency, DoITT provides for the sustained, efficient, and effective delivery of IT services, infrastructure, and telecommunications to enhance service delivery to New York City’s residents, businesses, employees, and visitors.

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