Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications
Testimony before the City Council Committee on Technology in Government
Oversight Hearing on the City's Mobile Workforce
Monday, June 12, 2006

Good morning Chairperson Brewer and members of the City Council Committee on Technology in Government. My name is Ron Bergmann, and I am the Acting Commissioner of the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications, or DoITT.

As you know, DoITT works with City agencies to align, leverage, and optimize the use of technology to meet agency and citywide business needs. DoITT operates the 311 Citizen Service Center, *NYC.gov*, and NYC TV, and regulates the City's telecommunications franchises and public pay telephones. In addition, DoITT manages the City's 800 MHz radio network, which supports 7,200 users in 30 agencies.

Now more than ever, the New York City workforce is mobile, and enhancing its ability to work at any time from anywhere is an important goal of the Bloomberg Administration. This focus has driven DoITT's efforts both citywide and with individual City agencies. We have made progress toward this goal by providing the infrastructure, support services, and procurement vehicles that enable agencies to empower their mobile field personnel.

First, I would like to speak about the City's infrastructure, and the ways in which we have and will continue to meet the needs of our mobile workforce.

New York City no longer operates on a nine-to-five basis, but 24x7 in office and field locations throughout the five boroughs. It is therefore necessary for DoITT to support agency business operations around-the-clock. A prime example of this has been the growth in the use of handheld devices by City workers. Currently, DoITT supports thousands of Blackberry users across 60 agencies. DoITT has also centralized email services to City agencies, migrating over 20,000 email users from 37 agencies into a consolidated environment. Providing centralized email, coupled with a hardened and secure citywide solution for remote access, allows users from dozens of agencies to retrieve their email and applications from their home computer—or from any PC with an internet connection.

There are also 20 agencies for which DoITT provides extensive site-to-site Virtual Private Network (VPN) connections, linking remote sites through CityNet. These often leverage low-cost access methods such as DSL and cable modems to save the costs of dedicated T1 leased-line connections for community-based sites with small numbers of users. The **Department of Parks and Recreation** is in the process of rolling out 90 of these VPN connections at their recreation centers and field offices throughout the City.

DoITT is also coordinating initiatives to enhance the way municipal field workers obtain real-time access to agency systems and the way first responders communicate at the scene of an incident. Last month, the Mayor announced a pilot program with two vendors to test wireless technologies for the creation of a high-speed wireless data network for emergency responders and field personnel.

This Citywide Mobile Wireless Network will enable Police and Fire Department personnel to quickly access and download information including City maps, building plans and various law enforcement databases from police and fire vehicles as well as EMS apparatus.

In addition, other City agencies will be able to leverage the network to support safety inspections and other activities in the field. After the pilot phase, the vendor that best demonstrates its ability to meet the City's requirements may then be selected to build out a network across the five boroughs.

I would next like to describe some of the City's many mobile initiatives, focusing on a sampling of agencies that have enforcement, inspectional and health and human services applications.

As you know, the **Police Department** (NYPD) is currently deploying handheld devices for use by traffic agents. To date, more than 1,500 devices for issuing parking tickets have been deployed. The use of these handhelds has significantly decreased the number of disputed tickets and hearings, since the printed tickets are more accurate and legible than hand-written summonses. At hearings, data from the ticket is electronically transmitted to the administrative law judge, with an image of the summons available on the judge's computer screen. Full deployment will be completed shortly with the addition of the Midtown Manhattan Command. To date, over eight million summonses have been issued using these devices.

Another initiative being piloted by NYPD is the rollout of handheld devices for use by field personnel. The Police Department is testing about 150 semi- and fully-ruggedized devices outfitted so that police officers may check on outstanding warrants and license plate information, as well as view photos of individuals with active warrants. Both the software and hardware components will be evaluated and modified as necessary based on the field experience.

The **Department of Sanitation** (DSNY) is currently rolling out devices for enforcement officers to issue Environmental Control Board-adjudicated summonses. The handhelds will streamline the ability of DSNY enforcement staff to issue summonses and access information on previous infractions. A pilot was launched in mid-May, with expansion within the borough of Manhattan expected in the beginning of Fiscal 2007. Citywide rollout of 260 handheld devices is planned to begin later this year.

The **Department of Buildings** (DOB) has revolutionized the way in which it schedules, routes, conducts and records the results of plumbing inspections through the use of its Plumbing Inspections and Portable Entry System, or PIPES. An Intranet application used by plumbing inspectors and support staff, PIPES facilitates structured and standardized inspections by using handheld computers and printers in the field. At the end of each day, the results from all inspections are uploaded into the Buildings Information System, and made accessible to the public via *NYC.gov*. Since implementing PIPES in 2004, there has been an increase in the accuracy, transparency, and efficiency of DOB's plumbing inspections. Planning is underway to phase-in the PIPES concept to other inspections conducted by the agency.

The **Department of Citywide Administrative Services** (DCAS) employs a number of handheld initiatives that enable its field inspection staff to perform their duties more efficiently. DCAS' Vehicle and Quality Assurance Inspection Applications were developed to enhance the collection and distribution of data from inspections performed at various field locations throughout the City. Approximately 20 vehicle fleet and fuel inspectors use mobile computers with wireless connections.

Data that was previously collected manually is now input directly into the mobile computers each inspector carries in the field. Additionally, the data collected is now exported directly from the mobile computers into a central database, eliminating paperwork and duplicate data entry. Building on the success of these initiatives, DCAS recently expanded its handheld inspection and data collection project to incorporate citywide food inspections.

Earlier this year, we assisted the **Administration for Children's Services** (ACS) in meeting the mobile telecommunications needs of its field personnel by purchasing 2,000 cell phones for use by its Division of Child Protection. Now, every ACS staff member who works with a child in the field has a City-issued, wireless device to better perform his/her duties. For example, interpretation services are now available via telephone for use in any investigation. Child protective workers can use their cell phones, which have speaker-phone capability, to access an interpreter in over 150 languages in less than five minutes. This expands ACS' interpretation services and allows for immediate access where needed.

In addition, a group of Children's Services workers are currently testing various handheld devices to enable remote access to the State's CONNECTIONS database, and as a result, they will be able to spend more time in the field. ACS is also working with the Family Courts on two initiatives: the first is to identify areas of each courthouse where field workers have access to CONNECTIONS; the second is to provide ACS legal staff with access to their Legal Tracking System on a tablet PC. The pilot for legal staff will continue through July at the Manhattan Family Courthouse, after which ACS will consider expansion of the program.

The **Department of Health and Mental Hygiene** (DOHMH) has a number of important handheld initiatives both underway and being explored for future development. As you know, initiatives in production include handheld applications for restaurant, daycare and lead inspections. In addition, DOHMH's Newborn Visits Handheld initiative allows Public Health advocates visiting new mothers to promote infant care and apprise them of available resources. Currently operated out of the Bedford District Public Health Office, this project is planned for expansion into the Bronx and Harlem offices. The Health Department has also deployed handheld devices for a number of data-intensive campaigns, such as its Clinic Management Survey and Smoking Cessation Campaign.

DOHMH's Radiological Van is a mobile unit that collects data which is then transferred wirelessly to the Health Department's network for analysis. In addition, the agency has developed an Environmental Handheld for staff responding to potential radiological incidents. A variety of environmental monitoring probes plug into the handheld device, which then wirelessly transfers data back to DOHMH in real-time. By September, there will be approximately 25 environmental handhelds available for in-house staff and participating agencies. An additional handheld application, the Radiological Equipment & Materials Tracking Handheld, or REMTrack, will expedite the citywide inspection and inventory processes behind the licensing of radiological equipment and materials.

In order to facilitate the acquisition of new technologies, DoITT has put in place a variety of enterprise contracts to leverage the City's buying power and reduce the time needed for agencies to launch new projects. To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their mobile deployments, agencies are using our quality assurance, project management and project monitoring contracts, as well as our citywide systems integration contracts specifically for handheld projects.

We are currently working with a number of agencies, including the **Fire Department** and **Department of Environmental Protection**, to explore how they may utilize the handheld contract for new and critical technology initiatives.

In addition, to ensure a method by which City agencies can convene around topics of common interest and offer feedback to DoITT, we have established a number of citywide user groups, one of which is focused exclusively on handheld applications. Attended by multiple City agencies, these meetings grow the City's knowledge base on successful implementations. Participants use these meetings as an opportunity to exchange data and share lessons learned. Last year, we had over 500 attendees from more than 40 agencies at user group meetings.

Finally, DoITT is exploring ways to increase mobile access to our award-winning website, *NYC.gov*. Using third-party software, we are planning to make agency and portal pages viewable in text only and will modify the navigation scheme so that mobile users can easily find information on the site. We will also mobile-enable a subset of *NYC.gov* applications so they can be viewed on a variety of handheld devices. With this implementation, *NYC.gov* will be able to offer a higher level of accessibility to our mobile users.

I appreciate the opportunity to describe many of our initiatives to support the City's mobile workforce. I would now be pleased to answer any questions you may have.