

**DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS TESTIMONY
BEFORE THE CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY
RE: INTRO. 564-2014 / ONLINE SUBMISSION OF CITY BUSINESS PERMITS, LICENSES AND
APPLICATIONS
TUESDAY, MAY 3, 2016**

Good afternoon Chairman Vacca and members of the Committee on Technology. My name is Don Sunderland and I am Deputy Commissioner for Application Development Management at the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications, or DoITT. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on Intro 564, regarding the online submission of city business permits, licenses and applications.

Intro 564, a bill sponsored by Council Member Vacca, would require that “all city permits, licenses and registrations...be available for online submission to the applicable city agency via a single web portal located on the city's website.”

We agree with the bill's intention to centralize application resources for small businesses and appreciate the opportunity to discuss the general direction we are heading as a City.

Since the bill was first drafted in 2014, both DoITT and the City have made great progress in how we do business and deliver services, and we hope to partner with the Council as we continue to map out wide-reaching solutions to increasingly complex and unique challenges.

In recent years, there have been significant developments in how we use the Web to streamline government services and improve access to vital information. DoITT's role here is multifaceted. We are committed to modernizing government technology, and as stewards of the foundational information technology infrastructure and systems that touch every aspect of City life, we are working diligently to foster a more transparent and open government. Further, facilitating greater access to the full spectrum of governmental operations and technology for all New Yorkers is central to our day-to-day business.

To this end, DoITT is contributing to efforts to make City data and agency services more transparent and accessible to the public, expand high-speed broadband access for all communities, and hold telecommunications providers accountable for providing high-quality services.

Our 2015-2017 Strategic Plan (issued April 2015) included a blueprint for becoming a more customer-centric service provider to empower and better support City agencies. Some of these efforts include:

- **Expanding Open Data.** We are working with the Mayor's Office of Data Analytics and City agencies to better leverage open data as a tool to problem-solve collaboratively with the public. Making City data on the open data portal available to everyone reflects the City's commitment to good government, and is

a great example of a forward-thinking approach to how the City can increase opportunity by increasing online access.

- Installing Wi-Fi in City Parks. We worked with Parks to install Wi-Fi access points in City parks through a \$10 million commitment from cable providers to bring affordable Internet access to the public.
- Implementing LinkNYC. We are working to replace an aging network of public payphones with up to 10,000 Link kiosks to provide free high-speed public Wi-Fi and communications access across all five boroughs.

In addition, last year, this administration announced the launch of the City's government publications portal, a portal that enables New Yorkers to easily search and download thousands of City agency reports from a single source.

Also last year, the Department of Small Business Services (SBS) and DoITT announced the launch of the NYC Online Certification Portal, an online tool available for businesses looking to apply for, maintain, or recertify as a Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprises (M/WBEs), Locally-Based Enterprise (LBE), or Emerging Business Enterprise (EBE).

All of this is to say, we are not only eager to utilize new and existing technology to improve and enhance service offerings, we are *making* progress every day. But we *are* up against significant challenges, and the complexity of the solutions we propose should not be understated. We need to carefully consider a pragmatic approach as we move ahead.

Small Business First

DoITT's efforts, along with the efforts of the Mayor's Office of Operations and SBS, on the "Small Business First" initiative to reduce the regulatory burden on small businesses in New York City, is a strong foundation for achieving the goals of Intro 564. Small Business First includes 30 initiatives developed as a direct result of conversations with stakeholders, advocates, small business owners, neighborhood and community leaders, and elected officials representing a diverse slate of City neighborhoods. Included among the initiatives that are being developed are efforts to centralize a business's access to applications, permits, and information across agencies – both in person and online.

Small Business First will build on the City's existing online resources for businesses to create a new, state-of-the-art Online Business Portal that provides the central resource that businesses need, and we believe this is the where and how to accommodate the spirit of Intro 564.

We agree that centralizing online City services for businesses will alleviate some of the administrative burdens small business owners currently face.

Building on the City's existing online resources for businesses, Small Business First will create an Online Business Portal that will allow a business owner to create an account to access personalized information from City records about its business, including licenses,

permits, certifications, inspections, and violations. The account will also allow a business owner to conduct all available online transactions with City agencies, including paying and applying for or renewing licenses and permits, and checking the status of applications. In addition, the business owner will be able to receive information distributed by City agencies, such as updates on the law and renewal notices.

Small Business First and Intro. 564

While Intro. 564 proposes requiring that “all city permits, licenses and registrations... be available for online submission to the applicable city agency via a single web portal,” we would want to further discuss this or any related legislation to ensure that its requirements align with the significant process that is already underway. We believe that the Small Business First initiative encompasses the desired functionality and intended spirit of Intro 564.

The new Online Business Portal will contain the relevant permit, license and registration information tools that are specifically being sought out by entrepreneurs and businesses across the city, and we look forward to further examining how to make it easier for residents to find information on City permits, licenses and registrations through the portal.

There are also non-business related permits and licenses that New Yorker’s want to apply for online. Many agencies have worked to make more applications for permits, licenses or registrations available online and are continuing to make efforts towards this. But there may be some instances where an online application may not make the most sense, or where an approval might involve a more significant review and discussion with the applicant or where there are currently additional security measures to account for.

It is also worth noting that 311 is an additional tool to leverage and promote. Anyone can call 311 and ask how and where to find the relevant information on practically any City permit, license or registration.

Looking Forward

We see a great opportunity here for collaboration and partnership across agencies as we move forward, and DoITT’s role is clear. DoITT must help government improve the availability and efficiency of key public services, and we stand ready to do that. The discussion raised by this proposed bill is helpful in the ongoing conversation. And while the Small Business First path is clear, we need to think ahead and prepare a practical and workable plan for more advanced technology solutions.

We thank Council Member Vacca for his leadership on these issues and thank the Council for being a key partner as we look toward the future. We look forward to answering any questions you might have.

To: NYC Council - Committee on Contracts
From: Noel Hidalgo, Executive Director of BetaNYC



Re: **Int 0564-2014**

Tuesday, 3 May 2016

Dear Chairperson Vacca,

We are supportive of Intro 0564 - 2014. We strongly believe that New York City needs an internal technology and design team to help accomplish the goals of this legislation. Similar to the US Federal Government's 18F or US Digital Services, New York City is at a point where its applications need to be developed in house, through open source tools, and be done in a way where they are expandable to any type of device, regardless of platform.

As part of this legislation's' goals, we hope you would include language that such a system is designed around an Application Protocol Interface (API). This would allow any eligible individual to apply for a permit, licenses, or application anytime, anywhere, and regardless of platform. Additionally, this API would maximize the initial investment and permit the city to grow and adapt the application with minimal cost.

With most New Yorkers using cellphones to access the internet, it is fundamental that this tool be build with a 21st Century values and technology.

We thank you for the opportunity to submit electronic testimony, and apologize that the flu has incapacitated me from being in your company.

Noel Hidalgo

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 564 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 5/3

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: DON SUNDERLAND

Address: _____

I represent: Dep. Comm. for App. Dev. MANHATTAN

Address: DOTT

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