



GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2E

Representing the communities of Burleith, Georgetown, and Hillandale

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October 7, 2022

Ms. Karima Holmes
Acting Director
Office of Unified Communications
2720 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20032
karima.holmes@dc.gov

RE: Inadequacies of DC's 3-1-1 System

Dear Director Holmes,

On October 3, 2022 ANC 2E held its regularly scheduled public meeting, which was properly noticed and attended by six commissioners, constituting a quorum. At this meeting the Commission adopted the following resolution by a vote of (6-0-0) with regard to the above-referenced matter:

3-1-1 is a toll-free number and online app that allows people in the District of Columbia to request assistance with city services and information. Since it is easy to use and easy to remember, 3-1-1 can help improve service delivery to residents, workers, and visitors in our nation's capital. The Office of Unified Communications (OUC) oversees the designated call center for all 3-1-1 calls and online app requests. OUC also oversees all of DC's 9-1-1 calls.

The call center is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Businesses, residents, and visitors can contact 3-1-1 to report a missed scheduled service, inquire about city agency phone numbers and hours of operation, and pursue other customer service-related items. Examples of typical 3-1-1 calls include: broken parking meters, trash collection problems, scheduling a bulk pick-up, potholes, abandoned autos, parking enforcement, tree services, illegal dumping, and street light repair.

While 3-1-1 generally works well, there are specific ways in which 3-1-1 could be improved upon to serve Washingtonians better and to instill greater confidence in the system:

- 1. Revise “Closed” or “Resolved”:** When a 3-1-1 case is closed it would be helpful to include notes on the request if the case is not a straightforward closed case. For

COMMISSIONERS:

Kishan Putta, District 1 Jenny Mitchell, District 2 Rick Murphy, District 3
Lisa Palmer, District 5 Gwendolyn Lohse, District 6
Elizabeth Miller, District 7

example, if a request has been made for a pothole repair and the site manager decides that the problem requires a more significant fix like street repaving, 3-1-1 policy could be to require a few notes to be added into the 3-1-1 case about the manager's findings, rather than simply closing the case. Closing the case without an explanation creates confusion and frustration. A simple one sentence line about the findings and plan would improve communication.

2. **Update "Estimates":** When a 3-1-1 case is submitted and a case identification number is sent to the requestor, it would be helpful to note the estimated time to resolution. Some common requests do note estimates of resolution, but many constituents have expressed displeasure with the amount of time given from filing a 3-1-1 request to resolution.
3. **Status Updates Beyond 30 Days:** 3-1-1 cases that last more than a month should be regularly updated so that residents are kept abreast of actions or delays. For example, dead trees seem to take inordinately long to take down. ANC 2E encourages a specific look into this ongoing tree removal problem. The 3-1-1 online map only allows a public view of cases reported within the last 30 days and tracking the status of cases over 30 days is a challenge for users.
4. **Access to System:** 3-1-1 is available via phone and app. ANC 2E encourages OUC to look into the feasibility of a text number similar to the Metropolitan Police Department's (MPD) text tip alert number (50411).
5. **Data Tracking:** ANC 2E appreciates the <https://311cards.dc.gov> website but finds the system less than intuitive. The ANC recommends that the system be evaluated for ways to become more user friendly.
6. **Use of 3-1-1:** ANC 2E encourages OUC to more widely advertise the 3-1-1 system and to encourage Washingtonians to engage the system to improve their community and the wider city. The system generally works well but can only work if residents know about it and use it.

ANC 2E encourages OUC to make improvements to the 3-1-1 system before skepticism and frustration set in and the system is rendered totally ineffective by residents. The ANC would welcome a meeting with OUC regarding the above recommendations.

Commissioners Elizabeth Miller (2E07@anc.dc.gov) and Rick Murphy (2E03@anc.dc.gov) are the Commission's representatives in this matter.

Respectfully submitted,



Rick Murphy
Chair, ANC 2E