



New York City Comptroller  
John C. Liu

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**LIU AUDIT: MANAGEMENT OF 911 CALL CENTER  
PROJECT WAS INEFFECTIVE**

*-Absentee management led to delays, cost overruns and abandoned priorities -*

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NEW YORK, NY - City Comptroller John C. Liu released an audit that found the Emergency Communications Transformation Program (ECTP) has suffered severe management flaws since its inception, resulting in a domino effect of delays and a billion dollars in cost overruns.

ECTP is now a billion dollars over budget, from an estimated \$1.3 billion, to now an estimated \$2.3 billion (City Capital Commitment plan, dated February 2012.) The project was scheduled to be completed in 2008. The latest figures released by Mayor Bloomberg now peg completion in 2015 - seven years behind schedule.

This audit, the first of two by Comptroller Liu’s office, identifies serious issues with the overall management of this important public safety project. Auditors found an alarming lack of decision-making by City Hall which led to major technical missteps, the abandonment of a critical objective, and poor vendor performance. Other findings show that the current project lacks a quality assurance monitor, and the newly created agency to oversee ECTP is ill-equipped for the job.

“Taxpayers are just tired of hearing about out-of-control projects involving expensive outside consultants,” Comptroller Liu said. “This is unfortunately yet another example of massive waste and delay due to City management that was at best lackadaisical, and at worst, inept. New cost constraints put in place by my office will help curb overruns, though they cannot turn back the clock or put already wasted dollars back in taxpayers’ pockets.”

Last year, Comptroller Liu’s office rejected the New York City Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications’ (DoITT) request for a \$286 million contract for ill-defined services based on hourly consulting fees. That contract, which was with Northrop Grumman for the PSAC #2 component of ECTP was restructured to clearly defined deliverables, with a cost revised down to \$95 million.

Comptroller Liu's office is currently in the process of auditing the HP contract for PSAC #1 (See history below).

## **HISTORY:**

ECTP was initiated in 2004 to consolidate emergency communications (FDNY, NYPD, and EMS) within the City. It is a multi-year, multi-agency undertaking that includes two separate Public Safety Answering Centers (PSAC#1 and PSAC#2). Oversight is delegated to DoITT.

Hewlett Packard was contracted to serve as project manager over PSAC#1 and #2 in 2005, with Northrop Grumman now serving as lead on PSAC#2 since January 2011.

## **AUDIT FINDINGS**

### ***COMMISSIONER'S EARLY WARNING WENT UNHEARD***

City Hall disregarded early warnings from the agency in charge of the project. In April 2007, an internal memo from the then-DoITT Commissioner attempted to sound the alarm on ECTP by raising questions about the vendor's poor management of subcontractors which led to questionable billings, incomplete status reports and schedules, and the lack of corporate oversight or quality assurance.

The Commissioner, with the support of NYPD and FDNY, recommended the contract be cancelled and re-bid. However, City Hall disregarded this advice and instead placed the project under the supervision of a Deputy Mayor, who outlined a timeline to meet three goals for ECTP - none of which were met.

### ***MANAGEMENT OF PROJECT INSUFFICIENT***

Since its inception ECTP has been managed by an interagency governance structure. However, a May 2009 consultant report by the Gartner group, entitled "Lessons Learned," outlined key deficiencies in this structure such as:

- Lack of timely and effective decision making
- Lack of a clearly defined strategy and direction

The Gartner report provides eleven pages of suggested changes in management and standards of operation to prevent the same problems from occurring in PSAC #2.

### ***POOR MANAGEMENT LEAD TO PROJECT DELAYS***

Technical problems with mission critical VESTA software, including the inability to keep up with NYC call volume, led to a three - year delay in the implementation of PSAC#1.

While both PSACs were expected to be operational by 2008, only PSAC#1 is complete. At present time, the foundation and walls have been completed on PSAC#2, with Mayor Bloomberg

recently stating that completion is now expected by 2015 – seven years past its estimated completion and 11 years after the project was announced.

### ***ORIGINAL GOALS HAVE BEEN ABANDONED***

One of the most crucial components of the original plan – a shared Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) between FDNY, NYPD, and EMS scheduled to be completed in 2007, was never implemented and may never be fully established. As a result of this failure in delivery, the NYPD portion of the CAD program has been moved from ECTP completely, resulting in additional expenditures.

### ***MONITORING AGENCY 40 PERCENT UNDERSTAFFED***

In 2010, the Mayor’s Office created the Office of Citywide Emergency Communications (OCEC) to be lead coordinator on the ECTP project. However, the agency has been plagued by personnel changes and leadership problems since its creation. As of September 2011 the agency remained nearly 40 percent below targeted headcount.

### ***NO CURRENT QUALITY ASSURANCE***

In addition to the personnel gap in OCEC, the current project is progressing without any outside monitoring by a quality assurance expert. Instead, DoITT plans on hiring “additional project managers and subject management experts on the program.” Liu’s auditors warned against this, stating that **“going forward on PSAC#2 without an independent QA process could recreate all the deficiencies noted in this report.”**

### **DoITT AGREES WITH AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS**

As a result of the audit DoITT has agreed to all recommendations in order to address the issues that have emerged concerning their ability to provide oversight on this project.

Liu credited Deputy Comptroller H. Tina Kim and the Bureau of Audit for their work on this report. The full audit can be found at [www.comptroller.nyc.gov](http://www.comptroller.nyc.gov)