STATE OF NEW YORK
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

Case 09-C-0058 – Proceeding to Investigate and Evaluate Options for Making Additional Central Office Codes Available in the 718/347 Area Code Region.

NOTICE INVITING COMMENTS ON STAFF OPTIONS PAPER

(Issued May 8, 2009)

The October 2008 Numbering Resource Utilization Forecast (NRUF), published by the North American Numbering Plan Administrator (NANPA), indicates that the geographic area served by area codes 718 and 347 (boroughs of Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island) is running out of assignable telephone numbers. Therefore, implementation of a new area code is necessary. Demand for central office codes in this area is expected to result in the depletion of available central office codes by late 2011, and Commission action is necessary to ensure the continued availability of telephone numbers in the area currently served by the 718/347 area codes.

Before the Commission reaches any decision regarding the best method of providing area code relief, it is essential that telecommunications service providers, consumers, businesses, and other interested parties located in the area have an opportunity to express their views. To structure that process, the Department of Public Service Staff has prepared an Options Paper that discusses 718/347 area code relief. A copy of the Options Paper is attached to this Notice. In addition, the Options Paper can be examined on the Commission's web site, at www.dps.state.ny.us. (From Home Page, click on the AskPSC.com links and look for 718/347 Area Code case; alternatively, access the File Room and search by Case Number.)

Comments in response to the Staff Options Paper are invited from interested parties. As described in the Paper, the

case will solicit public input through other methods, including mailings sent to targeted stakeholders in the affected boroughs, providing information at meetings and events, e-mails and calls to the Commission's toll-free Opinion Line available to consumers.

Any party desiring to submit formal comments on the Options Paper should do so by filing an original and five copies with the Honorable Jaclyn A. Brilling, Secretary, New York State Public Service Commission, Three Empire State Plaza, Albany, New York, 12223-1350, as well as electronically to the Secretary at on or before May 29, 2009. Comments should be served electronically to the Secretary at secretary@dps.state.ny.us and to each party identified on the Active Parties List maintained for this case. Reply comments will be entertained only to the extent they are strictly limited to and responsive to matters raised in initial comments. Reply comments must be filed with Secretary Brilling and served on the Active Parties on or before June 12, 2009.

Anyone desiring to be an Active Party should submit full contact information – name of party, name of representative, mailing address, telephone and facsimile numbers, and e-mail to the Secretary before May 22, 2009, so that the Active Party List can be posted prior to the deadline for service of comments.

(SIGNED) JACLYN A. BRILLING
Secretary

AREA CODE RELIEF FOR NEW YORK CITY

A DESCRIPTION OF OPTIONS

CASE 09-C-0058

Prepared by
The Staff of the New York State
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3 Empire State Plaza
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May 1, 2009

STATE OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE

AN OPTIONS PAPER FOR AREA CODE RELIEF IN NEW YORK CITY

BACKGROUND

The October 2008 Numbering Resource Utilization Forecast (NRUF), published by the North American Numbering Plan Administrator (NANPA), indicates that the geographic area served by area codes 718 and 347 (boroughs of Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island) is running out of assignable telephone numbers. Therefore, implementation of a new area code is necessary. Demand for central office codes in this area is expected to result in the depletion of available central office codes by late 2011, and Commission action is necessary to ensure the continued availability of telephone numbers in the area currently served by the 718/347 area codes.

The purpose of this paper is to present what the Staff of the New York State Department of Public Service (DPS Staff) believes are options for providing additional telephone numbering resources for the affected geographic areas, the goal being to provide long-term area code relief while causing the least possible disruption to consumers and businesses in this area. The Department of Public Service is seeking comment from telecommunications providers and the general public on the area code relief options outlined in this Paper.

The views contained in this Paper are DPS Staff views and have not been reviewed by the Commission. It is expected that recommendations to the Commission on providing area code relief in the 718/347 area will be made in late 2009, and that the Commission will make a determination shortly thereafter. This timeframe will allow sufficient time for the affected telephone companies to make necessary network changes and to educate customers about the impending new area code. The Commission may approve one of the Staff options, a modified version of these options, or entirely different plans. As discussed below,

only overlay options are being considered for this relief plan.[1] Therefore, regardless of the relief plan that is ultimately adopted, dialing patterns will not change and consumer rates will not be affected.

DISCUSSION

A telephone number has ten digits and is composed of three parts: a three-digit Numbering Plan Area (NPA), or area code; a three-digit NXX or central office code; and a four-digit station number (i.e., 315 555-1212). Three-digit central office codes are assigned to specific geographic areas, or rate centers, within each NPA. These central office codes cannot be used elsewhere within the NPA, nor can seven-digit telephone numbers (NXX code plus individual station number) be assigned to end-users outside of their home rate center.

Each NXX code contains approximately 10,000 assignable seven-digit telephone numbers. Approximately 571 of the 792 NXX codes available for assignment in the 347 area code have already been assigned to telecommunications carriers, leaving only 221 NXX codes available for assignment as of April, 2009. Also, 744 of the 792 NXX codes available for assignment in the 917 area code[2] have been assigned. The 718 area code has previously exhausted, and therefore there are no NXX codes available in area code 718. NANPA estimates that the remaining central office codes available in the 718/347 area will run out in late 2011.

In January 2009, in accordance with the Industry Numbering Committee's Area Code Relief Planning Guidelines,[3] NANPA filed a petition with the New York Public Service Commission seeking approval of the industry consensus to overlay a new area code over the existing 718/347 geographic area, upon exhaust of current numbering resources. A second option, which would have included assigning the new NPA to the area of Manhattan, was rejected by industry representatives. Both of these options are discussed below.

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1 An overlay option means that one new code is used throughout the entire geographic area for all new telecommunications services; existing phone numbers are not affected. This area has previously had an NPA overlay, thus a geographic split of this area becomes unviable due to massive customer disruptions that would result.

2 The 917 area code is the only code assigned in the New York City area that serves all five boroughs, and thus codes are still available for use in the 718/347 area, as well as the 212/646 area (Manhattan).

3 ATIS-0300061, issued January 19, 2007.

PROPOSED OPTIONS

Overlay

An overlay plan assigns a new area code to a given geographic area and provides area code relief by opening up the new code throughout the geographic area of the existing code, in effect, "overlaying" it. Existing customers (wireline or wireless) are not required to change their area codes or seven-digit telephone numbers. Central office codes from the new area code are assigned as needed on a carrier-neutral (i.e., first-come, first-served) basis for new service requests. In areas where NPA codes have been overlayed, such as the 718/347 area, Federal Communications Commission regulations require 10-digit dialing.[4] Ten-digit dialing is intended to provide a more level playing field among carriers competing in the same geographic region so that new telephone companies can offer services without a competitive disadvantage. Without 10-digit dialing, customers might choose a carrier based on opportunity to dial 7 digits versus 10.

Option 1 – All Services Distributed Overlay for the existing 718/347 NPAs

This option would assign a new area code to the same geographic area as the existing 718/347 area (see attachment 1). All local calls within and between the 718/347 NPA and the new NPA would continue to be dialed using 1+10 digit dialing. NANPA projects a 10-year life for this option.

Option 2 - All Services Distributed Overlay for the existing 212/646/917/718/347 NAPs

This option would assign a new area code to the same geographic area as the existing 718/347 area, as well as the 212, 646 and 917 areas (see attachment 2). All local calls within and between these NPAs and the new NPA would continue to be dialed using 1+10 digit dialing. NANPA projects a 6-year life for this option.

Discussion

Option 1 is projected to extend the life of the 718/347 area to late 2021. Option 2 is projected to extend the life of the 718/347 area to 2017, or four years less than Option 1. However, Option 2 also is projected to extend the life of the 212/646 NPA to late 2017, or an additional three years over current projections.[5] If these projections are accurate, choosing

[4] The dialing plan for New York State also includes the prefix "1" (1+NPA+NXX-XXXX)

[5] NANPA's most recent data shows that the area served by the 212/646 area (Manhattan) is expected to run out of assignable numbers in 2014.

Option 2 would require a new area code in 2017 for the geographic area served by the 212/646 and 718/347 NPAs.

At a meeting on December 9, 2008, industry representatives reached consensus to recommend Option 1, citing its projected longer life than Option 2 and the fact that it poses less customer confusion. The industry cited no advantages to Option 2. However, Staff notes that although Option 2 will provide for a quicker exhaust of assignable numbers in the 718/347 NPA, it will also serve to extend the life of the 212/646 NPA by an estimated three years. The industry also recommends that the Commission allow for a nine month schedule of implementation of the overlay.

CONSUMER OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

The initial objectives of this proceeding will be to 1) inform affected consumers of the need for new area code in the 718/347 area; 2) receive feedback on consumer preferences regarding the options presented in this Paper; and 3) receive comments related to the need for another code in this region. Soliciting feedback and comments will be accomplished through use of the AskPSC.com website, sending mailings to targeted stakeholders in the affected boroughs, and providing information at meetings and events.

Since consumers in this region have previously experienced the introduction of a new area code using the code overlay method, it is expected that the addition of another code will be routine, particularly since it does not affect existing telephone numbers, dialing patterns or rates. Therefore, public hearings will likely not be necessary. However, if public input of this Paper indicates that hearings are in the best interest of consumers, such hearings will be arranged.

Consumers may comment as follows:

1. By writing a letter addressed to Hon. Jaclyn A. Brilling, Secretary, New York State Public Service Commission, 3 Empire State Plaza, Albany, New York 12223-1350;

2. By calling the PSC's toll-free Opinion Line (1-800-335-2120) and leaving a comment on the recording; or

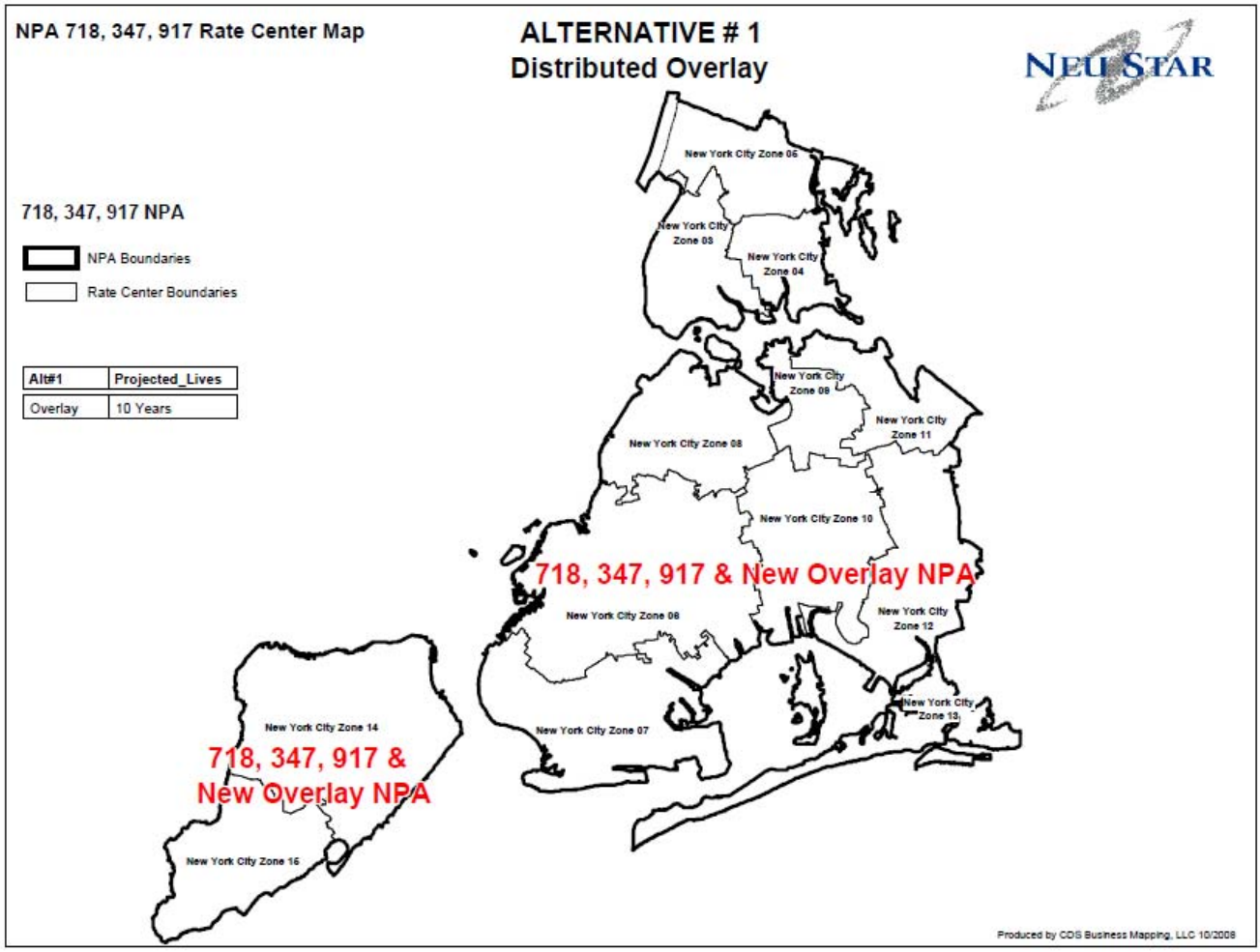
3. By commenting online at www.AskPSC.com.

All comments should reference the "718/347 Area Code Case" and/or "Case 09-C-0058." All of these comments will become part of the formal record in the case.

CONCLUSION

This Paper states no preference as to the method of providing area code relief in the 718/347 area. Comments are sought from all those affected, including residents, businesses and organizations in the region, on the two options contained herein. This feedback will be used to make an informed recommendation to the Commission.

Attachment 1



Attachment 2

