



Update – Toronto Paramedic Services Open Data

Date: August 25, 2017

To: Community Development and Recreation Committee

From: Gord McEachen, Acting Chief, Toronto Paramedic Services; Rob Meikle, Chief Information Officer

Wards: All

SUMMARY

This report provides supplementary information to an Administrative Inquiry submitted by Councillor Paul Ainslie, and referred to the Community Development and Recreation Committee by City Council on July 4, 2017, regarding Toronto Paramedic Services' (TPS') publication of incident data on the City's Open Data web portal as referenced in 2016.CD13.8. The Administrative Inquiry sought answers to the following questions:

1. Why has Toronto Paramedic Services not posted the incident data for publication on the Open Data web portal?
2. Why has Toronto Paramedic Services not incorporated the City of Toronto's mandate as per the City Open Data Policy?
3. When will Toronto Paramedic Services regularly release open data sets and update on a regular basis?

As of August 10, 2017, five years (2012 – 2016 inclusive) of historical TPS response data have been published on the City's Open Data web portal, with annual updates to be released in January of each year. The data consists of incident numbers, incident types, vehicle assignment times, number of vehicles assigned, and forward sortation areas in which individual incidents occurred.

In preparation for its release, the dataset has also undergone an extensive privacy review, conducted by the City Clerk's Office and involving multiple consultations, to ensure its publication is in compliance with the Ontario *Personal Health Information and Protection Act*, *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and with the City's Open Data Policy.

In keeping with the City's Information Management Framework, TPS is committed to accountable management of the information it collects and generates. By making information more accessible, TPS also supports the City's Open Government strategy to build public trust and confidence in government, and to improve the delivery of City services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Acting Chief, Toronto Paramedic Services and the Chief Information Officer recommend that:

1. The Community Development and Recreation Committee receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial impacts as a result of this report.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact statement.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on March 7, 2016, the Community Development and Recreation Committee requested the Chief, TPS, in consultation with the City Solicitor, to investigate options for an open data format for the daily incident responses and associated data on the City of Toronto website and report to the June 23, 2016, Community Development and Recreation Committee meeting. The full report can be found at <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.CD10.9>.

The Executive Committee at its meeting on May 24, 2016, requested the City Manager, in consultation with the Chief Information Officer, the City Clerk and the City Solicitor to develop an Open Data Strategic Plan to address, among other things, the Open Data challenges and opportunities identified by TPS in its report to the Community Development and Recreation Committee. The full report can be found at <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.EX15.25>.

At the June 23, 2016, meeting of the Community Development and Recreation Committee, TPS provided an information report in response to the request of March 7, 2016, noted above. In it, TPS explained that it would be able to provide five years of historical incident data for publication on the Open Data web portal while, followed by annual updates of the data in January of each year. The full report can be found at <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.CD13.8>.

At its meeting of July 4, 5, 6 and 7, 2017, City Council referred an Administrative Inquiry submitted by Councillor Paul Ainslie to the Community Development and Recreation Committee regarding TPS' publication of incident data on the City's Open Data web portal as referenced in 2016.CD13.8. The Administrative Inquiry and response from TPS can be found at <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.IA31.3>.

COMMENTS

Publication of TPS Incident Data

As of August 10, 2017, five years (2012 – 2016 inclusive) of historical TPS response have been published on the City's Open Data web portal. The data consists of incident numbers, incident types, vehicle assignment times, number of vehicles assigned, and forward sortation areas in which individual incidents occurred. Annual updates of the data are expected to occur in January of each year. The dataset can be found at www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=3994ee998c7cd510VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD&vgnnextchannel=1a66e03bb8d1e310VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD.

In addition, TPS provides annual response time performance plans and outcome data for its ambulance operations as well as for its communications centre to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) – these plans and data are published and available on the MOHLTC website, and can be found at: www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/program/ehs/land/responsetime.html.

TPS and the City's Open Data team are actively working to publish the performance and outcome data provided to the MOHLTC on the City's Open Data web portal, and target to have this completed by no later than Q4 2017.

Data Preparation and Review

The degree of analysis and reformatting of the TPS data, along with privacy considerations that were required to be undertaken, made the process more complex and longer than that required for more standard datasets.

In preparing for its publication on the Open Data web portal, the volume of historical incident data that needed to be generated by TPS was exceptionally large – close to 300,000 records per year for the 5-year period noted above. In addition, it was necessary for the data to be analyzed and properly reformatted for publication in accordance with the Open Data Policy.

The dataset subsequently underwent a privacy review by the City Clerk's Office (see "Data Privacy" below) to ensure it did not include personal information or personal health information. The review also ensured that, once posted, the dataset could not be linked to or combined with available data from other Divisions or agencies (e.g., Toronto Fire Services incident data), thereby leading to identification of an individual patient that TPS had cared for. Such identification would have constituted a privacy breach under the Ontario *Personal Health Information and Protection Act (PHIPA)*.

Data Privacy

Under the *Ambulance Act* of Ontario, TPS is accountable to the MOHLTC for the health information it collects from its land ambulance and communications centre operations. As a Health Information Custodian (HIC) under PHIPA, TPS must also ensure that the

personal and health information it collects is maintained securely within its custody, so as not to lead to inappropriate identification of patients.

The privacy review conducted by the City Clerk's Office determined that the published TPS incident data does not include either personal information or personal health information, and that the posting of the data set would not be found to breach PHIPA. As a result, in the opinion of the City Clerk's Office, there are no apparent privacy concerns regarding the publication of the TPS dataset.

Compliance with Open Data Policy

TPS supports the City's commitment to making information more accessible in order to build public trust and confidence in government and to improve the delivery of City services. In keeping with this commitment, TPS has actively worked with the Office of the Chief Information Officer (CIO) to ensure that the content and publication of TPS data on the City's Open Data web portal conforms to the Open Data Policy. In addition, TPS continues to be actively involved in the co-development of the City's Open Data Master Plan, as demonstrated through its participation in recent internal and public consultations.

Next Steps

TPS commits to providing annual updates of its incident response data, now posted on the City's Open Data web portal. These updates will occur in January of each year, commencing in 2018. In addition, TPS and the City's Open Data team are actively working to publish the performance and outcome data provided to the MOHLTC on the City's Open Data web portal, and target to have this completed by no later than Q4 2017.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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