

Review of Toronto Police Service - Opportunities to Support More Effective Responses to Calls for Service A Journey of Change: Improving Community Safety and Well-Being Outcomes

Date: June 24, 2022

To: Audit Committee

From: Auditor General

Wards: All

SUMMARY

Toronto Police Service (TPS) plays a key role in ensuring the safety and well-being of the people of Toronto through its delivery of policing services. As first responders, TPS officers are on the front lines and respond to a variety of situations. However, we found TPS has effectively become the default response in some situations, responding to some calls for service that are not police matters, due in part to the lack of available effective alternate responses at the times they are needed.

Furthermore, a lack of adequate social service supports for vulnerable individuals including people experiencing homelessness, mental health and substance use challenges, has resulted in a default police response to some calls for service. Supporting the complex needs of these individuals is not something that a police emergency response was intended to resolve and alternative community-based responses, if in place and available when needed, can help to provide the needed social supports for people.

Modernizing and enhancing the way data is captured and leveraged provides the opportunity for TPS to work with the City and stakeholders in an informed way to divert some non-emergency 9-1-1 calls, as well as some calls for service to alternative responses that may be able to provide better outcomes for vulnerable individuals.

In our view, based on the results, it is not a 'lift and shift' of calls for service and funding, but a strategy of gradual transition for alternative non-police responses where appropriate, with the shared goal to improve outcomes for the people of Toronto.

These are complex matters needing better information to support transition. Opportunities for alternative responses may grow over time as better information is captured and analyzed, and while alternative responses are piloted and evaluated for potential further roll-out.

Once the pilots for alternative non-police responses have been established and evaluated, which will likely take several years, funding levels and sources should be re-assessed. Other factors impacting both TPS and the City should also be considered, including the population growth, the demand level to meet the needs of vulnerable individuals, strategic priorities and resourcing to achieve them, as well as other considerations such as the impact of mandated NG9-1-1 requirements.

This review also highlights that a whole-of-government and a whole-of-community commitment and approach is needed. Strategic investment by all levels of government in social service infrastructure and alternative strategies is necessary in order to create long-term value for the City, for individuals and the community. The need for funding supports from other levels of government for social infrastructure is also supported by our recent audits of the City's shelters and affordable housing program.

Ensuring community safety and well-being will require active leadership and commitment from the City, and multi-sector collaboration and partnership in pursuing alternative responses that will allow TPS to focus on achieving its mandate and provide the best possible outcomes for the people of Toronto.

It will be important for TPS, the City, and other stakeholders to develop concrete community-wide plans that include the desired outcomes and a framework to capture data, and track, evaluate and report out publicly on the progress of pilot outcomes. This will help the City, TPS, and other stakeholders to make evidence-based decisions and ensure transparency and accountability as all stakeholders move forward together.

The following will be important to achieve the change needed:

- identifying key and shared outcomes as part of strategic planning and collaboration and use evidence-based data to inform decisions
- being transparent and accountable by tracking and reporting out publicly on progress against agreed plans and outcomes
- being committed and building trust and support between stakeholders as they move through any barriers and difficulties towards common goals.

The recommendations for change are in three key areas.

1. Re-thinking Call for Service Response to Support More Efficient and Effective Outcomes
2. Improving and Further Leveraging Data and Technology
3. Increasing Integration and Information Sharing

The review contains 25 recommendations for change in 3 key areas and 11 of these are relevant to the City's management response. The recommendations provide key stakeholders with a starting point that will support them on their journey of long-term change as TPS works with the City and stakeholders to move forward together.

This report contains 11 recommendations made to the City Manager's Office and applicable City divisions for consideration by City Council that are relevant to the City's management response. The list of these recommendations referenced between the

review report and this report can be found in Attachment 2 (Appendix 2 with references). The full list of the Auditor General's recommendations made to both City Council and the Toronto Police Services Board can be found in Appendix 1 to this report.

The public report was tabled at the June 22, 2022 TPSB meeting. The agenda for the meeting and the report are available at:

<https://tpsb.ca/jdownloads-categories?task=download.send&id=733&catid=32&m=0>

The Toronto Police Services Board will forward a transmittal on its actions to the Audit Committee for information.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Auditor General recommends that:

1. City Council request the City Manager, and request the Toronto Police Services Board to direct the Chief, Toronto Police Service (TPS) to work in collaboration along with other agencies, to determine the feasibility of setting up adequately resourced, non-time restrictive, alternative responses for events where police are currently attending and where such attendance is likely not essential; and City Council request staff and the Toronto Police Services Board, in doing so to:

a. identify call for service event types, including but not limited to, the six event types discussed in our report that may be suitable for an alternative response;

b. develop reasonable criteria for each event type to assess the calls for service within those event types that may be suitable for an alternative response, including defining the level of acceptable risk and liability and how these factors will be managed;

c. consider alternative response pilot programs (e.g. community dispute mediation), with adequate evaluation mechanisms, to provide information and insights on the effectiveness of any established responses. This should include an assessment of the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of providing these alternative responses;

d. consider existing City or other community programs that could provide an alternative response and where needed, the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of changing the approach and resourcing to provide a timely and effective non-police response (e.g. Municipal Licensing and Standards Division for noisy small gatherings, Shelter, Support & Housing Administration Division street outreach teams);

e. consider a gradual and informed approach to establishing responses and assess the factors that would be needed for an effective and efficient full transition, including consultation with the public; and,

f. develop and regularly update a plan that includes key milestones and targets so that progress can be tracked.

2. City Council request the City Manager, in consultation with the Toronto Police Services Board, to reiterate the City's requests for funding commitments from the Government of Canada and the Ontario Government to support permanent housing options and to provide supports to address Toronto's mental health and addictions crises, and in doing so, to communicate to the other governments that a "whole-of-government" funding approach in these areas will be critical to building the infrastructure needed to support effective alternative response delivery and ensure the best possible outcomes for the people of Toronto.

3. City Council request the Chief, Toronto Paramedic Services, and request the Toronto Police Services Board to direct the Chief, Toronto Police Service (TPS) to work in collaboration to review current protocols for when Priority Response Unit (PRU) officers are requested for See Ambulance calls for service; such review should include:

a. determining if there are any opportunities to further refine the See Ambulance protocol so that the attendance of PRU officers is based on an articulable risk to paramedic safety, specific to the unique circumstances of each call for service;

b. re-evaluating the criteria for when police are requested. This evaluation should specifically consider, but not be limited to, if the presence of alcohol, in absence of other risk factors, requires an automatic PRU response;

c. ensuring that the rationale for requesting PRU attendance and other important information is clearly documented in the Toronto Paramedic Services call for service details. Both entities should also consider documenting which entity initiated the request for attendance from the other entity;

d. in situations where TPS would have sent PRU officers to calls for service irrespective of a request from Toronto Paramedic Services, TPS should consider documenting this in its call for service system;

e. regular, joint evaluation of calls for service where PRU attendance is requested, to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the revised protocol and consider any changes as necessary; and,

f. considering if additional training is needed for TPS and Toronto Paramedic Services call takers to ensure requests for police attendance are well documented and comply with policies and procedures.

4. City Council request the City Manager, and request the Toronto Police Services Board to direct the Chief, Toronto Police Service (TPS) to work in collaboration along with other agencies to analyze low priority, non-emergency calls for service (e.g. Unwanted Guests, Check Address etc.) to identify instances where officers are repeatedly attending the same locations; to determine if an alternative resolution can be

implemented. In developing solutions, TPS should consider if call for service volume can be reduced through implementing Recommendation 1 of this report.

5. City Council request the City Manager, to work in collaboration with the President & CEO, Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) and request the Toronto Police Services Board to direct the Chief, Toronto Police Service (TPS) to determine if strategies can be implemented to reduce instances of Priority Response Unit officers repeatedly dispatched to the same locations within TCHC properties.

6. City Council request the City Manager, and request the Toronto Police Services Board to direct the Chief, Toronto Police Service (TPS) to work in collaboration to:

a. conduct joint program assessments of the outcomes from current mental health call for service diversion pilots, including the Gerstein Crisis Centre call for service diversion pilot, and the City's Toronto Community Crisis Service, to assess the effectiveness and outcomes of these programs;

b. ensure mechanisms are in place so that both the City and TPS have access to the necessary data, including TPS call for service data (e.g. number of calls for service received, diverted) and relevant call for service details to complete effective evaluations of the current and any future pilots; and,

c. ensure planning for future pilot programs are coordinated, involve both the City and TPS, and consider the recommendations from Section A.1 of this report, to ensure they are achieving the desired outcomes in the most efficient and effective way.

7. City Council request the Chief, Toronto Paramedic Services and request the Toronto Police Services Board to direct the Chief, Toronto Police Service (TPS), in consultation with Toronto Paramedic Services and the Chief Executive Officers (or other appropriate executive liaisons) of Toronto hospitals to:

a. leverage technology and/or the use of data to identify the most appropriate hospital for an officer to transport an individual in custody, with the view of minimizing wait times and travelling the least possible distance; and

b. develop police-hospital liaison committees and transfer of care protocols with all hospitals where TPS transports apprehended persons, to minimize wait times and develop protocols to create a workflow which will benefit both TPS and the hospitals.

8. City Council request the City Manager, and request the Toronto Police Services Board to direct the Chief, Toronto Police Service (TPS) to work in collaboration to:

a. assess if current call for service diversion strategies to the City, through 3-1-1 Toronto, are working as intended, and if TPS and City staff clearly understand the roles and responsibilities; such assessment to include evaluation of call volumes and outcomes at both TPS's Communications Centre and 3-1-1 Toronto for relevant call for service types; and

b. assess if there are opportunities to increase call for service diversion from TPS to the City.

9. City Council request the City Manager, and request the Toronto Police Services Board to direct the Chief, Toronto Police Service (TPS) to work in collaboration to consider through an interface or other means, increasing the information shared between City divisions (e.g. Municipal Licensing and Standards Division, 3-1-1 Toronto, etc.) and TPS on a per call for service basis (e.g. addresses where police respond to noisy parties) so that trends can be identified and the City can help address the root cause of issues that are not police matters and City Council request that, before undertaking any data sharing, TPS and the City perform a legal review, which includes consideration of any relevant privacy considerations, specifically the requirements outlined in the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

10. City Council request the City Manager, and request the Toronto Police Services Board to direct the Chief, Toronto Police Service (TPS) to work in collaboration to leverage 2-1-1 Central data in conjunction with call for service data, at an aggregate level, to identify neighbourhoods where there are a high number of low priority calls for service, and where community resources may exist to help divert front-line police resources and City Council request that before undertaking any data sharing, TPS and the City perform a legal review, which includes consideration of any relevant privacy considerations, specifically the requirements outlined in the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

11. City Council request the City Manager, and request the Toronto Police Services Board to direct the Chief, Toronto Police Service (TPS) to work in collaboration to consider implementing public awareness campaigns addressing the public's perceptions on people experiencing mental health challenges and/or homelessness and what type of response (e.g. police or non-police response) would be most appropriate and such process should include mechanisms for campaign evaluation (e.g. key metrics that will be measured), a process for including community engagement in the planning process and determining the most appropriate target audience.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

A whole-of-government and a whole-of-community commitment and approach is needed. Strategic investment by all levels of government in social service infrastructure and alternative strategies is necessary in order to create long-term value for individuals, the community and the City. The need for funding supports from other levels of government for social infrastructure is also supported by our recent audits of the City's shelters and affordable housing program.

DECISION HISTORY

At the request for the Toronto Police Services Board (TPSB), the Auditor General completed a risk assessment of TPS to develop a risk-based audit plan. This plan was

independently developed by the Auditor General and sets the audit priorities at TPS over the next five years.

The Auditor General's risk-based audit plan of TPS included a review of assessing policing responsibilities and service areas. This review is part of the Auditor General's 2022 Audit Work Plan.

The 2022 Audit Work Plan is available at:

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2021/au/bgrd/backgroundfile-172597.pdf>

COMMENTS

A high-level summary of key findings is provided in the At a Glance.

The attached report provides the Audit Committee and members of Council with the detailed results and recommendations together with management's response. City management has agreed to all 11 relevant recommendations - see Appendix 2 for the City's management response.

CONTACT

Tara Anderson, Assistant Auditor General, Auditor General's Office
Tel: 647-461-7013 E-mail: Tara.Anderson@toronto.ca

Bruno Gallé, Audit Director, Auditor General's Office
Tel: 416-995-5930 E-mail: Bruno.Galle@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Beverly Romeo-Beehler
Auditor General

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 -

Review of Toronto Police Service - Opportunities to Support More Effective Responses to Calls for Service

A Journey of Change: Improving Community Safety and Well-Being Outcomes

Attachment 2 -

Appendix 2 with References to Cover Report: City Management's Response to Relevant Recommendations to the Auditor General's Report Entitled: "Review of Toronto Police Service - Opportunities to Support More Effective Responses to Calls for Service, A Journey of Change: Improving Community Safety and Well-Being Outcomes"