

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 14, 2022

To: Toronto Police Services Board

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, 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.

This report makes 25 recommendations to the Toronto Police Services Board (TPSB), and also recommends that the TPSB forward this report and its actions to City Council for information through the City's Audit Committee. The recommendations for change are in 3 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 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.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Auditor General recommends that:

1. City Council request the City Manager, and the Toronto Police Services Board 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.

In doing so, the City and TPS should:

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.

In doing so, the City should 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. Toronto Police Services Board direct the Chief, Toronto Police Service (TPS), in consultation with the Toronto Police Association, to:

a. assess the impact of expanding the Primary Report Intake, Management and Entry (PRIME) Unit, Community Investigative Support Unit (CISU) and District Special Constable programs, and, where appropriate, if it would assist with supporting and/or further reducing the time spent on events currently attended by Priority Response Unit (PRU) officers. For the PRIME and CISU units, consider both sworn members (including retired officers) and potentially civilian members, where appropriate, for potential expanded capacity.

b. consider if all TPS Special Constables, including Court Officers and District Special Constables, can be cross-trained to increase the pool of Special Constables available to assist the PRU in call for service diversion.

4. Toronto Police Services Board direct the Chief, Toronto Police Service to examine if:

a. aspects of the Primary Report Intake, Management and Entry Unit and Community Investigative Support Unit (CISU) can be centralized together, so that the workload can be shared and calls for service can be handled more efficiently.

b. For aspects that cannot be centralized, (e.g. mobile CISU units) consider more clearly defining the responsibilities and expectations, including workload allocations, to both units.

5. City Council request the Chief, Toronto Paramedic Services, and the Toronto Police Services Board 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. This 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. ensure 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. consider 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.

6. Toronto Police Services Board direct the Chief, Toronto Police Service (TPS) to evaluate the root causes for increasing response times and determine a strategy for meeting priority one to priority three response time targets. This should specifically include:

a. considering strategies for how to improve staff deployability rates, both across the organization and for individual TPS divisions;

This could include reallocating officers across divisions when needed, and more active management of TPS members who are on accommodation, or long or short-term disability.

b. assessing how implementing the recommendations in Section A of this report would assist with improving response times.

7. Toronto Police Services Board (TPSB) direct the Chief, Toronto Police Service (TPS) to:

a. evaluate the root causes for increasing clearance times, particularly for non-emergency, low priority (priority four to six) calls for service, and consider the impact on response times; and,

b. in collaboration with TPSB, consider setting reasonableness thresholds for call for service clearance times by event type and evaluating/analyzing clearance times across divisions and event types to enhance performance measurement and operational monitoring at a high-level (e.g. divisional and/or TPS-wide).

8. Toronto Police Services Board, work in collaboration with the Chief, Toronto Police Service (TPS) to:

a. review response time standards adopted as part of the Metropolitan Toronto Police Restructuring Task Force's "Beyond 2000: Final Report" and determine if any updates are needed;

b. once a reasonable set of response time standards have been agreed upon and formally adopted, communicate them across the organization and routinely measure progress against those standards;

c. consider publicly reporting out on its response time performance to increase transparency and accountability; and,

d. consider its current response time calculation methodology and consider including the impact of call taker time and any other relevant factors, including items which may not be currently included.

9. Toronto Police Services Board direct the Chief, Toronto Police Service (TPS) to determine if an automated technology solution can be implemented to improve completeness of information for officer arrival times (or increase compliance with officers pressing the “at-scene” button), so that arrival time is recorded for all responses and that all responses are included in the response time calculation.

10. Toronto Police Services Board direct the Chief, Toronto Police Service (TPS) to ensure its 70/30 reactive/proactive officer time goal is effectively communicated across the organization, understood by the front line, and regularly measured.

In measuring achievement of this goal, TPS should identify divisions where the goal has not been met, identify the root causes, and develop strategies to enhance achievement.

11. Toronto Police Services Board direct the Chief, Toronto Police Service (TPS) to improve TPS data quality and reliability by:

a. establishing more detailed time categories in the I/CAD system, so that TPS can have more detailed information on how time is being spent on a per call for service basis. For example, this could include time spent on activities such as reporting, time spent during calls for service on investigative activities, and time spent on customer service/dispute resolution/mediation.

In improving the usefulness of data for time tracking purposes, TPS should consider both the need to collect more enhanced, detailed information, and the operational demands on TPS members.

b. improve the reliability of the data of the Time Resource Management System, including ensuring accurate reflection of leave hours, and members’ work assignments;

c. improve data reliability and quality related to members on disability and/or accommodation; and,

d. consider opportunities for integration between staffing and accommodation/disability management systems, where appropriate, so that there is one clear, reliable source of information for making staffing, resourcing and wellness decisions.

12. Toronto Police Services Board direct the Chief, Toronto Police Service (TPS) to improve the collection and analysis of its call for service data so that it includes more detailed sub-categories or data fields for responding officers to indicate the nature of the calls for service. This will allow for more robust data analysis and provide data for calls for service that may be suitable for alternative responses. Specifically, this should include:

- a. sub-categories/data fields to better understand event types that are broad in nature. For example, Check Address, Unknown Trouble, Advised and 311 Referral;
- b. system flags/data fields to identify any calls for service that involved interaction with persons experiencing homelessness and/or mental health challenges, or any other factors that may be helpful in analyzing calls for service; and,
- c. text analysis on call for service notes in the call for service system to allow for more effective event analysis.

13. City Council request the City Manager, and the Toronto Police Services Board direct the Chief, Toronto Police Service (TPS) to work in collaboration along with other agencies to:

- a. 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.
- b. for calls for service at hospitals related to missing persons inquiries, consider if a technological solution, such as an automated portal with authentication, may help reduce hospital visits and free-up officer time for more priority calls for service.

This evaluation should consider legislative requirements and consultation with the Ministry of the Solicitor General and other stakeholders, as required.

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

15. Toronto Police Services Board direct the Chief, Toronto Police Service (TPS) to:

- a. accelerate the Digital Officer program and electronic memo book initiative, including any interfaces with other records management and reporting systems, to create efficiencies in how front-line officer time is spent.
- b. consider any best practices that can be leveraged from other jurisdictions, and if any aspects of a digital memo book can be implemented on a more short-term basis, even if full integration is not achieved.

16. Toronto Police Services Board direct the Chief, Toronto Police Service (TPS) to:

- a. continue to pursue digital strategies, such as video calling, as an alternative to front-line Priority Response Unit officer response and consider if there are any event types that can be addressed remotely without an on-scene police response.

In doing so, TPS should assess if there are any legislative or privacy requirements that would need to be examined in relation to increased use of technology such as video capability.

b. review event types and consider if there are any additional event types that the public can report through the online reporting system or if current reporting criteria (e.g. dollar value limits) can be expanded.

17. Toronto Police Services Board direct the Chief, Toronto Police Service (TPS) to consider as part of its Digital Platform and Transformation Program, an interface for callers to communicate with TPS call takers and provide additional information, and provide confirmation, for certain event types, if a situation no longer exists, such as that an unwanted guest has gone or a noisy party has concluded.

18. City Council request the City Manager, and the Toronto Police Services Board 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.

19. Toronto Police Services Board direct the Chief, Toronto Police Service (TPS) to:

a. consider automating and streamlining the process by which TPS members make and track referrals for community-based services, including the Furthering Our Community by Uniting Services (FOCUS) table and other community referrals, with the goals of making the referral process easier for officers, preventing further repeat calls for service requiring Priority Response Unit officer response, increasing diversion to supporting organizations, and improving the outcomes and quality of service to the public.

b. with these same goals in mind, TPS to also consider performing analysis of call for service data at a corporate level to identify trends or possibly situations that may also be suitable for referral.

20. Toronto Police Services Board direct the Executive Director and Chief of Staff, Toronto Police Services Board Office, in consultation with the Chief, Toronto Police

Service, and other stakeholders as necessary, to request changes to the legislation for mental health apprehensions regarding police custody while waiting at hospitals.

21. Toronto Police Services Board direct the Chief, Toronto Police Service (TPS), in consultation with the Chief, 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.
- 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.

22. City Council request the City Manager, and the Toronto Police Services Board 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.

This should include evaluation of call volumes and outcomes at both TPS's Communications Centre and 3-1-1 Toronto for relevant call for service types.

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

23. City Council request the City Manager, and the Toronto Police Services Board 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.

Before undertaking any data sharing, TPS and the City should 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.

24. City Council request the City Manager, and the Toronto Police Services Board 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.

Before undertaking any data sharing, TPS and the City should 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.

25. City Council request the City Manager, and the Toronto Police Services Board 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.

This 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.

26. Toronto Police Services Board forward this report and its actions to City Council for information through the City's Audit Committee.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Based on average time-on-call for the event types above, we estimate that TPS could potentially save at least 85,000 hours over a projected five-year period if even some of these calls for service received a non-PRU response. The exact amount of savings cannot be determined at this time due to factors including limitations with TPS data systems and the varying nature of calls for service.

This savings in time could be used to improve TPS call for service response times, particularly for priority one to three events where there can be a risk of danger to life or damage to property, and will help achieving better outcomes for those calling for assistance.

While realizing these savings in PRU officer hours would likely result in positive impacts for TPS and the people of Toronto, the extent of these impacts is contingent on adequately resourced alternative responses that are available city-wide, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In most cases, these alternatives do not exist today and largely fall outside the purview of TPS to control.

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.

The plan can be found here:

[Attachment 5: Toronto Police Services Board Approval of Auditor General's Proposed Audit Plan](#)

COMMENTS

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

The attached report provides the Toronto Police Services Board (TPSB) with the detailed results and recommendations together with management's response. Management has agreed to all 25 recommendations.

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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