

Implementation Update: Auditor General Recommendations on 9-1-1 Operations and Responses to Calls for Service by the Toronto Police Service

Date: October 17, 2023

To: Executive Committee

From: Deputy City Manager, Community and Social Services

Wards: All

SUMMARY

This report provides an update to City Council on recommendations made by the Auditor General's (AG) office in items AU13.5 and AU13.6.

In July 2022, City Council received two reports from the AG, which presented findings from audits undertaken to improve and modernize the Toronto Police Service (TPS).

The AG audits focused on two areas:

- 1) Enhancing the efficiency of 9-1-1 operations ([2022.AU13.5](#))
- 2) Supporting more effective responses to calls for service to improve community safety and well-being ([2022.AU13.6](#))

The AG posed 51 recommendations across the two reports. Of these, 16 involved the City Manager's Office and relevant City Divisions, including Toronto Paramedic Services (PS), Toronto Fire Services (TFS), Social Development, Finance and Administration (SDFA), Municipal Licensing and Standards (MLS), Customer Experience Division (CXD, formerly 311), and others.

In July 2023, TPS presented a comprehensive update to the Toronto Police Services Board (TPSB) on the status of all 51 AG recommendations. Building on the July 2023 TPS update, this report provides an update on the 16 AG recommendations directed to the City Manager's Office and other City Divisions.

A detailed status update for each of the 16 AG recommendations can be found in Appendix 1. As of October 2023, 14/16 (88%) of the AG recommendations are actively in progress, one is implemented and ongoing, and one has not yet started. The status of these recommendations is subject to verification by the Auditor General.

Progress on the AG recommendations reflects a year of positive collaboration among police and City staff to modernize the TPS, enhance their operations, and support community safety for Toronto residents.

Key milestones include the launch and evaluation of the Toronto Community Crisis Service (TCCS) and 9-1-1 Crisis Call Diversion (CCD) pilots, which yielded 78% and 65% successful diversion rates for calls received, respectively. These programs represent promising alternative responses to support mental health and community safety while enabling police to refocus on emergency matters within their mandate.

The revived 9-1-1 Committee has enabled TPS, TFS, and PS to meet quarterly, with discussions focused on improving 9-1-1 operations. This partnership among the tri-services has set the stage for the successful rollout and transfer of operations to Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1), expected no later than March 2025, which will further improve interconnectivity, data sharing, and the efficiency of call transfers.

Ongoing partnership and knowledge exchange among the tri-services has supported TFS and PS to reduce call transfer times (the time it takes for police to transfer a call to TFS or PS dispatchers) and maintain national standards. TFS Call Answering performance has consistently remained within the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) standard of 15 seconds 90% of the time. PS has undertaken significant recruitment and training efforts to improve call transfer times, with a 53% reduction in average call transfer time in August 2023, when compared to July 2022.

Areas for action and next steps include ongoing coordination among TPS, CXD, and MLS to receive and respond to non-emergency service requests, particularly noise complaints. Criteria and guidance for where to direct noise complaints need to be reinforced internally and more broadly communicated to the public. Continued partnership among TPS, CXD and MLS, alongside a new awareness campaign slated for launch mid-to-late October 2023, will help minimize confusion and ensure Torontonians can 'make the right call' when it comes to non-emergency issues like noise.

Overall, this report demonstrates a strong, collaborative foundation for the City and TPS to continue driving AG recommendations to completion. The Deputy City Manager, Community and Social Services, will continue to facilitate this collaboration and provide updates on the success of City staff and TPS in implementing AG recommendations.

The next status update on AU13.5 and AU13.6 will be provided to City Council in Q1 2025, ahead of the successful rollout and transfer of operations to NG9-1-1.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Deputy City Manager, Community and Social Services, recommends that:

1. City Council forward this report to the Toronto Police Services Board to inform continued action and next steps on the Auditor General's recommendations.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The recommendations contained in this report do not have any immediate financial impact. Staffing resources and expertise needed among interdivisional sub-groups to advance the due diligence required and to support enabling work will be accommodated within the existing approved budgets for relevant City Divisions.

However, there are future financial impacts for the full implementation of the recommendations, as outlined in Appendix 1 of this report. Some of the recommendations will require longer term reviews of alternative service delivery, strategic planning, and collaborative efforts among relevant City Divisions and TPS, and further assessment will be required in terms of financial impacts including operational efficiencies and synergies as well as future funding requirements.

Additional funding requirements, if determined necessary will be included in future-year budget submissions for consideration through the annual budget review process.

The Interim Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial implications as contained in the Financial Impact Section.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on July 19, 2022, City Council considered two reports from the Auditor General: 'Toronto Police Service - Audit of 9-1-1 Public Safety Answering Point Operations - Better Support for Staff, Improved Information Management and Outcomes' and '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'. In adopting these reports, City Council requested the Deputy City Manager, Community and Social Services, to report back on the City's progress at the beginning of the next Council term.

Item 2022.AU13.5: <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2022.AU13.5>

Item 2022.AU13.6: <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2022.AU13.6>

At its meeting November 9, 2021, City Council adopted the Auditor General's 2002 Audit Work Plan. At the request of the Toronto Police Services Board (TPSB), the Auditor General developed an audit plan to set the audit priorities at TPS over the next five years. The Auditor General's 2022 Audit Plan included a review of assessing policing responsibilities and service areas.

Item 2021.AU10.3: <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2021.AU10.3>

At its meeting February 2, 2021, Toronto City Council discussed a Community Crisis Support Service pilot, recommending the Auditor General to prioritize the planned 2021 audit of the Toronto Police Service's 9-1-1 operations.

Item 2021.EX20.1: <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2021.EX20.1>

At its meeting December 16, 2020, City Council adopted the Auditor General's 2021 Audit Work Plan. At the request of the Toronto Police Services Board (TPSB), the Auditor General developed an audit plan to set the audit priorities at TPS over the next

five years. The Auditor General's 2021 Audit Plan included an audit of the TPS's 9-1-1 operations with a focus on examining its effectiveness and efficiency.

Item 2020.AU7.5: <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2020.AU7.5>

COMMENTS

Background and AG Recommendations on 9-1-1 Operations (AU13.5)

The Toronto Police Service oversees and operates a Communications Centre that receives all emergency 9-1-1 calls across the city. Depending on the nature of the emergency, 9-1-1 operators will dispatch police or redirect calls to fire services, paramedic services, and/or other agencies as appropriate. In this regard, TPS acts as the primary Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) for the City of Toronto. As the first point of contact for all 9-1-1 calls, the efficiency of the TPS Communications Centre is critical in determining the priority level, timeliness, and parties involved in a response.

At the request of the Toronto Police Services Board (TPSB) and the direction of Toronto City Council, the AG undertook an audit of 9-1-1 operations to assess whether the TPS 9-1-1 Communications Centre provides access to emergency services in an effective and timely manner. The audit resulted in 26 recommendations made to the TPSB to enhance operations, five of which involve the City Manager's Office and City Divisions:

1. Review timeliness of transferred 9-1-1 calls (including overdose calls) from Toronto Police Service to Toronto Paramedic Services and Toronto Fire Services.
2. Achieve live-time interconnectivity in communication on 9-1-1 calls between Police, Toronto Paramedic Services and Toronto Fire Services, currently and in the implementation of Next Generation 9-1-1.
3. Review feasibility of transferring 9-1-1 operations to a non-police City Service.
4. Undertake and evaluate public education campaigns on proper use of 9-1-1, the non-emergency line, online police reporting, and non-police alternative resources (e.g., 311 and 211).
5. Consider a shorter and easier to remember number (if possible three digits) for the Toronto Police Services dedicated non-emergency line.

Background and AG Recommendations on Calls for Service: Community Safety and Well-Being (AU13.6)

The TPS plays an indispensable role in addressing community safety and well-being, but often acts as the 'catch-all,' default responder for a host of community concerns that are not police matters.

For example, vulnerable individuals experiencing mental health and substance use challenges may benefit from alternative, non-police responses and supports. Alternative responders can act as bridge points, connecting individuals in crisis to the services they

need while freeing-up TPS capacity to respond to emergency police matters and drive positive outcomes for Toronto residents.

At the request of the Toronto Police Services Board (TPSB) and the direction of Toronto City Council, the AG office undertook an audit of policing responsibilities and service areas to support more effective responses to calls for service. The audit resulted in 25 recommendations to improve community safety and well-being, 11 of which involve the City's Managers Office and City Divisions:

1. Determine the feasibility of adequately resourced, non-time restrictive, alternative responses for events where police are currently attending and where such attendance is likely not essential.
2. Reiterate requests for funding from the Federal and Provincial Governments to support permanent housing options and provide supports to address Toronto's mental health and addictions crises.
3. Review and refine protocols for when police are requested for 'See Ambulance' calls for service.
4. Analyze low priority non-emergency calls to repeat locations, to determine if alternative resolutions could be implemented.
5. Reduce instances of TPS officers repeatedly dispatched to the same Toronto Community Housing Corporation properties.
6. Conduct assessments of the TPS Crisis Call Diversion pilot and the City's Toronto Community Crisis Service.
7. Consult with Paramedic Services and Toronto hospitals on a distribution system for individuals in custody and transfer of care protocols for apprehended persons.
8. Review and refine current call for service diversions strategies from TPS to the City, through 3-1-1.
9. Interface to share information between City Divisions (e.g., MLS, CXD) and the TPS on a per call for service basis (e.g., addresses of noisy parties) to identify root causes of issues that are not police matters.
10. Leverage 2-1-1 Central data to identify neighbourhoods with a high-volume of low priority calls for services, where community resources/responses could support.
11. Consider awareness campaigns to address public perceptions of people experiencing mental health challenges and/or homelessness, and what type of response is most appropriate.

Steps Taken to Implement AG Recommendations

Following Council adoption of AU13.5 and AU13.6, the Deputy City Manager, Community and Social Services (DCM-CSS), coordinated a Leadership Table to

advance implementation of the 16 recommendations directed to the City Manager's Office and City Divisions.

The Table includes senior leadership from the TPSB, TPS, and City partners named or involved in AG recommendations (e.g., TFS, SDFA, MLS). The Leadership Table continues to support this work, including performance monitoring and co-development of this update report.

Sub-groups of City and TPS staff have also met regularly and worked together to address AG recommendations. In some cases, sub-groups were formed for the express purpose of advancing specific AG recommendations. Other sub-groups pre-dated the AG audits but helped focus collaborative efforts on fulfilling AG recommendations. Current sub-groups are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Current City and Police Sub-groups Advancing Auditor General Recommendations in AU13.5 and AU13.6

Group	Purpose	Membership	Frequency
9-1-1 Committee	Support optimal service delivery to citizens and visitors to the City of Toronto by means of regular review and discussion of recent and upcoming issues to the three emergency services communications centres	TPS TFS PS	Quarterly
"See Ambulance" Protocol Review Working Group	Review and resolve issues relating to See Ambulance calls for service and provide updates on efforts to refine policies and protocols	PS TPS	Monthly
"Make the Right Call" Working Group	Develop education campaign to improve public awareness and understanding on when to call 9-1-1, the non-emergency line, online police reporting, 211 and 311	SPEC TPS	Bi-weekly, up to launch of campaign
Update Call on Policing Reforms	Share updates and coordinate next steps on alternative response models and other policing reform matters (e.g., TCCS, 9-1-1 Crisis Call Diversion)	TPSB TPS SDFA DCMO-CSS	Bi-weekly
Operational Leads Review Table	Review and discuss current issues that impact partners, address and collaborate on solutions	CXD TPS	Quarterly

Group	Purpose	Membership	Frequency
Integrated Service Division Operational Leads Group	Discuss operational improvements, changes to business processes, and complaints or issues that arise	CXD MLS	Bi-monthly

As a result of these partnerships, the City and TPS have made strides in implementing the AG recommendations. A detailed status update for each recommendation can be found in Appendix 1, including content from TPS and City staff.

As indicated in Appendix 1, 14/16 (88%) recommendations are actively in progress, one is implemented and ongoing, and one has not yet started. The status of these recommendations is subject to verification by the Auditor General.

TPS and City staff have achieved key milestones, identified areas for continued action, and initiated next steps on implementation. These are highlighted below and elaborated in Appendix 1.

Key Milestones

1) Improving 9-1-1 Call Transfer Times (AU13.5 Recommendation 1)

The 9-1-1 Committee has provided a forum for TPS, TFS, and PS to share best practices, problem solve, and expedite 9-1-1 call transfer times -- the time it takes a 9-1-1 call received by police to be transferred to TPS or PS for further processing.

TFS has continued to collaborate within the 9-1-1 Committee to establish requirements and the framework for call transfer reporting as well as real time Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) interfaces. TFS call answering performance remains within the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) standard of 15 seconds 90% of the time.

For Paramedics, 63% of calls transferred between January and August 2023 were picked up within the 15 second NENA standard. Through collaboration with the 9-1-1 committee and recruitment of 63 new Emergency Medical Call Takers in 2023, PS continues to make significant progress to reduce call transfer times. PS reported a 53% reduction in average call transfer times in August 2023, when compared to July 2022.

Table 2 presents the distribution of call transfer times identified through TFS and PS system records. Work continues with Police to further refine these call transfer times using TPS data to validate.

Table 2: Distribution of Call Transfer Times from Toronto Police to Toronto Fire and Paramedic Services (January 1 - August 31, 2023)

	<10s	10-19s	20-29s	30s≤
TFS	59%	38%	2%	1%
PS	58%	13%	8%	21%

2) Exploring Alternative Responses for Mental Health Calls for Service (AU13.6 Recommendation 6)

Two alternative, non-police responses to mental health crises have been piloted since Council adoption of the AG reports: The 9-1-1 Crisis Call Diversion (CCD) led by the TPS, and the Toronto Community Crisis Services (TCCS) led by City of Toronto SDFA. TPS and SDFA have worked closely throughout these pilots to share data, support monitoring and evaluation, and co-develop reports for the TSPB and City Council. TPS and SDFA look forward to ongoing partnership to further synchronize efforts on alternative responses and promote community safety for Toronto residents.

a) 9-1-1 Crisis Call Diversion Pilot

The 9-1-1 Crisis Call Diversion (CCD) co-locates a mental health worker from the Gerstein Crisis Centre (GGC) in the TPS Communications Services Call Centre. The objective of this program is to better and more quickly connect calls from individuals experiencing non-emergency mental health challenges to trained Gerstein staff, who can provide immediate crisis support and additional referral to community agencies. At its meeting June 24, 2021, the TPSB authorized entry into an MOU between the Board and GGC to pilot the CCD project in three divisions, 20-hours a day, seven days a week.

In October 2022, based on overwhelmingly positive results, the CCD pilot was scaled across all TPS divisions until Fall 2023, with expanded 24/7 availability. In a more recent update to the TPSB Budget Sub-committee, TPS reported that of the 1,558 events redirected through the CCD pilot between October 2022 and September 2023, 1,006 events (65%) were successfully diverted (see Figure 1). Based on this continued success, the TPSB has approved a second extension of the CCD pilot to Fall 2024.

TPS has retained the Provincial System Support Program (PSSP) at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health to provide ongoing evaluation services for the extended CCD pilot. With an additional year of monitoring, the PSSP will have access to the data necessary to complete a more fulsome evaluation, with recommendations focused on post-pilot program design and quality improvement. TPS is currently finalizing the scope and terms of the project agreement with PSSP.

The PSSP was also engaged as a third-party evaluator for the TCCS. As both projects focus on non-police crisis response models, with overlapping catchment areas and similar community partners, the TPS is confident in the ability of the PSSP to

successfully execute this evaluation and support further alignment between the CCD and TCCS.

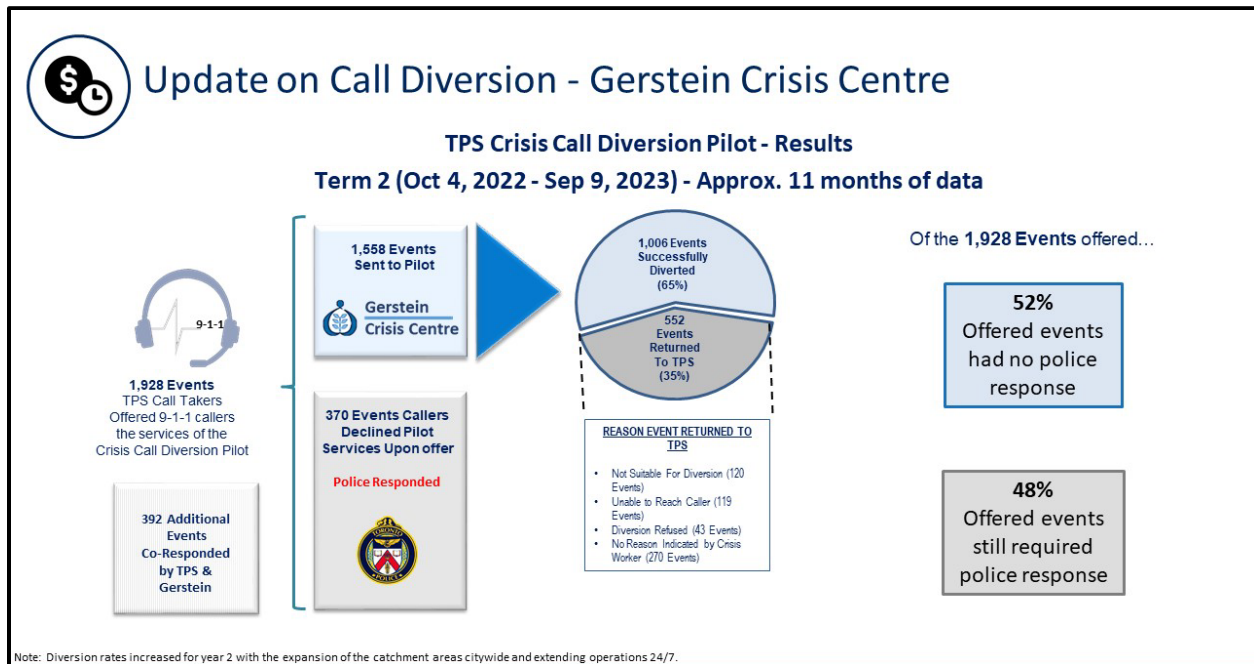


Figure 1. Update on 9-1-1 Call Diversion - Crisis Call Diversion Pilot (October 4, 2022 - September 9, 2023); [from TPSB Budget Sub-Committee Meeting, September 25, 2023](#)

b) Toronto Community Crisis Service

The Toronto Community Crisis Service (TCCS) dispatches trained teams of multidisciplinary crisis workers to provide community-based, client-centred, and trauma-informed response to non-emergency calls from people in crisis and requests for wellbeing checks.

At its February 2, 2022, meeting, Toronto City Council approved the TCCS pilot, and the service was launched in spring 2022. S DFA engaged PSSP and Shkaabe Makwa at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health to conduct a 1-year program evaluation, which was co-developed with community anchor partners and the TPS.

Data from the first year of operations illustrate that the TCCS has successfully met one of its primary objectives of diverting non-emergency crisis calls from 9-1-1. The TCCS received a total of 6,827 calls in its first 13 months of the service, of which 6,351 (93%) were successfully completed. Most of the completed calls were received through 9-1-1 (54%), followed by 211 (34%) with the rest of the calls (12%) received directly from community sources including direct crisis lines operated by community anchor partners. The TCCS successfully diverted 78% of the calls received from 9-1-1 with no police involvement.

The TCCS has also successfully connected service users to appropriate supports during the first year of the service. The crisis teams made 411 outbound referrals for service users on the scene of crisis visits, including referrals to shelter beds, crisis beds,

and emergency services and 1,196 referrals during follow-up visits including supports for mental health, substance, and housing. The service also connected 1,160 service users to post-crisis case management.

Based on these results, SDFSA and partners will submit a staff report to City Council in October 2023 with recommendations for expanding the TCCS city-wide.

Continued Areas for Action

1) Enhanced Coordination in Receiving and Responding to Noise Complaints (AU13.6 Recommendation 1 & Recommendation 8)

The AG recommendations focus on improving call diversion and response strategies for a wide array of non-emergency requests for service. However, noise continues to be an area of significant public interest and concern.

A review undertaken by CXD in response to AU13.6 Recommendation 8 identified noise complaints, including noisy parties, as the number one driver of CXD calls related to non-emergency Police services. CXD's review further underscored confusion among callers about where to direct calls related to noise. The criteria for determining when to direct noise complaints to TPS vs. MLS by-law enforcement officers (BEOs) need to be clarified internally and communicated publicly.

In response to the AG recommendations, the MLS Noise Team has provided guidance to CXD staff regarding the scope and criteria for BEO response. This includes:

- BEOs are not emergency responders and do not have the capacity to respond immediately to noise complaints
- Disturbing the peace and noisy parties are not in scope for MLS response, BEOs cannot arrive at a noisy party and shut-off the music
- BEOs can and do support response to persistent noise complaints through coordinated operational plans, including contacting homeowners after a noisy party to caution them regarding complaints.

The Noise Team has also participated in and will continue attending community town halls and TPS Divisions to present the Noise Team's enforcement strategies and response matrix, including what BEO resources are available, scope and synergy discussions on joint management of complex files.

Despite these steps, confusion persists among Toronto residents about who or where to call with complaints about noise. Clarity in roles and responsibilities needs to be reinforced among CXD, MLS, and TPS. Public awareness also needs to be raised on the proper channels to voice complaints.

Immediate next steps include:

a) Re-establishing the Non-Emergency Calls/Response Steering Committee: This committee, which includes SPEC, TPS, MLS, CMO, and CXD, focuses on identifying the appropriate agency or organization to respond to non-emergency calls being managed by 9-1-1. Prior to the release of the AG reports, the Steering Committee

supported redirection of non-emergency calls to CXD and an increase in response to non-emergency calls by MLS. This work also included public engagement events with TPS and CXD. As a result of the Committee, CXD continues to meet quarterly with TPS and bi-monthly with MLS to discuss ongoing operational issues and opportunities to improve processes. One of the call types being discussed is the management of noise complaints. As the groups are currently meeting separately, the Steering Committee will be re-established to enable City and TPS collaboration on noise and other non-emergencies, with continued communication to the public. Plans are underway to regroup in early November.

b) Build Public Awareness on 'Making the Right Call': In collaboration with TPS, MLS, and CXD, SPEC has developed a five-week organic social media campaign aimed at creating awareness about when the public should call 211, 311, 9-1-1, the non-emergency line or file an online report. The campaign is slated to be in market mid-to-end of October 2023 and will include examples of which channels to call for noise complaints.

CONTACT(S)

Kate Bassil, Chief of Staff, City Manager's Office; Kate.Bassil@toronto.ca;
Tel: 416-338-5632

Denise Andrea Campbell, Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration; DeniseAndrea.Campbell@toronto.ca; Tel: 416-392-5207

Bikram Chawla, Chief, Toronto Paramedic Services; Bikram.Chawla@toronto.ca;
Tel: 416-392-2815

Carleton Grant, Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards;
Carleton.Grant@toronto.ca; Tel: 416-392-8445

Joe Matthews, Acting Staff Superintendent, Toronto Police Services;
Joe.Matthews@torontopolice.on.ca; Tel: 416-808-8004

Matthew Pegg, Fire Chief and General Manager, Toronto Fire Services;
Matthew.Pegg@toronto.ca; Tel: 416-338-9051

Beth Waldman, Director Communications, Strategic Public and Employee Communications; Beth.Waldman@toronto.ca; Tel: 416-392-9305

Gary Yorke, Executive Director, Customer Experience Division;
Gary.A.Yorke@toronto.ca; Tel: 416-338-7789

SIGNATURE

(Original signed by)

Paul Raftis
Deputy City Manager, Community and Social Services

ATTACHMENT

Appendix 1. Status Update on AU13.5 and AU13.6 Recommendations