

Emergency Response on the TTC – Update

Date: November 18, 2025

To: Economic and Community Development Committee

From: Executive Director, Social Development

Wards: All

SUMMARY

At its October 2025 meeting, Toronto City Council requested information about emergency response activity on the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC). Specifically, City Council requested data on:

- the total number of emergency calls related to TTC stations and vehicles,
- the proportion of calls that could have been addressed by the Toronto Community Crisis Service (TCCS),
- and the proportion of calls that required police or TTC Special Constables.

This report responds to that request and outlines emergency response activity across the TTC system in 2025. It examines calls attended by the Toronto Police Service (TPS) and TTC Special Constables, with a focus on incidents aligned with the crisis service mandate. It also incorporates TTC safety and wellbeing data to present a more comprehensive picture of crisis response on the TTC. While available data do not fully capture potential demand for TCCS within the TTC, the crisis service on transit pilot, launched on November 15, 2025, is expected to generate greater insights that will guide the safe and effective deployment of community crisis teams in the transit environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Director, Social Development recommends that:

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

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of the recommendation in this report.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the information as presented in the Financial Impact section.

DECISION HISTORY

At its October 2025, meeting, Toronto City Council directed the City Manager to work with the Toronto Police Service and report directly to the December 2, 2025, meeting of Economic and Community Development Committee with information on the total number of emergency response calls related to Toronto Transit Commission stations and vehicles in 2025, the percentage for which only the Toronto Community Crisis Service could have been dispatched, and the percentage for which special constables or police were required.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.CC33.1>

At its May 21-22, 2025 meeting, Toronto City Council directed the Deputy City Manager, Community Development and Social Services, to work with the Toronto Transit Commission to develop an agreement to expand and strengthen access to the Toronto Community Crisis Service across TTC properties, including subways, platforms, buses, and streetcars, and to report back in the third quarter of 2025 with options and recommendations for deploying dedicated TCCS staff in subway stations in coordination with other mental health services. City Council further directed the Deputy City Manager, in collaboration with the TTC Chief Executive Officer and the General Manager of Toronto Shelter and Support Services, to report back in the third quarter of 2025 on the additional mental health resources and infrastructure required to effectively scale and implement expanded community safety services such as the TCCS across the TTC system.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.EX23.5>

COMMENTS

Background

People experiencing mental health crises, homelessness, and complex needs are increasingly seeking temporary refuge on the TTC. This trend has intensified demands on both TTC employees and emergency services to respond to a range of safety and wellbeing issues, including non-emergency situations involving people in mental health distress.

In response, the TTC is taking a multi-disciplinary approach to address these growing challenges on the transit system by partnering with social services such as the City's Streets to Homes and Loft's Multi-Disciplinary Outreach Teams (MDOT). Despite these efforts, gaps remain in the availability of community-based mental health crisis responses within the transit system. To address these gaps, in October 2025, City Council approved the crisis service on transit pilot for the Toronto Community Crisis

Service to provide timely, community-based mental health crisis interventions on the TTC.

The Toronto Community Crisis Service is a free, confidential, 24/7 mobile mental health crisis response service available citywide to people 16 years and older. TCCS mobile teams of trained crisis workers respond directly to people experiencing mental health crises in the community and provide immediate crisis intervention and de-escalation; safety planning and emotional support; connections to appropriate wraparound care; post-crisis follow-up within 48 hours; and ongoing case management for up to 90 days.

Crisis Service in Transit Pilot

Since launching in 2022, the TCCS has responded to more than 34,000 mental health crisis calls and resolved 89 per cent of calls transferred from 9-1-1 without police. The service has also strengthened access to post-crisis support by facilitating more than 8,000 referrals to wraparound services and connecting over 1,400 individuals to ongoing case management. Data from the TCCS' one-year evaluation demonstrates that 95 per cent of service users were satisfied or very satisfied with the service they received, and 90 per cent indicated that it positively impacted their perception of community safety and wellbeing.

The crisis service on transit pilot, launched in November 2025, embeds crisis workers in the U-zone of Line 1 (Yonge-University) to provide timely, trauma informed support for people experiencing mental health crisis in fifteen stations. These embedded teams respond directly to mental health crisis calls on the TTC, coordinate with existing social service partners, deliver trauma-informed, culturally responsive care, and connect service users to post-crisis supports and ongoing case management.

2025 Toronto Police Service Calls for Service on the TTC

To support City Council's request for information on emergency response on the TTC and the potential for TCCS to respond to mental health-related calls without police or special constable involvement, the Social Development division collaborated with the TPS and the TTC to analyze available call for service data.

From January 1 to October 16, 2025, the TPS attended 8,199 calls for service in TTC stations and vehicles. These calls reflect a broad range of incidents, including safety concerns, disturbances, wellbeing checks, mental health crises, and enforcement-related matters.

2025 Calls For Service on the TTC

Between January 1 and October 31, 2025, TTC Special Constables recorded approximately 18,658 calls for service¹, including over 600 mental health and wellbeing incidents. Between January and September 2025, TTC Safety Ambassadors conducted approximately 7,306 wellness checks. Additionally, the TTC conducted 1,304 well-being checks in response to requests made by riders through the SafeTTC app.

¹ This figure represents the sum of individual officer reports for a call for service. As multiple officers may submit separate reports for the same incident, the actual number of unique calls for service is lower.

Potential For Community Based Crisis Intervention Within the TTC Environment

Between January 1 and October 16, 2025, the TPS responded to 2,012 calls for service on the TTC that fall within categories eligible for diversion to the TCCS.² While TPS data do not capture the full context or acuity of each call, the current city-wide diversion rate offers a useful benchmark. As of October 2025, 89 percent of calls transferred from 9-1-1 to TCCS were resolved without police involvement. If this same diversion rate were applied to crisis-related 9-1-1 calls for service on the TTC, it is estimated that 1,791 of the 2,012 calls TPS responded to could have been diverted to the TCCS.

In addition, given the TCCS mandate to respond to requests for wellbeing checks, it is likely that the TCCS could have responded to the approximately 8,610 wellness related incidents reported by the TTC in 2025. In total, this analysis suggests that more than 10,000 calls for service could potentially have been addressed by TCCS during this period.

While currently available data limit the extent to which potential demand for the TCCS within the TTC environment can be projected, the crisis service on transit pilot will generate transit-specific operational data that will inform how crisis response teams can be most effectively deployed in the transit environment. Staff will report back in Q2 2026 on the crisis service on transit pilot outcomes and opportunities for improving coverage and refining dispatch strategies.

Enhancing Access to Timely Crisis Response on the TTC

To enable effective diversion and maximize access to community-based crisis care, City staff have implemented a series of coordinated strategies as part of the crisis service on transit pilot design, including:

- Multiple intake pathways to ensure a “no wrong door approach” that enables referrals through TTC employees, the SafeTTC app, social support partners, 2-1-1, 9-1-1 and, proactive engagement by TCCS teams. TCCS dispatchers embedded in TTC Transit Control provide real-time assessment and seamless diversion of eligible calls to crisis teams.
- Training for TTC employees that strengthens their ability to identify appropriate incidents and request timely TCCS support and public awareness campaigns to help TTC riders understand when and how to access the service.
- Ongoing monitoring and auditing of call volumes to ensure quality assurance and continuous improvement in call diversion processes.
- Proactive outreach by embedded crisis teams to increase early identification and support for individuals in need of mental health support who may not have otherwise accessed support.

These strategies are intended to ensure that all eligible calls across all intake channels are effectively diverted to TCCS, increasing the service’s reach and impact across the

² The Memorandum of Understanding between Toronto Police Services and the City of Toronto identifies the following 6 event types that may meet the criteria for diversion to the TCCS: Threaten Suicide, Person in Crisis, Wellbeing Checks, Disorderly Behaviour, Disputes, and Advised.

transit system. This approach has proven successful during the citywide expansion of the TCCS, where the diversion rate from 9-1-1 increased from 78 percent in 2022 to 89 percent in 2025.

Next Steps

Social Development has partnered with the MAP Centre for Urban Health Solutions at St. Michael's Hospital to lead a third-party evaluation of the crisis service on transit pilot. This evaluation will assess pilot effectiveness service across design, response pathways, coordination, and client outcomes. Staff will report back in Q2 2026 on the third-party evaluation and overall pilot outcomes.

Key components of the evaluation include:

- Developing a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plan to guide data collection, analysis and reporting.
- Identifying gaps in documentation, data-sharing, and reporting to create a consistent reporting structure and improve operational efficiency.
- Generating evidence-informed recommendations to strengthen crisis response, refine service delivery, and enhance coordination among TPS, TTC Special Constables, Streets to Homes, MDOT, and TCCS.
- Publishing pilot performance data on the TTC's Community Safety and Wellbeing on Transit Dashboard to support transparency and public accountability.

The evaluation findings will guide future decision making on scaling or refining the model, helping to build a more effective and coordinated approach to community safety on transit.

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SIGNATURE

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