

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

Date: April 29, 2025

To: Executive Committee

From: Deputy City Manager, Community Development & Social Services

Wards: All

SUMMARY

This report provides an update to City Council on a series of recommendations made by the Auditor General (AG) to improve 9-1-1 operations and responses to calls for service by the Toronto Police Service (TPS). The status of these recommendations is subject to formal review and verification by the Auditor General.

In July 2022, City Council adopted two reports from the AG, which focused on:

- 1) Enhancing the efficiency of 9-1-1 operations ([AU13.5](#))
- 2) Supporting more effective responses to calls for service ([AU13.6](#))

In total, the AG posed 51 recommendations across the two reports to improve and modernize the TPS. Of these, 16 recommendations involved the City Manager's Office and other City Divisions, including Toronto Paramedic Services, Toronto Fire Services (TFS), Social Development, Municipal Licensing and Standards (MLS), Customer Experience Division (CXD), and others.

As directed by Council, the Deputy City Manager, Community and Social Services (DCM-CSS) has played a key role in coordinating collaboration among TPS and relevant City Divisions to advance AG recommendations, including co-development of status updates to Council. The first of these updates was adopted by Council in fall 2023 (see [EX9.2](#)).

The City and TPS have continued to work closely to drive AG recommendations forward. A detailed update on each of the 16 shared AG recommendations can be found in Appendix 1 of this report. Pending Council approval, this update report will be forwarded to the Toronto Police Service Board, where it will be reviewed alongside a comprehensive update from the TPS on all 51 AG recommendations.

As assessed in consultation with the City's Internal Audit Division, 13 of the 16 AG recommendations are in-progress (with seven near completion - i.e., by end of 2025), two are implemented and ongoing, and one has not yet started.

Key milestones achieved since the last report to Council include the city-wide expansion of the Toronto Community Crisis Service (TCCS), a key component of the City's Ten-year Community Safety & Well-being Plan (SafeTO) that has contributed to a marked decrease in 'person in crisis calls' to the TPS. Since launching in 2022, the TCCS has responded to more than 25,000 calls, provided more than 6,000 referrals, and connected more than 1,000 service users to wraparound case management supports, while maintaining a call diversion rate of 78% (proportion of 9-1-1 calls received by the Service and completed without police involvement).

TPS and City Divisions have also collaborated to co-develop, launch, and evaluate 'Make the Right Call,' a multilingual, multimedia scenario-based campaign focused on educating the public about appropriate emergency and non-emergency responses. The campaign garnered more than 20,000,000 social media impressions, drove demonstrable increases in calls to the TPS non-emergency line and 2-1-1, and will return to market in June 2025 as an 'evergreen' communications tool to continue influencing public awareness and behaviour change.

The revived Non-emergency Call/Response Steering Committee (NECRSC), currently chaired by CXD with participation from TPS and City Divisions, has enabled the City to review and refine call diversion strategies and enhance information sharing. This includes new staff training, improvements to the 3-1-1 knowledge base to streamline call diversions, and a new warm transfer protocol between 3-1-1 and the TPS non-emergency line that ensures callers are connected to the appropriate organization.

Regarding areas for continued collaboration, the 9-1-1 Committee continues to meet quarterly to support collaboration among TPS, TFS, and Paramedic Services. This includes ongoing preparation for migration of operations to Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1), which will improve interconnectivity and the efficiency of call transfers. TFS migrated onto the NG9-1-1 network in December 2023, the first municipal emergency service in Canada to do so, and both TPS and Paramedic Services will achieve migration by the end of 2025, well in advance of the March 2027 deadline set by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC).

As part of an overarching communications strategy, Social Development and SPEC will also be launching a new anti-stigma campaign in Q4 2025 to address public perceptions of people experiencing mental health crises, in consultation with TPS and community stakeholders.

Overall, this report reflects that collaboration between the City and TPS remains strong, and will continue to advance the 16 AG recommendations. The next status update on AU13.5 and AU13.6 will be provided to City Council in 2027, following the cutoff date for migration to NG9-1-1 and in alignment with the next SafeTO implementation update.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The recommendations in this report do not have any immediate financial impact. Resources required to advance recommendations have been 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. Additional funding requirements, if determined necessary, will be included in future-year budget submissions for consideration through the annual budget review process.

The 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 November 9, 2023, City Council adopted an implementation update from the Deputy City Manager, Community and Social Services (DCM-CSS), on Auditor General (AG) Recommendations on 9-1-1 Operations and Responses to Calls for Service by the Toronto Police Service (TPS) and forwarded the item to the Toronto Police Service Board (TPSB) to inform continued action and next steps. As part of this item, Council also received a transmittal from the TPSB with an update from TPS on all 51 AG recommendations.

Item 2023.EX9.2 and EX9.2a: <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.EX9.2#>

At its meeting on November 9, 2023, City Council adopted an update on the Toronto Community Crisis Service (TCCS), including endorsement of the city-wide expansion of the TCCS as Toronto's fourth emergency service.

Item 2023.EX9.10: <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.EX9.10>

At its meeting on July 19, 2022, City Council considered two reports from the AG: '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 DCM-CSS, 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 AG 2022 Audit Work Plan. At the request of the TPSB, the AG developed an audit plan to set the audit priorities at TPS over the next five years.

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

At its meeting February 2, 2021, City Council discussed a Community Crisis Support Service pilot, recommending the AG to prioritize the planned 2021 audit of TPS 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 AG 2021 Audit Work Plan. At the request of the TPSB, the AG developed an audit plan to set the audit priorities at TPS over the next five years. The AG 2021 Audit Plan included an audit of TPS 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

As the primary Public Safety Answering Point for the City of Toronto, the Toronto Police Service (TPS) oversees a Communications Centre that receives all emergency 9-1-1 calls in the city, and redirects them as appropriate to Toronto Fire Services (TFS), Toronto Paramedic Services, the Toronto Community Crisis Service (TCCS), or other agencies. The TPS also plays a critical role in promoting community safety and well-being, but has historically acted as a default, 'catch-all' responder for a host of community safety and social issues that are not police matters.

In 2021, at the request of the Toronto Police Service Board (TPSB) and the direction of Council, the Auditor General (AG) undertook an audit focused on the efficiency of 9-1-1 operations and review of the effectiveness of TPS responses to calls for service.

The audit and review resulted in a total of 51 recommendations, which were provided to Council across two AG reports in July 2022 ([AU13.5](#) and [AU13.6](#)). 16 of the 51 recommendations involve the City's Managers Office and City Divisions, and are summarized below.

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

1. Review timeliness of transferred 9-1-1 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., 3-1-1 and 2-1-1).
5. Consider a shorter and easier to remember number (if possible three digits) for the Toronto Police Service dedicated non-emergency line.

AG Recommendations on Responses to Calls for Service (AU13.6)

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 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.

Ongoing Collaboration to Implement Auditor General Recommendations

Following Council's adoption of EX9.2 in fall 2023, the Deputy City Manager, Community and Social Services (DCM-CSS) has continued to coordinate collaboration among City Divisions and TPS to advance the 16 shared AG recommendations.

This includes convening a leadership table with representation from TPSB, TPS, and City Divisions involved in AG recommendations to support performance monitoring, collaboration on updates to the AG, and co-development of this report.

Sub-committees, working groups, and other collaborative tables of City and TPS staff have also continued to connect regularly to address specific recommendations. These are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1. City and Police Sub-groups Advancing AU13.5 and AU13.6 Recommendations

Group	Mandate	Members	Meeting Frequency	Achievements
9-1-1 Committee	Support optimal service delivery to residents and visitors through regular review and discussion of recent and upcoming issues to the three emergency services' communications centres	TPS TFS Paramedic Services	Quarterly	Successful transition of TFS to new NG9-1-1 platform in December 2023. Shared information on NG9-1-1 development and implementation for Toronto emergency services for optimal service delivery.
"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	TPS Paramedic Services	Monthly	Supported revisions to Toronto Paramedics Services' Police Services Notification policy and subsequent training for staff. Achieved 11.7% decrease in "See Ambulance" Calls for Service in Q1 2025 compared to Q1 2024.

Group	Mandate	Members	Meeting Frequency	Achievements
Non-Emergency Call/Response Steering Committee	Provide direction for response to AU13.6, with specific focus on recommendations to enhance coordinated response to non-emergency calls for service	TPS CXD MLS Social Development SPEC DCMO-CSS	Quarterly	Designed and supported the implementation of Make the Right Call Campaign Improved 3-1-1 online information Enhanced staff training Introduced new warm call transfer protocol between 3-1-1 and the TPS non-emergency line
Update Call on Policing Reforms	Share updates and coordinate next steps on alternative response models and other policing reform matters	TPSB TPS CMO DCMO-CSS Social Development	Bi-weekly	Enhanced collaboration, information sharing, and coordination between the City, TPSB, and TPS on progress of AG recommendations.

Assessment of Recommendation Status

In fall 2023, as reported in EX9.2, 14 recommendations were in-progress, 1 was implemented and ongoing, and 1 had not yet started.

As of March 2025, as assessed in consultation with the City's Internal Audit Division, 13 recommendations are actively in progress, with seven near completion - i.e., by end of 2025. Two recommendations are implemented and ongoing, and one has not yet started. The status of these recommendations is subject to verification by the Auditor General.

The single recommendation not yet started is AU13.6 recommendation 3, regarding a feasibility review of transferring 9-1-1 operations to a non-police City Service. Additional discussions to inform this review will take place following implementation of other AG recommendations set out in AU13.5/AU13.6. A detailed status update for each of the AG recommendations can be found in Appendix 1, including content from TPS and City

staff. Building on progress reported in Fall 2023, TPS and City staff have achieved new milestones and identified areas for continued collaboration, which are outlined below.

Key Milestones

1) Expanding Alternative Response for Mental Health Crises: A City-wide Toronto Community Crisis Service (AU13.6 Recommendation 6)

In July 2024, the Toronto Community Crisis Service (TCCS) expanded city-wide, representing a significant advancement in the City's approach to providing non-police, community-based response to mental health crises under SafeTO. A video snapshot the TCCS model can be viewed [here](#).

Since launch in March 2022, TCCS has responded to over 25,000 calls, made more than 6,000 referrals, and connected over 1,000 individuals to wraparound case management supports. A TPS report showed a 4.5% decrease in 'person in crisis' calls received in 2023. TCCS also reported a 78% diversion rate, indicating that the majority of crisis calls received from 9-1-1 by the Service were resolved without police involvement.

To support city-wide expansion, Social Development and SPEC launched a multilingual campaign to promote awareness of TCCS (see figure 1 below). The campaign included a full redesign of the TCCS website to enhance usability, and translation of outreach materials into 24 languages, including four Indigenous languages. Communications tactics included social media, digital advertising, radio, print, and multicultural media channels. From September 22 to October 31, 2024, the campaign amassed over 34,000 visits to the [TCCS webpage](#) and over 450,000 impressions across social media.



Figure 1. Sample Creative from the TCCS Expansion Campaign

Delivered alongside the "Make the Right Call" campaign, this initiative also contributed to a 4% increase in calls to 2-1-1. In fact, since Fall 2023, the 2-1-1 access pathway has been the primary access point for TCCS, handling an average of 62% of calls since Sept 2023.

In 2025, the TCCS campaign transitioned into a monthly communications strategy to continue public engagement. SPEC will deliver a final campaign report by the end of 2025.

To support continuous service improvement, Social Development engaged the Provincial System Support Program (PSSP) and Shkaabe Makwa at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) to conduct a qualitative evaluation of TCCS, with a focus on participant experience. Results are summarized in Appendix 1. Social Development's SCALE team also continues to monitor outcomes and performance metrics in collaboration with TPS.

The TPS–Gerstein Crisis Centre (GCC) pilot, which operated from October 2021 to September 2024, provided additional insights into crisis response alternatives. The pilot embedded trained GGC staff within TPS Communications Services, working alongside TPS responders to divert non-emergency mental health calls away from police responses. The final evaluation report submitted to the TPSB outlined key lessons, challenges, and a recommendation to refocus resources in support of the city-wide TCCS model. Following conclusion of the TPS-GCC pilot, some operators were transitioned to support TCCS expansion.

2) Helping Torontonians 'Make the Right Call:' A Campaign to Enhance Awareness of Emergency and Non-emergency Responses (AU13.5 Recommendation 4)

In partnership with SPEC, Paramedics Services, Social Development, CXD, and 2-1-1, the City and TPS jointly launched the 'Make the Right Call' awareness campaign in 2024. The campaign was developed to improve awareness among Torontonians of which emergency or non-emergency service best meets their needs (see figure 2 below).



Figure 2. Sample Creative from the 'Make the Right Call' Campaign

The campaign featured paid tactics including transit shelter ads, radio, social media and digital components and was available in ten languages. The campaign was in market for eight weeks (October 28-December 28, 2024). Delivered alongside the TCCS awareness campaign, 'Make the Right Call' contributed to a 4% increase in calls to 2-1-1.

While in market, 'Make the Right Call' also yielded the following results:

- [Make the Right Call](#) webpage views increased from 2,000 to more than 24,000.
- Campaign posts garnered over 20,000,000 impressions across social media platforms, with multilingual ads receiving more than 3,000,000 impressions.
- Calls to the TPS non-emergency line increased by 157% in the last week of November 2024 (compared to same week in 2023). The campaign may have played a role in calls being placed to the non-emergency line rather than 9-1-1 or other numbers.

The paid campaign is scheduled to return to market in June 2025, and the creative can be adapted and shared through the City's social media channels on an ongoing basis as schedule allows.

3) Improving Strategies for Call Diversion and Warm Transfers: Revival of the Non-Emergency Call/Response Steering Committee (AU13.6 Recommendation 8 and 9)

Revival of the Non-emergency Call/Response Steering Committee (NECRSC) was flagged as a key next step in the Fall 2023 update report (EX9.2).

Since then, quarterly meetings have been chaired by CXD with participation from TPS, CXD, MLS, Social Development, and the DCMO-CSS. Discussions have focused on reviewing the top drivers of non-emergency calls and identifying opportunities to collaborate on service enhancement, including the following achievements:

- Designed and supported implementation of 'Make the Right Call' campaign and public outreach events aimed to increase public awareness on which organization to call for which matters.
- Improved 3-1-1 online information on a variety of non-emergency topics, including directing customers to appropriate services and promoting self-serve through digital tools, such as TPS online reporting portal for parking infractions.
- Enhanced staff training, including clarifying service information and improving understanding of staff roles and hand off processes between 3-1-1 Toronto and TPS.
- Introduced new warm call transfer protocol between 3-1-1 and the TPS non-emergency line, launched May 2024, where staff stay on the line with a caller as they transfer the call between TPS and 3-1-1 to improve customer experience.

Areas for Continued Collaboration

1) Strengthening Tri-Service Partnership to Expedite Call Transfers, Improve Interconnectivity, and Prepare for Rollout of Next Generation 9-1-1

(AU13.5 Recommendation 1 and Recommendation 2)

The tri-services have continued to collaborate closely, with representatives from TPS, TFS and Paramedic Services meeting quarterly at the 9-1-1 Committee to share best practices and problem solve, including a special sub-committee focusing on expediting 9-1-1 call transfer times and the transition to Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1).

TFS was the first municipal emergency service in Canada to migrate to the NG9-1-1 system in December 2023. Paramedic Services and TPS are scheduled to migrate in Q2 2025, well in advance of the updated CRTC deadline of March 31, 2027.

All three services continue to work together on this implementation and shared environments, including live-time interconnectivity with TPS. TFS and Paramedic Services already have live-interconnectivity and are currently collaborating on a new interface to further enhance their interconnectivity, which is on track for implementation Q3 2025.

While work proceeds towards live-time interconnectivity, the services have seen individual progress. TFS continues to maintain NENA standards for call answer time: 90% of all calls answered in 11 seconds and 95% of calls answered within 18 seconds. Paramedic Services has seen a 39.13% reduction in call answer times in 2024 compared to the same period in 2023, a result of enhanced recruitment and training of 61 telecommunicators in 2024. The 2024 call answer performance for both TFS and Paramedic Services is summarized in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Distribution of Call Answer Times for Toronto Fire and Paramedic Services (January 1 - December 31, 2024)

	<10s	10-19s	20-29s	30s≤
TFS	84%	11%	3%	1%
Paramedic Services	74.5%	8.5%	5.3%	11.7%

Note: Call answer times are measured after calls are transferred from the TPS 9-1-1 centre.

2) Reshaping Public Perceptions of People Experiencing Mental Health Crises: A Joint Anti-Stigma Campaign (AU13.6 Recommendation 11)

Social Development and SPEC are collaborating on a new mental health anti-stigma campaign to address public perceptions of people experiencing mental health crisis. The campaign will build on previous success of the TCCS awareness campaigns and the 'Make the Right Call' campaigns, and development will include engagement with community stakeholders and the TPS. The campaign is set to launch Q4 2025.

Next Steps

Overall, this report reflects that collaboration between the City and TPS remains strong, and will continue to advance the 16 AG recommendations.

The next status update on AU13.5 and AU13.6 will be provided to City Council in 2027, following the cutoff date for migration to NG9-1-1 and in alignment with the next SafeTO implementation update.

CONTACT

Jacqueline Baus, Chief Superintendent, Toronto Police Service
Jacqueline.Baus@tps.ca; Tel: 416-808-8004

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

Roopy Chhina, Executive Director (Interim), Customer Experience Division
Roopy.Chhina@toronto.ca; Tel: 416-338-2937

Gifford Chu, Manager, Internal Audit
Gifford.Chu@toronto.ca; Tel: 416-397-0301

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

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

Dubi Kanengisser, Executive Director, Toronto Police Service Board
Dubi.Kanengisser@tpsb.ca; Tel: 416-808-8081

Julia Oosterman, Chief Communications Officer, Strategic Public and Employee Communications
Julia.Oosterman@toronto.ca; Tel: 416-397-5277

Jean Abou Saab, Chief of Staff (Acting), City Manager's Office
Jean.AbouSaab@toronto.ca; Tel: 416-392-3922

Mohamed Shuriye, Executive Director (Acting), Social Development
Mohamed.Shuriye@toronto.ca ; Tel: 416-392-7443

SIGNATURE

Denise Andrea Campbell
Deputy City Manager, Community Development and Social Services

ATTACHMENTS

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