

Toronto Community Crisis Service: Growing Toronto's Community-Based Crisis Response System

Date: July 7, 2026

To: Executive Committee

From: Executive Director, Social Development

Wards: All

SUMMARY

This report responds to Council direction in EX23.4 by providing an update on current crisis service performance, outlining the five-year pathway for growth, describing actions underway to increase the diversion of eligible 9-1-1 calls, and expanding access to the Toronto Community Crisis Service (TCCS).

Since launching in 2022, the TCCS has become firmly established as Toronto's fourth emergency service, providing a 24/7, community-based response to people experiencing mental health crises. To date, TCCS has received nearly 50,000 calls for service through 2-1-1 and 9-1-1, dispatched mobile crisis teams in more than 41,013 cases, completed over 11,659 referrals to health and social services, and resolved most eligible calls diverted from 9-1-1 without police involvement. These results demonstrate growing public confidence in the service and its ability to connect residents to appropriate care while reducing reliance on traditional emergency responses.

Building on these strong outcomes, the City is laying the foundation for significant service growth through enhanced 9-1-1 diversion, integrated dispatch with Toronto Paramedic Services, and expanded referral pathways across healthcare, community and institutional partners including the crisis service on transit initiative launched in 2025.

Analysis completed in 2026 projects annual TCCS call volumes from all sources will reach between 25,000 and 29,000 by 2031 through continued demand growth and increasing awareness. The analysis also identified the potential for an additional 20,000 annual calls through enhanced 9-1-1 diversion and new access pathways, bringing long-term demand potential to approximately 45,000 to 50,000 calls per year from all sources by 2031.

These findings reinforce the critical role of TCCS within Toronto's emergency response system. As demand continues to grow, expanding access to TCCS is essential to ensure more people experiencing mental health crises receive timely, appropriate, community-based care while reducing pressure on traditional emergency services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Director, Social Development recommends that:

1. The Executive Committee receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

This report provides an update on the current state of the Toronto Community Crisis Service (TCCS) since its launch in 2022 and outlines key actions to support the future growth of the service. There are no immediate financial impacts arising from the adoption of the recommendation contained within this report.

Funding of \$37.265 million gross and net for the TCCS is included in the 2026 Operating Budget for Social Development to support city-wide service delivery, dispatch through Toronto Paramedic Services and the TTC Pilot. In addition, a one-time grant of \$0.700 million from Health Canada has been secured in 2026 to advance equity-focused training and capacity building initiatives.

Any financial impacts arising from the growth and expansion of the TCCS will be submitted through future budget processes, as required, for consideration along with other City priorities, subject to the City's financial and resource capacity.

As demand for this service is driven in part by broader pressures, including persistent gaps in health and social service systems, that extend beyond municipal jurisdiction, continued intergovernmental investment will be required to sustain and scale the TCCS.

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

EQUITY IMPACT

The Toronto Community Crisis Service has a demonstrated positive equity impact on Indigenous, Black, racialized, and 2SLGBTQ+ communities. The service has strengthened confidence in community safety efforts, and led to better outcomes for Indigenous, Black, and equity-deserving communities that face over-policing and concerns about police interactions. This service reduces police engagements and increases community-based solutions that connect people in crisis to much needed mental health and well-being programs and services. This community-based service prioritizes the community safety and well-being of Toronto's most vulnerable populations.

DECISION HISTORY

At its October 8–9, 2025 meeting, City Council adopted CC33.1 - Advancing the Toronto Community Crisis Service for the Toronto Transit Commission pilot which

embeds crisis workers to provide timely, trauma-informed support for people experiencing mental health crisis in 15 stations in the U-zone of Line 1 (Yonge-University) in the downtown core.

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

At its May 21–22, 2025 meeting, City Council adopted EX23.4, directing staff to report back with an action plan to achieve at least 16,000 transferred calls annually from 9-1-1 to the Toronto Community Crisis Service (TCCS). Council also directed the City and the Toronto Police Service to strengthen 9-1-1 diversion by enhancing data sharing, improving training and resources for Toronto Police Service Communications Services staff, establishing diversion targets, and launching a public-facing performance dashboard.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.EX23.4>

At its May 21–22, 2025 meeting, City Council adopted EX23.5, directing the Deputy City Manager, Community Development and Social Services, to work with the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) to develop an agreement to expand and strengthen access to the Toronto Community Crisis Service (TCCS) 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>

At its November 8–9, 2023 meeting, City Council adopted EX.9.10, endorsing the city-wide expansion of the Toronto Community Crisis Service as Toronto's fourth emergency service.

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

At its July 19, 2022 meeting, City Council adopted CC47.5 Progress on the Toronto Community Crisis Service authorizing the adjustment of pilot boundaries within existing resources and directed the Executive Director Social Development, Finance and Administration to open the Request for Expressions of Interest process for Service expansion by December 2022, incorporating considerations from the launch of the initial four pilots, recommendations adopted by City Council from the Auditor General, and other relevant community safety considerations.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2022.CC47.5>

At its February 2, 2022 meeting, City Council adopted with amendments EX29.1 from the City Manager on the 2022 Launch of Community Crisis Support Service Pilots and Policing Reform Updates. The directions included a report back to City Council in July, 2022 on the implementation of the Toronto Community Crisis Service Pilots to date.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2022.EX29.1>

At its February 18, 2021 meeting, City Council adopted with amendments EX21.2 2021 Capital and Operating Budgets. Directions in EX21.2 included a report back on 911 call centre operations, Community and Safety Wellbeing work, and additional non-police interventions.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.EX21.2>

At its February 2, 2021 meeting, City Council adopted with amendments EX20.1 Community Crisis Support Service Pilot. Additional amendments included a request for a report back by end of 2021 on the Community Crisis Support Service pilots, an analysis of 9-1-1 operations, intergovernmental requests, directions on mental health and supportive system coordination, and changes requested to policing services and budget.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.EX20.1>

At its June 29, 2020 meeting, City Council adopted CC22.2 Changes to Policing in Toronto that included 36 decisions related to policing reforms covering areas touching on policing, public safety and crisis response. In addition, Council asked the City Manager to report to City Council with terms of reference for an anti-Black racism council advisory body.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.CC22.2>

COMMENTS

The Toronto Community Crisis Service (TCCS) represents a transformative shift in how the City supports people experiencing mental health crises. This report responds to Council direction EX23.4 by providing an update on current service performance, outlining projected demand over the next five years, and identifying the key actions to support service growth including enhanced diversion efforts.

Launched as a pilot in March 2022 and now operating city-wide as Toronto's fourth emergency service, the TCCS provides a community-based, client-centered and trauma-informed alternative to police response for mental health crisis calls and well-being checks. Since its inception, TCCS has delivered a high-impact crisis response model that is significantly expanding access to appropriate, person-centred care while reducing reliance on traditional emergency services.

As demand for the service continues to grow, increasing the diversion of appropriate calls to TCCS will be critical to maximizing its impact. Current trends highlight significant opportunities for expansion across multiple access pathways, positioning TCCS to extend its reach through both established channels and emerging referral partnerships.

While TCCS has established a strong foundation for community-based crisis response and continues to evolve in response to community need, sustaining and scaling TCCS will require continued intergovernmental investment. Demand for the service is driven in part by broader pressures that extend beyond municipal jurisdiction, including persistent gaps in the health and social service systems. Addressing these challenges will require coordinated, cross-sector collaboration to ensure the long-term stability and impact of community-based crisis response in Toronto.

Crisis Service Impact and Achievements

Since its launch in March 2022, the TCCS has become a significant access point for individuals experiencing mental health crises.

Service Uptake:

- The service received 49,185 calls for service from 9-1-1, 2-1-1, community-based referrals, and other partner organizations from March 2022 to May 2026.
- Overall, 54 per cent (26,392) of calls were received through 2-1-1, underscoring the importance of community-based crisis pathways. A further 34 per cent (16,680) of calls originated through 9-1-1. An additional 8 per cent (3,967) of calls were received directly through the TCCS Community Anchor Partners.
- 41,013 calls (83.4 per cent) resulted in the dispatch of a mobile crisis team and an additional 2,372 (4.8 per cent) were resolved through the provision of information and referrals without requiring dispatch.

Wrap-around Care and Stabilization:

- Crisis teams completed 11,659 referrals to health and social services during follow up and connected 1,898 individuals to case management from March 2022 to May 2026.
- Most common referrals were for mental health and related supports, including counselling, case management, housing services, psychiatric care, and primary care. Additionally, referrals for culturally specific supports, including Indigenous-specific and West Indian and Caribbean-focused, continue to be high in demand.

Crisis Call Diversion:

- In 2025, 9-1-1 received over 1.6 million total calls, of which 26,861 were mental health related calls for service. The TCCS received 4,482 eligible calls from the 9-1-1 intake source, 76.7 per cent of which were resolved without police involvement.
- 2.3 per cent (396 calls) of TCCS attended calls identified a need for other emergency services.
- 3.5 per cent (596 calls) of TCCS attended calls resulted in a visit to a hospital emergency department.

Enhancing Crisis Service Growth and Call Diversion

In response to TCCS's early success and efforts to further increase call volumes, City Council directed the Toronto Police Service and Social Development to maximize the diversion of eligible 9-1-1 calls to the TCCS by improving data sharing, enhancing training and resources for Toronto Police Service Communications Services staff; establishing year-over-year diversion targets; and maximizing the number of eligible calls transferred from 9-1-1.

To inform implementation of Council's direction, Social Development engaged PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) in 2026 to analyze future service demand and identify opportunities to expand access to TCCS over the next five years. The analysis projects that annual TCCS call volumes could increase to approximately 45,000 to 50,000 calls

per year by 2031. The following section provides a high-level summary of the analysis, with additional details provided in Attachment 1.

Analysis of Toronto Police Service call data identified a significant pool of eligible calls that could be redirected to TCCS, with annual calls diverted from 9-1-1 projected to increase from 5,300 in 2026 to more than 10,000 by 2031. Further growth may be achieved through the planned integration of the TCCS dispatch function within Toronto Paramedics service, which is intended to support more efficient call handling and transfer of eligible 9-1-1 calls. The City is also exploring additional access pathways across healthcare, community, and institutional settings, representing an estimated 9,000 additional calls annually. Realizing this growth will require continued collaboration to strengthen the 9-1-1 diversion pathway through enhanced call identification, data sharing, staff training and system performance. A phased action plan will guide implementation, establish diversion targets, monitor demand, and inform future service planning and resource considerations to support the long-term expansion of the TCCS through 2031.

Key Actions to Support Service Growth

TCCS has established a strong foundation for growth through a range of initiatives aimed at improving access and supporting future demand. These include integrating the service's dispatch within Toronto Paramedic Services, conducting targeted public awareness and anti-stigma campaigns, investing in workforce capacity, and building new access pathways to community-based crisis response.

1) Improving System Coordination through Integrated Dispatch

A key strategy to maximize call diversion and support future growth is the implementation of a centralized dispatch model for TCCS within Toronto Paramedic Services. Under this model, Toronto Paramedic Services will become the centralized dispatch function for all TCCS calls, including those transferred from 9-1-1 and those received through existing community access pathways. Leveraging Toronto Paramedic Services' established dispatch infrastructure will strengthen the identification, triage, and routing of eligible calls while reducing call transfers, improving response times, and enabling more consistent dispatch decisions. This approach will also support future growth in call volumes. The existing 211 access pathway will remain unchanged; however, under the new model, once a call is identified as appropriate for TCCS, Toronto Paramedic Services will be responsible for dispatching the appropriate crisis response team.

To support implementation, the City's consultant has worked with Toronto Paramedic Services, 9-1-1 and Toronto Police Services, and TCCS Community Anchor Partners to design the future-state dispatch model, including integrated dispatch workflows, escalation protocols, technology and interoperability requirements, data governance and privacy processes, and the system enhancements required to enable seamless call transfer and dispatch management.

Implementation is targeted for early 2027, following completion of the required technology integration, operational, and governance work. Once operational, the integrated dispatch model will support more efficient call handling, improve the diversion of eligible 9-1-1 calls, and establish a stronger foundation for the continued growth of TCCS.

2) Strengthening Public Awareness through Targeted Communications Campaigns

Public awareness efforts will continue to be an important component of expanding access to TCCS. Campaigns including TCCS Expansion, Make the Right Call, and the Anti-Stigma campaign have proven effective in increasing awareness of TCCS and promoting appropriate use of the service. Since their launch in 2024, these efforts have collectively generated more than 20 million social media impressions and increased visits to the TCCS webpage, helping residents better understand when and how to access mental health crisis supports. Materials were translated into 24 languages and promoted across social media, radio, digital advertising, transit shelters, and multicultural media outlets. The City will continue to promote these campaigns through existing and new channels to strengthen awareness and support continued uptake of the service.

3) Investing in Workforce Capacity to Meet Growing Demand

To support future growth while maintaining service quality, the City is continuing to invest in workforce capacity and development. Crisis workers receive more than 200 hours of specialized training in trauma-informed care, crisis intervention, suicide prevention, cultural safety, harm reduction, and equity-focused practice. The City also delivers specialized training for front-line crisis workers and emergency service responder partners to strengthen on-scene communication and collaboration. Building on this foundation, the City is advancing a dedicated TCCS Training Centre to strengthen workforce capacity, support consistent service standards, and enable ongoing training and innovation across the crisis response system.

4) Testing and Building New Access Pathways to Community-based Crisis Response

Building on opportunities identified through the consultant's review, the City will explore and test new pathways to connect people to TCCS through trusted community settings. Through strengthened partnerships with long-term care homes, community health centres, and post-secondary institutions, these access pathways could generate approximately 9,000 additional calls annually at full scale, expanding early intervention opportunities and strengthening connections to community-based crisis supports.

Together, these efforts will expand access to TCCS while ensuring the service has the capacity, partnerships, and infrastructure needed to meet growing demand and continue delivering timely, community-based crisis response.

Update on the Crisis Service on the TTC

In 2024, the TCCS responded to 109 calls for service across the TTC network. In May 2025, City Council directed ([EX23.5](#)) the Crisis Service to pilot an expansion of its services onto the TTC, providing an opportunity to enhance community-based mental health crisis response directly in the transit system.

The pilot, launched in November 2025, embeds crisis workers at 15 stations along the U-zone of Line 1 (Yonge-University). Crisis workers respond directly to people experiencing mental health crises within the TTC environment, providing consent-based, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive care, while connecting service users to post-crisis supports and ongoing case management. This pilot is part of a broader TTC safety strategy that includes Special Constables, Toronto Police Service and social service programs including Toronto Shelter and Support Services' Streets to Homes and Multi-Disciplinary Outreach Team (MDOT). Further, the expansion aligns with the City's efforts to strengthen coordination among existing outreach, health, housing and crisis response teams in and around Union Station, one of the city's busiest transit hubs, where people with complex needs regularly require crisis support.

Integrating TCCS within this broader network strengthens a coordinated, community-based approach to crisis response, ensuring people experiencing a mental health crisis receive appropriate support while improving coordination among transit, safety, health, and social service partners to support better outcomes for both transit users and vulnerable residents.

Evaluating Pilot Outcomes

Social Development engaged the MAP Centre for Urban Health Solutions at St. Michael's Hospital to conduct an independent evaluation of the pilot, assessing its effectiveness through both qualitative and quantitative methods. This evaluation will be completed by the end of 2026 and will include input from TCCS teams, the Toronto Police Service, TTC Special Constables, TTC riders and TCCS service users.

This section summarizes key highlights from the pilot during the first six and a half months of service, with a snapshot of initial findings provided in Attachment 2. Between November 15, 2025, and May 31, 2026, TCCS-TTC crisis workers responded to 528 calls for service and completed approximately 9,792 community interactions within the TTC pilot zone. Key insights from this early implementation period are outlined below:

- **Enhancing mental health crisis response on the TTC is addressing gaps in mental health services at high-incidence subway stations.** TCCS-TTC calls for service were concentrated in five stations along the Yonge side of the U-Zone (Bloor-Yonge, Union, Wellesley, Queen, and TMU), which accounted for 77 per cent of all calls. This aligns with TTC Special Constables data, which shows a similarly concentrated distribution of incidents in the downtown core of the transit network.
- **The pilot is demonstrating the effectiveness of TCCS' "no wrong door" approach by leveraging multiple service entry pathways.** Most calls for service were requested by TTC employees (44.8 per cent), closely followed by crisis workers approaching potential clients when conducting outreach (44.3 per cent).

Other service entry pathways, such as 211 (2.8 per cent) and public-initiated requests (4.2 per cent), have been used less frequently.

- **The pilot is delivering a rapid response to people experiencing mental health crises, attributed to dedicated dispatch processes and an active presence of crisis workers at high-activity stations.** TCCS-TTC calls for service had an average response time of approximately five minutes.
- **Crisis workers are successfully identifying and responding to clients' needs in the TTC environment, while providing holistic supports beyond immediate crisis intervention.** Clients were successfully located and accepted support 65 per cent of the time. Service completion was particularly high when crisis workers initiated contact through outreach, with 93.6 per cent of these interactions resulting in a completed service.
- **Crisis workers respond independently to the majority of mental health crises on the TTC.** Only six per cent of TCCS-TTC calls for service resulted in crisis workers requesting support from TTC Special Constables. Requests for police or ambulance services were even smaller, making up two and three per cent of calls for service respectively. Where additional supports were required, it was primarily due to immediate safety concerns, medical needs, inability to locate or engage a client safely, or situations outside the TCCS mandate.
- **The TCCS is working with the TTC and other transit system social service partners to effectively coordinate referrals.** Through the Social Support Coordination Workshops and the TTC Social Support Partners Interdivisional Table, the TCCS and TTC continue to strengthen coordination among social support partners, including Streets to Homes and LOFT Community Services' Multidisciplinary Outreach Teams (MDOT). These collaborative efforts help ensure that individuals experiencing crisis can access appropriate post-crisis care, ongoing support, and wraparound services tailored to their unique needs.

Early findings indicate that the crisis service on transit pilot is performing as intended, with strong alignment between the service model and observed needs in higher-incidence areas of the TTC network. A comprehensive evaluation of the pilot, including service user experiences, will be reported to Council as part of the SafeTO report back in 2027. The findings will help inform the next phase of work, including opportunities to strengthen partnerships, enhance service integration, and expand awareness to support broader access to community-based crisis response across the TTC network.

Next Steps

To support the next phase of service growth, a comprehensive demand analysis has identified the potential for annual TCCS call volumes to increase to approximately 45,000 to 50,000 calls per year by 2031. This growth will be supported by increased public awareness and demand, enhanced 9-1-1 diversion, centralized dispatch through Toronto Paramedic Services, and expanded referral pathways across health, community, and institutional settings.

To support this growth, the City is advancing the following key actions:

- Implementing a centralized dispatch model within Toronto Paramedic Services to improve call identification, routing, and coordination, with phased implementation beginning in late 2026 and full operationalization in 2027.
- Developing a phased action plan to strengthen 9-1-1 diversion pathways and support the projected increase in eligible calls transferred to TCCS.
- Establishing a dedicated TCCS Training Centre in 2027 to strengthen workforce capacity, support consistent service standards, and enable ongoing training, quality improvement, and innovation across the crisis response system.
- Exploring opportunities to expand community-based crisis response across the TTC network, informed by the pilot evaluation findings and evolving service needs.

The continued success of TCCS, combined with the significant growth projected over the coming years, demonstrates the importance of community-based crisis response as a core component of Toronto's emergency response system. The actions outlined in this report, along with the forthcoming TCCS evaluation and report back to City Council in 2027, will help position the service to meet future demand by improving system coordination, expanding access, strengthening partnerships across the health and emergency response sectors, and enhancing operational capacity. Together, these efforts will enable more people experiencing a mental health crisis to receive timely, appropriate, community-based care while improving the efficiency and sustainability of Toronto's crisis response system.

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - TCCS Call Volume and Expansion Pathway

Attachment 2 - Enhancing Mental Health Crisis Response on the TTC Pilot: Infographic