

Staff Report



To	City Council
Service Area	Public Services
Date	Monday, July 20, 2020
Subject	Paramedic Service Response Performance 2019 and Performance Plan 2021

Recommendation

1. That the Response Time Performance Plan for 2021 be set as recommended by staff.
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Executive Summary

Purpose of Report

To provide a report on the performance of the Paramedic Service against the 2019 Response Time Performance targets as set by Council, and to establish a Response Time Performance Plan (RTPP) for the Paramedic Service for 2021 as required by Provincial Legislation.

Key Findings

In 2019 Guelph Wellington Paramedic Service was generally able to meet the targets and compliance rates as set by Council. The targets set do not compare favourably with some paramedic response times in comparator municipalities, as the service is challenged by a relatively large rural area and increasing call volumes.

Financial Implications

The response time performance is a key data set that supports budget investment and is a measurable goal of the Strategic Plan. As the City moves towards presenting a four-year budget, the Paramedic Master Plan in connection with the actual response time results will be used to demonstrate the recommended timing of expanded paramedic services required to meet response time targets over this period.

Report

Response times are important for a paramedic service in order to ensure effective pre-hospital patient care. The timely intervention of paramedics in providing care can improve the overall condition and outcome of a patient suffering from a potentially life threatening event.

Provincial legislation requires that Council set the target performance levels for the ambulance service for each year by October 31 of the preceding year, and to inform

the Ontario Ministry of Health of the actual performance results by March 31 of the following year.

The purpose of setting response time targets is to provide the residents of our area with a reasonable expectation of ambulance response times in their community, and to provide some accountability and transparency around the provision of the paramedic ambulance service.

Performance targets are set in the form of a Response Time Performance Plan (RTPP), which establishes a target response time and compliance level to that target for each of five (5) categories of medical emergencies. The categories are based on the severity of the patient's illness or injury and are defined based on the Canadian Triage Acuity Scale (CTAS).

The five levels of CTAS include:

- CTAS 1 – requires resuscitation (i.e. cardiac arrest)
- CTAS 2 – requires emergent care (i.e. major trauma)
- CTAS 3 – requires urgent care (i.e. mild shortness of breath)
- CTAS 4 – requires less urgent care (i.e. minor trauma)
- CTAS 5 – requires non-urgent care (i.e. sore throat)

A sixth target is required measuring the response times to a call for a patient suffering a sudden cardiac arrest, and is different than CTAS 1 as it includes non-paramedic responders using defibrillators. The target of six minutes has been set by the Ministry of Health (MOH) but the compliance rates to that standard can be set by Council.

Performance in 2019

Response times to emergency calls tend to be affected by the volume of calls for assistance. As the service becomes busier, there are fewer ambulances available in the area that a call occurs, and available ambulances must travel further to respond. Guelph Wellington Paramedic Service's call volume has been increasing significantly over the past several years, attributable to an aging population, increasing population, and the community efforts to allow aging at home and recovery at home from serious illnesses (earlier discharge from hospital).

The negative effects on response times caused by these increases in call volumes have been offset with the enhancements to the service approved by Council over that past several years. The service was able to generally meet the targets set by Council for 2019.

Guelph Wellington Paramedic Service utilizes best practices in staffing and deploying available resources strategically so as to provide the best response time to emergency calls.

The table below illustrates Council's approved RTPP for 2019, and Guelph Wellington Paramedic Service's compliance with its response time targets. The paramedic service was required to report these results to the Ontario Ministry of Health by March 31, 2020.

CTAS Category	Response Time Target	2019 Target Compliance as approved by Council (October 2018)	2019 Actual Compliance Rate
Level 1	8 minutes (set by MOH)	65%	68%
Level 2	10 minutes	75%	76%
Level 3	15 minutes	90%	89%
Level 4	15 minutes	90%	87%
Level 5	20 minutes	90%	92%
Sudden Cardiac Arrest	6 minutes (set by MOH)	65%	51%

Table Notes:

- The response time performance for Sudden Cardiac Arrest involves multiple agencies and public access defibrillators. The actual response times of public access defibrillators are often difficult to capture consistently.
- The RTPP is a good retrospective measurement of performance, but is less useful as a planning tool. The service needs to attempt to arrive at all calls as quickly as possible because the severity of the patient's condition (and therefore their CTAS level) cannot be verified before a paramedic arrives.

Guelph Wellington Paramedic Service Master Plan

In 2016 a consultant was engaged to review the station locations and staffing using a sophisticated computer modelling process. The review provided some guidance on necessary steps that will be required in order to meet the needs of the community through 2026.

The final report was used to develop a five-year Master Plan for the paramedic service that has previously been presented to Council. That plan outlines recommended incremental enhancements to the service and relocation of some paramedic stations. Each change will be brought forward to Council for approval in the budget process for the proposed year of introduction.

Recommendations for the 2021 Response Time Performance Plan

Pressures on the response times for the Guelph Wellington Paramedic Service are offset by the enhancements that have been approved by Council in past budgets. As such, staff recommend maintaining the current RTPP targets and compliance rates for 2021:

Canadian Triage Acuity Scale Levels	Response Time Target	Compliance Rate Recommended to Council
CTAS Level 1	8 minutes (set by the Province)	65%
CTAS Level 2	10 minutes	75%
CTAS Level 3	15 minutes	90%
CTAS Level 4	15 minutes	90%
CTAS Level 5	20 minutes	90%
Sudden Cardiac Arrest	6 minutes (set by the Province)	65%

Guelph Wellington Paramedic Service will continue to strive to meet or exceed these targets and compliance rates using best practices in deployment strategies and methods.

Financial Implications

The response time performance is a key data set that supports budget investment and is a measurable goal of the Strategic Plan. As the City moves towards presenting a four-year budget, the Paramedic Master Plan in connection with the actual response time results will be used to demonstrate the recommended timing of expanded paramedic services required to meet response time targets over this period.

Consultations

The Response Time Performance Plan will be provided to the Ontario Ministry of Health, where it will subsequently be posted on their website. It will also be posted on the City's website: [Guelph Wellington Paramedic Services](#)

The County of Wellington will be provided with a copy of this report. Staff will be present at their Social Services Committee meeting to explain the RTPP Standards.

Strategic Plan Alignment

The creation of a Response Time Performance Plan is part of building our future and ensuring that we continue to build strong, vibrant, safe and healthy communities that foster resilience in the people who live here.

Departmental Approval

None

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