



Report of the Commissioner of Community and Health Services **2024 Paramedic Response Time Performance Plan Results**

1. Recommendation

1. Council amend Bylaw 2020-53 to expand the conditions under which York Region Paramedic Services' vehicles may use York Region's Bus Rapid Transit Network's dedicated bus lanes.
2. The Regional Clerk circulate this report to the local municipalities for information.

2. Purpose

This annual report presents the results of Paramedic Services' 2024 Response Time Performance Plan. Based on 2024 performance, it is recommended that Bylaw 2020-53 be amended to permit York Region Paramedic Services vehicles to use York Region's Bus Rapid Transit Network with lights only for lower-acuity calls. This change would help maintain response times for lower-acuity calls, reduce delays and enhance the safety and efficiency of emergency response.

Key Points

- In 2024, York Region Paramedic Services (Paramedic Services) responded to 95,511 incidents, a 3.3% increase from 2023
- Paramedic Services achieved all 2024 response time targets but missed the Canadian Triage Acuity Scale (CTAS) 3 target (how often paramedics achieve those times) by 1%. This minor variance was expected and is linked to the November 2024 implementation of the new Medical Priority Dispatch System at the Georgian Central Ambulance Communication Centre. Although it is early, initial data suggests that higher acuity patients are being prioritized appropriately, allowing for safe increases in wait times for non-urgent calls

- A Ministry of Health-led working group is assessing if the provincial response time framework should be revised to better reflect improvements from the Medical Priority Dispatch System. For now, Paramedic Services is maintaining the current response time framework and may update it later pending Ministry direction
- Council approval is required to amend Bylaw 2020-53 to expand the permitted use of York Region's Bus Rapid Transit Network's dedicated bus lanes (rapidways) by Paramedic Services vehicles. This amendment would help maintain response times for lower-acuity calls, mitigate delays and support safer, more efficient emergency response
- Since implementation of the Medical Priority Dispatch System, Paramedic Services has begun to realize operational efficiencies, including fewer over-resourced responses and a drop in lights-and-sirens incidents from 70% to 47% from November 2024 to July 2025
- Average hospital transfer of care times remained below the 30-minute offload target and are comparable overall to the previous year with slight improvements at three of York Region's four hospitals

3. Background

Council established a response time performance plan in 2012 and reports response time performance annually to the Province

Under [Ontario Regulation 257/00](#) of the *Ambulance Act*, upper-tier municipalities that operate land ambulance services must have response time performance plans. York Region Council approved the York Region Emergency Medical Services Response Time Performance Plan in [September 2012](#).

Response times are based on the CTAS, a five-level tool assessing the urgency of a patient's condition. CTAS level 1 is most severe (resuscitation) and CTAS level 5 is least severe (non-urgent). The Ministry of Health sets response times for sudden cardiac arrests and CTAS level 1, while municipalities set their own response times for CTAS levels 2 to 5 under Ontario Regulation 257/00.

Regulation 257/00 requires York Region to report the following performance measures to the Ministry of Health annually:

- percentage of times anyone equipped to provide defibrillation to sudden cardiac arrest patients arrived on scene within six minutes
- percentage of times an ambulance crew arrived on scene for CTAS 1 [level one] patients within eight minutes
- percentage of times an ambulance crew arrived on scene for CTAS 2, 3, 4 and 5 patients within the response time targets set by the Region.

Council is investing in expanding Paramedic Services' fleet, staff and stations

Since 2012, Council has made significant investments to meet the growing needs of the Region's communities. Over the past decade, Paramedic Services has expanded capacity by adding 210 frontline staff, six new paramedic stations, and 11 new ambulances. These enhancements improved service coverage across the region, enabling Paramedic Services to provide timely, high-quality emergency care and meet response time targets.

Georgian Central Ambulance Communication Centre has been using the new Medical Priority Dispatch System since November 2024

In [November 2024](#), the Ministry of Health launched the new Medical Priority Dispatch System at the Georgian Central Ambulance Communication Centre. It replaces the two current priority tools with a five-priority colour-coded system, enhancing call prioritization and dispatch to better match paramedic resources with patient needs.

4. Analysis

911 INCIDENT DEMAND

In 2024 Paramedic Services responded to 95,511 incidents, a 3.3% increase from 2023

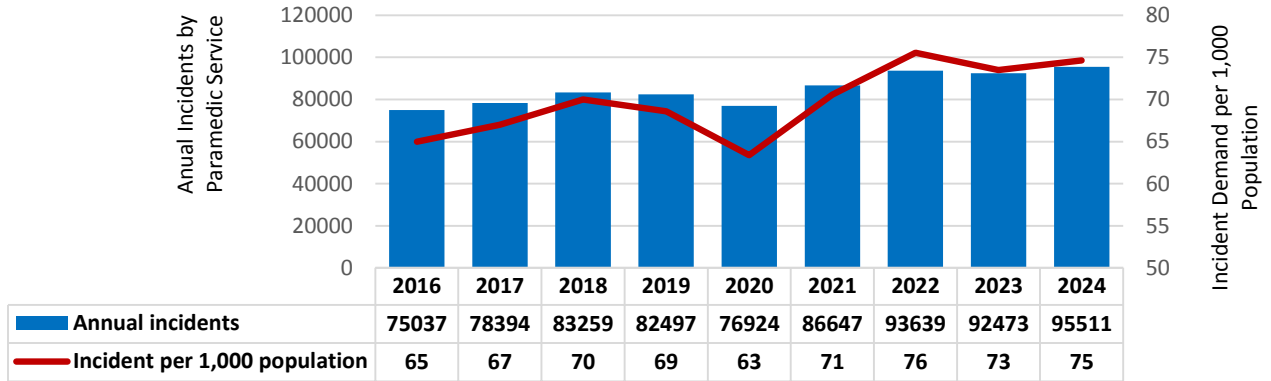
2024, Paramedic Services responded to 95,511 incidents, 3.3% higher than 2023 (92,473 incidents), as expected by the [Paramedic Services Master Plan, 2021 to 2031](#). Incidents mean events where paramedics are dispatched; response refers to the number of units dispatched to incidents. Figure 1 shows incidents from 2016 to 2024. Paramedic Services received 75 incidents per 1,000 residents in 2024 (compared to 73 incidents per 1,000 residents in 2023). As noted in the Paramedic Services Master Plan, 2021 to 2031, incidents are expected to continue to increase over the long term.

Community paramedicine is helping reduce 9-1-1 calls and manage future demand

Services' community paramedicine initiatives, aimed at addressing healthcare needs in the community and reducing frequent 911 callers, are expected to help manage future incident demand. For example, since its launch in 2024, the Improving Patient Access to Care in the Community (IMPACC) initiative (reported to Council in [September 2024](#)) reduced reliance on emergency services. Between April 2024 and May 2025, only 19 of 289 patients who received paramedic care through IMPACC called back 911 for the same incident.

Figure 1

Paramedic Incident Total and per 1,000 Residents, 2016 to 2024



Source: York Region Paramedic Services Ambulance Dispatch System

RESPONSE TIME PERFORMANCE RESULTS

York Region Paramedic Services exceeded most response time goals in 2024

Paramedic Services exceeded all six response time targets (how quickly paramedics arrive after being dispatched), however, missed the targeted percentage for CTAS 3 (how often paramedics achieve those times) by 1%. This minor variance is an expected outcome of the new Medical Priority Dispatch System introduced in November 2024. While it is too early for definitive conclusions, early data show expected trends with higher acuity patients being prioritized more effectively, leading to clinically safe longer wait times for non-urgent calls.

Table 1 provides 2024 response time targets and actual performance for sudden cardiac arrests and each CTAS level.

Table 1
2023 - 2024 Response Time Performance Result

Category and examples	Target response time from dispatch to arrival on scene	Targeted percentage to meet response times (%)	2023		2024	
			Actual (%)	Average Time (minutes)	Actual (%)	Average Time (minutes)
Sudden Cardiac Arrest, Absence of breathing, pulse	Community Target: Arrival of any person equipped with an AED within 6 minutes Ministry target	60	66	5:28	66	5:40
CTAS 1 - Excludes sudden cardiac arrest or other major trauma	8 minutes Ministry target	75	76	7:07	76	7:05
CTAS 2 - Chest pain, stroke, overdose	10 minutes York Region target	80	82	8:11	84	7:55
CTAS 3 - Moderate pain or trauma	15 minutes York Region target	90	91	9:36	89	9:20
CTAS 4 – Minor trauma, general pain	20 minutes York Region target	90	95	11:12	94	11:50
CTAS 5 – Minor ailments, repeat visits	25 minutes York Region target	90	98	11:51	98	12:06

The Medical Priority Dispatch System drives operational efficiencies since 2024 rollout

Since the introduction of the new Medical Priority Dispatch System in November 2024, the use of lights and sirens has dropped from 70% of incidents January to October 2024 to 47% November 2024 to July 2025. Reducing the use of lights and sirens lowers the risk of collisions and improves road safety for paramedics and the public during emergency responses.

Paramedic Services will maintain the current response time framework and may update it later pending Ministry direction

A Ministry-led working group is currently evaluating the provincial response time framework to determine whether updates are needed, following improvements from implementing the Medical Priority Dispatch System. Paramedic Services is not recommending changes to the current response time targets at this time. Paramedic Services will monitor provincial developments and evaluate the impact of the Medical Priority Dispatch System before proposing any adjustments. In 2027, Council will receive an updated Paramedic Services Master Plan, which will include any recommended updates to response time targets, if appropriate.

Integrated community-based strategies help Paramedic Services improve response times for sudden cardiac arrest

Under Regulation 257/00 (*Ambulance Act*), the response time to sudden cardiac arrest includes arrival on scene by paramedics or anyone equipped to provide defibrillation, such as fire services or bystanders, which can be factored into the overall performance result.

Integrated community-based strategies involving local municipal fire services and Automated External Defibrillator Programs are vital in meeting response time targets for sudden cardiac arrest. Currently 906 defibrillators are registered with Georgian Central Ambulance Communication Centre in York Region, including 205 from the Region's Automated External Defibrillator Program. These allow dispatchers to pinpoint their location for 911 callers during emergencies.

In 2024, five of 205 Regional defibrillators assisted individuals in medical emergencies, a 74% decrease from 2023, which may be due to a range of factors, including limited awareness about them, fewer cardiac arrests or improved community and health prevention efforts. Supported by community-based strategies, Paramedic Services surpassed its 60% sudden cardiac arrest target in 2024, achieving an actual performance of 66%, as indicated in Table 1.

Percentage of paramedic responses for each CTAS level in 2023 and 2024 remained stable

Paramedic responses by CTAS level remained consistent between 2023 and 2024, with patient acuity showing little variation across both years (see Table 2). Call volumes rose mainly due to increased CTAS 4 and 5 calls, while CTAS 1–3 remained stable between 2023 and 2024. Staff education on the Medical Priority Dispatch System improved consistency in response. In 2024, CTAS 1 (urgent intervention) accounted for less than 2% of incidents. CTAS 2 (conditions such as stroke or heart attacks) made up 21% of incidents. CTAS 3 (moderate conditions and physical trauma) comprised most incidents at about 52%. CTAS levels 4 to 5 (minor ailments) made up 24% of incidents. These are often addressed through paramedics providing care under the IMPACC initiative, such as treating low blood sugar or seizures. For example, in 2024, 155 out of 289 IMPACC-related calls (54%) were treated and discharged at the scene. This enables on-scene discharge, saving time and avoiding unnecessary hospital transport.

Table 2
2023 - 2024 Percent of Total Incidents by CTAS Level

CTAS Level	2023 Percent of Total Incidents	2024 Percent of Total Incidents
1	1.9%	1.8%
2	22.0%	21.0%
3	54.6%	52.8%
4	15.1%	16.9%
5	6.4%	7.5%

*Note: Only include incidents with a documented and valid CTAS level.

Expanding the permitted use of Paramedic Services’ vehicles on York Region’s Bus Rapid Transit Network will help to maintain response times for lower-acuity calls

York Region’s rapidways allow York Region Transit buses to move separately from regular traffic, as outlined in the [Transportation Master Plan](#). In collaboration with York Region’s Public Works, the rapidways are also being leveraged in innovative ways to support emergency services. Under the current Bylaw 2020-53, Paramedic Services’ vehicles are only permitted to use the rapidways when responding with both lights and sirens. This supports timely access for high-acuity emergencies. However, lower-acuity calls—particularly CTAS 3, which represents the largest portion of our incidents (see Table 2)—often do not meet the criteria for lights-and-sirens responses (such as CTAS 1 and 2). As the new Medical Priority Dispatch System improves prioritization for true emergencies, the ability for paramedics to access rapidways during lights-only responses (such as CTAS 3, 4 or 5) would help mitigate traffic delays, improve operational efficiency, and support safer, more consistent patient outcomes and public safety. Both Paramedic Services and Public Works support this initiative, recognizing its potential to enhance service delivery and better position Paramedic Services to meet CTAS 3 response time targets more consistently, especially following a 1% targeted percentage shortfall in 2024.

Council approval is requested to amend Bylaw 2020-53

To fully leverage operational efficiencies of integrating ambulances and ancillary vehicles used by paramedics into the rapidway network, Council approval is requested to amend Bylaw 2020-53 to permit the use of vehicles in rapidways during lights-only responses. The proposed amendment would improve operational efficiency and help meet response time targets for lower-acuity calls, without compromising public safety or the intent of the rapidway system.

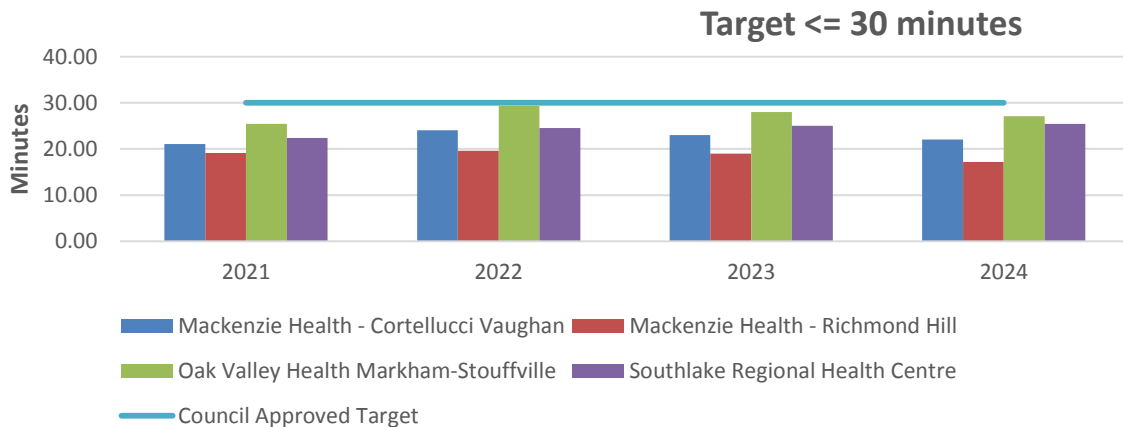
HOSPITAL TRANSFER OF CARE TIMES AND OFFLOAD DELAY

Hospital transfer of care times remained below the 30-minute target

Hospital transfer of care time refers to the average time between when paramedics arrive at a hospital and when a patient is transferred from the paramedic's care to the hospital. Time over the 30-minute target is called offload delay. Shorter transfer times get ambulances back in service faster, enabling paramedics to manage incident demand and meet response time targets.

As shown in Figure 2, average transfer of care times remained below the Region's target of 30 minutes. Overall, transfer of care times are comparable to 2023, with a slight improvement seen at all hospitals except Southlake Health in the Town of Newmarket, which remained the same. Average transfer of care times continues to remain below the 30-minute target, with Mackenzie Health in the City of Richmond Hill returning to its pre-pandemic levels.

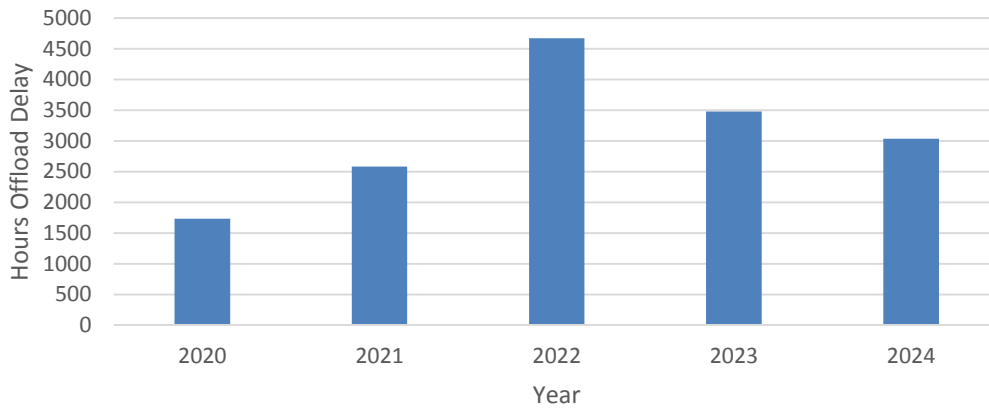
Figure 2
Average Transfer of Care Time by York Region Hospital



Total hours spent in offload delay continue to decrease significantly since 2022 but remain higher than 2020

Figure 3 shows the total hours spent in offload delay at York Region hospitals decreased from 3,481 hours in 2023 to 3,035 hours in 2024. Although total offload delay hours for paramedics are higher than 2020 levels, there has been a downward trend over the past two years. This is a positive development, as it enables paramedics to return to the road faster making them available to respond to other emergencies.

Figure 3
Offload Delay Hours at York Region Hospitals, 2021 to 2024



Through the Dedicated Offload Nurse Program, the Ministry of Health provides funding to Ontario paramedic services to reimburse hospitals for dedicated nurses to care for patients received by ambulance. Recent improvements can be attributed to the provincial investment made in [September 2023](#), which provided three years of funding for the Dedicated Offload Nurse Program. Paramedic Services typically receives an annual update on funding plans for the year ahead. This funding directly supports hospitals by increasing nursing hours, reducing offload times, and enabling paramedics to return to service faster.

5. Financial Considerations

This report does not present current or anticipated financial changes to the Region’s budget or fiscal position. Paramedic Services’ operating and capital budgets are managed within the Council approved budget. The Land Ambulance Service Grant and other external funding sources are shown in Table 3, as well as the amount of Regional tax levy required.

Table 3
Actual Funding Received 2024

Program	Funding Source	2024* (million)
Land Ambulance Service Grant	Ministry of Health	\$56.4
Dedicated Offload Nursing Program	Ministry of Health	\$2.7
Community Paramedicine for Long Term Care	Ministry of Long-Term Care	\$2.3
Community Paramedicine for Long Term Care +	Ministry of Long-Term Care	\$0.4
Community Paramedicine	Ontario Health	\$0.6
Subtotal External Funding 2024		\$62.4
Regional Tax Levy		\$53.2
Total funding		\$115.6

*Refers to actuals received/accrued

6. Local Impact

Paramedic Services continues to deliver dependable and timely emergency response to all local municipalities. The Paramedic Services Master Plan 2021-2031, approved by Council, outlines a strategic approach to expanding system capacity in line with population growth and service demand. In collaboration with York Region Transit, Paramedic Services will expand the permitted use of rapidways by paramedics to help navigate traffic congestion and improve response times, demonstrating innovative use of existing public infrastructure to enhance emergency service delivery. Paramedic Services will continue to work with municipal partners to optimize patient care and resource deployment.

7. Conclusion

Paramedic Services exceeded most response time goals, narrowly missing the targeted percentage for CTAS 3 (how often paramedics achieve those times) by 1% due to anticipated trends associated with the new Medical Priority Dispatch System. The current response time framework will be maintained while staff continue to monitor developments from the Ministry. Council will receive an updated Paramedic Services Master Plan in early 2027. If revised response times are introduced, Council will be informed about the changes and their implications for future service delivery. Expanding the permitted use of Paramedic Services'

vehicles on York Region's rapidways will be a key support to maintaining response times and aligns well with Dispatch System protocols.

For more information on this report, please contact Julia Roitenberg, General Manager, Paramedic and Senior Services at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 74024. Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request.



Recommended by:

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Approved for Submission:

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