



County Council

Meeting Date: December 13, 2022
Submitted by: Neal Roberts, Chief, Middlesex-London Paramedic Service
SUBJECT: MLPS System Status Update

BACKGROUND:

Middlesex-London Paramedic Service continues to monitor the status of the 911 system and the performance of the 911 system. Monitoring allows Middlesex-London Paramedic Service to monitor the 911 system performance and to identify emerging issues or concerns early.

As an established practice, Middlesex-London Paramedic Service routinely provides system status updates to Middlesex County Council so that County Council can remain informed on the system performance and challenges.

ANALYSIS:

Middlesex-London Paramedic Service has experienced considerable increases in demand over the past 10 years. Demand for service has increased at an average rate of 5.58% each year. In 2022 (January 1 through October 31) Middlesex-London Paramedic Service has experienced a 9.0% increase in demand for emergency responses over the previous year (2021).

Recently ORH completed a strategic plan for Middlesex-London Paramedic Service and forecasted a 10% increase in call volume over the next 5 years. In 2022 (to date) a 9.0% increase in call volume has been experienced and Middlesex London Paramedic Services expects to far exceed forecast for the year. This rapid increase further highlights the importance of implementing the recommendations by ORH.

Middlesex County, and the City of London, are growing at a rapid rate. With this growth comes additional pressures and utilization of emergency services. As communities grow, call volume increases and the demand on existing resources increases.

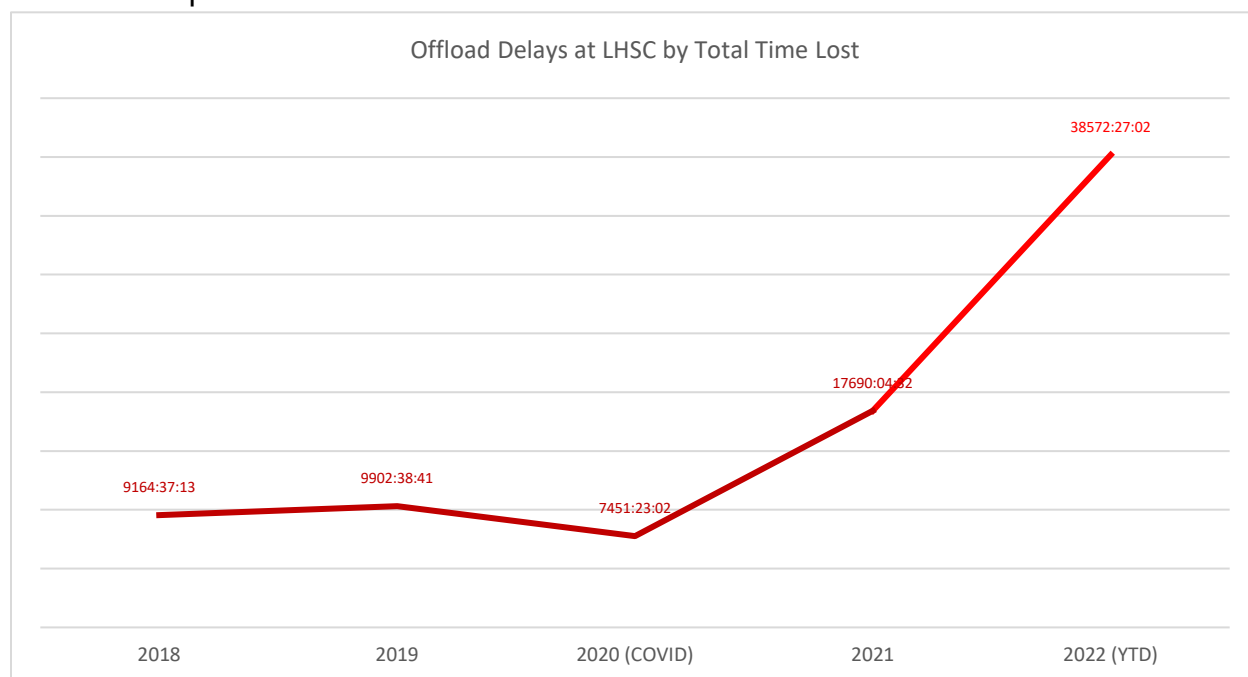
While increased call demand due to the growth of communities is positive, another significant pressure and contributor pressures is offload delays. Provincially,

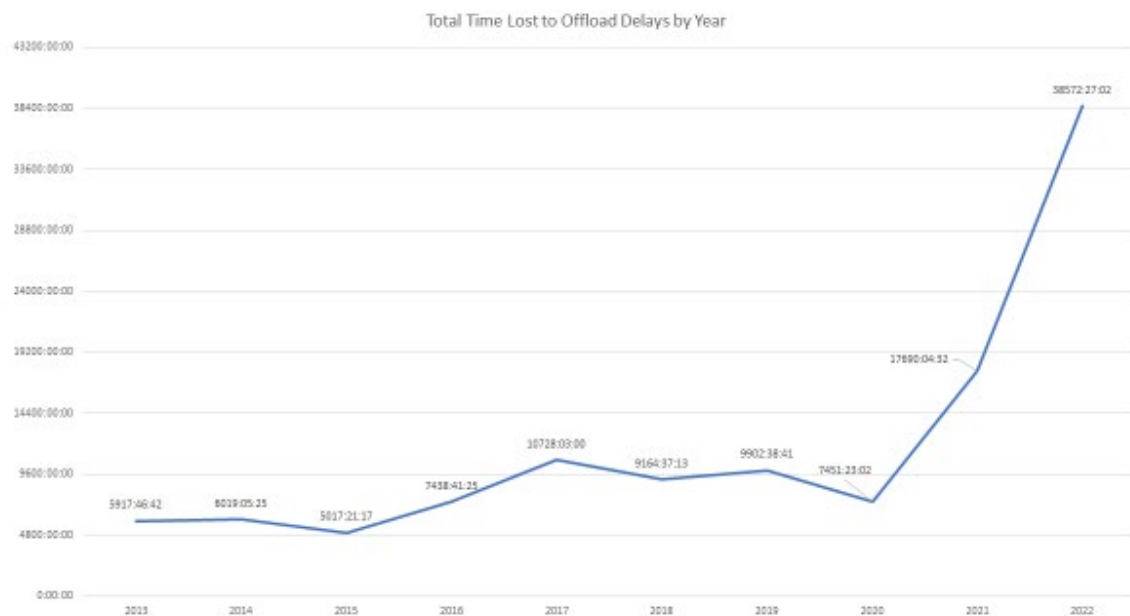
paramedics are afforded 30 minutes to register their patients, have them triaged and moved into a patient care space in the emergency department, transferring care to the receiving hospital. Offload delays are defined as the time in excess of this 30 minutes.

Middlesex-London Paramedic Service has been experiencing rapid increases in offload delays. Offload delays are increasing in frequency and length of delay. Every hour that a paramedic crew spends on offload delay is one less hour they are able to respond to 911 calls. This places extreme stress on the 911 system.

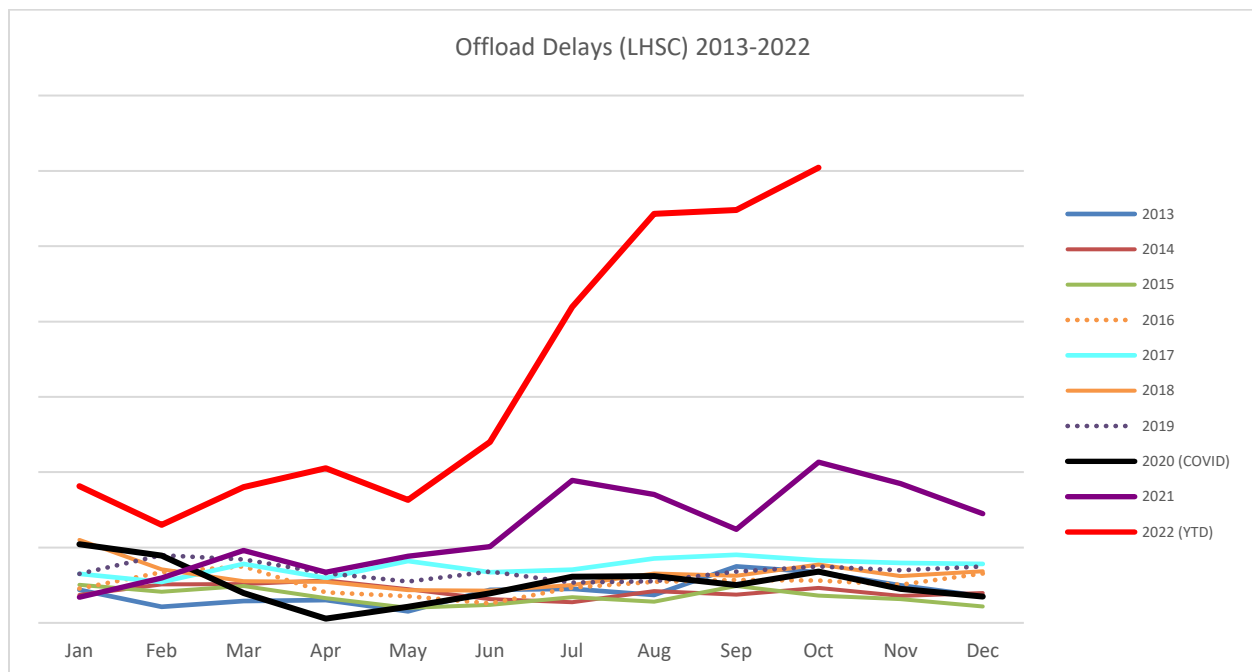
In principle, the root causes of offload delays create large expense and risk to municipalities. If Middlesex-London Paramedic Service resources are kept in emergency department hallways and unable to respond to 911 calls, Middlesex County is faced with increasing response times and the inability to respond to calls in the community. To meet legislative requirements, additional resources are required to meet these obligations and ensure that the citizens of Middlesex County and the City of London are protected.

Middlesex-London Paramedic Service takes full advantage of Provincial initiatives such as the Dedicated Offload Nurse Program (and is actively pursuing further investment from the province) and deploys strategies such as the utilization of doubling up patients where appropriate“. Additionally, Middlesex-London Paramedic Service continues to engage with LHSC, Ontario Health, the Ministry of Health, and the Province of Ontario to find more permanent solutions.





To date, Middlesex-London Paramedic Service has experienced 38,572 hours in offload delays. This represents an increase of 181% over the previous year and an aver loss of five (5) 24-hour ambulances from the 911 system each and every day.



Over the past 10 years Middlesex-London Paramedic Service has lost in excess of 117,902 ambulance service hours to offload delays (equivalent of 1 24-hour ambulance

on offload delay for 4,913 days or 13.5 years). In 2022 to date (January 1 through October 31) offload delays have increased 551.81% over the past 10 years.

Paramedic Services need to have the capacity to respond to major events such as structure collapses or motor vehicle collisions. The ability to respond to events or emergencies in the community is measured through utilization. Industry averages for paramedic utilization are between 30% and 50%. Once utilization exceeds 50%, resources are strained to the point where the ability to respond to major incidents is compromised.

As pressures from increasing call volume and offload delays continue to outpace available resources the 911 system can experience periods of “Code Zero”. When Middlesex-London Paramedic Service is in Code Zero that means that there are no available Middlesex-London Paramedic Service ambulances available to respond to 911 calls.

Code Zero status is trigger by the Central Ambulance Communication Centre (CACC) and data is controlled by CACC. As Middlesex-London Paramedic Service does not control the declaration of Code Zero we are not able to speak to or provide detailed statistics in relation to Code Zeros. What Middlesex-London Paramedic Service is capable of commenting on is that between January 1, 2022, and October 31, 2022, Middlesex-London Paramedic Service experienced more than 63 times. Offload delays remain the single largest contributor to Code Zero.

Middlesex-London Paramedic Service has proposed a pilot program to the Ministry of Health to provide improved response and patient care while reducing strain on the emergency departments and returning transporting ambulances back into the 911 system.

When the 911 system is busy, and hospitals are taxed creating long offload delays, lower priority calls (Code 3) are held in queue as there are no available ambulances to respond (as they are already engaged on Code 4 calls and are on offload delay at the hospitals). These calls can wait hours depending on their acuity and often times the patients could be treated and followed-up outside of an emergency department.

The pilot project proposed by Middlesex-London Paramedic Service would place single paramedics in SUVs to respond to these lower acuity calls that are waiting in queue. The responding paramedic can assess and treat the patient and possibly refer them to an on-duty community paramedic. Additionally, this First Response Unit (FRU) paramedic will be able to cancel a transporting unit if it is not required further alleviating the on-going strain on the 911 system and emergency departments.

This pilot would fall under the *Treat and Refer* model of care. Middlesex-London Paramedic Service has put forth a business case to be an early adopter of this model. The Minister of Health has provided her support to this model and has referenced it several times when addressing the province. The business case is currently with the Ministry of Health legal department for final review and acceptance.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

This report is for information and does not have any direct financial implications. Indirect financial implications can be found with the redirection of paramedic service hours to offload delays.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC FOCUS:

This report aligns with the following Strategic Focus, Goals, or Objectives: Promoting Service Excellence in that Middlesex-London Paramedic Service is ensuring the continuation of the delivery of high-performance paramedic services.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the MLPS System Status Update Report be received for information.