



# Emergency Services

## Departmental Overview

In 2021 Essex-Windsor EMS (EWEMS) adapted to change and pivoted to address numerous challenges. With the pandemic consuming the department's attention, opportunities and challenges surfaced. that required EWEMS to identify new ways to serve the County of Essex, City of Windsor and Township of Pelee. The proposed 2022 Budget incorporates this modified service delivery model.

The same services are delivered but the Proposed 2022 Budget now separates the different programs to improve understanding of the service and their associated funding sources. These programs are:

- Essex-Windsor EMS
- Community Paramedic, Long Term Care
- Emergency Management

## Service Delivery Promise

Essex-Windsor Emergency Medical Services (EWEMS) is responsible for the provision of land ambulance services for the County of Essex, City of Windsor and Township of Pelee. EWEMS is committed to providing the highest quality Emergency Medical Services in a manner that is accessible, accountable, responsive, seamless and integrated.

In 2021, it is projected that Essex-Windsor EMS will have responded to approximately 57,000 clients requiring medical services, interventions, treatment, transport or assistance.

In 2021 the Vulnerable Patient Navigator (VPN), also known as community paramedicine, was called upon for numerous tasks involving the most vulnerable in the community. As a result, the Province recognized the versatility, the mobility and nimbleness of community paramedics and is providing 100% funding, over a four (4) year term for the Community Paramedic, Long Term Care Program (CPLTC). The VPN program experienced growth in 2021 and with the addition of CPLTC, a true Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) model is being formed.

EWEMS also oversees the services of Emergency Management, Preparedness and Coordination. Emergency Planning and Preparedness is responsible for ensuring that the County of Essex has plans in place and is prepared for situations that are likely to have impact on the County, as a whole or to any of the individual local and neighbouring municipalities. Emergency Planning and Preparedness collaborates with and supports the other municipal service providers, community agencies, provincial ministries, stakeholders, organizations and responders to ensure the communities within and around Essex County are prepared and can respond to any current or potential threats.

## Emergency Medical Services



### Level of Service Statement

Essex-Windsor Emergency Medical Services is committed to providing the highest quality emergency medical pre-hospital care to the citizens of the County of Essex, the City of Windsor and the Township of Pelee.

Our purpose is to foster fiscally responsible quality care by:

- Maintaining mutually supportive relationships with other emergency services and health care agencies in our community.
- Participating in public education for prevention and awareness.
- Providing continuous quality improvement to ensure the highest standards are achieved.
- Supporting our employees and providing them with the tools and methods to accomplish the highest quality of care.

### 2021 EWEMS Achievements and Challenges

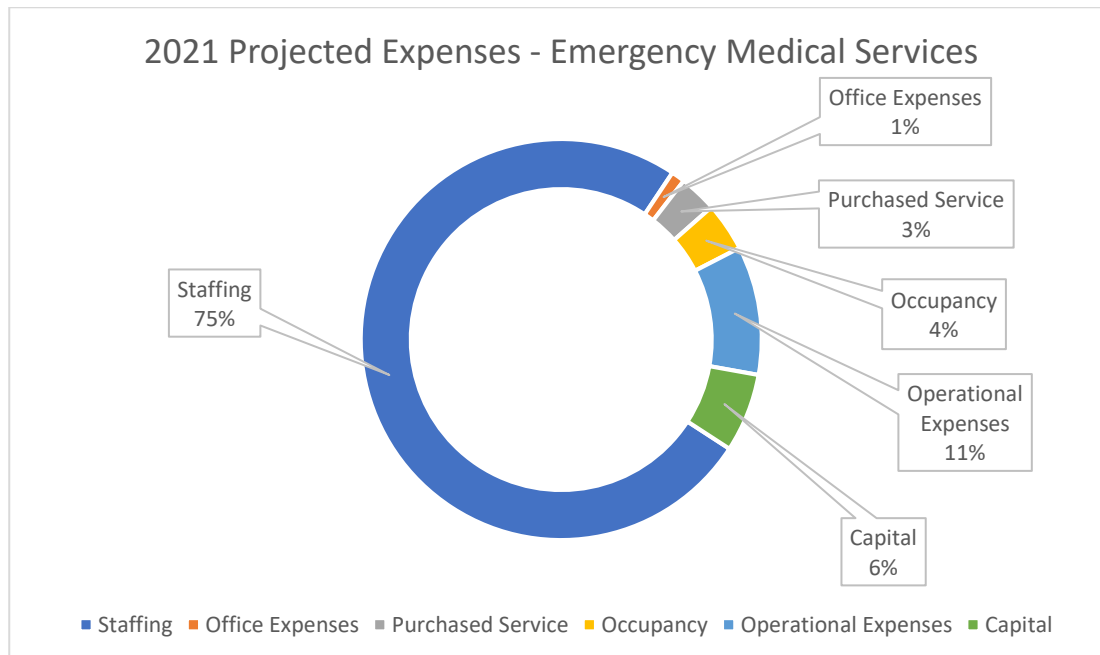
Essex-Windsor EMS continued its focus and partnerships on battling the impacts of COVID-19 across the region. From testing and swabbing to vaccinations and health assessments, EWEMS was on the frontline with community partners providing the best care possible to the residents of the City of Windsor, County of Essex and Township of Pelee. When tasked with developing mass vaccination site plans, EWEMS and our partners from St. Clair College, the Municipality of Leamington and the Town of Amherstburg stepped up and delivered.

When our most vulnerable populations required assistance, support and treatment, we and our partners at Erie Shores Health Care deployed the COVID Response and Stabilization Team (CRST) to provide health care in our neighbourhoods.

Urgent, emergent and standby volumes are projected to increase at a 2-3% rate in 2021 compared to 2020, while transfer calls are expected to remain stable. An important factor to the volume trends is the increasing use and successes of the Vulnerable Patient Navigator (VPN) program, including the newly implemented Mental Health and Addictions Response Team and the Community Paramedic Long Term Care Team. The usage of EWEMS services among enrolled Mobile Integrated Health clients has remained low compared to previous years. This trend assists in reducing offload delays and utilizing the right resource for the right response.

Continuing challenges in 2021 include the increasing costs of medical supplies, equipment, fuel, vehicle maintenance and most notably, personal protective equipment (PPE). The uncertainty of a global pandemic, the unknown of when and how a “new normal” will impact EMS and the general pressures of COVID-19 will have both financial and systemic pressures on the staff and operations of EWEMS. These uncontrollable variances and uncertainties have impacted both the current projections as well as future budget planning.

The graph below illustrates the key areas of spending in EWEMS for this past year (projected to December 31, 2021).



## Opportunities and Challenges Facing EWEMS in 2022

Continued collaboration, communication and integration with our local communities, organizations, partners and stakeholders will support the momentum realized in 2021. COVID-19 placed pressures on the entire health care system. Hospital capacities, health care backlogs, health human resource pressures, primary care backlogs and other issues play a part in the impacts and hurdles EWEMS experiences daily. Although offload delays are expected to decline with the attention currently given to this important component of ambulance service delivery, we may continue to experience peaks and valleys as we navigate the waves and recovery of COVID-19.

Opportunities exist to partner and collaborate with the community to improve the success of VPN and our Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) Teams. With the expansion of the MIH model, EWEMS is setting the goal to reduce ambulance use within the patient populations of mental health, falls and palliative care by providing the right care, at the right time and in the right place. Being a partner of the Windsor Essex Ontario Health Team (WE-OHT) further allows for those relationships to mature to meet those objectives.

COVID-19 created numerous obstacles for EWEMS. In the early stages we experienced scarce PPE availability to protect our paramedics while performing their duties, responded to requests to assist with onsite testing at long term care homes and provide mobile testing to all communities. As we progressed over the course of the pandemic, COVID fatigue, vaccine hesitancy and decreased hospital capacity represent new hurdles to overcome. Despite these challenges, EWEMS met COVID-19 head on. EWEMS is addressing the pandemic in the 2022 Budget with the continuation of doffing sites, uniform cleaning and continued mental wellness training and support. EWEMS also appreciates the financial restrictions placed on the department as we move down the pandemic path. EWEMS is approaching the 2022 Budget with a measure of conservatism, while understanding that the future lies ahead and we must be prepared for growth in demand and our communities along with increased pressures and reliance on EMS that a pandemic creates.

## Proposed 2022 EWEMS Budget Plan

The 2022 Budget reflects the ongoing attention to asset management with the replacement of seven ambulances, administrative vehicles and patient care equipment.

Future population growth within the region, increased development and forecasted call volume growth are addressed with a resource enhancement of twelve (12) full time paramedics to the ranks of EWEMS. The human

resource enhancement will address the pressures of call volume, response times and balanced emergency coverage across the region.

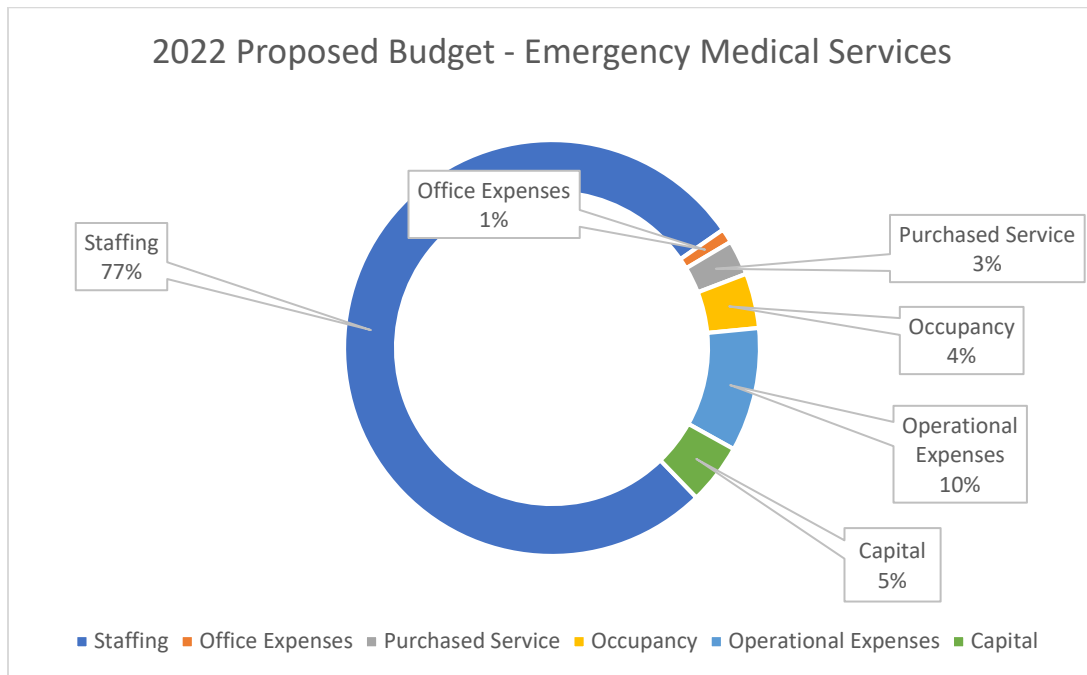
Paramedic safety is also a focus of the 2022 Budget which includes continued practice of drop off/pickup at stations for uniform cleaning and the continuation of the doffing trailers at all hospital sites. These key elements and the ongoing focus of infection control practices for the paramedics have mitigated the risk of cross contamination and infection among the ranks of EWEMS.

Mental wellbeing for responders is a growing concern and is expected to increase as the recovery of the pandemic progresses. EWEMS is very progressive in its services and tools for mental wellness support. The 2022 Budget includes education and support for frontline staff, support staff, administration and their families of EWEMS. Creating a well rounded, wrap-around support system will ensure that mental health support is provided in the right place, at the right time and as close to home as possible. EWEMS believes it is the next step in the proactive mental wellness of our staff and reducing injuries in the future.

### Funding

From a funding standpoint, the 2022 Budget assumes the provincial funding formula used in 2021 will remain in place for 2022. The 2021 formula was changed by the Province to exclude inflationary increases which historically formed part of the funding calculation. Although the inflationary costs are not captured in the funding model, the Province requested and accepted applications for COVID-19 relief funding for supplies, staffing and services. The Provincial funding model is structured to provide 50% funding of EMS services.

The graph below illustrates the key areas of proposed 2022 Budget spending in EWEMS.



Overall, the 2022 Budget for EWEMS, net of recoveries, totals \$13,140,300 (3.7% increase over the 2021 Budget of \$12,670,450).

## Community Paramedic, Long Term Care

In 2021 the Province of Ontario, Ministry of Long-Term Care, announced funding for the Community Paramedic, Long Term Care Program (CPLTC). The VPN Program now incorporates CPLTC services. CPLTC began operation in May 2021. CPLTC provides services to individuals who are waiting for placement in a long-term care home or who are soon to be eligible for long-term care. This initiative is part of the province's modernization plan to address systemic barriers in long-term care bed development and the growing demand for long-term care. CPLTC is staffed by:

- two full time VPN paramedics, (staffing 12 hours a day, seven days a week),
- one clerk, 8 hours a day, 5 days a week,
- one Registered Nurse/Paramedic District Chief, 8 hours a day, five days a week
- .25 Captain, 10 hours per week.

### Funding

The CPLTC program is funded 100% by the Ministry of Long-Term Care. The County of Essex will receive up to \$3,196,000 in one-time funding over the

four-year transfer payment agreement (2020-2024). The Proposed 2022 Budget reflects the 2021 projections and proposed 2022 allocation of the 100% funding model.

## Emergency Management

### 2021 Emergency Management Achievements and Challenges

The County of Essex Emergency Management Department was engaged on numerous fronts across the region during 2021. Most notably, COVID-19, but also in conjunction with possible coastal flooding across the region. These two starkly different occurrences impacted the department in direct ways. As the State of Emergency was declared in March 2020, Emergency Management has, and continues to address both threats.

Prior to, and continuing within, the State of Emergency, the Emergency Management Coordinator focused on the coastal flooding issues. Liaising with local community leaders, Community Emergency Management Coordinators (CEMC's), government and non-governmental organizations, the County CEMC maintained situational awareness and planning for any flooding issues that may have risen and impacted the County of Essex as a whole. COVID-19 command was assumed by the Chief of EWEMS for the coordination and collaboration of community tasks and preparedness. These tasks included long term care home testing, community testing, field hospital support, farm assessments, isolation centres and the overall agri-food command table. At times, the control and command table had well over twenty organizations present with multi-jurisdictional representation. Dividing responsibility for these challenges allowed for a more focused, manageable and direct approach to the different occurrences while obtaining achievable results. Although flooding is still a risk to all municipalities, the water levels have remained relatively stable across the County, with localized flooding occurring only during adverse events. Planning by numerous communities continues and Essex County Emergency Management is a partner at those sessions.

During 2021 the focus of Emergency Management and the County of Essex was the development and provision of assets to the mass vaccination sites. From chairs to partitions, from disinfectant to sign holders, various pieces of equipment were procured, utilized and now stored. Emergency Management retrieved, compiled and systematically stored various components to create a region wide inventory of vaccination site equipment. The assets are stored

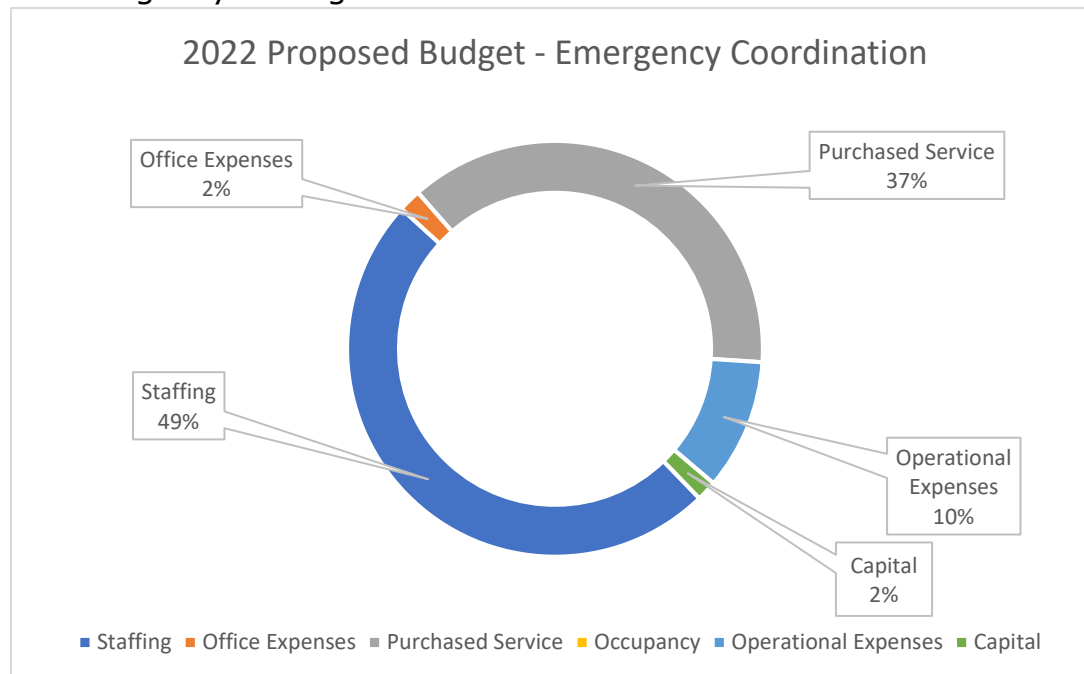
in containers so quick and efficient deployment can be enacted when and where needed.

### Proposed 2022 Emergency Management Budget Plan

The 2022 Emergency Management budget maintains the status quo of previous years in most aspects. Although an increase is being proposed, the main contributing factors are limited to two key items. The Transnomis (Municipal 511) incident mapping platform for road construction, shoreline flooding, weather alerts, emergency shelter locations, sandbag depots and real time road events was placed within the Emergency Management department. This platform has grown in use across the County through 2021, including local municipalities and other Essex County partners, such as ERCA and MTO. Municipal 511 provides a real time view, both publicly and internally, providing accurate situational awareness of a variety of circumstances and local municipalities can update in real time or as events are scheduled.

The other contributing factor to the increase in the Emergency Management 2022 budget is the cost to store and contain the mass vaccination supplies and capital equipment.

The graph below illustrates the key areas of proposed 2022 Budget spending in Emergency Management.



Overall, the 2022 Budget for Emergency Management, net of recoveries, totals \$228,200 (6.5% increase over the 2021 Budget of \$214,190).