



'Pretty good' ambulance response times in rural Wellington reported

It is "not very realistic" to expect ambulances to get to rural emergency calls – including those in Guelph/Eramosa Township – within eight minutes according to Fire/EMS officials who updated local councillors on Wellington County's land ambulance plans for this year.

A snapshot of Wellington County response times averages showed they met the provincial standard of an eight-minute arrival for critical cases, 66.6 per cent of the time. The County's response numbers improve with each category of call which provides a longer response time to the less serious incidents.

Rockwood Councillor Doug Breen asked how realistic it is to expect eight-minute response time for the critical calls

in the rural area.

"Not very realistic..." Fire Chief Shawn Armstrong, the general manager of Emergency Services, said, adding sometimes they get "sucked into the black hole of call volume" when they try to predict where to deploy resources. He said 48 per cent of the time they arrive at the highest priority calls in the rural areas within eight minutes, results he called "pretty good." Chief Armstrong said they are beefing their program to improve response times with re-deployment area changes, supervisors vesting hospitals to free up ambulances stuck by off-loading delays, and also examine patient transfers to less busy periods.

Chief Armstrong said response times are improving due to the

tiered response plan with firefighters who answer medical calls, redeployment of ambulances, and manning a station in Hillsburgh for 12-hours daily.

There are 12 ambulances on duty at any one time covering 2,600-square kilometres in Wellington. Three times last year there was a code red, meaning all 12 ambulances were on calls. Of the average 20,000 calls per year, 60 per cent are urban calls and 40 per cent are rural.

Chief Armstrong said while getting money for emergency response is sometimes like "trying to push a noodle up a hill," they will use the response time data to support requests for more money during County budget talks for more ambulances and additional staff.



Proposed antenna locations

TOWNSHIP SHORTS

ROCKWOOD CELL TOWERS?

Dropped calls and agonizingly slow downloads in the Rockwood area could be resolved if Rogers Communications is allowed to build two new wireless cell towers at two locations on CN Railway land on Highway 7, west of Wellington Road 29.

Roger's consultant Sean Galbraith of LandSquared, told GET Council recently they have a "dead zone... donut hole" in their network in the Rockwood area and the towers are critical to meet the five per cent, per week growth in consumption.

"It simply has to work," Galbraith said, noting that 60 per cent of 911 calls now come from wireless devices. He said existing towers along Highway 7 are too far apart, and growing Rockwood uses the limited system capacity.

Galbraith said yes, and no, when asked by Mayor Chris White if the final decision is made elsewhere as the Township is only a commenting agency on a federal application on federal land.

Galbraith said if Council approves the applications then Industry Canada takes no action, but a no would force Rogers to decide whether to appeal to Industry Canada, which then would have the final say.

After the courtesy presentation to GET, Rogers will now make a formal application, triggering a public consultation process including an open house and notification of property owners near the proposed towers.

'CLEAN' AUDIT FOR GET

Guelph/Eramosa Township (GET) received a "clean" audit – and praise from its auditor for its handling of Township finances, and for having the consolidated financial statements in on time.

Auditor Matthew Venne told GET recently at Council that the Township's debt level is "better than okay," and the capital work without taking an abnormal amount of debt was "just amazing."

PARKING 'NIGHTMARES' PREDICTED

Because "neighbours hate each other," Guelph/Eramosa Township Councillor Corey Woods, and some of his colleagues, anticipate future problems with parking issues in the 85-townhouse Noble Ridge condominium in Rockwood.

During recent debate on Charleston Home's condo application, Councillor Doug Breen predicted parking would be a "nightmare" and asked if they could register a warning on the deeds – "this is going to be trouble," Breen said. Charleston's plan complies with zoning requirements of two spaces per unit – with 242 spaces divided between garages and driveways, and 51 visitor spaces – on the deeds. Charleston offered to have the County review the condominium declaration which would detail, among other things, parking requirements.

Mayor Chris White suggested the Township should review all condominium declarations so it could say "buyer beware – we warned you," about issues that were not the Township's responsibility, but the condo corporation's.

Councillor Corey Woods said because neighbour hate neighbours, they don't knock on each other's doors to say they can't park in a fire lane or particular area, but instead come to council looking for help which it can't give. "Ultimately, we need more parking," Woods said, suggesting they look at updating the parking requirements.

Don't be a victim

Wellington OPP reports an increase in brazen daylight break and enters and ask for public help to prevent opportunities of crime.

Don't be a victim:

- Lock all doors when home and away, and lock gates
- Secure and lock windows to your home
- Install motion sensor lights around your home and buildings
- During vacation, have a neighbour check on your home, pick up mail and use light timers
- Ask a neighbour to park their car in your driveway
- Trim trees and shrubs to reduce camouflage
- Lock all doors to your vehicles
- Remove valuables in vehicles or put them out of sight

Get Involved In Your Community

- Residents should become familiar with the routine in their neighbourhoods
- Be aware of strangers and look out for each other
- Leave keys and emergency phone numbers with a trusted neighbour
- Get involved in crime prevention programs

If you see a suspicious person, a suspicious vehicle or anything unusual, contact Wellington OPP at 1-888-310-1122, and in case of an emergency 911. Want to remain anonymous? Call Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 (TIPS), where you may be eligible to receive a cash reward of up to \$2000.

For more information on crime prevention tips visit <http://www.opp.ca>