

An Analysis of 911-Initiated Calls for Service in Saint Paul, Minnesota

Submitted by the Robina Institute of Criminal Law and Criminal Justice

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	2
Methods.....	3
Data Requested and Received.....	3
Data Analysis and Appendices	4
Section 1: All Calls for Service	6
Figure 1. Types of Calls in 2019 (N=265,598).....	6
Figure 2. All Calls for Service by Priority Level (N=265,597).....	6
Table 1. Top Three Calls for Service by Priority Level (N=265,597).....	7
Table 2. Median Response Times, Most Frequent Calls, and Most Frequent Neighborhoods for All Call Types (N=265,597)	8
Table 3. Potential Mental Health or Other Crisis Situation by Priority Level (N=11,806)....	9
Section 2: Emergency Calls for Service by Priority Level.....	10
Figure 3. Emergency Calls by Priority Levels for 911 Emergency Calls (N=78,484).....	10
Table 4. Median Response Times, Most Frequent Calls, and Most Frequent Neighborhoods for Emergency Calls Only (N=78,484).....	10
Table 5. Potential Mental Health or Other Crisis Situation by Priority Level – Emergency Calls (N=5,850)	11
Table 6. Emergency Call Disposition by Priority Level (N=78,484).....	12
Table 7. Calls by Neighborhood and Response Time (N=78,484).....	13
Table 8. Mental Health and Other Crisis Calls by Neighborhood.....	16
Section 3: Officer-Initiated Calls Only	18
Figure 4. Number of Officer-Initiated Calls by Priority Level.....	18
Table 9. Officer-Initiated Calls by Neighborhood (N=105,702)	19
Section 4: Conclusion and Recommendations.....	20

Introduction

In late 2020, Saint Paul Mayor Melvin Carter established the Community First Public Safety Commission and charged the group with focusing on alternative first-response options to priority four and priority five calls for service, and approaches for ongoing community involvement in the City's Community-First Public Safety Plan.¹

To aid police officer responses to calls for service, each call is given a priority level. The priority level helps an officer determine the “priority” of a call and how quickly they need to arrive on the scene. St. Paul Police calls are divided into five priorities. The St. Paul Police Department (SPPD) identifies priority one and two calls as an emergency, priority three as urgent, and priority four and five as routine calls. Of important note, the priority levels are a triage of sorts in that they assist officers in determining the priority or order in which they should respond to calls. These priority levels do not necessarily signal much about the offense type or seriousness of the offense. For example, calls relating to domestic assault could be in priority two as well as in priority five. The urgency of the call is determined by other information gathered by the 911 operator (i.e., the suspect is still on the scene, crime in progress, no injuries). See [Saint Paul radio call priorities](#) for more information.

The Robina Institute of Criminal Law and Criminal Justice was engaged to assist in analyzing these calls for service to determine if patterns could be found in the types and frequency of calls that might be informative to the Commission as they engaged in their work. Robina was requested to analyze only priority four and five calls because these were assumed to be less serious instances for which it might be possible to identify other potential responses (i.e., social service, mental health agency). However, we determined we needed to analyze all priority level calls to understand the range of calls within the City as well as to compare various variables among the calls. If we limited the analysis to only priority four and five calls, it would be difficult to understand the full scope of calls for service.

Calls for service in the context of this report includes multiple ways in which officers are “called” to or dispatched to respond to a situation. In the data this includes a 911 emergency call, a call to a non-emergency line, online reporting (through a website), through an alarm being triggered or call from an alarm company, or teleserve, which is a call directly to an officer received by phone. Calls may also be officer-initiated. An officer-initiated call could occur in different ways. It could occur when officers see an incident or violation and then initiates the contact. A traffic stop is an example of this as well. It could also occur if an individual flags down an officer for assistance or to report a crime. This report examines calls for service in three different ways: 1) all call types as mentioned above, 2) emergency only calls, and 3) officer-initiated calls only. We analyze this data by priority level, incident types, response times, dispositions, and neighborhood.

¹ See the press release related to the effort at <https://www.stpaul.gov/news/mayor-carter-announces-48-members-serve-saint-paul%E2%80%99s-community-first-public-safety-commission>.

Methods

Data Requested and Received

Quantitative administrative datasets were obtained from the Ramsey County Emergency Communications Center (ECC) and Saint Paul Police Department (SPPD). We obtained annual data for the years 2017, 2018, 2019 and year to date data for 2020 through December 13, 2020. The director and staff from the Ramsey County Emergency Communication Center (ECC) as well as deputy chiefs from the St. Paul Police Department (SPPD) met with us on an ongoing basis to address our questions throughout the project.

We requested the following data variables from ECC:

- Call type
- Priority code of the call
- Problem nature
- Crime incident
- Call disposition
- Time call enters queue
- Time call 1st assigned
- Time 1st on scene
- General location (not exact address)
- Demographics (race/gender of caller & suspect)
- Method of call received (or the variable if the caller wants to talk to an officer)
- Master incident number

We requested the following data from SPPD:

- Master incident number
- Incident type
- Code type of the incident
- Response times
- Priority code
- General location of the incident
- Outcome of the call
- Demographic variables

In Appendix A, we provide the data definitions for each of these variables.

We received data on all the variables requested from the ECC except demographics. Because the primary purpose of the ECC is to quickly identify the reason for the call and dispatch an appropriate and timely response, the ECC does not collect demographic information on the caller and thus, it is not available.

Initially, we also received all variables requested from SPPD except demographic data. After further inquiry, we learned that race is collected for victims and individuals when an incident culminates in an arrest or citation. Thus, for most calls that law enforcement responds to,

demographic data is not collected. In those cases involving an arrest or citation where demographics are collected, the data is predicated on the law enforcement officer's perceived race and gender of the victim or individual(s) cited/ticketed or arrested. If there is a suspect, race and gender is also collected. Demographics are not collected on the caller. Because demographics are only collected in cases involving a citation or arrest, SPPD had to conduct a second data pull consisting of all arrests and citations in 2019. However, only a small subset of the incidents to which law enforcement respond each year end in an arrest or citation. Thus, additional work would be necessary to merge the arrest and citation information together with our calls for service dataset to be able to report demographics at the call for service level. But the result would be demographics for only a small proportion of the people with whom law enforcement interacted in responding to the large number of calls for service made in a given year—only those ending in an arrest or citation rather than all calls for service. Because of the lengthy period it would take to do this merge and the unbalanced picture such data would provide; this report does not include demographic information.²

Data Analysis and Appendices

For simplicity, we focus the analysis for this report on January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019. We analyzed the same data from 2017 and 2018 and the findings are consistent with what is seen in 2019. While we also analyzed 2020 data, we are not including it in this report because that year was an anomaly with two major events affecting the city. The first was the pandemic and the second was the civil unrest from the police killing of George Floyd. Both events significantly affected calls for services and are not reflective of other years. Thus, the focus of this analysis and report is on data from 2019.³

We identify the number of calls by priority level. We also explore these calls by priority level by several variables including types of calls, call incident types, call dispositions, response times, and neighborhoods. Response times are calculated as the difference in time between when a call is dispatched to SPPD and when an officer arrives on scene of the call. Neighborhoods are identified based on the SPPD's [2019 Crime Report](#) (see Appendix B). There were no priority one calls reported in 2019 and thus, there are no further findings on these calls. This level of priority call is reserved for an "officer down, injured, or needs immediate assistance in a critical situation" (SPPD).

² The unbalanced picture would occur because there is no information on demographics for *every* encounter police have with individuals, thus unable to identify any sort of base information on demographics for calls for service.

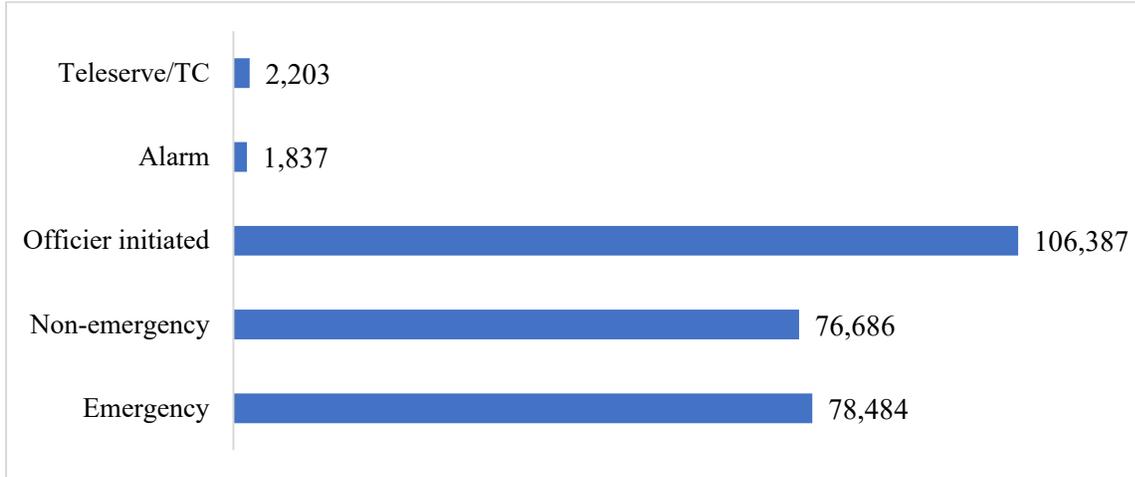
³ This data merges SPPD service call data into ECC service call data based on a unique identifier, the Master Incident Number (MIN). In this instance, some calls have no ECC data, but SPPD call service data (which has the most complete data). There were 267,991 calls based on SPPD data and 286,654 calls based on ECC call service data. Once merged, any MINs without corresponding data in ECC in SPPD datasets (and vice versa) were removed from the dataset, the total sample was 266,095. Medians were used in lieu of means, as there were several outlier response times, and analysis indicated the data is skewed. Lastly, all priority level 2A calls for service were not included in the written report - this is why totals may be less 37, 694 (14% of all calls, less than 0.2% of emergency calls). Priority 2A calls are identified as officer-initiated calls.

The following report is broken down into the following sections: 1) all calls for service; 2) only emergency calls for service; 3) police-initiated calls for service only; and 4) conclusions and recommendations.

Section 1: All Calls for Service

Figure 1 shows how calls for service originated in 2019. There were 266,095 total calls for service in 2019 from all call sources. The majority of calls were officer-initiated (n=106,387) whereas just 78,484 calls (30%) were 911 emergency calls.

Figure 1. Types of Calls in 2019 (N=265,598)



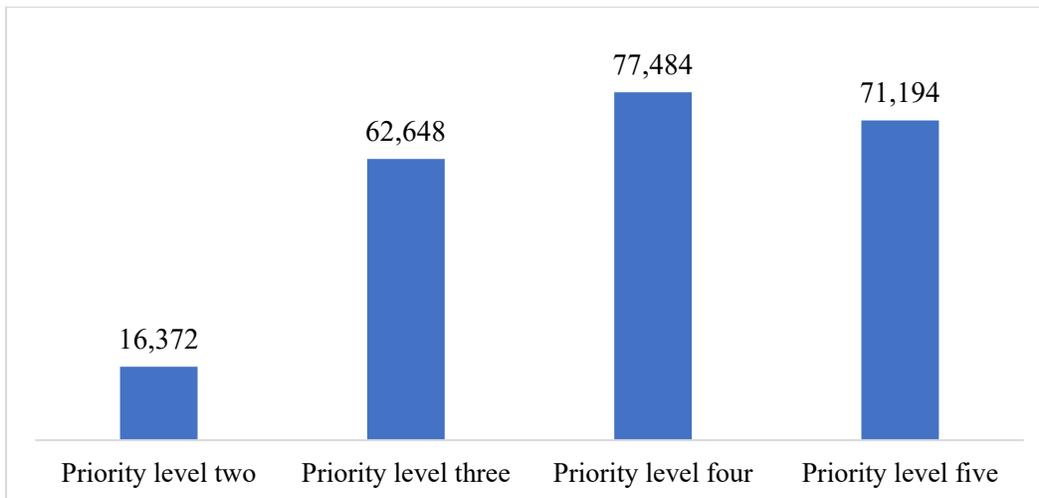
Source: Robina Institute analysis of SPPD and ECC calls for service data in 2019.

Note: There were 497 calls in which call origin was missing/not specified and there were no priority level one calls in 2019.

Note: The call type variable came from the SPPD dataset, as comparison of call types in ECC versus SPPD data showed negligible differences.

When examining all calls by priority level, priority levels four and five make up more than half (56%) of all calls in 2019. Figure 2 shows the priority levels for all calls for service in 2019.

Figure 2. All Calls for Service by Priority Level (N=265,597)



Source: Robina Institute analysis of SPPD and ECC calls for service data in 2019.

Note: Data excludes 37,694 priority 2A calls.

Table 1 shows the incident description of the top three most frequent incident types by priority level for *all call types*. Because the officer-initiated call type is the most frequent origin for a call, the most frequent incident types in this group differ somewhat from the most frequent incident types shown in the subset of emergency calls (detailed in the following section). However, disorderly conduct and suspicious activity arise as frequent calls even in this larger dataset.

Table 1. Top Three Calls for Service by Priority Level (N=265,597)

Priority Level Two (n=16,372)	Priority Level Three (n=62,648)	Priority Level Four (n=77,484)	Priority Level Five (n=71,194)
Assist medical agency (n=3,321)	Suspicious activity (n=10,867)	Disorderly conduct (n=14,293)	Proactive police visit (n=34,447)
Domestic family relationship (2,312)	Disorderly conduct (n=8,372)	Assist citizen (n=6,686)	Parking complaint (n=14,557)
Assist fire agency (n=2,119)	Alarm Sounding (n=7,978)	Previous case follow-up (n=6,384)	Proactive foot patrols (n=6,295)

Source: Robina Institute analysis of SPPD and ECC calls for service data in 2019.

Note: Data excludes 37,694 priority 2A calls.

For *all call types* and all priority levels, the most frequent call disposition was advise/assist. In priority level two, advise/assist is followed by the call dispositions of records received and gone on arrival. For priority level three, advise/assist is followed by the call dispositions of gone on arrival and records received. Priority level four call dispositions following advise/assist are records received and gone on arrival. In priority level five calls, after advise/assist, the top two call dispositions are records received and citation.

The median response times were measured from the time the police received the dispatched call until the time the officer(s) arrived on the scene. For all call priority calls, the median response time was 4 minutes with a standard deviation of 32 minutes. The median response times for priority level four in all calls was 11 minutes (SD = 32 minutes). With priority level five calls the median response time was zero minutes and this is because officer-initiated contact made up a large proportion of the calls. Thus, there is no response time when an officer initiated the contact rather than dispatch.

Regarding neighborhoods, most frequently, calls for service originated from Payne-Phalen (11.4%; n=30,301), Downtown (9.4%; n=24,933), Dayton’s Bluff (8.8%; n=23,344), North End (8.0%; n=21,346) and Thomas-Dale (8.0%; n=21,192). Downtown and Payne-Phalen neighborhoods had the most frequent priority level two and three calls. Payne-Phalen and Downtown neighborhoods had the most frequent priority level four calls. Thomas-Dale and Downtown neighborhoods had the most frequently priority level five calls (Table 2).

Table 2. Median Response Times, Most Frequent Calls, and Most Frequent Neighborhoods for All Call Types (N=265,597)

Priority Level	Median Response Time (Standard deviation)	Top 3 Call Types (n)	Top 3 Neighborhoods (n)
Priority Level Two (n=16,372)	5 minutes (9 minutes)	Assist medical agency (3,321) Assist fire agency (2,119) Domestic family relationships (2,312)	Payne-Phalen (1,769) Dayton’s Bluff (1,678) Downtown (1,561)
Priority Level Three (n=62,648)	11 minutes (20 minutes)	Suspicious activity (10,867) Disorderly conduct (8,372) Alarm sounding (7,978)	Payne-Phalen (7,535) North End (5,120) Thomas-Dale (4,993)
Priority Level Four (n=77,484)	11 minutes (31 minutes)	Disorderly conduct (14,293) Assist citizen (6,686) Previous case follow-up (6,384)	Payne-Phalen (8,417) Downtown (7,332) Dayton’s Bluff (7,236)
Priority Level Five (n=71,194)	0 minutes (47 minutes)	Proactive police visit (34,447) Parking complaint (14,557) Proactive foot patrols (6,295)	Downtown (9,802) Thomas-Dale (5,454) North End (5,402)

Source: Robina Institute analysis of SPPD and ECC calls for service data in 2019.

Note: There were no priority level one calls in 2019. Data excludes 37,694 priority 2A calls.

During the project, we were informed that the Commission was interested in learning more about situations involving potential mental health or other crises. There were three codes in the dataset—welfare check, crisis response, and persons in crisis—that may signal the call could be related to a mental health or other crisis. Within this data, these incident types include person in crisis (n = 3,303), crisis response (n = 1,305), and welfare checks (n = 7,217). No further information was available in the dataset to disentangle this information. There was no additional information beyond these variable names, so it is not possible with the existing dataset to know the reason for the welfare check, crisis response, or attending to a person in crisis. Further data collection or investigation would need to be completed to ascertain why, for example, a welfare check call might be classified as priority two versus a priority three. Table 3 shows the distribution of these types of calls by priority level. Most of these calls fall within priority two or three. Virtually none of these incident types exist in priority five.

Table 3. Potential Mental Health or Other Crisis Situation by Priority Level (N=11,806)

Call Types	Priority Two	Priority Three	Priority Four	Priority Five	Total Calls
Welfare Check	191 (1.2%)	2,209 (3.5%)	4,817 (6.2%)	0 (0.0%)	7,217
Crisis Response	397 (2.4%)	739 (4.6%)	141 (1.0%)	10 (0.0%)	1,287
Person in Crisis	319 (1.9%)	2,884 (4.6%)	98 (2.0%)	1 (0.0%)	3,302
Total Calls	907	5,832	5,056	11	11,806

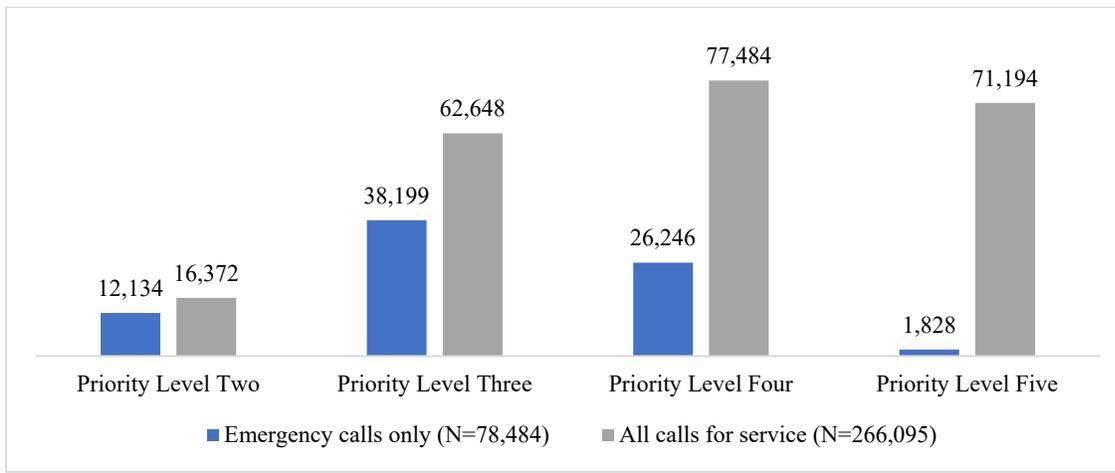
Source: Robina Institute analysis of SPPD and ECC calls for service data in 2019.

It is important to note that beginning in 2020, SPPD only responds to person in crisis calls with mention of violence, weapon, or upon request of medical responders. If the aforementioned situations are not present, the ECC refers callers to Ramsey County Mental Health, or it becomes a medical call handled by the St. Paul Fire Department.

Section 2: Emergency Calls for Service by Priority Level

Next, we focus exclusively on emergency calls for service, which totaled 78,484 emergency calls for service. Most frequently, emergency calls fall into priority level three (n=38,199) as illustrated in Figure 3. Significantly fewer calls are categorized as priority level five compared to the other priority levels (except for priority level one). Figure 3 also illustrates that emergency calls are a much smaller percentage of priority level four and five calls compared to priority two and three calls.

Figure 3. Emergency Calls by Priority Levels for 911 Emergency Calls (N=78,484)



Source: Robina Institute analysis of SPPD and ECC calls for service data in 2019.

Note: There were no priority level one calls in 2019.

Table 4 illustrates the median response time from when a call is received to the time police arrive on the scene, the top three most frequent calls within each priority level, as well as the top three most frequent neighborhoods from which calls originate within each priority level. Saturday was the most common day of the week for all priority levels except for priority level two. Tuesdays were the most frequent day of the week for priority level two calls.

Table 4. Median Response Times, Most Frequent Calls, and Most Frequent Neighborhoods for Emergency Calls Only (N=78,484)

Priority Level	Median Response Time (Standard deviation)	Top 3 Call Types (n)	Top 3 Neighborhoods (n)
Priority Level Two (n=12,134)	5 minutes (9 minutes)	Assist medical agency (2,601) Assist fire agency (2,028) Domestic family relationships (1,996)	Payne-Phalen (1,385) Dayton's Bluff (1,133) Downtown (1,065)
Priority Level Three (n=38,119)	11 minutes (19 minutes)	Investigate 911 hang-up (7,699) Disorderly conduct (6,076) Suspicious activity (5,729)	Payne-Phalen (4,879) North End (3,432) Thomas-Dale (3,245)

Priority Level	Median Response Time (Standard deviation)	Top 3 Call Types (n)	Top 3 Neighborhoods (n)
Priority Level Four (n=26,246)	15 minutes (29 minutes)	Disorderly conduct (6,862) Assist citizen (1,963) Welfare check (1,719)	Payne-Phalen (2,999) Thomas-Dale (2,337) North End (2,307)
Priority Level Five (n=1,828)	23 minutes (63 minutes)	Parking complaint (702) Fireworks (358) Warrant (270)	Payne-Phalen (256) North End (189) Dayton's Bluff (175)

Source: Robina Institute analysis of SPPD and ECC calls for service data in 2019.

Note: There were no priority level one calls in 2019. Data excludes 77 priority 2A calls.

Since the priority level aids an officer in determining the urgency of a call, we would expect that priority level two calls would have the shortest response times and priority level five calls would have the longest response times. This was true in the analysis, as median response times increased as the priority level went from two (urgent) to five (routine calls). The median response time for all calls was 11 minutes.

Table 5 shows the distribution of mental health or other crisis call for emergency calls by priority level. None of these calls fell into priority level five. The majority of welfare check calls were in priority levels three and four. The majority of calls labeled crisis response and person in crisis were priority level three. Moreover, these calls represent a very small proportion of emergency calls. The total number of calls in these three categories was 5,850, which is just 7.5% of the total number of all *emergency calls for service* in 2019. Again, the data is limited and so there is not more information about these calls.

Table 5. Potential Mental Health or Other Crisis Situation by Priority Level – Emergency Calls (N=5,850)

Call Types	Priority Two	Priority Three	Priority Four	Priority Five	Total Calls
Welfare Check	136 (18.7%)	1,308 (38.6%)	1,662 (96.0%)	0 (0%)	3,106 (53.1%)
Crisis Response	328 (45.0%)	482 (14.2%)	59 (3.4%)	0 (0%)	869 (14.9%)
Person in Crisis	265 (35.9%)	1,599 (47.2%)	51(2.9%)	0 (0%)	1,915(32.7%)
Total Calls	729 (12.5%)	3, 389 (57.9%)	1,732 (29.6%)	0 (0%)	5,850 (7.5%)

Source: Robina Institute analysis of SPPD and ECC calls for service data in 2019.

Note: The total of 5,850 represents the total number of welfare checks, crisis responses, and persons in crisis responses. The percentage is based on the number of those calls, divided by the number of total emergency calls in 2019 (N=78,484). Data excludes 77 priority 2A calls.

Note: The percentages in the priority level columns are based on the number of calls for the call type by priority level, and the denominator is *total calls* for that priority level. The percentage in the *total calls* row is the total number of calls for that priority level out of the total number of all mental health or other crisis situation calls (N=5,850). The denominator for total calls for each type of call is 5,850.

Table 6 provides information on the disposition or outcome of the *emergency calls for service*. Most calls are either resolved by the code advise/assist, gone on arrival, or records received. According to SPPD, advise and assist is when an officer provides some type of assistance to the

caller or the victim. An officer within SPPD gave the following examples, “if there was a car stuck in the snow, I would *assist* them [and] if I was sent on a civil dispute, I would *advise* them.” No official report is written for call dispositions of advise/assist. Gone on arrival means that the individual caller or suspect was no longer at the scene when the officers arrived. Records received means that an officer wrote a report, this report was approved by their supervisor and received by the records unit.

Table 6. Emergency Call Disposition by Priority Level (N=78,484)

	Priority Two (N=12,134)	Priority Three (N=38,199)	Priority Four (N=26,246)	Priority Five (n=1,828)
<i>Advise/Assist</i>	5,975	14,737	14,093	744
<i>Citation</i>	3	41	12	163
<i>Gone on Arrival</i>	901	10,336	4,542	364
<i>Records Received</i>	4,039	6039	5,101	422
<i>Services not required</i>	336	1,351	716	20
<i>Canceled</i>	517	1,405	645	28
<i>Other</i>	364	4,220	1,137	87

Source: Robina Institute analysis of SPPD and ECC calls for service data in 2019.

Canceled can include: Alarm cancelled by alarm company, cancel – duplicate, cancel – out of city, cancel by caller, and/or cancel by ECC.

Other can include: Morgan plan, 911 hang-up, detox, false alarm, mental health, no transport, parties dispersed, previous control number proactive policing, traffic stop warning, traffic stop – citation, unfounded, waiting for report, suspicious activity check,

Citation can include: Citation or traffic stop – citation.

Note: Data excludes 77 priority 2A calls.

In Table 7, we present the number of calls and median response time by neighborhoods in St. Paul, MN. The Payne-Phalen neighborhood received the most emergency calls for service whereas the Summit Hill neighborhood had the fewest emergency calls for service. There were no major variations in response times among the neighborhoods. Regardless of neighborhood, disorderly conduct, investigate 911 hang-up, and suspicious activity were the top three most frequent incident types for emergency calls for service. This also aligns with the most frequent incident types in priority level three, which is also the most frequent priority categorization among emergency calls for service.⁴

⁴ The frequency of priority calls within neighborhoods also aligned with what we found overall in the data – most calls were classified as priority level three, followed by priority level four, priority level two, and priority level five, respectively.

Table 7. Calls by Neighborhood and Response Time (N=78,484)

Neighborhoods	Total Number of Emergency Calls	Median Response Time (SD) ⁵	Top Three Most Frequent Calls (n)
Payne-Phalen	9,527	10 minutes (26 minutes)	Disorderly conduct (1,447) Investigate 911 hang-up (1,056) Suspicious activity (871)
North End	6,951	12 minutes (27 minutes)	Disorderly conduct (1,008) Investigate 911 hang-up (800) Suspicious activity (581)
Thomas-Dale	6,793	9 minutes (21 minutes)	Disorderly conduct (1,251) Investigate 911 hang-up (714) Suspicious activity (555)
Dayton's Bluff	6,575	10 minutes (25 minutes)	Disorderly conduct (1,056) Investigate 911 hang-up (614) Suspicious activity (564)
Greater East Side	6,080	12 minutes (27 minutes)	Disorderly conduct (849) Investigate 911 hang-up (631) Suspicious activity (514)
Downtown	5,995	9 minutes (19 minutes)	Disorderly conduct (1,591) Investigate 911 hang-up (450) Suspicious activity (346)
Summit-University	5,260	10 minutes (20 minutes)	Disorderly conduct (959) Investigate 911 hang-up (618) Suspicious activity (399)
Hamline-Midway	4,983	8 minutes (28 minutes)	Disorderly conduct (1,080) Suspicious activity (407) Investigate 91 hang-up (383)

⁵ SD = Standard deviation

Neighborhoods	Total Number of Emergency Calls	Median Response Time (SD)⁵	Top Three Most Frequent Calls (n)
Merriam Park	4,786	9 minutes (20 minutes)	Disorderly conduct (890) Accidental property damage (419) Investigate 911 hang-up (374)
Sunray-Battle Creek-Highwood	4,394	14 minutes (27 minutes)	Disorderly conduct (684) Investigate 911 hang-up (398) Suspicious activity (375)
West Side	3,990	12 minutes (25 minutes)	Disorderly conduct (634) Investigate 911 hang-up (451) Suspicious activity (369)
West 7 th	3,694	12 minutes (26 minutes)	Disorderly conduct (642) Investigate 911 hang-up (343) Suspicious activity (281)
Highland	2,969	15 minutes (27 minutes)	Disorderly conduct (376) Investigate 911 hang-up (331) Accidental property damage (277)
Como	2,462	12 minutes (23 minutes)	Disorderly conduct (366) Investigate 911 hang-up (289) Suspicious activity (278)
Macalaster-Groveland	1,529	11 minutes (19 minutes)	Suspicious activity (199) Disorderly conduct (178) Accidental property damage (141)
St. Anthony Park	1,491	13 minutes (26 minutes)	Disorderly conduct (195) Investigate 911 hang-up (176) Accidental property damage (132)
Summit Hill	974	11 minutes (22 minutes)	Disorderly conduct (133) Suspicious activity (107) Accidental property damage (94)

Source: Robina Institute analysis of SPPD and ECC calls for service data in 2019.

Like the priority level analysis, call dispositions by neighborhood suggest that most frequently, call dispositions are advise/assist, regardless of neighborhood, for *emergency calls* for service. In addition, emergency calls for mental health or other crisis incident types were analyzed by neighborhood (e.g., welfare check, crisis response, person in crisis). Table 8 illustrates this incident type for emergency calls for service by neighborhood.

Table 8. Mental Health and Other Crisis Calls by Neighborhood

Neighborhood	Check Welfare	Crisis Response	Persons in Crisis	Total Calls (n=5,805)	Percent of All Emergency Calls (N=78,484)
Payne-Phalen (n=9,527)	281 (2.9%)	94 (1.0%)	182 (1.9%)	557 (5.8%)	0.7%
North End (n=6,951)	236 (3.4%)	69 (1.0%)	130 (1.9%)	435 (6.3%)	0.6%
Thomas-Dale (n=6,793)	210 (3.1%)	61 (0.9%)	140 (2.1%)	411 (6.1%)	0.5%
Dayton's Bluff (n=6,575)	245 (3.7%)	76 (1.2%)	128 (1.9%)	449 (6.8%)	0.6%
Greater East Side (n=6,080)	212 (3.5%)	93 (1.5%)	147 (2.4%)	452 (7.4%)	0.6%
Downtown (n=5,995)	329 (5.5%)	60 (1.0%)	210 (3.5%)	599 (10.0%)	0.8%
Summit-University (n=5,260)	191 (3.6%)	57 (1.1%)	131 (2.5%)	379 (7.2%)	0.5%
Hamline-Midway (n=4,983)	215 (4.3%)	55 (1.1%)	104 (2.1%)	374 (7.5%)	0.5%
Merriam Park (n=4,786)	206 (4.3%)	39 (0.8%)	154 (3.2%)	399 (8.3%)	0.5%
Sunray-Battle Creek-Highwood (n=4,394)	158 (3.6%)	60 (1.4%)	103 (2.3%)	321 (7.3%)	0.4%
West Side (n=3,990)	173 (4.3%)	47 (1.2%)	97 (2.4%)	317 (7.9%)	0.4%
West 7 th (n=3,694)	196 (5.3%)	60 (1.6%)	97 (2.6%)	353 (9.6%)	0.4%
Highland (n=2,969)	154 (5.2%)	24 (0.8%)	66 (2.2%)	244 (8.2%)	0.3%
Como (n=2,462)	112 (4.5%)	39 (1.6%)	108 (4.4%)	259 (10.5%)	0.3%
Macalaster-Groveland (n=1,529)	56 (3.7%)	16 (1.0%)	56 (3.7%)	128 (8.4%)	0.2%
St. Anthony Park (n=1,491)	67 (4.5%)	13 (0.9%)	42 (2.8%)	122 (8.2%)	0.2%
Summit Hill (n=974)	65 (6.7%)	7 (0.7%)	20 (2.1%)	92 (9.4%)	0.1%

Source: Robina Institute analysis of SPPD and ECC calls for service data in 2019.

Note: Comparisons of percentages cannot be made across neighborhoods, as those percentages are related to the total number of calls for that neighborhood (the total number of calls in each neighborhood). Data excludes 77 priority 2A calls.

Note: Total calls and attending percentages are based on the total number of emergency calls in the identified neighborhood, whereas overall total calls is out of the total number of emergency calls (N=78,484) received in 2019.

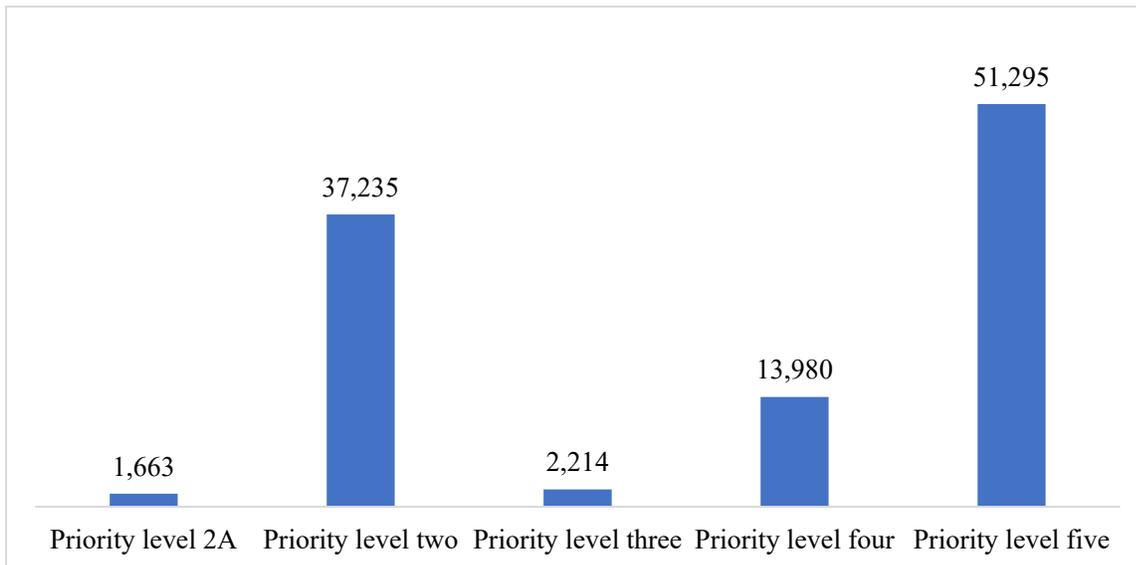
Overall, the number of emergency calls for welfare checks, crisis responses, and persons in crisis incident types range from 122 to 599 per neighborhood. At most, just over 10% of emergency calls in each neighborhood are potentially related to mental health or other crisis; at minimum, just under 6% of emergency calls in each neighborhood are potentially related to mental health or other crisis.

Section 3: Officer-Initiated Calls Only

In 2019 there were 106,387 *officer-initiated calls*. Officer-initiated calls can occur when an officer comes upon an incident or situation or a person flags an officer down and then they radio or call into the call center to indicate that they are responding to an incident. Almost half (48.2%; n=51,295) of officer-initiated calls were categorized as priority level five; however, there is a priority level, 2A, which is specifically for officer-initiated calls, which consists of 35% of officer-initiated calls (n=37,235; Figure 4). The top three incident types of officer-initiated calls were for:

- a proactive police visit (32.4 %; n=34,447);
- a traffic stop (21.3%; n=22,683); and
- to investigate – not specified (12.6%; n=13,436).

Figure 4. Number of Officer-Initiated Calls by Priority Level



Source: Robina Institute analysis of SPPD and ECC calls for service data in 2019.

Officer-initiated incidents can occur when an officer comes upon a situation needing further investigation, is flagged down by a citizen, following up on a previous call, or when involved in community engagement. Officers can radio the ECC or utilize their computer to initiate an incident in the computer aided dispatch (CAD) system.

Most frequently, officer-initiated calls occurred on Wednesdays (16.9%; n=18,005) followed by Tuesdays (16.0%; n=16,989) and Thursdays (16.0%; n=17,070). Since the officer is on the scene or initiates the call, there is no response time to calculate. Officer-initiated calls occurred most frequently in the Downtown (13.4%; n=14,211), Payne-Phalen (11.4%; n=12,124), and Dayton's Bluff (9.1%; n=9,664) neighborhoods. Table 9 illustrates the number of officer-initiated calls by neighborhood.

Table 9. Officer-Initiated Calls by Neighborhood (N=105,702)

Neighborhood	Officer-Initiated Calls
Payne-Phalen	12,124 (11.5%)
North End	8,718 (8.2%)
Thomas-Dale	8,998 (8.5%)
Dayton's Bluff	9,664 (9.1%)
Greater East Side	5,094 (4.8%)
Downtown	14,211 (13.4%)
Summit-University	4,906 (4.6%)
Hamline-Midway	5,994 (5.7%)
Merriam Park	7,799 (7.4%)
Sunray-Battle Creek-Highwood	3,768 (3.6%)
West Side	5,196 (4.9%)
West 7 th	6,198 (5.9%)
Highland	4,525 (4.3%)
Como	3,258 (3.1%)
Macalaster-Groveland	2,370 (2.2%)
St. Anthony Park	1,391 (1.3%)
Summit Hill	1,488 (1.4%)

Source: Robina Institute analysis of SPPD and ECC calls for service data in 2019.

Note: There were 685 officer-initiated calls that did not have an identified neighborhood.

Seventy-six percent (n=80,899) of call dispositions for officer-initiated calls resulted in advise/assist. Officer-initiated calls are almost never for mental health or other crises. There were 191 calls for a welfare check, 115 crisis response calls, and no officer-initiated calls for persons in crisis. In total, this represents just 0.2% of officer-initiated calls. Thus, such calls are more likely to come in as an emergency call.

Section 4: Conclusion and Recommendations

The purpose of this report was to examine multiple variables for calls for service by priority level. The priority level is used to aid officers in identifying the urgency of a call, so they know how quickly they need to respond to the call. When looking at *all call types*, the most frequent incidents included proactive police visits, disorderly conduct, and traffic stops. Most calls were assigned to priority level four (30%), followed closely by priority level five (27%). For *emergency call types*, the most frequent incidents included disorderly conduct, investigate 911 hang-up, and suspicious activity. Most emergency calls for service (49%) were assigned priority level three, which was outside of the Commission's charge. The next largest group was assigned to priority level four (33%). For *officer-initiated calls*, the most frequent incidents included proactive police visits, traffic stops, and proactive foot patrols, with most officer-initiated calls assigned to priority level five (48%). Though the Commission is charged with focusing on alternative first-response options to priority level four and priority level five calls, it is important to note that most of those calls are officer-initiated (40%) and 29.5% originate from 911 emergency calls for service. These represent two very different modes of operation and each would require different solutions.

To be responsive to the Commission's desire to learn more about calls relating to mental health crises, we homed in on call incident types identified as welfare check, crisis response, and persons in crisis because these seemed potentially related to the area of interest. For *all call types*, these incident types made up a small minority of cases – just 4.4% of all call types and most frequently assigned priority level three. For *emergency calls* only, these calls made up a small minority of cases as well—just 7.5%—and most were categorized as priority level three. It is important to note, however, that as of 2020, SPPD no longer responds to person in crisis calls unless there is an immediate threat of harm of potential death/serious injury to themselves or to others, so such calls likely make up an even smaller percentage of calls today.

The call for service data is limited so we were unable to understand more about the calls beyond what was identified in this report. Some data that was of interest (e.g., demographics) are not collected at all points in the process. Other information that could potentially be useful may instead be contained in narrative reports and was beyond the scope of analysis for this project.

To address the limitations of the data and to aid future research studies, we offer some recommendations. Our recommendations are focused on research and data. We do not offer practice-based recommendations, such as, who should respond to calls or ways to respond to calls.

1. Review and analyze police reports – subset of the sample

The data that is currently available within SPPD and ECC is limited to mostly the variables included in this report. Thus, we do not know have many details about the context surrounding these calls, including what happened during the calls and what led to the outcomes of the calls. Analyzing police reports may give more of the contextual information. Since there are hundreds of thousands of calls each year, it is recommended to analyze a subset of police reports to review

what happened once an officer arrived on the scene. This subset could include a random selection of cases or if there is interest in a particular category of offenses (i.e., check welfare) these cases could be reviewed (or a random selection of those cases). However, a police report is not generated for every call and some of the reports may still have sparse details. This method is also only going to provide information about what happened once an officer arrived at the scene, from the officer's point of view.

2. *Observations and ride-a-longs with SPPD to observe process of receiving and initiating calls*

It is recommended that if one wants to know what happens once a call is received or radioed in by police, observations of patrol officers would be one method to understanding what happens at each stage in the call process to arrival at the scene. These observations may serve to help understand how situations may change from the original calls. However, it would be important to conduct several observations and at different points in time, different times of day, and among different neighborhoods to get a full understanding of what happens regarding these calls.

3. *Define data variables to ascertain differences in meaning (e.g., person in crisis vs. crisis response)*

It is unclear what makes an incident identified as a person in crisis versus a crisis response. To understand the differences, these should be further defined. There are other similar examples of codes that could mean similar things or are vaguely defined, which make incident code information unclear. Further definitions could provide more clarity.

4. *Consider data points for collection or a more robust, comprehensive database, depending on future goals.*

We understand these databases are not inherently intended for research purposes. However, we would recommend that modifications be made so that research and evaluation could more easily be conducted in the future. Related, modifications may need to be made to allow for more robust analysis. For example, in the current databases we could not analyze how a call started compared to how a call ended. This is because the database overwrites some of the original information with updated information based on officer information at the scene. For example, if a call starts as a priority four because of a barking dog, but, then the officer arrives on the scene to find the dog is barking because a robbery occurred, the final code and priority level in the data may be the robbery and thus, we may not know that the original call was for a barking dog. Instead of overriding information, all information should be retained so analysis could be conducted on how calls start and how they end.

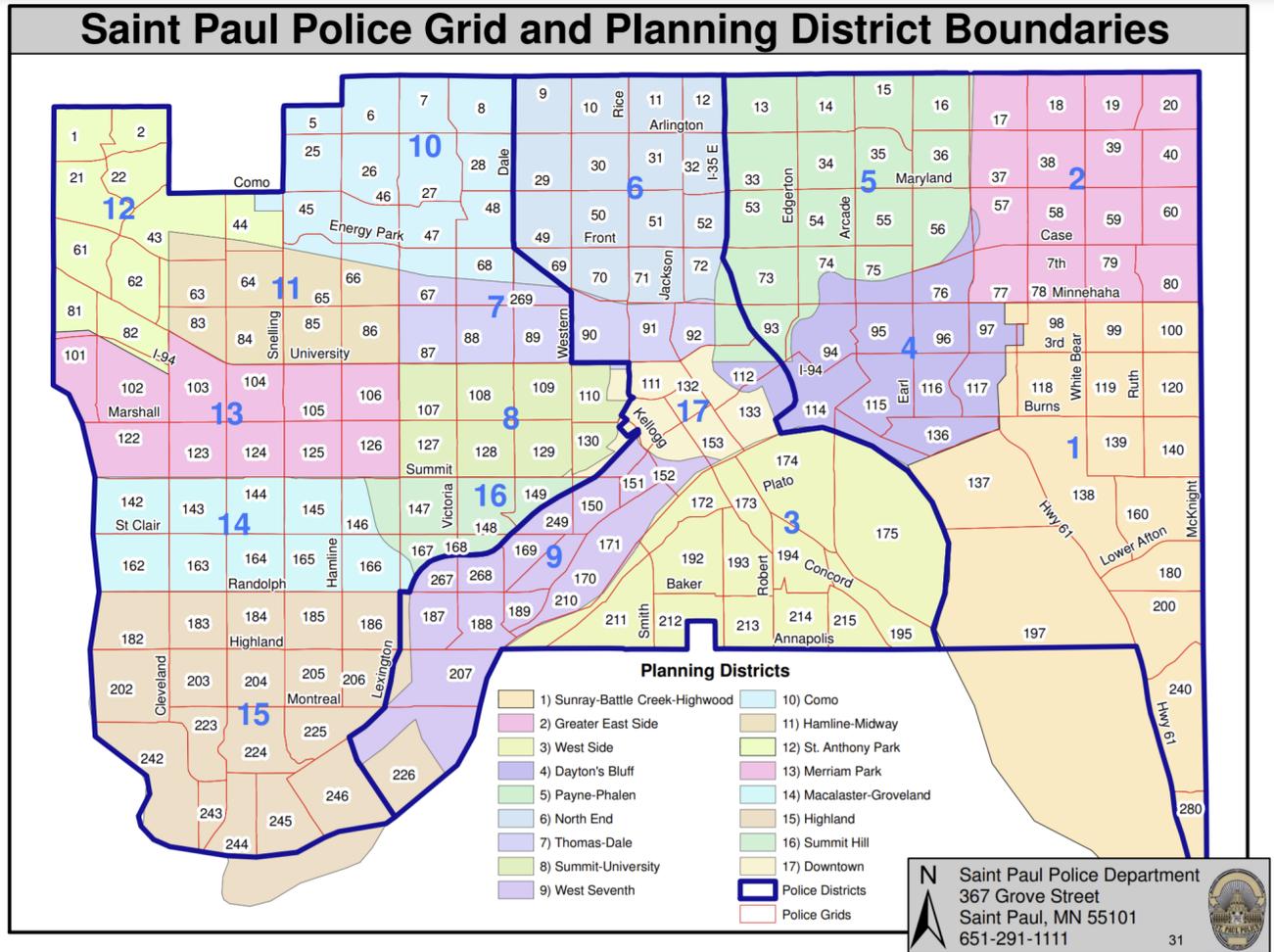
Additionally, if there is a way to incorporate the SPPD calls for service and arrest and citation information into one database, that would aid future analyses. By having these in one dataset we could more easily examine what calls for service ended in an arrest or citation, which are data points with demographic information.

Any implementation of the recommendations requires the full collaboration with ECC and SPPD. Some of these recommendations are easier to implement than others. Any changes to the existing databases would require financial resources and staff time.

Appendix A - Data Definitions

- Master incident number: This is the unique number provided to a call for service, which also serves to link the ECC and SPPD data. It is a confidential, unique incident identifier.
- Priority code of the call: the urgency of the call (levels one through five).
- Code type: The code used to identify the incident.
- Problem description: The problem nature of the incident in our database.
- Street name: name of the street where the incident occurred.
- Call disposition: the outcome of the call.
- Time call enters queue: the time the call is received by ECC.
- Time call 1st assigned: the time call is dispatched by ECC.
- Time 1st on scene: the time that the officer arrives at the scene.
- General location (not exact address): cross streets/neighborhood of the incident.
- Method/type of call received: calls can come through 911, online system, non-emergency line, an alarm system, or through officer-initiated.

Appendix B – St. Paul Police Department Neighborhood Map



Source: 2019 St. Paul Police Department Crime Report, retrieved from St. Paul Police Department's website.
<https://www.stpaul.gov/sites/default/files/2021-01/2019%20Crime%20Report.pdf>