

Subject: Emergency Evacuation Requests Policy
Report to: Niagara Transit Commission Board
Report date: **Tuesday, May 20, 2025**

Recommendations

1. That Policy NTCPOL-O-OP-XX Niagara Transit Commission Emergency Evacuation Requests Policy attached as Appendix 1 to Report NTC 12-2025, **BE APPROVED**; and
2. That staff **BE DIRECTED** to implement this policy, effective immediately.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to seek the Niagara Transit Commission (NTC) Board's approval to adopt an Emergency Evacuation Requests policy (Appendix 1) to govern staff's response when receiving requests for Niagara Transit vehicles to provide evacuation services.
- In accordance with Section 6.1(n) of By-law 2022-38, being A By-Law to Establish the Niagara Transit Commission, the Board has the authority to establish policies and procedures as the Board determines are appropriate that align with the Region's programs, by-laws, policies and procedures.
- Niagara Transit has previously received requests to provide vehicles and drivers for evacuation purposes from various emergency and non-emergency organizations.
- Niagara Transit is a community partner and uniquely positioned to provide evacuation assistance but must ensure we are providing assistance responsibly and when appropriate.

Financial Considerations

There is no financial consideration for implementing this policy. Costs would be incurred when providing evacuation service but would be variable based on a number of factors including the number of vehicles and drivers required, distances travelled, and the length of time required for any vehicle to be out of service. A total operating cost for each incident will be captured in the Emergency Evacuation Request Report (Appendix

2) and that report shared with the Board at the next available meeting following an incident.

Analysis

Prior to amalgamation, each individual conventional transit department or commission in Niagara provided evacuation support to their city or regional emergency services. Transit as a support in communities when emergencies require mass evacuations is a regular part of emergency operations planning. The NTC is a planning partner agency on the Regional Emergency Operations Centre (REOC) in part for this reason.

Staff are recommending adopting the attached Emergency Evacuation Requests Policy (Appendix 1). This will ensure a consistent response to requests from Niagara Region, local Niagara municipalities or emergency service agencies and guide staff in carrying out evacuation assistance. It will also provide clarity for which organizations and situations in which Niagara Transit will not grant evacuation services.

In accordance with the policy, Niagara Transit will provide emergency evacuation services under the following conditions:

- At the request of Niagara Region, local Niagara Municipality, provincial and federal emergency services
- Upon the activation of the Niagara Region, local Niagara municipality, provincial or federal Emergency Operations Centre (EOC)

Niagara Transit will not be responsible for:

- Determining or providing a location for the accommodation of evacuated people
- Any supplies or materials related to the well-being or safety of evacuated individuals, except which facilitates the safe transportation of those individuals

Requests from non-emergency entities such as private businesses or not-for-profit organizations will not be granted.

Once approved, the Operations department will manage and oversee the implementation of this policy. They will be the primary point of contact for emergency services personnel and communicate to other staff as per the policy.

When an emergency evacuation request is granted, an Emergency Evacuation Report (Appendix 2) will be filed and provided to the NTC Board for information.

Alternatives Reviewed

The NTC Board could choose not to adopt the policy, however this is not recommended as staff will not have a defined process for dealing with requests when they occur.

The NTC Board could also choose to not provide any emergency evacuation services, however this could lead to negative community perceptions and public relations challenges.

Relationship to Niagara Transit Commission Strategic Priorities

Safety	Niagara Transit is a community partner. Contributing to the safety and well-being of Niagara residents by providing emergency evacuation services aligns with our priority of safety by assisting residents in need. It also fills a need for our emergency services, contributing to their safety and well-being.
Customer Focus	While our ridership is what we typically consider our customer, as a taxpayer funded service, more broadly, we also serve the residents of Niagara Region as a whole. This policy ensures we have a defined response allowing staff to serve our residents when needed in an efficient and well-defined manner.

Other Pertinent Reports

n/a



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Appendices

Appendix 1 Emergency Evacuation Requests Policy

Appendix 2 Emergency Evacuation Requests Report