

Subject: Niagara Transit Letter of Support to CUTA for Bill C-395
Report to: Niagara Transit Commission
Report date: **Tuesday, August 26, 2025**

Recommendations

1. That the Niagara Transit Commission (NTC) Board **APPROVE** the letter of support from Niagara Transit, the Office of the NTC Chair, and ATU Local 846 for Bill C-395, An Act to Amend the Criminal Code (Public Transit Workers);
2. That staff be **DIRECTED** to provide the letter to the Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA); and
3. That staff be **AUTHORIZED** to provide support, in coordination with the Chair's office, regarding Bill C-395 in the future.

Key Facts

- CUTA has recently approached federal Members of Parliament to sponsor, as a private members bill, Bill C-395, An Act to Amend the Criminal Code (Public Transit Workers).
- The bill would amend the criminal code to strengthen penalties for assaults on transit workers and expand the current definition of transit operators to include all transit employees.
- In recent years, incidents of violence and harassment against front-line transit workers have escalated across Canada.
- Niagara Transit workers have been subject to such incidents, which have not only a physical and mental impacts on those directly affected, but on all Niagara Transit front-line workers.
- This letter would support CUTA in their efforts to find a sponsor for Private Members Bill C-395 and

Financial Considerations

There are no financial impacts as a result of this report.

Analysis

The Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA) is currently approaching federal Members of Parliament to sponsor Bill C-395, An Act to Amend the Criminal Code (Public Transit Workers).

The bill would strengthen penalties for assaults on transit workers and expand the current definition of transit operators to include all transit employees. Wording of the bill reads as follows:

His Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate and House of Commons of Canada, enacts as follows:

R.S., c. C-46
Criminal Code

1 Section 269.01 of the *Criminal Code* is replaced by the following:

Aggravating circumstance — assault against a public transit worker

269.01 (1) When a court imposes a sentence for an offence referred to in paragraph 264.1(1)(a) or any of sections 266 to 269, it shall consider as an aggravating circumstance the fact that the victim of the offence was, at the time of the commission of the offence, a public transit worker engaged in the performance of their duty.

Definition of *public transit*

(2) In this section, ***public transit*** means a passenger transportation service provided to the public — including paratransit and school bus services — using a vehicle such as a bus, train, subway, tram, ferry or licensed taxi cab.

Incidents of violence and harassment on transit systems have escalated in recent years affecting both riders and the front-line workers who serve them. These challenges are compounded by broader societal pressures, including homelessness, substance use, and mental health issues, which increasingly play out in public transit environments. The consequences of this have been felt in Niagara. Niagara Transit workers have been exposed to difficult and sometimes dangerous situations.

This letter and future support for Bill C-395 is an opportunity to demonstrate leadership on a growing public safety concern and deliver meaningful benefits to front-line workers and transit riders in Niagara.

[Bill C-395, An Act To Amend the Criminal Code \(Public Transit Workers\)](https://www.parl.ca/documentviewer/en/44-1/bill/C-395/first-reading)
(<https://www.parl.ca/documentviewer/en/44-1/bill/C-395/first-reading>)

Alternatives Reviewed

The Niagara Transit Commission Board could choose not to support Bill C-395.

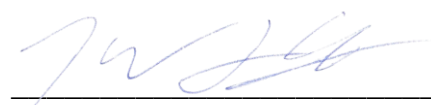
Relationship to Niagara Transit Commission Strategic Priorities

Safety

Support for Bill C-395 is a proactive response to supporting a safe working environment for public transit workers in Niagara. It represents a united approach by the Board, Union, and staff to ensuring incidents against workers are treated as seriously as possible in criminal proceedings.

Other Pertinent Reports

None



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Appendices

Appendix 1

Niagara Transit - Letter of Support to CUTA for Bill C-395