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**Item No. 21.1**  
**Halifax Regional Council**  
**September 23, 2025**

**TO:** Mayor Fillmore and Members of Halifax Regional Council

**FROM:** Brad Anguish, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** July 8, 2025

**SUBJECT:** Review of Halifax Transit Collisions

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### **INFORMATION REPORT**

#### **ORIGIN**

November 12, 2024, Halifax Regional Council motion (Item No.15.7.2):

MOVED by Councilor Morse, seconded by Councilor Cleary

THAT Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to prepare a staff report and presentation on transit-related collisions in HRM. The report should include data for injuries in the current year and the previous 5 years to identify trends. The report should also highlight current and planned initiatives to mitigate and reduce transit-related accidents and collisions involving vulnerable road users.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report provides an overview of all Halifax Transit collisions for the period of January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2024. The report includes overall statistics on preventable versus non-preventable collisions, identifies yearly trends and provides information to examine collisions that have resulted in injuries initially reported at the time of the collision. Included in the report is a breakdown of reported injuries by road user type, frequency and data on the severity of reported injuries. The report also presents comparisons to overall collision rates in Canada and Nova Scotia, as well as current and future strategies to mitigate transit-related collisions.

#### **BACKGROUND**

Halifax Transit has been expanding service and staffing levels at a time when the municipality is also undergoing rapid growth. The information in this report examines data to assist in recognizing trends in Halifax Transit related collisions, establish benchmarks for continued monitoring as well as identify risks and potential mitigating measures.

Halifax Transit collisions are defined as incidents where a Halifax Transit vehicle contacts another vehicle, person, animal, or object, unless deemed part of normal operation. Halifax Transit vehicles include any vehicle owned or leased by Halifax Transit, including buses, supervisor vehicles, and vessels. When a collision occurs, a Halifax Transit Accident and Claims Investigator is responsible for determining if the collision was preventable. This is a process where the investigator reviews information available for each incident (bus camera footage, employee report, Halifax Transit Supervisor report, witness statement, etc.) to determine whether the collision was preventable. Collisions are deemed preventable if the review determined that an Operator did not do everything reasonably possible by following policy and procedures, applying the rules of the road and using defensive driving techniques to prevent the collision, despite the potential of error on the part of others involved. Collisions deemed to be non-preventable are identified when the Operator could not have reasonably taken action to prevent the collision. Preventability does not equate to being at fault; fault is determined by other parties such as police and insurance adjusters.

**DISCUSSION**

Collisions

There were 4,281 total collisions involving Halifax Transit buses reported from 2020 to 2024. Of those, 1,945 were non-preventable while 2,336 were deemed preventable. The table below provides a yearly breakdown.

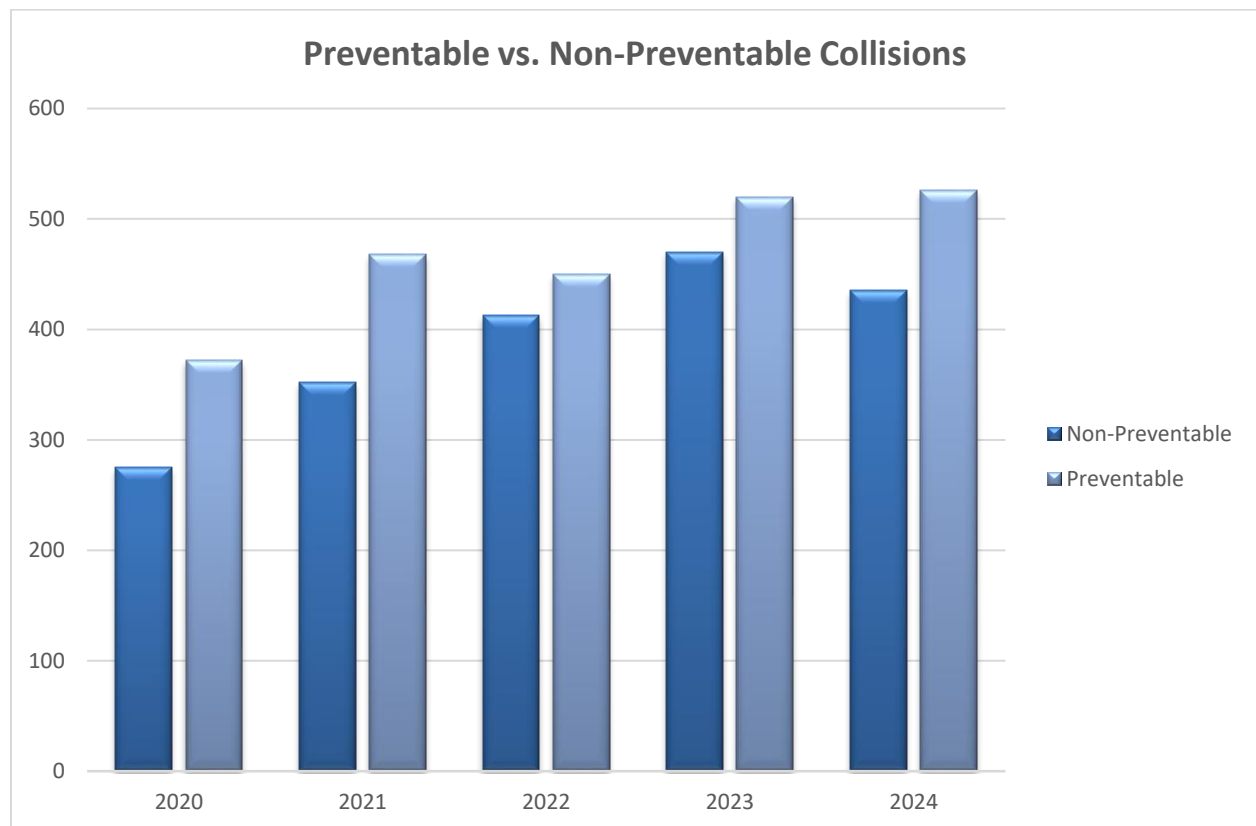


Figure 1: Preventable vs. Non-Preventable Collisions per year

Halifax Transit uses Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA) codes to categorize types of collisions. The categories include collisions with vehicles, pedestrians, objects, a vehicle going off road, a person committing suicide, or a collision with another bus. All Halifax Transit collisions, preventable and non-preventable, for the period reviewed are represented on the chart below.

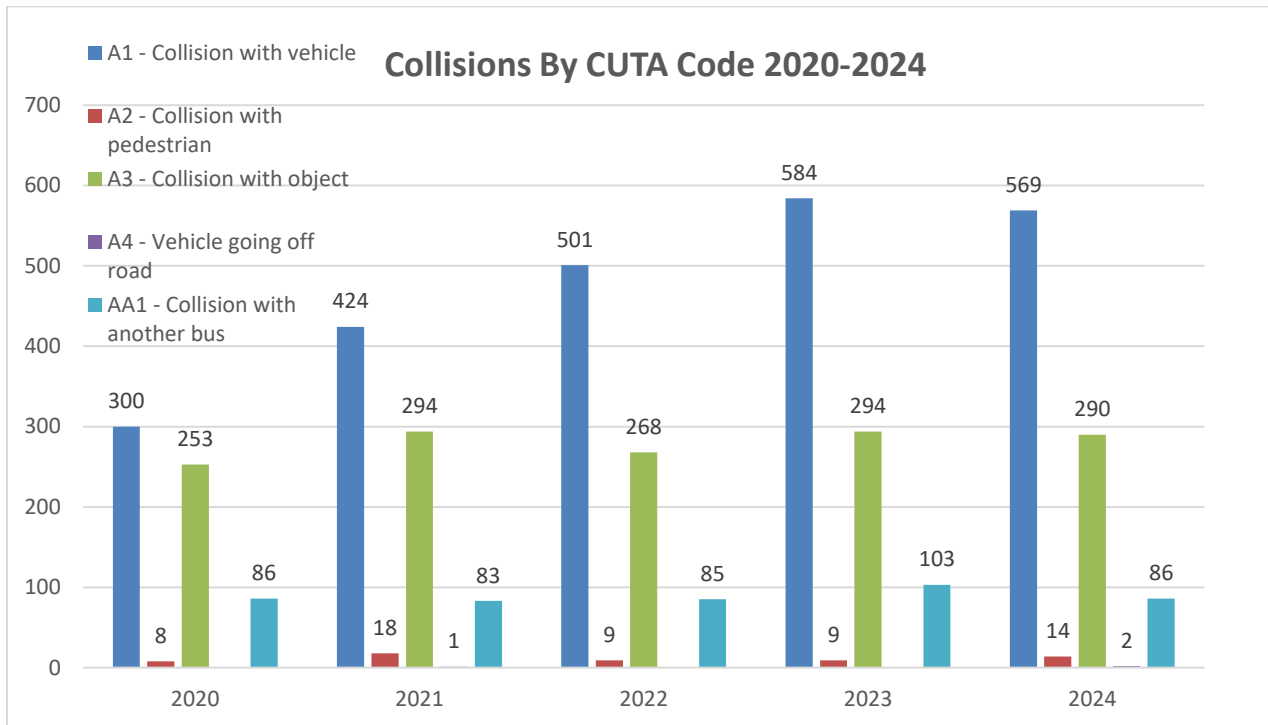


Figure 2: Collisions by CUTA code

Of the total collisions reported, 54 had injuries initially reported, accounting for an average of 1.26%. The number of collisions with an injury included in the initial report (per year) is shown on the chart below.

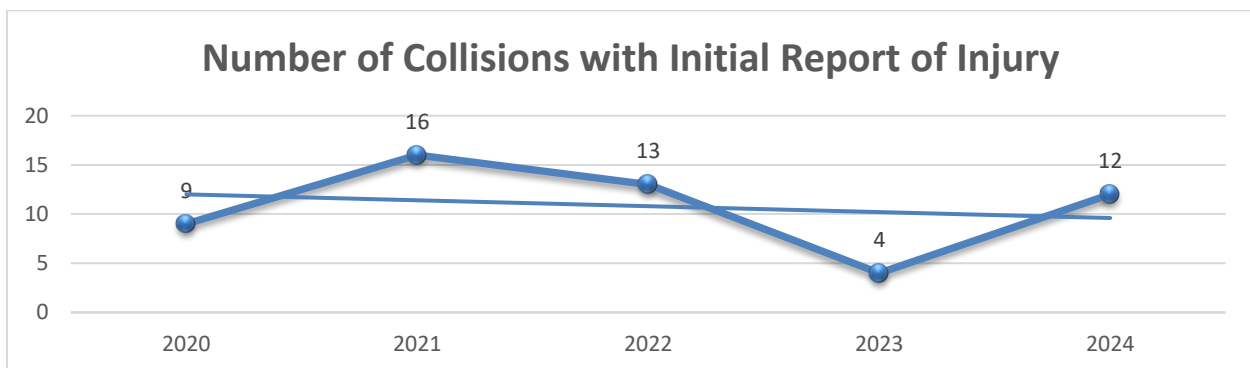


Figure 3: Number of collisions with initial reported injury per year

Reported injuries are categorized by severity; 15 were minor (no treatment required), 19 were moderate (treated and released), 17 were major (hospitalization) and three were fatal. Of the three fatal collisions, all were non-preventable, investigated by law enforcement with no charges laid. These collisions included one head-on collision and two pedestrian incidents. Of the 54 reported collisions involving injury, 25 were deemed as preventable. The table below shows reported injuries by road user type.

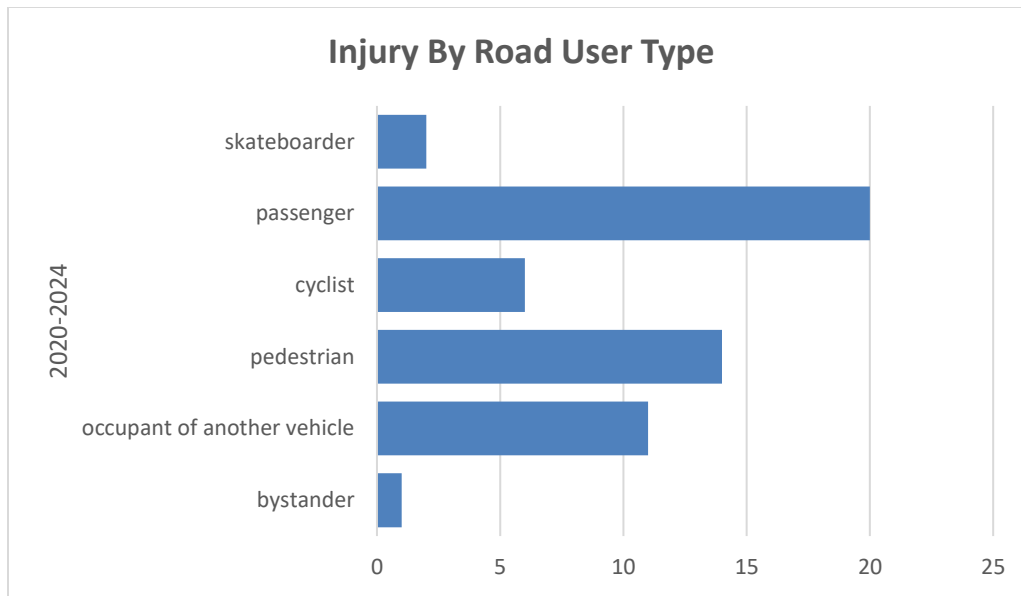


Figure 4: Injury by road user type

Halifax Transit buses travelled an average of approximately 20.8 million kilometres per year over the five-year review period. The lowest total occurred in 2020, at approximately 19.5 million kilometres, while 2024 was the highest, at approximately 21.5 million kilometres. The number of preventable collisions per million vehicle kilometres travelled (VKT) is shown in the table below. The table also shows the rate at which there is a preventable collision with a reported injury per million VKT.

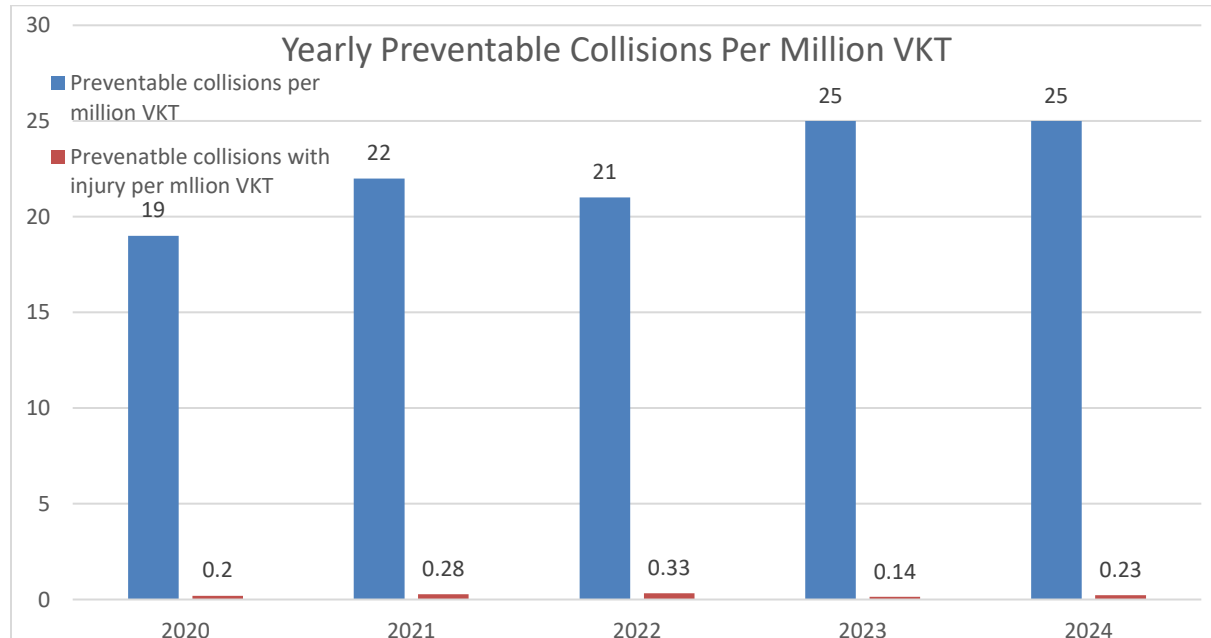


Figure 5: Preventable collisions per million VKT

Industry and Transport Canada Comparison

Obtaining comparable data from other Canadian transit agencies is challenging, limiting industry benchmarking opportunities. In addition to the requested data not being received, some challenges arose due to inconsistent data collection methods and/or a reluctance to publish collision and injury frequency information widely.

Transport Canada’s National Collision Database (NCDB) contains data on all reportable motor vehicle collisions in Canada. This report compiles collision data, provided annually by the provinces and territories. Transport Canada’s most recent available collision statistics are from 2023 (*Canadian Motor Vehicle Traffic Collision Statistics: 2023*). Statistics from 2024 were not available at the time of writing this report. Transport Canada estimates national collision rates per billion vehicle kilometres travelled (VKT). For easier comparison, all rates have been converted into per million vehicle kilometres travelled.

Transport Canada data considers collisions involving injury for all vehicle types. The four-year average available for review indicates a national average of 0.28 collisions involving an injury per million VKT. The data is available by province as well and indicates Nova Scotia has an average of 0.43 collisions involving injury per million VKT.

Halifax Transit has nearly 370 conventional buses, which travelled a yearly average of 20,839,931 kilometres over the 5-year review period. Compared to regular vehicle traffic, buses have considerably higher exposure to hazards due to operating in higher density traffic areas with a greater presence of pedestrians, cyclists, intersections and the associated risks created from making frequent stops, turns and interactions with passengers attempting to board or alight. Taking the foregoing into consideration when comparing data to Halifax Transit is a key consideration. Halifax Transit had an average of 0.5 collisions involving an injury per million VKT over the period reviewed. The average number of preventable collisions involving an injury per million VKT for Halifax Transit is 0.23. The yearly rates are plotted on the figure below (Figure 6).

Collisions involving a fatality per million VKT are also available in the National Collision Database, and comparisons are included in the table below.

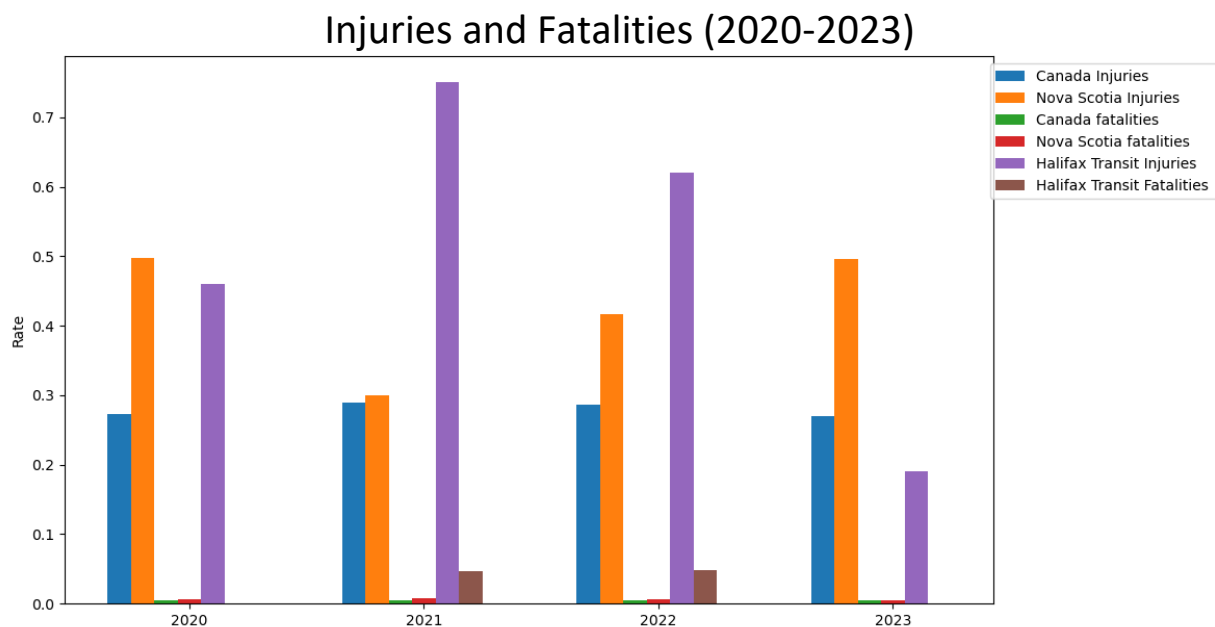


Figure 6: Comparison - Total (non-preventable and preventable) Collisions with injury per million vehicle kilometers traveled (VKT)

Collision Mitigation Strategies

Existing safety strategies include comprehensive pre-hire screening for bus Operator candidates to ensure they have a minimum of three years driving experience, a clean abstract with no more than two demerit points, a maximum of one at-fault collision and an air brake endorsement. All candidates are also required

to pass written and cognitive testing (as of mid-year 2022) as well as a pre-hire medical examination, which confirms functional abilities for the position.

New Operators are provided with six weeks of combined classroom and on-road training, which includes several defensive driving modules, as well as specific lessons on pedestrian safety and hazard identification. Before new Operators drive independently, they are also placed with an experienced mentor for a week, which includes a written evaluation.

Retraining or a “refresher” is available for existing employees, which provides one-on-one instruction with an experienced trainer. These sessions can be targeted for various reasons, such as performance improvement or reintegration into the workplace. Between 2020 and 2024, the Halifax Transit training team conducted over 650 one-on-one refresher training sessions, averaging approximately 130 refresher sessions per year. The training department also provides regular training material and updates through notices, on-site demonstrations, training sessions and communication boards.

Halifax Transit currently has a safe driving certificate, which is awarded annually to Operators who have not had a preventable collision. On average, 319 Halifax Transit Operators received this award annually for the period of 2020-2024. This program is currently under review, which includes engaging with transit partners to consider other models, such as driver excellence programs, that would replace or enhance current recognition systems.

Future safety initiatives include an information campaign regarding approaching buses and boarding safety. The campaign is designed to educate the public, customers and employees and is targeted for launch in late fall of 2025.

Further research into existing onboard collision avoidance technologies is also ongoing. Currently, all buses are equipped with CCTV equipment as well as telemetry recording systems. A review has begun regarding opportunities for the effectiveness of additional equipment, including engagement with other transit properties that deploy pedestrian warning or collision avoidance technology. Results for consideration are not yet available at the time of this report.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications associated with this information report.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

No community engagement was required.

### **LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

Section 7A of the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter* provides that:

- 7A** The purposes of the Municipality are to
- (a) provide good government;
  - (b) provide services, facilities and other things that, in the opinion of the Council, are necessary or desirable for all or part of the Municipality; and
  - (c) develop and maintain safe and viable communities.

Section 69 of the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter* provides that:

- 69** (1) The Municipality may provide a public transportation service by

- (a) the purchase of vehicles or vessels and operation of the service;
- (b) providing financial assistance to a person who will undertake to provide the service; or
- (c) a combination of these methods.

**ATTACHMENTS**

1. Review of Halifax Transit Collisions 2020-2024
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Report Prepared by: Michael Savary, Investigator, Accident & Claims, Halifax Transit: 902.490.5001

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# Review of Halifax Transit Collisions – 2020–2024

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*Prepared by: Michael Savary*

Investigator, Accident & Claims, Halifax Transit

Date: June 30, 2025

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## Overview

This report provides an overview of Halifax Transit collisions, with a focus on collisions involving injuries for the period of January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2024. The report contains key terms, presents injury statistics, and outlines mitigation strategies. The report provides insight into Halifax Transit collision data and highlights ongoing and planned safety initiatives.

## 1. Definitions

**Accident and Claims Investigator:** An employee of Halifax Transit responsible for reviewing documentation, responding to collision reports, conducting investigations, and determining preventability.

**Collision:** An incident where a Halifax Transit vehicle contacts another vehicle, person, animal, or object, unless deemed part of normal operation.

**Halifax Transit Vehicle:** Any vehicle owned or leased by Halifax Transit, including buses, supervisor vehicles, and vessels.

**Non-Preventable Collision:** A collision where the driver could not have reasonably prevented the incident.

**Preventable Collision:** A collision where the driver failed to take reasonable actions to prevent it.

**Fault:** Determined by police and insurance adjusters; differs from preventability.

## 2. Collision Categories (CUTA Codes)

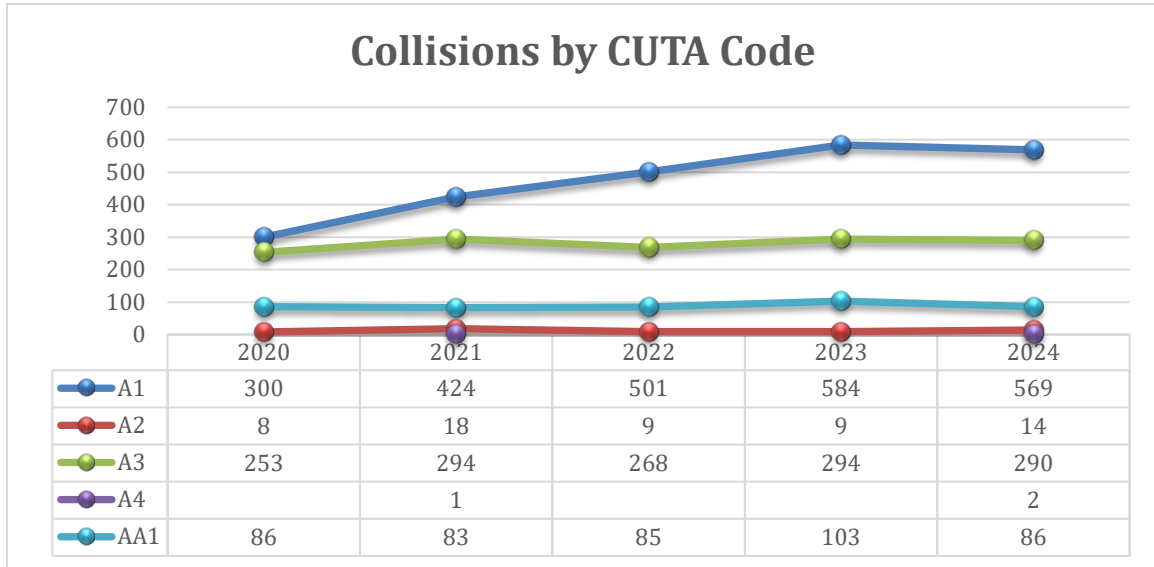
Halifax Transit categorizes collisions using the following Canadian Urban Transit Association codes:

- A1 - Collision with vehicle
- A2 - Collision with pedestrian
- A3 - Collision with object
- A4 - Vehicle going off road
- A5 - Collision with person committing suicide
- AA1 - Collision with another bus



**Figure 1**

*Collisions by CUTA Code*

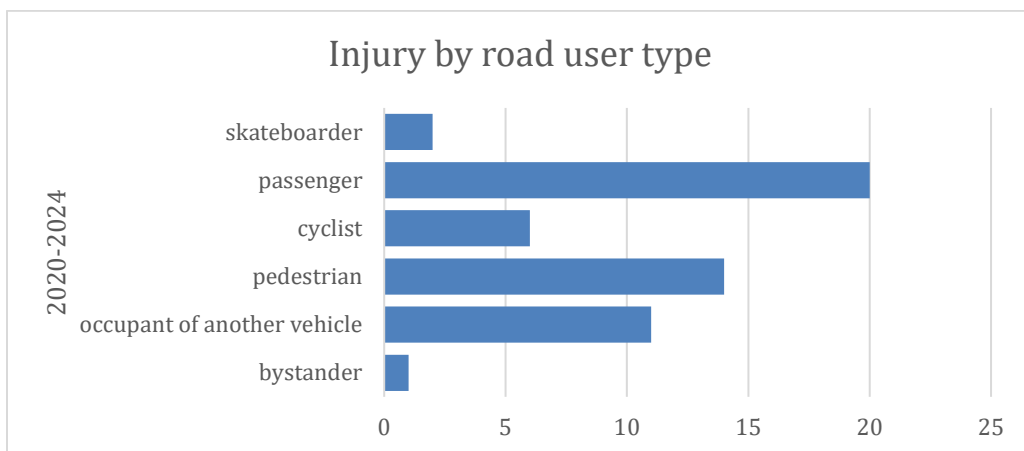


### 3. Injury Statistics (2020–2024)

Between January 1, 2020, and December 31, 2024, there were 54 transit collisions involving reported injuries. Collisions involving injury represented 1.26% of the total collisions for the period reviewed. Injuries ranged from minor (no treatment) to major (hospitalization). The most common injury was moderate, treated and released at the scene. There were three fatal collisions, all were deemed non-preventable, and no police charges were laid. These included one head-on collision and two pedestrian incidents.

**Figure 2**

*Injury by road user type*



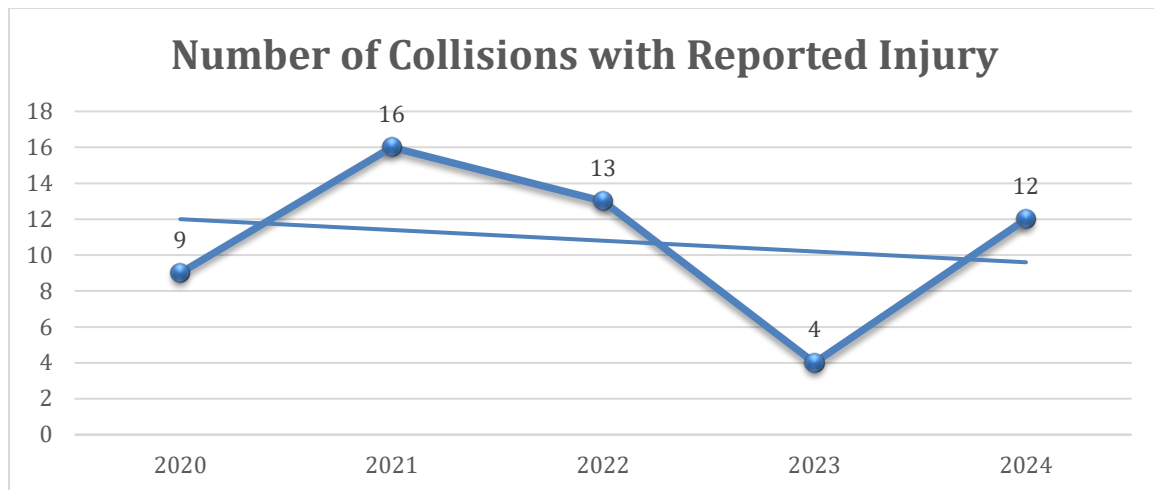
**Figure 2.1**

*Total collisions vs. collisions with reported injuries 2020-2024*

|              | No Reported Injuries | With injuries | Accounting for | Total       |
|--------------|----------------------|---------------|----------------|-------------|
| 2020         | 638                  | 9             | 1.39%          | 647         |
| 2021         | 804                  | 16            | 1.95%          | 820         |
| 2022         | 850                  | 13            | 1.51%          | 863         |
| 2023         | 986                  | 4             | 0.4%           | 990         |
| 2024         | 949                  | 12            | 1.25%          | 961         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>4227</b>          | <b>54</b>     | <b>1.26%</b>   | <b>4281</b> |

**Figure 2.2**

*Total collisions with reported injury 2020-2024*

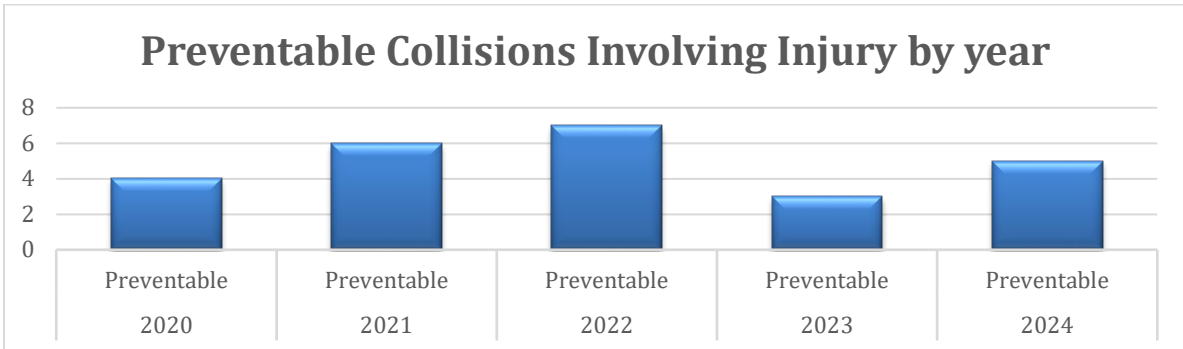


#### **4. Preventable Collisions**

For the period of January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2025, 54 collisions resulted in reported injuries and 25 of these were deemed to be preventable by Halifax Transit Collision Investigators. Figure 3.1 will show an annual breakdown of preventable collisions with reported injuries per year.

**Figure 3.1**

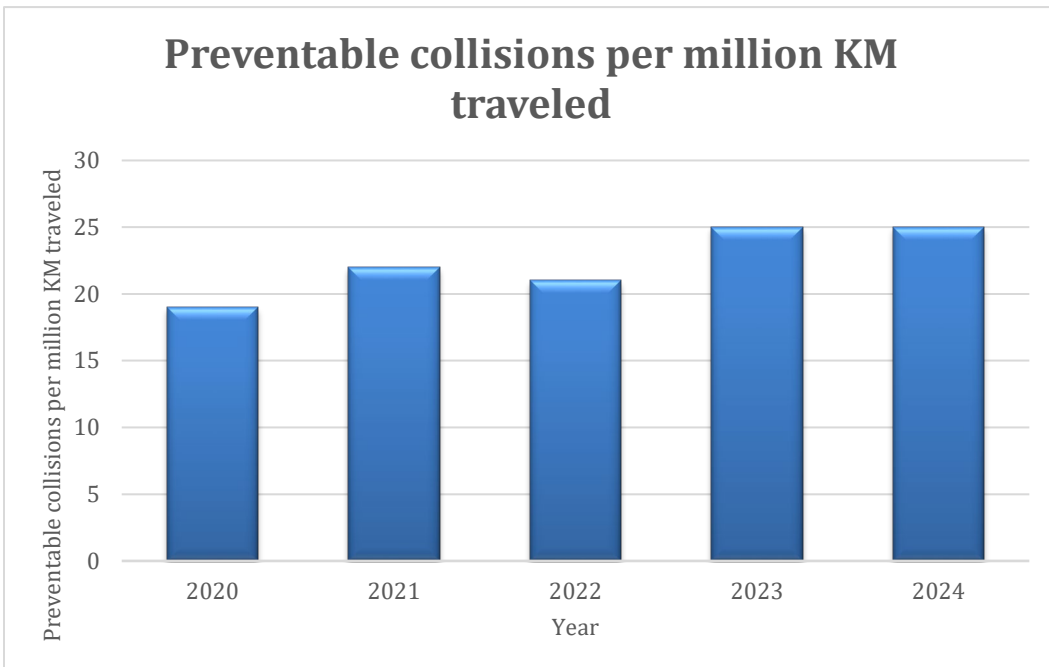
*Preventable collisions involving injury by year*



Halifax Transit buses travel millions of kilometres every year. Considering km travelled per year is a key factor in understanding collision frequency. It is widely accepted that distance directly correlates to the increased likelihood of encountering hazards such as other vehicles and adverse weather conditions. The following considers km travelled per year for Halifax Transit buses and provides further context on collision frequency.

**Figure 3.2**

*Preventable collisions per million KM travelled*



**Figure 3.3**

*Preventable collisions with injury, per million KM travelled*

| Year                  | Yearly KM travelled | Preventable collisions with injury | Preventable collisions with injury per million KM travelled |
|-----------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| 2020                  | 19,543,902          | 4                                  | 0.2   |
| 2021                  | 21,232,892          | 6                                  | 0.28  |
| 2022                  | 21,060,330          | 7                                  | 0.33  |
| 2023                  | 20,899,743          | 3                                  | 0.14  |
| 2024                  | 21,462,788          | 5                                  | 0.23  |
| <b>5-year average</b> | <b>20,839,931</b>   | <b>5</b>                           | <b>0.24</b>   |

## 5. Severity of injuries

Reported injuries are assigned a severity code as follows:

- 1- No injury
- 2- Minor (no treatment)
- 3- Moderate (treated and released)
- 4- Major (hospitalized)
- 5- Fatal

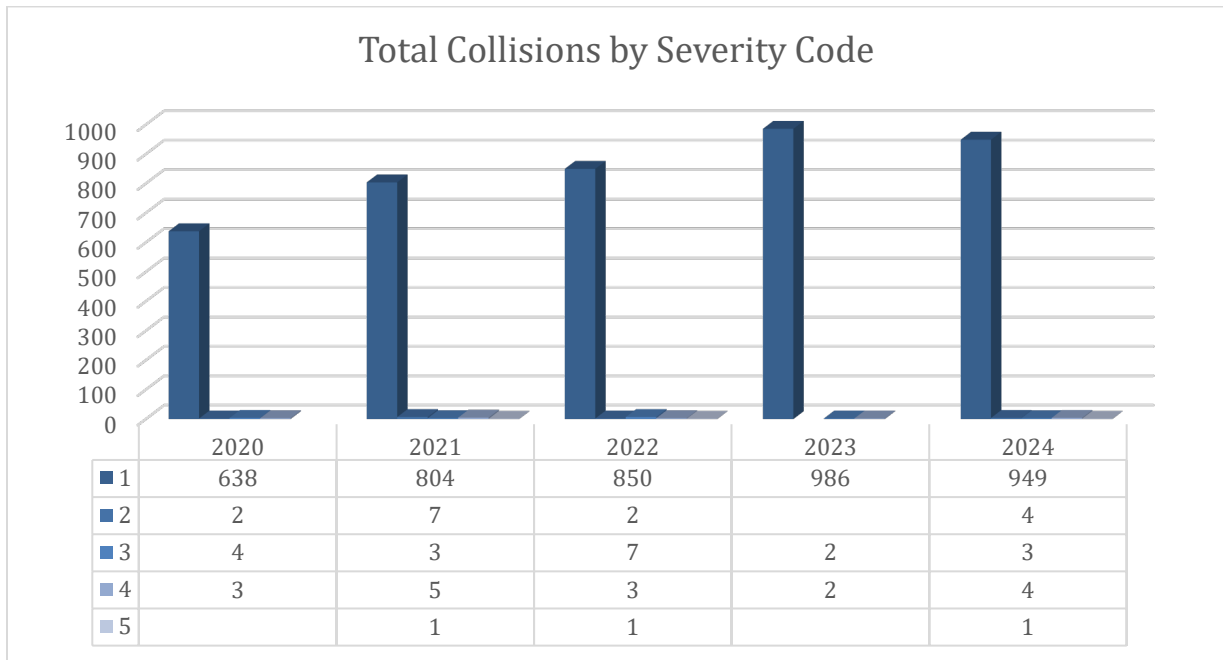
**Figure 4.1**

*Total collisions with injury by severity code*

| Year         | 1- No Injury | 2 - Minor | 3 - Moderate | 4 - Major | 5 - Fatal | Total     |
|--------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 2020         | 638          | 2         | 4            | 3         |           | 9         |
| 2021         | 804          | 7         | 3            | 5         | 1         | 16        |
| 2022         | 850          | 2         | 7            | 3         | 1         | 13        |
| 2023         | 986          |           | 2            | 2         |           | 4         |
| 2024         | 949          | 4         | 3            | 4         | 1         | 12        |
| <b>Total</b> |              | <b>15</b> | <b>19</b>    | <b>17</b> | <b>3</b>  | <b>54</b> |

**Figure 4.2**

*Total Collisions by severity code*



## 6. Industry Comparison

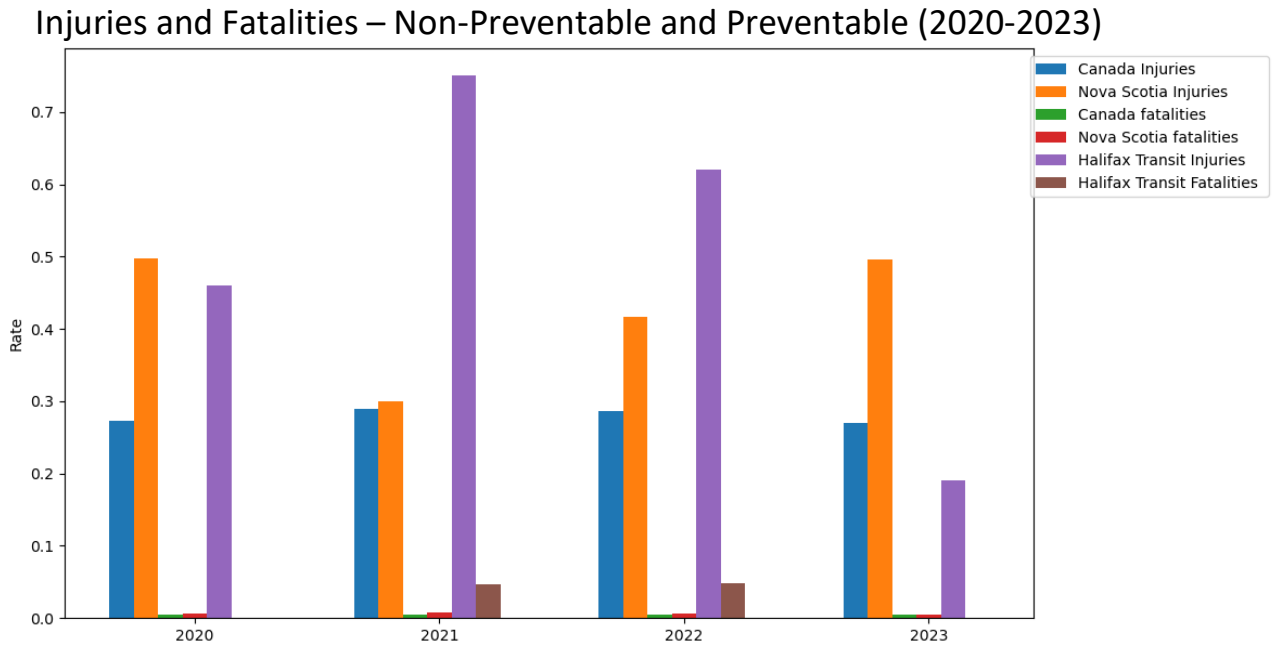
Efforts to gather comparable data from other Canadian Urban Transit agencies faced challenges due to inconsistent data collection and reluctance to share or publish collision and injury frequency information. Halifax Transit presented a request for information to the CUTA Safety and Security subcommittee in April, but has not received data to date.

Transport Canada’s National Collision Database (NCDB) contains data on all reportable motor vehicle collisions in Canada. Their report compiles collision data, provided annually by the provinces and territories. Transport Canada’s most recent available collision statistics are from 2023 (*Canadian Motor Vehicle Traffic Collision Statistics: 2023*), so comparisons to 2024 were not available at the time of writing this report. Transport Canada estimates national collision rates per billion vehicle kilometres travelled (VKT). For easier comparison, all rates have been converted into per million vehicle kilometres travelled.

A key consideration when reviewing the comparison in Figure 5, is the information from Transport Canada data includes all vehicle types, does not consider preventability or context on the increased exposure urban buses have to hazards due to operating in higher density traffic areas, with greater presence of pedestrians, cyclists and intersections, as well as the risks created from making frequent stops and turns and interaction with pedestrians attempting to board or alight.

**Figure 5**

*Comparison- Collisions with injury per million vehicle kilometres travelled (VKT)*



## 7. Collision Mitigation Strategies

### 7.1 Existing Initiatives

- Pre-hire screening includes ensuring candidates for Bus Operators have: a minimum of 3 years driving experience, a clean abstract with no more than 2 demerit points and a maximum of one at-fault collision, an air brake endorsement, as well as pass written and cognitive testing (ExceleRATE program: Vitals [evaluates 11 cognitive functions] and CORE [on-road] assessments).
- Seven-week standard training: defensive driving, pedestrian safety, hazard scanning, and more.
- Mentorship: final week paired with an experienced operator for evaluation.
- Safe Driving Certificate: awarded annually to operators with zero preventable collisions.
- Safety memos: regular updates on safe practices and policies.
- Retraining: one-on-one sessions for performance improvement or reintegration.
- Collision reviews: includes CCTV analysis and operator history checks.

## 7.2 Planned Initiatives

- Public/internal education campaign on boarding safety.
- Research into onboard collision avoidance technologies.
- Evaluation of driver excellence programs to replace or enhance current recognition systems.

## 8 Summary

- Of the 4,281 total collisions, **54 (1.26%)** involved reported injuries. While this is a low frequency of injury, any injury is highly impactful.
- Preventable collisions per million km travelled remained relatively steady, averaging **0.24** over five years. This sets a benchmark that can be used as a measure for tracking and improvement.
- On-board passengers (20) and pedestrians (14) were the most frequently injured. Identifying this trend will result in targeted improvements to avoid these types of collisions.
- Halifax Transit faced challenges in obtaining comparable data from other Canadian transit agencies, limiting benchmarking opportunities.

## 9 Recommendations

### 1. Pilot Programs

- Explore Collision Avoidance Technology: Further research into collision avoidance technology available for buses and the associated costs is needed. Consider feedback from agencies currently utilizing and reporting on this strategy or equipping a small number of buses with equipment to evaluate the effectiveness. Consider equipment that will include advanced operator telematics, allowing for real-time reporting and feedback.
- Driver Excellence Recognition: Test a tiered reward system to replace or enhance the Safe Driving Certificate.

### 2. Policy Updates

- Data Sharing Framework: Collaborate with CUTA to standardize and share safety data across agencies.

### 3. Education & Outreach

- Passenger Safety Campaigns: Focus on safe boarding/disembarking practices.
- Community Engagement: Partner with schools and cycling groups to promote pedestrian and cyclist safety near transit routes.

#### **4. Enhanced Analytics**

- Collision Mapping: Identify high-risk zones to determine if targeted interventions at specific locations require additional safety measures.