



Item No. 9.1
Board of Police Commissioners for the Halifax Regional Municipality
September 3, 2025
October 1, 2025

TO: Chair Greg O'Malley and Commissioners of the Board of Police Commissioners for the Halifax Regional Municipality

FROM: Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: August 11, 2025

SUBJECT: Violence Occurring on Halifax Transit Buses and Terminals

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

March 3, 2025, Board of Police Commissioners for the Halifax Regional Municipality motion (Item No.11.1):

MOVED by Commissioner Mancini, seconded by Commissioner O'Malley

THAT the Board of Police Commissioners for the Halifax Regional Municipality request an information report identifying:

- a) The number of Halifax Transit reported violence events in 2022, 2023 and 2024;
- b) The number of violent events in each of the three years involving attacks on Halifax Transit operators;
- c) The number of times in each of the three years that Halifax Regional Police and Royal Canadian Mounted Police Halifax Regional Detachment responded to issues of transit violence on buses, ferries; and
- d) Request the Chief Administrative Officer provide a report, in addition to the information requested in parts a)-c), regarding the current and anticipated HRM transit safety plans that may include programs and initiatives to address the above safety concerns.

MOTION AS AMENDED PUT AND PASSED.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report will provide data from three sources – Halifax Transit, Halifax Regional Police (HRP) and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Halifax Regional Detachment (RCMP HRD).

Data from Halifax Transit is broken down into three main categories – verbal incidents, physical incidents and racial incidents.

Verbal and physical incidents are further broken into three subcategories:

- Passenger to operator
- Passenger to passenger
- Passenger to supervisor

The following data outlines the total number of incidents captured in Halifax Transit data for verbal, physical and racial incidents for 2022, 2023 and 2024. Additional context, as well as an explanation for how Halifax Transit defines verbal, physical and racial incidents for the collection of their data, can be found further in the document.

Verbal incidents:

- Passenger to operator - 366 incidents
- Passenger to passenger - 273 incidents
- Passenger to supervisor - 67 incidents

Physical incidents:

- Passenger to operator - 109 incidents
- Passenger to passenger - 304 incidents
- Passenger to supervisor - 18 incidents

Racial incidents:

- 156 total incidents

Data from HRP and RCMP HRD shows there were 427 violent incidents which occurred either on Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) transit, at bus shelters or at transit terminals and were reported to police between 2022-2024. Over half of all incidents reported to police were level 1 assaults¹.

Of the 427 total violent incidents which occurred between 2022-2024, HRP responded to 93% or 396 incidents, while RCMP HRD responded to 7% or 31 incidents. The majority of the 427 incidents occurred in the Dartmouth area.

Between 2022 and 2024, there were 15 hate crimes and 21 hate incidents which occurred on buses, at bus shelters or at transit terminals in HRP jurisdiction and were reported to police. There are no records of any hate crimes or incidents occurring on buses, at bus shelters or transit terminals in RCMP HRD jurisdiction during that time period.

So far in 2025, HRP has responded to two hate incidents which occurred either on transit buses or at transit terminals in HRP jurisdiction. One hate incident occurred at a bus stop in RCMP HRD jurisdiction this year.

¹ Level 1 Assault, Criminal Code of Canada, section 266) is committed when an individual intentionally applies force or threatens to apply force to another person, without that person's consent. This offence does not require injury to occur, or the injury may be considered minor, unlike other Criminal Code offences of assault.

BACKGROUND

On March 3, 2025, the Board of Police Commissioners (BoPC) for the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) passed motion 11.1, which requested an information report regarding violent incidents related to HRM Transit from 2022-2024.

Specifically, the board requested information related to:

- a) The number of Halifax Transit reported violence events in 2022, 2023 and 2024;
- b) The number of violent events in each of the three years involving attacks on Halifax Transit operators;
- c) The number of times in each of the three years that Halifax Regional Police and Royal Canadian Mounted Police Halifax Regional Detachment responded to issues of transit violence on buses, ferries

This staff report is in response to the above request.

DISCUSSION

HRP and RCMP HRD collaborated with Halifax Transit to ensure information and data was provided by all three agencies to support the above request. The data provided for sections a and b is from Halifax Transit, while the data for section c is provided by HRP and RCMP HRD.

Halifax Transit

This section of the Information Report will provide information and data for sections a and b of the above request, which includes the following, "The number of Halifax Transit reported violence events in 2022, 2023 and 2024," and "The number of violent events in each of the three years involving attacks on Halifax Transit operators."

Data collection

Halifax Transit collects data through an application called Transit Master. Data is entered into the system by either a control centre supervisor who has received information from a transit operator, or by one of the mobile supervisors who are on the road supervising the transit service.

Documented incidents from 2022, 2023, and 2024 were reviewed by Halifax Transit staff for this report and placed into three categories: verbal incidents, physical incidents and racial incidents.

Verbal and physical incidents were further broken into the following three subcategories:

- Passenger to operator
- Passenger to passenger
- Passenger to supervisor

Verbal Incidents

Halifax Transit defines a verbal incident as an interaction between two parties which is escalated in nature but does not lead to any type of physicality. Verbal incidents can escalate quickly and have been a source of transit operator stress, and lost productivity.

Verbal incidents can unfold due to many factors. Examples of verbal incidents which have been captured in Halifax Transit data include:

- Fare disputes

- Passengers who are disruptive and need to be addressed by the transit operator
- Incidents when mobile/terminal supervisors address passengers for their conduct on transit property (e.g., drinking/vaping/smoking/cursing)

Data indicates that a large number of verbal incidents are between passengers. These incidents could be the result of general disagreements between the parties, or from an altercation prior to boarding a bus or ferry.

Figure 1 shows the number of verbal incidents captured by Halifax Transit for 2022, 2023 and 2024.

Figure 1: Verbal Incidents Per Year

Verbal Incidents	Passenger to Operator	Passenger to Passenger	Passenger to Supervisor	Totals
2022	73	57	11	141
2023	122	83	20	225
2024	171	133	36	340
Totals	366	273	67	706

As indicated in the figure above, there were 706 total verbal incidents captured by Halifax Transit data between 2022-2024. The total incidents are broken down by subcategory below:

- Passenger to operator - 366 incidents
- Passenger to passenger - 273 incidents
- Passenger to supervisor - 67 incidents

While there has been a steady increase in verbal incidents in all three categories, the largest number of incidents reflected in the data is in the passenger to operator category.

A breakdown of the geographic locations where verbal incidents took place in 2022, 2023 and 2024, based on data collected by Halifax Transit, can be found in **Attachment 1**.

Physical incidents

Halifax Transit defines a physical incident as an interaction between two parties which is escalated and becomes physical in nature.

Figure 2 shows the number of physical incidents captured by Halifax Transit data for 2022, 2023 and 2024.

Figure 2: Physical Incidents by Year

Physical Incidents	Passenger to Operator	Passenger to Passenger	Passenger to Supervisor	Totals
2022	30	78	5	113
2023	38	115	5	158
2024	41	111	8	160

Totals	109	304	18	431
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As indicated in the figure above, there were 431 total physical incidents captured by Halifax Transit data between 2022-2024. The total incidents are broken down by subcategory below:

- Passenger to operator - 109 incidents
- Passenger to passenger - 304 incidents
- Passenger to supervisor - 18 incidents

When compared to the number of verbal incidents, there are fewer physical incidents captured in the data from Halifax Transit. However, physical incidents have the potential of more serious consequences.

Examples of physical incidents which have been captured in Halifax Transit data include:

- Fare disputes
- Disputes on buses or in terminals where groups of passengers have a dispute and it becomes physical and violent
- Intoxicated passengers who have been addressed by transit operators or supervisors, and the passengers reacted negatively

Over the reporting period, the passenger-to-passenger incidents account for the majority of the physical incidents captured in the data. Like verbal incidents, sometimes these incidents stem from previous disagreements.

Physical incidents involving youth reflected 20% of physical incidents captured in Halifax Transit data in 2022, 25% of incidents in 2023 and 31% of incidents in 2024.

Figure 3 shows the number of incidents involving youth captured in Halifax Transit data between 2020-2025 (YTD: June 30, 2025).

As indicated below, there has been an increase in incidents involving young people over the last five years. Between 2022-2024, there were a total of 1,504 incidents involving youth captured in the data.

Figure 3: Incidents involving youth 2020-2025 (YTD: June 30, 2025)

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025 (YTD)
Disruptive Passenger	89	157	284	446	542	243
Fare Dispute	2	0	1	19	35	14
HRP Request	1	3	2	3	9	4
Intoxicated	6	1	3	35	8	10
Medical Issue	2	1	2	1	0	1
Passenger Assistance	9	15	10	74	30	36
Totals	109	177	302	578	624	308

In addition, the steady increase in physical incidents involving Halifax Transit employees is a matter of concern.

A breakdown of the geographic locations where physical incidents took place in 2022, 2023 and 2024, based on data collected by Halifax Transit, can be found in **Attachment 2**.

Racial Incidents

Halifax Transit records racial incidents when racially offensive comments are made by passengers to transit operators or supervisors. This data would also include such comments made among passengers, which are observed by transit staff.

Figures 4 and 5 show the number of racial incidents captured in Halifax Transit data per month for 2022, 2023 and 2024.

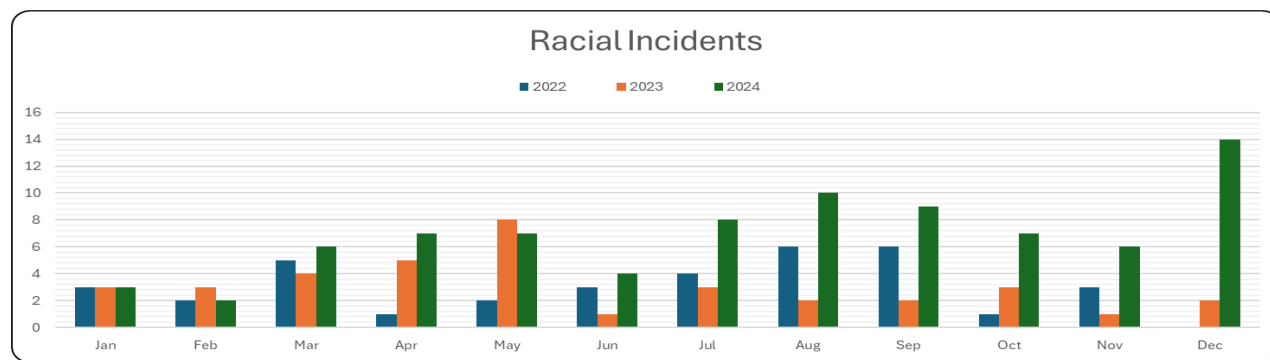
Figure 4: Racial Incidents Per Month, 2022-2024

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Totals
2022	3	2	5	1	2	3	4	6	6	1	3	0	36
2023	3	3	4	5	8	1	3	2	2	3	1	2	37
2024	3	2	6	7	7	4	8	10	9	7	6	14	83

There was a total of 36 racial incidents captured in Halifax Transit data in 2022, 37 incidents in 2023 and 83 incidents in 2024.

Data indicates that there has been an increase in incidents which were racial in nature within the reporting period, with a marked increase in the latter half of 2024.

Figure 5: Racial Incidents Per Month, 2022-2024



Additional Information

In 2023, Halifax Transit launched The Transit Code², a guide for passenger conduct and policies on Halifax Transit.

The Transit Code is built on the following eight guiding principles that create a safe, courteous and respectful environment for all:

- Respect one another
- Be inclusive
- Mind each other's space and privacy
- Be safe, for yourself and others

² Additional information on The Transit Code can be found here: <https://www.halifax.ca/transportation/halifax-transit/passenger-information/transit-code>

- Do not litter or deface property
- Communicate calmly
- Be courteous and kind
- Honour diversity, equality & the rights of all

The Transit Code also includes a safety campaign which encourages anyone who witnesses an act of aggression to let Halifax Transit staff know or to contact the police non-emergency line.

HRP and RCMP HRD Data

This section of the Information Report will provide information and data for part c of the above request, which includes the following, “The number of times in each of the three years that Halifax Regional Police and Royal Canadian Mounted Police Halifax Regional Detachment responded to issues of transit violence on buses, ferries.”

For the purpose of this report, ‘violent incidents’ include assault, possession of weapons, sexual assault/interference, robbery, uttering threats and harassment when referencing the data provided by police.

Methodology

HRP and RCMP HRD both use Versadex RMS as a Records Management System.

The data provided in this section of the report is a joint submission by HRP and RCMP HRD and therefore covers all of the municipality.

To obtain the most accurate data for this request, a robust search methodology was developed, and the following methods were used to identify incidents:

- Searching by location code of transit bus/ bus shelter/ transit terminal
- Mapping out incidents and geo-fencing³ those which were reported within 10 metres of a bus shelter
- Ferry terminals were searched by address⁴

Results

Police data indicates there were 427 violent incidents which occurred on HRM transit, at transit shelters or transit terminals which either HRP or RCMP HRD officers responded to between 2022 and 2024.

HRP responded to 93% or 396 of the 427 total incidents. RCMP HRD responded to 7% or 31 of the 427 total incidents.

Figure 6 shows the number of violent incidents which occurred on HRM transit, at transit shelters or transit terminals which either HRP or RCMP HRD officers responded to between 2022 and 2024.

Of the 427 total violent incidents captured in police data, there were:

- 208 incidents of level 1 assault
- 78 incidents of uttering threats
- 70 incidents of assault with a weapon causing bodily harm
- 24 incidents of sexual assault
- 14 incidents of robbery

³ Geofencing is a location-based technology that creates a virtual boundary around a real-world geographic area.

⁴ If an incident occurred on a ferry while it was in transit on the water, the data assumes the location was recorded as one of the ferry terminals.

- 11 incidents of assaulting police

Figure 6: Violent Incidents on HRM Transit, Bus Shelters or Terminals, 2022-24

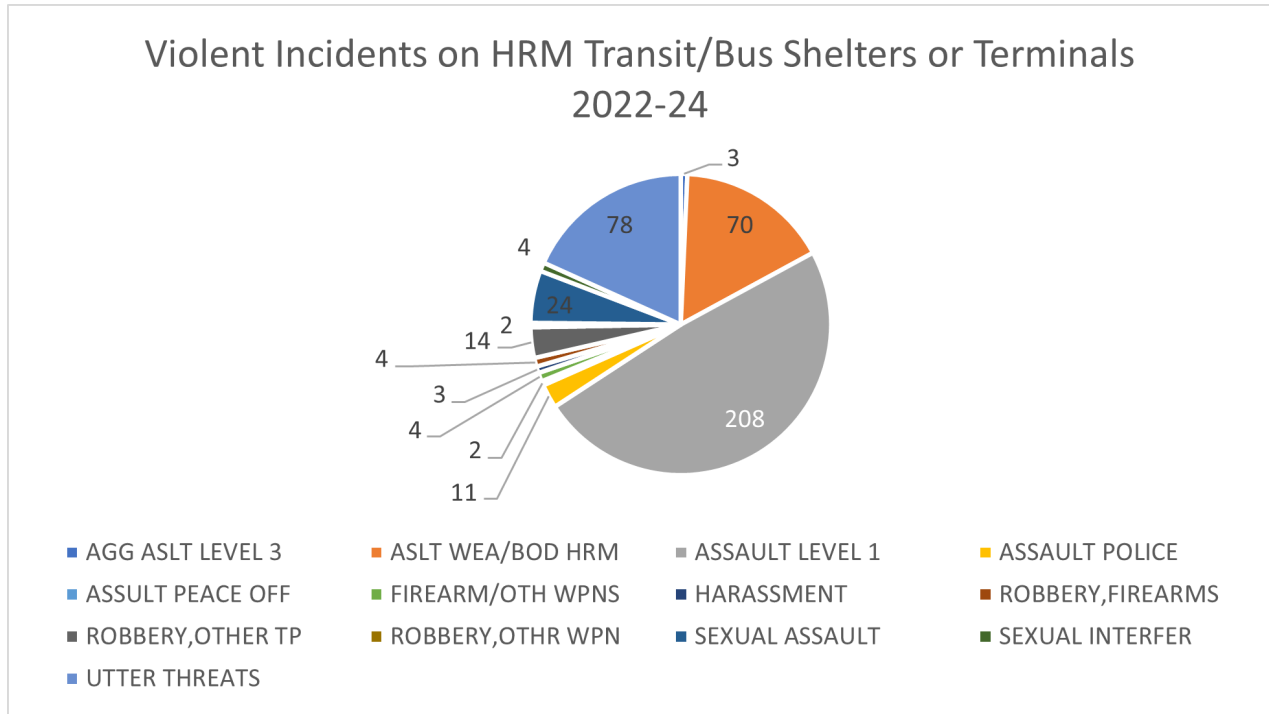
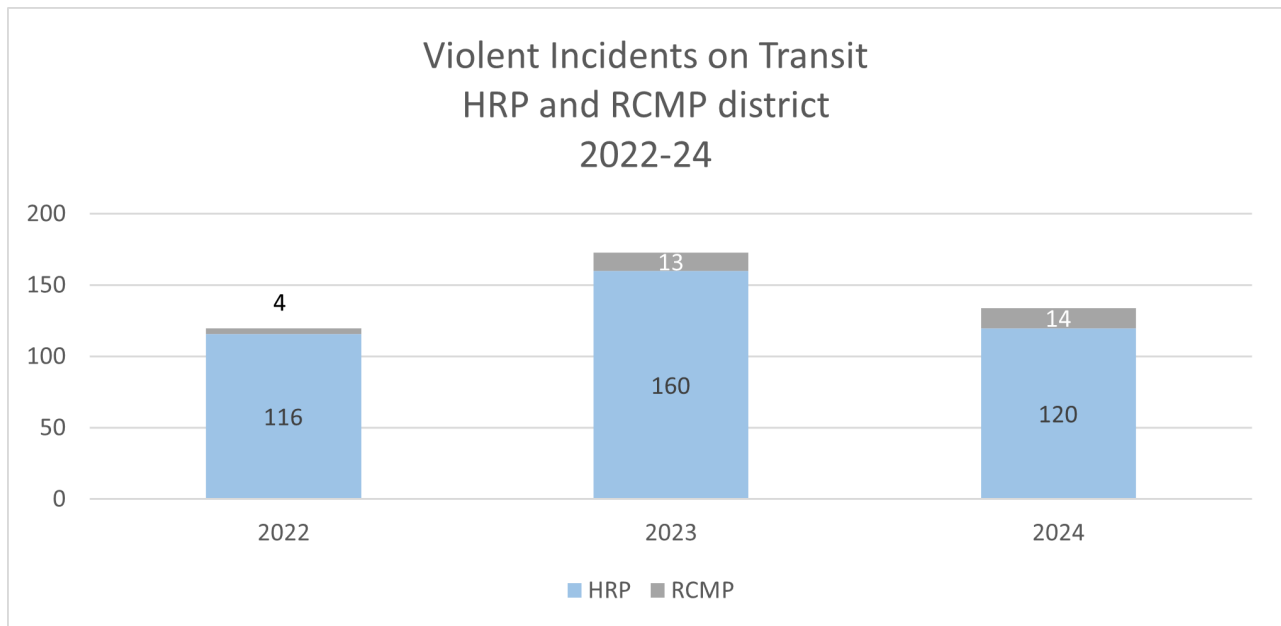


Figure 7 shows violent incidents on HRM transit, at transit shelters or transit terminals which were responded to by HRP and RCMP HRD in 2022, 2023 and 2024.

Figure 7: Violent Incidents on HRM Transit Responded to by Policing Agency HRM



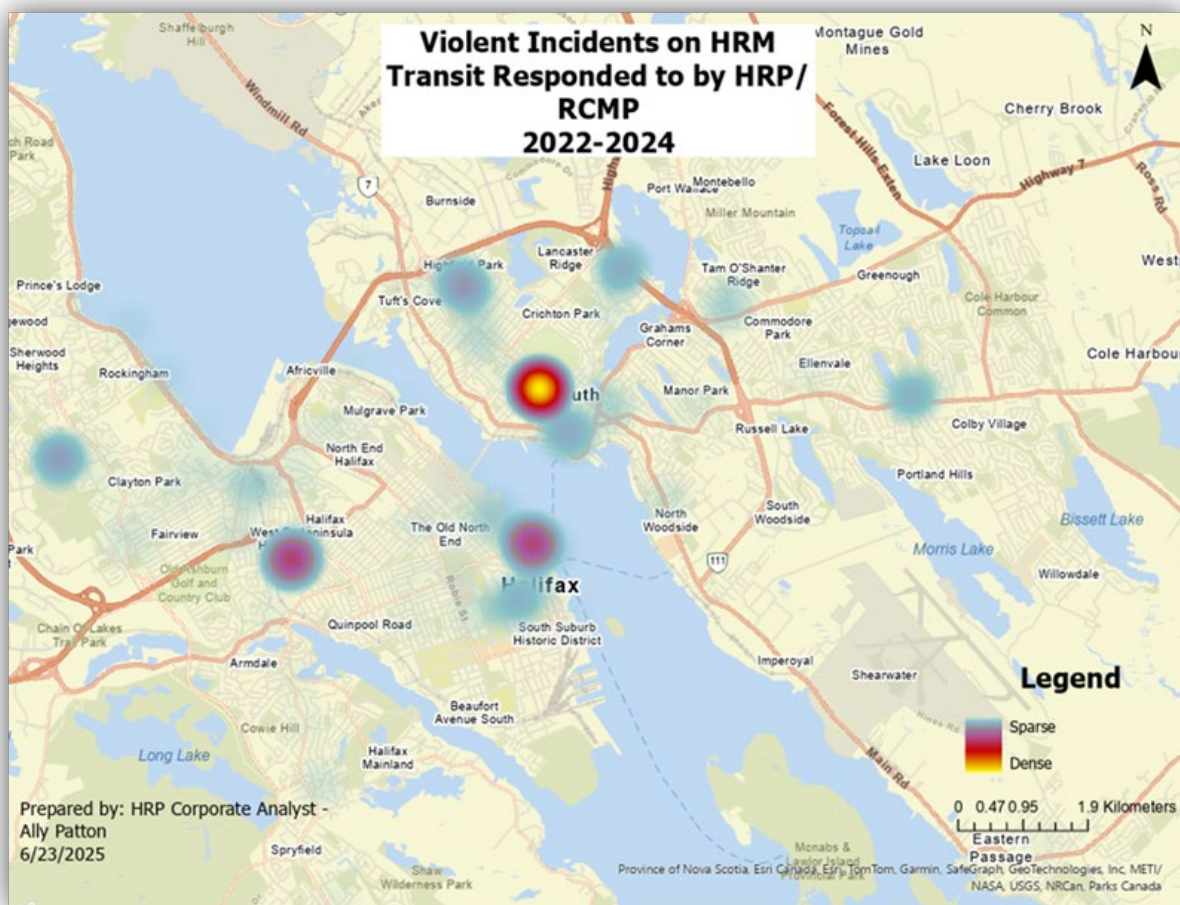
As indicated above, of the 427 total incidents reflected in police data:

- 120 incidents occurred in 2022
- 173 incidents occurred in 2023
- 134 incidents occurred in 2024

HRP responded to the vast majority of these incidents in all three years.

Figure 8 shows geographically where violent incidents that police responded to on HRM transit, at transit shelters or transit terminals occurred between 2022-2024.

Figure 8: Violence Incidents on HRM Transit Responded to by HRP/RCMP 2022-2024



As previously mentioned, within HRP Jurisdiction⁵ the majority of violent incidents captured in police data occurred in the Dartmouth area.

90 incidents occurred at the Bridge terminal on Nantucket Avenue during 2022-2024. The majority of these incidents were assault and assault with a weapon causing bodily harm.

⁵ HRP is responsible for policing Halifax, Dartmouth, Bedford, and all communities extending from Bedford to Sambro Loop.

Although there were lower numbers of violent incidents identified within RCMP HRD Jurisdiction⁶, the number has been growing, with police responding to 14 violent incidents in 2024.

The bulk of these incidents occurred in Lower Sackville, with seven incidents at the Sackville Transit Terminal and five incidents at the Cobequid Terminal. The majority of these violent incidents were assault (three incidents) and sexual interference (two incidents).

Hate Crimes and Incidents

Figure 9 shows the number of hate crimes and hate incidents reported to HRP which occurred on transit buses, at bus shelters or transit terminals between 2022-2025 (YTD: June 30, 2025).

Figure 9: Hate Crimes and Hate Incidents on buses/bus shelters, 2022-2025

Years	Hate Crime	Hate Incident	Totals
2022	8	7	15
2023	5	9	14
2024	2	5	7
2025 YTD	0	2	2
Totals	15	23	38

As indicated above, a review of HRP's data on hate crimes and hate incidents found there were 15 hate crimes and 21 hate incidents which police responded to between 2022-2024 that occurred on transit buses, at bus shelters or transit terminals.

There are no records of any hate crimes or hate incidents occurring on buses, at bus shelters or transit terminals in RCMP HRD jurisdiction during 2022-2024.

Between January 1 and June 30, 2025, RCMP HRD received one report of a hate incident which occurred at a bus stop. In the same period, HRP has responded to two hate incidents which occurred either on transit buses, bus shelters or transit terminals in HRP jurisdiction.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications identified as a result of this report.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

No community engagement was required for the purpose of preparing this report.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Under subsection 55(1) of the Police Act, the function of a board is to provide:

- (a) civilian governance on behalf of the council in relation to the enforcement of law, the

⁶ RCMP is divided into West Operations and East Operations. West Operations includes the communities of Tantallon, Lower Sackville and Cole Harbour. East Operations include Musquodoboit, Sheet Harbour, North Preston and North Central.

maintenance of law and order and the prevention of crime in the municipality; and
(b) the administrative direction, organization and policy required to maintain an adequate, effective and efficient police department

Section 8 (2) (b), (h), (i), (j) and (k) of the Police Board By-law, Halifax Regional Municipality By-law P100.

8. (2) The Board in accordance with the Police Act and HRM Bylaws may carry out any of the following roles and responsibilities:

- (b) provide civilian governance on behalf of the Council in relation to enforcement of the law, the maintenance of law and order and the prevention of crime within the municipality;
- (h) carry out any studies or investigations respecting its civilian governance responsibilities;
- (i) monitor gender, ethnic and minority group issues and making recommendations concerning these matters to the Chief of Police;
- (j) ensure that community needs and values are reflected in policing goals and methods;
- (k) act as a conduit between the community and the police service providers.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Geographic locations of verbal incidents captured by Halifax Transit data, 2022-2024

Attachment 2 - Geographic locations of physical incidents captured by Halifax Transit data, 2022-2024

Report Prepared by: Natasha Pace, Coordinator – Halifax Regional Police
 Ally Patton, Corporate Analyst – Halifax Regional Police
 Lawrence MacDonald, Senior Analyst, Transit Operations – Halifax Transit

Report Approved by: Chief Don MacLean – Halifax Regional Police
 Chief Superintendent John Duff, Officer in Charge, RCMP HRD
 Bill Moore, Commissioner of Public Safety, 902.490.8545

Geographic locations of verbal incidents captured by Halifax Transit data, 2022-2024

Figure 1 shows the locations of verbal incidents captured by Halifax Transit between passengers and transit operators in 2022.

Of the 73 incidents, the majority of incidents occurred at the following three locations:

- Bridge Terminal
- Barrington and Duke (Scotia Square)
- Water Street Terminal

Figure 1: Passenger to Operator Verbal Incidents, 2022

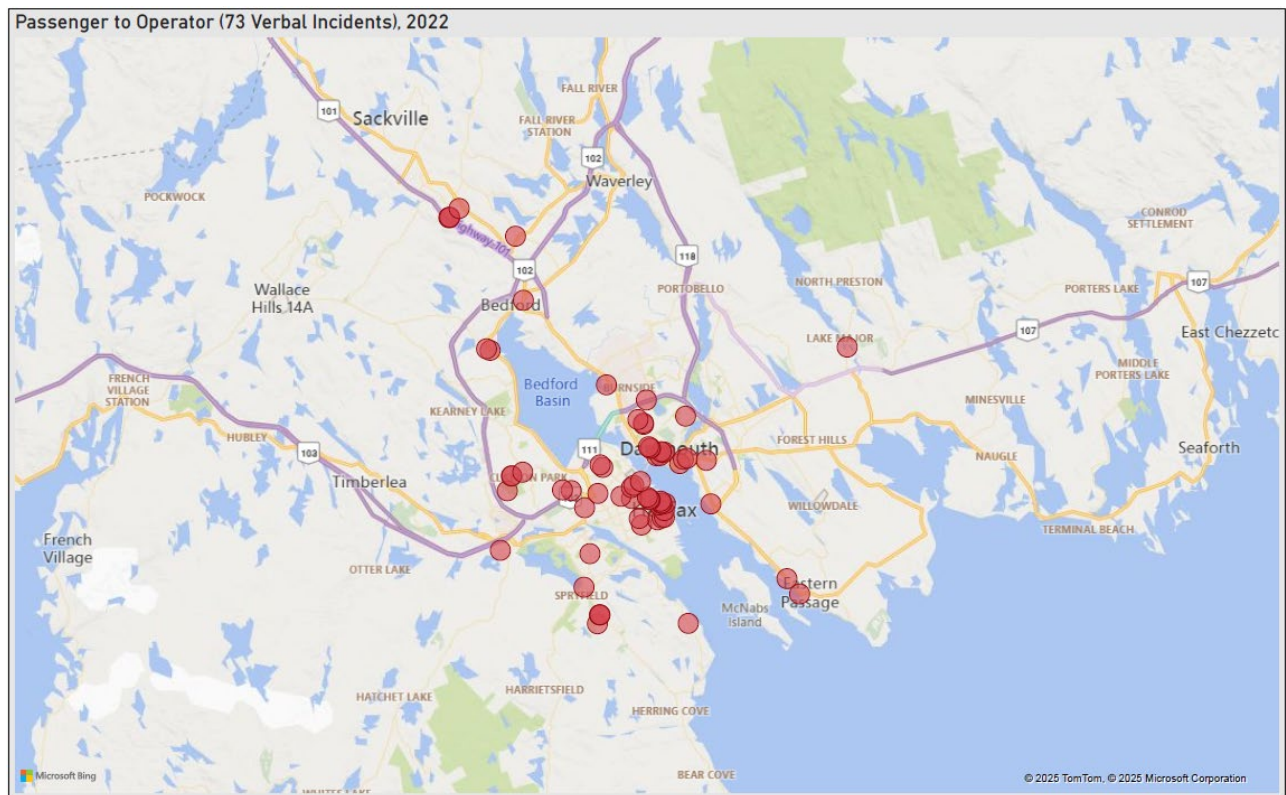


Figure 2 shows the locations of verbal incidents captured by Halifax Transit between passengers and transit operators in 2023.

Of the 122 incidents captured, the majority occurred at the following three locations:

- Lacewood Terminal
- Barrington and Duke Street (Scotia Square)
- Mumford Terminal

Figure 2: Passenger to Operator Verbal Incidents, 2023

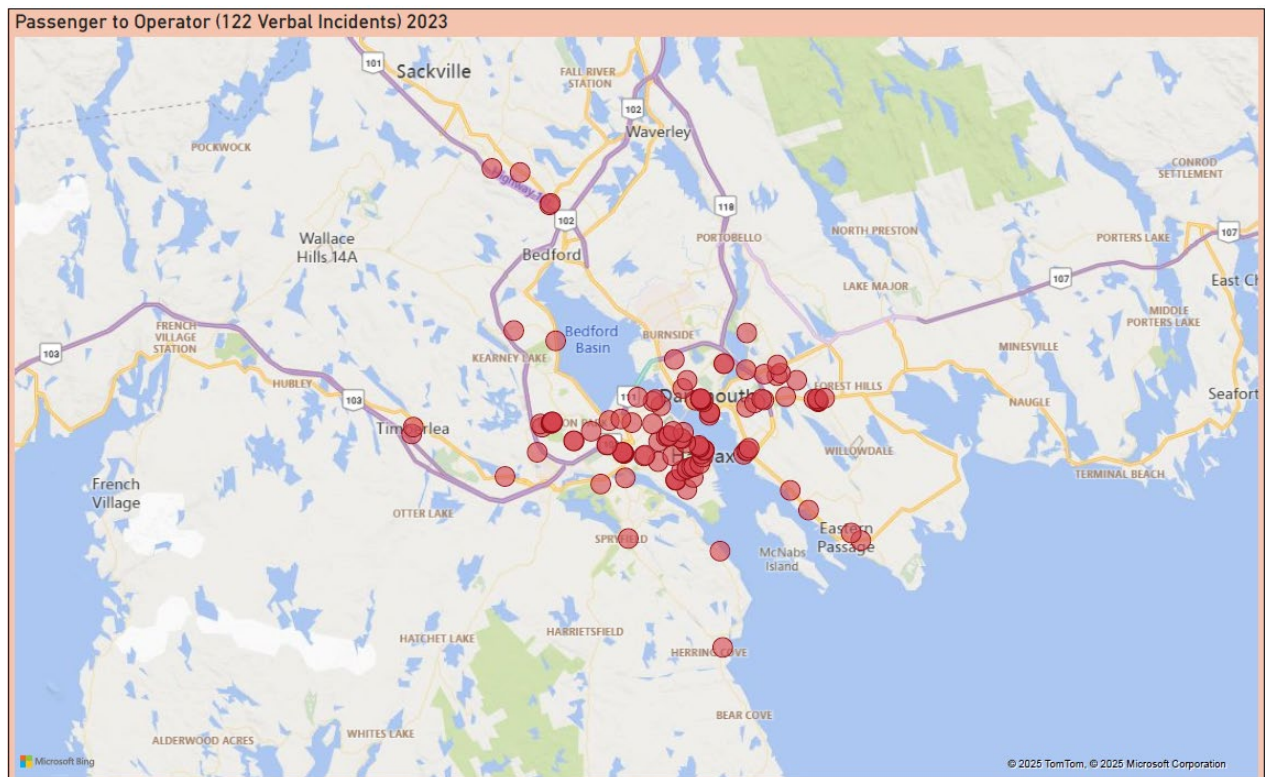


Figure 3 shows the locations of verbal incidents captured by Halifax Transit between passengers and transit operators in 2024.

Of the 171 incidents captured, the majority occurred at the following three locations:

- Bridge Terminal
- Barrington and Duke Street (Scotia Square)
- Mumford Terminal

Figure 3: Passenger to Operator Verbal Incidents, 2024

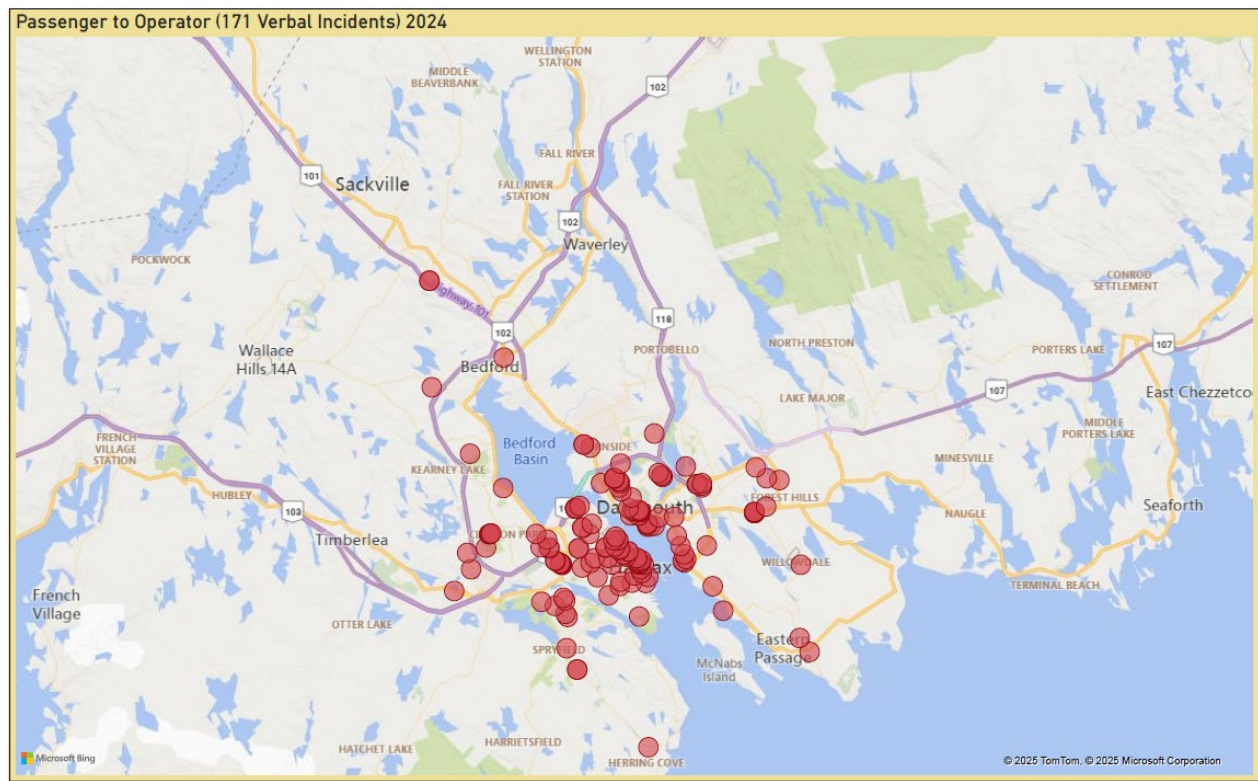


Figure 4 shows the location of passenger-to-passenger verbal incidents recorded by Halifax Transit in 2022.

Of the 57 incidents, the majority of incidents occurred in the following three locations:

- Mumford Terminal
- Portland Hills Terminal
- Bridge Terminal

Figure 4: Passenger-to-Passenger verbal Incidents, 2022

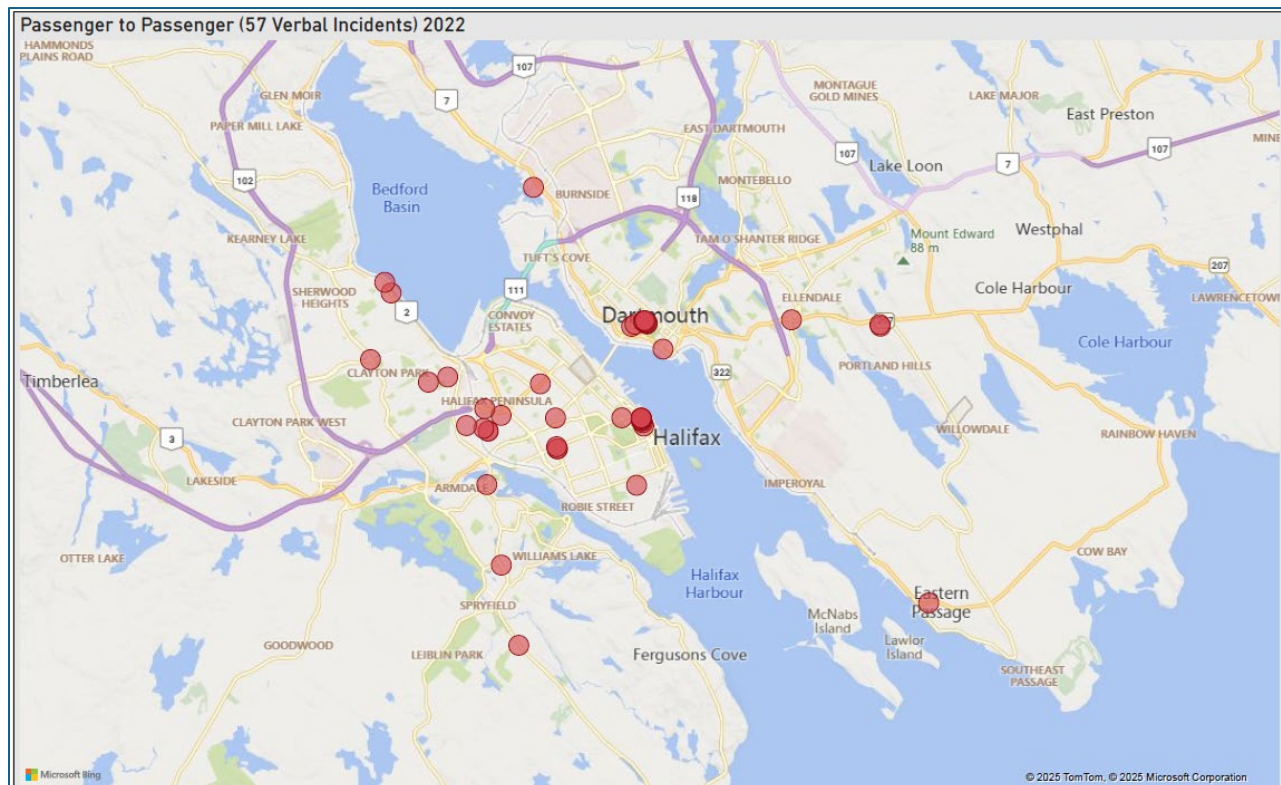


Figure 5 shows the location of passenger-to-passenger verbal incidents recorded by Halifax Transit in 2023.

Of the 83 incidents, the majority of incidents occurred in the following three locations:

- Bridge Terminal
- Lacewood Terminal
- Barrington and Duke Street (Scotia Square)

Figure 5: Passenger-to-Passenger Verbal Incidents, 2023

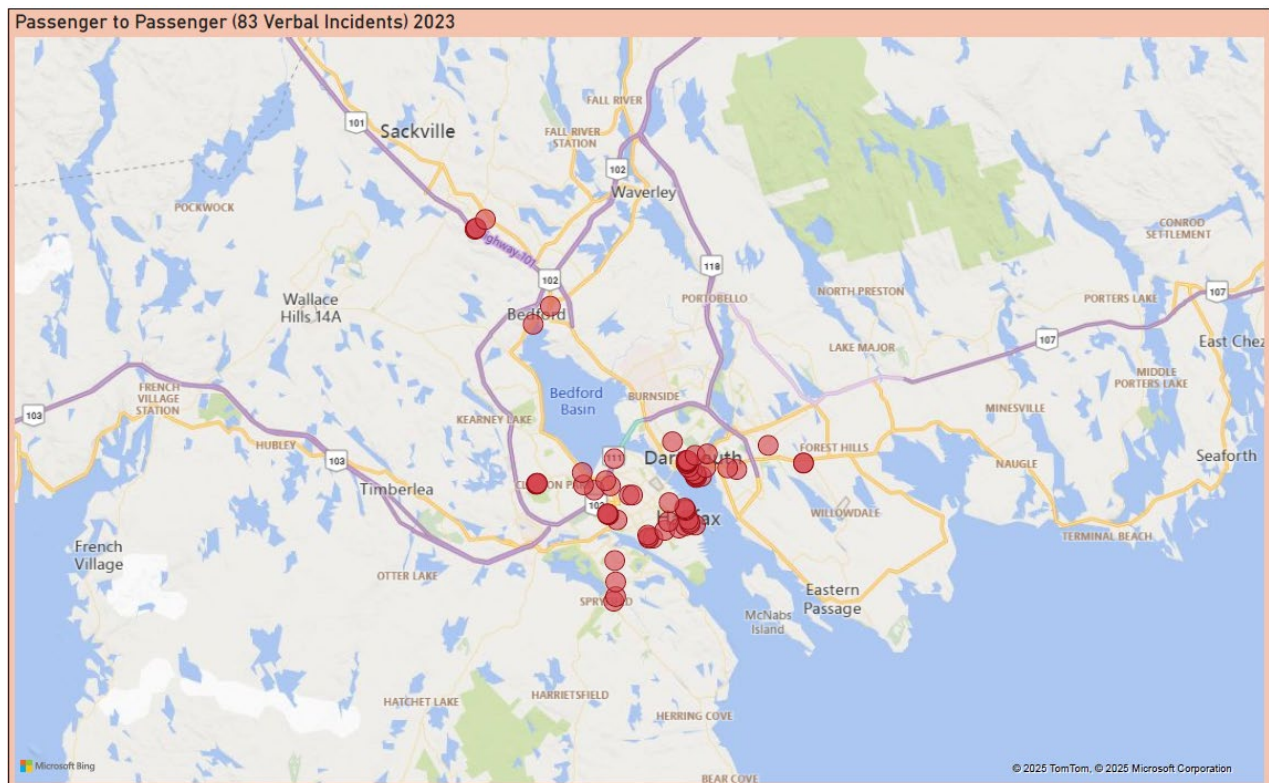


Figure 6 shows the location of passenger-to-passenger verbal incidents recorded by Halifax Transit in 2024.

Of the 133 incidents, the majority of incidents occurred in the following three locations:

- Bridge Terminal
- Mumford Terminal
- Barrington and Duke Street (Scotia Square)

Figure 6: Passenger-to-Passenger Verbal Incidents, 2024

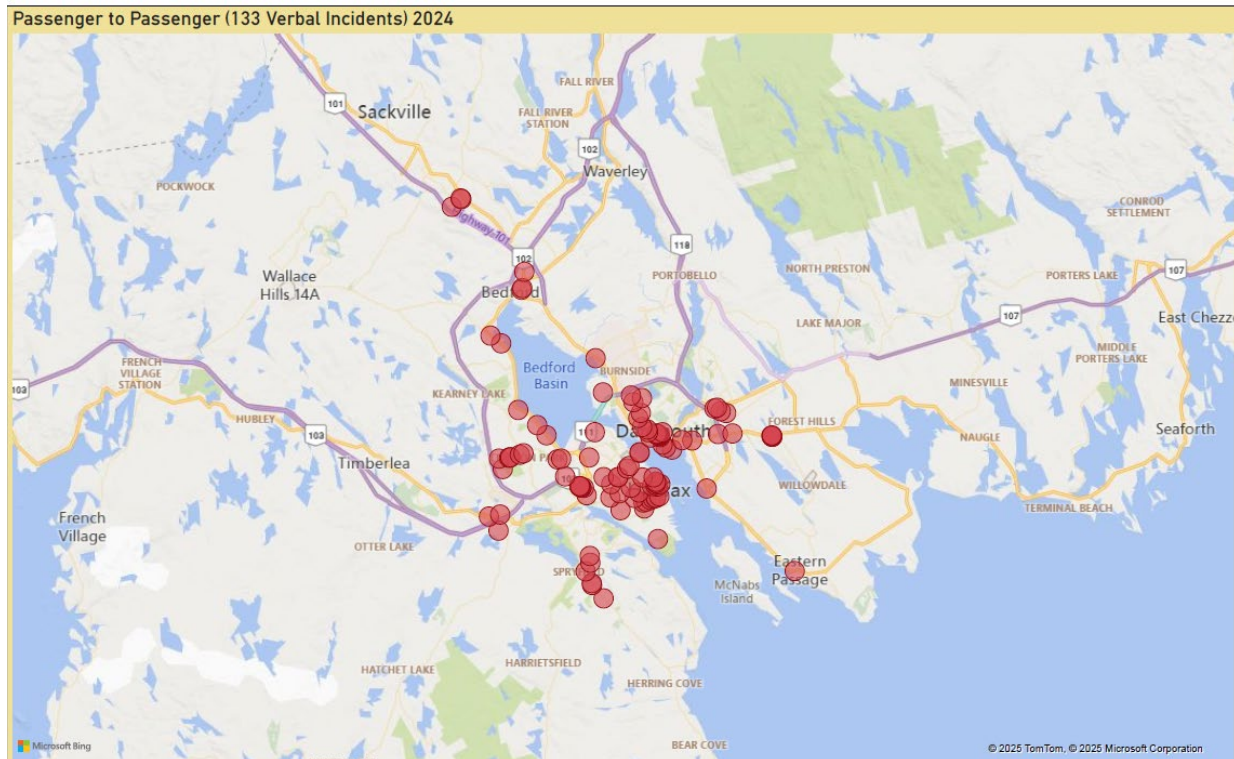


Figure 7 shows the location of passenger-to-supervisor verbal incidents recorded by Halifax Transit in 2022.

Of the 11 incidents, the majority of incidents occurred in the following three areas:

- Bridge Terminal
- Lacewood Terminal
- Mumford Terminal

Figure 7: Passenger-to-Supervisor Verbal Incidents, 2022

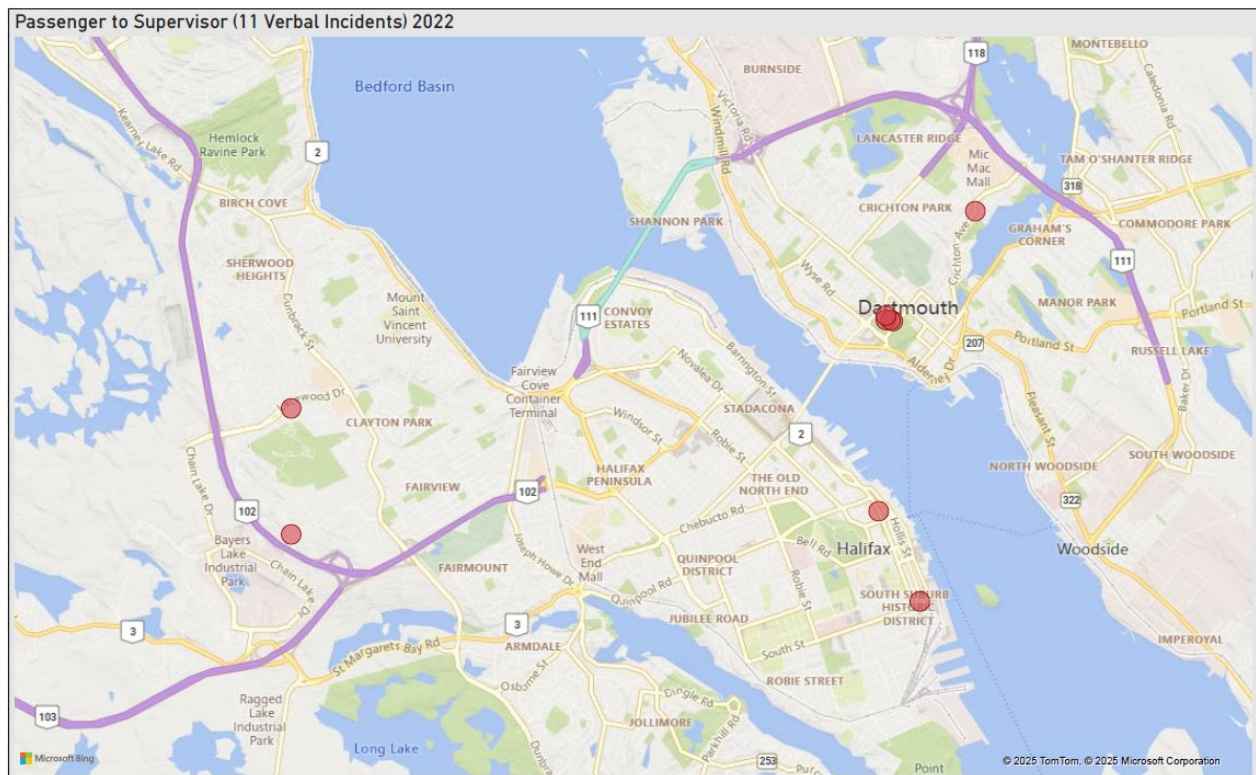


Figure 8 shows the location of passenger-to-supervisor verbal incidents recorded by Halifax Transit in 2023.

Of the 20 incidents, the majority of incidents occurred in the following three areas:

- Bridge Terminal
- Portland Hills Terminal
- Mumford Terminal

Figure 8: Passenger-to-Supervisor Verbal Incidents, 2023

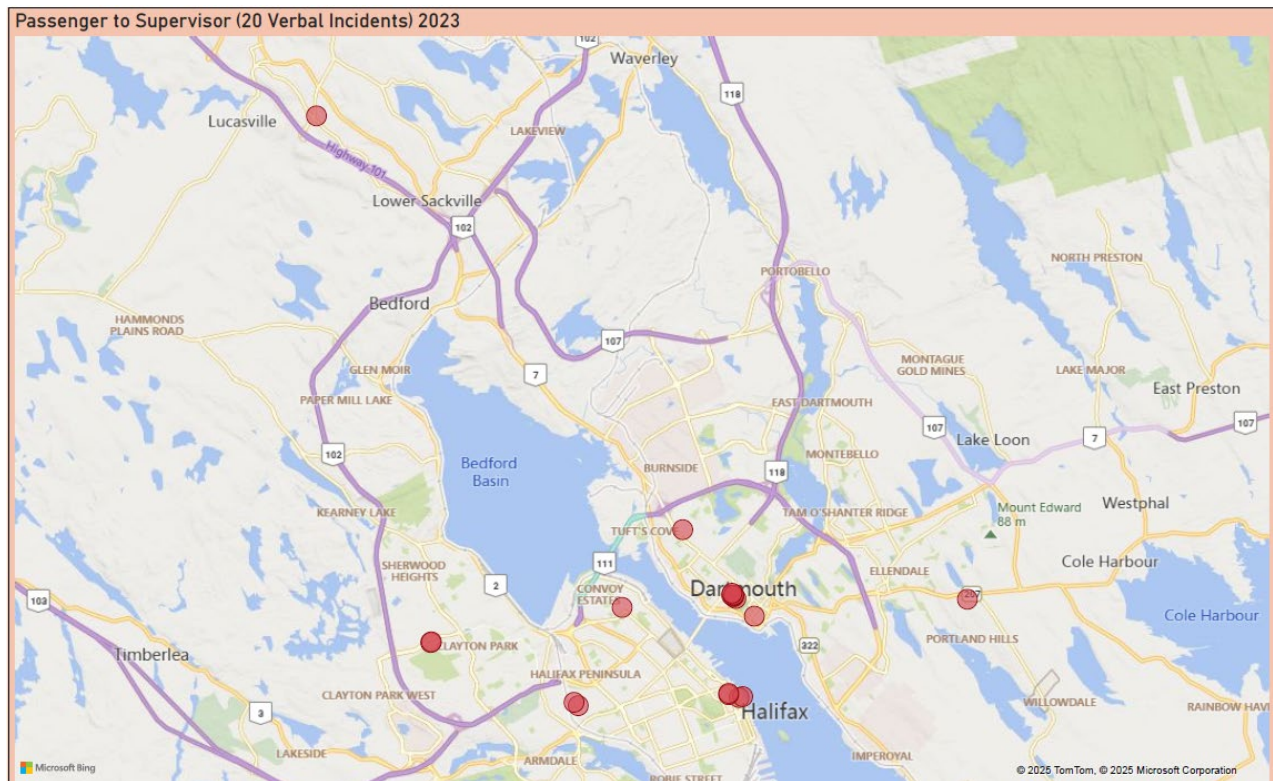
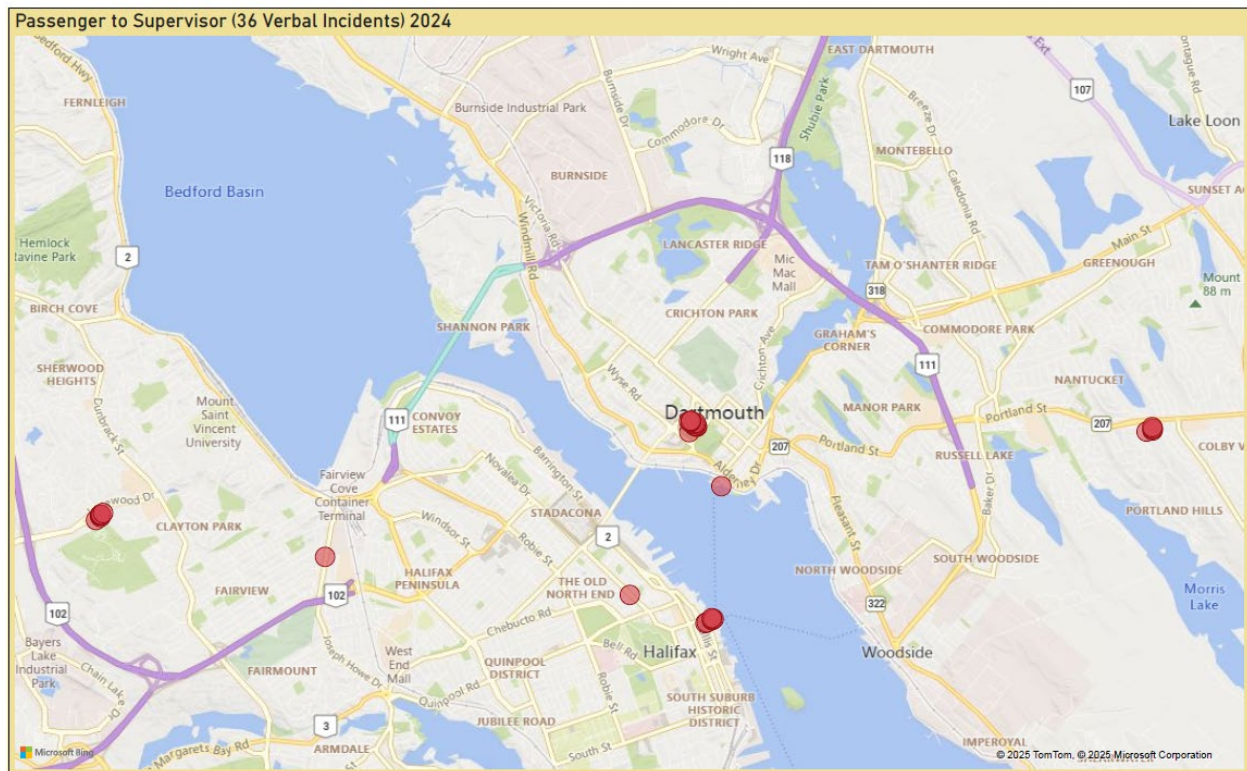


Figure 9 shows the location of passenger-to-supervisor verbal incidents recorded by Halifax Transit in 2024.

Of the 36 incidents, the majority of incidents occurred in the following three areas:

- Bridge Terminal
- Barrington and Duke Street (Scotia Square)
- Lacewood Terminal

Figure 9: Passenger-to-Supervisor Verbal Incidents, 2024



Geographic locations of physical incidents captured by Halifax Transit data, 2022-2024

Figure 1 shows the locations of physical incidents captured by Halifax Transit between passengers and transit operators in 2022.

Of the 30 incidents, the majority of incidents occurred at the following three locations:

- Water Street Terminal
- Bridge Terminal
- North and Brunswick Street

Figure 1: Passenger to Operator Physical Incidents, 2022

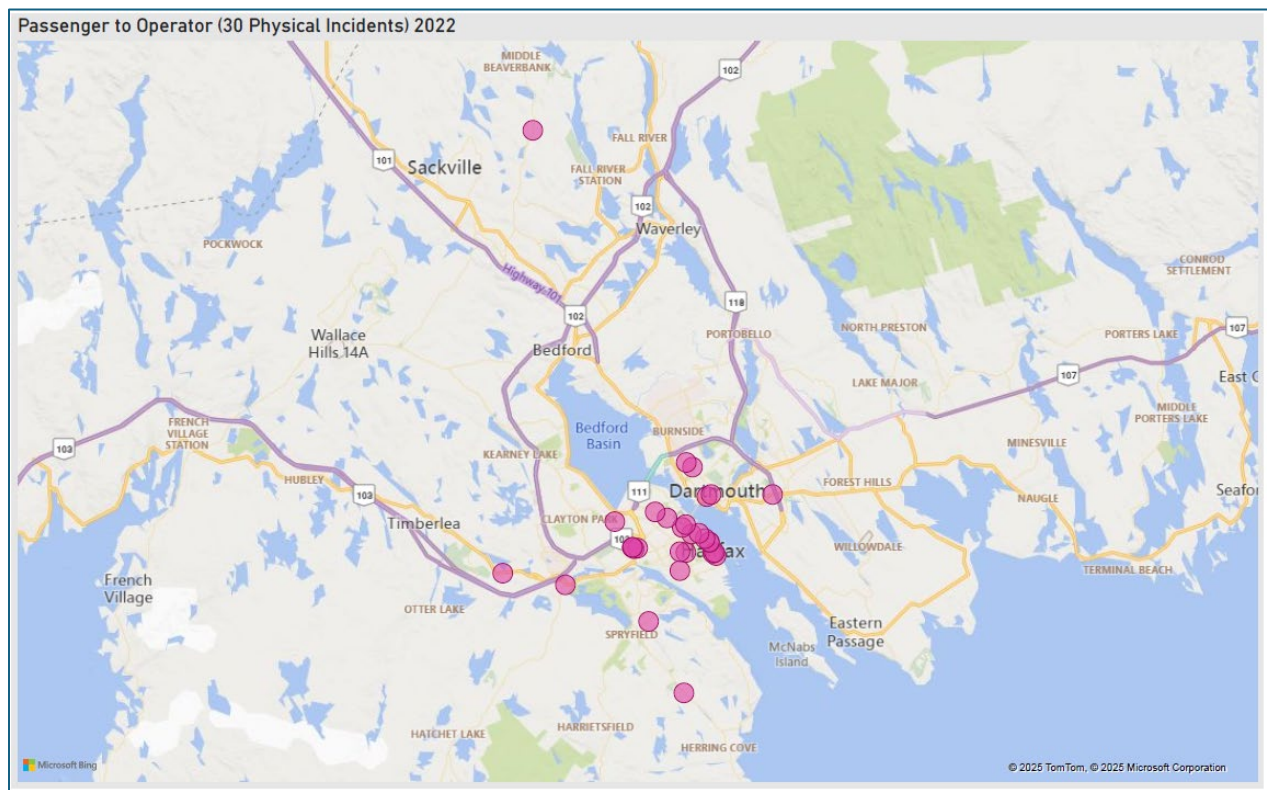


Figure 2 shows the locations of physical incidents captured by Halifax Transit between passengers and transit operators in 2023.

Of the 38 incidents, the majority of incidents occurred at the following three locations:

- Bridge Terminal
- Mumford Terminal
- Lacewood Terminal

Figure 2: Passenger to Operator Physical Incidents, 2023

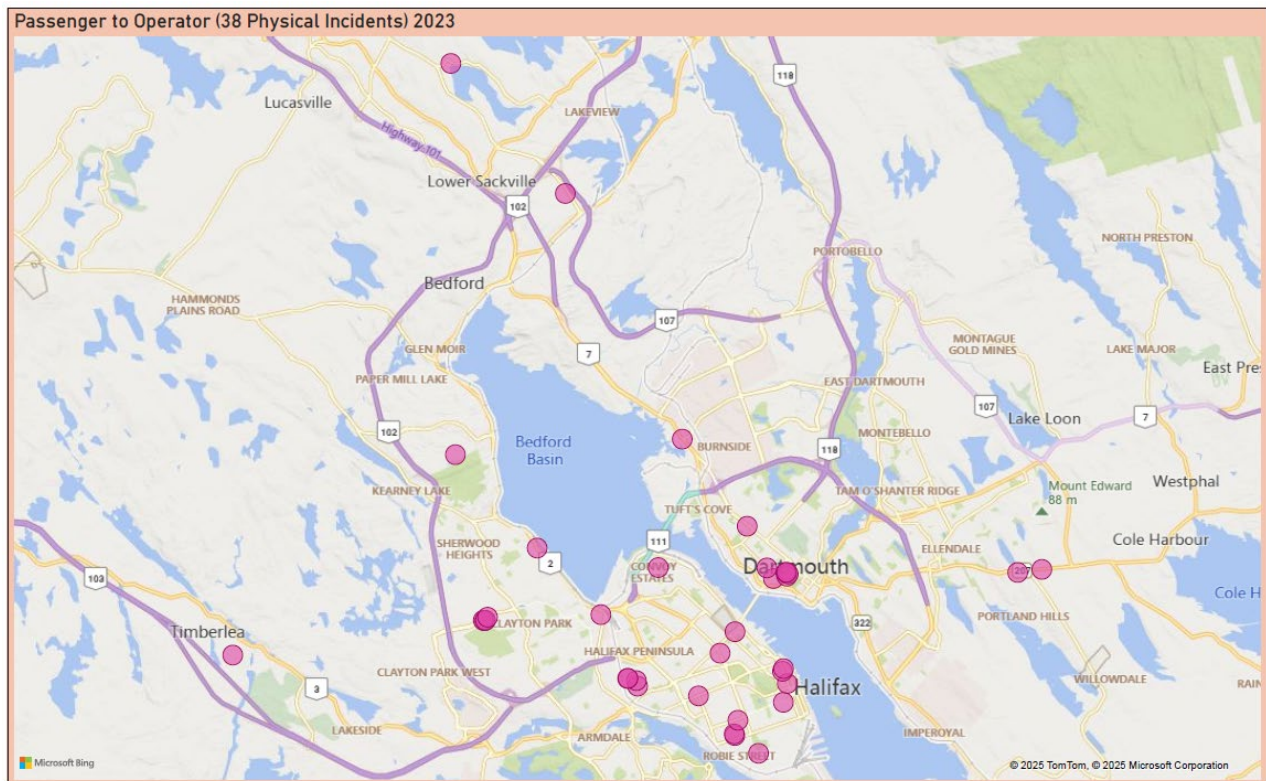


Figure 3 shows the locations of physical incidents captured by Halifax Transit between passengers and transit operators in 2024.

Of the 41 incidents, the majority of incidents occurred at the following three locations:

- Barrington and Duke Street (Scotia Square)
- Mumford Terminal
- Lacewood Terminal

Figure 3: Passenger to Operator Physical Incidents, 2024

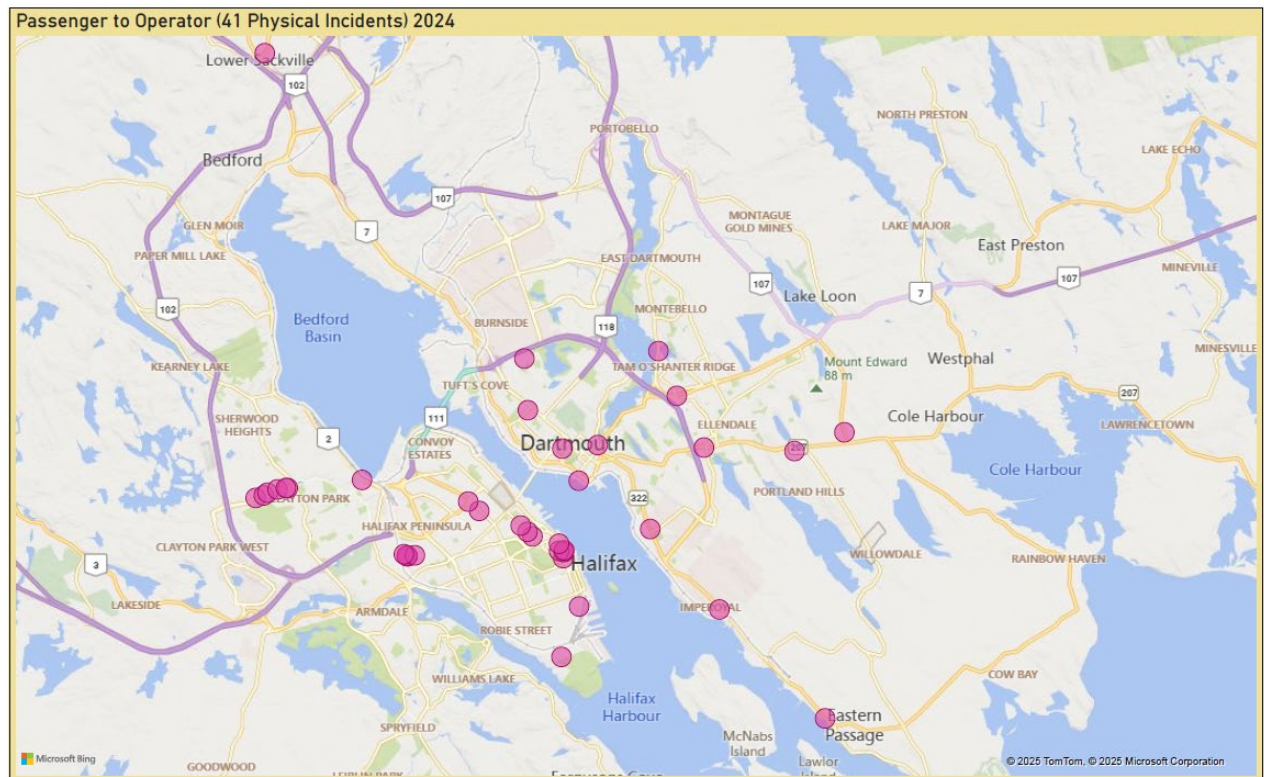


Figure 4 shows the location of passenger-to-passenger physical incidents recorded by Halifax Transit in 2022.

Of the 78 incidents, the majority of incidents occurred at the following three locations:

- Bridge Terminal
- Mumford Terminal
- Lacewood Terminal

Figure 4: Passenger to Passenger Physical Incidents, 2022

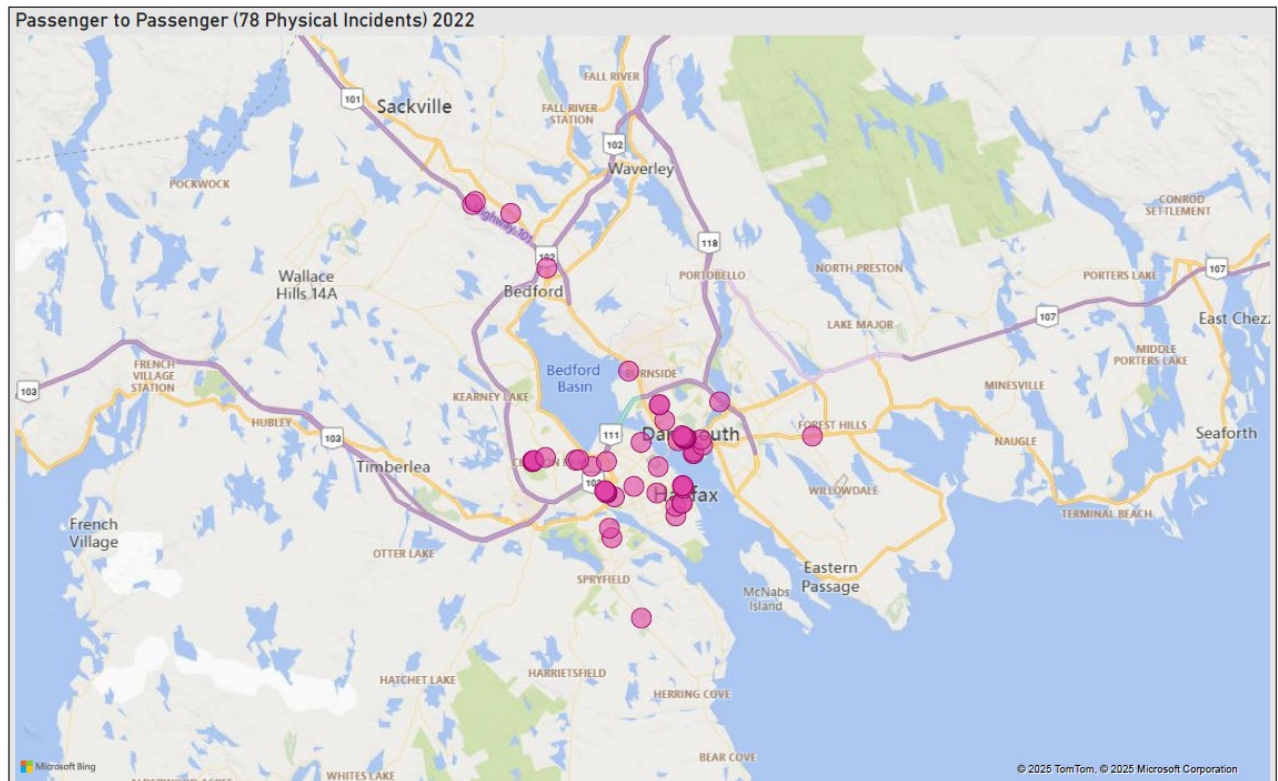


Figure 5 shows the location of passenger-to-passenger physical incidents recorded by Halifax Transit in 2023.

Of the 115 incidents, the majority of incidents occurred at the following three locations:

- Bridge Terminal
- Mumford Terminal
- Barrington and Duke Street (Scotia Square)

Figure 5: Passenger to Passenger Physical Incidents, 2023

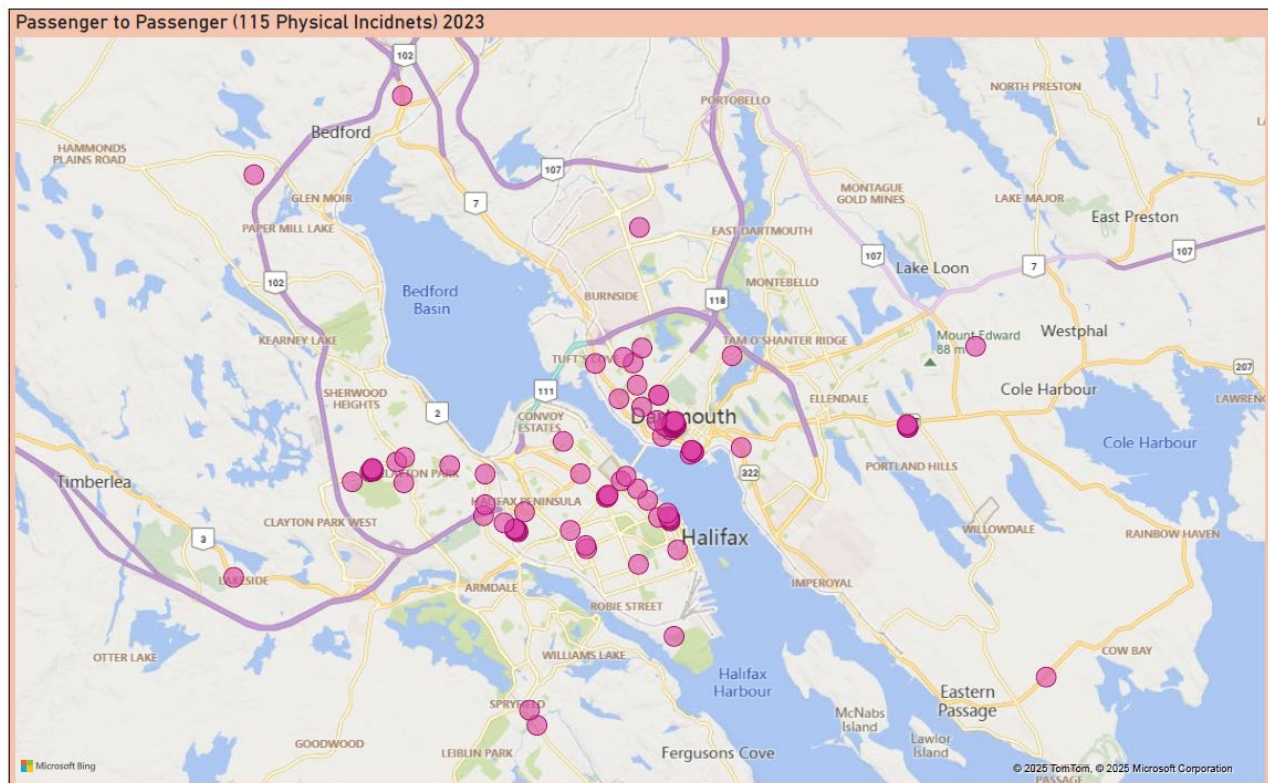


Figure 6 shows the location of passenger-to-passenger physical incidents recorded by Halifax Transit in 2024.

Of the 111 incidents, the majority of incidents occurred at the following three locations:

- Bridge Terminal
- Barrington and Duke Street (Scotia Square)
- Mumford Terminal

Figure 6: Passenger to Passenger Physical Incidents, 2024

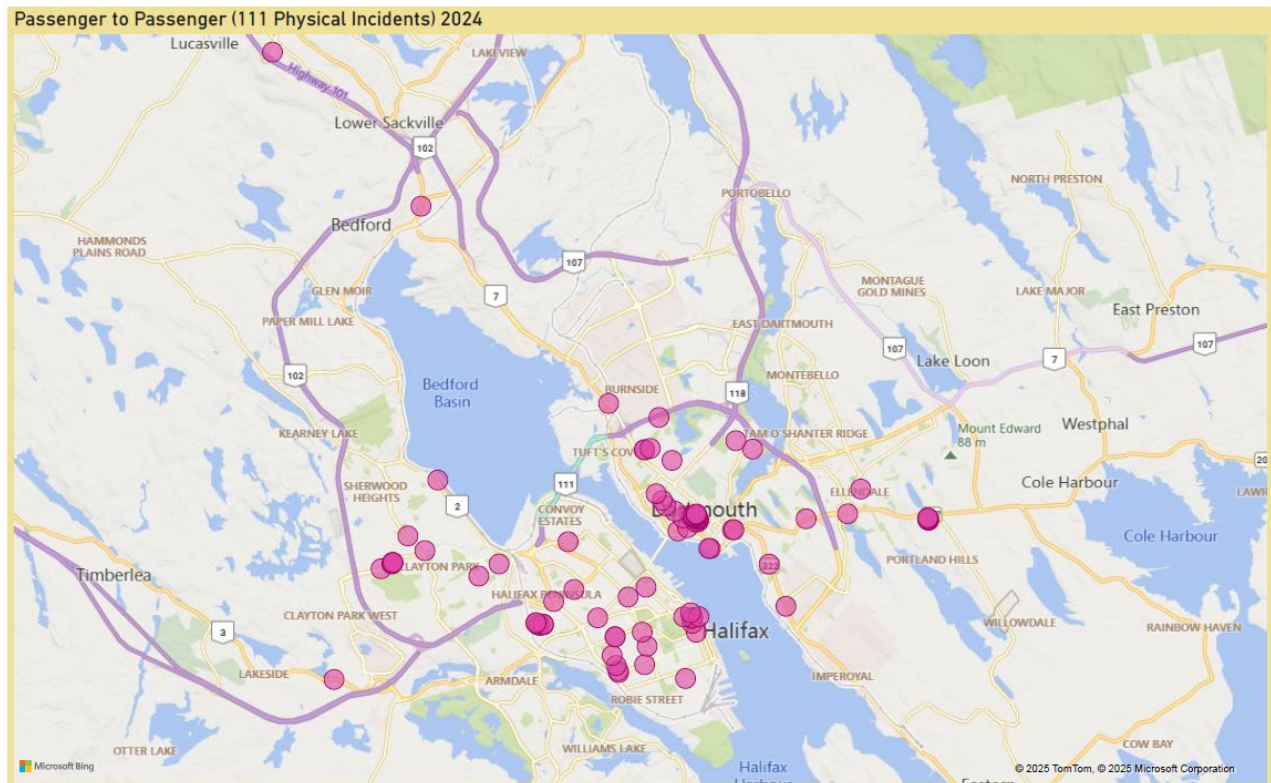


Figure 7 shows the location of passenger-to-supervisor physical incidents recorded by Halifax Transit in 2022.

Of the 5 incidents, the majority of incidents occurred at the following three locations:

- Bridge Terminal
- Mumford Terminal
- Barrington and Duke Street (Scotia Square)

Figure 7: Passenger to Supervisor Physical Incidents, 2022

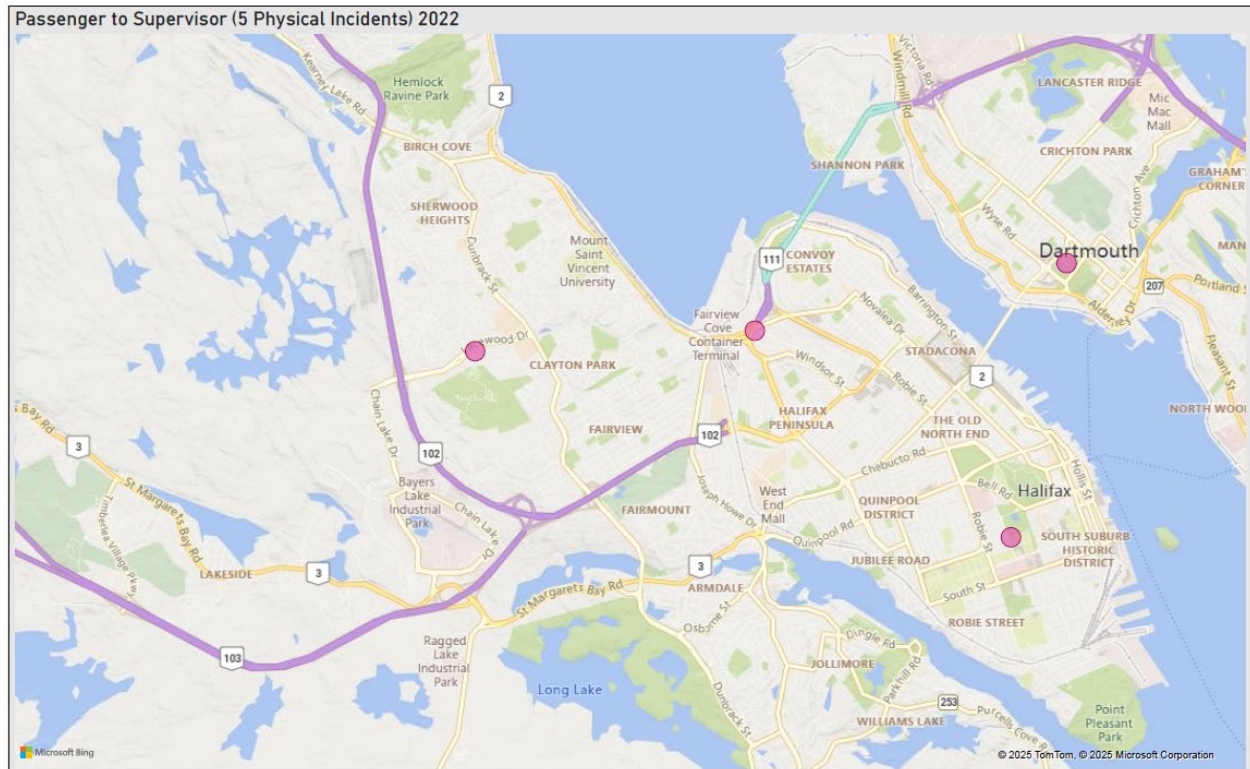


Figure 8 shows the location of passenger-to-supervisor physical incidents recorded by Halifax Transit in 2023.

Of the 5 incidents, the majority of incidents occurred at the following three locations:

- Bridge Terminal
- Mumford Terminal
- Halifax Ferry Terminal

Figure 8: Passenger to Supervisor Physical Incidents, 2023

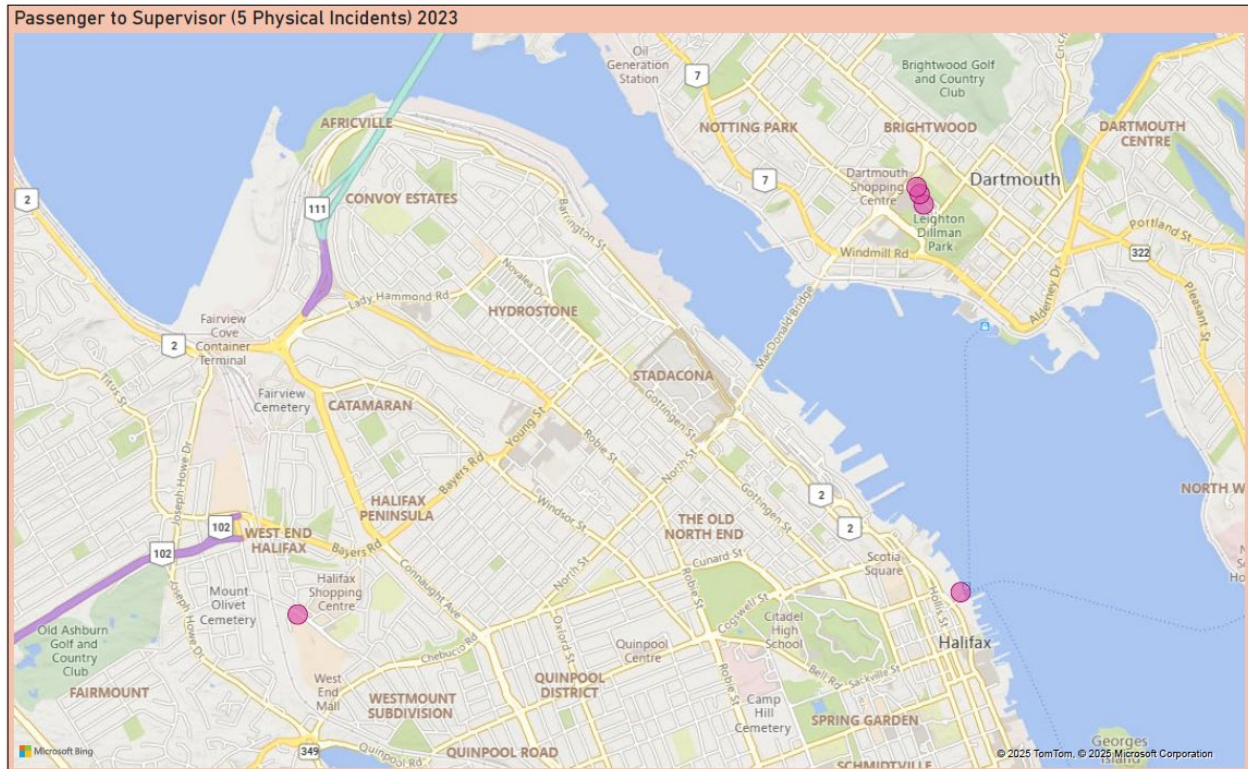


Figure 9 shows the location of passenger-to-supervisor physical incidents recorded by Halifax Transit in 2024.

Of the 8 incidents, the majority of incidents occurred at the following three locations:

- Bridge Terminal
- Barrington and Duke Street (Scotia Square)
- Lacewood Terminal

Figure 9: Passenger to Supervisor Physical Incidents, 2024

