

# HalifACT 2050: Acting on Climate Together

Community Engagement Report

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SSG *whatIf?*

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# Community Engagement Report

## Introduction

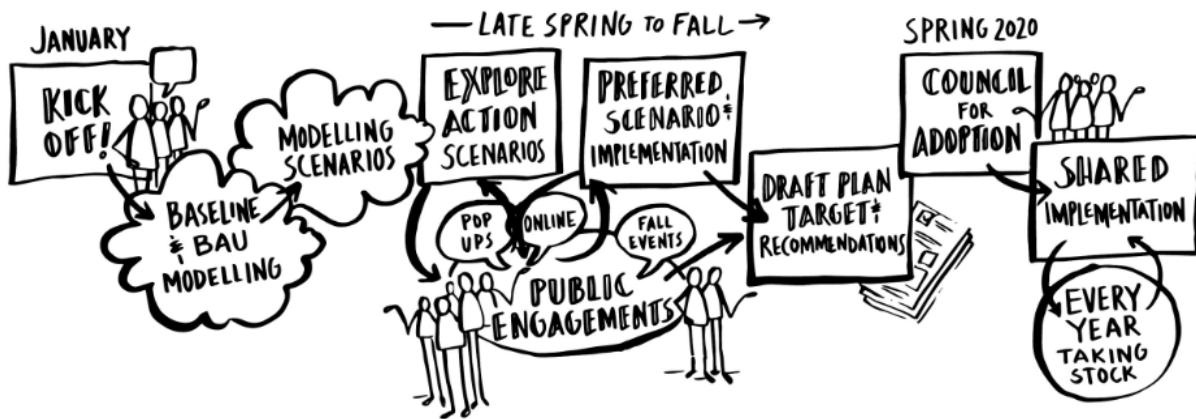
As the success of HalifACT 2050 relies on collective action, stakeholder and public engagement was critical in the development of the priority actions and strategies outlined in the climate action plan. As such, over the past year, the HalifACT project team has led an in-person and online engagement strategy that involved hundreds of internal and external stakeholders and community members across the region. The objectives of the engagement were to raise awareness about climate change and the urgency for action; facilitate discussions about strategies, tools and barriers to adaptation and mitigation; and to strengthen existing and build new networks and partnerships that will ultimately support the implementation of HalifACT.

## Public Engagement Overview

The project team hosted five large workshops and over 35 pop up sessions; presented to over 25 groups at conferences, stakeholder organizations and/or university classrooms; and met with three Joint Emergency Management (JEM) teams. HalifACT's online presence through Shape Your City saw more than 2,800 visitors, 1,300 survey respondents, and 23,000 votes cast for priority actions. Social media channels were used to raise awareness and spark conversation with Facebook receiving 228,817 views, Instagram receiving 23,520, and Twitter reaching 163,052 unique users.

The following report presents an overview of the engagement process including high-level summaries of the information and ideas discussed at each engagement session.

-  5 stakeholder workshops
-  35 pop-up sessions
-  23,000+ votes  
on All Our Ideas
-  25 formal presentations
-  2,800+ visits to  
Shape Your City



## Community Leadership Team Workshops

Early in the project, the HalifACT project team invited a diverse group of stakeholders representing all sectors interested in climate change and energy to join the Community Leadership Team (see Appendix A). Members of the Community Leadership Team were from the following sectors: transportation, energy, government, academia, commercial, industrial, and non-governmental. In addition to attending meetings and workshops to discuss priority adaptation and mitigation actions and strategies, team members were also asked to share information back to their respective organizations and sectors. The mandate for this team was to guide municipal staff in the development of draft actions, including recommendations for long-term mitigation targets and adaptation objectives. The Community Leadership Team met in January 2019 for a one-day workshop and again in June for a half-day workshop. The objectives of these meetings were to build relationships and understanding across sectors; share information with the Team about scenarios, actions, co-benefits and emission reduction pathways; engage Team members about actions, solutions, strengths, and barriers to meeting targets; and galvanize commitment to the project and to climate action.

## Summary of What We Heard

At both Community Leadership Team workshops, participants discussed adaptation priorities, emission reduction targets and pathways, and mitigation actions. Common themes discussed at many of the engagement sessions included: the need for policies and standards; funding and subsidies; equity and social justice; land use and transportation planning; collaboration across jurisdictions and sectors; knowledge, capacity and community building; and ongoing research, monitoring and innovation. The following list further describes some of the common themes heard through the workshops:

- Policies, regulations, standards and codes are integral tools and strategies needed to reach our targets. Reviewing existing and creating new policies and regulations will be key to success.
- A strong call to consider and address inequity, the unequal distribution of wealth and the potential uneven consequences of climate change on individuals living in poverty and other vulnerable populations. Continued concerted effort to engage vulnerable groups throughout implementation will be required.

- While concrete action is required, stakeholders also expressed the importance of planning, including transportation planning, food systems planning, and land use planning.
- Existing technologies are not sufficient and investment in new technologies (innovation funding, research and development, etc.) are needed.
- The financial costs are huge and new funding opportunities are needed.
- Government leadership is required in the form of not only funding opportunities and subsidies, but also in convening partners, developing a supportive policy environment, leveraging government assets, and supporting ongoing research efforts.
- While many understand the impacts and actions needed to address climate change, continuing to address knowledge gaps across communities, sectors and governments is critical. Building community knowledge, action and resiliency is key.
- Ongoing investment in surveillance, data collection, and research is needed to support widespread understanding of the current situation; understanding of risks, hazards and opportunities; and to support monitoring and evaluation of actions and achievements.

## Corporate Leadership Team Workshops

The Corporate Leadership Team included representatives from each municipal Business Unit, including the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, Planning and Development, Parks and Recreation, Halifax Transit, Transportation and Public Works, Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency, and Finance, Asset Management and ICT. The purpose of forming the Corporate Leadership Team was to engage staff in the development of corporate emission targets, foster ownership for actions and targets, build an understanding about how the Municipality can influence community-wide emission reduction and adaptation targets, and to provide an opportunity for staff and Business Units to reflect on how their work can enhance community resiliency. The Corporate Leadership Team met in March 2019 for a one day workshop and again in June for a half-day workshop.

## Summary of What We Heard

At both Corporate Leadership Team workshops, participants discussed adaptation priorities, emission reduction targets and pathways, and mitigation actions. Common themes discussed at many of the engagement sessions included the need

for buy-in, resolving conflicting priorities, the need for leadership, establishing and maintaining project scope, accurate data collection, effective communication, collaboration, and coordination, proper resourcing and implementation of the plan, and overcoming jurisdictional limitations. The following list further describes some of the common themes heard through the workshops:

- Ensure broad understanding and knowledge about the link between Business Unit and climate change
- Need for strong champions among Senior Leaders
- Continued opportunities, supports and training for Business Units to build internal capacity, foster collaboration, support organizational change, and to break down silos.
- Need for a dedicated, multi-faceted task team to continue to lead implementation (e.g., seek solutions, identify conflicting priorities, and emphasize co-benefits)
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## Community and Corporate Leadership Teams Joint Workshop

Members from both the Corporate and Community Leadership Teams were invited to a joint full-day workshop at the St. Mary's Boat Club in October 2019. The purpose of this workshop was to share the modelling results, provide a rationale for the preferred carbon scenario, identify key levers and actions, build commitment to actions, and to support connections between internal and external stakeholders.

## Summary of What We Heard

During the morning session, small groups focussed on what is needed to support mitigation and build momentum for success. The following list of needs and actions related to mitigation were discussed:

- Life Cycle Analysis for all buildings
- Address barriers and create incentives for retrofits
- Explore regulatory framework required to succeed
- Details on how to generate large scale renewable energy
- System change is needed
- Considerations for equity and social justice
- Empowering citizen action
- Data sharing and collaborative monitoring
- Continue to link transportation and land use planning

During the afternoon session, groups were asked to discuss what a well-adapted and resilient municipality looks like. This included exploring what actions are needed and how they rate in terms of urgency and importance. The actions discussed included:

- Vulnerability mapping and emergency planning
- Regulations, education and awareness about water supply
- Low impact development and green infrastructure
- Food action planning and coordinated effort to strengthen the local food system
- Protection and restoration of ecosystems
- Social and environmental justice at all levels
- Government support for businesses to adapt
- Capacity building within government and communities

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## Pop-Up Sessions

The HalifACT 2050 project team conducted more than 35 informal “pop-up” events throughout the summer and fall of 2019. These informal engagement sessions provided an opportunity to raise awareness about HalifACT 2050 and to gain insights with respect to public opinion on climate change and community-level climate hazards and impacts. Staff attended each pop-up session for 1-2 hours, displayed project posters and banners, and distributed postcards that informed residents where they could obtain more information about the project. Pop-up sessions were hosted in a variety of public spaces including ten different Halifax Public Libraries, the Public Gardens, Sullivan’s Pond, Chocolate Lake Beach Park, Long Lake Provincial Park, Sir Sandford Flemming Park, Captain William Spry Centre, Kearney lake Beach Park, Dartmouth Ferry Terminal, Cole Harbour Place, Scotia Square, and the Halifax Seaport Market. Project team members also shared information and engaged with the public at the following community events: Mawita’jikl Gathering, Portland Estates Homeowner’s Association, Bedford Days, Halifax Water’s Water Shed, Multi Fest, Clam Harbour Sandcastle Festival, Switch Dartmouth, and the Acadian Flag Raising.

## Summary of What We Heard

The following list presents common themes heard across the pop-up sessions:

- Lack of understanding: Many people were unaware that the Municipality was working on a climate plan. There was some hesitation to participate in online

surveys, as many people thought they did not have enough information to provide valuable feedback.

- General support for action: Many people were supportive of having a plan, happy that this work was being done, and felt that it was an urgent issue. Others felt the plan was too late and the timeframe (2050) was too far. Further, some residents felt that the plan did not have enough of a global impact.
- Transportation solutions: Residential streets should be accessed only by local traffic (residents that live on the street) in order to encourage other modes of transportation; provide facilities for people to park bike/electric scooters; more car-share infrastructure; electric busses; incentives to encourage less GHG intensive vehicles and more hybrid cars and bicycles in the urban core. Some respondents also advocated for a complete ban of all cars in the urban core.
- Renewable energy generation: There was interest in Solar City and the need for more renewable energy generation to offset emissions. Some residents were not aware of the program and others mentioned concerns that the program was not equitable for low and medium income earners.
- General ideas about sustainability: Need to revert to self-sustainable communities (e.g. mom & pop run stores and growing our own food); need for broader understanding of environmental impacts of communities and decisions; need for government-subsidized community-building programs in rural/semi-urban areas.

## Community Presentations

Staff attended a number of events, meetings, and conferences to represent HalifACT 2050 and to raise awareness of the plan development. These included:

- Blue Line Initiative Panel Discussion
- A to B 2019 - Move Into the Future Conference
- East Preston Rate Payers Association
- AKOMA Family Centre
- Canadian Oil Heat Association
- Teens Talk Now Youth Expo
- Smart Energy Conference
- Housing Symposium
- Wild Islands Tourism Advancement Partnership
- African United Baptist Association
- Climate Risks for Coastal Transportation Infrastructure in Atlantic Canada

- Joint Emergency Management Council Meeting
- Transition Bay St. Margaret's Bay Climate Emergency Preparedness Event
- Partenariat Acadien et francophone de Halifax
- Youth Advisory Committee
- Canada's Ambassador for Climate Change
- MacEachern Institute for Public Policy and Governance
- Salon d'exploration d'emplois bilingue
- Canadian Parents for French NS Chapter
- Design and Construction Institute of Nova Scotia Education Day
- Dalhousie University class presentations
- International Oceans Institute Policy and Governance Program in Halifax
- Liveable Cities Forum
- United Way Face of Poverty Consultation
- Conference Board of Canada's Emergency Management and Security Councils' Climate Change workshop

## Joint Emergency Management Team Meetings

In the fall of 2019, the project team met with Joint Emergency Management Teams for the Eastern Shore, Western Shore, and Mainland North regions of the municipality. The purpose of these meetings was to better understand climate change-related hazards and potential risks in communities and explore how to prepare and adapt to climate-related hazards. JEM volunteers and community members were asked to identify hazards, vulnerabilities, and exposures to climate risks on maps and articulate their experiences during extreme weather events.

## Summary of What We Heard

In addition to mapping hazards within the community, discussions were held to identify what hazards and risks the community faced as well as highlight their strengths. The following list presents common themes heard across the JEM workshops:

### Potential Risks and Hazards

- Vulnerable Infrastructure - concerns related to vulnerable infrastructure were identified (roads, dams and bridges vulnerable to flooding and damage)
- Isolation – many communities have one access point which can make it difficult to evacuate during an emergency, some individuals may be

reluctant to leave their homes, or neighbours may not know one another or know who requires assistance

- Natural hazards – there is increasing damage from coastal erosion, coastal flooding, saltwater intrusion, heavy snow and road clearing
- Power outages – many communities need to be prepared for prolonged power outages
- Communication – the need for effective communication of critical information during emergencies, a need for regular updates

### Community Strengths and Solutions

- Neighbourhood action – organize teams to assist families during evacuation for isolated homes or homes with only one access point (as well as farm animals that may need evacuation), establish a community freezer truck, establish community shared portable generators, identify muster points along the roads for evacuation, simulated emergencies or practice evacuations
- Infrastructure – investigate alternative methods to protect vulnerable infrastructure such as roads and bridges, prioritize critical infrastructure for repairs, establish on-site components to build make-shift bridge during an emergency
- Education – the need for more education about climate change and climate adaptation

### Online Engagement

The communications strategy for HalifACT included an extensive social media campaign and online engagement tools: Halifax.ca and Shape Your City. This strategy was designed to spark conversation and create awareness.

These online engagement platforms hosted an interactive map, resources, and surveys to gather general public opinion on climate consciousness within the municipality. During the online engagement, HalifACT Facebook ads have been seen by 228,817 people, our Instagram ads by 23,520 and our Twitter ads have been viewed by 163,052. These informal engagement sessions have been beneficial in providing the team with key insights on the public opinion of climate change and historic climate hazards and impacts.

Further, the site featured an interactive map where respondents could add place-based information on local climate change hazards (e.g., flooding, drought), as well

as a mitigation survey exploring their willingness to undertake mitigation actions and the barriers they may encounter in doing so. This survey received a total of 1,382 responses, energy diversification was the action that respondents voted to be the most important mitigation action and selected incentives at the action most likely to be acted on. This survey will continue to inform the development of detailed programs and actions. A survey called “All our Ideas” was also used to develop criteria (priorities) against which the mitigation and adaptation actions could be evaluated. This site has received more than 21,500 votes, with clean water, clean air, greenhouse gas emissions reduction, food security, and public health ranking as top areas of interest.

## Conclusions / Final Note

The project team received an incredible amount of information at each workshop, presentation, pop up session, and through online engagement platforms. The final plan and summary of actions are stronger because of all the different ideas shared by the many stakeholders and residents. The project team extends a sincere thank you to all who took part in this engagement effort.

# Appendix A – Invited Stakeholders

HalifACT 2050 Community Leadership Team Participating Organizations
ACOA Atlantic Cda Energy Office
Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia
Africville Heritage Museum
Akoma Family Centre / Akoma Holdings
Ambassatours Gray Line
Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs
Atlantic Policy Congress of FN Chiefs Sectariat
Atlantic Provinces Association of Landscape Architects
Atlantic Provinces Trucking Association
Black Cultural Centre of Nova Scotia
Building Owners & Managers Association of NS
Canada Green Building Council
Canadian Automobile Association, Atlantic Office
Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives
Canadian Home Builders' Assoc - NS
Canadian Oil Heat Association, NS Chapter
Canadian Solar Industry Association
Canadian Wind Energy Association
CarShare Atlantic
Citizens Climate Lobby Halifax Chapter
Clean Foundation
CN Rail Atlantic Canada
Coastal & Ocean Information Network Atlantic
Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq
Conseil communautaire du Grand Havre
Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse
Conseil de la jeunesse de la Nouvelle-Écosse
Conseil scolaire acadien provincial
Dalhousie Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering
Dalhousie Office of Sustainability
Dalhousie Transportation Collaboratory (DalTRAC)
Dalhousie University
Dalhousie University School of Nursing
Downtown Halifax Business Commission

Ducks Unlimited Canada
East Preston Ratepayers' Association
Eastern Shore JEM Team
Ecology Action Centre
Efficiency Nova Scotia
Electric Vehicle Association of Nova Scotia
Environment & Climate Change Cda
ExxonMobil Canada Ltd - Maritime Fuels Ltd
Fisheries & Oceans Canada
Fusion Halifax
Halifax Chamber of Commerce
Halifax Food Policy Alliance
Halifax International Airport Authority
Halifax Partnership
Halifax Port Authority
Halifax Regional Water Commission
Heritage Gas
Hope Blooms
Housing Nova Scotia
IKEA Halifax
Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia
iMatter Youth Movement Halifax
Insurance Bureau of Canada
Investment Property Owners' Assoc NS
Irving Oil Limited
It's More Than Buses
Lucasville Greenway Society
Maritime Aboriginal Peoples' Council
MARLANT Safety & Environment Office (DND)
Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre
Mount Saint Vincent University
Musquodoboit Trailways Association
Nova Scotia Business Inc
Nova Scotia Health Authority
Nova Scotia Museum
Nova Scotia Nature Trust
Nova Scotia Power
Nova Scotia Woodlot Owners & Operators Association (NSWOOA)
NRCan CanmetENERGY Office

NRCan Cdn Hydrographic Service
Nova Scotia Association of Black Social Workers
Nova Scotia Coalition for the Decade for People of African Descent (DPAD)
Nova Scotia Energy & Mines
Nova Scotia Environment - Climate Change Unit
Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities
Nova Scotia Lands & Forestry - Forest Management Planning
Nova Scotia Municipal Affairs
Nova Scotia Transportation & Infrastructure Renewal
Nova Scotia Community College Ivany Campus
Public Safety Canada
Quality Concrete Ltd
QUEST Canada
Railway Association of Canada
Réseau Santé
Sackville Rivers Association
Saint Mary's University
Sipekne'katik First Nation
Solar Nova Scotia
Superior Gas Liquids
Thinkwell Shift
Transport Action Atlantic
United Way Halifax
Urban Development Institute
VIA Rail
Waterfront Development Nova Scotia
Wilson Fuel Company Ltd