



Halif**ACT** / Acting on  
Climate  
Together

Community update

May 2024  
Issue 5



HalifACT is showing the impact of setting an ambitious course for net zero, but the 46 goals of HalifACT are only around 36 per cent on track. Adopting a climate plan to address our dependency on fossil fuels and make our infrastructure more resilient is still a relatively new idea. Hundreds of Canadian municipalities are currently trying to balance economic growth with hitting climate targets and ensuring that their communities have all of the services they need, particularly in times of crisis.

In this community update, we want to outline our progress in getting to net zero, as well as highlight the vital partnerships that we've formed with other levels of government, the private sector, universities and communities to help accelerate an equitable transition to clean energy.

We see partner organizations like Every One Every Day, the Ecology Action Centre and Halifax Public Libraries as forming the backbone of community resilience. Our partnerships with these groups will play an important role in preventing the worst effects of climate change by fostering community ties and actively working to reduce emissions to fight climate change.



# Investments in the Halifax region

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## Climate Action Challenge 3

In February 2024, seven groups won the Climate Action Challenge. By partnering with the [Halifax Innovation Outpost](#) for the third time to provide funding and mentorship to pilot projects that are focused on cutting emissions, the municipality is supporting innovative local climate solutions.

This year's winners got creative about reducing emissions in buildings across the region ([Navigate Energy](#), [MCC Energy Strategies](#) and [Building Efficiency Resources](#)), increasing options for clean transportation (Kube Mobility), limiting waste and cutting carbon in our food system ([Common Roots Urban Farm](#)) and finding new ways to generate energy from wind ([Gitpo Renew](#)).



HalifACT booth at the YCI Climate Futures Lab Summit

## Investments in the Halifax region

### YCI Climate Futures Lab Summit

On March 2, members of E&CC's Collective Impact team, Megan Fong and Zaina Lamontagne, attended [Youth Challenge International's Climate Futures Lab Summit](#). Zaina and Megan collaborated with other young people from across Canada to create community projects aimed at addressing climate change. They also spoke with local experts and decision-makers about climate action initiatives in the municipality, getting involved in the climate movement and building the green economy.

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### CART research showcase

The launch of the [Climate Action Research for Transportation network \(CART\)](#) took place on February 9 at Central Library. It gave graduate students in the [Dalhousie Transportation Collaboratory \(DalTRAC\)](#) program an opportunity to get feedback on their research and offered representatives from E&CC a chance to join employees from the municipality's Transportation Planning and Active Transportation teams to engage with the sold-out crowd about how climate action ties so much of our work together.



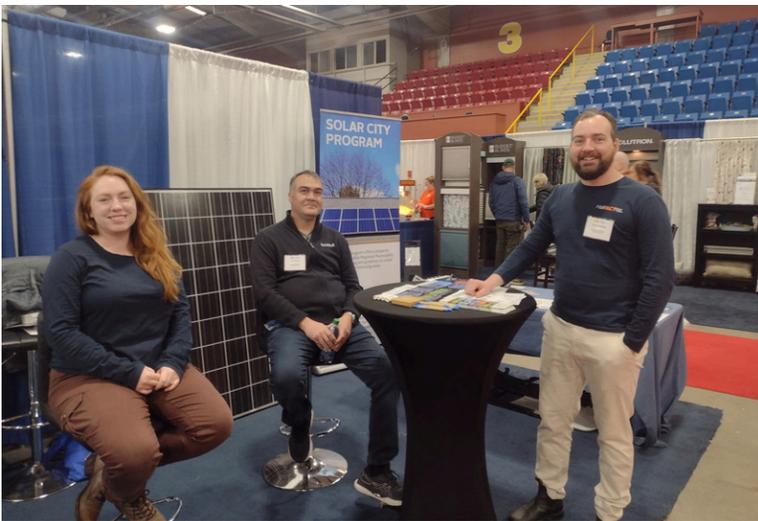
## Investments in the Halifax region

### NSCC Sustainability Fair

Members of the HalifACT team appreciate any opportunity to talk with students, so when NSCC invited us to attend its Sustainability Fair on March 7, we jumped at the chance.

This informal event was a casual way for young people to learn from people like our water resources specialist, Elizabeth Montgomery, about the projects that E&CC is working on and the opportunities that exist in environmental protection.

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### Spring Ideal Home Show

At the Spring Ideal Home Show, hundreds of homeowners spoke with E&CC energy experts, Chris Bernard and Kevin Boutilier, about making their homes more efficient. Attendees were keen to talk about [Solar City](#), the municipality's popular solar financing opportunity. Many people were also curious about [LakeWatchers](#), our community-based lake monitoring program. The home show was a great venue for face-to-face conversations about affordability, renewable energy and resilience.



## Investments in the Halifax region

### BTZx Action Accelerator

Members of HalifACT's Collective Impact team helped lead the first Building to Zero Exchange (BTZx) Action Accelerator event on February 20, which focused on green and affordable housing. The goal of the event was to bring together the green building sector and groups focused on affordable housing in order to look at opportunities for coordinating their efforts.



**Sera Thompson** leads HalifACT's Collective Impact team. Sera is an experienced facilitator and passionate believer in climate action. She has been instrumental in creating many of the opportunities for public engagement that guided the evolution of HalifACT. Her energy, vision and commitment to community are huge parts of HalifACT's success. Sera was the driving force behind Earth Fest, the Climate Action Challenge, the HalifACT Human Library and the Climate Engagement Series (created with Dalhousie University) to name a few.



### NRCAN funding for EV charging

On January 16, Mayor Mike Savage accepted \$980,000 on behalf of the municipality from the Natural Resources Canada Zero Emission Vehicle Infrastructure Program (ZEVIP). The funding will help install the first 56 electric vehicle (EV) chargers in the Halifax region.

Our Municipal Electric Vehicle Strategy aims to create a more reliable charging network for EVs so that people feel more confident about switching from a gas-powered vehicle to an EV.

## Investments in the Halifax region

### Public launch of electric bus

On February 16, journalists and political leaders were invited to the Ragged Lake Transit Centre to take a test drive and get more information on the municipality's very first electric bus, with 59 more ordered.

These buses will be a point of pride for our region, lighting a path to cleaner and quieter public transit. The first e-bus is slated to be ready for action later this year following safety testing and operator training.



**To efficiently charge our e-buses** and bring our emissions closer to net zero, we are installing 1 MW of solar photovoltaics on the Ragged Lake Transit Centre, making it one of the largest solar installations in Nova Scotia.

## Investments in the Halifax region

### Rimot receives HCi3 funding

HCi3 is one of seven non-profit organizations that make up the Low Carbon Cities Canada (LC3) network. Rimot, a company that is developing vessel-to-grid technology that allows electric marine vessels to charge and send electricity to the grid, recently won \$50,000 in financial support from HCi3 to study fuel consumption on the municipality's ferries.

Our five ferries currently burn around 1 million litres of diesel fuel every year, which results in 2650 tonnes of carbon dioxide being put into the atmosphere. Rimot's work will offer important insights on making the switch to clean energy.

**At the Smart Energy Conference in April 2024**, Kevin Boutilier, manager of community energy, shared why he cares so much about our pathbreaking Solar City program. Solar City has been running for more than a decade and has become one of the most successful sustainability programs in our history. Delivering \$23 million in financing and around 8 MW of solar power to date, Solar City saves residents \$1.6 million every year in energy costs and stops 6,800 tonnes of carbon dioxide from being pumped into the atmosphere.



## Investments in the Halifax region

### Electric Mobility Canada conference

In September 2024, Halifax is hosting the Electric Mobility Canada (EMC) conference. The conference will focus on the ever-changing market for electric vehicles, what electric mobility offers as a climate solution and how it fits the larger picture of electrifying for climate action. The EMC conference will be an opportunity to work with partners on making climate-friendly transportation that includes smart urban planning, public transit and active transportation.



A municipal mail delivery vehicle got a makeover to let people know it's fully electric and full of energy for supporting HalifACT.



## Investments in the Halifax region

### Greening the JUNOS

The carbon emissions from events like the JUNOS can be big, with the most pollution coming from audience travel. That's why we focused our sustainability efforts during our hosting of the 2024 JUNOS on providing sustainable options for getting around. From free public transit, to airport shuttles and music-themed bike racks, we encouraged concertgoers to leave their cars at home, hop on a ferry, a bus or their bike to help us cut carbon.

The *HalifACT* Climate Stage was the net-zero hotspot during four cold, damp days of vibrant music and performance. The weather couldn't keep the solar generators from keeping the power flowing at the outdoor stage. It also didn't dampen the spirits of our partners from the Ecology Action Centre, who gave out free bike tune-ups at all the shows.

Music Declares Emergency Canada made sustainable fashion a priority throughout the JUNOS. They were at the Climate Stage supporting artists and talking about what we can collectively do about our vulnerability to climate change.



*HalifACT Climate Stage*



**Did you know?** 10 per cent of global carbon emissions come from the fashion industry. Fashion outranks the airline industry in carbon pollution, so rethinking the way we buy and use clothing could give a huge boost to emissions reduction.

Community update

# Leadership

## Leadership

### Protecting clean water

Municipal water experts, Chris Kennedy, Elizabeth Montgomery and Emma Wattie, hosted two workshops focused on how to keep our water clean within the municipality. The World Water Day workshop and the LakeWatchers launch took place on March 21 and 22 at the Fairbanks Centre in Dartmouth. Both events offered residents an opportunity to learn about the energy and expertise that goes into keeping our lakes healthy.

**The path that Emma Wattie took** to her current job as the municipality's manager of environment started with the St. Mary's River Association. This group was inspired to protect the salmon population when they started to see worrying changes in the local environment. This experience drove Emma to work as much as possible with the community. She helped build LakeWatchers, our community-based water monitoring project, which spans the municipality and shows people how they can learn about their natural environment and act together to protect it.



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### HalifACT governance model launch

To create space in the municipality for collaborative climate action, the HalifACT team has designed a new "climate governance model." Supported by Chief Administrative Officer Cathie O'Toole, this approach aims to bring diverse teams together to identify barriers and challenges and propose creative solutions for implementing climate action much more quickly and at the scale required.



**Natasha Winters was working in the Mayor's office** in 2020 when Shannon Miedema, the director of Environment & Climate Change, was striving to get the HalifACT climate plan approved and adopted by Council. Seeing Shannon's passion and determination was transformative. It drove Natasha to follow the Environment & Climate Change team's progress closely in the years after the plan was approved and officially join the team in 2023.

## Leadership

### Earth Fest

A free, five-day celebration of the beauty and power nature, Earth Fest featured dozens of workshops, events and programs spanning the municipality. From April 18 until Earth Day on April 22, we collaborated with Ecology Action Centre, Every One Every Day and Halifax Public Libraries, among others, in order to showcase the people from all walks of life who actively devote themselves to protecting nature and taking action on climate.



**From May 21 – June 25**, the E&CC team is offering a free six-part session of a “Climate Connections” course developed by the organization How We Thrive. The course is focused on creating a supportive community in order to discover better ways of acting on climate together.



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### COP28 in Dubai

Mayor Mike Savage, along with director of E&CC, Shannon Miedema, and manager of climate adaptation, Shannon Fernandes, attended the United Nations Climate Change Conference (or COP28) in Dubai last year. At this pivotal global summit, many local governments argued for a seat at the table in discussions of climate policy because they are closest to the communities that are most affected.

Representatives from the municipality learned, shared and connected with others for the purpose of looking to discover new ideas and opportunities for driving down emissions and increasing resilience to climate impacts.



**HALIFAX**