

# Halif**ACT**

Acting on  
Climate  
Together

Community update

November 2022 | Issue 1

*The HalifACT Update is produced quarterly to provide the latest information about ongoing efforts to advance the goals set out in HalifACT – the municipality's long-term climate action plan.*

**HalifACT is one of the most ambitious climate action movements in Canada and we're committed to keeping residents informed of the ways we're leading, collaborating and supporting the climate movement in the municipality.**

Celebrating the second anniversary of HalifACT in June 2022 allowed us to reflect on our accomplishments over the past two years. We've invested in our municipality, built and strengthened partnerships, inspired our community to action and collaborated on education campaigns to support key climate initiatives.

While we're proud of our achievements, we recognize that there is significant work ahead to address climate change in our region. The devastation caused by Hurricane Fiona in September 2022 was an alarming reminder of the growing climate crisis. Our investment in climate action through our recent Climate Action Tax, ongoing HalifACT initiatives and many other projects and partnerships are all tangible ways we're proactively planning to protect our homes, our communities, our coastlines and each other.

To foster engagement and connectivity across communities as well as support the broader HalifACT plan, we will post the HalifACT community update quarterly on [halifax.ca/climate](https://halifax.ca/climate) and on social media. This update serves as the first of many, which we hope you'll share with others to inspire our collective commitment to climate action.

We're proud to share that HalifACT was one of the **Clean50 Project winners** and was also voted the **Clean50 Top Project of the Year** by award winners.

**Shannon Miedema, Director of Environment & Climate Change, has been named one of the 2023 Clean16 for her stewardship.**

[Learn more.](#)

2023 **Clean50**  
exceptional contributors to the clean economy  
contributeurs exceptionnels à l'économie propre



# Investments in the Halifax region



Credit: @daveyandsky



### Climate Action Tax

On April 12, 2022, Regional Council approved the 2022/23 municipal budget, including a residential and commercial property tax bill increase of 4.6 per cent. **Of that 4.6 per cent increase, three per cent has been allocated towards the Climate Action Tax which will directly support HalifACT.**

The Climate Action Tax will fund many important projects, such as electric vehicles and buses, net-zero buildings and the installation of public electric vehicle chargers. This funding will also improve the resilience of communities and infrastructure against the impacts of climate change by supporting initiatives around flood mitigation, storm water management, food security and emergency preparedness.

We shared information on the Climate Action Tax through the 2022/23 Municipal Budget process in spring 2022 and in the tax bill mailout issued in fall 2022. [\*\*Learn more.\*\*](#)

### Interim bikeways



Recognizing that interim measures are often required before long-term solutions are in place, plans are underway to install 8.5 kilometres of interim bikeway improvements in 2022. These quick-build bikeway improvements will be located along six routes within the Regional Centre, representing important links in the all-ages-and-abilities (AAA) bike network and promoting connectivity between existing cycling bikeways.

Interim bikeways will allow for faster implementation of the AAA bike network and provide the ability to trial street configurations on a temporary basis prior to committing more significant resources. This approach will also allow time to monitor the project's impacts and gather feedback from users, which will help shape the permanent designs. The interim bikeways support the Integrated Mobility Plan's vision to create connected, healthy, affordable and sustainable travel options. [\*\*Learn more.\*\*](#)



### E-Bike Pilot Program

As part of our continued commitment to employee wellness, we launched an Employee E-Bike Pilot Program in July 2022. This program provides electric-assist pedal bikes to staff for travel between municipal worksites for meetings, site visits, public engagement and other work-related activities. The goal of the program is to provide environmentally sustainable, cost-effective solutions for transportation for employees who travel frequently while on the job.

### Fall tree giveaway

In October 2022, we invited residents to join us for two free tree giveaway events in support of the [Urban Forest Master Plan](#) and HalifACT. Thanks to the passion and interest from residents, we distributed 1,000 trees (500 at each location) to residents on a first-come, first-served basis and residents were encouraged to walk, roll, cycle or take Halifax Transit to and from the event. Residents will be advised of any plans for future tree giveaways.



### Updated Coastal Extreme Water Levels & Flood Hazard Mapping

Over the past year, we worked to update the Extreme Water Level projections for the entire municipal coastline, which included the most recent scientific data from the 2021 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Sixth Assessment Report. Recently, we awarded a contract to a local consultant for the creation of detailed flood hazard maps for the entire municipality, which will help inform future resilience projects and policies. The project kicked off in October 2022 and is expected to be completed next year.

## Municipal facility upgrades

“Greening Government Operations” is a key target outlined in HalifACT, with a goal to achieve net-zero municipal operations by 2030. This commitment includes retrofitting and future-proofing existing municipally owned buildings and requiring all newly constructed buildings to be built to a net-zero ready minimum standard. Our recent efforts include:

### Fort Needham Park washrooms:

In June, we opened a new public and universal washroom at Fort Needham Memorial Park. The new washroom is the first building that meets our new net-zero construction standards, which means that 100 per cent of the building’s energy is generated on-site or off-site through a renewable source. The washroom also meets the municipality’s Standards for Universal Access to Municipal Facilities.

### Mackintosh Depot:

Opening in December, the Mackintosh Depot will house teams from Public Works and related municipal services. This new facility includes the largest solar panel installation across our facilities as well as LED lighting, electric vehicle charging stations and a bike room. With 208 solar panels, the tilt panel system provides 80 kilowatts of renewable energy.

### Woodside Ferry Terminal:

In November, renovations on the newly upgraded Woodside Ferry Terminal will be complete. The facility will include significant enhancements to accessibility and customer service to meet the needs of more than 2,300 passenger trips each weekday. It will also be one of the municipality’s most efficient facilities, reducing energy demand by 76 per cent and leading to almost \$60,000 per year in energy cost savings.



## What does it mean to be a net-zero facility?

It means that 100 per cent of the building’s energy is generated on-site or off-site through a renewable energy source.



# Community action & engagement





## Climate Action Challenge

As part of our community engagement, we're collaborating with the Halifax Partnership on the second [Climate Action Challenge](#) created for organizations and teams who have a project that will help accelerate climate action. Winners will receive learning, mentorship and support to test their ideas, funding of up to \$5,000 and more. The application deadline was Oct. 7 and winners were notified Oct. 18, 2022.

Through the [Halifax Innovation Outpost](#), we're working with the seven Climate Action Challenge winners from early 2022 who are helping to decarbonize the Halifax economy through green technology, buildings and jobs. We've produced videos for four of the winners from the challenge to demonstrate HalifACT in action – [watch here](#).

## Get There by Bike

Since summer 2022, the municipality has been actively encouraging residents to embrace cycling by emphasizing the comfort, convenience and ease of travelling by bike. As part of the promotion, we've included tips and resources for cyclists of all skill levels. [Learn more](#).

To help residents plan their cycling routes, we also launched the Regional Centre AAA Pocket Bike Map focused on the AAA bike networks in peninsula Halifax and Dartmouth within the Circumferential Highway. The map includes information on how to use the AAA bikeways and is available as both an interactive online and portable print format.

To support the launch of the Pocket Bike Map, we partnered with the Halifax Cycling Coalition (HCC) for a pop-up launch and route planning event on Oct. 12. The event provided an opportunity for residents to get a copy of the new AAA pocket bike map and help plan their cycling route with municipal staff and HCC volunteers. [Learn more](#).





## Commuter Challenge

As one of the largest employers in the region, we know that engaging employees is key. In June, 10 internal teams participated in the 2022 Commuter Challenge and committed to using sustainable transportation options throughout the week.

The challenge included an educational event at City Hall where employees had an opportunity to learn about HalifACT, plan their cycling and transit routes, test ride an e-bike and hear more about the new Employee E-Bike Pilot Program. Over one week, participants made 924 sustainable commute trips, totalling 4,200 kilometers and offsetting 184 kilograms of greenhouse gas emissions.

The Halifax Regional Municipality partnered with **Next Ride in September 2022 to offer free electric vehicle test drives** to participants in the region.

[Stay tuned for more exciting partner events coming soon.](#)

## Awareness & education campaigns

**Since spring 2022, we've launched several campaigns aimed at increasing awareness, engaging residents, and influencing behaviours that help support HalifACT's mission and the climate change movement.**

### Canines for Clean Water:

Through our annual summer education campaign, we've received 30 Canines for Clean Water Pledges that help to keep our waters clean. Now in its third year, the campaign's focus has been on maintaining safe water quality where high levels of canine E. coli has been identified and participating in outreach and education events at beaches, parks and community events throughout the municipality. **[Learn more and take the pledge.](#)**

### Harmful algae blooms:

This summer we launched a public education and awareness campaign on harmful algae in municipal lakes. Blue-green algae (cyanobacteria) can be harmful to people and fatal for pets, so our campaign focused on how to identify harmful algae blooms, avoid exposure and properly report suspected outbreaks. Educational resources were communicated through our website, social media channels, posters installed at monitored beaches, public service announcements and more.

**In early October 2022, we held our quarterly stakeholder meeting at the St. Mary's Boat Club, with 60 key partners in attendance.** The meeting was an opportunity to connect with our partners, provide an update on HalifACT projects and partnerships and discuss key forces impacting our shared ability to reach our climate goals. These insightful discussions with stakeholders help build a shared understanding of issues that need our collective attention to accelerate climate action in our region.

Community update

# Government, business & community partnerships





### Investments made through government funding

Since the beginning of our fiscal year, we have leveraged \$4.3 million in funding to support HalifACT projects in addition to \$88 million for the electrification of our transit fleet. These funds enable us to support municipal and community initiatives that advance our environmental and climate action commitments.

To support our partnership efforts, municipal staff met with the Honourable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change of Canada, in August 2022. This meeting was an opportunity to discuss HalifACT at the federal level and to share perspectives on how municipal and federal governments can work together to implement climate action.

On Sept. 6, 2022, all three levels of government announced over \$20.8 million in joint funding for the first phase of the Burnside Transit Centre Eco-rebuild Project to replace and expand on the existing Burnside Transit Centre as a net-zero facility. The funding will also support the transition to a zero-emission bus fleet as outlined in the [HalifACT plan](#).

### LakeWatchers program

Beginning in spring 2022, we partnered with local community organizations to launch LakeWatchers - a community-based lake monitoring program that gathers water quality data to help us understand the health of our lakes and how they are changing. We held information sessions and launched a public campaign to recruit LakeWatchers to the program as well as raise awareness of these efforts.

#### LakeWatchers

On Sept. 27, 2022, we released data collected from the LakeWatchers monitoring sites, with water testing results.

The release of this information supports the municipality's [Open Data Catalogue](#) and our commitment to providing public access to data. [Learn more.](#)

### Habit Studio sponsorship

As part of our support to the business community's climate education and awareness, we're supporting Habit Studio to sponsor an episode of the Passive House Retrofit Video Series.

Habit Studio is a residential design practice in Atlantic Canada specializing in sustainable whole home renovations and custom Passive Houses. The partnership will help showcase HalifACT, sustainable design and building practices, the innovative products used to bring retrofit projects to life, and the experts behind these transformations.

### Halifax Climate Investment, Innovation and Impact Fund

The Halifax Climate Investment, Innovation and Impact Fund (HCi3), a subsidiary of EfficiencyOne, launched its first round of climate funding in February 2022. The fund provides grants to innovative projects that seek to reduce GHG emissions in support of HalifACT and the municipality.

The HCi3 grant funding, totaling just over \$500,000, was awarded to 11 local projects to support coverage of up to 80 per cent of project costs. The projects include electric vehicle sharing, deep energy retrofits, passive tiny home construction and workforce development for African Nova Scotian communities, among others.



This fall, we're excited to partner with the **Common Roots Urban Farm** to plant fruit trees at their community farm on Bayers Road in Halifax. The fruit trees support food security, the Urban Forest Master Plan and HalifACT.







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