

The municipality will be entering into a Power Purchase Agreement and sourcing electricity from a wind farm in 2025.

Fall 2024



Halif**ACT** / Acting on  
Climate  
Together

Community update

# Introduction



**HalifACT** is the Halifax Regional Municipality’s climate action plan for rapidly cutting emissions and safeguarding communities from the impacts of climate change. Municipalities across Canada are taking a prominent leadership role in climate action, and our municipality has been at the forefront of that trend.

For the last 30 years, Canada’s three different levels of government—municipal, provincial and federal—have collaborated more than ever on investing in infrastructure. Infrastructure investment in Canada happens by coordinating with local officials because they have the deepest, most detailed understanding of the place-specific issues that affect their residents. Because there is a universal scientific consensus that climate change is real, dire and urgent, there is a need to focus climate action on the things that matter most: **protecting the people and places that we love.**

The municipality is proud to take ownership of the things that we can control when it comes to protecting the environment and taking bold action on climate. As a large and growing population, we take the responsibility to reduce greenhouse gas emissions seriously. The **HalifACT 2023/24 Annual Progress Report** shows that our corporate emissions dropped by more than 10 per cent from 2022-2023. In just one year, we showed the progress that can be made by taking simple steps like replacing light duty fleet vehicles with electric vehicles or adding solar panels to municipal buildings.



HalifACT was just recognized by the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) Canada and Climate Proof Canada as a leading municipality in the category of Economic Resilience. Former Mayor Mike Savage also received a prestigious Clean16 award at this year's Clean50 conference and the Co-operators Community Resilience Award for HalifACT's climate adaptation work.



Shannon Miedema and former Mayor Mike Savage accept an award from Climate Proof Canada and ICLEI Canada for Economic Resilience.



**HALIFAX**



The municipality has established, and continues to expand, a Voluntary Vulnerable Persons Registry to make sure that people who need additional support during emergencies can get it. We currently have 215 people registered, which will help the municipality ensure the safety of our most at-risk residents. If you or a loved one needs additional support during an emergency, please consider joining the Registry.

**Register on the municipality's website ►**

Switching from fossil fuels is also about affordability and the rising cost of living. More resilient infrastructure means less spending on maintenance and repair, especially as climate impacts become more severe. We are making progress by preparing communities for climate impacts and identifying the critical infrastructure that is at greatest risk.

The "ACT" in HalifACT stands for "Acting on Climate Together," and the acts that make a difference can be big or small. The plan imagines a place where anyone can take part in changing our communities for the better, where we all have a role to play in taking climate action and where no one gets left behind.

# Collective impact

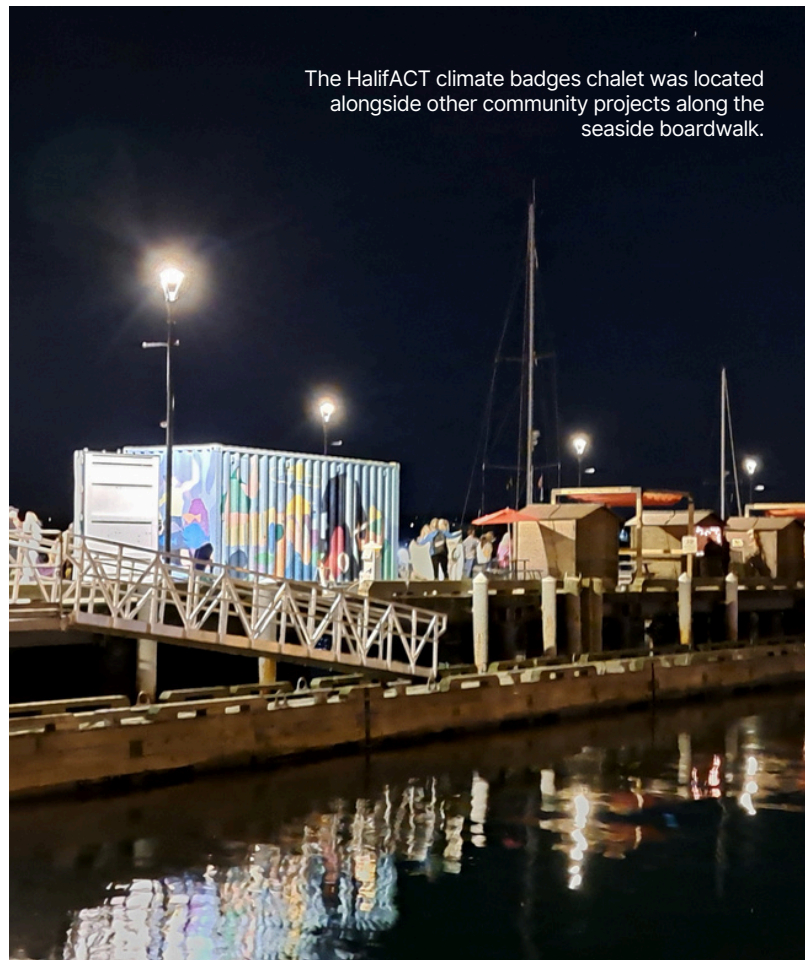


## Community update

# Climate Commitment Badges launched at Nocturne 2024

At Nocturne 2024, the municipality collaborated with the Ecology Action Centre to bring a message of courage and commitment to flocks of eager art-lovers. More than 750 people visited our waterfront chalet and pledged to take action with the Climate Commitment Badges.

Climate 101, Home Energy and Getting Around are the first of several badges that residents can earn by making large or small commitments to climate action, whether that involves learning about local climate impacts, switching one trip per week to public transit or exploring how we can make our homes more efficient and less reliant on fossil fuels. Find out how to get involved at [halifax.ca/badges](https://halifax.ca/badges).



The HalifACT climate badges chalet was located alongside other community projects along the seaside boardwalk.

**Emily Elisabeth**  
(She/Her)



**Molly Margaret**  
(She/Her)



**Lorne A. Julien**  
(He/Him)



## Learning how to connect on climate

Environment & Climate Change organized the Climate Connections Course to give folks an accessible way to build community resilience, understand how rising temperatures and extreme weather are impacting our region and find new ways to get engaged in Climate Action. The free course, which ran all through October 2024, was developed by How We Thrive, a network of people, organizations and communities engaged in climate conversations and action.

The entire course is available online at [howwethrive.org/climate](https://howwethrive.org/climate), but we'll be offering another in-person session of the course in spring 2025.



Winners gather for the Youth Climate Action Fund Kick-off

# Winners of the Youth Climate Action Fund announced

With the Youth Climate Action Fund (YCAF), the municipality and the Halifax Climate Investment, Innovation and Impact Fund went looking for innovative solutions and found them flourishing among youth-led groups in the region.

The municipality was one of 100 cities to receive \$50,000 USD (\$66,000 CAD) from Bloomberg Philanthropies and United Cities and Local Governments as part of this new program. On September 16, 2024, former Mayor Mike Savage presented the recipients of this funding with small grants of up to \$5,000 USD (\$6,600 CAD).

## Eleven youth-led or youth-serving organizations received YCAF funding. Here are the successful projects:

### Community capacity building

Caring for the Barrens

### Solar-Powered Electric Race Vehicle open house

DalSol (Dalhousie University)

### My Climate and Art: A Climate Justice Art Exhibition

Girl Child Art Foundation + Banye Art

### Hope Blooms

Community Climate Action Mural

### Level: Changing Lives Through Law

Environmental Justice Program

### Oakhill biomass project

Oakhill Outdoor

### Low carbon African Nova Scotian Community Ideas Mobilization

ONE North End

### Seeds of Tomorrow

Club of Halifax

### Turning the (Green) Tide: Investigating the Applications of Algal Climate Relief

Shambhala School

### Growing Resilience: Youth Empowerment Through Sustainable Gardening

Preston Area Food Network

### From Land to Sea

Woodlawn High School's Oceans Club and the Canadian Wildlife Federation

Halif**ACT** Acting on Climate Together

**YOUTH CLIMATE ACTION FUND**  
Supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies

**Hci3** FUND  
AN EFFICIENCYONE COMPANY





# Environment

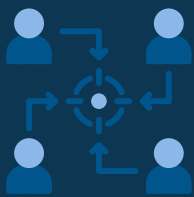


## Community update

## Regional Council adopts new framework for managing watersheds

In August 2024, Regional Council approved a new framework for managing watersheds in the municipality. Protecting these special places where water drains to a common outlet is important for biodiversity, especially as development in our region increases.

The population of the Halifax Regional Municipality is expected to grow to around **one million people by 2050**, according to a recent review of our Regional Plan. As our population doubles, we will put more strain on the natural environment and vital ecosystem services, but by adopting this evidence-based watershed framework, we are better positioned to safeguard the health of our lakes, streams, forests and wetlands for generations to come.



The most important word in our watershed framework might be “consensus.” The framework was created by finding a clear consensus between different levels of government, representatives from academia, local industries and community groups. Some of the most important ideas in the framework, like the idea that stewardship is a responsibility that “extends to all our relations, including the water that flows in our rivers and lakes,” comes from a combination of scientific and traditional ecological knowledge.

## Naturalizing Birch Cove Park

This summer, dozens of residents took part in a three-day naturalization workshop at Birch Cove Beach, hosted by the municipality and Helping Nature Heal, a landscape design company focused on sustainability and environmental stewardship. The workshop gave folks hands-on experience with the company’s Shore Up program’s techniques for restoring healthy freshwater shorelines. The project is expected to limit erosion, improve water quality, enhance local biodiversity and reduce the build-up of geese droppings on the beach, which can be toxic in large amounts.

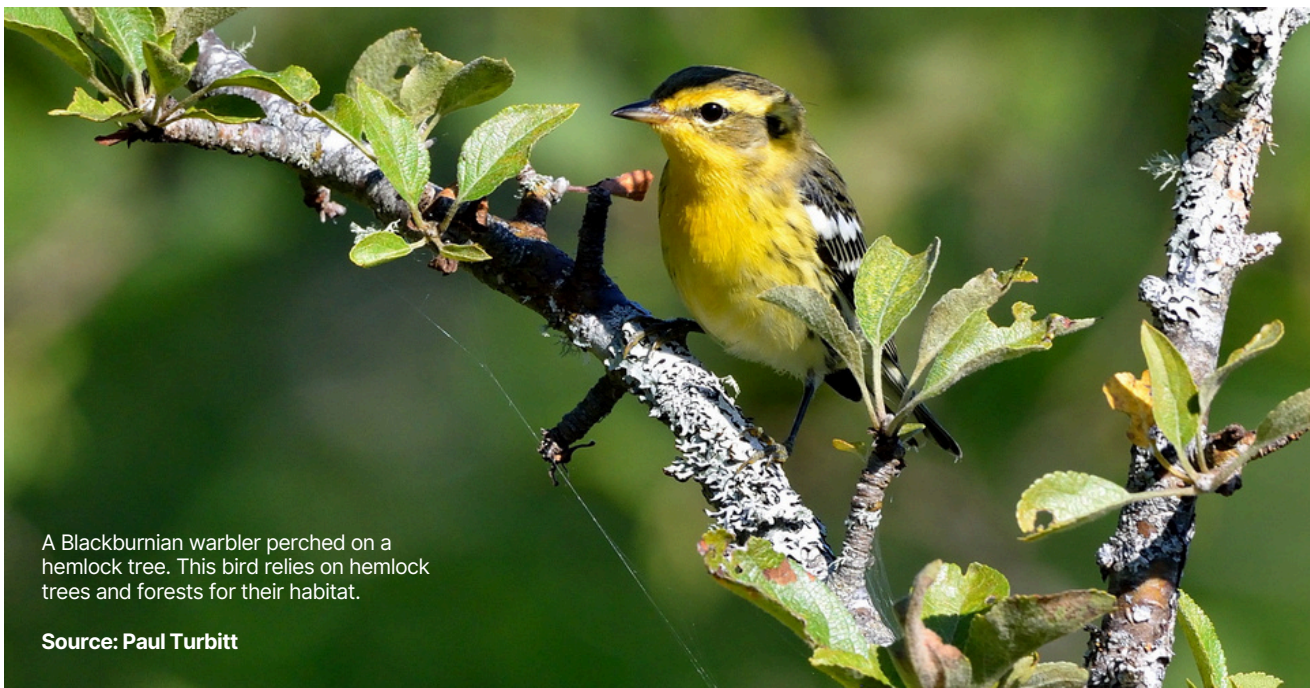
## Stopping the spread of invasive species

**Hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA)** is an invasive species of insect that was first spotted in the municipality back in 2023. When HWA is introduced to a stand of hemlock trees, it can kill up to 95 per cent over a span of four to 15 years.



Yellow Floating Heart

**Yellow floating heart (YFH)** is an invasive aquatic plant species that was first identified in Little Albro Lake over a decade ago. Both species could have a serious impact on local ecosystems if left unchecked.



A Blackburnian warbler perched on a hemlock tree. This bird relies on hemlock trees and forests for their habitat.

Source: Paul Turbitt

Our environmental team held public engagements in July and August to provide community members with clear information about the work we are doing to manage the spread of invasive species. Attendees walked the banks of Little Albro Lake and saw how much YFH has spread. Along with the province's Inland Fisheries team and the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans, **we applied a pesticide** to manage YFH. We'll be evaluating the success of this treatment in spring 2025.

# Lakewatchers

## ***State of the Lakes Report released***

The **LakeWatchers** program monitors the health of the municipality's lakes. We do this alongside consultants and volunteers by sampling and collecting data. On October 3, 2024, LakeWatchers released its landmark *State of the Lakes Report*, after sampling 73 lakes in the region twice a year for two years.

The report offers a snapshot of our lakes and the impact that human activity is having on water quality. It also has a useful glossary with simple explanations for issues like eutrophication, chloride enrichment and bacterial contamination. Visit [halifax.ca/lakewatchers](https://halifax.ca/lakewatchers) for more information.



## The East Preston Recreation Centre installs two bioswales

The HalifACT team supported the installation of two bioswales for the East Preston Recreation Centre to help manage stormwater runoff around this important community hub. Bioswales are a type of green infrastructure designed to capture rainwater and runoff by allowing water to slowly soak into the soil. They also provide benefits for local ecosystems, as the plants and soil act as natural filters for chemicals, bacteria, fertilizer and other pollutants that would otherwise contaminate our waterbodies.



# Clean energy



## Community update

## Municipal EV strategy presented at the 2024 Electric Mobility Canada conference

Halifax had the honour of hosting the 2024 Electric Mobility Canada conference, which brought together hundreds of experts in electric transportation from all over the country to talk about the challenges and opportunities facing the electric vehicle (EV) industry. The HalifACT team delivered a presentation to showcase the municipality's new Level 2 and Level 3 EV chargers.



We're installing new units on our EV charging network all the time to make our municipality EV-ready. Level 2 chargers are already operational at Grahams Grove in Dartmouth and at Halifax Transit's West Bedford Park and Ride. New installations are currently taking place all over the region. By the end of next spring, we aim to have 56 chargers operational so that drivers can keep their EVs charged up and on the road.

## EV test drives with Next Ride

The HalifACT team once again teamed up with our friends at Next Ride to give residents an opportunity to test drive an electric vehicle. Participants told us that they appreciated being able to try out an EV in a stress-free environment. Around 200 people got to take a spin in an EV and discuss the advantages of switching from gas to electric.



## HalifACT joins global conversation about climate action in cities

In April 2024, director of Environment & Climate Change, Shannon Miedema, attended an Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) meeting that focused on the most effective ways to support cities in embracing climate action. The result of this meeting of more than 100 climate leaders in Riga, Latvia will be the IPCC's Special Report on Climate Change and Cities, the first of its kind. HalifACT will benefit from all of us having a better understanding of how climate change is affecting cities and the climate solutions that work best in an urban environment.



Delegates gathered in Latvia for a scoping meeting to decide how to address climate change in cities globally.

**ipcc**  
INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON  
climate change





The Ragged Lake Transit Centre's rooftop will be equipped with more than 1,500 solar panels to generate clean energy for the fleet.



## Expanding the Ragged Lake Transit Centre

HalifACT is supporting Halifax Transit's efforts to electrify its fleet. Sixty long range electric buses will be undergoing testing to make sure they're ready for the road, with the goal of replacing the entire fleet with zero-emission vehicles. To store and charge the electric buses, the municipality is expanding the Ragged Lake Transit Centre and adding more than 1,700 solar panels that will generate 1,000 MWh of electricity.

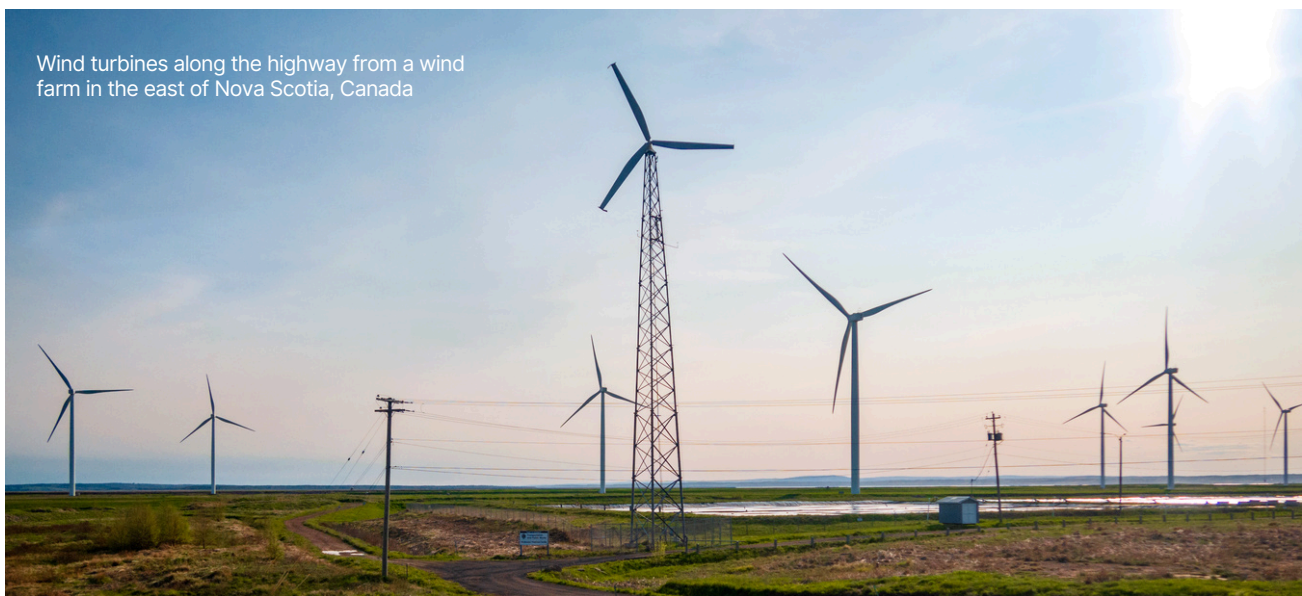


The municipality continues to install rooftop solar panels on eight more municipal buildings, with installations expected to be finished by the end of 2025. Solar energy systems were recently installed at the East Preston Community Centre, Sackville Public Library and the Carrolls Corner Community Centre. Once they are all online, these solar installations will save the municipality more than \$100,000 in electricity costs every year and protect against the volatility of energy prices.

## Power Purchase Agreement signed with Renewall Energy

CAO Cathie O'Toole has approved an agreement to purchase locally produced renewable electricity from Renewall Energy Inc. By the end of 2025, the municipality will be receiving electricity from the Mersey River Wind Farm as part of the agreement.

In 2022, the annual electricity cost for municipally-owned assets like buildings and streetlights was around \$9 million. By purchasing renewable electricity, we can save money on the municipality's annual operating costs and cut carbon at the same time.



Wind turbines along the highway from a wind farm in the east of Nova Scotia, Canada



**HALIFAX**