

# One Year of A<sup>2</sup>ZERO

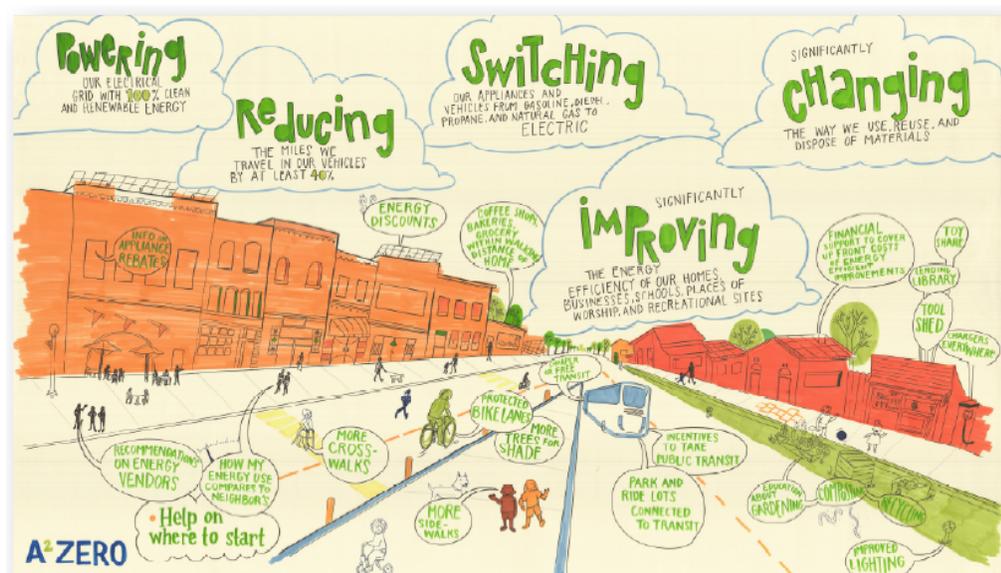


## Overview

A<sup>2</sup>ZERO is Ann Arbor's plan for achieving a just transition to community-wide carbon neutrality by 2030. Adopted by City Council in June of 2020, A<sup>2</sup>ZERO is an audacious and essential plan, framework, and series of programs that will help improve health, safety, and comfort, all while helping our community achieve deep decarbonization.

A<sup>2</sup>ZERO is a living plan, meaning that it's important to regularly reflect on what is working, what needs to be adjusted, and what needs to be added. This document presents one such reflection - looking back on the first year of A<sup>2</sup>ZERO, the accomplishments, the short comings, and the next steps.

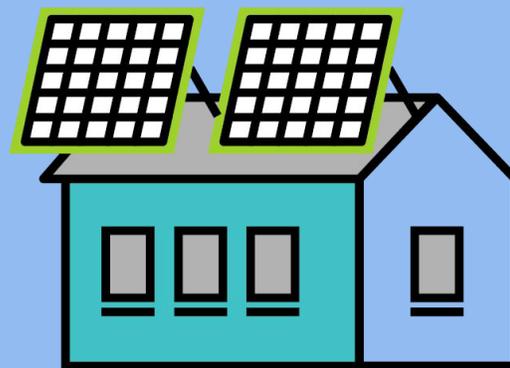
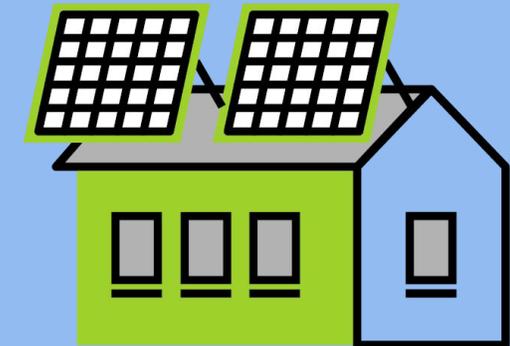
More details about the initiatives outlined in these pages, as well as ways to get involved in A<sup>2</sup>ZERO, can be found at [www.a2gov.org/sustainability](http://www.a2gov.org/sustainability).



# Strategy 1: Power our electrical grid with 100% renewable energy

In Year One, we:

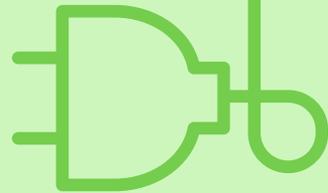
- Installed approximately 1.3MW of rooftop solar on over 200 residential roofs, saving residents over \$650,000 on upfront costs
- Launched the Solarize Toolkit, a step-by-step guide to implementing the Solarize model in other communities
- Helped negotiate agreements on community solar, Voluntary Green Pricing (VGP) programs, and carbon reduction offerings - allowing customers to have more control over where their energy comes from
- Began developing a low-to-moderate income (LMI) solar access program and won a National Community Solar Partnership (NCSP) grant for technical assistance on this program
- Conducted studies on the feasibility and cost of a 24MW solar installation on a capped landfill
- Launched a municipal rooftop solar Request For Proposals (RFP) related to the installation of solar at thirteen municipal facilities
- Achieved SolSmart Silver designation for our efforts to make going solar faster, easier, and more affordable
- Crafted core criteria and principles for achieving our renewable energy goals
- Regularly participated in Michigan Public Service Commission working groups



## Strategy 2: Switch our appliances and vehicles from fossil fuels to electric

In Year One, we:

- Transitioned 10% of our light duty City fleet to electric, including making our first purchase of electric vehicles (EVs) for the Police Department
- Expanded public EV charging infrastructure, including winning a grant to install 4 Direct Current Fast Chargers (DCFCs) at City Hall
- Developed and implemented an EV Readiness Ordinance, requiring new developments to include EV charging infrastructure in site planning
- Initiated a heat pump replacement campaign, including a sticker program to ease the transition process to electric
- Developed a range replacement program, which reduces barriers to the adoption of induction ranges through supply and demand side partnerships
- Initiated a collaboration with IBEW 252 to create a home electrification assessment



## Strategy 3: Significantly improve the energy efficiency in our buildings

In Year One, we:

- Completed energy audits of 6 City facilities
- Designed and launched a pilot of our Aging in Place Efficiently program, which aims to improve energy efficiency and comfort in the homes of older adults
- Drafted a commercial and multi-family benchmarking ordinance, as well as a home energy disclosure ordinance, including input sourced from stakeholder engagement
- Launched a decarbonization initiative with the Bryant neighborhood and Community Action Network, to co-create a whole home health, safety, comfort, and decarbonization assessment
- Introduced updates to our permitting system to better track our energy efficiency progress
- Worked with the International Code Council (ICC) to introduce Building Code Committees and volunteered to serve on these committees
- Participated in the scoping and evaluation for the zero energy fire station design
- Organized a cohort for a consumption-based emissions inventory

## Strategy 4: Reduce the miles we travel in our vehicles by at least 50%

In Year One, we:

- Launched a bike discount program to reduce barriers to bike access and encourage alternative modes of transportation
- Coordinated the donation of bikes to Common Cycle
- Supported the development of the Vision Zero plan





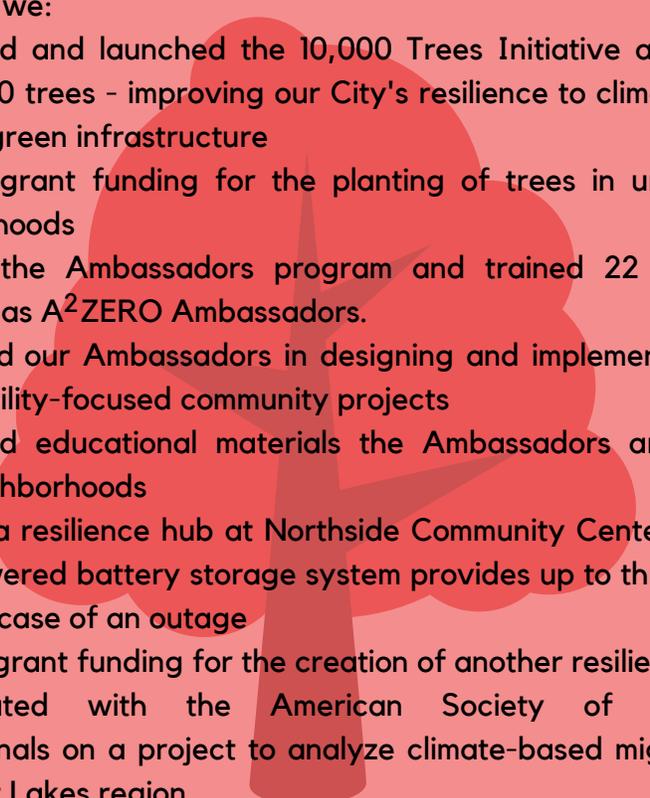
## Strategy 5: Change the way we use, reuse, and dispose of materials

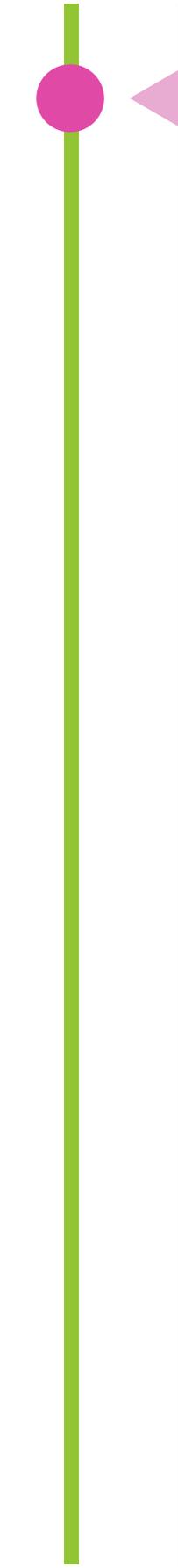
In Year One, we:

- Launched a reusable container pilot with four restaurants during Green Fare, in an effort to reduce food container waste
  - Published, in conjunction with the Public Works Department, a paper on the circular economy - which aims to decouple resource consumption from economics - in the journal *Sustainability*.
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## Strategy 6: Enhance the resilience of our people and our place

In Year One, we:

- Developed and launched the 10,000 Trees Initiative and planted over 1,000 trees - improving our City's resilience to climate change through green infrastructure
  - Secured grant funding for the planting of trees in underserved neighborhoods
  - Created the Ambassadors program and trained 22 community members as A<sup>2</sup>ZERO Ambassadors.
  - Supported our Ambassadors in designing and implementing seven sustainability-focused community projects
  - Developed educational materials the Ambassadors are using in their neighborhoods
  - Created a resilience hub at Northside Community Center, where a solar powered battery storage system provides up to three days of power in case of an outage
  - Secured grant funding for the creation of another resilience hub
  - Collaborated with the American Society of Adaptation Professionals on a project to analyze climate-based migration into the Great Lakes region
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## Strategy 7: Other strategies / accomplishments

In Year One, we:

- Secured 92 organizations as collaborators
- Launched RE4M, a 4-part internal learning series focused on how to pair renewable energy, efficiency, electrification, and equity into a program for all Ann Arborites
- Supported the creation of the City's equitable engagement initiative
- Continued the Sustaining Ann Arbor Together grant program, a vehicle for supporting our community's innovation and creativity as it relates to advancing local sustainability and climate action
- Were recognized as a finalist for the America's Climate Leadership Award
- Crafted and launched an A<sup>2</sup>ZERO Pledge for community members to commit to joining us in achieving our sustainability goals
- Engaged with community members and provided guidance and education on sustainability-related issues through the following avenues:
  - Our Sustainability Forum series
  - Our Climate, Coffee, and Conversation open discussions
  - Our revised website
  - The launch of our YouTube channel
  - A<sup>2</sup>ZERO Week, a celebration of the one-year anniversary of the adoption of the A<sup>2</sup>ZERO Plan
  - Regular neighborhood association meetings
  - The OSI stall at the Farmer's Market
  - Our 51st-annual Earth Day celebration
  - An inaugural Juneteenth Celebration in conjunction with the Ann Arbor Branch of the NAACP
  - A presentation at the 2021 Michigan Sustainability Conference
  - A keynote speech at the Washtenaw Community College Climate Summit
- Participated in the Environmental Rules Review Committee
- Joined multiple committees helping develop the MI Healthy Climate Plan for the State of Michigan
- Served on UM's Presidents Commission on Carbon Neutrality
- Launched a Carbon Neutrality Coordinating Committee

## Next Steps

As we look forward to Year Two of A<sup>2</sup>ZERO, we anticipate a series of new initiatives, the scaling of existing programs, and the continued expansion of our community engagement efforts, including the growth of our collaborators network. Some of the things currently planned for year two include:

- A community solar pilot
- Expansion of Solarize to commercial enterprises
- The creation of a new low to moderate income solar program
- Support for our Equitable Engagement Steering Committee
- The launch of a whole home "check-up" to help individuals understand their efficiency, electrification, and renewable energy options
- The installation of more bike lanes throughout the City
- The installation of more electric vehicle and bike charging infrastructure
- Energy efficiency improvements at City facilities
- Solar installations at multiple City facilities
- The commissioning of the City's first all electric refuse truck
- The training of our second Ambassadors cohort
- Expansion of our reusable container pilot
- Creation of a working group on utility carbon reduction offerings and voluntary power reduction offerings
- Launch of the BranchOut program and more FreeTree Giveaways
- Continued monitoring, intervention, and testifying before the Michigan Public Service Commission and State House and Senate Committees on relevant legislation or policies
- Deeper and more sustained neighborhood-based engagement

These are just some of the initiatives planned for Year Two of A<sup>2</sup>ZERO. Please share your ideas or get involved by sending a note to [sustainability@a2gov.org](mailto:sustainability@a2gov.org) or by going to [www.a2gov.org/sustainability](http://www.a2gov.org/sustainability).

