

ISSUE 3

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December/January 2020

WELCOME

Welcome to the third newsletter from the Office of Sustainability and Innovations (OSI)! It's been a fascinating fall as we work to advance A²ZERO while also addressing the realities of COVID-19. This includes continuing our work on supporting more sustainable and healthy building and energy codes, working for more sustainability smart state legislation, designing our renewable energy strategy, supporting solar throughout the community, administering energy audits at City facilities, and so much more. While this newsletter doesn't chronicle all of our work, it does provide some notable updates on activities unfolding at OSI. And even more detail can be found on our updated website: www.a2gov.org/sustainability. As always, thank you for your interest in sustainability activities in Ann Arbor.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Equity and justice are at the center of A²ZERO and staff in OSI are continuing to ground our work in these critical principles. In that light, we'd like to take a moment to honor the geographic and historic space we share. We acknowledge that the land the City of Ann Arbor occupies is the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary lands of the Anishinaabeg – (including Odawa, Ojibwe and Boodewadomi) and Wyandot peoples. We further acknowledge that our City stands, like almost all property in the United States, on lands obtained, generally in unconscionable ways, from indigenous peoples. The taking of this land was formalized by the Treaty of Detroit in 1807. Knowing where we live, work, study, and recreate does not change the past, but a thorough understanding of the ongoing consequences of this past can empower us in our work to create a future that supports human flourishing and justice for all individuals.

PROGRAM UPDATES

Below are some updates on sustainability activities in the City of Ann Arbor. More details on these projects and others can be found at www.a2gov.org/sustainability.

A²ZERO Ambassadors: In November, we launched our A²ZERO Ambassadors program. Ambassadors are residents interested in learning about the various ways the City and its people can advance sustainability and carbon neutrality and then given the tools to help operationalize that information. All Ambassadors are committed to attending a 9-week training course, supporting the implementation of a community project that advances sustainability, and conducting at least 20 hours of additional volunteer work in support of community sustainability and carbon neutrality (i.e., speak at events, talk to neighbors and peers, host community learning sessions, lead local projects). This is the first Ambassador's cohort but we plan to run another cohort in the 2021.

GET INVOLVED

Learn more and get involved at

www.a2gov.org/sustainability or by sending a note to sustainability@a2gov.org

Energy Benchmarking and Disclosure: As part of our A²ZERO Plan, OSI staff are actively working to create energy benchmarking and disclosure policies. Staff have completed promising practice research, literature review, and partnered with peer cities to share experiences and lessons learned. Staff also launched a local Task Force to help advance the commercial and multi-family portions of our benchmarking and disclosure program.

Solarize – Calling Participants: As Ann Arbor’s Solarize program enters its second year, we are gathering interest from folk who would like to participate in 2021. Solarize is a community-centered group-buy program that brings neighbors and friends together to learn about residential solar and explore if it is a good fit for them. If you would like to attend a future meeting or help gather neighbors and community members for a group, let us know! To learn more or see discounts offered through the program, please visit a2gov.org/solar.

Electrification of Vehicles: This December, City Council will consider an electric vehicle readiness ordinance which will ensure that new developments and major renovations are equipped with the electrical equipment necessary to support a transition to EVs. Additionally, the City secured grant funding from the State of Michigan and from DTE’s Charging Forward program to help support the installation of our first four direct current fast chargers (DCFCs) in the downtown corridor. In early December Council accepted these grant funds and gave direction for OSI to move forward with these installations in early 2021 (when the ground thaws). These are just some of the new developments happening within our EV work. More details on all of these programs are available on our [EV webpage](#).

Energy Criteria and Principles: OSI has been working on a draft set of Energy Principles to help guide energy-related investments necessary to meet A²ZERO. These principles will be discussed with Council at a working session in January and re-presented to the Energy and Environmental Commissions in January. OSI plans to bring the final set of principles to City Council for formal adoption in early 2021 as they will be instrumental when seeking solutions to achieve some of the goals identified in A²ZERO. You can learn review the draft principles [here](#).

The University of Michigan: The University of Michigan will be releasing their draft recommendations on achieving carbon neutrality any day. These recommendations will be open for public comment until mid-January. Individuals are encouraged to review these recommendations, which will be posted on [this website](#).

10,000 Trees Initiative: In early fall the City announced a new 10,000 Trees Initiative to support individuals with planting and nurturing trees on private property. The goal of planting 10,000 trees is in the City’s carbon neutrality plan: A²ZERO and will help address issues related to urban heat, stormwater, air quality, and climate change. We’re delighted to announce that we’ve hired a coordinator to help us advance this initiative, Sean Reynolds. Welcome to the team, Sean! The program is currently being designed so more details will be available on the City’s website soon.

Greenhouse Gas Accounting: Are you interested in greenhouse gas emissions tracking? Well then, we’ve got good news. We’ve updated our website, created a video, and published a report that dives more deeply into how we calculate greenhouse gas emissions. Learn more and check out these resources [here](#).

UPCOMING EVENTS

Join us at one of the following upcoming events (register and see more events, which are being added weekly, on the City’s public [calendar](#)):

- January 14th, 8:00am – **Climate, Coffee, and Conversation.** Join us for an open community chat about anything and everything A²ZERO and sustainability. Register [here](#).
- January 19th, 7:00pm – **Neighborhood Associations and Community Leaders Meeting.**

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

We’ve **updated our website!** It’s been a long time coming but if you haven’t yet, please check it out: www.a2gov.org/sustainability.

We're launched a **YouTube Channel**! Did you miss an event? Want to see some of the things we've been up to? Check out our new [YouTube Channel](#). Events added almost every week.

Remember that our **Sustaining Ann Arbor Together grant program** is available to those who have ideas for how to advance sustainability in the public right of way. Learn more and apply on the [sustainability website](#).

Thank you to the Great Lakes Renewable Energy Association for recognizing the A²ZERO Ambassadors and the Solarize Program as the GLREA Exemplary Project of the Year.