

THE CHARGING STATION

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF A²ZERO AND
THE ANN ARBOR OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY AND INNOVATIONS



IN THIS ISSUE:

- WELCOME.....1
- LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....1
- HOME ENERGY ADVISOR.....2
- ORDINANCE TRIFECTA.....4
- RESOURCES UPDATE.....5
- NEW OSI STAFF.....6
- CLIMATE ACTION HERO.....7
- GLREA HIGHLIGHT.....8
- 2030 DISTRICT HIGHLIGHT.....10
- COMMUNITY COOKBOOK.....12
- ANNOUNCEMENTS.....14
- UPCOMING EVENTS.....15

ABOUT THE EDITOR

This month's newsletter was a group effort from the Energy Team! Pictured above as follows from left to right. Front row: Sara Haleblian (AmeriCorps Member - Energy Team), Carissa Ebling (Energy Coordinator), Dreagn Bennett (Energy Team Fellow), and Lucas Forgy (AmeriCorps Member - Energy Team). Middle row: Evan Eisman (AmeriCorps - Energy Team), Sam Kachuck (Commercial Sustainability Analyst), Julie Roth (Energy Team Manager), and Jerrell Wylie (Community Energy Official). Back row: Valerie Wilke (Energy Team Fellow), Joe Lange (Senior Energy Analyst), Steve Christensen (Energy Assessor), and Connor Dailey (Energy Analyst).



The 2026 Energy Team at the Office of Sustainability and Innovations.

WELCOME

Welcome from the City of Ann Arbor's Office of Sustainability and Innovations (OSI). In this issue of the Charging Station, OSI is delighted to share details about improving energy efficiency at home. If you are interested in learning more about any of the organizations featured in this issue and how you can get involved, more detail can be found on our 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 Anishinaabe 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.

A²ZERO HOME ENERGY ADVISOR

WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BEGIN A SUSTAINABILITY JOURNEY AT HOME

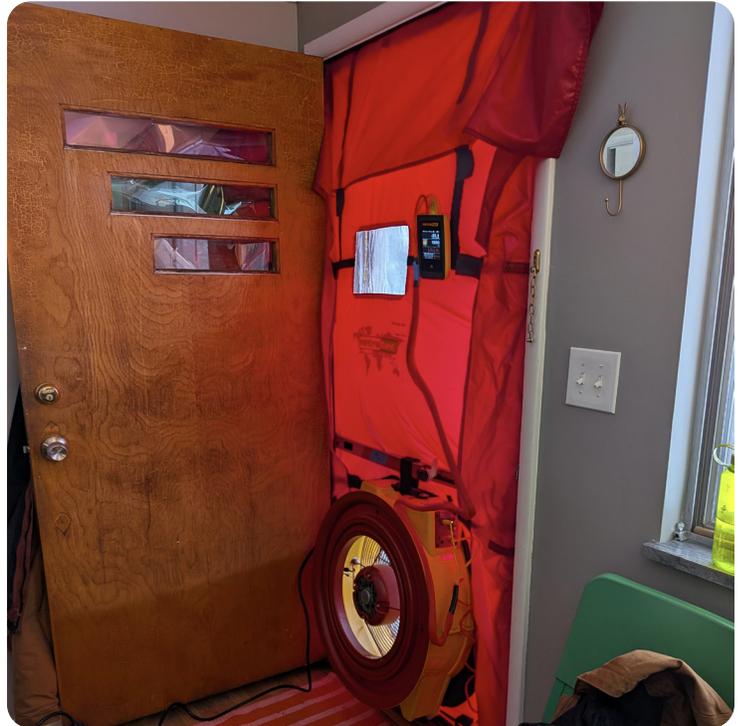
Homes have lots of moving parts that keep us safe and comfortable, which can make it challenging to know where to start to reduce their environmental impact. The A²ZERO Home Energy Advisor (HEA) was built with this purpose in mind, providing Ann Arbor residents a free home energy assessment and custom recommendations based on this assessment. This month, Lucas Forgy, AmeriCorps Member serving on the Energy Team at the Office of Sustainability and Innovations, took advantage of the HEA and chronicled his experience to shed some light on the subject.

My Home Energy Advisor Journey (As a Renter)

Like many renters in Ann Arbor, I have not always felt that I had much control over the comfort and energy efficiency of my home. I could bear with a little bit of sweat during the summer, but in winter the drafts made it uncomfortable to spend time in my living room. My cat Roberta, who enjoys watching birds through the window, had withdrawn to the warmth of my closet, and a blanket was a necessity while sitting on the couch. With this in mind, I registered for a [Home Energy Assessment](#) online in just a few minutes, and had an appointment set before I knew it. The City of Ann Arbor's [Home Energy Advisor \(HEA\) program](#) performed a free evaluation of the energy efficiency of my unit and provided me with a report and some recommendations on what I could do to save money, make my living space more comfortable, and help the environment.

My duplex, like many of the homes in Ann Arbor, was built in the 1950s. The State of Michigan had no building energy efficiency requirements until 1977, so my unit unfortunately wastes a great deal of heat in the winter. With only limited insulation between the warm interior and cold outdoors, I foot the bill for that increased energy use, and have increased emissions as a result.

Swen Hendrickson, one of A²ZERO's Home Energy Advisors, ran a blower door test for me (pictured right). This test can help identify where the "thermal envelope" of the building is the weakest, allowing you to track down how cold air is getting into your home. By attaching a large fan to my front door frame, the blower door creates a negative pressure within the home, which brings outside air in through all the little leaks throughout the house. Then, using a thermal imaging camera, Swen was able to quickly identify weak spots in the thermal envelope where cold air was intruding (pictured right), such as the area around my basement windows, dryer vent, and attic access. Basic air leaks like these can often be easy and relatively cheap fixes.



A blower door (above) test identifies spots in the house where air escapes using a thermal imaging camera (below).



A²ZERO HOME ENERGY ADVISOR

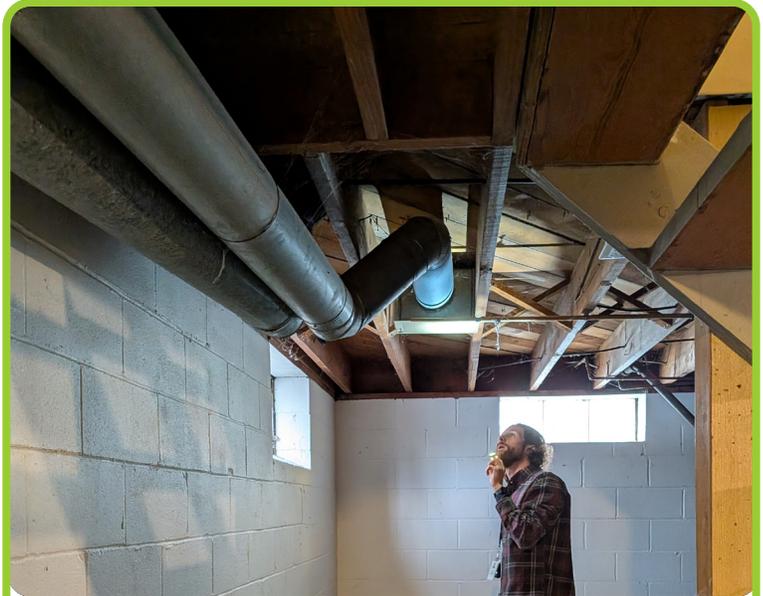
WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BEGIN A SUSTAINABILITY JOURNEY AT HOME

The Assessment (called the *Path To Zero*) also indicated that while I have a newer, more efficient water heater, my furnace is five times less efficient than a cold-climate heat pump. While for a long time heat pumps – which rely on the ambient temperature of the exterior environment – weren't viable in cold weather climates, the technology has significantly improved. Today's cold-climate heat pumps can pull warmth from outside air, even in temperatures far below freezing, to provide year-round comfort regardless of the weather outside. While I would never recommend tossing out a perfectly functional system, if the furnace was near to end-of-life it would make sense to [reach out to a specialist](#) to have my residence evaluated for a heat pump, as they are often a more involved install process than a furnace.

This Home Energy Assessment gave me the tools to bring this information to my building owner and direct them to a network of affordable and reliable contractors, as well as notifying them of any available rebates, whether through the City, the state, or DTE. The City of Ann Arbor has had [hundreds of rebates](#) claimed on insulation, air sealing, heat pumps, and induction cooktops, and has capacity for hundreds more. If you're considering making home improvements, these rebates are a great resource for lowering upfront costs.

The HEA also provided me with recommendations I could tackle as a renter, including lowering the temperature of my water heater and reducing unnecessary usage of my heating and cooling system. Swen identified that my duplex was particularly drafty: the single-pane windows in my basement and the lack of door sweeps on the exterior doors were particular pain points, and that temporary removable window sealing kits and door sweeps could address this issue and are easy to install. The report also suggested that the air leaks around the dryer vent and basement windows could be easily addressed with caulking.

If you're interested in getting a free Home Energy Assessment for your residence, you can learn more and sign-up at a2zerohea.org. If you'd like to know more about the rebates the City of Ann Arbor offers, visit osi.a2gov.org/rebates.



A²ZERO Home Energy Advisor Swen Hendrickson assesses ductwork (above) and the draft diverter on a water heater (below).



ORDINANCE TRIFECTA

IN PERFECT HARMONY

The Office of Sustainability and Innovations is responsible for implementing three ordinances relating to the energy and sustainability goals of the City. These ordinances all help provide transparency and accountability around energy usage. By doing this we are bringing residents and building owners into our work and pairing them with numerous incentives the City offers to advance our climate goals.



The City's [Energy and Water Benchmarking Ordinance](#) was approved by City Council in October 2021. This ordinance requires commercial and multifamily properties 20,000 square feet or larger to report aggregated, whole-property energy and water usage to the City annually. The goal of the ordinance is to help building owners and managers understand the energy use of their buildings, and how they compare to similarly sized buildings. As of January 2026, the City of Ann Arbor has reached 80% compliance with the ordinance and 90% of properties are working towards compliance. The next reporting deadline for the City's Energy and Water Benchmarking Ordinance is June 1, 2026.

March 2026 marks the two-year anniversary of the [Home Energy Rating Disclosure Ordinance \(HERD\)](#). The HERD Ordinance requires a [Home Energy Score \(HES\) Assessment](#) be conducted before a house is listed for sale. The HES provides information on the home's projected annual energy costs. Information from that assessment must be included in the home's listing and provided to all potential buyers. The purpose of the ordinance is to provide potential homebuyers information on the total cost of home ownership and information that can help them reduce energy bills, reduce carbon emissions, and improve health and safety. Over 900 homes have received HES assessments since the ordinance went into to full effect, with excellent compliance levels.

On January 6, 2026, the [Green Rental Housing \(GRH\)](#) ordinance went into effect in Ann Arbor. The GRH ordinance requires landlords to meet a baseline energy efficiency standard for all their rental units, as part of their regular rental inspection process. The impacts of this ordinance will enable renters to enjoy lower utility bills, healthier indoor air, and more comfortable room temperatures. Landlords will be made aware of rebates and tax credits which can support upgrades to insulation, air sealing and energy efficient appliances. This ordinance sets minimum standards and while aiding landlords in reaching compliance and providing renters with comfortable, safe places to live.

RESOURCES UPDATE

BUILDING THE ELECTRIFICATION MOVEMENT

A²ZERO Heat Pump Concierge

The [A²ZERO Heat Pump Concierge](#) by [Pearl Edison](#) assists residents with the transition to a heat pump.

In 2025, Pearl Edison worked on 71 air source heat pump projects within the City of Ann Arbor, with 39 of those having completed installation and commissioning as of the end of the year. Most of the projects are 100% electric, and utilize robust City [Home Energy Rebates](#).

The program has also helped an entire co-housing community with a weatherization and heat pump group-buy that will see 39 heat pumps installed in that community alone. If you are interested in learning more about whether your community could do something similar, reach out to co-founder Evan Anderson at evan@pearledison.com



Energy team staff member Connor Dailey on his e-bike – which he uses to commute to work, even in winter!

Lawn Care Rebates

This winter, the City of Ann Arbor launched new rebates for electric leaf blowers and electric snow blowers! These lawn care rebates were created to support the transition away from gas-powered lawn care equipment in accordance with Ann Arbor's new [leaf blower ordinance](#). Equivalent gas equipment must be traded in at Recycle Ann Arbor in order to claim a rebate. Below are the rebates that have been issued to date!

Lawn care rebates: 81
Electric snow blowers/shovels: 38
Electric leaf blowers/rakes: 106
Total number of lawn care rebate applications: 153

To learn more and stay up to date with our lawn care rebates, visit osi.a2gov.org/lawncarerebates and continue to follow our newsletter.



An induction cooktop.

Home Energy Rebates

Thanks to the 2022 Climate Action Millage, there are thousands of dollars to help residents insulate or air seal homes, transition to heat pump water heaters and induction stoves, upgrade electrical panels, and more. These rebates range from \$300 – \$5,500 depending on project, with each household eligible for \$15k – \$25k of rebates. Below are the available rebates, and how many residents have already taken advantage of them! [Learn about eligible projects and more at \[osi.a2gov.org/rebates\]\(https://osi.a2gov.org/rebates\)](#).

Induction cooktop range (\$500 - \$750): 156 claimed

Electric panel upgrade (\$1,000 - \$2,000): 141 claimed

Cold Climate Heat Pump (\$4,000 - \$5,500): 110 claimed

Heat pump water heater (\$1,000 - \$2,000): 86 claimed

Battery Storage (\$2,000 - \$3,500): 83 claimed

Heat pump dryer (\$300 - \$500): 41 claimed

Ductwork bonus (\$1,500 - \$2,500): 8 claimed

E-bikes (50% of bike cost up to \$250 - \$1,000): 197 claimed

Insulation/Air sealing (total including attic, wall, crawl space, rim/band joist, basement wall, air sealing; \$3,000 - \$6,000 + combined bonus \$1,500 - \$2,000): 301 claimed

WELCOME TO NEW OSI TEAM MEMBERS

EVEN MORE ENERGY FOR ENERGY WORK

The Energy Team at the Office of Sustainability and Innovations is growing to accommodate Ann Arbor's building momentum as we transition to clean and renewable energy. Four team members have recently joined us, one full time staff member, and three AmeriCorps volunteers. Learn more about their work below, and join us in welcoming them to the team!



SAMUEL KACHUCK, PhD, Commercial Sustainability Analyst. Sam works to make Ann Arbor a place where businesses and the communities they serve thrive because of sustainability by developing programs that improve efficiency, reduce emissions, and promote our city's green leaders. Prior to joining OSI, Sam worked as a climate scientist and lecturer at the University of Michigan, researching ice sheets, sea level change, and their impact on communities across the globe. He serves on local non-profit boards and working groups and holds degrees in geophysics from Cornell University (Ph.D.), mathematics from the University of Cambridge (M.S.), and physics and economics from Wesleyan University (B.A.). He enjoys riding public transit, playing folk songs on his front steps, and chatting with neighbors.



EVAN EISMAN, AmeriCorps member, joins the energy team with a background in sustainable infrastructure and building with a B.A. in Environmental and Sustainability Studies for Responsible Art and Building Design. Evan is tasked with several projects such as renter engagement, engagement efforts related to outreach to new homebuyers, [Home Energy Assessments \(HEAs\)](#), [Solarize](#) and residential decarbonization efforts.



LUCAS FORGY, AmeriCorps Member, joins OSI's energy team with a background in policy with a B.A. in English and International Affairs. As part of the energy team, Lucas is working on [geothermal](#) engagement in addition to engagement efforts related to outreach to new homebuyers, [Home Energy Assessments \(HEAs\)](#), [Solarize](#), and residential decarbonization efforts.



SARA HALEBLIAN, AmeriCorps Member, joins the team with a background in ecology and sustainability, with a B.A. in environmental studies and M.S. in Environment and Sustainability. As a member of the energy team, Sara is working on several projects including: [geothermal](#) engagement, renter engagement, REC and offsets engagement, and will also help update OSI's circularity dashboard. She is also on the planning committee for A²ZERO Week.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION ON THIS MONTH'S NEWSLETTER TOPIC

The Sustainability Forums unite Office of Sustainability and Innovations staff and other community leaders to discuss local sustainability concepts and efforts—past, present and future. Each Forum features short presentations followed by an interactive session where attendees are encouraged to ask questions and engage with fellow community members.

Join us at this month's forum on Energy on Tuesday, March 24, at 6 PM at the Ann Arbor District Library Downtown Branch.

If you have a topic you'd like to see discussed at an upcoming forum, let us know by sending an email at sustainability@a2gov.org!

A²ZERO CLIMATE ACTION HERO

THE VADUVA FAMILY ARE MARCH 2026'S HEROES

Beginning at the start of this year, the Office of Sustainability and Innovations started recognizing and celebrating Climate Action Heroes operating right here, in our community. These Heroes are individuals who are taking steps to help the community achieve its A²ZERO goal of making a just and equitable transition to community-wide carbon neutrality by the year 2030. The ideal Climate Action Hero is someone who inspires others to make positive change.

Each month, a Hero is selected by the Office of Sustainability and Innovations from all nominated applicants. Selected Climate Action Heroes will be celebrated with a column in the Ann Arbor Observer, as well as in this newsletter and on OSI's social media, and at an awards ceremony.

Individuals are encouraged to celebrate the Climate Action Heroes in their lives by nominating them at OSI.A2GOV.ORG/HERO. Anyone can submit a nomination, but the Hero themselves must live or work in Ann Arbor.



Timotei and Ashley Vaduva, along with their children, have taken direct action to implement A²ZERO Strategies in their home neighborhood of Darlington.

Timotei, an A²ZERO Ambassador, worked with another Ambassador and Pittsfield Elementary to engage with students to install a rain garden.

Timotei and Ashley have also hosted three annual Neighborhood Gatherings (one as a pilot of Ann Arbor Nourishing Neighborhood Network) with the purpose of meeting informally with neighbors to share ideas around water efficiency, resiliency, and general sustainability, with plans to continue this event.

Originally, just Timotei and Ashley were nominated for this recognition, but upon acceptance, they emphasized the importance of including their kids, because, "our kids are our motivation for this work." They continued, "We accept this honor because we want to inspire other parents and caregivers to take some action, even if it's just talking about sustainability or climate solutions."

THE VADUVA FAMILY

A TEAM OF HEROES

All this work is in addition to other ways they take action, both personally and in their community. Timotei and Ashley offer volunteer support for the Pittsfield Elementary PTO, Scarlett Middle School PTO, and Washtenaw Elementary Science Olympiad. Personally, they are currently moving towards full decarbonization of their home with the installation of a ground source heat pump HVAC system.

The Office of Sustainability and Innovations is delighted to celebrate the Vaduva Family as our next A²ZERO Climate Action Heroes for their genuine involvement in their community and their "dynamo" (as the resident who nominated them put it) spirit. They set a great example for incorporating climate action into daily life. For those feeling inspired by the Vaduva's example, information on building community and tackling climate change with your neighbors can be found on [the Office of Sustainability and Innovations website](https://www.osi.a2gov.org).

Thank you for being Climate Action Heroes in our community!
Submit your Hero at OSI.A2GOV.ORG/HERO

COLLABORATOR HIGHLIGHT

GREAT LAKES RENEWABLE ENERGY ASSOCIATION

An Interview with Lexi Crilley,
GLREA Solarize Coordinator

What are your organization's goals?

The Great Lakes Renewable Energy Association (GLREA) is a nonprofit organization of renewable energy advocates who support the expansion of solar, wind, and geothermal energy in Michigan. Our mission is to educate and empower homeowners, businesses, and other organizations to save money and protect our environment by installing renewable energy systems and creating policies that support the expansion of renewable energy and energy justice at the state level. Our key community initiatives include a state-wide Solarize (an educational & group-buy program for solar), weekly Solar Stories, and collaborations with local units of government to advise and assist on sustainable energy development. GLREA also intervenes in utility rate cases at the Michigan Public Service Commission to develop regulatory policies to support solar and demand accountability from utilities. Thus, the central goal of our organization is to meaningfully contribute to decarbonization in a community-centric way and accelerate the just transition to renewable energy.

What are some projects you're excited to share with the community?

We are excited to share that we are bringing Solarize for businesses, nonprofits, and places of worship to Washtenaw County! This program will kick off in spring 2026 and aims to complement the residential Solarize program run by A²ZERO. GLREA is working with the Washtenaw 2030 District to ensure participants save money on their energy bills and get personalized guidance on choosing the right type of solar technology, accessing federal tax credits before they expire, and receiving the group-buy discount offered through Solarize. Our first event in Washtenaw County will be in partnership with Homeland Solar on March 24, 2026, held at their nearby warehouse from 7 p.m. - 8 p.m. If you have been considering getting solar for your business, nonprofit, place of worship, school, or local government building, please join us for a fun night of solar education, community connection, and delicious food! If you or your organization are interested, [please register in advance](#).



GLREA engaging the community throughout several recent events.

COLLABORATOR HIGHLIGHT

GREAT LAKES RENEWABLE ENERGY ASSOCIATION

How does your work contribute to A²ZERO's goals?

GLREA's work directly aligns with A²ZERO — especially Solarize, which was built on the model passed along to us by A²ZERO itself! A²ZERO has been both a valued collaborator and an inspiration in the sustainability and environmental justice space. We aspire to contribute to the impressive carbon neutrality goal of 2030 by helping expand distributed renewable energy generation, while also spreading Ann Arbor's ideas and initiatives across the state for others to take tangible climate action. The community-centric nature of GLREA's programs also contributes to enhancing the resilience of our people and place, ensuring that individuals and organizations are united in collectively creating a livable future. The majority of GLREA's members live in Ann Arbor, and we empower them as advocates to create positive change, thus working towards the City's A²ZERO carbon neutrality goals.

How does sustainability factor into your work?

Sustainability is central to our work of expanding access to renewable energy. We are incrementally increasing renewable energy capacity with every individual or organization we aid with getting solar; therefore, reducing the use of electricity from the grid that is generated by harmful fossil fuels, little by little. We believe building a distributed network of carbon-free generation is key to combating climate change. Residential and commercial renewable energy systems installed add up. As of summer 2025, we surpassed a megawatt of installed solar capacity from our residential Solarize program alone, with installations across the state! In addition to helping create these sustainable energy systems from the ground up, we strive to create systematic change through the state legislature and continually advocate for policies that advance sustainability and combat fossil fuel dominance. These efforts include campaigns such as enabling community solar, increasing renewable energy targets, and more stringently regulating investor-owned utilities.

What are you looking forward to as your work progresses?

GLREA is looking forward to continually expanding our renewable energy advocacy and adapting our strategies to accommodate the challenges that may arise. In recent months, we have seen new and daunting energy conundrums emerge (such as AI and data centers) while older challenges still exist, like our efforts to close the remaining coal-fired power plants in Michigan. No matter what challenges renewable energy is facing, we will remain steadfast in our dedication to advancing clean, regenerative, safe, and affordable energy for all. Energy justice will be a core component of our work progressing into the future, and we seek to develop innovative solutions for expanding access to solar and other renewable technologies, from plug-in balcony solar to virtual power plants.

How can others get involved?

Become a member at glrea.org! GLREA is a member-based organization, so we are always looking for new renewable energy advocates — both individuals and organizations — to join our team. Member contributions and volunteer efforts are crucial to supporting our educational and advocacy programs. We have a variety of engagement opportunities to accommodate members' interests and skillsets. Whether you want to build your own knowledge on renewable energy subject matter, serve as a community advocate for these ideas, or delve into utility policy intervention, GLREA has a project for you!

And again, if you have been considering getting solar for your business, nonprofit, place of worship, school, or local government building register for our upcoming Solarize event! Join us, the Washtenaw 2030 District, and Homeland Solar on March 24, 2026, held at their nearby warehouse from 7 p.m. - 8 p.m. for a fun night of solar education, community connection, and delicious food!



COLLABORATOR HIGHLIGHT

2030 DISTRICT MULTIFAMILY GROUP

What are your organization's goals?

Our mission is to dramatically reduce carbon emissions associated with buildings across Washtenaw County. We work with commercial and multifamily property owners to reduce energy waste, water consumption, and transportation emissions — typically targeting 50% reductions compared to baseline performance. Because buildings represent a major share of community-wide emissions, improving building performance is one of the most effective ways to move Washtenaw toward carbon neutrality.

How have you been working toward those goals lately?

Membership in the Washtenaw 2030 District is free to property owners and managers. Members access a range of free benefits to increase building performance, decrease energy costs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Over the past year, our efforts have focused on expanding practical support for building owners and managers — especially in rental housing and commercial properties.

For rental housing, we're providing landlords with Green Rental Housing Ordinance compliance resources, including free benchmarking services, energy assessments for buildings with a full calendar year of data, and more. On the commercial side, we're preparing for expanded decarbonization work launching later this year. That includes technical assistance for electrification, energy efficiency upgrades, building envelope improvements, and on-site renewable energy installations.

We also help property owners navigate federal incentives available through the Inflation Reduction Act, including Elective Pay opportunities for eligible entities, such as houses of worship and nonprofits.



The 2030 District at the 2025 Green Fair.

What projects are you most excited to share with the community?

There's a lot of momentum right now. We are benchmarking over 39 million square feet of buildings throughout Washtenaw County. Published case studies, led by our Houses of Worship and Municipality best practice groups, share detailed decarbonization plans that are well along and we are tracking GHG, energy and cost changes.

Expanded Green Rental Housing support in collaboration with the **Western Washtenaw Rental Housing Association** is helping landlords move from compliance to performance — lowering utility costs, increasing property value and improving comfort. Landlords interest in learning more can [register for the upcoming workshop on Monday, April 6, 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.](#)

We are continuing our monthly [Implementing A²ZERO lunch & learn series](#) that shares high performance building strategies and technologies, applicable today, for new construction and renovation.

Our University of Michigan Graham Sustainability Scholars project team is reaching out to all Washtenaw County Houses of Worship to invite them to join the District Green Team and start their efficiency and decarbonization journey through free benchmarking and a free energy audit.

In addition, we're collaborating with partners such as the **Great Lakes Renewable Energy Association** to maximize the addition of on-site solar installations before tax credits end in 2027. [Upcoming Solarize group purchasing efforts](#) will make solar more affordable through bulk buying power, and Elective Pay Ambassadors are helping nonprofits and public entities access federal clean energy funding directly.

Together, these programs remove barriers and turn climate goals into actionable steps.

COLLABORATOR HIGHLIGHT

2030 DISTRICT MULTIFAMILY GROUP



An engagement session hosted by the 2030 District.

How does sustainability factor into your work?

Sustainability is at the core of everything we do, but we approach it holistically.

- Environmentally, we work to help you reduce emissions and resource use.
- Economically, we help owners lower operating costs and improve long-term asset value.
- Socially, we support healthier indoor environments and reduce energy burdens for tenants.

In short, sustainability isn't just about carbon. It's about creating buildings that are efficient, resilient, and beneficial to the people who use them.

How does your work contribute to Ann Arbor's carbon neutrality goals?

Building emissions are one of the largest contributors to local greenhouse gas emissions. By helping owners reduce energy waste, electrify systems, and install renewable energy, we're addressing that challenge directly. We translate climate policy into practical implementation:

- Benchmarking building performance
- Identifying upgrade opportunities
- Connecting owners to financial incentives
- Providing technical guidance

Every building that reduces emissions moves the entire community closer to its carbon neutrality target.

For people looking to get a HERS assessment for Green Rental Housing, how can they get started?

The first step is hiring a certified HERS (Home Energy Rating System) rater. These professionals conduct on-site evaluations of the property and provide guidance and options for compliance with the Green Rental Housing Ordinance through the HERS Index or the Green Rental Housing Checklist pathways. We're available to help landlords understand the process so you can make a clear, cost-effective plan forward.

How can others get involved?

There's a role for everyone! **Property Owners and Managers:** Join the Washtenaw 2030 District, benchmark your building, apply for an energy management grant to plan your efficiency and renewable options tailored to your building.

Businesses: Establish a Green Team to create and implement a sustainability plan. Join the [Green Business Challenge](#) for strategies, support and recognition. Join the Washtenaw 2030 District, benchmark your space or building, apply for an energy management grant to plan your efficiency and renewable upgrades.

Residents: Engage with your municipality, school, business, non-profit, or House of Worship as a Green Team member to promote sustainable practices in the organizations you are involved with.

Climate action in Washtenaw County is a shared effort, and the tools to participate are more accessible than ever.

FROM THE A²ZERO COMMUNITY COOKBOOK

VIEW THIS RECIPE AND 70+ MORE AT OSI.A2GOV.ORG/COOKBOOK

LAZY EGGROLLS

From the Kitchen of: Caitlin Yevzelman, Co-owner, Cedar Field Farm

Preparation Time: 20 minutes | **Cook Time:** 15 minutes | **Yield:** 4 small bowls

Common Allergens: Shellfish, Egg

“One of my favorite foods is my mom’s Vietnamese eggrolls - they’re wonderfully savory, comforting, humble, yet obscure (wood ear mushrooms?!). The delicious filling is hand rolled in wonton wrappers and deep fried to golden brown perfection. My parents spend HOURS making them for special occasions and it’s a true labor of love.

Anyways this recipe is not that - my lazy eggrolls are a quick weeknight fix using whatever veg is in the fridge and some staple aromatics to give me a taste of home when I need to satisfy a craving,” shares Caitlin.

“Growing up we never really ate Vietnamese food unless we were in large family gatherings or at an occasion worthy of the women in my family hand rolling eggrolls. Which is a shame because I LOVE Vietnamese cuisine. These lazy eggrolls give me the flavor of my mom’s without the labor involved, they’ll never be a substitute but still better than any store bought eggroll I’ve ever tried,” she adds.

INGREDIENTS:

FOR THE ROLLS:

- 1 pound mushrooms (fresh oyster works great)
- 1 white onion
- 1-2 carrots
- 1 clove garlic
- 1/2-inch piece of ginger (grated)
- 1 Tablespoon oyster sauce
- salt & pepper, to taste
- 1 egg
- 4-6 rice paper wrappers

FOR SERVING:

- Crunchy fresh veggies - lettuce, radishes, carrots, etc
- Fresh herbs - cilantro, mint, basil, etc
- Green onion
- Pickled chillis

INSTRUCTIONS:

PREPARE THE FILLING:

- Use a food processor or finely hand chop the mushrooms, onion, carrot, garlic, and ginger.
- Sauté the filling over medium heat until the veggies have softened and most of the water has evaporated.
- Add the oyster sauce and season the filling to taste.
- Remove the filling from the heat and let it cool.
- Once cooled, add the egg and mix it well to combine (this will help bind the filling).

ASSEMBLE THE ROLLS:

- Working one at a time: wet both sides of the rice paper wrapper (running it under running faucet works great) then lay it flat on a cutting board. The wrapper will need 30-60 seconds to soften for rolling, but wrappers can be finicky so be ready to move quickly!
- Spoon a few tablespoons of the filling mixture in the middle of the wrapper leaving an inch on both edges to close the side edges over.
- Fold the wrapper in half over the filling, lightly pressing around it to prevent air bubbles.

FROM THE A²ZERO COMMUNITY COOKBOOK

VIEW THIS RECIPE AND 70+ MORE AT OSI.A2GOV.ORG/COOKBOOK

- Fold in the sides of the wrapper and roll the rest of the log to the far edge of the wrapper.
- Continue rolling as many lazy rolls as you'd like or until you run out of filling. The cooked filling freezes well for later use.

FRY THE ROLLS:

- Add the rolls to an air fryer, spacing to ensure they don't touch.
- Spray the rolls with a neutral cooking oil and air fry them at 375° F for 10 minutes, flipping halfway.
- Increase the temperature to 400° F and fry for another 3-5 minutes until the rolls are golden and crispy (with an internal temperature of 165° F).
- Serve and enjoy, or:
 - Use a lettuce leaf as a boat to nestle fresh crunchy veggies, herbs, the lazy eggroll, some chilis and green onions.
 - Splash a little rice wine vinegar on top or dip in a sweet chili sauce and enjoy!

NOTES:

- Any veggies here can easily be substituted. Just use whatever you have in the fridge!



MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR CILANTRO:

“When using cilantro, use the leaves AND the stems. Slice the stems thinly and mix them along with the sliced leaves. Never chop cilantro like parsley or the flavor dissipates. The stems have a lot of flavor and can be used universally throughout the kitchen,” according to community member, Adam Roy.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

SUBMIT YOUR CLIMATE ACTION HERO! Every month, A²ZERO Climate Action Heroes recognizes a community member who inspires others to make positive change and help the community achieve its A²ZERO goals. These heroes are recognized in the monthly sustainability newsletter (The Charging Station), in the Ann Arbor Observer, on OSI social media accounts, and at a yearly celebration with all of the year's other Heroes! Nominate an individual as an A²ZERO Climate Action Hero, at osi.a2gov.org/hero. Congratulations to Ken Winter for being February 2026's Climate Action Hero.

\$184,000 IN A2ZERO HOME ENERGY REBATES CLAIMED IN PAST MONTH. Funded by the Community Climate Action Millage, the A2ZERO Home Energy Rebates have helped hundreds of Ann Arbor residents fund energy projects at home. Read the article on page 5 and visit osi.a2gov.org/rebates to learn more!

COMPLETED INSTALLATION OF SOLAR CARPORT AT FIRE STATION 3. This system was relocated from 4th and Catherine, a former DDA parking lot now the site of AAHC's Dunbar Tower. The system isn't yet online as we're waiting for some other electrical work to be completed at the station before final system tie in. But when it is live, check out the Block M that's included in the design!

SAVE THE DATE: A²ZERO WEEK. Celebrate the sixth anniversary of the A²ZERO Plan with a week (May 31 – June 6) of events, resources, action, and fun. Learn more about last year's A²ZERO Week to get a taste for this year's at osi.a2gov.org/a2zeroweek.

OSI RECEIVED LEAK DETECTORS to give out to small food retail businesses who participate in our refrigerant management technical assistance program to help eligible businesses reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and save money by replacing or retrofitting old and faulty refrigerant systems. Interested businesses can sign up for the technical assistance program at a2gov.org/refrigerant.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS: EV CHARGING STATION DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT SUPPORT SERVICES. To ensure the benefits of EV ownership are experienced across the entire community, the City is building a convenient, reliable, and affordable public EV charging network. In preparation for the expansion of electric vehicle charging stations (EVCS), the City is looking to contract with an experienced EVCS design team to successfully execute technical and design work to make EV charging fully operational at select sites. The City intends to award this design scope to a single qualified firm. Learn more by reading the [Request for Proposals](#) online. Applications are due by March 19 at 11 a.m.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS: ROOF REPAIR & REPLACEMENT SERVICES IN BRYANT NEIGHBORHOOD OF ANN ARBOR. The City is seeking proposals for qualified firms to undertake roof repair and replacement work as part of the City's efforts to decarbonize the Bryant neighborhood. It is estimated a total of 40-60 roofs will need repair or replacement during this period. As such, the City anticipates making multiple awards under this RFP. Learn more by reading the [Request for Proposals](#) online. Applications are due by March 19 at 2 p.m.

CONNECT WITH A²ZERO

Click the links below to see the latest updates, events, and more!

[Facebook @A2Zero](#)

[Instagram @a2zero2030](#)

[YouTube](#)

a2zero.org

[Join our mailing list](#)

[LinkedIn](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Electronics Collection Drop-Off Receptacle | *March 9 - 24, City Hall*

Household electronics such as laptops, cell phones, tablets, keyboards, hard drives, hot spots, GPS units, routers & modems, cords & cables, media (CDs, DVDs, disks, tapes), consoles will all be accepted. Please note that the bin opening is 1.5 inches tall, and items that do not fit cannot be accepted. Registration is not required. The drop-off bin will be open during City Hall's regular business hours (8 AM - 5 PM). Learn more at a2gov.org/electronics.

Monthly Clothing Swap | *March 19, 4 - 7 PM* | *City Hall Basement A*

Join the Office of Sustainability and Innovations for monthly clothing swaps on the third Thursday of each month! These are a perfect way to give your gently used clothes a new home. And you might just find an item of clothing you have been looking for, without having to buy it new.

Sustainability Forum: Climate Action for Renters - Breaking Barriers to Participation | *March 31, 6 PM* | *Ann Arbor District Library Downtown Branch*

Join Ann Arbor's Office of Sustainability and Innovations for the third session of the 2026 Sustainability Forums to explore how renters can participate in Ann Arbor's energy programs. From the green rental housing ordinance to the home energy advisor program, the Sustainable Energy Utility, and beyond, come to learn and ask questions about how renters can increase their comfort, improve their indoor air quality, reduce their emissions, and more!

Monthly Clothing Swap | *April 16, 4 - 7 PM* | *City Hall Council Chambers*

Join the Office of Sustainability and Innovations for monthly clothing swaps on the third Thursday of each month! These are a perfect way to give your gently used clothes a new home. And you might just find an item of clothing you have been looking for, without having to buy it new.

Earth Day Festival | *April 19, 12 - 4:30 PM* | *Leslie Science and Nature Center*

The Ann Arbor Earth Day Festival is an annual celebration coordinated by the Ann Arbor Earth Day Festival Planning Committee, a coalition of local environmental nonprofits and agencies. This free, family-friendly event features displays; hands-on activities; live entertainment; green building and commuting technologies; energy topics; water awareness; sustainable agriculture; and more.

Climate Teach-In | *April 25, 1 - 5 PM* | *Mitchell Elementary School*

Returning for its fourth year, this year's annual Climate Teach-In will be Sunday, April 25. This free event provides residents the opportunity to learn not only from local sustainability leaders but other community members as they create and innovate climate solutions.

Sustainability Forum: Celebrating the A²ZERO Community Cook! *April 28, 6 PM* | *Ann Arbor District Library, Downtown Branch*

Join Ann Arbor's Office of Sustainability and Innovations and members of the local food community for the 4th session of the 2026 Sustainability Forums to celebrate the recent release of the A²ZERO Community Cookbook! Hear from City staff, local food leaders, and contributors of the cookbook about how building community through food makes Ann Arbor a more sustainable and resilient City.

For more information on our upcoming events, please visit www.a2gov.org/sustainability/events.