

# THE CHARGING STATION

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF A<sup>2</sup>ZERO AND  
THE ANN ARBOR OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY AND INNOVATIONS



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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Grace Franke (pictured here in one of the City's four new all-electric refuse trucks during A<sup>2</sup>ZERO Week!) is the Communications Coordinator at OSI. It is her pleasure to support all communications that come from the Office, including social media, press releases, this newsletter, and more. Interested in learning more? Reach out to Grace at [gfranke@a2gov.org](mailto:gfranke@a2gov.org).



*Bandemer Park in the winter time.*

## 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 ways to get involved with climate action in 2026. 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](http://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 A<sup>2</sup>ZERO 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.

# NEW YEAR, NEW RESOLUTIONS

## WAYS TO GET INVOLVED IN CLIMATE ACTION IN ANN ARBOR RIGHT NOW

2025 was a busy year full of lots of hard work from the community and the Office of Sustainability and Innovations (OSI) – read more about this in the December edition of the [Charging Station](#). And 2026 promises to continue that trend. Below, we've detailed some programs and initiatives that residents can get involved with right now to join this work and this movement, as well as highlighting some sustainability-related things to look forward to in 2026.

While this is only a selection of some of OSI's 90+ current initiatives and programs, residents are encouraged to learn about all the rest at [www.a2gov.org/sustainability](http://www.a2gov.org/sustainability).

**Become an A<sup>2</sup>ZERO Ambassador:** The A<sup>2</sup>ZERO Ambassador program is a great way to get involved in local climate action and hands-on education. A<sup>2</sup>ZERO Ambassadors play a vital role in our work to achieve a just and equitable transition to carbon neutrality community-wide by the year 2030. No prior experience is necessary to join, and all Ann Arbor community members are invited to apply. Applications will open soon! Learn more at [osi.a2gov.org/ambassadors](http://osi.a2gov.org/ambassadors).

**Attend one of our upcoming Swap Days:** Swap days are opportunities for community members to come together and exchange goods, such as clothes, books, décor, small appliances, and more, all for free. It's a perfect way to give your unwanted items a new home instead of sending them to a landfill! And a great way to find that item you've been looking for without having to buy it new. Swaps are hosted on the third Thursday of every month at City Hall from 4 – 7 PM (this month's will be January 15), with more popping up around the city all the time. Or, see our guide to plan your own swap day in your neighborhood, all at [osi.a2gov.org/swapdays](http://osi.a2gov.org/swapdays).

**Sign up for a free Home Assessment through the Home Energy Advisor:** The A<sup>2</sup>ZERO Home Energy Advisor (HEA) program supports Ann Arbor residents in decarbonizing their homes. All City of Ann Arbor residents (homeowners and renters) are eligible to participate and receive an assessment of their home and two reports with recommendations for lowering the home's carbon footprint, and/or a consultation call where residents can ask related questions. Over 500 residents have already taken advantage of this free program! Customized recommendations can be paired with A<sup>2</sup>ZERO Home Energy Rebates which offer thousands of dollars to Ann Arbor residents to make home energy improvements. Learn more about the HEA at [a2zerohea.org](http://a2zerohea.org) and more about the rebates at [osi.a2gov.org/rebates](http://osi.a2gov.org/rebates).



*Clothing Swap at  
Midnight Madness  
2025*



*Behind the scenes  
with the Home  
Energy Advisor.*

# NEW YEAR, NEW RESOLUTIONS

## WAYS TO GET INVOLVED IN CLIMATE ACTION IN ANN ARBOR RIGHT NOW

**Check out the A<sup>2</sup>ZERO Community Cookbook:** Now available, the A<sup>2</sup>ZERO Community Cookbook is a free and practical resource for sustainable eating in Ann Arbor! With over 70 delicious, climate-friendly recipes contributed by Ann Arbor residents and 20 inspiring stories from local food leaders, the cookbook is a reflection of our city's commitment to sustainability and good food. The cookbook can be found online at [osi.a2gov.org/cookbook](https://osi.a2gov.org/cookbook), at the Ann Arbor District Library, and at various locations around town!

**Trade in your gas-powered snowblower and get an electric one:** 'Tis the season, to trade in a gas-powered snowblower and get an electric one! Electric snowblowers help improve health, reduce emissions, and are quieter than their gas-powered counterparts. Available until January 31, 2026, residential rebates offer up to 100% of the cost of a new shovel or 50% of the cost of a new electric snow-blower to a maximum of \$200 with the trade-in of a gas-powered snowblower. Learn more at [osi.a2gov.org/lawncarerebates](https://osi.a2gov.org/lawncarerebates).

**Learn about and join the Sustainable Energy Utility (SEU):** The Sustainable Energy Utility (SEU) is an opt-in, supplemental, community-owned energy utility that provides 100% renewable energy from local solar and battery storage systems installed at participating homes and businesses in the city. Approved by Ann Arbor voters in November 2024, development of the SEU is actively progressing with the goal of having the SEU's first assets built in 2026! To learn more about everything the SEU will offer and get regular updates on its development, visit [a2gov.org/a2seu](https://a2gov.org/a2seu).

**Home and Rental Energy Rebates:** Looking to get some insulation or upgrade an appliance this year? Then check out our Home Energy Rebates where you could be eligible for thousands in savings at [osi.a2gov.org/rebates](https://osi.a2gov.org/rebates).

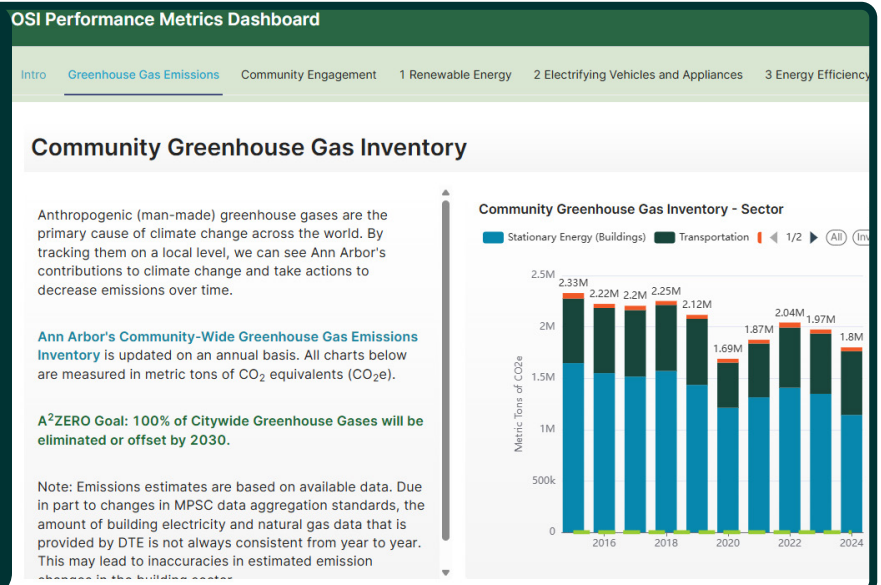
**Trees and Pollinator Support:** Help us protect our natural system this year by joining our Pollinator Aware Yard Care program or by partaking in our 10,000 Trees initiative. Both provide free resources to help you build and tend to our local natural system. More information available on our [Natural Resources webpage](#).

**Ensure your family is ready for a disaster.** If you haven't yet, 2026 is a great time to create your family's emergency preparedness plan and build your own emergency kit. Information on what to include, as well as upcoming community meetings around resilience, can be found on [the City's resilience website](#).

**Need more ideas or not sure where to start?** Check out an episode of Green Light or read a previous newsletter. Both resources are available at [osi.a2gov.org/events](https://osi.a2gov.org/events).

### Check out the A<sup>2</sup>ZERO Dashboard

This dashboard shares data on the progress of actions included in the A<sup>2</sup>ZERO plan. As a live dashboard, it is regularly updated with new information and initiatives the City advances to meet its A<sup>2</sup>ZERO goals. The dashboard is a great resource for visualizing and understanding the impacts of A<sup>2</sup>ZERO's many programs and initiatives. See data on everything from Ann Arbor's greenhouse gas emissions to our renewable energy progress to vehicles miles traveled to a map of where trees have been planted so far – and so much more! Dive in and see for yourself at [osi.a2gov.org/dashboard](https://osi.a2gov.org/dashboard).



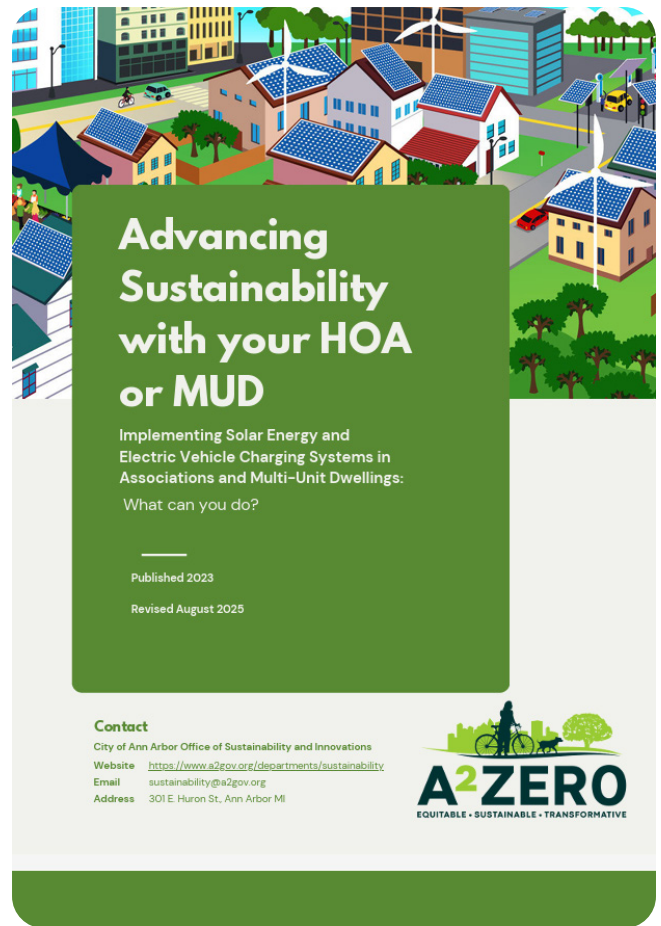


# STRATEGIES TO REDUCE YOUR OWN IMPACT

PICK UP A NEW HABIT OR RESOURCE

There are many ways to reduce your carbon footprint. Below, we've recommended some exciting resources and convenient behavior changes to help Ann Arbor on its journey to carbon neutrality by the year 2030.

- **Learn to repair with some of our great collaborators!** Give a friend a fish and they'll have dinner for a night, teach a friend to fish and they'll have dinner for a lifetime! While we don't have any fishing instructors as A<sup>2</sup>ZERO Collaborators (yet!), we do have lots of Collaborators teaching valuable skills, such as how to repair bikes, household items, clothes, and more. Learn a new skill with a friend and then take those skills out into the world this winter!
- **Encourage and support pollution-reducing practices in your community:** bring sustainability to your neighborhood, apartment complex, condo association, and more with our Advancing Sustainability in your Home Owners Association or Multi-Unit Dwelling Guide. Check out these resources and more at [osi.a2gov.org/solar](https://osi.a2gov.org/solar).
- **Reduce water consumption:** taking shorter showers, turning the water off while brushing your teeth, and fixing a leaky faucet are all great ways to save water! See more tips like this at [a2gov.org/sustainability](https://a2gov.org/sustainability) and check out the Energy and Efficiency at Home page under the "For Families & Individuals" tab.
- **Conserve water in the kitchen and laundry:** Only run the dishwasher and washing machine for full loads to further save water. Plus, if you're thinking about upgrading your appliances, check out the Home Energy Rebates at [osi.a2gov.org/rebates](https://osi.a2gov.org/rebates).
- **Keep it cool:** Turn your thermostat a few degrees lower in winter and higher in summer to save a significant amount of energy and money on your energy bill. Learn more about energy efficiency by visiting [a2gov.org/sustainability](https://a2gov.org/sustainability) and navigating to the Energy Efficiency at Home page!
- **Take care of a rain garden.** Rain gardens help to capture stormwater runoff and filter it of pollutants before it reaches the Huron River. These gardens are popping up all over Ann Arbor as residents plant them in their own yards and in shared community spaces. Learn how to build your own rain garden or volunteer to help maintain a public rain garden through the Washtenaw County Water Resources Office at [washtenaw.org/647/Rain-Gardens](https://washtenaw.org/647/Rain-Gardens).
- **Plant a tree in your yard:** wishing you could improve your canopy coverage? Look for the next FreeTree Giveaway to get a tree, for free, to nurture in your own yard. Learn more about the 10,000 Trees initiative at [a2gov.org/10ktrees](https://a2gov.org/10ktrees).



*Above: The Advancing Sustainability with your HOA or MUD guide.*

*Below: A rain garden in Washtenaw County.*



# STRATEGIES TO REDUCE YOUR OWN IMPACT

PICK UP A NEW HABIT OR RESOURCE

Yard sign for the Pollinator Aware Yard Care program.



A cyclist's perspective on protected bike lanes in Downtown Ann Arbor.

- **Pollinator Aware Yard Care:** Pick up some pollinator-friendly yard care habits to take care of pollinators like bees, butterflies, and more, from [osi.a2gov.org/pollinators](https://osi.a2gov.org/pollinators).
- **Visit a local park with a new friend:** Local resilience is at its strongest when we're close with our neighbors. Get to know a neighbor and one of Ann Arbor's 162 parks! Visit [a2gov.org/parks](https://a2gov.org/parks) to find your new favorite spot.
- **Make an emergency preparedness plan:** As we enter the season of chilly, icy weather, making a plan for what you'll do in case of emergency and reviewing it periodically can come in handy. Learn more at [ready.gov](https://ready.gov).
- **Replace disposable items with their reusable counterparts:** Cut down on plastic waste by transitioning to your own reusable straw, utensils, cups, and take-out containers. Learn more about our circular economy work at [a2gov.org/sustainability](https://a2gov.org/sustainability) and navigating to the Circular Economy page beneath the "For Families & Individuals" tab.
- **Reuse before buying new:** check out a second-hand store or learn to repair broken items before disposing of something and replacing it with something new. Check out our list of collaborators to find local businesses that can help you reuse and repair your items at [osi.a2gov.org/collaborators](https://osi.a2gov.org/collaborators).
- **Pick up biking:** maybe you've noticed the protected bike lanes popping up around the city – give them a try! With protected bikeways and biking infrastructure growing every day in Ann Arbor, there's never been a better time to try a new method of transportation on your way to work, school, or play.
- **Take the bus:** With expansions of service and offerings coming to TheRide all the time, taking the bus in Ann Arbor has never been easier. Plan your trip at [theride.org](https://theride.org).
- **Reduce food waste:** plan meals carefully, compost organic waste, and shop locally to reduce the waste and carbon footprint of your consumption.
- **Eat and shop at local restaurants and markets for sustainable, yummy food:** Ann Arbor is full of good food, to be enjoyed both at a restaurant and at home. View our list of Collaborators to find local, sustainable restaurants and markets at [osi.a2gov.org/collaborators](https://osi.a2gov.org/collaborators). Plus check out the new A<sup>2</sup>ZERO cookbook at [osi.a2gov.org/cookbook](https://osi.a2gov.org/cookbook)!



# A<sup>2</sup>ZERO CLIMATE ACTION HERO

ANNIE BRODERICK IS JANUARY 2026'S HERO

Starting this month, the Office of Sustainability and Innovations would like to recognize and celebrate Climate Action Heroes operating right here, in our community. These Heroes are individuals who are taking steps to help the community achieve its A<sup>2</sup>ZERO 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 will be 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. In 2026, all Climate Action Heroes will also be recognized at an awards ceremony with the Mayor and the City Administrator.

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



## ANNIE BRODERICK

**AN INSPIRATIONAL EDUCATOR  
AND SKILL-BUILDER**

January's A<sup>2</sup>ZERO Climate Action Hero is Annie Broderick, someone who works to ensure Washtenaw County residents are equipped with the skills necessary to steward healthy soils through composting and nature-friendly garden practices. Not only is Annie a teacher for Washtenaw County's Master Composter course, but she also oversees the Compost Education Center at Leslie Science and Nature Center.

During the composting course, she takes students out to the Education Center or another Project Grow site on weekends to provide them with a hands-on opportunity to learn and build their composting skills.

"Her enthusiasm about composting is infectious," writes the resident who nominated Annie. "The role that she plays in supporting others to build their own knowledge and skills is essential to developing everyday people into passionate and dedicated environmental stewards."

The Office of Sustainability and Innovations is delighted to celebrate Annie as our first A<sup>2</sup>ZERO Climate Action Hero for the passion and wisdom she brings to work that not only helps our environment, but brings together our community. Annie has made a big impact on those around her!

For residents looking to learn more about composting in our community, [Washtenaw County has online resources available](#), [Project Grow offers a Master Composter class once a year](#), and [information on compost collection in Ann Arbor can be found on the City's website](#).

**Thank you Annie for being a Climate Action Hero in our community!**  
**Submit your Hero at [OSI.A2GOV.ORG/HERO](https://OSI.A2GOV.ORG/HERO)**

# COLLABORATOR SPOTLIGHT: CTN

BINGE-WORTHY, LOCAL TELEVISION

Residents looking to watch enjoyable, educational, and engaging content while staying inside during the snowy season need look no further than Community Television Network, more commonly known as CTN! A regular partner of A<sup>2</sup>ZERO and of many other organizations throughout the community, CTN creates, produces, and streams memorable and meaningful television programming that celebrates the vivid life and interests of the Ann Arbor community.

CTN aims to inform, educate, and connect residents while amplifying community voices and increasing civic engagement. Since 1973, CTN has provided free television production workshops to residents and non-profit organizations and created local cable programming about our community. CTN is one of the oldest access television operations in the country and has experienced a dynamic and productive existence.

CTN has a few new series in pre-production for 2026, but it's too soon to disclose any more information just yet. They're also exploring the potential of a City of Ann Arbor podcast and are excited about the opportunity to add another avenue for sharing information with the community.

CTN works with staff at the Office of Sustainability and Innovations to produce PSAs, promos, and an entire series – Green Light! Presented by A<sup>2</sup>ZERO, it celebrates the residents who are envisioning, creating, and establishing an equitable and sustainable future for our community. Green Light presents a unique opportunity to get to know the faces behind the climate action work in Ann Arbor. Catch up on the latest episodes of Green Light at [osi.a2gov.org/GreenLight](https://osi.a2gov.org/GreenLight).

Sustainability factors into CTN's work through production choices and content delivery. They prioritize digital-first distribution, reuse equipment and recycle when possible, and minimize physical materials. They also support sustainability efforts by producing content – such as PSAs, promos, and series – that inform the community about City initiatives and environmentally friendly practices.

As CTN moves into a new location in 2026, there are many exciting changes, new ideas, and fresh opportunities to expand our vision and better serve the community, as well as expanding and enhancing programming.

If residents have programming topics or ideas, CTN wants to hear from you! Reach out to CTN to share your suggestions and get involved in creating content for the community at [a2gov.org/ctn](https://a2gov.org/ctn). Residents who are looking to enjoy CTN's programming can find it on Comcast/Xfinity channels 16, 17, 18, and 19, online streaming and video on demand, and on the CTN YouTube channel.



*CTN staff hard at work in the field.*





# COLLABORATOR SPOTLIGHT: NEW COLLABORATORS

WELCOME TO THE NETWORK!

In the past few months, three new Collaborators have joined the A<sup>2</sup>ZERO Collaborators Network, a community-wide network working on sustainability in the Ann Arbor area. Now at 144 businesses and organizations, these community members are vital to fully realize the A<sup>2</sup>ZERO plan. Get to know these new Collaborators below! See the full list of Collaborators at [osi.a2gov.org/collaborators](https://osi.a2gov.org/collaborators). Organizations interested in becoming an A<sup>2</sup>ZERO Collaborator should email DeAndré Calvert at [dcalvert@a2gov.org](mailto:dcalvert@a2gov.org).



**MOW GREEN MOW:** Founded in spring 2023, Mow Green mow is an all-electric lawncare company, that cares about taking care of your lawn and the environment. In their words, “our work is prompt, professional, and pleasantly quiet” thanks to the all-electric equipment! Learn more at [info@mowgreenmow.com](mailto:info@mowgreenmow.com).



**AC HOTEL ANN ARBOR DOWNTOWN:** With solar panels on their roof and more work to come in the future to reduce their waste, AC Hotel (mockup pictured above) is working to align itself with sustainability, community, and environmental stewardship as part of Marriott’s commitment to responsible hospitality and local engagement. Opening this month – learn more on [the AC Hotel Ann Arbor Downtown webpage](#).



**HICKORY NUT FARMSTEAD:** Hickory Nut Farmstead is a small farmstead in Dexter, MI, sharing woven funerary vessels, conventional baskets, and native plants. Passionate about deathcare better rooted in ecology and community, all funerary baskets and shrouds incorporate local plants that have been sustainably harvested in Michigan. Learn more at [hickorynutfarmstead.com](https://hickorynutfarmstead.com).

**Save the Date!**

**CONQUER THE COLD**

**The challenge begins January 12**

getDowntown TheRide CITY OF ANN ARBOR MICHIGAN DDA

**Conquer the Cold runs January 12 through February 12, 2026!** Record bike, bus, carpool, walking, and other green trips to earn rewards and show the impact of choosing sustainable transportation. Participants will have chances to win gift cards to downtown Ann Arbor businesses.

Download the getDowntown app to plan your trips, record them to earn points, and redeem your points for rewards such as restaurant coupons, retailer discounts, and tickets to shows and attractions.

Learn more at [win.getdowntown.org](https://win.getdowntown.org)!



# FROM THE A<sup>2</sup>ZERO COMMUNITY COOKBOOK

VIEW THIS RECIPE AND 70+ MORE AT [OSI.A2GOV.ORG/COOKBOOK](https://osi.a2gov.org/cookbook)

## CURRIED SQUASH SOUP

From the Kitchen of: Rembrandt van der Ploeg and Marcia van der Ploeg, Community Members

**Preparation Time:** 30 minutes | **Cook Time:** 1 hour | **Yield:** 4 quarts, or 10 (12-ounce) bowls

**Common Allergens:** Milk (Optional), Wheat, Tree Nuts



"Our 2024 community farm harvest! The squash lasted into the winter so that we could make this warming soup!"

Naturally sweet and creamy, this soup showcases the best flavors of winter squash! This recipe is a twist on a classic pureed squash soup yet draws on Thai-inspired ingredients to add a punch of flavor that perfectly complements the sweetness of the squash.

"When I was young, my mother, Marcia van der Ploeg, would make this dish every autumn or winter. My family and I are members and descendants of the Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians (Waganakising Odawa). Each fall, my mom goes up North to our reservation in Harbor Springs to help harvest vegetables from the community farm with her sisters and cousins. She often comes back with basketfuls of vegetables to share with loved ones - from tomatoes to squash!" says Rembrandt, who says that this soup changed his mind about not liking squash.

"My mother taught me how to make this soup, which she invented to combine her love of global flavors with Indigenous cuisine. Cooking this soup has become an annual family tradition that connects us to each other, our ancestors, and our traditional homelands here in Michigan," Rembrandt shares.

### INGREDIENTS:

- 3 large carrots
- 1 large onion
- 6 Tablespoons butter or plant-based butter, divided
- 1 (4-ounce) jar of mild, vegan Thai red curry paste
- 2-3 Tablespoons sambal or red chili paste, or to taste
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 8 cups winter squash of choice, (such as acorn, butternut, delicata, honeynut, kabocha, etc.), peeled and chopped
- 1/4 cup flour
- 6 cups vegetable or chicken broth
- 2 (14-ounce) cans coconut milk
- Salt and pepper, to taste

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Peel and roughly chop the carrots and onion.
- Heat a stock pot over medium heat with 3 Tablespoons of butter. Once hot, sauté the chopped onion, carrots, red curry paste, sambal or chili paste, and the minced garlic until the onions have softened, around 3 minutes. Season the sautéing vegetables with a big pinch of salt.
- Add the chopped squash and an additional 3 Tablespoons of butter. Sauté the squash until it starts to sweat a bit, but don't let it brown. This should take around 10 minutes. Stir continuously to avoid the squash sticking to the pan.
- Sprinkle 1/4 cup of flour into the pan and coat the vegetables. Continue cooking the mixture for around 5 minutes.

# FROM THE A<sup>2</sup>ZERO COMMUNITY COOKBOOK

VIEW THIS RECIPE AND 70+ MORE AT [OSI.A2GOV.ORG/COOKBOOK](https://osi.a2gov.org/cookbook)

- Add 6 cups of broth, then bring the soup to a boil and simmer it for 30-40 minutes.
- Remove the stock pot from the stove. With a potato masher, mash any large chunks of carrot and squash.
- Using an immersion blender, blend 2 cans of coconut milk into the soup. If you don't have an immersion blender, let the soup cool, then use a regular blender to incorporate the coconut milk.
- Return the soup to the stove and bring it back to a simmer.
- Once warmed, turn off the heat and serve the soup with a sprinkle of feta or goat cheese (optional) and some fresh cracked black pepper.



## OPTIONAL TOPPINGS:

- feta or goat cheese crumbles
- lime juice
- sour cream
- drizzle of olive oil



## VARIATIONS ON THIS RECIPE:

- Add 1 (1-inch) piece of minced ginger along with the curry paste, chili paste, and minced garlic in the second step.
- Add 1-2 roasted red peppers in the second step.
- Add 2-3 sliced apples along with the squash in the third step.
- Add red pepper flakes, to taste, after blending.
- Finish with maple syrup, to taste for sweetness.

## REMBRANDT'S SUSTAINABILITY TIP:

"Squash is an excellent storage vegetable that grows in abundance during the autumn months and stores well through the winter. It lasts a long time before spoiling and, because of this, takes a long time before it goes to waste, which means this soup is an excellent way to eat fresh, homegrown, or locally grown vegetables all year round, even during the cold Michigan winters."

**Want to see the A<sup>2</sup>ZERO Community Cookbook for yourself?** It's always available online at [osi.a2gov.org/cookbook](https://osi.a2gov.org/cookbook), at various locations across town, and in circulation at the Ann Arbor District Library!



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## **A<sup>2</sup>ZERO Home Energy Advisor hits milestone, helping over 500 Ann Arbor households.**

Over 500 Ann Arbor homes have now received customized plans for advancing sustainability, energy efficiency and health through the City's A<sup>2</sup>ZERO Home Energy Advisor (HEA). Launched in the spring of 2024, the HEA is a free program open to all city residents including homeowners, renters and landlords that performs comprehensive on-site home assessments and provides written reports detailing recommendations and resources individuals can take to save money and make their homes more sustainable. The HEA also provides follow-up support and standalone consultations for specific questions folks may have about things such as appliance replacements, contractor quotes, and more. Those interested can learn more or sign up at [www.a2zerohea.org](http://www.a2zerohea.org).

**City of Ann Arbor's Green Rental Housing Ordinance Goes into Effect Jan 6, 2026.** The Green Rental Housing Ordinance requires every rental unit in Ann Arbor to meet a minimum energy efficiency level at the time of its rental inspection. Passed in June 2025, the Ordinance helps ensure that all rental units in Ann Arbor meet a minimum baseline of health, comfort, and efficiency as Ann Arbor works to achieve its A<sup>2</sup>ZERO carbon neutrality goals while reducing energy costs. Learn more about the Ordinance and how to comply at [osi.a2gov.org/greenrentalhousing](http://osi.a2gov.org/greenrentalhousing).

**Expression of Interest: Public Electric Vehicle Charging.** In December 2024, The City of Ann Arbor was awarded the Charging & Fueling Infrastructure (CFI) grant with the goal of building a public electric vehicle charging station network that is affordable, safe, reliable, and widely accessible. The funding allows Ann Arbor to address gaps in charging infrastructure, particularly in low-income areas, multifamily properties, and large retail locations. The City is working with a variety of stakeholders including community organizations, local schools and libraries, residential neighborhoods, and the private sector. As of December 2025, the City is preparing a final Call-Out to invite any possible remaining site hosts to participate in the CFI grant program through [the Intake Form on the City's website](#).

**A<sup>2</sup>ZERO Ambassador Applications Now Open!** The A<sup>2</sup>ZERO Ambassador Program is a 12-session training program that hosts community members to explore pathways for advancing local sustainability initiatives, resilience, and carbon neutrality in Ann Arbor. Sessions are held weekly on Wednesday evenings from 6:30 – 8:30 PM. Ambassadors will gain increased knowledge, tools, and resources to discuss sustainability and learn about specific actions they and their communities can take to advance carbon neutrality. No previous experience is required, and all interested in sustainability are encouraged to apply at [osi.a2gov.org/ambassadors](http://osi.a2gov.org/ambassadors).

**Submit your Climate Action Hero!** Every month, A<sup>2</sup>ZERO Climate Action Heroes recognizes a community member who inspires others to make positive change and help the community achieve its A<sup>2</sup>ZERO goals. These heroes will be recognized here in the Charging Station, in the Ann Arbor Observer, on OSI social media accounts, and at a yearly celebration with the Mayor and City Administrator – and all of the year's other Heroes! To nominate an individual as an A<sup>2</sup>ZERO Climate Action Hero, please visit [osi.a2gov.org/hero](http://osi.a2gov.org/hero). Congratulations to Annie Broderick for being January 2026's Climate Action Hero.

**NEW Residential Rebates for Snow-Blowers.** The City of Ann Arbor just launched a new rebate program specifically for shovels and electric snow blowers beginning December 8, 2025, and running through March 1, 2026, or until funding is expended. Residents can trade in a gas snow blower for up to \$200 off an electric snow blower or a free snow shovel. Learn more at [osi.a2gov.org/lawncarerebates](http://osi.a2gov.org/lawncarerebates).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### SFBC 2026 KICKOFF: FOOD & HOSPITALITY SUSTAINABILITY SOCIAL | Jan 12, 2 - 3PM | Cobblestone Farm

Kick off the new year by connecting with fellow food producers, retailers, restaurants, and business leaders from across the Ann Arbor area at a lively afternoon of networking and inspiration. Hosted by the Ann Arbor Sustainable Food Business Coalition and the Ann Arbor Office of Sustainability and Innovations, this event brings together entrepreneurs and professionals who care about building a stronger, more resilient local economy. Learn more at [osi.a2gov.org/SFBC2026Kickoff](https://osi.a2gov.org/SFBC2026Kickoff).

### MONTHLY CLOTHING SWAP | Jan 15, 4 - 7PM | 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. You might just find an item you've been looking for, without having to buy it new. How it works: Each person can bring up to 10 items of clothing in good condition (no rips, holes, stains, or unwashed items please). Accessories are also welcome. You can take clothing without bringing anything, or bring clothing without taking anything. This is a completely free event. Learn more at [osi.a2gov.org/swapdays](https://osi.a2gov.org/swapdays).

### SUSTAINABLE ENERGY UTILITY CONTRACTOR OPEN HOUSE | Jan 14, 15, and 20

The SEU will be hosting a series of 3 open houses in January for contractors interested in working with the SEU. These are targeted toward businesses working in solar/storage, geothermal/HVAC, and utility software and consulting services. For details, see [contractor webinar recording online](#) and [register at the online form](#).

### SUSTAINABILITY FORUM: NEW INITIATIVES FOR A NEW YEAR - CHARTING A PATH FOR SUSTAINABILITY PROGRESS IN 2026 | Jan 27, 6 - 7PM | Ann Arbor District Library Downtown

The start of a new year offers us the opportunity to reflect on the past and affirm our values and intentions for the future. Join Ann Arbor's Office of Sustainability and Innovations, along with other community leaders, for the first session of the 2026 Sustainability Forums series to explore exciting new sustainability initiatives, programs, and commitments coming to Ann Arbor in 2026! Come to learn, ask questions, engage with community members, and cultivate your own "sustainable resolution" for the coming year. Learn more at [osi.a2gov.org/events](https://osi.a2gov.org/events).

For more information on our upcoming events, visit [www.a2gov.org/sustainability/events](https://www.a2gov.org/sustainability/events).

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