



# A2ZERO Annual Report Year Five

June 1, 2024 - May 31, 2025



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# INTRODUCTION

This Annual Report reflects upon and celebrates the milestones accomplished during the 5<sup>th</sup> year of Ann Arbor's work to achieve a just transition to community-wide carbon neutrality by the year 2030, known as [A<sup>2</sup>ZERO](#). Like all years before it, the year included many highs, some lows, lots of new collaborations, the deepening of relationships, and continued innovation to chart a path to something no community in the world has achieved – carbon neutrality.

In the pages that follow, we highlight some of the work that took place this last year as well as what's on the horizon. We've tried to celebrate milestones while also reflecting on what we learned and what we plan to change in the years ahead. Where possible, we highlight the collaborators that are helping us move climate action forward in the community. We celebrate the residents, businesses, nonprofits, institutions, and individuals that share their time, talent, and expertise with our Office, the [Office of Sustainability and Innovations](#), and the City as a whole.

If you've joined us at an A<sup>2</sup>ZERO event, participated in one of our programs, or given us feedback over the years, thank you! And if you'd like to join the movement, we can't wait to welcome you. You can join us at one of our [upcoming events](#), participate in our [A<sup>2</sup>ZERO Green Business Challenge](#), become an [A<sup>2</sup>ZERO Ambassador](#), take one of our [sustainability challenges](#), join us as an [A<sup>2</sup>ZERO Collaborator](#), or find new and innovative ways to help grow the sustainability movement locally. And, if you haven't yet, sign up for our monthly newsletter, [The Charging Station](#), to make sure you're always in the know on sustainability programs and activities unfolding in the community.

Those who have heard us speak have often heard our Office talk about the importance of doing this work together, with "together" being the key word. A goal as big, bold, and audacious as community-wide carbon neutrality requires all of us. And that's why we can't wait to work with YOU to help Ann Arbor show the world what it looks like when a community comes together to tackle one of the most pressing issues of our time.

Sincerely,

## The City of Ann Arbor Office of Sustainability and Innovations

*Missy, Simi, Steve, DeAndre', Aiden, Connor, Claire, Carissa, Grace, Bryce, Maggie, Valerie, Joe, Jordan, Azella, Genevieve, Sean, Julie, and Jerrell*



*The Office of Sustainability and Innovations pictured with the visiting delegation from one of Ann Arbor's Sister Cities, Tuebingen, Germany.*

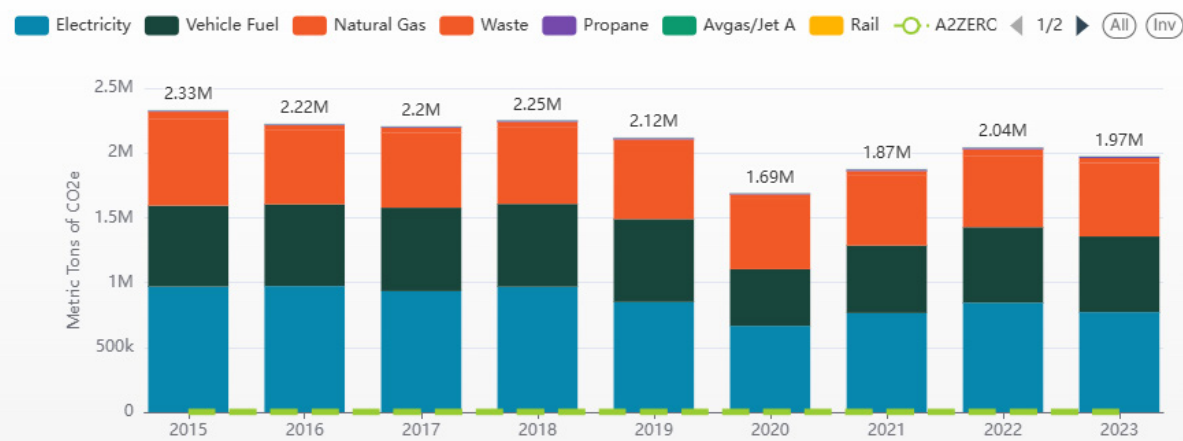
# GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS SUMMARY

Every year the Office of Sustainability and Innovations (OSI) conducts a greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventory for City operations and the community as a whole. Measuring GHG emissions is the leading way of tracking progress towards a community's climate goals, from guiding science-based target setting, to looking at the impacts of individual behavior change, to measuring the efficacy of existing programs and initiatives or guiding the development of new programs that will demonstrably and equitably reduce emissions. GHG reporting [standards exist](#) that help local governments measure their emissions in a consistent manor. The City of Ann Arbor adheres to these standards while simultaneously pushing to track even more variables, such as those related to community resilience and the circular economy. On our [A²ZERO Dashboard](#) we measure and track progress towards A²ZERO as accurately and wholistically as possible.

The A²ZERO goal of community-wide carbon neutrality requires reducing Ann Arbor's community-wide annual GHG emissions from over 2.1 million metrics tons of CO2 equivalent (CO2e) pollution to zero by 2030. Measuring progress against this goal through benchmarking and diligent data collection helps OSI understand where programs and initiatives are finding success as well as where modifications are needed. This is why, every year, Ann Arbor [completes a community-wide GHG inventory](#). While we are still waiting on data to complete our 2024 inventory, we are delighted to share that we have reached one major milestone: stopping emissions from increasing! This may not seem important but the first thing you need to do is stop emissions from going up. After achieving this goal, you start working on reducing all existing emissions, which is where OSI is focusing.

As we look to reduce existing emissions, it's important to understand where they are coming from. In Ann Arbor, the largest source of GHG emissions come from the electricity used in homes and businesses (39% of emissions). These emissions are driven by both how much electricity is consumed and how carbon intensive the fuel mix is that generates that electricity. In 2024, over 40% of DTE's Electric Fuel Mix used to supply electricity in Ann Arbor (and other communities) was generated using coal, compared to 13% from renewables. The second largest source of local emissions is from "fossil" gas usage in buildings. Locally, 28% of GHG emissions come from fossil gas used for heating and cooling the built environment. When combined with electricity usage, this means that buildings are the largest single contributor to local GHG emissions, with 69% of total emissions coming from buildings, 30% coming from fossil fuel usage in vehicles, and about 2% coming from waste disposal and processing.

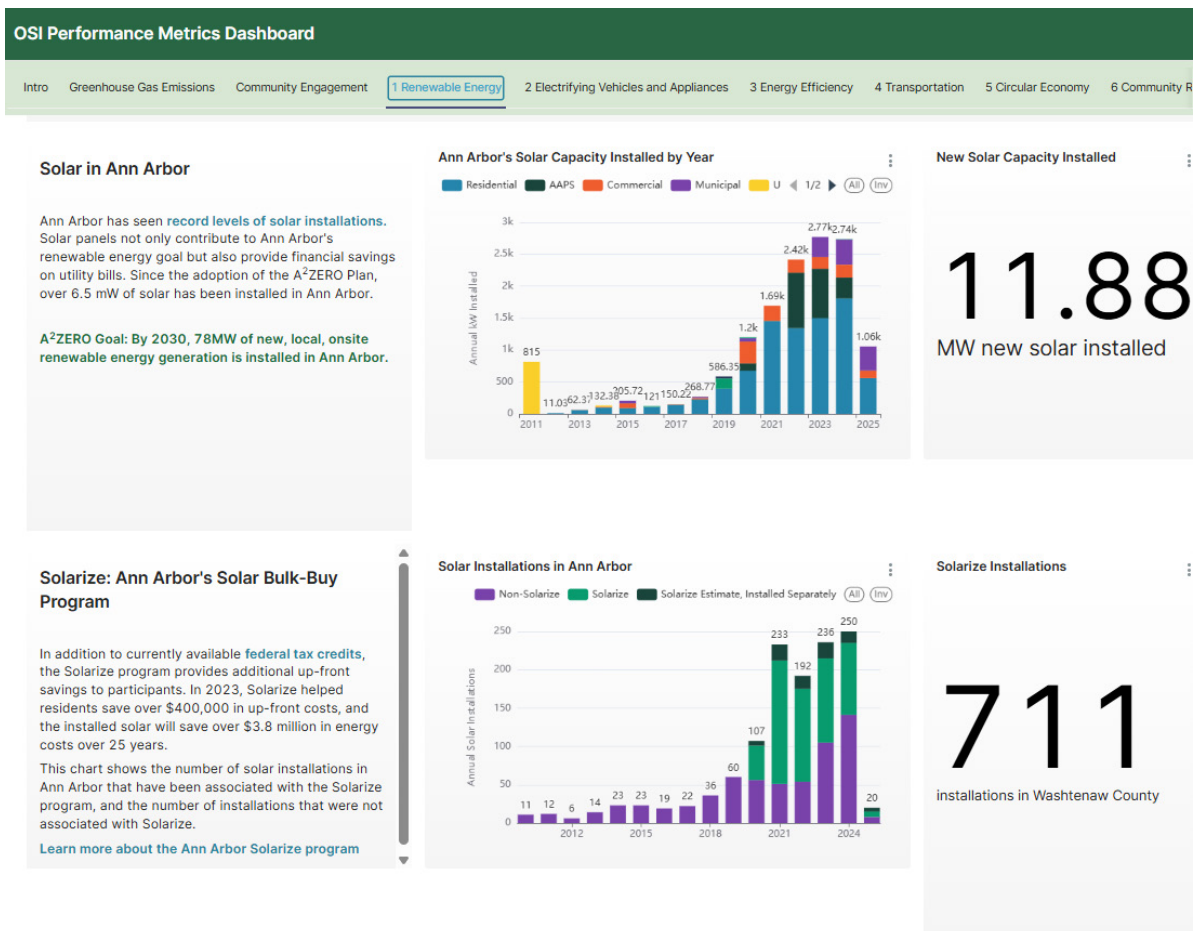
Community Greenhouse Gas Inventory - Source



# GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS SUMMARY

There are points of good news, however. First, many local stakeholders, including the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor Public Schools, the City of Ann Arbor, and local businesses and residents are purchasing clean, renewable energy on the open market or actively installing it on their homes and businesses (read below for more). Secondly, in late 2023, Governor Gretchen Whitmer signed into law a series of bills that advance clean energy in Michigan, including SB 271 which requires the State of Michigan to generate 50% of the State's total electricity from clean energy sources by 2030 and 100% of the State's electricity from clean energy sources by 2040. Third, in November of 2024, [Ann Arbor voters overwhelmingly voted to authorize creation of the Ann Arbor Sustainable Energy Utility \(SEU\)](#) (more below). Additionally, in 2024, OSI won an award from the U.S. Department of Energy to support building the state's first networked geothermal system. Designed to help 262 homes, a community center, and a local school transition completely away from fossil gas to geothermal, this project is a foundational component of the City's efforts to decarbonize heating and cooling systems. These activities are and will continue to make a notable difference in the clean energy landscape in Michigan.

In the pages that follow, you'll learn more about the programs and initiatives underway to help reduce emissions from all sectors, systems, and scales. You can also learn more about the A<sup>2</sup>ZERO Community Greenhouse Gas Inventory by engaging with [the new A<sup>2</sup>ZERO Dashboard](#) or by visiting the [webpage](#).





*City officials break ground on Fire Station 4, Michigan's first net-zero fire station.*

## STRATEGY 1: RENEWABLES

Strategy 1 of A<sup>2</sup>ZERO focuses on powering our electrical grid with 100% renewable energy. Below are highlights of accomplishments, programs, or actions taken to advance the adoption of renewable energy within Ann Arbor.

- Our [Solarize](#) program reached 5.4MW of solar installed through the program!
- [Solarize](#) was expanded throughout the State, including in Grand Rapids where the program is helping residents access solar at more affordable rates.
- We continue to expand solar at City facilities with [700 kW of new solar systems](#) installed on City properties this year, bringing total generating capacity on City properties above 1 MW. This includes installations at Veterans Memorial Park, Fuller Park, and the Ann Arbor airport.
- Even more solar has been designed for city facilities and will be installed in year 6, including solar at Bicentennial Park, Fire Station 1, City Hall, the Election Center, Wheeler Service Center, Steere Farm, the Water Resource Recovery Facility, and more!
- The City is advancing work on a battery storage system at the Water Recovery Facility and at Fire Station 6, with the goal of having both installed in the coming year.
- In deep collaboration with the Ann Arbor Housing Commission, geothermal was integrated into the new [affordable housing site on Catherine Street](#).
- Geothermal was installed at the [Bryant Community Center](#), taking another HUGE step in making the Community Center the City's first living, learning laboratory of carbon neutrality!
- On November 5, 2024, Ann Arbor voters authorized the creation of the Ann Arbor [Sustainable Energy Utility \(SEU\)](#) with a historic 79% of the vote. The SEU will provide clean, 100% renewable, opt-in, supplemental power to residents of the City of Ann Arbor. Work immediately began to launch the SEU, expected 24 months after the November vote. Learn more and join the waitlist at [www.a2gov.org/a2seu](http://www.a2gov.org/a2seu).
- Launched an [SEU waitlist form](#) and started sending nearly biweekly updates to those on the waitlist about SEU development progress.

# 1: RENEWABLES

- The City successfully secured \$5,000,000 to help launch the SEU, largely by investing in the foundational tools, structures, and preliminary staffing needed to bring the SEU to fruition.
- On May 20<sup>th</sup>, we supported the groundbreaking for [Ann Arbor's first net zero energy fire station](#).
- OSI and a team of collaborators successfully won \$10,000,000 to support the deployment of a [networked geothermal system](#) in the Bryant neighborhood of Ann Arbor.
- OSI initiated a city-wide geothermal feasibility analysis study with Stantec. This analysis will take approximately 18-months and help inform the role geothermal can play in decarbonizing heating and cooling in the city.
- Thanks to a collaboration with Constellation Energy, [over 70% of the electricity used](#) to power City of Ann Arbor facilities and operations is now generated by renewable energy sources. This achievement comes after 67 more city sites were enrolled in Michigan's Electric Customer Choice Program, which allows customers to make their own choices about how their energy is generated. The city's alternative energy supplier is Constellation Energy, the nation's largest producer of carbon-free energy.
- The City applied for Direct Pay rebates for the various solar, vehicle, and energy storage systems put into operation, leading to nearly \$320,000 worth of direct rebates.
- Drafted community choice aggregation legislation and supported microgrid legislation for the State House and State Senate's consideration.
- Office of Sustainability and Innovations (OSI) staff served on the national U.S. Department of Energy [SolSmart](#) Advisory Committee.
- For the first time in the City's history, OSI intervened in the two gas cases before the Michigan Public Service Commission, calling for a "Future of Gas" proceeding that outlines a path to decarbonized heating and cooling solutions throughout DTE's service territory.
- OSI staff participated in multiple Michigan Public Service Commission working groups, technical conferences, and stakeholder meetings related to reliability and distributed energy resources.



*Drilling for the geothermal system at the Bryant Community Center.*



*The 2024 Home Electrification Expo.*

## STRATEGY 2: BENEFICIAL ELECTRIFICATION

Strategy 2 of A<sup>2</sup>ZERO centers around programs and initiatives to help transition fossil appliances and equipment to electric. Below are highlights of accomplishments, programs, or actions taken to advance work in this area over the last year in Ann Arbor.

- [Ann Arbor's Home Energy Rebates](#) launched, helping Ann Arbor residents make improvements to their homes and invest in cleaner transportation options to reduce carbon emissions and lower energy usage. Residents can receive thousands of dollars to aid in weatherization and air sealing or the purchasing of appliances such as heat pumps, heat pump water heaters, inductions stoves, heat pump dryers, batteries, electrical upgrades and e-bikes. Over 650 rebates have been claimed as of May 2025.
- [The A<sup>2</sup>ZERO Heat Pump Concierge](#) launched, providing Ann Arbor residents an easy platform to obtain design and receive pricing estimates for replacing old furnaces with new heat pumps, including all applicable rebates, and contractor and installation oversight.
- Actively implementing the City's sustainability review as part of the City's plan review process.
- This year the City achieved an over 40% electric vehicle adoption rate in the light duty fleet, bringing the total city fleet to nearly 30% electric.
- OSI launched an [EV charger discount program](#) to encourage electric vehicle adoption throughout the City. The Commercial EV Charger Program provides commercial and multifamily property owners an opportunity to receive up to four free level-2 EV chargers along with a five-year software package, a five-year warranty, and, as needed, charger accessories essential to ensuring the functionality of the EV chargers.
- In collaboration with multiple local organizations, OSI hosted our [3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Home Electrification Expo](#), bringing contractors, experts and equipment to the Farmer's Market event, with robust community engagement. Join us for the 4<sup>th</sup> annual expo at this year 2025 Green Fair on September 19<sup>th</sup>.

## 2: BENEFICIAL ELECTRIFICATION

- OSI launched an [electric lawn care rebate program](#) designed to help lower the cost of transitioning from gas to electric lawn care equipment in accordance with Ann Arbor's new leaf blower ordinance. Special thanks to Grainger Industrial Supply and WEINGARTZ for their support in creating a version of the program. The Electric Leaf Blower Rebate Program includes rebates for both residents and for landscaping companies, helping ease the transition to healthy, safe, and environmentally friendly ways of maintaining our natural systems.
- The City purchased two more electric refuse trucks, bringing the total on order to four. And, the first electric refuse truck started providing service this spring! Visit A<sup>2</sup>ZERO Parties during A<sup>2</sup>ZERO Week 2025 to see them in-person.
- OSI was awarded a grant through the American Lung Association for partial support to purchase 2 of the electric vehicle side load Mack refuse trucks recently ordered by the City.
- On Earth Day, April 22, Ann Arbor and DTE signed [the first heating franchise](#) in the country to include climate commitments and dedicated resources to help address the climate crisis. Included within the franchise is an Agreement Regarding Climate Action (ARCA), which outlines commitment to cooperate in support of A<sup>2</sup>ZERO and DTE's climate goals. A 2-year work plan also specifies specific actions DTE and Ann Arbor will take to advance in pursuit of climate action.
- This year OSI won a \$2.8 Million Charging and Fueling Infrastructure (CFI) grant with Federal Highway Administration to expand public EV charging in Ann Arbor. Hiring is underway for an electric vehicle coordinator to administer this work over the next four years.
- This year the City's prohibition of gas-powered leaf blowers went into effect, with OSI providing significant market education and engagement. According to the ordinance, gas-powered leaf blowers are prohibited in Ann Arbor from June 1 to September 30 until January 1, 2028. From Jan 1, 2028 onward, the use of gas leaf blowers will be prohibited throughout the entire year in Ann Arbor. More details and rebates to help support the transition to all electric lawn care equipment can be found on the [City's website](#).
- OSI continued contractor education around beneficial electrification, including expanding our [contractor badging program with Michigan Saves](#).
- OSI supported TheRide in their successful grant application for \$25 MILLION to [fund zero-emission buses and refueling stations](#). The program is part of the Federal Transit Administration's No Emission Bus Grant program.



Mayor Christopher Taylor, Dr. Missy Stults, City Attorney Atleen Kaur, Chief of Staff for Public Services Skye Stewart, and outside legal Counsel Valerie Brader at the heating franchise signing.



The 2024 Sustainable Lawn Care Learning Session.



## STRATEGY 3: ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Strategy 3 of A<sup>2</sup>ZERO emphasizes efforts to improve the energy efficiency of our homes, businesses, houses of worship, community centers, and institutions. Some of the notable efforts taken to advance energy efficiency this last year are noted below.

- The [A<sup>2</sup>ZERO Home Energy Advisor](#) launched and has helped over 300 Ann Arbor residents obtain free home energy assessments with customized home decarbonization plans and connection to resources to help make improvements in their homes.
- The [A<sup>2</sup>ZERO Home Energy Rebate program](#) provided hundreds of thousands of dollars to support homeowners, renters, property managers, and landlords make energy efficiency improvements in their homes. Applications are open on a rolling basis for those interested in learning more and saving money.
- In collaboration with our A<sup>2</sup>ZERO Ambassadors, the City hosted the first [Net zero energy home tour](#) as part of A<sup>2</sup>ZERO week. The event daylight sustainability practices in action and afforded residents an opportunity to learn from a neighbor about their sustainability journey. Given the success of this event, OSI is offering it again on June 1<sup>st</sup> as part of the 2025 A<sup>2</sup>ZERO week.
- After years of engagement, the City brought forward the [Green Rental Housing ordinance](#) for consideration by Council. This ordinance proposes establishing a minimum baseline standard for health, comfort, and energy efficiency to ensure our tenants have a place to not just live, but also to thrive, as we all work towards our carbon neutrality goals.
- OSI staff and organizations across the State have been working for years to advance more holistic building codes in Michigan. And in early 2025, those efforts paid off as the State of Michigan adopted the [updated Michigan building codes](#). These updates do not apply to the Residential Code, but work is underway to get a more holistic residential code adopted as well.
- Efforts continue to refine and grow the successfully piloted [A<sup>2</sup>ZERO Green Business Challenge](#). Launched in 2024, the A2GBC presents a framework to recognize, support, and celebrate local businesses working to advance sustainability in the community.

### 3: ENERGY EFFICIENCY

- The A<sup>2</sup>ZERO Green Business Challenge welcomed Fresh Coast Climate Solutions to provide individualized work plans for businesses participating in the program. In addition, the program hired four interns to assist with programming and outreach to bring more businesses into the program.
- Implementation of Energy and Water Benchmarking Ordinance continued in earnest in year 5, with major efforts centered on bringing all building into compliance. Through the tireless efforts of staff and collaborators at the 2030 District, buildings over 20,000 square feet are benchmarking and learning about practices that could save them money, improve health and safety, and help address the climate crisis.
- The Home Energy Rating Disclosure Ordinance came into stride in year five, with 700 homes receiving a completed Home Energy Score through the City. This information is helping home buyer's factor in the impact of a home's energy efficiency as part of their decision-making process.
- OSI provided funding to the County's Office of Community and Economic Development so that they could expand service offerings to homes eligible for the weatherization program. In particular, the program allows the County to invest more funding, per household in need, in a variety of decarbonization approaches such as heat pump installation, appliance replacements, and more.
- In partnership with Community Action Network, OSI secured continuing operational support from the McKnight Foundation for the Bryant neighborhood decarbonization project.
- Thanks to a rich and deepening relationship with the Ann Arbor / Washtenaw 2030 District, OSI was able to reach more businesses, architects, property managers, and designers than in years previous. Additionally, the collaboration around the commercial solar program, sustainability in houses of worship, and energy and water benchmarking continued to grow.



*Michael Hagan from the Green Energy Neighbors leading the Net-Zero Home Energy Tour, 2024.*



### 3: ENERGY EFFICIENCY

- This last year OSI successfully secured a [\\$3.1 million grant](#) from Michigan Public Service Commission to improve energy efficiency and electrify homes in the Bryant neighborhood. Foundational work is currently underway so that the program can start making improvements in year six.
- OSI released a request for proposals for contractors to help make sustainability and energy-related improvements in the Bryant neighborhood (for more details, see [RFP 25-21](#)).
- Advanced work to transition all streetlights to LEDs thanks to a grant secured by OSI and Public Services to cover the majority of project costs.
- Work started in earnest in year five to develop a suite of new commercial building decarbonization support programs. OSI anticipates significant engagement opportunities in year six as this element of our work grows and expands.
- Thanks to work by countless organizations, including OSI, the Michigan legislature passed and Governor Whitmer signed, legislation that prohibits Homeowners Associations (HOAs) from limiting access to on-site solar as well as heat pumps, clotheslines and other energy efficiency measures. OSI has published a model energy policy template for HOAs, which can be found in our [Advancing Sustainability with Your MUD or HOA](#).
- OSI provided technical and financial support to help Avalon Housing make significant energy efficiency improvements at 23 rental units that comprise the Stimson Apartment complex.
- OSI provided funding support to the Ann Arbor Housing Development Commission to advance the affordable housing project at 121 Catherine Street. Throughout the development process, OSI has been collaborating with the AAHC to help ensure this development supports the City's sustainability goals.
- OSI staff were appointed to the [Washtenaw 2030 District Board of Directors](#).



*Residents at the A²ZERO table for the 2024 Electrification Expo.*

## STRATEGY 4: VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED REDUCTION

Strategy 4 of A<sup>2</sup>ZERO focuses on the way we move about the community. This strategy has two primary and intersecting pillars, reducing the miles we travel in our vehicles and changing our land use patterns to support more walking, biking, scooting, rolling, or transit travel. Major work undertaken this last year to advance this strategy are noted below.

- The primary area of emphasis OSI had regarding strategy four pertained to supporting development of the [City's draft Comprehensive Land Use Plan](#). With one of the three core tenants of the plan being sustainability, OSI has been highly involved in supporting the Planning Department with advancing the draft Comprehensive Plan. Public comment is open for those wanting to share feedback.
- The City's collaboration and funding support continued in year five with resources being dedicated to expanding more bike lanes throughout the City. This funding is granted to the City's transportation team who is working with OSI on efforts such as new crosswalks, better lighting, bike lane expansion, bike parking expansion, and other features to improve non-motorized mobility options in the City.
- In collaboration with Human Electric Hybrids and Bicycle Alliance of Washtenaw, the City launched the "Borrow a Cargo Bike A2" program. Check out the program and sign up to take a cargo bike for a spin at [this site](#).
- OSI advanced our commitment to biking by purchasing our very own cargo bike. We've been using the bike to carry materials to public engagement events throughout the City.
- The City continues to update a series of dashboards to monitor things like [sidewalk gap replacements](#), [traffic calming](#), and progress [towards Vision Zero](#).



*Mayor Taylor on his e-bike at the 2024 Green Fair.*

- Ann Arbor was recognized as a Gold-level "walk friendly" community by the Walk Friendly Communities program – one of only 20 in the country.
- Ann Arbor received Gold-level Bicycle Friendly Community designation from the League of American Bicyclists.



*The 2024 Local Food Festival.*

## STRATEGY 5: CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Strategy 5 of A<sup>2</sup>ZERO is about changing our relationship with things. It's about recognizing that there is no "away" and moving towards a society in which we question consumption patterns, leaning more into reuse, repair, repurpose, and reinvest before we dispose, recycle, or compost. Below are some of the highlights of circular economy-related work undertaken this last year.

- We celebrated our vibrant local food system, at the [3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Ann Arbor Local Food Fest](#), hosted in collaboration with the Ann Arbor Farmers Market and Argus Farm Stop. On a beautiful autumn evening, we gathered hundreds of Ann Arbor residents, farmers, chefs, and community organizations to celebrate the beauty and bounty of Michigan food and farming! Stay tuned for details about the 2025 Local Food Fest.
- The [A<sup>2</sup>ZERO Food Waste Challenge](#) helped over 540 Ann Arbor residents fight household food waste in June 2024. Participants learned about how simple changes to the way they shop, plan, store, and cook their food can make a dent in their household climate impact.
- This last year OSI received grant funding to support the creation of a formal circular economy action plan, to build on previous work to identify the needs, assets, and opportunities that exist within the Ann Arbor community to create a more local, circular economy.
- VegMichigan and OSI continued our work engaging the community around the connections between our food choices and climate change, highlighting the benefits of a plant-rich diet. Through our collaboration, we reached over 1,700 Ann Arbor residents, with more than 400 trying plant-based eating for the first time through the 30-day Plant-Based Pledge.
- The [Ann Arbor Sustainable Food Business Coalition](#), now with over 40 businesses participating, celebrated its first full year! Together, we explored actionable strategies to improve energy and water efficiency, prevent food waste, and transition towards more sustainable food packaging, while building connections between businesses and sharing knowledge and experiences.
- This year we completed the first draft of the Ann Arbor Sustainable Food Framework to advance more sustainable food options at City-operated facilities and events.

## 5: CIRCULAR ECONOMY

- Over 70 residents and 20 “community food leaders” shared their stories, favorite sustainable recipes, and food tips as part of the A²ZERO Community Cookbook, which will be published late summer 2025.
- OSI received grant funding from the EPA for a small food retailer refrigerant management program, with the goal of reducing refrigeration emissions from at least 75 businesses by a total of 13,074.9 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent. More program details coming shortly.
- OSI established a Resident Advisor Committee that co-designed and implemented a survey to residents in communities across Ann Arbor in an effort to better understand current and desired needs and opportunities for a local, circular economy.
- In early Spring, OSI released a request for proposals for firms to aid in engaging businesses in circular economy action planning (see [RFP 25-23](#)).
- This last year OSI hosted 5 [Neighborhood Swap Day](#) events and supported community led swap events, keeping over 10,000 items in reuse rather than sent to a landfill.
- As a new service offering, Comprenew and OSI hosted three Electronics Collection events this last year! At each event, over 6,000 pounds of electronics were collected to be recycled or refurbished. Given the success of the events, even more are planned for future years.
- This last year, OSI and Urban Forestry solidified their collaboration with Urban Ashes by launching a partnership to reuse urban forest waste. This is the first municipal wood waste recycling program in Michigan!
- Years earlier than planned, OSI is delighted to announce that we achieved our goal of planting [10,000 Trees!](#) Now that this goal has been achieved, we’ll be focusing our attention on conducting a tree survival study along with continuing to distribute trees through the community.
- In collaboration with Parks, Natural Areas Preservation, and Public Works, OSI is delighted to share that we were awarded a \$1,000,000 grant from the American Forests to advance tree equity initiatives locally. Through this grant, Ann Arbor will update the community’s tree canopy assessment to identify gaps in our urban forest, pilot private property tree planting and maintenance programs, undertake ecologically-driven stewardship work within our parks, and conduct a feasibility study for the creation of a city and/or county-owned tree nursery and agricultural demonstration site.



*Chef Allison Anastasio doing a sustainable food cooking demonstration at the 2024 Local Food Festival.*



*Aerial view of an electronics recycling event.*

## 5: CIRCULAR ECONOMY

- Funded Public Works' to hire a new worker to support the expansion of commercial recycling. Public Works is also working on a strategy to expand compost services throughout the City.
- Supported the "[More Life, Less Stuff](#)" social based marketing campaign that compiles stories from community partners and residents about reducing waste and engaging more with the world around them.
- Newly formed Move Out Ann Arbor (MOAA) Coalition formed and began collecting unwanted materials for reuse during recent University of Michigan student move-out: During its inaugural year, the newly formed MOAA coalition, including representatives from the University of Michigan, local non-profits, haulers, and the city, successfully diverted approximately 34 tons of material from local landfills during the recent University of Michigan student move out season. To learn more, read [their full report](#).
- OSI undertook a deep exploration into the feasibility of creating a citywide returnable container program. Through this work, we submitted a grant application to launch a city-wide program. Unfortunately, this grant program was terminated by the federal administration.



*Comprenew, electronics recycler, works to recycle electronics for an A<sup>2</sup>ZERO event.*



*Community swap at Pittsfield Elementary, 2025.*



*The June 2024 Ambassador Graduation, where the A²ZERO goal of 100 Ambassadors graduated was achieved.*

## STRATEGY 6: RESILIENCE

Strategy 6 of A²ZERO is all about enhancing the resilience of our people, natural systems, and institutions. Major work around resilience was advanced this last year, with notable highlights outlined below.

- OSI Officially trained the 100<sup>th</sup> [A²ZERO Ambassador](#) with the graduation of our 6<sup>th</sup> Cohort, bringing the total number of A²ZERO Ambassadors trained to 118.
- The 7<sup>th</sup> Cohort of A²ZERO Ambassadors begun their training in early 2025, with graduation slated for June. The graduation of this cohort will bring the number of Ambassadors trained up to 148.
- This last year we hosted 10 Ambassador recruitment events around the community, at libraries, houses of worship, and UM student groups, to advertise the 7<sup>th</sup> cohort of the program.
- OSI created and published a [StoryMap](#) to demonstrate the community impact of A²ZERO Ambassador projects.
- The Sesame Solar Unit is coming to the Ann Arbor Community! This mobile nanogrid provides sustainability-related education while also serving as a source of back-up power for central city facilities. Expect to see this unit around the City over the summer and fall!
- In partnership with the Office of Emergency Management, OSI staff led a household preparedness seminar at Washtenaw Community College, distributing 30 emergency kits and facilitating household plan creation. Plans are underway to scale this workshop model for administering with more community partners.
- In fall, as an Ambassador Project, OSI hosted a preparedness seminar with the Office of Emergency Management where 20 emergency kits were distributed to residents at Avalon Housing.
- As part of the Cinema and Sustainability series, OSI hosted a showing of COOKED: Survival by Zip Code, followed by a panel discussion on community resilience and climate adaptation.
- During A²ZERO week, OSI tabled at each of the ward parties, distributing information on household preparedness plan creation and raffling five complete family emergency kits.

## 6: RESILIENCE

- This last year, OSI co-hosted multiple Washtenaw County Resilience Network meetings with the Washtenaw County Resilience Office. At these meetings, critical service providers across Washtenaw County gathered to discuss resilience initiatives and how to best work together to create partnerships and a collaborative ecosystem to tackle climate resilience efforts.
- OSI hosted a breakout session at the 2025 Ann Arbor Climate Teach-In to help community members understand the role Resilience Hubs play in the climate transition and how Resilience Hubs in Ann Arbor are caring for our community.
- 50 additional sign-ups were received for the [Pollinator-Aware Yard Care program](#), bringing us to over 450.
- Over 2,250 additional trees distributed through the 10,000 Trees program, bringing us to over 11,000 total (we reached the [10,000 trees](#) mark in September 2024!).
- This last year we installed 8 additional air quality monitors, for a total of 10 in the network. This system is helping us understand the impact of various programs as well as areas for further programmatic work. See details about the monitors and live data on the [City's dashboard](#).
- OSI hosted our annual A²ZERO Ambassador Summit to convene A²ZERO Ambassadors and update them on all the new programs OSI has implemented and for Ambassadors to share what projects they have been working on.
- OSI was accepted into the Center for Heat Resilient Communities 2025 cohort to address and plan for the impacts of extreme heat on our community. While this funding has been terminated, efforts are underway to continue cohort collaborations.
- In partnership with the Ann Arbor Housing Commission, a request for proposal was sent out for the installation of solar and battery storage at Green Baxter Court Resilience Hub to meet community-identified needs.
- Peace Neighborhood Center Resilience Hub scheduled a LED lighting retrofit and HVAC control installation to enhance energy efficiency throughout the building, allowing them to reinvest energy savings into their programs.
- OSI supported Peace Neighborhood Center with efforts to prepare for future solar and energy storage on site to help manage energy-related disruptions.
- Assisted Peace Neighborhood Center in integrating sustainability into their STEAM summer programming curriculum.
- The City worked to advance our \$1,000,000 U.S. EPA Environmental Justice Government-to-Government grant to start a Model Regional Resilience Network and expand [Resilience Hubs](#) in the City and throughout Washtenaw County. Unfortunately, a letter was received terminating this award. The City is actively disputing this termination.



*Bicentennial tree planting, 2024.*



*OSI staff accepts the Climate Action Hero Award for Best in the Midwest.*

## STRATEGY 7: OTHER

Strategy 7 of A<sup>2</sup>ZERO focuses on activities that cross multiple other strategies, such as community engagement, metrics tracking, reporting, and relationship building. Below are some notable highlights that took place in these areas during year five of A<sup>2</sup>ZERO.

- 14 AmeriCorps members served with the City of Ann Arbor's Ann Arbor Climate Corps program. 8 members completed full terms, serving 13,600 hours with the OSI and earning Segal Education Awards totaling \$55,109. Segal Education Awards are funded by the National Service Trust, and AmeriCorps alumni have seven years to apply their award toward outstanding federal student loans, or future education at any Title IV school, including most colleges, universities, and technical schools. We look forward to four members completing second terms and six members completing their first term in the next fiscal year.
- More than 500 community residents helped celebrate [A<sup>2</sup>ZERO Week](#). AmeriCorps members and OSI staff hosted 30 events for A<sup>2</sup>ZERO Week. More than 15 community organization, collaborators, and partners joined the office to co-host events. 510 community members attended events throughout the week, 400 visited the OSI tent at the Ann Arbor SummerFest, and 540 people signed up for the Zero Waste pledge.
- OSI was honored to receive the "[Best of the Midwest](#)" Award from the Climate Action Museum for our work on climate action.
- OSI started tabling at the Farmer's Market started last year with AmeriCorps members tabling at the Wednesday Farmer's Market throughout the summer and fall, engaging with 418 community members to promote A<sup>2</sup>ZERO programs.
- OSI launched Fall Door knocking Campaign during the month of October. AmeriCorps members went door knocking in Ann Arbor neighborhoods to promote A<sup>2</sup>ZERO programs and complement the efforts of the Michigan League of Conversation Voters to ensure residents knew about available rebates and incentives from the City and the Inflation Reduction Act. Information was distributed to more than 1,000 households.
- Last year, and continuing through this summer, AmeriCorps members assisted Parks staff with stewardship activities on 53.7 acres of Natural Areas through the City's parks.

## 7: OTHER

- AmeriCorps members and OSI staff assisted the Bryant Community Center with their annual neighborhood clean up day, helping 60 households with recycling and neighborhood beautification efforts.
- AmeriCorps members helped OSI engage with Bryant residents, distributing information to raise awareness of home energy assessment sign ups, funding opportunities, and community charette sessions for neighborhood geothermal planning.
- In collaboration with the Leslie Science and Nature Center and Neutral Zone, OSI helped create Youth Now Climate Action, a small group of high school students representing various Ann Arbor Public Schools focused on highlighting environmental problems and coming up with solutions.
- Designed a district geothermal for the Bryant neighborhood and won \$10 million from the Department of Energy to begin installation. The system, in conjunction with solar and weatherization, is projected to reduce resident's energy costs by 77% and carbon emissions by 75%. (Funding is currently on hold).
- Sponsored and hosted the first Cinema and Sustainability film series at the Michigan Theater in 2024, screening four documentaries with post-film panel discussions. Topics in the series included food waste, extreme heat, renewable energy, factory farming, and environmental justice. More than 250 attendees participated across all screenings. Given the success of the program, OSI plans to repeat the series in 2025.
- OSI hosted another successful series of [Sustainability Forums](#) at the downtown branch of the Ann Arbor District Library. The series featured panel discussions and presentations from local experts and changemakers on the topics of: natural features, local food systems, circular economy/waste reduction, the Sustaining Ann Arbor Together grant program, and Ann Arbor's Sustainable Energy Utility. More than 100 in-person attendees engaged in the series, more than 50 attended virtually via livestream, and the events were also aired on Ann Arbor's CTN and can be found on their YouTube Channel.
- OSI formalized a collaboration with the Pittsfield Village community to explore and advance decarbonization and sustainability in the neighborhood.
- Filmed nine episodes of [Green Light](#), a short interview program on Ann Arbor's Community Television Network, featuring topics such as electric lawn care, the Sustainable Energy Utility, the A<sup>2</sup>ZERO Ambassador Program, the history of Earth Day in Ann Arbor, and more, with a combined total of 2,000 views.
- The Resilience team supported food distribution at resilience hubs throughout the City, boosting staff shortfalls and ensuring no disruption of services for community members.



## 7: OTHER

- OSI's social media accounts grew with over 750 followers on Instagram and Facebook, improving reach, awareness, and engagement throughout the community.
- Last year we were honored to host a delegation from our Sister City, Tübingen, Germany. The exchange focused exclusively on carbon neutrality and strategies both cities could use to hit our shared goal of carbon neutrality by 2030.
- Last year OSI welcomed 320 more subscribers to The Charging Station, the A<sup>2</sup>ZERO newsletter -- the best way to stay up-to-date on OSI work. Total number of subscribers is now at 4,502, with an average open-rate of 46% in the past year.
- The City continued to submit testimony in multiple cases before the Michigan Public Service Commission. And, last year the City's released a memorandum on the cumulative impact of City interventions over the last four years, showing that the City has saved rate payers more than [\\$1,000,000,000 through testimony and advocacy](#).
- OSI piloted [SEU](#) "open houses" with residents, hosting two events in which a host invited neighbors into their homes to learn more about the Sustainable Energy Utility. Based on experience with these two sessions, OSI is working on a template and associated toolkit that others can use to share information about the SEU with friends and neighbors.
- Last year, OSI hosted more than 200 discrete community events to engage with residents, businesses, institutions, and others on sustainability-related programs, initiatives, and actions.
- The [A<sup>2</sup>ZERO Community Collaborators](#) Network hosted an in-person meeting with over 30 collaborators in attendance.
- Sustaining Ann Arbor Together awarded a grant to SunBundle.
- The City of Ann Arbor received an A score from CDP, formerly the Carbon Disclosure Project. This award acknowledges the City's global climate action leadership.
- Ann Arbor became one of two cities to achieve "Platinum" status for sustainability leadership in the [Michigan Green Communities program](#).
- Collaborated with Leslie Science and Nature Center to host an annual Earth Day celebration.



*Ambassadors volunteer for Earth Day 2025.*



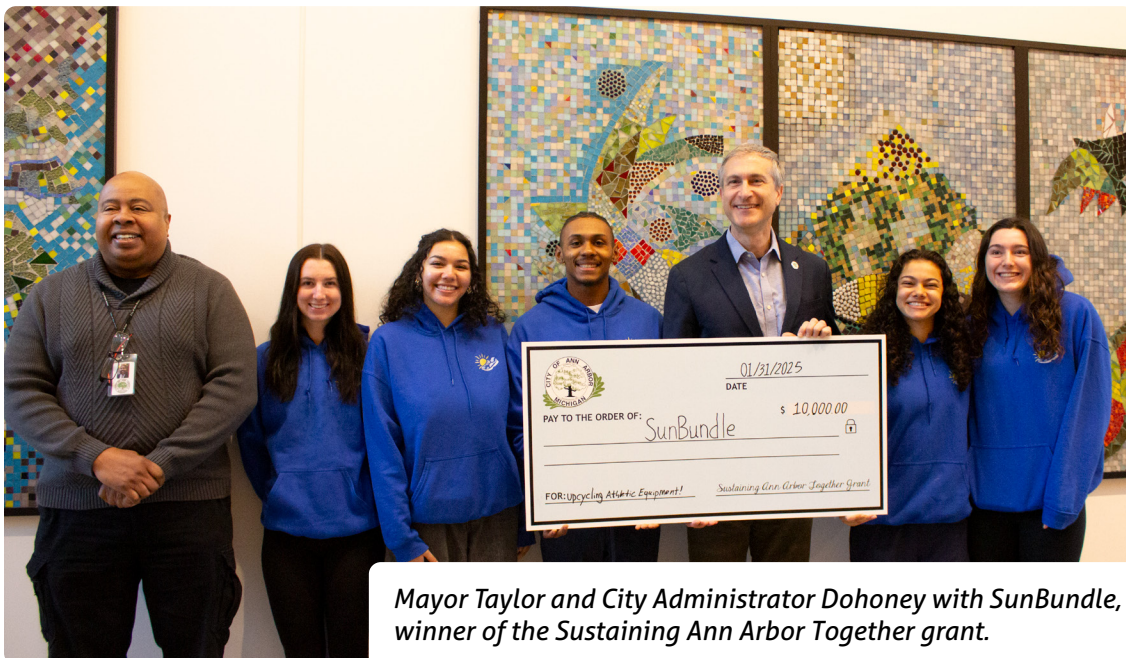
*Dr. Missy Stults (OSI) and Mayor Boris Palmer (Tübingen, Germany) shake hands.*

## 7: OTHER

- Participated in multiple national conversations and reports about climate-based migration.
- Working to update the City's Capital Improvements Planning Process to more holistically integrate sustainability criterion.
- Continued weekly segment on local radio station, 107.1 to consistently promote timely events and announcements from OSI.
- OSI staff conducted nearly 100 media interviews about the impact of our work over the last year, including for Time Magazine and the BBC!
- Staff presented at over 50 conferences or national webinars about various programs and initiatives.
- Staff served on advisory boards for the UM Museum of Natural History and the Refugee Agricultural Partnership Program.



*Sustainability and Innovations Fellows (formerly referred to as Climate Corps members) distribute food at Green Baxter Court.*



*Mayor Taylor and City Administrator Dohoney with SunBundle, winner of the Sustaining Ann Arbor Together grant.*



*Emergency kit supplies distribution.*

## YEAR 6 PRIORITIES

As the pages above show, year five was a busy year. But year six is shaping up to be another great year. Below are some of the priorities for next year:

- Launch a story-telling program to document and chronicle the local and personal impacts of A<sup>2</sup>ZERO.
- Stand up the Sustainable Energy Utility, getting significantly closer to the SEU formally providing it's first service offerings.
- Create a new [Green Rental Housing](#) program and support local property owners with making substantial improvements in rental efficiency.
- Scale the [Ann Arbor Green Business Challenge](#) to 50 local businesses.
- Install solar or have a plan to install solar at every viable city facility.
- Advance a city-wide geothermal feasibility study along with a strategy for deploying geothermal.
- Collaborate with Washtenaw County and other regional stakeholders to expand county-wide climate action, including expanding many A<sup>2</sup>ZERO programs across the County.
- Continue fundraising and making improvements to ensure the Bryant neighborhood becomes the nation's first carbon neutral existing neighborhood.
- Create a circular economy strategy that is codesigned with a wide variety of Ann Arbor residents.
- Launch a sustainable food strategy.
- Create and begin executing an electric vehicle charger deployment strategy.
- Expand and unlock greater collaboration opportunities with the [A<sup>2</sup>ZERO Community Collaborators](#) and OSI.
- Secure funding to scale the [Aging in Place Efficiently](#) program.
- In collaboration with local stakeholders, launch a "Welcome to Ann Arbor" sustainability-focused initiative.
- Implement a multi-family rebate program in coordination with renters, landlords, and property managers.
- Significantly scale our work to advance emergency preparedness at the household level.



## CLOSING

A<sup>2</sup>ZERO is our community's plan to become carbon neutral in a just and equitable way by the year 2030. Achieving this audacious, aggressive, and scientifically necessary goal requires all of us. Learn more about how to join this movement at [www.a2zero.org](http://www.a2zero.org).