

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
COMMERCIAL DECARBONIZATION.....	2
LOCAL FOOD.....	5
HIGHLIGHT: BEV'S BAGELS.....	7
HIGHLIGHT: C'MON BETTY.....	9
CLIMATE ACTION HERO.....	12
COOKBOOK EXCERPT.....	13
ANNOUNCEMENTS.....	14
UPCOMING EVENTS.....	15

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

This month's newsletter was organized by Samuel Kachuck, with significant help from Azella Markgraf, Bryce Frohlich, Claire DeBlanc, and many others. Sam joined OSI in February as the Commercial Sustainability Analyst to develop the Commercial Decarbonization Program, celebrate sustainable business practices, and promote our city's green leaders.

Interested in learning more? Reach out to Sam at skachuck@a2gov.org



Kids decorating A²ZERO totebags at the Art Fair Paint the Town Block pARTy.

WELCOME

In this issue of the Charging Station, OSI is delighted to share details about how Ann Arbor's businesses are leading the way with energy efficiency, electrification, and sustainability.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

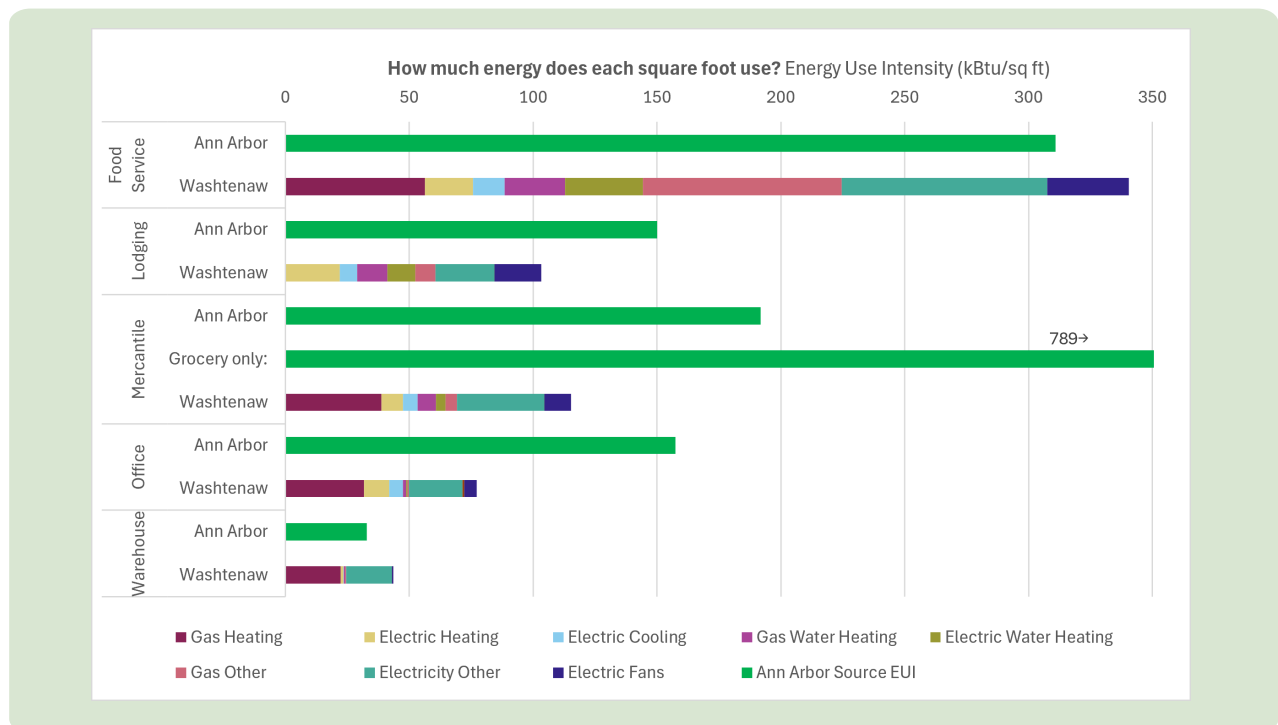
Equity and justice are at the center of A²ZERO and staff in OSI are continuing to ground our work in these critical principles. In that light, we'd like to take a moment to honor the geographic and historic space we share. We acknowledge that the land the City of Ann Arbor occupies is the ancestral, 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.

Commercial Building Decarbonization is Cool (and Hot)

What are busy Ann Arborites doing to reduce carbon emissions from commercial buildings?

Did you know that Ann Arbor has over 370 goods and services businesses, 650 restaurants, 500 retailers, and around 500 offices? That's over two thousand commercial establishments with over thirty million square feet of building footprint! These commercial buildings account for one-sixth of our community's greenhouse gas emissions, from using fossil gas and grid electricity to condition spaces, heat water, cook food, power electronics, and make products. All this busyness doesn't have to fill the air with anything but a song and a smile: businesses across the city are taking steps to reduce their emissions and Ann Arbor's Office of Sustainability and Innovations (OSI) is here to help.

An important step to decarbonization is identifying what's driving emissions. In October 2021, City Council unanimously adopted the Energy and Water Benchmarking Ordinance (City Code 104), requiring every building above 20,000 square feet to disclose their energy (gas and electricity) and water use. The data that comes from these disclosures give business owners the information they need to save money and improve their energy efficiency, while also giving OSI data that helps us support the businesses in making targeted improvements. As an example, the graph below shows data collected from benchmarking that allows the community to see the energy use per square foot – Energy Use Intensity (EUI) (see box on page 4) – for a handful of commercial uses in Ann Arbor (green bars).



Energy use per square foot of commercial building types. Ann Arbor data from Ann Arbor 2025 Benchmarking Report (2025 Report (Pub Jan 2026)). Washtenaw Data, broken into energy end-use, from NLR.

What is all this energy doing? In 2020 the National Laboratory of the Rockies (renamed in 2025 from the National Renewable Energy Laboratory) surveyed around 150,000 commercial buildings to model Site EUIs for different types of buildings in every county in the country. In Washtenaw County, it takes a lot of energy to keep our food cold (part of the teal bar, Electricity Other, in Food Service) and to then heat it up (the rose bar, Gas Other, in Food Service). Restaurants, especially cooking with gas, use a lot of energy to keep the air inside breathable through electric ventilation (indigo bars). Heating and air conditioning constitute a significant energy use (wine, sand, and cyan bars), with water heating (purple and olive bars) and all the other stuff plugged into outlets in offices, shops, and hotels (Electricity Other, teal bars) comprising much of the remainder.

Commercial Building Decarbonization is Cool (and Hot)

What are busy Ann Arborites doing to reduce carbon emissions from commercial buildings?

In supermarkets and grocery stores (with an EUI 789 kBtu/sq ft), especially those that prepare food in-store, many of these issues compound and are further augmented by the environmental effects of refrigerants (see Refrigerants and Heat Pumps on page 4). But here is an opportunity to feed two birds from one scone!

Under an EPA Pollution Prevention grant, OSI launched a refrigerant management and grant program to provide businesses with hands-on experience locating leaks, preventative maintenance recommendations, and financial assistance to switch to better refrigerants. Working with 25 businesses, OSI expects the community to reduce direct annual emissions from refrigerant leaks by up to 10,000 Metric Tons of CO₂ equivalent. Furthermore, because a system with better refrigerants and without leaks uses energy more efficiently, there will be secondary emissions reductions (shrinking the EUI bar), in addition to the operational cost savings from running equipment with less energy.

Across all building types, a significant amount of energy goes to heating and cooling spaces for occupant health and comfort. As with residential equipment, technical advancements have opened new possibilities for reducing these emissions. Take, for example, the deep energy efficiency upgrades, building electrification, and renewable energy adoption Peace Neighborhood Center (Peace) is pursuing in partnership with OSI at its west-side community center.

For more than 50 years, Peace has been a cornerstone of the Ann Arbor community, helping thousands of youth and families change their lives by providing critical wraparound support services: after-school & summer youth programming, food assistance, mental health support for kids & parents, housing support, and much more. But the aging fossil gas HVAC system in the agency's 12,000 square foot Ann Arbor facility, which serves over 100 residents daily, is nearing the end of life. As a trusted community institution and one of Ann Arbor's Community Resilience Hubs, maintaining a safe, healthy, and resilient building is essential to Peace's mission.

With a Sustaining Ann Arbor Together (SA2T) Grant, Peace is working with City partners – Washtenaw 2030 District and Inclination Engineering, experts in building science and decarbonization – on a plan to replace the existing HVAC equipment with all-electric alternatives, such as heat pumps (see Refrigerants and Heat Pumps on page 4). With future solar energy installation also on the horizon, investments in electrification and energy efficiency will reduce operating costs while improving the building's resilience. For a nonprofit organization like Peace, every dollar saved on utility expenses can be reinvested into the programs and services that directly benefit the community. The technical support provided to Peace makes the often-multi-layered facets of commercial decarbonization more accessible.

More Support for Commercial Decarbonization – Coming Soon

Improvements like those at Peace are possible across Ann Arbor's entire commercial sector. OSI is piloting a Commercial Decarbonization Rebate Program, which will officially launch this fall, to support our businesses in becoming more energy efficient and in making the switch from fossil-fuels to electricity so we can all see the maximum benefit from bringing more renewables onto our power grid.

Funded by the Climate Action Millage, businesses will have access to up to \$50,000 every 5 years for electrifying their appliances and reducing electricity consumption. Businesses will be able to choose from a list of standardized measures, such as weatherizing, retrofitting with heat pumps for HVAC and water heating, and installing energy-efficiency controls. If a business relies on specialized equipment that they want to electrify, they can work with local decarbonization experts and OSI to propose other improvements.

Commercial Building Decarbonization is Cool (and Hot)

What are busy Ann Arborites doing to reduce carbon emissions from commercial buildings?

WHAT IS ENERGY USE INTENSITY?

How much energy a building uses will depend on what the people and equipment inside the building are doing and how much of it is being done. To compare buildings across sizes, we rely on a metric called Energy use intensity (EUI). EUI is the quantity of energy a property uses per unit of gross floor area (GFA), expressed in units of energy use per square foot on an annualized basis (e.g., kBtu/ft²). By looking at a building's EUI and comparing to the city-wide, county-wide, or nation-wide average, we can identify opportunities for improving our energy use, reducing our emissions, and increasing our safety.

We use two different measures of EUI: Site EUI is the annual on-site energy consumption of a property, regardless of the source. Source EUI use is the total amount of raw fuel that is required to operate a property, including losses that take place during generation, transmission, and distribution of the energy. As a result, Source EUI incorporates more local context about our energy system, and is generally considered to be the best metric for understanding commercial energy use. For a full description of the Ann Arbor EUI data, please see the 2025 Benchmarking Report at a2gov.org/benchmarking.



Refrigerant Management Technical Assistance site visit with Zingerman's Deli.

REFRIGERANTS AND HEAT PUMPS

If you have a refrigerator or an air-conditioner in your home or business, you already have a heat pump! These modern marvels cool a space by a very special material – a refrigerant – that turns from a liquid to a gas and back at a temperature that can be controlled by its pressure. Pumping around a loop at carefully controlled pressures, the refrigerant picks up energy from inside by evaporating into a gas and dumps it outside by condensing back into a liquid. Refrigerants can even evaporate, and pick up energy, at temperatures as low as –60 deg F, and carry that energy inside to a house on a cold winter night (though efficiency does drop somewhat). All this requires is a reversing valve to change which side of the system is the evaporator and which side is the condenser, turning an A/C into what we call a Heat Pump. Whereas burning gas requires transforming chemical into new heat energy, a heat pump merely moves existing heat energy around. Pumping refrigerants takes a fraction of the energy they're able to move around, allowing them to be over 100% efficient!

One potential drawback to refrigerants is that they can act as very potent greenhouse gases if they escape from their loops into the atmosphere, trapping thousands of times more heat than CO₂ (this is known as a Global Warming Potential (GWP)). For instance, R-404A, a common refrigerant found in small food retail businesses, has a GWP of 3,922. That means that one pound of it in the atmosphere has a similar effect on global warming as 3,922 pounds of CO₂. The good news is that refrigerants with lower GWP are available and, unlike burning fossil fuels, a maintained system can reuse the same refrigerants for years on end.

Get the Dirt on Local Food

Dig into the role of local food in commercial sustainability with Sustainable Food Analyst, Azella Markgraf. Plus, a sneak preview of the 5th Annual Ann Arbor Local Food Festival!

Here is a question for you: What do a heat pump and a local tomato have in common? While they both may provide a refreshing reprieve on a hot Michigan summer's day, the similarities lie deeper still. To find the commonality between these two seemingly unrelated items, we encourage you to take a stroll through Ann Arbor, where you may seek out a delicious meal in one of our many local restaurants and find both of these items quietly evidencing the business' dedication to sustainability.

That's right! While a tomato and a heat pump are each wonderful in their own right, paired together they tell the story of a much larger effort underway in Ann Arbor - the story of a local business community dedicated to sustainability. From retrofitting their buildings or optimizing menus for waste reduction, to sourcing food with the utmost care and intention, businesses in Ann Arbor are working to tackle the climate crisis, employing diverse solutions to not only mitigate climate change but also provide tangible benefits to their bottom lines. And while infrastructure upgrades and new energy technologies are important and exciting steps in our community's sustainability journey, building a truly sustainable business is a multi-faceted process that involves many layered decisions and considerations.

In the previous article, you read about some of the ways that commercial businesses and organizations in Ann Arbor are addressing the direct greenhouse gas emissions associated with the buildings and equipment they rely on. In this article, we dig into the role of sourcing local food in business sustainability, highlighting the benefits of crafting a sustainable, farm-to-table plate! Plus, read to the end for a sneak peek into the fifth annual Ann Arbor Local Food Festival, Ann Arbor's biggest annual celebration of local food & farming, and learn how you can join in with the fresh, foodie fun!

The Role of Local Food in Commercial Sustainability

Behind every bite of food is a wild, wonderful, and occasionally treacherous tale, beginning with soil, seeds, and sunlight, then venturing through many hands, multiple vehicles, and perhaps even various plastic packages. Each step in a food's journey has an impact on the earth, the air, the people handling the food, and the broader environment. That story, those impacts, are all wrapped up within the delicious bite at the end of your fork, known in the sustainability sphere as their "embodied" impact.

The indirect, embodied emissions of products we consume are often not accounted for in traditional greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventories, making their contribution to climate change harder to quantify. However, GHG inventories done in other cities suggest that the food we buy and eat in our communities is likely a much larger piece of the climate pie than we may suspect. In some cases, food may have nearly as large an impact as transportation! For this reason, among others, where products come from and how they were made are important considerations for a community or business looking to reduce their environmental footprint.

One example of how businesses are working to "green" their supply chain is by choosing to purchase food from local farms and food producers. Besides the more obvious environmental benefit of reducing transportation-related emissions, sourcing food locally has other sustainability upsides, such as less food wasted in the food production process due to less time spent in transit and storage, or supporting a strong, thriving local food economy that's better able to withstand unanticipated shocks and disruptions.

Get the Dirt on Local Food

Dig into the role of local food in commercial sustainability with Sustainable Food Analyst, Azella Markgraf. Plus, a sneak preview of the 5th Annual Ann Arbor Local Food Festival!

Overall, the importance of local and sustainable sourcing as a potential sustainability strategy should not be understated! Here at OSI, we know that the road to carbon neutrality is steep and that we will need every possible tool available in our toolkit to help us reach our goals. As we continue to expand our support for the local business community and work towards our A²ZERO goal of community-wide carbon neutrality, we encourage you to notice, as you go about your daily lives, the many diverse and unique ways that the Ann Arbor community is putting sustainability into practice. Whether it's technology as exciting as a heat pump, or food as humble as a tomato, the next innovative climate solution may be at work, right in front of you!

Experience the flavors of Michigan at the Local Food Festival!

Do you want to experience the taste of sustainability yourself? Join us at the Ann Arbor Local Food Festival on Thursday, August 27th, from 5:00 – 8:00 pm, for an unforgettable evening of food, friends, and fun! Enjoy free local food samples, live music, engaging demonstrations, and family-friendly activities for all ages!

While you are there, share a delicious meal or treat from one of the festival's many food trucks or vendors, and explore all that Michigan's local food system has to offer with a number of interactive exhibits offered by local community organizations. For more details, visit a2gov.org/localfoodfest.



Attendees sample local produce from the Hungry Locavore Farm, Kapnick Orchards, Brines Farm, and Old City Acres at the 2025 Local Food Festival.



Festival attendees sample watermelon from Tantre Farm while Chef Joe Van Wagner prepares samples using local ingredients.



Photo Display created by the Community Farm of Ann Arbor, Local Food Festival 2025.



Local vegetable samples from the Hungry Locavore.

Collaborator Highlight: Bev's Bagels

Bev's Bagels, a 7-day-a-week bagel diner, serving organic sourdough bagels, wild-caught fish, and creative schmears and sandwiches, is opening a fully electric kitchen at 115 E. Liberty Street. Founded by James Beard-recognized chef Max Sussman and named for his grandmother, Bev's blends bagel tradition with modern flavors and the best ingredients. We interviewed owners Max Sussman and Kate McCabe by email.

WHAT ARE YOUR ORGANIZATIONS' GOALS?

We aim to be a leader in how restaurants can be sustainable, and we consider this from multiple angles, including ingredient sourcing, energy use, workplace culture, and more.

Max Sussman and Kate McCabe, founders of Bev's Bagels, preparing their locally-made, all organic bagels.



Bev's Bagels upcoming all-electric, Ann Arbor bagel diner at 115 E. Liberty Street.

HOW HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING TOWARDS THOSE GOALS LATELY?

From the beginning, Bev's has used organic flour, and we source exclusively wild fish. Both of these are pretty unique to a bagel shop. Most bagel shops use the cheapest possible flour, and even those that use a higher quality of flour are not organic. It's a real commitment we made when Bev's started as a popup that we are continuing to honor as Bev's grows.

The bagel shop tradition has also been so closely identified with smoked fish. Over the last few decades, the wild salmon population has been declining dramatically. Ironically, farmed salmon, which was supposed to help preserve wild salmon stocks, has ended up having a huge negative impact on wild salmon. We're committed to doing our part to help support sustainable salmon fisheries and that means we only use wild caught cold smoked sockeye salmon from Alaska.

We have a real opportunity to make our Ann Arbor location as sustainable as possible, in large part because we are turning a former retail space into a commercial kitchen. We hope to use this store as a template to make changes in our other locations.

Collaborator Highlight: Bev's Bagels

WHAT ARE SOME PROJECTS YOU'RE EXCITED TO SHARE WITH THE COMMUNITY?

For our new shop in Ann Arbor, we are excited to be pursuing an all-electric buildout. Our goal is that everything from the heating and cooling to cooking be electric. It's kind of an open secret that a lot of chefs and restaurant operators really hate electric and induction cooking. It can be harder to get used to, especially coming from gas cooking. Fortunately, the technology has come a long way and we've thought a lot about how to use electric equipment to set up an ideal bagel sandwich shop kitchen. We're working with great architects, contractors, and of course our partners at A2ZERO to think through the best ways to do this. All we have to do now is continue to shift the grid itself towards renewables, which can definitely seem like a challenge right now but ultimately is the end goal.

HOW DOES SUSTAINABILITY FACTOR INTO YOUR WORK?

We'd be remiss not to mention the culture we create and the community we build within our stores as part of our sustainability work. Social and economic sustainability are integral parts of a truly sustainable workplace. We aim to provide our staff with a living wage and are always thinking about how we can make sure our shops are fun and supportive places to work.

HOW DOES YOUR WORK CONTRIBUTE TO A2ZERO GOALS?

One of the most challenging parts of achieving a net zero community is commercial and institutional energy use. Places like restaurants, schools, and hospitals have such a higher energy usage than homes since there is such a concentration of people and activity. Most restaurants are small businesses and are highly budget- and time-constrained. Modeling how a restaurant can work with A2ZERO to pursue electrification is a really important step towards getting more restaurant owners to consider this path when choosing their equipment, contractors, designs, and so forth. We want to be a leader and help show what's possible in this area.

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO AS YOUR WORK PROGRESSES?

We're really looking forward to continuing to develop the infrastructure, resources, and common language for how restaurants can pursue electrification as part of a broader sustainability framework. Our goal is to set the bar for other small businesses and restaurants while at the same time being able to educate contractors and other people involved in the process. Being a showcase of how these ideas move out of the realm of policy goals and into reality is exciting and will be a great resource for the city as well as other restaurant owners. In the long-term we'd love to see sustainable practices becoming more accessible to all kinds of businesses – not just ones who have ample funding etc. It shouldn't cost extra to do the right thing.

HOW CAN OTHERS GET INVOLVED?

Even though we're doing something from the ground up in terms of electrification, there are a million smaller ways that folks can make sustainable choices. Restaurants can begin sourcing their ingredients more sustainably without having to make a big capital investment. We'd love for folks to reach out and talk about their challenges around sustainability, and, once we're open, we'd love for people to come support us and see what's possible in an electric kitchen, and when the city and small businesses work together towards building a just transition to green energy.

Collaborator Highlight: C'Mon Betty



Caitlin Burr, founder of C'Mon Betty, with signature shelf-stable condiments, Watermelon Rind Relish and Sweet Zucchini Relish.

The following Collaborator Spotlight on C'Mon Betty first appeared in the A2ZERO Community Cookbook, which includes even more stories and recipes about members of our community working to make our food system more sustainable! Since this story was first published, C'Mon Betty has been awarded the first Platinum Certificate in Ann Arbor's Green Business Challenge (MLive), joined as a Washtenaw County Waste Knot Partner, and can be found teaching canning classes at the Michigan Folk School expanding on food preservation education.

When Caitlin Burr, founder and sole operator of local condiment company, C'Mon Betty, started a home garden in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, she ran into a bit of a pickle: she had too much produce on her hands! To keep it from going bad, Caitlin taught herself how to can food by taking classes through Michigan State University Extension. By preserving her harvest, Caitlin found that she could more easily share the abundance of her garden with friends, family, and neighbors.

Over time, Caitlin's passion for food preservation grew stronger, and she decided to turn her hobby into a business, which she named after a phrase her mother often used - "C'Mon Betty!" An artisanal canning company making unique, locally sourced condiments, C'Mon Betty's mission is to recover surplus and "ugly" produce from local farms and markets and give it a new life: "Instead of ending up in a landfill, it comes to us, and we make delicious, shelf-stable condiments," says Caitlin.

Collaborator Highlight: C'Mon Betty

Fighting Climate Change, One Jar at a Time

In the United States, around 40% of all food produced ends up as waste. After being thrown away, most of that wasted food ends up in landfills, where it decomposes and releases methane, a harmful greenhouse gas that is 80 times more potent than carbon dioxide. Not to mention, when food is wasted, so too are all of the resources – energy, fertilizers, pesticides, fuel, money, and labor – that went into producing that food. According to the United Nations, wasted food is responsible for around 8% of global greenhouse gas emissions, making it a major cause of climate change.

Recognizing this, Caitlin opened C'Mon Betty with a goal of providing a creative and delicious solution to what she calls the “food waste opportunity.” However, even before starting her business, Caitlin was dedicated to reducing waste. After moving to Ann Arbor in 2018, she began volunteering with local organizations such as SCRAP Creative Reuse and ZeroWaste.org as a way to connect with her community and resources to reduce her personal carbon footprint. However, she says, “I really felt like I wasn’t doing enough. Food waste is a humongous contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. Knowing how much surplus produce is out there, [C'Mon Betty] felt like the perfect marriage of my love for food preservation and sustainability.”

Come see C'Mon Betty at the Ann Arbor Farmer's Market!



Caitlin Burr accepted the Green Business Challenge's first Platinum Certification for C'Mon Betty at the 2026 A2ZERO Week Award Ceremony.

C'Mon Betty is dedicated to a mission of “upcycling fresh produce, supporting local farmers, and enhancing a local circular economy.” By purchasing leftover produce from farmers markets, Caitlin is able to keep food out of the landfill and turn it into something delicious, while still providing a fair price to the farmer. Additionally, C'Mon Betty aims to be entirely zero waste, using only fully reusable or recyclable jars, labels, and liners to package their products, and composting any food scraps they do produce. In the near future, C'mon Betty customers will also be able to return used jars to be cleaned, sanitized, and reused!

Even in a place like Ann Arbor, where the community is so dedicated to sustainability, Caitlin acknowledges that actually achieving a zero-waste operation has been a difficult step. In addition to needing to master the basics of business entrepreneurship, Caitlin navigated confusing systems that at times made her commitment to sustainability challenging. For example, she says, “finding 100% recyclable labels took over a year of us going back and forth and fine tuning everything.” However, despite the obstacles, Caitlin said, “It was important to me to follow through on my values, even if it can be more time-consuming and expensive.”

Collaborator Highlight: C'Mon Betty

Taking Action to Reduce Waste at Home

Caitlin hopes that C'Mon Betty will inspire and encourage others to take action, while also contributing to a more sustainable local economy. She says, "most people don't realize how much they're wasting, both in terms of money and in produce." According to the EPA, the average family of four could save up to \$56 per week (\$3,000 per year!) on food they throw away!

Luckily, Caitlin shares, there are many resources in Ann Arbor to support those interested in reducing their own waste. "We are so lucky to live in Ann Arbor because the community is really supportive of sustainability efforts," she says. For example, she highlights that the City of Ann Arbor offers residential curbside compost collection, including food scraps, and suggests composting as a great first step towards waste reduction. Additionally, Caitlin recommends checking out local businesses, like the vendors at the Ann Arbor Farmers Market, By the Pound, or Bring Your Own Container (BYOC) that offer zero waste packaging options.

To learn more about C'Mon Betty's efforts to reduce food waste, or to purchase their products, visit www.cmonbetty.com.

Caitlin Burr, of C'Mon Betty, teaching a canning workshop at the Michigan Folk School.



A²ZERO CLIMATE ACTION HERO

JAN CULBERTSON IS AUGUST 2026'S HERO

Beginning January 2026, 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 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.

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.



Jan Culbertson

FOUNDER AND MENTOR

Jan Culbertson has been a part of Ann Arbor's sustainability leadership for decades – graduating from Huron High School, receiving her undergraduate and Master of Architecture degrees from the University of Michigan, and practicing architecture for over 40 years. As a Senior Principal at A3C Collaborative Architecture, she focused on sustainability in her practice and organized Architecture + 2030 continuing education sessions for designers throughout southeast Michigan. Jan was instrumental in launching the Washtenaw 2030 District (then Ann Arbor 2030 District) in 2018 and is invaluable to its expansion and impact throughout all of Washtenaw County. Collaborating closely with the City of Ann Arbor's Office of Sustainability and Innovations and Washtenaw County's Resiliency Office, Jan leads the District's support for the unique challenges of decarbonizing municipal, multifamily, and commercial buildings, key parts of Ann Arbor's A²ZERO Plan.

Her passion and expertise can be seen far beyond Ann Arbor, serving as Scio Township's Planning Commission Chair, leading their Environmental Sustainability Task Force, and advocating at the state level for the architectural profession and the environment as the co-chair of AIA Michigan's Government Advocacy Committee. Jan has mentored and inspired countless young professionals over the years, and has been recognized with AIA's highest membership honor, FAIA, for exceptional work and contributions to architecture and society.

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

From the A²ZERO Community Cookbook

View this recipe and 70+ more at osi.a2gov.org/cookbook

TOFU SUMMER ROLLS WITH PEANUT SAUCE

From the Kitchen of: Elodie Landry, Community Member

Preparation Time: 30 minutes | **Cook Time:** 4-8 minutes | **Yield:** 4 rolls

Common Allergens: Peanuts, Soy, Sesame

This recipe makes a fresh, crisp summer roll with an umami-filled sauce. Elodie loves to make these with their sister for lunches in the summer.

INGREDIENTS:

FOR THE PEANUT SAUCE:

- 1/3 cup peanut butter
- 2 Tablespoons rice vinegar
- 2 Tablespoons reduced-sodium soy sauce
- 2 Tablespoons honey
- 1 Tablespoons toasted sesame oil
- 3 cloves of garlic, minced
- 2 Tablespoons water

FOR THE SUMMER ROLLS

- 1 (14-ounce) package of rice noodles, cooked
- 4 rice paper wrappers
- 1 block of tofu, cut into 8 equally sized sticks
- 1 cucumber, cut into 4 sticks
- 1 carrot, cut into 4 sticks
- 1 cup shredded cabbage
- 1 avocado, sliced

NOTES:

If you have leftover tofu and peanut sauce, you can freeze them in individually portioned containers for future use!

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Make the peanut sauce by combining all sauce ingredients in a medium-sized bowl.
- Cook the rice noodles according to the package instructions. Once cooked, drain the water into a pan that fits the rice wrappers.
- Submerge one rice wrapper into the drained water until soft.
- Place the rice wrapper on a wet plate and fill it with some rice noodles and $\frac{1}{4}$ of the tofu, sliced vegetables, avocado, and some peanut sauce.
- Wrap the rice paper around the filling, tucking in the ends and folding the wrapper over the tucked ends to seal the wrap.
- Repeat steps 3-5 to make the remaining 3 wraps.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

I AM A²ZERO Share your sustainability story! On Earth Day, we launched the "I Am A²ZERO" storytelling campaign, with videos showing just some of the video variety of actions the Ann Arbor community is taking to become more sustainable. Celebrating things both big and small, this campaign highlights the impact of climate action in the Ann Arbor community straight from the members of the community themselves. Hear their stories and submit your own at a2zero.org/IAm.

**We want to hear what you do
to advance sustainability!**

**Tell us how you embody A²ZERO
at osi.a2gov.org/IAmA2ZERO**

INSULATE ANN ARBOR This new pilot between the City of Ann Office of Sustainability and Innovations and DTE Energy offering up to \$1 million in combined rebates, to qualified multifamily rental properties installing energy efficiency upgrades. The pilot program, Insulate Ann Arbor, offers rebates for insulation and air sealing upgrades that improve comfort, reduce energy costs, and make multifamily rental buildings healthier, more affordable, and more sustainable. Learn more at osi.a2gov.org/insulatea2.

NEW YEAR - MORE REBATES The City is pleased to offer \$2,000,000 in rebates for Ann Arbor residents to implement energy efficiency, appliance electrification, resiliency, and clean transportation improvements. You can learn more and apply for your rebate today at <https://osi.a2gov.org/rebates>.





UPCOMING EVENTS

CLOTHING SWAP AT PRIDE | August 1, 12 - 5 PM | Main Street, Ann Arbor

Celebrate Pride with a community clothing swap this year! In collaboration with Jim Toy Community Center, Ann Arbor's Office of Sustainability and Innovations will be hosting a clothing swap at Ann Arbor Pride. Bring up to 10 articles of clean clothing or accessories, in good condition. In the spirit of Pride, please consider bringing gently used gender-affirming items such as bras and binders to support our transgender community members, we are also looking for professional clothing! You can take clothing without bringing anything or bring clothing without taking anything. We hope to see you there! Learn more and RSVP for updates at luma.com/4jslgtaw.

THE RIDE OPEN HOUSE | August 1, 11 AM - 1 PM | The Ride Main Office, 2700 S Industrial Hwy

Whether you're new to riding the bus or just want to get more comfortable with knowing how to ride, this event is the perfect opportunity to learn, explore, and connect with TheRide.

ANN ARBOR SOLAR STORIES WITH GLREA | August 6, 7 - 8 PM | Zoom Events - Links are Emailed to Members

Please join Come hear from an Ann Arbor resident on their experience getting solar, with lots of time for questions and discussion. Learn more and register at <https://www.2glrea.org/events>.

A²ZERO EATS! GUIDED FARM TOUR: DOG STAR FARM | August 7, 1 - 3 PM | 4700 Whitmore Lake Road

Join us for a guided tour of Dog Star Farm! Dog Star Farm is a small-scale farm growing certified organic vegetables outside of Ann Arbor, MI. Founded in 2025, Dog Star Farm focuses on building healthy soils and advancing affordable, community-centered agriculture. On this tour, we'll meet the farmers, Magda and Zach, learn tips for how to harvest, dry, and preserve fresh herbs, and get an introduction to safe and responsible foraging. Learn more and register for this event: <https://a2zeroeats.eventbrite.com>

ELECTRONICS COLLECTION | August 8, 10 AM - 1 PM | Rudolf Steiner High School

Drop off unwanted electronics to prevent waste by facilitating reuse, refurbishment, repair, and, as a last resort, recycling of these devices. Registration is limited and required. Visit August2026Electronics.eventbrite.com to learn about accepted items and register.

SOLARIZE GROUP BUY KICKOFF MEETING | August 17, 7 - 9 PM | Zoom Meeting

Join the group buy to learn about solar, ask questions, and have the option of joining the group buy to get discounts on solar for your home. Interested in joining? Email CDailey@a2gov.org. Can't make it on August 17th? Email Connor to get the recording and still participate.

A²ZERO CLOTHING SWAP | August 20, 4 - 7 PM | Ann Arbor City Hall

Join the Office of Sustainability and Innovations for monthly clothing swaps on the third Thursday of each month from 4:00pm to 7:00pm! This swap, taking place in Council Chambers in Larcom City Hall (2nd floor), is a perfect way to give your gently used clothes a new home and find items of clothing you have been looking for, without having to buy them new. Each person can bring up to 5 items of clothing in good condition (no rips, holes, stains, or unwashed items). Accessories are also welcome. You can take clothing without bringing anything, or bring clothing without taking anything.

OSI PARK WORKDAY | August 21, 8:15 - 10 AM | Ann Arbor Farmers Market

Show some love to South Maple Park! Join the City of Ann Arbor's Office of Sustainability and Innovations and the Ann Arbor Parks Volunteer Program for a volunteer workday focused on weeding around the park's playground area. This work helps keep the play area safer, and more welcoming for all who visit the park throughout the season. No prior experience is necessary. Come lend a hand, meet your community, and show your love for South Maple Park!

LOCAL FOOD FESTIVAL | August 27, 5 - 8 PM | Ann Arbor Farmers Market

We are looking forward to welcoming you to the Ann Arbor Local Food Festival, Ann Arbor's annual celebration of Michigan food and farming! This free public festival showcases farms, food makers, and local organizations focused on growing a strong and sustainable local food system. Festival goers will learn about the benefits of local and sustainably grown food, eat delicious local food, participate in fun and educational activities, enjoy live music, and have a blast.