
The Newsletter for the City of Ann Arbor, Michigan
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Get tickets for the A200 celebration

Help to bring the city's milestone, 200th year to a close at the [Ann Arbor Bicentennial Closing Celebration](#) Saturday, Dec. 14, 6–8 p.m. at Ann Arbor Skyline High School. Do you have your [tickets](#) yet for this gathering of historic proportions?

The event will bring the community together with entertainment, refreshments and reflection on the bicentennial activities and commemorative initiatives that took place throughout 2024. Ticket proceeds will support Ann Arbor Legacy Projects. Event sponsors

include the City of Ann Arbor, DTE, Bank of Ann Arbor and Michigan Schools and Government Credit Union. Go online for [complete details](#)!

And before we say “bye” to the bicentennial, you have a last chance to buy some limited-edition A200 merch! Check out the [online Ann Arbor Bicentennial store](#) to get your gear before it's gone!

Learn more about the [Ann Arbor Bicentennial](#) on the celebration's official spot online.

Make a difference at the new Bicentennial Park

To celebrate Ann Arbor's 200th anniversary, Southeast Area Park was renamed [Bicentennial Park](#), with many improvements slated in the overall plan. The primary enhancement will be the addition of Ann Arbor's first universal-access splash pad for water play; updated playground; pavilion; and restrooms, all of which will be solar powered. Additional items being considered are a new building and shelter to support park operations and programming, trail improvements and more. The 26.5-acre park is located at the corner of Ellsworth Road and Platt Road in southeast Ann Arbor.



Now there's a convenient way to support these efforts! [Donations to Bicentennial Park](#) through the city parks software, CivicRec, are being accepted. Enhancements will make the park even more accessible, offering a vibrant, innovative and inclusive environment where neighbors, friends and families can connect. Please consider supporting this effort — for your own family's enjoyment, as a corporate or organizational sponsor, or even as a gift on behalf of a friend or loved one — or please share this opportunity with others who might want to be a part of the new Bicentennial Park's resurgence.

If you have questions regarding the process or would like more information about the project, please reach out to Parks & Recreation Manager Josh Landefeld at jlandefeld@a2gov.org.



Winter recreation in A2

Buhr Park Outdoor Ice Arena is officially open for the 2024–25 season (2751 Packard Road). Rent skates or bring your own. Open skating times are available seven days a week; Sticks and Pucks takes place on Sundays, Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays; and special times for drop-in hockey are on the schedule, too. Check out Frozen Fridays 7–8:45 p.m. weekly for themed skates — music and costumes, for those who wish to partake; see the

theme schedule online. See also opportunities to rent the ice for games or special events! Be sure to visit the website, www.a2gov.org/Buhr, for all the details as well as any weather related closures, delays or schedule changes.

Veterans Memorial Park offers indoor open skating daily, except on Wednesdays; Sticks and Pucks on Sundays; hockey leagues; and lessons, with the next session starting in late January (2150 Jackson Ave.). You can also book a birthday party at the rink, with times offered Saturdays and Sundays and include access to refrigerator and freezer storage for your party.

Vets has also gone to the dogs this winter! Well, in one designated area of the park. A fenced-in, off-leash temporary dog park is now open at ballfield No. 4, on the north/Dexter Avenue side. [Find details](#), and how to get a dog park permit if you don't already have one!

Or, for those who prefer their water unfrozen and comfortably warm, go for a swim at **Mack Indoor Pool**, 715 Brooks St. Open swims and special open swim times take place daily. The next sessions for the inclusive youth swim team, the Octopods, and for adults swim lessons begin in early January, with [signups going on now!](#)

Daily programs and events also take place year round at the **Ann Arbor Senior Center** (1320 Baldwin Ave.). Find details about wellness and enrichment classes, Bridge, lunch-and-learn workshops, organized travel excursions, mall walks, drive-thru events, music, art ... and much more ... on the [senior center website!](#)

Ace the holidays with parks merch

Do you or does someone on your gift list have an affinity for the Ann Arbor Farmers Market, the city's many parks, programs or teams? Fantastic finds — from goats to Octopods, "buy local" to Buhr Park ... and everything in between — are available to purchase at the [Ann Arbor Parks & Recreation online shop](#). Browse the fun (and functional) products today; and take your gift-giving to the next level this holiday season!



Bring a toy, leave a smile

New toys are being collected through Thursday, Dec. 12, for the fourth annual [Harper's Toy Drive](#) (PDF)! The Harper Strong Foundation is looking for new, unwrapped toys for children ages 0 to 18. The toys will be donated to CS Mott Children's Hospital to bring smiles to children's faces over the holidays. The toy drive is a meaningful cause to the Ann Arbor Police Department, in particular.

Unwrapped, new toys may be dropped off at:

- Ann Arbor Police Department — 301 E. Huron St.
- Kerrytown — Mudpuddles store, second floor

- Northfield Township Police Department — 8350 Main St., Whitmore Lake
 - University of Michigan Police Department — 1239 Kipke Drive
 - Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office — 2201 Hogback Road
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Winter taxes due

Winter property taxes are due by Tuesday, Dec. 31, in order to avoid interest or penalty. For eligible, low-income homeowners, Michigan law provides for a reduction in property taxes, commonly known as a poverty exemption. A poverty exemption application may be submitted no later than Monday, Dec. 9, 2024, to allow time for review prior to the Board of Review December meeting, which takes place Tuesday, Dec. 10. Go online to review the [qualifications and application information](#).



Taxes may be paid by mail, by phone (866.890.4982) or [paid online](#). As a reminder, in 2022, the city upgraded its online payment platform for property taxes. This platform has a similar look and feel to the online utility payment system and is intended to be more user friendly than the previous system. In addition, you have the option (not required) to register your email and/or mobile number to enable notifications and reminders. Payments are also accepted at the City of Ann Arbor Customer Service Center (located on the first floor of Larcom City Hall at 301 E. Huron St.) and at several Bank of Ann Arbor branches. Bank of Ann Arbor will accept full winter tax payments in December only.

Regular business hours at the Larcom City Hall customer service center are 8 a.m.–5 p.m. weekdays. Please note, the customer service center will be closed to observe the Christmas and New Year's holidays Tuesday, Dec. 24, Wednesday, Dec. 25, and Tuesday, Dec. 31.

Visit the city's [property taxes webpage](#) for more information, including how property taxes are calculated.



Manage ice and snow

We've already had bout(s) with snow and ice this season, proving it's not too early to think about preventing slippery driveways, walkways and sidewalks. There are several de-icing options to consider, each with its own benefits, limitations and drawbacks.

Salt can be the least expensive and most abundant material for ridding surfaces of ice, but its effectiveness drops as surfaces fall below 18 degrees Fahrenheit, and overuse can pollute water supplies. After careful deliberation years ago, the Ann Arbor City Council directed city crews to use a 95/5 percent sand/salt mixture on residential streets to decrease the use of salt alone.

There are all kinds of non-toxic materials available for purchase which, if you have pets, can be a good choice. Some solutions, like products containing calcium chloride (CaCl_2), can melt snow at lower temperatures, are less harmful to plants and animals, but corrode metal and concrete. In addition, CaCl_2 binds to water and can't be separated, which has the potential to cause environmental impacts, such as harm to water quality.

Products that contain potassium acetate can block ice from forming at very low temperatures, are noncorrosive and biodegradable, however, these products lower oxygen levels in water and can harm fish and plants in our waterways.

Some find various brines to help prevent ice from sticking to surfaces, while others use a bit of sugar in their salt to lower the temperature at which it's effective.

When in doubt, the best course of action is to use as little deicer as possible and, if feasible, use physical means to remove ice or snow. Learn more about [ice and snow management](#) in A2.

Help keep walkways walkable

Snowfall has already occurred in Ann Arbor, signaling time to share important reminders about snow- and ice-management requirements in the city. Please take note!



In short, property owners are responsible for removing and/or treating snow and ice on sidewalks, crosswalk ramps and bus stops adjacent to their property.

According to [city code](#):

Residential property — Within 24 hours, any accumulation of snow greater than 1 inch must be cleared from adjacent sidewalks, concrete bus stop walks and crosswalk ramps. Within 18 hours of forming, any ice accumulations must be treated with sand, salt or other substance, to prevent it from becoming slippery. The city is not responsible for clearing mailboxes of snow and/or ice.

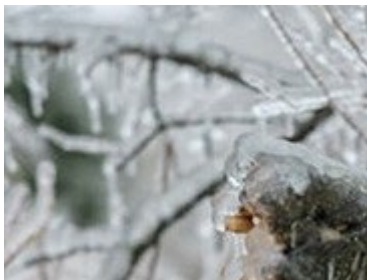
Nonresidential property — All snow/ice which, prior to 6 a.m., has accumulated on a sidewalk adjacent to property shall be removed by noon the same day. Snow and ice from walks and ramps that are at bus stops or that lead to a marked or unmarked crosswalk must also be removed. The owner or occupant shall keep the sidewalk effectively treated with sand, salt or other suitable substance in such manner as to prevent ice from being dangerous until such time as it can be removed.

Additional reminders:

Please exercise caution and care when shoveling, especially during extreme cold. Be alert to any signs of strain or discomfort, and stop immediately. Call on a friend, family member or neighbor to assist.

Remember, moving snow/ice from private property onto a public street, sidewalk or bridge not only poses a significant safety hazard, it's against the law.

Together, we can provide a safe and walkable community for everyone, all year round. It's not only a requirement, it's also the neighborly thing to do! For more information, visit www.a2gov.org/sidewalksnow. To report a neglected sidewalk, please use the A2 Fix It app, at www.a2gov.org/a2fixit, or call 734.794.6942.



Time to winterize

There are cold months ahead, and you can be prepared with these tips for winterizing:

- Drain rain barrels, remove their spigots and clear debris. If the rain barrel will be left outside for the winter, disconnect it from gutters and turn it upside down.
 - Weed rain gardens to prevent pesky weeds from coming back in the spring, but keep pruning to a minimum. Check your mulch depth to ensure at least 3 inches of material.
 - Give your gutters a good cleaning so that ice is less likely to build up and melting snow/ice can drain.
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Close of seasonal compost collection nears

Curbside pickup of compostable materials will end for the season on Friday, Dec. 13, 2024. Ann Arbor compost collection provides an opportunity for pickup of fall leaves and other yard material that have been placed on lawn extensions in compost carts, paper yard bags, or branches tied into bundles, as described at www.a2gov.org/compost. Leaves are not permitted in the street and will not be collected if placed there.



Christmas tree free drop-off sites

The City of Ann Arbor will once again provide [drop-off disposal locations for undecorated Christmas trees](#) between Monday, Dec. 16, 2024, and Monday, Jan. 20, 2025.

There are four park locations for tree drop offs during normal park hours, 6 a.m.–10 p.m.

The collected trees will be chipped for mulch on a regular basis at the park sites. The drop-off locations are:

1. Bicentennial Park (Southeast Area Park) located on Ellsworth at Platt. Trees may be left at the dirt lot north of the basketball courts.
2. West Park parking lot off Chapin near West Huron Street.
3. Gallup Boat Launch parking lot (not the Gallup Livery), entrance on the southeast side of Geddes Road, East of Huron Parkway.
4. Olson Park parking lot, 1515 Dhu Varren Road, near Pontiac Trail.

All tree stands, nails, lights, ornaments, tinsel and plastic items must be removed from the trees and discarded before dropping off. Any lights, metal, glass or plastic ornaments left on the tree can ruin processing equipment, spoil the landscaping mulch and harm the operators. Wreaths and evergreen roping/garlands are generally made with wire or plastic backing and should be placed in trash carts.

After Jan. 20, 2025, trees must be stored away or branches less than 6 inches in diameter can be cut and placed in compost carts for monthly winter compost service or saved for regular curbside compost service which resumes in April 2025.

City holiday schedules

City offices will be closed Tuesday and Wednesday, Dec. 24 and 25, for the Christmas holiday, and Tuesday and Wednesday, Jan. 1 and 2, for the New Year's holiday. Trash/compost/recycling collections will not occur on the holiday Wednesdays, and instead will be delayed by one day during the holiday weeks, taking place Thursday–Saturday. The city wishes a happy, safe and peaceful holiday season to all.





A destination for all

Wheel the World, an organization focused on accessible travel, recently explored Ann Arbor to share accessibility findings with their readers. While here, they looked at accessibility in transportation; lodging accommodations; walk- and wheel-friendliness; local events and attractions; and more. [Gallup Park](#) was also highlighted in the blog for its [accessibility features](#) (PDF), including wheelchair-accessible playgrounds, accessible boat launch and miles of paved paths. Learn more about [Wheel the World's visit to A2](#).

City scores favorably on Municipal Equality Index

The City of Ann Arbor is dedicated to ensuring lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ+) people, and all people, are welcomed and important members of the community. This core value has helped the city again earn a perfect score of 100 on the Human Rights Campaign's annual Municipal Equality Index (MEI)! The MEI examines inclusivity of municipal laws, policies and services are of LGBTQ+ people who live and work there. Cities are rated based on nondiscrimination laws, the municipality as an employer, municipal services, law enforcement and leadership on LGBTQ+ equality. Learn more about this [MEI achievement](#).



CTN highlights

Check out what's happening at CTN!

Santa Satellite Network 2024

Kids, are you on Santa's list? (The other important list, that is.) It's time to [sign up](#) for Community Television Network's (CTN) list to talk with The Big Guy live via Zoom from the North Pole! Don't miss the CTN Santa Satellite Network Tuesday, Dec. 10, 5:30–8 p.m. Those who [sign up in advance \(required\)](#) will have 6 minutes to tell Santa their holiday wishes (one slot per family).

Then, one week later, tune in with friends and family to watch the entire program! Viewing options:

Comcast Cable (in Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti areas only) — CTN Channel 17

[CTN Live Stream](#)

YouTube – [YouTube/ctnannarbor](#)

Also tune in to watch ...

[CTN Tours](#) — Dearborn Homeschool Group

[CTN Tours](#) — Ypsilanti Community Middle School

[CTN Tours](#) — Michigan Secular Explorers

[CTN Top Sports Plays of the Season](#)

[FYI](#)— Angela Bingham, director of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (Olli), discusses this enriching program for people ages 50 years and over; Gallup Park bridge reopening; and take a look back at the Ann Arbor Skatepark

[FYI](#)— November is Children’s Grief Awareness Month and Kate Powers with Ele’s Place Ann Arbor shares how we can support children coping with loss throughout the month and year

[FYI](#)— Laura Bird, director of the world premiere of A Very Shakespeare Christmas, gets us into the holiday spirit with PTD’s upcoming Riverside Arts Center production; Artoberfest; and take a peek at Postmans Rest Park

[Green Light](#) — Michael Hagan and Lex Kinter discuss the Green Energy Neighbors project through the A2ZERO Ambassador Program.

[Green Light](#)— Alan Piñon, director of communications and marketing, and Jenna Steele, sustainability program assistant, both from the University of Michigan, discuss the university’s community read of Not Too Late: Changing the Climate Story From Despair to Possibility.

[Park Peek](#) — Arbor Hills Nature Area

[Senior Moments](#)

*A2 City News is emailed monthly to [newsletter subscribers](#) from the [City of Ann Arbor](#).
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