



A²ZERO YEAR FOUR
ANNUAL REPORT
JULY 1, 2023 - JUNE 3, 2024

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INTRODUCTION

Four years ago this month, Ann Arbor’s climate action plan, known as [A²ZERO](#), was adopted. This plan sets the foundation for how, as an entire community, Ann Arbor will achieve a just transition to community-wide carbon neutrality by the year 2030. This goal is aggressive, even audacious, but also necessary for achieving a sustainable future. The plan defines strategies and frameworks for a clear path forward, and over the last several years, the community has come together in laudable ways to make significant progress in equitably addressing climate change.

In the pages that follow, we provide highlights of the work accomplished over the last year, drawing attention to the new initiatives, strengthened collaborations, and demonstrative progress made on our shared climate journey. We also point out areas where more work is needed, inviting members of the public to join us on this worthwhile path. And while the [Ann Arbor Office of Sustainability and Innovations \(OSI\)](#), is the formal caretakers for A²ZERO, we are not alone. More than [130 different organizations](#), [100 A²ZERO Ambassadors](#), and nearly a dozen City Departments are working beside OSI as part of the growing community of climate champions.

If you haven’t already, sign up for [A²ZERO’s monthly newsletter](#) to learn more about ways to get involved. Individuals are invited to apply to become an [A²ZERO Ambassador](#), raising awareness about the A²ZERO plan and demonstrating positive climate action. Local organizations and businesses can participate in our newest initiative, the [Green Business Challenge](#), or join the network of [A²ZERO Community Collaborators](#).

Regardless of how you get involved, please do get involved – because achieving a goal as ambitious as community-wide carbon neutrality requires each of us to be a part of the movement. And we look forward to welcoming you!

The Ann Arbor Office of Sustainability and Innovations

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS SUMMARY

Annually, the City of Ann Arbor conducts a greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventory. 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 creating new programs and initiatives that will demonstrably and equitably reduce emissions. GHG reporting [standards exist](#) that help local governments measure their emissions in a consistent manner. The City of Ann Arbor adheres to these standards while simultaneously pushing to include more variables -- such as life cycle emissions, emissions from food production and disposal, and the impact of individual purchasing decisions -- to improve the impacts of these standards.

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](#).

In Ann Arbor, the largest source of GHG emissions come from the electricity used in homes and businesses (40% 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 2023, over 50% 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. There are two 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. These activities are making a notable difference in the clean energy landscape in Michigan.

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, 29% coming from fossil fuel usage in vehicles, and about 2% coming from waste disposal and processing.

Learn more about the A²ZERO Community Greenhouse Gas Inventory by engaging with [the new reporting dashboard](#) or by visiting [the GHG inventory webpage](#).

But GHG emissions reporting is not the only way we can show the impact of Ann Arbor's climate work. Starting in July 2024, OSI will be launching a new story-telling series to profile how local efforts to address the climate crisis are impacting people's lives. Stay tuned to the OSI website and newsletter for more details on this exciting new series.



STRATEGY 1: Powering Our Electrical Grid with 100% Renewable Energy

Strategy 1 of A²ZERO calls for the community's electrical energy to be powered with 100% renewable energy. In year four of A²ZERO, significant progress was made to advance renewable energy policies, practices, and deployments, including:

- Installation of over 250 kW of rooftop and ground mounted solar at: Leslie Park Golf Course, Huron Hills Golf Course, Cobblestone Farm, Buhr Park, Ann Arbor Senior Center, Gallup Canoe Livery and Fuller Park. See all the City sites with solar at [A²ZERO Dashboard](#).
- Active work to design nearly 4 megawatts (MW) of additional solar for installation at the Municipal Airport, Ann Arbor Municipal Center, Wheeler Service Center, Water Resource Recovery Facility, Veterans Memorial Park, Fire Station 3, Bicentennial Park, and Fire Station 6. These should be deployed in Year 5 of A²ZERO.
- Secured \$2.5 million from the federal government to advance solar and energy storage installations at additional City sites.
- Work on installation of 500kw battery at Water Recovery Facility paired with rooftop solar array.
- Supported the installation of 231 solar systems (over 1.8 MW) across Ann Arbor in calendar year 2023 through the Ann Arbor Solarize program, the highest number of installations in a single calendar year.
- Over 4.8MW installed through Solarize to-date and over 630 households supported through the program.
- Savings from Solarize last year topped \$296,000 in upfront cost savings and an estimated \$2.4 million in energy cost savings over the estimated 25-year lifespan of solar systems installed through the program.
- Published [Advancing Sustainability with Your MUD or HOA](#) that includes tips for expanding access to solar and electric vehicle charging in multi-unit developments (MUD) and buildings within a home owners association (HOA).
- Created a sample HOA sustainability policy, which is freely available to anyone in the City or State.

STRATEGY 1: 100% RENEWABLES

- Awarded \$70,000 grant to design a microgrid at Veterans Memorial Park and Fire Station 3.
- Submitted federal grant to finalize microgrid design and install a microgrid at Veterans Memorial Park and Fire Station 3.
- Drafted community choice aggregation legislation and supported microgrid legislation for the State House and State Senate's consideration.
- Supported the State's clean energy bill package which is putting the state on a pathway to 100% clean electricity by 2040.
- Continued strategizing (and adjusting plan) to develop the Wheeler Center Solar Park, utilizing landfill site for a municipal solar installation.
- Secured \$5,000,000 award to help advance solar at and around the former landfill site.



Solar array installed at Gallup Park.



Solar array installed at Huron Hills Golf Course.

- Conducted technical study and rate analysis for a [Sustainable Energy Utility \(SEU\)](#).
- Launched community education and engagement initiative regarding the Sustainable Energy Utility (SEU), an optional, supplemental, and community-owned utility authorized to deploy renewable energy in Ann Arbor.
- Voters will have the opportunity to determine whether the City should formally create an SEU by voting in the November 2024 election. More details about the proposed SEU and the ballot language can be found at: www.a2gov.org/a2seu.
- Submitted testimony in multiple cases (U-21291, U-21172, U-21384, U-21376, U-21534, and U-21400) before the Michigan Public Service Commission advocating for increased reliability, better rates, new programs, and better service.

STRATEGY 1: 100% RENEWABLES

- Office of Sustainability and Innovations (OSI) staff served on the national U.S. Department of Energy [SolSmart](#) Advisory Committee.
- OSI staff participated in multiple Michigan Public Service Commission working groups, technical conferences, and stakeholder meetings related to reliability and distributed energy resources.
- Shared results from the [100% Renewable Energy Pathways](#) study with the public outlining pathways to achieve 100% renewable electricity powering the entire community.
- Launched a [call for public comment](#) on the scope for a Phase II Municipalization Study authorized by Council in May 2024 to conduct a detailed valuation of DTE’s electric assets in Ann Arbor.
- Applied for and secured funding to install solar panels on the City’s new election center.
- Supported the installation of geothermal at the new affordable housing property being built at [121 Catherine Street](#).
- Secured funding and began actively working to transition the Bryant Community Center into the City’s first fully carbon neutral building as well as a living, learning laboratory of decarbonization in action.
- Initiated work on a city-wide networked geothermal study to understand the potential for geothermal systems to support the decarbonization of heating and cooling systems in the City.



Drilling for the installation of geothermal at 121 Catherine Street, July 2023.



STRATEGY 2: Switch our Appliances and Vehicles from Gasoline, Diesel, Propane, Coal, and Natural Gas to Electric

Strategy 2 of A²ZERO focuses on beneficial electrification, or the switching of appliances and vehicles to those powered with electric (away from fossil fuel powered infrastructure). A lot of work in year four focused on advancing beneficial electrification, be that through educational campaigns, engagement activities, the creation of new programs, or grant writing. Some of the most notable activities to advance Strategy 2 over the last year include:

- Hosted 2nd Annual Home Electrification Expo and actively planning the 3rd annual Expo.
- Co-hosted meeting with the Michigan Energy Innovation Business Council (MIEIBC) in February to discuss the State of Michigan's roll-out of Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) home rebates.
- Achieved 25% electrification of City's light duty fleet vehicles – aiming for 50% by end of calendar year 2024.
- Purchased the State of Michigan's first all-electric refuse trucks!
- Procured two e-cargo bikes for use in the parks department and four additional e-bikes for use in City's general fleet.
- Installed and began operation of the State of Michigan's first curbside public L2 chargers in Ann Arbor and working on strategy to design and install more.
- Began designing a [district geothermal system](#) in the Bryant neighborhood through a grant from the U.S. Department of Energy. This system is being designed to cover at least 75% of the heating and cooling load for 262 households, the County Mental Health facility, Bryant Elementary School, the Bryant Community Center, and the City's public works facility.
- Initiated work on a city-wide networked geothermal study to understand the potential for geothermal systems to support the decarbonization of heating and cooling systems in the City.

STRATEGY 2: BENEFICIAL ELECTRIFICATION

- Supported the [gas leaf blower phase-out ordinance](#) by launching a new website, a series of educational materials, and personalized outreach. Preparing to launch a bulk buy program for electric yard equipment in late 2024.
- Initiated a 3-year contract with Elevate to design and launch a [Home Energy Rebate program](#) to increase the affordability of building electrification, building efficiency, and e-bikes. Local rebate program to launch in summer of 2024.
- Assisted Ann Arbor Housing Commission in designing pathways to full decarbonization for multiple existing and new buildings. This included supporting the installation of solar, geothermal, electric appliances, and energy efficiency improvements at [multiple sites](#).
- Supported the installation of geothermal at the new affordable housing property being built at [121 Catherine Street](#).
- Supported the Ann Arbor Housing Commission with installing electric vehicle (EV) chargers and launching their first [EV car share program](#).
- Installed EV chargers at 4 City parks sites, with 1 more upcoming, expanding public EV charging by 10+ ports.
- Continued implementing and monitoring the progress of the [EV readiness ordinance](#) – which is helping to expand EV charging infrastructure in the City.
- Designed an EV charger discount program for multi-family and commercial property owners. The program is slated to launch in summer of 2024.



Attendees at the Electrification Expo, August 2023.

STRATEGY 2: BENEFICIAL ELECTRIFICATION

- Submitted a grant to deploy EV chargers at two dozen more locations throughout the City.
- Awarded grant from State of Michigan to secure an electric forklift for the City fleet.
- Supported zero emissions propulsion study and grant application at TheRide.
- Continued contractor education around beneficial electrification, including expanding our contractor badging program with Michigan Saves.
- Initiated work on a new heating franchise, focusing on finding pathways to equitably, affordably and reliably decarbonize heating and cooling in Ann Arbor.
- Created a design for making the Bryant Community Center a living, learning laboratory of climate action, inclusive of making the site fully carbon neutral. Currently requesting bids on identified solutions to bring this vision to reality.
- Actively implementing the City's sustainability review as part of the City's plan review process.



Achieved 25% electrification of City's light duty fleet vehicles.



Ann Arbor Mayor Christopher Taylor, Senior Analyst Simi Barr, and residents at the unveiling of the State of Michigan's first curbside pole-mounted EV Chargers, October 2023.



STRATEGY 3: Significantly Improve the Energy Efficiency in our Homes, Businesses, Schools, Places of Worship, Recreational Sites, and Government Facilities

Energy efficiency – or energy waste reduction – is a critical part of achieving our A²ZERO goals. Work under this strategy continues to be a challenging and yet exciting area of emphasis with the following notable activities advanced in year four of A²ZERO:

- Launched [the A²ZERO Home Energy Advisor](#) service to help residents determine their next best step on the path to decarbonization. This free service is available to anyone in the City of Ann Arbor.
- Secured grant funding and actively working to transition all streetlights in the City to LED.
- Completed LED lighting retrofit project at Wheeler Service Center, decreasing operating costs and improving worker productivity.
- Joined DOE's Better Buildings Coalition to help promote building decarbonization strategies across the country.
- Achieved significant progress on advancing the [Green Rental Housing program](#), with plans to bring the program to City Council for consideration in summer/fall 2024.
- Launched the [Home Energy Rating Disclosure](#) and hired two assessors to help complete Home Energy Scores.
- Became a Department of Energy Home Energy Score Partner. This enables OSI to train and certify Home Energy Score Assessors who can support implementation of the [Home Energy Rating Disclosure Ordinance](#).
- Initiated a 3-year contract with Elevate to design and launch a Home Energy Rebate program to increase the affordability of energy efficiency improvements.

STRATEGY 3: ENERGY EFFICIENCY

- Authorized over \$4,000,000 in funds to be used for residential rebates in the coming 2.5 years.
- Continued implementing the [Commercial and Multi-Family Energy and Water Benchmarking Ordinance](#) with all buildings greater than 20,000 square feet now required to track and report their energy and water usage annually.
- OSI staff were appointed to the [Washtenaw 2030 District Board of Directors](#). The Ann Arbor / Washtenaw 2030 District supports commercial, multifamily, and non-profit buildings in understanding and improving their energy performance.
- Expanded weatherization services through grant to [Washtenaw County's Office of Community and Economic Development](#) with a goal of designing new support programs to help income-qualified residents fully decarbonize their homes.
- In partnership with [Community Action Network](#), secured over \$1,300,000 for [Bryant neighborhood decarbonization project](#) to help residents reduce their energy usage while also continuing public engagement and fundraising
- Continued pushing for updates to the Michigan building and energy codes with multiple staff testifying before the State committee.
- Launched the [Ann Arbor Green Business Challenge](#) in partnership with SPARK. The Green Business Challenge promotes, recognizes, and supports local businesses with improving the sustainability of their operations and businesses. This program is open to anyone in the City.
- Conducted decarbonization assessments at six municipal facilities and developed plans to make these carbon neutral buildings. Also initiated work to support decarbonization of the City's new election center.
- Initiated and advanced workforce development conversations with IBEW 252 and UA 190, leading to a living workforce development strategy with a focus on geothermal deployment.
- Launched a three-year contract with [Community Action Network](#) to support the Bryant Neighborhood Decarbonization project.
- Launched a three-year contract with [Washtenaw 2030 District](#) to support energy and water benchmarking, commercial energy saving programs, reporting and accounting for commercial buildings, and on demand support related to building decarbonization.



The Bryant Community Center, home to lots of decarbonization work, in March, 2024.



STRATEGY 4: Reduce the Miles We Travel in our Vehicles by at least 50%

How we move about the community has a significant impact on our local carbon footprint. That is why the City, under the leadership of the Transportation and Planning Departments, has been working on numerous activities to help us reduce vehicle miles traveled, including:

- Funded or supported the installation of 12.1 miles of bike facilities and 21 bike intersection improvements.
- Supported the reintroduction of the shared micromobility program (including adding in e-bikes). There are 450 scooters and 100 e-bikes in the system, logging over 214,000 shared micromobility trips in 2023 (a 21% increase from the previous year).
- Undertaking a detailed update to the [City's comprehensive land use plan](#). The three core tenants of the plan are affordability, equity, and sustainability.
- Supported the Ann Arbor Area Transit Authority (TheRide) with undertaking a zero-emissions propulsion study and applying for a grant to purchase their first zero emission buses.
- Promoted ridership on bikeways, with the downtown bikeways attracting over [100,000 users between September and January](#).
- Filled 1.39 miles of sidewalk gaps and installed 13 new crosswalks, and 2 new Audible pedestrian signals.
- The City also launched a series of dashboards to monitor things like [sidewalk gap replacements](#), [traffic calming](#), and progress [towards Vision Zero](#).
- Ann Arbor was recognized as a Gold-level "walk friendly" community by the Walk Friendly Communities program – one of only 23 in the country.
- Ann Arbor received Gold-level Bicycle Friendly Community designation from the League of American Bicyclists.
- Ann Arbor City Hall was recognized as a Silver Level Bicycle Business in 2023.
- Created Bicycle Parking Pilot program and there have been four bike parking installations as part of this program.

STRATEGY 4: VMT REDUCTION

- The Planning Department sought and received approval to eliminate car parking minimums in most developments.
- Created new [proposed zoning districts](#) for transit corridors, and created visualization tool to see where these corridors are throughout the city.
- Altered Chapter 127 of the City Code to allow the donation of impounded bicycles to be donated to tax-exempt organizations such as Common Cycle.



Participants of the bike rally at Green Fair 2023 enjoy their ride down Main Street, Ann Arbor.



STRATEGY 5: Change the Way We Use, Reuse, and Dispose of Materials

Moving towards a circular economy means reducing waste and improving the life cycle of materials, among many other things. Year four of A²ZERO saw many circular economy-related activities, including:

- Initiated a three-year contract with ZeroWaste.Org to promote circular economy activities and engagement throughout the community. Detailed reports on the activities ZeroWaste.org is undertaking can be found [here](#).
- Initiated a three-year contract with VegMichigan to promote and engage with the community and local businesses around plant-forward diets. In the first three quarters of this contract, VegMichigan has held more than 50 public events with upwards of 2,600 total attendees. 529 residents have participated in VegMichigan's 30-Day Plant-Based Pledge program, with 93% of respondents to a follow-up survey indicating they would continue to eat a more plant-based diet following the pledge period. VegMichigan has also engaged with 15 local businesses offering plant-based options and has worked with one local organization to implement a plant-based purchasing policy.
- Launched the [Ann Arbor Area Sustainable Food Business Coalition \(SFBC\)](#) to coordinate with the private sector in advancing sustainability across the entirety of Ann Arbor's food system.
- Developing strategy to scale-up returnable container program ([A2R3](#)) in collaboration with local businesses.
- Launched [circular economy planning initiative](#) in coordination with local resident advisory commission with the goal of creating a circular economy development strategy within the next 12-18 months.
- Applied for a grant for a refrigerant recycling and replacement program, focusing on supporting small, local businesses with reducing refrigerant emissions.
- Continued hosting [Neighborhood Swap Days](#), collaborating with Community Action Network, Church of the Good Shepherd, Ann Arbor Public Schools, and ZeroWaste.org to reuse more than 6,800 items through this program.

STRATEGY 5: CIRCULAR ECONOMY

- Supported Public Works' purchase of a new electric refuse truck and hiring of 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.
- Held the second annual [Local Food Festival](#) to celebrate the thriving local food ecosystem.
- Supported move-in/move-out days at the University of Michigan to re-purpose and donate materials and supplies from transitioning students (as opposed to seeing that material thrown away).
- Updated the [circular economy GIS map](#) to highlight businesses and organizations in Ann Arbor working to advance the circular economy.
- Launched 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.
- Supported a change to City Code to allow curbside placement of household items so that materials no longer in use by one household can be taken and used, for free, by another household.



Local Food Fest, September 2023.



Love a Park Day at Esch Park, June 2023.



STRATEGY 6: Enhance the Resilience of Our People and Our Place

Enhancing the resilience of our people and our community are pivotal elements of A²ZERO, as well as working to enhance the overall quality of life for all existing and future Ann Arborites. Year four of A²ZERO saw the following resilience-related activities:

- Reached 8,903 trees planted/distributed through the [10,000 Trees Initiative](#). 2,862 people have received a tree through the initiative.
- Won a \$1,000,000 grant In conjunction with Forestry and Natural Areas Preservation (NAP) from the USFS for a comprehensive tree canopy analysis, tree planting and maintenance in under-served neighborhoods, and critical stewardship work in our Natural Areas.
- Won a \$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.
- [Peace Neighborhood Center](#) and Ann Arbor Housing Commission's Green Baxter Court community center determined as the next two Resilience Hub sites in Ann Arbor with initial engagement and planning underway.
- Purchased a [mobile nanogrid](#) to provide sustainability-related education while also serving as a source of back-up power for critical city facilities.
- Developed a plan for a survival study to check on trees planted through the [10,000 Trees Initiative](#), gauge survival rates, and engage with the public around planting and maintenance. This study will be launched early in year five of A²ZERO.
- Continued monitoring air quality in our community and addressed reliability issues with monitoring equipment. Launched an [air quality visualization map](#).
- Ordered six more air quality monitors for deployment throughout the City (likely in fall 2024).
- Continued promotion of the [Pollinator-Aware Yard Care program](#); registered 396 addresses as participants and distributed yard signs to 332 participants.

STRATEGY 6: RESILIENCE

- Continued adoption of Bandemer Park, holding monthly workdays to clean up litter, plant native species, remove invasives, and perform general maintenance on facilities.
- Conducted two pilot battery back-up [Solarize](#) bulk buys, leading to 37 battery back-up systems installed while saving residents \$101,650 on upfront installation costs.
- Established the [Bryant Community Center](#) as the City's second resilience hub.
- Graduated our 5th Cohort of [A²ZERO Ambassadors](#), bringing the number of Ambassadors trained to 99.
- Launched 6th [A²ZERO Ambassadors](#) cohort – marking our 100th Ambassador trained!
- Hosted Science Communication Training for Ambassadors in partnership with R.E.L.A.T.E. (UM)
- Launched the [Green Energy Neighbors](#) initiative in collaboration with the A²ZERO Ambassadors. Green Energy Neighbors hosted (and continue to host) Ann Arbor Solar Stories and local Climate Reality Project meetings.
- A²ZERO Ambassador team and COSA (Community Organization Sustainability Advisors) assisted the Genesis Building with the construction of a rain garden to help flooding issues on property.
- Hosted three Fellows from ReDirect to develop the framework for the Nourishing Neighborhood pilot project in coordination with OSI and the Office of Emergency Management.
- Hosted initial neighborhood gathering in the Darlington Neighborhood for the Nourishing Neighborhood pilot led by A²ZERO Ambassadors.
- Hosted second Nourishing Neighborhood pilot event on sharing experiences with winter power outages and discussions on emergency preparedness.
- OSI staff assisted in developing an elections tabletop exercise for winter preparedness in partnership with the City Clerk's Office and the Office of Emergency Management to help plan for severe winter weather during election operations.
- Hosted Emergency Kit Distribution and Household Preparedness Seminar at Washtenaw Community College, distributing 30 Emergency Kits while developing Household Preparedness plans with students and staff.
- OSI staff joined Avalon Housing Emergency Preparedness (AHEP) working group and is assisting in ensuring residents are prepared for emergency events.
- OSI and Emergency Management submitted a FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant application to install a microgrid at Fire Station 3 and Veterans Memorial Park.
- Increased capacity of solar and battery storage systems at Bryant Community Center to ensure this resilience hub can provide 3 days of power with no grid connection.
- Added battery storage system for backup power at Ann Arbor Senior Center.



STRATEGY 7: Other Strategies (notable accomplishments or efforts)

Many of the activities undertaken to advance A²ZERO fall into multiple strategies. For example, community engagement, transparency, metrics tracking, and OSI's equity work help advance all A²ZERO strategies. Some activities completed in year four classified as other actions include:

- Launched the [A²ZERO Dashboard](#) showing progress on implementing the A²ZERO plan.
- Launched the [Ann Arbor Climate Corps](#) program, a national AmeriCorps program that specifically supports education and behavior change related to creating a more sustainable future.
- Ann Arbor recognized by the CDP as one of 119 global cities named climate action leaders on the [CDP 2023 A List](#).
- Awarded Mitigation and Adaptation badges by the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy.
- Recognized for sustainability leadership in the [Michigan Green Communities program](#) with the highest level of achievement - a "Gold-level" award.
- Restructured the monthly newsletter, [The Charging Station](#), to provide accessible and actionable information about sustainability activities in the community.
- Collaborated with Leslie Science and Nature Center to host an annual Earth Day celebration.
- Expanded the [A²ZERO Community Collaborators](#) network to over 130 organizations!
- Hosted annual [Green Fair](#) and [A²ZERO weeks](#) – engaging with hundreds of Ann Arbor residents.
- Formalized the [Sustaining Ann Arbor Together](#) grant program and granted \$80,000 through the program.
- Hosted over 100 community meetings, events, presentations, or discussion.
- Hosted a successful Sustainability Forum series covering the topics: building electrification, the Home Energy Rating Disclosure (HERD) ordinance, impacts and opportunities of e-waste, equity in action through the A²ZERO Plan, and the launch of new residential energy programs (Home Energy Advisor & Home Energy Rebates).

STRATEGY 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.
- Worked with regional stakeholders to explore the feasibility of a regional climate collaborative to foster greater coordination and collaboration to equitably decarbonize the region.
- Developed a Strategic Communication Plan, to more efficiently and effectively promote and raise awareness of all OSI initiatives, events, and announcements.
- Developed Branding Guidelines for all materials to ensure cohesion and success of content and recognition of A²ZERO amongst viewers.
- OSI launched its own social media channels on Instagram and Facebook!
- Partnered with University of Michigan Science Communications class to help students learn about and practice communicating challenging or unfamiliar materials to a wide audience.
- Began airing [Green Light](#), a recurring show on CTN, which features residents who are envisioning, creating, and establishing a sustainable and equitable future for the community.
- Began airing a recurring sustainability segment on local radio station, 107.1 to consistently promote timely events and announcement from OSI.



Green Light episode on the Home Energy Rating Disclosure Ordinance, hosted by Grace Franke, Communications Coordinator, with special guests Jerrell Wylie (left) and Steve Christensen (right), Energy Assessors.



Earth Day 2024 celebrations hosted by the Leslie Science and Nature Center.

STRATEGY 7: OTHER



- Staff participated in Energy Equity Community of Practice cohort with state-wide colleagues.
- Staff continue participating in Champions for Change (10-month racial equity cohort host NEW Center) and the United Way's 21-day equity challenge.
- Staff presented at over 30 conferences or national webinars about various programs and initiatives.

- Julie Roth named a Crain's Detroit 2023 Notable Leader in Energy.
- Missy Stults named Constellation's 50 notable sustainability leaders of 2024.
- Staff served on advisory boards for the UM Museum of Natural History and the Refugee Agricultural Partnership Program.



- Staff served as co-chair for an Urban Sustainability Director's Network learning group on energy equity and on the growing office working group.



- Staff participated in Southeast Michigan Council of Government's (SEMCOG) strategy sessions regarding regional decarbonization and on steering committee for SEMCOG's EV Infrastructure Roundtable series.
- Staff obtained Home Energy Score (HES) Certification.
- Staff obtained BPI Total Home Performance Certification.

Ann Arbor Mayor Christopher Taylor and the Winter 2024 cohort of A²ZERO Ambassadors at their February graduation.

YEAR 5 PRIORITIES

As illustrated above, year four was a busy year. But year five is slated to keep pace with the following priorities identified:

- Launch a monthly story-telling program to document and chronicle the local and personal impacts of A²ZERO.
- Achieve 5.5 MW of solar installed through the [Solarize](#) program.
- Support the education, engagement, and potential launch of a local [Ann Arbor Sustainable Energy Utility](#).
- 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 A²ZERO programs across the County.
- Win a federal grant to implement at least a portion of the district geothermal system in the Bryant neighborhood.
- Continue fundraising and making improvements to ensure the Bryant neighborhood becomes the nation's first carbon neutral existing neighborhood.



Ann Arbor Climate Corps members visiting a Greenbelt farm, December 2023.

YEAR 5 PRIORITIES

- Begin working with a second neighborhood interested in becoming carbon neutral.
- Create our third and fourth resilience hubs.
- Make the [Bryant Community Center](#) a carbon neutral (ideally negative) building and the City's living, learning laboratory for climate action.
- Create a circular economy strategy that is co-designed with a wide variety of Ann Arbor residents.
- Launch sustainable food strategy.
- Create and begin executing an electric vehicle charger deployment strategy.
- Launch a youth A²ZERO Ambassador program.
- Deepen and sustain community engagement with a focus on working directly with underrepresented communities.
- Deploy 60 more EV chargers, including our next tranche of curbside chargers.
- Expand and unlock greater collaboration opportunities with the [A²ZERO Community Collaborators](#) and OSI.



Unveiling of the Bryant Community Center as Ann Arbor's first Resilience Hub, June 2023.



Ann Arbor Climate Corps and Natural Area Preservation members at work together, November 2023.

- Secure funding to scale the [Aging in Place Efficiently](#) program.
- Achieve the 10,000 trees, emergency kit, A²ZERO Ambassador, air quality monitoring, and LED street lighting goals as outlined in A²ZERO.
- Create a weatherization expansion program that provides resources to help income-qualified households implement more decarbonization solutions.
- Continue to grant fund raise with the goal of a 1:1 match of the Community Climate Action Millage.
- In collaboration with local realtors, launch a "Welcome to Ann Arbor" sustainability-focused initiative.
- Launch the City's first microgrid and advance tangible steps related to a biodigester at the City's water recovery facility.
- Achieve 70% fleet electrification.
- Launch an electric vehicle bulk buy program.

A²ZERO 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.

