

Center of the City Sustainability Considerations and Recommendations

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Input Solicited from:

- Steve Brown, chair, Environmental Commissioner
- Wayne Appleyard, former chair, Energy Commission
- Susan Hutton, former chair Environmental Commissioner
- Michael Garfield, executive director, Ecology Center executive
- Laura Rubin, director, Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition
- Missy Stults, manager, Office of Sustainability and Innovation, City of A2
- Dan Ezekiel, executive committee chair, Sierra Club Huron Valley Group
- Jennifer Hall, executive director, Ann Arbor Housing Commission
- Eileen Naples, Resource Recovery Manager, City of A2

Sustainability Defined

- Merriam-Webster On-line Dictionary
 - capable of being sustained
 - of, relating to, or being a method of harvesting or using a resource so that the resource is not depleted or permanently damaged
- Brundtland Commission, formally known as the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED, 1987)
 - Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

Ann Arbor Sustainability Framework

- In 2013, Ann Arbor City Council formally adopted our Sustainability Framework as an element of the City Master Plan
- There are 16 goals in the Framework which are organized into four areas:
 1. Climate and Energy
 2. Community
 3. Land Use and Access
 4. Resource Management

Ann Arbor Sustainability Framework Goals

Climate & Energy



Sustainable Energy



Energy Conservation



Sustainable Buildings

Community



Engaged Community



Diverse Housing



Human Services



Safe Community



Active Living



Economic Vitality

Land Use & Access



Transportation Options



Sustainable Systems



Integrated Land Use

Resource Management



Clean Air and Water



Healthy Ecosystems



Responsible Resource Use



Local Food

Recommendation #1

Include exhibits / signage – possibly interactive – educating park users on the full breadth of sustainability topics AND how people can take action to improve sustainability outcomes in Ann Arbor

- Place exhibits / signage next to places where people are likely to idle, for example next to playgrounds, benches, shelters, etc.
- It is important that the exhibits and signage change regularly in order to engage park users on an ongoing basis

Recommendation #2

- Include demonstration space and features (where some could be rotating), such as:
 - Permeable pavement and raingardens / bioswales that allow rainwater to soak into the ground
 - As the park is situated on top of a parking structure, this could be difficult to execute.
 - Renewable energy generation examples, e.g. solar panels and a wind turbine
 - If there is one or more shade structures or shelters, solar panels should be incorporated into the roof
 - Ideally these features could include real-time generation information and factors affecting it (e.g. cloud cover, panel efficiency, etc.), both for the park installations as well as for A2's cumulative renewable energy generations vs. carbon neutrality generation targets
 - Edible local food with vegetable beds and fruit trees
 - Tiny homes

Recommendation #3

Include natural features, especially native trees, shrubs and perennial and annual flowers and grasses to reduce the heat island effect in the downtown area and to attract wildlife (birds, pollinators, etc.)

- When making plant selections, consider urban conditions (temperatures, air quality, global warming, etc.)
- It should be understood that the carbon sequestration impact of such plantings will be very limited

Recommendation #4

Recruit one or more non-profits / other entities to sponsor AND maintain and update portions of the park, i.e. plantings and educational materials / signage / demonstration projects

Recommendation #5

Provide flexible or temporary infrastructure (possibly shipping containers, in the case of the latter) which can serve as economic development incubator space for local green businesses or social entrepreneurs

- Residents could have a few months of very low or no rent to test and see if their idea has traction
- This would also help the City to activate the Center of the City space immediately

Recommendation #6

Include lot of 'parking' for visitors using green mobility options, including bicycles and scooters

- Take into consideration that such parking for major events taking place at the site and downtown in general is very limited

* Combine parking requirements with the adjacent library

Recommendation #7

Ensure full accessibility and features for people with disabilities

- Ramps
- Braille signage
- Playgrounds
- Bathrooms
- etc.

Recommendation #8

Solicit input from sustainability experts outside the environmental area

Thank-you for the opportunity
to provide input!

Questions / comments?