



AGENDA

Sustainability Commission Meeting

7:00 PM - Monday, May 10, 2021

Zoom Meeting

Page

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. ROLL CALL

Commissioner Heine
Commissioner Bayha
Commissioner Foley
Commissioner Greenwald
Commissioner Gibbons
Commissioner Collins
Commissioner Simmons
Commissioner Michalowski
Councilmember Wilcoxen
Director Akers
3. PUBLIC COMMENT (3 MINUTES)
4. AGENDA APPROVAL (5 MINUTES)
5. INTRODUCTIONS
6. PRESENTATIONS
 - 6.1. Front Porch Farming with Caylen Cole-Hazel 3 - 6
[Front porch farming pilot](#)
 - 6.2. Storm Water Awareness with Commissioner Collins
 - 6.3. Composting with Commissioner Collins
 - 6.4. MAJIC and THRIVE with Rei Fielder, the MAJIC Campaign Manager 7 - 16
[MAJIC Sub Grants Memo](#)
7. CONSENT AGENDA (2 MINUTES)
 - 7.1. Approval of minutes from February 8, 2021 17 - 19
[Sustainability 2-8-2021 Reg Minutes](#)
 - 7.2. Approval of minutes from April 12, 2021 21 - 23
[Sustainability 4-12-2021 Reg Minutes](#)
8. WORK SESSIONS
9. RESOLUTIONS/MOTIONS/DISCUSSIONS
 - 9.1. Michigan Bottle Bill 25 - 36
[Article 20210426104737698](#)
[Article 20210426103754769](#)

9.2.	Washington Street Green Space Proposal	37 - 50
	<u>Washington Street Green Space Proposal</u>	
	<u>Green Space is Good for Mental Health</u>	
	<u>Removing Roads and Traffic Lights Speeds Urban Travel</u>	
	<u>Removing Streets Is The Only Way To Reclaim Open Space In Cities</u>	
9.3.	Sustainability Action Plan - What can I do?	51 - 58
	<u>Sustainability Action Plan</u>	
10.	COMMISSIONER REPORTS (20 MINUTES)	
11.	PUBLIC COMMENT (3 MINUTES)	
12.	PROPOSED BUSINESS (5 MINUTES)	
13.	ADJOURNMENT	

Title: "Front Porch Farming" Pilot Project

Draft No. 1

Created 9/20/19; [DATES UPDATED]

[BACKGROUND](#)

[OBJECTIVES](#)

[SCOPE](#)

[DELIVERABLES](#)

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[MILESTONES](#)

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BACKGROUND

The original goal of my project was to build social equity by identifying and implementing strategies that serve the interests of the many currently disjointed, under-utilized resources inherent to the Ypsilanti community. One idea that came from this strategic investigation was the consideration of gardening lawns in the CN-SF, CN-mid, and/or CN blocks of Ypsilanti. These zoning areas typically represent independent land owners who are more-or-less well enough off to own property.

Many people, including myself, do not currently have the luxury of owning land and are restricted to renting their living space. Several people in this situation have considerable skills, knowledge, and experience about how to cultivate productive natural landscapes, and care deeply about mitigating food insecurity, the climate crisis, and supporting healthy Ypsi heritage.

This sentiment is shared by certain members of the landowning communities, many of whom either lack the ability, knowledge, time, or experience to create a functioning sustainable landscape that lends itself to both ecological and human health. Hence we have a number of traditional lawns in place of where a garden may be desired.

My hypothesis is that an increase in community equity and local food sourcing will occur by connecting experienced, knowledgeable, landless community members with enthusiastic

landowners who long for both:

1. An effective way to contribute to the greater community
2. The aesthetics of a well cared for, non-conventional lawn

OBJECTIVES

Transform 2,002sqft of front lawn space into a productive, permaculture-inspired garden plot. No use of chemical fertilizers or pesticides (other than biodegradable soap, diatomaceous earth, neem, kaolin clay, etc) shall be employed.

The following techniques are of interest to employ, but not mandatory. We seek counsel as to which of the following techniques may be used:

Sheet mulching

Raised beds

Hugelculture

Keyhole gardening

Companion planting

Container gardening

Sourcing from great lakes adapted seeds and heirloom michigan varieties among more common hybrids

Companion planting and heirloom techniques such as "3 sisters"

Water catchment via rain barrels for irrigation

Any and all pending harvests are to be split 3 ways:

⅓ to gardener

⅓ to landowner(s)

⅓ to local food related charity organizations

SCOPE

THIS PROJECT IS ON HOLD DUE TO COVID 19 PANDEMIC

Minimum 1 year agreed commitment to the pilot project, beginning September 16, 2019.

Post-pilot, information will be gathered from community to determine whether interest exists to expand gardening efforts to other neighborhood front yard plots. Each new plot will be brought forward for approval from the city planner. Gardener(s) take responsibility for maintaining plot and are responsible for mitigating fines. Gardener(s) will work closely with the city to maintain zoning compliance.

DELIVERABLES

Aesthetic, multi-scalar garden
Greenhouse gas mitigation and soil enrichment
Optimized use of land

Increased fresh food production in Ypsilanti
Greater collaboration between social impact groups
Heritage of community diversity, equity, and inclusion surrounding food production and consumption

ASSUMPTIONS, CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS

Assumptions:

We will have success in food production the first year
Food security is an issue in Washtenaw county
Increased lawn gardening presents opportunity to strengthen local agricultural seed resources
Allocating resources of wealthy areas to help sustain less wealthy areas will pay off in socially more equitable community

Challenges:

Climate change and its potential effect on landscaping efforts/food production
Unknown how much money project will cost beyond pilot
Any financial responsibilities related to project would be currently shouldered by gardener
Need partners and buy-in from community (maybe a vote? Could the city support bringing this up as an option for people?)

Constraints:

COVID 19
Small project. No guarantee that it will lead to anything significant
Still need city planner's approval of sketch
Need to sheet mulch by early November 2019

SPONSORS

Landowner(s):

314 Maple Street; Landowners Barb and Celeste

Gardener:

Caylen Cole

Partner organization:

Alex Ball, Old City Acres

STAKEHOLDERS

Ypsilanti City Hall / Community Development

Depot town and Ypsi community

Ypsilanti flora and fauna populations

FoodGatherers/associated food banks

314 Maple neighbors

MILESTONES

[DATE]	[MILESTONE]
9/20/19	Draft of pilot completed

ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1kJJz3Ukk834AttZPBqkvWpSlig5DXwWXRd-iSxutJMc/edit#slide=id.p>

Inspirations:

<https://fleetfarming.org/>

<http://www.foodnotlawns.com/>

<https://greatlakesstapleseeds.com/>

<https://www.urbanfarming.org/about.html>

<https://permaculturenews.org/what-is-permaculture/>

<https://www.nativeseedpod.org/>



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MAJIC Sub Grants Memo

Michigan Alliance for Justice in Climate [MAJIC] is a new alliance of over 50 groups that center people of color in leading the climate justice movement in Michigan, working for just and equitable solutions to racial injustice, climate disasters, and environmental degradation. The purpose of MAJIC is to bring together voices from across the state to drive community-led solutions *like* pollution-free energy, a regenerative economy, rebuilding strong infrastructure for clean and affordable water, homes and safer communities. MAJIC aims to build new narratives beyond divide-and-conquer strategies to bring urban and rural, working class people together across race, class, language, and to move our political actors, elected officials, and corporations, mobilizing against white supremacy, harmful extraction of Earth's resources, and the exploitation of people and their labor.

The Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice (ICPJ) is acting as the fiscal sponsor and steward for the sub grants of MAJIC. This document details the process for how decisions will be made and how the funds will be disbursed. We hope to support you through the process so if you have any questions please contact Desirée at desirae@icpj.org or 256-541-2347.

1) Municipal Voter Engagement/Mutual Aid

Description

This sub grant is meant to support the political mobilization and stability of local residents through mutual aid and community building using voter turnout tactics. The shock of COVID has left our communities reeling, exposing key failures in the collapse of the welfare state and the survival infrastructure. Many local groups pivoted to mutual aid groups and need the capacity to continue as climate shocks continue to rise. The other critical question is how to build the nascent mutual aid networks to a political electorate, and powerful base through grassroots communications tools typically only deployed in elections. Additionally, there are long-standing hurdles in the policy sector that prevent the full development of resilience hubs, for example, community solar power regulations limit neighborhoods and communities from building local solar arrays in Michigan. Additionally, economic hurdles created by the monopoly utilities provide a



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policy nexus for action with energy activists across the state. From the Community Defense and Thriving Committee: We are aiming to move beyond reactionary organizing and actions. By building reciprocal relationships, redefining terms, and having a bold dignified approach we can do the work critical to defending our communities where residents can survive, and most importantly the thriving of our movement toward liberation from oppression.

Local Elections (what's on the ballot)

Benton Harbor

City Commission (2 at large, 3rd & 4th Ward)

Detroit**

City Charter, Mayor, Clerk, Board of Police Commissioners (7 districts), City Council (2 at large and 7 districts)

Flint

City Council : 9 wards

Highland Park*

August Special election for City Council District 1

Kalamazoo

TBD

Lansing

Mayor, City Clerk, City Council (2 at large, 2nd and 4th Ward)

Pontiac

Mayor and City Council (7 districts)

Due Date: By 11:59 p.m. on July 16, funds disbursed beginning of August

Proposal Form: We have \$50,000 total to grant. We will select 5 municipalities/local care hubs and grant \$10,000 to each.**



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Criteria

We will be looking for proposals with a plan to connect real issues like mutual aid, utility, housing, and other related justice work with concrete political solutions that can be financed and will support long-term political power building and change. We recognize that there may be multiple organizations or groups interested in doing work in each city and encourage collaboration. We will consider this when determining the feasibility of the plan. We will also be asking about:

- Your ability to share information with the network about your events/efforts (i.e. VAN and tracking sheets)***
- Details about your project and the timeline
- Your plan for maintaining accurate financial record keeping
- The leadership of your team to determine if BIPOC-led
- Your collaborative partners and the different roles

* Highland Park- The MAJIC Subgrant and Steering Committees will consider an earlier proposal since this is for an August special election. We will also consider whether the proposal can be accomplished with a smaller grant amount since this is for only one race.

** Detroit- The MAJIC Subgrant and Steering Committees will consider whether more than one proposal from Detroit should be granted given the number of races on the ballot.

***Technical assistance is available to utilize the Voter Activation Network (VAN), cut turf/canvass sheets, and send text messaging through Spoke to local constituencies. Please indicate in your proposal if you are interested in these resources.

2) Organizer Stipends

Description

This sub grant is meant to support the creation and development of a curriculum for popular education on climate justice and to develop media opportunities that enhance the narrative of justice in climate across the state. The Race Class Narrative (RCN) project is creating a matrix of responses to cut-through the dog-whistle politics of the right for a statewide narrative shift agenda. For instance, we now have new data from statewide focus groups through RCN, anchored by We the People-MI, Detroit Action, 482Forward and SEIU, that indicates a majority of Michigan does not respond well to the



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Green New Deal terminology. Instead, residents prefer “local-economy for renewable energy, clean air and water.” From the Healing Justice and Narrative Committee: How do we talk to each other? Internally to the coalition, healing justice is necessary to lift up the process of consensus building. If we can’t talk to each other, and practice generative conflict and self-healing how are we going to win this thing?

Organizers will develop and deliver content for the curriculum, create a curriculum process, guide the development of materials, and recruit an audience for the content.

Due Date: 11:59 p.m. on May 14 and rolling until all positions filled

Proposal Form: We have \$12,000 total to grant. We will grant \$2,000 to six organizers.

Criteria

We will be looking for proposals that include a plan to center healing justice, and a narrative to shift the culture of organizing. The narrative should be centered on talking to everyday people, Black, Indigenous, POC, working class Michiganders with values of care and justice. We will also be asking about:

- Your communication and project management skills
- Your experience developing curriculum and implementing with audience
- Your healing justice practices
- Your technology comfort
- Your ability to work with others
- The leadership of your team to determine if BIPOC-led

3) Trainer Stipends

Description

This sub grant is meant to support the development and delivery of our curriculum for popular education on climate justice. Our communities are most impacted by industrial pollution, disinvestment, and poor responses to emergency situations like flooding and the coronavirus pandemic. Many EJ-impacted residents are not making the connection to climate change impacts, and how it affects their lives in material ways, nor may they be fully aware how climate and economic policy can positively impact their lives through a regenerative economy. This, along with the severe lack of resources to participate



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(e.g. basic needs like access to the internet, technological tools, language resources, adequate employment, childcare, affordable utilities and water), and additional COVID-19 vulnerability hold people back from being present. From the Community Capacity-Building Committee: we will focus on education, skills-building, critical connections, and political power-building to improve and build out networks among the lived experiences of EJ communities and their allies. By doing so, we will engage the base to shift and prioritize political and economic priorities.

Due Date: 11:59 p.m. on May 14, July 16, and rolling until all positions filled.

Proposal Form: We have a total of \$4,000 to grant. We will grant \$500 to eight trainers.

Criteria

We will be looking for proposals with a plan for a training series to share resources with our communities to learn and reclaim climate justice-- this includes overcoming obstacles for participation. We will also be asking about:

- Your experience facilitating trainings, whether in-person or remotely
- Your ability to work with others
- Your knowledge of climate justice and related issues
- The leadership of your team to determine if BIPOC-led

4) Rapid Response Funds

Description

This sub grant is meant to address needs that may arise that require a rapid community response. These funds should be to address a new emerging need and not to supplement funds from one of the other sub grants.

Due Date: Proposals are accepted on a rolling basis as a need arises until all funds are granted.

Proposal Form: We have a total of \$10,000 to grant. We will grant \$2,000 to five proposals.



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Criteria

We are looking for proposals that are clearly responding to an emerging need in your community. We want to understand the vision for the plan and why it needs to be enacted in this moment. We want to understand how you are well-positioned to respond quickly. We will also ask about:

- The leadership of your team to determine if BIPOC-led
- Details about your project and the timeline
- Your plan for maintaining accurate financial record keeping
- Your collaborative partners and the different roles

5) Working Group Chair Stipends

Description

This sub grant is meant to recognize the time and resources the Co-Chairs of the Working Groups will share in order to support the success of MAJIC's campaign. This is for the Federal Action, Statewide Narrative, and Local Elections Working Groups.

Working Group Co-Chairs commit to:

- Commit to leadership March 2021 - January 2022
- Keeping records of all meetings
- Updating listservs of participants
- Advancing communications to the Steering Committee, including any report of conflict of interest or tension and conflict
- Schedule meetings, at least bi-weekly, to track and or advance coalition work
- Help the coalition with evaluation of our goals

Due Date: 11:59 pm on April 9 and rolling until all positions are filled.

Proposal Form: We have a total of \$12,000 to grant. We will grant \$2,000 to six co-chairs (two for each of the three working groups.)

Criteria

We will ask questions about:

- Your ability to commit to the role expectations
- Evidence of your project management experience



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- Your ability to facilitate others
- Your communications skills
- Your conflict management skills and comfort
- Your understanding and experience in the topic area of work group
- Your evaluation skills/willingness to learn
- The leadership of your team to determine if BIPOC-led

6) Steering Committee Stipends

Description

This subgrant is meant to recognize the time and resources that the Steering Committee shares to support the success of MAJIC. The Steering Committee provides final decision-making and bottom line processes, procedures, and general good governance of MAJIC:

- Defines the governance model, guides the process of decision-making, hiring, and programming for the MAJIC decision-making process.
- Makes key decision about conflict resolution
- Guides the implementation by tracking GNDN objectives
- Responsible for the outcomes of grant deliverables
- Procures communication to the whole
- Make certain that the MAJIC participants voice is heard
- Ensure that MAJIC is being properly evaluated and facilitated
- Make final decisions to allocate resources to campaign contributors, committees, and other functions of MAJIC
- Coordinate with Michigan anchor for Green New Deal Network any additional funder
- Evaluate and assess budgets, resources, and attract and maintain new resources

The Committee is responsible for meeting bi-weekly to monthly throughout the GNDN work and more often as needed.

The Steering Committee must have 1 year commitment from Feb- Jan 31, 2022 of at least five members. New members are accepted as volunteers, and welcome to attend, offer advice but not vote. New members should be nominated and selected in Jan 2022.



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2021 Steering Committee:

Briana Parker, Michigan Welfare Rights Organization

Kenneth Jackson, Blank Komix/Democratic Socialists of America

Desirae Simmons, Interfaith Council on Peace and Justice

Nayyirah Shariff, Flint Rising

Michelle Martinez, Jamesa Johnson Greer, Michigan Environmental Justice Coalition

Jamie Simmons, Michigan Climate Action Network

Due Date: July 16, funds disbursed beginning of August

[Proposal Form](#) We have a total of \$35,000 to grant. The seven members of the Steering Committee will each be granted \$5,000.

Criteria

We will be asking about:

- Your current engagement with the Steering Committee
- Your ability to make the full commitment
- Your understanding of the overall statewide campaign and the components
- If you identify as BIPOC

7) Mutual Aid (Areas without local elections)

There is another sub grant that is being managed by MEJC. This work should focus on federal policy.

Decision-Making Process

- 1) We will first review applications for completeness and timeliness if applicable*. If we are missing needed information we will send a request via the mode of preferred communication.
- 2) Completed applications will be reviewed by members of an ICPJ MAJIC Subgrant Committee. For rolling applications, we expect to review within 2 weeks of reception and will prioritize a quick-turnaround when possible. The committee will make a recommendation to fund, to fund with adjustments/questions, or to not fund. Adjustments/questions the committee may look for include the need



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for more evidence of financial record keeping or questions about viability of the full proposal.

- 3) The Steering Committee of MAJIC will review the recommendations from the subgranting committee and make the final determination about funding. The Steering Committee meets weekly and will review the applications at these scheduled meetings.
- 4) ICPJ will let all applicants know about the decision. If your proposal is funded you will be notified of the next steps to receive payment. If your proposal is not funded we will provide some notes about the reason.

* For subgrant areas that have a specific due date, if we receive your application after the due date we will review it if there are still funds remaining after the initial recommendations have been completed. If you know in advance that your proposal will be late, please contact Desirée at desirae@icpj.org so that the committee can be aware.

Process for Payment

In order to process payment we will need a [W-9](#) in order to add you as a contractor eligible to receive payment. You will then need to submit documentation that will differ based on the specific agreement (e.g. invoice, receipts, payment requests, etc.) We can process payment as a check or electronically. We will share more specifics with the grantees.

Resources

- [MAJIC Governance Document](#) includes our principles and conflict management process.
- [MAJIC Table Principles](#) includes our agreements of how we will guide our work
- [Information about activities not allowed due to ICPJ's non-profit status: 501\(c\)\(3\)](#) charities may not conduct partisan political activities in support of or opposition to a candidate running for public office.

501(c)(3) nonprofits may not:

- Endorse or oppose a candidate running for public office.
- Make a campaign contribution to or expenditure for or against a candidate.



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- Rate candidates on who is most favorable to your issue.
- Let candidates use the organization's facilities or resources, unless those resources are made equally available to all candidates at their fair market value.

501(c)(3) nonprofits may:

- Conduct or Promote Voter Registration
- Educate Voters on the Voting Process
- Distribute Nonpartisan Sample Ballots, Candidate Questionnaires, or Voter Guides
- Organize Get-Out-the-Vote Activities
- Encourage and Help People to Vote
- Host or Co-Sponsor a Candidate Forum
- Educate the Candidates on Your Issues
- Continue to do Issue Advocacy During an Election



MINUTES

City of Ypsilanti SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION MEETING Virtual Meeting held via Zoom

Monday, February 8, 2021
7:00 P.M.

I. CALL TO ORDER: 7:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Keith Michalowski	Present	- Washtenaw County, Ypsilanti City
Nancy Heine	Present	- Washtenaw County, Ypsilanti City
Julia Bayha	Present	(*late arrival) - Washtenaw County, Ypsilanti City
Bryan Foley	Present	- Washtenaw County, Ypsilanti City
Katy Greenwald	Present	- Washtenaw County, Superior Township
Beth Gibbons	Present	(*early leave) - Washtenaw County, Ypsilanti Township
Takunia Collins	Present	- Washtenaw County, Pittsfield Township
Desirae Simmons	Present	(*late arrival) - Washtenaw County, Ypsilanti City

Also Present: Counsel Liaison Steve Wilcoxon
Staff Liaison Ron Akers, Public Services Director
Commission Recording Secretary, Nancy Hare-Dickerson

Additional Staff Present: Bonnie Wessler, Public Services Project Manager (Zoom Meeting Host)

III. INTRODUCTIONS – none

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT – none

V. AGENDA APPROVAL

Foley (Second: Heine) moved to approve the Agenda as submitted.

Roll Call Vote – Ayes: Commissioners Michalowski, Heine, Foley, Greenwald, Gibbons, Collins

Nays: None

Absent: Commissioners Bayha* and Simmons*

Motion Carried.

VI. PRESENTATIONS – none

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of January 11, 2021 minutes

Greenwald (Second: Gibbons) moved to approve the January 11, 2021 Minutes as submitted.

Roll Call Vote – Ayes: Commissioners Michalowski, Heine, Foley, Greenwald, Gibbons, Collins

Nays: None

Absent: Commissioners Bayha* and Simmons*

Motion Carried.

VIII. WORK SESSIONS

1. Sustainability Goals: Water

Commissioner Michalowski explained that, going forward until necessary, the work sessions would be to review the goals in the Sustainability Plan which are located inside of the Master Plan and discuss how they can be applied to the City of Ypsilanti. Discussion regarding the Water section of the Plan included topics such as Penn Dam removal, restoration sub-committee work, restoration opportunities, flooding and stormwater management, creation of micro pollinator gardens, drinking water concerns/water testing/YCUA-Water Quality Report, PFAS concerns, Water Street development considerations, educational opportunities – engaging students, and possible future presentation topics and presenters.

IX. RESOLUTIONS/MOTIONS/DISCUSSIONS

1. Annual Report 2020

Commissioner Michalowski asked that commissioners review each section of the draft report and alert him to any item which they feel needs to be changed/corrected. *[Discussion followed]*

2. Penn Dam Discussion

Council Liaison Wilcoxon provided an update as to what has occurred, from the City's perspective, from the time that Council voted to move forward with the project to remove the dam. He noted that it would be a years'-long project with many different phases, which he briefly outlined. *[Query/discussion followed]*

At or about 9:00pm, Heine (Second: Foley) moved to extend the meeting time to approximately 9:15pm.

Roll Call Vote – Ayes: Commissioners Michalowski, Heine, Bayha, Foley, Greenwald, Collins, Simmons

Nays: None

Absent: Commissioner Gibbons*

Motion Carried.

X. COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioners provided additional comment and also shared updates of events and activities they are involved with and/or are working on related to sustainability. Some discussion topics included: Penn Dam removal costs, 2021 Earth Day missive for commissioner review, Resiliency Hub update, Penn Dam power house building - possible EMU public engagement interest, compost/gardening education, research as to neighborhood resiliency needs, the Adapt game-possible future presentation.

XI. PUBLIC COMMENT – none

XII. PROPOSED BUSINESS

Commissioner Michalowski asked commissioners to contact him as soon as possible regarding any items they would like to see added to the agenda.

XIII. NEXT MEETING DATE

Monday, March 8, 2021

XIV. ADJOURNMENT: 9:23 p.m.

Simmons (Second: Greenwald) moved to adjourn the meeting of the Sustainability Commission.

Voice Vote: Unanimous

Motion: Carried



MINUTES

City of Ypsilanti SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION MEETING Virtual Meeting held via Zoom

Monday, April 12, 2021
7:00 P.M.

I. CALL TO ORDER: 7:10 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Nancy Heine	Present	- Washtenaw County, Ypsilanti City
Julia Bayha	Present	- Washtenaw County, Ypsilanti City
Bryan Foley	Present	- Washtenaw County, Ypsilanti City
Takunia Collins	Present	- Washtenaw County, Pittsfield Township
Desirae Simmons	Present	- Washtenaw County, Ypsilanti City
Keith Michalowski	Absent	
Katy Greenwald	Absent	
Beth Gibbons	Absent	

Also Present: Council Liaison Steve Wilcoxon
Staff Liaison Ron Akers, Public Services Director
Commission Recording Secretary, Nancy Hare-Dickerson

Additional Staff Present: Bonnie Wessler, Public Services Project Manager (Zoom Meeting Host)

III. PUBLIC COMMENT – none

IV. AGENDA APPROVAL

Collins (Second: Foley) moved to approve the Agenda as submitted.

Roll Call Vote – Ayes: Commissioners Heine, Bayha, Foley, Collins, Simmons

Nays: None

Absent: Commissioners Michalowski, Greenwald, Gibbons

Motion Carried.

V. INTRODUCTIONS

Commissioner Heine asked presentation participants to identify themselves.

VI. PRESENTATIONS

1. U of M Resilience Hub Group

Desmond Kirwan, Trevor McCarty, Paige Porter and Grant Faber, graduate students at the University of Michigan School for Environment and Sustainability, provided a Power Point presentation as to their resilience hub work, addressing the following topics:

- Implementing resilience hubs in Ypsilanti, Michigan
- Climate change in southeast Michigan and emerging crises in the United States
- Communities banding together to become more resilient
- What goes into creating a resilience hub

- Criteria used to determine priority areas in Ypsilanti
- Information gathering through community surveys and resident interviews
- Resilience hub funding
- Recommendations based on report findings
- Possible vision for what the future of resilience for Ypsilanti could look like

Desmond Kirwan introduced a second Masters group of University of Michigan students who will be available to conduct research and further assist the Commission --- Bryce Frohlich, Jessica Miller and Taylor Antal. *[Commissioner query and comment followed]*

2. Adapt Card Deck Game

Co-creator Bridget O'Brien shared the vision of the game's creators and provided a Power Point presentation explaining what the "Adapt Creative Process Game" is all about and how its use could possibly support the work of the Commission. There was discussion as to how it possibly might be worked out to hold a future outdoor commission meeting, sometime in the summer, in order to play the game. *[Further commissioner query and comment followed]*

3. Composting with Commissioner Collins

Commissioner Collins discussed teaching children, as well as senior citizens, how to properly compost and the importance of doing so. His plan is to do a follow up with a slide presentation at the next meeting.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of March 8, 2021 minutes

Simmons (Second: Collins) moved to approve the March 8, 2021 Minutes as submitted.

Roll Call Vote – Ayes: Commissioners Heine, Bayha, Foley, Collins, Simmons

Nays: None

Absent: Commissioners Michalowski, Greenwald, Gibbons

Motion Carried.

VIII. WORK SESSIONS – none

IX. RESOLUTIONS/MOTIONS/DISCUSSIONS

1. Sustainability Goals: Water

[To be discussed with the larger group at the next meeting]

2. Water Testing Experiment Update

Commissioner Heine explained that the worksheet included in the packet is from the County Water Resources Department to provide information regarding individual water testing and cost.

3. Storm Drain Awareness Campaign Discussion

Commissioner Collins will present information at a future meeting.

4. Composting Pilot Program Update

Commissioner Collins will present information at the next meeting.

5. Neighborhood Hubs Pilot Program Update

Commissioner Simmons provided an update of her efforts and thoughts about next steps.

6. Earth Day 2021 Planning Updates

Commissioner Bayha provided a follow up on the missive she wrote explaining Earth Day and shared future planning thoughts.

7. Sustainability Commission KN95 Mask Event Update

Commissioner Heine shared that she handed over 3,000 masks that she was able to get, to Commissioner Foley. Commissioner Foley provided an update on his community distribution efforts and storage of the remaining. *[Commissioner query and comment followed]*

8. Commission Vacancy Update

Commissioners were encouraged to share commissioner vacancy information with others.

[Commissioner thoughts/ideas followed re: ways to promote the Sustainability Commission within the community]

X. COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioners, who wished, shared additional thoughts/comments, and also shared activities they are involved with and/or are working on related to sustainability.

XI. PUBLIC COMMENT – none

XII. PROPOSED BUSINESS

- Approval of February 8, 2021 meeting minutes.
- Commissioner Heine notated items for the next meeting.

XIII. NEXT MEETING DATE

Monday, May 10, 2021

XIV. ADJOURNMENT: 9:08 p.m.

Simmons (Second: Bayha) moved to adjourn the meeting of the Sustainability Commission.

Voice Vote: Unanimous

Motion: Carried

CRAIN'S

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April 25, 2021 12:05 AM |

William J. Hallan: Michigan's bottle bill is a false sense of accomplishment for a job not well done

William J. Hallan

TWEET

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REPRINTS

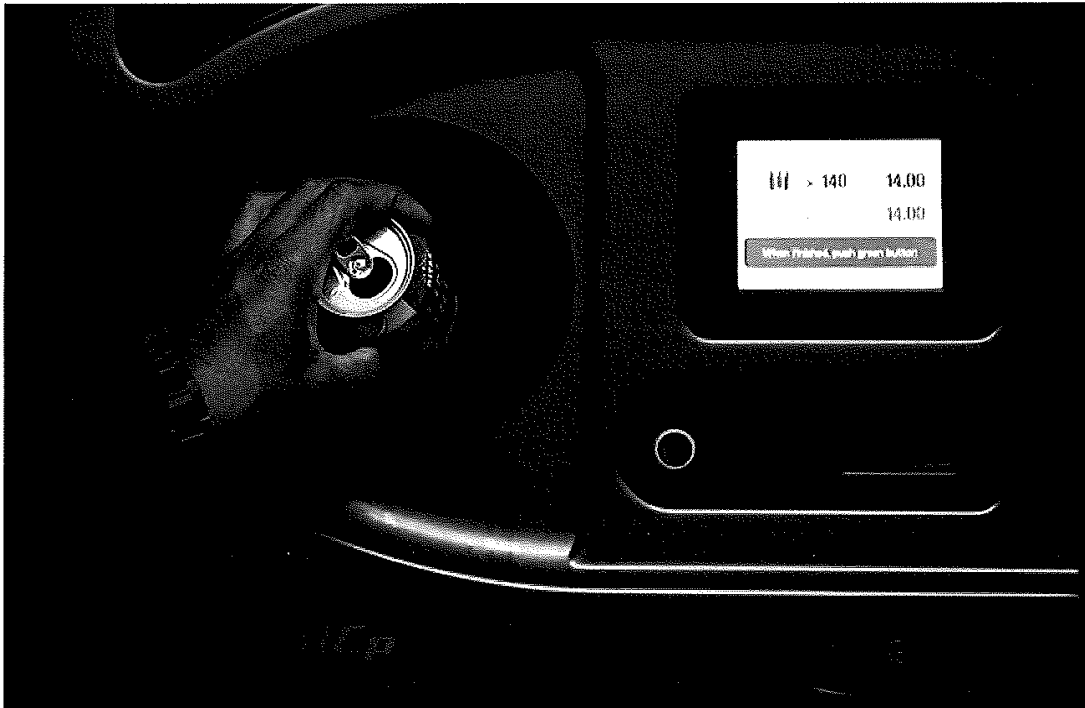


<https://www.crainsdetroit.com/crains-forum/william-j-hallan-michigans-bottle-bill-false-se...> 4/26/2021



Michigan Environmental Council

CRAIN'S FORUM: RECYCLING



This Crain's Forum looks at the state of recycling in Michigan. These are the stories in this report:

- Michigan pioneered litter control - now recycling is down in the dumps
- Michigan's bottle bill is a mess - it's time to expand it or repeal it
- Why Michigan's returnables give a false sense of accomplishment for a job not well done
- How Michigan can be a national leader in recycling again
- Make it a crime to defraud the bottle deposit system
- To solve a very Michigan problem, this inventor created an in-home can counter



A year ago, when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, we all started to look at the world differently. Retail employees began looking at bottle returns with even more fear and disgust.

How long could viruses live on these containers that have been in contact with people's saliva and mouths? Would

William J. Hallan is president and CEO of the Michigan Retailers Association.

handling them present another way retail workers could be exposed to COVID-19?

The bottle deposit law has always presented cleanliness and safety challenges for retail workers.

Employees are tasked with containing and cleaning up the sticky drips and all that's attracted to them (yes, we mean bugs).

That's not to mention the other surprise items humans tuck inside returned bottles and cans. It is tremendously expensive and inefficient to manage the collection of these containers in a retail setting.

Larger retail stores have to deal with extraordinary volume of returns and smaller stores have to find room to sort and store empty containers in limited space and juggle employee time to handle them.

Collectively, retailers and distributors spend over \$100 million each year managing the takeback of these materials given the state-prescribed method of takeback.

Michigan's current recycling programs are dismal at best. Despite being the Great Lakes State, where we take pride in promoting "Pure Michigan," somehow our overall recycling rate of just 18 percent lags well behind our neighboring states and the U.S. average of 34 percent. We send a lot of pure recycling to landfills.

Yet, Michigan is the only state among our neighbors with a bottle deposit law and also the only one that barely invests in recycling, budgeting only \$15 million a year. That's 15 percent of what retailers and distributors are paying to manage deposit containers, which only make up an estimated 2 percent of the waste stream.

Part of the problem is that residents believe that taking back their cans and bottles to the store is enough. It isn't.

Yet, local recycling programs struggle because the cardboard and plastic food containers returned don't offer much value. The real valuable materials: aluminum

and PET plastics, are diverted through the bottle deposit law instead of helping offset the costs of local recycling programs.

Let's imagine a better way. The Michigan Legislature is working on reforms that would require most communities to provide curbside recycling and recycling drop-off centers.

We strongly support efforts for the state to invest in more robust, convenient recycling opportunities for residents.

Recycling needs to be as easy and convenient as tossing something in the trash. Building programs and infrastructure is one step. We need to make it easier on residents by having a single-stream system.

If we direct all our recycling, including bottles and cans, through a single-stream, convenient drop-off system model, we should see actual results that improve Michigan's recycling rate.

It will also eliminate the food safety concerns of bringing dirty containers that attract pests into stores where we buy groceries and reduce the risk to retail workers currently required to handle them.

The state should lead by example and include recycling bins at state highway rest areas, in state buildings and on state property.

And while businesses have a role in helping these programs be successful, the entire cost of recycling and managing our waste should not be shouldered by private industry. It is a state problem that needs a state solution, and everyone needs to step up.

The state is long overdue in its development of a comprehensive solution for all our recyclable materials. Michigan cannot continue relying on an outdated and overly costly deposit law that neglects 98 percent of the remaining waste stream while giving residents a false sense of accomplishment.

CRAIN'S

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MENU

Home > Voices: Chad Livengood

April 25, 2021 12:05 AM |

Livengood: Michigan's bottle bill is a mess. Time for reform or repeal.



CHAD LIVENGOOD
Politics, Policy and Detroit Rising

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REPRINTS





Chad Livengood/Crain's Detroit Business

Faygo's Ohana lemonade drink is not subject to Michigan's ten-cent bottle deposit because it's a non-carbonated beverage, despite being bottled in the same two liter bottle as the Detroit-based beverage company's Redpop and other flavors.

CRAIN'S FORUM: RECYCLING



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Each day at its Detroit bottling plant on Gratiot Avenue in Detroit, Faygo fills the exact same 2-liter plastic bottles with its Ohana fruit punch and its iconic Rock & Rye soda pop.

After consumers drink those refreshing beverages, one bottle usually ends up traveling through Michigan's byzantine bottle deposit recycling system.

The other bottle might end up in a separate recycling system, but more likely just get pitched in the trash.

The difference is in the fizz.

Michigan's nearly half-century-old bottle deposit law is badly in need of being modernized.

There are dozens of sport drinks, bottled waters, canned wine, ice coffees and flavored whatevers on the shelves of stores today that simply hadn't been invented in the late 1970s.

But the law doesn't treat all bottles and cans the same.

If it doesn't have carbonation, it's not subject to the 10-cent deposit, even when it's the same exact bottle as a carbonated pop. To any reasonable person, this is complete nonsense.

For years, the Michigan Legislature has dragged its feet on modernizing the bottle bill. Meanwhile, the percentage of bottles being redeemed has been in decline for a decade and Michigan's recycling rate is somewhere around 15 percent of recyclable materials. For a state that values its natural resources, that's just embarrassing.

Like any third rail of Michigan politics, touching the bottle bill involves upsetting the apple cart of a lot of powerful interests in Lansing: Retailers large and small, supermarket chains, beer distributors, waste haulers, Big Soda, the Michigan Environmental Council and the list just goes on and on.

The time has come to expand the bottle bill to include most beverage containers and create the infrastructure to take the redemption work outside of places where fresh food is sold.

The alternative is to repeal the law, get rid of the 10-cent bottle deposit and adopt universal curbside recycling in every corner of the state and hope people will voluntarily separate their cans from their coffee grounds.

I grew up collecting pop cans as a kid to cash them in and buy baseball cards. The bottle bill is as Michigan as a coney dog with onions and cheese on top.

It pains me to suggest that Michigan's altruistic ten-cent bottle deposit law is broken, but it just is.

If someone was designing a recycling system, they wouldn't say Ohana two-liters go through one recycling system and Faygo Rock & Rye through another.

"The whole system doesn't make sense," said Derek Bajema, president of the Michigan Soft Drink Association. "Why do we have a two-way recycling system here in the state of Michigan?"



Special to Crain's Detroit

Joewaski Willis, left, and Muhammad Collins, both of Detroit, bring a container full of recycled cans to the back of the store at Mike's Fresh Market in Detroit, Mich. on March 30, 2021. (Nic Antaya, Special to Crain's Detroit)

It's maddening for consumers to go to a supermarket in Algonac and not be able to redeem a six-pack of glass bottles of 45'er IPA from Austin Brothers Beer Co. in Alpena just because that supermarket doesn't sell that brand of beer.

More often than not, those bottles get pitched in the grocery store's trash bin right next to the self-serve machines.

The coronavirus pandemic also has shined a spotlight on the inherently unsanitary nature of Michigan's bottle redemption system.

Many stores have built bottle return centers at the front of the building but have to store the crushed cans and bottles by the loading docks in the back of the building.

This requires moving what's essentially bins of trash potentially carrying actual bugs through the produce aisle. Yes, your stomach should be turning.

If lawmakers have the political will to expand the bottle bill to include all recyclable beverage containers short of milk jugs, they need to pay retailers the entire sum of unredeemed cans to subsidize the cost of building and maintaining recycling centers that are detached from the retail floor space.

Currently, retailers get 25 percent of the unredeemed dimes — known as escheats — to help defray their overhead costs of running an in-store bottle return operation. The remaining 75 percent gets diverted to cleaning up environmentally contaminated properties — a noble cause that has almost nothing to do with recycling or preventing the proliferation of litter.

It's kind of like Michigan's 6 percent sales tax on gasoline — almost none of that tax goes to actual the roads.

If lawmakers don't have the will to expand, then it's time for a wholesale change in how we recycle single-use beverage containers in Michigan.

The influx of billions of dollars in federal COVID relief aid gives the state a one-time source of funding to build out a recycling infrastructure and industry that's hobbling along, in part, because of the bottle bill.

There's an opportunity to build more community-based facilities for bottle and can returns, make single-stream recycling universal and get the waste out of grocery stores.

How is the bottle bill hurting recycling? It diverts some of the highest-value recyclable material — PET plastic and aluminum cans — away from the curbside recycling system, straining the finances of communities that end up subsidizing those operations or dropping the recycling service to save money.

"You're taking some of the most valuable commodities out of that curbside cart in a state where it's already hard to do curbside because, frankly, a lot of our state doesn't even have curbs," Bajema said.

The economics of recycling are already hard enough.

The case for strengthening Michigan's recycling infrastructure and culture can be made by simply going for a run down a country road or a city street.

They're often littered with non-refundable beverage containers much the way they were littered in the 1970s with Coke and Pepsi cans.

That's also a strong case for keeping the deposit law.

But relegating returnables to the sticky floors of a backroom at the supermarket seems to be a very 1970s concept that has run its course.

Letter

— to the —

Editor

Want to get something off your chest? Send us an email or hit us up on Facebook or Twitter.

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Resolution No. 2021-05-01
May 10, 2021

CITY OF YPSILANTI SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

Washington Street Green Space Proposal

WHEREAS, the City of Ypsilanti has previously approved the closure of Washington Street;;

WHEREAS, the aforementioned street closures have proven to benefit our local businesses;

WHEREAS, the City of Ypsilanti has shown support for promotion and improvement of non-motorized travel;

WHEREAS, streets should be designed for people, bicycles, and mass transit—not just for cars;

WHEREAS, the numerous benefits of green space on community mental health;

WHEREAS, the removal of streets has been proven to improve traffic calming;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Sustainability Commission of the City of Ypsilanti supports the permanent closure of the 100 block of North Washington; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that City Council vote for the removal of pavement and the addition of green space through community partnerships.

OFFERED BY: Commissioner Michalowski

SUPPORTED BY: _____

YES:

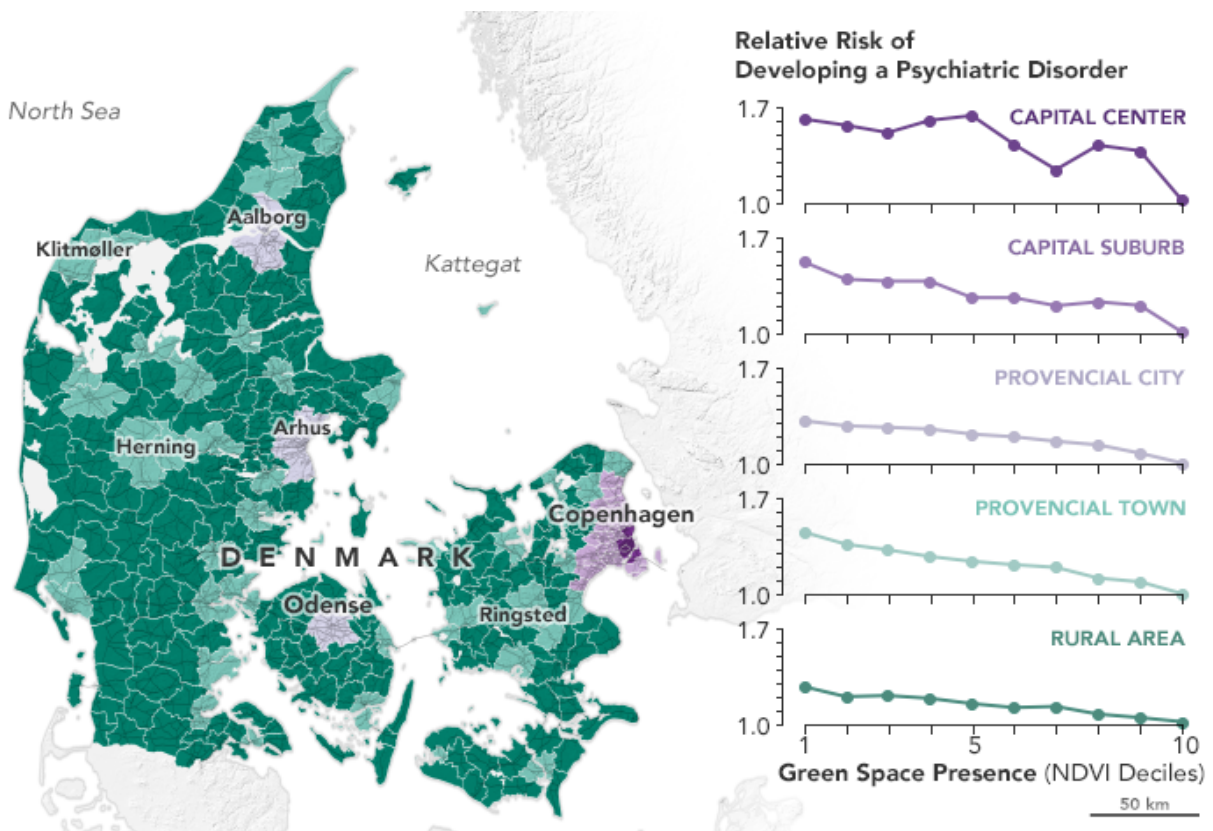
NO:

ABSENT:

VOTE:



Green Space is Good for Mental Health



1985 - 2013

PNG

In a sweeping nationwide study, researchers from Denmark's University of Aarhus found that childhood exposure to green space—parks, forests, rural lands, etc.—reduces the risk for developing an array of psychiatric disorders during adolescence and adulthood. The study could have far-reaching implications for healthy city design, making green space-focused urban planning an early intervention tool for reducing mental health problems.

Using data from the Landsat satellite archive and the Danish Civil Registration System, researchers tracked the residential green space around nearly a million Danes and correlated that with their mental health outcomes. The scientists found that citizens who grew up with the least green space nearby had as much as a 55 percent increased risk of developing psychiatric disorders such as depression, anxiety, and substance abuse in later years.

The research was published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. It is the largest epidemiological study to document a positive connection between green space and mental health.

The impact of green space throughout childhood is significant. Exposure to green space is comparable to family history and parental age when predicting mental health outcomes. Only socioeconomic status was a slightly stronger indicator.

Researchers are still working out exactly why green space is so beneficial, but it clearly provides health benefits across the population. It can encourage exercise, provide spaces for socializing, decrease noise and air pollution, and improve immune function by providing exposure to beneficial microbiota. It also can help with psychological restoration; that is, green space provides a respite for over-stimulated minds.

Green space most strongly protects against mood disorders, depression, neurotic behavior, and stress-related issues, the study found, signaling that psychological restoration may be the strongest protective mechanism that green space offers. The effect of green space is also dose-dependent, meaning those who have longer exposures to green space have greater mental health benefits.

The map and line plots above describe the relationship between green space and relative mental health. The darkest greens on the map are the most rural or undeveloped areas, while the darkest purples are the most developed and paved urban centers. The line plots show the relative risk of developing a psychiatric disorder (vertical axis) versus the proximity to green space. Green space is defined by the Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI), a satellite measurement of the greenness of a parcel of land (with greenest areas to the right on the horizontal axis). Note how the mental health risks fall even in highly urbanized areas when a citizen lives close to a green space.

Previous research had already established that city living can increase the risk for some psychiatric disorders. While the specific mechanism behind the risk is unknown, those dwelling in cities have higher neural activity, which is linked to higher stress levels. With more than half of the world's population now residing in cities—and that number is growing—health professionals are looking for ways to reduce the risk of psychiatric disorders that city living can cause.

While urban areas stand to benefit most from increased green space, this protective association is not just for city dwellers. The study found that longer exposure to green space was linked to bigger risk reductions from the city center to the rural outskirts. No upper limit to the benefit was

found.

Two rich and extensive data sources made this research possible: the Danish register—which contains georeferenced addresses, health records, and socioeconomic data for citizens reaching back into the 1960s—and the long, global archive of 30-meter Landsat data.

Researchers gathered information on more than 940,000 Danish citizens born between 1985 and 2003. The team then traced the proximity of those children to green space from birth to age 10, as well as their long-term mental health beyond age 10. To find the presence or absence of vegetation around each citizen's home, Engemann and colleagues used Landsat to calculate NDVI, a ratio of how vegetation reflects or absorbs near-infrared light (which plants reflect strongly) versus visible red light (which plants largely absorb). Higher NDVI levels indicate a greener, more vegetated landscape.

“We decided to use Landsat data because it was free, high-resolution, and covered Denmark back to 1985,” lead author Kristine Engemann of Aarhus University explained. “The global geographic range together with free availability ensures that our study could potentially be repeated in other countries.”

NASA Earth Observatory image by Joshua Stevens, using data courtesy of Engemann, K., et al. (2019). Story by Laura Rocchio, Landsat Science Outreach Team, with Mike Carlowicz.



[View this area in EO Explorer](#)**New study uses satellite and demographic data to show how the prolonged presence of green space is important for a healthy society.**

Image of the Day for July 17, 2019

Instruments:

Landsat 5 — TM

Landsat 7 — ETM+

Landsat 8 — OLI

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Jul 16, 2019

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References & Resources

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THE SCIENCES

Removing Roads and Traffic Lights Speeds Urban Travel

Urban travel is slow and inefficient, in part because drivers act in self-interested ways

By Linda Baker on February 1, 2009

Conventional traffic engineering assumes that given no increase in vehicles, more roads mean less congestion. So when planners in Seoul tore down a six-lane highway a few years ago and replaced it with a five-mile-long park, many transportation professionals were surprised to learn that the city's traffic flow had actually improved, instead of worsening. "People were freaking out," recalls Anna Nagurney, a researcher at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, who studies computer and transportation networks. "It was like an inverse of Braess's paradox."

The brainchild of mathematician Dietrich Braess of Ruhr University Bochum in Germany, the eponymous paradox unfolds as an abstraction: it states that in a network in which all the moving entities rationally seek the most efficient route, adding extra capacity can actually reduce the network's overall efficiency. The Seoul project inverts this dynamic: closing a highway—that is, reducing network capacity—improves the system's effectiveness.

Although Braess's paradox was first identified in the 1960s and is rooted in 1920s economic theory, the concept never gained traction in the automobile-oriented U.S. But

in the 21st century, economic and environmental problems are bringing new scrutiny to the idea that limiting spaces for cars may move more people more efficiently. A key to this counterintuitive approach to traffic design lies in manipulating the inherent self-interest of all drivers.

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A case in point is “The Price of Anarchy in Transportation Networks,” published last September in *Physical Review Letters* by Michael Gastner, a computer scientist at the Santa Fe Institute, and his colleagues. Using hypothetical and real-world road networks, they explain that drivers seeking the shortest route to a given destination eventually reach what is known as the Nash equilibrium, in which no single driver can do any better by changing his or her strategy unilaterally. The problem is that the Nash equilibrium is less efficient than the equilibrium reached when drivers act unselfishly—that is, when they coordinate their movements to benefit the entire group.



Visions: The
Future of
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Urban Visions: The Future of Cities

The “price of anarchy” is a measure of the inefficiency caused by selfish drivers. Analyzing a commute from Harvard Square to Boston Common, the researchers found

that the price can be high—selfish drivers typically waste 30 percent more time than they would under “socially optimal” conditions.

The solution hinges on Braess’s paradox, Gastner says. “Because selfish drivers optimize a wrong function, they can be led to a better solution if you remove some of the network links,” he explains. Why? In part because closing roads makes it more difficult for individual drivers to choose the best (and most selfish) route. In the Boston example, Gastner’s team found that six possible road closures, including parts of Charles and Main streets, would reduce the delay under the selfish-driving scenario. (The street closures would not slow drivers if they were behaving unselfishly.)

Another kind of anarchy could actually speed travel as well—namely, a counterintuitive traffic design strategy known as shared streets. The practice encourages driver anarchy by removing traffic lights, street markings, and boundaries between the street and sidewalk. Studies conducted in northern Europe, where shared streets are common, point to improved safety and traffic flow.

The idea is that the absence of traffic regulation forces drivers to take more responsibility for their actions. “The more uncomfortable the driver feels, the more he is forced to make eye contact on the street with pedestrians, other drivers and to intuitively go slower,” explains Chris Conway, a city engineer with Montgomery, Ala. Last April the city converted a signalized downtown intersection into a European-style cobblestone plaza shared by cars, bikes and pedestrians—one of a handful of such projects that are springing up around the country.

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Although encouraging vehicular chaos seems at odds with the ideas presented in the price of anarchy study, both strategies downplay the role of the individual driver in favor of improved outcomes for everyone. They also suggest a larger transportation niche for bicycles and pedestrians. As the Obama administration prepares to invest in the biggest public works project since the construction of the interstate highway system, the notion that fewer, more inclusive roads yield better results is especially timely.

Faster Streets with Less Parking

New strategies in parking management could also improve urban traffic flow, remarks Patrick Siegman, a principal with Nelson/Nygaard Consulting Associates in San Francisco, a transportation-planning firm. In a misguided effort to reduce congestion, planners in the 1950s required developers to provide a minimum number of free parking spaces—a strategy that “completely ignored” basic economics, Siegman says, referring to how lower prices increase demand.

Now limited urban space and concerns about global warming are inspiring city planners to eliminate these requirements. In San Francisco, for example, developers must restrict parking to a maximum of 7 percent of a building’s square footage, a negligible amount. Although downtown employment has increased, traffic congestion is actually declining, Seigard says. With fewer free spaces to park, drivers seem to be switching modes, relying more on mass transit, cycling and just plain walking.

5/5/2021

Removing Streets Is The Only Way To Reclaim Open Space In Cities

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space in cities

Can London build on the momentum of its Olympic building to do something truly radical to its urban planning? Take a major road and replace it with a park.



1/10 London Wall road today. Note the remains of the ancient Roman wall in the foreground DAVID BANK



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<https://www.fastcompany.com/1680214/removing-streets-is-the-only-way-to-reclaim-open-space-in-cities>

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Click through the slide show above to see London's Wall Road today, and the proposal for replacing it with a new park.

For seven years now, London has been consumed in its preparations to host the 2012 Olympics. As we enter the final countdown for the opening ceremonies, thoughts are now turning to what lies beyond this global event. What's next for London? How will the city maintain the momentum and enthusiasm sparked by the Olympics, and how will London plan and deliver further improvements to its quality of city life? One road through the center of the city could provide an opportunity to alter the urban environment in fundamental ways, and give some lessons to other cities looking to revitalize tight urban areas.

Much of the debate about the future of London focuses on the need for new infrastructure: [high-speed rail](#), airports (the [new Estuary Airport](#)), essential systems (a new [tunnel under the Thames](#)). Whilst these underpinnings are significant, none directly addresses livability. Within London's historic core, the area known as the City of London or "[The Square Mile](#)," there are no public parks of any scale. We know that open space offers economic, psychological, and ecological benefits, each key to improving a city's livability. But in a densely packed, historically rich urban setting with no unused land, how can we create additional open space?

In a densely packed, historically rich urban setting with no unused land, how can we create additional open space?

Cities across the world have started turning their attention to the acres of land allocated to roads and the almighty car. The [Reclaim the Streets](#) and [Critical Mass](#) movements illustrate the pressure building in communities across the world for a better use of the valuable space now dedicated to streets. Anarchists asked a basic question: Why don't streets belong to people, not cars? Municipalities listened and are taking initiatives to find a better [solution](#).

In the past year, "[parklets](#)" have spurred interest in cities including Vancouver, Philadelphia, and Chicago. An act of resistance, a parklet is a small urban park comprised of plantings and seating, typically created in a parking space. When people see and experience parklets, they realize the value open space offers in terms of livability. Parks—even at a micro-scale—are places people want to be, particularly in dense urban environments. San Franciscans are particularly enamored with the concept. They recently launched a [Pavement to Parks](#) initiative with the goal of reclaiming a portion of the 25% of San Francisco real estate currently devoted to streets.

Pedestrianization is not new to London, but the proposals are becoming more ambitious. City officials have experimented with closing small shopping streets and discovered that the result is increased foot traffic. When Oxford Street closed to vehicular traffic, thousands of additional people frequented the street's shops. These temporary street closures are now giving way to much larger civic interventions

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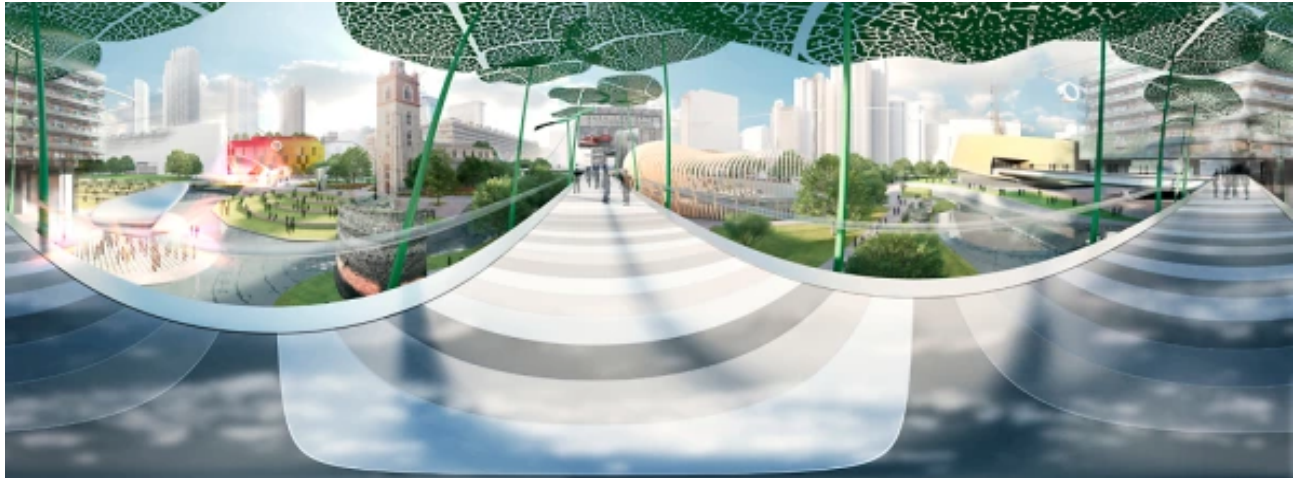


The London Wall road. Photo by David Bank.

That's precisely the question London should ask with regard to London Wall, a four-lane highway built in the 1950s as part of an unrealized urban motorway system. Located in the heart of the historic City of London, this road functionally separates the Barbican, one of London's most important cultural and residential centers, from the city center. This truncated highway is of little importance from a traffic management perspective, but potentially hugely valuable as an opportunity to create new open space in this densely developed part of the city. Why not reclaim that space, and transform it into the first large-scale urban park within the historic walls of the City of London?

The vision for London Wall Park is just one component of Gensler's conceptual designs at [The Developing City](#), an exhibition running in London throughout the summer. The exhibition curators challenged designers to re-imagine what London could be by 2050. To see more and explore possible futures for London's streetscape, click [here](#).

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What the London Wall could become.

In addition to giving The City more precious open space, the act of reclaiming London Wall would also offer the opportunity to activate its history—and purge some indignities: Segments of an ancient Roman wall currently sit adjacent to and even within an underground car park.

The new London Wall Park could provide a new front door for a range of cultural facilities contained within the Barbican, including concert halls, museums and galleries, and re-engage the public with “culture” in an entirely different way. The transformation would come at financial cost, to be sure, but it would be an investment in the long-term prosperity of the city.

London Wall presents an extreme example of a condition that exists in many cities. Urban streets should be designed for people, bicycles, and mass transit—not just for cars. Paradoxically, the parts of London redesigned in the 1950s and '60s to accommodate the car are those which now lend themselves most readily to conversion to large-scale parks.

We are living in the century of cities, and we must redefine what cities can be and how they can become more livable, not simply more crowded. One key to the transformation will be realizing that not all streets are created equal. It's time to reclaim some of them to create the additional open space that cities need to thrive.

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[RIP gymnastics leotards. Hello, unitards](#)

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Action Plan

Each action is rated for its ability to achieve the goal it fits under on a scale of one to three for: equity, environment, economy, and effectiveness (three is the highest score). They are then listed in priority order based on the overall score. Unrelated to its score, is the “term” in which it should be achieved. An item may be scored very highly but cannot be achieve in the near term. That is to say that Ypsilanti will have to work simultaneously on near term projects while making progress on longer term goals.

Near term = 1-2 years

Mid term = 3-6 years

Long term = 7-10 years

ENERGY: Decrease government operation emissions in support of attaining citywide net zero by 2030	
Action	Term
Establish an Energy Manager position to be responsible for the following duties: • Improve knowledge of energy management among city staff and appointed officials among staff • Create a data-driven system that is replicable over time, and includes annual forecasts, benchmarks for energy use reductions, and an internal reporting protocol • Work with the Sustainability Commission to produce an annual report that highlights where emission reductions and procedural improvements have been made • Improve communications with facility managers, utility providers, and relevant contractors to resolve issues quickly • Increase outreach to and participation of industrial and commercial customers in renewable energy and energy efficiency projects • Research and utilize the most efficient equipment available	Mid
Continue to incorporate renewable energy into the energy portfolio of each government building including back-up generation	Mid
Re-establish the City’s revolving loan fund for energy efficiency projects.	Mid
Conduct a GHG inventory every 5 years using input from 2012 & 2018 findings in the ICLEI GHG framework	Long
Improve fleet fuel efficiency with clean diesel, alternative fuels, and electrification.	Long
Publicly report on progress made toward those energy goals.	Near
ENERGY: Decrease the community’s emissions by 171,310 metric tons of C02e by 2030	
Action	Term
Work with the City of Ann Arbor to investigate bulk buying of renewable energy through the Community Choice Aggregation Legislation.	Long

Purchase renewable energy credits (RECs) for City operations.	Long
Promote state policies, incentives, grants, and Community Energy Management programs that encourage energy efficiency and renewable energy to property owners.	Near
Promote Washtenaw County’s weatherization program for low-income homeowners.	Near
Work with community stakeholders to initiate an energy competition. The university and City can partner together to challenge another city and university to an energy reduction competition.	Near
Implement an inter-departmental site plan review process with attention to sustainability-related strategies such as energy use and efficiency, generation and offsetting of emissions, on-site water management and infiltration, etc.	Near
Investigate the feasibility of a microgrid	Near
Review and incorporate aspects of the International Dark Sky Model ordinance to reduce energy waste (i.e. motion activated lighting on municipal buildings)	Near
Participate in or sign-on to regional, national, or international commitments energy, climate, and sustainability including: • The Paris Climate Agreement • The Sierra Club’s “Ready for 100” pledge • The Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy.	Near
Develop an electric charging vehicle infrastructure strategy	Long
Create a green rental certification program to encourage energy-efficient improvements	Mid
Work with the HDC to incorporate historically compatibly fixtures that are dark sky compliant	Mid

ENERGY: Reduce the amount of waste generated in Ypsilanti that enters landfills	
Action	Term
Support city organization’s reuse efforts	Ongoing
Expand recycling to public spaces and all City facilities by placing artful, educational, and engaging waste sorting stations throughout the community	Mid
Create a coordinated recycling system that has a one stop for difficult-to-recycle materials including electronics and refrigerant management	Long
Define Zero Waste for Ypsilanti using the Zero Waste hierarchy. Set a goal for City operations to be zero waste (excluding medical waste) by a specific date with annual	Near

benchmarks.	
Require government operations to use durable or compostable materials	Near
Implement a pilot program for a municipal kitchen compost system with high food-waste generators.	Mid
Increase access to curbside recycling services to multi-family units	Mid
Investigate a partnership with a commercial-scale compost operation	Near
Pilot curbside community composting services for leftover food	Mid
Conduct a waste audit to understand the baseline composition of the waste stream at the municipal operations and community level	Near
Investigate funding sources to bring down the cost of a biodigester	Mid
Implement an educational campaign on recycling and composting	Mid
Require that any events with a City permit provide for recycling, compost, and provide a discount for Zero Waste events	Near
Permit onsite composting of mulched leaves	Near
EARTH	
SOIL CONTAMINATION: Eliminate new instances of soil contamination and responsibly deal with the legacy of existing polluted sites	
Continue to use the Zoning Ordinances to limit land uses that have a higher likelihood of contaminating soil	Near
Consult residents prior to the public hearing regarding rezoning as a tool to mitigate contamination	When applicable
Continue to work with the Washtenaw County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority to remediate sites	Ongoing
Confirm sites of contamination with EGLE	Near
Notify homeowners where parcels have “limited capacity” soil	Mid

BIODIVERSITY	Term
Habitat and Animal: Expand and protect natural habitats	
Incorporate model language for rewilding landscaping into the city's ordinance	Near
Create informational materials for property owners on preferred and prohibited plants	Near
Rezone Mansfield and Clark to a more protective zoning district	Near
Continue to support the local food system	Ongoing
Support traffic calming and other infrastructure design that help reduce animal road crossing mortality	Mid
Promote "bird safe" designs and "lights out" programs during migratory season	Near
Consider programs for habitat improvement such as bat houses, pollinator gardens, and others as they develop	Near
Train inspectors to spot wildlife-friendly plants to prevent their removal	Near
Continue to monitor health of the city's wetlands and work with the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation to protect them	Ongoing
Partner with the County to inventory land that could be nominated for NAPP	Near
Encourage warm light to protect insects	Near
Review and incorporate aspects of the Dark Sky Model Lighting Ordinance to reduce negative effects on insects and migratory bird	Near
Trees: Preserve and expand a resilient tree canopy	
Implement a tree preservation ordinance	Near
Create an urban tree canopy that focusing on equitable tree planting based on social vulnerability consideration. Use Tree Equity Placement Map as a starting point	Mid
Increase and diversify the public tree stock according to the Community Forestry Management Plan	Long
Invest in tree maintenance	Long

Renew the City's Arbor Day designation	Mid
Update street planting guidelines to prioritize tap roots species and vary pit size by species	Near

WATER	
Action	Term
Quality: Protect the watershed from further contamination	
Establish a Sensitive Features Overlay Zoning District along the Huron River and implement LID standards and chemical bans	Near
Invest in consistent enforcement for compliance to the Sensitive Feature Overlay	Mid
Connect homeowners to Washtenaw County rain garden services	Near
Flooding: Expand the City's capacity to deal with heavy rainfall to mitigate negative effects on people and property.	
Incorporate capacity upgrades for grey stormwater management into the CIP based on predictions for greater precipitation	Mid
Update the flood maps based on climate projections and changes to the river channel	Near
Investigate an equitable stormwater fee schedule that encourages converting impervious to pervious surfaces and proper use of rain barrels	Mid
Consider banning basements or enforce floodplain standards in boundaries where the soil has limited capacity to handle stormwater	Near
Develop a Stormwater Management Plan	Near
Continue to financially support the removal of the Peninsular Dam	Ongoing
Efficiency: Promote resources for water conservation and testing to ensure access to clean water and efficiency upgrades	
Work with YCUA to develop home and business water efficiency financing programs	Near
Promote Great Lake Water Authority program WRAP to perform conservation audits and funds for repairs to help reduce low-income households reduce water bills	Near

Research the status of wells and provide resources for testing water quality to property owners	Near
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NEIGHBORHOODS		
Transportation: Maintain and expand transportation options including the development of bicycle, pedestrian, and sharing networks.		
	Action	Term
	Implement a parking cash-out alternative benefit option for employees	Long
	Prioritize transit-oriented development	Ongoing
	Partner with the DDA and AATA to provide a discounted transit pass as an alternative to downtown parking permits	Mid
	Encourage corporate sponsorship of transit passes and infrastructure to encourage employee bus and bikeshare ridership	Mid
	Partner with Eastern Michigan University to create a bike-sharing program and car-sharing network	Mid
	Make it easier for pedestrians and bicyclists to cross the street safely • Add bicycle lanes to major thoroughfares and trunklines • Retain the mix of uses within each corridor but allow them throughout the area. • Restore two-function to Cross, Huron, and Hamilton Streets. • Separate Cross and Washtenaw. • Restore Harriet Street as the Main Street of adjacent neighborhoods.	Long
	Prioritize pedestrians at crosswalks, and investigate where pedestrian walk signs can be made automatic	Mid
	Work with MDOT to make state-owned roads more accessible to nonmotorized users	Long
	Coordinate with Townships and WCRC on Border to Border (B2B) trail development	Ongoing
	Encourage police enforcement and legislative support for bike and pedestrian safety	Near
	Improve neighborhood walkability by improving sidewalk connectivity and conditions. Prioritize the improvement of nonmotorized connections that link neighborhoods and job centers.	Long

Continue to support the development of the Amtrak station		Long
Work with MDOT to make state-owned roads more accessible to nonmotorized users		Long
Coordinate citizens to advocate for slower traffic speeds on state owned corridors		Long
Development: Incentivize energy efficient and socially responsible development		
1	Consider density bonuses on commercial corridors in exchange for developers meeting criteria that achieve city goals	Near
2	Incentivize US Green Building Council's LEED for Neighborhood Development standard for new development	Near
3	Develop a Green Business/Neighborhood Certification program	Mid
4	Seek affordable housing development and identify parcels where it can locate near services	Ongoing
5	Provide a Sustainability Commissioner liaison to a neighborhood interested in developing an eco-district	When applicable

EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION	
Action	Term
Learning: The City of Ypsilanti plays a leading role in educating its residents on sustainability topics	
Implement an educational series about energy efficiency in different venues with a focus on teaching the most vulnerable populations about resources that help reduce their utility bills	Near
Sustainability Commissions shall continue to work with sustainability-related organizations to develop and offer in school guest lectures, field trips, and other learning opportunities with local schools	Ongoing
Work with schools to reduce waste and incorporate reusable items on campus	Mid
Determine a designated point person on city staff to direct sustainability-related questions or comments to the correct department	Near

Promote the city’s energy, climate, and sustainability vision through the establish monthly newsletter and develop other municipal marketing materials to update residents on city efforts, key sustainability topics, and easy-to-follow tips at home	Near
Organize competitions between municipal employees, business owners, and neighborhoods that promote sustainability-focused activities: • “Bring Your Green to Work,” • Energy treasure hunts, • Adopting catch basins or green infrastructure, • Zero waste days, • Smart commute weeks, and challenges to bike, walk, or take public transit to work.	Mid
Make critical public documents accessible and multilingual	Long
Disaster Preparedness: Develop the datasets necessary to determine where disaster relief efforts should be targeted	
Conduct an Environmental Justice analysis that identifies vulnerable populations and structures that are disproportionately impacted by climate change	Near
Work with the County to expand local air quality monitoring system	Near
Investigate infrastructure materials that can weather extreme weather	Near
Disaster Preparedness: To mitigate the damage inflicted on residents, infrastructure, and property from extreme weather	
Implement renewable backup power systems for areas of refuge and emergency facilities	Mid
Collaborate with landlords, YCUA, and DTE to ensure that in a time of crisis essential water and gas/electricity are not shut off	Near
Partner with Washtenaw County to expand emergency preparedness and communication tools including a multilingual and universally accessible plan that includes climate change predictions	Near
Work with the County to identify additional warming and cooling shelters	Near
Require occupied residential rental units to have one air-conditioned room	Near
Review response protocol and update where needed to respond to severe storm events	Near
Improve snow and ice response for sidewalks	Near