



Legislation Details (With Text)

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Title: Resolution in Support of Creating a Plan to Achieve Ann Arbor Community-Wide Climate Neutrality by 2035

Sponsors: Christopher Taylor, Anne Bannister, Chip Smith

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Resolution in Support of Creating a Plan to Achieve Ann Arbor Community-Wide Climate Neutrality by 2035

The City of Ann Arbor has long declared its commitment to climate action, ranging from the creation of an Energy Plan in 1981 to the adoption of the City’s Climate Action Plan in 2012 to the creation of the Office of Sustainability and Innovations in 2018.

Despite notable commitments by the City of Ann Arbor and other local governments, states, and national governments, the amount of action to meaningfully reduce greenhouse gas emissions has not been commiserate with what science has required to avoid significant climate related impacts. In Ann Arbor alone, over the last 30 years the City has experienced a nearly 1 degree Fahrenheit increase in annual temperature, an increase of over 44% in annual precipitation, and a 37% increase in the total volume of precipitation falling during extreme events. And climate projections show that the City is very likely to experience a 3 to 7 degree Fahrenheit increase in temperature, 12 to 36 more days per year over 90 degrees Fahrenheit, and a continued trend of increased annual and extreme precipitation by end of the century is significant actions aren’t taken immediately to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Globally, the impacts are even more dire with projections showing significant rises in the world’s oceans, the melting of permafrost and ice caps, salt water intrusion into water supplies, life threatening temperatures across much of the world, an increase in the extent and number of wildfires and other extreme weather events such as hurricanes, and significant increases in inland flooding followed by prolonged periods of drought. These changes are already disrupting economies, public safety and wellbeing, social systems, and the overall quality of life for natural and human systems.

In light of these realities, a growing movement of communities and institutions are declaring climate emergencies and working to achieve carbon neutrality as quickly as possible. In Ann Arbor, many groups have asked that the City once again become a climate leader by creating a plan for how the entire Ann Arbor community can achieve carbon neutrality as soon as possible.

To be the most valuable, a carbon neutrality plan needs to have actions that can be operationalized, with clear metrics to track success and financial resources identified that can support implementation. The actions identified need to be those that are essential for achieving carbon neutrality - including both easy, low-hanging fruit actions as well as complicated, challenging and long-term actions. Moreover, any carbon neutrality plan needs to be considered “living” as technology, politics, economics, and other external factors are dynamic and will continue to change the backdrop upon which carbon neutrality is being explored.

Because of the scientific urgency of climate change, creating a carbon neutrality plan today will provide the City with more time to design and implement solutions that will avoid the worst impacts of a climate altered future. Moreover, creating a carbon neutrality plan today helps secure the buy-in necessary to implement the easy as well as the more challenging actions required to achieve carbon neutrality as a community.

To help launch a climate neutrality planning process that has extensive public involvement, the City is looking to host a Carbon Neutrality Summit on November 13th. The Summit will be the launch of a community carbon neutrality planning process and will be followed by numerous additional opportunities for the community to help generate a carbon neutrality plan for the City of Ann Arbor. At the Summit, the City will also launch a technical advisory committee to help ensure that our carbon neutrality planning process is technically robust. By combining a variety of public engagement opportunities, building partnerships with local institutions, and by launching a technical advisory committee, the City anticipates being able to present a draft carbon neutrality plan, that includes actionable activities and preliminary budget details, to Ann Arbor City Council by Earth Day 2020.

Budget/Fiscal Impact: Funding for a carbon neutrality planning process is available in the FY2020 Office of Sustainability and Innovations budget. If additional funding is needed for planning, the Office of Sustainability and Innovations will work with local partners to try and leverage their resources and/or secure external funding. Implementation of the Plan, however, will very likely require changes to the priorities, programs, and organizational structure previously established in the FY21 budget.

Prepared by: Missy Stults, Sustainability and Innovations Manager

Approved by: Howard S. Lazarus, City Administrator

Whereas, By adopting the Climate Action Plan (CAP) in 2012, the Ann Arbor City Council (“City Council”) committed to an ambitious, multi-strategy vision to address climate change by reducing community-wide greenhouse emissions (8% by 2015, 25% by 2025, and 90% by 2050 relative to year 2000 baseline carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) emissions levels);

Whereas, The Environmental Commission and many community and student groups have advocated for Ann Arbor’s declaration of a climate emergency;

Whereas, The Office of Sustainability and Innovations (“OSI”) was created in FY19 in order to actualize the goals created and reaffirmed by City Council;

Whereas, The Office of Sustainability and Innovations has created a 5-year work plan that will help the City achieve a 25% reduction in community-wide greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2025, based on 2000 levels;

Whereas, Despite the City’s goals and progress to-date, the global climate is changing at a rate that necessitates bolder action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including getting to net zero

emissions as soon as possible;

Whereas, Over 19,000 scientists have signed a Second Warning to Humanity proclaiming that “a great change in our stewardship of the Earth and the life on it is required, if vast human misery is to be avoided”,

Whereas, City Council realizes that climate change has direct and pressing impacts on all aspects of public health, safety, and general welfare;

Whereas, Great community interest exists to support the efforts to achieve community-wide carbon neutrality in a just and equitable manner;

Whereas, The University of Michigan has convened The President's Commission on Carbon Neutrality (PCCN), which commission includes Ann Arbor staff, for the purpose of working together with community and regional partners toward shared carbon neutrality goals;

Whereas, Creating a climate neutrality plan is necessary to identify, plan for, budget, and work towards implementing the actions required to achieve community-wide carbon neutrality; and

Whereas, Funding for public engagement is available in the FY2020 Office of Sustainability and Innovations budget;

RESOLVED, That the Ann Arbor City Council declares a climate emergency and commits to take action as a result of that declaration;

RESOLVED, The Ann Arbor City Council supports a public engagement process, beginning immediately, that helps outline how the entire Ann Arbor Community could achieve carbon neutrality by the year 2035, a target date that is both ambitious and achievable;

RESOLVED, City Council requests that the City Administration develop a draft plan for how the Ann Arbor community could achieve carbon neutrality (“2035 Carbon Neutral Ann Arbor Plan”) to be presented to Council not later than March 31, 2020 to support its presentation on Earth Day 2020;

RESOLVED, City Council directs the City Administrator to design and execute a community engagement process that culminates with a draft strategy for how the Ann Arbor community could achieve carbon neutrality around the year 2035;

RESOLVED, City Council direct the City Administrator to seek and facilitate collaboration with the University of Michigan and the PCCN to create and realize the 2035 Carbon Neutral Ann Arbor Plan; and

RESOLVED, City Council request the City Administrator to consider the likely outcomes of the in-development 2035 Carbon Neutral Ann Arbor Plan as he develops the FY21 Budget Planning process and, ultimately, the FY21 Budget.

Sponsored by: Mayor Taylor, Councilmembers Bannister and Smith