

A² CITY NEWS



The Newsletter for the City of Ann Arbor, Michigan

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This is a reprinted version of the original, which was e-mailed to A² City News subscribers on July 30, 2010. Further information on featured topics and current news can be found at www.a2gov.org.

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Vote on Tuesday!

Tuesday, Aug. 3, 2010, is the State Primary Election to elect candidates for City of Ann Arbor mayor and City Council members in all five wards. Other county, state and federal offices will also appear on this ballot.

City of Ann Arbor polling locations will be in operation from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., including several new polling places. All polling places previously located in University of Michigan dormitories have been moved to other on-campus locations due to university housing safety standards. In addition, Skyline High School (2552 N. Maple Road) has become a polling place, replacing the Mack School location. New voter registration cards were mailed to effected voters.

To view the updated polling place list, for voter FAQs, and for more information on this election, visit the city's elections website (www.a2gov.org/government/Elections). To find out your exact polling location, visit the Michigan Votes online voter information center (<https://webapps.sos.state.mi.us/mivote/>).

Stretch of Fifth Avenue to close until November

In a project managed by the Ann Arbor Downtown Development Authority, an underground parking structure is being constructed under South Fifth Avenue between Liberty and William streets. As a result, beginning Wednesday, Aug. 4, South Fifth Avenue will be closed to vehicular southbound traffic between East Liberty and East William streets. Pedestrian access will be maintained on one side of the street at all times, and a restricted one-way lane will be provided on the west side of South Fifth Avenue for use by Ann Arbor Transportation Authority buses and authorized Federal Building tenants. For details and a map on the temporary closure of Fifth Avenue, visit the city website (www.a2gov.org/Alerts/Pages/EventRoadClosuresandDetours.aspx). For more information on the project, visit the DDA website (www.a2dda.org/current_projects/s_fifth_ave_parking_structure_project/#Top).

Single-stream recycling: The program, the rewards, the event!

All Ann Arbor residents and businesses were able to start using the city's expanded, single-stream recycling program on July 5, 2010. Single-stream recycling allows all recyclables to be placed into one recycling bin without separating papers from containers. Recyclers may use their existing recycling collection bins until the new recycling carts are delivered.

The expanded recycling program accepts many new materials, including all clean plastic bottles and tubs numbered 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 7 (such as yogurt tubs, plastic produce containers, plastic cups, and microwavable frozen food trays). The expanded recycling program also accepts clean frozen food boxes and bulky plastic items, such as laundry baskets, lawn chairs, and buckets. Mixed papers — newspapers, magazines, catalogs, junk mail, office paper, flattened cardboard (including pizza boxes without food — grease stains are OK) and cereal-type boxes — as well as milk cartons, juice



boxes, metal cans and lids, glass bottles and jars and scrap metal (up to 1 cubic foot, 20 pounds per piece) continue to be accepted for recycling. Place shredded paper in a clear plastic bag (to be removed at the start of the recycling plant sorting line so the plastic bags do not get into the gears).

Truckloads of Ann Arbor's recycling carts are being delivered to approximately 1,200 addresses per day through August. Maps and schedules of the anticipated cart delivery dates are posted online (via www.a2gov.org/recycling). The new carts have a recycling guide imprinted on the lid and an informational packet enclosed, which provides new recycling program details and suggestions to handle the old recycling bins or exchange a new cart for a different size. Information is also posted online (www.a2gov.org/recycling).

RecycleBank® Rewards are coming

RecycleBank® is a company that helps communities make the most of their recycling programs by offering rewards to residents who recycle. Ann Arbor's new recycling carts have a tag that uses radio-frequency identification technology to track if the cart is set at the curb on any week. Residents on each recycling route earn points based on how much material is recycled on the entire route. Points can be redeemed for rewards — such as discounts and offers from local and national businesses. Eligible residents in single-family and duplex homes will receive information in the mail in August with instructions on setting up and using a RecycleBank® account online or via phone. More than 1,500 businesses participate in the RecycleBank® program, and many of Ann Arbor's rewards will be from locally owned businesses. Typical RecycleBank® rewards include discount coupons, 2-for-1 purchase options, cash value certificates and gift cards. Participants may also choose to donate their points to RecycleBank's® Green Schools initiative, which helps provide educational grants to local schools.

Single-stream recycling open house

See the new recycling plant's upgrades on Saturday, Aug. 21, 2010, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., at 4150 Platt Road, Ann Arbor. Please join the City of Ann Arbor and MRF operator, FCR Recycling, for guided walking tours of the newly upgraded 20-ton-per-hour facility that sorts combined papers and containers for recycling. The event includes children's activities, hot dogs and ice cream sundaes, displays of new materials to recycle, demonstrations of the new hybrid hydraulic recycling truck, RecycleBank® rewards information and more! Use the on-site parking off Platt Road with continuous bus shuttle service between the parking area and the MRF or take the #6 or #5 AATA bus. This is a free event! More information is available online (www.a2gov.org/recycling).

Help for homeowners

The Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) recently announced the launch of a new \$154.5 million Michigan Helping Hardest-Hit Homeowners Fund. MSHDA will begin accepting applications from mortgage loan servicers Monday, July 12, 2010.

MSHDA has launched an awareness campaign to share eligibility criteria and program information. For details on how the program will work, visit the MSHDA website (www.michigan.gov/HardestHit). The (city/county) community development unit is helping in these awareness efforts, and is also reminding homeowners to contact 734.222.9595 for free counseling for those going through mortgage and/or tax foreclosure.



Sylvan Avenue solution doesn't hold water

Cutting-edge, environmentally friendly pavement will ease the drainage issues on a local Ann Arbor street. Sylvan Avenue, between Packard and White Street, is being repaved with a permeable asphalt which, instead of forming puddles, allows rainwater to pass through the pavement, where it is filtered, cleaned and temporarily stored until it can be absorbed into the ground or gradually enter the storm sewer system. A ribbon-cutting event on Sylvan Avenue will take place Friday, Aug. 20, including a permeability demonstration and a ceremonial first drive down the newly paved street by Ann Arbor's electric car. Details:

www.a2gov.org/government/publicservices/project_management/projectsunderconst/Pages/SylvanAvenuePermeablePavementProject.aspx

The science of roadwork

In Michigan, including here in Ann Arbor, when the weather breaks for the spring and summer seasons, it's time to roll out the (orange) barrels. Because the clock is ticking on how long construction-ready weather will last, almost all major road projects must, ideally, be completed in roughly five months — from mid May through mid October.

In addition to weather conditions, several other factors determine why multiple roads must be worked on at once. The funding, and associated time restrictions, play a major role in road improvement-project planning, especially in the current economy when the transportation dollars are scarce.

The city's project management services unit is responsible for designing and constructing utility, roadway, and sidewalk projects; coordinating and inspecting the utility and public roadway with work of developers; and optimizing traffic flow through the city. Here are updates on some of the recent, substantial road projects:

- The Geddes Road/U.S. 23 interchange project is being funded by the Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality grant awarded by the Federal Highway Administration to Michigan Department of Transportation. These CMAQ funds are highly competitive and are designated only to projects that significantly reduce congestion and improve air quality. This funding comes with the restriction that dollars must be spent this year. State funding for the project comes through MDOT, while the City of Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County Road Commission are the agencies providing the local funds. Geddes Road was one of the worst city streets. Now it is resurfaced and open to traffic. Work continues on the interchanges. More details are available on the project Web page (www.a2gov.org/government/publicservices/project_management/projectsunderconst/Pages/GeddesRdUS-23InterchangeandGeddesRdEarhartRdIntersectionImprovement.aspx).
- Plymouth Road was resurfaced in 1984, and currently is in a very poor condition. The construction is being funded by federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act dollars that are only available to a few “shovel ready” projects. Ann Arbor is fortunate to receive \$2,300,000 of the ARRA fund for this project. Green Road construction is included in the ARRA funding, and will begin after Plymouth Road is completed. Details can be found on the project Web page (www.a2gov.org/government/publicservices/project_management/Pages/PymouthRoadandGreenRoadProject.aspx).
- The water main on Georgetown Boulevard was old and was frequently breaking, impacting the residents and washing away the roadbed. The construction will be complete at approximately the end of July or beginning of August. Details are available on the project Web page (www.a2gov.org/government/publicservices/project_management/projectsunderconst/Pages/GeorgetownBoulevardImprovementProject.aspx).

While no one likes to be inconvenienced by construction projects, without these road improvements, it would not be very long before we run out of the paved roads we so much depend on. To help plan your route to avoid delays (as much as possible), follow — and subscribe to — road and lane closure updates, and/or go directly to the Web page (www.a2gov.org/Alerts/Pages/EventRoadClosuresandDetours.aspx).

Input sought for A2's urban forest

The City of Ann Arbor is in the process of creating its first Urban Forest Management Plan. What is the urban forest? It's all of the trees within the city, including those on streets, in parks, natural areas and on private property. The city is responsible for managing the public trees within the urban forest, which includes over 40,000 street trees and 6,600 park trees in mowed areas.



The Urban Forest Management Plan will be used to set long-term goals, guide management decisions and shape future tree policies. Ann Arbor's city-managed urban forest provides \$4.6 million in benefits; and the plan will help to maintain a sustainable urban forest that maximizes these benefits.

Residents can help guide the direction and scope of the plan by taking an online survey, being launched in August. The survey is part of an initial outreach effort to hear from residents about issues and opportunities for improving the quality of Ann Arbor's urban forest. Go to the forestry website for survey details, www.a2gov.org/Forestry, where you can also subscribe to receive urban forestry updates via e-mail. Printed copies of the survey will be available upon request to Urban Forestry and Natural Resources Planner Kerry Gray at 734.794.6430, extension 43703 or kgray@a2gov.org. The survey will close Sept. 30, 2010.

Compost carts roll out new leaf pick-up process

Ann Arbor's fall leaf-management program will transition this year from two street-leaf pickups each fall to weekly curbside collections (from April through the end of November). Residents have several options for leaf disposal, including use of a convenient rolling compost cart, available for purchase in a variety of sizes at \$50 each. Orders may be placed online (with the payment added to the next water bill) at ; www.a2gov.org/Compost, or place an order with the Customer Service and Payment Center during weekday business hours: 734.994.7336, extension 0; or in person at 220 E. Huron., where payments can be made with cash, credit or debit card or added to the next water bill.

Leaves (and other compostables) may also be disposed of in paper yard waste bags set at the curb on weekly garbage days (from April through the end of November); or residents may drop off bagged compost to the city's Compost Center or Recycle Ann Arbor's Drop-off Station. Go online for drop-off hours, special instructions, rates and for further details on the transition: www.a2gov.org/Compost.



Bid with Your Lid to benefit Ann Arbor parks

City of Ann Arbor Parks and Recreation is excited to announce a partnership with New Hampshire-based Stonyfield Farm, the world's leading organic yogurt company.

From Aug. 1 to Oct. 1, 2010, Ann Arbor grocery stores will host Stonyfield Farm's "Bid with Your Lid" program. Shoppers who purchase Stonyfield Farm products can return to any of the participating Ann Arbor grocery stores to cast their vote for any of three Ann Arbor Parks and Recreation entities: Mack Indoor Pool, Ann Arbor Senior Center and the Ann Arbor Parks and Recreation Scholarship Fund. The

program that receives the most votes at the end of the eight-week campaign will receive a \$15,000 donation from Stonyfield Farm.

Stonyfield will distribute free yogurt samples at upcoming parks and recreation events and in various park locations. Stay tuned for the locations and times of these events. Additional information will be posted on the city's website and social media pages as details become finalized (www.a2gov.org/parks). More information is also available on Stonyfield Farm's site, www.stonyfield.com/AnnArbor.

Nods to A²

Ann Arbor has again been recognized as a top-notch place to be. Here are some of the recent nods; see also a running list on the city's website, "Ann Arbor recognitions" page (www.a2gov.org/government/city_administration/communicationsoffice/Pages/AnnArborRecognitions.aspx).

- The U.S. Department of Energy Solar America Cities Team has awarded Team Player awards to members of the city energy office for engaging stakeholders to create support for solar initiatives.
- Forbes.com rates Ann Arbor as the fourth livable city in the nation as well as the No. 1 college sports town.
- Parenting Magazine considers Ann Arbor as a best city for families (No.4); while CNN's Money Magazine puts Ann Arbor on its top-50 list of places to live in America.

PROS Plan process update

The Parks and Recreation Open Space Plan update is moving forward. A citizen survey was completed, with 822 respondents providing input. Additionally, three public meetings and seven focus groups were conducted, and a plethora of comments have been submitted to the city's PROS Plan inbox.

During July and August, the steering committee will be evaluating all of the input and developing goals and objectives. These will eventually turn in to an action plan to move forward with a vision for the future.

The survey results are being posted on the website, and when the open-ended comments are summarized, these will be posted as well.

In the fall, the completed draft plan will be posted online, as well as available in Ann Arbor libraries, for public comment. Visit the dedicated Web page for details on the PROS Plan and process (www.a2gov.org/PROSPlan).

Web strategies make information accessible

The City of Ann Arbor website (www.a2gov.org) has become a substantial information clearinghouse, presenting important news and details about city services, initiatives and opportunities. The city's website, which welcomes an average of nearly 3,400 visits each day, includes features to help ensure this information is accessible to all.

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The free application, Google Translate, <http://translate.google.com/?hl=en#>, can present the information on the city's website in more than 50 languages. This feature is located on the left side of the city's homepage, and along the bottom of other pages throughout the website.

Launched in 2007, the Disability Resource Web site consists of a variety of links to help guide visitors to services, accommodations and resources pertinent to specific needs, based upon a particular disability and/or situation. <http://www.a2gov.org/disabilityresources/Pages/default.aspx> The website was completed with assistance from the Ann Arbor Commission on Disability Issues and features resources provided by agencies, entities and organizations other than the City of Ann Arbor, as well as links for city services and accommodations. Functional impairment categories used in the disability resource are derived from the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health from the World Health Organization.

Safe Passages Great Lakes

From the middle of August through the end of October, migrating birds will be flying over Ann Arbor on their way south from their breeding grounds in the north. During this journey, they risk hitting the lit windows of tall buildings. On clear nights, migrating birds navigate by the stars, but on cloudy and foggy nights, they attempt to navigate using the lights of tall buildings. They either crash into lit windows going full speed, or they become disoriented and vulnerable while endlessly circling the building.

Building occupants on floors five and above are asked to help prevent migrating-bird deaths by pulling the drapes or closing the shades on windows in lit rooms between 11 p.m. and dawn (approximately 6 a.m.). Ann Arbor would like to join other cities in helping migrating birds have a safe passage. Details are available on the city website (www.a2gov.org/government/publicservices/fieldoperations/NAP/birds/Pages/SafePassage.aspx) as well as the Washtenaw Audubon Society website (www.washtenawaudubon.org/safepassage.htm).

City meetings and events

Visit the City of Ann Arbor website for the schedule of meetings and events.

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