



Legislation Text

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Resolution to Advance Sustainable Food Options at City Facilities and Events

In June of 2020, Ann Arbor City Council unanimously adopted the A²ZERO plan, including the action of advancing plant-based diets. Since the adoption, staff in the Office of Sustainability and Innovations have primarily been working on public engagement and education around the value of plant-forward diets and working on reducing the amount of single-use plastics through the Ann Arbor: Reduce, Reuse, Return (A²R³) program.

In September of 2021, Ann Arbor City Council, under R-21-347, requested that the City collect information from all City departments regarding food purchases and develop suggestions on ways to improve food procurement policies to have greater alignment with the City's sustainability goals.

In response to this resolution, City staff prepared a memorandum for City Council outlining five near term recommendations and five potential long-term recommendations to advance sustainable food policies and options at city facilities and at city events. Those recommendations included:

Near-Term Recommendations:

- **Recommendation A:** Through the existing contract with Pepsi or through the establishment of new contracts, re-work the drink options available at City vending machines and other points of sale to include more nutritious and health-enhancing, ideally locally sourced, choices.
- **Recommendation B:** For food sold at City snack bars or distributed at City events, develop a list of preferred food items, with a focus on options that: have low GHG emissions; provide plant-based alternatives, especially when animal-based options are already provided; support the local food system; and minimize wasteful packaging.
- **Recommendation C:** For catering of City events, develop a directory of preferred restaurants, caterers, and other eating places with a focus on options that: have low GHG emissions; provide plant-based alternatives, especially when animal-based options are already provided; support the local food system; and minimize wasteful packaging.
- **Recommendation D:** Engage with, educate, and train City employees on the value of sustainable food and ensure that all employees who make food purchases are trained on the preferred food item and vendor lists.
- **Recommendation E:** Join the Washtenaw County Food Policy Council (WCFPC) and have City staff attend WCFPC meetings and work with the WCFPC to establish a sustainability working group.

Long-Term Recommendations:

1. Sign the [Milan Urban Food Policy Pact <https://www.milanurbanfoodpolicypact.org/the-milan-pact/>](https://www.milanurbanfoodpolicypact.org/the-milan-pact/) (MUFPP), which includes a framework of recommended actions for achieving more sustainable food systems and develop an action plan for achieving the goals outlined within this framework. By signing the MUFPP, Ann Arbor would join the cities of Austin, Chicago, Los Angeles, Miami, Montreal, New York City, San Francisco, Toronto, Vancouver, and

Washington, D.C. in committing to develop a sustainable food system that is inclusive, resilient, minimizes waste, mitigates, and is adaptive to climate change.

2. Establish a permanent Sustainable Foods Steering Committee consisting of City employees and community members, for the purpose of guiding future actions towards sustainable food practices in Ann Arbor. This could be the creation of a committee within the WCFPC or a stand-alone Committee within the City.
3. Establish a sustainable foods point system - based on the sustainable foods framework found above - that can be applied to each food item or eating place to determine how closely it aligns with the City's desired sustainability food practices.
4. Transition all City food purchases towards plant-based food products, providing plant-based alternatives to all animal-based options offered and eliminating all beef- and dairy-based food products from City food purchases by the year 2030.
5. Establish an "A²ZERO Preferred" labeling system to indicate more sustainable choices at vending machines, snack bars, and other City-operated points of purchase, and develop educational signage providing information on the reasons why certain food choices are more sustainable and the benefits they provide over less sustainable options. Work to make the labeling system and educational signage available to other members of the community for use at non-City operated food points of sale.

Staff have already begun work on near-term recommendation E. As such, this resolution strives to advance near-term recommendations A, B, C, and D and long-term recommendation 5.

Budget/Fiscal Impact: Outside of staff time, it is not believed much additional funding is needed to move the near-term recommendations forward. Implementation of the recommendations, however, will likely come with a modest increase in expenditure, particularly when purchasing more sustainable food options. In addition, additional resources will likely be necessary to fully develop and deploy long-term strategy 5.

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Reviewed by: Colin Spencer, Purchasing Manager

Reviewed by: Marti Praschan, Chief Financial Officer

Approved by: Milton Dohoney Jr., Interim City Administrator

Whereas, An adequate, reliable and sustainable food supply is critical for the well-being of the community now and in the future;

Whereas, The City of Ann Arbor promotes sustainable food programs as part of our A²ZERO plan for minimizing the environmental impacts of food production;

Whereas, The Ann Arbor Office of Sustainability and Innovations (OSI) specifically encourages our community to make food choices that consider organic products, support and preserve rural communities, are healthy and nutritious, respect farm animals, provide farmers with fair wages, are free of added toxins, are grown locally, do not harm the health of farm workers, are in season, and have minimal packaging;

Whereas, The City of Ann Arbor makes regular food purchases for activities at our parks and recreation facilities, vending machines, host sites, and at City-sponsored events and activities;

Whereas, Ann Arbor aims to lead by example in improving food procurement policies for the City that promote sustainability goals, support and advance racial equity, and encourage our community to

move toward a plant-forward diet;

Whereas, The City and Sustainable Food Working Group consisting of members of the public entrenched in the food sector, prepared a set of sustainable-food recommendations and delivered a memorandum to Council on January 25th, 2022 outlining five near-term and five longer-term potential courses of action;

Whereas, The Office of Sustainability and Innovations has dedicated staff time to work on advancing sustainable food options within the City and community;

RESOLVED, The City Administrator is directed to evaluate the contract with Pepsi and integrate drink options which shall be available at City vending machines and other points of sale that are more nutritious and health-enhancing;

RESOLVED, The City Administrator is directed to work with relevant staff to develop a list of preferred food items, based on a to-be-developed sustainable food framework that focuses on options that have low GHG emissions, provide plant-based alternatives, support the local food system, and minimize wasteful packaging, for sale at City snack bars or distribution at City events;

RESOLVED, The City Administrator is directed to work with relevant staff to develop a directory of preferred restaurants, caterers, and other eating places with a focus on options that: have low GHG emissions, provide plant-based alternatives, support the local food system, and minimize wasteful packaging, and train City employees on this list and the value of sustainable food;

RESOLVED, The City Administrator is directed to work with relevant staff to create an A²ZERO Preferred labeling system that helps identify more sustainable choices at vending machines, snack bars, and other City-operated points of purchase;

RESOLVED, The City Administrator is directed to work with the community to make the labeling system and associated materials available for use at non-City operated food points of sale.

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Nelson, Disch, and Hayner