

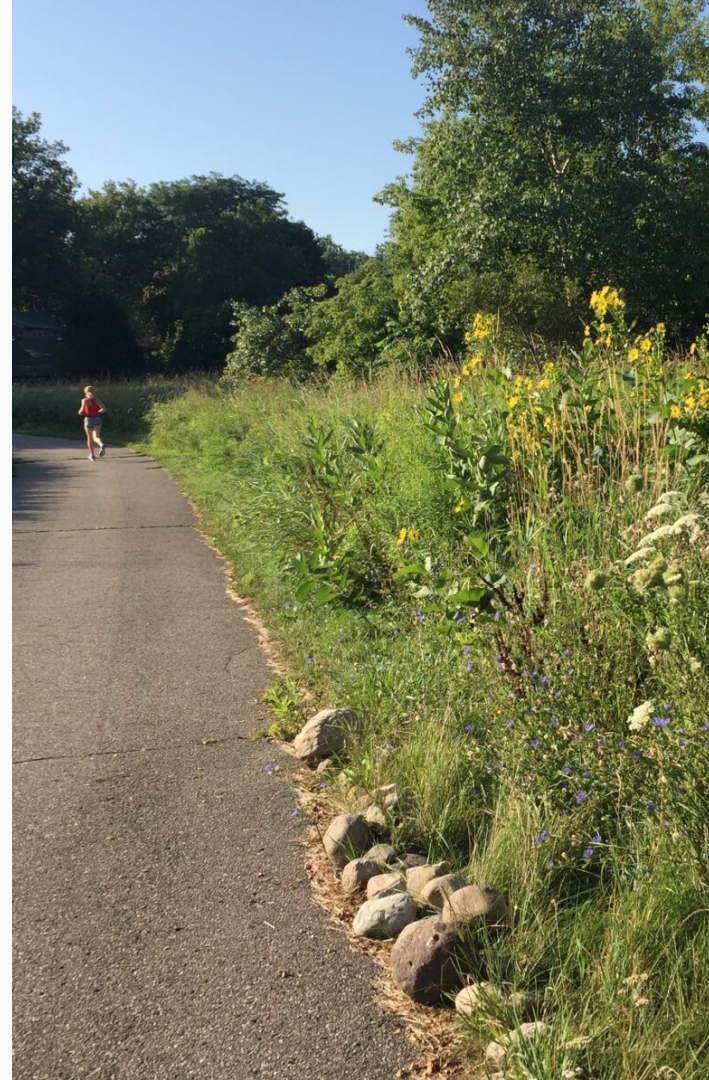
City of East Lansing
7/24/25

From Policy to Action: East Lansing's Sustainability Curriculum

Natalie Overton
Ph.D. Candidate, Political Science
Michigan State University



We worked with the various branches of East Lansing's City Government to *launch a policy interpretation effort* to be a *blueprint for change*.





THE PROBLEM

Environmental policies are confusing, dense, and *difficult to effectively implement.*

These policies have already been passed.

The taxpayers have already been taxed.

We aim to catalyze implementation.

SOLUTION

I translated *legalese into plain english* and extracted the *key takeaways from each policy* as it applies to each department.

PROJECT TIMELINE

What's the Process?

DEFINE

What policies?

Which departments?

01

CONNECT

Contact department heads

Conduct interviews

02

COMMUNICATE

Translate and extract

Get feedback

03

CREATE

Incorporate feedback

Format into one-pagers

04

DELIVERABLES

I create individualized one-pagers to simplify and condense a variety of existing policies.

01

DEPARTMENTAL

For each of 10 focus departments in the City government.

02

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Differently framed for elected citizen decision-makers

03

TEMPLATES

Canva layouts to serve as starting points for similar projects

04

SUSTAINABILITY FYI

General Sustainability education and terminology

One Pagers

The Basics of Deliverables 1, 2, and 3

Parks and Recreation: Construction

Environmental Policies and Plans

Green Building Policy (Policy Resolution 2009-01)

This policy reduces environmental impact, conserves resources, and improves efficiency in City buildings and operations.

Key Directives for Parks Staff and Municipal Projects:

- **Applicability:** Applies to all new municipal construction and renovation.
- **New Construction:** New municipal buildings >5,000 sq ft must achieve minimum LEED-NC Silver.
- **Renovation:** Incorporate green building/low impact design in renovations where possible.

Green Purchases: Office

10% Green Purchasing Incentive:

Purchasing more sustainable options is encouraged as long as they're less than 10% more expensive than your standard purchase.

Bathrooms and Kitchen:

Upgrading to low-flow water fixtures is encouraged! Consider paper, aluminum, or reusable alternatives to single use plastics for cups, plates, and cutlery.

Printing: Opt for paper products made from the most recycled paper material. Set printers and copiers to automatically make double-sided copies.

Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Ordinance

This ordinance protects waterways, drainage, and habitats by regulating all City land disturbances. Parks projects must comply with DPW procedures and permitting.

Key Directives for Parks Staff and Municipal Projects:

- **Applicability:** Projects disturbing >225 sq ft within 500 ft of water, or >6,000 sq ft elsewhere, require a DPW SESC permit. Confirm with Engineering.
- **Early Engagement:** Engage DPW Engineering early for permit/cost guidance.
- **Contractor Expectations:** Ensure SESC requirements, design, and erosion measures are in project bids/contracts.

Tree Protection Ordinance

This ordinance governs public and private tree protection, managing trees in public rights-of-way and parks for health, safety, and vitality.

Key Directives for Parks Staff:

- **DPW as Your Go-To:** DPW manages public trees and contracts.
- **When to Contact DPW:** Contact DPW for questions, assessment, or removal of diseased, damaged, or hazardous trees.
- **Work on Trees:** Never work on a public tree without consulting DPW; all work is tracked and implemented by DPW (Parks leads decisions for park trees).
- **Contractor Requirements:** Ensure contractors follow the City's

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Info Bubbles

Useful summary info from across all policies reviewed

Customized Formatting -> Templates

More points,
less detail

Moderate points,
moderate detail

Fewer points,
more detail

Environmental Policies

Key References for the City Clerk's Office

What you need to know...

While most environmental policies are implemented by other Departments, it is important for the Clerk's Office to be familiar with their existence and where to locate them. Below is a list of East Lansing's primary environmental policies, with citations and a brief summary.



- Soil Erosion & Sedimentation Control Ordinance**
(Code Ch. 34, Art. I)
 - Requires permits for qualifying land disturbances.
- Pollinator-Friendly Community Resolution (2015)**
(Resolution 2015-2)
 - Supports native landscaping and reduced pesticide use.
- Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy**
(Resolution 2017-2)
 - Requires "green" procurement when feasible.
- Green Building Policy**
(Resolution 2009-01)
 - LEED-Silver required for large municipal buildings; LEED-Silver for private development receiving municipal incentives.
- Post-Construction Stormwater Ordinance**
(Code Ch. 34, Art. IV)
 - Mandates on-site runoff control for new development.
- Coal-Tar Sealant Ban & Contractor Registration**
(Code Ch. 14, Art. IV)
 - Bans toxic sealants; applicators must register annually with the City Clerk.
- Wetland Protection Ordinance**
(Code Ch. 48)
 - Requires local review and permits for wetland impacts.
- Tree Protection Ordinance**
(Code Ch. 48, Art. I)
 - Regulates removal and planting of public and certain private trees.
- Green Fleet Policy**
(Resolution 2014-8)
 - Promotes low-emission vehicles and total-cost-of-ownership purchasing.
- Climate & Sustainability Plan (2012)**
 - Outlines goals across energy, waste, water, transportation, and buildings.
- 100% Clean Energy Resolution**
(Resolution 2020-1)
 - Commits to 100% renewable electricity for City operations by 2030.
- Recycling in Multifamily Housing**
(Code § 36-86)
 - Mandates recycling access in new apartment and mixed-use buildings.

Parks and Recreation: Operations

Environmental Policies and Plans

Climate Plan

- Develop outreach and education on employees recycling program
- Take advantage of the existing recycling infrastructure, add bottle recycling to community centers
- Adopt office practices that reduce the volume of waste
- New City office equipment should be ENERGY STAR compliant

Comprehensive Plan

- Focusing on Sustainability and Resilience
- Green Infrastructure designed to withstand climate impacts like flooding and heat, while reducing burden on the environment and human populations
- Use clean energy solutions for a more reliable grid and lower energy costs
- Local food systems for more food security

Green Purchasing: What It Means

The EPPP mandates that all departments actively seek out and prioritize environmentally preferable products and services. This translates to:

- Lifecycle Thinking:** Consider the full environmental impact of products and services from manufacturing through disposal. Favor options with lower energy consumption, fewer hazardous materials, and those made from sustainable or recycled content.
- Waste Reduction Focus:** Prioritize products that reduce waste, are easily recyclable, and support overall waste minimization across City operations.
- Vendor Engagement:** During the procurement process, inquire about vendors' sustainability practices and product environmental certifications.

Green Purchasing Policy

- The City of East Lansing operates under a formal **Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy (EPPP) (Resolutions 2017-2)**, a city-wide mandate guiding all procurement decisions.
- This policy directly instructs the prioritization of sustainable choices: environmentally preferred products and services, comparable in quality and function, can be purchased with an up to 10% price differential.

Green Purchasing: Events

Event & Festival Supplies:

- Waste Reduction Focus:** Think about alternatives for single-use plastics (e.g., cups, plates, cutlery, decorations, signage).
- Recycled/Sustainable Content:** Opt for paper products, banners, and other event materials made from recycled or sustainably sourced content.
- Energy & Water Efficiency:** When procuring or renting equipment for events (e.g., lighting, sound systems, temporary facilities), consider their energy and water efficiency.

Park Maintenance & Facility Supplies

Extend EPPP principles to daily park operations, including:

- cleaning supplies** (less toxic)
- landscaping materials**
- and office supplies** (recycled content).

Parking Downtown

Environmental Policies and Plans

Comprehensive Plan

- Implement green infrastructure and *expand tree canopy coverage* in public parking lots to manage stormwater and reduce urban heat island effects.
- Use *energy-efficient lighting*, support *EV charging*, and explore solar installations on parking facilities.
- Maintain strong *staff recycling practices*, minimize litter, and manage maintenance waste responsibly across all operations.
- Promote non-motorized transportation through well-placed, *secure bike parking* options.

Climate Plan

- Ensure all new office equipment in the Parking Division is ENERGY STAR compliant.
- For field operations, choose compact electric or highly fuel-efficient vehicles (e.g., Utility Task Vehicles or golf carts) where appropriate.
- Establish carpooling/ridesharing incentives or infrastructure for employees and public, such as preferred parking for carpools or discounted rates.


Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy

Resolution 2017-2

The City of East Lansing's Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy (EPPP) directly instructs the prioritization of sustainable choices: environmentally preferred products and services, comparable in quality and function, can be purchased with an up to 10% price differential.

This is a binding policy directive. Exemptions apply only if:

- The sustainable product or service does not meet the required form, functionality, or utility.
- The sustainable product or service is prohibitively expensive or cannot be competitively priced.
- An emergency or compelling public health or safety reason prohibits the purchase of the sustainable product.



QR Codes for Original Text Access



This material is based upon work supported by the Department of Energy and the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) under Award Number EE0008653. The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the United States Government or any agency thereof. Find this document and more about the CLC Fellowship that supported this project at graham.umich.edu/clcf.



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COMMUNITIES**



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UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN





SCAN ME



EL EnviroPolicies

View East Lansing's major environmental policies, plans, and ordinances here!

Climate Plan



Comprehensive Plan



Green Building Policy



Procurement Policy for Purchase of Recycled Products



Renewable Energy Policy



Green Fleet Policy



Green Purchasing Policy



Pollinator Resolution



Linktree Repository
for Original Policy Text

Sustainability Poster

The 4th Deliverable

ECO-FRIENDLY FYI Sustainability Terms, Defined

Sustainability Means...

...integrating equitable access to **housing**, **health-promoting spaces**, and **resilient infrastructure** while managing land use to meet current community needs without compromising future generations' ability to thrive, particularly for historically underserved populations.

East Lansing Comprehensive Plan



Post-Consumer Materials

Recovered materials that have that have been used by a consumer and then discarded, diverted from landfills, and then recycled into new products.



Biodiversity

The variety of plants, animals, fungi and microorganisms that are found in a given area.



Integrated Pest Management

A multi-modal style of pest management that focuses on preventing, monitoring, and controlling pests to simultaneously minimize infestations and risks to humans and the environment.



Product Lifecycle

The span from material extraction and manufacturing through purchase, use, and end-of-life management (reuse, recycling, or disposal).



Recycled Products

Any product that is at least partially composed of recovered materials.

Resilience Means...

... our community's capacity to **withstand**, **adapt** to, and **recover** from both acute shocks (such as natural disasters or economic crises) and chronic stresses (such as systemic inequities or climate change impacts), while maintaining essential functions and advancing equitable outcomes for all residents.

East Lansing Comprehensive Plan



Green Economy

Economic systems that minimizes environmental harm and resource over-exploitation of resources while maintaining a sustainable rate of development.



Greenhouse Gasses

Atmospheric gases that trap heat, reflecting it back onto the earth's surface.



Benchmarking Energy

The practice of comparing a building's energy usage to its past performance, that of similar buildings, or national standards, to plan for increased energy efficiency.



Systemic Pesticides

Chemicals absorbed by a plant and circulated through its tissues, rendering the plant toxic to feeding insects.

Climate Plan Excerpts and Policy Terms Defined

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We enabled easily *implementable*
environmental policies in East Lansing.

Team power

What made these policy
interpretations truly
individualized and *helpful*

Mentor

Cliff Walls

Technical Advisor

Matt Davenport

City Resource

Marcus Grosshans

City Resource

Justin Drwencke

City Resource

Matt Torok

City Resource

Catherine DeShambo

Do try this at home:

Takeaway 1: Get Feedback

Takeaway 2: Work Parallel

Takeaway 3: Follow Up

Environmental policy is our opportunity to take the onus of healing and protecting our earth off of the individual.

I've spent my academic career studying environmental policy and behavior change. This project gave me an opportunity to see how they tie together in real life.



Thank you!



MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY



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