

SUSTAINABILITY HOW-TO: PLANNING A COMMUNITY SWAP DAY



<https://osi.a2gov.org/swapdays>

Resources



Throughout this guide, you will find embedded links to various resources. Below is a list of these resources:



A²ZERO Climate Action Plan:
www.a2zero.org



The circular economy in Ann Arbor:
www.a2gov.org/circulareconomy



Swap Days webpage (includes the example list of accepted donations):
osi.a2gov.org/swapdays



Flyer template:
osi.a2gov.org/swapdayflyer



Notify us of your planned swap day:
osi.a2gov.org/swapday/notify



Give us feedback on your swap day:
osi.a2gov.org/swapdayfeedback



What is a Swap Day?

Swap Days are organized events that facilitate the circular economy at a neighborhood or community level. Unlike a garage sale, Swap Days forgo exchanging payment for items. Instead, items are freely exchanged to support the community and reduce waste.

The Circular Economy and Ann Arbor



The Circular Economy is an economic system that generates value by promoting activities (e.g., reusing, repairing, sharing, and lending) that give goods and resources a new life or extend their useful life. Creating a circular economy means rediscovering a culture of reclaiming products and materials, following the model of many cultures - notably indigenous ones - that prize conservation and creative reuse of material resources. Additionally, it can help to build community.

Strategy 5 of the [A²ZERO Climate Action Plan](#) is to change how we use, reuse, and dispose of materials by moving Ann Arbor towards a more circular economy. This includes investing in repair shops and thrift stores, encouraging reduced consumption of new materials, and implementing city-wide reuse systems. For more information about the circular economy in Ann Arbor, [read here](#).



Why Host a Swap Day?

In addition to the environmental benefits associated with reduced production and disposal of goods, swap days broaden access to items for those who might need them, help create more living space within homes, support local non-profits like the PTO Thrift Shop, and foster social connections within communities and neighborhoods.



How to Host a Swap Day

A Step-by-Step Guide



For those looking to host a swap day, we have created this guide to help you plan the event in six simple steps. Every community is unique, though, so make sure to consider your needs throughout each step! For additional guidance, email us at sustainability@a2gov.org.

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Find a Date to Host Your Swap Day

A swap day is ideally hosted on a weekend to maximize participation and attendance. Confirm what other events are happening in Ann Arbor and in your community on any potential dates to prevent a significant conflict for attendees or to synergize with relevant events the City or others may be holding. Also, consider upcoming holidays or weekends where people may be out of town.

Pick a Location

The City has hosted both centralized and distributed swap days, each of which present unique opportunities and challenges. In a centralized swap day, residents drop off items at a set location (such as a park, a community center, or a house of worship) before the event, and volunteers organize the items before and during the event. Opting for a central location makes it easier for people to know where to go to peruse items and makes clean-up and donation of leftover items easier. The centralized location does, however, require participants and/or volunteers to transport items to the event, which may be a barrier to participation. In a distributed swap day, swappers lay out items in their front yards. This option requires less planning and oversight and gives more opportunity for neighbors to mingle and connect, but requires more work for donations to be gathered after the event. If you opt for a centralized event, consider locations that are indoors; and for either type of event, consider selecting a rain date.

Make a Plan for Leftover Items

Will residents be responsible for picking up or donating their remaining items? Or will you collect the remaining items and take them to a thrift store? Please note that the collection of items will require volunteers and vehicles. Additionally, each thrift store has a list of items that are accepted. [Here](#) is an example list of items that won't be accepted, based on the Ann Arbor PTO Thrift Shop's requirements. You can also reach out to local thrift stores to see if they are available to stop by and collect any remaining items. We recommend reaching out to Mario at Kiwanis (mgasb44791@comcast.net) to coordinate item collection - but note that Kiwanis will only pick up items that are in good enough condition to be resold. If you will be recruiting volunteers to help pick up items and bring them to a donation site, we recommend using an online tool such as SignUpGenius to recruit your volunteers.



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Notify OSI

Once you've figured out the core details of your swap day, please let us know your plan by filling out [this form](#). This will allow us to notify other City departments, such as Community Standards, to avoid citations being issued for items left in yards. The form will also ask if you want help in promoting your event through OSI/City networks.

Promote the Swap Day

First, ask yourself if you want to advertise only within your neighborhood, or to the broader Ann Arbor community. Either way, social media sites like Nextdoor, Facebook (look for hyperlocal exchange groups such as Buy No Things), Instagram, and Craigslist are great ways to promote swap days - as are neighborhood listservs, posted flyers, and word of mouth! Yard signs are also a great way to generate traffic, and can be provided by OSI if desired. If you want your event promoted outside of your immediate neighborhood, OSI can help promote your swap day through City networks. You can also post flyers in many businesses and public places around Ann Arbor, such as the Ann Arbor District Libraries - just be sure to ask for permission first! Assistance from OSI through yard signs or posting to City networks can be requested through the form in step 4 or by emailing us at sustainability@a2gov.org.

Making A Flyer or Social Media Post?

Be sure to include the date, time, and location of the swap day, the purpose of the event, who is organizing it, any volunteer or participant sign-up forms, a place to find more information (this can be a link to the [OSI swap day webpage](#)), and contact information in case of questions. Here is a template you can use for your flyer.

Run Your Swap Day!

Finally, it's showtime! Here are a few tips on things to do during your swap day:

1. Consider having an informational table where people can learn about the circular economy and ask questions about how to host their own swap day. Ideally, someone should staff this table throughout the event.
2. Engage with the community! Ask people why they participated and if they found anything cool. Take the opportunity to befriend your neighbors and community members - it might lead to future resource-sharing down the road.
3. Keep the commitments you made in the promotional materials about collecting and donating (or returning) any leftover items.
4. Keep track of how many folks participate, and note any successes or failures that might help others run future swap day events. We ask that you share these metrics with OSI by filling out [this form](#).



A2ZERO

EQUITABLE • SUSTAINABLE • TRANSFORMATIVE



UNITY ACTION NETWORK

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- After School Programs
- CAN Art & Design Program
- Educational Summer Camps
- Food Distributions
- One-Time Volunteer

AT A GLANCE

97% Graduate from high school

88% Have an A/B Grade Average or Improve By Full Letter Grade

98% Have Maintained or Improved Academically Over 100%

Questions? Email us at sustainability@a2gov.org