



# ***Practical Sustainability* and Michigan Green Communities Update**

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Dan Broersma, Holland, MI & Author, *Practical Sustainability*



# MICHIGAN MUNICIPAL LEAGUE **CONVENTION2025**



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# Practical Sustainability

# Problems!



# Answers?



# We Have An Opportunity

Less Cost – More Efficient

Stronger Organizations, Households,  
Community

Attractive Places to Work and Live

Sustainable Community



# How To Start

## Team

- Experts / Owners
  - Operations
  - Waste Haulers
  - Businesses
  - Energy Generator (DTE/Consumers)
  - Maintenance
  - Grounds
  - Passionate People
  - Stakeholders Residents
  - Naysayers

## Goals

- Achievable
- Simple (Goals Everyone can Relate to, understand, and feel they can help)

# How To Start

## Define

- What is Sustainability to You
- What is Success
- Water Savings or Water Clarity
- Is Recycling a Waste?

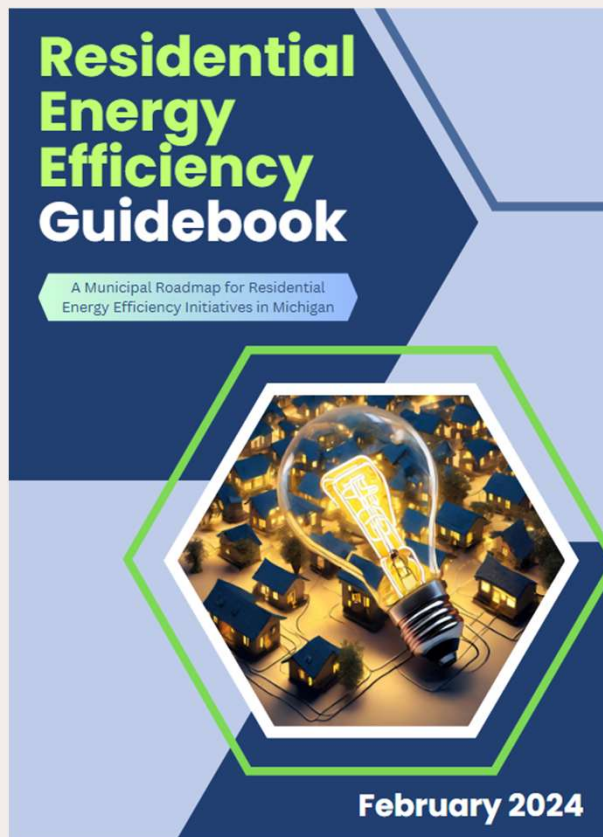
## Measure

- Things everyone can relate to, not just GHG reports
- KWHs/MMBTUs saved
- Money Saved
- The number of People who have gone through an energy efficiency program
- Tons of Recycling generated
- Stories!!!!

**REPEAT!!**



# Share and Repeat



# Home Energy 101

- Create our first Team
- Asked why our current program isn't working
  - Trust and Cost
- What is success
  - Number of Residents through the Program
  - Energy Saved
  - Dollars Saved
  - A program people want to sign up for without convincing
- Create our Second Team
  - Non-Profits Community Organizations
    - No Need for Internal Employees
    - Support our Community Organizations
    - Knowledge gained from and into our communities
- Trust and Cost
- What is success
  - Number of Residents through the Program (600+)
  - Energy Saved
  - Community Knowledge (Rebates)
  - Self-Sustaining



Thank  
you

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# Michigan Green Communities Updates



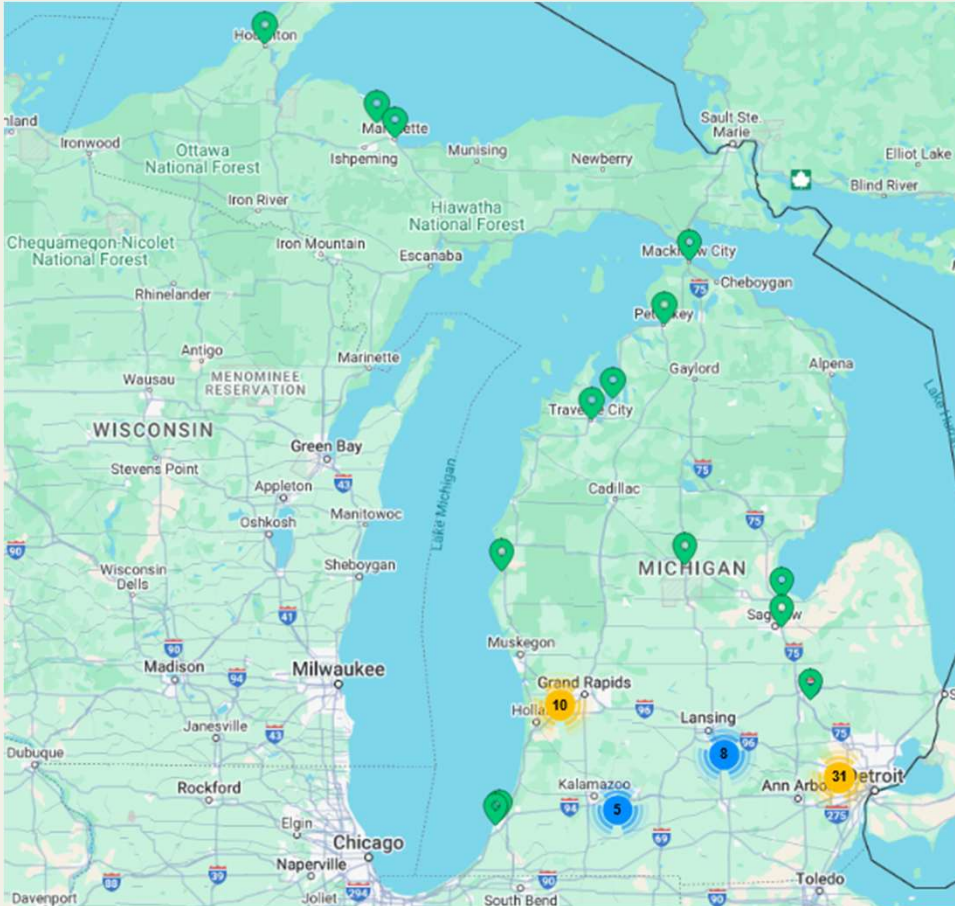
## About MGC



A free sustainability recognition, networking, and technical assistance program for local governments



Transition to the 21st-century global green economy



## A Record-Setting Year, Again!

**68**  
local  
governments

**5.5**  
million  
Michiganders

**A network of practitioners across  
Michigan addressing the same challenges.**





# MGC Challenge Benefits & Resources

## Technical assistance & peer learning

- Accelerator Cohort
- Catalyst Leadership Circle & Fellowship
- Sustainable Towns

## EGLE's Catalyst Communities & free MISCON registration

## Template sustainability plan

- [www.migreencommunities.com/plan](http://www.migreencommunities.com/plan)

# The Catalyst Leadership Circle & Fellowship, Defining Next Practices

10-week free fellowship program for local governments

37 projects in 4 years

- Waste management/composting/recycling
- Food waste reduction
- Energy – renewables, efficiency, resident engagement
- Forestry & habitat protection
- Pest management
- Communications & staff training





# Defining Next Practices

## *Envisioning a Scalable Composting Program for Holland, Michigan*

CLC Mentor: City of Holland

Technical Advisor: RRS

## *How to Implement Sustainability Leadership in Municipal Management*

CLC Mentor: City of Rockford

Technical Advisor: Ann Arbor 2030 District

## *Supporting Storm Water Management Initiatives for Community Resilience*

CLC Mentor: City of East Lansing

Technical Advisor: Lawrence Technological University



MICHIGAN GREEN COMMUNITIES



# Defining Next Practices

## *Laying the Groundwork for Food Waste Reduction*

CLC Mentor: City of Sterling Heights

Technical Advisor: Make Food Not Waste

## *A Guide to Urban Forestry Master Planning*

CLC Mentor: Canton Township

Technical Advisor: City of Grand Rapids







**Connect with  
Dan Broersma**



**Learn more  
about MGC**



## **This afternoon: Creative Stormwater Management in the City of Grand Rapids**

As we see more frequent and higher rainfall each year, many Michigan communities need different (and better) stormwater management systems. Investing in green or grey infrastructure isn't a small decision. This session highlights how the City of Grand Rapids has successfully used advanced stormwater management techniques while prioritizing neighborhoods at greatest risk of flooding and other environmental and socioeconomic stressors. Learn more about the innovative ways the city has pursued its sustainability to drive smarter infrastructure decisions.

### **Speaker**

Daniel Taber, Stormwater Manager, City of Grand Rapids

# **Tomorrow: Planning for Trees: Forestry in a Municipal Context**

Trees can beautify neighborhoods, mitigate heat islands, reduce A/C bills, and contribute to stormwater management—among many other benefits. However, poorly designed tree policies can cause problems for both infrastructure and private land development. This session explores the role of tree policy in shaping sustainable, equitable communities. Whether you're rethinking your local ordinance or planning for climate resilience, this session will help your community develop strategies rooted (no pun intended) in strong local policy.

## **Speakers**

Zach Michels, Associate Planner, Charter Township of Canton

Joe Sulak, Parks Superintendent, City of Grand Rapids