



# EVERYDAY ENERGY SAVING BEHAVIORS

## Ann Arbor Carbon Neutrality Plan

We are beginning an ambitious program to achieve community-wide carbon neutrality by 2030. To accomplish this goal we will need to change our behavior in many categories of everyday life (e.g., energy, water, consumption, waste, food, transportation, neighborhood resilience) and at various levels (e.g., individual, household, neighborhood, city, county). Below are a few energy-related behavior changes to consider; more suggestions for other categories will follow in the coming months.

## Links to webpages

Many of the links to the websites and documents are long and hard to copy-out to a browser. A document that contains these links is available at: [tinyurl.com/A2Zero-SMN-URL](https://tinyurl.com/A2Zero-SMN-URL)

## Detroit Edison (DTE) energy saving assistance

DTE is providing conservation services and subsidizing our purchase of a wide variety of products for household use. Energy saving products and services are dependent on DTE account type and eligibility.

**1. LED Lightbulbs** – The *Washington Post* did the math, even without the DTE subsidy, the monthly usage savings for a single LED bulb is \$1.25. So most people will be able to recoup the cost of a new LED bulb in just over three months. In addition to saving money these bulbs last about 25,000 hours, so fewer trips to the store and up the ladder.

Great DTE prices on a wide variety of LED light bulbs. As an example, a four-pack of 15 watt LED bulbs (each equivalent to a 100 watt incandescent) is \$5.00 (retail price \$29.94). Buy them at <https://www.dtemarketplace.com/collections/lighting>

**2. Setback Thermostats** – A simple and easy way to reduce your use of energy for heating and cooling. Of course, the amount of energy saved depends on how far you set back your thermostat and for how long. A general rule estimated that 1% energy savings can be achieved for every 1 degree setback for an 8 hour period. About the same result is possible by letting the home get warm in the summer. A tool to estimate annual energy savings is on the Energy Star website:

[https://www.energystar.gov/ia/partners/promotions/cool\\_change/downloads/CalculatorProgrammableThermostat.xls](https://www.energystar.gov/ia/partners/promotions/cool_change/downloads/CalculatorProgrammableThermostat.xls).

DTE sells setback thermostats at: <https://www.dtemarketplace.com/collections/thermostats>.

**3. DTE Home Energy Consultation** –A DTE Energy Specialist will come to your home for a basic walk-through. This specialist will check windows and doors, ventilation and home energy uses for efficiency. The specialist may install free, energy-efficient products and create a home energy profile to find out where your unit uses and loses the most energy. Invited speakers at an A2Zero training event suggested that we should make it a priority to “*know our energy conservation options*” and that the best way to do this is to get a household energy audit.

Each of our individual Co-op townhouses may qualify for a free energy consultation and free products (e.g., LED bulbs, programmable thermostat, water heater pipe wrap, energy efficient showerhead, faucet aerator). Unfortunately, getting DTE to understand what a housing co-operative is may be an initial barrier (i.e., they usually think that we are an apartment building or some other type of multi-unit housing) causing them to deny us access to the program. They need to understand that we are somewhat like a condominium in that we each own our own townhouse, have our own DTE account, and pay our own utility costs.

More details are at:

<https://newlook.dteenergy.com/wps/wcm/connect/dte-web/home/save-money-energy/residential/get-started-with/home-energy-checkup#free-consultation>

For more information on this free home energy consultation, call DTW toll free at 866.796.0512 or email [energy\\_saving@dteenergy.com](mailto:energy_saving@dteenergy.com)

#### **4. DTE Insight App**



Each of our Co-op units has a DTE installed “smart” electric meter. With the use of a **DTE Insight app** and an “energy bridge” we can monitor our electrical usage on a Smartphone. Together, the Insight app and energy bridge allow us to see exactly how much energy our household is using and when, all in real-time. No more waiting to see our energy consumption until the end of the month. The app also allows us to set budgets and goals all with the easy-to-use app. We can also get helpful tips and project ideas that make it easy

to reduce our household energy use. The system requires that we set up a DTE-supplied energy bridge (which we’ve found to be easy) and install the DTE Insight app on our Smartphone.

Information on how to get the energy bridge and app is at:

<https://newlook.dteenergy.com/wps/wcm/connect/dte-web/insight/insight-app>

## **Energy Star®**

Energy Star is a joint program of the *Environmental Protection Agency* (EPA) and the *Department of Energy* (DOE). Its goal is to help consumers, businesses, and industry save money and protect the environment through the adoption of energy-efficient products and practices. They use a government-backed symbol for energy efficiency, providing simple, credible, and unbiased information that we can use to make well-informed decisions. The main website is at: <https://www.energystar.gov/>

They have also developed tools for finding *Energy Star* products, rebates, and tax credits:

- **Product finder** at: <https://www.energystar.gov/productfinder/>
- **Rebate finder** at: <https://www.energystar.gov/rebate-finder>
- **Federal tax credits** at: [https://www.energystar.gov/about/federal\\_tax\\_credits](https://www.energystar.gov/about/federal_tax_credits)

## **Navigating our future**

There are a great many sources of energy-related news and many excellent organizations and programs. These are bound to expand during the coming decades as we face and respond to the climate crisis. However, during the *A2Zero Climate Ambassadors* training program, several invited speakers recommended the ***Energy News Network*** at: <https://energynews.us/>

Finally, one rather unexpected piece of news that came from an A2Zero training session on energy had to do with natural gas. The speakers were asked to suggest the one single piece of information and one single behavior change that they would want Ann Arbor residents to know about. Universally they said, “*understanding how very bad is the use of natural gas.*” The ensuing conversation made it clear that, as a community, we will have to replace our household appliances that use natural gas with newer designs that use electricity (from renewable sources). This will occur over the coming decades and may involve assistance from the local, state, and federal government. But it is essential that our community make this transition if we are to thrive during and after our response to the climate crisis.

***A2Zero – Scarlett-Mitchell Neighborhood (SMN)***

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