

SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY BOARD 2025 ANNUAL REVIEW AND 2026 WORK PLAN



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OVERVIEW

The New Albany Sustainability Advisory Board was created in June 2021 by New Albany City Council as a direct result of recommendations included in the 2020 Engage New Albany Strategic Plan. The Sustainability Advisory Board was established to advise City Council on matters relating to sustainability; promote and communicate sustainability principles broadly among the community; and advise and assist City Council and the City Manager in efforts to make city operations more sustainable.

The Board met for the first time in November 2021 and since then has been working hard to accomplish these duties. This work plan highlights the accomplishments and progress towards the Board's 2025 priorities and outlines their goals for 2026.

CURRENT BOARD MEMBERS

Charles Schumacher, Chair
Peter Barnes
Laura Gallo
Molly Scott
Jeff Kocian
Becky Kopelman
Jennifer Lopez
Noelle Griffith, Student Representative
Kasey Kist, Council Member Liaison

2025 PRIORITIES AND PROGRESS

In September 2024, members of the Sustainability Advisory Board were asked to determine their priorities going into 2025. Their priorities were developed by utilizing the Board's feedback and by utilizing recommendations from the Engage New Albany Strategic Plan (listed below for quick reference).

- S1. Protect and improve biodiversity and water and air quality.
- S2. Foster and encourage the adoption of alternative energy sources within the city.
- S3. Continue to reduce waste through the provision of city services and the encouragement of local partners.
- S4. Communicate to and educate the public about sustainability initiatives in the community.
- S5. Develop mechanisms for implementation and tracking progress.

The following outlines accomplishments and progress on 2025 Sustainability Advisory Board programs:

Earth Day to Arbor Day

The 2025 Earth Day to Arbor Day celebration was a week of sustainability-focused activities, including paper shredding, e-waste and hazardous waste drives, an Arbor Day proclamation, and the launch of our new Green Guardians program.

On April 22, 2025, residents were able to attend a Green Guardians training session on Earth Day from 5:30-6:30pm at the Heit Center. As part of the training, students and adult volunteers were able to learn how they will help keep our community events clean and green by ensuring compost, recycling, and trash go in the right receptacles. All attendees received a Green Guardians t-shirt.

The week-long celebration included an e-waste recycling drive, household hazardous materials collection, and paper shredding event. The city was overwhelmed by the response to this year's event. In 2024, we saw about 400 vehicles come through the event. This year we saw over 1,200! In fact, we had record-breaking results from both the e-waste and household hazardous waste collection. In 2025, we diverted 20,897 pounds of electronic waste from the landfill, which is a 176% increase from 2024. As for household hazardous waste, the city collected 50,348 pounds. This was up from 23,659 pounds in 2024. In addition, the first year for paper shredding at this event was also an outstanding success. We filled the paper shredding truck to capacity, shredding over 6,000 pounds of paper.

The 2025 celebration also included an Arbor Day proclamation with tree plantings hosted by the Service Department. The celebration took place on April 25, 2025, at Rose Run Park with an official Arbor Day proclamation, followed by local students planting over 300 trees to help grow our urban canopy.

Seasonal Recycling and Composting Opportunities

Other waste reduction opportunities include New Albany's annual pumpkin composting, political yard sign recycling and holiday lights recycling. In 2024, New Albany residents were once again invited to drop off seasonal pumpkins at a special composting dumpster located at the Public Service Facility. This effort saved 19.2 tons of waste from our local landfill. Residents were also able to drop off political yard signs and holiday lights to the designated collection bins located at Village Hall. As part of the political yard sign collection, the city received 272 plastic signs and 159 core plastic signs. As for the holiday lights, the city collected 1,320 pounds of discarded lights.

In 2025, the pumpkin composting collection kicked off on October 31st and will end on December 8th. The political yard sign collection takes place November 5th-19th and the holiday lights collection takes place December 1st through February 2nd.



Election Yard Sign Recycling



Pumpkin Composting



Holiday Lights Recycling

Ongoing Compost Program Management

New Albany households and businesses can continue to collect food waste at home or in the office using buckets, small bins, or plastic/glass food storage containers with snap lids. Once the waste is collected, they can drop off their food waste and compostable items at any of the following compost drop-off locations: the Public Service building (7800 Bevelhymer Road), Village Hall (99 W. Main Street), the Temple Beth Shalom/All Saints Episcopal Church parking lot (5089 Johnstown Road), and Taylor Farm Park (5526 E. Dublin-Granville Road). Drop-off sites are serviced weekly by GoZERO. As of October 1st, almost 19 tons of food waste and other compostable items have been diverted from the landfill through the community drop-off program.

Student Leaders in Sustainability Pilot Grant Opportunity

The New Albany Student Leaders in Sustainability Grant is an initiative created by the New Albany Sustainability Advisory Board in their effort to support students who have creative ideas for sustainability projects in the city. Projects must align with the Board's priorities on the topics of community waste reduction, renewable and solar energy, the natural environment, and community education and engagement. Any New Albany resident in grades 6-12. Students may apply individually or with a group, if the group consists of majority New Albany residents. Groups may be student clubs, sports teams, religious youth groups, boy or girl scout troops, or similar.

This year, the sole recipient was New Albany student, Alex Briggs. With the funding, Ms. Briggs was able to build and install 27 new wooden bluebird and tree swallow nest boxes in areas of the E3 Learning Lab wetlands and woods at the New Albany High School. In addition, she was able to do a quick cleaning and adjusting of the existing boxes to clear them of any old nesting materials and to make sure they stand straight and face the correct direction.

This project aligned with two key concepts: 1) Natural Environment – projects that improve, restore or enhance New Albany's natural environment; and 2) Community Education and Engagement: projects that increase New Albany residents' knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of sustainability.

Invasive Trade-In Program

In 2024, the City of New Albany partnered with the Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District (FSWCD) to launch the first ever Invasive Species Trade-in Program in Central Ohio. In 2025, FSWCD expanded the program to include a handful of other surrounding communities. Residents in qualifying communities can receive a reimbursement for removing invasive trees/shrubs and replacing them with a new native tree/shrub. The program was originally created in cooperation with the New Albany Sustainability Advisory Board to reduce the number of invasive plants in our communities and encouraging replacement with native plants. This incentive is a separate program offering from Community Backyards; meaning you can do both! To date, there have been 13 approved applications and 4 pending applications in 2025.

Sustainable/Native Landscaping

We're thrilled to announce an exciting new initiative coming to New Albany's parks: the installation of "Pocket Prairies"! This sustainable landscaping project, approved by City Council through the 2025 budget for the Sustainability Advisory Board, will bring beautiful and ecologically beneficial native plant habitats to our community. Working in partnership with Mad Scientist Associates LLC, the city has designed and will be installing specialized native plant habitats at three local parks: 0.63 acres at Taylor Farm Park, 1.22 acres at Planters Grove Park, and 0.72 acres (350 sq yd) at James River Park. Each site will feature tailored plant mixes, including wetland and upland wildflowers like Swamp Milkweed, Blue Flag Iris, and New England Aster.

In June of 2025, neighborhood letters were sent to residents living within a 200-mile radius of each park notifying them of the project and inviting them to attend an educational open house. The open house gave residents the opportunity to learn more about the project, view planting plans, and speak with representatives from the project.

Installation is expected to be completed by May 2026. At that time, signage will also be installed to serve as a piece of the educational component of the project. These beautiful native plants installations will support pollinators, reduce maintenance and mowing, improve soil and water quality, and bring natural beauty to the community. The goal is for these pocket prairies to serve as test plots. If they are successful, the hope is that they can be replicated in other areas of the city.

Green Guardians


































The New Albany Sustainability Advisory Board and New Albany City Council have expanded the city-wide composting program by collecting food waste and having food waste stations at our community events. To make this successful, the city has recruited individuals at New Albany community events to serve as Green Guardians and volunteer at the waste station to ensure compost, recycling and trash go in the correct receptacles. This special group of Green Guardian volunteers dedicated their time to all five community concerts, the New Albany Juneteenth Celebration, and the New Albany Diwali Celebration. One of the Sustainability Advisory Board's goals for 2026 is to expand the Green Guardians program to other sustainability volunteer events such as a potential "clean-up day."






































Pilot Curbside Food Waste Pick-up Program

Since 2022, New Albany has helped residents reduce food waste through the community drop-off sites and over the past couple of years, the city has heard from residents interested in a curbside option. This fall, in partnership with The Compost Exchange, the city launched a new pilot curbside collection program. New Albany's Windsor Neighborhood residents have an opportunity for their food scraps to be composted via a curbside pick-up program. The first 150 qualifying residents to apply will be eligible to participate in the program and receive a compost bucket from The Compost Exchange. This pilot program began in September of 2025, currently has 47 participating households, and (as of October 31st) has already diverted one ton of food waste and other compostable items from the landfill.

2026 WORK PLAN

In August 2025, the Sustainability Advisory Board began preparing their goals and work plan for 2026. The Board wanted to build on the progress made in 2025, work towards the priorities they hadn't yet touched on, and begin to investigate other ways they could encourage sustainable practices within the community. The table below summarizes the work plan, as well as the ease of implementation (more leaves = easier to implement), and the expected quarter of implementation.

<i>Initiatives</i>	<i>Associated ENA Recommendation</i>	<i>Ease of Implementation</i>	<i>Timeline</i>			
			<i>Q1</i>	<i>Q2</i>	<i>Q3</i>	<i>Q4</i>
<i>Core Activities</i>			<i>Q1</i>	<i>Q2</i>	<i>Q3</i>	<i>Q4</i>
E-Waste Drive, Household Hazardous Waste Collection, Paper Shredding - Biannual Event	S3, S4					
Political Yard Sign Recycling	S3, S4					
Pumpkin/Gourd Collection and Compost	S3, S4					
Holiday Lights Recycling	S3, S4					
Ongoing food waste/compost drop-off program	S3, S4					
Public outreach: Farmers Market booth, mailings	S4					
<i>Ongoing Programs</i>			<i>Q1</i>	<i>Q2</i>	<i>Q3</i>	<i>Q4</i>
Student Leaders in Sustainability Grant Implementation	S4					
Expansion of Existing Green Guardians Program	S3					
Continued Management of the Pilot Curbside Food Waste Pick-up Program	S3					
<i>New Programs</i>			<i>Q1</i>	<i>Q2</i>	<i>Q3</i>	<i>Q4</i>
<i>Waste Reduction & Composting</i>						
Develop framework for commercial compost program for Village Center	S3					
Review and assess city recycling operations in public spaces to determine if additional promotion/education is needed	S3, S4					

<i>Initiatives</i>	<i>Associated ENA Recommendation</i>	<i>Ease of Implementation</i>	<i>Timeline</i>			
Other Determine goals related to alternative fuel vehicles in the city or with the city's fleet	S2					
Clean-up Day event with education component	S1					
Research & Education for SAB			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
MORPC Summit on Sustainability and other training and education opportunities, including Organics Council membership	S5					
Investigate other sustainability boards/commissions to determine the role they play in their communities	S5					
Research pesticide/herbicide use and best alternatives	S1					
Bring in local partners and organizations to speak about their sustainability programming and educational resources including solar panels/alternative energy	S1, S2, S3, S4, S5					
Learn more about PACE programs and how they are used to encourage property owners to make energy efficient improvements in their homes and businesses	S2, S4, S5					
Research commercial food waste compost success stories	S3					
Find examples of successful sustainability action plans and identify potential functions for such a plan in New Albany	S5					
Determine how communities complete annual benchmarking activities for city buildings, commercial properties, and multifamily residential properties	S5					

<i>Initiatives</i>	<i>Associated ENA Recommendation</i>	<i>Ease of Implementation</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
Research capacity and best practices related to alternative fuel vehicles, fueling stations, and city fleet	S2	