

Sustainable Kent News

The latest on sustainability efforts in Kent



Sustainability Commission

INSIDE

Chronicling Implementation of the Climate Action Plan (CAP)

Learn more about how the City is exploring the EPA's Energy Star Portfolio Manager tool

Around the City

City of Kent, Ohio, Division of Engineering – Learn more about an upcoming public meeting scheduled for N. Manua Street Improvements

Standing Rock's Solar Future

PARTA - Harnessing Nature: Harvesting snowmelt and rainwater to wash transit buses

Calendar

Find upcoming events and other items of interest



Happy New Year! 2024 was a busy year for the City's sustainability work! The City's Greenhouse Gas Inventory (data year 2022) was completed with help from consultant KERAMIDA, this e-newsletter was created, along with and developing an ongoing CAP Open House series to help share information and provide educational opportunities around topics within sustainability. Additionally, the City tabled at numerous local events throughout the year to help share about the CAP and associated sustainability work.

2024 additionally saw City collaboration with NOPEC's Resiliency and Sustainability Support Program, and the Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) Northeast Ohio Resilient Cities Leadership and Learning Cohort, aiding with not just the City's climate action planning work, but in building connections for regional collaboration around sustainability efforts as well.

2025 will see the City continue development of its Municipal Energy Management Plan, evaluating solar energy expansion efforts, energy efficiency, and transportation efforts, as well as see a renewed focus on outreach and education. Stay tuned for more information as the year moves along!

Should you ever have questions, comments, and/or suggestions related to the City's CAP or other sustainability work, please feel free to contact the City's Sustainability Coordinator, Julie Morris, at: julie.morris@kentohio.gov.

CHRONICLING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CLIMATE ACTION PLAN



To test whether the EPA's ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager program will be adequate to house and measure the City's energy data, track associated metrics, help generate efficiency goals and showcase emissions reduction achievement



To help the City lead by example



To provide transparency and community engagement around energy use and emissions reduction in the City

Exploring the EPA's ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager Tool: The City's Three-Fold Purpose

An Overview:

The City of Kent's Climate Action Plan (CAP) directs the City to develop a Municipal Energy Management Plan (MEMP). One component of developing this multi-faceted MEMP is to assess and implement energy efficiency measures as a pragmatic way to reduce the City's institutional and community carbon footprint.

The CAP also asks the City to work towards developing a Green House Gas (GHG) Reduction Ordinance for building owners with facilities larger than a prescribed square footage to track their own energy and water usage, set reduction targets and eventually benchmark and report progress.

Both strategies will require databases to house the associated energy information, as well as generate and track metrics, assist with benchmarking, and showcase progress as the City moves through eventual development and implementation of these initiatives.

As such, the City is exploring use of the EPA's ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager Tool (the CAP suggests the use of same) to test the effectiveness of same for its internal and eventual community needs. The Portfolio Manager tool can allow the City to benchmark its annual energy and water use for selected facilities, assess associated GHG emissions, develop metrics, and explore reduction targets for same.

A Three-Fold Purpose:

This project has a three-fold purpose. As mentioned, one purpose is to trial the ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager tool for the City's facilities to learn what is needed to set up a portfolio in the program and how to use the program. This provides the City with an opportunity to learn the system, utilize the tracking and reporting options, and the ability to do an initial assessment of whether it will be adequate to meet our internal and eventual community needs.

This first-hand experience with the program will help the City lead by example, so that when eventually developing the GHG Reduction Ordinance, the City can demonstrate how it is already using the system, the benefits the program brings, and offer those benefits to the larger building owner community.

The ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager program has capacity for sharable reporting which Staff are exploring to provide transparency around the City's energy use, savings, and GHG Reductions over time – a third purpose of this project.

Relationship of this work to the City’s Vision - beyond the CAP:

The City’s 2023 Strategic Plan outlines the City’s Vision, Mission, and Strategic Values which align with this ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager work in the following ways:

The City’s Vision is: “to be the City of choice in Northeast Ohio for residents, businesses, and students seeking enriching community experiences that will last a lifetime.” Action demonstrating care, concern, and stewardship of the City’s environment and resources help to build capacity for enriching and equitable community experiences. Utilizing the ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager program has potential to help provide needed infrastructure to build capacity and support these goals.

The City’s Mission is: “to create social, economic, and lifestyle opportunities in a safe, vibrant and diverse environment that connects people to their community in a personal way.” Connecting folks to the City’s energy efficiency work, which has potential to extend cost savings, clean air, and many other benefits to our communities, businesses and residents’ lives, helps residents engage with their local government and larger community in a personal way.

Finally, the City has several Strategic Values, one of which is Natural Resources. Upholding this value involves promoting eco-friendly activities and measuring our energy savings per year. Reducing the City’s carbon footprint through energy efficiency and emissions reduction work is an eco-friendly activity and the ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager program can help us directly measure our energy savings per year. As such, this project has direct alignment with and can contribute to upholding the City’s Vision, Mission and Strategic Values in addition to helping us meet CAP related directives.

Stay tuned as more information is provided via the City’s newsletters, website, and other outlets as various aspects of this work become finalized and available.

City of Kent, Ohio Sample Portfolio Manager Dashboard

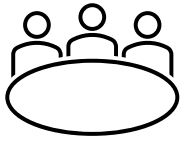
Name	Energy Current Date	ENERGY STAR Score	Site EUI (kBtu/ft²)	Source EUI (kBtu/ft²)
Lift Station - River Bend 37945392	11/30/2023	NA	244.5	493.6
Gaugler Pump Station 37872792	11/30/2023	NA	226.5	514.3
Fire Station No. 1 - Downtown 37590160	11/30/2023	NA	132.3	215.7
West Side Fire Station 37505360	11/30/2023	NA	106.7	171.5
Recreation Center 37506961	11/30/2023	NA	94.9	128.7
Police Department and Jail 37509461	11/30/2023	NA	71.4	151.6
Parks & Recreation Offices - Fred Fuller 37859992	11/30/2023	NA	56.6	91.1

VISIT OUR SUSTAINABILITY OVERVIEW WEBPAGE!

The City has a webpage to highlight its sustainability work and keep the community posted about related Climate Action Plan implementation progress, programs, news, events, and more!

Visit: <https://www.kentohio.gov/business-building-development/sustainability-overview/>

AROUND THE CITY



**PUBLIC MEETING SCHEDULED FOR
N. MANTUA STREET IMPROVEMENTS**

By City of Kent, Ohio Division of Engineering

For More Information: Jim Bowling, 330-678-8106 or Jim.Bowling@KentOhio.gov

Public Meeting Scheduled for N. Mantua Street Improvements

The City of Kent, Kent City Schools, and Davey Tree are partnering to make improvements to a section of N. Mantua St., from approximately Needham Ave. to just beyond the northern Kent City limits. This stretch of road is less than one mile, but is well-traveled with schools, a residential development and the corporate headquarters for a major company in the area. It also serves as the northern gateway into the city.

A public meeting to learn more about the project will be held on Wednesday, Feb. 12, 5-7 p.m. in the cafeteria at Theodore Roosevelt High School. The meeting will be an open house format, with a formal presentation at 5:45 p.m. Attendees will have an opportunity to view the proposed improvements, ask questions and provide feedback.

This section of North Mantua has a daily volume of 17,000-18,000 vehicles; concerns about traffic and pedestrian safety, speeding, and vehicular ingress/egress have been a concern in this area for more than 20 years.

A Citizens Advisory Committee has been working with the planning committee for the past year to develop a plan to transform this stretch of road. The purpose of the project is to improve traffic flow and safety for all users, provide connections for a future bike trail, create an aesthetic gateway and improve turning movements and access to drives and to River Bend Blvd.

The planned improvements include the reconstruction of .45 miles of N. Mantua St., construction of a single lane roundabout at the relocated Davey Tree driveways/N. Mantua intersection, addition of a right turn lane exiting River Bend Blvd., and an upgraded traffic signal at the Roosevelt Dr. intersection. The project will also include pavement resurfacing, installation of a new median boulevard, curbing, driveways, sidewalk, shared use path, drainage, streetscaping, lighting, signing and pavement markings.

The project cost is estimated at \$5 million, with \$2 million secured in state funding. Construction would begin in late 2026 and take approximately one year to complete. This project is also part of the City's Climate Action Plan.

The City welcomes comments or questions about this project. These can be sent to Jim Bowling, City Engineer, at (330) 678-8106 or Jim.Bowling@kentohio.gov. Please submit your comments no later than March 14, 2025.



STANDING ROCK'S SOLAR FUTURE

By Bill Wilen, Resident of Kent

The transition of electricity generation from fossil fuels to solar power is becoming more obvious in Kent as we notice more home roofs with solar photovoltaic cells. While the City of Kent continues to explore options for onsite solar development on its properties, one business building in Kent that we know of has been solarized.

When visiting the Standing Rock Cultural Arts for a musical performance several weeks ago, I found out that it gets electricity from a solar panel array installed on its lower roof. I was impressed and wondered how this major decision was made. So, I met with Jeff Ingram, the Executive Director of Standing Rock, and he showed me his set-up to transform solar power into electricity and helped me understand why, how, and the future of his project.

Jeff's commitment to support an alternative fuel source evolved into action when he decided to solarize Standing Rock in 2013. A friend of his who attended poetry readings, art shows and musical performances helped by providing a "grant" to fund solarization. Jeff purchased and installed five panels to provide 500 watts of energy and 24 volts of power generated to cover the electricity needed for the lighting and sound system of the original two-room structure on North Water Street. Four six-volt batteries were added to save and distribute the energy especially when electricity shuts down in the city. He is very pleased he made the decision to move to solar especially now that he does not have to pay an electricity bill. Standing Rock's future looks even brighter since Jeff has added two rooms including an art museum and looks forward to adding more solar cells to accommodate the need for additional electricity.

I asked Jeff if he knew of any other business in Kent that has or intends to transition to solar, but he knew of none. Our conclusion is that Standing Rock can serve as a model for other businesses in Kent. Should anyone have any questions regarding Standing Rock's solar array system, please feel free to reach out to Jeff Ingram at: info@standingrock.net. Please also be sure to visit their website, [Standing Rock Cultural Arts Kent Northeast Ohio](#), to learn more about their mission to build community through the arts and provide arts access for all!



HARNESSING NATURE: Harvesting Snowmelt And Rainwater To Wash Transit Buses

By Denise Baba, Communications & Public Advocacy Advisor at PARTA

Winter weather can be hard on vehicles. Road salt used to melt snow and ice can damage paint and promote rust on undercarriages. That's true for personal vehicles and public transit buses alike. The cost of a new transit bus exceeds more than \$600,000, so regular preventative maintenance is a high priority.

The Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (PARTA) cleans and disinfects the interior of its buses daily and washes bus exteriors. Consistent cleaning not only makes trips more pleasant for PARTA riders it's also an important part of bus maintenance.

With more than 30 large transit vehicles operating on PARTA's fixed routes and as many smaller light transit vehicles (LTVs) serving their Door-to-Door riders, PARTA uses a significant amount of water to keep its buses clean which helps to extend their useful life and protect the public's investment. However, PARTA also remains committed to reducing its impact on the environment.

For more than a decade PARTA has harvested snowmelt and rainwater to wash its buses reducing the use of treated city water for that purpose. A collection system captures runoff from the flat roof over PARTA's maintenance facility and directs it to holding tanks from where it is eventually pumped to PARTA's wash bay for use. Only the final rinse uses municipal water.

In addition to its practice of harvesting water, PARTA also employs a process of water recycling to reclaim up to 85 percent of the wash water it uses. Contaminated water is collected and moved through three in-floor sedimentation tanks before being pumped into the main recycling unit. This "grey" water is then filtered before going back into a storage tank.





Traditional bus washing practices often utilize treated municipal water which is costly and resource intensive. Harvesting snowmelt and rainwater allows for significant conservation of potable water drastically reducing dependency on a valuable limited resource and promoting a more sustainable water management system.

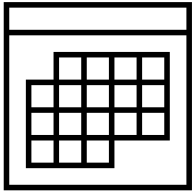
Using harvested water for washing buses helps to reduce the environmental footprint of PARTA's operations. It minimizes the demand on local water resources and decreases the energy required for water treatment processes. Moreover, rainwater is naturally soft which can lead to the use of fewer detergents and cleaning agents further reducing chemical runoff into local waterways.

As PARTA celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2025 it continues to look for opportunities to provide its service in a more sustainable, eco-friendly way. To keep this goal top of mind it has been incorporated into the transit's mission statement: "***PARTA enriches lives by providing eco-friendly transportation that builds community trust. We use technology to support mobility options that are flexible, safe, and reliable.***"

Around The City

Is your organization, business, or other group working on sustainability initiatives? If so, reach out to the City's Sustainability Coordinator, Julie Morris (julie.morris@kentohio.gov) with the details about your work to have it considered for inclusion in a future edition.

The intent of the Around the City column is to help share not just about efforts made within the City's departments, but to also share about the work our community is doing to help reach sustainability goals.



CALENDAR & ITEMS OF INTEREST

Supporting our local businesses and organizations is a key component of Sustainability! Check out the City's Culture & Community section of the website (www.kentohio.gov/culture-community/) for more details about the following:

- **Haymaker Farmers' Market**
 - Open year-round, every Saturday morning in Kent: Held outdoors in downtown Kent on Franklin Ave. from April through November, 9am to 1pm, and indoors at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Kent – Hobbs Hall from December to March, 10am to 1pm. Visit www.haymakermarket.com for full details.

- **Main Street Kent**
 - A non-profit organization that focuses on the promotion, beautification, and revitalization of downtown Kent. The City of Kent, Kent State University, local businesses, and community members support Main Street Kent. Check out their full calendar of events here: www.mainstreetkent.org/events/full-calendar/.

- **Kent In Good Company Podcast**
 - Hosted by Kent resident and small business owner, Katy Thomas, head to the Main Street Kent website at the following link to listen and learn more about Kent's local businesses: <https://mainstreetkent.org/discover/in-good-company/>.

- **The Kent Area Chamber of Commerce**
 - Visit www.kentbiz.com/events/eventcalendar for a full listing of Chamber and Community events.

- **Kent Historical Society & Museum**
 - Learn more about our community at Kent's primary history resource and reference center! Visit www.kentohiohistory.org for organization details and events.

- **Kent Parks and Recreation**
 - Offers a variety of locations, programs, and events for individuals and families to enjoy. They provide quality recreation and entertainment for the community through parks, sports, fitness, education and cultural arts. Visit their full program and event offerings at: www.kentohio.gov/culture-community/kent-parks-and-recreation/

- **Snow Day – 01/25/2025**
 - Get ready for the second annual Snow Day presented by Main Street Kent and the City of Kent! We'll have fire pits and s'mores, live music, ice carving, a scavenger hunt, winter StoryWalk, plus lot of games, crafts and activities both indoors and outside! Event starts at Noon and ends at 6pm. Full details and schedule of activities at: [Snow Day 2025 | Facebook](#)

- **Public Meeting for N. Mantua Street Improvements – 02/12/2025**

- A public meeting to learn more about these improvements will be held on Wednesday, February 12, 2025 from 5-7pm in the cafeteria at Theodore Roosevelt High School. The meeting will be an open house format, with a formal presentation at 5:45pm. Attendees will have an opportunity to view the proposed improvements, ask questions, and provide feedback. For more information contact: Jim Bowling, 330-678-8106 or Jim.Bowling@KentOhio.gov

CITY OF KENT SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

Meetings are held on the first Monday of every month at the Service Administration Complex (930 Overholt Road, Kent, OH 44240) from 5:30pm – 7pm and are open to the public.

Visit us on the web: [Sustainability Commission | City of Kent \(kentohio.gov\)](#)