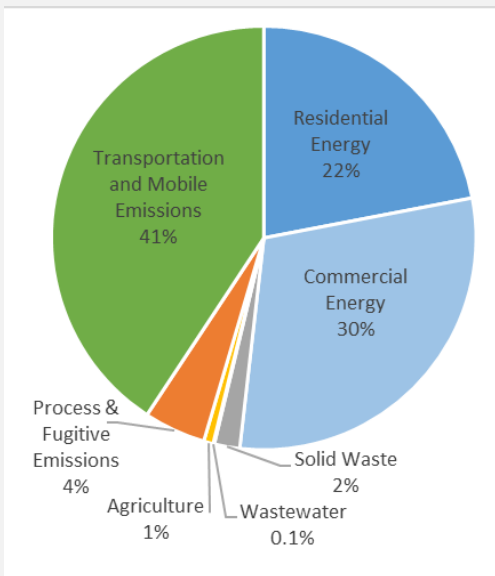


Tracking Metro Washington's Climate Impact: Trends in the region's communitywide greenhouse gas emissions

In 2008, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) and local governments across the region collaboratively established the regional GHG emission reduction goals of: 10% below business as usual projections by 2012 (back down to 2005 levels); 20% below 2005 levels by 2020; and 80% below 2005 levels by 2050. COG and its member jurisdictions are working toward these goals. Metropolitan Washington met the 2012 goal, demonstrating that GHG reductions are possible even as the population and economy grows.

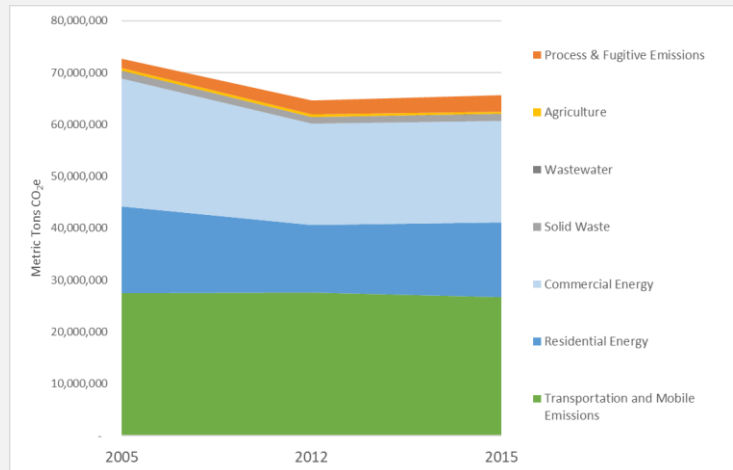
Where We Are

Here is a snapshot of where the region's 2015 GHG emissions came from:



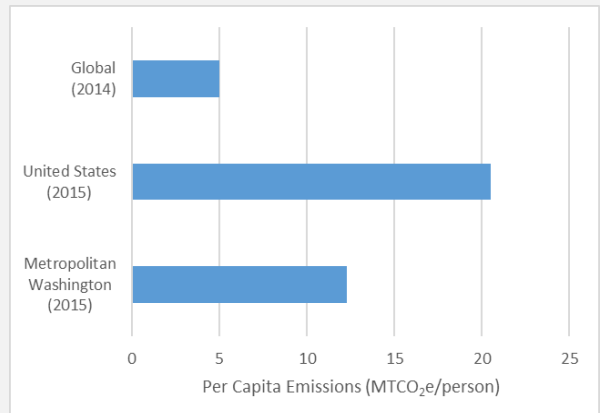
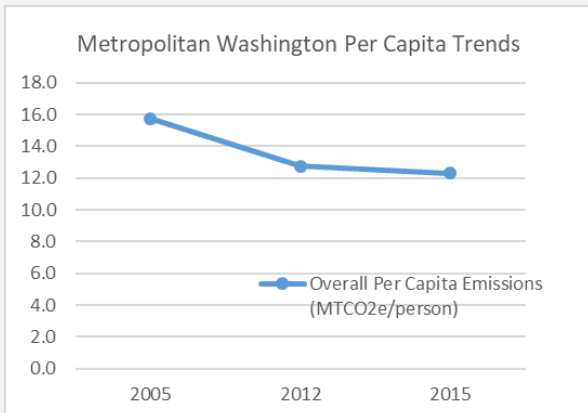
Where We've Been

GHG inventories have been completed for 2005, 2012, and 2015. Metropolitan Washington community-wide GHG emissions decreased by 10% between 2005 and 2015.



Accounting for Population Growth

Per capita emissions decreased 22% between 2005 and 2015; from 15.8 MTCO₂e (metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent) in 2005 to 12.3 MTCO₂e in 2015.



What's Driving the Trends?

The region calculates communitywide greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) inventories on a recurring basis to track progress and guide action toward meeting emission reduction goals. One challenge in using past inventory trends to inform future action is an inability to fully understand the underlying factors that drove observed trends. For example, if there is a decline in emissions, to what extent did external factors such as population growth and weather play a role, as opposed to local programs or policies such as home energy retrofit subsidies or building codes?

COG conducted an analysis of metropolitan Washington's greenhouse gas emission trends to better understand considerations and priorities for future climate action. The graphic below summarizes the resulting drivers of change in the region's emissions from 2012 to 2015. The results show that the colder winter in 2015 and population and commercial growth are the largest contributors to increases, outpacing decreases from a cleaner grid, more efficient vehicles and less driving per capita. Outcomes from this analysis will be used to inform priority actions implemented under the Regional Climate and Energy Action Plan.

Largest contributors to emissions INCREASES:



Colder winter



Population growth



Commercial growth

Largest contributors to emissions DECREASES:



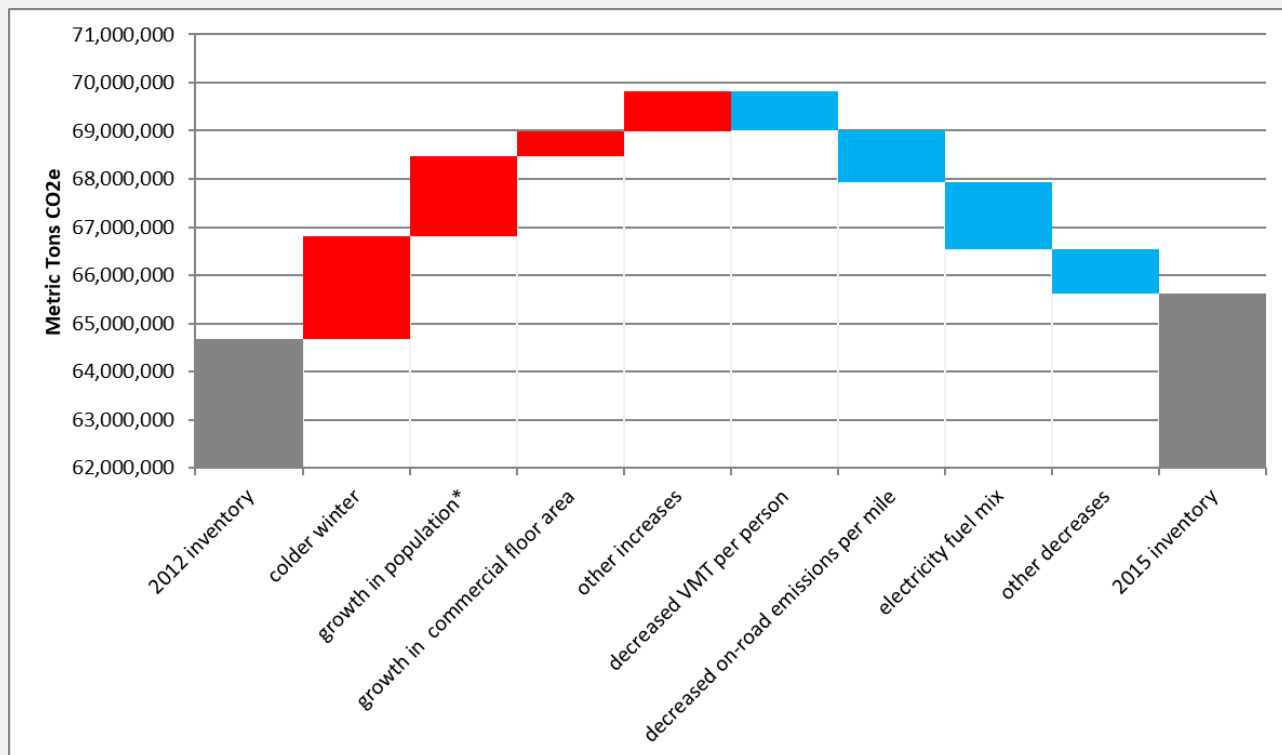
Cleaner electricity grid



More efficient vehicles



Less driving per-capita



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For more information on COG's GHG inventories and climate action work, contact Maia Davis at mdavis@mwkog.org.