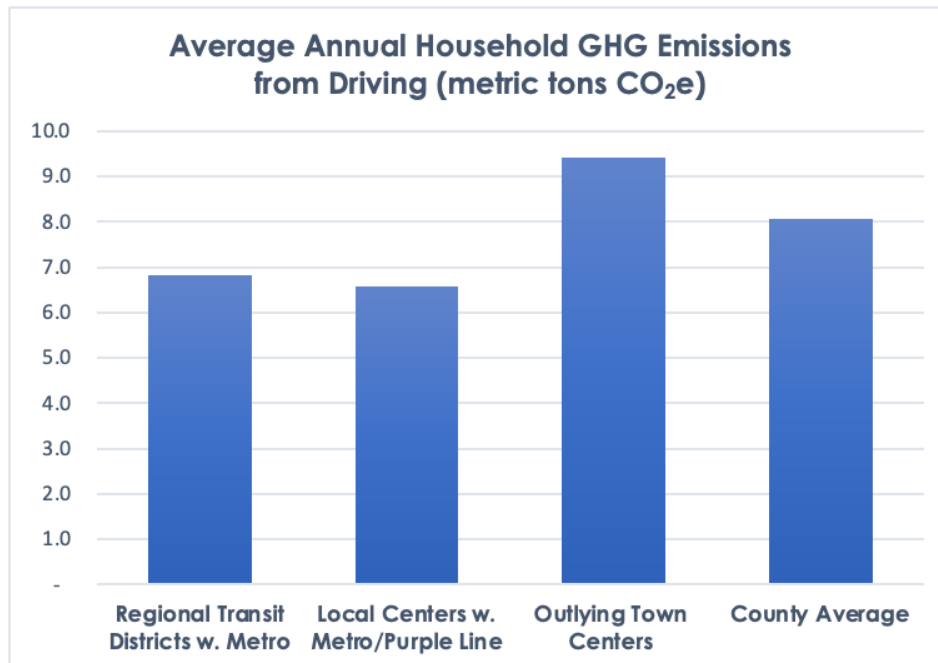


Prince George’s County Climate Action Plan Recommended Transportation & Land Use GHG Mitigation Strategies

Prince George’s County has the opportunity to be a regional leader in fighting climate change using land use and transportation tools that will also increase the county’s economic competitiveness, address the east-west jobs imbalance and shorten commutes for residents, reduce combined household housing and transportation costs, create great walkable communities, and significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation. Two overall recommendations are:

- **Implement and Strengthen Climate-Friendly Land Use Policies in Plan 2035** – Further prioritize the Regional Transit Districts, Transit Centers, and transit-served areas in Neighborhood Centers and Employment Centers for public investments and development. Households and workers in these areas drive significantly less for daily needs, as shown in the chart below.
- **Set a Countywide target to reduce per capita automobile vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and use VMT as a metric to assess the transportation and GHG impacts of new development** – Multiple studies show that electric vehicles and clean electricity will not be sufficient to meet our climate goals and that regions must reduce VMT to meet adopted climate targets. VMT measures a development project’s overall impact on auto travel (demand on the roadway network and resulting GHG emissions) much better than LOS which measures car delay at nearby intersections.

These and other recommendations are detailed on the following pages.



Note: “Outlying Town Centers” includes Konterra, Bowie Town Center, Westphalia, and Brandywine.
Source: Vehicle miles traveled estimates from [H+T Affordability Index](#), accessed April 2021. VMT-GHG emission factor from [USEPA Greenhouse Gases Equivalencies Calculator](#), 2019.

The Coalition for Smarter Growth recommends significantly strengthening the commitment to transit-oriented development, land conservation, transit, and reduction in vehicle miles traveled to achieve the county's greenhouse gas reduction goals. Our specific recommendations follow:

1. Implement and Strengthen Climate-Friendly Land Use Policies in Plan 2035

Development in Regional Transit Districts¹, Local Transit Centers, and Neighborhood Centers with Metrorail or Purple Line stations² generates significantly fewer GHG emissions from driving than development in outlying areas of the county and other areas without transit.

For example, households in areas with high levels of transit service and compact, walkable mixed-use development (e.g., Takoma-Langley, Prince George's Plaza, Naylor Road) on average generate 12,000 to 15,000 vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per year, resulting in household greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions of 6-7 metric tons from driving. In contrast, households in outlying auto-dependent sprawling new developments average 23,000 to 26,000 VMT per year, resulting in household GHG emissions of 9-12 metric tons from driving.

Specific recommendations:

- A. Recommit to the Plan Prince George's 2035 Growth Management Goals
 - a. From 2014-2019, growth in housing and jobs in areas outside of priority growth centers outpaced the Plan Prince George's 2035 growth management goals.³
 - b. Meanwhile residential growth in Regional Transit Districts and employment growth in Employment Centers and Local Transit Centers and Neighborhood Centers has lagged behind the growth goals.
- B. Further prioritize the Regional Transit Districts, Transit Centers, and transit-served areas in Neighborhood Centers and Employment Centers for public investments and development.
- C. Revisit the "Town Center" recommendations for Konterra, Westphalia, and Brandywine, since these auto-dependent areas lack transit, have poor regional accessibility, and consist of sprawling, poorly connected land uses.
- D. Increase use of planning, zoning, and land conservation tools to preserve rural and natural areas to reduce costly sprawl and driving.
- E. Use VMT to evaluate transportation impacts and required mitigation of new development as a priority measure rather than Level of Service (LOS). VMT measures a project's overall impact on auto travel (demand on the roadway network and resulting GHG emissions) much better than LOS which measures car delay at nearby intersections. Mitigation measures for VMT focus on reducing driving demand and increasing transit, walk and bike trips through mixed-use transit-oriented communities, rather than just widening an intersection by

¹ Branch Avenue Metro, College Park/UM Metro/M Square Purple Line, Greenbelt Metro, Largo Town Center Metro, New Carrollton Metro, National Harbor, Prince George's Plaza Metro, and Suitland Metro.

² Takoma/Langley Crossroads, UMD West, UMD Center, UMD East, West Hyattsville, Riverdale Park, Beacon Heights, Annapolis Rd/Glenridge, Cheverly Metro, Landover Metro, Capitol Heights Metro, Addison Road Metro, Morgan Boulevard Metro, Southern Avenue Metro, and Naylor Road Metro.

³ During 2014-2019, almost half of new housing in the County was built outside of Regional Transit Districts, Local Centers, and Employment Centers, in contrast to the County goal of only 20% of new housing construction occurring outside of these priority growth areas. Source: Plan Prince George's 2035 Approved General Plan Five-Year Evaluation (2019).

providing more traffic lanes. For example, [California moved to a VMT measure](#) to evaluate the impacts of new development under state-mandated legislation.

2. Set VMT and Mode Share Targets in the Climate Action Plan

Multiple studies show that electric vehicles and clean electricity will not be sufficient to meet our climate goals and that regions must reduce automobile VMT to meet adopted climate targets. The Coalition for Smarter Growth's issue brief [Cutting Transportation Emissions by 2030 and Beyond](#) summarizes these studies and also the co-benefits for equity, safety, livability, and sustainability, of VMT reduction climate strategies.

If our region can set a bold goal for a third of the cars on the roads to be electric by 2030, it can also set bold, necessary and achievable goals to reduce VMT and increase non-auto mode share. Addressing VMT and mode share also provides many co-benefits to the region (equity, safety, congestion, non-tailpipe pollution) that electric cars by themselves do not.

- A. Set a target to reduce per capita VMT 15-25% relative to 2019 levels by 2030 to 2045.
- B. Set a target to travel by transit, walking, biking or rolling with an increase in non-auto mode share 15-20% relative to 2019 levels by 2030 to 2045.

3. Focus New Housing and Affordable Housing Investments (Production and Preservation) in County-designated Regional Transit Districts and Local Centers

The lack of quality mixed-income and affordable housing in close-in, transit-served locations in the County results in long commutes, additional long car trips for basic needs, and expensive household transportation costs. Along with bringing more jobs to Prince George's transit-served centers, the County will reduce unnecessary vehicle travel by focusing housing growth close to transit and inside the Developed Tier. One of the COG housing targets, which is also a strategy in the COG 2030 Climate and Energy Action Plan is for 75% of new housing in the region to be located in activity centers with high-capacity transit; achieving the [COG housing targets](#) would reduce regional traffic congestion by 20% by reducing the need of many residents to drive long distances.⁴

- A. Focus new housing production and the creation and preservation of affordable housing in the eight Regional Transit Districts: Branch Avenue Metro, College Park/UM Metro/M Square Purple Line, Greenbelt Metro, Largo Town Center Metro, New Carrollton Metro, National Harbor, Prince George's Plaza Metro, Suitland Metro, and the transit connected local centers.
- B. The new Purple Line station areas should be a special focus of affordable housing efforts to prevent the potential displacement of current low-to-moderate income residents, as the County seeks to bring a thriving mix of new homes and businesses to these stations.

⁴ MWCOG, [The Future of Housing in Greater Washington](#), 2019, page 2. "TPB estimates that meeting the targets could result in a nearly 20 percent reduction in traffic congestion, if coupled with continued investment in existing transportation infrastructure, supportive land-use policies, among other factors."

4. Prioritize Funding for the Transit Vision Plan, Vision Zero Investments, and other Pedestrian and Bicycle improvements

- A. Invest in transit, walking, and biking including implementation of the Transit Vision Plan, along with expanded funding for Vision Zero projects to retrofit existing roads to make them safe for walking and bicycling, and construction of key walk and bike connections to destinations like transit stations, shopping centers, like public facilities.

5. Provide Equitable and Broad-Based Transportation Electrification Strategies

- A. Include electric buses, bikes, scooters, mopeds, shared mobility, and mobility hubs in a broader “e-mobility” strategy that includes equity provisions.
- B. Electric Vehicle strategies should also include equity-focused implementation metrics to ensure that incentives, charging infrastructure and other EV programs benefit all communities. These strategies include expanding EV charging accessibility to multi-family housing and ride hailing workers.

6. Support Regional Transportation and Land Use Policies and Projects that Reduce the Driving Burden on County Residents and Workers

- A. Advocate for regional cooperation and policies to address the east-west jobs/housing imbalance. Regional studies by the [National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board](#) and [WMATA](#) both showed that these strategies would significantly reduce VMT, greenhouse gas emissions, and commute times.
- B. Advocate for regional transportation planning that improves regional accessibility, decreases automobile-dependence and improves non-auto transportation options through land use planning and investment in transit, walking and biking.

Appendix: Prince George's County Land Use-Climate Reference Documents

Prince George's 2035 Plan

<http://mncppcapps.org/planning/publications/PDFs/279/01-Plan%202035-Pgs%201-26.pdf>

From Plan Prince George's 2035, Transportation Element, page 158

<http://mncppcapps.org/planning/publications/PDFs/279/04-Plan%202035-Pgs%2087-246.pdf>

Policy 6 Pursue a range of transportation facility and systems funding sources and strategies to maintain and enhance the existing transportation network in order to encourage the safe and efficient mobility of all persons.

TM6.1 Through the MDOT Priority Letter, the state's *Consolidated Transportation Plan*, and the County's Capital Improvement Program, prioritize implementation of transportation projects that reduce overall vehicle miles traveled and increase transit ridership within Downtowns and Reinvestment Areas.

Five Year Evaluation of 2035 Plan

Summary presentation:

<http://mncppcapps.org/planning/publications/PDFs/383/Plan2035%205-year%20Evaluation%20Presentation%2011-5-2020.pdf>

Full report:

http://mncppcapps.org/planning/publications/BookDetail.cfm?item_id=383&Category_id=2

"There is no clear evidence that transportation projects to reduce overall vehicle miles traveled or increase transit ridership within downtowns and reinvestment areas, as suggested in TM 6.1, have been prioritized." County Greenhouse Gas Emission, p. 27