MIDCOURSE REVIEW REPORT AND NEXT STEPS

Finalizing the report and policy implications discussion

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Climate, Energy and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC) Meeting
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Metropolitan Washington
Council of Governments

Topics for Today's Briefing

- Midcourse Review (MCR) Report findings recap
- Summary edits to draft report (highlights of comments and responses)
- Potential recommendations for COG

Midcourse Review (MCR)

- The COG Board's objectives of the Midcourse Review are to assess progress towards regional climate goals as well as examine key performance indicators and implementation levels of key actions to provide direction-setting for regional action.
- The results of the Midcourse Review is expected to show if regional trends are headed in the right direction and identify where CEEPC may need to course-correct to stay on track toward regional 2030 goals.
- The Midcourse Review is a ***technical report*** *evaluating past to current trends* of goals and key performance indicators to support COG's decision making and next step actions.
- ***Today***, presenting the final MCR report reflecting response to comments and facilitating a discussion on recommendations to present to the COG board.
- The MCR Report will be published upon the acceptance of the report by the COG Board at its July meeting.

Executive Summary - COG Board Goals and Priorities

For the Midcourse Review, progress for the COG Board goals and priorities related to climate and energy is being reviewed.

The COG Board adopted greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction goals to **reduce GHG emissions 20 percent below 2005 levels by 2020 and 50 percent below 2005 levels by 2030**.

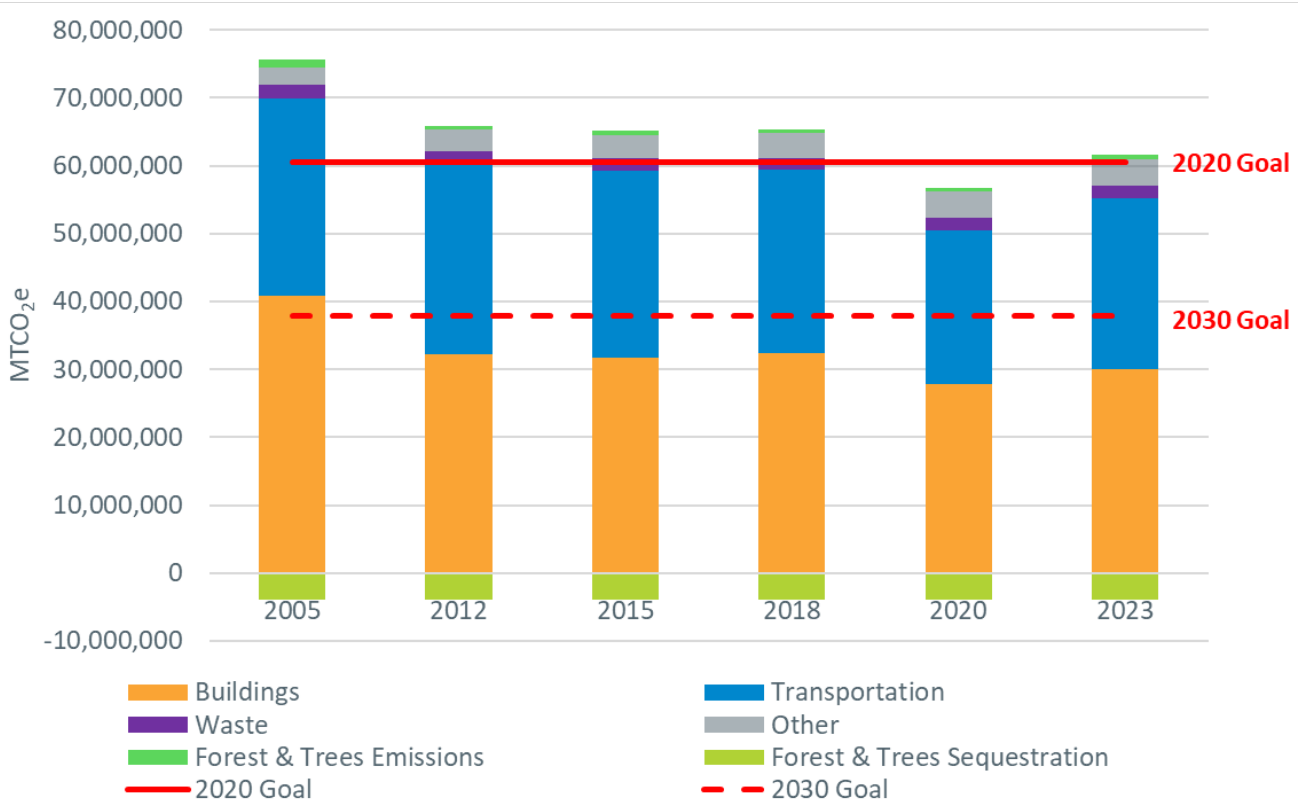
- The COG Board also endorsed additional goals and priorities to guide the climate work of the region and its members:
  - In 2022, the COG Board identified **electric vehicle (EV) deployment** as a regional priority.
  - In 2023, the COG Board endorsed a goal of **250,000 solar rooftops** in the region by 2030.
  - In 2024, the COG Board endorsed a goal of maintaining a **minimum tree canopy coverage of 50 percent** across the metropolitan Washington region.

Executive Summary – COG Board Goal Findings

- The review finds progress towards the adopted COG Board goals, yet accelerated effort is needed to attain the region's 2030 goals.
  - As of 2023, regional GHG emissions are at 20 percent below 2005 levels, meeting the 2020 goal, however, emissions experienced a 6% uptick between 2020 and 2023 due to an increase in commercial energy intensity, including increases from data centers, and from the expected bounce back in emissions from the temporary pandemic drop in emissions.
  - Solar rooftop growth in the region has been significant with more than 93,000 systems in 2024, 37% toward the 2030 goal of 250,000 solar systems.
  - As of 2021 the region had a 50% tree canopy, equivalent to the regional goal of a 50% tree canopy. Recent trends in loss of tree canopy, however, threatens this achievement.
- Without accelerated climate action and a shift in some trends, the region ***may not*/is unlikely to** meet its climate goals to reduce GHG emissions 50 percent by 2030 below 2005 levels, achieve 250,000 solar rooftops by 2030, and maintain 50 percent tree canopy region-wide.

Regional GHG Emission Reduction Results

- Metropolitan Washington **NET** greenhouse gas emissions decreased by **20%** from 2005 - 2023.
- Emission amounts in 2020 represents an anomalous low level due to the disruptions from the COVID pandemic.
- Data centers account for 11 percent of total GHG emissions as of 2023.
- Data centers, part of the buildings sector in the graph, are a high energy intensity industry with projected exponential growth in the region, which could pose a challenge in meeting regional 2030 GHG emission reduction goals.



Contribution Analysis

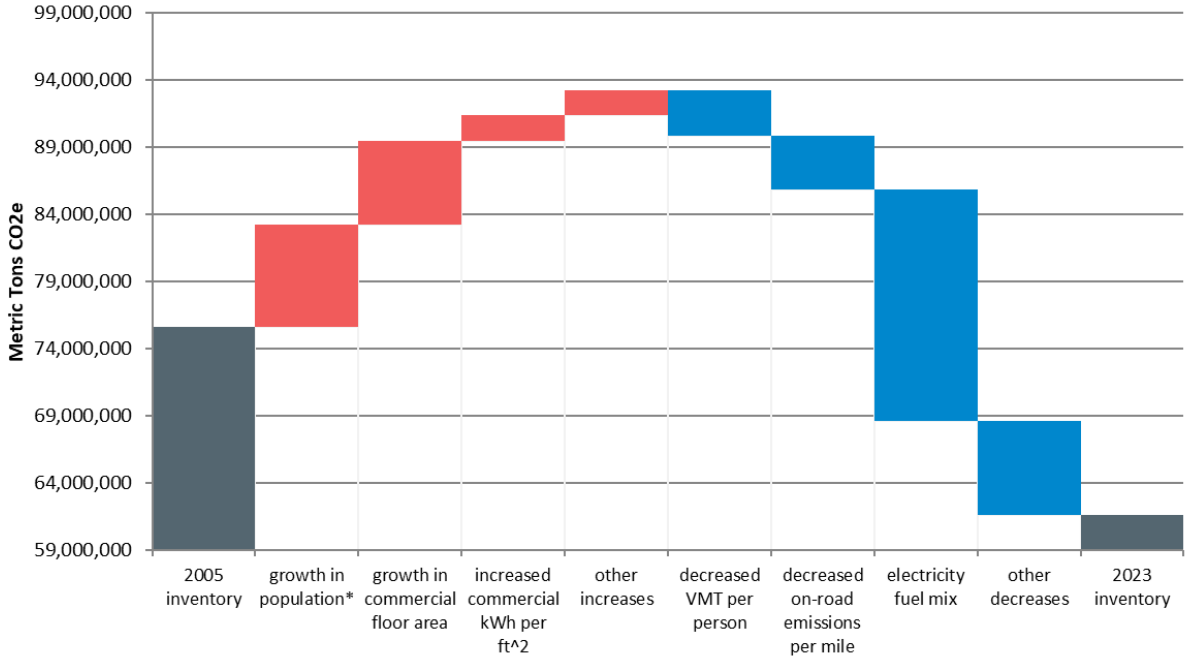
From 2005 to 2023:

- Increased commercial electricity energy use intensity (EUI) is the #3 main driver of GHG change.

From 2020 to 2023:

- Increased commercial electricity EUI is the #1 main driver of GHG change. Data centers increased from 30-54 million sq ft.
- That is followed by expected pandemic related bounce-backs including increased VMT per person and air passenger travel. The impacts have been projected to remain a one-time dip in emissions of 4-5% globally.

Drivers of GHG emissions change from 2005 to 2023



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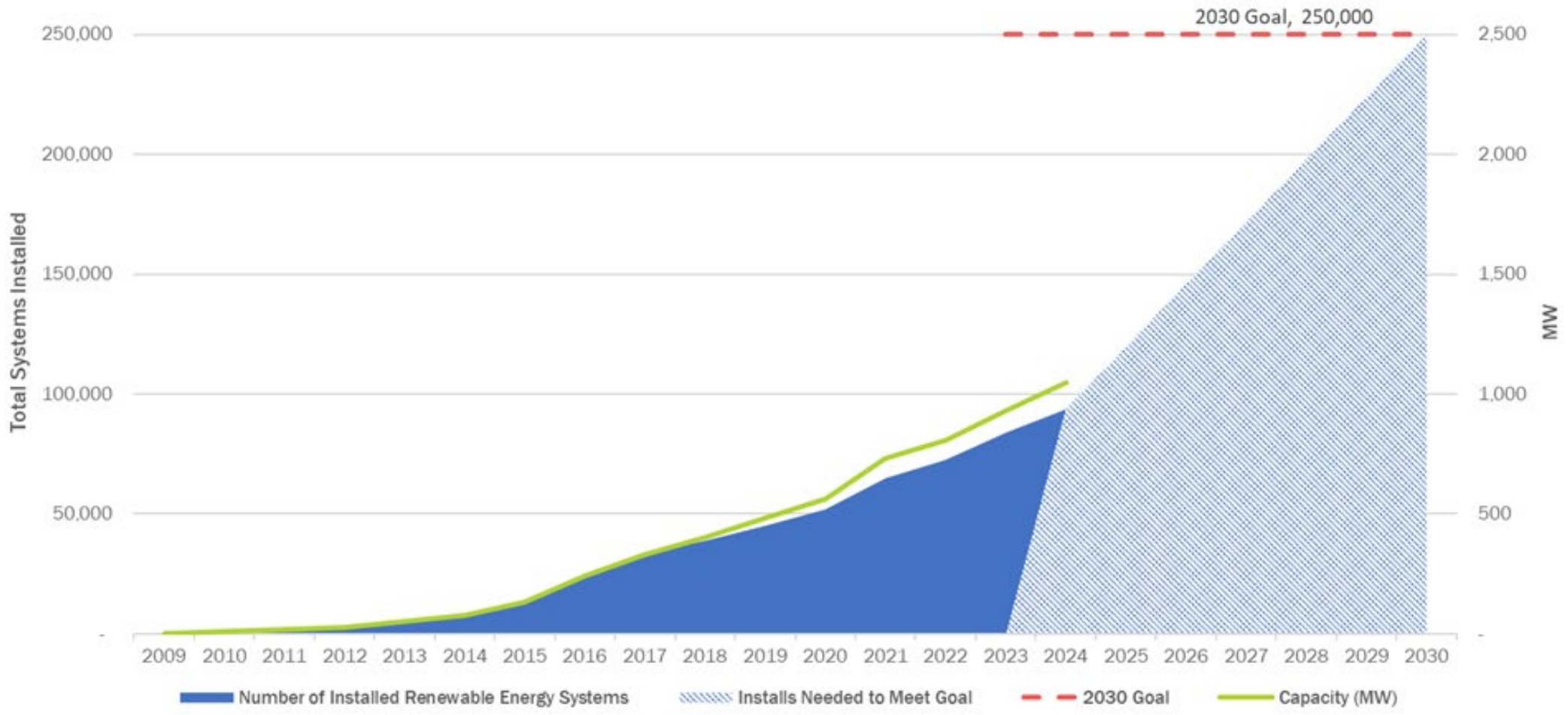
Grid-Connected Renewable Energy Systems



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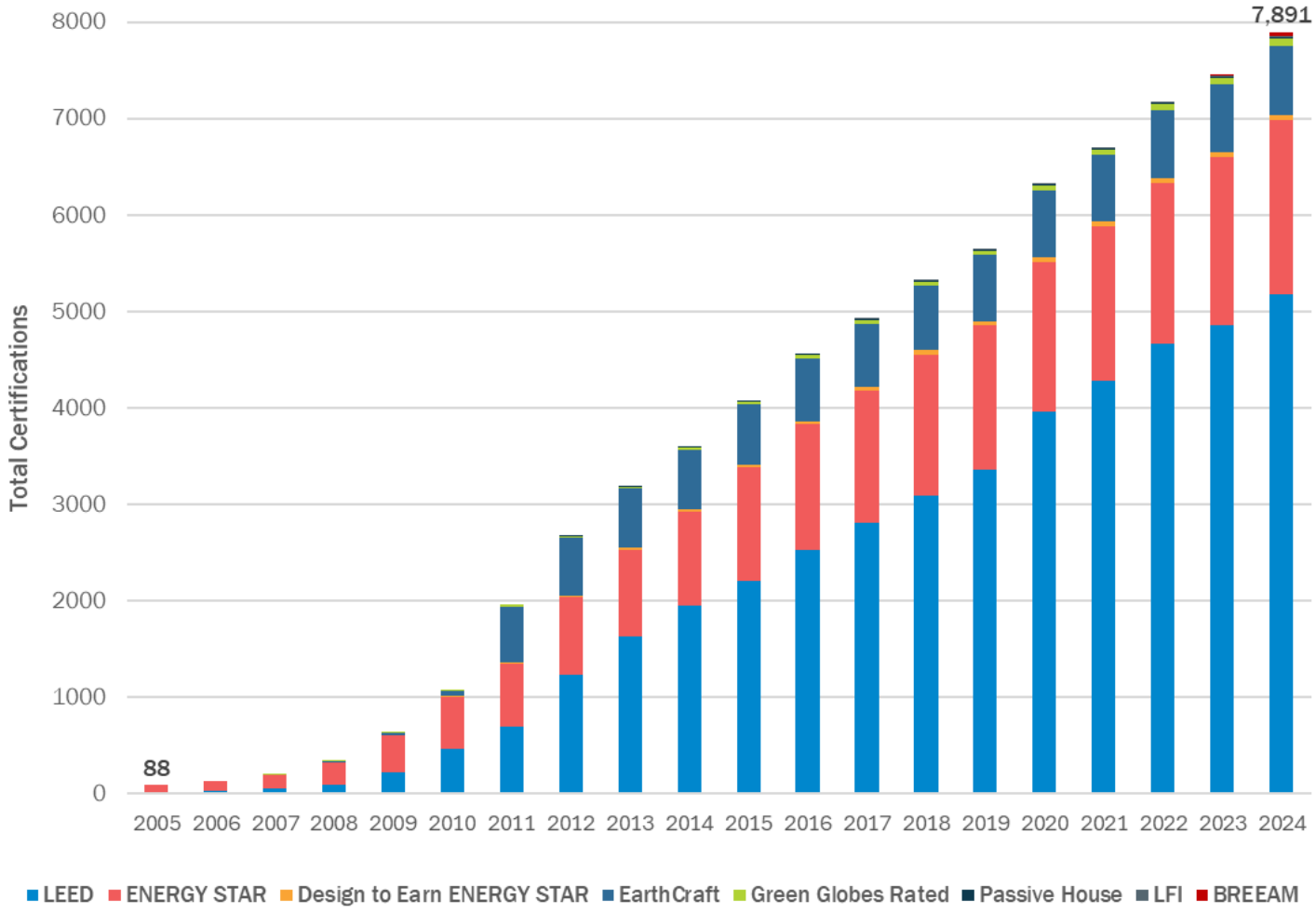
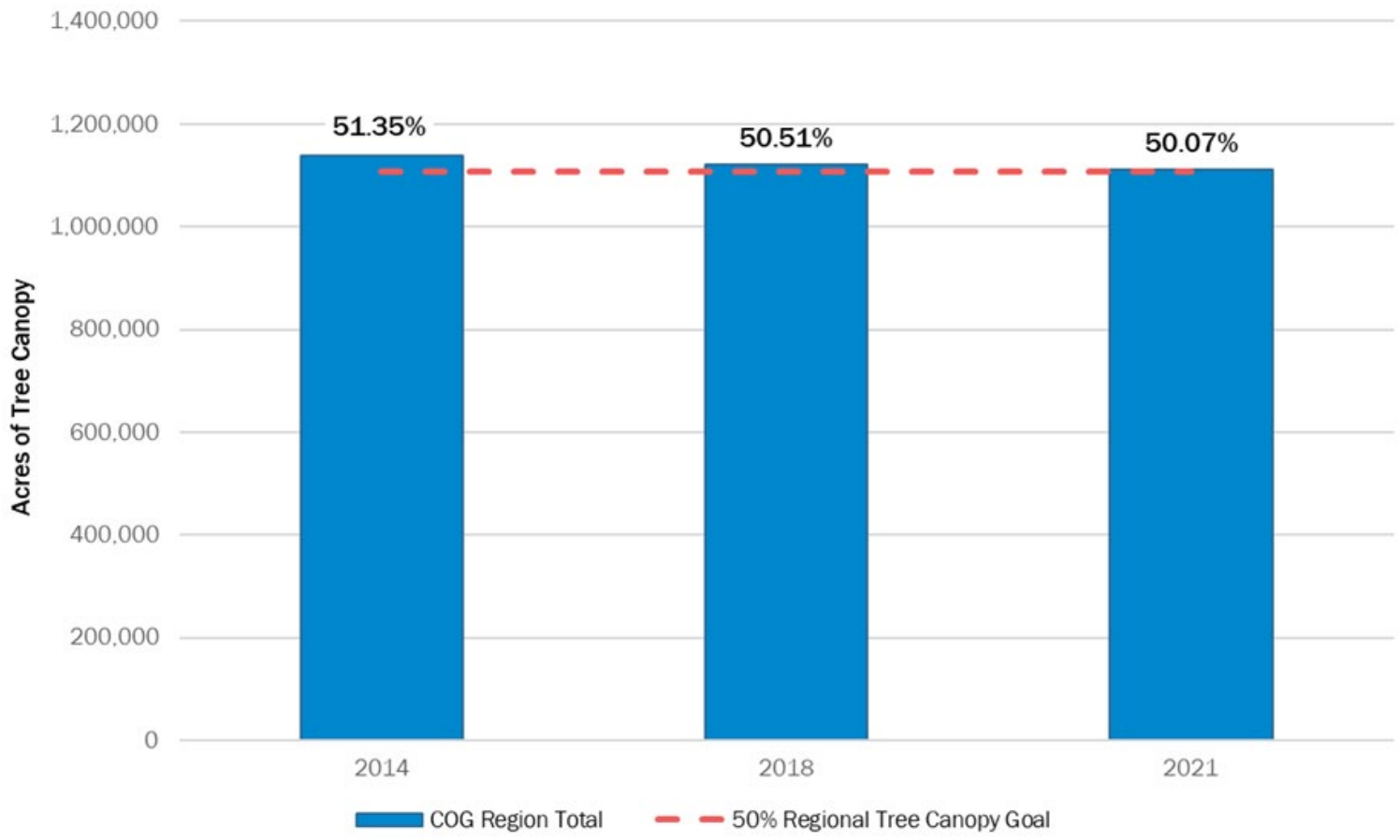
Green Building Trends – Regional Summary



2014-2021 Change in Tree Canopy Percent

The COG region experienced a net loss of 28,377 acres of tree canopy between 2014 and 2021

If the region continued to experience the same rate of tree canopy loss in 2022, that would already have put the region under the 50 percent tree canopy goal.



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Source: Chesapeake Tree Canopy Network

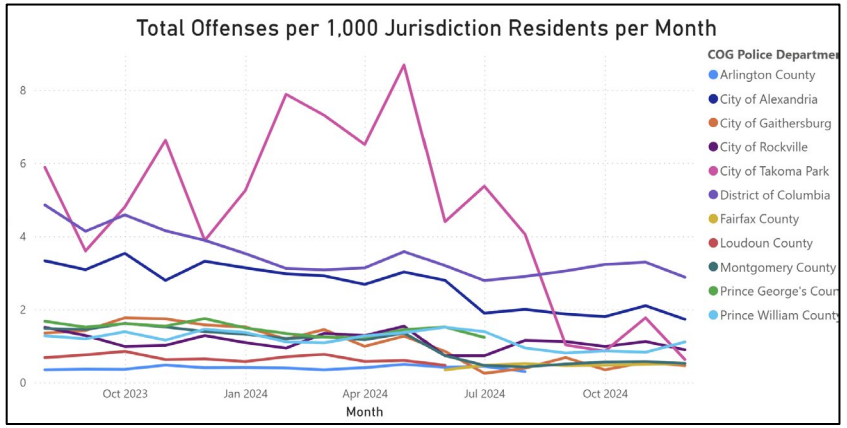
Additional Comments and Responses Highlights

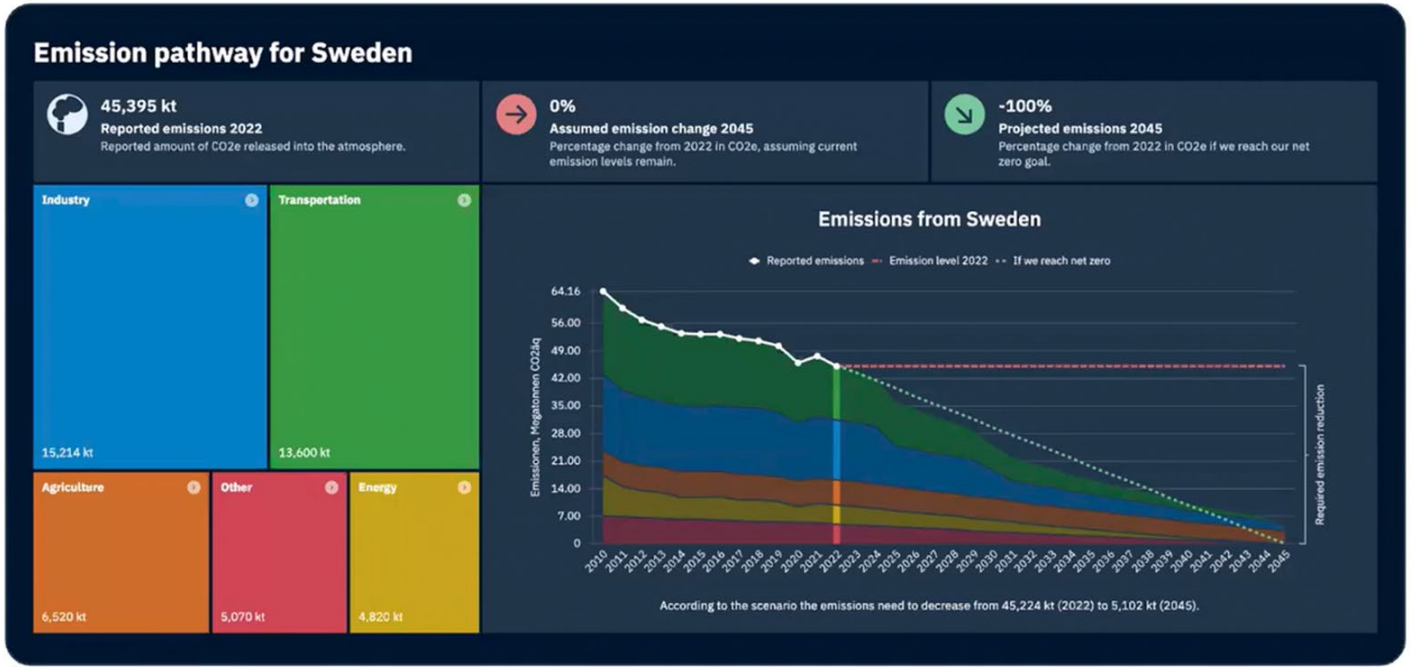
Comments	Responses
Forecasting	• The report in several instances refers to the forecasting in the Metropolitan Washington 2030 Climate and Energy Action Plan (CEAP) and the MSA Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP).
A couple updates to RPS language recommended	• DC's RPS 2032 solar requirement updated now states 9 percent from local solar. • MD RPS discussion reflects the increasing Alternative Compliance Payments.
Request to add NGBS to green building data	• NGBS green building certifications not publicly available but have been requested.
Include progress toward COG Housing targets	• A separate study would be needed to assess progress and will not be able to be included in the MCR Report. The study would fall under COG's Department of Community and Economic Services.
Updates requested for local highlights	• Updates made to DC, Montgomery County, Rockville, Solar Co-Ops and Compost Crew highlights
Update VMT table	• VMT table now include 2024 data
Use waste per capita as an indicator?	• Team conducted research and data collection. Incomplete data available at this time and won't be available for this report.

The complete list of comments received are provided in the CEEPC meeting materials online here: https://www.mwcog.org/events/2026/5/27/climate-energy-and-environment-policy-committee1/

Work in Progress - Local and Regional Climate Dashboarding

- **COG Website:** Climate and Energy Progress Dashboard – Local and regional data from the Midcourse Review
- **ICLEI ClearPath 2.0:** new public dashboarding features. COG will begin transitioning local and regional GHG inventories into ClearPath 2.0. ICLEI members have the option of making dashboards public.
  - The next inventory: 2026, start in Jan 2027, draft July 2028, final Dec 2028





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Next Steps - Policy Discussion

Potential COG Board request:

Recommit to and accelerate implementation of regional climate plan strategies

- **Key Recommendations:**
  1. Address the need to accelerate action across all sectors
     - Are we doing everything we can?
  2. Advance implementation through development of targeted energy strategies for key priority areas
     - Explore new Partnerships to fund and deploy solar
     - Utilize existing tools to optimize systems and processes (e.g., SolAPP, SolSmart, EVSmart)
     - Identify and map available funding sources to support implementation
  3. Address common challenges impacting our communities
     - Energy affordability
     - Serving large load growth including data centers
     - Decarbonizing homes and vehicles

Next Steps - Policy Discussion

Possible sector specific topics to discuss with the COG Board?

- **Buildings and Power:**
  - **Prioritize renewable energy deployment** –COG members develop new partnerships to install solar at scale, at local govt facilities and schools, supporting local large scale solar deployment to help meet state RPS. Continue advocacy for State RPS and sound PJM interconnection policy.
  - **Address energy affordability** – Develop a tri-state Energy Strategy Initiative to identify policy and program solutions for a multitude of issues impacting the cost of energy.
  - **Mitigating impacts of large loads, including data centers** – Work with States to advance sound policies at PJM, FERC, and PSCs related to large load interconnect, new generation (solar plus storage) and transmission.
- **Transportation:**
  - **Vehicle electrification** – Identify sources of funding to continue to support electric vehicle charging infrastructure, address electrification challenges for medium and heavy-duty fleets.
- **Trees:**
  - **Maintain a minimum tree canopy coverage of 50 percent across the region** – increase protection of existing trees and tree education; COG complete Action Plan.

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