

## The Thurston Climate Action Team

### Brief for the City of Olympia Planning Commission

7 July 2014

The Thurston Climate Action Team is a small non-profit dedicated to encouraging, coordinating, and taking action on climate change in Thurston County. We have a small core of dedicated volunteers who act to coordinate and support effective action throughout the county.

Some of our past accomplishments include:

- Providing educational forums and collaborative workshops through our Climate Action Symposia for a broad cross-section of public sector officials and citizens
- Securing Federal & State grant money to fund local energy efficiency programs and starting up the Thurston Energy program now resident within the Thurston Economic Development Council
- Leading a local “New Energy Cities” planning event for all local jurisdictions (facilitated by Climate Solutions)
- Promoting EV infrastructure and EV-ready building code amendments
- Collaborating with local EV enthusiasts to include Thurston County in Nissan’s first market roll-out of the Leaf
- Supporting the development and expansion of solar photo-voltaic installations around the county
- Completing the first-ever County-wide greenhouse gas inventory and analysis

Currently, we have a small team performing extensive research to frame and support planning for a county-wide greenhouse gas emissions mitigation plan. We are also studying potential funding mechanisms and encouraging the planning process for Thurston County’s first climate action plan. We hope to see and contribute to a completed climate action plan within the next year.

TCAT’s perspective is county-wide and comprehensive. We seek to stimulate and support collaborative action among jurisdictions and across sectors. We work with public-sector private, public, and citizens’ organizations with similar goals.

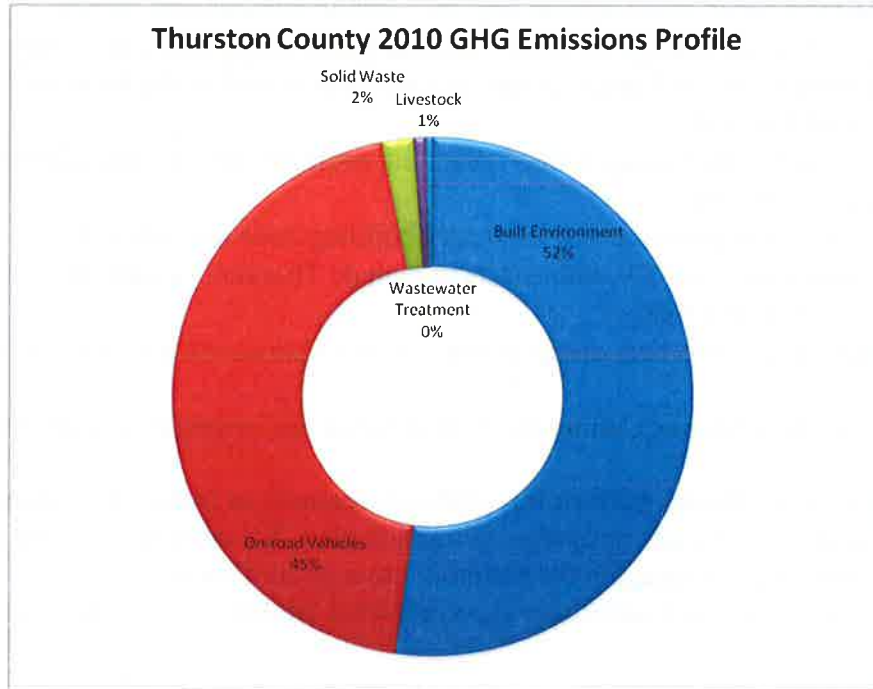
While we are constantly reviewing feasible actions for us to pursue, our top three priorities for county-wide action remain consistent:

- Reduce Transportation Emissions
- Improve Building Energy Efficiency (both residential and commercial)
- Increase Local Renewable Energy Production (mostly focused on solar PV)

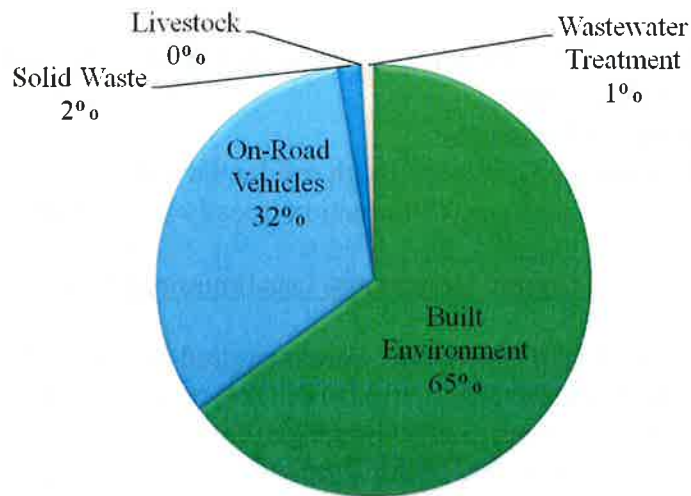
### Thurston County Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory

Thurston County’s total 2010 GHG emissions were measured at 2,761,800 Metric Tons of Carbon Dioxide Equivalence (MTCO<sub>2e</sub>; 2.76 MMTCO<sub>2e</sub>) or 10.95 MTCO<sub>2e</sub> per person. Though there are many contributions to greenhouse gas emissions the dominant sources were specifically related to transportation and building energy consumption.

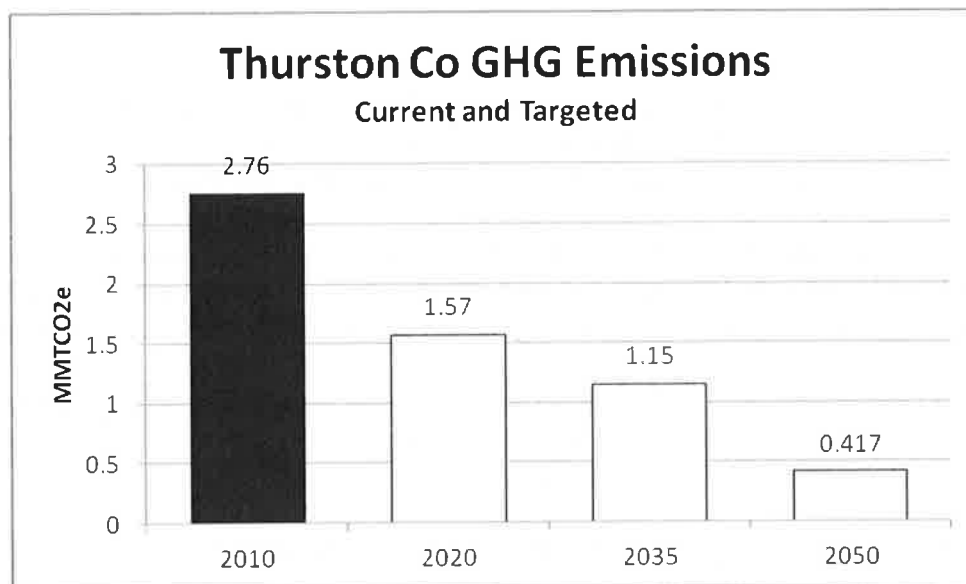
Emission Source	Metric Tons of Carbon Dioxide (equivalents)	
	Thurston County	City of Olympia
Built Environment	1,444,406	365,941
Local, on-road Vehicles	1,221,057	183,487
Solid Waste	54,166	9,980
Agriculture/Livestock	21,289	0
Wastewater Treatment	11,884	5,199
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,761,800</b>	<b>564,607</b>



**City of Olympia Profile (2010)**



The Sustainable Thurston plan set strong goals for reductions in county emissions, overall.



Climate change is a systemic problem, and TCAT both encourages and supports systemic responses. We believe that we should:

- **Work Together** – developing collaborative solutions across jurisdictions while coordinating and focusing our efforts to maximize our effects
- **Act Systemically** – make systemic or process changes with long-term impacts; dig into the interdependencies and interactions that may be leveraged for positive changes
- **Include the Community** – encourage people to get involved; the \$1.5 million grant that formed Thurston Energy was developed by a team of community volunteers
- **Measure and Assess** – annual GHG inventories and impact assessments will be essential to determining our effectiveness

The following are suggested, city-level actions and recommendations for consideration:

**WATER** – the water pumping infrastructure is large and energy intensive. It is also spread across multiple jurisdictions such that no single entity is responsible for the entire system. However, one entity, LOTT, does have the capacity to make positive impacts across the system for multiple partners. Effective expansion of their water conservation efforts would also reduce freshwater pumping demands and benefit the partner jurisdictions, as well as PSE and residential/commercial water users. Can an aggressive expansion of LOTT's conservation programs be supported through collaborative support from their partners?

**STATE POLICY** – City government can energetically lobby the State Legislature for new legislation that's essential for addressing environmental issues that will have large impacts on the City's budgets and citizens' lives in the long run, but can't be legally established by local governments, such as carbon pricing to help limit the many

anticipated local consequences of global warming, including sea-level rise and ocean acidification.

**CLIMATE ACTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE** – Form a new committee with members from all the city’s advisory committee’s to focus on climate change research, actions, and related technologies and bring that information back to their home committees to keep an up-to-date perspective on climate change in all committee discussions.

**CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT ASSESSMENTS** – Integrate climate change impact assessments into all project reports. It’s critical to include systemic, contextual assessments to illuminate how any specific project may or may not fit and perform on the larger scale.

**EVALUATE STRATEGIC ACTIONS** – There are too many moving parts in this climate and policy system for any action to be definitively ‘right’. We will need to periodically assess and re-evaluate whether past actions are still effective.

**COLLABORATE** – with other jurisdictions on the immediate priorities:

- EV charging infrastructure
- Small-scale renewable energy generation
- Improved pedestrian, transit, and bicycling options
- Energy efficient buildings
- New building orientation to facilitate solar PV
- Incentivize high-efficiency vehicles
- Lobby for state-wide action on issues outside of local control
- Sea-level rise