



Key Findings



Key Findings

From our research and analysis, Cascadia gleaned the following key observations intended to inform recommendations for advancing Renton clean economy goals. These eight high-level findings provide a snapshot of where Renton is today, based on interviews with city staff as well as business and community leaders, analysis of resource use, and clean economy trends and opportunities. These observations directly inform the recommended actions to help Renton continue to lead by example, foster local engagement, communicate success, and foster green innovation.

- 1. Renton's employees are highly motivated and enthusiastic about advancing clean economy goals.**
- 2. Renton is leading by example with an impressive list of actions underway through city partnerships, practices, policies, and programs.**
- 3. Renton's businesses bring strong leadership and interest in fostering a clean economy in Renton.**
- 4. The Renton community has a compelling "clean economy" story to tell.**
- 5. The clean economy continues to offer competitive advantages and economic development opportunities.**
- 6. The Puget Sound region is bursting with clean economy activity.**
- 7. Renton's greenhouse gas inventory shows that in 2009, the community emitted approximately 1.2 million metric tons of carbon dioxide-equivalent, translating to approximately 20 metric tons per resident.**
- 8. Renton's greenhouse gas inventory shows that in 2009, the City's municipal operations emitted more than 14,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide-equivalent, about 0.2 of metric tons per resident.**

These eight findings are described in more detail in the pages that follow.



1. Renton's employees are highly motivated and enthusiastic about advancing clean economy goals.

Staff from every department proudly described a host of clean economy actions and reported a prevailing green ethic across the City. Interviewees also expressed widespread interest in establishing a citywide policy to drive sustainability goals, set targets and metrics, and align department actions. Staff suggested making green actions engaging and fun through education and competitive challenges. Employee suggestions and ideas can be a key driver of efforts to improve energy efficiency.

2. Renton is leading by example with an impressive list of actions underway through city partnerships, practices, policies, and programs.

Renton has firmly established its clean economy leadership through national and regional efforts such as the U.S. Conference of Mayors' Climate Protection Agreement, the Cascade Agenda Cities program, Puget Sound Clean Cities Coalition, and the C-7 New Energy Partnership. The City is advancing regional transportation solutions with strategic investments in low-emission fleet vehicles and electric vehicle charging infrastructure. Renton has leveraged federal and utility funding to improve building and traffic lighting efficiencies, saving energy and money. The City is working with Puget Sound Energy to help residents reduce home energy use, and the Renton community has achieved an impressive 70% residential recycling rate. Renton recently became one of eight cities in Washington to adopt a Complete Streets ordinance to foster safe and convenient access and travel for all users including pedestrians,

Key Findings

bicyclists, transit riders, freight, motor vehicles, and people of all ages and abilities. In 2009, Renton received Tree City USA status and that same year, its Maplewood Golf Course was the twelfth in the state to be designated as a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary.

3. Renton's businesses bring strong leadership and interest in fostering a clean economy in Renton.

Most of the employers interviewed showed strong sustainability awareness and reported green innovations. Most of the larger companies, like Boeing, IKEA, Valley Medical Center, and Wizards of the Coast are currently developing or implementing leading clean technology, transportation, and efficiency initiatives. Renton's educational institutions such as the Renton School District and Renton Technical College are implementing resource efficiency measures at their facilities and helping educate and train the next generation of workers for green jobs. Business leaders are eager to engage with the City on green topics, particularly transportation opportunities.

4. The Renton community has a compelling "clean economy" story to tell.

Many inspiring green efforts are underway across city departments and within the business community. Taken together, the City's clean economy leadership is remarkable. However, most of the stakeholders (city staff and employers) that we spoke with had a limited view of what others were doing to advance green initiatives. The City needs to articulate and share these stories across departments and the community as a whole to firmly embed the clean economy in the City's brand.



5. The clean economy continues to offer competitive advantages and economic development opportunities.

Between 1998 and 2007, green jobs grew at a faster rate than overall jobs (9.1% compared to 3.7%), and national clean technology venture capital investments totaled more than \$12 billion over the past three years.¹ States like California, Massachusetts, New York, Oregon, and Texas are aggressively competing to align clean energy and regulatory policy to support clean economy development. The 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) brought a \$90 billion investment in clean energy and transportation-related programs. President Obama reiterated this federal commitment in his 2011 State of the Union address, calling to generate 80 percent of U.S. electricity from clean energy sources by 2035, put 1 million clean vehicles on the road by 2015, reauthorize clean energy manufacturing tax credits, and expand clean energy research and development.

¹ The Pew Charitable Trusts, *The Clean Energy Economy: Repowering Jobs, Businesses and Investments Across America*, 2009.

6. The Puget Sound region is bursting with clean economy activity.

Our region is investing in growing a clean economy to create industries and jobs for the future. The state has emphasized green economy goals through its Climate Change Challenge and the Evergreen Jobs Initiative. The Governor convened a Clean Energy Leadership Council to help Washington more aggressively foster a clean economy. Several state energy measures are advancing energy efficiency in buildings and vehicles as well as renewable energy generation. Electric vehicle (EV) technology is a particular focus, supported by our region's clean hydropower. Initiatives such as the Electric Highway Project, the EV Project, and Puget Sound Clean Cities Coalition alternative fuel funding are bringing multimillion-dollar investments in EV infrastructure to our region. The Puget Sound Regional Council's Prosperity Partnership is crafting a business plan to develop an energy efficiency export market in central Puget Sound. In addition, dozens of local governments are testing innovative clean energy programs to advance community energy savings, green jobs, and emission reductions.

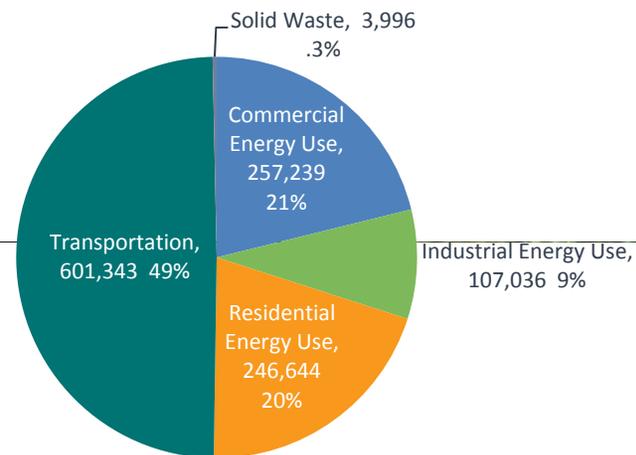
Key Findings

7. Renton’s greenhouse gas inventory shows that in 2009, the community emitted approximately 1.2 million metric tons of carbon dioxide-equivalent, translating to approximately 20 metric tons per resident.

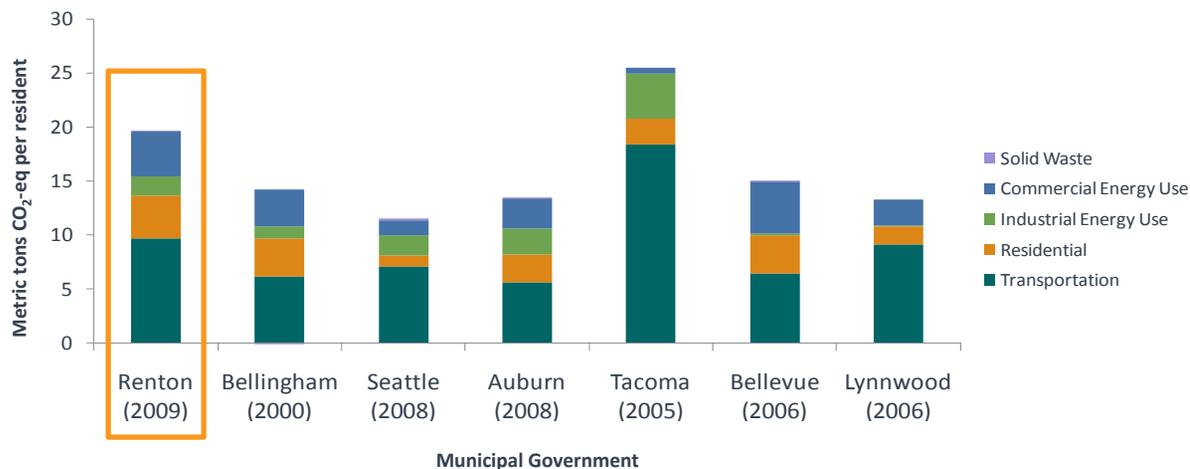
As shown to the right, transportation accounts for the largest emissions (49%), as in other Washington communities. Commercial (21%) and residential energy use (20%) are the next largest contributors, followed by industrial energy use (9%) and solid waste (.3%). Renton’s community emissions are higher than other Puget Sound cities in several categories (differences can be due to factors such as inventory year, development patterns, and inventory scope). In addition to transportation, key opportunities for reducing Renton’s carbon footprint may exist in commercial and residential energy use.

Community Inventory by Emissions Sector

Total Emissions: 1,216,258 mtCO₂e



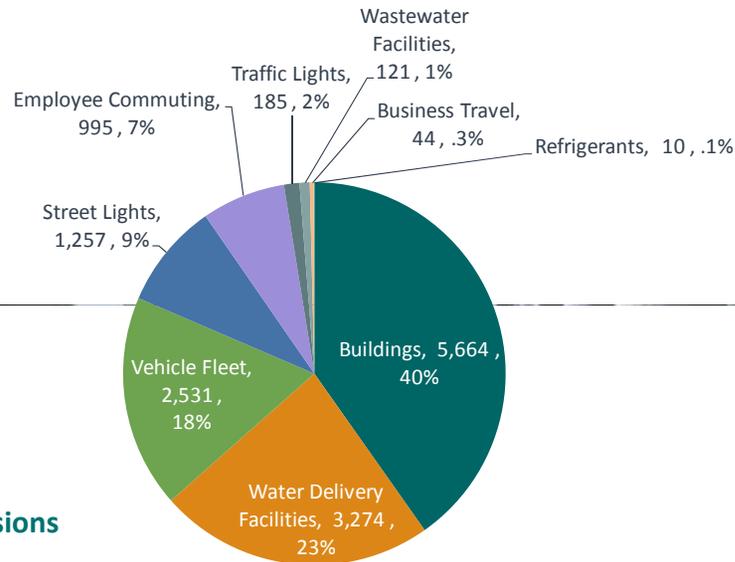
Per Capita Community Emissions



Key Findings

Municipal Inventory by Emissions Sector

Total Emissions:
14,081 mtCO₂e



8. Renton's greenhouse gas inventory shows that in 2009, the City's municipal operations emitted more than 14,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide-equivalent, about 0.2 of metric tons per resident.

As shown in the sidebar, the majority of municipal emissions come from building energy use (40%), while water delivery services (23%) and vehicle fleet (18%) contribute the second- and third-highest emissions, respectively. In comparison with other jurisdictions, Renton's municipal emissions are slightly higher on a per-capita basis than nearby communities such as Auburn and Kirkland—though differences in inventory years, the size and type of city facilities, and the scope (e.g., whether employee commuting and material use are included) make it difficult to draw exact comparisons. Renton's municipal inventory points to key reduction opportunities in water, fleets, and buildings.

Per Capita Municipal Emissions

