

Information Item

Date: October 12, 2021

To: Mayor, Mayor Pro Tempore, and Members of the City Council

From: Johnnie Taylor, Assistant City Manager
Helen Peplowski, Office of Sustainability Director

Subject:
Office of Sustainability City Operations and Community Greenhouse Gas Update

Strategic Focus Area: Healthy Environment

Strategic Objective: Support Green Initiatives

Strategic Plan Action Item: Yes

Key Work Item: No



Attached is the first annual report from the Community Sustainability Program Committee for FY 20-21.

Highlights of the report include passing a Resolution that the City Council approved on November 16, 2020, and an overview of the work by the four ad-hoc subcommittees.

Also attached are the annual Sustainability Report from 2020 and the first informal community scale greenhouse gas inventory. These two reports provide an overview of the work being done by the Office of Sustainability and a better understanding of which community sectors contribute to greenhouse gas emissions.

In calendar year 2020, as a direct result of many city operations being impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, total city emissions were reduced by 5.7%, the largest reduction since 2013. This reduction can largely be contributed to the reduction in electricity use specifically. To provide further context to the energy use by the city, Duke Energy provided an energy generation mix report that shows 6.5% of the city's energy comes from carbon-free renewable sources.

Sustainability staff also conducted a community wide emissions inventory for the first time since the 2008 Local Government Action Plan and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory based on 2019 data to establish a more recent baseline. The data shows that electricity use (30%) and mobile combustion from vehicle miles traveled (36%) contribute the most CO₂ equivalent emissions to the community wide total. These sectors are highlighted in an effort to show where any reduction efforts, such as improved building energy efficiency or additional electric vehicle infrastructure, would make the biggest impact of overall emissions reduction.

Other notable sustainability program updates:

- Keep Winston-Salem Beautiful had the most Adopt-A-Street, Adopt-A-Park and Adopt-A-Stream program sign ups in 2020 than any other year in the history of the program. The high level of interest from the public has continued into this year.
- Total recycling tonnage increased for almost every month in 2020 after the pandemic began.