The transportation sector produces 28 percent of the greenhouse gas emissions in Northeast Ohio. The GreenCityBlueLake Institute’s Climate Action Plan for the region proposes how we can reduce these emissions 90 percent by 2050. This will require a major transition in how we move around, including the development of more fuel-efficient vehicles and increased use of transit, bicycles, and walking. In addition, it will require the redevelopment of compact urban and suburban places where more people can live a convenient “low-mileage lifestyle” that is less dependent on driving cars.

We can accomplish this transition if we work steadily in the coming decades. The result will be communities that offer healthier transportation choices, cleaner air, and attractive, walkable places. The work of transition can employ thousands of people as we rebuild infrastructure to meet the needs of the 21st century.

What you can do

- Reduce the miles you drive by walking, biking, using public transit, car pooling, and combining trips.
- Consider moving closer to the activities in your life so you need to travel less.
- Buy the most fuel-efficient car that meets your needs and maintain it for peak efficiency. Drive smart for maximum gas mileage.
- Let local policy makers know that you support transportation alternatives, street designs that support all modes of transportation, and land-use strategies that create walkable communities.

Did you know?

In a historic transition, Americans are starting to drive less.

In 2011, the average American drove 6 percent fewer miles than in 2004, a major shift in transportation trends since World War II. The decline was even more pronounced for young people, who are increasingly seeking walkable, bikeable lifestyles.
Provide better transportation options, reducing the need to travel by car

- Adopt zoning and other land-use policies that encourage the development of compact, walkable places designed around transit.
- Improve public transit service, bike facilities, car-sharing and car-pooling programs, and pedestrian environments.
- Further reduce the demand for driving cars by instituting flexible work weeks, employer-sponsored transit passes, congestion pricing, and other forms of demand management.
- Reform regional transportation plans so that the development of more sustainable transportation options becomes a priority.

Increase efficiency of vehicles

- Accelerate the transition of the vehicle fleet to more fuel-efficient vehicles with local and state incentives, such as tax incentives, cash-for-clunker programs, and preferential parking for hybrid, electric, and other low-emission vehicles.
- Educate motorists about “eco-driving” and anti-idling techniques that save gas.
- Allow vehicles to be driven more efficiently with improved traffic management to reduce congestion delays.
- Increase public transit efficiency by transitioning to hybrid and fuel-cell buses.
- Encourage the transition to cleaner truck and ship engines.

Reduce the carbon intensity of fuels

- Increase the number of fueling points for alternative fuels, such as biodiesel, as well as charging stations for electric vehicles.
- Require public fleets to use biofuels, hybrids, and other low-emission vehicles.

Align the true costs of driving with the impacts

- Incorporate the costs of air pollution, congestion, health problems, climate change, and other “externalities” into the costs of driving.

More information

See a detailed climate transition plan for the transportation sector of Northeast Ohio at: www.gcbl.org/research/climatechange