



Regional Snapshot: Metro Vision 2035 Goals

Metro Vision 2035 was updated and adopted by the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) Board in February 2011 to include a focus on sustainability. The DRCOG Board defined sustainability for the Denver region by identifying a series of measurable goals the region should achieve by the year 2035. What follows is an overview of current progress toward achieving the goals detailed immediately below.

Growth and Development Goals

- ◆ Achieve a 10 percent increase in the region's overall density between 2000 and 2035.
- ◆ Accommodate 50 percent of the region's new housing and 75 percent of the region's new employment in urban centers.
- ◆ Limit the number of households in the semi-urban areas to 3 percent of the region's total households.

Transportation Goals

- ◆ Reduce the annual per capita greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector by 60 percent by 2035.
- ◆ Reduce the percent of trips to work by single-occupancy vehicles (SOV) to 65 percent by 2035.
- ◆ Reduce the daily per capita vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by 10 percent by 2035.
- ◆ Increase the rate of construction of alternative transportation facilities.

Environmental Goals

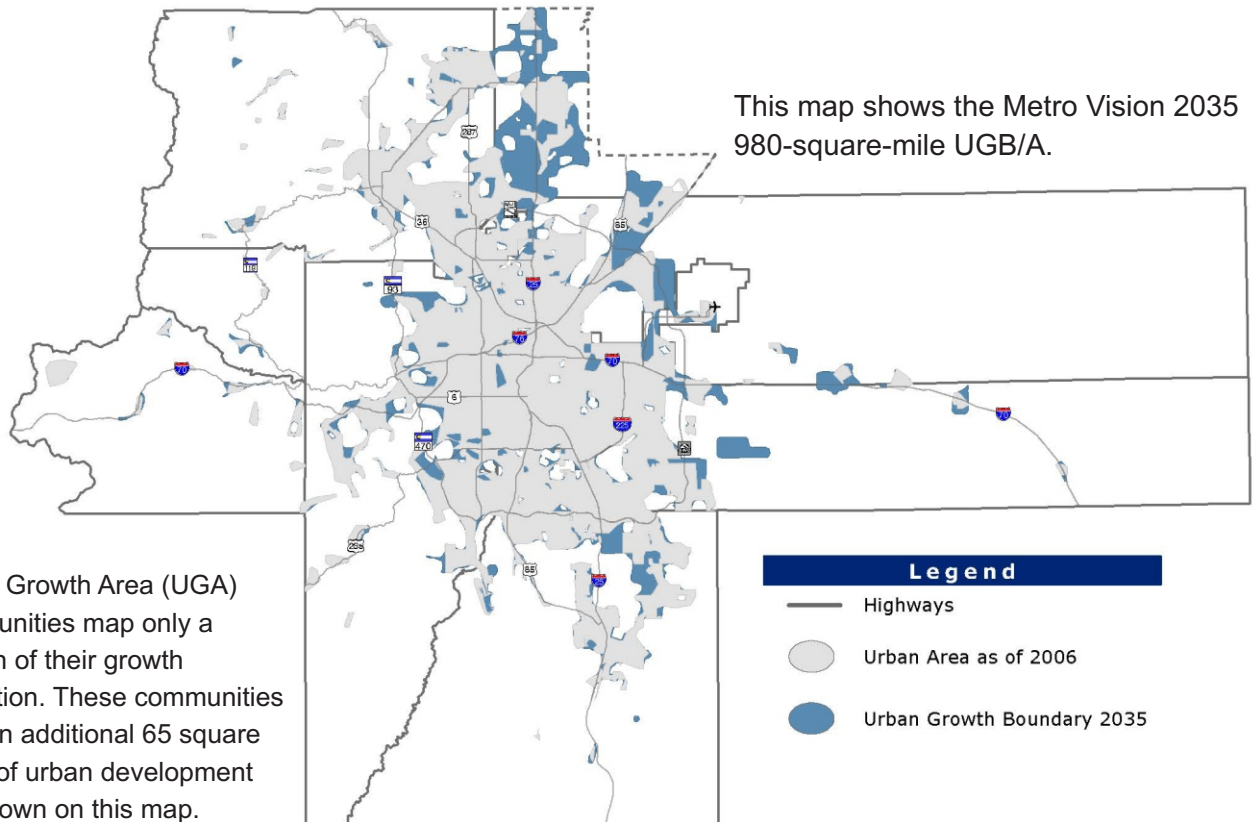
- ◆ Protect a minimum of 880 square miles of parks and open space by 2035.



Growth and Development Goals - Density

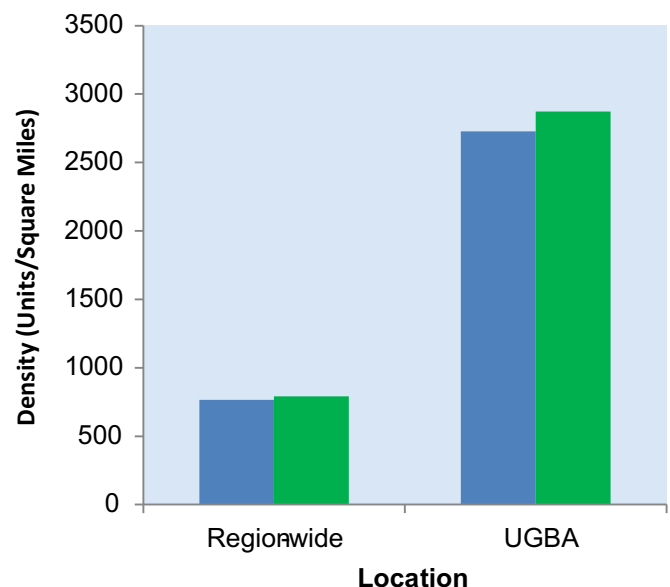
The urban growth boundary/area (UGB/A) defines where urban development will take place in the region in the coming years. The UGB/A promotes an orderly, compact, and efficient pattern of future development in the region. Metro Vision 2035 defines the UGB/A as **980 square miles** of urban development, which is intended to **achieve at least a 10 percent increase in the region's overall density between 2000 and 2035**.

Current and Future Development in the Denver Region



Shifts in residential density within the UGB/A were analyzed to measure progress toward the goal. DRCOG's most recent inventory of residential structures includes buildings constructed in or before 2010. In looking back to 2000 the analysis relied on UGB/A limits established in previously adopted plans (i.e. 735 square miles in Metro Vision 2020). Between 2000 and 2010, residential density within the UGB/A increased by 5.3 percent. This suggests the region has made significant progress toward the established goal. Given the dominance of the multifamily housing sector in recent years, there is a very real possibility that the 5.3 percent figure based on 2000-2010 change is lower than if density change was measured using more current data.

Residential Density

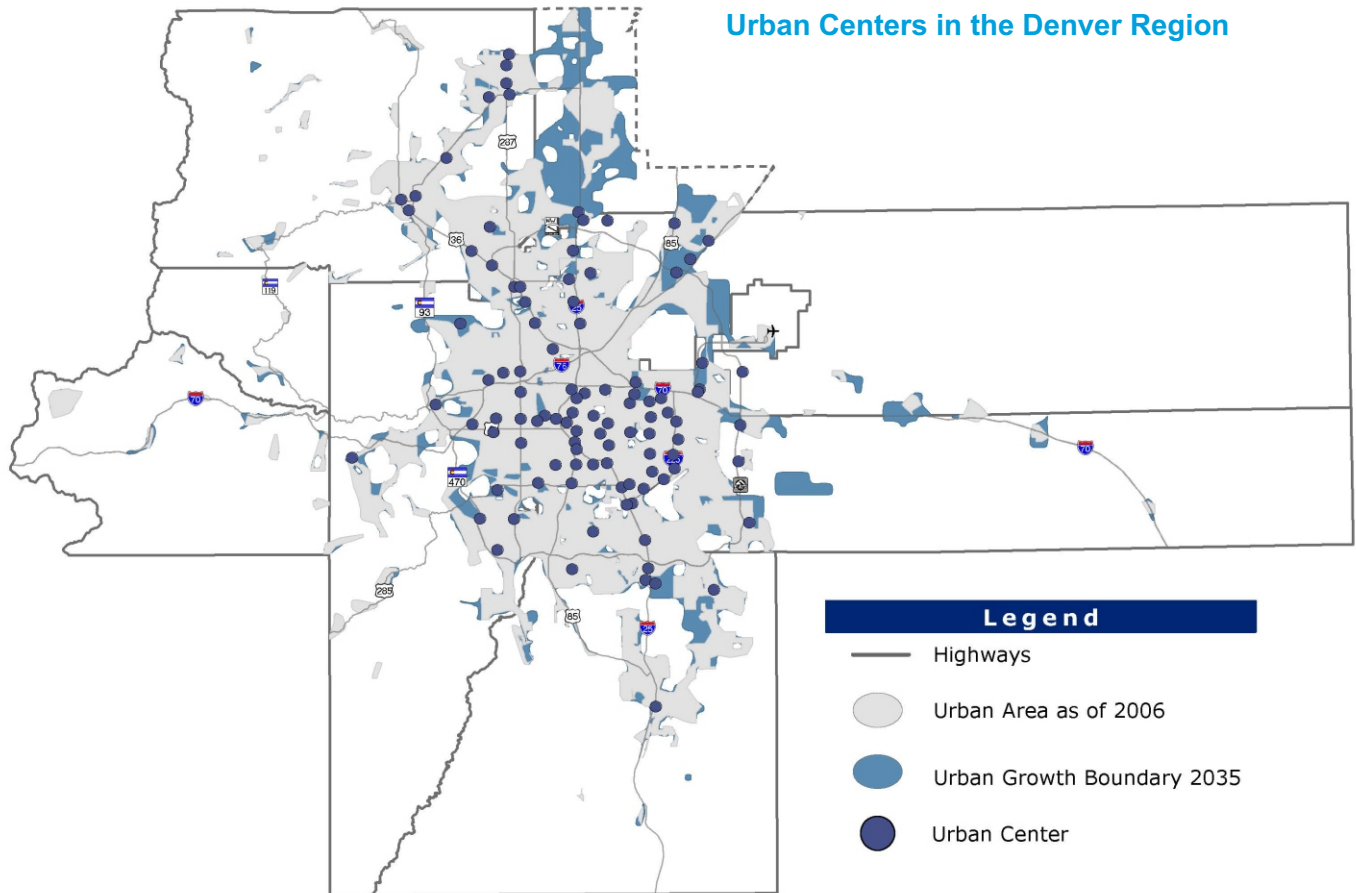


■ Residential, 2000 or older ■ Residential, built up to 2010

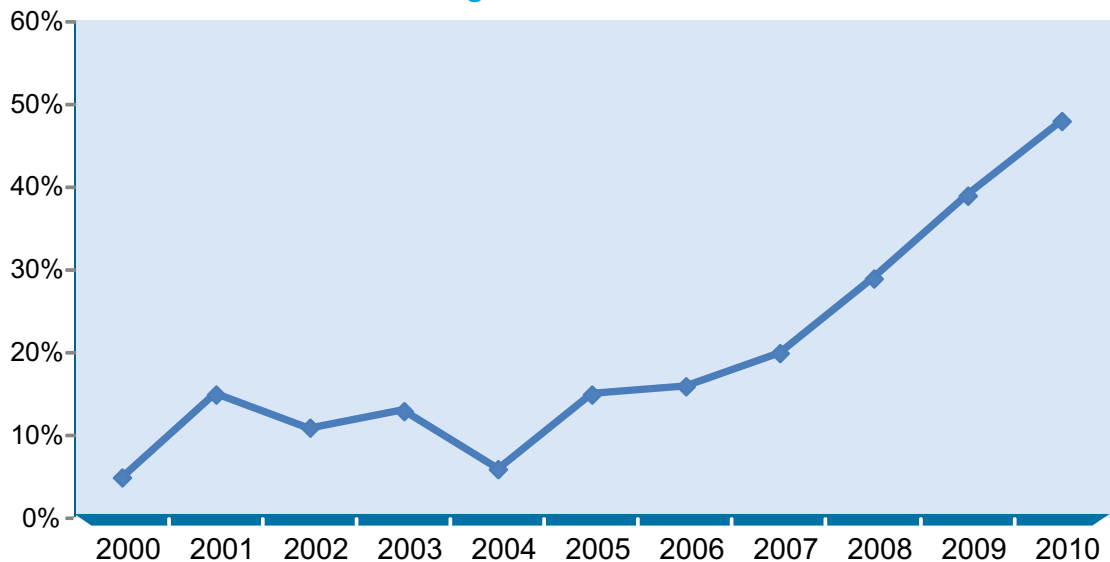
Housing in Urban Centers

Metro Vision 2035 describes urban centers as being mixed-use, more dense than surrounding areas, multimodal, and providing a range of housing options for people of all ages, incomes, and abilities. Urban centers have been an integral element of Metro Vision since the original Metro Vision Guiding Vision was adopted by the DRCOG Board in 1992. Metro Vision further establishes a goal of **accommodating 50 percent of all new housing units and 75 percent of all new jobs in urban centers between 2005 and 2035.**

At the time of this analysis, there were 103 urban centers designated in Metro Vision. The combined land area of those centers is approximately 1 percent of the region's total land area.



Percent of Housing Units Built in Urban Centers



Urban centers designated in Metro Vision 2035 captured 21 percent of the region's housing growth between 2005 and 2010. While the share of housing growth in urban centers during that period is short of the 50 percent target set in Metro Vision, several trends may indicate positive progress toward the goal.

- ◆ Between 2000 and 2004, less than 10 percent of all housing units built in the region were located in urban centers.
- ◆ In 2009 and 2010, 40 percent of the housing units built were in urban centers.
- ◆ As noted previously, the region has experienced significant multifamily construction in the past few years. Much of this activity is likely to have taken place in designated urban centers.

Employment in Urban Centers

Employment growth in urban centers is outpacing other areas of the DRCOG region. The region added 124,068 jobs, including both full-time and part-time workers between 2005 and 2013¹. Of these additional jobs, **55 percent were located in urban centers.**

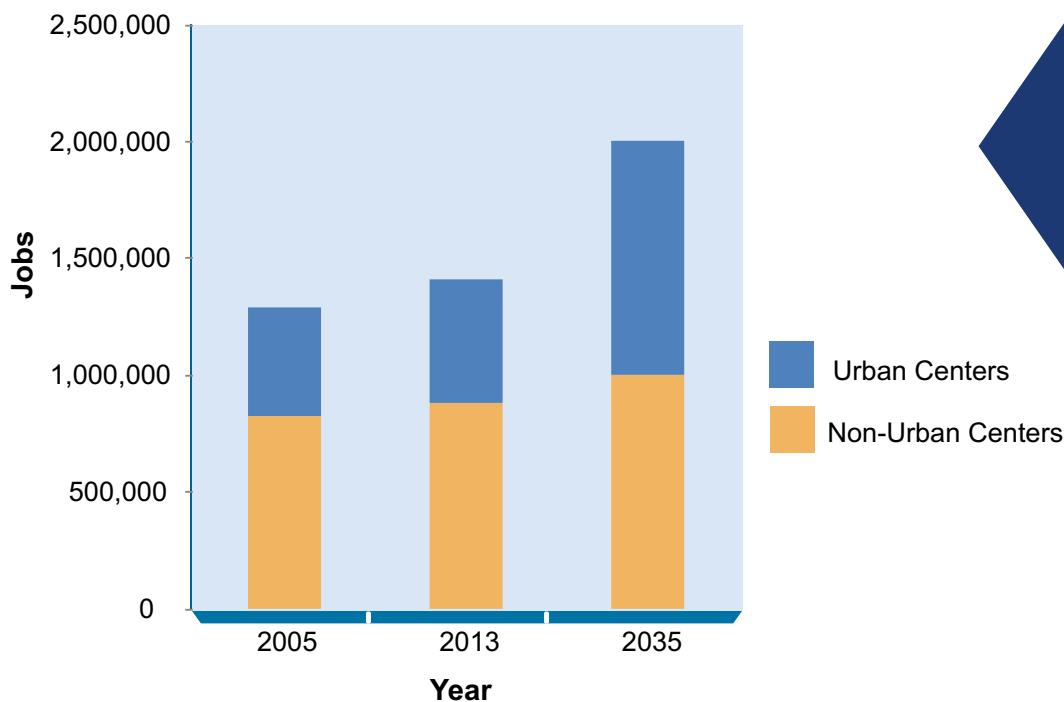
The data do not indicate whether urban centers are attracting new jobs as the Metro Vision goal calls for. It's possible existing jobs within the region are relocating and concentrating in urban centers. Overall the data show that the region is making progress in reaching the Metro Vision goal.

The chart at right shows the proportion of all jobs located in urban centers relative to the total number of jobs in the region. The bar at far right depicts the relationship of total jobs to jobs in urban centers if the region were to achieve the goal outlined in Metro Vision, accommodating 75 percent of job growth in urban centers (2005 – 2035).

Employment in Urban Centers

Area	2005	2013	Difference (2013-2005)	Percent of Growth
DRCOG Region	1,288,900	1,413,000	124,000	
Urban Centers	463,500	531,400	67,900	55%
Non-Urban Centers	825,400	881,500	56,100	45%

Employment in the Denver Region, 2005-2035



¹ Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Quarter 2. This data records employees and firms, and does not include sole proprietors.

Semi-Urban Growth Target

Metro Vision 2035 further establishes a goal of **limiting the total households in semi-urban development in 2035 to 3 percent** of the region's total households. This represents an amount equal to the estimated number of semi-urban households estimated to be present in the region in 2006. As defined in the Metro Vision 2035 Growth and Development Supplement, semi-urban development is residential subdivisions or groupings of 10 or more residential parcels with an average residential lot size greater than or equal to one acre and less than 10 acres. Metro Vision 2035 notes the importance of carefully planning semi-urban development to minimize its financial, environmental and visual impacts.

Of the 1,126,500 housing units in the region in 2010, 40,020 or 3.5 percent were located in semi-urban areas beyond the UGB/A. This exceeds the target set in Metro Vision. The 3 percent target was established based on analysis completed in 2006. The 2006 analysis indicated data limitations may impact the accuracy of the original benchmark. In the intervening years DRCOG's parcel databases have improved and it's conceivable the 3 percent benchmark did not reflect an accurate accounting of the number of housing units in semi-urban areas in 2006.

Semi-Urban Development Outside the UGB/A

	Square Miles	Number of Housing Units
Semi-Urban (NOT in the UGB/A)	204	40,024
Region	5,290	1,126,500

Transportation Goals

Metro Vision 2035 includes four transportation-related goals:

- increase the rate of construction of alternative transportation facilities,
- reduce single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) mode share for work trips,
- reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT), and
- reduce greenhouse gas (GHGs) emissions per capita.

These goals are interrelated and work in concert: when SOV trips are reduced, VMT per capita and GHG emissions per capita also decrease. While measuring progress on the GHG, SOV, and VMT goals is straightforward, there is no standard or accepted methodology for measuring the rate of construction for alternative transportation facilities².

The table at right provides yearly measurements for the three measurable goals.

Baseline (2005) measures identified in the table will be different than baseline conditions identified in Metro Vision 2035 as new tools (including DRCOG's travel model) and techniques have been implemented and updated since the plan was adopted.

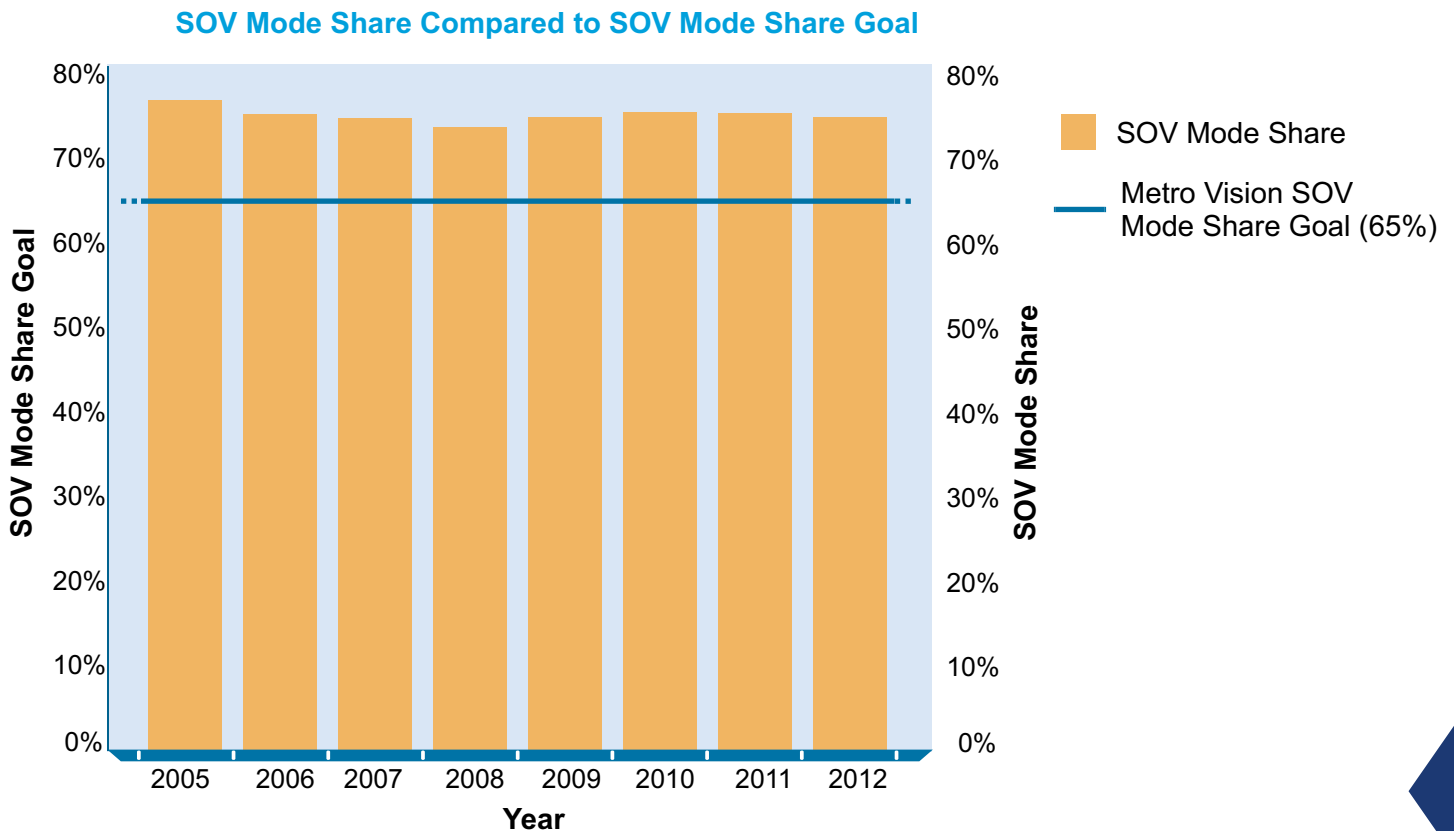
Progress on Metro Vision 2035 Transportation Goals between 2005 and 2013

Year	SOV Mode Share %	VMT millions/day	DRCOG Region Population	VMT / Capita
2005	77.10%	67.5	2,727,900	24.7
2006	75.40%	69.3	2,755,200	25.1
2007	74.90%	69.1	2,782,700	24.8
2008	73.80%	69.1	2,810,200	24.5
2009	75.00%	69.2	2,837,700	24.3
2010	75.60%	70.0	2,865,200	24.4
2011	75.50%	69.0	2,892,800	23.8
2012	74.90%	69.8	2,920,300	23.9
2013	*	71.3	2,947,800	24.2

* 2013 SOV Mode Share % is not yet available from the Census.

² FasTracks - one of the largest public transit rail programs in the country - continued construction including the completion of the West Line, Denver Union Station, as well as significant progress on the East Line, the Gold Line, and the US-36 BRT.

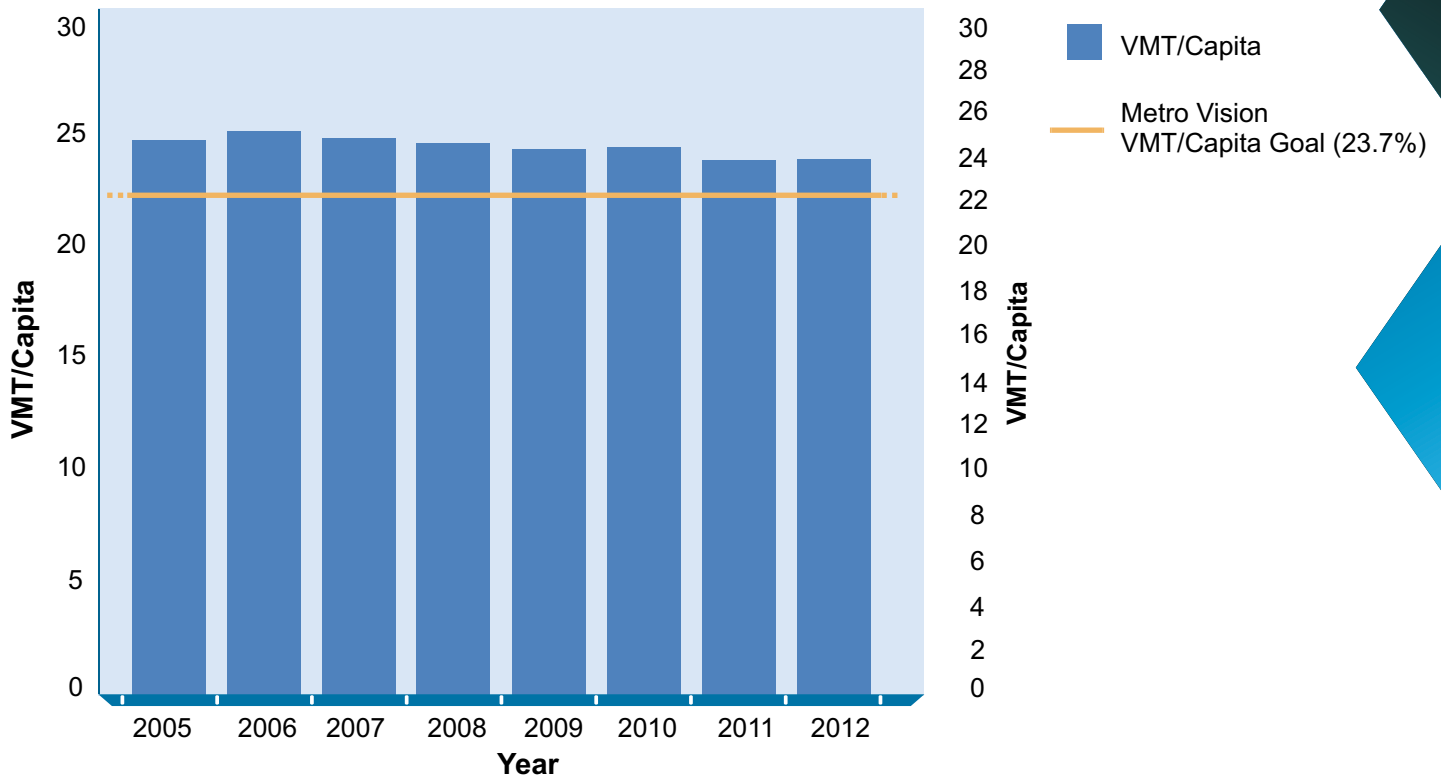
According to the Census' American Community Survey (ACS), SOV mode share for work trips dropped since 2005. Metro Vision set a goal of 65 percent by 2035, a reduction of 12.1 percentage points from the 2005 baseline. The year-to-year data show a drop that corresponds to the time period when gas prices spiked, which may have influenced household decision-making regarding if, when, and how to travel. SOV mode share increased in 2009, on the heels of record high gas prices in the summer of 2008, but started dropping again in 2011. However the decline was not as steep as was experienced between 2005 and 2008. The most recent decreases have occurred as unemployment rates have also decreased. Three major economic factors – record high gas prices, a national recession, and the beginnings of an economic recovery -- had little impact on how people travel to work.



Source: ACS, Census

Metro Vision 2035 includes a goal of reducing daily per capita VMT by 10 percent. DRCOG's travel model estimates the baseline (2005) per capita figure to be 24.74 miles of travel per day. A 10 percent reduction would lower daily per capita VMT to 22.27 in 2035. The trend in per capita VMT has been generally downward since 2006. This downward trend is more pronounced than the slight downward trend of commuting via SOV.

VMT Per Capita Compared to Goal VMT (10% reduction)



Metro Vision 2035 establishes a goal of **reducing GHG emissions from transportation by 60 percent** by 2035. Between 2005 and 2010 the region achieved a 5 percent reduction. If the region were to continue that trajectory and reduce emissions by 5 percent every five years, the resulting GHGs would be 8,684 lbs (3.93 metric tons) per capita – for a total reduction of 26.5 percent.

While GHG emissions are decreasing on a per capita basis, to achieve the goal of a 60 percent reduction, significant advancements to lower emissions will be needed in the coming years. A key part of lowering emissions will be for people to switch to more fuel-efficient vehicles. New, federally mandated CAFÉ standards have been signed into law, requiring an increased fleet new car fuel efficiency of 54.5 miles per gallon for cars and light-duty trucks by model year 2025, which will assist greatly in achieving the goal.

2005-2010 Goal Progress

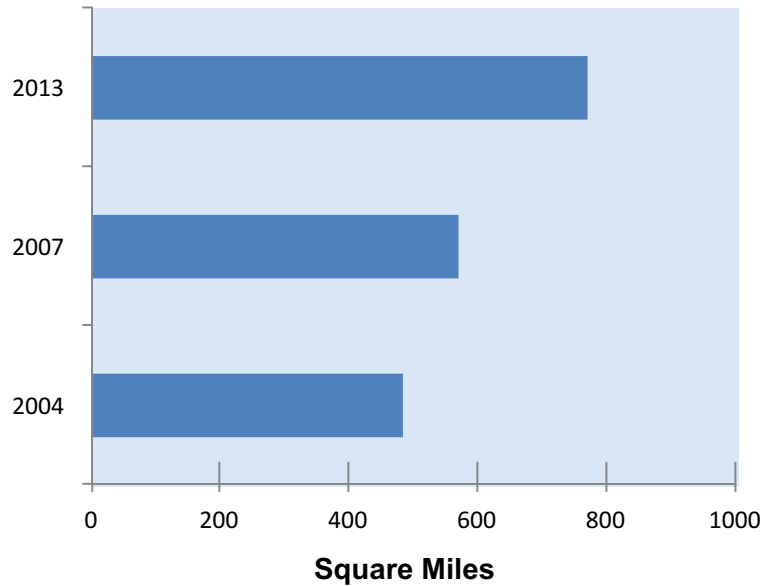
2005-2010 Goal Progress	2005	2010	Percent change from 2005 to 2010
Weekday VMT (mile)	67,481,300	70,022,400	3.8%
DRCOG Region Population	2,727,900	2,865,200	5.0%
Weekday GHG (pound)	92,707,600	92,471,500	-0.3%
Weekday GHG (pound) per capita	33.9	32.2	-5.0%
Annual GHG (pound) per capita = Weekday GHG*338	11,460	10,880	-5.0%

Environmental Goals - Parks and Open Space

The Denver region is home to many natural and recreational resources including the mountain backdrop, riparian corridors, and other key open space and wildlife habitats. Some examples of parks and open space include: agricultural lands; athletic fields; local, regional, and state parks; greenways; natural areas for wildlife; and reservoirs. Metro Vision 2035 recognizes that as our region grows we must take care to ensure our natural assets remain for generations to come. Metro Vision 2035 establishes a **goal of protecting a minimum of 880 square miles of parks and open space by 2035**.

In 2013, DRCOG identified more than 770 square miles of parks and open space in the metro area, a significant increase from previous inventories. This recent inventory of protected lands suggests the region is well on its way to achieving the goal of protecting 880 square miles of parks and open space by 2035.

Parks and Open Space in the Denver Region



Open Space in the Denver Region

