



HAMILTON COUNTY

Climate
Initiative

Green Credit Score Methodology

We have developed formulas for many of the recommended initiatives on the Master List of Strategies (Solid Waste, Transportation, Energy & Development) to generate the estimated reduction of greenhouse gases, in metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents (MTCO₂e), for when the initiatives are implemented at various scales. This gives the Hamilton County jurisdictions a good approximation of how their initiatives will payback in reducing greenhouse gases (GHG) in our overall community.

However, for some important initiatives under Development, there are not readily available formulas to calculate CO₂ reductions. Most of these Development Initiatives are concerned with land use policy issues [for example, see: Community Visioning/Comprehensive Plan/Code Revision Process with Form-based Code (e.g. Smart Code)/LEED-ND Emphasis]. Though we don't have ready formulas for these policy initiatives, we do know that actual implementation of these policies will eventually result in a more compact development pattern characterized by higher densities, a mix of land uses, interconnection of streets, and resilient population and employment centers.

From many recent urban planning studies (over 100 empirical studies), we have found out that residents in compact communities drive fewer miles than those in more sprawling communities. From the recent book *Growing Cooler: The Evidence on Urban Development and Climate Change* (Urban Land Institute, 2008), it was concluded that “a meta-analysis of many of these types of studies show that people living with twice the density, diversity of uses, accessible destinations, and interconnected streets drive about a third less than otherwise comparable residents in low-density sprawl”.

If we continue to develop in the same sprawling way we have since World War II, we will guarantee ever increasing vehicles miles traveled (VMT) and transportation-related CO₂ emissions. Land use policy changes that would facilitate a transition to compact, mixed-use development exemplified by Smart Growth policies including Form-based Codes and LEED-ND Neighborhood Development would, as *Growing Cooler* clarifies, “provide a permanent climate benefit that would compound over time”.

We are creating the **HCCI Green Credit Score** to recognize those Hamilton County jurisdictions that implement approved Smart Growth Development Initiatives. The Green Credit Score for these Initiatives can range from one to five points. The Initiatives with the highest possible scores are for major policy changes like **Community Visioning/Comprehensive Plan/Code Revision Process with Form-based Code (e.g. Smart Codes)/LEED-ND Emphasis**. The lower possible scores would be for important but lesser changes, such as **Join Smart Growth Network & Leadership Institute/Conduct Smart Growth Audit**.

If jurisdictions choose to adopt these development initiatives, the HCCI will review the proposed initiative and grant the appropriate score based on the quality of the project. Considering the “permanent climate benefit” that “compounds over time” from Smart Growth Initiatives, the HCCI Green Credit Scores for these initiatives will be weighed equally with initiatives that have definitive formulas for estimating GHG reductions. The scores for both types of initiatives, as well as the overall combined Score/Ranking, will be compiled for all participating jurisdictions on the **Hamilton County Climate Initiative Carbon Calculator Summary Sheet**, which can be accessed [here](#).



Green Credit Score Methodology

Smart Growth Development Initiative	Highest Possible Green Credit Score (Range from 1 to 5 points)
Join Smart Growth Network & Leadership Institute/Conduct Smart Growth Audit	3 points out of 5 points
Community Visioning/Comprehensive Plan/Code Revision Process with Form-based Code (e.g. Smart Code)/LEED-ND Emphasis	5 points out of 5 points
Fast Track Green Permitting	3 points out of 5 points
Other ?	?

Hamilton County Climate Initiative Carbon Calculator Summary Sheet

Hamilton County Climate Initiative Participating Jurisdictions	# of Carbon Reduction Projects	Estimated Total # of CO2e Emissions Reductions (in metric tons)	# of Planning/Development Projects that earn HCCI Green Credits	Overall HCCI Green Credits Score	Combined Score/Ranking
ABC City					
Amberly Village					
Anderson Township					
Blue Ash					
Colerain Township					
Elmwood Place					
Evendale					
FairFax					
Forest Park					
Glendale					
Golf Manor					
Greenhills					
Harrison					
Lincoln Heights					
Lockland					
Maderia					
Montgomery					
Mt. Healthy					
Newtown					
North College Hill					
Norwood					
Reading					
Sharonville					
Silverton					
Springfield Township					
St. Bernard					
Terrace Park					
Woodlawn					
Wyoming					