

PRIMERA'S CARBON FOOTPRINT

NEW TREND FOR OUR FUTURE?

This year’s carbon footprint analysis is a departure from the previous four reporting periods, going back to 2009, and it’s no wonder given we were in the midst of a pandemic. Determining our company’s carbon emissions in 2021--when commuting to work had quickly become a practice of the past, and our offices went largely unoccupied-- was challenging, to say the least.

Primera continues to promote green efforts in not only the services we provide but also in the way we conduct and maintain our business. This is the fifth analysis (on a triennial basis) conducted to determine our company’s carbon footprint. We began this ritual of conducting a carbon footprint analysis to give us an idea of where we stand on the green company spectrum. In 2009, when we performed the initial analysis, we only included our Chicago office location. Fast-forward to 2021, Primera now has multiple offices in Illinois, Indiana, and Pennsylvania, amongst others, and none of which are now occupied regularly. This interesting shift has forced us to rethink the best way to breakdown and present data, seeing that the company as a whole will not entirely return to a pre-2020 model, where employees are typically physically present at one office location and full-time.

As in previous years, we estimated that the main sources of carbon emissions from the operation of our business would be due to the following: office electricity, paper, and water usage, as well as employee commutes. These sources were chosen because they’re the main activities and consumables we have direct control over. Space heating, for example, is something we neither have direct control over nor are our offices set up to measure.



In the past, an employee survey was sent out to determine the characteristics of our employee commutes such as frequency, distances, and modes of transportation. This time we assumed the commuting ‘intensity’ was based on the typical frequency of office visits by employees throughout 2021. This method may not be as accurate as the survey, but this number was greatly reduced compared to previous years and the carbon footprint contribution of this element was not as significant as discussed below.

Results

The following results are based on our consumption in 2021. Analyzing our utility bills, restroom usage estimates, and office paper orders (which include all printers, copiers, and plotters) we estimated the consumption of electricity, water, and paper. To estimate the carbon emissions from our commutes, we first estimated the frequency of the employees typically present in the offices through 2021 and used average commuting mileage based on previous years. The data revealed our annual carbon emissions by source for 2021 were the following:

	ANNUAL CARBON EMISSIONS (TONS CO ₂ /YEAR)	ANNUAL CARBON EMISSIONS AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
Employee Commute	9.34	9.01%
Electricity Usage	93.71	90.47%
Paper Usage	0.52	0.50%
Water Usage	0.01	0.01%
TOTAL	103.57	100%
No. of Full-Time Employees*	245	
Per Person Annual Carbon Emissions	0.42	

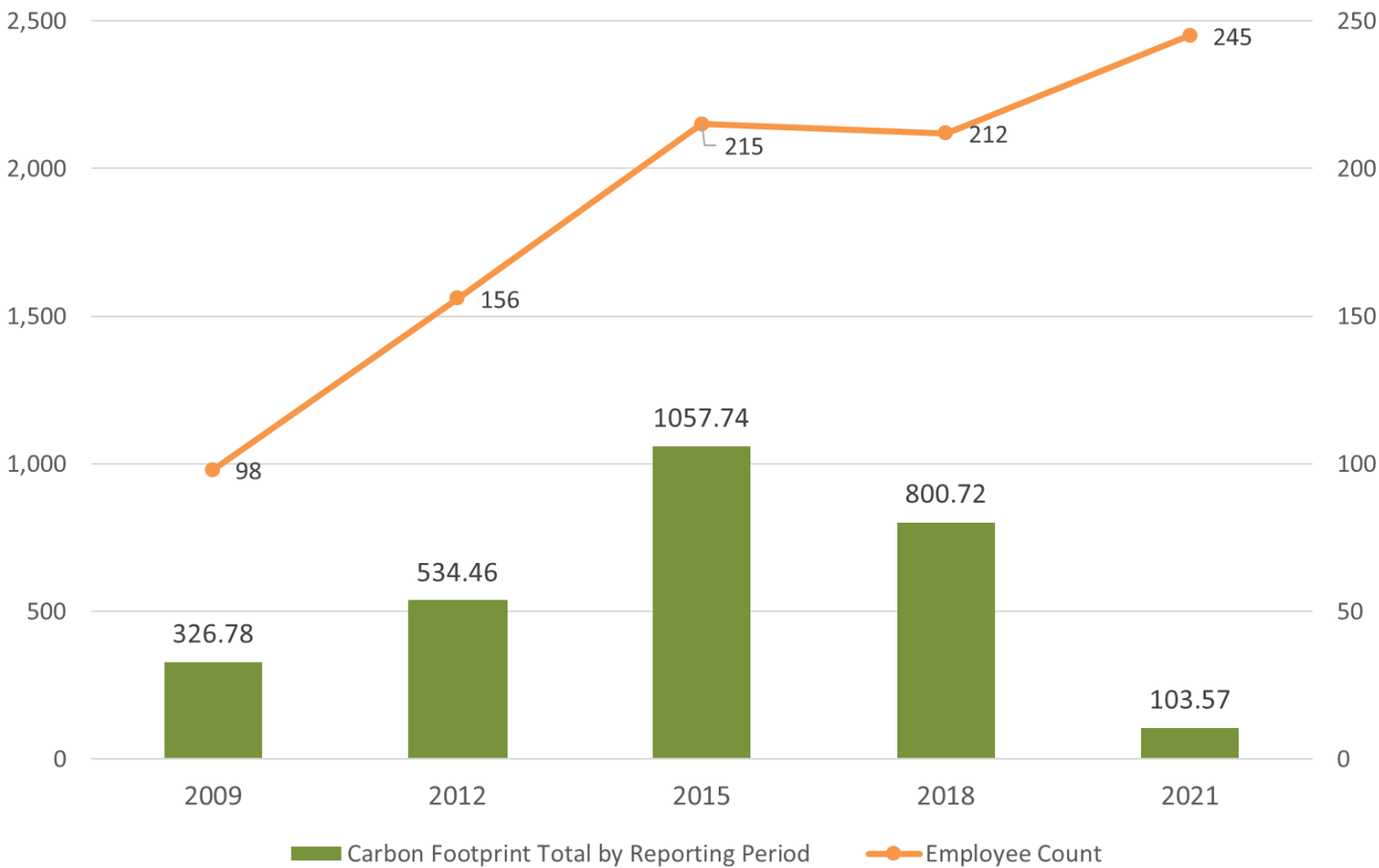
**As of December 31, 2021*

The findings differed significantly from previous years. Transportation from our daily commutes was historically our largest contributor to carbon emissions, accounting for two thirds or more. In 2021, emissions as a direct result of commuting unsurprisingly dropped to below 10%. In all cases, we saw drastic reductions in CO2 emissions as expected. The emissions due to employee commutes, water use, and paper consumption dropped between 95% and 98% compared to 2018. Office electricity consumption dropped by 60% and took the spot as our largest contributor to carbon emissions last year. As in previous years, paper usage and water use have a much smaller impact. Primera’s total carbon emissions for 2021 was 104 tons CO2. This translates to about 0.42 tons CO2 per year, per employee. To put this into perspective, for 2018, the results were 801 tons CO2 and 3.78 tons per year per employee – that’s an 87% decrease from 2018.

What Does It All Mean

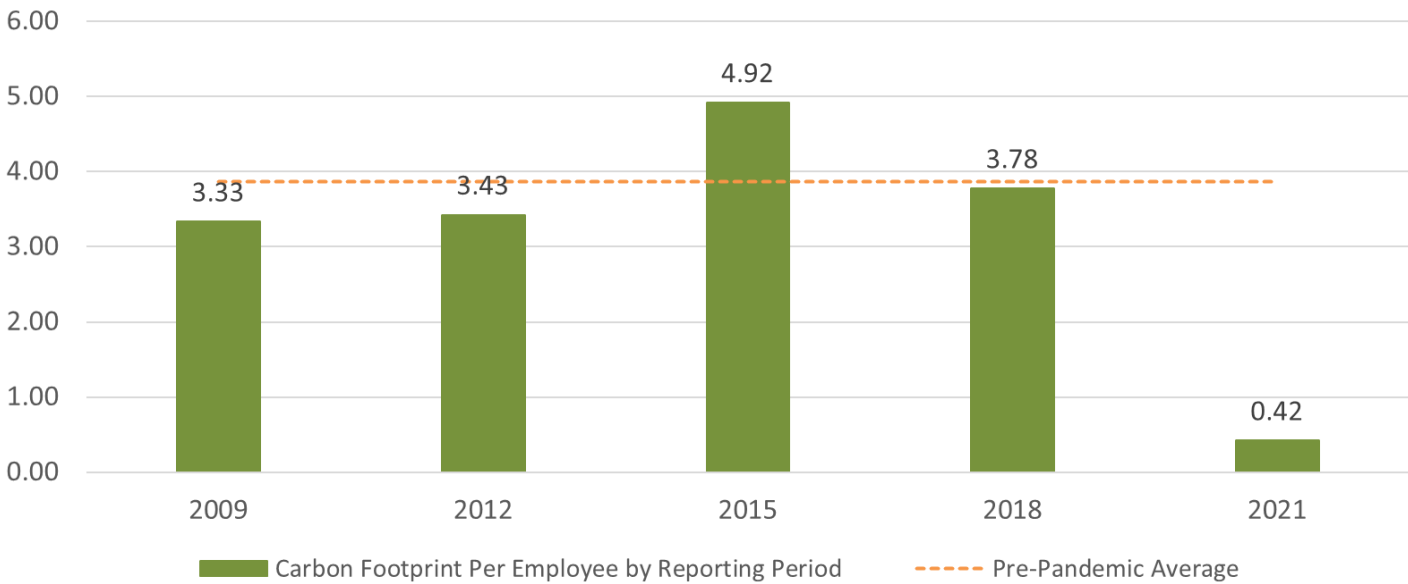
The data for 2021 will obviously present itself as an outlier. No trend can be discerned from this data except perhaps that working from home will significantly reduce our company's overall carbon footprint. Displayed below are Primera's historical emissions, including company growth by employee count:

Annual Carbon Emissions (tons CO₂)



Below is the historical data for Primera, displaying the annual carbon emissions per employee for each of the reporting periods for which data was collected:

Annual Carbon Emissions per Employee (tons CO₂)



Using a per-employee carbon footprint helps eliminate some of the variability due to the changing number of employees at any given office for any given year. Primera's average pre-pandemic carbon emissions by employee was 3.86 tons CO₂ per employee - that dropped to only 0.42 tons CO₂ in 2021.

It's All About the Commute

Employee commutes have historically taken the #1 spot as the largest contributor to our carbon emissions. It remains to be seen what our new work model will look like going forward, but the reduction in commuting will reduce our overall carbon footprint. Based on previous years' data, commuting to work produced over 500 tons of CO2 annually.

While we likely won't eliminate this number completely, it will be greatly reduced. Primera continues to encourage employees to be conscious of their commuting habits and ask them to consider different modes of transportation – stressing that they take advantage of mass transit and walk or bike when they can. Primera also provides mass transit subsidies to employees and the opportunity to buy transit tickets on a pre-tax basis. Even at the office locations lacking feasible public transit options, we hope alternate methods, such as carpooling, or even staying home and utilizing Microsoft Teams in place of in-person meetings, can remain an option. We look forward to our next analysis in 2024 and what that means for our own personal fight against climate change.