

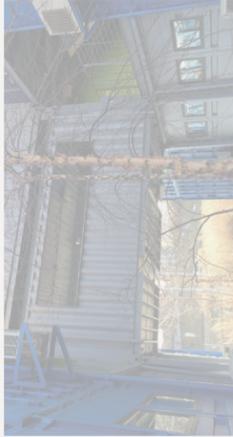


Creating an equitable, low-carbon,
and climate resilient future.
October 2019

Providence's Climate Justice Plan Executive Summary



Climate change is one of if not the greatest threats to humanity in the 21st century. Cities all over the world are stepping up to take action, and in 2016, Mayor Jorge O. Elorza set a goal for Providence to become carbon neutral by 2050. Yet the climate crisis we face is the result of a systemic problem that is much deeper than just carbon emissions; it is the result of race and power inequities that support an extractive economy that disproportionately burdens low-income communities across the world, including here in Providence. Providence's Climate Justice Plan was co-created by the Mayor's Office of Sustainability and Providence's frontline communities. It is a climate action plan that aims to create an equitable, low-carbon, and climate-resilient Providence. The plan sets forth concrete carbon reduction targets in buildings and transportation sectors while promoting clean energy sources and also addressing the system-level changes that are needed in our governance structures, our economic system, and the overall health of our communities in order to ensure a just and equitable transition away from fossil fuels. It provides near-term policy and program recommendations to meet these targets.



English

<http://bit.ly/32R747F>



Español

<http://bit.ly/32OXHpa>

The stories can be heard in English and Spanish:

Future Stories
A truly just and equitable climate action plan will only succeed if the community creates, controls and holds the vision. Using speculative fiction techniques, the Racial and Environmental Justice Committee created scenarios in a future Providence where policy has supported a transformed way for people to be connected to each other, the land, and the City's fight against climate change. Nine Stories provide different perspectives of how Providence has been transformed.

From the Frontline of Providence's Climate Crisis

"Not every room in my house has heat! **Radiators are missing or broken.** Windows are a mess and the outside air come right through the walls. Gotta use space heaters, but can't really afford it ... [Summer's] so hot I have to go outside. Can't even open windows in my apartment. More access to AC would make a big difference for my family!"

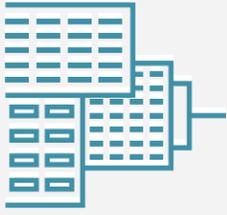
"There are not enough places for kids to play and be near nature. Even Roger Williams Park is surrounded by highways!"

"Every time our community gets cleaned up, white folks want it and start moving us out. ... **We need to make sure we won't get kicked out before we push to make good things happen.**"

"Those huge tanks at the Port are just scary. They look like they could blow up anytime. Wait, I think something did a few months ago! And then nasty stuff spilled on Allens. **What are they bringing in and out of there anyway? Definitely not benefiting me, just adds to pollution and makes me wish I could move.**"

"Why are buses in RI so hard to use? Not enough routes and stops. Not on time. You just need a car around here, and if you can't afford one it is really difficult to get around."

Where Climate Pollution in Providence Comes from



Buildings: 70%



Transportation: 30%



Waste + other: <1%



Lead by Example

- Upgrade municipal buildings to shift towards zero energy buildings.
- Reduce emissions from school buses.
- Expand and improve green spaces.

- 100% of municipal buildings' electricity will be **renewable** by 2030.
- 100% of municipal buildings' heating will be **renewable** by 2040.
- 100% of the City's fleet and school buses will be **renewable** by 2040.
- Diversity hiring target to shift municipal workforce to be more reflective of the community.*
- Number or percentage of City employees using alternative transportation to get to work.*



Collaborative Governance + Accountability

- Establish Green Justice Zones in frontline communities.
- Implement plan via a collaborative governance structure.
- Measure and monitor the level of environmental burden and investments being made in each neighborhood.
- Create a dedicated funding stream to support implementation.
- Advocate and support statewide shift towards Energy Democracy.

- By 2020, two members from the Racial and Environmental Justice Committee are on the Environmental Sustainability Task Force.
- By 2025, the Office of Sustainability is actively partnering with frontline community organizations on every major initiative using a collaborative governance model.
- By 2030, the Office of Sustainability and the REJC have advanced from the "Involve" stage to "Collaborate" stage on the Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership.
- By 2025, all City staff are trained upon hire and have continuing education on **racial equity**, anti-racism, **environmental racism**, **environmental justice** and implicit bias.



Housing + Buildings

- Stop the displacement of communities of color in Providence.
- Expand energy efficiency, energy access, clean energy and electrification programs to better serve low-income communities, renters, and other underserved populations.
- Create more equitable energy rate structures.

- By 2035: 48% of residential heating and 45% of commercial converted to heat pumps.
- By 2050: 90% of residential heating and 85 percent of commercial converted to heat pumps.
- By 2040, reduce low-income energy burden to <5% (Low income energy burden is the percent of income that low-income households are spending on energy)
- By 2040, eliminate **utility** shut offs.
- Increase the energy savings (MMBTUs) for low income households in Providence.*
- Increase low-income **energy efficiency** program participation.*
- Increase **energy efficiency** and electrification investment dollars for low income households.*
- Housing and anti-**displacement** metrics and targets.*



Community Health

- Advocate for legally binding climate pollution reduction and clean energy targets.
- Explore zoning and land use policy changes to reduce pollution and improve community health.
- Work with state to communicate air quality to impacted communities.
- Work towards a clean port economy.

- By 2035, reduce childhood asthma-related Emergency Department visit rate to 10 per 1,000 children and by 2050, reduce the rate to less than four per 1,000 children.
- By 2035, **direct emissions** in **frontline communities** are reduced by 20% and all are eliminated by 2050.
- By 2035, there are three **Resilience** Hubs in **frontline communities** and by 2050, there is one in every neighborhood.



Local + Regenerative Economy

- Create workforce development programs to support a just transition away from fossil fuels.

- By 2040, eliminate food waste in Providence.
- Meet annual targets of 10% of City spending in municipal purchases of goods and services from state-certified women-owned enterprises and 10% of City spending in municipal purchases of goods and services from state-certified minority-owned enterprises as outlined in City ordinance.
- Increase number of enterprises in Providence that are democratically controlled and operated by their own workers.*
- Increase partnerships with frontline community organizations for workforce training.*
- Expand training and educational opportunities offered through the PVD Self Employment Program for unemployed and underemployed Providence residents, specifically for **frontline communities**.*
- Increase investments from the Providence Business Loan Fund that are supporting enterprises that are engaging in a circular and regenerative economy, specifically to people of color in Providence.*



Clean Energy

- Increase access to renewable energy for frontline communities via community solar other programs.

- By 2035, 50% of electricity is carbon-free.
- By 2050, 100% of electricity is carbon-free.
- Local generation accounts for 30% of supply.
- Number of low to moderate income Providence residents enrolled in community solar.*
- Percentage of clean energy assets in Providence owned by frontline community organizations and individuals.*



Transportation

- Evaluate and modify traffic patterns to reduce emissions in frontline communities.
- Advocate for investing in cleaner and more accessible public transportation.

- By 2035, 11% reduction in Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMTs) and by 2050, 20% reduction in VMTs.
- By 2035, 43% of VMTs in Providence are electric and by 2050, 80% of VMTs are electric.
- By 2035, increase the number of employers in Providence offering RIPTA's EcoPass to their employees from 50 to 200.
- Increase the number of trips taken using JUMP Boost plan subscriptions to 10%.
- Increase in public transit ridership in Providence.*
- Reduce diesel truck traffic in **frontline communities**.*
- Increase low-carbon transit options in **frontline communities**.*
- Increase sidewalk maintenance and investment in **frontline communities**.*

* Targets depend on data that the City does not currently have but intends to collect, measure and analyze in order to develop achievable targets.

There are 19 priority strategies, identified by the REJC, highlighted throughout the report. The Office of Sustainability is committed to working with the REJC and other stakeholders to advance these strategies by the end of 2021.