Rhode Island

3% bigger at low tide

Welcome to Rhode Island
The Ocean State
Rising sea levels are already impacting Providence.

Sea level is now expected to rise +9.6’ by 2100.

Photo Credit: Barnaby Evans
Fox Point Hurricane Barrier (1966)
Redevelopment of I-195 (Protected by Barrier)
Sustainable Providence 2014

- Waste
- Energy
- Food
- Water
- Transportation
- Land Use & Development

- Partner with long-term owners such as hospitals, higher ed, and large property owners
  - Hurricane Barrier Study
- Create a focus on racial justice within sustainability:
  - Establish a people of color led community Advisory Committee
  - Implement a Race and Social Justice screen
  - Develop an Equitable Engagement Checklist
  - Fund Community organizations to lead engagement processes
- Create community-based resilience hubs
2016 Providence Resilience Workshop with large businesses and employers

Essential 1A: Organization for Short-term Impacts
Essential 1B: Organization for Long-term Impacts
Essential 2A: Risk Scenario Strategy
Essential 2B: Risk Scenario Implementation
Essential 3: Financial Capacity
Essential 4A: Urban Development Planning
Essential 4B: Urban Development Implementation
Essential 5: Natural Ecosystems
Essential 6A: Institutional Capacity Skills
Essential 6B: Institutional Capacity for Data
Essential 7: Societal and Cultural Resiliency
Essential 8A: Built Infrastructure
Essential 8B: Emergency Response Infrastructure
Essential 9: Disaster Response
Essential 10: Recovery
Hurricane Barrier Study

- Decide to build new port barrier because in 2090, economic losses increase to approximately $30 million annually.

(Cost of barrier not included in graph due to scale.)
Hurricane Barrier Study
Nuisance Flooding
Racial & Environmental Justice Committee

• Established in 2016 to:
  – Identify key concerns, issues and needs of frontline communities
  – Build a broader base of frontline community members
  – Racial Equity Trainings
  – Provide recommendations for a long-term process and structure
Recommendations for a Racially Equitable and Just Providence

A Racially Equitable and Just Providence...
• Moves us toward el Buen Vivir
• Supports safe spaces for frontline communities of color
• Knows people are sacred and respects their cultures and traditions.
• Upholds self-determination
• Co-creates and co-leads governance with frontline communities of color and the City of Providence to protect the space for communities' self-determination, and ensure equitable access to resources, information, and power.
• Values education for our children and youth. Education is a fundamental right for our children and youth
• Practices local, regional, national and international solidarity
• Creates meaningful work.
• Requires building a sustainable local economy now, one in which we produce and consume to live well without living better at the expense of others.
• Respects community rights to land, water, and food sovereignty
• Works to end the extractive economy.
Developing a Climate Justice Strategy: The City is collaborating with the Racial & Environmental Justice Committee to center equity in the process.

- July-Sept.: Trained community leaders in Energy Democracy
- Nov. - Dec.: Leaders interviewed 40 frontline community members of color to guide prioritization of actions
- Feb. – March: REJC & community leaders refine actions

This plan has been developed based on the lived experiences of the people who are most impacted by environmental issues in Providence.
Why?

- Frontline communities contribute the least to the problem.
- Frontline communities will suffer the most if we don’t address this problem.
- Frontline communities are closest to the issues and are closest to the solutions.
- We must address the root causes of the climate crisis: structural inequalities and oppression that enabled the unsustainable extraction of resources and labor. We need more inclusive processes and decentralized decision-making. We need to be more like penguins! [https://youtu.be/TQ707s2Xi7Q](https://youtu.be/TQ707s2Xi7Q) (3 minutes)

Emperor Penguins shuffle every 30 – 60 seconds so every individual gets to cycle through the warm, central part of the huddle.
Climate action in Providence must prioritize:

• **Equitable investment**: Focus resources in low income, communities of color

• **Anti-displacement**: Prevent “Green Gentrification” and further harm to communities of color

• **Collaborative Governance**: Structures and processes that center frontline communities in decision-making.

• **Local pollution reduction**: Prioritize reducing local carbon emissions and co-pollutants, especially those that burden EJ communities.
Policy Examples

• **Work to phase out fossil fuel infrastructure** and other hazardous materials in Providence via fees, taxes, or other mechanisms.

• **Explore the development of micro-grids**, prioritizing low-income communities and critical facilities.

• **Create network of Resilience Hubs**, prioritizing frontline communities. These hubs will connect residents to resources and City services, build power and capacity in the community, and service as resources during and after natural disasters or other disruptions.

• **Establish Green Justice Zones**—areas where investments in sustainability and equity are made in frontline communities led by frontline community organizations and community members.

• **Create a Community Port Initiative** that brings community (led by the Green Justice Zone) and port-area businesses together to set goals and plan for increasing local hiring, emission reduction, and climate preparedness.
Connected, community-based Resilience Hubs

- CITY/ URBAN GREENING
- PARK DEVELOPMENT
- REDUCING HARDSCAPE
- BIKE CONNECTIVITY
Davey Lopes Rec Center

3 days
Thank You

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