Hurricane Barrier
City Hall
RI’s only Level 1 Trauma Center
Environmental Justice Community

Legend
Will 1-FOOT of SEA LEVEL RISE affect my property?

Will 3- FEET of SEA LEVEL RISE affect my property?

Will 5- FEET of SEA LEVEL RISE affect my property?

Will 7- FEET of SEA LEVEL RISE affect my property?

Will 10- FEET of SEA LEVEL RISE affect my property?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NOAA 2017 projections</th>
<th>2030</th>
<th>2050</th>
<th>2080</th>
<th>2100</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.67 feet</td>
<td>3.25 feet</td>
<td>6.69 feet</td>
<td>9.6 feet</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

NOAA 2017 projections
Rising sea levels are already impacting Providence.

Sea level is now expected to rise +9.6’ by 2010.

Photo Credit: Barnaby Evans
This map shows the 100-year flood with two feet of SLR.

The Fox Point Hurricane Barrier should be able to continue to protect downtown until about 2070.
WHERE OUR SUMMER IS HEADED

9.1° Hotter By 2100
Environmental burden is not equally shared

Providence ranks:
- 5th highest in nation for income inequality (Brookings)
- 5th highest in nation for low-income energy burden (ACEEE)
- Most polluted county for air quality in the Boston-Worcester-Providence metro area. Received an F for high ozone days (American Lung Association)
Low-income neighborhoods in Providence have the highest asthma rates in the state.
And lowest tree canopy coverage
And highest lead poisoning rates.

In many Providence neighborhoods, over 20% of kindergarten-aged children have elevated blood lead levels. Smith Hill is the highest at 32%.
Sustainable Providence 2014

- Waste
- Energy
- Food
- Water
- Transportation
- Land Use & Development
ResilientPVD Lab Recommendations

- 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
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.
The City is collaborating with the Racial & Environmental Justice Committee to center equity in the process of developing a climate action plan.

- 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.
What We’ve Heard

Priorities

• Adequate heat and insulation
• Energy efficient heating
• Improve RIPTA
• Efficient central air
• Public indoor play facilities
• Better windows in homes
• Be able to control heat
• Access to clean public water/cooling centers in summers open until late
• Ability to open windows
• Renewable energy
• Move away from natural gas
• Improve street cleaning
• Waste Management/Trash/Dirt
• Bike paths

Concerns

• Rodents/roaches
• Gas Leaks
• Smog
• Contaminated Air - especially in Port area
• No care of or maintenance in subsidized housing
• Water quality concerns, especially lead in schools
• Support for obtaining electric energy/solar panels
• High pollen
• Food access
• More/better park areas
• Highways, transportation causing pollution
• Cars not up to standards
• Poorly paved streets
• Smoke from the recycling facility
• Factory emissions
• Highway emissions
“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 is] 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.”

“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.”

“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 sucks!”

“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 pollution and make me wish I could move.”

“Not enough places for kids to play be near nature. Our air definitely would be cleaner. Even Roger William’s is surrounded by highways!”
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.
Providence’s Climate Justice Plan: Creating an equitable, low-carbon, and climate resilient future.

1. **Mitigation**: Reducing greenhouse gas emissions
2. **Adaptation**: Preparing for the impacts of climate change
3. **Equity**: Moving towards a more racially equitable city. Everyone gets what they need to thrive.
Policy Examples

- **Community solar**: Use rooftops, vacant lots, brownfields, community rooftops for community solar to make renewable energy affordable for low-income communities of color.
- **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.
- **Partner with community organizations to create workforce development programs** to train local workers careers as electricians, construction, and engineers, as well as build capacity for self-employment, women and minority owned businesses and enterprises, and employee-owned businesses.
- **Train local employers in racial equity and sustainability practices.**
ResilientPVD Lab Recommendations

- CITY/URBAN GREENING
- PARK DEVELOPMENT
- REDUCING HARDSCAPE
- BIKE CONNECTIVITY
ResilientPVD Lab Recommendations

3 days
Thank You!

Lbamberger@ProvidenceRI.gov
SustainPVD.org
Facebook.com/SustainPVD
Twitter.com/Sustain_PVD