



SUSTAINPVD

Mayor Jorge O. Elorza

Leah Bamberger, Director of Sustainability



In 1790 Samuel Slater and Moses Brown opened the first water-powered cotton-spinning factory in the United States in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, thus beginning a new age of industrialization.



PROVIDENCE, R.I.

1. The City of Providence, Rhode Island, is situated on the eastern bank of the Providence River, which flows into the Narragansett Bay. The city is one of the oldest in the United States, having been founded in 1639. It is a major center of commerce and industry in the New England region.

2. The city is bounded by the Providence River to the north and east, and by the city limits to the south and west. The harbor is one of the best in the United States, and is the center of a large shipping trade.

3. The city is divided into several wards, and is governed by a Mayor and a City Council. The population of the city is approximately 100,000.

4. The city is a major center of industry, and is particularly known for its textile mills. The city is also a center of commerce, and is the headquarters of many large corporations.

5. The city is a major center of education, and is home to several of the best universities in the United States. The city is also a center of culture, and is home to many of the best museums and theaters in the United States.

6. The city is a major center of transportation, and is the headquarters of many of the largest railroads in the United States. The city is also a major center of shipping, and is the headquarters of many of the largest shipping companies in the United States.

7. The city is a major center of government, and is the headquarters of many of the largest government agencies in the United States. The city is also a major center of finance, and is the headquarters of many of the largest banks in the United States.

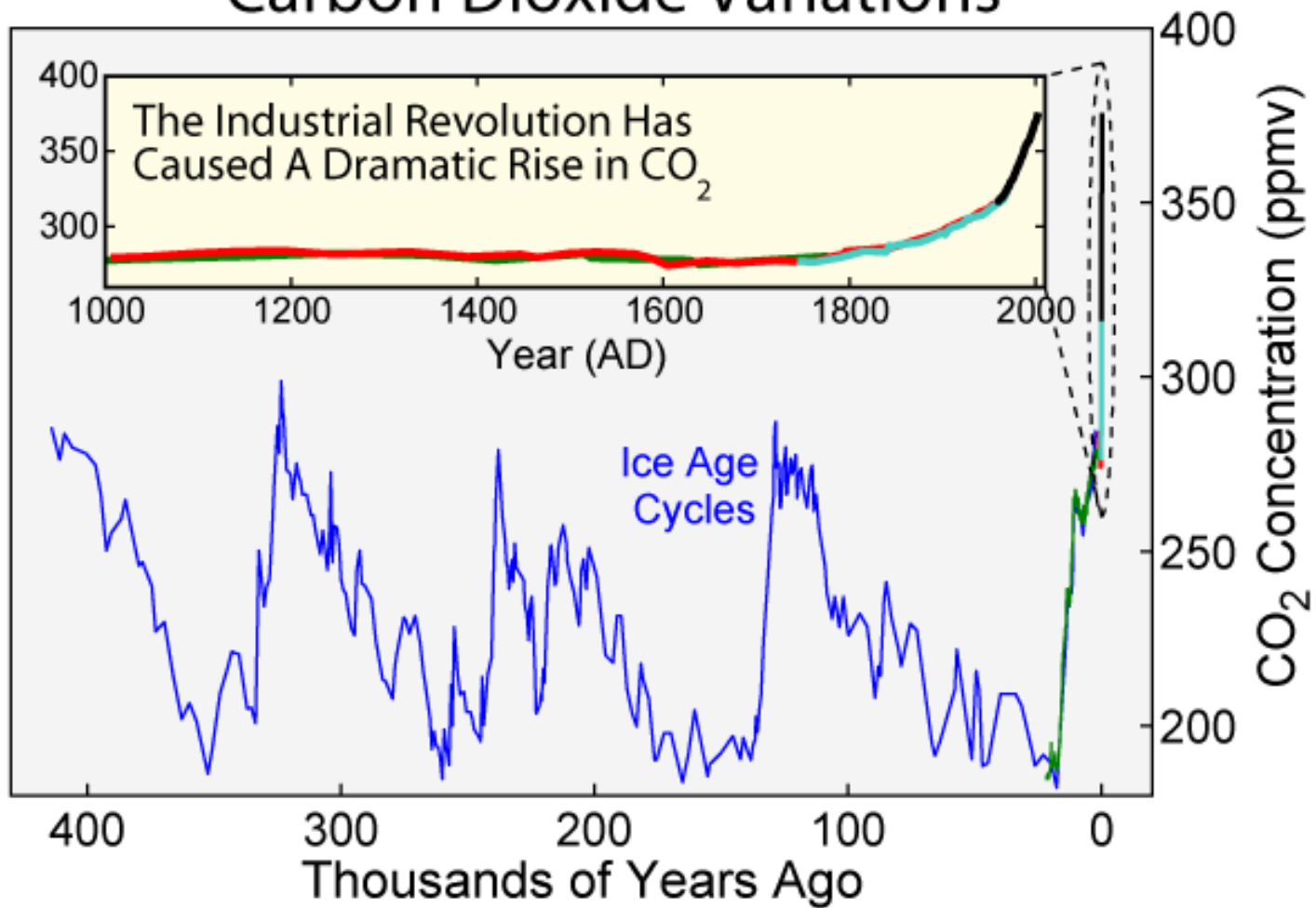
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Carbon Dioxide Variations

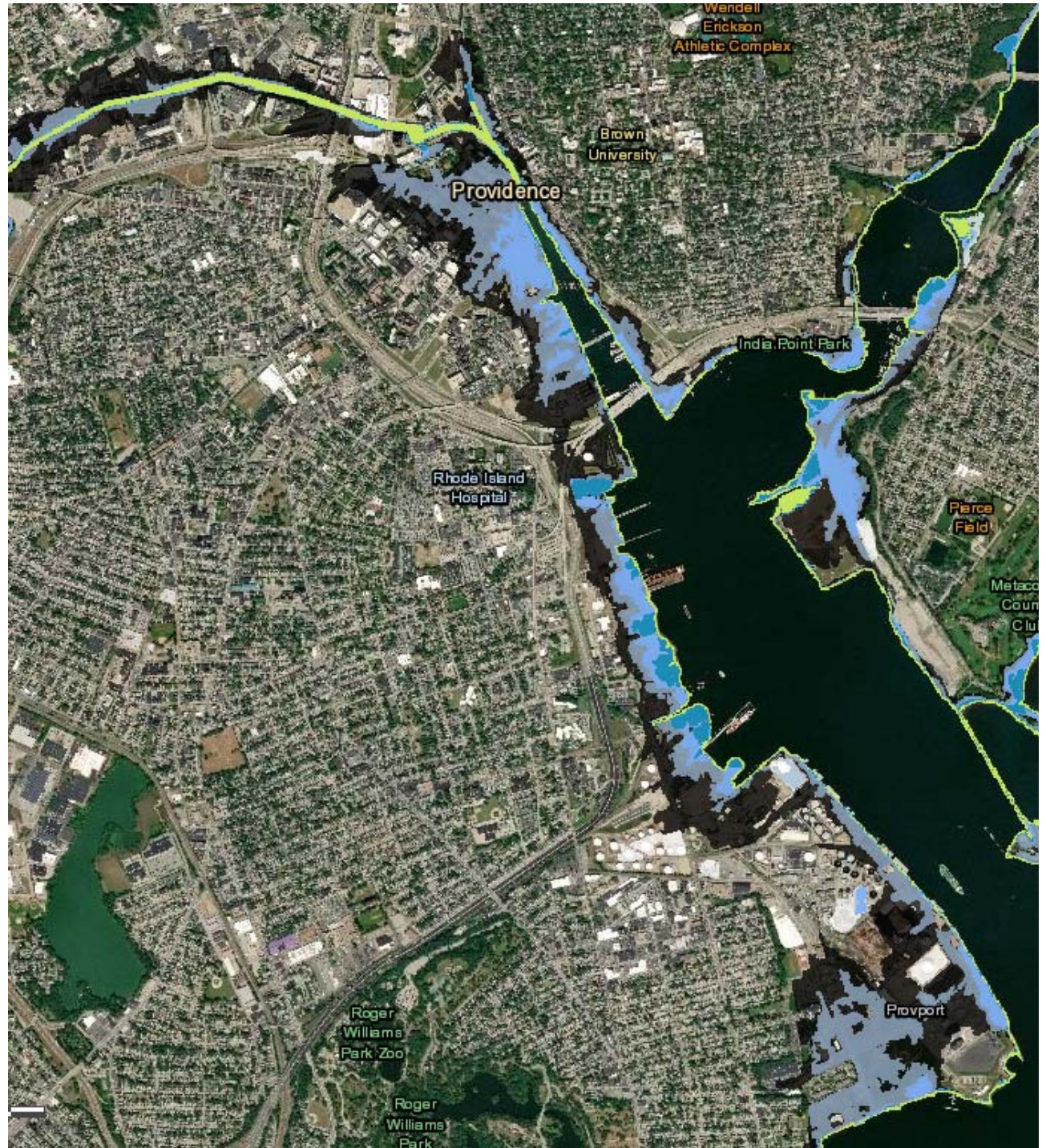


Sea-level Rise Impacts

2030: Yellow

2050: Teal

2010: Black



Climate Action Milestones

2004

State adopts **Renewable Energy** Standard requiring 16% of electricity to be **renewable** by 2019.

2007

Environmental Justice League of Rhode Island forms.

2009

Regional **Greenhouse Gas** Initiative (RGGI) established to reduce **greenhouse gas emissions** from power plants across the Northeast via a cap and trade system.

2008

Greenprint Providence released.

2006

State establishes **energy efficiency utility** programs via the Comprehensive Energy Conservation, Efficiency and Affordability Act which requires electricity and natural gas **utility** companies to invest in all cost-effective **energy efficiency** before purchasing traditional energy supply.

2011

Office of Sustainability established.

2014

Sustainable Providence released.

State sets **GHG** reduction targets of 45% from 1990 levels by 2035 and 80% from 1990 levels by 2050 via the Resilient Rhode Island Act of 2014.

2012

Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission created.

2013

Fossil Free Rhode Island forms.

2015

City divests from "Filthy 15" fossil fuel companies.

Mayor Elorza joins Compact of Mayors, now the Global Covenant of Mayors.

2016

City releases first annual energy report, disclosing energy consumption of all municipal buildings.

Mayor Elorza commits Providence to become **carbon neutral** by 2050.

Providence launches first Solarize campaign.

Racial and **Environmental Justice** Committee forms.

Renewable Energy Standard updated to statewide target of 38.5% **renewable energy** by 2035.

2018

RePowerPVD program launched.

Bike share program launched.

Rhode Island becomes first state to sue big oil companies for climate damages.

2017

City releases first **greenhouse gas** inventory showing ~70% of **emissions** are coming from our buildings.

Office of Sustainability adopts REJC's "Just Providence Framework".

Providence selected to join City Energy Project.

All streetlights in Providence converted to LEDs.

Climate Action Rhode Island forms.

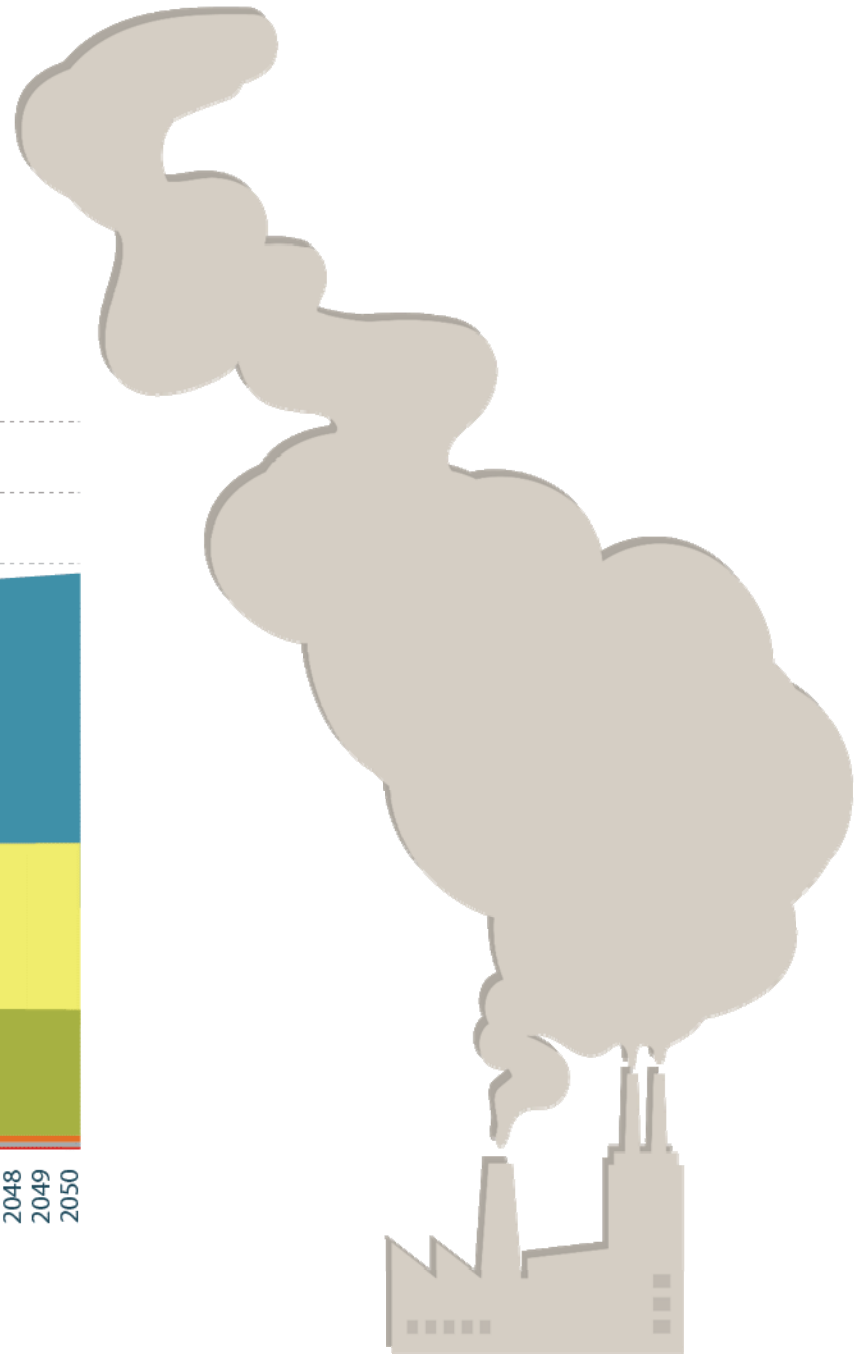
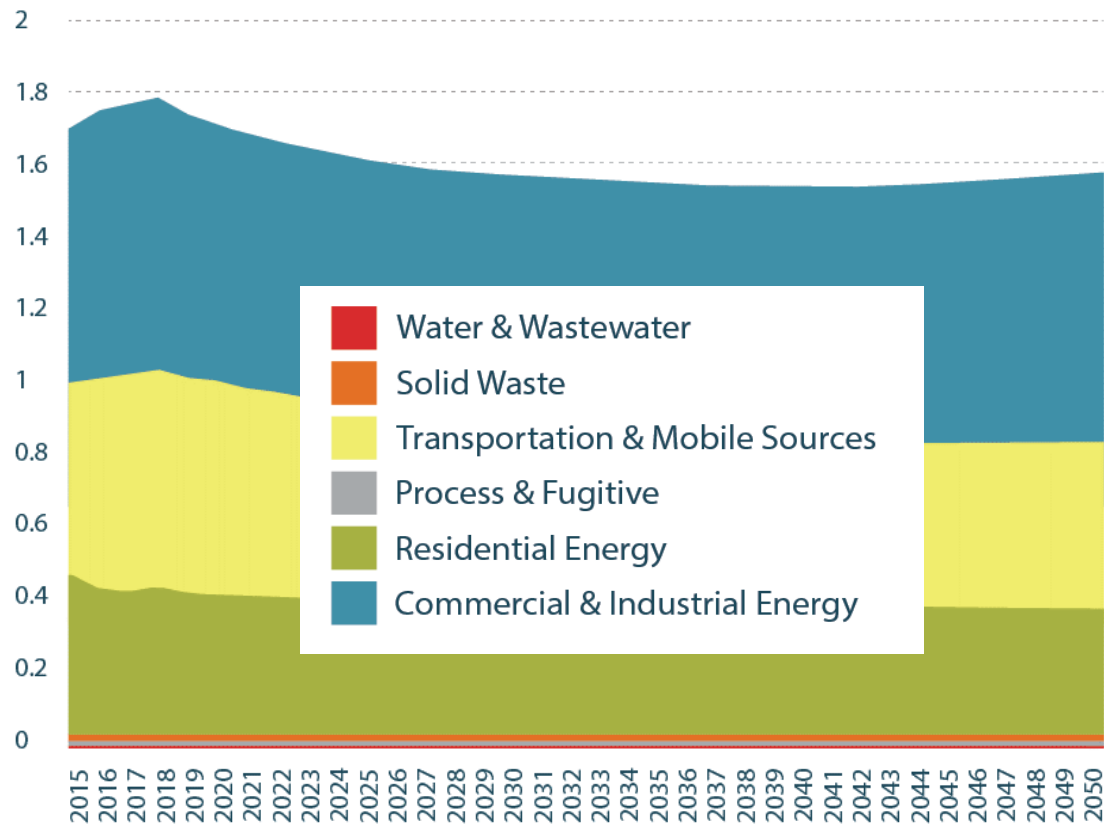
2019

Rhode Island youth assemble at State House to strike for climate action.

City connects to 23 MW solar farm to power municipal buildings.

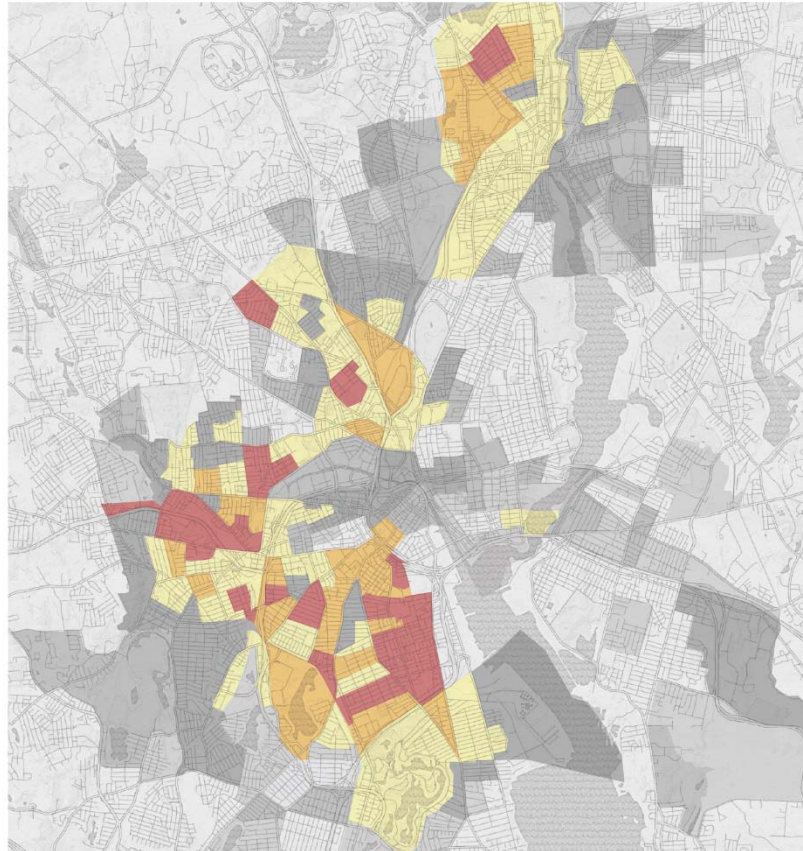
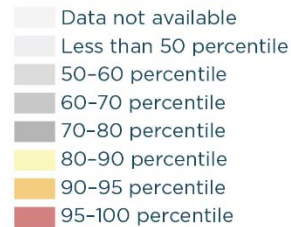
Business-As-Usual Emissions Scenario

(Million Metric Tons of CO₂e)



Environmental Justice Screening Map: Frontline Communities

Demographic Data (National Percentiles)

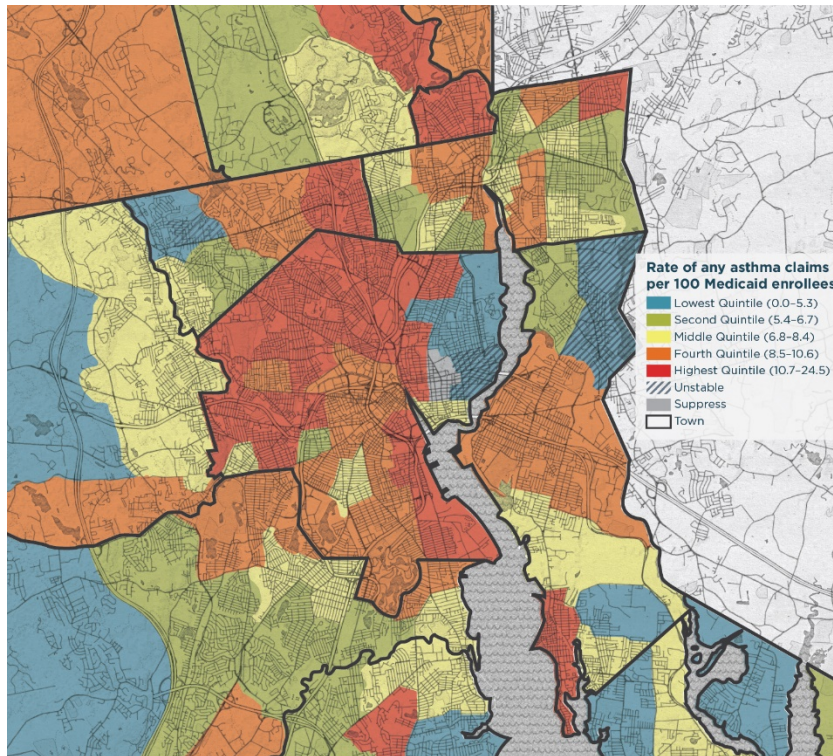


Frontline communities are communities of color most impacted by the crises of ecology, economy and democracy.

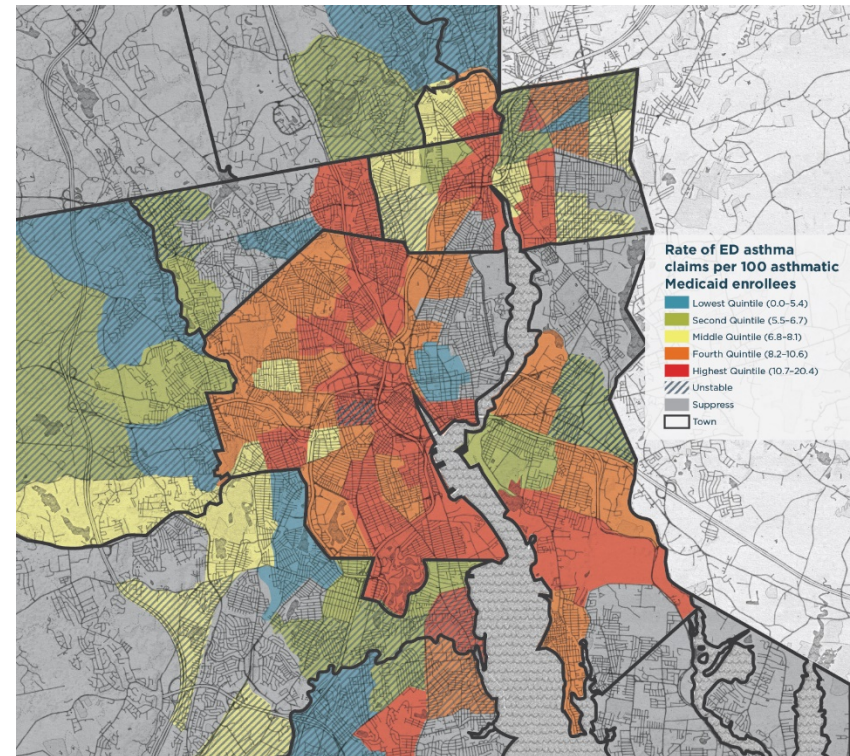
In Providence, they generally include the Indigenous, African-American, Black, Latinx, and Southeast Asian communities.

EJSCREEN identifies parts of South Providence, Washington Park, Olneyville, Manton, Silver Lake, Wanskuck, and the West End as frontline communities.

Rate of Children with Asthma in Medicaid

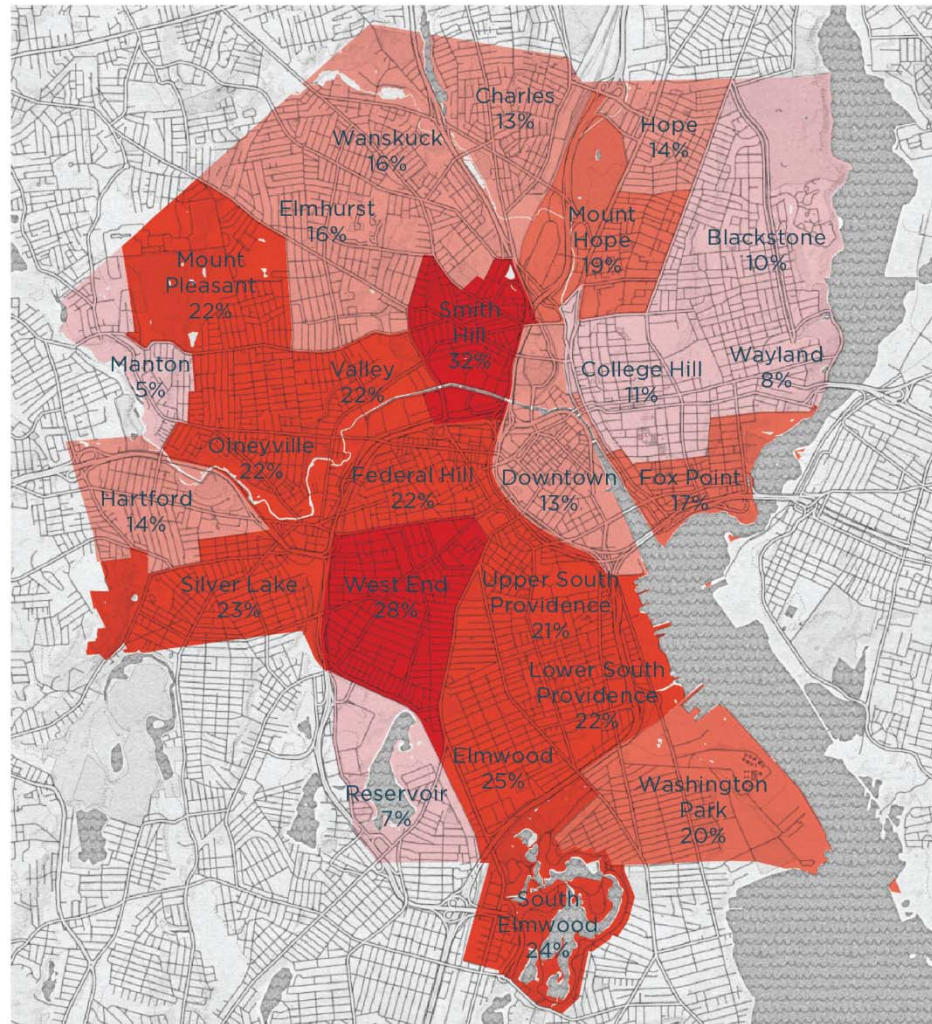


Rate of Asthma Emergency Department Visits for Children with Asthma in Medicaid

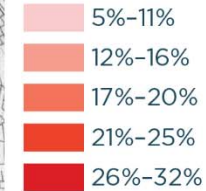


Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, with data analysis and maps produced by the Hassenfeld Child Health Innovation Institute at Brown University. Data source: Medicaid claims data for Rhode Island children, 2013-2017: insurance claims with primary diagnosis of asthma (ICD-9 493, ICD-10 J45)

Kindergarten-Aged Children Who Have Had Elevated Blood Levels in Providence, 2014



% BLL 5+



Statewide average = 12.4%

Source: Rhode Island Department of Health Lead Elimination Surveillance System, Rhode Island GIS

Note: The population includes the total number of children eligible to enter school in fall 2014 (born between 9/1/08 and 8/30/09) with at least one confirmed lead test. Elevated blood lead levels are defined as at least one confirmed test of 5 micrograms/deciliter or higher in the child's lifetime.



Targeted Universalism

Equitable Process for Equitable Outcomes

In order to create a climate plan that supports **frontline communities**, the Office of Sustainability partnered with the Racial and **Environmental Justice** Committee to apply the Just Providence Framework – a set of principles developed by frontline community members of Providence – to the planning process which provides guiding principles and values. The process included the following steps:

1

Agreement between the REJC, City of Providence and consultants on a community-centered process:

including defined roles and responsibilities and the formation of a project team comprised of members of the REJC, City, a third-party facilitator, and consultants. The project team's skills included the lived experiences of local frontline community members, arts education and management, community organizing, climate and environmental policy, **energy democracy**, consensus building and facilitation, **racial equity**, **environmental justice**, language justice expertise and placed-based regenerative development.

2

Community-led education and training in energy democracy:

To begin the decision-making process, the project team needed to ensure that the community had the resources and information needed to make decisions about energy in Providence. The REJC worked with a cohort of frontline community members for a program to understand how our energy system currently works, and what a more equitable, just, and carbon-free system might look like. Through the **Energy Democracy** Community Leaders Program, 10 frontline community members of Providence were trained by the REJC, Shalini Gupta (a climate, energy and **environmental justice** policy consultant), Adeola Oredola, a local facilitator and equity expert, and One Square World (an equity and sustainability process consultancy). This program took place in the summer of 2018 via a series of Saturday workshops. At these workshops, participants learned about **environmental justice** and **energy democracy**; how energy is produced, distributed and consumed; the impact of fossil fuels on communities of color; strategies for **energy democracy** possible for Providence including those addressing major polluters, transportation and buildings; and basic organizing and base building skills. The educational program concluded with a combined retreat of the Community Leaders and the full REJC, where we took a deep dive into the Providence energy system and concepts of **energy democracy**.

3

Peer-led interviews of frontline community members:

In the fall of 2018, REJC members and Community Leaders conducted 40 interviews with community members of color to understand how they experience our current fossil fuel-based system in Providence. Interview responses were recorded via phone audio recorder and written on forms. The results of these interviews are in the Appendix. Participants were asked four simple questions:

How do you keep warm in the winter? What do you like about that and what would you change?

How do you keep cool in the summer? What do you like about that and what would you change?

How do you get around the city? What is good about that and what would you change?

What in your community keeps you and/or your family healthy? What do you think makes you or your family sick?

The City also conducted a citywide survey that included similar questions, along with demographic information. Over 150 people responded to the survey. A summary of the results is in the Appendix.

4

Design solutions based on the priorities and concerns of frontline communities:

From these interviews, the project team identified key priorities and concerns and began to formulate potential policies that would be responsive to community priorities.

5

Reflect policies and actions back to community members via "Future Stories":

In order to return to community members with solutions for feedback and direction, the initial policies and actions were presented alongside stories from the perspective of future residents of Providence. This helped community members visualize how their communities could change depending on the policies and actions being presented. Community members noted what they liked and did not like about the future stories.

6

Refinement and finalization of policies based on community feedback with the project team:

Consultants, the City, and the REJC discussed and refined the goals, targets, and strategies to meet community priorities and be effective in a Providence-specific context. Policies were then pulled into the final report form and reviewed to ensure mutual agreement before the report was released.

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 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."

"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 traffic pollution and make 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."

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. The stories can be heard in English and Spanish:



English

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



Español

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

[Port Green Justice Zone Story](#)

What's Next?



Green Justice Zones



Community Choice
Aggregation



Energy reporting
for large buildings



SUSTAINPVD
MAYOR JORGE ELORZA



How to stay involved

- Connect with the Racial and Environmental Justice Committee (Facebook)
- Attend an Environmental Sustainability Task Force Meeting (Open Meeting Portal)
- Join our mailing list! (SustainPVD.com)