

NEMSN Profile: Providence, RI

Community Profile¹

<i>Area (sq. Miles):</i>	18.4
<i>Population:</i>	179,204
<i>Population Density:</i>	9,739.3
<i>Households:</i>	60,644
<i>Median Age:</i>	30
<i>Median Household Income:</i>	\$39,015
<i>Poverty Rate:</i>	28.2%

City Department:

Title: Office of Sustainability

Staff: Leah Bamberger: Energy Manager, Dino Larson: Building Energy Advisor.

Responsibilities: Minimizing waste, preventing pollution, promoting efficiency and developing local resources to revitalize the local economy and reducing energy consumption.

Programs/Policies: Recycle Together program, Equity Sustainability Initiative, Community Engagement, Municipal Energy Efficiency, Reducing City's energy costs, working with community groups, work with residents and business to implement the City's first comprehensive Sustainability Action Plan.

Frameworks: Compact of Mayors

Interview:

What have been your biggest successes in the past 2-3 years?

- Compact of Mayors- have received a lot of support from Mayor.
- Carbon Neutral Foundational progress.
- Reporting municipal energy data- summarizing in annual report.
- Reporting GHG inventory-initiating programs to reduce GHG.
- LED streetlighting replacement completed-reduced 25% energy use (\$3m a year saved).
- Virtual Net Metering (solar).
- Pilot on recycling education- making sure that recycling is not contaminated from lack of proper recycling practices. (Ticketing to reduce poor practices).
- Ongoing Equity Project.

Given the range of your priorities, which do you consider to be your top priorities?

- Building energy efficiencies-carbon neutrality.
- GHG inventory & programs.
- Recycling Education &

Please explain why you have chosen these strategies?

The strategies comply most with achieving the goals set in the Compact of Mayors. They are also the most feasible along with being the most beneficial to the community.

How important are the metrics to project the progress of programs and policies? How did you develop them?

Updated/revised the metrics and will be putting metrics/definitions onto a website that clearly identifies the progress of programs/policies. This was recently updated and will be released within the next month or so.

What resources are needed to complete your strategies and priorities? Are they currently available to you? If not, do you know where/how to obtain them?

- Financing.
- Expand team working on programs and actions.
- Looking to expand staff.
- **How has the local community promoted its sustainability efforts to members in the community?**
- Publishing data online (metrics) and progress on projects/programs through the Sustainability webpage.
- There are engagement events that help educate the community on renewable energy systems (solar). As well as programs such as Recycling.

What are your top 3 barriers that you consider to be beyond the control of the municipality, which have limited your ability to implement sustainability initiatives?

- RI has state level efforts making it harder for individual communities to receive proper attention. Need for more local support.
- RI is not business friendly- Need to improve organization in business community in order to progressive on GHG reductions.
- Political challenges- bill is being passed that will make LED replacements nearly impossible for other communities.

Sustainable Profile²

Overview:

- Solid Waste Reduction & Recycling
- Food & Agriculture
- Transportation
- Storm Water
- Energy
- Development
- Greenhouse Gas Reduction
- Climate Preparedness
- Equity & Economics
- Community Engagement

Sustainable Plans

	Targets/Goals	Published Plan	Metrics/Reporting
Solid Waste Reduction & Recycling	✓	✓	✓
Food & Agriculture	✓	✓	✓
Transportation	✓	✓	✓
Storm Water	✓	✓	✓
Energy	✓	✓	✓
Development			
GHG Reduction	✓		✓
Climate Preparedness	✓		
Equity & Economics			
Community Engagement			
Totals	7	5	6

Data Source: University of New Hampshire Sustainability Institute: 2017 Program Implementation Survey

Solid Waste & Recycling

Top Priorities

- Community Enforcement and Education on waste removal.
- Hire Staff to help reduce waste fees by increasing recycling education and enforcement efforts.
- Increase recycling in the public realm.
- Add composting services to municipal buildings, including schools.
- Continue community enforcement to decrease amount of contamination.

Strategies

- Waste Reduction: eliminate waste it is created.
- Increase Diversion: Maximize separation and diversion of materials that can recycled, composted or processed for reuse.
- City Operation and Services: Implemented important solid waste strategies and policies in city buildings and operations and through solid waste services to the public.
- Land Use and Business Development: Ensure land use and business development strategies to support waste reduction and diversion goals.
- Ticket residents that do not follow proper recycling protocol.

Food & Agriculture

Top Priorities

- Healthy Food Access Program
- School Garden Initiative
- Maximize use of Providence's land for urban agriculture, including vacant City-owned property.
- Support food processing business development.
- Create a Providence School Garden initiative.
- Healthy Food Access Grants program.
- Expand PPSD's commitment to purchasing locally sourced food.

- Expand availability and use of SNAP/WIC enhancement incentives (e.g. Bonus Bucks).

Strategies

- Production: Encourage and promote appropriately scaled agriculture production to meet the needs of residents.
- Processing: utilize existing manufacturing facilities and create new infrastructure to make Providence a major aggregation and distribution hub for the New England region.
- Distribution: utilize existing distribution infrastructure and create new distribution models to make Providence a major aggregation and distribution hub for the New England region.
- Consumption: Increase consumption of local and healthy food produced in ways that ecologically-sound and provide fair and just working conditions and wages.

Transportation

Top Priorities

- Bike Infrastructure (Big Jump Program)
- Improve City Walk on the South Side of City.
- Healthy Community Improvements- Developing new Rec Centers.
- Support the development of ZEV infrastructure.
- Reduce GHG emissions from public transportation fleet.
- Assess sidewalk conditions and map assets to determine needs.
- Promote incentives for City employees to take alternative transportation to work.
- Create mechanism for businesses to request and install bike parking.
- Invest in modern parking management system, adding more meters and payment methods.

Strategies

- Complete Streets: Improve Providence's roads so that they are safe and accessible for all users.
- Transit: Provide greater access to high-quality mass transit options.
- Vehicles: Reduce pollution from and fuel consumption by private vehicles.
- Bicycles: making cycling safe and attractive transportation option.
- Pedestrians: Make walking a safe and attractive transportation option.

Storm Water

Top Priorities

- Update Storm Water Management System.
- General Water Way Mapping Update.
- Replace Drinking Water Pipes.

Strategies

- Expand Public Access: Maintain and expand public access to the waterfront, and provide recreational opportunities at shorelines and on the water for all

residents and visitors.

- **Protect Habitat:** Protect and restore buffers and habitat in and around all waterways and wetlands.
- **Safe Drinking Water:** Promote efficient water usage practices to preserve our water supply, protect the source of our drinking water, and maintain and improve our water delivery infrastructure.
- **Improve Water Quality:** Improve surface water quality and mitigate flooding of water bodies through strategies including robust storm water management.

Energy

Top Priorities

- Achieve a minimum of 30% energy use reduction by 2030 in all city-owned property.
- Develop methods of getting buildings to become Net-Zero.
- Complete audits on City-owned buildings to identify energy efficiency opportunities.
- Development of 20 mw Solar Farm with virtual net metering.
- Promote participation in energy reduction programs available to City property owners.
- Streamlining solar permitting residents and business to get solar. DOE SolSmart(Solar Destination).

Strategies

- **Conservation:** reduce energy usage and increase energy efficiency in city-owned buildings.
- **Incentives:** promote energy reduction initiatives for building owners and energy users citywide.
- **Renewables:** identify and implement renewable energy opportunities on city properties, as well as citywide.

Development

Top Priorities

- Incorporate climate and sustainability survey into project review process to create baseline of current practices.
- Use tax stabilization agreement, zoning variance requests, and other processes to encourage advanced sustainable design in new development.
- Emphasize the importance of sustainable design upon initial engagement with developers.
- Promote energy efficiency and renewable energy incentive programs to developers, contractors and homeowners as they interface with City permitting and project approval processes.
- Encourage more Green (zoning, incentivize).

Strategies

- Transportation Choice and Accessibility

- Housing Choice and Affordability
- Economic Development
- Community Character and Collaboration
- Environmental protection and Public Health

Greenhouse Gas Reduction

Top Priorities

- 85% reduction in GHG emissions by 2050
- 10% reduction in GHG emissions by 2020
- 45% reduction in GHG emissions by 2035

Strategies

- Develop a baseline projection of emissions through 2050.
- Identification of “Mayor Mitigation Options” that could substantially reduce GHG emissions.
- Scenario deployment of technologies at their economic or technical potential.
- Support new citywide energy efficiency policy and programs to reduce carbon emissions from buildings.
- Set interim greenhouse gas reduction target.
- Include climate vulnerability assessments in the update of neighborhood plans.
- Assess the vulnerability of the port and the surrounding industrial areas.
- GHG inventory on buildings.

Climate Preparedness

Top Priorities

- Completed feasibility (phase 2), now moving to implementation in the fall 2017.
- Gathering information from Army Corp and working with businesses/stakeholders on Hurricane barriers.
- Develop neighborhood-specific climate vulnerability assessments and resilience plans, with metrics.
- Determine the feasibility of a regional storm water utility district concept to deal with storm water management and infrastructure issues and address non-compliance with municipal permitting.
- Collaboration between City of Providence with National Flood Insurance Program’s and Community Rating System.
- Meet the targets of the 2013 Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Strategies

- Envision climate resiliency in 2050 & 2100 then work backwards.
- Design multi-level approaches to protection & preparedness.
- Create a community-defined vision of resilience.
- Increase individual and community disaster preparedness.
- Gain an understanding of local risks, address hard choices, invest in long-term community well being.

- Provide funds to local communities in order to develop a plan for hazard mitigation planning & implementation measures before a disaster occurs.

Equity & Economics

Top Priorities

- Support and leverage the Equity in Sustainability Initiative.
- (REJ Committee)- identify key concerns, issues and needs for communities of color related to environmental sustainability in Providence.
- (REJ Committee)- Recommend a long-term process and structure for collaboration between communities of color and the Office of Sustainability.
- Implement a Race and Social Justice Screen.
- Improve website to inform low-income families.
- Develop an Equitable Engagement Checklist
- Fund Community members and organizations to lead engagement processes.

Strategies

- Researching the best practices for applying a racial equity lens to sustainability work and areas of concern in Providence.
- Establishing a Racial and Environmental Justice Committee (REJC).
- Understanding effects of personal and institutional racism, the project is hosting two Undoing Racism training from the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond.
- Establish a people of color led community Advisory Committee.

Community Engagement

Top Priorities

- Further engagement with the private sector in order to help the city achieve its sustainability and climate goals.
- Create a Challenge program to incentive residents to improve sustainable lifestyle.
- Explore program development for businesses to set goals and report on key sustainability metrics.
- Increase business and employee engagement
- Private Sector Engagement to assess their interests in sharing similar data and setting collective goals.
- Identify leaders in community engagement.

Strategies

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Initiative Implementation Matrix

Providence, RI	Not Yet Considered	Planning	In Progress	Fully Implemented
Curbside Composting	✓			
Zero Waste Policy		✓		
Community Gardens			✓	
Urban Agriculture & Local Food Programs			✓	
Complete Streets			✓	
Bike Share/ Rail Trail			✓	
Green Storm Water Infrastructure Upgrades			✓	
Commercial/Municipal Building Upgrades			✓	
Municipal Energy Aggregation	✓			
Municipal Solar Installations				
Community Solar Installations			✓	
LED Conversions: Streetlight	✓			
LED Conversion: Municipal Buildings			✓	
Mixed-Use Development			✓	
Urban Infill			✓	
Sustainable Housing for Low-Income Families				
Aiding Local Business With Sustainable Programs				
Updated Website with Events/Reports				
OTHER				
Totals	3	1	10	

Data Source: University of New Hampshire Sustainability Institute: 2017 Program Implementation Survey

Sources:

- 1.) "Census Profile: Providence, RI." *Census Reporter*. N.p., n.d. Web 21 Feb. 2017
- 2.) "Sustainable Providence: 2017 Updates and Priorities" *Sustainable Providence*. 2017
<https://data.providenceri.gov/Public-Safety/Office-of-Sustainability-High-Priority-Actions/j42x-yrwy>