

# Planning for Climate Change: Providence

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October 28, 2010

RI DEM

# Planning and Policy Efforts with Climate Change Implications:

- Providence Tomorrow: the Interim Comprehensive Plan - New section (“element”) called “Sustainability and the Environment” with focus on emissions reduction, tree planting, waste reduction, green space, green buildings, environmental justice, etc. – has become a model for other communities
- Greenprint – City policy/action plan ICLEI membership; energy efficiency; alternative energy; waste reduction and recycling; and other best green practices for City operations and facilities; green development; green jobs; establishing a culture of sustainability
- On-street parking pilots – less paving, more green space
- Trees 2020 - planting/canopy coverage goals
- Transit 2020 – goals of increased ridership; improved access, service and routes; alternative modes, etc.

# More Planning, Policy and Regulatory Efforts

- Zoning sections 425 and 427: Tree planting/Landscaping and pervious surface in residential zones (minimum 30%)
- Extensive tree planting at hospitals to reduce heat island effect – condition of approval of Institutional Master Plan process (RI Hospital and Women & Infants)
- More amendments to Comp Plan incorporating additional Greenprint initiatives, composting objectives, community gardening, etc. and highlighting accomplishments
- Current planning for grants targeting flood mitigation and business/job creation and retention: new approach emphasizing green principles including native planting/bank stabilization; rain gardens/detention ponds/swales; wetland/riparian buffer restoration; permeable driveways; less structural intervention and hardscape

# More Planning, Policy and Regulatory Efforts

- Parks – expansion, less paving, more green space, community gardens, more trees
- Depaving initiatives (conceptual stage)
- Support for Urban Agriculture
- New Flood Zone Regulations: including freeboard requirements in coastal flood zones (CRMC/State Building Code-mandated)
- Implementation of Urban Coastal Greenways (UCG)

# Opportunity:

## “Green the Knowledge District” (GKD)

- OSCAR = Ocean State Consortium of Advanced Resources
- “Energy and Environment Collaboratory” – Green the Knowledge District Project
- Opportunity presented by relocation of I-195 – new development parcels = a rare blank slate opportunity (20 acres)
- Existing institutions (hospitals, colleges) and related growth industries
- City Support for GKD
- Data-driven approach – establishing baseline energy data and ultimately developing policy and perhaps a Climate Action Plan for the district
- Focus on energy efficiency but also likely to address stormwater, LID practices, water use, etc.
- A (climate neutral) model of energy efficiency, ecological health and sustainability, and quality of life for the city, state and beyond
- Attracting business by doing the right thing (a new business model)

# What a Climate Action Plan might look like

## **TARGETS, MITIGATION STRATEGIES, TRACKING/REPORTING**

- Emissions Inventory/History
- Business as Usual Projections: Historical and Build-out
- Minimum Actions: LEED; public transit use; waste minimization: performance contracting for energy efficiency and conservation?; fixture replacement/retrofitting; lighting controls; energy management systems; weatherization; etc.
- Reduction Goals
- Mitigation Strategies (conservation, efficiency, renewables, transportation)
- Standards for new construction; on-site stormwater/LID; incentives for green roofs, etc.
- Other: recycling/waste reduction/composting

# Meeting Challenges:

- Public and professional education essential
- Rally the troops and avoid turf battles – non-profits, institutions, businesses, government, etc.
- Data-driven decisions
- Sustain City support
- Sustain enthusiasm
- GKD: Translate the message into action and attraction – businesses attracted by the cause and by uniqueness, efficiency, design, etc.
- Political will: local and statewide, regardless of the economic climate
- Time/patience/political cycles