Climate Justice

Presented to:

EC4 Advisory Board
December 15, 2020

The following highlights initiatives and programs currently ongoing within climate-related agencies. This list is not comprehensive, but it demonstrates efforts including grant programs, studies, cross-agency collaborations aimed at addressing climate justice.

DEM

- Providence Port Green Justice Initiative
- Climate Resilience Fund
- Port of Providence Grant
- RI Truck Count & Assessment Study
- Air Toxics Community Scale Grant

OER

- Least Cost Procurement Standards
- Meetings with community organizers
- LMI Community Solar Working Group
- NEED curriculum for efficiency, health, and equity
- Energy Efficiency plans

Division of Statewide Planning

- Moving Forward 2040 (includes Transit Forward 2040, Bicycle Mobility Plan, Congestion Management Plan; incorporates Environmental Justice Analysis)
- Mobility Innovation Working Group

RIPTA

- Transit Forward RI 2040
- Title VI Equity Analysis for Service Changes
- Electric Bus Pilot Program

RIDOT

- Convert fleet to electric vehicles
- Convert streetlights to energy efficient LEDs
- Power roadside traffic monitoring devices with solar panels
- Improve access for pedestrians, bicyclists in road improvement projects

DPUC

- Low-income rate discount program
- Energy Efficiency Technical Working Group
- Ratepayer Advisory Board
- M/W/DBE utilization
- Replace leak-prone gas pipes and older water lines

RIIB

- Municipal Resilience Program
- Revolving loan fund programs
- Stormwater Project Accelerator
- Reduced interest for water projects in environmental justice communities

RIDOH

- Tree Equity Program
- Promote green infrastructure
- Health Equity Zones
- Track data with health equity measures
- Use mapping and data to highlight social, environmental, and health inequities
- Heat Watch Program

CRMC

- Urban Coastal Greenways

FRAMING EC4 ADVISORY BOARD REVIEW

State government climate leaders have outlined a set of proposed priorities aiming to advance a coordinated climate justice approach to our work, emphasizing equity and access for all Rhode Islanders. We are requesting the EC4 Advisory Board's assistance to review this outline and recommend improvements.

Objectives of EC4 Advisory Board Review:

- Review proposed climate justice priorities outline
- Provide feedback on outline: Do these priorities effectively work to advance climate justice?
- Are these priorities framed correctly? Is this the appropriate language?
- Identify priorities to add/remove
- Engage stakeholders throughout review and incorporate their perspective in findings
- Develop guidelines for community engagement best practices
- Advise on next steps regarding priorities

PRIORITIES FOR CONSIDERATION

Conduct a **Gap Analysis**

Prioritize and Improve **Public Engagement and Input Throughout Development** and Decision-Making Process

Create and/or **Improve Access** to Programs, Resources and Information

Mitigate and **Remove Burdens** from EJ Communities

Example related goals:

- Informed by community engagement
- Qualitative and quantitative comprehensive equity assessment of programs
- Include metrics: (e.g. grant funds awarded to environmental justice communities)
- Define environmental justice and develop statewide environmental justice policy, defining environmental justice communities, benefits, and burdens (aligned with federal definitions/restrictions)
- **What else?**

Example related goals:

- Compensate community members for their engagement
- Provide free child-care and/or transportation during community listening sessions and public input meetings
- Even after COVID, consider continuing to live stream public meetings and enable remote public comment
- Attend and present at community meetings and/or host workshops at community groups
- Hold regular environmental justice listening sessions with community members and leaders from our overburdened communities
- Engage Advisory Boards: RIPTA Passengers Advisory Board, TCI Equity Advisory Board, DPUC Ratepayer Advisory Board, National Grid/OER Income-Eligible Energy Efficiency Advisory Board, EC4 Advisory Board
- In EC4 annual report, include environmental justice section
- **What else?**

3. IMPROVE ACCESS TO PROGRAMS, RESOURCES & INFORMATION

Example related goals:

- Analyze existing programs to promote increased access to environmental communities
- Coordinate across agencies to connect Rhode Islanders with comprehensive resources across state government (i.e. broad comprehensive resource document with personal contacts at state agencies; think about how we can plug resources into 211 and/or validate info)
- Create new initiatives that serve environmental justice communities
- Improve outreach and sharing information (includes ensuring all public documents and/or websites are translated); translation opportunities to provide public input (consider Google Translate resource or other state translation program)
- Short-term: secure stable translation services
- Expand translation opportunities to provide public input
- Improve public access and transportation to shores, parks, state offices
- Forge community partnerships with EJ communities
- Identify a climate justice point of contact at each agency
- Expand hours of operations
- Create a climate justice webpage on climatechange.ri.gov
- Educating people about channels for involvement and engagement
- **What else?**

Example related goals:

- Identify burdens for environmental justice communities
- Consider unique needs of environmental justice communities in statewide grant programs
- Create new programs specifically targeted to serve environmental justice communities
- Reduce local emissions in environmental justice communities
- Create maps of environmental justice areas
- Address cost inequities in services
- Screen new initiatives through an environmental justice lens
- Coordinate efforts with our Health Equity Zones (HEZs)
- **What else?**