

**EC4  
ADVISORY  
BOARD**

**REPORT TO EC4  
SEPTEMBER 30, 2021**

# EC4 Advisory Board Membership

- **Diane Williamson** appointed by the Governor
- **Rachel Calabro** appointed by the Governor
- **Sue Mara** appointed by the Governor
- **Amy Rainone** appointed by the House
- **David Caldwell Jr.** appointed by the House
- **Patrick Crowley** appointed by the House
- **Elizabeth Catucci** appointment by the Senate
- **Kenneth Filarski** appointment by the Senate
- **Pam Rubinoff** appointment by the Senate
- **Sheila Dormody** appointment by the Senate
- 1 House vacancy, 2 Governor vacancies

## EC4AB Priorities

- Act on Climate law implementation
- Update to the 2022 GHG Report
- Climate justice priorities and anti-racism training
- Connect with other state climate programs (Municipal Resilience Program, Tree Equity)

RHODE ISLAND  
CLIMATE JUSTICE  
PRIORITIES

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DRAFT PROPOSED BY  
THE EC4 TO THE EC4AB



Conduct a gap analysis of statewide policies and programs



Prioritize and improve public engagement and input throughout development and decision-making process



Create or improve access to programs, resources and information



Mitigate and remove burdens from environmental justice communities

# CLIMATE JUSTICE PRIORITIES REVIEW TIMELINE

**December 2020**

EC4 request EC4AB review of climate justice priorities outline

**June 2021**

EC4AB present initial findings to the EC4

**September 2021**

EC4AB present final findings and recommendations to EC4

**Jan-June 2021**

EC4AB review and stakeholder engagement

**July-August 2021**

Continue review, stakeholder engagement

# EC4AB Review - Early Themes

Provide clear definitions, values, acknowledgements and principles

Prioritize this work with staffing and training

Meet people where they are

Proceed at the pace of trust

Address cumulative impacts  
Acknowledge and rectify

Address the representation gap on state boards and decision-making groups

Partner with community-based organizations and compensate them

Move toward collaborative governance with environmental justice communities

# Findings

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The EC4AB supports the proposed climate justice priorities.

The EC4 should **designate staff** to continue to develop the priorities by partnering with frontline communities.

**Frontline communities should have the final say** determining the next steps in adopting the climate justice priorities and be a compensated partner in moving them forward.

**Leverage federal funding** for workforce development that will advance climate justice.

# Recommended Actions



Finalize the Climate Justice Priorities



Expand State Capacity to Advance Climate Justice



Integrate Climate Justice Across State Functions



Develop and Expand State Partnerships





## Finalize the Climate Justice Priorities

1. Engage with residents of environmental justice areas and with relevant community-led organizations to vet the climate justice priorities.
2. Articulate the values and principles that the State is trying to achieve through the priorities.
3. Compensate community partners for the expertise they will provide.
4. Follow the Platinum Rule: Treat others the way they want to be treated.
5. Advance the implementation of the priorities while continuing to integrate the community response.



## Finalize the Climate Justice Priorities

6. Allow time to build effective, trusting partnerships.

7. Map existing environmental justice areas of Rhode Island.

8. Provide clear definitions of key terms including environmental justice and climate justice.

9. Create a framework acknowledging past and current harms to frontline communities.

10. Review the Spectrum of Community Engagement (slide 13) and establish goals and strategies for state action.



## Expand State Capacity to Advance Climate Justice

11. Hire and assign staff, and contract with community-based consultants and organizations, to center marginalized communities most affected by climate injustice in decision making, policies and practices.

12. Provide training for staff to apply climate justice principles in all areas of work.

13. Develop an open and transparent process for candidates to appoint to boards and commissions with diverse backgrounds.

14. Identify and address barriers to participation in public meetings for board members and public participants.

15. Leverage federal funding opportunity to invest in community-led solutions that advance climate justice.



## Integrate Climate Justice Across State Functions

16. Review state programs to align and maximize their potential benefits toward climate justice. (Slide 14)

17. Expand the review of existing programs to include Workforce Development, RI Housing and others.

18. Analyze both gaps and potential connections of existing state programs to maximize the benefits.

19. Focus State climate change actions on community level solutions rather than depend on individual consumer actions.

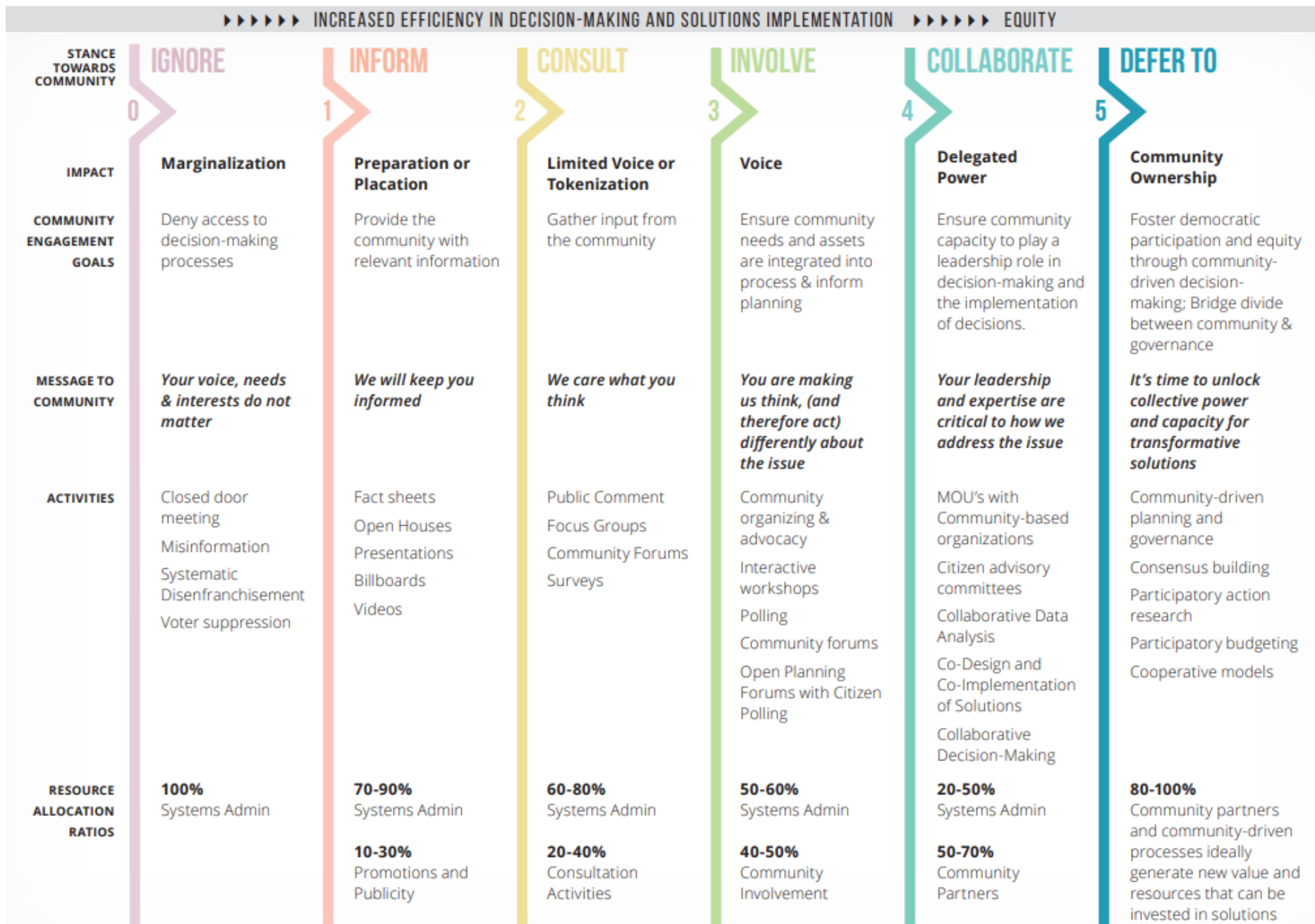
20. Develop a curriculum for integrating climate change across all grade levels.

21. Account for cumulative impacts of environmental degradation and advance restoration in environmental justice areas.



## Develop and Expand State Partnerships

22. Collaborate with and support the Health Equity Zones and expand the model for community-led prioritization for state funding.
23. Explore opportunities to integrate climate justice work into the Equity Council and other cross-cutting state initiatives.
24. Partner with the City of Providence Sustainability Office and the Racial and Environmental Justice Committee to apply the lessons from the Providence Climate Justice Plan.
25. Leverage the wealth of private resources and expertise from across Rhode Island's academic, non-profit and private business sectors to support climate justice strategies.



# Highlights of Ongoing Initiatives and Programs within Climate-related Agencies

EC4 partial list of efforts including grant programs, studies, and cross-agency collaborations relevant to 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
- Low to Moderate Income 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





# REFERENCE SLIDES

EC4 ORIGINAL DESCRIPTION OF RELATED GOALS  
TO CLIMATE JUSTICE PRIORITIES

## Conduct a gap analysis of statewide policies and programs

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A gap analysis is an examination of the space between "where we are" (the present state) and "where we want to be."  
By defining gaps, we can create a plan to address them.

### 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?

# Prioritize and improve public engagement throughout development and decision making

## 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?

# Improve access to programs, resources, and 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](http://climatechange.ri.gov)
- Educating people about channels for involvement and engagement
- What else?

# Mitigate and remove burdens from Environmental Justice communities

## 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?