

RANK

25 / 75

2019 CITY CLEAN ENERGY SCORECARD

Providence

Providence was one of three “Cities to Watch” in the 2019 City Scorecard. Along with Hartford and Cincinnati, it stood out for having adopted several major clean energy policies and program since early 2017. Providence approved an agreement allowing building owners to use C-PACE to finance energy efficiency upgrades. In 2017 the city partnered with National Grid and the Northwest Energy Efficiency Council to offer a Building Operator Certification class, and in 2018 it partnered with the Urban Green Council to offer Green Professional Building Skills Training. Providence has also shown a commitment to engaging low-income communities and communities of color in its environmental planning processes. In fact, Providence performed well across the report for metrics assessing equity-driven clean energy planning and policies due to efforts that included the formation of the Racial and Environmental Justice Committee. While the city has room to improve across the board, it is poised to move up the rankings in future scorecards should it continue its pursuit of clean energy.

OVERALL SCORE

41.5 / 100



LOCAL GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

6

3.5

9



COMMUNITY-WIDE INITIATIVES

8

4.5

16



BUILDINGS POLICIES

5.5

9

30



ENERGY AND WATER UTILITIES

11

5.5

15



TRANSPORTATION POLICIES

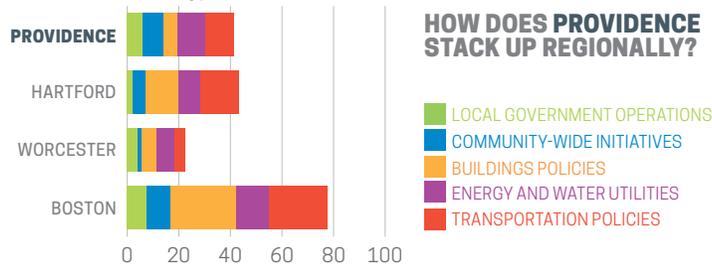
11

8.5

30

MEDIAN SCORE

MAXIMUM POINTS POSSIBLE



LOCAL GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS (6 OF 9 POINTS)

Providence has set energy-reduction, renewable electricity, and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction goals for local government operations. ACEEE does not currently project that the city will achieve its goal of reducing local government GHG emissions 100% from 2015 levels by 2050. Providence requires building projects to meet LEED standards, benchmarks all municipal buildings, and retrofits select buildings. The city works to incorporate fuel-efficient vehicles into its fleet.

COMMUNITY-WIDE INITIATIVES (8 OF 16 POINTS)

Providence’s GHG emissions reduction goals and renewable energy goals, as well as equity-driven planning efforts provide the vision for its clean energy efforts. ACEEE does not currently project that the city will achieve its goal of reducing community-wide GHG emissions 100% by 2050. The city has not adopted a community-wide energy-savings goal. The city has overseen the development of municipal combined heat and power (CHP), wind, and solar systems and supports on-site solar installation by streamlining permitting and allowing solar-by-right accessory use in all zones. To mitigate the urban heat island effect, the city has adopted a goal to increase urban tree canopy coverage from 23% to 30%.

BUILDINGS POLICIES (5.5 OF 30 POINTS)

Rhode Island requires all jurisdictions to adopt the state energy code, the SBC-8 State Energy Code that references the 2012 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC). While Providence must enforce the state code, the city could advocate for more stringent state codes. The city grants commercial property owners access to property assessed clean energy (PACE) financing for energy efficiency or renewable energy projects. The city could further encourage energy efficiency and renewable generation investments through mandatory policies that require building energy-use benchmarking and energy-saving actions like audits or retrocommissioning. The city has offered several workforce development training courses, like the Green Professionals Building Skills (GRPO) training and the Building Operator Certification level 1 training program.

ENERGY AND WATER UTILITIES (11 OF 15 POINTS)

Compared to other utilities, Narragansett Electric shows high savings for both electric and natural gas efficiency programs. Narragansett also offers comprehensive programs for low-income and multifamily households. Through RePowerPVD, the city works closely with its utility to promote energy efficiency. Providence is also taking steps to encourage the decarbonization of the utility electric grid; this includes submitting comments to the Public Utility Commission. Multiple efforts also aim to increase energy efficiency in water services and wastewater treatment plants.

TRANSPORTATION POLICIES (11 OF 30 POINTS)

The Comprehensive Plan and the city’s sustainability plan set a sustainable transportation vision, although the city has not adopted quantitative vehicle miles traveled (VMT) or transportation-related GHG reduction goals, nor has the city established mode shift targets. Coupling VMT or GHG reduction goals with mode shift targets can help guide the city into a sustainable transportation future. The zoning ordinance features transit-oriented development zones to encourage more intensive development on portions of major transit routes. The city also has no parking minimums downtown, and parking maximums exist in designated transit-oriented development areas. Relative to other city systems, Providence’s transit system is moderately accessible but underfunded.