

Community Services and Facilities

GOAL: Sustain a high quality of life by providing efficient, responsive, and cost-effective city services, and maintaining quality community facilities.

In the coming decades, the City of Providence will face challenges including a changing climate, new

technologies, new ways of living and working, and a growing population. The city's community services and facilities must anticipate change and adapt to provide adequate service and continue acting as hubs of civic life. At a minimum, public services and facilities ensure the ability of a community to live in a safe and adequate environment. When designed with people and their environment in mind, quality services and facilities have the potential to build community capacity, support economic mobility, enhance the natural environment, and more.

Community services include both the visible and unseen systems that enable urban life. This includes management of water, wastewater, stormwater, and solid waste, as well as energy production and consumption, and the interface through which residents engage with these services: PVD 311.

Community facilities are often the most direct way that residents engage with government. Facilities such as fire and police stations, libraries, schools, and community centers are often the heart of neighborhoods in which they are located and viewed as amenities, anchors, and stabilizing influences.

Not every service or facility discussed in this chapter is provided by the City of Providence. Some, like libraries and wastewater management, are provided by partner agencies or organizations. The City must remain aware of the limited resources and capacity of the various public, not-for-profit, and private entities that manage vital services, while working collaboratively to ensure the highest possible quality of life for the Providence community.

Objectives and Strategies – Community Services

City Service Coordination and PVD 311

Launched in 2015, the Mayor's Center for City Services (MCCS) and the PVD311 system has transformed how services are requested, managed, and advocated for in Providence. Constituents now have one central hub where they can ask a question or request services, either by walking into the MCCS office at City Hall, calling 3-1-1, or downloading the PVD311 app on a smartphone and submitting a request.

To date, more than 130,000 city service requests have been made through the 311 system since 2016. The most common request types include reports of trash or debris on public or private property, potholes and sidewalk issues, housing code issues or violations, missed trash pickup, illegal parking, and tree maintenance requests.

The 311 system has undergone continuous improvement since launching, with a significant upgrade expected in 2024 that will improve the user experience and better integrate service requests into City department workflows.

OBJECTIVE CS1: CITY SERVICE COORDINATION

Provide and advocate for accessible, transparent, efficient, and proactive city services.

Strategies:

- A. Continue centralizing constituent service requests through a central public facing hub (PVD 311).
- B. Improve public awareness of PVD 311 through additional signage, community outreach events, public advertising, and other best practices.
- C. Improve accessibility and user experience of PVD 311, potentially through additional channels of communication, such as virtual chat and email.
- D. Continue to expand the services and information that can be requested via PVD 311.
- E. Continue improving the integration of PVD 311 requests and City department workflows, with transparent and regular progress updates reported back to constituents.
- F. Study how innovative new technologies, like generative artificial intelligence, can be used to improve PVD 311.

Police, Fire and Public Safety

Providence's violent crime rate has steadily declined in recent decades. The Providence Police Department continues to be acknowledged as a national example of community policing, with deep relationships in Providence neighborhoods and partnerships with community organizations that help deter and respond to crime and violence. Initiatives like partnerships with ride-along mental health clinicians have helped tailor police responses to community needs, prioritizing de-escalation and supporting victims.

Understaffing continues to impact the police force. However, recent police academy graduating classes have increased staffing levels, while continuing to add diversity to the force so that it more closely reflects the Providence community. Providence Police are also expanding their capacity to respond to issues like traffic safety and quality of life crimes, by cracking down on illegal ATVs and unsafe driving behavior through speed cameras and other tools. Investments in new technology and training are also helping to tackle long considered "hard-to-enforce" issues like noise, which negatively impacts quality of life across Providence neighborhoods.

The Fire Department has also expanded services beyond fire response and prevention in the last decade, especially to combat the opioid overdose epidemic in response to an increase in basic and advanced life support. The Safe Stations program opens fire stations to anyone seeking addiction recovery services. A new Fire EMS bike unit has been deployed in high population areas of the city to respond more quickly to calls for overdose prevention, first aid, and mental health support.

OBJECTIVE CS2: POLICE, FIRE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Ensure the safety and well-being of residents by providing fire and police protection and adequate resources, technology, and training to perform these vital services.

Strategies:

- A. Support innovation in methods and technology to advance the work of the police and fire departments.
- B. Coordinate the operations of the police and fire departments and support inter-operational systems like dispatch.
- C. Maintain and support programs to address substance use and prevent overdoses, including emerging best practices in public health, exemplified by RI's first overdose prevention center and in the City of Providence's overdose prevention plan.
- D. Coordinate disaster operations and Homeland Security functions with the Providence Emergency Management Agency (PEMA).
- E. Promote ongoing training and certification of police and fire personnel.
- F. Promote fire prevention and safe buildings.
- G. Maintain and improve public education efforts such as the smoke and carbon monoxide detector program.
- H. Coordinate fire and police operations with code enforcement.
- I. Promote accessible routes for fire and emergency response; this also entails effective and legible street and directional signs.
- J. Improve traffic safety citywide, emphasizing pedestrian and bicycle as well as automobile safety.
- K. Educate the public on the proper use of the 911 system and non-emergency line to reduce abuse of the system.
- L. Continue to support and emphasize the importance of community policing and community engagement in all departments.
- M. Improve enforcement of traffic regulations citywide, including by studying and utilizing new technology and best practices.
- N. Review and develop public safety strategies around nightlife, to ensure that Providence is a safe destination for active nightlife that contributes to and does not detract from quality of life in the city.

Emergency Management

Studies have shown that every dollar spent on hazard mitigation and emergency preparedness saves an average of six dollars in future disaster costs, in addition to lives saved and injuries avoided (National Institute of Building Sciences, 2019).

Emergency prevention, preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery in Providence is led by the Providence Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) in collaboration with public safety personnel and several other public, non-profit, and private partners. PEMA also acts as the local Office of Homeland Security and is supported by both the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The emergency management landscape has changed dramatically since 2014. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, PEMA quickly pivoted to lead the coordination of vaccination clinics and distribution of

supplies like test kits, masks, and sanitizer. Extreme weather events are becoming more frequent and severe, notably coastal, riverine, and nuisance flooding, which have become a major focus of PEMA's prevention and response efforts in recent years. The opioid overdose epidemic is now an official nationwide public health emergency and year-over-year increases in overdoses in Providence have informed an urgent expansion of NARCAN training, among other actions.

At the time of this draft in spring 2024, Providence is in the final stages of updating its Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) in accordance with the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000. With help from a consultant team and a Local Hazard Mitigation Committee made up of City departments, state agencies, universities, non-profits, and other stakeholders, the plan assesses the risk of various potential hazards, ranging from the natural (ex: drought, disease, flooding), to the human-caused (ex: civil unrest, terrorism, cyber attack), and technological (ex: utility failure). The plan includes specific mitigation actions and is guided by a set of goals reflected in the strategies below that aim to reduce the risk of hazards to the City of Providence.

OBJECTIVE CS3: EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Enhance the City's capacity to mitigate, prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from major emergencies and disasters.

Strategies:

- A. Update hazard assessments to incorporate the latest data and scientific understanding with an emphasis on future projections to ensure readiness for evolving threats.
- B. Before designing mitigation measures, study and leverage nationwide best practices, explore nature-based solutions, perform a "root cause analysis," and understand the design of legacy systems in the context of current and future capacity needs.
- C. Foster collaboration between different systems and agencies to create more cohesive and efficient mitigation opportunities.
- D. Leverage emerging opportunities presented by new regulations (e.g. Executive Order 20-01: Advancing a 100% Renewable Energy Future for Rhode Island by 2030) and technological advancements, while concurrently mitigating the risks or challenges that they introduce.
- E. Tailor hazard mitigation strategies to align with the evolving landscape and its novel ramifications.
- F. Increase public involvement in disaster preparedness through education and outreach programs.
- G. Uplift community organizations in emergency response by encouraging community-driven ideas and solutions and providing resources to ensure success.
- H. Build up the financial resilience of Providence communities and provide aid after catastrophic losses.
- I. Ensure that policy, building code, and investment decisions are proactive and adaptive, aligning with the current and future risk environment and mitigation best practices to safeguard communities.

Water

Drinking water is supplied to Providence households and businesses by the Providence Water Supply Board (PWSB), also known as Providence Water. PWSB maintains the Scituate Reservoir and its purification plant, as well as the infrastructure that serves drinking water to 600,000 people across Rhode Island. The Scituate Reservoir watershed is strictly protected and managed by PWSB, RI Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) and private and municipal landowners.

Based on demand projections and capacity estimates in the 2018 Water Supply System Management Plan, PWSB anticipates having ample water supply for projected future average demand, with reserve system storage available to help meet maximum day demand projections. Several drought events in the last decade, most recently in summer 2022, left the reservoir below average levels for a period of months, but never dangerously low. As climate change leads to more frequent extreme weather events in the decades to come, assumptions informing water supply and demand projections will need to be further studied.

PWSB has invested \$547 million into capital improvements and infrastructure replacements since 1990, with an additional \$615 million of capital improvements planned to be spent from 2021-2040. In recent decades, the public health dangers of lead service lines have become more widely understood. Responsibility is divided amongst ownership of lead pipes, with homeowners owning the sections of pipe on private property, making it more difficult to replace full lead service lines. However, recent federal grants and the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law have funded free private lead service replacement to qualified families.

OBJECTIVE CS4: WATER

Provide a safe, sustainable, and adequate water supply for residential, commercial and industrial users.

Strategies:

Protect the city's water supply by:

- A. Implementing a watershed protection plan for the entire Scituate Reservoir system watershed area.
- B. Continuing use of the watershed protection surcharge for watershed land acquisition.
- C. Protecting and preserving the watershed land of the Scituate Reservoir by mandating additional regulations to restrict pedestrian and vehicular access to the reservoir.
- D. Continuing to support all watershed protection efforts, including use of the power of eminent domain to acquire property rights.
- E. Working to create emergency connections with other water providers throughout the state and region based on the recommendations of the supplemental water supply study.
- F. Working to amend the enabling legislation for the PWSB to allow the City to reserve enough water for its future needs.
- G. Working with the State to plan for statewide water supply challenges and needs.

Maintain the City's water supply by:

- H. Discouraging industrial use of potable water when other water sources can be made available or technology can minimize the need.
- I. Encouraging users to create gray water systems to lessen demand on the potable water supply.
- J. Meeting and exceeding all applicable water quality regulations.
- K. Continuing to upgrade and maintain infrastructure throughout the system, including the replacement of lead service lines, with proper notification and outreach to eligible families about incentive programs and health risks.

Upgrade the water supply system by:

- L. Addressing storage and distribution problems in order to cope with predicted long-term growth in the service region and population served.
- M. Conducting studies of water system demand, safe yield, and facilities needs to ensure that future needs for water are met.
- N. Improving the water distribution system with the installation of state-of-the art equipment and infrastructure.
- O. Completing installation of automated water meters throughout the system.
- P. Exploring new areas for potential to serve as reservoirs for additional water supply.

Wastewater

All Providence households are served by a “partially combined” sewer system that carries both wastewater and stormwater. Wastewater is treated at the Field’s Point Wastewater Treatment Facility and has been managed in conjunction with the quasi-public Narragansett Bay Commission (NBC) since 1980.

In addition to technology, facilities, and renewable energy upgrades at the Fields Point Treatment Facility in the last decade, NBC’s multi-decade Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Abatement Project completed Phase II in 2014 and advanced into its final Phase III, scheduled for completion in 2028. When completed, this project will end CSO discharges into Narragansett Bay, one of the largest point sources of pollution affecting the Bay. Work in the last decade diverted outfalls in several Providence neighborhoods and separated stormwater and wastewater flow on the East Side of Providence, leading to a significant improvement in water quality in the Woonasquatucket, Providence, Moshassuck, and Seekonk rivers.

The City of Providence does not receive funding from the Narragansett Bay Commission to help maintain and upgrade City-owned sewer lines. In the last decade, the Providence Department of Public Works has utilized local Capital Improvement Plan and federal American Rescue Plan Act (2021) funding to study and map the sewer system, as well as make the first proactive repairs to City sewer lines in decades. Further study is required to understand and proactively improve the condition and capacity of the entire system, an increasingly urgent task given the changing climate and the anticipated frequency of extreme weather events in the coming decades.

OBJECTIVE CS5: WASTEWATER

In conjunction with the Narragansett Bay Commission (NBC), provide an efficient and sanitary wastewater treatment system that adequately serves the entire city, operates in full compliance with all state and federal standards, and improves water quality in Narragansett Bay.

Strategies:

The City shall ensure efficient operation of city wastewater facilities by:

- A. Pursuing funding opportunities to maintain and improve City owned wastewater lines and storm water treatment systems.
- B. Pursuing legislation for revenue sharing with NBC to ensure maintenance of City-owned wastewater lines.
- C. Continuing to ensure that all new development and redevelopment projects include separate wastewater and storm water lines.
- D. Incorporate Best Management Practices (BMPs) for storm water to limit storm water flow into the city's rivers and combined sewers, reducing outfall, flow and capacity issues.
- E. Expand and incentivize the use of innovative storm water management interventions, such as green infrastructure, de-paving and rain gardens, especially in anticipation of increased extreme weather events associated with climate change.
- F. Amending regulations to allow the operation of grey water systems to reduce the amount of wastewater entering the treatment system.

Encourage NBC to ensure the efficient and effective operation of its wastewater facilities by:

- G. Completing Phase III of the Combined Sewer Overflow Abatement Project.
- H. Continuing the Combined Sewer Monitoring and Metering Program which provides capacity and maintenance analysis.
- I. Making sewer improvements which include: video inspection of all sewer lines, development of an asset management program linked to GIS and upgrading infrastructure as needed.
- J. Ensuring ability to maintain and upgrade infrastructure through review and enforcement of all overland maintenance easements.
- K. Preparing treatment facilities for the effects of climate change, including sea level rise and storm surge risks at Field's Point.

Solid Waste

Refuse and recycling programs in Providence are administered by the Department of Public Works' Environmental Services Division with household curbside garbage and recycling pick-up under contract with Waste Management. The Department of Sustainability also leads several programs and grants relating to solid waste, including composting initiatives and plastic bag ban compliance.

Waste and recycling are brought to Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation (RIRRC) in Johnston, which includes a central landfill, materials and residential recycling, eco-depot for hazardous waste, and leaf and yard debris composting. According to *Solid Waste 2038*, an element of the State Guide Plan, the Johnston Central Landfill is expected to reach capacity in 2038 unless disposal rates change.

In an effort to improve Providence’s low rates of recycling and diversion (7.8% and 8.3% of all solid waste respectively in 2023 – well below the 35% and 50% state goals), the city and RIRRC launched a new “Recycle Together” public education program in 2022 that aims to raise recycling rates and save the estimated \$1M spent by the city annually on rejected truckloads of contaminated waste. Recent community outreach initiatives relating to mattress disposal have saved the City hundreds of thousands of dollars and reduced dumping.

The Providence Climate Justice Plan sets a target of eliminating all local food waste by 2040. Providence has seen a significant increase in backyard, indoor, and pick up composting in the last decade, indicating a demand for further expansion. Programs like Groundwork RI’s Harvest Cycle, Bootstrap Compost, and others pick up food waste directly from paying or qualifying households as well as dedicated drop off locations at community gardens and libraries. In 2024, the City of Providence received a major grant from the US Department of Agriculture to subsidize training and supplies in support of food waste diversion and composting in Providence. According to RIRRC, almost one-third of all municipal waste that goes to the land fill can be composted. In addition to expanding the life of the landfill beyond 2038, achieving this level of composting could also save over 44,000 tons of greenhouse gas emissions annually in Rhode Island.

OBJECTIVE CS6: SOLID WASTE COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL

Reduce the amount of waste disposed of in landfills by prioritizing participation in recycling and composting programs, and promoting solid waste and litter reduction.

Strategies:

- A. Expand recycling and composting public education and enforcement measures to increase citywide recycling rates to meet and exceed the 35% recycling and 50% diversion rates required by the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation (RIRRC).
- B. Encourage, invest in, and dramatically expand recycling and composting programs to reduce the amount of solid waste sent to the landfill, and consider implementing incentives to do so.
- C. Study and consider launching a municipal compost program that collects food waste and yard debris and sells compost back to residents for use.
- D. Promote the beneficial reuse of materials.
- E. Work with RIRRC and RIDEM to have multi-family housing solid waste reclassified as municipal waste rather than commercial to facilitate recycling at these properties.
- F. Encourage and support the work of non-profit groups and community organizations to help reduce litter and dumping in the city’s neighborhoods and promote the proper disposal of solid waste.
- G. Educate consumers regarding the impact of purchases on waste generation and reduction, and materials recovery, through the purchase of recycled content products, and the purchase of products with reduced toxicity and packaging.
- H. Encourage industrial processes that generate reduced amounts of waste.
- I. Encourage local businesses and industries to recycle and to use recycled and recyclable products.
- J. Promote litter prevention efforts at the local and state levels, stressing the protection of waterfront areas and waterbodies, and establishes a culture of stewardship of public spaces.

- K. Continue to modernize the City’s solid waste management system.
- L. Investigate the feasibility of a municipal Pay as You Throw program for Providence.
- M. Work with RIRRC to expand the list of acceptable recyclables (i.e. colored glass, plastic types 3 through 7).
- N. Work with RIRRC and RIDEM to expand the Recycle Together public education program.

Energy

In Providence, electricity and natural gas are delivered to households and businesses by Rhode Island Energy, which is regulated by the Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission. Most Providence residents and businesses receive energy supply via a competitive bidding process under Providence Community Electricity, a “community-choice aggregation” program launched in 2023 that allows the municipality to aggregate buying power to seek more competitive prices and a higher share of renewable energy sources.

The City and State are transitioning to a more clean, diverse, and secure energy system in the coming decades. Goals and mandates set by the Paris Agreement, RI Energy 2035 Plan, Rhode Island Act on Climate, and Providence Climate Justice Plan – to reduce emissions by 40% by 2030, 80% by 2040, and 100% by 2050 – reflect an urgency to decarbonize and reduce greenhouse gas emissions to avoid the worst effects of Climate Change. Strategies to achieve these goals are included in several Comprehensive Plan chapters (including Land Use, Sustainability, and Mobility), but must include improving energy efficiency across sectors, promoting renewable energy (especially from local sources), reducing vehicle miles traveled and transitioning to alternative fuel and electric vehicles, addressing gas leaks and outdated infrastructure, and reducing costs.

OBJECTIVE CS7: ENERGY

Provide for the energy needs of City residents and the State, while phasing out the use of fossil fuels and lessening impacts on the environment.

Strategies:

- A. Work with local generators and distributors by providing them with city plans for growth and change as they plan for the future utility needs of city and state residents.
- B. Discourage the development of private generators using fossil fuels as a primary fuel and encourage the development of generators using renewable energy sources and heat pumps.
- C. Transition energy supply to renewable sources such as wind, solar, geothermal, and tidal.
- D. Encourage utility companies to use best and most advanced technology to minimize environmental impacts on air quality.
- E. Encourage co-generation of electricity, including home and community solar programs.
- F. Promote conservation of existing energy resources through education programs.
- G. Create standards for the siting and design of physical plants, service vaults, transformers, and electric and gas meters within the city limits.
- H. Work with the city’s institutions to incorporate energy sustainability and net-zero, LEED, and passive building standards into their master plans.
- I. Increase participation in RePOWER PVD the City’s voluntary energy challenge program.

- J. Prioritize electric and alternative fuel vehicles when adding to the City's fleet.
- K. Develop plans and strategies to ensure all municipal buildings are carbon-neutral by 2040.
- L. Determine locations where wind turbines and solar farms could be constructed in the city, under certain conditions.

Objectives and Strategies – Community Facilities

Schools

As of School Year 2023-2024, the Providence Public School District (PPSD) serves approximately 19,400 students across 36 schools: 19 elementary schools, 7 middle schools, and 10 high schools. PPSD schools are racially and linguistically diverse learning communities. Approximately 69% of PPSD students identify as Latino, 14% Black, 6.5% White, 4% Asian, 5.5% multi-racial and 1% Native American. Approximately 40% of PPSD students are multilingual learners, and about 17% of students receive special education services.

In addition, roughly 6,505 students attend charter schools, representing 25% of Providence students. Because these schools are located in various geographies and serve students from both in and outside the City of Providence, this summary and comprehensive plan discusses only PPSD buildings and programs.

Over the last decade, two key initiatives have been driving changes to PPSD buildings and educational programming: the Rebuild PVD Schools and the District Turnaround Action Plan.

Rebuild PVD Schools

Following decades of deferred maintenance, a statewide moratorium on facility reimbursements and inadequate resources, PPSD's school facilities have over \$900 million of reported deficiencies that require repairs and upgrades. Supported by both City and State issued bonds, as well as State reimbursement incentives, PPSD and the City of Providence have begun an ambitious capital plan to reimagine school facilities under the umbrella of the Rebuild PVD Schools Plan.

Under this plan, PPSD and the City of Providence have built three new or like-new schools – the first in over a decade – with nine additional schools already approved and underway. Through strategic use of swing space, construction timelines are able to move faster and with less disruption to students. These projects represent over \$500 million in construction, repair, and renovation. City and state officials approved an additional \$400 million of projects in February 2024.

Reflecting national trends in demographics and the growth of private and charter schools, PPSD has had an enrollment decline of 3,000 students since 2018, a trend that is projected to continue, with a decline of another 3,000 students expected by 2030. Without any changes to school programming and facilities, this decline would leave the district with 5,500 excess seats by the 2029-30 school year. PPSD capital and programmatic planning aims to align school buildings to these shifts, ensuring a thoughtful right-sizing of district facilities and classrooms.

District Turnaround Action Plan

In November 2019, PPSD entered State Intervention, putting the district under control of the state Department of Education. Drafted in collaboration with Community Design Teams and using district outcome data, state and district leaders crafted a Turnaround Action Plan (TAP) to guide the district's work from 2020-2025. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, leaders Acknowledge the impact the global pandemic has had on the improved outcomes of the turnaround action plan. The TAP has four pillars: (1) Engaged Communities, (2) Excellence in Learning, (3) World Class Talent, and (4) Efficient District Systems. Under each of these pillars, the TAP details specific goals following key metrics to track turnaround efforts, as well as strategies for driving change.

Additionally, the City of Providence has convened an interdepartmental working group, the Return to Local Control Cabinet, that includes city departments, City Council staff and Providence School Board members. This Cabinet is tasked with identifying an outline of what the city needs to do to responsible repair for a return to local municipal control, whenever that is determined to be by the RI Department of Education and the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education.

OBJECTIVE CS8: SCHOOLS

Ensure that all Providence children have the learning environment, tools, and opportunity to succeed in school and their future workplace and become active members of civic society.

Strategies:

Improve academic achievement for all children and increase the graduation rate by:

- A. Increase the number of PPSD school that are rated 2-stars or higher by the state evaluation system.
- B. Increase the number of parents and caregivers engaged with PPSD formal community engagement structures.
- C. Increase the percentage of students who are present 90% of the school year.
- D. Increase the percentage of students who are meeting and exceeding their Multilingual Learner (MLL) targets on the ACCESS assessment
- E. Increase the percentage of students meeting and exceeding expectations in 3rd grade ELA RICAS.
- F. Increase the percentage of students meeting and exceeding expectations in 3rd grade Math RICAS.
- G. Increase the percentage of PPSD students who graduate within four years.
- H. Increase the percentage of students who graduate with college credit, AP credit or a CTE credential.
- I. Developing partnerships with local colleges and universities, as well as major employers and foundations to ensure students have access to opportunities.
- J. Recruiting highly effective teachers and school leaders who reflect Providence's diversity and are focused on student growth and achievement.
- K. Collaborating with local colleges and universities on teacher training, education curriculum and continuing education opportunities to ensure teachers are highly qualified.
- L. Working with local businesses, institutions and non-profit agencies to develop school-to-career

programs and cooperative work experiences that provide practical application of academic knowledge and prepare students to join the workforce.

- M. Exploring partnerships with libraries and local colleges and universities to increase access to resources and programming.
- N. Collaborating with community organizations to expand Eat Play Learn and other year-round out of school educational, recreational and cultural activities for children of all ages.

Develop physical and social environments that are conducive to learning by:

- O. Utilizing state and local bond funding to improve school facilities to meet current and future educational needs.
- P. Preserving the continuity of school communities and transform the middle school experience through the expansion of pre-kindergarten through 8th grade school models.
- Q. Building new schools in strategic locations where Providence families are concentrated.
- R. Building “newer and fewer” schools, to right-size the number of buildings to align with current and future projected enrollment.
- S. Modernizing security and educational technology at all school buildings.
- T. Ensuring that new and rehabilitated schools are models of environmental sustainability and design excellence.
- U. Improving pedestrian and bicycle access to schools from the surrounding neighborhoods.
- V. Opening grounds and facilities for community use, such as recreation and joint landscaping projects, to create additional urban green space in neighborhoods.
- W. Exploring opportunities for the creation of joint-use facilities such as athletic, recreational, and libraries, with community organizations.
- X. Implementing maintenance programs for buildings and grounds.
- Y. Ensuring that schools are free from physical violence and psychological abuse such as bullying.
- Z. Support efforts to create a predictable and fair school funding formula statewide that recognizes the particular challenges and needs of urban school systems.

Library Services

Providence’s library system is managed by two non-profit organizations, the downtown Providence Public Library and nine community libraries managed by Community Libraries of Providence, both of which receive significant public funding.

Since Community Libraries of Providence was founded in 2009 to take over the management and operation of the neighborhood libraries, both organizations have completed significant capital improvements and program expansions to better meet the needs of Providence communities. The Covid-19 pandemic forced both institutions to rethink their delivery of services and programs, but American Rescue Plan Act dollars and other initiatives have continued to expand programming and increase library visits. Providence Public Library completed a major modernizing renovation of its building in 2020, which has enabled a significant expansion of community programs and services. Community Libraries of Providence also completed several renovations at neighborhood branches, including ADA accessibility improvements, new “maker spaces,” and technology improvements.

OBJECTIVE CS9: LIBRARY SERVICES

Encourage Community Libraries of Providence and the Providence Public Library to provide residents of the city with a full range of library services.

Strategies:

The Providence Community and Public Libraries will:

- A. Acquire, organize and maintain comprehensive collections that reflect diversity and a wide spectrum of views.
- B. Provide specialized reference services.
- C. Refine and expand library services statewide through the development and implementation of cooperative services and individual programs, with and for community and professional groups and individual experts.
- D. Improve the effectiveness of library services for children by developing and implementing programs, in cooperation with other organizations, that serve the child in the context of her/his family and the larger community.
- E. Expand library services to adolescents.
- F. Provide sufficient hours at all library locations to ensure that the needs of the community are met. Maintain a high standard of customer service in library staff to ensure that the needs of users are met.
- G. Bridge the gap between those with ready access to information and those without by providing access to technology through the provision of up-to-date computer equipment, programs and access to the Internet.
- H. Continue training and educational programs to inform and aid individuals accessing and using the library's electronic and physical information resources.
- I. Provide remote access to library resources utilizing electronic databases.
- J. Provide access to library resources to individuals with disabilities including the provision of assistive technology for the vision and hearing-impaired.
- K. Host community events at libraries to increase community awareness of library services and continue expanding library spaces as hubs for community connection.

Recreation and Community Centers

Providence's neighborhoods are also anchored by 12 recreation centers, more than 10 senior centers, and several community centers. These facilities are the heart of their diverse and vibrant communities and host programming serving residents of all ages and backgrounds.

Providence recreation centers are managed by the Department of Recreation and have a long history of serving Providence's youth through early childhood development and athletic programs. Facilities include indoor gyms, indoor and outdoor pools, and computer rooms. Programs range from the popular \$5/week summer camps as part of Providence's Eat Play Learn program, to basketball, soccer, and swim leagues, and arts and crafts groups. Recent projects include the renovation of various recreation center gyms and pools, a major rehabilitation project at the Elmwood Community Center, and the establishment of a "Resilience Hub" at Olneyville's Joslin Recreation Center, which aims to meet the

needs of residents around climate change mitigation, emergency management, and community capacity building.

Senior centers are managed by various non-profit organizations, with programs and services coordinated by the City's Senior Services Division. The City provides transportation for seniors from private houses, nursing homes, and assisted living facilities to community centers, day centers, supermarkets, and other event locations.

OBJECTIVE CS10: RECREATION AND COMMUNITY CENTERS

Support the continued growth of recreation, senior, and community centers to meet the needs of and promote connection between constituents of all ages and backgrounds.

Strategies:

- A. Analyze changing neighborhood demographics and conduct community outreach to assess what community needs can be served by community facilities and programming.
- B. Enhance the physical infrastructure of recreation center buildings through capital improvements and grand funds, with attention to accessibility and climate resiliency.
- C. Consider developing new recreation centers in neighborhoods where there are lacking youth and community recreation opportunities.
- D. Improve the accessibility, outreach, and communication of recreation center programs and initiatives through improved technology, website, and use of social media.
- E. Expand relationships with community organizations to expand programs in line with the mission of the City and Department of Recreation
- F. Create opportunities for programming and initiatives that will enrich the experience of children, families, and community members by establishing opportunities to address athletics, health and wellness, food insecurity, and extended learning.
- G. Hire and train staff to advance the mission of the Department of Recreation.
- H. Develop relationships with elementary and secondary schools to build expand programming and extended learning opportunities.
- I. Develop relationships with senior centers and assisted living facilities to expand programs for community members of all ages.