



MAYOR BRETT P. SMILEY
CITY OF PROVIDENCE

2026 DECARBONIZATION ROADMAP SUMMARY



City of Providence
April 2026

Meeting the Challenge of the Climate Crisis

Anchored on the Climate Justice Plan, Mayor Smiley signed into law the Energy Efficiency and Carbon Neutral Goals for Municipal Buildings Ordinance in March 2024. The Decarbonization Roadmap creates a guide for phasing out fossil fuels from City buildings by 2040, a goal the City knows is achievable, despite federal program roll backs. It identifies building energy upgrades that can help safeguard the resiliency of community centered spaces, the prosperity of our local economy, and the path to energy affordability by changing how we power, heat, and cool, and operate our buildings.

Our Approach

- Prioritize energy efficiency to reduce building energy use.
- Electrify existing fossil fuel systems with high-efficiency heat pumps.
- Procure clean energy through on-site and off-site installations.

City of Providence Building Portfolio

The roadmap assessed 130 City owned buildings for efficiency, electrification, and clean energy upgrades. Occupied and maintained by 4 separate administrative divisions, a breakdown of the number of buildings, square footage, and GHG emissions are provided for each division. As is typical of a municipal portfolio, the school district has the largest share of building square footage at 80% and emissions at 73%.

This roadmap provides a high-level cost estimate of \$61M and while we expect that cost to change over time, it also estimates that Providence’s GHG emissions will be reduced by 80%, lowering each division’s Energy Use Intensity (EUI) by at least 50%, and save up to \$12 million on energy costs cumulatively through 2040.

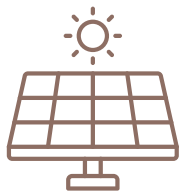
City of Providence Building Portfolio						
Administrative Division	Building Count		Building Size		GHG Emissions (CY24)	
	Count	Percentage	Square Feet	Percentage	MTCO ₂ e	Percentage
Public Property	34	26%	695,205	13.20%	2,790	14%
Providence Public School District	38	29%	4,210,907	79.97%	14,248	73%
Parks	14	11%	210,419	4.00%	1,086	6%
Roger Williams Zoo	44	34%	149,278	2.83%	1,388	7%
Total	130	100%	5,265,809	100%	19,512	100%

Key Achievements

- **22 Building Electrification Projects** have been completed or are currently under construction. This accounts for ~1.2M square feet, or 22% of the City's building portfolio that has been built new or will be updated with heat pump technology by 2028.
- **Energy efficiency projects and audits** have touched more than 60 buildings over the past 2 years and have resulted in \$3.2M in utility incentives for lighting, HVAC, and building management system upgrades.
- **Retro Commissioning (RCx)** with assistance from RI Energy and the RIDE Healthy Environments Advance Learning (HEAL) Program, 18 Providence school buildings have undergone RCx audits to identify energy and cost savings opportunities.
- **On-Site Renewable Energy** roof top solar assessments have been conducted for all municipal buildings.
- **Off-Site Renewable Energy** has led to the City receiving 30M kWh annually of virtual net metering credits, which reduce energy expenditures by \$1.5 M per year.
- **Implementation of the Energy Intelligence Suite (EIS)** for strategic energy management
- **Energy benchmarking** shows that building energy use is trending down, with the energy use in the City's buildings decreasing by 7% over the last four years.

Achieving Carbon Neutral Goals by 2040: Next Steps

- Align roadmap with **capital improvement project (CIP)** budgets and planning.



- Expend the number of **contracted solar projects** before the federal investment tax credit (ITC) direct pay program ends.
- **Reinvest utility incentive dollars**, ITC direct pay dollars, and RI Commerce Renewable Energy Fund payments in future decarbonization projects.



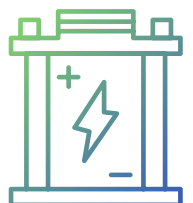
- Improve the City's **integrated building management system** platform to support all city owned buildings with state-of-the-art BMS technologies.
- Enroll all qualified buildings in Rhode Island Energy's demand response (DR) programs with the goal of **reducing energy use during peak events** and reducing operating costs.

- Pursue opportunities to deploy **thermal energy networks** at city owned buildings and at adjacent facilities.



- Develop public and private partnerships to identify **new funding and financing mechanisms** to advance more projects and to allocate capital improvement dollars more strategically.

- Explore **Decarbonization as a Service (Daas)** is an outsourced, expert-driven model to help plan, project manage and finance building decarbonization projects.



- Pursue grants and technologies that will make the city's buildings more resilient. **Microgrids** and **battery energy storage systems** are the best choices at this time.