

# ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY TASK FORCE

February 28, 2020

Dear Mayor Elorza, City Council President Sabina Matos, and Members of the City Council,

The Environmental Sustainability Task Force respectfully submits to you our annual report and priorities for 2020. We look forward to discussing these with each of you over the coming weeks and continuing to work with you and your staff to achieve our shared goals for the City.

In 2019, we urged you to take bold action on climate – particularly for the city’s frontline communities of color who are disproportionately affected by the effects of our changing climate. We asked for you to more fully staff the Office of Sustainability and to fully support the efforts of the Racial and Environmental Justice Committee and the Office of Sustainability to create a Climate Justice Strategy for the City.

We first want to thank you and applaud you for the steps you have taken in the last year. Some of your joint accomplishments over the last year have been impressive:

- The Office was recently able to hire several superb new staff who will help expand capacity on a variety of fronts.
- The Mayor also partnered with the Racial and Environmental Justice Committee to release Providence’s Climate Justice Plan in late 2019.
- The City has already gotten to work in implementation – launching the Green Justice Zones initiative, including climate resilience investments in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), and more.
- The City Council and Mayor have also both partnered to pass and begin implementation of community choice aggregation to green our electricity supply.
- The City Council recently passed a resolution to support the Environment Council of Rhode Island’s Climate Justice Strategy.

You are picking up momentum in this work – and we cannot stop or slow down now. The Environmental Sustainability Task Force is focused on two major themes for 2020.

1. **Continued support for the Climate Justice Plan implementation:** Providence is innovating new ways to engage and partner with the community through the creation and implementation of the Climate Justice Plan. There are several implementation initiatives underway – and we urge you to continue to support the Office of Sustainability in their implementation of this plan, particularly in a way that is rooted in community engagement. This work is making Providence stronger, more resilient – and a model for other cities across the country. Implementation includes (but is not limited to):
  - a. The Benchmarking ordinance City Council will be considering in March
  - b. The update to the ordinance outlining the roles of the Office of Sustainability to be introduced in March
  - c. Implementation of the Municipal Aggregation Program to support renewable energy
  - d. Continued support for the Green Justice Zones initiative
2. **Sustainability & Climate Justice in all Policies:** Sustainability isn’t just something that can be accomplished by staff in the Office of Sustainability –it impacts so much of the functioning of

IN CITY COUNCIL  
MAR 05 2020  
READ  
WHEREUPON IT IS ORDERED THAT  
THE SAME BE RECEIVED.  
*Paul Bellia* CLERK

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City Hall. You recognized this when you passed the CIP with investments for green infrastructure to begin implementation of the Climate Justice Plan. The Racial and Environmental Justice Committee explains this in their Recommendations for a Racially Equitable and Justice Providence. Climate Justice & Sustainability are integral parts of economic development, city planning, infrastructure investments & more. The Environmental Sustainability Task Force will be working to connect with other Task Forces, Commissions, City Departments, and residents to continue to infuse the great work of the Sustainability Office & the Climate Justice Strategy into other arenas and find opportunities for partnership. We would welcome your partnership & introductions to new constituencies.

- a. We ask that you use this lens as you are considering initiatives. From Transportation to Finance to Economic Development – how do they impact our goals and work for sustainability and climate justice?

Thank you so much for your partnership on these efforts. We look forward to ways to continue working together to move our great city forward.

Sincerely,



Sue AnderBois  
Chair, ESTF  
Ward 3



Julian Drix  
Vice Chair, ESTF  
Ward 9

## ESTF Members:

Vatic Kuumba, Ward 14

Carlos Garcia-Quijano, Ward 7

Kevin Purdy, Ward 2

Catherine Van Amburgh, Ward 1

Amelia Rose, Environmental Council Rhode Island (ECRI) appointee