



WOONASQUATUCKET RIVER  
WATERSHED COUNCIL

*Encourage, support and promote the restoration and preservation of the Woonasquatucket River Watershed as an environmental, recreational, cultural, and economic asset of the State of Rhode Island.*



# NEW VOICES AT THE WATER TABLE

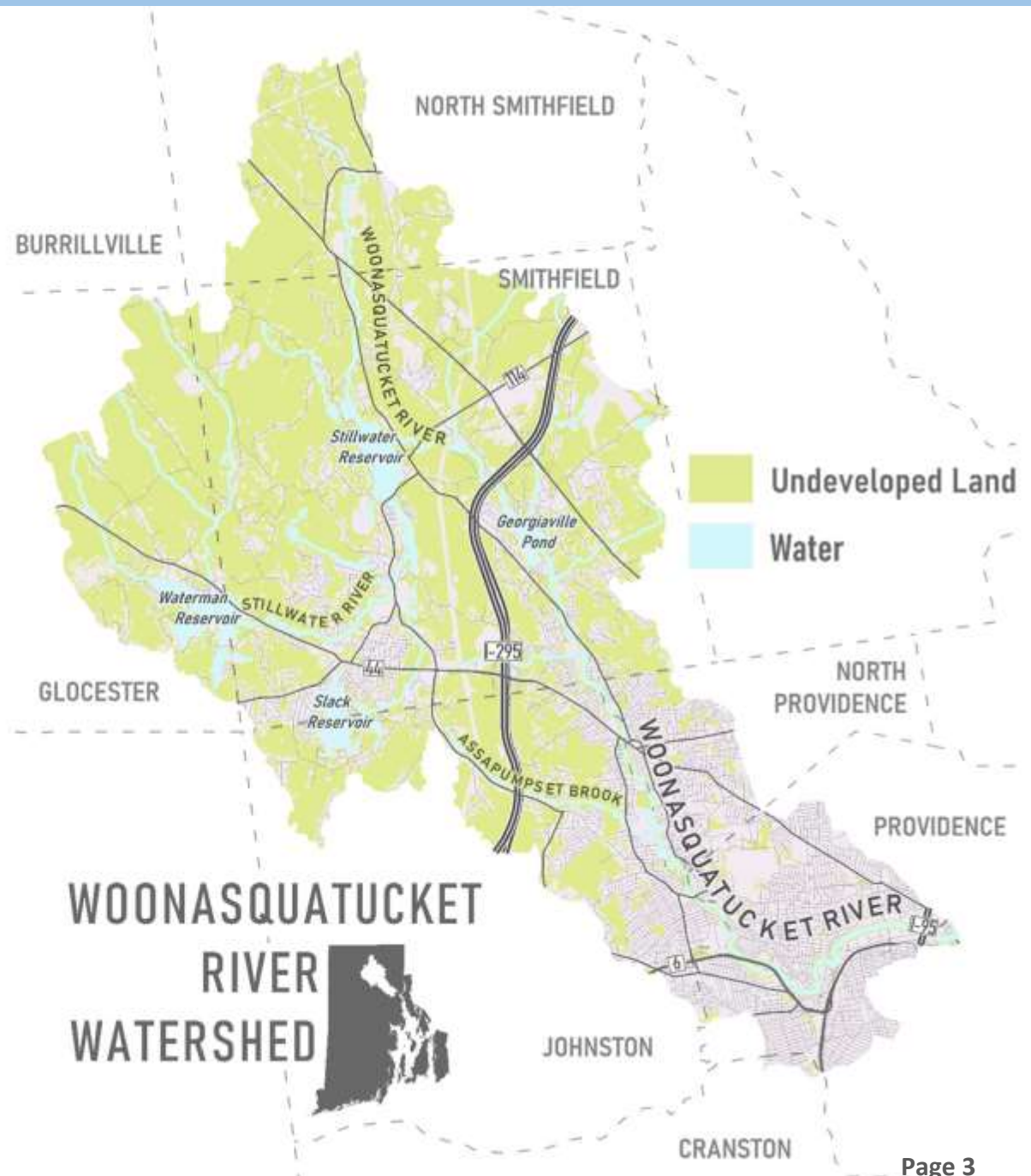
Front Line Community Engagement:  
Capacity Building & Leadership Development for Climate Resilience

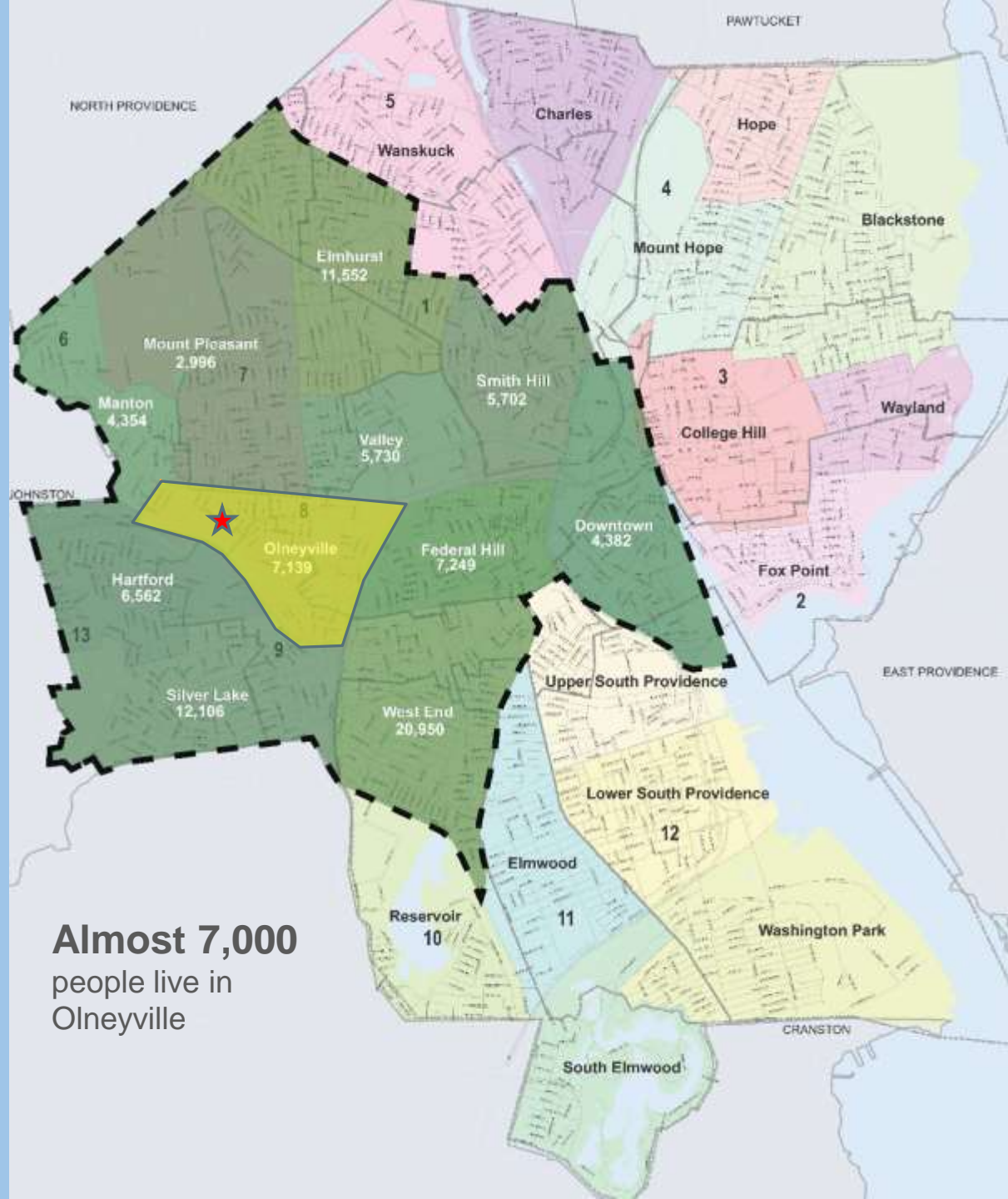
- Selected Providence, RI Neighborhood - **Olneyville**
- First Steps of Engagement - Health Equity Zone
- Neighborhood Students - Our Secret Weapon
- City & Community Partners
- Next Steps and Desired Outcomes



**283,757 total  
population**  
(27% of RI)

COMMUNITIES IMPACTED BY  
**WOONASQUATUCKET  
RIVER WATERSHED  
COUNCIL**





**Almost 7,000**  
people live in  
Olneyville

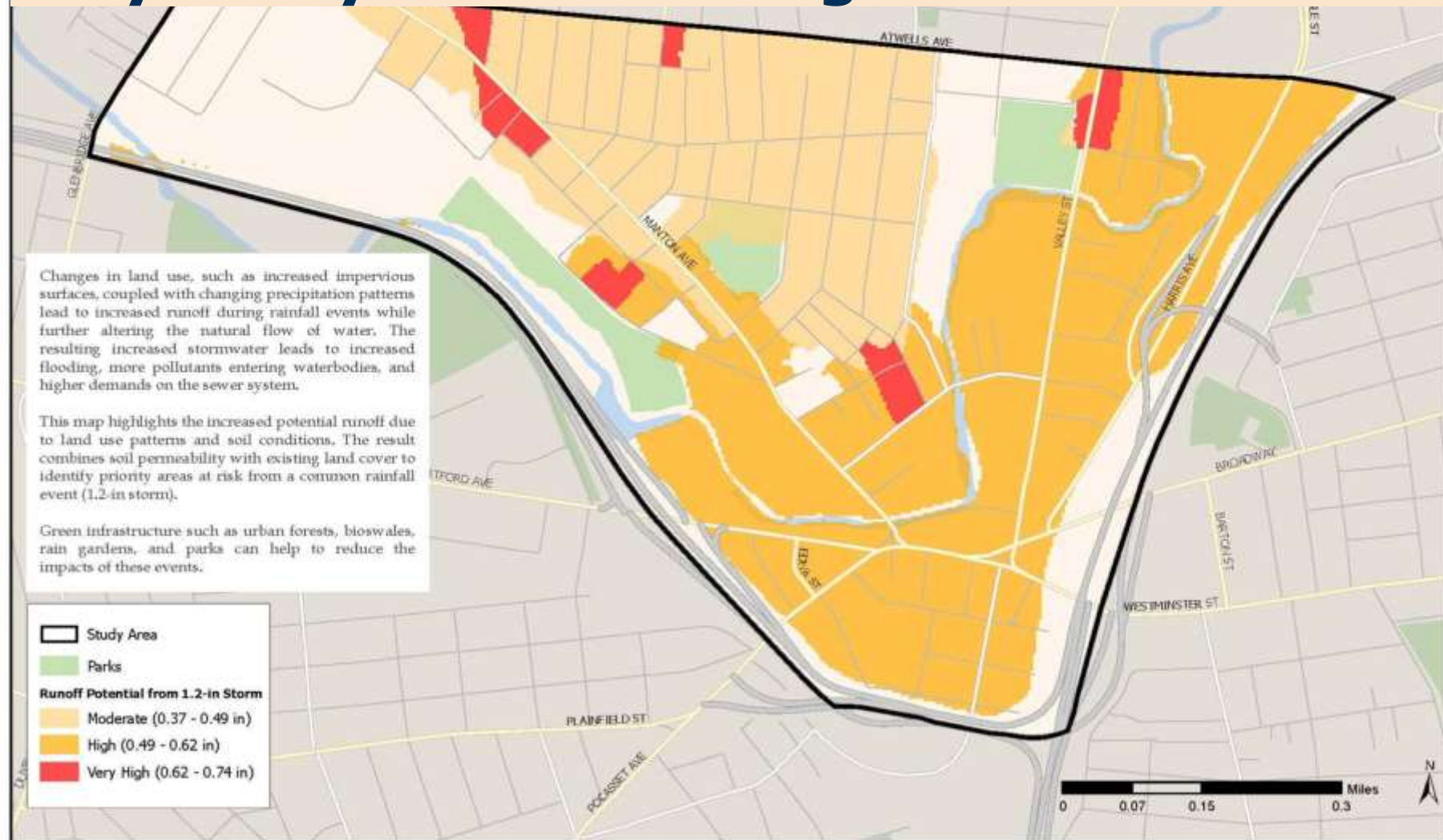


# Addressing Stormwater Challenges

Olneyville Health Equity Zone



## Why Olneyville? Flooding as a climate issue



This map was created by CGD Analytics([cgdanalytics.com](http://cgdanalytics.com)) for the Rhode Island Department of Health in conjunction with The Trust for Public Land ([www.tpl.org](http://www.tpl.org)). Information on this map is provided for visualization and discussion purposes only. For more information, please contact the Rhode Island Department of Health. January 2019

## 100 Year Flood Zone

“What used to be, say, a 1,000 year event (like [Superstorm] Sandy or perhaps Harvey) is now, say, a 30 year event, and will eventually become an event we see every few years if we continue on the course that we’re on,”

Huffington Post Article – August 2017





# Flooding



Flood of March 2010

# Project Goals



## Address community resilience to climate change

1. Residents of all ages, races and socio-economic statuses are connected to their local waterways and greenspaces, and are “water literate.”
1. Residents of all ages, races and socio-economic statuses are knowledgeable about the science and neighborhood concerns related to stormwater, flooding and resiliency.
1. Through participation in school-based and community environmental education and training programs, student and resident leaders develop comprehensive understanding of the science and inter-related issues of stormwater and flooding, and leadership skills they need to become empowered agents of stewardship and decision-making where they live.





*We get by with a little help from our friends...*



**To maximize our success for this project, we are working with organizations in the community to pull this project together**



- 1. Northern Rhode Island Conservation District**
- 2. YouthBuild Preparatory Academy**
- 3. DownCity Design**
- 4. The Metropolitan Career and Technical High School**
- 5. One Neighborhood Builders**

In addition, we are also combining efforts with other great organizations such as: The Narragansett Bay Estuary Program, The Providence Youth Hire Program, City of Providence: Office of Sustainability, and Terracorps.

## Ways of engagement so far:

### Partnership with One Neighborhood Builders for Health Equity Zone Climate Health

- Survey 90 people – 2 bilingual (Spanish/English) surveyors
  - Survey completed through in person interviews and online
  - Respondents receive \$15 Price Rite gift card for in person interviews
    - First 10 18+ living in OV receive \$15 Price Rite gift card for online
  - Specifically target Hispanic/Latino residents to represent OV population
  - Analyze results, create informational video, and share out with residents.





# RESULTS – Knowledge/Perceptions on Climate Change

- How much do you know about CC? – 50% little or nothing
- Is climate changing in OV? – 63% Yes, 28% Not Sure, 9% No
- If yes, what risks are there in OV?
  - Theme Identified:
    - Flooding – 13
    - More Extreme Weather – 7
    - Illness/Flu/Fever – 13
- How likely is a disaster here? – 71% somewhat to very likely
- How severe would the impact be to you? – 75% somewhat to very severe

# Results: Hazard Preparedness Film





# How do we prepare for floods?

## ¿Cómo prepararse para las inundaciones?

1. Make a kit
2. Make a plan
3. Stay informed

1. Hacer un kit
2. Hacer un plan
3. Mantenerse informado



# Ways of Engagement: Cont.

Development of Story Mapping software by students in Environmental Leaders Program

Several students are currently working through story mapping process, and will be adding different content remotely

Students will present information to community members to educate and engage these audiences on climate issues, and how to be better prepared



Students in MET Environmental Leaders Program 2019-2020 year.





# Kiana Gonzalez - MET Student

- **Goal:** to show that plants are a green solution to lessen the impacts of flooding
- Things I've Done:
  - I did research on how plants will help the earth and how it will help stop climate change
  - Brainstormed with group to determine group roles
  - Talked about the Olneyville 2010 flood
  - Completed my first and second trimester of Environmental Leaders class
- Things I need to Do:
  - Start adding info to the story map and getting comfortable with Arc GIS.
  - Working on and actually doing community presentations
- **Excited about:** opportunity to teach others about the environment and getting to teach the Olneyville community about what is going on with the flooding



WRWC River Ranger Jacob helping to “green” the Woonasquatucket River Greenway by planting in a swale near the river.

# Engaging Community with Signage



## Nature is at work here!

We're creating a healthy community! This site uses nature to clean dirty stormwater and reduce flooding.

[www.greeninfrastructure.org](http://www.greeninfrastructure.org)



### San Souci Connector Rain Gardens

This site used to be a big parking lot, but it was changed to be better for people and wildlife. All the dirty water from the parking lot used to wash straight into the river. This path and garden now create a walkway that also cleans water, leading from Olneyville Square to the Woonasquettuck River. The brick around the walkway and the garden collect and filter dirty rain water that washes off the parking lot, making the river **cleaner** and Olneyville **greener**.



#### Clean

The rain garden removes sand, dirt and other pollutants from the rain water before it enters the Woonasquettuck River.



#### Protect

Retards rain and reduces flooding.



#### Economy

The land is protected and used by local residents and businesses. Green space increases property values for street front.



#### Cool

Removes heat surfaces that hold heat. Rainy plants and trees that provide shade for people and wildlife.



#### Wellness

Provides exercise and places to rest outside, connecting people to nature in the city.



#### Habitat

Attracts and feeds animals like Eastern Bluebirds, Song and Goldfinches. Butterflies and bees are really important to local farmers who provide fresh food.



## La Naturaleza trabaja Aquí!

Estamos creando una comunidad saludable! Este sitio usa la naturaleza para limpiar agua sucia lluvia y reducir inundación.

[www.greeninfrastructure.org](http://www.greeninfrastructure.org)



### Conector de agua de lluvia San Souci

Este sitio antes era un estacionamiento grande, pero se ha cambiado para ser mejor para las personas y fauna silvestre. Toda la agua del estacionamiento antes se corría hacia el río. Este camino y jardín ahora es un camino que también limpia agua, conectando en Olneyville Square hasta el Río Woonasquettuck. El ladrillo sobre el camino y el jardín, colectan y filtran agua sucia de lluvia, que pasa del estacionamiento, haciendo al río más **limpio**, y Olneyville más **verde**.



**Refresca**  
Elimina las superficies que sostienen calor. Agua limpia y árboles que proporcionan sombra para la gente y la fauna silvestre.



**Buena Salud**  
Proporciona ejercicio y lugares para descansar al aire libre, conectando la gente a la naturaleza en la ciudad.



**Habitar**  
Atrae y alimenta animales como mariposas, golondrinas y pájaros. Abejas y otros insectos son muy importantes para los granjeros locales que producen comida fresca.



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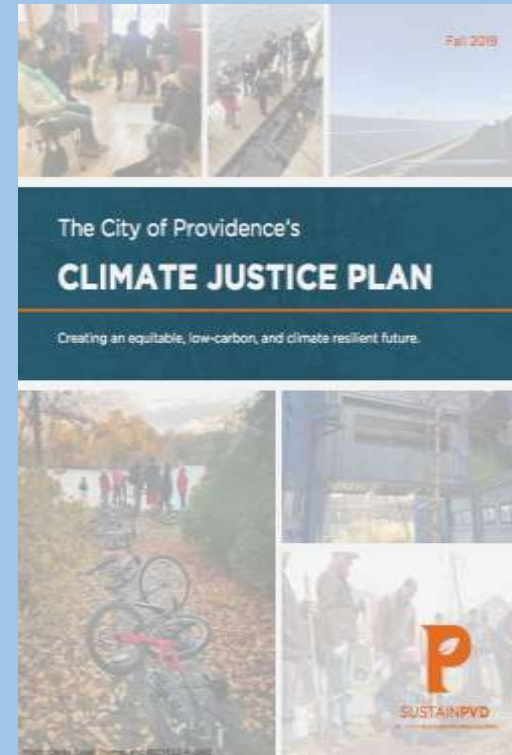
Citizens Bank



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# What's to Come

- Youth led climate presentations in the community
  - Increase awareness and engagement in community
- Work with **Green Justice Zone** - partnership with the Office of Sustainability
- Cohort of “Flood Fighters” who will brainstorm and connect to assess climate resilience needs for Olneyville.







## *Desired Outcomes*



- Support ongoing efforts of the Climate Justice Plan
- Engage youth to continue to work on climate resilience topics
- Connect residents with government and open lines of communication
- Increase community involvement and voice on environmental concerns
- Encourage community to be prepared for environmental emergencies

# QUESTIONS?



**WOONASQUATUCKET RIVER  
WATERSHED COUNCIL**

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