

Initial Focus Areas

## ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

### What We Learned

—  
higher  
temperatures  
due to a  
lack of shade  
and green  
areas

A variety of urban environmental and public health conditions in the 02907 neighborhood affect people's quality of life in their homes, schools, communities and neighborhoods. These conditions include polluted air, contaminated water, and extreme heat.

Years of environmental health inequities, stemming from cumulative social, economic, and environmental factors, have negatively influenced the health outcomes of people who live in the 02907.



## Heat and Access to GREEN SPACE

- Poor housing conditions, lack of air conditioning, small living spaces and inadequate resources to find alternative shelter during **high heat events** can make **community members more likely to experience heat-related illnesses.**
- The 02907 geographic area contains large amounts of gray infrastructure, including asphalt parking lots and other paved surfaces. The area also contains lower levels of tree canopy coverage, leading to **higher temperatures due to a lack of shade and green areas.**
- The neighborhoods in 02907 contain a variety of environmental assets, including Roger Williams Park, playgrounds, community gardens and small pocket parks ranging in size from half an acre to several acres in size. However, much of the **larger greenspace sits towards the outskirts of the neighborhood making access more difficult.**
- SpeakOut participants stated they would like to see **"more street trees"** as a **number one priority in the 02907** along with community gardens.
- Places in 02907 where people enjoyed being outside include:

**Peace and Plenty Park**  
**Grace Church Cemetery**  
**Knight Memorial Library**  
**Roger Williams Park**  
**Bucklin Park**

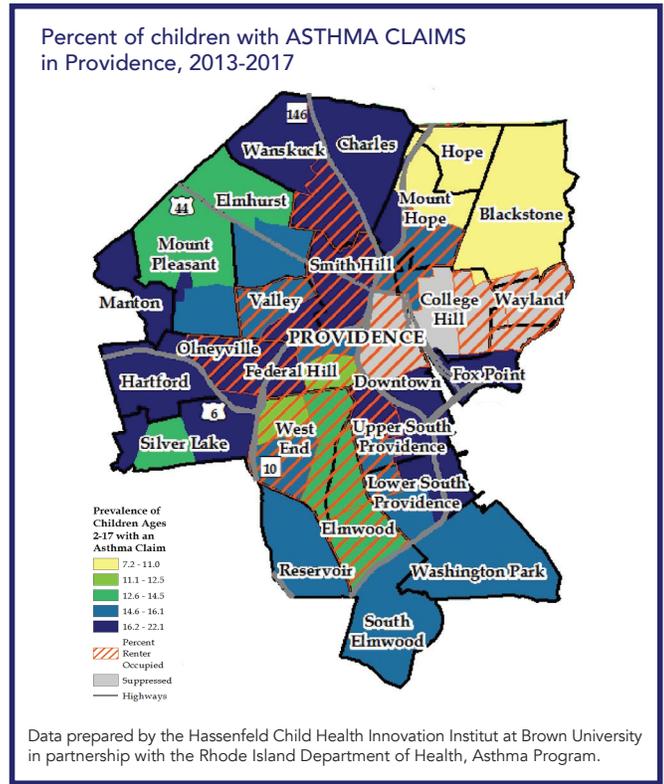
*\* It should be noted that in order to get to many of these spaces, people need to first get through parking lots, industrial facilities, and areas with very limited tree canopy.*



**BUCKLIN PARK**

## LEAD and AIR

- RI Department of Health data indicates that **the highest asthma rates in the state occur in or near the West End neighborhood.** Rhode Island asthma rates on average range between 0–4.4% or 4.5–6.2%. Most of Providence has asthma rates of 8–10% and the **South Providence neighborhoods have the highest levels in the state ranging between 10.4–15.4%.**
- Among children with asthma living next to the Port of Providence, 15.5–24.1% have had an Emergency Department visit compared to rates of 0–3.3% for the other neighborhoods in Providence.
- According to findings from the City of Providence’s Climate Justice Plan, the West End has the second highest rate of Kindergarten-aged children who have elevated blood lead levels (BLL), with 28% of kindergarten students reporting elevated BLL. **Elmwood, South Elmwood, and South Providence all have BLL percentages that are near-double the state average of 12.4%.**



*“I’d say one thing I’ve noticed is, unless it’s a very rainy day, there’s usually a lot of cars out. A lot of motorcycles out. And it just makes me think because I’m in a house where I can hear literally every single thing happening outside. So, like, I think it’s annoying and then it makes me not want to even live here. I just want to leave, but I’ve lived here my whole life, this is all I know.” – Focus Group participant*

## WALKABILITY and NOISE POLLUTION

Walkable communities can help raise the level for sustainability, lead to more social interaction and increase health through physical fitness. Many residents in the 02907 walk Broad Street and their local area for exercise.

27% of the respondents at SpeakOuts noted that the “noise levels, especially along Broad Street, are too loud. Too much noise is coming from the music at night clubs.” Also, “the noise levels along Highway 95 can be extraordinarily loud.”