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## **City of Worcester Launches Citywide Planning Process**

*The Worcester Now | Next Citywide Plan kicks off*

**WORCESTER, Mass.** — The City of Worcester has launched a citywide planning process this month that will engage the community to explore issues such as housing, land use, environment, transportation, and economic development, among other topics.

*Worcester Now | Next* will generate a long-range plan that knits together past, present, and future initiatives covering the entire city, from downtown to its dozens of neighborhoods. The plan will provide a coordinated roadmap for the future development and evolution of the city.



“Now is the time to build on Worcester’s recent successes,” said Mayor Joseph M. Petty. “This is an opportunity to ensure Worcester thrives as the heart of the Commonwealth for generations to come.”

The 18 month-long process, which will conclude in May 2023, will be guided by equitable community engagement. The first half of the planning process will focus on listening, learning, and studying issues in Worcester, while the second half will focus on analysis, opportunities, and documentation.

“This planning effort is a unique opportunity to engage with the people who live and work in Worcester,” said City Manager Edward M. Augustus Jr. “The citywide plan will lay out a coordinated vision and strategy that allows Worcester to continue to grow and develop as a diverse, prosperous and innovative city.”

The plan will leverage ongoing and planned initiatives, integrating them with new priorities linked by a common community vision. Working closely with the residents, workers, students, business

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owners and others, the process will move through a series of virtual and in-person events over the next 15 months, culminating in release of the [Worcester Now | Next](#) plan in May 2023.

## Citywide Long-range Planning Team

The city has selected *Utile*, an urban planning and design firm based in Boston, to lead development of [Worcester Now | Next](#). Utile's team additionally includes *HR&A* for economic development, *Nelson Nygaard* for transportation planning, *Brown Rowe Richardson* for open space and recreation strategy, and *Rivera Consulting* for equity and engagement.

[Worcester Now | Next](#) will be led by the city's Planning & Regulatory Services Division. The Worcester Planning Board will review progress and provide guidance to the project team at major milestones, ultimately leading to endorsement of the final plan document.

Collectively, the city and consultant team provide a wealth of experience, technical expertise, and local knowledge to guide development of [Worcester Now | Next](#).

## Planning Timeline

### Phase 1: Listen, Learn, Test

#### **Spring Citywide Survey: March–May 2022**

Community members are encouraged to participate in the Spring Citywide Survey to help the planning team understand what issues and opportunities are top of mind in the city.

#### **Public Visioning Workshop: June 2022**

Community members are encouraged to attend the first public workshop in June 2022. Details on time and location will be announced.

#### **Summer Listening Tour: June–August 2022**

The planning team will take public engagement on tour this summer, with Listening Tour stops in neighborhoods around the city. The Listening Tour will enable citizens to engage in the planning process in their neighborhoods and communities.

### Phase 2: Analyze, Revise, Document

#### **Fall Citywide Survey: October 2022–December 2022**

A second survey in late 2022 will help the planning team understand community priorities, and serves as another touch point for understanding issues in the city.

#### **Public Draft Plan Workshop: January 2023**

Community members are encouraged to attend the final public workshop in January 2023 to review and engage with draft work to date, before final report production begins.

#### **Winter Listening Tour: January–March 2023**

A second Listening Tour will take place in early 2023 to engage citizens in the planning

process in their neighborhoods, and provide an opportunity for folks to review and engage with draft work to date before final report production begins.

## How can I get involved?

The City is inviting all to engage in shaping the plan. The [Now | Next](#) process will include a series of virtual and in-person events in 2022 and early 2023, including surveys, interactive mapping activities, focus group sessions, neighborhood meetings, public workshops, advisory committee meetings, and planning board meetings.

There are three ways you can get involved now, as the planning process gets underway:

### Step 1. Connect with the project's digital platforms.

For updates and the latest information, visit the [Worcester Now | Next](#) Citywide Plan website: <https://now-next.worcesterma.gov/>

Follow the City of Worcester's social media accounts to stay in touch.

- **Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/TweetWorcester>
- **Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/WorcesterMassachusettsOfficial>
- **Instagram:** <https://www.instagram.com/cityofworcester/>

### Step 2. Watch for the Community Survey launching this spring.

The planning team will launch a community survey this spring to learn what issues, themes, big ideas, and opportunities exist in neighborhoods and communities throughout Worcester.

### Step 3. Spread the word! #NowNextWorcester

The more people know about this plan, the better. We want to hear from everyone — and we need your help! As the beloved late planner and author Jane Jacobs said: “Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody.”