



# Worcester

**In Worcester, the Network worked with the City and Community leaders to develop a detailed strategic framework for City government to meet key performance indicators toward its vision.**

Worcester is the economic hub of Central Massachusetts and is in the midst of a real estate development surge. One of the largest sources of downtown resurgence is CitySquare, a \$565 million multi-phase project encompassing 21 acres in the heart of downtown. CitySquare is one of the largest public/private development projects in Massachusetts, adding high-quality commercial, medical, retail, entertainment, and residential space to downtown. The project spurred additional development; Unum Group, Saint Vincent Hospital's cancer division, and UMass Healthcare's IT department relocated downtown. Hanover Theatre, located adjacent to CitySquare, was renovated and reopened in 2008 and played a significant role in reactivating the area. Worcester was designated a "District in Development" by MassDevelopment and was awarded assistance through the TDI to focus on revitalization efforts in the Theatre District – immediately adjacent to the City's downtown.

The City's deliberate and focused attention to sustainable fiscal and operational planning has City government on solid footing and well-positioned to continue driving Worcester's economic resurgence. The City's leadership has demonstrated a significant interest in continuing to improve City government by rethinking "business as usual," with a focus on increasing efficiency and transparency. As the City works to institutionalize a culture of performance and accountability, it is beginning to implement performance measurement and an open and accessible public data platform.

Worcester's leadership is also updating the City's Master Plan, a critical component for the City's broader economic and community development strategies. Simultaneously, Worcester Public Schools is embarking on a school department-specific strategic plan.

**Scope of Work:** Using the City's vision and mission as a foundation, the Network worked closely with city staff and stakeholders to create a framework for a City-government-specific strategic plan. The strategic planning framework details the City's vision during the next three-year period and how it is going to get there by aligning services, operations, strategies, goals, and objectives to help city leaders drive performance and outcomes, increase transparency, and enhance communication -- elements that are critical to ensure the shared success for all neighborhoods, including the TDI district. The Network facilitated monthly meetings of four working groups – one focused on each of the City's four respective priority areas: creating a vibrant, thriving city; building strong neighborhoods; maintaining sound fiscal government; and providing opportunities for all – to allow city leaders and community stakeholders to develop the detailed framework, which will effectively serve as an organizational roadmap to help direct the City's activities and resources to meet key performance indicators toward its clearly stated vision.

In addition to facilitating the monthly meetings of the subject-focused workgroups (comprised of internal and external participants), the NRN Team analyzed data, conducted interviews with City departmental leadership and community stakeholders, and provided the City with a summary of environmental scan of city strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) to inform the planning framework. The Network supported the administration of a public opinion survey, focus groups, and public forums to obtain public input.

The City is taking several critical implementation steps, starting with the City's definition of high-priority time-delineated objectives, and assigning measures to respective departments.

**Timeline:** September 2017 - April 2018 | **Funding:** \$160,000 (MassDevelopment: \$120,000 Local: \$40,000)