

# City of Worcester

## Community Needs Survey Information



Prepared by:  
Executive Office of Economic Development

January 8, 2013

# Process

- The Executive Office of Economic Development (EOED) has restructured the Community Development Block Grant Program and engaged in a review of the City's federally funded programs and services.
- In the fall of 2012, the EOED and the Community Development Advisory Committee hosted a series of community meetings to obtain feedback and input on neighborhood needs, desires and wants.
- In all, six (6) community meetings were held in eligible neighborhoods, attracting 225 participants.
- Public comment was also solicited through a survey that was available on the City's web site and distributed to neighborhood organizations. 456 surveys were completed.
- The data and public input received will be used by the City and the CDAC when updating the City's Consolidated Action Plan and Five Year Plan for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

# Survey Tool

## City of Worcester Community Needs Assessment

### Introduction

The City of Worcester is reaching out to the community to explore residents' needs and concerns. This will help the City make better decisions on where it spends its federal grant money.

As part of this assessment, this survey is being administered to people who live in Worcester. The information gathered from this survey will be used to inform and identify community programming and service needs for future consideration and support.

We ask that you complete this 5-minute survey by October 16th. Thank you for your participation.

**\* 1. In what ZIP code is your home located? (enter 5-digit ZIP code; for example, 00544 or 94305)**

**2. My neighborhood is a good place to live.**

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

**3. The following service programs are effective in my community.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transportation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Health	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jobs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public Safety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Housing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

# Key Findings

- 68% of participants agree or strongly agree that their neighborhood is a good place to live.
- Education and health care rose to the top as services most effectively delivered in our community.
- Access to jobs and transportation received the lowest satisfaction rates.
- Participants stated that access to resources proved a barrier and people do not often know that programs and services exist to help with their needs or how to access those services.
- The need for Affordable Housing, Good Jobs that Paid a Living Wage and Workforce Development Skills were tied for the 2<sup>nd</sup> most frequently stated need.
- The need to address Homelessness, After-school Programs for Youth, and Food Security/Proper Nutrition Education also rose to the top of the list.

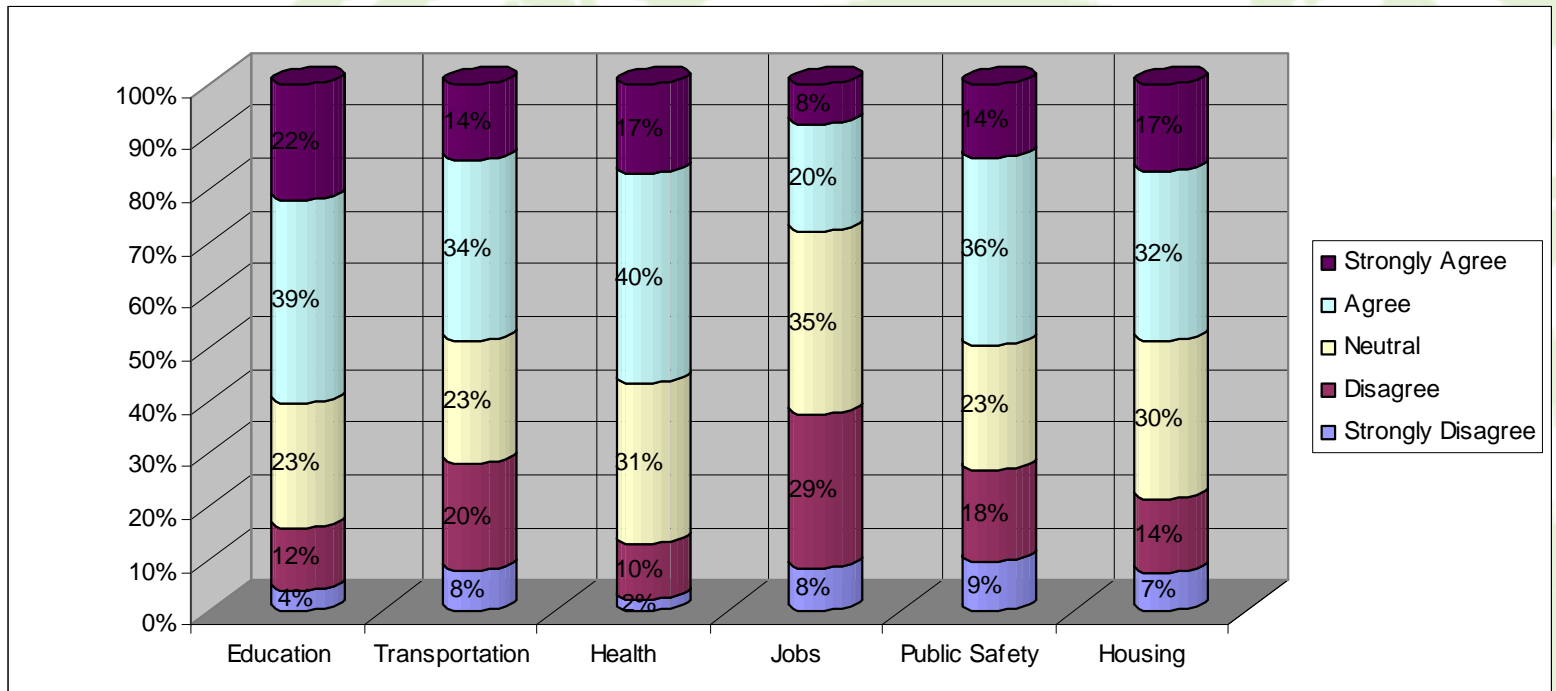
# What's Good in our Neighborhoods?

- Neighborhood-based agencies
- Worcester agencies that work with youth
- Green space, open space, conservation areas and parks
- Neighborhoods, Night Life
- Senior Center

\* Most often stated responses from participants who attended community meetings.

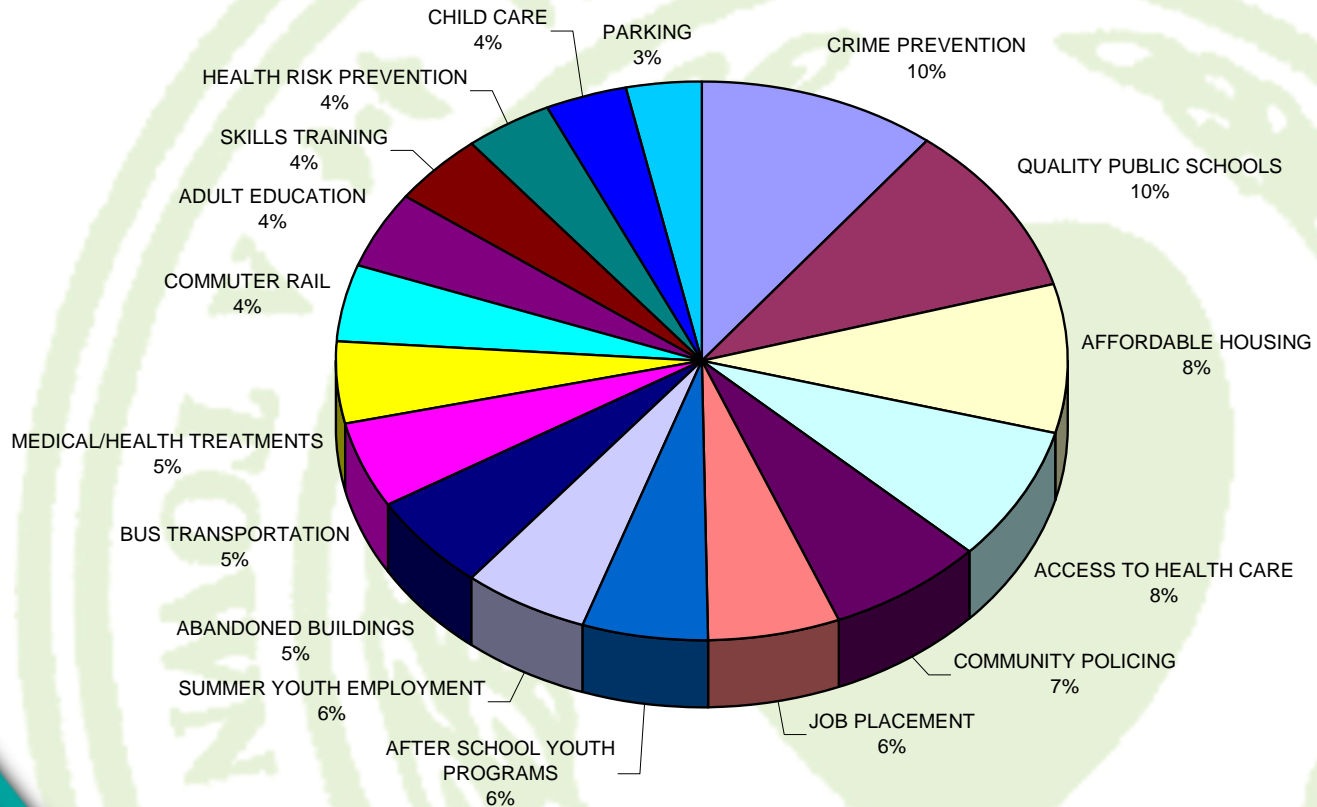
# Effective Public Services

Which services are most effective in our community? Our participants thought ...



# Top Issues Cited

TOP ISSUES FOR "YOU/YOUR FAMILY" AND "THE COMMUNITY"



# Education

- Participants ranked the following issues around education as most important:
    - Quality Public Schools – 9.8%
    - Bus Transportation\* – 4.8%
    - Adult Education – 4.1%
- \* Bus Transportation was often cited as an important part of the persons' ability to access educational opportunities and skills training



# Housing

- Among the top 20 needs relative to housing, most stated
  - Affordable, Safe Housing (6.6%)
  - Homelessness (5.9%)
  - Abandoned Buildings (3.7%)
  - Housing Counseling, Foreclosure Prevention, and Problem Tenants (3.7%)
  - High Energy Costs, Weatherization and Fuel Assistance (2.9%)

# Public Safety

- Issues that rose to the top for participants
  - Crime prevention (9.8%)
  - Community/neighborhood policing (6.5%)
  - Abandoned buildings (5.1%)

# Youth

- Top cited services most needed for children
  - After-school programs/activities (30.3%)
  - Affordable Child Care (25.4%)
  - Recreation (19.1%)
  - Tutoring (18.5%)

# Workforce

- Among issues highest rated
  - Job placement (6%)
  - Summer youth employment (5.2%)
  - Bus transportation (4.8%)
  - Skills training (4.0%)
  - Child care (3.3%)

# Health

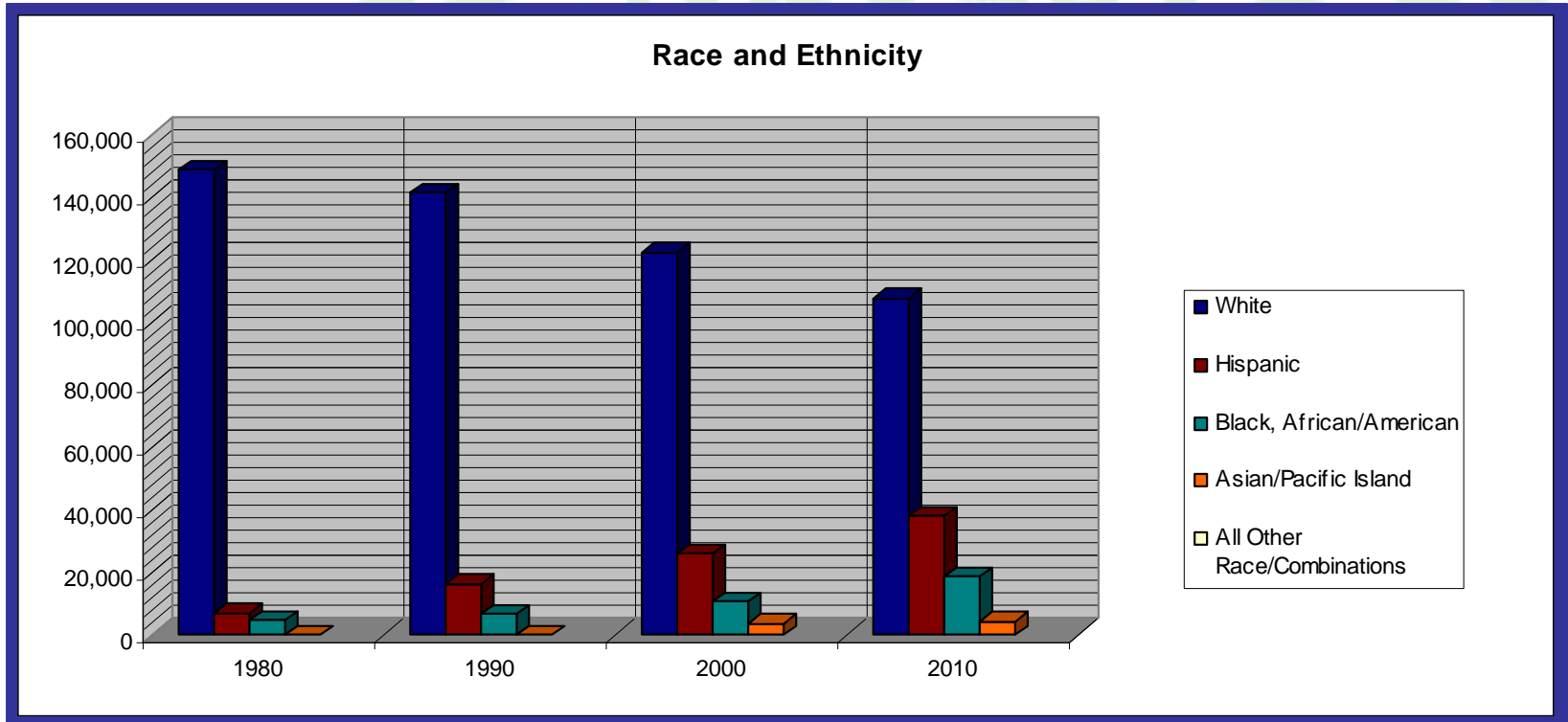
- Most important health issues cited
  - Access to health care (7.5%)
  - Medical/health treatments (4.5%)
  - Health risk prevention (3.6%)

# What does the data show?

- Population: 181,045
- Number of Households: 68,616
- Residents under age 25: 67,633
- Average family size: 3.14
- Median family income: \$56,053
- Families in poverty: 5,852 or 18.3%
- Poverty level for a family of four: \$21,954
- Individuals in low to moderate income: 56.7%
- Persons Unemployed 8,202

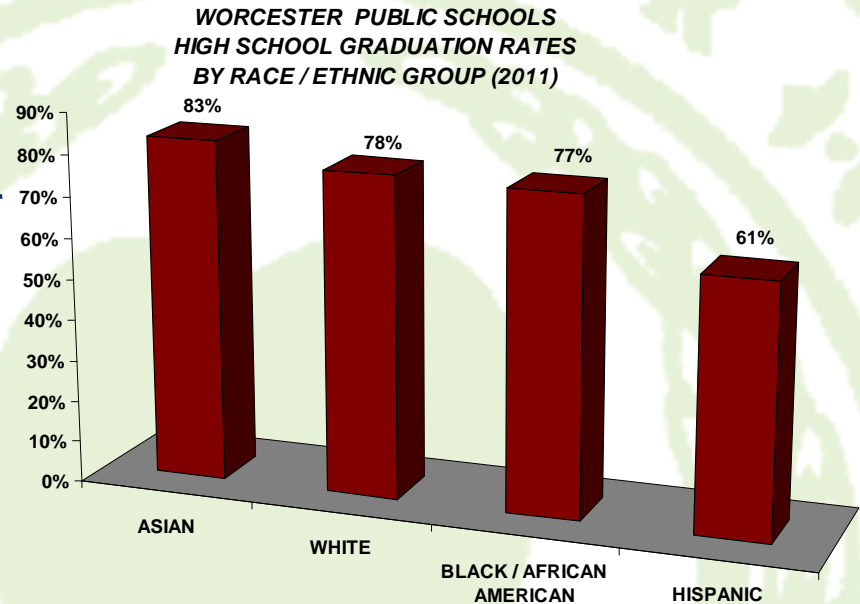
\*U.S. Census Bureau

# Race and Ethnicity



# Education (con't)

- In Worcester, U.S. Census Bureau indicates that 32% of students come from homes that speak a language other than English
- Spanish and Vietnamese were the most common, non-English languages spoken at home.





## Education (con't)

- 23% of students were offered, given or sold drugs in the past year
- In 2011, 24.1% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders report being bullied.
- 11.9% of students carried a weapon at school

\* Data supplied by 2011 Worcester Regional Youth Survey

# Housing

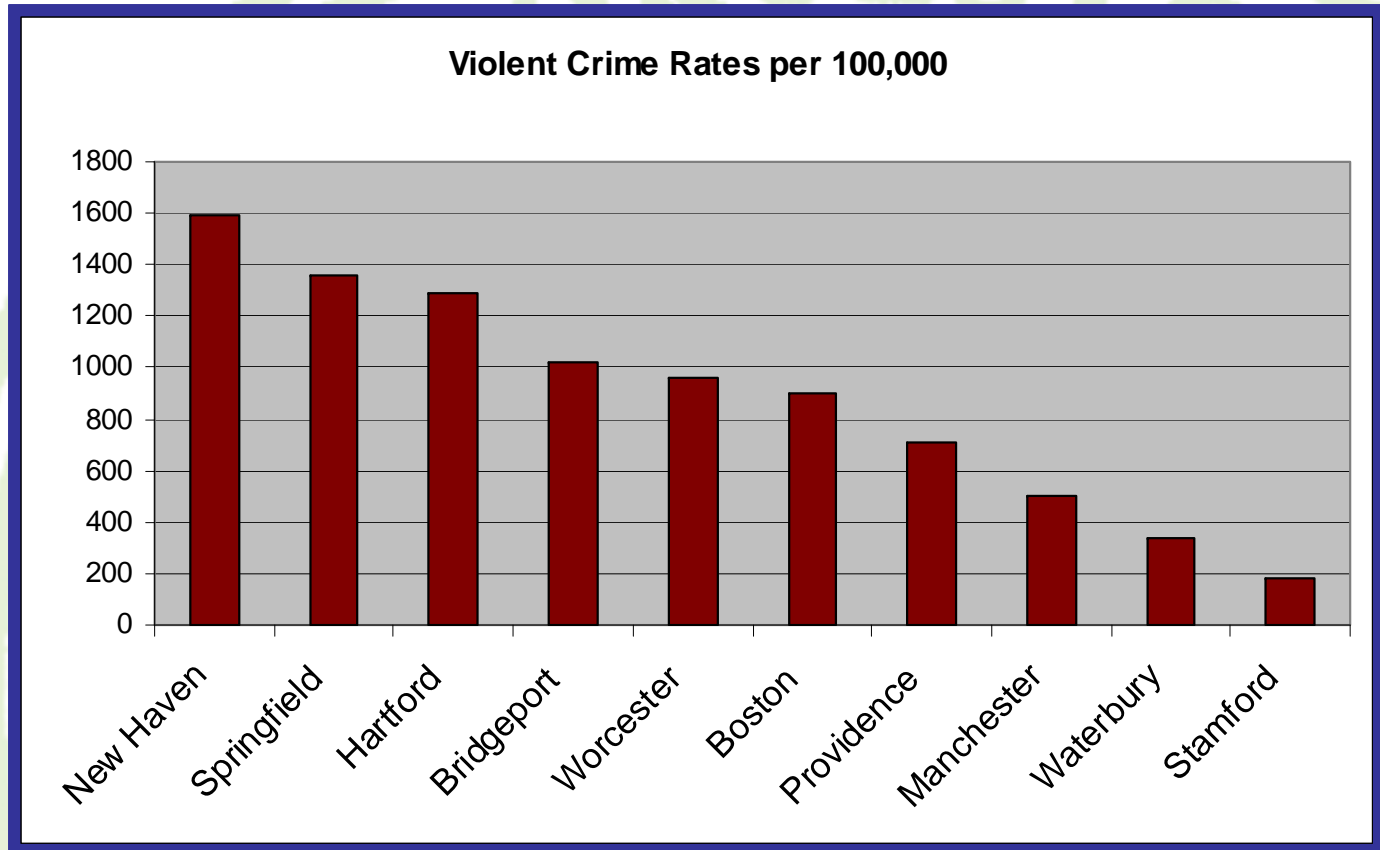
- Housing Units in 2010: 74,645
  - Increase in housing units since 2000: 3,920
- Number of Affordable Units: 9,591
- Number of Foreclosure Petitions: 960
- Percentage of Housing Stock built prior to 1940: 52%
- Number of units “below average”: 5,760
- Housing vacancy rate in 2010: 8.1%  
(compared with 5.2% in 2000)
- Median home sale price in 2010: \$204,000

# Public Safety

- Citywide crime has decreased 4.1% from 2011 to 2012.
- There was a 15.8% drop in the number of aggravated assaults.
- In 2011, there were 16 non-fatal and four fatal shootings.
- Larceny from Motor Vehicles increased by 4.6% from 2011 to 2012.
- Vandalism increased by 2.6% from 2011 to 2012.

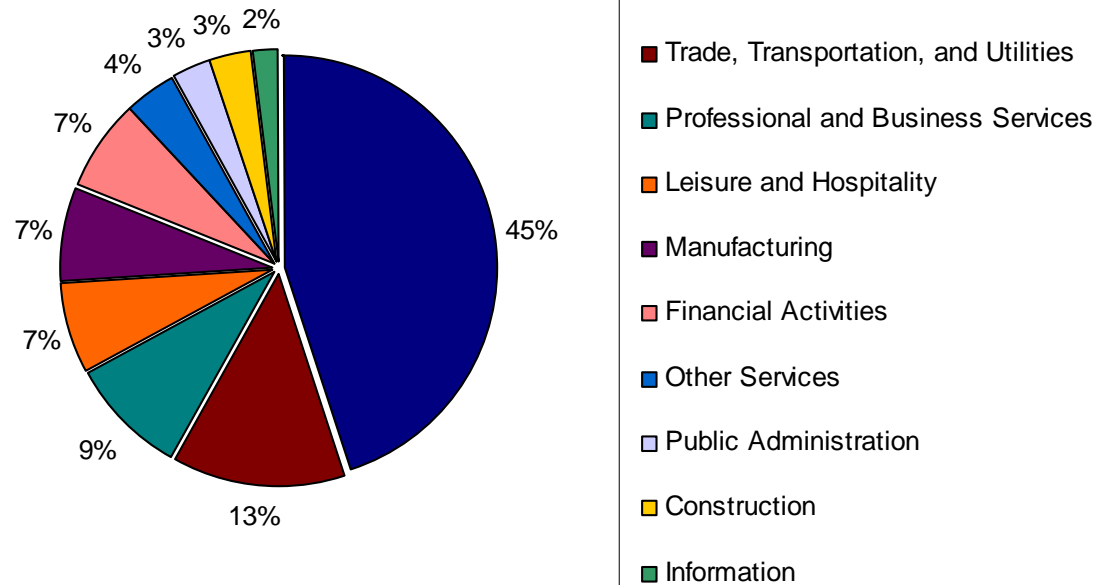
Data from Benchmarking Public Safety in Worcester, Worcester Regional Research Bureau.

# Public Safety



# Workforce

Employment by Industry 2011



- Employment in areas of health care, education and social assistance increased by 21.1% from 2000 to 2010.
- As of October 2012, 6,531 were unemployed, a rate of 7.7%

Data Provided by Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development

# Public Health

- Obesity – 28% of Worcesterites are obese and 35% are overweight
- Drug Abuse – 1-2% of Worcester adults are addicted to opiates; there are 1,000 overdoses per year in Worcester.
- Tobacco – Use rate is 19% among Worcester adults
- Top 3 causes of death in Worcester
  - Cardiovascular, cancer, and unintentional death (i.e., accidents, poisoning, falls)

# Transportation

- Share of jobs in neighborhoods with public transit: 55.8%
- Share of the Worcester metro population that can reach the typical job in 90 minutes via transit: 17.5%
- Worcester ranks 81<sup>st</sup> compared to the largest metropolitan areas in employer access to labor by transit

Data from Brookings Institute