

## **Call for Artists: Illuminated Winter Public Art Festival of Lights 2025–2026 | Worcester Common, Worcester, MA**

### **I. Overview**

The City of Worcester’s Cultural Development Division and the Downtown Worcester Business Improvement District (BID) invite artists and creative teams to submit proposals for the design and fabrication of temporary illuminated public art installations for the 2025–2026 winter season.

Selected installations will be exhibited on the Worcester Common as part of the Festival of Lights, launching on December 5, 2025, and will remain on view through March 1, 2026.

This initiative is supported by the New England Foundation for the Arts’ (NEFA) Making it Public grant, the City of Worcester, and the Downtown Worcester BID. The total program budget is \$30,000, which will be distributed across multiple awards ranging from \$5,000 to \$30,000, based on the scope and scale of selected proposals.

**Submission Deadline: August 1, 2025 at 5:00 PM (EST).**

The City of Worcester will enter into grant agreements with individual artists or artist teams selected for the program.

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### **II. Context & Background**

The Winter Lighting Program is a key component of Worcester’s creative placemaking strategy, designed to brighten the winter season, foster community engagement, and enhance the vibrancy of the downtown area. The program coincides with the annual Festival of Lights—a beloved holiday celebration featuring performances, attractions, and seasonal festivities.

This call seeks innovative 2D and 3D illuminated artworks that transform the Worcester Common into a festive, inclusive, and visually striking winter destination. The site, located at 455 Main Street behind City Hall, is a central hub for public programming and winter activities such as ice skating.

Artists should consider the site’s logistical and historical constraints, including access to power, ADA accessibility, and respect for protected areas like the historic burial ground. Artists are encouraged to use energy-efficient lighting technologies (LED), motion-based features, low-maintenance and vandal-resistant designs. Supporting materials, including maps, photos, and site dimensions, are provided in Section VII.

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### III. Artist Eligibility & Qualifications

This opportunity is open to artists and artist teams, 18 years or older, working in visual arts, sculpture, design, creative technology, with experience in public art installations, illuminated artworks and/or accessible artworks that consider ADA compliance.

*Preferred qualifications include:*

- Individuals with a strong connection to Worcester or Massachusetts

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### IV. Selection Process & Evaluation Criteria

*Selection Process:*

Proposals will be reviewed by a selection panel consisting of artists, City staff, and community representatives. Technical and contextual input may be requested from advisors or City departments.

*Evaluation Criteria:*

- **Creative concept** for 2D or 3D illuminated artwork clearly:
  - Fosters community engagement
  - Enhances the vibrancy of Worcester's downtown area
  - Creates a festive, inclusive, and accessible experience
- **Project proposal** includes clear plans for addressing site conditions and technical requirements (see details below):
  - **Durability.** Installations must be weather-resistant, anchored securely, structurally sound, and designed for outdoor, public display from December 5, 2025 through March 1, 2026. Note: Trees and existing structures may be incorporated (with approval); no staking into the ground is allowed. Weighted bases or secure mounts are required. See Site Conditions and Technical Requirements section below for more details.
  - **Accessibility & Feasibility.** Artwork must be ADA compliant and feasible for exhibition on Common, as approved by DPW & Parks
  - **Installation, Maintenance and Deinstallation Plans.** Artists are responsible for installation, routine maintenance, and repairs during the exhibition period from December 5, 2025 - March 1, 2026. Note: Power is available at designated locations (see site map).
  - **Budget:** Proposed budget aligns with program budget (\$5,000 - \$30,000).
- **Artist/Artist Team demonstrates experience** in:
  - Project management of artworks of similar scope and scale; including experience with, but not limited to fabrication, installation, maintenance and deinstallation.
  - Creating illuminated artworks that are durable, weather-resistant, structurally sound, and designed for outdoor, public display.
  - Creating accessible artwork that considers ADA compliance.

## **V. Key Dates**

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Date</b>
Call Release	June 30, 2025
Question Deadline	July 14, 2025
FAQ Responses Posted	July 25, 2025
Submission Deadline	August 1, 2025, 5:00 PM
Awards Announced	September 26, 2025
Grant Agreements Issued	September 26, 2025
Accessibility and site planning coordination meetings	September - October 2025
Fabrication Period	September – November 2025
Installation Window	November 24 – December 1, 2025
Public Display	December 5, 2025 – March 1, 2026
Deinstallation	March 2 – 6, 2026

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## **VI. Copyright & Reproduction Rights**

Artists retain ownership and copyright of all original artwork. The City of Worcester and Downtown Worcester BID reserve non-exclusive, royalty-free rights to reproduce and publicly display artwork for promotional and archival purposes, with artist attribution.

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## **VII. Site Conditions & Technical Requirements**

The Worcester Common includes a 12,000 square-foot ice rink for seasonal skating on the Oval, a historic burial ground, memorial statues and paved pathways throughout the public park, which are plowed and maintained during seasonal storms. Seasonal skating and public events will occur during the Winter Lighting Program period. Winter weather in Worcester, Massachusetts is highly variable including low temperature, wind, rain, snow and seasonal storms.

- Installations must be weather-resistant, structurally sound, able to withstand public interaction, and designed for outdoor, public display from December 5, 2025 through March 1, 2026.
- Trees and existing structures may be incorporated (with approval). Designs should not impact tree health and landscape.
- No staking into the ground is allowed, weighted bases or secure mounts are required.
- Installations should not obstruct sidewalk passage and entryways.
- Power is available at designated locations.
- Artists are responsible for installation, routine maintenance, and repairs during the exhibition period.
- Installations must be ADA compliant and approved by DPW & Parks

Selected artists/artist teams will work with the City of Worcester to coordinate site accessibility, ADA compliance, and other site-specific logistics before fabrication and installation. Adjustment to artist submission may be required.

As public, outdoor installations, design(s) require: durability, weatherproofing, security, and ease of maintenance/repair if necessary. Routine checks, maintenance and repairs will be the responsibility of the artist.

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## **VIII. Budget & Funding**

The total available funding is \$30,000, which may be allocated across multiple projects. Artists may request funding within the range of \$5,000 to \$30,000, depending on the project's complexity, scale, and budget proposal.

Budgets should include, but are not limited to:

- Artist fees
- Materials and fabrication
- Lighting components
- Transportation, installation, and deinstallation
- Maintenance and contingency costs
- Insurance

Funding decisions will be made based on project criteria outlined above and overall program budget.

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## **IX. Proposal Requirements**

All candidates must complete the **Festival of Lights 2025 – 2026 Application for Illuminated Public Art & Lighting Installation**. The application includes the following items:

### **SECTION 1: APPLICANT INFORMATION**

### **SECTION 2: PROJECT OVERVIEW & CREATIVE CONCEPT**

- **Summary of the Project**

*Please offer a brief description of your illuminated public art installation. Include type, colors, lumens, and any interactive features.*

### **SECTION 3: PROJECT PROPOSAL**

**Creative Concept Description (max 500 words);** How will this project:

- Foster community engagement
- Enhance the vibrancy of Worcester's downtown area



- Create a festive, inclusive, and accessible experience
- **Durability.** Describe how you will ensure installations is weather-resistant, anchored securely, structurally sound, and designed for outdoor, public display. Description may include materials utilized and/or construction.
- **Project Visuals:** sketches, diagrams, or renderings of proposed installation
- **Budget Attachment**
- **Project Timeline: Installation, Deinstallation and Maintenance Availability**

## SECTION 4: ARTIST EXPERIENCE & BACKGROUND

### SECTION 3: Experience and Background

- **Include CV/Resume for lead artist/each artist on the artists team**
- **Artist Experience with public artworks:**
  - ☐ Public art installations
  - ☐ Lighting or illuminated artworks
  - ☐ Accessible artworks that consider ADA compliance
- Preference will be given to individuals with a strong connection to Worcester or Massachusetts.
- **Work Samples**

*Please attach 2–5 examples of previous relevant work. Samples may be shared as documents and/or website links.*

## SECTION 5: CERTIFICATION, INDEMNIFICATION, AND USE OF MATERIALS

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### X. Submission Instructions

**Deadline: August 1, 2025 at 5:00 PM (EST)**

Submission Format:

- ***Completion of the online application is recommended and preferred.***
- Online application: <https://forms.worcesterma.gov/ng/fa/FOLArtInstallation>
- Email PDF submissions to: [culture@worcesterma.gov](mailto:culture@worcesterma.gov)
- Deliver hard copies to:  
Cultural Development Division  
Worcester City Hall, Room 409  
455 Main Street, Worcester, MA 01608

The City of Worcester reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to negotiate final terms with selected artists.

Thank you for your interest in the Illuminated Winter Public Art Program. We look forward to seeing your creative vision bring warmth, light, and joy to downtown Worcester this winter!



**Supplemental Materials**

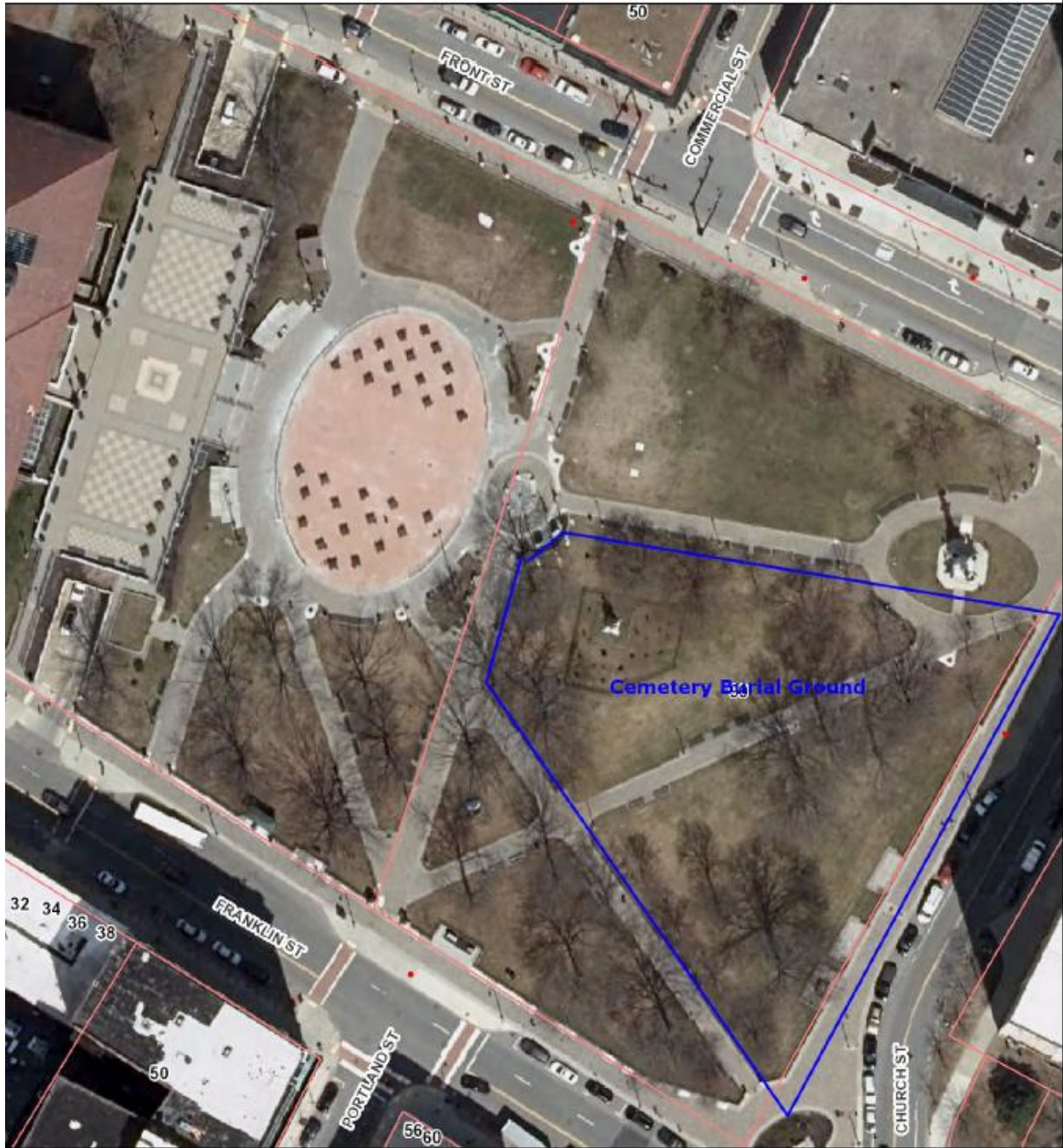
**Images and Maps of Worcester Common**



***Arial Street Map of Worcester Common***



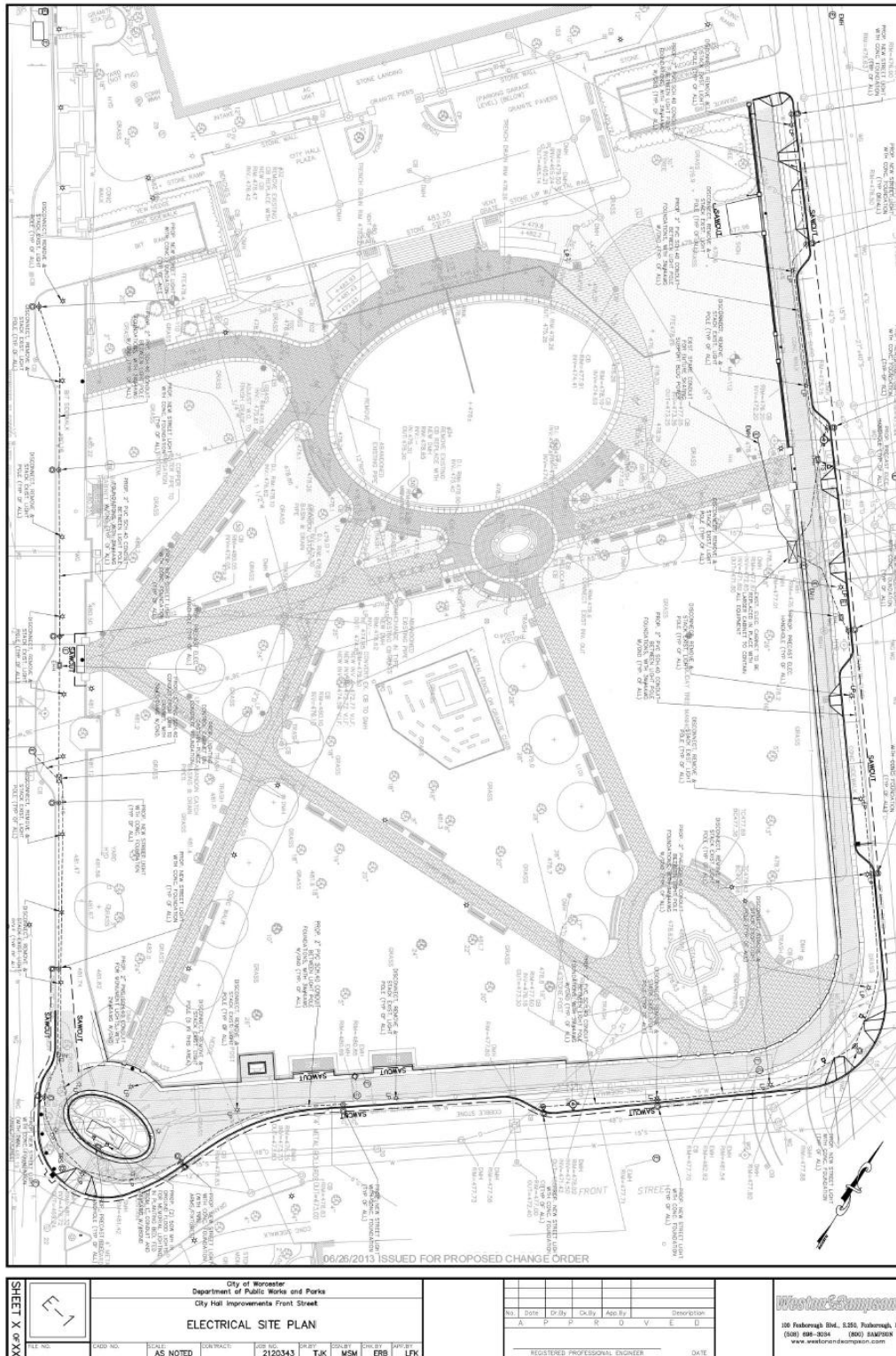
**Worcester Common Cemetery**



***Arial Image of Historic Bural Ground  
[Area Outlined in Blue is a Cemetery Burial Ground and Off-Limits for Public Art]***

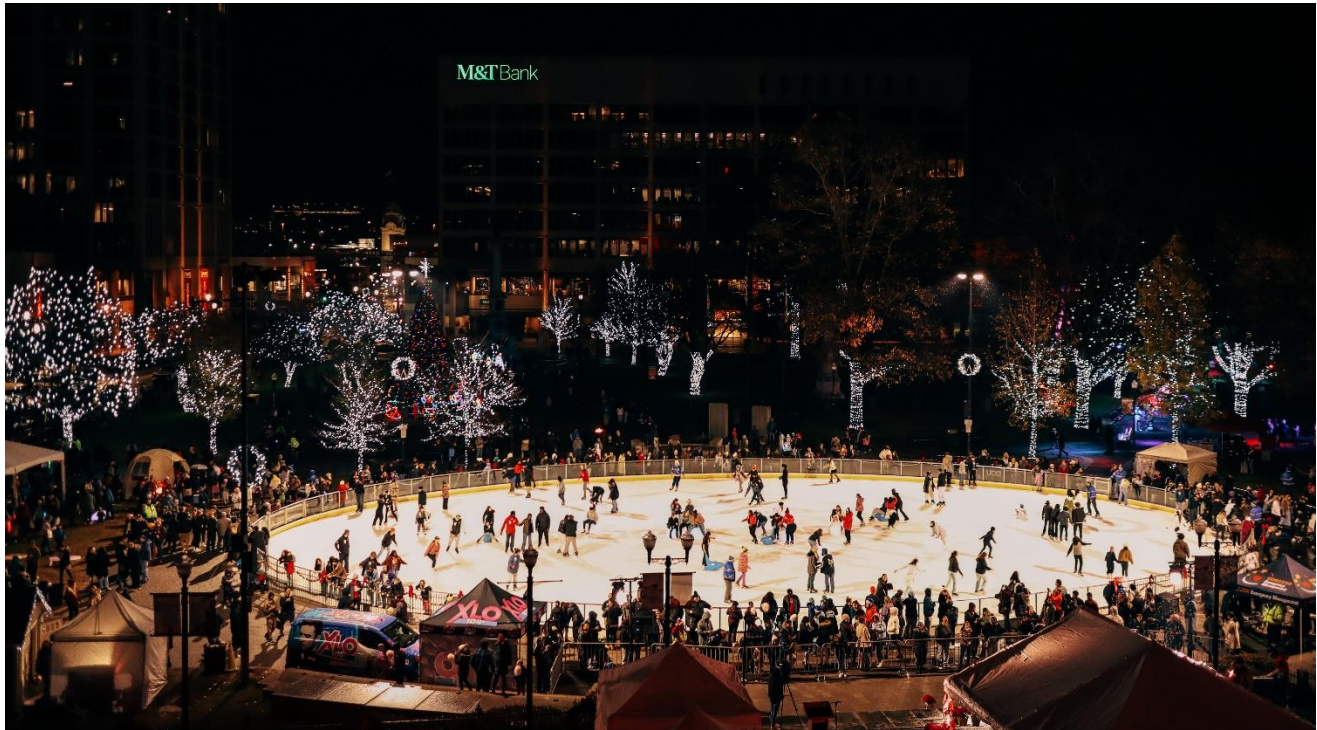


The City of  
Worcester



**Worcester Common Map, Including Electrical Plan**



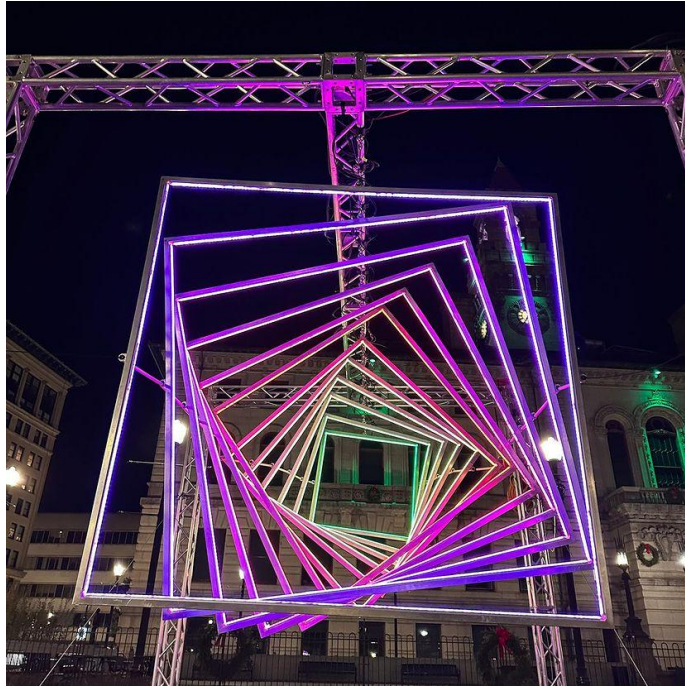


*Worcester Common Illuminated*



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**Images of Previous Installations on the Common**



***“Illuminaciones” by Zebbler Studios, 2023***



***“Worcester Winter Wonderland” by LunoSol Design, LLC., 2020***





*Tower Hill Botanic Garden, 2022*



*“Rainbow Tunnel”, Tower Hill Botanic Garden, 2020*