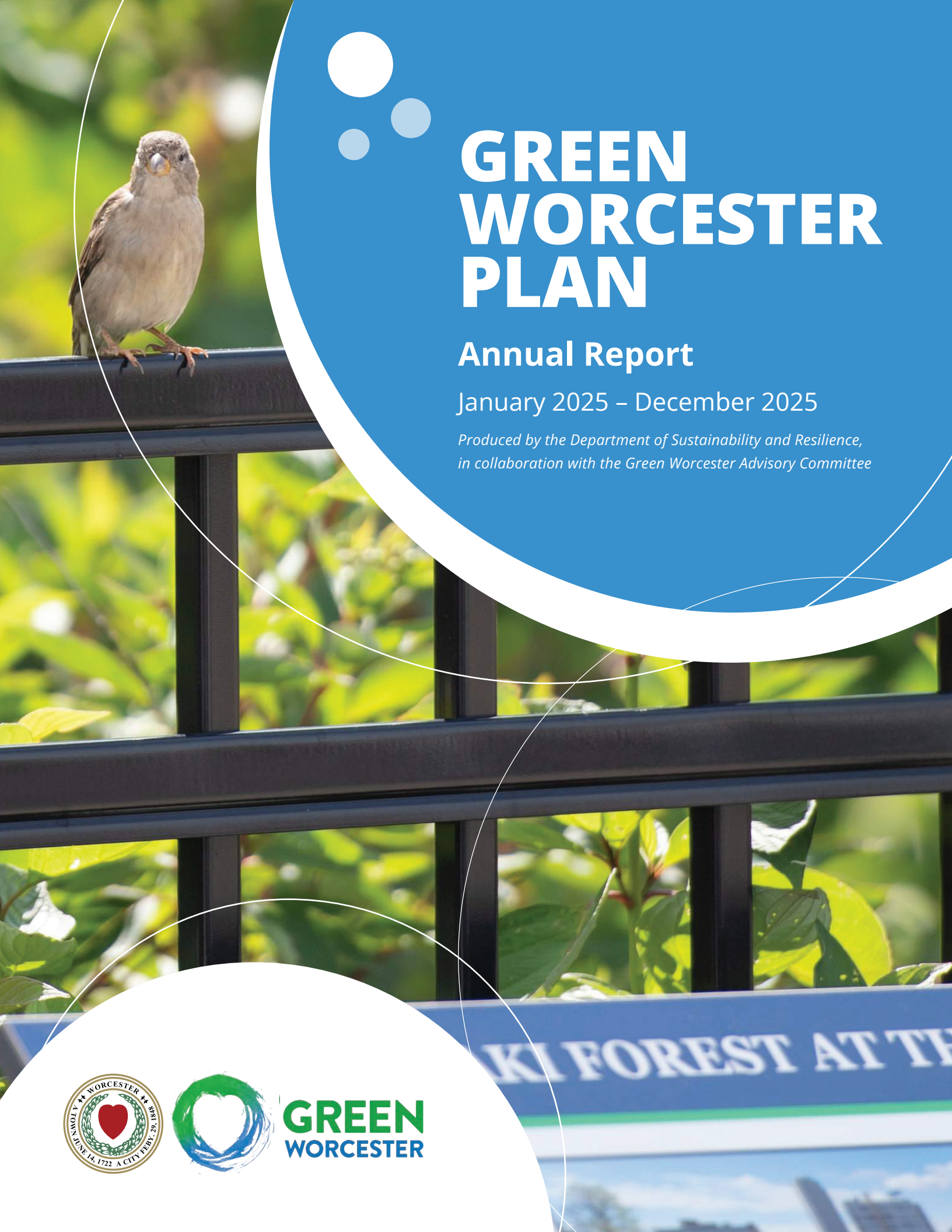




GREEN WORCESTER PLAN

Annual Report

January 2025 – December 2025

*Produced by the Department of Sustainability and Resilience,
in collaboration with the Green Worcester Advisory Committee*



**GREEN
WORCESTER**

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GREEN
WORCESTER



Letter from the City Manager

Dear Partners, Neighbors, and Friends,

This year marks the fifth anniversary of the Green Worcester Plan, our roadmap to making Worcester one of America's most sustainable and climate-resilient mid-sized cities by 2050. When the plan was adopted in 2020, the future felt uncertain amid the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. But this roadmap guided us through, and now five years later, Worcester built the foundation needed to turn vision into action, including creating the Department of Sustainability and Resilience, a dedicated Green Worcester Advisory Committee, and stronger partnerships across government, business, and community stakeholders.

This annual report reflects our commitment to transparency and accountability. It highlights progress made in 2025 and outlines priorities for 2026.

Achieving the goals set out in the plan hasn't been without its challenges. Shifting federal priorities, global uncertainty, and rising utility costs continue to affect local governments and residents alike. Acknowledging these obstacles is essential to maintaining the trust that meaningful climate action requires.

Despite these headwinds, Worcester made significant progress in 2025. We expanded our zero-waste efforts with the installation of 150 WooBins across the city and advanced development of a Zero Waste Master Plan scheduled for completion in 2026. We strengthened green infrastructure through tree planting and the launch of a three-year rain garden revitalization initiative, while advancing Project Blue Worcester to improve watershed health and water quality citywide.

In 2026, we will continue building momentum by installing more than 15 electric vehicle charging ports, auditing municipal buildings for energy efficiency and solar opportunities, expanding tree canopy and biodiversity initiatives, and launching early actions from the Zero Waste Master Plan.

None of this work happens alone. The progress outlined in this report is possible because of the commitment of city staff, community organizations, businesses, institutions, and residents who share a vision for a greener and more resilient Worcester. Together, we will continue advancing the goals of the Green Worcester Plan and help make the Heart of the Commonwealth more sustainable and resilient for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Eric D. Batista, City Manager



Statement from the Green Worcester Advisory Committee

Once again, the Green Worcester Advisory Committee (GWAC) commends the Worcester Department of Sustainability and Resilience (DSR) for the progress the city has made in 2025. Worcester's goal is to be a climate leader, which represents both sound fiscal policy and a strategic investment in our city's future. To this end, DSR is advancing a wide range of inter-connected initiatives, weaving sustainability and resilience deeper into the fabric of our community.

DSR's energy initiatives – including expanding access to electric vehicle charging stations, securing energy savings in municipal buildings, and helping homeowners and renters achieve home energy efficiency – are mission-critical. DSR is developing a Zero Waste Master Plan that provides a comprehensive roadmap to beautify the city and reduce material waste flows that contribute to climate change. The Lakes and Ponds program continues to conserve our vital water resources, while engaging residents in science and stewardship opportunities. In spring 2025, the City completed Phase I of its Stormwater & Green Infrastructure Master Plan and by fall had launched the next phase to develop a reliable flood mitigation model for Worcester's future. The City is greening our urban landscape and building climate resilience through initiatives such as rain gardens, pollinator gardens, and innovative Miyawaki Forests. DSR has also shown creative leadership in sustainability education, partnering with public schools, the city's universities, and community organizations to build a foundation of awareness among younger generations.

These successes come despite a challenging political climate. With the current federal administration's climate policies rooted in denial and reversing past progress, state and local governments must assume greater leadership roles, but they too have shown signs of wavering commitment and retreat. Now more than ever, the City of Worcester and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts need to serve as models for municipalities and states committed to addressing climate change. Worcester can be not just an environmental leader, but an economic innovator that generates new kinds of jobs and opportunities. The economy of the future will be based on green jobs, and municipalities that make this transition first will be positioned to benefit as markets shift in this direction.

However, we must acknowledge the scale of the challenge ahead. Worcester has set ambitious and necessary goals: 100% renewable energy for municipal facilities by 2030, and 100% renewable energy citywide (including heating and transportation) by 2045. The Green Worcester Plan also identifies an interim target of 30% of units heated by renewables by 2030. Despite Worcester's commendable efforts, current trajectories indicate that meeting these goals without federal assistance is no longer possible—a challenge faced by municipalities and states nationwide.



This reality underscores the importance of DSR's dual approach. Sustainability involves adjusting our infrastructure, operations and lifestyles in order to prevent or mitigate the lifestyle, financial, ecosystem, and climate disruptions that await us. Resilience is how we adapt to those current and future disruptions when sustainability efforts fall short.

GWAC shares DSR's commitment to pushing on both fronts simultaneously to continue to make Worcester a place where the people who live, work and play here can live healthy, thriving lives. We must continue to advance policies that empower developers, businesses, and residents to meet carbon emission targets. And in partnership with property owners and developers, we must plan and implement the resilience upgrades needed to address the inevitable local impacts of climate change. As this annual report demonstrates, DSR is making substantial progress in making the city more resilient against climate risks like increased heat and flooding. The city must continue to strengthen these efforts, because anticipating and minimizing climate impacts is the most cost-effective path forward.

GWAC commends DSR's efforts to engage across city departments, including Planning and Regulatory Services, Parks, Recreation and Cemetery, Public Works, Transportation and Mobility, and the Worcester Public School system, and we call upon the city to review all city departments and enhance communication and coordination among them to ensure that all city operations are as sustainable and resilient as possible.

Worcester's continued investment in sustainability and resilience work delivers benefits that extend far beyond carbon reduction. These efforts improve public health through cleaner air and reduced heat-related illness, lower energy costs for residents and businesses, create quality jobs in growing sectors, enhance property values through improved aesthetics and infrastructure, strengthen community equity by prioritizing vulnerable neighborhoods, and increase our regional competitiveness as a forward-thinking city. In every way, these efforts save money and strengthen our local economy. By empowering developers, businesses, and residents to meet carbon emission targets while simultaneously preparing for climate impacts, Worcester builds a more livable, economically vibrant, and equitable city for all its residents. This is the leadership our moment demands, and Worcester can and should remain at the forefront of this essential work.



About This Report

The Green Worcester Plan (GWP) is Worcester's roadmap to becoming one of the most sustainable and climate-resilient mid-sized cities in America by 2050. It envisions a city where government, residents, businesses, and institutions work together in shared stewardship of our community and our planet – using resources wisely, minimizing environmental impact, and building a more livable, prosperous, and equitable Worcester.

This report summarizes progress made in 2025 across six themes in the Green Worcester Plan and looks ahead to priorities for 2026. Each section includes an **Update** on work completed and a **Looking Forward** section outlining next steps.

The Department of Sustainability and Resilience (DSR) leads most of the programs described in this report, in close collaboration with partners across City departments and the broader Worcester community. Special recognition goes to the Department of Public Works, the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Cemetery, the Department of Transportation and Mobility, and the Executive Office of Economic Development (Housing, Neighborhood, and Planning Divisions).





KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS & UPCOMING PRIORITIES

Energy and Climate Change Mitigation

Energy Efficiency, Renewable Energy, Vehicle Electrification, and Assistance for Residents

Reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions is central to the Green Worcester Plan. Moving city energy users to 100% clean and affordable energy by 2045 requires eliminating all fossil-fuel-related emissions. Worcester has already reduced its GHG emissions by 9.5% since 2009 – even as the city has grown by more than 20,000 residents. This progress is guided by three goals:

- **By 2030:** Use 100% renewable energy for municipal facilities
- **By 2035:** Provide 100% residential renewable electricity city-wide through the Community Choice Aggregation program (renamed Green Worcester ElectriCITY Municipal Aggregation Program)
- **By 2045:** Use 100% renewable energy for residences and businesses, including heating and transportation, with an interim goal of 30% by 2030

The following projects contribute to the City's ongoing reduction of GHG emissions.

SMART ENERGY ADVICE

 **Update:** DSR continued to implement and expand the Smart Energy Advice Program, which launched in Fall 2023 to connect residents, small businesses, and nonprofits – particularly renters, low- and moderate-income households, and non-English-speaking communities – with energy efficiency resources and financial assistance. A full-time Energy Advocate provides tailored support including no-cost energy assessments, Mass Save incentives, financing through the 0% HEAT Loan program, utility bill guidance, and referrals to local partners such as the Worcester Community Action Council.

Since its launch, the program has engaged over 1,000 individuals, assisted more than 450 low- and moderate-income residents, and participated in over 50 community events.

 **Looking Forward:** DSR will continue managing the program, primarily funded by the Community First Partnership grant (2025–2027), sustaining operations and expanding outreach to address Worcester's aging building stock. This work is especially critical as rising utility costs place increasing strain on vulnerable residents, making access to efficiency resources and financial assistance an essential service.



ENERGY SAVINGS PERFORMANCE CONTRACT FOR MUNICIPAL FACILITIES

🔔 Update: In December 2025, the City launched the procurement process for a next-generation energy efficiency initiative for municipal facilities through an Energy Savings Performance Contract (ESPC) by beginning a competitive procurement process under the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER) ESPC Program. This ESPC will identify energy conservation and renewable energy opportunities across municipal facilities, including Worcester Public Schools buildings.

➡ Looking Forward: The contractor will be selected in late Winter 2026 and will, once a contract is signed, complete an Investment Grade Audit of municipal and WPS facilities and prepare a plan for energy efficiency and renewable energy investment. The results will inform future project phases, guaranteed savings estimates, and negotiation of a long-term Energy Savings Performance Contract.

MAINTENANCE OF MUNICIPAL SOLAR SYSTEMS

🔔 Update: DSR managed the City's third-party maintenance contract for all municipally owned solar PV facilities to ensure renewable energy production is maximized. Over the past year, the City's solar projects produced 12 million kWh – generating significant revenue and the equivalent of powering 1,170 homes for a year.

➡ Looking Forward: Maintenance will continue for all municipally owned solar PV facilities, as this work is critical to optimizing the City's solar energy production and protecting its long-term investment in renewable infrastructure.



VEHICLE ELECTRIFICATION: PUBLIC CURBSIDE CHARGING

🔔 Update: In March 2025, Worcester was awarded the MassCEC On Street Charging Solutions Grant to fully fund the design and installation of up to 15 public curbside electric vehicle (EV) charging ports at four sites by the end of 2026. The program is designed to expand equitable access to EV infrastructure, particularly for residents without access to off-street parking. Community input gathered through an interactive map and public engagement sessions helped identify prospective locations. Sites were evaluated through

feasibility studies in coordination with City departments and utility providers. Several originally proposed sites were determined to be infeasible due to underground utility setbacks, limited electrical capacity, or right-of-way limitations, and the list was refined accordingly.

➡ **Looking Forward:** The final four sites will advance through engineering and design, with installation anticipated to begin in Summer 2026.

VEHICLE ELECTRIFICATION: MUNICIPAL FLEET AND PUBLIC ACCESS

🔔 Update: In November 2025, DSR launched a project to design additional EV charging infrastructure at City facilities. The effort is intended to expand charging availability for both the public and municipal fleets. Projects are being designed to leverage external funding where eligible, including grants through the Massachusetts Electric Vehicle Incentive Program (MassEVIP) and infrastructure support through National Grid's Make Ready program.

The Worcester School Department received grant funding from the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center to purchase 20 electric school buses. The buses and their charging stations at the WPS bus depot were acquired in 2025 and

are expected to enter service in early 2026. Compared to traditional gasoline-powered buses, the electric fleet is quieter, lower-emission, and significantly more cost-effective — with annual maintenance costs estimated at 40–60% less.

➡ **Looking Forward:** The City will continue working with consultant Weston & Sampson, National Grid, and multiple City departments to develop designs for charging stations at four locations: the Great Brook Valley Parking Lot (public), Tacoma Street Playground (public), Police Headquarters (municipal fleet), and the DPW/DTM facility (municipal fleet). Once designs are finalized, the projects will proceed to competitive procurement for installation, expected by end of Fall 2026.



Resilience to Climate Change

INCREASING OUR TREE CANOPY AND BIODIVERSITY

🔔 Update: The Executive Office of Economic Development (EOED) and the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Cemetery (DPRC) have been key partners in tree canopy preservation and maintenance, with monthly coordination meetings helping to advance this work. Trees are essential to Worcester's

climate resilience, and DSR provided financial support to the DPRC to increase street tree plantings over the past several years. In Spring 2025, 352 trees were planted.

➡ **Looking Forward:** DSR anticipates the planting of 700–900 additional trees in 2026.

MONITORING AND MANAGING WATER QUALITY

🔔 Update: Worcester's lakes and ponds saw meaningful progress on multiple fronts in 2025. The Lakes and Ponds Program (L&P) used monitoring data to guide management of cyanobacteria in two waterbodies, preventing beach closures and maintaining safe recreational conditions throughout the season. Combining professional staff, contracted surveys, and volunteer community scientists, L&P collected data from over 100 sampling events to track invasive species, cyanobacteria, and general lake health. These efforts informed management of over 100 acres of invasive aquatic plants and supported hands-on removal of one ton of aquatic vegetation by more than 80 local volunteers, reducing the need for aquatic chemical treatments. Public engagement remained a cornerstone of the program, with over 50 rain barrels distributed and nine educational events held for students and residents.

watershed management planning initiative focused on identifying and mitigating the root causes of water quality impairments. Three public meetings were held to integrate local knowledge and resident priorities, and eight years of water quality data were analyzed to better understand lake and watershed dynamics. The findings are being compiled into a draft watershed plan for community review.

➡ **Looking Forward:** L&P will finalize the Project Blue Worcester watershed management plans through a series of community meetings in Fall 2026 to gather resident feedback, ensuring final strategies reflect local needs. Monitoring and management efforts will continue to be improved to proactively address water quality impairments and maintain the health of Worcester's aquatic ecosystems.

L&P also advanced long-term stewardship through Project Blue Worcester, a holistic



BIODIVERSITY AND HEAT MITIGATION: MIYAWAKI FORESTS AND HABITAT GARDENS

🔔 Update: 2025 was a significant year for Miyawaki Forests in Worcester. Two forests installed in Spring 2024 – at the McGrath Municipal Parking Lot and Plumley Village – continued to grow rapidly and were actively maintained and monitored through late fall 2025. Maintenance focused on weeding and targeted infill plantings as the forests mature toward self-sufficiency. More information, including a StoryMap, is available on the City’s website.

DSR also funded Rewild to create a habitat garden at the main branch of the Worcester Public Library in 2024, and Rewild continued to maintain the garden throughout 2025.

➡ **Looking Forward:** DSR plans to bid Miyawaki Forest maintenance services for an additional two to three years. Maintenance work for the Worcester Public Library Habitat Garden will continue in 2026 with the goal of improving the site’s ecological resilience and aesthetics.

A COOLPOCKET AT A WORCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

🔔 Update: In 2024, the City received state funding to design two CoolPockets – public spaces that provide shaded gathering areas and relief from urban heat, while incorporating stormwater management and increasing plantings for health and carbon sequestration benefits. Two locations were selected, Vernon Hill Park and Columbus Park School, and received conceptual designs developed with community input. In 2025, the City hired BSC Group to complete an engineering design for the Columbus Park School CoolPocket.

➡ **Looking Forward:** With designs nearing completion, DSR intends to apply for a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) implementation grant in Spring 2026 to fund construction of the CoolPocket at Columbus Park School, with construction hoped to begin in summer 2027 if funding is secured.





DEVELOPING A FLOOD MITIGATION MODEL AND NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

🔔 Update: Between 2023 and 2025, the City developed a Stormwater and Green Infrastructure Master Plan to assess urban flooding risks and build capacity to adapt to a changing climate. The plan covers existing and anticipated flooding across Worcester, the impacts of that flooding, and an evaluation of both green and traditional infrastructure approaches to flood reduction.

In 2025, the City launched Phase 2 of this project in partnership with the Department of Public Works (DPW) and engineering firm Weston & Sampson, supported by a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) action grant. Phase 2 focused on three areas: building an Integrated Flood Model (IFM) that combines stormwater and drainage data into a comprehensive citywide tool for identifying effective flood mitigation

strategies; advancing Nature-Based Solutions by selecting demonstration sites that reduce flooding while delivering community and environmental benefits; and expanding education and engagement through Worcester Public Schools, community organizations, and regional partners. This phase of work is expected to conclude on June 30, 2026.

➡ Looking Forward: DSR and DPW plan to apply for an additional MVP grant to complete Phase 3 of this project, which will include model calibration and validation and designs for nature-based solutions. The completed model will help the City make strategic, data-driven decisions about stormwater investments – reducing localized flooding and strengthening Worcester’s climate resilience.

RAIN GARDEN REVITALIZATION

🔔 Update: In summer 2025, DSR launched a Stewardship Maintenance Program for the City’s eight existing rain gardens on municipal and school properties which include: Shore Park, Crompton Park, Coal Mine Brook, Morgan Landing, Northeast Cutoff, Francis McGrath Elementary School, Midland Elementary School, and the Senior Center. These green stormwater infrastructure sites are landscaped areas that absorb rain, reduce flooding, and filter pollution from waterways using plants and

soil – while adding beauty and natural habitat to neighborhoods. Project consultants BSC Group assessed the condition of all eight sites and developed a replanting plan to be implemented in spring and summer 2026.

➡ Looking Forward: DSR will continue working with BSC Group through 2028, focusing on site improvements, new native plantings, and long-term maintenance planning for all rain garden sites.



Advancing Mobility Transformation

Vision Zero, E-Bikes, Fare-Free WRTA, and More

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY AND WRTA

🔔 Update: The Worcester Vision Zero Safety Action Plan was finalized and adopted in June 2025, establishing a citywide commitment to eliminating traffic deaths and serious injuries on Worcester streets by 2035.

The Department of Transportation and Mobility (DTM) expanded the city's multi-modal network by adding bike lanes to Stafford Street, Burncoat Street, and Grove Street, bringing the citywide total to 28.7 miles. Lane additions also narrowed vehicular lane widths, reinforcing safer travel speeds. Design work is ongoing on Chandler Street, Pleasant Street (a MassDOT project), and Massasoit Road. Pedestrian safety improvements included the installation of Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacons, curb

extensions, accessible pedestrian signals, and new sidewalks across the city.

In partnership with the Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA) and Metro Mobility, the City launched a pilot e-bike share program with 10 publicly available e-bikes at the WRTA Hub, supporting first-mile and last-mile transit connections. The WRTA Advisory Board voted to extend fare-free service for a fifth consecutive year. With continued fare-free operations and expanded weekend service, the WRTA achieved its highest ridership this century.

➡ Looking Forward: DTM, with support from DSR, will continue implementing the Mobility Action Plan and Vision Zero Plan.

ENDICOTT-BIGELOW STREET REDESIGN: PREPARING FOR CONSTRUCTION

🔔 Update: Endicott Street and Bigelow Street are important connectors between the Green Island neighborhood, Crompton Park, and the rest of the city. A high rate of crashes and limited tree cover have made these streets feel unsafe, and the area is prone to street flooding and intense summer heat due to its high proportion of paved surfaces. With community input, the City designed improvements to make both streets safer, greener, and more accessible for people driving, biking, walking, or using a wheelchair. Planned improvements include new bike lanes, wider sidewalks, raised crosswalks,

additional shade trees, and updated parking. The project is led by the Neighborhood Development Division in collaboration with the Departments of Transportation & Mobility, Sustainability & Resilience, and Public Works. In 2025, the project was awarded to JH Lynch & Sons and project preparation began.

➡ Looking Forward: The Endicott-Bigelow Street redesign project is planned to break ground in Summer 2026 with construction expected to be completed in 2027.



Striving Towards Zero Waste

KEEP WORCESTER CLEAN

🔔 Update: In August 2025, the City Manager relaunched and expanded the Keep Worcester Clean initiative, bringing together Public Works, Parks & Recreation, Inspectional Services, DSR, Health & Human Services, the Quality of Life Team, the Police and Fire Departments, and community partners in a unified effort to address litter, illegal dumping, graffiti, and overgrowth.

In 2025, the WooBins Pilot Project installed 150 dual-stream public trash and recycling bins across high-traffic areas citywide, completed in two phases — 30 bins in Spring and the remaining 120 in Summer. Bin placement was informed by over 830 resident suggestions submitted through a crowdsourcing map, and 50 bins feature original artwork by local artists. Since full deployment in August, approximately 8.5 tons of recycling and 17 tons of trash, were collected.

DSR also continued its Clean Streets Collective program, providing free green trash bags to resident volunteers and community organizations to address street litter in their own neighborhoods, and extended its zero waste programming to Worcester's Out to Lunch Festival and Farmers' Market series for the second consecutive year, diverting 332 pounds of compost over the 10-week series.

➡ **Looking Forward:** Quarterly Keep Worcester Clean meetings will continue to strengthen coordination between departments. The WooBins Pilot Project will be refined based on lessons learned, with improvements to bin placement and service delivery, and litter pickup programs including the Clean Streets Collective will continue to expand.

ZERO WASTE MASTER PLAN

🔔 Update: The majority of community engagement and planning work for the Zero Waste Master Plan took place in 2025. This ambitious effort, led by DSR in collaboration with the Department of Public Works, is built around a bold vision – Zero Waste Worcester: a community committed to working together to reduce waste, reuse materials, prevent litter, and ensure zero waste programs are accessible for all. The plan is on track to go before City Council in the spring of 2026.

To ground the plan in real data, the City commissioned its first citywide Waste Characterization Study in April 2025, analyzing

over 22,000 pounds of waste from 103 locations. Community input was central to the process: more than 1,800 residents responded to an initial survey, hundreds participated in public workshops and listening sessions, and a follow-up survey of nearly 750 residents helped prioritize the plan's 27 proposed strategies. Preliminary analysis suggests that with the right investments, Worcester's diversion rate could climb from 10% to 75% over the next decade.

➡ **Looking Forward:** DSR will finalize the Zero Waste Master Plan, present it to City Council, and work with DPW and others to begin implementation of high-priority actions.



Improving the Health and Safety of Our Residents and Working Toward Food Security

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, HOUSING DEVELOPMENT DIVISION, AND PARKS, RECREATION & CEMETERY PROJECTS

 **Update:** Safe and healthy housing is fundamental to resident well-being. In 2025, the City continued investing in programs that preserve and improve the housing stock, particularly for vulnerable residents. Through the Executive Office of Economic Development, the Housing Development Division administers several Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)-funded programs that support homeowners and tenants with repairs, rehabilitation, and homeownership assistance – helping to improve indoor air quality, safety, and energy systems while allowing residents to remain in their homes.

The Elder Home Repair Program assisted 14 homeowners over age 62 with critical repairs such as roofs, porches, heating, and electrical systems using CDBG funding, helping residents safely age in place. The Worcester Lead Abatement Program remediated 46 housing units containing lead paint hazards, protecting children under age six in Worcester’s older housing stock. The Housing Development Division also launched a four-year Healthy Homes grant program in March 2025 to address environmental health hazards in residential properties, with 15 properties already qualified in its first year and a goal of assisting up to 90 total.

Food insecurity remains a growing concern for many Worcester residents, particularly as challenges in federal food assistance programs have increased pressure on local households. In response, community partners launched the Center for Food Equity – a collaboration between the Worcester County Food Bank, the City of Worcester Task Force on Food Security, the Worcester Food Policy Council, and the Central Mass SNAP Coalition. In May 2025, partners began conducting a Community Food Assessment to better understand Worcester’s food landscape and identify gaps, barriers, and challenges residents face in accessing healthy and culturally appropriate food.

In addition, the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Cemetery began construction of 124 new raised planting beds for community gardens in Green Hill Park, which will open to residents in 2026 to support access to fresh produce and advance a key goal of the Green Worcester Plan.

 **Looking Forward:** The Community Food Assessment will be completed and its findings used to inform future policies and programs to strengthen Worcester’s food system. Community gardens will open to residents in 2026, expanding access to fresh, locally grown produce across the city.



Communication, Education, and Public Engagement

EDUCATION, OUTREACH AND WORCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

🔔 Update: Outreach and public engagement are core functions of DSR, and transparency is central to the City's sustainability work. DSR leads the outreach strategy for the Green Worcester Plan, sharing updates through newsletters, videos, the Green Worcester Dashboard, social media, and media coverage.

In 2025, DSR staff participated in numerous events and educational programs, including regional conferences such as the MassRecycle Annual Conference, the Ecological Landscape Alliance presentation, a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program webinar, and the Massachusetts Green Communities Summit, as well as city-specific events including Jane Week, GIS Day, the Mayor's Civics Academy, and a Worcester Technical High School Earth Day event.

DSR made significant progress integrating sustainability into Worcester Public Schools (WPS) curriculum. A partnership between Green Worcester Advisory Committee volunteers, WPS curriculum staff, and Worcester Polytechnic Institute has produced a curriculum development program launching in early 2026 to help teachers build sustainability-focused lessons using Worcester-specific sustainability and resilience data — connecting classroom concepts to students' lived experience in the city.

Partnerships with local institutions of higher education continued to be an important part of DSR's work in 2025, spanning research initiatives and volunteer programs across areas including flood reduction, tree canopy and water quality. These collaborations continue to be a valued and mutually beneficial part of DSR's mission.

Additionally, a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) grant supported a new partnership between DSR, the Department of Public Works, and the Blackstone River Watershed Association to bring watershed education to students at four Worcester elementary schools. In summer 2025, DSR hired its first Zero Waste Outreach Intern to expand community engagement at farmers markets and community events, educating residents about recycling and waste reduction.

➡ Looking Forward: DSR will expand and innovate partnerships with Worcester Public Schools and the WPI STEM Education Center, and will begin to develop its first Green Jobs Training program – providing participants with classroom and hands-on experience in maintaining local green infrastructure.



Acknowledgments

The Department of Sustainability and Resilience would like to thank the following people, elected and appointed officials, partners, and organizations, for their contributions to the implementation of the Green Worcester Plan. We are grateful for your support and participation that has made all this work possible.

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Worcester Public Library
Worcester Public Schools
Worcester Senior Center

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External Partners

Regional Environmental Council
College of the Holy Cross
Worcester Polytechnic Institute
Clark University
Worcester State University
Indian Lake Watershed Association
Lake Quinsigamond Commission
Lake Quinsigamond Watershed Association
Plumley Village
Tatnuck Brook Watershed Association
Worcester Native Plant Initiative
Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce
Worcester Regional Transit Authority
WalkBike Worcester



The City of Worcester

Department of Sustainability and Resilience

For more information about the Green Worcester Plan and the Department of Sustainability and Resilience:

- Visit worcesterma.gov/DSR
- Sign up for the Green Worcester monthly newsletter: [Signup Form](#)
- Check out the Green Worcester dashboard: green.worcesterma.gov
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