



The City of Worcester

STRATEGIC PLAN FY2025-2029

Mission, Vision & Values

Mission

To deliver exceptional public services and municipal operations that are rooted in equity, innovation, and integrity, and **centered on people**.

Vision

To be the best-managed city in the country and create a thriving community where opportunity is available to everyone, **regardless of their background or situation in life**.

Values

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion – Building a workforce that reflects the population we serve and where employees feel valued and included.

Innovation – Adapting with the times to constantly improve our operations and implement creative solutions.

Professionalism – Serving with discipline, integrity, transparency, empathy, and dedication to public service.

Resident Focus – Starting with the needs of residents to inform our priorities.

Evidence-Based Decision-Making – Developing policies based on data and best practices rather than emotions or speculation.

Excellence – Inspiring a more productive and high-performing government through organizational health.

Collaboration – Breaking down siloes to facilitate interdepartmental cooperation to solve complex issues.

Strategic Plan Priority Areas

Our priority areas will guide our Strategic Plan and our operations for the next 5 years.



Strategic Plan Priority Areas

Public Health & Safety

A city's primary responsibility to its residents is public health and safety. This is non-negotiable.



Strategic Plan Priority Area

Public Health & Safety

OBJECTIVE 1: Develop and maintain a public health and safety infrastructure that is responsive to community needs and builds trust and cooperation.

Strategy	Partners
1.1 Facilitate Community Health Assessment, Regional Youth Health Survey, and public health surveillance on an ongoing basis to determine programming needs and focus.	Health & Human Services, Central Massachusetts Regional Public Health Alliance, Worcester Public Schools, hospitals, community partners
1.2 Actively participate in the development of the Community Health Improvement Plan to create clear and actionable municipal goals.	Health & Human Services, community partners
1.3 Facilitate ongoing communication and strengthen interdepartmental collaboration to maximize efficiency, share data/lessons learned, and ensure strategic cohesion.	Health & Human Services, Inspectional Services, Sustainability & Resilience, Transportation & Mobility, Police Department, Fire Department, Emergency Management
1.4 Develop and track key community health indicators to ensure efficacy of programming.	Health & Human Services
1.5 Develop and implement a city-wide Youth Agenda to implement strategies to increase equitable youth mental and physical health outcomes across demographics and identities.	Health & Human Services
1.6 Create a problem-oriented policing plan that includes enhanced communication with neighborhood associations, and park-and-walk initiatives.	Police Department, neighborhood/business associations
1.7 Maintain a robust training program that ensures well-managed and executed mitigation of emergency incidents.	Fire Department, Emergency Management, Health & Human Services
1.8 Apply industry-leading community risk reduction strategies.	Fire Department

Strategic Plan Priority Area

Public Health & Safety

OBJECTIVE 2: Strengthen support for individuals and families living with mental health and substance use disorder.

Strategy

- 2.1** | Enhance coordination and communication between Health & Human Services and Police Department to provide non-emergency support and outreach services.
- 2.2** | Build capacity of local service providers and private and government sectors to meet the mental health and addiction needs in the community, through alignment of goals and collaboration.
- 2.3** | Strengthen partnerships with youth-serving organizations to educate youth on addiction, poor mental health, and how to seek help.

Partners

Health & Human Services, Police Department

Health & Human Services, Massachusetts Department of Mental Health, local hospitals and non-profit service providers

Health & Human Services, sports organizations, faith communities, youth organizations



Strategic Plan Priority Area

Public Health & Safety

OBJECTIVE 3: Reduce overdoses and minimize harms of substance use disorders for individuals and families.

Strategy

- 3.1** | Establish a city-wide approach to tackling substance use disorder that centers harm reduction and unites prevention, intervention, and suppression efforts in a destigmatizing manner.
- 3.2** | Create a centralized data repository to track information including overdose, mortality rates, and incarceration rates.
- 3.3** | Increase outreach to provide services to individuals struggling with substance use disorder, and provide education/access about Narcan, Good Samaritans laws, and other related tools.
- 3.4** | Share drug intelligence with State and Federal law enforcement partners, including identities of drugs seized.
- 3.5** | Increase enforcement on street level drug trade.

Partners

Health & Human Services, Police Department, District Attorney's office, Worcester County Sheriff's Office, Worcester Emergency Medical Services, hospitals/care providers, community partners

Health & Human Services, Police Department, hospitals

Health & Human Services, Police Department, service providers

Police Department; Massachusetts State Police; Fusion Center; District Attorney's office; Drug Enforcement Administration

Police Department

Strategic Plan Priority Area

Public Health & Safety

OBJECTIVE 4: Reduce overall gun crimes and violence in the city.

Strategy

- 4.1 | Create Crime Gun Intelligence Center to focus on enhancing penalties for armed career criminals and incarcerating trigger pullers upon conviction for gun-related violence.
- 4.2 | Create dedicated firearms unit to enforce and investigate gun crimes.

Partners

- Police Department; Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
- Police Department

OBJECTIVE 5: Reduce youth violence rates in the city through collaborative efforts with community partners.

Strategy

- 5.1 | Establish mentoring programs in collaboration with community organizations to provide positive role models and support networks for at-risk youth.
- 5.2 | Implement initiatives that empower youth to become agents of change in their communities.
- 5.3 | Coordinate intervention efforts and implement evidence-based practices to address youth violence through interagency process.
- 5.4 | Utilize data analysis and evaluation to identify trends, assess the effectiveness of intervention programs, and inform decision-making to help prioritize resources and target interventions more effectively.

Partners

- Health & Human Services, community partners
 - Health & Human Services, community partners
 - Health & Human Services, community leaders
 - Health & Human Services
-

Strategic Plan Priority Area

Public Health & Safety

OBJECTIVE 6: Reduce health inequities by prioritizing vulnerable communities and promoting racial justice.

Strategy

- 6.1** | Reconvene Health Equity Task Force to adapt its goals and objectives to post-COVID-19 community health needs.
- 6.2** | Implement health equity training for employees.
- 6.3** | Apply “trusted messenger” approach to all health campaigns to incorporate community voice and increase buy-in.
- 6.4** | Develop culturally-appropriate and tailored materials and programming to effectively engage with the city’s diverse population and increase health literacy.
- 6.5** | Make new green spaces in the urban core and throughout Environmental Justice neighborhoods, including the installation of Miyawaki forests and expanding the existing tree canopy.

Partners

- Health & Human Services, community partners
 - Health & Human Services, community partners
 - Health & Human Services, community leaders
 - Health & Human Services; Worcester Public Library
 - Sustainability & Resilience
-

Strategic Plan Priority Area

Public Health & Safety

OBJECTIVE 7: Partner with Worcester Public Schools to engage with students and families on public health topics and implement safety measures.

Strategy

- 7.1** | Present age-appropriate fire risk reduction techniques to all second graders and seek to expand the program to other school-aged children as opportunities present.
- 7.2** | Reduce youth substance use by preventing “first use” through ongoing school programs, including tobacco education.
- 7.3** | Foster participation in Massachusetts Safe Routes to Schools program.
- 7.4** | Prioritize and implement speed reduction methods, while improving walkability and bikeability for routes accessing and adjacent to Worcester’s schools.

Partners

- Fire Department, Worcester Public Schools
 - Health & Human Services, Worcester Public Schools
 - Transportation & Mobility, Public Works & Parks, Worcester Public Schools
 - Transportation & Mobility, Public Works & Parks, Worcester Public Schools
-

Strategic Plan Priority Area

Public Health & Safety

OBJECTIVE 8: Bring the city's old housing stock up to code to eliminate nuisance violations to ensure safe and healthy housing for residents.

Strategy

- 8.1 | Maintain rental registry and conduct inspections to increase compliance with sanitary and building codes.
- 8.2 | Implement the Neighborhoods First Model to find and remove nuisances and other issues that degrade neighborhood value and overall safety.
- 8.3 | Increase community partnerships to educate tenants, landlords, and the public on housing/building/health codes.
- 8.4 | Make investments in lead paint abatement to increase the total number of units with an abatement certificate to 25% by 2030.
- 8.5 | Facilitate access to technical and financial resources to address deferred maintenance issues, including sanitary, building, and fire code violations.
- 8.6 | Leverage federal grants and healthcare-related funding to reduce health-related costs due to older housing stock including lead poisoning, asthma, and elder falls.
- 8.7 | Pursue cost reimbursement from managed healthcare organizations for home repairs and remediation that are the root cause of health issues.

Partners

Inspectional Services

Inspectional Services, Quality of Life Team, City Manager's Office

Inspectional Services, City Manager's Office

Inspectional Services, Economic Development

Economic Development

Economic Development, Inspectional Services, community housing partners, local healthcare organizations

Economic Development, Inspectional Services, community housing partners, local healthcare organizations

Strategic Plan Priority Area

Public Health & Safety

OBJECTIVE 8: Bring the city's old housing stock up to code to eliminate nuisance violations to ensure safe and healthy housing for residents. (cont.)

Strategy

- 8.8** | Facilitate adaptation of housing to accommodate ADA and accessibility needs.
- 8.9** | Promote methods to improve indoor air quality, including the reduction of fossil fuels in appliances and utilities.

Partners

Economic Development, community housing partners
Health & Human Services, Sustainability & Resilience

OBJECTIVE 9: Develop and implement comprehensive emergency management strategies, ensuring a swift and coordinated response to all hazards.

Strategy

- 9.1** | Conduct regular, cross-functional training sessions and realistic simulation exercises involving various emergency scenarios and including municipal departments and campus public safety agencies
- 9.2** | Develop and implement a comprehensive outreach program to engage with the community and educate residents on emergency preparedness
- 9.3** | Provide resources, information, and training to empower citizens to take an active role in public health and safety

Partners

Emergency Management, Fire Department, Police Department, college/university police departments
Emergency Management, college/university campuses, neighborhood/business associations
Emergency Management, college/university campuses, neighborhood/business associations

Strategic Plan Priority Area

Public Health & Safety

OBJECTIVE 10: Build and operate a transportation network that is safe and accessible to all users.

Strategy	Partners
10.1 Develop a Vision Zero Safety Action Plan aimed at eliminating serious injury and fatal crashes.	Transportation & Mobility, Public Works & Parks
10.2 Complete and begin implementation of the ongoing Mobility Action Plan.	Transportation & Mobility, Public Works & Parks, Sustainability & Resilience
10.3 Complete an ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition plan for the public right-of-way.	Transportation & Mobility; Public Works & Parks; Diversity, Equity & Inclusion; Accessibility Advisory Commission
10.4 Develop and implement traffic calming treatments appropriate for the street classification.	Transportation & Mobility, Public Works & Parks
10.5 Develop and implement intersection, sidewalk, and pedestrian safety treatments.	Transportation & Mobility, Public Works & Parks
10.6 Implement Complete Streets and Accessibility improvements as streets are reconstructed/resurfaced and as standalone projects.	Transportation & Mobility; Public Works & Parks; Diversity, Equity & Inclusion; Accessibility Advisory Commission
10.7 Maintain and improve street lighting.	Public Works & Parks

Strategic Plan Priority Areas

Affordable Neighborhoods & Reduced Homelessness

The city is still feeling the effects of COVID-19 pandemic-related supply chain delays and global inflation. Increasing cost of living—particularly housing—is making it very difficult for our residents to make ends meet. At the same time, our nation is facing a homelessness crisis, with its impacts felt and seen in every major city.



Strategic Plan Priority Area

Affordable Neighborhoods & Reduced Homelessness

OBJECTIVE 1: Expand affordable housing options and protect residents from displacement.

Strategy

- 1.1** | Partner with non-profits and private developers to preserve and expand the supply of protected affordable housing.
- 1.2** | Expand requirements and/or incentives that facilitate the development of new, subsidized and permanently affordable housing in transit-accessible and amenity-rich areas.
- 1.3** | Improve availability and awareness of supports to residents facing eviction, foreclosure, and displacement through a network of City services and non-profit partners.
- 1.4** | Develop Housing Production Plan.
- 1.5** | Update City zoning to facilitate more housing types and residential uses to accommodate the growing population.
- 1.6** | Facilitate production of senior housing and units that enable “aging in place” to accommodate the aging population.

Partners

- Economic Development, Health & Human Services, non-profits, private developers
 - Economic Development, Inspectional Services, Health & Human Services, Worcester Housing Authority, non-profits, private developers
 - Economic Development, Health & Human Services, non-profits, private developers
 - Economic Development, Health & Human Services, private non-profits, private developers
 - Economic Development
 - Economic Development
-

Strategic Plan Priority Area

Affordable Neighborhoods & Reduced Homelessness

OBJECTIVE 2: Expand and create new opportunities for affordable homeownership to meet the needs of lower income, BIPOC, and immigrant households.

Strategy

- 2.1** | Allow and encourage the development of accessory dwelling units and other 2- to 3-unit housing typologies, condos, multigenerational housing, and smaller “no-frills” single family housing in existing single-family zones.
- 2.2** | Partner with local non-profits, financial institutions, and community-based organizations to provide educational, programmatic, and financial support for first-time and low-income homebuyers.

Partners

Economic Development, Planning Board, Inspectional Services, Health & Human Services, non-profits, private developers

Economic Development, Health & Human Services, Worcester Housing Authority, non-profits, private developers

OBJECTIVE 3: Partner with service providers to develop a more comprehensive, place-based, Housing First approach to prevent and provide pathways out of homelessness.

Strategy

- 3.1** | Expand coordination and communication among municipal departments, non-profit, and institutional partners to effectively assess and address homelessness.
- 3.2** | Increase the number of units available for formerly homeless households, particularly permanent supportive housing and including accessible units.
- 3.3** | Modify zoning to encourage the development of housing and services for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness in transit-accessible, walkable areas of the city.

Partners

Economic Development, Health & Human Services, non-profits, private developers

Economic Development, Health & Human Services, Inspectional Services, non-profits, private developers

Economic Development, Health & Human Services, Planning Board

Strategic Plan Priority Area

Affordable Neighborhoods & Reduced Homelessness

OBJECTIVE 4: Increase outreach to unhoused individuals to assess their individual needs and connect them to services.

Strategy

- 4.1** | Collaborate with service providers to increase full-time trauma-trained outreach workers to make contact and build relationships with the unsheltered.
- 4.2** | Connect individuals experiencing homelessness with essential services and support resources, including housing assistance, healthcare, mental health services, substance abuse treatment, employment assistance, and social services.

Partners

Health & Human Services, service providers

Health & Human Services

OBJECTIVE 5: Establish a Day Resource Center to provide the unhoused with supportive services in housing, employment, income, and physical and mental health needs to facilitate the successful return to self-sufficiency.

Strategy

- 5.1** | Secure location and funding for the Day Resource Center.
- 5.2** | Develop a supportive services coordination model to centralize access to housing navigation, employment, and healthcare resources.

Partners

Health & Human Services, Economic Development, private partners

Health & Human Services, Economic Development, private partners

Strategic Plan Priority Area

Affordable Neighborhoods & Reduced Homelessness

OBJECTIVE 6: Improve current shelter model and expand transitional housing options.

Strategy

- 6.1** | Enhance and create safe and supportive environments for people experiencing homelessness such as non-congregate shelters and Housing Resource Centers, working with economic development and community partners.

Partners

Health & Human Services, Economic Development, private partners

OBJECTIVE 7: Reduce the number of Veterans who become homeless in the City of Worcester.

Strategy

- 7.1** | Strengthen the relationship with the Worcester Housing Authority, the Commonwealth, and the Veterans Administration to address Veteran homelessness.
- 7.2** | Enhance and increase participation of the Ch. 115 Veterans rental assistance program.

Partners

Health & Human Services, Economic Development, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Department of Veterans Affairs

Health & Human Services, Executive Office of Veterans Services, Department of Transitional Assistance

Strategic Plan Priority Area

Affordable Neighborhoods & Reduced Homelessness

OBJECTIVE 8: Reduce utility costs to residents.

Strategy

- 8.1 | Maintain competitive electricity rates with energy suppliers that result in savings for Worcester residents.
- 8.2 | Develop a marketing campaign to increase participation in the Green Worcester ElectriCITY Municipal Aggregation Program.
- 8.3 | Implement pilot homeowner water/sewer service line program to replace aging lateral pipes, lasting through 2026.
- 8.4 | Implement Water Sewer Integrated Plan consistent with long term affordability analysis.
- 8.5 | Complete updated rate study to evaluate multiple sewer rate methodologies.
- 8.6 | Promote Mass Save and other efficiency/decarbonization incentives and funding options.

Partners

- Sustainability & Resilience
- Sustainability & Resilience, City Manager's Office
- Public Works & Parks
- Public Works & Parks
- Public Works & Parks
- Sustainability & Resilience

Strategic Plan Priority Area

Affordable Neighborhoods & Reduced Homelessness

OBJECTIVE 9: Provide all residents with quality and affordable transportation options to meet their daily needs.

Strategy

- 9.1** | Coordinate with WRTA and MBTA to improve transit service, particularly in designated environmental justice neighborhoods.
- 9.2** | Prioritize implementation of sustainable mobility options serving environmental justice communities that have been historically neglected, underserved, or disproportionately impacted by past transportation decisions.

Partners

- Transportation & Mobility, WRTA, MBTA
- Transportation & Mobility, Public Works & Parks, WRTA, MBTA

OBJECTIVE 10: Deploy city-wide open-access fiber network, inviting a wider range of Internet Service Providers to the Worcester market, lowering prices for residents.

Strategy

- 10.1** | Work with private partners to plan and build fiber network to increase competition between internet providers.
- 10.2** | Promote digital equity programs that reduce the cost of broadband access and advocate for policies and initiatives that address the digital divide.

Partners

- Innovation & Technology, Public Works & Parks, private wireless operators
 - Digital Equity Working Group, Worcester Public Library
-

Strategic Plan Priority Area

Affordable Neighborhoods & Reduced Homelessness

OBJECTIVE 11: Reduce barriers to access City services by connecting citizens to services in their neighborhood, eliminating roadblocks that hinder efficient communication and creating a stronger, more responsive connection between the community and its government services.

Strategy

- 11.1** | Implement a Pilot 311 Service Center in the Main South Neighborhood to improve services and streamline access to vital local government resources.
- 11.2** | Conduct a feasibility study to expand 311 Municipal Service Centers to other City districts.
- 11.3** | Expand access to technology resources, internet access, and training programs.
- 11.4** | Enhance customer service and user experience by leveraging technology solutions, such as self-service kiosks, mobile apps, and online reservation systems, to provide convenient access to library resources and services.

Partners

- Emergency Communications, Innovation & Technology, City Clerk, Public Works & Parks, Inspectional Services
 - Emergency Communications, Innovation & Technology, City Clerk, Office, Public Works & Parks, Inspectional Services
 - Worcester Public Library
 - Worcester Public Library
-

Strategic Plan Priority Area
**Affordable Neighborhoods &
Reduced Homelessness**

OBJECTIVE 12: Increase access to social and human service programs in low to moderate income neighborhoods.

Strategy

12.1 | Leverage Federal Entitlement grants to partner and fund social and human services programs, especially youth programming.

Partners

Economic Development, Emergency Communications, Innovation & Technology, City Clerk's Office, Public Works & Parks, Inspectional Services

DRAFT

Strategic Plan Priority Areas

Investment in Quality Education

Maintaining our school facilities is critical for an effective learning environment. If we do not create a long-term funding mechanism to preserve and update our existing buildings, they will continue to fall into disrepair, putting our educators and students at risk both physically and developmentally.



Strategic Plan Priority Area

Investment in Quality Education

OBJECTIVE 1: Provide clean and safe environments for children that are appropriate and adequate for learning.

Strategy

- 1.1** | Create a School Capital Maintenance Fund with startup investment of \$1 million from new growth over budget in FY24.
- 1.2** | Update the City's Financial Integrity Plan to include the School Capital Maintenance Fund.

Partners

City Manager's Office, Administration & Finance, Worcester Public Schools

City Manager's Office, Administration & Finance, Worcester Public Schools

OBJECTIVE 2: Strengthen the relationship between the City of Worcester and Worcester Public Schools through an updated, fair, and transparent Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that reflects the needs of today.

Strategy

- 2.1** | Review and update all in-kind contributions extended by the City on behalf of school operations in accordance with 603 CMR 10.04.
- 2.2** | Execute a new Memorandum of Understanding between the City and Worcester Public Schools.

Partners

City Manager's Office, Administration & Finance, Worcester Public Schools, Law

City Manager's Office, Administration & Finance, Worcester Public Schools, Law

Strategic Plan Priority Area

Investment in Quality Education

OBJECTIVE 3: Expand access to educational resources, foster early literacy and school readiness, and support academic achievement for students of all ages.

Strategy

- 3.1** | Increase the availability of educational materials, including books, e-books, audiobooks, and online databases, to support lifelong learning and skill development.
- 3.2** | Provide access to academic journals, research materials, and educational tools.
- 3.3** | Implement early literacy programs and initiatives targeted at young children and their families to promote early language development, reading readiness, and school success.
- 3.4** | Provide Storytime sessions, interactive workshops, and literacy-focused events designed to engage children in reading activities and stimulate their curiosity and imagination.
- 3.5** | Offer outreach programs and resources that support parents and caregivers in promoting early literacy at home.
- 3.6** | Offer homework help services, tutoring programs, and study resources to support students of all ages in their academic endeavors.

Partners

- Worcester Public Library
 - Worcester Public Library, Worcester Public Schools, colleges and universities
 - Worcester Public Schools
 - Worcester Public Schools
 - Worcester Public Library, Worcester Public Schools, childcare centers, and early childhood organizations
 - Worcester Public Library
-

Strategic Plan Priority Area

Investment in Quality Education

OBJECTIVE 3: Expand access to educational resources, foster early literacy and school readiness, and support academic achievement for students of all ages. (cont.)

Strategy

- 3.7** | Organize educational workshops, seminars, and skill-building sessions on topics such as STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), literacy, financial literacy, and career development.
- 3.8** | Provide access to online learning platforms, educational software, and digital resources that facilitate self-directed learning and skill acquisition.
- 3.9** | Offer technology training programs, workshops, and one-on-one assistance to help community members navigate digital tools, software applications, and online resources effectively.

Partners

- Worcester Public Library, Worcester Public Schools, childcare centers, and early childhood organizations
- Worcester Public Library
- Worcester Public Library

Strategic Plan Priority Areas

Clean City Initiatives

Worcester has set a goal to be the cleanest Gateway City in the nation. This will require us to go beyond the basics of municipal sanitation services. We need a multi-layered approach to create sustainable and vibrant neighborhoods.



Strategic Plan Priority Area

Clean City Initiatives

OBJECTIVE 1: Minimize litter, reduce trash and illegal dumping, and implement sustainable solutions to maintain the cleanliness of streets and public places.

Strategy	Partners
1.1 Develop a Zero Waste Master Plan to determine best practices to reduce litter, minimize illegal dumping, and expand recycling efforts while enforcing compliance.	Public Works & Parks, Sustainability & Resilience
1.2 Implement the Neighborhoods First model to assess and manage trash, litter, graffiti, bulk items, potholes, nuisances, etc. across the city.	Quality of Life, Inspectional Services, Public Works & Parks, Police Department
1.3 Establish partnerships with neighborhood associations, community development corporations, schools, and volunteers to enhance local beautification efforts.	Public Works & Parks, Quality of Life
1.4 Roll out Neighborhood Champions initiative to appoint residents to coordinate street cleanups and strengthen partnerships between the city and its residents within the community.	Quality of Life
1.5 Promote “Landlord & Tenant Responsibilities” booklet that educates property owners and tenants on proper storage and disposal of trash.	Quality of Life, Inspectional Services
1.6 Enhance snow and ice programs, as well as street sweeping programs to keep streets and sidewalks clean and generally accessible.	Public Works & Parks
1.7 Explore methods to increase options for public trash disposal, including but not limited to trash/recycling receptacles in parks and on sidewalks.	Public Works & Parks, Sustainability & Resilience
1.8 Continue to refine the affordability and accessibility of the “Pay As You Throw” program.	Public Works & Parks, Sustainability & Resilience

Strategic Plan Priority Area

Clean City Initiatives

OBJECTIVE 2: Develop attractive, well-maintained, and welcoming public spaces to inspire community pride and reinforce a cycle of cleanliness.

Strategy

- 2.1** | Develop/update sidewalk and streetscape guidelines and design standards to enhance placemaking that incorporates infrastructure.
- 2.2** | Enhance and maintain right-of-way vegetation/trees/planters as well as routine park maintenance.
- 2.3** | Conduct regular cleaning and preventative maintenance of municipal parking lots and garages.
- 2.4** | Incorporate improvements to façades, signage, and landscaping as municipal infrastructure is updated.
- 2.5** | Maintain and upgrade parks equipment, playing fields, and other facilities as they age.
- 2.6** | Develop signage and messaging to educate the public on rules and regulations, special displays, and features of public spaces.
- 2.7** | Expand placemaking efforts to create more civic landmarks and link neighborhoods through creative design.

Partners

- Transportation & Mobility
 - Public Works & Parks, Sustainability & Resilience
 - Transportation & Mobility, Public Works & Parks
 - Transportation & Mobility, Public Works & Parks
 - Public Works & Parks
 - Public Works & Parks, Economic Development
 - Public Works & Parks, Economic Development
-

Strategic Plan Priority Area

Clean City Initiatives

OBJECTIVE 3: Increase environmental resilience to pollution, transportation, and climate change-related weather impacts.

Strategy	Partners
3.1 Prioritize transit, micro-mobility and pedestrian modes in operation of the city's street network.	Transportation & Mobility
3.2 Align transportation investment with land use regulations to promote walkable mixed-use neighborhoods with access to transit and micro-mobility travel options.	Transportation & Mobility
3.3 Implement Electronic Vehicle charging infrastructure at public parking facilities and at on-street locations.	Transportation & Mobility, Sustainability & Resilience
3.4 Expand and promote procurement of more sustainable products by all departments, with a priority on streamlined vehicle purchases.	Administration & Finance, Sustainability & Resilience, Public Works & Parks, Police Department, Fire Department, Inspectional Services, Transportation & Mobility
3.5 Update street design standards and seek opportunities to incorporate green infrastructure.	Transportation & Mobility, Sustainability & Resilience, Public Works & Parks
3.6 Install additional bike parking to support everyday bike trips and support businesses.	Transportation & Mobility
3.7 Engage residents to raise awareness of stormwater management.	Sustainability & Resilience
3.8 Maintain and improve water, sewer, and stormwater systems.	Public Works & Parks

Strategic Plan Priority Area

Clean City Initiatives

OBJECTIVE 4: Maintain public “blue spaces” for water quality, recreational use, and promotion of economic development.

Strategy

- 4.1** | Expand Lakes & Ponds Program and reduce water pollution with a near-term focus on watershed-based planning.
- 4.2** | Monitor water quality and educate residents on threats, impacts, and how it can be improved.
- 4.3** | Develop innovative solutions to protect and improve waterways.
- 4.4** | Develop and maintain strategic partnerships with local watershed associations for stewardship of blue spaces.

Partners

- Sustainability & Resilience
- Sustainability & Resilience
- Sustainability & Resilience
- Sustainability & Resilience

Strategic Plan Priority Areas

High Performing Government & Strong Financial Health

To be the best managed city in the country, we must implement sustainable, efficient systems that will enhance and maintain our organizational health and maintain a strong financial position.

FISCAL YEAR 2025

EMPOWERING PROGRESS:
INVESTING IN EQUITY, TALENT, AND CULTURE

Annual Operating Budget



Eric D. Batista, City Manager

Strategic Plan Priority Area

High Performing Government & Strong Financial Health

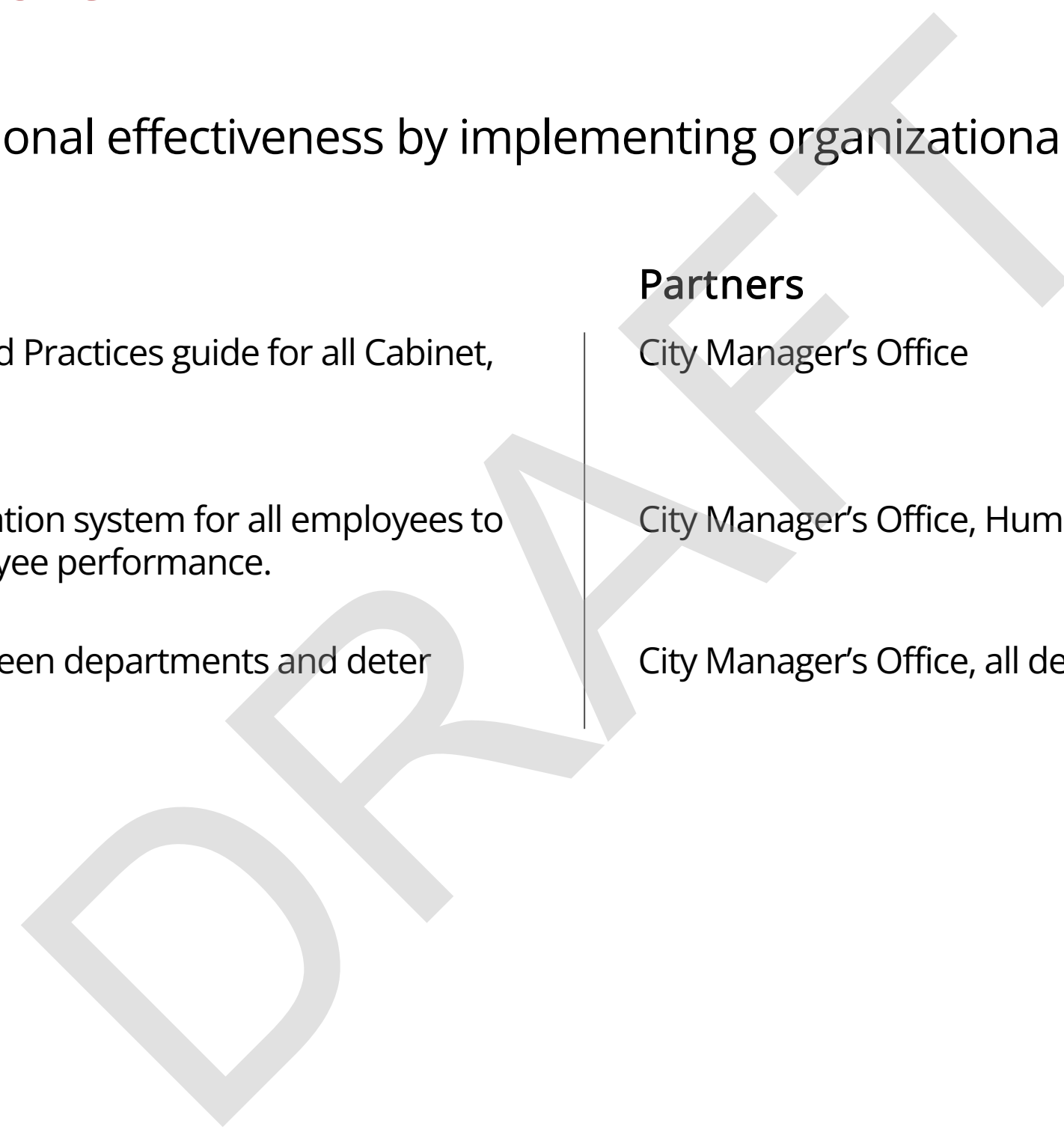
OBJECTIVE 1: Increase organizational effectiveness by implementing organizational culture, philosophy, and performance principles.

Strategy

- 1.1 | Develop a Management Principles and Practices guide for all Cabinet, executive managers, and managers.
- 1.2 | Create an annual performance evaluation system for all employees to assess both management and employee performance.
- 1.3 | Foster a culture of collaboration between departments and deter departments from working in silos.

Partners

- City Manager's Office
- City Manager's Office, Human Resources
- City Manager's Office, all departments



Strategic Plan Priority Area

High Performing Government & Strong Financial Health

OBJECTIVE 2: Increase efficiencies in municipal operations by centralizing core administrative functions in the departments of Human Resources, Administration & Finance, and Innovation & Technology.

Strategy

- 2.1** | Centralize all workforce management functions such as recruitment, hiring, onboarding, compensation, pay, and benefits to ensure equity goals are met.
- 2.2** | Create a City-wide centralized procurement office to advantageously manage municipal resources through the transparent and competitive procurement of goods and services and disposition of municipal assets.
- 2.3** | Centralize all technology management such as devices, data, infrastructure, and governance.
- 2.4** | Centralize all facilities management such as office maintenance, layout, and furniture needs to the Department of Public Facilities to promote a safe and healthy work environment for employees.

Partners

- Human Resources; Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
- Administration & Finance; Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
- Innovation & Technology
- Public Facilities, Human Resources, Innovation & Technology

Strategic Plan Priority Area

High Performing Government & Strong Financial Health

OBJECTIVE 3: Ensure Diversity, Equity & Inclusion goals are met.

Strategy

- 3.1 | Accelerate representation within the municipal workforce and leadership by significantly increasing the number of people from underrepresented communities.
- 3.2 | Build a training program that includes access to leadership and career coaches for both entry-level staff and experienced hires that will aid in talent development, specifically in the areas of management and interpersonal skills.
- 3.3 | Foster an environment where people with disabilities are included, empowered, and have access to support by providing education and resources for disability awareness and implementing a centralized platform in our enterprise resource planning (ERP) system to make it easier for people with disabilities to request accommodations
- 3.4 | Conduct a pay equity analysis that looks deeply into whether there are pay gaps within the municipal workforce, update job descriptions and pay structures as needed to ensure equal pay for equal work.
- 3.5 | Proactively create new pay equity goals based on known disparities, and policies to achieve said goals.

Partners

- Human Resources; Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
- Human Resources; Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
- Human Resources; Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
- Human Resources; Diversity, Equity & Inclusion; Administration & Finance
- Human Resources; Diversity, Equity & Inclusion; Administration & Finance

Strategic Plan Priority Area

High Performing Government & Strong Financial Health

OBJECTIVE 4: Improve and automate business processes to increase access and efficiencies for employees and residents.

Strategy

- 4.1** | Advance new technologies such as human resources analytics, recruitment software, and e-learning platforms, to streamline processes, improve decision-making, and enhance employee engagement.
- 4.2** | Implement instant messaging capabilities to respond to frequently asked employee questions.
- 4.3** | Automate applications and approval processes for municipal licensing and permit applications.
- 4.4** | Implement and optimize a comprehensive replacement plan for outdated computer-aided dispatch (CAD) software and customer service request system (CSRS) software, with a primary focus on enhancing overall performance and service capabilities.

Partners

- Human Resources, Innovation & Technology
- Human Resources, Innovation & Technology
- Innovation & Technology, Inspectional Services, Public Works & Parks, Fire Department, Police Department, Law
- Innovation & Technology, Emergency Communications, Fire Department, Police Department

Strategic Plan Priority Area

High Performing Government & Strong Financial Health

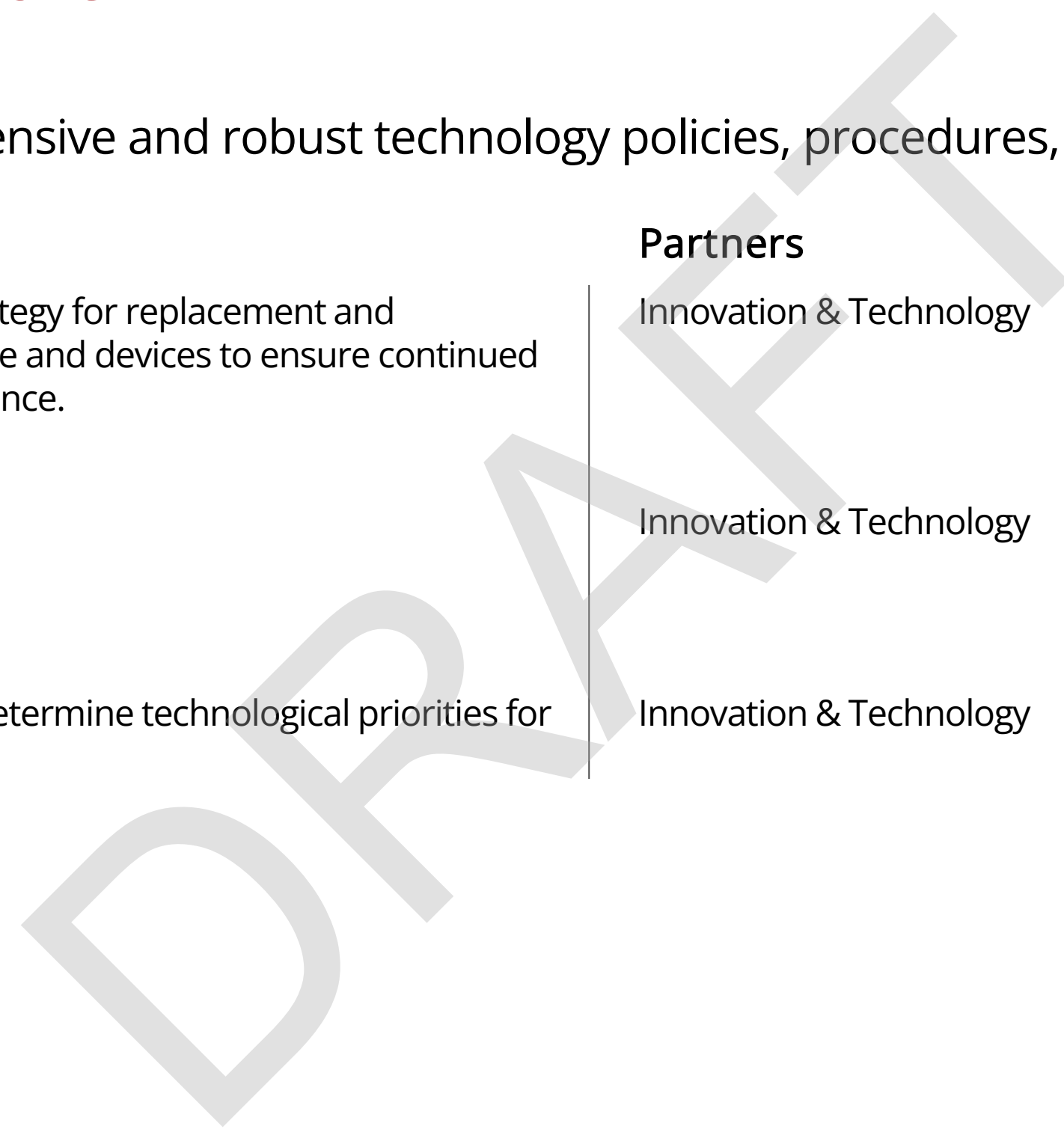
OBJECTIVE 5: Develop comprehensive and robust technology policies, procedures, and standards.

Strategy

- 5.1** | Develop a Lifecycle Management Strategy for replacement and maintenance of employee IT hardware and devices to ensure continued operations and cybersecurity compliance.
- 5.2** | Develop data and privacy policies.
- 5.3** | Create an IT Steering Committee to determine technological priorities for departments.

Partners

- Innovation & Technology
- Innovation & Technology
- Innovation & Technology



Strategic Plan Priority Area

High Performing Government & Strong Financial Health

OBJECTIVE 6: Implement technologies to support the future of work.

Strategy

6.1 | Implement a one device policy to support hybrid work strategy.

6.2 | Ensure consistent Wi-Fi connectivity throughout municipal facilities.

6.3 | Deploy updated devices and software to field workers to improve communication and streamline work processes.

Partners

Innovation & Technology

Innovation & Technology, Public Facilities

Innovation & Technology, Public Facilities, Inspectional Services, Fire Department, Public Works & Parks

Strategic Plan Priority Area

High Performing Government & Strong Financial Health

OBJECTIVE 7: Enhance the employee experience through a culture of employee engagement, wellness, diversity, and inclusion that leads to overall employee well-being, productivity, and retention.

Strategy

7.1 | Develop check-in interviews to maintain regular contact with employees to obtain feedback on how we are doing as an organization.

7.2 | Develop programs at department and City level to increase engagement and comradery among employees.

7.3 | Invest in employee development by providing training and development opportunities, supporting career advancement, and creating a supportive work environment.

Partners

Human Resources

Human Resources

Human Resources, all departments

Strategic Plan Priority Area

High Performing Government & Strong Financial Health

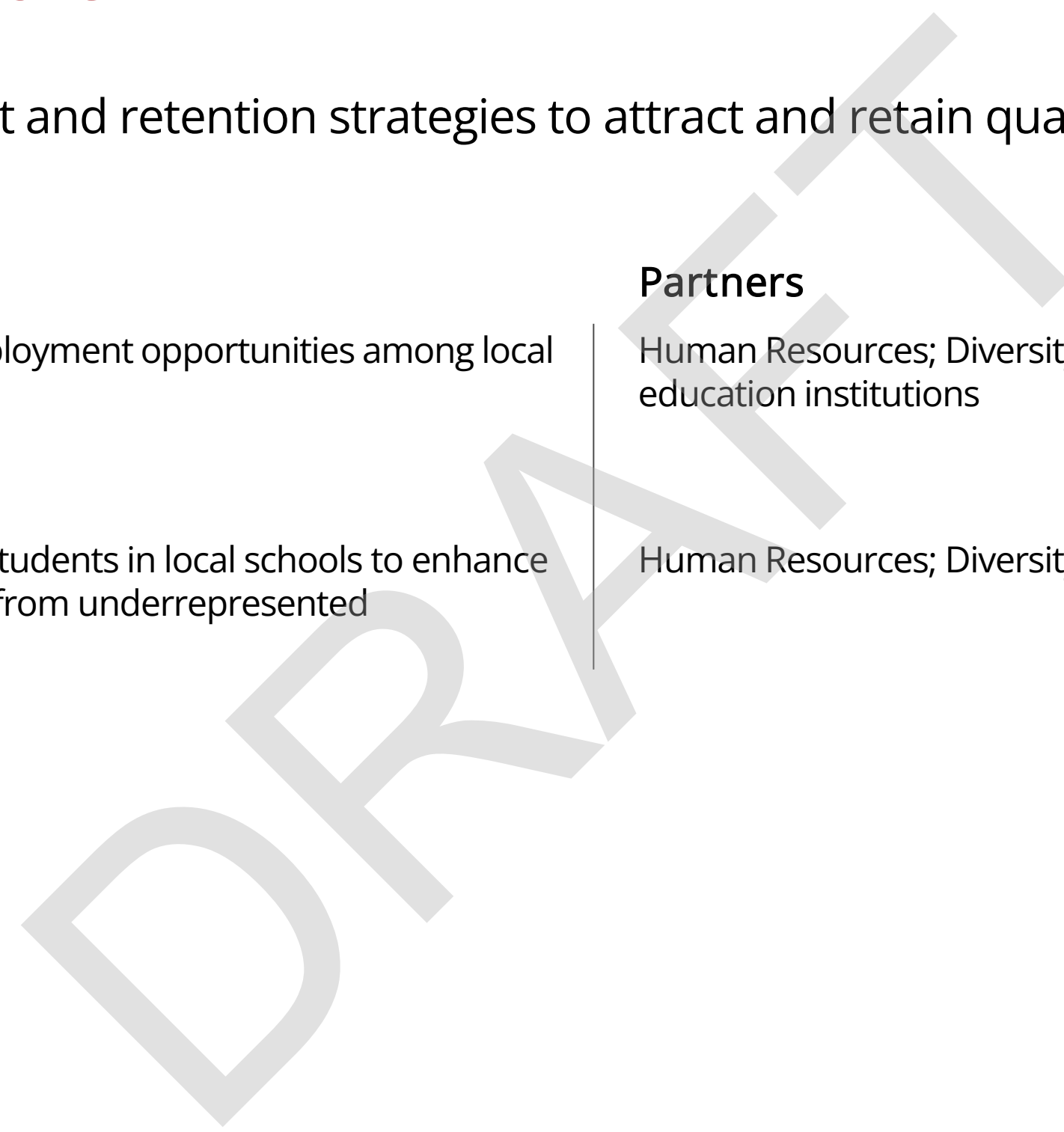
OBJECTIVE 8: Deploy recruitment and retention strategies to attract and retain qualified and diverse individuals to the city.

Strategy

- 8.1** | Increase awareness of municipal employment opportunities among local students.
- 8.2** | Provide internship opportunities for students in local schools to enhance learning experience, especially those from underrepresented communities.

Partners

- Human Resources; Diversity, Equity & Inclusion; Worcester Public Schools; education institutions
- Human Resources; Diversity, Equity & Inclusion



Strategic Plan Priority Area

High Performing Government & Strong Financial Health

OBJECTIVE 9: Optimize internal and external communications to keep residents and workforce informed in an accurate, transparent, and efficient manner.

Strategy

- 9.1** | Facilitate regular communications between administration and staff to enhance internal communications.
- 9.2** | Innovate strategies to accelerate dissemination of information to keep the public informed in close to real-time.
- 9.3** | Build the City's brand identity to make it a recognizable and trusted, credible source.
- 9.4** | Enable efficient interdepartmental communications processes by simplifying and standardizing procedures for seasonal and regularly occurring events and campaigns.
- 9.5** | Equip and empower departmental public information officers (PIOs) to engage with media and other external inquiries through media training and public relations support.
- 9.6** | Make information more accessible to Worcester's diverse community by enhancing translation processes and expanding communications channels.

Partners

- City Manager's Office
- City Manager's Office
- City Manager's Office
- City Manager's Office, Health & Human Services, Sustainability & Resilience, Emergency Management, Police Department, Fire Department
- City Manager's Office, all departments
- City Manager's Office

Strategic Plan Priority Area

High Performing Government & Strong Financial Health

OBJECTIVE 10: Maintain and improve bond rating by implementing solid management practices.

Strategy

- 10.1** | Update the municipality's Financial Integrity Plan to guide fiscal decisions to address new challenges and needs.
- 10.2** | Create a Capital Review Committee to analyze capital needs and borrowing capacity to strategically manage annual debt and long-term liabilities.
- 10.3** | Create a tactical review policy to reduce or rescind inactive loan authorizations.
- 10.4** | Create measurable performance indicators that improve management of departments based on quantifiable inputs and outcomes.
- 10.5** | Minimize the municipality's financial risk by providing real-time analysis of revenues, spending, and outcomes to support decision-making and operational improvements.

Partners

- City Manager's Office, Administration & Finance
- City Manager's Office, Administration & Finance
- City Manager's Office, Administration & Finance
- City Manager's Office, Administration & Finance
- City Manager's Office, Administration & Finance

Strategic Plan Priority Area

High Performing Government & Strong Financial Health

OBJECTIVE 11: Securely manage the collection, investment, and disbursement of municipal funds.

Strategy

- 11.1 | Improve the efficiency of collecting, managing, and disbursing (payroll and vendor) funds through improved processes, technologies, and integrated systems.
- 11.2 | Implement and enhance the utilization and capacity of cloud-based tax and billing systems for improved customer service and efficiency.
- 11.3 | Build and Implement Workday HCM System, especially Payroll capacity.
- 11.4 | Implement grant management and acquisition strategies to maximize grant funding opportunities.

Partners

- Administration & Finance, Innovation & Technology
 - Administration & Finance, Innovation & Technology
 - Administration & Finance, Human Resources, Innovation & Technology
 - Administration & Finance
-

Strategic Plan Priority Area

High Performing Government & Strong Financial Health

OBJECTIVE 12: Enhance vendor relationships and experience doing business with the municipality.

Strategy	Partners
12.1 Develop and expand Purchasing Staffing & Operations to include vertical construction and, ultimately, overall departmental procurement needs.	Administration & Finance
12.2 Update systems for managing procurement and cataloguing receipt and inventory of goods and services.	Administration & Finance
12.3 Develop new systems for procurement management.	Administration & Finance, Human Resources, Innovation & Technology

Strategic Plan Priority Area

High Performing Government & Strong Financial Health

OBJECTIVE 13: Improve the utilization of existing facilities and reduce the municipality's facility footprint and overall climate impact.

Strategy

- 13.1** | Extend the life span and maintain existing facilities through a defined multi-year investment plan while improving climate and energy efficiencies and reducing negative service impacts.
- 13.2** | Provide design and facility expertise to departments to help improve efficiencies, especially in a hybrid remote environment.
- 13.3** | Reduce number of break/fix work orders by implementing a preventative maintenance program.
- 13.4** | Promote physical and psychological safety for employees by providing a safe and healthy work environment through training and health & safety programs.

Partners

- Public Facilities, Sustainability & Resilience
 - Public Facilities
 - Public Facilities
 - Public Facilities, Human Resources
-

Strategic Plan Priority Areas

Economic Growth

The city finds itself in the midst of a modern revitalization across each of our vibrant and diverse neighborhoods—strengthening our economy, boosting innovation, and enhancing community development.



Strategic Plan Priority Area

Economic Growth

OBJECTIVE 1: Expand the tax base through private investment in housing, commercial, and industrial developments.

Strategy

- 1.1** | Support the realization of residential, commercial, and industrial development that reflects community needs and the Worcester Now | Next Long-Range Plan.
- 1.2** | Execute a clear, consistent, and easy to understand zoning code that aligns land use policy with infrastructure to support transit-oriented development.
- 1.3** | Incentivize development that meets the highest standards for climate resilience and sustainability, including issues of stormwater management and water quality, energy efficiency, flooding, and heat waves.
- 1.4** | Enhance Development application review process and encourage greater certainty and predictability for developers by increasing responsiveness and timely review of development applications.
- 1.5** | Digitize all permits to improve the workflow and process efficiencies for permitting.
- 1.6** | Maintain and develop infrastructure that supports and enables development, including targeted repair and replacement.
- 1.7** | Complete infrastructure capacity analysis to model the effect of development and to identify growth potential and constraints.

Partners

- Economic Development
 - Economic Development
 - Economic Development, Sustainability & Resilience
 - Economic Development, Inspectional Services, Fire Department, Public Works & Parks
 - Economic Development, Inspectional Services, Fire Department, Public Works & Parks
 - Public Works & Parks
 - Public Works & Parks
-

Strategic Plan Priority Area

Economic Growth

OBJECTIVE 2: Add 10,000 new jobs to Worcester by 2030, as compared to the 2020 Census.

Strategy

- 2.1** | Invest in balanced growth of industries that contribute meaningfully to increasing living-wage jobs through modern land use regulations, development partnerships, and strategic recruitment.
- 2.2** | Recruit and support the growth of private employers that provide well-paying jobs with professional development and advancement opportunities for residents with lower educational attainment.
- 2.3** | Design and implement policies and programs that both enable and incentivize the development of infrastructure, spaces, amenities, and educational institutions that meet the needs of the workforce (and employers) of today and into the future.
- 2.4** | Retain existing jobs through accessible resources, skill-building programs, and career support services, and retain local college graduates through career fairs, academic collaboratives, and pipelines to employment.
- 2.5** | Provide workforce training and resources for those wishing to pursue careers in specific industries.
- 2.6** | Facilitate pre-apprenticeship programs and apprenticeship opportunities for Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs)/Women Business Enterprises (WBEs).

Partners

- Economic Development
 - Economic Development
 - Economic Development
 - Economic Development, Human Resources, Worcester Public Library, school partners
 - Human Resources, Sustainability & Resilience, Health & Human Services
 - Economic Development
-

Strategic Plan Priority Area

Economic Growth

OBJECTIVE 3: Enable and support diverse neighborhood-scale commerce, small businesses, and entrepreneurship.

Strategy	Partners
3.1 Centralize services and promote broad access to technical assistance and financing mechanisms that help offset costs for first-time, low-income, and marginalized business owners, including those with limited English proficiency and encourage certification for MBEs/WBEs.	Economic Development
3.2 Proactively prevent displacement of existing Worcester-based small businesses during periods of disruption and redevelopment, especially in identified Growth Areas.	Economic Development
3.3 Explore if and where the formation of neighborhood center business improvement districts (BIDs) may be helpful to advance economic opportunity.	Economic Development
3.4 Establish the Worcester Public Library as a hub for community networking and business opportunities.	Worcester Public Library

Strategic Plan Priority Area

Economic Growth

OBJECTIVE 4: Expand and improve intercity travel options.

Strategy

- 4.1 | Support efforts to expand commercial air service at Worcester Regional Airport.
- 4.2 | Support efforts to improve east-west rail infrastructure.
- 4.3 | Support efforts to expand and implement new Amtrak routes serving Worcester.
- 4.4 | Advocate and support efforts to increase MBTA Commuter Rail service, including more one-hour express service.
- 4.5 | Implement the development of citywide transportation networks identified in the Mobility Action Plan to improve access to economic and employment clusters by all modes.

Partners

- Economic Development, Transportation & Mobility, Discover Central MA
 - Economic Development, Transportation & Mobility
 - Economic Development, Transportation & Mobility
 - Economic Development, Transportation & Mobility, City Manager's Office
 - Transportation & Mobility, Sustainability & Resilience
-

Strategic Plan Priority Area

Economic Growth

OBJECTIVE 5: Modernize and improve municipal parking and curbside management.

Strategy

5.1 | Reconcile and update parking regulation schedules and posted signage.

5.2 | Implement flexible parking zones and other innovative curb management programs to maximize utility of parking and access zones.

5.3 | Manage parking pricing to target parking utilization at 85% to 90%.

5.4 | Proactively publicize availability of City parking and its proximity to local business.

Partners

Transportation & Mobility

Transportation & Mobility

Transportation & Mobility

Transportation & Mobility, City Manager's Office, Economic Development

Strategic Plan Priority Area

Economic Growth

OBJECTIVE 6: Promote arts and culture to drive economic development by drawing talent and tourism.

Strategy

6.1 | Support year-round meaningful experiences by promoting cultural events.

Partners

Economic Development

6.2 | Automate and improve the workflows of the special events permitting process.

Economic Development, Public Works & Parks, Fire Department, Police Department

6.3 | Recruit and support partners in the film and creative industries to film in the city.

Economic Development

6.4 | Complete implementation of Cultural Plan priorities.

Economic Development
