



The Research Bureau

2018 **ANNUAL REPORT**

OF THE RESEARCH BUREAU



FEATURING

Dr. Kerry Healey,
PRESIDENT OF BABSON COLLEGE

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Chair of the Board and Executive Director

Dear Friends of The Research Bureau,

Last year, our Annual Meeting focused on the importance of strong foundations to local governance. A clear mission, sound finances, and efficient operations are essential elements to effective management in any organization. Worcester and our neighboring towns have worked diligently to build those foundations and to prepare our communities for future opportunities. Yet, a foundation is a beginning, not an end. Moving a city and a region forward requires understanding, vision, and collective effort to recognize needs and identify potential. It requires embracing diverse perspectives and building an informed consensus and a united approach. It requires engaging the whole community in the determination of its future.

This year, we celebrate the incredible diversity of our region and the increasing need to expand the community conversation beyond the traditional boardroom. Nationally, our society is struggling to acknowledge, address, and move forward past generations of exclusion. The role and value of traditionally underrepresented cohorts, including women and people of color, is being emphasized more than at any time in human history. Yet determining a way to make sure all voices are heard equally is challenging. As a result of its history, size, and accessibility, Worcester has an opportunity to capitalize on its diversity and identify a way forward that will make us a model of collaborative leadership on a troubled national scene.

The Research Bureau is engaged on its own efforts to embrace diversity and promote new voices. Internally, we are working to broaden representation on our Board and solicit public feedback on issues and approaches. We continue to engage the community through our reports and forums. We are working with partners from across the community – public sector, advocacy, not-for-profit, higher education, business, and media – to both inform our thinking and to generate engagement from a broad spectrum of stakeholders. These differing viewpoints inform our research, allowing us to achieve greater insight on everything from municipal operations to the immigrant economy, public education to transportation. We are especially proud of our leading role in the community-wide effort to create Defining Our Path:

A Strategic Plan for Education in Worcester, the first strategic plan for the Worcester Public Schools since 1992. Adopted by the Worcester School Committee this summer, the Bureau is partnering with the Worcester Education Collaborative and the Worcester Public Schools on an implementation framework. With continued community involvement, we can ensure that this plan is a success, leading to a better education for our young people and an improved environment for our families and community.

For our success, we thank the people of Greater Worcester. The rise of this region, and the Worcester Regional Research Bureau, is a testament to your efforts. Your commitment to good government and informed public policy has ensured our future. We extend our sincerest gratitude to the civic and business leaders on our Executive Committee and our Board of Directors. Your involvement, guidance, and support enable us to provide invaluable research and analysis of complex issues. Because of your contributions, we remain a leading voice on municipal policy in the region, diving into a range of issues that every community must address. We highlight the ongoing partnership and contributions of Greenberg, Rosenblatt, Kull & Bitsoli P.C. and PENTA Communications, Inc. For many years, they have provided us unparalleled pro bono assistance in organizational management and finance and communications and marketing. Your commitment to our organization is a testament to your leadership in and dedication to the Greater Worcester community.

We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to the corporate and philanthropic communities and our individual supporters, recognized in the back of this Annual Report, especially Commerce Bank, a division of Berkshire Bank, which serves as our Presenting Sponsor, and AbbVie, which serves as our Leadership Sponsor. Accomplishing our mission of informed public debate and decision-making would not be possible without your generosity. We also thank our intellectual partners who have informed our work, helped us dive deep into the issues, and collaborated on important initiatives in the community. You are an asset to this region and we thank you.



We would also like to give thanks to the entire media community, with special thanks to our media sponsor the *Telegram & Gazette*. Thousands of people count on you for their news and information, and we thank you for turning to The Research Bureau and our publications as both content and a resource when you report on the issues facing our communities across Central Massachusetts and beyond. Finally, we thank the staff of The Research Bureau, both past and present, for their dedication to this important work - while it may not be glorifying, it is satisfying.

As we celebrate another year of accomplishment, we thank all of you for your contributions to The Research Bureau, large and small. We look forward to our continued partnerships – new, old, and diverse – making Greater Worcester a thriving region to live, work, and play.



Abraham W. Haddad, D.M.D.
Chairman of the Board



Timothy J. McGourthy
Executive Director

The Year in Review

2018

The Research Bureau is well respected for its insight into and analysis of local policy issues. In 2018, the Bureau continued to publish detailed briefs and reports, host important topical forums, and partner with key community organizations to provide a foundation for debate in Greater Worcester. Our efforts connect residents, non-profit leaders, business executives, and government officials to real world data on the potential and pitfalls of local policy.

In 2018, the Bureau released its fourth edition of *The Worcester Almanac*, an annual compendium of all things Greater Worcester. A popular resource, the Bureau is able to direct hundreds of data requests to this extensive document and it is an oft-quoted source in news articles and local discussions. The Bureau also hosted its thirtieth Thomas S. Green Public Service Awards, recognizing select government employees from across the region. This year, the Bureau honored municipal employees from Worcester, Auburn, Grafton, and Fitchburg – making the ceremony the most geographically representative in our history. The Bureau also continued its efforts to introduce candidates for public office to the public through a series of municipal debates for Mayor, At-Large City Council, District City Council, and School Committee in Worcester, co-hosted with the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Worcester *Telegram & Gazette* in partnership with Mechanics Hall.

While building on established initiatives, this year The Research Bureau also launched new programs including a partnership with the Worcester Regional Transit Authority and the Worcester Railers called “Buck Bus,” an effort to raise awareness of transportation opportunities in the City of Worcester through an on-the-bus trivia contest for WRTA bus riders, featuring celebrity guest Congressman Jim McGovern. The Bureau also brought back March Municipal Madness, a bracket competition highlighting the difficult budgetary decisions that must be made when multiple municipal priorities compete for limited dollars.

On key topic areas, The Research Bureau offered more thorough and specific insight throughout the year through dedicated reports, briefs, and forums.

Education

In 2018, The Research Bureau has been a leader on topics of public education. Beginning with the release of the 2016 report *The Urgency of Excellence: Considerations for the School Committee and New Superintendent of Schools in Worcester*, The Research Bureau and Worcester Education Collaborative worked jointly with public school officials, business leaders, and local philanthropies to generate support for a community-wide strategic planning initiative for the Worcester Public Schools. With support from the Rennie Center for Education Policy and Research, we worked closely with Superintendent Maureen Binienda and her team as well as a diverse group of public school constituents to explore the challenges facing local public education and propose new ways for moving forward. The result was *Defining Our Path: A Strategic Plan for Education in Worcester*. The plan calls for new thinking on innovation, academic excellence, welcoming schools, investing in educators, and technology and operations. It establishes core metrics to measure progress and improvement. The final draft of the plan was approved by the Worcester School Committee and adopted as a guide to future policy, practice, and funding. Public education is crucial to the success and vitality of any city. In Worcester, thanks in part to The Research Bureau, we will approach public education intentionally and strategically.

Economic Development

Worcester is experiencing increased notice on matters of economic development. The Research Bureau works to contribute to this effort by identifying best practices and sharpening a statewide focus on Worcester’s growth. In 2018, the Bureau tackled significant issues of local and statewide importance to economic growth.

Minimizing Risk: The Implications of a \$15 Minimum Wage for Worcester analyzed the local impacts of the \$15 minimum wage, recognizing the important role the restaurant industry plays in Worcester’s economy. The Bureau offered its thoughts on the structure of the minimum wage and proposed alternative approaches to legislative oversight of the minimum wage debate. The Bureau followed up with a similarly-named forum, assembling a panel of local and regional experts, including state policymakers, to discuss the purpose and outcomes of a change in the minimum wage.

The Bureau also published *Brokering a New Lease: Capturing the Value of State Offices for Massachusetts*. This report offered a reasoned argument linking state government office demand with the potential of Gateway Cities. Boston’s economic boom means greater demand for office space and a dramatic increase in market rents. The report used data from state leases and office studies to make the case that shifting some leased space from Boston to Worcester would be a win-win for taxpayers’ wallets and the Heart of the Commonwealth. A companion piece also ran on Commonwealth Magazine’s “The Upload,” garnering statewide attention.



Transportation has been a critical issue for many years. Boston's inadequate infrastructure and the lack of strong connections to and among the Gateway Cities is often hotly discussed. Yet, Worcester must also address internal and regional connections, moving residents and 100,000 workers in and around the city each day. The Research Bureau dived deep into local transportation with *City on the Move: An Overview and Assessment of Worcester's Transportation Needs*. A follow-up forum, co-hosted with the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce, brought together transportation experts to discuss the region's current transportation system and review ways for policymakers to move forward in the future. The Research Bureau also looked at the economic potential of transportation infrastructure, co-hosting an event called "Exploring the Future of Transit-Oriented Development in Gateway Cities" with MassINC and the Gateway Cities Innovation Institute to discuss their report *The Promise and Potential of Transformative Transit-Oriented Development in Gateway Cities*. After a brief presentation of findings, the Bureau and MassINC led a community conversation on the potential of transit-oriented development in Worcester.

While our minimum wage, state office, and transportation reports applied statewide challenges to local needs, *The Immigrant Entrepreneur in Worcester*, co-released with the *Worcester Business Journal*, examined the role of immigrant business owners in Worcester's economy. The Bureau and the *Journal* highlighted the critical role that immigrants play in Worcester's local economy. Throughout its history, Worcester has epitomized the Gateway City concept, where foreign-born residents have an opportunity to join the nation and the workforce. Even today, one in five Worcester residents was born outside the United States. With higher rates of entrepreneurship than native-born citizens, immigrants have a disproportionate presence in key local industries such as the burgeoning restaurant and food service industry and administrative and support services.

Finally, the Bureau added its voice – rooted in fact and analysis – to the consideration of the Worcester Red Sox ballpark proposal. The Bureau highlighted the opportunities, but acknowledged the very real financial challenge that the City must address should certain elements of the proposal be delayed or fail to materialize.

Finances

Founded in the critical need for strong municipal finances, The Research Bureau published the fourth edition of its *Breaking Down the Budget* series, analyzing the City of Worcester and Worcester Public Schools FY19 budgets. These budgets are long (over 700 pages combined) and are often difficult to parse. This series breaks down the "need to know" information so that the budgets, and municipal finance generally, are accessible to the public. The Research Bureau also tackled the Community Preservation Act (CPA) in Worcester, which, if adopted, would put in place a surcharge on the property tax that would be dedicated to open space, historic preservation, affordable housing, and outdoor recreation. The Bureau argued that due to the disproportionate impact of the current dual tax rate, the CPA could further harm the commercial and industrial taxpayers. While the CPA is a valuable tool for localities, Worcester must address its current unbalanced tax rate structure before it should consider implementation of the CPA.

Public Safety

Public Safety is one of the primary functions of municipal government and is vital to the well-being of any city. For that reason, it must be efficient and effective. It is time for reconsideration of the current relationship between emergency medical services and the Worcester Fire Department (WFD). For some time, Worcester has outsourced emergency medical services while retaining the responsibility of first responder. The Research Bureau published *To Protect Lives and Property: The Role of Worcester Fire Department in Emergency Medical Services*, which analyzed the roles of medical response and fire service. The report included a series of recommendations for the City to consider to improve the potential of both, including adding ambulances to the WFD fleet.

Municipal Operations

Maintaining effective and efficient municipal operations is an ongoing process. It means adapting to the needs of a city and its residents while also keeping up with industry best practices in a variety of fields, utilizing new technologies, all while respecting taxpayer dollars. It is a complex and difficult feat, but a necessary one for a city to realize its potential. In support of that effort, The Research Bureau provided input to the City's internal strategic planning initiative and held a public forum on the City's master planning initiative. We convened planning experts from across the state to discuss best practices in managing a master planning effort and the potential pitfalls that a process will have to avoid. We also assisted the Worcester Student Government Association (WSGA) with an initiative to survey college students that addressed student life in the city and highlighted key areas of improvement to retain college students after graduation. The Bureau also published a report entitled *Tracking City Equipment: How Expanded GPS Monitoring Could Benefit Worcester*, exploring how the benefits of tracking city vehicles measures up to the monetary costs and identifying successful ways for municipalities to approach this technology.

Reports and Briefs

SINCE OUR LAST ANNUAL REPORT, THE RESEARCH BUREAU
PREPARED THE FOLLOWING REPORTS AND BRIEFS:



Minimizing Risk: The Implications of a \$15 Minimum Wage for Worcester

To Protect Lives and Property: The Role of the Worcester Fire Department in Emergency Medical Services

Brokering A New Lease: Capturing the Value of State Offices for Massachusetts

Defining Our Path: A Strategic Plan for Education in Worcester

Worcester Almanac: 2018

Bureau Brief: The Community Preservation Act

Breaking Down the Budget: Questions to Consider, City of Worcester & Worcester Public Schools FY2019

City on the Move: An Overview and Assessment of Worcester's Transportation Needs

Tracking City Equipment: How Expanded GPS Monitoring Could Benefit Worcester

The Immigrant Entrepreneur in Worcester

Bureau Brief: Trash, Recycling, and Yard Waste Removal

Bureau Brief: Worcester Housing Authority



Forums and Events

SINCE OUR LAST ANNUAL REPORT, THE RESEARCH BUREAU
HELD THE FOLLOWING FORUMS AND EVENTS:



32nd Annual Meeting featuring Secretary James Peyser

Municipal Debates: District Councilor, At-Large Councilor, and Mayoral

Minimizing Risk

2018 Thomas S. Green Awards

Buck Bus

The Master Plan: Crafting a Shared Vision for the Future of Worcester

Defining Our Path: 3 Community Forums on the Worcester Public Schools Strategic Plan

Exploring the Future of Transit-Oriented Development in Gateway Cities

City on the Move: Building on Worcester's Transportation System



Forums and Events

(CONTINUED)



HIGHLIGHTS



Thomas S. Green Public Service Awards



EACH YEAR, THE RESEARCH BUREAU RECOGNIZES THE “UNSUNG HEROES” IN MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT WHO ARE COMMITTED TO MAKING WORCESTER AND NEARBY COMMUNITIES BETTER PLACES TO LIVE AND WORK. THE 2018 THOMAS S. GREEN PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS WERE HONORED AT A CEREMONY AND RECEPTION AT ASSUMPTION COLLEGE ON APRIL 26, 2018.



Recipient

Affiliation

Daniel Cahill

Worcester Quality of Life Team

Richard Cavalieri

Worcester Department of Public Works & Parks

Marianne DeVries

Grafton Police Department

Stacy Fitzgerald

Auburn Police Department

Victoria Zarozinski

Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School

32ND

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE RESEARCH BUREAU

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2017

DCU CENTER WORCESTER, MA

With Featured Speaker **James A. Peyser**





Fairman C. Cowan Municipal Leadership Award



Daniel J. Morgado

A dedicated public servant, and renowned for his insight, determination, and community spirit, Dan has been a model of civic leadership for more than four decades. While his time in Shrewsbury is legendary, his contributions to communities across Massachusetts are legion. An enthusiastic educator to colleagues and students alike, his passion for excellence in local government will continue across generations.



The Research Bureau

Board of Directors Meetings



February 5, 2018

Board Meeting at The Hanover Insurance Group

June 14, 2018

Board Meeting at Worcester Regional Airport



Annual Meeting Speakers



2018 Dr. Kerry Healey,
President, Babson College, and
former Lieutenant Governor

2017 James A. Peyser,
Secretary of Education,
Commonwealth of Massachusetts

2016 John H. Sununu,
Former Governor,
State of New Hampshire, and
White House Chief of Staff

2015 Jonathan Kraft, President,
The Kraft Group

2014 Jay Ash, City Manager of Chelsea
Bernard F. Lynch, Founder,
Community Paradigm Associates, LLC
Michael V. O'Brien, Executive Vice
President, Winn Development

2013 Edward Glaeser, Fred and Eleanor Glimp
Professor of Economics,
Harvard University

2012 Eric S. Rosengren, President & CEO,
Federal Reserve Bank of Boston

2011 Senator Scott Brown

2010 Lisa A. Mancini, Senior Vice President,
CSX Corporation

2009 Amity Shlaes, Bloomberg News Columnist,
Political Economist

2008 John W. Rowe, Chairman, President &
CEO, Exelon Corporation

2007 Dr. Thomas Payzant, former
Superintendent of the Boston Public
Schools and senior lecturer at the Harvard
Graduate School of Education

2006 Dr. David Driscoll, Commissioner of
Education, Commonwealth of
Massachusetts

2005 Tamar Jacoby, Author and Senior Fellow at
the Manhattan Institute

2004 John Gannon, Staff Director,
U.S. House of Representatives,
Select Committee on Homeland Security

2003 Governor Mitt Romney,
Commonwealth of Massachusetts

2002 Fred Siegel, Professor of History,
The Cooper Union for the Advancement
of Science and Art, New York City, and
Senior Fellow, Progressive Policy Institute

2001 Heather MacDonald, Senior Fellow,
The Manhattan Institute

2000 Rev. Dr. Floyd H. Flake, Senior Pastor,
Allen African Methodist Episcopal
Church and former U.S. Representative to
Congress

1999 Howard Husock, Director of Case Studies
in Public Policy and Management,
Kennedy School,
Harvard University

1998 Myron Magnet, Editor, City Journal

1997 Thomas Birmingham, Senate President,
Commonwealth of Massachusetts

1996 Glenn C. Loury, Professor of Economics,
Boston University

1995 Peter Harkness, Editor and Publisher
of Governing

1994 James Q. Wilson, Author and
Professor of Political Science, UCLA

1993 Robert Poole, President,
Reason Foundation

1992 William Hudnut, former Mayor of
Indianapolis

1991 David P. Forsberg, Secretary, Executive
Office of Health and Human Services,
Commonwealth of Massachusetts

1990 Bruce Carnes, Director of Budget
Planning, Office of National Drug Control
Policy

1989 Edward J. Logue, CEO, Logue Boston,
former Director of the Boston
Redevelopment Authority

1988 Raymond Flynn, Mayor of Boston

1987 William Bulger, Senate President,
Commonwealth of Massachusetts

1986 Ira Jackson, Commissioner, Department
of Revenue, Commonwealth of
Massachusetts

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