

City of Worcester

CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY



Prepared By: Sam Hammar, Michael Hamel, John Kafalas, Amelia Percentie, and Lauren Shuffleton

Office of Municipal & School Technology and GovNext



Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Community Profile: The Heart of the Commonwealth	3
Internet Access & Usage	5
GovNext: Our Citizen Engagement Philosophy	7
About This Report	9
Ongoing Citizen Engagement	10
Current Strengths	10
Recommendations for the Future	12
Campaign Action Plan	16
The Challenge	16
The Solution	16
The Campaign	17
Professional Development Plan	25
Developing Your Citizen Engagement Team	25
Available Trainings & Resources	28

Tools

29

Appendix A: Recommendations for Social Media Effectiveness

31

Appendix B: Influencers and Local Businesses

33



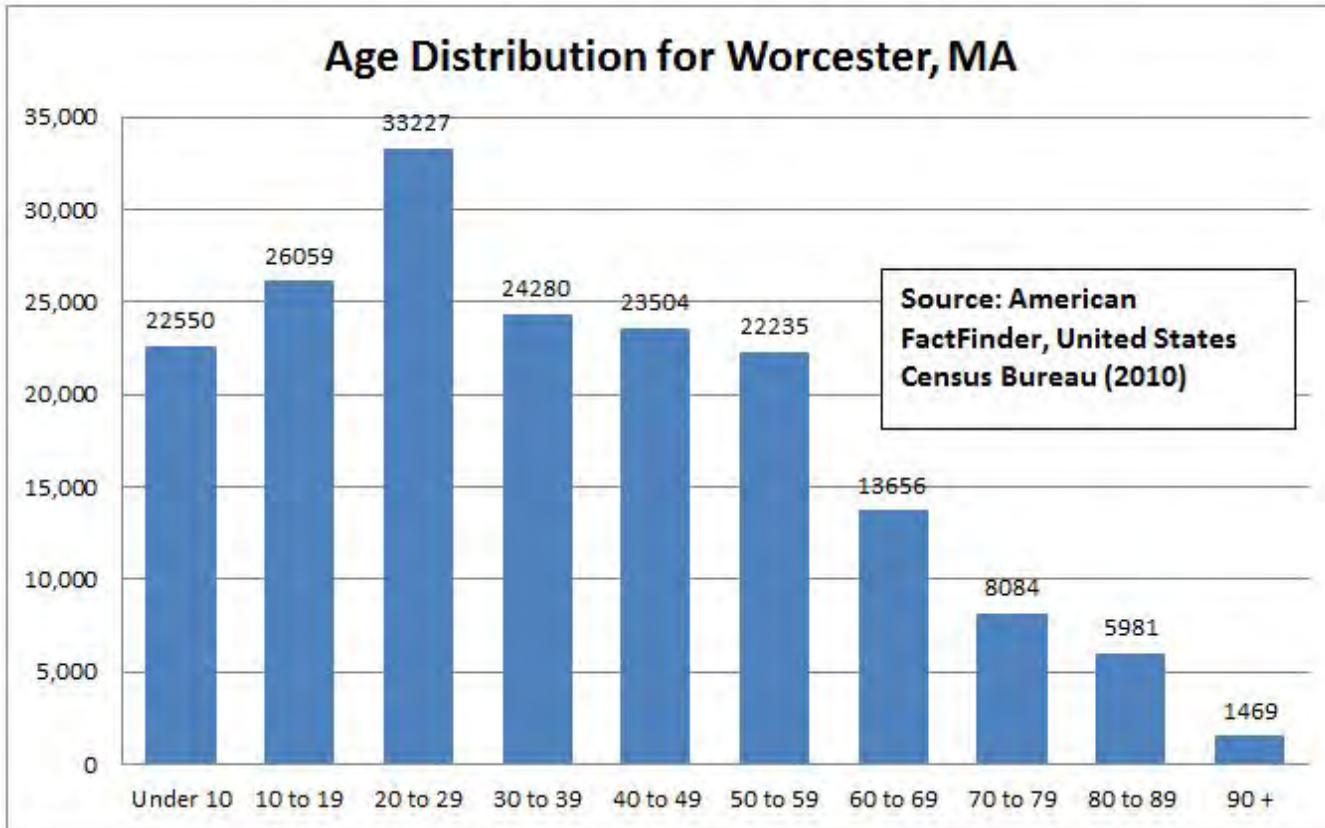
Introduction

In late 2015, the City of Worcester entered into a Community Compact agreement for Citizen Engagement as an IT Best Practice. In mid-2016, a team from the Office of Municipal and School Technology (OMST) and GovNext at the Massachusetts Office of Information Technology (MassIT) conducted several meetings with the City Manager's staff to discuss the goals of the Compact and identify a project to use as a model for Citizen Engagement.

As specified by the [Community Compact agreement](#), the Citizen Engagement Best Practice includes a strategy for deploying technology solutions, including a public communication strategy and a professional development plan. The intention is to ensure that residents feel city government is responsive to their needs and concerns.

Community Profile: The Heart of the Commonwealth

Worcester is the second-largest city in New England, with a population of more than 181,000 residents (source: American Community Survey 2014, 5-Year Estimates). The median household income of the city is \$46,449 (source: the United States Census Bureau's [American FactFinder](#)). Worcester is home to a bustling restaurant scene amid a growing healthcare industry and numerous higher education institutions. The Worcester Public School system serves over 25,000 students in grades pre-K through 12.



City Government

Worcester government includes the 11-member City Council, with a City Manager appointed by the City Council. There is also a Mayor, who is the at-large City Councillor who receives the most votes for the mayoral office. There are five City Council districts, each with one Councillor, plus six at-large members of the City Council. Worcester is in the 2nd Congressional District of Massachusetts.

Internet Access & Usage

As more Americans gain access to the Internet and rely on it as a key information source more regularly, constituents demand that their governments offer more resources online. According to 2015 data available from the Pew Research Center, 84% of adults now use the Internet. Even senior citizens, who make up 12% of Worcester's population¹, are becoming avid Internet users—58% percent of senior citizens are on the Internet as of 2015.²

Web design must be mobile-friendly to meet constituent needs. Other Pew Research suggests that the way people access the Internet is shifting as well. 2015 data show that an increasing number of people use smartphones exclusively, with no fixed broadband or desktop/laptop computer in the household. This appears to be particularly common in low-income households, suggesting that the decision to use a smartphone for Internet access is likely motivated by cost savings. Pew Research says that nationwide home broadband connectivity has actually gone down from 70% to 67% from 2013 to 2015, while the percentage of households using smartphones but no home broadband has risen dramatically, from 8% to 15% of all households during the same period.³ This means that mobile apps and responsive Web design are a high priority for technology initiatives.

Social media is a high-impact opportunity for municipal communications. As Internet usage increases, so does participation in social media. According to Pew Research Center, 65% of all adults are on at least one social media site.⁴ Social media participation is closely correlated with age; 90% of adults between the ages of 18 and 29 use social media, compared to 77% of adults between the ages of 30 and 49 and 50% of adults between the ages of 50 and 64.⁵ Senior citizens are less likely to use social media—only 35% do according to the same study—but this number is increasing by the year.

A different study by Pew Research indicates that Facebook is by far the most popular social media site, but Twitter is probably the most widely used for fast-breaking news, while Instagram is popular with municipalities for publishing photos.

¹ United States Census, 2010.

² Pew Research Center, [Americans' Internet Access: 2000-2015](#), June 26, 2015

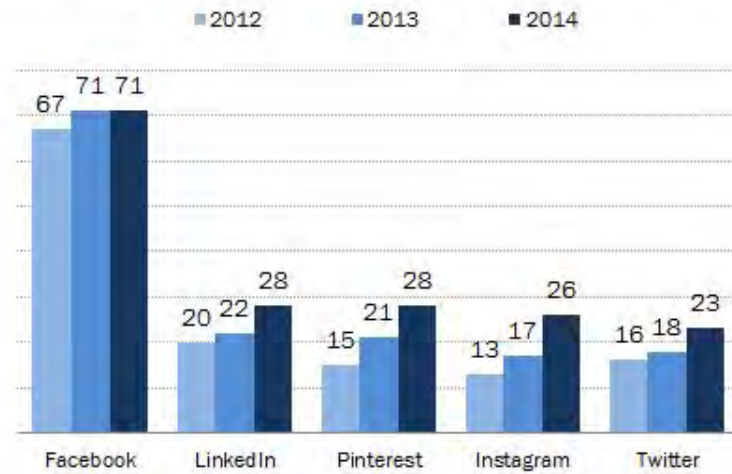
³ Pew Research Center, [Home Broadband 2015](#), December 21, 2015

⁴ Pew Research Center, [Social Media Usage: 2005-2015](#), October 8, 2015

⁵ Ibid.

Social media sites, 2012-2014

% of online adults who use the following social media websites, by year



Pew Research Center's Internet Project Surveys, 2012-2014. 2014 data collected September 11-14 & September 18-21, 2014. N=1,597 internet users ages 18+.

Source: Pew Research Center, [Social Media Update 2014](#), January 9, 2015.

Citizen Engagement 3 WAYS TO ENGAGE



1 When broadcasting information on the web evolves into responding to online comments and proactive social media dialogue.

2 When technology applications empower constituent input to make local government services more efficient.

3 When deep interaction with constituents guides the transformation or building of government services.

Do you have the following **TRIFECTA?**

- 1 Executive Support
- 2 Staff Capacity
- 3 Constituent Desire

+ DigitalMass Emails
- Social Media Best Practice Newsletter

+ Available Campaigns
- #StateWithoutStigMA
- Cyber Security
- Commonwealth Connect
- #MASnow

+ Best Practice Cohort
(Meets the last Friday of every month)
- Social Media Analytics
- Website Revamp
- Search Engine Optimization
- Meaningful Metrics
- MassGIS
- Real Estate

How to Immediately **Walk the Talk**

GovNext: Our Citizen Engagement Philosophy

This infographic was developed to illustrate the essential ingredients for successful citizen engagement. The big picture is that we see three levels of engagement within a city or town as it embarks on a program to get residents more closely involved in their government:

1. Communication
2. Transaction
3. Co-creation

Communication

The first and broadest level of engagement is communication. In this layer, the City is using a variety of media to “broadcast” information and is engaging in two-way communication (Facebook timelines, the ability to receive Twitter messages and replies, and other media). By implementing a blended campaign involving traditional media -- such channels as letters to the editor and coverage on local cable -- with digital media, we have developed campaigns for cities and towns that are designed to reach all demographic groups.

A municipality focusing on this level of engagement might use a Facebook page or Twitter feed to share information such as:

- Road or office closures
- Upcoming construction
- Event announcements or updates
- Meeting agendas, locations, or cancellations
- Hot topic issues
- Requests for help or announcements from other agencies

An important aspect of this type of communication is that feedback from residents—especially when it takes the form of complaints and service requests—requires a certain amount of staff time to monitor and reply to. In the marketing world, companies with active Facebook pages often find that they need to devote a lot of staff time to this. Although this can be a burden to keep up with, it isn't necessary for municipalities to reply to every single comment; part of the value of these spaces is to provide a forum for citizens to engage with each other. A certain amount of complaining will go on—but that's to be expected. If a commenter is not demanding that the City take a particular action or that you respond directly to their comments, sometimes it's better just to let residents have their say and listen to the conversation.

Transaction

After establishing active communication channels with residents, the next step to citizen engagement involves making common transactions simple to accomplish online. These transactions can include bill payments, ticket appeals and payments, permit applications, service requests and public records requests.

The City of Worcester has an online payment system in place using partners such as UniBank, Kelley & Ryan, and Buy Crash for parking tickets, taxes, fees and other bills. In addition, the City offers online permitting services, form submission, job application, and bid submission online. In implementing these processes, Worcester does a good job providing convenient transaction points for constituents.

To build on these successes, future technology initiatives might include upgrading some of the most popular forms now available only as mail-in PDFs that residents have to print, fill in by hand, and mail. The existing online parking ticket appeal is a simple web form that lets residents quickly submit all the information needed to appeal a ticket, including image attachments. Good candidates for upgrade to fully online submittal might include transactions such as property and excise tax abatements, and some of the permits not currently available as fully online transactions. Making as many transactions as possible available online is a high-impact way to improve resident satisfaction and project the image of a modern, responsive city government.

Co-creation

The ultimate goal of citizen engagement initiatives is to achieve a state where residents are so heavily “engaged” that they become actively involved in governing their City. Social media can be a powerful component of a citizen engagement campaign by providing real-time information about City issues, so voters can get involved earlier and take a proactive role, instead of finding out late in the process and having to say, “Why didn’t we hear about this sooner?”

Given that Worcester already demonstrates best practices around communication and transaction, we envision continued co-creation as the key goal in this community. By building explicit opportunities for residents to actively participate in their own governance, the City of Worcester can continue to elevate its citizen engagement strategy.

About This Report

In the next section, we will make some recommendations for the City of Worcester’s ongoing citizen engagement based on the City’s current as-is state. Next, we share our Campaign Action Plan with steps to publicize the newly redesigned website when it launches. For each Community Compact engagement, the OMST asks the municipality to identify a project it needs help with and designs a citizen engagement strategy to serve as an example for future engagement efforts. In the final section, we make suggestions around the organizational and human capital components of citizen engagement; who should be involved, and what resources are available to them.

We also include a brief appendix featuring evergreen recommendations around social media effectiveness that will hopefully be beneficial to anyone working on social media within the City moving forward. A representative list of local influencers and businesses worth following on social media is also included. In a large city like Worcester, such a list will of necessity be far from comprehensive -- the intent is to give a sample of the types of people, businesses, and institutions that it makes sense to follow, and whose social media announcements are worthy of a retweet or share.

Ongoing Citizen Engagement

One goal identified in our discussions with Worcester is to build on the City's multifaceted citizen engagement strategy, as well as increasing voter turnout and resident involvement in city government. Once the initial campaign is complete, the idea is that Worcester will be able to reach increasing numbers of residents with a minimum of time and without having to add communications staff.

Current Strengths

The City of Worcester's online citizen engagement strategy is primarily steered by its communications director and supported by individuals in the City Manager's Office and the Information Technology Department. The diversity and strength of these three figures suggest the capability for robust citizen engagement around technological initiatives within Worcester.

Social Media Presence

The City of Worcester currently has a Facebook page and a considerable Twitter presence, which are used both to broadcast information about city events and to drive traffic to the City's website.

The City's [Facebook](#) page has over 7,000 followers and usually posts several times a day. The [Department of Public Works and Parks](#) and [Youth Opportunities Office](#) along with many other government agencies like the [Police Department](#) are also on Facebook, making for a strong ecosystem of Worcester government representation on Facebook. The City shows a willingness to be responsive by engaging with comment threads.



Worcester Massachusetts

June 7 at 9:58am · @

Riding a registered vehicle on private property? Not a problem. Riding illegally on city streets, parks, or without permission? The [Worcester Police Department \(Official\)](#) are going to want a word with you.

If you have information regarding the identities of any riders, planned meets/rides and locations where unregistered Off-Highway Vehicles are stored are encouraged to call 508-799-8669 and use Option #7 to reach a new task force aimed at curbing these illegal and dangerous activities.

Auburn Man Arrested for Operating Dirt Bike on City Street | City of Worcester, MA

Welcome to the official governmental website for the City of Worcester, MA. Here you will find all city administration, e-services and information related to Worcester.

WORCESTERMA.GOV

Keith [redacted] Just come sit on grafton @ wall Street there constantly riding the stupid dirt bikes late at night mid afternoon .

Like · Reply · 2 · June 7 at 10:54am · Edited



Worcester Massachusetts Thank you, we will pass along the report.

Like · Reply · 1 · June 7 at 11:08am

Jennifer [redacted] I watched a young guy on a motorscooter drive right on all the crosswalks as if he had a bicycle thru Speedway/BK/Park Ave Auto intersection at Webster Sq. Cops are never around to see that though.

Like · Reply · June 7 at 10:46am



Worcester Massachusetts Jennifer [redacted] the goal of this task force and the new ordinance is to work to put a stop to that kind of activity. Thank you for your information.

Like · Reply · 1 · June 7 at 10:51am

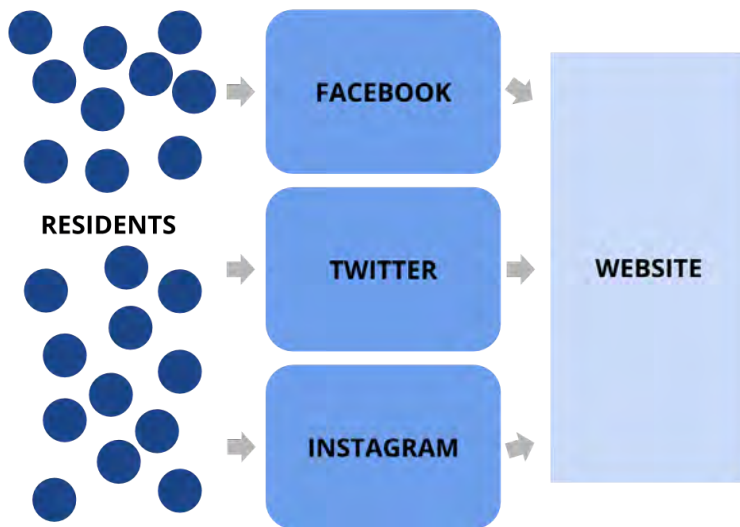
[View more replies](#)

Worcester demonstrates best practices in Facebook engagement with constituents.

Twitter. Similarly, [@TweetWorcester](#) is already following many best practices in citizen engagement and has garnered more than 11,000 followers. Our recommendations build on this success by using the City's Twitter and Facebook presence to attract traffic to the website. This is especially important right now, because the City is preparing to roll out a newly redesigned website. This presents an opportunity to enhance the City's level of engagement via a social media drip campaign (see below) to get the new site off to a flying start via a steady stream of announcements on social media with links to the new website.

Recommendations

In the citizen engagement planning that OMST has done for cities and towns across Massachusetts, the basic idea is that the city or town's website is the main source of detailed information, while social media outreach is a way of broadcasting time-sensitive news items. Many residents will be attracted by the town's social media presence, make their initial contact there, then go to the website to drill down for more information on such topics as public board meetings and real-estate development project documentation, as well as town services like online bill payment. This will become particularly important for the City of Worcester once its new website is complete.



Because residents are already heavily present on social media, they will easily come across Worcester's presence in these spaces. From there, the city can drive traffic to the website for more in-depth, "evergreen" information.

Social Media

- The photos and videos of ribbon cuttings, events, and promotions are compelling content that constituents like to see. To build on the visibility created by these efforts, there is an opportunity to post more about the functionality the Worcester website offers. For example, do your Facebook and Twitter followers know that they can apply for permits and make tax payments on the website?
- Please note: Facebook's Government Terms state as follows: 'If you have an official website, your Page must contain, in a prominent location: "If you are looking for more information about the City of Worcester, please visit <http://www.worcesterma.gov/>."'
- On Twitter, the city does a great job of retweeting relevant information and tagging other parties. This could be done more often on Facebook. Retweeting messages from local consumer-oriented businesses -- particularly restaurants -- is an easy way to give the local economy a boost while attracting more social-media followers.

One great way to generate buzz might be to launch a beta or pilot of portions of the new site; this is what the City of Philadelphia has done, with a beta version of its own new website. This illustration shows the city's existing home page (left) and the beta version of the new design (right):

www.phila.gov/Pages/default.aspx

City of Philadelphia | Mayor's Office | City Council | Courts | District Attorney

City of Philadelphia
LIFE • LIBERTY • AND YOU™

Topics | Businesses | Residents | Visitors | Government

Mayor Kenney Unveils Fiscal Year 17 Budget

Mayor Jim Kenney presented his Fiscal Year 2017 Budget to City Council on March 3, 2016.

Learn More >>

Fraud/Corruption ▶
Submit a Tip ▶
Potholes ▶
Philly 311 ▶

Pay
With so many options, it's easy to pay on time.

Departments
Departments, quasi-government and related agencies

Stay Connected
f | t | 64
v | r | w

Resident Services ▶
Disability Resources >
Free Library of Philadelphia >
Health Centers >
Jobs >
Parks >
Recreation Centers >
Recycling >
Winter Weather Information >

Licenses, Permits, & Certificates ▶
Animal License > Block Party > Birth Certificate >
Housing Inspection > Building & Construction > Death Certificate >
License to Carry Firearms > Moving Truck Requests > Property Sales >
Marriage License > Special Events Permits > Rental Suitability >

Property
City Maps >
Property Assessment >
Property Inventory >
Real Estate Tax Balances >

Business
Business Services Center >
Contracts Online >
M/W/DSBE Resources >
Philadelphia is a Smart Choice >
Vendor Invoice Information >

Transparency
City Agency Regulations >
City Budget >
City Code and Charter >
City Council >
Civil Docket >
Executive Orders >
Integrity Works >
Open Contract Data >
Right to Know Policy >
Social Media Policy >
Tax Forms >
Voter Information >

potholes.phila.gov/tap.nsf/d15d032a30a36768852578830008337c?OpenForm

https://alpha.phila.gov

We're piloting a new, user-friendly website design. To view the existing City website, visit PHILA.GOV

City of Philadelphia

What can we help you find?

Search alpha.phila.gov

311 Report a Problem
Pay a Bill
Find a Job
Property Search

HEALTH
LEGAL
PAYMENTS & TAXES
PROPERTY & HOUSING
PUBLIC SAFETY
STREETS & UTILITIES

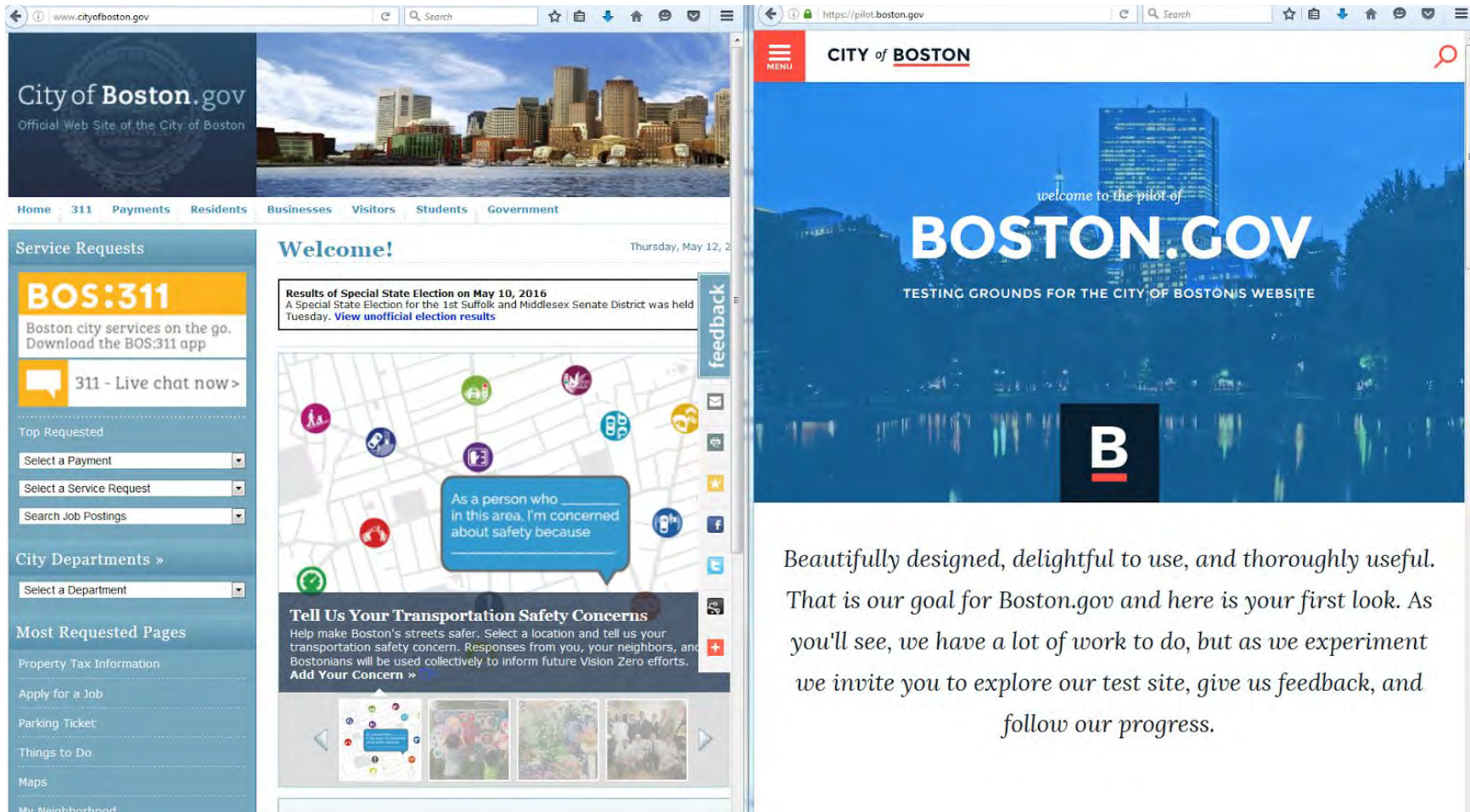
CITY GOVERNMENT DIRECTORY | MAYOR'S OFFICE | MAPS

News

Number of Employees by Annual Salary

THE CITY OF ARBORVITAE LOVE

Boston:



Beautifully designed, delightful to use, and thoroughly useful. That is our goal for Boston.gov and here is your first look. As you'll see, we have a lot of work to do, but as we experiment we invite you to explore our test site, give us feedback, and follow our progress.

Campaign Action Plan

The Challenge

The City of Worcester is implementing a new, modernized website with the help of Avatar Computing, a Worcester-based IT consulting firm. This website will help the City to communicate better and transact with citizens through improved functionality and a more user-friendly interface and organizational structure.

The main challenge of implementing a new website is simply in publicizing it to residents as widely as possible. The old site has a lot of content and features, so most people probably run across it in the course of conducting business with the city. However, such a major initiative and improvement over the current site warrants a celebration of this accomplishment. It's important to publicize a successful initiative that will make being a resident of Worcester easier and better. It's also an opportunity to make the new site a destination for Worcester residents, so they'll visit more often than they did the old site. Engaging residents and encouraging them to make transactions online instead of in person reduces the amount of time City staff have to spend taking care of in-person requests from residents at City Hall. This frees them up to focus on longer-term tasks that add more value to the services the City provides its residents.

In addition, there is also an opportunity to pursue co-creation through this initiative. By actively engaging citizens in certain parts of the website development process, the City of Worcester can benefit from the insight of its users and inspire increased engagement from residents in many areas of civic life.

The City has already started this effort by incorporating citizens in targeted focus groups to fine-tune the website to meet constituent needs. By definition, these focus groups need to be limited to certain key demographic groups in order to get quality input. Once the website is ready for the public, however, there will be an additional opportunity to engage a broader base of constituents.

The Solution

We recommend two separate campaign sections as a part of the website release.

First, we suggest a long-term campaign that specifically targets the demographics most affected by the website's transition. This campaign would start before the release of the website and include the teasing of various pages and designs by

introducing them ahead of the redesigned site's official rollout. Once the new website is public, the campaign can focus on highlighting key improvements and added functionality. All of these campaign pieces should be targeted to promote the services most often used on the current website.

Secondly, a more ambitious citizen engagement campaign might center around the banner image on the homepage. Take advantage of the bustling arts scene in Worcester and artistically-minded students in the public school system or higher education institutions in the city to solicit art and photography for the scrolling homepage banner. If there are a large amount of submissions, the City could let residents vote for their favorites. Those making submissions could make their pieces available for the City to use in promotional materials (while offering credit to the artist or creator), generating a library of images for the City to use on the website in the future. If the initiative creates enough interest, the city could turn the images into a downloadable coloring book on the website. Coloring books for adults are trendy nowadays; a Worcester coloring book for all ages would be right in line with the City's growing reputation for having a vibrant culture and an up-to-date arts scene.

The Campaign

Standard Social Media Promotional Campaign

The standard social media campaign will ideally inform all residents about the new website--both for basic informational purposes about how to do business with the City and to celebrate this exciting improvement for Worcester. To increase awareness of the website upgrade, we recommend a long-term social media campaign.

To start, we recommend selecting a hashtag to use throughout the transition. This will encourage followers to use the hashtag to share feedback and enthusiasm for the new site. Hashtags like **#wooweb** or **#worchesterweb** might help the City gain followers.

Before The Website is Live. Worcester has already incorporated a robust focus-group strategy around designing and fine-tuning the new website. However, releasing a few snapshots of the website before it's released as a "tease" would likely drum up some excitement before the official launch. Consider tweets and Facebook posts like these, accompanied by screenshots of the updated website.

Big things are coming to the #worchesterweb.

Coming to a theatre near you this Fall: an all-new #worchesterweb

Change is good. Get ready for the refreshed #worchesterweb

Check out our back-to-school wardrobe change! #worcesterweb

Announcing the New Website. Once the new website is live and seems to be operating without any issues, it's time to pull the sheet off the car, so to speak. These announcements can be fun, cheery, and celebratory, and using cheeky gifs or screenshots of the website will help boost their visibility on Facebook and Twitter. These can be accompanied by posts like this:

The new #worcesterweb is here today! <http://worcesterma.gov>
At long last, it's alive! The new #worcesterweb arrives: <http://worcesterma.gov> (Related gif:
<https://giphy.com/gifs/3oEjl6hkw6nbYNQkz6>)
#worcesterweb is a changed website today. Check it out: <http://worcesterma.gov>

The police department's social media presence is strong in Worcester, with more than 51,000 followers. The WPD has the largest following of any City entity. Because they send a high amount of traffic to the Worcester website, these social media posts can be complemented by more targeted outreach to the police and other public agencies operating social media presences in the city. Consider emailing the people who run these social media accounts a few days before the new website launches to ask them to promote the new site to their followers and to alert them that URLs they are accustomed to promoting might be changing.

Highlighting New Features. The new website launch is an opportunity to highlight the new tools that the website offers and tools that existed previously but were perhaps underutilized. These can be identified by comparing the online and offline figures for things like payments for excise and real estate taxes, parking tickets, and other financial transactions. Making the same comparison with the other types of orders that can be placed online would also be useful -- for instance, license renewals and requests for vital records like birth, marriage, and death certificates. Wherever the statistics show a low percentage of online transactions, that might be a good candidate for a tweet or Facebook post to promote the website:

Did you know you can renew your dog license online? It's easy at bit.ly/2a8gCUR **#WorcesterMA**

Or:

If you were born in Worcester, you can order a copy of your birth certificate at bit.ly/2a5Papg **#WorcesterMA**

These tweets use URLs shortened with bit.ly, but you can use any URL shortening site -- or post the URL in its entirety if there's room. We recommend a URL shortener because it allows you to put more content into a tweet -- but it is certainly not required.

The following items are designed to be usable for any of the major social media outlets. They're primarily intended as Twitter posts, because they're all under 140 characters, but they could just as easily go on the City's Facebook page, ideally with photos, as well. Each post contains a link to the City's website -- the idea being to use social media as a way of driving traffic to information on the site. The idea is that social media are great for posting timely news about events, while the website is the place to go for forms and applications, to make transactions with the city, and to do other recurring digital tasks or look up "permanent" information about Worcester.

The suggested dates are intended to give an idea of the steady pacing that goes into an effective campaign. Most likely, any given social media user who follows Worcester will not be interested in every post -- and in fact might only be interested in a small fraction of the items -- but those items of interest will be enough to entice them to take a look at the City website and bookmark it for repeat visits.

August 12

Worcester City Council meetings are blogged in detail on the [Worcester Magazine City Desk blog](#) #WorcesterMA

August 14

Worcester's city budget, going back to 2009, is available at [bit.ly/2934GT6](#) #WorcesterMA

August 19

Need a traffic accident report? Use the City Clerk's request form [bit.ly/2arbozH](#) #WorcesterMA

August 26

Ferret out the rules on ownership of dogs, cats, and ferrets! Worcester's got the regs at: [bit.ly/29S64ng](#) #WorcesterMA

August 28

Worcester's Residential Parking Program rules are at: bit.ly/290MncH #WorcesterMA

September 2

Remember the USS Worcester? Our city's namesake warship had a proud history: bit.ly/28YoW3m #WorcesterMA

September 4

Worcester's City Council meeting schedule: bit.ly/293PMvF #WorcesterMA

September 9

Apply for public housing online at the Worcester Housing Authority: bit.ly/295oCUc #WorcesterMA

September 11

Voter registration by mail for Worcester residents! Application at: bit.ly/28YzPIC #WorcesterMA

September 16

Got a new street tree? Here's how to keep it healthy: bit.ly/290tqHv #WorcesterMA

September 18

Worcester's Trash Collection Map shows pickup days citywide: bit.ly/29427yI #WorcesterMA

September 23

Where can you get Worcester city trash bags? Anywhere on this list! bit.ly/2943loa #WorcesterMA

September 25

Want to appeal a parking ticket? Here's the form: bit.ly/290gKQh #WorcesterMA

September 30

School's back in session! Stay in touch with the Worcester Public Schools at: bit.ly/295MuWa #WorcesterMA

Social media “drip” campaigns, like the one suggested above, take time -- content marketers generally say that it takes around six months to achieve a significant increase in site traffic. But a consistent flow of social media messaging will gradually increase the proportion of city residents who go to the website for information and to make transactions with the city.

Worcester Imagery Contest

Here's a more ambitious idea centered around promoting the new website: Invite residents to send in photos or other images of Worcester, for display on the site. The following plan would provide a highly engaging campaign for residents while simultaneously developing a library of Worcester art and imagery the City could use throughout the website and social media.



Photo Credit: metrojacksonville.com; kusocartoon.com

To start, the City should decide the shape of the contest. For example, the City could solicit submissions of digital art, photography, or imagery relating to Worcester with the idea that the City will pick a handful to use on the new website at its launch and afterwards, to get people interested in visiting the site. Winners of the contest could receive a prize in addition to promotion of their work on the website and mention in official press around the website launch. If there are many high-quality submissions, the City could even release a survey asking residents to vote from a list of top contenders.

The first step will be to generate a process for submissions. A Google Form could be used to collect the following information from a participant:

- Contact information
- Age bracket (possibly only if the submission is from someone under 18).
- A preferred URL to share if the participant wins (for example, a portfolio website).
- The link to the image (participants can upload their images to their personal site, on Google Drive, Dropbox, etc.). In addition, there could be an email address where participants who are unable to upload their work on their own.
- A checkbox indicating that they consent to the City of Worcester using the image on the website and social media provided the City attributes the image to them.

Once this link is established, write a Facebook post detailing the contest that includes the link to the form, and pin it to the top of their page. It could look something like this:

Make your mark on the all-new #worchesterweb! Submit your digital art or photography about Worcester, and you might end up on the brand new home page! We'll accept submissions through [deadline].

Promote the contest on Twitter as well, with tweets pointing to this specific Facebook post. For example:

**That amazing sunset photo you took of Union Station? Maybe it's ready for the Big Leagues! [URL]
#worchesterweb**

Local artists: let us showcase your Worcester-inspired work on the new #worchesterweb. [URL]

We're sprucing up the #worchesterweb, but we'd love to have some artwork. Got what it takes? [URL]

This is also a great opportunity to bring in other organizations. Consider emailing contacts, perhaps through the Worcester Arts Council, at key arts-related organizations within the city and ask them to promote the contest among their groups. In follow up correspondence, link to specific tweets or Facebook posts that the City has published and ask them to share with their audiences. (Of course, one of the best ways to someone to promote your content is to promote theirs first!) The following organizations might be useful targets for such an effort:

- ArtsWorcester
- Worcester Art Museum
- The Sprinkler Factory
- stART
- Davis Art Gallery
- The arts departments at the College of the Holy Cross, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Clark University, Assumption College, Becker College and Worcester State University
- The arts departments in the Worcester Public Schools

When it's time to announce the winners, the City could do so in conjunction with the site launch, accompanied by a press release sharing all of the names of the winners. In addition, the City could post each winning image with links to the artist.

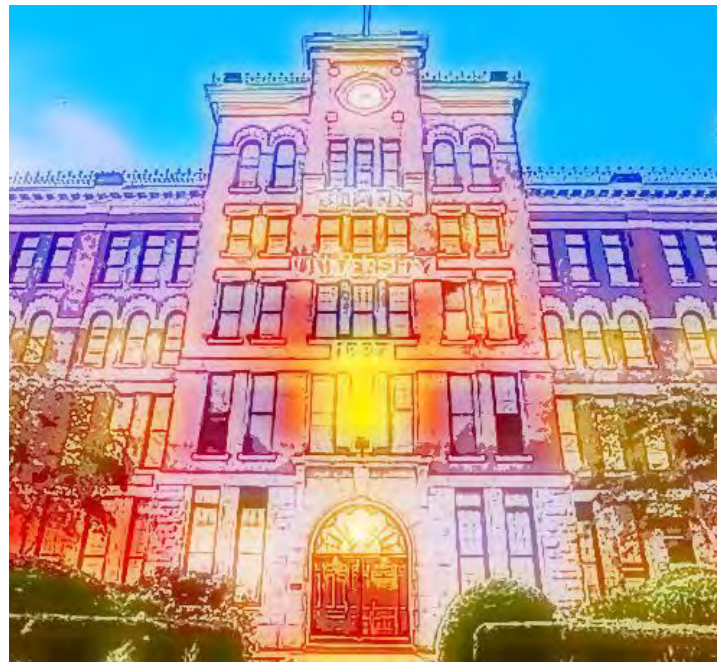


Photo Credit: lewisboroledger.com; kusocartoon.com

Ideally, this outreach will prompt residents to share the contest with each other, building interest in the new website. People will feel more personally engaged with the site launch, regardless of whether or not their art is ultimately used. In addition to serving as a useful publicity tool, the City will also be gathering a collection of Worcester-related art that can be used in the future.

Because entrants will have signed off on allowing the City to use their work, even images that don't win the initial contest can be used at a later date -- maintaining the appropriate attribution, of course. If there seems to be a substantial amount of energy around this initiative, you might consider other uses for the images, with the permission of the creators. For example, twelve could be collected into a calendar, or you could turn some of the images into a coloring book to download and print from the new website.

Professional Development Plan

It is clear from the City of Worcester's exemplary social media presence that the city already has extremely skilled talent manning the city's social media efforts. As such, the professional development recommendations for such a high-performing municipality are geared more towards refining best practices, operating more efficiently, and laying the foundation for continuous improvement. They are also a reference source for new city hires and anyone moving into a public-facing communications role.

Developing your Citizen Engagement Team

Typically, we recommend that a city decentralize access to its social media accounts, to ensure that people in diverse roles are able to share information about their work. However, if the current organizational foundation of social media maintenance is working efficiently, we would not recommend making any changes.

Establishing a Social Media Policy

In order to make sure the municipality is projecting a consistent voice, best practices require having a social media policy. When creating or revising a social media policy, it is helpful to sit down with everyone who touches the accounts and establish some basic goals for social media presence. Some topics to consider:

- Which are the best social media channels for your municipality to engage on?

- Worcester is already on Facebook and Twitter, the most-often used social media channels.
- Given the success of these, is there appetite (both in terms of the audience and of internal capacity) to expand to Instagram?
- Should the city set up accounts for certain public officials? What about those who have personal accounts and tweet about public issues?
- What is the expected frequency of posting?
 - Worcester already follows best practices by posting regularly and often multiple times a day. We suggest staying the course and continuing to post as frequently as staff time permits.
- What content is appropriate?
 - The City of Worcester already does a great job of posting appropriate content.
 - Municipalities often walk the line between official and friendly in the tone of their social media posts. The Citizen Engagement Team should make sure everyone is on the same page about what content and voice is appropriate.
 - Some of the most successful tweets are also the more edgy ones that do depart from the official, like the one below [@CityofBoston](#) sent about their website redesign.



- Who will post during emergencies? If inspiration for something funny strikes, should your team have a sign-off policy? Should everyone agree not to auto-schedule funny posts, in case something tragic happens that would make it insensitive to post something funny?
 - In the event of a national emergency, someone should be responsible for rescheduling any scheduled posts during that day. A municipality wouldn't want to be tweeting about a fun fact when the rest of the world is mourning a sad event or a terrorist attack.

- Residents will be looking to your social media accounts during local emergencies like fires, snowstorms, or police action. If multiple people are posting to social media on most days, it might be advisable to designate one person responsible for sharing information relating to these events to avoid crossing the signals. For more information about crisis communication, check out this video: <https://youtu.be/FTfxuuUo2mQ>
- Finally, it is essential to review with anyone touching municipal social media accounts how public records law affects these spaces. For example, your own posts, as well as comments from the public, generally may not be deleted from a municipal account, at least for a period of time, because all comments, posts, and likes are a matter of public record, so they're subject to the same retention schedules that apply to other types of public records. However, many government agencies and municipalities across the country opt to promote a social media policy that reserves their right to delete comments in violation of specific rules. In addition, some uses of social media can ultimately trigger Open Meeting laws. Discussing matters that are likely to come before a City board or commission for official action should not be discussed in email or social media. If a constituent asks a question, opinion, or criticism about such a matter, it's best to refer them to the public meeting schedule and the contact information for the pertinent board members or commissioners, instead of posting a substantive reply via social media.

Examples for Ongoing Inspiration

One of the most difficult parts about social media management once the initial setup is complete is to create compelling, useful content day to day. Here are a few examples of different municipalities and officials, which can provide some inspiration.

The [City of San Jose, CA](#) tweets and retweets helpful information about city affairs, interspersed with cheers for sports teams. Its Twitter and [Facebook](#) page serve as solid examples of municipalities broadcasting important information on social media.

Although he is posting to his personal account, [Dongho Chang](#) exemplifies how municipalities can share their achievements and day-to-day activities. 2,000 people follow this Seattle Traffic Engineer and often engage with his posts.

The [City of Somerville's Facebook Page](#) is a great example of a warm, but informative, social media channel.

The City of Cambridge's Community Development Division keeps their [Instagram feed](#) well-fed with fun happenings throughout the city.

[Bangor, Maine Police Department](#). This public-safety agency sets new standards for compelling, fun, and informative citizen engagement via social media. In a City of about 33,000 people, they have more than 165,000 Facebook followers -- an amazing level of interest for a remote town in Maine. The writer, "TC," posts on a daily basis, with amusing, philosophical, and practical observations based on real police calls and local incidents.

Facebook's page for [Government and Politics on Facebook](#) can also serve as a source for inspiration, as it highlights other governments' uses of Facebook.

Available Trainings & Resources

The next step is to match Citizen Engagement Teammates with the appropriate professional development resources.

Resources for Beginners

The people managing Worcester's social media feeds currently seem to be well-seasoned veterans, but feel free to connect new social media users to these helpful resources.

Twitter

- A basic introduction: Wired, "[How to Use Twitter: Critical Tips for New Users](#)," May 6, 2016.
- An explanation of @-mentions, and generally who can see what on Twitter: [MomThisHowTwitterWorks.com](#).
- Twitter's very own glossary will help as a refresher in the future: Twitter, "[The Twitter glossary](#)."
- Lynda.com has a number of tutorials which are free during a trial membership period or \$19.99/month for unlimited access. (Some public libraries offer access to Lynda to library patrons.)
 - [Twitter Essential Training](#)
 - [Twitter for Business](#): Some items covered in this tutorial may not be helpful for municipalities, but the introduction to hashtags and third-party Twitter tools will be useful.

Facebook

- A walkthrough on setting up the initial page: Town Web Design, "[Facebook Part 1: How to Create a Facebook Page for a Municipality](#)," September 9, 2015.
- Facebook launched a guide for newcomers managing pages: Facebook, "[Learn How to Succeed at Facebook](#)."
- Lynda.com courses:
 - [Learn Facebook: The Basics](#)

Other Social Media Platforms

- Instagram: Lynda.com's [Learn Instagram: The Basics](#)
- Snapchat: Snapchat's [Getting Started](#) resources
- Pinterest: Pinterest's [Guide to Pinterest](#)

Resources for Intermediate and Advanced Users

Twitter

- A sprawling resource into innumerable topics: Mashable, "[Twitter Guide Book](#)"
- Lynda.com courses:
 - [Twitter for Businesses](#) (Not all parts of the tutorial will be helpful, as it is targeted toward for-profit businesses.)

Facebook

- Facebook offers this training program for intermediate and advanced users: Facebook, [Blueprint](#).
- Lynda.com courses:
 - [Managing Online Communities](#)

General Resources

- HootSuite University, which is free for Enterprise customers and \$21/month for everyone else, offers numerous classes and resources.

Tools

Many social media power users utilize tools that can publish posts according to a schedule. This way, a user can compose and save multiple posts and schedule them to publish later in the day or on a different week. These tools often make it easier to post the same content to multiple social networks at once. Our team cannot recommend any particular service, but here are a few that we are aware of.

[Buffer](#). Save posts into Buffer and the tool will automatically schedule and post them for you at the best time during the day. Check out their introduction [here](#).

[HootSuite](#). HootSuite is a social media scheduler that also has robust tools for listening to the conversation your posts produce across multiple social media platforms.

[ManageFlitter](#). This scheduler features tools to help you find other Twitter users you should engage with.

[SproutSocial](#). Another scheduler, but this one focuses on helping users get involved in relevant conversations occurring on social media already.

[TweetDeck](#). People who manage personal and professional social media profiles often use TweetDeck to help keep them separate.

Appendix A: Recommendations for Social Media Effectiveness

Convey the voice of the City of Worcester to your key audiences through consistent messaging. Aim at showing all segments of the demographic and political spectrum that town government is responsive to their needs, viewpoints, and concerns.

Style and Tone

- Always use subject's handle (ID) if possible, in upper/lowercase; for example, @GovNextMA
- Use a smart, personal voice. Do not use chat-speak (abbreviations like "2day," "4eva")
- Be gracious but modest. Don't retweet kind words; just thank people!

Frequency and Dialogue

- Tweet when you have something to teach, or to announce timely news items.
- Conversations happen organically, but try to have the last word, even if it's "thx" (an exception to chat-speak rule), unless an exchange is going on and on
- Make room for old-school re-tweets! Don't use all 140 characters; save 16 characters for someone else to "RT @GovNextMA"
- If you want to share info strategically, copy community organizations, other agencies, or public figures at the end of the tweet by adding their handles
- Use hashtags when tweeting during live events, for example, #WorcesterMemorialDay

Listening to the Conversation

- Use a robust app like Hootsuite or TweetDeck to manage incoming streams. Twitter is more about listening than talking!
- Stay on top of what's being said about Worcester, by searching for hashtags such as #WorcesterMA, #Worcester, #VoteWorcester, or whatever's topical at the moment. Be proactive -- don't wait until someone sends you a re-tweet asking, "Why hasn't the city done something about this?"
- If possible, decentralize management of the city's Twitter ID ("handle"), so that more than one person can check message traffic and reply or take action when necessary. It's important to reply -- especially to negative feedback -- within 24 hours.

Tutorial: Pinning a Post

When posting on the City of Worcester's own social media, we recommend pinning a tweet to your Twitter Profile and a Facebook post to your Page. This helps draw attention to important announcements because people will see this item first, before your recent activity.

Pinning a post to Twitter and Facebook also enables your visitors to your page to share this important information easily. To "pin" a tweet to the top of your Twitter profile, just go to the tweet, then click the "dots" icon at the bottom-right, and select **Pin to your profile page**, as in the illustration at right.

Pinning to a Facebook page

To pin a post to the top of a Facebook Page (right), follow these steps:



1. Go to the post on your Page's Timeline
2. Click the down-arrow icon at the top-right of the post (see illustration below)
3. Select **Pin to Top**

Appendix B: Influencers and Local Businesses

The following is a list of some representative community influencers and local businesses that have an active social media presence. This list is by no means exhaustive -- in a big city like Worcester, there are far too many active social media users for us to find more than a small fraction of them. But these types of local figures tend to post a lot of items of community interest. Follow them and retweet or share when there's something interesting -- probably the most popular type of post is from restaurants; people are always looking for a new place to eat. This is an easy way to give local businesses a prop, as well.

Local Media

Tom Quinn, Worcester Magazine: [@bytomquinn](#)

Michael D. Kane, MassLive: [@MichaelKaneML](#) or <https://www.facebook.com/WorcesterMass>

Lindsay Corcoran, MassLive: [@Lacor](#)

Charter TV 3: <https://twitter.com/CharterTV3>

Andy Lacombe (Charter TV 3 news/sports supervisor): [@AndyLac32](#)

Worcester Business Journal: [@WBJournal](#)

Lisa Eckelbecker, Worcester Telegram: [@LisaEckelbecker](#)

Public Officials

Michael Gaffney, Worcester City Councillor: [@mgaffneycc](#)

Kate Toomey, Worcester City Councillor: [@KateToomey](#)

Aaron Nicodemus, Telegram & Gazette editor: @anic89
Molly McCullough, Worcester School Committee: mollyom81

Local Business/Cultural Institutions:

Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce: [@chamberworc](#) or <https://www.facebook.com/WorcesterChamber>
Mercantile Center: [@MercantileCtr](#)
Hanover Theatre: [@HanoverTheatre](#)
Worcester Art Museum: @WorcesterArt
Bay State Savings Bank: @BayStateSavings
Worcester Pride: [@worcester_pride](#)

Restaurants and those who cover them:

Mass Foodies: [@MassFoodies](#)
Cafe at deadhorse hill: @deadhorse_hill
Ciao Bella: @ciaoworcester
Lock50: @lock_50
EVO Dining: @EvoDining
Oak Barrel Tavern: <https://www.facebook.com/Oak-Barrel-Tavern-458501244340381/>
Dacosta's Pizza Bakery: <https://www.facebook.com/DacostaPizzaBakery/>
Giovanni's Italian Bakery: <https://www.facebook.com/Giovanis-Italian-Bakery-126909050704380/>
Caffe Espresso Trattoria: <https://www.facebook.com/Caffe-Espresso-Trattoria-573509589339833/>
Cafe Manzi's: <https://www.facebook.com/Cafe-Manzis-102832516426390/>
Cafe Neo: <https://www.facebook.com/CAFE-NEO-455941070187/>
Belmont Vegetarian: [@belmontveg1](#)
Flying Rhino Cafe: @FlyingRhinoCafe
Annie's Clark Brunch: <https://www.facebook.com/Annies-Clark-Brunch-12309532059/>

_wormfood (monthly restaurant reviews): https://www.instagram.com/_wormfood/
Blue Jeans Pizza: <https://www.facebook.com/bluejeanspizza/>
Zorba's Taverna: <https://www.facebook.com/Zorbas-Taverna-100695276692400/>
Cafe Reyes: @Cafe_Reyes_MA
Yummy Steak House: <https://www.facebook.com/yummysteakhouse/>
Baba Sushi: <https://www.facebook.com/Baba-Sushi-193405187348133/>
Niche Hospitality (restaurants): @NicheDining
7 Nana: <https://www.facebook.com/7-Nana-398976036814766/>
Coney Island Hot Dogs: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Coney-Island-Hot-Dogs/120420394688489>
British Beer Company: <https://www.facebook.com/britishbeerworcester/>
The Hangover Pub: [@thehangoverpub](https://www.facebook.com/thehangoverpub/)