

→ LOCAL MARKET

Worcester, Mass.

TEXT BY MARGOT CARMICHAEL LESTER

1. CitySquare

ARCHITECT: Arrowstreet, Somerville, Mass. **COMPLETION:** 2011 (first phase). **BRIEF:** 2.2-million-s.f., \$563 million mixed-use project received \$94 million in state/local funding. Phase one seeking LEED Silver.

2. Gateway Park

ARCHITECT: Tsoi/Kobus & Associates, Cambridge, Mass. **COMPLETION:** 2007. **BRIEF:** Destination for life sciences and biotech firms and employees has 500,000 s.f. of commercial/lab space and 241,000 s.f. of condos.

3. New England Scope

ARCHITECT: Margulies Perruzzi Architects, Boston. **COMPLETION:** 2008. **BRIEF:** Rehab of windowless warehouse into 10,000-s.f. outpatient medical facility.

4. Union Station Intermodal Transportation Center

ARCHITECT: Finegold Alexander + Associates, Boston. **COMPLETION:** 2008 (build-outs ongoing). **BRIEF:** 90,000-s.f., \$32 million renovation reintroduced 175-foot towers, removed in 1926. Request for \$7.5 million submitted with governor's office, which could lead to stimulus funds.

POPULATION/EMPLOYMENT

175,521 residents; 2% annual growth for several years. April 2009 unemployment: 8.3%.

RESIDENTIAL MARKET

Current median home sale price: \$219,940.

MARKET STRENGTHS

- Easy access to Boston and Providence, R.I.
- Nine universities and colleges
- Low cost of doing business

MARKET CONCERNS

- Sprawl outside city core
- Need for larger commercial tax base
- Economic uncertainty

FORECAST

"The city must continue the recovery of industrial brownfields, reduce urban flight, and bring additional housing and employment opportunities to the downtown area," says native son Michael Pagano, president of Lamoureux Pagano Associates. "The city needs to build on the progress made over the last 10 years."



NEW ENGLAND'S SECOND-LARGEST CITY, Worcester, Mass., rose to prominence during the Industrial Revolution on the strength of manufacturing, primarily of textiles. It also became something of an innovation hub: the monkey wrench, barbed-wire fencing, and the envelope-folding machine were invented there. Today, the city continues to be a leader in advanced manufacturing, information technology, and biotechnology, healthcare, and medical research.

Creating a place for workers in these industries to live and play has prompted a reversioning of the city's core. "City planners and savvy developers understand the value of a more transit-oriented, higher-density, livelier pedestrian streetscape, so there is a strong movement to encourage downtown redevelopment," says Marc Margulies, principal of Boston's Margulies Perruzzi Architects. "Even the medical and research institutions understand the desirability of a successful downtown and are considering reasonable ways of encouraging and supporting urban multiuse residential and commercial growth."

So far, public and private development projects totalling more than \$2 billion are under way, and more investment may be on the way. "Outdated facilities and brownfields are being tackled to make room for innovative technologies," says city director of economic development Timothy McGourthy. "We've submitted a number of projects for stimulus dollars, from bridge and road work to project-specific funding. We're hopeful to hear soon about our success." □



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