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# Municipal Digital Equity Planning Program Summary

**Massachusetts Broadband Institute**

**MBI**  
MASSACHUSETTS  
BROADBAND INSTITUTE

  
at the MassTech  
Collaborative

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**Plan prepared by:** Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC)

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### **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Promote and support digital literacy training programs like those available through local organizations.
- Continue to evaluate and update the Ashburnham Digital Equity Plan and pursue opportunities that enhance digital inclusion initiatives.
- Encourage peer-mentorship and “train-the-trainer” models where residents are empowered to become certified digital navigators.
- Identify and train a digital navigator at each community anchor institution.
- Join a regional digital equity coalition and play a role in the implementation of regional broadband and digital literacy initiatives.
- Create public Wi-Fi mesh networks and install computer work and charging stations in public spaces.
- Expand capabilities on the town website for improved accessibility, ease of use and enhanced function.
- Create a digital equity and inclusion webpage on the town website to host the Ashburnham Digital Equity Plan and related interactive resources.
- Create print and digital versions of a local digital resources map.
- Partner with social service agencies to create device distribution programs.
- Purchase Wi-Fi hot spots for the library to loan to residents.
- Provide upgraded devices, workspaces, cloud storage capabilities, enhanced software and improved audio/visual capabilities for town departments.
- Leverage existing and seek new funding opportunities and partnerships to enhance digital equity and inclusion townwide.
- Coordinate with MassHire and Montachusett Opportunity Counsel to understand existing digital literacy funding sources to plan for the next five years and beyond.
- Establish mobile, site-site and in-home digital literacy training services and/or transportation programs that provide rides for digital inclusion.

### Key Populations Engaged

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Veterans
- Rural residents
- Individuals with disabilities

### Needs Identified

- Limited outdoor Wi-Fi and private workspaces
- Limited access to digital literacy resources
- Americans with Disability Act (ADA) compliance for public computers, workstations and government webpages
- Updated technology for public computers, workstations and government webpages
- Market competition for affordable internet service provider (ISP) options
- Increased access to affordable, modern devices in public spaces or device distribution programs
- Improved cybersecurity and internet safety
- Access to home broadband subscriptions for rural residents
- Device access
- Availability of reliable, high-speed internet service

### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Stevens Memorial Library	Ashburnham Senior Center/Council on Aging
Ashburnham Veterans Services	Ashburnham Planning Department
Ashburnham Select Board	

**Plan prepared by:** Montachusett Regional Planning Commission

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### **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Create a digital navigator program with staff at each community anchor institution and train town staff on digital literacy training techniques.
  - Improve internet service and create additional public Wi-Fi availability.
  - Provide adequate private workspaces and desktop computers for connectivity at the library and senior center.
  - Promote existing and create new programs to provide financial assistance resources for internet service for those who qualify.
  - Promote existing and offer new one-on-one in-person technical support opportunities.
  - Create a map of locations showing where public Wi-Fi and digital literacy support are available.
  - Provide additional Chromebooks, laptops and hot spots for loan programs at the senior center and library.
  - Provide translation tablets to all community anchor institutions.
  - Offer workshops and educational campaigns in multiple languages to improve residents' understanding of digital terminology and internet safety.
  - Upgrade town audiovisual capabilities to broadcast government meetings and train residents to access online meeting platforms.
  - Update the town website to include fillable forms and accessibility features.
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### **Key Populations Engaged**

- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Veterans
- Rural residents

### **Needs Identified**

- Digital literacy training for older adults
- Increased internet access
- Device access
- Accessible devices
- Cybersecurity training
- Affordable internet service options for veterans
- Internet-enabled devices and workspaces
- Instruction on using technology
- Reliable broadband service at the library
- Increased devices and private workstations at the library
- Large-screen devices at public schools
- Reliable broadband service at public schools and Town Common



### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Ashby Free Public Library	Wachusett District Veterans Services
North Middlesex Regional School District	Ashby Planning Board
Ashby Senior Center/Council on Aging	Ashby Select Board
Luk, LLC	

**Plan prepared by:** Cape Cod Commission

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### **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Support improved internet connectivity by offering public Wi-Fi in key locations.
  - Incorporate connectivity considerations within the construction and maintenance of community buildings, particularly housing, by including broadband access in early phases of development.
  - Continue to learn about and advocate for improved internet service, increased market competition and network expansion.
  - Provide support and educational services to help residents understand internet service bundles.
  - Monitor and promote hot spot and device lending programs, as well as introduce device provision programs for residents.
  - Promote and enhance existing skills programs and introduce new group and individualized digital equity offerings.
  - Support existing English language learning programs by developing complementary educational opportunities that integrate digital skills training.
  - Explore digital navigation models and offerings.
  - Establish community-wide programming focused on internet safety.
  - Support digital equity programming for community groups, such as small businesses, nonprofits, libraries and municipal services.
  - Integrate digital equity and accessibility considerations into municipal and community-based services and communications.
  - Participate in regional efforts, such as those related to coalition-building, digital navigation and grant applicants.
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### **Key Populations Engaged**

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Members of racial or ethnic minority groups
- Rural residents
- Individuals with a language barrier (limited English or literacy)
- Youth

### **Needs Identified**

- Reliable broadband service
- Affordability
- Access to devices
- Digital skills for older adults, English language learners and small businesses
- Internet safety training

### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Barnstable Planning and Development Department	Barnstable Community Services
Barnstable Community Services Department	Barnstable Council on Aging
	Brazilian Resource Center
Barnstable Human Resources & ADA Coordinator	MassHire Cape Cod & The Islands
Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority	YMCA Cape Cod
Love Live Local	Amplify POC Cape Cod
Hyannis Public Library	Cape Cod Healthcare
Barnstable Public Schools	Duffy Health Center
Barnstable Youth Council	Cape Cod Community College
Barnstable Information Technology Department	Vinfen



**Plan prepared by:** Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC)

### Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions

- Create a regional digital equity coalition or committee to coordinate efforts, make recommendations and implement programs.
- Create a local or regional digital navigator program.
- Explore opportunities to bolster the knowledge base of existing municipal staff and organizations.
- Investigate device recycling and reuse to support access to affordable devices.
- Explore a regional digital equity hub and resource sharing partnership.
- Build and support library-based device lending and digital literacy programs.
- Promote healthy device and internet use across all age groups.
- Explore opportunities to increase the number of internet service providers in the region.
- Explore new programs directly targeted at improving cybersecurity and online safety.

### Key Populations Engaged

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Veterans
- Rural residents

### Needs Identified

- Device and service affordability
- Digital literacy
- Quality of service and availability
- Diversity in internet service provider options
- Increased programming

### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Woods Memorial Library (Barre)	Merriam-Gilbert Public Library (West Brookfield)
Barre Senior Center	West Brookfield Senior Center/Council on Aging
Paige Memorial Library (Hardwick)	West Brookfield Board of Selectmen
New Braintree Council on Aging	West Brookfield Housing Authority
North Brookfield Senior Center	Quabbin Regional High School
Haston Public Library (North Brookfield)	

**Plan prepared by:** Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC)

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### **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Create a digital resource page on each town website modeled after the BRPC Digital Resource Guide to help residents quickly and easily find computer and internet information.
  - Identify grants to support the sustainability of implementation activities after Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) funding ends.
  - Hire local digital navigators to provide tech support and lead in-person or hybrid digital skills classes and promote self-directed learning opportunities.
  - Develop creative outreach strategies to reach less-engaged residents by enhancing social media presence, leveraging community newspapers and town-wide mailings and hosting social events at non-traditional digital-skills venues.
  - Facilitate access to large-screen devices for high-need residents by coordinating requests through town, social services and faith-based organizations using the Alliance for Digital Equity and/or Computers4People.
  - Identify locations that could support public Wi-Fi to provide residents and visitors with seamless internet access.
  - Create public-facing materials using language and designs accessible to a wide audience regardless of education or ability.
  - Advocate for digital literacy and computer science (DLCS) content to start earlier in elementary schools serving Becket, Washington and Windsor.
  - Cover the upfront connection costs for broadband installation to allow more people to subscribe to municipal broadband in Becket, Washington and Windsor.
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### **Key Populations Engaged**

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Individuals with disabilities
- Rural residents

### **Needs Identified**

- Financial assistance programs for devices
- Self-directed online learning programs
- Subsidized municipal broadband connections
- Public space Wi-Fi
- Digital literacy content in elementary schools
- Improved access to digital resource information

# TOWNS OF BECKET, OTIS, WASHINGTON & WINDSOR

Population: 4,890



## Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Becket-Washington Public Library	Farmington River School District
Becket-Washington Community Partnership	Otis Veterans Agent
Community TV of the Southern Berkshires	Otis Observer
Becket Council on Aging	Washington Council on Aging
Becket-Washington Public Schools	Becket and Washington Food Pantry
Becket Veterans Agent	Washington Tracks Newsletter
Becket Beat	Windsor Council on Aging
First Congregational Church of Becket	Windsor Public Library
Otis Council on Aging	Windsor Veterans Agent
Otis Public Library	Central Berkshire Regional School District
Windsor Congregational Church	Friends of Windsor
Windsor Facebook Group	Windsor Artist Group

**Plan prepared by:** Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)

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### **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Promote existing digital access and expand digital access in community facilities.
- Explore publicly accessible outdoor Wi-Fi leveraging the city's existing networks.
- Explore partnerships for public Wi-Fi and pilot service at public transit stops.
- Partner with housing providers to support internet access in affordable housing.
- Pursue the Residential Retrofit Program in partnership with the Beverly Housing Authority.
- Engage internet service providers (ISPs) to encourage and facilitate greater market competition and availability through the cable franchise agreement.
- Explore leveraging public infrastructure and policy to increase competition.
- Work with ISPs to advocate broader network coverage at key sites.
- Promote low-cost internet options and programs.
- Expand hot spot lending by investing in the library's capacity to increase the number of hot spots available for distribution.
- Partner with local community organizations serving individuals experiencing homelessness and poverty to provide hot spot equipment.
- Expand device access and digital skills support, building on existing assets.
- Provide computer labs in critical high-need community anchor institutions (CAIs).
- Provide accessible and adaptive devices for individuals living with disabilities.
- Coordinate device donation, refurbishment and distribution programs with major employers, nonprofits and the city's Information Technology (IT) department.
- Expand and diversify technology education for priority populations through the council on aging, Beverly Bootstraps, public schools and BevCam.
- Provide multilingual technology support through programs at key locations.
- Build community capacity through culturally relevant and multilingual awareness, education and outreach.
- Publicly track progress on digital equity measures.
- Build on the digital equity community asset map to serve as an up-to-date inventory of resources and programs.
- Develop "how to" videos and visual guides for accessing city services online.
- Conduct a study of the digital divide as a social determinant of health (SDoH).
- Conduct user-testing of online resources to understand current barriers to online municipal services among at-risk populations.
- Form a Digital Equity Steering Committee.
- Connect with local and statewide digital equity partners by joining coalitions.
- Explore opportunities for regional collaboration with fellow participants in the MBI Digital Equity Planning Program.
- Strengthen participation in the North Shore Digital Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) Consortium.

### Key Populations Engaged

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Individuals with disabilities
- Individuals with a language barrier
- Members of racial or ethnic minority groups

### Needs Identified

- Affordable internet services
- Affordable digital devices
- Transportation to community spaces
- Adaptive devices
- Digital skills education
- Versatile, multilingual programming
- Internet safety and security resources

### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Beverly Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging	Beverly Mayor's Office
Beverly Council on Aging (COA)	Beverly Grants Office
Beverly Human Resources Department	Beverly Police Department
Beverly Information Technology (IT) Department	Beverly Recreation Department
Beverly Health Department	Beverly Department of Planning and Development
Beverly Public Library	Beverly Public Schools
Beverly Bootstraps	BevCam
Harborlight Homes	



**Plan prepared by:** CTC Technology & Energy (CTC)

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### **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Develop a strategy for deploying best-in-class, competitive, low-cost internet services in Boston Housing Authority (BHA) facilities and other affordable housing properties.
  - Explore alternative funding sources to enable the continuation of Digital Equity Fund efforts past 2026.
  - Prioritize local funding for digital navigator programs and coordination of capacity.
  - Review and upgrade computer room facilities across city departments to facilitate internet and computer access for low-income residents.
  - Build additional computer rooms in BHA developments and consider expanding Chromebook distribution program.
  - Increase inventories of the Boston Public Library's (BPL) short-term device lending programs to alleviate long wait times.
  - Expand free Wi-Fi at community and transportation hubs to allow targeted public access.
- 

### **Key Populations Engaged**

- Low-income households
- Incarcerated individuals
- Veterans
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Individuals with disabilities
- Individuals with a language barrier (limited English or literacy)
- Members of racial or ethnic minority groups
- LGBTQIA+ individuals
- Immigrants or refugees
- Members of religious minority groups

### **Needs Identified**

- Additional fiber broadband availability in some BHA developments and other complexes
- Increased internet provider competition
- Funding for the city's Digital Equity Fund
- Affordable broadband subscriptions
- Broadband access
- Device access
- Digital skills training to increase confidence in broadband use

### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Boston LesBiGay Urban Foundation	Ethos
Inquilinos Boricua en Acción (IBA)	Zumix
Somali Parents Advocacy Center for Education (SPACE)	Leaders through Education, Action & Hope (LEAH) Project
Vietnamese American Civic Association (VACA)	Age Strong Commission
Boston HealthCare for the Homeless	Boston Housing Authority (BHA)
Boston Department of Innovation and Technology (DoIT)	Boston Public Schools
Boston Public Health Commission	Disability Policy Consortium
Veterans Collaborative	Native American LifeLines Boston
MassINC Polling Group (MPG)	Boston Public Library (BPL)
Boston Office of Workforce Development (OWD)	

**Plan prepared by:** Cape Cod Commission

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### **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Advocate for improved service options and continue pushing for better internet service provider (ISP) performance using community feedback and data collection.
  - Encourage ISP competition, promote increased provider presence and explore broadband expansion, including fiber-to-the-premises opportunities.
  - Promote public Wi-Fi availability by mapping and expanding public access in key locations.
  - Improve and expand device and hot spot lending programs.
  - Build and maintain a digital equity practitioner network aligned with regional efforts.
  - Increase one-to-one digital skills support and programming, as well as embed digital equity services in social services.
  - Expand internet safety programming through workshops on topics like online safety, privacy and cybersecurity.
  - Assess options for creating or joining digital navigator programs.
  - Address geographic service challenges by providing service equitably across Bourne.
  - Improve digital equity communication by creating educational campaigns, community messaging, and ensuring municipal services and communications embody digital equity principles.
  - Measure progress and develop evaluation strategies for the above recommendations.
- 

### **Key Populations Engaged**

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Veterans
- Individuals with disabilities
- Youth
- Members of racial or ethnic minority groups

### **Needs Identified**

- Unreliable broadband connection
- Lack of internet service provider (ISP) competition
- Affordability
- Lack of digital skills programming
- Lack of device lending programming
- Safety, security and trust-based concerns
- Implementation and capacity challenges impacting program development and delivery

### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Bourne Council on Aging	Jonathan Bourne Public Library
Bourne Public Schools	Upper Cape Cod Regional Technical High School
Town Administration and Selectboard	Cable, Internet and Telecommunications Advisory Committee
Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribe	Massachusetts Maritime Academy
Joint Base Cape Cod	

**Plan prepared by:** Health Resources in Action

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### **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Assign a point person to organize the community's initial implementation effort.
  - Establish goals and identify data sources to benchmark progress.
  - Celebrate success and provide regular updates on Brockton's progress to legislators and leaders from relevant state agencies.
  - Conduct outreach to income-eligible households to increase enrollment in discounted internet programs.
  - Rewire affordable housing developments for better internet service.
  - Increase eligibility for federal infrastructure funding by ensuring service levels reported by internet service providers (ISPs) reflect actual network performance.
  - Monitor ISPs and proactively help them improve network performance and reach.
  - Increase use of the Brockton Public Library's device loaner program.
  - Establish a program to recycle, refurbish, distribute and service devices.
  - Post digital navigators in organizations throughout the city.
  - Build strong partnerships with national and statewide organizations that specialize in digital skills training.
- 

### **Key Populations Engaged**

- Individuals with a language barrier (limited English or literacy)
- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Youth

### **Needs Identified**

- Affordability
- Inadequate broadband speed
- Lack of broadband reliability
- Device access
- Lack of knowledge on how to use the internet
- Concerns about internet safety
- Digital skills training and support



### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Brockton Public Schools	Brockton Public Libraries
Brockton Council on Aging (COA)	Brockton Information Technology Center
Brockton Redevelopment Authority	Brockton Veteran's Services
NeighborWorks Housing Solutions	Father Bill's
Brockton Neighborhood Health Center	Old Colony Elder Services
MassHire Greater Brockton Career Center	Cape Verdean Association of Brockton
Boys and Girls Club of Metro South	Tech Goes Home
UMass Boston Collins Center	MassINC

**Plan prepared by:** CTC Technology & Energy

### Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions

- Continue to support a network of digital navigators connected to trusted organizations to address residents' complex digital literacy and access needs.
- Explore Metropolitan Area Planning Council's (MAPC) Apartment Wi-Fi Program and options for free Wi-Fi in common areas of affordable housing developments.
- Provide a combined total of 50-100 devices per year for 3,000 housing units.
- Fund Cambridge Housing Authority's Tech Goes Home Program to serve 30 residents per year.
- Fund the Cambridge Public Library so it can partner with an organization like the Massachusetts Association for Computer and Internet Resources (MACIR) to provide residents with Chromebook and personal computers for access to digital literacy training, job readiness skills and support services.
- Provide the Community Learning Center with 75 Chromebooks for student use and an ongoing annual investment to replace aging and outdated equipment.
- Provide tablets and hot spots with mobile data subscriptions to Cambridge Public Health Department (CPHD) outreach staff and clinics.
- Expand CCTV's Foundational Technology Program to weekly in-person classes.
- Explore cybersecurity programming/partnership opportunities.

### Key Populations Engaged

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Members of racial or ethnic minority groups
- Immigrants or refugees

### Needs Identified

- Digital skills training to increase confidence in broadband use
- Device access and affordability
- Affordable broadband subscription plans
- Increased internet service provider competition
- Online privacy and security resources

### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Cambridge Council on Aging	Cambridge Community Television (CCTV)
Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee	Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA)
Cambridge Public Health Department	Cambridge Public Library
Cambridge Public Schools	Community Learning Center
Homeowners Rehab Inc.	Just a Start

**Plan prepared by:** Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission

## Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions

- Create a digital equity coalition to coordinate efforts, make action recommendations and implement programs.
- Create a digital navigator program/position that works with community members to ensure a continuum of help with access, affordability and literacy.
- Consider hiring a broadband/digital equity manager or identify existing staff to stay apprised of funding opportunities, internet service providers (ISPs) and community needs.
- Consider creating a modest grant program to fill the gap left by the discontinuation of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) and leverage upcoming state and federal funding opportunities.
- Bolster existing digital skill training and device lending programs through the library.
- Partner with educational institutions throughout the city to provide additional learning and assistance resources.
- Explore new digital literacy and communication programs directly targeted at improving cybersecurity and online safety.
- Promote healthy device and internet use for all age groups, particularly children, adolescents and young adults.
- Explore device recycling and reuse as a cost-effective strategy to increase access to affordable devices.
- Explore opportunities to increase the number of ISPs operating in Worcester County.

## Key Populations Engaged

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals
- Rural residents

## Needs Identified

- Internet connectivity
- Wraparound services
- Device distribution and digital skills
- Targeted digital skills training
- Support for vulnerable populations to address internet safety and confidence
- Digital literacy programming
- Support for the most vulnerable populations

## Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Charlton Public Library	The Overlook
Charlton Arts and Activities Center	Charlton Town Administration

**Plan prepared by:** Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)

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## **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Create a digital equity coalition to coordinate efforts, make action recommendations and implement programs.
- Invest in better infrastructure to help bridge the digital divide in Chelsea.
- Develop a business plan/next steps for implementing the Chelsea Digital Access Plan vision developed by EntryPoint and Biarri in 2023.
- Evaluate different legal frameworks for providing municipal broadband service or increasing municipally owned infrastructure.
- Evaluate and catalog existing city-owned “dark” fiber and city-owned conduit.
- Re-evaluate and improve implementation of Chelsea’s existing Dig Once policy.
- Explore public-space Wi-Fi leveraging municipally owned network infrastructure and utility poles.
- Encourage multifamily building owners and anchor institutions to engage with MBI and state resources to improve infrastructure.
- Re-activate the Chelsea’s Cable Television Advisory Board to oversee regulation and respond to resident input for both cable television and internet service.
- Evaluate capacity needs for additional programs or projects, especially within the information technology (IT) department.
- Promote awareness of and improve access to public spaces that could provide computer classes, digital navigator services and public Wi-Fi nodes.
- Develop a best-practice guide for anchor institutions who want to provide an open guest internet network for community use.
- Promote, extend and support existing community resources.
- Expand educational offerings at Chelsea Community Schools to include more digital literacy programming.
- Build awareness around services offered by the public library, such as public computer workstations, public Wi-Fi and space.
- Expand the Chelsea IT department’s device refurbishment initiative to support housing-authority residents and community organizations.
- Develop partnerships with large employers in and near Chelsea to provide refurbished laptops to residents in need.

### Key Populations Engaged

- Low-income households
- Individuals with a language barrier
- Immigrants or refugees
- Members of a racial or ethnic minority groups
- Youth

### Needs Identified

- Better internet connection in homes
- Digital literacy and cyber security education
- Affordability
- More community spaces to gather in small groups
- Increased device access, including newer/updated devices
- Advocacy for discounted internet plans, devices and quality connection
- Accessible technical support
- Outreach about existing programs and resources
- Staff capacity to expand programming
- Free public Wi-Fi

### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

La Colaborativa	Chelsea IT Department
Chelsea Community Connections	Chelsea Department of Public Works
MACIR, Inc.	Chelsea Housing Authority
MassHire Metro North Workforce Board	Chelsea Public Library
Mystic Valley Elder Services	Chelsea Department of Housing and Community Development



**Plan prepared by:** Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

### Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions

- Create a permanent Digital Accessibility Working Group for the city.
- Assign responsibility to a city employee to coordinate the ongoing implementation of the Chicopee Internet for All Plan.
- Expand hot spot lending programs through libraries and schools.
- Support ongoing efforts by local internet service providers (ISPs) to expand fiber coverage throughout multi-dwelling units (MDUs).
- Pursue a phased-in deployment of publicly available Wi-Fi networks including both public buildings and outdoor spaces.
- Establish a fund to support distribution of computer devices.
- Coordinate city-wide with existing programs to provide digital skills training and technical support.

### Key Populations Engaged

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Individuals with a language barrier (limited English or literacy)
- Members of racial or ethnic minority groups

### Needs Identified

- Device accessibility
- Accessible internet subscriptions
- Digital equity disparities
- Lack of Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)

### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

City of Chicopee	Crossroads Fiber
Chicopee Public Library	Chicopee Council on Aging
Valley Opportunity Council	Way Finders
Alliance for Digital Equity	

**Plan prepared by:** Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC)

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### **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Ensure all Clarksburg residents have access to the internet by forming a town broadband committee, creating a hotspot lending program, installing Wi-Fi in public spaces and installing computer stations at the community center and library.
  - Conduct a feasibility study for municipal broadband or wireless internet service provider (WISP) network and encourage fiber service providers to expand to residents' homes.
  - Support regional efforts to increase internet service provider (ISP) competition.
  - Raise residents' internet confidence by creating intergenerational learning programs, supporting educators' use of technology and hosting educational events focused on cybersecurity, telehealth and device usage.
  - Increase residents' access to affordable devices by connecting residents with device refurbishing companies and creating a laptop lending program.
  - Build internal capacity to address digital technological changes by seeking collaborative opportunities, identifying funding sources, designating a local digital champion and joining a regional coalition.
  - Ensure online government communications are accessible by advocating for Northern Berkshire Community Television Corporation (NBC-TV) to add subtitles, translation services and interpretation to meeting broadcasts.
- 

### **Key Populations Engaged**

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Youth

### **Needs Identified**

- Lack of competition
- Affordable internet access
- Inconsistent internet service quality
- Lack of knowledge and skills among certain populations
- Insufficient public infrastructure to support residents' digital needs
- Device usage and setup assistance for older adults
- Cybersecurity training for youth
- Greater in-town support for device access and education

### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Clarksburg Council on Aging	Northern Berkshire School Union
Clarksburg School	Clarksburg Parent-Teacher Group
Clarksburg Library	Clarksburg Information Technology (IT) Department
Clarksburg Town Administrator	State Legislator's Office
Veterans' services	Clarksburg Board of Selectmen
Northern Berkshire Adult Education Program	

**Plan prepared by:** Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

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### **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Extend fiber ring to affordable housing complexes and the downtown area.
  - Ensure all town websites are Americans with Disability Act (ADA) compliant.
  - Pilot a Wi-Fi hot spot lending program and install a virtual bulletin board at the library.
  - Work with Dalton Community Television to upload digital literacy skills videos to their YouTube channel and connect with community-based organizations.
  - Expand device options for on-site public use and lending and increase availability of accessibility technologies (e.g. Perkins).
  - Seek funding to expand digital literacy and skills classes at town assets in coordination with identifying a part-time digital navigator.
  - Dedicate space for youth to participate in digital literacy classes and intergenerational programming at the Community Recreation Association (CRA) and Dalton Senior Center.
  - Provide cybersecurity education information on the town website and incorporate cybersecurity handouts/awareness into community meetings and events.
- 

### **Key Populations Engaged**

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Individuals with disabilities
- Youth
- Rural residents

### **Needs Identified**

- Digital skills for older adults
- Devices and dedicated technology support for town organizations
- Digital navigators
- Digital devices
- Internet hotspots
- Dedicated learning space for youth
- Assistive technology for older adults
- Online learning options
- Reliable internet connection at the town senior center
- Public Wi-Fi extensions at the library and senior center

### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Office of the Town Manager	Dalton Community Television (DCTV)
Community Recreation Association	Dalton Youth Center
Dalton Senior Center	Dalton Free Public Library
Dalton Housing Authority	St. Agnes Church
Wahconah High School	Dalton Veteran's Agent



**Plan prepared by: VHB**

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### **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Establish a framework for promoting digital equity in East Bridgewater by identifying local digital equity champions, diversifying public outreach methods and tracking community sentiment regarding digital inclusion.
  - Track the local broadband market to support a variety of services for consumers and promote job opportunities locally.
  - Support a wide range of training opportunities and resources to strengthen digital literacy and protect the community from cybersecurity threats.
  - Support effective device access and digital literacy training in East Bridgewater Public Schools (EBPS) for students, families and staff.
  - Strengthen existing local connections and explore new partnerships and funding opportunities.
  - Promote access to affordable broadband services through Wi-Fi in affordable housing, free public Wi-Fi access points, outreach about public subsidies and development of an inventory of locations with free Wi-Fi.
  - Promote access to affordable devices by establishing a local device reuse program and promoting public subsidies.
- 

### **Key Populations Engaged**

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Members of racial or ethnic minority groups

### **Needs Identified**

- Internet service provider (ISP) competition
- Affordable broadband subscriptions
- Education of bundled service options and internet subsidy programs
- Transparency from ISPs
- Higher quality ISP customer service
- Library's position as a supportive resource should be enhanced
- Digital literacy training for students and parents for school-provided technology
- Coordinated digital navigator system
- Sufficient digital literacy resources for cybersecurity
- Diversified methods of municipal public outreach
- Partnerships with other municipalities

# TOWN OF EAST BRIDGEWATER

Population: 14,393



## Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Town of East Bridgewater Council on Aging	Community Coalition for Change
East Bridgewater Public Schools (EBPS)	East Bridgewater Public Library

**Plan prepared by:** Kimley-Horn

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### **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Restructure/rebrand the Broadband Committee with a name and members that will support progress on the digital equity plan and town-wide fiber internet.
  - Designate a champion to coordinate and pursue funding for improvements, equipment, etc., and continue collaboration with the Alliance for Digital Equity.
  - Enhance the town's website to promote digital services/resources.
  - Assign digital navigators at the library, senior center, hospital, housing authority sites and public safety facilities.
  - Purchase additional digital devices for public use and increase support staff at the library, the senior center, and housing authority sites.
  - Update broadband infrastructure at housing authority buildings.
  - Create a digital library of free on-demand digital skills training resources.
  - Identify a telehealth champion to address barriers to digital health access.
  - Provide digital skills workshops.
  - Host in-person workshops covering online safety, digital skills and device troubleshooting.
  - Update East Longmeadow's zoning and land development regulations to include requirements to accommodate fiber installations in new developments.
- 

### **Key Populations Engaged**

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)

### **Needs Identified**

- Affordability
- Reliable broadband connection
- Device access and device use support
- Digital literacy training and internet safety resources
- Multilingual programming

# TOWN OF EAST LONGMEADOW

Population: 16,431



## Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

East Longmeadow Town Management	East Longmeadow Public Schools
East Longmeadow Information Technology (IT) Department	East Longmeadow Health Department
East Longmeadow Town Council	East Longmeadow Public Library
East Longmeadow Broadband Committee	East Longmeadow Council on Aging
East Longmeadow Housing Authority	

**Plan prepared by: VHB**

### Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions

- Establish Easthampton as a leader in digital equity and inclusion through collaboration with local, regional and statewide partners.
- Improve the efficiency, efficacy and quality of local digital equity initiatives by prioritizing city-wide knowledge and resource sharing.
- Expand digital inclusion through community outreach and strategic long-term planning.
- Ensure affordable and reliable high-speed internet (100/20 Mbps) access for all community members.
- Facilitate access to digital devices both in the home and in the public.
- Promote digital literacy with community education programs to empower individuals with the skills to use digital technology effectively.
- Make Easthampton a smart city.

### Key Populations Engaged

- Low-income households
- Rural residents
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Veterans
- Individuals with disabilities

### Needs Identified

- More internet service provider (ISP) options
- Additional digital literacy courses
- Educational opportunities for seniors at the public library or senior center
- Affordable internet options

### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Easthampton Public Library	Easthampton Public School District
City of Easthampton Information Technology (IT) Department	City of Easthampton Council on Aging/Senior Center
Easthampton Media (E-Media)	City of Easthampton Public Health Department
Holyoke Veteran's Office	Easthampton Housing Authority
Crown Castle	Local Linx
GoNetSpeed	



**Plan prepared by:** CTC Technology & Energy (CTC)

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## **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Create a digital equity coalition to coordinate efforts, make action recommendations and implement programs.
  - Convene a digital equity coalition and facilitate biannual meetings to share information and set priorities.
  - Consider setting up a modest town grant fund to fill small gaps and reduce reliance on uncertain or finite state or federal funding streams.
  - Fund a digital navigator position to serve at the Council on Aging (COA), library and other sites for skills training and enrollment support for low-cost broadband programs.
  - Consider a fund to create a digital education curriculum to provide professional pathways for high school students.
  - Explore expansion of Fairhaven TV's role to include digital skills training.
  - Pursue Metropolitan Area Planning Council's (MAPC) Apartment Wi-Fi Program to provide potential capital and operating support for Wi-Fi in housing authority units.
  - Explore partnerships with device provision entities to meet community needs.
  - Purchase iPads for the COA and Community Connections.
  - Support the Commission on Disability (COD) through funding for consulting and device access resources to adequately serve residents living with physical and developmental disabilities.
  - Explore cybersecurity programming/partnership opportunities.
- 

## **Key Populations Engaged**

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Veterans
- Individuals with a language barrier (limited English or literacy)
- Individuals with disabilities
- Youth

## **Needs Identified**

- Limited access to affordable broadband for residents
- Lack of access to devices
- Digital skills gaps
- Lack of confidence performing online tasks
- Lack of digital literacy
- Lack of skills programming
- Online safety concerns from residents

### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Town of Fairhaven	Fairhaven Public Schools
Millicent Library	Fairhaven Council on Aging (COA)
Fairhaven Veterans' Services	Fairhaven Housing Authority
Fairhaven Planning and Economic Development	Commission on Disability (COD)
Fairhaven Broadband Study Committee	Fairhaven TV
M.O.L.I.F.E. Inc.	People Acting in Community Endeavors (PACE)

**Plan prepared by:** Cape Cod Commission

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### **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Advocate for improved internet affordability, speed and quality of service through community feedback, support for local institutions, expanded public education, and enhanced public Wi-Fi access and mapping.
  - Expand awareness, access and availability of devices and hot spots through lending, distribution and refurbishment.
  - Develop targeted device lending programs for populations such as aging individuals and graduating high school seniors.
  - Build local digital skills capacity through a digital navigator program, expanded workshops and new community-informed courses with a focus on internet safety for residents.
  - Participate in Cape Cod-wide digital equity initiatives to align efforts, share resources and pursue regional partnerships and funding opportunities.
- 

### **Key Populations Engaged**

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Veterans
- Individuals with a language barrier (limited English or literacy)
- Members of racial or ethnic minority groups
- Individuals with disabilities

### **Needs Identified**

- Device access
- Affordability
- Quality of service
- Lack of competition
- One-on-one support for digital skills development and training
- Cybersecurity concerns

### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Falmouth Public Library	Falmouth Human Services
Falmouth Senior Center	Falmouth Community TV
Cape Verdean Cultural Center	Neighborhood Falmouth
Falmouth Housing Trust	Falmouth Housing Corporation
Falmouth Department of Recreation	Falmouth English as a second language (ESL) classes
Falmouth Community Veterans' Center	Falmouth Service Center
Town Administration	Falmouth Broadband Municipal Light Plant (MLP)
FalmouthNet	Better Broadband 4 Falmouth
Falmouth Public Schools	

**Plan prepared by:** Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC)

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## **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Promote and support continuation of the UML/FSU digital literacy training program to provide devices, education, funding and partnerships with local organizations.
- Continue to evaluate and update the Fitchburg Digital Equity Plan and pursue opportunities that enhance digital inclusion initiatives, such as existing and new partnerships and funding sources.
- Coordinate with the housing authority to provide free internet and computers at each property and explore providing affordable internet options to all residents.
- Pursue expansion of affordable, fast and reliable internet service through partnerships with internet service providers (ISPs) and/or by installing Wi-Fi networks in public spaces.
- Update the city webpage for improved accessibility and enhanced function.
- Create a digital equity and inclusion webpage within the city website to host the Fitchburg Digital Equity Plan and related interactive resources.
- Create print and digital versions of a local digital resources map.
- Purchase and install new computer workstations at the Fitchburg Public Library, Senior Center and Veterans Center.
- Purchase additional Wi-Fi hot spots for the library to loan to the public.
- Coordinate with MassHire and UML/FSU to understand existing digital literacy funding sources to plan for the next five years and beyond.
- Promote Fitchburg as a champion of digital equity and inclusion initiatives.
- Join a regional digital equity coalition and play a leadership role in implementing broadband and digital literacy initiatives.
- Establish a Twin City Coalition to facilitate and maintain critical partnerships.
- Train a digital navigator at each community anchor institution and encourage local service providers to become digital trainers.
- Encourage peer-mentorship models where community members, including youth and older adults, are empowered to become certified digital navigators.
- Establish mobile, site-site and in-home digital literacy training services and/or transportation programs that provide rides for digital inclusion.



### Key Populations Engaged

- Low-income households
- Incarcerated individuals
- Individuals with disabilities
- Individuals with a language barrier (limited English or literacy)
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Veterans
- Members of racial or ethnic minority groups
- Youth

### Needs Identified

- Reliable internet service
- Affordable internet service
- Accessibility to public internet computer workspaces, affordable devices and digital literacy training
- Additional internet hotspots for public schools and the library.
- Digital literacy and cybersecurity training
- Increased access to public internet, public computers/workstations and public charging stations
- Access to reliable transportation
- Lack of computers or broadband connection
- The end of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)
- Improved accessibility for government website functions

### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Fitchburg Community Development and Planning Department	Fitchburg Information Technology (IT) Department
Fitchburg Council on Aging/Senior Center	Fitchburg Economic Development Department
Fitchburg Disability Commission	Fitchburg Health Outreach and Prevention Team
Fitchburg Veterans Services	Fitchburg Public Schools
Fitchburg Public Library	Fitchburg Public Access Television (FATV)
Fitchburg Redevelopment Authority	Fitchburg Housing Authority
Clear Path for Veterans New England	ACTION Community Health Center
Community Foundation of North Central Mass	Community Health Connections
Fitchburg Fiber	Growing Places
LUK, Inc.	Making Opportunity Count (MOC)
MOC Youth Innovation Center	MassAbility
MassHire North Central Mass Career Center	Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School
Mount Wachusett Community College	NewVue Communities
Spanish American Center	UMass Lowell (UML)
Fitchburg State University (FSU)	Work, Inc.

**Plan prepared by:** Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District

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### Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions

- Establish sustainable oversight and partnerships to support coordinated, long-term digital equity plan implementation across town departments and community organizations.
  - Improve access to affordable, reliable internet by increasing awareness of low-cost options, assessing coverage gaps and pursuing long-term infrastructure expansion.
  - Expand public access to internet service and devices by leveraging town-owned anchor institutions to provide shared connectivity and computer lending opportunities.
  - Support vulnerable populations by providing trusted assistance, digital skills training and cybersecurity education to support safe and confident use of technology.
- 

### Key Populations Engaged

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Members of racial or ethnic minority groups
- Rural residents

### Needs Identified

- Cost
- Lack of internet provider options
- Need for more digital skills and literacy classes

### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Freetown Public Library	Freetown Council on Aging
Freetown Elementary School	Freetown Town Administration
Freetown Planning Department	Cavalry Pentecostal Church
United Church of Assonet	

**Plan prepared by:** Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG)

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### Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions

- Purchase new Chromebooks and a public printer for the town library.
  - Review the need for public hot spots and purchase hot spots to distribute through a local entity.
  - Expand outreach to Gill residents about programs such as Tech Tuesday at the Gill-Montague Senior Center.
  - Extend and expand digital literacy classes and free laptop distribution through the Digital Equity for Seniors Program at the Gill-Montague Senior Center.
  - Explore options to extend public Wi-Fi in areas such as around the library or at the town hall.
  - Locate and map areas in town lacking cellular service.
  - Expand access to broadband for residents who are unable to connect to cable.
  - Explore local and regional options to reduce the burden of cost for internet subscriptions.
- 

### Key Populations Engaged

- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Rural residents

### Needs Identified

- Internet affordability
- Affordable internet access such as free public Wi-Fi or subsidized internet plans
- Device access through the library or senior center
- Access to digital skills training for older adults and students

### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Gill-Montague Senior Center	Gill-Montague School District
Gill Cable Advisory Committee	Slate Memorial Library (Gill Public Library)
Western MA Alliance for Digital Equity	

**Plan prepared by:** Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)

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### **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Implement publicly accessible Wi-Fi networks downtown and in open spaces.
- Raise awareness of free public Wi-Fi locations.
- Implement free Wi-Fi access in subsidized and affordable housing sites.
- Promote lower-cost plans for income-qualified residents.
- Bring internet service provider (ISP) market competition to Gloucester.
- Integrate assessment of digital literacy and device access needs into one-on-one client services in agencies across Gloucester.
- Provide and scale computer basics programs and support confidence-building for safe online participation.
- Expand workforce preparation digital skills programs in proportion to community needs.
- Offer video tutorials on basic and workforce digital skills in high-need languages.
- Expand opportunities for Gloucester Public Schools students to pursue technology internships and careers.
- Form a Gloucester Digital Equity Steering Committee.
- Launch the Digital Learning Lab at the Sawyer Free Library and expand computer labs in other public spaces.
- Regularly update Gloucester's digital equity asset map and resource directory.
- Support small businesses with digital literacy capacity building.

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### **Key Populations Engaged**

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Individuals with a language barrier
- Individuals with disabilities
- Members of racial or ethnic minority groups

### **Needs Identified**

- Improved home internet access
- Affordable broadband services
- Access to adequate devices and device support
- Digital literacy and safety programs tailored for different populations
- Increased awareness of available resources

### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Action Inc.	Wellspring House
Open Door	Backyard Growers
Gloucester Housing Authority	Pathways for Children
MassHire Metro North Workforce Board	Greater Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce
Gloucester Racial Justice Team	Sawyer Free Library
City of Gloucester Administration	Gloucester Information Technology (IT) Department
Gloucester Community Development Department	Gloucester Health Department
Gloucester Council on Aging/Rose Baker Senior Center	Gloucester Public Schools
Gloucester Police Department	Greater Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce
Gloucester Human Rights Commission (Gloucester Racial Justice Team)	Essex County Community Foundation (ECCF)
National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA)	



**Plan prepared by:** Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG)

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### **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Apply for Massachusetts Broadband Institute and other funding opportunities to expand Greenfield Community Energy and Technology's (GCET) infrastructure and services at site-specific, low-income housing.
  - Explore ways to support the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) and fund a replacement program.
  - Explore funding and partnership opportunities to expand public Wi-Fi.
  - Adopt a policy for the City of Greenfield to prioritize digital equity goals and actions.
  - Continue city funding for and explore potential funding to expand the Greenfield Public Library's onsite computer use, hot spot lending program, digital devices lending program, digital learning workshops and digital navigator services.
  - Explore funding to support local organizations to develop programs to host public use devices (including hot spots) and provide secure, private spaces for assisted internet access.
  - Explore funding for free or low-cost device distribution to target populations.
  - Continue to promote digital equity and coordination of plan implementation through continued Steering Committee meetings and/or convening practitioners and relevant organizations.
  - Work with Greenfield Community College to explore potential funding to sustain their digital literacy support programs.
  - Promote and support organizations providing digital literacy services and technical assistance to sustain and potentially expand their programs.
- 

### **Key Populations Engaged**

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Veterans
- Low-income households

### **Needs Identified**

- Affordable and consistent internet service at broadband level speeds
- Sufficient computer devices
- Greenfield Public Library does not have enough devices to meet demand
- Difficulty using the internet for tasks related to telehealth services, transportation and accessing social services benefits
- Cybersecurity concerns

### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

City of Greenfield	Greenfield Council on Aging/Senior Center
Greenfield Public Library	Greenfield Community Energy and Technology (GCET)
Upper Pioneer Valley Veterans' Service District	LifePath
Franklin County Community Meals Program	Greenfield Community College
Big Brothers, Big Sisters	Greenfield Public Schools
Greenfield Human Rights Commission	Crossroads Cultural District Committee
Center for New Americans	

**Plan prepared by:** Kimley-Horn

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## **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Establish a fiber task force dedicated to bringing additional internet connectivity to businesses and residents by applying for funding.
  - Designate a digital champion to lead the fiber task force and coordinate with external groups.
  - Provide broadband service to underserved areas.
  - Complete the town's municipal fiber build-out.
  - Continue working to bring new internet service providers (ISP) into the town by pursuing discussions to gauge providers' interest in working with the town.
  - Improve Wi-Fi speeds at the library, fire department and Hadley Council on Aging.
  - Provide additional support staff and digital devices for public use at the library and senior center.
  - Assign digital navigators at the library, senior center, hospital and public safety facility.
  - Host in-person workshops covering online safety and device troubleshooting.
  - Update the town's bylaws to require developers to install conduits for future use.
- 

## **Key Populations Engaged**

- Rural residents
- Aging individuals (60 and older)

## **Needs Identified**

- Digital literacy training and resources tailored to specific demographics
- Online resources, such as telehealth and translation services
- Outreach and education materials in multiple languages
- Affordability and substitutions for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)
- Device accessibility
- Improved broadband and cellular quality and availability
- More ISP options and better customer service from existing ISPs

### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Hadley Public Schools	Hadley Public Library
Hadley Council on Aging	Cooley Dickinson Hospital Board of Trustees
Hadley Select Board	Hadley Fire Department
Mass General Brigham	

**Plan prepared by:** Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC)

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### **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Create a permanent digital access planning group for the Town of Hampden.
  - Modernize the new Hampden Town Offices with fiber-optic cabling and public Wi-Fi capabilities.
  - Increase Wi-Fi accessibility by renewing the hot spot lending program and deploying public Wi-Fi infrastructure in strategic locations.
  - Coordinate town-wide programs through the Hampden Council on Aging and Hampden Public Library to provide digital skills training and technical support for town residents.
  - Engage PVPC to provide guidance during the implementation phase.
- 

### **Key Populations Engaged**

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Rural residents

### **Needs Identified**

- Lack of computer devices.
- Lack of affordable internet service and devices
- Affordable broadband internet
- Lack of broadband for older residents

### **Organizations Engaged in Planning Process**

Hampden Council on Aging	Hampden Public Library
Hampden Town Offices	



**Plan prepared by: VHB**

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### **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Ensure equitable connectivity and broadband access among Haverhill residents by collaborating with local, regional and statewide partners.
  - Promote opportunities for digital devices to be available at home and in publicly accessible locations.
  - Expand community educational opportunities to increase digital literacy and residents' confidence using technology.
  - Maintain strong momentum with public outreach and engagement to make it easy for residents to keep up to date with the latest digital equity resources.
  - Strengthen internal capacity among local institutions working to eliminate the digital divide in Haverhill.
  - Prioritize workforce development as a key component of digital equity work and engage appropriate partners.
  - Promote public infrastructure improvements for digital equity in Haverhill.
- 

### **Key Populations Engaged**

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Individuals with a language barrier (limited English or literacy)
- Youth
- Members of racial or ethnic minority groups

### **Needs Identified**

- Rising internet costs are a barrier to access
- Better access to digital resources and devices
- Gaps in digital literacy and cybersecurity awareness
- Effective community engagement requires culturally relevant and accessible outreach
- Addressing skill gaps in manufacturing and technology
- Partnerships with local businesses to support blended learning models with classroom and on-site training
- Reliable broadband in business parks
- Sustainable funding and dedicated staff for long-term effectiveness of programming

## Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Haverhill Community Development	Open Hand Pantry
City of Haverhill & Haverhill Public Schools Information Technology (IT) Department	Haverhill City Council
Haverhill Mayor's Office	MakeIT Haverhill
Haverhill Human Services	Haverhill Public Library
Latino Education Institute Worcester State University	Worcester Elder Affairs & Senior Center
Haverhill Community Development Department	Haverhill's Public-Private Partnership (HP3)
Emmaus House Inc.	Community Action, Inc.
Northern Essex Community College	Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC)
Essex County Community Foundation (ECCF)	Haverhill Promise
Latino Business Outreach	Haverhill Council on Aging
Haverhill Housing Authority	UMass Lowell
Merrimack Valley Transit (MEVA)	Center for Assistance to Families (CAF)
Comcast	

**Plan prepared by:** Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC)

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### **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Create a permanent Digital Equity Working Group (DEWG) for the city.
  - Assign a city staff person to oversee ongoing digital accessibility work and pursue relevant funding opportunities.
  - Expand hot spot lending programs at Holyoke libraries.
  - Support expansion of fiber to the premises (FTTP) by Holyoke Gas & Electric (HG&E), providing consumers with high quality, reliable broadband service while encouraging competitive pricing.
  - Identify strategic locations for public Wi-Fi deployment.
  - Broker relationships between landlords of multi-dwelling units (MDUs) and internet service providers (ISPs) to improve internet quality, reliability and affordability.
  - Establish a fund to support the distribution of computer devices.
  - Enable residents to enroll in discounted internet packages by helping people in arrears on payments to providers.
  - Coordinate with existing programs to provide digital skills training and tech support.
- 

### **Key Populations Engaged**

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Individuals with a language barrier (limited English or literacy)
- Members of racial or ethnic minority groups

### **Needs Identified**

- Lack of affordability
- Lack of devices
- Lack of affordable internet subscriptions
- Device access
- Internet safety remains a concern
- Lack of broadband for older adults
- Affordability, lack of digital skills, and mistrust of the internet
- Lack of internet service provider competition in Holyoke
- Limited knowledge of skills or internet access resources

### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Holyoke Public Schools	Holyoke Council on Aging / Senior Center
Way Finders	City of Holyoke
Holyoke Public Library	Holyoke Community College
Tech Foundry/Tech Hub	Holyoke Gas & Electric (HG&E)
Alliance for Digital Equity	

**Plan prepared by:** Kimley-Horn

### Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions

- Enhance the town's website to promote local digital services and resources.
- Create a group of digital navigators at the library, senior center, hospital, housing authority sites and public safety facilities.
- Continue working to expand wired internet options across the town.
- Provide additional support staff and digital devices for public use at the library and senior center.
- Create a digital library of on-demand digital skills training and provide workshops for resident education.
- Implement Dig Once policies and update the town's bylaws and land development regulations to require developers to install conduits for future use.
- Modify local laws and regulations to allow open-access networks.

### Key Populations Engaged

- Rural residents
- Aging individuals (60 and older)

### Needs Identified

- Reliable, high-speed internet and cellular service
- Affordable broadband options
- Digital literacy and internet safety education
- Online resources
- Internet service provider (ISP) competition

### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Town of Hubbardston Council on Aging	Town of Hubbardston Cable Commission
Town of Hubbardston Planning Board	Hubbardston Public Library
Town of Hubbardston Select Board	Town of Hubbardston Town Administration



**Plan prepared by:** CTC Technology & Energy (CTC)

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### **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Consider setting up a modest city grant fund to fill small gaps and reduce reliance on uncertain or finite state or federal funding streams.
  - Provide additional financial support to Lawrence Public Library and Mass Association for Computer and Internet Resources (MACIR) for its ELEVATE Program.
  - Consider funding a new digital skills instructor position and the purchase of Chromebooks, laptops and a Smartboard for Lawrence Community Works
  - Explore funding computers and software installation at Lazarus House.
  - Explore funding the purchase of laptops and upgrading connectivity at the Lawrence Council on Aging and Senior Center's computer lab to host digital literacy classes.
  - Establish digital kiosks at City Hall and the Lawrence Police Department so residents can submit applications, forms and payments online.
  - Install Wi-Fi and computers in Lawrence Housing Authority community rooms.
  - Explore cybersecurity programming and partnership opportunities.
- 

### **Key Populations Engaged**

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Individuals with a language barrier (limited English or literacy)
- Members of racial or ethnic minority groups

### **Needs Identified**

- Home internet subscription lag rates
- Significant device gaps
- Disproportionate reliance on smartphones as a primary device to access the internet
- More affordable broadband options
- Increase access to fixed wireless services
- Unreliable broadband speeds

### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Lawrence Housing Authority	Lawrence Council on Aging and Senior Center
Lawrence Community Works	Lawrence Public Schools
Lawrence Information Technology (IT) Department	Lazarus House
Lawrence Police Department	Lawrence Public Library
Latino Education Institute Worcester State University	Worcester Elder Affairs & Senior Center
Mass Association for Computer and Internet Resources (MACIR)	

**Plan prepared by:** Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC)

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## **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Promote and support continuation of existing digital literacy training programs that include device distribution, education, funding and coordination.
- Continue to evaluate and update the Leominster Digital Equity Plan and pursue opportunities that enhance digital inclusion initiatives, such as existing and new partnerships and funding sources.
- Encourage peer-mentorship and “train-the-trainer” models where individuals are empowered to become certified digital navigators.
- Identify and train a digital navigator at each community anchor institution.
- Join and/or establish a regional digital equity coalition and play a leadership role in implementing broadband and digital literacy initiatives.
- Create additional public Wi-Fi mesh networks and install outdoor public workstations and charging stations.
- Coordinate with the housing authority to provide free internet and workstations in communal spaces and explore providing affordable internet options to all units.
- Expand capabilities on the city webpage for improved accessibility, ease of use and enhanced function.
- Create a digital equity and inclusion webpage on the city website to host the Leominster Digital Equity Plan and related interactive resources.
- Create print and digital versions of a local digital resources map.
- Partner with social service agencies to create device distribution and digital literacy programs.
- Improve Wi-Fi service and provide additional workspaces, laptops and hot spots at the library.
- Provide private computer workspaces at the veteran's center and senior center.
- Coordinate with MassHire and Making Opportunity Count (MOC) to understand existing digital literacy funding sources to plan for the next five years and beyond.
- Establish mobile, site-site and in-home digital literacy training services and/or transportation programs that provide rides for digital inclusion.

## Key Populations Engaged

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Veterans
- Individuals with disabilities
- Individuals with a language barrier (limited English or literacy)
- Members of racial or ethnic minority groups

## Needs Identified

- Access to affordable broadband service
- Affordable device access and digital skills training
- Outdoor Wi-Fi and public workspaces in and around public buildings
- Americans-with-Disabilities-Act (ADA) compliant public computer workstations and government webpages
- Market competition to increase internet service provider (ISP) options
- Cybersecurity and internet safety resources
- Increased access to digital literacy resources
- Opportunities to learn basic computer and internet navigation skills
- Updated networking equipment, computers and workstations in public spaces

## Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

City of Leominster	Leominster Public Library
Leominster Council on Aging	MassHire North Central Career Center
Leominster Television	North Central MA Chamber of Commerce
Leominster Veterans Services	MassAbility
New Vue Communities	Spanish American Center

**Plan prepared by:** Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG)

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### **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Connect households that are not currently able to access fiber networks.
  - Explore implementing a cellular tower and public Wi-Fi locations.
  - Distribute digital devices, i.e. laptops or tablets; gaming systems at the library.
  - Review the possibility of offering an internet subsidy program in place of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP).
  - Explore and promote options for affordable, quality data plans for mobile phones and more robust, reliable cell service.
  - Support and promote current digital literacy programs and develop new programs.
  - Support cyber security and safety policies, enforcement and training for all students and families in school districts.
  - Secure private spaces for assisted internet access and provide one-on-one digital literacy consulting.
  - Provide in-home technology assistance for residents who may be unable to travel to more central locations.
  - Ensure equitable access to town services and communications and evaluate town websites for accessibility.
  - Track inventory of municipal devices to determine equipment needs.
  - Provide up-to-date equipment and staff capacity in town halls and libraries to host hybrid or remote meetings and programming.
  - Support and enhance current digital equity partnerships, such as the Alliance for Digital Equity, as well as other local and regional organizations.
  - Work with other Franklin County towns to promote digital equity regionally.
  - Promote and support local and regional organizations providing digital equity services.
- 

### **Key Populations Engaged**

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Rural residents

### **Needs Identified**

- Increased affordability
- Greater municipal services and coordination between organizations
- Digital literacy for aging individuals
- Ongoing funding and staff capacity to sustain services and programs
- Improved cellular service
- Local/regional asset map so people know where to go for services



# TOWNS OF LEVERETT AND SHUTESBURY

Population: 3,622



## Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Leverett Municipal Light Plant	Shutesbury Municipal Light Plant
Alliance for Digital Equity	Leverett Public Library
Shutesbury Public Library	Leverett Council on Aging
Shutesbury Council on Aging	Leverett Public School District
Shutesbury Public School District	

**Plan prepared by:** Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)

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## Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions

- Form and staff a regional digital equity task force.
- Pursue grants or fellowships to support digital equity efforts.
- Offer grants to support community-based organizations providing digital equity services.
- Undertake coordinated program evaluation, including surveys to measure progress.
- Commission a feasibility study to explore municipal internet or a public open-access network.
- Inventory and map existing broadband infrastructure, including municipal or public fiber, private fiber and cell signal coverage.
- Explore how existing public infrastructure can be leveraged or expanded, while coordinating with private internet service providers (ISPs) to advocate for expanded service coverage.
- Inventory and audit digital assets and needs in public facilities.
- Ensure older adults have access to basic digital skills and online safety training.
- Create a regional digital equity library through inventorying, sharing and translating existing educational materials for language access and cultural relevance.
- Create a regional program to coordinate device donation, refurbishment and distribution in partnership with nonprofit and corporate entities.
- Create a regional digital equity resources directory and shared events calendar.
- Create a digital outreach and online engagement guide to assist communities in using social media and digital tools equitably and effectively.

## Key Populations Engaged

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Incarcerated individuals
- Veterans
- Individuals with disabilities
- Individuals with a language barrier (limited English or literacy)
- Members of racial or ethnic minority groups
- Rural residents
- Members of religious minority groups
- Youth
- Immigrants or refugees
- LGBTQIA+ individuals

## Needs Identified

- Broadband access for vulnerable populations
- Device access paired with digital skills training
- Increased internet service provider (ISP) competition
- Access to additional devices for households sharing one device or relying on cell phones
- Digital skills training for a variety of needs
- Online privacy and internet safety resources
- Support for municipal services and staff
- Access to programming in rural areas
- Diversity in programming and support staff
- Technical assistance from ISPs
- Reliable and affordable internet service
- Culturally competent support and language access in programs
- Accessibility and adaptive devices for individuals with disabilities

## Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Lowell Department of Planning and Development	Lowell Management Information Systems (MIS)
UMass Lowell	Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG)
Chelmsford Senior Center / Council on Aging	Parker Memorial Library (Dracut)
Town of Billerica	Chelmsford Information Technology (IT) Department
Chelmsford Health Department	Town of Dunstable
Town of Pepperell	Tewksbury Planning & Zoning
Town of Tyngsborough	Westford IT Department
THRIVE Communities	Tyngsborough Commission on Disability
Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association	Latinx Community Center for Empowerment
International Institute of New England	Westford Council on Aging/Cameron Senior Center
Chelmsford Woods Residences	Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) of Lowell
Boys and Girls Club of Greater Lowell	Lowell Association for the Blind
Pepperell Economic Development Committee	Chelmsford Public Library
Tyngsborough Public Library	Billerica Public Library
Tewksbury Public Library	Tyngsborough Recreation and Parks
Chelmsford Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee	Community Teamwork Inc.
Lowell Community Health Center	Dracut Access Television, Inc.
Tyngsborough Media Department	Billerica Access Television
Girls Inc. of Greater Lowell	Lowell Housing Authority
Chelmsford Housing Authority	MassDevelopment
Westford Department of Veterans Services	Frederick Assad Abisi Adult Education Center
MassHire Greater Lowell Workforce Board	MassHire Career Center Lowell
Pollard Memorial Library (Lowell)	AgeSpan

**Plan prepared by:** CTC Technology & Energy

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### **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Form a local digital equity coalition.
  - Consider creating a modest grant fund to support existing programs or provide seed funding for new ones.
  - Fund digital navigator positions at the library and public schools.
  - Pursue the Metropolitan Area Planning Council's (MAPC) Apartment Wi-Fi program for the housing authority.
  - Expand digital equity programming at Lynn Community TV.
  - Facilitate partnerships between Tech Goes Home and interested local organizations.
  - Fund My Brother's Table to address inequities in access to telehealth and digital health monitoring services.
  - Support education at North Shore Community College for information technology (IT) workforce development.
  - Support the New American Association of Massachusetts with funding to purchase new and refurbished devices for refugees and migrants.
  - Explore cybersecurity programming and partnership opportunities.
- 

### **Key Populations Engaged**

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Individuals with disabilities
- Individuals with a language barrier (limited English or literacy)
- Members of racial or ethnic minority groups
- Youth
- Immigrants or refugees
- LGBTQIA+ individuals

### **Needs Identified**

- Affordable internet subscription options
- Increased digital devices
- Develop a stronger network among those working on digital equity and sharing of resources and information
- Need for digital skills training and instruction
- Need for cybersecurity training



### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

North Shore Community College	North Shore Career Center
Entrepreneurship for All (EforAll)	MassDevelopment
North Shore Latino Business Association	Creative Collective
Pathways	Lynn Community TV
Latino Support Network	Essex County Community Foundation
Lynn Public Schools	North of Boston Library Exchange
Centerboard	LEO, Inc.
New American Association of Massachusetts	Lynn Housing Authority and Development
Lynn Council on Aging	Lynn Community Health Center
My Brother's Table	

**Plan prepared by: VHB**

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## **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Improve access to and affordability of high-speed internet for all residents.
  - Enhance access to public digital devices and support device distribution to households that need them.
  - Support and build upon existing digital literacy initiatives.
  - Ensure inclusivity of historically vulnerable populations, including immigrants and first-generation Americans.
  - Build internal and external awareness of resources and accessibility to institutions.
- 

## **Key Populations Engaged**

- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Individuals with a language barrier (limited English or literacy)
- Low-income households
- Members of racial or ethnic minority groups

## **Needs Identified**

- Support to identify internet subsidies, cheaper subscription options, device subsidies and device lending programs
- Enhanced support services to learn how to use digital tools for older adults
- Greater physical access to training programs or virtual options for older adults
- Training to close the knowledge gap between parents and students regarding internet use and safety
- Greater access to training programs for individuals with disabilities
- Additional translation services for digital skills training and online resources
- Consistently reliable internet speeds, awareness of public devices and cybersecurity training

### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Methuen Information Technology (IT) Department	Nevins Memorial Library
Methuen Public School District	Methuen Community Studios
Methuen Housing Authority	Methuen Council on Aging
Local banks and credit unions	

**Plan prepared by:** Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission

## Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions

- Increase partnerships between town departments and local educational institutions to provide additional opportunities for digital literacy support.
- Partner with organizations or vendors to increase digital literacy for Millbury's older adults.
- Explore opportunities to evaluate the quality of broadband connections at local senior housing and work to provide solutions.
- Investigate device recycling and reuse to support access to affordable devices.
- Explore a regional hub/partnership with neighboring towns and cities to share resources.
- Assess gaps that exist for English as a second language (ESL) students and parents in Millbury Public Schools and explore methods to address limitations.
- Explore creating a digital navigator position or program to connect Millbury's community with resources focused on bridging the digital divide.

## Key Populations Engaged

- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Veterans

## Needs Identified

- Increased internet service provider (ISP) choices and transparency
- Additional organizational capacity and physical space
- Additional in-person or virtual educational resources for aging adults
- Improved internet service reliability

## Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Millbury Planning Department	Millbury Council on Aging/Senior Center
Millbury Public Library	

**Plan prepared by:** Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG)

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### **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Develop and maintain a framework to continue promoting and supporting digital equity for all Montague residents.
  - Support and enhance current digital equity partnerships with the Alliance for Digital Equity, Senior Tech and the FRCOG.
  - Promote and support local and regional organizations providing digital equity services.
  - Work with other Franklin County towns to promote and implement digital equity regionally.
  - Promote the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) Program.
  - Expand the library mobile hot spot program.
  - Enhance public Wi-Fi in high-traffic areas, working with businesses, government entities, and internet service providers (ISPs) to determine the best approach.
  - Negotiate lower internet subscription rates with local ISPs or investigate the possibility of direct subsidies.
  - Create and disseminate outreach materials for internet subsidy programs and low-cost internet plans.
  - Investigate public housing eligibility for the Apartment Wi-Fi Program with guidance from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and/or Massachusetts Broadband Institute.
  - Explore and promote options for affordable, quality data plans for mobile phones and more robust and reliable cell service.
  - Support and promote current digital literacy programs and organize new programs with resident input via a survey to understand needs and interests.
  - Extend existing and create new digital device distribution programs.
  - Include cyber security/safety training for all students and families in the Gill-Montague School District.
- 

### **Key Populations Engaged**

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Rural residents

### **Needs Identified**

- Affordable internet service plans
- More consistently reliable broadband and cellular service
- Digital literacy and cybersecurity education
- Accessible devices for public school students
- Ongoing funding and staff capacity to sustain programs
- Coordination between local organizations



### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Town of Montague	Alliance for Digital Equity
Montague Comprehensive Plan Steering Advisory Group	LifePath
Montague Public Library	Gill-Montague School District
Gill-Montague Council on Aging / Senior Center	

**Plan prepared by:** Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC)

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### **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Continue the tenure of the Monterey Library's current digital navigator to provide in-person, long-term tech support to residents.
- Create a standing committee to effectively carry out and assess the impact of implementation activities and continue addressing digital needs long-term.
- Provide free public Wi-Fi at popular locations in town long-term.
- Increase the number of hot spots and large-screen devices available to borrow from the Monterey Library.
- Work with local community organizations to create a sustainable, intergenerational digital skills training program pairing local teens with seniors.
- Offer classes tailored toward industry-specific digital skills.
- Boost the accessibility of community spaces and activities with the help of digital devices and software.
- Make town and community organization websites and newsletters Americans with Disability Act (ADA) compliant.
- Spread awareness of lower-cost internet plans and partner with organizations that supply refurbished devices and offer free digital skills classes.
- Consider partially subsidizing the cost of internet for income-qualifying residents.
- Inform local veterans about how to access benefits, discounts, Veterans' Affairs (VA) Telehealth Services and opportunities for securing digital devices.
- Share information about multilingual digital resources and skills classes.
- Create a community calendar to help residents keep track of local events.
- Consider purchasing a digital gaming system for the Monterey Community Center to encourage youth to visit and teach older adults how to use technology in a fun way.

### Key Populations Engaged

- Low-income households
- Veterans
- Incarcerated individuals
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Individuals with disabilities
- Rural residents
- Immigrants or refugees
- Youth
- LGBTQIA+ individuals
- Individuals with a language barrier (limited English or literacy)
- Members of racial or ethnic minority groups

### Needs Identified

- Staff capacity, including specifically IT staff
- Increased internet access to improve emergency preparedness
- Reliable internet connection
- Digital devices
- Instruction on digital skills for older adults
- Industry-specific digital skills training
- Assistive technology
- Accessible website designs
- Education about lower cost internet and device options
- Awareness of multilingual digital resources
- Youth-focused digital equipment

### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Monterey Town Administration	Monterey Library
Monterey Food Pantry	Undermountain Elementary School
Monterey Council on Aging	Monterey Community Center

**Plan prepared by:** CTC Technology & Energy

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### **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Form a citywide digital equity coalition to harmonize efforts and support outreach to funders.
  - Set up a modest city grant fund to fill small gaps and reduce reliance on uncertain or finite state or federal funding streams.
  - Expand staffing and hot spot budget for New Bedford Public School's family engagement centers to enable computer instruction for more students and their families.
  - Seek funding for a computer lab to host digital literacy classes at the council on aging.
  - Expand partnerships with device-provision and digital literacy training entities to ensure all New Bedford residents have access to classes and devices.
  - Explore funding two digital navigators at libraries and the Department of Community Services to assist in signing up residents for low-cost internet programs.
  - Explore options from Massachusetts Broadband Institute to improve connectivity at public and affordable housing properties.
  - Explore cybersecurity programming and partnership opportunities.
  - Scale Bristol Community College's cybersecurity programming efforts by informing local stakeholders of the various "KnowBe4" curricula.
  - Consider funding community classes in technology and engineering at Global Learning Charter Public School's Thinkabit Lab.
- 

### **Key Populations Engaged**

- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Veterans
- Low-income households
- Members of racial or ethnic minority groups
- Youth
- Immigrants or refugees
- Individuals with disabilities
- Individuals with a language barrier (limited English or literacy)
- LGBTQIA+ individuals

### **Needs Identified**

- Reliable broadband speeds
- Affordability for lower-income residents
- Increased device ownership
- Confidence in performing common online tasks for those in lower income households
- A variety of digital skills support programs
- Online privacy and security resources
- Expanded availability of digital skills training, especially for low-income households and older residents
- Digital education instruction from the Free Public Library, Immigrants' Assistance Center, United Way Greater New Bedford and council on aging

## Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

New Bedford Public Schools	Global Learning Charter Public School
Alma del Mar	Nativity Preparatory School New Bedford
Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School (GNBVT)	MassHire Greater New Bedford Career Center
UMass Dartmouth	Bristol Community College
New Bedford Council on Aging	New Bedford Veteran's Services
New Bedford Free Public Library	New Bedford Health Department
New Bedford Housing Authority	New Bedford Community Services Department
Office of Housing and Community Development	United Way of Greater New Bedford
Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Fall River	Immigrants Assistance Center
Community Economic Development Center (CEDC)	New Bedford Economic Development Council
DeMello International Center	HUB 128



**Plan prepared by:** Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC)

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### **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Extend coverage of the New Marlborough public Wi-Fi network (NM-Net).
  - Purchase and maintain iPads and Chromebooks for the New Marlborough Town Library.
  - Collaborate with local and regional nonprofits to help residents secure permanent devices through participation in digital skills classes and workshops.
  - Consider purchasing and distributing uninterruptible power supply (UPS) battery backups to income-qualifying residents so they can receive internet service in case of an emergency.
  - Work with local community organizations to create a sustainable, intergenerational digital skills training program that pairs local teens with seniors.
  - Offer classes for younger working adults looking to expand their job prospects through acquiring relevant digital skills.
  - Boost the accessibility of community spaces and activities with the help of digital devices and software.
  - Make town and community organization websites Americans-with-Disabilities-Act (ADA) compliant.
  - Spread awareness of lower-cost internet plans and partner with organizations that supply refurbished devices and offer free digital skills classes.
  - Consider partially subsidizing the cost of internet for income-qualifying residents.
  - Inform local veterans about how to access benefits, discounts, Veterans' Affairs (VA) Telehealth Services and opportunities for securing digital devices.
  - Share information about multilingual digital resources and skills classes.
- 

### **Key Populations Engaged**

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Veterans
- Individuals with a language barrier (limited English or literacy)
- Individuals with disabilities
- Rural residents
- Youth
- Members of racial or ethnic minority groups

### **Needs Identified**

- Wi-Fi coverage
- Access to internet connections
- Access to digital devices
- Battery backups for older adults
- Assistive technologies in community spaces and activities
- Older residents and working adults need access to digital skills instruction
- Increased awareness about lower cost internet and device access opportunities
- Awareness of multilingual digital resources

# TOWN OF NEW MARLBOROUGH

Population: 1,528



## Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

New Marlborough Select Board	New Marlborough Broadband Committee
New Marlborough Town Manager	New Marlborough Council on Aging
New Marlborough Fire Department	New Marlborough Town Library
New Marlborough Meeting House	

Plan prepared by: VHB

## Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions

- Guarantee cost-effective and dependable high-speed internet access for every member of the community.
- Enhance the effectiveness, efficiency and quality of local digital equity initiatives through a focus on regional collaboration and the exchange of knowledge and resources.
- Broaden digital inclusion through community outreach efforts and strategic, long-term planning.
- Bridge the digital skills gap by encouraging digital literacy through community education programs, empowering individuals with the skills to effectively utilize digital technology.
- Enable accessibility to digital devices, both within households and in public spaces.
- Develop sustainable funding models through grants, partnerships, and advocacy for public funding.

## Key Populations Engaged

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Members of racial or ethnic minority groups
- Youth
- Individuals with disabilities
- Rural residents

## Needs Identified

- Students need internet access at home
- Digital skills training for teachers and families
- Alternative funding sources for schools to replace aging devices
- Cyber security awareness and software for schools
- Additional devices and space digital literacy training at the library
- Improved cellular service for hot spot lending programs and outdoor events
- Device training, devices and internet safety training for older adults
- Affordable internet and devices for older adults
- Additional internet providers for public housing residents and businesses
- Additional staff, time and funding for resident service coordinators
- Technical assistance and awareness of workshops for small business owners
- Affordable access to digital skills training and technology
- Access to virtual workforce services and employment opportunities

## Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Town of Lanesborough	Town of Cheshire
Town of Adams	Town of Florida
City of North Adams	North Adams Public School District
Berkshire Arts & Tech Charter Public School (BART)	Lanesborough Elementary School
Charles H. McCann Technical School	Northern Berkshire Vocational School District
Information technology (IT)	North Adams Public Schools
Lanesborough Public Library	Cheshire Public Library
Adams Free Library	Lanesborough Council on Aging
North Adams Council on Aging	Adams Council on Aging
North Adams Housing Authority	Berkshire Housing
1Berkshire	North Adams Chamber of Commerce

**Plan prepared by:** CTC Technology & Energy (CTC)

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### Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions

- Convene local entities annually or biannually to harmonize digital equity efforts and support outreach to funders.
  - Consider purchasing devices for the youth center, Stevens Memorial Library, North Andover School District and the Andover/North Andover YMCA.
  - Explore a partnership between the Andover/North Andover YMCA and Tech Goes Home to ensure digital skills and device needs are met.
  - Consider pursuing the Metropolitan Area Planning Council's (MAPC) Apartment Wi-Fi Program and Massachusetts Broadband Institute's Residential Retrofit Program for public and affordable housing properties.
  - Consider setting up a modest town grant fund to fill small gaps and reduce reliance on uncertain or finite state or federal funding streams.
  - Explore cybersecurity programming/partnership opportunities.
- 

### Key Populations Engaged

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Individuals with disabilities
- Youth

### Needs Identified

- Broadband affordability
- Programs to connect households with discounts or subsidies for broadband subscriptions
- Device access
- Digital skills training and education, including programs focused on internet safety

### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Stevens Memorial Library	North Andover Housing Authority
North Andover Elder Services	North Andover Community Access TV
North Andover Public Schools	Youth and recreation services
Andover/North Andover YMCA	



**Plan prepared by:** Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG)

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### **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Promote and support the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) Program Challenge Process.
- Connect households not currently able to access a fiber network.
- Explore public Wi-Fi locations and implementation.
- Distribute digital devices and expand library mobile hot spot programs.
- Negotiate lower internet subscription rates with local internet service providers (ISPs) or investigate the possibility of direct subsidies.
- Support a state or federal qualification program a town or ISP could use to implement need-based pricing.
- Disseminate outreach materials for internet subsidies and low-cost internet plans.
- Explore and promote options for affordable, quality data plans for mobile phones and more robust, reliable cell service.
- Support and promote current digital literacy programs and develop new programs based on community input about needs and interests.
- Support cyber security policies, enforcement and training for all students and families in school districts.
- Evaluate town websites and communication materials to ensure they are universally accessible on all internet devices.
- Secure private spaces for assisted internet access and one-on-one digital literacy consulting.
- Support and enhance current digital equity partnerships.
- Work with other Franklin County towns to promote digital equity regionally.
- Promote and support local and regional organizations providing digital equity services.

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### **Key Populations Engaged**

- Rural residents
- Aging individuals (60 and older)

### **Needs Identified**

- Affordable connectivity
- Digital literacy and internet safety education
- Broadband connection for towns without fiber infrastructure
- Accessible devices for students

# TOWNS OF NORTHFIELD, CHARLEMONT, COLRAIN, LEYDEN, NEW SALEM, ORANGE, WARWICK AND WENDELL

Total Population: 16,634



## Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Charlemont Broadband Committee	Leyden Municipal Light Plant
Colrain Town administration	New Salem Municipal Light Plant
Northfield grant development	Rural Programs Manager of the Executive Office of Economic Development
Orange Economic Development Office	Northfield Town Administration
Warwick Town Coordinator	Wendell Selectboard
Town councils on aging/senior centers	Wendell Municipal Light Plans
Tyler Memorial Library	Griswold Memorial Library
Greater Worcester Community Foundation	Robertson Memorial Library
New Salem Public Library	Dickinson Memorial Library
Orange Public Libraries	Wendell Free Library
Public regional school districts	Warwick Free Public Library
Greenfield Community College	Town planning departments

**Plan prepared by:** Cape Cod Commission

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### **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Organize and advocate for improved services and encourage internet service provider competition.
  - Promote public Wi-Fi availability and incorporate connectivity into municipal planning and construction efforts.
  - Coordinate and promote device and hot spot lending programs while also pursuing solutions that address waste.
  - Promote and expand one-on-one support systems and provide offerings that address concerns around internet safety, privacy and security.
  - Develop a digital equity network to strengthen public services and explore digital navigation models.
  - Develop methods and structures to measure progress.
  - Support regional collaboration.
- 

### **Key Populations Engaged**

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Individuals with disabilities
- Rural residents

### **Needs Identified**

- Inadequate service
- Lack of internet service provider (ISP) competition
- Overcomplicated internet packages
- Financial assistance
- Affordable device access
- Lack of programs supporting target populations
- Lack of awareness for existing programs and resources
- Concerns regarding safety, security and trust
- Digital inequities within public and community-based communications and services

## Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Orleans Planning Department	Orleans IT Department
Orleans Town Administration	Orleans Communications Department
Orleans Senior Center and Council on Aging	Snow Library
Orleans Middle School	Orleans Elementary School
Rock Harbor Village	Nauset Public Schools
Orleans Housing Authority	Lower Cape TV
Homeless Prevention Council	Lower Cape Outreach Council
Community Development Partnership	Cape Cod Technology Council

**Plan prepared by:** CTC Technology & Energy (CTC)

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### **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Form a digital equity coalition to inform a holistic programmatic strategy.
  - Consider creating a city grant program to support local organizations.
  - Host adult education programming at Peabody Public Schools.
  - Provide Peabody TV an annual grant to support digital skills programming.
  - Expand the partnership with Tech Goes Home (TGH) at Citizens Inn and connect TGH with other interested entities such as the Peabody Council on Aging and Peabody Institute Library.
  - Fund digital navigators at North Shore Community Health and the Peabody Institute Library to assist residents with telehealth, digital skills and enrollment in low-cost internet or other benefits programs.
  - Pursue grants to expand Wi-Fi access in Peabody Housing Authority facilities.
  - Explore cybersecurity programming/partnership opportunities.
- 

### **Key Populations Engaged**

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Individuals with a language barrier (limited English or literacy)
- Immigrants or refugees
- Individuals with disabilities
- Youth
- LGBTQIA+ individuals
- Members of racial or ethnic minority groups

### **Needs Identified**

- Affordable internet subscriptions
- Device access
- A stronger network for digital equity resource and information sharing
- Digital navigators
- Digital skills training/instruction
- Digital supports for migrants and new immigrants
- Cybersecurity training



### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Citizens Inn	North of Boston Library Exchange (NOBLE)
North Shore Children's Museum (NSCM)	North Shore Community Action Programs (NSCAP)
North Shore Community Health (NSCH)	Peabody Council on Aging (COA)
Worcester Community Action Council	WYCA
Peabody TV	Peabody Public Schools
Peabody P.R.E.P.	Peabody Housing Authority (PHA)
Peabody Institute Library	

**Plan prepared by:** Montachusett Regional Planning Commission

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## Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions

- Provide digital literacy training opportunities with various formats, levels and topics, paired with device distribution.
- Expand outdoor Wi-Fi networks and provide detailed instructions for use of outdoor charging stations and connecting to public Wi-Fi or mesh networks.
- Provide access to devices and workspaces in public spaces, such as kiosks for online town services, computer workstations with printers and charging stations.
- Continue to work toward affordable, fast, reliable internet for residents through coordination with Massachusetts Broadband Institute and internet service providers (ISPs).
- Consider developing an affordable internet program for eligible populations.
- Continue to seek funding support for free, fast, reliable public internet at the town hall, library and other public spaces.
- Develop partnerships or provide town-funded sponsorship to leverage the Comcast Internet Essentials Partnership Program (IEPP).
- Commit to participation in a regional digital equity coalition.
- Promote digital literacy resources through town-wide public outreach.
- Install video-conferencing equipment to stream and record public meetings.
- Observe measurable objectives from Year-1 activities to plan for and seek long-term funding to maintain ongoing implementation of the digital equity plan.
- Encourage and enable municipal staff to become digital equity leaders and train a staff or volunteers as digital navigators.

# TOWNS OF PHILLIPSTON AND ROYALSTON

Total Population: 3,373



## Key Populations Engaged

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Veterans
- Individuals with a language barrier (limited English or literacy)
- Individuals with disabilities
- Members of racial or ethnic minority groups
- Youth

## Needs Identified

- Better access to digital literacy and technology resources, programs and services
- Internet safety and security training
- Affordable internet services and up-to-date devices
- More public internet and workspaces with expanded hours and accessibility
- Help navigating government websites and managing online accounts
- Better cellular coverage and improved Wi-Fi services in public spaces

## Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Phillipston Select Board	Phillipston Planning Board
Phillipston Cable Access Television	Royalston Select Board
Royalston Emergency Management	Royalston Council on Aging/Senior Center
Royalston School Information Technology (IT) Department	Phillipston School IT Department
Phinehas S. Newton Library	Phillipston Free Public Library
LUK, Inc.	Montachusett Veterans Outreach Center, Inc. (MVOC)
Clear Path for Veterans New England	Town of Templeton

**Plan prepared by:** Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission

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## **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Form a multi-sector coalition to lead digital equity efforts.
  - Expand affordable options for digital services such as public Wi-Fi and digital navigator networks.
  - Provide digital literacy and cybersecurity training for all ages.
  - Meet people where they are by partnering with local organizations and improving accessibility of services and resources.
- 

## **Key Populations Engaged**

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Veterans
- Members of racial or ethnic minority groups
- LGBTQIA+ individuals
- Individuals with a language barrier (limited English or literacy)
- Immigrants or refugees
- Individuals with disabilities
- Incarcerated individuals

## **Needs Identified**

- Affordable internet service
- Local digital literacy skills programs
- Cybersecurity training
- One-on-one assistance for older adults
- Device access
- Internet subsidy program enrollment assistance

## Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Pittsfield Department of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion	Berkshire Athenaeum (Pittsfield's Public Library)
Pittsfield Council on Aging	Pittsfield Housing Authority
Pittsfield Community Development Department	AdLib
Berkshire Immigrant Center	Berkshire Family YMCA - Pittsfield Branch
Berkshire Black Economic Council	Blackshires
2nd Street Second Chances	Literacy Volunteers of Berkshire County
Team R3Set	Habitat for Humanity
Elizabeth Freeman Center	18 Degrees
Faith leaders (various)	Berkshire Housing Services
United Cerebral Palsy	Molari Employment
Girls Inc.	Pittsfield Public School District
Soldier On	Roots & Dreams and Mustard Seeds
1Berkshire	Can Code Communities
Massachusetts Attorney General's Office	21st Century Learning Communities
Pittsfield Community TV (PCTV)	Pittsfield Community Justice Center
MassHire Berkshire Workforce Board	Downtown Pittsfield Inc.



**Plan prepared by:** Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)

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## **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Improve and expand information about the City of Quincy's existing municipal digital equity programs online and in print.
- Expand City of Quincy Community Technology Integration & Support (CTIS) administrative capacity to streamline operations and maximize impact.
- Convene a digital equity advisory council to facilitate feedback and coordinate digital inclusion efforts in Quincy.
- Continue digital equity planning work to maintain an up-to-date picture of current needs in Quincy.
- Continue to invest in CTIS' ongoing Technology Instruction Program.
- Provide hot spot, device lending and ownership programs in partnership with Quincy Public Schools, Quincy Public Library and the Quincy Housing Authority.
- Provide multilingual technology instruction and individualized device access for organizations serving unhoused individuals.
- Pursue the Apartment Wi-Fi and Residential Retrofit Programs in partnership with the Quincy Housing Authority.
- Evaluate performance and impacts of the municipal broadband pilot and plan for targeted expansion of the project.
- Develop technology instruction and technology to support a "Train the Trainer" program.
- Provide multilingual resources for non-English technology instruction.
- Offer safe and secure Wi-Fi in public spaces.
- Provide funding and technical support for community computer labs.

### Key Populations Engaged

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Veterans
- Individuals with disabilities
- Individuals with a language barrier (limited English or literacy)
- Members of racial or ethnic minority groups

### Needs Identified

- Reliable and affordable internet access
- Adequate devices to meet household needs
- Digital literacy and internet safety support system

### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

City of Quincy Community Technology Integration & Support (CTIS)	Quincy Housing Authority
Quincy Community Action Program, Inc. (QCAP)	Quincy Asian Resources, Inc. (QARI)
Father Bills & Mainspring (FBMS)	South Shore YMCA
Operation Able	Vinfen
Quincy Public Schools	Quincy Office of the Mayor
Quincy Office of Municipal Finance	MassHire South Shore Career Centers
Quincy Purchasing Department	Quincy Department of Information Technology (IT)
Quincy Department of Natural Resources	Quincy Department of Planning and Community Development (PCD)
Quincy Health Department	Quincy Veterans Services
Thomas Crane Public Library	Quincy Elder Services
Quincy College	Brush Magic Kids
Equitable Tech	Tech Goes Home
Executive Office of Technology Services and Security (EOTSS)	Brown University's Social Innovation Initiative (SII)
CWS-US	MassCyberCenter
Comcast	Town of Danvers
Fortinet	

**Plan prepared by: VHB**

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## **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Identify a core team of digital equity champions, pursue increased funding and become a leader in digital equity.
  - Expand community outreach and strengthen partnerships with local organizations and businesses.
  - Promote access to affordable devices and broadband through publicly available devices and Wi-Fi, device distribution and donation programs and participation in the Apartment Wi-Fi Program.
  - Expand digital literacy programming and resources throughout the community.
  - Provide targeted support for vulnerable segments of the community, including students, adults seeking jobs and seniors.
  - Track the local broadband market to advocate for consumers and promote job opportunities locally.
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## **Key Populations Engaged**

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Individuals with a language barrier (limited English or literacy)
- Immigrants or refugees
- Members of racial or ethnic minority groups
- Youth

## **Needs Identified**

- Expanded digital literacy training focused on business and IT systems management
- Language access in internet service enrollment, education, business development and municipal resources
- Expanded library technologies and digital literacy training offerings
- Expanded digital literacy training for older adults on internet and device access, subsidy programs, telehealth, and cybersecurity
- Improved connectivity among faith-based institutions and RPS facilities
- Awareness of publicly accessible devices, support programs and how to enroll
- Increased Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) enrollment townwide
- Local digital navigator system

### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Turner Free Library	Randolph Public Schools (RPS)
U.S. Haitian Chamber of Commerce, Inc.	Randolph Community Partnership, Inc.
Randolph Community Programs	Randolph Elder Affairs
Randolph Information Technology (IT)	Randolph Police Department
Linguistic Systems, Inc. (LSI)	

**Plan prepared by:** Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District

### Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions

- Establish strong regional coordination to support consistent, long-term implementation of the Tri-Town Digital Equity Plan.
- Increase availability and resident awareness of low-cost internet options.
- Provide readily accessible devices for residents at libraries and other community anchor institutions.
- Support vulnerable and underserved populations to safely navigate the internet while providing resources to expand digital skills and device use.

### Key Populations Engaged

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Veterans
- Individuals with disabilities
- Rural residents

### Needs Identified

- More community connection and updated tech resources
- Opportunities to improve tri-town coordination
- The need for digital literacy and skills training
- One or two internet service provider (ISP) options are available, often resulting in lackluster service and a high price point
- Technology classes or one-to-one help for mitigating fears and building cybersecurity awareness for older adults

### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Rochester Planning Department	Rochester Town Administration
Rochester Public Library	Old Colony Regional Vocational Technical High School
Marion Finance Department	Marion grant administration
Marion Council on Aging	Elizabeth Taber Library
Marion Town Administration	Old Rochester Regional School District
Mattapoisett Planning Department	Mattapoisett Free Public Library
Mattapoisett town administration	Coastline Elderly Services
Mattapoisett Housing Authority	Rochester Council on Aging
SER-Jobs for Progress Inc.	



**Plan prepared by:** Cape Cod Commission

## Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions

- Improve internet access and quality through coordinated advocacy, resident feedback, increased competition and expanded public Wi-Fi.
- Increase access to devices and connectivity tools by coordinating lending, reuse, repair and hot spot programs.
- Build digital skills and support through expanded training, one-to-one assistance, digital navigation and internet safety education.
- Embed digital equity across municipal and community services by aligning communications, service delivery and social service goals.
- Strengthen coordination and sustainability through local and regional collaboration, shared networks and ongoing measurement of progress.

## Key Populations Engaged

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Individuals with disabilities
- Veterans
- Members of racial or ethnic minority groups
- LGBTQIA+ individuals
- Immigrants or refugees
- Youth
- Individuals with a language barrier (limited English or literacy)

## Needs Identified

- Inadequate service
- Lack of competition
- Overcomplicated internet packages
- Financial assistance
- Affordable devices
- Digital waste and internet safety concerns
- Lack of awareness of existing programs
- Digital access challenges in public services and communications
- Implementation challenges
- Funding challenges

## Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Sandwich Town Planning	Upper Cape Regional Technical High School
Sandwich Council on Aging/Center for Active Living	Sandwich Partnership for Families
Sandwich Public Schools	Sandwich for All
Sandwich Commission on Disability	Joint Base Cape Cod
Sandwich Public Library	Cape Cod Healthcare

# TOWNS OF GREAT BARRINGTON, LEE, LENOX, SHEFFIELD, STOCKBRIDGE AND WEST STOCKBRIDGE

Population: 3,327



**Plan prepared by:** Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC)

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## Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions

- Hire a regional digital navigator to travel between key locations in each town and deliver in-person classes and one-on-one help.
  - Advocate through the Massachusetts legislature for alternatives to the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), such as a \$15 monthly plan option from all internet service providers (ISPs).
  - Provide free Wi-Fi in additional public, highly used spaces.
  - Work with regional organizations to provide laptops and higher-quality refurbished devices for people through a dedicated Berkshire County supply chain.
  - Engage with businesses and colleges to redirect devices back into the digital equity ecosystem.
  - Purchase newer devices to replace and expand device supplies at local libraries.
  - Help libraries apply for philanthropic funding.
  - Promote free or low-cost internet service in affordable housing by encouraging owners to apply for Massachusetts Broadband Institute's Residential Retrofit Program.
  - Work with schools to build local partnerships that engage teens in delivering digital skills classes and one-on-one help.
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## Key Populations Engaged

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Individuals with disabilities
- Members of racial or ethnic minority groups
- Rural residents
- Immigrants or refugees
- Individuals with a language barrier (limited English or literacy)

## Needs Identified

- In-person digital literacy classes
- One-on-one assistance
- Alternatives to the ACP
- A dedicated Berkshire County supply chain
- Additional devices for local libraries
- Free or lower-cost internet service at affordable housing sites
- Engaging teens to help deliver classes and one-on-one help

# TOWNS OF GREAT BARRINGTON, LEE, LENOX, SHEFFIELD, STOCKBRIDGE AND WEST STOCKBRIDGE

Population: 3,327



## Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Great Barrington Council on Aging	Lee Chamber of Commerce
Lee Council on Aging	Stockbridge Chamber of Commerce
Lenox Council on Aging	West Stockbridge Chamber of Commerce
Stockbridge Council on Aging	Lee Chamber of Commerce
West Stockbridge Council on Aging	Affordable housing directors
Lee Public Library	School superintendents
Lenox Library	BERK12
Mason Public Library	West Stockbridge Visioning Committee
The Stockbridge Library, Museum and Archives	West Stockbridge Historical Society
West Stockbridge Public Library	Berkshire Community College ESOL Program
Southern Berkshire District Department of Veteran's Services	

**Plan prepared by:** CTC Technology & Energy (CTC)

### Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions

- Convene local entities annually or biannually to harmonize digital equity efforts and support outreach to funders.
- Consider setting up a modest town grant fund to fill small gaps and reduce reliance on uncertain or finite state or federal funding streams.
- Consider funding a town digital navigator to serve Somerset Public Schools, Somerset Public Library, the council on aging, veterans services and the housing authority.
- Seek technical support from Vinfen and AgeSpan for local entities interested in developing device access and digital navigation programs.
- Establish a partnership between Somerset Public Schools and Somerset Public Library so interested students can volunteer to provide technical support.
- Purchase three Wi-Fi access points for Somerset Public Library to strengthen internet connections in dead zones.
- Consider pursuing Metropolitan Area Planning Council's (MAPC) Apartment Wi-Fi Program and Massachusetts Broadband Institute's Residential Retrofit Program for public and affordable housing properties.
- Explore cybersecurity programming/partnership opportunities and expand existing cybersecurity efforts at Somerset Public Schools to include students.
- Explore establishing digital skills programs at Somerset Access Television.

### Key Populations Engaged

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Veterans
- Youth
- Individuals with disabilities

### Needs Identified

- Broadband competition
- Affordable broadband options
- Digital skills and computer/internet literacy training for older adults
- Digital navigators
- Device access
- Digital literacy programming
- Wi-Fi access points in public spaces

### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Somerset Public Library	Somerset Council on Aging
Somerset Public Schools	Somerset Housing Authority
Somerset Veterans Services Office	

**Plan prepared by:** Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)

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### **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Create a digital equity coalition to coordinate efforts, make actions recommendations and implement programs.
- Build on the digital equity asset map that was created during the planning process to serve as an up-to-date directory for residents.
- Foster new and existing digital navigator programs with guidelines, resources, program support and funding.
- Develop multilingual educational materials on technology basics, internet safety and privacy in partnership with community-based organizations (CBOs).
- Explore opportunities to provide free Wi-Fi in public spaces.
- Expand hot spot distribution and device lending programs.
- Organize device donation drives to collect gently used devices for refurbishment and distribution.
- Support CBOs by funding device distribution programs, community computer labs, device refurbishment and technical support.
- Provide resources and support to digital navigators throughout the city.
- Convene a community of practice to amplify existing work, facilitate resource sharing and coordination, document best practices and provide a support structure for CBOs to enter the digital equity field.
- Explore opportunities to support community-led infrastructure, such as neighborhood mesh networks or other community networks.
- Work with community anchor institutions to coordinate and expand services.
- Explore dig once policies, requiring network infrastructure to be installed whenever a public roadway is opened for utility work, repaving or other construction.
- Engage internet service providers (ISPs) to facilitate greater private market competition and availability.
- Consider consumer advocacy and protection policies.
- Provide direct support for households experiencing difficulty affording broadband.
- Explore investments in open-access fiber infrastructure, regional partnerships to improve internet infrastructure, and connectivity in public and affordable housing.
- Transition temporary and grant-funded digital equity staff to permanent positions.
- Empower municipal digital equity staff to seek funding to support digital equity.
- Continue work started in the digital equity planning process to identify specific needs and existing conditions.
- Collaborate across city departments to ensure the city's digital equity goals are reflected as appropriate.



### Key Populations Engaged

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Individuals with disabilities
- Individuals with a language barrier (limited English or literacy)
- Members of racial or ethnic minority groups
- LGBTQIA+ individuals
- Youth
- Immigrants or refugees

### Needs Identified

- Broadband access/connection
- Increased market competition and consumer choice
- Fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) connections
- Broadband affordability
- Awareness of low-cost options or subsidy programs
- Increased device access
- Awareness of existing device access programs
- Digital literacy and formalized support systems

### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Worcester Interfaith	Worcester Public Schools
African Community Education	Quinsigamond Community College
Main South CDC	Abby's House
Worcester Community Action Council	WYCA
Latino Education Institute Worcester State Univ.	Worcester Elder Affairs & Senior Center
UMass Chan Medical School	Worcester Regional Research Bureau
UMass Memorial Health	City of Worcester Health and Human Services
Greater Worcester Community Foundation	The Southeast Asian Coalition
Worcester Public Library	The Village
Edward Street	Center for Health Impact

**Plan prepared by:** Kimley Horn

### Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions

- Establish a fiber task force dedicated to bringing additional internet connectivity to businesses and residents by applying for funding.
- Designate a digital champion to lead the fiber task force and coordinate with external groups.
- Continue working to bring new internet providers into the town.
- Complete the town's municipal fiber network buildout.
- Improve Wi-Fi speeds and update broadband infrastructure in public buildings.
- Provide additional support staff and digital devices for public use.
- Create a digital library of on-demand digital skills training and provide workshops.
- Establish Spanish-speaking digital navigators.
- Update the town's bylaws to require developers to install conduits for future use.
- Expand the availability of public Wi-Fi in the downtown area.
- Reach out to families with children being cared for by grandparents to identify and address digital literacy gaps.

### Key Populations Engaged

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Youth

### Needs Identified

- Digital literacy and internet safety education tailored to specific demographics
- Online resources and services
- Affordable broadband and device options
- Suitable substitutes for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)
- Translated resources and multilingual programming
- Reliable broadband and cellular services
- Increased internet service provider (ISP) competition and quality of service

### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Jacob Edwards Library	Southbridge Information Technology (IT) Department
Southbridge Council on Aging (COA)	Southbridge Economic Development and Planning Department
Seven Hills Foundations & Affiliates	Southbridge Community Center

**Plan prepared by:** Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC)

## Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions

- Create a permanent digital equity working group (DEWG) for the city.
- Assign one person in the city administration to track progress, pursue funding and coordinate the city's ongoing efforts to ensure digital access for all.
- Expand hot spot lending programs at Springfield libraries.
- Pursue options for expanding competition from other providers, particularly providers of fiber to the premises (FTTP).
- Pursue deployment of indoor and outdoor publicly available Wi-Fi.
- Support training via Tech Foundry and distribution of computer devices including loaned, discounted or free items.
- Help people in arrears on payments to providers to enable residents to enroll in discounted internet packages.

## Key Populations Engaged

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Individuals with disabilities
- Veterans
- Individuals with a language barrier (limited English or literacy)
- Members of racial or ethnic minority groups

## Needs Identified

- Cost of quality internet services and devices
- Device access
- Internet subscriptions for lower-income residents
- Lack of household access to the internet
- Internet safety concerns
- Lack of internet service provider (ISP) competition
- Termination of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)
- Limited knowledge of skills or internet access resources

## Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Springfield City Council's Working Group on Digital Equity and Internet Access	New North Citizen's Council
Way Finders	Springfield Public Library
Tech Foundry	The Alliance for Digital Equity
East Springfield Neighborhood Council	Springfield Public Schools

**Plan prepared by:** Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District

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### Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions

- Create more opportunities for underserved communities to access fast and affordable internet.
  - Ensure plan implementation by leveraging and supporting community partnerships.
  - Ensure all residents, especially vulnerable populations, have access to adequate devices that meet their needs.
  - Assist vulnerable and underserved populations to safely and effectively navigate the internet while providing resources to troubleshoot digital devices.
- 

### Key Populations Engaged

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Veterans

### Needs Identified

- Internet affordability
- Lack of internet service provider (ISP) options
- Digital literacy
- Concerns about cybersecurity, the rise of artificial intelligence (AI) and general internet safety

### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Swansea Free Public Library	Swansea Community Development
Swansea Council on Aging	Swansea Veteran's Agent
Swansea Community Television	American Legion
Swansea Town Administration	First Congregational Church

**Plan prepared by:** CTC Technology & Energy (CTC)

## Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions

- Form a digital equity coalition that convenes annually or biannually to harmonize local digital efforts and support outreach to funders.
- Consider setting up a city grant fund to fill small gaps and reduce reliance on uncertain or finite state and federal funding.
- Expand access to digital navigation services through contracted support to provide residents with support by working with local organizations.
- Leverage partnerships to provide hands-on tech support including student-led volunteer programs connecting schools, higher education and senior services.
- Increase access to public devices by funding equipment purchases at trusted community anchors such as the Taunton Council on Aging, Boys and Girls Club of Metro South, Taunton Housing Authority, Girls Inc. and the Old Colony YMCA.
- Expand partnerships with device-provision and digital literacy training entities to ensure all residents have access to classes and devices.
- Promote cybersecurity awareness and online safety, particularly for vulnerable populations, by sharing and utilizing free state-supported training resources.

## Key Populations Engaged

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Individuals with a language barrier (limited English or literacy)
- Members of religious minority groups
- Members of racial or ethnic minority groups
- Youth

## Needs Identified

- Affordability
- Lack of low-cost options
- Digital access gaps
- Device access, digital skills and digital literacy for vulnerable populations
- Online privacy and security concerns

## Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Taunton Council on Aging	Community Counseling of Bristol County
Boys and Girls Club of Metro South	Taunton Public Schools
Old Colony YMCA	Taunton Public Library
Taunton Housing Authority	



**Plan prepared by:** Montachusett Regional Planning Commission

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### **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Enhance the effectiveness, efficiency and quality of local digital equity initiatives, such as Templeton Community Television's (TCTV) digital lab at Scout Hall.
  - Increase access to affordable, fast, reliable and discounted internet.
  - Expand digital literacy offerings through community engagement, increased staff support and the creation of educational resources.
  - Further develop the municipality's technological resources and public digital workspaces.
  - Increase access to internet-connected devices within homes and public spaces.
  - Seek and secure funding opportunities for investment and long-term support of digital equity programs and services.
  - Become a municipal leader in digital equity through collaboration, inclusion, education and programming.
  - Support and provide digital equity services and opportunities to interested stakeholders and community members.
  - Advocate for residents and businesses to grow the local economy through digital inclusion.
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### **Key Populations Engaged**

- Low-income households
- Veterans
- Individuals with disabilities
- Members of racial or ethnic minority groups
- Youth
- Immigrants or refugees

### **Needs Identified**

- Better customer service from internet service providers (ISPs)
- ISP network improvements (speed, reliability)
- Increased competition among ISPs
- Municipal-owned ISP option
- Reliable affordable or subsidized broadband services and equipment, including accessible digital devices
- Affordability and availability of digital literacy programs, including cybersecurity training
- Equipment and infrastructure improvements, maintenance and routine updates
- Publicly accessible, internet-connected computer workstations
- Accessible/Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant webpages and technology
- Alternate funding sources to support TCTV
- Transit solutions or mobile/remote/virtual services

### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

LUK, Inc.	Clear Path for Veterans New England
Montachusett Business Incubator	Boynton Public Library
Templeton Community Television (TCTV)	Templeton Municipal Light and Water Plant
Templeton Senior Center	Town of Templeton
Narragansett Regional School District	Town of Phillipston
Montachusett Veterans Outreach Center, Inc. (MVOC)	Town of Royalston

**Plan prepared by:** Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission

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### **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Promote and support local digital literacy training programs.
- Continue to evaluate and update the Townsend Digital Equity Plan and pursue opportunities that enhance digital inclusion initiatives.
- Encourage peer-mentorship and “train-the-trainer” models where residents are empowered to become certified digital navigators.
- Identify and train a digital navigator at each community anchor institution.
- Join a regional digital equity coalition and support implementing regional digital literacy initiatives.
- Expand public Wi-Fi capabilities, create public Wi-Fi mesh networks and install outdoor charging stations in public spaces.
- Create spaces for connectivity in community anchor institutions that include private workspaces, devices with charging stations and audiovisual equipment.
- Improve accessibility and functionality of the town website and create a digital equity and inclusion webpage to host the Townsend Digital Equity Plan and related digital equity resources.
- Create print and digital versions of a local digital resources map.
- Partner with social service agencies and other town groups to create device distribution and internet assistance programs.
- Purchase additional Wi-Fi hot spots and devices for Townsend Public Library.
- Upgrade networking infrastructure and technology at the meeting hall, recreation center and library.
- Leverage existing and seek new funding opportunities and partnerships to enhance digital equity and inclusion in Townsend.
- Coordinate with MassHire Career Center and Making Opportunity Count (MOC) to understand existing digital literacy funding sources to plan for the next five years and beyond.
- Establish mobile, site-site and in-home digital literacy training services and/or transportation programs that provide rides for digital inclusion.

### Key Populations Engaged

- Low-income households
- Individuals with disabilities
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Veterans
- Rural residents
- Youth

### Needs Identified

- Expansion of free public Wi-Fi locations and charging stations
- Additional hotspots and Wi-Fi options for homebound residents
- Transportation to digital resources
- Fiber-optic network and third-party software training for the library
- Central/Western Massachusetts Automated Resource Sharing (CWMars) premier support for the library
- Upgraded printers and devices in public spaces
- Low-cost/free internet programs
- Equitable internet service provider options
- Device distribution programs that include a digital literacy component
- Digital literacy curriculum and consistent classes, including cybersecurity
- Private workspaces
- Live one-on-one tech help and tech help phone line
- Printed and online information pertaining to available digital resources

### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Townsend Public Library	Montachusett Veterans Outreach Center, Inc. (MVOC)
Townsend Grant and Housing Coordinator	MassHire Career Center
Townsend Recreation Department	LUK, Inc.
Townsend Council on Aging/Senior Center	Townsend Ecumenical Outreach
North Middlesex Regional School District Information Technology (IT) Department	Making Opportunity Count (MOC)

**Plan prepared by: VHB**

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### **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Improve online content, including redesigning the website and expanding social media presence.
  - Collaborate with local media channels to spread awareness of municipal resources, upcoming events and digital literacy training opportunities.
  - Set up smart poles to provide free Wi-Fi and 4G or 5G coverage at key spots, targeting areas with poor signal.
  - Explore opportunities for collaboration with Greater Attleboro Taunton Regional Transit Authority (GATRA).
  - Promote existing public Wi-Fi access points in the community.
  - Work with local internet service providers (ISPs) to establish a standard level of customer service to ensure all households have the support they need.
  - Work with the Wareham Free Library and Wareham Public Schools to establish a hotspot sharing program.
  - Raise awareness regarding cybersecurity best practices.
  - Leverage Cape Cod Canal Region Chamber of Commerce outreach to communicate information technology (IT) resources to local businesses.
  - Support a variety of digital literacy models (e.g., in-person classes, online classes, do-it-yourself modules, personalized assistance via digital navigators).
  - Improve library capacity to support job seekers, businesses and employees with adequate videoconferencing technology.
  - Integrate digital equity goals with the Wareham Free Library's five-year plan.
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### **Key Populations Engaged**

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)

### **Needs Identified**

- Internet service affordability
- Better quality customer service among ISPs
- Access to web-enabled devices
- Access to digital literacy and cybersecurity resources

### **Organizations Engaged in Planning Process**

Cape Cod Canal Region Chamber of Commerce	Wareham Information Management Technology
Wareham Council on Aging	Wareham Police Department
Wareham Free Library	Wareham Department of Planning and Community Development



**Plan prepared by:** CTC Technology & Energy (CTC)

## Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions

- Coordinate digital equity efforts citywide by convening a city-led digital equity coalition that meets annually or biannually.
- Establish a city grant fund to fill small gaps and reduce reliance on uncertain or finite state and federal funding.
- Expand digital navigation services at core community anchors, such as libraries, housing authorities and schools.
- Increase device access for residents by partnering and promoting organizations like Tech Goes Home and TEK Collaborative.
- Expand public devices by increasing Chromebook availability at the Watertown Free Public Library, Watertown Housing Authority sites and the Watertown Boys & Girls Club.
- Provide technical support to existing programs and explore new programs focused on cybersecurity and digital skills education.

## Key Populations Engaged

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Individuals with a language barrier (limited English or literacy)
- Immigrants or refugees
- Veterans
- Individuals with disabilities
- Members of racial or ethnic minority groups
- Youth

## Needs Identified

- Convening of organizations to discuss existing programs
- Potential partnership opportunities
- Concerns around device access
- Multilingual assistance for digital navigation
- Additional cybersecurity programming and resource support
- Strong internet access in public housing

## Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Watertown Public Schools	Watertown Free Public Library
Watertown Council on Aging	Watertown Veterans Center
Wayside Youth and Family Support Network	Watertown Housing Authority
Perkins School for the Blind	Watertown Boys & Girls Club
Watertown Cable Access Corp (WCA-TV)	Watertown Business Coalition
MassHire Metro North Workforce Investment Board	

**Plan prepared by:** Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC)

## Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions

- Create a permanent digital accessibility working group for the city.
- Support a consultant to work with internet service providers (ISPs) and housing operators to increase connectivity and competitive pricing citywide.
- Expand hot spot lending programs through the library and Westfield Public Schools.
- Encourage schools to provide more devices and digital navigation services.
- Establish a fund to support device distribution (loaned, discounted or free).
- Help people in arrears on payments to their ISP to enable residents to enroll in discounted internet packages.
- Work with ISPs and owners of multi-dwelling units (MDUs) to ensure residents have access to high-speed internet at affordable prices.

## Key Populations Engaged

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Members of racial or ethnic minority groups

## Needs Identified

- Affordability of internet service
- New subsidy programs to replace the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)
- Accessibility of affordable devices
- Privacy and cybersecurity resources
- Digital literacy training, especially for older adults
- Broadband subscriptions for older adults
- Awareness of community resources

## Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

City of Westfield	Westfield Athenaeum
City of Westfield Public Schools	Westfield Gas & Electric/Whip City Fiber
Westfield Council on Aging	Westfield Boys & Girls Club

**Plan prepared by: VHB**

### Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions

- Ensure all households and businesses have access to reliable, high-speed internet by expanding public Wi-Fi, working with internet service providers (ISPs), exploring the Municipal Light Plant model and seeking funds to support troubleshooting technology for residents.
- Enhance use of and access to digital devices through library lending, community spaces and refurbishing partners.
- Collaborate with local organizations to provide regular training and workshops to help individuals understand and use digital technology efficiently.
- Consistently review and improve community engagement and information sharing, including a webpage dedicated to digital equity resources.
- Create and maintain connections with local and regional digital equity champions to support plan implementation.

### Key Populations Engaged

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Rural residents

### Needs Identified

- Increased availability of affordable broadband services
- Increased availability of reliable broadband services
- Increased market competition between ISPs
- Better customer support from Comcast, the current ISP
- Public awareness of digital inclusion activities and services

### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Westhampton Town Hall	Westhampton Council on Aging
Westhampton Public Library	Westhampton Veterans Services
Hampshire Regional School District (HRSD)	Suzor IT
Maitri Learning	Northern Hilltown Consortium of Councils on Aging
Comcast	Westhampton Elementary School
Westhampton Selectboard	

**Plan prepared by:** Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG)

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### **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Maintain and improve free public Wi-Fi and partner with internet service providers (ISPs) and broadband infrastructure experts to investigate the expansion of last-mile connections.
- Develop and maintain partnerships across sectors to support digital equity.
- Promote and support the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) Program Challenge process.
- Explore and promote options for affordable, quality data plans for mobile phones and more robust and reliable cell service.
- Consider alternatives to major ISPs, such as partnering with other communities to create a publicly owned regional ISP.
- Negotiate lower internet subscription rates with current local ISPs or investigate the possibility of providing direct subsidies.
- Track major ISP coverage/rates and advocate for greater transparency, accountability, and higher quality customer service among current local ISP, Comcast.
- Improve and promote transportation to community anchor institutions.
- Improve town's public outreach methods to increase resident participation.
- Explore cybersecurity programming and partnership opportunities to educate residents about topics like scam prevention and online safety.
- Establish easily accessible information and maps promoting digital equity resources so residents are aware of the support available to them.
- Partner with local organizations providing regular, in-person digital literacy training and support current digital literacy programs through the S. White Dickinson Memorial Library and Tri-Town Senior Center.
- Expand general digital literacy assistance, such as walk-in tech help at the library and educational tools focused on various online resources.
- Consider funding a digital education curriculum to provide professional pathways for high school students.
- Establish device and mobile hot spot lending programs and modernize existing on-site devices at the library.
- Establish a local device reuse and recycling program.

## TOWN OF WHATELY

Population: 1,736

### Key Populations Engaged

- Rural residents
- Aging individuals (60 and older)

### Needs Identified

- Lower costs for internet service
- ISP competition
- Cybersecurity awareness

### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Town of Whately	S. White Dickinson Memorial Library
Tri-Town Senior Center	Frontier Regional School District



**Plan prepared by:** Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC)

### Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions

- Continue the public bid process to create a high-quality fiber network and provide free public Wi-Fi access points in areas with poor residential connectivity.
- Continue to convene the original working group that consisted of residents and key stakeholders to inform the town's planning efforts.
- Provide a hot spot lending program.
- Work with schools, libraries and the council on aging to continue providing coordinated support and education to improve digital literacy.
- Encourage schools to provide more devices and digital navigation services.
- Continue working with PVPC to help advance plan implementation.

### Key Populations Engaged

This summary is based on an interim report shared by the PVPC with the Town of Wilbraham's Broadband Advisory Committee to guide the municipal digital equity planning process. The town concluded its participation in the program before the PVPC completed the community engagement process.

### Needs Identified

- Some household lack broadband connection
- Some households lack a computer device
- Lack of device access for older residents and low-income households
- Lack of internet subscription for older residents and low-income households
- Lack of competition at the provider level
- Connectivity assistance for older adults
- Education on device usage and cybersecurity at the senior center
- Regularly advertised tech help at the senior center

### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Wilbraham Broadband Advisory Committee	Wilbraham Public Library
Wilbraham Senior Center	

**Plan prepared by:** Montachusett Regional Planning Commission

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## **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Organize and advocate for improved internet services for residents.
  - Create a map of locations where free, public Wi-Fi is available.
  - Provide access to additional devices, including hot spots, through loan programs.
  - Provide translation tablets and desktop computers to community anchor institutions and local digital assets.
  - Provide updated software to town institutions and departments to streamline processes and ensure accessibility.
  - Update the town website to include fillable forms and Americans with Disability Act accessibility measures.
  - Provide a list of existing financial assistance resources for internet service.
  - Create a program similar to fuel assistance programs to provide financial internet service assistance to those who qualify.
  - Explore digital navigation models and resources to provide technical support and build a stronger network.
  - Promote Wi-Fi availability in affordable housing complexes.
  - Expand indoor/outdoor public Wi-Fi availability and install public charging stations.
  - Increase civic participation by providing adequate equipment to broadcast government proceedings and provide active resident participation.
  - Provide spaces for connectivity in community anchor institutions, including private workstations.
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## **Key Populations Engaged**

- Low-income households
- Rural residents
- Individuals with disabilities
- Immigrants or refugees
- Veterans
- Youth
- Members of racial or ethnic minority groups

## **Needs Identified**

- Affordability of devices and/or internet service
- Devices for staff and client use, private workspaces and improved internet service for Winchendon Community Action Committee
- More digital literacy and cybersecurity resources
- Laptops, accessible devices and more resources for digital access programming at Winchendon Senior Center
- Additional hotspots and laptops to loan and extended outdoor Wi-Fi at Beals Memorial Library

### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Winchendon Town Hall	MassHire Career Center (Regional digital equity planning)
Winchendon Senior Center	Winchendon Housing Authority
Winchendon Community Action Committee (WCAC)	Montachusett Veterans Outreach Center, Inc. (MVOC)
Winchendon Public School System	Beals Memorial Library
Winchendon Select Board	

**Plan prepared by:** Kimley-Horn

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## **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Establish a fiber taskforce and designate a digital champion to lead it.
- Continue working to bring fixed cable/fiber providers into the city.
- Improve Wi-Fi speeds at the Woburn Senior Center.
- Designate a champion to be responsible for continuous coordination, guidance and to pursue funding.
- Enhance the city's website to promote digital services and resources.
- Establish digital navigators at local institutions.
- Review internet service bills and continue to explore and promote lower-cost connectivity for seniors and low-income residents.
- Provide additional support staff and digital devices for public use/loan.
- Update broadband infrastructure and provide Wi-Fi to Woburn Housing Authority sites.
- Create a digital library of on-demand skills training and provide workshops
- Work with a local/regional refurbishing organization for device reuse.
- Identify a telehealth champion to address barriers to digital health access.
- Update Woburn's zoning code to require developers to install fiber conduits for future use.

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## **Key Populations Engaged**

- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Youth

## **Needs Identified**

- Affordability
- Improved quality of service
- Support for online access to telehealth and government services
- Device access and support
- Digital literacy and internet safety training

## **Organizations Engaged in Planning Process**

Woburn Mayor's Office	Woburn Engineering Department
Woburn Planning and Economic Development Department	Woburn Information Technology (IT) Department
Woburn Housing Authority	Woburn Public Library
Woburn Public Schools	Woburn Senior Center

**Plan prepared by:** Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission

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### **Key Takeaways & Suggested Actions**

- Create a digital equity coalition to coordinate efforts, make action recommendations and implement programs.
  - Create a digital navigator program/position that works with community members to ensure a continuum of help with access, affordability and literacy.
  - Consider hiring a broadband/digital equity manager or identify existing staff to stay apprised of funding opportunities, internet service providers (ISPs) and community needs.
  - Consider creating a modest grant program to fill the gap left by the discontinuation of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) and leverage upcoming state and federal funding opportunities.
  - Bolster existing digital skill training and device lending programs through the library.
  - Partner with educational institutions throughout the city to provide additional learning and assistance resources.
  - Explore new digital literacy and communication programs directly targeted at improving cybersecurity and online safety.
  - Promote healthy device and internet use for all age groups, particularly in children, adolescents and young adults.
  - Explore device recycling and reuse as a cost-effective strategy to increase access to affordable devices.
  - Explore opportunities to increase the number of ISPs operating in Worcester.
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### **Key Populations Engaged**

- Low-income households
- Aging individuals (60 and older)
- Individuals with a language barrier (limited English or literacy)
- Immigrants or refugees

### **Needs Identified**

- Internet affordability
- Websites tailored for smartphone accessibility
- Availability of accessible laptops and desktops through community organizations
- In-home access to laptops and desktops
- Repetitive, one-on-one approach to learning digital literacy skills for seniors
- Digital literacy teachers for non-English speakers



### Organizations Engaged in Planning Process

Worcester Interfaith	Worcester Public Schools
African Community Education	Quinsigamond Community College
Main South CDC	Abby's House
Worcester Community Action Council	YWCA
Latino Education Institute Worcester State University	Worcester Elder Affairs & Senior Center
UMass Chan Medical School	Worcester Regional Research Bureau
UMass Memorial Health	City of Worcester Health and Human Services
Greater Worcester Community Foundation	The Southeast Asian Coalition
Worcester Public Library	The Village
Edward Street	Center for Health Impact