Agenda

Welcome!

Introducing MBI

Statewide Planning Process

Digital Equity and Broadband in Greater Boston

Breakout Sessions

Thank You & Closing

Meeting Ground Rules

Be **fully present** by not checking your phone or computer

Know when to lead versus **creating space for others to speak**

Be open and listen to others. Even when you disagree, suspend judgment, and look for common ground.

Recognize that **we are all approaching this process with different levels of understanding and lived experiences** surrounding equity and digital equity.

01

Introducing MBI

About the Massachusetts Broadband Institute

MBI's mission is to make affordable high-speed Internet available to all homes, businesses, schools, libraries, medical facilities, government offices, and other public places across the Commonwealth. MBI works closely with key stakeholders to bridge the digital divide in Massachusetts.

Investments: City of Boston

$5M investment to support expansion of the City's **Wicked Free WiFi Network**, digital literacy across **Boston Public Housing** properties, and support for more than **50 community based** organizations to engage in digital equity activities.

How to get involved?
Follow Boston's Department of Innovation and Technology (DoIT)!

Investments: Tech Goes Home

Expanding the TGH program to reach learners in **Revere, Chelsea, Lynn, Malden and Boston** that will receive **digital literacy instruction, a new device**, and registration support for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) – a $30 federal subsidy for broadband service.

How to get involved?

Refer learners to partner sites via TGH Staff and program website!

Investments: Revere Rose Pomona Housing Authority

MBI will provide **50+ households** at the Revere Rose Pomona Housing Development with no barrier, no subscription internet. **All public and affordable housing** in the Boston Metro Area and across the state are now eligible to participate in this program!

How to get involved?

Building owners can enroll through an online form [here](#)!

Contact MAPC Team:

Will Pfeffer, Civic Technologist, wpfeffer@mapc.org
Stephen Larrick, Digital Services Manager, slarrick@mapc.org
Brian Luther, Municipal Services Specialist, bluther@mapc.org

MBI's Digital Equity Programs and Partnerships

Municipal Application Status

🔷 Approved Application

0 5 10   20   30   40 Miles

Map Date: 18 May 2023

Greater Boston Participants

Boston
Somerville
Watertown
Lynn
Gloucester

Massachusetts Broadband & Digital Equity Funding

$75M - State ARPA Digital Equity Fund

$175M - US Treasury Capital Projects Fund

$1M - NTIA Digital Equity Act Planning Grant

$147M - NTIA Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Grant (including $5M Planning Grant)
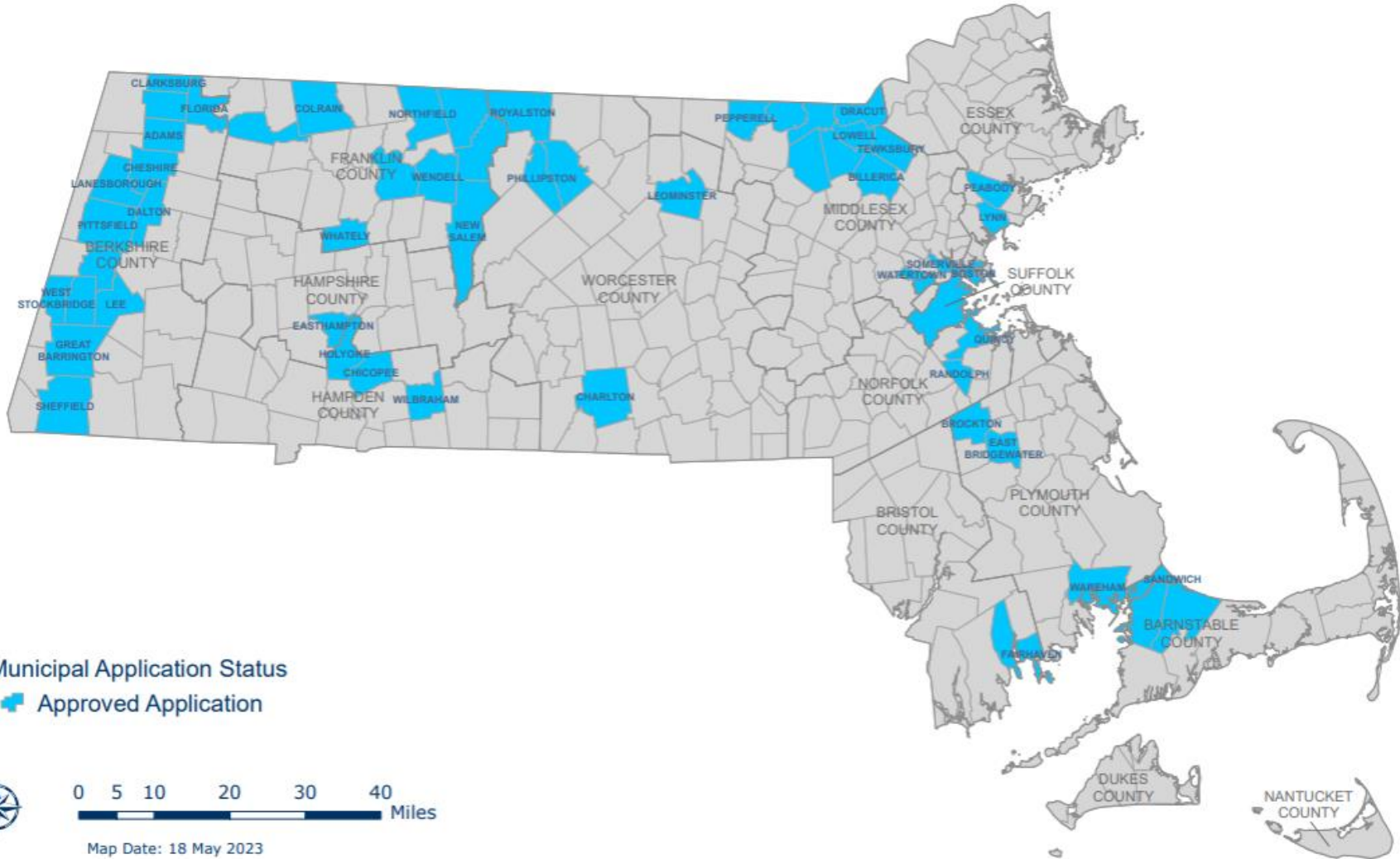
MBI | MASSACHUSETTS BROADBAND INSTITUTE | at the MassTech Collaborative

Santiago Garces

CIO, City of Boston

02

Statewide Planning Process

State Broadband and Digital Equity Planning

The State Digital Equity Plan will include...

- Vision and input gathered from communities across the state in the planning process

- Community-identified barriers to digital equity

- An assessment of what's working to advance digital equity

- Strategies to build on existing data, reports, and plans

How you can further shape the plan!

Contribute to Asset Mapping Database

Fill out Asset Mapping form with relevant assets including programs, organizations, reports, engagement activities

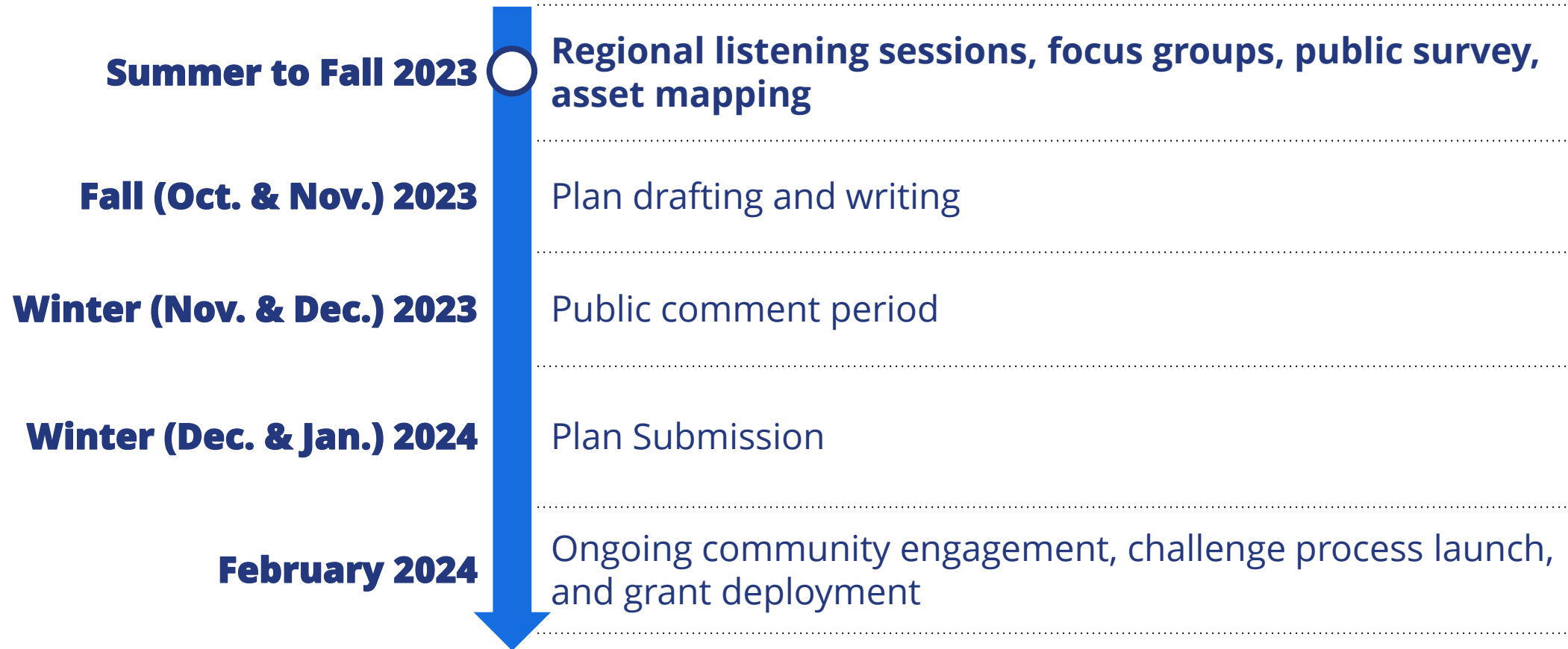**Take our Public Survey**

Send to your friends and family!

Promote a Listening Session

Tell your networks about the regional listening sessions!

Greenfield 10/3

Timeline

Summer to Fall 2023	**Regional listening sessions, focus groups, public survey, asset mapping**
Fall (Oct. & Nov.) 2023	Plan drafting and writing
Winter (Nov. & Dec.) 2023	Public comment period
Winter (Dec. & Jan.) 2024	Plan Submission
February 2024	Ongoing community engagement, challenge process launch, and grant deployment

→ *Visit broadband.masstech.org for upcoming events and ways to get involved.*

03

Existing Conditions

Digital equity is a condition in which all individuals and communities have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in our society, democracy, and economy. Digital equity is necessary for civic and cultural participation, employment, lifelong learning, and access to essential services.

– National Digital Inclusion Alliance

Image Source: Detroit Community Technology Project

Determining Factors of Digital Access

Connection

Fast
Affordable

Adequate Device
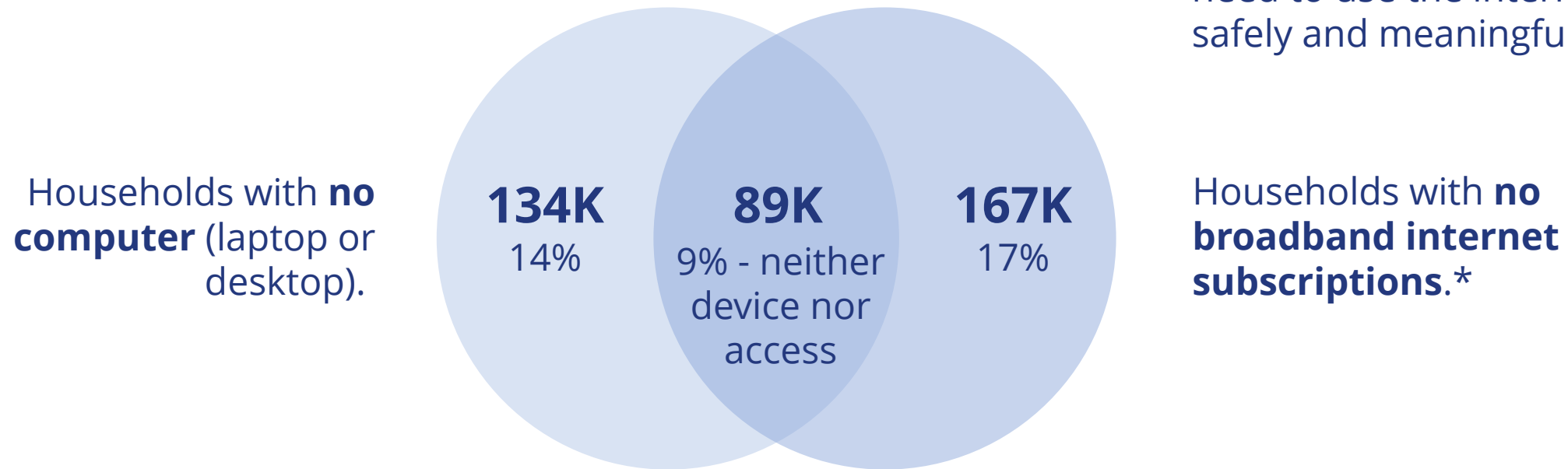
Router
Personal Computer /Laptop

Literacy

Use of Technology
Ensuring functioning equipment
Evaluating quality of information and privacy risks

Digital Gaps in Greater Boston

Of **980,000 households** in the region...

Many more face challenges with finding the support they need to use the internet safely and meaningfully.

Households with **no computer** (laptop or desktop).

134K
14%

89K
9% - neither device nor access

167K
17%

Households with **no broadband internet subscriptions**.*

These challenges have **disproportionate impact for specific population groups** depending on a range of socioeconomic, historical, and geographic factors.

* Residents with no broadband access (cable, fiber optic, or DSL) in their household. **Source:** U.S. Census Bureau

Statewide Survey - Preliminary Findings
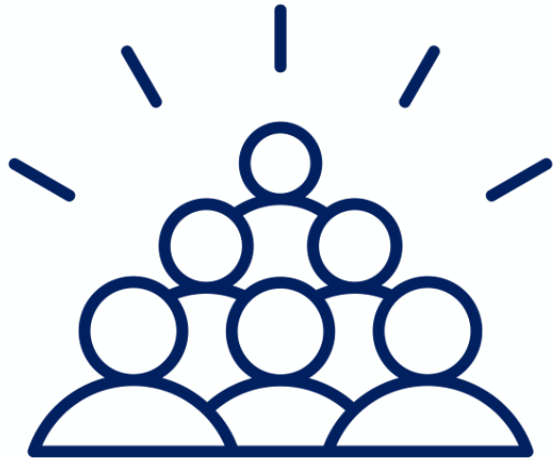
Total Responses x Region

Region	Responses	Target
Connecticut River Valley	821	307
Greater Boston Region	1,091	1,085
Cape Cod & Islands Region	828	112
Southeast Region	1,101	608
Northeast Region	1,034	455
Central Mass Region	175	378
Berkshire Region	918	55
Unknown	62	-
Total	**6,030**	**3,000**

Covered Population Responses in Greater Boston

Covered Population	Responses	Target
Aging Individuals	326	220
Veterans	15	29
People of Color	560	354
Households with Limited English**	38	32
Individuals with Disabilities	186	103
Low-Income Households	205	153
Residents in Rural Areas	5	15

*Response numbers are updated as of Wednesday, 9/13, 12pm.
** This is an estimate based on the number of non-English surveys submitted.

Note: The availability gap score is comprised of three scores: 1) average upload speeds, 2) average download speeds, and 3) percent of the population (2021) not using internet at 100/20 megabits per second. This metric does not capture infrastructure.
Sources: ACS 2017-2021, 5-year estimates and Ookla speed tests.

Woburn

Waltham

Framingham

Boston

Bellingham
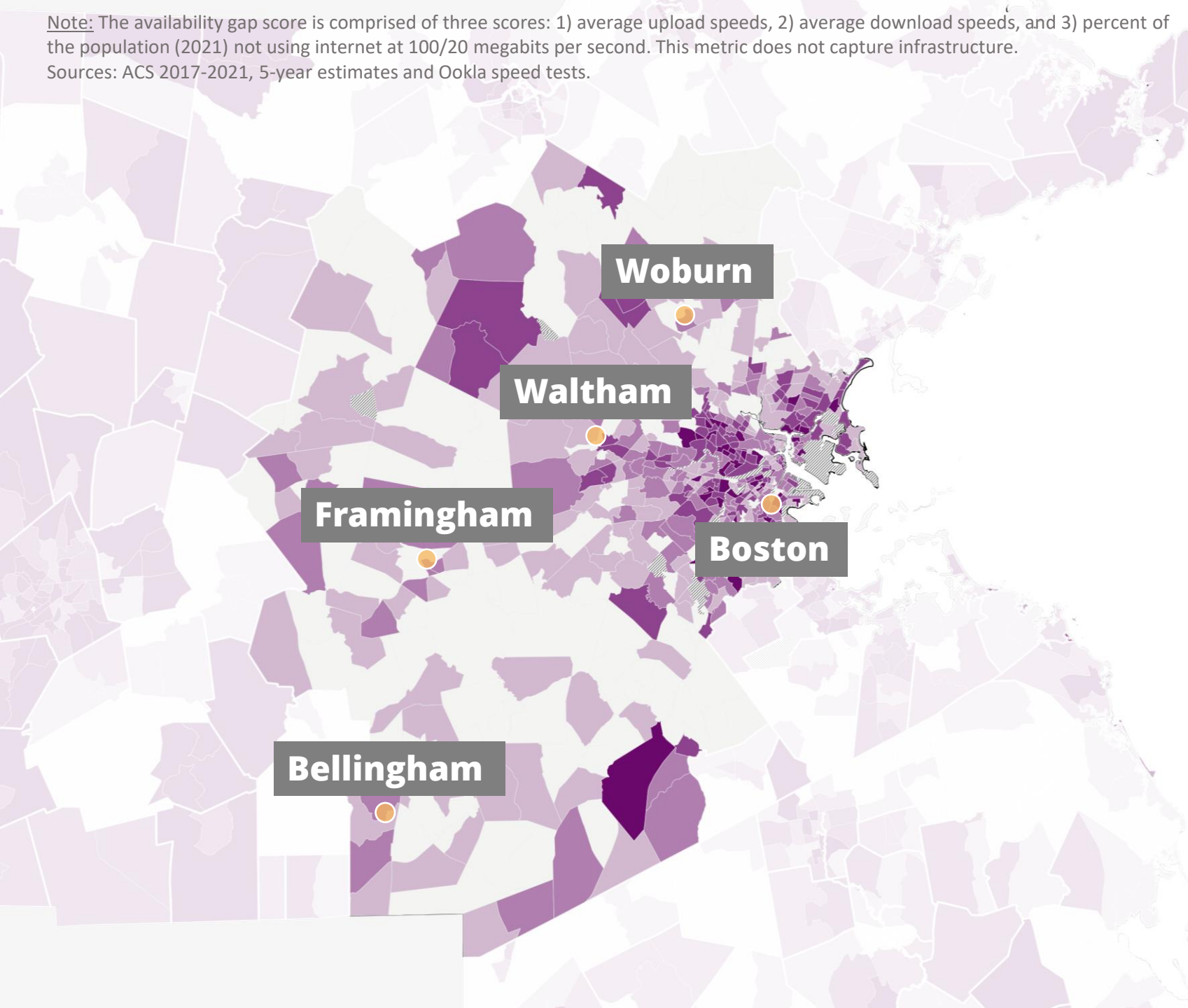
Access and Quality of Service

26% of statewide survey respondents reported that their internet service is not good enough to meet their household's needs.

55% of municipalities in Greater Boston have little or no competition in the broadband market.

Legend
The availability gap score ranges in value from 0 to 100, where 100 indicates the highest gap in availability.
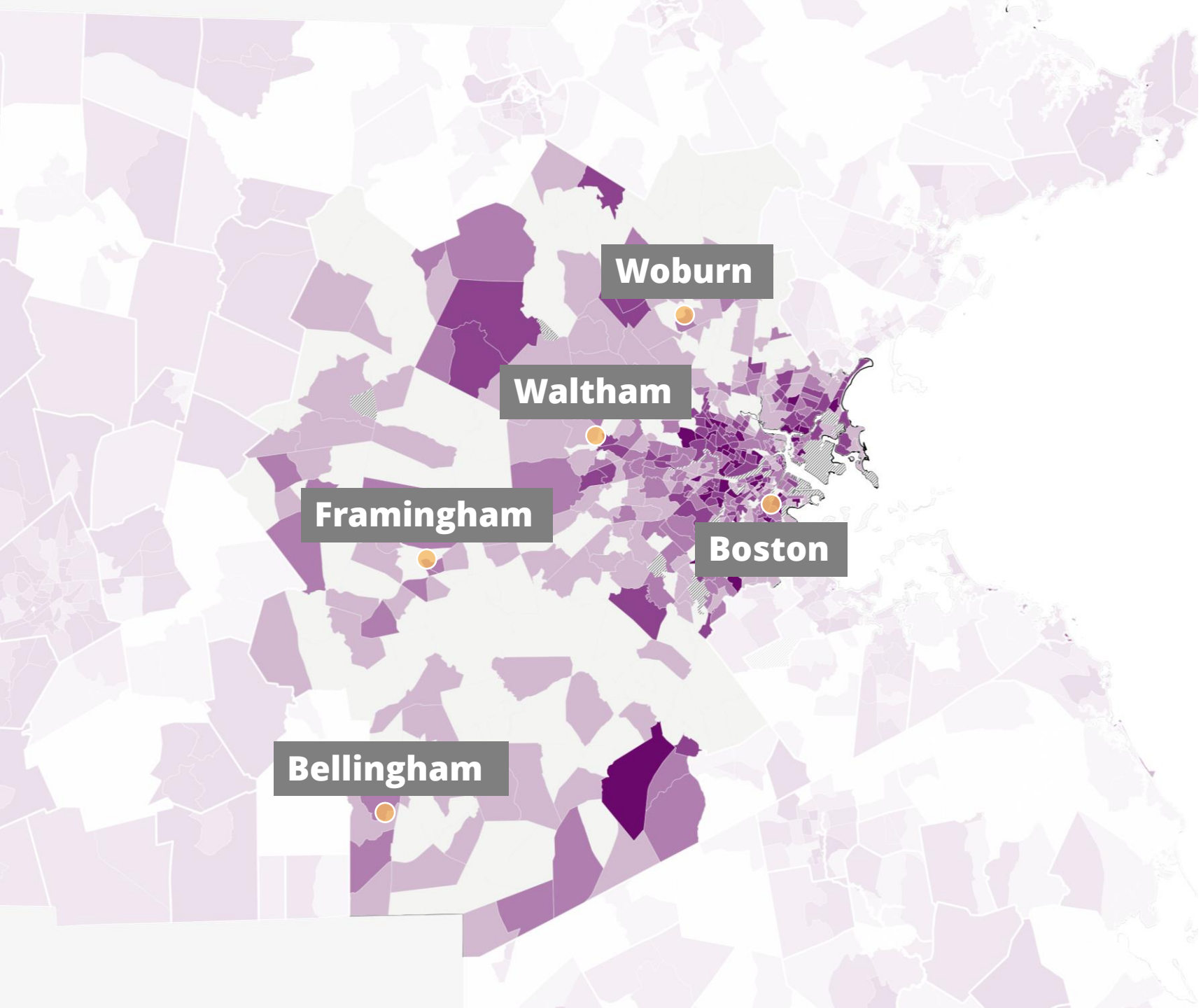
LOW   MEDIUM   HIGH

Access and Quality of Service

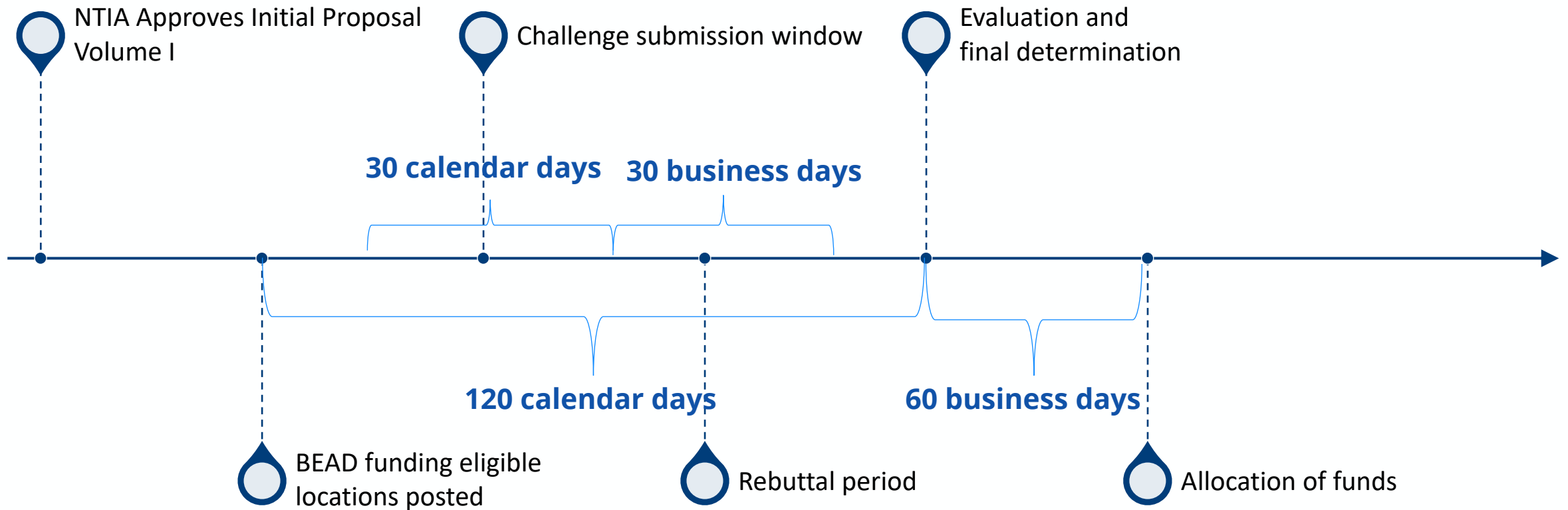In Greater Boston, there are **~1,000 Unserved or Underserved** locations.

Top 5 Municipalities – Unserved Locations	
Walpole	89
Boston	65
Marlborough	53
Holliston	43
Millis	28

Top 3 Municipalities – Underserved Locations	
Boston	23
Sharon	13
Wellesley	10

Source: Federal Communications Commission, Broadband Data Collection (2022)

Challenge Process

NTIA Approves Initial Proposal Volume I

Challenge submission window

Evaluation and final determination

30 calendar days

30 business days

120 calendar days

60 business days

BEAD funding eligible locations posted

Rebuttal period

Allocation of funds

Affordability Gap

Over **1 in 3** survey respondents statewide reported having at least some difficulty paying for their internet.
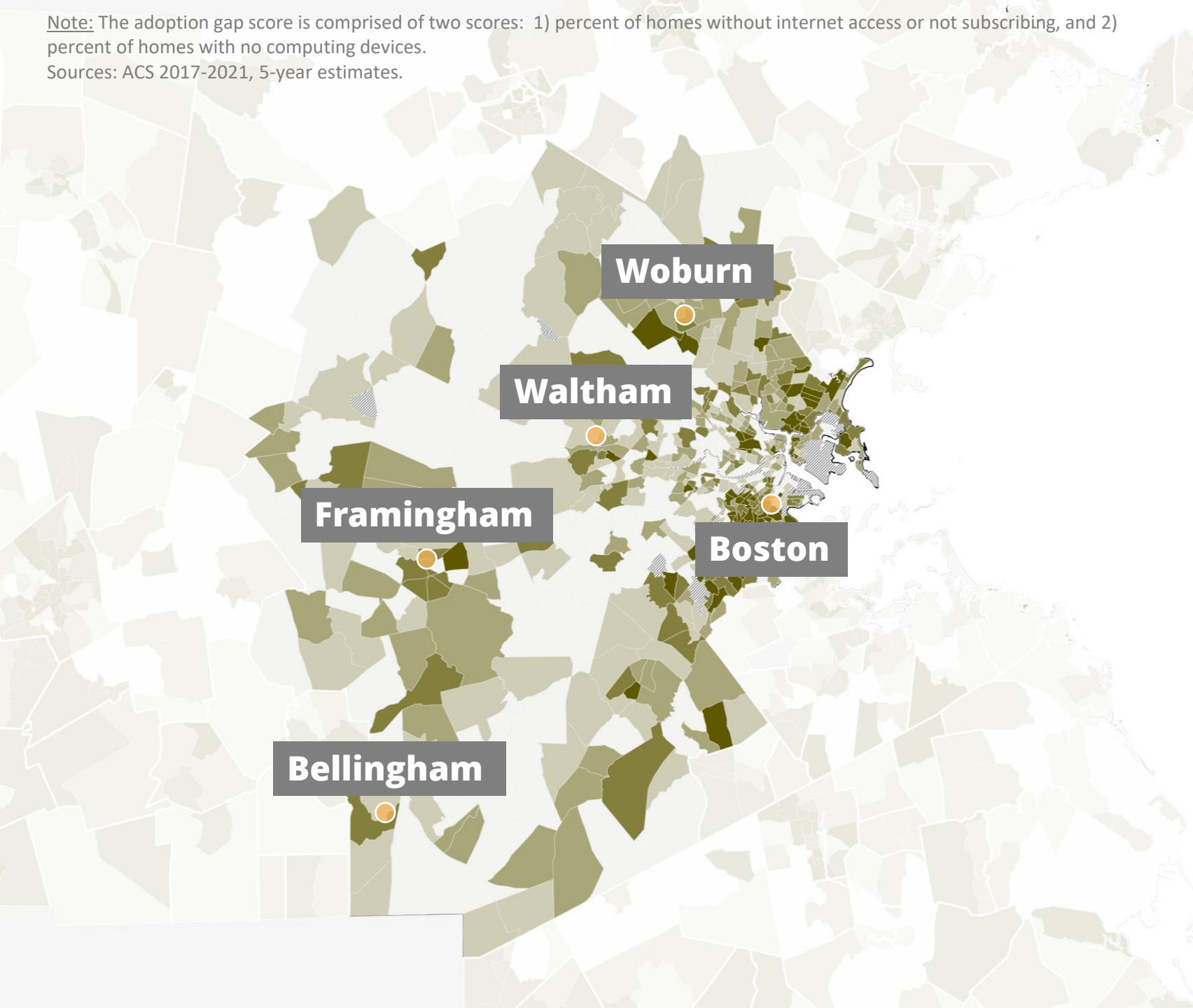
The average for the lowest broadband price regionwide is **$42.**

Legend
The affordability gap score ranges in value from 0 to 100, where 100 indicates the highest gap in affordability.

LOW   MEDIUM   HIGH

Adoption Gap

In Greater Boston, adoption gaps are highest in and near the city of Boston.

Statewide, **nearly half** of survey respondents without internet at home cite cost as a prohibiting factor.

Legend
The adoption gap score ranges in value from 0 to 100, where 100 indicates the highest gap in adoption.

LOW   MEDIUM   HIGH

Community Anchor Institutions

Education Institutions

Community Centers

Libraries

Museums and Cultural and Religious Centers

Healthcare Infrastructure

Public Housing

Assets in the Greater Boston Region

MBI is collecting unique assets that contribute to digital equity in each region.

Example Assets:

56

Digital equity assets submitted to date for the region

Timothy Smith Network - tech education programs for people of all ages to access technology education to prepare students for higher education and a technology-driven workforce.

La Alianza Hispana - community organization providing culturally and linguistically appropriate health and education programs to the Latino Community, including beginner to advanced computer classes.

03

Breakout Discussions

Remember the Ground Rules

Be **fully present** by not checking your phone or computer

Know when to lead versus **creating space for others to speak**

Be open and listen to others. Even when you disagree, suspend judgment, and look for common ground.

Recognize that **we are all approaching this process with different levels of understanding** surrounding equity and digital equity.

Respect confidentiality. What is discussed in this room stays in this room.

Breakout Rooms

We look forward to hearing from you on the topics below.

Virtual Breakout Rooms:

Please follow this jam board link:

XX

In Person:

Staff will assign breakout group participation

Visioning Exercise

Thank you for your participation in breakout discussions. We would like to move into a visioning exercise to close out today's activity.

What does Internet for All mean to you?

Imagine it's five years in the future. The Digital Equity Plan has been a resounding success. After some initial challenges, Massachusetts's solutions are having a huge impact on the world in ways you'd never even imagined!

- Take 1 minute to scan the QR code to the right and use one word to answer the question above.

04

Closing
Session

Report back

Thank you for your participation in our facilitated discussion. We want to learn more about what you heard and discussed.

What was discussed in your breakout room?

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