

Municipal Digital Equity Planning

Templeton Digital Equity Plan

November 20, 2024

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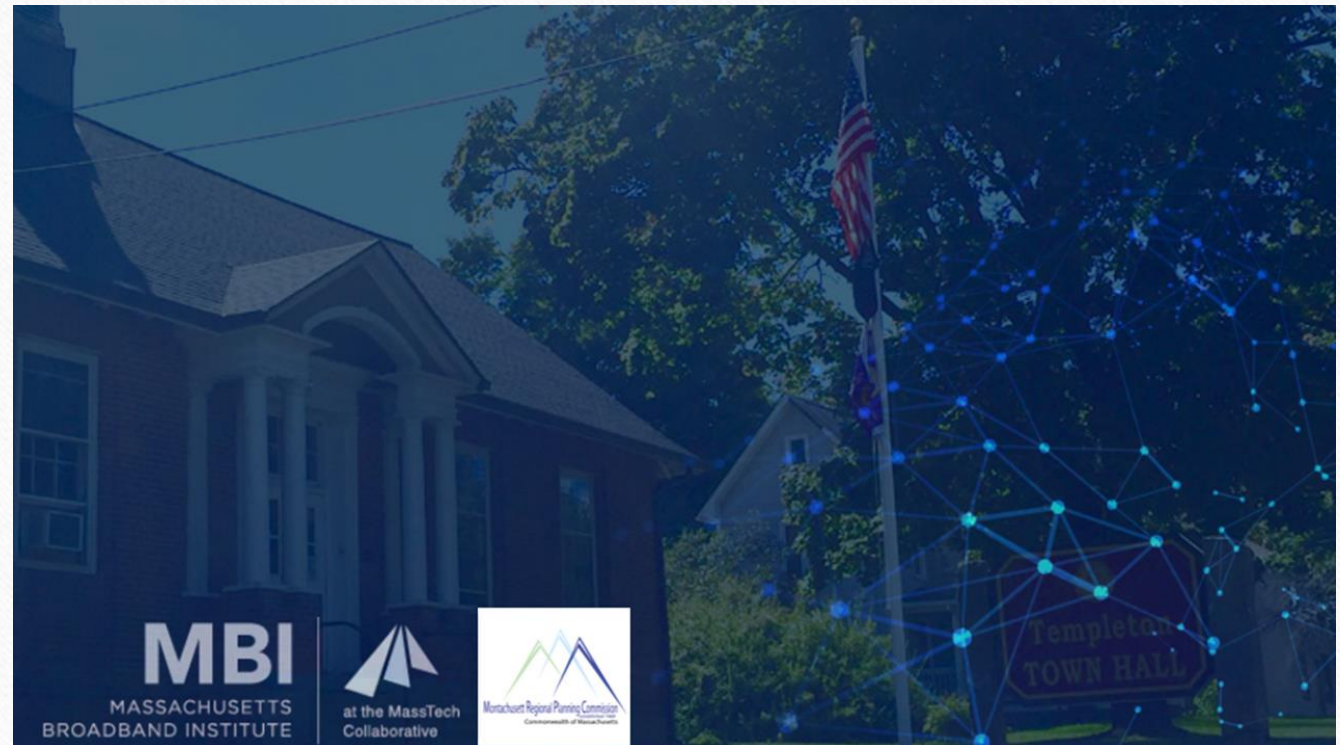
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Public Presentation to the Templeton Select Board
Templeton Town Hall
160 Patriots Road, Templeton

Components of the Plan

1. Introduction
2. Digital Equity Overview
3. Planning Process
4. Existing Conditions
5. Community Needs
6. Vision, Goals & Actions
7. Appendix



2. Digital Equity Overview



Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI)
part of the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative
has created a
Municipal Digital Equity Planning Program.

\$50M in this program is funded by Federal ARPA and Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act with Technical Assistance for Planning and Implementation Grant Application Preparation provided by a qualified consultant at no cost to the Town.

2. Digital Equity Overview



Massachusetts Internet for All Plan

Read the READ Initial Proposal Volume 9



- Availability**
Every location has high-speed internet available.
- Adoption**
Every resident can utilize and afford the internet.
- Quality of Service**
Every location has reliable service.

Digital Equity Defined...

“The 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

Key components of digital equity include:



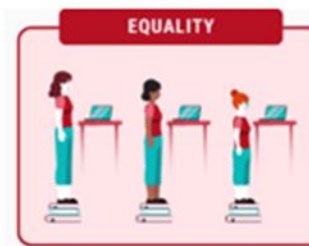
Internet Connection: Do all populations experience internet connection that is affordable, fast, and reliable? Can all populations access the internet?



Devices: Do all populations have devices that are adequate, needs-appropriate? Are devices affordable or otherwise accessible?



Literacy and Skills: Do all populations have the ability to use technology and the internet to achieve their needs? Do concerns around trust, privacy, and safety exist?



Goals of the Program

The overall purpose of Digital Equity Planning is to understand the existing conditions around internet **Access** and **digital technology**, specifically those related to, Availability, Affordability, and Adoptability of broadband internet and digital devices with a focus on certain covered populations of the Digital Equity Act.

Once a Plan is completed municipalities are eligible for reserved funds to implement certain actions identified within the Plan and better prepared to submit grant proposals to other state or federal programs in support of digital equity activities.

Covered Populations in the Digital Equity Act

1. Individuals who live in covered households
2. Aging individuals
3. Incarcerated individuals, other than individuals in a Federal correctional facility
4. Veterans
5. Individuals with disabilities
6. Individuals with a language barrier, including individuals who—
 - a. Are English learners
 - b. Have low levels of literacy
7. Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group
8. Individuals who primarily reside in a rural areas



Covered Populations in Templeton

Rural Population	100%
Aging Adults over 60	23.0%
Population with one or more disabilities	10-14%
Language Barrier	17.7%
Covered Households	10.3%
Lacking Broadband or Internet	4.7%
Veteran	8-10%
Non english Speaking	1.6%
Incarcerated	0.0%



3. Planning Process

1. Statewide Survey

Survey Boxes at: Town Hall

Library

Senior Center

Scout Hall

2. Stakeholder Interviews

3. Focus Groups & Workshops

4. Core Team Meetings

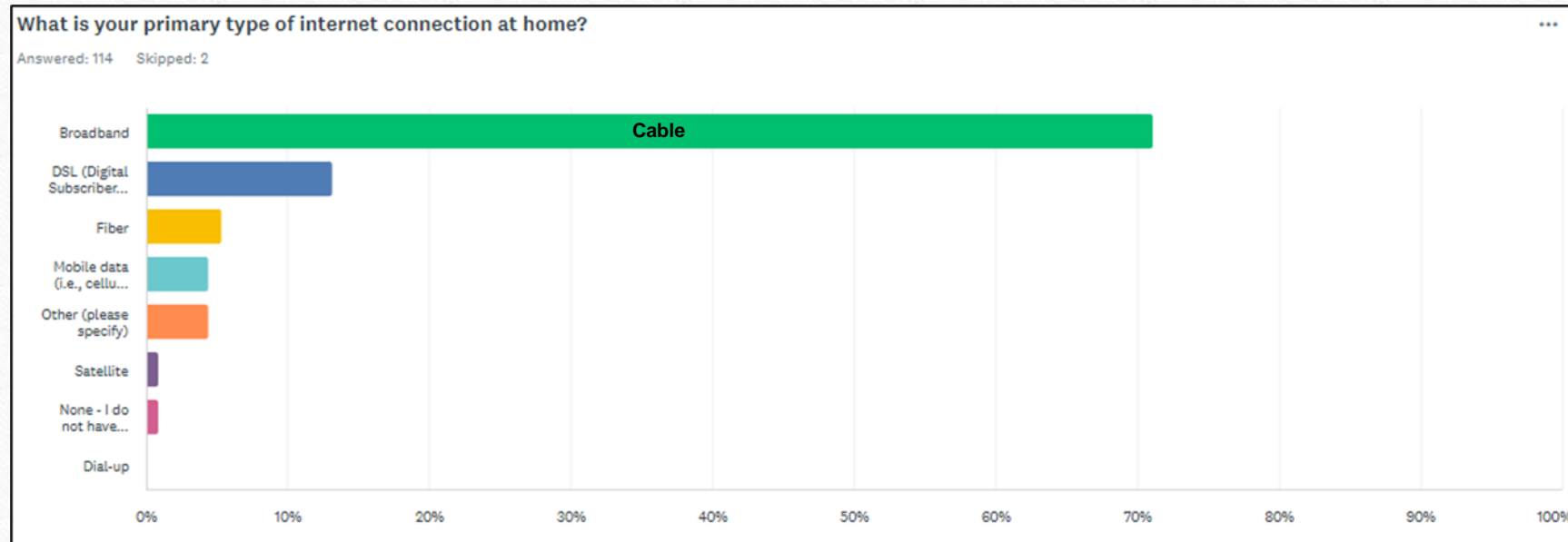
5. Community Events

- Art Fest/National Play Outside Day (Gilman-Waite Park)
- Narragansett Fest



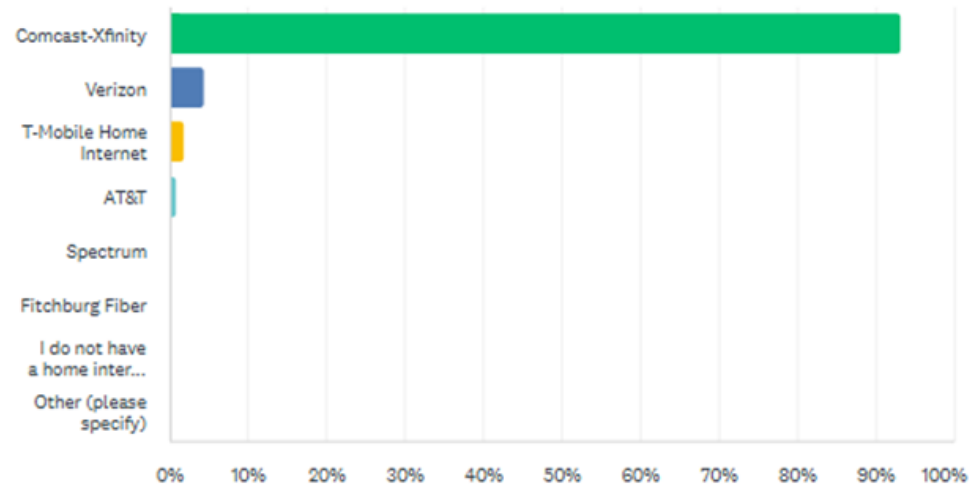
Local Digital Equity Survey

118 Templeton residents took the survey



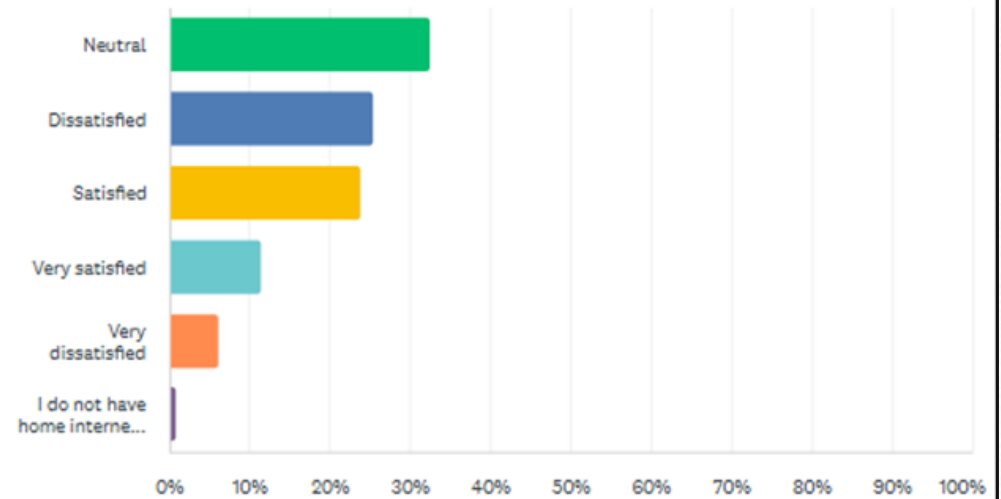
Who is your home internet service provider? ...

Answered: 115 Skipped: 1



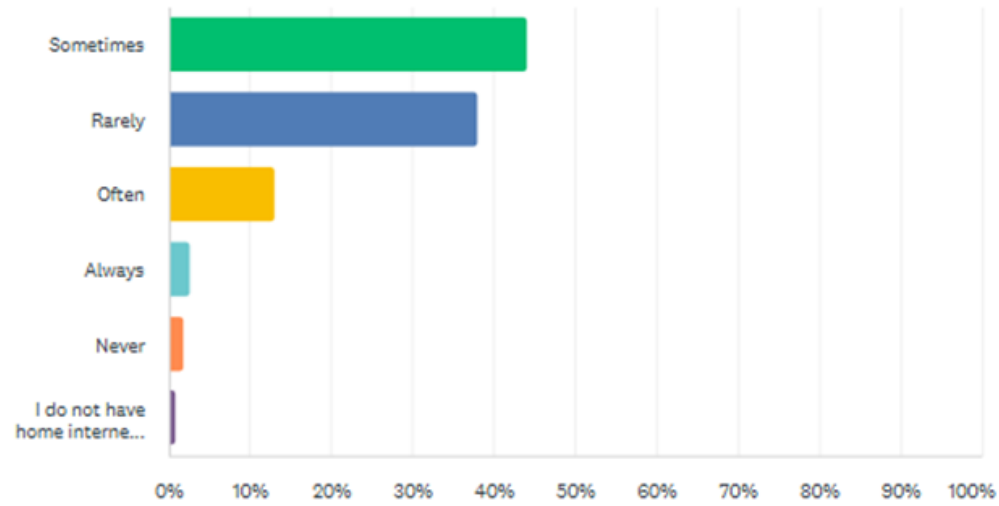
How satisfied are you with your current home internet service? ...

Answered: 114 Skipped: 2



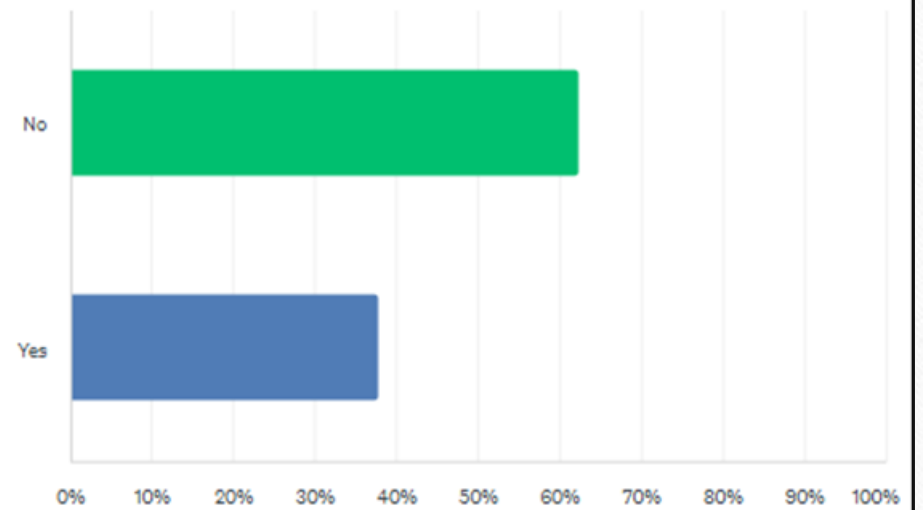
How often do you experience home internet connectivity issues? ...

Answered: 116 Skipped: 0



Do you feel that the cost of internet service is affordable for you? ...

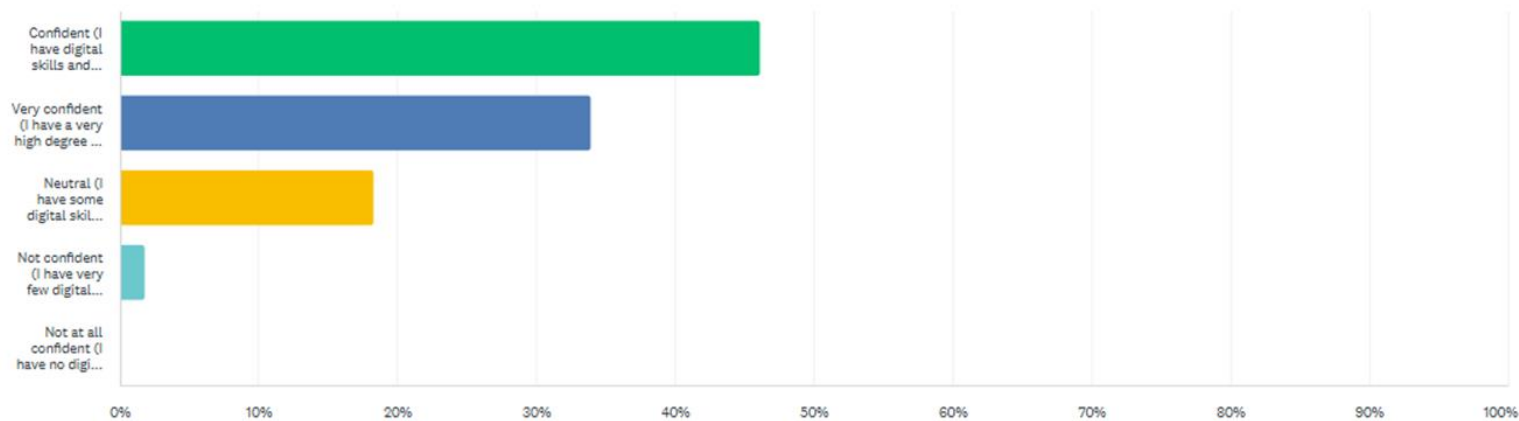
Answered: 114 Skipped: 2



How confident are you in your digital skills?

...

Answered: 115 Skipped: 1



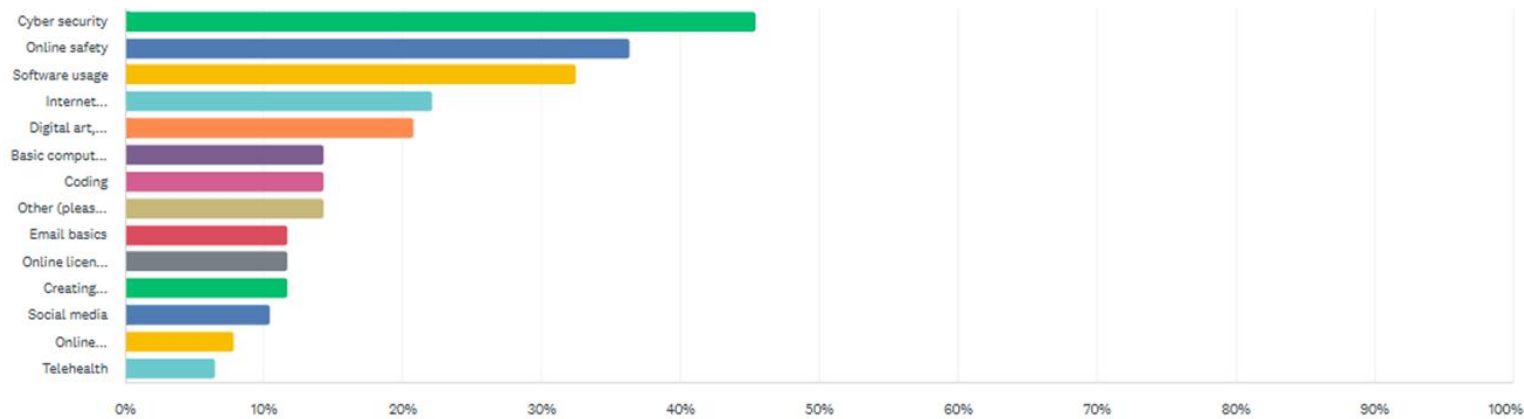
Digital Equity Planning for the Montachusett Region

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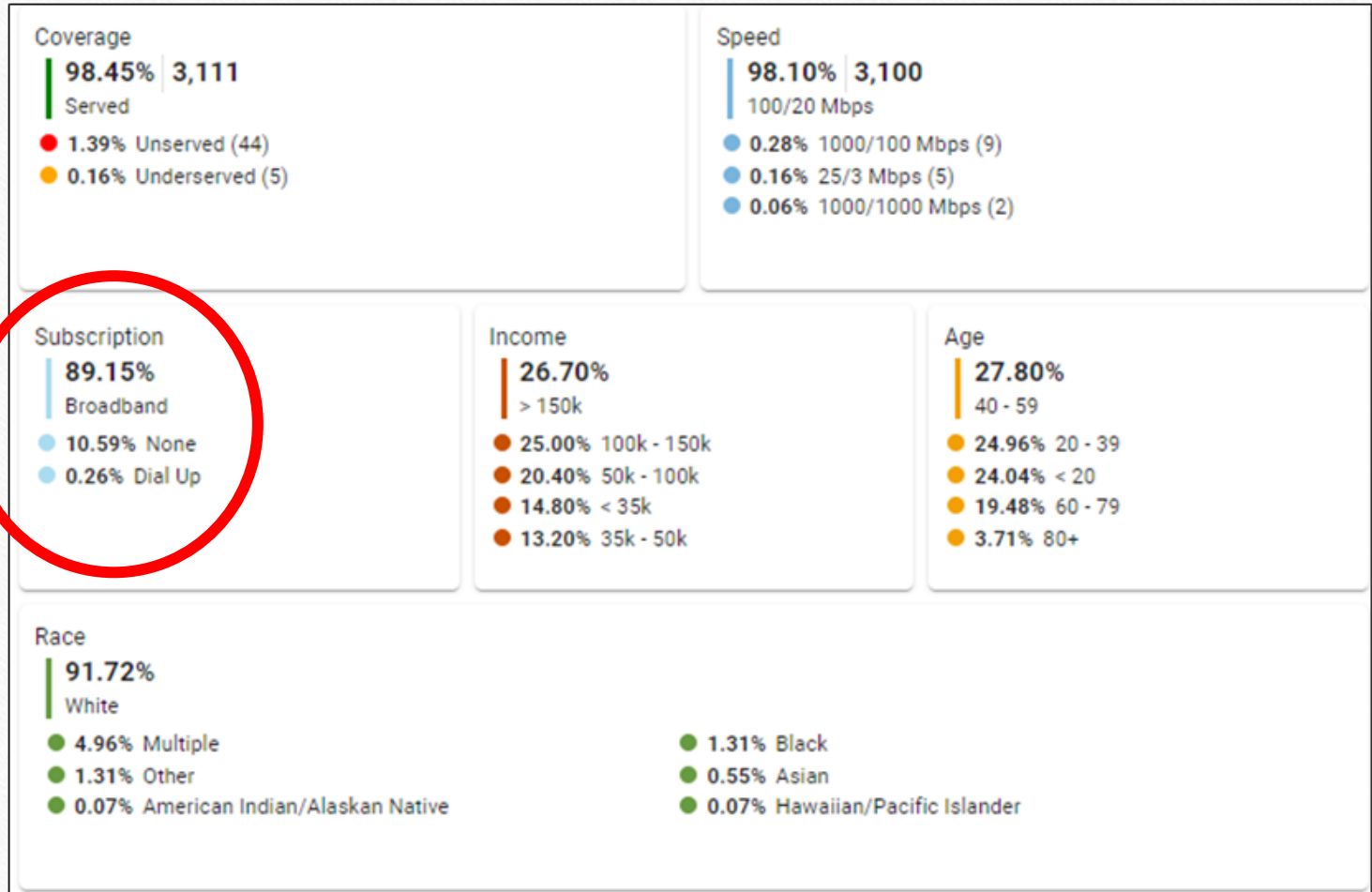
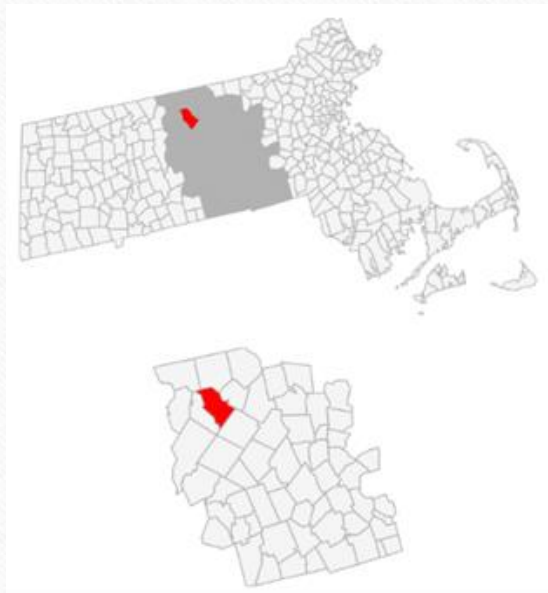
What types of digital skills training would benefit you? (Select all that apply)

...

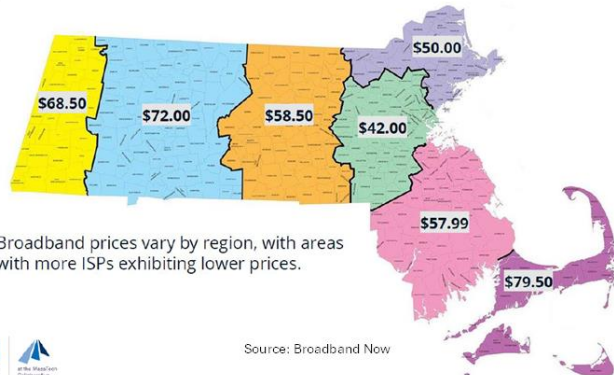
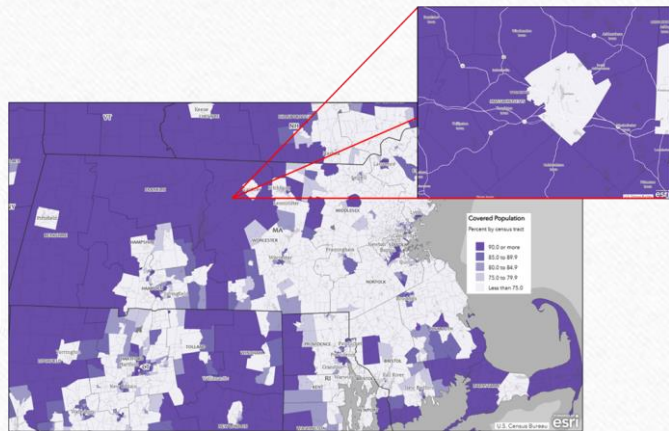
Answered: 77 Skipped: 39



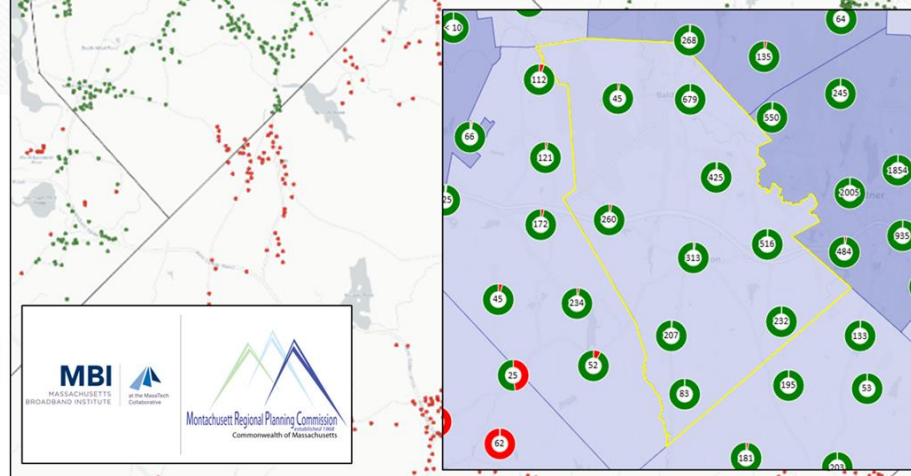
4. Existing Conditions



4. Existing Conditions



Source: Broadband Now



Internet Availability:
Templeton, MA
Municipal Digital Equity Planning



Critical Digital Assets & Anchor Institutions

Critical Digital Assets - Templeton		
Facility Type	Organization	Location
Other Government Facility	Templeton Highway Dept.	381 <u>Baldwinville Rd.</u>
Other Government Buildings	Templeton Municipal Light & Water	86 Bridge Street
Public Safety	Templeton Fire Department Station #2	2 School Street
Post Office	Templeton Post Office	449 Patriots Road
Post Office	<u>Baldwinville Post Office</u>	38 Elm Street
Post Office	East Templeton Post Office	132 Patriots Road
Public Safety	Police Station Dispatch Center	33 South Road
Other Government Buildings	Templeton Wastewater Treatment Facility	33 Reservoir Rd
Other Government Buildings	Gardner Wastewater Treatment Facility	52 Plant Road
Public Safety	Templeton- Center Fire Station	18 - 22 South Road
Public Safety	Templeton Emergency Management	1 - 3 Elm Street



Community Anchor Institutions - Templeton		
Facility Type	Organization	Location
Town Hall	Templeton Town Hall	160 Patriots Road
Clinics	Mountain View Family Practice	570 <u>Baldwinville Road</u>
Senior Center	Templeton Senior Community Center	16 Senior Drive
Church	Holy Cross Church	26 Lake Avenue
Church	First Church	1 Wellington Street
Church	St. Vincent de Paul	18 Pleasant Street
Church	Memorial Congregational Church	4 Memorial Street
Church	St. Martin's Rectory	248 State Road
Library	BOYNTON PUBLIC LIBRARY	27 BOYNTON ROAD
School	Templeton Elementary School	17 South Road
School	Narragansett Regional Middle School	460 <u>Baldwinville Road</u>
School	Narragansett High School	464 <u>Baldwinville Road</u>



5. Community Needs


















3 key actions to improve Digital Equity:








1. Public workspaces and digital resources are needed to provide access to the internet, devices, and technology (including training), to the public for various services where home internet is not available or convenient.
2. Cyber-Security training is imperative as many residents, particularly aging adults and Veterans lack trust and comfort due to safety and cyber security concerns.
3. Affordable internet options and devices are needed because many residents, particularly rural residents, aging adults and covered households, cannot afford to pay for internet services, nor can they afford a device.

- Additional devices and public computer workstations
- Hotspots, and digital equipment and technology
- Digital Literacy Classes & Resources
- Additional Resources for digital learning, engagement, and opportunities at the Digital Lab
- Workspaces equipped with peripheral devices for communication and all other activities such as wellness/medical appointments, etc.
- Additional Hot Spots are needed as they are popular with those who cannot afford internet service.
- Update the Town website (incorporate ADA, translation & audio-visual impairment improvements, & fillable forms where needed)
- Support for Scout Hall Community Center & Digital Lab

Prioritized Actions for Implementation

\$56,603.77 in funds reserved for Templeton

Town of Templeton Digital Equity Plan: Implementation Action Plan				
Goal	Action	Champion	Potential Funding Program	Project Focus Area Category
1. Enhance the effectiveness, efficiency, and quality of local digital equity initiatives that promote digital literacy and access to close the digital gap and support and empower the community.	1.1 Continue to support Digital Lab at Scout Hall to allow TCTV to oversee and execute digital initiatives.	TCTV/Digital Lab		     
	2.1 Promote discounts, affordability and provide equipment through TCTV	TCTV		 
2. Increase access to affordable fast, reliable internet.	2.2 Upgrade broadband/ Wi-Fi/ internet capabilities in Town Hall, Senior Center, Scout Hall, and Library	TCTV		
	3.1 Host open houses at Scout Hall Digital Lab to showcase and promote use of technology and equipment (V.R. Goggles, Digital Music Transfer/Conversion Equipment, Karaoke, 360 Cam, etc.)	TCTV/Digital Lab		
3. Expand internet access and digital literacy through community engagement and inclusion to bridge the digital divide and empower the community.	3.2 Produce short videos, host classes, and be a digital help desk	TCTV		 
	3.3 Increase staff support to provide digital literacy education	TCTV/Digital Lab		
	3.4 Create digital media outreach & education materials on internet safety & security	TCTV/Digital Lab		 
	3.5 Create a map and brochure of public digital spaces and resources in Templeton	TCTV/Digital Lab		
	4.1 TCTV will test and utilize new and latest digital technologies to make	TCTV		

Project Focus Areas	
	Staff Capacity for Digital Equity A full- or part-time staff person to oversee, project manage, and execute municipal digital equity activities in coordination with municipal leadership, various municipal departments, stakeholders, and residents.
	Wi-Fi Access and Innovative Connectivity Technology Assessment, design, and establishment of an appropriate technology solution to provide in-unit access to the internet for residents living in affordable housing and/or low-income neighborhoods.
	Public Space Modernization Improvements to inadequate broadband infrastructure and digital use in public spaces, such as libraries, community centers, senior centers, educational facilities, workforce training locations, and commercial corridors.
	Connectivity for Economic Hardship Provision of Wi-Fi cellular hot spots to individuals lacking stable housing where they are unable to have a fixed broadband internet subscription.
	Digital Literacy Provision of training programs to improve digital literacy and skills to use devices, online resources, and other digital tools. Literacy program curricula and models may vary based on learner needs and familiarity with devices and the internet, such as in-person group instruction, asynchronous online instruction, or one-on-one training.
	Device Distribution and Refurbishment Provision of new or used internet-connected devices, such as laptops, tablets, and smart phones, to distribute to target populations.
	Education, Outreach, and Adoption Enrollment of eligible residents in discounted options for broadband, devices, and digital skills. Outreach may include workshops, call center phone banking, door-to-door outreach, online/printed communications, and public service announcements.

Next Steps

1. Public Comment Period (November 21 until December 6, 2024)
2. Submit Final Plan to MBI
3. Once Plan Approved – Proceed with Implementation Grant Application process with Technical Assistance from MRPC
4. Implement priority aspects of the plan to begin enhancing broadband access through increase availability, affordability, and adoptability

Public Comment Period Info:

*A **14-Day Public Review and Comment period** will follow the presentation of the Plan.*

Public Comments can be submitted beginning November 21 and until December 6, 2024. Comments should be submitted by email to: Town Administrator, Adam Lamontagne (alamontagne@TempletonMA.gov); or by mail or hand delivery to the following address:

Templeton Town Hall, Attn: Town Administrator - Digital Equity Plan Comments, 160 Patriots Road, East Templeton, MA 01438

A copy of the plan will be posted for review on the town webpage at www.templetonma.gov under the Town News section and a hard-copy will be available in the Town Administrator's office during normal business hours Monday-Thursday 7:30AM-4:30PM; Two additional days have been added to account for the Thanksgiving Holiday.

Questions ?

This project was funded by the Massachusetts Broadband Institute at the MassTech Collaborative under the Municipal Digital Equity Planning Program. Funding was provided by Massachusetts ARPA State Fiscal Recovery Funds

Prepared by the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission
for The Town of Templeton

Templeton Digital Equity Plan DRAFT – November 2024

MBI
MASSACHUSETTS
BROADBAND INSTITUTE


at the MassTech
Collaborative


Montachusett Regional Planning Commission
established 1968
Commonwealth of Massachusetts