



TRANSPORTATION & PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEETING

~ FINAL ACTIONS ~

Wednesday, April 24, 2024

3:00 PM

Sullivan Chamber
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

The Transportation and Public Utilities Committee will hold a public hearing on the Digital Navigator Pilot Program (DNP), a collaborative effort between the City of Cambridge Information Technology Department, Cambridge Public Library, Cambridge Public Schools Department, Just A Start, and Cambridge Community Television (CCTV) to discuss how this initiative is designed to support residents' digital needs.

Attendee Name	Present	Absent	Late	Arrived
Burhan Azeem	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Joan Pickett	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Paul F. Toner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ayesha M. Wilson	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

A communication was received from Maria McCauley, Director of Libraries, Sue Walsh, Assistant Director Adult and Family Services, and Patrick McCormick, CIO, transmitting a document relative to the Digital Equity and Digital Navigators Update.

A communication was received from Councillor Pickett, transmitting information regarding Cambridge Public Internet (CPI) WiFi Access Points.

A communication was received from Councillor Pickett, transmitting information relative to the City of Cambridge Comprehensive Digital Equity Study.



City of Cambridge

COF 2024 #48
IN CITY COUNCIL
April 24, 2024

INTRODUCTION

This is an update on Digital Equity progress including the Digital Navigator Program in Cambridge. Several departments and collaborating organizations have formed a Digital Equity coalition to ensure that all Cambridge residents have opportunities to access technology and related learning and skills building opportunities. Our collective efforts have focused on serving vulnerable and marginalized community members—those who face barriers to accessing technology and learning how to use technology to improve their lives.

DIGITAL EQUITY

Background and Vision

Inspired by our vision in which everyone has equitable opportunities to learn and thrive, Digital Equity means a Cambridge where everyone has equitable digital opportunities. The City of Cambridge and the Cambridge Public Library (CPL) are building on their digital equity work and expanding Digital Equity learning opportunities for the Cambridge community to address these barriers. In addition to partnering with local nonprofits on existing programs and new initiatives, the commitment to digital equity is also reflected in the City's budget with two new Library positions and one new Information Technology Department (ITD) role.

We continue to assess the needs of residents and library patrons and determining steps to implement innovations related to digital equity in partnership with nonprofits, schools, and other community partners. Our objective is to prioritize innovation programs so that community members have the information technology capacity and support they require for full societal participation. This has included convening a digital equity and inclusion coalition to guide digital equity efforts across the City.

Citywide Priorities

Based on the City's [Digital Equity in Cambridge Report](#) recommendations from March 2021, the City Departments, CPL, Cambridge Public School District (CPSD) and local nonprofit organizations have been partnering to build upon existing programs, jointly pursue opportunities, and develop new services to better serve Cambridge residents. Key efforts are highlighted below per report recommendations:

Report recommendation	Status	Efforts to date
Convene a digital equity and inclusion coalition to guide implementation efforts	Ongoing	Coalition actively meeting and pursuing opportunities including recently awarded Mass. Broadband Institute (MBI) funding
Expand the city's \$50,000 pilot program into a Digital Equity Fund emphasizing device and skills programs	Planned	The City Manager's Office, IT, Finance and Law are exploring options to establish a Digital Equity Fund
Consider establishing a community digital equity specialist position or similar public	Completed	CPL and ITD have established and budgeted for digital equity roles in

support function		their organizations
Engage local philanthropic organizations to broaden the reach of broadband equity initiatives	Planned	Discussions are exploring areas of mutual interest and availability of resources and funding for key programs
Partner with organizations that provide low-cost devices and training to Cambridge residents and expand loaner programs	Ongoing	In addition to CPL and CPSD programs, the City is working with Cambridge Community Television (CCTV), Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA), and Just-A-Start on new and existing programs
Establish a digital skills training corps	Ongoing	A Digital Navigators pilot program has been developed by ITD, CPL, CPSD, CCTV, and Just-A-Start with committed MBI and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding
Conduct a municipal broadband feasibility study that allows exploration of a variety of partnership and facilitation models	Completed	The City's municipal broadband study was published in March 2023 with next steps currently under development
Facilitate the provision of additional providers of low-cost service in more CHA developments	Completed	CHA contracted with Starry Internet, providing broadband services to most residential units
Expand public Wi-Fi and charging stations in core areas	Ongoing	Additional locations have been added with more expansion in the works
Promote the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) to provide relief for eligible residents on bills and purchases	Completed	Program promoted by CPSD, CPL, and City as well as low-income housing providers and ISPs but ends in May 2024

Digital Navigators Program (DNP) Pilot

A collaborative effort between City of Cambridge IT, Cambridge Public Library, Cambridge Public School Department, Just-A-Start, and CCTV to be funded by Mass Broadband Institute and ARPA in partnership with MassHire and Metro North.

The Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) is one of six Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (MassTech) divisions and was established under Chapter 231 of the Acts of 2008 with up to \$40 million bonding authorization to close broadband gaps. MBI provides ARPA and other funding to MA municipalities for broadband and digital equity programs including the Digital Equity Partnerships Program, the Municipal Digital Equity Planning Program, and the Municipal Digital Equity Implementation Program.

MassTech is a state agency that supports business formation and growth in the state's technology sector, helping Massachusetts lead in the global digital economy. MassTech aims to build strategies, strengthen connections, assist companies, make investments, and lead programs; develop meaningful collaborations across industry, academia, and government, turning shared challenges into economic opportunity; and support the Commonwealth's tech sector with a strategic focus on talent, ecosystems, and innovation infrastructure across key divisions and programs.

The MassHire Metro North Workforce Board (MNWB), incorporated in 1995 as the Metro North Regional Employment Board (REB), is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to develop partnerships, generate resources, and advocate for workforce solutions that result in a skilled workforce, prospering businesses, and equitable access to meaningful career pathways and quality employment for residents. MNWB serves as the Workforce Development Board (WDB) for the Metro North region of Massachusetts and the City Manager of the City of Cambridge serves as the Chief Local Official and is represented on the Board by leaders from the Department of Human Service Programs. As one of sixteen local Workforce Development Boards established in Massachusetts by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014, MNWB was formed to set local workforce policy, determine how state and federal funds are best used for workforce development, align the needs of employers to the needs of area residents, leverage partnerships to meet the region's workforce needs, and oversee the MassHire Metro North Career Centers (MNCC) where both job search and employer services are provided. The MNWB has identified the hiring and training of Digital Navigators as a key workforce development strategy for the region. In addition to helping residents access job search tools or unemployment assistance, the Digital Navigators gain skills and experience and are paid a living wage for the important work they do.

To implement DNP, Cambridge will be joining the regional effort known as the Digital Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Consortium with the first meeting scheduled for May 9, 2024. The Digital JEDI program will offer a suite of services, including recruiting, hiring, training, and supporting a cohort of 32 Digital Navigators (DNs) dedicated to priority communities. It includes tiered digital literacy classes at Career Centers and community-based organizations, as well as the distribution of high-quality refurbished laptops, peripherals, Internet access, and IT support for residents. The structure in each community is specifically tailored to meet its unique needs, ensuring a targeted and effective approach to addressing digital equity challenges. The May 9th kick-off session is expected to provide updates on program pre-implementation, discuss the shared collective vision of the Digital JEDI Consortium's structure and goals, review the working timeline for program implementation, and build relationships between partners.

CCTV is coordinating the recruitment of DNP staff on behalf of participating partner organizations and began recruitment with roles posted online starting April 22, 2024. A Cambridge DNP will provide ARPA-eligible beneficiaries with effective outreach, education, and assistance with affordable alternatives to the soon to be terminated ACP. Navigators will also be trained to connect residents to a wide array of social service supports as they come to know the needs of families they serve. CCTV and Just-A-Start, essential partners with aligned missions and goals, are part of a regional proposal to the Mass Broadband Institute to secure funding to support Digital Navigators (DN) in their organizations; CCTV will also employ a coordinator as part of that project who will both serve residents and coordinate the DNs across partners to build community, skills and consistency in DN supports for residents.

Program activities include:

- Hire and train digital navigators to be placed in Cambridge Public Library and Cambridge Public Schools to work in partnership with navigators at CCTV and Just-A-Start.

- Coordinate meetings for navigators across the city to share best practices, challenging cases, and community resources. This will be in alignment with regional efforts supported through the MBI Digital Navigator coalition.
- Ensure that data is collected on all residents served through the program and that ARPA eligibility is established.
- Support navigators in providing a menu of supports and services to low-income residents, including: identifying and assessing individuals' digital needs; assisting residents to sign up with low-cost internet providers and enroll qualified residents in the affordable internet plans; troubleshooting connectivity issues in residents' apartments; connecting residents to free/low-cost computers, hot spots, or related equipment; assisting residents in setting up a computer, tablet or other devices for home use; tracking individual residents' progress and types of requests, and keeping accurate and timely records.
- Report quarterly on activities provided through the program and document lessons learned that would support replication.

Municipal Digital Equity Planning (MDEP) Program

Cambridge was recently approved for participation in MBI's Municipal Digital Equity Planning (MDEP) Program and will be eligible to reserve digital equity implementation funding. The intent of the MDEP Program is to enable municipalities to mobilize, start-up, and implement digital equity activities locally to access a one-time grant up to \$100,000 per municipality to execute a project (or projects) defined in their Digital Equity Plan that MBI deems of sufficient standard. Project implementation will increase access and usage of the internet for the populations most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Specifically, the MDEP Program will accomplish three goals:

1. Enable municipalities to make local digital equity investments that will increase access, adoption, and usage of the internet for the populations most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Transition municipalities from the planning to implementation phase by providing funds to execute a project (or projects) indicated in their Digital Equity Plan, Digital Equity Planning Charette, or pre-existing plan deemed sufficient by MBI.
3. Encourage collaboration and synergy with the Digital Equity Partnerships Program, which includes statewide and regional grantees with high capacity for digital equity work.

Participating MDEP municipalities may select one or more of the following focus areas for implementation:

- Staff Capacity for Digital Equity
- Wi-Fi Access and Innovative Connectivity Technology
- Public Space Modernization
- Connectivity for Economic Hardship
- Digital Literacy
- Device Distribution and Refurbishment
- Education, Outreach, and Adoption

Other Citywide Program Work

CHA FTTP Pilot Project

The Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA) and the City of Cambridge (the “City”) intend to increase the affordability and quality of broadband access by facilitating competitive wired broadband service options to low-income residents of the City. The goal of project is to provide the necessary infrastructure to support a competing option for high-speed wired broadband service at three CHA sites: the Frank J. Manning elderly housing high-rise in Central Square and the Washington Elms and Newtowne Court apartment complexes. The City and CHA are working closely with MIT, who is anticipated to provide dark fiber infrastructure following on prior generous support for Cambridge Digital Equity initiatives.

Danehy Park Public Wi-Fi Project

Many public buildings and parks across the City offer public wi-fi internet access, but one of the largest most utilized parks in the City, Danehy Park, has proven difficult given its isolated location and lack of nearby City buildings and infrastructure. Unfortunately given waste mitigation and construction delays for the new Sports Pavilion building and park improvements, and related dependencies for the needed fiber cable infrastructure, this project is on hold with a revised timeline TBD.

Digital Equity Fund

As noted in the table of Digital Equity Report recommendations, the City is exploring options to establish a Digital Equity Fund. While the structure, logistics, and governance for the fund is under development, the City is pleased to report that initial funding has been identified to support digital equity. As part of the recently concluded cable television license renewal process, the City negotiated a one-time \$312,000 contribution from Comcast that will be directed to support the City’s digital equity efforts.

Cambridge Public Library Program Work

CPL is addressing the below recommendations outlined in the Digital Equity in Cambridge report:

Recommendation	Status	Efforts to date
Participate in the City’s digital equity and inclusion coalition to guide implementation efforts	Ongoing	Actively meeting with the coalition
Planning for digital equity specialist positions at CPL	In process	Hired a Digital Equity Manager, Gina Josette Rivera, and laying groundwork for recruiting a Digital Equity Coordinator
Engage local philanthropic organizations to broaden the reach of broadband equity initiatives (I.e., CPL Foundation & Friends)	Completed	Received supplemental funding for circulating wi-fi Hotspots from Friends
Partner with organizations that provide low-cost devices and	In process	Engaged with the Community Learning Center (CLC) and CCTV. The Federal Affordable

training to City residents and to expand loaner & promoting affordable connectivity programs		Connectivity Program is ending at the end of April 2024. Team members will focus on highlighting Internet Essentials
Build onto our digital skills training offerings and develop learning curriculum and program at the library	Ongoing	Launched drop in 1-1 Tech Help and technology classes; classes occur at least weekly
Work with City IT to explore expanding public Wi-Fi outside of branches	Completed	Public wi-fi network is now outside O’Connell Branch and Donnelly Field and Rindge field have outdoor public wi-fi now as well, not too far from some branch libraries

Programming and Training for Skills Development

The Library offers Basic Tech Classes on a monthly basis, offers 1-1 Tech Help at three branch locations, and had been offering ACP information sessions and sign-up help. Going forward, with the likely sunseting of federal ACP, we will focus more on promoting Internet Essentials to community members.

- In the first 9 months of FY24 (July 2023-March 2024) CPL held 153 Digital Equity programs attended by 491 patrons.
- In the first 9 months of FY24 (July 2023-March 2024) CPL connected 385,459 patron devices with wi-fi sessions inside the Library.
- In the first 9 months of FY24 (July 2023- March 2024) CPL provided patrons with 57,972 internet computer sessions from a desktop at a Library.

CPL class offerings included three levels: Get Started: Mouse & Keyboard; Email Basics; Internet Basics; Google Sheets Basics; More Practice: Email Tips & Tricks; Google Docs Tips & Tricks; Internet Safety; and Grow Your Skills: Intro to Library e-Resources; Intro to LinkedIn Learning; and Create Resumes with Google Docs.

1-1 Tech Help

From July-April 2024 staff hosted 176 Tech Help Sessions for 340 patrons across three libraries. One hundred twelve sessions were held at the Main Library for 211 patrons. At Central Square we hosted 26 drop-in sessions for 93 patrons; at Boudreau Branch we hosted 38 sessions and assisted 36 patrons. Through these 1-1 Tech Help sessions CPL is building a community of driven and engaged patrons looking to improve their tech skills. It is imperative to the community members attending these sessions to build the tech skills essential to participating in civic life here in Cambridge and beyond.

Free Devices and Support

Attachment: Digital Equity and Digital Navigators Update for City Council - 2024 April (COF 2024 #48 : A communication was received from

We continue to circulate Chromebooks, hotspots, portable DVD players, GoPro cameras, computer accessories and provide printers and scanners across all our seven libraries. In April 2024, CPL started a pilot program circulating Chromebooks with built in wi-fi service.

Next Steps

Throughout 2024, CPL plans to expand Basic Tech Classes to all branch locations. We will onboard our staff to assist patrons with these classes. In partnership with our STEAM team and Matt Landry from CPSD, we are working on organizing AI workshops. Also, as noted above, with ACP winding down, we are working with ISPs and partner organizations to inform impacted residents and promote and support other options including Lifeline, Internet Essentials and Starry Connect plans.

Going forward, the Library will coordinate efforts for Tech Goes Home across branch locations and collaborate with CLC to incorporate language levels for tech classes. CPL is currently exploring a possible exciting collaboration this year with the Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society on ChatGPT and AI. We consistently assess technology needs for our programs and Takeout Tech with a focus on expanding device options for digital literacy programs.

We plan to establish a digital equity webpage presence that City partners can link to promote updates to the Cambridge community. In collaboration with external instructors and facilitators, we will expand Digital Equity offerings. It is our goal to continue developing a strategic framework within our digital equity initiatives that will expand our capacity for sustainable programs in the long-term.

Conclusion

Work continues to be done by City partners on deepening and broadening access to technology and learning opportunities for the Cambridge community, especially for residents who face barriers to access. Partners are passionate in our efforts to close the digital divide and level the playing field for Cambridge residents who have been left out of opportunities due to the inability to leverage technology to further their career and life goals.

Maria McCauley, Director of Libraries

Sue Walsh, Assistant Director Adult and Family Services

Patrick McCormick, CIO



City of Cambridge

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CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC INTERNET (CPI) WIFI ACCESS POINTS

The City of Cambridge is proud to provide free public WiFi at all public libraries, schools, C buildings, youth centers and select parks around Cambridge. A goal of our public WiFi program is to bridge the digital divide in Cambridge that disproportionately affects low income households. Lack of internet access often translates to fewer opportunities for residents to engage and prosper in today's digital society. By providing free public WiFi, the City of Cambridge aims to increase access to the internet in an effort to deliver economic and educational opportunities and benefits to its residents.

Interactive Map of Locations

Wireless access to the Internet is available via the Cambridge Public Internet (CPI) at the following locations:

[View larger map](#)

Attachment: Cambridge Public Internet (CPI) WiFi Access Points - City of Cambridge, MA (COF 2024 #49 : A communication was received from



[Download high-resolution map \(PDF\).](#)

List of Locations

- All Public Libraries ([Locations](#))
 - **Outdoor WiFi access available at:**
 - Main Library, 449 Broadway ([Directions](#))
 - Central Square Library, 45 Pearl St ([Directions](#))
 - O'Connell Branch Library, 48 Sixth St ([Directions](#))
- All Schools ([Locations](#))
 - **Note:** Tobin School is no longer a WiFi access point
- City Hall ([Directions](#))
- Senior Center at 806 Massachusetts Avenue ([Directions](#))
- Lombardi Building at 831 Massachusetts Avenue ([Directions](#))
- City Hall Annex at 344 Broadway ([Directions](#))
- Water Department at 250 Fresh Pond Parkway ([Directions](#))

- 51 Inman Street ([Directions](#))
- Moore Youth Center, 12 Gilmore Street ([Directions](#))
- Hoyt Field, 12 Gilmore Street ([Directions](#)) - **Outdoor WiFi access available**
- West Cambridge Youth Center, 830 Huron Ave ([Directions](#))
- Moses Youth Center, 243 Harvard Street ([Directions](#))
- Frisoli Youth Center, 61 Willow Street ([Directions](#))
- Gately Youth Center, 70R Rindge Ave ([Directions](#))
- Gold Star Pool, 123 Berkshire Street ([Directions](#))
- Fresh Pond Golf Course, 691 Huron Ave ([Directions](#)) - **Outdoor WiFi access available**
- Sennott Park, 305 Broadway ([Directions](#)) - **Outdoor WiFi access available**
- Donnelly Field, York & Berkshire Street ([Directions](#)) - **Outdoor WiFi access available**
- Rindge Field ([Directions](#)) - **Outdoor WiFi access available**

Connecting to CPI

1. Provide your own WiFi enabled laptop or device.
2. Connect to the **Cambridge Public Internet** wireless network



City of Cambridge

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April 24, 2024

City of Cambridge Releases Comprehensive Digital Equity Study

April 20, 2021 • 3 years ago

The information on this page may be outdated as it was published 3 years ago.

The City of Cambridge today released Digital Equity in Cambridge: Data and Strategic Recommendations, the final report for the city's comprehensive digital equity study. The report provides a complete and clear understanding of the problems and gaps preventing Cambridge residents from making the most effective and meaningful use of broadband (high speed internet access) in the city. Additionally, the report suggests a range of solutions for the city to pursue to address the findings that emerged around broadband access, affordability, digital skills, and device ownership.

Cambridge partnered with CTC Technology (CTC) to conduct the study. CTC is a nationally recognized firm that offers independent strategic, technical, and financial guidance primarily to public sector and nonprofit entities. The report will serve as the foundation for the city's future digital equity and broadband initiatives. CTC has helped develop digital equity strategies for other cities including Austin, Texas; Portland, Oregon; and Seattle, Washington.

"We are creating a comprehensive approach to ensure digital equity and 21st century broadband access in our city," said Cambridge City Manager Louis A. DePasquale. "The Digital Equity in Cambridge report will inform our strategy to ensure affordable broadband access, digital skills, and device ownership for all residents."

Key Findings

The Digital Equity in Cambridge report surfaces and explores key findings based on the robust data collected, including:

- Comcast remains an effective monopoly in much of Cambridge’s fixed internet market, but NetBlazr has expanded, and a new provider, Starry, recently began competing in the city;
- Comcast’s \$10 Internet Essentials plan appears significantly underused by potentially eligible residents in Cambridge;
- Speed tests conducted over several weeks in Comcast customer homes demonstrate a need for user education in managing in-home networks;
- Citywide internet usage survey shows most residents are connected to the internet but point to more problems with affordability, devices, and skills for older and lower-income residents;
- Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA) internet usage survey finds many residents face significant challenges related to affordability, device maintenance, and computer skills;
- City stakeholders defined a variety of gaps and made programmatic suggestions;
- Interviews with residents of CHA and subsidized housing units reveal some pay \$10 monthly while others pay \$264 monthly to Comcast; and
- Strategies outlined by subject-matter experts and practitioners in other cities that have proven effective elsewhere in the country.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has put a spotlight on the critical role that internet access, device ownership, and digital skills play in successful online learning, job searching, remote work, and telemedicine,” said City of Cambridge Director of Communications Lee Gianetti. “This new report provides the city with a framework for expanding existing programs, creating new initiatives, and learning from digital equity efforts in other cities.”

Recommendations

The study provides a range of recommended strategies the city can deploy to address the digital equity challenges within Cambridge, including:

- Convene a digital equity and inclusion coalition to guide implementation efforts;
- Expand the city’s \$50,000 pilot program into a Digital Equity Fund emphasizing device and skills programs;

- Consider establishing a community digital equity specialist position or similar public support function;
- Engage local philanthropic organizations to broaden the reach of broadband equity initiatives;
- Partner with organizations that provide low-cost devices and training to Cambridge residents and expand loaner programs;
- Establish a digital skills training corps;
- Conduct a municipal broadband feasibility study that allows exploration of a variety of partnership and facilitation models;
- Facilitate the provision of additional providers of low-cost service in more CHA developments;
- Expand public Wi-Fi and charging stations in core areas, such as Porter and Central squares; and
- Promote the new Emergency Broadband Benefit program to provide temporary relief on bills and purchases for eligible Cambridge residents.

“In the 21st century, digital equity spans nearly every dimension of life, from education and work, to social engagement and civic participation,” said Cambridge Chief Information Officer Patrick McCormick. “Like other inequities, the pandemic exacerbated how anyone lacking online tools and connectivity became disadvantaged in their daily lives. Fortunately, the pandemic also created richer data and tangible use cases to spark conversations and inform analysis. The Digital Equity Study provides clear and compelling insights and recommendations to build a more equitable and inclusive digital future for Cambridge residents and businesses.”

In response to some early study findings and challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Cambridge has already taken specific actions to:

- Launch a \$50,000 pilot program to assist up to 415 families in obtaining \$10 Internet Essentials subscriptions;
- Redirect study resources to allow CTC later this year to conduct a preliminary high-level engineering and cost estimation work for high-speed residential broadband service in three CHA developments: Newtowne Court, Washington Elms, and the Manning Apartments;
- Engage in preliminary discussions with Life Science Cares, a nonprofit organization that funds anti-poverty programs and expressed interest in being part of a public-private partnership to address digital inequities;

- Accelerate the Cambridge Public Schools laptop and hotspot provision efforts, providing all students with laptops and (where needed) hotspots. The Cambridge Public Library also began its first-ever technology lending programs; and
- Partner with the Cambridge Public Library, the MetroNorth Regional Employment Board, and Cambridge Community Foundation to provide essential technology, including Chromebooks, hotspots, and webcams, to adult learners participating in Cambridge Community Learning Center programs.

Background on Methodology

This study, prepared throughout late 2019 and 2020, did not presuppose what the problems were or what the solutions should be. It thoroughly explored access, affordability, digital skills, and device ownership. The study methodology included the following activities:

- Analyzed consumer and FCC pricing and availability data to understand the local broadband market, the presence of competition, and any market changes since the City of Cambridge commissioned its earlier broadband study;
- Through a variety of means (surveys, resident interviews, and conversations with local broadband providers) gathered data on the usage of existing low-cost broadband subsidy programs, particularly the \$10 Comcast Internet Essentials program;
- Conducted a statistically valid mail survey of a sample of the entire city population to understand broadband usage patterns, sentiments, and gaps;
- Conducted a statistically valid mail survey of a sample of residents of the Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA) and of subsidized housing for a closer look at lower-income residents and any challenges they face;
- Interviewed a range of stakeholders representing city departments, nonprofits, schools, library, and others (we also have appended the work of the Cambridge Nonprofit Coalition, which separately conducted a survey of local nonprofit staff);
- Interviewed a sampling of Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA) and subsidized housing residents who volunteered to be interviewed as part of our mail survey, to understand what they pay for services, and what challenges they face;
- Conducted in-home internet speed tests of Comcast customers to take hourly measurements over a period of weeks to evaluate service quality and assess potential sources of reported problems, albeit at an anecdotal level;

- Interviewed practitioners and experts who have studied or implemented digital equity plans and programs in other cities to glean lessons and suggest strategies that might assist the city and its stakeholders in implementing solutions; and
- Developed several strategic and programmatic recommendations based on all of the above research and data, informed as well by the examples of models in other cities.

Creating a digital equity and inclusion coalition to help guide and support implementation of study recommendations will be one of the early action items. While the Digital Equity in Cambridge study lays out strategies to address digital equity challenges within Cambridge, implementation will require engagement from a variety of internal and external stakeholders and the establishment of an implementation timeline. Detailed planning and implementation plans will be managed by staff from the Information Technology Department and the City Manager's Office.

Download a copy of the report, *Digital Equity in Cambridge: Data and Strategic Recommendations*. Print copies are available upon request. Please call the City Manager's Office at 617-349-4300 to schedule a pick-up.

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