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# THE RURAL RESCUE PLAN



PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE IN  
WESTERN  
MASSACHUSETTS

a Critical Need for Regional Investment and Revitalization

Hon. Suzanne M. Bump, Auditor of the Commonwealth  
Dr. Ben Tafoya, Director – Division of Local Mandates

April 9, 2022

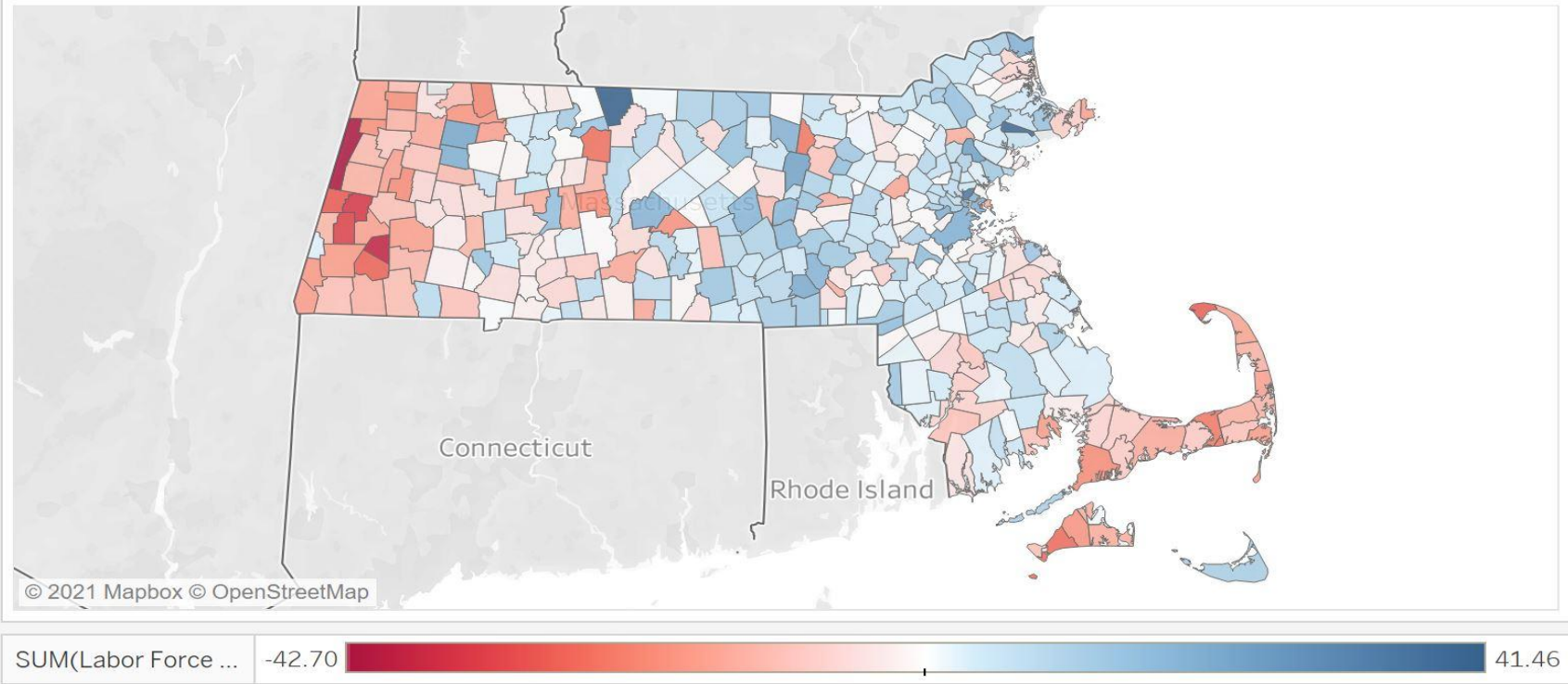
OFFICE OF THE STATE AUDITOR  
SUZANNE M. BUMP

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*Making government work*

# A Divided Commonwealth

Labor Force Rate of Change 2010 to 2020 by Municipality



# Methodology

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- Stakeholder Conversations
- Survey of Municipal Officials

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# The Situation - Transportation



*Left photo: Damage to Chestnut Hill Road in Warwick (Franklin County) as a result of a storm in July 2021. (Photo courtesy of Brian Snell, member of the Warwick Selectboard). Right photo: Flagg Road in Orange (Franklin County) after storms in July 2021. (Photo courtesy of the Office of State Representative Susannah Whipps).*

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# The Situation – Municipal Buildings

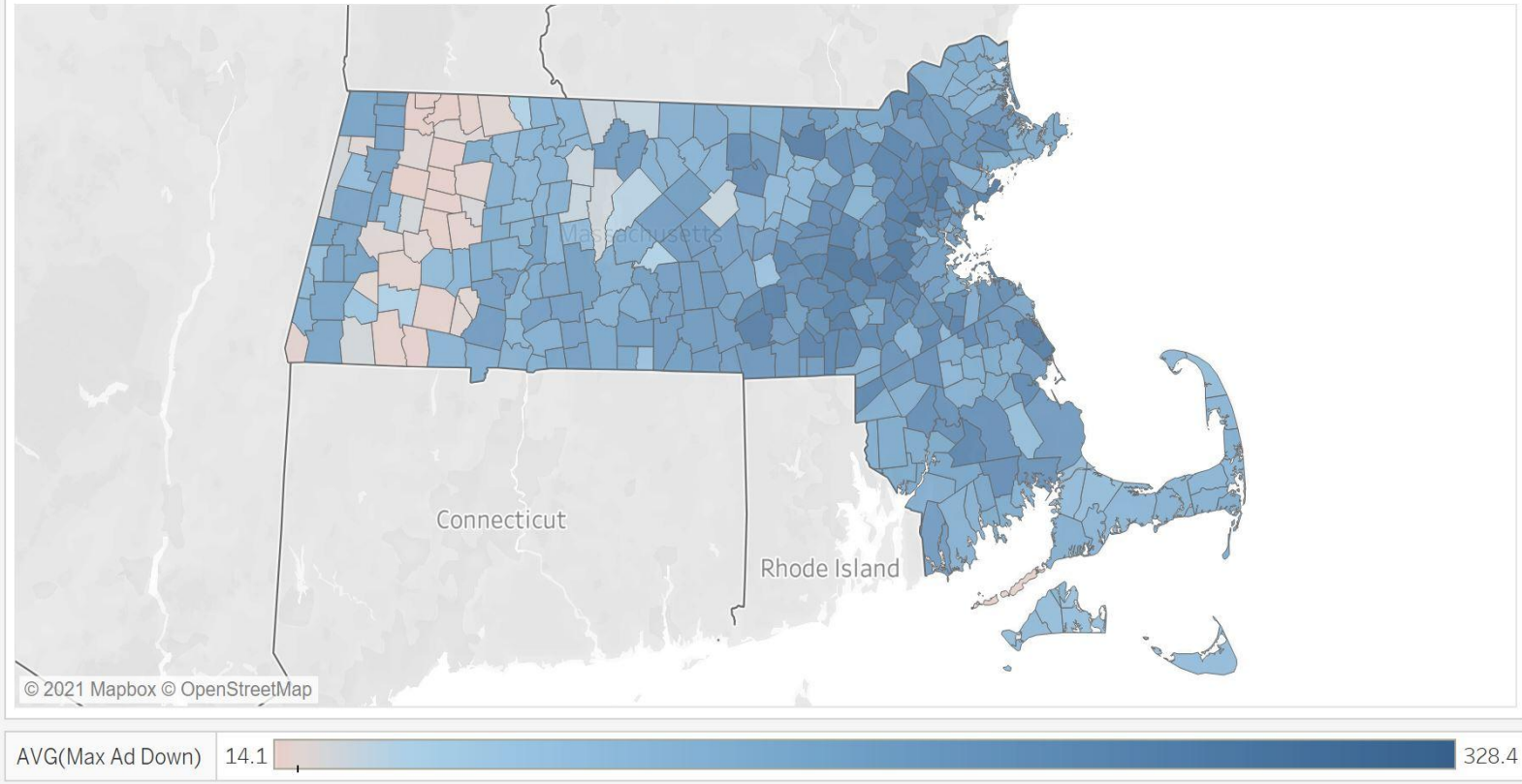


*Photo of the rusting condition of the ramp at the Deerfield Regional Senior Center. Photo courtesy of the Town of Deerfield.*

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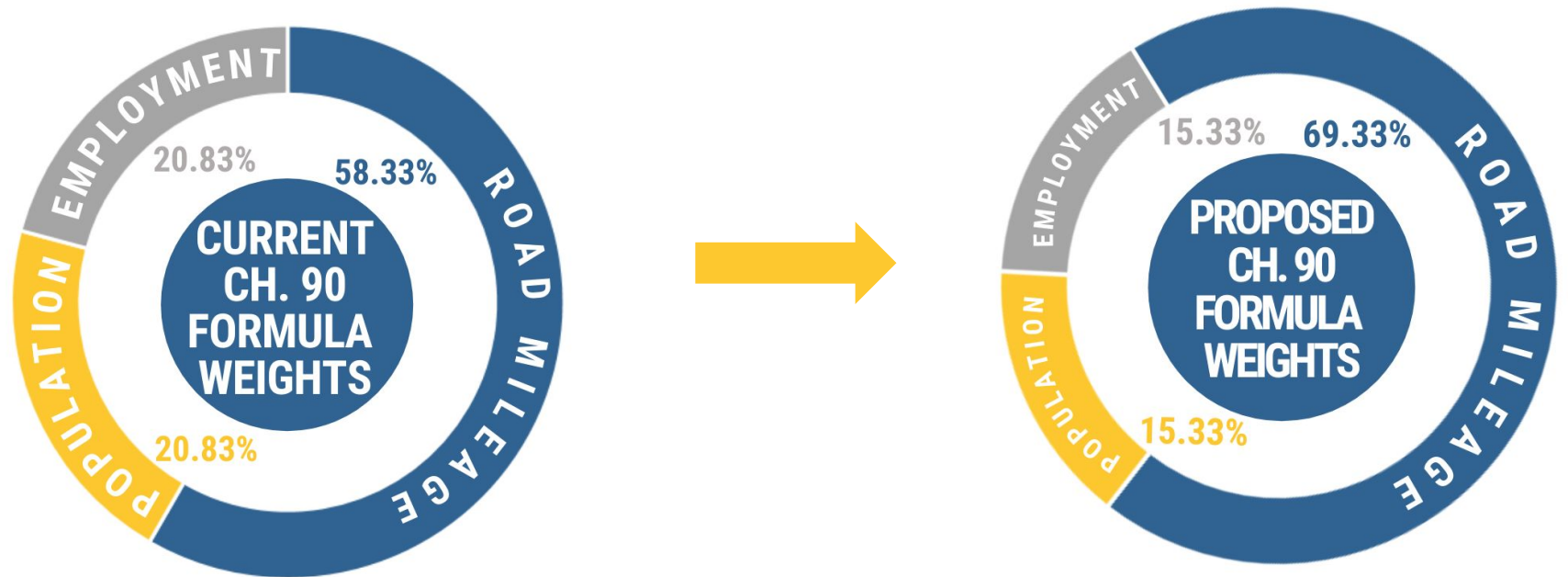
# The Situation – Broadband

Average Download Speed per Community, mbps



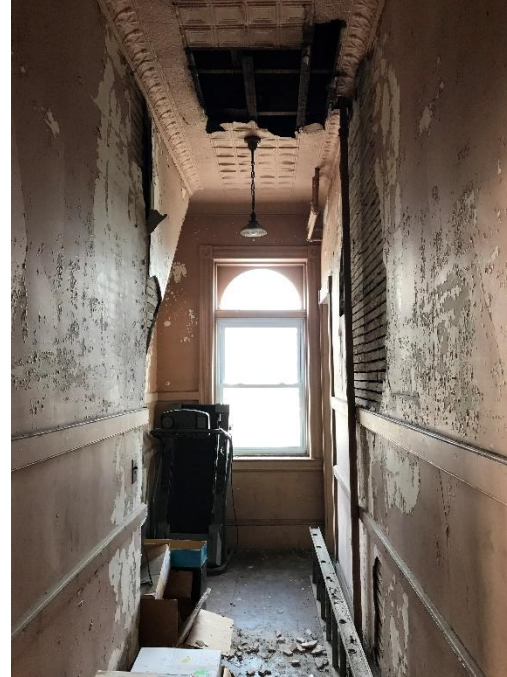
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# Recommendation: Transportation



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# Recommendation: Municipal Buildings



*Left photo: The booking desk at the Pittsfield Police Department. Note: Since this photo was taken in 2011, the hardware on the desk has been updated, but other conditions still remain. (Photo courtesy of the Pittsfield Police Department). Center Photo: Deteriorating conditions depicted from the upper floors of the Deerfield Regional Senior Center. Photo courtesy of the Town of Deerfield. Right Photo: Recent images of the Greenfield Police Department (Franklin County) depict the lack of storage space and the need for infrastructure repairs. (Photo courtesy of the Office of Greenfield Mayor Roxann Wedegartner)*

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# Recommendation: Broadband

## BUSINESS

### Business Monday: The rural connectivity dilemma

Are you a Berkshires resident trying to work remotely in this pandemic? You may be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

BY JULIA DIXON  
POSTED ON FEBRUARY 1, 2021

### Egremont officials sign broadband pact to 'light up' unserved areas of town

One of the provisions of the FC–Town agreement is that FC will offer a 50% promotional discount on installation charges to all Egremont residents regardless of location — even locations already cabled — who sign up within six months of the effective date of the agreement.

BY TERRY COWGILL  
POSTED ON APRIL 26, 2021



### Governor, State Officials Mark 'Last Mile' Connections in Becket

By Tammy Daniels

iBerkshires Staff

07:57PM / Tuesday, August 31, 2021

[Print Story](#) | [Email Story](#)

BECKET, Mass. — Heather Anello has been trying to keep her businesses running on insufficient broadband for years.

"We have three dwellings there, the liquor store, the dispensary and the restaurant. We had very low bandwidth, we had three routers," she told the large gathering Tuesday that included Gov. Charlie Baker outside the "fiber hub" next to Town Hall. "We had to make very tough and difficult and costly decisions to provide competent wireless services, not only to our customers but just things as simple as credit card processing."

Customers would try to download documents and get stalled, go home to try again, and then be back asking if her internet was working. Credit card processing would freeze up midstream and the security system for her boutique marijuana dispensary would suck 90 percent of her bandwidth.



Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito worked closely with the partners — down to the status of the wires and poles, say local officials.

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# Since the release....

- Legislative advocacy for recommendations
  - Stakeholder presentations to garner support ... letters from PV Planning, FRCOG and Berkshire Planning
  - Extensive press coverage
  - Infrastructure spending on the way
  - Still gaps ... municipal buildings
  - Other areas are equally valid such as water/sewer/stormwater, housing, public transportation
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# **We need your advocacy.**

*If important to you, speak to your legislators and help them with advocacy.*

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**Dr. Ben Tafoya, Director**  
Ben.Tafoya@sao.state.ma.us  
857-242-5428

Mass.gov/Auditor  
Twitter: @MassAuditor

Mass.gov/RuralRescuePlan

