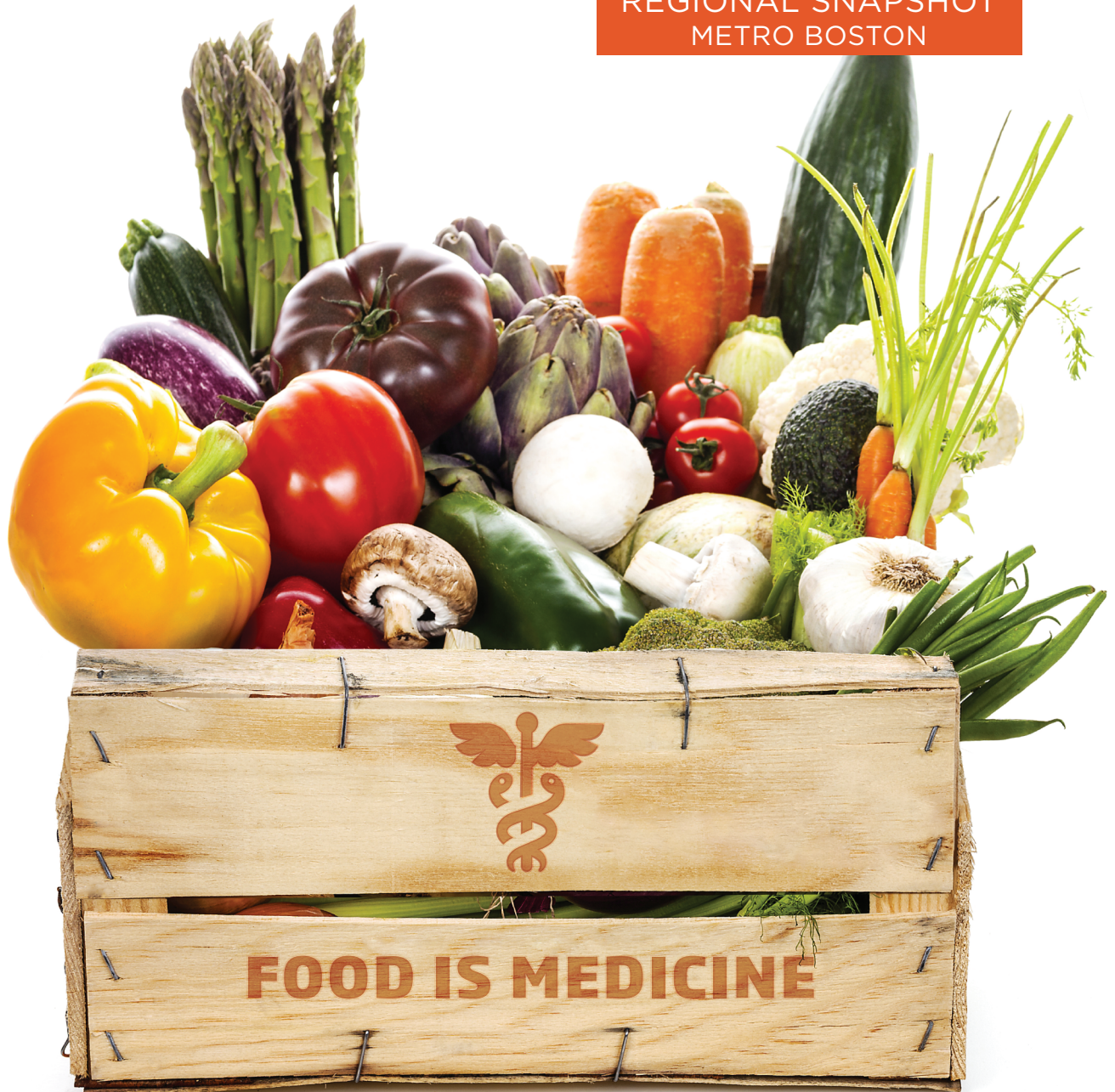


MASSACHUSETTS

Food is Medicine

STATE PLAN

REGIONAL SNAPSHOT
METRO BOSTON



JUNE 2019

Regional Snapshot

METRO BOSTON

MIDDLESEX, SUFFOLK, AND NORFOLK COUNTIES⁶

Massachusetts' Metro Boston region encompasses the 85 cities and towns of Middlesex, Suffolk, and Norfolk Counties. While most of the region's rates of chronic disease are no higher than the remainder of the state, the concentration of food insecurity is exceptionally high. When paired with high rates of no vehicle access, Malden, Chelsea, Boston, and Quincy are priority towns for Food is Medicine interventions according to our Food is Medicine Priority Level analysis. Economic hardship, especially as evidenced by lack of affordable housing, affects community health and is a barrier to obtaining care. Ethnic diversity, while a strength in this region, poses concerns about the availability of linguistically and culturally appropriate services.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Housing Cost Burdens

In Metro Boston, there are many areas where housing costs are very high compared to household income. About half of households in Roxbury and Malden, and about a third of households in Chelsea and Quincy, spend 50% or more of their household income on rent.¹ Despite a relatively strong national and local economy, the number of households severely burdened by housing costs (50% or more of household income spent on housing costs) increased between 2007 and 2017 in Boston.² Lack of affordable housing means that low-income residents may cut back on other basic

needs due to the high cost of housing relative to their incomes.³

Ethnic Diversity

Priority areas of Boston, Chelsea, Malden, and Quincy are rich in ethnic diversity, compared to the rest of the state. Chelsea is the most diverse, with 45.6% of the population born outside the U.S., and 70.4% who speak a non-English language at home.⁴ Potential language barriers and issues related to immigration status should be considered by community-based organizations when designing and promoting services. Nonprofit and other advocacy organizations that work with these communities can be strong partners in ensuring that Food is Medicine services reflect and continue to be shaped by their preferences and values.

Racial Disparities

Historic racial discrimination in Boston has also led to massive wealth gaps, which place non-white households at greater risk of food insecurity. In 2017, the Boston Globe reported that the median household wealth (which takes into consideration total assets and debts) was \$247,500 for whites, \$8 for US-born blacks, \$12,000 for Caribbean blacks, \$3,020 for Puerto Ricans and \$0 for Dominicans.⁵ Unfortunately, these stunning racial wealth disparities drive adverse health outcomes for many people of color in the Boston area.

Regional Listening Session Themes: *March 1, 2018, Metro Boston*

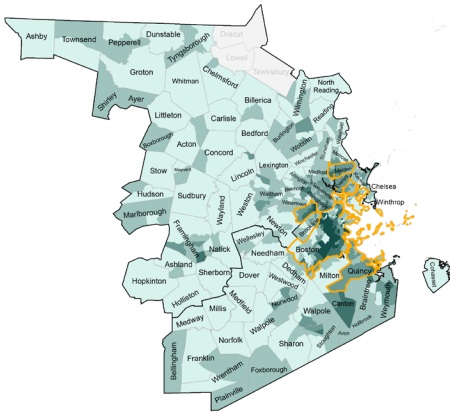
- While the number of FIM programs in Metro Boston is a great asset, it can also make coordination between programs difficult, leading to confusion in the community about program eligibility and operation.

FOOD IS MEDICINE INDICATORS OF NEED

METRO BOSTON SNAPSHOT

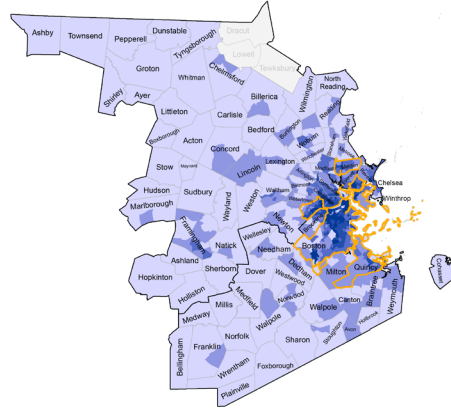
MASSACHUSETTS 2018

FOOD INSECURITY



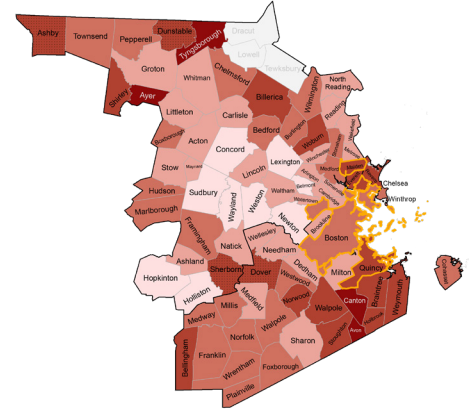
January 2019; Projected Coordinate System: NAD 1983 2011 StatePlane Massachusetts Mainland FIPS 2001; Sources: US Census, Feeding America

VEHICLE ACCESS

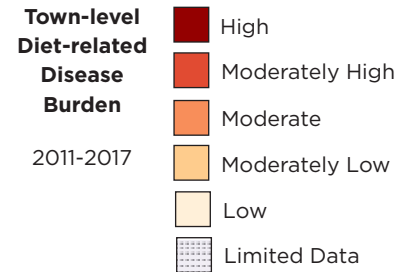
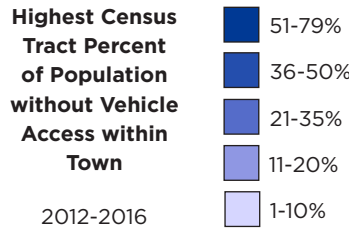
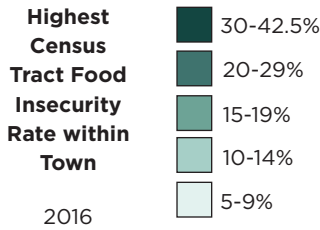


January 2019; Projected Coordinate System: NAD 1983 2011 StatePlane Massachusetts Mainland FIPS 2001; Sources: US Census, ACS 2012-2016 5-year Estimates

DIET-RELATED CHRONIC DISEASE BURDEN



January 2019; Projected Coordinate System: NAD 1983 2011 StatePlane Massachusetts Mainland FIPS 2001; Sources: US Census, MassDPH (Massachusetts Acute Care Database/BRFSS), Massachusetts Cancer Registry



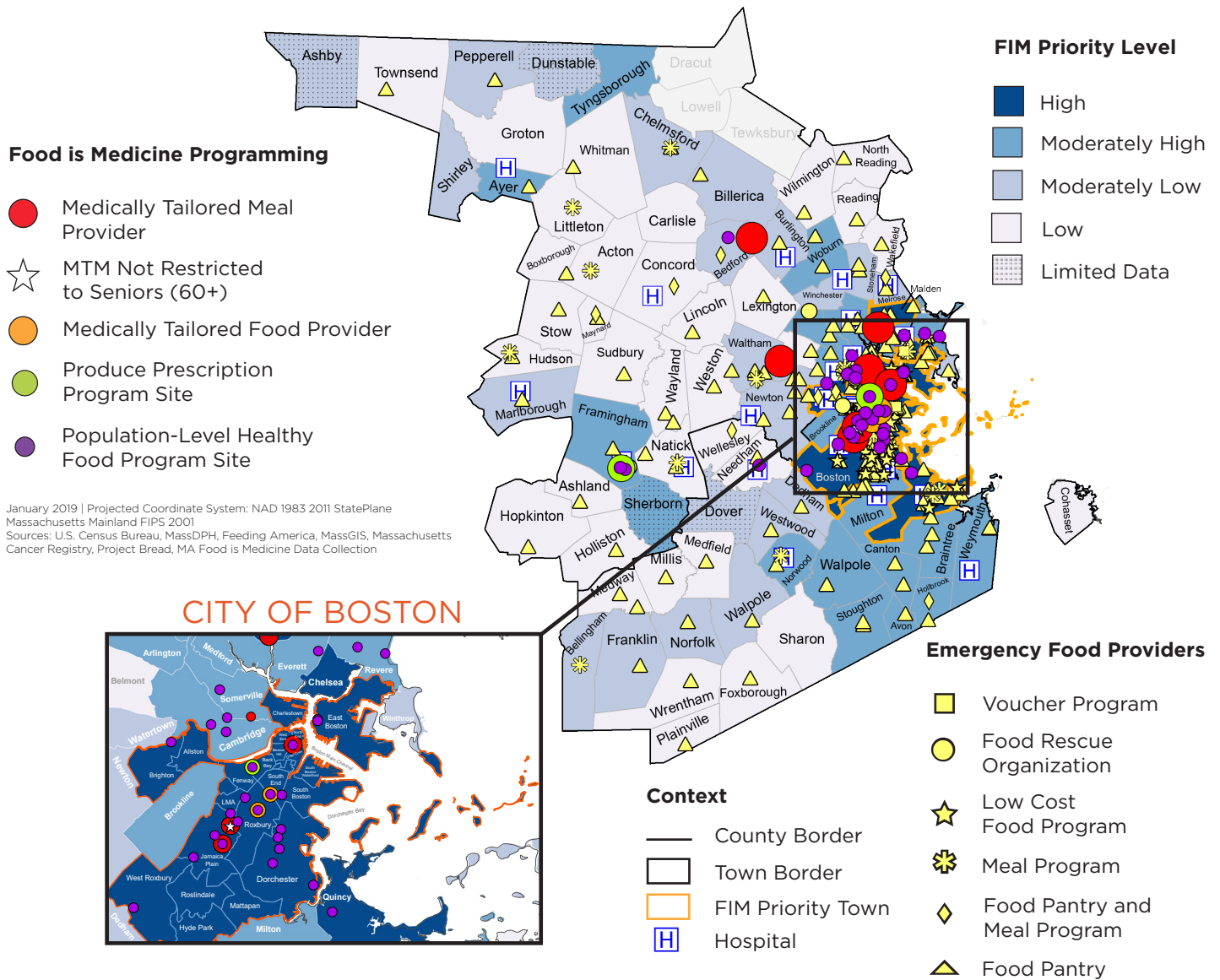
Appendix Table 4: Food is Medicine Indicators of Need, Metro Boston

Food is Medicine Indicators of Need	Regional Data
Food Insecurity	Nearly 40% of the region's census tracts have food insecurity rates higher than the state average (10.9%) with the highest rates concentrated around the urban core. Food insecurity rates reach as high as 38% of the population in the Roxbury neighborhood of Boston. Outside of Boston, food insecurity is high in Malden and Quincy, where in some communities up to a quarter of households are food insecure. ⁷
Vehicle Access	Many neighborhoods of Boston are within a ten-minute walk of a subway line, key bus route, or commuter rail station; however, significant portions of Dorchester, Hyde Park, Jamaica Plain, Mattapan, and South Boston have longer walks to rapid transit. Without access to vehicles, these residents must rely on infrequent buses or other modes. ⁸ In Roxbury, a neighborhood that has historically been underserved by public transportation, only 50% of residents have access to a vehicle. ⁹ In Malden, Chelsea, and Quincy, there are even larger areas that are only serviced by infrequent bus routes.
Chronic Disease	Almost half of the cities rated for highest prevalence of HIV in the state are located in Metro Boston, including Boston and Chelsea, which are ranked 2 nd and 4 th for highest HIV prevalence in the state. ¹⁰ Chelsea, Boston, and Revere have some of the highest adult asthma rates in the state. ¹¹

FOOD IS MEDICINE PRIORITY ANALYSIS

METRO BOSTON SNAPSHOT

MASSACHUSETTS 2018



INNOVATION IN METRO BOSTON

Boston is home to one of the only medically tailored meal programs in the state that serves people under the age of 60. In 2018, Community Servings provided 650,000 made-from-scratch, medically tailored meals to 2,300 clients with complex nutritional needs, 66% of whom are younger than 60. Community Servings’ on-staff Registered Dietitian Nutritionists develop nutrition care plans to help manage medical conditions and provide guidance for managing nutrition-related medication side effects and weight loss or gain. While Community Servings’ meals have profound effects on its clients’ health outcomes and health care costs, the high proportion of individuals under 60 they serve points to a large unmet need for Food is Medicine interventions outside of Community Servings’ service area. Recognizing unmet needs such as this, and that malnutrition is a costly, prevalent problem for the health care system, Community Servings advocates for the integration of medically tailored meals and supportive nutrition services into public and private health care models.

Endnotes

- ¹ *Massachusetts Town-level Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey*, CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTIONS-MDPH, (2018).
- ² Chris Salviati, *2018 Cost Burden Report: Despite Improvements, Affordability Issues are Immense*, APARTMENT LIST: RENTONOMICS, (2018).
- ³ *Rental Burdens: Rethinking Affordability Measures*. U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT OFFICE OF POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH, https://www.huduser.gov/portal/pdredge/pdr_edge_featd_article_092214.html (last accessed Mar. 19, 2019).
- ⁴ *Selected Demographic Table: Selected Social Characteristics (DPO2)*, AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY 2013-2017 5-YEAR ESTIMATES, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU.
- ⁵ Akilah Johnson. That was no typo: The median net worth of black Bostonians really is \$8. THE BOSTON GLOBE. Dec 11, 2017.
- ⁶ Minus Lowell, Dracut, Tewksbury
- ⁷ Craig Gundersen et al., *Map the Meal Gap 2018: A Report on County and Congressional District Food Insecurity and County Food Cost in the United States in 2016*, FEEDING AMERICA, (2018).
- ⁸ *Go Boston 2030 Vision and Action Plan*. BOSTON TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT, (2017).
- ⁹ *Household Size by Vehicle Available [Percent no Vehicle]*. AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY 2012-2016 5-YEAR ESTIMATES, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU.
- ¹⁰ *2017 Massachusetts HIV/AIDS Epidemiologic Profile (Table 2)*, HIV/AIDS SURVEILLANCE PROGRAM-MDPH. (2017).
- ¹¹ *Massachusetts Town-level Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey*, CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTIONS-MDPH, (2018).

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