



# Loss of Local News Sources in the MAPC Region

*An Executive Discretionary Fund report by Tim Viall*



# Introduction

## Where have all the newspapers gone?

**‘Looks like the apocalypse’:  
Gannett weekly papers across the  
state announce the end of print  
publication**

Almost 20 publications will cease print publication in May and another nine papers are merging into four papers.

**Yes, hyperlocal newspapers are  
dying. But here’s what’s rising up  
to fill the void.**

**Local newspapers aren't dying. They're  
dead.**

**‘It’s devastating.’ As Boston-area weeklies close,  
towns ponder civic life without local news.**

**Gannett’s Mass. weeklies to  
replace much of their local  
news with regional coverage**



# What does “hyperlocal” mean?

1. Independent (or operates under a locally owned entity);
2. Print or online based;
3. Mainly focuses its coverage on community-based reporting in one city or town;
4. Must have published new stories within the last two months

What does this report  
exclude?

WICKED  
LOCAL®

The  
Boston  
Globe







## Lawmakers, Uxbridge selectman urge easier medical marijuana access for veterans

STATE 3:10 p.m. ET June 22

### More Stories



#### City Dance Party is back on in Cambridge for June 23

Thousands of residents will gather from 6-10 p.m. Friday at Cambridge City Hall for a beloved event that's back in business.

MASSACHUSETTS 11:19 a.m. ET June 22



#### These million-dollar homes for sale come with various water amenities

These four homes are for those who can afford to own a home with easy access to activities involving the water.

MASSACHUSETTS 5:12 a.m. ET June 22



#### Healey backs update of sex ed curriculum in Mass. schools

The state's framework has not changed since 1999; the governor's effort would bypass the need for legislative approval.

STATE 11:20 a.m. ET June 22



#### How to get back unclaimed property in MA

Unclaimed property is more common than many people think — and surprisingly easy to get back.

Story from Massachusetts Unclaimed Property Division



#### 'Just not enough.' Mass. health pros worry over future of pediatrics

Theodore Macnon, of UMass Memorial, said the pandemic came in three waves: an initial virus, a mental health pandemic and respiratory syncytial virus.

HEALTHCARE 11:35 a.m. ET June 21



#### Bill would allow Mass. cities and towns to set up safe injection sites

The bill was discussed on the same day that the state reported that there were a record number of fatal overdoses in 2022.

STATE 5:49 a.m. ET June 23



#### Cocktails for summer at Sogno Restaurant

Kelly Samlburg, general manager, serves cocktails behind the bar at Sogno Restaurant, fine Italian dining, in Woburn, Thursday, June 22, 2023.

MASSACHUSETTS 7:46 p.m. ET June 22



#### Interactive video gaming business has landed at the Natick Mall

The Natick Mall store is the first of its kind in New England, and only the third on the East Coast.

ENTERTAINMENT 5:17 a.m. ET June 22

Spotted lanternfly season is here. What it means for Massachusetts

MASSACHUSETTS 10:32 a.m. ET June 22

No juice on the Mass. Pike: Charging stations out of order

LOCAL 9:20 a.m. ET June 23

A Newton DNA collection event was postponed for this reason

MASSACHUSETTS 5:18 a.m. ET June 23

Drug overdose deaths in Mass. soared to record high in 2022

LOCAL 7:29 a.m. ET June 23



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# An in-depth look: Wicked Local



# Connecting the analysis with MAPC's data

Municipal total  
population

The BIPOC  
population % of  
each municipality

% of a municipal  
population living in  
EJ block groups

% of limited English  
and no English-  
speaking population  
in a municipality

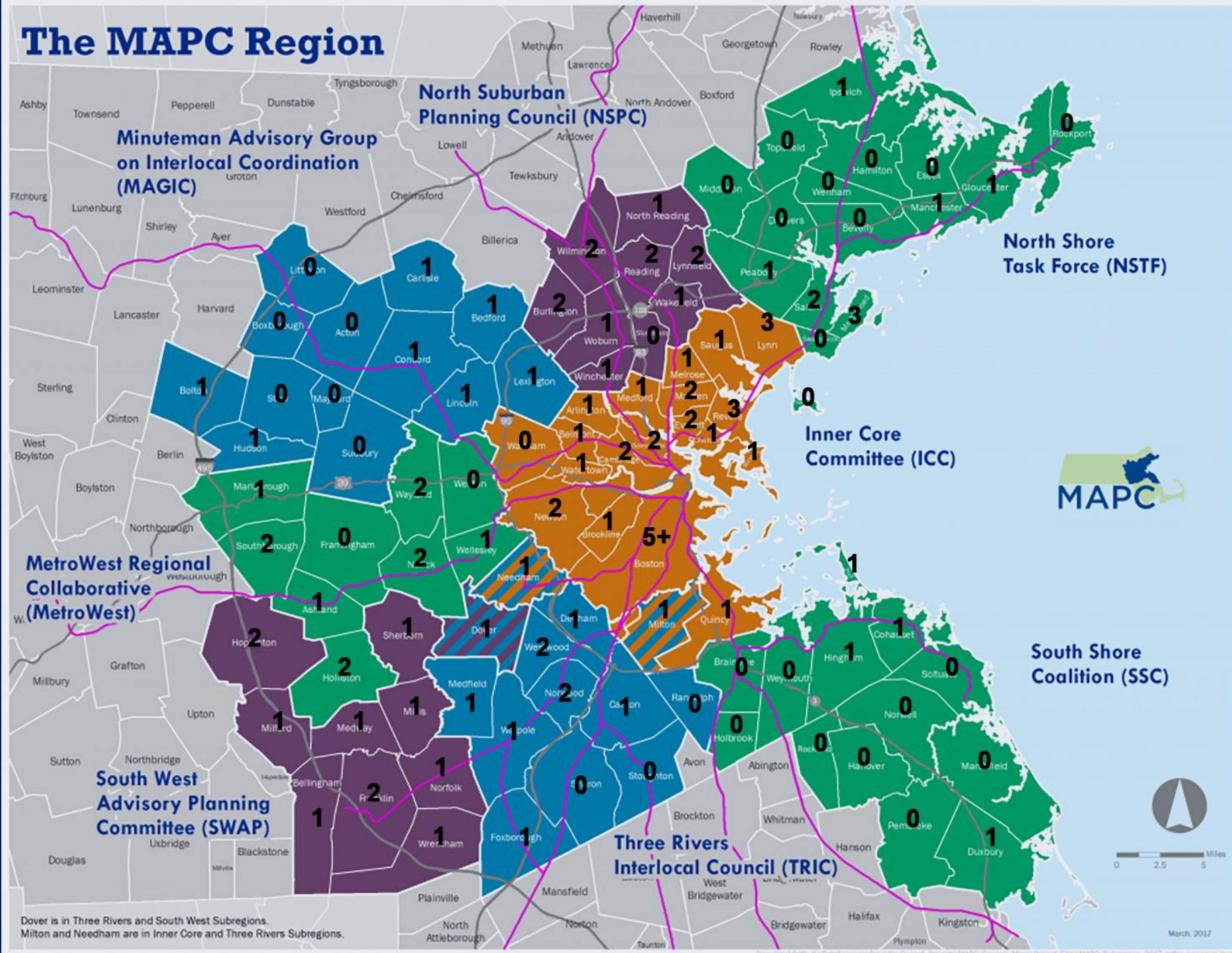
% of residents with  
an associate degree  
or higher

% of the population  
that are foreign born

Median household  
income



# The MAPC Region





**The MAPC Region**

**Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (MAGIC)**

**North Suburban Planning Council (NSPC)**

**North Shore Task Force (NSTF)**

**Inner Core Committee (ICC)**

**MetroWest Regional Collaborative (MetroWest)**

**South West Advisory Planning Committee (SWAP)**

**South Shore Coalition (SSC)**

**Three Rivers Interlocal Council (TRIC)**

MAPC

0 2.5 5 Miles

Dover is in Three Rivers and South West Subregions.  
Milton and Needham are in Inner Core and Three Rivers Subregions.

March, 2017

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March, 2017





69 out of the 101 (68.32%) cities and towns in the MAPC region have at least one hyperlocal news source. Thirty-two (31.68% - nearly a third) do not have a hyperlocal news source.



# Breakdown of Hyperlocal Sources

- 46 communities (45.54%) have one hyperlocal source
- 19 communities (18.81%) have two hyperlocal sources
- 3 communities (2.97%) have three hyperlocal sources
- 1 community (0.99%) has more than three hyperlocal sources



# South Shore Coalition

South Shore Coalition	Number of municipalities	Number of hyperlocal sources	Number of cities/towns lacking a hyperlocal source	% of cities/towns lacking a hyperlocal source in subregion
	13	4	9	69.23%
Hyperlocal sources / number of municipalities ratio = 0.3077				

- Cohasset Anchor (Digital)
- Duxbury Clipper (Weekly Newspaper)
- Hingham Anchor (Digital)
- Hull Times (Weekly Newspaper)
- WATD (Marshfield & South Shore)



**Table 1: Select Municipalities with No Local News Source**

	Population (highest six municipalities):	BIPOC Pop.	% of pop. that are foreign born (highest percentage of foreign born)	Bottom 15 in median household income:	Bottom 20 in median household income:	% of municipal pop. living in EJ block groups:	% of pop. with associate degree or higher:	Falls within a news desert:
Framingham	<b>72,362</b>	<b>46.3%</b>	<b>31%</b>		* *	<b>97%</b>		* *
Waltham	62,186	39.6%	25%			74%		
Weymouth	57,437	22.58%			* *	40%	50%	* *
Beverly	42,670	15.37%			* *			* *
Braintree	39,143	29.94%				80%	53%	* *
Randolph	34,984	73.45	37%	* *		100%	41.73%	* *
Rockland					* *		41.63%	* *
Rockport				* *				* *
Weston		>25%						
Boxborough		>25%	25%			100%		* *
Sharon		>25%						
Holbrook		>25%			* *	92%	42.19%	* *
Acton		>25%	27%					* *
Stoughton		>25%				97%	49%	* *



# Is there hope on the horizon? Or more problems brewing?

The Harvard Crimson aims to fill local news gaps with a new Cambridge-focused newsletter – Harvard NiemanLab, April 2023

A new bill in the Mass. Legislature could subsidize local newspaper subscriptions – The Boston Globe, February 2023

How public radio can help solve the local news crisis - Northeastern University's School of Journalism, February 2023

Commission will explore ways to support local journalism in Massachusetts – The Berkshire Eagle, February 2021

# Questions?

