



OFFERED BY COUNCILORS ERIN MURPHY, JULIA MEJIA, ED FLYNN, BREADON, COLETTA ZAPATA, DURKAN, FITZGERALD, SANTANA, WEBER, WORRELL AND LOUIJEUNE

CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO ASSESS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CITY OF BOSTON'S MUNICIPAL DIGITAL EQUITY PLAN AND EXPLORE NEXT STEPS TO CLOSE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

WHEREAS: In June 2025, the City of Boston finalized its Municipal Digital Equity Plan, prepared in collaboration with state and local stakeholders to identify persistent gaps in broadband access, digital literacy, and technology equity across Boston neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS: The plan found that approximately 21,500 Boston households rely solely on mobile internet, and tens of thousands of residential units have access to only one wireline broadband provider, with many concentrated in public housing developments; and

WHEREAS: The plan further highlights significant disparities in device access and digital skills, particularly for low-income residents, seniors, people with disabilities, English language learners, and residents of Boston Housing Authority (BHA) properties; and

WHEREAS: Many essential city services — including 311 requests, paying parking tickets, applying for permits, and accessing housing or school information — now rely heavily on digital platforms, creating significant barriers for residents without reliable internet or digital literacy; and

WHEREAS: The City has taken meaningful steps to support this work—such as expanding the Digital Equity Fund, supporting community-based digital navigators, and piloting public Wi-Fi expansions—but many recommendations in the June 2025 report remain at the early stages or require further investment; and

WHEREAS: Ensuring equitable access to digital tools and reliable internet service is essential to public education, workforce development, healthcare, and full civic participation; and

WHEREAS: The Boston City Council has a duty to review the findings of the Municipal Digital Equity Plan and ensure that its priorities are reflected in budget, infrastructure, and programmatic decisions going forward;

THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED: The appropriate Committee of the Boston City Council holds a hearing to assess the City's implementation of the Municipal Digital Equity Plan, to hear from the Administration and community stakeholders, and to explore strategies for achieving digital equity for all Boston residents.

Filed in Council: August 6, 2025