


# Virtual Outreach During COVID-19

In the SJTPO Region

South Jersey  
Transportation  
Planning Organization



# SJTPO Going Digital

- Evaluated virtual public meetings tools  GoToMeeting
- April Special Meeting of Technical Advisory Committee and Policy Board
  - Legal Advertisement as teleconference meetings with call-in information posted publicly
  - Use of social media / email distribution lists
- All other planned meetings have been postponed as we evaluate options and re-plan

**POSTPONED**



# Big Concerns

- Ability to devote attention to planning efforts as they are focused on major issues
- However, the major concern is internet access...

NOISE



# Overview of SJTPO Internet Access

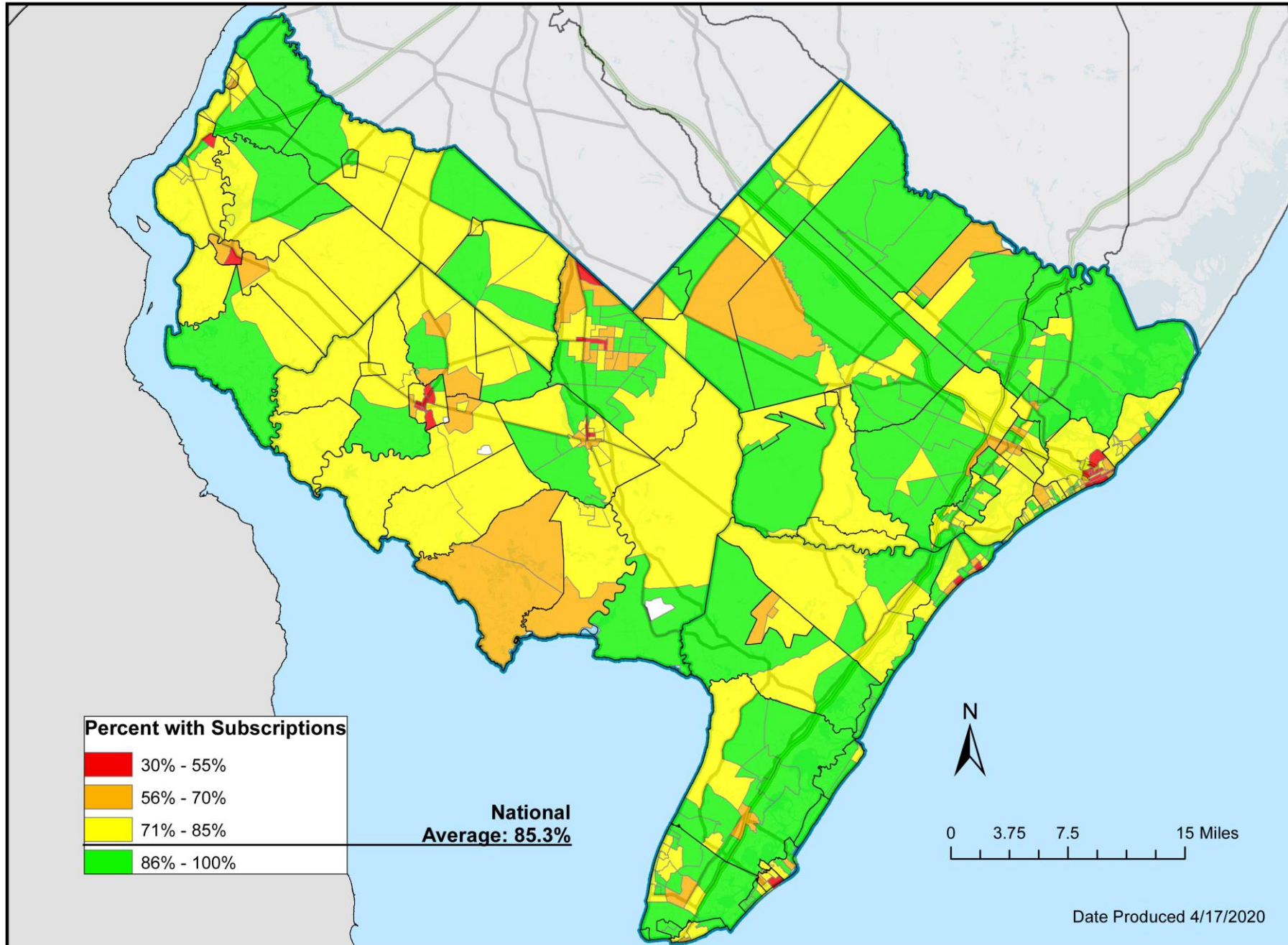
- Households with Internet\*: **US: 85.3%** **NJ: 88.2%** **SJTPO: 79.7%**
- Over 43,000 SJTPO Households have **Little or No Internet Access**
- Low-income and communities of color are vastly over-represented in lack of internet access
  - Atlantic City
  - Bridgeton
  - Pennsville
  - Millville
  - City of Salem
  - Vineland
  - Wildwood

\* ACS 2018, Table B28002, Households with Internet Subscription



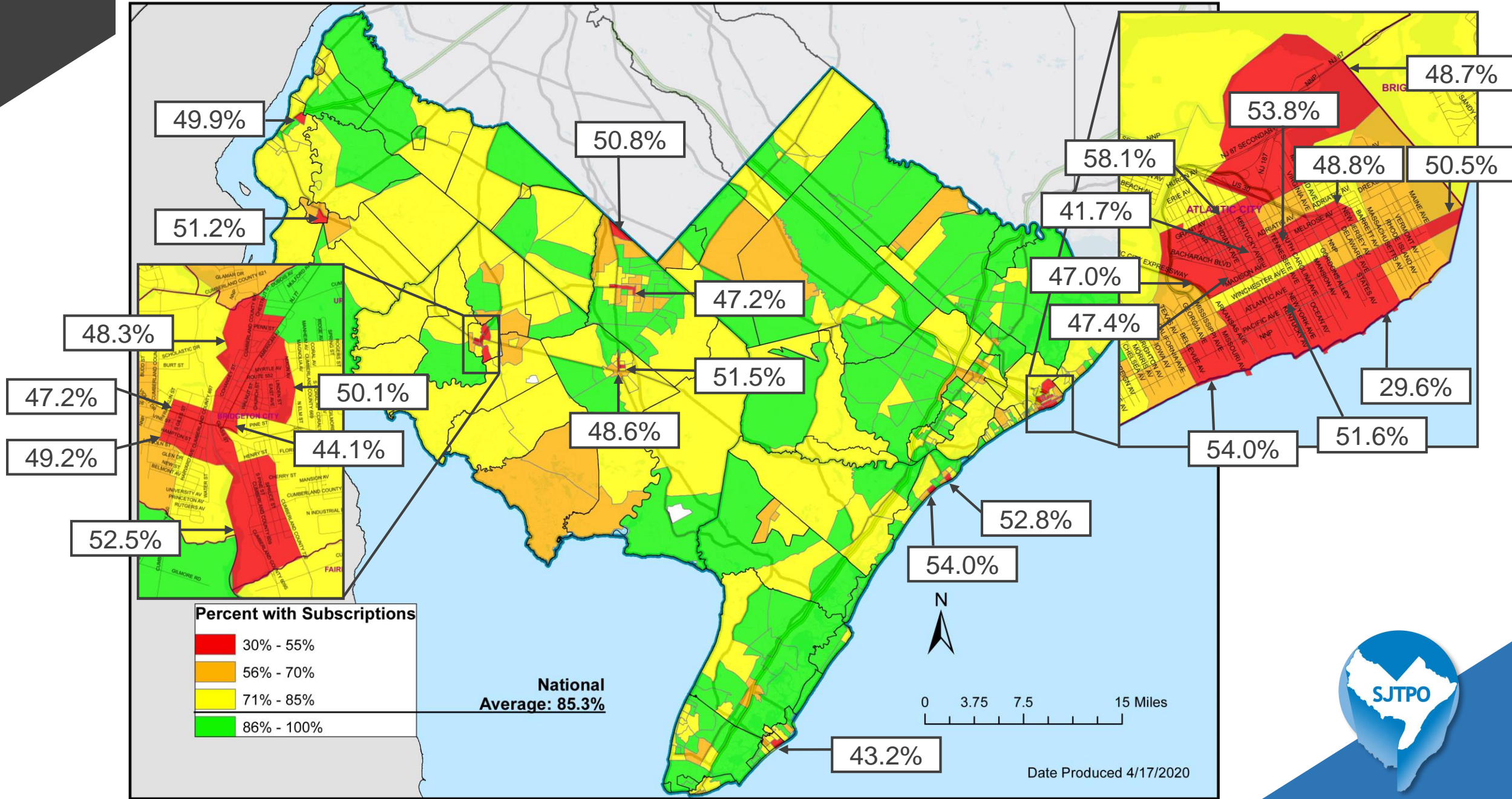
# Percent of Total Households with Access to Internet Subscription

SJTPO Region I ACS 5-Year Data (2018)



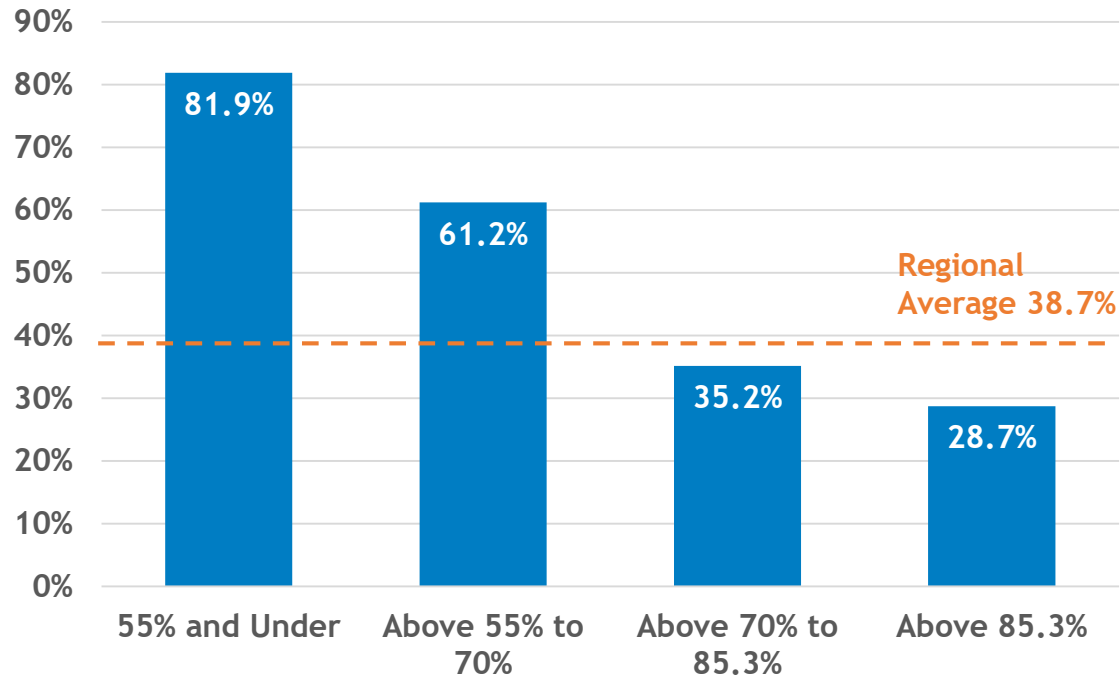
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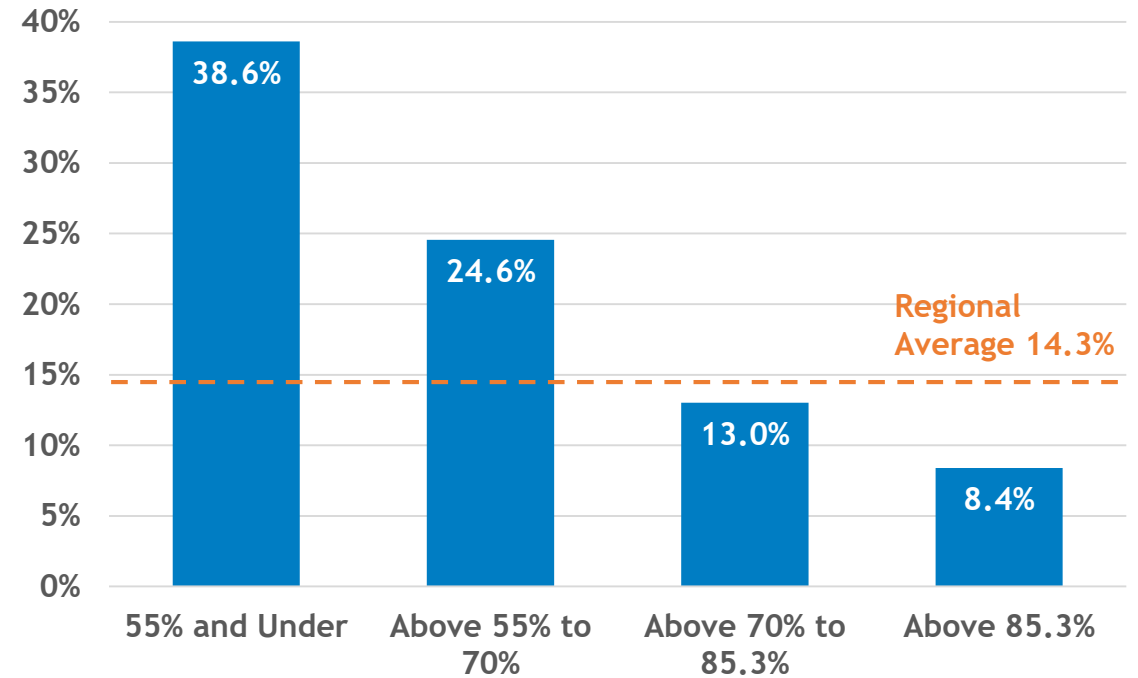
# Major Disparities in Internet Access

Percent Hispanic or Racial Minority Population



Internet Access by Block Group  
In the SJTPO Region

Percent of Households in Poverty



Internet Access by Block Group  
In the SJTPO Region



# How Can We Provide Equitable Input Opportunity in a Virtual-Only Environment?

We can't





# What We Can Do

- Be as flexible as possible
  - Some efforts may need to advance now, others **CAN NOT**
- Delay outreach on issues of great importance or that have major implications for disadvantaged communities
  - Regional Transportation Plan
  - Multilingual Outreach for LEP Language Assistance Plan
  - Cumberland County Bike/Ped Safety Action Plan
  - (SJTP0 is currently advancing 6-month extensions to each)
- Remember virtual involvement is a compliment to traditional involvement



# What We Can Do

- Where virtual-only outreach may be acceptable
  - In areas with uniformly high internet access
  - When there is no choice but to move forward
- How to do the best we can
  - Spread the word through as many partners as possible
  - Continue Newspaper Legal Advertisement
  - Provide toll-free telephone options
  - Unstaffed information kiosks or handouts, as appropriate
- Keep looking for best practices, innovative approaches
- What else can we do?

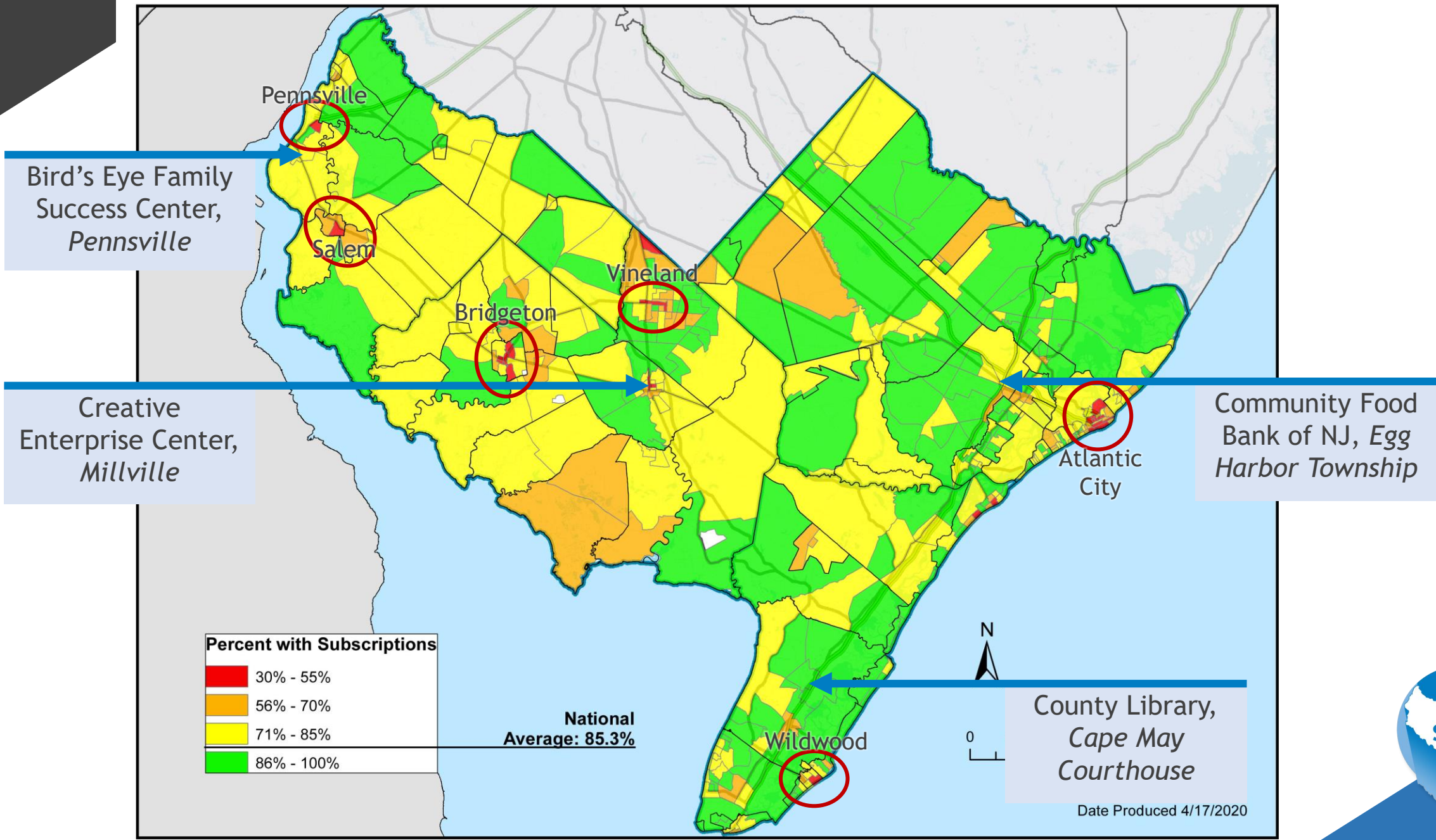


# This Will Make SJTPO Better

- We had not committed to a virtual meeting tool (only teleconferencing)
- This prompted a deep dive into internet access
- We can now target physical outreach to disadvantaged communities with low internet access
- Our Public Involvement Plan will need to be updated
- When RTP outreach starts up, we will need to improve access beyond our originally-planned locations



# Originally-Planned RTP Public Meetings | Opportunity for Improvement



# Thank You

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