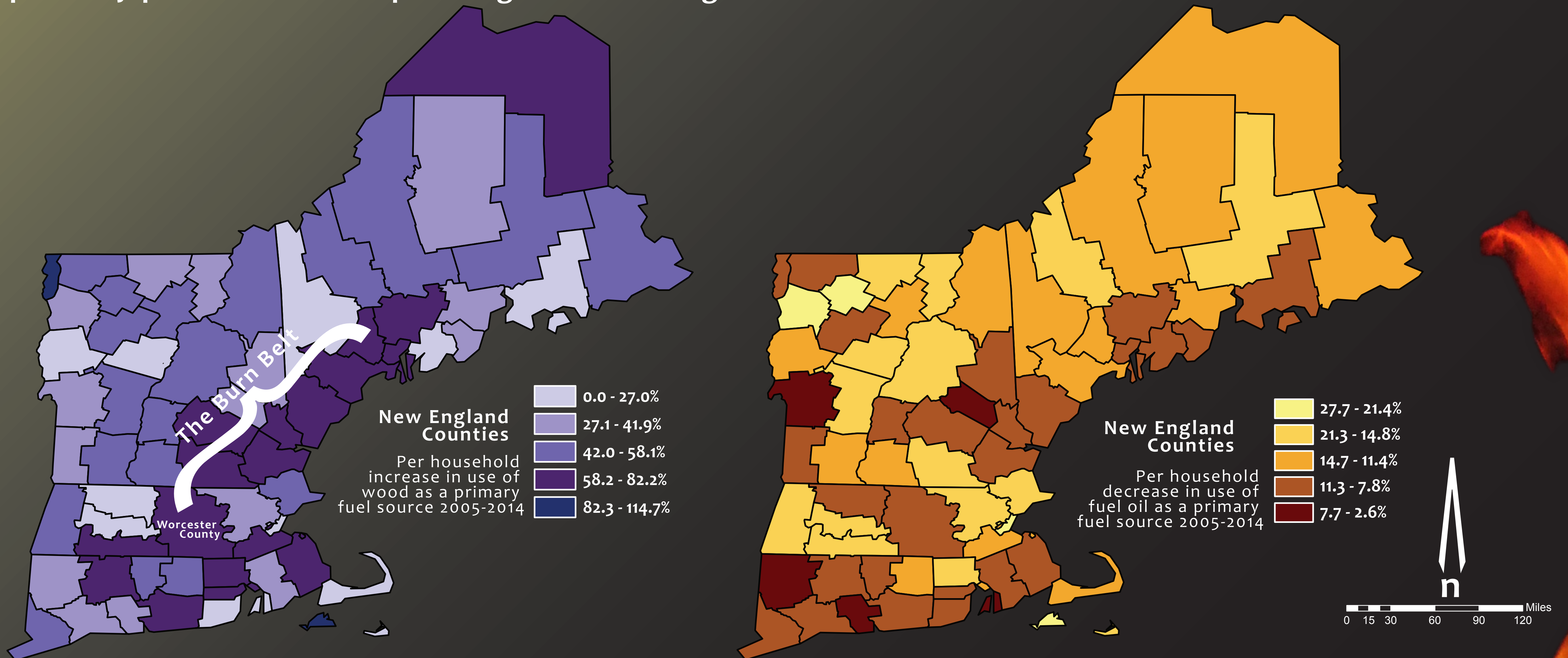


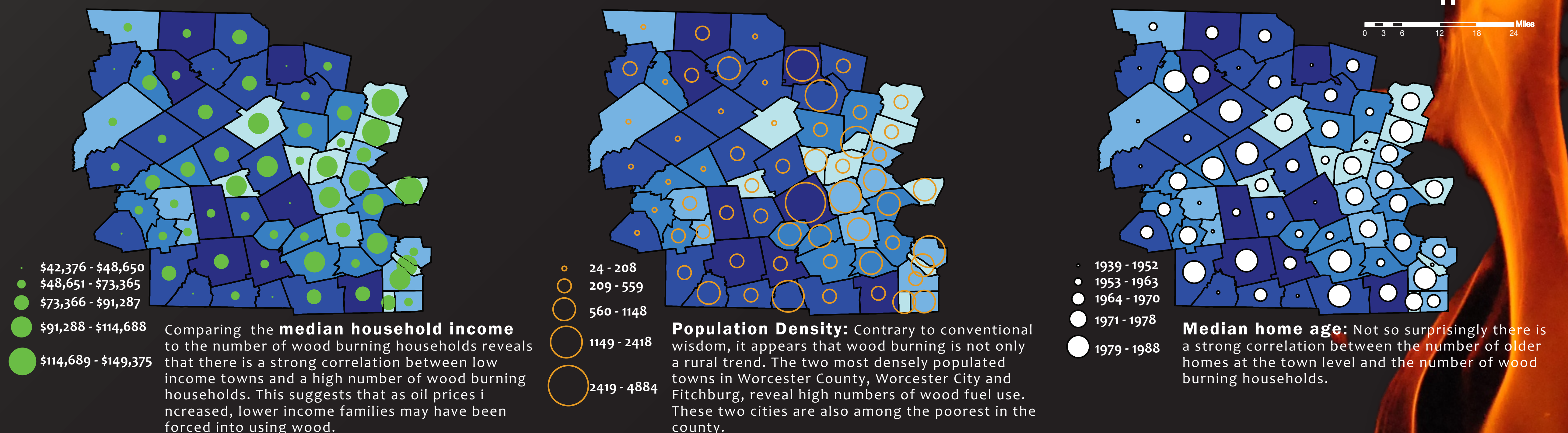
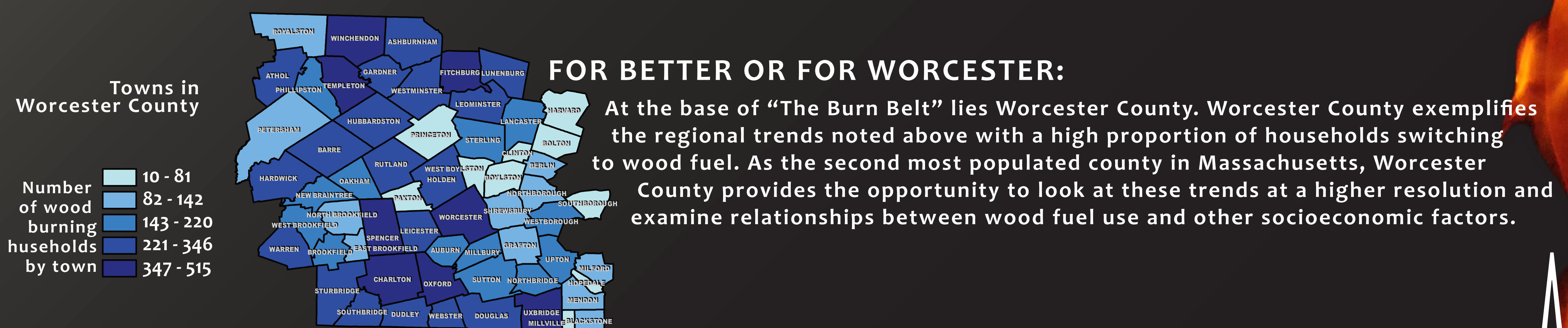
BURNING LOVE in Worcester County

For many New Englanders, burning wood in stoves and fireplaces is a deeply ingrained part of our culture and history. It represents the traditional value of self-reliance and the practical and aesthetic value of curling up by the fire with a book on a cold winter night.

Unfortunately, the benefits of burning wood come at a great cost. Of all major home heating fuels, wood is by far the least efficient energy producer. Not only does this make for a disproportionately large carbon footprint, it also releases a large amount of suspended particles which have been shown to cause respiratory problems and expedite glacial melting.



FEELING THE BURN: As the price of fuel oil significantly increased over the last decade, many New Englanders sought alternative home heating sources. Between the 2009 and 2014 ACS 5 year surveys, Wood use as a primary heating fuel increased by over 68% in New England. This is exemplified by “The Burn Belt,” a series of many of Northern New England’s most populated counties which have shown a significant increase in the number of homes burning wood as home heating fuel. As the use of fuel oil decreased by almost 250,000 households, the use of wood increased by almost 100,000.



Kindling Further Research: While it is hard to draw any conclusive findings from the preliminary analysis of this data, strong relationships between median income, population density, median home age, and an increase in the number of households using wood as a primary heating source warrants further research.