

FFY 2019

Environmental Justice Summary



Approved:
07/19/2018

Reading Area
Transportation Study

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It is the policy of the Reading Area Transportation Study (RATS), the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for transportation planning in Berks County, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, to ensure that "no person shall, on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability; be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity" for which the MPO receives Federal financial assistance. Furthermore, it shall be the policy of the MPO to ensure that as a recipient of Federal-aid funding, it will ensure nondiscrimination in all of its programs and activities whether Federally funded or not. The MPO is steadfast in its commitment to ensure the uniform adoption of this policy.

RATS fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. RATS' website (www.countyofberks.com/planning) may be translated into multiple languages. Publications and other public documents can be made available in alternative languages and formats, if requested. In accordance with Federal Highway Administration Regulation 23 CFR 200.9, and Title 49 CFR, Department of Transportation, Subtitle A, Office of the Secretary Part 21, and FTA Circular 4702.1B the MPO has developed procedures for prompt processing and disposition of the Title VI complaints. Any person believing the MPO has violated Title VI in the administration of its programs or activities may file a complaint with the MPO's Title VI Compliance Officer by telephone, fax, or in writing at the contacts shown above, or by email at planning@countyofberks.com. A link to the MPO's complete Title VI Complaint Procedures may be found at <http://www.co.berks.pa.us/Dept/Planning/Pages/RATSMetingSchedule.aspx>

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The contents of this report reflect the views of the authors who are responsible for the facts and the accuracy of the data presented herein. The contents do not necessarily reflect the official policies of either the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA) or the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania at the time of publication. This report does not constitute a standard, specification or regulation.

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BACKGROUND

Environmental justice addresses fairness of federal actions in regards to disadvantaged persons, particularly low-income and racial minority populations. Environmental justice became an active part of federally funded planning activities with Executive Order 12898, issued in 1994, that required federal agencies to examine the potential for their programs, policies and activities to have negative impacts on minority and low-income populations. The Environmental Justice executive order is based on Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which requires recipients of federal aid to certify and ensure nondiscrimination.

The roadway and transit projects identified and programmed in the proposed Reading Area Transportation Study FFY 2019 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan must address the principles of Executive Order 12898 relating to Environmental Justice. Specifically, the plan must identify and address disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs and policies on minority and low-income populations. Basic principles addressed by the Environmental Justice analysis include:

- To avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority populations and low-income populations.
- To ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process.
- To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations.

In response to the USDOT order and the FHWA guidelines, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) developed *Every Voice Counts* in 2004, updated in 2012, to guide PennDOT and the local transportation planning agencies in Pennsylvania to address EJ issues. This guidance is found at:

[PennDOT Environmental Justice Guidance](#)

In general, this means that for any program or activity for which any federal funds will be used, the agency receiving the federal funds:

- Must make a meaningful effort to involve low income and minority populations in the processes established to make the decision about the use of the federal funds; and
- Must evaluate the nature, extent, and incidence of probable favorable and adverse human health or environmental impacts of the program or activity upon minority or low-income populations.

The Reading Area Transportation Study (RATS) is the regional transportation planning organization for the Reading, Pennsylvania metropolitan area. The Reading MPO is co-terminus with the political boundary of Berks County. RATS prepares this Environmental Justice report to respond to the federal and state requirements and facilitate the fair transportation planning process in Berks County. This document supersedes the July 2016 EJ document.

RATS will assess the impacts of the transportation planning process, the Long Range Plan (LRTP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) on selected populations, identify their transportation needs, and explore ways to satisfy these needs. Our assessment of the potential for environmental justice concerns relies on relative measures, not specific thresholds or measures. This includes our professional judgment of the disproportionate impacts and judgment of efforts made during the planning process to inform people potentially impacted.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Berks County is an urban county of the third class, comprised of one city of the third class, 27 boroughs, and 44 townships. It is located in southeastern Pennsylvania, surrounded by six other counties: Schuylkill County to the north, Lebanon County to the west, Lehigh and Montgomery Counties to the east and Chester and Lancaster Counties to the south. Reading, a city of the third class, serves as the county seat. The County's geographic location and transportation network promote accessibility and mobility for

people and freight to several surrounding larger metropolitan areas including Allentown (39 miles), Philadelphia (56 miles), Baltimore (97 miles), and New York City (125 miles).

As of 2016, Berks County is home to 414,812 residents. In comparison to the six neighboring counties, it ranks fourth in overall population. From 2000-2010, population increased 10.2 percent, exceeding both the state and national figures, and placing 5th highest amongst the other counties. Population growth slowed substantially from 2010-2016, below state and national figures for the period. The county ranked sixth out of the seven counties.

County Population Between 2000 and 2016					
County	2000	2010	2016	% Change 00-10	% Change 10-16
Lebanon	120,327	133,688	138,863	11.1%	3.9%
Lehigh	312,090	350,106	363,147	12.2%	3.7%
Lancaster	470,658	520,156	538,500	10.5%	3.5%
Chester	433,501	499,797	516,312	15.3%	3.3%
Montgomery	650,097	801,052	821,725	6.8%	2.6%
Berks	373,638	411,850	414,812	10.2%	0.7%
Schuylkill	150,336	148,228	143,573	-1.4%	-3.1%
Pennsylvania	12,281,054	12,702,379	12,784,227	3.4%	0.6%
United States	281,421,906	308,745,538	323,127,515	9.7%	4.7%

Source: U.S. Census, Census 2000, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

RATS has identified the following groups to be included in this analysis. The United States Census Bureau American Community Survey (2012-2016) provides the data supporting the analysis.

Low-Income means a person whose median household income is at or below the Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines and identified as such in the U.S. Census American Community Survey, 2012-2016.

Minority means a person who is: (1) Black (a person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa); (2) Hispanic (a person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race); (3) Asian American (a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, or the Pacific Islands); (4) American Indian and Alaskan Native (a person having origins in any of the original people of North America and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community

recognition); and (5) Native Hawaii or Other Pacific Islanders (a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands). Additionally, any person who responded to the US Census as being either solely or a mix of one of these minority groups qualifies as being in the minority population.

Disabled population includes people with mobility limitation, self-care limitation, or people with both limitations. Those limitations can include a long-lasting physical, mental or emotional condition, and can make it difficult for a person to do activities such as walking, climbing stairs, dressing, bathing, learning or remembering. Limitations can also impede a person from being able to go outside the home alone or to work at a job or business.

While not specifically identified by Title VI or the Executive Order, RATS chooses to expand its Environmental Justice analyses to include the following populations because they too have unique transportation needs:

Elderly population includes persons age 65 and older.

Limited English households include households where no one ages 14 and older speaks English only or English "very well".

Zero vehicle workforce includes employed individuals ages 16 and older that possess no cars, vans, and pickup or panel trucks of one-ton capacity or less that are kept and available for use.

METHODS

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) does not specifically outline how an EJ analysis should be conducted. RATS used the Berks County Geographic Information System (GIS) to view and tabulate demographic information and analyze this information in relation to the FFY 2019-2022 Transportation Improvement Program projects. We added planned roadway improvement projects and the BARTA fixed route network for the analysis. The BARTA fixed route network largely reaches many of municipalities discussed in this report.

Spatial and demographic data from the American Community Survey (2012-2016) was analyzed at the municipal level. For the purposes of this report, Strausstown Borough, which merged with Upper Bern Township in July of 2016, is included in this study. To determine threshold levels for all of the populations evaluated levels, county averages were calculated. Municipalities where the local population was greater than the county average were identified as communities where Environmental Justice issues should be analyzed.

The municipalities where minority and/or low-income populations live according the above description are referred to throughout this discussion as Environmental Justice, EJ areas or EJ communities. Likewise, the areas falling outside of the EJ areas are referred to as Non-Environmental Justice, Non-EJ areas or Non-EJ communities.

IDENTIFICATION

Minority Concentration

The minority concentrated areas are defined as those municipalities with a minority percentage greater than the County average of 16.4%. As shown in the following maps, Figures 1.1 and 1.2, those municipalities are:

Municipality	% White	% Minority
Reading	54.8	45.2
New Morgan	55.6	44.4
Muhlenberg	79.9	20.1
Kenhorst	80.7	19.3
Shoemakersville	81.3	18.7
Womelsdorf	81.7	18.3
West Reading	82.1	17.9
Ontelaunee	83.1	16.9

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, B02001

Hispanic Concentration

Hispanic concentrated areas are defined as those municipalities with a Hispanic percentage greater than the County average of 18.8%. As shown in the following maps, Figures 1.3 and 1.4, those municipalities are:

Municipality	% Hispanic
Reading	63.1
New Morgan	56.9
Mt Penn	24.4
West Reading	23.9
Muhlenberg	21.0
Laureldale	19.4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, B03003

Low Income Concentration

Low Income concentrated areas are defined as those municipalities with a poverty rate percentage greater than the County average of 14.3%. As shown in the following maps, Figures 1.5 and 1.6, those municipalities are:

Municipality	% Poverty Rate
Reading	39.3
Kutztown	21.7
Lyons	19.2
Lower Alsace	17.9
Alsace	16.6
Tulpehocken	16.1
West Reading	15.9
Kenhorst	15.1
Lenhartsville	15.1
Laureldale	14.8

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, S1701

Disabled Concentration

Concentrated areas of disabled populations are defined as those municipalities with a percentage greater than the County average of 13.3%. As shown in Figures 1.7 and 1.8, those municipalities are:

Municipality	Population	# Disabled	% Disabled
New Morgan	72	5	25
Longswamp	5683	1144	20.7
Reading	87899	17192	19.7
Hereford	2917	493	16.9
Hamburg	4333	727	16.8
Laureldale	3879	617	15.9
Boyertown	4048	638	15.8
Ruscombmanor	4138	654	15.8
St. Lawrence	1895	297	15.7
West Reading	4198	587	15.4
Wernersville	2527	369	15.2
Douglass	3509	520	14.9
Upper Bern	1542	227	14.7
Lenhartsville	166	24	14.5
Womelsdorf	2851	407	14.3
Windsor	2400	339	14.1
Richmond	3471	478	13.8
Shillington	5265	719	13.7
Marion	1520	203	13.4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, S1810

Elderly Concentration

Areas of concentrated elderly populations are defined as those municipalities with an elderly population percentage greater than the County average of 15.8%. As shown in Figures 1.9 and 1.10, those municipalities are:

Municipality	% 65 and over	Municipality	% 65 and over
Lenhartsville	27.1	Shoemakersville	19.2
Wyomissing	25.2	Pike	18.8
Lyons	24	Kutztown	18.7
Upper Bern	23.6	Spring	18.7
Boyertown	23.5	Muhlenberg	18.5
Douglass	23.1	Richmond	18.5
Marion	22.7	West Reading	18.5
North Heidelberg	22.6	Robesonia	18.2
Hereford	22.4	Oley	18.1
Union	22.3	Upper Tulpehocken	17.9
Longswamp	22.1	Exeter	17.7
Bally	21.4	Bethel	17.6
Cumru	21.3	Penn	17.2
Albany	21.1	Robeson	16.9
Hamburg	21	Brecknock	16.7
Tilden	20.9	District	16.5
Alsace	20.7	Lower Heidelberg	16.5
Wernersville	20.6	Ruscombmanor	16.5
Bern	20.2	Fleetwood	16.4
Perry	20.2	South Heidelberg	16.3
Jefferson	19.9	Washington	16.3
Kenhorst	19.7	Greenwich	16.2
Laureldale	19.6	Shillington	16.2
Colebrookdale	19.3	Topton	16
Heidelberg	19.3		

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, S0101

Elderly populations are generally more transit-dependent than the population as a whole and may have special transportation needs, such as reliance upon public transportation or paratransit services.

Limited English Proficiency Household Concentration

Concentrated areas of these households are defined as those municipalities with a percentage greater than the County average of 4.5%. As shown on Figures 1.11 and 1.12, those municipalities are:

Municipality	% No one age 14 and over speaks English only of speaks English "Very well"
Reading	18.8
West Reading	6
Sinking Spring	4.6

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, S1602

Zero Vehicle Workforce Concentration

Providing reliable and affordable transportation options to people who cannot, or choose not to operate a personal vehicle in rural or urban areas of Berks County is an important consideration when making transportation-related planning decisions. Concentrated areas of employed individuals without a vehicle are defined as those municipalities with a percentage greater than the County average of 3.4%. As shown on Figures 1.13 and 1.14, those municipalities are:

Municipality	% Population 16 and Over, No Vehicle Available
Reading	14.2
West Reading	7
Richmond	5.4
Shoemakersville	5.4
Maxatawny	4.9
Centre	3.9
St Lawrence	3.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, S0802

ANALYSIS

An analysis was performed in conjunction with the spatial analysis identifying traditionally disadvantaged groups to determine what level of investment these areas would receive in terms of transportation spending as part of the FFY 2019 TIP and 2040 LRTP Update. Only proposed federal or state funded projects are subject to

Environmental Justice (EJ) analysis. Private/local funded projects are not subject to EJ analysis since these projects are not federally funded.

The RATS MPO staff possesses neither the expertise nor specific project knowledge to properly assess the environmental impacts of the candidate projects beyond the investment of funding in disadvantaged population areas. As these projects move through the construction process, they will be subject to project-specific NEPA review that will appropriately assess any negative environmental (human or otherwise) impacts these projects might have on neighboring populations.

The vast majority of the LRTP's projects are operational improvements to existing facilities through specific spot improvements or improved transit service. The current condition of many of the streets, roads, and bridges on this list may be viewed as having a negative impact on the EJ municipalities because of unsafe, congested, or inefficient facilities. The condition of these bridges and roads hampers access to economic opportunity for these residents. Access to employment and education are two of the most important factors in creating the ladder of opportunity for these residents. Improved transportation access is a key factor.

These projects when implemented should mitigate the negative impacts to motorized vehicle operations in these areas and ultimately show positive benefit to the municipalities in which they are located.

Approximately two thirds of the investment dollars on the FFY 2019-2022 TIP are located in or adjacent to EJ communities. Transit vehicle replacements or rehabilitations, bridge and roadway repair line items for future projects to be defined, and other non-location-specific projects are not included in this analysis.

Transit projects are generated by the operating agency - the South Central Transit Authority (SCTA) and include both fixed route and Special Services to provide transportation services to individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low-incomes. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) mandates that federally funded public transportation operators must accommodate passengers who live within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of a fixed bus route but are physically unable to access the service. To provide this accommodation, most public transportation providers use a paratransit service to provide eligible passengers service from their origin to their destination. The Special Services program is used to address that mandate.

SUMMARY

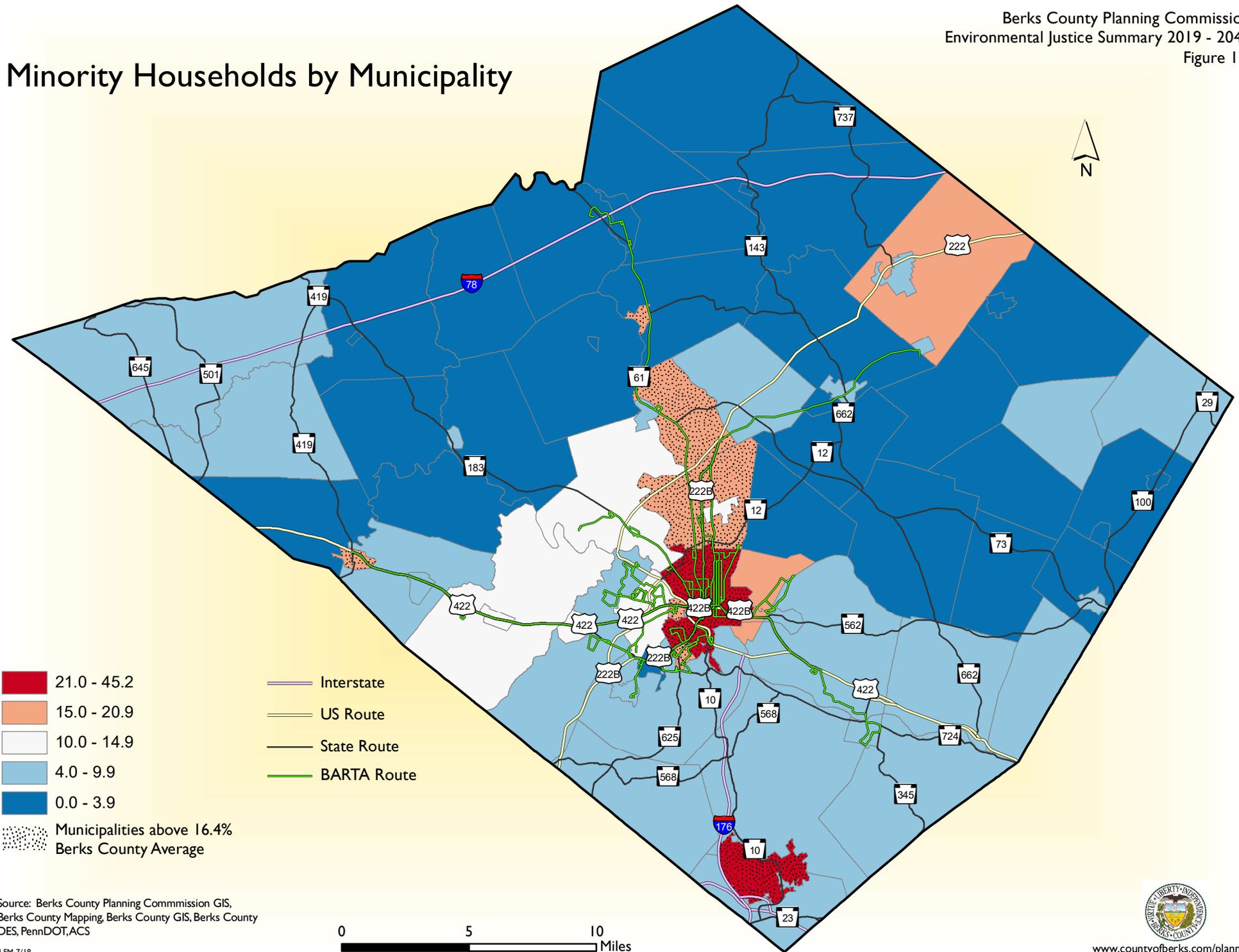
Overall, there is low potential for negative impacts against the analyzed populations in relation to the recommended LRTP projects. The identified populations would experience higher levels of transportation investments with the TIP and Long-Range Transportation Plan list of recommended improvement projects. RATS will continue to update and maintain the public participation mailing list, and continue to improve communication, coordination, education, and involvement activities in order to reach the traditionally disadvantaged populations (including minority and low income) to ascertain and evaluate potential effects or impacts resulting from proposed projects.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

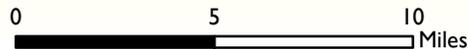
RATS supports and encourages active public participation throughout the transportation planning process. We adopted a public participation policy in 2017 to ensure that specific opportunities exist for the public to offer input and provide feedback as active participants in the decision-making process. Public participation takes many forms, and RATS uses a wide range of methods and media to enhance the public's participation in the process.

As part of the FFY 2019 TIP and 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan, RATS took a number of steps to ensure consideration of the public's views, including using the public participation plan, developing and contacting a comprehensive listing of stakeholders, utilizing a variety of methods to involve the public, and considering public comments in developing the list of transportation projects. The overall goal of the TIP and LRTP is to develop plans and strategies that promote an efficient and effective transportation system for Berks County.

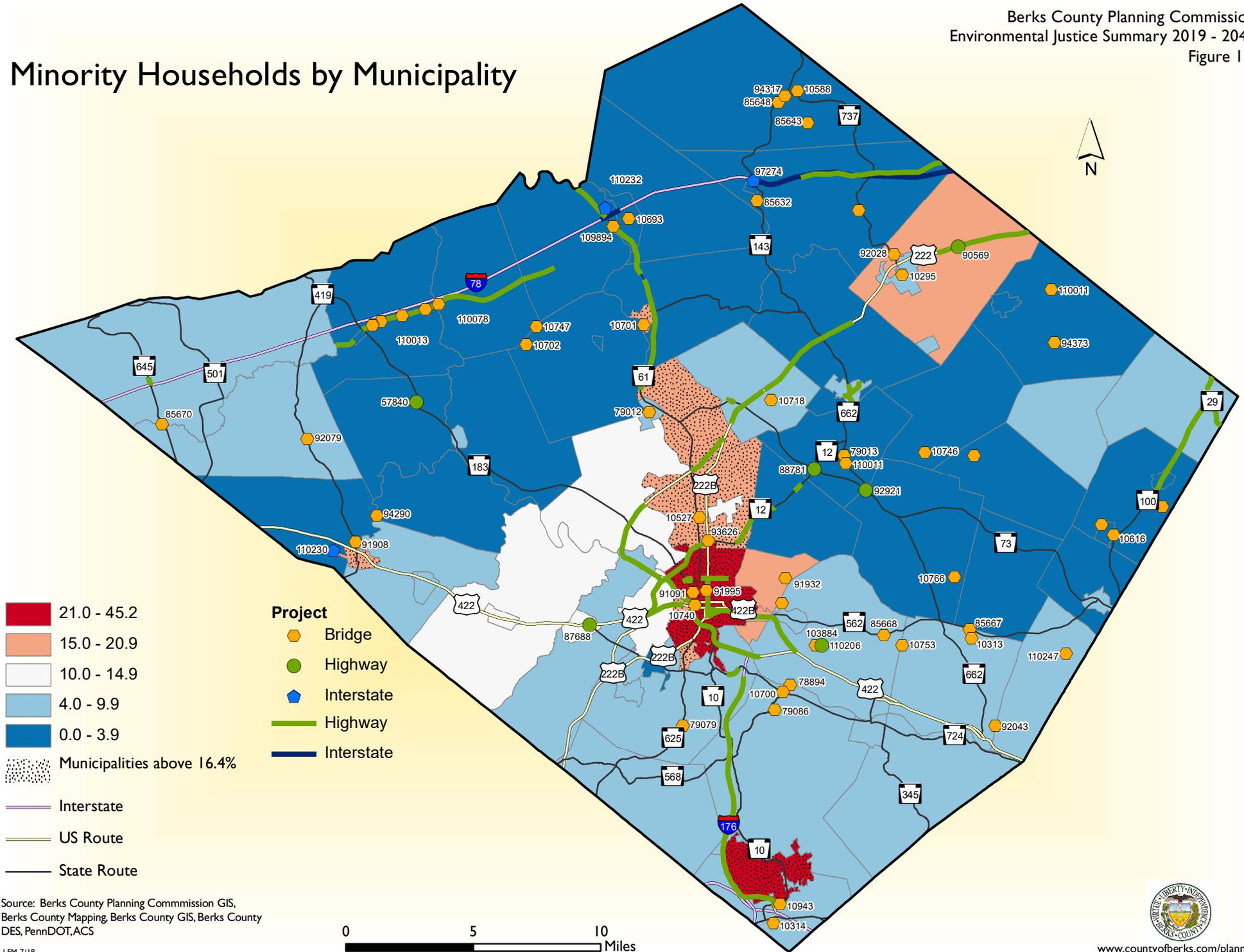
Minority Households by Municipality



Source: Berks County Planning Commission GIS, Berks County Mapping, Berks County GIS, Berks County DES, PennDOT, ACS



Minority Households by Municipality



Source: Berks County Planning Commission GIS, Berks County Mapping, Berks County GIS, Berks County DES, PennDOT, ACS

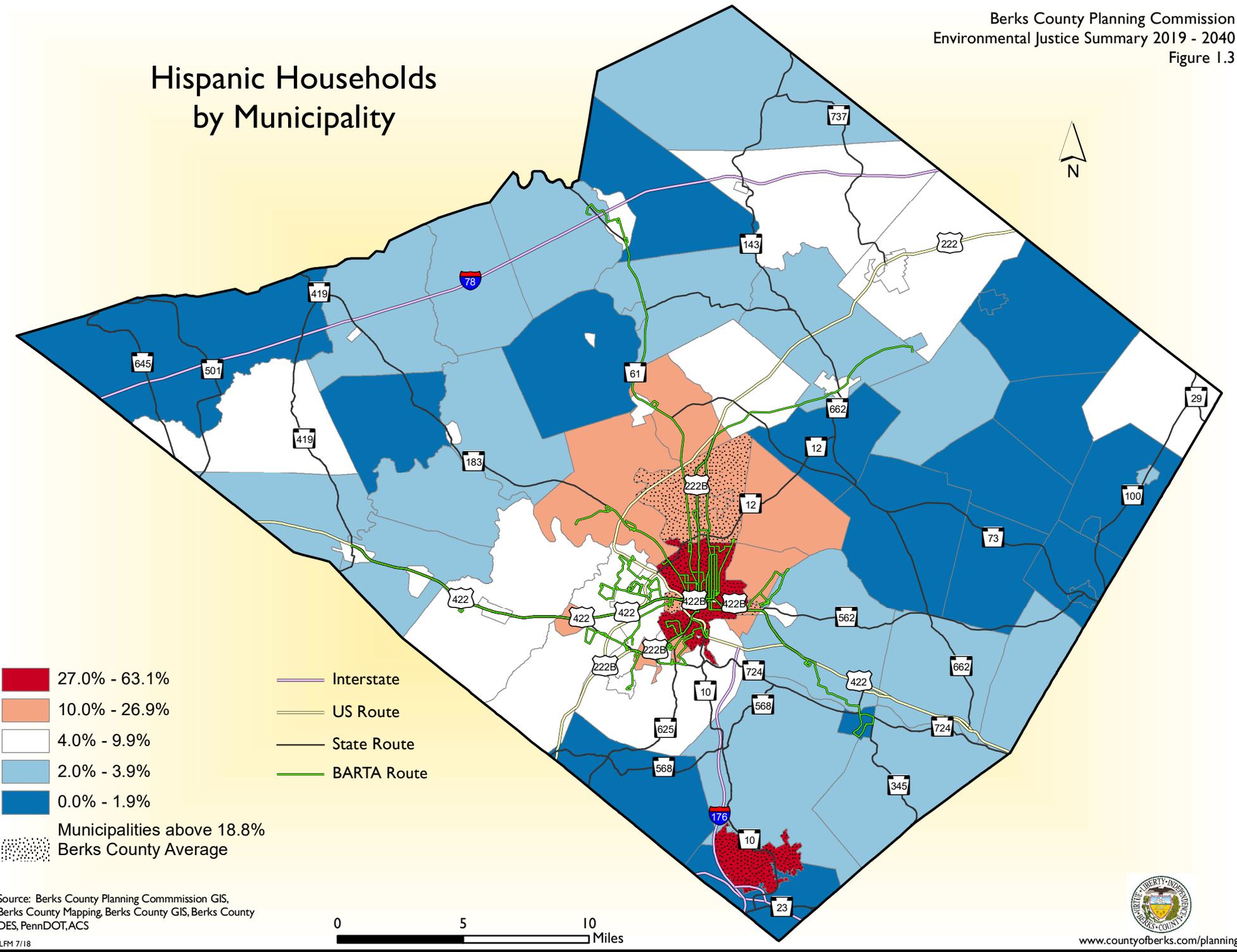
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Hispanic Households by Municipality

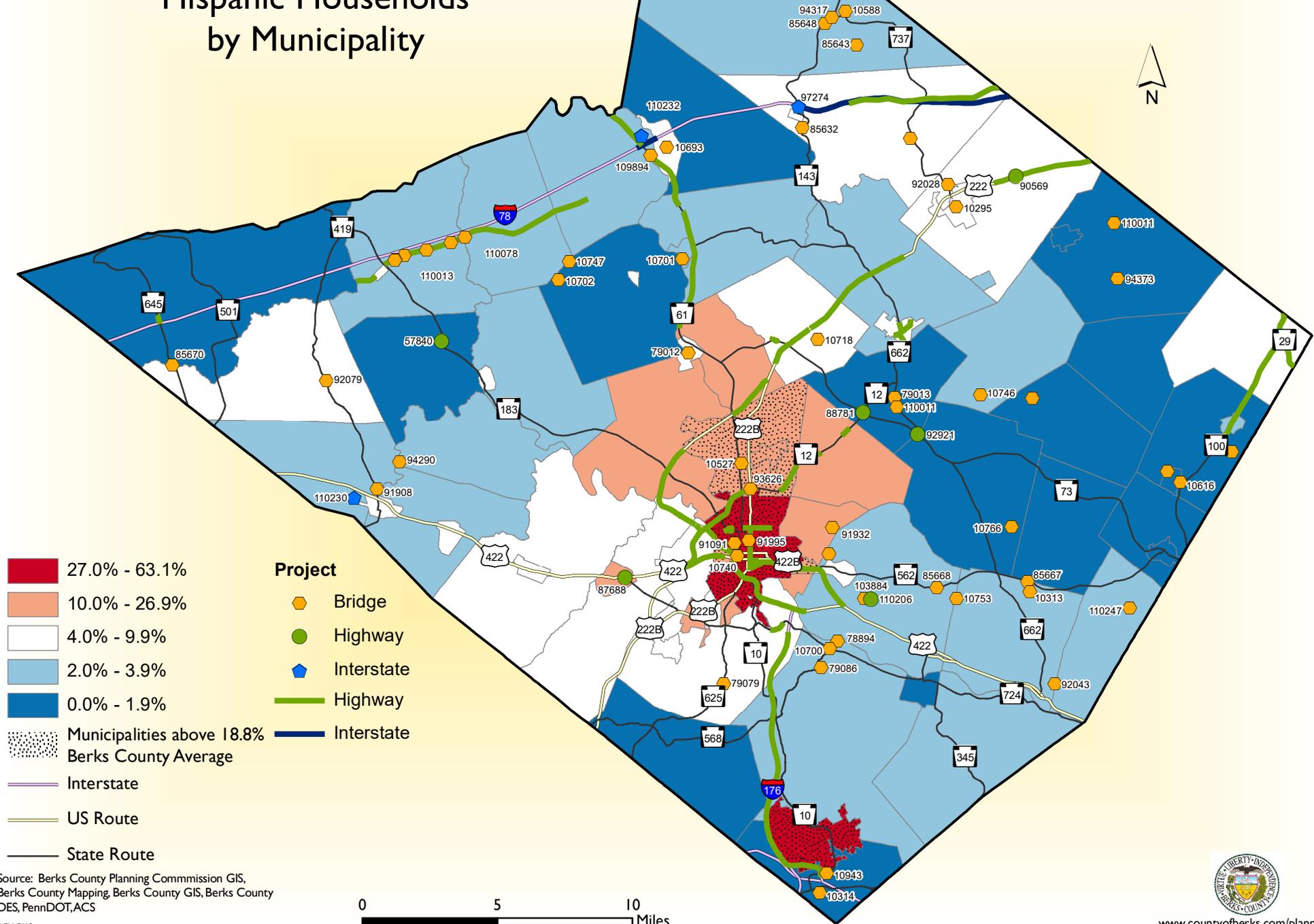


 27.0% - 63.1%	 Interstate
 10.0% - 26.9%	 US Route
 4.0% - 9.9%	 State Route
 2.0% - 3.9%	 BARTA Route
 0.0% - 1.9%	
 Municipalities above 18.8% Berks County Average	

Source: Berks County Planning Commission GIS,
 Berks County Mapping, Berks County GIS, Berks County
 DES, PennDOT, ACS
 LFM 7/18

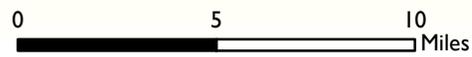


Hispanic Households by Municipality

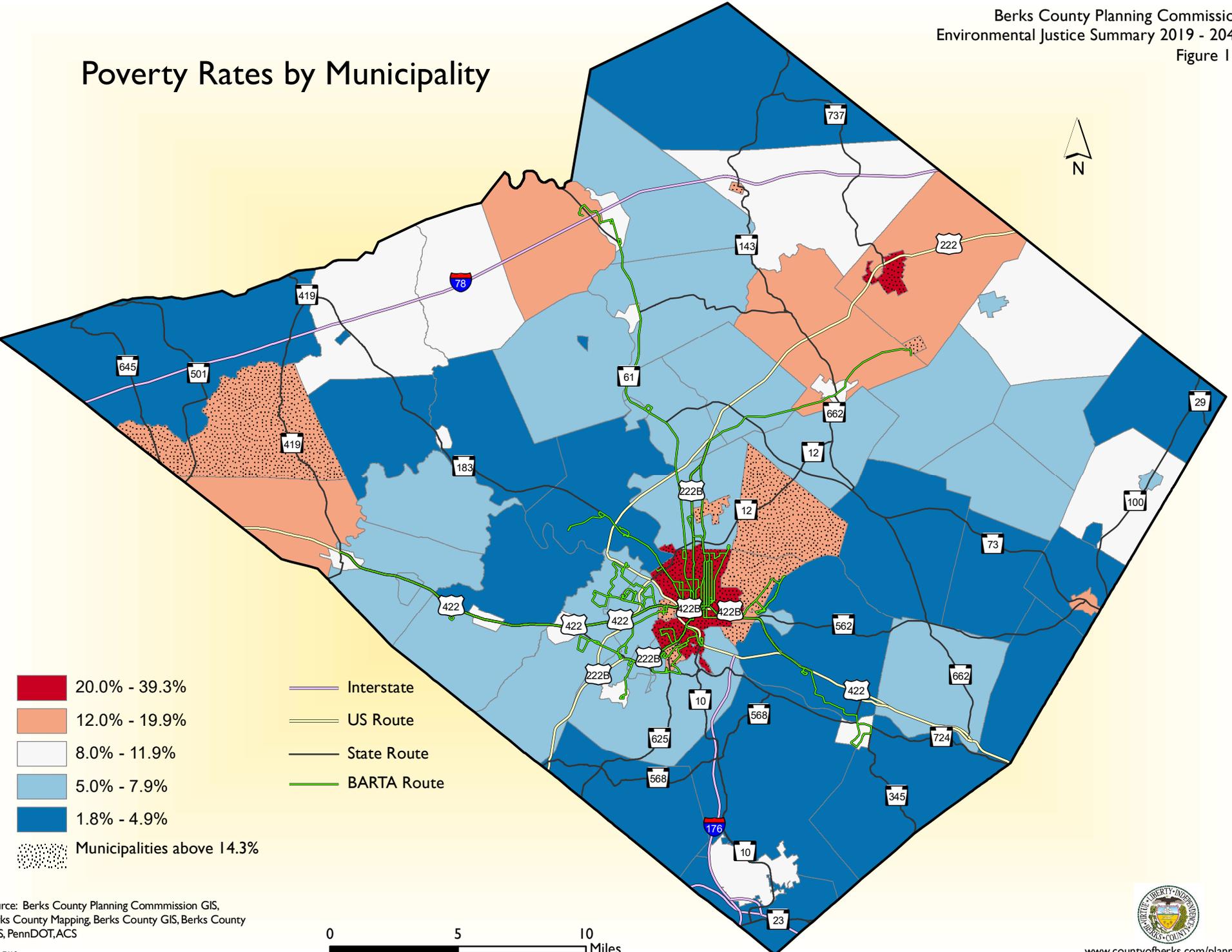


 27.0% - 63.1%	Project
 10.0% - 26.9%	 Bridge
 4.0% - 9.9%	 Highway
 2.0% - 3.9%	 Interstate
 0.0% - 1.9%	 Highway
 Municipalities above 18.8% Berks County Average	 Interstate
 Interstate	
 US Route	
 State Route	

Source: Berks County Planning Commission GIS, Berks County Mapping, Berks County GIS, Berks County DES, PennDOT, ACS



Poverty Rates by Municipality



- 20.0% - 39.3%
- 12.0% - 19.9%
- 8.0% - 11.9%
- 5.0% - 7.9%
- 1.8% - 4.9%
- Municipalities above 14.3%

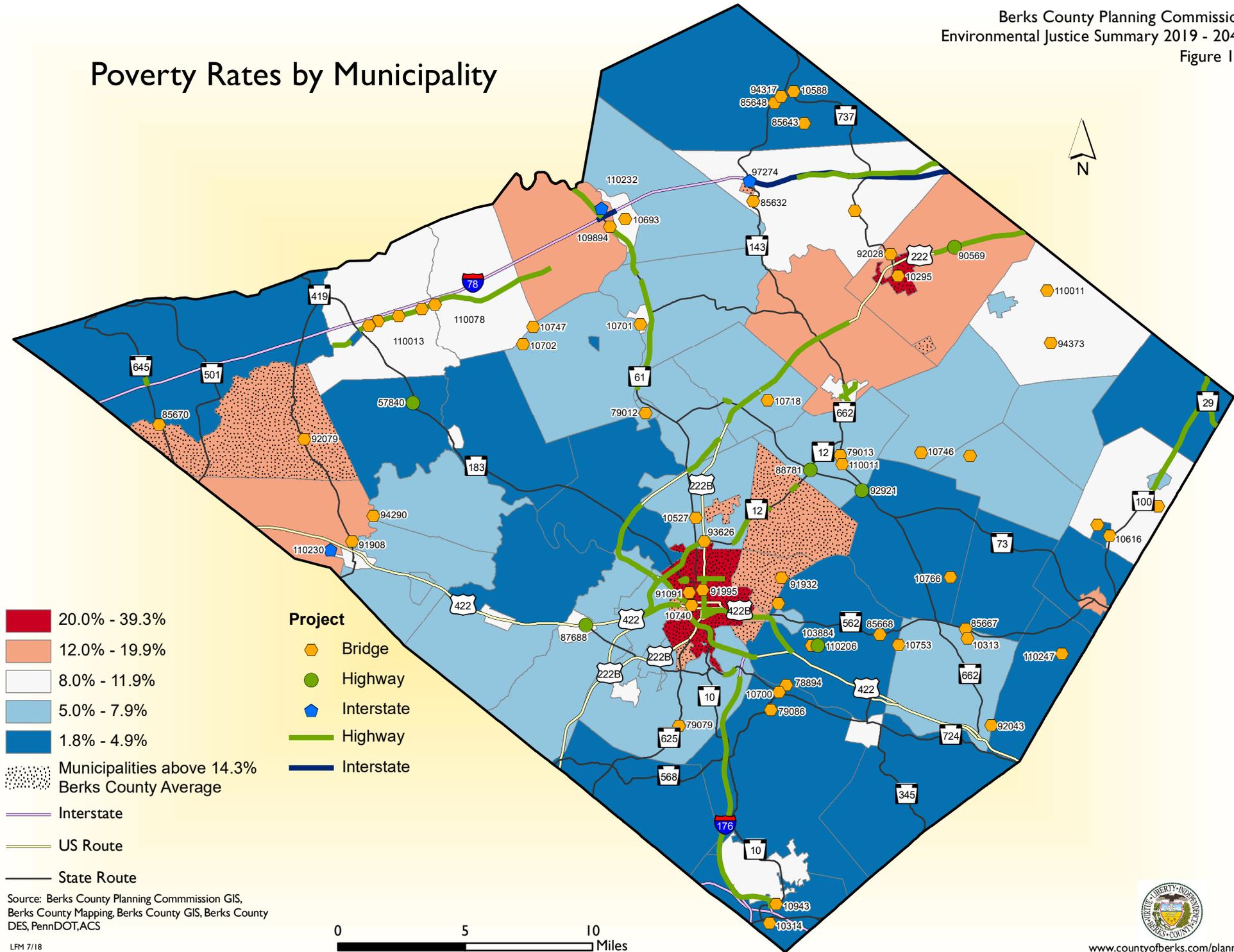
- Interstate
- US Route
- State Route
- BARTA Route

Source: Berks County Planning Commission GIS,
 Berks County Mapping, Berks County GIS, Berks County
 DES, PennDOT, ACS

0 5 10 Miles



Poverty Rates by Municipality



- 20.0% - 39.3%
- 12.0% - 19.9%
- 8.0% - 11.9%
- 5.0% - 7.9%
- 1.8% - 4.9%
- Municipalities above 14.3% Berks County Average
- Interstate
- US Route
- State Route

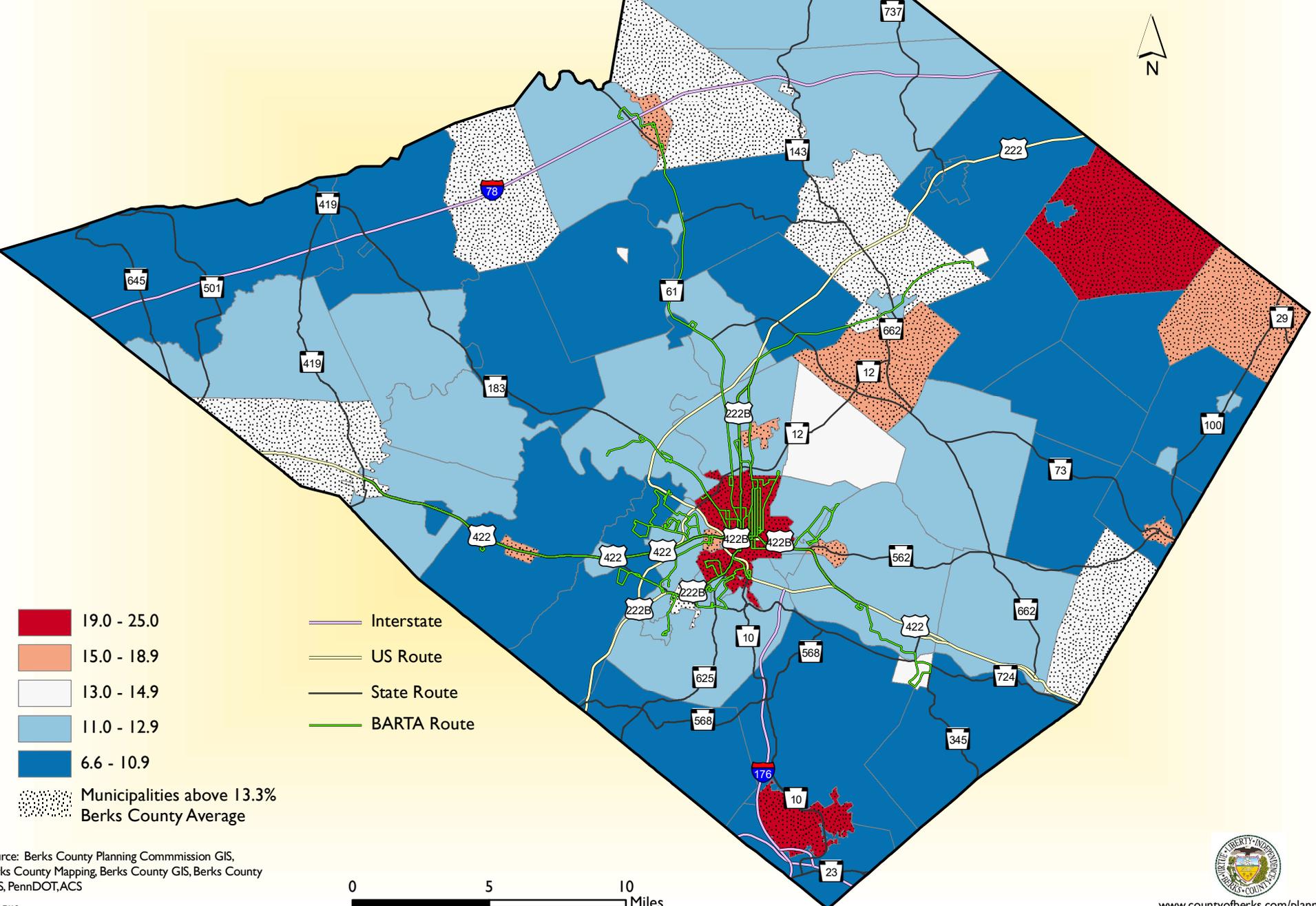
- Project**
- Bridge
 - Highway
 - Interstate
 - Highway
 - Interstate

Source: Berks County Planning Commission GIS,
 Berks County Mapping, Berks County GIS, Berks County
 DES, PennDOT, ACS

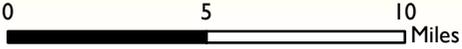
0 5 10 Miles



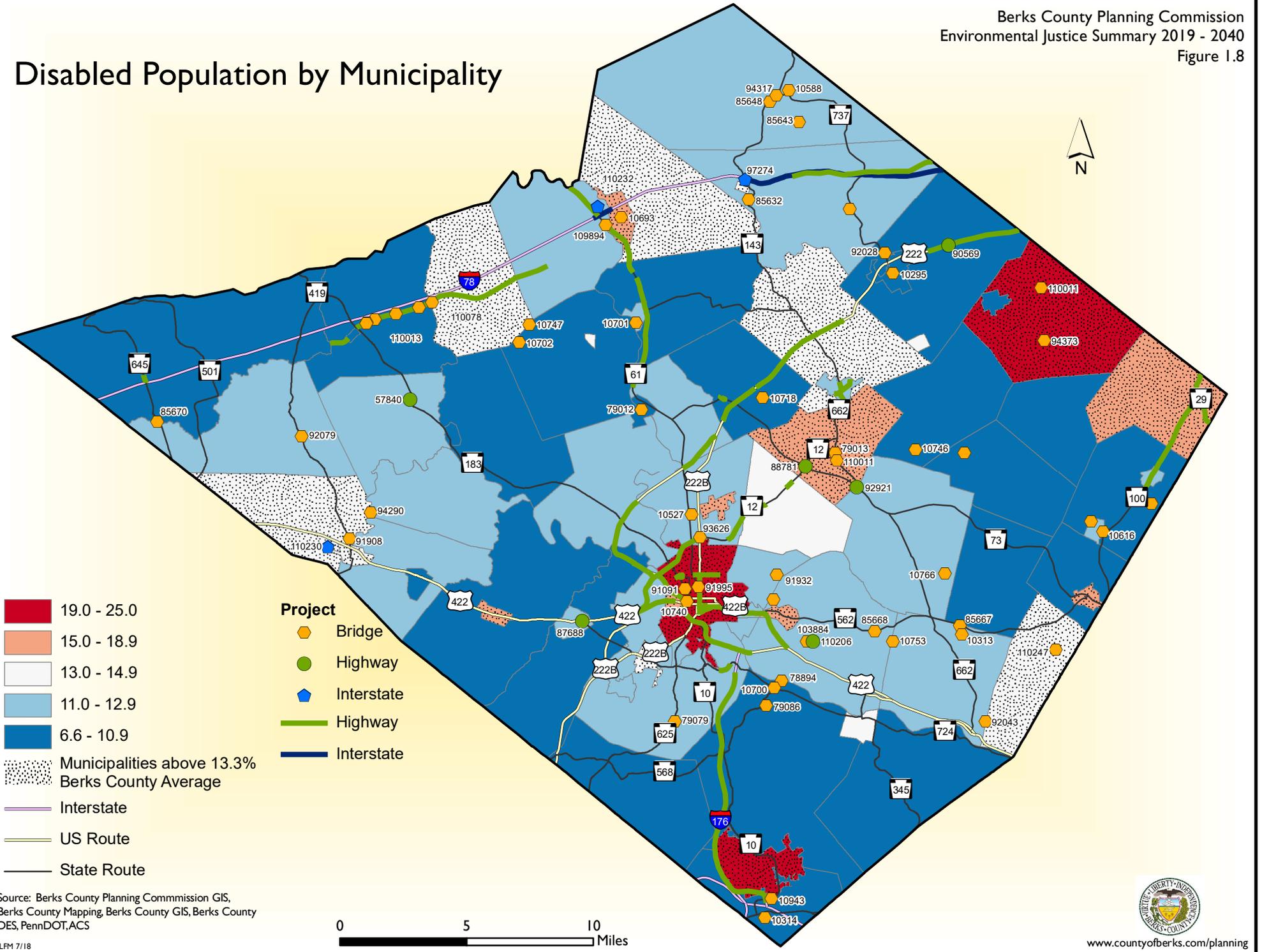
Disabled Population by Municipality



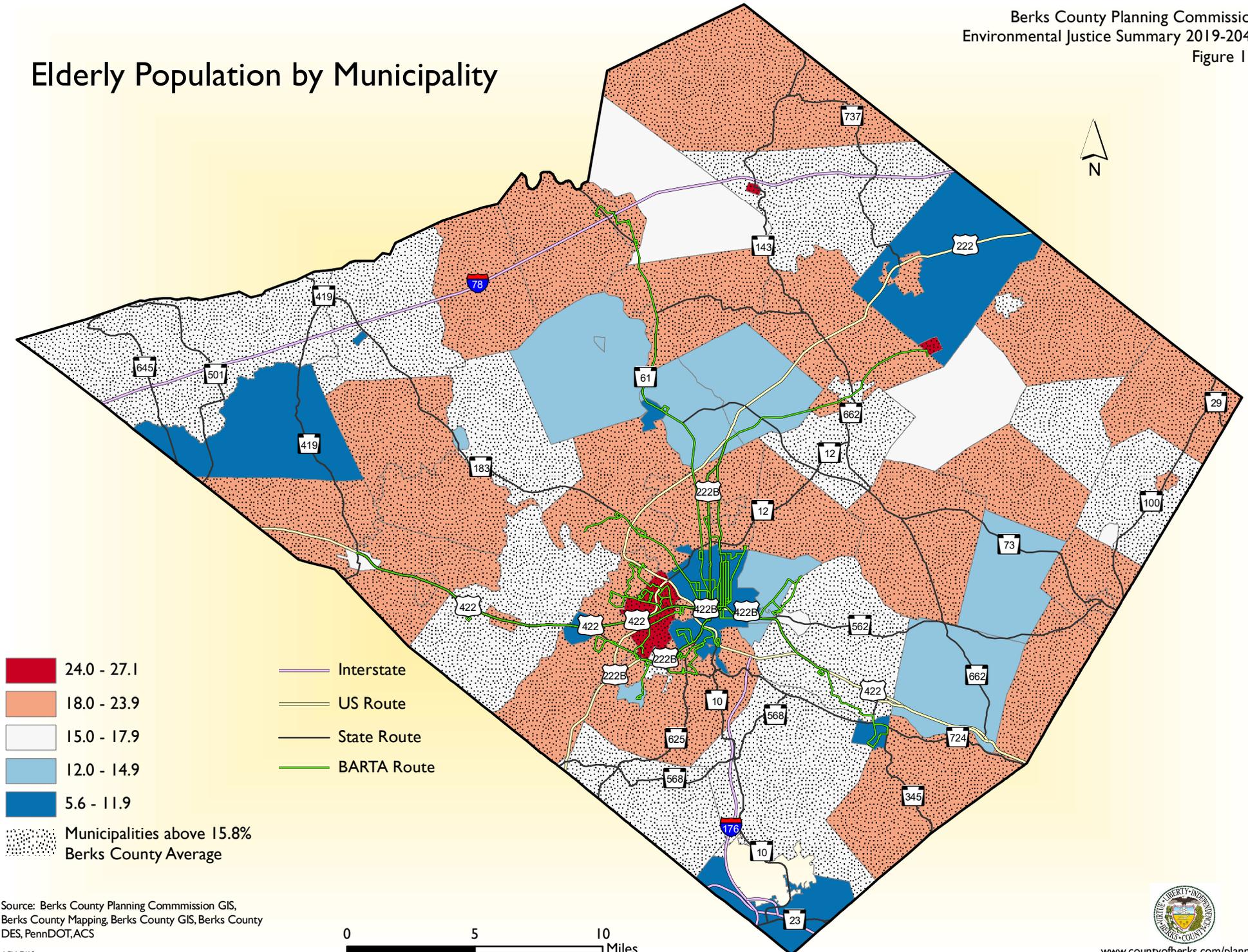
Source: Berks County Planning Commission GIS, Berks County Mapping, Berks County GIS, Berks County DES, PennDOT, ACS



Disabled Population by Municipality



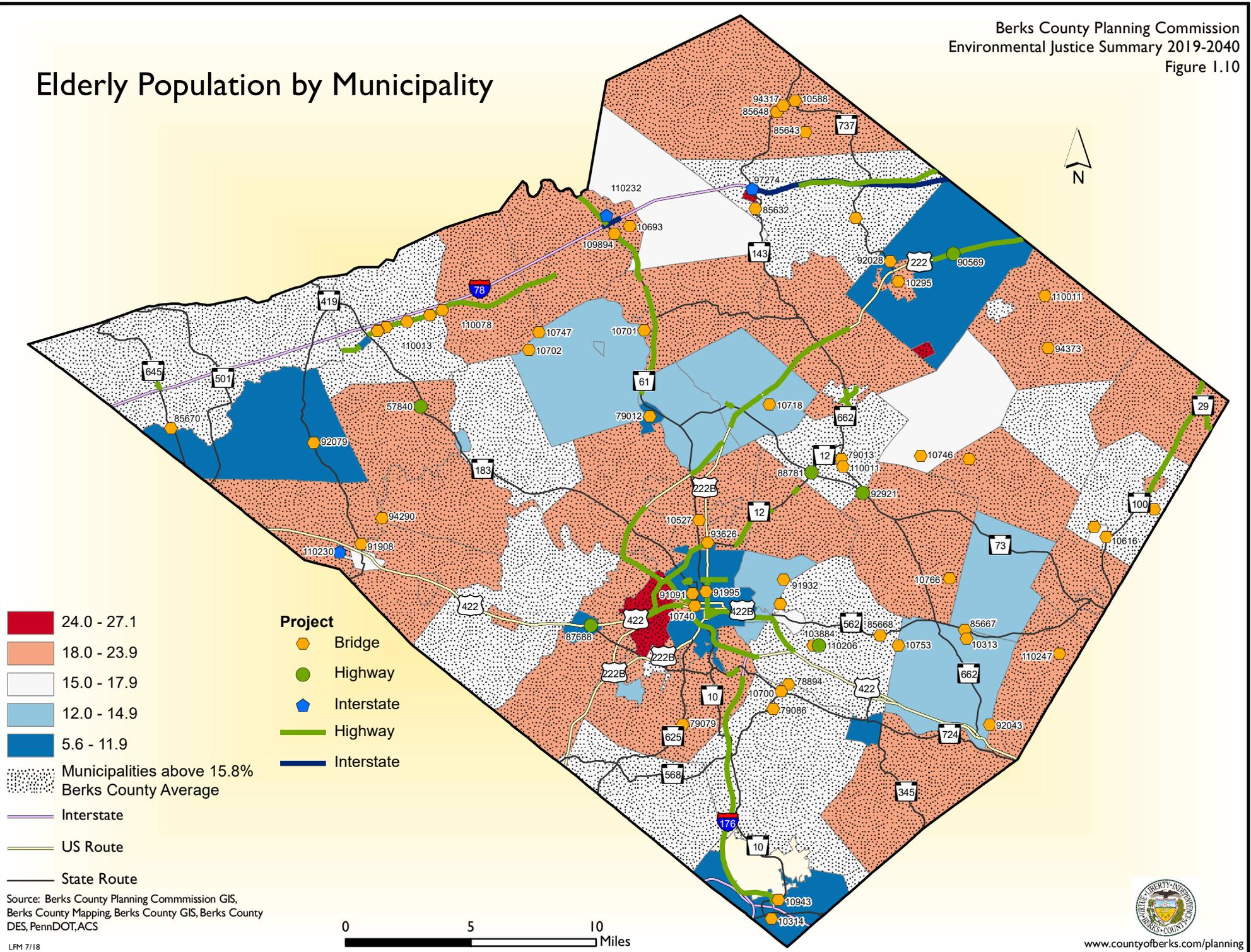
Elderly Population by Municipality



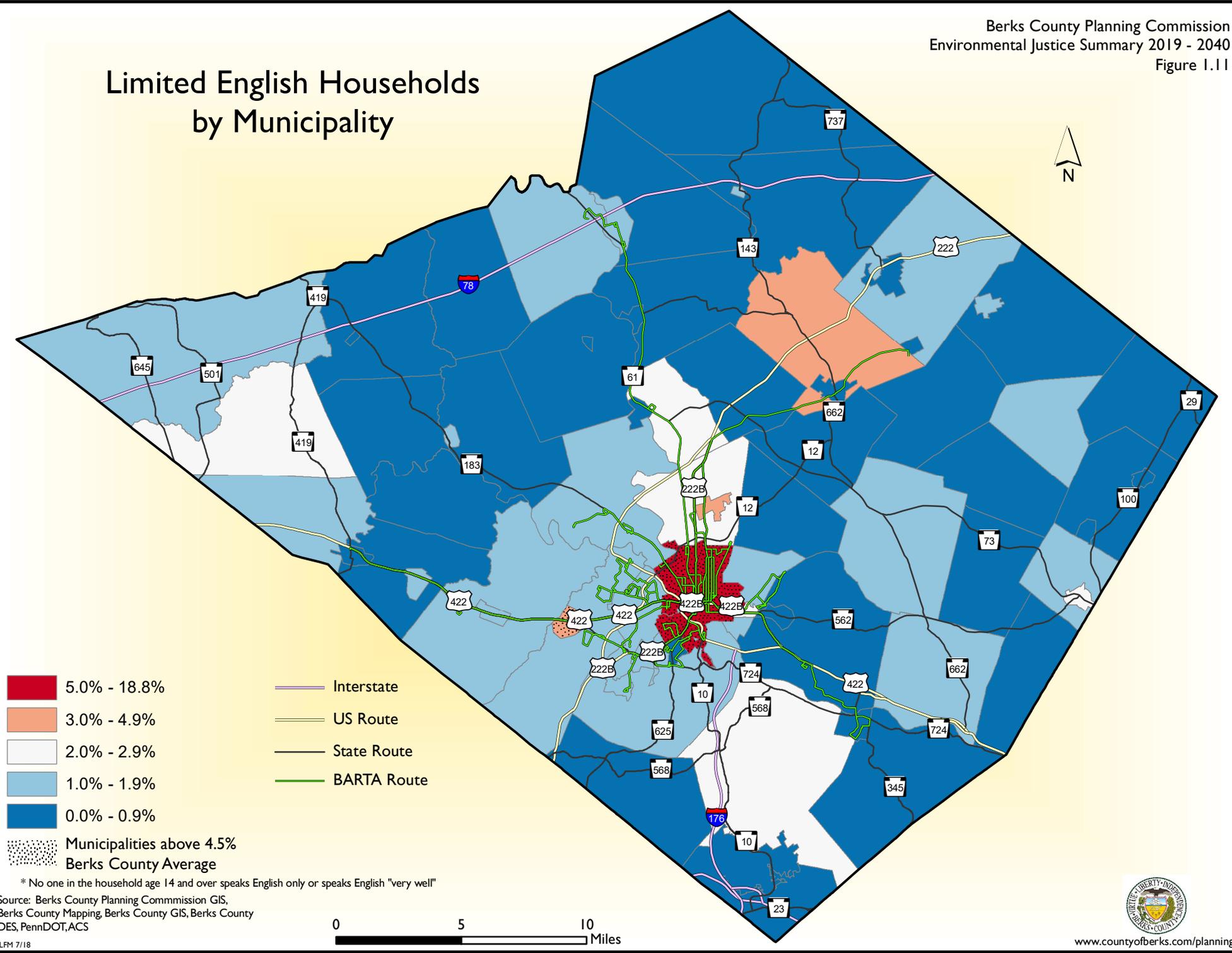
Source: Berks County Planning Commission GIS, Berks County Mapping, Berks County GIS, Berks County DES, PennDOT, ACS



Elderly Population by Municipality



Limited English Households by Municipality



- 5.0% - 18.8%
 - 3.0% - 4.9%
 - 2.0% - 2.9%
 - 1.0% - 1.9%
 - 0.0% - 0.9%
- Interstate
 - US Route
 - State Route
 - BARTA Route

Municipalities above 4.5%
 Berks County Average

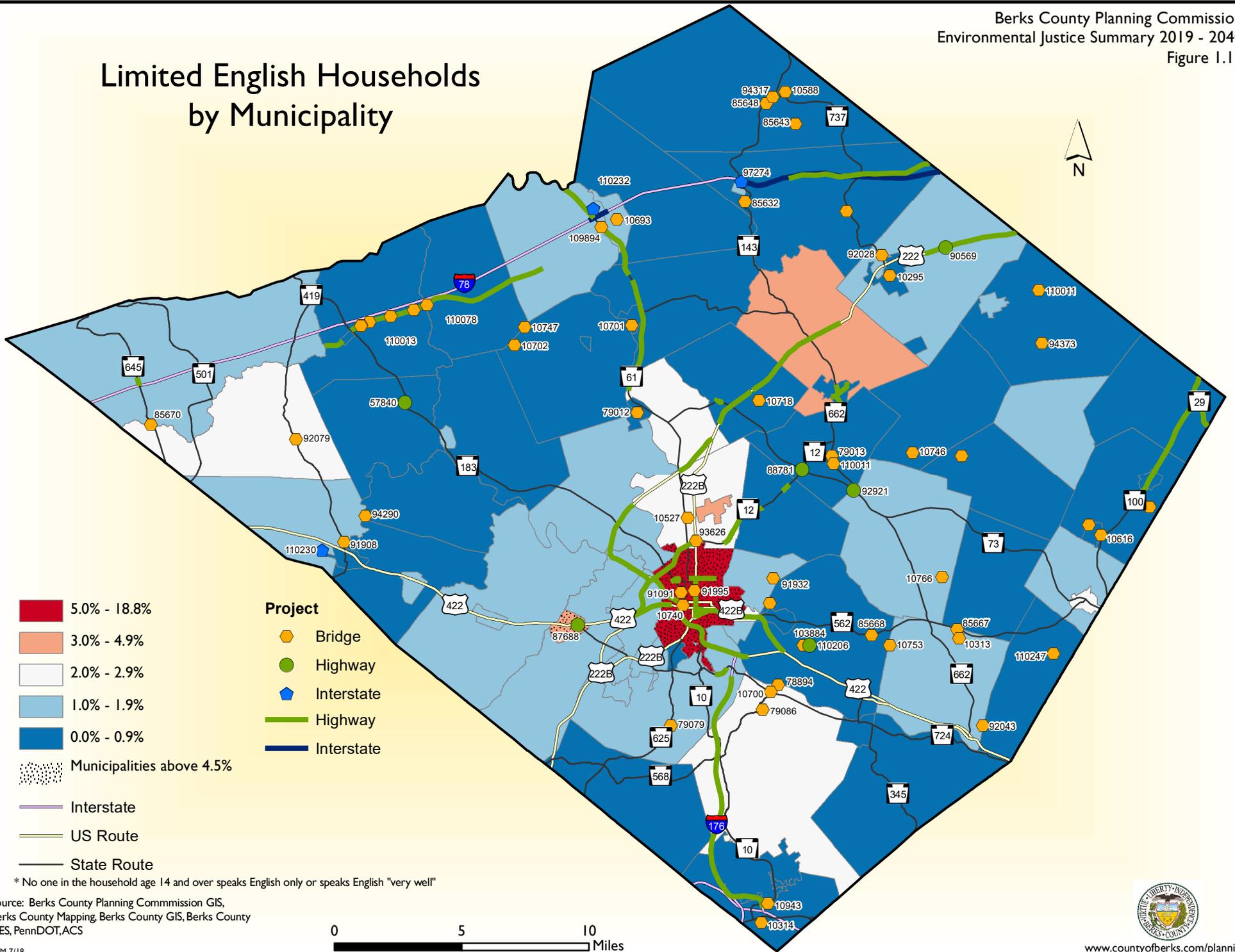
* No one in the household age 14 and over speaks English only or speaks English "very well"

Source: Berks County Planning Commission GIS,
 Berks County Mapping, Berks County GIS, Berks County
 DES, PennDOT, ACS

0 5 10
 Miles



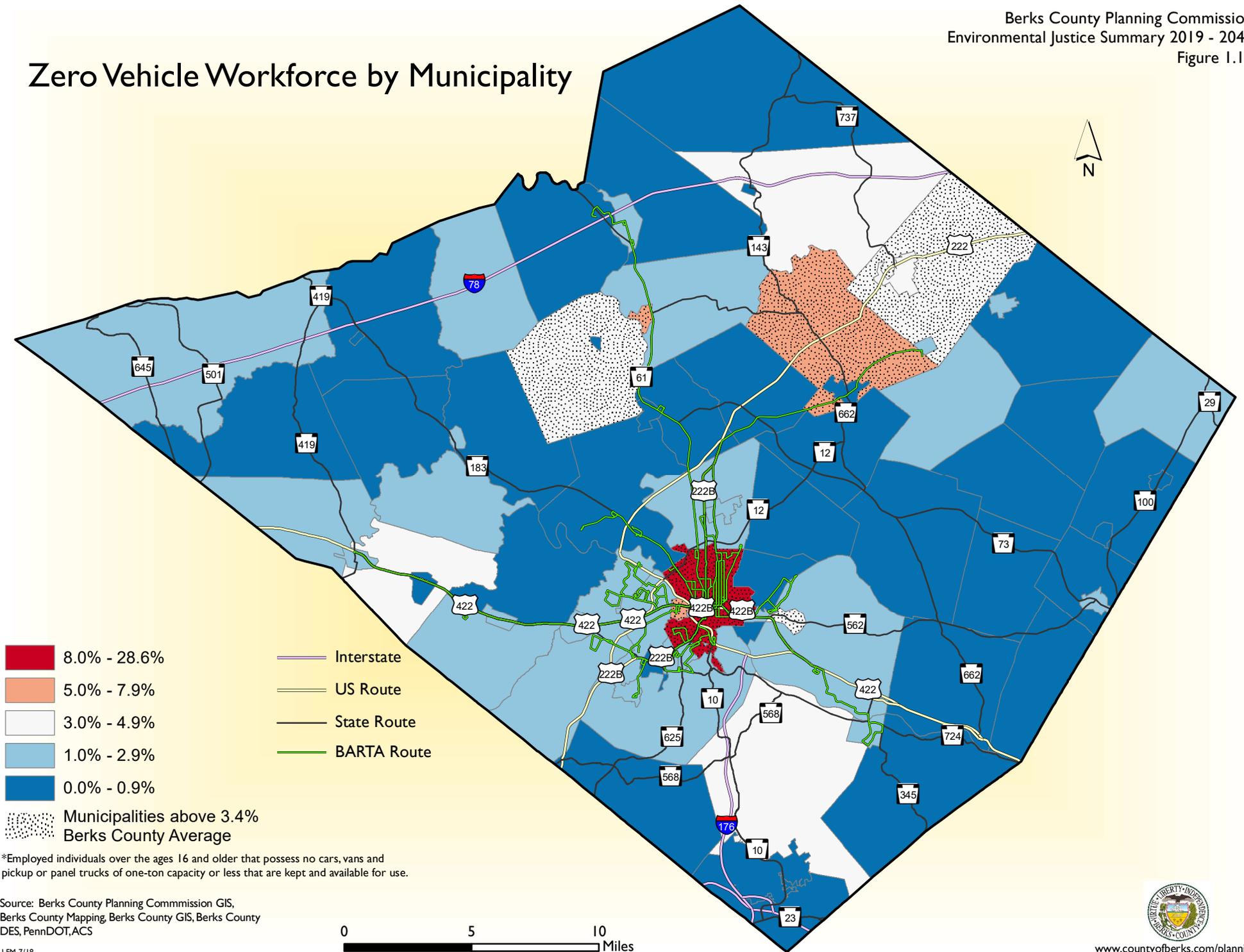
Limited English Households by Municipality



Source: Berks County Planning Commission GIS,
 Berks County Mapping, Berks County GIS, Berks County
 DES, PennDOT, ACS



Zero Vehicle Workforce by Municipality



- 8.0% - 28.6%
 - 5.0% - 7.9%
 - 3.0% - 4.9%
 - 1.0% - 2.9%
 - 0.0% - 0.9%
- Interstate
 - US Route
 - State Route
 - BARTA Route

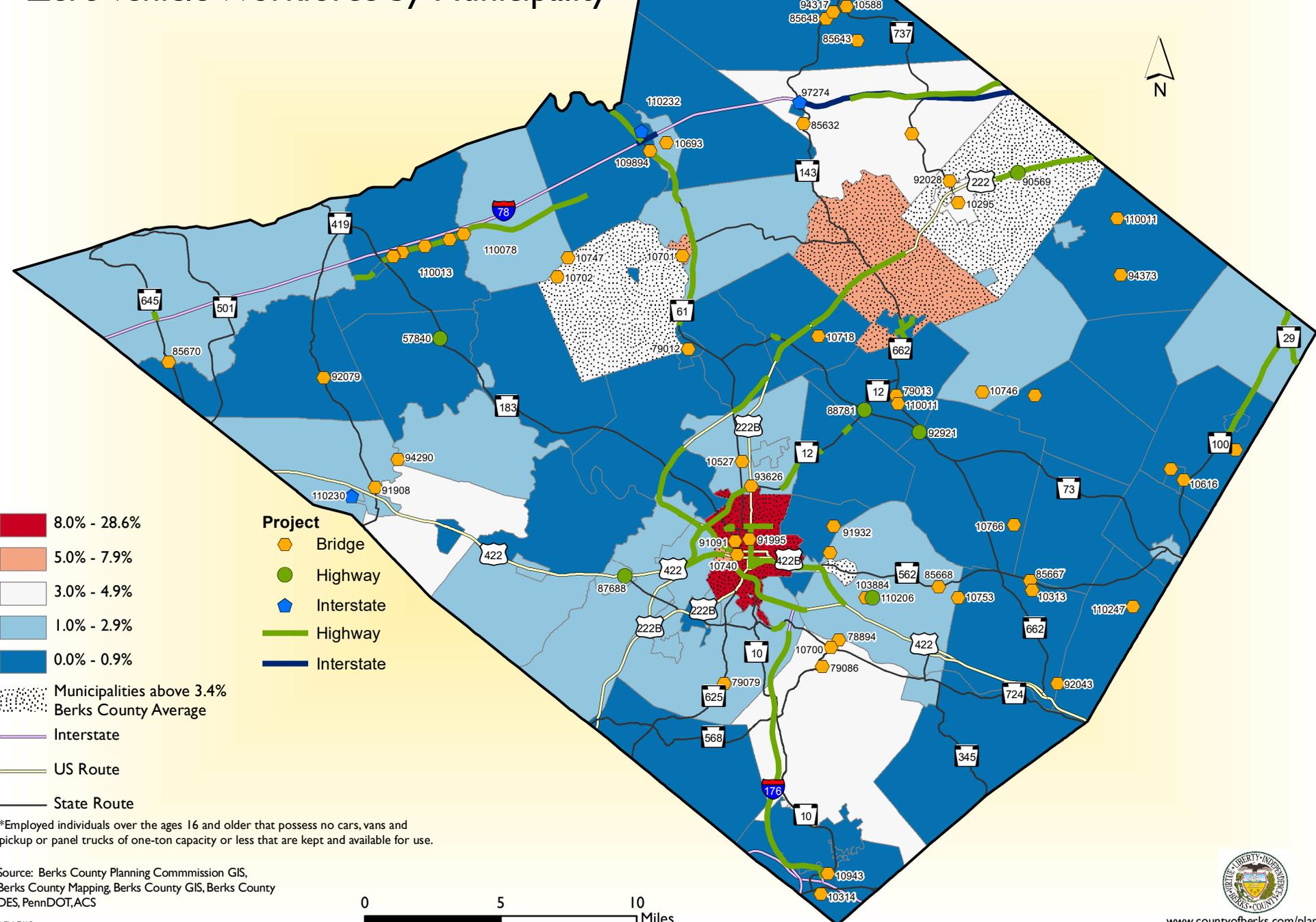
Municipalities above 3.4% Berks County Average

*Employed individuals over the ages 16 and older that possess no cars, vans and pickup or panel trucks of one-ton capacity or less that are kept and available for use.

Source: Berks County Planning Commission GIS, Berks County Mapping, Berks County GIS, Berks County DES, PennDOT, ACS



Zero Vehicle Workforce by Municipality



*Employed individuals over the ages 16 and older that possess no cars, vans and pickup or panel trucks of one-ton capacity or less that are kept and available for use.



Reading Area Transportation Study July, 2018

Coordinating Committee

PennDOT District 5-0 PennDOT Central Office	Mr. Michael W. Rebert, District Executive (Chairman) Mr. James Ritzman, Deputy Secretary for Planning Mr. Larry Shifflet, Bureau Director*
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Berks County Planning Commission	Mr. Thomas McKeon, Board Member (Vice Chairman)
City of Reading	Ms. Donna Reed, Councilmember Mr. John Slifko, Councilmember*
Berks County Boroughs	Mr. Stephen H. Price, Borough Council President (Wernersville Borough)
Berks County 1 st Class Townships	Mr. Kevin Lerch, Township Commissioner (Muhlenberg Township)
Berks County 2 nd Class Townships	Mr. Joseph E. Rudderow, III, Township Supervisor (Maidencreek Township)
South Central Transit Authority / Berks Area Regional Transportation Authority	Mr. David Kilmer, Executive Director Mr. Jeffrey Glisson, Director of Capital Projects/Planning*
Reading Regional Airport Authority	Mr. Randall Swan, Board Member Mr. Craig Lutz, Board Member*

Technical Committee

PennDOT District 5-0	Mr. Christopher Kufro, Asst. District Executive for Design (Chairman) Ms. Vanessa Koenigkramer, Planning & Programming*
PennDOT Central Office	Mr. Gene Porochniak, Transportation Planning Specialist Mr. Raymond Green, Transportation Planning Specialist Supervisor*
Berks County Planning Commission	Mr. Alan Piper, Transportation Planner III (MPO Secretary) Mrs. Shannon Rossman, BCPC Executive Director*
Berks County Planning Commission	Mr. Michael Golembiewski, Transportation Modeler Mrs. Shannon Rossman, BCPC Exec. Dir.*
City of Reading	Mr. Ralph Johnson, Director of Public Works City of Reading Mr. Timothy Krall, Department of Public Works
South Central Transit Authority / Berks Area Regional Transportation Authority	Mr. David Kilmer, Executive Director Mr. Jeffrey Glisson, Director of Capital Projects/Planning*
Reading Regional Airport Authority	Mr. Terry Sroka, Airport Manager

* denotes alternate

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