

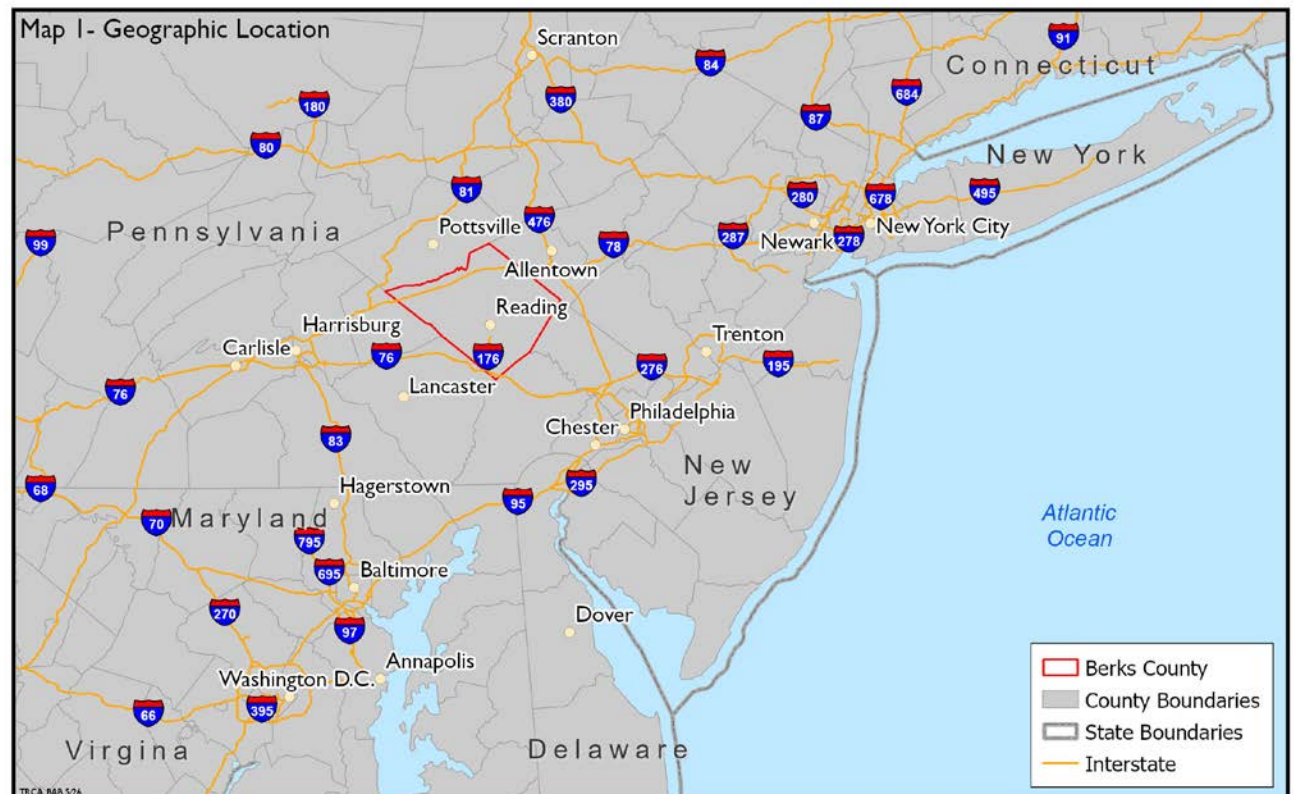
CHAPTER 2- DEMOGRAPHICS

Berks County's transportation system is an essential asset, connecting residents and businesses to jobs, markets, goods, and services at local, national, and global levels. To anticipate how transportation in the county will evolve over the next 25 years, it is critical to analyze the socioeconomic and land-use factors that shape travel demand and patterns.

Population and employment growth typically drive increases in travel and commerce. Additional demographic and economic variables—such as age distribution, per capita income, the proximity of housing to jobs and services, household structure, education levels, and transportation costs—also play key roles in determining travel needs and preferences. Travel behavior often varies significantly across age groups. For instance, recent trends show that younger Americans are driving less than earlier generations for a variety of reasons, while older adults are staying in the workforce longer and maintaining more active lifestyles than their predecessors. These evolving demographics will guide future transportation planning, helping to create a balanced, multimodal system capable of addressing diverse mobility needs.

Geographic Location

Berks County is a county of the third class, comprised of 72 municipalities: 1 city, 27 boroughs, and 44 townships. It is located in southeastern Pennsylvania, surrounded by six other counties: Schuylkill County to the north, Lebanon and Lancaster counties to the west, Lehigh and Montgomery counties to the east and Chester County to the south (see Map 1). 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).



Berks County's topography has profoundly influenced its historical development and transportation network. The county spans a diamond-shaped area of 864 square miles, with its northern and southern borders defined by sections of the Blue and South Mountains—two ridges of the Appalachian chain—that rise to an average elevation of about 640 feet above sea level. Combined with the Schuylkill River and its extensive system of creeks and streams, the region's abundant limestone geology and rich, fertile soils attracted early settlers in the early 18th century.

Population

As of 2024, Berks County is home to 433,015 residents and is the ninth most populated county in Pennsylvania. In comparison to the six neighboring counties, it ranks fourth in overall population. From 2010 to 2020, population increased 4.2 percent, exceeding state figures but falling below the national rate of growth. Population growth slowed between 2020 and 2024, above the state but consistent with national trends.

Most counties show modest growth through 2030 - 2040, but that pattern diverges by 2050. Berks County's population shows growth through 2040, but that growth dramatically slows in 2040 - 2050. Surrounding counties like Lehigh, Lebanon, and Lancaster show the most sustained growth, while the older, industrial Schuylkill County is steadily losing population. Berks County ranked fourth in the number of in-migrants between 2017 - 2018. In 2021 - 2022, the latest data available, the county fell to fifth compared to the other six surrounding counties. The reasons for this are numerous but could include retirements or decisions on improving quality of life and employment prospects.

COUNTY POPULATION BETWEEN 2010 AND 2024

County	2010	2020	2024 Est.	% Change 10-20	% Change 20-24
Chester	498,886	534,413	547,840	7.1%	2.5%
Montgomery	799,874	856,553	867,573	7.1%	1.3%
Lehigh	349,497	374,557	378,792	7.2%	1.1%
Berks	411,442	428,849	433,015	4.2%	1.0%
Lancaster	519,445	552,984	557,931	6.5%	0.9%
Lebanon	133,568	143,257	144,186	7.3%	0.6%
Schuylkill	148,289	143,049	143,558	-3.5%	0.4%
Pennsylvania	12,702,379	13,002,700	13,018,639	2.4%	0.1%
United States	308,745,538	331,449,281	334,922,499	7.4%	1.0%

Source: U.S. Census, Census 2010, 2020, and American Community Survey, 2024 5-year Estimates (DP05)

COUNTY POPULATION PROJECTIONS, 2020 - 2050

County	2020 Census	2030 Projected	2040 Projected	2050 Projected	% Change 20-30	% Change 40-50
Berks	428,849	442,748	453,624	460,295	3.2%	1.5%
Chester	534,413	552,077	567,038	571,892	3.3%	0.9%
Lancaster	552,984	569,039	583,665	599,146	2.9%	2.7%
Lebanon	143,257	148,872	155,167	161,410	3.9%	4.0%
Lehigh	374,557	391,415	405,502	416,810	4.5%	2.8%
Montgomery	856,553	864,526	866,836	858,686	0.9%	-0.9%
Schuylkill	143,049	138,732	133,698	127,877	-3.0%	-4.4%
Pennsylvania	13,002,700	13,185,540	13,226,568	13,195,997	1.4%	-0.2%

Source: U. S. Census, 2020 Decennial Census, The Center for Rural Pennsylvania *Pennsylvania Population Projections 2030-2050*

COUNTY MIGRATION FOR 2017-2018 AND 2021-2022

2017-2018	In	Out	Difference		2021-2022	In	Out	Difference
Chester	22,216	19,741	2,475		Chester	23,058	20,829	2,229
Montgomery	36,395	34,209	2,186		Schuylkill	5,259	4,246	1,013
Berks	13,063	12,582	481		Montgomery	37,432	36,797	635
Lebanon	5,473	5,179	294		Lebanon	5,540	5,148	392
Schuylkill	4,053	3,869	184		Berks	13,629	13,541	88
Lehigh	16,237	16,436	-199		Lehigh	16,501	17,023	-522
Lancaster	14,520	16,391	-1,871		Lancaster	15,081	16,200	-1,119

Source: Internal Revenue Service, Statistics of Income Office, Migration Data, County to County Migration Data, 2017-2018 and 2021-2022

Population Density

Of the seven counties, Berks County has the fifth highest population density. This is in part due to the physical size of the county. The county is the 18th largest in the state and only Lancaster County is larger when comparing the seven neighboring counties.

The United States Census Bureau defines a place “urban” when the population density is a least 1,000 people per square mile. Based on current estimates, 30 of the 72 municipalities in Berks County could be considered “urban” by this definition.

Population density is an important consideration in transportation planning. As more people move into and within the county, the density of residential and employment opportunities changes in both magnitude and distribution. Reading and most of the older boroughs contain the highest densities of persons and jobs, while the rural areas contain more land and therefore, lower densities (see Map 2). The provision of transportation services is affected in different ways by density of people and jobs. Mass transit services operate more efficiently in very dense, urban areas. Areas that were formerly rural are now developing at suburban densities but are neither dense enough nor close enough to the transit system to warrant system expansion. Many rural roads, bridges, and intersections are not constructed to standards adequate to handle increased demands created by new development.

POPULATION DENSITY BY COUNTY, 2024

County	Size (Sq. Mi.)	2024 Pop. Est.	Density
Montgomery	483.0	867,573	1796.2
Lehigh	345.2	378,792	1097.3
Chester	750.5	547,840	730.0
Lancaster	943.8	557,931	591.2
Berks	856.5	433,015	505.6
Lebanon	361.8	144,186	398.5
Schuylkill	778.6	143,558	184.4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2024 Estimates (DP05)

Households

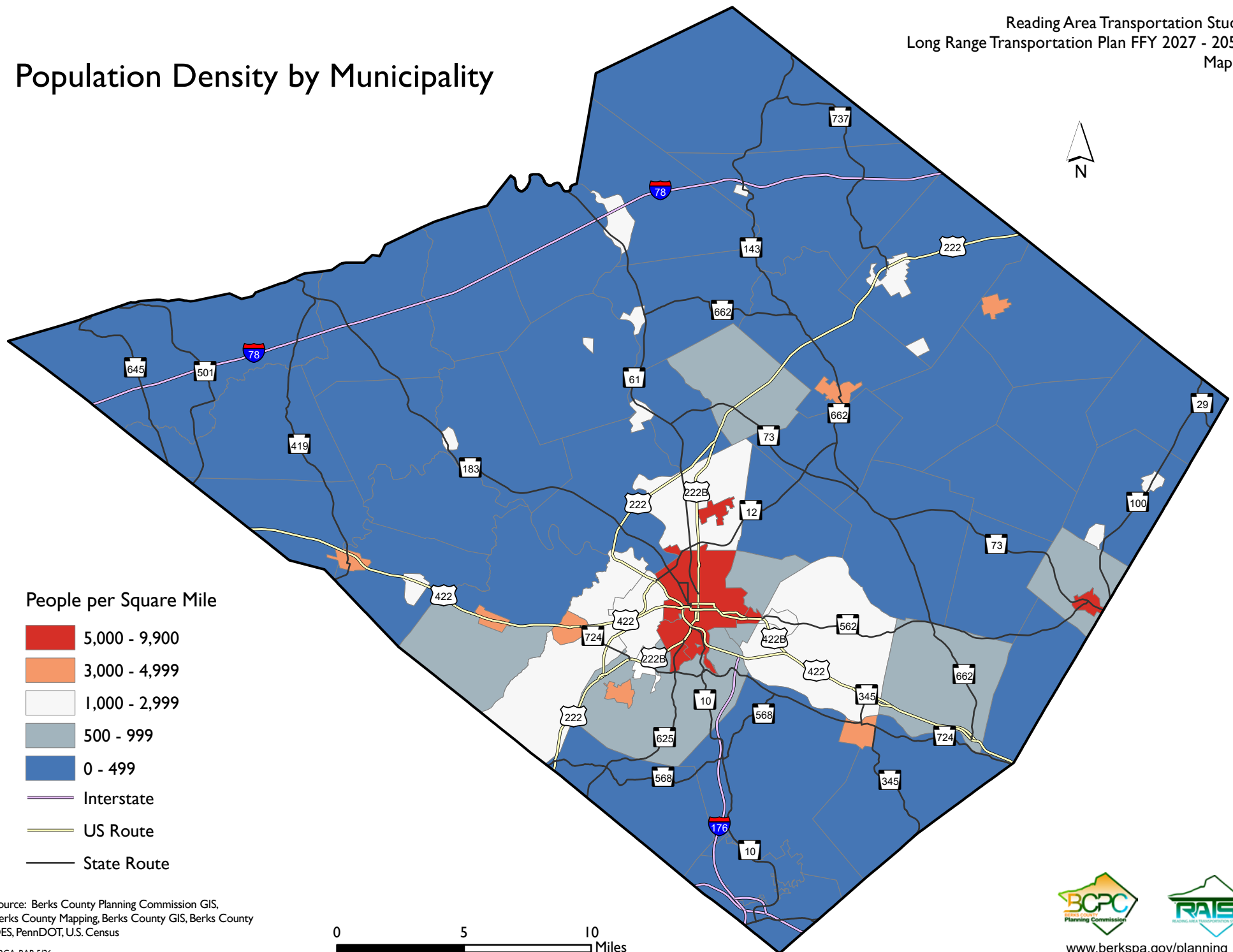
The household is the primary driver of trip making, so it is important to examine trends and forecasts of the number of households. Large families tend to generate fewer trips per person than do smaller families because there is a tendency towards increased vehicle occupancy with each trip. The number of households increased by 2.7 percent in Berks County between 2019 and 2024 ranking sixth out of the 7 counties. The lower rate of household growth mirrors the slow population growth the county is experiencing. In 2024, a Berks County household had 2.57 people per household (PPH), down slightly from 2.62 in 2019. The county has slightly more people per household than the state average of 2.39. Map 3 shows the persons per household by municipality in Berks County.

NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS, 2019 TO 2024

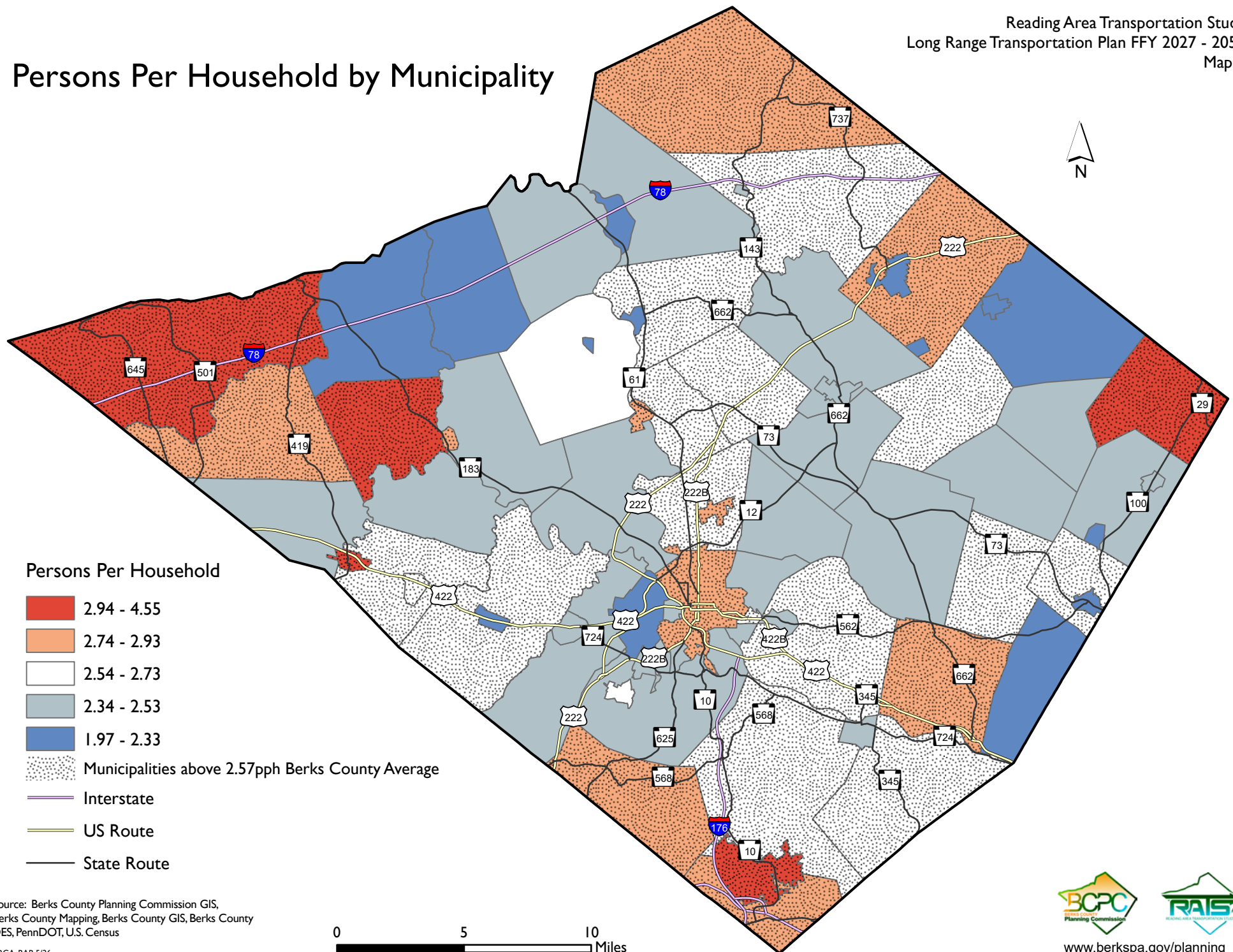
County	2019	2024	% Change
Chester	200,402	212,491	6.0%
Montgomery	334,387	350,351	4.8%
Lebanon	57,609	59,921	4.0%
Lancaster	210,985	219,224	3.9%
Lehigh	146,145	151,220	3.5%
Berks	167,105	171,580	2.7%
Schuylkill	69,870	67,295	-3.7%
Pennsylvania	5,693,314	5,806,452	2.0%
United States	137,428,986	143,775,355	4.6%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2019 and 2024 5-year Estimates (DP04)

Population Density by Municipality



Persons Per Household by Municipality



Berks County Poverty

In 2024, Berks County had the second highest overall poverty rate of the seven counties and is 0.5 higher than the state poverty rate. From 1960 – 2000, Schuylkill County had the highest overall poverty rate. Berks surpassed Schuylkill in the 2000 – 2010 decade. According to the latest estimates Schuylkill County again has the highest poverty rate out of the seven-county region. While the highest rates of poverty are in the City of Reading, several boroughs and townships have had considerable poverty gains in the last decade. (see Map 4)

To provide some explanation of why some Berks County municipalities saw substantial increases in poverty, staff explored American Community Survey data on usual hours worked during a week for those between the ages of 16 and 64 and median household incomes. Most Berks County municipalities have seen declines in hours worked with sharp declines in full-time employment hours. There have also been substantial increases in part-time employment and no employment whatsoever.

Berks County median household incomes grew 25.9 percent between 2019 and 2024. This rate is slightly below both state and national figures. There are some Berks County municipalities that have median household incomes that are below the state median.

Berks County Elderly Population

As the “baby boom” generation ages, the amount of elderly population in the region will increase which will have a significant impact on the transportation system. Driving will become difficult or impossible for many, as they grow older, with an increasing need for transit and paratransit services. Improvements in roadway signage, lighting, or other highway system elements will be needed to accommodate a higher number of drivers with visual or other physical challenges due to aging. In Berks County, 18 percent of the population is 65 and over, up from 16.9 percent in 2019. Statewide, the population age 65 and older is expected to rise from 19.5 percent in 2024 to 23 percent in 2040. Map 5 shows the concentrations of the 65 and over population by municipality in Berks County. According to the Federal Highway Administration, in 2023, drivers 65+ accounted for approximately 25.2 percent of all licensed drivers in Pennsylvania.

Elder mobility will be a focus of long- range transportation and safety planning. The vast majority of older adults prefer to “age in place” by continuing to live in their current homes and communities. Many older adults in Berks County are dependent on cars, particularly in the suburban and rural areas of the county, which typically developed around the motor vehicle as the primary mode of transportation.

Berks County Disabled Population

In 2024, 13.5 percent of Berks County residents identified themselves as being disabled. This is a very slight decrease from 13.7 percent in 2019. Map 6 shows the concentration of disabled people in Berks County. Disabled mobility will also be a focus of long-range transportation and safety planning as the majority of disabled people prefer to live in non-institutionalized settings such as nursing or personal care facilities or in their own homes. This trend will be constantly monitored and documented in subsequent plan updates because if the numbers increase rather than decrease it may elevate the need for transit and paratransit services in the boroughs and townships outside the metropolitan area.

Berks County Limited English Proficiency Households

Individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English are considered by federal law to be limited English proficient, or “LEP.” This language barrier may prevent individuals from accessing services and benefits. In 2024, 5.8 percent of Berks County households had limited to no proficiency with the English language. Map 7 shows many of those households are in the City of Reading, with other concentrations in Muhlenberg Township, Laureldale, Mount Penn and Kutztown Boroughs. Reading and Muhlenberg exceed the countywide average.

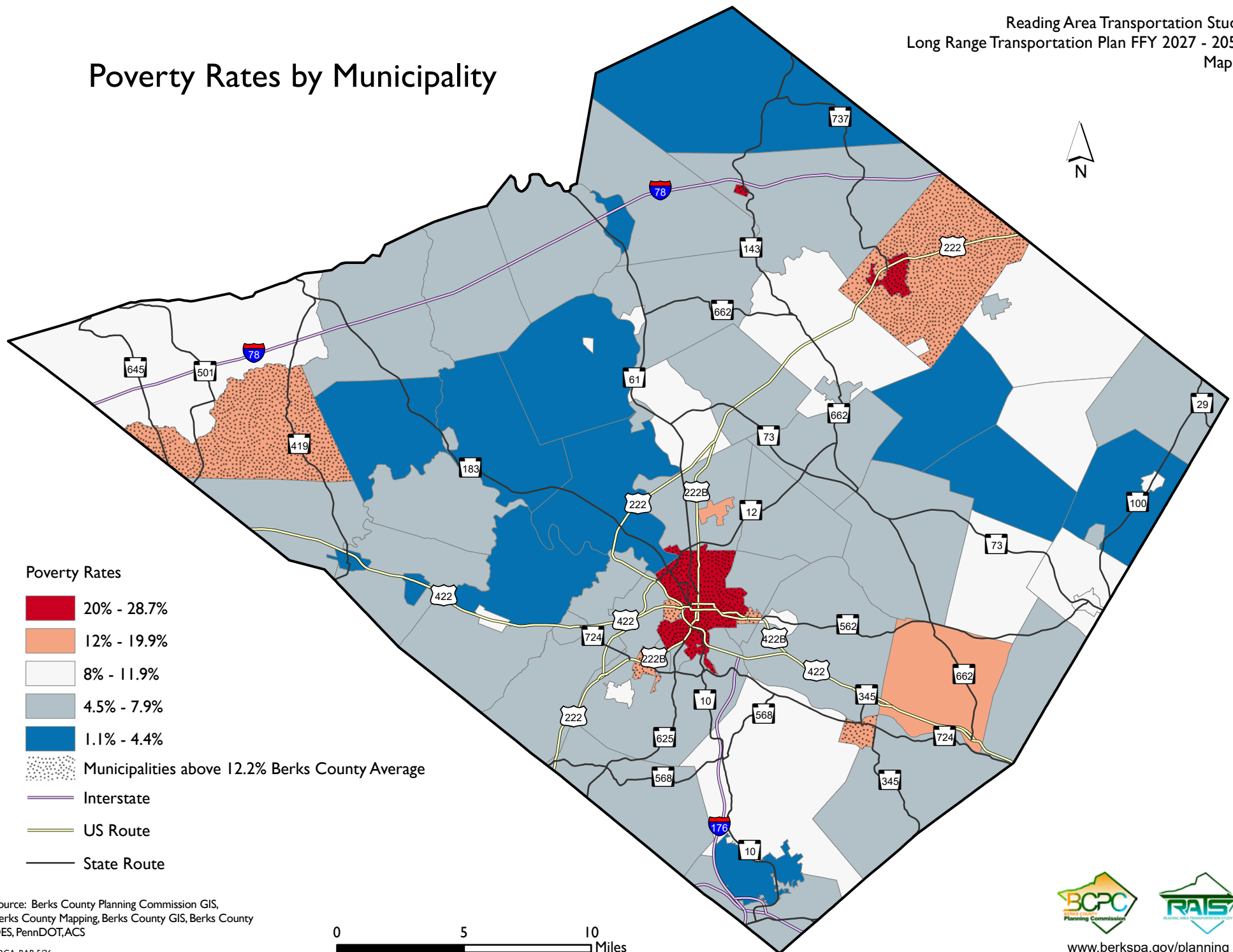
Berks County Zero Vehicle Households

Despite the dominance of automobiles, 8.7 percent of Berks County households do not have access to a vehicle. This is a slight increase from 8.3 percent in 2019. Map 8 shows the percentage of these households by municipality. Although the majority of Zero Vehicle Households are in the City of Reading, Map 8 shows several municipalities meet or exceed the county average. Lack of access to a personal vehicle or transit may leave residents with poor access to employment and healthcare centers. The more limited access to a private automobile, the more reliant on public transportation an individual or household becomes.

Berks County Minority Population

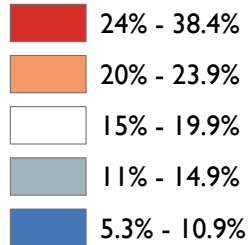
Minority populations are defined as those groups differing, especially in race or ethnic background from the majority of a population. For the purposes of this analysis, the United States Census standards for identifying minorities will be used. The average minority population in Berks County is 26.1 percent, an increase of 4.9 percent since 2019. The municipalities that exceed the county average are highlighted on Map 9.

Poverty Rates by Municipality



Elderly Population by Municipality

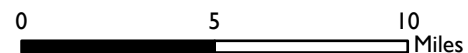
Percent of Elderly Population



— Interstate
— US Route
— State Route

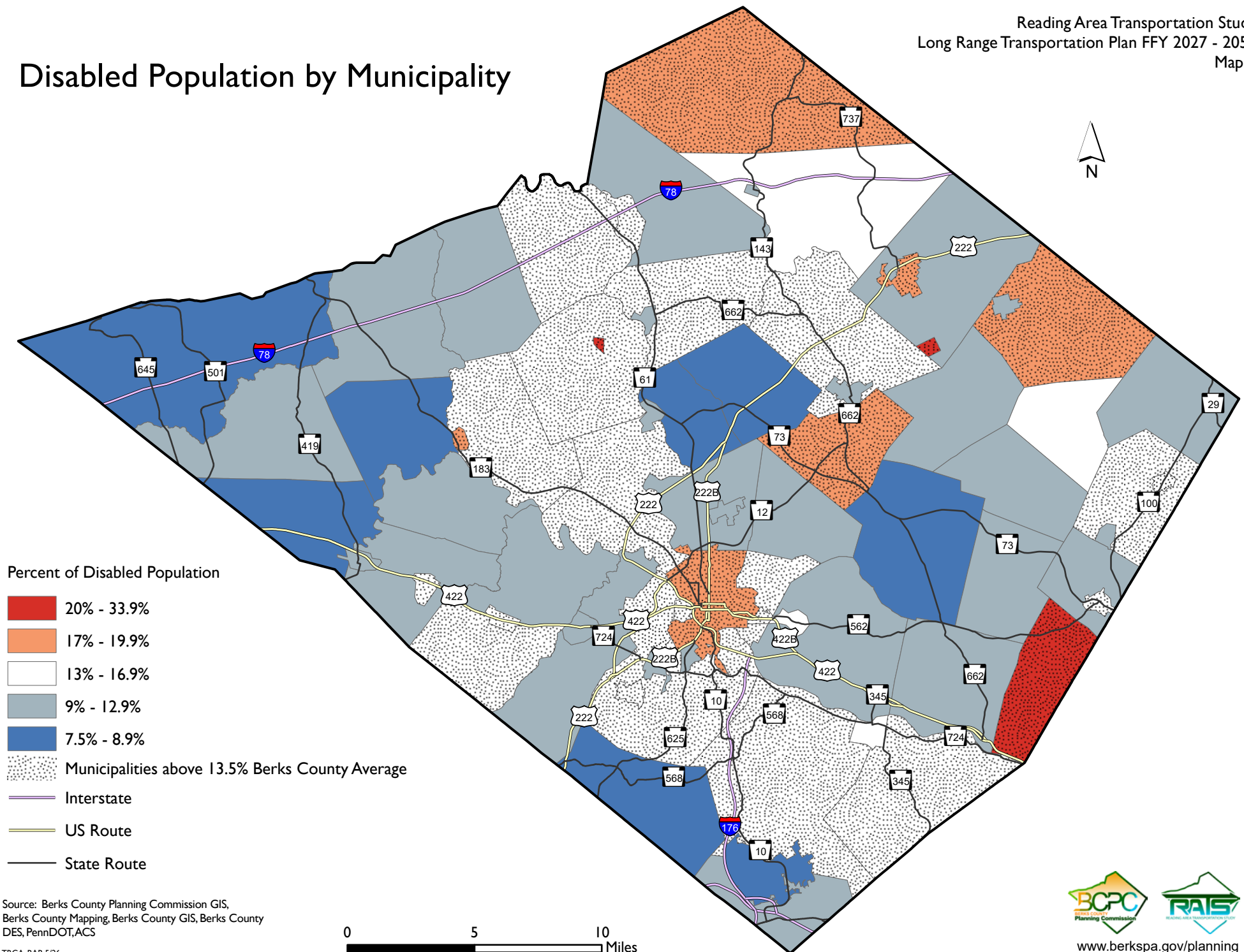
Source: Berks County Planning Commission GIS,
Berks County Mapping, Berks County GIS, Berks County
DES, PennDOT, ACS

TRCA, BAB 5/26



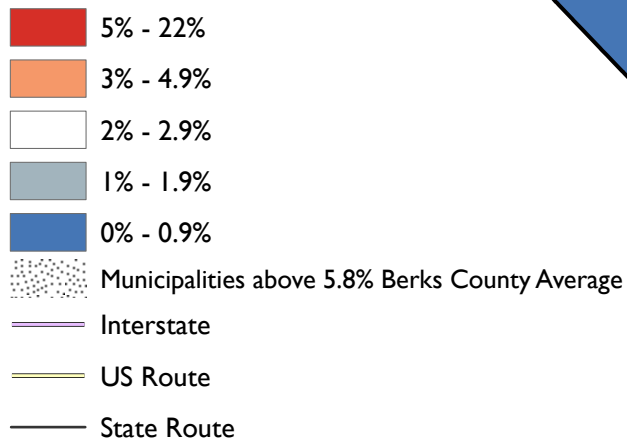
www.berkspa.gov/planning

Disabled Population by Municipality



Limited English Households by Municipality

Limited English 14yrs and Older *



* 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

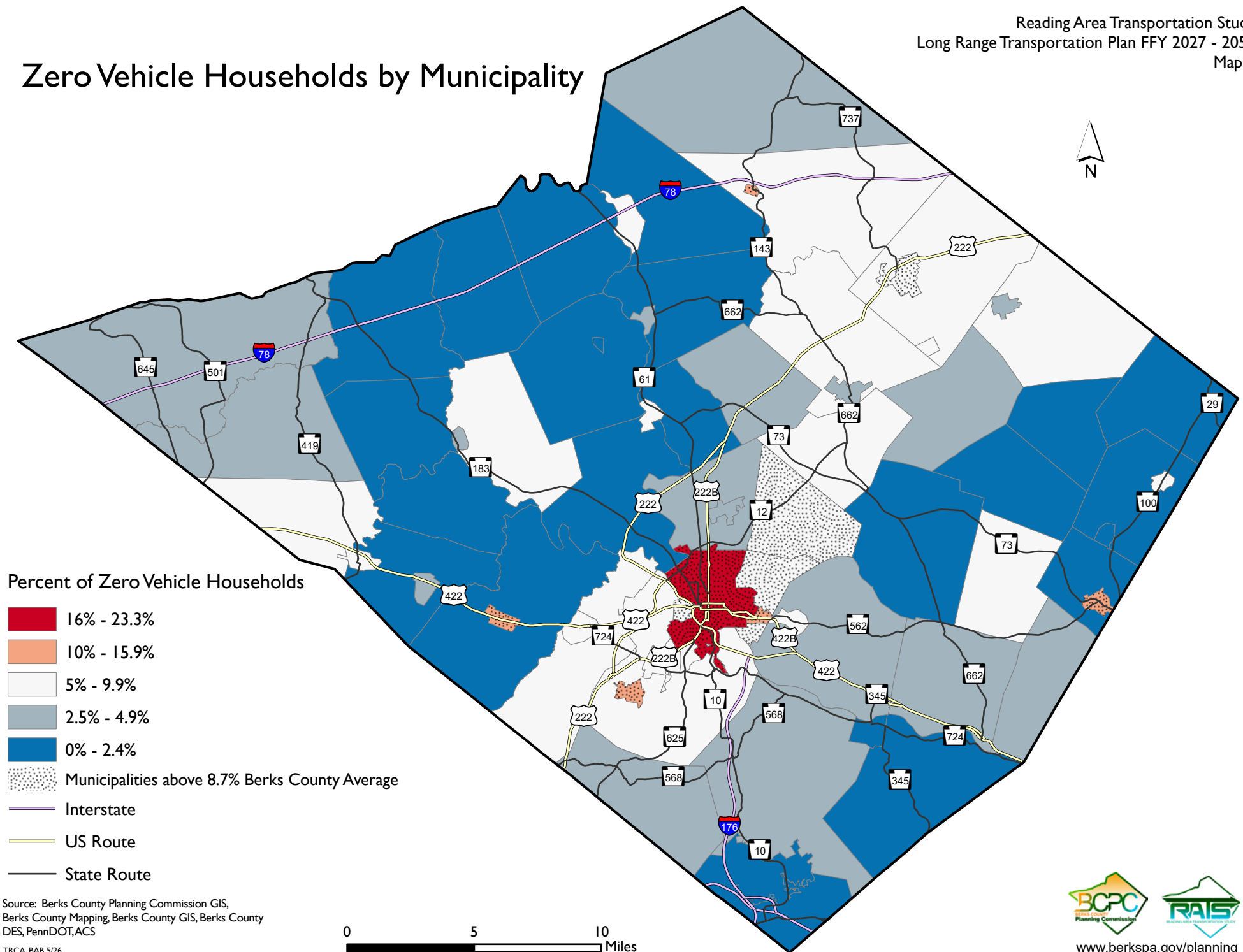
TRCA, BAB 5/26

0 5 10
Miles

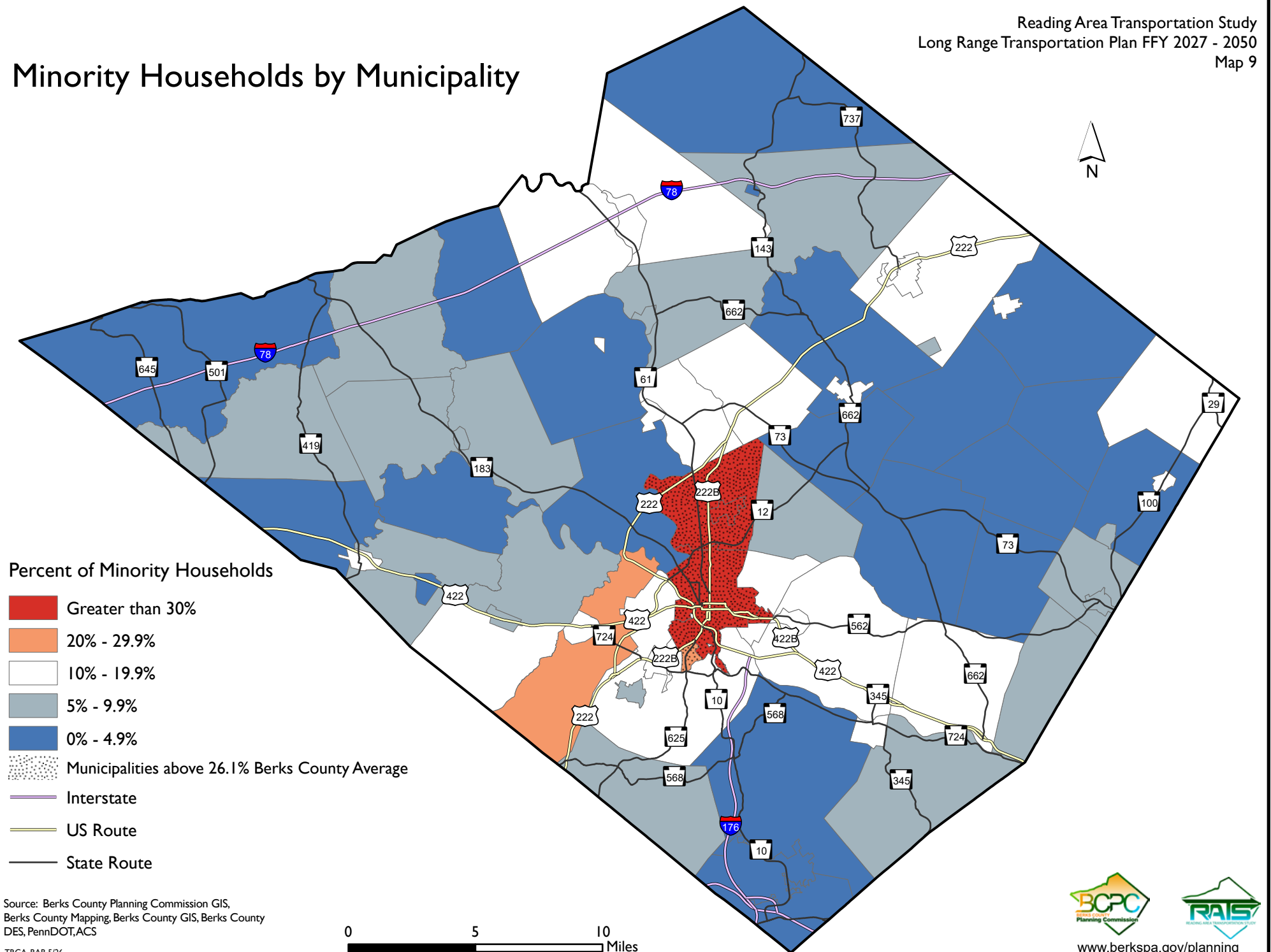


www.berkspa.gov/planning

Zero Vehicle Households by Municipality



Minority Households by Municipality





Berks County's economy shapes its transportation patterns in several key ways. The size of the local workforce directly affects commuter traffic volume and the severity of rush-hour congestion. Residents' income levels help determine how many people can afford personal vehicles versus how many rely on public transportation. Additionally, the overall level of business and industrial activity in the county influences the volume of freight movement and, to some extent, the preferred modes of transportation for shipping goods.

While this section provides valuable economic data as it relates to the transportation network in Berks County, it is not intended to be a complete analysis of the economic vitality of the County. For a comprehensive picture of Berks County's current workforce landscape and future economic outlook please review the Berks County Workforce Development Board's report titled *Berks Workforce 2030* at: [Berks-2030-Workforce-Report_clickable-TableofContents.pdf](#)

Employment Gain/Loss

Including population changes, employment in Berks County was influenced mostly by the recovery from the December 2007-June 2009 recession and 2020 COVID-19 pandemic along with global economic impacts, technological innovation, changes in logistics management, continued offshoring of industry to other countries and demographic changes [e.g. Leading Edge (born between 1946-1951) Baby Boomer retirements]. While Berks County gained approximately 16,336 jobs between 2014 and 2024, employment grew at a slower rate than many of our neighboring counties and the state.

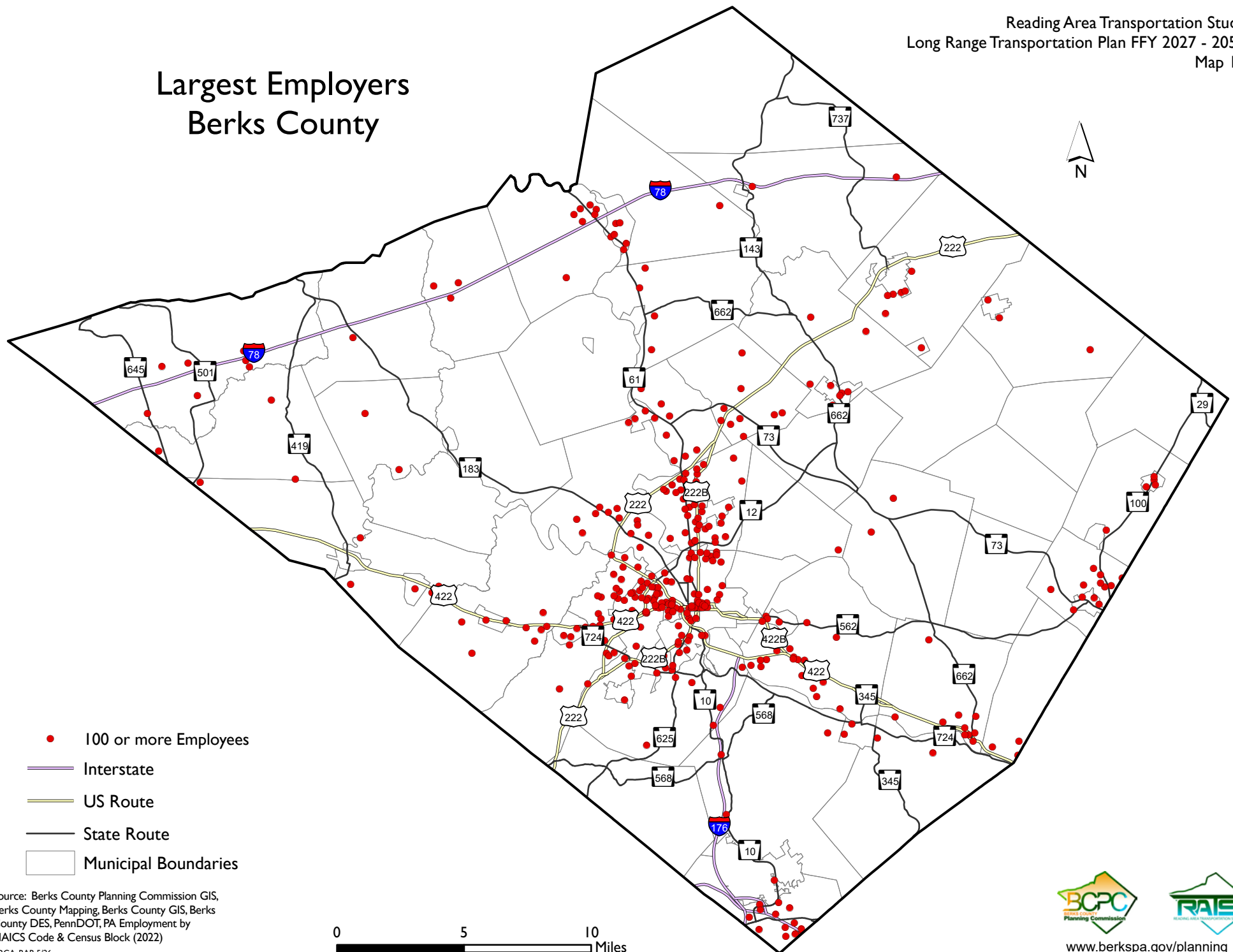
Map 10 shows employers with 100 people or more in Berks County and their location on the Berks County transportation network. Many of these businesses are within minutes of a state highway, Interstate or the Turnpike.

TOTAL EMPLOYMENT BY COUNTY AND PENNSYLVANIA, 2014 - 2024

County	2014	2024	Employment Gain
Montgomery	415,553	456,734	41,181
Chester	258,128	288,154	30,026
Lancaster	256,207	281,193	24,986
Lehigh	166,747	185,591	18,844
Berks	196,201	212,537	16,336
Lebanon	64,169	69,025	4,856
Schuylkill	63,551	64,590	1,039
Pennsylvania	5,946,480	6,332,886	386,406

Source: Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2014 to 2024 5-Year American Community Survey (DP03)

Largest Employers Berks County



Labor Force and Employment Trends

National, state, and county unemployment rates experienced a sharp rise due to the 2007-2009 recession. However, since 2014, the unemployment rate in Berks County has consistently decreased from 9.4 percent to 5.4 percent in 2024. Broken down, the labor force increased 3.8 percent during that time, employment increased 8.3 percent, and unemployment decreased 39.8 percent.

BERKS COUNTY EMPLOYMENT, 2014 - 2024				
Year	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Rate
2014	216,467	196,201	20,266	6.2%
2015	217,230	197,703	19,527	5.9%
2016	216,846	199,047	17,799	5.4%
2017	217,070	201,177	15,893	4.8%
2018	217,610	203,128	14,482	4.3%
2019	218,529	205,648	12,881	3.8%
2020	218,535	206,343	12,196	3.6%
2021	221,719	209,098	12,621	3.7%
2022	223,434	211,422	12,012	3.5%
2023	223,263	211,518	11,745	3.4%
2024	224,734	211,518	12,197	5.7%
Trend				

Source: Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2014 to 2024 5-Year American Community Survey (DP03)

The labor force participation rate (labor force as a percentage of the population 16+) continues to decline in Berks County. While the decline in the participation rate is both a state and national trend, it would suggest that there are less people using the transportation network to get to and from work.

BERKS COUNTY LABOR FORCE 2014 TO 2024			
Year	16+ Pop.	Labor Force	Participation Rate
2014	329,111	216,467	65.8%
2015	330,102	217,230	65.8%
2016	330,820	216,846	65.6%
2017	332,475	217,070	65.3%
2018	333,733	217,610	65.2%
2019	335,068	218,529	65.2%
2020	336,742	218,535	64.9%
2021	342,555	221,719	64.7%
2022	345,342	223,434	64.7%
2023	346,504	223,263	64.4%
2024	349,775	224,734	64.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2014 and 2024 5-Year American Community Survey (DP03)



The table below presents data on the labor force participation rate for various age groups in Berks County, comparing figures from 2014 and 2024. For younger groups, the 16 to 19 age bracket saw a slight decline from 45.9 percent participation in 2014 to 45.3 percent in 2024, while the 20 to 24 group dropped from 76.5 percent to 74.5 percent. The prime working age categories show that in 2014, the combined 25 to 44 group had an 85.6 percent rate, in 2024 the U.S. Census Bureau collected data a little differently by breaking the age groups down into 25 to 29 (84.9%), 30 to 34 (84.2%), and 35 to 44 (85.7%). Regardless, the numbers indicate stable high participation in the labor force. Middle-aged workers in the 45 to 54 range remained steady at around 84.2 to 84.3 percent. For older adults, the 55 to 64 cohort in 2014 splits in 2024 to 77.6 percent for 55 to 59 and 62.4 percent for 60 to 64, suggesting increased participation among those nearing retirement. Interestingly, participation among seniors rose modestly, from 26.8 percent for the 65 to 74 group and 5.4 percent for the 75+ group in 2014 to 30.1 percent and 7.8 percent in 2024, respectively, reflecting broader trends of extended workforce involvement amid an aging population.

BERKS COUNTY PERCENT OF POPULATION BY AGE IN THE LABOR FORCE, 2014 AND 2024				
Age Group	2014	% in Labor Force	2024	% in Labor Force
16 to 19	25,384	45.9%	25,338	45.3%
20 to 24	28,289	76.5%	27,824	74.5%
25 to 29	98,828	85.6%	26,193	84.9%
30 to 34			27,679	84.2%
35 to 44			53,025	85.7%
45 to 54	61,701	84.2%	52,457	84.3%
55 to 59	52,405	69.6%	29,521	77.6%
60 to 64			29,638	62.4%
65 to 74	32,443	26.8%	45,284	30.1%
75+	30,061	5.4%	32,816	7.8%

Source: U. S. Census Bureau, 2014 and 2024 5-Year American Community Survey (S2301)

Berks County Employment Projections

According to ten-year projections provided by the Berks County Economic Development Office, the county is expected to see a 4.0 percent increase in the total number of jobs during the ten-year period. The largest gains will be in the accommodation of food services industries.

BERKS COUNTY EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS, 2035				
Industry	2025 Employment	2035 Forecast	# Change	% Change
Health Care and Social Assistance	32,257	32,347	90	0%
Manufacturing	31,969	32,505	536	2%
Retail Trade	19,583	23,829	4,246	22%
Educational Services	12,984	11,698	-1,286	-10%
Accommodation of Food Services	12,629	21,293	8,664	69%
Transportation and Warehousing	12,627	12,694	67	1%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	9,979	10,462	483	5%
Construction	9,606	7,810	-1,796	-19%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	8,637	9,388	751	9%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	7,221	5,662	-1,559	-22%
Wholesale Trade	5,853	5,517	-336	-6%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	4,713	3,763	-950	-20%
Public Administration (Government)	4,488	3,788	-700	-16%
Finance and Insurance	4,007	3,093	-914	-23%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	3,148	3,466	318	10%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	2,896	4,074	1,178	41%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	2,144	1,956	-188	-9%
Information	1,015	793	-222	-22%
Utility	735	581	-154	-21%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	220	197	-23	-10%
Total - All Industries	186,711	194,916	8,205	4%

Source: JobsEQ, Berks County Economic Development

Berks County Major Industries

As of 2024, the top three industries in terms of overall employment are trade/transportation/utilities, education and health services, and manufacturing. While the goods producing industries still provide higher wages and manufacturing still remains a major source of employment, the county has solidly transitioned into a services-dominated economy.

BERKS COUNTY 2024 ANNUAL AVERAGES					
Industry Sector	Annual Establishments	Annual Average Employment	Total Annual Wages	Annual Average Weekly Wage	Annual Wages per Employee
Financial Activities	702	5,573	\$566,681,546	\$1,956	\$101,689
Construction	884	7,460	\$588,085,649	\$1,516	\$78,831
Professional and Business Services	1,346	19,719	\$1,608,156,602	\$1,568	\$81,554
Manufacturing	508	31,477	\$2,453,863,638	\$1,499	\$77,957
Information	108	874	\$52,542,002	\$1,156	\$60,088
Education and Health Services	1,222	31,605	\$2,079,756,508	\$1,265	\$65,804
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	1,820	35,284	\$1,764,498,229	\$962	\$50,009
Natural Resources and Mining	130	2,688	\$130,047,604	\$931	\$48,390
Other Services	902	5,488	\$221,845,843	\$777	\$40,421
Leisure and Hospitality	919	14,903	\$342,862,980	\$442	\$23,007
Federal Government	62	859	\$70,064,026	\$1,569	\$81,604
State Government	31	2,694	\$202,278,405	\$1,444	\$75,085
Local Government	283	15,068	\$967,445,714	\$1,235	\$64,206
Goods-Producing	1,523	41,625	\$3,171,996,891	\$1,465	\$76,204
Service-Providing	7,018	113,446	\$6,636,343,710	\$1,125	\$58,498

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, QCEW

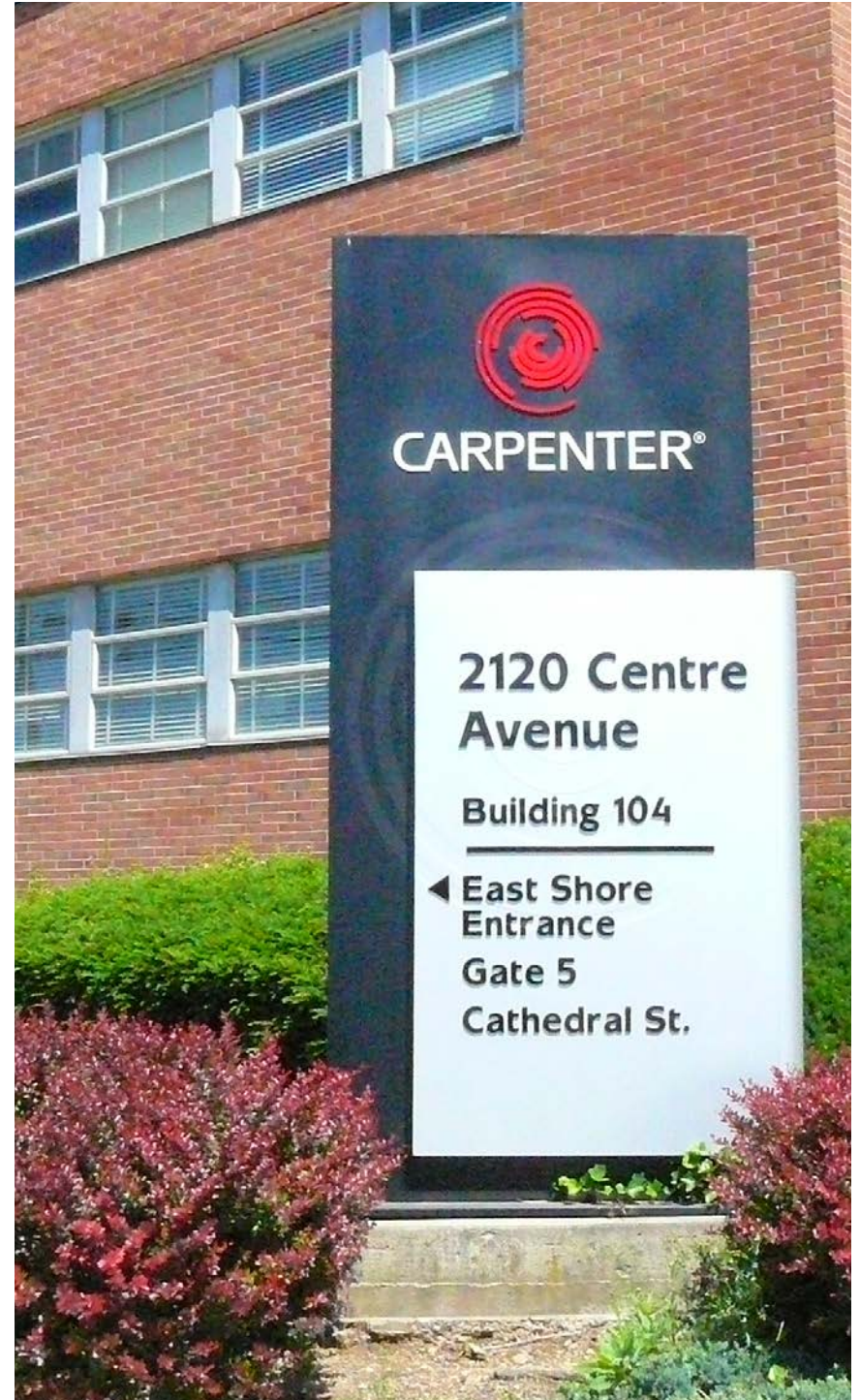
Berks County is home to numerous employers with 100 or more workers at a single site. A substantial portion of these are situated in the Reading urbanized area, particularly within the City of Reading itself. Overall, the primary trip generators—such as major employers and activity centers—are clustered in the Reading metropolitan area, which is also where most of the county's residents live.

Additionally, smaller concentrations of trip generators exist in the eastern, northern, and northeastern parts of the county, in and around the boroughs of Hamburg, Kutztown, and Boyertown, respectively. Ongoing expansion of logistics and warehousing along key transportation corridors is expected to shift and intensify these patterns in the coming years.

TOP 25 EMPLOYERS IN BERKS COUNTY - 2023

1. East Penn Mfg. Co.	14. Tower Health Medical Group
2. Reading Hospital	15. Giant Food Stores LLC
3. Carpenter Technology Corp.	16. Alcon Research Ltd.
4. Penske Truck Leasing	17. Berks County Intermediate Unit
5. Amazon	18. PA State System of Higher Education
6. Wal-Mart Associated Inc.	19. Dollar General
7. County of Berks	20. Ashley Furniture
8. Reading School District	21. Federal Government
9. Redner's Markets	22. Alvernia University
10. PA State Government	23. Supportive Concepts for Families
11. Saint Joesph Medical Center	24. Aim - Agency with Choice
12. Boscov's Dept Store LLC	25. The Reading Truck Group LLC
13. Wilson School District	

Source: Greater Reading Chamber Alliance



Berks County Gross Domestic Product

Berks County businesses generated nearly \$26 billion in GDP in 2023, up nearly 25 percent or \$5.1 billion since 2018. The County's finance/insurance/real estate/rental/leasing and manufacturing services are the largest contributors to GDP. In considering transportation needs, it is noteworthy that there was a nearly 67 percent increase in the output from the county's transportation and warehousing producing industry.

BERKS COUNTY REAL GDP IN 2018 AND 2023 (IN BILLIONS OF DOLLARS)				
Industry Sector	2018	2023	\$ Change 2018-2023	% Chang 2018-2023
All industry total	20,864,174	25,974,930	5,110,756	24.5%
Private industries	18,890,866	23,891,807	5,000,941	26.5%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting	275,969	254,359	-21,610	-7.8%
Mining	45,931	72,226	26,295	57.2%
Utilities	309,019	512,253	203,234	65.8%
Construction	912,089	1,123,623	211,534	23.2%
Manufacturing	3,953,345	4,293,809	340,464	8.6%
Durable goods manufacturing	2,898,910	3,014,199	115,289	4.0%
Nondurable goods manufacturing	1,054,435	1,279,610	225,175	21.4%
Wholesale trade	1,108,794	1,335,734	226,940	20.5%
Retail trade	1,163,747	1,603,514	439,767	37.8%
Transportation and warehousing	748,075	1,247,456	499,381	66.8%
Information	440,087	493,539	53,452	12.1%
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental, and leasing	4,137,175	5,518,940	1,381,765	33.4%
Real estate and rental and leasing	3,123,099	4,206,564	1,083,465	34.7%
Professional and business services	2,414,857	2,996,663	581,806	24.1%
Professional, scientific, and technical services	964,275	1,223,048	258,773	26.8%
Management of companies and enterprises	820,692	976,685	155,993	19.0%
Administrative and waste management services	629,891	796,930	167,039	26.5%
Educational services, health care, and social assistance	2,322,150	2,964,838	642,688	27.7%
Health care and social assistance	2,163,095	2,766,413	603,318	27.9%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services	545,432	826,020	280,588	51.4%
Accommodation and food services	440,858	677,433	236,575	53.7%
Other services, except government	514,196	2,083,124	1,568,928	305.1%
Government	1,973,308	2,083,124	109,816	5.6%
Private goods-producing industries	5,187,334	5,744,017	556,683	10.7%
Private services-providing industries	13,703,532	18,147,790	4,444,258	32.4%

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis

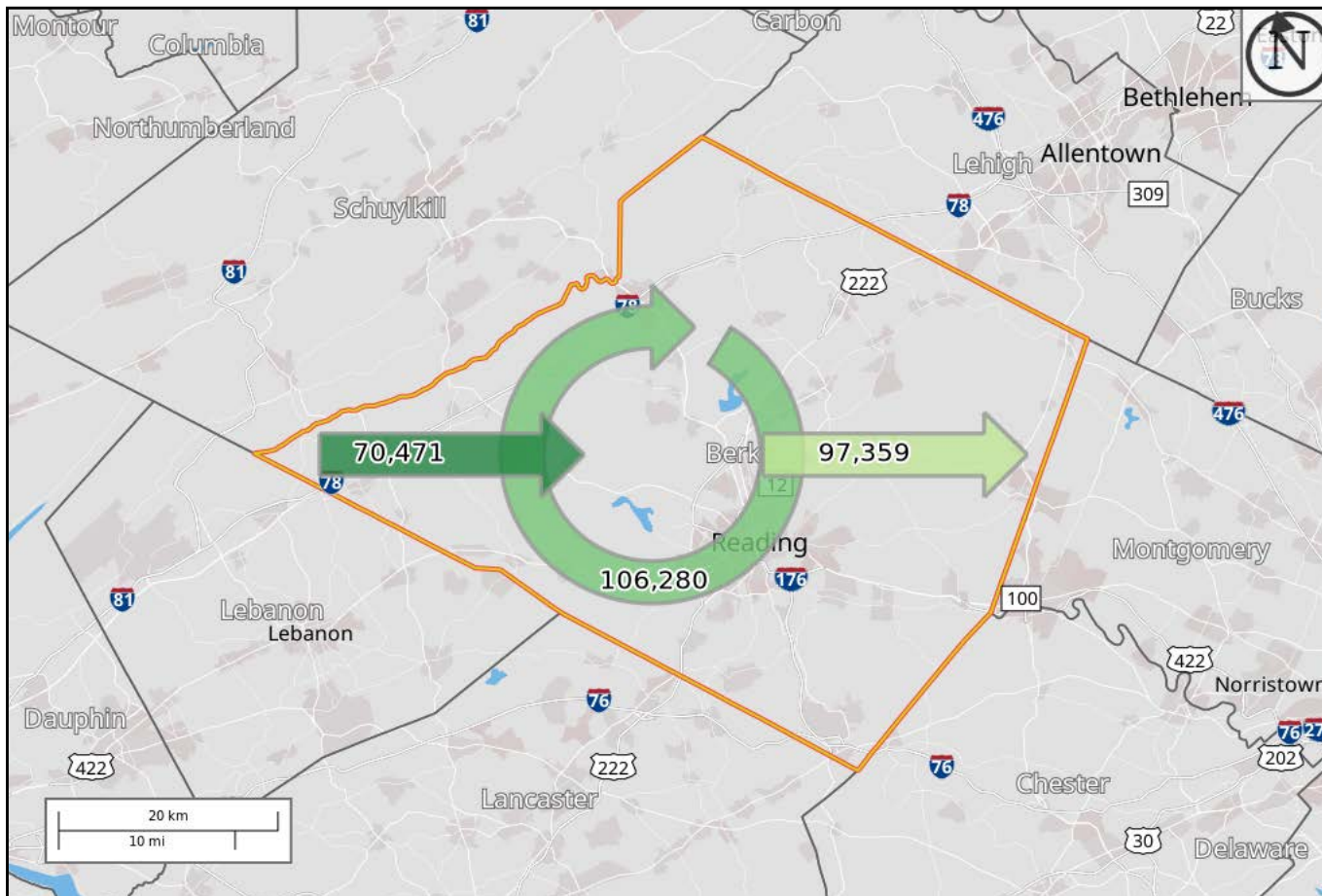
Berks County Commuting Patterns

Berks County remains a strong net exporter of labor, (i.e., more out-commuters than in-commuters) in 2022 (the most recent data available at the time of this writing). The county is the largest exporter of labor in the seven county region. Over 70,000 workers commute into the county for employment while over 97,000 residents commute out of Berks County for work. Routes 222 and 422 remain major conduits for commuters in Berks County.

COMMUTING PATTERNS BY COUNTY, 2022

County	Total All Jobs	In to Work	Staying to Work	Out to Work	Difference
Berks	203,639	70,471	106,280	97,359	-26,888
Chester	260,938	152,784	111,648	149,290	3,494
Lancaster	256,741	85,912	165,881	90,860	-4,948
Lebanon	67,007	25,408	25,626	41,381	-15,973
Lehigh	177,112	119,429	90,076	87,036	32,393
Montgomery	429,902	337,958	198,633	231,269	106,689
Schuylkill	64,706	22,944	27,314	37,392	-14,448

Source: U.S. Census LEHD, 2022



The majority of Berks County workers drive less than ten miles to work. However, more people are driving further distances for work than they had in 2018.

NUMBER OF RESIDENT WORKERS WHO COMMUTE TO WORK (IN MILES) IN 2022

County	Less than 10	%*	10 to 24	%*	25 to 50	%*	50 +	%*
Berks	88,340	43.4	54,407	26.7	39,382	19.3	21,510	10.6
Chester	98,493	37.7	100,153	38.4	38,197	14.6	24,095	9.2
Lancaster	130,149	50.7	65,801	25.6	30,404	11.8	30,387	11.8
Lebanon	29,268	43.7	20,754	31.0	7,535	11.2	9,450	14.1
Lehigh	96,933	54.7	31,103	17.6	26,529	15.0	22,547	12.7
Montgomery	207,508	48.3	156,754	36.5	33,720	7.8	31,920	7.4
Schuylkill	24,056	37.2	15,630	24.2	13,502	20.9	11,518	17.8

Source: U.S. Census LEHD, 2022

* % of total jobs

BERKS COUNTY DISTANCE TO WORK COMPARISON

Distance	2018	2022	Difference
Less than 10 Miles	48.9	43.4	-5.5
10-24 Miles	24.2	26.7	2.5
25-50 Miles	17.2	19.3	2.1
Greater than 50 Miles	9.7	10.6	0.9

Source: U.S. Census LEHD 2018 and 2022

Mode of Travel

The chart below compares the means of travel by age group of the labor force. The youngest age group maintained their share of driving alone and did less carpooling than in 2019. Their use of public transit was relatively unchanged. Decreases in the somewhat older age groups (45 – 54 and 55 – 59) suggest that some people in these age groups may have removed themselves from the workforce or transitioned to pre-retirement. The 45 – 54 age group shows an increase in transit usage and the 60+ age group showed increases in driving alone, carpooling, and using public transit. This may have impacts on future safety programming as well as an increased need for transit accessibility.

MODE OF TRAVEL TO WORK BY AGE GROUP IN BERKS COUNTY - 2019 AND 2024

Worker Age	Drive Alone			Carpooled			Public Transit		
	2019	2024	Difference	2019	2024	Difference	2019	2024	Difference
16 - 19	3.4%	3.7%	0.3%	10.4%	10.0%	-0.4%	7.3%	7.4%	0.1%
20 - 24	8.2%	8.9%	0.7%	14.4%	11.1%	-3.3%	18.5%	12.6%	-5.9%
25 - 44	39.3%	39.3%	0.0%	42.1%	44.4%	2.3%	38.2%	37.0%	-1.2%
45 - 54	22.7%	20.2%	-2.5%	19.3%	18.4%	-0.9%	12.0%	19.7%	7.7%
55 - 59	11.9%	11.0%	-0.9%	6.4%	6.1%	-0.3%	13.4%	9.9%	-3.5%
60+	14.5%	16.9%	2.4%	7.4%	9.9%	2.5%	10.6%	13.3%	2.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2024 5-year Estimates (S0804)

The adjacent chart compares the means of travel by industry sector. Shifts can be seen in all modes but the most dramatic of them is in the Education/Healthcare industry. Workers in those fields increased their use of carpooling and public transit. This trend seems to coincide with the amount of workers employed at a large schools or a regional health center like the Reading Hospital.

MODE OF TRAVEL TO WORK BY INDUSTRY IN BERKS COUNTY - 2019 AND 2024									
Industry	Drive Alone (%)			Carpooled (%)			Public Transit (%)		
	2019	2024	Difference	2019	2024	Difference	2019	2024	Difference
Agriculture	1.4	1.6	0.2%	2.7	3.0	0.3%	0.7	2.4	1.7%
Construction	5.2	6.1	0.9%	6.1	9.2	3.1%	4.0	7.4	3.4%
Manufacturing	18.8	19.4	0.6%	22.0	19.1	-2.9%	8.9	7.6	-1.3%
Wholesale Trade	3.4	2.3	-1.1%	2.8	1.1	-1.7%	0.3	1.9	1.6%
Retail Trade	11.9	12.9	1.0%	14.6	12.8	-1.8%	22.4	17.2	-5.2%
Transportation/ Warehousing	5.6	6.5	0.9%	4.6	8.8	4.2%	8.1	2.3	-5.8%
Information and Finance	6.4	5.3	-1.1%	3.7	3.2	-0.5%	2.9	0.5	-2.4%
Professional/Management	8.4	7.7	-0.7%	7.6	7.4	-0.2%	11.2	9.4	-1.8%
Education/Healthcare	24.4	24.7	0.3%	17.7	22.3	4.6%	18.1	29.4	11.3%
Arts/Recreation	7.4	6.3	-1.1%	11.6	9.8	-1.8%	17.2	19.1	1.9%
Other Services	4.1	4.3	0.2%	6.1	2.3	-3.8%	4.0	1.1	-2.9%
Public Administration	3	2.8	-0.2%	0.6	0.8	0.2%	2.1	1.7	-0.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2024 5-year Estimates (S0804)

The adjacent chart compares drive times between 2019 and 2024 for the different modes. Driving alone has the fastest drive times, in fact, the numbers show that drive times have decreased between 2019 and 2024. Generally, transit remains an attractive option for short commutes in the county, though there is significant growth in the 20 to 24 minute trip length as well.

TRAVEL TIME TO WORK IN BERKS COUNTY - 2019 AND 2024									
Travel Time to Work (Minutes)	Drive Alone (%)			Carpooled (%)			Public Transit (%)		
	2019	2024	Difference	2019	2024	Difference	2019	2024	Difference
Less than 10	12.4	12.7	0.3%	13.4	11.1	-2.3%	3.4	7.9	4.5%
10 to 14	16.2	16.1	-0.1%	12.3	22.1	9.8%	3.5	2.5	-1.0%
15 to 19	19.8	18.1	-1.7%	19.8	15.5	-4.3%	14.9	7.6	-7.3%
20 to 24	16.3	16.3	0.0%	14.0	15.2	1.2%	15.2	24.7	9.5%
25 to 29	7.8	7.6	-0.2%	10.3	6.3	-4.0%	4.8	0.4	-4.4%
30 to 34	10.3	10.4	0.1%	11.2	10.5	-0.7%	15.5	14.8	-0.7%
35 to 44	5.5	7.2	1.7%	4.7	8.0	3.3%	11.7	11.1	-0.6%
45 to 59	6.2	6.1	-0.1%	6.2	6.2	0.0%	6.8	8.4	1.6%
60 or More	5.7	5.5	-0.2%	8.0	5.2	-2.8%	24.2	22.6	-1.6%
Mean Travel Time	23.2	n/a	n/a	25.0	n/a	n/a	38.2	n/a	n/a

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2024 5-year Estimates (S0804)

Comparison of Berks County Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and County Gross Domestic Product

Historically people were driving more and more each year between the years 2015 through 2019. In 2020, the COVID 19 pandemic created an all-time low number for VMT in Berks County as people were relegated to staying home as a result of the pandemic. During this time there was also no growth in the County GDP. In 2021 VMT returned to pre-pandemic levels as people returned to work and businesses began to reopen. There was very little change in VMT between years 2022 and 2023.

Using data from PennDOT and the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, the chart below illustrates the decoupling of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and gross domestic product (GDP) in Berks County.

Historically across the United States, economic growth (as measured by GDP) has closely tracked VMT: rising prosperity typically meant more driving, while recessions led to declines in both. This strong correlation held for decades.

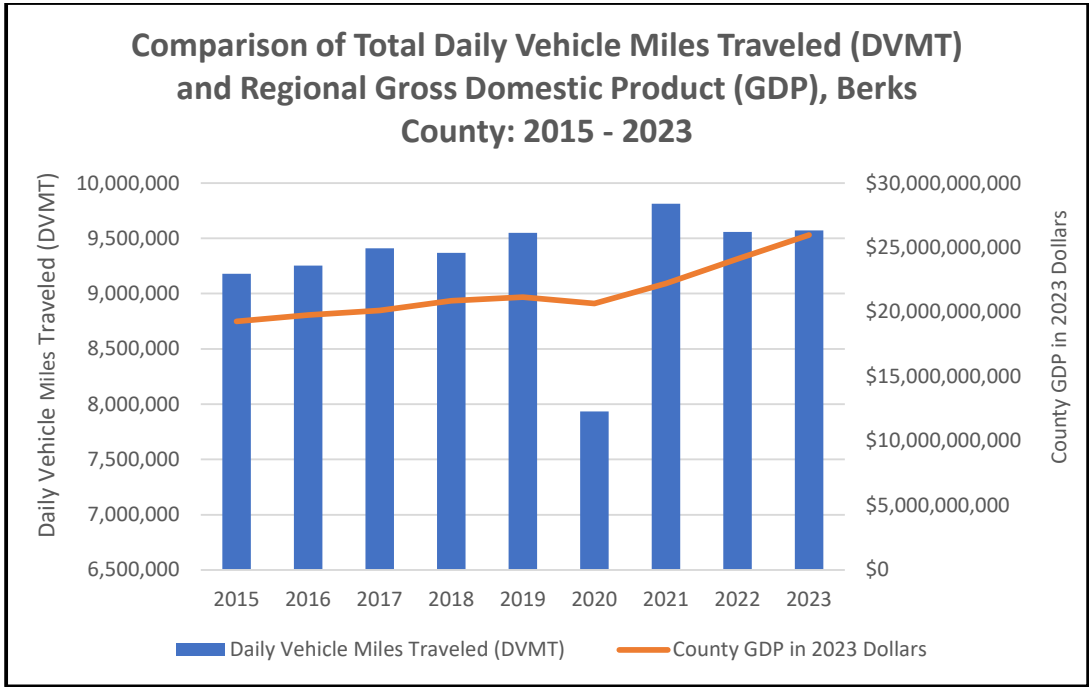
However, since 2015—and excluding the sharp drop during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic—Berks County has experienced steady economic expansion even as total vehicle trips on local roadways have declined or remained stagnant.

It is unclear whether this represents a temporary, cyclical shift driven by economic conditions or the start of a more permanent change in driving behavior, potentially influenced by demographic trends (such as aging populations, changing work patterns, emergence of online shopping and next-day deliveries, or shifts toward alternative transportation).

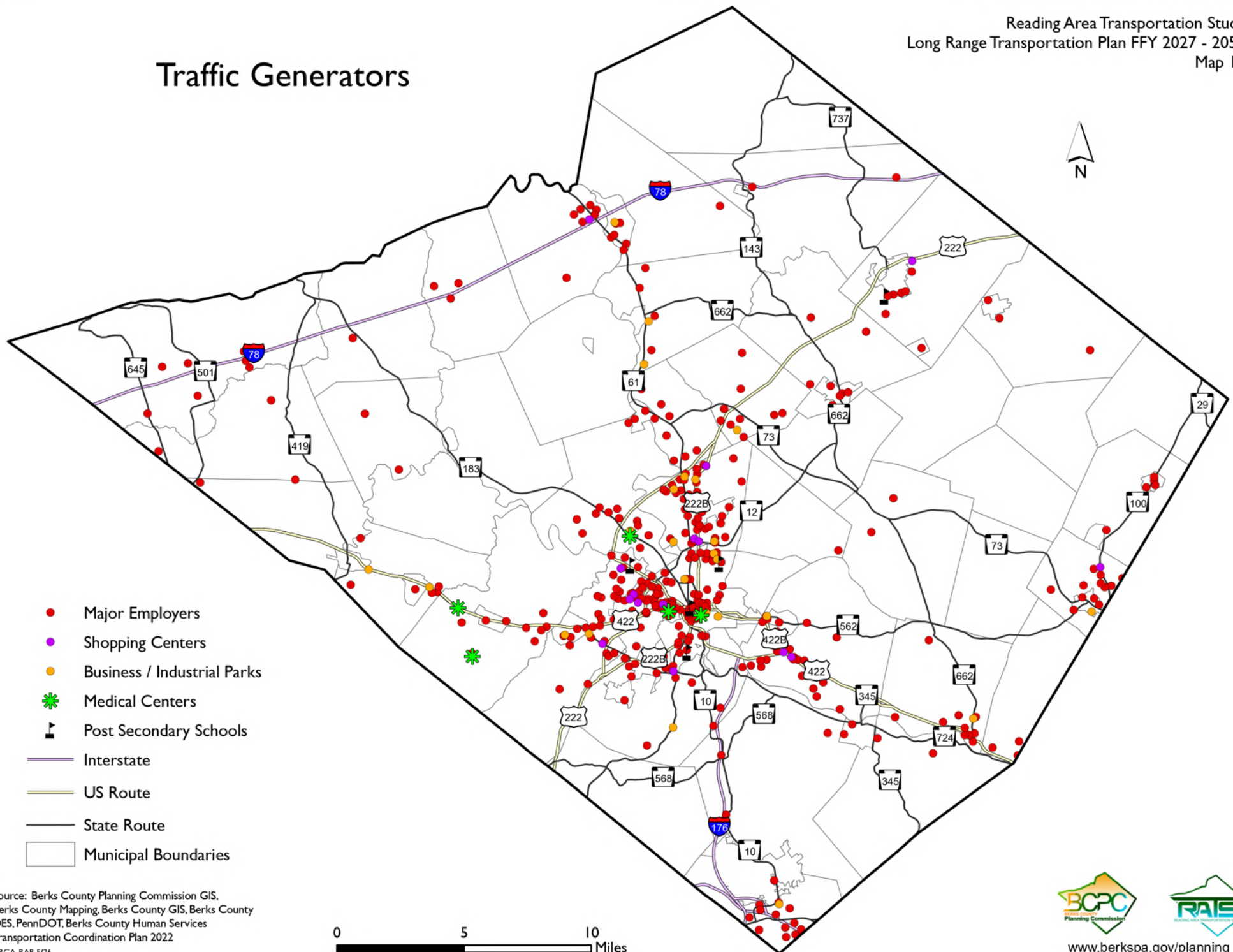
This local pattern aligns with broader national discussions about the gradual weakening of the traditional link between VMT and GDP growth in recent years.

Berks County Transportation Generators

Data provided by the RATS 2022 Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan shows major transportation generators in Berks County. Shown on Map 11, these locations are referred to as activity centers and include major employers (i.e., at least 100 employees at a single location) or a grouping of employers at business and industrial parks, medical facilities, retail destinations (shopping centers and malls and stand-alone big-box retailers), senior citizen facilities, and multi-family housing.



Traffic Generators



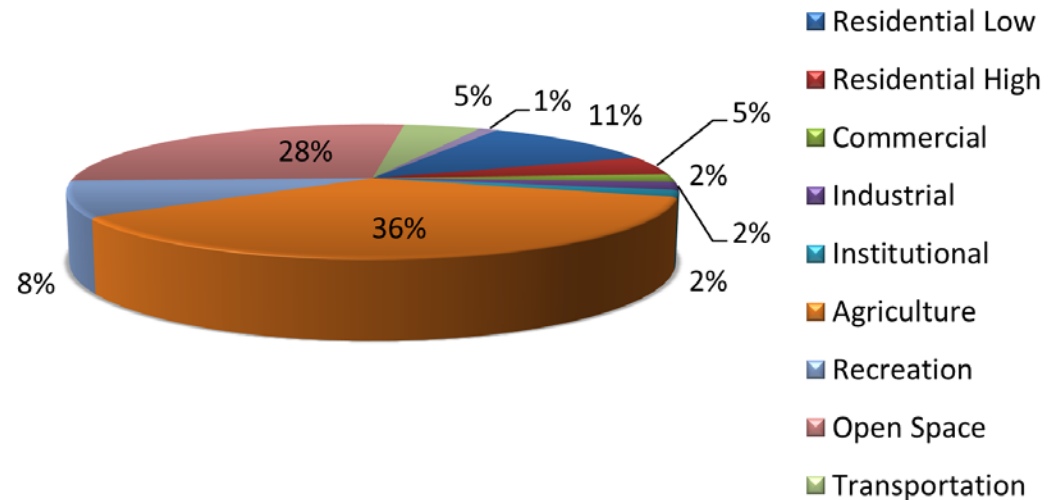
EXISTING AND FUTURE LAND USE

Coordinating the growth forecasts for the LRTP with the Berks County 2030 Comprehensive Plan Update, adopted in January 2020, is a key component to accurately representing future transportation needs. The Future Land Use Plan is a key tool used to determine where growth will occur in the future as well as the permitted and allowed types of development.

To protect natural resources while optimizing social infrastructure enhancements, including transportation, designation of wetlands and other protected areas are factored into the future land use designations. The Future Land Use Plan was used in the development of the socioeconomic data in the following ways:

- Identification of physical constraints imposed by environmental limitations such as floodplains, wetlands, and steep slopes.
- Direction of new growth towards existing urban areas that can accommodate growth and to vacant lands proximate to existing urban areas of the county.

Berks County Existing Land Use - 2013

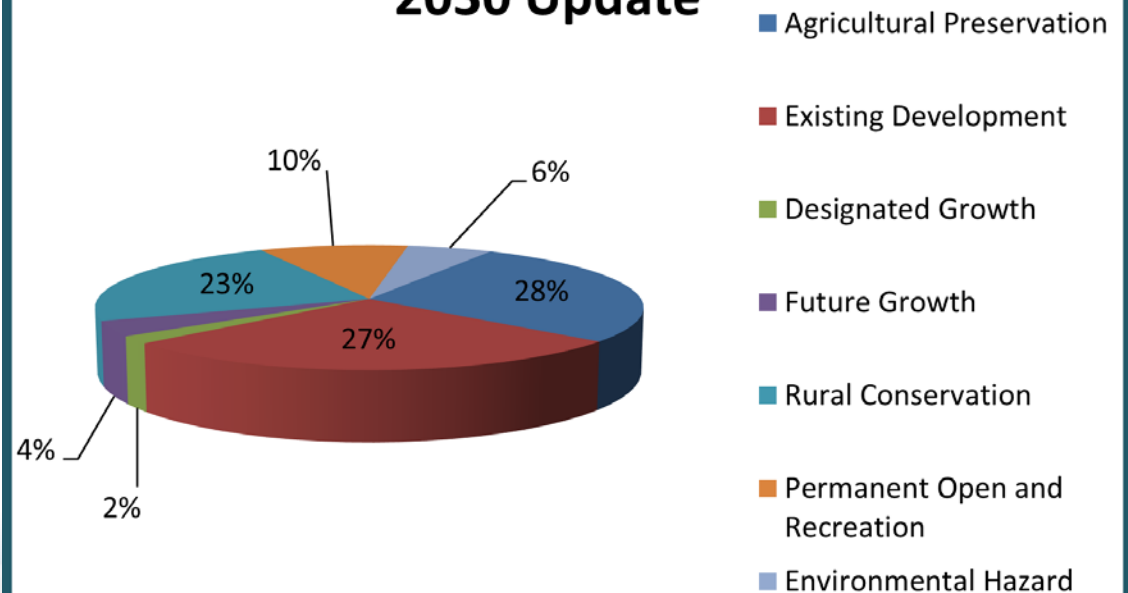


In 2013, Berks County had unique land use patterns when compared to other urban southeastern counties in Pennsylvania. Today, agriculture remains the predominant land use, accounting for 36 percent of the nearly 550,000 acres of land that comprises Berks County, followed by open space (28 percent) and low density residential (11 percent).

The largest use of land in the county is projected to be agriculture, with an assumption that the county will be 27 percent “developed”.

Approximately 28 percent of the total county land area is designated for Agricultural Preservation. The future land use plan adds approximately 33,000 acres of urban land to accommodate expected urban development that includes new houses, industrial development, and expansion of institutional uses. Growth is directed towards existing major road corridors and existing interchanges on the Interstate system. Certain areas of the county will accommodate less growth than others based upon environmental and infrastructure constraints, the location of conservation easements, as well as local land development regulations. Rural conservation, covering 23 percent of the county, is the third highest category by percentage, and permits low-density development.

Berks County Future Land Use - 2030 Update







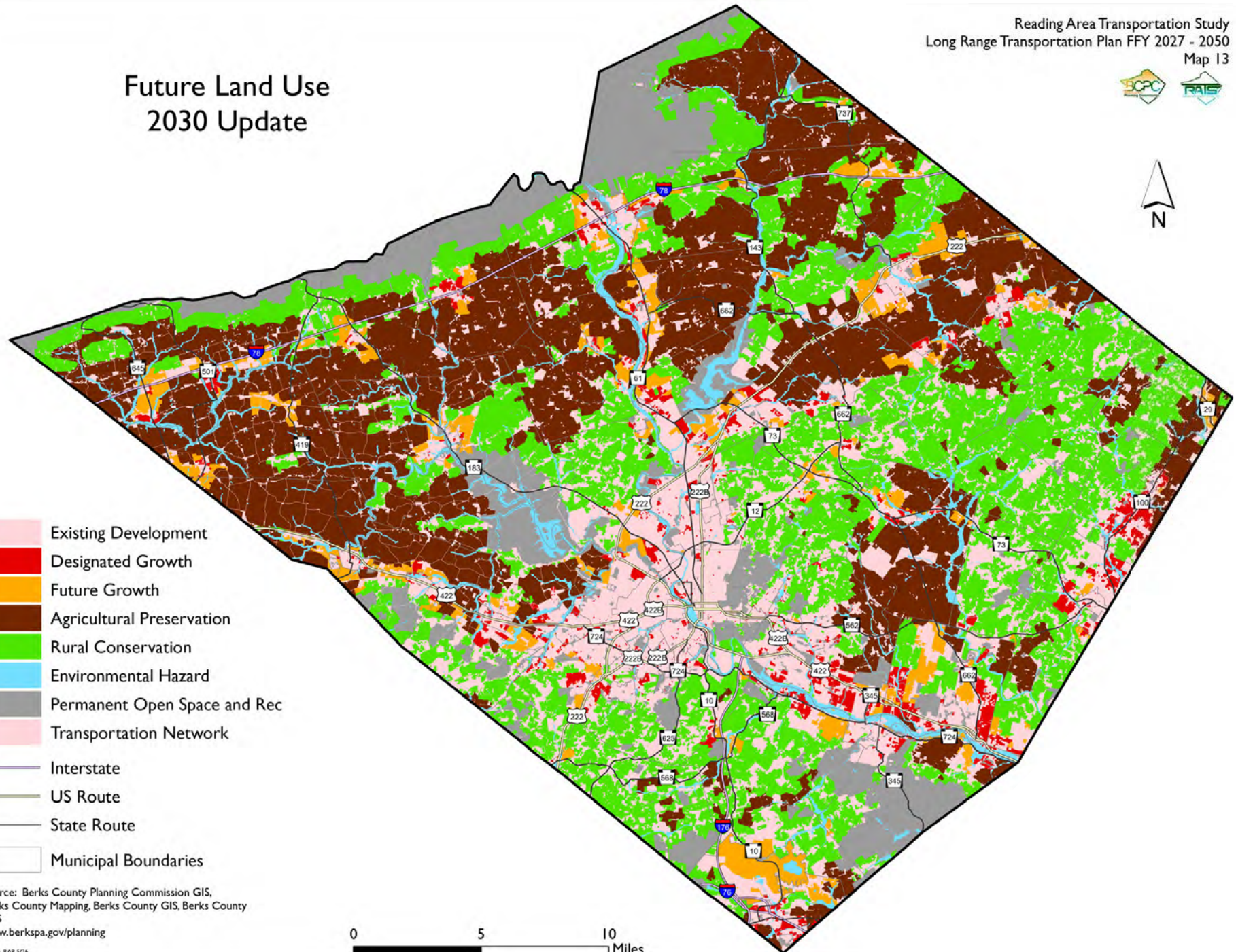
Future Land Use 2030 Update

- Existing Development
- Designated Growth
- Future Growth
- Agricultural Preservation
- Rural Conservation
- Environmental Hazard
- Permanent Open Space and Rec
- Transportation Network
- Interstate
- US Route
- State Route
- Municipal Boundaries

Source: Berks County Planning Commission GIS,
Berks County Mapping, Berks County GIS, Berks County
DES
www.berkspa.gov/planning

TRCA, BAB 5/26

0 5 10
Miles



ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRATION

Transportation projects can have environmental impacts. Federal guidelines require MPOs to consult with state and federal resource regulatory agencies. The MPO maintains an environmental resource inventory that is used early in the project development process to identify potential project impacts on environmental resources. The early resource inventories and agency consultation during transportation planning can help to avoid potential delays in project delivery and minimize potential changes in project scope that may result in project cost increases.

Transportation projects in Berks County can face a range of complex, interrelated environmental and community issues. These often relate to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. NEPA is the ‘umbrella’ law that directs agencies to consider impacts to environmental resources specifically regulated by other federal and state laws, such as:

- Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act, which requires consideration of impacts to publicly owned parks and recreation lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic properties.
- Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, which requires consideration of impacts to grant-assisted public recreation lands.
- Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, which requires consideration of impacts to threatened and endangered species.
- Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, which requires consideration of impacts to historic resources.
- Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, which requires consideration of impacts to wetlands and waters of the United States.
- PA Chapter 93, which sets water quality standards for waters of the Commonwealth.
- The Farmland Protection Policy Act, which aims to prevent the conversion of prime and unique farmland soils into non-agricultural uses.

Linking transportation and environmental planning is achieved through two types of consultation. The first concerns comparing transportation plans with natural and cultural resource information that is discussed in detail below. RATS will be involved in efforts aimed at ‘Linking Planning and NEPA’ (LPN) during the project development process. Additionally, RATS will be involved throughout the PennDOT Connects process, which involves collaboration with state, MPO, and local government representatives early in the project development process to identify potential environmental, community, and technological issues that could impact project scopes and cost estimates. The goal of these efforts is to develop a better understanding of transportation problems and related environmental characteristics of proposed transportation projects earlier to produce a realistic project scope of work that encompasses all of the relevant design and environmental issues.

The second type of required consultation concerns mitigation activities. Federal law mandates that long-range metropolitan transportation plans must include a discussion of types of potential environmental mitigation activities and areas to carry out these activities, including activities that may have the greatest opportunity to restore and maintain the environmental functions affected by the plan. This discussion is to be developed in consultation with federal, state, tribal, wildlife, land management, and regulatory agencies.

The L RTP includes projects expected to be constructed by 2050. The plan provides maps of common environmental features and historic areas and general mitigation strategies. The identification of environmentally sensitive areas and historic sites and the strategies are intended to provide for the long-term protection of these areas and properties.

The BCPC, RATS and state agencies conduct regional data collection, and as a result, maps of the most common environmental features and historic sites have been developed. The maps included in this section identify the location of the following features:

- Hydrology Network (surface waters, wetlands, and floodplains) (Map 14)
- Steep Slopes (Map 15)
- Prime Agricultural Soils (Map 16)
- County Greenway Network (Map 17)
- Natural Heritage Areas, Important Bird Areas, and Trout Streams (Map 18)
- Easements and Agricultural Zoning (Map 19)
- Historic Resources Listed on the National Register (Map 20)

While the responsibility for implementing environmental mitigation largely rests with PennDOT and local municipalities, both BCPC and RATS will continue to facilitate information sharing about potential mitigation locations, techniques, and best practices. RATS will continue to assist District 5-0 with finding suitable sites for a ‘seasonal wetland’ bank, where applicable, inside the county or other regional mitigation strategies. A ‘seasonal wetland’ bank is a wetland area that has been restored and protected to provide compensation for impacts to wetlands. These banks are established to generate environmental credits that can be used or sold to offset unavoidable wetland losses, ensuring that wetland functions are maintained even after development or other impacts occur. RATS will continue working with the BCPC and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) in identifying historic sites in Berks County.

Mitigation can be defined by the order of process sequencing as:

- Avoiding the impact altogether.
- Minimizing impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation.
- Rectifying the impacts by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment.
- Reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action.
- Compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.

There are generally two categories of mitigation activities:

Best Management Practices (BMPs)

BMPs are existing policies, practices, and measures required by law, regulation, or policy that reduce the environmental impacts of designated activities, functions, or processes. Although they mitigate potential impacts by avoiding, minimizing, or reducing/eliminating impacts,

BMPs are distinguished from mitigation measures because BMPs are 1) existing requirements for the proposed action, 2) ongoing, regularly occurring practices, and 3) not specific to a proposed project. In other words, they are inherently part of the proposed action and are not additional mitigation measures proposed because of the NEPA environmental review process for the proposed action. The primary purpose of using BMPs in Berks County is through stormwater management – to protect beneficial uses of water resources through the reduction of pollutant loads and concentrations, and through reduction of discharges (volumetric flow rates) causing stream channel erosion.

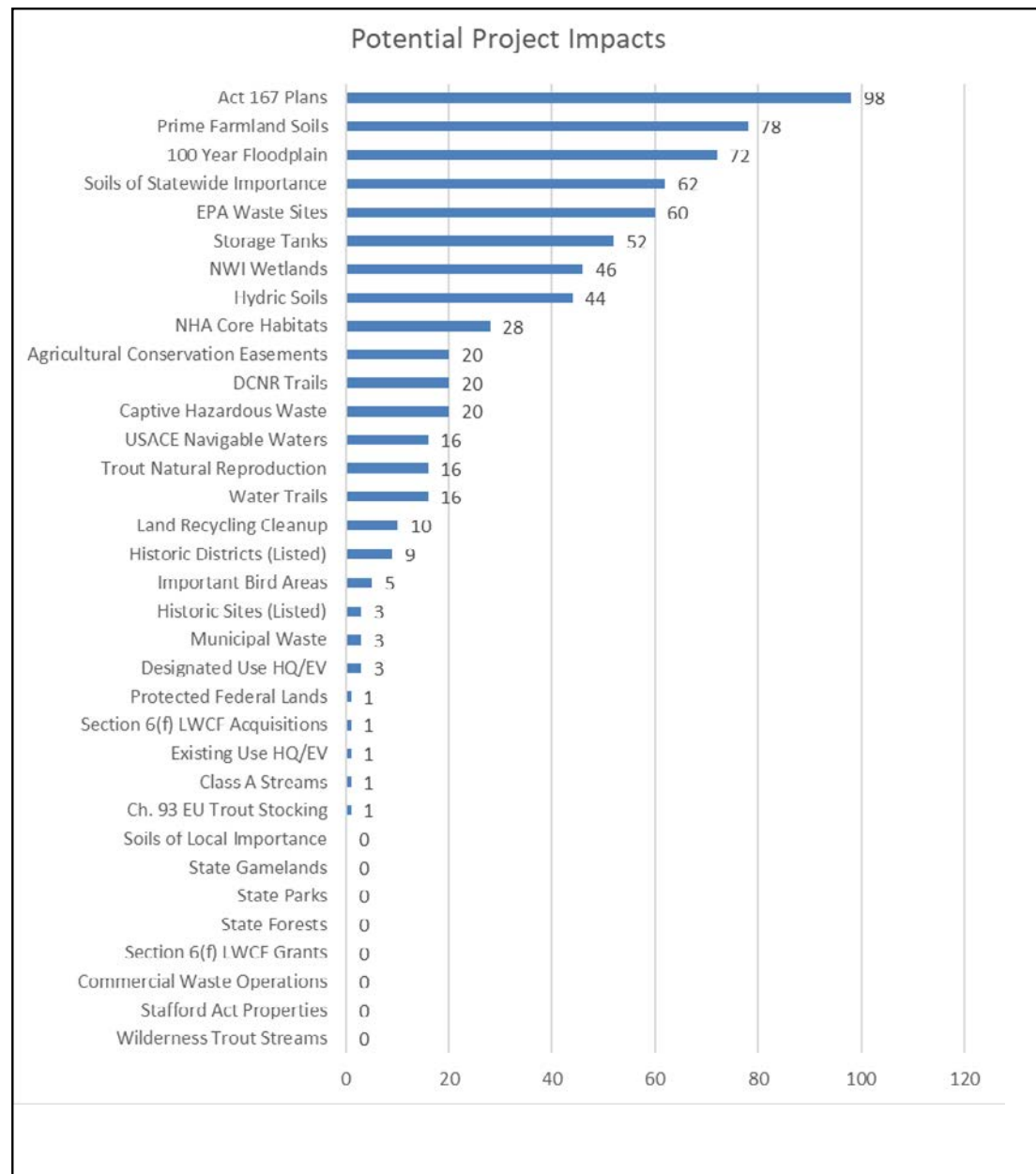
Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measures are additional, project specific measures proposed because of the NEPA environmental review process. Mitigation measures may be routinely applied across many transportation projects but are often determined on a project-by-project basis. The following table identifies the number of projects that could have a potential impact on a variety of environmental features.

The focus of this LRTP is asset management and maintenance first, with limited, capacity improvement projects and right-of-way acquisition. The majority of projects identified in this LRTP will likely not require substantial mitigation efforts. Measures can be taken to avoid, minimize, rectify, reduce, or compensate for project-specific impacts identified during the environmental review of the proposed project. If any, small, project specific actions will occur at individual project locations.

To get a better understanding of how projects in this plan may affect these natural features, RATS inventoried environmental features within 250 feet of each project.

In Pennsylvania, the Agency Coordination Meeting (ACM) is a forum where regulatory and resource agencies meet on a regular basis to discuss potential issues on various transportation projects (typically projects that require Environmental Impact Statements [EIS]), as well as review potential environmental concerns related to projects identified within the LRTP. Presentation of the LRTP and/or project-level impacts are at the discretion of PennDOT. This LRTP was presented to the ACM on December 10, 2025. The agencies were in agreement with the processes used by the MPO to identify environmental resources and provided additional guidance and resource links to expand our efforts.



RESILIENCY

From a transportation perspective, threats of extreme weather events (such as heat, drought, floods, and severe weather ranging from hurricanes to blizzards) pose substantial environmental, economic, public health and safety risks. An assessment of potential extreme weather impacts on transportation infrastructure could benefit regional planning activities. Often-cited resiliency strategies such as green infrastructure, heat island abatement, alternative fuels and fleets, and alternative transportation may help reduce future risks while creating other near-term community benefits.

The Berks County Department of Emergency Services develops and maintains a Berks County Emergency Operations Plan and a Hazard Vulnerability Assessment and Mitigation Plan that serve to coordinate emergency hazard mitigation activities. The Hazard Vulnerability Assessment and Mitigation Plan documents historic hazard events that occurred in Berks County dating back to 1958. In addition, a summarization of the hazards that present the greatest potential risk are identified. Part of the plan development process includes identifying what initiatives – mitigation actions – the County is taking (i.e., existing) or could take (i.e., potential) to minimize the effects of a hazard event on the Berks County population, economy, property, building stock, and infrastructure.

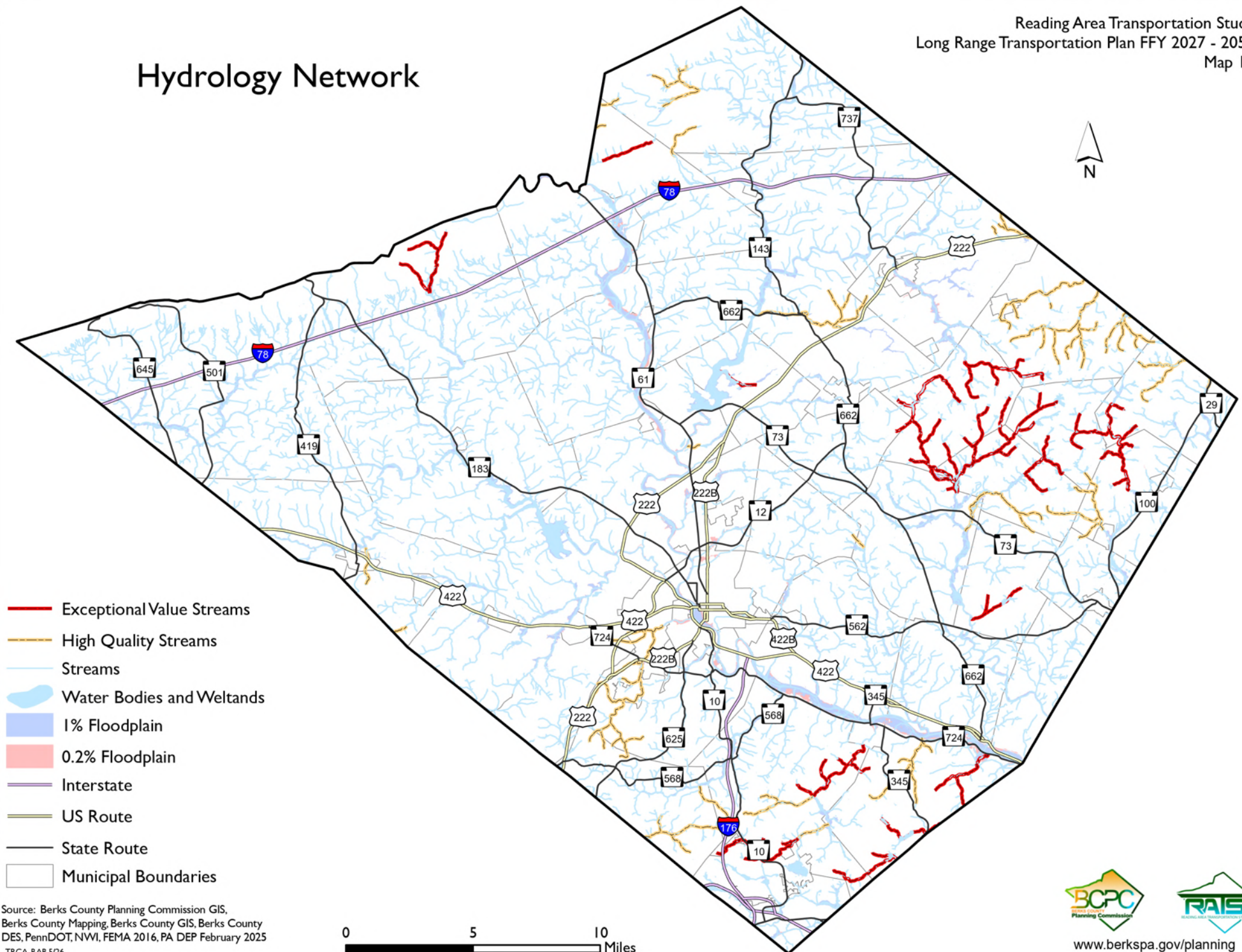
These include evacuation and transportation security planning that anticipates, absorbs, adapts to, and recovers from disruptions. These plans outline the types, frequencies, vulnerabilities, capabilities, and mitigations for various natural and man-made disasters. The plans establish an incident command system to coordinate emergency and evacuation responsibilities among the various emergency responders. RATS and the BCPC will continue to communicate with both PennDOT and the County Emergency Services Department to ensure that the plans remain current.

Federal regulations require PennDOT and MPOs to address changing weather conditions as a focus of long-range planning. In 2017, PennDOT completed its Extreme Weather Vulnerability Study (EWVS) which was developed to better anticipate the consequences and potential impacts of extreme weather events and to identify funding priorities and strategies to improve transportation system resiliency. Many of the strategies identified in the EWVS are incorporated into the County's current and ongoing efforts to mitigate changing weather conditions on existing and future infrastructure.

Current planning regulations already include a number of requirements that generally align with weather condition mitigation and adaptation. For example, provisions that relate to efficient management and operation of the transportation system, coordination with land use plans, congestion mitigation, and electric vehicle and alternative fuels use can be related to reducing harmful emissions. Further, RATS, in collaboration with PennDOT, will review historical impacts of events such as flooding, and attempt to mitigate those impacts through improved design and incorporating resiliency into the project prioritization process.

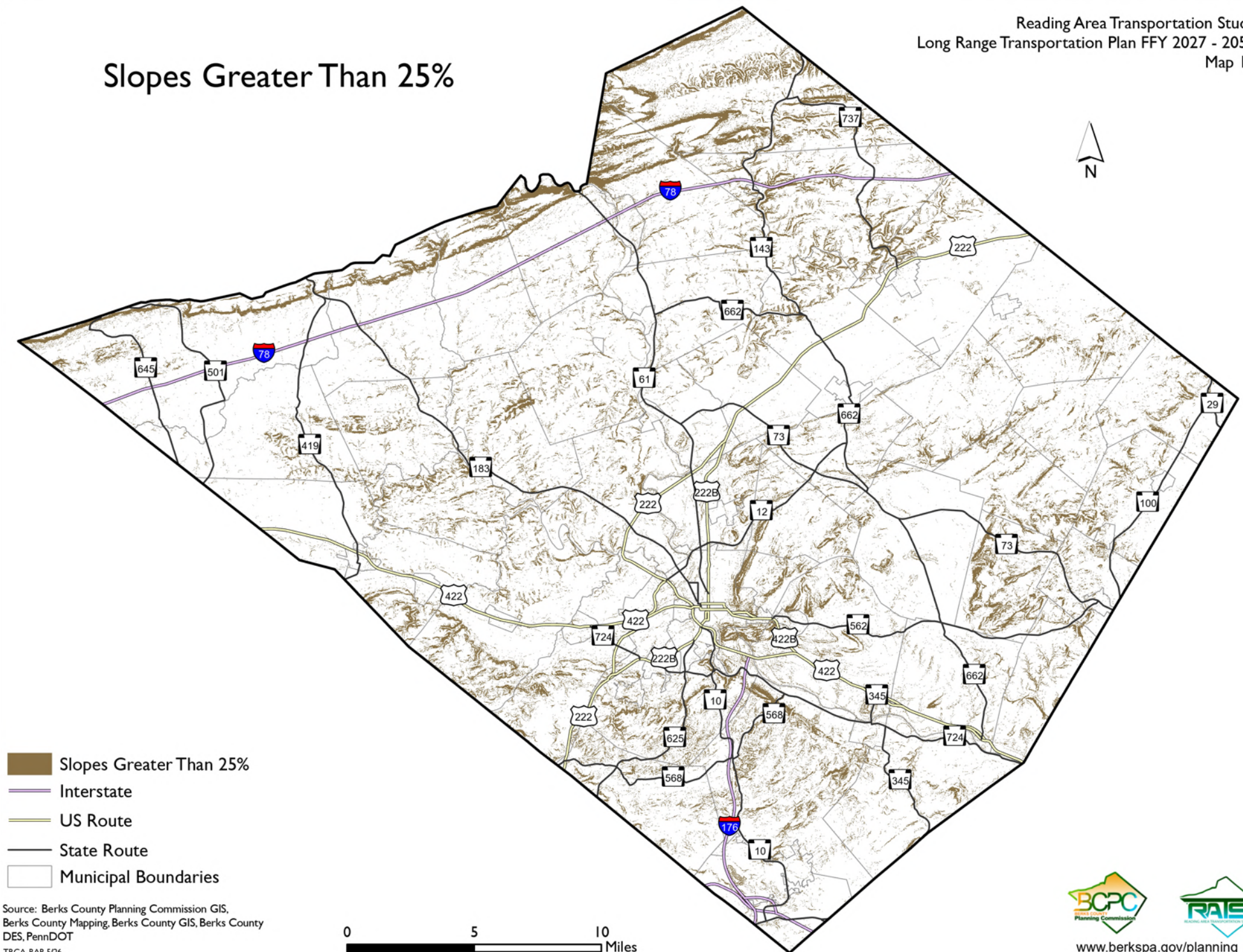


Hydrology Network



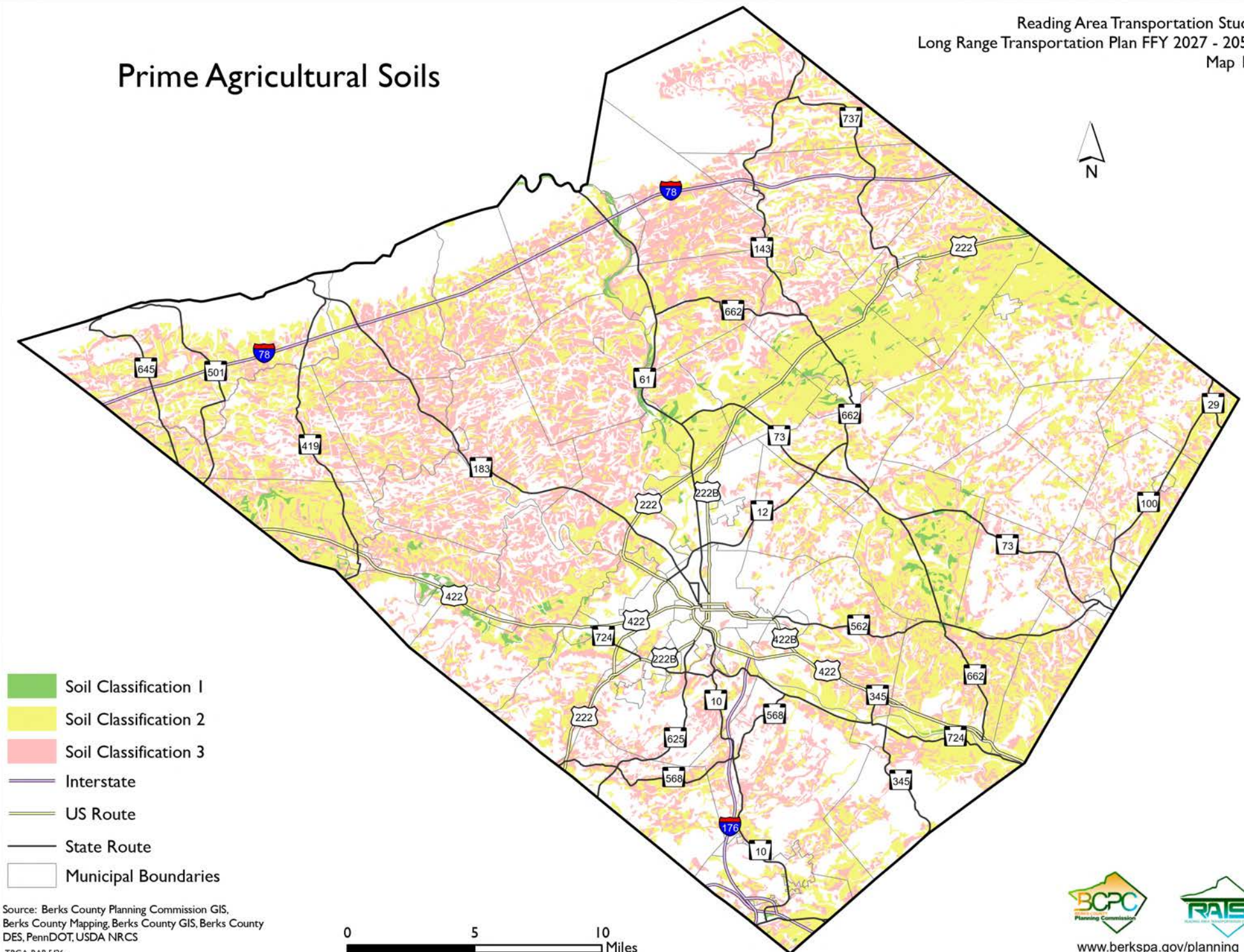
www.berkspa.gov/planning

Slopes Greater Than 25%

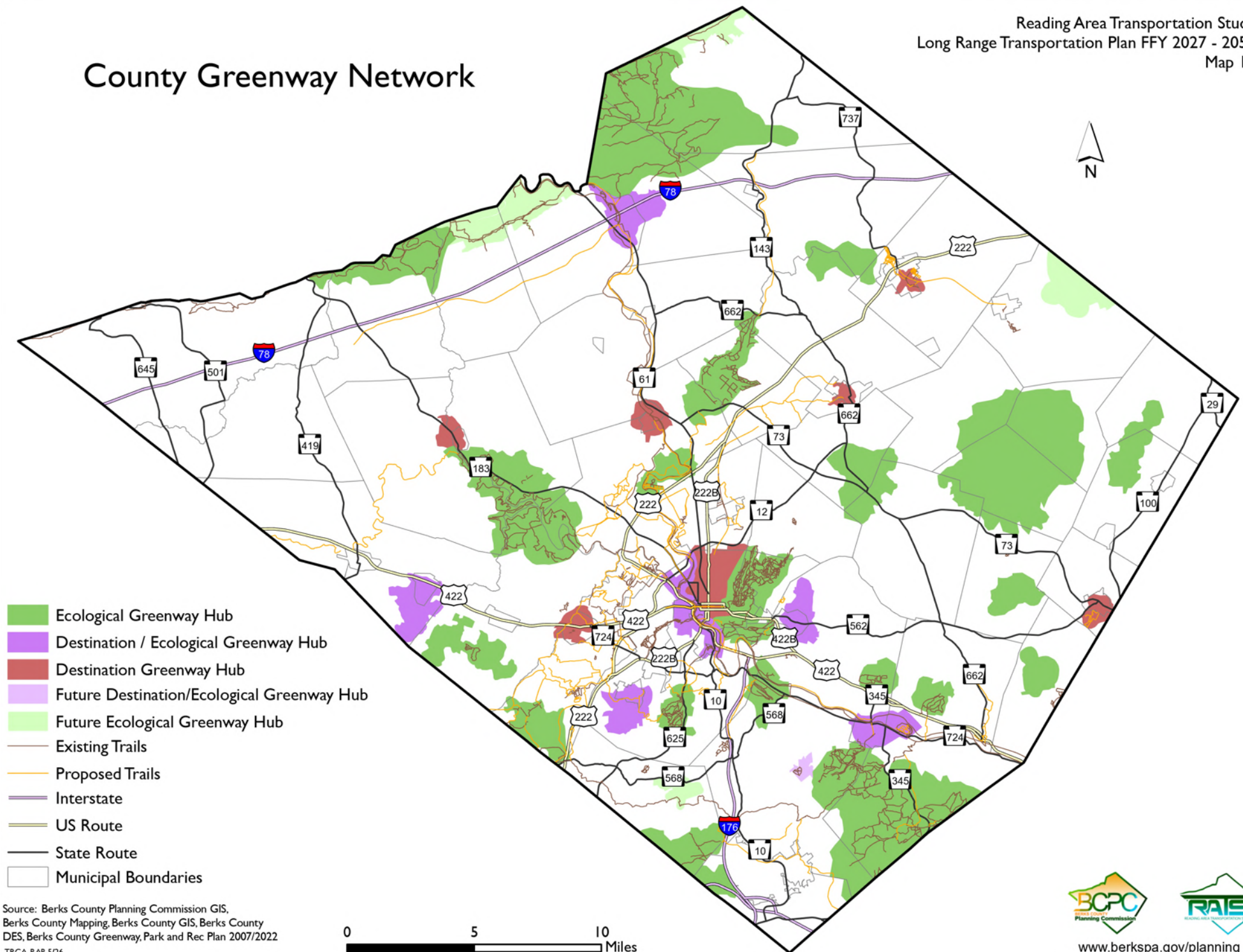


www.berkspa.gov/planning

Prime Agricultural Soils



County Greenway Network

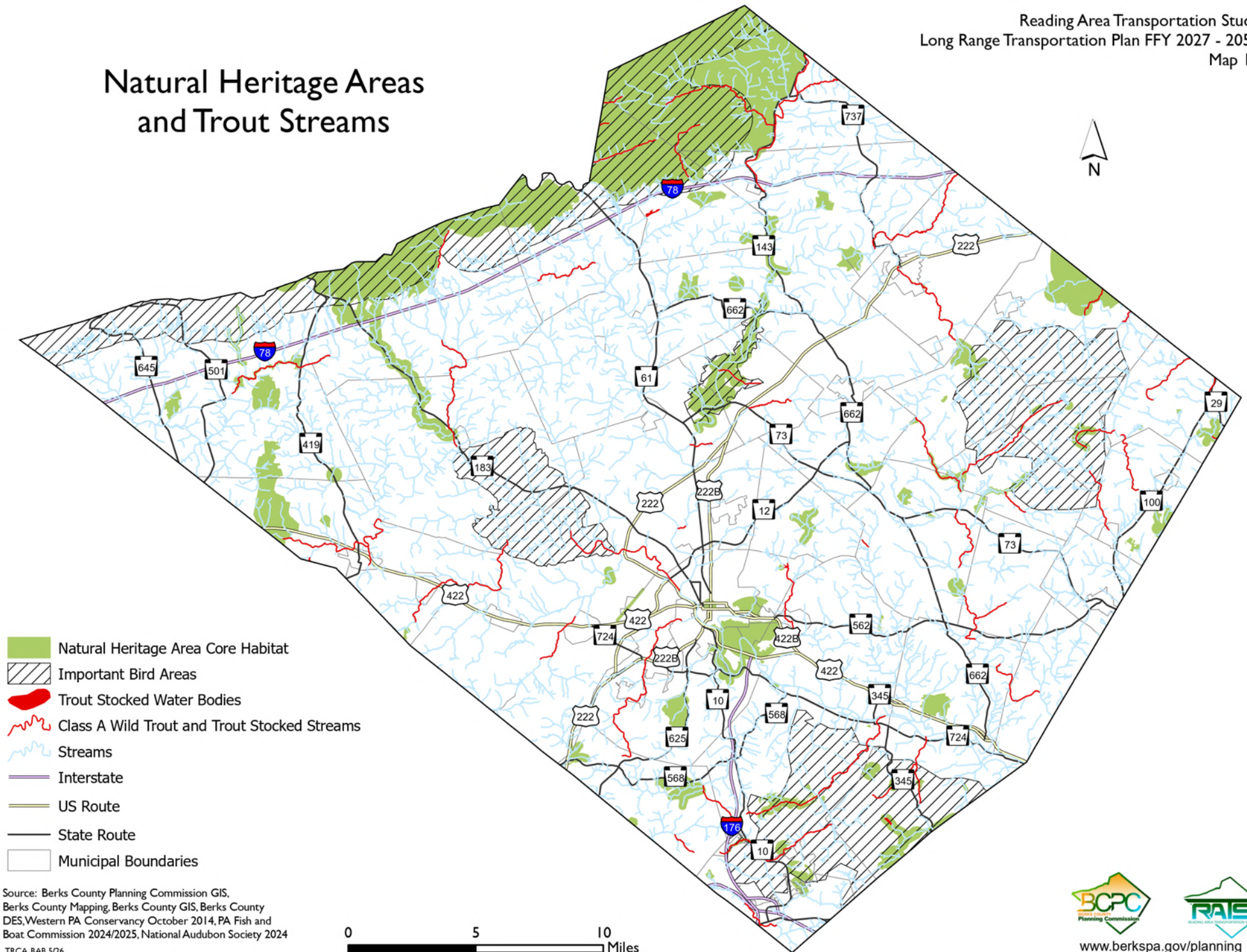


Source: Berks County Planning Commission GIS,
Berks County Mapping, Berks County GIS, Berks County
DES, Berks County Greenway, Park and Rec Plan 2007/2022
TRCA, BAB 5/26

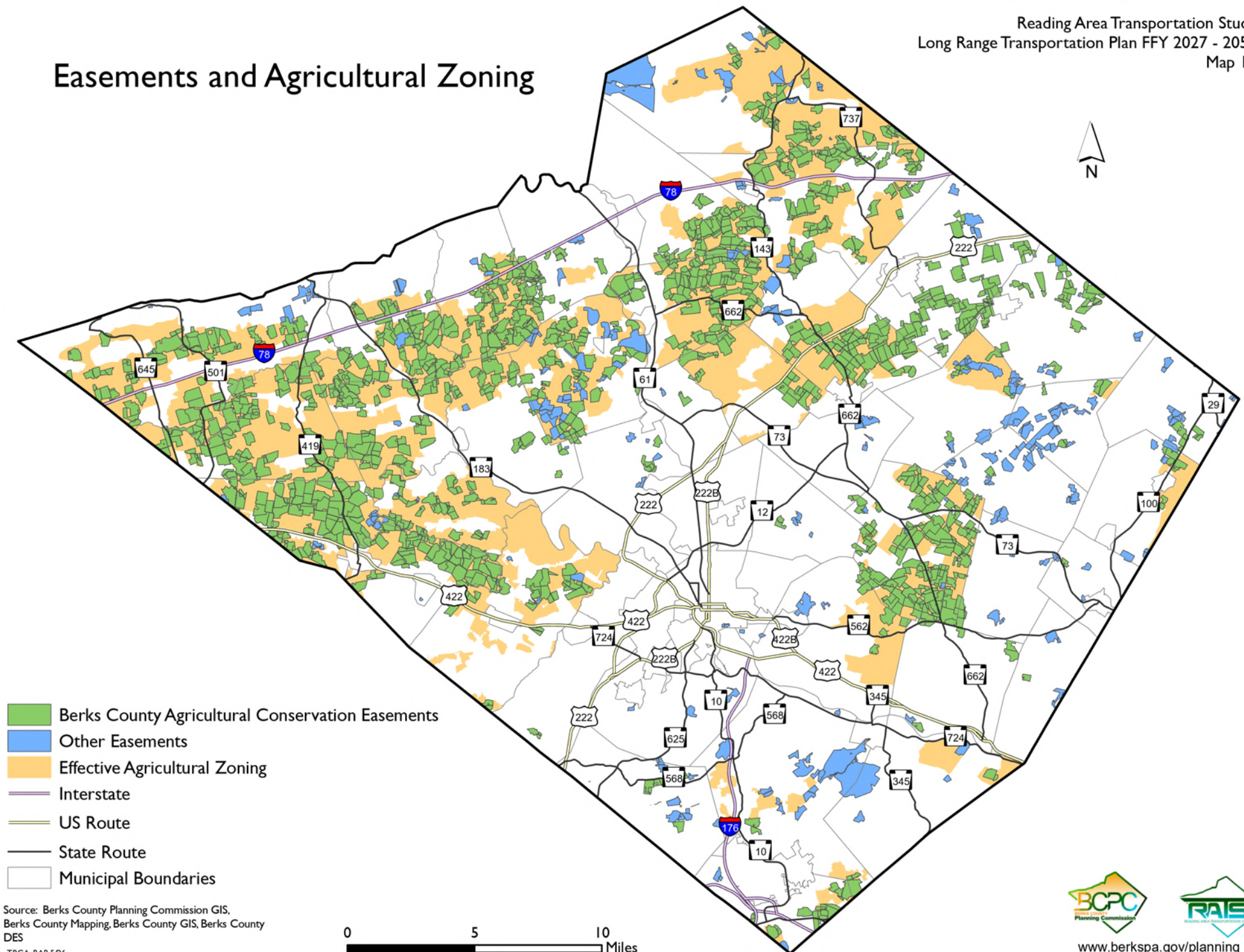


www.berkspa.gov/planning

Natural Heritage Areas and Trout Streams



Easements and Agricultural Zoning



Historical Resources Listed on National Register

