



SECTION 2 COUNTY PROFILE

Section 2 of the Fulton County Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) discusses the geography and environment, community facts, population and demographics, and land use and development in Fulton County.

2.1 GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENT

Fulton County is located in south-central Pennsylvania (The County has a rich historical background dating back to pre-Revolutionary days. Because of its Mason-Dixon Line location, Fulton County played a significant role during the Civil War. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2016 County Business Patterns, key industries in Fulton County include: other services (except public administration), retail trade, construction, health care and social assistance, transportation and warehousing, and accommodation and food services (U.S. Census Bureau 2018). Agriculture is also a main industry within Fulton County.

Figure 2-1) and encompasses approximately 438 square miles. The County is bordered to the north by Huntingdon County, to the east by Franklin County, to the south by Allegany and Washington Counties (Maryland), and to the west by Bedford County. It is one of the smallest counties in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Fulton County has a scenic landscape characterized by numerous high ridges separating narrow valleys. These valleys are fertile and productive enough to support the primarily rural lifestyle of the county's residents. Over 68 percent of the land area is forestland. Several of the large streams within the county flow southward into Maryland and drain into the Potomac River. The streams in the western and northern parts of the county are tributaries of the Juniata River.

2.2 COMMUNITY FACTS

Fulton County was created on April 19, 1850, from a portion of Bedford County. It is named after Robert Fulton, the inventor who pioneered the use of the steamboat. It consists of 13 municipalities; specifically, 11 townships and 2 boroughs. The County seat is McConnellsburg. The County has an estimated population of 14,631 (U.S. Census Bureau 2018).

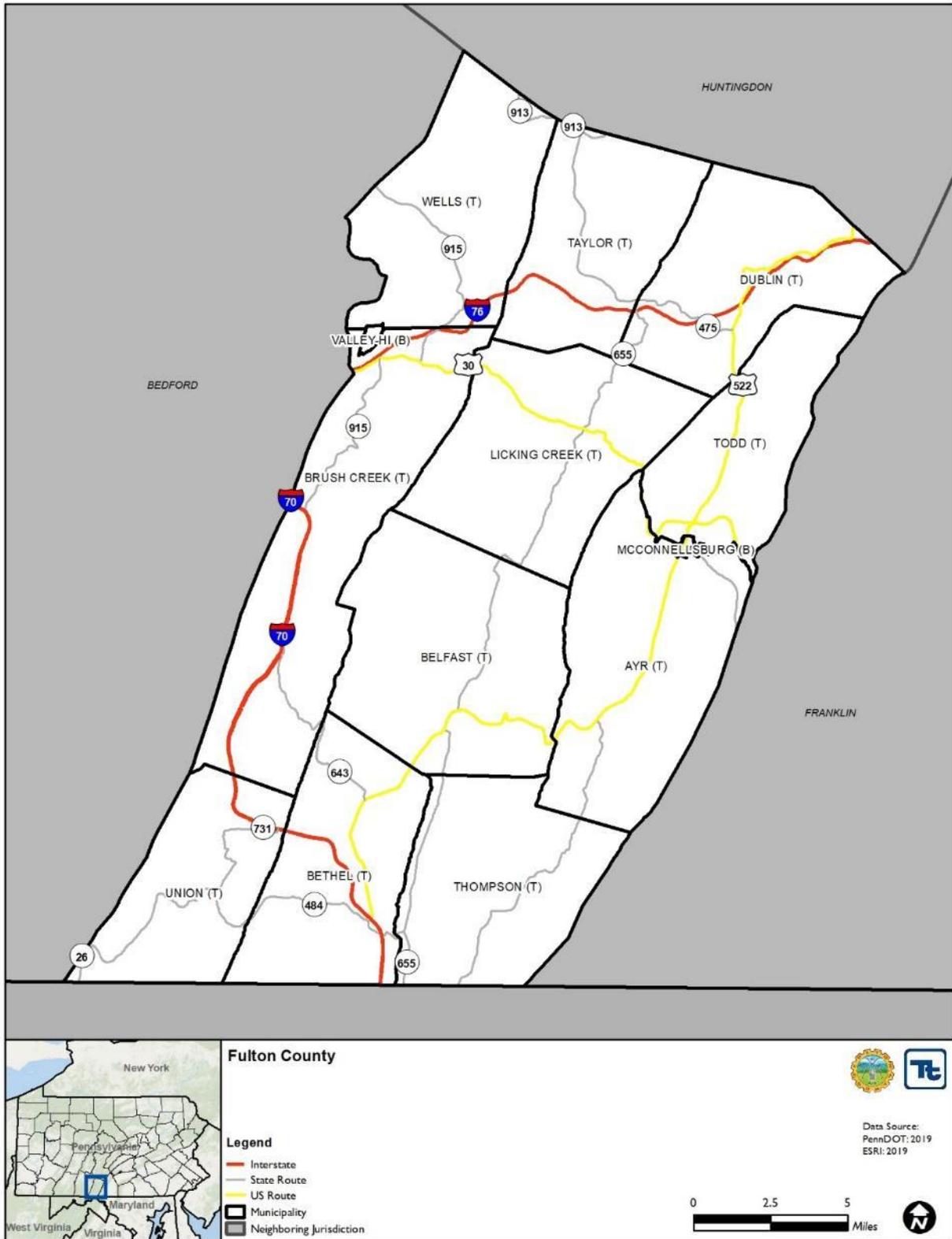
Fulton County has an extensive transportation network of roads, with 20 miles each of turnpike and interstate highways, 368.4 miles of State and federal highways, and 231.5 miles of secondary and municipal roads. The major routes are US-522, US-30, PA-16, Interstate (I)-70, and the Pennsylvania Turnpike (I-76).

McConnellsburg Borough has remained the population center and the industrial and commercial nucleus of Fulton County. Several larger population centers are located just outside of Fulton County: the City of Altoona, located approximately 70 miles north; the City of Harrisburg, located approximately 90 miles northeast; the City of Hagerstown (Maryland), located approximately 45 miles southeast; Pittsburgh, located approximately 135 miles to the west; and Johnstown, located approximately 75 miles northwest.

The County has a rich historical background dating back to pre-Revolutionary days. Because of its Mason-Dixon Line location, Fulton County played a significant role during the Civil War. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2016 County Business Patterns, key industries in Fulton County include: other services (except public administration), retail trade, construction, health care and social assistance, transportation and warehousing, and accommodation and food services (U.S. Census Bureau 2018). Agriculture is also a main industry within Fulton County.



Figure 2-1. Base Map of Fulton County





2.3 POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Population and demographic data provide baseline information about residents. Changes in demographics or population may be used to identify higher-risk populations. Maintaining up-to-date data on demographics will allow the county to better assess magnitudes of hazards and develop more specific mitigation plans. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, Fulton County had a population of 14,845, which represents a 4 percent increase from the 2000 U.S. Census population of 14,261. Table 2-1 presents the population statistics for Fulton County based on the 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census, and 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year estimates (the most current available) data. Table 2-2 provides details regarding the demographics for Fulton County.

Table 2-1. Fulton County Population Statistics

Municipality	2000 Census	2010 Census	2013-2017 5-Year ACS Estimate	Population Change 2000-2017	Population Change 2000-2017 (%)	Population Density Per Square Mile
Ayr Township	1,982	1,942	2,151	169	8.53%	42.00
Belfast Township	1,341	1,448	1,347	6	0.45%	28.90
Bethel Township	1,420	1,508	1,570	150	10.56%	40.7
Brush Creek Township	730	819	748	18	2.47%	15.1
Dublin Township	1,277	1,264	1,317	40	3.13%	34.2
Licking Creek Township	1,532	1,703	1,557	25	1.63%	38.10
McConnellsburg Borough	1,073	1,220	1,037	-36	-3.36%	3,393.90
Taylor Township	1,237	1,118	907	-330	-26.68%	34.3
Thompson Township	998	1,098	1,094	96	9.62%	29.00
Todd Township	1,488	1,527	1,728	240	16.13%	52.8
Union Township	634	706	722	88	13.88%	23.1
Valley-Hi Borough*	20	15	0	-20	-100.00%	29.80
Wells Township	529	477	453	-76	-14.37%	12.8
Fulton County	14,261	14,845	14,631	370	2.59%	33.9

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau 2000, 2010, and 2018

* Valley-Hi has a low population and therefore American Community Survey (ACS) data may be skewed because of the sampling techniques used for ACS data collection.

Table 2-2. Demographics for Fulton County

Demographics	2000 Census	2010 Census	2013-2017 5-Year ACS Estimate
Total population	14,261	14,845	14,631
Male	7,133	7,471	7,376
Female	7,128	7,374	7,255
Median age (years)	38.2	41.8	44.6
Under 5 years	898	916	759
18 years and over	10,754	11,414	3,075
65 years and over	2,068	2,544	2,945
Total Households	5,660	6,014	6,014
Group quarters population	102	122	38

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000, 2010, and 2018



As shown in the tables above, Fulton County's 2010 Census population was 14,845. Based on these data, the population density of Fulton County is 33.9 persons per square mile, which is considerably lower than the Pennsylvania statewide average of 284 persons per square mile. The Borough of McConnellsburg has the highest population density all the municipalities in the county (3,393.90 persons per square mile of land area) (U.S. Census 2010). A majority of the municipalities in Fulton County have population densities below the statewide average. However, many municipalities in the county have low population density, meaning that people are spread throughout the county rather than clustered in groups. Dispersing information, instructions, and resources during a disaster response effort to residents in low-density areas is more difficult than in more densely populated areas because individuals are not centralized. Fulton County 2010 population density data is illustrated on Figure 2-2.

While low-density areas provide challenges to disseminating hazard mitigation information, a low population density also means that hazards will not affect as many people. For example, diseases may not spread as quickly because citizens are in contact with less people. Similarly, fires are less likely to spread to other structures because of the large distances between them. The magnitude of an event is typically smaller in a less-populated area because each event affects fewer people and properties.

The Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA 2000) requires that HMPs consider socially vulnerable populations. These populations can be more susceptible to hazard events based on a number of factors, including their physical and financial ability to react or respond during a hazard and the location and construction quality of their housing. For the purposes of this study, vulnerable populations shall include (1) the elderly and younger populations (persons aged 65 and over; persons aged 5 and younger) and (2) those living in low-income households.

Approximately 17.1 percent of the county's total population is aged 65 and older. Older residents may have access and functional needs. For example, many may be unable to drive; therefore, special evacuation plans may be necessary. They may also have hearing or vision impairments that could make receiving emergency instructions difficult. Additionally, 6.1 percent of the county's total population is under the age of 5 years. Both older and younger populations have higher risks for contracting certain diseases. The County's combined population under 5 years of age and over 65 years represent approximately 23.2 percent of its total population.

Figure 2-3 and Figure 2-4 show the number of these populations by municipality. It should be noted that these two population figures are reported by municipality because American Community Survey data is not available at the Census Block level; therefore, for more concise reporting of population, the municipal level of data was used to report Population Over 65 Years of Age and Population Under 5 Years of Age.



Figure 2-2. Fulton County 2010 Population Distribution

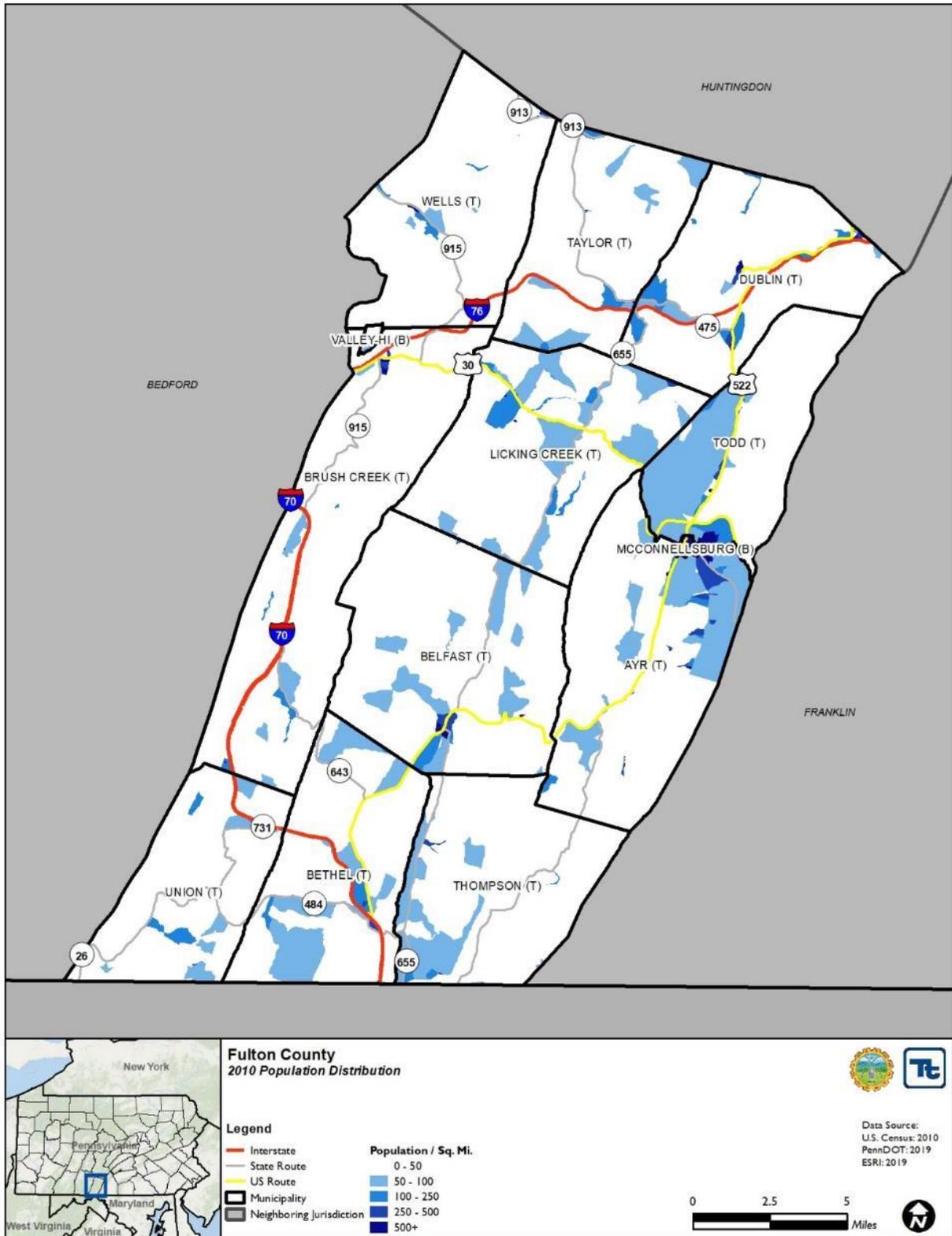




Figure 2-3. Fulton County Population Over 65 Years of Age

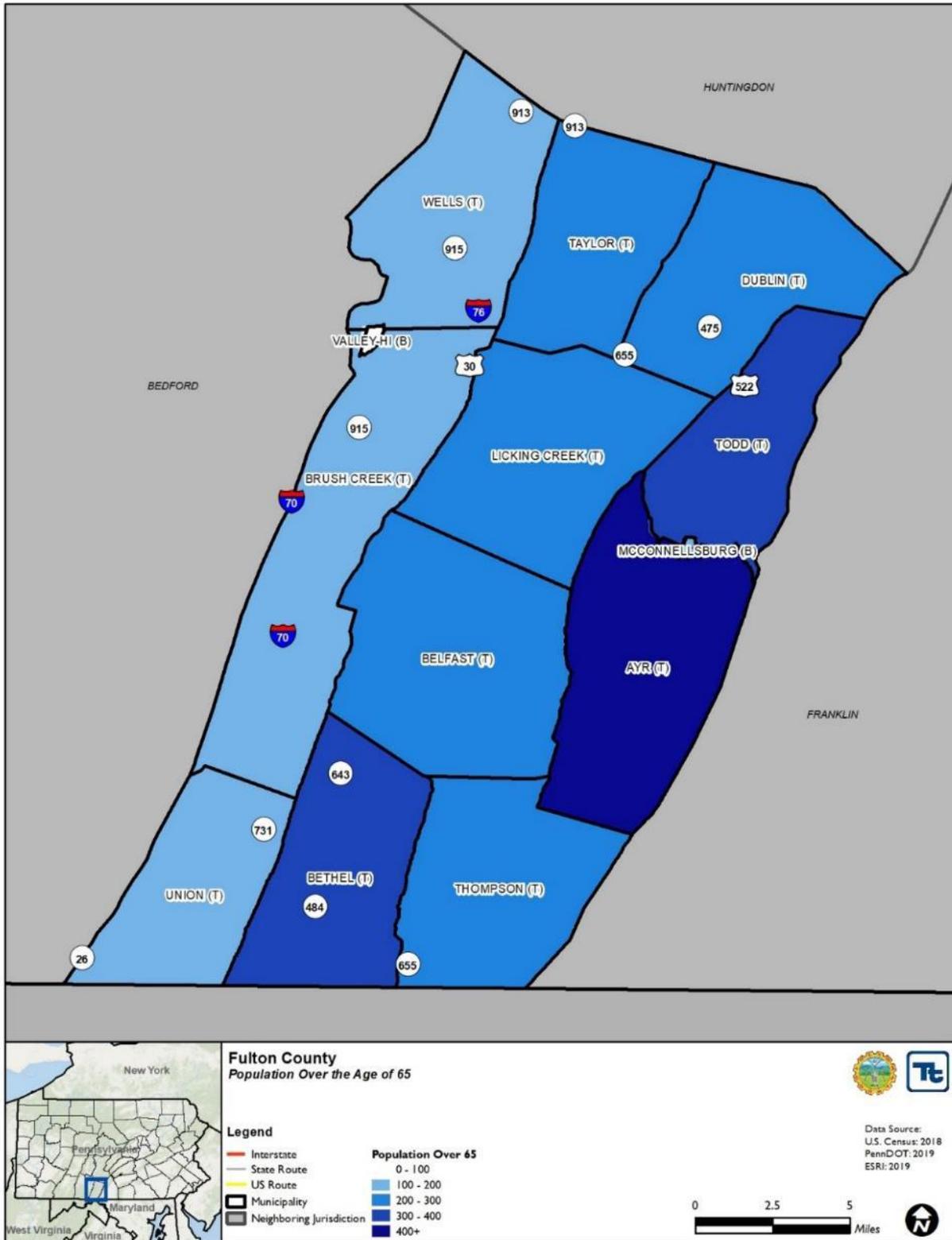
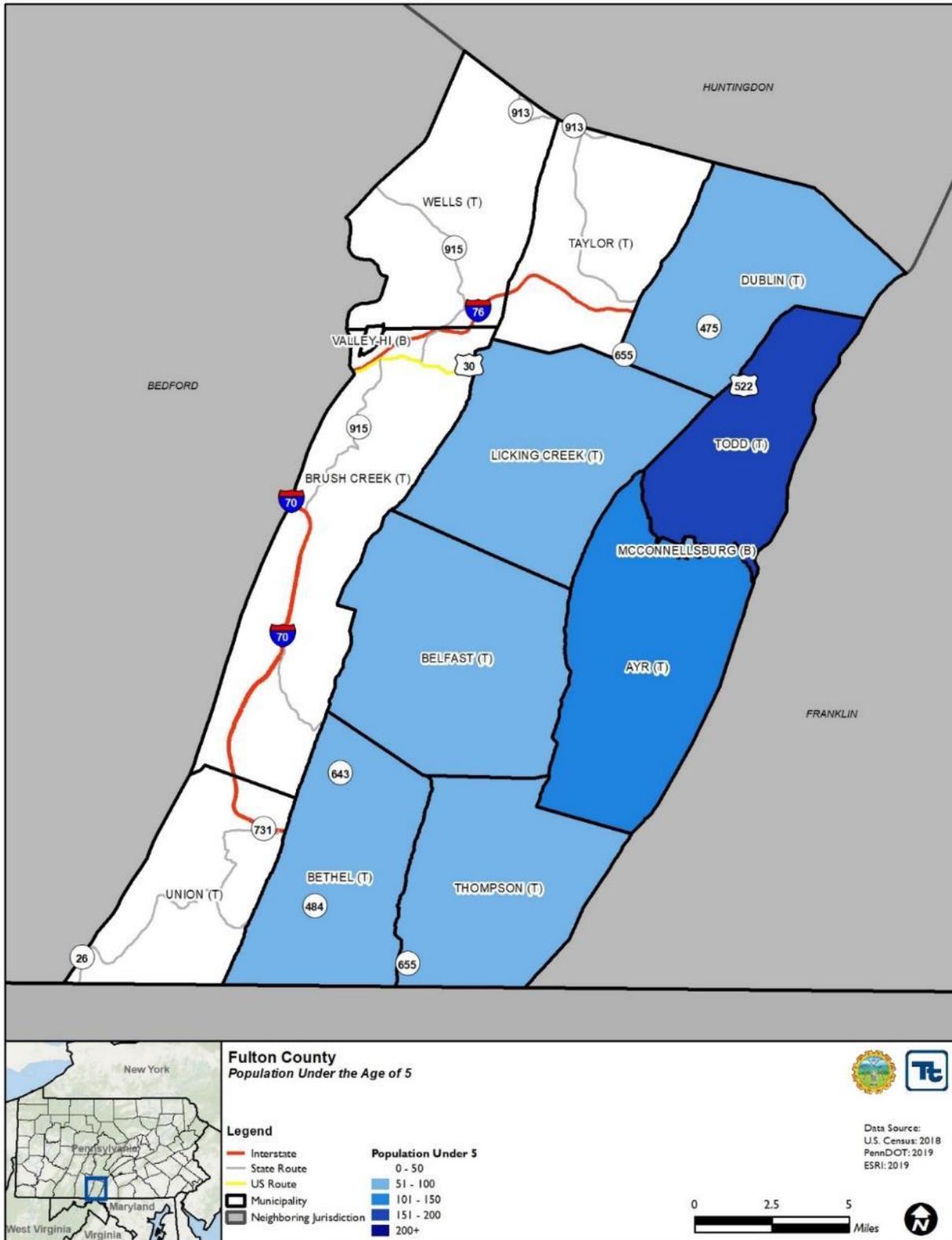




Figure 2-4. Fulton County Population Under 5 Years of Age





Only 0.8 percent of Fulton County’s population lives in group quarters. The term “group quarters” refers to people living in communal settings, which can include inmates in a prison, students in a dorm, or elderly or mentally disabled individuals living in group care homes. Residents living in group quarters are often special needs populations. It is important to ensure that each group quarter facility has its own emergency plan to account for the unique needs of its residents during a hazard event.

Table 2-3 provides population estimates and projections for each municipality in Fulton County and for the county as a whole. The population of the entire County is estimated to be 16,573 by the year 2040, which represents a net population increase of 1,728 people in a 30-year period. As shown in the table below, approximately half of the municipalities in Fulton County are projected to see an increase in population. The table also shows that four municipalities are projected to see a decrease in population. It should be noted that changes in population or demographics may be used to identify higher-risk populations. Maintaining up-to-date data on demographics will allow Fulton County to better assess magnitudes of hazards and develop more specific mitigation plans and strategies.

Table 2-3. Fulton County Population Projections by Municipality

Municipality	2000 Census	2010 Census	Population Change 2000-2010 (%)	2020 Projection	2030 Projection	2040 Projection	Projected Population Change 2010-2040 (%)
Ayr Township	1,982	1,942	-2.02%	1,819	1,744	1,641	-15.50%
Belfast Township	1,341	1,448	7.98%	1,570	1,683	1,801	24.38%
Bethel Township	1,420	1,508	6.20%	1,605	1,696	1,791	18.77%
Brush Creek Township	730	819	12.19%	907	995	1,084	32.36%
Dublin Township	1,277	1,264	-1.02%	1,333	1,356	1,405	11.16%
Licking Creek Township	1,532	1,703	11.16%	1,846	2,005	2,155	26.54%
McConnellsburg Borough	1,073	1,220	13.70%	1,264	1,367	1,436	17.70%
Taylor Township	1,237	1,118	-9.62%	1,104	1,030	991	-11.36%
Thompson Township	998	1,098	10.02%	1,112	1,176	1,211	10.29%
Todd Township	1,488	1,527	2.62%	1,575	1,853	1,830	19.84%
Union Township	634	706	11.36%	743	800	846	19.83%
Valley-Hi Borough*	20	15	-25.00%	14	12	11	-26.67%
Wells Township	529	477	-9.83%	446	406	371	-22.22%
Fulton County	14,261	14,845	4.10%	15,338	16,123	16,573	11.64%

Sources: U.S. Census 2000, 2010, and 2018

According to the 2013-2017 American Community Survey, 1.8 percent of the county’s population speaks a language other than English with 0.3 percent of the population speaking English less than “very well.” While currently a low percentage, future hazard mitigation strategies should consider addressing language barriers to ensure that all residents can receive emergency instructions. Table 2-4 summarizes race and ethnicity population information for Fulton County.

Table 2-4. Race and Ethnicity in Fulton County

Race and Ethnicity	2010	% of Population	2016	% of Population
One race	14,691	99%	14,523	99.3%
White	14,450	97.3%	14,191	97.0%
Black or African American	151	1.0%	234	1.6%



Race and Ethnicity	2010	% of Population	2016	% of Population
American Indian and Alaska Native	28	0.2%	37	0.3%
Asian	19	0.1%	34	0.2%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	1	0.0%	24	0.0%
Some other race	42	0.3%	11	0.1%
Two or more races	154	1.0%	108	0.7%
Foreign born	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Speak a language other than English	166	1.2%	208	1.5%
Hispanic or Latino	110	0.7%	174	1.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010, 2018

Fulton County has 7,208 housing units. These properties may be vulnerable to various natural hazards, particularly those located in defined hazard areas. Damage to residential properties is not only costly to repair or rebuild, but devastating to the displaced residents.

According to the U.S. Census, approximately 17.5 percent of the county’s residential properties are vacant and most of these units are available for rent. Vacant buildings are particularly vulnerable to arson and criminal activity. Because vacant properties are not inhabited year-round or may not be adequately maintained, many are structurally deficient and at risk of collapse.

Approximately 21.5 percent of the county’s population live in rented homes. Because renters are more transient than homeowners, communicating with renters may be more difficult than communicating with homeowners. Similarly, communications with tourists would be harder during an emergency event. Communication strategies should be developed to ensure that these populations receive proper notifications.

Table 2-5 summarizes characteristics of the residential properties in Fulton County.

Table 2-5. Housing Characteristics in Fulton County

Housing Characteristics	2010	2017
Total housing units	7,122	7,208
Owner-occupied housing units	4,617	4,670
Renter-occupied housing units	1,397	1,277
Vacant housing units	1,102	1,261
Median value (dollars)	\$157,500	\$156,000
Housing units with a mortgage	2,457	2,305
Housing units without a mortgage	2,160	2,365

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010, 2011, 2018

In 2017 (the most current data available), the median household income in the county was \$50,007, which was lower than the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania’s estimated median household income (\$56,951). The County’s 2017 estimated per capita income of \$25,273 was lower than the Commonwealth’s 2017 estimated per capita income of \$31,476. Approximately 8.3 percent of family incomes in Fulton County were below poverty level, and 11.5 percent of individual incomes were below poverty level. Emergency responders may have difficulty connecting with individuals within this economic bracket for several reasons, including less access to the Internet. Additionally, some low-income families and individuals may not own vehicles, and therefore could be more vulnerable during an evacuation. Table 2-6 summarizes economic characteristics of Fulton County’s population.



Table 2-6. Economic Characteristics in Fulton County

Economic Characteristics	2010 Census	2017 Estimates
Median household income	\$45,240	\$50,007
Median family income	\$54,946	\$61,448
Per capita income	\$21,729	\$25,373
Families with income below the poverty level	8.8%	8.3%
Individuals with income below the poverty level	13.3%	11.5%

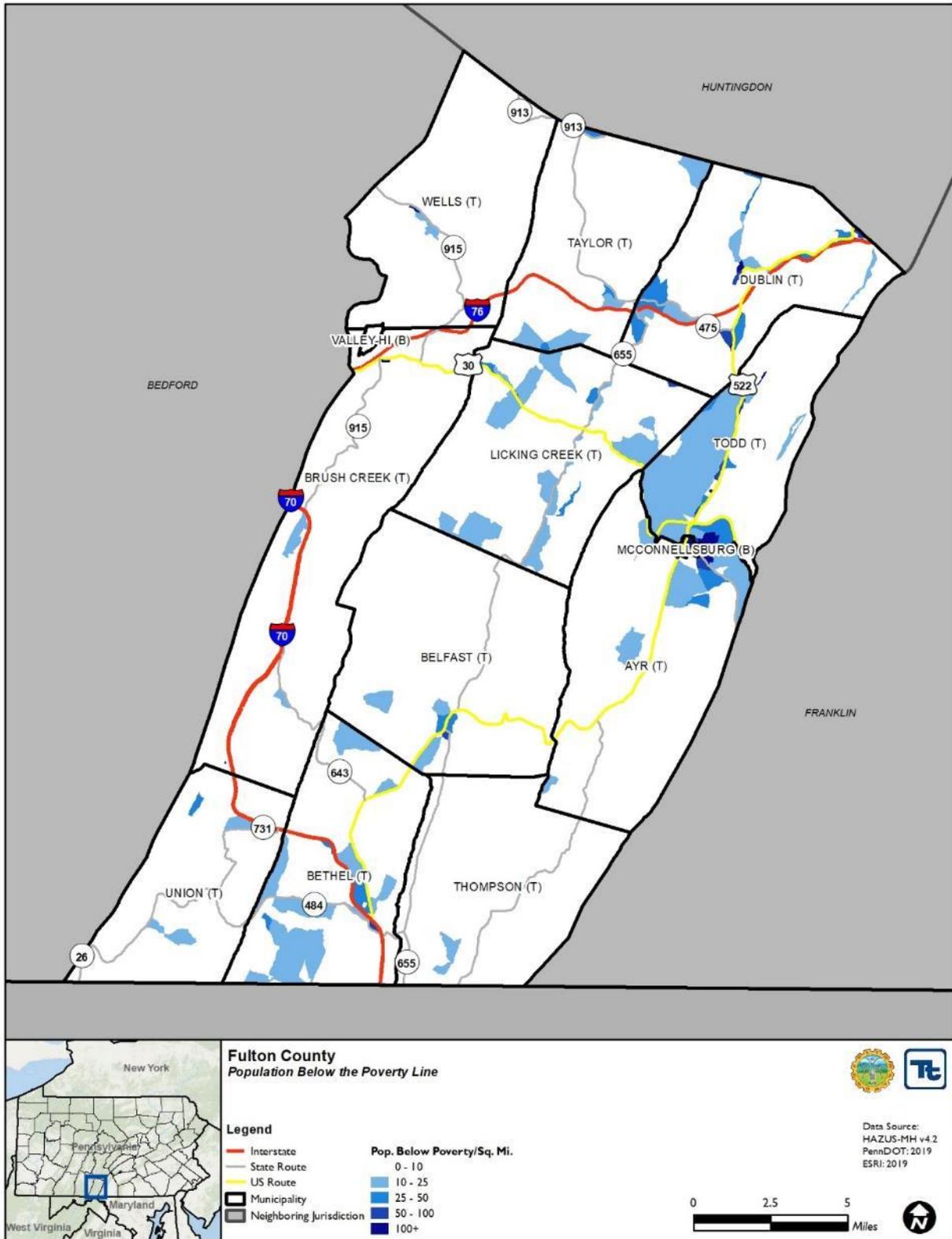
Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2011, 2018

Figure 2-5 illustrates population distribution for residents with incomes below the poverty level.

DRAFT



Figure 2-5. Fulton County Population Below the Poverty Level





2.4 LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

Fulton County's existing land use patterns are greatly influenced and shaped by surrounding natural features such as mountain ranges, valleys, and waterways. These features have largely determined the location of transportation corridors and development activities, as well as agricultural practices.

A network of high-capacity transportation systems traverses Fulton County. These systems include the Pennsylvania Turnpike, I-70, US Route 30, and US Route 522. In addition, Fulton County is in proximity to the juncture of I-70 and I-68 in Maryland. These transportation systems have greatly contributed to Fulton County's accessibility and land development patterns. Of the county's total land area of 438 square miles, approximately 95 percent is classified as agricultural or forested land and approximately 5 percent is considered developed.

McConnellsburg Borough has remained the population center and the industrial and commercial nucleus of Fulton County. Consequently, a natural pattern of development has occurred as a concentric ring of growth has expanded outward from the Borough into the neighboring rural townships.

Fulton County's commercial and industrial land development patterns are largely influenced by the transportation network and availability of public sewer services. As a result, future growth in the county is expected to occur in five distinct geographic areas: (1) McConnellsburg, (2) Warfordsburg, (3) Hustontown, (4) Fort Littleton, and (5) Crystal Spring.

Fulton County's future population growth and land use development patterns will be largely influenced by immigration patterns of people from the east and south. Data gathered from the Internal Revenue Service reveal that Fulton County's greatest population inflows originated in Franklin County, Pennsylvania; and Washington County, Maryland.

Fulton County residents have expressed concern that the county's rural character is being jeopardized as its agricultural lands are slowly being converted to areas of low-density, scattered residential development. While still a concern, residential development growth has slowed since this trend has been noted. From 2010 to 2017, U.S. Census records showed an increase in housing units (1.2 percent) that was slightly outpaced by the county's population growth (2.59 percent). This contrasts from the 2000 to 2010 comparison, which showed a housing unit growth of 4.9 percent, compared to a County population growth of only 4.1 percent.

Land use regulations are not prevalent in Fulton County. For example, Fulton County does not have a County zoning ordinance nor a subdivision and land development ordinance. In addition, of the 13 municipalities, only McConnellsburg Borough has adopted a zoning ordinance. Moreover, municipal subdivision and land development ordinances lack the regulations necessary to support the preservation of the county's existing rural character.

Agricultural use of land is in long-term decline. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 63 farms and 3,051 farmland acres were lost between 2007 and 2017. Approximately 145 acres of farmland from 2 farms are enrolled in the agricultural easement program within Fulton County (Pennsylvania Land Trust Association no date). Fulton County identified actions to increase the agriculture industry, including increasing representation of agriculture on the county economic development agency, actively recruiting additional businesses or facilities to the county, increasing public awareness of the role agriculture plays in the county's economy, and collaborating with lenders to offer low-interest loans to farmers (Southern Alleghenies Regional Planning Commission 2018)

Access management is an increasing concern as residential land development patterns continue to develop in a linear fashion along local roadways (e.g., US-522) and each property obtains an individual highway occupancy permit from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT). Fulton County has developed a growth management survey to help monitor and guide County growth and development in a way to ensure compliance with overall County land use goals. Figure 2-6 provides visual representations of current County land use and predicted growth patterns.



Figure 2-6. Fulton County Land Use and Land Cover





As displayed in Figure 2-7 through Figure 2-12, the county has identified six geographic hazards and growth areas inside its borders. All six of the identified growth areas are located within the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood hazard zone, the subsidence hazard area, and the environmental hazard area. Growth Area A, however, is the only area located within both the 0.25-mile buffer of a major road and 0.10-mile buffer of a Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA) Title III facility. Growth Areas A, B, and F are located above limestone formations in the subsidence and sinkhole hazard area. The County has noted the location of these hazards in relation to the growth areas to ensure that the planning and development officials considers these factors. Additionally, the county intends to discourage development within (1) vulnerable areas, areas with high population density, and the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA); or (2) encourage higher regulatory standards at the local level.

DRAFT



Figure 2-7. Fulton County Growth Area A and Hazard Areas

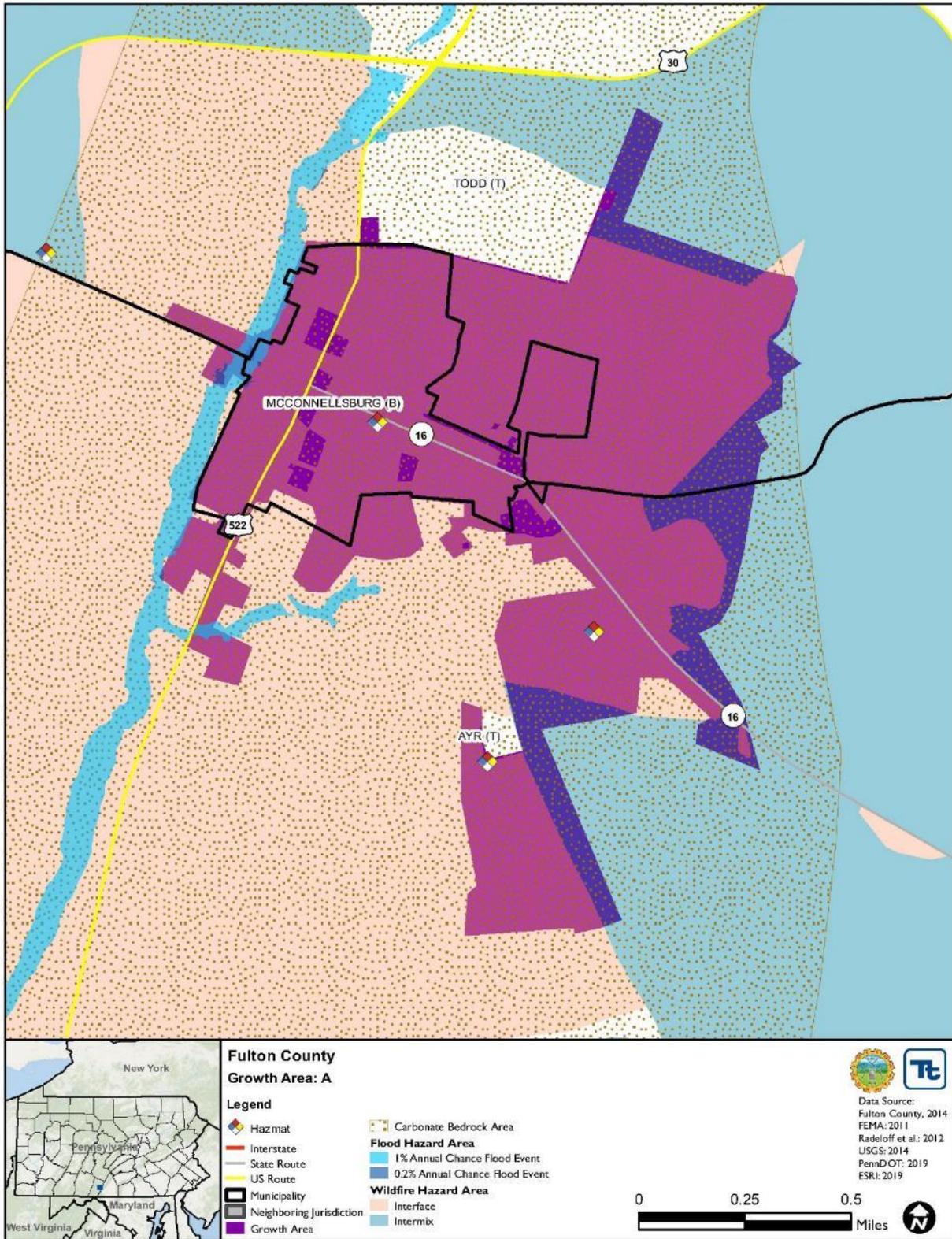




Figure 2-8. Fulton County Growth Area B and Hazard Areas

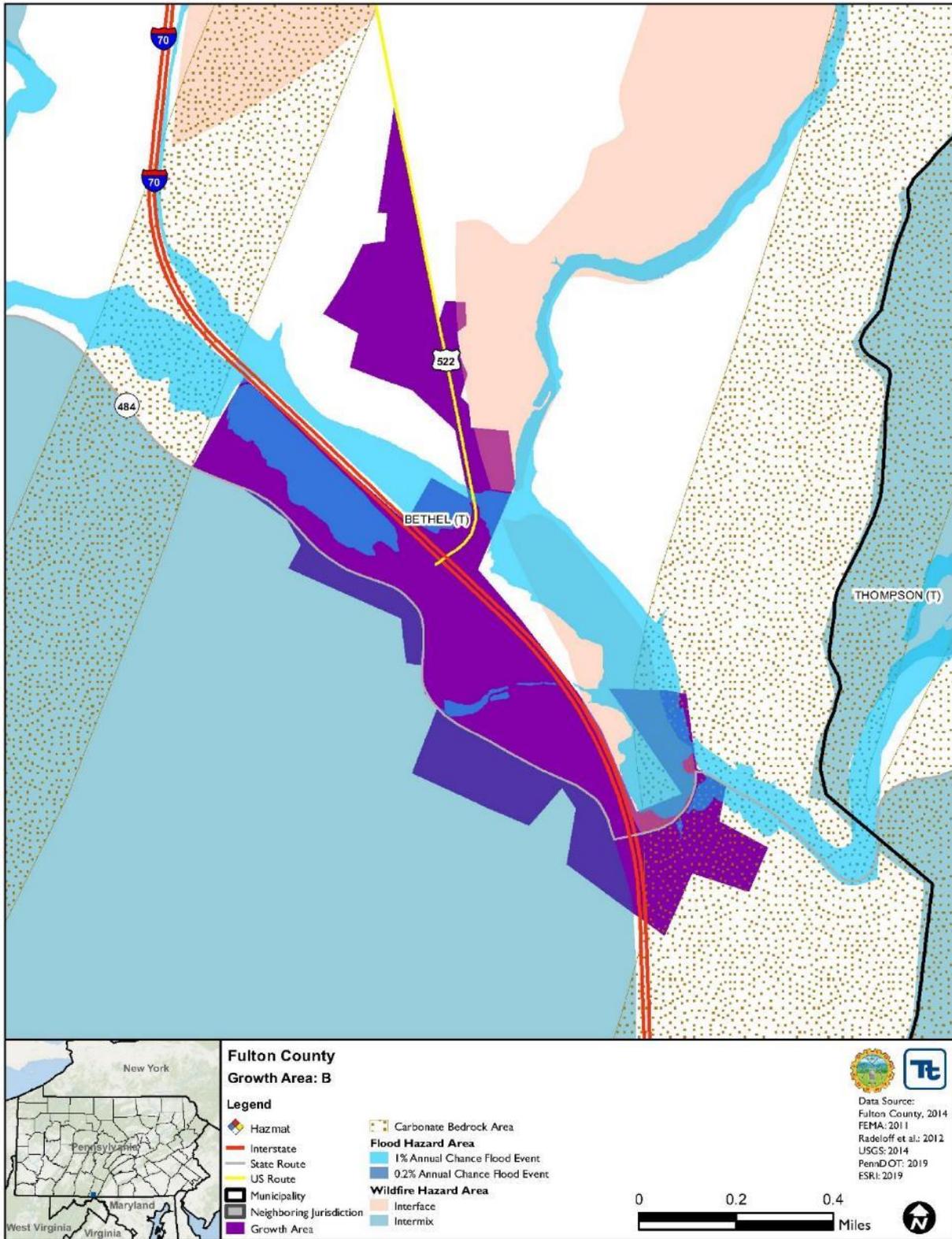




Figure 2-9. Fulton County Growth Area C and Hazard Areas

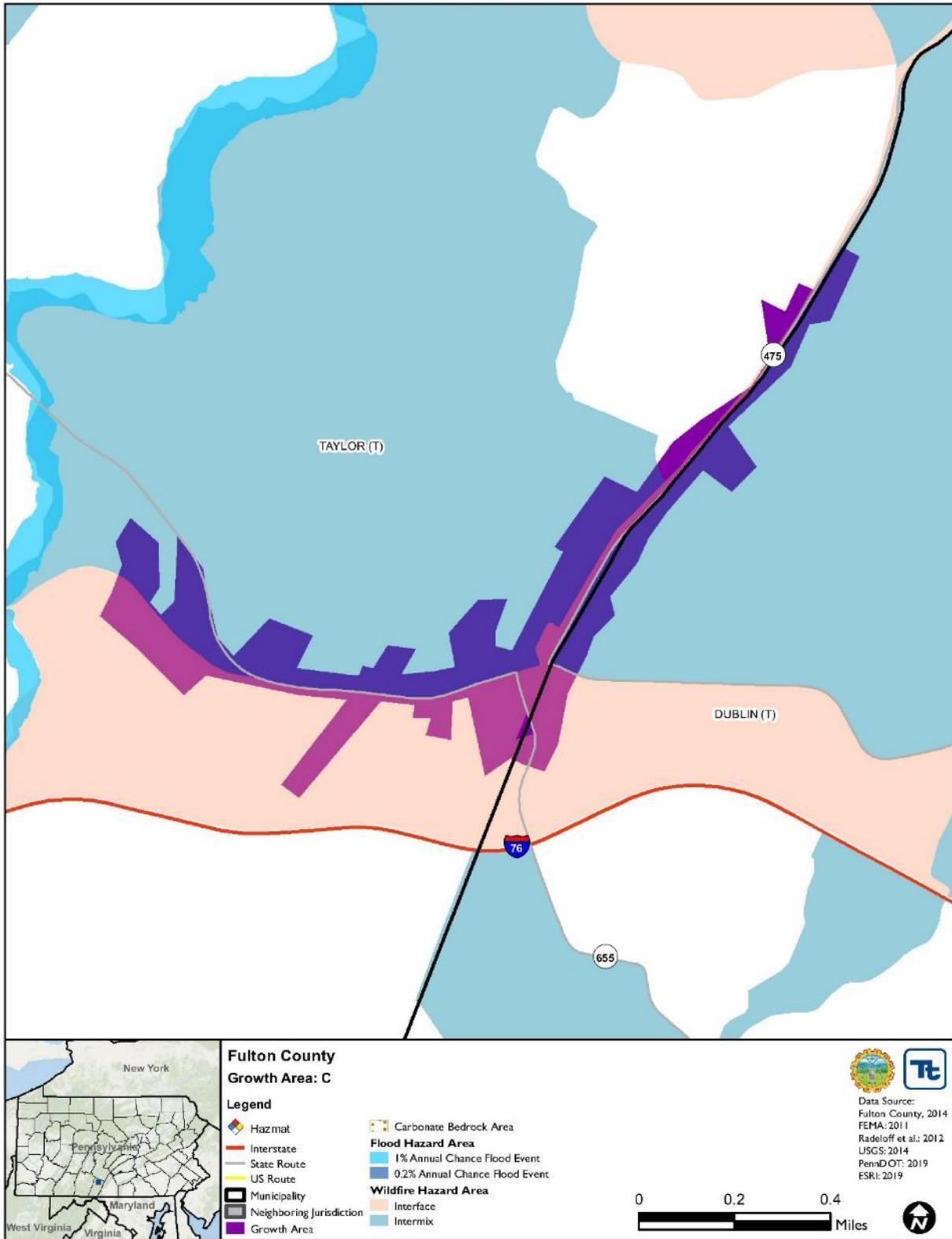




Figure 2-10. Fulton County Growth Area D and Hazard Areas

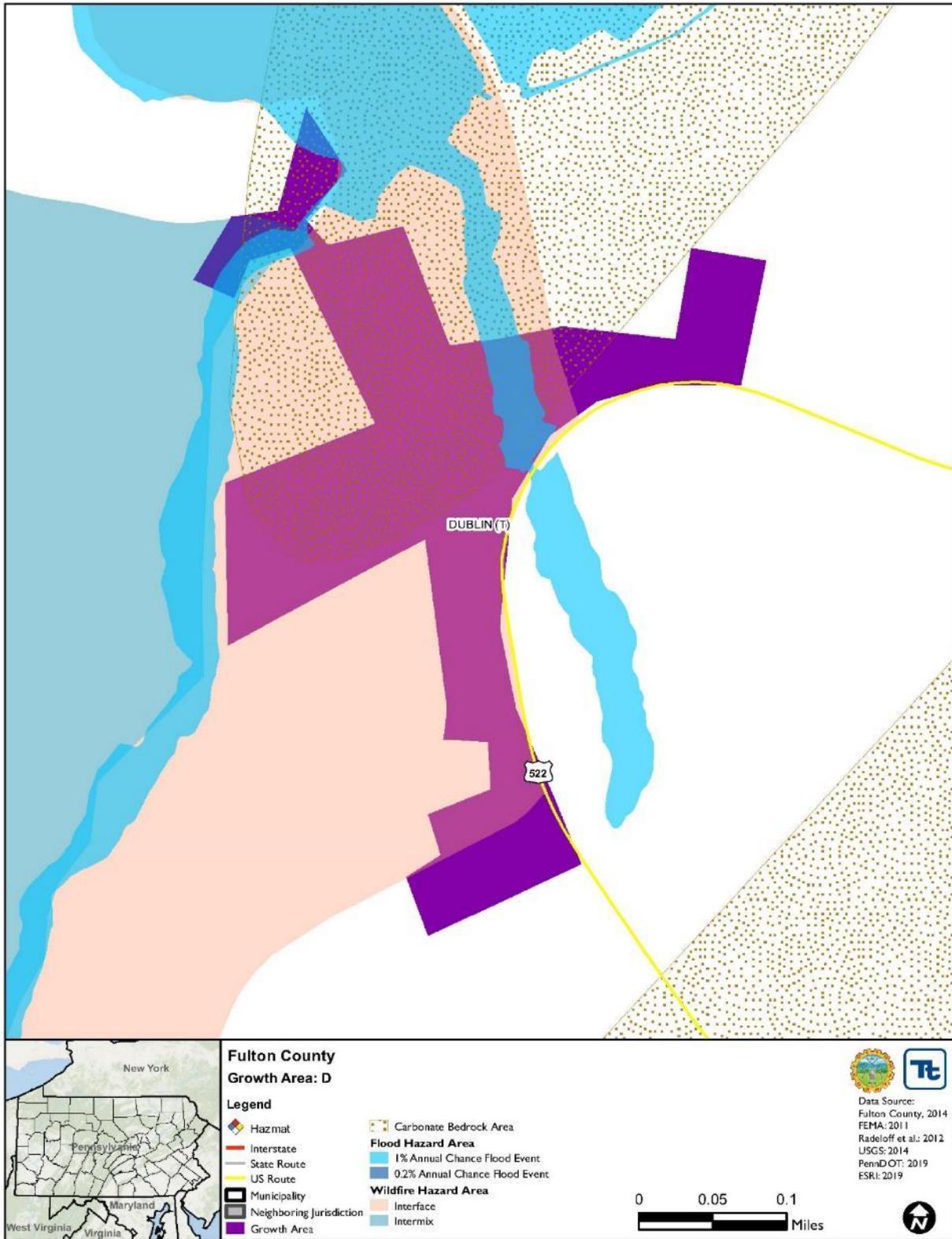




Figure 2-11. Fulton County Growth Area E and Hazard Areas

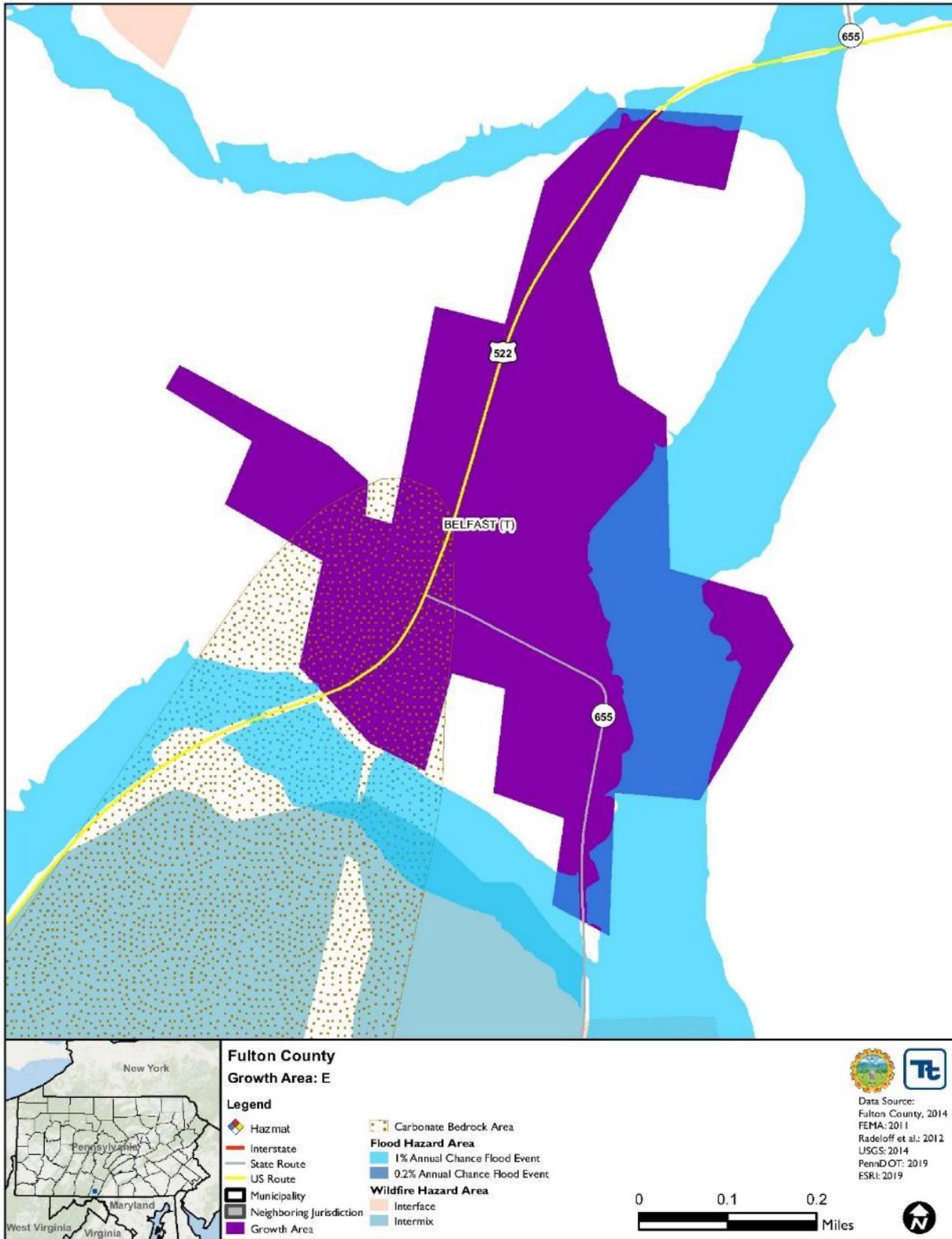
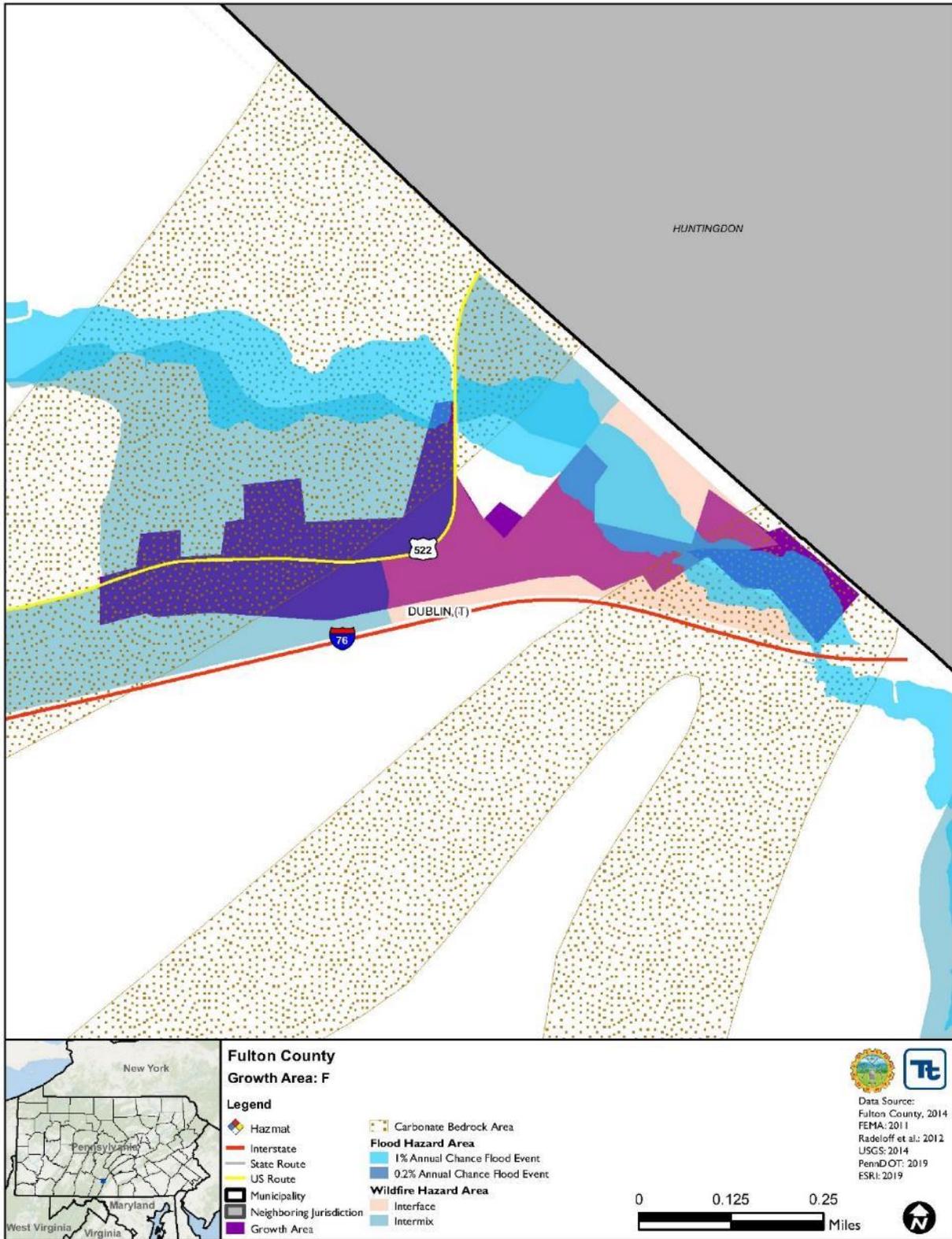




Figure 2-12. Fulton County Growth Area F and Hazard Areas





2.5 DATA SOURCES AND LIMITATIONS

The County Profile section of this HMP was developed with information from the following sources:

1. Comprehensive Plan for the Southern Alleghenies Region (Southern Alleghenies Regional Planning Commission, 2018).
2. Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection Population Projections Report (PA DEP no date)
3. U.S. Census Bureau. 2010.
4. U.S. Census Bureau. 2011. "2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Fulton County."
5. U.S. Census Bureau. 2018. "2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Fulton County."
6. U.S. Census Bureau. 2018. "2016 County Business Patterns – Fulton County."
7. United States Department of Agriculture. 2018. 2012 Census of Agriculture: Fulton County, Pennsylvania County Profile.
8. United States Department of Agriculture. 2019. 2017 Census of Agriculture: Fulton County, Pennsylvania County Profile.
9. Pennsylvania Land Trust Association. Accessed 2019. "Fulton County Agricultural Land Preservation Board."

Data sources used to develop the HMP in general are listed in Section 1.4. Data sources used to perform geographic information system (GIS) analysis for the risk assessment are listed in Section 4.1. These sources were key in understanding the current demographic makeup of the C as well as in framing the foundation of the Plan. The sources listed provided the underlying context of the HMP and allowed the Steering Committee to understand critical vulnerabilities in the county. Throughout the course of the planning process, the Steering Committee continually sought additional data sources to augment the information included in the Plan.