



Metropolitan Planning Organization of the Regional Intergovernmental Council (RIC)

Public Participation Plan

December 2022

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www.wvregion3.org

**RESOLUTION OF THE BCKP REGIONAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL COUNCIL POLICY
BOARD TO ADOPT THE UPDATE TO THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN**

- Whereas,** The BCKP Regional Intergovernmental Council, as the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Charleston, WV urbanized area, developed an update to its Public Participation Plan in accordance with the USDOT Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA);
- Whereas,** The Public Participation Plan was developed to detail public involvement processes for the metropolitan transportation planning and programming initiatives of the RIC;
- Whereas,** The Public Participation Plan has an established formal update cycle of (3) years to maintain compliance with state and federal requirements; and
- Whereas,** The Public Participation Plan was properly advertised and made available for public review, having a public comment period of (45) calendar days in accordance with U.S. Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §450.316.

Now, therefore, be it resolved, that the BCKP Regional Intergovernmental Council hereby adopts the updated Public Participation Plan for the metropolitan planning organization.

So, resolved this 8th day of December 2022.



David Casebolt, Chairman
BCKP Regional Intergovernmental Council

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The RIC Public Participation Plan frames the strategies for public and stakeholder communication and collaboration in all phases of the planning process. The plan is reviewed annually by the RIC transportation staff and the Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC) to assess progress and solicit feedback to improve public involvement strategies.



The metropolitan planning organization of the Regional Intergovernmental Council (RIC) places a strong emphasis on public involvement and maximizing public participation while promoting a comprehensive transportation planning process. For inquiries regarding public involvement or to learn more on how you can get involved, visit the RIC website: www.wvregion3.org, contact (304) 744-4258, or email mail@wvregion3.org

RIC Organization

In 1975, RIC was designated as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Charleston, WV Urbanized Area. Later, the area was expanded to include the entire Metropolitan Area which comprises all of Kanawha and Putnam counties in West Virginia to align with air quality designation. All urbanized areas in the United States, as a condition of receiving Federal highway and transit funding, must have an official MPO, responsible for out a coordinated, cooperative, and comprehensive (“3-C”) metropolitan planning process. This process includes the development of various transportation plans and programs in cooperation with federal, state, and local entities, transit agencies, members of the public, and stakeholder communities.

Introduction

Public involvement is an integral part of metropolitan transportation planning. A successful public participation process ensures stakeholders and members of the public are afforded opportunities for inclusion in the metropolitan transportation planning process. Originally adopted by the RIC Policy Board in 1993, the RIC Public Participation Plan seeks to reduce and eliminate barriers for underserved communities and promote public participation in the metropolitan transportation planning process. The plan details the incorporation and application of strategies and activities used to inform and engage members of the public for transportation planning initiatives. The RIC recognizes the significance of implementing early and continuous public involvement practices. This plan serves as a guide to promote and increase public involvement in the metropolitan transportation planning process.

The Regional Intergovernmental Council (RIC) Policy Board is the decision-making body of the Council. The RIC Policy Board is primarily comprised of representatives from the 25 municipal and four county government units in Region 3—comprising Boone, Clay, Kanawha and Putnam counties in West Virginia. Additional members of the RIC Policy Board include representatives from the West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT), Kanawha Valley Regional Transportation Authority (KVRTA), minority organizations, and at-large citizen representatives.

The RIC Policy Board convenes quarterly meetings in March, June, September, and December for the purposes of:

- Communicating local transportation issues and needs to the RIC transportation staff
- Receiving updates from the RIC transportation staff regarding current or proposed plans and studies
- Consideration for approval or adoption for transportation planning products
- Consideration for approval or adoption of the: RIC Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), subsequent amendments to the RIC MTP, RIC Transportation Improvement Program (RIC TIP), subsequent amendments to the RIC TIP, RIC transportation planning budget, and Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Meetings of the RIC Policy Board are published or posted by way of public notice through the local newspaper, the West Virginia Secretary of State website: www.sos.wv.gov and the RIC website: www.wvregion3.org

Federal Requirements

The RIC Public Participation Plan was developed in accordance with the federal requirements of the current transportation reauthorization bill, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), signed into law on November 15, 2021. Additionally, the plan was developed with the objectives of Executive Order (EO) 13985: Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government and Executive Order (EO) 12898: Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) contains federal requirements for the public involvement process and directs metropolitan planning organizations to provide citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, public ports, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process. The IIJA directs MPOs to consider the equitable and proportional representation of the population of the metropolitan planning area when designating officials for the first time.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin. Since the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, legislation broadened to prohibit discrimination against persons based on age, disability, sex, religion, limited English proficiency (LEP), or income level. Throughout the transportation planning process, RIC ensures the transportation-related needs and concerns of underserved communities are incorporated to the maximum extent practicable.

Title VI is one of eleven Titles of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and applies to all programs and activities of federal-aid recipients, sub-recipients, and contractors. Title VI addresses discrimination in federally funded programs by mandating requirements and responsibilities for affected programs to prevent and prohibit discriminatory behavior against minority and low-income populations. Title VI requirements apply to all metropolitan planning organizations receiving federal funds and therefore prohibits discrimination in all federally funded programs, policies, and activities of the RIC.

The RIC adheres to federal requirements for metropolitan transportation planning in accordance with 23 CFR § 450.316, which directs metropolitan planning organizations to address the needs of underserved communities.

“Seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services.” -- 23 CFR § 450.316

The RIC Public Participation Plan seeks to reduce public participation barriers that may exist for minority, low income, disabled, and limited English proficiency (LEP) populations. Procedures and guidance regarding transportation planning for underserved communities is further described in the RIC Title VI Plan, accessible on the RIC website:

www.wvregion3.org. Thematic maps and related data for minority, LEP and low-income populations for both Kanawha and Putnam counties are provided in the Appendix of this plan.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, meetings of the RIC are held in ADA accessible facilities. The RIC will make any reasonable accommodation to ensure all persons are able to meaningfully participate in RIC meetings, events, and activities.

Guiding Principles for Public Involvement

To ensure best practices in decision-making for transportation planning and activities, public participation is essential for all transportation planning initiatives. The RIC is responsible for engaging the public early and often through a transparent, collaborative, and accessible process. The following guiding principles demonstrate the initiatives of the RIC Public Participation Plan: opportunity, engagement, involvement, education, accessibility, and compliance.

Opportunity

Objective: Members of the public and other stakeholders are encouraged to participate throughout the development of various transportation plans, studies, and projects. The RIC will ensure members of the public and stakeholder communities are afforded opportunities to express opinions and concerns about transportation issues and will facilitate multiple, accessible participation formats, including electronic and in-person.

- Attend community events to engage members of the public and stakeholder communities to identify transportation needs and concerns
- Engage local community and advocacy organizations and coordinate targeted community engagement in collaborative efforts
- Encourage participants of RIC meetings or events and stakeholder communities to provide input on RIC plans, studies, and projects

Engagement

Objective: Publicize all public involvement opportunities during the development of transportation plans, studies, and projects.

- Engage members of the public and stakeholder communities through the RIC website: www.wvregion3.org, social media, and other web-based platforms
- Provide adequate public notice of meetings and events

Involvement

Objective: Collaborate with members of the public and stakeholder communities in all phases of the planning process.

- Conduct public meetings, stakeholder meetings, or steering committee meetings throughout the development of a plans, studies, or projects.
- Document public comments for incorporation into transportation plans, studies, and projects
- Ensure transportation-related issues and concerns from the public are properly considered

Education

Objective: Effectively communicate transportation-related concepts and planning activities to members of the public and stakeholder communities.

- Ensure RIC transportation staff and other meeting facilitators are prepared to provide clear, accurate, and relevant transportation-related information to meeting participants
- Provide accessible visual and educational materials to easily communicate subject material

Accessibility

Conduct outreach to underserved communities and minority, low-income and limited English proficiency (LEP) populations.

- Implement Title VI and Environmental Justice requirements for transportation plans, studies, and projects
- Selection of public meeting locations that serve areas of underserved communities
- Provide accessibility accommodations, including interpretation or translation services for meetings and events to ensure all persons can participate

Compliance

Maintain compliance in accordance with applicable requirements and regulations.

- Maintain compliance with applicable requirements regarding public involvement in the metropolitan transportation planning process
- Conduct research on best practice public involvement strategies and methodologies

Public Involvement

Participants who engage in the metropolitan transportation planning process consist of members of the public and stakeholder communities. Public involvement in the metropolitan transportation planning process must be afforded to elected officials from all levels of government, city and county government staff, planning department officials, city and county engineers, representatives from the Federal Highway Administration and the State of West Virginia departments and divisions such as the West Virginia Department of Transportation, West Virginia Division of Highways, and the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection, public transportation providers, paratransit agencies, and local taxi services; regional freight providers, community leaders in the sectors of business and economic development.

Public Outreach Initiatives

The RIC employs a variety of public participation techniques to broaden and increase overall public involvement through the facilitation of “hybrid meetings” (in person and virtual) with advisory committees, steering committees, interagency consultation groups, stakeholders, special interest groups, and community organizations.

The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated the RIC to utilize the technological capabilities of videoconferencing to conduct public meetings and plan-specific public involvement efforts. The RIC continues to use video teleconferencing platforms such as GoToMeeting and Zoom to maximize stakeholder and public participation. Meetings of the RIC Policy Board and Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC), and RIC Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) are conducted in a “hybrid” manner—both in-person and virtual attendance options are available to meeting participants. The RIC will continue to employ the use of virtual public involvement (VPI) capabilities to maximize public participation in the metropolitan transportation planning process.

Additional public participation methods include tabling at community events, charrettes, public surveys, newsletters, data visualization components, and online engagement through the RIC website: www.wvregion3.org, social media platforms, and other web-based tools.

Advisory Committees

The RIC Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC) and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee (BPAC) serve as coordinated groups for the purposes of providing technical oversight and making recommendations to the RIC Policy Board.

The RIC TTAC consists of representatives from FHWA, WVDOH, Kanawha Valley Regional Transportation Authority (KVRTA), the City of Charleston, Kanawha County Commission, Putnam County Commission, regional economic development agencies, and other stakeholders interested members of the public. Members of the TTAC review planning

products such as transportation studies, plans, and projects. The TTAC also discusses regional transportation-related issues and concerns. TTAC meetings provide a forum for members to share ideas and provide feedback to improve transportation in the RIC study area. In addition, the TTAC reviews the RIC Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and TIP amendments to make recommendations for consideration of approval or adoption by the RIC Policy Board. Meetings of the TTAC are conducted on a quarterly basis and are conducted two days prior to meetings of the RIC Policy Board.

The RIC Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) is comprised of members from the following organizations: local bicycle and pedestrian advocacy groups, West Virginia Division of Highways, the City of Charleston, the Kanawha County Commission, the Putnam County Planning Commission, and other interested parties. The RIC BPAC convenes two weeks prior to scheduled meetings of the RIC TTAC. The RIC BPAC works in collaboration with the RIC transportation staff throughout the development of the *Kanawha-Putnam Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan*, advises the RIC on regional bicycle and pedestrian concerns, promotes policies that would improve non-motorized transportation, and provides recommendations for potential bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

Additional Committees

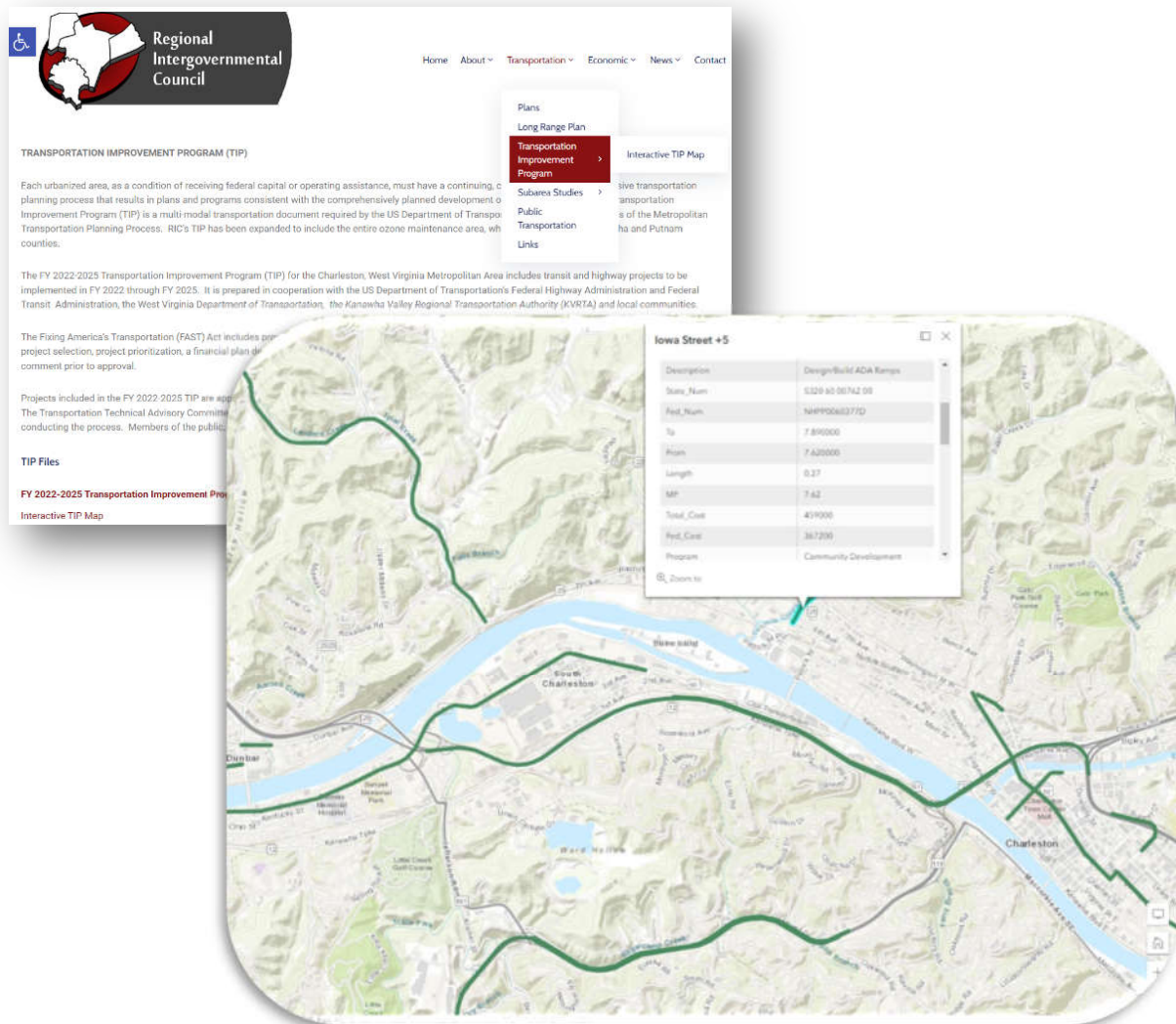
RIC transportation staff attends meetings of the James H. Caruthers Jr. Transportation Committee—a committee facilitated through the Putnam County Commission. This citizen-based committee was established to provide an open forum for members of the public to express opinions on transportation issues in Putnam County.

During the development of a transportation plan or study, the RIC may assemble a steering committee to meet at key junctures to provide direction and input for the planning process. Steering committees typically consist of key stakeholders and affected agencies or organizations. Throughout the development of special studies, the RIC incorporates public participation procedures to the maximum extent practicable to include public outreach where appropriate. During the development of transportation plans and studies, the RIC consults with members of the public and stakeholder communities to facilitate communication and collaboration.

The RIC also consults with external and interagency partners as resources for technical guidance and oversight. External and interagency partners review findings and recommendations from plans and studies. Planning activities that involve transportation conformity are conducted in conjunction with interagency consultation. Communication between RIC transportation staff and the interagency consultation group is facilitated through meetings, teleconferencing, or email.

RIC Interactive Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Map

The RIC developed a web-based tool—the RIC Interactive Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Map, which provides data visualization for transportation projects. The information in the map is based on project data provided in the TIP. This supplemental virtual component gives members of the public and stakeholder communities the ability to visualize locations of transportation investments in their region, consider which routes may be affected by construction in the future, and determine a project's location from the TIP. When amendments and adjustments are made to the TIP, the RIC TIP Interactive Map is updated accordingly. The map can be accessed on the RIC website: www.wvregion3.org or the RIC TIP landing page: <https://wvregion3.org/transportation-improvement-plan/>, then selecting “Interactive TIP Map”.



Public Meetings

Public meetings are essential to the public involvement process. They provide the general public with opportunities to:

- provide meaningful input for the transportation planning process
- express opinions and concerns regarding proposed transportation improvements
- consume informative and educational material from the RIC transportation staff and other officials regarding transportation studies, plans, and projects

The RIC conducts a variety of public meetings in various formats. Examples include:

- open house style meetings
- meetings held in conjunction with community groups
- meetings at locations in traditionally underserved areas to increase inclusive public participation

Public meetings are publicized through the RIC website, public notices in local newspapers, broadcast media, flyers, posters, or RIC's social media accounts.

ADA and LEP Accommodations

Meeting participants requesting accessibility accommodations are encouraged to contact the RIC at least (5) business days prior to a scheduled meeting date to ensure appropriate accommodations can be made.



Visualization Methods

For all public meetings, participants can view maps and other visual media, review current and proposed plans or studies and engage with RIC transportation staff. Participation by providing oral and/or written comment and feedback to the RIC on plans, studies, and projects is encouraged.

Event Tabling

The RIC transportation staff may set up and staff a table or booth at an existing local or statewide event in order to publicize public outreach events. The purpose of this public involvement method is to share information on existing and developing plans and studies, engage members of the public regarding regional transportation policies and issues, and obtain input on potential plans and studies.

Charrettes

Charrettes have been used by planning and design teams for many years. A charrette is a collaborative, workshop-style session in which a group of individuals draft a solution to a problem. The RIC conducts charrettes with groups of stakeholders to generate ideas and feedback surrounding transportation issues.

Surveys





The RIC transportation staff uses public surveys to gather public input on transportation needs and concerns during the development of a plan or study. Survey formats consist of paper or web-based surveys. Surveys are disseminated through email, RIC social media platforms, the RIC website: www.wvregion3.org and public meetings.

Public Notification Procedures





Timely notification is important for successful public involvement practices. Early and consistent notification allows participants the opportunity to provide comments and input on proposed planning documents or products. An official public notice is published in the local newspaper preceding the adoption of various planning products to inform the public of the opportunity to participate during public comment periods. A public comment period is required for the following transportation planning products: adoption of a new Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), amendments to an existing TIP, adoption of a Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), adoption of an MTP amendment, adoption of a new or updated Public Participation Plan, adoption of a new or updated Title VI Plan, or other transportation planning products that benefit from public input.



The table below details the public involvement procedures for RIC transportation plans:

 Plan or Process	 Minimum Required Public Comment Period	 Procedures for Adoption or Approval	 Notes
Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)			
MTP Update (4-year update cycle)	(15) calendar days <i>* A second review period of (15) calendar days shall be provided if the final MTP is different from the one made available for public comment</i>	Presentation for consideration of adoption before the RIC Policy Board <i>* All public comments will be provided to the TTAC and the RIC Policy Board</i>	All public comments and responses are to be included in the final document
MTP Amendment	(15) calendar days	Presentation for consideration of approval before the RIC Policy Board <i>* All public comments will be provided to the TTAC and the RIC Policy Board</i>	Presented to the TTAC for review prior to policy board approval
Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)			
UPWP (annually updated)	(45) calendar days	Presentation for consideration of adoption before the RIC Policy Board <i>* Presented to the TTAC for review prior to policy board approval</i>	A summary of public comments will be provided to the TTAC and the RIC Policy Board
Public Participation Plan			
Public Participation Plan (annual review with three-year update cycle)	(45) calendar days	Presentation for consideration of adoption before the RIC Policy Board <i>* Presented to the TTAC for review prior to policy board approval</i>	All public comments received will be included in the final document
Title VI Plan			
Title VI Plan (annual review with four-year update cycle)	(15) calendar days	Presentation for consideration of adoption before the RIC Policy Board <i>* Presented to the TTAC for review prior to policy board approval</i>	All public comments received will be included in the final document

The table below details the public involvement procedures for the RIC Transportation Improvement Program (TIP):

RIC MPO Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)			
 Process	 Minimum Required Public Comment Period	 Procedures for Adoption or Public Hearing	 Notes
New or Amended RIC TIP*	(15) calendar days <i>* A second review period of (15) calendar days shall be provided if the final TIP is different from the one made available for public comment</i>	Presentation for consideration of adoption before the RIC Policy Board <i>* All public comments and responses are to be included in the final document</i>	Presented to the TTAC for review prior to policy board approval
RIC TIP Administrative Adjustments	No required public comment period	No public hearing required	Presented to the TTAC for review/informational purposes
* A new RIC Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is adopted by the RIC Policy Board every two years at the December RIC Policy Board Meeting to accommodate the update cycle of the West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)			

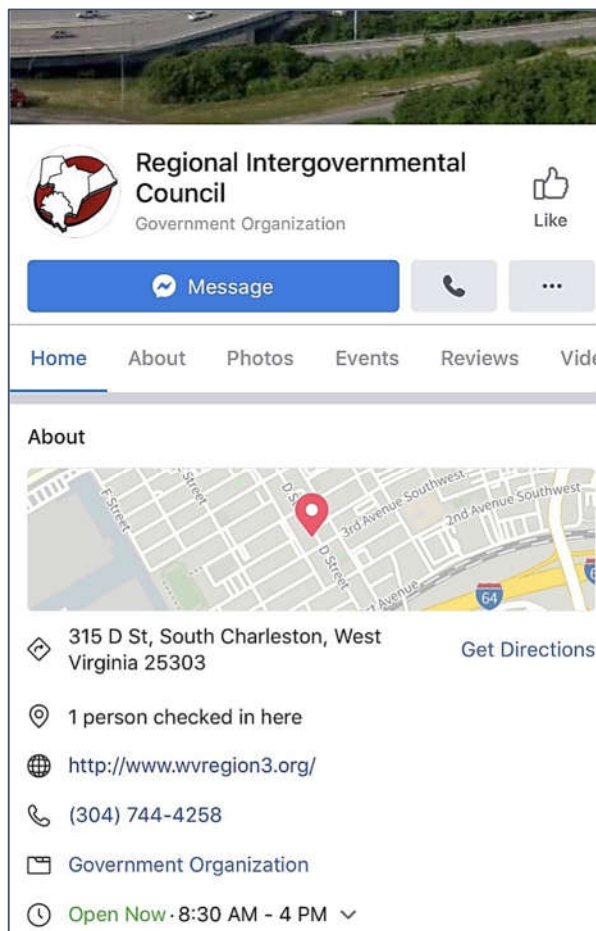
Additional Public Involvement Tools

The Regional Intergovernmental Council distributes a quarterly newsletter titled the *RIC Messenger*. The *RIC Messenger* serves as an informative tool and can be accessed on the RIC website www.wvregion3.org. Additionally, the RIC publishes an annual report which details the organization's annual activities and accomplishments.



RIC Social Media

The RIC maintains an active presence on its social media platforms. RIC social media accounts are used to actively engage members of the public with information and visual content regarding RIC public meetings, photographs from projects and events, and articles or graphics related to transportation or economic development.



www.facebook.com/wvregion3

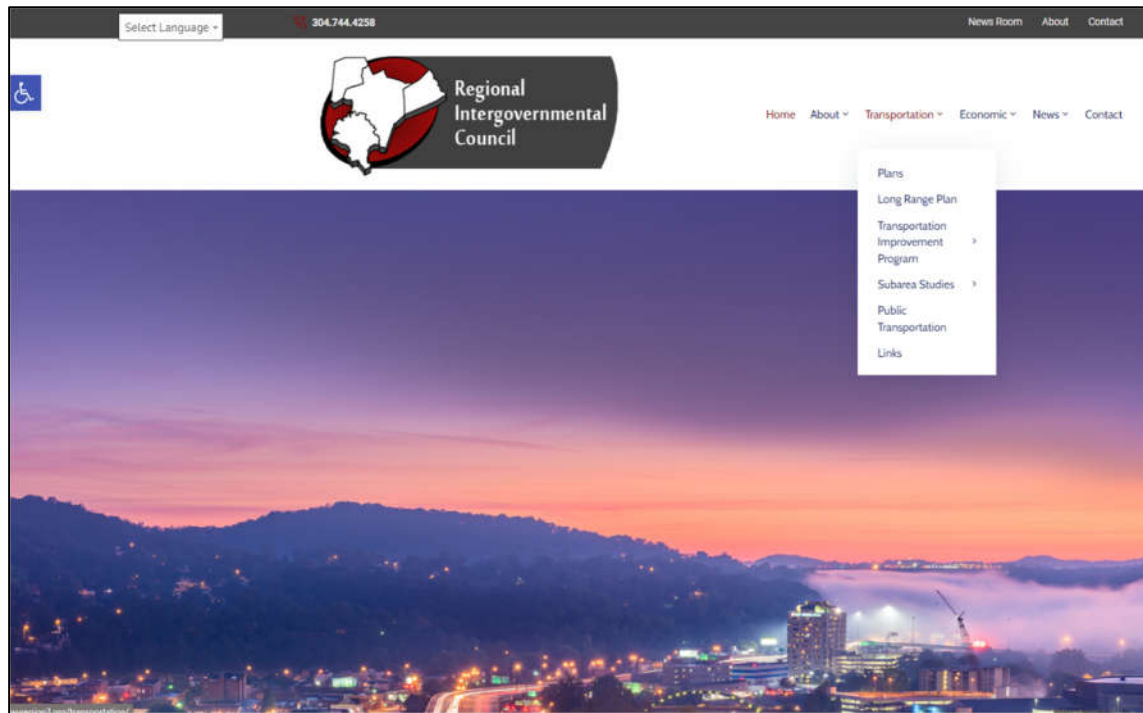


www.twitter.com/wvregion3

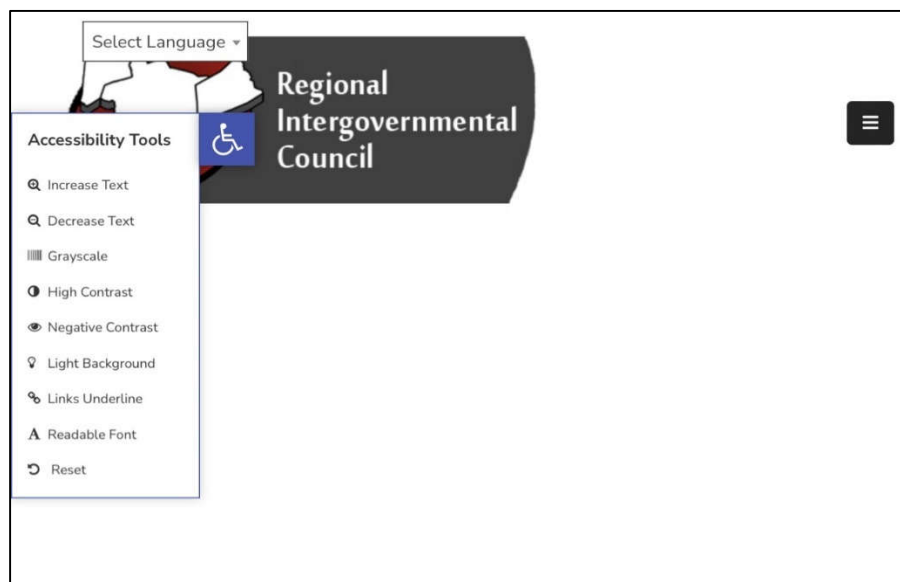
RIC Website

The RIC website is a vital tool to promote public involvement. The current RIC Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), RIC Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), other planning documents and information regarding upcoming events can be accessed at:

www.wvregion3.org. The landing page of the RIC website is displayed in the graphic below:



The RIC website also features a variety of accessibility tools as displayed in the graphic below:



Getting Involved

The Regional Intergovernmental Council encourages participation from all interested parties and members of the public. There are many ways to get involved in the transportation planning process. Upcoming meetings and events are posted online via the RIC website. For additional information, contact the RIC at (304) 744-4258, email mail@wvregion3.org or visit the RIC website: www.wvregion3.org



RIC Contact Information

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304-744-4258

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External Agency Resources

State of West Virginia Equal Employment Opportunity Office (EEO)

1900 Kanawha Blvd., East
Building 6, Room B-123
Charleston, WV 25305
304-558-0400

West Virginia Department of Transportation (EEO)

Equal Employment Opportunity Division (EEO)
1900 Kanawha Blvd., East
Building 5, Room 430
Charleston, WV 25305
304-558-3931

West Virginia Human Rights Commission

1321 Plaza East 108 A
Charleston, WV 25301
304-558-2616

Appendix

Demographic Maps

Households of Limited English Proficiency by Census Tract

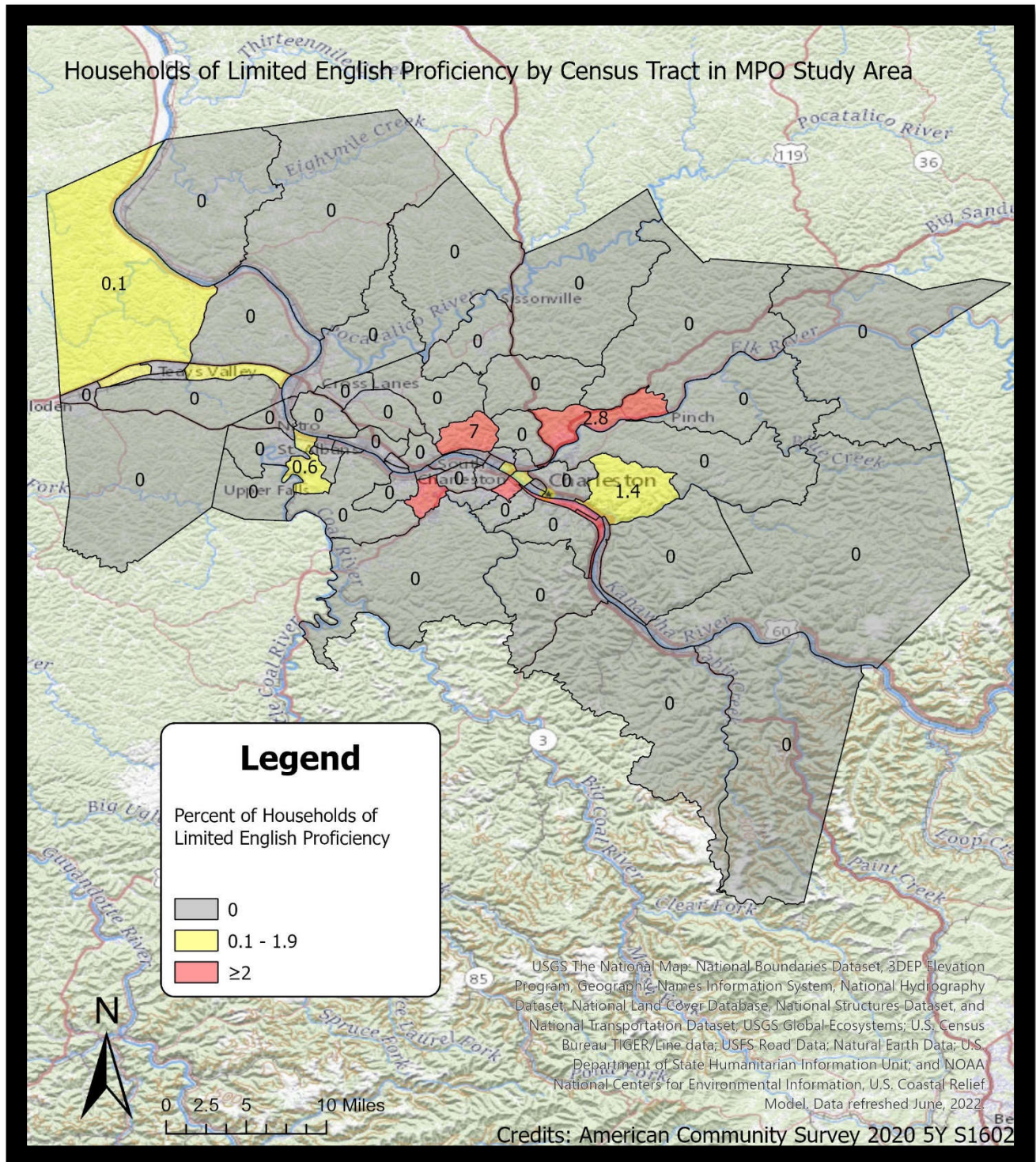
LEP Households in the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Study Area	20
Kanawha County	21
Charleston Metro Area	22
Putnam County	23

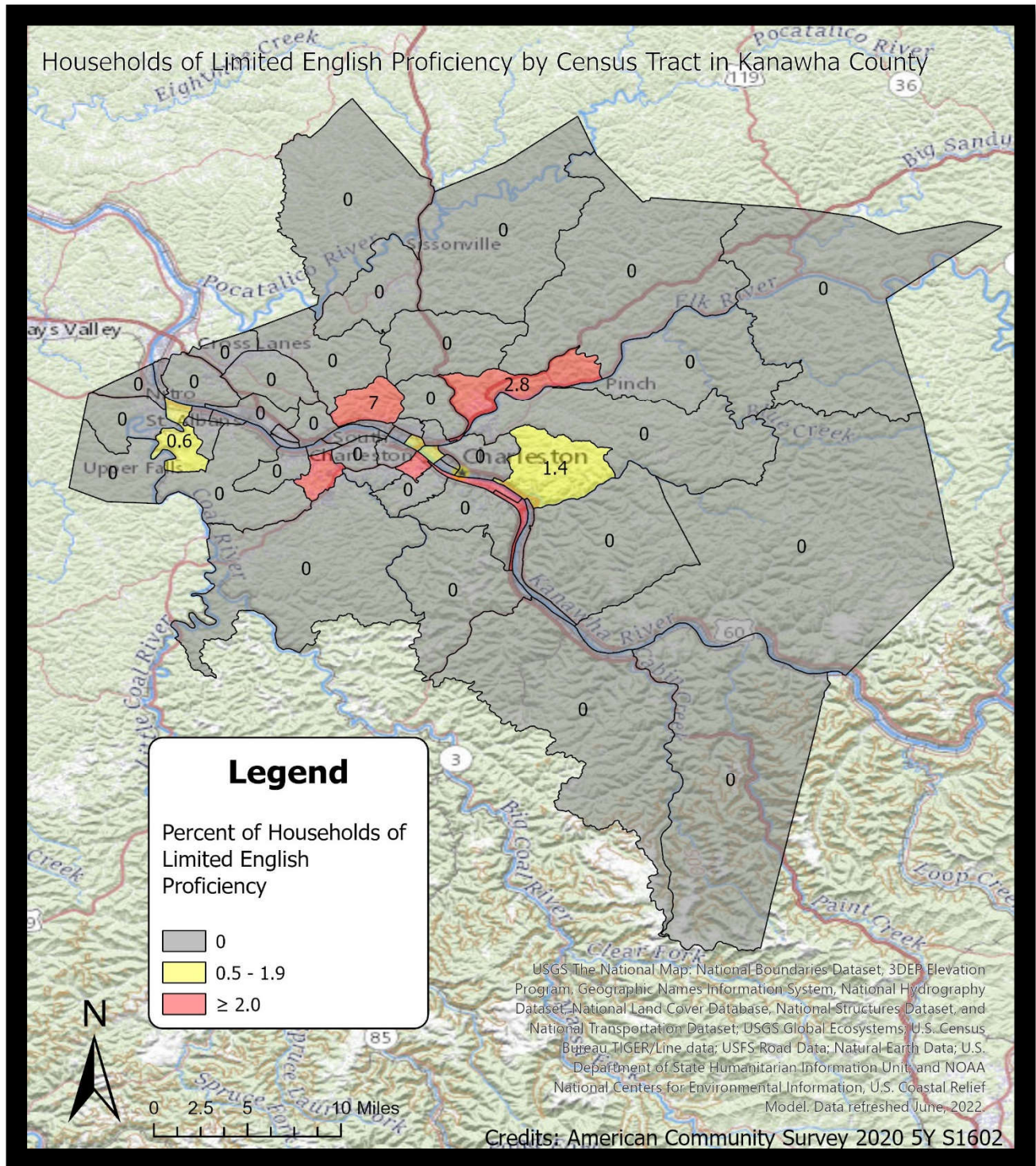
Minority Populations by Census Tract

Minority Populations in the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Study Area	24
Kanawha County	25
Charleston Metro Area	26
Putnam County	27

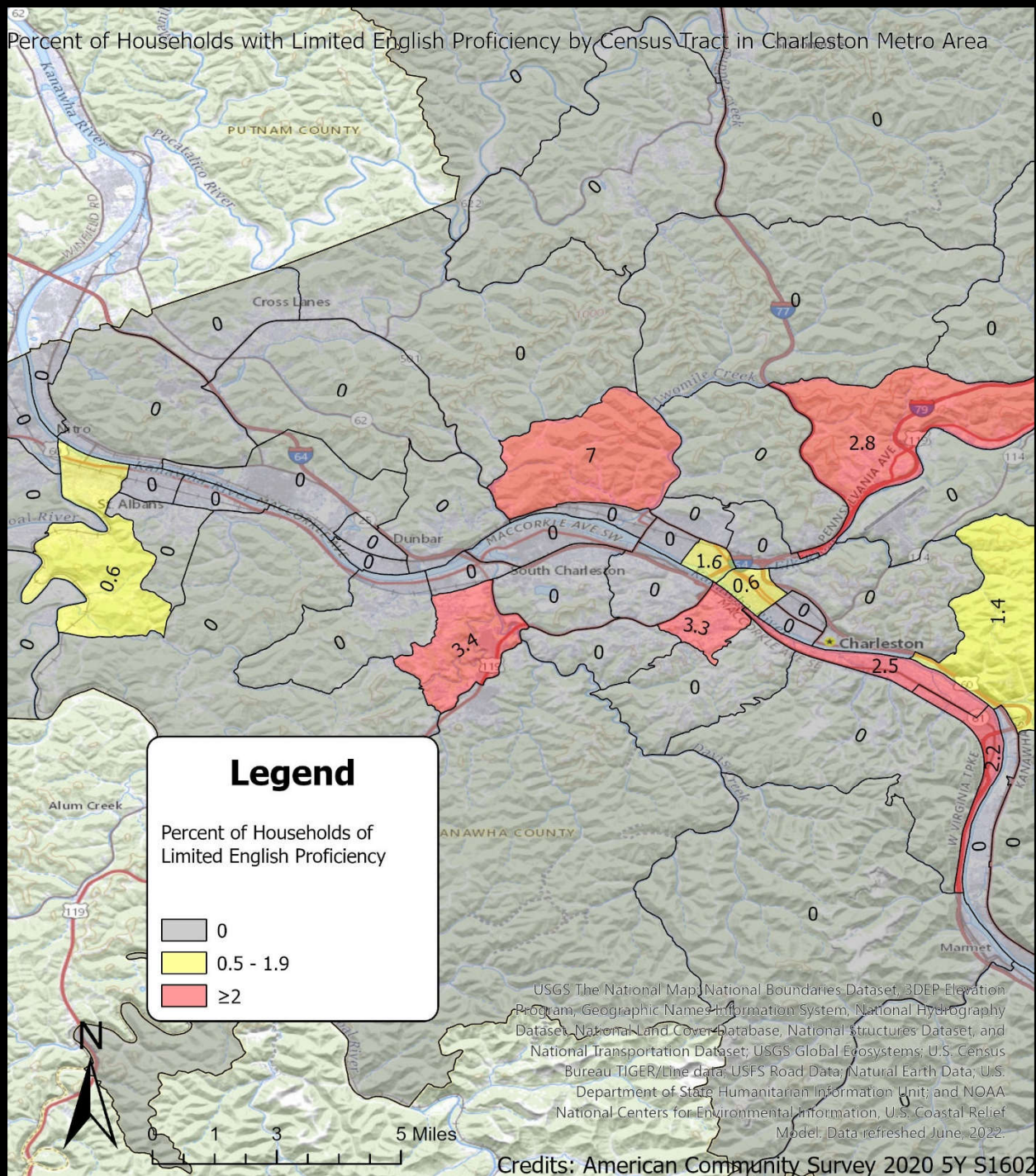
Populations Living Below Poverty Level by Census Tract

Populations Below Poverty Level in the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Study Area	28
Kanawha County	29
Charleston Metro Area	30
Putnam County	31

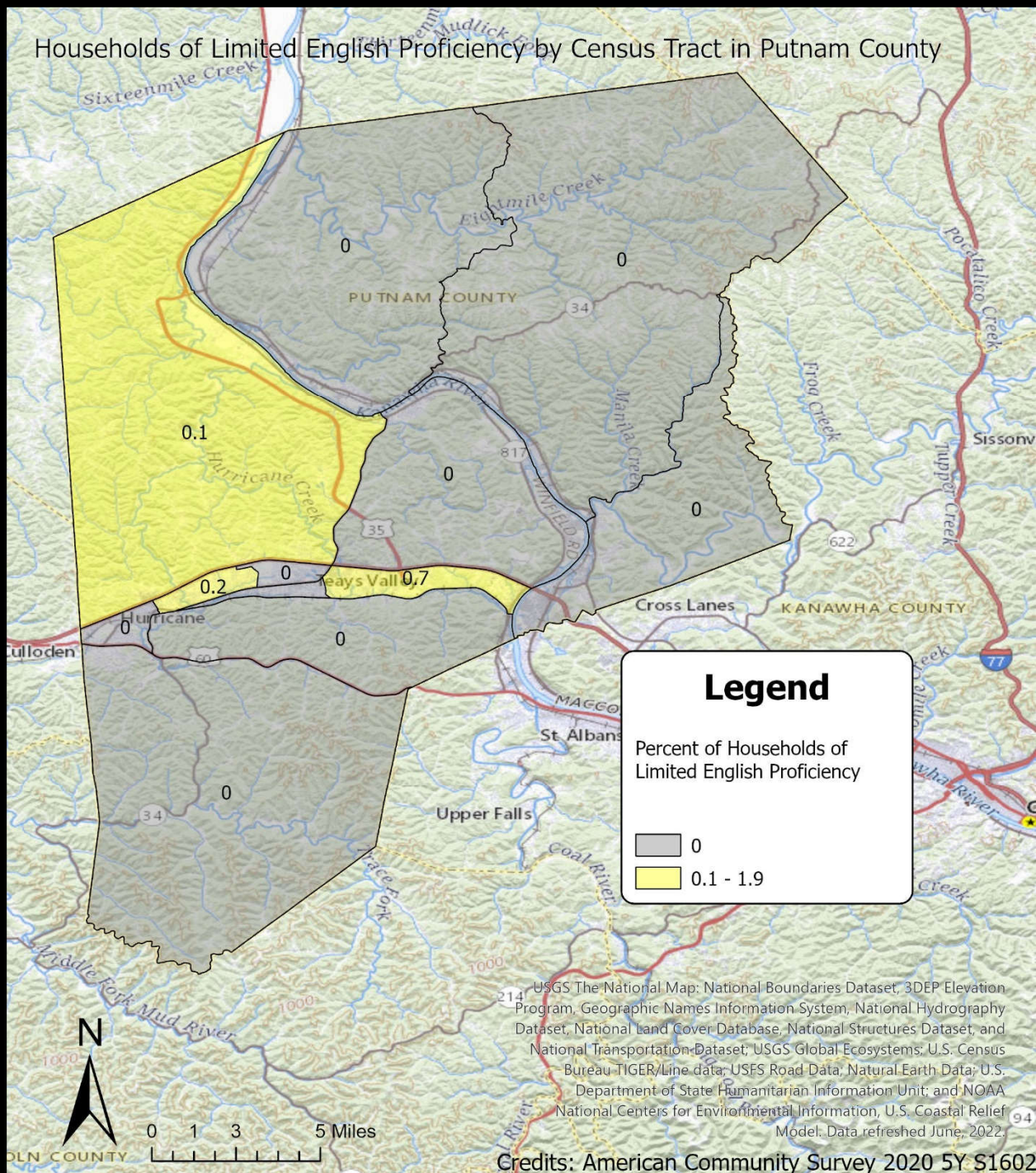


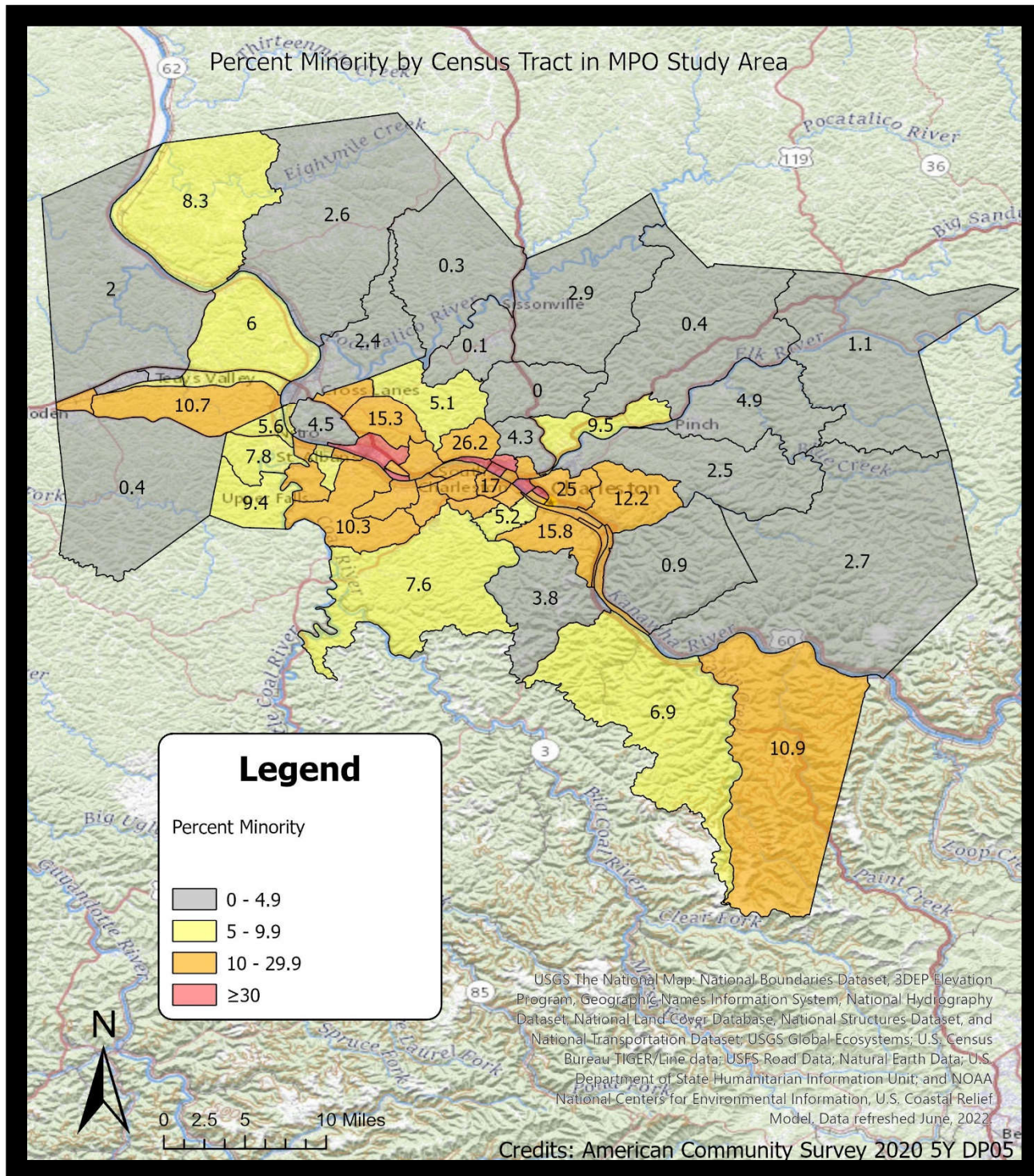


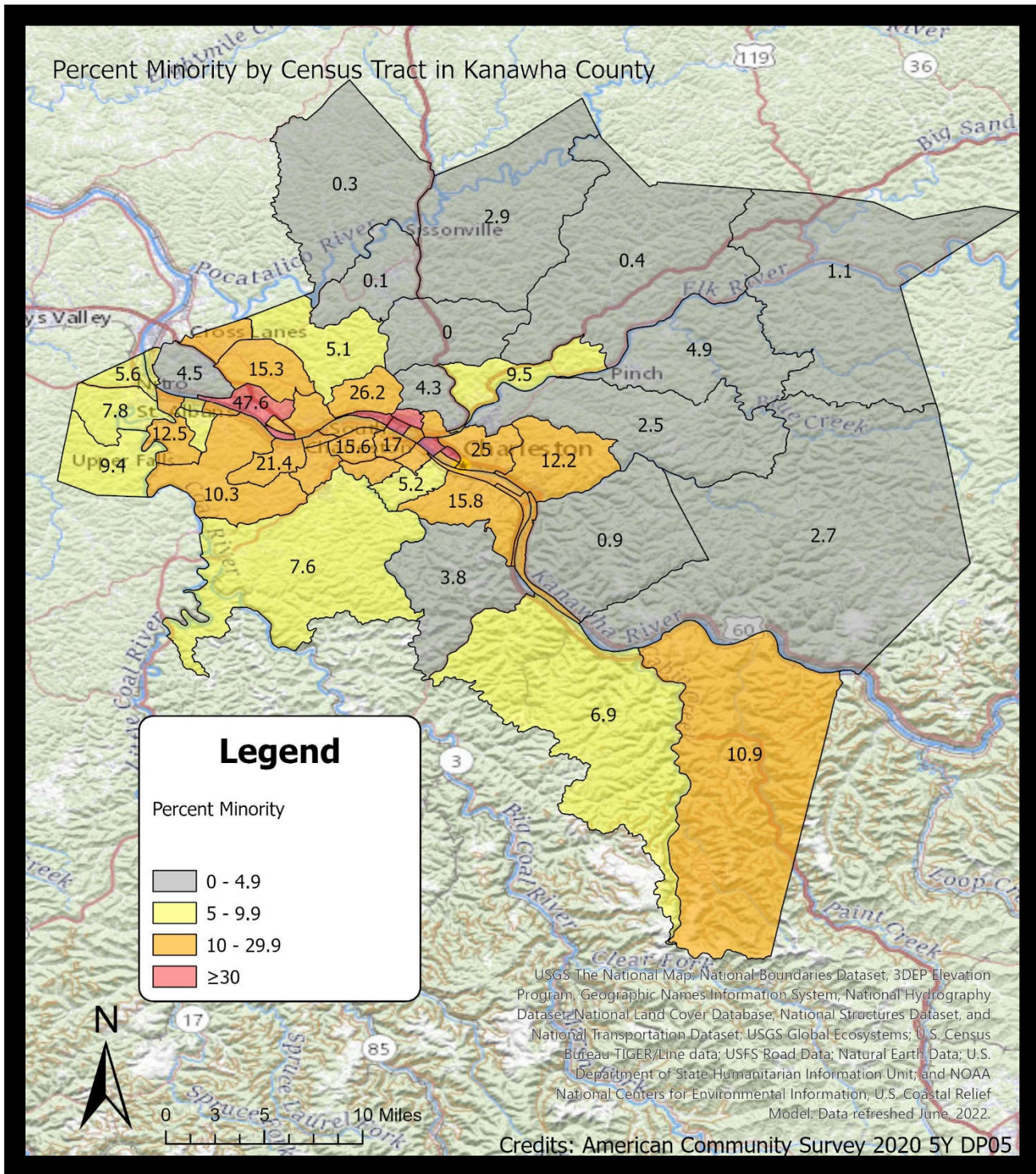
Percent of Households with Limited English Proficiency by Census Tract in Charleston Metro Area

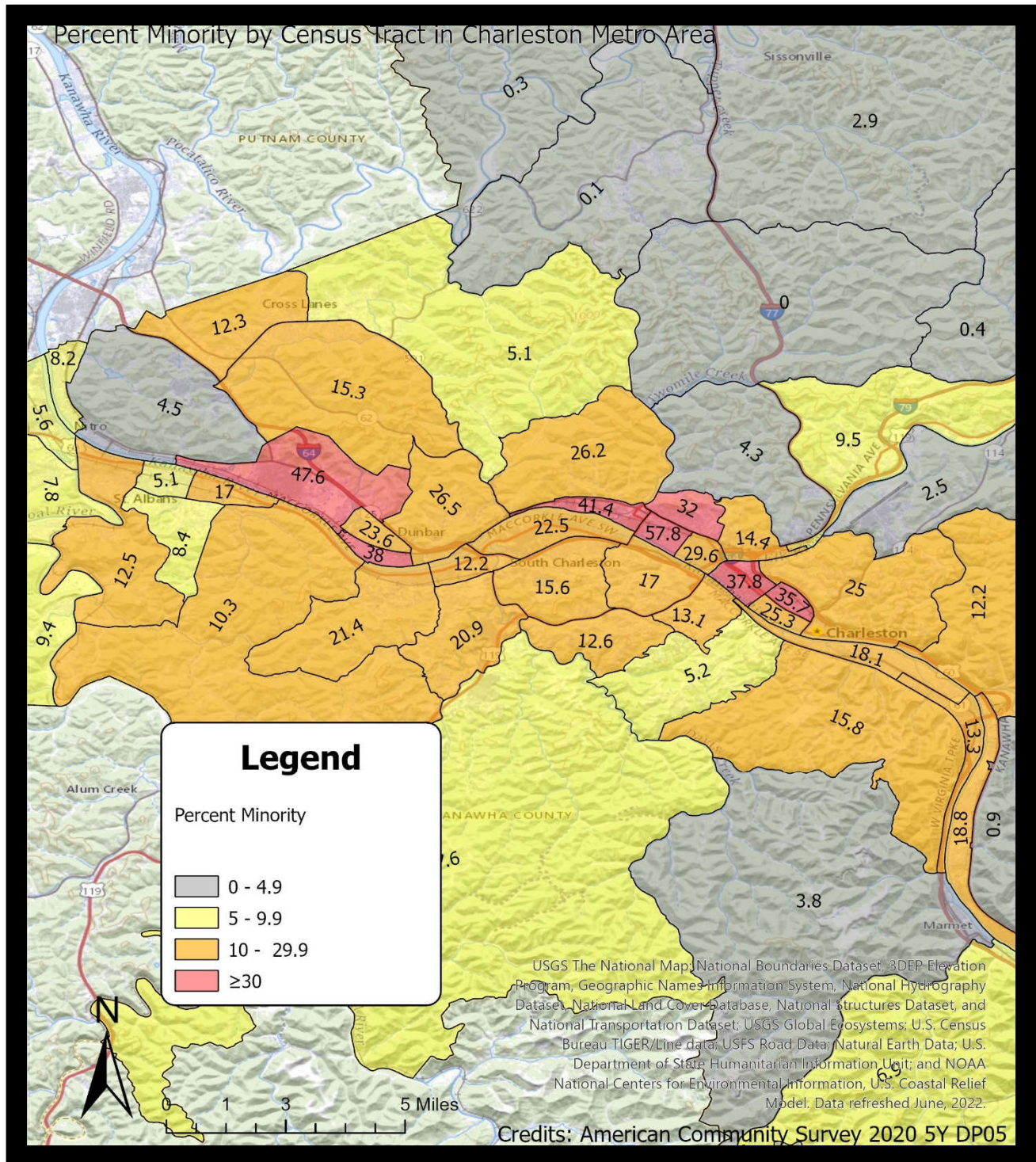


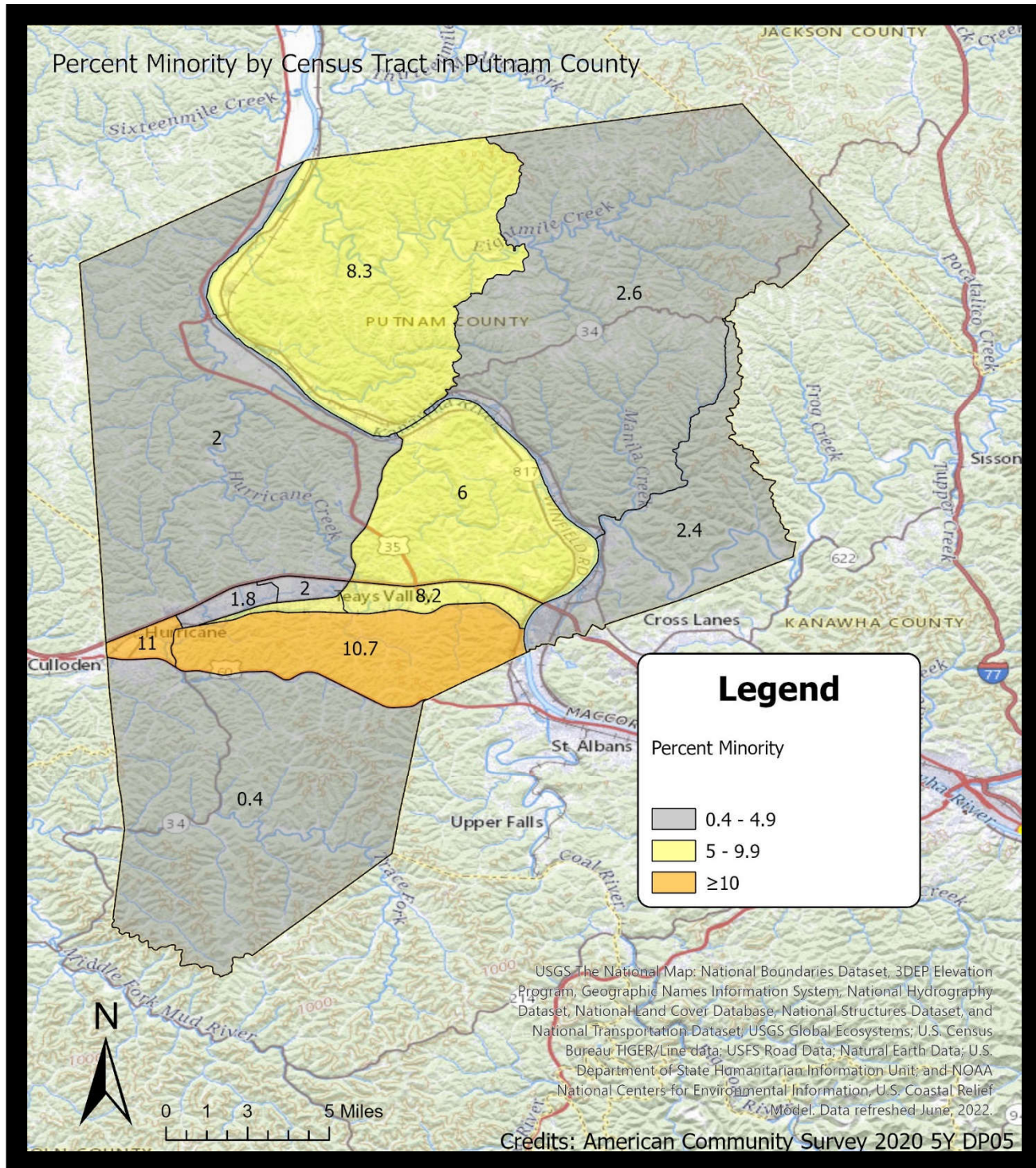
Households of Limited English Proficiency by Census Tract in Putnam County











Percent Living Below Poverty Level by Census Tract in MPO Study Area

