

Three Year Community Development Plan
Franklin County, Pennsylvania
2022-2025



I. Introduction:

This Three Year Community Development Plan has been developed in support of Franklin County’s 2022 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application. The Plan details community development needs, establishes short-term and long-term planning goals focusing on how to address these needs, and describes how the selected activities support these short and long term plan goals.

II. Purpose:

In order to effectively determine community development needs, establish long and short term objectives, and design initiatives to meet these objectives, Franklin County develops a three-year Community Development Plan (CDP) that is submitted to the PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) with their annual CDBG application. The objectives and criteria met with this plan are based on national standards established by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The goal of the plan is to present a vision and initiatives that benefit low and moderate income (LMI) residents Countywide (Figure 2). To meet inevitable changes and issues in our community, the plan is reviewed and updated each year to include these concerns and entertain potential projects to address these needs.

III. About Franklin County

Franklin County is located in south-central Pennsylvania, nestled between South Mountain and Tuscarora Mountain. Geographically, Franklin County is located north of the Pennsylvania-Maryland line and south of Shippensburg, PA. Franklin County is a part of the Cumberland Valley region of Pennsylvania. Franklin County’s transportation network relies on Interstate 81 and U.S. Routes 30, 16 & 11. A portion of the Pennsylvania Turnpike is located in the northern section of the County. Directly after the release of the 2020 U.S. Census results, Franklin County was noted as one of the top 10 fastest growing counties in Pennsylvania. In 2020, the U.S. Census released the Profile of

General Population and Housing Characteristics: 2020 Demographic Profile Data for Franklin County. The profile stated that Franklin County's population was 155,932, a 15.7% increase from 2000. However, the population continues to increase into 2022. With a rise of 4.2% since 2010, Franklin County's current population stands at 156,289 individuals. After the occurrence of the 2010 U.S. Census, the U.S. Census Bureau designated the Chambersburg region of Franklin County as the County's first urbanized area.

Between the years of 2010 and 2020, based on observations, Franklin County saw an increase in residential, retail, manufacturing, and logistics developments. The increase in development can largely be attributed to local, regional, and state policies as well as the location of Franklin County (between several metropolitan areas (Harrisburg-Hershey-Carlisle, PA & Washington, DC/Baltimore, MD/ Hagerstown, MD/Frederick, MD) and major interstates (I-81, I-76, & I-70)). Franklin County is home to 22 municipalities (7 boroughs & 15 townships), 21 census tracts, and several villages (Figure 1 depicts Franklin County's municipalities, census designated areas, and project locations). Two of the municipalities in the Franklin County area are CDBG entitlement communities: Boroughs of Chambersburg and Waynesboro (2020 Population [US Census]: Chambersburg – 21,903; Waynesboro-10,951).

IV. CDBG in Franklin County:

The Franklin County Commissioners, the elected body, has been allocated approximately \$362,131.00 from DCED for the fiscal year 2022-2023 CDBG cycle. Over the previous three fiscal years, DCED has allocated a total of approximately \$882,936.00 from fiscal years 2020-2022. In addition to this funding, \$166,152.00 was allocated in fiscal year 2020 for the COVID-19 pandemic funding assistance. The funding originates from HUD, thus federal regulations such as the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 apply to all activities. The Franklin County Planning Commission (FCPC) administers and manages the CDBG funding on behalf of the Franklin County Commissioners.

V. Incidence and Concentration of Low and Moderate Income Minority Persons:

HUD establishes Low-Moderate Income population statistics according to the U.S. Census and based on 2016-2020 ACS data. The 2016-2020 ACS dataset showed that Franklin County's population is 156,371 (an increase of nearly 7,000 residents since 2010). Excluding the previously mentioned CDBG entitlement communities of Chambersburg Borough and Waynesboro Borough, and noting that Shippensburg Borough (located in two counties: Franklin & Cumberland) participates in the Cumberland County CDBG program, the remaining balance is 119,545. Of the 119,545 people, 37.14% were considered LMI.

The largest percentages of LMI residents are located in the townships of Metal, as well as areas of Southampton, St. Thomas, and small portions of Greene Township. Marion (considered unincorporated as Marion is not a municipality) (56.38%) and Mercersburg Borough (51.94) contain the highest LMI values in the remainder portions of the County (Figure 2 depicts LMI persons, while Figures 3-6 indicate the most prominent minority populations and Language Proficiency in Franklin County).

VI. Assessment of Community Needs:

The following section discusses community development needs within Franklin County.

This assessment is used to help prioritize activities for the CDBG funding requested.

(A) **Housing:** Housing affordability appears to be the primary housing issue facing Franklin County. Recently, Franklin County partnered with Shippensburg University @ Land Use and Sustainability to conduct a Housing Analysis Report that was compiled by Dr. George Pomeroy. Within the report, there is a clear need for affordable housing. Concurrently, warehouses have jumpstarted widespread urban sprawl creating employment Countywide. Since 2010, Franklin County's population has risen 4.2% creating an urgent need for affordable, yet acceptable housing. With increased land use focused around commercial employment, multiple housing types will be requiring investigation due to limited land availability. Single family dwellings may no longer be more acceptable, as apartment type housing may best utilize the land. However, each employee that works in the region requires a place to live. A scattered pattern of substandard housing can be found in the rural and more mountainous part of the County as well as in small, older sections of some of our boroughs and villages. Throughout the County, a wide range of population at or below poverty creates varying affordability issues as Montgomery Township maintains a 3.8% poverty rate while Fannett Township illustrates a 16.2% of residents. Affordability is a challenge for LMI residents. The results of this study will allow us to better assess housing in our County and look at strategies for utilizing CDBG and HOME funds on Housing projects.

(B) **Public Services:** Continuing viability and community access to existing public services is the primary issue facing public services provision in Franklin County. These can include, but not necessarily limited to, community education, community health and wellness services, and various activities that enable civic engagement and enhance quality of life. To combat the funding challenges that many local governments, county governments, and local non-profit organizations are facing, strategically filling funding gaps with CDBG funding becomes an essential strategy. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Franklin County wanted to emphasize improving the quality of life for residents with low to moderate income using programs that focus on hunger, eldercare, substance abuse, wellness and transportation needs are of high priority. Accordingly, CDBG funding continues to ensure that the public services that

target income qualified individuals and households continue to be available in Franklin County.

(C) *Economic Development:* Franklin County has seen an increase in median household income in 2015 of \$61,744.00 to \$63,420.00. As of 2020 via 2016-2020 ACS data, 62.1% of Franklin County residents are lawfully employed. However, the County has not directly devoted economic development activities with CDBG funds in the past. To continue to support our businesses, Franklin County must have adequate infrastructure and a well-trained labor source. To ensure that LMI members of the community benefit from the economic growth in Franklin County, pursuing initiatives that enhance access to and promote workforce training in the future are key. Such training needs span the spectrum from basic skills to more advanced, highly technical skills. Additionally, the potential impact on economic development is considered when evaluating projects and programs for CDBG funding. In several cases, projects and programs supported with CDBG funding may have secondary impacts on economic development and the overall County economy. Other CDBG funded activities, including direct investment in community infrastructure, also have economic development benefits. Direct funding for Economic Development projects are not a high priority for the Franklin County CDBG program, however, as these types of projects can be difficult to implement effectively given our available resources.

(D) *Public Community Facilities and Improvements:* As highlighted in Franklin County's Comprehensive Plan, improvement and expansion of public sewer and water systems are the most significant public community facility issues in Franklin County. Many of the sewer systems within the County are small community or rural systems that currently operate at or near capacity and where almost 80% of the land is still without sewer. Budgetary constraints make it financially difficult for the local system operators to upgrade their systems to meet future capacity needs and more restrictive discharge limits mandated by the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement. Additionally, several of the County's townships have been requested by Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP) to extend sewer into malfunctioning on-lot septic system areas based on their PA Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan. As with sewer, many small water systems in Franklin County need to increase their capacity in order to meet growing demand or to address the PA DEP's requirements for redundant water sources. Treatment improvements are also required of these systems to meet more stringent water quality requirements. Due to the size of the sewer and water systems and the demographics of the populations they serve, lack of available funds threaten to leave the people served with inadequate water and sewer treatment. Targeted funding has been used, and will continue to be necessary, to help offset some costs for the communities. We have been made aware of several projects in Mercersburg Borough and Quincy Township that may be submitted on future applications

In addition to sewer and water facilities, the County also recognizes the continued need to make public facilities more accessible to people with disabilities and to provide or support facilities for special population groups such as the aged or homeless. Due to the significant health and economic constraints caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic, specialized projects have been funded including health and emotional support programs, as well as County senior center resources to maintain safety while remaining operational. We have funded sidewalk improvement projects in the past to improve accessibility, and will continue to entertain these projects on current and future applications.

VII. CDBG and the Franklin County Comprehensive Plan

Since its adoption in 2012, the Franklin County Commissioners have been committed to utilizing the Franklin County Comprehensive Plan in making resource allocation decisions regarding the CDBG program. The highest priority has been to focus on providing access to clean water and sewer throughout the County in existing communities. However, additional concerns have also risen while completing public outreach events across the community. Local recycling and the continuation of warehouse development have become focal points of conversation. Furthermore, solar farms are a significant concern to the residents of Franklin County due to their expansive land use, potential environmental impacts, and potentially limited ability to aid public energy. The 2012 Comprehensive Plan adopted pursuant to the PA Municipalities Planning Code Article 3, states the following goal:

Foster the continued livability and success of urban communities and of communities embedded within the rural landscape.

Within Franklin County, the communities embedded within the rural landscape are called villages. Typically villages do not have sewer systems or water systems. Generally, property owners in the rural landscape of Franklin County rely on on-lot sewage systems such as: sand-mounds & conventional systems, and water wells.

In Pennsylvania, every municipality is required by state law (Act 537) to provide a Sewage Facilities Plan (pursuant to PA Act 537). The Sewage Facility Plan reviews the current trends such as: soil conditions, development trends & pressures, and offers goals,

objectives, & strategies for the future of the municipality. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) was tasked with the duties of reviewing the previously mentioned plans and enforces the PA Act 537. Upon review, if community issues arose such as on-lot septic system failures or migrating sewage from existing leach fields, DEP could require improvements to be completed. Sometimes municipalities/community corporations elect to resolve the issues prior to being under a mandate. Required improvements could mean the establishment of a package/community sewage treatment facility. In years past, Franklin County supported projects via the CDBG funds to community corporations and municipalities to complete such projects. The same can be said of water system projects; municipalities and community corporations find existing problems or are selected to address a potential problem before it arises. Funding for these types of projects is limited. Municipal Sewer and Water projects are increasing in costs. The County's Comprehensive Plan specifically references use of CDBG monies for such purposes in the following essential action:

Utilize CDBG monies to support infrastructure improvements.

For continued livability in our County, CDBG monies should be used to support infrastructure projects in the low-moderate income (LMI) areas. In addition, the County Comprehensive Plan advocates the following strategy to meet the goal of continued high quality of life:

Coordinate with public and private sector entities to promote the benefits of coordinated planning and public health.

To meet this, the following action item was derived:

Utilize CDBG monies to provide for handicap accessibility.

In the past, Franklin County has supported architectural barrier removal projects such as handicap accessibility improvements to meet American Disabilities Act standards and requirements. Continued support from the County through allocation of CDBG funds to projects which enhance accessibility either through infrastructure improvements or by other means such as expansion of safe active transportation alternatives within our communities is a high priority in order to ensure a high quality of life for all County residents. Additionally, supporting public service projects that support the most vulnerable populations of our County directly impacts public health and the wellbeing of County citizens. We will continue to support these projects during this time of severe need.

The County is preparing for the upcoming Comprehensive Plan that is targeted to be adopted in Spring 2023. The results of the plan will help identify areas that may need support, and significantly affect our future usage of CDBG or other grant funds.

VIII. Community Development Objectives:

The community development planning process will complement recommendations and guidance provided by the County's comprehensive plan. Neither plan is static and will be altered to meet new initiatives and challenges on County-wide and regional basis. Municipal and private planning projects that complement the comprehensive plan will be considered for CDBG funding. Between 2016 and 2021, most of Franklin County's CDBG funding was granted to public facility projects that address sewer and water issues. For 2022, the county is researching various opportunities to utilize the CDBG funding to best serve the needs of the residents while acknowledging public facility projects may rise in priority, but continue to promote the availability of funding for that purpose. We have received information on water/sewer projects that may be submitted on future applications, and will plan to include them accordingly. In addition, public service projects have also been a notable source of funding. When new facilities are required in smaller communities, care will be taken to design systems that are both affordable and realistic. Public facility projects will be considered for CDBG funding in other communities throughout the County that are in need of infrastructure improvements to enhance the livability of these communities as outlined in the County's comprehensive plan.

We will continue to provide opportunities for a variety of housing types, with an emphasis on affordable owner-occupied housing that utilizes public sewer and water services to the greatest extent feasible. There are also unmet housing needs other than new construction. Approximately 30% of the County's housing stock was built prior to 1940 and maintenance issues are often financially unattainable for LMI families or public services organizations. Implementation of a Countywide housing rehabilitation program is crucial to resolve fundamental safety concerns for homeowners. This rehabilitation program will continue and will be funded through other grants and the County's housing trust fund. In order to meet many of these needs without federal assistance and guidelines, the housing trust fund plan that was developed to complement the comprehensive plan will be utilized. Reallocation of unspent funds may also be used to fund various public service projects. Finally, we plan to continue to be responsive to the needs of our handicapped residents by allocating CDBG funds to the removal of architectural barriers at government and community facilities. Furthermore, interest has continued to grow in relation to street construction projects and curb ramp reconstruction / implementation across the County. These projects will generally be funded through reallocation of unspent funds.

By using direct programming and targeted assistance to local municipalities and organizations, Franklin County will make every effort to enhance community development for all Franklin County residents. The County utilizes CDBG funding to support community development initiatives that are focused on low to moderate income populations, minority populations, and disabled populations. CDBG programming helps ensure that these populations have the opportunity to fully participate in the civic, economic development, cultural, and related opportunities in the County.

IX. Planning Goals:

(A) Short Term (1 Year) Planning Goals: Franklin County's 2022 priority is to maintain and support those that have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and continue an increase in available public services, as well as continue to assist disabled persons within the County through the removal of architectural barriers. All projects will serve the County's low to moderate income citizens, with a continued emphasis on soliciting projects that will benefit areas of the highest LMI populations.

(B) Long Term (3 Year) Planning Goals: Franklin County's long term goal is to continue to support public facility projects, specifically water and sewer system projects within the County's low to moderate income areas, and continue to make improvements to community sewer and water systems that serve income qualified areas and neighborhoods. However, the County also intends to solicit an expanded scope of projects to enhance accessibility of the County's public facilities and expand public services that improve the quality of life for Franklin County's minority, disabled, and LMI populations. Problems arising from the COVID-19 pandemic continue to be felt, and utilizing CDBG funds to alleviate stress on our most vulnerable populations is one of the highest priority goals for the program.

Both the short and long term planning goals have been designed to be consistent with Franklin County[@] 2012 Comprehensive Plan and those goals will be reevaluated upon adoption of the updated Comprehensive Plan in Spring 2023. These goals have been determined through our analysis of current needs within Franklin County and the projects that have been presented.

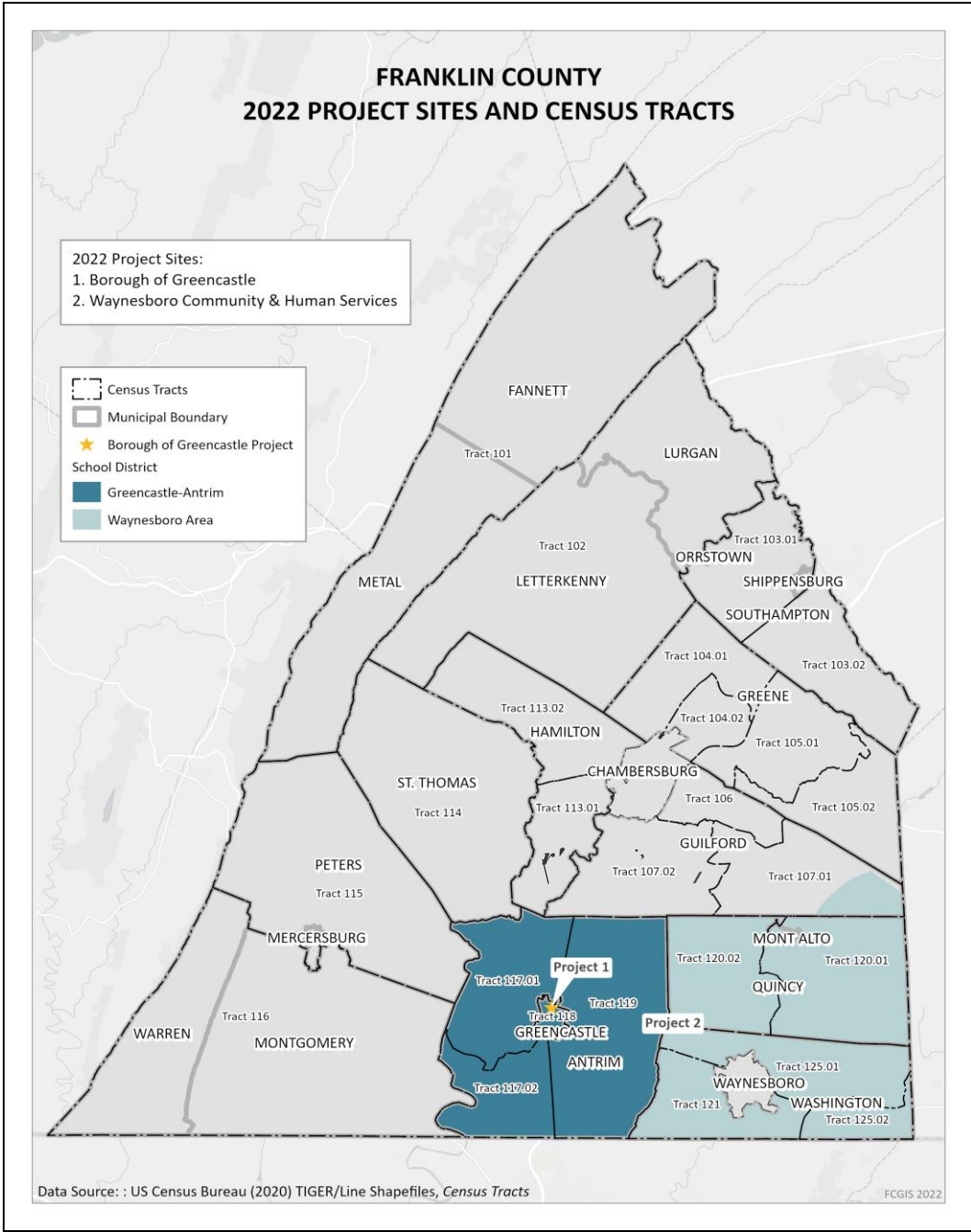


Figure 1: Franklin County Project Sites by Census Tracts

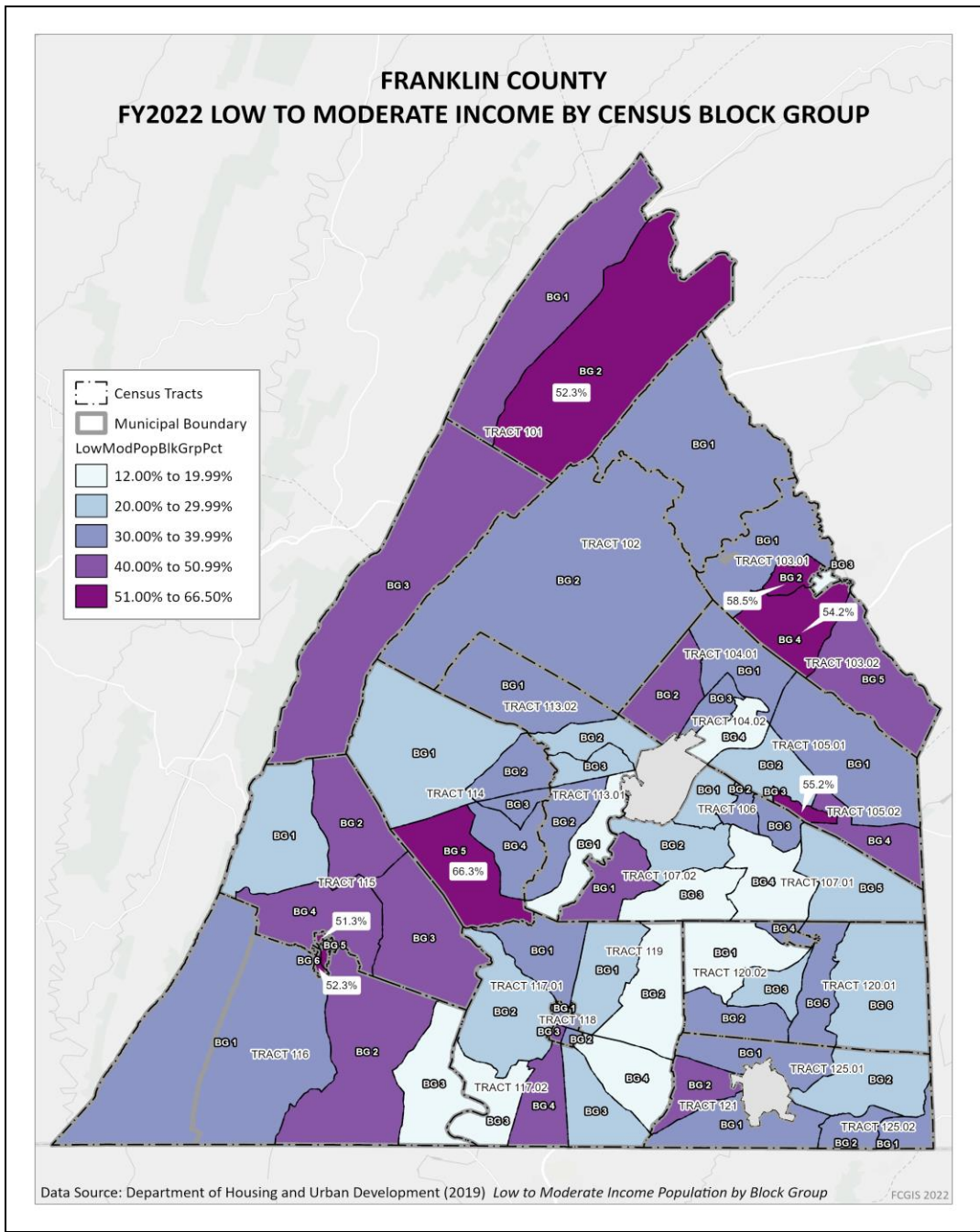


Figure 2: Franklin County Low-Mod Income by Block Group

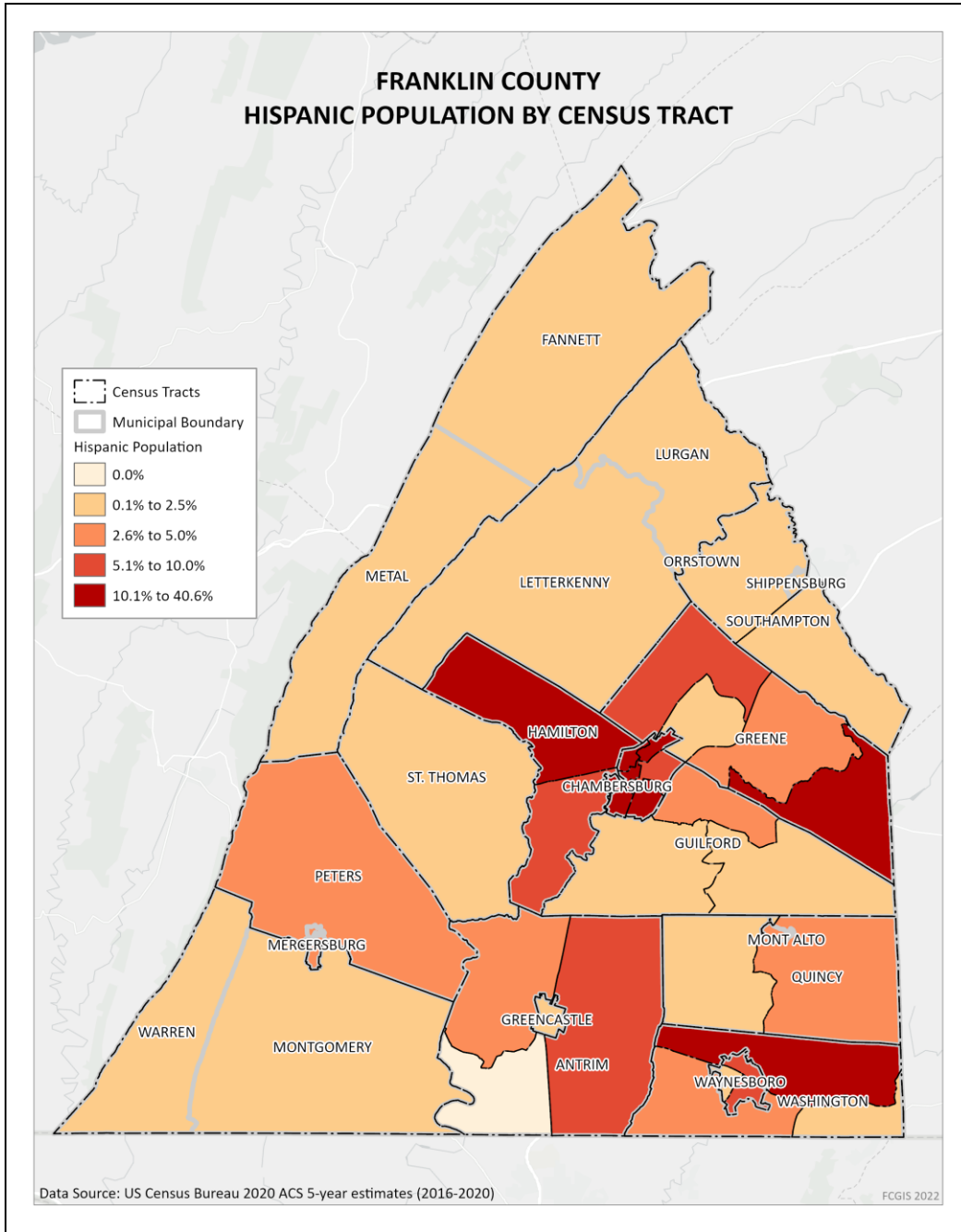


Figure 3: *Franklin County Hispanic Population by Census Tract*

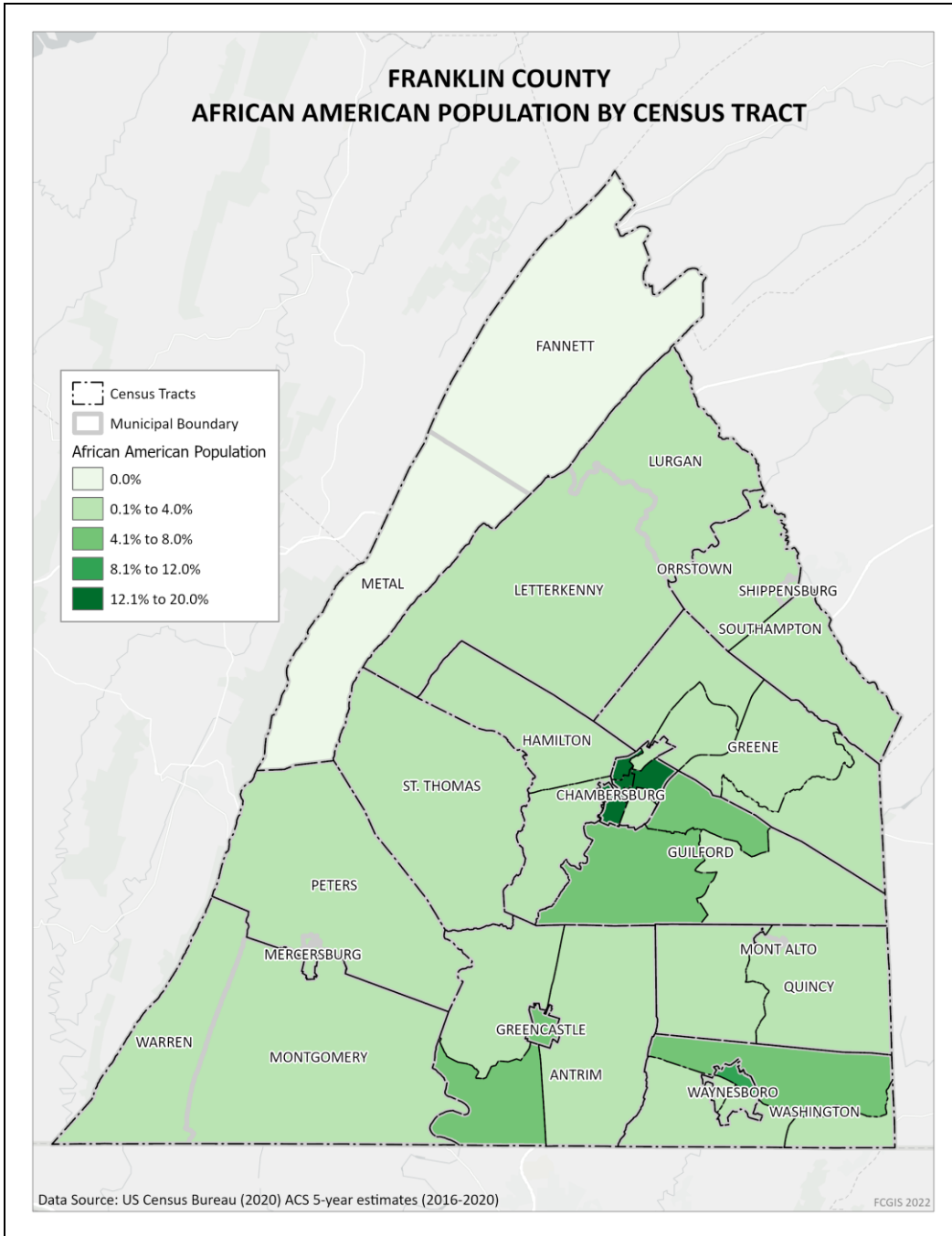


Figure 4: *Franklin County African American Population by Census Tract*

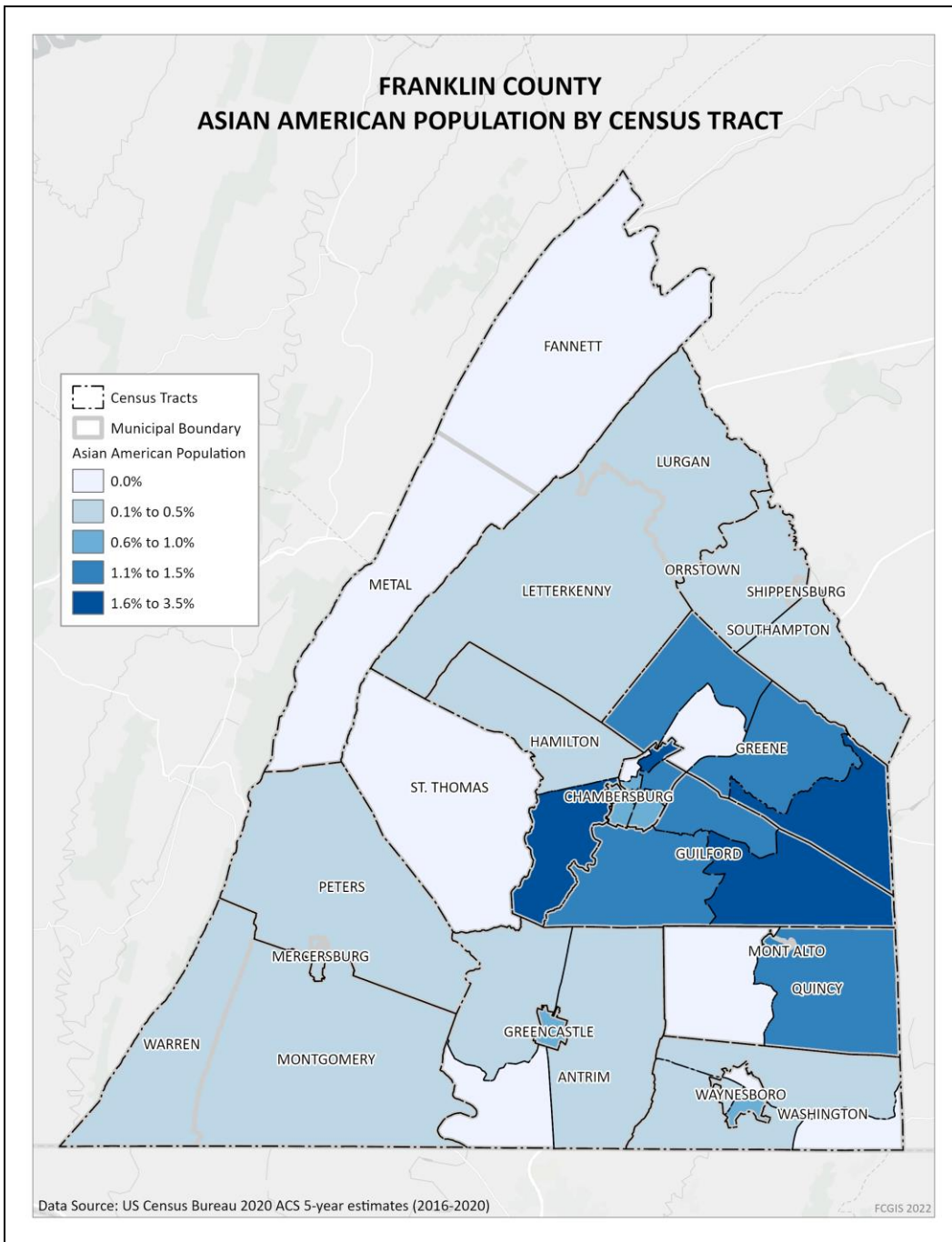


Figure 5: Franklin County Asian American Population by Census Tract

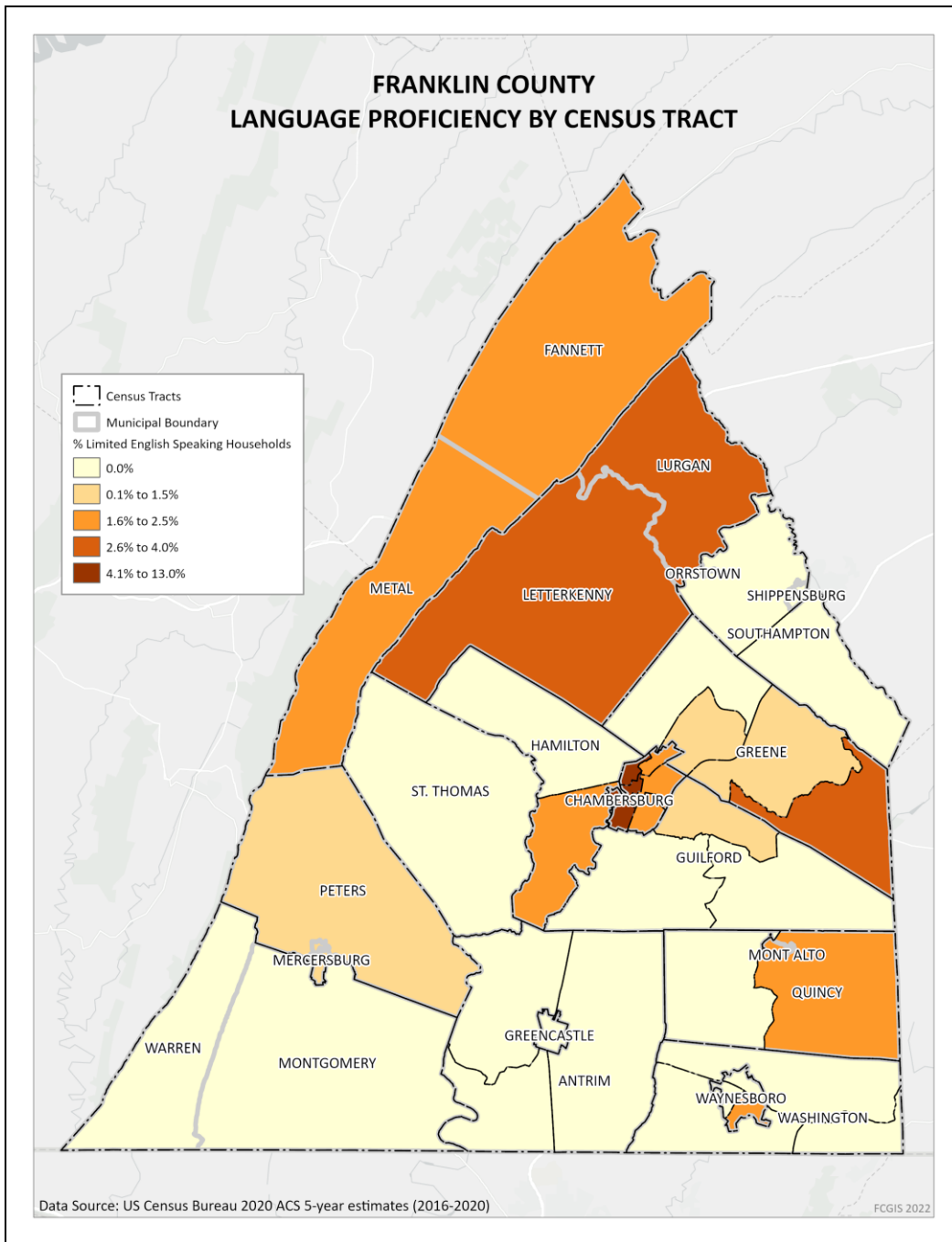


Figure 6: Franklin County Language Proficiency by Census Tract

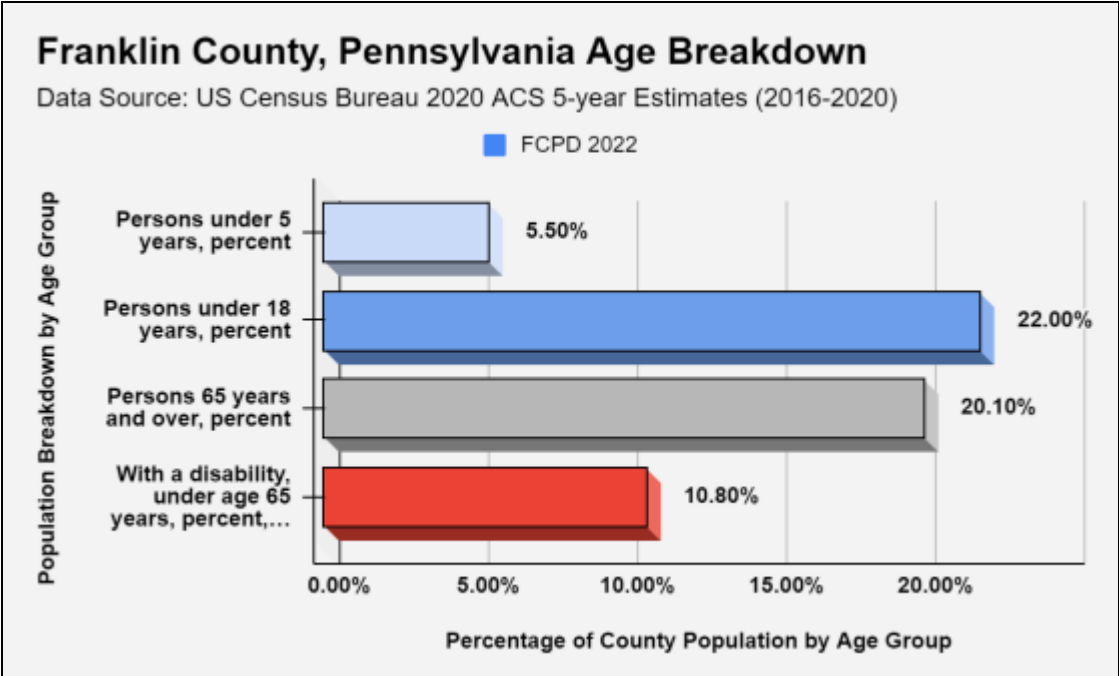


Chart 1: Franklin County Age Group Breakdown

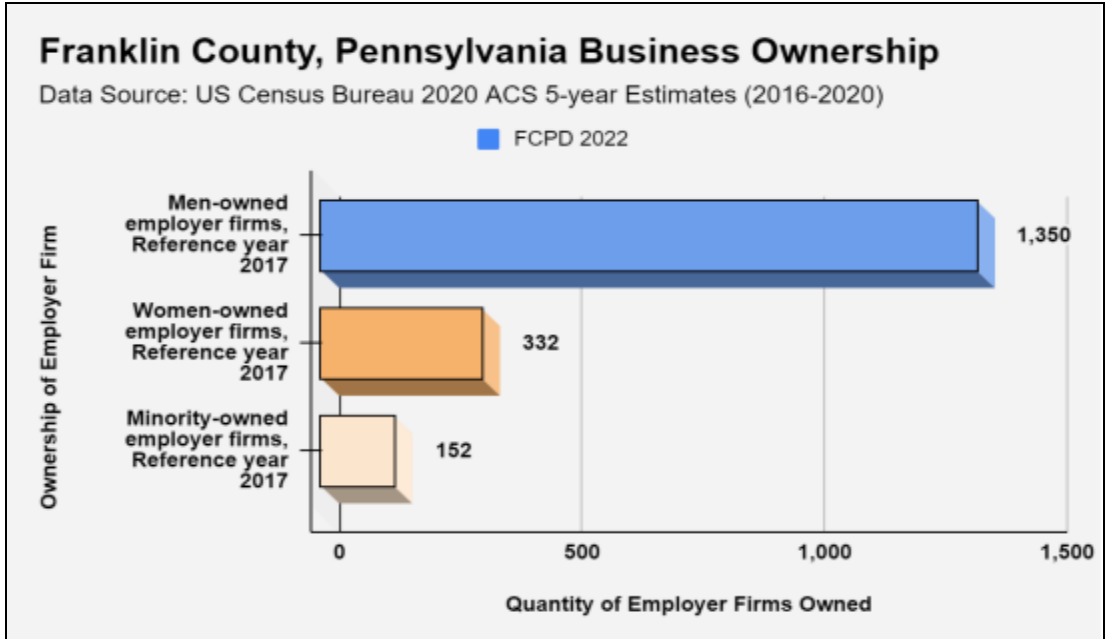


Chart 2: Franklin County Employer Firm Ownership Comparison