

Special Topics

Cherokee County Disaster Resiliency Assessment

The purpose of this section is to assess at the county level key components of disaster resiliency. Housing location and quality as well as planning activities can help reduce impacts from disaster events and allow for faster recovery. Disasters can include tornadoes, extreme weather, high winds, as well as man-made events. These events may largely be inevitable, but the ability to reduce damage and casualties as well recovery can be improved with good planning.

C.0 Comprehensive Plans & Hazard Mitigation Plans

There are 5 key cities within the county (Tahlequah, Hulbert, Fort Gibson, Peggs, Oaks). No comprehensive plan was found for Tahlequah (population just under 15,000).

Comprehensive plans are the guiding documents for cities of various sizes to address key aspects of their community from land use, transportation, environment, housing, and economic development.

The other key plan for a city to manage, mitigate and plan for recovery related to disasters is a **Hazard Mitigation Plan** (or Emergency Management Plan). Often low density counties, the Hazard Mitigation Plan is done at the county level, though some cities may augment the county plan with a city plan.

Cherokee County does not have a current Hazard Mitigation Plan.

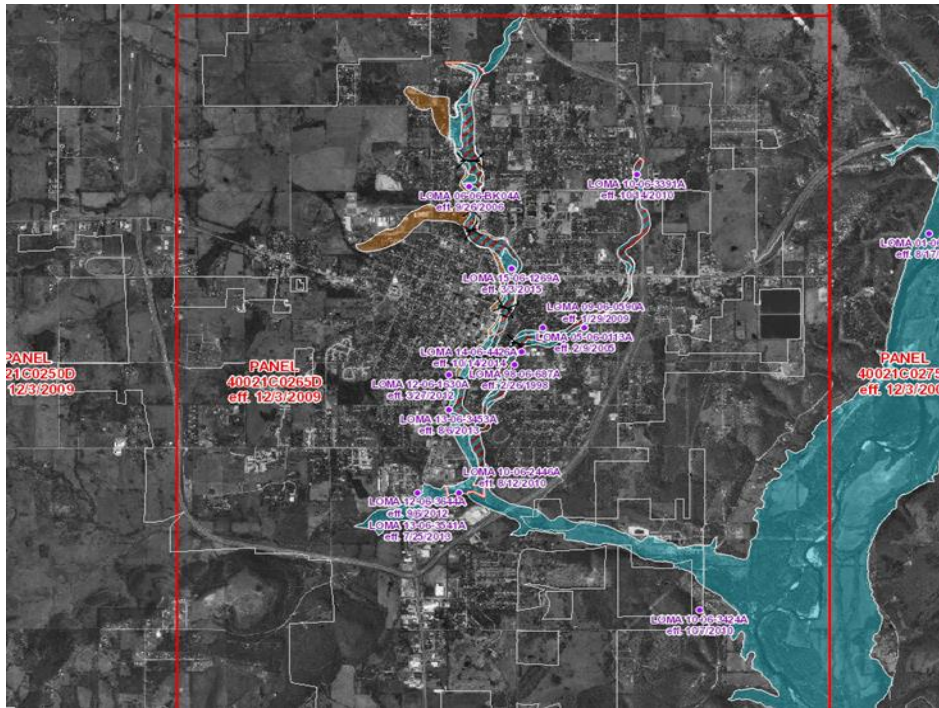
C.2.1.1. Historical Data on Natural Disasters and Other Hazards

Data on historical damages and casualties is typically collected as part of a Hazard Mitigation Plan preparation to determine the appropriate planning measures and actions to take before and after an event.

Flooding

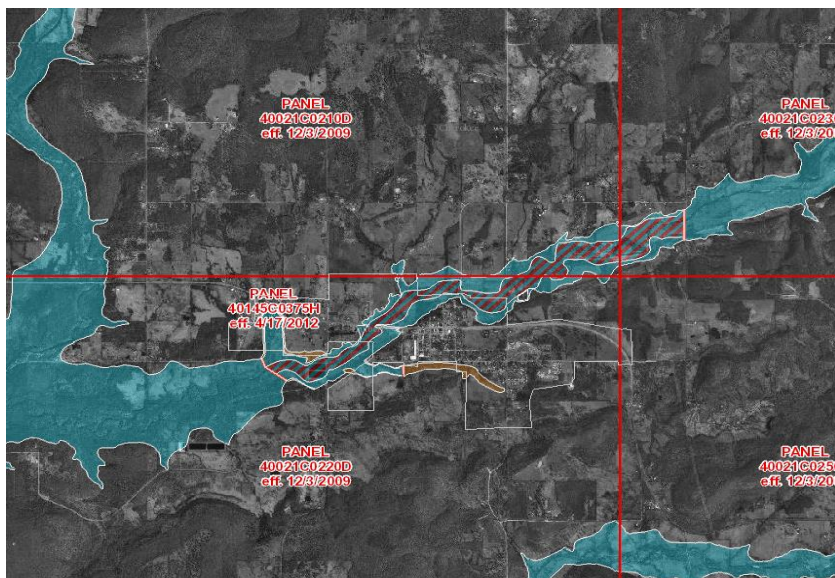
All parts of the county may be subject to flash flooding, freeze-thaw flooding and extreme precipitation that can cause flooding, unrelated to the streams and rivers. Development in the floodplain, however, increases risk of damages and property loss potentially repeatedly

Tahlequah



FEMA's National Flood Hazard Layer <http://fema.maps.arcgis.com/>

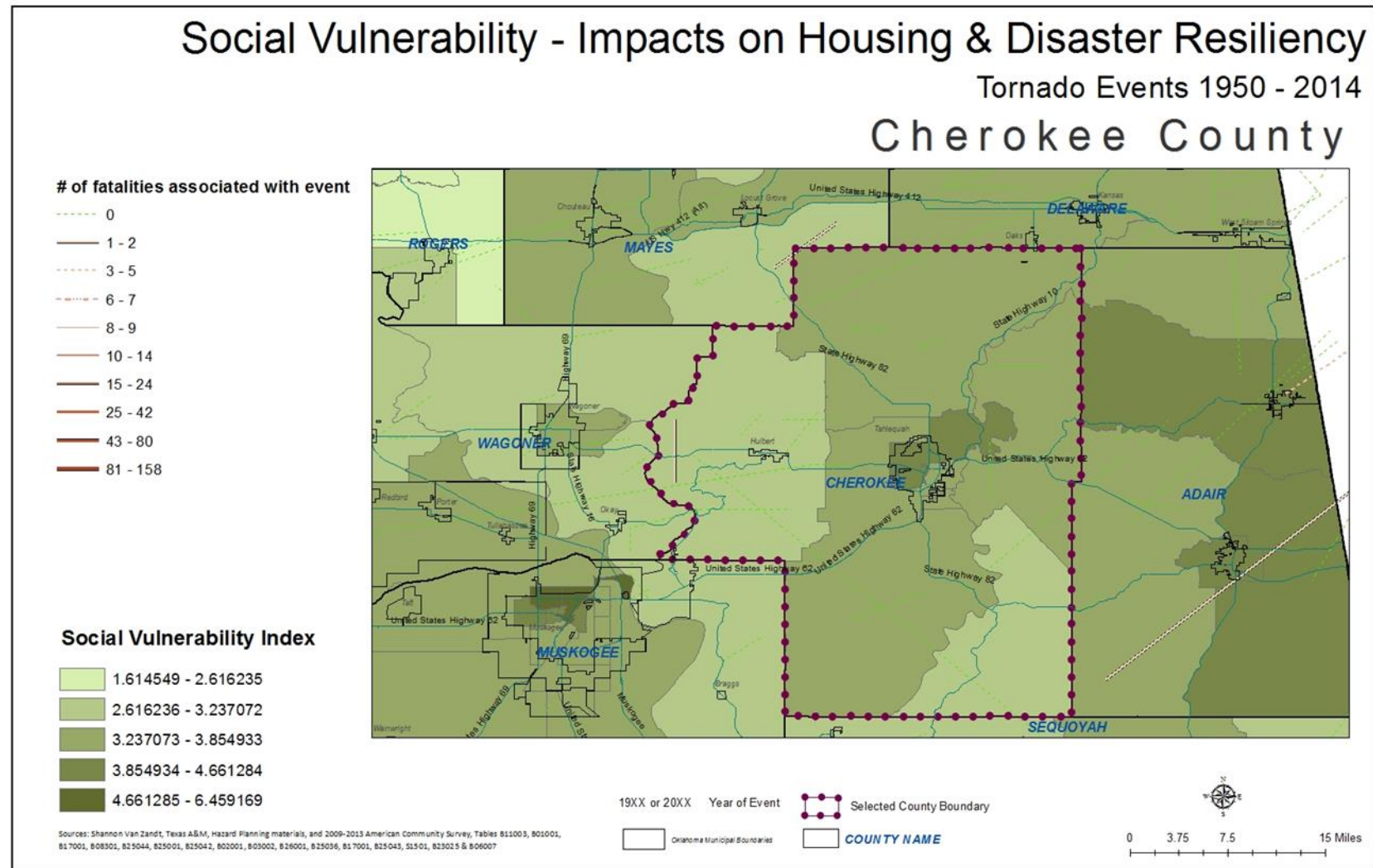
Hulbert

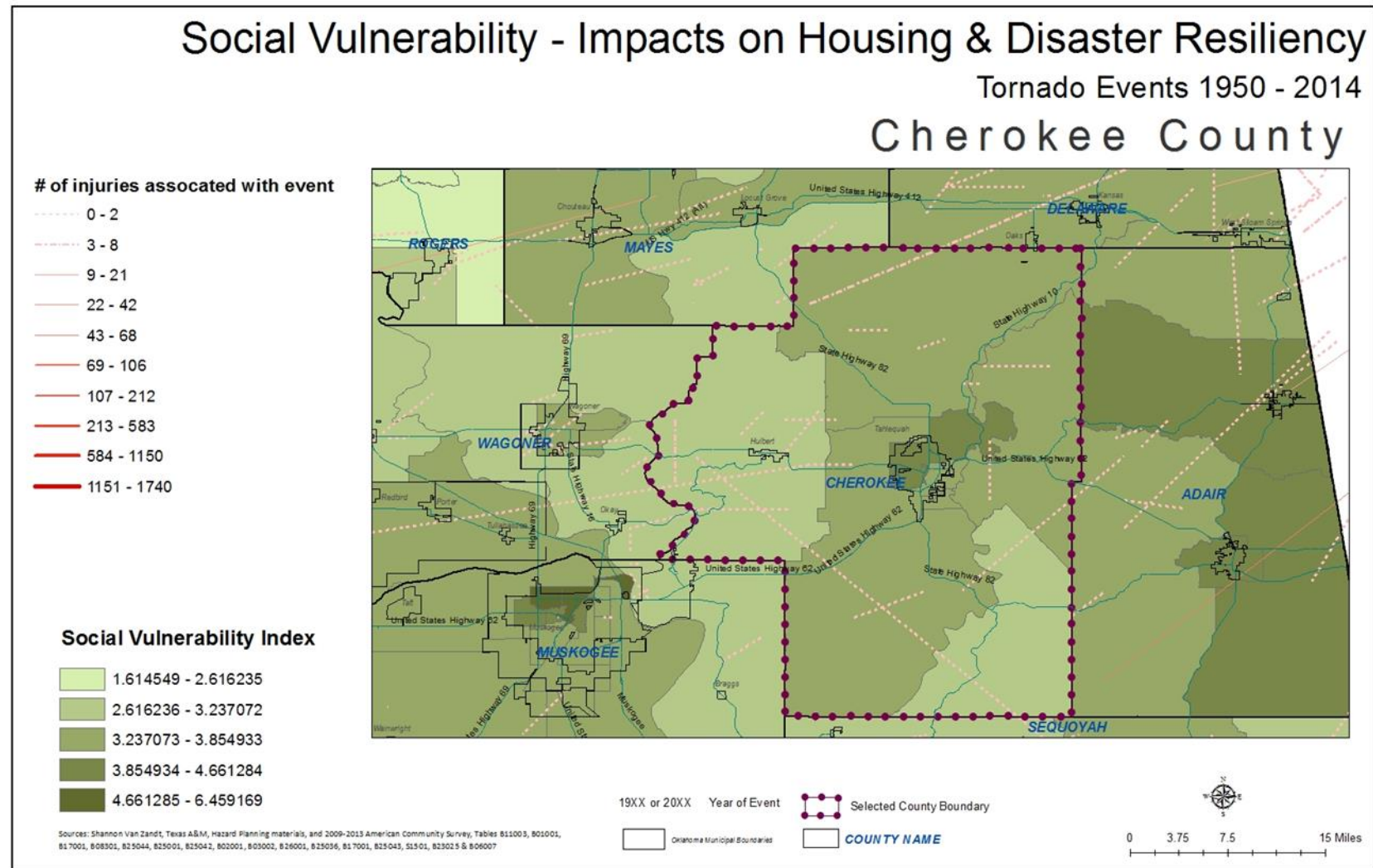


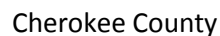
FEMA's National Flood Hazard Layer <http://fema.maps.arcgis.com/>

NOAA data shows the following historic data on disaster events for the county:

Historic data on tornados between 1950-2014 there are 33 tornados documented. There were 13 injuries that occurred connected to these tornados, with 8 of those injuries happening in the 2006 tornado. There were 2 fatalities connected to tornadoes during this time period, 2 of which occurred in 1999. Property losses between 1950-1996 ranged from \$840,501.00 to \$8,405,050.00. (The accounting methods used for losses changed in 1996.) The losses estimated between 1996-2014 was \$4,810,000.00.







C.2.1.2; C.2.1.6; C.2.1.7;C.2.1.8 Shelters from Disaster Event

The Cherokee Nation used \$77,375 from the tribe's special projects budget to fund the installation of five community storm shelters in southern Cherokee County. The shelters will hold up to 100 people each. (<http://nativenewsonline.net/currents/cherokee-nation-donates-77k-for-storm-shelters-in-southern-cherokee-county/>)

C.2.1.3 Public Policy and Governance to Build Disaster Resiliency

Information not available.

C.2.1.4 Local Emergency Response Agency Structure

Information not available.

C.2.1.5 Threat & Hazard Warning Systems

The identified Threat & Hazard Warning Systems for Cherokee County include:

- ☐ Sirens
- ☐ Phone notification
- ☐ Emergency Broadcast System
- ☐ Other

59 siren sites but they do not cover the entire county (<http://www.cherokeega-ema.org/media.cfm?csi=178>)

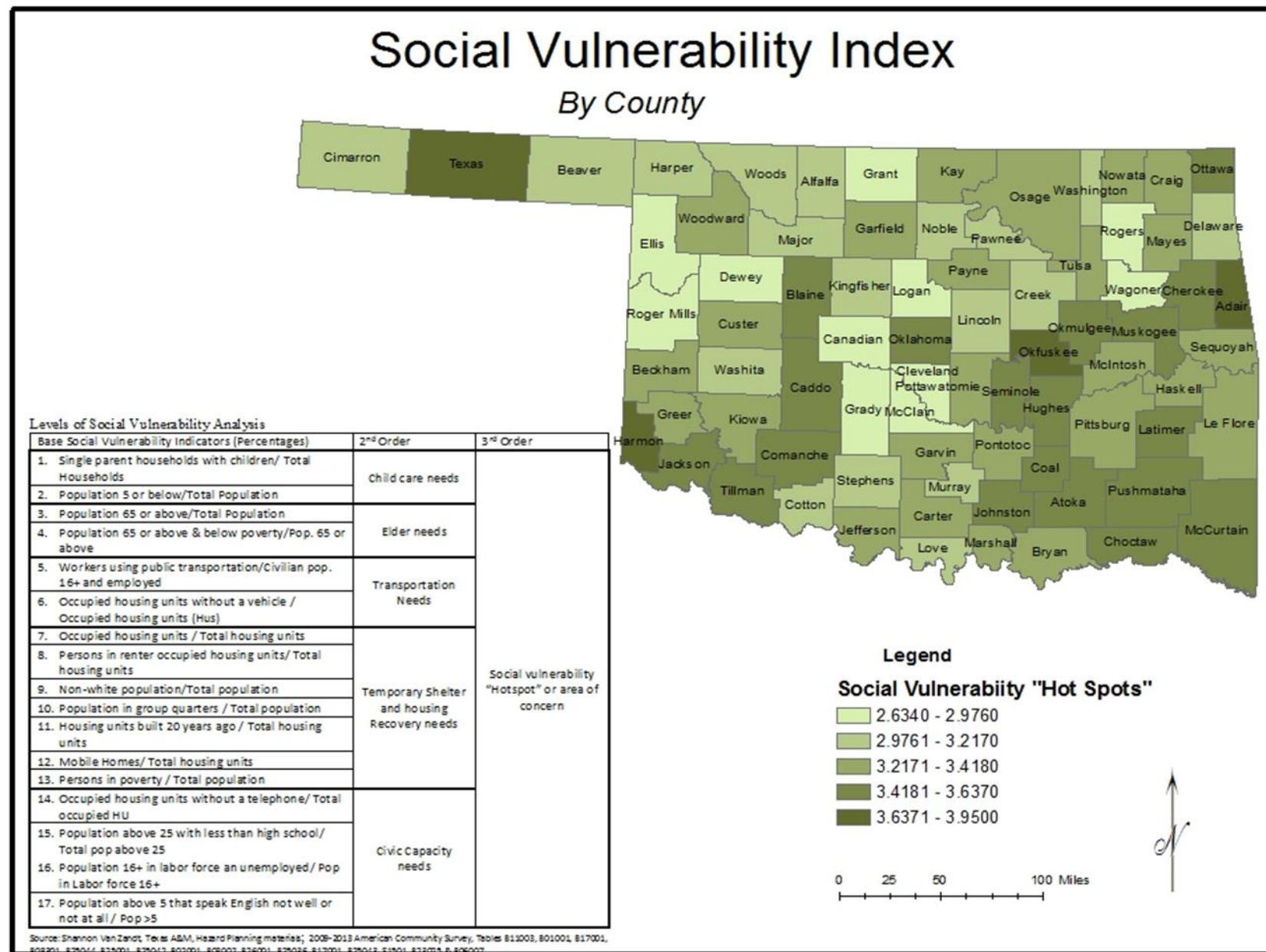
Social Vulnerability

Based on the research work done by the Texas A&M University Hazard Reduction and Recovery Center, an added component is being included in this section. Social vulnerability can place households at a further disadvantage during and after a disaster. This analysis is assessing for the county the levels of social vulnerability based on demographic indicators to highlight 'hotspots' or counties that have higher social vulnerability. That combined with Hazard Mitigation Plans – or lack thereof – can highlight places where additional work is needed to reduce impacts on households.

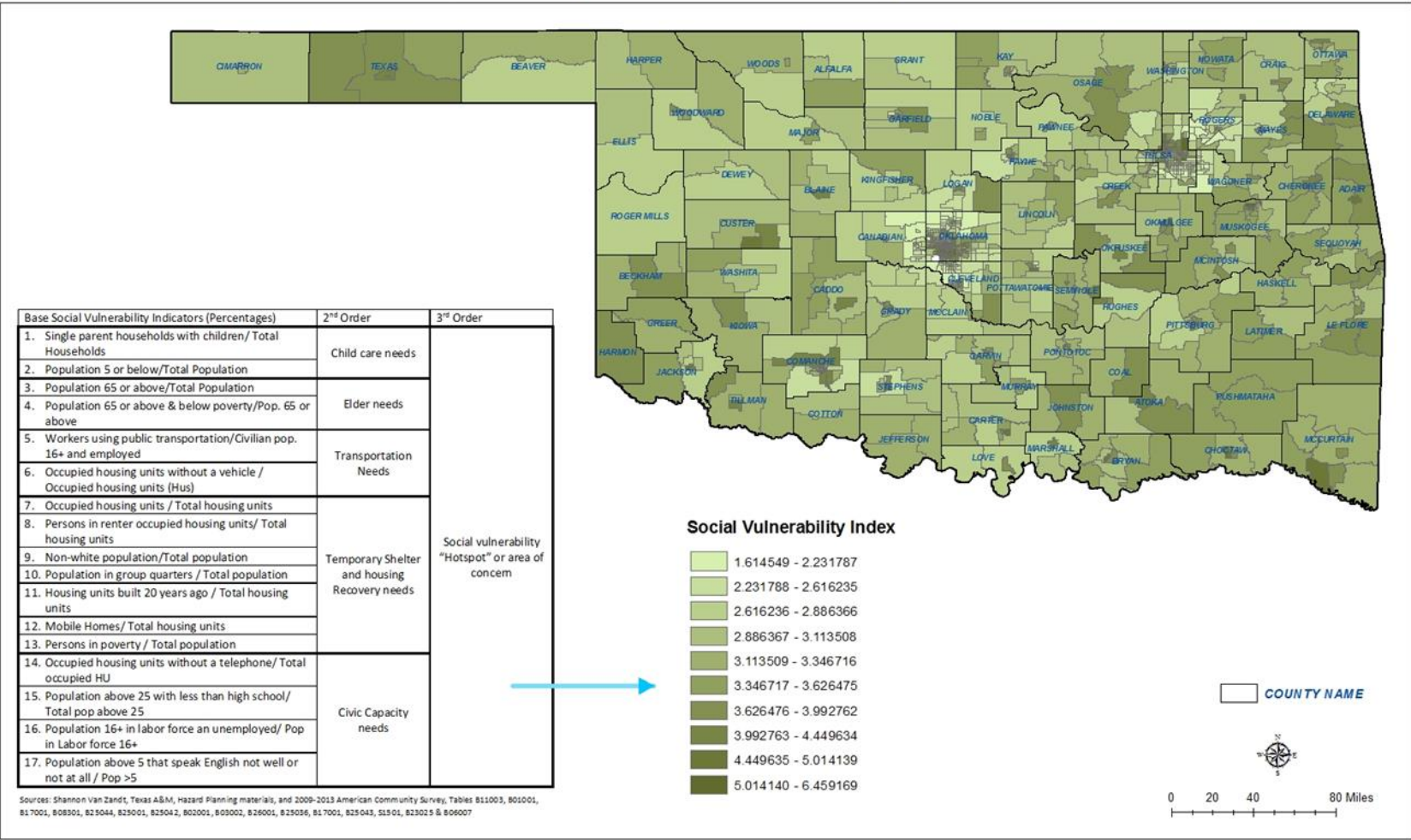
Social Vulnerability Analysis - Cherokee County

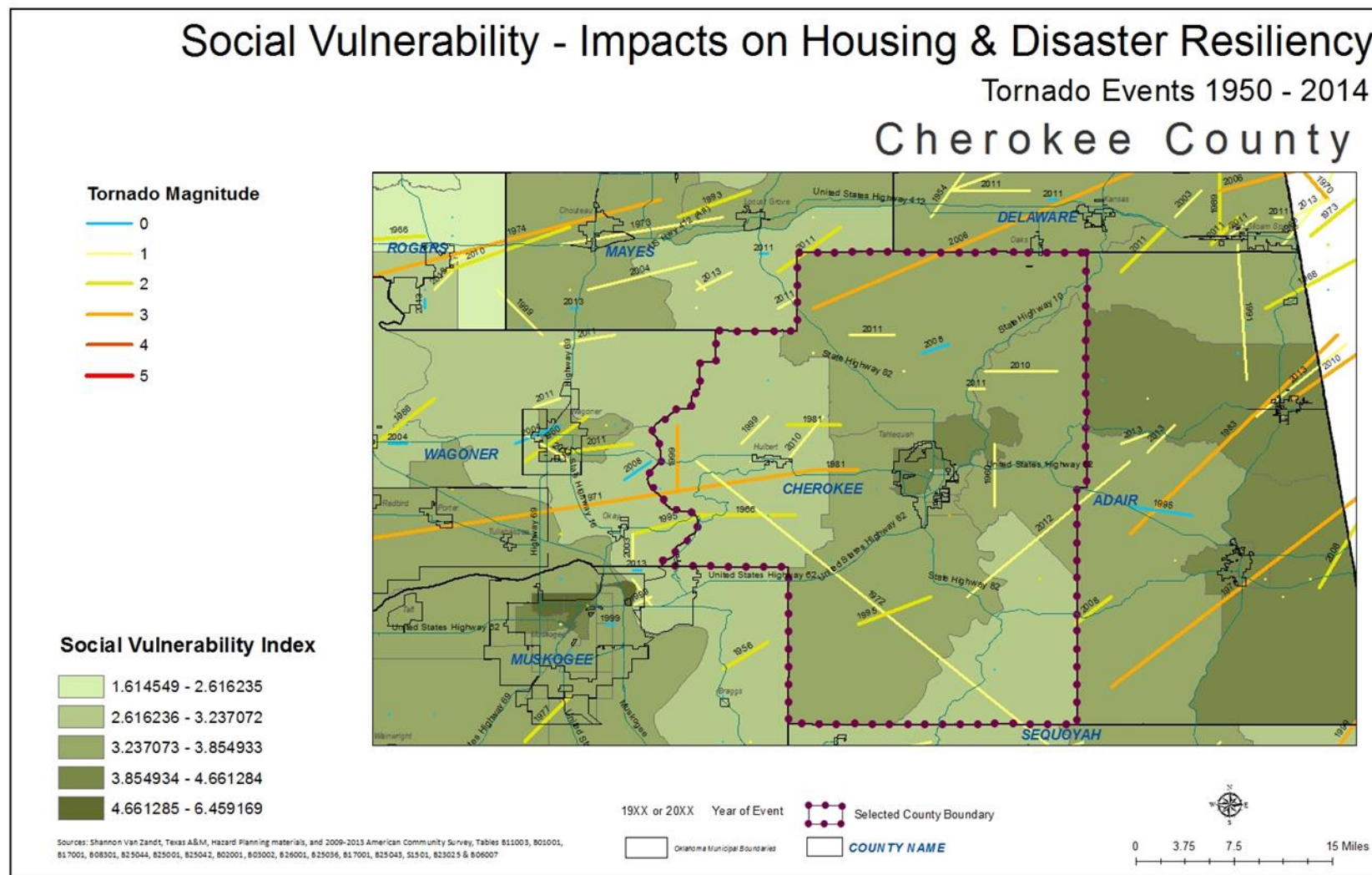
Base Social Vulnerability Indicators (%)		2nd Order	3rd Order
1.) Single Parent Households	15.26%	0.221	3.585 Social Vulnerability 'Hotspot' or Area of Concern
2.) Population Under 5	6.82%	(Child Care Needs)	
3.) Population 65 or Above	13.96%	0.263	
4.) Population 65 or Above & Below Poverty Rate	12.32%	(Elder Needs)	
5.) Workers Using Public Transportation	0.24%	0.068	
6.) Occupied Housing Units w/o Vehicle	6.55%	(Transportation Needs)	
7.) Housing Unit Occupancy Rate	78.62%	2.761 (Temporary Shelter and Housing Recovery Needs)	
8.) Rental Occupancy Rate	33.49%		
9.) Non-White Population	50.09%		
10.) Population in Group Quarters	4.64%		
11.) Housing Units Built Prior to 1990	63.58%		
12.) Mobile Homes, RVs, Vans, etc.	22.94%		
13.) Poverty Rate	22.79%		
14.) Housing Units Lacking Telephones	2.36%	0.272 (Civic Capacity Needs)	
15.) Age 25+ With Less Than High School Diploma	14.90%		
16.) Unemployment Rate	7.71%		
17.) Age 5+ Which Cannot Speak English Well or Not At All	2.24%		

Sources: Shannon Van Zandt, Texas A&M, Hazard Planning materials, and 2009-2013 American Community Survey, Tables B11003, B01001, B17001, B08301, B25044, B25001, B25042, B02001, B03002, B26001, B25036, B17001, B25043, S1501, B23025 & B06007



Social Vulnerability - Impacts on Housing & Disaster Resiliency





Social vulnerability combined with the devastating impacts of a natural or man-made disaster can compound a household's ability to recover and in fact can place those individuals at an even great gap or disadvantage prior to the event (Shannon Van Zandt, Texas A&M).

This county falls above average per this index for social vulnerability when comparing as a county to other counties in the state. There are several census tracts that have elevated social vulnerable scores and therefore attention during an event and as part of recovery should be directed in these areas.

Recommendations for this county:

- Continue to update and maintain the county HMP and include attention to areas within the county that in addition to physical vulnerability may have compounding social vulnerability factors.
- Efforts to strengthen building codes related to tornadoes and natural disasters should be considered.
- Planning for shelters from disaster events for multifamily, HUD and LIHTC units, in addition to all housing in the community should be incorporated with any effort to increase housing.