Coastal Zone Visitor Use Management Strategy

Monterey Ranger District

Appendices

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Introduction

The appendices to the Coastal Zone Visitor Use Management Strategy provide additional information and background supporting the development of the strategy.

Appendix A is the completed Sliding Scale Decision Support Tool from the Interagency Visitor Use Management Framework for the project area. This tool helps inform the level of analysis that is appropriate for a project. Applying this "sliding scale of analysis" seeks to match the investment made in analysis with the level of uncertainty and risk associated with the issues being addressed. The sliding scale is a simple high, moderate, low rating system that considers criteria including issue uncertainty, impact risk, stakeholder involvement, and level of controversy.

Appendix B is a summary of public engagement that helped inform development of the VUM strategy. Public engagement opportunities included three in person workshops, a virtual workshop, and opportunities to comment on the Story Map online, and project e-mail. This appendix also includes summaries of surveys conducted by the Community Association of Big Sur and the Ventana Wilderness Alliance.

Appendix C is a prioritized summary of potential management actions, some that may be ready for immediate implementation, and others that would require additional planning, coordination, and compliance work. This intended to be a snapshot of the potential management strategies and actions. The full VUM strategy will need to be referenced for full detail and context.

Appendix D includes results from the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility, and Justice (DEIAJ) review for the project area using three online tools. The results help inform future potential actions that may improve conditions or prevent DEIAJ related issues.

The CJEST tool helps federal agencies identify disadvantaged communities that will benefit from programs included in the Justice40 Initiative, which seeks to deliver 40 percent of the overall benefits of Justice40 investments. The tool uses datasets that are indicators of burdens in eight categories: climate change, energy, health, housing, legacy pollution, transportation, water and wastewater, and workforce development.

The Social Vulnerability Index tool was developed by the CDC as a planning tool in the event of a natural or man-made disaster, such as a tornado, disease outbreak, or harmful chemical spill. The SVI tool helps identify and map communities and residents may be less able to prevent human suffering and financial loss in a disaster. The tool helps disaster response organizations estimate things like amounts of supplies and food needed; number of emergency personnel assigned; location of emergency shelters; and where people with special needs might need help evacuating the area.

The EJ SCREEN tool was developed by the Environmental Protection Agency. The tool combines environmental and demographic factors to provide a nationally consistent approach to identifying areas of the country that may need further consideration, analysis, or outreach by EPA program areas. Specifically, areas where public health disparities exist; disadvantaged demographic groups may live; and natural and man-made conditions may pose a threat to well-being.

Appendix A – Sliding Scale
Sliding Scale Decision Support Tool

Table 1. Decision Support Tool used to assess the Coastal Zone Visitor Use Management Strategy

	Rating Questions	**Rationale**	**High, Moderate Low?**
1	What is the likelihood that the situation involves sensitive, rare, or irreplaceable natural resources?	*The highly scenic coastal setting is rare within the National Forest System*	*Moderate*
2	What is the likelihood that the situation involves sensitive, rare, or irreplaceable cultural resources?	*The presence of cultural resources is likely high along the coast; some known impacts are occurring within developed sites. Management actions could mitigate impacts.*	*Moderate*
3	What is the likelihood of imminent and significant changes to the natural or cultural resources?	*Ongoing high levels of visitor use, and current trends in dispersed camping may contribute to degradation of natural or cultural resources through proliferation of user created campsites and trails, increased risk for wildfire, presence of human waste, and litter. Management actions could mitigate impacts.*	*Moderate*
4	What is the likelihood of imminent and significant changes to visitor experience?	*Ongoing high levels of visitor use could degrade visitor experience in some areas due to crowding, traffic congestion, lack of available campsites, and resource impacts. Management actions have the potential to improve the visitor experience over time.*	*Moderate*
5	How will the issue affect other aspects of land management in the area or surrounding areas?	*Management actions could shift use and associated impacts to adjacent areas. High visitor use has increased fire risk to the forest and adjacent private lands. Road conditions and maintenance needs are impacted by high use. Concessionaires and adjacent businesses will have interest in economic impacts of potential management actions.*	*Moderate*
6	What is the geographic extent of the issue's impacts? Scales of impacts include national, regional, state, local or county, and site or project.	*Impacts to visitor experience and resources are local, however there is national and international interest in this area an iconic resource and destination.*	*High*

	Rating Questions	Rationale	High, Moderate Low?
7	What is the relative interest of stakeholders affected by the action? Stakeholders may include local communities, public, special interest groups, recreational Visitors, Commercial users, traditional-subsistence users, tribes, and others	*High level of interest from community members, community and non-profit organizations, concessionaires, adjacent land managers, elected officials, and visitors. High levels of visitor use and increasing popularity of this iconic location via social media.*	*High*
8	Is the impact temporary (low) or long lasting (high)?	*Changes in visitor use management that influence the type, timing, location, or amount of use would have long lasting impacts.*	*High*

CRITERIA - Use the ratings assigned to questions 1-8 to evaluate the following 4 sliding scale criteria. Combine those criteria into a single qualitative rating (high, moderate, or low) of the project's appropriate location on the sliding scale.

Table 2. Criteria sliding scale used to assess the Coastal Visitor Use Management Project

Issue Identifier?	Criteria	Rationale	High, Moderate or Low?
A	Issue Uncertainty	The primary issues of recreational demand exceeding supply and associated impacts to natural and cultural resources and visitor	Moderate
B	Impact Risk	There are unique and high quality scenic and recreational resources associated with this world class coastal destination.	High
C	Stakeholder Involvement	Stakeholder interest is very high, the area issues are tracked closely by community groups and elected officials. Partner organizations are involved in this VUM process.	High
D	Level of Controversy	There is a high level of interest in sustainable recreation management of the area, stakeholders are engaged and supportive of efforts	Moderate

Based on the criteria and rationale evaluation considered using the sliding scale in table 2 above, the project appropriate location on the Criteria Sliding Scale rates as "High".

Appendix B – Public Involvement Summary

Public involvement during development of the Coastal Zone VUM Strategy included:

- A public workshop on June 8, 2022, at Big Sur Lodge

- A virtual public workshop held August 3, 2023

- Two in person public workshops one on August 8 at Big Sur Lodge and one on August 10 at Pacific Valley School.

- Opportunities to provide input via e-mail and through the Coastal Zone VUM Story Map – Get involved tab were available throughout the process.

In addition to the public engagement lead by the Los Padres National Forest, two partner organizations, Ventana Wilderness Alliance and Community Association of Big Sur conducted surveys that helped inform the desired conditions and potential management actions.

The sections below provide overview and summaries of the public involvement efforts.

VUM Public Workshop Overview – June 8, 2022

Summary

The Los Padres National Forest held a public workshop as part of its development of a visitor use management (VUM) strategy. The goal was to gather input on recreation trends and visitor use of coastal areas managed by the Forest Service along the Big Sur coast and California State Highway One. The workshop was held at the Big Sur Lodge Conference Center on June 8, 2022, from 10:00 am -3:00 pm and was attended by approximately 75 people.

Attendees were greeted, signed in, and oriented to the meeting layout. Stations were set up based on the VUM project zones: North Coast, South Coast – Coastal, South Coast Dispersed, and Wilderness. Parks Management Company (PMC), the local concessionaire, also staffed a station. Participants were each given five colored dots to place on large maps of the project area. Dots were placed in areas of greatest concern or of greatest importance to provide a visual indication of areas that may need focus in the VUM plan.
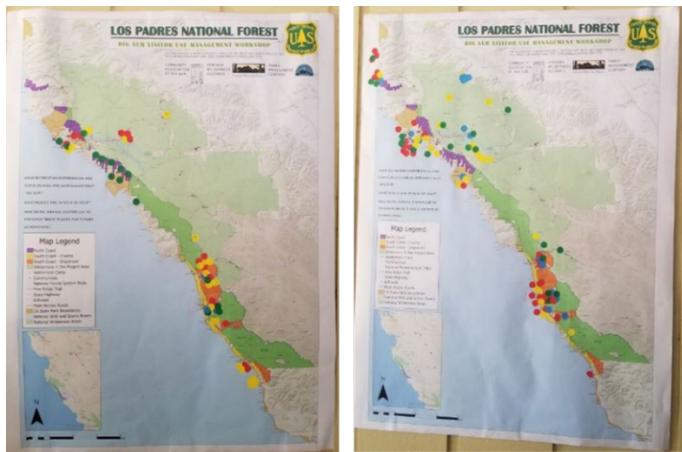
Figure 1. Map activity for participants to identify areas of greatest concern or greatest importance.

Monterey District Ranger Tim Short, and resource officer, Fin Eifert, welcomed participants to the workshop. Forest Service Enterprise Program employees Stephanie Valentine, Mary Ellen Emerick, and Mike Hill provided an orientation to the VUM project, and workshop goals. Participants were then asked to rotate through the stations to make comments and have conversations. Each station was facilitated by a Forest Service employee and local community partners from the Community Association of Big Sur (CABS), Ventana Wilderness Alliance (VWA), and PMC. Lunch for workshop participants was provided by CABS. A summary was given by each station facilitator at the end of the day.

Public Comment Summary

Public Comment Sources:

- Discussion notes recorded on flip charts during public workshop.

- Comment forms

- Comments received via Online Story Map and project e-mail address.

- Review of comments submitted to CABS and VWA through survey forms.

- Review of public comments previously provided during development of the Big Sur Destination Stewardship Plan

General comment themes by project zone:

Whole Project Area: Traffic, economy, enforcement, trailheads & safety, education, visitor information, visitor restrictions, public access, facilities (toilets, developed campsites, trash cans, water, parking), fire safety, impacts to resources, on-the-ground presence, more staff and funding, visitor impacts (litter, vandalism, campfires, human waste), fines, permit system, dispersed camping regulation, crowding, impacts to residents, drug cartels, concession operations, trespassing, cooperation among agencies, existing regulations, visitor behavior, crowding, capacity

North Coast: facilities (restrooms, parking), access (permits, reservations), crowding, resource impacts (trash, illegal campfires), concession, presence (Multi-Agency Facility, signs), roads (traffic congestion)

South Coast – Coastal: dispersed camping impacts (human waste), facilities (restrooms, trash cans, road damage, parking), visitor information, need for more developed camping sites, trespassing on private lands, permit system, resource impacts, visitor impacts.

South Coast – Dispersed: Dispersed camping, road use, visitor use and experience, visitor information, facilities, access, enforcement, visitor restrictions, residents.

Wilderness and Wild and Scenic River: crowding, resource impacts, education, enforcement, permit system and access, user-created impacts to water quality and free flow, wilderness incursions, facilities.

The Visitor Use Management (VUM) Framework

Following the VUM Framework, a process outlined by the Interagency Visitor Use Management Council, the goal of this project is to provide sustainable recreation opportunities and access by identifying desired conditions, adaptive management strategies, and management tools.

The VUM framework has four broad Elements:

1. Build the Foundation ("Why")

2. Define Visitor Use Management Direction ("What")

3. Identify Management Strategies ("How")

4. Implement, Monitor, Evaluate, Adjust

We are now working on element number 2, above, with focus on defining desired conditions, defining appropriate visitor activities, facilities, and services, and considering how these conditions will be tracked over time.

What are Desired Conditions?
Desired conditions are statements of aspiration that describe resource conditions, visitor experiences and opportunities, and facilities and services that the Forest would strive to achieve and maintain in a particular area. They describe what the area should look like, feel like, sound like, and function like. Desired conditions do not say HOW an area would be managed—determining management actions comes later in this VUM process. An area may already be meeting these conditions, or they can be future-oriented, - not necessarily what exists today.

The draft desired condition statements reflect public input that we have received during this VUM planning process. The statements also tier from the existing desired conditions in the Los Padres Forest Plan and other relevant planning documents.

Draft Desired Conditions

The draft desired condition statements and future project updates will be available on the Coastal Zone Visitor Use Management Story Map[1]; comments may be made at this link, click on the "Get Involved" tab. Comments on the draft desired conditions may also be submitted by e-mail to: SM.FS.BigSurVisUse@usda.gov. Input received by October 5th will be most useful to the ongoing VUM process.

To be most helpful, please review the draft desired conditions and think about the following.

*   Do you agree with the outcomes described for the zones/project area? What do you like, and what would you change?

*   Should there be additional desired conditions for other specific Forest Service locations in the project area (such as other trails, other recreation sites?)

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[1] Full link to the Coastal Zone Visitor Use Management Story Map: https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/6cc7fa5bd7304c3888a19154030abb13

- Where will achieving these desired conditions be more difficult and where do you think they are close to current conditions?

Scan the QR code below to go to the Coastal Zone Visitor Use Management Story Map:

VUM Public Workshops Overview – August 3, 2023

Summary

- Virtual workshop: August 3, 2023
- In-person workshops:
    - ♦ **Big Sur** – August 8, 2023
    - ♦ **Pacific Valley School** – August 10, 2023

The Los Padres National Forest held three public workshops as part of its ongoing development of a visitor use management (VUM) strategy. The goal was to review potential management strategies and actions and gather input on additional ideas to help achieve the desired conditions for the area. The focus of this effort is on recreation trends and visitor use of coastal areas managed by the Forest Service along the Big Sur coast and California State Highway One. The virtual workshop was held online via Microsoft Teams on August 3, 2023, the in-person workshops were held at the Big Sur Lodge Conference Center on August 8, 2023, and at Pacific Valley School on August 10, 2023. Each meeting was held from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm. Each of the three meetings were attended by approximately 40 to 50 people.

The meetings were organized around the project zones (North Coast, South Coast – Coastal, South Coast – Dispersed, and Wilderness), with breakout sessions during the virtual meeting and individual stations for each zone at the in-person meetings. Participants were asked to share their top three priority management actions for the project zone they were discussing.

The Los Padres Forest Supervisor, Chris Stubbs, Deputy Forest Supervisor Jeanne Dawson, and Monterey District Ranger, Fin Eifert welcomed participants to the workshop and provided an orientation to the VUM project and workshop goals. Local Forest Service employees, Forest Service Enterprise Program employees, and community partners assisted with meeting facilitation. A summary was given by each station facilitator at the end of the sessions. A fun addition to the meetings that encouraged participants to think about the Big Sur experience was to create a playlist of songs that capture the Big Sur "vibe", the collection of songs is shown in the picture below:

Figure 2. Big Sur "playlist" developed by workshop participants.

The Visitor Use Management (VUM) Framework

Following the VUM Framework, a process outlined by the [Interagency Visitor Use Management Council](#), the goal of this project is to provide sustainable recreation opportunities and access by identifying desired conditions, adaptive management strategies, and management tools.

The VUM framework has four broad Elements:

- Build the Foundation ("Why")

- Define Visitor Use Management Direction ("What")

- Identify Management Strategies ("How")

- Implement, Monitor, Evaluate, Adjust

> **What are Management Strategies and Actions?**
>
> This element is intended to help managers identify management strategies and actions to achieve and maintain the desired conditions of a project area. Management strategies are general approaches of addressing visitor use management issues, while actions are specific ways of implementing management strategies. The three fundamental categories of management actions include (1) site management/engineering, (2) information and education, and (3) regulation/enforcement.

We are now working on #3 with focus on identifying management strategies and actions that will move the area towards the desired conditions (previously developed through public workshops in June 2022).

Potential Management Strategies that apply to the whole project area:

- Policies and procedures for emergency closures

- Seasonal or year-round fire restrictions for high-risk areas and seasonal post-fire recovery closures

- Accessible facilities

- Increased law enforcement and field staff presence/increased collaboration with other agency law enforcement

- Increased fines for illegal campfires

- Call-in line for locals for reporting

- Information, interpretation, and sign plan for area

- Guided tour opportunities

Public Comment Summary

- Public Comment Sources:

- Discussion notes recorded on flip charts during public workshops.

- Comment forms.

- Comments received via Online Story Map and project e-mail address.
- Chat transcript from the online meeting and facilitator notes.

Following are summaries of public input received during the three workshop sessions, by project zone.

VUM Public Workshop Zone Summaries

North Coast

Potential Management Strategies:
- Master plan for Brazil Ranch that could include future recreational opportunities.
- Information and education for Sycamore Canyon Road including signs when parking is limited and road conditions.
- Increased cultural heritage interpretation.
- Increase staffing at the Multi Agency Facility (MAF)
- Shuttle or reservation system at Pfeiffer Beach
- Safety protocols for closures at developed sites
- Improved or increased facility capacity (bathrooms, bear proof cans)

Public response and comments from online meeting

Engage tribal groups for how they would like to partner and have presence at all these locations (not just interpretive themes)

Development at the **Brazil Ranch** should be prohibited or at least significantly restricted. Any proposed development should go through a public review. Level playing field.

Rename facilities like "**Multi-Agency Facility**" to visitor center because it's user-friendly language.

Online outreach + Education: hope social media platforms are prioritized.

High traffic time propositions: texting information service, live updates such as sign outside park, Instagram, Facebook, etc. regarding closure and wait times.

Shuttle proposition for sycamore.

Consider trail connections to reduce congestion at Bixby Bridge in addition to providing alternatives to Bixby and Pfieffer beach through the NFS website AND outreach.

Proposed **reservation system** for sycamore like Muir woods BUT also wants to consider equitable accessibility for folks in surrounding counties (ex: Monterey County, Santa Cruz County, San Luis Obispo County, etc.)

Trails: look at managing access (ex: Palo Colorado Road) for Ventana Wilderness trails, VWA: provide resources, 'locals' parking lot partnered with organizations/partner

Fires: **change language** of campfire permit to 'open stove' because it causes confusion

Public response and comments from in-person meeting

Brazil Ranch:

- Put limited funds into the **maintenance** of already developed areas and trails.

- To leave current conditions as is but invest in **a recreational officer to maintain current projects such as roads and trails**. The current roads are not built to fit fire engines or forest service trucks.

- Another ongoing issue is cars parking on Highway 1, a way to combat this is by funding a **shuttle service** to eliminate personal vehicles from entering. Would need to consider volume and weight of transportation if it comes to fruition. This will resolve the issue of the Bixby Bridge Asphalt that a private company constructed causing more foot traffic.

- The **maintenance** and upkeep of the ranch could be used to hold conferences and support **interagency collaboration** such as Caltrans taking up space on west side of road.

Multi-Agency Facility and Pine Ridge Trailhead

- Through **creative collaboration** with tribes and non-profit organizations, there could be **more staff** placed at the Multi-Agency Facility such as a 55+ Volunteer Program at MAF

- **Combine** North Coast Ridge with Pine Ridge Trail

- **Display maps** outside of MAF.

- **Implementation of a permit system**, and example being for Sykes Reservation: 50 percent first come first service / 50 percent reservation without strict enforcement but rather to reduce the overall use.

Pfeiffer Beach

- PMC Staffing to support consistent **management and regulation** to stop people from breaking rules if parking lot is full or observing permit rules. This would also be support with signage and updating website, socials, and signage way before Pfeiffer beach.

- Bringing back the **shuttle system** that existed back in 1994.

- Implement a **reservation system** of timed use permits for Pfieffer beach with local resident reserved parking (5-10 spots)

- **Equity**: Keep Pfieffer Beach rustic by capping beach fee to increase low-income experience

- Prime conservation wants to be led by local resident community.

Overnight Permit System

- Self-reservation for same day permits, except day hikers wouldn't need a permit.

- Popular trails can possibly include a quota.

- Education Programs: backcountry experiences

- Permit Lottery System for equitable footprint.

- Volunteer vs. Mandatory System permits.

Non-quota Base Permits

- To start off, it will provide statistics to look down the road for quota and fee assessments. This permit will include watching informational videos and meet a forest person. Maybe it'd be best to not mention the non-quota portion.

- A permit system will allow monitoring usage plus footprint of environmental impact.

Shuttle Bus

MAF Shuttle

'Park it' initiative

Access, Open trails, roads, gates. Visitors first, local second

Pine Ridge Trail(s)

- No camps at designated wilderness

- Inventory count.

- Rehabilitation

- Campfires only at designated/areas like a possible community campfire

- Designated Campsites/areas at silver peak, Vicente, spruce, Kurkshed, Indians, pine valley

- What are the carrying capacities to continue monitoring, update it as it changes, it is not a one size fits all.

- What does a reservation system look like, 80% reservation and 20% "day of" to allow locals and public?

Prioritized management strategies and/or actions based on most responses, in no order.

1. Accessible facilities, specifically Brazil Ranch's infrastructure as a desired outcome

2. Increased law enforcement and field staff presence/increased collaboration with other agency law enforcement for regulations and restrictions.

3. Informational/Educational Videos, interpretation, and sign plan for area

4. Permits

5. Public Contracts at the Multi-Agency Facility with non-profits, tribes, and residents for a more personal experience

6. Shuttle System reservation system for hot spot usage sites.

South Coast Coastal

Potential Management Strategies

- Update and increase visitor information on site and in specific locations.

- Create a Salmon Creek master plan for best use of the site.

- Seasonal or other restrictions for San Carpoforo Beach to address impacts.
- Look for opportunities to increase facilities, camping, and safe parking in this zone.

Comments from participants on actions they felt would be most useful:

Education and Enforcement

- Boots on the ground, especially after hours
- Volunteers
- Citizen communication – radio channel to report incidents. Formalize citizen patrol and provide training.
- Educational video associated with permits for fire and camping.
- Public Information Center at Salmon Creek Station (consider opportunity for co-management)
- State grants for funding, fire prevention grants to fund information, education, awareness.
- Information & interpretation about wildlife, habitat, culture, etc., low profile signs (see example at vista point mile marker 37), interpretive theme around "Big" including condor, big trees, sea lions, etc.
- Kiosks

Salmon Creek Station Master Plan

- MAF for the south, staffed visitor information station
- Gift shop.
- Short term parking
- Horseback riding facilities/parking
- Trail maintenance and signs
- Housing for FS staff
- Interpretive signs & videos
- Historic site/properties

Seasonal restriction for San Carpoforo Beach

- Parking needed.
- Bathroom/water needed.
- No overnight camping to protect resources.
- Interagency coordination and enforcement (State Parks and FS)
- Information & education about red legged frog and plovers

Recreation Site Facilities

- Increased facilities, camping and parking; consider ways to reimagine use of existing developed campgrounds: reconfigure or expand to accommodate more of the demand for campsites.

- Concern for protection of coastal bluffs.

- Maintenance needed at existing day use areas and campgrounds – Sand Dollar, Mill Creek, Willow Creek, trails, interpretive signs, bathrooms pumped, water systems.

- Recreation facility analysis update

- Consider FS management of sites or Big Sur specific campground/day use prospectus for potential concession operator vs lumping in with the prospectus for the whole Los Padres NF.

- Day use areas should be free.

South Coast Dispersed

Proposed Management Strategies
- Increase availability of pre-planning trip information and training

- Increase on-site information through kiosks and other methods.

- Provide focused education on reducing impacts from large events and road use.

- Improve coordination with other providers for real-time camping availability.

- Consider options to increase campsite availability near developed campgrounds or other developed areas and identify overflow opportunities with other providers.

- Designate sustainable dispersed campsites.

- Install facilities and barriers where needed.

- Identify road capacity and maintenance needs.

- Seasonal or yearlong fire restrictions, day or night limitations on use, and increased enforcement

Comments from participants on actions they felt would be most useful:

Education and Enforcement
- Enforcement is needed for all potential management actions, collaboration between agencies for enforcement especially during peak seasons, evening patrols/sunset patrol, campfire ban enforcement, Cal Fire & FS collaboration agreement, more boots on the ground.

- Communication for volunteer patrol with law enforcement/agency

- More education on wildlife and habitat protection (oceanic dunes, sequoia trees, sand pipers, plovers, frogs), fire safety,

- Louder signs

- Coordination between FS and volunteers for information & education, education to recreation groups in universities, schools, clean up days, etc.; coordinate messaging with

tourism organizations and special events such as races to ensure messages around appropriate use are being shared.

- Information and education on social media

Designated dispersed camping:

- Reservation system with a quota or limited number of dispersed sites (such as: 80% reserved, 20% first-come-first-serve, or 50/50), set parameters around number and size of campsites. Look at visitation data weekday vs weekend, peak seasons.

- Support for management of dispersed camping along main road access, should be limited where monitoring and enforcement are difficult (along S. Coast Ridge Road where Silver Peak Wilderness borders Ft. Hunter Liggett land)

- How are we going to manage/enforce designations when large groups show up on a weekend?

- Look at example from BLM Alabama Hills VUM

- More enforcement needs to be in place before going to a permit system.

- Pilot area before full implementation – San Martin Top, Plaskett

- Tie education to permit, low impact camping, 4-wheel drive vehicles, etc., clarify dispersed camping distance from road, and vehicle camping limitations along HWY 1

- Staffed kiosks at the bottoms of Nacimiento, Los Burros, and Plaskett Roads, more road signs, availability of campsites monitored and permitted at kiosks – this could be only during the peak summer high-use season.

- Special Use Permits for large groups, require port-a-potties, access considerations, site-clean up.

Recreation Site Facilities

- More garbage cans and restrooms out of critical viewsheds and/or screened from view.

- Install barriers where needed, signs.

- Consider more campgrounds/campsites to reduce dispersed camping/off-road impacts, are there options for walk in camping? Look at area south of Sand Dollar and near Station 17 – could there be additional low development, low-cost dispersed camping options provided? Reimage potential uses of existing developed sites to meet the current needs of visitors. Convict Flat/Plaskett

General area comments:

- Capacities of specific areas determined to preserve environmental & scenic integrity, capacities monitored and enforced.

- Helipad needed.

- Local non-profit concessionaires – proceeds to fund local staff and go back into site.

- Noise restrictions for dispersed camping areas and other public areas such as campgrounds and beaches

- Fire restrictions – interagency communication and consistency, year-round open fire ban, provide more fire rings or community fire pits at developed campgrounds, provide clarity to campfire permit online system and how it relates to fire restrictions, education around legal fire options propane, etc.

- Prescribed fires, fuels reduction, goats, etc.

- Housing: accessory dwelling units (ADUs), house sharing, camp hosts, Pacific Valley units (camp trailers)

- See Nordhoff ridge example and Santa Barbara front country year-round campfire ban.

- Funding is needed, consider ways to accept donations.

Prioritizing Management Actions:

Most respondents listed the following order of priority:

In Person Meeting top three Priorities – South Coast

1. Enforcement
   - ♦ Fire restriction.
   - ♦ Dispersed camping areas
   - ♦ On-the-ground presence
2. Information and Education
   - ♦ In person, ambassadors, volunteers
   - ♦ Kiosks – clear rules and information
   - ♦ Online videos
3. Salmon Creek Station Master Plan
   - ♦ Information & education
   - ♦ Restrooms
   - ♦ Staffed - visitor information.

Other Priorities:

- Dispersed camping Reservations and Permit system
- Maintenance of existing sites
- Year-round fire ban – allow propane stoves.
- More funding for Los Padres, personnel, law enforcement, maintenance, housing
- Toilets, Garbage Cans, Water
- More campsites and dispersed camping near the coast
- No camping as San Carpoforo
- Communication between agencies

Online Meeting top three priorities – South Coast Dispersed

1. Seasonal or yearlong fire restrictions, day or night limitations on use, and increased enforcement

2. Designate sustainable dispersed campsites.

3. Identify road capacity and maintenance needs.

Other priorities:

- Install facilities and barriers where needed.

- Increase on-site information through kiosks and other methods.

- Consider options to increase campsite availability near developed campgrounds or other developed areas and identify overflow opportunities with other providers.

Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers

Potential Management Strategies:
- Informational videos, ambassadors, and targeted education on camping, challenges, other trails available and less busy times to visit.

- Shuttle bus system or other parking options.

- Overnight permit system.

- Vehicle barriers and boundary signs

- Designated campsites on Pine Ridge trail with campsite capacities

Comments from participants on actions they felt would be most useful:

Education:
- Educational videos prior to hiking and camping in the wilderness (particularly overnight use)

- Public contacts at the MAF to discuss wilderness ethics.

- Ambassadors and boots on the ground in wilderness

- Kiosks at the base of roads to educate people on road type and wilderness boundaries.

Engineering:
- Use natural rocks as barriers/use signs for boundaries.

- Combine North Coast Ridge with Pine Ridge Trail

- Open other trails where access has been limited to disperse use.

- Limit campsites at certain locations (Sykes in particular)

- Rehabilitation of over-used sites

- Inventory wilderness area for campsites.

Enforcement:

- Campfires only at designated sites at several sites in the wilderness or a community campfire

- Fines enforced.

- Trail permit system (overnight) on Pine Ridge trail

- More USFS personnel on the ground

- Non-quota-based permits, monitor and evaluate for capacity later.

Prioritizing Management Actions:

Most respondents listed the following order of priority:

1. Education

2. Permit system.

3. Designated campsites

4. Vehicle barriers/boundary signs

Respondents in the online meeting said that shuttle services would only bring more people to the area and would not alleviate the issues particularly on the Pine Ridge Trail.

Additional Project Information

The desired condition statements, draft management strategies and actions, and future project updates will be available on the Coastal Zone Visitor Use Management Story Map[i]; comments may be made at this link; see the "Get Involved" tab. Comments on the project may also be submitted by e-mail to: SM.FS.BigSurVisUse@usda.gov.

If you would like to provide additional input, please review the draft management strategies and actions, and think about the following:

- Do you believe that these strategies and actions will meet desired conditions identified with each zone? What do you like, and what would you change?

- Should there be additional management strategies and actions for other specific Forest Service locations in the project area that are not mentioned here (e.g. other trails, other recreation sites?)

- Where will implementing these management actions be more difficult and/or require partnerships to achieve?

- What are the top three actions that you think the Forest Service should prioritize regarding visitor use management in the project area?

Full link to the Coastal Zone Visitor Use Management Story Map:
https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/6cc7fa5bd7304c3888a19154030abb13

Ventana Wilderness Alliance

The mission of the Ventana Wilderness Alliance *is to protect, preserve, and restore the wilderness qualities and biodiversity of the public lands within California's northern Santa Lucia Mountains and Big Sur coast.*

Ventana Wilderness Alliance – Big Sur-South Coast Survey

Results of VWA Visitor Use Management Survey

The Ventana Wilderness Alliance, in collaboration with the U.S. Forest Service and the Big Sur/South Coast communities, is participating in the development of a Visitor Use Management (VUM) plan for the Big Sur and South Coast areas managed by the Monterey Ranger District of the Los Padres National Forest. In May, we distributed a VWA-sponsored visitor use survey concerning those areas. 100 surveys were completed. The information provided by the surveys will help inform VUM planning. The following is a synopsis of the responses.

All survey responses were rounded to the nearest whole number. Individual comments submitted by respondents are not included in the tabulations.

Are you a Big Sur or South Coast resident?

- No — 66%
- Yes — 34%

Of the National Forest Big Sur areas you have visited, which one(s) do you think are experiencing overuse?

- Pfeiffer Beach — 82%
- Boronda Trail — 24%
- De Angulo Trail — 4%
- Brazil Ranch — 4%

Of the National Forest South Coast areas you have visited, which one(s) do you think are experiencing overuse?

- Salmon Creek Falls — 65%
- Plaskett Ridge — 64%
- Prewitt Ridge — 51%
- Sand Dollar Beach & Headlands — 41%
- Jade Cove & Headlands — 34%
- Willow Creek Beach — 30%
- Pacific Valley Bluff — 21%
- San Martin top — 14%.
- Alder Creek — 9%

How important is it to you personally the way the Ventana and Silver Peak Wilderness Areas are managed?

- Extremely – I think about it a lot and am very concerned — 48%.

- Very – I think about it sometimes and have some concerns — 38%.

- Somewhat – I haven't thought about it a lot, but it seems important — 8%.

Have you traveled on any portions of the Pine Ridge Trail between the Big Sur Trailhead and Sykes Camp before?

- Yes — 83%

- No — 17%

Have you observed human-caused natural resource impacts while using the Pine Ridge Trail?

- Quite often — 36%

- Often — 28%

- Occasionally — 22%

- No — 11%

When visiting the Ventana and Silver Peak Wilderness Areas, how important to you personally are solitude and quiet?

- Extremely - I actively avoid areas with heavy visitation — 47%.

- Very – I make a concerted effort to avoid contacts with visitors — 27%.

- Somewhat – I tend to avoid areas with heavy visitation — 19%.

- Not very - I am not bothered by the presence of other visitors — 4%.

If you were to travel or camp near the Pine Ridge Trail in the Ventana Wilderness, what would be your expectation of solitude between the trailhead at Big Sur Station and Sykes Camp?

- A low expectation of solitude — 37%

- No expectation of solitude — 28%

- A moderate expectation of solitude — 22%

- A high expectation of solitude — 9%

If you were to travel or camp on or near the Kirk Creek Trail in the Ventana Wilderness, what would be your expectation of solitude?

- A low expectation of solitude — 43%

- A moderate expectation of solitude — 22%

- No expectation of solitude —13%

- A high expectation of solitude — 10%

If you were to travel or camp on or near the Salmon Creek Trail above the Salmon Creek Falls in the Silver Peak Wilderness, what would be your expectation for solitude?

- A moderate expectation of solitude — 33%

- A low expectation of solitude — 26%

- No expectation of solitude —21%

- A high expectation of solitude — 15%

Would you like to see Wilderness Self-Issue Visitor Permits implemented at other trailheads of the Ventana and Silver Peak Wilderness Areas besides the Big Sur Pine Ridge Trailhead?

- Yes — 83%

- No — 17%

Would you like to see Agency-Issued Wilderness Visitor Permits implemented at high or some moderate use coastal trailheads at the Ventana and Silver Peak Wilderness Areas?

- Yes — 69%

- No — 18%

If Agency-Issued Wilderness Visitor Permits were to be implemented in the Ventana or Silver Peak Wilderness, Areas, at which high and moderate use coastal trailheads should they be required?

- Pine Ridge Trail — 86%

- Kirk Creek Trail — 69%

- Salmon Creek Trail (above the falls)— 57%

- North Coast Ridge Road (PRT connector) — 40%

- Buckeye — 26%

- Cruikshank — 25%

If dispersed campsites in the South Coast - Dispersed Zone (Alms Ridge, Prewitt Ridge, Los Burros, San Martin Top, Plaskett Ridge) show evidence of overuse, would you be willing to see use restrictions placed on them?

- Yes — 91%

- No — 8%

Would you support implementing Designated Campsite Areas with the goals of reducing overuse and/or human impacts on natural resources and an improved visitor experience?

- Yes — 62%

- No —19%

If you answered yes to the above and are familiar with the South Coast - Dispersed Zone, which geographic areas do you think should be allocated as Designated Campsite Areas?

- Plaskett Ridge — 63%
- Prewitt Ridge — 60%
- Los Burros Road from Highway 1 to the Coast Ridge Road — 53%
- Alms Ridge — 41%
- San Martin Top Area — 40%
- None — 14%

The mission of the Ventana Wilderness Alliance is to protect, preserve, and restore the wilderness qualities and biodiversity of the public lands within California's northern Santa Lucia Mountains and Big Sur coast.

General Comments from the Ventana Wilderness Alliance VUM Survey

Area needs more restrooms along Highway. Too much human waste visible.

The biggest issue at this point is that most folks consider the Bi Sur Coast as a free for all with no real enforcement. Having been on many trails and back roads, you can see how much overuse there is at many of the camps. Spruce Creek, Estrella, Kirk Creek Camps are just to name a few. The different Wilderness and non-wilderness areas need to be managed for their use case for each individual site. Whether increased signage, limited number of users and increased personnel to manage the forest. On any given weekend, there are 50 to 100 Cars parked at Salmon Creek Trailhead.

Designated camping sites limit access to the wilderness. Usually camping sites are all booked which is why people decide to disperse camp. IF they are implemented, I think using a first com first serve method makes it more equitable for all.

17 years owner of Big Sur tours and more. Taking visitors from the Peninsula to Big Sur and back. Also 35 Years Driving Highway one before moving to the Peninsula.

USFS needs more funding for insight ranger enforcement of illegal use/access.

The area has been hugely overused and vastly understaffed for nearly 3 decades now. The problems are complex and any solutions controversial. Existing infrastructure is outdated and inadequate. Staffing levels and funding for agency oversite grossly inadequate.

You have to see the destruction of Plaskett to believe it.

I am not a current resident of Big Sur but lived on the south coast in the past.

Ventana Wilderness Alliance

There are huge mismanagement issues with the Los Padres that over the last five years. Mostly due to the lack of staff, and money available to manage the amount of visitation to these areas. When you have open land with very few employees to enforce the rules, employees who are not trained to care about the core issues, it just cannot be left as a free for all and that is exactly what has happened. There is huge damage done by people off-roading along all the ridge roads, trash, fires, human waste, large groups, and parties, are what is destroying the visitor experience and the environment. It is not necessarily year-round either. It flows in waves of visitation. On some days there is a very nice experience for many. On others it can be awful. The Big Sur Land Use Plan should be what the USFS should look at as a guide for the Big Sur coast. It talks clearly about visitation levels and limits, carrying capacity of the road, use of signs, and more. I look forward to more discussion at the Big Sur Station meeting soon. Thank you.

My wife and I are king time Sierra Club leave no trace hikers and backpackers. The advent of social media posting has meant more people on trails Carrying disposable water bottles they leave on the trails, people carrying radios, and people who go outside to party and take selfies rather than enjoy and preserve the wilderness.

I live in San Luis Obispo County

more ranger patrols and enforcement. Porta potties at designated parking locations.

The USFS needs to have fully funded positions to implement any sort of oversight that comes out of this survey.

We have a cabin at Plaskett ridge and frequently put out lingering campfires and pick up trash from non-designated (and unmonitored) campsites.

I have watched over the many years living in Big Sur the dispersed camping gets completely out of control with barely any management or enforcement. This has led to destruction of this sensitive natural environment. The protections of Big Sur in its natural state should be the top priority for all agencies. With the ever-increasing fire danger, we live in now and increased visitation due to social media dispersed camping should be banned all together, which has been done in other sensitive Forest Service lands and should only be open for day use from sunrise to sunset. We also need an LEO that resides on the South Coast of Big Sur and is solely responsible for that area of the Los Padres.

Very important that something be done to manage the dispersed camping!! Thank you!!

The "easy access" areas off Nacimiento-Fergusson Rd down to Prewitt Ridge have been out of control with too many people - often very irresponsible visitors. Another often overloaded area is Alder Creek and the "spur" roads accessed via Los Burros which lead to the San Martin Top area.

These are forcing you to choose and conclude that permits are only solution. Until there is more infrastructure, none of these should be an option. Only open to public, what you

are going to be responsible for. Only allow the amount of public that you can control, such as fires, feces, trash, off road driving very out of control. Lock. It. Down.

I'm an older backpacker in the SC area. I avoid weekend camping. Human traffic has steadily increased in 25 years. Obviously, it's time to implement some controls.

There needs to be more public camping sites along the coast. The FS should be building more campgrounds and working with landowners to build more public camping. The number of campsites needs to be increased by at least 400 percent. That would start to accommodate the number of people currently camping illegally. Rather than always trying to restrict, we should be trying to accommodate more people. It's not complicated or difficult and would pay for itself.

We must keep wild areas wild.

I filled a survey out, but then I got to thinking of the issues with dogs. Everyone seems to have one. I know federal lands allow them, but why? When I walk, I find dog scat often in plastic bags along the trail, not to mention I'd rather see a mountain lion than some untrained dog, barking and running after innocent animals. There definitely must be some guidance regarding pets. Thank you.

Re-opening the road to Botchers Gap and the associated trails would take some pressure on more southern parts of the Wilderness, as would opening the NF road and N Coast Ridge Road past Cone Peak.

Wildfire is a big concern of mine. I think fires should be banned year-round outside established campgrounds (Kirk Creek, Plaskett, etc.). I think a quota/permit system should be implemented for Sykes, but it should be done in an equitable way so low-income and BIPOC people are not at a disadvantage. There also need to be more resources allocated for maintaining trails and camps (and wilderness toilets), and more enforcement officers patrolling for illegal and unsafe campfire use.

In general, I think permit usage is a great idea. I feel like a lot of damage to the wilderness is caused by day-trippers that might be deterred by a (small) barrier to entry.

I'd like to see more visible signage about not using drone or amplified music in the Pine ridge trail accessible camps.

Please leave the South Coast areas as they are so everyone can continue to use them in the same way it always has been. Thank you!

I am a resident of Carmel Highlands, hike often but no long camp (80 years old).

Was a property owner on the south coast for over 40 years.

I am not a "Big Sur" resident, but I am a Carmel resident and a teacher in Big Sur. I love the Los Padres and grew up in Caugachua. I want to see it respected not trampled on.

Ventana Wilderness Alliance

There are such limited places for people to stay let alone somewhere "affordable". So just locking the gate doesn't seem right. But a designated area for people to camp needs to have at the minimum a porta potty, pack it in pack it out signs and fires need to be severely fined.

A lot of these questions I answered questioningly based on lack of knowledge. I have seen firsthand how much of a zoo the tourism in the northern Santa Lucia's has become in recent years. Seeing ridiculous amounts of litter, people being unsafe with fires, and driving recklessly has continued to break my heart spending time on the Big Sur coast and communities on the inland boundary of the national forest. There is lots of action that I believe should be taken, but the concern of access for local people always looms slightly.

In my recent trips to the south coast, I have seen an uptick of camping (tents, camp chairs) set up on the bluffs overlooking the ocean. I never minded people sleeping out on the bluffs as a stopover, but I do take exception to full on camping out on the bluffs. The amount of dispersed camping on Plaskett ridge and along Nacimiento roads has grown over the years and it borders on the absurd. Fires left unattended, roads congested and/or blocked completely. Campers leaving trash behind. All degrading the experience and the landscape that I came to love about the south coast. When I first traveled there in the late '70's, the USFS had rangers that patrolled the region and kept most of these activities from occurring. I would not mind paying extra fees to support patrolling one again. Perhaps a social media awareness campaign as I am certain social media has informed the masses of the beauty of BS and SC in recent years.

A reasonable balance must be established and enforced to protect natural resources and prevent human caused wildfire while providing low impact public access to public lands.

Thank you!

Campfires should only be permitted in car campgrounds during appropriate seasons; there's no good reason to allow them elsewhere (especially in Wilderness). Also, "Big Sur Trailhead" is not a very useful term (too many "Big Sur" place names!) "Pine Ridge Trailhead" is far more informative.

I've been camping & hiking in the Big Sur area for 50+ years, it's my favorite area to unplug. Unfortunately, too many people who have no respect for the wilderness are swarming to the area and abusing it. I don't know what the answer is, but something needs to be done to protect this natural treasure while safeguarding respectful use.

I hope to see more public access and trail work for our wonderful wilderness in the future.

With the locked gates that we are dealing with now. I find it hard to believe that it will get any better. The problem is that there is no one to 'manage' the gates and the campers on a daily basis. So, they cut the gate posts (the wooden ones); remove the locks and

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chains. Also, the gates are difficult to open. One of my neighbors has greased the gate at the Nacimiento summit, it was almost impossible to open. That is an example (to me) of the Forest Service not being able to/ or wanting to take care of the gates.

Before the last 4 miles of Palo Colorado Road was closed, after the Soberanes Fire, Bottchers Gap Campground and Trailhead was overflowing with visitors. When the county road reopens, and users are once again allowed to drive to Bottchers Gap a new system should be in place to limit the number of people allowed to park at the Gap for campers and trailhead parking. A reservation system should be in place to camp or park at Bottchers, so people don't drive all the way up to the Gap and seek illegal alternatives. I believe we should have a permanent fire ban that coincides with the back yard burn season. Dec 1-April 30th fires could be allowed with a permit, other times of the year absolutely no open flame. A permit system does not have to be onerous and could be on-line, but it needs to provide accountability.

South Coast Designated camping areas must include maintained restroom facilities (i.e. pit toilet) in the vicinity and regular enforcement patrols that can be supported with user fees/online permit.

Since I've been hiking in the Ventana in the late 70s I've seen trail access to the Wilderness sadly decline. I believe part of the problem with overuse of some trails/areas is due to areas which were previously easily accessible being choked off. I'm thinking for instance of access to the Little Sur Valley via Bottcher's Gap, Sinner Ridge Trail, Pico Public Trail via the OCR to Mt Manuel Trail, Carmel River Trail, trails in the Wilderness past Pine Valley. Travel in these areas has become increasingly limited or effectively impossible. I would wish for a greater emphasis on clearing and opening back up these traditional areas, which could only then reduce pressure on the few areas that currently remain accessible to the public.

The Ventana and Silver Peak Wildernesses are some of the least-visited areas in California. The Ranger districts in these areas have acted wholly inappropriately over the past 5 years, in my opinion. These areas are rugged, challenging and less known than other areas of California, and receive hardly any foot traffic. Wilderness areas are protected so that citizens can enjoy and use them freely. The over-regulation of this area would diminish the value of having them. The various Ranger districts have already inappropriately blocked access to massive swaths of public lands over the past 5 years. USFS should continue to keep the same regulations in place that currently exist or remove regulation. They should NOT add to this.

it is important to distinguish vehicular abuse of drivable areas from backpackers camping in the back country. The former is a problem. The latter is not.

The Monterey District needs greater staffing (Wilderness Manager/Trail Crew, etc...), and facilities need to be rehabilitated and staffed such as the Cachagua, Salmon Creek and Indians Ranger Stations, the Merle Ranch, and the Brazil Ranch. Let's use the resources!

Ventana Wilderness Alliance

Highway 1 Toll should be the beginning. Let the forest remain a place for free. Too many permits and fees to get out there these days.

On several occasions last fall I made data collection observations west from San Martín Top for about a mile, to where the road ended. I went in late afternoon, too early to note campfires (at a time when they were not allowed) but always found campers with piles of firewood at their campsites and regular evidence of past-tense campfires in many locations which I broke up and raked out so I could tell when new ones had been made. On one occasion I encountered more than 20 vehicles in less than a mile and dozens of people all looking for camp spots and pulling off just anywhere and setting up camp. I never saw any USFS patrol up there. I found people camping up there even when the road was closed during the Dolan fire. I am very concerned about the depredation of the environment due to ignorant, unregulated overuse and the very real fire danger o an area with thousands of dead tan oaks which has not burned in at least 35 years. In conducting my surveys, I met a few seasoned people who had camped there for many years who are as appalled as I am of current conditions.

Please help us conserve Big Sur and the national forest.

I believe that the real issue is that there has been little to no enforcement presence in the South Coast Dispersed Camping Areas leading to blatant overuse of the area. This, along with a lack of available educational information has made the situation worse. These are public lands that belong to all citizens of the United States and should not be privatized or monetized. Day use visitation should be unlimited in these wilderness areas regardless of whatever decision is made about overnight camping.

The forest and wilderness belong to the people, and visitation should not become monetized. It would be a shame to see public areas of Big Sur become privatized in access. The main issue with the SCDCA overuse is that no one is currently patrolling regularly to enforce proper wilderness and camping etiquette. How can we jump from having little to no patrolling and enforcement to having locked gates and permits? It seems like a middle ground should be approached first. Every time I have visited the Pacific Valley Station, there is no one there to answer questions. Will we suddenly have agents working there to issue permits and educate people? I think we could start by having an officer patrol the roads of the South Coast on the busiest days of Friday and Saturday, enforcing fire restrictions and proper camp placement and behavior. Word would spread that the South Coast has a regular patrol that holds visitors accountable to

their actions. This would eliminate the desire in some people to visit this area, and for those busy weekends in which there is still an influx of visitors, they would all be behaving with respect to this landscape.

I own a property on Plaskett ridge rd.

Thank you for this opportunity and for all the work you do! In summary, I'd like to see a gradual increase of more restroom infrastructure, visitor education signage, and daily monitoring by forest service personnel before going to a permit system. I would support the permit system if these other measures don't work.

Tubs should be built and maintained at Sykes. Any fees charged should support public infrastructure including trails and toilets.
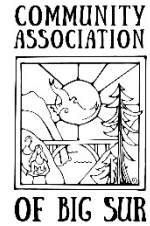
CABS Survey
Future of Land Management Handout 3

Dear Big Sur Neighbors and Friends,

As a result of Big Sur community concerns over growing visitor impacts on Big Sur federal lands, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) has initiated an in-depth, collaborative, multi-year process called Visitor Use Management (VUM) to determine what changes, if any, need to be made to improve and reduce visitor impacts.

Community Input Meeting June 8th

Please put June 8th, 2022, on your calendar to participate in an all-day discussion with the USFS to provide input regarding current conditions and future desired conditions in the use of federal lands by visitors and residents. This will be an in-person meeting at the Big Sur Lodge from 10 am to 3 pm. An agenda and logistical details will be sent one week prior to the meeting. The success of the VUM process will rely on input from our community.

Important Survey Input Requested by Friday, May 27th

It is important to this process to hear from as many residents as possible. However, we understand that not everyone can attend a full day meeting. To provide an additional way to provide input, we have designed a brief survey that you can complete, whether you attend the meeting or not. The more responses we receive, the more clarity our community and the US Forest Service team will have to craft the best solutions possible.

Work to Date

The USFS VUM team has been meeting for many months gathering preliminary information alongside a group of Big Sur residents and owners, and representatives from the Ventana Wilderness Alliance. Current participants include:

VUM Stakeholder Committee
Tom Collins - CABS
Butch Kronlund - CABS
Bree Harlan -South Coast Residents Rep.
Gordon Johnson – VWA
Krikor Andonian - VWA
Richard Popchak – VWA
John (Fin) Eifert - USFS Chair
Tim Short - USFS

USFS VUM Project Team
John (Fin) Eifert - USFS Chair
Tim Short - USFS
Nate Koontz - PMC (Parks Management Co.)
Nicholas Shults - PMC
Stephanie Valentine -USDA, Project Manager
Michael Hill - USDA VUM Team Member
Mary Emerick - USDA VUM Team Member

The June 8th meeting and survey are two unique opportunities for our community to inform how Big Sur federal lands will be managed for many years to come.

Questions? Please reach out to us at info@CABigSur.org

With gratitude – Tom Collins & Butch Kronlund, Community Association of Big Sur

The Future of Federal Land Management in Big Sur

SURVEY: Thank you for providing your input to this important survey which will inform how Big Sur federal lands will be managed for many years to come.

Please mail completed survey to CABS at POB 59, Big Sur, CA 93920 no later than May 27th.

Rank questions 2 through 8 according to how you believe these Visitor Impacts are currently being addressed. Select appropriate option for questions 1 and 9. Use "Comments/Examples" to share your thoughts.

1. Where do you reside? Check correct option. In Big Sur ____ or Outside Big Sur ____

2. Illegal Campfires: Comments/Examples

   Insufficient | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Sufficient

   _____

3. Overcrowding: Comments/Examples

   Insufficient | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Sufficient

   _____

4. Visitor Serving Infrastructure: Comments/Examples

   Insufficient | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Sufficient

   _____

5. Law & Forest Orders Enforcement: Comments/Examples

   Insufficient | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Sufficient

   _____

6. Sanitation and Litter: Comments/Examples

   Insufficient | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Sufficient

   _____

7. Trespassing: Comments/Examples

   Insufficient | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Sufficient

   _____

8. Other Impacts: Comments/Examples

   Insufficient | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Sufficient

   _____

9. I will attend the June 8th meeting: Yes ____   No ____

Respondents were asked to rank questions 2 through 8 according to "how you believe these visitor impacts are currently being addressed" (1 = insufficient, 5 = sufficient). Select appropriate option for questions 1 and 9. Use "Comments/Examples" to share your thoughts.

Results are shown for 340 responses, brief summaries of general comment themes are provided.

Question 1: Where do you reside?

In Big Sur	Outside of Big Sur
77%	23%

Question 2: Illegal Campfires

1	2	3	4	5
56%	25%	14%	3%	3%

Question 3: Optional Comments or Examples of above

Most comments addressed the need for more enforcement and on-the-ground presence, education, and higher fines.

Question 4: Overcrowding

1	2	3	4	5
52%	25%	16%	4%	3%

Question 5: Optional Comments or Examples of above

Areas where overcrowding has been experienced were noted including Pine Ridge Trail, Prewitt, Plaskett, South Coast Ridge Road, Pfeiffer Beach, and Sycamore Canyon Road. There are not enough facilities, campsites, parking, and bathrooms to accommodate use. Concerns expressed regarding emergency access. Some commentors feel that the area is advertised too much and there is not adequate enforcement and staff. Others urge careful consideration of capacity.

Question 6: Adequacy of Visitor Serving Infrastructure

1	2	3	4	5
48%	22%	21%	5%	5%

Question 7: Optional Comments or Examples of above

Comments express a need for more infrastructure especially bathrooms and trash cans, campsites, parking, more staff, and staff housing. Balance is needed to protect Big Sur and the natural character.

Question 8: Enforcement of Laws and Forest Orders

1	2	3	4	5
48%	18%	20%	9%	6%

Question 9: Optional Comments or Examples of above

A consensus was expressed in comments regarding the need for additional law enforcement, forest service presence, education, and volunteers. Opportunities for coordination between agencies were noted.

Question 10: Sanitation and Litter

1	2	3	4	5
59%	20%	10%	6%	4%

Question 11: Optional Comments or Examples of above

Examples were provided of issues related to human waste and lack of respect for the land. Comments expressed a need for more infrastructure, especially bathrooms and trash cans. Also, a need for more Forest Service staff, fines, and education. Comments note that volunteers and residents do a lot of clean-up work.

Question 12: Trespassing

1	2	3	4	5
33%	18%	33%	9%	6%

Question 13: Optional Comments or Examples of above

Some comments indicate that trespassing and vandalism have been a problem, while others do not see this as a priority issue. Some comment feel this is a private landowner responsibility, while others see a need for more enforcement presence and education.

Question 14: Other Impacts

Other impacts noted include traffic, litter, overtourism, vandalism, parties, cannabis grows, illegal harvest of native plants, and fires. A need for more education, enforcement of existing rules, weekend patrol, and cell service was expressed. Commenters would like management to follow the Big Sur Land Use Plan.

Question 15: I will attend the June 8th meeting.

Yes	No	Maybe
102	236	1

Appendix C – Management Action Priorities

Prioritizing Potential Management Actions within the Coastal Zone Visitor Use Management Strategy

The Coastal Zone Visitor Use Management Strategy identified issues and opportunities related to management of visitor use within the Monterey Ranger District along Highway 1. The strategy identifies desired conditions and management strategies and actions to move toward achieving those desired conditions.

The tables below identify the short-, medium-, and long-term management strategies and actions, by zone, from the Coastal Zone Visitor Use Management Strategy. Each action item will display a corresponding icon or icons correlating to the need for one of the following: Forest Service involvement, partnership opportunities, funding needs, and analysis needs. This is intended to be a snapshot of the overall VUM Strategy that can be used to prioritize actions and engage potential partners. However, the Coastal Zone Visitor Use Management Strategy document must be referenced for additional detail and context of the strategies and management actions.

Implementation Icons

	Forest Service	Actions that are either led by the Forest Service or have substantial Forest Service participation.
	Partnership Opportunity	Opportunities for community, non-profit, and other agency partners to lead efforts or with opportunities for substantial partner participation or input.
	Funding Needed	Actions that would require additional funding to move forward or implement.
	Analysis Needed	Actions for which analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), or other compliance documentation is needed, including additional public involvement, prior to implementation.

Timeframe

The actions are grouped by short-, medium-, and long-term, in reference to the ability to implement and additional planning steps that may be needed to move toward implementation. Some potential actions may shift in priority depending on available funding, agency priorities and staffing, and partner involvement. This is a general grouping of the actions for panning purposes.

Short-term actions: Actions for which implementation could begin immediately under existing management direction. Generally low levels of funding and no, or minimal additional analysis or compliance documentation needed.

Medium-term actions: High priority actions that generally require additional planning or coordination, funding sources may need to be identified, and some level of additional analysis or compliance documentation may be needed.

Long-term actions: Generally, more complex, long-term strategies and actions that require funding sources to be identified, additional planning, and additional analysis or compliance documentation is needed.

Partnerships and the Larger Big Sur Area

Strategies

- **Education:** Information sharing and coordination
- **Engineering:** Transportation and infrastructure coordination
- **Enforcement:** Law Enforcement presence and patrol

Short-term actions

Table 3. Short-term actions for the Larger Big Sur area

Implementation Icons	Actions
	Education: Real time information sharing and FAQ documents.
	Education: Monitor social media for awareness of events, visitor experiences, potential issues to address.

Medium-term Actions

Table 4. Medium-term actions for the Larger Big Sur area

Implementation Icons	Actions
	Education: Coordinate with tourism entities regarding marketing a broader spectrum of opportunities and messaging in alignment with desired conditions.
	Education: Monitor social media, and messaging aligned with desired conditions.
	Education: Volunteer entity assisting with public education.
	Engineering: Local businesses coordinate creative opportunities to accommodate some of the public demand for parking, toilets, and trash cans.
	Engineering: Work with state and private partners to identify overflow camping options on or near the coast to accommodate late arrivals when all campsites are full (with limitations on length of stay)
$	**Enforcement:** Increased Law Enforcement Presence and coordination between law enforcement entities

Long-term Actions

Table 5. Long-term actions for the Larger Big Sur area

Implementation Icons	Actions
	Education: Google and Apple maps updated for areas of public access.
	Education: Coordinate with social service organizations to provide information and assistance to non-recreational campers.
	Engineering: Big Sur Area Shuttle System Partnership
	Engineering: Tourism funds reinvested into infrastructure; partnerships to leverage funds on joint projects.
	Engineering: Participate in collaborative efforts to find creative solutions to housing issues for seasonal and full-time staff.
	Enforcement: Big Sur Fire annual academy: incorporate training for local patrol of campfires, fire basics, youth engagement, partnership, and volunteer opportunities

Whole Project Area

Strategies:

Education: Implement a suite of actions designed to inform visitors and reduce impacts.

Engineering: Utilize or reconfigure existing facilities to improve visitor experience.

Enforcement: Provide a presence and needed restrictions to protect resources and provide for human health and safety.
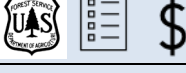
Short-term actions

Table 6. Short-term actions for the whole project area

Implementation Icons	Actions
	Education: Information, interpretation, and sign plan
	Education: Tribal coordination regarding information and interpretation
	Enforcement: Policies and procedures for emergency closures due to events such as landslides, floods, and fire.

Medium-term Actions

Table 7. Medium-term actions for the whole project area

Implementation Icons	Actions
	Education: Use creative social media campaigns and engage social media influencers to share messages about visitor ethics, types of camping opportunities, fire risk, etc.
	Engineering: Assess facilities for accessibility and address deficiencies (prioritize the ones used most often)
	Engineering: Identify locations for placement of portable toilets and trash cans during peak visitation season.
	Engineering: Look for opportunities to increase safe roadside parking, restrooms facilities and trash cans.
	Engineering: Interagency coordination on management of invasive weeds, especially along roads
	Enforcement: Seasonal or year-round fire restrictions for high-risk areas and seasonal post-fire recovery closures
	Enforcement: Increased law enforcement and field staff presence/increased collaboration with other agency law enforcement
	Enforcement: Establish a resident hotline for reporting incidents and designate personnel to answer it

Long-term Actions

Table 8. Long-term actions for the whole project area

Implementation Icons	Education
	Education: Guided tour opportunities
	Enforcement: Consider increased fines for illegal campfires

North Coast

Strategies

Education: Implement a suite of actions designed to inform visitors and reduce impacts

Engineering: Utilize or reconfigure existing facilities to improve visitor experience

Enforcement: Provide an increased presence and needed restrictions at Pfeiffer Beach

Short-term actions

Table 9. Short-term actions for the North Coast area

Implementation Icons	Actions
🌲 🤝 $	**Education:** Increase staffing at the Multi-Agency Facility
🌲 🤝	**Education:** Real-time campsite availability information shared between agencies
🌲	**Enforcement:** Concessionaire Staffing (or other) to support consistent management and regulation at Pfeiffer Beach
🌲	**Enforcement:** Additional patrol and enforcement of existing day-use and campfire limitations at Pfeiffer Beach

Medium-term Actions

Table 10. Medium-term actions for the North Coast area

Implementation Icons	Actions
🌲 🤝 $	**Education:** Interpretive messaging including videos, kiosks, signs
🌲 🤝	**Education:** Pre-trip planning information
🌲 🤝	**Education:** Education on biophysical resources
🌲 📋	**Engineering:** Pfeiffer Beach transportation plan including signs and information updates regarding real-time site availability.
🌲 📋 $	**Engineering:** Consider opportunities to increase bathroom and trash can capacity at existing developed sites.

Long-term Actions

Table 11. Long-term actions for the North Coast area

Implementation Icons	Actions
🌲 🤝 📋 $	**Engineering:** Brazil Ranch masterplan
🌲 🤝	**Engineering:** Complete a trail and trailhead inventory and provide trail network information to the public.
🌲 📋 $	**Engineering:** Consider need for additional trailheads or additional trailhead parking
🤝	**Engineering:** Collaboration to reduce private vehicle usage through shuttles or public transportation, "park it" initiative.

South Coast Coastal

Strategies

Education: Implement a suite of actions designed to inform visitors and reduce impacts

Engineering: Reduce visitor impacts and increase health and safety at sites

Enforcement: Provide a presence and needed restrictions

Short-term actions

Table 12. Short-term actions for the South Coast Coastal area

Implementation Icons	Actions
	Education: Install information kiosks at key access points. Staffed kiosks at the bottoms of Nacimiento, Los Burros, and Plaskett Roads during peaks use season. Consider Forest Service, partner, and volunteer staffing options for the kiosks.
	Education: Utilize Salmon Creek station as a portal information station, consider temporary staffing options for peak use season and long-term future development plan.
	Engineering: Ensure public access to restroom facilities at the Mill Creek, Willow Creek, and Sand Dollar Day Use Areas (DUA's), appropriate signs and consistent policy to manage.

Medium-term Actions

Table 13. Medium-term actions for the South Coast Coastal area

Implementation Icons	Actions
	Education: Interpretive messaging including videos, kiosks, signs
	Engineering: Explore appropriate management of recreation use at San Carpoforo Beach including viability of restrooms and parking expansion (FS parcel across highway from existing site south of bridge)
	Engineering: Determine maintenance backlog needs at existing sites and maintain sites to standard.
	Engineering: Identify locations to safely provide community campfires within developed sites to provide the desired experience while reducing individual campfires.
	Enforcement: Enforce relevant forest orders at San Carpoforo and consider the need for a seasonal restriction for plovers
	Enforcement: Increase law enforcement presence in the evenings
	Enforcement: Create a citizen channel for reporting incidents

Long-term Actions

Table 14. Medium-term actions for the South Coast Coastal area

Implementation Icons	Actions
	Education: Prepare Salmon Creek Station Master Plan
	Engineering: Determine opportunities for expanding or reconfiguring existing developed sites to meet camping demand
	Engineering: Determine best management for developed sites
	Engineering: Update the Recreation facility analysis
	Enforcement: Develop any necessary agreements to coordinate law enforcement and volunteer patrol

South Coast Dispersed

Strategies

Education: Implement a suite of actions designed to inform visitors and reduce impacts

Engineering: Reduce visitor impacts and increase health and safety at sites

Enforcement: Provide a presence and needed restrictions

Short-term actions

Table 15. Short-term actions for the South Coast Dispersed area

Implementation Icons	Actions
	Education: Focused education on reducing impacts from large events and road use (see South Coast Coastal - kiosks at key access points)
	Education: Real-time campsite availability information shared between agencies.
	Enforcement: Increase law enforcement presence in the evenings and early mornings

Medium-term Actions

Table 16. Medium-term actions for the South Coast Dispersed area

Implementation Icons	Actions
	Education: Interpretive messaging including videos, kiosks, signs
	Education: Pre-trip planning information made readily available
	Education: Education on biophysical resources
	Engineering: Pilot "designated dispersed" camping system for Plaskett
	Engineering: Enforce requirement for special use permits for large groups (over 75), include stipulations for port-a-potties, access considerations, site-clean up, etc.
	Enforcement: Increase on-site volunteer or paid information/education/patrol

Long-term Actions

Table 17. Long-term actions for the South Coast Dispersed area

Implementation Icons	Actions
	Engineering: Identify road maintenance needs and capacity to maintain adequate fire or emergency ingress/egress and provide recreational access.
	Engineering: Seek partnerships and funding to support road maintenance needs
	Engineering: Determine opportunities for expanding, reconfiguring, or adding new developed sites to meet camping demand.
	Enforcement: Consider needed restrictions: a no campfire or limited campfire regulation for the south coast roads and noise restrictions.
	Enforcement: Collaborate with other agencies through agreements for patrol presence

Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers

Strategies

Education: Implement a suite of actions designed to increase understanding and reduce impacts

Engineering: Reduce campsite impacts in the Sykes area

Engineering: Reduce motor vehicle intrusions

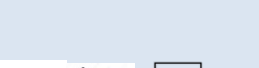**Enforcement:** Enforce restrictions on visitor use

Short-term actions

Table 18. Short-term actions for wilderness and wild and scenic rivers

Implementation Icons	Actions
	Education: Kiosks with information at south coast roads and trailheads
	Education: Ambassadors at trailheads and in the wilderness, continue and expand support for the current VWA ambassador program
	Engineering: Install wilderness boundary signs or barriers where vehicle incursions are occurring
	Enforcement: Maintain active agency presence in the field, particularly at Sykes and near wilderness boundaries on south coast roads but possibly including the other camps prior to Sykes
	Enforcement: Enforce no campfire regulations in the wilderness
	Enforcement: Ensure "tubs" at Sykes don't get built up (remove/restore)
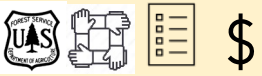
Medium-term Actions

Table 19. Medium-term actions for wilderness and wild and scenic rivers

Implementation Icons	Actions
	Education: Education message or video tailored to wilderness visitors (video or other that visitor is required to watch/sign)
	Education: Design interpretive and informative kiosk signs and install where most needed;
	Engineering: Pine Ridge Trail and Sykes area campsite inventory and capacity decisions
	Engineering: Rehabilitate campsites that are not desired and encourage use of campsites that are durable

Long-term Actions

Table 20. Long-term actions for wilderness and wild and scenic rivers

Implementation Icons	Actions
	Education: Non-agency volunteer "social media manager"
	Enforcement: Permit system for overnight use linked to the number of appropriate campsites on the Pine Ridge Trail

Appendix D – Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility and Justice (DEIAJ)

Climate and Economic Justice (CJEST) screening tool.

DEIAJ analysis of the Big Sur coast, Monterey County, using the CJEST tool

[The White Council on Environmental Quality's CJEST tool](#) is the mandated tool for compliance with Justice 40 directives; however, the CJEST tool eliminated evaluation of any metrics based on race and ethnicity. This was a political compromise.

The Climate and Economic Justice (CJEST) tool uses census tracts. Census tracts are a small unit of geography that generally have populations of between 1,200-8,000 people.

Communities that are disadvantaged live in tracts that experience burdens. These tracts are highlighted in blue gray on the map.

The tool ranks most of the burdens using percentiles. Percentiles show how much burden each tract experiences when compared to other tracts.

Thresholds, or cutoffs, are used to determine if communities in a tract are disadvantaged. Certain burdens use percentages, or a simple yes/no (check mark).

Land within the boundaries of Federally recognized tribes may be highlighted on a map. These communities are also considered disadvantaged.

We are able to track socio-economic factors using the [CDC's Social Vulnerability Index tool](#) and environmental justice metrics combining socio-economic, health and environmental issues using [the EPA's EJ Screen tool](#). This analysis is preliminary in nature. Monterey County's own data on diversity, equity and inclusion (as well as the [CA SCORP and supplemental reports](#)) may provide additional insight on vulnerable communities and their relationship to recreation opportunities provided on the Big Sur coast.

The tools point to several factors that place unfair burdens on citizens. We provide some detail on the nature of those burdens below. Further analysis will be needed to determine what issues can be addressed directly by forest staff, and whether those interventions are best made as part of management changes or programmatic and partnership/engagement efforts.

The tool indicates that none of the census tracks along the Big Sur coast have relevant issues. However, communities north of the study zone (Salinas, Watsonville, Castroville and San Jose) and west of the mountain ridge line (Gonzales, Soledad, Greenfield, King City and Paso Robles) are designated 'disadvantaged.' These communities are along the Hwy 101 corridor. While the issues raised in the analysis below may not be directly actionable by this project, the analysis meets the requirement of understanding which communities are disadvantaged and how under Justice 40. See figure 3 for a map of the study area.
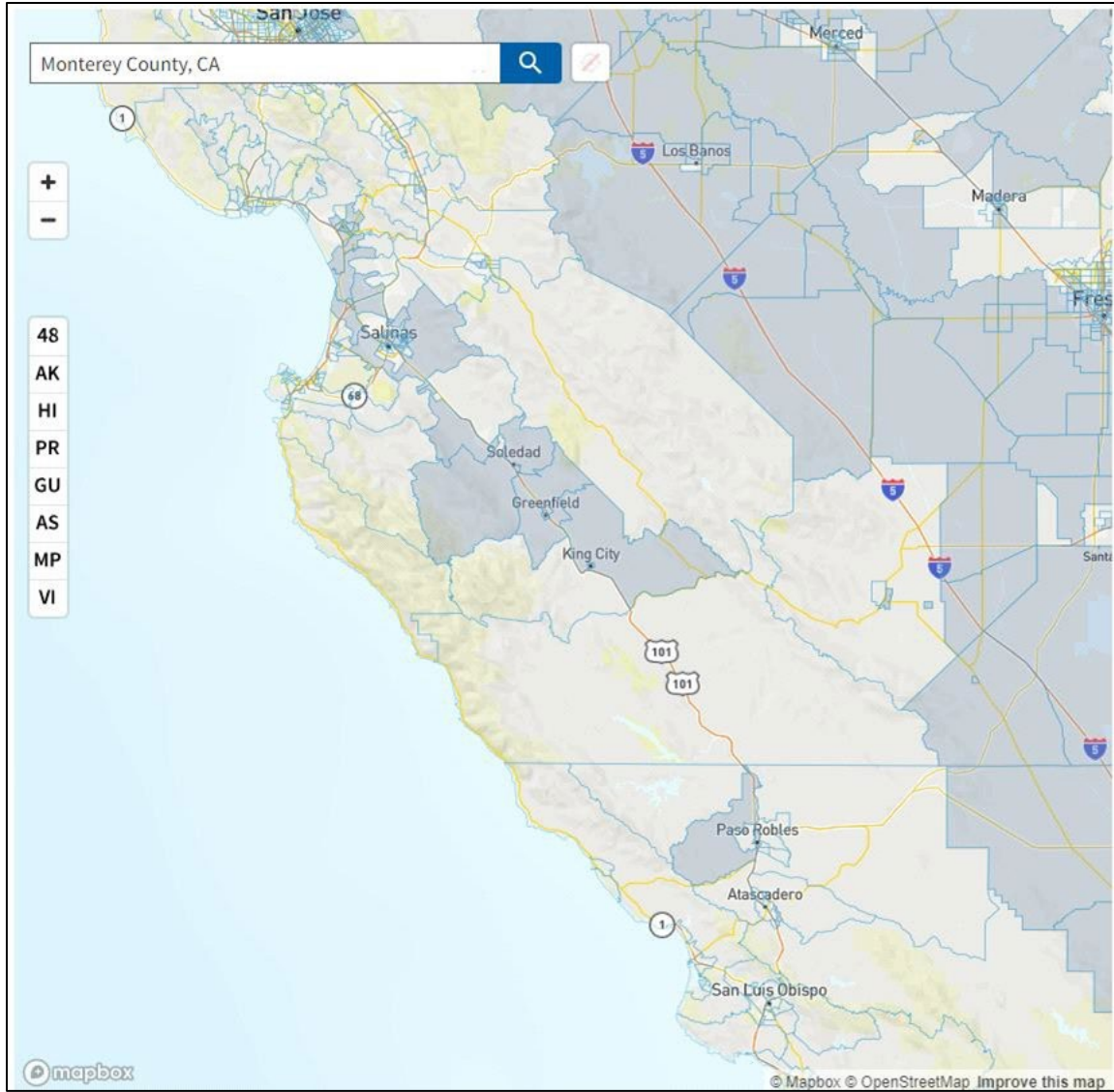
Figure 3. Map of the study zone using the CJEST tool (12/19/2023)

Workforce issues are in the areas of High School Education and Linguistic Isolation. This is typical of communities outside of Salinas' downtown and on the outskirts of Castroville and Watsonville.
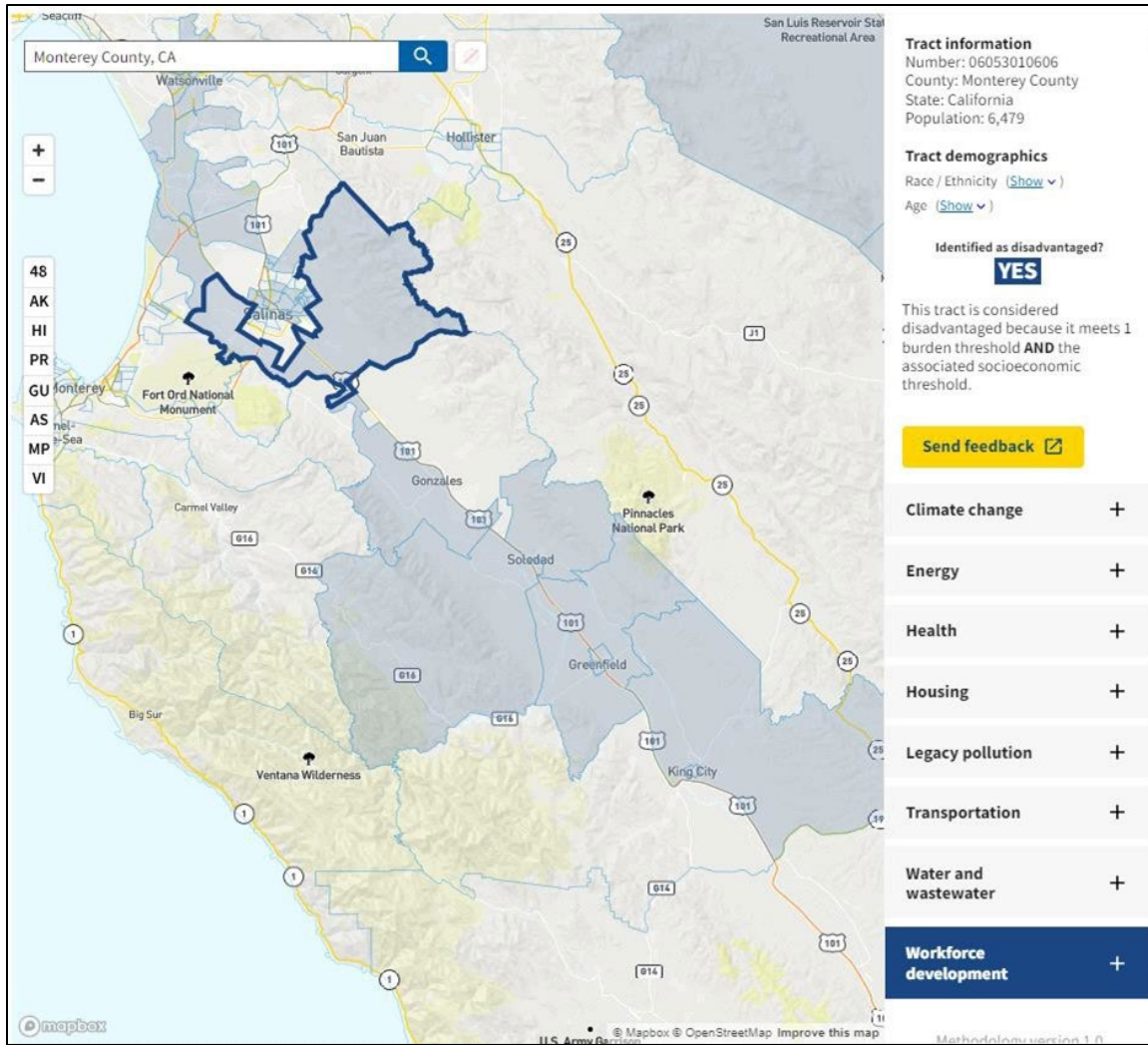
Figure 4. Monterey and Salinas area tract with workforce development issues using the CJEST tool (12/19/2023)
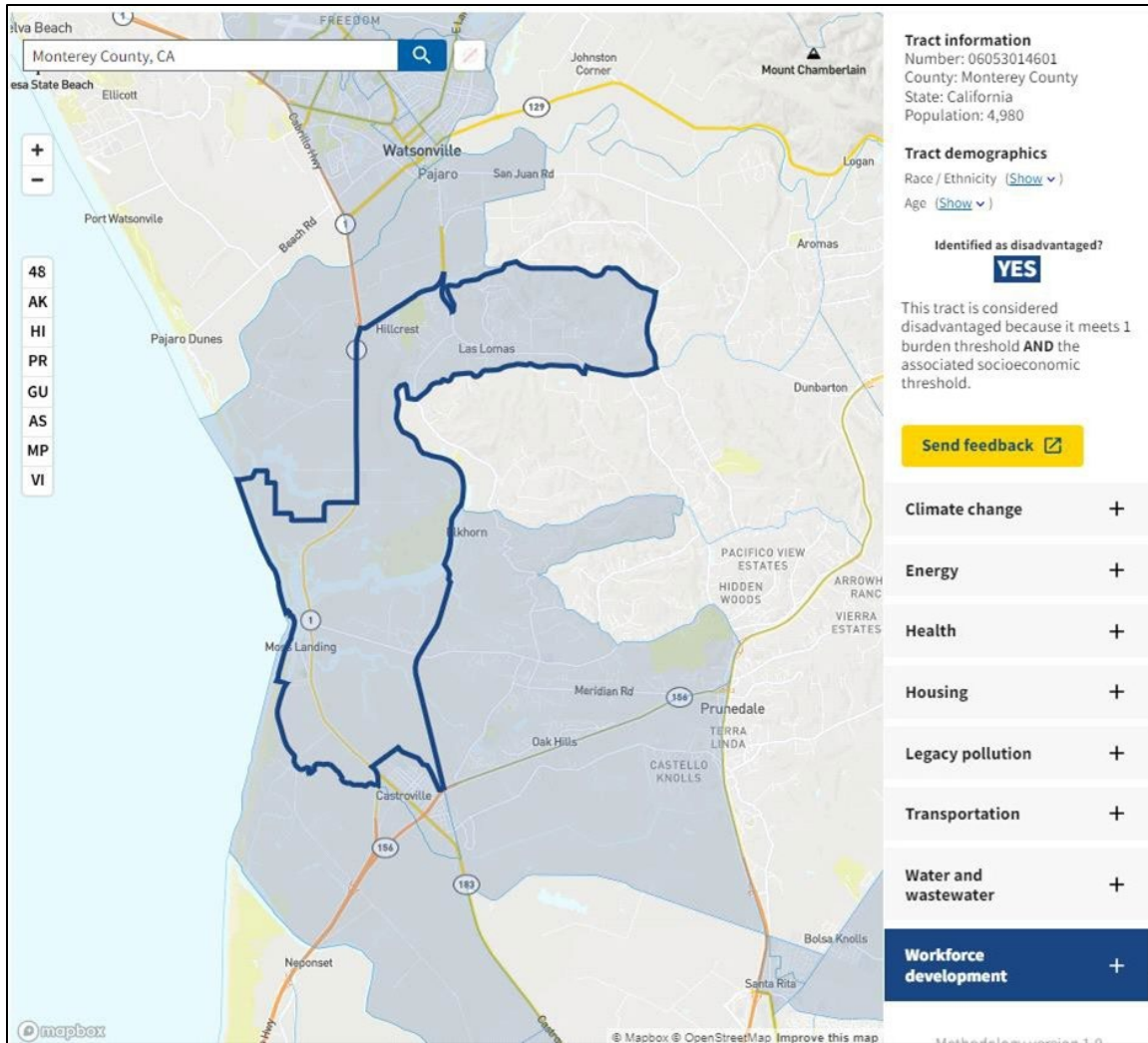
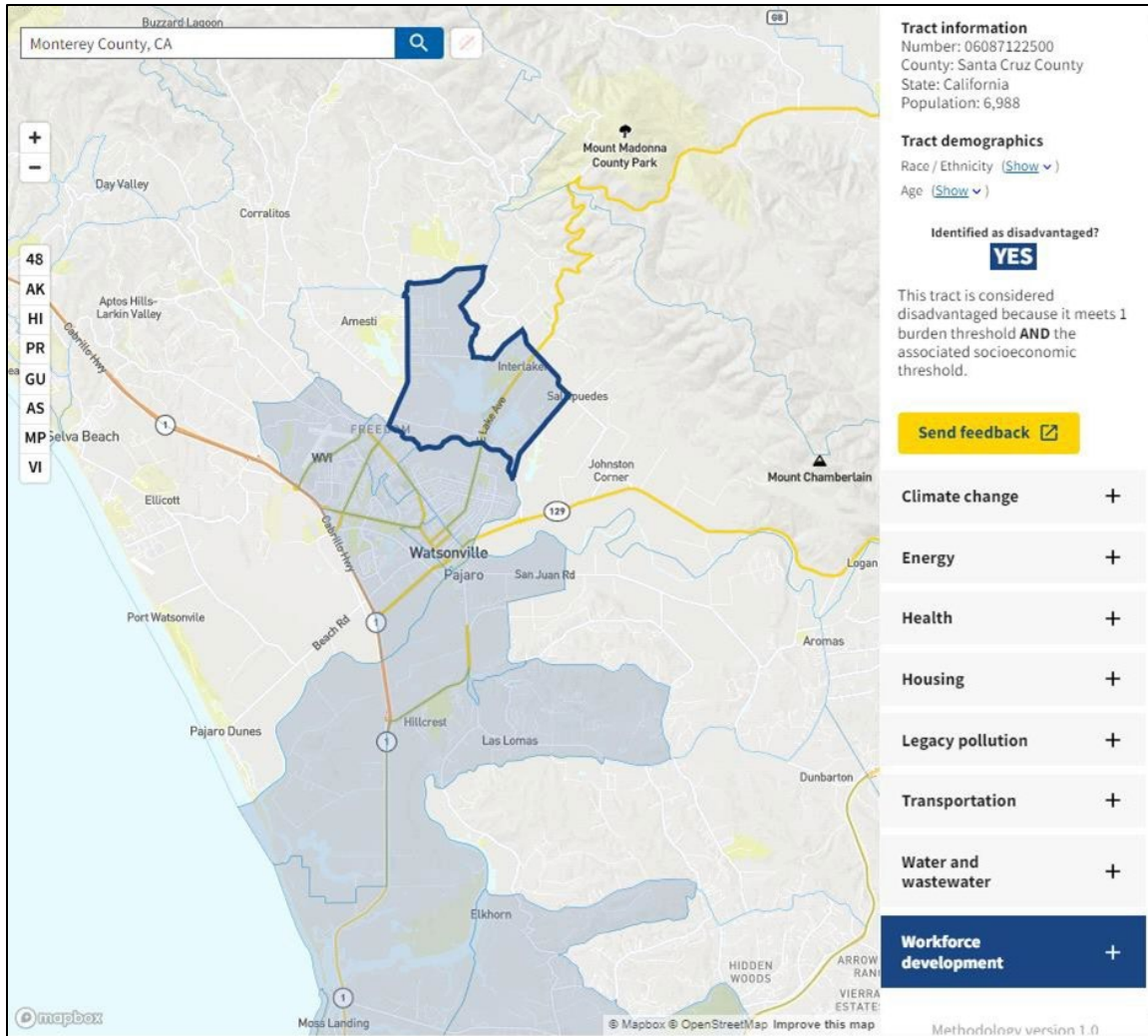**Figure 5. Castroville area tract with workforce development issues using the CJEST tool (12/19/2023)**

Figure 6. Watsonville area tract with workforce development issues using the CJEST tool (12/19/2023)

Communities in Salinas' downtown tend to also suffer from issues with Housing (Cost), Legacy Pollution (Proximity to Risk Management Plan Facilities and Low Income), Transportation (Traffic Proximity and Low Income) and Water and Wastewater (Underground Storage Tanks and Releases and Low Income). In general, the aggravating factor for these environmental issues is the prevalence of low-income families and communities. Data for Castroville and Watsonville is similar.
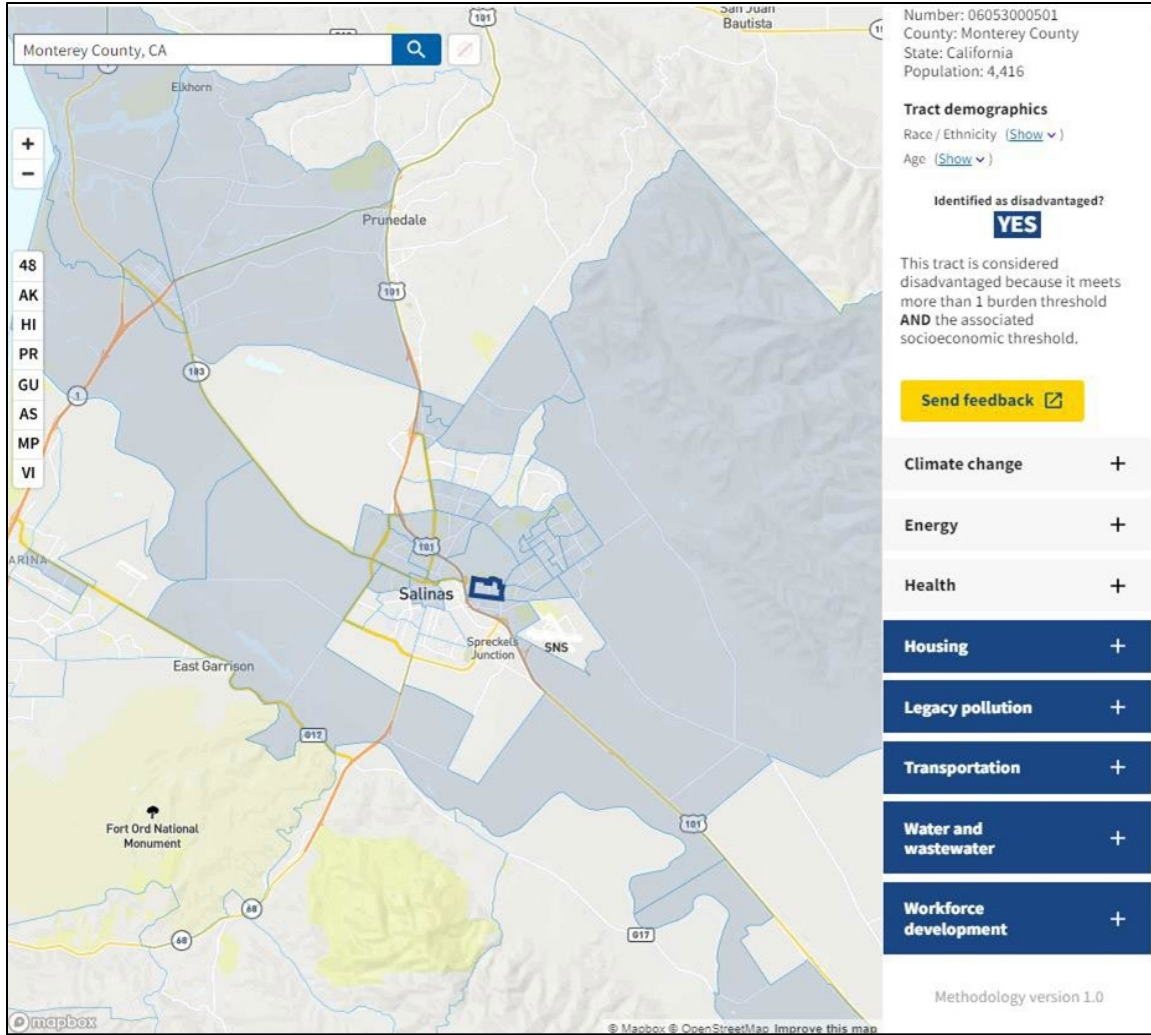
Figure 7. Salinas area tract with housing, legacy pollution, transportation, and water and wastewater issues using the CJEST tool (12/19/2023)
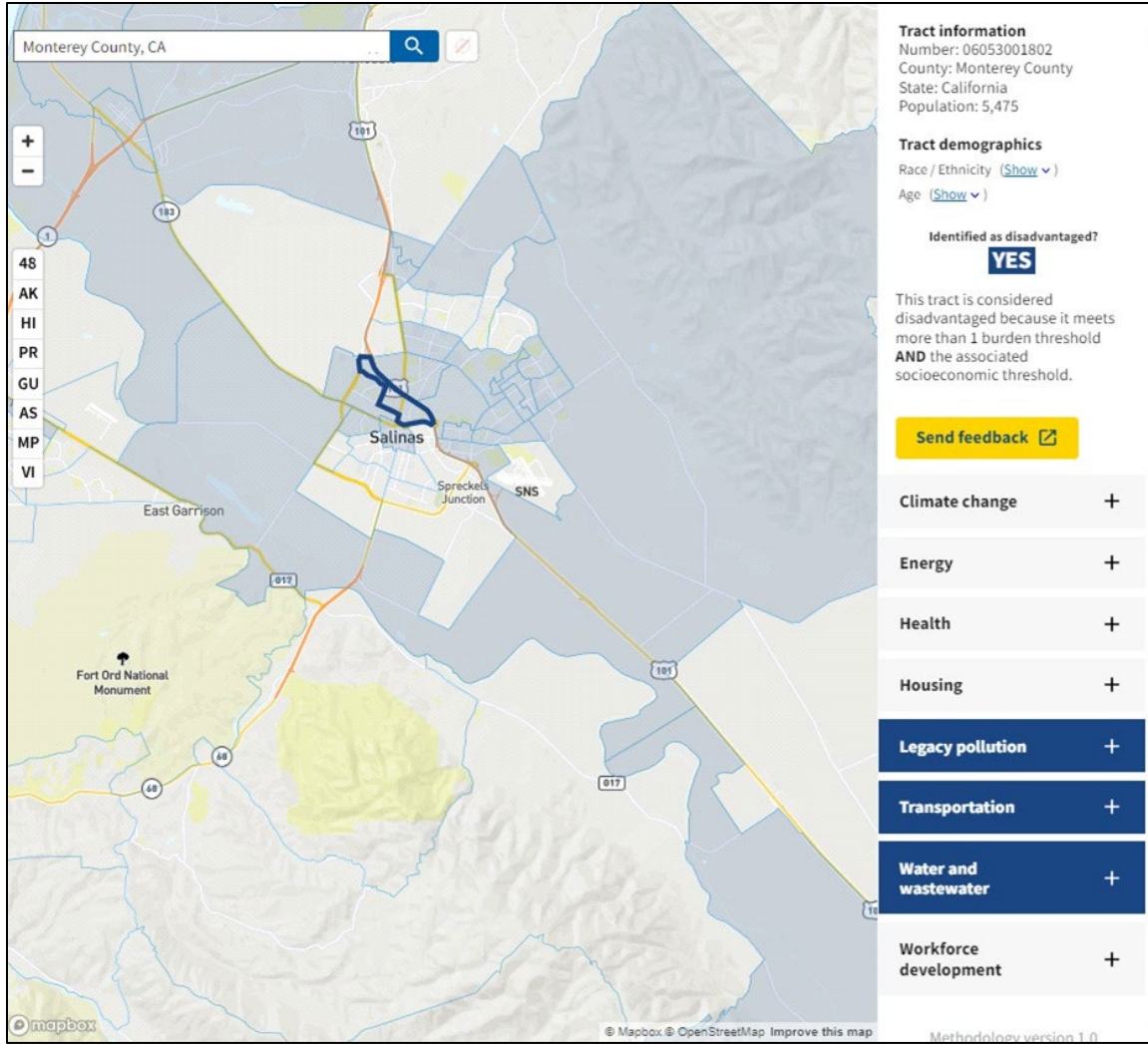
Figure 8. Salinas area tract with legacy pollution, transportation, and water and wastewater issues using the CJEST tool (12/19/2023)
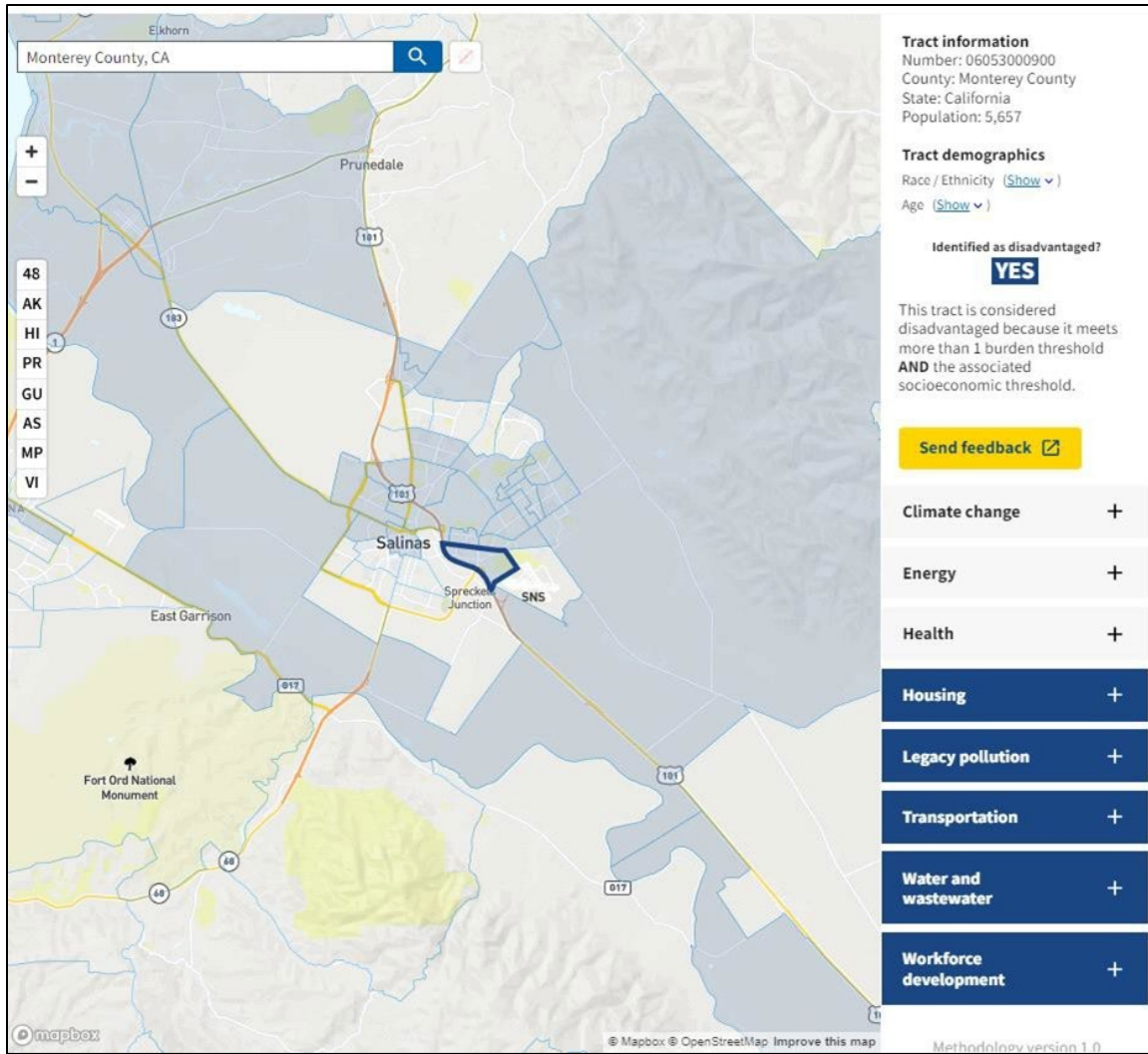
Figure 9. Salinas areas tract with housing, legacy pollution, transportation, water and wastewater, and workforce development issues using the CJEST tool (12/19/2023)
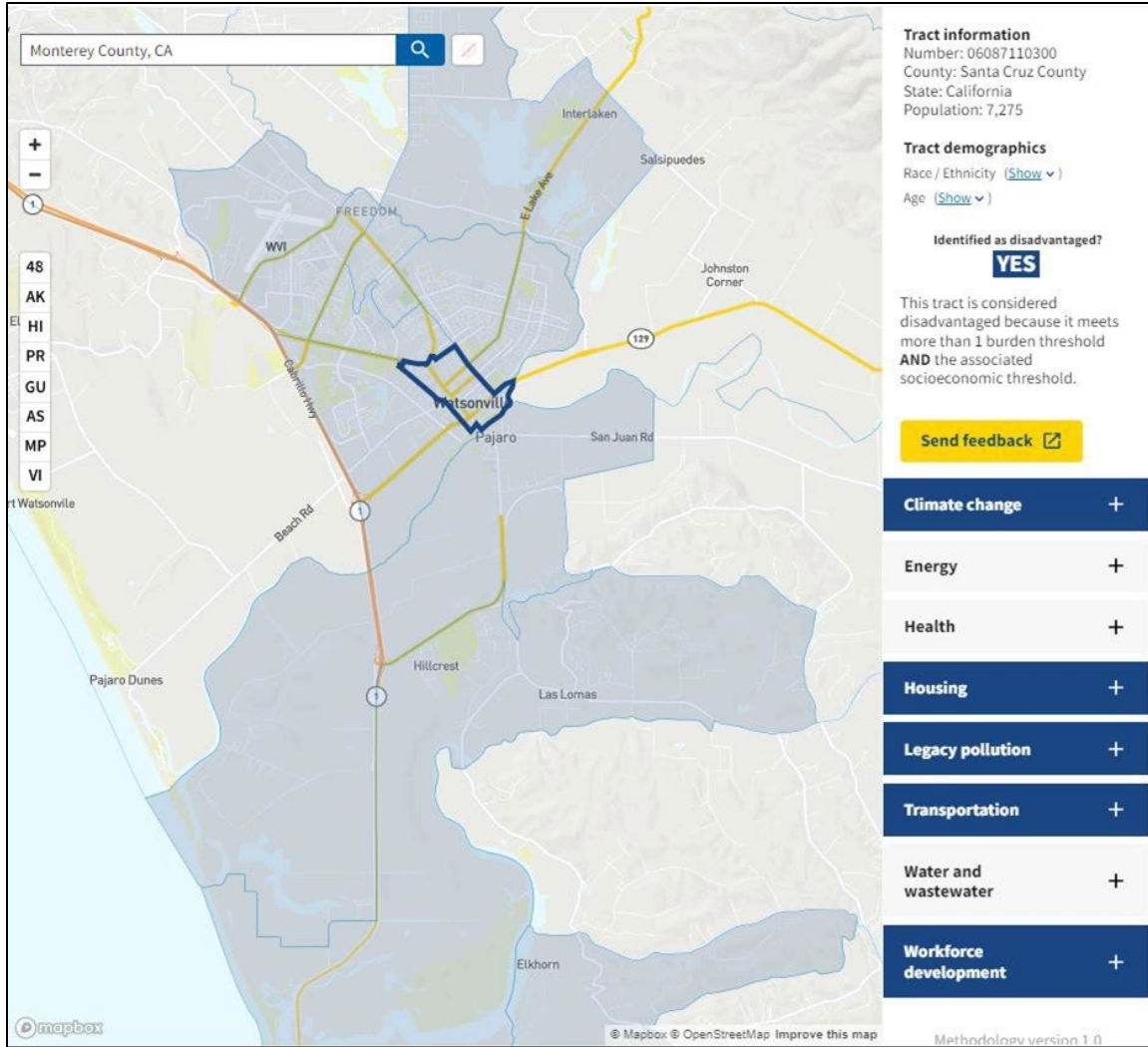
Figure 10. Watsonville area tract with climate change, housing, legacy pollution, transportation, and workforce development issues using the CJEST tool (12/19/2023)
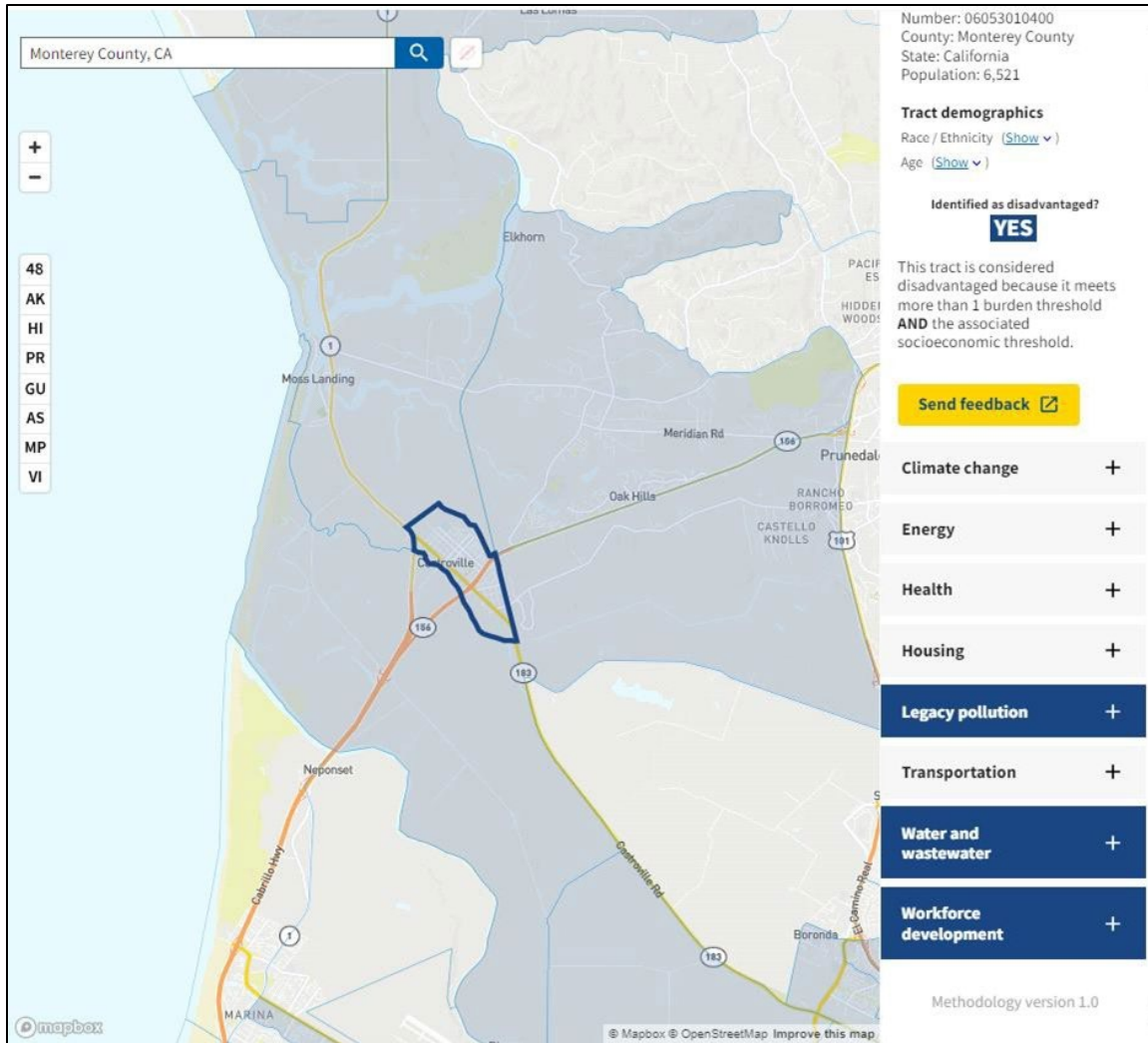
Figure 11. Castroville area tract with legacy pollution, water and wastewater, and workforce development issues using the CJEST tool (12/19/2023)

In San Jose, most disadvantaged communities are east of SR 87 and Interstate 880, and south of the Warm Springs District and Mt. Allison. Issues persist with Workforce Development (Linguistic Isolation, Low Median Income and High School Education).
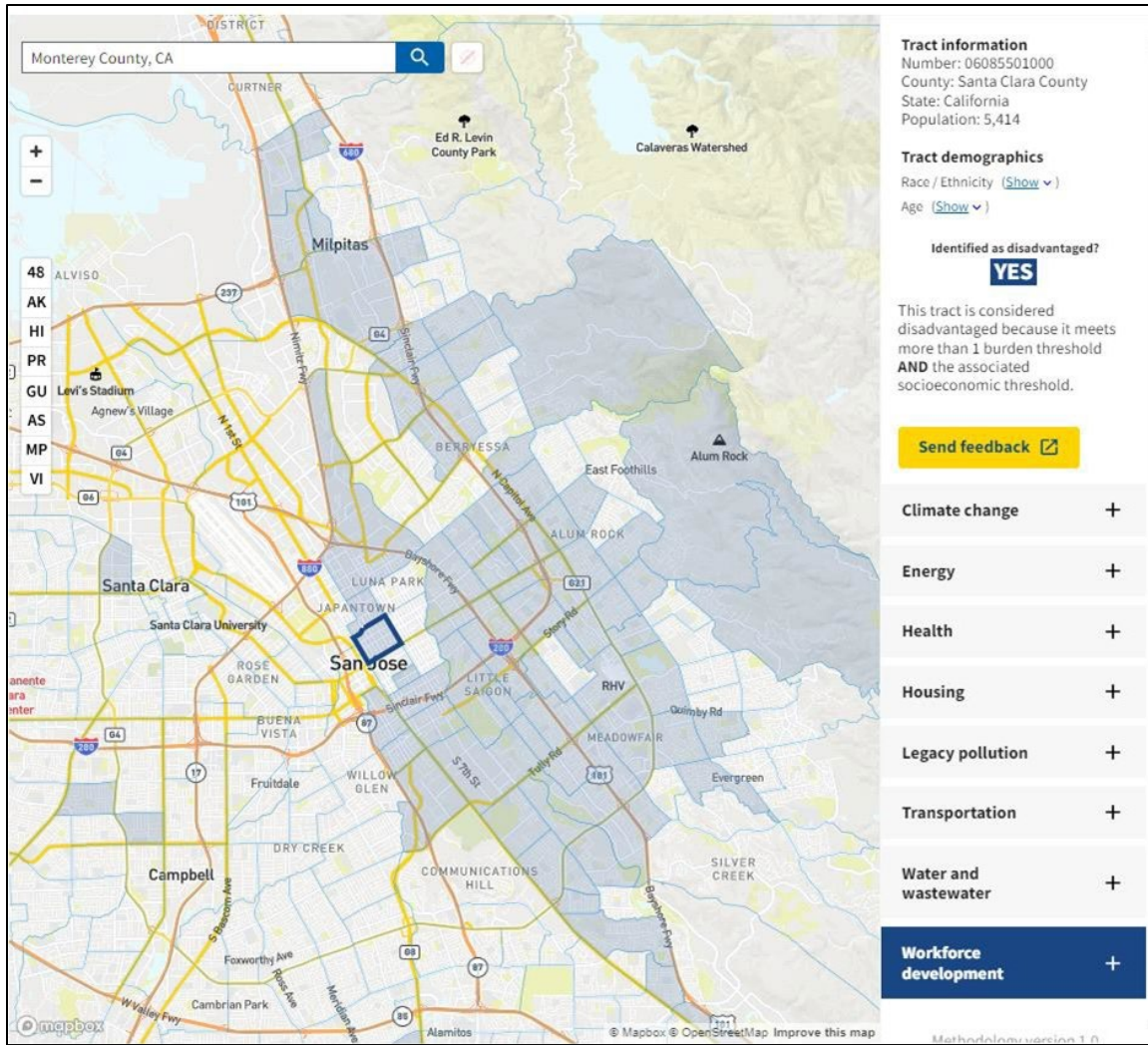
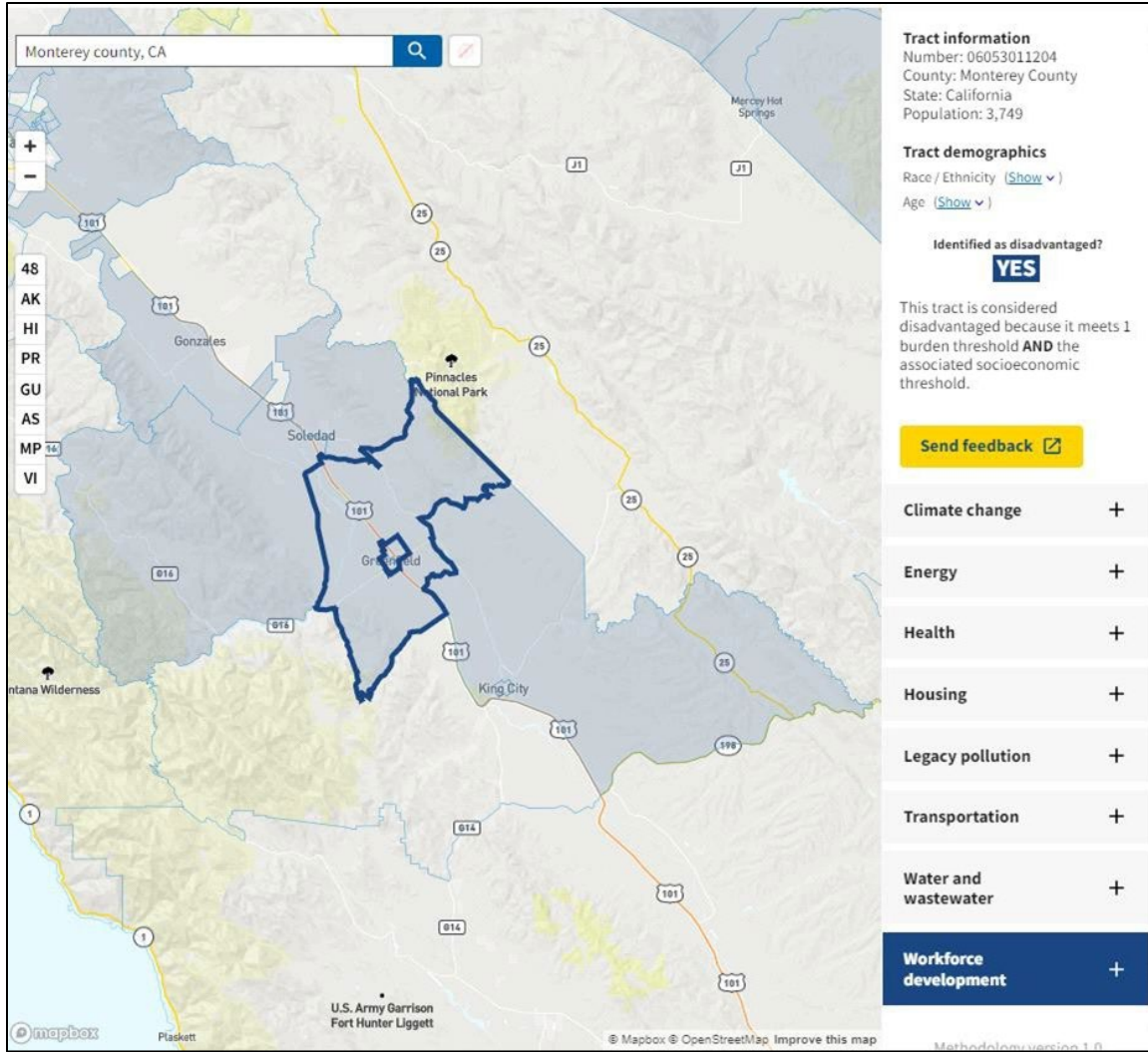**Figure 12. San Jose area tract with workforce development issues using the CJEST tool (12/19/2023)**
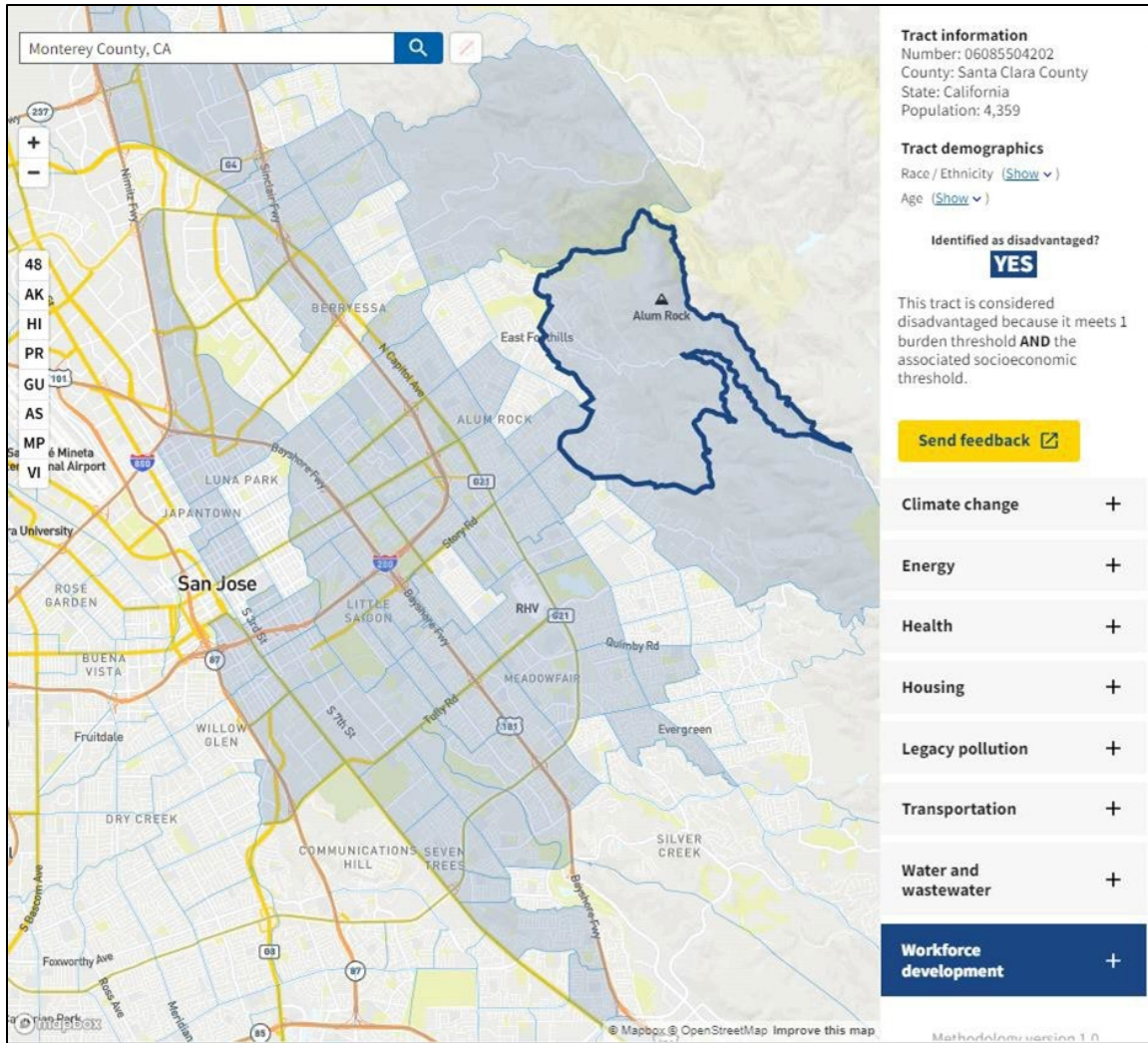
Figure 13. San Jose area tract to the northeast with workforce development issues using CJEST tool (12/19/2023)
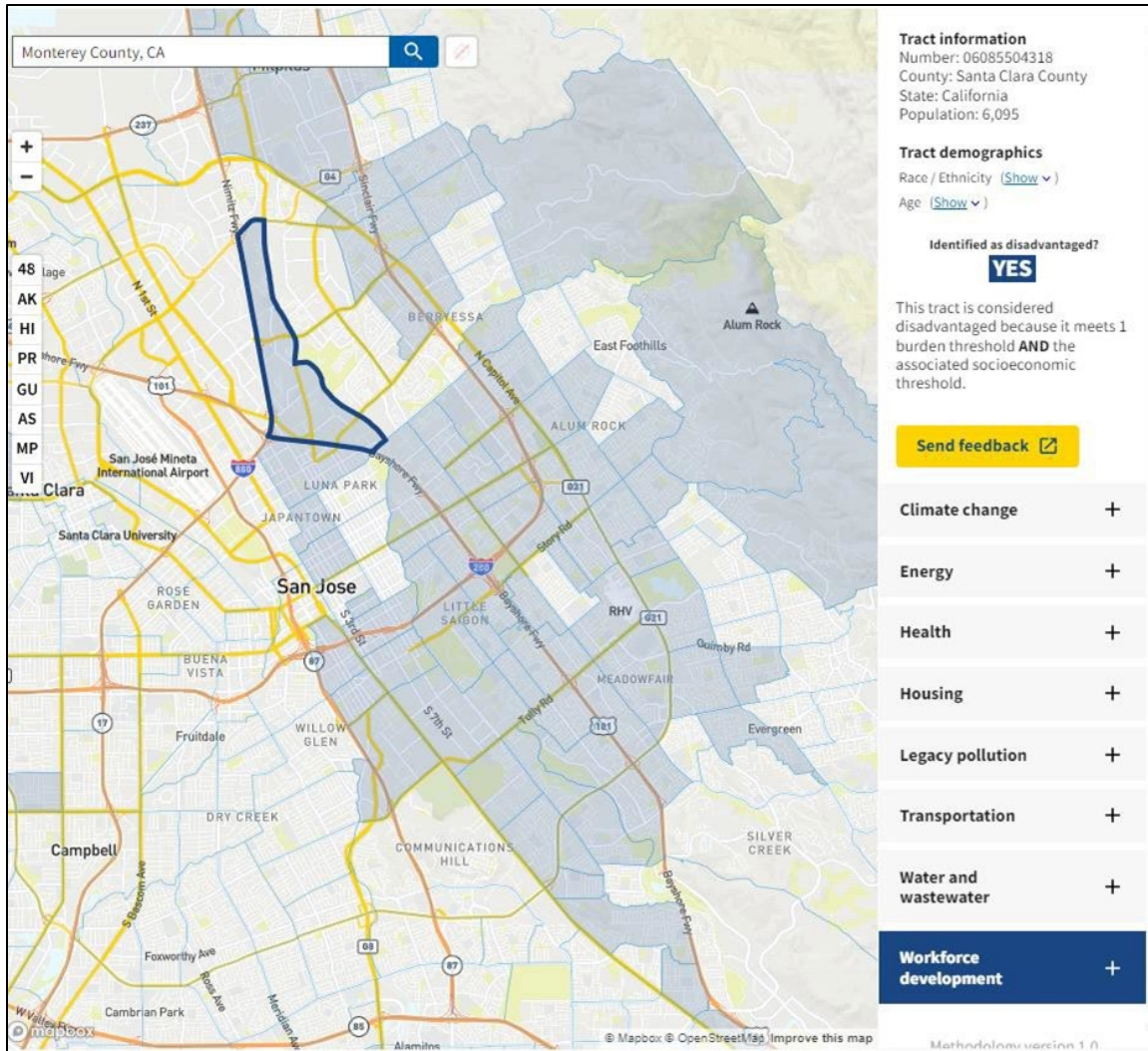
Figure 14. San Jose area tract to the north with workforce development issues using the CJEST tool (12/19/2023)

The towns of Gonzales, Salinas, Greenfield, and King City have similar issues. Gonzales' issues include Housing (Lack of Indoor Plumbing and Low Income), Legacy Pollution (Proximity to Risk Management Plan Facilities and Low Income) and Workforce Development (Linguistic Isolation and High School Education).
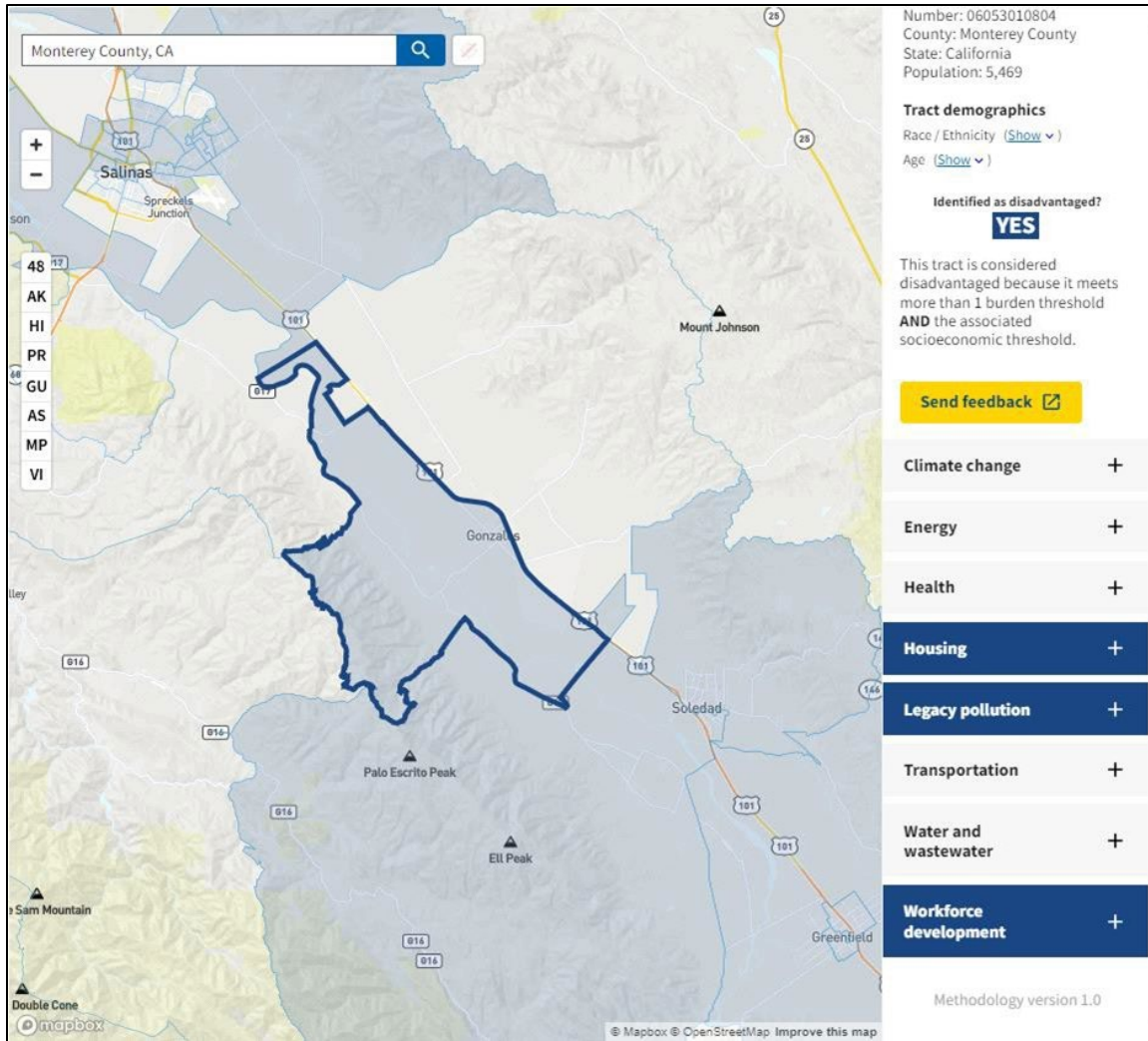
Figure 15. Gonzalas area tract with housing, legacy pollution, and workforce development issues using the CJEST tool (12/19/2023)

Issues in Soledad, Greenfield and King City are dealing with Workforce Development (Linguistic Isolation and High School Education).
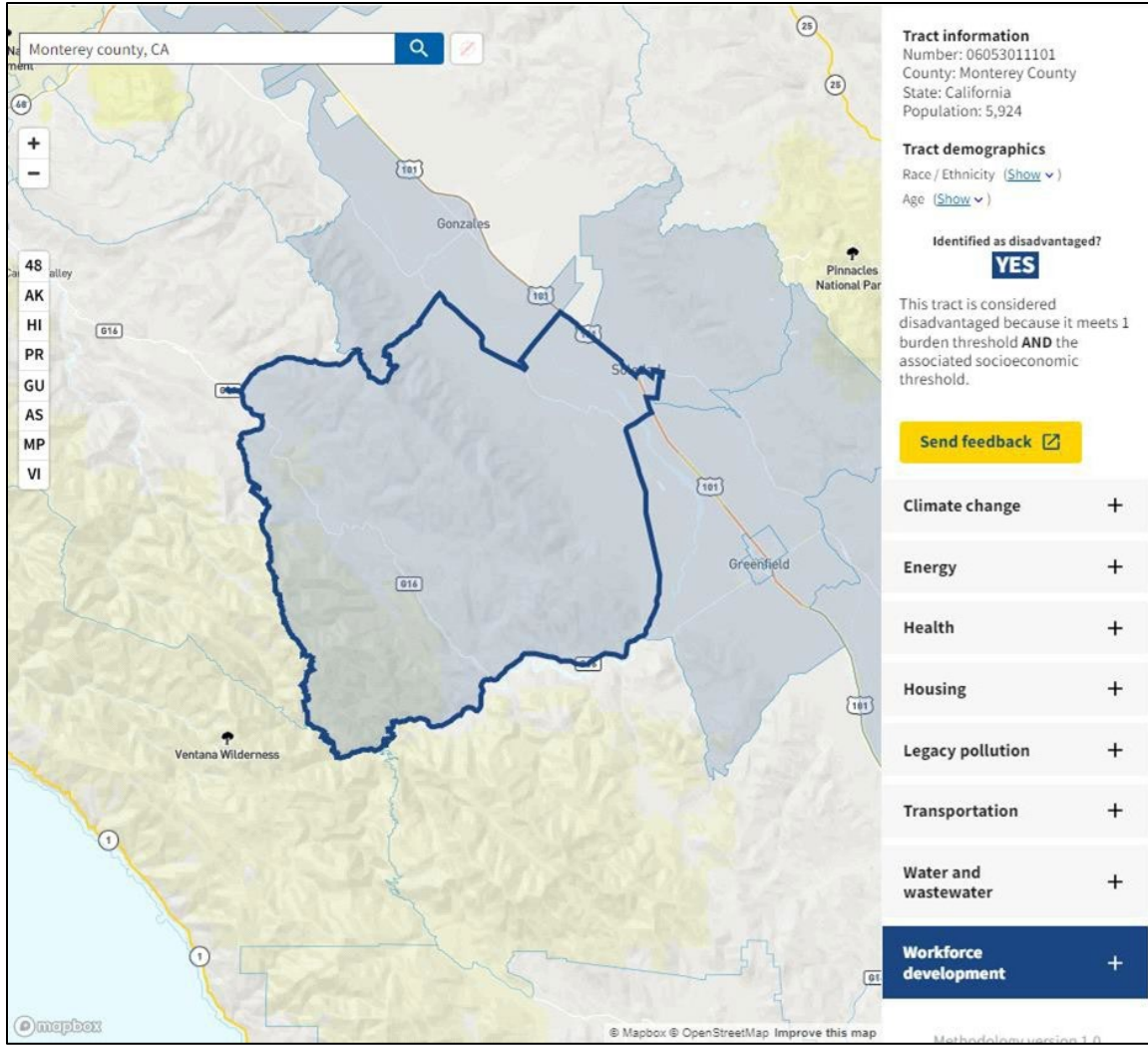
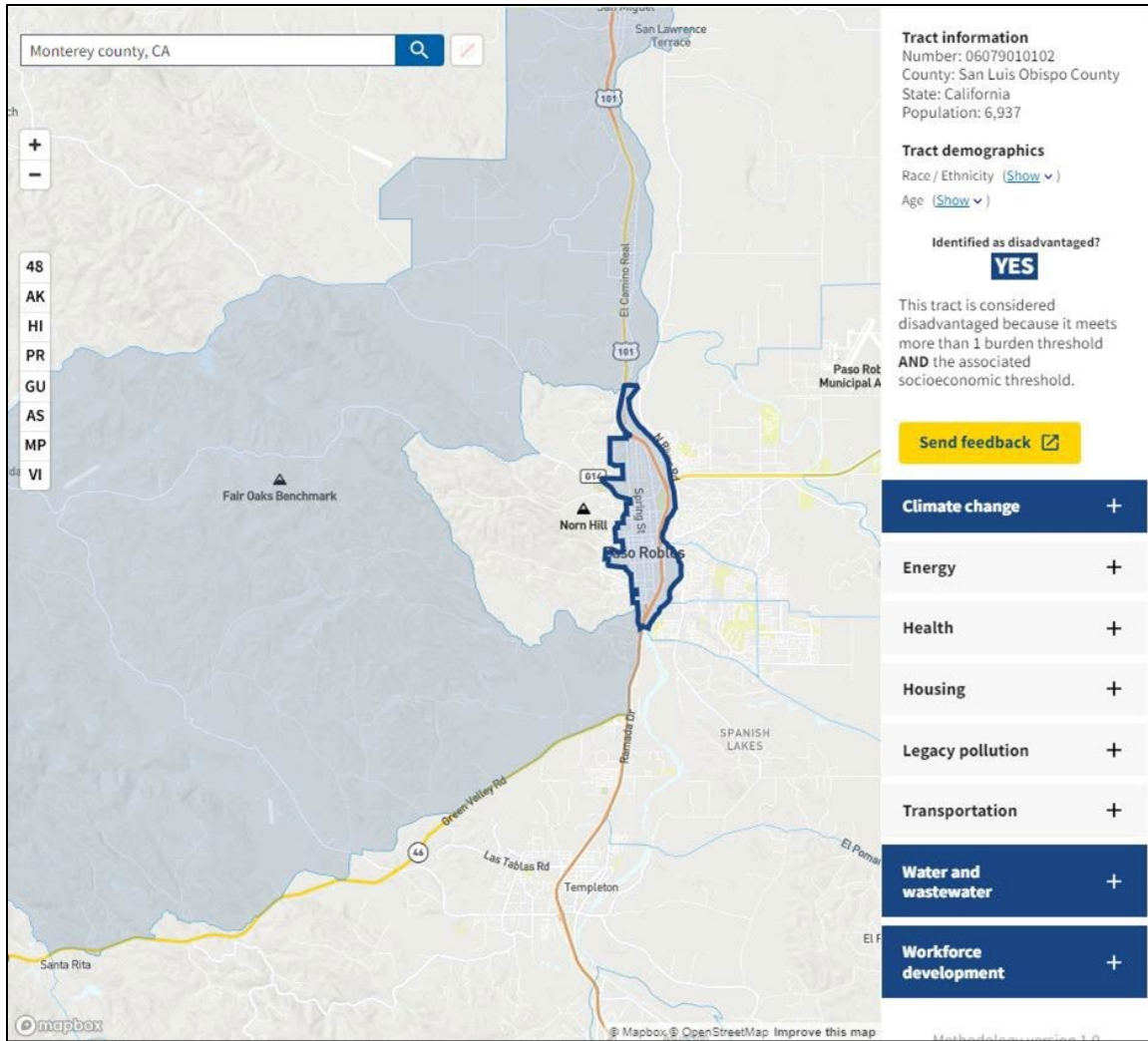**Figure 16. Soledad area tract with workforce development issues using CJEST tool (12/19/2023)**

Figure 17. Greenfield area tract with workforce development issues using CJEST tool (12/19/2023)
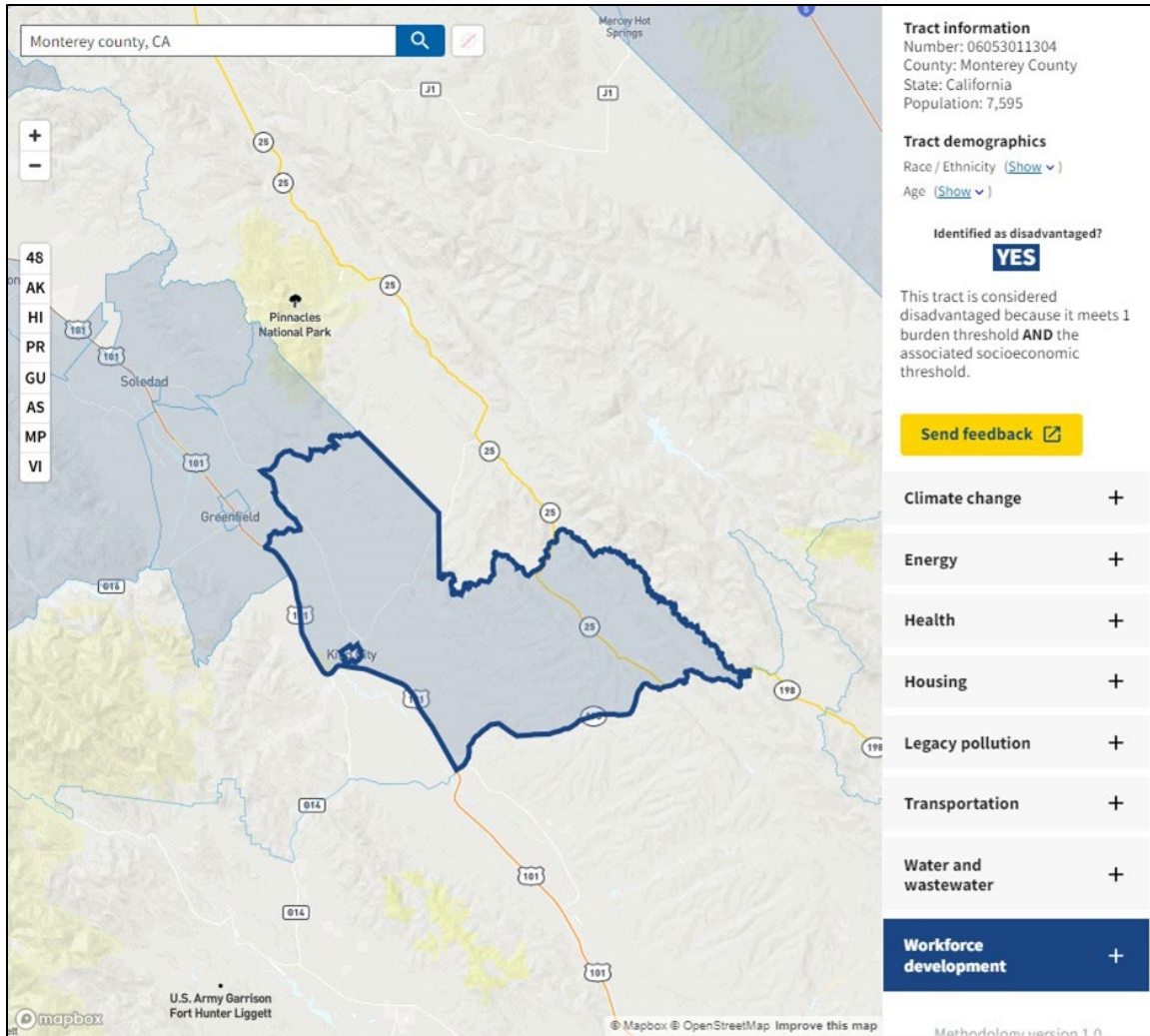
Figure 18. King City area tract with workforce development issues using the CJEST tool (12/19/2023)

In Paso Robles, the issues are Climate Change (Expected Building Loss, Projected Wildfire Risk and Low Income), Water and Wastewater (Water Discharge and Low Income), and Workforce Development (Linguistic Isolation and High School Education).
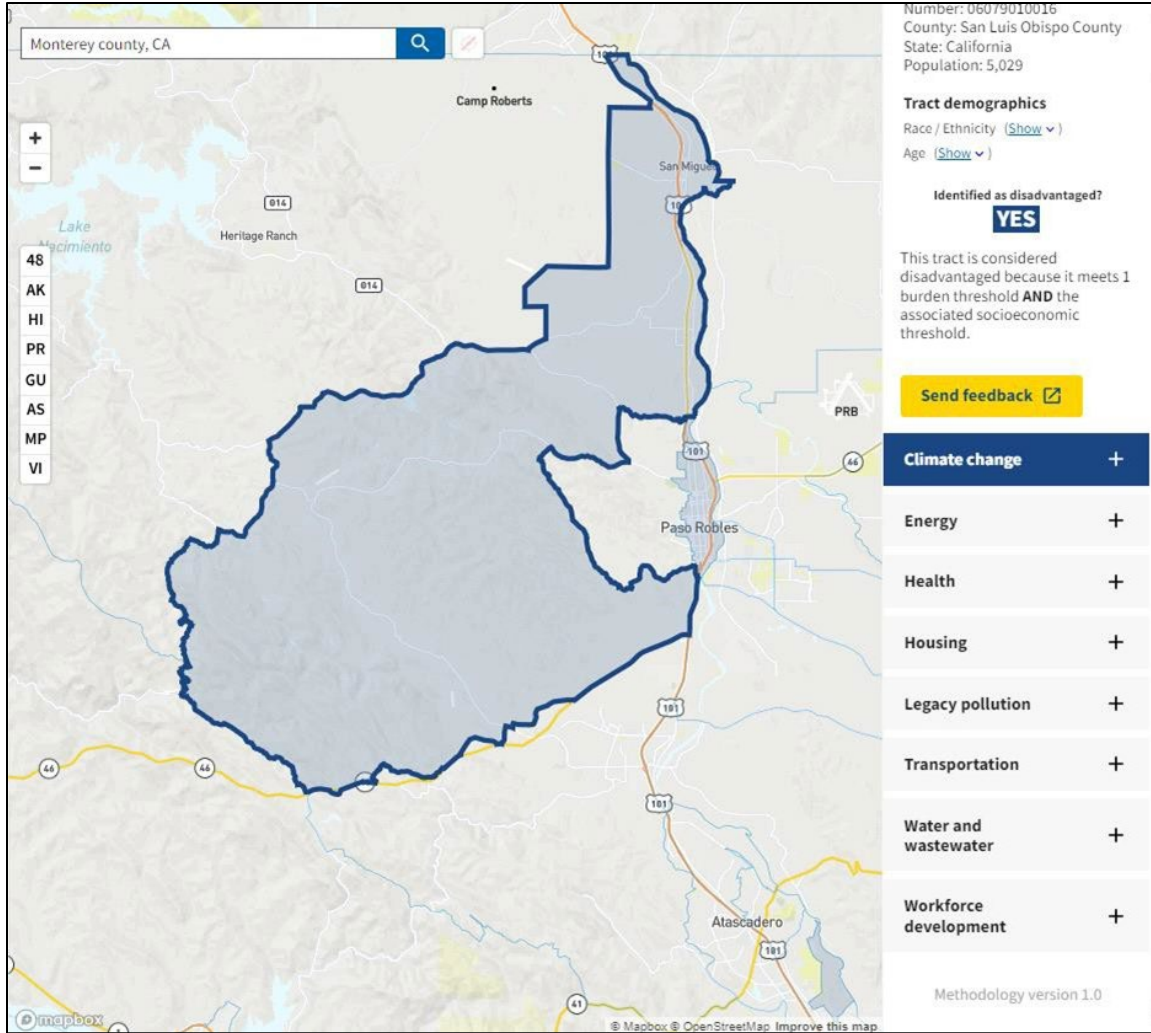
Figure 19. Paso Robles area tracts with climate change issues using the CJEST tool (12/19/2023)

Figure 20. Paso Robles area tract with climate change, water and wastewater and workforce development issues using the CJEST tool (12/19/2023)

Environmental Justice screening and mapping tool

The EJScreen tool was developed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to "better meet the Agency's responsibilities related to the protection of public health and the environment." The tool "provides EPA with a nationally consistent dataset and approach for combining environmental and demographic socioeconomic indicators" EJScreen includes:

- 13 environmental indicators
- 7 socioeconomic indicators
- 13 EJ indexes
- 13 supplemental indexes

These indicators are mapped against national percentiles; for instance, an area mapping in the 90 - 100 percentile for wastewater pollution would be among the highest levels of pollution in the country. The tool also allows you to screen for socio-economic vulnerabilities and environmental justice impacts at the same time on multiple layers of a single map (for clarity's sake, the maps below illustrate a single factor). Additional information on EJScreen can be found here.

EJScreen is used for preliminary consideration of environmental justice issues in certain situations, including communities that may need additional support from EPA programs, policies, and activities. These activities (which in some cases mirror potential Forest Service actions) could include:

- Informing outreach and engagement practices
- Implementing aspects of the following programs:
    - permitting
    - enforcement
    - compliance
    - voluntary
- Developing retrospective reports of EPA work
- Enhancing geographically based initiatives

EPA does not base all decisions on EJScreen results. The tool is not intended to designate "EJ communities," quantify specific risk factors for communities, or calculate cumulative impacts.
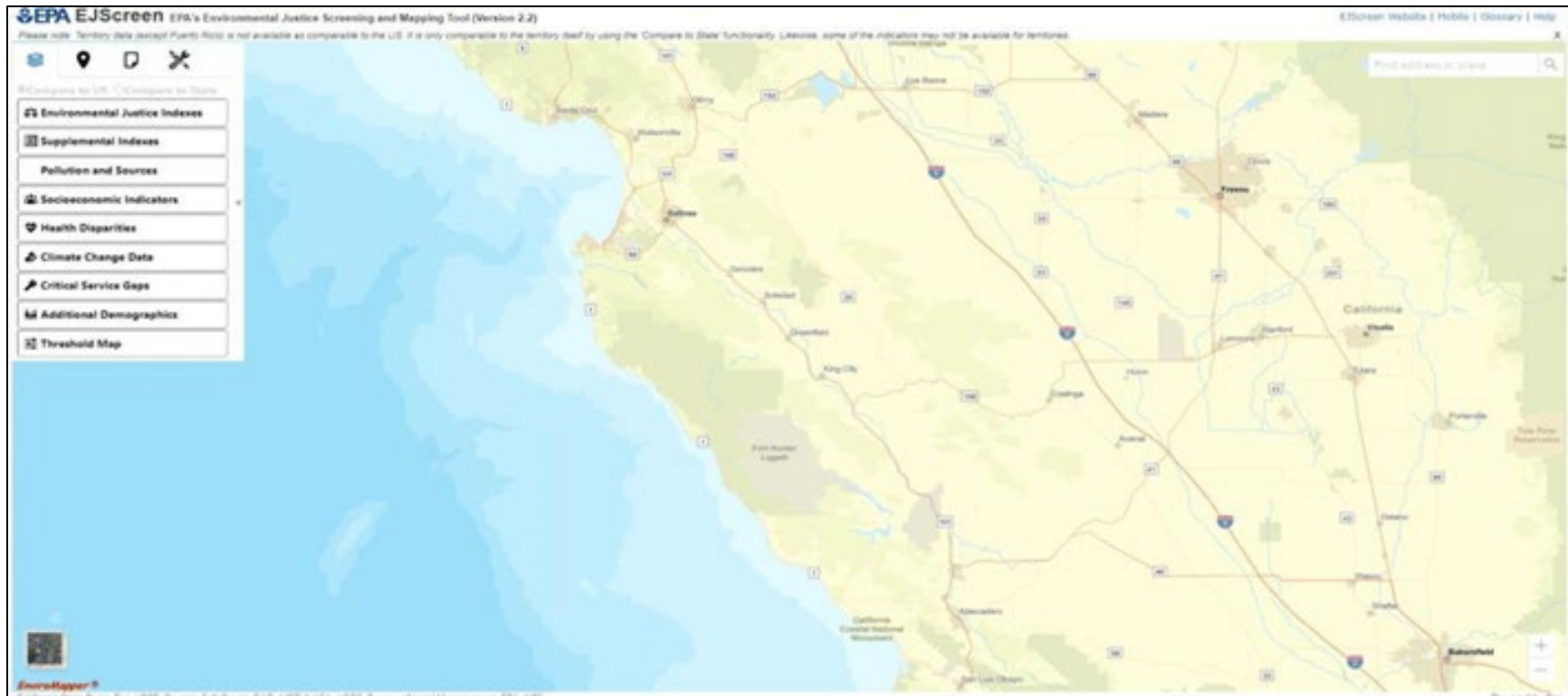
Figure 21. Map of the study zone using the EJ Screen tool (12/27/2023)

Monterey County is largely free of airborne cancer-causing toxins, hazardous waste, and proximity to traffic. Equitable access to the Big Sur region will literally give people in more urbanized parts of the region greater access to fresh, clean air, land, and water.

Figure 22. Monterey area traffic proximity using EJ Screen tool (12/27/2023)
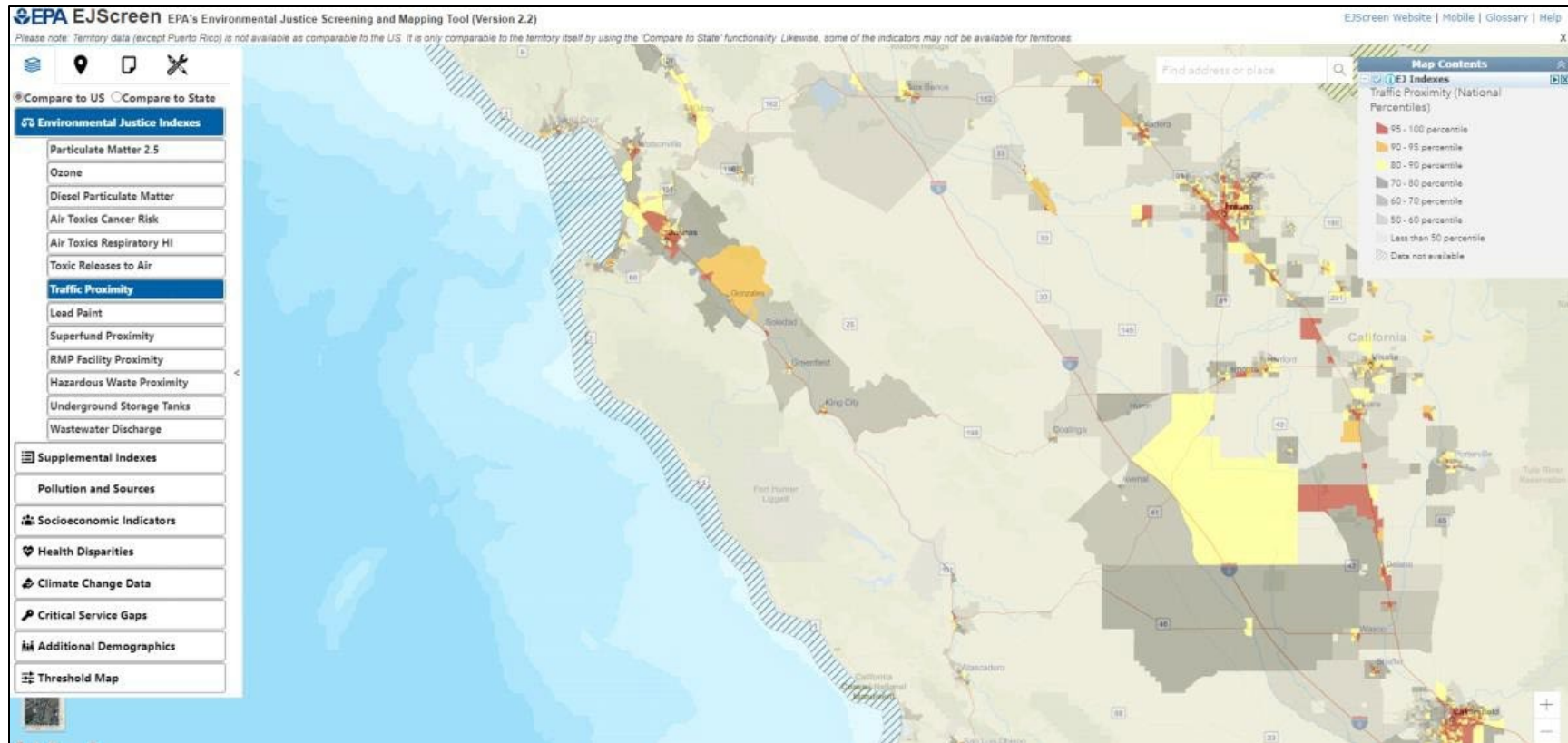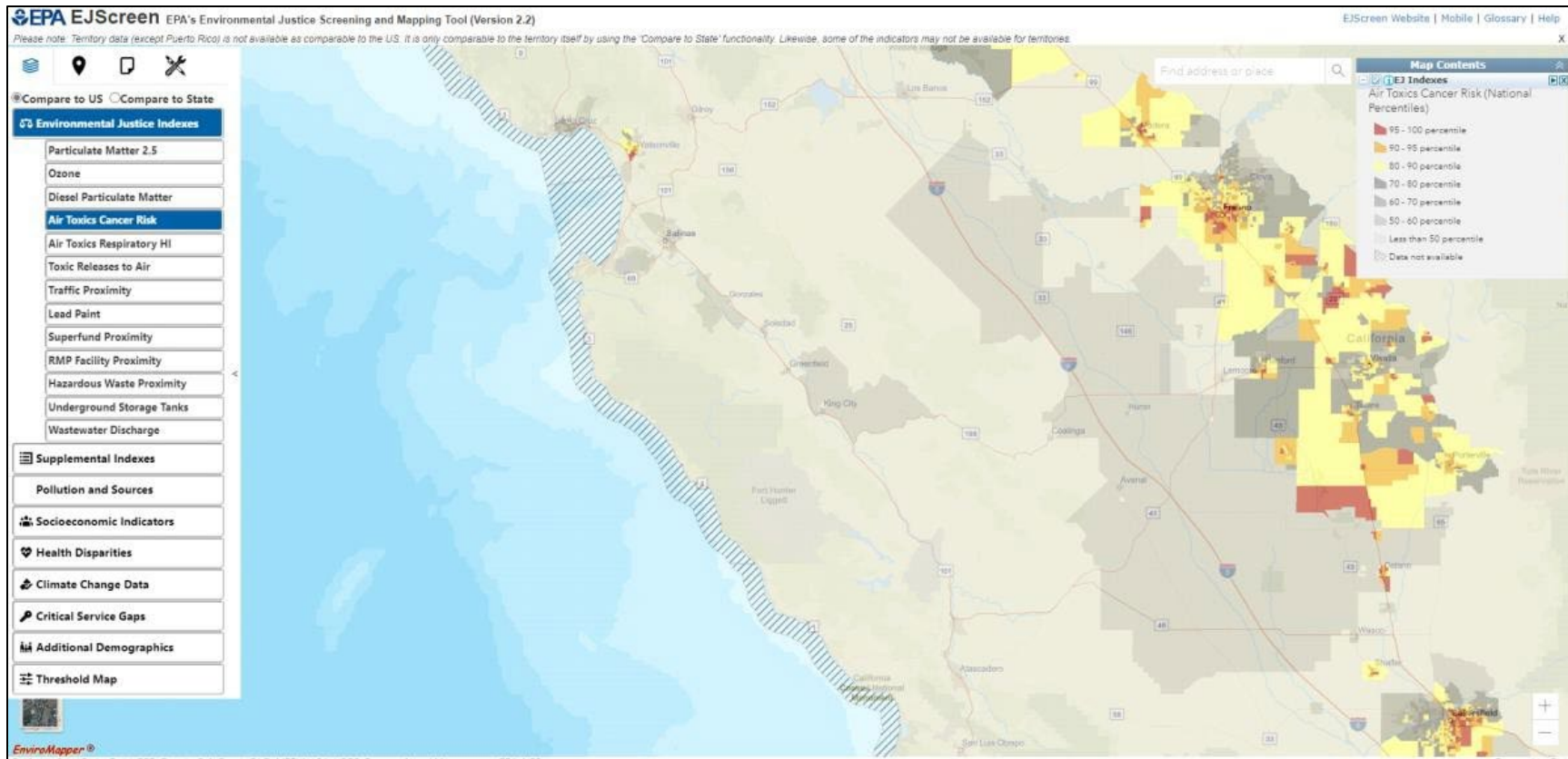
Figure 23. Project area traffic proximity using EJ Screen tool (12/27/2023)

Figure 24. Project area airborne cancer-causing toxins using EJ Screen tool (12/27/2023)
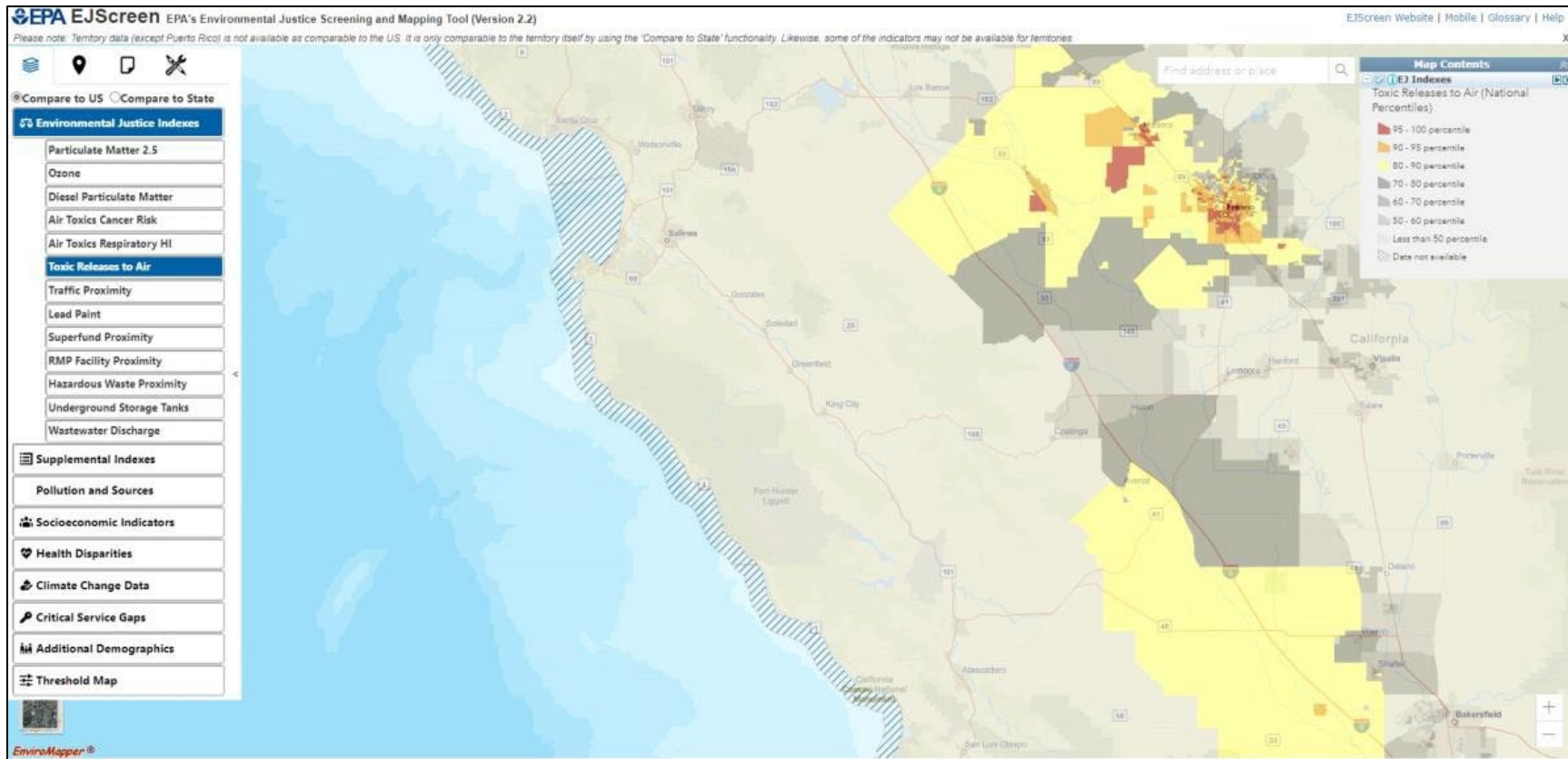
Figure 25. Project area toxic release to air using EJ Screen tool (12/27/2023)
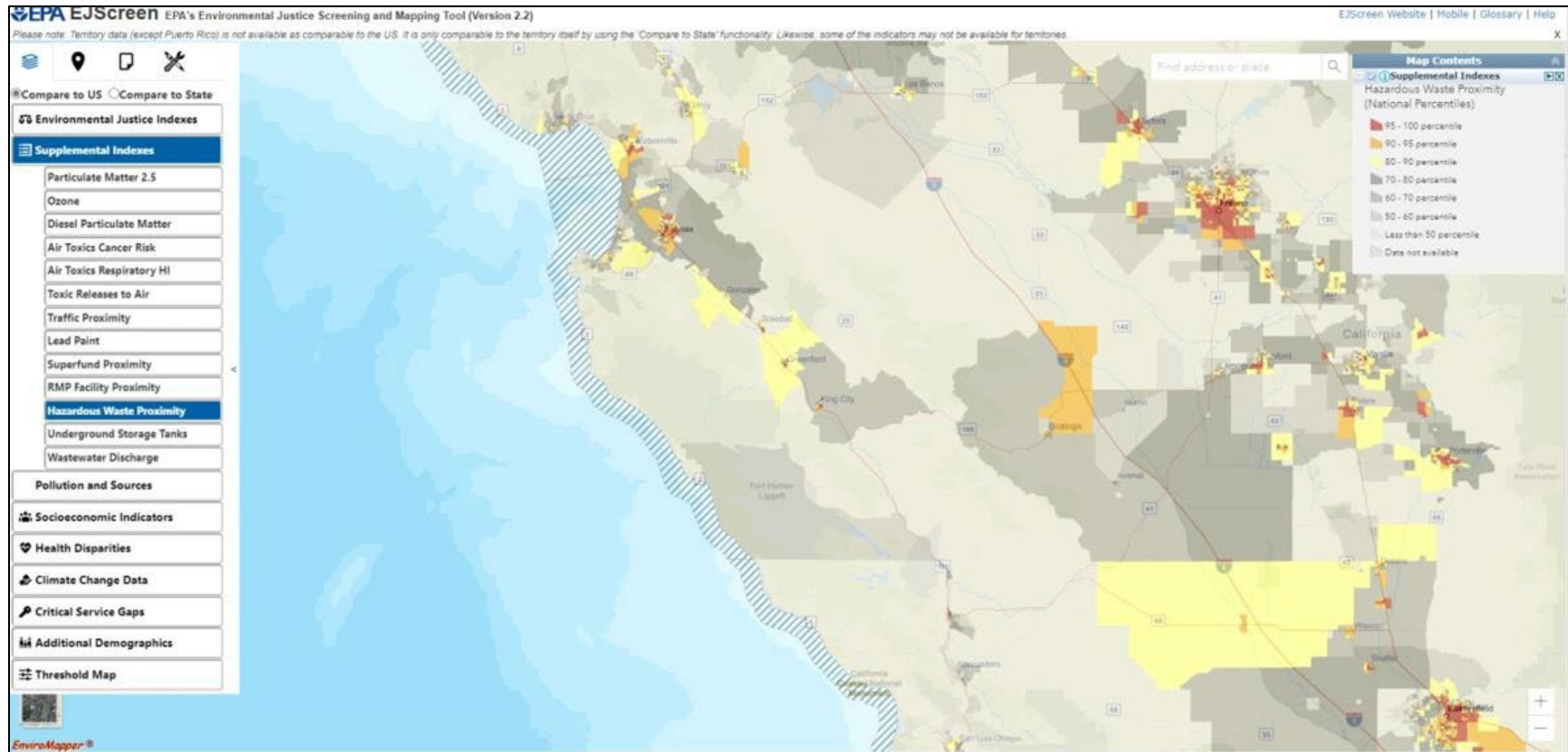
Figure 26. Project area hazardous waste proximity using EJ Screen tool (12/27/2023)
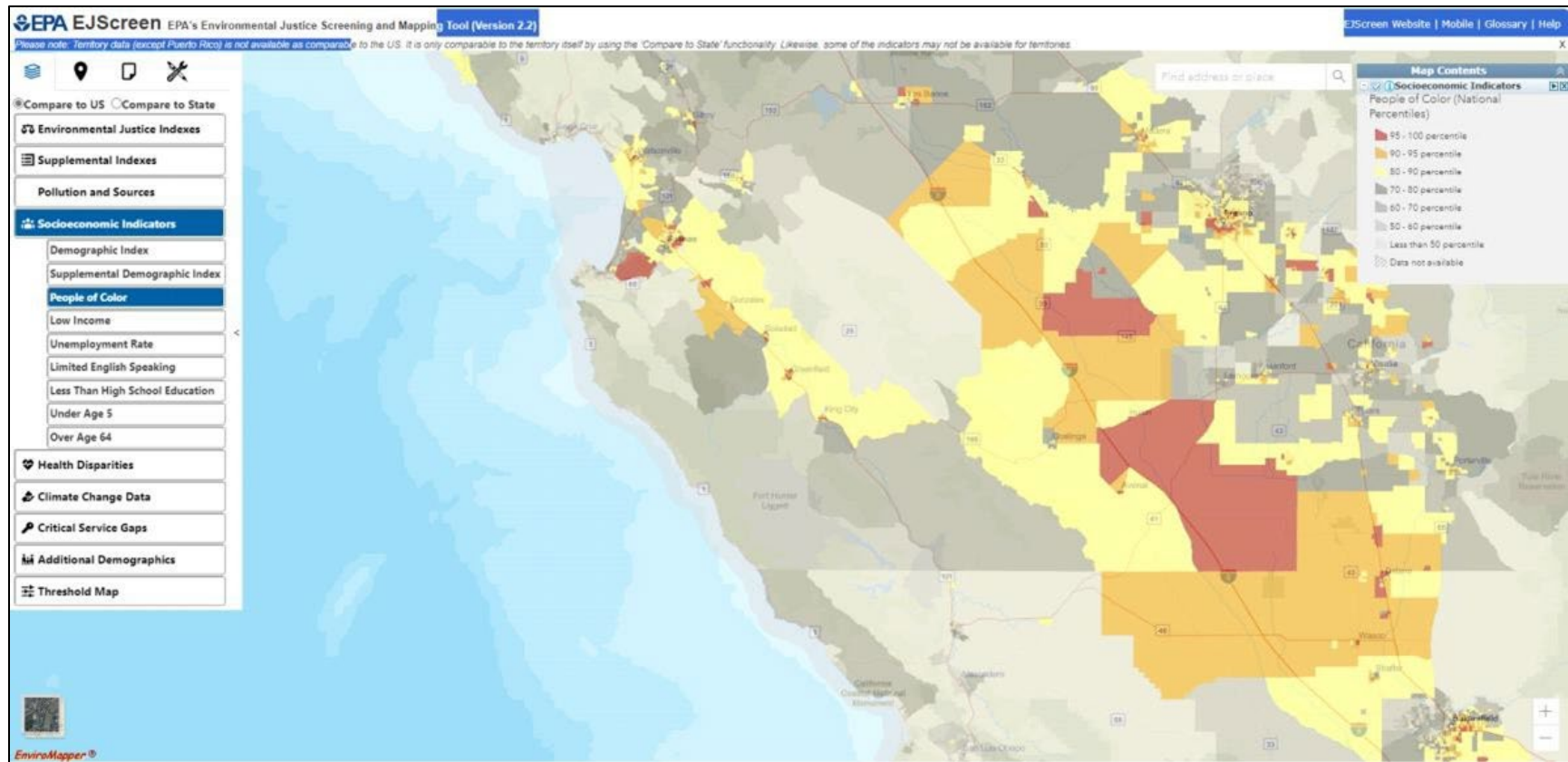
Figure 27. Project area Socioeconomic Indicator people of color using EJ Screen tool (12/27/2023)
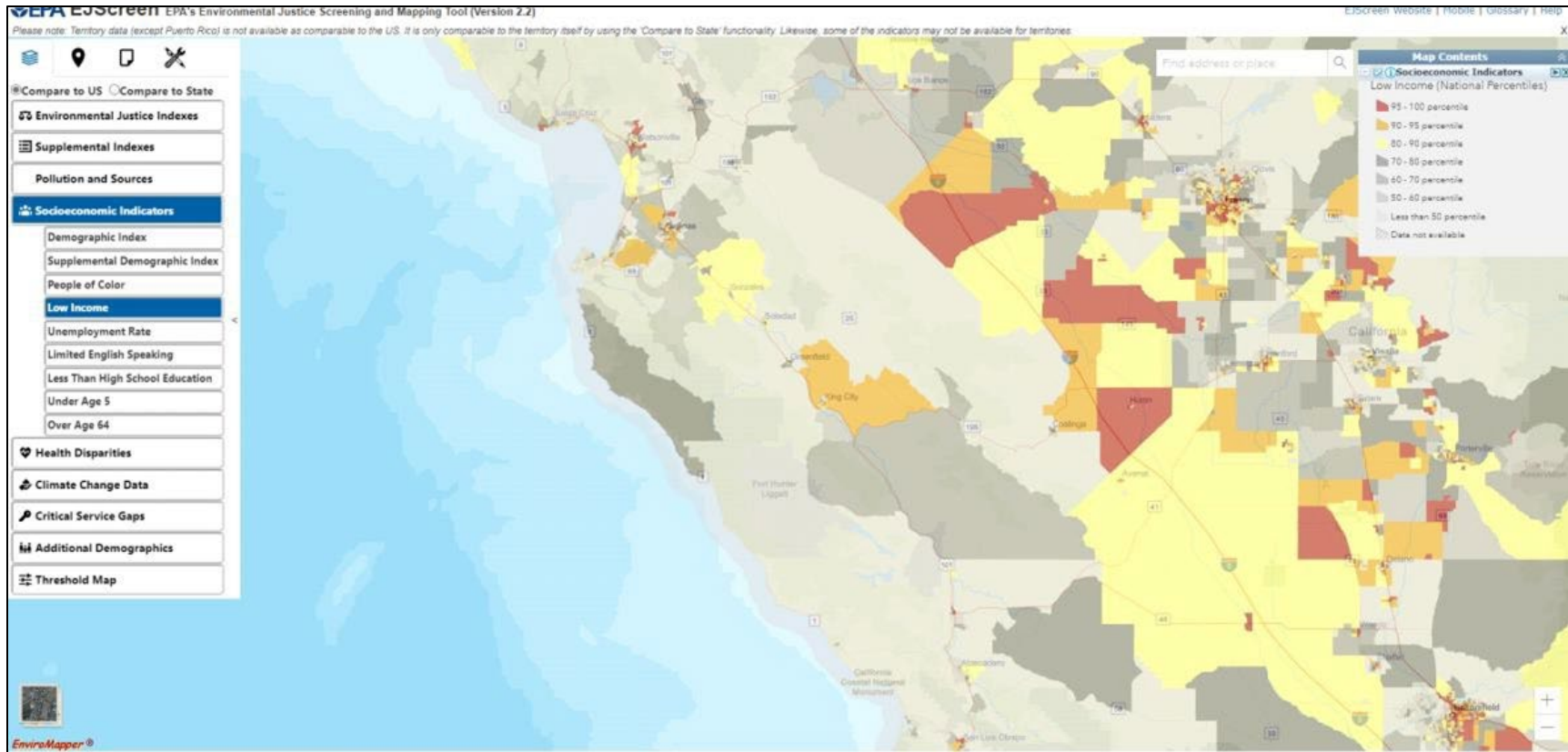
Figure 28. Project area socioeconomic indicator low income using EJ Screen tool (12/27/2023)
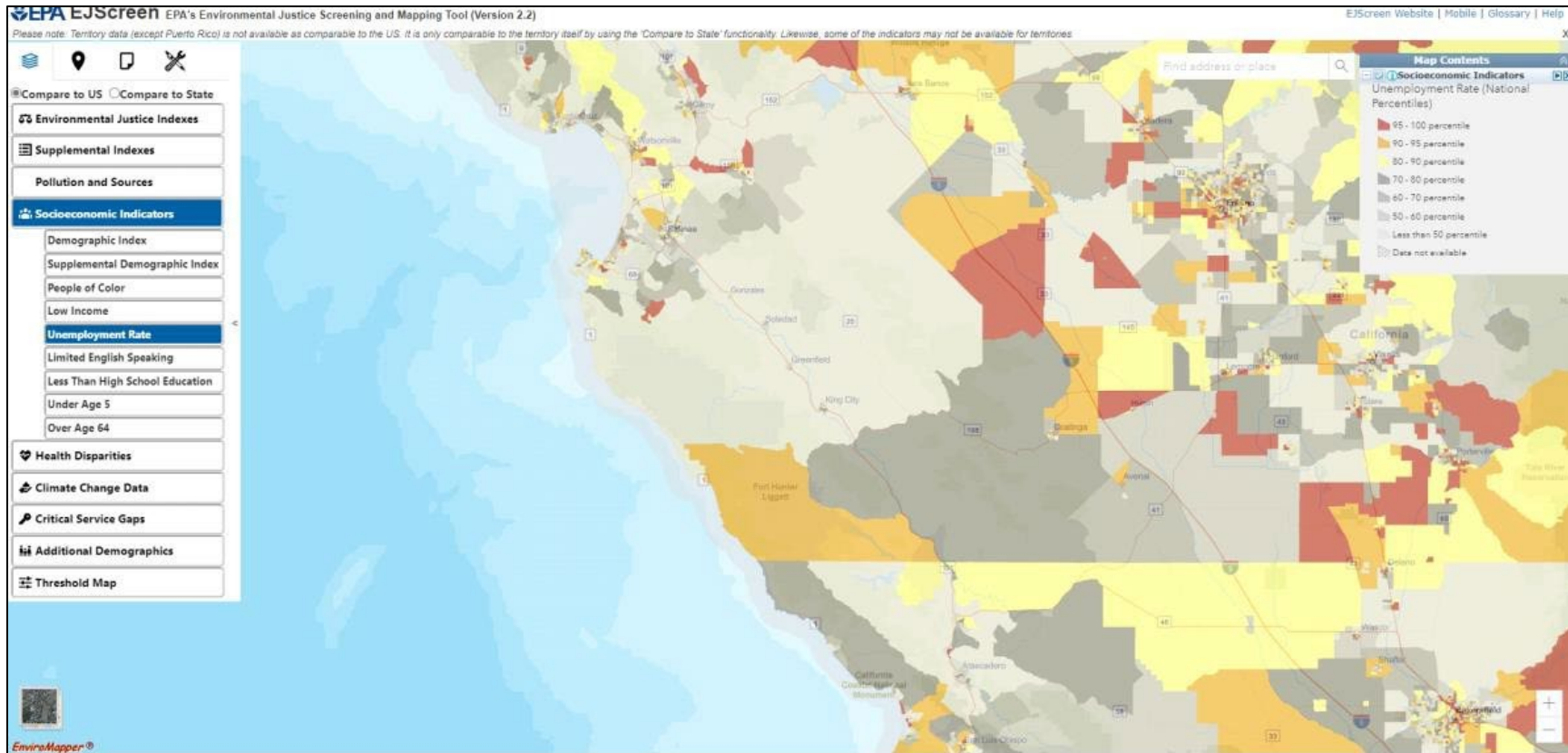
Figure 29. Project area socioeconomic indicator unemployment rate using EJ Screen tool (12/27/2023)
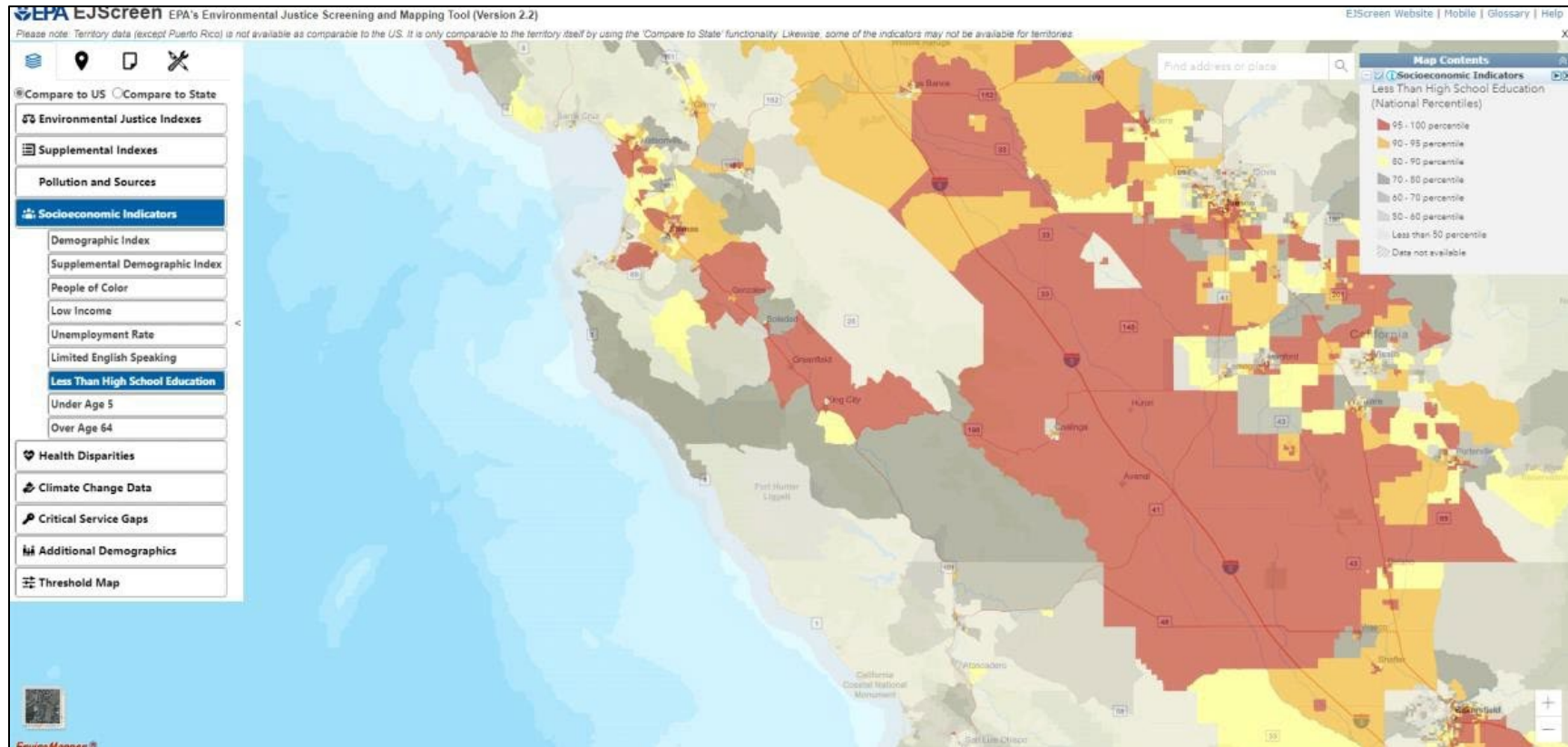
Figure 30. Project area socioeconomic indicator less than high school education using EJ Screen tool (12/27/2023)

EJScreen identifies small children (under 5 years) and older adults (64 and older) as vulnerable populations. Monterey County has moderate numbers of small children, mostly to the north, south and east of the Big Sur study area. Older adults in moderate to high concentrations live in parts of the Big Sur study area, in some urban areas and in other coastal communities.
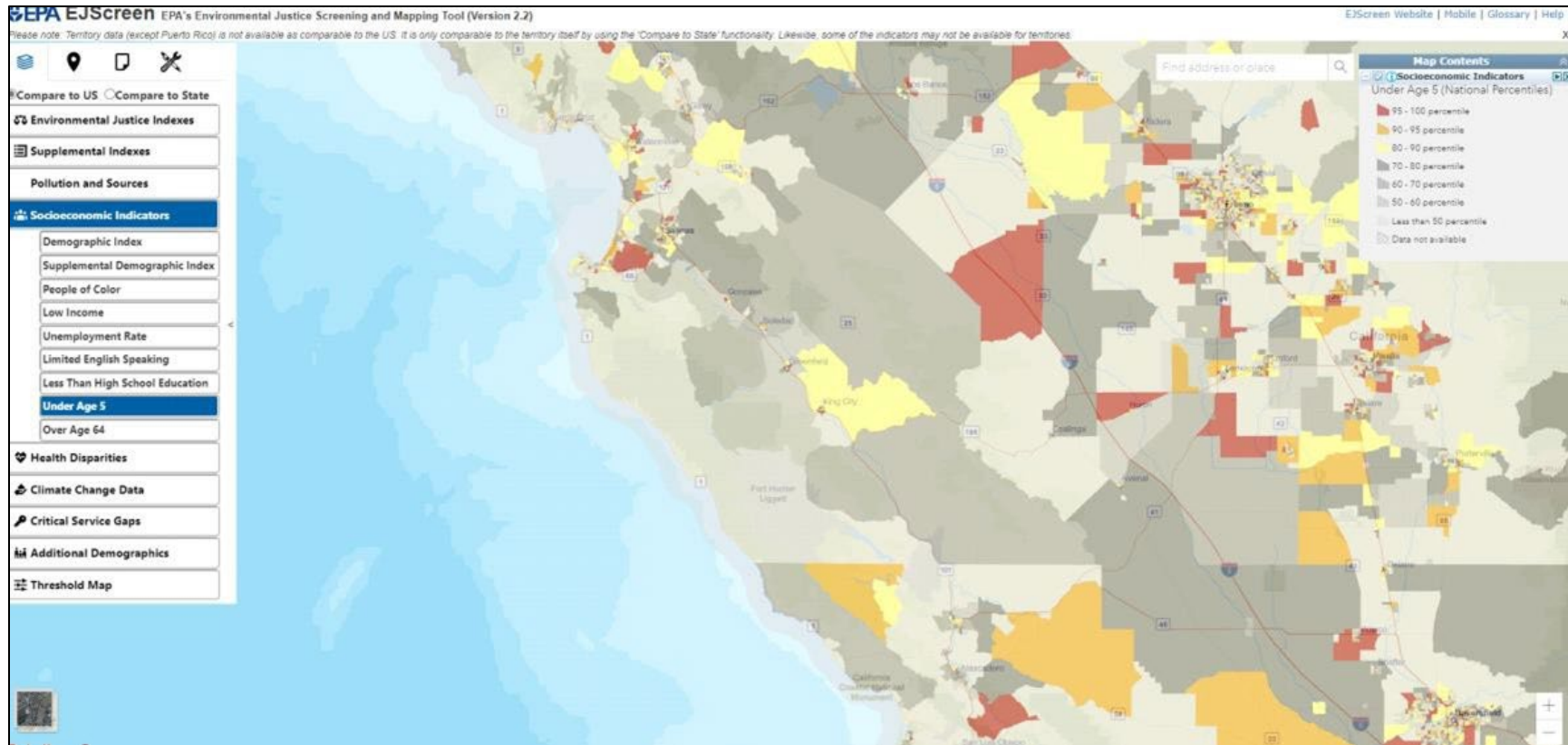
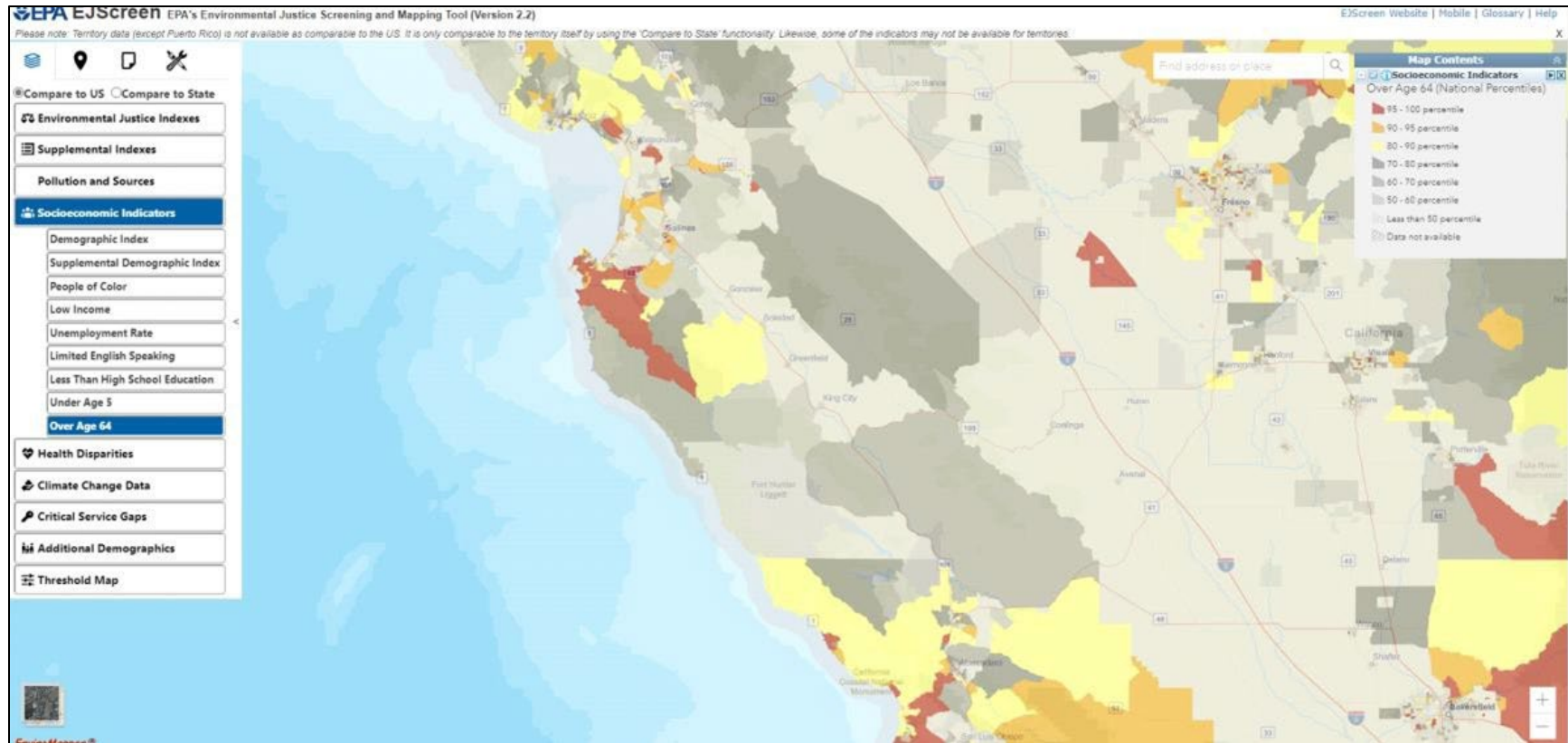**Figure 31. Project area socioeconomic indicator under age five using EJ Screen tool (12/27/2023)**

Figure 32. Project area socioeconomic indicator over age 64 using EJ Screen tool (12/27/2023)

In general, Monterey County and the surrounding area is not afflicted by Low Life Expectancy except for a few places. There is moderate to high occurrence of heart disease. There are moderate concentrations of people with Asthma in and near Big Sur, with greater concentrations of Asthma to the east, near Interstate 5, Fresno and Vasalia. There is a moderate to high concentration of Cancer on the north and south ends of the study area. There are moderate to low concentrations of Persons with Disabilities in the Big Sur study area. Greater equity could increase health benefits and access to outdoor recreation for these populations.

Many of the communities outside of the study area have limited transportation access; these areas overlap some of the most densely populated urban areas. Working with Monterey County and regional efforts to provide public transport could increase access to outdoor recreation and reduce congestion in Big Sur.
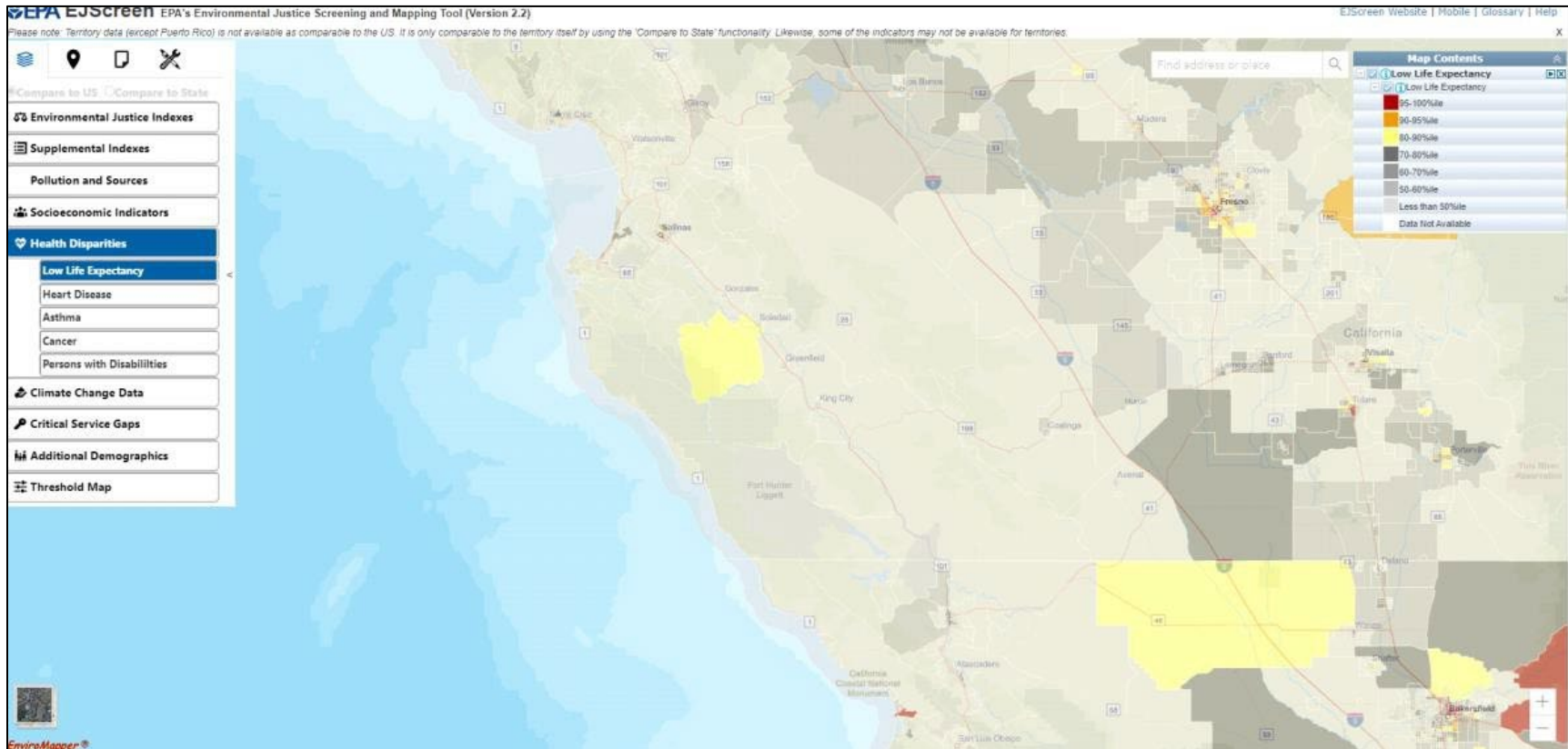

Figure 33. Project area health disparities low life expectancy using EJ Screen tool (12/27/2023)
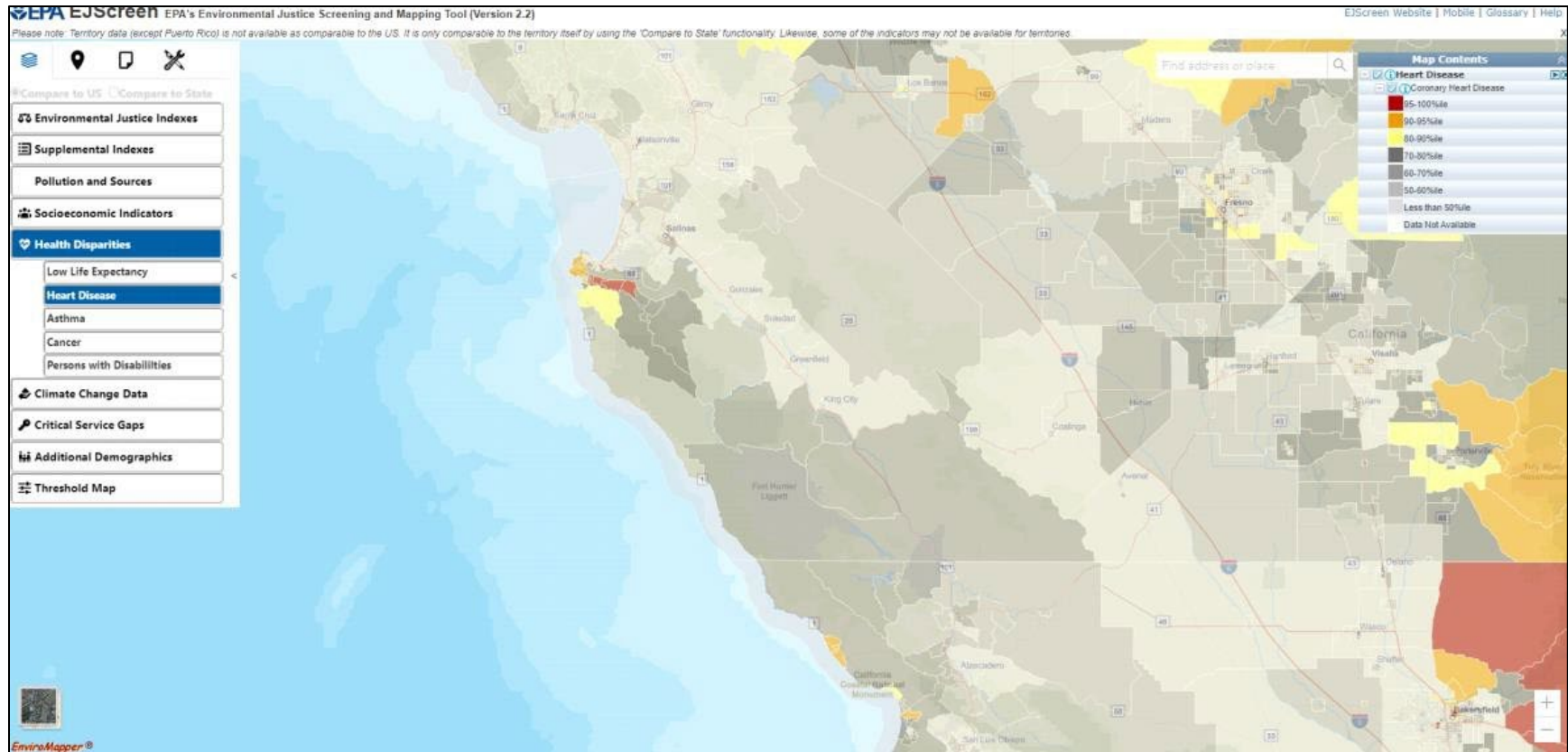
Figure 34. Project area health disparities heart disease using EJ Screen tool (12/27/2023)
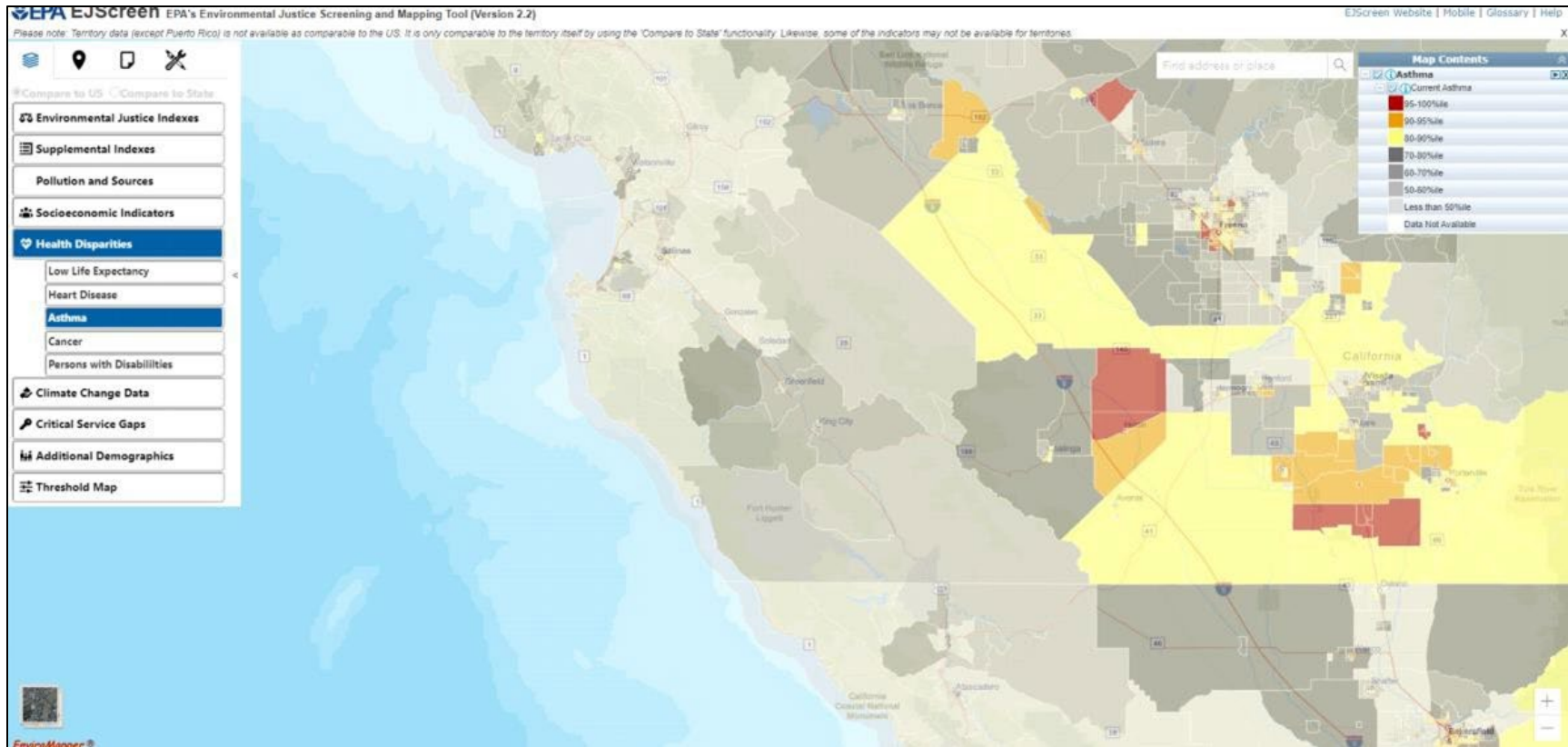
Figure 35. Project area health disparities asthma using EJ Screen tool (12/27/2023)
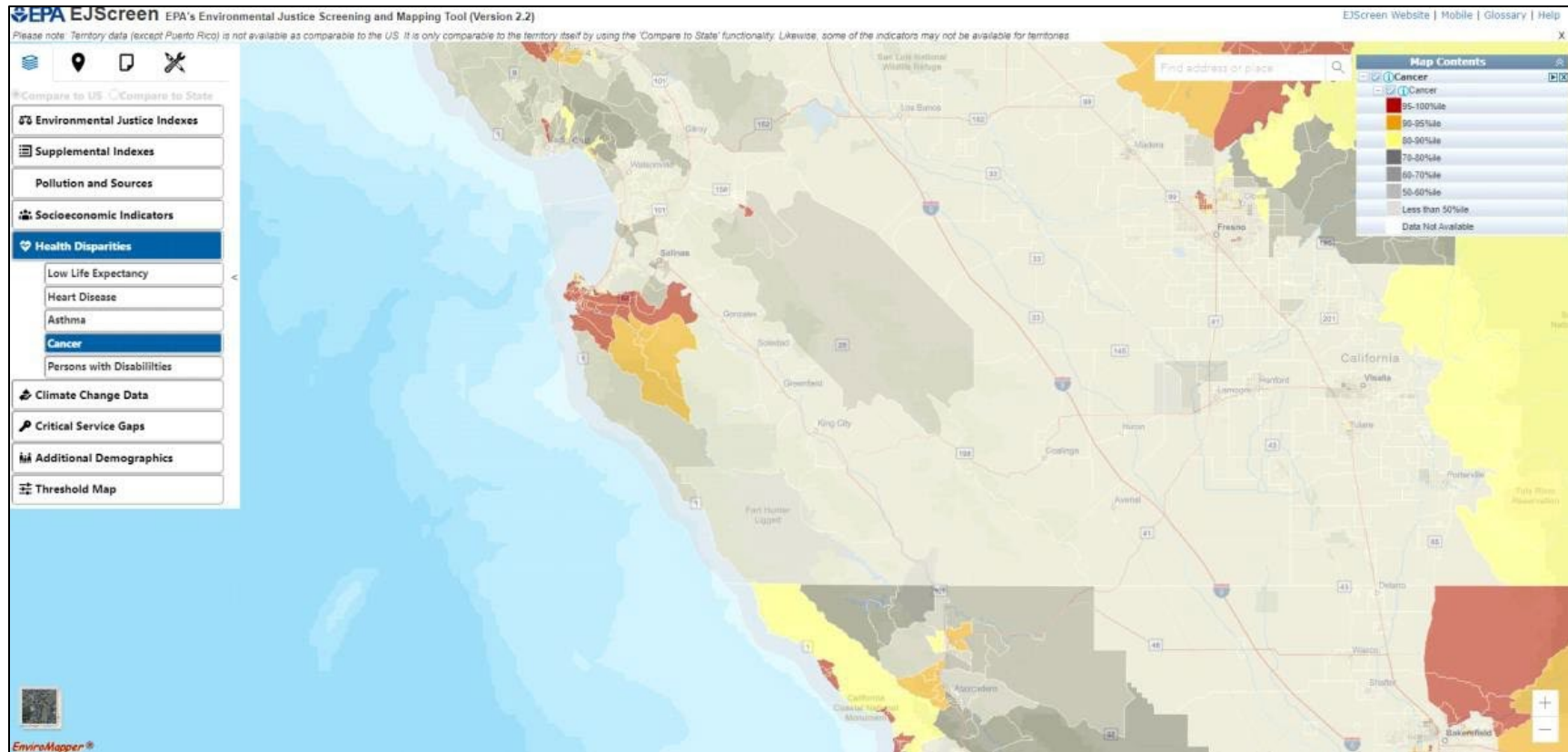
Figure 36. Project area health disparities cancer using EJ Screen tool (12/27/2023)
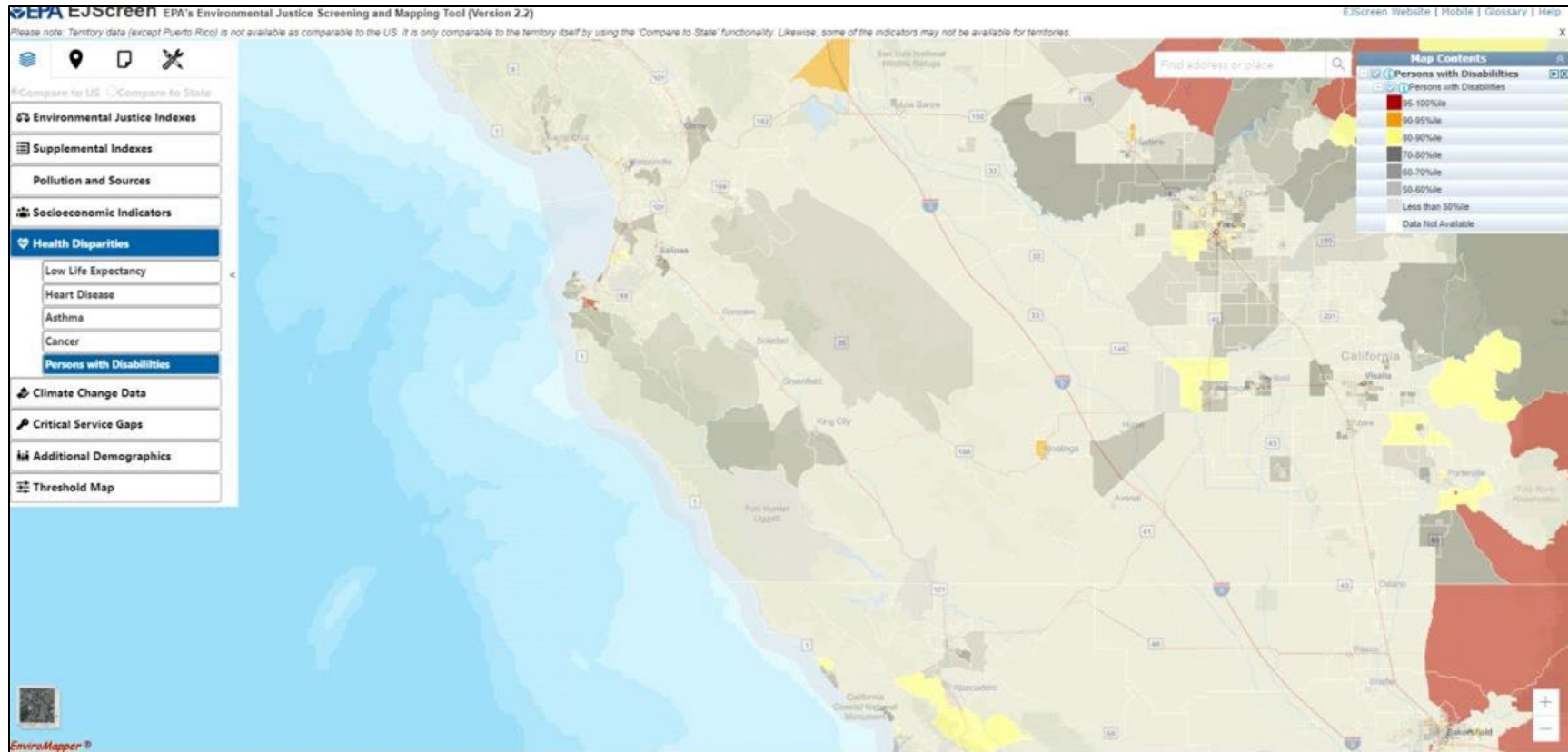
Figure 37. Project area health disparities persons with disabilities using EJ Screen tool (12/27/2023)
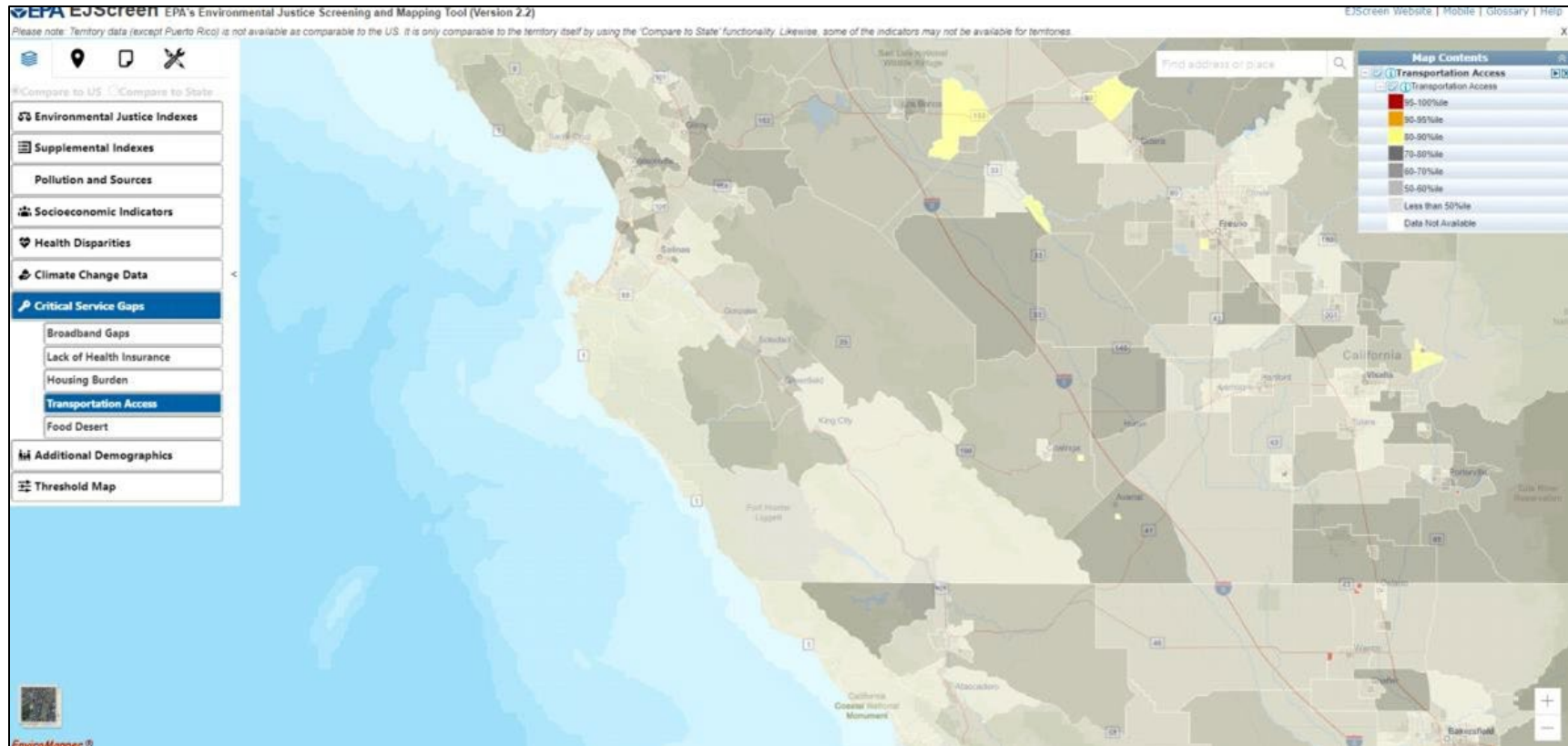
Figure 38. Project area critical service gaps transportation access using EJ Screen tool (12/27/2023)
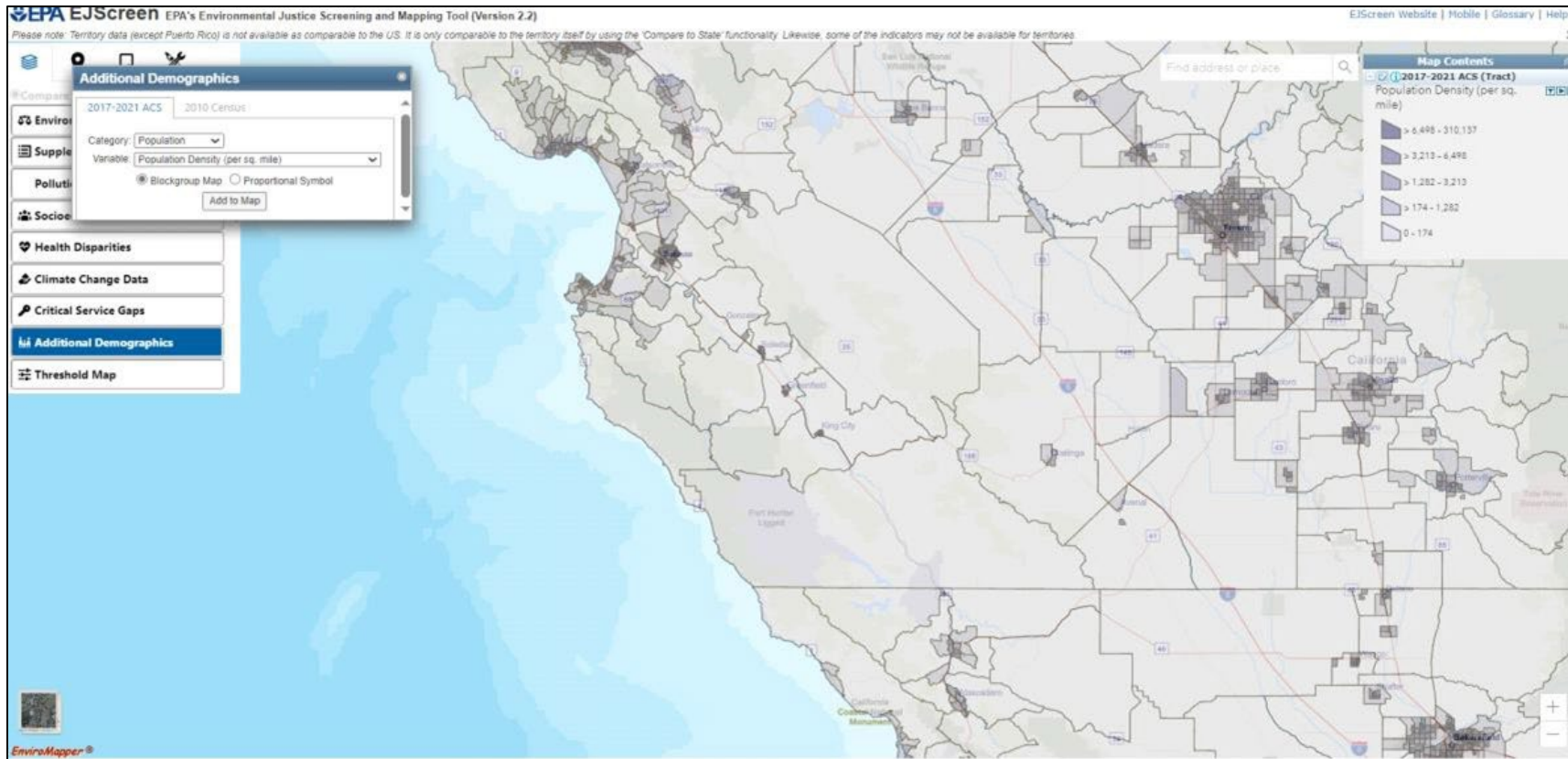
Figure 39. Project area population density using EJ Screen tool (12/27/2023)

Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) tool

We are able to track socio-economic factors using the CDC's Social Vulnerability Index tool, which is developed by the Centers for Disease Control and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (CDC/ATSDR). The tool uses census data to focus on the whether populations are considered vulnerable. According to the SVI website, social vulnerability "refers to the potential negative effects on communities caused by external stresses on human health. Such stresses include natural or human - caused disasters, or disease outbreaks. Reducing social vulnerability can decrease both human suffering and economic loss."

The CDC/ATSDR Social Vulnerability Index (CDC/ATSDR SVI) uses 16 U.S. census variables to help local officials identify communities that may need support before, during, or after disasters. The SVI ranks each census tract on 16 social factors, including poverty, lack of vehicle access, and crowded housing. SVI then groups them into four related themes -- Socioeconomic Status, Household Characteristics, Racial and Ethnic Minority Status, and Housing Type/Transportation. The data shown is based on 2022 census data. A fact sheet on SVI can be found here.

This tool, although developed to support governments in effectively supporting local populations through disasters, many of the socio-economic factors tracked by the tool also impact the ability of people to participate and derive benefit from outdoor recreation. For instance, families who are at 150 percent of the poverty rate or greater, are chronically unemployed, who have disabled family members, or who don't have a vehicle may be unable to recreate easily in Big Sur. The tool also shows that, in contrast to visitation and population of the study area, Monterey County and the surrounding counties have high levels of racial and ethnic diversity.

By providing a score on a county-wide level, the SVI tool provides insight on the condition of populations beyond specific communities. The results show that, although communities in Big Sur and other nearby places may be affluent, Monterey County has a high level of social vulnerability. Nearby counties, home to larger communities that may include Big Sur visitors, have vulnerability levels that are either low-medium or medium-high, despite being home to some more affluent communities.
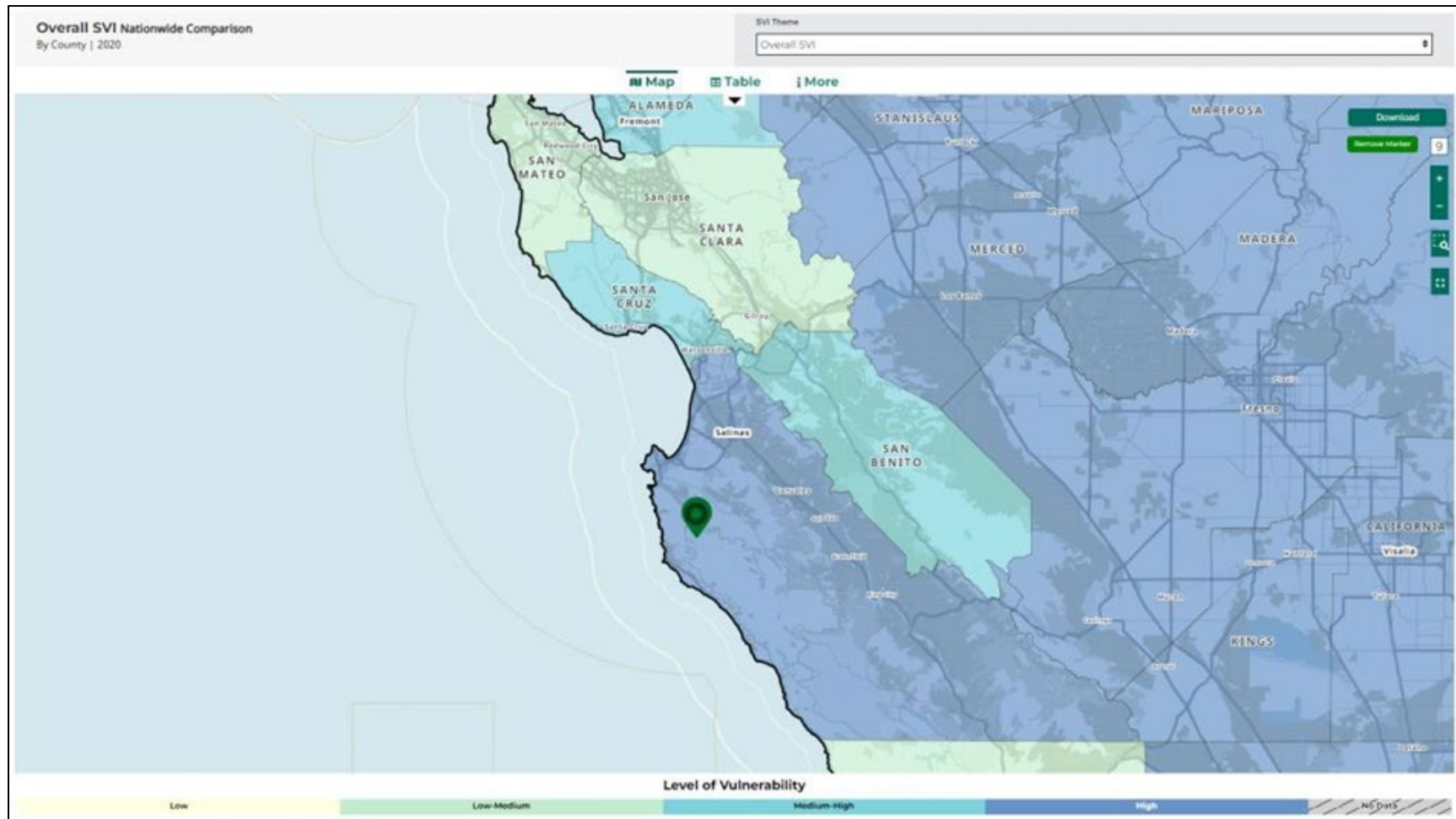
Figure 40. Project area social vulnerability using SVI tool (12/21/2023)

Monterey County and counties to the east have a medium -high level of vulnerability based on socioeconomic status. The adjacent counties of Santa Cruz and San Benito have a low -medium level of socioeconomic vulnerability. Elements of socioeconomic status include below 150 percent poverty, unemployed, housing cost burden, no high school diploma, no health insurance.
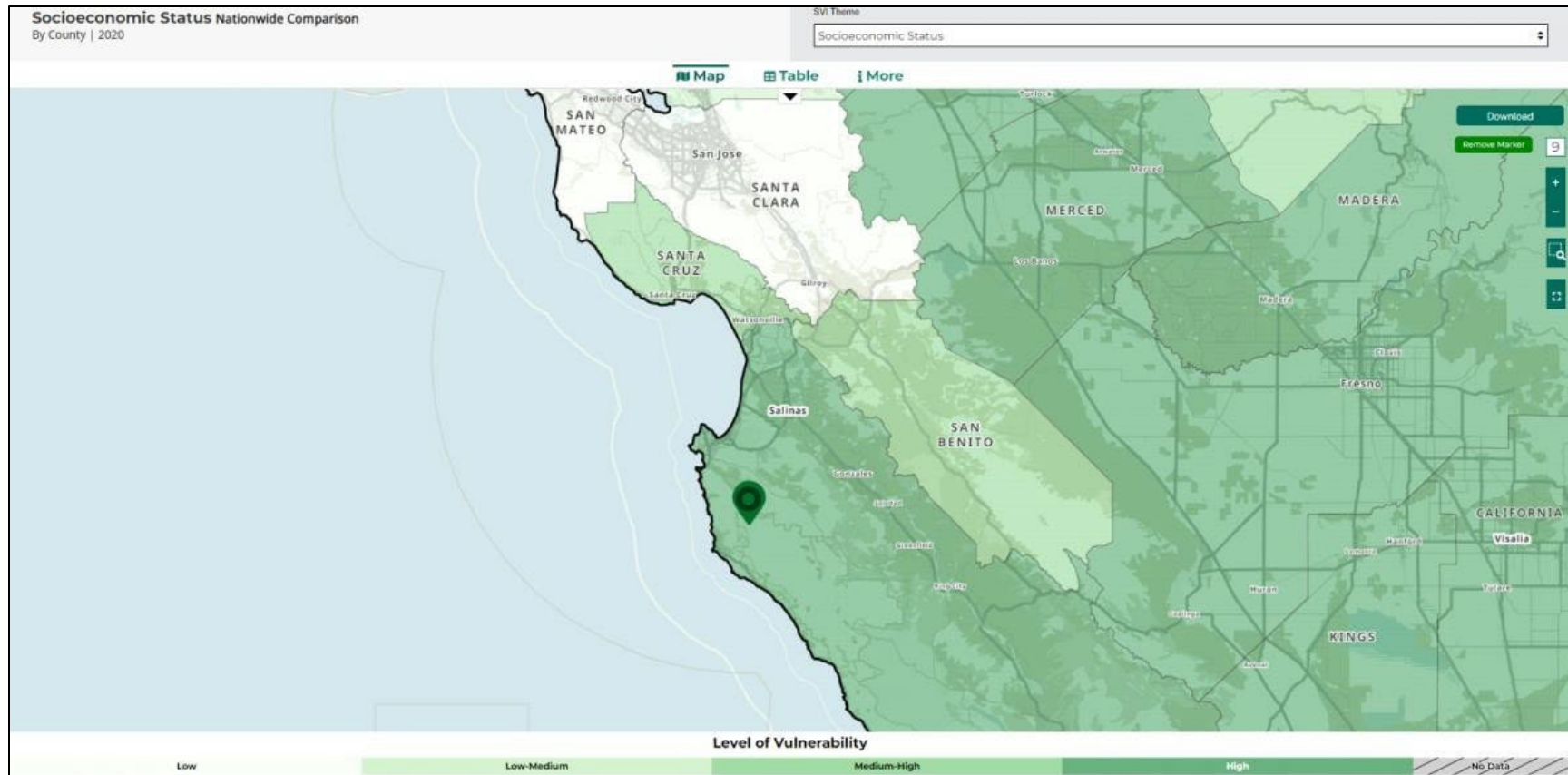
Figure 41. Project area socioeconomic status using SVI tool (12/21/2023)

Monterey County has a medium-high level of vulnerability based on household characteristics. The adjacent counties to the north and south have low levels of vulnerability while counties to the east and highly vulnerable. Household characteristics indicating cultural vulnerability include aged 65 or older, aged 17 or younger, civilian with a disability, single-parent households, English language proficiency.
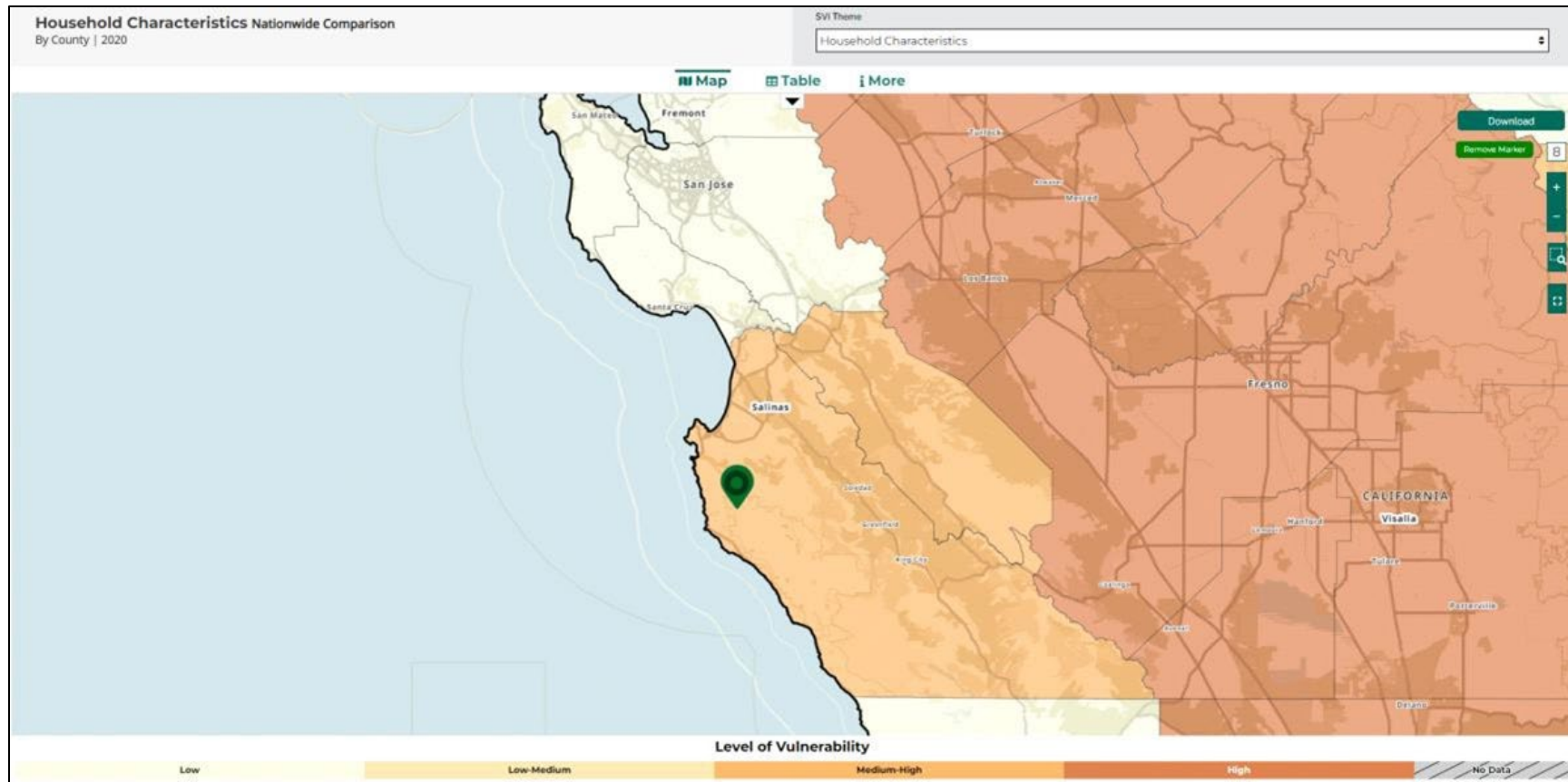
Figure 42. Project are household characteristics using SVI tool (12/21/2023)

Monterey County and its neighboring counties to the north and east all have a high level of vulnerability based on the percentage of the population considered racial or ethnic minorities. For the purposes of SVI, those considered ethnic and racial minorities include people who identify as: Hispanic or Latino (of any race); Black and African American, Not Hispanic or Latino; American Indian and Alaska Native, Not Hispanic or Latino; Asian, Not Hispanic or Latino; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, Not Hispanic or Latino; Two or More Races, Not Hispanic or Latino; Other Races, Not Hispanic or Latino.
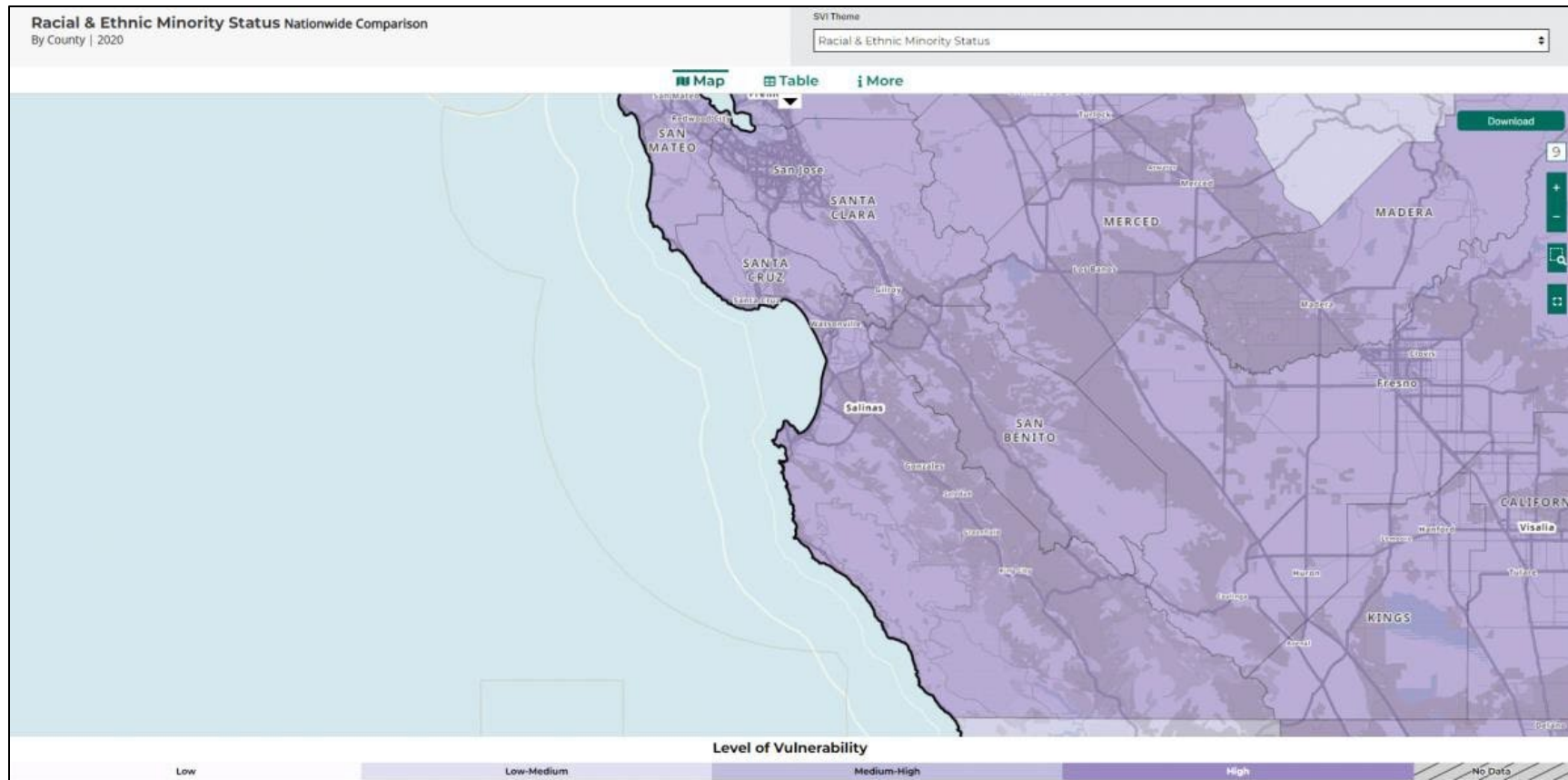
Figure 43. Project area racial and ethnic minority status using SVI tool (12/21/2023)

Monterey County has a high level of vulnerability based on housing type and transportation along with most counties to the east and north, with a few having a medium-high level of vulnerability. The exception is San Benito County, which has low vulnerability. Housing type and transportation vulnerability analysis is based on multi-unit structures, mobile homes, crowding, no vehicle, group quarters.
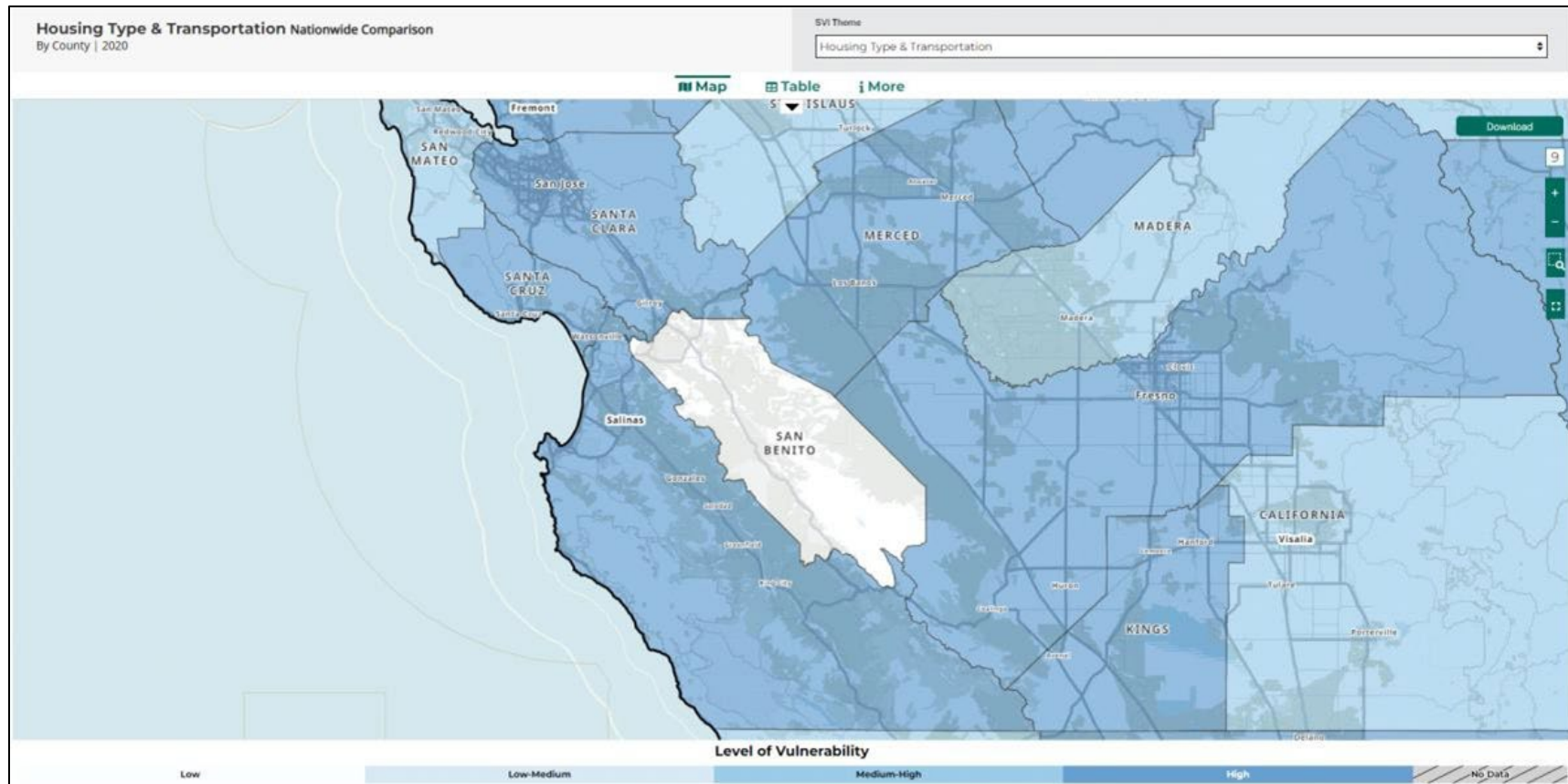
Figure 44. Project area housing types and transportation using SVI tool (12/21/2023)

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[i] Full link to the Coastal Zone Visitor Use Management Story Map: https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/6cc7fa5bd7304c3888a19154030abb13