

Supporting Environmental Justice Through Screening and Mapping Tools

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Introduction

Environmental justice (EPA definition): the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin or income, with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies.

The use of environmental justice screening and mapping tools (EJSM) is relatively new in supporting disadvantaged communities.

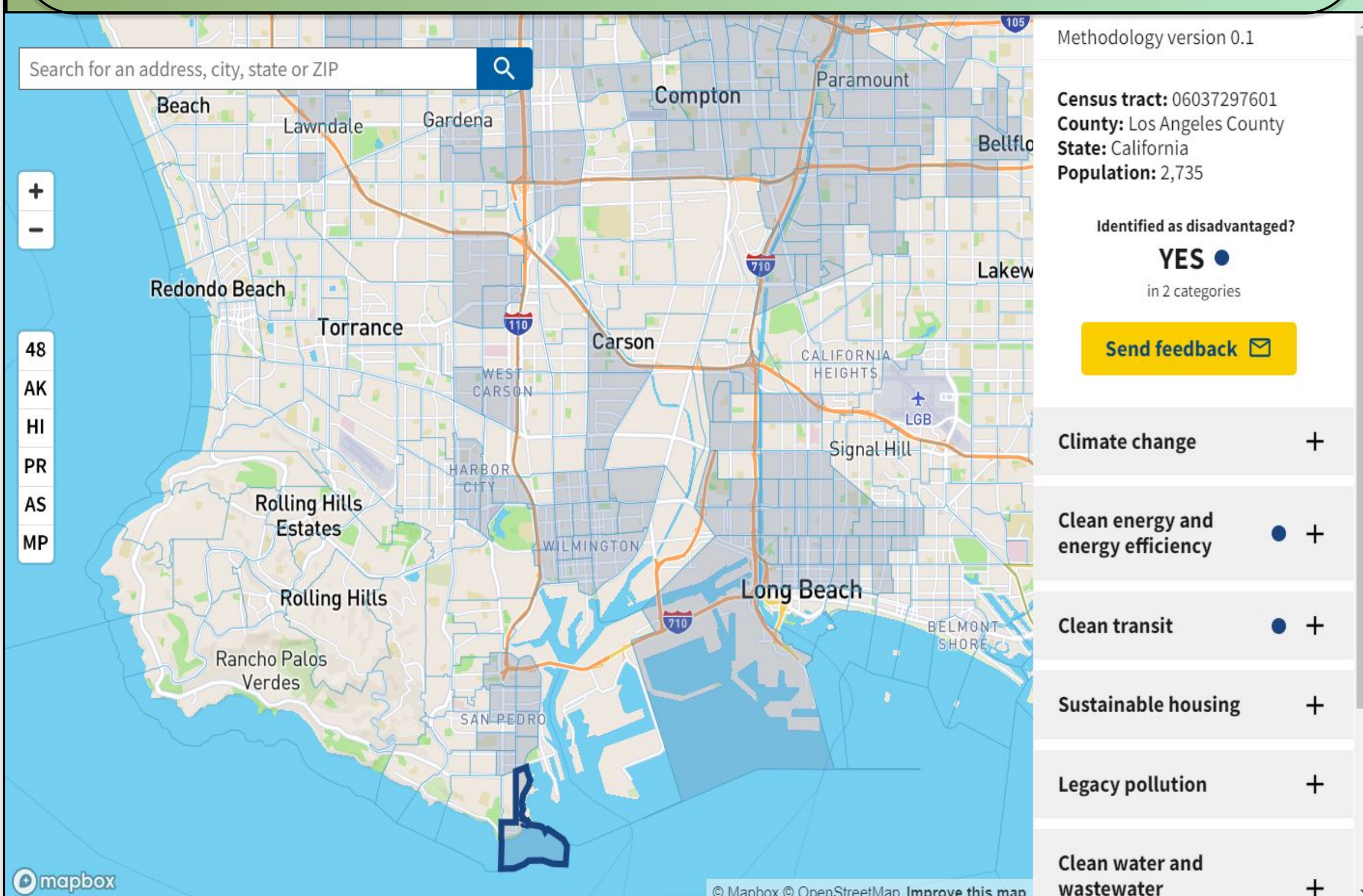


Figure 1: This is the White House Council on Environmental Quality's Climate and Justice Screening Tool that was released alongside President Biden's Justice40 initiative

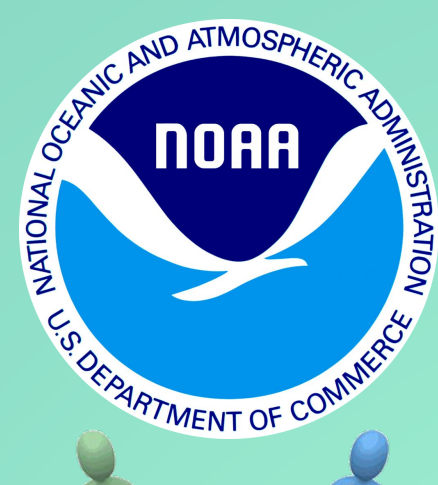
What is a disadvantaged community?

- a community that experiences higher or more adverse human health or environmental effects
- significant representation of communities of color, low-income, or tribal and indigenous communities

Question

How can EJSM tools be improved to better support disadvantaged communities?

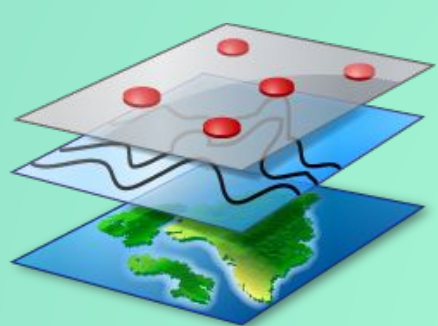
Internship/Methods



Completed an internship with NOAA's Office of Habitat Conservation



Collaborated with NOAA employees and affiliates



Analyzed existing EJSM tools



Conducted literature review on the use of EJSM tools

Which EJ mapping tool should I use?

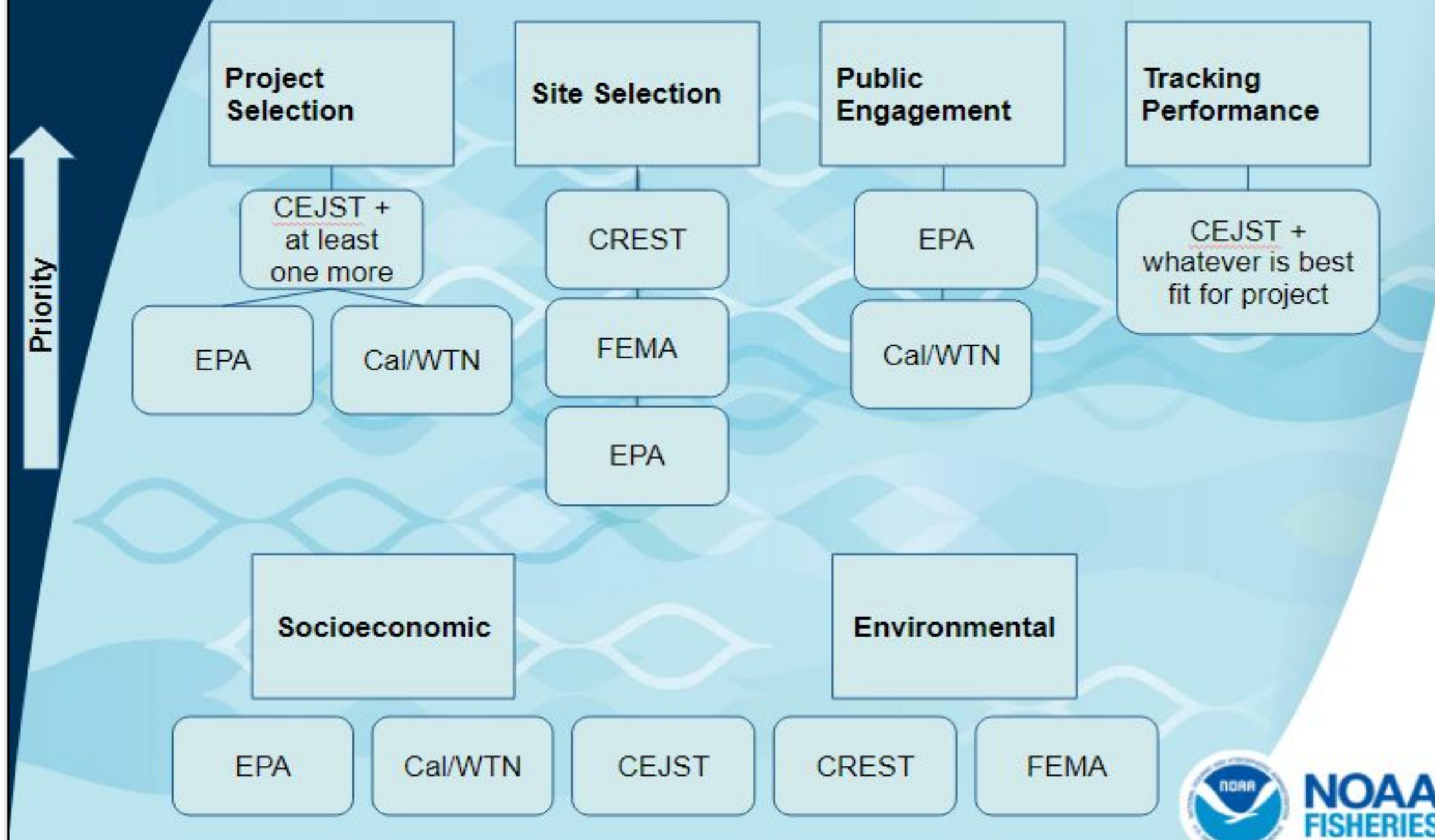


Figure 2: This is a little flowchart diagram I created during my internship with NOAA. This graphic is intended to be used for deciding on which EJSM tool to use depending on the type of indicators and information you are looking for.

Solutions

How can we improve EJSM tools?

Provide information on more specific communities



Common terminology and definitions



Include race/ethnicity

Demographic distribution

Percent of census tracts identified as **disadvantaged** and **not disadvantaged** by the White House screening tool

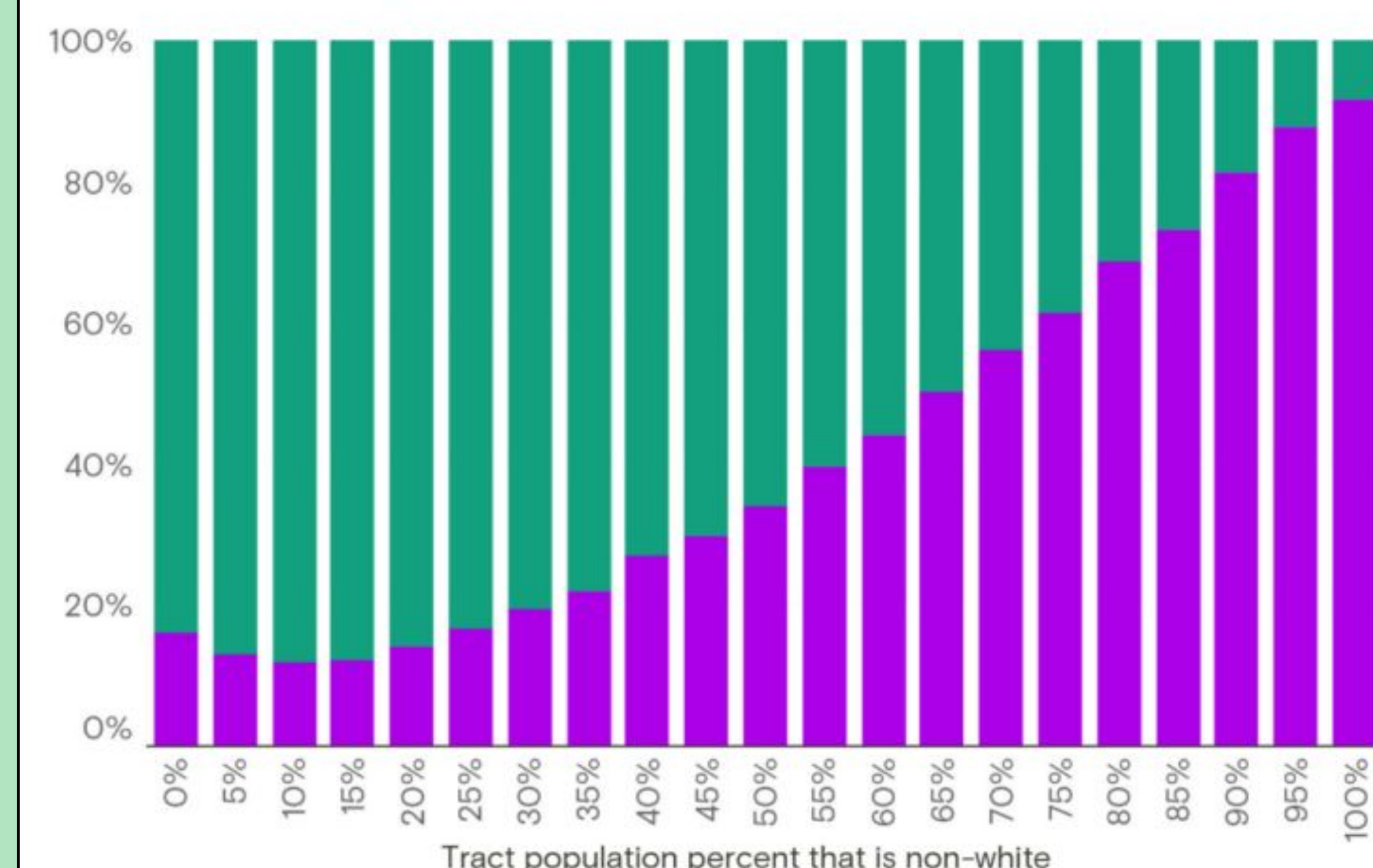


Figure 3: This bar graph shows the distribution of disadvantaged communities over the tract population percent that is non-white ranging from 0-100 percent.

Broader Significance

- Where do we go now with EJSM tools? Create one main tool with all relevant data to environmental justice or enhance existing tools to have a specific use.
- Some maps require further interpretation and understanding: Without experience using certain tools, it can be difficult to navigate and interpret the indicators.
- How do we define disadvantaged communities? Federal agencies and private stakeholders should work together.