A method for identifying Bernalillo County's Vulnerable Communities as an initial step toward addressing disparities in environmental exposures and health

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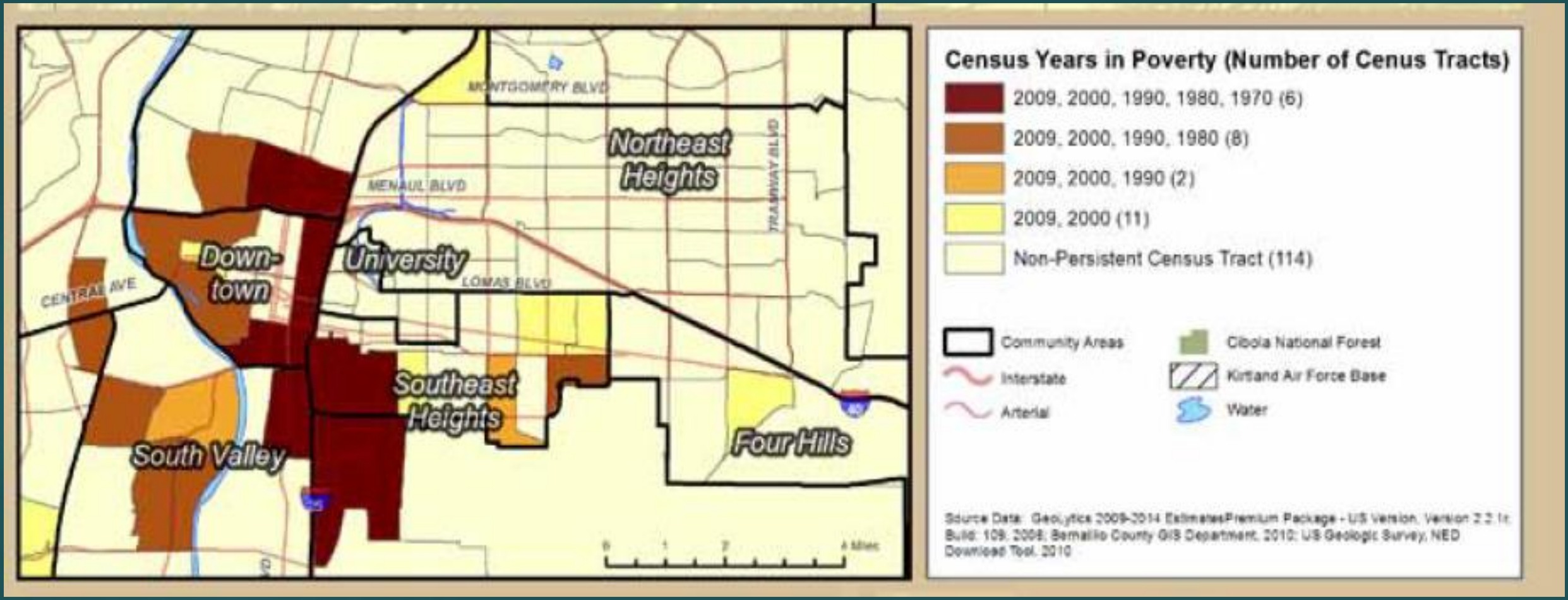
Introduction

- A review of policies and regulations to address Environmental Justice and Cumulative Impacts provide a reliable roadmap for successfully addressing disparities at the local level, these include:
  - Developing a workgroup and ensuring community members who are the most affected are at the decision making table
  - Recognizing the existence of disparities in environmental exposures and health outcomes and understanding the concept of equity
  - Discussing the role of historical policies in the current disparities landscape
  - Defining EJ, Cumulative Impacts, and Vulnerable Communities
  - Identifying vulnerable communities and creating policies that offer greater protection for neighborhoods and individuals that are experiencing inequities
  - Understanding that as policy making bodies, different departments within City and County government play a substantial role in addressing environmental disparities.
    - Responsibility for success belongs not to one department but to many departments. For example, the Planning Department, Environmental Health Department, and Community Services Department
- The following slides provide one method for identifying vulnerable communities. The methods come from the report, "Place Matters for Health in Bernalillo County: Ensuring Good Health for All". Published in 2012 by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies.

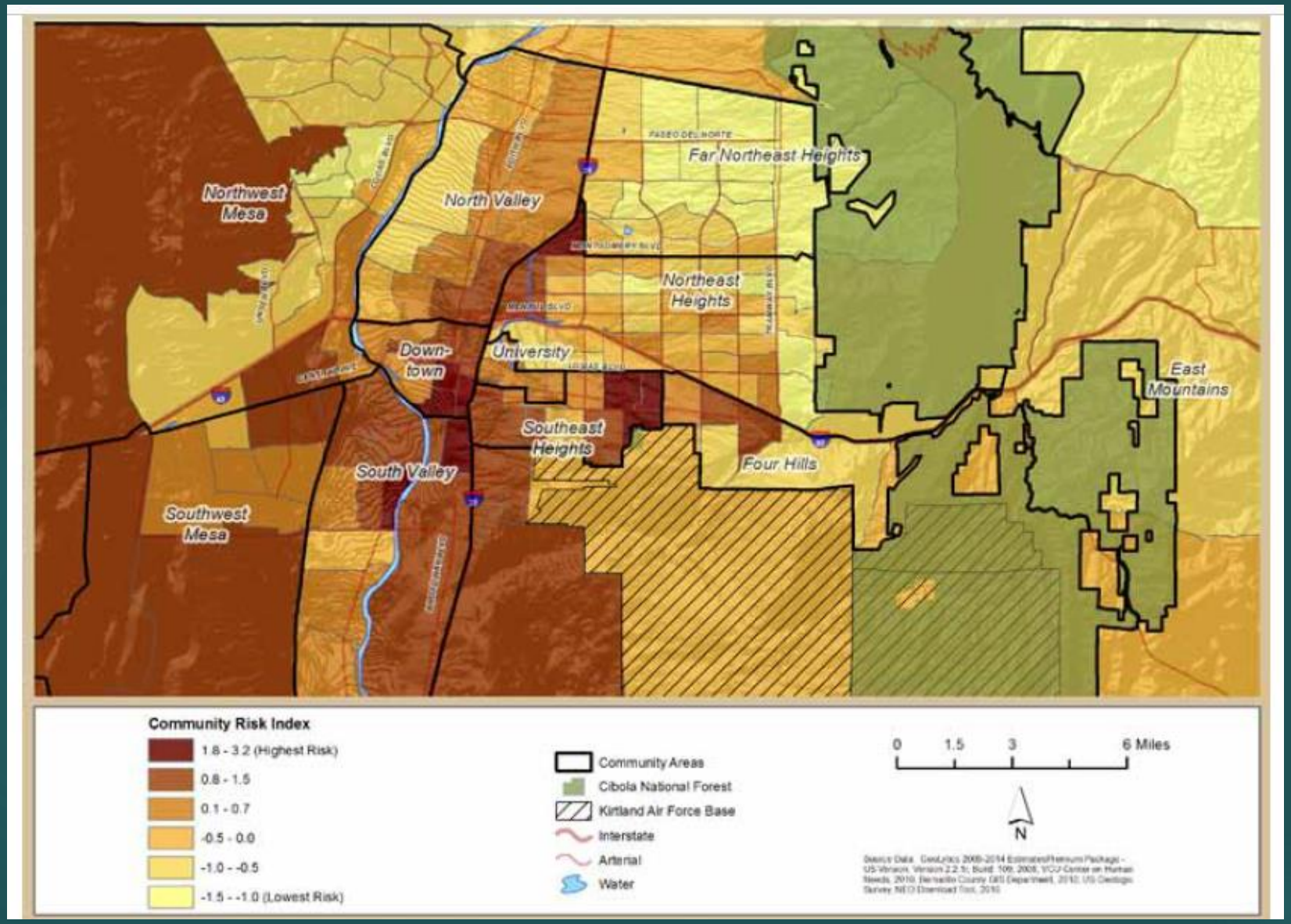
Persistent Poverty by Census Tract
1970 - 2009



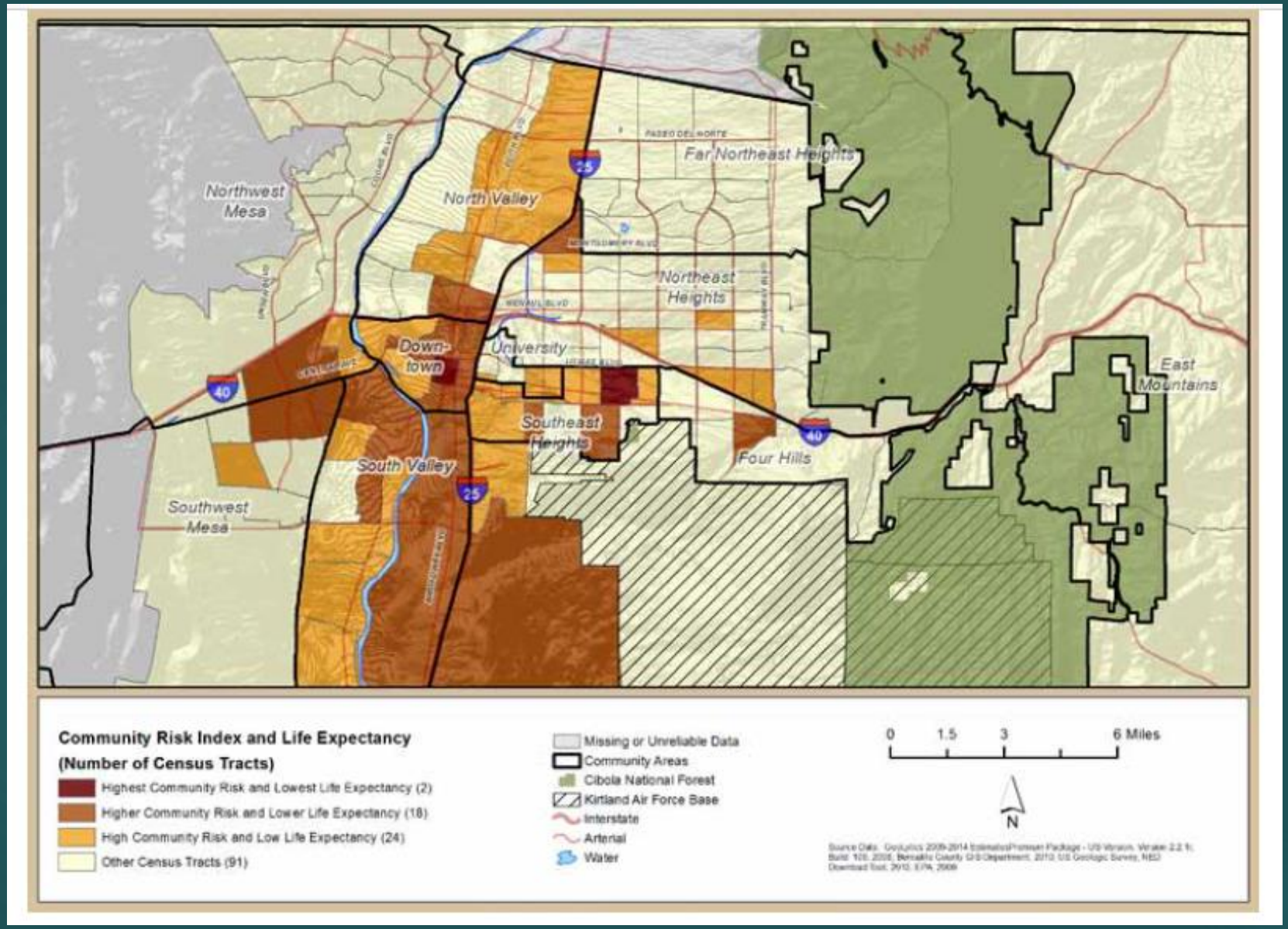
Community Risk Index

The CRI is a composite index that is based on the following indicators: percentage of population with less than a high school education, average standardized test scores, the violent crime rate, the foreclosure rate, the unemployment rate, percentage of houses that were vacant, and percentage of households with no automobile or with overcrowding. Higher scores represent the highest levels of risk.

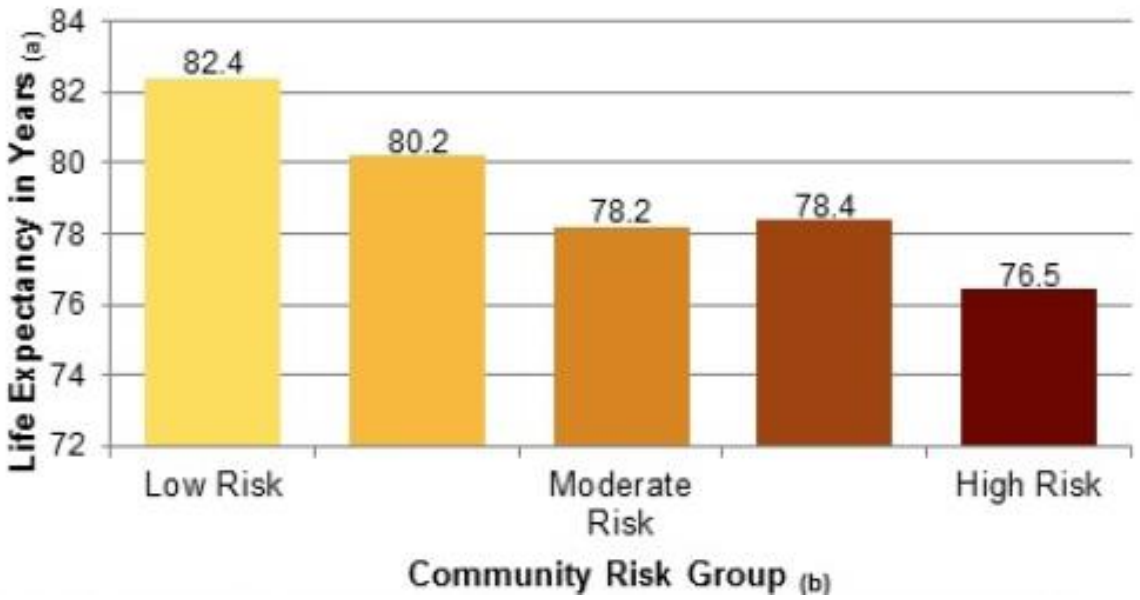
Community Risk Index by Census Tract 2004 - 2009



Regions of Elevated Community Risk Index and Low Life Expectancy by Census Tract, 1970 - 2009

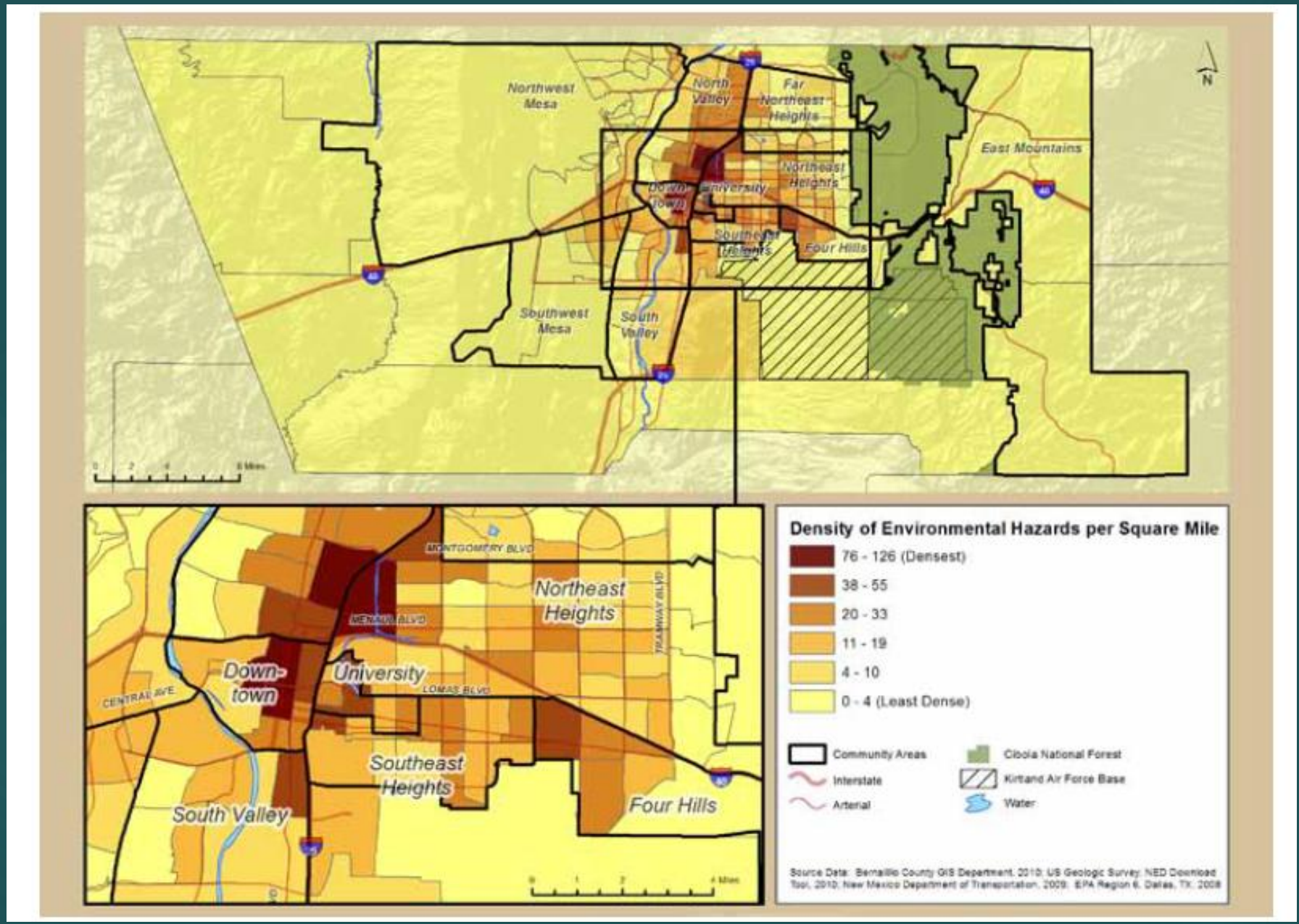


Life Expectancy by Community Risk

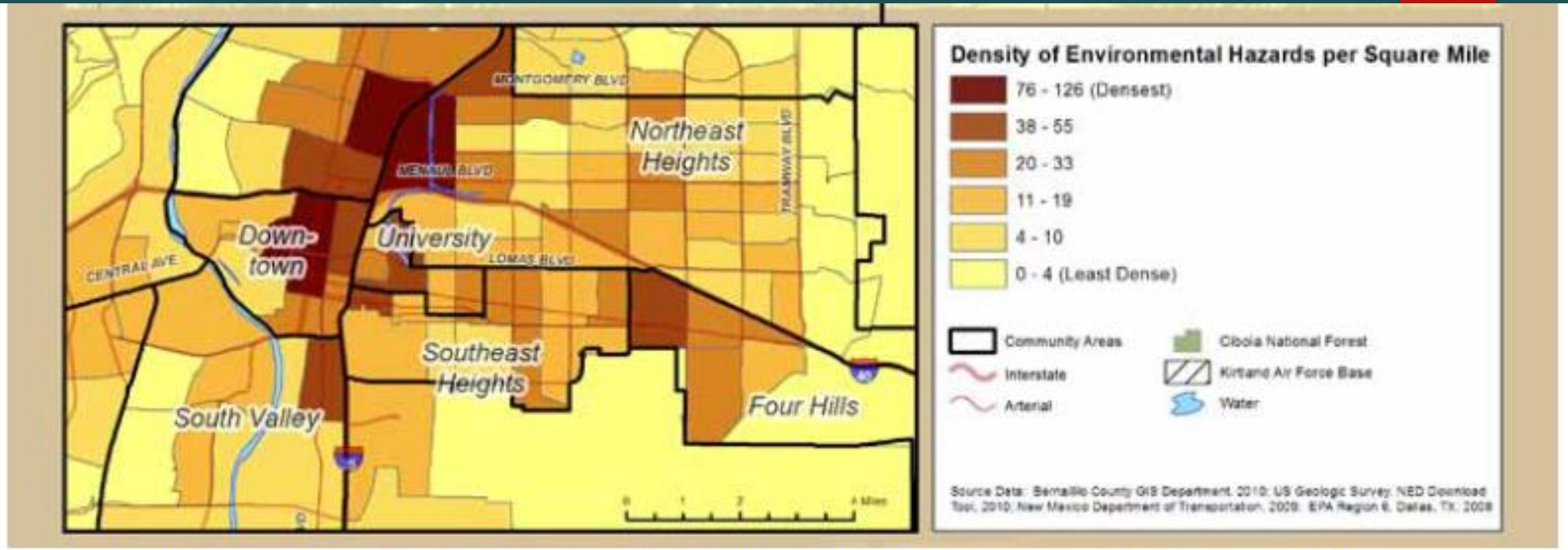


Environmental Risk

Environmental Risk by Census Tract, 2002



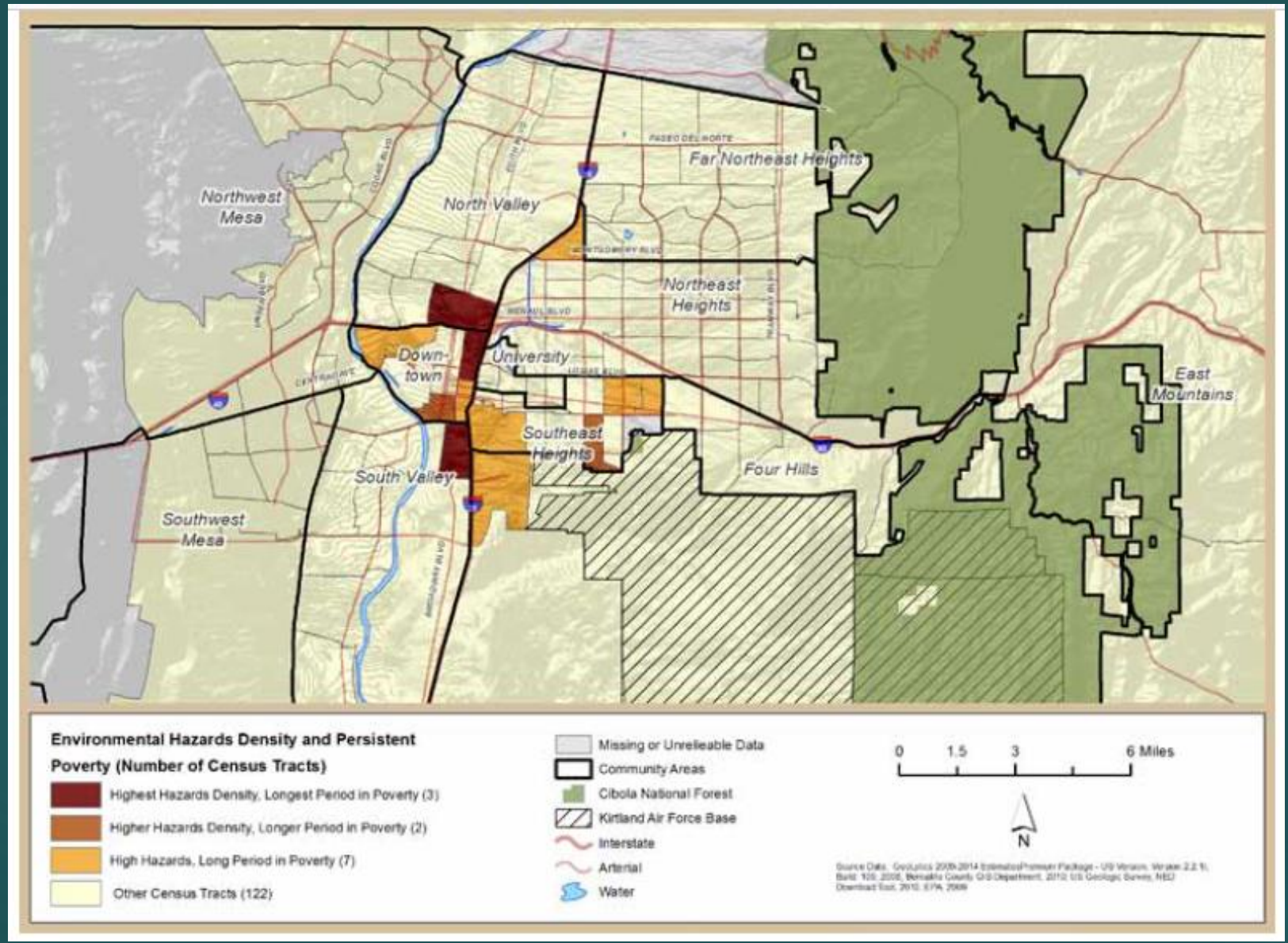
Environmental Risk by Census Tract, 2002



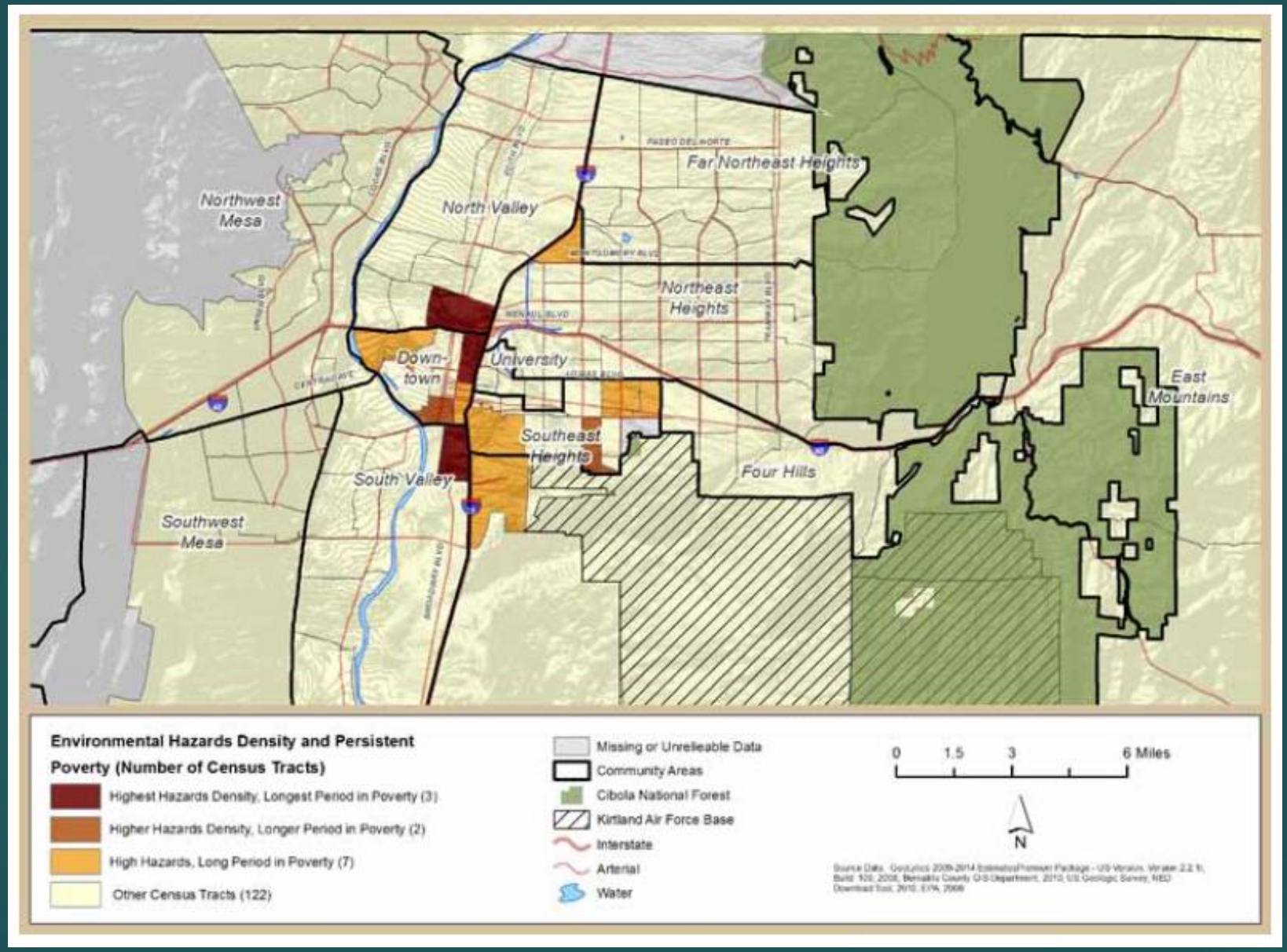
Note: The density of environmental hazards was generated from an aggregation of the following types of hazards per square mile:

- Tier II reporting facilities
- Discharge permit points
- Dumping locations
- Hazmat locations
- Hospitals
- Railroad depots
- NMED discharge permit locations
- NPDES permit locations
- NMED petroleum storage tank bureau leak sites
- Stationary air [pollution] sources
- Superfund sites
- Industrial/manufacturing land use

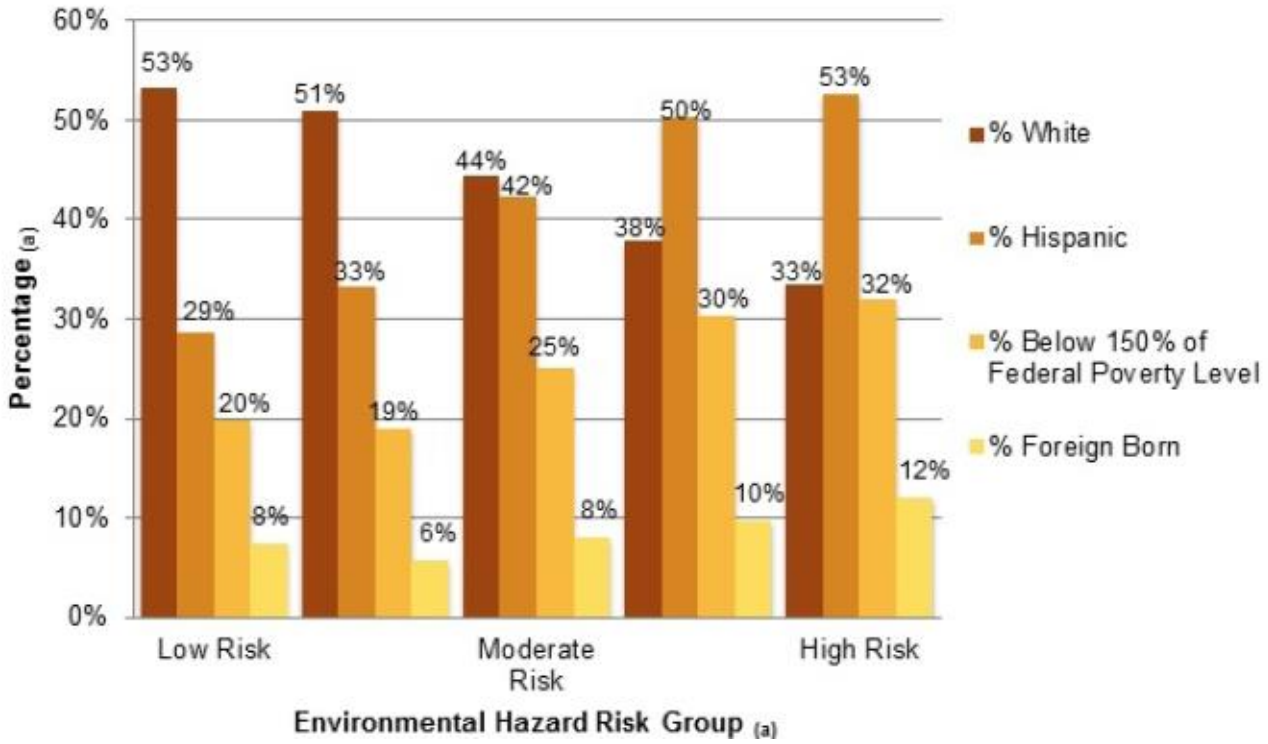
Regions of Elevated Environmental Risk and Persistent Poverty by Census Tract, 1970 - 2009

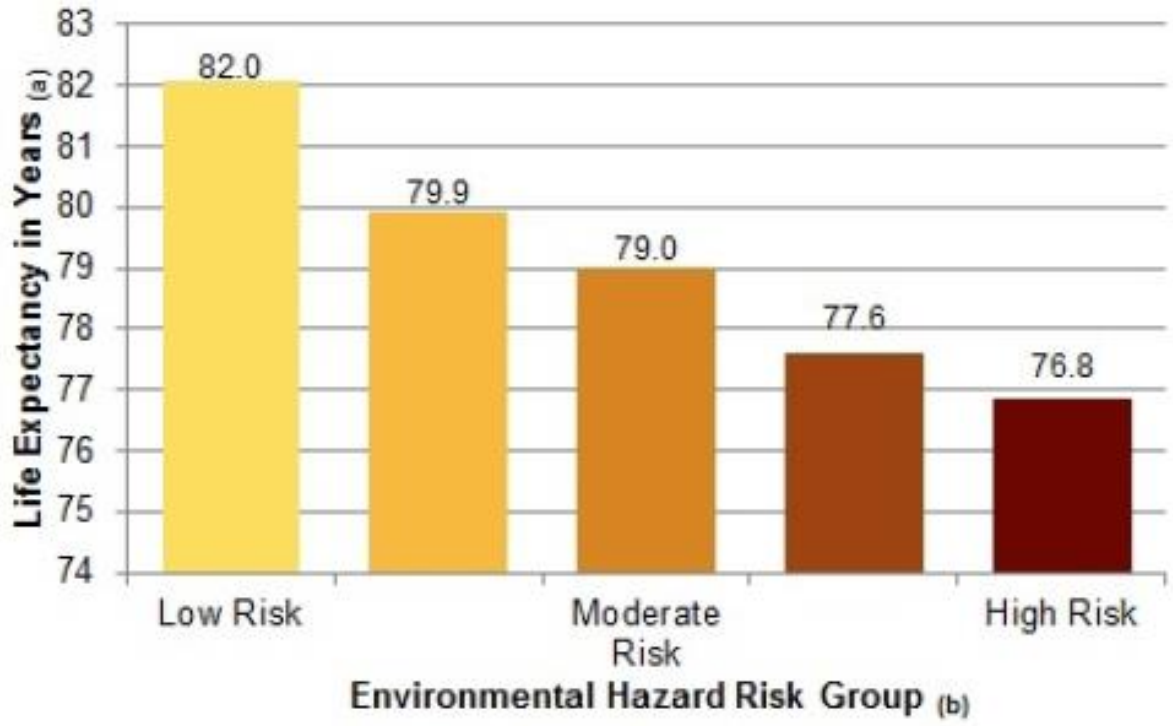


Regions of Elevated Environmental Risk and Low Life Expectancy by Census Tract, 1970 - 2009



Environmental Exposure by Race/Ethnicity and Poverty





Life Expectancy by Environmental Risk Group