

# Meeting 1 Workshop Summary

## Overview

The first Joshua Tree Community Workshop for the San Bernardino Community Plans Continuum took place on February 25, 2016, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Joshua Tree Community Center. The meeting consisted of an informational PowerPoint presentation by San Bernardino County Land Use Services and Michael Baker International; an interactive strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis; and an interactive values and aspirations discussion.

## SWOT Analysis

### Strengths

- Quiet atmosphere
- Well-preserved night sky, beautiful vistas
- Friendly, close-knit, and knowledgeable community
- Involved community of creative and active residents, community pride
- Residents are passionate about Joshua Tree National Park (JTNP) and preservation of open space and wildlife
- Close proximity to JTNP
- Mojave Desert Land Trust's preservation work
- Abundant native landscape and wildlife
- Predominance of small local businesses, lack of strip malls and fast food
- Low-density housing
- Community values culture and the arts
- No gated communities
- Bordered by protected land, secluded
- Great, weird residents
- Commitment to water conservation; a model community for the county
- Ability to create unique character through yard art and uniquely painted properties
- Affordability of housing in the area, low cost of living
- Adjacent to JTNP, which attracts more than a million visitors a year
- Commercial and industrial districts located along Twentynine Palms Highway (S.R. 62)

- Public transportation (MBTA 1 and 12/15) through the area that links with surrounding communities
- Good mixture of business types in the area

### Weaknesses

- Section 6 is open to vehicular traffic
- Poor safety on Highway 62 due to lack of sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes, and high traffic speeds
- Community split in half by Highway 62, with no safe way to cross; most residents drive, even if it is just a few hundred feet
- Squatters on rental properties
- No code enforcement to protect natural flora
- Lack of jobs within town
- No public swimming pool
- Crime, drugs, meth production
- Does not have a municipal advisory council
- Local educational system and education involving lower socioeconomic population
- Information highway bypasses the community; lack of investment by outside agencies
- Disparity between rich and poor residents
- Underserved in infrastructure, maintenance, county representation, and communication; lack of ability to effect change
- Lack of support and flexibility for local business and community development

- Five percent of the community residents attend meetings and speak for the other 95 percent of the population
- Far distance to travel for certain services, which is not a possibility for some residents
- Residents do not have the ability to fight large corporations; no political teeth or resources to keep the corporations out of the community
- County needs to help with the preservation of Joshua trees
- Lack of services for helping homeless population
- No organized plan; the last community plan was largely unpopular and ignored
- Lack of racial and ethnic diversity throughout the community
- Road flooding throughout many areas during the rainy season
- Unpaved secondary roads and lack of pedestrian facilities, such as sidewalks and signalized crosswalks
- Walk score of 0 for much of the community, indicating the need for a personal vehicle
- Code enforcement concerns:
  - **Land-use issues:** artist studios and galleries, short-term rentals
  - **Public nuisance:** junk/trash, vacant structures, illegal dumping
  - **Recreational activity:** popular riding areas for off-highway vehicles
- Recreational and guide services for rock climbing, hiking, camping, nature viewing, and seeing the night sky
- Capitalize on two strong economic pillars, marine base and national park
- Be an environmental and economic sustainability model for the county
- Untapped tourism opportunity; bike trails, camping, and JTNP entrance roads
- Addition of a community service district
- Revised zoning should be a reflection of community values
- Create additional protected wildlife zones and wildlife corridor bridges over Highway 62
- Route Highway 62 around downtown to create an actual downtown
- Slow traffic on Highway 62 to 35 miles per hour in the downtown area
- Create mixed-use zoning guidelines for parts of downtown, improve overall zoning
- Increase the walkability of the community through sidewalks and slower traffic
- Natural conservation and historic reserve involvement
- Formulate retail ordinance
- Development of more restaurants and other places to spend time in downtown
- Take advantage of location next to the national park to increase lodging and tourism impact

## Opportunities

- Section 6 is an opportunity for hiking if closed to vehicle traffic
- Airbnb and vacation rental activity to bring more people to the community
- Outdoor education and learning trades through the community college, Copper Mountain College
- County support for small rooftop solar projects
- National conservation and historical reserve

## Threats

- Chain big-box stores and large corporations, such as Dollar General, moving into the community seeking to make a profit
- Uneducated park visitors from out of the area who deface wilderness and JTNP
- County involvement in Airbnb industry
- Hipster culture coming into town
- Outside developers who do not understand the culture of the area
- Theft, crime, drug use, and vagrants

- Destruction of native land for renewable power plants
- Lack of resource information for returning adult community members regarding attaining higher education; low socioeconomic status
- Dense housing developments bringing more traffic, high-density residential projects
- Lack of money for infrastructure, such as sidewalks and bike lanes
- Large solar projects
- Some vacation homeowners are not maintaining properties
- County disconnect in the vision of the future of the community
- Utility-scale solar corporate development
- Outside beliefs affecting the community's cultural values and desires; hipster invasion
- Increasing high-speed traffic on Highway 62 that ages the infrastructure more quickly
- Lack of enforcement on illegal off-highway vehicles
- Usurping of Joshua Tree water
- People trying to damage local resources, such as air, water, and land
- Too much light pollution caused by big-box stores
- Local hospital now run by for-profit company
- Gentrification by outside investors and greed
- Airbnb and other vacation rentals
- Increased crime rates and disconnect between residents and sheriff's department
- Isolation from the rest of the county, distance from services
- Garbage and illegal dumping
- Invasive plant material taking over the native landscape

## Values and Aspirations

### Values

- Natural beauty and open spaces, clean air
- Close proximity to JTNP, a worldwide attraction
- Uniqueness of people, location, natural environment, and biological resources
- Do-it-yourself attitude of the community
- Considered a very spiritual place by many residents
- Slower pace of life, quiet atmosphere
- The community values reflect those of the JTNP

### Aspirations

- Higher attendance of community members at the local community college and more educational institutions
- Creation of arts and music programs for youth
- Decrease in local crime and more police enforcement

- More paved streets, bike lanes, and crosswalks
- Model sustainable community via increased environmental education and self-sufficiency
- Community organic garden
- Smart development and growth that fits within the existing community
- Low-emission bus service and additional access ways to JTNP and throughout town
- Maintaining a small, close-knit community character that can sustainably accommodate local and international visitors to JTNP
- Public swimming pool
- Elected representation who have the community's best interests in mind
- Land-use control by the community
- Maintain diversity at every level; people, income, arts, climate, etc.

- Develop an alternative kind of attitude towards alternative energy sources, health, arts, and culture
- Development of a senior center for the community
- To be a culturally vibrant community
- Be an LGBT-friendly community
- Natural conservation and historic reserve



COUNTYWIDE PLAN  
Joshua Tree Community Plan