

**Hilltop Communities, San Bernardino County**

# Community Profile

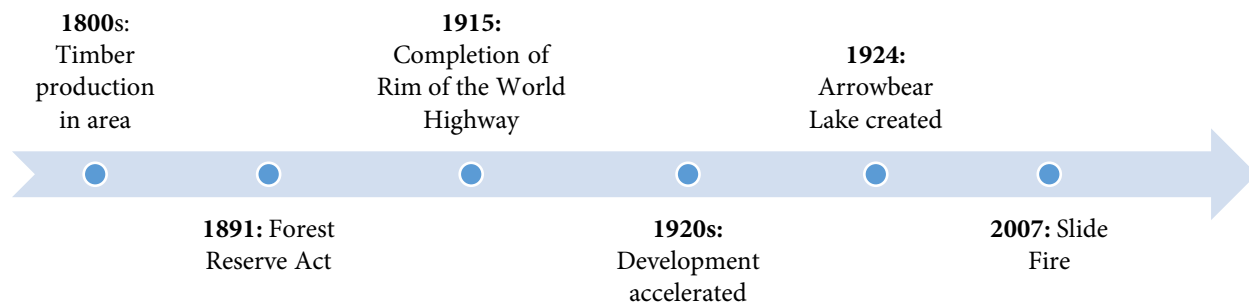
## Purpose

The community profile is a summary of the social, cultural, economic, and historic dimensions of the Hilltop Communities. It presents data collected through secondary sources to inform future actions. The profile, together with future studies and information gathered from residents, highlights essential facets and “tells the story” of the Hilltop Communities of Arrowbear, Green Valley Lake, and Running Springs.

The initial objective research prepared for the community profile was provided to participants as a handout at each community workshop to provide a basis for discussion during the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats), values, and aspirations exercises. Workshop participants were asked to review the information and provide comments as a way to infuse local knowledge into the community plans process. Their feedback was used to finalize the community profile, which includes objective research and issue identification by community workshop participants.

The objective information, community stories, and public’s participation in the community profile, SWOT, values, and aspirations exercises were all used when developing the framework for the focus and action statements that make up the community plan.

## History



In the mid-1800s, high rates of timber harvesting resulted in new road construction to facilitate production. In 1890, the Forest Reserve Act was enacted, creating the San Bernardino Forest Reserve, which became the San Bernardino National Forest in 1907.

In 1915, the 101-mile Rim of the World highway was constructed connecting Lake Arrowhead to Big Bear Lake, improving circulation in the mountains. Between 1946 and 1950, Snow Valley established itself as a major winter recreation area with one of the first overhead cable lifts, and State Route (SR) 30 (now SR 330) was constructed. After many years of inactivity, development was renewed in 1954 and stimulated much of today’s residential land uses in the area.

In October 2007, the Slide Fire burned over 12,000 acres in the Green Valley Lake area, destroying over 100 homes and three businesses, including the historic Fox Lumber and various ski run facilities.

Source(s): Wikipedia, Hilltop Community Plan, green-valley-lake.com

## Location & Geography

The Hilltop Communities are located 13 miles northeast of the City of San Bernardino in the mountain area of the San Bernardino National Forest, with Green Valley Lake located northeast of Running Springs, and Arrowbear and Big Bear Lake located to the east and Lake Arrowhead to the west.



Figure 1: Area Map

Source(s): ESRI, San Bernardino County LUS

## Key Census Data

Category	Hilltop Communities		San Bernardino County		California		United States	
	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total
<b>Population</b>								
Total Population	5,761		2,078,586		38,066,920		314,107,084	
2020 Population Forecast	5,866 (+1.8%)		2,227,066 (+7.1%)		40,619,346 (+6.7%)		334,503,000 (+6.5%)	
Total Households	2,319		607,604		12,617,280		116,211,092	
Average Household Size	2.48		3.34		2.95		2.63	
Median Age	43.8		32.2		35.6		37.4	
<b>Education</b>								
High School Diploma	N/A	N/A	330,613	26.3%	5,153,257	20.7%	58,440,600	27.95%
Education Past High School	N/A	N/A	417,953	33.3%	7,400,714	29.8%	60,821,634	29.1%
Bachelor Degree or Higher	N/A	N/A	336,315	26.8%	7,708,909	31.0%	61,206,147	29.3%
<b>Housing</b>								
Total Dwelling Units	5,160	n/a	703,737	n/a	13,781,929	n/a	132,741,033	n/a
Homeowner Occupied Units	1,638	31.7%	370,032	52.58%	6,908,925	50.1%	74,787,460	56.3%
Renter Occupied Units	681	13.2%	237,572	33.76%	5,708,355	41.4%	41,423,632	32.2%
Vacancy*	2,841	55.1%	96,133	13.7%	1,164,649	8.5%	16,529,941	12.5%
Median Year Structure Built	N/A	n/a	1976	n/a	1974	n/a	1976	n/a
<b>Income</b>								
Median Household Income	49,027	n/a	\$54,100	n/a	\$61,489	n/a	\$53,482	n/a
Persons Below Poverty Level	N/A	N/A	199,451	12.7%	3,354,518	11.2%	26,235,361	10.6%
Employed	N/A	N/A	812,707	86.1%	16,890,442	89.0%	143,435,233	90.2%
Unemployed	N/A	N/A	131,293	13.9%	2,084,564	12.3%	14,504,781	9.2%
Note: N/A indicates that the data is not available; n/a indicates that the category is not applicable								
*This figure may include seasonal households								

Table 1: Key Census Data

Source(s): 2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates and ESRI

## Community Structure (Physical Characteristics)

The Hilltop Communities’ residential developments consist of multiple-family and single-family dwellings on lots up to five acres in size with limited setbacks. There are multiple small commercial districts with buildings set back from the street with parking facilities in front. The businesses are clustered on either side of SR 18 in Running Springs and Arrowbear. Additionally, Green Valley Lake has concentrated commercial districts on the south side of the lake and on the eastern part of town. Large, separated signs identify businesses to vehicular traffic.

The major roadways are Hilltop Boulevard/Rim of the World Highway (SR 18), City Creek Road (SR 330), and Green Valley Lake Road/101 Mile Drive. All of these highways are two lanes; however, a portion of SR 330 is a divided four-lane highway. The local, private roads are paved and lack pedestrian facilities.

The Walk Score for the Hilltop Communities ranges from 1 to 36 out of 100, indicating that most errands need to be completed with a car. For properties with higher scores, some errands can be completed by walking; for lower scores, all errands will require a car. There are no bicycle facilities in the area. Two Mountain Transit bus routes, RIM 4 and RIM Off the Mountain, serve the communities, connecting with Lake Arrowhead, Running Springs, Crestline, and San Bernardino. Two truck routes run through the communities.

*Source(s): Google Earth, San Bernardino Zoning Map, San Bernardino Countywide Plan Existing Conditions Report, Walkscore.com, mountaintransit.org*

## Community Existing Land Use

The Hilltop Communities Plan area covers 25,448 acres of land. Within this area there are 10 land uses. Agriculture and resource conservation are the predominant uses, accounting for 86% (25,448 acres) of the land area. Single-family residential and special development uses each account for approximately 6% (1,511 and 1,592 acres, respectively) of land area. Special Development land uses consist of a special land

use zoning district or Specific Plan area that provides sites for a combination of residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, open space, and recreation uses. The remaining land uses include community industrial; floodways; institutional; multiple family; office, service, and highway (OSH) commercial; and rural, neighborhood, and general (RNG) commercial; each account for less than 1% of land area.

Land Use Type	Acreage	% of Total Area
Agriculture/Resource Conservation	21,732	86%
Single Residential	1,511	6%
Special Development	1,592	6%
Rural Living	384	2%
Community Industrial	27	<1%
Floodway	18	<1%
Institutional	29	<1%
Multiple Residential	34	<1%
Office, Service, and Highway Commercial	31	<1%
Rural, Neighborhood, and General Commercial	90	<1%
<b>Hilltop Total</b>	<b>25,448</b>	

*Table 2: Land Uses by Acreage*

*Source(s): San Bernardino County Land Use Services*

## Community Amenities

The Hilltop Communities are completely surrounded by the San Bernardino National Forest with approximately 77% of the area located within the National Forest. The Hilltop Communities area contains the Snow Valley ski area, a number of campgrounds, organization camps, and recreational and maintenance trails.

### Hospitals

No hospitals are located within the planning area. The closest hospitals are Mountains Community Hospital in Lake Arrowhead and Bear Valley Community Hospital in Bear Valley.

*Parks*

**Robert Hootman Community Center:** 2929 Running Springs School Rd, Running Springs  
**Arrowbear Lake:** Arrowbear Dr, east of Highway 18 in Arrowbear  
**Green Valley Lake:** Green Valley Lake Rd north of Highway 18 in Green Valley Lake  
**National Children’s Forest:** 32573 Highway 18, Running Springs

*Schools*

Charles Hoffman Elementary is the only public school within the area and is accessed by SR 18. The school district is planning a new intermediate school adjacent to Charles Hoffman Elementary. Additionally, the area has one private preschool facility, Mt. Calvary Lutheran Preschool, and an outdoor educational institute known as the Pali Institute.

*Fire Protection*

The Running Springs Fire Department provides fire protection and paramedic services to Running Springs and the surrounding 52-square-mile area. The department includes 9 full-time staff and 30 on-call firefighters who provide 24-hour emergency response.

Response times are 8 to 15 minutes, depending on weather and road conditions.

*Police*

The Hilltop area is covered by the San Bernardino County Sheriff Department’s Twin Peaks Station. The station currently has 17 sworn deputies, two detectives, five sergeants, and one captain, in addition to seven administrative employees. The station is also home to the Major Enforcement Team, which focuses on identified crime areas, and the Off-Highway Vehicle Teams, which patrol the forest area. A Marine Enforcement Team also patrols the lake itself. *Community Gardens*

There are four community gardens within 25 miles of the Hilltop Communities: Big Bear Valley Community Gardens Project, Green Maven’s Community Garden, Harvest to Home, and Baldwin Lake Community Garden.

*Source(s): Google Maps, Hilltop Community Area Plan 2007, San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department, Running Springs Fire Department, American Community Garden Association 2016*

**Community Groups**

<p><b>Running Springs Rim Communities for Youth Coalition</b> (909) 336-1800 <a href="http://www.rimfamilyservices.org/category/rim-communities-for-youth-coalition/">http://www.rimfamilyservices.org/category/rim-communities-for-youth-coalition/</a></p>	<p><b>Arrowbear Lake Lions Club</b> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/Arrowbear-Lake-Lions-Club-912734958740974/">https://www.facebook.com/Arrowbear-Lake-Lions-Club-912734958740974/</a></p>
<p><b>Running Springs Area Chamber of Commerce</b> (909) 867-2411 <a href="http://www.runningspringschamber.com/contact_us">http://www.runningspringschamber.com/contact_us</a></p>	<p><b>Mountain Community Alliance</b> (909) 867-7105 <a href="http://www.mountaincommunityalliance.org/">http://www.mountaincommunityalliance.org/</a></p>

*Table 3: Community Groups  
Source(s): Listed in Table*

**Quality of Life Concerns**

The following list was compiled from observations and calls received by the San Bernardino County Sheriff and Code Enforcement officers. Common issues noted in the communities include the following: drought and other natural disasters; drug use and drug related crimes/accidents; trash, junk,

and other littering; poor road maintenance, particularly during the winter; and slow response time from law enforcement and other emergency services.

*Source(s): San Bernardino Code Enforcement and Community SWOT*

## Community Events

**Valentine’s Day Brunch:** February, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Hootman Center

**Mountain Top Days (Running Springs Area Chamber of Commerce):** August

**Yoga – Tai Chi – Qi Gong:** Mondays at 10:00 a.m., Hootman Center

**Annual Easter Egg Hunt (Running Springs Area Chamber of Commerce):** March, Running Springs

**Bingo:** last Sunday of the month, Hootman Center

**Bunco:** second Wednesday of the month at 12:30 p.m., Hootman Center

**Golden Oaks Senior Luncheon:** March, Hootman Center

**Running Springs Farmer’s Market and Artisan**

**Faire:** Saturdays, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

**Summer Faire Series:** Every-other-Saturday from June 17 to August 12, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

## Public Health

**Chronic Disease:** Data for chronic illness is limited for the Hilltop Communities. The emergency room rate for hypertension is higher than the County, whereas the rate for all other chronic illnesses is below the County. The Hilltop Communities experience lower rates of E.R. visits for diabetes, asthma, and hypertension in comparison to San Bernardino County.

	Diabetes Hosp./E.R.	COPD Hosp./E.R.	Asthma Hosp./E.R.	Heart Failure Hosp./E.R.	Hypertension Hosp./E.R.
Hilltop Communities	* /17.5	* / *	* /37.7	* / *	* /28.2
San Bernardino County	23.3/42.4	16.0/19.9	9.6/52.6	32.3/10.6	5.6/46.9

Table 4: Rate of Hospitalization/Emergency Room Visits per 10,000 People

Source(s): Healthy San Bernardino

\* Indicates insufficient data

**Air Quality:** Table 5 below shows the air quality near the Hilltop Communities, measured at the San Bernardino 4<sup>th</sup> Street monitoring site, in terms of the number of days that area exceeded the federal standards for pollutants (exceedance days). The table shows that the monitoring site near the Hilltop Communities had fewer exceedance days for each pollutant than that of the overall South Coast Air Basin, in which the Hilltop Communities are located.

Air pollution is one of the contributing factors linked to the development of chronic diseases such as stroke, heart disease, lung cancer, and respiratory diseases. By reducing levels of ambient pollution (outdoor air pollution), communities can lessen the impact that it has on resident’s health.

## Community Economics

The 2016 ESRI Community Analyst Report showed that the Hilltop Communities are home to 1,825 jobs and 240 businesses. The top business industries in the Hilltop Communities are construction; services; retail trade; and finance, insurance, and real estate. **Figure 2: Top Industries**, shown below, displays the top business industries in the area.

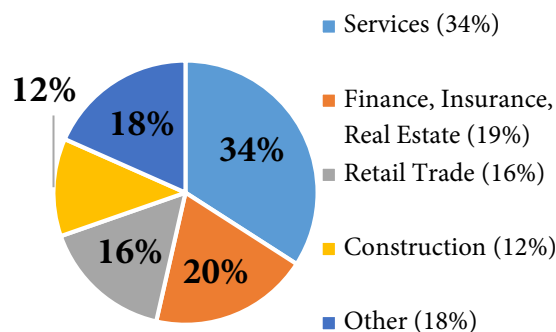


Figure 2: Top Industries

Source(s): ESRI Community Analyst

	San Bernardino – 4 <sup>th</sup> St. Monitoring Site			South Coast Air Basin		
	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014
Ozone Federal 8-hour standard	54	36	51	111	88	92
Course Particulate Matter (PM <sub>10</sub> ) Federal 24-hour standard	0	1.0	1.0	0	2	1
Fine Particulate Matter (PM <sub>2.5</sub> ) Federal 24-hour standard	0	3.3	*	17	13	15

Table 5: Air Quality Exceedance Days

Source: California Air Resources Board

\* Indicates insufficient data

**Modified Food Index:** The Modified Food Index maps the availability of healthy food in a census tract. The lower the score, the less available healthy options are in the area.

The entire community area of the Hilltop Communities ranks within the lowest category for food access (shown in red), meaning that there is access to less than 5 healthy food outlets within that area. Lower scores indicate that these areas contain many convenience stores and fast food restaurants compared to the number of healthy food markets.

Source(s): Modified Retail Food Environment Index Score Map

**Public/Active Transportation:** Bus service in the Hilltop communities are operated by Mountain Transit, which serves the mountain region with connections to San Bernardino. The one route serving the Hilltop Communities provides a connection to Lake Arrowhead. There are no dedicated bike lanes or bike trails. City Creek Road identified as a bike-friendly road. The Rim of the World Active Transportation Plan was adopted in 2018.

Source(s): Mountain Transit Route map, San Bernardino County of Public Health, California Air Resources Board

## Community Engagement Summary

As a part of the Community Plans Continuum process, community members from the Hilltop Communities were invited to participate in three community workshops. The first workshop, titled “What We Value”, took place on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 from 6:30 – 8:30pm at the Robert Hootman Community Center. This workshop was attended by 20 community members. Workshop participants performed a SWOT analysis to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats within the community. Following that exercise, participants used that information to share what they valued about the community (Values) and what they want to see the community become in the future (Aspirations).

The second workshop, titled “Our Roadmap”, took place on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016 from 6:30 – 8:30pm at the Robert Hootman Community Center. This workshop was attended by 28 community members. The purpose of this workshop was to develop preliminary focus and action statements. The project team provided word for word summaries of the SWOT and Values and Aspirations exercises to use during the goal setting process. Additionally, an existing land use map was provided for each of the Detailed Plan Communities for participants to comment on and recommend changes. Participants made comments on where they would and would not like to see certain uses in the future, as well as what they saw as the true boundary of their community.

The third workshop, titled “Making it Happen”, took place on July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2016 from 6:30 – 8:30pm at the Robert Hootman Community Center. This workshop was attended by 20 community members. The workshop was used to help prioritize the focus statements developed in the previous workshop while also identifying possible champions for each effort.

Information was also made available on project websites made specifically for each community. This information included:

- Background materials on the project
- Materials developed for each workshop
- Summaries of the information collected from past workshops
- Surveys developed to follow the process of each meeting and allow for further input

## Community Identified Issues

### SWOT Analysis

This section contains the results of the SWOT analysis conducted during the first workshop. A SWOT exercise stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats and is used to help gain insight into the community through local knowledge. In the first part, participants identify their communities’ biggest strengths, such as community assets like a library or community center, along with their biggest weaknesses, which could be a lack of open space or high rates of internal crime. Next, workshop participants looked at opportunities that the community could take advantage of as part of the community plans process. This builds off of what was identified in the strengths and weaknesses portion. Lastly, participants identify external threats to the community. These are generally concerns that are outside of the control of community members, such as natural disasters or changes in economic conditions. This information was then compiled and used throughout the rest of the community plans process to inform the values and aspirations exercises conducted at workshop #1, as well as the focus and actions statements.

#### Strengths

- Friendly, safe, resilient community
- Small size (everyone knows everyone)
- Strategic location (SR 330 / SR 18)
- Community involved to solve problems, helpful
- Awareness of members/neighbors
- Natural beauty and recreational opportunities
- Private lake
- Surrounded on three sides by national forest
- Not a drive-thru community
- All roads are walkable and bike friendly - safe
- Museum (keeps the history of Green Valley Lake)
- Mecca for artists and musicians
- Community Center and community garden
- Quiet neighborhood
- Long-time residents
- People know and support their neighbors
- Share concerns for community services
- Clean air
- Affordable housing in the area
- Farmer’s market
- Seasons
- Charles Hoffman Elementary (young families)
- Good schools
- Outdoor snow play areas
- Abundance of natural resources
- Recreation
  - San Bernardino Regional Forest
  - Snow Valley ski area
  - Trail system
- Natural characteristics – Mountains, completely surrounded by San Bernardino National Forest
- Community Events

### *Weaknesses*

- Some off-highway vehicle drivers don't respect the laws (ruins quiet atmosphere)
- Susceptible to natural disasters (fire)
- Home-based businesses
- Need more support from customers of business, especially restaurants
- Harmful competition between businesses
- Recent fires and poor snow have slowed tourism and caused decline of commercial areas
- Drought affecting lake level and water supply
- Political differences
- No community places to gather throughout the year
- Territorial (old guard vs. newbies)
- Speeding on the neighborhood streets
- Finding Green Valley Lake in the fog on highway 18 (need better lighting)
- Highway striping inadequate/unsafe
- Trash/pollution (short-term rentals, weekenders, contractors)
- Need more law enforcement in the area (people know reaction times are slow)
- Transients and crime (petty theft, breaking and entering, illegal parking)
- Drug use
- Few jobs on the mountain
- Too many empty houses
- Poor winter road maintenance
- Parochialism
- Higher prices in many businesses
- Not a lot of doctors
- Lack of resources to draw in tourists (can't take advantage of industry)
- Not enough youth activities
- No community pool
- Lack of involvement from community members
- Extended response time by law enforcement and emergency services (spread too thin)

- Lack of centralized notification during emergencies
- Unsustainable economy
- Walkscore.com ratings between 1 and 34, indicating little to no walkability
- Very few pedestrian facilities (sidewalks, signalized crosswalks) in some areas
- Lack of access to healthy food
- Hypertension rates are above County and State median

### *Opportunities*

- Sleepy community
- Rim of the World trail system
- Addition of public transit options to decrease private vehicle use
- Recreational opportunities (baseball field, larger skateboard park, community swimming pool, tennis)
- Dog park
- Playground for children
- After school activities for children
- Addition of a hotel
- Regional marketing of the area
- Regional development and revitalization
- School development using outside resources
- Tap into tourism market
- Enhance snow play for residents and tourists
- Become equipped to handle tourists
- Building trades
- Downtown revitalization, including signage
- Direct traffic and attention to Running Springs instead of through it
- Increased revenue capture of tourist activities
- Take advantage of major access routes (SR – 18 and SR – 38)

### *Threats*

- Over development leading to traffic congestion, especially during winter holidays
- Maximum inflow of people for fun/snow
- Growth for the sake of growth



*Threats (continued)*

- Natural disasters  
(water/fire/earthquake/landslides)
- Anything that is harmful to the forest  
(invasive species)
- Safety issues – children sledding down hills  
along the highway
- Court system releasing people who commit  
crimes over and over again
- Drug addiction related crime/accidents
- Drug rehab centers
- Drug use/abuse
- Planetary warming – no reliable snow for  
activities
- Fear of lawsuits (snow play, accessibility)
- Breakdown of the family
- Government regulations on the  
environment
- Not enough funding for needed services
- Trash/littering affecting community  
appearance/environment
- Inclement weather
- Earthquake
- Wildfire
- Economic threats to tourism industry