



Community Profile

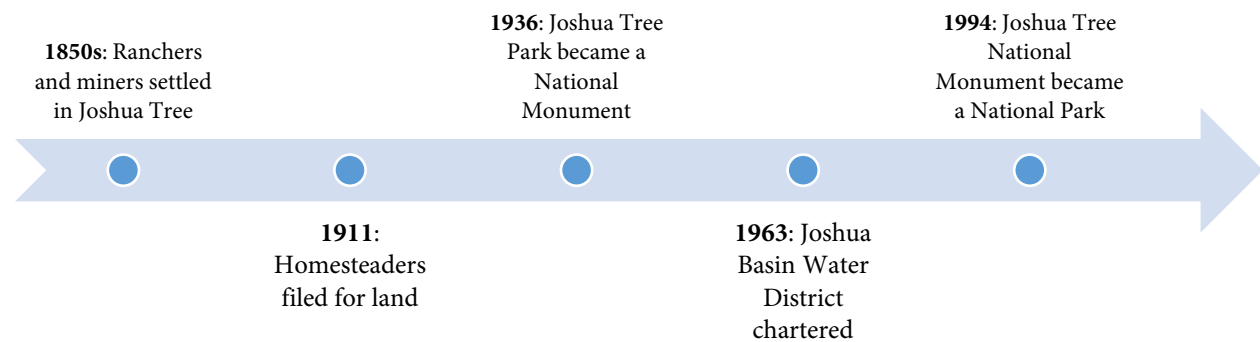
Purpose

The community profile is a summary of the social, cultural, economic, and historic dimensions of Joshua Tree. 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 Joshua Tree Community.

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



Originally settled by the Serrano Tribe, Joshua Tree was populated by ranchers and miners in the 1850s. The earliest connections to the Joshua Tree area came by way of an access route to the Mojave Basin (now known as Twentynine Palms Highway) and the Hi-Desert Airport (now known as Roy Williams Airport). Joshua Tree Park was established as a National Monument in 1936 and attracted visitors from around the region. At the end of World War II, cabins, homes, and commercial buildings were built throughout the desert. In 1994, the Joshua Tree National Monument was elevated to a National Park when Congress passed the California Desert Protection Act. Today, it attracts over a million visitors a year.

Source(s) National Parks Service, Wikipedia, Joshua Tree Chamber of Commerce, 2007 Joshua Tree Community Plan

Location & Geography

Joshua Tree is located in the Mojave Desert near San Bernardino County's southern border with Riverside County. Surrounding cities include Yucca Valley to the west and Twentynine Palms to the east. According to the US Census Bureau, Joshua Tree encompasses a total land area of 37 square miles.

Source(s): US Census Bureau, Wikipedia, ESRI



Figure 1: Joshua Tree Location

Source(s): ESRI, San Bernardino County LUS

Key Census Data

Category	Joshua Tree		San Bernardino County		California		United States	
	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total
Population								
Total Population	9,122		2,078,586		38,066,920		314,107,084	
2020 Population Forecast	9,009 (-1.1%)		2,227,066 (+7.1%)		40,619,346 (+6.7%)		334,503,000 (+6.5%)	
Total Households	3,881		607,604		12,617,280		116,211,092	
Average Household Size	2.31		3.34		2.95		2.63	
Median Age	41.0		32.2		35.6		37.4	
Education								
High School Diploma	1,863	28.5%	330,613	26.3%	5,153,257	20.7%	58,440,600	27.95%
Education Past High School	1,488	22.8%	417,953	33.3%	7,400,714	29.8%	60,821,634	29.1%
Bachelor Degree or Higher	1,163	17.8%	336,315	26.8%	7,708,909	31.0%	61,206,147	29.3%
Housing								
Total Dwelling Units	5,352	n/a	703,737	n/a	13,781,929	n/a	132,741,033	n/a
Homeowner Occupied Units	2,368	44.2%	370,032	52.58%	6,908,925	50.1%	74,787,460	56.3%
Renter Occupied Units	1,513	28.3%	237,572	33.76%	5,708,355	41.4%	41,423,632	32.2%
Vacancy*	1,471	27.5%	96,133	13.7%	1,164,649	8.5%	16,529,941	12.5%
Median Year Structure Built	1975	n/a	1976	n/a	1974	n/a	1976	n/a
Income								
Median Household Income	\$30,433	n/a	\$54,100	n/a	\$61,489	n/a	\$53,482	n/a
Persons Below Poverty Level	1,029	15.7%	199,451	12.7%	3,354,518	11.2%	26,235,361	10.6%
Employed	2,284	79.8%	812,707	86.1%	16,890,442	89.0%	143,435,233	90.2%
Unemployed	578	20.2%	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 Joshua Tree area consists primarily of residential land uses, ranging from single-family houses on large lots to mobile homes and multi-family apartment buildings. The small commercial and industrial district of the Joshua Tree Community is located along Twentynine Palms Highway (State Route [SR] 62).

Joshua Tree contains a network of primary and secondary roadways ranging from two to four lanes. Some privately owned roads are unpaved and contain few pedestrian amenities, such as sidewalks or bicycle lanes, leading to a Walk Score rating of 0 out of 100 in most of the residential areas and scores of 25–50 in the commercial core at Park Boulevard and SR 62.

Public transportation includes the Morongo Basin Transit Authority (MBTA) 1 and 12/15 routes, as well as a Ready Ride service provided by the MBTA.

Source(s): Google Earth, County of San Bernardino Zoning Map, Walkscore.com, Morongo Basin Transit Authority, County of San Bernardino Existing Conditions Report, January 2016

Community Existing Land Use

Joshua Tree is a 59,850-acre community containing eleven distinct land uses. Residential is the predominant land use, with rural living and single-family residential uses accounting for a combined 75% (44,192 acres) of the community’s land. Agriculture and resource conservation land is the second largest use, accounting for 21% (12,519 acres).

Land Use Type	Acreage	% of Total Area
Agriculture/Resource Conservation	12,519	21%
Community Industrial	358	1%
Floodway	126	<1%
Institutional	275	<1%
Multiple Residential	893	1%
Open Space	605	1%
Office, Service, and Highway Commercial	148	<1%
Rural, Neighborhood, and General Commercial	409	1%
Rural Living	39,446	66%
Single Residential	4,746	8%
Special Development	325	1%
Joshua Tree Total	59,850	

Table 2: Land Uses by Acreage

Source(s): San Bernardino County Land Use Services

Community Amenities

Joshua Tree National Park is adjacent to the Joshua Tree Community Plan area and attracts approximately 1.2 million visitors a year. Other services in Joshua Tree include:

Hospitals/ Medical Centers	Hi-Desert Medical Center Morongo Basin Health Care District
Fire Protection	San Bernardino County Fire Station #36, response times are 4 to 6 minutes
Police	San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department Morongo Basin Station
Public Schools	Joshua Tree Elementary School, Friendly Hills Elementary School

Table 3: Community Services

Source(s): Zillow.com, Google Maps, San Bernardino County Fire Department, San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department

In addition to the two public elementary schools listed above, Joshua Tree also has a private kindergarten (Copper Mountain Head Start) and access to several schools within a few miles of the community boundary in nearby Yucca Valley. These include:

- Yucca Mesa Elementary School
- Onaga Elementary School

- La Contenta Middle School
- Sky High School
- A number of private schools spanning first to twelfth grades.

Source(s): Google Maps, San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department, 2007 Joshua Tree Community Plan

Community Groups

Friends of Joshua Tree www.friendsofjosh.org/	Joshua Tree Tortoise Rescue www.desertusa.com/reptiles/tortoise-rescue.html
Joshua Tree Satsang amma.org/groups/north-America/joshua-tree-ca	Transition Joshua Tree transitionjoshuatree.org/
The Village of Joshua Tree – NCHR www.thevillageofjoshuatree-nchr.org/Home_Page.php	Joshua Tree Community Association http://www.jtcaonline.org/
Mil-Tree 323)791-2986, https://www.mil-tree.org/	Mojave Desert Land Trust (MDLT) (760)366-5440, https://www.mdlt.org/

Quality of Life Concerns

Common issues noted in the community include:

- **Land Use:** artist studios/galleries, short-term rentals
- **Public Nuisances:** junk/trash, vacant structures, illegal dumping
- **Recreational Activity:** off-highway vehicles (popular riding areas)

Source(s): San Bernardino County Code Enforcement, San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department

Community Economics

The 2016 ESRI Community Analyst Report showed that Joshua Tree is home to 2,708 jobs 236 businesses. The majority of businesses fall into four categories: services (43 percent); retail trade (16 percent); finance, insurance, and real estate (10 percent); and construction (8 percent). Approximately 95% of the Joshua Tree labor force is employed within Joshua

Tree. **Figure 2: Top Industries**, displays the top industry types for the Joshua Tree area.

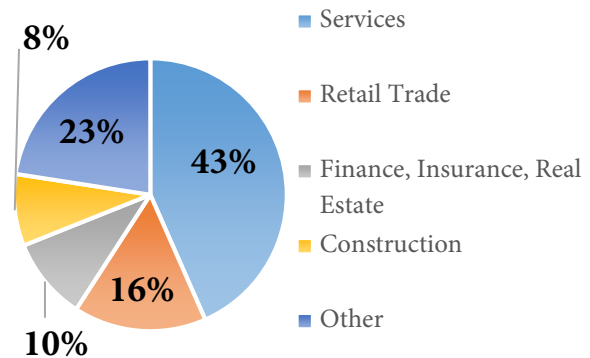


Figure 2: Top Industries

Source(s): 2016 ESRI Community Analyst, 2016 U.S. Census Bureau



Community Events

Many of the community events in the area take place in or around Joshua Tree National Park. A full calendar of up-to-date events can be found at www.nps.gov/jotr/planyourvisit/calendar.htm. Some of these events are:

Recreational:

- Guided walk, talks and evening programs by the National Park Service (held weekly)

Cultural:

- Spring Joshua Tree Music Tour Festival (annually in May)

- Fall Joshua Tree Music Festival (annually in October)
- Joshua Tree Weekly Arts & Crafts Festival (every Sunday from 9am – 2pm)

Food and Spirits:

- Joshua Tree Commodities Food Distribution (third Monday of each month)
- Joshua Tree Farmer’s Market (every Saturday from 8am – 1pm)

Source(s): Joshua Tree Music Festival, National Parks Service, Joshua Tree Visitors Guide

Public Health

Chronic Disease: The predominant health concerns for Joshua Tree include chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and Asthma. Joshua Tree experiences higher rates of hospitalization for COPD in comparison to San Bernardino County. Additionally, Joshua Tree also experiences higher rates of E.R. visits for COPD, asthma, and heart failure.

	Diabetes Hosp./E.R.	COPD Hosp./E.R.	Asthma Hosp./E.R.	Heart Failure Hosp./E.R.	Hypertension Hosp./E.R.
Joshua Tree	15.7/ *	28.8/35.9	* /68.4	28.5/23.7	* / *
San Bernardino County	23.3/42.4	16.0/19.9	9.6/52.6	32.3/10.6	5.6/46.9

Table 5: Rate of Hospitalization/Emergency Room Visits per 10,000 People

Source(s): Healthy San Bernardino

* Indicates insufficient data

Air Quality: Table 6 below shows the air quality in Joshua Tree, measured at the Joshua Tree National Park 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 Joshua Tree had fewer exceedance days of the Federal 8-hour standard for ozone than that of the overall South Coast Air Basin, in which Joshua Tree is 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.

	Joshua Tree – National Park Monitoring Site			Mojave Air Basin		
	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014
Ozone Federal 8-hour standard	48	26	37	81	66	86
Course Particulate Matter (PM ₁₀) Federal 24-hour standard	*	*	*	1	1	1
Fine Particulate Matter (PM _{2.5}) Federal 24-hour standard	*	*	*	2	6	2

Table 6: 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 Joshua Tree 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: The community is served by Morongo Valley Transit Authority, which also provides service to Yucca Valley, Twentynine Palms and the marine base, Palm Springs, and Landers. Routes serving Joshua Tree provide direct connection to Yucca Valley, Landers, and Twentynine Palms and the marine base. There are no dedicated bike trails or bike lanes, but Park Boulevard and Alta Loma Drive are identified as bicycle-friendly roads with connections to Yucca Valley

Community Initiatives: The primary topics regarding community initiatives in Joshua Tree that are discussed in the 2015 First 5 San Bernardino report “Assessing the Needs and Assets of San Bernardino Families: Joshua Tree” identify Joshua Tree National Park and two local museums as assets that provide recreation. It also identifies the need for adequate infrastructure, including sidewalks, bike paths and public transportation, while citing safety concerns for outdoor activities and the opportunity for additional shade and lighting in public park areas.

Source(s): First 5 San Bernardino, 2015

Community Engagement Summary

As a part of the Community Plans Continuum process, community members from Joshua Tree were invited to participate in three community workshops. The first workshop, titled “What We Value”, took place on February 25th, 2016 from 6:30 – 8:30pm at the Joshua Tree Community Center. This workshop was attended by 50 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 March 31st, 2016 from 6:30 – 8:30pm at the Joshua Tree Community Center. This workshop was attended by 48 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 21st, 2016 from 6:30 – 8:30pm at the Joshua Tree Community Center. This workshop was attended by 32 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 look at opportunities that the community could look to take advantage of as a 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

- 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

Strengths (continued)

- 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

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
- 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

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