

Baker Community, San Bernardino County

Community Profile

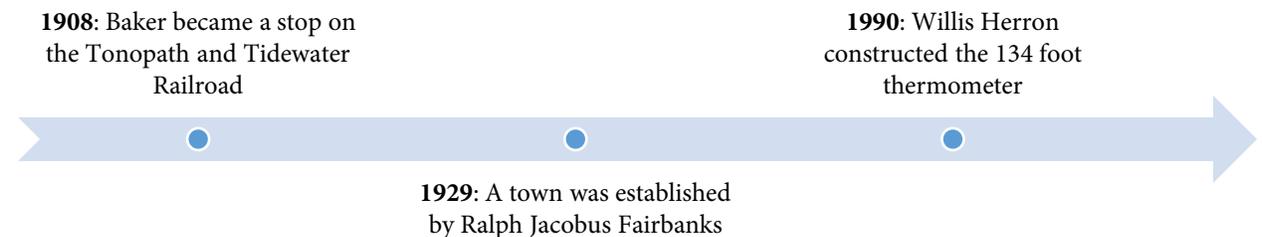
Purpose

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



In 1908, Baker became a stop on the Tonopath and Tidewater Railroad. The town was named after Richard C. Baker, president of T&T Railroad. In 1929, a town was established by Ralph Jacobus Fairbanks (who also established the towns of Fairbanks Springs and Shoshone in the Death Valley area). Baker provided gasoline and other services in the remote desert area between Las Vegas and Barstow.

The town’s most prominent feature is the 134 foot thermometer along the I-15, constructed in 1990 by Willis Herron, to commemorate the hottest temperature ever recorded in Death Valley, 134 degrees Fahrenheit. Baker is the last town for those traveling to the Death Valley National Park or to the Mojave National Preserve. The town has a small airport, Baker Airport, owned by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management.

Source(s): Roadsideamerica.com; Digital-desert.com; Wikipedia

Location & Geography

Baker is located just north of the center of San Bernardino County. Geographically, it is located on a plain amongst several small collections of mountains. The community sits south of the Hollow Hills Wilderness Area



Figure 1. Source(s): Google Maps, Wikipedia

Key Census Data

Category	Baker		San Bernardino County		California		United States	
	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total
Population								
Total Population	751		2,078,586		38,066,920		314,107,084	
2020 Population Forecast	765 (+1.0%)		2,227,066 (+7.1%)		40,619,346 (+6.7%)		334,503,000 (+6.5%)	
Total Households	221		607,604		12,617,280		116,211,092	
Average Household Size	3.3		3.3		2.9		2.6	
Median Age	31.9		32.2		35.6		37.4	
Education								
High School Diploma	184	41.3%	330,613	26.3%	5,153,257	20.7%	58,440,600	27.9%
Education Past High School	74	16.6%	417,953	33.3%	7,400,714	29.8%	60,821,634	29.1%
Bachelor Degree or Higher	21	4.7%	336,315	26.8%	7,708,909	31.0%	61,206,147	29.3%
Housing								
Total Dwelling Units	310	n/a	703,737	n/a	13,781,929	n/a	132,741,033	n/a
Homeowner Occupied Units	110	35.8%	370,032	52.6%	6,908,925	50.1%	74,787,460	56.3%
Renter Occupied Units	111	35.8%	237,572	33.8%	5,708,355	41.4%	41,423,632	32.2%
Vacancy*	89	28.7%	96,133	13.7%	1,164,649	8.5%	16,529,941	12.5%
Median Year Structure Built	1981	n/a	1976	n/a	1974	n/a	1976	n/a
Income								
Median Household Income	\$35,831	n/a	\$54,100	n/a	\$61,489	n/a	\$53,482	n/a
Persons Below Poverty Level	72	16.8%	199,451	12.7%	3,354,518	11.2%	26,235,361	10.6%
Employed	428	95.7%	812,707	86.1%	16,890,442	89.0%	143,435,233	90.2%
Unemployed	19	4.3%	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

Sources: 2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates and ESRI

Community Structure (Physical Characteristics)

The community is located at the intersection of I-15 and SR-127. It consists primarily of commercial uses including rural and highway commercial. The residential developments have minimum lot sizes that range from 14,000 square feet to 40 acres. The commercial uses are chain stores, restaurants, motels, and gas stations with vehicle parking provided around the buildings.

Source(s): Google Earth, County of San Bernardino Zoning Map, Fehr & Peers, San Bernardino Countywide Plan Transportation Existing Conditions Report, January 2016

Community Amenities

Parks and Trails

- Chet Hoffman Park
- Trails: Mojave: Lava Beds Trail; Kelbaker Road to Peak 2451; Dumont Dunes; North Lava Bed Wash Trail; Crystal Spring Trail; Saddle Peak Hills Wilderness Trails; Hollow Hills Wilderness Trail

Schools

- Baker Valley Unified School
- Baker Junior High School
- Baker Valley Community Day School
- Baker State Preschool
- Baker Elementary and High School

Fire Protection

- San Bernardino County Fire Department- Station 53, Response Time 16-18 minutes

Police

- San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department

Source(s): Google Maps; San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department; San Bernardino County Fire Department

Quality of Life Concerns

Common issues noted within the community include:

- Vacant structures (businesses and single-family residential).
- Junk/Trash
- Inoperable vehicles

Source(s): County of San Bernardino Sheriff Department

Community Economics

The 2016 ESRI Community Analyst Report showed that Baker has approximately 574 jobs and 62 businesses. The most common business types are retail trade, finance, insurance and real estate, and services. Almost all of the jobs within Baker are held by Baker residents.

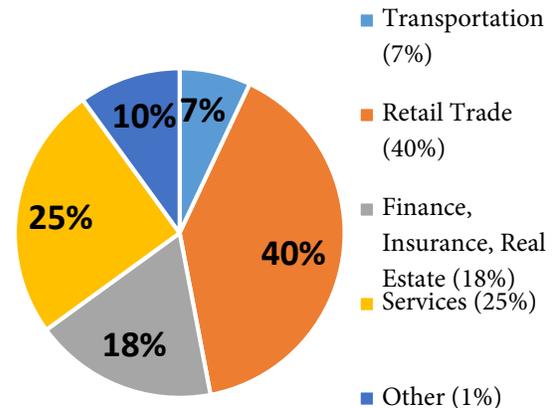


Figure 2: Business Types in Baker
Source: ESRI Community Analyst

Community Groups

- **Iglesia Ministerios de Amor.** <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Iglesia-Ministerios-de-Amor/791433067606921>
- **Baker Bible Church.** (760) 733-4384. <http://www.yelp.com/biz/baker-bible-church-baker>
- **Wings of Healing.** <https://www.fundraise.com/non-profit/baker-ca-wings-of-healing>

Community Events

- **The Challenge Cup Relay:** Law enforcement does a relay from Baker to Vegas (3/19-3/20)

Source(s): bakervegas.net

Public Health

Air Quality: Table 3 below shows the air quality near Baker, measured at the Barstow 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 Baker had fewer exceedance days for each pollutant than that of the overall Mojave Air Basin, in which Baker 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.

	Barstow Monitoring Site			Mojave Air Basin		
	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014
Ozone Federal 8-hour standard	15	10	17	81	66	86
Course Particulate Matter (PM ₁₀) Federal 24-hour standard	0	0	1	1	1	1
Fine Particulate Matter (PM _{2.5}) Federal 24-hour standard	*	*	*	2	6	2

Table 3: 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 Baker ranks within the second lowest category for food access, meaning that there is access to less than 15 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

Community Engagement Summary

As a part of the Community Plans Continuum process, community members from Baker were invited to participate in two community workshops. The first workshop, titled “What We Value”, took place on November 29th, 2016 from 6:00 – 8:30pm at the Baker Community Services District. This workshop was attended by 11 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). Lastly, workshop participants worked on forming the draft focus and action statements that form the backbone of the community plan.

The second workshop, titled “Our Roadmap to Making it Happen”, took place on January 23rd, 2017 from 6:00 – 8:30pm at the Baker Community Services District. This workshop was attended by 11 community members. The purpose of this workshop was to continue to develop the draft focus and action statements created in workshop #1. The project team provided word for word summaries of the SWOT and Values and Aspirations exercises to use during

the goal setting process. The workshop was primarily 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

- Not near gout
- Kids are safe
- Everybody knows everybody
- Good water system
- I-15
- People can find jobs
- Natural beauty
- Clean air
- No gangs
- Peaceful
- Close knit community
- Small town positive "vibe"
- Safe community
- Low crime rate
- Open space
- School District implementing PBIS (research based positive intervention and support framework)
- Excellent customer service
- Hard working community

- Dumont Dunes adventure events
- Biggest thermometer

Weaknesses

- County problems with subdividing
- County problems with permitting
- County problems with checking on road requirements
- I-15 accidents pulls services
- No access to medical (clinic in process)
- Parcels cannot be subdivided
- Rules need to be more flexible for this area, small communities
- Emergency services lack of EMT transport
- Lack of resources
- Lengthy planning review process
- No newspaper
- Poorly designed sewer system greets tourists if wind is strong
- Lodging (lack of)
- Housing

Weaknesses (continued)

- Lack of housing and growth
- Housing (lack of)
- Need more things for adults and children to be involved in
- Many buildings on boulevard closed or in disrepair
- No public library
- Lack of medical care
- Lack of local stores (example, big box)

Opportunities

- Take advantage of freeway
- Sit down full service restaurant
- Traffic requirements include signal, stopping development – to expensive
- Hotels
- Take advantage of movie grow demand
- Potential for mobile home residents to move into homes if they could build (regulations)
- Additional development if you can subdivide
- Small lot sizes
- Small class size school
- Jobs available
- Career/technical opportunities (pathways) for high school students (internships, etc.)

- Plenty of opportunities for new businesses and increasing variety of offerings
- Jobs available
- To provide transportation to Barstow for community college attendance, and other local needs
- Implementing Barstow College promise first 2 years of college threats

Threats

- Stateline is competition
- Legalizing gambling
- Reduce traffic
- High speed rail
- Solar wanting to take the water supply
- High traffic volume on weekends
- Emergency services
- Economy reliance of highway traffic
- Human (potential threat) trafficking already exists in San Bernardino, Riverside, Victorville
- People get stranded here and they can pose a threat
- Crime
- Emergency response
- Vandalism from people passing through