

Morongo Valley Community, San Bernardino County

# Community Profile

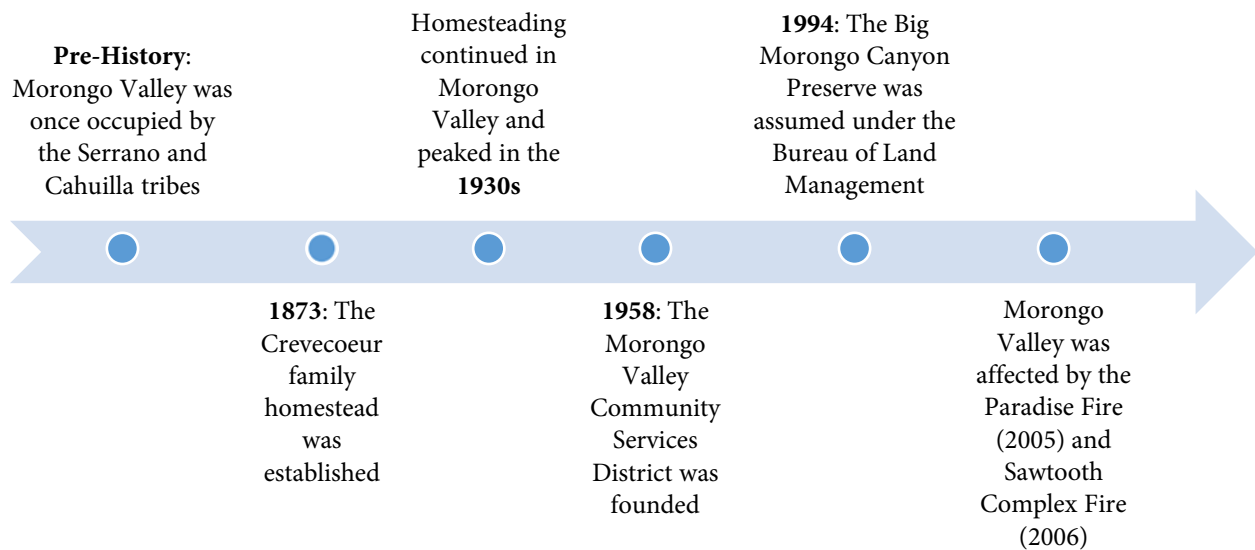
## Purpose

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



The Serrano and Cahuilla tribes from the Shoshonean division (Takic) occupied the Morongo Basin until the small pox epidemic decimated the majority of their society in the 1880’s. The Crevecoeur family homestead was established in 1873, when Hans Frederick Briand de Crevecoeur moved into the Morongo Valley with his wife and their livestock. The valley area was sparsely settled by cattle and sheep ranchers due to adequate natural vegetation for grazing. Homesteading continued in the valley for a number of years, and peaked in the 1930’s.

In the last 50 years, the community has been primarily residential in nature, attracting a number of retirement-aged residents. In 1958, the Morongo Valley Community Services District was founded to oversee the fire department, parks, libraries and street lighting. In 1994, the nearby Big Morongo Canyon Preserve was assumed under the Bureau of Land Management, and is currently managed in coordination with the County Regional Parks Department. Morongo Valley was affected by the Paradise Fire in 2005 and the Sawtooth Complex Fire in 2006.

*Source(s) 2007 Morongo Valley Community Plan, Morongo Valley Community Services District, Wikipedia.*

## Location & Geography

Morongo Valley is located along the southern border of San Bernardino County with Riverside County. It is located north of Palm Springs, west of Yucca Valley, south of Pioneertown and is a fairly mountainous area at the edge of the San Bernardino National Forest. According to the US Census Bureau, Morongo Valley Community Plan area encompasses a total land area of 25.2 square miles.

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



*Figure 1: Morongo Valley Location*

*Source(s): ESRI, San Bernardino County LUS*



## Key Census Data

Category	Morongo Valley		San Bernardino County		California		United States	
	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total
<b>Population</b>								
Total Population	3,639		2,078,586		38,066,920		314,107,084	
2020 Population Forecast	3,723 (+1.0%)		2,227,066 (+7.1%)		40,619,346 (+6.7%)		334,503,000 (+6.5%)	
Total Households	1,645		607,604		12,617,280		116,211,092	
Average Household Size	2.21		3.34		2.95		2.63	
Median Age	49.0		32.2		35.6		37.4	
<b>Education</b>								
High School Diploma	679	24.7%	330,613	26.3%	5,153,257	20.7%	58,440,600	27.95%
Education Past High School	1,003	36.5%	417,953	33.3%	7,400,714	29.8%	60,821,634	29.1%
Bachelor Degree or Higher	471	17.1%	336,315	26.8%	7,708,909	31.0%	61,206,147	29.3%
<b>Housing</b>								
Total Dwelling Units	2,079	n/a	703,737	n/a	13,781,929	n/a	132,741,033	n/a
Homeowner Occupied Units	1,154	55.5%	370,032	52.58%	6,908,925	50.1%	74,787,460	56.3%
Renter Occupied Units	491	23.6%	237,572	33.76%	5,708,355	41.4%	41,423,632	32.2%
Vacancy*	434	20.9%	96,133	13.7%	1,164,649	8.5%	16,529,941	12.5%
Median Year Structure Built	1973	n/a	1976	n/a	1974	n/a	1976	n/a
<b>Income</b>								
Median Household Income	\$41,998	n/a	\$54,100	n/a	\$61,489	n/a	\$53,482	n/a
Persons Below Poverty Level	498	18.1%	199,451	12.7%	3,354,518	11.2%	26,235,361	10.6%
Employed	1,322	76.5%	812,707	86.1%	16,890,442	89.0%	143,435,233	90.2%
Unemployed	405	23.5%	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 Morongo Valley Community consists primarily of single-family dwellings on large lots ranging from 10,000 square feet to 5 acres. The majority of the homes in this area are one-story, set back from the street. There is a small multiple-family residential district near the commercial district in the community, which consists of similar homes to the single-family districts and a small trailer park. There are two small commercial areas both along Twenty-nine Palms Highway (SR-62). The shops in these

areas are single one-story buildings, some with road frontage, and off-street parking.

The major roadway in this community is SR-62, which is a two-lane major State Highway. This road has pedestrian facilities including signalized crosswalks and sidewalks. A large portion of local roads are paved, but lack pedestrian facilities. Only a few of the roads in the southern section of the community are county maintained. The rest are privately or otherwise maintained. There is a truck route that runs through the community along SR-62.



The Walk Score rating for the community ranges from 1 to 31 out of 100, indicating that most errands need to be completed with a vehicle. Public transportation is provided through the Morongo Basin Transit Authority (MBTA) Routes 12 and 15, which runs through the community area and connects with Yucca Valley and Palm Springs. The MBTA also offers a Ready Ride service that provides origin to destination rides with an advanced 24 hour reservation.

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, 2007 Morongo Valley Community Plan.

### Topics Important to Quality of Life

Common issues noted in the community include:

- **Land Use Issues:** animal density issues
- **Housing Issues:** junk/trash issues
- **Public Nuisances:** illegal dumping, inoperable vehicles

Source(s): San Bernardino County Code Enforcement

### Community Amenities

Recreation opportunities within Morongo Valley include the Big Morongo Canyon Preserve, which offers hiking trails, ecology trails, nature study, bird watching, and educational tours; Covington Park; and

### Community Groups

<b>Friends of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve</b> <a href="http://www.bigmorongo.org/a6JoinFriends.htm">http://www.bigmorongo.org/a6JoinFriends.htm</a>	<b>Morongo Valley Clean Team</b> (760) 363-6004 <a href="http://www.92256.net/clean/cleanteam.asp">http://www.92256.net/clean/cleanteam.asp</a>	<b>Morongo Valley Social Club</b> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/pages/Morongo-Valley-Social-Club/147779865312462">https://www.facebook.com/pages/Morongo-Valley-Social-Club/147779865312462</a>	<b>Morongo Basin Historical Society</b> <a href="http://www.mbhs.net/index.html">http://www.mbhs.net/index.html</a>
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Table 3: Community Groups

Source(s): Listed in Table

### Business Services

A 2016 ESRI Community Analyst report showed that Morongo Valley has approximately 404 jobs and 121 businesses. The majority of businesses fall into four categories: services (37 percent), retail trade (21 percent), construction (18 percent), and finance, insurance and real estate (11 percent). Approximately

Bureau of Land Management multi-purpose trails for hikers, bicyclists, and equestrian users. The closest hospital is Desert Regional Medical Center located in Palm Springs while the closest police station is the Morongo Basin Station located in Joshua Tree. Other services in Morongo Valley include:

<b>Hospitals/ Medical Centers</b>	Desert Regional Medical Center Morongo Basin Healthcare District
<b>Fire Protection</b>	San Bernardino County Fire Station #4, response time of 16 to 18 minutes. Morongo Valley Fire Department and Emergency Services is located at 11207 Octoillo and staffed daily with a duty officer (typically the fire captain), a paramedic firefighter, a firefighter apparatus, and a reserve firefighter.
<b>Police</b>	San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department Morongo Basin Station
<b>Schools</b>	Morongo Valley Elementary School

Table 2: Community Services

Source(s): Google Maps, San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department, San Bernardino County Fire & Rescue Station Map, 2007 Morongo Valley Community Plan, Morongo Valley Fire Department and Emergency Services.

35% of the Morongo Valley labor force is employed within Morongo Valley.

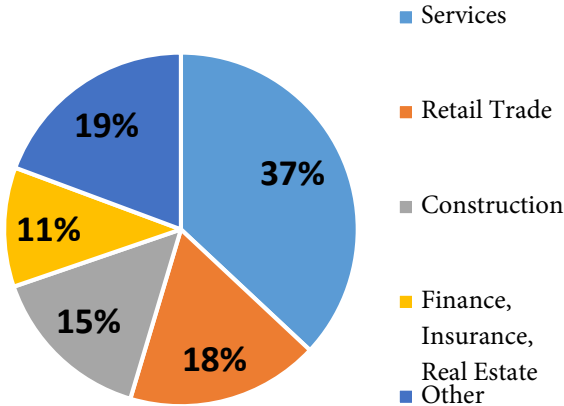


Figure 2: Retail Services in Morongo Valley  
Source(s): 2016 ESRI Community Analyst

### Community Events

Many of the recreational events are located in the Big Morongo Canyon Preserve. Other community events are listed below and offer entertainment opportunities:

#### Recreational:

- Big Morongo Canyon Preserve Bird Walks
- Whitewater Preserve Bird Walks
- Group Hikes
- Education Tours, Field Studies, and Outreach Programs

#### Entertainment:

- St. Patrick’s Day Mixer
- Morongo Valley Firefighters’ Auxiliary Yard and Bake Sale
- Morongo Basin Historical Society Programs and Lectures

Source(s): Big Morongo Canyon Reserve, Morongo Valley News, The Smoke Signal, The Newsletter of the Morongo Valley Chamber of Commerce

### Public Health

**Chronic Disease:** Morongo Valley experiences lower rates of hospitalization for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease COPD and heart failure in comparison to San Bernardino County. Additionally, Morongo Valley also experiences lower rates of E.R. visits for heart failure in comparison to San Bernardino County, but higher rates of E.R. visits for COPD.

Source(s): 2016 Healthy San Bernardino County Report

	Diabetes Hosp./E.R.	COPD Hosp./E.R.	Asthma Hosp./E.R.	Heart Failure Hosp./E.R.	Hypertension Hosp./E.R.
<b>Morongo Valley</b>	* / *	14.1/26/6	* / *	29.3/8.5	* / *
<b>San Bernardino County</b>	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 Morongo Valley, measured at the Joshua Tree – National Monument 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 Morongo Valley had fewer exceedance days for each pollutant than that of the overall Mojave Air Basin, in which Morongo Valley 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 Monument 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 <sub>10</sub> ) Federal 24-hour standard	*	*	*	1	1	1
Fine Particulate Matter (PM <sub>2.5</sub> ) Federal 24-hour standard	*	*	*	2	6	2

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 Morongo Valley ranks within the three lowest categories for food access, meaning that there are access to 30 or less 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 Morongo Valley were invited to participate in two community workshops. The first workshop, titled “What We Value”, took place on September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016 from 6:00 – 8:30pm at the Morongo Valley Community Services District – Senior Nutrition Room. This workshop was attended by 18 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 November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016 from 6:00 – 8:30pm at the Morongo Valley Community Services District – Senior Nutrition Room. This workshop was attended by 10 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

- Rural Feeling
- Wildlife
- Park
- BMC Preserve
- Dark night
- Night skies
- No light pollution
- Low light
- Very few street lights
- One signal
- Community involvement
- Mountain Views
- Dirt roads
- Protected Lands, BLM wilderness
- Clean air
- Morongo Canyon
- Eclectic Housing Mix
- Skate park
- Minimal noise
- Flora and fauna
- Family values
- A lot of nice people moving in
- Friendly, helpful people
- Morongo Elementary School
- No big box stores
- Rural, no chain stores
- Current businesses
- Store fronts
- Festivals, rent out to others
- No windmills
- Sand to snow
- Softball park
- Kids play area in park
- Maintain park and baseball field
- Dump is very well run
- Covington Park
- Art colony



*Strengths(continued)*

- Views
- Dark night skies
- Clearer air
- Rural setting
- Moderate weather
- Sand to snow
- Environment
- Low impact from bright lights preserving night skies
- Proximity to larger communities with services (i.e. Palm Springs)
- No high rises
- Large lots
- Welcoming to horse owners and other farm animals
- Horse property
- Rural community
- Peace and quiet
- Friendly community
- Space
- Nature preserve
- CSD Manager
- Animal husbandry
- Agriculture
- We're spread out
- Large lots
- Wild lands
- Strong volunteer groups
- Beautiful park
- Transfer station
- Local business invested in community
- Art community
- Strong water table
- Beautiful scenery
- Gateway to hi-desert
- TV repeater
- Good local food
- Preserve
- Great star gazing at night
- Great Fire Department
- Fire Department

*Weaknesses*

- Delineators
- Divided Highway
- Slow Police Response
- Need help with police time response
- Law enforcement presence for patrol/prevention
- Community budget
- Budget deficits
- Low tax base
- Need more community activities
- Hunting – we haven't recovered from fire, the animals are sitting ducks
- Trash (illegal dumping)
- Code compliance, trash, non-running vehicles, illegal dumping
- Off-road riding
- Co-existing with wildlife especially around park and preserve
- Off road riders threat to cause
- Water
- Lack of services: doctor, dental, chiropractic, etc.
- Limited water from Big Bear runoff, not in Mojave Water Agency
- Local Community Control (CSD Fire)
- Local Fire and Paramedic service
- Extreme lack of funding availability for community services (i.e. fire, paramedic, park)
- Poor internet connectivity
- Cell phone service
- Infrastructure
- Terrible neighborhood roads
- Many isolated and/or poor residents
- Lack of communication with all residents
- Highway 62 dangerous speeds and no lights
- Highway safety
- Shabby mobile home parks
- Roads
- Dangerous Highway 61!!!!
- Community apathy
- High mineral content
- Water quality
- Lack of kids activities



*Weaknesses (continued)*

- Lack of resources
- Fees to do events
- Infrastructure
- Highway divides town
- Lack of family entertainment
- Financially challenged community
- Lack of Police service
- Reserved community
- Road ways in and out of Community
- Earthquakes
- Lack of law enforcement presence and patrol
- Response time of Sheriff
- Windmills
- Windmills coming in
- Air pollution crawling in
- Big box development
- Large business
- Development threatening rural life style
- Vacation rentals = threat
- Divided town with delineators
- Localized Radon in water
- Water
- Limited water
- Uranium in County water districts
- Pino & San Andreas faults
- Crime
- Confiscation of land ROW easements
- Light pollution
- High intensity lights from business and homes
- One way in, one way out
- Off road vehicle not zoned for it
- Development near Big Morongo Canyon Preserve Unregulated vacation rentals
- Dense housing developments
- Unregulated vacation rentals
- Mojave Water Agency intrusion into east Mojave Valley. Will not get water
- Highway 62!!
- Yucca Valley growth
- Big business moving in
- Subdivisions
- Light pollution
- Lack of local control
- High speed limit

*Opportunities*

- Provide horse trails
- Equestrian (capitalize)
- Need restaurants
- Capitalize on sand to snow
- Renewable Energy
- Encourage reduce, reuse, and recycle
- Provide recreational activities for children
- Kids programs softball and soccer
- Festivals
- Small family owned business
- 3,000 sq. ft. lots for commercial on highway
- To raise a family
- Nature living
- Expanding enjoyment of B.M. Preserve
- Education for youth – nature – birdwatching
- Growing gardens
- Sand to snow
- Vacation rentals
- Park to be used for increased revenue
- Controlled growth
- Organic farming
- Increase local business involvement in the Community
- Gateway to high desert
- More locally owned business
- Growing local small business

*Threats*

- Off-road vehicles