

***Downtown Design Guidelines for
Joshua Tree
Community Workshop Summary 1***
September 3, 2008

San Bernardino County and Hogle-Ireland Attendees

Jim Squire, David Dawson, Jerry Guarracino, C.J. Davis, Monica Ronchetti, Heidi Mellor and Amy Briggs

Business Community Attendees

Lauren McGowan, Ravi Bagga, Jay S., Mickey Luckman, Carrie Yeaser, Jr. Daniels, Abe Daniels, Bonnie Kopp, Celeste Doyle, Clea Benson, John Schurter, Scott Cutler, and Tawnja Pflueger

Community Outreach Workshop 1

Hogle-Ireland staff conducted an interactive community outreach workshop for the business owners and Chamber of Commerce members on September 3, 2008. The workshop was held in the Hospice of Morongo Basin meeting room in Downtown Joshua Tree. The workshop was successful bringing in 13 members of the business community.

Presentation Format of the Workshop

The Community Workshop allowed the participants to move freely through a series of the different stations beginning with a sign-in station and a detailed orientation explaining the purpose, goals and objectives of the workshop. Station 2 allowed the participants to view the existing conditions of the Joshua Tree Downtown from an aerial and land use perspective. Station 2 also contained visual boards showing the current right-of-way conditions and possible examples of amenitized right-of-ways. Station 3 consisted of examples of similar projects that contain a state highway running through their downtown. These examples showed improvements that have transformed made these state highways into a main street for the community. The participants then viewed amenity boards located at Station 4. The amenity boards displayed visual examples of the following categories: landscape medians, landscaping, shade structures, signage, street furniture, banners and graphics, bus shelters, enhanced paving, gateways and monumentation, outdoor dining, pedestrian lighting, public art, and public gathering spaces. Each amenity board displayed a symbol that represents the above mentioned categories. These symbols were used in conjunction with an interactive priorities game. Station 5 allowed the participants to vote on amenities for future downtown improvements through an interactive priorities game and express their design preferences by ranking the design themes on a scale from 1 to 4.

The interactive priorities game allowed the participants to vote on the amenities they would like to see in their downtown. Each participant was given ten Joshua Tree Bucks worth \$100.00 each. Each amenity had a value from \$100.00 to \$300.00. This value was based on the cost to bring this amenity to the downtown. Participant's placed their Joshua Tree bucks in envelopes that corresponded with the amenity symbols from Station 4.

In order to express the design preference participants preferred, each participant viewed pictures of the following four design theme styles, Western Mining, Old West, South West, and Pueblo, and were asked to rank the design themes on a scale from 1 to 4, (one being the most favored). The participants were given a pre-addressed comment card before leaving the workshop and given the choice to fill it out while at the workshop or take it with them and mail it back at their convenience.

Key Issues of the Business Community

Hogle-Ireland staff recorded comments and interacted with the business owners and Chamber of Commerce members as they moved from station to station. The participants were pleased with the workshop and very enthusiastic about sharing their thoughts and ideas.

The main issues expressed by the business community were parking and safety. Several business owners feel the County's Parking Regulations are too strict and make it impossible to open new restaurants which they feel keeps Joshua Tree from growing. Also, they are unable to upgrade existing buildings because they can not comply with the parking requirements. Business owners would like to see additional parking such as angled parking or a shared parking lot for the downtown area that would be paved in natural materials or other porous materials. They questioned whether a Downtown Specific Plan as an alternative to the planned Design Guidelines might be what they need.

Pedestrian safety on highway 62 was the other main issue that business owners said should be addressed in downtown Joshua Tree. They indicated that traffic calming is the key to a safer environment for Joshua Tree residents and visitors. They would like to see reduced traffic speeds, medians that provide refuge and smart crosswalks (that light up when in use), particularly at Alta and El Reposo. Other safety traffic calming measures included a stoplight at Sunset and SR62, and continuous sidewalks throughout the downtown.

The business community of Downtown Joshua Tree like the idea of reforming SR62 into a Main Street that includes many amenities such as landscaped medians, landscaping, shade structures, banners, a monument entry gate, outdoor dining, and increased seating areas that would create a more pedestrian friendly downtown. They do not want to become an extension of The Town of Yucca Valley, keeping businesses small is very important to them.