

***Downtown Design Guidelines for  
Joshua Tree  
Community Workshop Summary 2***  
September 9, 2008

**San Bernardino County and Hogle-Ireland Attendees**

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Community Outreach Workshop 2

Hogle-Ireland staff conducted an interactive community outreach workshop for the residents and Municipal Advisory Committee (MAC) members. The workshop was held at the Joshua Tree Community Center. The workshop was successful bringing in more than 60 residents and MAC members.

Presentation Format of the Workshop

The Community Workshop allowed the participants to move freely through a series of different stations beginning with a sign-in station and an orientation explaining the workshop process. Station 2 allowed the participants to view the existing conditions of downtown Joshua Tree from an aerial and land use perspective. Station 2 also contained visual boards showing the current right-of-way conditions and two examples of amenitized right-of-ways. Station 3 displayed examples of similar projects that have a state highway running through their downtown. The examples showed the improvements that have transformed 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 monummentation, outdoor dining, pedestrian lighting, public art, and public gathering spaces. Each amenity board displayed a symbol that represented the above mentioned categories. These symbols were later 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 four different design themes on a scale from 1 to 4.

The priorities game was an interactive method used to gather the community's input. The 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. Participants were also asked to express their design preference by ranking the following four design theme

styles: Western Mining, Old West, South West, and Pueblo, on a scale from 1 to 4, (one being the most favored).

The workshop was concluded with a moderated question and answer session. Residents and MAC members were allowed to express their opinions and ask questions that were answered by Jerry Guarracino from Hogle-Ireland or Jim Squire from the County of San Bernardino. The workshop participants were given pre-addressed comment cards 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

Hogle-Ireland staff recorded comments and interacted with the residents and MAC members as they moved from station to station. The participants enjoyed the workshop and were eager to share their thoughts and ideas.

The main issues expressed by the residents and MAC members were related to safety, parking, amenities, infrastructure, theme/style, and the availability of a website for online information/input. There were also a few miscellaneous comments.

**Safety**-was the biggest issue concerning residents that attended the workshop. They were interested in ways to make their community safer, such as adding crosswalks and other traffic calming measures.

***Reducing speed***- on Hwy 62 through the downtown was another major safety concern. Hogle-Ireland (H-I) gave many examples of how traffic calming measures such as, medians, monumentation, landscaping, wider sidewalks, etc., could help reduce traffic speeds by making drivers aware that they are entering a downtown environment.

***Crosswalks***- Residents expressed a need for school crosswalk at Hwy 62 and El Reposo, a crosswalk and a stop light at Sunset/Hwy 62, and crosswalks with safety features such as flashing crosswalk lights, to improve pedestrian safety across Hwy 62.

**Parking**- was another significant issue for residents. Just as the business owners from the Community Workshop 1 expressed, the residents felt that the County's Parking regulations are too strict and make it impossible to open new restaurants and other businesses which require onsite parking. Residents would like to see a change in parking requirements for existing downtown business establishments, such as a parking overlay district.

Residents are interested in additional parking along Hwy 62 in front of businesses, in the form of angled parking, or a central parking lot in the downtown. Residents like the idea of having an area for RV/trailer parking to draw visitors to their downtown. One resident suggested acquiring empty lots to provide for future parking.

**Handicap Access-** According to residents, Joshua Tree has many disabled citizens that drive electric mobility scooters that are often forced onto the streets and around parked cars in downtown. To improve handicap safety residents expressed a desire for continuous sidewalks with handicap ramps throughout the downtown.

**Turning Lanes-** Additional left-hand turn lanes were requested by residents, whom stated there have been many accidents on Hwy 62 in front of the Hi Desert Playhouse Guild due to the lack of left-hand turn lanes. Residents have worked with Caltrans on obtaining a turning lane near the Playhouse but still nothing has been done.

**Infrastructure-** particularly drainage has many residents concerned. Joshua Tree once had medians in the downtown but they were immediately removed after drainage problems became apparent. Runoff from rain causes streets in Joshua Tree to flood and wash out. The previous medians trapped mud and rocks when flood water raged through their downtown. Many streets have been washed out by runoff and need repaving, such as Center St. and Division St. Sunburst is another street that continuously floods and needs an underground culvert.

**Decorative Amenities-** Residents were in favor of turning their downtown into a more pedestrian-friendly setting with places to sit and eat outside. Residents expressed their desire for a native landscape palette in keeping with their weather and elevation. Other amenities residents desire are wider sidewalks in front of stores, shade trees, shade structures, public phones, water fountains, misters, and a “Gateway” sign to bring attention to Joshua Tree National Park. When asked what they would like to see on the Joshua Tree National Park sign the residents said, “a Joshua Tree, of course.” Other logo ideas were rocks, a tortoise and a coyote.

**Bike Lane-** Many residents would like to see bike lanes in the downtown that connect to residential neighborhoods making their community more bikable and reducing the amount of vehicular trips in the downtown area.

**Design Theme and lighting-** Residents expressed a wide range of opinions on these issues. Although many residents participated in voting for one of the four design themes H-I displayed in the priorities game in Station 5, a couple of residents expressed the desire to have frontier style or retro-50’s style. The majority of residents expressed a desire for an eclectic design theme. Residents feel Joshua Tree is a great place for star gazing so they do not want excessive lighting. Any lighting will need to comply with the Dark Sky Ordinance but residents would like to limit the amount of lighting in Joshua Tree.

**Public Art-** In light of the significant population of artist in Joshua Tree, one resident suggested public art by local artists be used in front of and on the side of the library, post office and on Park Blvd., and Sunset St. One suggestion of the type of art to be used is the decorating of large tortoise sculptures. The same resident suggested having live music, by local musicians, in public places to liven up the downtown.

**Miscellaneous Concerns-** A few residents want to see a zone change in the downtown to include mixed-use and industrial, a change in the street name of Park Blvd. to National Park Blvd., a separate road for Marine Convoy's, a Citizens Advisory Committee, and a multi-day community charrette. Many residents were concerned about how these improvements would be funded.

Jim Squire, Deputy Director of Advanced Planning, San Bernardino County, informed the residents that San Bernardino County staff would post the workshop exhibits on the county website and resident's comments can be emailed to the planning department. The website link can be found at [www.sbcounty.gov/landuseservices.com](http://www.sbcounty.gov/landuseservices.com).