

Homestead Valley Communities, San Bernardino County

# Community Profile

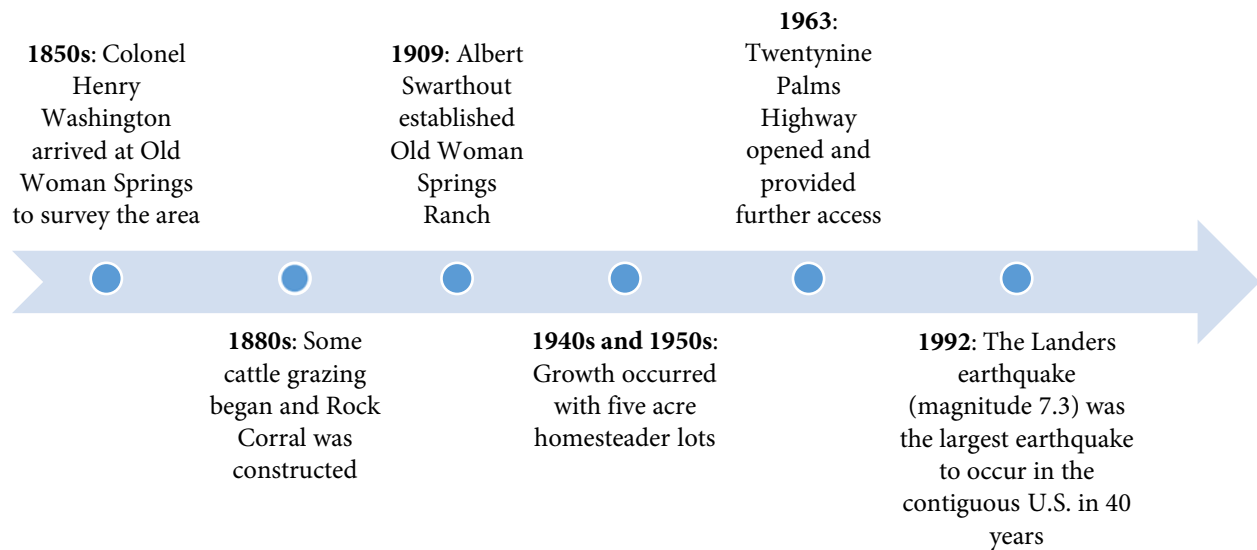
## Purpose

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

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



Archeological finds indicate that the Serrano tribe traveled through the Homestead Valley region occupying the region intermittently. Cattle grazing begun in the 1880s and the Rock Corral was constructed. In 1909, Albert Swarthout established Old Woman Springs Ranch, where cattle grazed during the winter and were driven to the mountains for the summer. By the 1940’s and 1950’s, Homestead Valley saw some growth with five acre homesteader lots and in 1963, the Twentynine Palms Highway opened up the area to further development. The

Giant Rock was a sacred meeting place for California Native Americans and since the 1950s it has become a popular site for those interested in natural land forms and spiritual beliefs. In 1992, Landers had a magnitude 7.3 earthquake, the largest earthquake to have occurred in the contiguous United States in 40 years.

Source(s) Wikipedia, Johnson Valley, California Community Website, 2007 Homestead Valley Community Plan

### Location & Geography

The Homestead Valley Communities are located near San Bernardino County's southern border in the foothills of the San Bernardino National Forest. Pioneertown, Yucca Valley, and Joshua Tree are to the south and Rimrock to the west. According to the US Census Bureau, Homestead Valley Communities Plan area encompasses a total land area of 33.9 square miles.

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



Figure 1: Homestead Valley Location

### Key Census Data

Category	Homestead Valley Communities		San Bernardino County		California		United States	
	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total
<b>Population</b>								
Total Population	6,924		2,078,586		38,066,920		314,107,084	
2020 Population Forecast	6,891 (-.99%)		2,227,066 (+7.1%)		40,619,346 (+6.7%)		334,503,000 (+6.5%)	
Total Households	2,951		607,604		12,617,280		116,211,092	
Average Household Size	2.35		3.34		2.95		2.63	
Median Age	48.2		32.2		35.6		37.4	
<b>Education</b>								
High School Diploma	992	19.4%	330,613	26.3%	5,153,257	20.7%	58,440,600	27.95%
Education Past High School	836	16.3%	417,953	33.3%	7,400,714	29.8%	60,821,634	29.1%
Bachelor Degree or Higher	254	5.0%	336,315	26.8%	7,708,909	31.0%	61,206,147	29.3%
<b>Housing</b>								
Total Dwelling Units	4,906	n/a	703,737	n/a	13,781,929	n/a	132,741,033	n/a
Homeowner Occupied Units	2,156	43.9%	370,032	52.58%	6,908,925	50.1%	74,787,460	56.3%
Renter Occupied Units	795	16.2%	237,572	33.76%	5,708,355	41.4%	41,423,632	32.2%
Vacancy*	1,955	39.8%	96,133	13.7%	1,164,649	8.5%	16,529,941	12.5%
Median Year Structure Built	1964	n/a	1976	n/a	1974	n/a	1976	n/a
<b>Income</b>								
Median Household Income	\$29,637	n/a	\$54,100	n/a	\$61,489	n/a	\$53,482	n/a
Persons Below Poverty Level	654	12.8%	199,451	12.7%	3,354,518	11.2%	26,235,361	10.6%
Employed	951	83.6%	812,707	86.1%	16,890,442	89.0%	143,435,233	90.2%
Unemployed	186	16.4%	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 Homestead Valley Communities consists primarily of single-family dwellings on large lots from 14,000 to 40 acres. Homes are generally one-story and set far back from the roads with property lines delineated by a fence. There is a large amount of open space between each home and most yards are not landscaped. A large portion of the community area is designated as Resource Conservation, in which the natural landscape, which consists of Joshua trees and desert, are preserved. There are small commercial uses along Old Woman Spring Highway (SR-247), consisting of one-story buildings with surface parking in front and large amounts of open space between uses.

The major roadways in the community area are a major highway (SR-247), Aberdeen Drive, and Avalon Avenue. All major roadways are paved with 2 lanes. Most local roads are unpaved and lack pedestrian facilities. A truck route runs along Old Woman Springs Road. Only a few major roads in this community are county maintained. Most roads are privately maintained.

The Walk Score rating for Homestead Valley ranges from 0 to 5 out of 100, indicating that the community area is car-dependent and requires almost all errands to be done with a vehicle. In addition, there are no bicycle facilities within the area. Public transportation is provided on the weekdays through the Morongo Basin Transit Authority (MBTA) Route 21 (Landers Loop), which also connects the community area to the Yucca Valley Transit Center.

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 Homestead Valley Community Plan.

## Topics Important to Quality of Life

Common issues noted in the community include:

- **Land Use Issues:** rural, animal density issues
- **Housing Issues:** demolition/rehabilitation issues, vacant homes
- **Public Nuisances:** illegal dumping
- **Recreational Activity:** off-highway vehicles (popular riding areas)

Source(s): San Bernardino County Code Enforcement

## Community Amenities

Recreation opportunities nearby are designated areas of the BLM lands for Off-Highway-Vehicle (OHV) use at the Johnson Valley OHV park, wildlife viewing, hiking, rockhounding, etc. in nearby wilderness areas. The closest hospital is Hi-Desert Medical Center and the closest police station is the Morongo Basin Station located in Joshua Tree. Other services in Homestead Valley include:

<b>Hospitals/ Medical Services</b>	Hi-Desert Medical Center Morongo Basin Health Care District
<b>Fire Protection</b>	San Bernardino County Fire Station #19, response time is 10 minutes if staffed; San Bernardino County Fire Station #42; response time is 9 minutes, 4 seconds.
<b>Police</b>	San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department Morongo Basin Station
<b>Schools</b>	Yucca Mesa Elementary School Landers Elementary School* *Possible closure due to declining enrollment

Table 2: Community Services

Source(s): Google Maps, San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department, San Bernardino County Fire & Rescue Station Map, 2007 Homestead Valley Community Plan, Yucca Valley General Plan Update EIR.

## Community Groups

<b>Homestead Valley Community Council</b> <a href="http://www.hvccsite.org/index">http://www.hvccsite.org/index</a>	<b>Flamingo Heights Community Association</b> <a href="http://www.flamingohts.com/index.html">http://www.flamingohts.com/index.html</a>	<b>Johnson Valley Improvement Association</b> <a href="http://www.johnsonvalley.com/jvia.html">http://www.johnsonvalley.com/jvia.html</a>	<b>Yucca Mesa Improvement Association</b> <a href="http://www.yuccameasa.org/">http://www.yuccameasa.org/</a>	<b>Landers Community Association</b> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/LandersAssociation/">https://www.facebook.com/LandersAssociation/</a>
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Table 3: Community Groups

Source(s): Listed in Table

## Community Economics

A 2016 ESRI Community Analyst report showed that Homestead Valley has approximately 428 jobs and 91 businesses. The majority of businesses fall into four categories: services (33 percent), retail trade (19 percent), construction (16 percent), and wholesale trade (8 percent). Approximately 38% of the Homestead Valley Communities' labor force is employed within the Homestead Valley Communities.

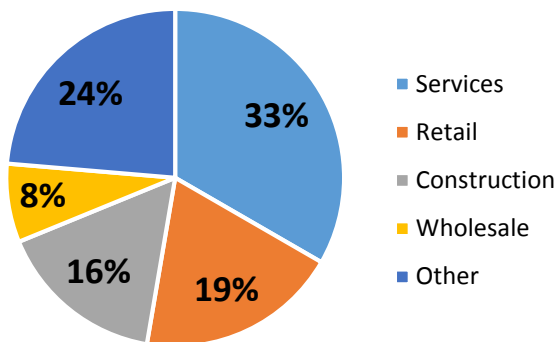


Figure 2: Retail Services in Homestead Valley

Source(s): 2016 ESRI Community Analyst

## Community Events

Many of the events are located in various areas of the community. Some of the events include a community clean-up in Landers and King of the Hammers extreme off-road competition. Other regularly scheduled events are listed below and can be found at: <http://www.hvccsite.org/calendar>.

### Entertainment:

- Landers Bingo
- Yucca Mesa Community Gardening Days

### Food:

- Johnson Valley Breakfast and Dinner
- Yucca Mesa Improvement Association Potluck

Source(s): Z107.7 FM Community Radio for the California Hi Desert, Homestead Valley Community Council Calendar of Events

## Public Health

**Chronic Disease:** Several key indicators point to potential issues in Homestead Valley in terms of residents' overall health. Heart disease and cancer are the top chronic illness concerns. Hospitalization and emergency room rates for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) are higher than the median rates in the County.

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>Johnson Valley/Landers (92285)</b>	* / *	16.0/19.9	* / *	33.2/ *	* / *
<b>Yucca Mesa/Flamingo Heights (92284)</b>	22.4/21.0	22.1/24.9	6.3/42.9	21.2/9.2	* /18.8
<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 the Homestead Valley Communities, 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 the Homestead Valley Communities had fewer exceedance days for each pollutant than that of the overall Mojave Air Basin, in which the Homestead Valley Communities are 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 plan area of the Homestead Valley Communities ranks within the lowest category for food access, 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*

## Community Engagement Summary

As a part of the Community Plans Continuum process, community members from the Homestead Valley Communities were invited to participate in two community workshops. The first workshop, titled “What We Value”, took place on September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2016 from 6:00 – 8:30pm at the Johnson Valley Improvement Association Community Center. This workshop was attended by 28 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 17<sup>th</sup>, 2016 from 6:00 – 8:30pm at the Yucca Mesa Community Center. This workshop was attended by 23 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

- Neighbors
- We live here
- Engaged
- Strong community
- That we have a community plan
- Rural setting quiet
- Clean air
- Open spaces
- Peace & quiet
- Scenic
- View shed
- Immediate access to recreation opportunities
- Dark skies
- Wildlife
- OHV opportunities
- Freedom
- Saturday breakfast for residents & visitors
- Community center volunteers
- Formal line of communication
- Airport
- Rural area normally quiet
- Wildlife
- Close community
- Scenery
- Open vistas
- Starry nights
- Wildflowers & formal desert garden
- Scenic Highway 247
- Dynamite views
- Night Skies
- No piped water!
- Historic places
- OHV recreation opportunities
- Home brew
- People are independent and for the most part secure in life without government assistance
- Self-reliance
- Strong neighbor loyalty
- Limited dependence on government
- Native American
- Historic sites & places of significance
- Historical Archive of Johnson Valley
- Johnson Valley improvement association
- Old Woman Springs & ranching history
- We are over-regulated with our kitchen
- Building codes are out of touch
- Home of our local school board present
- Landers Elementary School
- Landers Post Office
- Open spaces
- Dark skies
- Sunsets & rises
- Landers has water
- Affordability
- 10% cooler than Palm Springs
- Dark skies – get rid of so called “personal security” white lights
- Sunsets & sunrises
- Wildlife
- Solitude
- Keep bikers safe on community roads
- Proximity to Joshua Tree National Park, sand to snow mountain and Pioneertown Mountains Preserver
- People
- Scenic 247
- Activities: Giant rock, integration, Johnson Valley OHV area
- Rural lifestyle
- Artistic culture
- Culture
- Nature/environment
- Night sky
- Clean air
- Quiet
- Small business locally owned & operated

### Weaknesses

- No voice with County

*Weaknesses (continued)*

- County not paying attention to our needs
- Outside Politics: County, State, Feds
- Severely disadvantage no aware they have a voice
- Small community
- Small voice
- Roads CSA
- No adequate networks, media, etc.
- Slow police response time
- More emergency such as Fire and Sheriff's Department
- Robberies
- Dumping
- No disposal plan
- No enforcement
- Illegal dumping
- Need Scenic Highway designation for SR 247
- Aging community with limited local resources
- Current government policies make the desert less attractive to the next generation of potential residents
- Lack of rural standards
- Government enforces "city codes"
- Misguided hauled water policy
- Insufficiently staff code enforcement
- Bring back the fire truck to Joshua Valley
- Lower our fire insurance
- Unmanned Fire State #43
- Misguided hauled water policy
- Sheriff's response time
- Fire response time
- Current misguided hauled water policy that do not allow personal property improvement
- Drugs – pot – meth – vandals
- Johnson Valley no pressurized water
- Inadequate response time for sheriff's/fire
- Lack of street signs
- Inadequate coverage from Sheriff's department 45 minutes to 1 ½ hour response time
- Illegal dumping code enforcement (slow)
- Inadequate roads and poor at suggestions
- Illegal dumping
- Inadequate roads
  - No more constant grading
  - Need repair
  - Need improvement
  - \$ don't make sense, okay to pay but to fix not just grade
- Slow & expensive internet
- Water: expensive, not service to all
- Electric power outages
- Poor secondary road maintenance
- No independent revenue sources
- Zoning and permits for new business is challenging
- Lack of good restaurants
- No identity of Homestead Valley outside of area
- Residential vs. commercial zoning
- Remodeling permits from County 2 days per week
- County zoning requirements inappropriate for area

*Opportunities*

- Tourism
- Hiking
- New National Monument Sand to Snow
- Renewed investment in real estate (fixing properties)
- Weekender recreation
- Point-of-use solar renewable energy
- Partial manning of fire station
- Less restrictions, and fees
- More law enforcement
- Small independent business opportunity



*Opportunities (continued)*

- Lower taxes, fees and licenses for the community associations so they can remain the center & heart of community
- Scenic Highway 247
- Protect the area's open use designation
- Gun store
- Neighborhood watch
- Paved airport
- Solar on rooftops
- Free recyclable
- Develop and build a "Brand" identity
- Need signage showing Homestead Valley – one at south end of 247 one at north of 247
- Something to be a leader in:
- Encourage cultural events & activities
- Capitalize on Giant Rock (UFO's) and integration
- Outdoor events "concerts in the park" etc.
- Tours of area – museum to show the whole Homestead concept
- Encourage some small business:
  - Good food
  - Hardware
  - Off road related
- Celebrate the environment
- Improve Homestead Park

*Threats*

- Subdivision
- Too many Airbnb vacation homes
- No phone service in some areas internet
- Light pollution
- Expanding Marine Base (Officers' quarters)
- DRECP
- Solar farms
- County deciding where solar goes not community
- Industrial scale solar variances over community plan
- Industrial projects
- Rattlesnakes Mojave Green Diamondback
- Flash floods

- Access to medical services
- Off roaders on private land
- Drugs Marijuana & others (meth)
- Off road vehicles
- County putting signs on private property OHV
- Illegal dumping
- Big box stores
- Industrial renewable energy
- Exporting local resources
- Too many government – mandated burdens
- Local government has limited interest in the wants, needs & input from residents
- Burglars
- Too much government regulations
- Resistance to understanding of the importance of open recreation areas.
- Hiking – OHV – geology exploration
- Government does not outreach to HVCC for critical community decisions
- Development we do not have the water
- County – increased cost
- Sneaky solar
- Powerline & windmills
- Inappropriate off-roading
- Open spaces
- No people
- Industrial solar farms
- Large commercial project i.e. solar farms
- Annexation and taxation of Yucca Valley (especially Yucca Mesa and Flamingo Heights)
- Littering and disrespect
- Weekenders disrespect area
- Uncoordinated and hodgepodge commercialization along 247 corridor
- Outsized residential projects
- No C.O.P. or minimal
- Drug labs
- Drugs
- squatters