

Community Focus Statement C: Become a model gateway community to Joshua Tree National Park.

Action Statement C.2: Establish a plan to create a vibrant downtown with more restaurants, cafes, bakeries, craft shops, galleries, and the like.

2

Benchmark: Approval of a downtown plan by the Joshua Tree Chamber of Commerce for the future development of downtown Joshua Tree.

Champion: Volunteer group or person or can be identified by the community

Estimated Cost: \$50,000 - \$150,000 dependent upon consultant resources needed.



Downtown areas have traditionally been the meeting places, areas of commerce, and general lifelines of many communities. They usually house the stores, restaurants, and services necessary to the everyday lives of community members. Currently Joshua Tree has an eclectic mix of uses along Twentynine Palms Highway, which despite being a highway as opposed to a traditional smaller, more walkable road, serves as the downtown street for the community.

The Farmington Downtown Development Authority in Farmington, Michigan, is in charge of maintaining the historic nature of the downtown while promoting and enriching the downtown business and residential district. Photo source: Farmington, Michigan

Developing a plan for how the community would like downtown Joshua Tree to look and function is the first step in creating a vibrant area filled with the types of uses that the community wants and needs. Main Street America is a program of the National Main Street Center and the National Trust for Historic Preservation that provides services and resources, including toolkits on how to develop a downtown area, get buy-in from the community, and fundraise for projects that can be handled on a community level.

The San Bernardino County Economic Development Agency (EDA) also has a number of resources available online to help promote small business development. Most importantly, the EDA offers information on incentives and other programs to help businesses get established. A downtown plan will help to guide future development, growth, and investment in Joshua Tree and could help ensure that the vision of the community remains the main driver of the discussion. The task is a significant one. Many communities also create a separate board or agency to focus on this topic, which is another option for Joshua Tree as it looks to capitalize on the community's close proximity to Joshua Tree National Park.

Action	Action Leader	Timeline	Resources
1. Organize a downtown development committee to lead the downtown plan efforts.	Champion, Local stakeholders, community members	Months 1 – 2	Joshua Tree Chamber of Commerce http://joshuatreechamber.org/
2. Review past materials and plans for the downtown area.	Downtown development committee	Month 3	San Bernardino County Economic Development Agency http://www.sbcountyadvantage.com/Home.aspx
3. Engage community members through surveys, community meetings, and community events to gather input on the planning efforts.	Downtown development committee	Months 4 – 8	Aetna Foundation – Cultivating Healthy Communities Grant Program https://www.aetna-foundation.org/grants-partnerships/grants/cultivating-healthy-communities-rfp.html
4. Consult outside organizations for guidance, such as Main Street America or the San Bernardino County Economic Development Agency (EDA).	Downtown development committee	Months 4 – 8	National Geographic Gateway Toolkit http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/sustainable/gateway_community_toolkit.html
5. Present concepts to the community for feedback.	Downtown development committee	Month 10	
6. Present the final agreed-upon concept plan to the San Bernardino County EDA.	Downtown development committee	Month 12	
7. Revise the concept based on feedback from the San Bernardino County EDA.	Downtown development committee	Month 15	
8. Begin implementation of the final accepted plan.	Downtown development committee	Month 16	