

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

**Action Statement C.4: Establish a downtown business improvement district (BID), or similar financing mechanism, to assist in developing improvements to the gateway.**

C4

**Benchmark:** A BID is created that serves the downtown commercial area of Joshua Tree.

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

**Estimated Cost:** \$25,000 - \$100,000 dependent upon consulting services needed.



Business improvement districts (BID) are defined areas that serve as a financing mechanism by collecting additional taxes which are used to maintain and improve the area. They generally have a board of directors made up of established local business owners who help to oversee improvements and the future direction of the business corridor. It is estimated that there are now more than 2,000 BIDs in North America.

Some keys to creating a BID are getting buy-in from the local business owners and the community, ensuring that there are enough members to make a

meaningful impact, and creating a plan for the types of improvements that businesses in the area would like to see.

Improvements often include:

*A downtown business improvement district (BID) can help to promote vacant properties and increase value in the area. Photo source: Michael Baker International*

- Community cleanup/trash pickup days
- Street beautification through street furniture or plants
- Increased lighting
- Safety improvements to the road
- Business façade programs
- Festivals or business appreciation programs
- Marketing campaigns

The Joshua Tree Chamber of Commerce could play a crucial part in developing the BID, as it is already in tune with the local business climate and any businesses that are Chamber members. The Chamber of Commerce and BID could work hand in hand to develop the downtown area based on the direction that local business owners see the community going. A number of outside resources provide information on BIDs, although it is largely a community effort to start one. Templates exist online for what has been done in other communities. These templates can easily

be adapted to fit the needs of Joshua Tree. Lastly, the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides information on the history and research behind business improvement districts through the department’s downtown revitalization resources online.

Action	Action Leader	Timeline	Resources
1. Perform a survey to determine interest in creating a BID among business owners and to identify potential improvements.	Champion with Local business owners	Months 1 – 2	San Bernardino County Economic Development Agency <a href="http://www.sbcountyadvantage.com/home.aspx">http://www.sbcountyadvantage.com/home.aspx</a>
2. Adopt a resolution of intention with San Bernardino County (see California Tax Data resource).	Local business owners	Months 3 – 6	Joshua Tree Chamber of Commerce <a href="http://joshuatreechamber.org/">http://joshuatreechamber.org/</a>
3. Identify improvements and activities to be financed.	Local business owners	Months 3 – 6	California Tax Data <a href="http://www.californiataxdata.com/pdf/businessimprovement.pdf">http://www.californiataxdata.com/pdf/businessimprovement.pdf</a>
4. Distribute a public notice to impacted business owners, and go through a public hearing process.	Local business owners	Month 6	USDA Rural Development <a href="https://www.nal.usda.gov/ric/downtown-revitalization#bid">https://www.nal.usda.gov/ric/downtown-revitalization#bid</a>
5. Appoint an advisory board.	Local business owners	Month 6	
6. Begin to collect dues and carry out BID responsibilities.	BID advisory board	On-going	