

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

Action Statement C.8: Collaborate with businesses and property owners to discourage Caltrans from widening of Twentynine Palms Highway.

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Benchmark: The Twentynine Palms Highway Task Force becomes a prominent group that coordinates with Caltrans in regard to improvements on Twentynine Palms Highway.

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

Estimated Cost: Variable depending on project initiatives



Twentynine Palm Highway near the Joshua Tree Community. Photo source: [Arminnius](#)

Twentynine Palms Highway (State Route 62) serves as the primary route through Joshua Tree and conveys large volumes of traffic at high speeds. Through Joshua Tree, Twentynine Palms Highway serves as a four-lane roadway (two travel lanes in each direction), with several turning lanes. The highway serves as a “Main Street” for Joshua Tree and bisects commercial, industrial, and institutional land uses.

While roadways are often widened for safety purposes, the result is usually the opposite. Wide lanes make drivers feel safe at higher speeds, often resulting in more accidents. Increasing highway capacity may not unnecessarily relieve traffic congestion.

In order to maintain the small-town, rural nature of Joshua Tree, business and property owners can work together to discourage Caltrans from any widening of the highway. Property owners along Twentynine Palms Highway can partner with the Chamber of Commerce to identify community needs for the roadway. This group can coordinate and lobby Caltrans to ensure the roadway is serving the needs and wants of the community, instead of the roadway simply serving as a route through Joshua Tree.

Maintaining Twentynine Palms Highway in its current form can encourage a “Main Street” revival, which would result in safer streets, more pedestrian and bicycle activity, and a boosted local economy. Joshua Tree could instead promote traffic calming measures (Action Statement C.3), and other Complete Streets elements to become a model gateway community to Joshua Tree National Park.



Action	Action Leader	Timeline	Resources
1. Reach out to property owners and business located along Twentynine Palms Highway who would be interested in volunteering on a task force to discourage highway widening and the addition of pedestrian safe zones at crossings.	Champion with Joshua Tree Chamber of Commerce	Years 1 – 3	Smart Growth America https://smartgrowthamerica.org/ California Department of Transportation http://www.dot.ca.gov/
2. Designate a chair for the Twentynine Palms Task Force.	Twentynine Palms Highway Task Force	Years 1 – 3	San Bernardino County Transportation Division http://cms.sbcounty.gov/dpw/Transportation.aspx
3. Identify community needs for Twentynine Palms Highway, including Complete Streets elements, traffic calming, and others.	Twentynine Palms Highway Task Force	Years 1 – 3	Smart Growth America https://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/app/legacy/documents/cs/resources/lanewidth-safety.pdf
4. Coordinate with Caltrans and the County for desired improvements, and ensure that Twentynine Palms Highway is not widened.	Twentynine Palms Highway Task Force	Years 1 – 3	California Department of Transportation http://www.dot.ca.gov/newtech/researchreports/reports/2015/10-12-2015-NCST_Brief_InducedTravel_CS6_v3.pdf Main Street Recovery Program https://ourfuture.org/report/main-street-recovery-program