



YUCCA VALLEY

COMMUNITY PROFILE





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Celebrating 20 Years of Community

November 2011

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1. Introduction

In this chapter:

PURPOSE OF PUBLICATION

TOWN HISTORY

MOVING FORWARD



PURPOSE OF THIS PUBLICATION

No other community is exactly like ours. This publication celebrates what makes Yucca Valley unique. It notes how the Town has changed during the past twenty years and highlights how its distinct strengths and assets may be utilized as the Town plans for the next twenty years and beyond. Our hope is that the information provided here can provide a common knowledge base and understanding of local issues and encourage residents that do not normally participate in Town government to engage in an informed dialogue about the Town's future.

This Community Profile provides a basic framework for identifying and understanding the broad range of issues Yucca Valley faces. It compares the Town with the region in order to highlight the Town's unique characteristics. It also assesses how the Town is changing over time to determine the direction the Town is heading. By providing a clearer understanding of where Yucca Valley stands and where it is heading, this Community Profile is a valuable tool to assess the relevance of the Town's General Plan goals, policies, and implementation items that were established twenty years ago.

Document Overview

This Community Profile provides a basic framework for understanding the broad range of issues in community planning, how Yucca Valley compares in these areas, and what the Town may face in the future. The document contains three distinct parts:

I. Introduction

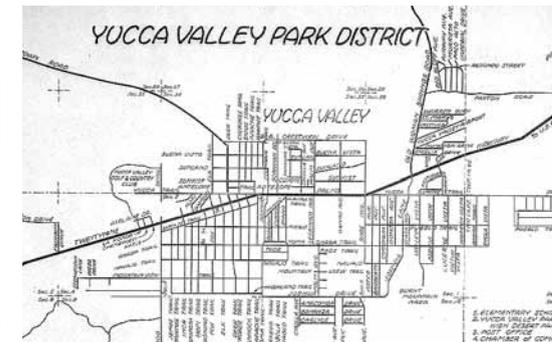
Where we have been. This section provides a snapshot of the history of the community and general discussion about its location in the region.

II. Community Survey

Where we are now. This section describes where Yucca Valley stands today, including its natural environment, built environment, human and social capital, and local governance.

III. Market Scan and Forecast

Where we are headed and what other issues affect our direction. This section provides projections for key community indicators including demographics and residential and non-residential demand. It also describes national, state, and regional trends that may affect the approach to, and implementation of, the General Plan.





Source: Morongo Basin Historical Society

TOWN HISTORY

Establishing Roots

Over the years, Yucca Valley has undergone dramatic changes, expanding from a tiny frontier way station into a thriving modern desert community of 20,700. Despite these changes, Yucca Valley still maintains its friendly, hometown feel, and the surrounding mountains and desert lend the town an enduring sense of timelessness.

November 27, 2011, marks the Town of Yucca Valley's twentieth anniversary; however, the town's rich history and culture began centuries earlier. Yucca Valley can trace its origins back to its first residents, the Serrano and Chemehuevi Indians, who occupied the San Bernardino Mountains during summer and the warmer Coachella Valley in the winter. Artifact and petroglyphs from these early inhabitants can still be found today.

In the 1880s, Chuck Warren and his sons dug Warren's Well, which established a critical water source as well as a lively social center. Warren's Well helped the area then known as Lone Star (after the local Lone Star Ranch) transform into an important stop for ranchers, miners, and horse-drawn supply trains traveling between the San Bernardino Valley and Coachella Valley. Around this same time, many homesteaders attempted to build farms and ranches. The harsh conditions deterred many of them, but those who remained survived by "neighbor helping neighbor."

In the 1920s, WWI veterans who experienced physical ailments resulting from the war sought the hot, dry, desert climate for its healing properties, a reputation the area continues to hold. With the dawn of the automobile, fuel surpassed water as a key supply for travelers. In 1923, development began in Lone Star with the area's first gas station. Through the 1920s and 1930s, the area continued to serve as an important stop for travelers. Additional gas stations, food markets, and homes flourished and the way station transformed into a small town and destination in its own right. Town forefathers purchased 3,000 acres, installed water lines, and renamed the area Yucca Valley in 1949. Forty-two years later, when the Town incorporated in 1991, more than 16,000 people called Yucca Valley home.

It's All Part of Growing Up

Water supply and quality has and continues to be a key hurdle facing the residents of this community. In the late 80s, a building moratorium was instituted to address the overdraft conditions of the Warren Basin. The voters overcame that hurdle in 1990 when area residents overwhelmingly voted to approve \$41 million in General Obligation Bonds to fund construction of the Morongo Basin Pipeline.

Shortly after incorporation, the Town suffered significant damage resulting from the Landers earthquake, one of the strongest earthquakes to hit California in the last 60 years. The earthquake severely affected the Town, which had to be resourceful in addressing this natural disaster just as it was establishing itself as a government agency.

Still reeling from the effects of the Landers Earthquake, the community forged ahead with the Morongo Basin Pipeline. Construction began in December 1992 and water began to flow through its approximately 71-mile pipeline in January of 1995. The pipeline has continued to serve nearly 60,000 people and 455 square miles of the High Desert, including the communities of Yucca Valley, Joshua Tree, Landers and Johnson Valley.

Today, the community is faced with yet another water hurdle - this time the impacts of septic systems on groundwater quality. On November 1, 2011, the State Water Board approved a septic tank prohibition affecting residents and businesses located through much of Yucca Valley...requiring the removal of septic systems beginning in 2016. Once again the community will be faced with a challenge that requires a solution. That solution - a centralized wastewater treatment facility - represents the single greatest infrastructure need for Yucca Valley. And while this challenge is daunting, this community has the history of overcoming hurdles collectively.



Damage to the Yucca Lanes Bowling Center caused by the 1992 Landers Earthquake.

Connecting the Past with the Present

On the twentieth anniversary of Yucca Valley’s incorporation, it is noteworthy how Yucca Valley’s past has shaped its future. Since its incorporation, Yucca Valley has grown from a population of 16,000 to more than 20,000 residents - an increase of over 25 percent. The Town now encompasses 39 square miles in the Mojave Desert, with the San Bernardino Mountains to the west and Joshua Tree National Park along its southern border. Yucca Valley’s desert climate and affordable cost of living has helped earn it national recognition as an attractive place for retirees. In 2007, *U.S. News and World Report* identified Yucca Valley as one of the top ten most affordable places to retire.

Throughout the twentieth century, Yucca Valley was a frontier that attracted a diverse array of homesteaders, prospectors, explorers, veterans, and ranchers. The draw of Yucca Valley continues to this day. Its expansive starry skies and dramatic desert landscapes lure an eclectic mix of retirees, artists, musicians, tourists, health gurus, equestrians, and people simply looking to escape fast-paced city life while remaining close to many amenities.

The Town has also retained its historical roots as a high desert travelers’ hub. With state routes 247 and 62 meeting in Yucca Valley, the Town is a popular stop for visitors traveling to Palm Springs, Joshua Tree National Park, Big Bear, Las Vegas and the Colorado River. Its central location also means Town residents have access to diverse amenities including ski resorts, beaches, and major cities.

Comparing Yesterday and Today

One way to understand how the Town of Yucca Valley has changed since its incorporation is to compare the Town’s demographic data in 1990 and 2010. Table 1-1 lists some key demographic figures and shows changes in population and housing in Yucca Valley. In the past 20 years, Yucca Valley’s overall population added nearly 4,300, an increase of 26 percent. The number of seniors (age 65 years and older) living in Yucca Valley has decreased by 9% while the number of school age children increased by 60% since the Town’s incorporation. The biggest change has been in the number of middle age adults (age 45-64 years). This group increased by

73% and today, they are Yucca Valley’s largest age group, comprising over a quarter of the Town’s population.

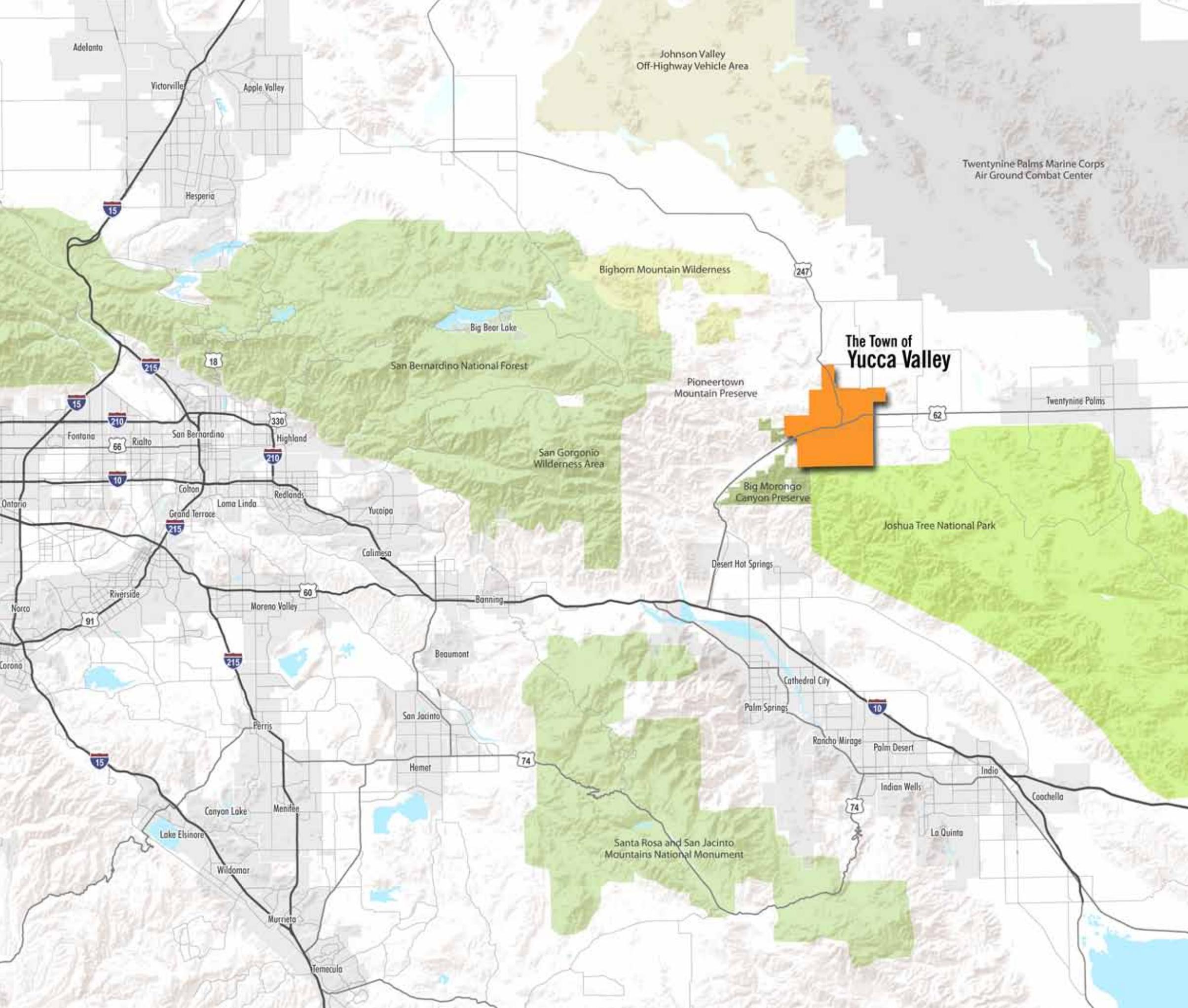
In the past two decades, the number of housing units in Yucca Valley has increased by 27 percent. However, the overall makeup of the housing stock has remained largely the same over the past 20 years. The value of Yucca Valley’s homes has significantly increased. Since 1990, the median home value in Yucca Valley has increased by more than 55 percent, even when inflation is taken into account.

Table 1-1: Demographic Changes in Yucca Valley, 1990 and 2010

Demographic Figures	1990	2010	% Change
Total Population	16,403	20,700	+ 26%
Preschool age children (0-4 years)	1,422	1,271	- 11%
School age children (5-17 years)	2,466	3,954	+ 60%
College age (18-24 years)	1,075	1,260	+ 17%
Family forming (25-44 years)	4,104	4,392	+ 7%
Middle age (45-64 years)	3,057	5,311	+ 74%
Seniors (65 years and older)	4,279	3,878	- 9%
Total housing units	6,941	9,558	+ 38%
Single-family detached	5,971	8,401	+ 40%
Single-family attached and multifamily	970	1,157	+ 19%
Median Home Value	\$137,553*	\$214,500	+ 56%

Sources: US Census 1990 and 2010; CA Dept. of Finance 1990; The Planning Center|DC&E, 2011.

*Displayed in inflation-adjusted 2010 dollars. The unadjusted 1990 median home value is \$82,448.



**The Town of
Yucca Valley**

Johnson Valley
Off-Highway Vehicle Area

Twentynine Palms Marine Corps
Air Ground Combat Center

Bighorn Mountain Wilderness

Big Bear Lake

San Bernardino National Forest

Pioneerstown
Mountain Preserve

Twentynine Palms

San Geronimo
Wilderness Area

Big Morongo
Canyon Preserve

Joshua Tree National Park

Desert Hot Springs

Calimesa

Banning

Beaumont

Cathedral City

Palm Springs

Rancho Mirage

Palm Desert

Indio

Coachella

Santa Rosa and San Jacinto
Mountains National Monument

La Quinta

Geographical Region

Yucca Valley is near the southern border of San Bernardino County, about 10 miles north of Riverside County and 115 miles west of the Arizona border. Nearby cities include San Bernardino (55 miles to the west), Palm Springs (37 miles to the south), and Barstow (89 miles to the north). The Town encompasses 39 square miles. Yucca Valley is located in the Mojave Desert approximately 3,300 feet above sea level. The San Bernardino Mountains are to the west and Joshua Tree National Park abuts the Town's southern border.

In 2010, Yucca Valley had a population of 20,700 residents, making it the third smallest of San Bernardino County's 24 cities, significantly larger than Big Bear Lake, the second smallest city, and slightly smaller than Barstow, the next largest city. From 2000 to 2009, Yucca Valley grew by 19 percent, a growth rate similar to that of San Bernardino County and significantly higher than California's growth rate of 10 percent. Yucca Valley's growth contributed less than 1 percent of San Bernardino County's growth over the nine-year period.



Source: Town of Yucca Valley

Table 1-2: Population of Nearby Jurisdictions, 2010

Rank by Size	Jurisdiction	Population
1	Needles	4,844
2	Big Bear Lake	5,019
3	Yucca Valley	20,700
4	Barstow	22,639
5	Twentynine Palms	25,048

Source: US Census, 2010.

MOVING FORWARD

The General Plan Update

The Town of Yucca Valley's twentieth anniversary offers the opportunity to not only celebrate the Town's history, but also plan for its future. In this twentieth year, the Town is initiating a significant civic effort to revisit the contents and direction provided in the Town's inaugural General Plan.

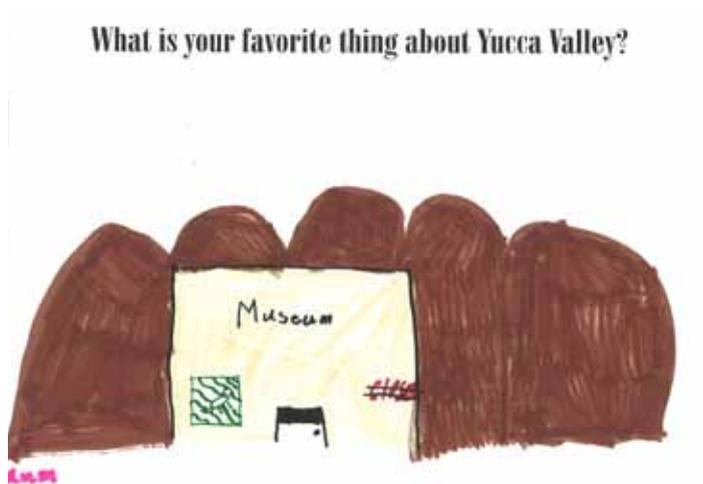
The General Plan provides the blueprint for how a community will grow over time and addresses important issues such as adequacy of vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian circulation; safety of the community; housing opportunities; availability of recreational amenities such as parks and trails; conservation of natural resources; and impacts that land uses have on noise and air quality.

The Town's current General Plan was adopted in 1995. The needs and values of the community may have changed since then. Updating the General Plan is an opportunity for the Town to comprehensively evaluate the community's priorities and aspirations. It will develop strategies to sustain the quality of life and economic prosperity desired by the community, and will create a contemporary vision for the future reflective of local values.

The dialogue with the community regarding the General Plan started in August of this year at the last Summer Music Festival concert of the season. Adults and children alike were asked to identify the things in Yucca Valley that were important to them, what things in the Town that they would like to change, and what the community should look like in another twenty years. The dialogue will continue over the next several months, concluding with a revised General Plan in early 2013.



OUR TOWN, OUR VISION!



The community provides the Town with input regarding the future of Yucca Valley during a summer Concert in the Park.





2. Community Survey

In this chapter:

HUMAN AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

LOCAL GOVERNANCE



Concertgoers express patriotism during the National Anthem at the Music Festival.



HUMAN AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

Human capital is the depth of knowledge within a community. It includes the education and training that contribute to productivity, entrepreneurial spirit, and creativity. Our skills help determine how we create opportunities and solve local challenges. Social capital refers to a collection of people and how they may work together to achieve a greater good. Civic engagement, community organizations, and public events all play a role in promoting a healthy and close-knit community.

Our People

Demographic factors—such as income, household composition, age, race and ethnicity, and birth rates—and the relationships between them affect current and future demands for housing, educational and recreational facilities, and community-serving programs. Comparing Yucca Valley to the comparison region (Indio, Victorville, and Desert Hot Springs) and to California provides context for understanding Yucca Valley’s demographic factors.

The Comparison Region and State

While no two cities are exactly alike, drawing comparisons between the town and its surrounding region and state can help shed light on what issues are particular to the town and what issues are part of a larger trend. Yucca Valley poses a particular challenge for creating an appropriate comparison region for several reasons. Its small size, climate, distance from major cities, proximity to two state routes, and economy all contribute to shaping the unique Town of Yucca Valley.

This Community Profile seeks to comprehensively describe Yucca Valley using available statistics, for example, the percentage of the housing that is single-family detached, multifamily, and mobile homes. It is one thing, however, to know what those percentages are, and it is another thing to understand if one of those percentages is particularly high or low. To provide that understanding, the Community Profile compares statistics for Yucca Valley to those for a group of comparison cities and to those for California.

While there are no other cities that perfectly match Yucca Valley, the community profile uses three that each reflect some key aspect of the Town. Desert Hot Springs is a small desert city where many of the residents commute to jobs elsewhere in the Coachella Valley. It is also trying to establish a downtown area as a destination that can attract visitors and spending from its region. Indio is widely seen as a successful Coachella Valley city that provides a fair amount of jobs for its local residents, has developed successful retail destinations, and yet also seeks to improve and expand

economic activity in less successful parts of the city. Finally Victorville, the largest city in the Victor Valley is a leading employment and commercial center for the subregion. Much like the Morongo Basin, many residents in the Victor Valley travel down the hill, in their case to work at jobs in San Bernardino County’s valley region.

Reading the Community Profile, one will see Yucca Valley compared to the three comparison cities and to the state. At times, when there are meaningful implications, the profile also compares and contrasts Yucca Valley to San Bernardino County and the Inland Empire.

Table 2-1: Regional Comparison

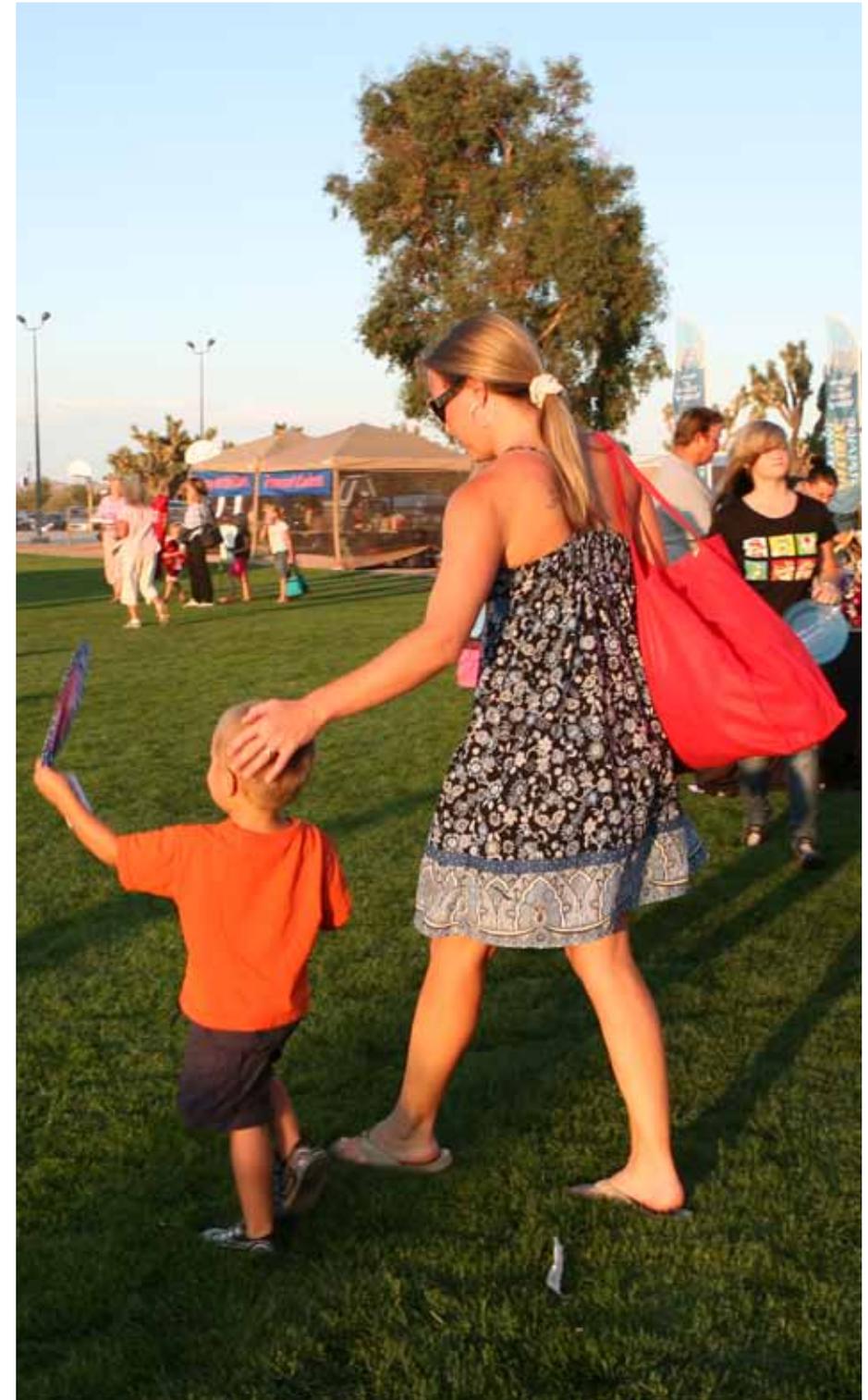
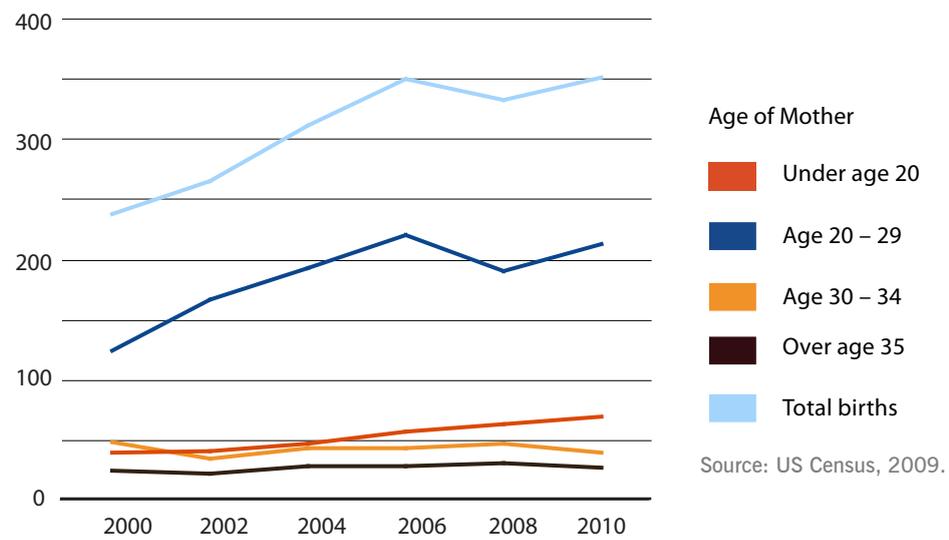
	Yucca Valley	Desert Hot Springs	Indio	Victorville	California
Population, 2010	20,700	25,938	76,036	115,903	37,253,956
Annual Growth Rate 2000-2010	2.1%	4.6%	4.5%	6.1%	1.0%
Households, 2010	8,274	8,650	23,378	32,558	12,577,498
Average Household Size	2.5	3.0	3.3	3.6	3.0
Median Age	40.6	31.0	32.2	29.5	35.2
Median Household Income	42,120	37,404	53,087	49,520	60,392

Source: US Census, 2009.

Birth Rates

A large portion of the Town’s growth comes from the expansion of existing families. As shown in Fig. 2-1, the number of births has increased over the past decade. Between 2000 and 2009 the number of births by age of mother has increased for all age categories except for the youngest mothers under age 20, who are giving birth at a lower rate than in 2000. The largest increase in births occurred for women age 20–29 (41 percent) and age 30–34 (42 percent). Women age 35 and older experienced a smaller increase in births (12 percent).

Figure 2-1: Birth Rates



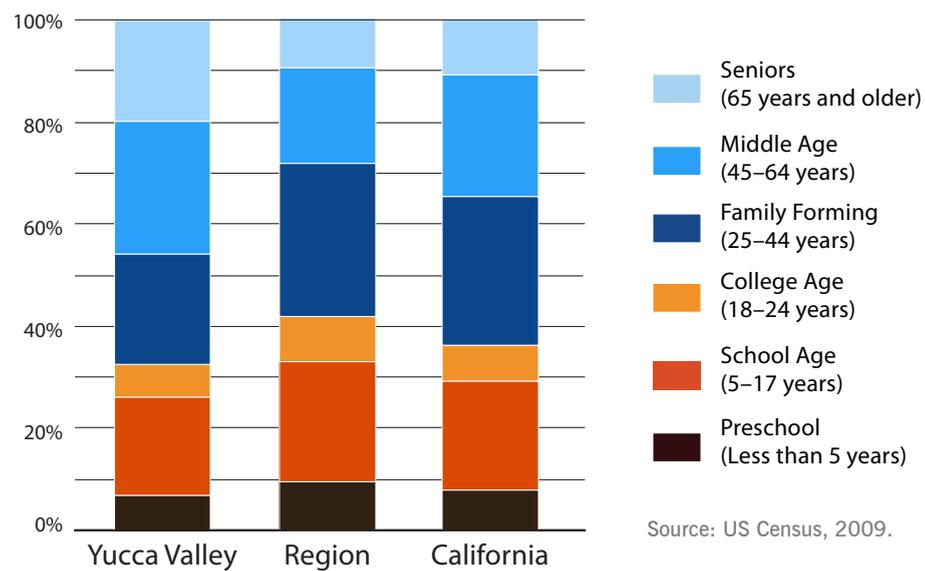
Mother and child outside the Community Center.

Age Distribution

From 2000 to 2009, Yucca Valley maintained a consistent age distribution structure. In 2009, Yucca Valley's median age was 41, which is significantly higher than the region's median age of 31 and the state's median age of 34. Fig. 2-2 shows how the age composition of Yucca Valley differs from the region. Yucca Valley has more middle age adults and seniors, while the region has more family forming and college age adults, as well as more school and preschool children.

Age composition is an important factor for assessing demand for types of housing, health care, and community facilities. More than 25 percent of Yucca Valley residents are children and teens which may indicate demand for educational amenities and may help explain why the Morongo Unified School District is the Town's largest employer. Yucca Valley's large population of middle age and senior residents, which constitutes 46 percent of the population, may indicate a demand for different facilities than younger residents, such as health care and lifelong learning. The large senior population may contribute to Yucca Valley's strong health care and social services field.

Figure 2-2: Age Distribution



Residents participating in a community outreach workshop.



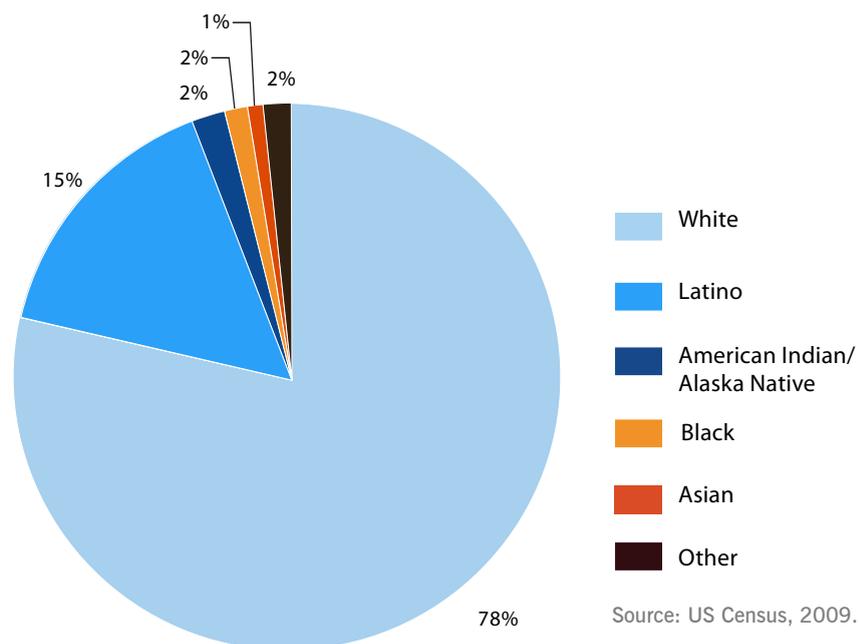
Awards ceremony for youth track and field program participants.

Racial and Ethnic Diversity

Historically, the Town’s racial composition has consisted of a significant majority of caucasian residents, although it is becoming more diverse. In 2000, 82 percent of the Yucca Valley residents identified as white compared with 78 percent in 2009. The largest shift is in the Latino population. From 2000 to 2009, the proportion of Yucca Valley resident reporting Latino ethnicity increased from 10 percent of the population to 16 percent. The number of Yucca Valley residents identifying as American Indian/ Native Alaskan population more than doubled from 2000 to 2009; however, they still comprise less than 3 percent of Yucca Valley’s population. The number of residents identifying as black, Asian and other remained approximately the same from 2000 to 2009.

There are notably fewer Latinos in Yucca Valley than in the comparison region; 16 percent compared with 60 percent, respectively. This difference may be attributed to Yucca Valley’s location in the Morongo Basin which also has a population that is 16 percent Latino. Also, compared with the region, Yucca Valley has fewer residents identifying as Asian (1 percent and 3 percent, respectively) and black (2 percent and 8 percent, respectively).

Figure 2-3: Racial and Ethnic Diversity

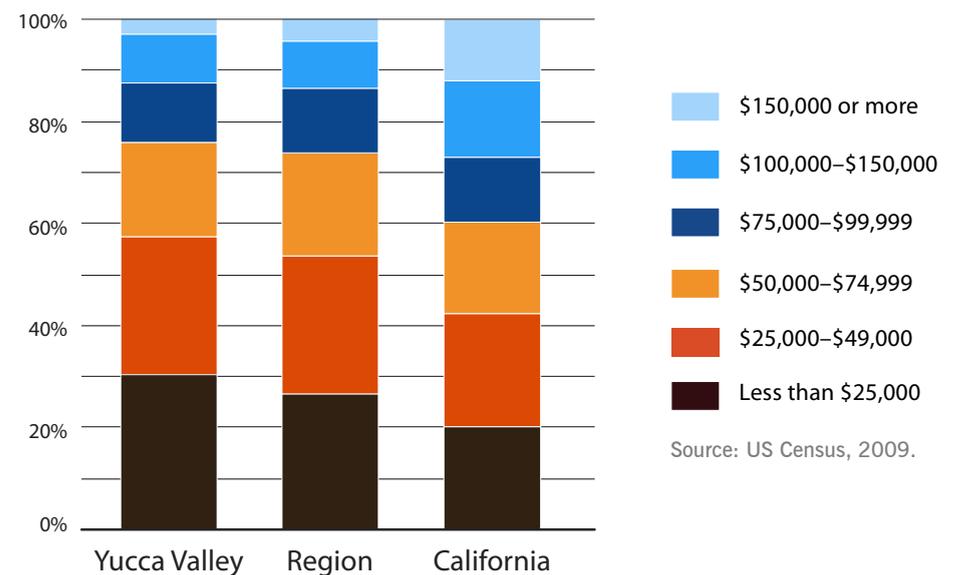


Household Income

In 2009, Yucca Valley’s median household income of \$42,120 was 9 percent lower than the region’s median income of \$46,551 and 28 percent lower than the state’s median income of \$58,925. A comparison of household income distribution between Yucca Valley and the region reveals that Yucca Valley has 4 percent more households with incomes lower than \$25,000. Yucca Valley also has 10 percent fewer households making \$150,000 or more than the region. Yucca Valley’s lower income may be a result of the Town’s senior population, who generally live on limited incomes after retirement. Yucca Valley’s low cost of living has garnered it attention as an attractive town for retirees. In 2007, *U.S. News and World Report* listed Yucca Valley as one of the top ten most affordable places to retire.

While the income of town residents is lower than the state and region, overall, Yucca Valley ranks 9th in the two-county area for bank deposits, and 3rd overall in San Bernardino County (*Inland Empire Quarterly Economic Report*, San Bernardino Association of Governments, October, 2011).

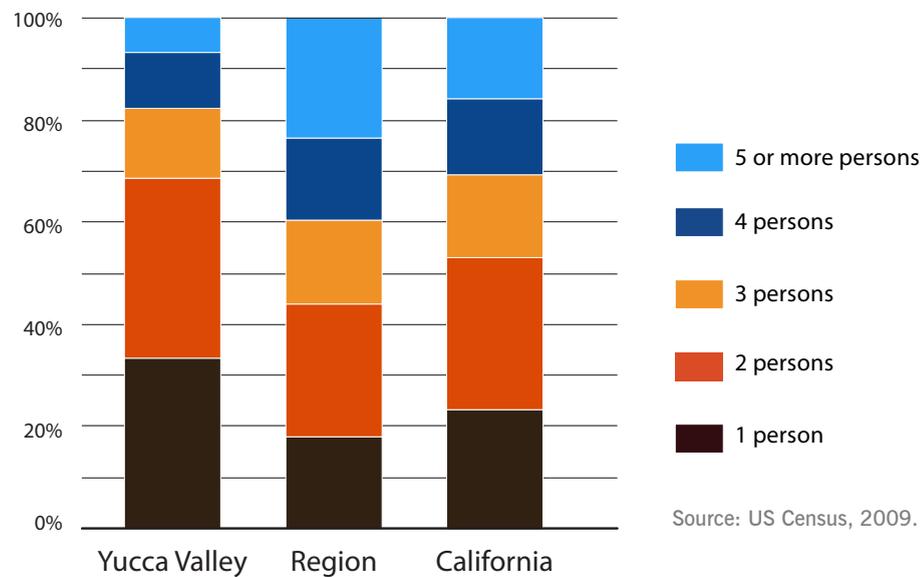
Figure 2-4: Household Income



Household Size

Changes in household composition and size together significantly affect the need for different types of housing. The average household size for Yucca Valley in 2009 was 2.39 persons per household which is significantly lower than the region's average of 3.27 persons per household and slightly lower than the state's average of 2.91 persons. Approximately 69 percent of Yucca Valley's households consist of only one or two persons compared with 44 percent of households in the region. Only 18 percent of Yucca Valley households have four or more people compared with 40 percent of households for the region.

Figure 2-5: Household Size

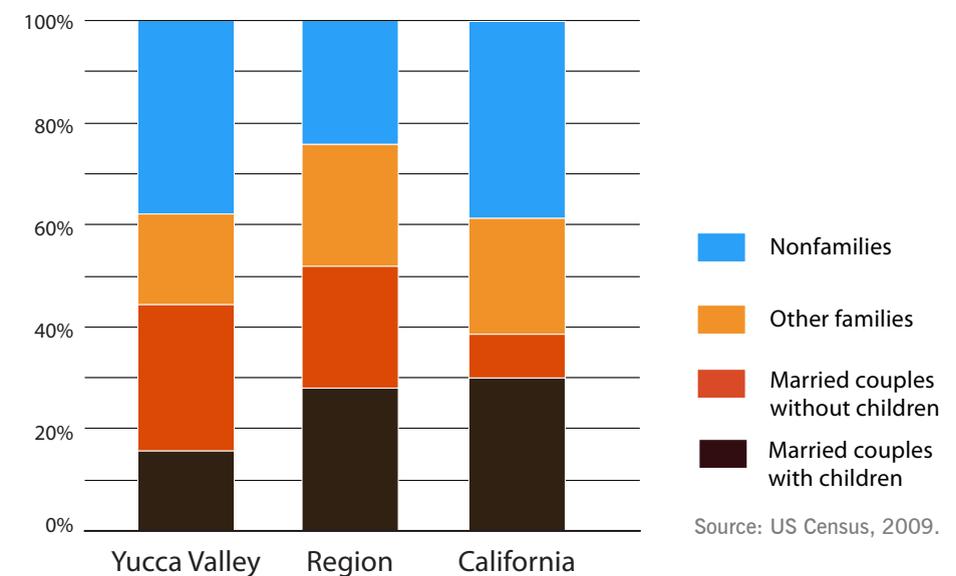


Household Composition

The relationship of household members contributes to the types of housing and services needed. For example, single-person and non-family households create demand for adult education and recreation programs, and may be served well by rental housing. Family households with minor children create demand for K-12 school facilities and playgrounds, and may increase demand for single-family homes.

Yucca Valley has a slightly lower proportion of married couples with children than the region and significantly lower than the state. This is to be expected due to the fact that Yucca Valley has nearly twice the percentage of senior adults (age 65 and older) than the region. Senior adults may no longer have children living at home or may be living alone after the passing of a spouse.

Figure 2-6: Household Composition



Crime Rates

Police protection services in Yucca Valley are provided by the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department, operating out of the Morongo Basin Station in Joshua Tree. According to the Sheriff's Department, the Town of Yucca Valley is experiencing a decrease in the number of property crimes (2009). The number of violent crimes increased; however, the Town of Yucca Valley has a relatively low crime rate compared to the county as a whole and the trend across the state. The sheriff's department has implemented several special programs to control criminal activity in Yucca Valley, including the juvenile crime reduction plan, traffic safety checkpoints, multi-family housing crime prevention efforts, and parole compliance sweeps. Policing services like these, along with assistance from citizen patrol volunteers, reflect a community-oriented policing strategy designed to solve local problems. A summary of local crime statistics and Sheriff's Department responsiveness is provided in Table 2-2.



Deputy on patrol.

Table 2-2: Yucca Valley Crime Statistics, 2006 to 2010

Activity	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Calls for Service	25,678	24,529	27,205	27,691	27,365
REPORTED CRIMES *					
Part I	798	815	896	750	702
Part II	2,738	2,143	2,231	2,195	2,091
CASES CLEARED					
Part I	274	197	312	270	206
Part II	1,406	851	936	842	828
Total	1,680	1,048	1,248	1,112	1,034
Percent of Reported	47.5	35.4	39.9	37.8	37.0
OTHER ARRESTS					
Driving Under the Influence	111	72	95	89	69
TRAFFIC POLICING					
Citations	3,126	2,918	5,297	4,786	4,064
Collisions	398	309	290	231	222
RESPONSE TIMES IN MINUTES					
Emergency	4.09	5.14	4.04	4.22	3.49
Non-Emergency	10.26	10.19	10.40	10.02	10.20
Average Handling	28.42	32.06	34.19	32.39	31.40
VOLUNTEERS					
Hours Donated	9,528	9,025	10,038	8,005	6,952

Source: San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department, 2011.

* Part I crimes are classified as being more serious than Part II crimes.



Soccer is one of many youth sports activities offered in Yucca Valley.

Developing Human Capital

Human capital is the community's collective inventory of skills, values, and knowledge. It is a reflection of the education, training, and expertise that people can utilize to contribute to the health of society. Schooling, opportunities for higher education, health care, general social services and need-specific programs all contribute to Yucca Valley's human capital.



Children enjoying H-2-Oh! Friday.

School Performance

School performance is an indicator of the community's ability to provide its youth with a foundation for independence, higher education, and a career. Yucca Valley is in the Morongo Unified School District. Curriculum includes special opportunities such as advanced placement classes, subject-based intervention programs, independent continuing education, gifted and talented education track, and the English Language Learners Program. The public school facilities in the Town include Yucca Valley and Onaga Elementary Schools, La Contenta Junior High School, Sky Continuation High School, and Yucca Valley High School. Both high school facilities in Yucca Valley are accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, an official academic body responsible for evaluating and accrediting public and private schools in the United States.

The district measures several types of student development at different levels and participates in state and federal student performance evaluation programs. The No Child Left Behind Adequate Yearly Progress system is a federal measure of annual scholastic improvement. The Morongo Unified School District met or exceeded 22 out of 30 criteria in the 2009–2010 academic year. Over the last few years, student proficiency in English language arts, science, and history have improved; performance in math has fluctuated. The California High School Exit Examination is a measurement of competency in reading, writing, and mathematics for 10th and 12th grade students. Tenth-grade students are passing at a 78 percent rate in math and English language arts.

The Academic Performance Index is a state assessment of educational growth in every California public school. In 2010, the district's results grew by 6 points to a score of 759; the state's target score is 800 points. Another indicator of school performance is the ratio of students to teachers. The district has a student to teacher ratio of 23.7 to 1, only slightly higher than the student to teacher ratio of 23.0 to 1 for San Bernardino County as a whole (2009–2010 academic year).

Higher Education Opportunities

Yucca Valley residents have access to community colleges, technical colleges, university extension programs, and university satellite campuses. The closest facility is Copper Mountain College, an accredited two-year community college in Joshua Tree offering degrees and certificates in 24 areas of study. Another accredited two-year community college, College of the Desert, is approximately 45 minutes south of Yucca Valley in the Coachella Valley.

The California State University and University of California systems have satellite campuses in the Coachella Valley. The California State University, San Bernardino, Palm Desert Campus offers 10 bachelor's degree programs and 10 master's degree or credential programs. Approximately 15 percent of its courses are distance learning, reducing the need to commute to campus. Other opportunities for post graduate study are available through Brandman and National Universities, as well as the University of California, Riverside, Palm Desert Graduate Center. These satellite campuses, as well as private vocational colleges and distance learning coursework available through numerous colleges and universities, improve opportunities for Yucca Valley residents to pursue personal and career advancement.



Adults honing their painting skills at an art workshop.

Adult Education Opportunities

Lifelong learning opportunities can greatly enrich adult lives through both educational attainment and social interaction. As the Town's middle-age and senior populations increase, so will demand for continuing education. The Town of Yucca Valley offers a variety of adult classes, including music, dance, fine art, applied arts, nutrition, yoga, aquatics, and video gaming. The Town also organizes adult athletic leagues and events for softball, basketball, horseshoes, and tennis.

The Morongo Basin Coalition for Adult Literacy, a United Way agency, and the Yucca Valley Branch Library provide reading classes and tutoring. The library also hosts adult education classes for computer literacy and Internet use for job searching. Copper Mountain College is another local resource for personal enrichment, offering no-credit classes, workshops, seminars, and lectures in 28 topics, including digital photography, creative writing, and child care. Online community education and training courses are additional valuable learning opportunities for Internet-savvy Yucca Valley adults.

The Hi-Desert Nature Museum supports lifelong learning and provides area residents with engaging and timely public programs and exhibitions related to the High Desert's natural science, history, art, and culture. The Museum's summer and winter lecture series are focused toward adult education, in addition to special events such as the Starry Nights Festival. The Museum is open to the general public with free admission to ensure that all segments of the population are able to access the educational programs.

Youth Programming

The Town of Yucca Valley provides a variety of community services and activities geared toward youth and teens. The Town offers a free after-school program for students ages 4 to 16 at Paradise Park. Students can drop in for academic tutoring, arts and crafts, and games. Several Morongo Unified School District elementary school campuses have an after-school program generally formatted to include an hour for each of these activities: homework, reading, and physical education. The Boys & Girls Club of the Hi-Desert is in Yucca Valley, but the facility serves children and teens from throughout the Morongo Basin. Their programs include tutoring, incentive-based homework hours, financial management classes, fitness challenges, and personal growth and character workshops.

The Hi-Desert Nature Museum offers a variety of educational programs related to the region's unique desert elements. Family-oriented programs, such as Science Saturdays, Art and Culture Wednesdays, Family Fun Days, Earth Day, and Halloween Spooktacular are geared toward youth education. The Museum includes a "hands-on" area for children called the Kids' Corner where children of all ages can participate in a variety of activities that relate to the Museum's mission.

Yucca Valley High School provides the community's youth with opportunities to explore the arts through the Yucca Valley High School Theatre Company, Art Club, and Visual and Performing Arts Department. The Town of Yucca Valley Community Services Department hosts a variety of classes for special interests such as guitar, gymnastics, tennis, and dance. The Town also organizes leagues for youth basketball and flag football and camps for volleyball and track and field. Other youth sports programming is provided by the Morongo Basin Youth Soccer Association, Tri-Valley Little League, Hi-Desert Aquatics, Morongo Basin Tennis Association, Yucca Valley BMX Family Park, and the Yucca Valley Lobos (cheerleading and tackle football). These organizations participate in the Yucca Valley Sports Council, an official forum for collaboration on recreational programs and sharing facilities.



Arts and crafts classes entertain and educate children.



A flag football team in a huddle.

Senior Programming

The Town of Yucca Valley's Senior Center and other facilities host senior programs to benefit residents across the Morongo Basin. Popular events and services include leisure activities, educational classes, personal business consulting, nutritional lunches, fitness and wellness programs, and field trips. The Town of Yucca Valley Community Services Department and local non-profits like the San Bernardino County Community Action Partnership, Family Service Association, and Morongo Basin Adult Health Services provide a spectrum of resources to promote vitality, support independence, and meet the diverse needs of the local senior population.



Bingo at the Senior Center.

Social Services

Social services are offerings of critical assistance for the community's lower income residents. The Town of Yucca Valley, local nonprofits, and San Bernardino County offer no-cost social services to individuals and families in need. Special efforts, like food and personal item drives, also help meet common needs.

Tender Loving Christmas is a Yucca Valley resident-initiated food drive and holiday meal program that serves thousands of Morongo Basin residents each year. This program and others like it demonstrate that Yucca Valley residents take pride in taking care of each other.

The Morongo One Stop Transitional Age Youth Center, operated by San Bernardino County and Pacific Clinics, opened in 2008 to meet a rising need for support for extremely low income young adults ages 16 to 25. The Transitional Age Youth Center is a component of the continuum of care for young people who are homeless, coping with substance abuse or mental illness, or transitioning out of the foster care system. The facility offers access to clothes washers and dryers, nutritious meals, addiction and mental health counseling, field trips, and internship placement.

San Bernardino County provides numerous social service programs and resources to Yucca Valley residents in need through the following departments and programs:

- Adult and Aging Services
- Behavioral Health
- Children's Fund
- Children's Network
- Children and Family Services
- Child Support Services
- Community Relations Office
- Office of Homeless Services
- Pre-school Services
- Public Housing Authority
- Public Health
- Transitional Assistance
- Veterans Affairs
- San Bernardino County Homeless Partnership

Health Care

Hi-Desert Memorial Health Care District provides full hospital services to an area stretching from Morongo Valley on the west, past Twentynine Palms on the east, to the county line on the south, and north past the unincorporated community of Landers, including all of the Town. The Hi-Desert Memorial Health Care District operates medical clinics in Yucca Valley and Joshua Tree, as well as the Hi-Desert Medical Center, a dynamic health campus with more than 100 physicians in 28 medical specialties and over 500 support staff members. The campus includes a 59-bed acute primary care hospital and a 120-bed skilled nursing facility. The Hi-Desert Memorial Health Care District's facilities include:

- Behavioral Health Center
- Continuing Care Center
- Infusion Clinic
- Airway Outpatient Surgery and Diagnostic Center
- Special Additions Prenatal Education Center
- Yucca Valley Family Health Clinic
- Family Birthing Center
- Helen Gray Education Center
- Twentynine Palms Family Health Clinic

Hospice services in the Yucca Valley area are provided by the Hi-Desert Memorial Health Care District's Home Health Services Department and Hospice of Morongo Basin. Hospice of Morongo Basin specializes in providing trained volunteers to visit patients and provide bereavement services for free.

The Town's demographic trends suggest that the community will have a need for additional health care facilities, wellness programs, and medical professionals as the population continues to age and grow.



Volunteer participating in one of the Town's many blood drives.



Learning environmental stewardship at Kamp Kool Beans.



Spectators at the Great Race.



Enjoying balloons at the Town's 15th Anniversary Celebration.

Building Social Capital

Social capital is an intangible resource of relationship building that community members can draw upon to solve collective problems and reach a common end. It consists of social trusts and networks that demonstrate an ongoing investment in the members of the community. Civic engagement facilitates coordination, communication, and collaboration. A community's social capital is only as strong as its willingness to participate in its civic and cultural environment.



Rhythms of Life by Andrew Rogers.



Arts and Culture

Fine art is a defining feature of Yucca Valley's historic culture and physical character. The natural beauty of the high desert inspires emotion, and creativity, which in turn cultivates artistic exploration. Yucca Valley is one of several communities in the Morongo Basin contributing to the growing regional artists' colony that celebrates the area's history and environment.

The concentration of art studios, public installations, and well-known private artistic endeavors attracts visitors to Yucca Valley. Appreciation of the arts in the area has grown so much that since 2001, the Morongo Basin Cultural Arts Council, a non-profit organization that promotes local artists, writers, performers, and musicians, has hosted an annual tour of local artist studios, galleries, site-specific installations, and video and performance art exhibits. The first tour featured 24 artists; over 200 artists participated in 2011.



Works of art in various styles throughout the Town.



Sunburst by Simi Dabah greets visitors at the California Welcome Center.



Gecko by John Gleason adorns a wall of the Hi-Desert Nature Museum.

Yucca Valley is recognized for several noteworthy art installations, including the *Rhythms of Life* earthwork sculpture created by internationally renowned Australian artist Andrew Rogers (located just 5 miles north of Town Hall). Upon incorporation in 1991, the Town had three official public art pieces within its jurisdiction:

- *Sabre-Tooth Tiger* by Antoine Martin, displayed in Remembrance Park
- *Goddess of Flight* by Antoine Martin, displayed in the Community Center
- *Owls* by Howard Pierce, displayed in front of Hi-Desert Nature Museum

Incorporation provided the local arts community with an official avenue for pursuing a high-quality permanent art collection that could be enjoyed by all. In 2002 the Yucca Valley Town Council adopted its first Public Arts Policy to enrich the public environment, enhance awareness of art, and provide clear goals and guidelines for attracting and maintaining a public arts presence. The Art in Public Places program attracts works of art of a variety of styles and media, exposing the public to a breadth of exceptional talent. Since the adoption of the Art in Public Places program, over 10 works of art have been donated to the Town.

Preserving this artistic heritage and fostering greater appreciation of the arts are important issues for a community to consider as it evolves.

Community Events

Residents and visitors alike enjoy numerous community celebrations throughout the year. Many of the most popular events are held with support from the Town and in cooperation with other agencies and groups in the Morongo Basin. The festivities appeal to a diverse range of interests and age groups, bringing residents together to share their pride in the community.

Perhaps the most highly anticipated community event of the year in Yucca Valley is Grubstake Days, a weekend celebration dating back to 1951, forty years prior to incorporation. The first Grubstake Days was organized by the chamber of commerce to welcome the California Mining Council members who were in Yucca Valley for an annual meeting. Grubstake Days celebrates the history of the Morongo Basin with a parade, arts and crafts, races, and friendly competitions like a beard growing contest and horseshoe tournament.

The Town hosts several events for artistic expression. The Summer Music Festival is an outdoor concert series that entertains over 10,000 people. Attendees enjoy a variety of music genres in the comfort of cool summer nights. The annual Yucca Valley Gourd Art Festival showcases decorative and practical art applications to gourd enthusiasts.

The Hi-Desert Nature Museum is a key facility for community events. In addition to exhibits about the natural sciences and local history and weekly programs exploring traditions from world cultures, the Hi-Desert Nature Museum hosts the following annual events:

- Earth Day Conservation Fair
- Family Fun Days in February
- Halloween Spooktacular in October
- Starry Nights Festival in October

The Starry Nights Festival celebrates the natural wonders that can be viewed in the clear, dark skies above Yucca Valley. This all-day event features educational programs from local experts in the Andromeda Society and noted astronomers who interact with enthusiasts of all ages and levels of expertise. One of the highlights of the event is stargazing with the Southern California Desert Video Astronomers, who project awe-inspiring images from their telescopes onto large screens.

Numerous community events are held each year, including the Healthy Hearts 5K, Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce Golf Tournament, Full Moon Run, Grubstake Run, and the American Cancer Society Relay for Life Morongo Basin. Residents of Yucca Valley always have a special event to look forward to.



Yucca Valley residents share ideas through community organizations and events.



Clockwise from top left: Starry Nights Festival attendee; a community fair; Santa getting a ride from the Fire Department; Relay for Life Morongo Basin participants.

Civil Society Organizations

Civil society refers to the entire network of social relationships, associations, and institutions in which individuals or groups can volunteer to participate. Civil society organizations include clubs, charities, cooperatives, social movements, neighborhood groups, and faith-based organizations that contribute to supporting the community at large. Yucca Valley is a tight-knit community in which formal and informal networks of volunteers collaborate for the greater good of their neighbors in Town and throughout the Morongo Basin.

Based on information provided by GuideStar, a database of nonprofit organizations, there are approximately 142 nonprofits registered in Yucca Valley (2010). This breaks down to an estimated 7 nonprofits per 1,000 residents, which is a relatively high ratio in comparison to other communities in San Bernardino County and north Coachella Valley. Civic pride is alive and well in Yucca Valley.

A highly engaged group representing the Town's population of children and young adults is the Yucca Valley Youth Commission, an active advisory group of 10-20 middle and high-school students appointed annually by the Town Council. Youth Commissioners research special concerns and issues and provide input to the Town Council and other decision-making bodies. This influential group of volunteers played a key role in the creation of a teen center at the Boys & Girls Club, is currently exploring public-health-related projects, and will weigh in on issues that should be addressed in the General Plan.

On the other end of the spectrum are groups for senior residents. Morongo Basin Adult Health Services is a nonprofit organization in Yucca Valley that provides a breadth of wellness, social, and educational programs at the Morongo Basin Senior Support Center. Numerous other organizations also play key roles in maintaining independence and quality of life for seniors in the area, including Reach Out Morongo Basin, which matches volunteers with seniors in need of transportation, home maintenance, and visitation.



Several national service clubs are represented in Yucca Valley.

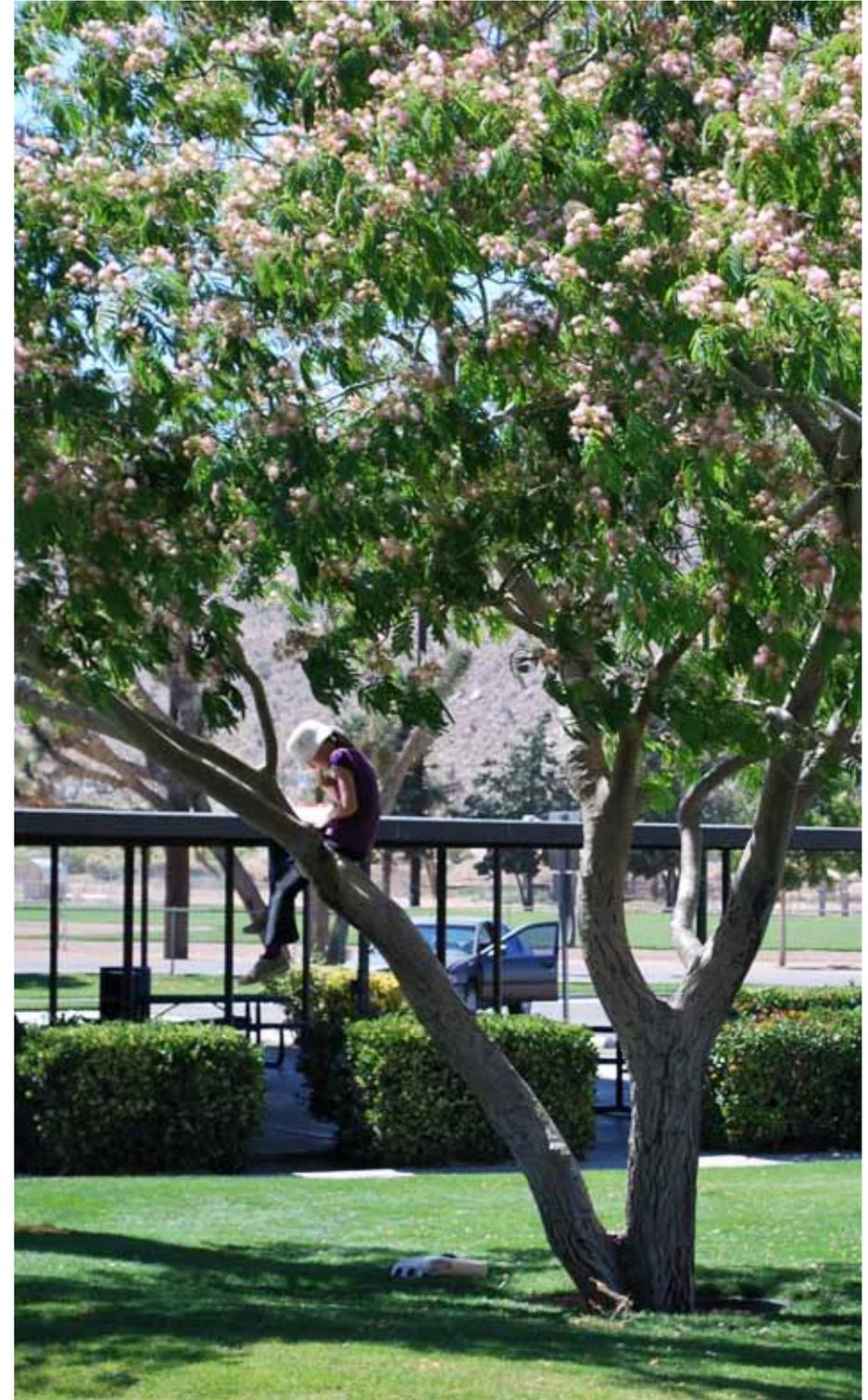
Voting

There are 9,208 registered voters in the Town of Yucca Valley: 4,281 Republican (46.5 percent), 2,630 Democrat (28.6 percent), 1,759 non-partisan (19.1 percent), and the balance are American Independent (4.6 percent), Libertarian (0.6 percent), Green (0.5 percent), and Peace and Freedom (0.2 percent). In the 2010 General Election, 66 percent of registered voters in Yucca Valley cast ballots, 11 percent higher than the voting rate for the County of San Bernardino.

Library

Access to free educational materials is critical for encouraging lifelong learning for all segments of society. The Yucca Valley Branch Library, operated by the County of San Bernardino, has over 43,000 items in its collection (2011). Library card holders have access to the county's entire collection of over 1,130,900 items including books, periodicals, governmental publications, videos and DVDs, CDs, maps, audiobooks, and e-books. Members can download audiobooks and e-books and reserve traditional reading materials through the system's website.

The library is a dynamic education and recreation resource, offering study areas, Internet terminals, cultural performances, early childhood education programs, children's storytelling events, summer reading programs, adult book groups, computer and Internet training, and job search assistance. The library receives support from Friends of the Yucca Valley Library, a nonprofit organization of volunteers who raise money to sponsor special events and programs, and purchase literary materials and technical equipment.



A young resident reading outdoors.



A Veterans' Day tribute.

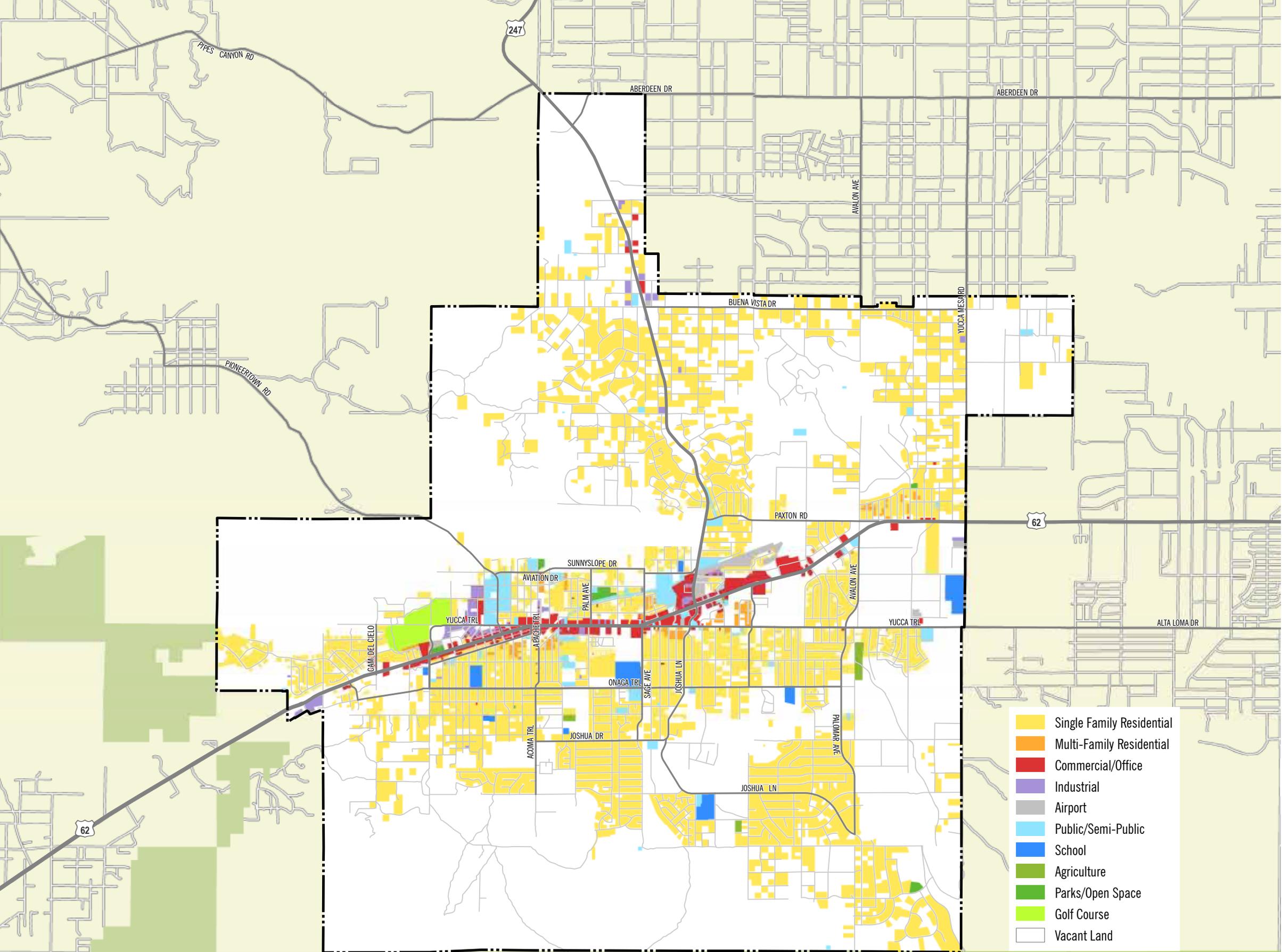


Relationship with Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center

Yucca Valley is approximately 15 miles southwest of the 596,000-acre Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (29 Palms Marine base), the largest military training area in the world. Marines, sailors, other service members, and international troops receive special training including relevant live-fire combined arms training, urban operations, and joint coalition integration to promote the readiness of operational forces. 29 Palms Marine base provides facilities and support that responds to the needs of resident organizations, Marines, sailors, and their families.

In addition to its important role in protecting national security, the military has particular significance to people in the Town of Yucca Valley. In 2011, at least 680 Yucca Valley residents, military and civilian, are employed at the base. Many more residents may also have a direct connection since this estimate does not include contractors or reflect the number of military family members and veterans in the Town. About 11 percent of Yucca Valley residents are veterans; they and their families may seek benefits assistance at the San Bernardino County Department of Veterans Affairs on the base.

The connection between the Town of Yucca Valley and the base thus extends beyond physical proximity. The presence of veterans, active military personnel, civilian and contract employees, and military families in town creates strong personal connections. The symbiotic relationship between the Town and base is demonstrated by the highly attended performance of the Marine Corps Combat Center Band at the annual Music Festival and the Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce's program that welcomes the spouses of military officers to the area. The base has a significant influence on job opportunities, attracting residents, and it generates a strong sense of patriotism and support for military service members within the town.



THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The built environment provides the setting for daily activities in Yucca Valley. It consists of the homes, places of employment, community facilities, and the connections between these destinations. The buildings and infrastructure that constitute the built environment are the physical support system for community life, creating a place where people will want to spend their time for years to come.

Existing Land Use

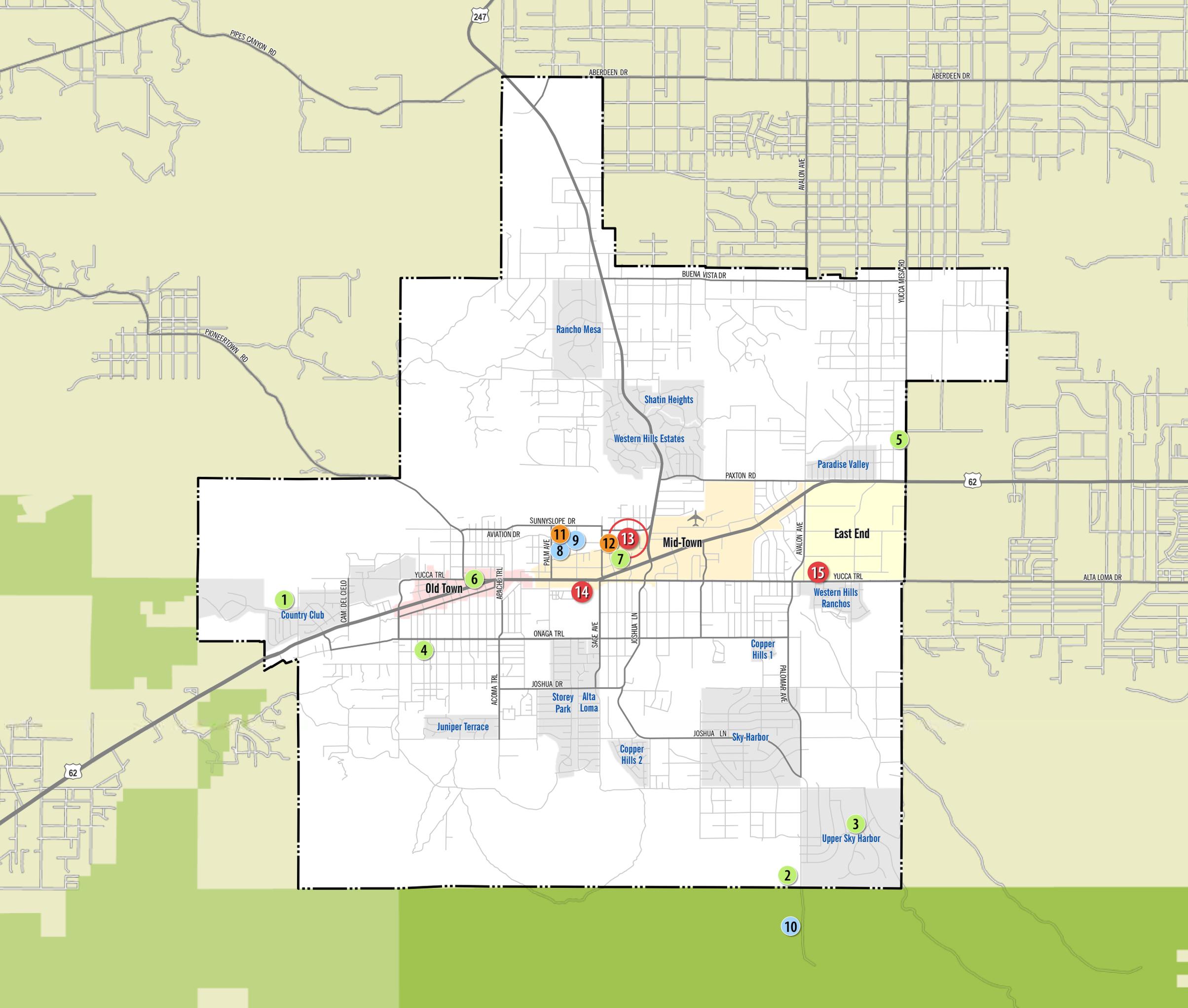
The Town of Yucca Valley encompasses about 25,600 acres. Single-family residential is the most prevalent development type in the community with 22 percent of the land area, followed by commercial/office uses and public/semi-public facilities at about 1 percent each. Multi-family residential, schools, industrial, golf course, airport, agriculture, and open space each occupy less than 1 percent of the Town’s land area. The majority of land in Yucca Valley is categorized as vacant, meaning that almost 68 percent of the land (about 17,210 acres) has never been developed. These vacant parcels are located throughout the community, predominantly located in hillside areas and the edges of the Town.

The General Plan land use process will allow the community to identify focus areas where change should occur, select areas and uses that should be preserved, and recommend potential uses for key vacant and underutilized land resources. Underutilized sites are underdeveloped parcels or deteriorating structures that could be revitalized and reused to meet future community goals. Land use planning does not imply that all land within the Town must be developed; rather, it is an opportunity to create a long-range guide toward achieving the community’s vision for its future.

Table 2-3: Existing Land Use Distribution

Land Use	Percent
Single-Family Residential	22.3
Multi-Family Residential	0.4
Commercial/Office	1.2
Industrial	0.4
Schools	0.5
Public/Semi-Public	1.1
Parks/Open Space	0.1
Golf Course	0.4
Agriculture	0.1
Airport	0.3
Right-of-Way	5.7
Vacant Land	67.5
Total	100.0

Source: The Planning Center|DC&E, 2011.



247

PIPES CANYON RD

ABERDEEN DR

ABERDEEN DR

AVILON AVE

BUENA VISTA DR

YUCCA MESERO

PIONEERTOWN RD

Rancho Mesa

Shatin Heights

Western Hills Estates

Paradise Valley

5

PAXTON RD

62

SUNNYSLOPE DR

Mid-Town

East End

1 Country Club

6 Old Town

6

AVIATION DR

11

9

8

12

13

7

14

15

15 Western Hills Ranchos

4

ONAGA TRL

ACOMA TRL

Storey Park Alta Loma

Copper Hills 1

Juniper Terrace

JOSHUA DR

Copper Hills 2

JOSHUA LN Sky-Harbor

PALOMAR AVE

3 Upper Sky Harbor

3

62

2

10

Town Parks

- 1 North Park
- 2 South Park
- 3 Machris Park
- 4 Jacobs park
- 5 Paradise Park
- 6 Remembrance Park
- 7 Community Center Park

Other Parks

- 8 Brehm Youth Park
- 9 Pop Rauch Park
- 10 Black Rock Canyon Campground and Joshua Tree National Park
- 11 Boys and Girls Club
- 12 High Desert BMX

Town Facilities

- 13 Town Hall Complex
 - Town Hall
 - Community Center
 - Museum
 - Library
 - Senior Center
- 14 California Welcome Center
- 15 Community Development/ Public Works

Community Structure

The town's identity is shaped by design features and visual cues that make it a distinctive community, unlike any other in the Inland Empire. Design features also include the town's corridors and streetscape settings. These attributes, when combined, comprise the Town's community structure.

Corridors

SR-62 serves as the primary community "lifeline" and spans the entire width of the town's boundaries. SR-62 is not only the primary vehicular access through the town and the gateway to Joshua Tree, it is also a "window" into the community, establishing many visitors' impressions of the town. The majority of the town's non-residential uses are located here, creating a synergy and supporting the Town's role as the economic hub of the Morongo Basin.

The convergence of SR-62 with SR-247 creates a significant street intersection and reinforces the Mid Town area as a focal point of the community—the heart of Yucca Valley from a geographical and figurative standpoint.

Yucca Valley's corridors are a vital component of the town's economic stability, and therefore, great care should be taken to ensure the streetscapes, signage, and other architectural details support the quality image that the community desires to convey. These corridors constitute a significant opportunity for the community to further enhance its image and maintain a strong economic presence in the basin.

Special Districts and Neighborhoods

Old Town

Envisioned as a pedestrian-friendly, dense, mixed-use development, the Old Town Yucca Valley Specific Plan currently consists of residential, commercial, industrial, and civic uses. Commercial land uses, which include retail, medical, restaurants, offices, and hotels, are primarily located along SR-62; residential and service commercial uses bound on the north and south, and vacant land is located throughout. The northwest corner of the area contains mostly industrial uses of varying degrees, including automobile repair shops and warehouses.

Mid-Town

The Mid Town area is located at the intersection of two state highways (SR-62 and SR-247). It is the civic and cultural heart of the community, largely due to the proximity to three of the largest event generators in Town—Yucca Valley High School, Little League and Brehm Park, and Community Center—and the synergistic environment that they create. The Yucca Valley Redevelopment Agency (RDA) owns the southwest corner of the SR-62 and SR-247 intersection and is also proposing development of a 75-unit senior housing project at the corner of Dumosa/SR-62.

East Side

The East Side provides an opportunity for the Town to provide new commercial development in the community, like Home Depot. This area of Town serves as the eastern gateway from Joshua Tree, Twentynine Palms, and the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (Combat Center) and serves as a transition from an urban environment to the more natural desert character in adjacent areas. It will be important to carefully balance the economic opportunities that can be accommodated in this area with the conservation of the desert character that the community desires.

Neighborhoods

Yucca Valley features a wide array of homes sure to suit any family's housing needs, including custom-built homes, desert hideaway cabins, and recently approved senior apartments near Town Hall. Large lots are a community asset that allow some of our residents to pursue equestrian interests. Yucca Valley's neighborhoods include rural horse properties, large lots, homes that are located in close proximity to shopping and restaurant venues and executive homes overlooking the town. Many of them also have picturesque panoramic views generated by the town's many hillsides and attractive vegetation that can only be found in more established neighborhoods.

Following is a listing of some of the Town's most recognizable neighborhoods:

- Rancho Mesa
- Sky Harbor
- Western Hills Ranchos
- Alta Loma
- Storey Park
- Juniper Terrace
- Country Club Area
- Western Hills Estates
- Paradise Valley

An excerpt from the Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce website captures the essence of Yucca Valley living:

We offer all the amenities of life without the complications. Our residents enjoy large retail outlets right alongside small "mom & pop" establishments. We do not experience "gridlock" and a trip through town will take not more than 10 minutes. We are close to ski and mountain resorts, the beaches, the Colorado River, numerous major attractions and even a couple of major cities. Close, but not too close. Yucca Valley is big enough to support our residents' needs but small enough to maintain the friendly hometown atmosphere. And most of us would not even consider living anywhere else.



A scenic view of Yucca Valley.

Source: Luke Jones

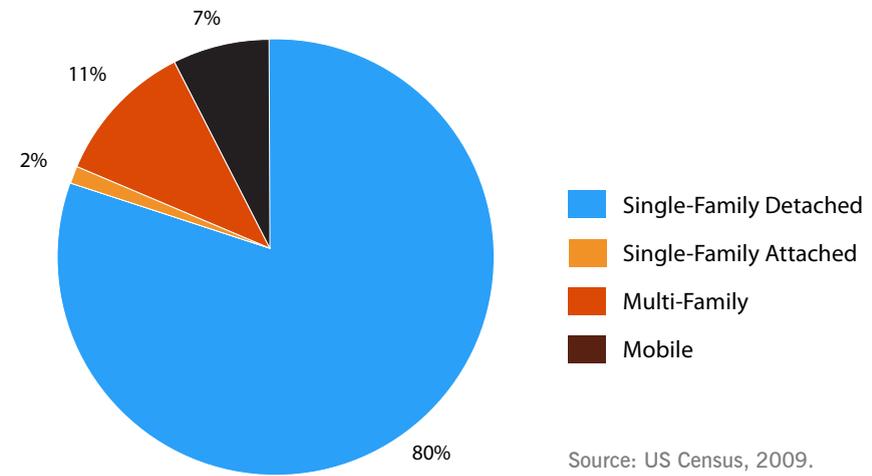
Housing

Housing characteristics such as product type, tenure, vacancy rates, and affordability affect the housing choices of current Yucca Valley residents, thereby affecting personal finances, space, and opportunities to gain equity. As homes generally do not redevelop until over 100 years of age, the housing decisions made today will greatly impact future generations.

Product Types

Different housing types support various lifestyles and reflect local preferences. Historically, residential neighborhoods in the Town of Yucca Valley and the region have primarily consisted of single-family detached homes. This development pattern continues today, fueled by several factors including financial incentives for homeownership, desire for privacy and private open space, and the relative affordability of land in inland communities. With the relatively large single family lots that have been developed over the years, Yucca Valley exhibits a lower housing unit per acre development pattern than many southern California communities; 80 percent of Yucca Valley's 9,619 homes are single-family detached units. Single-family detached homes provide ownership opportunities for those seeking the space and amenities associated with that product type. However, this type of housing is generally the most expensive to purchase and maintain. Single-family attached homes, typically in the form of condominiums, comprise 2 percent of the local housing stock, multi-family apartments comprise 11 percent, and mobile homes comprise 7 percent. Mobile homes and modular homes are generally more affordable alternatives to traditional single-family homes. Allowing a range of housing options is important to meeting the needs of a variety of incomes and life stages.

Figure 2-7 Housing Types for Yucca Valley



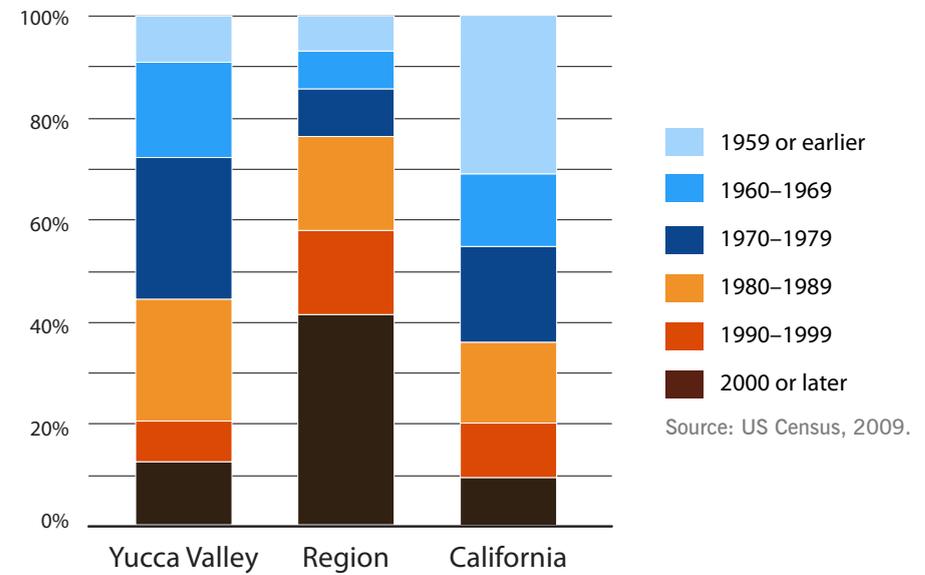
Multifamily housing in the Mid Town Area.

Age of Existing Housing Stock

Maintaining the existing housing stock is critical for preserving neighborhood stability, quality, and value. Housing conditions can also impact public health and safety, whether real or perceived. Homes typically require significant maintenance investments after 30 years, and those over 50 years may require substantial modernization to meet current building and safety standards. Prior to incorporation, Yucca Valley was primarily a residential oasis from bustling Los Angeles, and this long history is represented in the housing stock. Fifty-six percent of all homes in Yucca Valley are at least 30 years old, 19 percent over 40 years old and 9 percent over 50. The remainder of the homes in this range, 28 percent, are between 30 and 39 years old.

The age profile of the housing stock throughout other communities in the Morongo Basin is similar to that of the Town. In comparison to the region, the Town's housing stock is significantly older. This may be attributed to the housing boom in the 2000's, which resulted in a rapid increase in new homes constructed in Inland Empire communities close to employment centers in Los Angeles and Orange counties as well as new homes constructed in the Coachella Valley. Preserving the functionality and aesthetics of homes and neighborhoods is an ongoing community goal.

Figure 2-8: Housing by Year Built



A single-family detached neighborhood featuring xeriscaping.



A residential neighborhood after a snowstorm.
Source: Luke Jones

Residential Vacancy

The housing vacancy rate reflects how the supply of available housing meets the demand for different types of housing. Residential vacancy is needed in order to provide opportunities for movement within the community and in-migration, but a high vacancy rate can indicate a mismatch between jobs and housing opportunities or other changes leading to a decline in residency. Housing policy analyses usually consider vacancy rates of 3 to 4 percent reasonable; however, select destination communities often have higher vacancy rates due to vacation rentals. Yucca Valley is not a major seasonal destination, but its warm climate and access to the outdoors attracts seasonal residents and second home owners. Yucca Valley's vacancy rate in 2000 and 2010 was nearly three times the standard vacancy rate, an indication of seasonal housing vacancies as well as the impacts from foreclosures in recent years.

Affordability

The affordability of housing is a critical factor in determining who can reside in the community and the overall quality of neighborhoods and housing over time. Housing overpayment occurs when renters and homeowners pay more than 30 percent of their gross income for housing. Housing costs for homeowners include mortgage payments, utilities, insurance, property taxes, and home association fees. Housing costs for renters typically include rent and utilities.

The median single-family home sales price in the Town of Yucca Valley is \$92,250 (2011). Multi-family housing is a less expensive alternative to homeownership, with a median gross rent of \$776 per month. Approximately 57 percent of Yucca Valley owner households and 48 percent of renter households have affordable housing, while the remaining 43 percent of owners and 52 percent of renters overextend their budgets for housing. These rates of overpayment by tenure are consistent with the region. Overpaying for housing takes away from resources available for home maintenance, health care, transportation, and education, among other important expenditures.

Relatively affordable alternatives to traditional single-family detached homes are condominiums, second units, manufactured homes, and mobile homes. Rental housing, like multi-family apartments, typically offers affordable housing choices and little or no exterior maintenance. Affordable housing opportunities are critical resources for supporting seniors, disabled persons, independent young adults, single parents, and growing families, all of whom often live on limited incomes.



Desert cabins are often seasonally occupied vacation homes.

Commercial Development

Commercial development plays an important role in providing services to meet daily needs, creating jobs, and generating taxes that support public services.

The bulk of non-residential development in Yucca Valley is along Highway 62, a major east-west thoroughfare connecting the Morongo Basin to the San Bernardino Valley, Coachella Valley, and Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (Combat Center). Much of the non-residential development in Yucca Valley is local serving, such as medical and professional offices. The Town is also home to numerous antique, art, and other specialty shops that cater to local and visiting collectors and artists.

In recent years, retail development in Yucca Valley has evolved to attract patrons from across the region. With an estimated 1.4 million annual visitors to the Joshua Tree National Park and 800,000 to the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area, the town is a major gateway for tourists. Several national retailers have responded to this demand, transforming Yucca Valley into the economic hub of the Morongo Basin. An estimated 50 percent of



A new medical office.

Yucca Valley's sales tax revenue is generated by non-residents, including millions of tourists as well as the military-related traffic created by year-round activities at 29 Palms Marine base.

In spite of the devastating effects of the national recession, Yucca Valley continues to attract new retail development. In 2011, the Town welcomed Sonic, Rite Aid, Verizon Wireless, and GameStop and is processing applications for a Super Walmart and several shopping centers. As retail development continues to succeed in Yucca Valley, the community will need to plan adequate infrastructure for the growing non-residential market as well as additional housing options.



National retail chains perform well in Yucca Valley.

Mobility

Pedestrian and Bicycle

Yucca Valley has limited bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and connectivity. For example, some sidewalks do not connect and most streets lack any sidewalks or curbs. These limitations are attributed to the low density development patterns that existed prior to and since incorporation. In response to these existing conditions, the Town has been developing a number of pedestrian safety programs along SR-62 to better serve the pedestrian community. There is a growing interest in identifying walking routes where sidewalks can be developed to improve pedestrian safety and areas for streetscapes to maintain desert character.

Yucca Valley is currently working toward expanding its bike and trail system. In 2005, Yucca Valley adopted a Trails Master Plan. This plan is part of the Town's Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan's objectives include creating trails that are used not only for transit purposes, but for recreation and fitness. It also aims to improve connectivity to local sites and the regional trails system.

For example, the proposed Yucca Wash Trail, which is part of the Old Town Specific Plan, connects with the local street network and also to the California Riding and Hiking Trail System. Full implementation of the Trails Master Plan would result in Yucca Valley having a 6.25-mile multi-trail system for bicyclists and pedestrians, including over 33 miles of Class 1 bike lanes.



Residents share their thoughts on parks and trails at a public workshop.



Pedestrians and vehicles share the road in many parts of Town.



IDEAL MALL

56669

PROFESSIONAL
CENTER

LOOK IN THE EYE
HEARING AIDS
TO VALLEY HEALTH

HEARING AID
HealthCare
Services

HI-DESERT
ORAL & MAXILLOFACIAL
SURGERY CENTER
365-0650

DENTAL IMPLANTS

FOR SALE OR LEASE
This
60 ACRE SITE
365-1766 | 365-1100

DISCOVER
The Valley

SANTANA'S
MEXICAN FOOD

Star

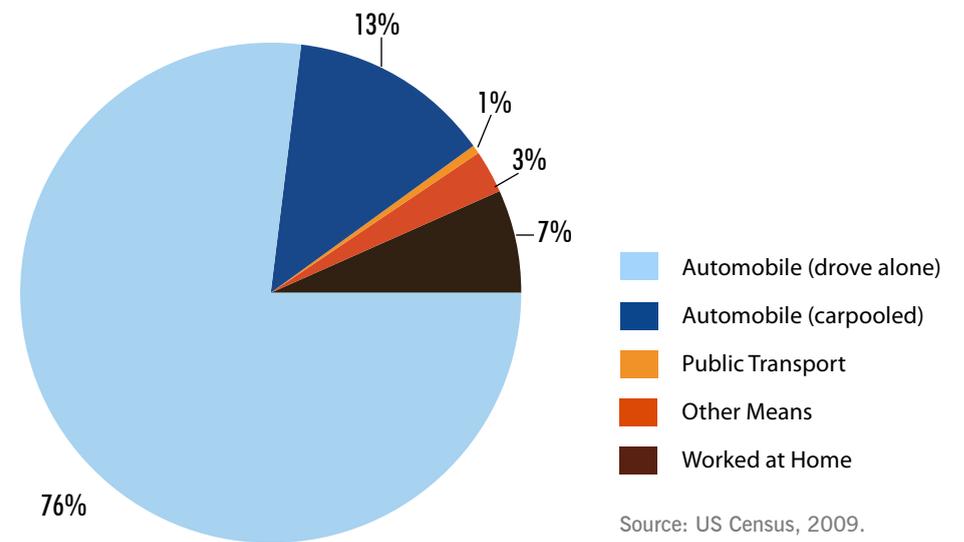
Looking west along SR-62.



Means of Transportation

Eighty nine percent of working residents in Yucca Valley commute to work via automobile (compared with 88 percent statewide); of these 13 percent travel in a carpool with two or more people. Walking, bicycling, public transit, and other modes account for 3 percent of the total work trips for Yucca Valley residents (compared with 9 percent statewide), and the remaining 7 percent work from home.

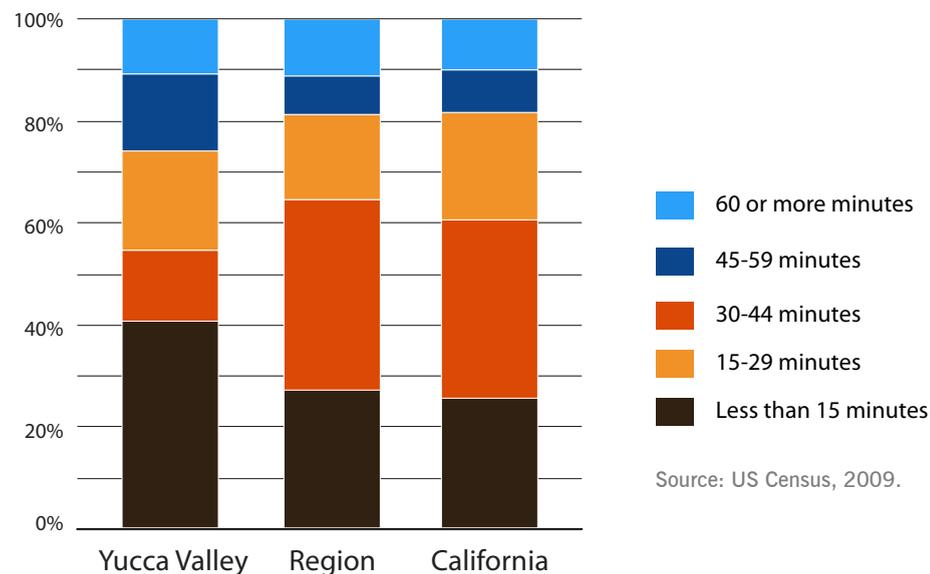
Figure 2-9: Means of Travel to Work for Yucca Valley Residents



Commute Times and Patterns

Travel time to work affects quality of life; long commutes detract from the time one can spend with family and friends and can be an unproductive time, especially for those driving alone. In 2009, 43 percent of Yucca Valley residents not working from home commuted less than 15 minutes to work. Only 27 percent of working residents in the comparison region of Indio, Desert Hot Springs, and Victorville traveled less than 15 minutes to work. Only 25 percent of Californians working outside the home commuted less than 15 minutes. However, twice as many Yucca Valley residents commuted between 45 and 59 minutes to work than residents in the comparison region (16 percent and 8 percent, respectively). The average commute time for Yucca Valley residents and residents in the region is similar, approximately 28 minutes.

Figure 2-10: Commute Times and Patterns



Public Transit

The Morongo Basin Transit Authority (MBTA) provides public transportation to Yucca Valley as well as the communities of Joshua Tree, Twentynine Palms, the Combat Center, Palm Springs, and the Palm Springs International Airport. Annual ridership is approximately 143,000 passengers. It operates a fleet of 24 buses which run on compressed natural gas. Eight bus routes run within and between these cities and connect with SunLine Transit Agency in the Coachella Valley and with the Greyhound bus station in Palm Springs. The MBTA recently completed the Yucca Valley Transit Center, an intermodal transit center where passengers can transfer between bus routes. The transfer station provides connectivity to the Park N Ride facility with 137 lighted parking spaces where commuters can safely leave their cars and join a carpool, as well as a link to SunLine Transit Agency in the Coachella Valley.

The MBTA also provides Ready Ride, a door-to-door service available for senior and disabled passengers with advance reservations. Senior and disabled passengers can also receive free transportation for non-emergency medical appointments from Reach Out Morongo Basin, an interfaith volunteer program based out of the Yucca Valley Senior Center.

Table 2-4: Morongo Basin Transit Authority Bus Routes

Routes	
Route 1	Yucca Valley–Twentynine Palms
Route 3A	Marine Base–Twentynine Palms
Route 3B	Twentynine Palms Neighborhood
Route 7A	North Yucca Valley
Route 7B	South Yucca Valley
Route 12	Palm Springs–Twentynine Palms
Route 15	Palm Springs–Yucca Valley
Route 21	Landers–Yucca Valley

Source: Morongo Valley Basin Transit Authority.

State Highways

While Yucca Valley’s relatively isolated high desert location helps it maintain a friendly hometown atmosphere, the fact that it stands at the crossroads of two corridors gives residents direct access to major cities, beaches, ski resorts, and tourist destinations. SR-62 is the primary east–west thoroughfare for Yucca Valley, and SR-247 is the primary north–south thoroughfare. The two highways meet in the central part of town and serve as primary corridors for Yucca Valley residents and visitors. The majority of travelers going to 29 Palms Marine base or Joshua Tree utilize these roads, making Yucca Valley a hub of activity for the Morongo Basin.

SR-62 is 152 miles long. It begins 17 miles west of Yucca Valley and connects the town with Morongo Valley, Joshua Tree, and Twentynine Palms. Its eastern terminus is in Earp at the Arizona state line. Its western terminus connects with I-10 which gives Yucca Valley residents direct highway access to Palm Springs in 30 minutes, Los Angeles in 2 hours, and San Diego in 2 ½ hours.



Passengers transfer buses at the newly constructed Yucca Valley Transit Center.

SR-247 is a 78-mile route entirely within San Bernardino County. Its southern terminus begins at SR-62 in Yucca Valley. The portion of the highway that runs from Yucca Valley to Lucerne Valley is known as Old Woman Springs Road. From Lucerne Valley, SR-247 travels north to Barstow, connecting with I-15. Las Vegas is less than a 4-hour drive from Yucca Valley.



A commemorative plaque marks part of SR-62 as a Blue Star Memorial Highway in Yucca Valley.



A plane takes off from Yucca Valley Airport.

Airport Access

Yucca Valley Airport is a public use general aviation airport covering 35 acres in the Town of Yucca Valley. General aviation refers to aviation activity other than military flights, scheduled local airline flights, and cargo flights; it typically refers to flights by small private aircraft. The airport is leased and operated by the Yucca Valley Airport District. It is unique in that homes with attached and unattached hangars are located on the property for the convenience of residents with privately owned aircraft. As of 2010, 50 single-engine, 2 multi-engine, and 2 ultra-light aircraft were based at the airport. The airport has one runway, and expansion of the airport is limited due to the surrounding terrain and development.

For passenger flight service throughout the United States and international flights, Town residents must travel to Palm Springs International Airport, 22 miles south of Yucca Valley. Thirteen commercial airlines operate out of Palm Springs International Airport. The airport maintains seasonal operations and many airlines do not operate there during part of the summer.

The desert's cloudless skies and vast open spaces make flying small aircraft popular for recreation and travel in the geographical region. In addition to Yucca Valley Airport, there are several general aviation airports within 30 miles of Yucca Valley.

- Hi-Desert Airport, 9 miles
- Johnson Valley Airfield, 16 miles
- Bermuda Dunes Airport, 28 miles
- Big Bear City Airport, 27 miles
- Twentynine Palms Airport, 26 miles
- Banning Municipal Airport, 30 miles

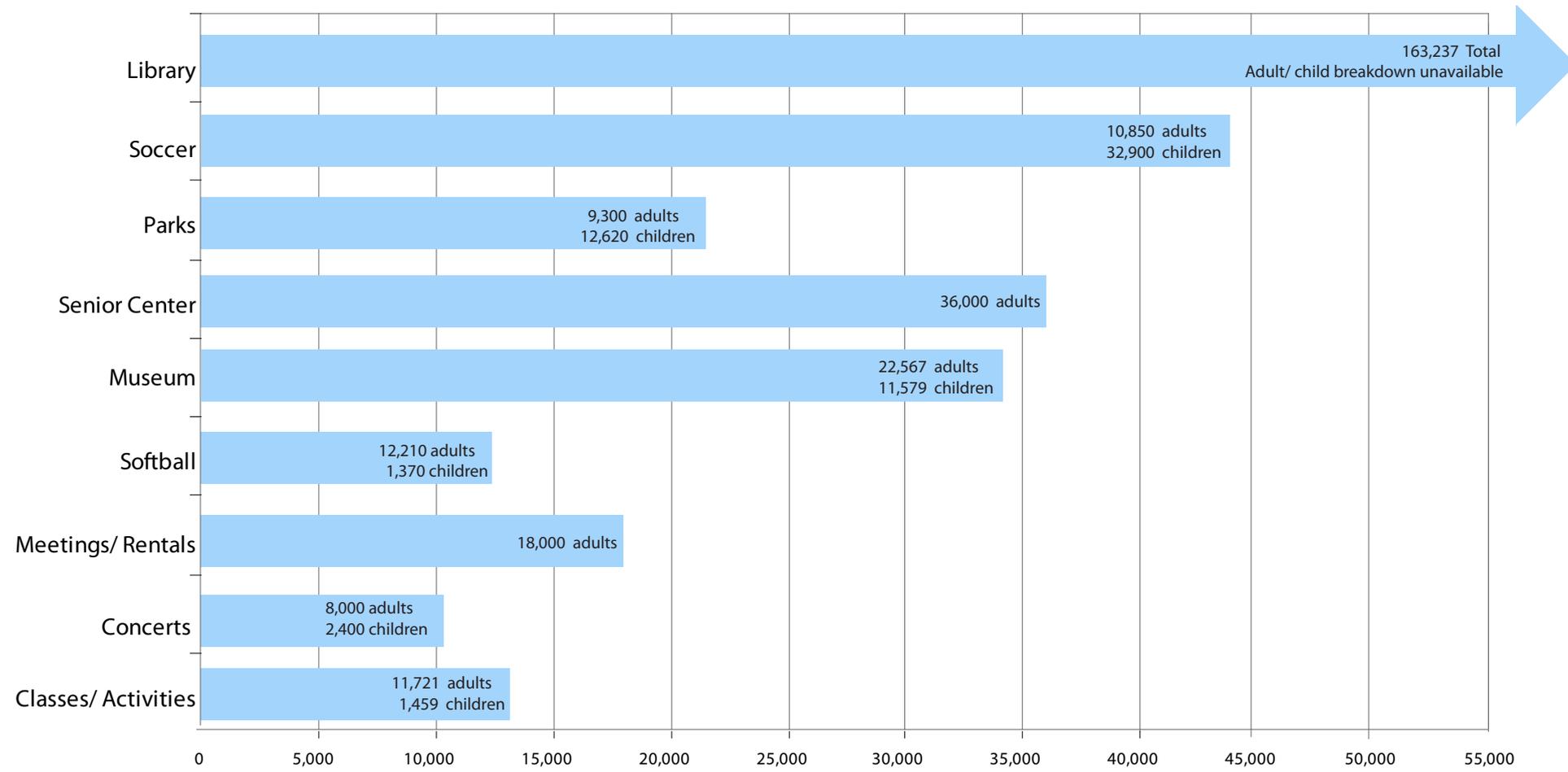
Community Facilities

Community Center Complex

The dynamic Yucca Valley Community Center complex is near the intersection of Yucca Valley's two major thoroughfares; SR-62 and Old Woman Springs Road (SR-247). The Community Center includes Town Hall, Community Center Park, Yucca Valley Senior Center, Yucca Valley Branch Library, and the Hi-Desert Nature Museum. Locating community facilities on one complex promotes collaboration between facilities. The proximity of these facilities also creates a dynamic environment where Yucca Valley residents can gather for community events and celebrations.

As shown in Figure 2-11, the Community Center facilities are highly frequented. The total attendance for the Community Center Complex facilities, Town Hall, and public parks exceeded 355,000 visitors in a one-year period.

Figure 2-11: Number of Visitors to Yucca Valley Facilities and Events, June 2010 to May 2011



Source: Town of Yucca Valley, 2011.



Community Center Rose Garden.

Yucca Valley Cultural Facilities

Yucca Valley residents have access to several cultural facilities in Town and in the surrounding communities. Founded in 1964, the Hi-Desert Nature Museum predates incorporation of the Town of Yucca Valley by 35 years. In 1991, it became a division of the Town's Community Services Department. The 5,300 square-foot museum is in the Community Center Complex. The museum includes interactive, educational exhibits for visitors of all ages, including a mini-zoo, Native American artifacts, fossils, and a gem and mineral collection. It offers free educational community events throughout the year and features six rotating exhibits. The museum serves not only Yucca Valley, but the surrounding region as well. In 2010, it attracted over 34,000 visitors. The museum was selected as the #1 Cultural Attraction in the Morongo Basin by the Readers' Choice Awards from Hi-Desert Publishing.

One of only 20 official California Welcome Centers is in Yucca Valley on SR-62. The Yucca Valley California Welcome Center was established in 2002 and serves the entire Southern California desert region, including the Morongo Basin and the Coachella Valley. The Desert Regional Tourism Agency and Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce operate out of the Welcome Center. These organizations are ambassadors for the character and culture of Yucca Valley and other Morongo Basin communities. Visitors can obtain information on local activities, cultural facilities, events, restaurants, and other businesses that reflect the unique qualities of the area.



Visitors receive information on local sites of interest and activities at the California Welcome Center.



Children enjoying the mini-zoo exhibit at the Museum.

Regional Cultural Facilities

An array of cultural facilities in the surrounding region are within quick and easy access for Yucca Valley residents. Adjacent to Yucca Valley is historic Pioneertown, which was built in 1946 as a frontier town movie set, with homes for actors. Dozens of Hollywood westerns were filmed there. Pappy & Harriet's Pioneertown Palace is a local musical venue that draws crowds from across the nation. Nearby Twentynine Palms is home to "Oasis of Murals", a project that has gained international recognition for spawning dozens of public murals. The Integratron is a dome-shaped structure designed to create unique acoustics. Joshua Tree National Park includes over 500 archaeological sites, 88 historic structures, and 19 cultural landscapes and houses a museum collection documenting the cultural and natural resources of the park. The award-winning Hi-Desert Cultural Center in Joshua Tree includes the Black Box Theater and Kaye Ballard Playhouse, which offer a broad spectrum of events ranging from classic Broadway plays and musicals to original local productions.



Actors entertain on Mane Street in Pioneertown.

Joshua Tree

- Joshua Tree National Park
- Joshua Tree & Southern Railroad Museum
- Hi-Desert Cultural Center
- Mentalphysics (Joshua Tree Retreat Center)
- Noah Purifoy Museum

Landers/Homestead Valley

- The Integratron
- Gubler Orchids
- Morongo Basin Historical Society
- Giant Rock

Pioneertown

- Pappy & Harriet's Pioneertown Palace

Palm Springs Area

- Palm Springs Art Museum
- Living Desert

Twentynine Palms

- Joshua Tree National Park Oasis Visitor Center
- Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center
- Roadrunner Dunes Golf Course
- Oasis of Murals
- Theater 29
- Old School House Museum
- Sky's the Limit Observatory and Nature Center
- Beauty Bubble Salon and Museum

Morong Valley

- Big Morongo Canyon Preserve
- Fellow Earthlings' Space Wildlife Center
- Groves Cabin Theater
- SummerTree Institute



The Integratron in Landers.

Public Education Facilities

Morongo Unified School District (MUSD) currently serves over 9,700 students in grades K–12 from Yucca Valley, as well as Morongo Valley, Joshua Tree, and Twentynine Palms. The District currently operates 11 elementary schools, 2 middle schools, 2 high schools, 2 continuation high schools, 2 state preschool programs, and a special education preschool program.

Yucca Valley’s public schools include 1 preschool, 2 elementary schools, 1 middle school, 1 high school, and 1 continuation school.

- Yucca Valley Preschool
- Onaga Elementary
- Yucca Valley High School
- Yucca Valley Elementary School
- La Contenta Middle School
- Sky Continuation High School

Yucca Valley’s two elementary schools served a combined total of 1,381 students in the 2009–10 school year. Yucca Valley Elementary School includes 24 classrooms on a 15-acre campus. Onaga Elementary has 42 classrooms and a 16.5-acre campus. Each elementary school is equipped with its own library and computer lab.

In 2009–10, 868 students in grades seven and eight were enrolled in La Contenta Middle School. It has 24 permanent classrooms, 20 portable classrooms, 2 computer labs, a library, a cafeteria, and a multipurpose room on a 29-acre campus.

In 2009–10, approximately 1,600 students in grades 9–12 were enrolled in Yucca Valley High School. The campus includes 63 permanent classrooms, 18 portable classrooms, 6 computer labs, 4 science labs, and a library, cafeteria, gym, swimming pool, and football field on 38 acres.

Sky High School is a continuation school that provides individualized education ultimately leading to a high school diploma. In 2009–10, 134 students in grades 10–12 were enrolled at Sky High.

Alternative Education Programs

Private, charter and home schooling are alternatives to the traditional education system in the area. MUSD runs an independent continuing education and home schooling program that provides supervision for both parent and child to ensure progress in the California standards-based curriculum. MUSD also oversees the only charter school in Yucca Valley. Hope Academy is a K–12 independent study charter school where students correspond with teachers by e-mail or phone and meet with them once a week.

There are eight private schools in Yucca Valley. Joshua Springs Christian School is the largest Christian school in the entire Morongo Basin. The coed school serves over 300 students. Its 42-acre campus features a preschool, elementary school, junior high, and high school.



Yucca Valley High School, home of the Trojans.

Parks and Recreational Open Space

The Town of Yucca Valley manages a combination of Town-owned parkland, leased parkland and land on patent from the U.S. Bureau of Land Management. Cumulatively, Yucca Valley’s neighborhood parks, managed open space, and undeveloped parkland totals 255 acres. Currently, Yucca Valley has approximately 2 acres of developed parkland per 1000 residents, substantially behind the National Recreation and Parks Association’s standard of 5 acres per 1000 residents. Due to the community’s demographics and corresponding demand for recreational facilities, the Town has prioritized the acquisition and development of additional parks.



Playground and tennis courts in Jacobs Park.

Table 2-5: Yucca Valley Public Parks, Acreage, and Amenities

Park Site	Developed Acreage	Undeveloped Acreage	Managed Open Space	Amenities
Community Center Park	19.9	2.3	0	Lighted softball field Lighted soccer field 2 lighted basketball courts Lighted volleyball court Playground 2 picnic shelters Horseshoe pits
Jacobs Park	5.0	0	0	2 basketball half-courts 4 lighted tennis courts Tee-ball field (un-turfed) Playground Picnic Shelter Community building
Machris Park	4.0	8.0	0	Lighted softball field Basketball court Playground Community building
Paradise Park	5.0	0	0	Basketball half court Tee-ball field (un-turfed) Playground Picnic shelter Community building
Sunnyslope Park	2.5	8.0	0	BMX Track
North Park	0	0	80.0	-
South Park	0	0	40.0	Developed Hiking Trail
Southside Park	0	80.0	0	-
Remembrance Park	0.2	0	0	Xeriscape Garden
Total	36.7	98.3	120.0	-

Source: Town of Yucca Valley, Parks and Recreation Master Plan, adopted 2008.



Catching air at the skate park.

Active Recreation Facilities

With a combined total of approximately 37 developed acres, Yucca Valley's parks provide facilities for a variety of recreational activities. Community programs include softball, baseball, soccer, football and tee-ball leagues, and facilities for pick-up sports activities such as basketball, volleyball, horseshoes, and tennis. Extreme sports enthusiasts enjoy the centrally located skate park and BMX track.

Yucca Valley residents also have access to 120 acres of natural open space that provides such opportunities as hiking, bird watching and enjoying panoramic views of the high desert and surrounding mountains.

The Town partners with the Boys and Girls Club to secure use of the Club's facilities for such activities as the youth basketball league and various sports clinics. The Town also participates in the maintenance and care of the Brehm Youth Sports Park's athletic field to ensure availability of additional turf areas for recreation.

"Pop" Rauch Park is owned and operated by Tri-Valley Little League. It is one of a very few Little League organizations in the country that own their facilities. The park includes fields for softball, baseball and tee-ball.

The Town shares its southern border with Joshua Tree National Park, a 794,000-acre treasure that offers world class hiking, climbing, camping, and equestrian activities, in addition to unmatched opportunities for photography, nature exploration and peaceful meditation. More than 1.4 million people visit the Park each year, including many Europeans that consider it a favorite destination. Black Rock Campground in Yucca Valley provides the equestrian entrance to the Park.

Passive Recreation Facilities

Remembrance Park is a quarter-acre landscape display located in the center of town on the main highway. The park has a pedestrian walkway with benches and a Veterans' Memorial by the flag pole. The park is home to the landmark Saber-Tooth Tiger sculpture.

Desert Christ Park is a 3.5-acre sculpture garden owned by a non-profit foundation. The site pays tribute to the work of artist Antoine Martin who created the 55 biblically-themed sculptures in the 1940's. The artwork, constructed of concrete reinforced with steel, was intended to share a non-denominational message of world peace. The figures weigh between 3 and 16 tons each. The park was owned and maintained by the Yucca Valley Parks and Recreation District until it became the center of a much-publicized Church/State debate in the late 1980's and early 1990's.



Ribbon cutting ceremony for Paradise Park.

Sites of Historic Interest

For more than 45 years, the Hi-Desert Nature Museum has collected, preserved, interpreted, and fostered stewardship of Morongo Basin's historical resources. The Museum maintains a collection of approximately 3,000 artifacts, many related to the Town's colorful history. Permanent exhibitions present information on local Native American history, mining, homesteading, and the development of the Town of Yucca Valley.

The area boasts two active historical societies; the Morongo Basin Historical Society in Landers and the Twentynine Palms Historical Society (Old Schoolhouse Museum in Twentynine Palms). These nonprofit organizations collect historic photographs and memorabilia, and promote historic points of interest. The Hi-Desert Nature Museum partners with the Morongo Basin Historical Society to present history programs, including the First Wednesday History Lectures. The Morongo Basin Historical Society's guide includes the Town's Hi-Desert Nature Museum, Desert Christ Park, a school house at Wamego and Yucca Trail, the Yucca Valley Elks Club, and Warren's Well.

Dug in the 1880's for cattle by Chuck Warren and his two sons, Warren's Well is a well-known site of historic interest in Yucca Valley. The Warren family developed the area with a water pump, reservoir and bunkhouse. The site later became the social center of Yucca Valley. Warren's Well is listed as a historic site by California.

Two other historic structures valued by Yucca Valley residents are the Van Heusen house and Water Canyon Coffee Company building. The Van Heusen house, former residence of famed musical composer and Rat Pack member Jimmy Van Heusen, draws visitors nostalgic for 1950s culture. He won four Academy awards, one Emmy award, and wrote 95 songs for Frank Sinatra, making him one of America's most accomplished songwriters. Several events and tours are hosted at the house throughout the year.

The corner building at the intersection of Pioneertown Road and SR-62 in Old Town is one of the oldest commercial buildings in Yucca Valley. It is known for its unusual rounded shape and the eclectic mix of businesses that have occupied it over the years. The building was constructed in 1946 by Fred Storey. It was rented out and operated as the Yucca Valley Drug Store, Johnnies Yucca Valley Fountain & Grill, a corner store, Rexall Drug Store, MDX Purity Prescription Specialists, a used furniture store, and as the Water

Canyon Coffee Company. In 2011, the building was purchased and turned into Ma Rouge Coffee House. Ma Rouge, like Water Canyon, is a popular gathering spot for locals and visitors. It hosts regular local and regional musical performances.

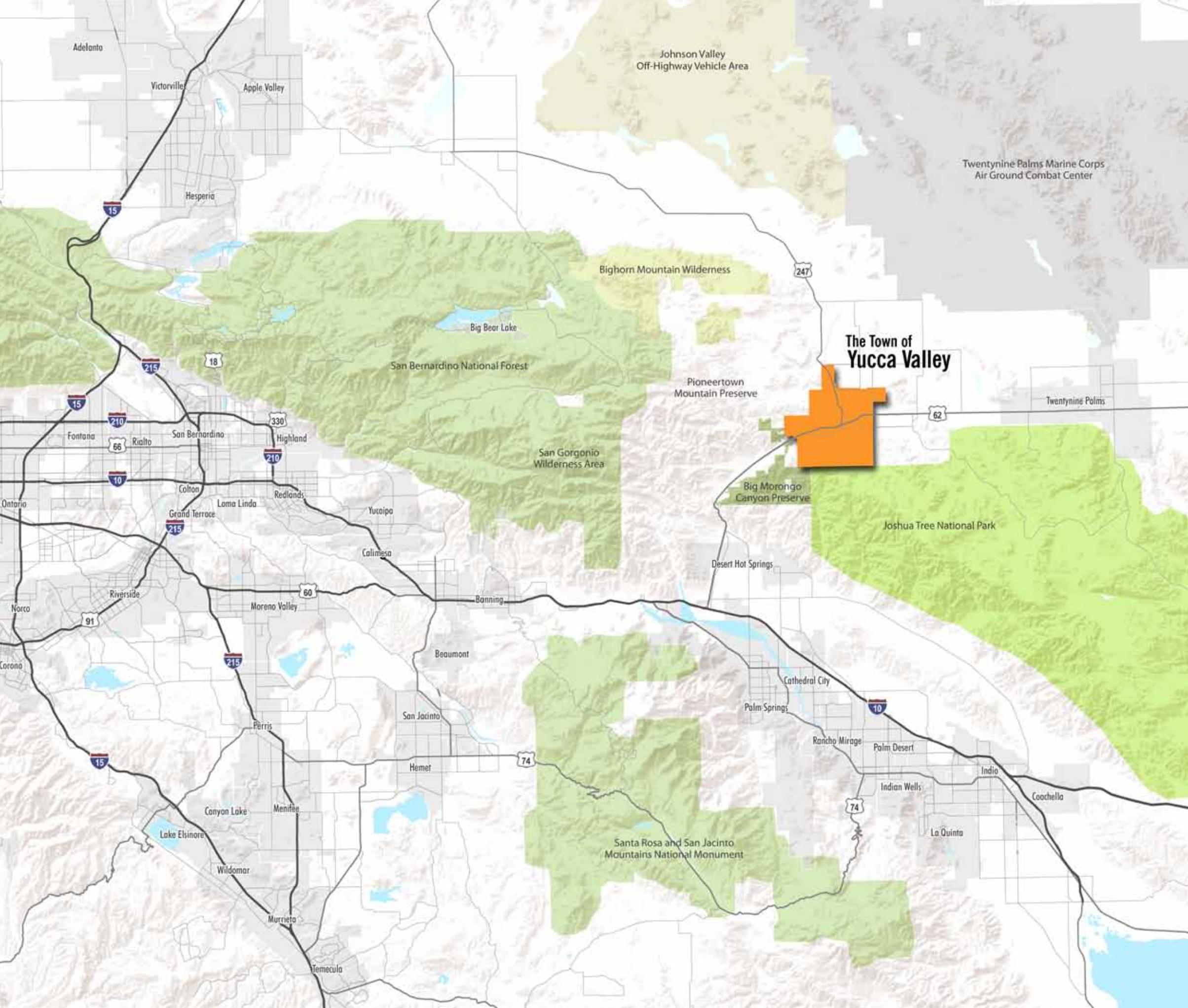


Three of many designs and uses of this iconic corner building, from 1946 to today.
Source: Morongo Basin Historical Society.



Warren's well
Was dug by Chuck Warren and sons,
in 1888, and was used for watering
Cattle, Bill Warren was cow boy for
many years, and lived at Warren's well,
after Bill Warren got married his
Brother Walter Warren took over
the Cow business at Warren's well
in 1910 The Talmadge brothers took
over the Warren's well, and young
Talmadge named Ot Talmadge
lived at Warren's well and who was
drowned in Bear lake, there the
Talmadge bro's, held Warren's well
until one James Stocker, James,
Deaver, Mrs, Berry her son John and
Dr. Bointen held Warren's well until
Mrs, 1948, after this date Yucca Valley
took over,
Wm. J. Keys

The history of Warren's Well, written in 1964, and Warren's Well today.



**The Town of
Yucca Valley**

THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

As population increases, the management and conservation of natural resources play a critical role in sustaining a desirable, safe, and healthy community. Open space, groundwater, and other natural systems are essential infrastructure. The wellness of these systems indicates the importance communities place on the balance of the natural and built environments and the quality of basic needs such as clean air and water; proper management of these vital resources can help maintain a desirable quality of life for the community and contribute to the strength of the local economy.

Natural Land Resources

Natural land resources are community assets that are derived from the environment and are relatively undisturbed or undeveloped. Natural land resources in Yucca Valley and its environs consist of open space, biological resources, hillsides, dark skies, and solar and wind energy.

Open Space

The Town of Yucca Valley is in the Morongo Basin, a valley that is surrounded by the San Bernardino Mountains to the west and northwest and the Little San Bernardino Mountains to the south. Year-round access to scenic beauty and outdoor recreational opportunities attracts residents, visitors, and entrepreneurs. Yucca Valley is a proud neighbor and gateway to numerous celebrated and protected open spaces.

Joshua Tree National Park is immediately south of the Town, making the community an important resource for its more than 1.4 million visitors per year. Visitors enjoy backpacking, birding, camping, geologic tours, hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, rock climbing, stargazing, wildflower viewing, and spectacular panoramas in 794,000 acres of open space. Yucca Valley is also the gateway to the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area, an 188,000-acre outdoor recreational and competitive riding area. Visitors enjoy organized racing events and casual rides as well as hiking, rock

hounding, and viewing wildflowers and wildlife in unique landscapes from dry lake beds to mountains of red rock.

Protected areas of natural resources and recreation are a key amenity for many residents, visitors, and businesses in Yucca Valley. With its proximity to those open space areas as well as the Big Morongo Canyon Preserve, San Bernardino National Forest, San Gorgonio Wilderness, Pioneertown Mountains Preserve, and Bighorn Mountain Wilderness areas, the relationship between the community and open space areas is an influential factor in planning future development in the town.



Hikers enjoy Joshua Tree National Park

Biological Resources

Understanding biological resources enables the Town to evaluate and mitigate potential impacts to wildlife and habitats as the community changes over time. The Town of Yucca Valley is participating in the Bureau of Land Management's 9.4-million-acre West Mojave Plan, a multiple species habitat conservation effort to protect nearly 100 federal- and state-listed plant and wildlife species and their habitats. The proposed West Mojave Plan will implement a recovery program for the desert tortoise, a federally threatened species residing in the Town of Yucca Valley and environs. Several species of special concern are found in or near Yucca Valley, including the northern red-diamond rattlesnake, yellow warbler, and Nelson's bighorn sheep; and although not a sensitive species, the California state bird, valley quail, are frequently observed throughout the community.

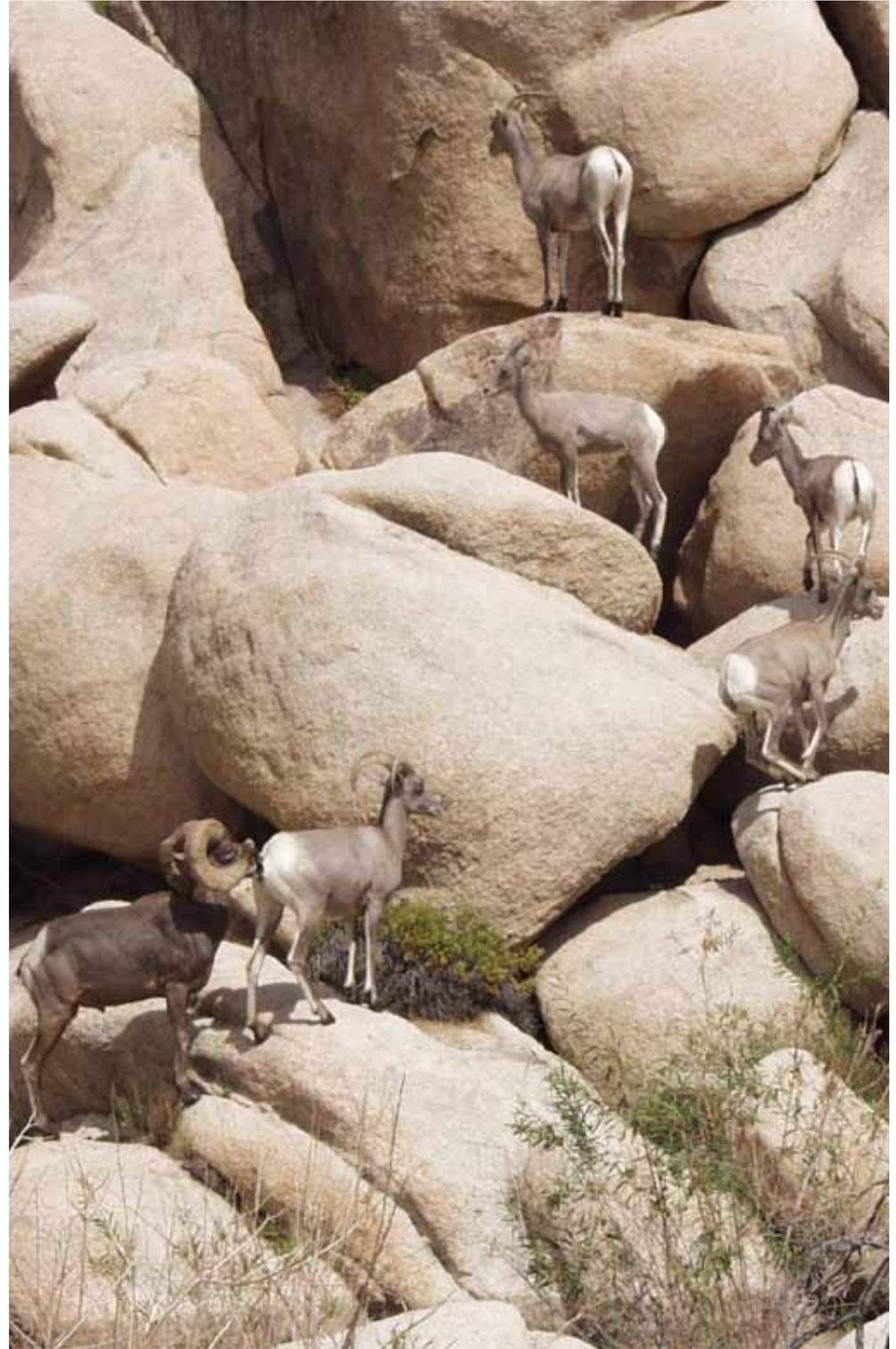
The Town regulates the relocation or removal of all species of mesquite, yuccas, Joshua trees, California juniper, desert willow, pinyon pine, palo verde, manzanita, and creosote rings 10 feet or greater in diameter. Several natural communities in Yucca Valley and environs provide a diverse range of habitats, including desert saltbush scrub on the valley floor, Joshua tree woodland in higher elevation valleys and lower mountain elevations, and pinyon-juniper woodland at elevations above 4,000 feet. The numerous

microclimates in the Yucca Valley vicinity support a range of unique flora and fauna. For example, over 250 kinds of birds have been spotted in adjacent Joshua Tree National Park, where 5 of North America's 158 desert fan palm oases are found. Other nearby examples include the desert oasis at Big Morongo Canyon Preserve, one of the 10 largest cottonwood and willow riparian habitats in California, and the San Bernardino National Forest, a 677,000-acre conservation and recreation area to the west that protects more than 85 species of sensitive plants and 71 threatened or endangered wildlife species. The ecological value of the Morongo Basin and surrounding mountains is demonstrated by the concentration and diversity of wildlife species that live or migrate there.

Federal legislators are considering establishing the Sand to Snow National Monument, 134,000-acres of federal land between Joshua Tree National Park and the San Bernardino National Forest. A nonprofit research organization has also proposed wildlife corridors in the Morongo Basin including two southwest of the Town. A wildlife corridor is a passageway allowing free movement between two or more habitat areas. The ability of wildlife to move without unnatural barriers is important for maintaining intrinsic behaviors that allow them to thrive.



Quails in the snow.



Clockwise from top left: Desert flowers; Nelson's bighorn sheep; desert tortoise.





Clockwise from opposite: Joshua trees; Mariposa lily; blooming Mojave yucca plants.



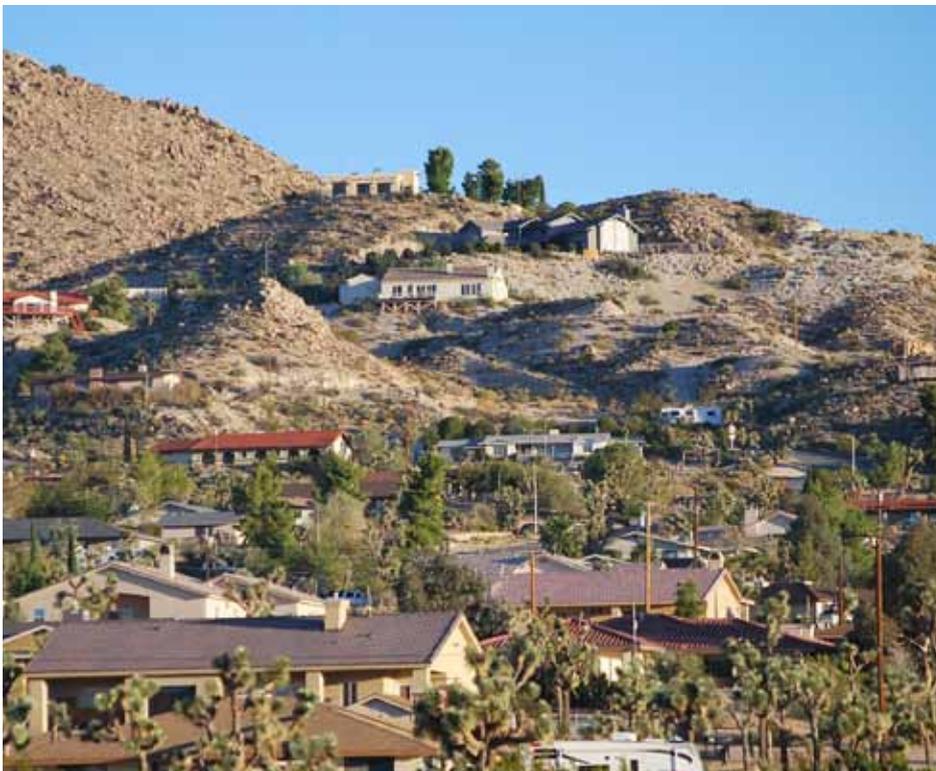


The harsh appearance of the desert environment is softened by blooming cacti.

Hillsides

The terrain in Yucca Valley is generally characterized by the low-lying plains of the valley floor at 3,000 feet above sea level, gradually leading to small hills, and framed by steep hillsides up to 4,000 feet above sea level to the north and south. This undulation provides spectacular views of the valley floor and dramatic desert landscapes, making the hillsides an asset to the community.

This topography also influences development patterns. Over time, as infill development reduces the availability of land in relatively flat areas of the community, it will become important to establish guidance for the thoughtful development in the town's hillsides. The purpose of preparing for potential hillside development pressure is to ensure that future projects will be carefully designed to respect sensitive biological resources, and preserve views, and will be adequately served by infrastructure.



Picturesque hillsides in western Yucca Valley.

Solar and Wind Energy

Residents of Yucca Valley enjoy over 320 days of clear skies and sunshine per year, making the area an ideal location for harnessing solar energy. The Town proudly completed its first solar energy project in 2005 with the installation of 324 photovoltaic panels on the south-facing roof of the Town Hall and library building. The system provides approximately one-third of the total electrical demand for the Town Hall, Library, Community Center, and Hi-Desert Nature Museum. The photovoltaic monitoring system for that project can be viewed in the Library. The Town's second solar energy project was a shade structure that supports photovoltaic panels. Several residents and business owners in Yucca Valley have also taken advantage of the climate to access solar energy through individual systems.

Another natural resource that can be converted into energy in Yucca Valley is wind. Historically, the Town has areas that often experience winds in excess of 10 miles per hour, a common requirement for proper capture of wind energy. The Town will continue to look for opportunities for energy efficiency in its own facilities and update codes to reflect new advancements in locally available alternative energy resources.



Photovoltaic panels providing solar energy in a residential area.

Dark Skies

One of Yucca Valley's unique natural amenities is its dark night sky, which attracts a multitude of stargazers each year. The National Park Service estimates that only 10 percent of the population of the United States can see the night sky in its natural state, making the relatively dark sky in Yucca Valley a special asset.

Yucca Valley benefits from its proximity to land uses that emit little or no light pollution: protected open spaces and the 29 Palms Marine base. The limited lighting in this area preserves the natural night environment and allows for inspiring views of astronomical features. The glow of lights in urbanized areas brightens the night sky and excessive light at night can

interrupt natural cycles and behavior of both humans and wildlife. Focusing lights where they are needed for public safety and direction reduces light pollution and glare, allowing the sky to be observed and enjoyed in a more natural state.

The Town of Yucca Valley is active in protecting its dark skies. The Town's website features an Outdoor Lighting and Night Sky Protection page where residents identify problem areas or give praise to properties that are in compliance. Preservation of dark skies continues to be a priority for the Town and will be a factor considered as the community grows.



Sunset over the Morongo Basin. People choose to live and visit Yucca Valley, in part, for the health benefits of the dry, desert climate and fresh air.

Water and Air Resources

The availability and quality of water and air in Yucca Valley are influenced by both natural conditions and human activity. Air quality directly affects human health and the environment and can impact the local economy and overall quality of life. Local water and air resources are components of regional systems, but government agencies can influence their quality and availability at a range of levels. This section discusses resources available and the plans to enhance these resources in the future.

Water Supply

Access to an adequate potable water supply is critical for sustaining the community. The Hi-Desert Water District (HDWD) provides water to Yucca Valley and the unincorporated community of Yucca Mesa. HDWD serves approximately 24,000 people through 10,000 connections and 296 miles of pipeline. Groundwater is the town's main water source, supplemented with imported State Water Project water as needed. The HDWD owns and operates 13 active wells—with a combined capacity of 7,000 gallons per minute—that tap the Warren Valley Groundwater Basin under Yucca Valley south of the Pinto Mountain fault and the Ames Valley Groundwater Basin north of the fault. Approximately 3,000 acre-feet of water are annually extracted from deep aquifers in these basins. The water is lifted to higher elevations by 10 booster stations and stored in 16 tanks with a total capacity of 12.6 million gallons.

The town's groundwater supply is supplemented by up to 4,282 acre-feet per year from the Mojave Water Agency, the State Water contractor to the high desert and supplier of HDWD's State Water Project water allocation. The imported water is provided to recharge the Warren Groundwater Basin. HDWD is collaborating with the Bighorn-Desert View Water Agency and Mojave Water Agency to recharge the Ames Valley Groundwater Basin with imported water.

Water Quality

To ensure the highest quality water, the Hi-Desert Water District tests water at all 13 wells and at various locations throughout its system on a regular basis. Water samples are subject to hundreds of tests to determine the presence of radioactive, biological, inorganic, volatile organic, or synthetic organic contaminants. Results are published in an annual water quality consumer confidence report. The State Water Project water is also tested regularly. Substances that have been detected in the HDWD water provided to consumers include arsenic, chromium, fluoride, nitrate, haloacetic acids, and others; all of these substances occur in the water provided to consumers at concentrations well below the levels of concern identified by both state and federal regulatory agencies.

In 2003, drinking water contamination from septic disposal systems spurred HDWD to invest in nitrate removal systems at some of its wells. Nitrate levels in the Town are currently within regulatory limits for drinking water.



A water recharge facility.

Wastewater

Yucca Valley relies on septic systems for wastewater disposal, and groundwater contamination is a major concern. In 2011 the Colorado River Regional Water Quality Control Board adopted the Basin Plan Amendment, which prohibits septic tank discharge after 2016. A sewer system and wastewater collection and treatment facility is proposed. Phase I would begin operation with capacity of 1.5 million gallons per day in 2016; by completion of Phase 3 in 2022, the facility would have a capacity of 2.5 million gallons per day. The timing and reach of the wastewater system will influence future development patterns in terms of location and intensity. The limited capacity of septic systems generally reduces development potential within the Town, because only relatively low intensity and self-treating (package treatment plant) projects are viable. Residents of Yucca Valley may consider leveeing a tax to fund wastewater services.

As the sewer system is implemented, HDWD is expected to use treated wastewater for basin recharge and landscape irrigation, thus reducing reliance on imported water sources.

Air Quality

Air quality directly affects human and environmental health, and can influence economic factors such as home and land values. Given the natural beauty in the Yucca Valley area, there is an expectation that the air is healthy; however, all communities are subjected to both mobile and stationary sources of air pollutants. Air pollution is not confined by political boundaries, so air quality issues are addressed through the collaborative efforts of federal, state, regional, and local government agencies. The town of Yucca Valley is in the Mojave Desert Air Basin and within the jurisdiction of the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District (AQMD). The Mojave Desert AQMD is responsible for monitoring and reporting air quality as well as planning, implementing, and enforcing programs intended to maintain ambient air quality standards. The monitoring station closest to the Town is in Twentynine Palms.

Areas of the country where criteria air pollutant levels persistently exceed the ambient air quality standards are typically designated “nonattainment” areas. The Mojave Desert Air Basin in the vicinity of Yucca Valley is designated a nonattainment area for state and federal standards for coarse inhalable particulate matter and ozone, common in desert environments. The Mojave Desert AQMD is working to improve air quality by controlling air pollution from various sources within the Mojave Desert Air Basin and making recommendations for attainment plans, air contaminant thresholds for development projects, and separations between sources of contaminants and sensitive land uses such as schools, playgrounds, medical facilities, and residential neighborhoods. The Town of Yucca Valley will continue to coordinate with the Mojave Desert AQMD and assess the potential impacts of local projects on air quality to protect the health of its citizens.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Legislation

Global climate change concerns were brought to the political forefront in California when the state legislature passed Assembly Bill 32 in 2006. Assembly Bill 32 places the state on a course toward reducing its contribution of greenhouse gas emissions by setting a 2020 target for emissions levels

equivalent to what was generated in the state in the year 1990. This new 2020 target is approximately 30 percent less than the greenhouse gas emissions previously projected for 2020. In 2008 the California Air Resources Board adopted a Climate Change Scoping Plan to outline the state's greenhouse gas reduction strategies. That year, Senate Bill 375 was adopted to connect the transportation sector targets established in the Scoping Plan to land use and housing plans. In response, the California Air Resources Board proposed per capita greenhouse gas reductions of 8 percent by 2020 and 13 percent by 2035 (both from a base year of 2005) to regions in the state covered by metropolitan planning organizations. Senate Bill 375 requires California's metropolitan planning organizations to prepare a Sustainable Communities Strategy that proposes a development pattern for the region that when integrated with transportation networks, should reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation.

The metropolitan planning organization that represents the Town of Yucca Valley is the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG). The Sustainable Communities Strategy for the SCAG region is being prepared with input from its member jurisdictions. The end result will be a Sustainable Communities Strategy that provides incentives for individual jurisdictions to have complementary or consistent plans that integrate land use, housing, and transportation plans. As communities like Yucca Valley plan for increasing populations and economic opportunities, there are a variety of tools that can reduce greenhouse gas emissions from development, such as improving alternative transportation (public transit, biking, walking), encouraging mixed-use and infill development, and facilitating energy efficiency in building construction and operation.

The Town has taken a proactive role in addressing these issues by applying for and receiving SCAG approval under the Compass Blueprint Program for the Mid Town area. As such, the Town is embracing the concepts of sustainable development and continually looking for ways to implement sustainable best practices to preserve the community's quality of life.

Safety

Yucca Valley faces a variety of natural hazards that can compromise the safety of its residents and their property. This section discusses safety concerns created by geological hazards, seismic activity, wildland fire, and flooding, as well as the community's preparedness to respond to these and other hazards.



A view of the town from a rock outcropping.

Geological Hazards

Several types of hazards affecting human settlements are related to earth processes and the materials upon which a community is built. Yucca Valley is in an east–west trending basin bounded by the Little San Bernardino Mountains on the south and the Sawtooth Mountains on the north. The Sawtooth Mountains extend eastward through the middle of the town. As a result, the Town’s topographic relief is gentler in the south than in the north. The sections of the Little San Bernardino and Sawtooth Mountains closest to Yucca Valley are composed primarily of igneous and metamorphic rocks. The valley floor is underlain by sandy, granular soils eroded from the surrounding mountains and transported to the lower elevations by gravity and runoff. Other significant surficial sediments in the area include older alluvium and fan deposits consisting of cobbles, pebbles, and coarse sand that have been uplifted above the present floodplain. Some common geologic hazards that could affect structures and infrastructure include ground subsidence, liquefaction, erosion, and landslides.

Due to the depth of the groundwater below most of the town, liquefaction is generally not considered a hazard except within the Yucca Wash floodplain and tributary canyons. There are no reported occurrences of subsidence in the Town; however, increased pumping of the underlying aquifers could result in subsidence of the valley floor. Subsidence could also occur as a result of earthquake activity. Rapidly deposited sand on the basin floor can compact as a result of increased wetting, for instance, due to landscape irrigation. Sandy soils are also susceptible to erosion. Erosion is common in Yucca Valley, where there is limited vegetation to protect the topsoil when infrequent but intense storms create flood conditions. Heavy rainfall often triggers debris flows and mudflows that can impact areas downslope. Although the topography and soil types within the Town limits are not prone to landslides, a powerful earthquake could cause rockfalls in the hilly terrain in the northern and western ends of the community. Several rockfalls were observed west of the Town following the 1992 Landers earthquake.

Seismic Activity

Yucca Valley is in an area of high seismic activity and several faults have the potential to cause damage in the community. The Pinto Mountain fault extends in an easterly direction through the central part of Town. The Eureka Peak, Burnt Mountain, Johnson Valley, and Homestead Valley faults run north–south through various portions of the community. The southern San Andreas fault passes about eight miles southwest of the Town. These and several other seismically active faults are within about 60 miles of the community, posing a significant seismic shaking hazard. The faults that extend through the town also have the potential to cause surface fault rupture, the displacement of the ground surface when a fault moves. Deformation associated with movement along the Pinto Mountain fault could impact several buildings and infrastructure in downtown Yucca Valley. The State of California regulates development in seismically active areas through the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act and Seismic Hazards Mapping Act. As the Town of Yucca Valley continues to plan for its future, maintaining an understanding of the location of faults and limiting development on and around them are essential steps to preventing unnecessary loss of life and property.

The 1992 7.6-magnitude Landers earthquake occurred on the Johnson Valley fault north of the town and involved ruptures on several other faults, including two previously unknown faults (Burnt Mountain and Eureka Peak). The impacts were serious. More than 400 people were injured and 3 people lost their lives, including 1 in Yucca Valley, as a result of the earthquake. Several other significant earthquakes have occurred in the area’s recent history:

- 1999 Hector Mine earthquake, 7.1 magnitude
- 1992 Joshua Tree earthquake, 6.1 magnitude
- 1992 Big Bear earthquake, 6.4 magnitude
- 1986 North Palm Springs earthquake, 5.6 magnitude

Flooding

Yucca Valley averages less than 10 inches of rainfall per year. While this amount may not sound significant, parts of the community are susceptible to flooding during heavy downpours. The primary drainage facility in the Town is Yucca Wash, a graded-earth flood control channel flowing from west to east and connecting to several natural tributaries. Many existing drainage courses in the Yucca Valley are unimproved. Brief but intense storms can overwhelm these drainage channels, pushing water and sediment over low-lying areas and making dirt roads impassible.

Floodplains are established by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and shown on Flood Insurance Rate Maps. Several parts of Yucca Valley are within 100-year flood zones, mainly along Yucca Wash and its tributaries extending to the south. A 100-year flood is a flood that has a 1 percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year. The Town of Yucca Valley prohibits development in the Yucca Wash to prevent property damage and avoid impeding the natural course of the water. The Town of Yucca Valley Master Plan of Drainage calls for bank stabilization improvements to Yucca Wash and other drainage channels, redesigning select detention basins to allow infiltration of stormwater to enhance groundwater recharge, and providing wildlife corridors and recreational trails along channels and floodplains. The San Bernardino County Flood Control District will continue to collaborate with the Town to address flooding issues.



Floodwater inundates low-lying roadways.

Wildland Fire

The expansive open space areas surrounding the Town of Yucca Valley are susceptible to destructive wildland fires, often exacerbated by dry weather and Santa Ana winds. A wildland fire is an uncontrolled fire in areas of little or no development, but these fires can quickly spread to the urban/wildland interface where development meets expanses of vegetative fuels.

Yucca Valley is an interface area where a proactive approach to preventing the start and spread of wildland fire is vital to protecting lives and property. Fire suppression services are provided by the San Bernardino County Fire Department. One station is located within the Town limits, another is adjacent to the community. The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection provides wildland fire assistance in the community.

The Town was most recently threatened by the Millard/Sawtooth Complex Fire in 2006. The fire injured 17, resulted in one fatality, and destroyed approximately 69,000 acres. The Juniper Complex Fire, the largest fire in the history of the Joshua Tree National Park, burned 13,894 acres adjacent to the Town in 1999. Both fires were ignited by lightning hitting dry desert vegetation in the summer.

The central, west-central, and southern parts of the town are in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones as mapped by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Prevention. The continued development of defensible spaces, free of combustible vegetation, will help reduce the potential for fire to harm lives and property.

Emergency Preparedness

The Town of Yucca Valley has an active Emergency Preparedness Division responsible for planning, coordinating, and managing disaster preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery. The Town has developed goals and strategies for day-to-day operations as well as long-range hazard mitigation planning. Furthermore, the Town of Yucca Valley collaborates with the San Bernardino County Fire Department to train a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). CERT volunteers must complete coursework on disaster preparedness, fire safety, disaster medical operations, light search and rescue operations, disaster psychology, terrorism, and the CERT organization.



Smoke from the Millard/Sawtooth Complex Fire approaches a staging area for fire suppression teams in the Town of Yucca Valley.

LOCAL GOVERNANCE

The Town of Yucca Valley conducts the public's business, providing quality leadership and decision-making, on behalf of the present and future residents of Yucca Valley.

"The mission of the Town of Yucca Valley is to provide a government that is responsive to the needs and concerns of its diverse citizenry and ensures a safe and secure environment while maintaining the highest quality of life."

Organization

Under the council-manager form of government, the Council is the Town's legislative and governing body. The Council adopts policies, develops strategic priorities, and gives general direction to staff regarding the operations of the local government. The Council appoints a Town Manager, who serves at the Council's pleasure. Five representatives elected at large constitute the Town Council. Each year the Council appoints one of its members as Mayor. The Council's policy rotates the Mayor position to a different Council Member each year.

The Council currently conducts regular meetings on the first and third Tuesdays of each month. The agenda usually includes a public comment section at the end of regularly scheduled business. During this time, the public is invited to address the Council on matters not otherwise scheduled for discussion.

The Town's Municipal Code designates the Town Manager as the administrative head of the government. The code directs communications between Town staff and the Town Council to flow through the Town Manager. As the Town's chief executive officer, the Town Manager:

- Enforces the Town's laws, ordinances, contracts, and permits
- Directs all department heads and employees
- Prepares the annual budget
- Supervises all Town purchasing

- Generally supervises all public facilities
- Recommends policies and actions for Town Council consideration

Several departments plan and implement other services and strategies to address the daily and projected needs of the community. Administrative Services provides the Town's financial and reporting functions, budgeting, accounts payable, accounts receivable, and business registration. The department is also responsible for human resources and risk management. Community Development coordinates planning, building and safety, and code enforcement. Community Services manages recreation programs, special events, the Hi-Desert Nature Museum, use and rental of Town facilities, animal control services, and community relations programs. Public Safety oversees police, and other emergency services, including a variety of prevention programs and public awareness campaigns. Public Works/Engineering provides maintenance and improvement of Yucca Valley's streets, parks, and public buildings. All of these departments communicate with one another to provide efficient and effective services.



Town Hall is the center of local government administration.

Commissions

In addition to professional staff, various citizen commissions assist the Council on matters within their area of responsibility. They help focus attention on specific issues and serve as channels of communication among government, the public, and special interest groups. The Planning Commission makes recommendations for Town Council action on general plan adoption and amendment, specific plans, changes in zoning districts, and approval of tentative tract maps. The Planning Commission has final authority on other planning and zoning appeals matters as provided in the Town's Municipal Code. The Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Commission advises and makes recommendations on planning for recreation, open space, parks, playgrounds, play fields, and recreational facilities, and on the provision of programs, community leisure services, senior services, museum, events, and special projects. They also evaluate proposals and make recommendations on the development, acquisition, funding, installation, display, removal, alteration, and disposition of art in public facilities and the development, funding, and presentation of art generally.



Youth Commissioners participating in the Grubstake Days Parade.

The Youth Commission explores issues and makes recommendations on matters pertaining to the activities and programs of and for youth in and around the town. The Sports Council provides a forum for the discussion of cooperative opportunities, mutual issues, and common problems facing the providers of recreational programs and facilities in Yucca Valley. These commissions represent a range of local interests.

Services Provided by Other Agencies

Several resources and services are provided to the Town of Yucca Valley by other agencies. Crime prevention and protection services are provided by the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department under contract to the Town of Yucca Valley. Fire prevention and suppression services are provided by the San Bernardino County Fire Department. The Morongo Unified School District oversees public schooling and many special education programs and facilities. Water services in Yucca Valley are provided by the Hi-Desert Water District. These services are integral to maintaining a high standard of health and public safety in Yucca Valley.



Public Works/Engineering Department employees paving local roads.





3. Market Scan and Forecast

In this chapter:

THE BABY BOOM AND AFTER
EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMICS
POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLD PROJECTIONS
RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
NON-RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY



The faces in the audience represent the diversity of age groups in Yucca Valley.

MARKET SCAN AND FORECAST

No community stands still for very long. The preceding chapters have provided a general snapshot of Yucca Valley today and what it has achieved in its first twenty years. This chapter, however, moves the conversation to the future, describing the trends carrying the town forward. Some trends are positive, representing strengths and opportunities that the community can harness to realize its aspirations. Other trends, however, may be moving in less helpful directions. Over time, the community might want to address the challenges over which it has some influence. This chapter intends to support public discussion by describing these trends, positive and negative, and their implications.

The Baby Boom and After

No other trend is as well understood and as certain as the demographic trend of the aging and retirement of the baby boom generation. The impacts of the subsequent generations, however, are less certain even though one can clearly see change on the way.

What Is the Baby Boom?

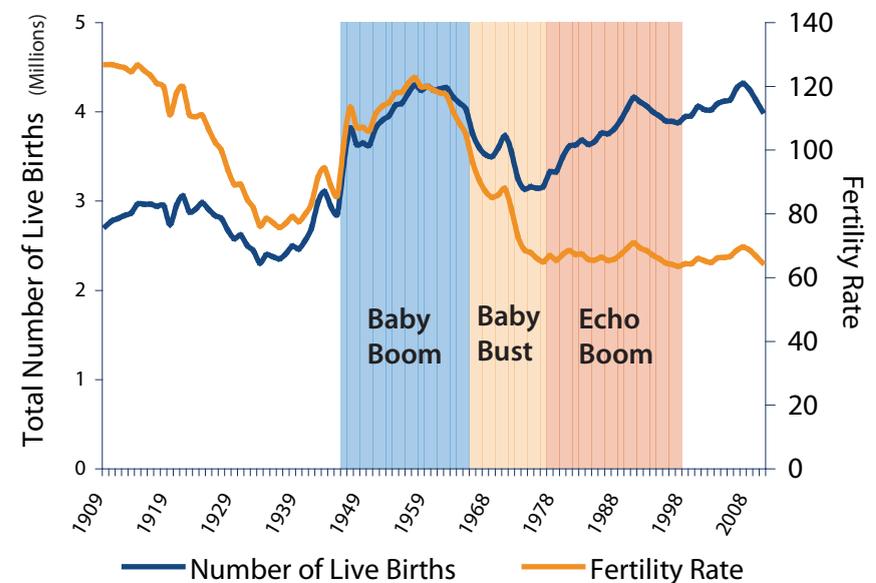
After World War II, the number of births in the United States increased substantially above its long-term norm, peaked around 1957, and showed a sharp decline from 1964 to 1965. Starting in 1976, the number of births then began to climb once again as the baby boomers began starting families, although the actual fertility rate has, since 1973, remained at historical lows of under 70 live births per 1,000 women ages 15 to 44. Figure 3-1 shows the long-term fertility rate and number of births nationally.

Although many commentators and academics debate whether or not the baby boomers represent one or more social generations, the 20-year period did create a population bubble. The subsequent ten-year period, when the fertility rate dipped below the long-term average (down to the Depression-era rate), produced significantly fewer people. This period is often referred to as the baby bust, or, more commonly, as generation X. Finally, the generation born from 1977 to 2000, with more total births than during the previous baby bust period, is often referred to as the echo boom, or generation Y.

Although the basic fertility rate has not changed much since 1973, the increasing number of women of child-bearing age has resulted in the increase in total number of births in the echo boom. The United States currently produces slightly more babies than the replacement rate; thus the nation's population continues to grow, and would so even without immigration.

This demographic pattern of baby boom, baby bust, and echo boom poses several challenges for the nation, state, and region, as well as Yucca Valley. Some of these important challenges are the aging of the baby boom generation, the coming labor shortage, and the challenge of employing echo boomers.

Figure 3-1: Births, Fertility Rates, and Demographic Categories, US, 1900 through 2010



Source: The Planning Center|DC&E, 2011, using data from the US Centers for Disease Control, National Center for Health Statistics.

Aging Baby Boomers and Retirement

In 2011, the first baby boomers became age-eligible for retirement. Just as this demographic group has shaped every stage of life it has passed through, it will now put its own spin on retirement.

Retirement

Current surveys suggest that boomers, on average, intend to work about three years longer than previous generations. Will boomers work much longer? Will they get up and move when they retire as some in previous generations did? Will they retire only to open their own businesses? Will they swell the ranks of civic volunteers? No one really knows. Even where survey research has been conducted, it is, at best, only a reflection of what the survey respondents felt they would probably do. But when the time comes to retire, baby boomers may change their minds and fool all of the surveyors.

The drop in household wealth from the decline in both stock values and housing values during the recession may encourage many baby boomers to stay employed longer to rebuild that part of their retirement nest egg. It might also, however, induce more boomers than those in past retiring generations to retire from their careers and start new businesses. Whether these new businesses are independent retail stores or home-based consulting services, this potential could reshape both the built environment and the local economies in many communities across the country.

For baby boomers to cash in on the value in the housing they own, they will need buyers, most likely members of the baby bust or echo boom generations. There are substantially fewer people in the baby bust than in the baby boom generation. And survey research suggests that fewer members of the echo boom are as interested in larger single-family detached houses on large suburban lots as were members of the baby boom. This suggests that there may not be enough buyers to purchase the houses of all the baby boomers who might desire to sell and downsize or relocate. This is perhaps the most interesting conundrum of changing demographics.

Wealth Transfer

One key difference in the retirement of the baby boom generation will be their wealth. Their real earnings are higher than previous generations, even though savings rates are lower. More important, though, their parents' generation was the first in the United States to, en masse, become homeowners and create widespread family wealth. As this generation passes on, many are leaving this wealth to their children and grandchildren. The baby boomers are becoming the recipients of the largest inter-generational transfer of wealth in history. No one really knows how this wealth will affect baby boomers' choices for and after retirement, but it does provide opportunities past generations did not have.

Medical Care

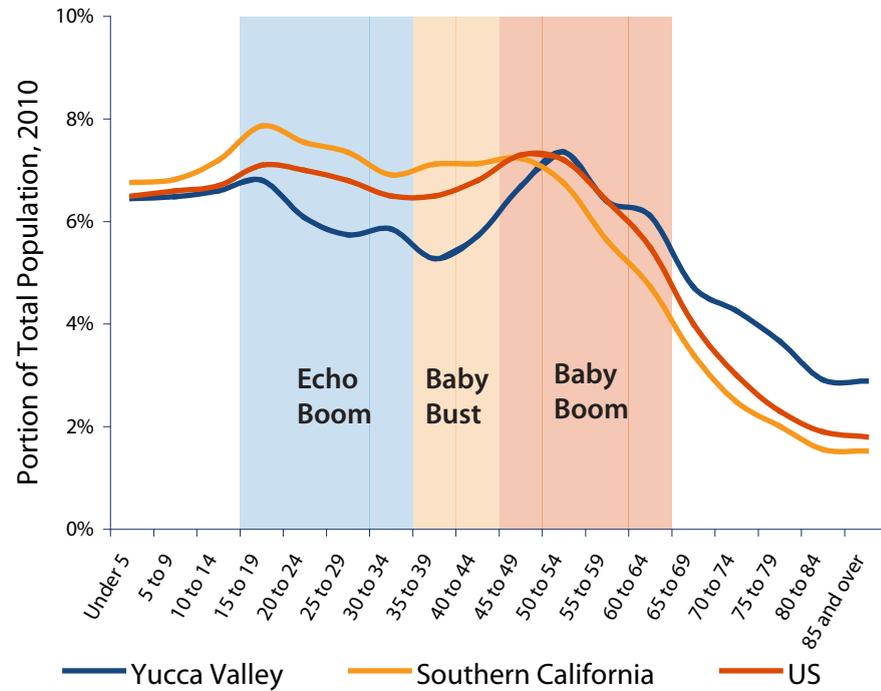
What is known is that this country is woefully unprepared to deal with the cost of medical care as baby boomers age. Although Social Security is often reported to be in jeopardy, it is much better funded than Medicare. More important, as this generation enters the ages that require the most medical care, the United States will face an increasingly acute lack of skilled nurses, doctors, hospital beds, and most other things related to medical care. Regardless of how national medical care policy and funding eventually shape up, the aging of the baby boom generation assures rising demand for medical services.

What Does This Mean for Yucca Valley?

Figure 3-2 shows the age distribution in Yucca Valley in 2010 compared to that of Southern California and the United States. The data show that Yucca Valley has a larger portion of its population in the demographic group that preceded the baby boom generation, those aged 65 and older in 2010. The portion of the town's population in the baby boom generation is generally about the same as the region and the nation. But it has a lower portion of its population in the baby bust and echo boom generations. Indeed, the Town's demographics show a fairly pronounced bump in the 50 to 54 age group, followed by a relatively sharp decline. Nevertheless, the school age population is at about the same proportion in the town as in the region and state.

The town’s demographics suggest that the community might already be facing some of the medical care challenges that will be felt more acutely as the baby boom generation ages. If present trends continue, however, Yucca Valley will face a more acute shortage of workers than Southern California and the nation as the baby boomers retire (this challenge is discussed in more detail in the following section). This suggests that the Town might have to attract new residents in order to maintain property values as the boomers, at least some of them, seek to downsize their housing after retirement.

Figure 3-2: Age Distribution by Age and Demographic Category, Yucca Valley, Southern California, and the US, 2010



Source: The Planning Center | DC&E, using data from the US Census Bureau.

The Coming Labor Shortage

Nationally in 2010, the 15-year segment of the population following the baby boom had 3.4 million fewer people (a 5.3 percent decrease) than the youngest 15-year segment of the baby boom generation. Narrowing that window to 10-year segments, the decline in population will be even larger, 8.3 percent. Figure 3-2 illustrates the drop in population for Yucca Valley, Southern California, and the nation. Yucca Valley has a much more pronounced drop-off from the baby boom to the baby bust generation. In contrast, the Southern California region actually has 17 percent more people in the 20-year age group following the baby boom generation.

As boomers move into retirement, the United States labor force does not have enough workers to fill their jobs. The economy faces a monumental challenge over the next 20 years, a structural labor shortage. The United States will either have to: bring in more skilled and educated immigrants, increase economic productivity by 5.1 percent (just to maintain the status quo), ship more jobs overseas, and/or expand and improve the effectiveness of education and job training. The economy will feel the effects of this labor shortage most intensely in about 10 to 15 years as the largest single age group moves into retirement.

Talk of a looming labor shortage may seem counterintuitive during a period of sustained high unemployment, but over the long term, the decrease in the size of the labor force will have major consequences for the economy. For example, growth in the labor force accounted for about 60 percent of all economic growth since 1948. A shrinking labor force would limit, if not reverse, economic growth.

As boomer retirement progresses, one can expect American jobs to chase American workers. Communities that have the quality of life to attract the highest educated and highest skilled workers will also attract the jobs that need those workers. As in the late 1990s, proximity to available labor will be the most important factor for business location decisions, surpassing land costs, perceived business climate, or where company executives reside.

Employing the Echo Boomers

Because Southern California has a higher percentage of its population in the age groups following the baby boom generation it is well positioned to capture new jobs that will be chasing available workers. Nevertheless, the region faces a challenge to assure the labor force has the skills and education needed to fill those jobs. Those jobs will be searching for workers with skills and education (most regions will have a ready supply of under educated and low-skill workers, potentially a greater supply than demand). Yet, of Southern California's residents age 25 to 44, 21.0 percent do not have a high school diploma, compared to 12.7 percent nationally. And even though California prides itself on its competitiveness in attracting and employing those with college degrees, a somewhat smaller percentage of Southern California's residents 25 to 44 have a college degree compared to the nation as a whole (29 versus 31 percent).

In addition, the baby bust and echo boom generations have not generally pursued science and engineering education to the degree the national economy will need. Workforce development is and will continue to be one of the primary challenges for the region to address in order to capitalize on the national labor shortage. Thus, while the town and its subregion may not face the extent of the challenge from an undereducated labor force, the local economy is inextricably linked to the regional economy and its broader challenges.

Employment and Economics

People most closely associate their community with the place in which they live, and to a somewhat lesser degree, the place where they do a lot of their shopping, entertainment, and recreation. But because the majority of employed people work in a different place than where they live, they often do not think of their community as a place to work and earn a living.

Nevertheless, economic activity is a key defining characteristic of communities and the quality of life they offer. Economic activity also provides more in municipal revenues than it costs in municipal services, thus generating resources to provide services and enhance quality of life. This section describes the local economy in Yucca Valley and projects how the economy might grow over the next 20 years.

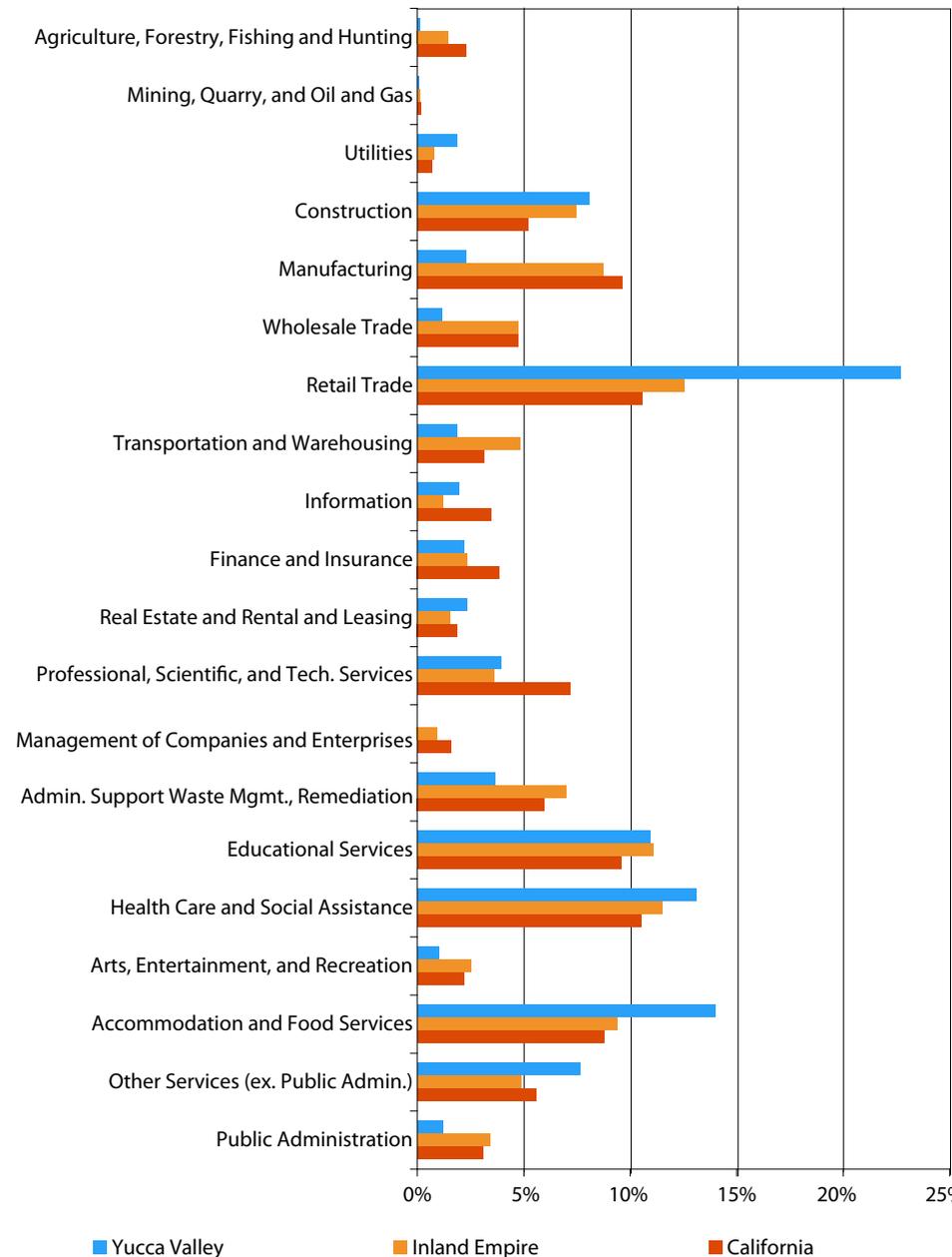
Economic Structure

To describe the structure of a local economy, economists often compare and contrast employment across 20 sectors of the economy locally with each sector's share of the regional economy. This type of analysis identifies the types of economic activity in which the local economy specializes and the types in which the local economy is underserved. Figure 3-3 shows the share of total employment by economic sector for Yucca Valley, the Inland Empire and California. The data are an average for 2007 through 2009, the three most recent years for which data are available.

Relative to the more complete economies of the Inland Empire and California, five sectors employ a substantially larger share of workers in Yucca Valley's economy: utilities; retail trade; real estate, rental and leasing; accommodation and food services; and other services, excluding public administration. Together, these sectors account for 48.5 percent of local jobs but only about 28.3 percent of jobs regionally and statewide.

At the same time, six sectors employ substantially fewer workers locally than would be expected. These sectors are: manufacturing; wholesale trade; transportation and warehousing; management of companies and enterprises; arts, entertainment and recreation; and public administration. The underrepresented sectors account for only 7.5 percent of the jobs in Yucca Valley but make up about 24.8 percent of the jobs in the region and state.

Figure 3-3: Employment by Economic Sector as a Portion of Total Employment, Yucca Valley, Inland Empire, and California, Average for 2007 through 2009



Base Sectors: Goods-Producing

Economic development efforts typically focus on base sectors, which are the sectors that usually produce goods and services that are exported out of the region and thus bring new dollars into the local economy. One group of base industries are the goods-producing sectors: agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting; mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction; construction; and manufacturing. The goods-producing sectors only account for 10.5 percent of jobs in Yucca Valley and the Morongo Basin, while making up 17.8 percent of jobs in the Inland Empire and California. Thus, the local economy lacks the depth of economic activity in goods-producing sectors that would be expected in a more complete economy.

Base Sectors: Services-Producing

The other sectors that typically bring new dollars into a region and a local economy are the base service sectors. This group includes: utilities; wholesale trade; transportation and warehousing; information; professional, scientific, and technical services; management of companies; and administration and support, waste management, and remediation. The base services sectors only account for 14.4 percent of jobs in Yucca Valley and 15.4 percent in the Morongo Basin. In contrast, this group constitutes 26.9 percent of jobs in the Inland Empire and 26.7 percent statewide. Thus, the local economy also does not have sufficient economic activity in the base services sectors.

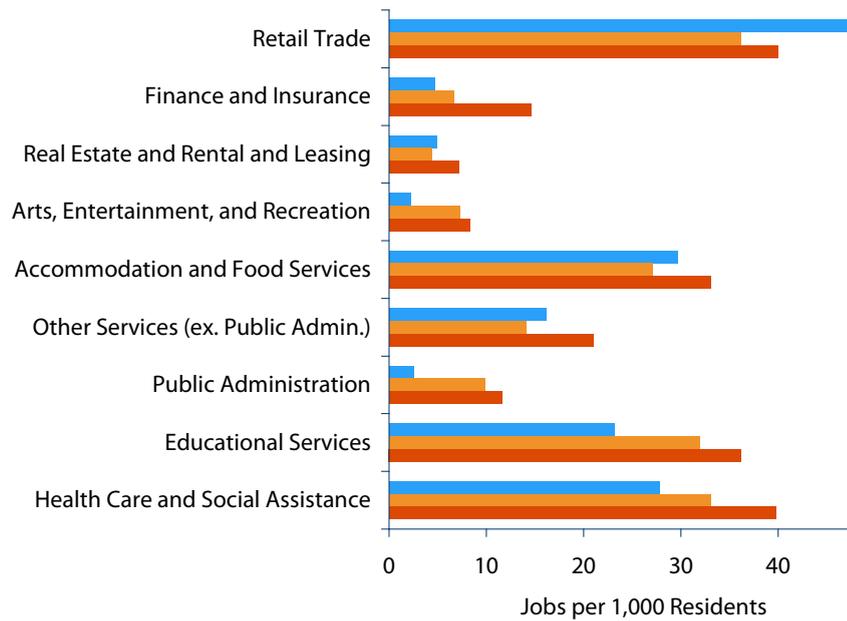
Local-Serving Sectors

Local-serving sectors are the complement to the base sectors. These businesses primarily serve local residents, recirculating existing dollars rather than bringing new dollars into the local economy. This group of sectors includes: retail trade; finance and insurance; real estate, rentals, and leasing; arts, entertainment, and recreation; accommodation and food services; other services; and public administration. Local-serving sectors account for 51 percent of jobs in Yucca Valley (42.6 percent in the Morongo Basin), yet these sectors only provide about 36 percent of the jobs in the Inland Empire and California.

Source: The Planning Center | DC&E, 2011, using data from the US Census Bureau's Local Employment Dynamics Program.

The increased importance of the local-serving sectors, however, does not necessarily imply an excess concentration in these sectors. Rather, the discrepancy mostly reflects that the local economy provides less economic activity in the base sectors. Considering the number of jobs per resident can provide a better illustration of the degree to which the local-serving sectors provide an expected level of economic activity. Figure 3-4 shows the number of jobs per 1,000 residents in Yucca Valley, the Inland Empire, and California, averaged for 2007 through 2009. The data show that retail trade has a higher than expected level of employment. That even population-weighted employment is higher in this sector reflects the fact that Yucca Valley serves as a retail destination for the Morongo Basin. Three sectors—real estate, rental, and leasing; accommodation and food services; and other services—employ about the expected number of workers. The remaining local-serving sectors, however, employ substantially fewer people than expected to serve the number of residents in Yucca Valley.

Figure 3-4: Local-Serving Employment by Economic Sector per 1,000 Households, Yucca Valley, Inland Empire, and California, Average for 2007 through 2009



Source: The Planning Center|DC&E, 2011, using employment data from the US Census Bureau's Local Employment Dynamics Program and household data from the CA Department of Finance.

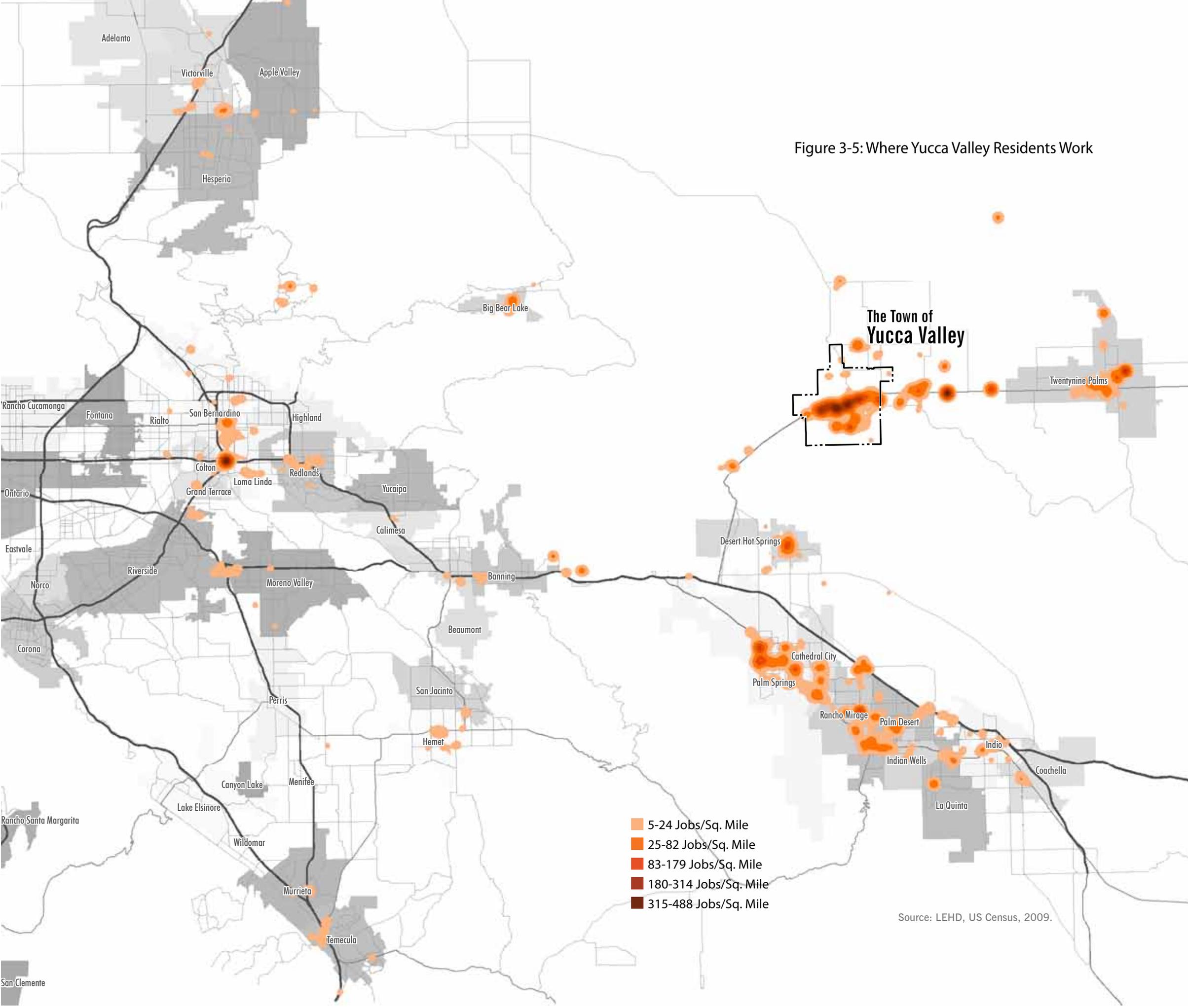
Education and Health Care

The education services and the health care and social assistance sectors are also local-serving sectors. Economic analyses, however, often consider these sectors separately because state and federal regulations and funding have a greater influence over the level of employment than do the market forces that drive the other local-serving sectors. As shown in Figure 3-4, education services employ slightly more than half of what would be expected based solely on the number of households. Health care and social assistance employs about two-thirds the expected level.

Out-Commuting

On average from 2007 through 2009, only about 16 percent of Yucca Valley residents worked in the town, and residents living outside of the Town filled about 68 percent of the jobs in Yucca Valley. The data show that more residents in the Town are employed in each sector than there are local jobs in each sector. The discrepancies between jobs in the town and the employment of the Town's residents range from 99 percent of Yucca Valley's residents employed in management of companies and enterprises to 21 percent of those working in retail having to leave town for work. Figure 3-5 shows the locations where Yucca Valley's residents work.

Figure 3-5: Where Yucca Valley Residents Work



Source: LEHD, US Census, 2009.

Employment Projection

If present trends continue, Yucca Valley’s local economy has the potential to grow by about 1.6 percent per year. Figure 3-6 shows the projected job growth by economic sector from 2011 through 2035.

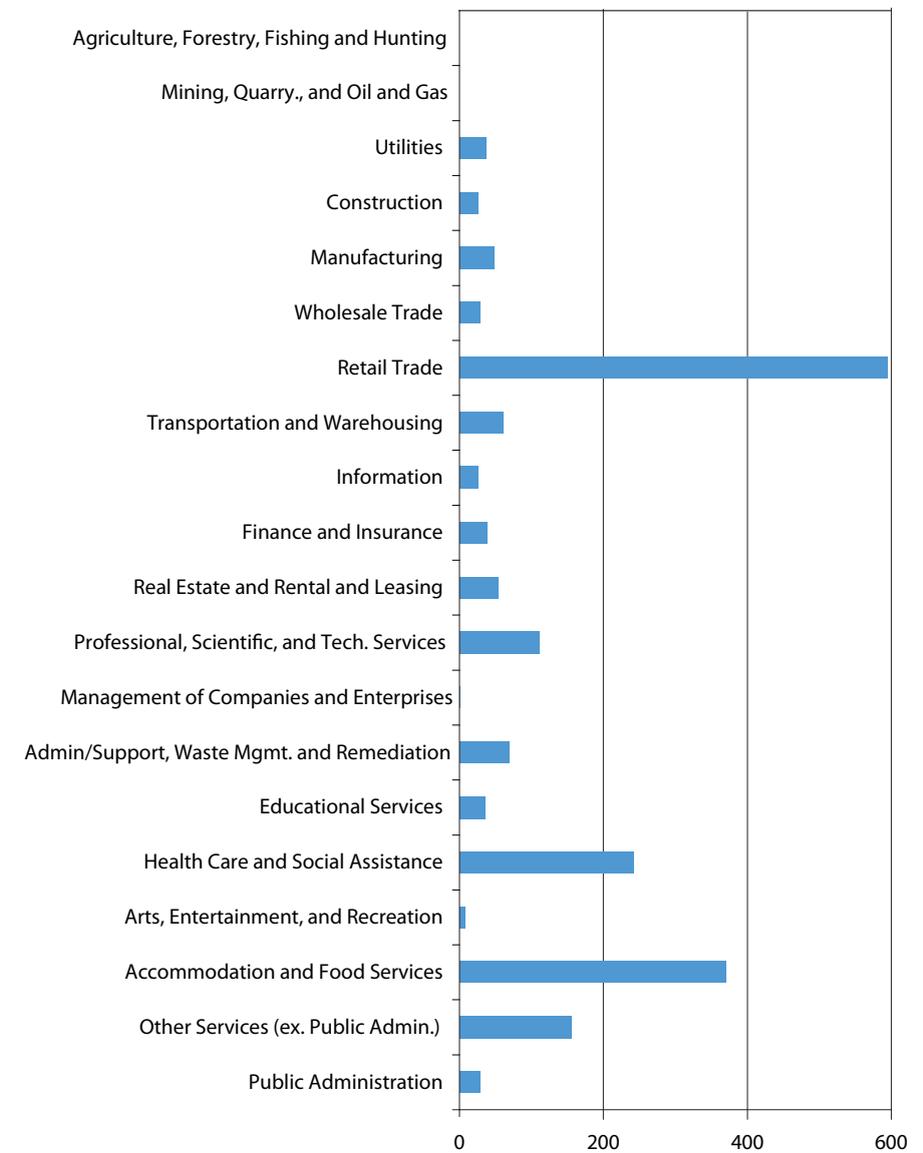
The majority of growth would occur in the local-serving sectors of the economy. These sectors could increase employment by about 1,250 jobs, growing at a rate of 1.9 percent per year. The basic sectors of the economy, goods and services, could provide about 410 jobs, with an annual growth rate of 1.5 percent. Finally, education and health would add 280 jobs, for a 1.0 percent per year growth rate.

The two sectors that would add the most jobs, retail trade and accommodation and food services, would account for 50 percent of all job growth. However, these sectors pay, on average, less than the average annual wage in the region. Indeed, if present trends continue, employment in sectors with above-average wages would account for only 31 percent of the total job growth in Yucca Valley.



Infrastructure improvements in progress.

Figure 3-6: Total Job Growth Projection by Economic Sector, Yucca Valley, 2011 to 2035



Source: The Planning Center|DC&E, 2011.

Yucca Valley's Economic Future

Yucca Valley is, in some ways, a quintessential bedroom community. The vast majority of working residents commute to jobs out of town. And the local economy predominantly provides services to residents in the Town and surrounding areas in the Morongo Basin. If present trends continue, these characteristics would continue and strengthen: an even higher percentage of local jobs would be in the local-serving sectors of the economy, and even more employed residents would work outside of the town.

Through the Town's General Plan Update, the community will address whether Yucca Valley should continue along this path or begin to diversify the local economy and provide more jobs for residents. Diversifying the local economy could expand net municipal revenues. Providing more jobs for residents could reduce out-commuting and improve the social and environmental effects of commuting.

If the regional economy would continue to provide good jobs within an acceptable commuting distance (with "good jobs" and "acceptable commuting distance" defined on an individual basis), and if the current trends in municipal revenues and expenditures would be sufficient to maintain an acceptable quality of life in the town, then there would be less value in expanding and diversifying the local economy. The General Plan Update should allow the community to consider these trade-offs and seek a balance that reflects the community's values.



One of Yucca Valley's many small businesses that contributes to its eclectic charm.

Population and Household Projections

Previous sections of the Community Profile have described demographic characteristics of the people who live in Yucca Valley today. Going forward, though, it is population growth and households that will drive the demand for municipal services, residential development, and retail development. This section projects the number of people and households that could call Yucca Valley home by 2035 if present trends continue.

Population Projection

As part of the process to develop the Regional Transportation Plan, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) projects the number of households, total population, and total number of jobs in each community. From an estimated 2011 population of 20,800, SCAG projects that the Town's population will grow to 27,200 by 2035, an increase of 6,400 people. The projected growth would represent a rate of 1.1 percent per year. Similarly, based solely on past population growth trends, the Town's population would only increase by 5,700 or 1.0 percent per year. Finally, taking into consideration the age of the town's residents, countywide birth and death rates, and migration rates, Yucca Valley's population could increase by as much as 12,300 new residents, or a growth rate of 1.9 percent per year.

These various projections ranging from 1.0 to 1.9 percent per year reflect what might happen if past trends continue. Yucca Valley's growth and development policies, however, can influence the likely rate of population growth. Nevertheless, these projections suggest that growth will continue in Town. The General Plan Update affords the community an opportunity to weight the costs and benefits of continued growth and to discuss appropriate policies to manage growth pressures.

Changing Age Structure

Beyond just the total number of people, the age of those likely to be living in Yucca Valley in the future has implications for planning. Figure 3-7 shows the portion of the town's total population in five-year age groups, for 2010 and 2035. One should note that the chart shows the percentage in each age group; because the town's total population will be substantially larger, there will be more residents in every age group in 2035.

If present trends continue, in 2035 Yucca Valley's population would have slightly higher percentages of school-age children, middle-age adults, and seniors in their late 60s and 70s. The population would have lower percentages of young adults, adults in their 50s and early 60s, and those over the age of 85. This resulting distribution among age groups would not be substantially different from today, only more pronounced.

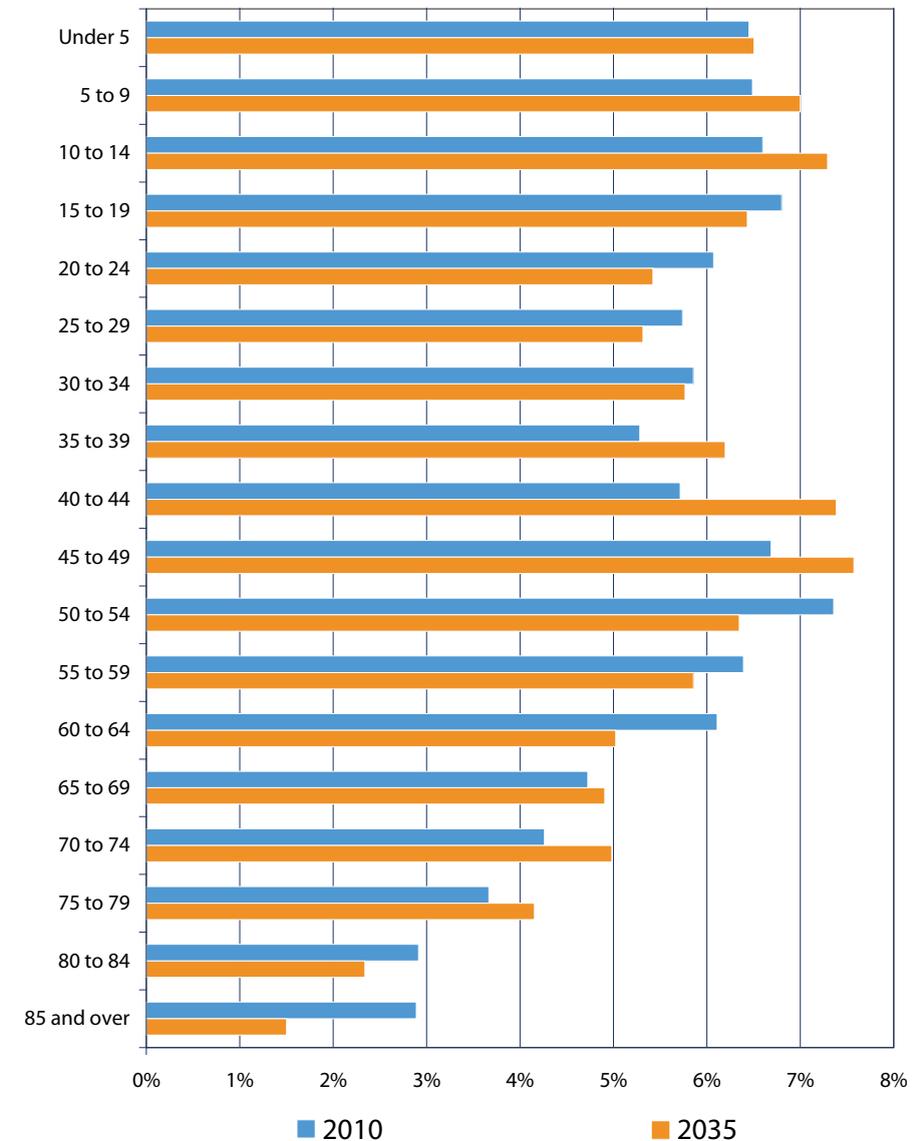
Household Growth Forecast

The household is the basic unit in economic analyses, especially regarding consumer spending, retail market demand, and residential development. To forecast the number of households in Yucca Valley through 2035, this analysis compared four different projections. Figure 3-8 shows the trend in household growth from 1992 through 2011, the four different projections, and the resulting forecast for the total number of households in Yucca Valley from 2011 through 2035.

The "DOF" household trend is a projection of the number of households based on the state Department of Finance's estimates of the number of households in the Town in each year from 1992 through 2011. The "employment trend" projection reflects the average number of households per job in Yucca Valley and the projected increase in employment presented previously. The "demographic trend" projection represents the increase in population presented previously and the trend in average household size. Finally, the "SCAG projection" reflects the number of households SCAG projects for Yucca Valley as part of the Regional Transportation Plan.

The forecast for total number of households assumes that household growth will follow the lowest projection through 2015, and from there, the annual increase would be the average suggested by the four projections. The

Figure 3-7: Share of the Total Population by Age Group, Yucca Valley, 2010 and 2035



Source: The Planning Center|DC&E, 2011.

analysis forecasts that Yucca Valley would increase from 8,280 households in 2011 to 11,890 households in 2035, an increase of 3,610 and a growth rate of 1.5 percent per year.

The household forecast is used to determine the demand for residential and retail development in subsequent sections of the Community Profile. Should the General Plan Update incorporate planning and policies that either limit household growth or facilitate higher rates of growth, both the retail and residential development forecasts would change.

Residential Development

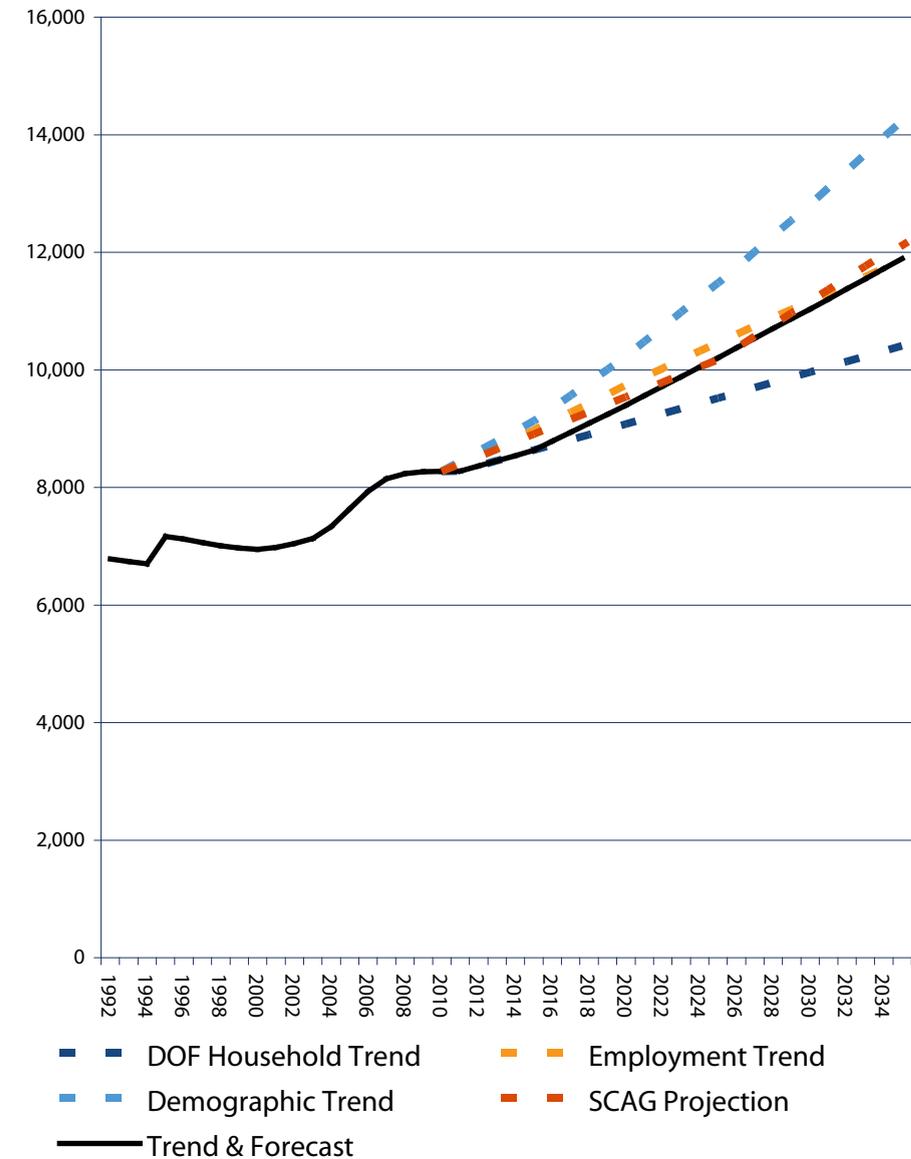
At the simplest level, the long-term demand for housing equates to the long-term forecast for growth in households. Yucca Valley would thus need to accommodate the development of about 3,610 housing units from 2011 to 2035. Such a calculation, however, leaves out an important consideration for planning: what types of housing should the Town plan for?

In 2000, single-family detached housing accounted for about 76 percent of the Town’s housing stock. Over the subsequent ten years, however, single-family detached units account for about 97 percent of the housing constructed in Yucca Valley, increasing its share of total housing to 80 percent. For the General Plan Update, the question becomes whether or not the market will continue to provide single-family detached housing almost exclusively as well as what housing opportunities and types of neighborhoods residents desire Yucca Valley to have available in 2035. This section describes some looming changes in market demand and provides a forecast for residential development.

Demographic Shifts

The progression of the baby boom generation from their first apartment rentals through their first home purchase to move-up family housing fueled housing development trends from the 1970s through the 2000s. Much common knowledge and awareness of housing has been built on the demand for single-family detached housing that satisfied the needs of the baby boomers.

Figure 3-8: Household Growth, Yucca Valley, 1992 through 2035



Source: The Planning Center|DC&E, 2011, using data from the CA Department of Finance, the US Census Bureau, and the Southern California Association of Governments.

Moving forward, however, demographics are shifting. Baby boomers no longer need larger houses. In fact, market research indicates that a sizeable portion of the boomers will seek to downsize to smaller housing as they age into and through retirement. At the same time, their children, now in their teens and early adulthood, will, like their parents, need more rental housing opportunities. The smaller baby bust generation is moving through the family-forming and trade-up housing stage of life. Because this age group is smaller, there will be less demand for this type of housing.

Professor Arthur Nelson, director of the Metropolitan Research Center at the University of Utah, suggests that three factors—the aging of the baby boomers through the empty nest stage and into retirement; the movement of echo boomers out of their parents' home and into their own homes; and the increasing numbers of minorities as a share of national households—will drive future market demand. He projects that multi-family housing will constitute 85 percent of the new housing units built nationally through 2030.

Focusing on Southern California, the State Department of Finance demographic projections suggest that the number of people aged 20 to 29 (an age group made up primarily of renters) will increase by 480,000 from 2010 to 2020, accounting for approximately 33.6 percent of all population growth in the primary home-buying ages of 20 to 69. Those aged 30 to 39 (the age group by which a majority of households have purchased a first home) are also projected to also grow, but account for less than 30 percent of population growth. Those aged 40 to 59 (an age group in which households are trading up to larger and/or higher quality housing and neighborhoods) will decline by 88,000, meaning a smaller pool of potential purchasers for larger family housing. Finally, the population aged 60 to 69 will grow by 623,000, or 44 percent of population growth in the home-buying age groups. Thus, over the next ten years, the majority of population growth will be in the age groups that are more likely to favor multi-family and smaller housing units.

From 2020 to 2030, though, the pattern is expected to change. All of the echo boomers that fueled market demand for apartments will be moving into the first-time homebuyer and trade-up housing age groups. Demand in the younger apartment-living age group falls off, but demand in the older

down-sizing age group continues strongly. Figures 3-9 and 3-10 show the relative population changes in these age groups from 2010 to 2020 and from 2020 to 2030, respectively.

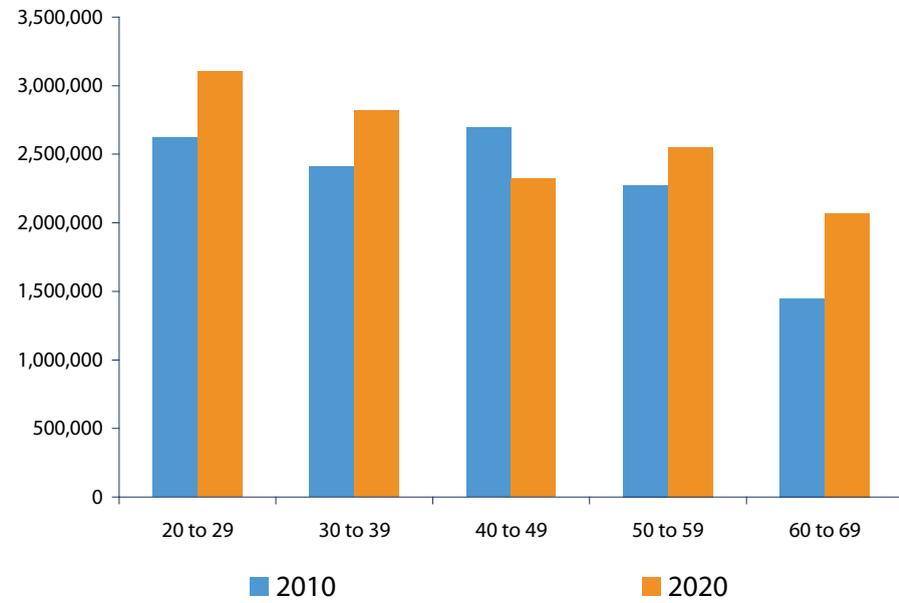
Housing Projection

Through 2035, Yucca Valley has the potential to grow by 3,610 households. If past trends are an indication, the vast majority of those new households will be moving into single-family detached housing. However, the demographics of the region suggest that there will be a shrinking pool of households in the age ranges that typically buy such housing. Furthermore, the community might decide that an increase in other forms of housing are needed to serve other community values, such as providing housing options for those growing up in Yucca Valley or for those older residents who are ready to downsize to smaller housing.



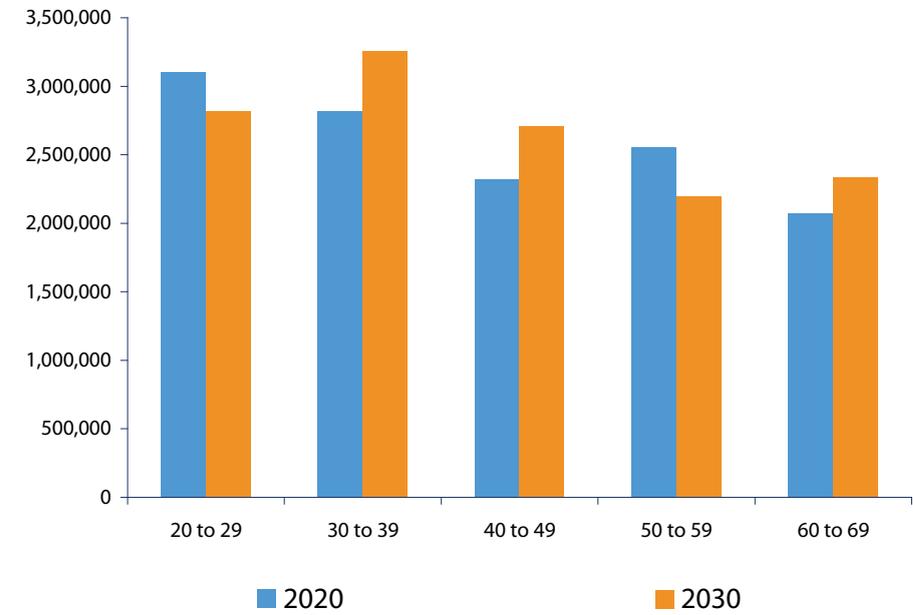
A relaxing evening at the Music Festival.

Figure 3-9: Population Change by Age Group, Southern California, 2010–2020



Source: The Planning Center|DC&E, 2011, using data from the CA Department of Finance.

Figure 3-10: Population Change by Age Group, Southern California, 2020–2030



Source: The Planning Center|DC&E, 2011, using data from the CA Department of Finance.



Grubstake Days.

If single-family detached housing accounts for the same portion of new construction as it has in the past ten years, then the Town will need to accommodate 3,460 new single-family detached homes and 150 new multifamily units. If the community desired to maintain the current ratio of single-family to multi-family housing, then the Town will have to accommodate 2,890 single-family houses and 720 multi-family units. As a final example, if the community desired to return to the ratio of single-family to multi-family housing that existed in 2000, the Town will have to accommodate 2,230 single-family units and 1,380 new multi-family units. There are many trade-offs and economic factors involved in the plans and policies that the Town will formulate in the General Plan Update, and these various levels of housing construction are intended to support community discussions about the future of Yucca Valley. Figure 3-11 illustrates the amount of housing by type assuming that present construction trends continue.

Non-Residential Development

Growth in households and consumer spending primarily drives the demand for retail development, while economic and employment growth drives the demand for other non-residential types of development. The following analysis covers the retail demand and the demand for other non-residential development types.

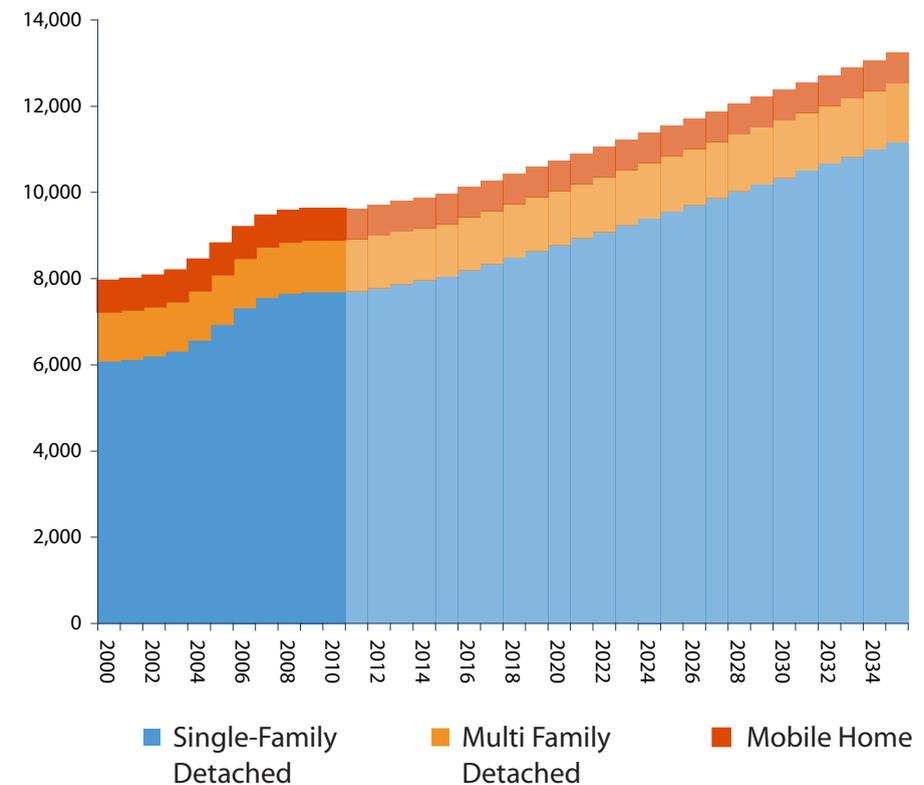
Retail Development Projection

An earlier section of the Community Profile forecast that if present trends continue, the Town of Yucca Valley will grow by about 3,610 households through 2035. If household incomes and consumer spending patterns remain the same, this level of household growth could support the development of approximately 243,000 square feet of additional retail building space.

However, Yucca Valley attracts consumer spending by residents outside of the Town, including those living in rural subdivisions and in smaller communities that are not large enough to support a full array of retailers. With the additional household growth in those areas and assuming that Yucca Valley maintains most of its ability to attract their consumer spending,

the Town might see support for a total of approximately 435,000 square feet of additional retail building space. Table 3-1 quantifies the amount of retail building space that household growth could be supported in the Town of Yucca Valley from 2011 to 2035.

Figure 3-11: Residential Development Trend and Projection in Total Housing Units by Type, Yucca Valley, 2000 through 2035



Source: The Planning Center|DC&E, 2011.

Note: Projection assumes that single-family housing accounts for 96 percent of new units constructed and that the number of mobile homes does not change.

Table 3-1: Increase in Supportable Retail Building Space (in building square footage) by Type of Store, Based on Projected 2011 to 2035 Household Growth

Retail Store Type	Supportable Retail (Sq. Ft.) by Yucca Valley Household Growth (2011-2035)	Supportable Retail (Sq. Ft.) by Regional Household Growth (2011-2035)
Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores	10,500	31,500
Electronics and Appliance Stores	7,400	0
Building Material, Garden Equipment Stores	23,700	29,500
Food and Beverage Stores	31,900	54,800
Health and Personal Care Stores	21,500	39,200
Gasoline Stations	9,400	29,600
Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores	17,000	75,500
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, Music Stores	8,000	19,400
General Merchandise Stores	47,500	100
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	13,700	41,200
Food Service and Drinking Places	40,000	98,000
Personal Services	12,100	16,100
Total	242,700	434,900

Source: The Planning Center|DC&E, 2011.

Other Non-Residential Development Projection

The growth in economic activity and employment drives the demand for commercial, office, and industrial land demand. The Employment and Economics Section projected the potential economic growth that the Town could expect over the next twenty years if present trends continue.

The projected amount of other non-residential development represents the potential market based on the employment projection. Table 3-2 indicates the amount of development and acreage required based on the potential market if present trends continue. Should the community decide that more robust economic development efforts are warranted to expand employment opportunities in the town, the non-residential development projections will be subject to revision.

The analysis finds that Yucca Valley could develop up to about 745,000 square feet of non-residential building space through 2035. If built out at a floor-to-area ratio of 0.25, then the town would need about 68 acres of land to accommodate this level of development.

Table 3-2: Non-Residential Development Projection, Yucca Valley, 2011 to 2035

	Retail	Commercial	Office	Industrial	Total
20-year Employment Increase	490	600	510	220	1,820
Market Demand Potential (bldg. sq. ft.)	243,000	211,000	128,000	163,000	745,000
Assumed FAR	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25
Land Area Required (acres)	22	19	12	15	68

Source: The Planning Center|DC&E, 2011.

Fiscal Sustainability

Yucca Valley, like most municipalities in California and elsewhere in the United States, is learning to manage its public facilities and services in a new era of highly constrained public revenues resulting from the collapse of the housing and financial services sector, the ensuing recession, and the slow economic recovery. With California's inability to address its structural budget deficits, Yucca Valley cannot even be certain which revenues will be available from year to year. Nevertheless, during General Plan update, the community should consider the impacts of land use and development on the Town's financial health and resiliency. This section describes the Town's revenue and expenditure trends and projects future revenue and expenditures if present trends continue.

Revenues

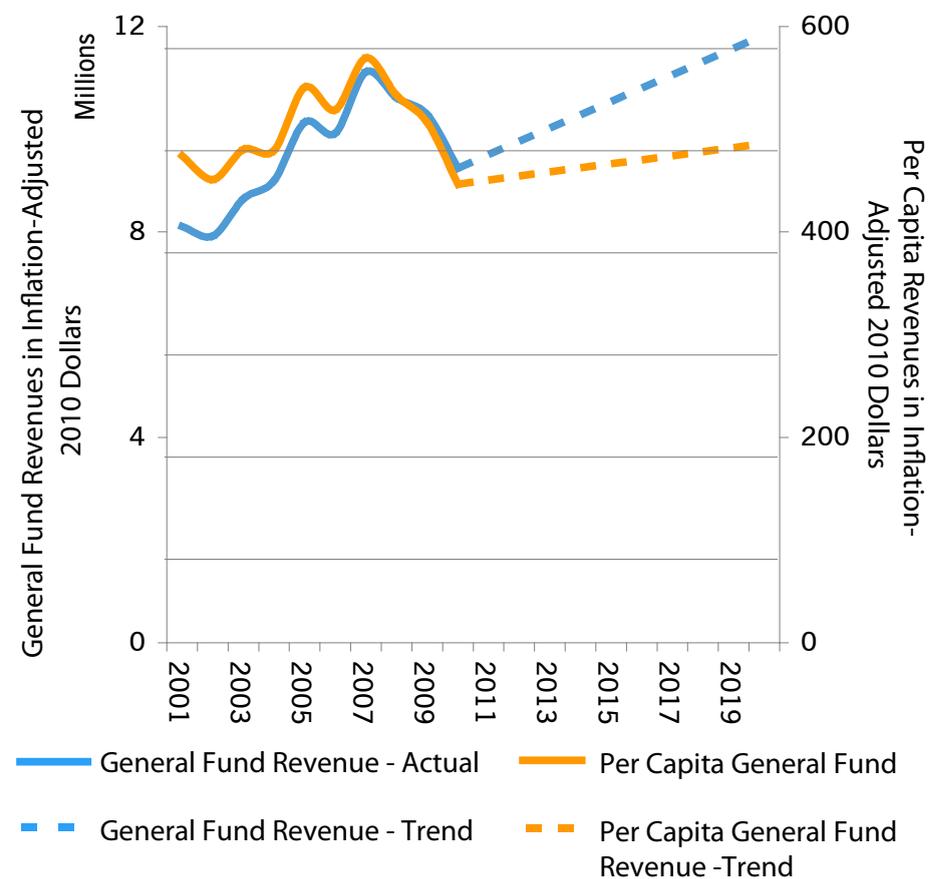
The Town's general fund revenues increased from \$6.3 million in 2001 to \$10.5 million in 2007, then decreased to \$9.2 million through 2010 as the economic recession began to affect municipal finances. Nevertheless, total revenues in 2010 were still higher than they were in 2006 and 47 percent higher than in 2001. Even adjusting for inflation, the Town's real 2010 revenues were actually 14 percent higher than in 2001, although the lowest since 2004.

The overall inflation-adjusted trend from 2001 through 2010, though, shows an average annual growth rate of about 2.8 percent per year. If that trend continues, Yucca Valley's revenues could increase by \$2.6 million, growing to \$11.8 million by 2020, in inflation-adjusted terms. Under this rate of growth, the Town could return to its 2007 high in general fund revenues by 2018. The projected revenues assume, however, that the current economic expansion continues and that the state does not enact new provisions to take local revenues for the state's budget.

Even more important than the trends in total revenues is the trend in per capita revenues. Because a majority of local expenditures provide public facilities and services to residents, the revenues per capita indicate whether or not a municipality is generating more or less revenues over time relative to potential service demands. On an inflation-adjusted basis, Yucca Valley's

per capita total revenues in 2010 were nearly 6 percent lower than they were in 2001. Nevertheless, the trend in per capita revenues from 2001 through 2010 is one of upward growth. If present trends continue, Yucca Valley's per capita revenues would increase by about 0.8 percent per year, generating increasing revenues relative to population growth and the demand for services. Figure 3-12 shows the actual general fund revenues and the projection through 2020 if present trends continue.

Figure 3-12: Inflation-Adjusted General Fund Revenues, Total and Total per Capita, Yucca Valley, 2001 through 2010 Actual and 2011 through 2020 Projected



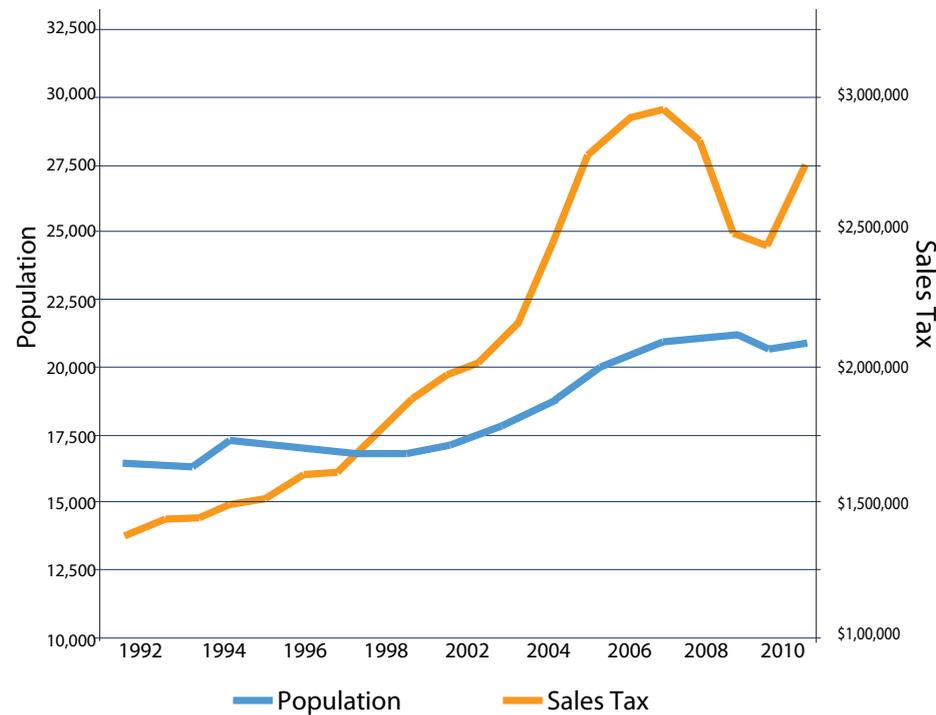
Source: The Planning Center|DC&E, 2011, using data from the Town of Yucca Valley and inflation data from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Sales tax revenues are a key component of municipal finance in California, because these funds are not restricted. The Town can use sales tax revenues to fund priority projects and services. Yucca Valley's sales tax revenue has shown an increasing trend since the Town's incorporation. Figure XX shows sales tax revenues and population, showing that sales taxes have outpaced population growth. And even though the Town did experience a three-year decline with the recession, sales tax revenues are rebounding this year and are expected to continue to increase.

Expenditures

In inflation-adjusted terms, the Town's general fund expenditures increased from \$7.8 million in 2001 to \$11.5 million in 2007, and then decreased to \$9.2 million in 2010. Overall through this period, though, the general trend is of increasing expenditures, growing about 3.3 percent per year. If this trend continues, the Town's total expenditures would increase by \$2.9 million through 2020. This rate of growth, however, would exceed the potential rate

Figure 3-13: Sales Tax Reliability, Yucca Valley, 1992 through 2010

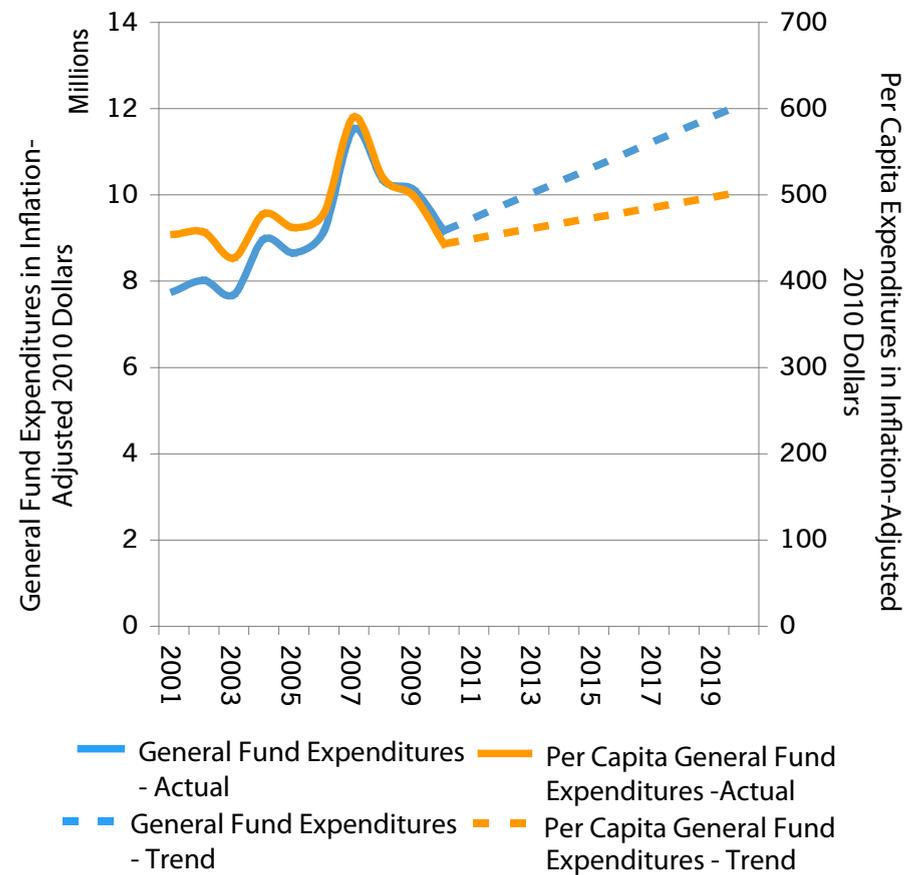


Source: Town of Yucca Valley, 2011.

of growth in revenues. Thus, the Town will have to continue to manage and balance its budget over time because expenditures cannot exceed revenues.

In per capita terms the trend in real expenditures is also upward. From 2001 through 2010, the growth rate trend in per capita expenditures, 1.3 percent per year, is higher than the growth rate trend in per capita revenues, 0.8 percent per year. This suggests that the Town will continue to face budgetary pressures as the amount of revenues coming in would be insufficient to continue increasing the level of spending per capita.

Figure 3-14: Inflation-Adjusted General Fund Expenditures, Total and Total per Capita, Yucca Valley, 2001 through 2010 Actual and 2011 through 2020 Projected



Source: The Planning Center|DC&E, 2011, using data from the Town of Yucca Valley and inflation data from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Sustainability of Fiscal Trends

Although Yucca Valley has managed its finances and has reserve funds, the trends in inflation-adjusted revenues and expenditures indicate that the Town will have to manage expectations for increasing services. The long-term trends are not insurmountable obstacles.

Yucca Valley requires new development to form assessment districts for street, drainage, and parkway maintenance programs to ensure that new development pays for maintenance costs created as a result of development. This approach ensures that new development does not result

in the reduction of service levels to the existing community. The Town is also considering a sales tax measure that if approved by the voters would generate additional revenues for street and park maintenance, in addition to providing significant funding for the State mandated wastewater treatment and collection system.

The General Plan Update provides the community with an opportunity to evaluate its growth and development patterns and economic development strategies. One consideration in this process should be whether or not Yucca Valley should place a greater emphasis on attracting non-residential development and expand economic activity in order to generate higher revenues.