

Community Focus Statement D: Grow the local economy in a manner consistent with the rural desert character.

Action Statement D.2: Encourage the sustainable development of lodging for Joshua Tree National Park visitors and advocate for responsible short-term rental (e.g., Airbnb) operations.

D2

Benchmark: Joshua Tree has adequate, sustainable, and varied lodging for visitors.

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

Estimated Cost: Variable depending on lodging facilities proposed



Joshua Tree National Park attracts visitors from all over the world, many of whom use short-term rentals in the area. Photo source: Michael Baker International

Having adequate and affordable lodging available increases visitors to the area and helps spur local economic activity. Low-cost rentals are especially in high demand in California. As a popular tourist destination, Joshua Tree could benefit from increasing the supply of affordable overnight lodging. Campgrounds, RV parks, and low-cost motels are traditional methods of meeting this need, but the community can also look to short-term rentals such as Airbnb for the provision of affordable accommodations. With proper regulation, short-term rentals increase the availability of low-cost lodging and can contribute to the friendly, welcoming culture of the community. The County has an adopted short-term rental code.

Several methods could aid in maintaining or increasing the amount of available low-cost lodging. Zoning, impact fees for displacement of existing low-cost facilities, requirements for a percentage of low-cost rooms at new or existing hotels, and allowances for smaller rooms are all ways to reduce lodging costs and increase options for visitors. While Joshua Tree is not located near the coastal zone, coastal cities can serve as examples for ways to increase lodging inventory and reduce their cost since they are required to provide for low-cost accommodations per the California Coastal Act.

Action Statements D1, D2, and D3 could be completed together.

| Action | Action Leader | Timeline | Resources |
|---|--|---------------|--|
| 1. Review the Zoning Code to ensure there are adequate areas for overnight lodging, including campgrounds, to locate. | Economic Development Committee | Months 1 – 2 | Airbnb & Zoning: A Planner & Lawyer’s Guide to Short-Term Rentals [Webinar] https://www.planning.org/events/eventsingle/9102266/ |
| 2. Advocate for accommodations with a variety of amenities and room sizes to provide options for guests. | Economic Development Committee | Months 2 – 6 | How to Effectively Regulate Airbnb-Style Short-Term Rentals [webinar] http://www.icompasstech.com/webinars |
| 3. Lobby County to allow short-term rentals in Joshua Tree under the County’s current short-term rental regulations. | Economic Development Committee Joshua Tree Chamber of Commerce, with support from the community | Months 6 – 12 | The Definitive Guide to Crafting Short-Term Rental Ordinances [webinar] http://www.icompasstech.com/webinars |