Empowering Communities Through the GNAR Initiative

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GATEWAY AND
NATURAL AMENITY REGION
INITIATIVE

EXTENSION
UtahStateUniversity.

The GNAR Initiative

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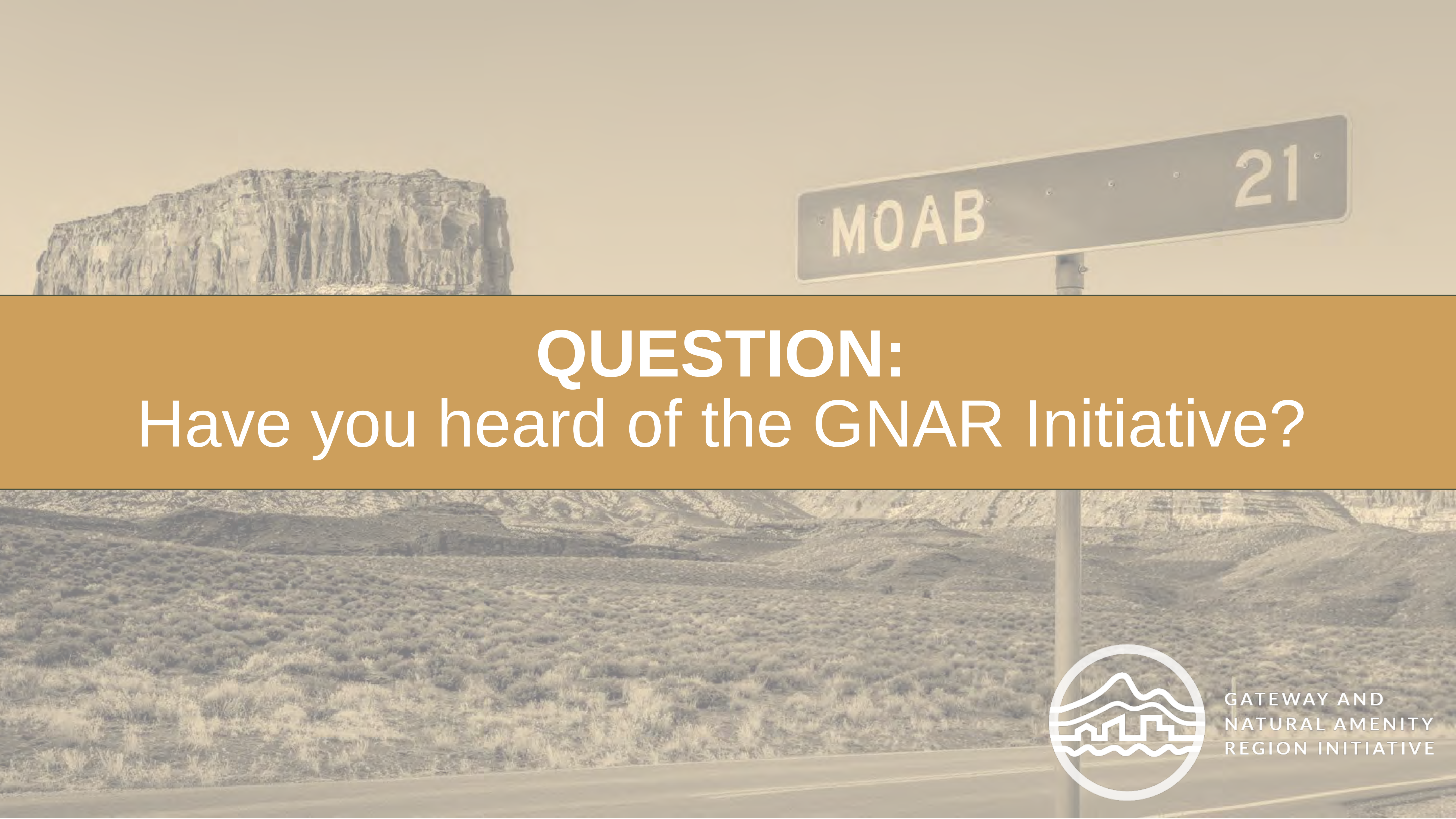
GNAR?



QUESTION:
Have you heard of the GNAR Initiative?

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Who is GNAR?

Gateway
…to a state or national park, national forest, BLM recreational area, protected cultural heritage site, or other prominent public lands

Natural **A**menity
…community and economic development is closely tied to landscape and natural assets utilized for recreation, tourism, and outdoor-based leisure

Region
…part of a larger region with similar attributes AND/OR a region surrounding a resort-like community

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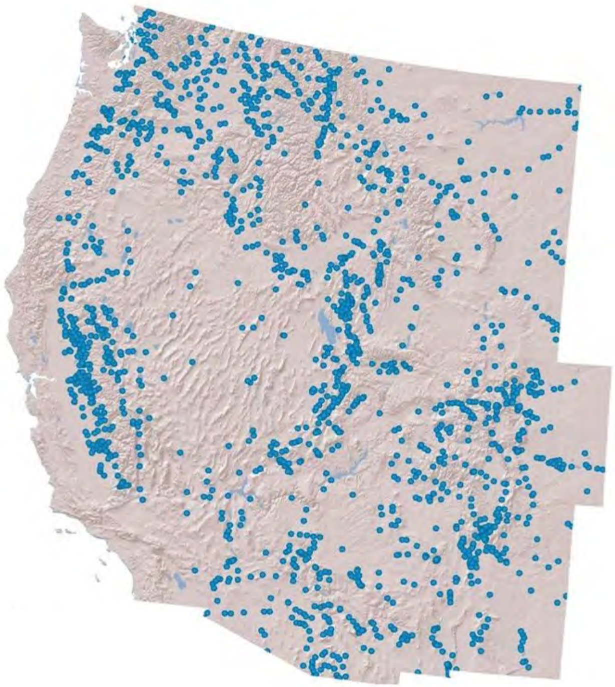
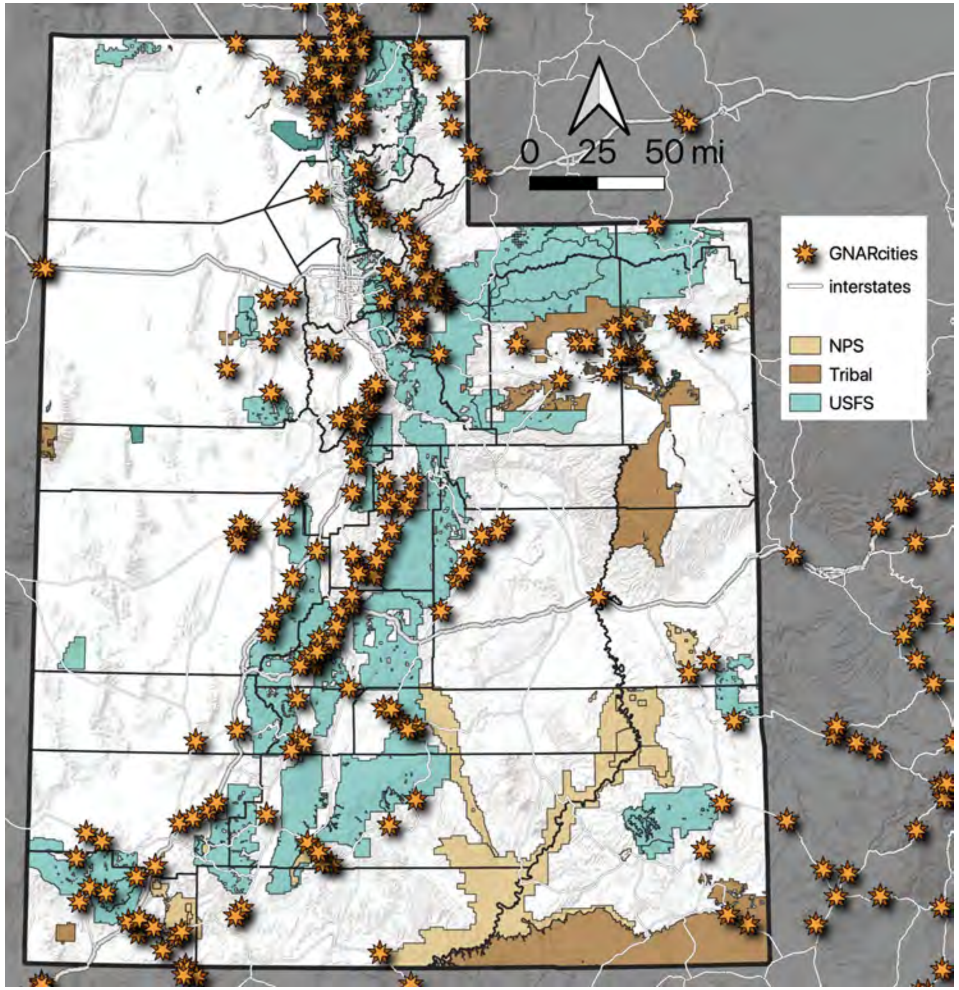
Who is GNAR?

- Small town
  - 150-25,000 people
- Proximity to natural amenities
  - Within 10 miles of a national park, state park, national forest, lake, scenic river, etc.,
- Not in an urbanized area
  - Further than 15 miles from an urbanized area by road

Who is GNAR?

- 1522 GNAR communities
    - 821 incorporated cities
    - 701 Census designated places
- 30.6% of Mountain West communities
- 61.1% of "small" Mountain West communities

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GNARcities
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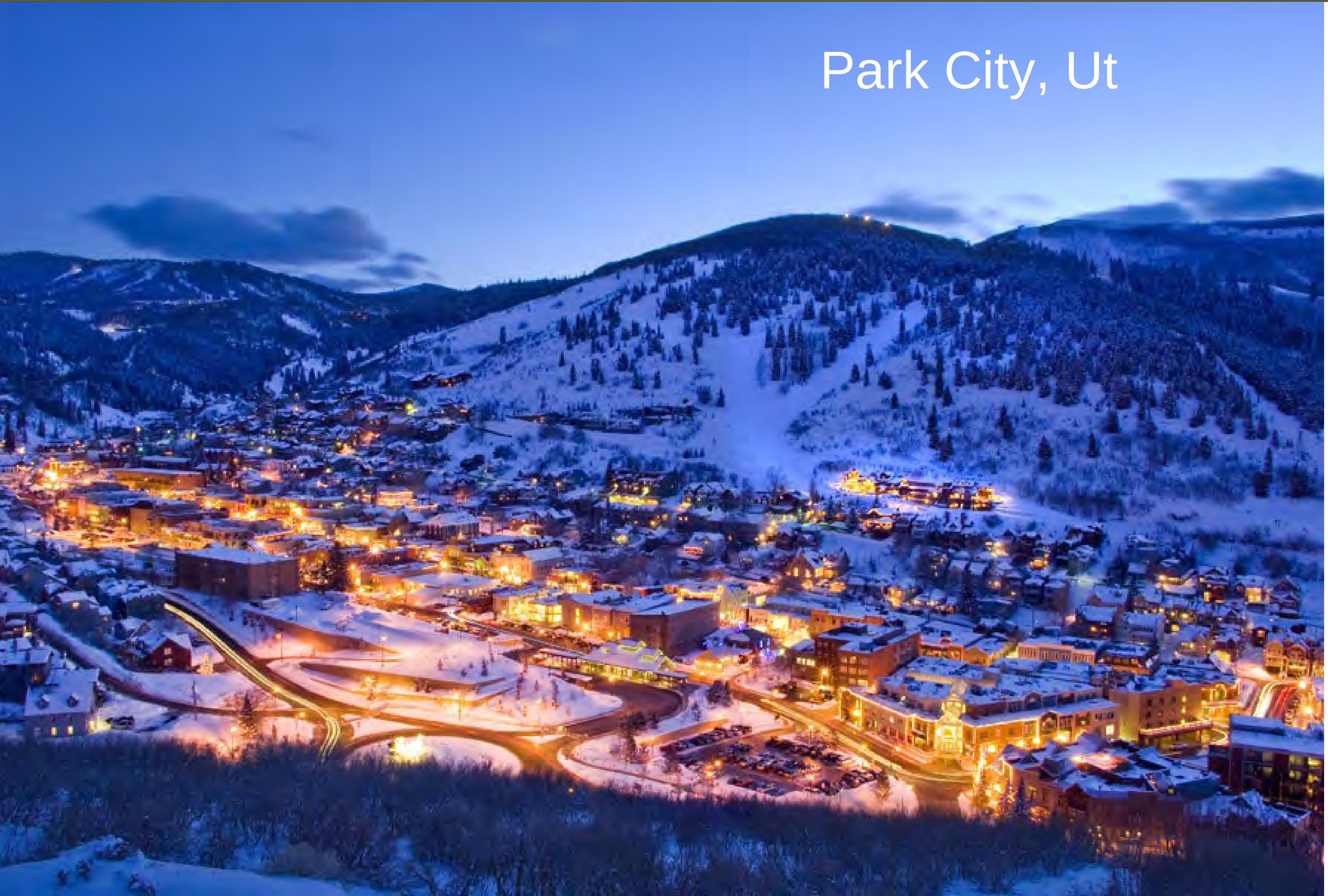
What is GNAR?



Park City, Ut

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What is a GNAR?

Moab, Ut

Two National Parks
One Destination
MOAB
ere Adventure Begins

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What is a GNAR?

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What is a GNAR?

Telluride, Co

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GNAR-ly issues

Springdale, UT

SPRINGDALE
ZION · CANYON

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GNAR(ly) Challenges

Big city problems in small rural towns…

- Affordability and availability of housing
- Traffic/congestion/parking
- Short term/Long term rentals
- Climate change vulnerability/adaptation

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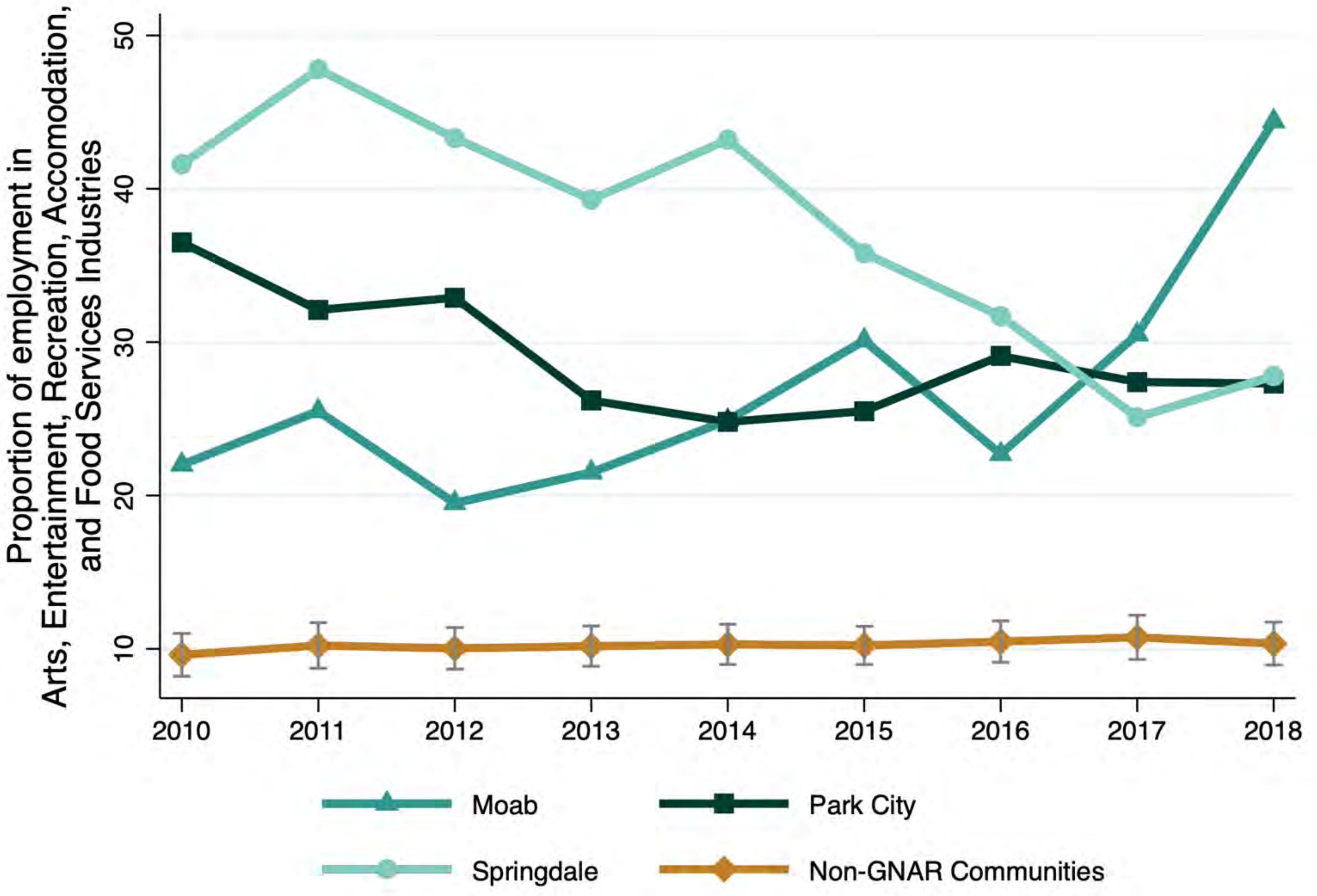
Big city problems in small rural towns…



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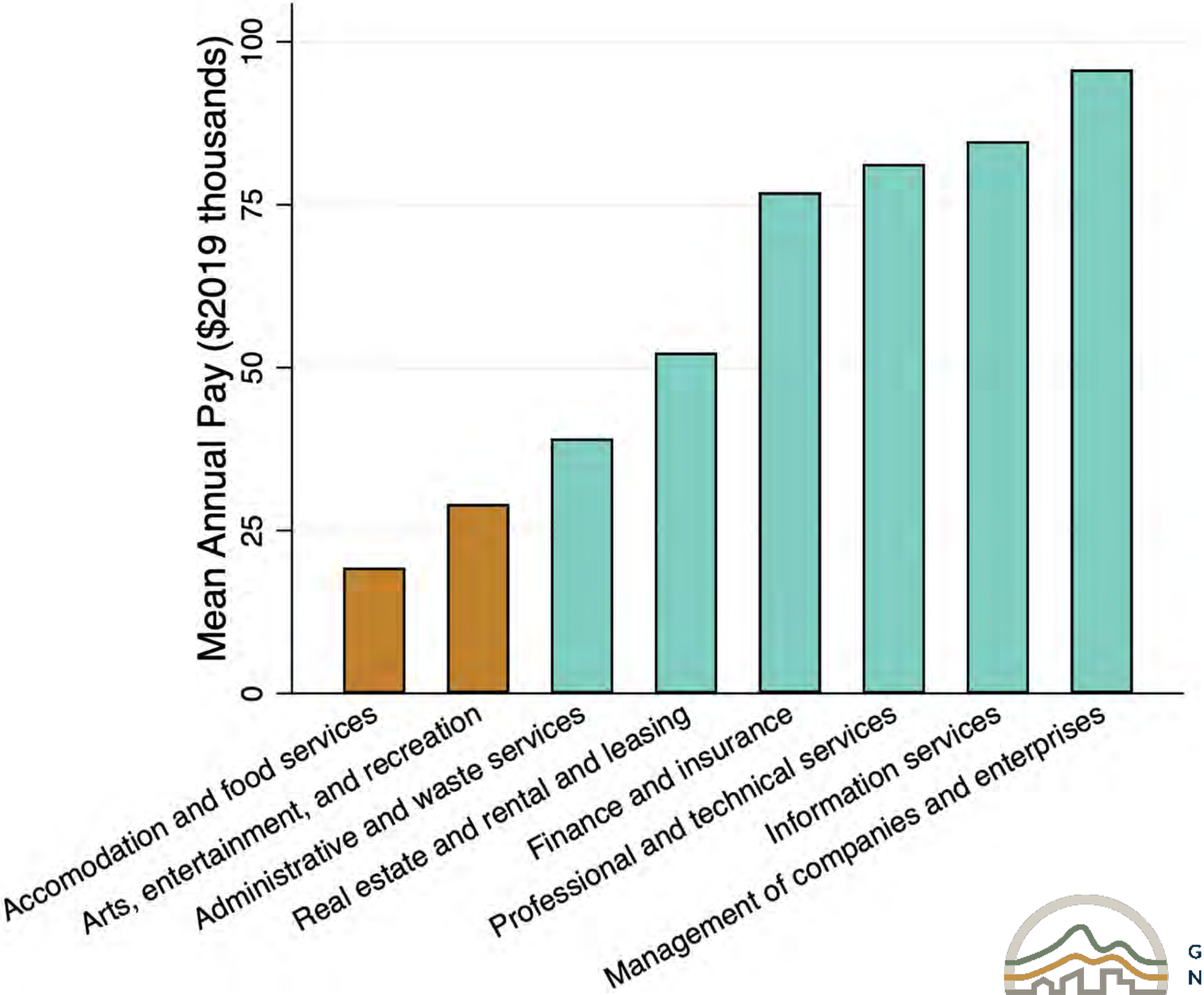
Big city problems in small rural towns…



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GNAR(ly) Challenges

Identity Crisis

A lot of GNAR communities say they don't want to be like:

- Vail, Aspen, or Breckenridge, CO
- Jackson, WY
- Moab, UT

Or to be:

- "A tourist trap"
- A big city
- Many say they want to maintain their "small town-ness"

On the other hand, some are concerned about becoming:

- "An abandoned small town"

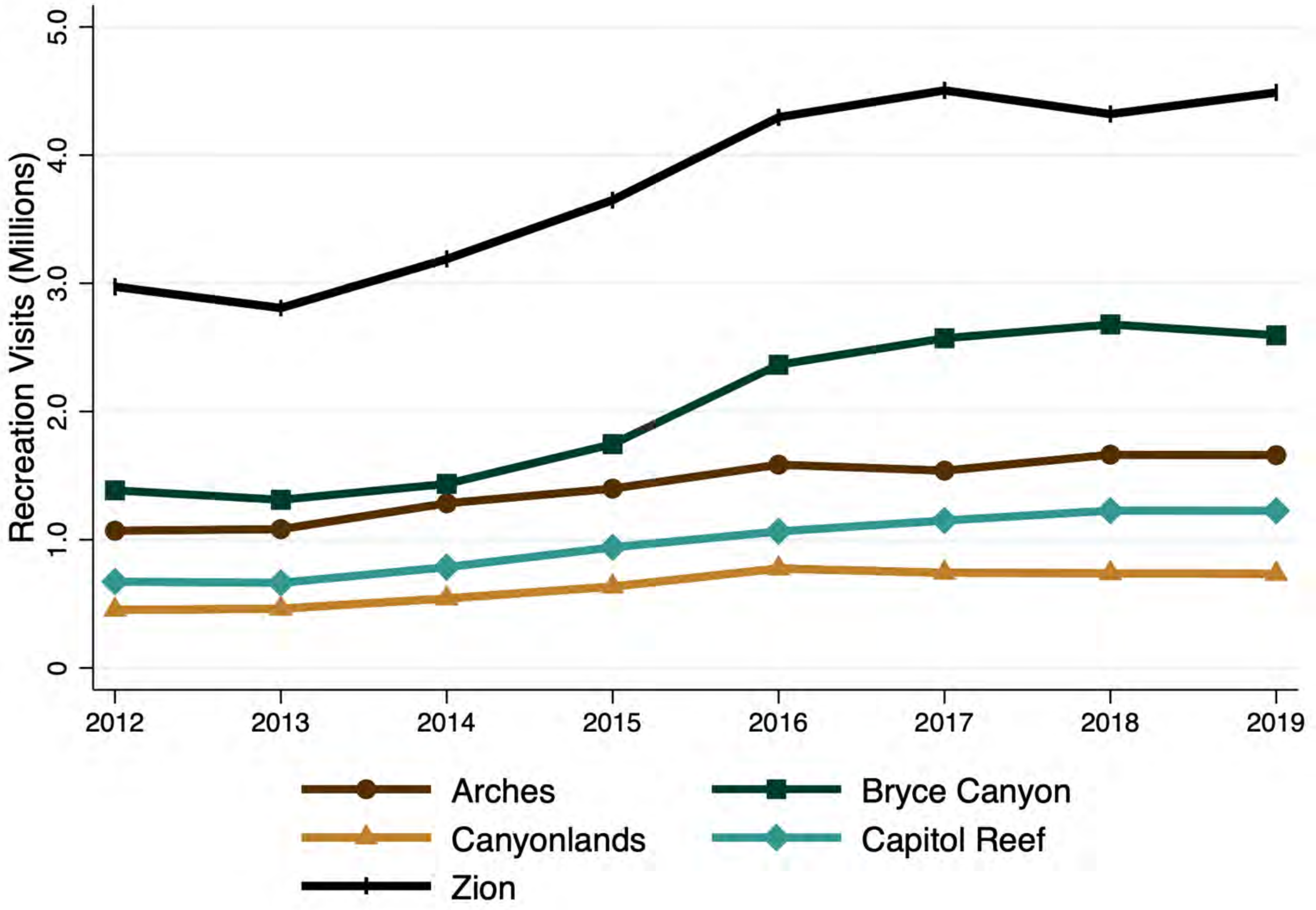
GNAR(ly) Challenges

Help Wanted!

GNAR communities want assistance with their planning, development, and sustainability issues

- Strong interest in:
  - Model ordinances
  - White papers on key topics
  - Case studies and lessons learned
  - Best practice guidelines for GNAR communities
  - Help with charrettes and design workshops
  - Models for regional collaboration
  - Information about different funding options
  - Forums (in person, webinars, etc) for peer-to-peer learning and sharing innovative ideas
- 95% said an online toolkit to support planning in GNAR communities would be helpful

GNAR-ly issues



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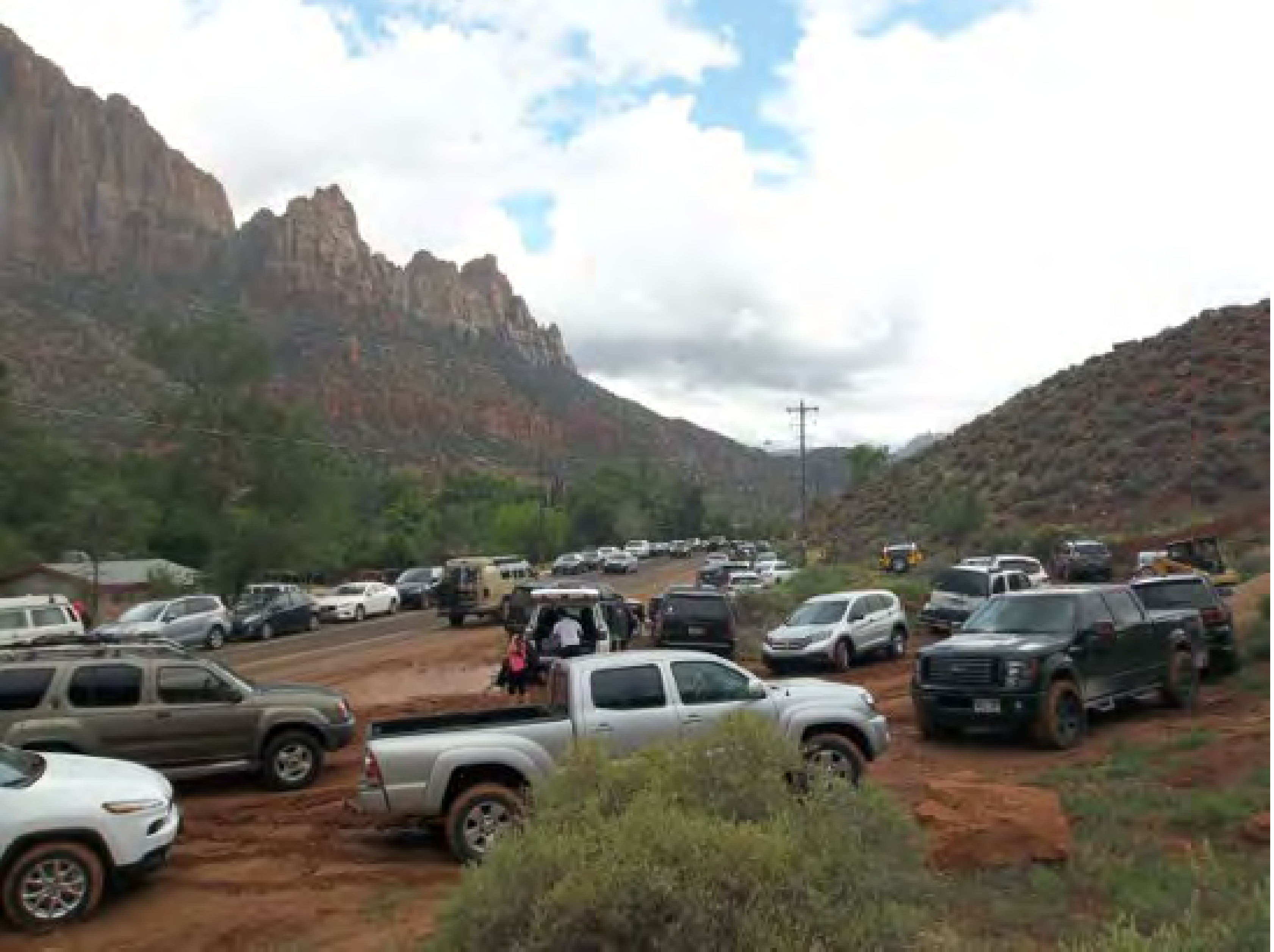
GNAR-ly issues



~4.5 Million Visitors in 2017-2019

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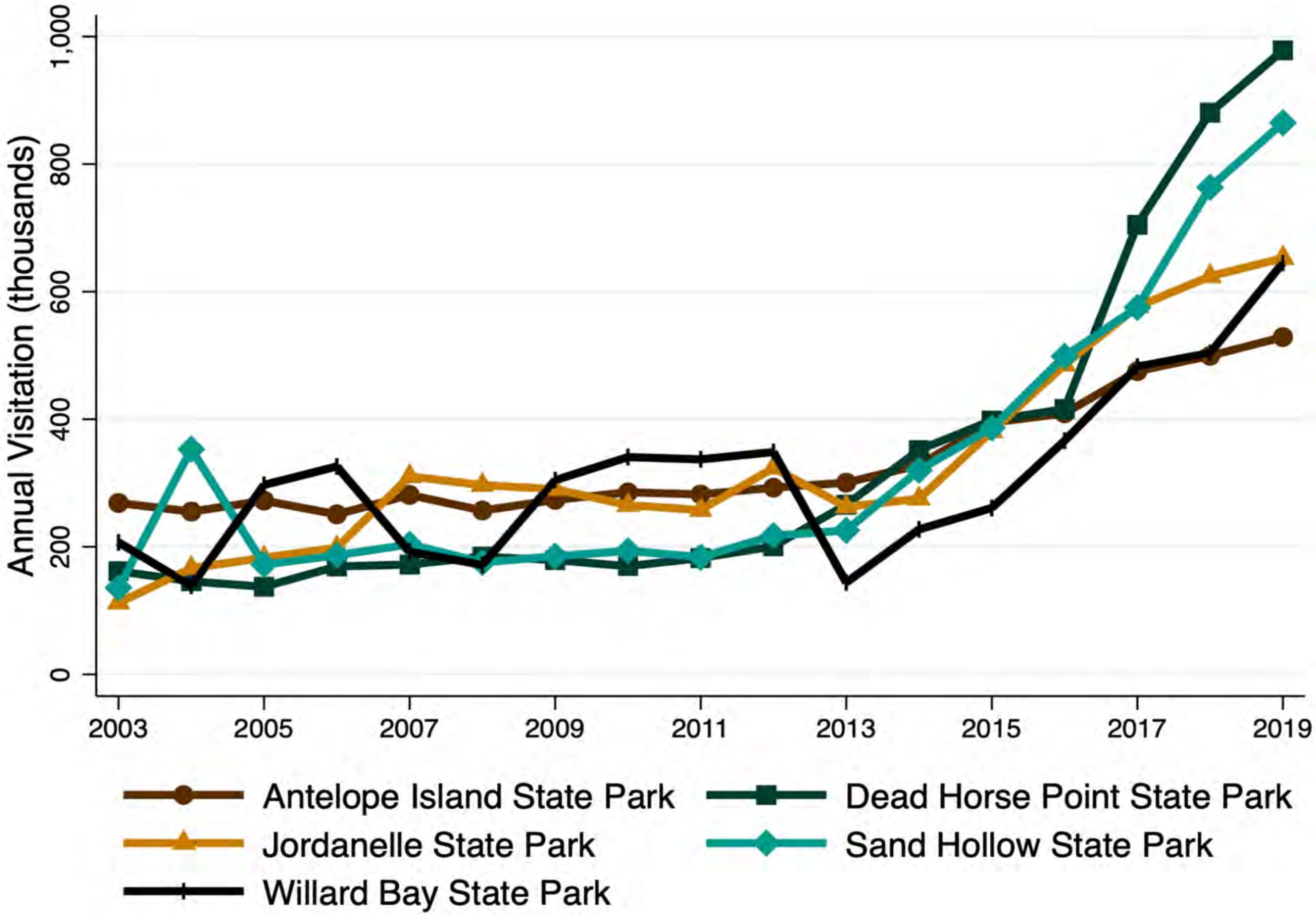
GNAR-ly issues



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QUESTION:

What’s the main challenge your community is facing right now?

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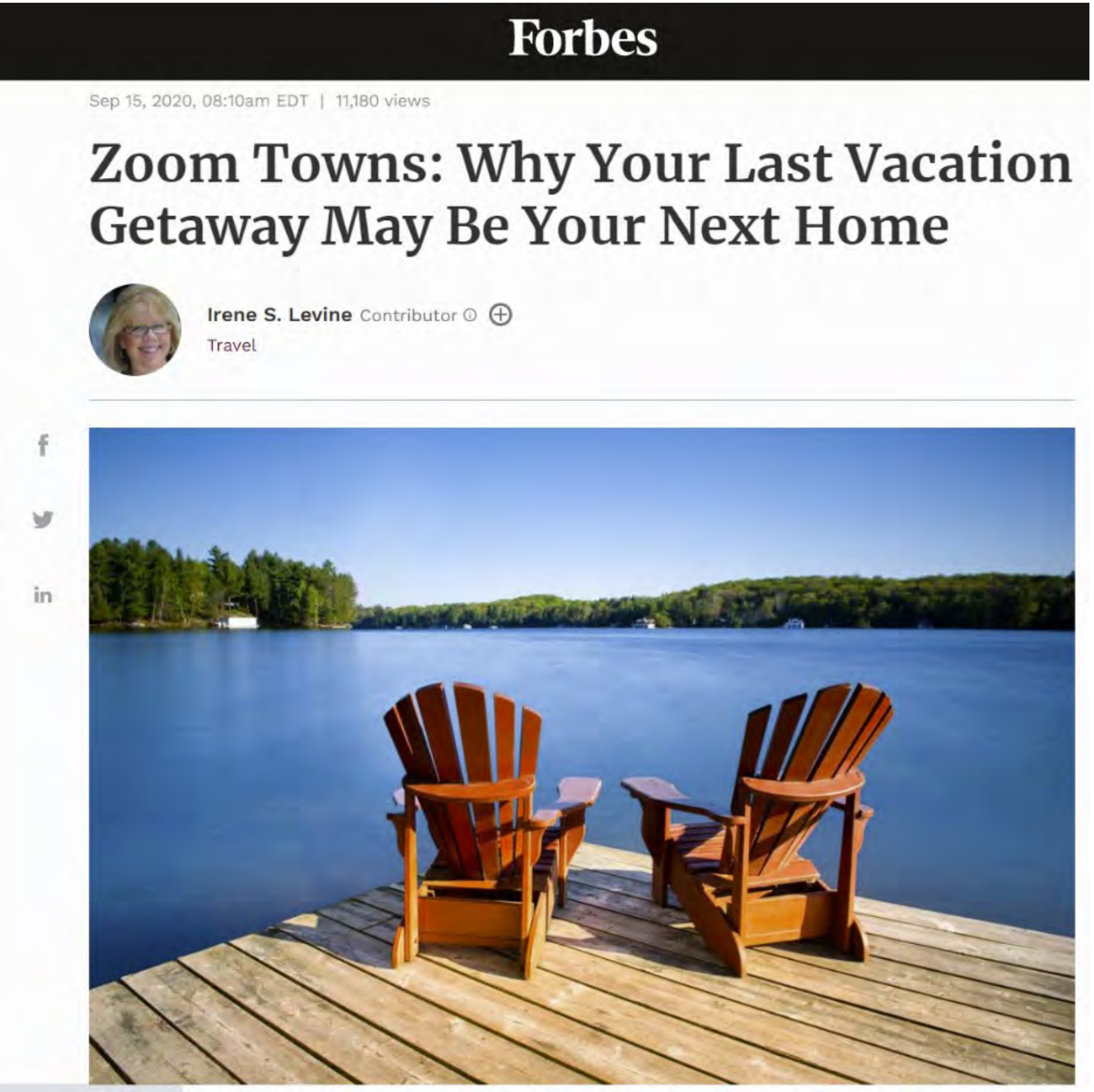
GNAR-ly-ER issues

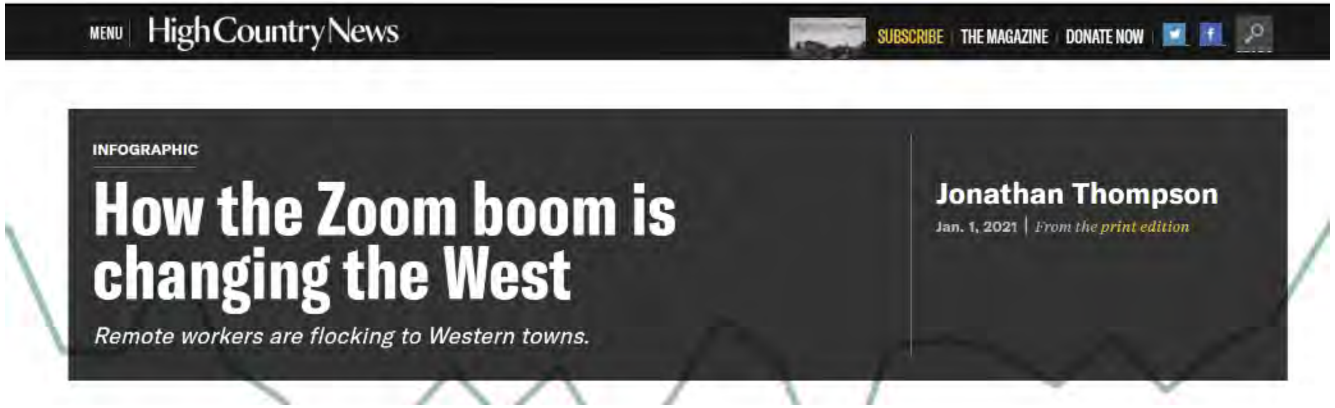


Sep 15, 2020, 08:10am EDT | 11,180 views

Zoom Towns: Why Your Last Vacation Getaway May Be Your Next Home

Irene S. Levine Contributor

Travel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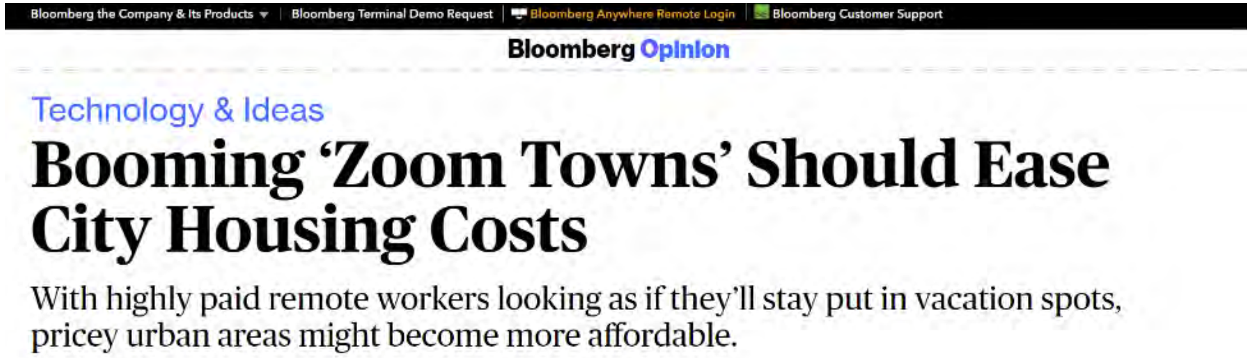
INFOGRAPHIC

How the Zoom boom is changing the West

Remote workers are flocking to Western towns.

Jonathan Thompson

Jan. 1, 2021 | *From the print edition*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Technology & Ideas

Booming 'Zoom Towns' Should Ease City Housing Costs

With highly paid remote workers looking as if they'll stay put in vacation spots, pricey urban areas might become more affordable.

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Laying the Groundwork

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THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

STATE

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INSTITUTE OF
OUTDOOR
RECREATION
AND TOURISM
UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY

Extension
UtahStateUniversity

THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH
S.J. QUINNEY COLLEGE OF LAW
Wallace Stegner Center for Land, Resources, and the Environment

Environmental Dispute Resolution Program

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“The GNAR Initiative exists to help western GNAR communities thrive and preserve the things that make them special.”

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Research

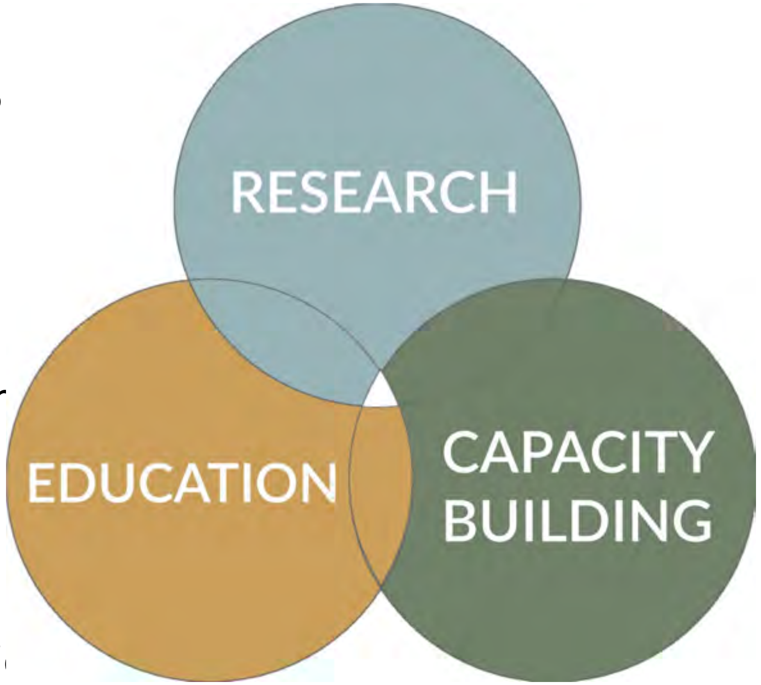
What are the challenges?
What are the opportunities?
What are communities doing to prepare and respond?

Education

Getting students out working in GNAR communities
Engaging students in research and developing tools
Training for public officials and community members ir
GNAR communities

Capacity Building

Technical Assistance
On-the-ground planning, urban design, and collaborati
assistance
Online toolkit
Tool and resource development
Peer-to-peer learning forums



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A GNAR-LY RESPONSE

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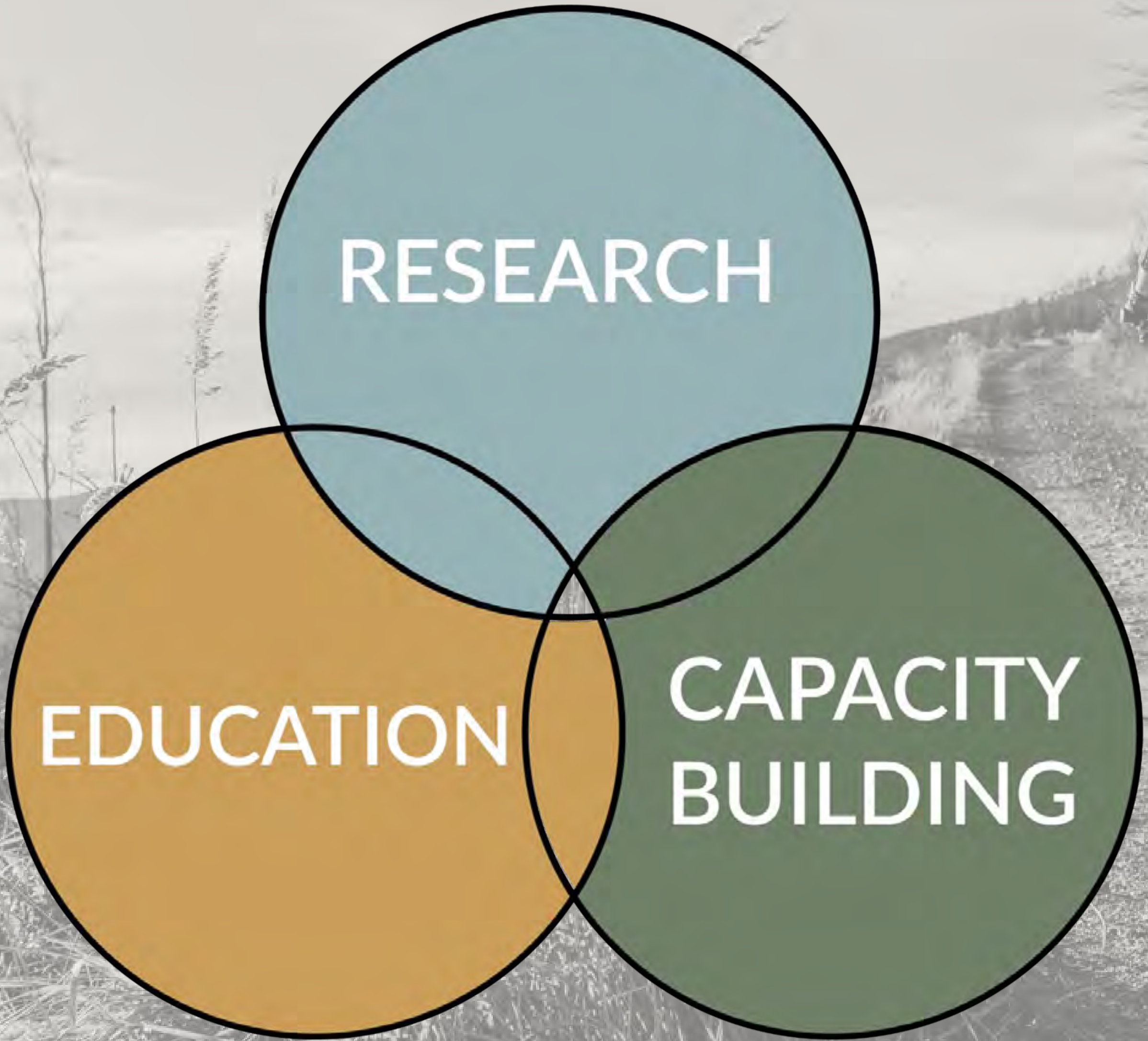
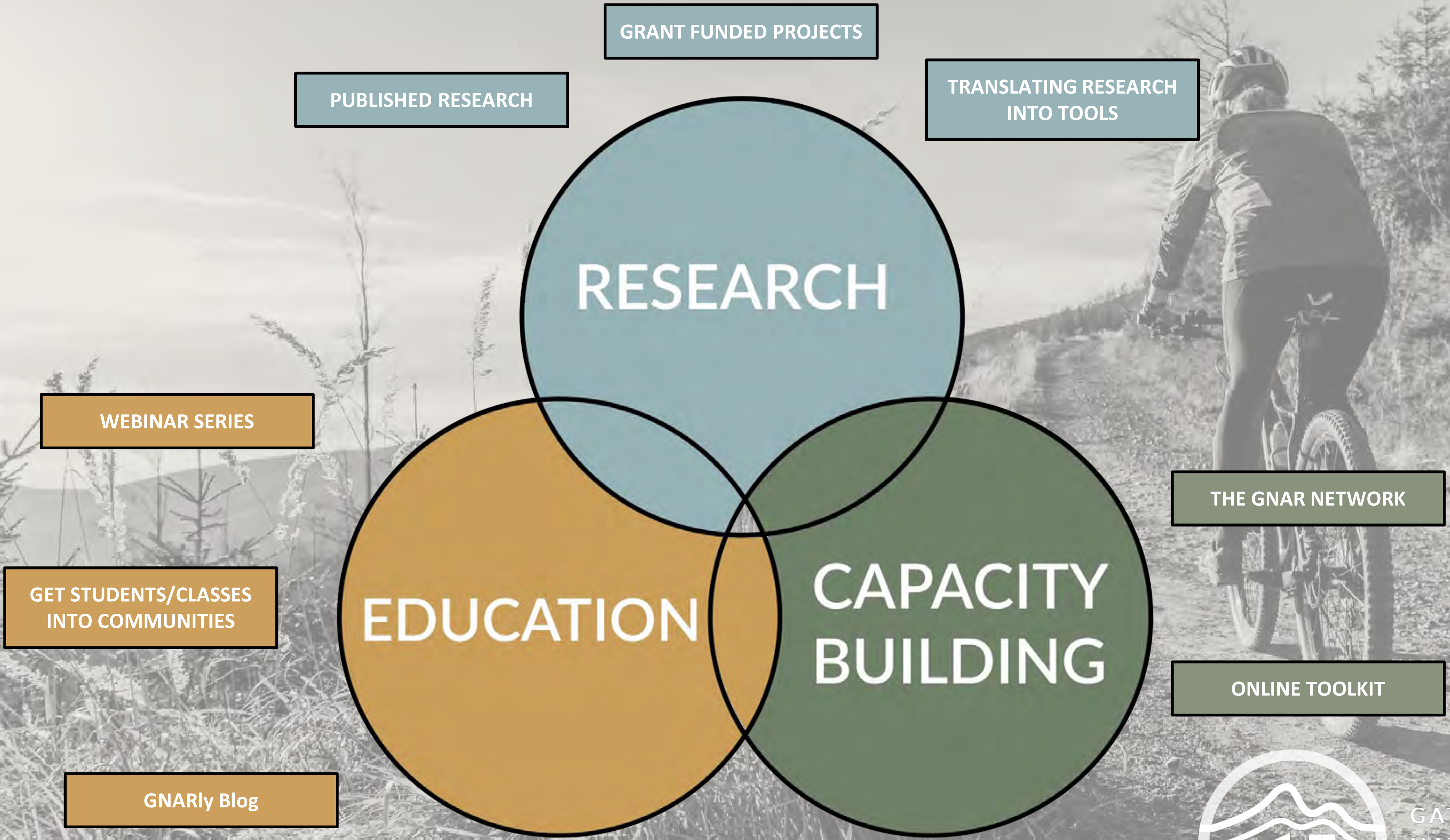


RESEARCH

EDUCATION

CAPACITY BUILDING



GRANT FUNDED PROJECTS

PUBLISHED RESEARCH

TRANSLATING RESEARCH INTO TOOLS

RESEARCH

WEBINAR SERIES

GET STUDENTS/CLASSES INTO COMMUNITIES

GNARly Blog

EDUCATION

CAPACITY BUILDING

THE GNAR NETWORK

ONLINE TOOLKIT

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CAPACITY BUILDING

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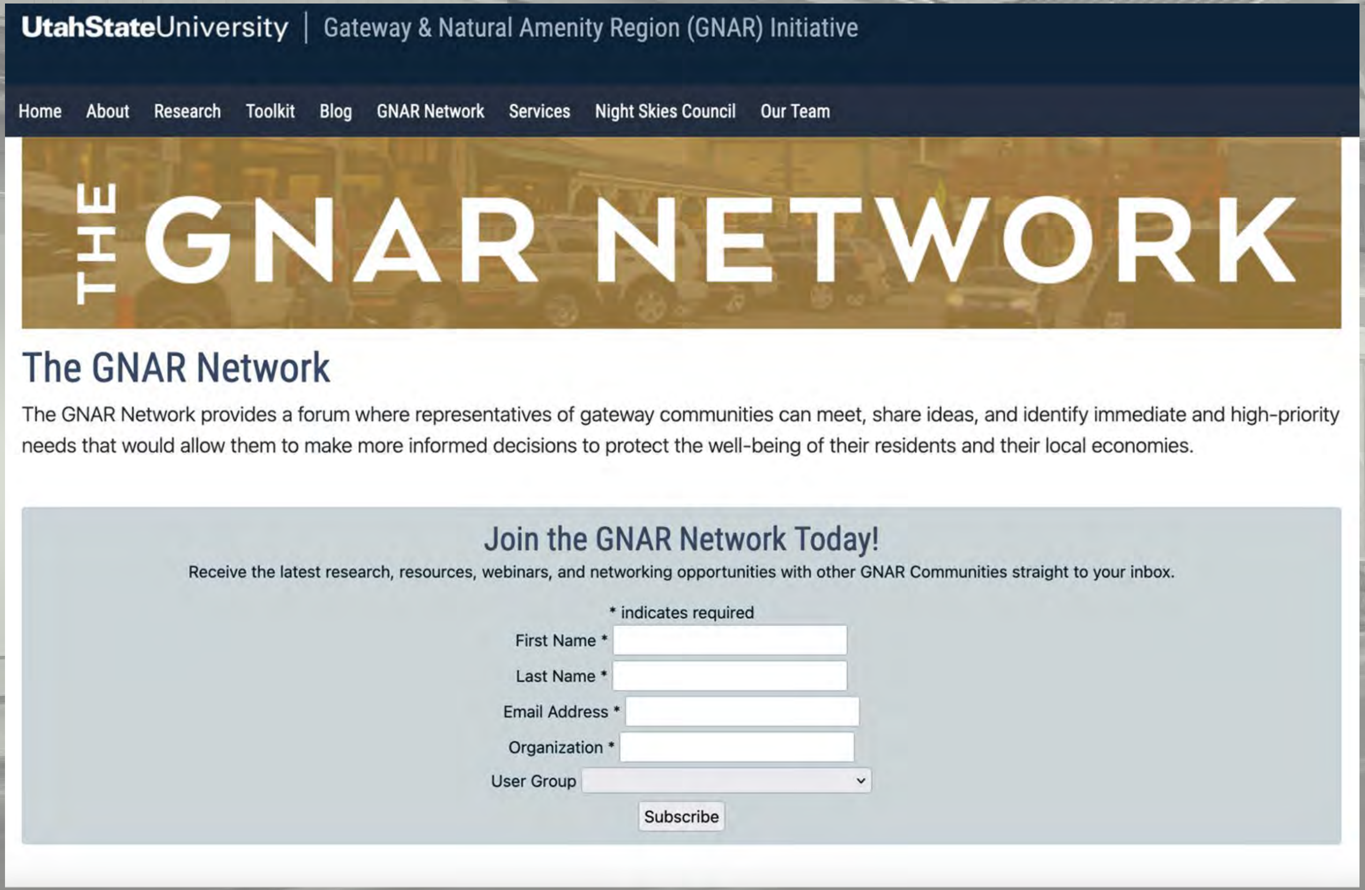
CAPACITY BUILDING - The GNAR Network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The GNAR Network

The GNAR Network provides a forum where representatives of gateway communities can meet, share ideas, and identify immediate and high-priority needs that would allow them to make more informed decisions to protect the well-being of their residents and their local economies.

Join the GNAR Network Today!

Receive the latest research, resources, webinars, and networking opportunities with other GNAR Communities straight to your inbox.

* indicates required

First Name *

Last Name *

Email Address *

Organization *

User Group

- Peer-to-peer learning through facilitated interactions
- Community based network
- Aiming for meetings 2-4 times a year
- **Join our email list to learn when our peer-to-peer meetings occur: gnar.usu.edu**

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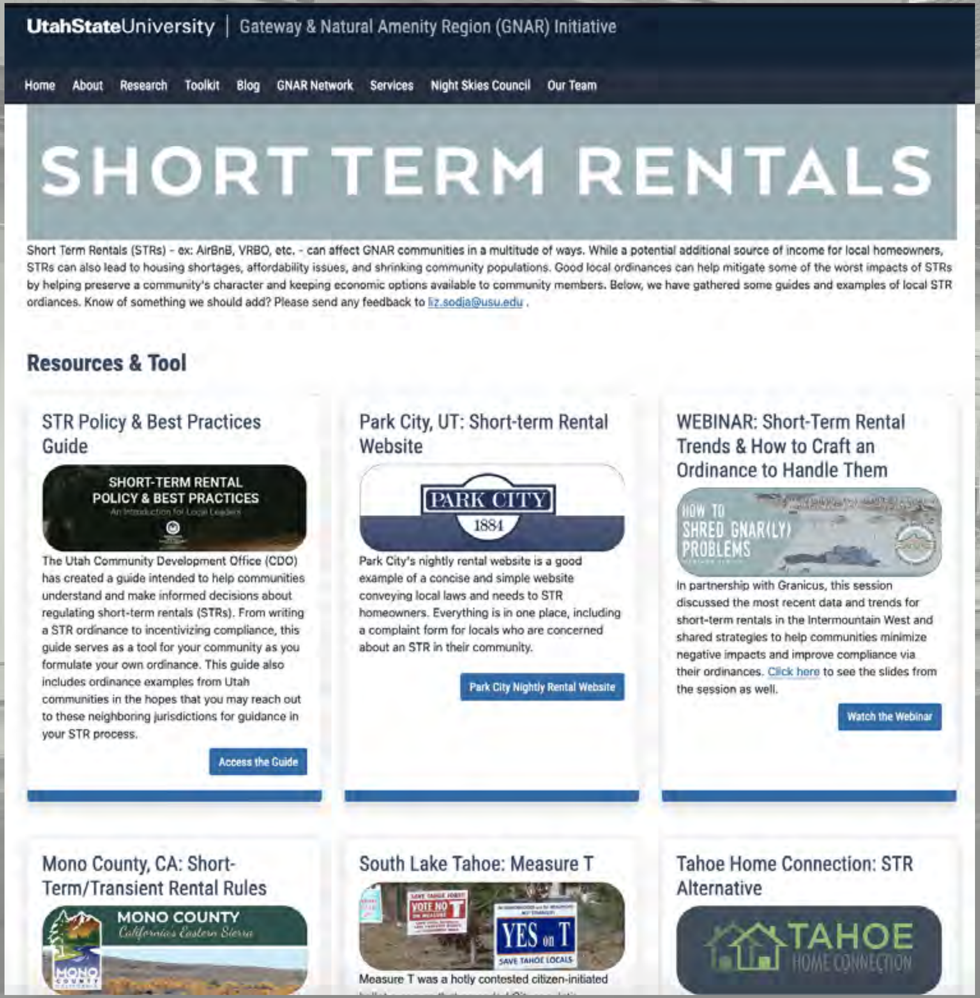
CAPACITY BUILDING - Online Toolkit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SHORT-TERM RENTAL POLICY & BEST PRACTICES
PARK CITY
1884
HOW TO SHRED GNAR(LY) PROBLEMS
Access the Guide
Park City Nightly Rental Website
Watch the Webinar
MONO COUNTY
California's Eastern Sierra
VOTE NO T
YES on T
SAVE TAHOE LOCALS
TAHOE
HOME CONNECTION

SHORT TERM RENTALS

Short Term Rentals (STRs) - ex: AirBnB, VRBO, etc. - can affect GNAR communities in a multitude of ways. While a potential additional source of income for local homeowners, STRs can also lead to housing shortages, affordability issues, and shrinking community populations. Good local ordinances can help mitigate some of the worst impacts of STRs by helping preserve a community's character and keeping economic options available to community members. Below, we have gathered some guides and examples of local STR ordiances. Know of something we should add? Please send any feedback to liz.sodja@usu.edu .

Resources & Tool

STR Policy & Best Practices Guide

The Utah Community Development Office (CDO) has created a guide intended to help communities understand and make informed decisions about regulating short-term rentals (STRs). From writing a STR ordinance to incentivizing compliance, this guide serves as a tool for your community as you formulate your own ordinance. This guide also includes ordinance examples from Utah communities in the hopes that you may reach out to these neighboring jurisdictions for guidance in your STR process.

Park City, UT: Short-term Rental Website

Park City's nightly rental website is a good example of a concise and simple website conveying local laws and needs to STR homeowners. Everything is in one place, including a complaint form for locals who are concerned about an STR in their community.

WEBINAR: Short-Term Rental Trends & How to Craft an Ordinance to Handle Them

In partnership with Granicus, this session discussed the most recent data and trends for short-term rentals in the Intermountain West and shared strategies to help communities minimize negative impacts and improve compliance via their ordinances. Click here to see the slides from the session as well.

Mono County, CA: Short-Term/Transient Rental Rules

South Lake Tahoe: Measure T

Measure T was a hotly contested citizen-initiated

Tahoe Home Connection: STR Alternative

- 11 focus areas,
- Continually building new pages as critical topics and resources come up.

- **Have a resource or topic area you think we could add to our toolkit? Contact liz.sodja@usu.edu**

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EDUCATION

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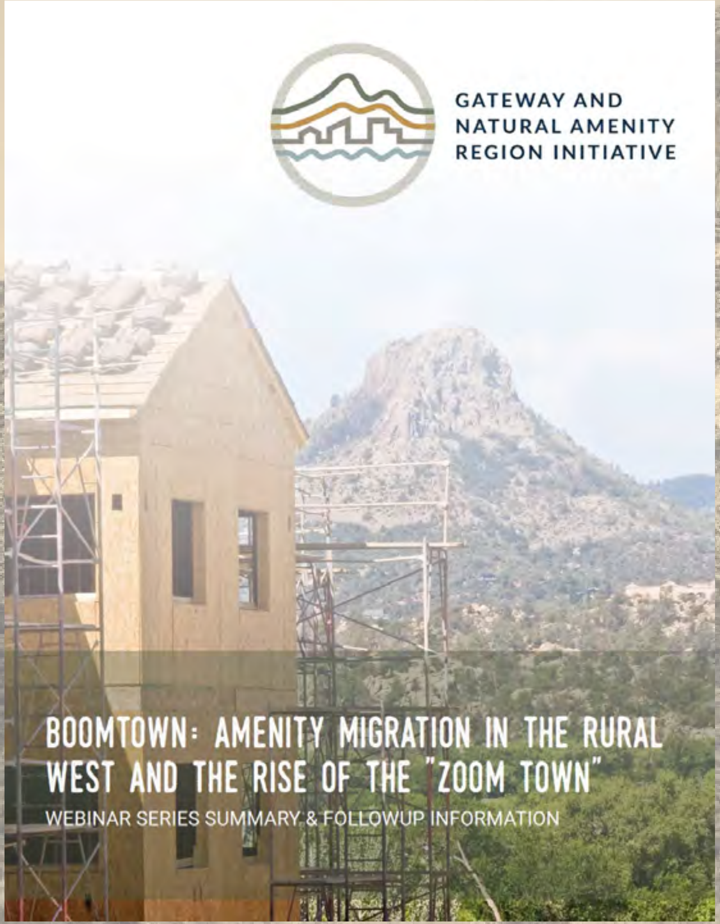
EDUCATION - Webinar Series



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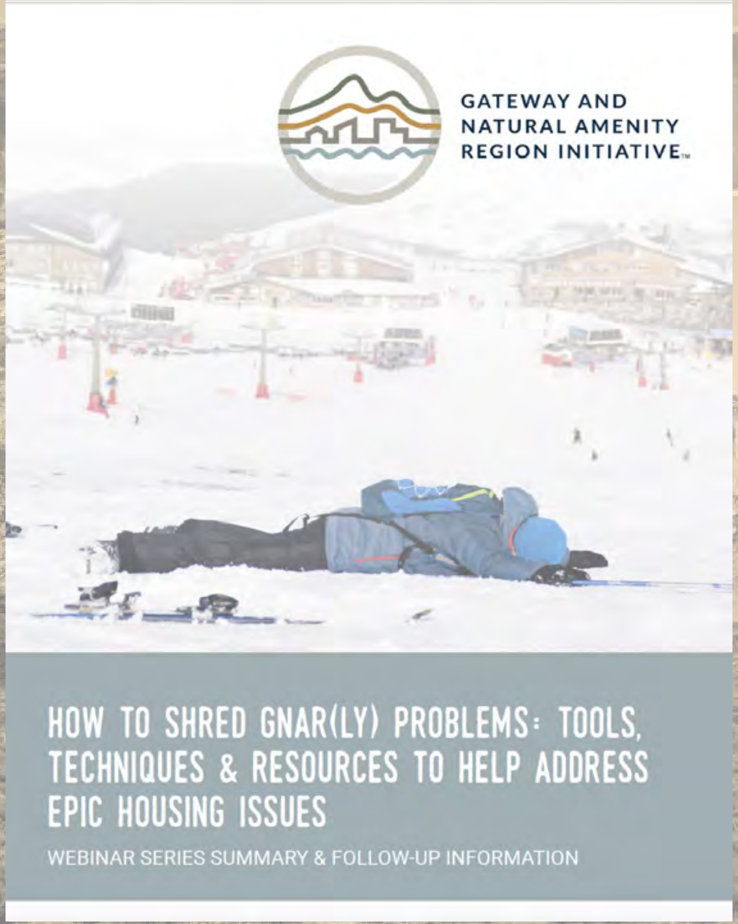
BOOMTOWN: AMENITY MIGRATION IN THE RURAL WEST AND THE RISE OF THE "ZOOM TOWN"

WEBINAR SERIES SUMMARY & FOLLOWUP INFORMATION



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HOW TO SHRED GNAR(LY) PROBLEMS: TOOLS, TECHNIQUES & RESOURCES TO HELP ADDRESS EPIC HOUSING ISSUES

WEBINAR SERIES SUMMARY & FOLLOW-UP INFORMATION

- Two Completed Series
  - Fall 2020: Amenity Migration Trends
  - Spring 2021: Tools to Address Short-Term Rentals and Housing Affordability

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EDUCATION - Webinar Series

RED EMERALD RESILIENCE
TRAINING PROGRAM
LIFE
UTAH
ELEVATED
UTAH OFFICE OF TOURISM | INSTITUTE OF OUTDOOR RECREATION AND TOURISM

https://extension.usu.edu/iort/services/red-emerald-resilience-training-program

- This Year:
  - Red Emerald Resilience Training Program
- Coming fall 2022
  - Planning 101 Webinar Series

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EDUCATION

THE GNARLY BLOG

- Blogs from practitioners and researchers relating things to communities
- Highlights new resources and research.

- **Has your community done something innovative to address a challenge? Consider writing a blog!**
- **Sign up for our email list to find out when new blog come out!**

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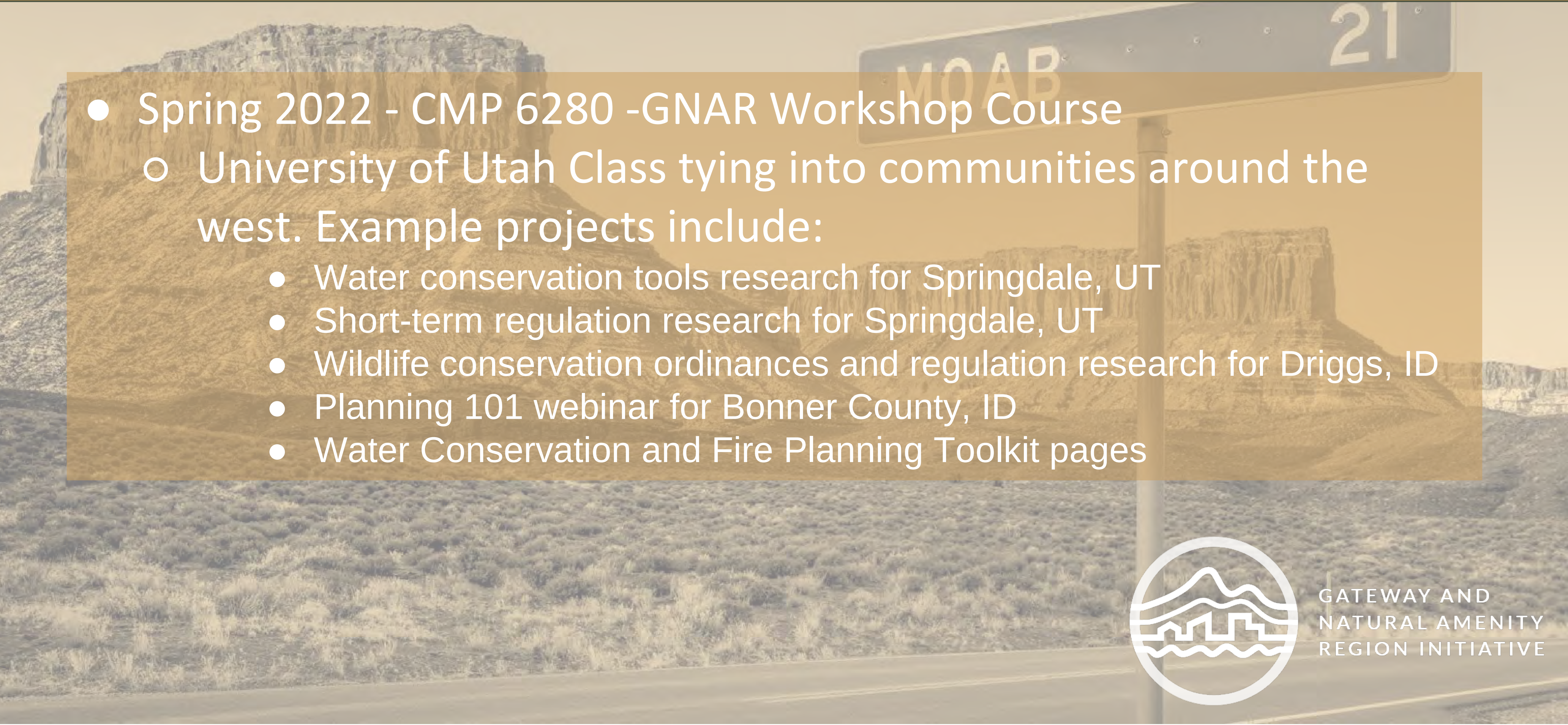
EDUCATION - Linking Students to Communities



- Spring 2022 - CMP 6280 -GNAR Workshop Course
  - University of Utah Class tying into communities around the west. Example projects include:
    - Water conservation tools research for Springdale, UT
    - Short-term regulation research for Springdale, UT
    - Wildlife conservation ordinances and regulation research for Driggs, ID
    - Planning 101 webinar for Bonner County, ID
    - Water Conservation and Fire Planning Toolkit pages

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RESEARCH

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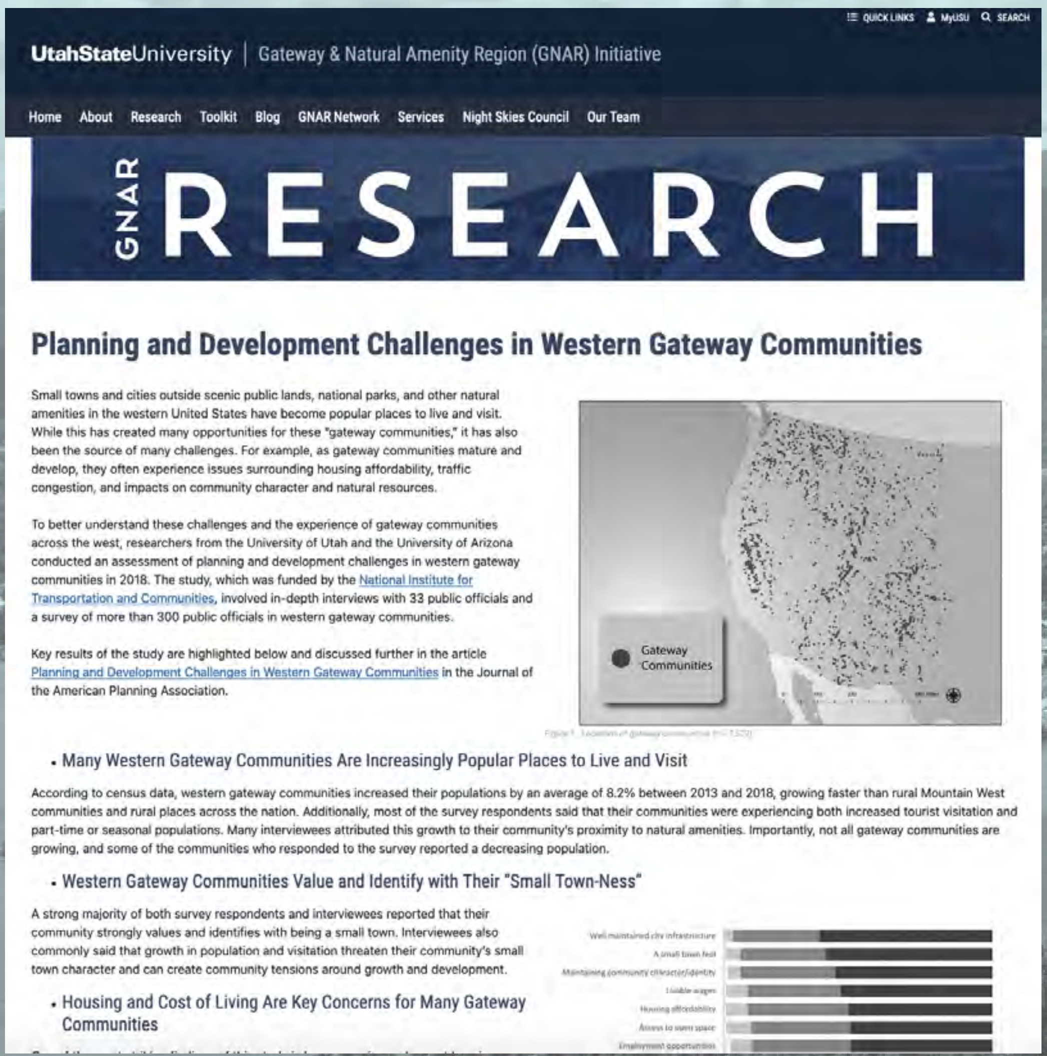
RESEARCH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Gateway Communities
Well maintained city infrastructure
A small town feel
Maintaining community character/identity
Livable wages
Housing affordability
Access to open space
Employment opportunities

Planning and Development Challenges in Western Gateway Communities

Small towns and cities outside scenic public lands, national parks, and other natural amenities in the western United States have become popular places to live and visit. While this has created many opportunities for these "gateway communities," it has also been the source of many challenges. For example, as gateway communities mature and develop, they often experience issues surrounding housing affordability, traffic congestion, and impacts on community character and natural resources.

To better understand these challenges and the experience of gateway communities across the west, researchers from the University of Utah and the University of Arizona conducted an assessment of planning and development challenges in western gateway communities in 2018. The study, which was funded by the National Institute for Transportation and Communities, involved in-depth interviews with 33 public officials and a survey of more than 300 public officials in western gateway communities.

Key results of the study are highlighted below and discussed further in the article Planning and Development Challenges in Western Gateway Communities in the Journal of the American Planning Association.

- Many Western Gateway Communities Are Increasingly Popular Places to Live and Visit

According to census data, western gateway communities increased their populations by an average of 8.2% between 2013 and 2018, growing faster than rural Mountain West communities and rural places across the nation. Additionally, most of the survey respondents said that their communities were experiencing both increased tourist visitation and part-time or seasonal populations. Many interviewees attributed this growth to their community's proximity to natural amenities. Importantly, not all gateway communities are growing, and some of the communities who responded to the survey reported a decreasing population.

- Western Gateway Communities Value and Identify with Their "Small Town-Ness"

A strong majority of both survey respondents and interviewees reported that their community strongly values and identifies with being a small town. Interviewees also commonly said that growth in population and visitation threaten their community's small town character and can create community tensions around growth and development.

- Housing and Cost of Living Are Key Concerns for Many Gateway Communities

- The study that started it all!
- Funded by the National Institute for Transportation and Communities,
- Assessment of planning and development challenges in western gateway communities in 2018.
- Involved in-depth interviews with 33 public officials and a survey of more than 300 public officials in western gateway communities.

JAPA
Journal of the American Planning Association

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RESEARCH

GNAR COMMUNITY GENTRIFICATION & SPILLOVER EFFECTS:

Integrated Housing, Transportation, Land Use Challenges and Strategies in Gateway Communities

- Builds off of the first study
- Funded by the [National Institute for Transportation and Communities](),
- Study on interconnected housing, transportation, and land use issues in western gateway communities/regions.
- Aims to develop tools, guidelines, and planning and policy recommendations to assist gateway communities in addressing interconnected housing, transportation, and land use concerns.

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RESEARCH

GNAR COMMUNITY GENTRIFICATION & SPILLOVER EFFECTS:

Integrated Housing, Transportation, Land Use Challenges and Strategies in Gateway Communities

- **Future opportunities for involvement:**
    - **Partnering to develop a library of community case studies**
    - **Sponsor a case study within your own community**

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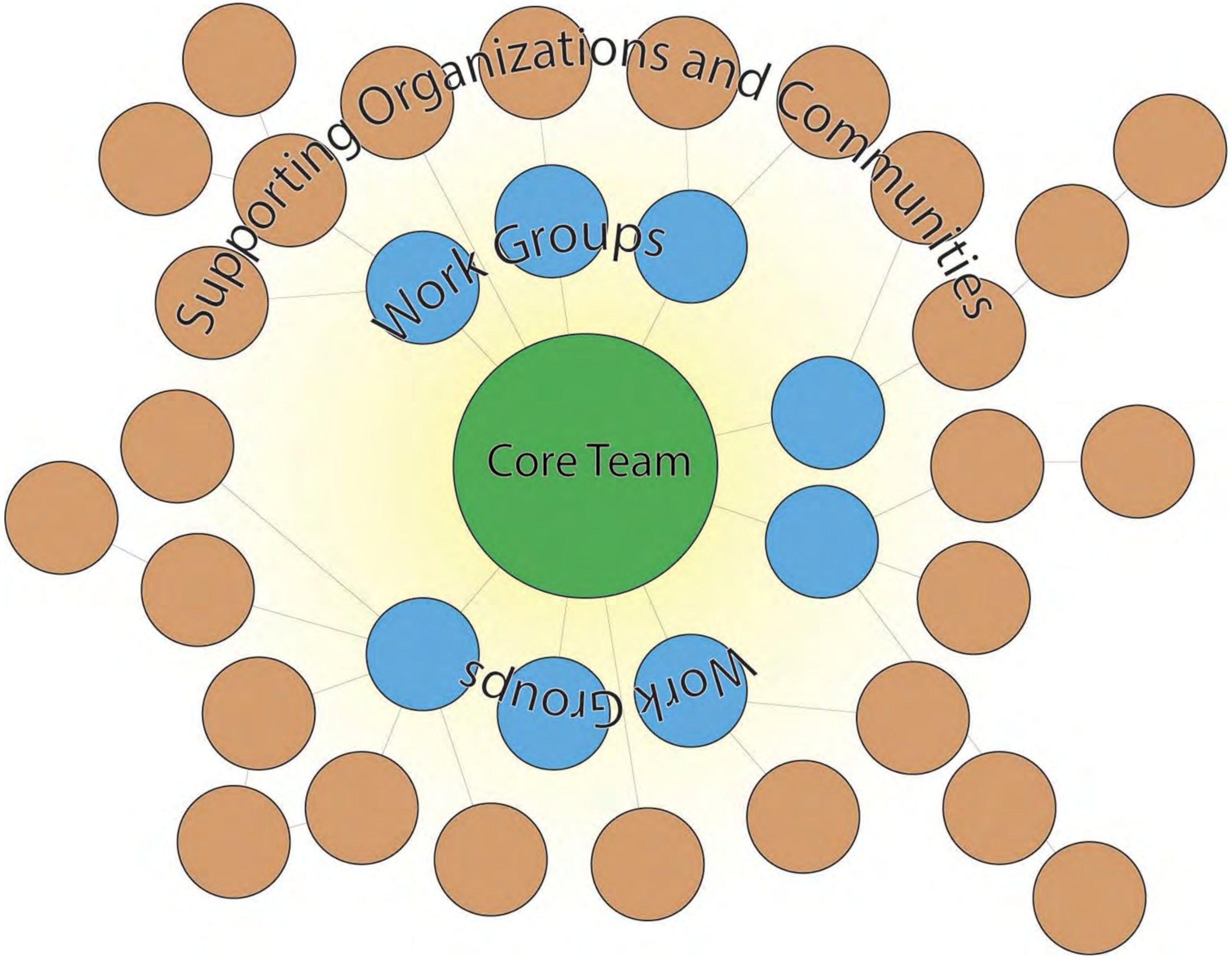
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Core Team
Work Groups

Hub

Interdisciplinary

Regional Scale

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