

THRIVING... OR SURVIVING?

EXPLORING GNAR(LY) CHALLENGES IN WESTERN
GATEWAY COMMUNITIES.

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GATEWAY AND
NATURAL AMENITY REGION
INITIATIVE

EXTENSION 
UtahStateUniversity.

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

Episode

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THE GNAR INITIATIVE



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GNAR?



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 Amenity

...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?

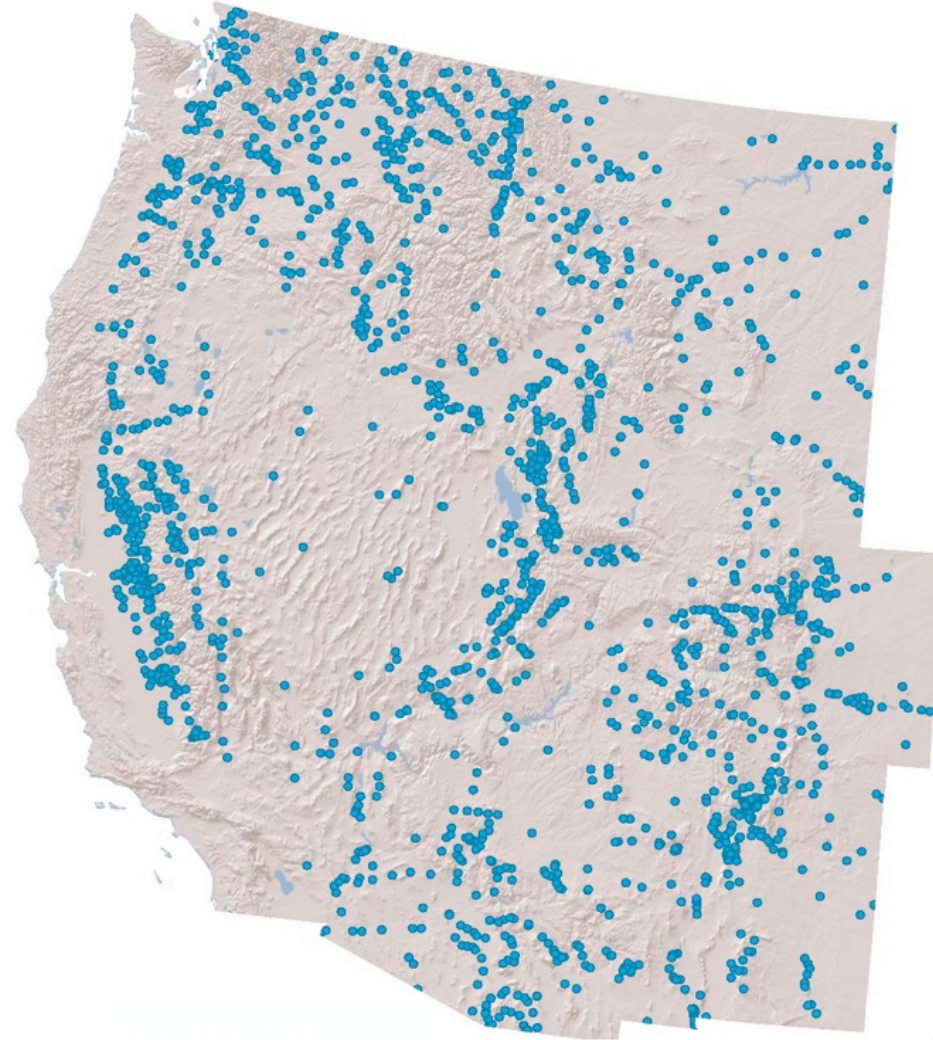
- Small town
 - 150-25,000 people
- Proximity to natural amenities
 - Within 10 miles of a national park, state park, national forest, lake, scenic river, etc.,
- Not in an urbanized area
 - Further than 15 miles from an urbanized area by road



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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



60 30 0 60 120 180 240 Miles



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WHAT IS GNAR?

PARK CITY, UT




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WHAT IS GNAR?

MOAB, UT

Two National Parks
One Destination



MOAB
Where Adventure Begins



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WHAT IS GNAR?

ASPEN, CO



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WHAT IS GNAR?

TAHOE, CA



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WHAT IS GNAR?

TELLURIDE, CO



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WHAT IS GNAR?



SOMEWHERE, UT



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GNAR-LY ISSUES

SPRINGDALE, UT



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GNAR(LY) CHALLENGES

Research Structure

- Database of western GNAR communities
- Interviews with public officials in 25 western GNAR communities, ranging from more to less developed
- Survey of public officials in western GNAR communities



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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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GNAR(LY) CHALLENGES

Big city
problems
in small
rural
towns...
and some
unique
challenges...

- Insufficient or overwhelmed infrastructure and public services
- Environmental and natural amenity impacts
- Climate change vulnerability/adaptation
- Employee attraction/retention
- Loss of community character
- Economic vulnerability and need for diversification
- Questions about the role of tourism and tourism marketing
- Reduced quality of visitor experience
- Unique social-cultural-political dynamics
- Challenging local-regional-state-federal relationships
- Seasonal economy



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Survey Details

GNAR(LY) CHALLENGES

Survey was sent out to 1278 communities

- Completed by 333 public officials in 263 communities
 - Average population of represented communities was 8,649

On average, these communities:

- Are growing (7.17% average growth rate between 2010-2016)
- Had a median income of \$49,414 in 2016 (as compared to a national average of \$57,617)
- Are seeing higher than the national average rates of housing unit and rental unit growth
- Are becoming more popular places to visit:
 - 82% of respondents said the number of tourists visiting their communities increased in the last 10 years
 - 42% said this increase was substantial



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GNAR Evolution

GNAR(LY) CHALLENGES

- *Certain issues seem to come to the fore as GNAR communities develop*
 - Communities often quickly go from not being concerned about short-term rentals to being quite concerned, sometimes due to acute shortages of long-term rental stock
 - Tensions between residents and tourists seem to appear once tourism reaches a certain level – or if the community attracts certain kinds of tourists
- *Certain kinds of GNAR communities tend to have certain kinds of issues (and don't have other issues)*
 - Geographic constraints tend to exacerbate housing issues, but also tend to prevent concerns about sprawl
 - Transportation issues are a predominant concern in some, but not all – more in highly developed GNAR communities



Identity Crisis

GNAR(LY) CHALLENGES

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”

Innovation

GNAR(LY) CHALLENGES

GNAR communities are innovating and experimenting

- “Pop-up” intersection treatments and experimental traffic calming measures
- E-bike share programs
- Tiny house ordinances

And they want to learn from each other and share their lessons learned

GNAR(LY) CHALLENGES

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

Help
Wanted!

GNAR-LY ISSUES

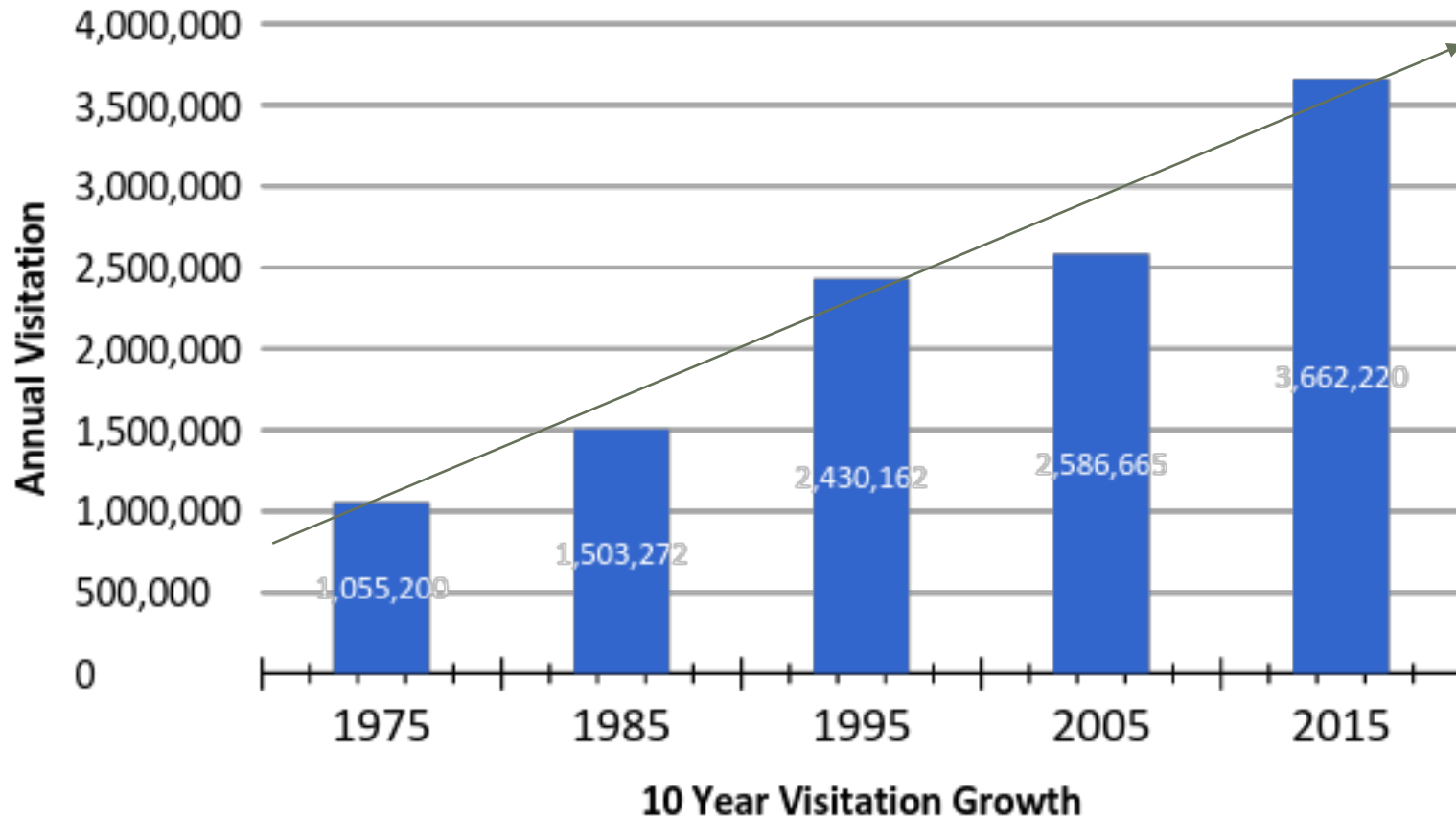
SPRINGDALE, UT



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GNAR-LY ISSUES

ZNP Visitation (1975 -2015)



~4.5
MILLION
VISITORS IN
2017-2019



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GNAR-LY ISSUES



~4.5
MILLION
VISITORS IN
2017-2019



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GNAR-LY ISSUES



~4.5
MILLION
VISITORS IN
2017-2019



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The mighty wait at The Mighty Five (Utah's national parks)

By [Amy Joi O'Donoghue](#)  [@amyjoi16](#)

Published: April 15, 2016 2:55 p.m.



Comments



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Tiny Utah town's stunning canyon draws thousands of hikers — and a potential federal buyer

By **BRIAN MAFFLY** AND **NATE CARLISLE** | The Salt Lake Tribune

First Published Jul 11 2016 08:00AM • Last Updated Jul 11 2016 03:25 pm



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GNAR-LY ISSUES

Park Officials Preparing for Another Bustling Year in Glacier

Superintendent: Glacier Park will likely attract record crowds again in 2016

BY DILLON TABISH // MAR 3, 2016 // OUTDOORS



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A GNAR-LY RESPONSE



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A GNAR-LY RESPONSE



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**GATEWAY AND
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A HUB FOR CONNECTING PEOPLE AND
RESOURCES TO HELP GNAR
COMMUNITIES THRIVE AND PROTECT
THE THINGS THAT MAKE THEM
SPECIAL

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 in GNAR communities

Technical Assistance

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



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Universities
Research
Extension

Planners

Designers

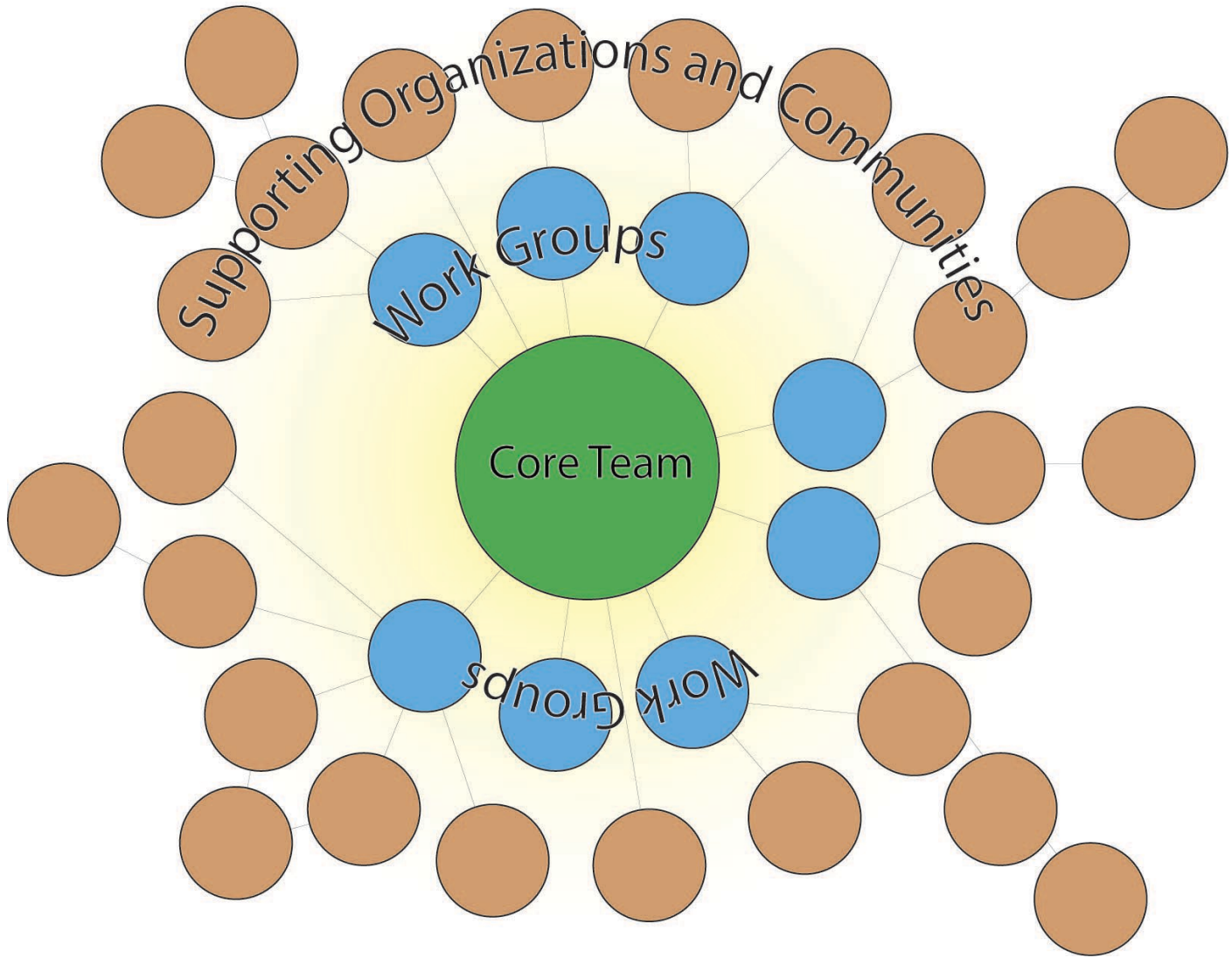


City
Officials

Non-Profits
&
NGO's

Federal
Officials





Hub

Interdisciplinary

Regional Scale

COVID-19



GNAR-LY-ER ISSUES

NEWS DESK

WHY AN IDAHO SKI DESTINATION HAS ONE OF THE HIGHEST COVID-19 INFECTION RATES IN THE NATION

By Michael Ames

April 3, 2020



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GNAR-LY-ER ISSUES



FEATURED ARTICLES

CAN TOURIST TOWNS LIKE MOAB SURVIVE THE CORONAVIRUS?

by Jon Du Pre / April 27, 2020 / 4.2k / 13 comments



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GNAR-LY-ER ISSUES

Forbes

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



MENU HighCountryNews

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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*

[Bloomberg the Company & Its Products](#) | [Bloomberg Terminal Demo Request](#) | [Bloomberg Anywhere Remote Login](#) | [Bloomberg Customer Support](#)

Bloomberg **Opinion**

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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CHALLENGING CONVERSATIONS



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- Planning



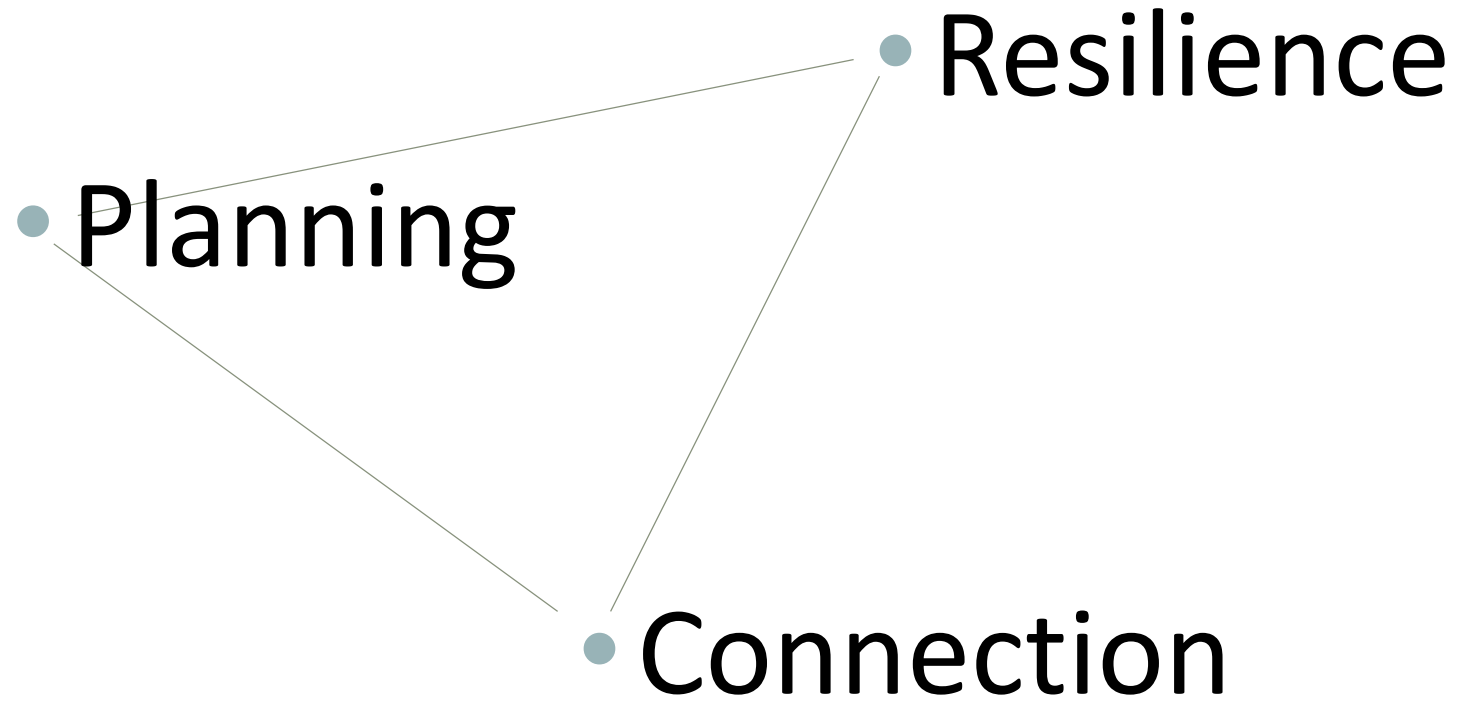
CONVERSATIONS

- Planning
- Resilience



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CONVERSATIONS



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RESOURCES



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Tools

Toolkit Page
GNAR Compass Tool

Connections

Linking University Programs – GNAR Research network
The GNAR Network – A GNAR Community Peer to Peer Network

Education

Fall 2020 Amenity Migration Webinar Series
Spring 2021 Housing Affordability and Short Term Rentals Webinar Series
NITC Research Project



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Arches NP



Arches NP



Moab, UT



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