

Rural Gentrification and the Spillover Effect:

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



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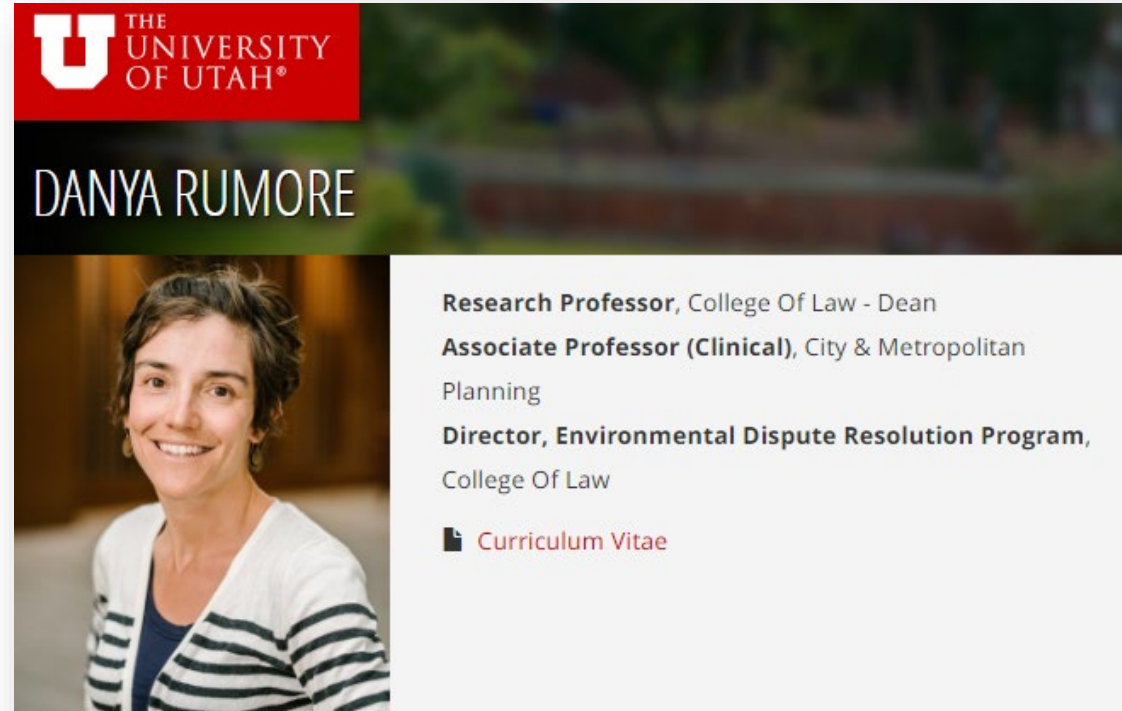
Integrated Transportation, Housing, and Land Use Challenges and Strategies in Gateway Communities

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Courses in the College of Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Planning:

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Sustainable Cities and Societies

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Ph.D., City and Metropolitan Planning, University of Utah

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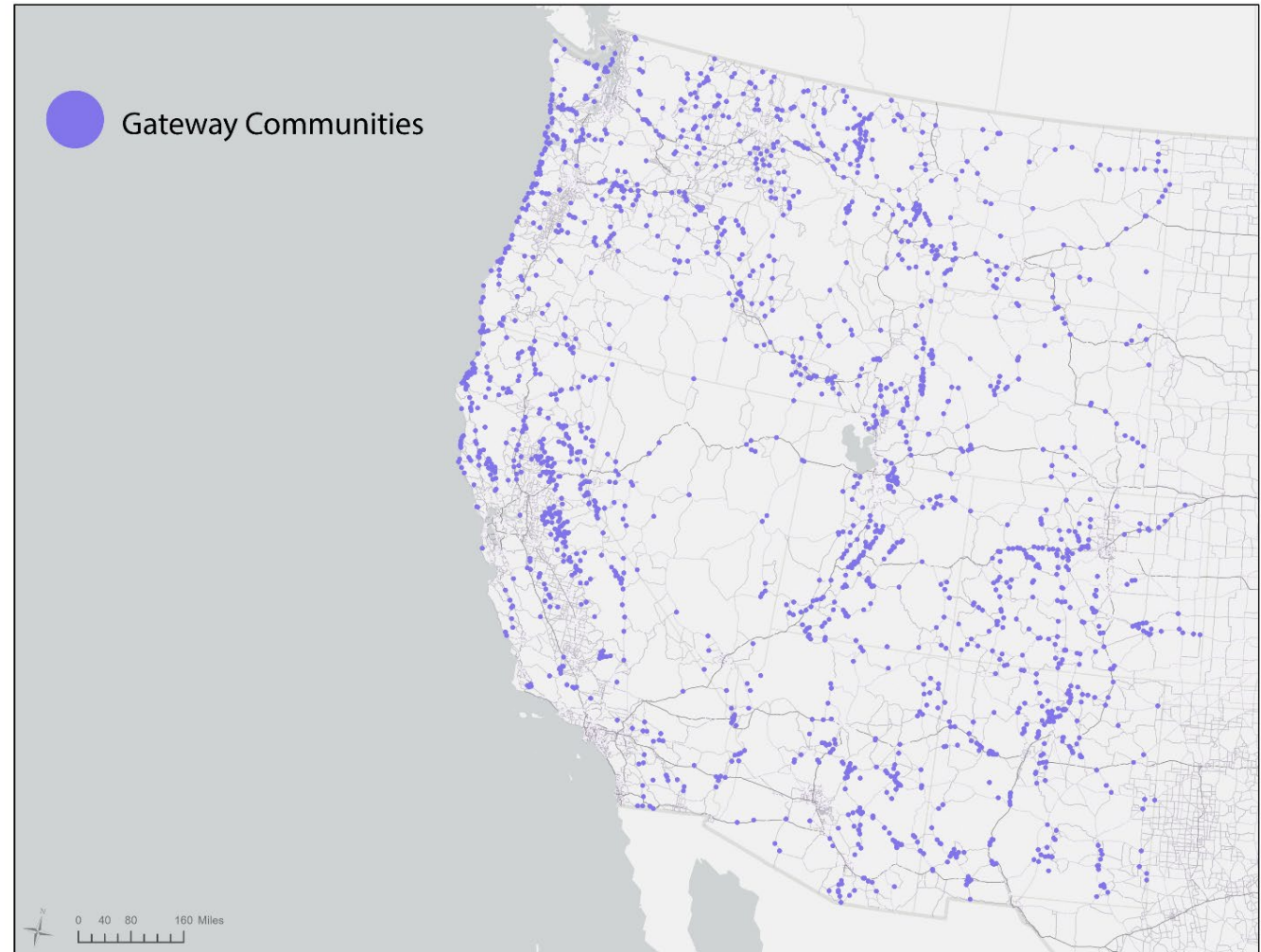
Today: Gateway Communities

- “Small towns with big city problems”
- Results from NITC funded final report
- Useful sources of public data
- Raise awareness of these challenges and opportunities in gateway communities.
- Provide resources for further connections



“Gateway Communities”

- Gateways to natural amenities
- A wide range of small rural communities in the western U.S.
 - Many national parks/federal/public lands
 - Distant from urbanized areas
- 500-25,000 population
- 15 miles from an urbanized area
- Within 10 miles of:
 - National Park/Monument
 - National Forest
 - State Park
 - Wild and scenic rivers
 - Reservoirs and lakes
 - Ski resorts
- N= 1,857 census designated places
 - Represents a range of community types



Covid 19 and gateway communities:

- Anecdotal mass migration to gateway communities
- “Zoom towns”
- High income earners moved to “affordable” rural communities for their natural amenities
- Additional pressure on housing and transportation


Forbes

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

Irene S. Levine Contributor @

Sep 15, 2020, 08:10am EDT

Listen to article 7 minutes



Many vacation areas are now being looked at as places where remote workers want to live, GETTY

The COVID-19 pandemic is propelling many remote workers to flee crowded cities in search of more bucolic settings. Some of these destinations were, in fact, once considered vacation getaways. NPR's *Planet Money* defines “zoom towns” as *housing markets that are booming as remote work takes off*—adding another term to our growing pandemic lexicon.

B B C

By Mark Johanson 8th June 2021

As remote work takes hold, rural 'Zoom towns' are popping up all over the US. For outdoorsy workers, the options are an embarrassment of riches.

Los Angeles native Shanelle Sherlin always wanted to live close to nature in a place where, as a triathlete, she could run, bike and swim away from city noise. So, when her job as a digital marketing manager for an entertainment company went fully remote, the 30-year-old made a dramatic move that would have been unimaginable before the pandemic: she traded the Hollywood Hills for the rolling Ozarks of Northwest Arkansas.

Sherlin was one of 30,000 applicants from 50 states and 115 countries who applied for the [Life Works Here](#) talent initiative, which was launched in November 2020 with a \$1.5 million investment from the Walmart heirs (the big-box retailer has its headquarters in Northwest Arkansas). Successful candidates – there are currently 35 out of what will be a total of 100 by year's end – receive \$10,000 (£7,090) if they relocate for a minimum of one year, plus outdoor perks such as a free bike to enjoy the area's 400 miles (644km) of hard and soft-surface trails.



Small towns, big city problems:

- Lack of affordable housing
- Displaced workforce
- Limited city budgets and staff
- Traffic, crowding, and long commutes
- Environmental degradation
- Change/loss of community character



Our research:

- Supporting these communities with data, strategies, and outreach
- Better understand the interconnected issues of housing, transportation, and land use issues in these types of communities
- *Are these local or regional issues?*
- Can we measure the impacts Covid 19 had on gateway communities?



What we've done:

- Questionnaire of public officials in gateway communities
- Four case studies
- Analysis of publicly available secondary data
- Community workshops/informal public official interviews
- Previous NITC supported surveys and interviews



Questionnaire

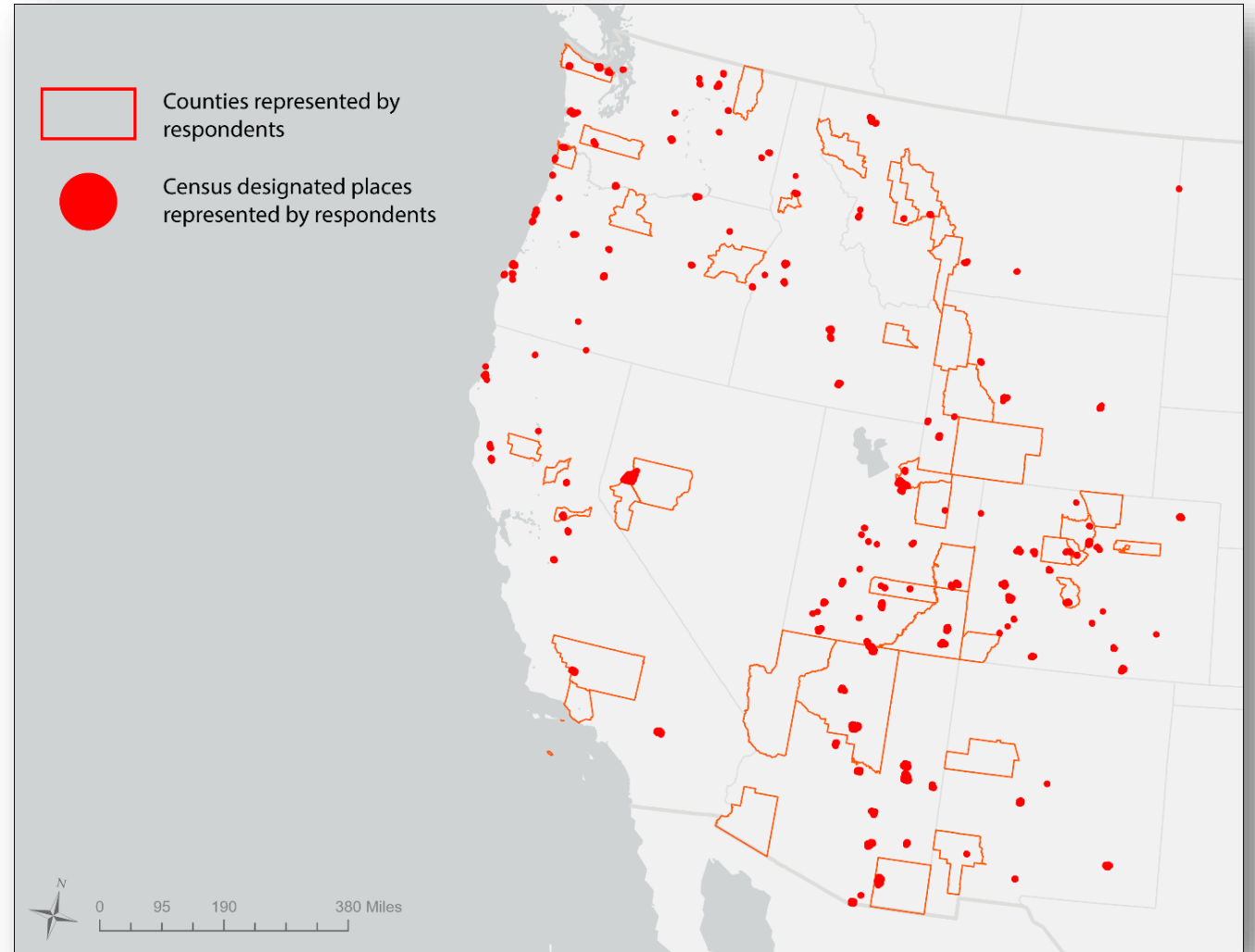
- Public official e-mail addresses
- 42 questions (Qualtrics)
- https://uarizona.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bvYNCMR1Pr0PRhc
- Sections:
 - Screening
 - Community challenges
 - Housing
 - Transportation
 - Planning Strategies

Scan here to see the online survey



Questionnaire

- 1,857 identified gateway communities
- 1,153 public official e-mails
- 235 completed questionnaires
- 11 states
- 151 cities and towns
- 42 counties
- One regional organization
- Two tribal organizations
- 13 “other”
- Response rate= 17.6%



Who took the survey?

- 73% represented city/town government
- 20% represented county government
- Regional, tribal, and other government represented the rest.

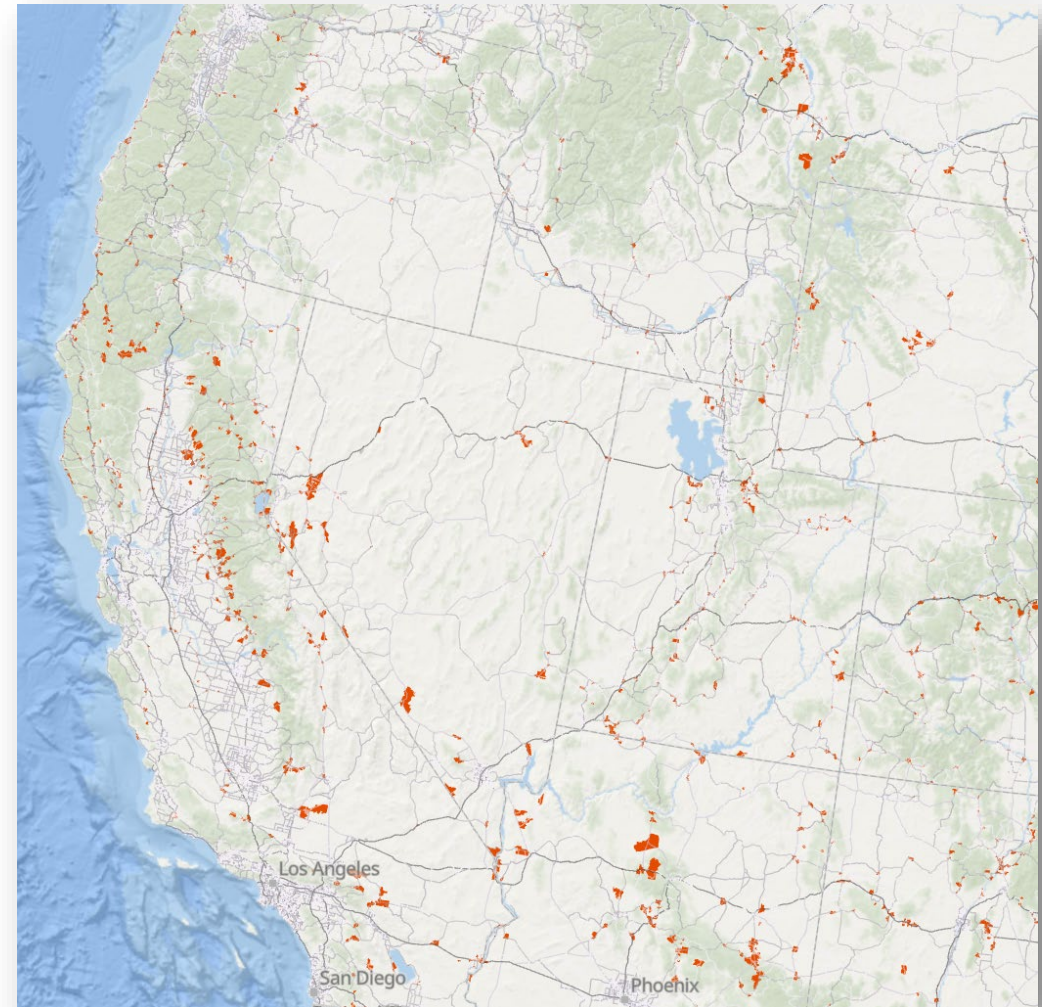
Table 3.5: Summary of Reported Positions

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<i>Planner</i>	69	29.4
<i>Economic/Community Development Director</i>	36	15.3
<i>City/County Manager</i>	34	14.5
<i>Clerk</i>	19	8.1
<i>Other</i>	19	8.1
<i>Elected Official</i>	18	7.7
<i>Administrator</i>	11	4.7
<i>Transportation Planner/Engineer</i>	3	1.3
<i>City Recorder</i>	3	1.3
<i>Housing Agency or Program Director</i>	2	0.9
<i>Chamber of Commerce Director</i>	2	0.9
<i>Public Works Director/Manager</i>	1	0.4
Total	217	92.3



Secondary Datasets

- 1,857 communities
- Census data
 - Housing
 - Demographics
 - Employment
 - Rates of change
- Commuting data
- Land cover data
- Proximity to amenities



Case Studies

- Student led
- Trained students in a Spring 2022 course (University of Utah)
- Partnered students with community members/leaders
- Conducted interviews
- Collected planning documents
- Wrote and presented the case studies



Community workshops

- Gateway and Natural Amenity Region Initiative (Utah State University)
- Initiated the project with 13 informal interviews with potential case study communities
- Three workshops throughout the project to share and get feedback on our approach and results.



Our findings

- Challenges
- Housing
- Transportation
- Commuting



Provision of basic infrastructure is challenging

- Over 20% of respondents indicated each of these factors as *very or extremely challenging*

Case Study: Moab, Utah

- Busy weekends, new hotels, and high water demand.
- Struggled to keep up with wastewater demand

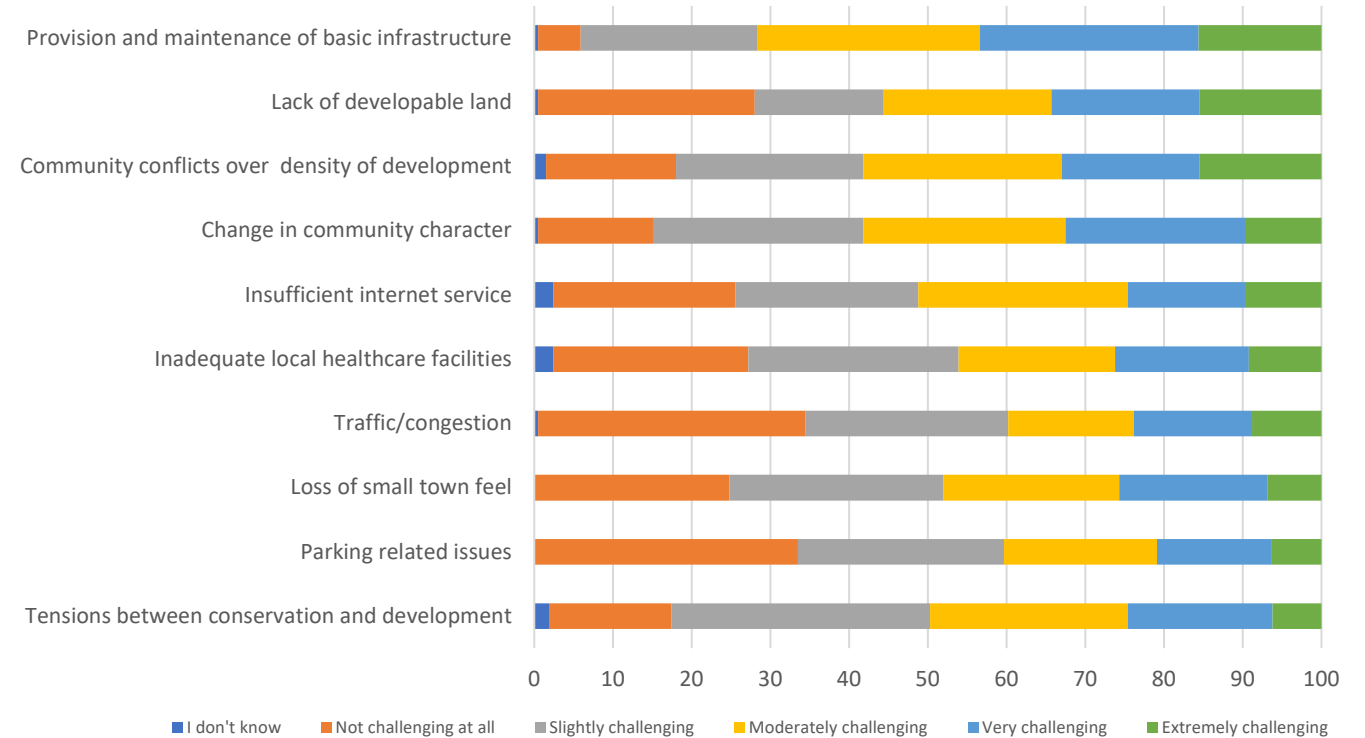


Figure 3.3: Severity of development issues in gateway communities



Lack of local resources is challenging

- Write in responses:
“Finding resources to update water and wastewater treatment facilities”
“Funding to update General Plan”
“Insufficient essential services- grocery, barber, hardware, etc.”
- 40% or more of respondents said lack of long-range planning, community distrust of local government, and local political tensions are moderately to extremely challenging

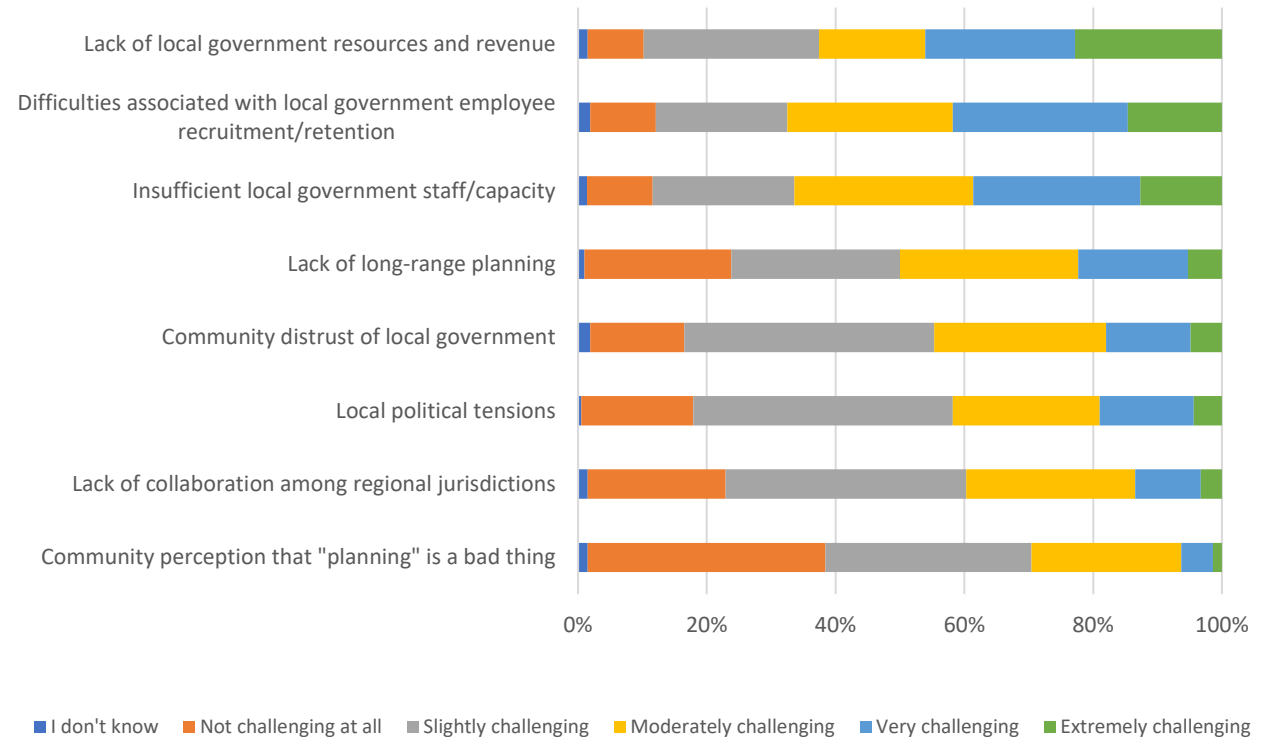


Figure 3.4: Severity of governance issues in gateway communities



Lack of affordable housing is most commonly reported challenge

- Same result as our pre-pandemic 2018 survey
- Interviewees tie this to an imbalance of local wages to relative cost of living
- Aspen, Colorado
 - Median income is \$74k
 - Median home price is \$4 million
 - Calculates it has a deficit of 4,000 affordable housing units (year round population of less than 8,000)

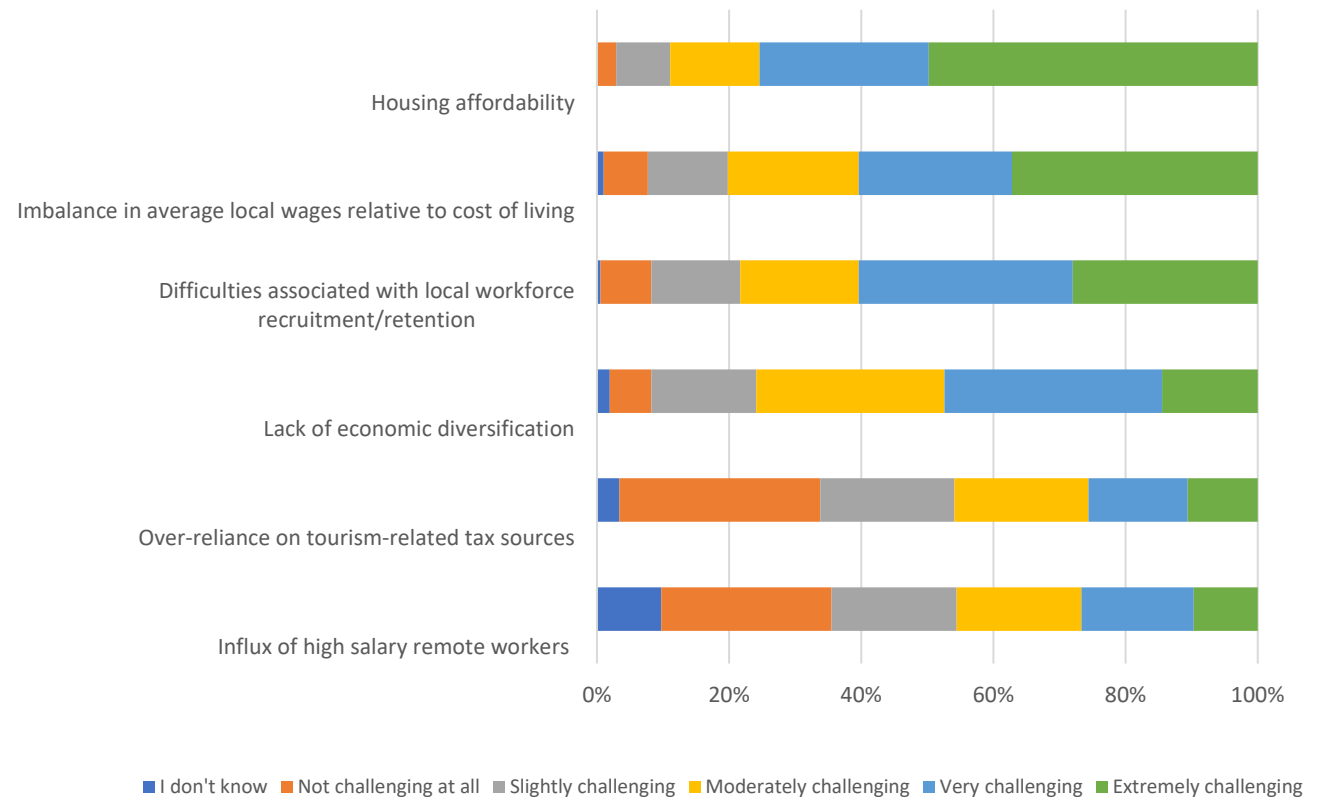


Figure 3.5: Economic challenges in gateway communities



What factors are making it more difficult to live in or near a community?

“Other” likely reflects the complexity of this question:

“COVID = driven migration from wealthier areas of the nation driving 50-60% median homes prices over last one year, kicking out tenants, converting to STRs [short-term rentals], lack of County and Town consistent stance on STR’s for our small community of 12,000”

Table 3.7: Factors That Make it More Difficult to Live in or Near a Community

Factor that makes it difficult to live in or near the community	Average response
Other	4.86
Increasing residential property values	4.3
Shortage of long-term rentals	4.27
Cost of long-term rentals	3.92
Lack of diverse housing options	3.83
Developer reluctance to building affordable housing	3.48
Prevalence of second homes	3.13
Push back against increased housing density	3.04
Remote workers with high-incomes moving into your community	2.95
Lack of nearby developable land	2.94
Long-term housing being converted to short-term rentals	2.85
Negative community attitudes towards affordable housing	2.8

1 being “not at all” and 5 being “a great deal;”



What are these communities doing to improve housing affordability?

Only 13% of respondents indicated they thought their community “was doing enough”

Table 3.8: Frequency of Reported Affordable Housing Strategies

Strategies	Count
Allowing or encouraging accessory dwelling units	105
Changing zoning to allow for more density within the community	70
Regulating short-term rentals	70
I don't know	67
Permitting tiny homes	49
Offering density bonus incentives	45
Developing publicly owned land for affordable housing	44
Offering impact fee or other fee/waiver/deferral incentives	34
Supporting/utilizing a housing land trust	28
Requiring and administering income-based deed restrictions	21
Inclusionary zoning (aka fair-share housing or community benefits zoning)	19
Providing rental or ownership subsidies	13



What would be helpful resources to help address housing challenges?

- Changes to mandates and laws
- Publishing best practices
- Funding
- Increased planning capacity
- Regulatory reform
- Better data

Table 3.10: Reported Tools, Data, or Resources That Would Be Helpful to Address Housing Challenges

Tools, data, or resources	Representative quotes
Changes to state mandates and laws	<p>"A strong state mandate that forces all communities to have affordable housing."</p> <p>"The state needs to step up and require commercial property taxes for STR properties."</p> <p>"The State needs to stop implementing regulations that 1) don't apply to our community, and 2) hamper our progress/ability to address our situation locally."</p> <p>"Get rid of state laws restricting cities' ability to enforce on STRs."</p>
Best practices	<p>"An assessment of best practices around the country. There are many different programs being used - it would be great for someone to summarize them all and analyze which ones are most effective to use."</p> <p>"Case studies from peer communities in other states."</p> <p>"We lack adequate staff. Therefore, any boilerplate ordinances, applications, tax incentives, etc that might be applicable to a tiny, rural town would be helpful."</p>
Funding	<p>"Funding for infrastructure to serve new development. As a rural community, without fully constructed streets, limited water capacity, and aging and incomplete storm drainage, it's difficult to attract developers of all kinds to develop on the properties available."</p>
Increased planning capacity	<p>"Increased capacity and funding for staff to develop more housing and/or policies."</p>
Regulatory reform	<p>"Second home rights cap and trade system."</p>
Better data	<p>"The State has an e-permitting software system it provides to local jurisdictions; we could track all of this better if every community would just do so."</p> <p>"Up-to-date MLS and rental market data for review by local decision-makers."</p>



Transportation in gateway communities

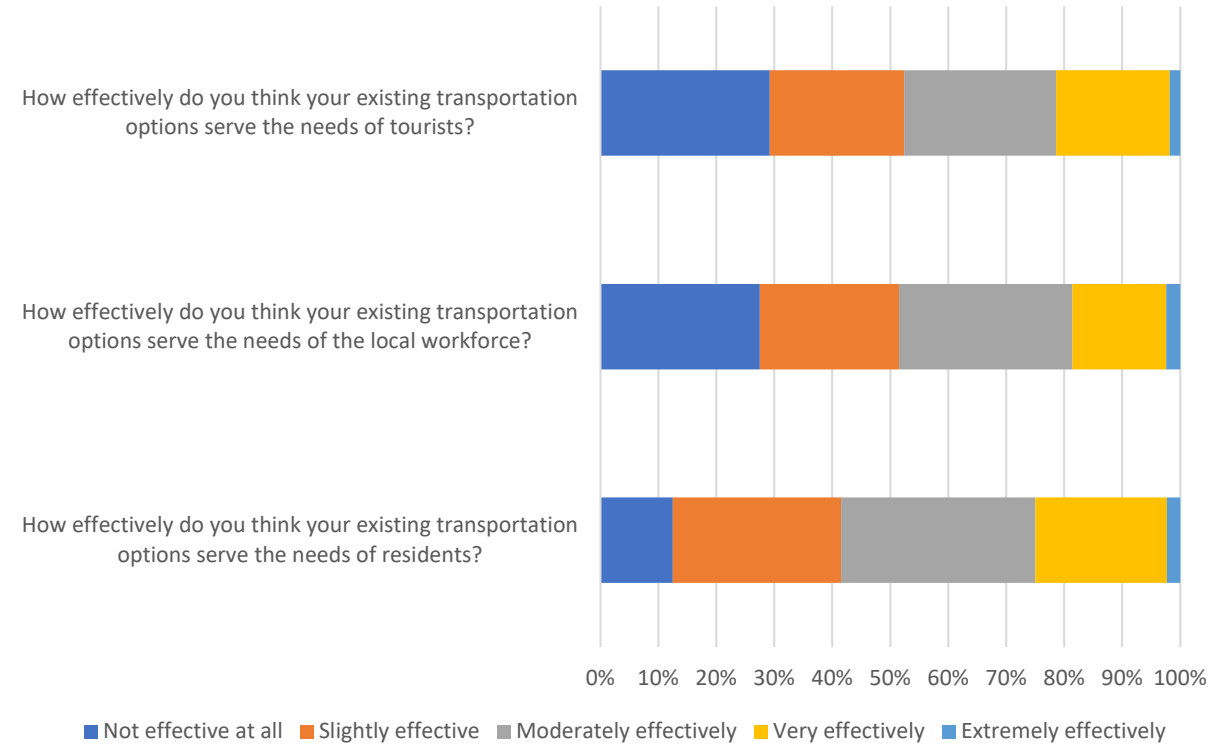


Traffic, long commutes and limited options

- Cities like Moab and Springdale frequently deal with congestion because the main street is also a state highway

Case Study: Sandpoint, Idaho

- Bypass routes are politically challenging and costly, but can alleviate some of the traffic challenges



Variety of transportation options exist in gateway communities

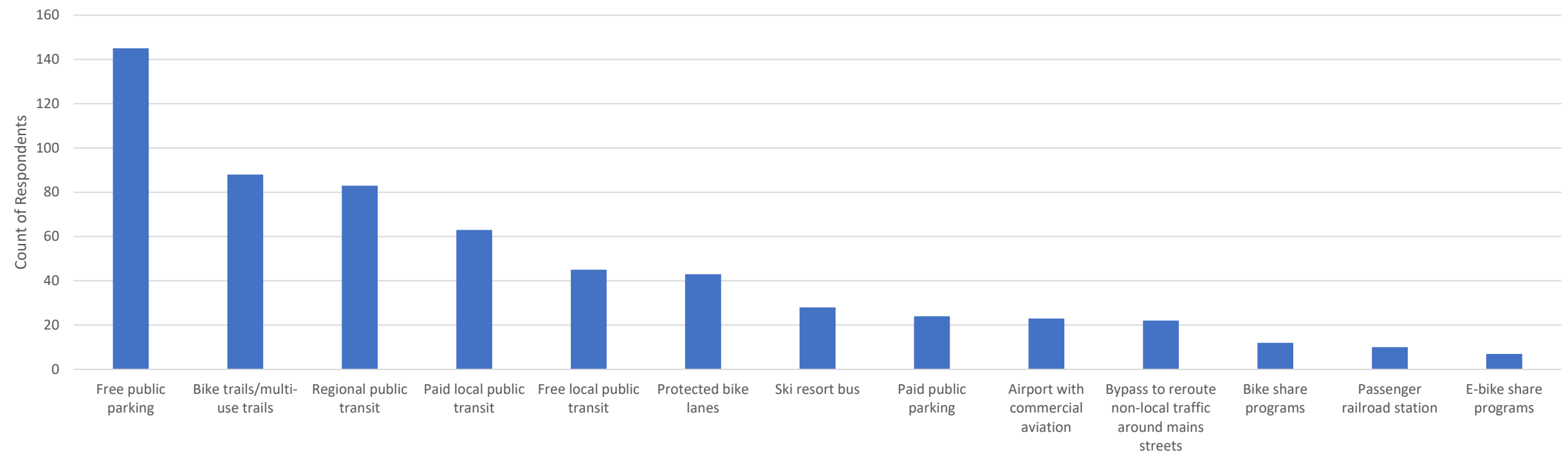


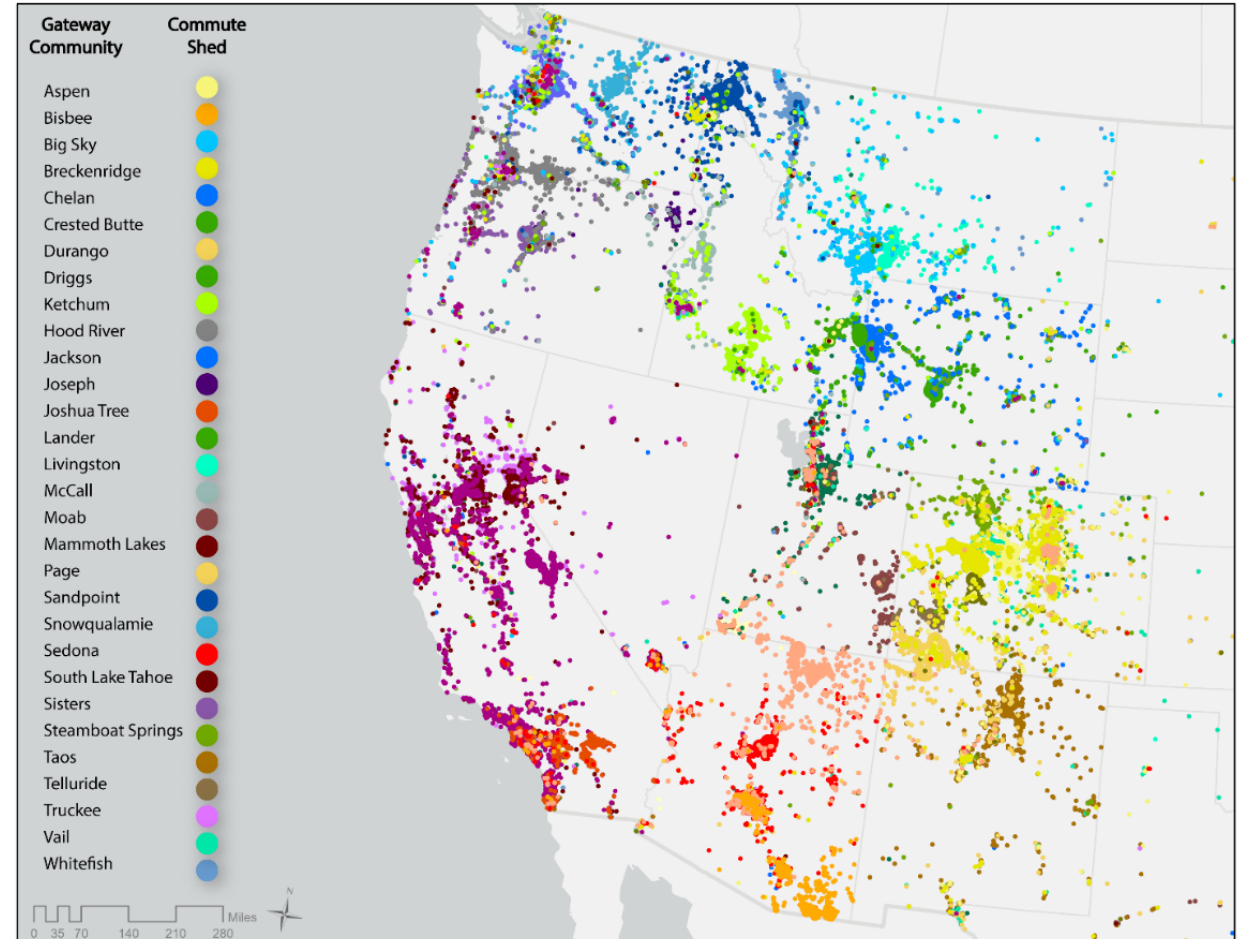
Figure 3.12: Frequency of transportation options



Regional transportation patterns

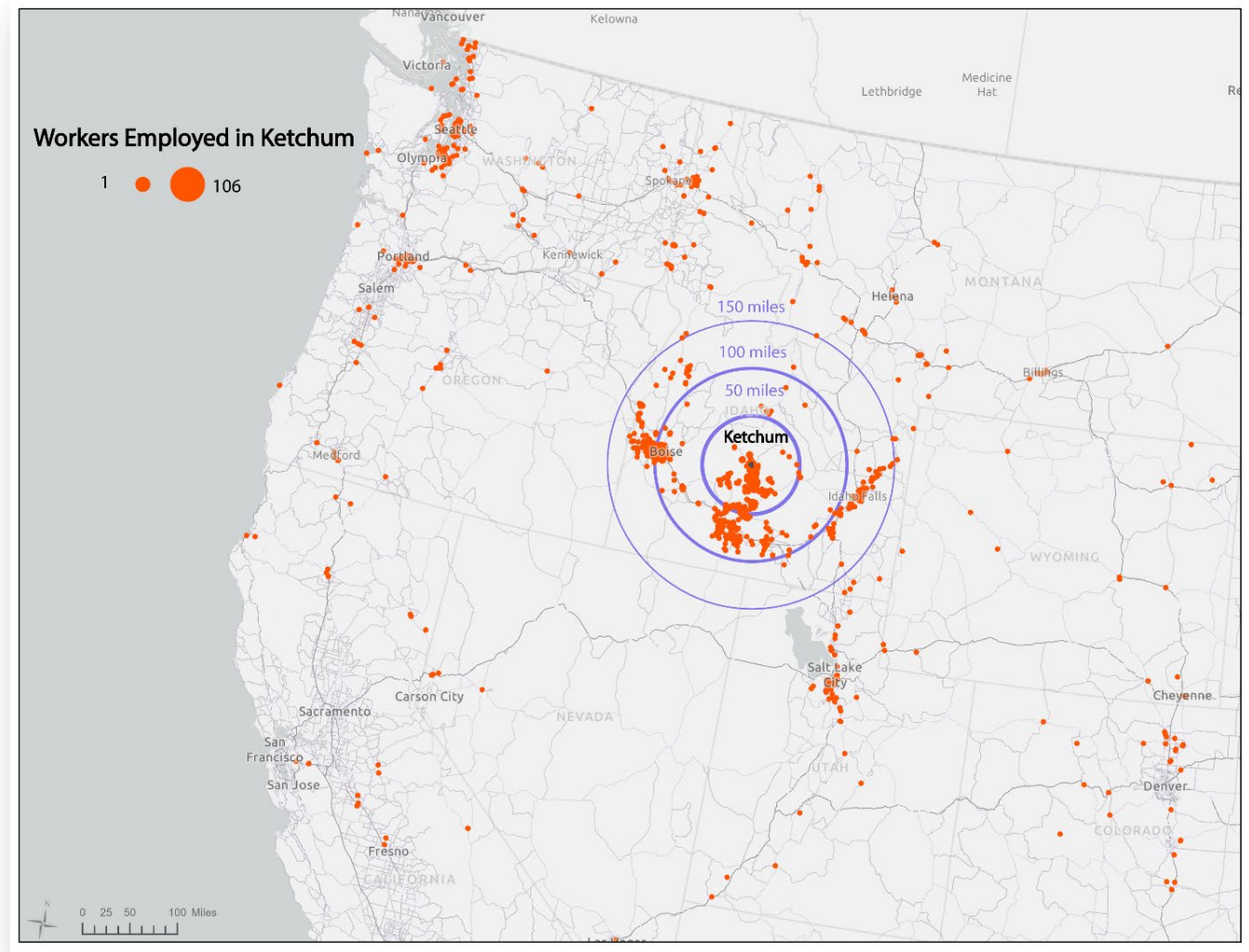
Visualizing commuter sheds:

<https://uagis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/basic/index.html?appid=c7262349fd624b96bc1a0c0912caf03d&locale=en-us>



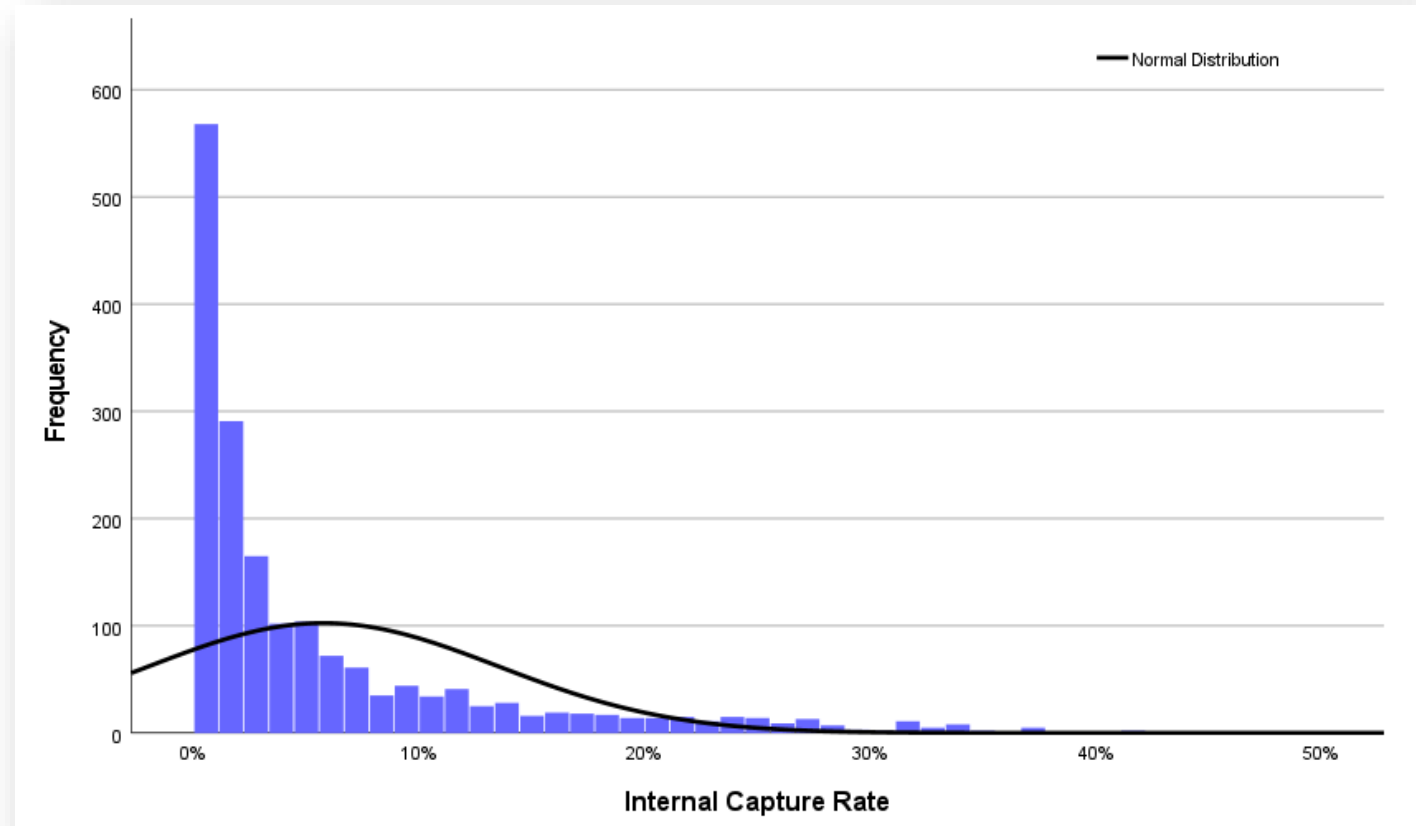
Regional commuting patterns

- 73.2% of workers in gateway communities commute over 10 minutes
- On average, 35% of the workforce in gateway communities does not live in the community* they work in
*census designated place
- Internal capture rates in all gateway communities are very low



LODES data:

- Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics
- Census Bureau product and state unemployment data
- Origin-Destination Dataset
- Location of worker's residence matched with location of job
- **Caveats:**
 - Anonymization procedure inserts probabilistic random data
 - Does not necessarily mean a commute, just a location of a worker and where the business is located
 - Doesn't capture all industries, i.e. construction
 - Seasonal workers could be reflected in this dataset



Do communities understand their workforce commuting patterns?

- Respondents indicated a less than complete understanding of workforce commuting patterns
- What data would be helpful?
 - “Accurate local data on VMT, commuteshed”

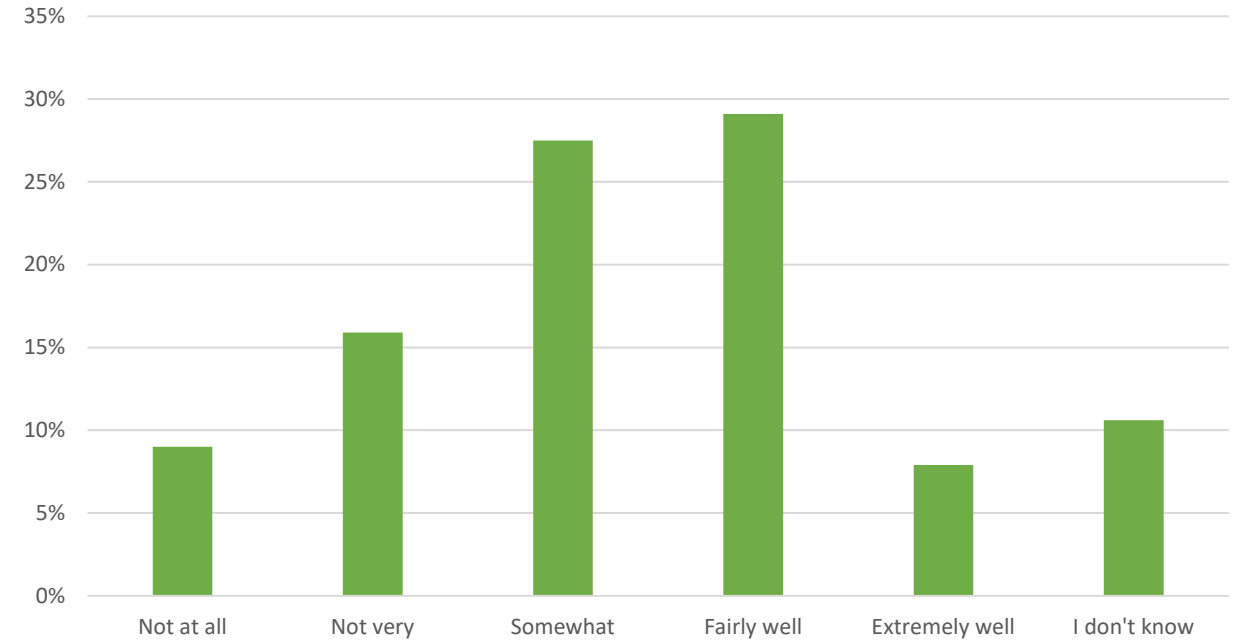


Figure 3.14: Respondents understanding of workforce commuting patterns for their community

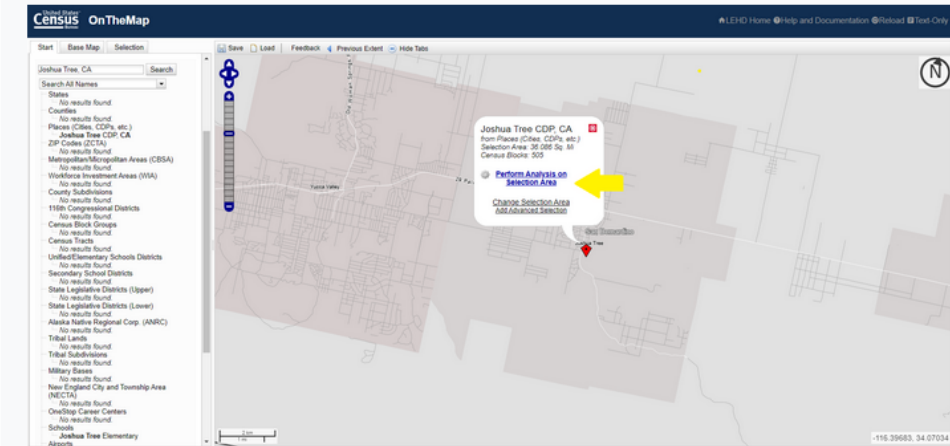


Online blog: How to make a commute map:

- Hosted at the Gateway and Natural Amenity Resource (GNAR) Initiative
- Instructions and links to data sources
- Make your own commute map!
- Link:
https://www.usu.edu/gnar/gnarly_blog/s-tephanie_commutershed

Part One - Downloading LODES Data

1. Pick a place of study.
2. Go to <https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>
3. Enter your place of study in the **Search** box and click on the place title from the list of options that load.
4. In the pop-up that appears on the map, click '**Perform Analysis on Selection Area**'.



5. Use the interface to determine which data you need, in this case:

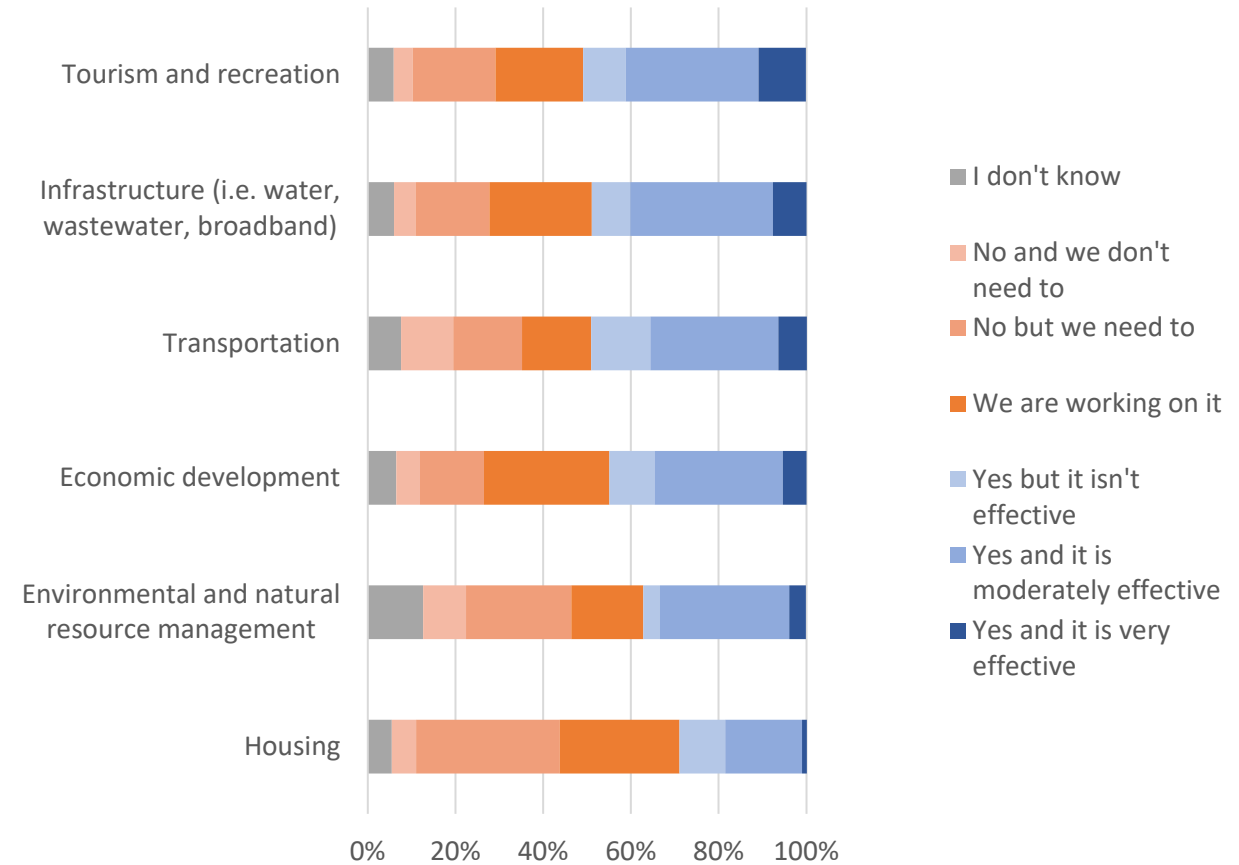
Home/Work area = **Work**

Analysis Type = **Distance/Direction**



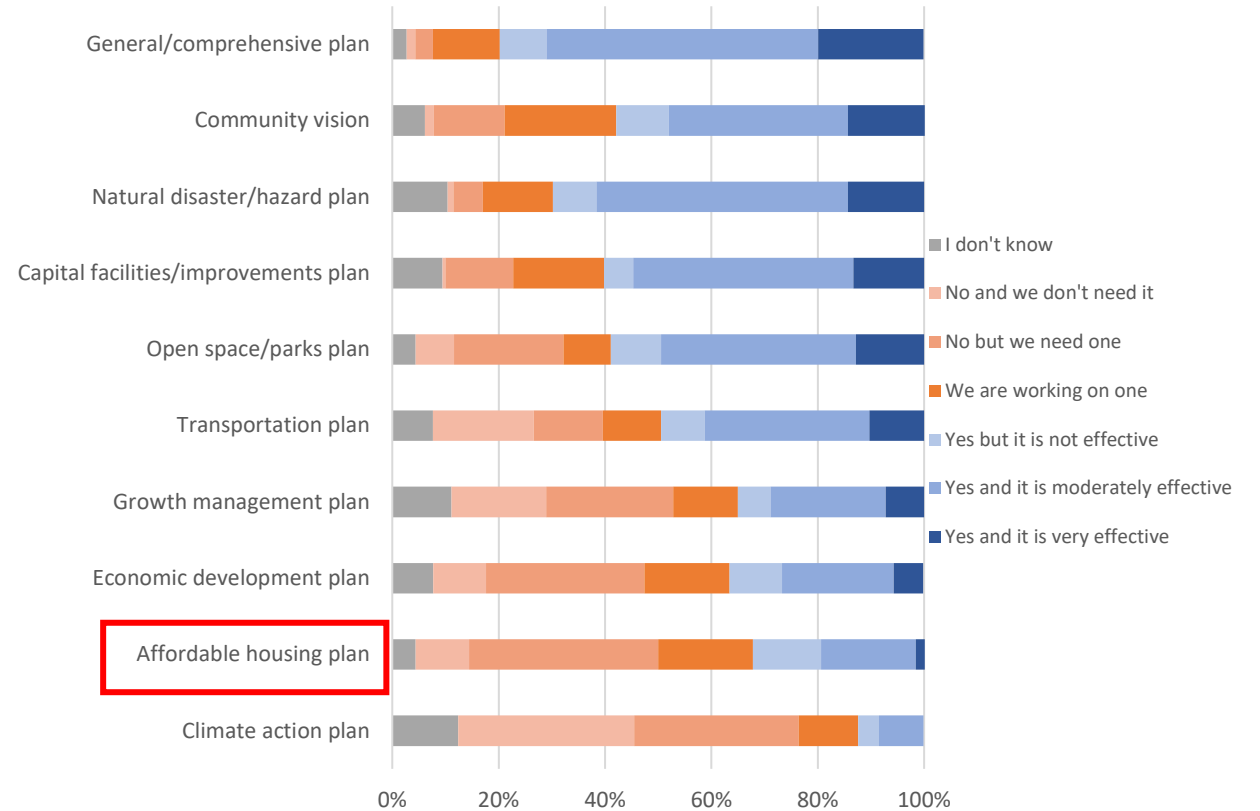
Do gateway communities engage in regional planning?

- Regional housing efforts were the least commonly reported
 - i.e. biggest problem is not being widely addressed at a regional level
- Very low percentages of respondents indicated that regional planning was very effective.
- Most commonly around tourism and recreation.
- Least commonly on housing issues.



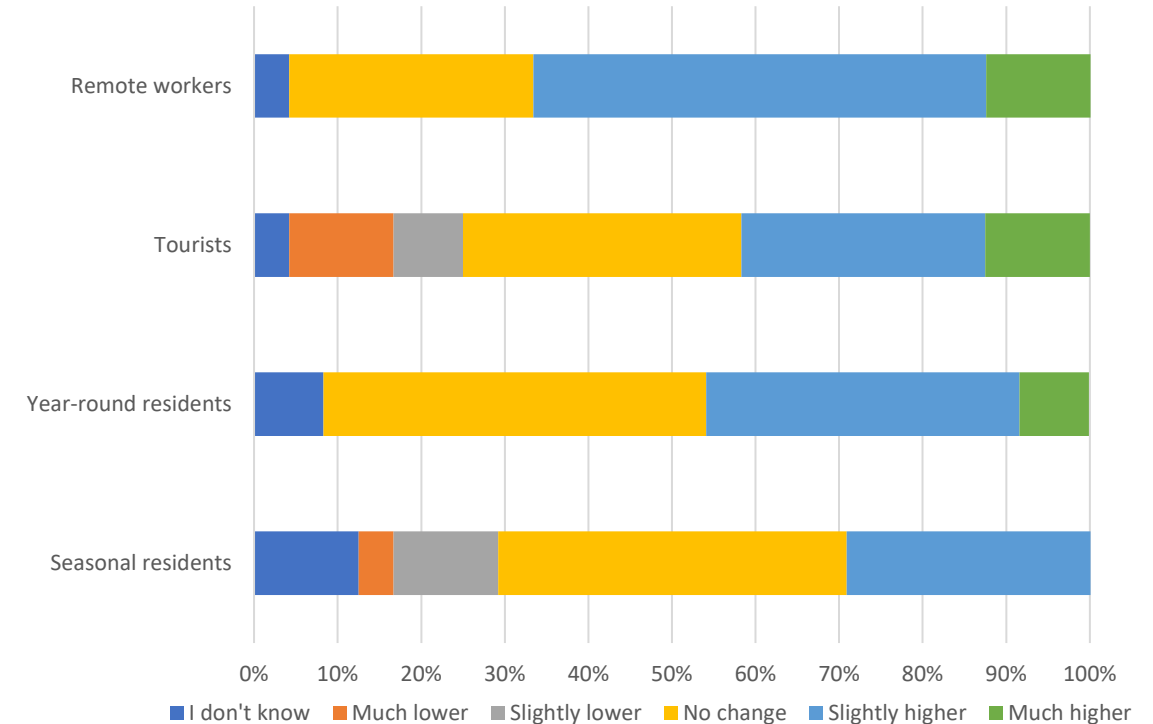
What other planning tools are used?

- General/comp plans
- Community vision
- Natural disaster/hazard plans



How did Covid 19 impact the communities?

- 45% of respondents said that the population of year-round residents is higher or much higher;
- A little more than 60% said that the population of tourists was higher or much higher
- Interestingly, no one said the population of seasonal residents was much higher in their community; about 40 % said this population had not changed, and about 15% said that this population had decreased since
- “Zoom towns” are a subset of our total sample



Next steps: Gateway Typology

Better differentiate types of gateway communities

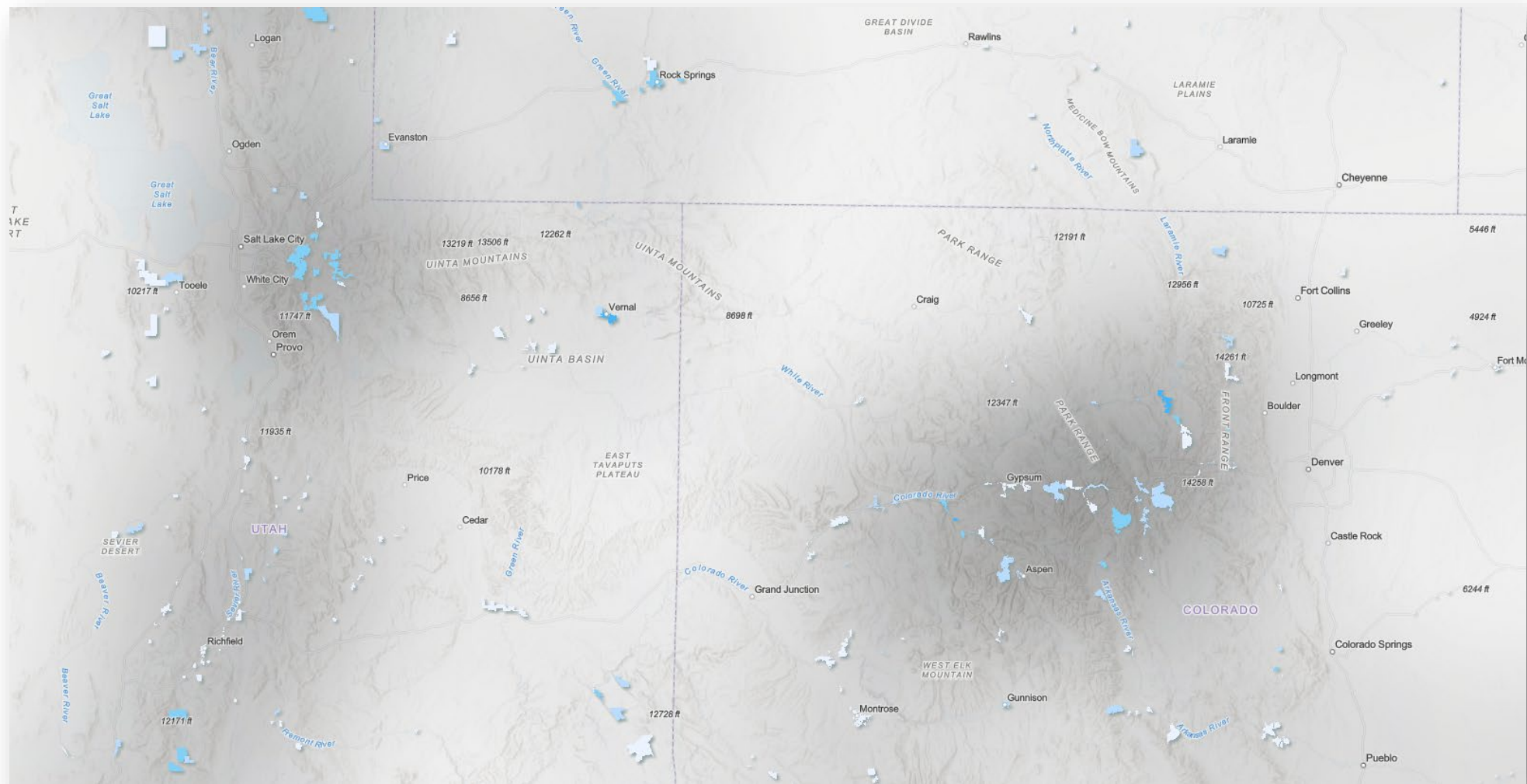
Our 1,857 “gateway communities” don’t always identify as gateway communities

- “none of this is applicable for our town”

We knew this, but still think that many have the potential to “turn into one”, i.e. development trajectory

Variable	Group 1 (1 amenity)	Group 2 (2 amenities)	Group 3 (3 and 4 amenities)	Group 4 (Five plus)
Population growth rate	13%	14.5%	15.9%	26.9%
Median household income	\$45,099	\$47,348	\$49,991	\$56,829*
Per capita income	\$22,551	\$24,868	\$26,904	\$29,956**
Percent 2 nd home ownership	6.4%	9.6%	13.4%	17.3%
Median home value	\$146,497	\$185,651	\$222,223	\$238,300*
Median gross rent	\$740	\$800	\$890	\$919****





Other resources:

- Two NITC Reports
 - https://nitc.trec.pdx.edu/research/project/1118/Planning_in_Gateway_and_Amenity_Communities:_Understanding_Unique_Challenges_Associated_with_Transportation,_Mobility,_and_Access_to_Opportunity
- Journal of American Planning Association
 - *Stoker, P., Rumore, D., Romaniello, L., & Levine, Z. (2021). Planning and development challenges in western gateway communities. Journal of the American Planning Association, 87(1), 21-33.*
- Gateway and Natural Amenity Resource Initiative
 - <https://www.usu.edu/gnar/>

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Upcoming Events

Date	Topic	Type	Summary/RSVP
Feb. 23, 2023 (2-3:45pm MST)	Planning for a GNARly Future : REDEFINE: Solutions Beyond Boundaries Craft regional solutions for regional problems	Webinar & P2P	RSVP FOR MAIN SESSION > REGISTER FOR P2P SESSION >
Mar. 30, 2023 (2-3:30pm MDT)	Planning for a GNARly Future : REMAGINE: Planning, Not Plans Navigate an uncertain future and increase resiliency	Webinar (P2P TBD)	RSVP FOR MAIN SESSION >



Thank you!

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Questions

