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Building Economic and Infrastructure Resilience and Connected Gateway Communities of Yellowstone National Park

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Initial Interview Summary

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Objective: to provide an overview of jurisdictional challenges and desired modeled scenarios that were discussed in interviews.

Overview of interviews

The primary purpose of the interviews was to explore whether long-term data model scenarios and interactive visualizations could serve as effective planning tools for community engagement and to inform decision-making processes. Insights from these conversations will guide scenario development. Interviews covered the following themes: community issues, planning data/tools used/desired, planning scope and timelines, desired scenarios/visualization. The results presented here were summarized by Microsoft Co-Pilot, which analyzed de-identified transcripts (no names, organizations, and communities). Dr. Church reviewed the results for validity. A systematic qualitative analysis is forthcoming. We conducted 13 interviews in 4 jurisdictions, with 1 non-governmental organization, and 1 university.

Planning challenges

Challenge	Description
Housing Affordability & Availability	High costs, limited workforce housing, short-term rentals pressure
Funding & Infrastructure Constraints	Tax caps limit revenue; aging water/sewer and roads
Zoning & Land-Use Governance	Few zoning rules; growth policies lack enforcement
Traffic & Transportation	Seasonal congestion, evacuation concerns, rail bottlenecks
Natural Hazards	Flood and wildfire risks in WUI areas
Tourism Dependence & Seasonality	Reliance on summer visitors; need winter economy diversification
Political Polarization & Large Landowner Influence	Distrust, misinformation, water rights conflicts

Desired scenarios

Scenario	Description
Growth & Zoning Alternatives	Compare no growth vs. infill vs. dispersed lots
Traffic & Transportation	Simulate traffic flows under increased visitation; model river traffic
Floodplain & Levee Impacts	Visualize inundation and levee footprint changes
Wildfire Spread & WUI Costs	Model fire behavior and service costs under codes
Evacuation Routes	Map ingress/egress options for vulnerable areas
Wildlife Corridors & Connectivity	Show development impacts on migration routes
Water Supply & Demand	Overlay growth with groundwater and drought projections
View-Shed & Community Character	Render hillside housing clusters and visual impacts

Contact information

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