From Insights to Action - DRAFT

Shaping a resilient and Thriving Community

Project Purpose

Empower Grand County with an actionable economic plan that integrates insights from the Trail to Tomorrow report, fostering a balanced, prosperous future reflected by the General Plan and guiding strategic projects for resourcing by the Rural Grants program.

Project Goals

1. To augment the findings of the Trail to Tomorrow report with the lived experience of the community to create a nuanced summary.
2. Incorporate that nuanced summary into an actionable approach and plan for a healthy and prosperous Grand County economy.
3. To leverage the resulting plan to draft a new Healthy Economy section of the Grand County General Plan for Commission review.
4. To utilize that approach and plan to solicit, evaluate, and resource projects with the Rural Grants program.

01

Situational Overview

Grand County's economy thrives at the intersection of natural beauty and economic opportunity. This overview highlights the county's leading assets, challenges, and impacts, laying the foundation for a resilient and prosperous future through intentional planning and action.

Executive Summary

Building Resilience, Cultivating Prosperity

Grand County stands at a unique intersection of natural beauty, economic opportunity, and community potential. Our economy is deeply rooted in facilitating the visitation and use of the public lands surrounding Grand County—iconic landscapes attracting millions of visitors annually. The direct economic contributions from these visitors, as outlined in the *Trail to Tomorrow* study, reveal the substantial role of public land visitation and use in sustaining the county's businesses, jobs, and tax revenue. Beyond these measurable direct impacts, this visitation's indirect and induced economic impacts ripple through the community, supporting businesses and services that support the local population and the quality of life for residents. Warm data and anecdotal evidence suggest an even greater reliance on public land visitor-enabled resources than currently quantified by the TTT report.

This dependence presents both economic challenges and opportunities. While Grand County's economic assets are unmatched, its economy remains vulnerable to external factors such as shifts in visitation trends and infrastructure constraints.

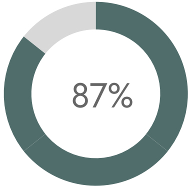
The future of a prosperous economy benefiting Grand County residents requires an intentional and proactive approach to economic development—one that leverages the county's unique position as a gateway to public lands while fostering resilience through diversification and intentional evolution.
This planning approach aims to:

- **Strengthen** the county's existing economy by addressing current constraints and challenges.
- **Develop** deeper economic resilience through innovative uses of existing assets and strategic partnerships.
- **Cultivate** a prosperous and inclusive Grand County economy that lifts the entire region.

By grounding the planning process in clear data, inspiring a shared vision of possibility, and connecting all stakeholders to the goals of regional prosperity, this effort seeks to address Grand County's economic challenges and maximize opportunities, shaping a thriving Grand County economy that serves as a hub of economic vitality and community wellbeing—setting a benchmark for gateway communities nationwide.

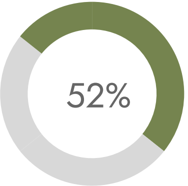
Direct Economic Impact

Visitor Driven Revenue and Employment in Grand County



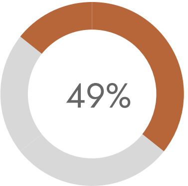
Taxable Sales

87% of taxable sales stem from services (lodging, restaurants) and retail.



Services

Services alone, primarily serving visitors, contribute 52% of county taxable sales.



Employment Concentration

48.9% of jobs are in tourism-related sectors, one of the highest concentrations among comparable counties.

Facilitating public land use & visitation drives Grand County's economy, generating substantial revenue and employment by providing goods and services to millions of visitors, underscoring the county's deep reliance on visitor-enabled resources.

**Direct = takes place in the industry being measured. Direct + Indirect + Induced = total economic impact of the industry being measured.*

Indirect Economic Impact

Visitor Driven Revenue and Employment in Grand County

Grand County's visitor-driven infrastructure, from healthcare to recreation, supports residents while generating indirect employment and revenue, highlighting the essential role of public land visitation in sustaining community services and the local economy.

Moab Regional Hospital

Moab Regional Hospital is Grand County's largest employer according to Utah Department of Workforce Services

Grand County EMS

Grand County EMS employees an outsized number of highly skilled and trained staff

MRAC

MRAC employs year round staff and serves the local community

**Indirect = inter-industry transactions demanded or needed to operate the industry being measured*

Induced Economic Impact

Resident Spending Amplifies Economic Vitality

The combined visitor-driven workforce in Grand County channels spending into housing, food, and recreation, creating a significant induced economic impact that, alongside direct and indirect effects, forms the backbone of the local economy.





**Induced = Household spending on goods & services by people working to serve the direct or indirect needs of the industry being measured.*

Goods

The visitor-driven workforce fuels Grand County's economy by purchasing groceries, clothing, and retail items, supporting local businesses and suppliers.

Services

Residents employed to facilitate visitation spend on healthcare, childcare, dining, and recreation, driving revenue and sustaining service providers.

Housing

Visitation-supported workforce housing demand stimulates construction, rentals, and home purchases, significantly impacting Grand County's real estate economy.

Top Three Economic Assets

Foundations of Grand County's Prosperity

Built Infrastructure

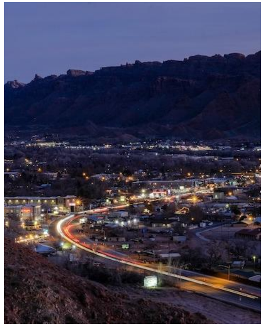
Grand County's built infrastructure supports visitors with diverse hospitality properties, dining, retail, emergency services, recreation, and outfitters, ensuring seamless access to public lands and enriching visitor experiences.

Human Infrastructure

Grand County's skilled workforce excels in facilitating public land use, offering expert EMS, outdoor recreation guides, and experienced hospitality and food & beverage professionals to ensure exceptional visitor experiences.

3M+ Annual Visitors

Grand County's 3M+ annual visitors provide a refreshed market for goods, services, and hospitality, offering a unique, continuous customer base for local businesses and entrepreneurs not typical of a rural community.



Top Three Economic Constraints & Challenges

Visitor Reliance, Workforce Strains, and Resident Concern

Workforce Shortage

Grand County's workforce shortage threatens economic stability, driven by severe housing shortages, low incomes, and seasonal job volatility. Nearly 46% of households are cost-burdened (30%+ of household income goes to housing) from a lack of affordable and attainable housing. Grand County ranks lowest in household income among 12 comparable outdoor recreation communities.

Resident Sentiment

Grand County's economy relies heavily on tourism, yet resident concerns about over-tourism, rising costs, and cultural shifts fuel a tension between tourism promotion and resistance. Perceived unfriendliness toward visitors and community tensions need addressing to build clarity and support for a healthy, prosperous, sustainable, visitor-dependent economy.

External Market Vulnerability

Grand County's economy is highly dependent on facilitating public land visitation and use, with 48.9% of jobs tied directly to tourism and indirect and induced adding to visitor economic impact. Slowing visitation and declining taxable sales since 2021 and tight correlation to park visitation highlight the county's vulnerability to external market trends even compared with comparable communities.

02

Strategy

Grand County's economy thrives at the intersection of natural beauty and economic opportunity. This overview highlights the county's leading assets, challenges, and impacts, laying the foundation for a resilient and prosperous future through intentional planning and action.

Strategy

Building Prosperity through Focused Growth

Our strategy for Grand County's economic development focuses on building a robust, resilient, diversified economy that addresses current challenges while fostering opportunities for long-term prosperity. By leveraging Grand County's unique assets—its built infrastructure, skilled workforce, and 3M+ annual visitors—we aim to balance the County's reliance on tourism with sustainable growth in new sectors. This strategy is structured around four strategic focus areas: Strengthen, Develop, Diversify, and Evolve—each addressing immediate needs and future opportunities.

Empowering Grand County with a resilient, diversified economy that strengthens current assets, enhances opportunities, and fosters innovation for long-term prosperity.

Strengthen

Remove barriers and challenges to stabilize Grand County's economy and support its essential role in facilitating public land use.

Develop

Enhance Grand County's role as a gateway community by improving visitor experiences and promoting local businesses that drive tourism.

Diversify

Cultivate new economic opportunities leveraging existing assets to reduce tourism dependency and build economic resilience.

Evolve

Foster entrepreneurship and innovation to identify and support emerging trends, creating a diversified, future-ready economy beyond supporting public land use.

Strategic Focus Areas

Foundations for Economic Resilience

Strengthen

Remove barriers and challenges to economic stability by addressing housing shortages, workforce constraints, and resident sentiment. Initiatives in this area aim to ensure Grand County's current economy thrives in its vital role of facilitating public land visitation and use.

Develop

Build on and enhance the County's role as a gateway community for public land visitors. This includes strategic partnerships with public land managers to improve visitor experiences and targeted campaigns to promote local businesses directly supporting tourism, ensuring this critical economic driver remains vibrant.

Diversify

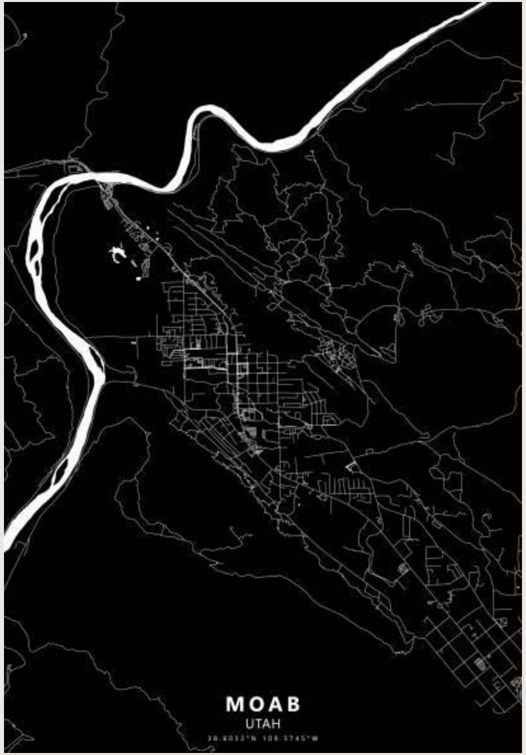
Cultivate new economic opportunities that leverage existing assets to reduce dependence on traditional tourism. Focus areas include creating a training and education hub, attracting weddings and corporate events, and fostering content creation industries. These sectors utilize current infrastructure while mitigating risks from tourism fluctuations.

Evolve

Nurture a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation to identify and support emerging trends unrelated to public lands. Grand County will cultivate a future-ready economy that aligns with residents' aspirations and needs through observation, measurement, and resource allocation.

03

Plan



Questions & Answers