2016 Request for Proposals
Session Guidelines

The Rocky Mountain Land Use Institute at the University of Denver Sturm College of Law is soliciting session proposals for the celebration of its 25th anniversary event, *Western Places/Western Spaces: Examining the Past, Exploring the Future*. The conference will be held on Thursday and Friday, March 10 & 11, 2016 at the University of Denver campus.

Western Places/Western Spaces: Examining the Past, Exploring the Future

The Rocky Mountain Land Use Institute was established to conduct education and research programs on legal and public policy issues related to land use and development. For 25 years, RMLUI has been leading a discussion in the West about the challenges presented by growth and innovative ideas for addressing them.

In celebration of its 25th year, RMLUI is pausing to look back and examine lessons learned that can guide our actions and policies as we move forward into the next 25 years.

This year’s *Western Places/Western Spaces* conference will address the transformative land use legal and policy developments in the Rocky Mountain West that have influenced the shape of our communities today. We will also explore the trends and innovations—like demographic shifts, climate change, and economic forces—that are likely to affect the future of the West.

In addition, RMLUI will advance the dialogue on some recurring themes from past conferences—urban growth and density, regional planning and conservation, water, and housing—and consider emerging challenges facing the region.
Session Topics

We are looking for sessions that fit within the conference theme and selected topic areas. Listed below are the issues we are seeking to explore during the conference. The submission form will ask you to select the topic or topics most applicable to your proposal.

- **Examining the Past, Exploring the Future**: What have we learned over the past 25 years that should guide our land use decisions in the future? Is growth and development following predicted trends? What mistakes have we made? What opportunities have we missed? How do we best address anticipated future challenges?
- **New Urbanism & Density**: Land use experts have long called for increased density as part of a Smart Growth agenda, but that agenda is under attack in many places. Is it working to contain sprawl? If not, does the agenda need an update? If so, are there tools and strategies that can help ensure that density enhances, rather than detracts from, our Western quality of life?
- **Regional Planning**: Nature doesn’t respect boundaries, and neither does sprawl. Is it time to revisit robust regional approaches to address some of our most pressing challenges, from providing adequate water supplies and a robust public transportation system to ensuring equitable access to housing, greenspace, and disaster recovery?
- **Water**: Water supply is a perennial issue in the arid West. With limited natural resources to share across a vast region, communities are looking for new and innovative ways to provide an adequate supply for current and projected populations, while meeting the water needs of agriculture, recreation, and nature. What are the most innovative tools and approaches for stretching an increasingly limited, but vital, natural resource?
- **Housing**: Communities across the West are struggling with the need to provide housing for a rapidly growing population. Affordable housing is in short supply across the region, from large cities to resort towns and rural areas. How are communities across the West addressing the need for fair and affordable housing?
- **Other**: What issues are emerging for communities across the West? What are the tools, technologies, and innovations being used to address the challenges facing communities?

About the Conference

RMLUI’s Annual Land Use Conference is the place for land use and development professionals in the West to share knowledge and network. With more than 400 attendees annually, RMLUI’s conference helps define and influence the West’s land use and development future.

The conference attracts people from across the country, but most are from the Rocky Mountain West (Arizona, Colorado, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming). Attendees represent national, state and local government agencies, private planning and law firms, development companies, academic institutions and non-profit organizations.

The conference takes place on a Thursday and Friday, and typically includes about 30 sessions. Each session is 90 minutes, and runs concurrently with four to six other sessions in the same time block.
Plenary events are usually an hour in length and are held during the lunch hour. Mobile tours are typically scheduled for Thursday or Friday afternoon, and run for three and a half hours (including transportation to and from the site). We also offer an optional day-long workshop that provides a more in-depth look at a specific land use topic on the Wednesday prior to the start of the regular conference activities.

Proposal Criteria
RMLUI seeks to provide a variety of program offerings, including plenary tracks focused on the conference theme, mobile tours to highlight innovative developments, and sessions for each of the Issue Tracks.

We are also interested in sessions that utilize formats other than the traditional panel style, such as debates and round tables, and those that encourage audience participation.

RMLUI provides continuing education for legal, planning, and real estate professionals, and encourage session organizers to emphasize this content in their proposals.

Sessions should strive to:
- Represent the conference theme and highlighted topics.
- Address current issues trending in the land use and development communities.
- Provide useful and practical knowledge participants can use in their own work.
- Present innovative tools and case studies of current projects.
- Offer diverse perspectives with speakers from across the region with different perspectives and backgrounds.
- Engage the audience in a meaningful way.
- Support continuing education for legal, planning and real estate professionals.

Submitting Your Proposal
When submitting your session for consideration, you should be prepared with the following information: session title, description, outline, learning objectives, and speaker information. You should also be prepared to describe how your session supports the conference theme and highlighted topics, as well as how you will engage with participants during your session.

The title and description of your session will be used not only in evaluating your proposal, but also for marketing materials if your session is accepted. Titles should catch the reader’s attention, and the description should provide enough information for an audience to know what the session will cover. For examples, please refer to programs from past conferences on our website.

The session outline provides the Selection Committee with a more in-depth look at your session and the topics you plan to cover and the issues that each speaker will cover. It should be no more than a page in length.

Learning objectives describe what lessons participants will take away from the sessions. These are used in obtaining continuing education credits for the conference, but also are used in evaluation criteria.
Speakers should be able to demonstrate content expertise in the topic, as well as be engaging to the audience. We are looking for well-rounded panels that present a variety of perspectives, represent different geographic, ethnic and gender diversity. It is our experience that panel-style presentations work best when limited to no more than three speakers, including the moderator. We strongly encourage you to contact potential speakers to verify their interest and availability prior to submitting your proposal. RMLUI is not able to provide travel assistance for speakers.

Please adhere to the following guidelines when preparing your proposal:

- **Proposals are due by Friday, August 7, 2015.**
- Please review the Western Places/Western Spaces conference theme and the highlighted topics above to make sure your session is a good fit for the conference.
- Comply with word limitations.
- Limit panel style sessions to one moderator and two speakers.
- Please provide all of the information requested. Incomplete proposals will not be considered.

**Next Steps**

All applications must be submitted online. However, we encourage you to create your proposal in Word and then copy and paste into the online form. You can [download a sample form here](#).

The Selection Committee will review all complete proposals and make a final decision on which to include. RMLUI reserves the right to make changes to sessions, including adding speakers or combining sessions with similar content.

**Important Dates:**

- August 7, 2015: proposals due
- September 30, 2015: applicants will be informed of the status of their proposals
- November 6, 2015: selected sessions must be finalized (content, speakers)
- March 10 & 11, 2016: RMLUI’s Annual Land Use Conference

**Questions?**

Please contact us:

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