Imagine your ideal community. What makes a place of enduring value? Does it preserve and appreciate its local history or is it a high-tech, future-oriented, master-planned development? Is it dense, urban, walkable, and transit-oriented or is it rural in nature, producing food, providing habitat, or protecting our natural heritage? Is it welcoming to all, regardless of income, ethnicity, ability, or age? Is it accessible, easy to navigate, and comfortable? Is it resilient and sustainable, able to cushion the impacts of climate change and reduce our impacts on the environment? And what is the role of art and beauty in creating places of enduring value? How important is it to create spaces that inspire awe, that promote civic engagement, that provide a respite, or that encourage recreation?

As economic recovery has spread across the West, the demands of rapid growth threaten to undermine our ability to plan for and design places of lasting value. And yet, good design ensures that what we build works for the communities now and into the future. High quality design can transform a mundane block of apartments into a vibrant community; it can help revitalize a struggling Main Street; and it can promote sustainability by ensuring that our investments are durable.

For RMLUI’s 28th Western Places/Western Spaces conference, we will be looking at the ways in which the quality of design informs and shapes our communities. What works and what doesn’t? How are small towns using design to encourage growth and economic opportunities? How are cities ensuring that their focus on affordability doesn’t come at the expense of quality infrastructure? How are suburban areas re-designing spaces to meet changing market demands amid a retail revolution? How are regions using design to ensure that communities build on their diversity, leverage their collective resources, improve their connectivity, and preserve their natural assets? What design disasters should we learn from and avoid in the future? And what tools can we use to promote more thoughtful, more effective, and more beautiful design?

Join us March 7 & 8, 2019, as we explore these themes and more at the Western Places/Western Spaces — Designing for the Future: Building Enduring Value.
The Rocky Mountain West is characterized as much by its vibrant and diverse communities as by its sweeping plains and rugged mountains. The Western Places/Western Spaces conference explores the growth and development issues facing communities—from large cities to small towns—as well as concerns about managing and preserving our natural heritage.

RMLUI’s annual conference is the place for land use and development professionals in the West to share knowledge and network. With 500 attendees annually, this event helps define and influence the West’s land use and development future.

The conference attracts people from across the country, but most attendees are from the Rocky Mountain West: Arizona, Colorado, Montana, Nevada, Idaho, New Mexico, Utah, and 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 at the University of Denver campus on a Thursday and Friday, and typically includes about 30–35 sessions. Each session is 90 minutes, and runs concurrently with four to six other sessions in the same time block. Plenary events are an hour in length and are held during the lunch hour. Off-site tours are scheduled for afternoons 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 an in-depth look at a specific land use topic on the Wednesday prior to the start of the regular conference activities.

Ways to Apply

Submit a Session
We are primarily looking for sessions that address the theme and topics of this year’s conference. Sessions can be a traditional panel with 3–4 speakers, a roundtable discussion, or even an off-site tour.

Speaker Nominations
A speaker nomination is a good option for those who may not be able to develop a full session but could lend their expertise to fill out an existing panel. RMLUI will work with session organizers to add selected speakers to increase depth and diversity of existing sessions.

How to Apply:
For both speaker and session submissions, use the online application form. The first page has a check box that allows you to select the type of application you want. If you have any questions, please contact RMLUI at rmlui@law.du.edu.
Submitting Your Proposal

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 (see page 4), 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 how your session will be structured, the topics you plan to address, and the issues that each speaker will cover.

**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. Speakers should be able to discuss how tools and methodologies can be transferred to other cities and towns.

It is our experience that panel-style presentations work best when limited to no more than three speakers. Please note that 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 31, 2018.**
- 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 (text will be cut off longer entries).
- Limit panel style sessions to one moderator and three speakers.
- Please provide all of the information requested. Incomplete proposals will not be considered.

Selection Criteria

RMLUI seeks to provide a broad selection of offerings focused on the conference theme, highlighting innovative developments, and covering the topics listed in the Themed Tracks section.

Panelists should represent geographic diversity as well as different viewpoints. We strongly encourage sessions that provide the perspective of small towns and mid-size cities.

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:
- Provide useful and practical knowledge participants can use in their own work.
- Address current issues trending in the land use and development communities.
- 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.
Themed Tracks & Session Topics

Designing for the Future: In keeping with the theme of the conference, consider what “good design” means in the context of urban planning, community development, and landscape conservation. How do we create enduring value in the places we build? How do we ensure that today’s designs aren’t tomorrow’s headaches?

Community Engagement: Engaging with communities is one way developers can work with neighborhoods to build support for their projects, but community activism can also work against these projects when neighbors band together in opposition to a project. How is social media helping or hurting these efforts, and how can communities harness these tools?

Finance and Taxation: As the nature of retail changes from big box superstores to a preference for smaller venues and online shopping, how are communities adapting to retain shops or revitalize dying strip malls? Public-private partnerships, special districts, and other tools have changed how we finance infrastructure and development. Is it time to reconsider our reliance on sales tax and take another look at land valuation, regional tax base sharing, or other means of financing government functions?

Housing: There’s plenty of new housing and apartments being built, but are they what we need? Are they addressing the chronic shortage of affordable housing? And how can we ensure that new developments blend into the character of existing neighborhoods? Can good aesthetics be used to combat NIMBY-ism? What is the role for alternative housing styles, like ADUs, tiny homes, and manufactured housing acceptable solutions?

Inclusive Design: Everyone likes to see communities prosper, but sometimes this comes with a cost. Gentrification can revitalize areas, but too often means long-term residents—too often minorities and economically disadvantaged groups—are priced out of their neighborhoods. How can we use good design to ensure that what we are building promotes equity and acknowledges cultural heritage while still promoting growth?

Land Conservation: Access to open space is highly valued in Western communities, not only for the aesthetic value, but also because they can provide a source of income from tourism and related industry. Community parks add beauty and a respite in busy urban streetscapes. Open space with walking and biking trails appeals to many people and can helps connect suburban areas. How do we factor green space into our designs for the future?

Legal Developments: What are the most important legal developments impacting land use and real estate development this year? Which legislative efforts will allow for, or stifle, innovation and progress? What regulations are holding us back or hindering us from designing the places we want to have in our communities? Which judicial decisions will have the most disruptive ripple effects—or not?

Mobility and Transportation: With driverless, autonomous cars just over the horizon, car sharing services like Lyft and Uber continuing to grow, and bike sharing on the rise, what are the implications for driving and parking infrastructure? What is the future for mass transit? What mobility infrastructure do we need, and how do we plan now for the multi-modal needs of the future?

Natural Resources: The West has abundant resources for energy from both renewables and extractive resources. At the same time, we are also facing a challenge in how we provide enough water to meet the needs of our growing populations. How do we balance our need for these resources with our desire to protect our natural landscapes? How can tools such as green building design, energy conservation codes, and infrastructure improvements increase the sustainability of our built environment and reduce our need for resources?

Resilience and Adaptation: Natural disasters, including landslides, floods and fires, are forecast to become more frequent and less predictable due to climate change. How can we build communities that are resilient and adaptive, capable of bouncing back from the ultimate disruption?

Urban/Rural Divide: While cities are pushing back against growth, small towns are searching for innovative ways to encourage new development. How can aesthetics be used in urban areas to mitigate the impacts of density? How can design support Main Street development in rural areas?

Other Hot Topics: What topics have we missed? What new disruptive technologies are around the corner that will affect land use? How is social media changing the way we plan and build our communities? Suggest something to be included in the Hot Topics track.
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 31, 2018:** proposals due
- October 5, 2018: applicants will be informed of the status of their proposals
- November 2, 2018: selected sessions must be finalized (title, description, speakers)
- March 7 & 8, 2019: RMLUI’s Annual Land Use Conference

Questions?

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**Sponsorship & Promotional Opportunities**

Our conference is not possible without the generous support of our sponsors. These financial contributions help fund our programs and conference activities, including top-notch keynote speakers, plenary lunch events, and tours. Conference sponsorship provides visibility and underscores your company’s commitment to sustainable communities and informed and ethical land use and development practices.

Equally important are our Aspen sponsors, who provide in-kind marketing and promotional support.

For more information, please see the [Sponsor page](#) on our website or contact Susan Daggett.