2020 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 29th annual Western Places/Western Spaces conference.

Western Places/Western Spaces Conference
Hot, Dry, and Crowded: Planning for the Future

The West of the future will be warmer and more populous, and as a result, will face significant challenges with respect to our water supplies, our ability to withstand unpredictable weather patterns and extreme storm events, and our capacity to preserve our economy and our quality of life while adapting to the coming changes. The climate is changing, but we can do something about it.

Land use planning, water planning, and disaster mitigation are just a few of the tools available to help prepare for an uncertain future. We can work now to prepare our communities and landscapes for the impacts we are sure to experience. We can use design to create places that are more sustainable and adaptable. We can use integrated water and land use planning to help stretch dwindling water supplies. We can use our natural systems to create more resilient communities that are cooler and more connected. And we can work to ensure that the communities of our future are more equitable, affordable, and inclusive.

For RMLUI’s 29th Western Places/Western Spaces conference, we will be looking at the ways in which we can use design, planning tools, and creative approaches to better plan for a future that will be different from the known past. The Babbitt Center for Land and Water Policy is partnering with us to develop a track focused on integrating land use and water planning. In addition, we will consider how our built environments, using mixed use design, transportation infrastructure, and even building codes, can help reduce our impact on climate change and create a more comfortable and sustainable living environment. We will explore how our natural systems and outdoor spaces can be designed for greater resilience, cooler micro-climates, and more water-wise landscaping. We also will focus on rural resilience and how to adapt sustainability innovations and new technologies to small towns and rural communities. Finally, we will consider how climate change is likely to affect our natural resources—from our recreational playgrounds to our economic engines—and discuss ways in which our land use strategies can or should adapt in anticipation of changes across our Western landscapes.

As always, we’re looking for your ideas about hot topics, emerging trends, legal developments, or great case studies that can help inform the conversation and ensure that RMLUI continues to provide leadership in the region.

Join us March 5 & 6, 2020, as we explore these themes and more at the Western Places/Western Spaces — Hot, Dry, and Crowded: Planning for the Future.

2020 Dates
March 5 & 6
About the Western Places/Western Spaces Conference

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, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, 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 2, 2019.
- Please review the Western Places/Western Spaces conference theme and the highlighted topics 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

**Hot, Dry, & Crowded:** Communities will need a full set of tools to deal with effects of a changing climate, such as warmer temperatures, water scarcity, and extreme weather events. How do these challenges impact rural vs. urban areas? How can a city mitigate urban heat islands to reduce the impacts on public health? How can green infrastructure be used to reduce flood risk? What other tools are available to communities?

**Equity:** Communities across the West—large and small, urban and rural—are trying to balance the need for growth while ensuring that they meet the demands of their existing populations. How do we embrace diversity, protect neighborhoods from gentrification, promote accessibility, and provide for our aging populations?

**Design:** Good design can be used to create places and spaces where people want to live, work, and play. What are the best practices in design that communities can use to create mixed-use projects, improve building codes, or develop innovative solutions for flood the expected impacts from our increasingly hot, dry and crowded future?

**Finance & Economics:** Economies are changing across the West, as traditional industries give way to new and emerging technologies and traditional retail continues to face challenges. How can we ensure a just transition that continues to support broad-based job growth and local economies? How can communities address these trends, and how do they finance needed change?

**Housing & Mobility:** How we build our communities has everything to do with sustainability and resilience. How do we ensure that we are building the amount and type of housing we need (such as housing for lower and middle income families), while addressing affordability? And how are we ensuring mobility and transportation options that work for changing development patterns? How are communities promoting alternative transportation, including bike and scooter shares? What options do we have to address mobility, reduce congestion, and protect the environment?

**Integrating Land Use & Water Planning:** The Babbitt Center for Land and Water Policy at the Lincoln Institute is partnering with RMLUI to develop a track devoted to exploring best practices for integrating land use and water planning. Although this track is already under development, we welcome suggestions for topics or speakers. Current session concepts being considered for this track include: Water Law & Policy 101; Land and Water Status in the Colorado Basin; Climate Adaptation and Water Planning; Lessons from State Water Policy Initiatives; Water in the Sustainable Development Code; Water & Land Integration Successes; Water Sustainable Landscape Opportunities; Water-Land-Climate & Equity; Roundtable of Regional Water Utility and Community Planning Managers. For further information on this track contact Jim Holway at jholway@lincolninst.edu.

**Land Conservation:** Open space is highly valued in Western communities, not only for its aesthetic value, but also because it can support tourism and related industries, provide ecological services, and promote healthy, thriving communities. What are some of the best practices available for communities to protect and increase accessibility to green space? How do we preserve our agricultural heritage?

**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?

**Natural Resources:** The West has abundant resources for energy from both renewables and extractive resources. How do we balance our energy demand with a desire to protect our natural landscapes and improve our air quality? What are communities doing to promote conservation of energy and water? What is the role of mining and agriculture in the West, and how will these industries—and the communities that depend on them—be impacted by a changing climate?

**Planning Tools:** Planners—from rural communities to suburban towns to large cities—face a variety of issues and have a number of tools for addressing them. What best practices should planners be looking at? How can some of the big city tools be adapted for smaller communities? How can regional planning balance the goals of urban areas with those of rural places to develop a plan that lifts everyone up?

**Small Towns & Rural Communities:** Small towns and rural communities face the same issues of growing populations and shrinking water supplies, that urban areas do, but are also often those worst hit by natural disasters and have fewer resources to cope. What other issues do they face that differ from urban areas? What is the role for the shared economy in these areas? How are they preparing the for the changing future ahead?

**Other Hot Topics:** What topics have we missed? What is your community doing that could serve as a lesson to others? 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 2, 2019: proposals due
- September 6, 2019: applicants will be informed of the status of their proposals
- October 18, 2019: selected sessions must be finalized (title, description, speakers)
- March 5 & 6, 2020: 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.