# 2026/27 Request for Applications (RFA)

## Technical Advisory Panels

Urban Land Institute – Colorado District Council (ULI Colorado)

Due date for applications: Applications for Technical Advisory Panels are now rolling. ULI will accept up to two (2) applications each year to be awarded the DRCOG sponsorship. Other applicants will be considered, but may not be eligible for funding. The funding is first come, first serve for DRCOG communiities.

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## I. Overview of RFA

The Urban Land Institute (ULI) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit global research and education organization supported by its more than 48,000 members drawn from the breadth of land use professions. Its mission is to shape the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide.

To further this mission, the 1,400-member Colorado District Council of the Urban Land Institute (ULI Colorado) has secured a matching grant from the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) to support two Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) studies at key sites in two Metro Denver communities. TAPs are 2 day exercises that put volunteer ULI expertise to work to help communities address pressing land use issues. They are preceded by extensive preparation.

TAPs provide value at a variety of scales -- from a single site or building to a district. Study areas should contain the potential to deploy ULI best practices and expertise in such areas as affordable housing, economic development, placemaking, healthy communities, transit-oriented development, walkability, public-private partnerships and infrastructure. Potential study locations could be transit-oriented development sites, traditional main street environments, a vacant school or public building, brownfield, or another site with potential to attract new investment and transformation into compact, walkable, healthy development.

TAPs are designed to provide practical and actionable recommendations that produce results on the ground. They are intended to be blueprints for positive change. TAPs help communities establish this direction and inform next steps, including targeted investments in planning, economic development and infrastructure.

Through $15,000 in funding from DRCOG, ULI Colorado is accepting requests from applicants including public agencies, nonprofits, and institutions (or private entities working in a public-private partnership) seeking a TAP study. The DRCOG grant will reduce the cost of a TAP to two sponsoring communities by $7,500, with the potential for additional matches to reduce cost to the primary sponsor.

Example of funding structure:

| | |
|---|---|
| Cost of each TAP<br>(Public & non-profit fee): | $25,000 |
| DRCOG match<br>(Eligible public & non-profit entities): | $7,500 |
| Sponsor/host share: | $17,500 (can be split/shared up by government agency, nonprofit, institution, private developer, BID, etc.) |
| Cost of TAP (Private entities): | $35,000 (Not eligible for DRCOG funding) Please contact Hannah.King@ULI.org to discuss a TAP for a private entity. |

This TAP may support projects at different phases of implementation and may include a new project, advance a conceived project not yet implemented, or examine vacant land with no

established direction for development. The TAP study may include a wide range of strategic findings and recommendations, including conceptual design, feasibility analysis, strategic planning or implementation recommendations.

ULI Colorado's TAP program seeks to increase public sector, private sector, and community involvement and collaboration in projects that exemplify ULI's best practices. These best practices include:

- Mixed uses
- A built environment that supports public health and a healthy natural environment
- Urban design framework for walkability and multi-modal transit
- Placemaking
- Opportunities for new economic vitality
- Market potential
- Strategies and development opportunities that support aging-in-community/lifelong communities
- Mixed-income housing or housing opportunities for different income levels

## II. Background: ULI Technical Advisory Panels

ULI's Advisory Services Program brings the finest expertise in real estate to bear on complex land use planning and development projects, programs, and policies. Since 1947, this program has assembled more than 600 ULI member teams to help sponsors find creative, practical solutions for land use challenges.

Since 2004, ULI Colorado has conducted more than 65 TAPs that have been successful in identifying creative solutions to local challenges in Aurora, Arvada, Beaver Creek, Boulder, Commerce City, Denver, Lakewood, Littleton, Louisville, and Wheat Ridge, among others. Panel sponsors have included RTD, school districts, city governments, and private developers.

Each TAP team is composed of highly qualified professionals who volunteer their time to ULI. They are chosen for their knowledge of the topic and assessed to ensure their objectivity. ULI teams are interdisciplinary with the team mix tailored to the assignment. They provide a holistic look at development problems and formulate realistic and actionable recommendations to move forward. A respected ULI member with previous TAP experience will chair the TAP.

Each TAP report addresses the scope of work proposal by relying on background information, best practices and creative problem-solving. Project applicants must not rely on the TAP study for any required entitlement study, environmental clearance or any other element of project approval. TAPs do not compete with or replace consultant studies nor replicate the scope of a professionally produced site plan, master plan, architectural renderings or similar documents. TAPs do set the stage for wise and productive investment in future professional services and policy directions.

As described below, the project narrative and proposed scope of work should be suitable for the 2 days allowed for each TAP. The TAP study deliverables consist of a 2-day Technical Advisory Panel, a PowerPoint presentation, a formal report (PDF), and potential follow¬-up to support implementation of recommendations.

Each TAP study is valued at more than $100,000, which includes program staffing and coordination, report writing and design, and the estimated value of donated professional consulting services from ULI panel members.

More information about the TAPs program is available at colorado.uli.org/taps.

## III. Eligibility, Funding and Requirements (initial requirements)

Eligible Applicants
Any nonprofit institution or public agency (with the potential for a private entity partner) may respond to this RFA. City or county governments, redevelopment or transit agencies, nonprofit organizations, and community-based organizations (with potential for a private entity partner) are all eligible. Each application must be accompanied by:

1) A partnership or letter of support from a planning agency with direct jurisdictional oversight;

2) A letter of support from an elected or public official; and

3) A non-binding applicant pledge of $17,500 to co-fund the TAP study.

Private businesses or property owners may apply for consideration only if they can demonstrate a strong partnership with the public, nonprofit or institutional sectors.

Eligible Study Areas
Any site or district located in a DRCOG community is eligible. Preference will be given to sites and districts that pose both the greatest challenges to redevelopment and the greatest potential benefit if they could be redeveloped. Typical ULI study sites include underperforming retail areas, vacant sites or buildings, and downtown or other commercial districts.

Demonstration of Support – Required of all Applicants
Each application must be accompanied by a letter of support from a public planning agency with direct jurisdictional oversight of the proposed site and one letter of support from an elected or public official. These acknowledgements must recognize that the applicant has sought to collaborate with local government to work toward successful redevelopment.

Each applicant must attach a non-binding pledge of $17,500. While the successful applicant will be required to submit the pledge amount as a condition of acceptance for the TAP study, there are no requirements regarding funding, which can come from one or more sources.

If chosen, the applicant will also be required to sign ULI Colorado's standard Letter of Agreement for a TAP and otherwise comply with TAP procedures for planning and hosting a TAP. These guidelines include:

- Producing a digital "Advance Packet" for each TAP panelist (samples provided on request),
- Organizing stakeholder interviews,
- Orchestrating a site tour,
- Providing an appropriate venue for the TAP and
- Covering incidental costs for food and refreshment during the TAP.

## IV. Application Guidelines

Please fill out the Application found here: CLICK FOR APPLICATION LINK >

To apply for the DRCOG match, applicants must 1) define their study area and the TAP scope-of-work in a Project Narrative and 2) craft a Problem Statement and 3) Questions for the Panelists that they hope a Technical Advisory Panel will address. The Project Narrative, Problem Statement, Questions for the Panelists, letters of support from public officials, and financial pledge can be submitted by emailing them Hannah King, Manager of ULI Colorado, at Hannah.King@uli.org.

Project Narrative
The TAP study may support a new project; advance a project that has been conceived, but not yet implemented; or provide a development direction for a site with no defined use. The scope-of-work within the project narrative should define the study area and partners involved in applying for the TAP. The narrative should also address the following questions and provide any other relevant information:

- What are the physical boundaries of the study area (using a map is helpful to show the boundaries)?
- What is the current vision for this site or district?
- What is the current thinking about what needs to occur to realize this vision?
- What has occurred on the site recently (within the past 5 years)? Describe any relevant planning processes and how community members have been engaged to date.
- What are the area's key demographic or market characteristics that are relevant to the Problem Statement and Questions for the Panelists (median household income, housing prices for-sale and for-rent, employment figures, etc.)?

Applicants can review the Appendix for examples of narrative content.

Problem Statement & Questions for the Panelists
A well-crafted Problem Statement is critical for the success of the TAP. The Problem Statement should succinctly define challenges to development/redevelopment while providing five to seven specific questions for the panel to answer. The problem statement should ultimately define one key question, "What is the main problem you would like the ULI panel to address?"

## V. Application Review and Selection Criteria

**A team consisting of ULI staff, ULI volunteers, and DRCOG representatives will select applicants based on the following:**

1. **Clear identification and definition of the obstacles and challenges to creating successful development/redevelopment.**
2. **Potential for the project to benefit stakeholders and the broader community.**
3. **Project narrative that will translate to a clear, concise and articulate scope for the TAP.**
4. **The exemplary potential of the project as a successful development that embodies ULI's best practices.**
5. **The project's potential to win broad support, investment and market success.**

## VI. Submission Instructions and Timeline

**Submit an electronic copy of the application materials in PDF format to Hannah King, Director of ULI Colorado, at Hannah.King@uli.org. If you have any questions about the application, you can contact Hannah King at Hannah.King@uli.org.**

**CONTACT INFORMATION: For questions regarding the Technical Advisory Panel program, guidelines, or application process, please contact Hannah King at Hannah.King@uli.org.**

## VII. Appendix

**Applicants may consider some or all the following in the Project Narrative, depending on what is relevant to the proposed Problem Statement and Questions for the Panelists:**

- **Planning Context: A description of current zoning and land use regulations applicable to the proposed site or district. What are the nearby public and private infrastructure or amenities that would benefit from or enhance a development, e.g. open space, fire and public safety, public venues such as libraries or concert halls, freeways, transit stops, etc.? Is there a detailed depiction of the applicant's goals for the site? Have major zoning amendments or conditional permit issues been acknowledged?**

- **Metrics: What are the quantifiable impacts of the proposed project? These may include improved local economy, better access to retail and other services, enhanced local tax base, improved walkability and connections, and other general or specific community benefits.**

- **Community Participation: Is there significant community support or opposition to change at this site? To what extent has community interaction already taken place? What review or approvals related to the project have agencies already given? In addition to the required letter of support, to what extent has the applicant partnered or otherwise consulted with the city or county planning agency? What additional declarations of support has the applicant obtained from local entities, such as Business Improvement Districts, neighborhood coalitions, schools, elected etc.?**

- **ULI Best Practices: Can the project area potentially advance such goals to help create thriving communities that support livable, compact, pedestrian-friendly development? Does the project implement relevant regional and local plans that contribute to mixed-income housing and encourage a jobs/housing balance?**

- **Project Feasibility: Does the project area have potential for funding support from local, state, federal, private or foundation funding sources?**

- **Community Benefits: How might the proposed project area enhance and revitalize the surrounding community and provide a catalyst for additional beneficial developments and community improvements? Is there a potential to provide jobs, improve services, increase the housing supply, decrease crime, or enhance use of public transit?**