



RetoolCOS: City of Colorado Springs Unified Development Code (UDC) Project PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

Updated: January 29, 2020

Introduction

In January 2019, the Colorado Springs City Council approved PlanCOS, our community’s plan for the physical development of Colorado Springs. To support the implementation of PlanCOS, the City has initiated an effort to overhaul the zoning and subdivision ordinance, Chapter 7 of City Code, with the goal of creating a new, modern Unified Development Code (UDC). The project—referred to as RetoolCOS—is being managed by a project team comprised of City staff from the Department of Planning and Development and City Communications, with support from Clarion Associates, a national land-use consulting firm.

RetoolCOS is a major undertaking that will require community input and collaboration among a wide range of community stakeholders. This Public Participation Plan (PPP) provides a summary overview of the City’s approach to public engagement throughout this process. Specifically, the PPP identifies key stakeholder groups, opportunities for input, communication tools, and an overall project timeline.

Public engagement strategies will be tailored to each phase and will vary depending on the types of information being considered and the level of stakeholder input needed. This PPP may be updated during the RetoolCOS process to refine outreach approaches and/or meeting formats as necessary to ensure that engagement efforts are transparent, inclusive, effective, and efficient.

Participation Objectives for RetoolCOS

This project will implement the “Inform and Consult” level on the Public Participation Spectrum (International Association of Public Participation). Key objectives are to:

- Solicit input from internal and external stakeholders who regularly use the zoning and subdivision ordinance regarding the strengths and weaknesses of its structure, format, and organization and how it might be improved;
- Ensure the public is kept informed, understands the purpose and scope of RetoolCOS, their role in the decision-making process and how their input influences the UDC project;
- Ensure the public is kept informed throughout the process and to listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations;
- Solicit input from stakeholders who may be interested in or affected by potential modernization and streamlining of the zoning and subdivision ordinance, including those who may be less familiar with how zoning works
- Inform and educate stakeholders about emerging practices in zoning regulations and administration that may improve Colorado Springs’s ability to implement PlanCOS and achieve other planning goals; and
- Ensure that all stakeholders, including citizens, zoning and subdivision ordinance users, developers, applicants and appointed and elected officials, have a variety of ways to convey their input.

Key Stakeholder Groups

Key stakeholders for the RetoolCOS process include both those that are familiar with and use the zoning and subdivision ordinance regularly—such as City staff, members of the design and development community, and housing organizations—and those that may be less familiar, but may have an interest in the implementation of PlanCOS and growth and development issues generally—such as residents, business owners, and members of other City boards and commissions. In addition to providing general project updates and input opportunities for the general public, the project team will use the following forums to facilitate more in-depth discussions about potential updates to the zoning and subdivision ordinance with key stakeholder groups:

Stakeholder Meetings

The project team will conduct individual or small group interviews with stakeholders to hear their insights about the strengths and weaknesses of the existing zoning and subdivision ordinance, as well as other development-related regulations. Discussions will focus on how current regulations hinder or facilitate desired development and the implementation of PlanCOS. Representatives from the following groups will be included, as well as any other subject matter experts identified through the RetoolCOS process.

- City Council members
- Members of appointed boards (e.g., Planning Commission, Historic Preservation Board, etc.)
- Developers (both residential and nonresidential, as well as representatives that are both infill/redevelopment and greenfield-focused)
- Neighborhood representatives and/or business owners (e.g., Council of Neighborhood Organizations (CONO), Colorado Springs Chamber & EDC)
- Local architects and/or builders
- Consultants familiar with development regulations and who work with local developers and builders

While most of these meetings will occur as part of initial kick-off meetings during Phase 1, follow-up meetings via phone, or as part of other planned trips to Colorado Springs, will be scheduled as needed. Clarion will work with City staff to arrange additional meetings as appropriate.

Advisory Committee Meetings

The Advisory Committee is intended to represent a balanced group of citizen and other stakeholder interests. The Advisory Committee is comprised of elected and community representatives including City Council members, CONO (Council of Neighborhood Organizations) representatives, HBA (Home Builders Association) representatives, and other stakeholders represented on the list above. A complete list of members is posted on the project [webpage](#). The Advisory Committee will serve as a sounding board for ideas, directions, and questions raised by the project team throughout the process. Members are expected to review the draft ordinance updates and offer detailed feedback to the project team. While Committee members will not vote or have veto power over proposed revisions recommended by City staff or the project team, their opinions will be shared with Colorado Springs elected and appointed officials. Advisory Committee meetings will be open to the public, and a meeting summary will be posted on the project webpage.

Technical Committee Meetings

The Technical Committee (TC) is comprised of staff from multiple City departments that deal with zoning and land-use issues. This group will be responsible for providing the technical review of all interim work products; providing detailed or department-specific knowledge of specific conditions, issues, or concerns; introducing ideas for consideration; responding to department-specific questions; and considering the enforceability and administrative effort required by proposed changes.

Elected and Appointed Officials Updates

The project team will provide updates to the City Council and Planning Commission at key points during the process to keep them informed about potential changes to the zoning and subdivision ordinance and seek guidance on potential policy choices and potential tools to implement them. City staff will also provide brief updates on RetoolCOS to both bodies at regular work sessions.

Communication Tools

A variety of tools will be used to keep the public informed about RetoolCOS and to advertise public events and input opportunities. Updates and notifications will generally coincide with major project milestones. Generally, each time a major deliverable is made available for public review, and/or approximately two weeks in advance of public meetings, events, or input opportunities. Primary methods of communicating with the public about RetoolCOS are anticipated to include, but not be limited to:

Project Webpage

COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

- Provide general project information
- Advertise upcoming meetings and engagement opportunities
- Provide access to interim work products, presentations, and other project-related materials
- Provide answers to Frequently Asked Questions
- Provide a portal for submitting comments at any time during the project
- Allow interested parties to sign up to receive periodic e-mail updates about the project

RESPONSIBILITY

- City staff will create a dedicated page on the City's website, make periodic updates (with input from Clarion), and manage comments and e-mail addresses received
- Clarion will provide initial content for the webpage, suggested updates to content monthly (or as needed), and materials and work products to be posted online

Social Media

COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

- Advertise upcoming meetings and available documents for public review
- Expand awareness of public meetings and events
- Direct community to online engagement activities
- Highlight participation in community events and activities

RESPONSIBILITY

- Clarion will develop brief talking points to highlight overall project progress, key questions for discussion, and opportunities for input
- City staff will craft and disseminate posts on different forums, as appropriate

E-mail blasts/Electronic Newsletters

COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

- Provide brief updates on the project to interested parties and meeting attendees
- Advertise upcoming meetings and engagement activities

RESPONSIBILITY

- Clarion will draft content for City approval and distribute as appropriate, starting with a list developed for PlanCOS and/or others used by the City, and expanding to include new additions received via the project webpage and meeting sign-up sheets
- City staff will approve final content

Opportunities for Input

Opportunities for public input in the RetoolCOS process are summarized below. Specific meeting dates and input opportunities are outlined on [the RetoolCOS Schedule](#), and will be added to the 'Upcoming Events' section of the project webpage as the process progresses. In preparation for each round of meetings and events, Clarion will prepare a brief summary of talking points, background information for use by City staff in advertising and communicating critical information about that particular stage of the process to different groups and members of the public. This information will be provided in advance of public meetings and events to allow time for review, approval, and dissemination through the various channels used by the City Communication team. Clarion will also prepare presentation materials for key meetings, with input from City staff. Presentation materials will generally be provided to City staff for review a week in advance.

Summary of RetoolCOS Input Opportunities

Participation Objectives	Opportunities for Input	Timing
PHASE 1: RESEARCH, EVALUATION, AND PROJECT PLANNING (OCTOBER 2019 -FEBRUARY 2020)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop awareness in the community about the ReToolCOS process Identify strengths and weaknesses of the format, structure, and organization of the current ordinance, as well as issues related to the implementation of PlanCOS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder interviews Advisory Committee meeting(s) Public Kick-off Meeting Technical Committee meeting(s) Online surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project kick-off meetings December 2-4 Internal survey distributed in advance of December kick-off meetings; public survey launched immediately following (both to remain active through mid-January) Second round of meetings to present Project Plan (February 2020)
PHASE 2: DRAFT UDC MODULES (APRIL 2020 – NOVEMBER 2020)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage key stakeholders in an in-depth review of each draft module of the UDC Provide the public with periodic updates, with an emphasis on informing them of notable changes to the current ordinance and engaging them on targeted set of questions to help inform the consolidated draft UDC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City Council and Planning Commission update(s) Advisory Committee meeting(s) Technical Committee meeting(s) Interactive public meetings (one per module)¹ Stakeholder meetings 	<p>One round of public input opportunities will be provided for each of the three draft modules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Module 1: Zoning Districts and Permitted Uses (May 2020) Module 2: Development and Design Standards (July 2020) Module 3: Review and Approval Procedures (October 2021) <p>Additional opportunities for comment will be available in Phases 3 and 4</p>
PHASE 3: CONSOLIDATED DRAFT UDC (NOVEMBER 2020 – JANUARY 2021)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build public awareness of the draft UDC, highlighting notable changes to the current ordinance Seek input on the consolidated draft UDC before the draft is finalized for consideration by the Planning Commission and City Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City Council and Planning Commission update(s) Advisory Committee meeting(s) Technical Committee meeting(s) Interactive public meeting Stakeholder meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One round of in-person and online input opportunities will be provided on the Public Draft of the Consolidated UDC (January 2021)

¹ Meeting formats will vary during the process, based on the topics being addressed and the types of input needed. Clarion will work with City Communications to incorporate interactive tools and techniques used on other city initiatives for continuity.

Participation Objectives	Opportunities for Input	Timing
PHASE 4: FINAL DRAFT & ADOPTION (FEBRUARY 2021 – APRIL 2021)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build public awareness of the key elements of the new UDC, notable changes to the current ordinances, and the overall timeframe for implementation Provide an opportunity for public comment on the adoption draft of the UDC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City Council and Planning Commission update(s) Advisory Committee meeting(s) Technical Committee meeting(s) Public hearings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least two study sessions and two public hearings on the Adoption Draft of the UDC will be held (one study session and one public hearing each the both Planning Commission and City Council)
PHASE 5: IMPLEMENTATION (APRIL 2021 – AUGUST 2021)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep the public informed about the effective date of the ordinance revisions and the process for implementing those revisions Inform public how input was used to guide the process and improve overall outcome 	<p>Variety of communication tools</p>	<p>Informational only</p>