

PlanCOS as a Cutting Edge Comprehensive Plan



by Carl Schueler, AICP, City of Colorado Springs Comprehensive Planning Manager v

I literally just returned from taking a mid-afternoon break from work to hear two renowned female scientists present their perspectives on a host of topics including the importance of a liberal arts and science education. During the program, one was asked what scientists and academics should do to better communicate and promote what they

know and are learning about science in general, and about climate change (and related ocean impacts) in particular.



In a nutshell, her responses were:

“use images”
“establish relationships”
“acknowledge values”, and
“build trust”.

I got to thinking:

Hey that’s kind of what we did with PlanCOS----- and it worked pretty well.

Any comprehensive plan worth beans has always been heavy on public process. The 2001 Comprehensive Plan PlanCOS replaced certainly was. Nowadays, -, social media and the internet are routinely a bigger part of the mix. Finally, the “go to your audience” approach toward public engagement is now fairly standard practice.

However, what truly distinguished the PlanCOS engagement effort was how creative and relentless we were---and the ways we established genuine partnerships. On the relentlessness side, we developed a dispersion map to identify gaps in input and spur creativity in how to fill them. We prided ourselves in taking our process out to places planners seldom venture. For example, we went to our rescue mission/ homeless shelter and asked folks there what was important to them.

Many of our events were creative and full-on partnerships, and several were also fun. We partnered with our local photographer’s club for a scavenger hunt. We rode fat tire bikes in and down the middle of a creek to celebrate our “Complete Creeks” Big Idea. We teamed up with almost everybody, including the arts community, homebuilders, students and young professionals. Check out Appendix C of PlanCOS for more on how we did this.

Unique Places
a PlanCOS Celebration

Hosted by Goat Patch Brewing Company
at The Lincoln Center, Colorado Springs

1 READY SET-GO!

Send a Text
Share your Voice
Get involved in Celebrating Unique Places!
Text your ZIP Code to 778.848.4488 to take part in the discussion.

2 ASK & SHARE

Panel Discussion with Neighbors
Join us to discuss what places make Colorado Springs unique.
The panel discussion will run until 6:30 p.m.
Raise your hand, ask a question, and share your thoughts.

3 MOVE & PROPEL

Fire Engine and Bus
Spring and Moving Us
Huddle up to ride the Colorado Springs Fire Department Fire Engine and a Mountain Metro Bus!

Pop-Up Workouts with Homeset
Join us for a series of 5 minute pop-up workouts after the panel discussion, starting at 6:30 p.m.

Ride a Bike with Friends
Join us at The Lincoln Center for planned bike rides after the panel discussion, departing both at 6:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

We decided to not use traditional chapter headings like “land use” and “transportation” and instead organized our plan around themes like “Majestic Landscapes”, “Vibrant Neighborhoods” and “Renowned Culture”. Our primary goals are presented as big ideas such as “Everybody is in a Neighborhood”, and “Be a City of Places”. We backed away from a traditional land use map and instead went with typologies that graphically depict actual places and talk about how to move the needle in a desired direction. Although our partners in the development community scrutinized and provided feedback on every word of our plan, its foundation is established by the public process and ultimately is written for and about a broader audience beyond traditional users like boards and commissions, public and private planning professionals, developers and seasoned activists. PlanCOS is unapologetically branded and marketed to positively resonate with and have meaning for our whole community.

For more on PlanCOS go to <https://coloradosprings.gov/plancos/page/plancos>

If you are an APA member and want to see and hear more about how Colorado Springs, Centennial and Aurora have all re-invented how they create, design and use their comprehensive plans, also check out “Cutting Edge Comprehensive Plans” at: <http://www.apacolorado.org/article/2019-conference-presentations>

