



Historic Denver, Inc.

2019 Municipal Candidate Questionnaire

CANDIDATE NAME: Lisa Calderón

1. Do you have a personal connection with historic preservation?

I grew up in the historic neighborhoods of Denver, attended schools with remarkable architecture—Skinner Junior High and North High School—and participated in places of community gatherings, such as St. Dominic’s Catholic Church and the Woodbury Branch Library. Because I grew up experiencing the cultural and aesthetic beauty of these neighborhoods, I chose to buy historic homes that were reflective of the character of the neighborhood in Berkeley and Jefferson Park, and currently own an 1896 Victorian in the Cole neighborhood. Therefore, by living in and among historic homes and institutions, I have cultivated a deep love and appreciation for Denver’s defining architecture, and the need to protect these irreplaceable structures for current residents and future generations.

2. What is your favorite example in Denver (or in your district) where historic preservation, economic redevelopment and strategic reinvestment were successfully combined to create something new?

Two examples come to mind that represent the regulatory and partnership approach I will take as mayor: First is the partnership between Historic Denver and then-Planning Director Jennifer Moulton to create the Downtown scattered-site historic district. Misguided urban renewal efforts and expansion of parking lots had destroyed much of the contiguous fabric of our downtown’s original buildings making it difficult to establish a traditional district. The scattered site approach recognizes the value of our historic assets without constraining buildout of the downtown on opportunity sites. My administration will seek a similar type of partnership with Historic Denver to expand the use of preservation tools, and I will appoint a Planning Director who understands the relationship between historic preservation and economic development. The second is the Krisana Park Pattern Book and Conservation Overlay District. This regulatory tool

aligns with my commitment to resident-led development. I will expand the use of conservation overlay tool to ensure the context-sensitive, form-based development standards that were promised in the Blueprint Denver Areas of Stability concept, but that have not been delivered with the new Denver Zoning Code.

3. Neighborhoods across Denver are facing intense development pressure, and Denver's population is expected to increase in the decades to come. What specific ideas do you have to balance new infill with our historic built environment?

Neighborhoods have been promised a historic property inventory for more than 20 years. It was nearly impossible to deliver on that promise because of a lack of political will, as well as the sheer number of hours it would take to complete it using conventional methods. In the intervening years, technology has caught up and the full survey is attainable. However, the current administration has failed to act and take advantage of this opportunity. As Mayor, I will seek full funding of the Discover Denver program. Full implementation of the survey will help identify the character-defining features of our neighborhoods, and allow us to calibrate our zoning tools to protect and maintain that character even as the city grows and changes. For example, residents in the Harkness Heights neighborhood in North Denver used the Discover Denver survey results to inform standards for a residential conservation overlay district that will soon makes its way through the city's review process.

4. Identify the most critical historic preservation challenge/opportunity in your district. At-Large and Mayoral candidates: you can pick anywhere in the city.

The most critical historic preservation challenge to our city is the disequilibrium between our residential zoning entitlements and our existing built environment, which encourages displacement of residents and scrape offs. In just the last three years, we have lost 450 houses per year in our brick-and-mortar neighborhoods. While resident investors line up to buy the moderately priced historic resources in our original neighborhoods, the developers see only a lot's development potential. The competition has driven up land prices and taxes. We can look to cities like Minneapolis for solutions to these problems. Minneapolis adopted truly form-based design and development standards that respect historic patterns of development so that new growth is durable and compatible, even if it is stylistically different. By tuning into the city's architectural integrity, city leaders boosted confidence in other regulatory moves that will dramatically increase their ability to house a growing population in the core city. It's time that we take our architectural heritage and legacy seriously as we grow.

5. Please finish this sentence: *“I believe historic preservation in Denver can be strengthened by...”*

I believe historic preservation in Denver can be strengthened by fully funding Discover Denver, expanding the use of the conservation overlay tool, adopting a deconstruction ordinance, exploring a building recompense fee, and more sophisticated regulatory and investment strategies that: favor adaptive reuse of existing structures and promote infill/redevelopment based on historic patterns of development (especially “missing middle” housing options).

6. **Extra & Optional:** We think historic preservation is most authentic as a personal and visual experience.

Historic preservation means using time-honored, character-defining features to grow our city in a harmonious way. The example illustrated below is from Sunnyside’s resident-led effort to establish a conservation overlay district that allows neighborly growth. The first image illustrates a speculative development. The second image illustrates a context-sensitive alternative that allows a similar amount of new development:

