



Historic Denver, Inc.

2019 Municipal Candidate Questionnaire

CANDIDATE NAME: Candi CdeBaca, District 9

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

Yes. I am a Mexican and Indigenous woman who is the eldest of my matriarchal family. In our family the eldest daughter is always “the Keeper” of the family. The Keeper has the responsibility of preservation on a cultural, financial, and spiritual level. From wearing the wedding rings of several generations of women in our family to living in my great-grandmother’s home, I have been tasked with preserving our family’s legacy, history and traditions. Also having been raised by my grandparents and great grandparents, I learned very early the value of our histories. While this may not be the typical response to this question, my personal connection to historic preservation was birthed through this cultural and familial role and through a deep knowledge of our indigenous history/legacy being intentionally erased through colonization. My connection to preserving the past through historic preservation is rooted in my ancestral responsibility to preserve our identities and existence.

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?

My top favorite preservation example in Denver (and my district) is Union Station. While there are some things I would have done differently, it is clear that Union Station is a shining example of strategic reinvestment and economic development. The restoration of a transportation hub and reuse for modern transit mixed with the hotel and the commercial uses in the terminal are a perfect illustration of what can be done when we transform spaces that served a need into spaces that meet modern needs. I wish the arch had also been preserved or recreated but that will have to wait until I am fortunate enough to advance the effort as councilwoman of District 9!

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?

I think we have to more intentionally focus on preserving the elements of our built environment that brought people here in the first place. There is great temptation to scrape all things small regardless of historical significance for the sake of generating more profit with less space available. I think this temptation will separate leadership that deeply loves Denver for who she is and leadership that loves what Denver can do for them and their pocketbooks. For example, we sacrificed so many historic buildings in the name of urban renewal of the 1960s. We demolished historic gems from the 1800s and even still fought fiercely for what remains and were fortunate to be able to stop the skyline freeway and all that it would have destroyed in the LoDo area we prize today. Many of the buildings in LoDo that survived characterize what we know and love as Denver today. Development must be cognizant of and honor the past. Infill is necessary to accommodate our new growth and we have a city that was never dense to begin with. Open parking lots, large lots with small homes, our city was planned more like a suburb. Design standards built around historic places make the most sense for balancing new and old while maintaining character. Setbacks and height restrictions are needed with new builds in historic areas. We should require development to invest into a fund for preservation if they are building in historic areas as well. There should definitely be more support for those who want to preserve historic buildings and this is a place where we can shift some of that burden to new development.

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 controversial development in my district right now is the proposed Larimer redevelopment which has been tabled for now. This is an incredible opportunity because Larimer is one of the few areas left that harnesses the original charm and character of our city in the midst of the most modern section of our city. It is also blocks away from what I believe is one of our greatest historic landmarks that was well integrated for modern use; Union Station. While some see the opportunity to generate profit by building up in Larimer Square, I see the opportunity to define ourselves by refusing to succumb to the profit potential in service of standing firmly in our values and identity. The next few years of our development will define Denver for generations. We have the opportunity to force the market and development to bend to our needs. We have spent decades hoping growth would choose us and now that it has, we have to remind everyone WHY it chose us. We are the city built within a park. Our mountain views and old west charm, our neighborhoods within the urban core are the gems that attracted the world and now we have a responsibility to preserve those magnetic forces by any means necessary.

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

Historic preservation in Denver can be strengthened by restructuring our preservation process so that the city (in partnership with an institution) can flag and initiate preservation. Additionally there should be a dedicated effort to generate resources for residents who would like to preserve but do not have the means to do so.

6. **Extra & Optional: We think historic preservation is most authentic as a personal and visual experience. *Show us in 1 or 2 images (no more than 2, please) what historic preservation means to you.***