



Historic Denver, Inc.

2019 Municipal Candidate Questionnaire

CANDIDATE NAME: Michael B Hancock, Mayor

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

I grew up here in Denver. My family moved from Park Hill, to Montbello, back to Park Hill, then to Whittier and Five Points where we finally secured public housing. I have great appreciation for the saying, "Preservation is a conversation with our past about the future." As Denver's communities of color continue to feel the pressures of growth, it is critical that we preserve their impact on Denver's culture and history.

Preservation goes beyond brick and mortar to the soul of a neighborhood and a city, and I have spent my career helping to keep Denver the city we are all proud to call home. It's exciting that Denver now has 54 designated historic districts and 341 designated landmark structures. In the last few years, we renamed the "Five Points Historic Cultural District" to better honor one of Denver's most iconic neighborhoods and enhanced the historic nature of a beloved city icon through the restoration of the City Park Esplanade. These designations and actions to preserve our history are critical. As Mayor, I will continue to be an advocate for safeguarding our city's soul and ensuring growth is inclusive.

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?

I have many favorites. I appreciate the uniquely diverse preservation efforts throughout our city, understanding the layers of thoughtful work that has gone into each to shape our communities through reuse. From opening Denver Union Station, to experiencing the renewed Dairy Block, during my time as Mayor, my team has worked hard with the community on many efforts – large and small in scale – but equally important. A few near and dear to my heart are:

Five Points Historic Cultural District – establishing this district was a creative way to amplify the importance of Five Points in the history of the city and its role in arts and cultural movements such as jazz; while still accommodating revitalization. I am eager to see the end results of the team breathing new life into the Rossonian.

Emily Griffith Opportunity School – through this collaboration we were able to develop a solution for Denver Public Schools that preserves the architecture of the structure, continues to tell the story of Emily Griffith and allows for new investment opportunities in our Downtown. Achieving preservation, economic development and investment, the Emily Griffith Opportunity School Urban Redevelopment Plan is a model plan for reurbanism in Denver.

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?

The Denveright plans incorporate specific ideas that I am excited to implement. We'll direct larger scale, new infill to areas best equipped to accommodate that change and relieve pressure from internal neighborhoods along major transportation corridors, downtown, and other emerging neighborhoods. In these areas, we will explore more pro-active partnerships to facilitate this reinvestment in a manner which preserves the integrity of the structures. We want to ensure new infill is worthy of preservation in 50 years, so we must raise the bar on design quality in our growth areas.

We'll also accommodate more contextual solutions for greater variety in housing choices within existing homes and residential areas. The city will implement citywide regulatory improvements for small scale infill within our neighborhoods to improve baseline requirements such as massing, height, and lot coverage. I am also eager to create more, easy to apply design quality tools to allow communities to capture unique design character

Finally, much of the tension is coming from the complete demolition of structures that have shaped our neighborhoods for centuries. If we find new and creative ways to accommodate jobs and housing within structures, we can do more to maintain the physical character of our neighborhoods.

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

While we have made great strides in historic preservation – in partnership with Historic Denver and other community partners – I believe we must strive to tell the diverse story of Denver. That must come from diverse voices in our community to ensure we are

preserving the fabric of our city. Our biggest challenge is making preservation an inclusive and accessible option so that more communities come forward to preserve their most valued resources.

I believe we must also focus on leading by example at the city by preserving the assets and ensuring that new development in Denver is worthy of preservation in the next 50 years. I have tasked my team to better capture a complete inventory of our historic resources which will lend more support to the Discover Denver effort – this will help us make more informed choices about preservation policy implementation and priorities for Denver

Finally, we must merge the conversations around preserving community character and resiliency to explore ways to reduce demolition of structures. This is also the time to ensure long-term viability and integrity of our oldest structures.

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

...making it more accessible to truly capture the best Denver has to offer in terms of notable history, significant architecture, iconic locations, and the vibrant culture and rich heritage of its communities.

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.**



