



**Historic Denver, Inc.  
2019 Municipal Candidate Questionnaire**

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**CANDIDATE NAME: Debbie Ortega, Council At-Large**

- 1. Do you have a personal connection with historic preservation? (Please limit your response to no more than 200 words)**
  - a. Yes, I lead Denver's efforts to create the Lower Downtown (LoDo) Historic District, and worked as Councilman Sal Carpio. The preservation advocates and property owners were nowhere.
  - b. I worked with National Image to acquire and preserve a city building at Colfax and Kalamath for a Hispanic Heritage Center.
  
- 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?**
  - a. LoDo was my first major and favorite project I worked on as a newly elected District 9 councilwoman because it attracted investment in this part of downtown, including nearby Coor's Field baseball stadium. I helped to broker a compromise with property owners and preservation advocates on the B-7 Zoning changes and LoDo Historic District. This included a sunset after six years; which was removed after the second annual report to city council. In addition, I was able to secure \$750,000 of city resources that was used as gap financing and this functioned as a revolving loan fund to assist property owners with seed money to attract other financing.
  
- 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?**
  - a. First, I firmly believe that the language used in the current draft of Blueprint Denver known as Denver Right; should continue to refer to "neighborhoods of stability" to ensure the city is not conveying a subliminal message that all neighborhoods are up for grabs for redevelopment. This does not mean that they won't see some activity along business corridors and edges of traditional neighborhoods.
  - b. Denver has several large parcels going through various stages of CPD's development/rezoning process that will equate to approximately 500 acres. These sites are along the I-25 Corridor from I-70 to Mississippi and are proposed

to hold millions of square feet of high-density development. The city must look at the cumulative effect/impact to existing infrastructure (roads, all utilities, storm drainage, open space, affordable housing, opportunities for green buildings, etc) as well as the adjacent communities. The growth should be kept within these new parcels.

- 4. Identify the most critical historic preservation challenge/opportunity in your district. At-Large and Mayoral candidates: you can pick anywhere in the city.**
  - a. Larimer Square was Denver's first historic district that has been a major attraction for visitors. I am very concerned if we let the land owners tinker with this one, it sets a precedence for all the others.
  
- 5. Please finish this sentence: "I believe historic preservation in Denver can be strengthened by..."**
  - a. Overlay districts, historic designations and an overall commitment to preserving the quality and character of buildings and unique historical sections of Denver neighborhoods. I also believe every effort must be made to connect with the property owners and adjacent RNO's to engage input into an application that gets filed with the Landmark Commission.

**Extra & Optional: We think historic preservation is most authentic as a personal and visual experience. Show us in 1 or 2 images what historic preservation means to you.**

I am on the board of Del Norte Neighborhood Development Corporation that has preserved several historic properties in the Highlands neighborhood in NW Denver and received awards from Historic Denver.