



Historic Denver, Inc.

2019 Municipal Candidate Questionnaire

CANDIDATE NAME: Mary Beth Susman, District 5

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

I have a personal history of historic preservation in my district. Most important to me is that I worked hard to preserve the history at Lowry AFB. I served as the Chair of the Lowry Economic Adjustment Committee, the community advisory group, then as a board member on the Lowry Re-Development Committee, and had a keen interest in preserving the history of the base from its early beginnings as a tuberculosis sanatorium (before 1939), the first home of the Air Force Academy and its role in WWII, Korea, and Vietnam as well as being part of the summer White House for President Eisenhower. I was married at the Eisenhower Chapel and had my wedding reception at the Officer's Club (which is now part of the British Primary School) before it closed.

I also worked to save buildings on the Community College campus, not the least of which was the adaptation of the Burger King/Dry Cleaner building into a multi-million dollar production studio for online course delivery and the preservation of some barracks for AmeriCorps and student housing.

We preserved all three hangars, and even established the design guidelines so that no building can be taller than the hangars. The hangars are now a retail establishment, storage, an air and space museum, and an ice rink. The runways concrete was re-cycled to build roads at Lowry. My one regret was losing the "temporary" barracks built during the second World War and could have been adapted with some creative thinking. The barracks were actually warmed by fireplaces. And their chimneys were the only really vertical structures on the base. I think the design would have been helped if we could have preserved those buildings and chimneys.

Besides Lowry, I was active in the restoration of the Cranmer Park plaza and sundial which was on the Most Endangered Places list of the State Historical Society.

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?**

The Lowry redevelopment has many awards for preservation, smart economic development, and is one of the most vibrant, inclusive communities 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?**

Whatever we do, we need to hold onto our identity. There are so many cities that look like other cities. There are only a few that have held onto their identity as singular and unreplicated. San Francisco, New Orleans, San Antonio, Charleston, Savannah, and others. Most in southern states in my experience. But the west has opportunities to hold on like these others do. We need to celebrate our history of the expanding country and the singular roles that Denver played. Where possible, I want to encourage the western town image of Denver, i.e. preservation of Larimer Street and others downtown. I'm hopeful the sales tax for parks that I worked on can be used to purchase spaces for preservation.

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

This is easy. Colfax. The only east/west corridor we had before I-70 was built. We need to renew it and maintain it as a city jewel of main street commerce and bring it into the 21st century for its ability to create neighborhood attachment, and the place you want to go.

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

Helping Denverites understand what is meaningful to them. To help them understand what a walkable, bikeable community means for their quality of life. We're growing exponentially and to enhance neighborhood amenities where you can walk to the grocery store, hardware store, a special restaurant, a park, and take inexpensive, and convenient transit to other areas of the city. This was the design for our early cities when cars didn't dominate. Many of our structures facilitated those amenities. We have an historic district in my district-Montclair and historic parkways, schools, a house of

worship, the things that bind communities together and what historically were places you could walk to or around (or ride a horse in the case of 4-mile house.)

I would suggest that Historic Denver expand their interest to mobility concerns in our city: sidewalk enhancement, bike ability, transit. Perhaps take a stance on preserving the historic ability to move around the city. Historic Denver could advocate for the preservation of easy mobility i.e sidewalks, bikeways, new inventions that not only replicate the ease of access of earlier cities but encourage the new era of transit possibilities. What does Historic Denver think about autonomous vehicles? Hyperloop? And the opportunity these innovations provide for re-claiming land used up by cars.

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.



Lowry Barracks



Cramner Park Sundial

