



**Historic Denver, Inc.**

## **2019 Municipal Candidate Questionnaire**

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**CANDIDATE NAME: Jamie Torres, City Council District 3**

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

One of the reasons I pursued two degrees in Anthropology is because I was interested in how our past, our culture, and our built environment influence our communities. Historic preservation, to me, is our deliberate attempt to capture the past in order to treasure it, learn from it, and remember how we arrived at our current place. I am a third generation Denverite, and my family came to Colorado from New Mexico, which they called home before boundaries between countries determined their nationality. Our ability to preserve our culture, language, architecture, stories, images, all become more and more important to us.

**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?**

West Denver is home to Paco Sanchez Park which straddles two neighborhoods (West Colfax and Villa Park), and covers both sides of the Lakewood Gulch and the W light rail line. I have lived next to the park all my life and it's always been a forgotten park with an old baseball diamond and small playground. Finally, after a proposal to put a brand new playground at City Park was declined by residents, Councilman Lopez and Councilman Espinoza lobbied Parks to bring the idea to Paco Sanchez Park. It was agreed this was the perfect space for investment and celebration of a local pioneer. Today, bolstered by GO Bond dollars, Paco Sanchez Park is home to the ReImagine Play development, which was built in homage to Paco Sanchez as a celebration of music. Paco established Denver's first Spanish language radio program, was elected to two terms in the state house, and who took action to economically empower and support Latino communities in Denver. This park is now a place of joy for families all around Denver and recognition of local history that needed to be preserved and celebrated.

**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 support design and overlay efforts like the one currently taking place along Santa Fe Blvd, a corridor that has both unique history and architectural identity that should be preserved while allowing height to be added. I would like to see a historic identity assessment implemented in new large site development and proposals on how it will be included in plans and engagement. A sense of community is created deliberately and thoughtfully, as we build, we have to prioritize a built environment with spaces that bring residents together rather than keep them separate.

**4. Identify the most critical historic preservation challenge/opportunity in your district.**

A couple things come to mind here. Historic homes can face higher costs when it comes to updates and repairs, like new windows for example. We should be able to ensure this is not an overwhelming burden to upgrade historic spaces in low and mod-income community because we should retain our historic home character in Denver neighborhoods. An opportunity in the District is one that faces intense development on top of deep cultural identity along the Old West Colfax corridor under the Colfax overpass just south of the Broncos Stadium. It is within the Sun Valley Neighborhood where a vibrant Jewish community established a businesses and residential corridor layered next with chicano and Latino community. Today, Old West Colfax's history is coming back to life as buildings become revitalized (Steam on the Platte, Mile High Station, Raices Brewery, and the Latino Cultural Arts Center, in addition to the ever-present restaurant and bar, Brooklyn's) and reinvestment takes place.

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

... making preservation accessible and reflective of Denver's diverse history and community composition.

**6. Extra & Optional: Show 1-2 images what historic preservation means to you.**

**Image 1:** my mom and I at Brooklyn's bar on Old Colfax Ave under the Colfax overpass which was originally built in 1893 as part of a Jewish community main street.



**Image 2:** St Cajetans church on Auraria Campus. My grandparents were married at this church when Auraria was a neighborhood. The church is one of the few buildings that remains standing after the neighborhood was converted to the Auraria campus where both my mom and I went to school.

