



February 22, 2018

Office of Mayor Michael Hancock
1437 N Bannock Street, Rm 350
Denver, CO

Dear Mayor Hancock,

The LoDo District Board of Directors is writing to express concern about a proposal to make changes to the Larimer Square Historic District Ordinance. We have seen a presentation regarding proposed development in the Square, and while we are not opposed to redevelopment projects in historic districts and understand and appreciate issues related to the costs involved in maintaining historic buildings, we are apprehensive about opening the ordinance to amendment without a more thorough understanding of the proposed project.

Nearly 50 years ago, committed citizens led the charge to protect this authentic heart of Denver. Fueled by concern over the pervasive demolitions that were taking place – and destroying much of what made Denver, Denver - this citizen group worked long and hard on a plan to protect this block, as well as some of the other important and iconic buildings in the downtown area. There were heated and challenging discussions about future needs and opportunities and property rights. In the end, after compromise and conservative values prevailed the 1400 block of Larimer was selected as the first historic district in Denver. That's important to remember. This is historic district number one!

The ordinance that created this district is specific in its considerations of height and context and we strongly support these fundamental views and values developed for this prominent place. Any change to the ordinance would not only place Larimer Square at risk but send a message undermining the commitment to historic preservation to all the other districts.

To repeat, we certainly understand the expenses related to maintaining and rehabilitating historic buildings. It is a constant challenge and one of the main reasons that these designations are so precise and conservative. But funds are available and thankfully there has not been a change in circumstances putting these credits at risk and we offer our total support in investigating all financial options to aid the property owners in their efforts to maintain these important structures.

We also fully understand that for a place to remain vital it must grow and there are many ways, within the ordinance, for Larimer Square to refresh and add contemporary amenities for its visitors and businesses. We support opportunities to add new investments within the context of the existing ordinance and guidelines.

Finally, we are willing to consider supporting possible development changes proposed within the boundaries of the Lower Downtown Historic District, provided that such changes are in compliance with the intent and within the guidelines of the existing ordinance which offer an appropriate scale of

LoDo District, Inc.
1536 Wynkoop Street, Suite 108
Denver, CO 80202
info@lodo.org
(303)605-3510



development for the district, that over the past decades has produced the very special urban neighborhood called LoDo.

We urge you to take the time to seriously consider any proposed changes to the ordinance so as to fully understand the ramifications of those changes. History has taught, all too well, that changes that are rushed are often changes that are regretted in hindsight.

Preserve the ordinance as it is and preserve the character of the Larimer Square that we all love and which is the cornerstone, the birthplace, of our wonderful city. We protect our future by preserving our past.

Respectfully,

Fabby Hillyard, Chair of the Board
On behalf of LoDo District Board of Directors

CC: Alan Salazar, Chief of Staff; LoDo District Board of Directors; Historic Denver; Denver City Council, Landmark Preservation Commission; Brad Buchanan and Community Planning and Development; Jon Buerge, Urban Villages; and, Larimer Associates

For any additional comment or media inquiries, please contact Fabby Hillyard, Chair of the LoDo District Board of Directors at (303)880-5767 or frh@fhillyard.com.

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