

## Updating Denver's Landmark Preservation Ordinance

For the last year, preservation planners have been working with a task force to review and recommend updates to the rules that govern the city's Landmark Preservation program. Starting in March 2018, the task force met monthly to discuss various aspects of the city's preservation ordinance and make recommendations on how to improve landmark processes, balancing property rights with city and community goals to preserve Denver's history, architecture, culture, and neighborhood character. Now, after a year of work, proposed updates to the ordinance and changes to policy are ready for public review.

### What are the major changes?

Along with small tweaks throughout the ordinance to clarify definitions, streamline processes and provide greater consistency, several major changes are proposed to address specific challenges.

- 1** Challenge: Highlight Denver's diversity and distinct cultural history through its landmarks.  
Proposed solution: Expand the criteria for historic designation to include culture and simplify how potential landmarks can meet the criteria.

*Current:* To be eligible for designation, structures must meet one criterion in two of the three categories (history, architecture, geography).

*Proposed:* Designation criteria would be simplified and expanded to include cultural significance, and categories would be eliminated so that eligible structures would have to meet three of ten total criteria.

*Result:* Greater diversity of landmarks while retaining the high standards for designation.

- 2** Challenge: Address conflicts between property owners and community members due to designation applications submitted in response to a demolition application.  
Proposed solution: Encourage collaboration by adjusting key deadlines in the process to give property owners and neighbors time to meet and arrive at a potential compromise.

*Current:* One person may submit a notice of intent to file a designation application, extending the period before a demolition permit may be issued by 7 days (total of 28 days).

*Proposed:* Three residents of Denver may submit a notice of intent to file a designation application, extending the period before a demolition permit may be issued by 39 days (total of 60 days). A city-facilitated stakeholder meeting would also be required by day 40 of the posting period.

*Result:* Greater opportunity for dialogue and collaboration, with time to seek alternative outcomes.

- 3** Challenge: Encourage proactive, owner-initiated designations by creating incentives to designate and reducing regulatory barriers once a building is designated.  
Proposed solution: Explore and improve policies that encourage property owners to designate their properties, and streamline regulations for owners of historic properties.

*Proposed Policy Updates:* Explore zoning incentives for designated properties.

*Result:* Provide greater flexibility to owners of designated properties when making alterations.

**Next steps:** The community will have a chance to review the task force's recommended proposed updates to the Landmark Preservation ordinance at public events in May and June. Public comments may be submitted to [landmark@denvergov.org](mailto:landmark@denvergov.org) through June 14, 2019. The final amendment will be reviewed by City Council. See complete details at [www.DenverGov.org/landmark](http://www.DenverGov.org/landmark).