



**To:** Land Use, Transportation, and Infrastructure committee  
**From:** Kara Hahn, Principal Planner, Community Planning & Development  
**Date:** September 5, 2019  
**RE:** Proposed Landmark Ordinance Update – Amendment to Chapter 30 of the Denver Revised Municipal Code (DRMC)

#### Staff Recommendation:

Based on the unanimous recommendations of the Landmark Ordinance Update Task Force, staff recommends approval of the amendment to Chapter 30.

#### Denver Landmark Ordinance:

Denver Landmark Preservation was created by the Denver City Council through the adoption of Denver's landmark preservation ordinance (Chapter 30 of the DRMC) in 1967 to foster the protection, enhancement, perpetuation, and use of structures and districts of historical, architectural, and/or geographic significance. Since then, the ordinance has been updated numerous times, most recently in 2012, to ensure that Denver's preservation program aligns with construction and preservation standards as well as other city processes and policies.

#### Summary of Landmark Ordinance Task Force:

Denver Landmark Preservation staff has been working over the past 19 months to update the ordinance. In early 2018, we convened a task force to examine areas to reduce conflict and simplify some of the complexities of the ordinance. The task force met 11 times between March 2018 and March 2019 and explored how to improve Landmark processes while balancing property rights with city and community goals to preserve Denver's history, architecture, culture, and neighborhood character. The task force reached consensus and the recommendations, which are summarized below, were unanimous.

#### Task Force Recommendations:

- Add Culture to the Designation Criteria
  - Expand the criteria for historic designation to include culture
  - Simplify how potential landmarks can meet the criteria by removing categories so that eligible structures would have to meet three of ten total criteria
- Increase Collaboration on Designations Resulting from the Demolition Review Process
  - Encourage collaboration by extending existing demolition pause to provide property owners and the community time to meet and arrive at a potential compromise
  - A city-facilitated stakeholder meeting would be required during the posting period
- Explore Incentives for Designations
  - Explore and improve policies that encourage property owners to designate their properties
  - Reduce regulatory barriers for owners of historic properties
- Clarify language, streamline processes, and ensure consistency throughout ordinance

#### Outreach:

After the final task force meeting in March, Landmark staff briefed City Council members and the Mayor's Policy Review Committee, presented proposed changes to the Landmark Preservation Commission, the Lower

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Downtown Design Review Board, and the Denver Planning Board, held community meetings and office hours, and met with RNOs, INC, and professional organizations, such as the Denver Metro Board of Realtors and the American Institute of Architects. The public comment period was open during May and June.

#### **Public Comments:**

As of the date of this staff report, CPD received public comments from 11 organizations or individuals.

- Neighborhood comment
  - The West Highland Neighborhood Association RNO
  - Architectural Historians working group
- Public comments submitted to CPD from individuals
  - 9 individuals

#### **Attachments Provided by CPD:**

- Summary sheets of proposed changes
- Amendment of Chapter 30 - redline
- Public comments received by September 5<sup>th</sup>