

DENVER CITY COUNCIL



Proclamation No. 25-0604

Proclamation for the Renaming of Civic Center Station to Wade Blank Civic Center Station

WHEREAS, public transit is an essential lifeline that connects communities, facilitates access to healthcare, employment, education, and recreation, and fosters a vibrant, equitable city for all its residents; and

WHEREAS, the Denver City Council is committed to ensuring that every citizen, regardless of ability, has access to a robust, accessible transportation system that supports their daily lives and enhances their mobility; and

WHEREAS, people with disabilities have historically faced significant barriers to accessible transportation, and it is imperative that their rights to safe, reliable, and inclusive transit options be fully recognized and upheld; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Wade Blank, the founder of ADAPT, established the first independent living center in Denver in 1975, laying the foundation for a national movement dedicated to advocating for the civil rights of people with disabilities, including the right to accessible transportation, home healthcare services, and independent living; and

WHEREAS, Wade Blank's pioneering efforts—such as the "Gang of 19" sit-in protest in 1978 that led to Denver becoming the first city in the nation to provide accessible buses for people using wheelchairs—sparked a nationwide movement for disability rights and accessibility in public transit; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his leadership in ADAPT, Wade Blank's commitment to the disability rights movement was informed by his earlier experiences as an ordained Presbyterian minister and civil rights advocate, marching with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and standing against injustice at Kent State University in 1971, experiences that fueled his passion for equality and social justice; and

WHEREAS, Denver became the national center of the disability rights movement, with Wade Blank's activism directly influencing key policies, including the Home and Community-Based Services Act of 1981 and the 1999 Olmstead Decision by the U.S. Supreme Court, which recognized the right of individuals with disabilities to live in the least restrictive environment possible; and

WHEREAS, Wade Blank's lifelong work and ADAPT's non-violent direct actions set the standard for one form of disability rights actions across the country, making cities more accessible and ensuring that people with disabilities can live independently with dignity.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED BY THE DENVER CITY COUNCIL:

Section 1. That the Denver City Council wholeheartedly supports the renaming of Civic Center Station to Wade Blank Civic Center Station, in honor of his groundbreaking contributions to the disability rights movement and his lasting legacy in advancing equality and accessibility for all.

Section 2. That the Clerk and Recorder of the City and County of Denver shall affix the seal of the City and County of Denver to this proclamation and that a copy be transmitted to the Atlantis Community and to the Regional Transportation District.

PASSED BY THE COUNCIL April 28, 2025

PRESIDENT

