

To: Denver City Council, Land Use and Transportation (LUTI) Committee, Denver, CO
Date: 6/6/25



RE: Support for NADB Ordinance Updates to Strengthen Public Safety

Dear Members of the City Council,

The WeCAN Safety Team strongly supports the proposed updates to the Neglected and Derelict Buildings (NADB) ordinance. From a public safety standpoint, these changes are essential to reducing threats to our neighborhoods, driving property owner accountability, protecting residents, and ensuring the efficient use of emergency response resources. Residents in our community have experienced risks presented by NADB properties or qualifying NADB properties firsthand and we therefore will support more stringent measures to prevent such risks.

Neglected and derelict buildings pose significant safety risks. They are frequent sources of emergency calls for police, fire, and medical services due to fires, trespassing, drug use, and other unlawful or hazardous activity. These properties often remain unsecured and unmaintained, creating dangers not only for those who enter them but also for nearby residents and first responders. Establishing a service response fee for repeated emergency calls to these properties is a reasonable and necessary step to deter chronic neglect and reduce strain on emergency personnel. We also support expanding this policy to include vacant lots, which often present similar public safety concerns.

The proposed updates also provide the city with stronger enforcement tools to ensure property owners are held accountable. Clarifying and streamlining the process for civil penalties will help ensure more timely compliance. The ability for the city to recover costs for boarding, fencing, or demolishing unsafe structures is critical to maintaining neighborhood safety, and reinforcing the responsibility of owners to secure and maintain their properties will help prevent dangerous conditions from escalating.

In particularly severe cases, the city must have the authority to take emergency action. Granting the Community Planning and Development department the ability to coordinate with public safety agencies to shut off utilities at dangerous nuisance properties will help prevent fires, health hazards, and other crises before they occur. These actions should be coordinated with departments such as DFD, DPD, and DDPHE to ensure they are used appropriately and effectively.

We also support the creation of an annual reporting process to ensure transparency around enforcement outcomes and help inform future public safety planning and budgeting. An appeals process and exemptions for owners actively working to resolve issues will provide fairness without undermining safety goals.

In sum, the NADB ordinance updates are a critical step toward reducing risks in our neighborhoods, protecting emergency responders, and ensuring that our communities are safe and livable for everyone. We urge you to adopt these changes.

Sincerely,

West Colfax Association of Neighbors (WeCAN) Safety Team

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