

MEMORANDUM – SANTA FE BID

TO:	Mayor Mike Johnston
FROM:	Office of Boards & Commissions
DATE:	3/31/2025
PURPOSE:	Appointments & Reappointments Santa Fe BID
PROCESS:	Mayor's Approval
NEXT STEPS:	City Council Confirmation

Staff Liaison:

Jackie Bouvier – Executive Director, Santa Fe BID

CURRENT BOARD STATUS

Scope of Board/Commission: The Santa Fe BID was created in 2015 for the purpose of implementing new and improved services through a special tax assessment for the Santa Fe Drive commercial corridor between the 600 and 1200 blocks. These services include Physical Improvements, Maintenance, Economic Development, and Safety.

Appointment Process: Mayor appoints 11 members (was recently increased from 7) to this board followed by City Council Confirmation

Appointment Candidates:

Term: 04/01/2025 – 03/31/2028 or until a successor is duly appointed

Michael Vela, (Male) (Caucasian) – Co- Owner, Room For Friends Wine Bar



BIO: Michael Vela is a part-owner of Room for Friends, a wine bar. He has previous experience working in the business office for United Airlines with staff/vacation planning/personnel bid building/daily scheduling. Recently has opened a casual wine bar in the Denver Arts District on Santa Fe. With that, he's gone through business planning dealing with city and state entities with licensing/permitting, established financial plans/forecasts and worked with many loan lenders throughout the city, and has been successfully running a startup business for the community.

Sasha Zanabria, (Female) (Native American) – Owner, El Taco De Mexico



BIO: “Born in Los Angeles, I moved to Colorado in 1986 and spent my summers in Mexico City. These summers were transformative, offering me a broader perspective on the privileges I enjoyed as a U.S. citizen and fostering gratitude for the opportunities available to my family and me in this country. My greatest role models are my parents, particularly my mother. As a single mother Mrs, MaLuisa Zanabria, turned El Taco De Mexico from a humble food truck in the streets of L.A. and 17-seat trailer in Denver into a thriving 61-seat taqueria. She inspired me with her vision, determination, and ability to create opportunities, particularly for women in her only woman taqueria. Growing up around her, I was consistently reminded of the power of hard work and resilience, values that continue to shape my approach to life and business.”

Kristina Sablatura, (Female) (Caucasian) – General Manager, Colorado Ballet



BIO: Kristina’s passion has always been to “let artists art’. She has spent the past 30 years working in performing arts administration, working across the fields of theatre, opera, visual arts and film. Having lived and worked in both Australia and England, where she worked for major arts organizations, Kristina has an international understanding of how non-profit organizations live and breathe. Kristina came to America in 2000 to work for the Houston Ballet, and has spent the past two decades in Denver where she has worked for the Colorado Ballet, raised three children and been an active member in her neighborhood schools and communities.

Reappointment Candidates:

Term: 04/01/2025 – 03/31/2028 or until a successor is duly appointed

Andrea Barela, (Female) (Hispanic) – President & CEO, NEWSED Community Development Corporation



BIO: Andrea has been with NEWSED since 2006, first as the Development Director and currently as the President and CEO since the beginning of 2018. Prior to NEWSED she worked for organizations such as the Chinook Fund, The Denver Foundation and the Denver Inner City Parish in all areas of program/event coordination, administration, programming and development. Andrea has a Bachelor Degree in Political Science and a Masters in Public Administration with an emphasis in Nonprofit Management from the University of Colorado at Denver. At NEWSED Andrea is responsible for facilitating NEWSED’s vision, mission, goals and objectives in coordination with the staff and board of directors. Andrea also serves as the Santa Fe Business Improvement District board President and provides administration and oversight through NEWSED.

George Lim, (Male) (Asian) – Founding Partner, Tangram Design LC


BIO: With a master's degree from the Tyler School of Art of Temple University in Philadelphia, a bachelor's degree from the University of Denver in Colorado, and over 30 years of professional experience, George has established himself as a national leader in the professional practice of **experiential graphic design**. George is an authority in the design of branded environments for culturally sensitive, municipal and private projects. His experience includes designing and implementing branded wayfinding signage systems and programming for municipalities, airports, universities, parks, retail environments, and transit stations. As a guest lecturer at the University of Colorado, George commits his desire and passion to teach to all his projects. He delivers creative guidance, inspiration, and leadership to

facilitate design solutions from conception to completion. He aims to communicate the specific mission and values of a project and create a positive and memorable experience which connects with people and engages their sensibilities.

Russell Brown, (Male) (Caucasian) – President, Semple Brown Design


BIO: As President of Semple Brown Design, Rusty Brown oversees the overall management operations of the firm. Rusty is a skilled administrator of large, complex projects with more than 45 years of experience in design, management, production, and construction administration. His specialty lies in adaptive-reuse and new construction within historic districts. His work encompasses a number of Denver's most beloved urban spaces including: The Ellie Caulkins Opera House, Temple Buell Theatre, and Larimer Square Master Plan and Revitalization.

Jim Stevens, (Male) (Caucasian)- Artist & Author


BIO: While serving in the Vietnam War, Jim Stevens was shot in the head. He survived, but decades later, the injury caused Stevens to lose nearly all of his vision -- his line of sight is now the size of a tiny pinhole. Despite being legally blind, Stevens has made a name for himself as an artist. He works out of his studio in Wheat Ridge.

CURRENT BOARD
TERM END DATE

David Brehm, (M)(C)

12-13-27

Tom McLagan, (M)(C)

12-13-27

Andrea Barela, (F)(H)

Up for Reappointment

George Lim, (M)(Asian)

Up for Reappointment

Russell Brown, Jr. (M)(C)

Up for Reappointment

Jim Stevens, (M)(C)

Up for Reappointment