

June 11, 2025

Denver City Council
1437 Bannock Street, room 451
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Denver City Council Members:

I am writing on behalf of the Colfax Mayfair Business Improvement District in support of the proposed updates to the Neglected and Derelict Building Ordinance.

Our district provides services to some 200 commercial property and business owners between Eudora Street and Monaco Parkway, including those in the Mayfair Town Center between Colfax and 14th Avenue at Krameria Street.

Over the years, we have worked collaboratively with businesses, property owners, neighbors, elected officials, police and city staff on numerous neglected and derelict buildings. Two are currently on the city's list. We're currently focused on two more.

There will likely be more in the coming months and years due to local and national economic factors and the cost to run a business or maintain a property.

Neglected and derelict buildings can pose health and safety risks, deter customer spending, and depress nearby property values. This reduces quality of life for everyone and decreases sales and property tax revenue to the City of Denver.

Examples in our district have resulted in vandalism, fires, drug use and trade, prostitution, criminal acts, camping, rotting trash, visible mold, overgrown landscape, and hiding places that attract nuisance and criminal activity.

While most local property owners are responsive to business and neighborhood complaints and are motivated to improve or sell their property, some are not. There are many reasons for this: they live out of state, they are a corporate interest, they are an ownership group, they can't afford repairs or are unable to comply with city regulations.

It is exceedingly difficult for local community groups to address these properties because they usually involve numerous city departments and until recently, there was not one single point of contact. Therefore, it takes many months or years to turn around a nuisance property.

The updated ordinance provides many improvements to the current procedures, including a dedicated staff member; higher service response fees, fines, emergency abatements; and enforcement that will get the attention of negligent owners.

At the same time, property owners must have a fair and equitable opportunity to respond and appeal during the process. These can be complex, emotionally charged situations with many perspectives, subject to misinformation or mischaracterization of those involved.

While private property ownership is a core value in our culture, it doesn't come without responsibilities. This ordinance will do more to balance the rights of those living, working, shopping and running a business nearby.

Thank you for considering this important policy change to address critical community concerns about crime, safety, and local business vitality.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hilarie Portell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Hilarie Portell, Executive Director
Colfax Mayfair Business Improvement District