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Denver City Council
1437 Bannock Street, Room 451
Denver, CO 80204

Dear Council Members,

It is my privilege to write a letter of recommendation for Al Gardner in his quest to become the Executive Director of Safety. I have been a sworn member of the Denver Sheriff Department for 31 years and have worked closely with the Managers/Executive Directors of Safety for 22 of those years. As the Sheriff and Interim Sheriff, I have been a direct report to three of those Directors: Stephanie O'Malley, Murphy Robinson and Armando Saldate III. In all that time, I have come to not only respect the incredible demands of the position but also know what it takes to do the job well. Al has the skill sets needed to be a good director and I am very confident that he will prove the same to the people we all serve.

I first met Al when he was a member and chair of the Citizen Oversight Board. In that role, he asked great questions regarding topics relative the Denver Sheriff Department, either from the position of representing community interests or in gaining an understanding of why we did things a certain way. I often found his inquiries to be thoughtful and tough, but understood he was not a person to shy away from challenging conversations which helped me to achieve a level of respect for him. When we met down the line in person for coffee, he told me his philosophy of holding law enforcement to a higher standard was rooted in his upbringing and that public service was a privilege. We connected in these shared values, and I know they help Al to define his "why" in seeking this role.

Since he became the Executive Director of General Services at the end of 2023, I have been able to work closely with him in a professional capacity and have witnessed his leadership in action as the duties of our departments overlap. He is a collaborative administrator who proactively reaches out to other leaders to gather input on topics which may impact their organizations. This was appreciated by us, and I believe an indication of the thoughtful approach he has to understanding how the larger system of government intersects and works together. I also have confidence that this demonstrates his viewpoint that you must reach into subject matter experts to accomplish a task, which good Executive Directors of Safety demonstrate in leading public safety organizations from a non-uniformed role.

From the standpoint of respecting the work the people of the Denver Sheriff Department perform each day; Al Gardner has shown that he is ready to walk beside us. I believe he is prepared to lead the entire Department of Safety forward in our service to the community and he has my highest recommendation.

Sincerely,

Sheriff Elias A. Diggins
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