



Proclamation No. 19-0571
A Proclamation Honoring Outgoing Council Members

WHEREAS, Councilmen Rafael Espinoza defeated an incumbent for the first time since 1979 by more than a two-to-one margin, to represent District 1 in 2015. He is the first architect elected to Denver City Council and was able to use his expertise to address pressing land-use issues and constituent concerns throughout Northwest Denver. Councilman Espinoza built collaboration between the Council office and the community and held multiple registered neighborhood organization dinners to identify concerns, seek input and craft best practices; and

WHEREAS, Councilman Espinoza utilized his office funds to respond to the community's desire for more input into the look and feel of their neighborhoods by funding zoning overlay processes. He hosted countless meetings with Harkness Heights, Sunnyside, Berkeley Regis United Neighborhood registered neighborhood organizations to draft overlays for their neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, as a City watchdog, Councilman Espinoza performed thorough reviews of large projects and contracts and used the dais to bring awareness to major issues, such as the I-70 expansion, the City Park Golf Course redesign, the storm-water fee increase and ensuring Councilmembers understood the separation of powers from the Mayor's administration. He was a steadfast supporter of the people of Northwest Denver and his expertise related to complex land-use issues will be missed but his citizen advocacy will continue.

WHEREAS, when Councilman Paul D. López was elected in 2007 to represent the district he was born and raised in, he was the youngest elected official to take the oath of office in Denver's history, where at the age of 28 he sought to better his community and the quality of life of West Side residents, who had for decades been forgotten, by creating a more equitable Denver; and

WHEREAS, using his experience as a community organizer, he brought forth the community voice of the culturally vibrant and "Historic" District 3 with passion and authenticity, paving streets that hadn't been improved in over 20 years, paving undedicated allies that were still dirt, painting murals to combat graffiti and celebrate culture, overseeing dumpster conversion to reduce illegal dumping, turning blight into the first parks in West Denver in over 30 years, affordable housing, community space, and food producing community gardens; and

WHEREAS, Councilman López's legislative work always focused on responsible community development and neighborhood stabilization, first through the *Great Recession*, then through a period of unprecedented growth, passing legislation to curb illegal dumping, increasing civilian oversight over Police and Sheriff, honoring the first peoples of Denver through the official recognition of *Indigenous Peoples' Day*, limiting employee interaction with I.C.E., creating an immigrant legal services fund, building a foundation that will be felt for years through updated neighborhoods plans, capital projects like the Westwood Recreation Center, and a call to action - "¡Participe!"

WHEREAS, Councilwoman Susman’s guiding philosophy in office was to serve the residents of Council District 5 by providing excellent constituent services, focusing on issues that were beneficial to all the residents of the district, and fighting for inclusive neighborhoods. Mary Beth Susman was elected to Denver City Council by the residents of District 5 in 2011, quickly establishing herself a leader by being elected President of City Council the following two years, and successfully presiding over the unprecedented municipal ordinances regulating recreational marijuana; and

WHEREAS, Councilwoman Susman chaired the Land Use Transportation and Infrastructure Committee from 2015-2019, was a member of the taskforce responsible for updating the 17-year-old Blueprint Denver plan, participated in the complex revision of the Green Roofs Initiative to Green Building Initiative, spearheaded the Short-Term Rental Ordinance which resulted in the highest compliance rate in the country and a created a model plan for other municipalities; and

WHEREAS, Councilwoman Susman was tenacious in obtaining better and different transit options for Denver residents by advocating for more funds in the city budget to address bike and pedestrian infrastructure, backing the plans for the Colfax Bus Rapid Transit, tirelessly working for several years to introduce micro-transit to Denver and being successful with the launch of City Shuttle in partnership with Ford/Chariot, recognizing the need to regulate scooters and ebikes, and championing the upcoming ballot initiative that will create the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure.

WHEREAS, in 2011 Albus Brooks began his political career as the youngest elected African-American leader in northeast Denver, defeating 38 challengers in the largest municipal race in Denver’s history; and

WHEREAS, Albus Brooks devoted his career to creating opportunities for young people by funding and expanding the Denver Preschool Program and giving universal access to preschool for all 4-year-olds in the city. He eliminated food deserts and prevented thousands of young people from entering the criminal justice system by decriminalizing marijuana possession for those 18-21; and

WHEREAS, Albus Brooks sparked a renaissance of black-owned businesses in the Five Points, revitalizing areas that were once vacant and dormant. He secured more than a quarter billion dollars of new cultural and infrastructure investment for District 9, improved every park in the district, and helped create Denver’s first, and Colorado’s largest, affordable housing fund.

WHEREAS, Councilman Wayne New was elected to represent District 10 in 2015, served as Chair on both the Safety and Business Committees, and has been a strong neighborhood advocate passing the Garden Court Moratorium, improving slot home design, eliminating the building form in lower density zone districts, implementing the Sidewalk Repair Program, and developing rules for construction project management to reduce impacts. He addressed quality-of-life issues including improving neighborhood pedestrian and traffic safety, keeping the Congress Park Pool open prior to renovations, undergrounding the utility poles in Cheesman Park, rehabilitating South Harrison Lane the “worst street in Denver”, increasing police and Right-of-Way Enforcement staffing, and preventing commercial events from closing residential streets without approval.

WHEREAS, he worked diligently analyzing discriminatory payment practices affecting minority and women owned subcontractors that performed work on City construction projects. Councilman New passed an ordinance to end this discrimination by ensuring prompt, full payment for completed work. He continued his advocacy as the City Council representative on the task force making improvement recommendations to the current ordinance on Women and Minority Business Enterprise participation in City construction contracts.

WHEREAS, Councilman New was consistently frugal with his office budget, often employing just one aide, which allowed him to use the unspent monies to fund district needs such as the formation of the Golden Triangle Creative District, a Congress Park traffic study, commercial and residential design overlays in Cherry Creek East, auto-free Sundays in Cheesman Park, a pop-up traffic calming demonstration on 8th Avenue, the initiation of a conservation overlay in Congress Park, driver feedback (radar speed) signs, HALO cameras, a Denver Police Department digital message board trailer, LED street lighting on Colfax Avenue, active shooter kits with rifle-ready vests for Denver police officers and many donations to organizations that address the needs of unhoused individuals. His generosity will benefit District 10 neighborhoods for years to come.

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

Section 1. The Council hereby recognizes and honors its seven members who are leaving office on July 20, 2015, thanks them for their service and dedication to the people of the City and County of Denver and wishes them well in their next endeavors.

Section 2. That the Clerk of the City and County of Denver shall attest and affix the seal of the City and County of Denver to this proclamation and that a copy be transmitted to Council members Espinoza, Lopez, Susman, Brooks and New.

PASSED BY THE COUNCIL [Date]

PRESIDENT