

7 Benefits of Historic Preservation

- **Demolition Protection:** Historic designation is one of the best ways you can ensure your historic property will be enjoyed by future generations. With local historic designation comes protection against demolition and inappropriate additions which can ruin the character of your property. This does not preclude changes in ownership or use. There are many examples in Denver of historic buildings in full adaptive use as something other than what was intended in initial construction. Sympathetic physical changes can also be allowed and involve the design review process described below.
- **Design Review:** One of the ways we can protect the historic character of a neighborhood is through Design Review. When the property owner of a designated building applies for a building permit, they must also submit their plan to the Landmark Preservation Committee for review. The Preservation Committee judges the impact a prospective project would have on the character of the property. 80 percent of the time, plans are approved administratively with no further action needed. 20 percent of the time, a homeowner may need to meet with the committee to discuss the project further. Often the committee will suggest an alternative that will minimize the adverse effect on the structure. In 2013, of 399 projects sent to the Landmark Preservation Committee for review, 325 were approved administratively. Of the remaining 74 projects, 73 were eventually approved and only 1 was denied.
- **Tax Credits:** Colorado state tax credits are available for designated buildings to offset the cost of rehabilitation. These tax credits encourage property owners to rehabilitate their buildings and upgrade their systems to meet modern needs. Qualifying projects often include: roofing repair or replacement, drywall and plaster work, masonry repair, window rehabilitation, and even upgrading HVAC and electrical systems. These improvements make historic properties more comfortable for modern uses, and ensure that they retain their significance and purpose. These upgrades also ensure that historic properties will survive another 100 years for future generations to enjoy. Currently, the tax credit available for commercial properties in Denver is 30% of Qualified Rehabilitation Expenditures, and 25% of QREs for residential properties. Commercial property owners have the ability to sell their tax credits, which can provide funding for larger projects. There is also a 20% federal tax credit for historically designated commercial properties.



- **Older, Smaller, Better**

The National Trust for Historic Preservation recently released a study called *Older, Smaller, Better*. This study uses data from Seattle, Washington DC and San Francisco to examine the role historic preservation has in boosting local economies. The study has shown that buildings of diverse vintage and small scale provide flexible, affordable space for entrepreneurs launching new businesses and serve as attractive settings for new restaurants and locally owned shops. They offer diverse housing choices that attract younger residents and create human-scaled places for walking, shopping, and social interaction. Some of the key findings from the study include: nightlife is most alive on streets with a diverse range of building ages; older business districts provide affordable, flexible space for diverse entrepreneurs; the creative economy thrives in older, mixed-use neighborhoods; and historic buildings provide space for a strong local economy, led by local businesses instead of national chains.

- **Property Values:** A 2011 study by the Clarion Institute showed that, on average, property values in historic districts increase equally or greater than in non-designated, comparable neighborhoods. Historic districts provide communities with an assurance of stability. Many property owners are more willing to rehabilitate their buildings when they know their neighbors are equally invested in the community. This communal investment has a direct impact on the local economy. Designation also encourages sustainable redevelopment through adaptive reuse of historic buildings.
- **State Grants:** Eligibility to compete for funding from the State Historical Fund or other historic preservation funds is available for historic designated buildings, particularly if your building houses a non-profit or demonstrates broad public benefit. Grants received from the State Historical Fund can be as high as \$200,000 per grant round and require a 25% cash match on the amount requested from any eligible non-profit or civic entity.
- **Civic Pride:** Denver is home to many neighborhoods, all with a unique identity. By identifying and preserving what gives each neighborhood its distinctive character, we can create stronger, more diverse communities. By preserving our communities, we forge a link between past, present, and future generations. Citizens of Denver can take pride in their neighborhoods, which are vibrant reflections of the values of their residents.





August 30 2016

Santa Fe BID Board
904 W. 10th Avenue
Denver CO 80204

“The Santa Fe Business Improvement District was created for the purpose of implementing new and improved services for the Santa Fe Drive commercial corridor between the 700 and 1200 blocks; including Physical Improvements, Maintenance, Economic Development and Safety.”

Implementation of these services would improve the business climate of the Santa Fe Corridor resulting in increased revenues for the businesses as well as increased revenues for the City and County of Denver. These services would also by extension improve property values for the property owners, which is a strong factor among property owners in the corridor, especially those well-established businesses between 10th and 14th Avenues whose revenues are derived from a mix of retail and services provided for customers and clients from areas beyond the boundaries of Denver.

Recently several members* of the Upper Santa Fe Neighbors RNO met to discuss issues of mutual interest about the Santa Fe BID. From two meetings the attendees - all property owners – developed a list of priorities that we feel will benefit property owners, and businesses and organizations, including leaseholders. They are:

- A grant writer is needed to assist in leverage funds for needed improvements
- A SFBID board member must be appointed to represent the BID at City Planning meetings.
- A complete review of the budget by an appointed committee of property owner members.
- A developer-partner is needed to assist in future business development.
- The board should consider re-organization to be more inclusive of leaseholder needs.

These are the issues we would like to see addressed in a separate, special board meeting

Sincerely,

Aubrey J Lavizzo,
USFN RNO Coordinating Co-Chair

*Attendees: Rusty Brown, Tim Correa, Mike Gerken, Ray Gerken, Mark Landman, Aubrey Lavizzo, John Peters, Bob Tank

Emergency Shelter for Senior Women
A Project of Volunteers of America Colorado Branch

CASE STATEMENT

August 2016

NEED FOR SHELTER

The need for housing and services for people experiencing homelessness in the Denver community is well documented. At least until there is enough affordable housing for the individuals and families who need it, emergency shelter will remain a community need. Recent years have seen huge rent increases, making a market-rate apartment beyond the reach of many people. As leases have expired, landlords have raised rents beyond affordability for many low income people, including seniors. *Older people on a fixed income have found themselves homeless for the first time.*

2015 MDHI Point in Time - 7 County Region

Each year, Metro Denver Homeless Initiative (MDHI) undertakes a concerted effort to survey all individuals and family members who are homeless in the Denver metro area. Metro area homeless providers, street outreach workers, and county departments of human services all participate in the effort to complete surveys focusing on where the person/family spent the night at a particular point in time, gather demographic data and other factors related to homelessness. On Monday, January 26, 2015 there were 6,130 homeless men, women and children counted in the seven county Metro Denver area. There were 3,332 adults surveyed over age 25; of these individuals, **9.5% or 318 were over age 60**. This number is known to be a substantial undercount.

MDHI Point in Time – Denver Only

The count within the City of Denver only on January 26, 2015 was 3,737 people; of the adult respondents, 31% were female. Single adults without children comprised 39% of those surveyed in Denver. When asked where they spent the night of January 26, 2015, the following responses were received: 16% on the street; 37% in emergency shelter; 2% in safe haven and 45% in transitional housing of some type. Of those 60 years old or older, 269 (or 7.1% of the total Denver count) were surveyed. An additional 351 adults (9.4%) between the ages of 55 and 59 were counted. In order to estimate the number of people experiencing homelessness in a community over the course of a year, a generally accepted calculation is to multiply the point-in-time number by three.

Inadequate Shelter and Resources for Older Women

Older, unaccompanied women experiencing homelessness are a unique subset of the homeless population. Homelessness in this cohort of women results from the confluence of chronic, untreated mental illness, displacement in the work force, economic despair due to low wage jobs, family neglect and abuse. Many of these women married and raised children. Divorce or abandonment by the spouse left them without any entitlement to benefits; inadequate mental health services caused by overtaxed outpatient public mental health centers left them without resources to manage their mental illness. Family and friends quickly weary of “couch-surfers” –hence these older women must move every few days and eventually find themselves unsheltered.

Two paths to older adult homelessness have been identified in the literature. The first mirrors the trends in the larger population—the proportion of the population over 60 is increasing as is the absolute number of older persons. Persons unable to break the cycle of homelessness due to myriad issues continue to age into their 50's and 60's without stable housing. In the second pathway, older individuals with a history of stable housing experience homelessness for the first time, victims of severe housing cost burden and limited, fixed incomes including Social Security and or SSI. Waiting times for affordable senior housing now exceed 3+ years in Denver. The moderate to low income housing stock is rapidly being replaced with high end residences, forcing fixed income older women out of familiar areas near services and public transportation.

Permanent supportive housing is the solution for the both the newly homeless senior woman as well as the chronically homeless woman. The dire lack of such housing makes the need for supportive services in a shelter situation even more crucial. These older women need safe shelter, access to services during the day and advocates to help them negotiate a complicated system. The Senior Women's Shelter managed by the VOA will be a start in the right direction.

VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA COLORADO BRANCH

Volunteers of America is in a unique position to help alleviate the shelter crisis for women. Services to older Coloradoans has long been a hallmark of Volunteers of America, with Meals on Wheels, Foster Grandparent Program, Senior's Handyman Program and over 600 units of Denver area affordable housing for people 62 and older. Additionally, Volunteers of America is well known and respected in the community for their services to homeless women, operating "Safe Haven" residential programs for women to exit the streets and permanently end long time homelessness. Over the past twenty years, Volunteers of America has operated emergency shelters for a variety of homeless populations, particularly women.

Proposed New Shelter for Older Women

With assistance from Denver's Road Home, Denver City Council and the City of Denver Zoning Administration, an overnight shelter with services will be designed to serve those women who are most vulnerable. A large building located at 1247 Santa Fe, owned by Volunteers of America and renovated in 2015, now houses staff and community partners who have a common mission: assisting Veterans who are homeless and at risk of homelessness. The Veteran Services office space is located entirely on the second floor leaving space open on the first floor. **Current plans are underway to seek approval to convert a portion of the first floor to an emergency overnight shelter for single older homeless women (60+), prioritizing female Veterans, as well as widows and other female family members of Veterans.**

The location at 1247 Santa Fe is centrally located and accessible by bus, train and on foot from downtown. VOA's recent building renovation included a fenced court yard on the north side of the building where women can queue up for shelter without exposure to the busy Santa Fe corridor.

Shelter plans include the following features:

- Open 6 p.m. to 7 a.m. every day throughout the year.
- Case management staff located at the shelter (as well as in other VOA and community programs) to assist the shelter guests in finding services and suitable housing during regular business hours.

- Cots and linen provided for 50-70 women who are over age 62, and/or Veterans, and/or mobility impaired.
- A staff to guest ratio of at least 1 to 20 during all awake hours; 1 to 30 from midnight to 6 a.m.
- A nutritious dinner and continental breakfast each day.
- Referral and bus fare to Denver area day shelters, where additional services, meals, showers and laundry are offered.
- Specific training for all shelter staff in working with older people, senior resources, trauma-informed care and other best practices.
- A direct link to the beds available in Volunteers of America's Safe Haven programs for women.
- A link to open units in Volunteers of America's housing for low income seniors, several of which can now offer a "homeless preference", a new HUD allowed work-around for lengthy wait lists.
- Program collaboration with regional "Coordinated Assessment and Housing Placement" system, currently designed for the most vulnerable individuals.
- Access to senior specific services frequently beyond the reach of homeless individuals.

To prepare for this undertaking, Volunteers of America will do the following:

1. Obtain general support from Denver City Councilman for District 3, Paul Lopez.
2. Meet with Denver Zoning Administration staff to begin the city-required process.
3. Meet with the following neighborhood groups to obtain input and develop plans to address concerns:
 - La Alma /Lincoln Park
 - Upper Santa Fe Neighbors
 - Santa Fe Business Improvement District
 - Santa Fe Arts District
4. Work closely with the current providers of shelter for single women to develop an organized referral system.
5. Communicate intentions to other providers and interested stakeholders, garnering support and involvement where applicable.

Anticipated Neighborhood Concerns

There are several issues that it is anticipated will be at the forefront of neighborhood concerns.

1. *Will the proposed use of the building in the overnight period bring additional homeless individuals into the community who would not have been in the area otherwise?*
 - Volunteers of America will take steps to minimize the impact on the neighborhood by making it clear that no one will be allowed to loiter in and around the building, in the alley or around neighborhood businesses during the day. Arriving on site just prior to the evening opening of the shelter, women will be required to remain in the enclosed fenced courtyard immediately adjacent to the building, out of sight of passing cars and neighborhood businesses.
 - Staff and volunteers will take careful note of any individuals who are not following these rules and if the practices continue after fair warning, these individuals will not be welcome to participate further in the program.
 - Each morning the area around 1247 Sante Fe will be surveyed and accumulated debris will be removed as a service to the neighborhood.

- All participants will be required to immediately leave the area at 7AM each morning when the shelter closes. Bus tickets will be provided to assist the women in going to day shelters where auxiliary services are offered.
2. *Why did the Volunteers of America brand the building as a Veteran Services Center if they intended to offer services to homeless women as part of their service package in this location?*
 - The primary services offered at this location during regular business hours are for Veterans and their families. This will continue to be the case. Over 12 organizations, both governmental and private non-profit, office here and serve Veterans and their families during the day.
 - The overnight use of a portion of the building will be virtually invisible since it will not open until after normal business hours, the women will enter the enclosed courtyard and be screened from view entering and leaving the building.
 - The VOA never anticipated that naming the building would limit forever other activities that might be contemplated at that location. There was no intent to mislead the neighborhood.
 3. *With all the work that has been done by the neighborhood to become the new "Arts District" and all the improvements that have been made to the street scape and building appearances, why would Volunteers of America bring elderly, disabled, and veteran women into the neighborhood each day?*
 - Volunteers of America will do everything necessary to maintain the look and feel of this property as it stands today. Over 2.2 million dollars went into the recent renovation and the organization will do what it takes to protect this investment for the benefit of those served within its walls as well as to the benefit of the neighborhood.
 - Volunteers of America will continue to be an active part of the Santa Fe Business Improvement District (BID) and respond to any neighborhood concerns in a timely manner.
 - Our goal is to be a good neighbor.
 - The Volunteers of America always maintains its properties to be among the best in the neighborhoods in which we are located. The organization encourages concerned neighbors to tour our other facilities in Denver and talk to members of the neighborhood associations with which we have worked.

Mission and Commitment

Volunteers of America's mission is: "Volunteers of America seeks to identify and serve the basic needs of the most vulnerable individuals and families in the communities we serve." Staying true to our mission, our commitment to serve with accountability, integrity and respect, and our history as responsive, reliable neighbors, Volunteers of America seeks community engagement and support for the Senior Women's Emergency Shelter.