

Dear Candidate,

Historic Boulder, Inc. will celebrate its 55th anniversary in 2027. Our mission is, “To foster the spirit and to promote the benefits of preservation through education, advocacy, celebration and rehabilitation.” Our nonprofit has been responsible for the restoration and landmarking of several notable structures (most recently the Boulder Theater), championed the original historic preservation ordinance in 1978, and has advocated for the landmarking of a wide variety of individual properties and neighborhood districts. We sponsor talks and tours focused on Boulder’s past, present and future, and we have highlighted the compatibility of historic preservation with affordable housing and sustainability goals.

We’d like to get your responses to questions related to historic preservation. Historic Boulder, Inc. is grateful for your willingness to serve our community. We appreciate that even running for city council is time-consuming and tough.

Historic Boulder, Inc. has a local membership of over 500 people and our newsletter reaches over 3,500 email addresses. With this in mind, we have four short questions to pose. Your responses can be as long as you wish. **Please submit them by Friday, September 25th**, and we’ll share them widely, including on our website and in our newsletter.

2026 Mayoral/City Council Candidate Historic Preservation Questionnaire:

1. How do Boulder’s historic buildings and places contribute to making the City of Boulder the special place that it is?

Boulder’s historic buildings and places are part of what makes this city feel distinct rather than interchangeable with any other Front Range community. I’ve lived in Boulder for over 40 years, and buildings like the Hotel Boulderado, the Boulder Theater, and the older storefronts along Pearl Street give downtown its texture and sense of continuity across generations.

They anchor Boulder’s identity, draw visitors who generate real economic activity, and remind residents that the city’s story stretches back across generations, and is something we should honor and celebrate.

2. There is interest from residents in several of the city’s older neighborhoods, including University Hill, to create new historic districts. Do you support their efforts? Why or why not?

University Hill has genuine historic lineage with a distinctive relationship to CU and Boulder's early development. I would enthusiastically support a careful, survey-based process to identify areas and structures to focus preservation efforts on and to make rehabilitation incentives available—starting with National Register options where appropriate.

I would be cautious about imposing a broad local historic district designation across whole areas without clear boundaries, plain-language rules, and meaningful owner outreach, not to mention flexibility for housing, safety, accessibility, energy improvements, and responsible redevelopment.

Preservation should support the Hill becoming more active, economically viable, and livable—not freeze it in place.

3. How familiar are you with the city's historic preservation program, and what improvements would you recommend for the historic preservation ordinance and the city's outreach?

I am familiar with the broad outlines of Boulder's preservation ordinance and its 1978 origins, but I do not claim to be an expert on every regulatory detail. If elected, I would welcome the opportunity to learn more directly from Historic Boulder.

Broadly, I would apply the same principles here that I would to Title 9: the process for landmarking and reviewing work on historic properties should be predictable, streamlined, and clearly explained to owners up front, not discovered through trial and error.

I would encourage the city to do more proactive outreach and education, rather than leaving that burden mostly to volunteer groups like yours, and to explore incentives such as grants or streamlined permitting for owners who maintain historic structures well.

4. Do you have a favorite historic building or site in Boulder? Please tell us why.

The Boulder Theater. It is a Pearl Street landmark, and Historic Boulder's role in its restoration is exactly the kind of preservation work that pays off for the whole community. I have spent many enjoyable evenings there for shows, and it is a great example of how an older building, thoughtfully restored, can stay commercially vital instead of becoming a museum piece.

It also captures something I care about broadly: preservation and economic vitality reinforcing each other rather than competing, which is the same balance I would want to strike downtown and on University Hill.

Please send your responses to: melanie@historicboulder.org

Responses are due by Friday, September 25th