

***COLORADO MUSIC HALL OF FAME, PRESENTED BY COMFORT DENTAL,
PROPOSED FOR RED ROCKS PARK***

Background and outline of park policy issues for INC. 9.15.15
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WHAT: Red Rocks Park and Amphitheatre is the premier Denver Mountain Park, owned and loved by Denver residents for decades. The City will be seeking public comment this fall on a current proposal for the park.

The non-profit, Colorado Music Hall of Fame, presented by Comfort Dental, has proposed a 7,500 square foot building to house their collection be built at Red Rocks Park, adjacent to the Trading Post. The Hall of Fame has been working in good faith with the city for almost two years and opened Hall of Fame exhibits in July in the Trading Post. In 2014 the Denver Parks and Recreation Manager approved the concept for a new building on site. Funds to build the Hall of Fame would be raised privately and the collection managed by the non-profit. The building would be owned and maintained by the City. The City realized that approval had preceded any public input or review process and, consequently, has put the concept on hold until a process is completed. Those meetings are anticipated this fall 2015.

BACKGROUND: The geologic formations, landscape, and natural acoustics of Red Rocks has attracted visitors for over 100 years. Denver purchased the park in 1920-30 and built the renowned Amphitheatre in the 1930s. Red Rocks Park, Amphitheatre, and CCC Camp received national recognition July 2015 when it was designated by the Department of the Interior as a National Historic Landmark. The Amphitheatre and the Trading Post building also are local Denver Historic Landmarks, with oversight from the Denver Landmark Preservation Commission. Parks and Recreation manages the entire designated park, while Arts and Venues manages the Amphitheatre and its events. Arts and Venues also oversees a vendor contract for the Visitor's Center and for the Trading Post.

ISSUES: The Colorado Music Hall of Fame would display the work of Colorado musicians, most of whom have performed at Red Rocks Amphitheatre and have space for annual inductee ceremonies and other events. The initial issue for public discussion and careful analysis is whether the location adjacent to the Trading Post or within Red Rocks Park is appropriate. However, a discussion of only location would ignore three primary issues raised by the Hall of Fame proposal that have complex park and policy implications beyond Red Rocks. They all deserve extensive public and city policy debate.

1. **Green Space.** With green and open space always a premium, when is it appropriate to build a new building in an established park? Would, for example, a new recreation building ever be acceptable in an established park, at the loss of considerable open space? ***Is any loss of any park land, landscape and view at Red Rocks justified for the 7,500 square foot Hall of Fame?*** What criteria and policies guide the city in making these decisions?

2. **Historic Preservation.** When a park is historic and is honored and protected for its historic character and special features, when is it appropriate to make any major change? The Trading Post, built in 1929, is a Denver Historic Landmark, with its garden and outstanding views to the rocks behind the building a highlight of the park. The entire park is a National Historic Landmark. Even incremental changes can build over time to the point that a place loses its character. *What permanent impact will a 7,500 square foot building have on this historic, protected park and Denver Historic Landmark?* What criteria guide the city in making these decisions, in accommodating change while protecting what is special?
3. **Use of City Land.** Constructing a new city building for park purposes on park land is a complex and controversial decision in itself. But, providing city land (and especially park land) as a *building site* for a non-city organization is a precedence-setting departure. It differs from situations when the City contracts with a non-profit partner to help fill existing city-owned buildings and to provide park-related public programs. Building in response to a request from a specific organization also raises questions of policy, favoritism, and process. And, corporate association with a non-profit or a public building raises policy issues of commercialism in parks. *Should the City seriously consider a proposal from the Colorado Music Hall of Fame, presented by Comfort Dental, however well-meaning the non-profit, when it raises such contentious land use policy issues?* Again, what land-use policies does the City have in place for these decisions?

The Friends of Red Rocks and other Red Rocks advocates are encouraging wide public discussion of the proposed Colorado Music Hall of Fame when the City starts its review role this fall. *What would the impact of this building be on Red Rocks and what are its wider implications for Denver's parks throughout the city?* It is a decision about a specific park, but it raises broader issues of what policies and principles will Parks and Recreation and the City use in making it.

