

Denver Parks and Recreation

Park, Arts and Culture Committee

March 31, 2026



DENVER
PARKS & RECREATION

GAME PLAN
for a Healthy City



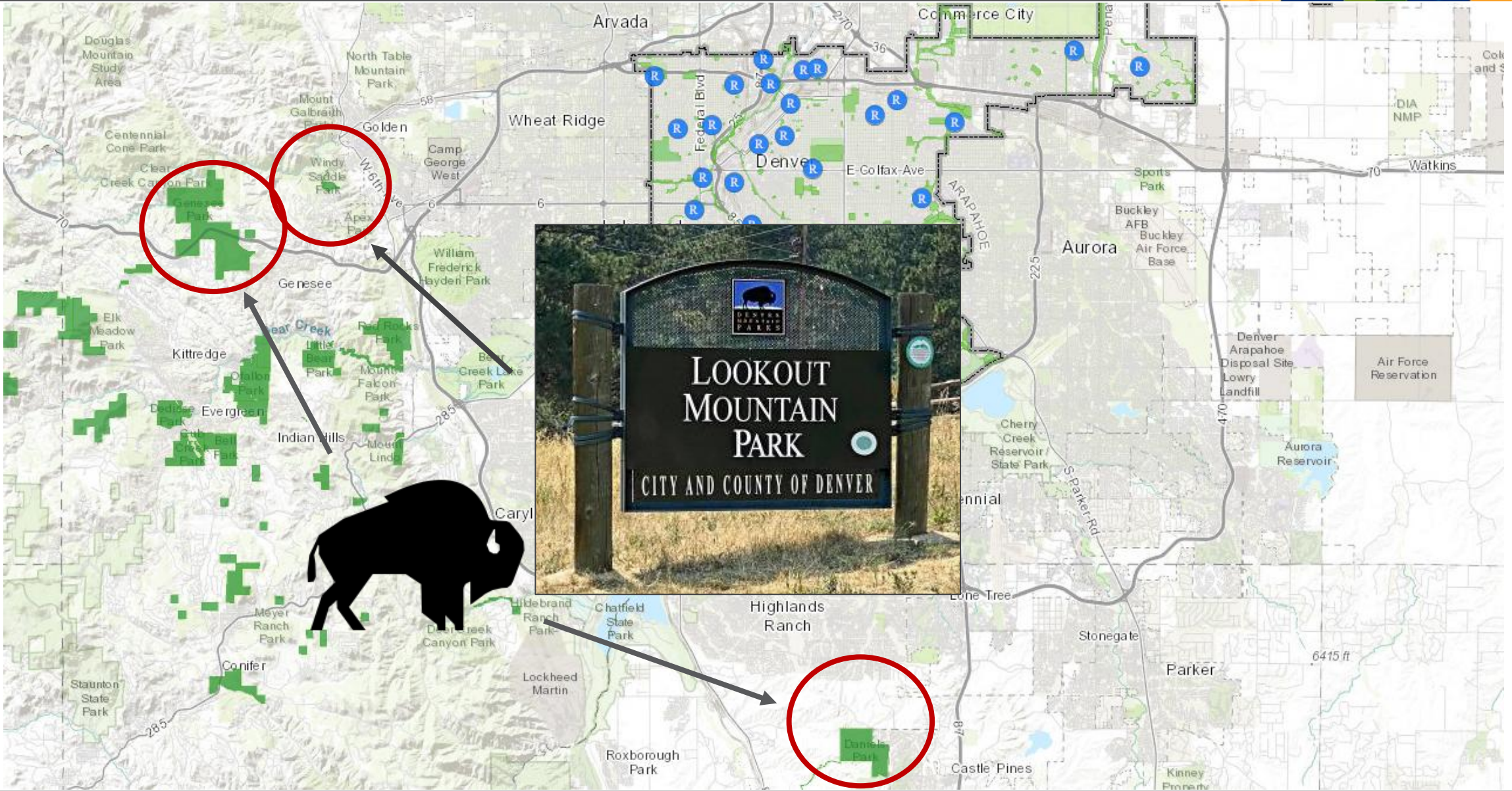


Two Items for Council Consideration

**Council Resolution 26-0398:
Concessionaire Contract at Pahaska**

**Council Bill 26-0422: Bison Transfer
Ordinance**





COUNCIL RESOLUTION 26-0398: CONCESSIONAIRE CONTRACT AT PAHASKA

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LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN PARK



Buffalo Bill's
grave

Pahaska Café
and gift shop

Buffalo Bill Museum

- Pahaska café and gift shop constructed in 1921, operated by concessionaire through 12/31/24.
- Buffalo Bill Museum constructed in 1977, operated by DPR.
- Key opportunity to reimagine the space to advance goals of the *Game Plan for a Healthy City*.

THE NEED FOR TRANSFORMATION

Current Condition

Aging Infrastructure

Underutilization

Underrepresented history and culture

Lack of revenue diversity

Limited operations space



Future Condition

Historic & inviting mountain charm

Daytime and evening activation

Improved reflection of native history

New event facility and transportation

New facility for public and staff

PAHASKA THEN AND NOW



Historic Condition



Recent Condition

PAHASKA THEN AND NOW



Historic Condition



Recent Condition

PAHASKA THEN AND NOW

© MRS. JOHNNY BAKER

DENVER AT NIGHT FROM VERANDA OF THE "BUFFALO BILL" MEMORIAL MUSEUM



LOOKOUT MT., COLO.

ELEVATION 7,342

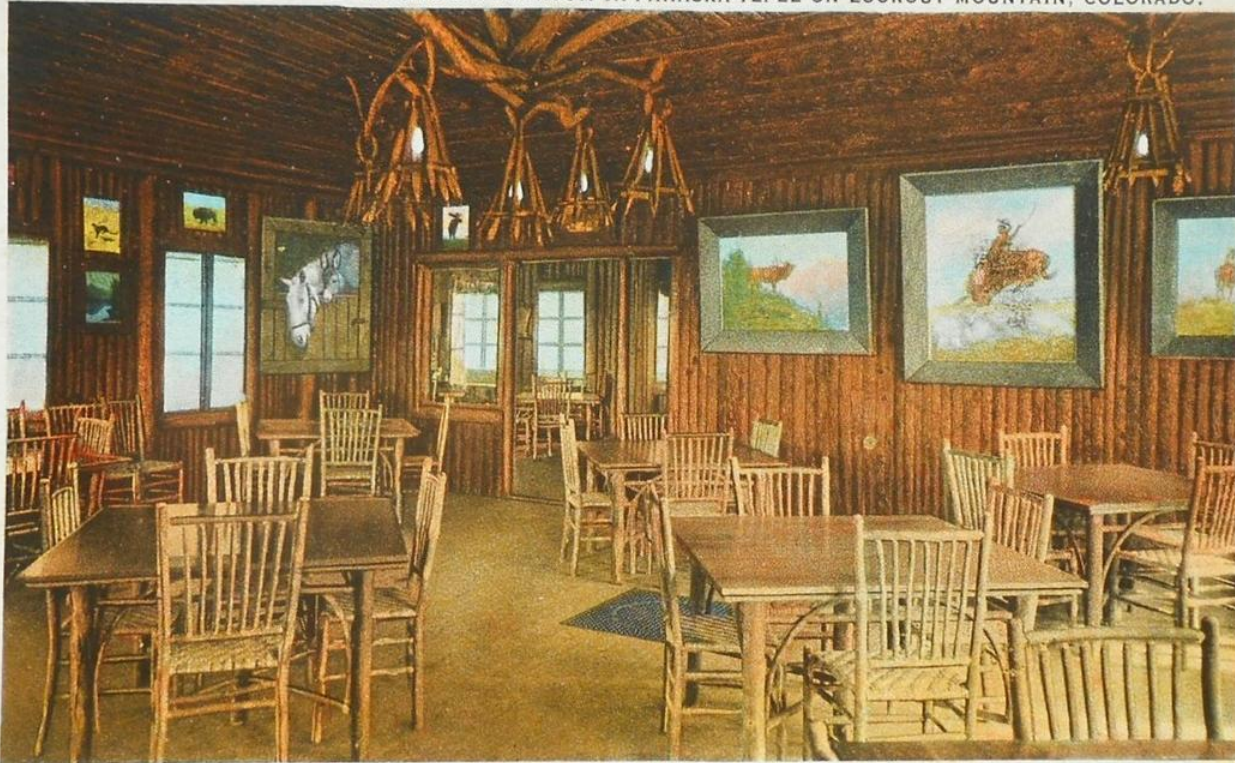
Historic Condition



Recent Condition

PAHASKA THEN AND NOW

RUSTIC DINING ROOM IN PAHASKA TEPEE ON LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN, COLORADO.



Historic Condition



Recent Condition

CURRENT CONDITIONS: LOBBY/RETAIL



CURRENT CONDITIONS: LOBBY/RETAIL



CURRENT CONDITIONS: DINING ROOM AND KITCHEN



CURRENT CONDITIONS: GENERAL



CURRENT CONDITIONS: MANAGER'S APARTMENT





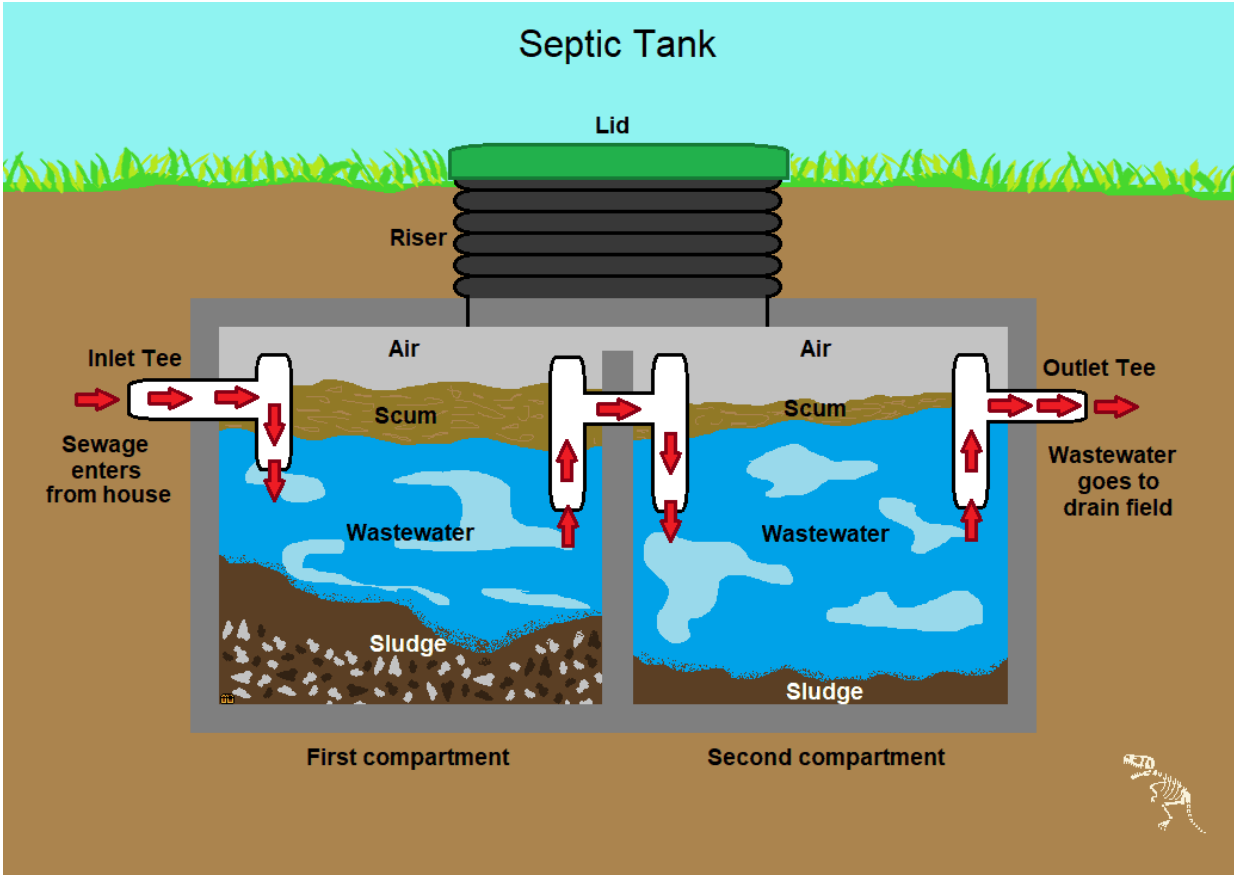
CURRENT CONDITIONS: BASEMENT DORMITORY



CURRENT CONDITIONS: BASEMENT DORMITORY



PAHASKA GIFT SHOP & CAFE



PAHASKA GIFT SHOP & CAFE



Recent Condition

PRIOR CONCESSION CONTRACTS

- Johnny and Olive Baker: 1921-1956
- Ogden Foods: 1969-1979
- H.W. Stewart Inc: 1957-1969, 1979-2024
 - DPR provided contractor, City Council, and Mayor's Office with 15 months advance notice of contract expiration in September 2023
- Proposed new contract: 2026-2036



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS TIMELINE

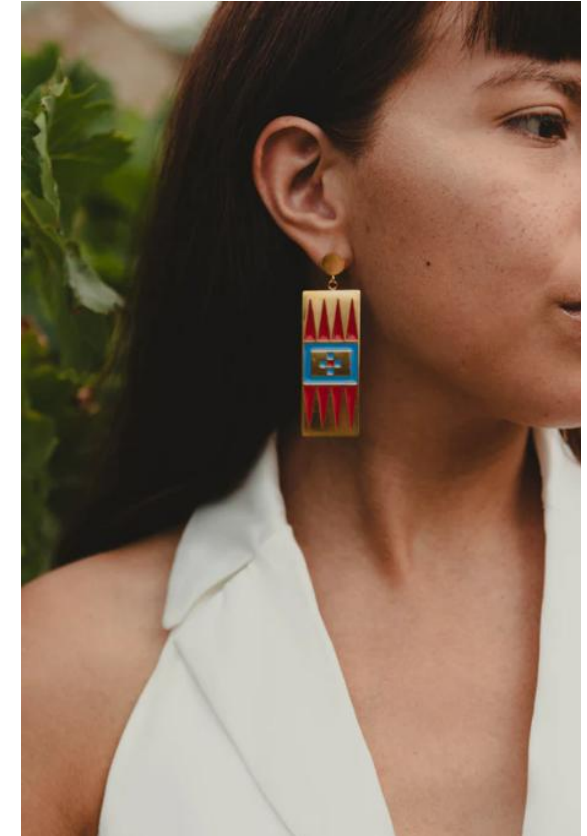
Request for Information (RFI) – May 12, 2025

Request for proposals (RFP) October 13, 2025

- *Closed November 24, 2025*
- *3 responses received*

- *DPR sought proposals to operate providing a food and retail experience that honors and celebrates contemporary indigenous culture in keeping with the historical theme of Buffalo Bill's Wild West traveling show.*

- *Scoring was completed by evaluation committee*
 - *Mountain Parks Staff*
 - *Two non-voting community members*



SUCCESSFUL BIDDER



Retail at our White Sands National Park concession includes jewelry and leather goods from local Native American artists.



Where history meets hospitality, enjoy Southwestern and Native-inspired dishes in the nostalgic setting of the Painted Desert Diner.



Diners at The Rim restaurant are treated to spectacular views of the Kilauea caldera.

AGREEMENT TERMS



ExplorUS
ROOTED IN HOSPITALITY

(Explor Pahsaka LLC)

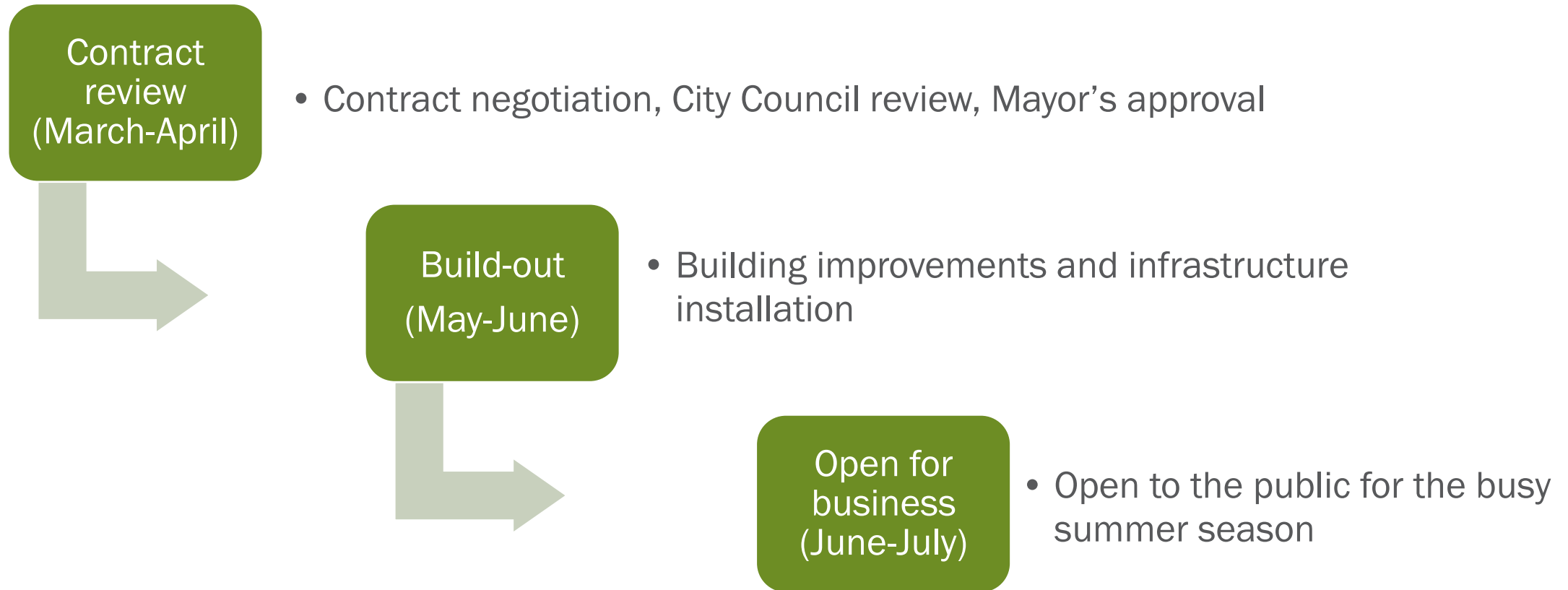
- 10-year contract term
- 9.5% of gross receipts incl. GAMP (Guaranteed Annual Minimum Payment) equal to 50% of previous year's fee
- 2% of gross receipts for capital improvement (projected \$330K over 10 years)
- One-time up-front investment of \$397,000
 - Kitchen equipment and infrastructure: \$200K
 - Retail infrastructure, displays, and inventory: \$140K
 - Technology and operations: \$57K
- Will utilize an estimated 1/3 of the space of the former concessionaire, leaving shared program space with the Buffalo Bill Museum, DPR caretaker space, and vacant space for ongoing building assessment and repair
- No employee dorm in basement or residential use of upstairs

PROSPECTIVE PARTNER

- Tocobe, a local American Indian and operated restaurant submitted letter of engagement and support of Explor US proposal.
- Explor US is in active discussions with Tocabe regarding ingredient sourcing, menu integrations, and broader collaboration opportunities.



TIMING



COUNCIL REQUEST

Approval of Council Resolution 26-0398

- Approves a concession license at Pahaska with Explor Pahaska LLC based on a percentage of gross revenues and for a term of ten years for indigenous-focused food and beverage, retail marketplace, and cultural programming concession services, Mountain Parks



Questions?

Council Bill 26-0422: Bison Transfer Ordinance

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Genetic value: DPR bison herd was established in 1898 and is genetically important

Ecological value: Bison are a keystone species in the North American shortgrass prairie

Cultural value: Acknowledging indigenous trauma and sovereignty through buffalo restoration



Annual bison auction: 1985-2020



BISON AUCTION
GENESEE PARK BISON RANCH



Friday, March 4*

Preview 10:30AM | Auction 12:00PM

More info + directions: denvergov.org/MountainParks



*Snow date: March 11 | Weather confirmation : 720.865.0900

Coffee & light snacks provided. It can be cold in the barn so dress for winter weather!

Tribal Transfer Ordinance: 2021-2030

- 2020: City Council adopted a land acknowledgment that is read before every weekly council meeting
- 2021: City Council approved a bill that allowed for bison transfer to American Indian Tribes and American Indian Non-Profits with out additional council action
 - This billed allowed for donation with no additional council action
 - Sunset in 2030
- Executive Directors of DPR and General Services consult with Denver Indian Commission, the Tall Bull Memorial Council and InterTribal Buffalo Council, American Indian Tribes or American Indian non-profit to select designee to receive donation



Tribal Transfers 2018-2026

Bison Donations	State	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Total
Tall Bull Memorial Council	Colorado		1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	10
Southern Cheyenne and Arapaho	Oklahoma					12	17					29
Northern Arapaho	Wyoming						15	16	9			40
Standing Rock-WOZU (tribal non-profit)	South Dakota								16	5		21
Yuchi Tribe	Oklahoma							6				6
Eastern Shoshone	Wyoming							12				12
Philip Whiteman (Northern Cheyenne)	Montana								6			6
Kiowa	Oklahoma									10		10
Ponca (ITBC)	Nebraska									5		5
Winnebago (ITCB)	Nebraska									2		2
Navajo Nation	Colorado										11	11
Northern Cheyenne Tribe	Montana										10	10
Buffalo First (tribal non-profit)	South Dakota										12	12
Total			1	1	1	13	34	35	32	23	34	174



Tall Bull Memorial Council partnership

Tribal transfers through existing ordinance

Impact of Tribal Transfer Ordinance





Wozu, Standing Rock Sioux
North Dakota



Kiowa Tribe
Oklahoma



Navajo Nation
Wolf Springs Ranch, CO



CPR News

NEWSLETTERS SIGN IN NPR SHOP

NEWS CULTURE MUSIC PODCASTS & SHOWS SEARCH

NATIONAL

Denver Returns 14 Bison To Tribal Land In Reparations, Conservation Effort

APRIL 14, 2021 · 2:57 PM ET

By Anna Sirianni



2-Minute Listen

+ PLAYLIST



Denver typically auctions off its excess bison to avoid overgrazing, but there was still an excess after this year's auction. So, the city decided to return bison to their native habitats on tribal land.

Evan Semón/Denver Department of Parks and Recreation

Proposed Ordinance Strengthen City's Commitments by Removing the Sunset



COUNCIL REQUEST

Approval of Council Bill 26-0398

- Approves a bill for annual donation of bison to American Indian Tribes and American Indian Non-Profit. The programs prior sunset is rescinded.

Questions?



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