

Thursday, March 10, 2016

Mayor Hancock, Denver Arts & Venues announce The Next Stage vision, process

Includes new construction, school of the arts, funding/governance, interim programming at the Arts Complex

DENVER – A new music hall, rehearsal and recording space, commercial development, expanded retail, and an arts high school campus are elements of a redevelopment vision for the performing arts complex presented by Mayor Michael B. Hancock and Denver Arts & Venues Thursday.

The vision, dubbed “The Next Stage,” was delivered by the Executive Leadership Team (ELT), a working group appointed by Hancock that has studied options, needs and trends in arts over the past year. The group received input from more than 4,200 Denver residents, as well as arts patrons, performers and presenters.

The vision includes facilities and activities that fall into three categories that include music facilities and concert halls, education of our youngest arts lovers, and further development of the neighborhood.

“The Next Stage vision provides a phenomenal opportunity to elevate our Arts Complex to become a vibrant, public regional center of cultural activity in the heart of downtown,” said Hancock. “With this vision, we will set out to realize the potential of the Arts Complex by better attracting diverse residents and tourists, integrating it into the neighborhood, and enhancing the Galleria and Sculpture Park. I am thankful for the ELT’s and community’s commitment to create this vision together.”

Following a display of The Next Stage vision renderings, Hancock announced a year-long funding and governance study to develop the next steps to build a plan to deliver on the vision. The funding and governance group will aim to provide its recommended plan by the end of 2016.

The featured elements of The Next Stage are an open wedge design that offers more green space, an elevated Sculpture Park with parking beneath it, a new mid-size music hall for the Colorado Symphony Orchestra and other presentations, and a number of other retail options. A memorandum of understanding has been established between Denver Arts & Venues and Denver Public Schools to study the feasibility of bringing a school of the arts to the Arts Complex.

“The next generation of performers, artists and patrons is growing right before our eyes in our schools,” said Susana Cordova, acting superintendent of Denver Public Schools. “We are committed to studying how our school of the arts can fit in at the Arts Complex because of our commitment to diversity, creativity and imagination in education.”

Work to diversify and expand the arts programming, recommended as part of The Next Stage vision, will begin almost immediately. Donations from the Boettcher Foundation and the Arts Complex’s largest resident company, Denver Center for the Performing Arts, will be used to seed and encourage the unique programming. New visual art will appear at the Arts Complex with the expanded programming. Denver Arts & Venues is committing \$250,000 in public artworks to be installed over the next year.

“All of us at Arts & Venues are eager to build on the vision of The Next Stage,” said Kent Rice, executive director of Denver Arts & Venues. “The exciting new programming we’re about to start will further brand this city and this neighborhood as the heart of Denver’s creative and cultural life.”

Multiple performances from the Arts Complex resident companies, local Denver arts organizations and student performers from Denver Public Schools entertained attendees at the announcement.

H3 Hardy Collaboration, under contract to Denver Arts & Venues, delivered sections of the report and renderings of what the revised complex might look like. Those renderings and additional information are available at ArtsandVenues.com.

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About Denver Arts & Venues

Denver Arts & Venues’ mission is to amplify Denver’s quality of life and economic vitality through premier public venues, arts and entertainment opportunities. Arts & Venues is the City and County of Denver agency responsible for operating some of the region’s most renowned facilities, including Red Rocks Park and Amphitheatre, the Denver Performing Arts Complex, Colorado Convention Center, Denver Coliseum and McNichols Civic Center Building. Arts & Venues also oversees the Denver Public Art Program, Create Denver, SCFD Tier III granting process, Arts Education Fund and other entertainment and cultural events such as the Five Points Jazz Festival, Urban Arts Fund, P.S. You Are Here and implementation of IMAGINE 2020: Denver’s Cultural Plan.

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