REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS
Waterfront Café Operator for Rash Field Park

RFQ Issue Date: June 1, 2021
Qualifications Due: June 18, 2021

Issued by Waterfront Partnership of Baltimore on Behalf of
Baltimore City Department of Recreation & Parks and Baltimore
Development Corporation
INTRODUCTION

The Waterfront Partnership of Baltimore, along with Baltimore Development Corporation and Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks (collectively “Issuer”) requests qualifications from restaurateurs and food purveyors to operate a waterfront cafe in the Rash Field redevelopment. Respondents shall have experience in restaurant operations, preferably in the greater Baltimore area. Additional experience and requirements for respondents are listed in the Response Guidelines section of this document. Selected respondents may be invited to submit a specific proposal for food operations in this location through a subsequent Request for Proposals.

BACKGROUND

Rash Field is comprised of 7.5 acres of waterfront parkland on the south shore of Baltimore’s Inner Harbor, along Key Highway between the Maryland Science Center and the Rusty Scupper Restaurant. The new facility and park will reside on public open space that is managed by Baltimore City Recreation and Parks. The Waterfront Partnership of Baltimore (WPB) is the steward of Rash Field Park, as well as the Inner Harbor, Harbor East, Harbor Point and Fell’s Point, and Federal Hill Park. Since 2015, Waterfront Partnership and its partners have been working with local communities on a two-phased redevelopment of Rash Field. The first phase of the redevelopment will include a nature park, an adventure park, a dedicated skatepark, a shade lawn and a pavilion featuring a waterfront cafe and a green roof overlook, all scheduled to be completed in October of 2021.

Rash Field is home to dozens of city-wide festivals and events, including Light City and the Baltimore Book Festival, Baltimore Running Festival, Maryland Fleet Week, New Year’s Eve and Fourth of July Fireworks, Baltimore Wine and Food Festival, Harbor Harvest Festival, Make- A-Wish’s Walk for Wishes and more. In addition, Baltimore Beach hosts beach volleyball leagues and competitions throughout the year on seven courts at the park.

The Waterfront Partnership anticipates high demand for café/food offerings at the new Rash Field Park. According to a 2018 independent survey, 69% of Baltimore City residents would patronize an outdoor cafe at the Inner Harbor. Furthermore, 73% of Baltimore City residents and 80% of surrounding residents voted for a Charter Amendment that authorized the development of this café.

Baltimore’s Inner Harbor welcomes over 14 million visitors each year and is Maryland’s most popular tourist attraction. Rash Field is served by ten bus lines, including the Charm City Circulator’s Purple and Banner routes, and CityLink’s Green, Silver, 63, 67, 71, 94, 95 and 164 routes. An estimated 20,000 vehicles will pass by the park on a daily basis.

CAFE SPECIFICATIONS

The waterfront café will be approximately 1,200 square feet. The café space has approximately 70 feet of storefront, opening onto a pedestrian plaza with a unique shade structure that offers outdoor seating opportunities. The café will be delivered as a “warm, lit shell” and the café operator will be responsible for all improvements required to accommodate their proposed use. Restrooms are provided with a separate entrance. Please refer to the attached plan and renderings for more information.
The operator will have opportunities to provide parking to its customers and employees, at its sole expense. For example, the Marina Garage is immediately adjacent to Rash Field, and offers 214 parking spaces.

A dumpster pad is provided south of the café along the service drive entering the park. The pad can accommodate a 6-yard dumpster. The tenant is responsible for engaging a commercial trash service to remove its trash and recycling. Trash service and delivery trucks may enter the park near Key Highway and Battery Avenue and through the service drive. Deliveries can be accepted through the storefront doors.

The selected respondent – in partnership with Waterfront Partnership of Baltimore – may apply for a liquor license for this location. Subject to approval by the Board of Liquor License Commissioners for Baltimore City, the operator may be allowed to serve beer, wine and liquor from Monday through Sunday between the hours of 8 am and 11 pm. The selected firm is solely responsible for the $1,320 annual license fee and may also provide low key live entertainment and outdoor table service for alcoholic beverages for an additional $500 and $200 per year, respectively. In no event may live (or recorded) music be played loud enough to be heard beyond the park boundaries. The operator must present an operations plan for food and alcohol service to local community groups prior to seeking Liquor Board approval, and provide updates to the community, as requested.

**RESPONSE GUIDELINES**

Interested respondents should submit three (3) copies, including all attachments, of their response to this RFQ with the following minimum information:

1) Name, title, company name (if applicable), address, telephone number, and email address. Include the name of the person or persons who will be authorized to make representations on behalf of the respondent and identify the project lead.

2) Qualifications and Experience. Explain the qualifications of the respondent and its experience operating similar establishments. Identify key management personnel, number of years in operation, locations and types of facilities presently or formerly occupied by respondent.


4) 2019 and 2020 personal tax returns for all owners.

5) Personal financial statement for all owners.

Please note that a personal credit check may be performed for all proposed owners and/or guarantors.
Issuer encourages responses from Baltimore City Woman and Minority-Owned firms and non-profit social enterprises. Qualifications are due back to Issuer no later than noon on June 18, 2021 and should be sent to:

Rash Field Café RFQ Coordinator  
Waterfront Partnership of Baltimore, Inc  
650 S. Exeter Street, Suite 200  
Baltimore, MD 21231

Alternatively, qualifications may be submitted electronically to:  
info@waterfrontpartnership.org

Please note that no hand deliveries will be accepted.

QUALIFICATION CRITERIA

Responses will be evaluated on the following criteria:

1) Demonstrated ability to operate a restaurant/café with a liquor license.

2) Financial ability to support the opening and operation of a cafe.

3) Any other relevant criteria identified by Issuer.

RIGHTS RESERVED AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

1) This RFQ does not commit Issuer to award a lease or to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a response to this RFQ.

2) Should it become necessary to revise any part of this RFQ, provide additional information necessary to adequately interpret provisions and requirements of this RFQ, or respond to written inquiries concerning the RFQ, Issuer reserves the right to issue an Addendum to the RFQ to all respondents who received the initial RFQ.

3) Issuer reserves the right to accept or reject any and all proposals, at its sole discretion, received as a result of this RFQ, to waive minor irregularities, and to conduct discussions with all responsible respondents, in any manner necessary, to serve the best interests of the City of Baltimore.

4) Issuer, at its sole discretion, may choose to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) that requires a more detailed proposal for this project and may choose to offer that RFP to only those respondents that responded to this RFQ and met the qualifications criteria set forth herein.
EXHIBITS

A. Overall Park Plan

B. Birdseye Rendering of Park

C. Location of Park

D. Cafe Space Specs

Exhibit A – Overall Park Plan
Exhibit B – Birdseye Rendering of Park

Exhibit C - Location of Park
Exhibit D - Cafe Space Specs